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### Wyre Forest District Local Plan – Foreword

Welcome to the Wyre Forest District Local Plan. The Local Plan sets out how the district will accommodate its housing and employment needs up to 2036. This Local Plan replaces the previously adopted local plans for the district.

The process of reviewing the Local Plan began in 2015 when the Council consulted on the broad Issues and Options; this was followed by the Preferred Options consultation held in 2017. The Pre- Submission version of the Local Plan was consulted on in 2018 and 2019. The Council submitted the Local Plan to the Secretary of State in April 2020 for the purposes of the Examination in Public of the Local Plan review. This adopted Local Plan has been produced in accordance with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (2021), which requires Councils to plan positively for a period of at least 15 years for development in its area and particularly to meet the objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing.

Wyre Forest District Council believes that to have an up-to-date adopted Local Plan is essential in order to successfully plan for development to go where we want it and to enable the Council to make good decisions on planning applications.

## Introduction

**1.1** This document is Wyre Forest District Council's Local Plan. In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 it was published to allow representations to be made before submitting the document to the Planning Inspectorate. The re-opened consultation on the Local Plan Pre-Submission Publication ran from 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019 to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019. All representations received from this consultation and the previous Pre-Submission consultation, that was held in Autumn/Winter 2018, were submitted with the Local Plan to the Secretary of State in April 2020 for examination in public.

**1.2** Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) is the local planning authority responsible for producing the Local Plan; town and parish councils can produce neighbourhood plans, and Worcestershire County Council is responsible for producing the minerals and waste local plans. Together these plans make up the Development Plan, which sets out where development can take place, or where it should be avoided, and what form and type of development should take place.

## What is the Local Plan?

**1.3** This document is the Wyre Forest District Local Plan. It sets out the long-term vision and strategic context for managing and accommodating growth within the District until 2036 in order to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The aim of the Local Plan is to set out:

- the areas where development will take place;
- the areas that will be protected; and
- policies that will be used to determine planning applications.

**1.4** Under the planning system most development needs planning permission. The principal basis for making those decisions is the development plan; this Local Plan forms the main part of it for Wyre Forest District, replacing the previously adopted Local Plan.

## How has the Local Plan been prepared?

**1.5** The key stages for preparing the Local Plan included gathering evidence, identifying key issues and options and public consultation. The Council consulted extensively on the development of the Local Plan. Key public consultations that were undertaken are listed below:

- Issues and Options consultation - Autumn 2015
- Preferred Options consultation - Summer 2017
- Pre-Submission Publication consultation - Autumn/Winter 2018
- Re-opening of Pre-Submission Publication consultation - September/October 2019

**1.6** The Council received more than 1,600 responses to the Issues and Options public consultation, and over 5,000 responses to the Preferred Options public consultation, many of which were very detailed. The Council also received over 1,500 responses for the Pre-Submission consultations. Summaries of the consultation responses and key issues raised for the consultations are available on the Council's website. In addition, the Council undertook a number

of 'Call for Sites' during which landowners were able to submit their sites for consideration. Various meetings were held throughout the process including meetings with Worcestershire County Council, meetings with Statutory Consultees such as Historic England and Natural England, ongoing discussions with service and infrastructure providers and other local authorities and key bodies. Wherever possible, responses were taken into account in the preparation of this Local Plan.

**1.7** The Submission version of the Local Plan was approved by a meeting of the full Council in February 2020. The Council submitted the Submission version of the Local Plan in April 2020 to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Government appointed Planning Inspector. All consultation responses received for the Local Plan Pre-Submission Publication documents and the evidence base studies were passed to the Planning Inspector.

**1.8** The examination in public commenced in April 2020 with the Public Hearings held in early 2021 and the adoption of the Local Plan took place in April 2022.

## National Planning Policy

**1.9** The content of the Wyre Forest Local Plan has to be consistent with the Government's national planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF. The Plan has also been informed by the guidance contained in the National Planning Practice Guidance, the content of new relevant legislation and Government statements about planning. Whilst preparing this Local Plan, the Government published its draft revised NPPF in March 2018 with the final version being published on 24th July 2018. Further updates to the NPPF were later published by the Government on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and 20th July 2021.

## Background and Context

**1.10** The Council has a legal obligation to have an up-to-date Local Plan. The Local Plan review process commenced in September 2015 with the "Issues and Options" consultation which set out the key reasons for a review:

- To consider the amount of development that will be required in response to the most recent official data (including population trends, demand for housing, economic trends) and locally generated evidence.
- To respond to changes in legislation (including the Housing and Planning Act 2016) and national planning policy as reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- To respond to the Government's demand that Local Planning Authorities should have a Local Plan that is regularly reviewed and evidence-based to enable them to respond strategically to changing development needs over at least a 15 year period.

**1.11** This Local Plan document is a complete Plan and replaces the previously adopted Local Plan, which included the Core Strategy (2010), Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013), and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (2013). As such the coverage of the new Local Plan is:

- The **strategic element and policies** (Part A)
- The **development management policies** (Part B)
- The **allocations policies** (Part C)
- The approach to **monitoring and implementation** (Part D).

### Influences on the development of the Local Plan

**1.12** National planning policy includes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out a number of fundamental issues that need to be taken into account during the preparation of local plans, which include the following requirements:

- a. To set out a clear economic vision and strategy for the area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.
- b. To use a robust and up-to-date evidence base to ensure that the local plan meets the objectively assessed needs for the market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as it is consistent with the policies set out in the NPPF, including identifying key sites that are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period.
- c. To set criteria, or identify strategic sites, that will help to encourage local and inward investment to match the strategy and meet anticipated needs over the plan period.
- d. To maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites with an appropriate buffer.
- e. To recognise a duty to co-operate between public bodies and to implement a new soundness test, to ensure that plans are "positively prepared."

**1.13** Wyre Forest District is unusual in that it currently constitutes a self contained Housing Market Area whilst at the same time it is a member of two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) - namely Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and Worcestershire LEP. This provides Wyre Forest with a range of opportunities to further enhance its economic position, access funding streams and ensure that the area is able to continue to look both towards the rest of Worcestershire and the conurbation in the same way that it has done for many years. It also brings a range of challenges in terms of ensuring that development is balanced, is proportionate to the capacity of the District and does not undermine the unique character of the area.

**1.14** In 2013 leaders from Worcestershire's business, voluntary, community and public sector organisations pledged to work together to create a better future for Worcestershire. Expressed via "Worcestershire Next Generation" <sup>(1)</sup> this provides an update to the Sustainable Community Strategy.

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1 <http://www.wearethenextgeneration.co.uk>

## The Duty to Co-operate

**1.15** The Duty to Co-operate was introduced through the Localism Act 2011 and places a requirement on Local Planning Authorities (as well as a number of other public bodies) to work together on cross-boundary strategic issues. Local Planning Authorities and other public bodies are required to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to develop strategic policies. This requirement is also established in national planning policy (NPPF, paragraphs 24 to 27).

**1.16** The NPPF includes a 'soundness' requirement to be met through the compliance with the Duty to Co-operate. Plans are to be positively prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development. Joint working should be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities and enable Local Planning Authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas. Local Planning Authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively co-operated to plan for issues with cross boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination. Co-operation should be a continuous process of engagement.

**1.17** As part of its plan making process, Wyre Forest District Council consulted and engaged with relevant Local Planning Authorities and other public bodies on emerging policies at key stages. The Duty to Co-operate formalised this process and placed an emphasis on continuity.

**1.18** Wyre Forest District Council is fully committed to continuing to work positively and proactively with other local authorities and public bodies to address strategic issues in the longer term, particularly with regards to addressing opportunities to meet unmet housing needs. Where necessary, Statements of Common Ground were prepared for the purposes of the examination stage (in accordance with NPPF).

## Evidence

**1.19** In order to ensure that the Local Plan's policies are robust and supported by evidence, the Council has carried out and commissioned a wide range of studies. Work undertaken included the following and can be viewed on the Council's Planning Policy webpages:

- Housing Need Study
- Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
- Site Selection Paper
- Employment Land Review
- Green Belt Study
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Water Cycle Study
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Ecological Appraisals
- Open Space, Built Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies
- A revised settlement hierarchy
- Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Survey

- Traffic Modelling and Transport Evidence Paper
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Viability Assessment

**1.20** A Sustainability Appraisal report is also required under European and government legislation, which has to assess the sustainability implications of the proposals and policies in the Local Plan. A Sustainability Appraisal report was therefore prepared to accompany the Local Plan.

### Using this Local Plan Document

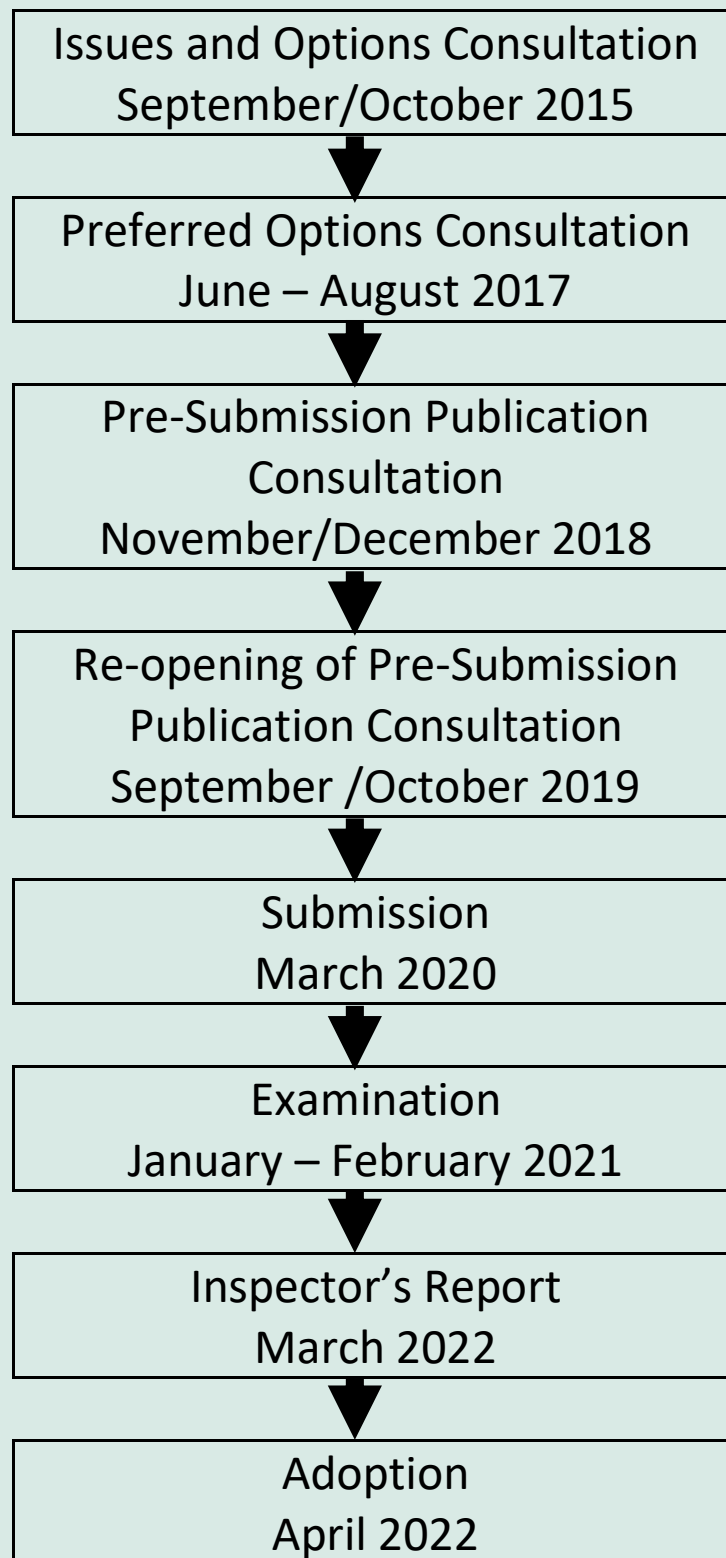
**1.21** This Local Plan has been written with the intention that it should be read as a whole. Taken together, the policies and proposals within the Local Plan will form a coherent strategy for development in the Wyre Forest District area up to 2036 (Local Plan period is 2016 to 2036). It is therefore important that individual policies are not considered in isolation.

**1.22** The policies in the Local Plan will only apply where planning permission is required and not where permitted development rights exist as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

**1.23** This document is accompanied by a Policies Map which shows the area specific policies and proposals on an Ordnance Survey base map. The Policies Map identifies areas to be allocated for development and designations which need to be taken into account in applying policies. The Local Plan Policies Map does not replicate proposals and designations from the 'made' neighbourhood plans and their maps will need to be consulted separately.



Key stages of the Wyre Forest District Local Plan



## Wyre Forest today – a pen picture

**2.1** This section paints a picture of Wyre Forest District and provides a snapshot of its key features. It also summarises the key issues facing the District. These include continuing to make the most of brownfield regeneration, ensuring that we have thriving communities with suitable jobs and homes and ensuring that the natural environment is enhanced, used and enjoyed by all.

### The Settlement Hierarchy

**2.2** Wyre Forest District is named after one of the largest ancient semi-natural woodlands in the country and is situated in north-west Worcestershire. The local authority area covers 75 sq.miles and has an estimated population of around 100,600 people in 2018<sup>(2)</sup>.

**2.3** The population increased by 1.1% (2001-2011), by a further 1.1% from 2013 to 2015 and again by a further 1.1% from 2015 to 2017. The rate of growth in Wyre Forest District is below that of Worcestershire which is 6.7%, the West Midlands 8.9%, or England 10.8% (Amion 2017). The population of Wyre Forest District is projected to increase by 4.9% over the course of the Plan Period 2016-2036. This means that the population is likely to rise to 105,300 in 2036<sup>(3)</sup>. The District has an ageing population. The population aged 65 years and over is expected to increase by 28.1% from 24,200 in 2016 to 31,800 in 2036<sup>(4)</sup>.

**2.4** The District is largely rural and has three towns: Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley. The three towns form a triangle of settlements at the centre of the District; between each of the towns is a narrow area of countryside. Each of the towns has its own character and community identity.

**2.5** Kidderminster (pop.56,538 in 2016), is the largest of the three towns and is the main centre for retail, industry and housing. The town developed rapidly in the 19th Century as a world leading centre for the production of carpet. This manufacturing industry has been in decline since the 1970s.

**2.6** Stourport-on-Severn (pop.20,542 in 2016), developed as an important industrial Georgian Canal Town at the confluence of the River Severn and River Stour with the construction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. For over 100 years this attractive town with its riverside meadows has been a popular day trip destination for residents from Birmingham and the Black Country.

**2.7** Bewdley has a population of approximately 9,000 (including the surrounding rural area the population is approximately 13,802) and is a Georgian riverside town, an inland port with surviving wharves which saw significant development during the 1960s. Today Bewdley is an attractive historic market town and a popular visitor destination.

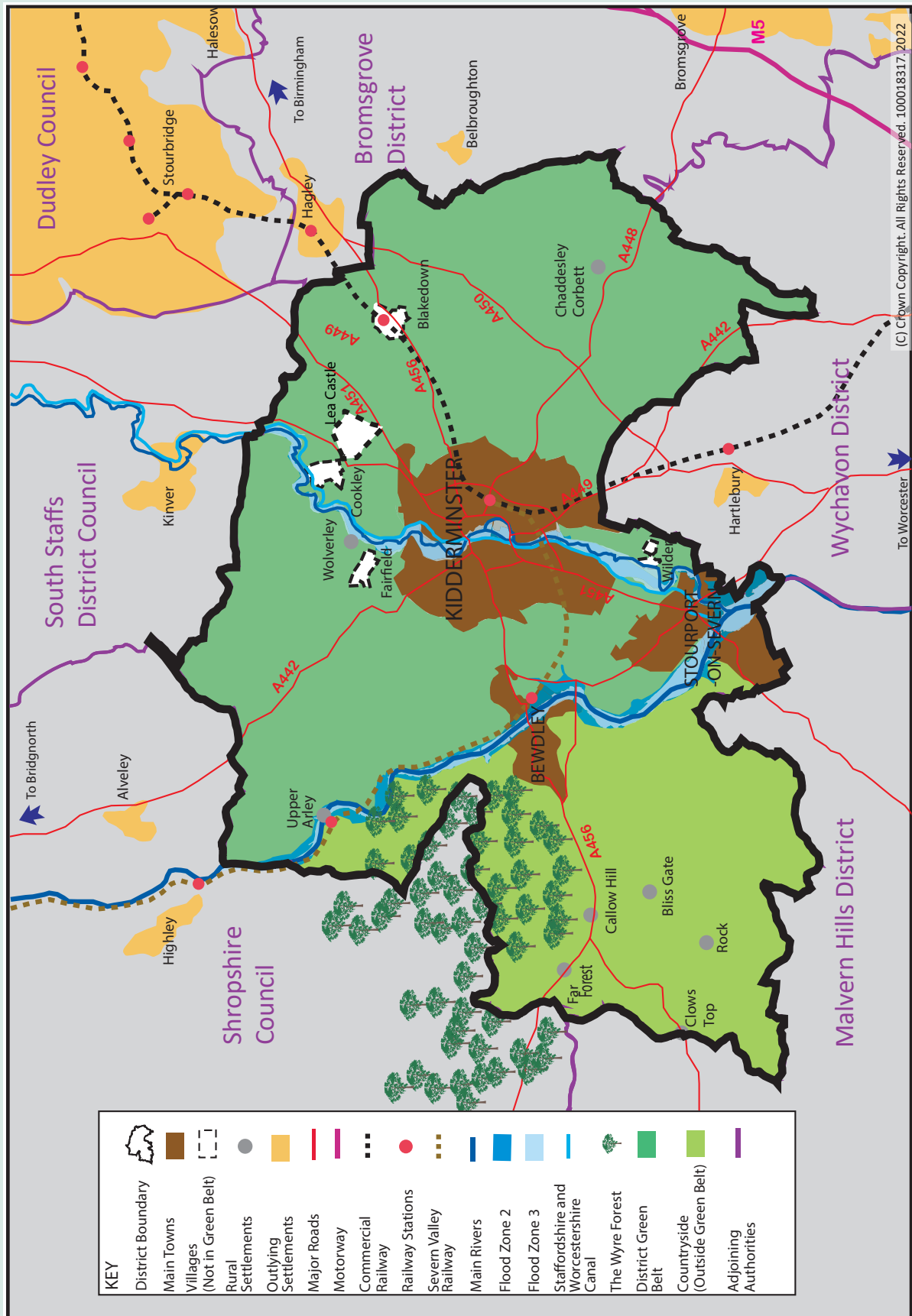
2 ONS 2016 Subnational Population Projections

3 ONS 2016 Subnational Population Projections

4 ONS 2016 Subnational Population Projections

**2.8** To the east, the larger more accessible villages include Blakedown and Cookley which are served by both facilities and public transport, Blakedown having a railway station. Villages in the west, which include Rock and Far Forest, are smaller with fewer facilities and more limited public transport.

### Context Map showing overview of District



### Issues facing Wyre Forest District

**2.9** During the plan making stages of this Local Plan a range of challenges that face the Wyre Forest District were considered and consulted on. The consultations provided valuable feedback to the development of the Local Plan which has helped to steer the spatial development strategy.

**2.10** Table 2.0.1 sets out the issues facing the district and are divided into three categories: social; economic; and environmental.

**Table 2.0.1 Issues facing Wyre Forest District**

Social issues for Wyre Forest District:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing population. Low percentage of residents in the 0-19 and 20-39 age groups. High proportion of residents aged 45-64; very high proportion of residents aged 65+.</li> <li>• The ageing population means that more care facilities are needed for elderly/end of life as well as specialist accommodation.</li> <li>• The elderly may want to downsize to smaller residential units which could free up family sized accommodation. Need to ensure that residential development caters for all groups in society.</li> <li>• There are high obesity levels.</li> <li>• The District has a low level of in-migration.</li> <li>• Whilst the population has increased, the number of households has increased at a greater rate as the quantity of residents per unit of accommodation is falling.</li> <li>• Housing affordability problems.</li> <li>• Need to ensure that residential development caters for all groups in society.</li> <li>• Fuel poverty.</li> <li>• Noticeable variations in health between those living in the most affluent wards and those living in the most deprived wards in the District.</li> <li>• High costs of providing healthcare for an ageing population with high obesity which results in more medical intervention; for example, hospital stays or visits to GPs.</li> <li>• Low availability of services in the District's rural areas.</li> <li>• Leisure and sport facilities should be accessible to local residents. Participation in swimming and attending the gym are highest within the District with over 10% of the public accessing these activities.</li> </ul>
Economic issues for Wyre Forest District:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in traditional manufacturing industries – need for employment opportunities and suitable housing. Working age people need to be attracted to the District as economically active people improve the area. This helps retail and regenerates the area; more people spending money encourages more shops; this in turn improves the town centre so that more retailers wish to open shops, restaurants and provide services.</li> <li>• The ratio of economically dependent people to economically active people is high. Therefore, we need to attract more economically active people to the District to ensure that communities are better balanced.</li> <li>• Generally low unemployment within the District; however, there are pockets of higher unemployment in Foley Park and Hoobrook ward and Broadwaters ward.</li> <li>• Lower earnings, both by location of employment and by residence than the West Midlands or Great Britain. It is likely that many people are commuting to Worcester or Birmingham for higher paid jobs. About 40% of residents commute to outside the district for work. Need to raise wage levels by attracting employers with higher wages, thus reducing the wages gap between the district and neighbouring local authority areas, and reducing commuting.</li> <li>• Development of brownfield sites - current Government policy states that 90% of suitable brownfield sites should have a Local Development Order for residential development by 2020. This could potentially push</li> </ul>

<b>Social issues for Wyre Forest District:</b>
<p>industrial development into other areas such as the Green Belt. Diversify the economy, create more skilled jobs to reduce out of District commuting and increase the retention of young educated residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to deliver infrastructure to support housing and employment development.</li> <li>• Improve rates of qualification at both GCSE level and higher and further education.</li> <li>• Greater diversity of shops as improvements are made to Kidderminster shopping centre to encourage more visitors to the town centres and to tourist attractions throughout Wyre Forest District.</li> <li>• Need to regenerate the town centres, areas of the town centre which have been traditionally retail could change to other uses and the primary shopping area could be redefined.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental issues for Wyre Forest District:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure for development in the Green Belt as over half of the District falls within the West Midlands Green Belt.</li> <li>• Pressure for development in flood zones.</li> <li>• Safeguarding the best and most versatile agricultural land.</li> <li>• Improving air quality and water quality.</li> <li>• Ensuring that new development reflects Wyre Forest District's distinctive character.</li> <li>• Protecting, conserving and, where it is possible to do so, enhancing the District's rich natural environment and heritage assets.</li> <li>• Planning for the impact of climate change, which includes flooding, in new development.</li> <li>• Poor air quality (AQMA) at Horsefair, Kidderminster and Welch Gate, Bewdley.</li> </ul>

**2.11** In addition to the issues highlighted in Table 2.0.1, respondents to the consultations raised concerns relating to the following issues:

- Very poor public transport and high levels of traffic congestion with poor strategic transport infrastructure. It was strongly felt by consultees that these issues need to be addressed to encourage further investment in the District.
- Concern that infrastructure i.e GP surgeries and schools are at capacity and more dwellings would mean more population that would add to the problem.
- Concern raised regarding the number of dwellings required and amount of employment land required as many considered the amount required is too high.
- Many residents concerned that development of dwellings or employment may take place in the Green Belt.
- Many residents wanted brownfield sites to be developed before greenfield or Green Belt sites.
- Many local residents raised the importance of protecting the Green Belt and concerns over increased recreational pressures on the countryside.
- A number of comments were received regarding the future role of the Severn Valley Railway and the part it could play in improving passenger transport.
- A number of landowners and others involved in the development industry registered their concern that the relationship between the Green Belt, brownfield land availability, housing completions and employment opportunities had not been addressed.
- Many residents commented that Kidderminster town centre needs regeneration and a range of uses introduced into the centre including residential.

**2.12** The issues set out above have been considered during the development of this Local Plan together with evidence from the evidence base studies.

## Overall Sustainable Development Objectives

**3.1** In order to achieve a sustainable end result, the Local Plan (through its overall approach and policies) needs to perform a number of roles:

**a. An economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive Wyre Forest economy by:

- i. Ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right locations and at the right time to support economic and social growth and innovation.
- ii. Identifying and co-ordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.
- iii. Promoting accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car or those seeking to achieve a modal shift away from the car.
- iv. Implementing the Worcestershire LEP Strategic Economic Plan.
- v. Implementing the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Strategic Economic Plan.

**b. A social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities in Wyre Forest District by:

- i. Ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.
- ii. Fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
- iii. Creating a strong sense of place by strengthening the distinctive and cultural qualities of towns and villages
- iv. Creating safe and accessible environments where crime, disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion

**c. An environmental role** - protecting and enhancing Wyre Forest District's unique natural, built and historic environment by:

- i. Making effective use of land.
- ii. Improving biodiversity.
- iii. Using natural resources prudently.
- iv. Minimising waste and pollution.
- v. Safeguarding and enhancing landscape character.
- vi. Protecting significant historic buildings, monuments, sites of archaeological significance and the integrity of local planning designations.
- vii. Protecting and enhancing green infrastructure.
- viii. Mitigating and adapting to climate change and flood risk, including moving to a low carbon economy and reducing flood risk and wastewater through water management.

**3.2** These roles should be delivered through the application of the policies within the NPPF and the Development Plan.



**3.3** Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards and well-designed, beautiful and safe buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. For example, the promotion of local food production can help support and diversify the local agricultural economy, promote healthier lifestyles and provide valuable habitats or wildlife. Similarly, sustainable drainage can provide a cost-effective measure to reduce the environmental impact of surface water run-off and increase resilience to flooding. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains will be sought jointly and concurrently wherever possible.

**3.4** The Local Plan will seek to guide development to achieve sustainable solutions and the policies, taken as a whole, constitute the authority’s view of what sustainable development means in practice for Wyre Forest when promoted through the planning system.

**3.5** Development proposals will need to accord with the Development Plan, which comprises the adopted Local Plan, neighbourhood plans that have been made, the Waste Core Strategy, Minerals Local Plan, and the Local Transport Plan. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the Development Plan, unless the District Council decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made. Any relevant adopted Supplementary Planning Documents should also be considered as part of the planning application process.

## Visions and Objectives for 2036

**3.6** Table 3.0.1 presents the Local Plan's vision for Wyre Forest District up to 2036.

**Table 3.0.1 Vision: What will Wyre Forest District be like in 2036?**

1.	In 2036 the three main towns of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley in Wyre Forest District continue to maintain their distinctive and separate identities and will be the main focus for growth within the district. The outlying villages have grown organically to meet their own needs. The Rivers Severn and Stour and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal together with other green infrastructure are valued links for both wildlife and residents within and between the town centres, the surrounding countryside and villages.
2.	The District’s varied natural habitats, together with its diverse and historic landscapes are thriving, and offer a range of outdoor interests, contributing to local educational opportunities and sustainable tourism. Residents and businesses rely increasingly on energy from locally generated renewable sources. Water management forms an integral part of the planning and design of developments. This includes the mitigation of flood risk, water efficiency and widely used SuDS.
3.	Kidderminster has benefited from sustainable brownfield regeneration. The attractive and accessible town centre provides a range of retail and commercial leisure opportunities as well as civic spaces and urban greenspace. Kidderminster supports a vibrant visitor economy and a flourishing evening economy. Through its links with the region’s Universities and Colleges, Kidderminster provides an important educational and vocational training centre. The transformation of the town has been enhanced by an improved transport infrastructure through which traffic congestion in the town centre has been considerably reduced with an associated improvement in air quality and opportunity for regeneration.
4.	Stourport-on-Severn offers a range of facilities to local residents and visitors alike and its canal and riverside remain a key visitor attraction. Its public realm is enhanced through the restoration of its unique heritage including the canal basins and the regeneration of Bridge Street.
5.	Bewdley remains a thriving market town which meets the local community’s needs. The town’s historic character is preserved and its flourishing riverside environment continues to attract visitors.
6.	To the east of the District, the larger villages of Cookley and Blakedown continue to provide local residents and the surrounding rural hinterlands with key local services. There remain more limited services,

focussing on the needs of local communities, in settlements to the west such as Rock, Clows Top and Far Forest.

7. The District's housing market provides a choice of accommodation responding well to local needs and catering for single households, families and the elderly in particular. Job creation is balanced with housing delivery, encouraging younger people to remain within and be attracted to the District to create a better balanced population structure.
8. A vibrant and sustainable economy exists, primarily focussed around Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and the Stourport Road Employment Corridor providing a range of jobs across the service, retail, research and development and manufacturing sectors, with the infrastructure and a skilled population in place to support it. The urban areas of Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn and the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park are the main focus for employment but they are supported by the rural economy including several existing and significant industrial estates where sustainable growth will have occurred, and sustainable tourism.
9. The three towns and rural areas are well served by a sustainable transport network that delivers high levels of accessibility to key services and attractions by a variety of modes of transport. The urban environments have experienced reduced levels of traffic congestion and improved air quality within the town centres which has encouraged the renaissance of Kidderminster town centre. Kidderminster Railway Station acts as a high quality gateway to the District providing convenient interchange for pedestrians and cyclists alike. Frequent rail links to the nearby regional centre of Birmingham and the sub-regional centre of Worcester give access to higher order services. There will also be traffic calming measures in place around schools that are properly enforced.
10. Crime and disorder in the District remain low and local residents feel safer. Residents have the opportunity to lead healthier lifestyles with improved access to clean and attractive green spaces, facilitated by a comprehensive network of routes suitable for vulnerable users (e.g. walkers, cyclists, horse riders). Young residents can access a variety of activities and facilities in the three towns and can make better use of community facilities in the rural villages. Educational achievement rates have improved, particularly in the wards of Oldington & Foley Park and Broadwaters.<sup>(5)</sup> Local residents are more skilled through improved access to training opportunities within the community. As they get older, residents' good health and wellbeing continues through easy access to quality health care and community facilities.
11. New development in Wyre Forest is properly supported by the timely provision of suitable infrastructure.
12. Lea Castle Village will be a new sustainable village with enough housing to generate a new village centre with its own local shop, primary school, employment uses and new and upgraded sports pitches. It will be set within an extensive woodland/landscape setting.
13. The Kidderminster Eastern Extension will be a well-designed residential development offering a choice of high quality new homes to meet local needs set within an extensive area of green space which is readily accessible to everyone in the area. It will also provide a new primary school and a community hub with retail provision.

5 Pre May 2015 Wards are referred to as data is not yet available for new Wards.

## Local Plan Aim and Objectives

**3.7** The following plan objectives (Table 3.0.2) will help address the key challenges facing Wyre Forest District and will contribute to the achievement of the Vision expressed in Table 3.0.1.

**Table 3.0.2 Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036) – Aim and Objectives**

<p><b>Plan Aim</b></p> <p>By 2036 Wyre Forest will be a District where people want to live <i>and</i> work <i>and</i> fulfil their potential without the need for excessive travel.</p> <p><b>Plan Objectives</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To encourage the long term sustainable development of Wyre Forest and its communities.</li> <li>2. To address the key challenges facing the District especially in terms of housing, employment, health and transport.</li> <li>3. To address housing needs in order that existing and future residents' requirements are met and the economic development of the area is supported.</li> <li>4. To recognise the changing nature of employment, encourage economic diversification and make sufficient high quality employment sites available.</li> <li>5. To maximise the use of previously developed land in order to ensure the best use is made of available land both within and beyond the main towns.</li> <li>6. To protect and support the role of the Green Belt through a strategic review and to identify a necessary and justified level of strategic Green Belt release to enable the delivery of the plan whilst reinforcing the role and integrity of the Green Belt for future Plan periods.</li> <li>7. To maximise opportunities for the inclusion of green infrastructure into high quality development in order to provide a good quality of life and maximise the benefits of walking and cycling. Safeguard and enhance the District's biodiversity and geodiversity assets.</li> <li>8. To promote the historic environment and conserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations</li> <li>9. To increase provision and to facilitate greater access to sport, recreational and other community facilities in order to encourage healthier lifestyles and improve the health and wellbeing of the District's population.</li> <li>10. To improve connectivity within the District and achieve more sustainable travel patterns and reduce the need to use the private car through improved public transport services (bus and rail), and new and enhanced cycleways and footpaths. These actions will contribute to an improvement in air quality.</li> <li>11. To protect the District's water supply and quality, and reduce the risk of flooding.</li> </ol>
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## Document Structure

**3.8** To address this range of challenges and issues within the space of a single document is both challenging and complex. In order to achieve this, the document is ordered according to the following structure:

**Table 3.0.3 Document Structure**

Part	Description	Associated Policies	
		Section	Policy Title
A	Strategic Policies	5	A Sustainable Future – Development Strategy
		6	Strategic Green Belt Review
		7	A Desirable Place to Live
		8	Health and Wellbeing
		9	A Good Place to Do Business
		10	A Unique Place
		11	Strategic Infrastructure
		12	Transport and Accessibility
		13	Green Infrastructure
		14	Water Management
		15	Pollution, Minerals and Waste
		16	Telecommunications and Renewable Energy
	Key Diagram		
B	Development Management Policies	18	A Desirable Place to Live
		19	Providing Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
		20	Community Facilities
		21	Employment Land
		22	Town Centre Development and Retail
		23	Sustainable Tourism
		24	Safeguarding the Green Belt
		25	Safeguarding the Historic Environment
		26	Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness

Part	Description	Associated Policies	
		Section	Policy Title
		27	Rural Development
C	Site Allocations	29	Strategic Allocation Lea Castle Village
		30	Strategic Allocation Kidderminster Eastern Extension
		31	Strategic Allocations Blakedown
		32	Kidderminster Town
		33	Stourport-on-Severn
		34	Bewdley
		35	Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt
		36	Rural Wyre Forest
D	Monitoring and Implementation Framework	37	Monitoring and Implementation Framework

**3.9** Wyre Forest District Council is satisfied that this Local Plan has been designed to achieve sustainable economic growth throughout the plan period, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF. It has identified and promoted a range of sites suitable for housing, employment-generating activity, mixed-use, commercial and retail growth and appropriate rural diversification and enterprise activities.

**4.1** The remainder of Part A of this Plan sets out the primacy of the need for sustainable, positively planned development required to meet the needs of Wyre Forest District throughout this plan period (2016 - 2036). In doing so it describes the Spatial Development Strategy necessary to address the identified issues and challenges and to guide development to ensure that it is appropriate in scale and balanced.

**4.2** In setting out the Development Strategy this section proposes a range of Strategic Policies intended to provide the context and necessary framework for the subsequent Development Management and Site Allocations policies (Sections B and C respectively) of this document.

**5.1** The Spatial Development Strategy sets out the broad framework for future development within the District for the 2016-2036 time period. It takes forward the vision and development objectives into a strategy to address the issues and challenges facing the District and to guide development into the future. Importantly it also establishes a clear role for the District's settlements in accommodating future development.

**5.2** The Spatial Development Strategy is made up of six policies which consider:

- the Development Needs – or amount of development - to be delivered within the Plan period and the spatial distribution of growth (Policy SP.1);
- the general location strategy for new development and Settlement Hierarchy (Policy SP.2);
- the role of Kidderminster as the strategic centre (Policy SP.3);
- the role of the Strategic Allocation Sites (Policy SP.4);
- the role of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley as market towns (Policy SP.5); and
- the role of the villages and other rural settlements (Policy SP.6).

**5.3** The 'Key Diagram' supports the Spatial Development Strategy by showing the opportunities and constraints to guide new development and significant future infrastructure. The Key Diagram is the principal illustration of the spatial strategy. The diagram identifies broad locations for development, key areas of constraint, the main patterns of movement and also outlines the classification of settlements, reflecting the settlement hierarchy included within the Spatial Development Strategy. The Key Diagram can be viewed at the end of Part A.

#### **Policy SP.1 - Spatial Development Strategy 2016 - 2036**

1. During the Plan Period (2016-2036) Wyre Forest District Council will make provision for, monitor and manage the delivery of housing, employment land, retail and offices at the levels of development contained in Table 5.0.1. This delivery will be in accordance with the site allocations set out in Part C of this document.
2. As required by the Duty to Co-operate <sup>(6)</sup>, due consideration will be given, through a future early review of the WFDC Local Plan where necessary and in accordance with the NPPF, to the housing needs of neighbouring local authorities <sup>(7)</sup> in circumstances when it has been clearly established through the local plan process that these needs must be met through provision in the Wyre Forest District area. The review will consider the need for additional growth and plan appropriately for this if the need has been clearly evidenced and justified.

<sup>6</sup> Section 110, Localism Act (2011) relating to unmet need.

<sup>7</sup> This includes the Black Country Local Authorities who are currently preparing a joint Local Plan Review.

**Table 5.0.1 Wyre Forest Development Needs 2016-2036**

Type of Development	Amount of Development Required	Annual requirement
Dwellings (net additional)	5,520	276 (minimum)
C2 use (Institutional / Care home bed spaces)	487 bed spaces	Not applicable
Employment Land	29 hectares	Not applicable
Comparison Retailing	Zero	Not applicable

- Growth aspirations for the district will largely be directed towards the most sustainable, larger settlements and towards the new village at Lea Castle and the Kidderminster eastern urban extension, as set out in table 5.0.2 below. These are considered to be the best locations for delivering supporting infrastructure as well as active and sustainable travel choices.

**Table 5.0.2 Spatial distribution of growth over the period of Local Plan (2016-2036)**

Settlement	Expected Minimum Growth Delivery
Kidderminster Town	1,231 net additional dwellings 16 traveller pitches 6 travelling showpeople pitches 21.82 ha net additional employment land
Lea Castle Village	1,400 net additional dwellings 7.34 ha net additional employment land
Kidderminster Eastern Urban Extension	1,439 net additional dwellings
Stourport-on-Severn	1,155 net additional dwellings 4 traveller pitches 0.56 ha net additional employment land
Bewdley	227 net additional dwellings
Rural Wyre Forest	108 net additional dwellings 1.7 ha net additional employment land



The expected growth delivery for each settlement area as set out in table 5.0.2 within this Policy are minimum requirements. Further development within the District's settlement areas will not be refused if, over the plan period, growth expectations have been exceeded for any settlement and provided development proposals are in accordance with other policies in this Plan.

## **Reasoned Justification**

**5.4** In arriving at its Spatial Development Strategy, the Council has taken account of national planning policy, responses received through public consultation, and the evidence that has been prepared to support the Local Plan, including the Sustainability Appraisal. The Spatial Development Strategy has been used to shape the site allocations set out in Part C of the Local Plan and will help deliver the Local Plan objectives.

## **Housing Provision**

**5.5** Housing provision will be made for 5,520 dwellings (net) which includes market housing and affordable housing provision. A separate provision for 487 C2 (e.g. care homes / nursing homes bed spaces) will also be made. This level of housing is considered appropriate by Wyre Forest District Council in order to meet the challenges posed by the need for economic regeneration of the District and the provision of an improved level of affordable housing without undermining the local housing market. Key objectives of the Spatial Development Strategy include making provision for:

- a. The right amount of land and type of employment uses at readily accessible locations in which business will thrive and be resilient to current and future challenges;
- b. Sufficient housing provision that enables the labour force to live locally and contributes to achieving the right mix of housing types so that the wide range of housing needs can be met;
- c. Whilst the current quantum of available retail provision is considered to be broadly correct it will be necessary to ensure that the retail offer is appropriate to the future requirements of the District. Therefore, whilst it is not anticipated that there will be a need for any additional large scale provision, it may be appropriate for the offer to evolve in order to meet future requirements. Where additional requirements are anticipated to be required to support housing allocations these are detailed by the specific site allocation policies in Part C of this document.
- d. Infrastructure that supports communities which are housing the labour force and facilitates the movement of people to their employment, education and other services through the alignment of the phasing of development and supporting infrastructure, including green infrastructure.

**5.6** The National Planning Policy Framework requires that Local Planning Authorities, as a minimum, meet their objectively assessed needs (OAN) for both market and affordable housing (as far as is consistent with other policies in the Framework). The most up-to-date work on OAN, and that which is used in this Local Plan is the Housing Needs Study 2018 (HNS, 2018). This 2018 study uses an updated set of demographic projections, taking account of information including 2016 based Sub-National Population Projections from ONS and the most up-to-date

2016 based Household Projections. It also takes account of the Government's new standardised methodology for calculating housing need. This HNS (2018) study supercedes all previous Objectively Assessed Needs Reports published by the Council. It is important to note that the Council has not used the 2014 based Household Projections as this would have given a lower housing figure of 248 dwellings per annum. This is because the Council wishes to be ambitious with its housing requirement figure in order to support economic growth and affordable housing delivery. This approach is supported by the PPG, which states: *"The government is committed to ensuring that more homes are built and supports ambitious authorities who want to plan for growth. The standard method for assessing local housing need provides a minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area. It does not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour. Therefore, there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than the standard method indicates."* (PPG, Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 2a-010-20190220).

**5.7** As such the figure of 5,520 (from the HNS study, 2018) reflects the necessary housing requirement to satisfy housing need plus additional need arising from the necessity to provide additional affordable housing and opportunities for economic growth. The same report separately identifies an additional requirement of 487 C2 (e.g. care homes / nursing homes bed spaces) which are not part of the 5,520 figure

## Employment Provision

**5.8** The Employment Land Review (ELR) (2018) report appraised a range of employment land projections for Wyre Forest District using a variety of methodologies in accordance with the former Planning Practice guidance (as this being the most up-to-date PPG at the time). A range of factors were considered within the report to help inform the judgement on the appropriate level of employment need for the district. The ELR report concludes that the employment land requirement for Wyre Forest District should be 29ha of land between 2016 and 2036. The Local Plan seeks to allocate sufficient employment land to accommodate this employment need of 29ha.

## Annual requirements

**5.9** Table 5.0.1 sets out the annual minimum housing requirement for the Wyre Forest District. This is derived by a simple division of the housing requirement (5,520) by the number of years that the Plan will apply (20 years). This equates to an annual minimum housing requirement of 276 dwellings. As discussed in Policy SP.10 (Affordable Housing) there will be a number of elements that make up the affordable housing component.

**5.10** Sites considered unsuitable (e.g. because of flood risk), not viable or not deliverable have been excluded. As in all plan making it is also necessary to adopt a precautionary approach to allow for sites that may not be delivered - this is particularly the case for sites with a poor viability (such as brownfield sites). It is therefore necessary to identify some additional sites so that in the event of a site not coming forward, or sites being excluded from the Local Plan, the District is able to demonstrate that the housing and employment requirements can still be met and flexibility is demonstrated.

**5.11** In order to achieve the required flexibility it was necessary to propose allocations in excess of the housing requirement of 5,520. The Plan therefore includes an over allocation of more than 20%, to allow for sites not coming forward and to be able to maintain a rolling five-year housing land supply. At the time of preparation of this Local Plan the Council's understanding of how this might be achieved was guided by the following available data.

**Table 5.0.3 Housing Land Supply at 1st April 2021**

Source of Supply	No. of Net Dwellings (approx)
Completions (1st April 2016 to 31st March 2021)	1,018
Under Construction at 1st April 2021	474
Commitments not yet started at 1st April 2021 <sup>(8)</sup>	1,216
Strategic Allocation Site - Lea Castle Village (non-pdl part)	800
Strategic Allocation Site - Kidderminster Eastern Urban Extension	1,439
Remaining Development Sites:	
Kidderminster Town	485
Stourport-on-Severn	977
Bewdley	221
Rural Settlements	104
Total:	6,734

### Duty to Co-operate

**5.12** It is clearly demonstrated by the HNS (2018) that, unusually in the West Midlands, the Wyre Forest District Council area is co-terminus with the Wyre Forest Housing Market Area. As such the housing requirement reflected by this Plan is based solely on that required for the needs of Wyre Forest District. However, this does not negate the need for the Plan to be prepared in consultation with neighbouring and near-by authorities (e.g. other Worcestershire districts, Birmingham and the Black Country, South Staffordshire, Shropshire); accordingly Wyre Forest District has co-operated with authorities that are both adjoining and beyond in order to consider strategic priorities for the delivery of homes, including cross-boundary requirements. Statements of Common Ground were prepared where necessary for the purposes of the examination of the Local Plan to evidence the joint working and effective co-operation consistent with the Duty to Cooperate legal requirement and the NPPF.

### Management of land supply

**5.13** The Council's monitoring of the provision of dwellings demonstrates that, whilst under normal economic circumstances, a fairly consistent supply can be achieved. Under unusually buoyant or depressed economic circumstances extremes (both high and low) of delivery can be evidenced. It is therefore prudent to ensure that the authority is in a position to respond quickly to changing circumstances. Positive planning measures may be required to help bring forward sites for development earlier in the plan period to ensure a five-year supply of sites is able to be sustained. Whilst not exhaustive such initiatives might include:

8 \* The Commitments shown in table 6.0.3 do not include lapse rates. At 1st April 2021, the lapse rate was 4%. Applying 4% to the commitments not yet started =  $1,216 \times 96\% = 1,167$ . For further information on completions and commitments please refer to the Council's 5 Year Housing Land Supply Report, which will be updated annually throughout the Plan Period).

- a. Working with house builders / landowners / Registered Providers, to monitor and progress the housing supply and to identify any causes of supply problems and where appropriate to act on feedback received.
- b. Production of detailed Planning Briefs and / or area-based Supplementary Planning Documents, to increase certainty for developers on the progression of sites through the planning process.
- c. Regular meetings with stakeholders about the major urban extensions.
- d. As part of the preparation of Planning Briefs, indicate different development permutations to accommodate different viability scenarios.
- e. Pre-application discussions with developers, landowners and their agents to increase certainty in the development management process.
- f. Sensitive application of policy where issues around scheme viability have been clearly demonstrated.
- g. Prioritise public sector land.
- h. Potential funding streams, such as Homes England and other public funding sources.
- i. Testing of viability through an independent study and liaison with developers about viability issues.
- j. Annual update of the Council's Brownfield Land Register.
- k. Bringing forward Reserved Housing Sites, subject to Policy SP.8.

### Policy SP.2 - Locating New Development

1. The Spatial Development Strategy and the site allocations in this Plan (as described by Policies SP.3 – SP.6) are based upon the following principles:
  - a. Provide accessible, attractive employment sites and positive policies to deliver job creation opportunities.
  - b. Provide for and facilitate the delivery of sufficient accessible housing to meet as a minimum the objectively assessed needs to 2036.
  - c. Encourage the effective use and re-use of accessible, available and environmentally acceptable brownfield land.
  - d. Safeguard and (wherever possible) enhance the open countryside.
  - e. Maintain the openness of the Green Belt (as identified on the Policies Map).
  - f. Focus most development in and adjacent to the urban areas, where both housing needs and accessibility to more effective public service provision are greatest.
  - g. Protect from development areas that are sensitive because of their landscape, heritage assets or biodiversity.
2. Windfall development proposals will be assessed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy described in the following table:

Table 5.0.4 Wyre Forest Settlement Hierarchy

Category	Settlements Included	Role	Suitable Development
Main Town	Kidderminster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative centre of the District</li> <li>Focus of public services</li> <li>Focus of employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus of large scale housing provision including Kidderminster Eastern Extension</li> <li>Utilisation of appropriate brownfield and greenfield sites, subject to the more detailed Plan policies</li> <li>Comparison and convenience retail (to meet District requirements and needs)</li> <li>Commercial leisure</li> <li>Large and small scale offices</li> <li>Residential</li> <li>Employment</li> <li>Hotels, tourism and leisure</li> <li>Sports and education facilities</li> <li>Major services</li> </ul>
Large Market Town	Stourport-on-Severn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive range of local services</li> <li>Employment for residents and those in nearby rural areas</li> <li>River/Canal based Tourism and leisure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support role in the provision of larger scale housing</li> <li>Utilisation of appropriate brownfield and greenfield sites, subject to the more detailed Plan policies</li> <li>Convenience retail (to meet the needs of Stourport-on-Severn)</li> <li>Local services</li> <li>Employment, offices and commerce</li> <li>Sports and recreation uses</li> </ul>
Market Town	Bewdley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of local services</li> <li>Employment opportunities especially for rural area west of the River Severn</li> <li>Tourism and leisure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convenience retail to meet local needs.</li> <li>Employment, offices and commerce</li> <li>Housing to meet local needs and to ensure long-term vitality and viability</li> <li>Leisure and business tourism</li> <li>Local services</li> </ul>
Villages, settlements and rural hamlets covered (washed over) by Green Belt	Chaddesley Corbett Wolverley Upper Arley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varying ranges of local services and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing to meet local needs via allocated sites and rural exception sites in appropriate circumstances</li> <li>Limited infilling in villages</li> <li>Local services</li> <li>Small scale rural employment including offices</li> </ul>
Other villages and rural settlements	Inset Green Belt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fairfield</li> <li>Cookley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varying ranges of local services and facilities</li> <li>Settlements to west of River Severn tend to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing to meet local needs via allocated sites and rural exception sites in appropriate circumstances</li> <li>Infill development within settlement boundary</li> </ul>

Category	Settlements Included	Role	Suitable Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blakedown</li> <li>Wilden</li> </ul> <p>Non Green Belt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clows Top</li> <li>Rock</li> <li>Bliss Gate</li> <li>Far Forest</li> <li>Callow Hill</li> </ul>	have a widely dispersed catchment for employment, services etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local services</li> <li>Small scale rural employment, including offices</li> </ul>
New Village	<p>Inset Green Belt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lea Castle Village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New sustainable village with enough housing to generate a new village centre with local facilities and primary school.</li> <li>To also include employment use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential</li> <li>Employment</li> <li>Sports and education facilities</li> <li>Local services</li> </ul>

- Where a community decides to bring forward a Neighbourhood Plan the District Council will cooperate with and support the community in this activity so that greater local control over the location of development can be exerted whilst supporting the delivery of the Local Plan. Neighbourhood Plans will need to be consistent with the strategic policies of the Local Plan as a whole and will be expected to support the District in meeting its development needs.
- Development of land beyond settlement boundaries will be strictly controlled and will be limited to dwellings for rural workers, replacement dwellings and rural exception sites (Policy SP.11); employment development in rural areas and buildings for agriculture and forestry (Policy DM.10) and renewable energy projects (Policy SP.37) and development specifically permitted by other Wyre Forest Local Plan policies.
- The Green Belt (as identified on the Policies Map) will be maintained and development proposed within the Green Belt will be considered in accordance with national policy as set out in the NPPF, and with the policies set out in this Local Plan, in particular, Local Plan Policies SP.7, SP.8, DM.2, DM.22 and SA.PDL

## Reasoned Justification

**5.14** The development strategy is driven by the Wyre Forest vision and its associated objectives. It brings together land use, development and infrastructure considerations that flow from the economic, environmental and social characteristics of the area. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) demonstrates that the development strategy will help deliver the SA objectives.



**5.15** The new development strategy builds upon the previous Wyre Forest Core Strategy which concentrated development on the large amount of brownfield land in the urban core of the District. Whilst the new strategy continues to maximise the benefit of this resource it will no longer be possible to be entirely reliant on brownfield land meaning that some greenfield land take will be required. This is due to two key factors:

- a. much of the readily available deliverable brownfield land has now been developed;
- b. the housing requirement of Wyre Forest District is significantly greater than the availability of brownfield land.

**5.16** The purpose of the settlement hierarchy is to provide a clear steer on the future role of the District's settlements and to focus new development in locations which will promote sustainable communities. The settlement hierarchy is based on an assessment of the services and facilities that are available in each settlement and further information on this can be found in the evidence base documents <sup>(9)</sup>.

**5.17** The urban areas of the District have the greatest housing needs and are locations where the cost of public service delivery is relatively low. Accordingly the bulk of development needs that cannot be met via brownfield land (including brownfield land in the Green Belt) will be via greenfield land release adjacent to the main towns, especially Kidderminster. In the other settlements, the allocated growth and future development sites are primarily to meet local needs whilst at the same time ensuring the future sustainability of the settlement.

**5.18** The villages and hamlets in Wyre Forest, particularly to the west of the River Severn, are characterised by close-knit communities that in many places retain links with the traditional rural economy as well as providing some limited services. Sites beyond development boundaries generally are less sustainable as access to local services and employment opportunities tends to be poorer and therefore it is appropriate that development in the open countryside is restricted to proposals which are supportive of more specific Local Plan policies, e.g. Policy DM.10 – Rural Employment.

**5.19** Maintaining the identity and integrity of individual settlements is an important issue for local communities. To the east of the River Severn this is achieved by the West Midlands Green Belt designation. Green Belts serve five purposes (set out in the National Planning Policy Framework), which are:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**5.20** Locally, the Green Belt continues to serve all the purposes of national policy and the boundaries are considered to be strong and enduring. However, due to the exceptional circumstances of an increased housing demand coupled with a reduced amount of brownfield

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9 Wyre Forest District Settlement Hierarchy Topic Paper 2018)

land and a very tightly constrained Green Belt boundary restricting the ability to develop sustainable locations the District Council considered it necessary to undertake a Green Belt Review through this Local Plan Review (NPPF para 140). Where the Green Belt is fundamental in preventing the neighbouring towns from merging (e.g. between Bewdley and Kidderminster along the A456 corridor and Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn along the A451 corridor), it will be particularly important to ensure that the land remains open.

**5.21** The nearest sub-regional centre to Wyre Forest District is Worcester which has a sub-regional function. Additionally, particularly in respect of commuting, there are links with the southern Black Country and Birmingham. Within the District the largest and most important retail and commercial centre is its administrative centre, Kidderminster, which also provides a focus for public services, comparison shopping, etc. This strategy will continue to support the role of Kidderminster and will seek to facilitate its further regeneration through the redevelopment of such key zones as Lion Fields (the Eastern Gateway) and Churchfields.

**5.22** The other Main Town centres at Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley are smaller and provide a smaller scale and range of retail and other services typically serving their own settlement and their hinterland of smaller settlements and villages. Centres in the villages and rural settlements are again smaller and will typically provide only a limited range of day-to-day retail and other services.

### **Policy SP.3 - Kidderminster town as the strategic centre of the District**

Kidderminster will continue to be the strategic centre for the District and its role in providing a focus for new housing, commercial, employment, retail, office and leisure development is to be enhanced. New development will focus on the regeneration opportunities on the identified sites within and adjacent to the town. Two sustainable strategic sites are allocated (see Policy SP.4).

The future development needs of Kidderminster will be allocated and implemented through the Kidderminster Site Allocations policies in Chapter 30 as well as the “ReWyre Renewed” Strategy.

Development proposals which help to promote Kidderminster as the tourism 'hub' of the District will be encouraged during the plan period. This includes the provision of supporting facilities such as sports facilities, hotels, conferencing facilities and developments that improve the evening / night time economy and cultural offer of the town. Where the residual cumulative impacts of development on the road network are severe, sustainable transport links and infrastructure to promote ease of access to the Wyre Forest, Stourport-on-Severn, Bewdley, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park and Kidderminster Railway Station will be sought, where practical and viable.



**Reasoned Justification**

**5.23** Kidderminster is a former carpet manufacturing town which has been, and is still experiencing economic restructuring as a result of the decline in activity of this industry. Consequently, Kidderminster faces a number of economic challenges and contains areas which experience acute deprivation. The challenges include lower than average household incomes, low skill levels and poor educational attainment.

**5.24** There is great potential for regeneration in Kidderminster. The Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and River Stour both run through the town centre, providing a significant opportunity to create new waterside destinations. Whilst much of the deliverable brownfield land in the town has now been redeveloped, Kidderminster still benefits from significant areas of brownfield land suitable for redevelopment most notably Lionfields (the Eastern Gateway) and Churchfields.

**5.25** As the District's strategic centre Kidderminster has a unique role within the District. There are key opportunities to improve the town's tourism and employment roles, boosted by the Severn Valley Railway, the West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, and the economic success of the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park. Overall, opportunities to create additional employment and learning opportunities, improve the natural and built environment, increase tourism and provide new housing, through regeneration are all present in Kidderminster.

**5.26** All new development should make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the town and support the creation of a safe, attractive and accessible urban environment and improve both the overall mix of land uses in the town and its connectivity to adjoining areas.

**5.27** The development of a diverse evening/night time economy centred on Kidderminster is seen as an important element in driving the improvement of this strategic centre and the wider District. Careful consideration will be required to determine the number, type and scale of activities and uses to ensure that a rich, inclusive and safe environment is created.

**5.28** There should be sufficient protection/provision of outdoor sports facilities as identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy.

**Policy SP.4 - Strategic Allocation Sites**

The strategic allocation sites are defined on the Policies Map and will come forward in line with the detailed requirements expressed by Policies SP.LCV1, SP.LCV2 and Policies SP.KEE1 - SP.KEE4.

The strategic allocation sites are:

- a. Lea Castle Village (the ex-hospital site at Lea Castle and wider site area) - Policies SP.LCV1 and SP.LCV2;
- b. Kidderminster Eastern Extension - Policies SP.KEE1 - SP.KEE4.

## Reasoned Justification

**5.29** In recognition of the insufficient amount of sustainably located readily available land to accommodate the necessary housing and employment requirement two well-designed sustainable strategic sites are allocated.

**5.30** In line with the NPPF (Para 140) Wyre Forest District Council has determined the need for a review of the Green Belt within the District under the exceptional circumstances provision. This is to specifically accommodate larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions and is necessary due to the scale of development needs identified for the District up until 2036.

**5.31** The housing requirement is 5,520 dwellings for the plan period plus an additional 487 C2 Institutional (e.g. care homes / nursing homes bed spaces). The Plan also allocates in excess of the housing requirement by more than 20% to allow for sites that may not come forward.

**5.32** The Plan allocates an additional 2,097 dwellings on brownfield sites. Together with existing completions and commitments, this means that 49% of all housing developed in this Plan period will be on brownfield sites. These figures include 600 dwellings at Lea Castle ex-hospital site (this takes into account viability and flood risk issues). There is limited greenfield capacity on suitable and sustainable sites to the west of the River Severn.

**5.33** Therefore to meet the needs of the growing population and ensure that sufficient high quality accessible land is available for residential and economic development the District has two strategic allocation sites which will require the removal of land from the Green Belt. This will enable the delivery of planned sustainable urban development with accompanying primary school, local services and infrastructure. Lea Castle Village will also include some employment use. *(Note that the total Green Belt land take for the Plan equates to 2.1% for all of the Green Belt site allocations in the Plan).*

**5.34** The District Council will continue to work proactively in these locations with existing landowners, stakeholders and other agencies to bring forward these strategic developments during the plan period.

### Policy SP.5 - Role of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley as Market Towns

1. Within the District's market towns of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley, both of which have Conservation Areas as their town centres, the following development proposals will be sought:
  - a. Employment, start-up business units and commerce, to provide local employment opportunities and enhance economic viability.
  - b. Current retail provision will be safeguarded where possible, however, diversification proposals will be assessed against their overall positive contribution to the town centre.
  - c. New retail development proposals should be appropriate to the town's position in the District's settlement hierarchy.

- d. Developments which provide additional community and health facilities for the local area.
- e. Sustainable transport infrastructure should be enhanced to ensure ease of access to the town's services and facilities, particularly from the surrounding rural areas. Access from the market towns to the higher order services available in Kidderminster will also be improved where practical and viable.
- f. There will be some Green Belt release to enable the market towns to contribute to the housing requirement whilst addressing the need for sustainability and cost effective infrastructure provision (see Chapters 33 and 34).
- g. Sufficient protection/provision of outdoor sports facilities.
- h. Development within the towns' Conservation Areas must preserve or enhance those areas, the heritage assets contained therein and their settings.

## 2. **Stourport-on-Severn:**

- a. Due to its role in the settlement hierarchy and mix of employment and service opportunities, Stourport-on-Severn is expected to make an important contribution to meeting the District's requirements for new homes. The focus will be on existing brownfield sites within the urban area and sustainable, suitable greenfield sites such as the site at Pearl Lane (Policy SA.S4).
- b. Developments which will increase the variety and mix of the tourism offer in the town will be encouraged and facilities which focus on heritage tourism, particularly capitalising on the historic canal basins, will be especially promoted.
- c. Development within the three Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance those areas.
- d. The allocations for Stourport-on-Severn are detailed within Chapter 33.

## 3. **Bewdley:**

- a. Bewdley's contribution towards the District's housing need will be limited to the development of the allocated sites for Bewdley and development which ensures the long-term vitality and viability of Bewdley. This reflects the town's conservation context and the more limited availability of jobs and services within the town. Some limited greenfield development will be permitted to enable this.
- b. The role of Bewdley as a sustainable tourist destination is to be enhanced, with sustainable transport links to the Wyre Forest, Severn Valley Railway, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park and Kidderminster Rail station being a particular focus, where practical and viable.
- c. Development within the Bewdley and Wribbenhall Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance those areas.
- d. The allocations for Bewdley are detailed within Chapter 34.

## Reasoned Justification

**5.35** Within market towns, local people and those in the surrounding rural hinterland, should be able to buy most things they need and have sufficient access to housing, jobs, education and entertainment.

**5.36** The geography of the District means that Kidderminster is just 3 miles from each of the market towns with the potential for good public transport links between them. Therefore, the need for Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn to provide facilities and services should be balanced with their proximity to Kidderminster and the services it provides in its function as the strategic centre of the District.

**5.37** There should be sufficient protection/provision of outdoor sports facilities as identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy.

## Stourport-on-Severn

**5.38** With a population of 20,000 Stourport-on-Severn is a large market town that is well served by local amenities such as shops and community facilities. It is relatively well served by public transport, although some outlying housing estates have poor access to bus services. The town provides a good level of existing employment opportunities.

**5.39** The town has the potential to accommodate a significant amount of new development on brownfield sites within or adjacent to the town centre. However, regeneration will need to be carefully considered in the context of the town's historic character and heritage in addition to the settlement hierarchy.

**5.40** In Stourport-on-Severn town centre congestion is an issue because of the current road layout, pedestrian arrangements and lack of alternative routes (including bridge access and capacity). In respect of future development in and around the town the strategic transport infrastructure in the town is therefore a key consideration. Accessibility to the town centre by alternative modes for residents and visitors alike is extremely important to the town's future functionality and viability.

**5.41** Stourport-on-Severn has unique origins as a canal town and has five historic basins which have recently undergone a major restoration programme. The town is also located on the banks of the River Severn which has helped it become a popular visitor destination. The town is a particular attraction for day trippers, especially for people from the Birmingham and Black Country areas. The tourism offer of the town has a great potential for generating economic activity, but this has not been fully utilised in the past. A key opportunity is available to promote Stourport-on-Severn's history as a canal town with its historic basins and take advantage of its heritage assets. This would help to enable the town to tap into new tourism markets and potentially attract a higher-spending, longer-stay visitor.

## Bewdley

**5.42** Bewdley has a smaller population at around 9,000 but has a greater interdependent relationship with the surrounding rural parishes.

**5.43** There is a reasonable level of service provision in the town with shopping and community facilities to serve the local population. However, higher order services and goods are on offer in Kidderminster and therefore are available within a short distance from Bewdley.

**5.44** Employment opportunities are very limited within the town with the majority of workers having to commute out to the surrounding areas.

**5.45** Like Stourport-on-Severn, Bewdley is also a popular tourist destination. This is largely due to its attractive and historic Georgian architecture, its setting on the River Severn, the West Midland Safari and Leisure Park and the Severn Valley Railway station close to the centre. The town's setting within the countryside is also an important factor and the Wyre Forest is located just on the town's outskirts. Therefore, Bewdley is well located within a tourist setting and provides opportunities for developing sustainable tourism.

**5.46** The ability to accommodate new development on brownfield sites within or adjacent to the town centre is limited due to the heritage setting of the town as well as its topography and the Welch Gate Air Quality Management Area. Development within the town's Conservation Area itself, which covers most of the town centre, is especially sensitive and will need to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area. There are few development opportunities within the built environment and conservation is a priority.

## **Policy SP.6 - Role of the existing villages and rural areas**

### **1. Sustaining Community Facilities and Services**

- a. Developments that provide the rural community with essential facilities and services will be supported in principle.
- b. The network of local groups of shops and public houses will be safeguarded in order to support nearby settlements and reduce the need to travel.
- c. Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley will remain the most sustainable places to provide higher order services and facilities to the rural areas, but access to them by public transport should be improved.
- d. Where there is a need for new housing in existing villages and rural settlements, priority should be given to locations which are well connected to higher order settlements and which already have key services and facilities.

### **2. Providing Housing for Local Need**

- a. New residential development in the District's existing villages, rural settlements and other rural hamlets will be to meet local housing needs, as established through the Housing Needs Study and parish surveys (Policy SP.11 - Rural Exception Sites, and Policy DM.2 - Residential Infill Development).

### 3. The Rural Economy

- a. The rural economy will be supported by promoting development which contributes to rural employment sectors as well as encouraging appropriate farm diversification schemes.
- b. Development proposals will not be permitted where they would be likely to have direct and significant impact on the District's best and most versatile agricultural land.
- c. Historic farmsteads will be protected from inappropriate development (for details refer to Policy DM.23 and Policy DM.29).
- d. The provision of rural based workspace and live/work units will be permitted providing:
  - i. the proposals are small scale (i.e. not major development);
  - ii. that they are appropriate to the character of the area;
  - iii. that they do not have an adverse impact on the Green Belt.

Priority will be placed on the re-use or replacement of existing rural buildings.

The allocations for the existing villages and rural areas of Wyre Forest are detailed within Chapter 36.

Policy SA.PDL identifies allocations for previously developed sites in the Green Belt

### Reasoned Justification

**5.47** Agriculture is the predominant land use within the District's rural areas. The quality of agricultural land is generally very high in the area running from east and south east of Kidderminster to the District boundary. There are also significant blocks of high quality land to the north of Kidderminster and around Rock.

**5.48** Economic and employment opportunities in rural areas go beyond the traditional land based and agricultural sectors. There are great opportunities for sustainable farm diversification, particularly with regard to the tourism and leisure sectors. New employment opportunity sectors such as creative industries and environmental technologies may also be available in rural areas. The provision of superfast and ultrafast broadband in addition to the availability of mobile infrastructure able to provide 2G, 3G, 4G and increasingly 5G coverage will be essential in developing the economic base of the rural areas.

**5.49** Equestrian activities are also prominent uses in rural areas. Commercial equestrian development in particular, can contribute significantly to the rural economy and provide employment for local people. However, equine related development will need to be balanced with the potential impact on the landscape and character of the rural environment and the continued need to preserve the best and most versatile agricultural land to enable localised food production in the future.



**5.50** However, the economic development of the District's rural areas does not need to be at the expense of environmental protection and enhancement and must be balanced by the pressure to regenerate the adjacent towns.

**5.51** Sustainable living is as important in rural areas as it is in urban areas. Measures that encourage working practices that cut down on commuting and improve the work/life balance should be encouraged. It is also important to help establish lifestyle changes that support the local economy and the sustainability of the rural community. However, much of the rural area is close to the combined urban area of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley and to the employment opportunities and services they provide. Therefore, significant numbers of the rural population will rely on these centres regularly to access these facilities. Transport links between the urban and rural areas should be improved to increase the sustainability of the relationship between the two areas.

**5.52** The Lea Castle Village (Policies SP.LCV1 and SP.LCV2) is not applicable to Policy SP.6.

### **Policies Map**

**5.53** Throughout the Local Plan, reference is made to the Policies Map. This includes statutory designations for areas such as Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Nature Reserves. It also includes site specific allocations for residential, employment, retail and community uses. The map makes it easier to identify the major areas for change as well as those for protection.

**5.54** The Policies Map and the maps throughout the Local Plan use Ordnance Survey base maps which are Crown Copy right protected (Ordnance Survey 100018317).

**6.1** The establishment and maintenance of Green Belts around many of England's main urban areas has long been a part of national planning policy designed to strictly control development. The Green Belt (GB) within the administrative Area of Wyre Forest District Council is part of the larger West Midlands Green Belt and was intended to prevent urban sprawl, restrict the expansion of villages and protect the open countryside from the pressure for development.

### **Policy SP.7 - Strategic Green Belt Review**

The District's most up-to-date Green Belt boundaries are identified on the Policies Map.

There is a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt, and such development will not be permitted unless very special circumstances exist. Development proposals, including those involving previously developed land and buildings in the Green Belt, will be assessed in relation to the relevant national planning policy.

The important role of the District's Green Belt will be recognised and protected, with the majority of new development being channelled towards the most sustainable Main Towns of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley, many parts of which are bounded by the Green Belt.

In accordance with paragraph 140 of the National Planning Policy Framework, a number of changes will be made to the Green Belt boundaries to support the strategic development of Wyre Forest through this Plan. The following areas will be removed from the Green Belt to accommodate future development needs and are shown on the Policies Map. Where appropriate, further details are provided in Chapters 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36:

- a. Changes to the Green Belt boundary to enable sustainable development at two strategic allocation sites:
  - i. to the north of Kidderminster, to enable the Lea Castle Village development.
  - ii. the eastern edge of Kidderminster urban area.
- b. Changes to the Green Belt boundary will also be made at locations around Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn, Bewdley and Blakedown to enable the development needs for the District to be met most sustainably and economically.
- c. The following Areas of Development Restraint (ADRs) (see Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan, adopted 2013) are allocated in accordance with Local Plan Policies SA.K11 and SA.S11:
  - i. Hurcott ADR (land between A451 and Hurcott village) - green gap to be maintained as per Policy SA.K11;
  - ii. Four Acres Caravan Park, Stourport-on-Severn (in accordance with Policy SA.S11).

The Policies Map also shows the villages that continue to be included in the Green Belt ('washed over' as per Policy SP.2). These villages will be protected from inappropriate development due to the important contribution which the open character of the village makes



to the openness of the Green Belt. However, limited infilling in these locations may be considered appropriate if in accordance with Policy DM.22, Policy DM.2 and NPPF Green Belt policy. Any proposal in these locations will be expected to be of an appropriate density to reflect surrounding properties and should not impact negatively on the openness and character of the wider Green Belt.

Limited affordable housing for local community needs in the Green Belt will be supported on rural exception sites where the development complies with Policies SP.10 (Affordable Housing Provision) and Policy SP.11 (Addressing Rural Housing Needs).

Opportunities to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt and improve public access to Green Belt areas will be supported in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy DM.22 (Safeguarding the Green Belt).

This policy should also be used in conjunction with Policy SA.PDL (Part C of Plan), which permits certain forms of development at identified Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt (as shown on the Policies Map).

## Reasoned Justification

**6.2** The WFDC Green Belt was originally determined in the mid-1970s and was subsequently confirmed in detail by the Wyre Forest Urban Areas Local Plan, adopted in 1989. Subsequent Local Plan Reviews (1994, 2004 and 2010) did not identify the need for any significant changes although some limited adjustments around a number of the larger villages were made.

**6.3** Within the WFDC administrative area, the current extent of the Green Belt includes all the land as far west as the River Severn, but excludes the towns of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley and the smaller settlements of Blakedown, Cookley, Fairfield and Wilden. There are three villages included within the Green Belt (i.e. washed over by Green Belt). These three villages are Chaddesley Corbett, Wolverley and Upper Arley.

**6.4** Provision for longer-term development was made in the 1996 adopted Local Plan through the adoption of a number of Areas of Development Restraint (ADRs). ADRs are areas of land which have been taken out of the Green Belt to meet longer-term housing needs. The ADRs are treated as Green Belt land until they are allocated for development through the plan-making process. The existing ADRs are as follows:

- Land between A451 and Hurcott Village, Kidderminster
- Land off Hayes Road, Fairfield
- Land off Lowe Lane, Fairfield
- Land off Kimberlee Avenue, Cookley
- Land off Wilden Top Road, Stourport-on-Severn
- Four Acres Caravan Park, Stourport-on-Severn

**6.5** With the exception of the Hurcott ADR and the Four Acres Caravan Park ADR, the current ADR sites will be maintained as Reserved Housing Sites (Safeguarded Land) as per Policy SP.8. The northern area of the Hurcott ADR has already been developed for housing the southern

area of the site is protected by a green gap as per Policy SA.K11 'Land at Stourbridge Road'. The Four Acres ADR site at Stourport is currently being used as a Caravan Park providing mobile homes. The land (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated as a caravan park as Policy SA.S11. The other ADR sites are greenfield and will remain as Safeguarded Land (Policy SP.8). They will be considered for development either through the Neighbourhood Plan process or the next Local Plan review. This is to give local communities that are preparing Neighbourhood Plans a greater influence on the type of development that takes place in these areas in the future.

## Green Belt Review

**6.6** The important role of the Green Belt is fully recognised. The NPPF (para 137) states that "the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence." The Green Belt serves five purposes as set out at paragraph 5.19.

**6.7** The NPPF (para 140) states that "Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period."

**6.8** Whilst the District Council has been able to adopt subsequent Local Plans without requiring incursions into the Green Belt or requiring the development of ADRs to meet development needs, the time has come for the District Council to look beyond the boundaries of its urban areas for sites to meet the District's development needs.

**6.9** The Local Plan seeks to minimise the impact of development upon the Green Belt. However, it was concluded during the Local Plan Review that there were exceptional circumstances which justified a review of the Green Belt boundary. The Green Belt boundary was therefore amended for the need to locate development to the most sustainable settlements and locations where there is easy access to a range of existing services and facilities and supporting infrastructure.

**6.10** The Strategic Review of the Green Belt in Wyre Forest District was justified for the following two key reasons:

- i. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that it is necessary for the evidence base for all Local Plans to be up-to-date. As stated above the Wyre Forest Green Belt was instituted in the mid-1970s and has not been subjected to fundamental review since. The District Council therefore needs to provide up-to-date evidence to support its Green Belt policies. To achieve this it was necessary to perform a review to demonstrate that the Green Belt boundary within the District remain robust and defensible so that it can effectively fulfil the five purposes set out in the NPPF. The NPPF requires that Green Belt boundary reviews must be established through strategic policies during the preparation or updating of plans.
- ii. Wyre Forest has been successful in utilising previously developed land to meet its housing and employment land requirements in previous adopted Local Plans. However, in this Local

Plan period (up to 2036) previously developed land on its own will not be sufficient to accommodate all development needs. It will therefore be necessary to ensure that the most appropriate and sustainable locations are utilised for future development whilst at the same time protecting the future role and functions of the Green Belt in a robust and thoroughly evidenced way. This will require some strategic adjustments to the Green Belt boundary.

**6.11** A Strategic Green Belt Study (AMEC 2016) and a more detailed Second Stage Green Belt Study (AMEC 2017, and updated in 2018) form that robust evidence base. These studies demonstrate that across the District the Green Belt fulfils its intended strategic purpose as part of the West Midlands Green Belt with many instances of more than one Green Belt purpose being fulfilled.

**6.12** These studies have formed a key part of the evidence base in deriving the policy options and decisions in the preparation of the Strategic, Development Management and Allocations Policies contained within this document. It is important to note that the NPPF also requires the consideration of whether the Green Belt boundary will remain appropriate to meet the District's needs beyond 2036.

### **Wyre Forest District Exceptional Circumstances**

**6.13** The Wyre Forest District Housing Need Study (2018) highlights Wyre Forest District's housing need to be at least 5,520 homes to 2036 (based on 276 dwellings per annum). Having undertaken a comprehensive review of the Green Belt together with a full analysis of other relevant evidence, it has become clear that the Council cannot physically accommodate all of this need within its existing urban areas.

**6.14** The NPPF is clear that housing need (market and affordable) must be met. Through the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal and in taking these findings on board, the Council has considered realistic alternative options through its Local Plan review and the Duty to Co-operate. Existing urban areas and non-Green Belt land has been considered, but existing Green Belt land is required to meet the District's housing needs, including identified needs for affordable housing.

**6.15** The District's tight boundary close to its main towns means that potential employment land supply is limited. The District must provide employment land to stimulate economic growth, however to promote a balance of need and supply Green Belt land must be utilised.

**6.16** Without the release of land for development that is currently in the Green Belt, it is highly unlikely the District would be in a position to demonstrate a continuous five year supply of housing land or a continuous supply of employment land over the plan period. The need for housing in general and affordable housing in particular, are matters to be given very substantial weight. Paragraph 149(f) of the NPPF confirms that affordable housing is an issue of sufficient weight for it potentially to be an exception to normal Green Belt policy.

**Policy SP.8 - Reserved Housing Sites in the Green Belt**

1. The areas of Reserved Housing Sites (Safeguarded Land) comprise the following sites and are shown on the Policies Map.
  - a. Land off Hayes Road, Fairfield ;
  - b. Land off Lowe Lane, Fairfield ;
  - c. Land off Kimberlee Avenue, Cookley ;
  - d. Land off Wilden Top Road, Wilden ;
  - e. Lawnswood, Cookley.

Any development of these sites will be subject to consideration through a full or partial review of this Local Plan or through a Neighbourhood Plan process. In the interim period, proposals for development will be assessed against the Green Belt policies of the Development Plan. An ecological appraisal of the site will also be required where necessary to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity (in accordance with the GI policies in this Plan).

2. If the Council is unable to meet the NPPF requirement of being able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of land for housing or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that housing delivery was substantially below the housing requirement over the previous three years, then sites allocated as 'Reserved Housing Sites' within the adopted Local Plan, will be considered for development if the applicant can demonstrate why the site should be released in advance of other allocated sites within this Plan or prior to the completion of any future Local Plan review, including consideration of the harm that might arise by its early release and submission of Very Special Circumstances.

**Reasoned Justification**

**6.17** The NPPF sets the approach to defining the Green Belt boundaries. Its purpose is to help ensure that the Green Belt (as defined in this Plan) endures beyond the Plan period and that defensible boundaries are maintained.

**6.18** Paragraph 143 of the NPPF expressly mentions the opportunity to safeguard land within the Green Belt as part of a Local Plan. It is not however allocated for development at the present time and is instead identified for consideration through future Plan reviews. As such, planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land will only be granted following a Local Plan review or Neighbourhood Plan which proposed the development. For clarity, in this Local Plan 'safeguarded sites' are referred to as 'Reserved Housing Sites'. Reserved Housing Sites are areas of land which have been taken out of the Green Belt to meet longer-term housing needs. They are treated as Green Belt land until they are allocated for development through the plan making process.

**6.19** The NPPF requires local planning authorities to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. If the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of land for housing, then sites allocated as 'Reserved Housing Sites' within the adopted Local Plan will

provide the first option to consider for development if sites are not available to meet the desired requirement in other, sequentially preferable locations. The applicant will need to demonstrate why the site should be released in advance of the completion of the Local Plan review, including consideration of the harm that might arise from its early release. This is to allow flexibility in the Local Plan if a 5 year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated. Inappropriate development on non-allocated sites within the Green Belt will not be supported.

**6.20** The Council considers this flexible approach to adapt to rapid change will support sustainable development, support on-going commitment to Duty to Co-operate, and assist the long term protection and management of the Green Belt in the District.

**6.21** The Council would encourage early pre-application discussions for any proposals on Reserved Housing Sites.

**7.1** The 2018 Housing Need Study has evidenced the overall requirement for 276 new dwellings per annum over the new plan period. This would total 5,520 new dwellings (before discounting those already built or granted permission since 2016) plus 487 C2 Institutional bedspaces (e.g. residential care homes) over the whole plan period. The policies contained in this Chapter set out how new housing types will be delivered within the District in accordance with the overarching Development Strategy policies at Section 5. They also address site provision for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople during the new plan period.

**7.2** 2011 Census migration data suggests that 66.1% of all household moves are within the Wyre Forest District area and that 59.1% of residents in employment work within the District. Of the individuals who work in the District, 74.4% also live within Wyre Forest. Therefore Wyre Forest is a largely self contained Housing Market Area. A review of market signals data undertaken in 2016/17 suggests that the Housing Market in this area is relatively stable.

**7.3** The Housing White Paper (February 2017) has set out more specific requirements for housing types to encourage greater delivery of housing and to promote home ownership. National Housing Policy focuses on building more affordable housing; improving the quality of rented housing; helping more people to buy a home and providing housing support for vulnerable people. Policies within the Local Plan will be required to take account of this and to set out a proactive approach to delivery to meet specific needs.

#### **Policy SP.9 - Housing Density & Mix**

A minimum annual average target of 276 new dwellings will be delivered during the plan period to 2036.

New housing developments must be well designed and address local housing needs incorporating a range of different types, tenures and sizes of housing to create mixed communities.

Table 7.0.1 provides an indicative view on the overall mix of housing which may be required. Actual mix of housing will be influenced by the context of the site, the market needs and the most up-to-date housing needs specific to the location.

**Table 7.0.1 Suggested dwelling mix for 276 units by market and affordable dwellings (including all types of housing need)**

Unit size	Market	Affordable
One bedroom	24 (12%)	23 (33.3%)
Two bedroom	87 (42%)	23 (33.3%)
Three + bedroom	96 (46%)	23 (33.3%)
Total	207 (100%)	69 (100%)

*Source: Derived from Table 7.6 Housing Need Study (arc4, September 2018). Please note this data will be subject to regular review*



The make-up of individual developments, their design and density will be in sympathy with the development context and existing neighbouring development. It is anticipated that new brownfield and greenfield developments will have a minimum density of 35 dwellings per hectare, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be in conflict with the development context and existing neighbouring development. Individual site characteristics may mean that this level of density is not achievable on all greenfield developments and this will need to be robustly justified and evidenced by the applicant in relation to housing needs and local context.

For new housing developments in the district, an indicative guide of densities expected is as follows:

- a. within Kidderminster town centre, new development will be expected to secure housing densities of 70 dwellings per hectare. In areas adjacent to the town centre and the railway station, new development should incorporate housing densities of at least 50 dwellings per hectare.\*
- b. within Stourport-on-Severn town centre new development should meet housing densities of 50 dwellings per hectare\*.
- c. within Bewdley and the rural areas new developments should meet housing densities of 35 dwellings per hectare.\*

\*There may be circumstances where applying these indicative density requirements will not be appropriate due to the character and surroundings of the proposed site.

## Reasoned Justification

**7.4** The Local Plan needs to plan positively for a mix of housing based on an assessment of the population that will live in the District both now and in the future. Housing mix refers to both the size of property (number of bedrooms) and the type of housing – whether detached, semi-detached, terraced or apartments. Housing completions over the last 9 years within the District have provided a good mix of house types and sizes.

**7.5** Within the District, 71.23% of dwellings are owner occupied, 14.44% are social rented and 14.33% are private rented. The 2016 OAHN Report undertook an analysis of stakeholder feedback into housing priorities for the District. This is set out in the table below:

**Table 7.0.2 Ranking of priorities by stakeholders**

High Housing Priorities	Percentage
Properties Designed for Older People	75
Affordable Homes to Rent	63
Affordable Homes to Buy	44
Properties for People with Specialist Needs	40
Improving Quality of Existing Stock	31

High Housing Priorities	Percentage
Building Open Market Homes	12
Executive Housing	6

*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% since respondents were permitted to nominate more than one priority*

**7.6** Analysis (arc4, September 2018) indicates a particular requirement for the development of 2 and 3 bedroom market dwellings and a mix of 1, 2 and 3+ affordable dwellings. The affordable dwellings data is derived from the Housing Register which restricts people to housing need / housing benefit eligibility rather than housing aspirations and so the Council would seek to provide a higher ratio of 2 and 3 bedroom properties to meet current and future housing requirements.

**7.7** This broadly accords with the findings of stakeholder consultation which suggests that there is a mix of size and tenure needed across the District to support a spectrum of needs, cater for demand and attract people to the area.

**7.8** In the preparation of the April 2017 Objectively Assessed Housing Needs study, stakeholders were asked to identify what types of housing they thought should be built. The following were mentioned:

- larger affordable family homes;
- two- and three-bedroom homes for families;
- executive homes;
- housing for the elderly including bungalows and accessible and adaptable dwellings M4(2) of the Building Regulations (2010), in addition to extra care schemes;
- specialist housing to support specific household groups identified as in need; and
- smaller one bedroom flats to rent.

**7.9** The NPPF emphasises the need to set minimum standards of density for cities and towns as part of the Local Plan, and in particular it establishes that the minimum standard should be a significant uplift in average density. The 35 dwellings per hectare standard meets this requirement. This standard is considered viable for most development on greenfield and brownfield sites. Different density standards could be supported where necessary to ensure the development is in sympathy with the development context and existing neighbouring development.

**7.10** Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn provide a good range of jobs and services and the opportunities for accessing the public transport network within these urban areas are higher. The higher density levels indicated for these towns reflect their roles within the settlement hierarchy and will help to support existing public transport infrastructure into the future. The indicative residential density levels for Bewdley and the rural areas reflect the more limited opportunities to access infrastructure and services within these parts of the district.



**Policy SP.10 - Affordable Housing Provision****1. Level of Provision**

A minimum annual average target of 90 affordable dwellings will be delivered during the plan period to 2036.

Affordable housing provision of a minimum of 25% on major development sites or on sites within designated rural areas comprising more than 5 dwellings will generally be required. Where proposals do not meet this requirement, a Viability Assessment should be submitted to the Council but only where assumptions depart from the Local Plan Viability Assessment, as per Policy DM.1, Financial Viability, in the Local Plan. Where viability assessments show that the developer will be unable to meet all policy requirements on site, prioritisation of infrastructure requirements have been agreed so that the provision of affordable housing is not always reduced first from developers' obligations. This will be site specific as each site will bring forward its own individual and specific requirements. This is in line with the current PPG on Viability.

If a development scheme comes forward which is below these thresholds and thus does not require the provision of affordable housing, but the scheme is followed by an obviously linked subsequent development scheme at any point where the original permission remains extant, or up to 5 years following completion of the first scheme, then, if the combined total of dwellings provided by the first scheme and the subsequent scheme/s provide 10 or more (or the area of the site of the first scheme and the subsequent scheme/s is 0.5 hectares or more), then an affordable housing provision of a minimum of 25% will be enforced, with the precise level of affordable housing to be provided being 'back dated' to include the earlier scheme(s).

**2. Vacant Building Credit**

Vacant Building Credit will apply to brownfield land where empty or redundant buildings which have not been abandoned are being reused or redeveloped. In applying Vacant Building Credit the District Council will give consideration to the following points:

- a. The building is not in use at the time the application is submitted.
- b. The building is not covered by an extant permission for a materially similar development, or a permission for a materially similar development expired within six months of the date of submission of the application.
- c. The building has not been made vacant for the sole purpose of redevelopment.
- d. Planning applications that seek to utilise Vacant Building Credit as part of any proposal will be required to provide evidence to demonstrate eligibility.

### 3. Tenure Split

An indicative tenure split of 65% rented (primarily social rent) and 35% affordable housing for sale tenure(s) (including shared ownership) will be sought for affordable housing provision on new sites. The exact split will be determined on a site by site basis based on housing need in an area at the time of an application and viability (if relevant).

### 4. Affordable Housing led schemes

On Registered Provider-led developments which would predominantly deliver affordable housing but still need some enabling market housing to make the site viable, the number, tenure and type of units will be agreed on a site by site basis taking into account housing needs in the area. The number of enabling dwellings should not be higher than the number of affordable dwellings and would not normally exceed more than 20% of the overall number.

### 5. Build to Rent Schemes

The District Council will support the development of Build to Rent proposals which will offer a mixture of houses at market rent and Affordable Private Rent, aimed at lower to middle income households. Such schemes should demonstrate that they have fully considered the incorporation of a proportion of homes to be made available at an Affordable Private Rent. They should also offer security of tenure through tenancy agreements of 3 years or more, where possible.

### 6. Entry Level Exception Sites

The District Council will work with the Town and Parish Councils, Community Led Housing Groups, Registered Providers and Neighbourhood Planning Forums to identify appropriate sites for entry-level exception sites. Such schemes will be subject to the following criteria:

- a. The site provides entry-level homes suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent).
- b. The site is adjacent to the existing settlement.
- c. The number, size, type, mix and tenure of dwellings must not exceed the extent of identified local need.
- d. The size and design of the development should be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the settlement and the surrounding landscape, and it should have regard to any local design policies and standards.
- e. Any enabling market housing required to make the development of affordable dwellings on the site viable must be accompanied by a robust viability assessment (open book) in order to justify the required enabling development. The number of dwellings should not be higher than the number of affordable dwellings and would not normally exceed more than 20% of the overall number.

## Reasoned Justification

**7.11** The definition of Affordable Housing, Build to Rent and Affordable Private Rent is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.

**7.12** The Wyre Forest Housing Need Study (September 2018) establishes an affordable housing need of 158 dwellings per annum over the new plan period. However it could render the plan unviable to expect this level of affordable housing delivery and this level is unrealistic in light of delivery in recent years. Over the period April 2010 to September 2015, Council data indicates a total of 521 affordable dwellings have been built – an annual average of 96 affordable dwellings. The anticipated future supply of affordable homes over the next five years will be around 90 per year.

**7.13** Analysis undertaken suggests that for open market housing rental within the District the minimum income required is £23,280 for lower quartile renting. For house purchase, an annual income of £33,429 is required for entry level house prices. The following table sets out the affordability ratios (based on 3.5 x household income ratios) across the District for housing products (taken from the Wyre Forest Housing Need Study, October 2018).

**Table 7.0.3 Affordability ratios across the District (based on 3.5 household income ratios)**

Housing Type/Product	% of District Population who can afford
Median House Prices	40.0
Average House Prices	16.5
Lower quartile House Prices	43.4
Shared Ownership (50% and 25%)	42.9% and 56.7%
Help to Buy	63.0
Median rent	59.8
Average rent	43.8
Lower quartile rent	66.3
Affordable rent	70.8
Social rent	77.6

**7.14** Evidence suggests that there is a significant need for affordable housing within the District. In particular, the table above demonstrates that more rental properties are required, with the greatest need being for social rent. The current level of housing need, as evidenced in the Housing Need Study, supports the Council in having a preference for social rented units but the inclusion of affordable rent and affordable housing for sale tenures within the overall affordable housing mix will be sought in line with the NPPF and Homes England funding regime. This will need to be delivered through a combination of policy measures and proposals including

100% provision of affordable housing on sites (including exception sites) and Section 106 provision as part of the overall mix on sites over 10 dwellings or above 0.5 hectare, according to the NPPF definition of major development and sites within the designated rural area.

**7.15** The District is required to set an overall minimum target for the Wyre Forest District area for the amount of affordable housing to be provided per annum. This target should take account of local assessment of need and also be subject to viability assessment to ensure that it is deliverable. Viability testing has suggested that a minimum figure of 25% affordable housing provision on new sites would be appropriate for the area. The past annual average delivery of 83 affordable dwellings would suggest that it may be more appropriate to set a target of 90 per annum, particularly with the Government's new emphasis on promoting schemes for affordable rent and other intermediate tenures.

**7.16** The District Council supports the reuse and redevelopment of brownfield sites and the reuse of vacant buildings for housing. Acknowledging that redevelopment of vacant buildings incur additional costs compared to greenfield site development of the same size and typology, the District aims to implement the Vacant Building Credit methodology established in the NPPF and PPG. The Policy outlines the requirement to define a vacant building, as opposed to a building made vacant for the sole purpose of development and to an abandoned building, two situations where the Vacant Building Credit does not apply according to the NPPF and PPG.

**7.17** The Housing Need Study evidence suggests an overall tenure split of 65% rented (including social rent) and 35% affordable housing for sale tenure dwellings. It is therefore recommended that a 65% rented and 35% affordable housing for sale tenure split is appropriate for affordable housing provision. According to the Housing Need Study 22% of households in the district can not afford affordable housing at social rent levels and 29% of households cannot afford affordable housing at affordable rent levels. The Council will therefore seek social rent as the dominant tenure type within the 65% split.

### **Policy SP.11 - Addressing Rural Housing Needs**

The provision of residential development to meet specific local needs within the District's designated rural settlements will be encouraged. Residential development will be permitted where it is in accordance with the relevant rural development or Green Belt policies as contained within the Local Plan. Residential and Community-Led Housing schemes that take account of local housing needs on windfall sites will be positively considered within the rural areas. Housing should be located where it will maintain or enhance the vitality of rural communities and within the settlement boundary.

#### **1. Rural Exception Sites**

The District Council will work closely with the Parish Councils, Registered Providers, Community Led Housing Groups and Neighbourhood Planning Forums to identify appropriate sites for rural exception schemes where there will be an expectation to provide 100% affordable housing of a size, type and tenure to meet local housing needs. Such schemes will be subject to the following criteria:

- a. The provision of affordable housing must remain so in perpetuity in agreement with the Registered Provider but where legislation prevents this from happening then agreement must be reached with the Registered Provider to find a replacement unit if the original property is sold.
- b. The number, size, type, mix and tenure of dwellings must not exceed the extent of identified local need.
- c. The scale of the scheme should be appropriate to the size and character of the settlement and must not significantly damage the character of the settlement or any surrounding valued landscape.
- d. The site should be accessible to local services and facilities.
- e. Any enabling market housing required to make the development of affordable dwelling on the site viable must be accompanied by a robust viability assessment in order to justify the required enabling development. The number of enabling market dwellings should not be higher than the number of affordable dwellings and would normally be expected to be up to 20% of the overall number.

## **2. Rural Workers Dwellings**

Applications for rural workers' dwellings will be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- a. There is a clear and established existing functional need.
- b. The need relates to a full time rural worker who is employed locally in livestock management, agriculture/agricultural contracting or forestry.
- c. The proposed dwelling is of a size commensurate with the functional requirement and need of the worker's household.
- d. Wherever possible, the dwelling is sited within, and designed in relation to the main building complex where the worker works, or a nearby group of dwellings.

Where permission is given for such dwellings, occupation of the dwelling will be restricted by condition to a person solely employed in the locality in livestock management, agriculture/agricultural contracting or forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person, and any resident dependants. The removal of an occupancy condition will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that there is no longer a need for the unit to be occupied by a person employed locally in livestock management, agriculture/agricultural contracting or forestry, or by a widow or widower of such person and any resident dependants. Any application for the removal of an occupancy condition should include evidence to demonstrate that the dwelling with the occupancy condition in place has been actively marketed to rural workers or potential rural workers employed locally for a period of 12 months, at a price which reflects the existence of an occupancy condition, and that no financially viable interest has been expressed from within the District or its adjoining parishes.

## **3. Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside**

The replacement of a permanent existing lawful dwelling will be permitted in the following circumstances:

- a. The dwelling is subject to residential use and has not been abandoned.
- b. The replacement dwelling is in the same or less prominent position as the original with curtilage only being amended if required by re-siting, landscape enhancement, vehicular safety or neighbour amenity.
- c. The replacement dwelling should not be materially larger than the one it replaces. In this respect the District Council will apply the following size criteria;
  - i. If the dwelling is in its 'original' form – the existing size plus 20% floorspace increase;
  - ii. If the dwelling has been extended beyond its original form – the existing size.

When considering comparisons in size, the District Council will have particular regard to floorspace, volume and height.

The terms 'original' form refers to the floorspace, volume, and height of the building as it was originally built, or as existed on 1st July 1948. The term 'existing' size refers to the floorspace, volume and height of the existing dwelling.

In respect of all of the categories contained within this Policy the costs of any independent assessment that is required will be met by the applicant.

## Reasoned Justification

**7.18** The District's rural areas have some of the most expensive house prices within the District, which means that many local families who wish to remain are priced out of the market. In addition, more elderly residents may wish to downsize to smaller properties and bungalows which in turn will release housing opportunities for families. The Housing Need Study (October 2018) demonstrates significant affordability issues relating to house purchase in all of the parishes. This is most marked within the designated rural parishes of Broome, Chaddesley Corbett, Churchill & Blakedown, Kidderminster Foreign, Ribbesford, Rock, Rushock and Stone. The analysis shows that rental products are far more accessible to parish residents in terms of their household income.

**7.19** Local housing needs are established through housing needs surveys which are undertaken in agreement and partnership with the relevant Town or Parish Council. It is also established through the Housing Register of persons assessed according to the Council's Allocations Policy as qualifying residents.

**7.20** Rural Exception Sites are sites where general market housing would not normally be acceptable, which provide affordable housing in rural areas. Such sites may only come forward where there is a need for specific housing types as identified through a Housing Needs Survey. Where no housing needs survey is available, the District Council will consider need demonstrated by the housing register data.



**7.21** Housing provision on rural exception sites must seek to address the needs of the community by accommodating households who are existing residents or who have an existing family or employment connection to the area in line with the local connections criteria. Proposals for development will need to demonstrate that arrangements are put in place to ensure that the housing will remain permanently available to meet the continuing needs of local people.

**7.22** In circumstances where it is not viable to deliver 100% affordable housing on rural exceptions sites, it may be possible to cross subsidise a scheme with an element of market housing (typically no more than 20%). Under these circumstances, developers will be required to provide additional supporting evidence in the form of an open book development appraisal for the proposed site. The provision of starter homes to meet identified local needs will also be an acceptable form of housing on rural exception sites in addition to other tenure types that meet local housing needs.

**7.23** There can be a need for livestock management, agricultural/agricultural contractors or forestry workers to live on site. Rural workers dwellings will only be permitted where they are considered to be essential and the assessment of this will depend on the needs of the particular enterprise. Where permission is granted for an additional dwelling, then the applicant will be expected to agree to retain the existing accommodation for use within the unit. Convincing evidence should be provided with any application for the removal of an occupancy condition, as set out in Policy SP.11.

**7.24** There may be specific circumstances where existing dwellings are in poor repair or no longer appropriate in terms of their design to meet the occupant's needs. In such circumstances, it is considered that it may be appropriate to permit replacement dwellings to meet a specific local need.

### **Policy SP.12- Self Build and Custom Housing**

Major development schemes of 50 or more units should take into consideration the demand shown in the Self-Build and Custom-Build Register and where possible provide suitable plots. Self Build and Custom Housing dwellings within the site will be developed in accordance with an agreed design code. Where plots have been made available and marketed appropriately for at least 12 months (from the date when the relevant planning permission was granted) and have not sold, the plot(s) may be built out by the developer. The timescales for marketing will be reduced if the phasing of the site and build out rates are less than 12 months.

The District Council will support planning applications for self-build and custom-build housing, provided they are in keeping with the other policies contained in this Plan.

Overall provision will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the residential land availability assessment and will be based on the demand as set out in the Custom and Self Build Register maintained by the Council.



The District Council will work closely with partners, such as, developers, Registered Providers, the Parish Councils, Community Led Housing Groups and Neighbourhood Planning Forums to identify appropriate sites for Self Build and Custom Housing schemes. Such schemes will be subject to the following criteria:

- a. The numbers of each different type of Self-Build or Custom-Build plots offered in the scheme should reflect the proportion of preference for each type as shown in the register.
- b. Self-Build and Custom-Build plots within the scheme will be developed in accordance with an agreed design code. The design code will ensure the number, scale, and design of Self Build and Custom Build plots should be appropriate to the size and design of the settlement and the surrounding landscape.
- c. The site should be accessible to local services and facilities and within or adjacent to existing settlements.
- d. Where plots have been made available, applicants on the Self-Build and Custom Build register should be notified by developers.
- e. Where plots have been made available, they should be reasonably priced to reflect prevailing market values and average local income.

## Reasoned Justification

**7.25** Under the Self Build and Custom House Building Regulations 2016, the District Council is required to have regard to a register of people who are interested in self build or custom build projects in the area. This will help to inform policy development and future plot requirements in the District. There are different types of custom build which will have specific requirements for the types of land plots to be allocated through the Local Plan.

- DIY Custom Build
- Self Finish Custom Build
- Full Turn Key Custom Build
- Independent Community Custom Build
- Supported Community Custom Build
- Co-housing Custom Build
- Affordable Custom Build

**7.26** The Self-Build and Custom-Build Register will be updated on an annual basis.

### **Policy SP.13 - Housing for Older People and others with special housing requirements**

The Council will continue to work with providers, developers and community-led housing initiatives to meet the additional need over the lifetime of the Plan for dwellings suitable for older people, whether as part of suitably adapted Class C3 dwellings or in Class C2 residential accommodation.

The District Council will also require all major housing development proposals to provide evidence that they have fully considered the provision of the following tenure and type within the overall housing mix on site:

- Bungalows
- Sheltered Housing
- Extra Care Units
- Other types of supported housing

These housing types should include housing for sale and rent and include intermediate forms of tenure, having regard to the Housing Need Study, Housing Needs Surveys (where available) and the Housing Register.

The Council will seek the provision of a minimum of 487 Residential Institutional (C2) bedspaces over the Plan Period to be met on sites allocated for housing and this will be to meet a range of housing needs including for older people.

**a. Accommodation for Family Members and carers**

The development of annex accommodation will be supported subject to its consistency with all other Local Plan policies and where it meets the following criteria:

- i. Accommodation should be provided by way of an extension which is physically linked to the existing dwelling.
- ii. The dwelling and annex should share vehicular and pedestrian access and the extension should only incorporate a maximum of two bedrooms.

**b. Accommodation for families with children**

The needs of families should be met through general developments.

There are a number of homeless households with dependant children whose needs are unlikely to be met through market housing and there will be a requirement to provide a majority of family style housing within the affordable housing mix.

**c. Accommodation for people with disabilities**

The District Council will require all major housing development proposals to contribute towards providing 20% of the total housing requirement to meet the higher access standards of Part M Building Regulations (Access to and use of buildings), (Category 2 M4(2), accessible and adaptable dwelling) of the Building Regulations (2010); and a further 1% of the overall number of housing units to meet Category 3 M4(3) of the Building Regulations (2010), wheelchair user dwellings standards in properties where the Council has nomination rights.

## Reasoned Justification

**7.27** National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) specifies that Local Plans should consider the size, location and quality of dwellings needed within the area to allow older people to live independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible. Future needs should be broken down by tenure and type:

- Sheltered
- Extra Care
- Registered Care Homes
- Residential Institutions (C2 Uses)

**7.28** The Housing Need Study recognises the number of people aged 65 or over is increasing from 24,000 in 2016 to 31,800 by 2036. Wyre Forest District's population has an old age dependency ratio of 38.6%; this is well above Worcestershire – 34.1%, West Midlands – 28.3% and England – 27.2%. A major strategic challenge for the Local Plan is to ensure a range of affordable housing provision, adaptation and support for the ageing population.

**7.29** During 2010/11 – 2012/13 Core Lettings data showed that 699 older people with support needs were accommodated in the social rented sector within the District. This housing need will need to be met within the overall housing requirements and in addition the Wyre Forest Housing Need Study September 2018 has identified that there is a requirement of 487 C2 units for the plan period.

**7.30** Given the ageing population and the identified levels of disabilities amongst the population it will be essential for some element of the new housing to be built to accessibility standards to meet these needs. It is estimated that 23% of all residents in Wyre Forest have a illness/disability and this is expected to increase to 26% by 2036. It is estimated that there are 450 households requiring wheelchair accessible housing in the district.

**7.31** Financial viability testing has been undertaken to meet the adapted dwelling standards and therefore the policy thresholds have been set at 20% of all new housing (on sites of 10 dwellings or more) meeting M4(2) dwelling standard of the Building Regulations (2010) and 1% meeting M4(3) of the Building Regulations (2010), on dwellings where the Council has nomination rights.

**7.32** The provision of annexes or flats as part of an extension to an existing dwelling can be a useful way of meeting the accommodation needs of elderly, sick or disabled relatives or children returning to the parental home. However, it is important to ensure that annexes do not become physically separate dwellings where new dwellings would not normally be permitted.

**7.33** In 2020/21 there were over 8,500 households approaching the Council for housing advice and 415 homeless or at risk of homelessness households had initial assessments undertaken.

**7.34** There is limited identifiable need for bespoke student housing or for service families in Wyre Forest. Those in serious housing needs could be met through the Housing Register.

### Policy SP.14 - Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision

The following sites (A-M), as shown on the Policies Map, will continue to be safeguarded for Gypsy and Traveller use, and in addition, a new site, (Site N) (Policy SA.K17) is allocated on land to the rear of Zortech Avenue, Kidderminster, to contribute to meeting the housing needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community that are expected to arise over the Plan period:

- Site A – Lower Heath, Stourport-on-Severn ( 22 pitches)
- Site B – Broach Road, Stourport-on-Severn (9 pitches)
- Site C – Power Station Road, Stourport-on-Severn (4 pitches)
- Site D –1 Broach Meadow, Stourport-on-Severn ( 3 pitches)
- Site E – 1b Broach Road, Stourport-on-Severn (3 pitches)
- Site F – 6/6a Broach Road, Stourport-on-Severn (5 pitches)
- Site G – Meadow Park, Stourport-on-Severn (7 pitches)
- Site H – Saiwen, Stourport-on-Severn (5 pitches)
- Site I – 28/29 Sandy Lane, Stourport-on-Severn (6 pitches)
- Site J – Land adjacent Nunn’s Corner, Stourport-on-Severn (8 pitches)
- Site K – The Gables Yard, Stourport-on-Severn (5 pitches)
- Site L – Gatehouse Caravan Park (16 pitches)
- Site M – Wilden Lane (4 pitches)
- Site N - Land to the rear of Zortech Avenue, Kidderminster (16 pitches)

The 2020 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment identifies the need for 13 pitches, under the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) definition to be provided in the period 2020/21 to 2035/36, 3 of which need to be provided by 2024/5. It is anticipated that the short-term and longer-term needs can be met through the allocation of the land to the rear of Zortech Avenue (Policy SA.K17) and limited intensification/expansion of the existing safeguarded sites where proposals would comply with the other policies of the Plan. Gypsy and Traveller sites are predominantly residential in nature. Outside the sites safeguarded and allocated in this Plan, planning permission for new sites will be granted on previously developed land or in areas allocated primarily for residential development subject to all relevant policies within the Local Plan being met. Development in the open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas identified in this Plan will be strictly limited in accordance with the Plan’s policies.

There is a wider cultural need for 22 pitches to address the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers who do not meet the planning definition set out in PPTS. This will be addressed through various means, including residential caravans/mobile homes sites and through other policies in the Plan which provide for different types of housing.

### Reasoned Justification

**7.35** Gypsies and Travellers are defined as per the Planning Policy for traveller sites (2015).

**7.36** The 2020 Wyre Forest District Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) provides a robust evidence base to determine an appropriate level of pitch and plot provision for the District. The GTAA identified a total indicative need for 35 pitches over the Plan Period, of which 13 fall within the definition set out in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. This can be split down into 5 year tranches as follows:

**Table 7.0.4 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment indicative need to 2036**

	Cultural Need	of which PTTS need
5 yr authorised pitch shortfall (2020/21 to 2024/25) (A)	25	14
Potential turnover on existing pitches (B)	3	3
Potential regularisation of unauthorised site (C)	0	0
Potential expansion / intensification of existing sites (D)	4	4
Potential new site (E)	4	4
<b>Residual need 2020/21 to 2024/25 F=A-B-C-D-E</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>
Medium -term need (2025/26 to 2029/30) (G)	9	5
Potential turnover on existing pitches (H)	3	3
<b>Residual need 2025/26 to 2029/30 I=G-H</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
Long-term need (2030/31 to 2035/36) (J)	17	10
Potential turnover on existing pitches (K)	2	2
<b>Residual need 2030/31 to 2035/36 L=J-K</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Summary</b>		
<b>Total shortfall 2020/21 to 2035/36 (M)</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>29</b>
Total potential turnover on existing pitches (N)=B+H+K	8	8
Total potential regularisation of unauthorised site(O)=C	0	0
Potential expansion / intensification of existing sites (P)=D	4	4

	Cultural Need	of which PTTS need
Potential new site (Q)=E	4	4
<b>Residual need 2020/21 to 2035/36 (R)=M-N-O-P-Q</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>13</b>

**7.37** Under the PPTS the Council should provide pitches for those meeting the planning definition. However, there is no government guidance on how to meet the needs of those who do not meet the planning definition (other than by the implication that they should be met as part of overall housing need) even though they may need to live on a pitch. Therefore, as a minimum the Council are seeking to address the needs of those meeting the planning definition and will also endeavour to meet the overall cultural need for pitches.

**7.38** The 2020 GTAA identifies that there is a need to provide 4 transit pitches in the district. According to the report, this obligation could be met through temporary stop over orders, negotiated stop over rights or provision of a permanent site. The use of temporary stop over orders and/or negotiated stop over rights will be the preference of the authority due to the low number of transit pitches required each year. It is anticipated that the proposed sites for temporary stop over sites and / or negotiated stop over rights will be several Wyre Forest District Council car parks and parks, used by Gypsy and Travellers in the past.

#### **Policy SP.15 - Site Provision for Travelling Showpeople**

The former Burlish Golf Course Clubhouse site (see Policy SA.K22), is allocated and safeguarded to meet the immediate needs of the existing Travelling Showpeople family currently living within the District. The site should be developed in accordance with Policy SA.K22.

#### **Reasoned Justification**

**7.39** The 2020 Wyre Forest District Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment identified one Travelling Showperson family in the district who have a requirement for a yard to accommodate 11 caravans and equipment. The allocation at the former Burlish Golf Course Clubhouse site will adequately meet the needs of the family on a permanent basis.

**8.1** Improving the health and wellbeing of Wyre Forest District's residents is a key objective of the Council. It is working closely with partner organisations to tackle health inequalities<sup>(10)</sup> and ensure the best health outcomes for local people.

### Policy SP.16 - Health and Wellbeing

1. Development should help minimise negative health impacts and maximise opportunities to ensure that people in Wyre Forest District lead healthy, active lifestyles and experience a high quality of life by:
  - a. Providing easy to maintain, safe and attractive public realm and green infrastructure including green spaces, footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes that encourage active travel opportunities. These spaces should enable formal and informal physical activity, recreation and play, and should support healthy living and social cohesion. The design of these spaces should be flexible<sup>(11)</sup> and should consider older people and those living with dementia or disabilities.
  - b. Minimising and mitigating the impacts of negative air quality and reducing people's exposure to poor air quality.
  - c. Providing a mix of high quality, energy efficient, affordable and adaptable housing that meets the needs of different groups in the community, including older people and those with disabilities.
  - d. Delivering new and expanded health services provision and facilities in locations where they can be easily accessed using public transport, walking and cycling.
  - e. Encouraging opportunities for access to fresh food, for example through the retention and provision of allotments, community orchards, fruit trees, local markets, and usable private amenity spaces.
2. Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Screening will be required for proposals for, or changes of use to:
  - Restaurants and cafés;
  - Drinking establishments;
  - Hot food takeaways (see Policy DM.18);
  - Residential Institutions;
  - Non-residential institutions;
  - Leisure facilities;
  - Betting shops and pay-day loan shops (Sui Generis).

The screening process will identify whether the proposal requires a HIA.

10 Health inequalities are differences in health status or in the distribution of health resources between different population groups, arising from the social conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age.

11 Successful places can adapt to changing circumstances and demands. They are flexible and are able to respond to a range of future needs (PPG, Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 26-019-20140306, Revision date: 06 03 2014)



HIA will be required for proposals for:

- a. Residential and mixed use major development sites.
- b. Employment sites of 5 ha or more
- c. Retail developments of 500 square metres or more.

The HIA should be commensurate with the size of the development.

Where an unacceptable adverse impact on health and wellbeing is identified through the Health Impact Assessment process, development will not be supported unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

## Reasoned Justification

**8.2** Wyre Forest District Council recognises that spatial planning has an important role to play in the creation of healthy, safe and inclusive communities.

**8.3** The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Public Health England data have been used to inform this policy. Health challenges for the district include obesity in children and in adults, mental health, limiting long term illness or disability and increased numbers of people living with dementia. Wyre Forest District currently has a large population of residents over the age of 65 which will increase significantly over the next 20 years. Wyre Forest District experiences significant health inequalities. There is a link between the health and wellbeing of people living in more affluent areas compared with those living in less affluent areas. Current data shows that life expectancy is 8.4 years lower for men and 11.7 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Wyre Forest than in the least deprived areas. <sup>(12)</sup>

**Table 8.0.1 Key Findings from Health Profile 2019 for Wyre Forest District**

Indicator	Year	Wyre Forest	Worcestershire	England	England Worst	England Best
Life expectancy at birth (males)	2015-17	79.4 years	79.9 years	79.6 years	74.2 years	83.3 years
Life expectancy at birth (females)	2015-17	83.1 years	83.9 years	83.1 years	79.5 years	86.5 years
Dementia diagnosis (aged 65+)*	2020	56.8%	55.8%	67.4^	51.3%	88.4%
Excess weight in adults (aged 18+)	2017/18	62.7%	62.7%	62%	77.6%	43.4%

12 Public Health England, Wyre Forest Health Profile 2019

Indicator	Year	Wyre Forest	Worcestershire	England	England Worst	England Best
Obese children in year 6 (aged 10-11)	2017/18	35.2%	32.8%	34.3%	44.5%	20.5%
GCSEs achieved (5A*-C) incl. maths & English	2015/16	58.8%	61%	57.8%	44.8%	77.2%
*Dementia diagnosis is the proportion of those who are estimated to have dementia who have been diagnosed. NB Worst and best for England refer to district and not county						

## 8.4

Planning has a very important role to play in addressing these issues. The NPPF contains measures aimed at reducing health inequalities, improving access to healthy food and reducing obesity, encouraging physical activity, improving mental health and wellbeing, securing proposals that meet the needs of all sections of the community and improving air quality to reduce the incidence of respiratory diseases.

**8.5** The design of the built environment can have a significant impact on both physical and mental wellbeing. Well-designed built environment can help to reduce health inequalities in Wyre Forest; while poor environmental quality, housing conditions or pollution can exacerbate them.

**8.6** Obesity is a major risk factor for several diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease. It can also affect people's mental health. The design of the built environment should encourage physical activity and healthier lifestyles which can help reduce obesity in both adults and children.

**8.7** New homes should be adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants and be designed with all community groups in mind, including, disabled and older people. The District Council will require all major housing development proposals to contribute towards providing 20% of the total housing requirement to meet the higher access standards of Part M Building Regulations (Access to and use of buildings), (Category 2 M4(2), accessible and adaptable dwelling) of the Building Regulations (2010),; and a further 1% of the overall number of housing units to meet Category 3 M4(3) of the Building Regulations (2010), wheelchair user dwellings standards in properties where the Council has nomination rights.

**8.8** Proposals will provide for multifunctional green infrastructure. This will encourage active travel and social interaction and minimise the potential for crime and antisocial behaviour. Proposals will provide connectivity to local centres, health and community facilities, thereby reducing car dependency. This can be achieved in part through public realm design which prioritises people over motor traffic. This should allow for convenient, safe and attractive routes, in particular for walking and cycling. Sport England's Active Design principles <sup>(13)</sup> will be supported to encourage physical activity through the development layout.

13 Sport England (2015) Active Design Planning for health and wellbeing through sport and physical activity

**8.9** The provision of green spaces can provide multiple benefits such as the facilitation of physical activity, social cohesion, healthy food growing and improvement to air quality. They should be accessible and well-maintained in order to preserve their functionality and serve members of the communities. Proposals that include access to fresh food, for example through the retention, enhancement or provision of allotments, community orchards, fruit trees or local markets, and usable private amenity spaces, will be encouraged. Shared use of community spaces will also be encouraged to improve social cohesion through schemes such as community allotments or orchards.

**8.10** Proposals will seek to reduce their negative impacts on air quality and reduce people's exposure to poor quality air through sustainable building design, encouragement of active travel, discouragement of car dependency and provision of electric charging points. Appropriate planting will be provided to absorb pollutants and the design and layout of development will increase separation distances between people and sources of air pollution.

**8.11** The design of public realm should be of flexible design which means that it can adapt to changing uses and demands. Developments should consider design elements that can affect the quality of life of elderly and people living with dementia. This includes the provision of safe, well-lit and walkable routes connecting local green spaces and essential amenities. Seating areas provided in strategic places, simple street furniture and plain, non-reflective and contrasting surfaces could improve the likelihood of those with dementia continuing their everyday lives as part of the community.

**8.12** New residential developments should be supported by sufficient and accessible healthcare provision. Where there is a shortfall in sufficient healthcare facilities, measures should be taken to rectify the shortfall as a result of development.

**8.13** Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a tool to ensure that impacts on health and wellbeing of the population are considered at the planning and design stage. HIA Screening is a simplified process to determine whether an HIA is needed for a particular scheme.

**8.14** Part B of the policy requires certain developments to demonstrate how they have specifically addressed the health and wellbeing principles specified in part A through a HIA. Other development types, as also specified in Part B will be expected to undertake a HIA screening assessment to identify whether a proposal requires a full HIA. Undertaking a HIA will ensure that the effects of a development on both health and health inequalities are considered and addressed during the planning process. Early dialogue with the local planning authority (such as through pre-application advice) is encouraged to help establish the extent and content of HIA. HIAs will be assessed by Wyre Forest District Council in consultation with Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Directorate and will be a material consideration in the planning application process.

**8.15** Further guidance on health and wellbeing principles and the HIA and HIA Screening process will be included in the Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document. This SPD will include HIA and HIA Screening templates to guide the applicants through this process.

**8.16** Other policies in the Development Plan (such as the Community Facilities Policies DM.6, DM.7 & DM.8 address issues which could have implications for health and well-being and should be considered in conjunction with this policy. Also see the adopted Wyre Forest Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan and the Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy.

**8.17** The Food and Drink Retailing Policy (Policy DM.18) further expands on the issues around the prevalence of hot-food takeaways and how they can negatively impact on health.

**8.18** The Sustainability Appraisal has assessed the Local Plan as having an overall positive impact on health and wellbeing. The Local Plan is seen as supporting healthy lifestyles by aiming to maximise the delivery of Green Infrastructure and provide housing and employment sites in locations that are close to existing services, thereby encouraging walking and cycling and reducing reliance on car travel with the associated air pollution problems.

**9.1** The Local Plan provides the strategic framework for the future prosperity and evolution of the District's economy. The District's economy is vital to the prosperity and quality of life of its residents. Economic growth can increase employment opportunities, improve income and regenerate communities. This chapter includes policies relating to employment, retail, offices and tourism.

**9.2** Appropriate infrastructure to serve businesses and new development is essential for future prosperity. Suitable access to and from economic areas is crucial to the effectiveness of businesses.

## **Local Economy**

### **Policy SP.17 - A Diverse Local Economy**

1. At least 29 hectares of employment land will be brought forward in the plan period up to 2036.
2. The sites allocated for employment use over the plan period are shown on the Policies Map and are listed in table 9.0.1. These sites are to be safeguarded for economic development. The development of these sites will need to be in line with the site specific policies identified in Part C of this Plan.
3. In addition to the sites allocated for employment use, all future employment land should be located in highly accessible locations and be in accordance with the settlement hierarchy in Policy SP.2.
4. The development of small-scale businesses and starter units which are less than 500 sqm, will be encouraged in suitable locations and where they do not conflict with other policy objectives. Live work units will be encouraged where they conform to requirements of Policy DM.11.
5. Land and premises within the District's existing employment areas will be reserved for B2 and B8 use classes as well as employment generating uses including Class E offices (other than professional and financial services offices), research and development and light industrial uses and, where appropriate, sui generis uses.
6. Small scale (less than 500 sqm gross) development of retail uses in rural areas will be supported where appropriate.
7. Small scale (less than 500 sqm gross) development of commercial and leisure uses in rural areas will be supported where appropriate.
8. Proposals for expansion, updating and intensification of employment uses on existing sites will be supported where they do not compromise the activities of the employment area or conflict with other policy objectives.
9. Rural employment sites will be safeguarded for employment uses where appropriate. Proposals for small scale employment of less than 500 sqm in rural areas will be assessed on their merits and should have regard to accessibility by public transport and national policy as well as other Development Plan Policies (such as Policy DM.10). The use of previously developed land will be supported where suitable sustainable, accessible opportunities exist.

## Reasoned Justification

**9.3** The strength of the District's economy is vital to the future prosperity and quality of life of its residents. Economic prosperity is a primary objective of Wyre Forest District Council and this has been highlighted by initiatives such as the 'ReWyre Prospectus' and the more recently adopted ReWyre ReNewed Prospectus as well as initiatives such as the Local Development Order for South Kidderminster Enterprise Park.

**9.4** The Government in October 2018 has produced a Local Industrial Strategies policy prospectus and a document 'Working towards a West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy (May 2019). This is a strategic approach to jointly designing solutions. The strategic overview will help inform LEPs to drive future growth and productivity, including skills growth, infrastructure improvements and innovation within the West Midlands region.

**9.5** A strategic approach to Employment Development is set out within Policy SP.17 and the quantum of land required to meet the Districts future employment needs has been determined through the production of an Employment Land Review (ELR) 2016 and updated in 2018.

**9.6** The figure of less than 500 sqm used for small scale businesses is a figure that is used for development in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended.

**Table 9.0.1 Employment Allocation Sites\***

Policy reference number	Site	Size in hectares
Policy SA.K18	Frank Stone Building	0.32
	Green Street depot	0.2
Policy SA.K19	SDF	4.3
	British Sugar Phase 2	2.37
	British Sugar Plot D	1.48
	Romwire	5
Policy SA.K20	Adj Easter Park	2.51
	Hoobrook Site	0.25
Policy SA.K21	VOSA Worcester Road	1.75
Policy SA.K23	Land off Zortech Avenue	1.96
Policy SA.S15	North of Wilden Industrial Estate	0.22
	Ratio Park	0.69
Policy SA.S16	Wilden Industrial Estate	0.34
	Oakleaf Finepoint	1

Policy reference number	Site	Size in hectares
Policy SP.LCV1	Land off Park Gate Road, Lea Castle	7.34
Policy SA.R2	Alton Nurseries	1
Policy SA.PDL	Cursley Distribution Park	0.7
<b>TOTAL SITES</b>		<b>31.43</b>
* Sites without a policy reference number have already been developed.		

**9.7** The ELR identified that Wyre Forest has higher levels of economic activity and lower claimant unemployment levels than regional and national averages. Unemployment in Wyre Forest District is 3.4%, the regional figure is 5.0% and nationally 4.3%.

**9.8** However, challenges still remain and the District still suffers from a historic legacy of economic restructuring, relating to the decline of carpet manufacturing in Kidderminster, which is still ongoing. The District also has relatively few high-skilled residents and higher levels of those with no qualifications than comparator areas. Furthermore, the gap between Wyre Forest's resident and workplace wages implies a disconnect between the quality of employment available to commuters travelling out of the District and that available in Wyre Forest District.

**9.9** Given these challenges it is important that a positive economic framework is put in place to help tackle these issues. Having sufficient, readily available and attractive land, of an appropriate type and in the right location, is therefore vital to tackling some of these challenges. The amount and type of employment land identified in Policy SP.17 will ensure that the District is in a good position to respond and react to the continued diversification of the local economy.

**9.10** A focus of the Wyre Forest District Local Plan is to provide development that supports the area's economic prosperity. The principal mechanisms to achieve this include making provision for:

- The right amount of quality, readily available and type of land for employment uses in locations where business will thrive and be resilient to the challenges of competition and move towards a low-carbon economy.
- To protect and encourage land for employment use, particularly for affordable small/medium spaces, start-up and incubator units and flexible employment space, in order to support the District's current and future economic and employment needs.
- Facilitate inward investment and support businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises and creative industries to grow the employment base of the District.
- Sufficient housing provision that enables more of the labour force to be housed locally and provides the right mix to meet the wide range of housing needs.
- Infrastructure that supports communities, housing, the labour force and facilitates the movement of labour, goods and materials through the alignment of development and supporting infrastructure; this will include provision of facilities supporting training and skills.

**9.11** In addition, it is important that the plan is flexible and responsive to market demands. The Council will annually monitor employment land allocations within the district as part of the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).



## Town Centre Development

**9.12** Town centres are crucial to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the District. The NPPF paragraph 86 states that "planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation."

**9.13** The concentration of a range of goods, services and facilities in one area creates a centre for communities and enables people to make one trip for many reasons. The District's settlement hierarchy of towns is Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley, and this provides the basis for identifying the locations for new retail, leisure and commercial development.

### Policy SP.18 - Town Centre Development

1. Support will be given to safeguarding, maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the existing retail centres throughout the District.
2. New development for retail, commercial and leisure uses should be focussed on the three town centres of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.
3. Small scale (less than 500 sq m) development of retail development within towns will be supported subject to proposals being in keeping with the settlement hierarchy and proposals not causing adverse effects on the built, historic and natural environment.
4. Small scale (less than 500 sq m) development of office development within towns will be supported subject to proposals being in keeping with the settlement hierarchy and proposals not causing adverse effects on the built, historic and natural environment.
5. Proposals for alternative town centre uses outside of the primary shopping areas, such as residential, which can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres will be encouraged on appropriate sites if there is no significant adverse impact on the overall vitality and viability of the existing centre.
6. Proposals for town centre uses such as recreation, will be supported if there is no significant adverse impact on the overall vitality and viability of the existing town centre.
7. Proposals for the reuse of vacant floorspace for town centre uses at ground floor and residential at upper floors and regeneration of the eastern part of Kidderminster town centre to provide a counterbalance to Weavers Wharf will be supported.

## Reasoned Justification

**9.14** Wyre Forest District Council applied for a bid from the Government's Future High Streets Fund and has been awarded £20.5m to transform important regeneration sites within Kidderminster town centre.

**9.15** Three major transformational projects will improve permeability around the town and improve connectivity between the more popular western side with the less popular eastern side and will create new commercial and housing provision, supporting regeneration of the town and introducing a wide range of uses.

**9.16** The funding will enable the derelict former Magistrates Court, a Grade II Listed Building to be transformed into a multifunctional digital and creative enterprise hub. The Bull Ring area will be developed as a gateway into the town and access between Worcester Street and Bromsgrove Street car park will be improved through a programme of acquisition and redevelopment of redundant and no longer fit for purpose properties. The three development schemes will improve linkages around the town centre. There will be investment in public realm and uses within the town centre will be diversified. The development will be transformational and significantly boost the local economy.

**9.17** Kidderminster will also be transformed through the regeneration of Lionfields which forms part of the Council's ReWyre initiative together with the transformation of the public realm in High Street, Vicar Street, Exchange Street and Oxford Street. Crown House has been demolished and redevelopment of the area will transform the Bullring area of Kidderminster town centre and will ensure a more attractive shopping environment.

**9.18** The retail sector and town centres are undergoing a period of significant structural change arising not just from the effects of the recent and sustained economic downturn but also the continuing popularity and convenience provided by out-of-town facilities and the increasing adoption of online shopping by both consumers and retailers.

**9.19** The Covid pandemic has also had a detrimental impact on the High Street. The pandemic has led to an acceleration of changes in the way consumers shop, and a decline in employment in town centres. At the current time it is unknown what the long-term effects of the pandemic on town centres will be.

**9.20** The three town centres of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley all have historic buildings within them which add to the quality and attractiveness of the town centres. The Council wish to ensure that the three towns are attractive centres that members of the public want to visit.

**9.21** Policy SP.18, together with other policies in the Plan, seeks to foster and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres, including encouragement of appropriate alternative uses of vacant retail units, to ensure that the town centres will remain vibrant places at the heart of their communities.

**9.22** The Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Study identified that there is no additional capacity for further convenience floorspace in the District and there is no pressing need for the Council to allocate any sites for additional larger food stores. In addition, the Wyre Forest District Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs study identified that:

**9.23** *"Whilst Kidderminster Town Centre does have a theoretical need for additional comparison goods shopping, due to commitments this need only arises toward the end of the plan period. We do not therefore consider any specific site allocations are required now and would suggest*

*instead that there is encouragement given to the reuse of vacant floorspace and regeneration of the eastern part of the town centre to provide a counterbalance to Weavers Wharf." (Paragraph 6.88, Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Study 2016).*

**9.24** *"Neither Stourport-on-Severn nor Bewdley Town Centres are forecast to have needs for significant levels of comparison shopping floorspace for them to continue to fulfil their existing roles." (Paragraph 6.89, Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Study 2016).*

**9.25** Given this position, it is not proposed to specifically allocate any sites for future retail needs. However, whilst no sites are required to be allocated to meet need, support will continue to be provided within the identified retail areas of the town's where future development opportunities might arise. Maps showing the Primary Shopping Areas can be found in the Appendix of the Plan. In addition, the Council will continue to support the development and diversification of the three main towns in the District to ensure that their role as strategic Centres are retained and enhanced.

## Sustainable Tourism

**9.26** Wyre Forest District has an attractive and diverse landscape character, which has contributed to growing tourism in the area. Within the District are many visitor and tourist attractions, a number of them are of regional significance such as Severn Valley Railway and West Midland Safari and Leisure Park. The District has many more "natural" tourist/visitor attractions such as The Wyre Forest itself, Habberley Valley, Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, the River Severn and Stourport Riverside as well as Brinton Park. The District also has Bewdley Museum which attracts 200,000 visitors per annum and the Museum of Carpet in Kidderminster.

**9.27** The following policy seeks to protect and enhance the existing visitor and tourist facilities whilst providing opportunities for new tourist attractions and ensuring that the high quality of the environment is not compromised.

### Policy SP.19 - Sustainable Tourism

1. Support will be given to proposals that improve the quality and diversity of existing visitor/tourist facilities, attractions, accommodation and infrastructure, where development is compatible with the physical character of the area and does not cause any unacceptable impacts.
2. Proposals for new tourism related developments will be considered on their merits and determined in line with the policies contained within this Plan.
3. Proposals linked to the Tourism Industry should incorporate sustainable transport links as the site should be readily and safely accessible by public transport wherever possible, especially between attractions and Kidderminster town centre. Sustainable transport links and infrastructure to promote ease of access to the Wyre Forest,

Stourport-on-Severn, Bewdley, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park and Kidderminster Railway Station will be sought where it is practical and viable to do so.

4. Support will be given to developments, projects and initiatives that assist in promoting the waterways as a tourist attraction and proposals that facilitate and encourage heritage tourism.

## Reasoned Justification

**9.28** Tourism is an important element within the overall economy of the area. Each year more than 119 million visits are made to the region, generating over £121 million to the local economy and offers employment to more than 2,100. During 2014 2.5 million trips were undertaken to Wyre Forest District comprising 2.3 million day trips and 0.2 million overnight visitors. £64 million was spent by day visitors and £23 million by overnight visitors. The local visitor economy supports 2,138 jobs within the area. It is recognised that the Historic Environment is a strong contributor to the economic benefits of the District resulting from Heritage Tourism.

**9.29** The visitor economy creates new and additional services that can lead to the creation and growth of businesses in the area. Tourism also helps to support the high level of employment that is found in the region.

**9.30** A strong visitor economy can support regeneration projects, additional facilities and services for visitors. This also provides local people with these same facilities that can enrich the life of local communities.

**9.31** The majority of visitors to Wyre Forest District visit on day trips and do not stay overnight. Day trips are important but the short break market needs to be supported and encouraged to expand which would help to secure greater economic benefits for the area as a whole.

**10.1** Wyre Forest District Council has an overall vision to protect, improve and enhance the built and natural environment in order to provide an accessible, attractive, enjoyable and healthy place to be. The quality of the District's historic environment is one of its most valuable assets and includes a diverse collection of heritage assets, sensitive habitats and attractive landscapes.

**10.2** The built and natural environment includes everything that surrounds us from open space to historic buildings, rivers and canals and the wider countryside. The environment of Wyre Forest District is made unique by the valleys of the River Severn and River Stour and by the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal which all run through the District and help to shape the landscape. A major and distinctive landscape asset is the Wyre Forest itself, comparable to the rivers in terms of both character and significance within planning policy and being the largest contiguous area of Ancient Woodland in England (*source: Wyre Forest Landscape Partnership*). The District has a number of sites and features which are designated either nationally or locally for conservation interest.

**10.3** A high quality environment can have numerous benefits for an area. Businesses are more likely to locate in areas where the built and natural environment is attractive. The natural, historic, and built environment of the District is also attractive to tourists and can create a strong sense of place, helping to retain residents within the District.

**10.4** Access to high-quality, well-maintained public space is an essential part of promoting active, healthy lifestyles. Well-designed streets can encourage walking and cycling and good access to public space can facilitate participation in sport and active recreation. A comprehensive network of green spaces and corridors will support a range of biodiversity and will help to tackle climate change.

**10.5** This chapter sets out policies to define quality design and safeguard and enhance the natural and historic environment of Wyre Forest District.

## Design and Local Distinctiveness

Wyre Forest District is a considerably diverse area with particularly distinctive characteristics and heritage assets. It is especially important to aim for quality design in any future development to both complement and enhance this local distinctiveness and create a high quality environment.

### Policy SP.20 - Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness

#### 1. High Quality Design

All development within Wyre Forest District will be expected to exhibit high quality design. It will need to integrate effectively with its surroundings, in terms of form and function, reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve, and where appropriate, enhance cultural and heritage assets and their settings. New, inclusive and innovative designs will be encouraged and supported where they enhance the overall quality of the built environment.

#### 2. Creating and Reinforcing Local Distinctiveness

Wyre Forest District has an existing character that is determined by the qualities of the existing buildings and landscape. New development should respond to these existing qualities and ensure that it represents a positive addition to the streetscape or landscape. Where the existing context is weak or negative, it is important that new development demonstrates an improvement in the quality of the area. Guidance is provided in the District's Adopted Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2015.

## Reasoned Justification

**10.6** High quality design is considered to be essential for sustainable development and it is recognised as a key contributor to community health, economic value, social well-being and inclusion, as well as environmental quality. High quality design is needed to create places where people want to live, work and visit. Design is important everywhere in the District, not only in maintaining places which are attractive, but also in revitalising and regenerating places. High quality design is not just about individual buildings but how places work as well as look.

**10.7** The NPPF (2021) Chapter 12 'Achieving well-designed places' emphasises that creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning process should achieve. The District Council's adopted Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document of 2015 <sup>(14)</sup> underlies its commitment to improving the quality of new developments within the area and this will be updated following adoption of the Local Plan.

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14 Design Guidance SPD WFDC, 2015

**10.8** It is widely recognised that the process of good design starts with the creation of a well planned structure of streets and spaces which are often the most enduring feature of successful places.<sup>(15)</sup> Effectively connecting new streets and spaces into their surroundings will help to assimilate new developments.

**10.9** The District contains a rich heritage with a range of heritage assets including significant buildings, structures, and archaeology and conservation areas. These include the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal in addition to a valued network of green infrastructure incorporating important habitats, rivers and streams. This creates an asset-rich environment which will influence the location, design and use of future development and management of the public realm.

**10.10** Utilising existing qualities including heritage assets will help to strengthen the sense of local identity and community. If successfully incorporated, these elements will also improve the overall legibility of the place with inclusion of recognisable landmarks, spaces and points of enclosure. These strategic policies will help to ensure the creation of successful places that are secure, active, well-connected and attractive places to live and work, with a clear sense of community.

**10.11** Crime and the fear of crime can affect the well-being of the District's communities. Even low levels of anti-social behaviour and fear of crime can have a significant impact on people's lives. In line with the objectives of the NPPF paragraph 92 new development within Wyre Forest District should create safer and accessible environments where crime, disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

**10.12** Policy SP.20 should be read in conjunction with Policy DM.24 (Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness).

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15 Manual for Streets Paragraph 1.1.2 (Dft & DCLG 2005)



## Historic Environment

**10.13** The District currently has about 750 designated heritage assets included on the National Heritage List for England, together with 17 Conservation Areas. Undesignated heritage assets include those identified on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record together with a approximately 1000 included by the District Council on the local heritage list.

**10.14** Historically the River Severn was the principal transportation network, being navigable as far north as Bewdley, and encouraging its development as a market town and point of transfer of merchandise from the Middle Ages onwards. The development of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century resulted in dramatic industrial expansion at Kidderminster, and the creation of the new inland port of Stourport-on-Severn, whilst the fortunes of Bewdley correspondingly declined. The coming of the railways in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century supported further industrial expansion to the east of the River Severn and improved links both east-west and north-south.

**10.15** The District's villages and hamlets are mostly of medieval or earlier origin. Many of them have surviving medieval assets, such as the parish church, ponds and earthworks. To the east of the River Severn nucleated villages are set within a landscape that is characterised by diverse and important historic field systems, punctuated by small areas of ancient and semi-natural woodlands and remnants of historic parklands. To the west of the River Severn, the farmsteads and settlements are more dispersed and to the north west of the District the Wyre Forest itself remains a dominant feature.

### Policy SP.21 - Historic Environment

Development proposals should protect, conserve and enhance all heritage assets and their settings, including assets of potential archaeological interest, subject to the provisions of Policy DM.23 (Safeguarding the Historic Environment). Their contribution to the character of the landscape or townscape should be safeguarded and protected in order to sustain the historic quality, sense of place, environmental quality and economic vibrancy of Wyre Forest District. **In particular this applies to:**

- a. Designated heritage assets; i.e. listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and registered battlefields; also non-designated heritage assets (including those identified on the District's Local Heritage List or for which a Historic Environment Record exists), and their settings.
- b. The historic landscape, including locally distinctive settlement patterns, field systems, woodlands and commons and historic farmsteads, smallholdings and their settings.
- c. Designed landscapes, including parkland, gardens, cemeteries, churchyards, public parks, urban open spaces and industrial, military or institutional landscapes, and their settings.
- d. Archaeological remains of all periods.
- e. Historic transportation networks and infrastructure including roads and track-ways, canals, river navigations, railways and their associated industries, and their settings.

- f. The market town of Bewdley with its historic street and plot patterns, buildings and open spaces along with their settings and views of the town.
- g. The historic inland port of Stourport-on-Severn with its late-18<sup>th</sup> century street pattern and buildings along with their settings and views of the town.
- h. The industrial urban landscape of the historic market town of Kidderminster with its surviving heritage assets and their settings.
- i. The rural villages within the District, including their associated Conservation Areas and buildings, along with their settings and historic views to and from the surrounding countryside.

### Reasoned Justification

**10.16** When considering development proposals Policy SP.21 should be read in conjunction with Policy DM.23 Safeguarding the Historic Environment.

**10.17** The historic environment of Wyre Forest is a valuable, finite and irreplaceable resource, which is central to the character and identity of the area. It has a crucial role in supporting sustainable development through enhancing the quality of life of those currently living in and visiting the area and should do so for generations to come as well as delivering wider economic benefits through tourism and uplift in related development benefits.

**10.18** Proposals for development should have regard to the locally distinctive character of Wyre Forest District and appropriate weight will be given to those characteristics identified when determining proposals.

**10.19** Development proposals should protect, conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets, and the valuable contribution they make to the quality, sense of place, environment, economy and vibrancy of the Wyre Forest District.

**10.20** Heritage assets are a powerful reminder of the work and life of earlier generations. Opportunities will also be pursued to aid the promotion, understanding and appreciation of the historic environment as a means of maximising wider public benefits, and reinforcing a strong sense of place.

**10.21** The benefits of conserving and enhancing heritage assets include:

- a. Potential for sustainable development, reducing carbon emissions by re-using historic structures
- b. Influencing the character of an area and giving it a sense of place
- c. Providing opportunities to be the catalyst for regeneration within an area and inspiring new development and imaginative design

**10.22** Historic Landscape Characterisation studies have been produced for Worcestershire County Council. These provide an evidence base that can be used to inform assessments of local distinctiveness and the heritage value of historic landscapes and their associated heritage assets. The contribution that historic farmsteads make to the landscape is recognised in the guidance produced as a result of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project.

**10.23** Designed landscapes include historic parks at Upper Arley, Ribbesford and Wribbenhall as well as Brinton Park and Kidderminster cemetery. The Policies Map will specifically identify Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Monuments. Others are identified in the local heritage lists available to view on the District Council's website and Worcestershire County Council's Historic Environment Records. As well as landscape interest, these heritage assets have significant architectural and archaeological interest and often contain other monuments and memorials.

**10.24** Archaeological remains provide crucial links to the past and can provide useful information about local heritage. In addition to those Scheduled Monuments included on the National Heritage List for England the District has many undesignated sites with archaeological potential – these are often identified on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.

**10.25** A green infrastructure-led approach to development could aid the conservation of historic environment features, for example by allowing archaeology to remain in situ or strategically placing green space to preserve the setting of designated heritage assets. Therefore this policy has close links with Policy SP.28 (Green Infrastructure).

## Landscape Character

### Policy SP.22 - Landscape Character

#### 1. Landscape Character

New development must protect and where possible enhance the unique character of the landscape including individual settlements or hamlets located within it. Opportunities for landscape gain will be sought alongside all new development, in order that landscape character is strengthened and enhanced.

The Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance (2012 or as later amended) and Historic Landscape Characterisation will be used as guidance when determining applications for development within the rural areas.

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils.

#### 2. Severn Valley Regional Heritage Park

The establishment of a Severn Valley Regional Heritage Park to link the historic towns and landscape from Stourport-on-Severn through to Ironbridge will be supported and promoted during the plan period.

### Reasoned Justification

**10.26** One of the core principles in the NPPF is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

**10.27** Natural England defines landscape character as “*a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements be it natural (soil, landform) and/or human (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*”.<sup>(16)</sup>

Worcestershire County Council has undertaken a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) covering the rural areas of the county. The LCA is a tool for identifying those features that give a locality its sense of place, and is used to sub-divide the landscape into areas of similar character, classified as Landscape Types. The LCA Supplementary Guidance is a document designed to inform planning and land management, and is a tool for planners, designers and local communities.<sup>(17)</sup>

16 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types>

17 <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/landscape-character-assessment.aspx>

**10.28** The LCA and Historic Landscape Characterisation will be used when determining applications for development in rural areas. LCA determines the sensitivity of the landscape which may be used at a strategic level to help guide new development to the most appropriate areas. Areas of high landscape sensitivity are those which are least able to accommodate changes without damage to their character and these include the Wyre Forest itself. Less sensitive areas are those which are the most likely to be suitable for future small scale development such as community facilities and rural affordable housing, needed to maintain the viability of the District's villages

**10.29** The landscape of the Severn Valley is particularly distinctive. The River Severn is a cross-boundary feature and the establishment of a linear Severn Valley Heritage Park to celebrate and promote the Severn Valley will be supported through the development of supplementary guidance on its landscape character and the designation of the Severn Valley Railway as a Conservation Area.

## Biodiversity and Geodiversity

### Policy SP.23 - Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity

1. The Council will expect proposed developments to deliver measurable net gains in biodiversity through the promotion and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of legally protected and priority species populations. Delivery of measurable net biodiversity gains should be designed to support the delivery of the identified biodiversity network. The level of biodiversity net gain required will be proportionate to the type, scale and impact of development. Enhancements for wildlife within the built environment will be sought where appropriate from all scales of development.
2. Where required proposals for development must be supported by an appropriate level of up to date technical ecological assessment, demonstrating how ecological features identified have influenced the design and layout.
3. In these circumstances development should support the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity across the Plan Area. Specific provisions are identified below. Full consideration will be given in making planning decisions to the importance of any affected habitats and features, taking account of the hierarchy of protected sites:
  - a. Development which is likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (including candidate SACs), Special Protection Area (SPA) (including candidate SPAs), or other international designations or the favourable conservation status of European or nationally protected species or habitat will not be permitted.
  - b. Development likely to have an adverse effect on nationally important sites including a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and irreplaceable features including (but not limited to) ancient woodland, and ancient or veteran trees will not be permitted, except where the public benefits of the development at that site clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
  - c. Development which would compromise the favourable condition, (or make it less likely that favourable condition can be reached) of a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), a Grassland Inventory Site (GIS), an important individual tree or woodland and species or habitats of principal importance recognised in the Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan, or listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, will only be permitted if the need for and the public benefits of the proposed development outweigh the loss.
  - d. The ecological network of wildlife corridors that link the biodiversity areas detailed above, including areas identified for habitat restoration and creation will be protected.
  - e. Where the policy requirements of b and c and d have been met, full compensatory provision, to include establishment (secured through a legal agreement where appropriate) commensurate with the ecological value of the site will be required. In the first instance this should be through on-site mitigation, the details of which

should be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Off-site mitigation will only be acceptable where on-site mitigation is shown not to be possible.

4. The development will secure the management and monitoring of biodiversity of features retained and enhanced within the site or for those features created off-site to compensate for development impacts for a period reasonably related to the lifetime of the development.
5. Where, having followed the mitigation hierarchy, there is an unavoidable requirement for offsite biodiversity compensation to offset harm, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that this will be brought forward at a scale and proximity to the proposed development in keeping with the harm caused. Where pooled off-setting is required for multiple sites compensation will need to be proportionally supported in scale and kind by the project proposer(s).
6. Proposals for new housing development should ensure that the development (including gardens) are permeable to native wildlife (such as small mammals, reptiles and amphibians).

Specific details relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure within the District will be set out in a Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

## **Reasoned Justification**

**10.30** The importance of protecting and enhancing biodiversity occurring outside designated sites is recognised in European and national law and in the NPPF. In particular, guidance reflects the need to maintain functioning ecological networks at the landscape scale together with irreplaceable habitats and biodiversity features which may not necessarily be covered by a formal designation but which may be highly susceptible to in-combination and cumulative effects such as lighting, noise and disturbance. The Council will therefore expect developments to be informed by an understanding of the site within its local ecological context. This comprises the mappable network of designated and undesignated features and interlinking features within the landscape, including non-designated and non-priority habitats such as road verges, hedgerows and trees outside woodland. The relevant ecological network will draw from readily accessible evidence sources including, but not limited to, the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework, Worcestershire's Biodiversity Delivery Areas, the Worcestershire Habitat Inventory and Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan.

**10.31** As well as sites which are protected by designations, there is also the potential through development to create and enhance other sites. These additional areas may be smaller 'stepping stones' forming part of 'wildlife corridors' (both blue, green and dark corridors (see Glossary)) which help to link sites into a more comprehensive and resilient ecological network. This approach is embedded within NPPF paragraphs 174, 175 and 179 which require Local Authorities to create biodiversity or ecological networks. The need to maintain and integrate dark corridors within wildlife corridors is discussed in more detail in the GI Concept Plans.



**10.32** Ancient woodland and veteran trees are an irreplaceable and intrinsic feature of Wyre Forest's ecological network, their importance is recognised within NPPF paragraph 180(b) and a strong commitment for their protection is expressed within DEFRA's 25 year plan. Due to their historical significance, veteran trees are to be considered heritage assets (NPPF Section 16). Natural England guidance on ancient woodland and veteran trees <sup>(18)</sup> states that mitigation measures could include leaving an appropriate buffer zone of semi-natural habitat between the development and the ancient woodland or veteran tree. The actual size of the buffer depends on the type of the development, the type of woodland and what the likely impact would be, but as a minimum it should be at least 15 metres. For veteran trees, where a more precautionary approach is warranted, the distance should be greater than the standard minimum buffer.

**10.33** Where development proposals may affect biodiversity assets, including ancient woodlands, veteran trees and their immediate surroundings, the following principles shall be used to guide the design of development:

- Avoid harm
- Provide unequivocal guidance of need and benefits of proposed development
- Provide biodiversity net gain
- Establish likelihood and type of any impacts
- Implement appropriate and adequate mitigation and compensation
- Provide adequate buffers
- Provide adequate evidence to support proposals

Source: The Planners' Manual for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees (Woodland Trust, 2017)

**10.34** Impact assessments and evidence of biodiversity net gain must use the DEFRA biodiversity metric or similar metric subject to the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Mitigation strategies must be informed by an appropriate level of technical study reasonably related to the scale of unmitigated impact anticipated and risks posed. The effectiveness of mitigation and compensation measures is critical in ensuring protection and enhancement of the integrity of biodiversity networks. The Council will expect that wherever possible biodiversity measures in relation to habitats and species will be subject to reasonable monitoring effort related to their scale and complexity.

**10.35** The garden boundaries of new housing developments should be appropriately designed to ensure there is ecological permeability for wildlife species such as hedgehogs, nesting birds, roosting bats, invertebrates etc. This is to ensure the protection and enhancement of existing wildlife corridors and the provision of new connections across the site. This can be achieved in new housing developments by ensuring garden boundaries include at least a 125mm<sup>2</sup> (5 inch<sup>2</sup>) holes/gap in garden fences and walls to allow access for wildlife, such as hedgehogs, frogs and toads. The use of hedgehog shelters, nesting boxes and bug hotels (e.g. installed on buildings and fence posts), to provide food and nesting opportunities is encouraged. Developers will be required to provide an information/welcome pack, and have a special sign installed, so new residents understand the importance of maintaining wildlife corridors and why they should not

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18 Natural England guidance - Ancient woodland and veteran trees: protecting them from development  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

be blocked. Information for developers on how to create hedgehog highways and why they are important can be found at the Hedgehog Street Campaign website: <http://www.hedgehogstreet.org/development/>.

**10.36** The District Council will seek to progress a Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in order to provide a holistic approach to the provision of green infrastructure and to maximise the many benefits that green infrastructure brings. The SPD will set out specific requirements for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure within the District up to 2036.

**10.37** Wyre Forest District has a range of nationally and locally important sites. The NPPF provides the context for conserving biodiversity and this Local Plan protects the relevant designated sites through identifying them on the Policies Map. The designated sites are also set out in the table below. Additional sites may be designated during the lifetime of the Local Plan.

**10.38** The River Severn, Severn Estuary and tributaries provide a route for migratory fish forming part of the reasons for the Severn Estuary's designation as a Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar Site. The Severn Rivers Trust has been established to promote projects to improve fish passage along the Severn and to develop greater use of the Rivers Severn and Teme by local people and visitors. Development that may have direct or indirect impacts on watercourses used by the SAC and Ramsar species will be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

**Table 10.4.1 Important sites for Biodiversity**

Designation	Sites
<b>Areas of National Importance:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</li> <li>• National Nature Reserves (NNRs)</li> <li>• Other Areas of National Importance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chaddesley Woods NNR and Feckenham Forest SSSI</b> - A large semi-natural ancient woodland and species-rich unimproved grassland.</li> <li>• <b>Wyre Forest SSSI and NNR</b> - One of the largest and most important ancient woodlands in England, including woodland, scrub, springline flushes, streams, grassland and orchards; and incorporating several outlying areas.</li> <li>• <b>Areley Wood SSSI</b> - A large ancient semi-natural woodland.</li> <li>• <b>Devil's Spittleful and the Rifle Range SSSI and nature reserve.</b></li> <li>• <b>Hartlebury Common and Hillditch Coppice SSSI</b> - The County's most important lowland heaths, which are a nationally and internationally scarce habitat.</li> <li>• <b>Hurcott and Podmore Pools SSSI</b> - The County's largest alder woodland.</li> <li>• <b>Kinver Edge SSSI</b> - Woodland, heathland and geology.</li> <li>• <b>Puxton Marshes, Stourvale Marshes, and Wilden Marsh and Meadows SSSIs</b> - The County's most important marshlands, adjoining the River Stour.</li> <li>• <b>Showground Meadow, Callow Hill SSSI</b> - Meadows.</li> <li>• <b>Ranters Bank Pastures SSSI</b> - Grassland and traditional orchard.</li> <li>• <b>Eymore Cutting and River Stour Flood Plan SSSIs</b> - Sites of geological interest.</li> <li>• <b>Dumbleton Dingle SSSI</b> - Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland - lowland.</li> <li>• <b>Hurcott Pasture SSSI</b> - A species-rich lowland, acidic grassland pasture.</li> </ul>

Designation	Sites
Areas of Regional, County or Local Importance	<p><b><u>Local Nature Reserves:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Burlish Top</b> (between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn) &amp; <b>Habberley Valley</b> (to the Northwest of Kidderminster) - Part of the County's most important complex of lowland heaths, which is a nationally and internationally sacred habitat. Habberley Valley also includes woodland and acid grassland.</li> <li>• <b>Blake Marsh, Spennells Valley and Redstone</b> (Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn) - Marshlands.</li> <li>• <b>Hurcott Woods</b> (Kidderminster)</li> <li>• <b>Vicarage Farm Heath/Whittall Drive West</b> (Birchen Coppice Estate, Kidderminster)</li> <li>• <b>Half Crown Wood</b> (Walshes Estate, Stourport-on-Severn)</li> <li>• <b>Moorhall Marsh</b> (Stourport-on-Severn riverside)</li> <li>• <b>Kingsford Forest Park</b> - Wolverley</li> <li>• <b>Hartlebury Common</b> - Stourport-on-Severn (immediately adjacent to district boundary)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other Potential LNRs:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Blakedown Valley</b> (Blakedown)</li> <li>• <b>Hoobrook Valley</b> (Kidderminster)</li> <li>• <b>Mitton Marsh</b> (Timber Lane/River Stour, Stourport-on-Severn)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other Nature Reserves:</u></b></p> <p><b>Worcestershire Wildlife Trust:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betts Reserve (Far Forest)</li> <li>• Bishops Meadow (Wolverley)</li> <li>• Devil's Spittleful (Kidderminster fringe)</li> <li>• Knowle's Coppice (the Wyre Forest)</li> <li>• Wilden Marsh (Stourport-on-Severn)</li> </ul> <p><b>Woodland Trust:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verflores Wood (Pound Green)</li> <li>• Wassell Wood (Kidderminster Foreign)</li> </ul> <p><b>Forest Enterprise:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wyre Forest Nature Reserve (the Wyre Forest)</li> </ul> <p><b>Important Arboreta:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arley House (Upper Arley) - Registered Park and Garden</li> <li>• Bodenham (Wolverley)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Local Wildlife Sites:</u></b></p> <p>A network of 58 sites throughout the District that includes the Rivers Severn and Stour and a number of brooks, streams and pools as well as Ribbesford woods and Arley Wood and Eymore Wood.</p>

Designation	Sites
<b>Natural Space - Sites of biodiversity and conservation importance</b>	Additional sites shown on the Policies Map

## Geodiversity

### Policy SP.24 - Protecting and Enhancing Geodiversity

1. New development must strive to enhance and not have a detrimental impact on the geodiversity of the District
2. Where relevant, development proposals should:
  - a. make a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of geodiversity;
  - b. identify, maintain and appropriately manage geodiversity assets;
  - c. actively contribute to the implementation of Geodiversity Action Plans (GAPs) at the national, regional or local level.

## Reasoned Justification

**10.39** Geodiversity is a fundamental cornerstone of our everyday lives. Geology affects where we build, how we construct buildings and how we deliver associated services. It influences the design and layout of infrastructure, filters our drinking water and underpins the landscape around us. Geodiversity cannot be replaced or recreated (other than on geological timescales).

**10.40** Geodiversity may be defined as the range of rocks, fossils, minerals, landforms and soils that occur on our planet along with the natural processes that shape the landscape. The geodiversity of the District plays a major role in influencing and supporting its biodiversity.

**10.41** National planning policy is clear that Local Planning Authorities should protect and enhance geodiversity. Geodiversity sites with existing or proposed European or national designations are Sites of Special Scientific Importance and subject to statutory protection. The Council will protect and enhance geodiversity designations within the District and will continue to work with the local Geodiversity Partnership to promote geodiversity. Geodiversity designations are shown on the Policies Map and are set out in the table below. Additional sites may be designated during the lifetime of the Local Plan.

Table 10.4.2 Geodiversity Designations

Type	Details
Local Geological Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Bark Hill (Bewdley)</b> - Eturia Marl Formation and Upper Coal Measures.</li> <li>● <b>Bewdley Road cutting (Wribbenhall)</b> - Bridgnorth Sandstone Formation.</li> <li>● <b>Bewdley Road cutting (Kidderminster)</b> - Kidderminster Formation.</li> <li>● <b>Blackstone Rock</b> - River cliffs, Bridgnorth Sandstone and Kidderminster Formations.</li> <li>● <b>Hartlebury Common</b> - Quaternary late glacial and post-glacial wind blown sand.</li> <li>● <b>Hextons Farm Quarry</b> - Upper Carboniferous, Salop Formation - Alveley member.</li> <li>● <b>Worcester Road (Hoobrook)</b> - Wildmoor Sandstone Formation.</li> <li>● <b>Eymore Railway Cutting</b> - Carboniferous, Westphalian Formation.</li> <li>● <b>Redstone Rock</b> - Triassic, Sherwood and Sandstone Group, Wildmoor Sandstone Formation.</li> <li>● <b>Leapgate Old Railway Line and Quarry</b> (Country Park).</li> </ul>
Additionally, the Council considered that areas of at least local geological or geomorphological importance exist at various locations, including the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Arley Station railway cutting</b> - Upper coal measures.</li> <li>● <b>Habberley Valley</b> - Permo-Triassic Sandstones.</li> <li>● <b>Vales Rock (Kingsford)</b> - Permo-Triassic Sandstones.</li> <li>● <b>Wilden Lane</b> - river terraces and gravel deposits.</li> </ul>

**10.42** Geodiversity sites should also be recognised for their importance in providing habitats for biodiversity and in allowing delivery of ecosystem services.

**10.43** Where appropriate, access for all should be provided to geodiversity sites, although it is recognised that this is not always desirable. Geological sites will require appropriate maintenance regimes to ensure that these assets are properly protected and managed.

**10.44** The local Geodiversity Partnership will identify, map and regularly review the priorities for protection and improvement throughout Worcestershire County. These will be used to inform planning decisions. See Herefordshire & Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust for further details: <http://www.earthheritagetrust.org/pub/>

## Regenerating the Waterways

### Policy SP.25 - Regenerating the Waterways

#### 1. Rivers

All proposals for development in or adjacent to the District's rivers and/or within an area at risk of flooding must also conform with Policy SP.31. Rivers are to be enhanced in accordance with Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Water Management Policies.

Development which opens up views and enhances the landscape and biodiversity of the River Stour in Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn will be encouraged.

Development which preserves and enhances the historic riverside character of the Bewdley Conservation Area will be encouraged.

Development proposals which preserve and enhance the character of the Stourport No.1 Conservation Area adjacent to the River Severn will be encouraged.

#### 2. Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

Developments and initiatives that make a positive contribution to the creation of an attractive and high quality canal-side environment will be supported.

### Reasoned Justification

**10.45** Two of the District's three main waterways (the River Stour and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal) pass through Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn, whilst the principal river, the Severn, passes through both Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley.

**10.46** The canal and rivers are prominent features of the District and, as well as helping to shape the area's past, these key distinctive assets have great potential to act as catalysts for local regeneration, bringing benefits and influencing the future development of the District.

**10.47** Proposals for development within or adjacent to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area should accord with the most up-to-date Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan.

**10.48** This Policy is to be read in conjunction with Policies SP.31 and DM.28 (Wyre Forest Waterways).

**11.1** The assessment of infrastructure requirements set out in this Local Plan has been carried out by the Council in close consultation with infrastructure providers, including the County Council. Worcestershire LEP and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP have also been consulted to secure maximum alignment on the priorities for infrastructure in Wyre Forest. The partner authorities intend to explore a range of funding mechanisms to finance the infrastructure requirements of Wyre Forest.

**11.2** The Council will consider wider infrastructure funding streams as part of the delivery of the Local Plan. Following the adoption of the Local Plan, the Council will consider the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy in conjunction with the latest Planning Obligations SPD adopted by the Council.

#### **Policy SP.26 - Strategic Infrastructure**

1. The Council will work closely with its partners, especially the County Council, to bring forward the appropriate, proportionate and necessary infrastructure that is required to deliver the Plan.
2. Development will be required to provide or contribute, financially or in kind, towards the provision of infrastructure needed to support it, subject to viability requirements designated by the NPPF.
3. Where new infrastructure is needed to support new development, the infrastructure must be operational no later than the appropriate phase of development for which it is needed.
4. Where appropriate, planning obligations will be required to fund infrastructure projects that are directly related to specific development, including, but not limited to, affordable housing, transport, green infrastructure, education, health and other social infrastructure.

#### **Reasoned Justification**

**11.3** Cross reference should be made to Policy SP.27 Transport and Accessibility.

**11.4** In the previous Wyre Forest Core Strategy and the subsequent Development Plan Documents, much of the development was in the urban areas with a focus on brownfield sites. In this Local Plan, a different pattern of development is required with more sustainable urban extensions on greenfield sites and this is reflected in the consequent infrastructure requirements. New development requires suitable infrastructure to integrate it with existing communities and meet the needs of new residents and businesses.

**11.5** The infrastructure requirements to support the Plan are set out in the Wyre Forest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (WFIDP) that was prepared in spring 2017, updated in summer 2019 and which will be updated regularly throughout the lifetime of the Plan.

**11.6** The Council and its partners are committed to the delivery of infrastructure, as set out in the WFIDP. The WFIDP specifies the requirements for physical infrastructure (including transport and utilities), social infrastructure (including education, health), and green infrastructure



(including sport and recreation facilities). The WFIDP also contains a spatial description of the infrastructure requirements. The WFIDP is intended to be a “living document” and will be updated as necessary to support the delivery of this Plan.

**11.7** For the specific infrastructure requirements related to particular sites, reference should be made to the site specific policies contained in Part C of this Plan, where appropriate. For those allocated sites where this Plan does not contain detailed policy guidance on infrastructure provision, a specific assessment of infrastructure requirements will be developed by the Council in conjunction with infrastructure providers and in liaison with developers when development proposals come forward. Reference should be made to the most current version of the WFIDP, which will provide assistance in identifying infrastructure requirements for these sites.

## Policy SP.27 - Transport and Accessibility in Wyre Forest

### Managing Travel Demand

1. Proposals must demonstrate that:
  - a. the location and layout of development will minimise the demand for travel;
  - b. they offer viable sustainable transport choices, with a particular focus on active travel modes with attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks;
  - c. they address road safety issues; and in particular,
  - d. they are consistent with the delivery of the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan objectives.
2. Travel Plans will be required for all major developments. These must set out measures to reduce demand to travel by private cars and must seek to promote and support increased walking, cycling and public transport use for a range of trip purposes through agreed targets and monitoring arrangements. The Travel Plan must follow the guidance set out in national planning policy and guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.
3. New development should have regard to the principles and design criteria set out in Manual for Streets 1 and 2, the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan compendium and the Worcestershire Streetscape Design Guide.

### Providing Alternative Modes of Travel

4. Priority will be given to improving infrastructure, technology and services to support active travel (walking and cycling) and passenger transport (bus, rail and community transport) during the plan period. In accordance with Policy SP.26 on Strategic Infrastructure, development will be expected to contribute to the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure, technology and services necessary to support that development, either through direct investment or by financial contributions.
5. In order to promote greater transport choice in rural areas, community transport and innovative transport projects, including those that promote the use of new vehicle technology, will be encouraged in conjunction with new development proposals.

### Delivering Transport Infrastructure to Support Economic Prosperity

6. The following transport schemes, as identified within the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan, are the most significant for the successful implementation of the WFLPR:
  - WFST 1: Kidderminster Transport Strategy Major Scheme.
  - WFST 2; Transport Telematics Investment Package (all towns).
  - WFST 3: Active Travel Corridor: Bewdley to Wyre Forest (Dowles Link).
  - WFST 4: Mustow Green Junction Enhancement Scheme.
  - WFST 5: Blakedown Rail Station Enhancement Scheme.

- The schemes listed in the Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley Packages.
- SWAT 10: Stourport to Hartlebury Station (Leapgate Line) Active Transport Corridor.
- In addition schemes will require implementation to support the level of development proposed in the Local Plan.

7. Development proposals will not be permitted if they are likely to prejudice the implementation of the transport schemes set out in clause F, the implementation of identified highway improvements or traffic management schemes, or the operation of existing or proposed public transport facilities.
8. The following sites and corridors will be safeguarded from development that would prejudice future enhancement of the rail network and strategic access to it:
  - Worcester-Kidderminster- Stourbridge junction – Birmingham Snow Hill line.
  - Severn Valley Rail Line.
  - Leapgate Lane former rail alignment (Stourport to Hartlebury).

### **Transport Assessment Strategy**

9. Transport assessments are required for all major developments and must be carried out in compliance with relevant national and local policies and guidance, including the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan compendium.

### **Freight Proposals**

10. Any industrial or commercial development that is likely to generate freight movements of more than 10 vehicular trips per day will be required to carry out an assessment of its impact on the local road network and environment and the suitability to accommodate the increased traffic. Wherever possible, such development should be located on or near the principal road network.

### **Implementation**

11. Financial contributions from development towards transport infrastructure will be secured through developer contributions subject to viability requirements designated by the NPPF and, if appropriate, the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

## **Reasoned Justification**

**12.1** The Wyre Forest Local Plan Review recognises that the quality of transport provision and the accessibility of the District greatly affect regeneration, economic diversification and growth, and the quality of life of its residents and visitors. Traffic congestion, in particular, is a major cost to the local economy, has the potential to constrain future growth, and is a major cause of environmental pollution, including deteriorated air quality and ambient noise, especially within the urban areas.

**12.2** There are two Air Quality Management Areas in the Wyre Forest District: one at Welch Gate in Bewdley Town Centre and one at Horsefair/Coventry Street and the adjacent section of Kidderminster Ring Road. Both locations are particularly challenging to mitigate; the former because of historic, dense street patterns and the latter because of traffic volumes. The introduction of the Churchfields Master Plan scheme will significantly improve Air Quality in the Horsefair area of the Kidderminster Ring Road. In residents' surveys, concerns regarding traffic congestion as well as the quality of roads and pavements, sit second only to crime concerns in relation to satisfaction with living in the District.

**12.3** Sites on the highway network such as the A449 Worcester Road, the A451 Kidderminster Ring Road and its approaches, and the A448 between Kidderminster and Bromsgrove suffer from significant congestion during peak times; the A456 near the West Midland Safari and Leisure Park suffers from high levels of traffic in the summer months, when visitor numbers are highest. Furthermore, the Kidderminster Ring Road creates a barrier and 'collar' effect which deters pedestrian and cycle journeys to and from the town centre, including links to Kidderminster Railway Station/SVR on Comberton Hill.

**12.4** Constrained by its single river crossing, highway network and the location of the main car parks to the west of the town centre, high levels of traffic are channelled through the historic centre of Stourport-on-Severn. These high traffic levels have resulted in borderline Air Quality Management Areas and have a detrimental impact on regeneration proposals. Bewdley town centre is also constrained by its single river crossing and narrow historic street pattern, which results in localised congestion and reduced dispersal of vehicular emissions. This has resulted in deterioration in ambient air quality in Bewdley Town Centre and the designation of the Air Quality Management Area in Welch Gate.

**12.5** If traffic growth trends continue with a reliance on the private car, many more of the District's main urban and interurban arterial routes will become increasingly impassable due to congestion beyond traditional peak times. Further growth in the District, especially as part of the regeneration of key employment and town centre sites such as the Churchfields development (Kidderminster), has the potential to exacerbate traffic congestion unless delivered in conjunction with investment in transport infrastructure, technology and services. In addition to private cars, the poor performance of the highway network in the form of congestion has significant impacts on the passenger transport network (including bus/rail integration), freight and small delivery movements, taxis/private hire journeys and trips taken by pedestrians and cyclists.

**12.6** To tackle traffic congestion, significant changes in travel patterns and travel behaviour are necessary on a local neighbourhood and District wide level. This will require investment in transport infrastructure and services, and the adoption of policies that ensure the closer integration of land use and transportation planning, to help manage demand on the local transport network. Specifically, a strong focus is required on reducing the need to travel and encouraging use of other modes of transport (travel choices), especially for shorter trips, to improve accessibility and tackle traffic congestion. Nationally and at the local level, evidence and experience consistently proves that even small shifts away from single-occupancy car use to walking, cycling and passenger transport can deliver significant improvements to access to key services and facilities.

**12.7** The recent completion of the Hoobrook Link Road (opened Sept 2016) has helped to ease delays along the A451 Stourport Road corridor and brought significant economic benefits to the area; however, traffic congestion cannot just be tackled by building new roads, as this approach is unaffordable and unrealistic. Investment in transport infrastructure, technology and services across all modes of transport will be required to accommodate the growth in travel demand without increasing travel times, congestion and the associated costs that can undermine economic performance.

**12.8** Traffic congestion is a significant challenge for freight movements and networks, and businesses rely on this network for access to raw materials and delivery of finished products. Reducing delays on the highway network to promote consistently reliable journey times is especially important for road freight operations and to promote economic growth. Tackling 'pinch points' in the network is very important to the freight sector, as is investment in Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). At the hub of ITS is Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC), which provides the facility to integrate a wide variety of information on highway network conditions from numerous sources/systems to support network management and provide comprehensive travel information across a wide range of communication channels.

**12.9** In addition to road based freight, future proposals for employment development, particularly along the Stourport Road Employment Corridor, should have regard to the possibility of utilising the existing rail infrastructure for the sustainable movement of freight.

**12.10** To promote further development, economic growth and tackle traffic congestion, the Wyre Forest District will need to have:

- High-quality active travel routes and corridors providing for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks and direct travel choice for shorter distance journeys, particularly in urban areas;
- Excellent access to rail stations and improved rail services;
- A convenient and efficient urban passenger transport network;
- An efficient highway network with good links to the strategic highway network, to enable the efficient movement of goods and services essential to support economic activity and growth.

## **Highway Network**

**12.11** The District does not benefit from direct access to the Strategic Road Network. However, it does have connections to the M5 corridor through the following local principal road network which connects to the M5 through the identified corridors and junctions;

- A456 Corridor – which provides access to M5 Junction 3 (Quinton);
- A491 Corridor – which provides access to M5 Junction 4 (Lydiate Ash); and,
- A449 Corridor – which provides access to M5 Junction 6 (Worcester North).

**12.12** These connections enable the movement of goods, services and freight into and out of the district. These junctions are also signed for routing to the West Midland Safari and Leisure Park and Severn Valley Railway which are national tourist destinations and important to the regional economy.

**12.13** Whilst it is noted that the Wyre Forest Local Plan will increase potential trips on the Strategic Road Network, the impact is considered minor. However, cumulatively with further housing and employment growth in Birmingham, Black Country, Bromsgrove and South Worcestershire it is likely that improvements will be required at these junctions.

**12.14** Therefore, Highways England, who maintains and manages the M5 Corridor, continues to work with Worcestershire County Council, and other key stakeholders to identify and develop improvement schemes and funding opportunities at these locations, to enable the growth across this area to be accommodated within the operational capacity of the Strategic Road Network.

**12.15** The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, M5 Junction 3 and 4 provide access from Wyre Forest District and the rural hinterland to the Strategic Road Network for journeys by road. They provide connections to the wider West Midlands Conurbation and wider Worcestershire. This in turn provides access to the local principal road network.

**12.16** The main highway corridors are:

- A442 - runs north/south through the District and Kidderminster town centre linking Droitwich and Bridgnorth;
- A448 - runs Kidderminster- Bromsgrove-Redditch;
- A449 - runs north/south through the District and the eastern side of Kidderminster town centre, linking Worcester and Wolverhampton;
- A450 – runs in the south of the District linking Stourbridge and Hagley to Torton, near Hartlebury;
- A451 - runs north/south through the District and Kidderminster town centre (incorporating the Kidderminster Ring Road) linking Stourport-on-Severn and Stourbridge;
- A456 - runs east/west through the District providing the main route from the West Midlands conurbation to Kidderminster, Bewdley and on to the Marches.

**12.17** There are significant challenges with traffic congestion in Kidderminster and Stourport town centres in particular and intervention is needed to support regeneration, economic diversification and growth. This will require new active travel links and potentially the construction of some new sections of highway and alterations and improvements to existing roads and junctions, if these can be justified. In particular, focus is needed to enhance the performance of 'pinch-points' on the existing transport network where journey times and costs are increasing. The recent opening of the Hoobrook Link Road has released capacity on the A451 Stourport Road corridor which may offer opportunities for infrastructure enhancements to benefit buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

**12.18** There are a number of 'pinch points' on the inter-urban highway network such as the junction of the A448 and A450 at Mustow Green, where significant investment is required to improve the efficiency of the junction to cater for existing, and the forecast increase, in traffic demand. Development in intelligent transport systems (telematics), such as Variable Message Signs and Real Time Information Systems, will increasingly have a role in managing demand on the highway network and investment will be required to develop and maintain these systems so that the network functions more efficiently.



## Rail Network

**12.19** There are two rail stations within the District, Kidderminster and Blakedown, both providing important links with the West Midlands conurbation and Worcester; there are also direct trains from Kidderminster to London (Marylebone) via Birmingham Snow Hill. Whilst having a good service to Birmingham and Worcester, Kidderminster's connectivity southwards from Worcester depends upon the 2-hourly frequency Great Malvern-Bristol service and connectivity at Cheltenham Spa, with the result that it is often quicker and faster to travel to destinations south of Worcester via Birmingham City Centre. Northbound journeys from Kidderminster require a change either between Birmingham Snow Hill/Moor Street and Birmingham New Street or at Smethwick Galton Bridge.

**12.20** Kidderminster Rail Station is the second busiest in Worcestershire, representing nearly 20% of all rail travel in the County, dominated by commuter flows into Birmingham. The service provides valuable links for employment, retail, leisure and education, and is well used in both directions, with the highest demand during weekday peak periods. It is recognised however, that the facilities at Kidderminster Rail Station need to be improved and investment is necessary for enhancements to cater for the expected doubling of passenger numbers by 2043.

**12.21** The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) highlights a number of challenges facing the County and notes that "there is considerable scope to enhance Worcestershire's rail infrastructure and services". In the SEP there is clear commitment to support the Kidderminster Rail Station Enhancement scheme as a short-term 'Local Growth Fund' initiative, to actively improve accessibility to and from the County by rail, and reduce reliance on private car travel.

**12.22** The proposed enhancements include a new station building and improved access for all modes that provides a high quality transport gateway to Kidderminster and the Wyre Forest that is better integrated with the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) and other key business and tourist destinations. To maximise the benefits of the Rail Station enhancements, it is vital that investment go toward measures to enhance rail integration and active mode improvements; in particular, toward improved walking and cycling links into and through Kidderminster town centre and surrounding residential areas. This recognises that increased demand to travel cannot be met by the car alone; travel choice is essential to support sustainable growth of rail patronage in the longer term.

**12.23** To complement the planned enhancements to Kidderminster Rail Station and rail connectivity for the District, the emerging Worcestershire County Council Rail Investment Strategy includes evidenced aspirations for the following rail access improvements:

- Extending London Paddington-Worcester services to Droitwich Spa and Kidderminster;
- Provision of a new direct train service between Kidderminster, Worcester, Cheltenham Spa, Gloucester, Bristol Parkway and Bristol Temple Meads.

**12.24** The emerging Rail Investment Strategy also highlights the need to address poor journey times between Kidderminster and Birmingham, where the average travelling speed is just 33mph.



**12.25** Although patronage is relatively low at Blakedown Station, it is recognised that investment is required to cater for the significant forecast growth in rail travel with enhancements required to include:

- Improvements to passenger information and station facilities for passengers;
- Improvements to walking/cycling routes to the station;
- Improvements to access arrangements for cyclists and provide additional new cycle storage facilities;
- Set-down and pick-up facilities for taxi users and operators;
- Improve facilities for passengers with disabilities;
- Provision of suitably sized station car park.

**12.26** The opportunities to increase car parking provision at Kidderminster Rail Station are limited and so improving parking provision at the alternative stations (Blakedown and Hartlebury) will be essential to support anticipated rail growth in the Wyre Forest.

**12.27** The South Worcestershire Transport Strategy (covering the City of Worcester, Wychavon and Malvern Hills Districts) includes aspirations to enhance facilities and services at Hartlebury Station which will offer increased travel and economic growth opportunities for Wyre Forest District, particularly for residents and businesses in Hartlebury and Stourport-on-Severn. The proposals, similar in scope to those for Blakedown Station, suggest enhancements to facilities to cater for the forecast growth in rail travel. The Worcestershire County Council LTP4 includes proposals for the promotion of 'Active Travel Corridors' and a strategic corridor identified is the Stourport to Hartlebury Station (Leapgate Line) Active Travel Corridor. This Active Travel Corridor aims to focus investment in walking and cycling links along the corridor to create a comprehensive, integrated off-road network linking residential areas with key trip attractors, including rail stations.

**12.28** The Severn Valley Railway (SVR) is one of the leading heritage railways in the UK, operating over a 16 mile route between Kidderminster and Bewdley to Bridgnorth in Shropshire. The railway is one of the major tourist attractions in Worcestershire with over 200,000 visitors annually. There is potential for connections to the National Rail network at Kidderminster Rail Station to enhance services to/from Bewdley. This would, however, require significant investment and support from the Department of Transport (DfT) before this could be realised.

**12.29** As part of the 70 acre 'Silverwoods' development on the former British Sugar site (A451 Stourport Road), now accessed via the new Hoobrook Link Road, works are on-going for a mixed used development including 250 homes. The outline planning consent for 'Silverwoods' includes provision for a new rail halt on the nearby SVR line to connect to the SVR and National Rail services. The viability of such a scheme will require further investigation before it is considered feasible.

**12.30** The West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, located near the SVR line has ambitious plans for growth. The Park is keen that the arrival of HS2 in Birmingham in 2026 may support further visitor volume growth.

**12.31** Located near Norton in Wychavon District, the Worcestershire Parkway Major Scheme involves the development of a new parkway station at the intersection of the Bristol to Birmingham and the Hereford –Worcester- London main line railways; the station is due for completion during 2019. The poor quality rail service between Kidderminster and locations served by the Birmingham - Cheltenham - Gloucester - Bristol and Cardiff main lines is exacerbated by the lack of direct access to cross-country services. Worcestershire Parkway aims to address this issue and improve access to national rail services. Parkway's location close to Junction 7 of the M5 will make it a strategic access point for the rail network for much of the County. It will have 500 car parking spaces and services to Parkway will initially include:

- Hourly GWR Worcester – London Paddington services;
- Hourly Cross Country Cardiff – Nottingham services.

**12.32** The Worcestershire Parkway Station is likely to offer increased opportunities for Kidderminster, Blakedown and Hartlebury Stations in the future, including enhanced links to regional and national economic hubs in London and the South East, the South West and South Wales.

### **Road-Based Passenger Transport Networks (Bus, Taxi and Community Transport)**

**12.33** The provision of a high quality road-based passenger transport network is critically important for the social and economic wellbeing of the District, providing essential access to a range of health, employment, leisure, education and retail opportunities and services, as well as rail hubs which provide access to a far greater range of destinations. Road-based passenger transport plays a significant role in tackling social inequality and, where subject to investment, can significantly reduce congestion and promote healthier lifestyles. The bus network in the Wyre Forest District is predominantly provided by a single operator, and has been subject to consistent underfunding for a number of years. The network suffers from poor service reliability and punctuality due to traffic congestion and a deteriorated bus fleet, lack of bus priority measures and poor interchange facilities at the district's rail stations. In the Wyre Forest, car ownership is lower than in other areas of Worcestershire, and particularly so in some of the more deprived neighbourhoods. In particular, certain protected groups (the young, the elderly and the disabled, for example), are particularly dependent on the bus network to access essential services and facilities needed to enjoy an acceptable quality of life. Furthermore, poor bus service provision in the evenings undermines the viability of the evening economy.

**12.34** Kidderminster bus station, located adjacent to Weavers Wharf and delivered as a purpose-built facility as part of that development, has proved unpopular with local operators and so has been largely snubbed in favour of on-street bus stop facilities. It is necessary to develop a road based passenger transport access strategy for Kidderminster Town Centre (bus, taxi and community transport) , to consolidate and improve the quality of facilities, as well as improving ease of interchange for this mode of transport. The provision of better road based passenger transport services and infrastructure, including bus priority measures, is a critically important element for better accessibility and economic growth in the District. Investment is also required to enhance transport technology such as Real Time Information systems and more comprehensive integrated ticketing arrangements.

**12.35** Whilst most of the population of the District reside in the three main towns, there are rural hinterlands and villages whose residents are more reliant on the private car than those in the urban areas. In particular, the transport needs of the ageing population in rural areas will be increasingly difficult to meet, as the numbers of residents without access to a car rises. More demand-responsive forms of public and community-based transport, such as community buses, dial-a-ride cars and taxis, will be required if the needs of these residents are to be met. Developments in new technology are likely to enhance the ability of community transport providers to offer flexible, accessible and responsive solutions to unmet local transport needs. These improvements should not only benefit rural users but residents in those urban neighbourhoods where conventional passenger transport provision is poor.

### Active Travel Modes (Walking and Cycling)

**12.36** Walking and cycling should be a normal part of everyday life, and the natural choice for shorter journeys such as going to school, college or work, travelling to the station, and for simple enjoyment. Having access to safe and attractive and well-designed routes for walking and cycling with secure cycle parking, is essential to tackle rising obesity and deteriorated public health, reduce congestion, improve environmental quality and increase civic pride and wellbeing.

**12.37** Rising obesity in the District is partly caused by sedentary lifestyles, so investing in high quality, continuous corridors for active travel modes (walking and cycling) will help to tackle this issue, by providing attractive and well-designed environments and realistic alternative travel choices for shorter trips;

**12.38** The District is suffering the legacy of a period where land use planning tended to favour the needs of the motorist, particularly apparent at the Kidderminster ring road where the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is of a poor quality. Although the majority of roads within the District are available to cyclists, the speed and volume of traffic on some roads makes them undesirable, particularly for new or less physically able users. There have been improvements in walking and cycling infrastructure in recent years, however, continued investment in active travel modes, as well as improvements to the public realm in our urban areas, will help to encourage more uptake of sustainable modes and reduce dependency on the private car.

### Worcestershire County Council Local Transport Plan 4: 2017-2030 (LTP4)

**12.39** The Local Plan Review provides the main opportunity for the partners to contribute to the implementation of the District's transport network; the LTP4 and associated policies and overarching strategies, provide the basis on which to develop and deliver this network. It provides the policy and strategy context for major transport projects to enable Worcestershire County Council to bid for additional Government funding. It also provides a context within which developer contributions can be guided. The LTP4 document states that the challenges for the District are:

- To relieve congestion;
- To improve journey time reliability;
- To deliver transport schemes to mitigate the effect of the local plan to accommodate development growth.

**12.40** The LTP4 aims to target investment in three broad areas:

- **Transport Technology** - technology is offering increasingly attractive opportunities to help manage demand on our networks, to tackle congestion and support growth. Modern traffic signals, for example, can intelligently manage traffic flows to respond to variable demand. Improved access to dynamic travel information through a variety of media will enable users of our transport networks to make more informed travel choices;
- **Travel Choice** - increasing realistic travel choice is critical to enable our economy to diversify and grow. In addition to enhancing access to travel information, we recognise that we need to prioritise investment in alternative modes of travel. In particular, our rail network has significant potential to accommodate and support economic diversification and planned growth. Significant investment will be required in our stations, rail infrastructure and rolling stock to provide the quality of services and facilities that the 21st century passenger expects. Rising obesity in the county is partly caused by sedentary lifestyles, so investing in high quality, continuous corridors for active travel modes (walking and cycling) as well as improvements to the public realm in our urban areas will help to tackle this issue, by providing attractive and well-designed environments and realistic alternative travel choices for shorter trips;
- **Capacity Enhancement** - the most expensive of the three areas, where suitable business cases can be identified to support investment, we will aim to fund and deliver capacity enhancements at key 'pinch points' to support development growth, address poor air quality issues and tackle congestion.

**12.41** Detailed plans for the implementation of transport infrastructure will come forward during the lifetime of the LTP4 and their implementation will be essential to allow for the further investment in transport infrastructure and services needed to accommodate the increased travel demand associated with future development proposals. The funding to deliver this transport infrastructure is likely to come from a variety of sources and potential funding sources include:

- Section 106 Planning Obligations
- Other developer contributions;
- Community Infrastructure Levy;
- Integrated Transport Block
- Local Growth Deal

**12.42** Developers will be required to demonstrate that they have given appropriate consideration to the potential impacts of development on the wider and strategic transport network, including that managed by Worcestershire County Council, Highways England and Network Rail.

**13.1** The enhancement of the District's Green Infrastructure Network will form a key part of the spatial development strategy for the District. This policy places an emphasis on the delivery of a comprehensive network of green spaces and corridors across the District. This will help to promote active lifestyles, support biodiversity, address climate change and safeguard and enhance the District's unique landscape character.

#### **Policy SP.28 - Green Infrastructure**

1. The existing green infrastructure (and associated blue infrastructure) network will be safeguarded from inappropriate development.
2. New development will be expected to retain, protect, enhance and provide Green Infrastructure (GI) assets (and associated blue infrastructure) by integrating GI into developments and contributing positively to the District's green infrastructure network. Housing and employment development proposals (including mixed use schemes) will be required to contribute towards the provision, maintenance, improvement and connectivity of GI, directly delivering GI as part of their design as follows, subject to viability requirements designated by the NPPF:
  - a. For Greenfield sites exceeding 1ha (gross): 40% GI (excluding private gardens).
  - b. For Greenfield sites of less than 1ha but more than 0.2ha (gross): 20% GI (excluding private gardens).
  - c. For Brownfield sites: no specific GI figure. However, mitigation would be expected if the proposed development will impact negatively on protected environmental sites and/or where brownfield sites have a high environmental value.
3. Development which is unable to retain, protect and enhance the integrity of the GI network and its connectivity or 'stepping-stone' features will be considered inappropriate. Within brownfield developments it is expected that key GI features such as SuDs, green roofs, green walls, enhancements to the District's urban and peri-urban forest, and biodiversity measures will be delivered wherever possible and integrated into the wider GI network.
4. Within the identified key strategic development corridors it is expected that masterplanning for all major developments will be informed by the Green Infrastructure Concept Plans.
5. The precise form and function(s) of the GI provided will depend on local circumstances and the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy's priorities. Developers should seek to agree these matters with the Council in advance of submitting a planning application. Effective management arrangements should also be clearly set out and secured. Once planning permission has been given by the Council, the associated GI will be protected as Natural Space or Open Space (see Policy DM.7).
6. Development proposals that would have a detrimental impact on important GI attributes within areas will not be permitted unless:



- a. A robust independent assessment of community and technical environmental need and functionality shows the specific GI typology to be surplus to requirements in that location
  - b. Replacement of, or investment in, GI of at least equivalent quantity and quality of community and technical environmental benefit is secured in a suitable location agreed with the LPA.
7. To the north of Kidderminster Town Centre, the Council will safeguard the areas shown on the Policies Map in the Stour Valley for future development as a Country Park. Proposals for development which would prejudice the provision of a Country Park in these areas will not be permitted.
8. The Council will safeguard and implement a scheme on land between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn for development as the Burlish Country Park, as shown on the Policies Map. Proposals for development which would prejudice the provision of the Country Park in these areas will not be permitted.

## Reasoned Justification

**13.2** The District has a distinctive environment comprising diverse landscape character areas including urban areas. There are many green corridors within the District which are currently fragmented but have the potential to provide a comprehensive network of green infrastructure (GI). The District's watercourses in particular offer the opportunity to link the urban areas with the open countryside beyond. There are also some of the County's most important and distinctive acid/lowland heath communities and the continued protection and enhancement of these important areas needs to be considered in future development.

**13.3** The green infrastructure network for the District is set out within the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Wyre Forest District. This Strategy shows how the District's existing green infrastructure assets can be better linked in order to provide greater connectivity for both people and nature.

**13.4** Worcestershire's GI Strategy and supporting evidence base seeks to enhance opportunities to link biodiversity with drainage, historic landscape character and improved accessibility. The Worcestershire GI Strategy promotes the GI Concept Plan approach for strategic sites and seeks to promote collaborative working with developers.

**13.5** The key objective of Green Infrastructure Concept Plans is to establish principles for development which will identify key GI assets and opportunities for their protection and enhancement in line with their surrounding Environmental Character Area priorities, local policies and the broader Worcestershire GI Framework. Green Infrastructure Concept Plans have been developed for each of the identified key strategic development corridors within Wyre Forest and should inform masterplanning exercises of all major developments coming forward within these corridors. Green Infrastructure Concept Plans have been produced for the following identified key strategic development corridors:

- Kidderminster North GI Concept Plan
- Kidderminster East GI Concept Plan

- Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront GI Concept Plan
- South Kidderminster Enterprise Park GI Concept Plan

**13.6** The Council requires developers to have regard to and contribute towards these Green Infrastructure Concept Plans for these identified key strategic development corridors. The Council has an aspiration for developers to prepare a GI Concept Plan for all large scale developments, which would then serve to inform all developments in that area as they come forward.

**13.7** GI will need to be carefully planned into new developments from the outset. When determining planning applications the way in which the proposals contribute to delivering the GI network will be of paramount importance. GI (and associated Blue Infrastructure) is an over-arching approach to secure a range of measures already required and being delivered by development, including: formal and informal play areas, sustainable drainage systems, footpaths and bridleways, public open space, community gardens, living walls, wildflower verges and enhancement of the District's urban and periurban forests etc. For sake of clarity: this is not a requirement to be considered alongside such features, but the GI target in Policy SP.28 should constitute a quantitative summation of GI measures. For GI to be deemed of acceptable quality, matters including multifunctionality, cohesion and aftercare also require careful consideration. Helpful demonstration of such consideration should include benchmarking of development through assessment tools such as Building with Nature ([www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/about](http://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/about)). The GI Concept Plans and/or a Supplementary Planning Document will be of assistance to developers in crafting robust and effective GI schemes.

**13.8** When considering GI on brownfield sites no specific figure has been set as such sites can be relatively constrained by development viability. Therefore any GI provision will be as a direct consequence of development proposals having to meet other policy requirements as necessary in order to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Where proposed development is likely to impact negatively on protected sites and/or where brownfield sites have a high environmental value then appropriate mitigation measures will be expected. Brownfield habitats qualifying as Open Mosaic Habitat or supporting NERC S.41 species would qualify as a site offering 'high environmental value'.

**13.9** If a site is part brownfield and part greenfield, the GI % in 2(a) and 2(b) of Policy SP.28 should be applied depending on the size of the greenfield area. For example, if the greenfield area exceeds 1ha then 40% GI should be applied. If the greenfield area is less than 1ha but more than 0.2ha then 20% is applied (subject to viability requirements designated by the NPPF).

**13.10** Blue infrastructure i.e. 'blue' landscape elements are linked to water such as pools and wetland systems, artificial basins or watercourses. Along with green infrastructure, wildlife corridors and dark corridors they help form an interconnected network of environmental enhancements within and across catchments.

**13.11** The delivery of the Stour Valley Country Park is a long-standing aspiration for the District. The completion of the Kidderminster Flood Alleviation Scheme presents the opportunity to create a new country park to the North of Kidderminster. The creation of a new country park would provide a new link between the town centre and the existing green corridor running from



Springfield Park, Broadwaters, and Hurcott Pool via the important wetlands of the Stour and Blakedown Brook Valleys. The site will remain safeguarded in order to allow the future delivery of the Stour Valley Country Park.

**13.12** The Policies Map shows land between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn being safeguarded as the Burlish Country Park. Until 2016, much of this land was in use as a golf course. The site returned to local authority ownership in June 2018. The Wyre Forest Golf Facility Review (2019) sets out why this golf course is surplus to requirements. The long-term vision for the site is to create a Country Park. Parts of the site have now been brought under management by the Council's ranger service to be managed as a nature reserve. These parts of the site will be managed as an extension to the adjacent Burlish Top Nature Reserve. The land has been made available for public access with footpaths, signage, gates, and fencing. Cattle have also been brought in to graze the wildflower meadow. A proposal to develop a cycling route on the land to the south of Kingsway is also being discussed with British Cycling. Any funding secured would be match funded from S106 contributions. There are also plans to create a new area of woodland on 10ha in conjunction with the Woodland Trust. A visitor car park has been provided adjacent to the Kingsway.

**14.1** The purpose of policies relating to water is to ensure that the integrated management of water resources (water supply, water conservation, water quality and waste water) is addressed as an integral part of the planning and design of developments. This includes the mitigation of flood risk and surface water drainage including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The Wyre Forest Water Cycle Study considers issues of water resources, wastewater and flood risk and forms a key part of the evidence base alongside the Wyre Forest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2019).

**14.2** Strategic issues faced by the District affecting the long term sustainability of the local water environment include:

- The provision for 5,520 new homes and 29 hectares of employment land which will have an impact on water resources and its role in reducing demand on available ground water supplies;
- The distribution and phasing of development sites to match the available capacity of foul sewer network and waste water treatment works so that improvements to be undertaken are in advance of development;
- The need to maintain and replenish ground water supplies, reduce flooding and increase the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems;
- Addressing watercourses in the District which have poor/moderate water quality status under the Water Framework Directive and the affect of development and the quality of waste water discharging from local treatment works.

**14.3** Policies in this chapter relate to several other policy areas in the Local Plan. Addressing water issues in a comprehensive and integrated way will result in more effective and sustainable solutions to managing water.

**14.4** To introduce high levels of water efficiency, new development is expected to take all available opportunities to integrate the principles of sustainable design and construction into the design of proposals.

#### **Policy SP.29 - Water Conservation and Efficiency**

The Council will require development to demonstrate that it:

- a. Incorporates design features that will reduce water consumption. Proposals for residential development will be expected to demonstrate that a water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day can be achieved;
- b. Incorporates design features that will support recycling / re-use of water through measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling, especially where a large demand for water is predicted such as industrial processes or irrigation.

**Reasoned Justification**

**14.5** The Wyre Forest area covers surface and groundwater bodies that are either at risk of or have been impacted by abstraction. In areas such as this the Environment Agency is working with abstractors including water companies to reduce the impact of abstraction on the environment and bring it to more sustainable levels.

**14.6** The Council recognises that from a sustainable perspective, water should be used efficiently in order to reduce the associated energy requirements (needed to pump water, for example) and to avert adverse environmental effects such as over-abstraction. Improving water efficiency will also help to reduce the volume of wastewater that the sewer system has to accommodate.

**14.7** STW has made demand assumptions based on the increasing levels of water efficiency in the design of new homes which show that water consumption per person will drop from 120 litres per day (current) to 109 litres per day by 2034. EA has expressed support for reducing consumption of water to a level of around 110 litres per person per day.

**14.8** Developers of new dwellings will be required to demonstrate that appropriate measures to conserve and re-use water, such as low flow showers and kitchen taps, and provision of water butts and rain/grey water harvesting have been incorporated to achieve water efficiency, working to a limit of 110 litres per person per day or better. The additional cost of meeting this target have been assessed as being as little as £9 per dwelling (DCLG Housing Standards Review (Sept 2014)).

**Policy SP.30 - Sewerage Systems and Water Quality**

The capacity and resilience of local sewerage infrastructure is critical to the sustainability of new development. In order to avoid adverse impacts of additional demand on the existing foul sewerage network, the Council requires residential development to demonstrate:

- a. How foul flows produced by the development will be drained and the identification of the agreed point of connection to the public foul sewerage network;
- b. That sewerage and surface water will drain separately;
- c. How development will be phased to allow Severn Trent Water (STW) sufficient time to undertake any necessary capacity improvement works to the public foul sewer network or to existing waste water treatment works prior to construction and occupation of the developments. Where development is brought forward in advance of planned capacity improvements by STW through the Asset Management Process, any required capacity improvements should be delivered via agreement between the developer and STW.

Development should follow the hierarchy (order of preference for foul drainage connection), as set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance. The Council requires non mains drainage proposals to assess the potential impacts upon water quality to ensure no detrimental impact on the water environment.

Proposals that would result in an unacceptable risk to the quality and / or quantity of a watercourse or groundwater body will not be permitted. Strategies to help mitigate the impact of development on water quality will be required at planning application stage. Proposals should seek opportunities to improve water quality and help achieve good ecological Water Framework Directive (WFD) status.

## Reasoned Justification

**14.9** A plan led approach to the delivery of development is critical to addressing the capacity constraints within the District's sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure. The main purpose of Policy SP.30 is to address the alignment of development with the available capacity at wastewater treatment works and where capacity is constrained ensure that improvements can be made prior to development coming forward.

**14.10** The *Wyre Forest Water Cycle Study* (2017, and 2018 update) shows that although most wastewater treatment works have capacity to accommodate additional development this available capacity is not distributed evenly and is not always sufficient to absorb the planned levels of development for the area. Phasing development across the course of the plan will allow STW to incorporate improvements into Asset Management Planning delivering key infrastructure in advance of development.

**14.11** Regular reviews of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will help provide STW with information on any changes to the phasing of development, to feed into their Asset Management Plans in a timely manner allowing opportunities to re-deploy resources to better meet the needs of emerging development patterns.

**14.12** Receiving watercourses and groundwater bodies covered by the European Union *Water Framework Directive* (2000) are subject to a basic requirement of 'no deterioration' and the objective to reach Good Ecological Status or Potential (GES/GEP) by 2027. It is essential that all future development helps to address the issues that currently prevent the watercourse or groundwater body from achieving GES/GEP. Water Framework Directive (WFD) data is available from the Environment Agency's Catchment Data Explorer tool at: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/RiverBasinDistrict/9>

**14.13** Strategies to help mitigate the impact of development on water quality will be required in advance of planning approval being granted and could include on-site measures, such as SuDS, reinforcement of wastewater treatment infrastructure, restoring natural watercourses through the removal of culverts, improvements to habitats and overcoming barriers to fish movement. To protect the receiving water environment developers are required to set out how surface water from the development will be treated sufficiently, using the simple index approach included in the *CIRIA SuDS Manual* (2015).

**Policy SP.31 - Flood Risk Management**

In line with the NPPF and NPPG the Council will steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. In order to minimise the impacts of and from all forms of flooding, the Council requires all development in areas thought to be at risk of flooding to:

- a. Ensure development proposals are located in accordance with the Sequential and Exception Test where appropriate and also take account of the latest versions of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, the Worcestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, and the Worcestershire Surface Water Management Plan.
- b. Submit a site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), which confirms:
  - i. the wider hydrological context of the site.
  - ii. the development is safe from flooding for its lifetime, taking into account all forms of flooding. This shall include safe access and egress.
  - iii. finished ground floor levels will be set a minimum of 600 mm above the 1% annual probability (1 in 100 year) river flood level plus climate change allowance. Where necessary any flood proofing/resistance measures are incorporated into the design.
  - iv. finished ground floor levels will be set no lower than the modelled 1% annual probability (1 in 100 year) surface water flood level plus climate change allowance.
  - v. the development will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, and proposals will detail how existing flood flow paths on the site will be accommodated, how the amount of flood storage will be maintained and improved (where possible) and how surface water runoff will be addressed.
  - vi. any opportunities for wider flood risk benefits
  - vii. flood management and flood warning requirements
  - viii. the development layout is informed by the management of residual flood risk and the drainage strategy for the site, which incorporates sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as set out in Policy SP.32.

The FRA shall use modelled flood level data where possible and shall take into account appropriate allowances for climate change, using the latest Environment Agency's local Climate Change Guide.

Planning permission for development will only be granted where:

- c. The development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce overall flood risk in the area and beyond. This will entail evidence showing consideration of wider benefits and opportunities, including from cumulative impact assessment, to help ensure development will be safe and reduce flood risk in the catchment where possible.
- d. The natural watercourse and flood plain profiles are not adversely affected. Where practicable, any culverted (piped) watercourses will be opened up to improve drainage

and flood flows. Proposals involving the creation of new culverts will not be permitted unless essential to the provision of access.

- e. A minimum 8 m access strip is provided adjacent to watercourses for maintenance purposes. It should be appropriately landscaped for biodiversity benefits. The width of the strip may be reduced for smaller ordinary watercourses, where agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

## Reasoned Justification

**14.14** It is essential that new development minimises its impact on the built and natural environment. This includes reducing risk of flooding through incorporating features such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) (Policy SP.32). The purpose of Policy SP.31 is to take a proactive approach to managing flood risk from watercourses, sewer, heavy rainfall and groundwater sources.

**14.15** Areas of the District are subject to regular flooding instances. Certain areas are at risk of flooding due to existing drainage systems and watercourses becoming overwhelmed during or following heavy rainfall, whereas areas adjacent to the River Severn are predominantly at risk of flooding following prolonged rainfall outside the District. The Council works closely with multiple agencies (including the EA and STW) to address flooding issues.

**14.16** The Local Plan plays an important role by requiring new developments to provide integrated flood mitigation methods and by working to retain surface water runoff on-site through sustainable drainage, integrating flood mitigation measures and providing appropriate buffering between watercourses and development. Development needs to be resilient to flood risk and the effects of climate change for its lifetime by setting appropriate floor levels, providing safe pedestrian and vehicle access and where appropriate provide a flood evacuation management plan, exceedance route plan and a SuDS maintenance plan.

**14.17** Development can make improvements by reducing the length of culverted watercourses. This can have the added benefits of improving access to water features, improving local habitats and using water bodies as a catalyst to enhance the ecological value of an area. The Council recognises the value of open watercourses on or adjacent to development sites as part of wider green infrastructure which helps improve the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors through opportunities for active travel, informal recreation and visual amenity in and around the District's extensive Green Network.

### Policy SP.32 - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Effective on-site management of surface water can improve water quality, water conservation, the replenishment of ground water supplies and reduce instances of flooding. The Council therefore requires all development with surface water drainage impacts to ensure that flows and volumes of surface water runoff leaving a development site do not exceed Greenfield levels. For re-development (Brownfield) applications, substantial



betterment is expected where limiting to Greenfield levels is deemed not reasonably practicable. Any surface water drainage scheme will be expected to not adversely affect the receiving water bodies, both during construction and when operational.

The design and development of the site's surface water drainage scheme should include:

- i. Assessing the potential for management of surface water to be wholly or partially achieved via infiltration.
- ii. Providing Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water. The design and construction of the SuDS should be in line with the non-statutory technical standards for SuDS (Defra, 2015) and WFDC SuDS Design and Evaluation Guide (2017). The SuDS design should also make allowances for:
  - Climate change, in line with the latest Government's Climate Change Allowances guidance.
  - Future development in residential development ("urban creep"), dependent on the housing density, following the Local Authority SuDS Officer Organisation (LASOO) Practice Guidance for the non-statutory standards for SuDS or any replacement guidance.
  - Improvements to the Green Infrastructure and biodiversity of the area.

For all major applications the Council requires to see a detailed Drainage Strategy that demonstrates how the proposed drainage system meets the criteria set out above and how the proposed drainage system will be managed and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

## **Reasoned Justification**

**14.18** This policy should be read in conjunction with the Wyre Forest Water Cycle Study (2017, and 2018 update). All new development will require a suitably designed drainage system in order to mitigate the risk of surface water and overland flooding both on and off the site.

**14.19** The Water Cycle Study provides more detail on the implementation of greywater recycling, rainwater harvesting and SuDS. Developers should allow for sufficient land for SuDS to be designed in at the outset; lack of space is not considered appropriate justification for not accommodating SuDS. A range of SuDS methods are available, although some will be more suited to some sites than others. SuDS selection should be specific to a site and should not be limited to one technique per site. Consideration should be given to source control within the surface water drainage proposals, which can be achieved through a range of techniques.

**14.20** There will be a clear presumption in favour of at surface level, multi-functional and biodiversity-led SuDS and sites should be assessed on their merits to determine which SuDS techniques are the most suitable particularly where contaminated land may be an issue. It is considered that all development sites are able to incorporate some form of SuDS; the scale of these techniques should be proportionate to the scale of development proposed. All surface water run-off should be properly treated (see 14.13).



**14.21** New development must not create adverse pressures on the water environment that could compromise the District's ability to meet the Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives. Development is required to conserve and where feasible enhance watercourses and riverside habitats, through management and mitigation measures for the improvement and/or enhancement of water quality and habitat of any aquatic environment in or adjoining the development site. It is also important for applicants to bear in mind the importance of the River Basin Management Plan and the Worcestershire Surface Water Management Plan when putting together proposals.

**14.22** Like all drainage systems, SuDS components should be inspected and maintained. This ensures efficient operation and prevents failure. The design process should consider the maintenance of the components and a SuDS management plan for the maintenance of SuDS should be prepared. SuDS components that are on or near the surface can often be managed using landscape maintenance techniques. For below-ground SuDS such as permeable paving and modular geocellular storage the manufacturer's maintenance advice should be followed.

**14.23** Developments should make allowance for future development for example the hard surfacing of previously green areas such as gardens, in the design and capacity of drainage systems. Local evidence shows that change occurs over time as residents extend their properties through property extensions, tarmac front gardens for extra parking spaces, use hard surfacing to reduce maintenance in gardens as well as businesses seeking to provide more parking for employees.

**Policy SP.33 - Pollution and Land Instability**

1. Development proposals must be designed in order to avoid any significant adverse impacts from pollution, including cumulative ones, on any of the following:
  - Human health and wellbeing.
  - Biodiversity.
  - The water environment.
  - The effective operation of neighbouring land uses.
  - An existing or proposed Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) <sup>(19)</sup>
2. Development proposals will not be permitted where the land is contaminated <sup>(20)</sup> and not capable of appropriate remediation without compromising development viability or the delivery of sustainable development. For sites where land contamination is suspected, an adequate site investigation survey will need to be prepared (by a competent person) to demonstrate that land contamination issues have been fully addressed or can be addressed through the development.
3. C. Development proposals will not be permitted in locations where there are risks from land instability. Development proposals within areas known or suspected to be at risk of slope instability or poor ground conditions will need to demonstrate the following:
  - a. Its structural integrity will not be compromised by slope instability;
  - b. The development does not exacerbate any instability on the site or elsewhere;
  - c. The development can tolerate ground conditions by special design; and
  - d. There is long term stability of any structures built on filled or mined land.

For sites suspected of land instability, an adequate site investigation survey will need to be prepared (by a competent person) to demonstrate that land instability issues have been fully addressed.

**Reasoned Justification**

**15.1** The NPPF<sup>(21)</sup> clearly sets out, in broad terms, that pollution and land instability are material planning considerations.

**15.2** Pollution can and does have detrimental impacts on the environment and human health. In the absence of a robust local plan policy, both the quality of life of local residents and the ecology of the area would be compromised.

19 The countywide Worcestershire Air Quality Action Plan (September 2013) includes maps of the AQMA in the plan area and is available at <http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/media/486190/Final-AQAP-Whole-Doc-v23b-adopted.pdf>

20 As defined under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

21 NPPF Paragraphs 183, 184, 185, 186

**15.3** Pollution can take many forms, e.g. chemical, dust, light, noise, fumes, smell, vibration, all of which can have detrimental impacts on the environment and the quality of life. These potential adverse effects must be carefully considered in the assessment of any planning application and can be the basis for the refusal of a planning application if not adequately addressed. Developers are encouraged to have pre-application discussions with the Council to be advised on the specific requirements.

**15.4** Assessments should:

- Identify the sensitive receptor(s) which may be affected by the proposed development, including residents, businesses, land users and sensitive environmental assets;
- Consider the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or approved development;
- Demonstrate the measures which would be implemented to ensure adverse impacts would be avoided at source or, where this is not possible, outline the proposed management and mitigation measures to reduce effects to an acceptable level; and identify the significance of any residual effects.

**15.5** Developers are expected to proactively monitor impacts and emissions to enable issues to be addressed swiftly. Close liaison with communities can support this approach, enabling feedback and dialogue on the need for and effectiveness of any mitigation measures.

**15.6** The Wyre Forest District overlies a principal aquifer of regional strategic importance in terms of water supply and there are a number of Source Protection Zones (SPZs) to protect public water resources. For proposed developments that will have an impact on or are affected by groundwater, the Environment Agency's Groundwater protection position statements should be considered to help provide appropriate control measures, especially in areas designated as Source Protection Zone 1 (SPZ1).

**15.7** The term 'poor ground conditions' referred to in Policy SP.33 may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Poorly consolidated made ground and fill material;
- Soft, weak and wet natural soils;
- Areas of shallow mine-workings and mineshafts; or
- Colliery spoil mounds.

## Minerals

**15.8** At present, minerals policy and proposals for the County of Worcestershire are set out in the policies of the Minerals Local Plan (1997) that were "saved" by the Secretary of State in September 2007. These "saved" minerals policies will be replaced by the revised Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan upon its adoption (currently anticipated in spring 2021) which will form part of the overall Development Plan for Wyre Forest District.

**15.9** Most of the north-west of Worcestershire consists of Old Red Sandstone. Carboniferous strata occur in the western parts of Wyre Forest Area where they form a western continuation of the South Staffordshire Coalfield. These strata contain layers of sandstone and shales, ironstone and coal deposits. The NPPF states that permission should not be given for the

extraction of coal unless the proposal is environmentally acceptable or can be made so by planning conditions or obligations or it provides national, local or community benefits that clearly outweigh the likely impacts. Any planning application for coal extraction would be determined by Worcestershire County Council as the Mineral Planning Authority.

**15.10** The Permian and Triassic rocks of the following Upper Palaeozoic and Mesozoic eras are generally softer, comprising sandstones and marls and make up the greater part of central Worcestershire, including the eastern parts of Wyre Forest. Overlying the 'solid geology' are Quaternary deposits of 'drift' material. These include till / boulder clay deposited directly by glacial ice as fluvio-glacial deposits which can be found particularly along the valleys of the Rivers Severn and Stour.

### **Policy SP.34 - Minerals**

1. Developers will be encouraged to reuse and recycle construction waste on-site and use substitute or secondary and recycled minerals within development to reduce the use of primary materials.
2. Proposed development in Minerals Consultation Areas will be required <sup>(22)</sup> to assess the potential for the proposed development to sterilise locally or nationally important mineral resources, or impact on the operation of permitted mineral sites or supporting infrastructure. Planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development that would lead to the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources or unacceptable impacts on the operation of permitted mineral sites or supporting infrastructure within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) unless:
  - i. The applicant can demonstrate that the mineral concerned is no longer of any value or future potential value, or the supporting infrastructure is no longer necessary to facilitate minerals working; or
  - ii. The development is of a temporary nature and can be completed and the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed; or
  - iii. Where sterilisation of a locally or nationally important mineral resource could occur, opportunities for extraction of the resource will be optimised prior to any non minerals development commencing; or
  - iv. Where permitted mineral sites or supporting infrastructure could be compromised, sufficient mitigation measures will be put in place to ensure their continued operation.

### **Reasoned Justification**

**15.11** The NPPF indicates that local planning authorities should define Mineral Safeguarding Areas and Mineral Consultation Areas and should take account of the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials can make to the supply of materials.

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22 Excluding 'exempt development', as defined in the Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan.

**15.12** The broad extent of mineral resources that occur in Wyre Forest District is shown on the Worcestershire County Council Emerging Minerals Local Plan interactive map.<sup>(23)</sup>

**15.13** Development can "sterilise" mineral resources (make them inaccessible for potential extraction) or prejudice the operation of mineral sites and supporting infrastructure. This can be either directly, for example by building over land that contains minerals; or indirectly, for example through the introduction of sensitive land uses in close proximity to these resources or sites.

**15.14** Minerals Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) are areas designated by the Minerals Planning Authority that cover known deposits of minerals that are desired to be safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development. MCAs, based on MSAs, are where consultation is required with Worcestershire County Council as the Minerals Planning Authority on development proposals that have the potential to sterilise the minerals interests of the site.

**15.15** The boundaries of the existing MSAs are shown in the currently adopted Herefordshire and Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan<sup>(24)</sup> These boundaries may be changed during the preparation of the Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan.

**15.16** The Local Planning Authority will consult the County Council on any planning application received for non-minerals development which falls within the boundary of a MSA. Allocations where mineral resource safeguarding has been highlighted and those potentially affecting minerals infrastructure are listed in paragraph 15.31 onwards.

**15.17** Proposals which are in MCA should take a sequential approach to considering the following possible outcomes:

1. Extracting all of the resources within the proposed development site and in the area which would potentially be sterilised by the development, either in advance of development taking place or in phases alongside the development;
2. Where extracting all of the resource would prevent establishment of a suitable landform for subsequent development, consider whether a proportion of the resource could be extracted; or
3. As a last resort if neither (1) nor (2) is possible, consider whether any opportunities exist for "incidental recovery of the mineral resource."

**15.18** Permitted minerals sites and the supporting infrastructure of existing potential storage, handling and transport sites are important to delivering a steady and adequate supply of mineral resources in Worcestershire, and it is therefore important that they are not adversely impacted by insensitive or inappropriate development that would conflict with the use of sites identified for these purposes.

**15.19** Different types of development may or may not conflict with the use of the mineral site or supporting infrastructure. The potential for conflict is a function of both the sensitivity of the land use or receptors at the proposed development and the techniques or processes employed at the minerals or infrastructure site. Applicants will need to assess whether the normal operation

23 <http://gis.worcestershire.gov.uk/Website/MineralsLocalPlan/>

24 [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_strategy/1009/adopted\\_minerals\\_local\\_plan](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning_policy_and_strategy/1009/adopted_minerals_local_plan)

of the mineral site or supporting infrastructure could have adverse impacts on the proposed land use or any users of the proposed development. This should include consideration of issues such as (but not limited to) any noise, vibrations, dust, or fumes that may result from the normal operation of the site, and could lead to complaints which could jeopardise the continued operation of the mineral site or supporting infrastructure. Techniques such as considered design, site layout and landscaping or screening of the proposal may in some cases be adequate to mitigate any impacts.

**15.20** The identification of a MSA does not imply that permission for extraction will be given, only that the presence of minerals is a material consideration that must be addressed when considering future development.

### **Secondary and Recycled Aggregates**

**15.21** To sustain economic growth without increasing the use of land-won aggregates, it is vital that the contribution of secondary and recycled materials used in construction projects is increased. On site recycling and reuse of construction materials will therefore be encouraged, having regard to the environmental implications of any proposed operations and their overall acceptability. The use of substitute or secondary and recycled materials in development will also be encouraged.

### **Legacy of Minerals Extraction**

**15.22** Where development is proposed in areas with a known legacy of minerals extraction, the developer will be expected to assess the site for ground contamination, ground stability and mining hazards and submit appropriate mitigation reports in support of their planning application.

### **Waste**

**15.23** Planning applications relating to the use of land (and buildings) for the purposes of waste management will be determined by Worcestershire County Council. The Waste Core Strategy, adopted by the County Council in November 2012 and covering the period up to 2027, is complementary to the Wyre Forest Local Plan and forms part of the development plan.

#### **Policy SP.35 - Waste**

Proposals for new development should incorporate adequate facilities into the design to allow occupiers to separate and store waste for recycling and recovery unless existing provision is adequate. Such facilities should be well-designed.

### **Reasoned Justification**

**15.24** National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014) sets out national waste planning policies. It should be read in conjunction with the NPPF, the Waste Management Plan for England and National Policy Statements for Waste Water and Hazardous Waste, or any successor documents.



**15.25** To minimise waste and pollution and reduce the impact of waste on Climate Change, Wyre Forest District Council expects future developments to support the waste management hierarchy. The waste hierarchy gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. Where waste is generated, priority is to reuse, then recycle, then other forms of recovery such as energy recovery and last of all disposal (for example landfill).

**15.26** To ensure waste is dealt with at as high a level as possible on the waste hierarchy, and to protect amenities and prevent pollution, the waste implications of all new development must be considered.

**15.27** To safeguard existing or permitted waste management facilities Wyre Forest District Council will consult Worcestershire County Council on any planning applications within 250m of such a site, in accordance with the Waste Core Strategy. Maps showing existing waste management facilities with a 250m buffer are shown on the Worcestershire County Council's website. Allocations affecting these facilities are listed in paragraph 16.30 onwards.

**15.28** The Waste Core Strategy requires that on-site facilities for separating or storing waste should be adequate to meet the needs of occupiers of any proposed new development. Such facilities should be well designed so that they do not act as an eyesore.

**15.29** On smaller sites, provision might include collection points for segregated waste. On larger sites, particularly where significant areas of new housing or employment land are proposed, waste storage facilities will almost always be needed and provision might also include on-site treatment facilities such as community composting, anaerobic digestion forming part of a district heating system or, in the case of industrial operations, the management of specific wastes produced on site.

**15.30** Specifications for the minimum standards for the type and scale of facilities and vehicular manoeuvrability needed for new residential, commercial and mixed-use developments will be informed by the ADEPT report 'Making Space for Waste' (June 2010)<sup>(25)</sup> All applications will be assessed against this guidance.

### **Implications for Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy and Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan**

**15.31** A number of the site allocations have repercussions for existing waste management facilities, mineral infrastructure or mineral resources.

**15.32** Policy WCS 16: New Development proposed on or near to existing waste management facilities, requires a developer to demonstrate that as the 'agent of change' (NPPF paragraph 187) the proposed development will not prevent, hinder or unreasonably restrict the operation of an existing waste management site within 250m and will include any necessary mitigation to ensure that the operation of the existing business will not have an adverse effect on the new development. (Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy 2012-27)

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25 [http://www.lgcplus.com/Journals/3/Files/2010/7/14/ADEPTMakingspaceforwaste\\_000.pdf](http://www.lgcplus.com/Journals/3/Files/2010/7/14/ADEPTMakingspaceforwaste_000.pdf).



**15.33** Sites potentially affecting existing waste management facilities:

- Timber Yard Park Lane (Policy SA.K5)
- Kidderminster Fire Station (Policy SA.K7)
- Rock Works Park Lane (Policy SA.K6)
- SDF site Stourport Road (Policy SA.K19)
- Firs View Yard Wilden Lane (Policy SA.S14)

**15.34** NPPF paragraph 210e requires infrastructure which supports mineral development to be safeguarded. Developers of the following sites will need to address the mineral sites and infrastructure safeguarding policy requirements of the Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan to demonstrate that as the 'agent of change' (NPPF paragraph 187) the proposed development will include any necessary mitigation to ensure that the operation of the existing business will not have an adverse effect on the new development.

**15.35** Site potentially affecting existing minerals infrastructure (concrete batching plant):

- Kidderminster Ambulance Station Stourport Road (Policy SA.K12)
- SDF site Stourport Road (Policy SA.K19)

**15.36** NPPF paragraph 210 (c & d) requires locally and nationally important mineral resources to be safeguarded from sterilisation by non-mineral development where this should be avoided. Developers of the following sites will need to address the mineral resource safeguarding policy requirements of the Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan, undertaking a minerals resource assessment to inform design and to optimise opportunities for the partial extraction or incidental recovery of the underlying mineral resource either in advance of development taking place or in phases alongside it.

**15.37** Sites where mineral resource safeguarding has been highlighted through the Duty to Cooperate:

- Land at Low Habberley (Policy SA.K16)
- Adj. Easter Park, Worcester Road (Policy SA.K20)
- Land off Zortech Avenue (Policy SA.K23)
- Lea Castle (Policy SP.LCV1)
- Land at Husum Way (SP.KEE1)
- Land at Comberton Road (SP.KEE3)
- Pearl Lane (Policy SA.S4)
- Land North of Wilden Industrial Estate (Policy SA.S15)
- Stourport Road Triangle (Policy SA.B2)
- Catchem's End (Policy SA.B3)
- Land south of Habberley Road (Policy SA.B4)
- Land at Caunsall Road (Policy SA.R8)

**15.38** The need for safeguarding of minerals resources at the following sites has been ruled out through the Duty to Cooperate process and exemptions will be applied.

- Land at Stourbridge Road (Policy SA.K11)

- Four Acres Caravan Park (Policy SA.S11)
- School site Coniston Crescent (Policy SA.S13)
- Firs View Yard, Wilden Lane (Policy SA.S14)
- Rock Tavern car park, Caunsall (Policy SA.R7)
- Land r/o Zortech Avenue (Policy SA.K17)
- Land west of former school site Coniston Crescent (Policy SA.S6)
- Former Burlish Golf Course Clubhouse (Policy SA.K22)

**16.1** For the Plan to facilitate the viability and success of the Wyre Forest economy it must be sensitive to the opportunities posed by new technology whilst at the same time offering some protection from unnecessary intrusion. Two forms of new technology of particular relevance and importance to the planning system due to their infrastructure implications are Telecommunications/Broadband and Renewable Energy. The interpretation of these policies and any future review will need to acknowledge the fast-moving nature of these technologies.

**16.2** Broadband development across the whole of Worcestershire is driven by the Worcestershire Local Broadband Plan (WLBP), as agreed in May 2012. The Plan aims to drive economic growth across the County improving speeds for all residents and local businesses. This will maximise opportunities for private sector investment, thus reducing the need for public sector funding. These priorities are echoed in the County Council's Corporate Plan for which "Open for Business" is a priority and broadband is a key enabler. This is fully supported by the business community and the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

### **Policy SP.36 - Telecommunications and Broadband**

#### **Broadband and Mobile Infrastructure**

1. All new development of 20 dwellings or more will be expected to include the provision of full fibre gigabit capable network infrastructure Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) to enable broadband services for all occupiers. On sites below 20 dwellings FTTP should still be installed where the costs are no more than copper line broadband infrastructure.
2. For all new development the applicant will be expected to consult with telecommunication providers to explore the need for other telecommunications technology incorporating mobile (including 5G), fixed wireless<sup>(26)</sup> and Wi-Fi. If additional technology is required space should be made available for the required infrastructure within the development; When considering the development of telecommunications technology the following factors should be taken into consideration:
  - a. Operational requirements of the telecommunication networks and the limitations of the technology, including technical constraints on the location of telecommunications apparatus.
  - b. The need for International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Guidelines (and/or any other relevant guidance in place at the time of the application) for safe emissions to be met.
  - c. The need to avoid interference with existing electrical equipment and air traffic services.
  - d. Development should also consider the provision of in-building solutions for broadband and telecommunications technology.
  - e. The impact of the development on its surroundings.

26 Fixed wireless is the operation of wireless communication devices or systems used to connect two fixed locations (e.g., building to building or tower to building) with a radio or other wireless link, such as laser bridge. Usually, fixed wireless is part of a wireless LAN infrastructure. The purpose of a fixed wireless link is to enable data communications between the two sites or buildings. Fixed wireless data (FWD) links are often a cost-effective alternative to leasing fibre or installing cables between the buildings.

Reference should also be made to government guidelines on the rollout of fixed and mobile networks at the local level. <sup>(27)</sup>

3. Within all new developments both residential and commercial, ducting infrastructure should be provided to 120% of the capacity requirements of the proposed development to provide for future growth.

Reference should also be made to government guidelines on the rollout of fixed and mobile networks at the local level <sup>(28)</sup>

The siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures should seek to minimise the impact on the visual amenity, character, landscape and appearance of the surrounding area, particularly if it affects the setting of Heritage Assets. All geospatial considerations can be considered through Government guidance <sup>(29)</sup>

If on a building, apparatus and associated structures should be sited and designed in order to seek to minimise the impact to the external appearance. When choosing a suitable location for the apparatus ongoing access at appropriate and suitable times should be considered.

## Reasoned Justification

**16.3** The NPPF recognises the role of advanced, high quality communications infrastructure in creating sustainable economic growth as part of strategic policies. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks will also play a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services. The Government's target is that at least 85% of UK premises will have access to gigabit-capable broadband by 2025. The Government states it will "seek to accelerate roll-out further to get as close to 100% as possible" <sup>(30)</sup>

**16.4** Plans exist to eventually retire the copper network, <sup>(31)</sup> with dates suggested as early as 2030 for this. The migration away from analogue services over the copper network is already underway. In 2015 BT announced that they will be switching off the Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN) and Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) by 2025. <sup>(32)</sup>

**16.5** Some infrastructure providers have agreed to provide FTTP infrastructure to new developments of 20 dwellings or more at no cost to the developer; whilst others will provide and deliver materials at zero cost to the developer e.g. Virgin Media.

27 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8392>

28 [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0022/204853/consultation-copper-regulation-withdrawal-conditions.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/204853/consultation-copper-regulation-withdrawal-conditions.pdf)

29 <https://digitalwholesalesolutions.com/2019/10/the-bt-openreach-pstn-and-isdn-2025-switch-off/>

30 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8392>

31 An Openreach guide for developers is available here, including rate cards for residential and urban developments under 20 premises, rebates for self-install and other Frequently Asked Questions Fibre for developers (openreach.com)

32 <https://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPmfgdl.pdf>

**16.6** Openreach <sup>(33)</sup> will install FTTP to all developments of fewer than 20 dwellings where the cost is equal or lower than the installation of copper.

**16.7** In some exceptional locations outside urban areas, an equivalent alternative solution may be acceptable if developers are unable to facilitate an FTTP solution, although FTTP is the preferred option and the burden of proof lies with the developer as to why an alternative solution is required. In any case developers must, as a minimum, make sure that broadband services reach ultrafast speeds (80mbps +) and are made available to all premises, at market prices and with a choice of UK service providers.

**16.8** Communication infrastructure includes telephone systems (both wired and mobile) and broadband. The benefits of having a modern and accessible system of telecommunications, wireless and electronic methods of communication to Wyre Forest District will be significant. Increasingly the demand is for FTTP broadband using fibre optic technology as defined within the NPPF.

**16.9** Further detail on the provision of high quality telecommunications and broadband is also found in the Wyre Forest Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

**16.10** Broadband development across the whole of Worcestershire is guided by the Worcestershire Local Broadband Plan (WLBP), as agreed in May 2012 and updated in 2016. The WLBP aims to drive economic growth across the County improving broadband speeds for all residents and local businesses. This will maximise opportunities for private sector investment, thus reducing the need for public sector funding. These priorities are echoed in the County Council's Corporate Plan for which "Open for Business" is a priority and broadband is a key enabler. This is fully supported by the business community and the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

**16.11** The additional capacity required in part C of the policy will allow for future proofing e.g. additional new builds /redevelopment and to support digital connectivity for other solutions. These might include fibre connectivity to mobile or smart community applications which for example could provide energy efficient lighting or traffic management solutions for the development.

**16.12** A digitally accessible Wyre Forest District will allow people an enhanced freedom of choice about where and how they work, how they interact with services and facilities and how they promote and operate their businesses. A connected community is a more sustainable one, as it represents the opportunity for a reduction in car-based commuting and a commensurate reduction in carbon outputs and traffic congestion. It also promotes the idea of Wyre Forest as a suitable place for high technology activities and employment to take place.

33 An Openreach guide for developers is available here, including rate cards for residential and urban developments under 20 premises, rebates for self-install and other Frequently Asked Questions Fibre for developers ([openreach.com](https://openreach.com))

**16.13** Wyre Forest District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. A climate emergency requires prompt action. Climate change is caused by the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and has been a consistent trend since the Industrial Revolution. However, it has been realised that this is likely to cause catastrophic and probably irreversible climate change.

**16.14** The types and amounts of fuel we use to generate energy determine the amount of carbon emissions released into the atmosphere, which in turn impacts on climate change. Heat and power provision from fossil fuels such as coal and gas contribute significantly to our overall carbon emissions. This can be reduced by generating energy from renewable sources through use of systems such as solar panels and air and ground source heating. Whilst clean energy technology and markets continue to develop, new development in the near term will still rely upon fossil fuel generated heat and power to some extent. Whatever source of fuel is used, it is important economically, as well as environmentally, to use energy generated as efficiently as possible.

**16.15** Our climate is changing and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future due to carbon emissions already emitted and locked into our climate systems. However, the more that is done to reduce carbon emissions, the less extreme the impacts are likely to be. Worcestershire's climate has changed over the last century, with changes including an increase in average annual temperature and with winters becoming wetter relative to summers. Predictions for our future climate include increasing temperatures and changes to precipitation patterns and also an increase in extreme weather events such as heatwaves and flooding. The potential impacts of climate change are far reaching, and it is vital that new development considers the impacts and includes measures to adapt accordingly. Climate impacts must be considered in development of the built environment, including buildings, roads, drains and utilities, which are designed for the long-term of 50 to 60 years or even longer. Structures designed now will need to cope with the climate of the 2070s at least and development built to withstand the likely impacts of climate change. Due to the amount of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>) in the atmosphere there will be some degree of climate change, however the more that we can do to reduce emissions the less severe the impact.

**16.16** Wyre Forest District Council's Corporate Plan's (2019-2023) includes a 'Safe, Green and Clean Living Environment' as one of its three priorities. It includes a strategic action to work with partners to protect our environment, to address air quality issues and to help tackle climate change.

**16.17** The NPPF states that "The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate .... and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure".

**16.18** Wyre Forest District Council recognises that the climate change emergency requires councils to take positive action. For example, the District currently has a very low level of provision of charging points for electric vehicles. The Council has resolved to ensure that adequate electric vehicle charging points are provided in Council-owned public car parks. Privately owned car parks are encouraged to do likewise and electric vehicle charging points



should be provided on all future residential, employment and commercial developments where vehicle access is provided. The Wyre Forest Climate Change Action Plan sets out actions on energy efficiency and renewable energy, reducing single use plastics and tree planting.

### **Policy SP.37 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy<sup>(34)</sup>**

#### **General**

1. All new developments, and where possible redevelopment of existing buildings, should consider location, design, siting and orientation to maximise the use of natural heat and light and the potential for renewable energy micro-generation. Where possible, in appropriate locations, solar panels should be fitted. All new residential, employment or commercial developments should include electric vehicle charging points.

#### **Incorporating Renewable and Low Carbon Energy into New Development**

2. To reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable energy solutions, all new developments over 100 square metres gross, or one or more dwellings, should incorporate the energy from renewable or low carbon sources equivalent to at least 10% of predicted energy requirements, unless it has been demonstrated that this would make development unviable. Applications will be required to include an Energy Assessment demonstrating how these requirements will be met. New developments should be built to the highest standards of energy efficiency, subject to the Government's policy for national technical standards and the viability of the development.
3. New large scale<sup>(35)</sup> development should install a decentralised energy and heating network if it is feasible and viable to do so as part of the development. If a district heat network already exists new development should connect to this network unless satisfactory evidence is provided to demonstrate that this is not viable or feasible.
4. Renewable energy installations that would harm the significance of heritage assets or have a detrimental impact on the landscape or historic environment, conflicting with any other policies contained in this Plan will not be supported unless the requirements of the NPPF are satisfied.

#### **Stand Alone Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes**

5. With the exception of wind turbines (see below), proposals for stand-alone renewable and other low carbon energy schemes are welcomed and will be considered favourably having regard to the provisions of other relevant policies in the Plan, providing that appropriate consultation has taken place with the local community and the appropriate Town or Parish Council. Where possible, community shares in renewable energy schemes which offer members of the community investment into local energy schemes

34 This policy should be considered within the context of an "energy hierarchy", whereby energy demand is reduced through energy efficiency and low energy design before meeting residual energy demand, first from renewable or low carbon sources and then from fossil fuels.

35 For the purposes of this policy only, the definition of large scale development is residential developments of 100 or more dwellings or non-residential developments of more than 10,000 square metres.



should be considered. No areas within Wyre Forest District have been identified as suitable for wind turbines. This is due to constraints such as wind speeds, access, topography and land classification.

### Reasoned Justification

**16.19** The Council supports the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. It supports ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, re-use of existing resources, low carbon energy and associated infrastructure in conformity with the NPPF.

**16.20** Energy infrastructure is also referred to in the Wyre Forest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

**16.21** The EU's Renewable Energy Directive sets an overall target for 20% of the energy consumed in the European Union to come from renewable sources by 2020, with a UK target of 15% by 2020.

**16.22** In December 2018 the directive <sup>(36)</sup> was revised in which it established a new binding renewable energy target for the EU for 2030 of at least 32%. This figure may be revised upwards by 2023.

**16.23** National government policy is to end the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030. This Local Plan runs to 2036, therefore the Council needs to ensure that residents, workers and visitors to the District have access to vehicle charging points as they move to alternative fuelled vehicles such as hybrid, plug in electric or other fuels such as hydrogen. Year on year the number of electric vehicle registrations are increasing. Between July 2017 and July 2018 there was an increase in plug in electric cars of 35%. In November 2019 more than 1 in 10 new vehicles on the road were alternatively fuelled vehicles either hybrid, plug in hybrid (PHEV) or pure electric or mild hybrid electric. At the end of September 2020 pure electric vehicles accounted for 6.7% of new car registrations, however, when PHEV's are added the figure rises to 10.5% (Data from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT)).

**16.24** The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 sets out how the UK will tackle and respond to climate change. The Act sets a legal requirement for the UK to be zero carbon by 2050, with a series of five year carbon budgets, including a 37% cut by 2020 and 51% by 2025. In 2018 the UK was 44% below 1990 levels; this means that both the first and second carbon budgets were met. At the present time the third budget is likely to be met but the UK is not on track to meet the fourth budget (2023 to 2027). The UK government also ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in November 2016. The Paris Agreement provides a framework for governments as well as business and investors to keep global warming well below 2°C, pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. In October 2018 a report by the Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which is the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change. The report highlighted the differing impacts

36 European Commission renewable energy directive (2009/28/EC) and directive 2018/2001/EU

between limiting global warming to 1.5% compared with 2%. If limited to 1.5% the likelihood of an Arctic Ocean free of sea ice in summer would be once per century and coral reefs would decline by 70 to 90 percent. If the rise was by 2% the likelihood of an Arctic Ocean free of sea ice in summer would be at least once per decade and coral reefs would virtually all be lost. The Government's Clean Growth Strategy sets out a comprehensive set of policies and proposals that aim to accelerate the pace of "clean growth", i.e. deliver increased economic growth and decreased emissions. Clean growth means growing our national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Since 1990, UK emissions have fallen whilst the economy has grown. In order to meet future carbon budgets, government recognises the need to drive a significant acceleration in the pace of decarbonisation.

**16.25** The Government has pledged to introduce a Future Homes Standard which will require new build homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency; it will be introduced by 2025. The Building Regulations are to be updated in order to implement this, along with interim increases in energy efficiency requirements. New requirements for the inclusion of electric charging points in new residential and commercial developments are also due to be introduced through the Building Regulations.

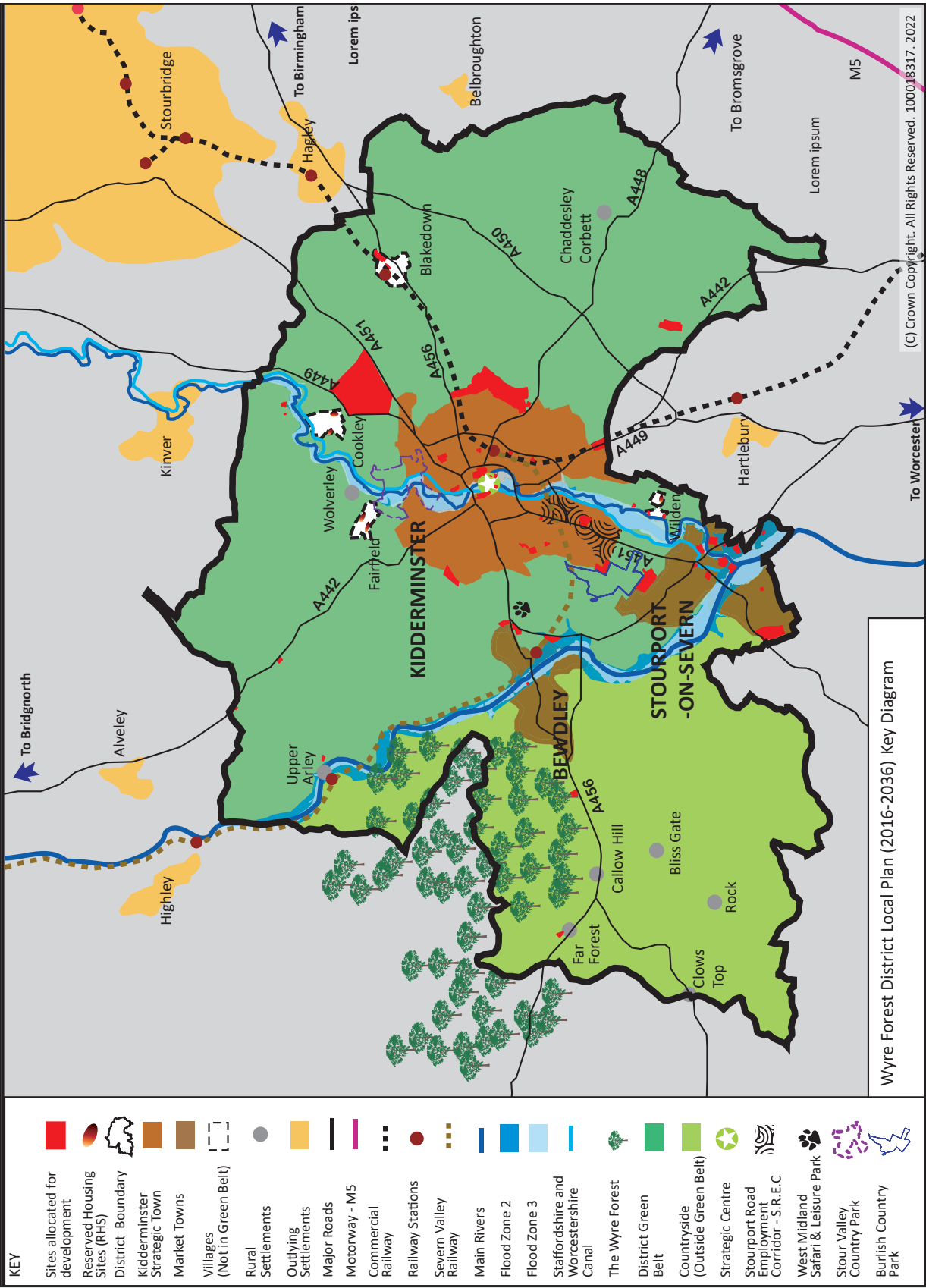
**16.26** The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan recognises 'agri-tech' (including green energy) as one of the county's three growth sectors. Among Worcestershire's key infrastructure issues that need to be addressed, it identifies an over-reliance on energy supplies from outside the county and an over-reliance on energy from non-sustainable sources. The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's Energy Strategy 2019-2030 aims to reduce carbon emissions by 50% from 2005 levels by 2030, to double the size of the low carbon sector by 2030 and triple energy production from renewable generation by 2030. The strategy has been produced to help identify the opportunities and challenges that Worcestershire faces in its movement towards a low-carbon, low emission economy and sets out an overarching energy vision for Worcestershire.

**16.27** Worcestershire County Council's 'Assessment of the capacity for large-scale renewable energy in Worcestershire' was commissioned in 2008 to determine the potential capacity for larger-scale renewable energy generation in Worcestershire. It was concluded that a suggested realistic target of 3.5% of energy consumption from renewables could be achieved by 2026 across Worcestershire. This relates only to large scale biomass, wind and hydro power schemes and excludes micro generation schemes, such as solar.

**16.28** Heat networks (district heating schemes) supply heat from a central source directly to homes and businesses through a network of pipes, so that individual homes and business do not need to generate their own heat on site, helping to reduce carbon emissions through energy efficiency. The UK government has ambitious plans for heat networks in the UK. Initial results from modelling by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy indicated that up to 20% of UK domestic heat demand might be served by heat networks by 2030. Government set up a Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU) to assist local authorities address capacity and capability challenges identified as barriers to heat network deployment in the UK. The Worcestershire LEP obtained HNDU funding and commissioned a heat demand mapping and energy master-planning study. Two potential district heat networks were identified in the Kidderminster area; the viability of these could be significantly improved by the inclusion of future and planned developments.

**16.29** To be considered acceptable it is necessary for proposals for stand-alone wind turbines to demonstrate local support either through a Neighbourhood Plan or through other methods to secure local backing.

Key Diagram



**17.1** This section sets out the Council's planning policies for managing development and growth in the District from 2016 until 2036. It will be used to guide, assess and determine planning applications. The Council's aim is to produce a comprehensive planning framework to ensure that the District's housing, employment, infrastructure and other needs are met over the Plan Period in a way that contributes to achieving sustainable development. Following on from the strategic framework, it will set out the development allocations and detailed policies for managing new development.

**17.2** The plan and policies in this section should be read alongside the strategic policies set out in Part A of this Local Plan and any Wyre Forest District Council Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The Council will produce SPDs where it considers them necessary to provide more details on the policies set out within other parts of the Local Plan. SPDs are not part of the statutory development plan and do not have the same weight; however, they will be significant considerations in determining planning applications.

**17.3** The primary objective of development management is to enable the delivery of sustainable development. Development management is not intended to hinder or prevent sustainable development. The Council sees development management as a positive and proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining and delivering development proposals.

**17.4** In combination with each other, the development management and site allocations policies set out the specific development intentions of Wyre Forest District Council for the Plan Period 2016-2036 as follows:

- **Development Management Policies:** Detailed planning policies which will be used by the council when assessing planning applications.
- **Site Allocations:** Sites allocated for development for particular land uses, for example housing, employment and mixed uses. This is to provide clarity to the community and developers regarding land uses that, in principle, are acceptable to the council on specific sites.

**17.5** These sections of the Local Plan include additional policies where it is considered that further detail is required to aid the interpretation of the strategic policies and to provide a proper basis for local development management.

**17.6** Government guidance makes it clear that a Local Plan should not repeat policies that are in either National Policy or other 'development plan' documents. The absence of a policy for a particular topic in the Local Plan therefore does not necessarily mean that the topic is unimportant; it may be that there is already a relevant adopted policy and must therefore be read in conjunction with the other relevant plans and guidance.

**18.1** The following chapter includes the Development Management Policies that will be used to determine residential planning applications. These provide more detailed criteria for decision makers and should be considered within the overall strategic context of chapter 7 – A Desirable Place to Live.

### **Viability of Affordable Housing Requirements**

**18.2** This policy provides the framework against which negotiation over the proportion and type of affordable housing on individual sites will be considered to take account of specific viability issues.

#### **Policy DM.1 - Financial Viability**

All the allocated sites within the Local Plan have been assessed using the typology methodology set out in Paragraph 004 of the Planning Practice Guidance. Where applications depart from the assumptions made in the Local Plan Viability Assessment, May 2017 (IFT07), the Local Plan Viability Assessment Update, October 2018 (IFT06) and the Pre-Submissions Viability Note (IFT05), the applicant will be expected to justify the need for a viability assessment.

- a. If it is agreed that a viability assessment is required then it is for the applicant to demonstrate how the assumptions made in the Plan assessments have changed. Any evidence to substantiate any claims should also be provided. Details of acceptable evidence can be found in the Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations.
- b. Where the District Council considers it necessary to obtain independent advice to validate a viability assessment which has been submitted, the applicant will be required to meet all reasonable costs of doing so.
- c. For transparency, in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance, any viability assessment should be prepared on the basis that it will be made publicly available other than in exceptional circumstances. In addition, an executive summary should be prepared in accordance with the government's data format.

### **Reasoned Justification**

**18.3** Where an applicant considers that there are significant cost constraints affecting a development site and that these are sufficient to impede the developer meeting the Council's affordable housing policy expectations of 25% on residential or other planning obligations and requirements on development sites, they will be expected to demonstrate that the viability of the proposals would be jeopardised by this level of provision.

**18.4** The applicant will be required to provide financial information in the form of a full viability assessment carried out by a suitably qualified person to enable the Council to assess the nature, extent and impact of the constraints and the level of affordable housing that could be provided.



**18.5** It is recommended that the methodology, underlying assumptions and any software used to undertake the appraisal should be agreed with the Council during pre-application discussions. This will ensure that the viability assessment includes the level of detail required by the Council.

**18.6** Where the Council needs to seek independent advice to validate a viability assessment submitted by an applicant, then it will require all reasonable costs of the independent advice to be met by the developer.

**18.7** The viability assessment should be presented on a residual land value or profit basis, which takes into account various inputs, including projected sales revenues and values (including affordable housing revenue) to establish a Gross Development Value (GDV) from which Gross Development Costs (GDC) are deducted. GDC either includes i) a site value as a fixed input cost resulting in a developer's return or profit becoming the residual figure which is then compared to a benchmark profit level to assess viability, or ii) a developer's return is adopted as an input cost giving a residual site value which reflects the land value that a developer would pay for the site. The residual land value should then be compared to the benchmark market value of the site.

### **Policy DM.2- Residential Infill Development**

Infill development is defined as residential development of up to 6 dwellings in an otherwise built up frontage.

Residential developments on infill plots within the settlement boundaries of the three main towns and the villages and other rural settlements will be encouraged provided that they contribute to the existing character of the area in terms of design, density and layout.

- a. Proposals for infill development within villages and other rural settlements should be to meet local needs only as determined by parish needs surveys and/or the housing register as set out under Policy SP.2.
- b. Proposals should not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- c. Proposals that would lead to the over development of a site will be resisted.
- d. The design, scale and layout of the proposed development should take account of existing dwellings to ensure that there are no adverse impacts associated with overlooking and disturbance to neighbouring properties.
- e. All new proposals for infill development should take account of the design principles as set out in the District Council's adopted Design Supplementary Planning Document and the Government's Nationally Described Space Standards.
- f. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that proposals include adequate car parking space unless the character and local distinctiveness of the area dictates otherwise. Proposals should not have an adverse impact on existing road safety or cause amenity and parking issues for existing residents.
- g. Infill development proposals located within a Conservation Area or adjacent to heritage assets will need to be in keeping and not harm the form, character and setting of the Conservation Area or heritage assets. They also must demonstrate accordance with



Historic Environment Policies SP.21 and DM.23 and Policy DM.24 Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness.

### **Reasoned Justification**

**18.8** Residential developments (up to 6 dwellings) on infill plots within the settlement boundaries of the three main towns and the villages are likely to contribute towards new housing provision in the District. Whilst such developments are generally to be encouraged, it is important that they are well designed to protect and enhance the existing character and amenity of the residential areas. It is important that such plots that become available in the rural areas are developed to meet local housing need as demonstrated through a Parish Housing Needs Survey and/or the Housing Register. This will ensure the long-term viability and vitality of these settlements.

**18.9** The Council will assess the effect that proposed residential infill developments will have on the amount of daylight and overshadowing neighbouring properties receive. Proposals that are likely to have an adverse impact and do not take account of design guidance will not be permitted.

### **Policy DM.3 - Flat Conversions**

Proposals for the conversion or sub-division of existing buildings into flats will be considered having regard to the intensity of the proposed use and the accessibility of the location to shops and other services.

Proposals will be supported provided that:

- a. Conversion is not detrimental to the appearance of the building and the building and plots are of a suitable and adequate size for conversion.
- b. Appropriate provision is made for car and cycle parking, private amenity space and refuse storage.
- c. The proposal will not be detrimental to the character of the area.
- d. The internal layout minimises noise disturbance and overlooking to neighbours.
- e. It can be demonstrated that development and the site location provides appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes.

### **Reasoned Justification**

**18.10** The District has a number of larger properties for which the original use may no longer be viable. Sub-dividing such buildings into smaller residential units can secure the future of such buildings; however it needs careful consideration to ensure that proposals safeguard the character of the area. This policy serves to ensure that any such development does not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area and the quality of life of existing residents.

**18.11** The sub-division of existing dwellings can be a suitable means of providing smaller accommodation. Where the existing dwelling is important to the character of the area, conversion into flats can secure the future of the building.

**18.12** The intensification of the use of the building can lead to detrimental impacts for neighbouring properties including increased levels of noise and issues associated with an increased number of vehicles at the property. Adequate parking provision should generally be made within the curtilage of the dwelling. However, in town centres, parking requirements may be relaxed where this is not possible or desirable.

#### **Policy DM.4 - Residential Caravans, Mobile Homes and Houseboat Moorings**

The use of caravans and mobile homes for residential purposes will only be permitted for temporary periods to meet specific short term needs as follows:

- a. To temporarily re-house households during redevelopment or major refurbishment to existing housing schemes.
- b. To provide temporary accommodation for workers, but not their families, during the construction, major alteration or repair of a dwelling, provided that the mobile home can be satisfactorily sited within the curtilage of the dwelling.
- c. To meet a temporary or seasonal agricultural or forestry need.
- d. To provide temporary accommodation for a carer, where it is fully justified and supported by an appropriate medical practitioner, provided that the mobile home can be satisfactorily sited within the curtilage of the dwelling. The time period for any temporary permission will need to be included as part of the justification with a maximum period of two years being considered suitable at any one time.

The exception to this is if a Gypsy or Traveller household can demonstrate a cultural need for the siting of a residential caravan or mobile home on an existing caravan/mobile home site.

#### **Reasoned Justification**

**18.13** Caravans and mobile homes are not considered to be appropriate to meet long term permanent housing needs due to their limited size and design. The use of residential mobile homes will therefore be restricted to occasions when they may be required to meet a temporary need, for example, during construction or major alterations/repairs to a dwelling or group of properties, in instances relating to the needs of agriculture and forestry, or in the case of a carer, which will be temporary either due to the nature of the disability or illness of the cared-for person, or because the carer is currently looking for more permanent accommodation.

**18.14** The Wyre Forest District Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2020) established a need for 35 pitches to be provided in the period 2020-2036. In order to meet this requirement, flexibility has been built into the policy to allow permanent residence of caravans and mobile homes on existing parks.

**18.15** The Wyre Forest District Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2020) also identified that there may be a need for residential boat moorings in the district. However, there is currently insufficient evidence on this matter. If further evidence shows that there is a need for any type of new moorings, the Council will work with the Canal and River Trust to bring forward a suitable moorings policy in the review of the Plan. This will establish whether any allocation for moorings may need to be made in the review of the Local Plan.

## Site Standards for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

**19.1** This policy sets out specific requirements in relation to the design of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople which are consistent with Policies SP.14 (Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision) and SP.15 (Site Provision for Travelling Showpeople).

### Policy DM.5 - Site Standards for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Proposals for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites will only be granted planning permission where:

- a. Pitch boundaries are clearly demarcated using an appropriate boundary treatment and landscaping which is sensitive to the local context. There should be a clear delineation between public and private areas and between residential and non-residential areas.
- b. The site layout gives adequate consideration to pedestrian safety, cycle movements and vehicle movements and provides adequate space for vehicles, towing caravans to enter, exit and manoeuvre around the site and for refuse collections.
- c. All necessary utilities can be provided on the site including mains water, electricity supply, surface water and foul water drainage, sanitation and provision for the screened storage and collection of waste including recycling.
- d. Sites of 5 or more pitches should include a communal recreation area for children where suitable provision is not available within walking distance. Play areas should be designed in consultation with the site manager and residents and should meet local authority standards.

## Reasoned Justification

**19.2** Gypsy and traveller sites should be well-designed and provide adequate amenity and safety levels for residents, including the provision of communal facilities and sufficient space for safe vehicle movements, including for refuse collections.

**19.3** Private gypsy and traveller sites will need to apply for a licence and will be required to meet conditions which are based on the national model standards and relevant to the site in question. The site licence conditions are applied to protect the amenity and safety of the residents of the site. These licence conditions will cover issues including around the provision of facilities, layout of sites, spacing out of pitches and safety requirements.

**19.4** The Good Practice Guide on Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites (published by DCLG in 2008 and cancelled in 2015) suggested that, where possible, sites should be developed near to housing for the settled community as part of mainstream residential developments. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites also says that new Traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements should be very strictly limited and that any sites in rural areas should respect the scale of, and not dominate the nearest settled community. The guidance also states the sites should have access to water, electricity, drainage and sanitation.

**20.1** Access to community facilities and the provision of such new facilities to complement new development is important in determining the acceptability and attractiveness of a location to live and work and can be an important factor in the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle (see also Policy SP.16).

### **Policy DM.6 - Community Facilities**

1. Proposals for new community facilities or the enhancement of existing facilities which offer an increased overall provision will be supported:
  - a. where they are demonstrated to meet an identified local need
  - b. in accessible locations that serve a wide community
  - c. where they promote the opportunities to travel by sustainable modes, and
  - d. subject to not conflicting with any other policies contained in the Plan.
2. If new facilities are proposed, existing facilities in the area need to be assessed to determine whether rationalising or combining facilities would be more appropriate in the first instance.
3. Where existing facilities could have a significant adverse effect on proposed new development in its vicinity, the applicant will be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.
4. Applicants proposing to re-develop or convert a community facility should demonstrate that they have carried out an appropriate consultation with the community most likely to use the facility prior to the submission of a planning application.
5. Heritage assets can have a positive impact on their location and communities. The use of under used heritage assets to provide community facilities as a benefit to the community and the historic environment will be supported.
6. Proposals for sites that have existing community, natural or historic points of interest within the site boundary should seek to enhance these assets within the development.
7. Any proposal that would result in the loss of land or buildings currently or formerly used as a community facility will only be permitted if:
  - a. It has been demonstrated that there is a surplus of similar provision in the appropriate catchment area for that particular facility and the land or building(s) are not needed for any other community facility; or
  - b. The community facility, lost as a result of the proposed development, would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
  - c. The development is for alternative community facilities to meet local needs and, in the case of the loss of sports and recreational facilities, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss; or
  - d. In the case of community facilities other than sports and recreational facilities, it has been demonstrated that it would not be economically or operationally viable to retain the facility for community use and the community facility could not be provided or operated by either the current occupier or by an alternative occupier (e.g. by a local community body, public-private partnership etc) and it has been

actively marketed for at least 12 months. It must be demonstrated where and how the marketing has taken place and that it has been marketed through a suitably qualified agent and at an appropriate value.

## Reasoned Justification

**20.2** Community facilities comprise specific buildings (and associated land) for a range of uses including (but not exclusively):

- Health facilities
- Emergency services i.e. ambulance, fire & police
- Educational establishments, such as schools and colleges
- Community centres and village halls
- Leisure and cultural facilities
- Allotments
- Public houses
- Places of worship
- Libraries
- Built sports facilities
- Cinemas and theatres
- Formal sports pitches and courts
- Historic and environmental points of interest

**20.3** This policy is consistent with the NPPF. Alongside national planning policies and Policy SP.26 (Strategic Infrastructure), the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will set out the need for new community facilities to service the anticipated level of housing growth. The adopted Built Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies will further inform the application of this policy.

**20.4** The policy allows for changes under the Localism Act 2011. This permits the listing of Community Assets, the Community Right to Challenge (in delivering public services) and the encouragement of communities to run their own facilities, or for a community to plan for its local area through neighbourhood planning. This allows for the consideration of a wider range of community services when appropriate, acknowledging that the importance of particular facilities will vary between communities. It is essential that the community is involved in considering the merits of any new facility and the suitability of proposals for alternative forms of use.

**20.5** Wyre Forest District Council wish to protect valuable community facilities and services that play an important role in the social infrastructure of the District and help to secure sustainable communities. These mainly local facilities are particularly important in helping to maintain a high quality of life for local residents, some of whom have limited access to alternative facilities further afield. Under certain circumstances it may be more appropriate to look to combining or rationalising facilities in a locality rather than replicate through a new proposal. In situations where a facility may be redundant, no longer fit for purpose and/or incompatible with existing surrounding uses a robust assessment should have taken place.

**20.6** In the case of any proposals that would result in the loss of a community facility, a satisfactory assessment should be undertaken (using recognised national methodology, e.g. Sport England), that proves there is a surplus of similar provision in the appropriate catchment area for that particular facility and the site or building is not needed for any other community service/use; or that the facility would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of location, quantity or quality; and, if the development is for an alternative sports or recreation provision, the need for it must outweigh the loss of the existing community facility.

**20.7** When applying these tests to specific proposals, the Local Planning Authority will have full regard to the particular characteristics, needs, service priorities and objectives of the service or organisation concerned. The implications of maintaining and running new facilities will also be an important consideration.

**20.8** For urban areas, proposed facilities should ideally be located within development boundaries. Within rural areas, proposals should be located within, or adjoining, the settlement subject to compliance with other relevant policies.

#### **Policy DM.7- Open Space**

1. Open space is identified on the Policies Map and includes a range of private and public open spaces and associated community facilities. Open Space sites will be safeguarded from development unless:
  - a. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity or quality in a suitable location; or
  - b. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
  - c. The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
2. Any new open space for recreation or sport secured through new development will be designated and protected as Open Space, in accordance with Policy DM.7.
3. Local Green Space allocated by Neighbourhood Plans will be supported if the proposal is compliant with the NPPF; and
  - a. Is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - b. Is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance; and
  - c. Is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

#### **Reasoned Justification**

**20.9** Well-designed, attractive and functional open space is an essential component for a high quality of life. It contributes positively to biodiversity, health and the character of an area and can also help to mitigate the impacts of extreme temperatures and flash flooding.



**20.10** The NPPF emphasises the benefits of recreational open space in terms of its contribution to creating sustainable patterns of urban and rural development, its role in maintaining strong and vibrant communities and the associated promotion of health and well-being. Open space for recreation and sport can also deliver a number of Green Infrastructure objectives, often simultaneously.

**20.11** There is a wide range of types of open space across Wyre Forest; for example, playing fields, recreation grounds, allotments, cemeteries, parks and amenity green space. They are all part of and contribute to the Green Infrastructure both within and outside settlements. Some open space may not specifically be recognised for biodiversity value but will contain elements that will need to be considered when valuing green space. Other open spaces have high ecological or landscape value and are protected elsewhere in the Plan, e.g. Green Infrastructure (Policy SP.28) and Biodiversity & Geodiversity (Policy SP.23 and SP.24).

**20.12** The Policies Map identifies the Open Space sites from the Wyre Forest Open Space, Built Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies. Policy DM.7 aims to protect the open spaces that are identified on the Policies Map, together with numerous incidental open spaces which are too small to include but that nonetheless contribute to the quality and character of their local areas. These small local spaces are often valued and used heavily by local communities and are therefore worthy of policy protection. Whilst most open spaces are publicly accessible, some are in private ownership, although they nonetheless perform valuable functions such as contributing to biodiversity, the character of the area and providing a sense of openness and space.

### **Open Space, Sports Pitches and Outdoor Community Uses in Housing Development**

**20.13** The District currently has 98 football pitches, 15 rugby pitches of which 10 are senior, 1 junior pitch and 4 mini pitches, 2 hockey pitches and 11 cricket fields. Additionally Wyre Forest District currently has 2 full size 3G pitches and 6 small 3G pitches.

#### **Policy DM.8 - Provision for Open Space, Sports Pitches and Outdoor Community Uses in Housing Development**

1. The Council will require any major development, subject to viability, to make provision in accordance with the following principles:
  - a. On-site provision which meets local needs for open space, sport and play;
  - b. Off-site contributions instead of an on-site contribution where it can be demonstrated that on-site provision is not feasible or viable;
  - c. Contributions towards the enhancement of existing open space and/or creation of new areas of open space and/or sports facilities where the development would otherwise lead to a deficiency;
  - d. Provision of open space in the most accessible possible locations including access by cycle routes and provision for walking and cycling;
  - e. Play and recreation spaces for children and young people including the provision of play equipment for special needs children;

- f. Creation of historic and/or environmental interpretation features, where appropriate; and
- g. Street trees (where appropriate and subject to long-term maintenance arrangements).

2. The Council will apply the following standards to new development:

- a. Development proposals for 10 or more dwellings should make provision for open Space and outdoor community uses, as set out in Table 20.0.1 (see below), together with secure arrangements for its long-term management and on-going maintenance by the developer, Town Council, Parish Council, or other community organisation. Enhancing accessibility to these open spaces, e.g. through improvements to the Rights of Way Network, is strongly encouraged.
- b. The Council will require developers to establish a mechanism by which public open space will be maintained to an agreed standard. The mechanism must be secured and in place prior to commencement and it must be operational prior to occupation of no more than 80% of the development.
- c. On-site provision of open space will have regard to the following accessibility standards:
  - i. Children's Play Space (safe walking distances to dwellings)
  - ii. Local Area for Play (LAP) - within 100m
  - iii. Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) - within 400m
  - iv. Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) - within 1km
- d. Playing pitches: within 1.2km of dwellings or within 20 minutes drive in the rural areas of the District
- e. In addition to Table 20.0.1, the precise amount, type and form of outdoor community use will be informed by local evidence e.g. Neighbourhood Plans and Playing Pitch Strategy.
- f. New open space should be designed to be multi-functional and be of a size, type and quality to meet site, local and strategic needs. Where new sport and recreation facilities are provided as part of a development, they will be created in accordance with Sport England technical standards. Where replacement facilities are being provided, equivalent quality and quantity or greater will be required.
- g. Ongoing management and maintenance of public open space, sports, play, leisure and recreation facilities must be considered at the outset of the planning and design of a development and this should inform the type, amount and layout of provision proposed.
- h. Where a development is in proximity to an existing community facility, green space or biodiversity asset, the developer will need to enhance or buffer the existing asset to mitigate any increase in demand put on that asset by the new development.
- i. Proposals must provide an assessment which demonstrates how they have responded to and addressed the issues and requirements of the Council's

strategies as identified in the Open Space audit, Playing Pitch Strategy and other relevant strategies and their subsequent updates.

3. On-site provision of open space will have regard to the following accessibility standards:
  - a. Children's Play Space (safe walking distances to dwellings):
    - i. Local Area for Play (LAP) - within 100m.
    - ii. Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) - within 400m.
    - iii. Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) - within 1km.
  - b. Playing Pitches: within 1.2km of dwellings or within 20 minutes drive in the rural areas of the District.

**Table 20.0.1 Open Space Requirements**

Type of Open Space	Quantity standard (hectares per 1000 population)	Total current hectares	Open space requirement for District 2016-2036 (hectares)
Parks and Gardens	0.56	56.20	6.92
Natural and Semi Natural	4.26	426.22	52.67
Amenity Green Space	0.78	77.81	9.64
Allotments	0.18	17.6	2.23
Provision for Children and Young People	0.12	12.17	1.48

### Reasoned Justification

**20.14** The NPPF advocates improving the conditions in which people live and take their leisure. A high quality built environment, including the spaces within it, plays an important social role in the delivery of sustainable development. The NPPF also requires local planning authorities to plan positively for the provision of community facilities and spaces. This Policy should be read in conjunction with Policy SP.26 (Strategic Infrastructure), Policy SP.28 (Green Infrastructure), and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

**20.15** The Council requires major development to provide and/or contribute to the provision of multi-functional open space which serves and meets the needs of the development as well as local needs, including those with disabilities and wider needs, subject to viability. The need for open space, sport and recreational facilities must be assessed to determine what provision is needed.

**20.16** Sport England's Playing Pitch Demand Calculator calculates a development's playing pitch requirements. The calculator identifies associated costs for providing the required pitches and associated ancillary facilities (such as changing rooms and car parking) to meet the demand generated by the development; whether there is capacity within existing pitches to meet the demand generated by the development; or whether additional provision is required needs to be considered, taking into account evidence in the Playing Pitch Strategy.

**20.17** It is considered that the provision of new functional open space and other facilities is necessary in order to achieve active, healthy and integrated communities. The type and size of the residential proposal will also be a factor in determining the make-up of the various community use typologies. Over-provision in any single typology does not negate the need to provide for other typologies. In addition to parks, open spaces and recreation areas, the provision of amenity space is an important aspect of the urban environment. The increasing emphasis on higher density residential development raises the importance of outdoor amenity space as an integral consideration in the design of new developments. It provides opportunities for play, outdoor relaxation and social interaction. The continued provision of adequate children's play space is considered to be an important component for new development.

**20.18** For larger developments the expectation will be that the development will provide new sports pitches on site. However, in accordance with Policy DM.8, in cases where it is demonstrated that this is not feasible or appropriate, an off-site contribution will be required. The size of the proposed residential development may not create demand for a whole pitch. In such cases, it may be appropriate to secure a financial contribution to increase the capacity of an existing site or to contribute financially to new provision off-site. Consideration should be given to identifying suitable investment priorities that could serve the proposed development and which could benefit from a contribution towards increasing capacity to meet demand generated from the development, taking into account the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy. If financial contributions are found to be preferable, the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan should be used to identify existing sites for investment.

**20.19** The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy identifies shortfalls of provision to meet quantitative needs for football (both natural grass pitches and artificial grass pitches) and rugby union, qualitative improvements to grass pitches for all pitch sports and the need for provision of new and improved changing room facilities. It also identifies the need for two 3G additional artificial grass pitches for football, and there is a need to re-surface an existing hockey pitch at Stourport Sports Club.

**21.1** Wyre Forest District Council wants to encourage business into the District and for those already in the District to be able to expand and adapt to changing markets. The District needs to be able to adapt to new and flexible working practices such as homeworking and live/work units to ensure that there are a wide range of employment opportunities within the District in conformity with NPPF paragraph 82. Policies within this chapter should be read in conjunction with Policy SP.17 which is the strategic policy 'A Diverse Local Economy'.

**21.2** Wyre Forest District Council commissioned an Employment Land Review (ELR) for the District which was published June 2016; this was updated in October 2018. It assessed economic development needs across the District objectively in line with the revised NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance. The report found that the majority of businesses within Wyre Forest District (89.6%) are micro businesses which mean that they employ 0-9 employees; this figure is slightly higher than the figure for West Midlands (89.1%) and Great Britain (89.5%). Wyre Forest District has seen an increase of micro firms within the District of 1.9% since 2015, this is more than the increase seen in the West Midlands (1.4%) and for Great Britain (1.2%). Large firms employing in excess of 250 employees only account for 0.3% of businesses within the District versus 0.4% in the West Midlands and Great Britain. The updated 2018 Employment Land Review identified the need for at least an additional 29 hectares of employment land which includes employment generating uses such as nursing homes. Table 9.0.1 in chapter 9 A Good Place to do Business, shows sites allocated for employment uses. The employment allocation sites are also shown on the Policies Map and site specific policies can be found in Part C of the Plan.

**21.3** The South Kidderminster Enterprise Park area is a key employment and regeneration focus for Wyre Forest District. To help encourage business growth within the district a Local Development Order (LDO) for this area was implemented in August 2012. The LDO introduced permitted development to any site within the boundaries of the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park. The LDO was revised for a further 3 years in 2015. Owing to the success of the LDO, it was renewed again in August 2018 for a further three years running until August 2021. The LDO has been used by 17 businesses and developments and has provided circa £25 million of economic investment since its initial adoption in 2012. It is hoped that it will continue to attract inward investment to the area in the future. The South Kidderminster Enterprise Park is shown on the Policies Map.

**21.4** Wyre Forest District is located within two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs): Worcestershire LEP and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP. The involvement of the District in both Partnerships reflects the economic geography of an area that has strong ties with both the county in which it is located, Worcestershire, as well as the larger urban conurbation of Birmingham and its surrounding areas.

**21.5** It is important that the Council's planning documents, wherever possible, reflect the aims and ambitions of the LEPs ensuring that the District continues to be a place for businesses to operate and to grow.

**21.6** Over the past few years there has been a rise in the levels of home working in the UK. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the number of home workers in the UK amounted to 4.2 million in the first three months of 2014, equivalent to 13.9% of the total workforce. Wyre Forest has around 5,300 workers who work mainly at or from home, which is equivalent to the national rate of 13.9% of the workplace population.

**Employment Development****Policy DM.9 - Economic Development**

The employment allocation sites are shown on the Policies Map and are safeguarded for employment use in Policy SP.17.

1. In addition to sites allocated specifically for employment uses, the provision of employment land and the conversion of existing buildings to support job creation throughout the District will be supported if they are in conformity with other policies in the Plan and providing it can be demonstrated that the new employment use can integrate effectively with surrounding uses and is of an appropriate scale to the location.
2. Planning permission for the change of use to alternative uses of land or buildings which are allocated for employment use (as shown on the Policies Map), or were last used for employment purposes within use class B2, B8, Class E (g) offices (other than professional and financial services offices), research and development and light industrial use will only be granted where:
  - a. A financial appraisal demonstrates that redevelopment for any employment generating use is unviable and is unlikely to achieve viability within 5 years; and
  - b. Details are provided of active marketing of the premises / land for at least 12 months and appropriate to the prevailing market conditions; and/or
  - c. The proposed use would be compatible with adjacent land uses and not prejudice the amenity, lawful operation, viability or future development of other businesses.
3. Where the above criteria are met and there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings will be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities. They must also be in accordance with other policies within this Plan.

**Economic Development outside Allocated Areas**

4. Proposals for economic development outside of the allocated areas will be prioritised following the sequential approach of:
  - a. Previously developed sites;
  - b. Greenfield infill sites within a settlement outside the Green Belt;
  - c. Greenfield sites adjacent to a settlement outside the Green Belt.
5. They will be assessed on their individual merits and should be fully in accordance with other policies within this Plan.

**Hazardous Substances**



6. Proposals for development or activities involving hazardous substances, or development adjoining an area where hazardous substances already exist, will only be permitted where the relevant authorities are satisfied that the proposals are acceptable. Where necessary, appropriate measures to protect the public and environment will be required.

### Waste Developments on Employment Land

7. Development for waste facilities will also be considered favourably within the designated employment locations, subject to proposals being in conformity with the other policies in the Plan and the Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire.

## Reasoned Justification

**21.7** To achieve sustainable growth within the District we need to create opportunities for people to work. Wyre Forest District Council aims to ensure that the right amount of suitable land is available to attract business to the District and enable existing businesses to grow. In Part C of the Local Plan, there are site specific policies for the sites allocated for employment uses.

**21.8** Proposals involving hazardous substances will need to be carefully assessed. Any decision will be made having regard to the advice of the Health and Safety Executive, the degree of risk and the likely hazard or consequences of an accident occurring. Proposals for development in close proximity to existing hazardous installations will also be carefully assessed to ensure that these proposals are safe and acceptable with the appropriate authorities.

**21.9** The Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire was adopted in November 2012 and forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the District. The Waste Core Strategy sets out a long term vision for waste management within Worcestershire and outlines areas of land that may be suitable for development of new facilities. Waste management facilities are often akin to business or industrial activities and, when directed to the right locations, they can provide economic opportunities without having adverse impacts on their surroundings. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to allow for the principle of development of waste management facilities on allocated employment sites, subject to the proposals being in line with the other policies included in the Local Development Plan and the Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire.

## Rural Employment

### Policy DM.10 - Rural Employment

1. Agriculture is an important industry in rural areas within Wyre Forest District both for the production of food and for employment. Support will be given for the sustainable growth and development of agricultural and other rural businesses that are in conformity with other policies in the plan.



2. To help promote rural regeneration existing employment sites in rural areas that are currently or were last used for B2, B8, Class E (g) offices (other than professional and financial services offices), research and development, light industrial uses, tourism, leisure and/or recreation related purposes will be safeguarded for the existing use during the plan period, unless it has been demonstrated that the site has been actively marketed for a period of at least 12 months and that it is no longer viable in its existing use.
3. The expansion of existing employment sites in rural areas will be supported where it has been demonstrated that intensification of the existing site is not viable or practical subject to compliance with other relevant policies.
4. The redevelopment of existing previously developed land, outside the Green Belt, for economic development purposes will be allowed, where this would result in a more acceptable, sustainable and better designed development than would be achieved through conversion or reuse.
5. Proposals to diversify farm businesses for employment, tourism, leisure and recreation uses will be permitted providing:
  - a. The proposed new use does not detract from or prejudice the existing agricultural undertaking or its future operation.
  - b. The scale of activities associated with the proposed development is appropriate to the rural character of the area.
  - c. Wherever possible existing buildings are used to reduce the need for additional built development.
  - d. The proposed new use does not cause an unacceptable rise in vehicular movements that is inappropriate by virtue of disturbance to the character of the area or amenity of any neighbouring area.

## **Reasoned Justification**

**21.10** The provision of new rural employment sites, especially the use of previously developed land and sites that physically relate well to an existing settlement, should be considered favourably if it is not harmful to the integrity of the settlement or landscape character.

**21.11** Employment sites that fall vacant should be actively marketed before their conversion to an alternative use such as residential and the consequent loss of a facility/service providing important local jobs. The marketing exercise will need to have regard to the nature and scale of the site and buildings and the prevailing economic conditions.

**21.12** Rural employment sites not only provide local employment, they also provide opportunities for new investment and rejuvenation through intensification or re-use.

**21.13** Over the past few years, changes to traditional farming methods have meant that many farms need to diversify to ensure their survival. Diversification should be encouraged but agricultural uses should still remain as the main focus of the farm unit.

## Live work units

### Policy DM.11 - Live Work Units

1. Proposals for live/work units will be permitted in sustainable, appropriate locations within the rural areas. The proposal will need to be justified and, where they involve the re-use of a rural building, be in accordance with Rural Conversion policies and other policies within the Plan.
2. New developments including replacement buildings for live/work units will be permitted in sustainable, appropriate locations within the rural areas. The proposal will need to be justified and be in accordance with other policies within the Plan and that the following criteria are met:
  - a. They are located on Previously Developed Land;
  - b. They do not have an adverse impact on the character, landscape, residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers or wildlife of the area;
  - c. They do not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
  - d. Suitable access arrangements can be made without the need for extensive new access roads.
3. All Live/Work proposals must also ensure that:
  - a. The work element is restricted to uses considered appropriate to the location, in rural areas this being use class B2, Class E(g) offices (other than professional and financial services offices), research and development, light industrial uses and appropriate rural employment uses where there are no adverse impacts on surrounding properties;
  - b. The workspace is designed to be separate from the dwelling;
  - c. The emphasis is on the work element with residential use ancillary. This should be reflected in the split of floorspace with at least 60% afforded to the workspace and no more than 40% for residential;
  - d. The workspace must be constructed and available for occupation and in use before the residential element of the scheme is occupied.
4. Normally the residential accommodation should contain no more than three bedrooms, and residential and work spaces should have separate entrances and toilet facilities.

**Reasoned Justification**

**21.14** There has been an increase in self-employment and home working and increasing use of technology amongst many growth sectors. It is therefore important that Wyre Forest District Council monitors and responds to these changing preferences, to ensure that business needs can be met within the District.

**21.15** Live work units differ from homeworking in that homeworking uses a small proportion of a residential unit for generally office work whilst live work units are a business being run from the same place that the worker resides. The employment aspect is the main use with the residential area as an ancillary use.

**21.16** Live work units can make use of redundant rural buildings and afford opportunities for farm diversification or they may be purpose built on previously developed land. The emphasis should be on the work element of the building but the two uses should be separate and should not have an adverse effect on the surrounding area. Policy criteria need to be set to ensure that proposals are genuinely intended for employment purposes. The approved development may be controlled by planning conditions or a legal obligation governing the use of the premises and other relevant matters such as the number of non-resident employees who can work at the premises. The removal of permitted development rights for change of use of all or part of the premises or for residential extensions may also be considered appropriate. The size of the business area must be justified to ensure that a larger than necessary business area is not constructed just to enable a larger dwelling to be built.

**Offices****Policy DM.12 – Offices**

- Office accommodation will be permitted where it does not cause an adverse effect on the built, historic and natural environment and will be focussed on the three town centres and allocated employment areas. The main town centres should be considered first, then edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.
- Small scale offices of less than 500sqm in rural areas outside the Green Belt will also be supported where appropriate.

**Reasoned Justification**

**21.17** The majority of offices within the District are located in Kidderminster. The demand for office accommodation tends to be from small, mainly professional, companies and businesses wanting small office accommodation. The demand is generally local as the market does not attract a high number of occupiers from outside of the District. The area faces competition from larger conurbations such as Birmingham and locations in proximity to the strategic motorway network.

**21.18** In Wyre Forest District the majority of offices tend to be small units above retail units in the town centre, ancillary office units on industrial estates or buildings that have been converted to offices such as Elgar House. Very few offices are purpose built. If the District had a supply of offices that were accessible and had parking they would achieve a higher rental value and could attract inward investment.

**21.19** The figure of less than 500 sqm used for small scale offices is the figure used for development in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended.

**21.20** Loss of office floorspace has an adverse effect on business, employment and the character of the District and will therefore be resisted where possible.

**21.21** Some low cost offices are required to meet the requirements of the voluntary sector and start up businesses.

**22.1** Town centres are crucial to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the District. The concentration of a range of goods, services and facilities in one area creates a centre for communities and enables people to make one trip for many reasons. The District's settlement hierarchy of towns are Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley (see Policy SP.2). It is this hierarchy that provides the basis for identifying the locations for new retail, leisure and commercial development. Further retail development should be directed towards Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley.

**22.2** The main retail centre is Kidderminster which has the widest choice of retail facilities within the District. Since the development of Weavers Wharf (opened 2005), the shopping centre has moved westwards away from the traditional town centre which was based around Worcester Street, High Street and Vicar Street. However town centres have changed and are still changing as retail patterns have altered with the increase in internet shopping and click and collect. This means that Kidderminster town centre needs to change its role from mainly retail to a variety of additional uses that will include residential, recreation, leisure, employment and offices to ensure that the town centre is vibrant.

**22.3** In 2016 Wyre Forest District Council commissioned a Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Study (Boyer 2016). The conclusion of this study was that Kidderminster is the main shopping centre in the District, however there is an imbalance created by the Weavers Wharf development which is the dominant element within the town centre. Due to this there is a need to regenerate the eastern part of the town centre. Consequent to the Retail report by Boyer the primary shopping area and primary and secondary shopping frontage areas in Kidderminster have been revised owing to the impact of the Weavers Wharf development. This is shown on the Kidderminster Retail map in Appendix d.

**22.4** Stourport-on-Severn offers a range of retail facilities and services which include supermarkets as well as individual specialist shops to serve the town with more retail facilities in Kidderminster which is situated 3 miles away.

**22.5** Bewdley is the smallest of the towns within the District and its retailing function reflects its size and role within the area. The retail core is compact and focussed on Load Street. Bewdley provides an important top-up shopping destination with a range of convenience goods and services.

## **Town Centre Development**

### **Policy DM.13 - Town Centre Development**

1. Large scale retail development (2,500sqm net and above) and commercial or leisure uses should be targeted towards Kidderminster as the strategic centre of the District followed by Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley in a sequential approach. Proposals for new retail development (of more than 500sqm gross), or proposals regarding the removal of restrictive retail conditions, (condition that restricts retail use) will only be permitted where a sequential approach has been followed and it is demonstrated that:

- a. It is within the Primary Shopping Area. These areas are where retail development is concentrated and generally comprises the primary and those secondary shopping frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage.
  - b. If edge-of-centre, that the proposals cannot be accommodated within the Primary Shopping Area.
2. Support will be given to proposals that safeguard, maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the existing retail centres throughout the District without causing adverse effects on the built and natural environment and that are of a scale that is appropriate to its location.
3. In secondary shopping frontages, support will be given for alternative uses that maintain or enhance the vitality and viability of the Town Centre's retail and commercial offer. Proposals must demonstrate that the building is fully used avoiding vacant floors. Proposals to introduce residential development above ground floor within the Primary Shopping Area will be supported. Within secondary shopping frontages, residential development at ground floor will be considered in accordance with other policies within the plan and on their individual merits. This will help to improve the vitality of the centres without compromising the core retail function of the towns.
4. Support will be given for the appropriate development for the regeneration of the eastern gateway area of Kidderminster town centre.
5. Within the defined Primary Shopping Frontage, which is likely to include a high proportion of retail uses, development proposals for retail use at ground floor will be permitted where:
  - a. The scale and type of development proposed is directly related to the role and function of the centre and its catchment area and it contributes to the provision of a safe environment.
  - b. There would be no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre or other centres
  - c. They provide an active frontage and are open for business during the day.

## Reasoned Justification

**22.6** The NPPF (paragraph 85) states that planning policies should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their vitality and viability, allowing them to grow and diversify allowing a mix of uses including residential. Town centres and primary shopping areas should be defined with a range of uses in each centre. Sites should be allocated to meet likely need, where town centre sites are not available then edge of centre sites should be considered.

**22.7** Town centres are extremely important to communities and Wyre Forest District Council wishes to support town centre viability and vitality and to pursue policies that promote town centre development creating thriving town centres. Policy DM.13 should be read in conjunction with Policy SP.18 which is the strategic policy relating to Town Centre Development.



**22.8** Kidderminster, being at the top of the retail hierarchy, will be the preferred location for major leisure, office and retail developments and other uses that attract large numbers of people. Other centres are suitable for day-to-day food and non-food shopping, small-scale leisure uses and local service and facility provision (NPPF paragraph 85).

**22.9** The retail sector and town centres are undergoing a period of significant change due to the continuing popularity and convenience provided by out-of-town facilities and the increasing adoption of online and click and collect shopping. Therefore, alternative uses such as leisure and residential within town centres may add to the viability and vitality.

**22.10** Retail development should be focussed on existing centres in order to strengthen and, where necessary, regenerate them. Wherever possible, growth should be accommodated by more efficient use of land and buildings within existing centres. This approach will help maintain the historic character of town centres and provides opportunities to minimise the consumption of non-renewable resources by reusing existing buildings and reducing the need to travel to out-of-centre retail parks.

**22.11** The Primary Shopping Area is a defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping frontage). Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses and often provide complementary uses to the core retail function that exists within the primary frontage. Maps showing the primary shopping area and primary and secondary shopping frontages for Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley are to be found in Appendix d.

**22.12** Proposals involving a change of use of ground floor premises in the Primary Shopping Frontage should complement the retail offer and should not lead to an over dominance of non-retail uses or 'dead' frontage, which would detract from the overall retail experience.

**22.13** Throughout the retail chapter of this Plan a number of policies have regard to a threshold of 500sqm (gross).<sup>(37)</sup> This permissive approach towards small-scale development provides flexibility to existing retailers and promotes appropriate community shopping facilities. To avoid duplication this point has not been added into each reasoned justification but is relevant to each.

**22.14** Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley are classed as market towns. Stourport-on-Severn offers leisure and shopping facilities to its residents and its canal and riverside assets continue to be a key visitor attraction. Its public realm is enhanced through the restoration of its unique heritage including the canal basins. Bewdley remains a thriving market town which meets the local community's needs. The town's Georgian historic character is preserved and it is a popular riverside destination.

**22.15** The geography of the District means that Kidderminster is just 3 miles from each of the market towns. Therefore, the need for Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn to provide facilities and services should be balanced with their proximity to Kidderminster and the services it provides in its function as the strategic centre of the District.

37 Gross retail floorspace: the total built floor area measured externally which is occupied exclusively by a retailer or retailers; excluding open areas used for the storage, display or sale of goods .

## Out of Town Retail

### Policy DM.14 - Edge of Centre and Out of Town development

1. Edge of centre is a location that is well connected with the town centre and the primary shopping area. Proposals for new, or an extension to existing, edge or out-of-centre retail, offices, entertainment or leisure development in excess of 500sq.m gross floorspace will be required to submit a sequential test and an impact assessment demonstrating that there would be no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of a town centre as a whole. The Council will refuse planning permission where there is evidence that proposals are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the vitality and viability of a town centre as a whole.
2. Before out of centre sites are considered the sequential approach must demonstrate why there are no suitable or available sites within the Primary Shopping Area in the first instance and then edge of centre sites. When edge of centre and out of centre locations are considered, sites which are accessible and well connected to the town centre will be preferable.

### Reasoned Justification

**22.16** When assessing applications for retail, leisure and office development at edge of centre and out of centre locations, paragraph 90 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is above the proportionate locally set floorspace threshold. The threshold of 500sqm gross is a permissive approach to small scale development.

### Local Shops

**22.17** Local shops and other services play a vital role in promoting communities' sustainability by helping to meet everyday needs and reducing the need to travel. The Council is therefore keen to ensure that the loss of existing retail areas is resisted, where possible.

### Policy DM.15 - Local Shops

1. Planning permission for new village and neighbourhood shops or the extension of existing facilities will be granted provided that the total floor space does not exceed 500sqm gross and parking should be provided where possible.
2. Existing retail and commercial units (within use class E) within village or neighbourhood centres will be safeguarded. Any planning application for change of use will be resisted unless the site has been actively marketed for a minimum of 12 months at an

appropriate value. The provision of new, or the extension of existing, small scale commercial and retail units (within Use Class E) will be supported, subject to the resulting size being commensurate with the size of the centre in which it is located.

### **Reasoned Justification**

**22.18** The provision of local services within walking distance of residents' homes is an important component in the way a community functions. Use Class E provides a wide range of retail and commercial services which should be retained unless it is proven that such uses are no longer viable. Planning applications for change of use should be supported with a comprehensive marketing statement from a suitably qualified agency that demonstrates that the unit has been actively marketed for a period of no less than 12 months at an appropriate value.

### **Other forms of Retailing – Specialist Retailing**

**22.19** There are other forms of retailing that do not lend themselves to being sited within designated areas or neighbourhoods, yet they often make an important contribution to the local economy. It is important that the focus for new retailing remains in the most sustainable locations, following a sequential approach, but there is a recognition that other forms of retailing also need consideration. The following policy is therefore proposed to manage applications for 'specialist retailing'.

#### **Policy DM.16 - Specialist Retailing**

1. Retail developments within employment areas (factory outlets) will not be permitted unless they are small scale uses (not exceeding 500sqm gross) and related to or an ancillary part of a business use. Car showrooms and vehicle maintenance, repair and service centres will also be permitted on land allocated for B2 and B8 purposes.
2. Proposals for convenience retailing associated with petrol stations will be permitted where this is clearly an ancillary function to the main use, is for convenience goods and the floorspace does not exceed 500sqm gross.
3. Other forms of specialist retailing will be permitted where the retail element is ancillary to the main use. Extensions to existing operations should not lead to an increase in the amount of retail floorspace dedicated to the sale of comparison goods. Where necessary, the range of goods to be sold from the site may also be limited by a planning condition.
4. New or expanded farm shops, garden centres or petrol filling stations will be permitted in appropriate locations provided:
  - a. In the case of farm shops, the proposal would make use of redundant or under-used buildings and the range of goods to be sold is restricted to foodstuffs, plants and rural crafts produced locally.

- b. The creation of new, or extensions to existing, garden centres or farm shops in the open countryside and unrelated to a settlement will only be permitted if the proposed development is ancillary to, and on the site of, an existing horticultural business or existing farming operation.
- c. They do not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- d. The suitability of the provision for parking will be considered in the light of Worcestershire County Council's standards.

## Reasoned Justification

**22.20** There are locations within the District where retail elements exist as an ancillary element of another use. This includes outlet shops in employment areas, petrol filling stations, garden centres, and farm shops. It is important that any future proposal remains ancillary to the existing use so as to not to undermine the primary role.

**22.21** With the loss of many traditional independent retail outlets, the operators of petrol stations have often provided for the convenience needs of their localities. However, the role that petrol filling stations play in providing retail facilities should be limited to a modest scale.

**22.22** Traditionally, many farms have sold produce grown on the farm to the general public, sometimes from farm buildings and in more recent years from 'farm shops'. Due to the potential impact of the development of farm shops, it is proposed that the role of the shops be limited to agricultural produce originating from the farming unit and its immediate environment. If non-local agricultural produce is required to be sold (for example to combat the issue of seasonality), then this should remain subsidiary to the sale of local agricultural produce. The sale of a wider range of goods not produced locally is considered to be inappropriate for farm shops.

**22.23** Garden centres were also established as an ancillary function to agricultural (horticultural) production. However, such has been the growth in the leisure sector that there are now national chains of garden centres, many of which are dedicated to the retail sale of plants and sundries and have little if any horticultural production capabilities. There is no reason as to why these facilities cannot be located within more urban areas. Where rural garden centres do exist, they often have a valuable role to play in the local economy. Nevertheless, in order to accord with the retail strategy and to preserve the openness and character of the rural landscape, the Council is keen to ensure such facilities remain predominantly ancillary to horticultural production.

## Food and Drink Retailing

### Policy DM.17 - Food and Drink Retailing

Development proposals involving the sale of food and drink must not have an adverse impact in terms of:

- Residential amenity;
- Pollution by virtue of litter, noise or odour;

- Crime and Disorder;
- Parking and highway safety

### **Reasoned Justification**

**22.24** Proposals specifically regarding food and drink bring their own issues and challenges. Proposals involving consumption on the premises can increase the levels of liveliness and vibrancy throughout the day and night. Whilst there may be problems associated with anti-social behaviour, such uses can also, conversely, add to the sense of security through ensuring maximum people presence and natural surveillance. The policy therefore seeks to ensure that premises for the sale of food and drink have due regard to community safety and local amenity.

### **Policy DM.18 - Hot Food Takeaways**

1. Proposals for hot food takeaways will not be permitted where:
  - a. They would result in two or more hot food takeaways adjacent to one another;
  - b. Outside of designated centres, hot food takeaways will not be permitted where the proposal is within 400m of the boundary of a school.
  - c. Development proposals involving hot food takeaways must not have an adverse impact in terms of:
    - i. Residential amenity;
    - ii. Pollution by virtue of litter, noise or odour;
    - iii. Crime and disorder
    - iv. Parking and highway safety
2. Applications for hot food takeaways will, where it is deemed necessary, be required to include a health impact screening to assess whether a full health impact assessment is required (also see Policy SP.16 Health and Well being).

### **Reasoned Justification**

**22.25** As part of the evidence base, a report by Worcestershire County Council Public Health summarises the policy context and evidence which has informed Policy DM.18 to regulate takeaways through the planning system.

**22.26** Where high concentrations of hot-food <sup>(38)</sup>takeaways occur in the town centres, they can pose a serious threat to the local economic vitality and viability. It is not uncommon for hot food takeaway shops to locate outside of town centres and high concentrations exist along some of the key road corridors such as the Horsefair and Comberton Hill in Kidderminster. In addition to health issues and obesity levels, hot food takeaway shops are more likely to have a detrimental impact on amenity and on retail character and function of shopping centres. Such harmful impacts relate to increased incidence of litter, smells, crime and anti-social behaviour, noise and general disturbance, parking and traffic problems.

**22.27** Research indicates that the more overweight a person is and the earlier in life a person becomes overweight, the greater the impact on that person's health. It is therefore considered important to support the establishment of healthy eating habits from an early age and minimise the negative impacts of hot food takeaways on childhood health <sup>(39)</sup>In Worcestershire, in common with many areas in England, there is a general upward trend in the prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults and children. Overweight and obesity contributes to a growing prevalence of long-term conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, reduced quality of life and increased mortality.

**22.28** Wyre Forest District has a higher rate of excess weight amongst reception class children compared to the Worcestershire and England average. In Reception year (age 4/5 years) 24.2% of the children living in Wyre Forest were overweight (including obese) and by Year 6 (age 10/11 years) this increases to 36.2% (2018/19) <sup>(40)</sup>. This prevalence also tends to be higher within areas characterised with high levels of socioeconomic deprivation <sup>(41)</sup>. Local evidence in Worcestershire highlights that exposure to at least one fast food outlet within 1 mile of home and within 1 mile of school were both associated with a higher proportion of children becoming obese. This was most pronounced in the proportion who were overweight in reception and became obese by year 6. Local research in Worcestershire using 2016/17 National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data showed that at baseline <sup>(42)</sup> the prevalence of obesity in children who were exposed to fast food outlets from the home was less than 2% higher than

38 The food or any part of it is hot, if it is at a temperature that is above the ambient air temperature, at the time that it's provided to the customer (the precondition) and one or more of the following tests are satisfied i) It's provided to a customer in packaging that retains heat (whether or not the packaging was primarily designed for that purpose) or in any other packaging that is specifically designed for hot food; ii) It's been kept hot after being heated; iii) It's been heated to order; iv) It's been heated for the purposes of enabling it to be consumed hot.

39 Source LGA 2016 Tipping the scales case studies on the use of planning powers to limit hot food takeaways.

40 Public Health Outcomes Framework. Available at: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#page/0/gid/1000042/pat/6/par/E12000005/ati/201/are/E07000239>

41 In reception, for children without a fast food outlet within 1 mile of school. 6.43% obese, and 8.81% obese if exposed. In year 6, for children without a fast food outlet within 1 mile of school. 11.4% obese, and 19.4% obese if exposed.

42 In reception, for children without a fast food outlet within 1 mile of school 6.43% obese and 8.81% obese if exposed. In year 6, for children without a fast food outlet within 1 mile of school 11.4% obese and 19.4% obese if exposed.

Variable		Weight Category in Reception (2010/11)			
		Underweight	Healthy Weight	Overweight	Obese
Exposure to Fast Food Outlets (FFOs) from school	None	1 (0.29)	263 (76.9)	56 (16.4)	22 (6.43)
	>1	13 (0.55)	1800 (75.5)	362 (15.2)	210 (8.81)

Variable		Weight Category in Year 6 (2016/17)			
		Underweight	Healthy Weight	Overweight	Obese
Exposure to Fast Food Outlets (FFOs) from school	None	7 (2.05)	242 (70.8)	54 (15.8)	39 (11.4)
	>1	29 (1.22)	1553 (65.1)	341 (14.3)	462 (19.4)



those not exposed. By year 6 this gap had increased to over 5%. Similarly, the prevalence of obesity for those who were exposed from school was less than 2% in reception and increased to 8% by year 6.

**22.29** Wyre Forest District Council considers that the location of hot food takeaways in close proximity to schools could lead to children consuming a greater amount of unhealthy food which would undermine initiatives to promote healthier diets, particularly in schools. The proliferation and proximity of hot food takeaways to schools is also of concern as the food they serve is mostly high in fat, salt and sugar. Healthier options, if available, are generally very limited. There is concern that the effect of fast food consumption on children's diets and eating behaviour can add to health problems related to obesity. A proliferation of hot food takeaways within walking distance of locations where children and young people congregate, including schools, youth centres and parks can be seen as a contributing factor to rising levels of childhood obesity.

**22.30** 400 metres distance is equivalent to a 10 minute walk and is considered sufficient to deter school children from walking to takeaways during their lunch break or after school. <sup>(43)(44)</sup>

**22.31** Policy DM.18 will be further expanded by the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) relating to Health (as per Policy SP.16).

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43 Source NHS Healthy Urban Development.

44 For the purpose of Policy DM.18, 400 metres will be measured as the 'crow flies'



**23.1** Wyre Forest District Council recognises the importance of tourism and the contribution it can make to the local economy. It supports rural tourism and leisure developments that respect the character of the countryside in conformity with NPPF paragraph 84. It also aims to protect the environmental quality of the area. Visitors to Wyre Forest District were surveyed as part of the Wyre Forest District Visitor Survey 2015/2016, approximately 79% of those surveyed were day visitors. The remainder were made up of 13% overnight visitors and 7% visiting the District as part of a holiday but not staying within the District. Opportunities to encourage visitors to stay overnight or longer as well as facilities for all weathers, and encouraging visitors throughout the year will be encouraged. Policies within this chapter should be read in conjunction with Policy SP.19 which is the strategic policy Sustainable Tourism.

**23.2** Tourism is an extremely important sector of the UK's economy. Within the Wyre Forest District, approximately 6.2% of jobs are related to the tourism industry. This figure is below the national average of 9.5%. Between 2009 and 2014 employment in tourism industries in the UK increased from 2.66 million to 2.97 million. The majority of tourism workers are permanent (89.57%) and the percentage of the workforce employed in the tourism industry has increased from 8.29% (2.50 million 2008) to 9.46% (2.97 million 2014) an increase of 18.78% over 6 years. Employment in the tourist industry is extremely important for younger workers with 26.4% of those aged between the ages of 16-24 being employed in the industry compared to only 10.5% in non tourist industries (Office for National Statistics – data from Annual Population survey 2008-2014 ONS). The income from tourism can help support the retention of existing services and facilities such as shops, public houses and restaurants.

**23.3** It is therefore important that future planning policy protects and enhances this aspect of the economy. Planning can have a significant impact on the tourism sector's ability to grow in response to future demand and to protect the natural and historic assets on which the industry is based. Within the District we need to provide adequate opportunities for growth, but also policies should be strong enough to prevent inappropriate development that would limit tourism potential and cause an adverse impact on the District.

## **Policy DM.19 - Supporting Major Tourist Attractions**

### **Severn Valley Railway (SVR)**

Proposals that enhance the role and function of the SVR (including visitor attractions and facilities and maintenance facilities subject to their impact on the surrounding landscape, biodiversity, heritage assets and the Green Belt) will be supported. Proposals to link the SVR with other sites along the route will be encouraged, especially at West Midland Safari and Leisure Park.

### **West Midland Safari and Leisure Park (WMSLP)**

The Council will consider favourably applications for major development at West Midland Safari and Leisure Park that are contained in the WMSLP masterplan or any other similar agreed document, where such development would:

- a. Upgrade and improve the viability of the attraction;
- b. Address the potential for heathland restoration and recreation;
- c. Be appropriate to its function as a major tourism destination;
- d. Make a positive contribution to the local economy; and
- e. Be acceptable taking into account the masterplan and its location within the Green Belt and the need to ensure compatibility with the local infrastructure network.

### **The Wyre Forest**

Future development proposals that enhance the tourism and leisure role of the Wyre Forest will be supported. Proposals will need to ensure that they respect the landscape, biodiversity and historic environment of this ancient woodland. Proposals that cause adverse impact to the area will not be permitted. Development proposals that link to the Forest, but are not necessarily within the Forest boundaries will also be supported, subject to proposals conforming to other policies within the plan and Natural England guidance on ancient woodland and veteran trees.

### **Arboreta**

There are two large arboreta located within the District at Upper Arley and Wolverley (Bodenham). Development proposals that enhance the tourism and leisure role of these areas will be supported. Proposals will need to ensure that they respect the landscape, biodiversity and historic environment of these areas and proposals that cause adverse impact on the environment will not be permitted.

## Reasoned Justification

**23.4** Wyre Forest District Council is committed to ensuring that the District's appeal as a tourist destination is retained and enhanced throughout the plan period. It is therefore important to provide support for tourist proposals by either the expansion of existing development or new developments.

**23.5** Nationally, tourism is generally an expanding part of the economy. However, locally there was a slight downturn in 2014 when both bed nights and expenditure were down 4%. It is estimated that within Wyre Forest District the number employed in tourism is around 2,155 and £121 million is spent in the local area as a result of tourism, taking into account multiplier effects. (Economic Impact of Tourism, Wyre Forest 2015)

## Severn Valley Railway

**23.6** The Severn Valley Railway (SVR) is a heritage railway line running steam trains between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth (in Shropshire), a distance of 16 miles. The railway is not currently a commercial line but provides a genuine draw for visitors and enthusiasts alike. The potential exists to open the line to commercial services in the future. The route of the railway closely follows the course of the River Severn for most of its journey. Kidderminster Railway Museum houses a vast range of railway artefacts, most of which date back to the days of steam travel.

**23.7** The route is now a major national and international tourist attraction. During 2016 over 250,000 passengers travelled on SVR (source SVR website). Given the SVR's potential impact on the District, it is considered important to provide a flexible policy framework that safeguards the existing railway operations whilst providing support for additional development proposals.

**23.8** The line of the SVR runs through the District and therefore support will be given to proposals to link this route with other sites that lie adjacent to the tracks where additional benefit in terms of sustainable transport and improving the tourism offer can be realised. The SVR is a key attraction for tourists and provides an undeniable economic draw into the District. The continued support for operations along the railway is provided within this policy, recognising the important role that the railway provides as both a defining feature of the landscape and the economic impact that it brings.

## West Midland Safari and Leisure Park (WMSLP)

**23.9** WMSLP is one of the largest tourist attractions in Worcestershire, and has been in operation for over 35 years. As well as the major Safari Park, it contains one of the UK's leading and longest established inland amusement parks, with over 30 rides catering for the family market, and is also a major events venue. The safari park and leisure park attracts 750,000 visitors a year and employs 82 year round staff plus a further 395 seasonal staff. The company spends several million pounds each year with local and regional suppliers. Its payroll is a substantial, multi-million pound sum which goes directly to the local economy as WMSLP primarily recruits from the local area.

**23.10** In order to understand more fully the impact that the WMSLP has on the District, a study was carried out by Amion Consulting in 2011 which focussed on the potential economic impact of the Park. The study looked at how proposed redevelopment at the Park would impact

on the local economy. The conclusions of the study were that proposed improvements to the Park would help to drive the development of the visitor economy, enable business growth and create new employment opportunities, as well as building on an existing local asset. The study identified that redevelopment at the Park has the potential to generate significant net additional local jobs and economic activity.

**23.11** The WMSLP undoubtedly has a large impact on the economy of the District, with the potential for this impact to grow further. However, future expansion or redevelopment of the Park is constrained by the Green Belt designation. The site is therefore identified as a Previously Developed Site in the Green Belt (Policy SP.21).

**23.12** There are competing priorities in planning policy terms within this location and the Council is seeking to achieve a balanced approach which maintains the identity of Bewdley along with the essence of the Green Belt whilst providing some flexibility to enable one of the District's key tourist attractions and employers to develop in a sustainable and appropriate manner. Unless the Park can continue to introduce new attractions and complementary development, the Park's contribution to the local economy will be restricted.

**23.13** In recognition of the valuable role which WMSLP plays in the region's tourism industry, and to help secure its long term future as a major tourist attraction, the Council will support the ongoing enhancement and improvement of the WMSLP as a major tourism destination, subject to other policies being adhered to (including Green Belt policies).

## The Wyre Forest

**23.14** This ancient woodland is a major attraction for tourists and residents of the District alike. Situated to the west of the District, the Forest offers visitors a range of woodland walks and trails amongst beautiful ancient oak woodland and conifer plantation together with an arboretum in the forest close to the 'Whitty Pear'. The forest now stretches to approximately 6,000 acres (although not all of this lies within Wyre Forest District). It is one of the largest remaining ancient woodlands in Britain and much of the area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with many rare species of flora and fauna being found there.

**23.15** The Forest includes a visitor centre and a recently developed Community Discovery Centre, providing a magnet for visitors to the Forest. A high wire course within the Forest, run by Go Ape, is situated near to the visitor centre. These facilities provide an important tourism offer and enable people to enjoy this ancient woodland. The Forest also helps to improve the health and wellbeing of the District's population by offering walks and trails to support all abilities.

**23.16** Natural England have produced guidance on ancient woodland <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences> Therefore, it is of vital importance to the future development of the attraction and the area as a whole, that any proposals respect the special characteristics of the area and do not cause harm to the main reason that people visit the area in the first place, the enjoyment of the Forest itself.

## Arboreta

**23.17** The District has two large Arboreta that perform a tourism function, as well as being important natural habitats. Arley Arboretum boasts more than 300 species of trees in formal and informal plantings and gardens. Bodenham Arboretum contains 3,000 species of trees and shrubs from all over the world and its 156 acres contains mature woodland, specimen trees and shrubs and two acres of pools and lakes. The continued operation of these tourist attractions may require future development proposals to come forward. Therefore, the policy framework allows for development to be considered, subject to the proposals not causing an adverse impact on the environment, which is the main draw for tourists.

### Policy DM.20 - Supporting Tourist Attractions

Proposals for the development of other tourism related developments within Wyre Forest District will be permitted where the following criteria have been met:

- a. The development is compatible with the surrounding area and Green Belt policies together with other policies within the Plan.
- b. Provision should be made for suitable access and car parking, including where appropriate coach parking, and where possible be served by public transport, walking and cycling routes.
- c. Heritage assets and their setting should be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced to encourage heritage tourism within the District.
- d. The natural environment and landscape should be enhanced and safeguarded.

## 23.18 Reasoned Justification

**23.19** Wyre Forest District provides a wide range of visitor attractions encompassing both the natural and the built environment. Tourism supports the economic viability and vitality of local businesses and provides uses for historic buildings.

**23.20** Visitor attractions can range from the main tourist attractions which were explored earlier in this chapter to other attractions such as Kidderminster Harriers, Bewdley Museum which attracts 200,000 visitors per annum, the Rivers Severn and Stour together with Stourport Riverside, the Worcestershire and Staffordshire Canal, Harvington Hall, Kidderminster Carpet Museum as well as various festivals.

**23.21** Access to attractions within the District should be as accessible to as many visitors as possible by public transport, walking and cycling routes and parking facilities. Currently there are few suitable coach parking areas. Additional suitable coach parking areas may encourage additional visitors to attractions.

**23.22** Within the District there are also 13 parks and gardens and 26 sites of natural and semi natural space. Around 6% of the District's land area is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) the Wyre Forest itself being the largest, others include Hurcott Pool and Woods and Puxton Marsh. The District also has Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) which include Habberley Valley and Redstone Marsh. There are also a number of formal parks in the District which host events including Brinton Park. The policy supports proposals that are compatible with the character of the area.

### **Tourist and business visitor accommodation**

**23.23** Hotels, bed and breakfast and self catering accommodation make a particular contribution to the tourist industry in the District as they are an important element in the stock of tourist accommodation. In order for the business, conference and tourist market to grow, the District Council recognises the need for accommodation to cater for these demands, together with adequate parking.

**23.24** Where uses such as restaurants and pubs, are included in schemes, their impact on adjacent settlements will need to be assessed.

#### **Policy DM.21 - Tourist Accommodation**

##### **1. Extension to Existing Tourist Accommodation**

- a. Proposals for extensions to existing tourist accommodation within settlements outside the Green Belt will be supported subject to their impact on the built, historic and natural environment.
- b. Proposals to existing tourist accommodation in the Green Belt should be of a scale that is not disproportionate to the size of the original building and design should be sympathetic to the original building.

##### **2. Conversion of Existing Dwellings to Tourist Accommodation**

The conversion of dwellings to guest house or bed and breakfast accommodation will be acceptable subject to car parking provision being available, in accordance with adopted Worcestershire County Council Parking Standards and there being no undue disturbance to surrounding neighbours.

##### **3. Caravan and Camping Sites**

- a. Applications for further new mobile home or caravan sites within the District's rural areas will be resisted due to the collective impact which the existing sites have on the landscape (also see Policy DM.30).
- b. Proposals for extensions and improvements to existing sites will be considered on their individual merits.

##### **4. Grass Pitch Sites**



Grass pitch sites designated for camping for recreation/holiday uses without new built facilities will be encouraged where the proposal does not conflict with any other policies. Grass pitch campsites will be encouraged to reuse existing buildings to provide facilities.

## 5. New Accommodation

Proposals for new visitor accommodation will only be supported for:

- a. New hotels within settlements outside the Green Belt subject to their impact on the built, historic and natural environment;
- b. New accommodation on brownfield sites. For any applications on greenfield sites, the Local Planning Authority will require supporting information demonstrating that all potential brownfield sites have been thoroughly investigated and why they are inappropriate for the development proposed;
- c. Conversion of large country houses to hotel or self catering use where it is demonstrated that proposals are fully in accordance with relevant policies of this plan, in particular where it is demonstrated that proposals are:
  - i. Of a type and scale that is appropriate for its location with no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity;
  - ii. Provided as part of a farm diversification scheme or ancillary development to an existing hotel, guest house, public house, restaurant or other similar establishment.
- d. The re-use of redundant rural buildings of permanent and substantial construction proposals must also comply with Policy DM.29 Reuse and adaptation of rural buildings.
- e. To protect the high quality landscape of the District, proposals for new build hotels will not be permitted in the Green Belt.

## Reasoned Justification

**23.25** Visitor accommodation can take a wide variety of forms, including hotels, bed and breakfast, guest houses, self catering and group accommodation such as youth hostels. A significant proportion of the money that visitors spend is on accommodation and therefore it is important to retain existing accommodation and secure the provision of new visitor accommodation to support tourism in the Wyre Forest District. By encouraging the development of visitor accommodation in built-up areas, the environmental impact of building in the open countryside can be minimised. In the open countryside reuse of existing buildings will help to minimise the visual impact.

**23.26** Sites within settlements are more appropriate as they already have access to the infrastructure, amenities and public transport links and cycling and walking infrastructure needed to support them. The NPPF requires Local Authorities to support tourism in rural areas and the countryside. It is important that any tourist accommodation does not compromise the amenity of surrounding local residents and is suitable in its surroundings.



**23.27** Camping sites can encourage tourism which helps the local economy, they also provide a wider range of holiday accommodation. Camping sites provide the facilities for overnight visitors who may then visit the many attractions that the District has to offer. However, hard standing sites for touring caravans and motor homes can have a detrimental impact on the landscape.

### **Waterway Policies**

**23.28** The River Severn plays a key role in attracting visitors to Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn whereas the potential of the River Stour and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal has yet to be fully exploited (other than in the Stourport Basins which has benefitted from a major restoration scheme).

**Policy DM.22 - Safeguarding the Green Belt**

Within the Green Belt (as defined on the Policies Map), development will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances, or unless one of the following applies:

- a. There is a clear need demonstrated for new buildings for the purposes of agriculture or forestry.
- b. Provision of appropriate facilities (both for existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments, as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- c. The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.
- d. The development involves the re-use or conversion of buildings in accordance with the policies for the re-use and adaptation of Rural Buildings (especially Policies SP.11 (dwellings) and DM.10 (employment)).
- e. The proposals involve the limited infilling or redevelopment of an identified Previously Developed Site in the Green Belt, in accordance with the site specific policies contained in Policy SA.PDL.
- f. The proposals are part of a Community Right to Build Order or a Neighbourhood Development Order.
- g. Other operations, including changes of use which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

In addition, development of housing in the Green Belt will not be permitted unless one of the following circumstances applies:

- i. There is a proven need in association with the purposes of agriculture or forestry.
- ii. It is for affordable housing, reserved for local community needs in accordance with Addressing Rural Housing Needs (Policy SP.11).
- iii. It is for the extension of an existing dwelling, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling.
- iv. Limited infilling in villages

Proposals within, or conspicuous from the Green Belt, must not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the Green Belt, by virtue of their siting, materials or design.

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## **Reasoned Justification**

**24.1** Over half of the District's land area is covered by the West Midlands Green Belt designation. The NPPF sets out the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and includes information on the types of development that are considered to be appropriate within the Green Belt. Chapter 6 of this document describes the necessary review of the Wyre Forest Green Belt. Policy DM.22 sets out detailed local guidance on development within the Green Belt.

**24.2** The essential characteristic of Green Belts is their openness and their permanence, and their protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Green Belts help to protect the countryside, and can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development. The inclusion of land in Green Belts is of paramount importance to their continued protection and it is important that the visual amenities of the Green Belt are not damaged by proposals for development within, or conspicuous from, the Green Belt.

**24.3** It is nationally recognised that outdoor sport is one of the uses of land which can be appropriate within the Green Belt. Within the District's Green Belt, there is a concentration of outdoor sports facilities on the Minster Road between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn. Because Green Belt areas, by their nature, are located close to towns, they can play a valuable role in opening up access to the open countryside for urban populations.

**24.4** The District Council has identified a small number of Previously Developed Sites within the Green Belt on the Policies Map. The policy framework for further development at these sites or for their redevelopment is set out within the NPPF at paragraph 145(g). Further site specific policies for each of these "Previously Developed Sites" are set out within Policy SA.PDL Part C of this document.

**Policy DM.23 - Safeguarding the Historic Environment**

1. Proposals likely to affect the significance of a heritage asset (including the contribution made by its setting or any important vistas or views) should be accompanied by a description of its significance in sufficient detail to allow the potential impacts to be adequately assessed by a qualified and/or experienced heritage professional. This will usually be in the form of a Heritage Statement. Where there is potential for heritage assets with archaeological interest to be affected, this description should be informed by available evidence, desk-based assessment and, where appropriate, field evaluation to establish the significance of known or potential heritage assets.
2. Any development proposal causing harm or loss of significance to a heritage asset will be resisted unless clear and convincing justification is provided, to permit assessment against the NPPF criteria, relevant legislation and published local and national guidance.
3. Development proposals should avoid harm to or loss of heritage assets wherever possible. The highest level of harm should require very robust justification, including the demonstrable consideration of alternatives. Substantial harm to a designated heritage asset should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.
4. The sympathetic and creative reuse and adaptation of historic buildings will be encouraged. Such proposals that provide a sustainable future for heritage assets identified as at risk, will be considered in accordance with Policy DM.24.
5. Repairs, alterations, extensions and conversions of heritage assets must be sympathetically designed to respect the significance of the form, character and materials of the original heritage asset and its setting. Fixtures and fittings should be inconspicuously sited and proportioned and be designed sympathetically to reflect the significance of the asset.
6. Where a material change to a heritage asset has been agreed, recording and interpretation should be undertaken to document and understand the asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance. The scope of the recording should be proportionate to the asset's significance and the impact of the development on the asset. The information and understanding gained should be made publicly available, as a minimum through the relevant Historic Environment Record and where appropriate at the asset itself through on-site interpretation.

**Reasoned Justification**

**25.1** The various elements of the historic environment contribute to making Wyre Forest District a desirable place to live, work and attract tourism and economic investment to the area. Conservation of heritage assets must reflect a sufficient understanding of their significance, including both their setting and their wider context in the landscape/townscape. It is recognised that many heritage assets, in particular archaeological remains, are currently unidentified and thus their significance is unknown. Appropriate information, where necessary from a field evaluation of significance, is the key to well-informed decision-making.

**25.2** Local heritage listing is a means for a community and a local authority to jointly identify heritage assets that are valued as distinctive elements of the local historic environment. The Local Heritage List identifies those heritage assets that are not protected by statutory designations. A Local Heritage List provides clarity on the location of these assets and what is significant about them. Their local interest could be related to the social and economic history of the area, individuals of local importance, settlement patterns or the age, design and style of buildings. The Local Heritage List is not restricted to buildings. It may comprise sites, places or areas such as village greens or ponds. It may include structures such as bridges and sluices, and historic street furniture such as letter boxes, signposts or telephone boxes. Local Heritage Assets are not given any protection through Law, but the use of appropriate materials and design is encouraged in schemes for their alteration. Repairs should be undertaken on a like-for-like basis. The District Council will continue to compile and maintain its Local Heritage List for those undesignated heritage assets it considers to be of local interest and significance.

**25.3** Pre-application discussions are encouraged, as this will allow the early identification of heritage issues, save time, reduce risk and improve the quality of applications and thereby encourage investment in the District. These discussions should involve the relevant local planning authority, applicants, architects and agents and heritage specialists and Parish or Town Councils working on Neighbourhood Plans. Proposals involving new build, repair, alteration or extension of heritage assets can conserve the significance of the existing asset and its setting. This may be achieved by means of appropriate siting, massing, form, height, scale, design and use of local materials.

**25.4** The use of local building materials or the sourcing of building materials compatible with those used historically but no longer available (such as stone from local quarries which have closed) is of great importance in maintaining the character of the built historic environment. The Building Stones Database produced by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust provides data on the origins of building stone used in local buildings and the District Council will use evidence contained within this database to inform its decision making.

**25.5** The sympathetic reuse, repair and adaptation of existing buildings can act as a catalyst for economic regeneration, support tourism and encourage the sustainable use of resources. It is important that any climate change mitigation / adaptation measures do not cause harm to the significance of heritage assets. Where appropriate, when opportunities for creative, contemporary and innovative architectural design arise, they will be encouraged.

**25.6** In having regard for the provisions of the NPPF, the total loss of any heritage asset either by demolition or development will be resisted unless all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses, find viable new uses for the asset, or otherwise preserve it in charitable or community ownership. When considering development proposals of substantial benefit to the community and warranting consideration of total loss of a heritage asset, the District Council will require clear evidence that the redevelopment will proceed.

**25.7** The District Council will from time to time identify and designate Conservation Areas where it considers those Areas to have special character warranting protection under Policy DM.23. Alongside relevant policies and guidance regard should be had to the provisions of relevant legislation, including the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

### Policy DM.24 Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness

1. All development will be expected to be of a high design quality. It will need to integrate effectively with its surroundings, in terms of form and function, reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve, and where appropriate, enhance cultural and heritage assets, landmarks and their settings. New and innovative designs which promote high levels of inclusivity and sustainability will be encouraged and supported where they enhance the overall quality of the built environment.
2. Applications should demonstrate, through a Design and Access Statement or other supporting evidence, how the objectives outlined in criterion 1 have been addressed. They will also need to address the following matters:

- a. Siting and layout

The siting and layout of a development should reflect the given characteristics of the site in terms of its appearance and function. Orientation should take advantage of passive heating and cooling systems, offer shade as appropriate and provide for the use of renewable energy.

- b. Relationship to Surroundings and to Other Development

Development proposals must complement the character of the area. In particular, development should respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interest of the townscape, frontages, streets and landscape quality of the local area, and should integrate well into the existing streetscene. Development should concentrate the most active uses or entrances on main thoroughfares and focal points, maximising the use of corner plots and the street frontage, and have appropriate regard to the common building line, historic street pattern and skyline.

- c. Neighbouring Amenity

Development should provide an adequate level of privacy, outlook, sunlight and daylight, and should not be unduly overbearing.

- d. Settlement Character

The distinct identity and character of settlements should be safeguarded and proposals should be consistent with the relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal or Neighbourhood Plan. Design proposals should ensure that the prominent views, vistas and skylines of Bewdley, Stourport-on-Severn, Kidderminster and the village

settlements are maintained and safeguarded, particularly where they relate to heritage assets, existing landmark buildings, and 'gateway' sites. Development at the urban edges should respect the rural setting.

e. Mix of Uses

To create vitality and interest, proposals should incorporate a mix of uses where this is appropriate to the location.

f. Flexible Design

Development should incorporate flexible designs, addressing access to public open spaces and enabling adaption for future needs and uses in terms of internal spaces and extensions. It should avoid being prejudicial to the development of larger areas.

g. Scale, Height and Massing

The scale, height and massing of development must be appropriate to the setting of the site and the surrounding landscape character and townscape, including existing urban grain and density. The footprint should be appropriate for the locality and not represent over-development of the site.

h. Links, Connectivity and Access

Design and layouts should maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cycle linkages to the surrounding area and local services and should be generally accessible for all users, including those with disabilities. Vehicular traffic from the development should be able to access the highway safely and the road network should have the capacity to accommodate the type and volume of traffic from the development.

i. Detailed Design and Materials

The detailing and materials of development should be of high quality and appropriate to its context, avoiding inappropriate features and detail. Design should have regard to sustainable construction approaches and ensure adaptability to changes in the climate.

j. Appropriate Facilities

Development should incorporate the parking facilities required by the current Parking Standards and provision for the storage of bicycles. Satisfactory access and provision for the parking, servicing and manoeuvring of vehicles should be provided in



accordance with the recognised standards. Parking solutions should provide secure parking with adequate natural surveillance without resulting in cars dominating a development.

k. Landscaping

Development should provide high quality hard and soft landscaping. The importance of soft landscaping, using appropriate species and incorporating arrangements for long-term management is emphasised. Existing trees should be incorporated into development or replacements provided where a tree survey demonstrates trees are not worthy of retention or retention is not possible.

l. Public Realm

Public realm and open spaces should be well-designed, appropriately detailed and maintained via management agreements. They should also incorporate active frontages where appropriate. Proposals should include hard and soft surfaces, public art, street furniture, shade, lighting and signage as appropriate to the development. Open space and play provision should be sited to take advantage of natural surveillance.

m. Creating a Safe and Secure Environment

Opportunities for creating a safe and secure environment and providing surveillance should be included, principally through the layout and positioning of buildings, spaces and uses. Where appropriate, development should incorporate measures for crime reduction that are consistent with those recommended by the Secured by Design guides. Buildings and their surrounding spaces should incorporate fire safety measures and be designed to allow rapid access by the emergency services.

New development should be inclusive and accessible for all users including those with disabilities.

## Reasoned Justification

**26.1** The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare robust policies on design. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (NPPF paragraph 126) and excellence in design can create a sense of place, improve the attractiveness of a location and create safer places to live and work, thereby enhancing the quality of people's lives. Much detailed advice on design issues exists at the national level but, given the importance of the issue locally, it is considered essential to have a specific development management policy at the District level.

**26.2** This policy is underpinned by the Council's Adopted Design Guidance SPD 2015. This SPD will be updated following adoption of the Local Plan.

**26.3** Good design can have a number of direct and indirect advantages. Well- designed well-connected places provide safe and attractive pedestrian environments and can therefore encourage sustainable modes of transport. Well-designed buildings can also incorporate sustainable and climate change mitigation features which maximise natural heating, cooling and lighting and provide opportunities for the generation of renewable energy.

**26.4** Poor design, on the other hand, has the potential to detract from people's day-to-day lives through poor building relationships, car-dominated layouts and a sub-standard public realm, all of which add little to a sense of place and have a negative impact on land values, property prices and the environment in general.

**26.5** The landscapes and townscape of the District represent a legacy of previous developments and they frequently present a history of design styles. Whilst many aspects of this design legacy are pleasing in terms of their aesthetics and function there are other examples which neither are pleasing nor continue to function well.

**26.6** Mixed use developments add to the vitality and viability of places. Residential properties within town centres extend the length of time activity takes place and create natural surveillance. Small business units and retail outlets within primarily urban areas increase the activity within those areas making places feel safer.

**26.7** Good design is also a crucial element in supporting economic prosperity, and can be an important factor in attracting inward investment and promoting a vibrant tourist economy. Where some employment development proposals require the accommodation of specific processes, design solutions should strive to achieve a positive aesthetic without compromising the functionality of the development.

**26.8** It is essential that full consideration is given to achieving sustainable development which counteracts anticipated climatic variations over the lifetime of a new building or development through the choice of location, design and materials. It is also important to address ecological integrity and there may be opportunities for slowing excess water through the use of green infrastructure, and use of guttering which can cope with higher-intensity rainfall. Reducing the demand for energy and improving energy efficiency is also an important starting point for achieving sustainable design. Further advice and guidance can be sought from the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, which covers risks to infrastructure and the built environment.

**26.9** Good design is also vital in protecting and enhancing the special character of Wyre Forest. The design principles contained within this policy provide a design framework for new development that is explained further in the Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document. They may also be complemented by Neighbourhood Plans, Management Plans and Conservation Area Appraisals that can provide the "fine grain" local design detail. In accordance with the NPPF, it is expected that pre-application discussions should include design-related matters.

**26.10** Where development proposals are required to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, these should be used to explain how the principles of good design, including those set out in this policy's criteria, have been incorporated into the development. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies in the WFDP and proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they have been informed by current available guidance.

### Policy DM.25 - Design of Extensions and Alterations

1. Extensions and alterations, whether to residential or non-residential properties should not have a serious adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents or occupiers.
2. Residential extensions and alterations should:
  - a. Accord with the 45 degree code
  - b. Be in scale and keeping with the form, materials, architectural characteristics and detailing of the original building
  - c. Be subservient to and not cumulatively, when taken with previous extensions, overwhelm the original building, which should retain its visual dominance
  - d. Harmonise with the existing landscape or townscape and not create incongruous features
  - e. Not encroach onto neighbouring land not owned by or under the control of the applicant, including highway pavements where properties are built up to the back of pavement

Unless it can be demonstrated that there is no other alternative, the development of flat roofed extensions will not be allowed.

3. Proposals involving the extension or alteration of an existing non-residential building should:
  - a. Accord with the 45 degree code if located next to a residential property.
  - b. Harmonise with the existing landscape or townscape and be complementary to the appearance of the existing building.
  - c. Not unduly diminish the amount of ancillary operational space.

### Reasoned Justification

**26.11** Extensions to dwellings constitute one of the most frequent proposals for development. A well-designed extension may add to the value of a property whereas unsympathetic design may not only reduce the value of the building but, potentially, its overall life-span.

**26.12** As a general rule extensions should be subservient to and reflect the scale and character of the existing building. Extensions, both in themselves and when taken together with previous works, should not dominate the original building. A cumulative succession of modest extensions on a building could have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area, particularly sensitive open countryside and Green Belt. For this reason extensions must be in scale with the original building rather than the building at the time of the application.

**26.13** This policy is underpinned by the Council's Adopted Design Guidance SPD 2015. This SPD will be updated following adoption of the Local Plan.

**26.14** Most dwelling houses in the District feature traditional pitched roofs, and in order to ensure that two storey extensions to such dwellings harmonise in general design terms, the use of flat roofs on such extensions will not normally be permitted.

**26.15** The designers of extensions must consider the 45 degree code in order to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents. Proposals that do not adhere to the code will not be permitted.

**26.16** Extensions and alterations to non-residential buildings must have regard to their impacts on the visual integrity of the building and local amenity. Such proposals should not seriously diminish the amount of operational space to the detriment of local amenity and safety.

**26.17** Where properties have been constructed to the back of the pavement with no amenity space in front of the elevation facing the highway, extensions or alterations (including external thermal cladding) will technically fall outside the curtilage and will not be permitted in the interests of highway safety and maintenance of utility services.

## **Policy DM.26 - Landscaping and Boundary Treatment**

### **Landscaping and Boundary Treatment**

1. Landscape Schemes and Boundary Treatments should be:

Specific to the place, recognise the context, reflect existing materials where these contribute to the character of the area and be demonstrably maintainable

2. Landscape schemes must demonstrate that they:

- a. Are informed by the Landscape Character Assessment and/or Historic Landscape Characterisation, protecting existing trees, hedges and other landscape features where possible.
- b. Provide adequate room for growth and acknowledge the importance of existing trees, hedges and plants when specifying their location
- c. Predominantly use local native species to protect and improve biodiversity
- d. Incorporate features to clearly mark desire lines, enhance or create views or vistas, and clearly define public and private spaces
- e. Incorporate planting appropriate to the prevention of crime and vandalism
- f. Provide imaginative, durable and porous hard landscaping solutions which add to a sense of place and local distinctiveness, meet policy requirements on water management integrating SUDS where possible
- g. Utilise lighting and architectural features to give artistic effect where appropriate to the locality

- h. Encourage walking and cycling and provide direct routes to relevant services
- i. Have a sustainable management plan providing for maintenance and aftercare

### 3. Boundary Treatments must be designed to:

- a. Reflect the local landscape or urban character and appearance of the area and protect existing trees, hedges or distinct landscape features to protect and improve biodiversity
- b. Reinstate and include appropriate new vegetative boundaries wherever possible
- c. Provide woodland planting where new development is proposed along transport corridors if this is appropriate to the existing landscape type or natural habitats

## Reasoned Justification

**26.18** Landscaping schemes and boundary treatments are an important aspect of design. When the topography of an area or the layout of the buildings is taken into account, a combination of good design and landscaping can dramatically reduce the impact of development.

**26.19** Wyre Forest District has a wealth of native species which should be utilised in landscaping schemes to harmonise with the character of the wider area.

**26.20** Insensitive landscaping schemes can harm the openness of the Green Belt and impact on historic views of the local towns and villages.

**26.21** The definition of public and private spaces is important to facilitate future management of landscapes in both urban and rural settings. Landscape schemes require a clear and sustainable management plan to ensure that they do not degenerate over time into wasteland.

**26.22** The use of certain plants (particularly those with spikes or thorns) can deter vandals, burglars and other criminal activity. Consideration should be given to how sensitive landscaping will contribute to a reduction in crime whilst being manageable and attractive.

**26.23** The integration of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems into hard landscaping schemes can enrich biodiversity and ecology whilst contributing to a reduction in flood risk See Policy SP32.

**26.24** Architectural and lighting features can enhance and contribute to an increase activity levels in and around landscaping schemes which can make these places better integrated into an urban environment.

**26.25** It is important to be able to easily identify the boundary between public and private spaces. Walls, fences, railings, gates, archways, paving and signage can all be used and should form an integral part of the design solution.

**26.26** Walling with or without timber infill panels, designed as an integral part of the overall development will enhance a housing development over the longer term, particularly when used in association with well-designed landscaping. Timber fencing along boundaries with the public domain is considered inappropriate due to its limited lifespan and vulnerability to damage.

**26.27** The need for a secure perimeter around industrial, commercial, business and retail premises is recognised, especially where there are external storage areas or vehicle depots. It is important, however, that the choice of fencing and screening can harmonise well with the wider setting.

**26.28** Where there is a requirement for screening, this can be designed as a work of art and this will be encouraged to mitigate adverse impacts where appropriate.

**26.29** Landscaping is an important element of design and should augment good design rather than screening or hiding poor design.

**26.30** Landscape schemes whether for residential or non-residential properties should have regards to the design principles set out within the Council's Adopted Design Guidance SPD (2015, and subsequent revisions).

### **Policy DM.27 - Advertisements**

1. Proposals for advertisements must:
  - a. Not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the area or building in/on which they are displayed.
  - b. Not be prejudicial to public safety by reasons of their size, location or content.
  - c. Not obstruct a highway or public right of way either directly or through maintenance requirements.
  - d. Not confuse users of highways, navigable waterways and railways.
2. Proposals for large advertisement hoardings or groups of small hoardings will only be permitted within towns at the following locations:
  - a. Vacant plots in large commercial or industrial areas or to provide temporary screening of those areas whilst undergoing development.
  - b. Around sites identified by the Council as long-term eyesores where alternative screening will not adequately enhance the amenity of the area.
3. Proposals for advertisements within, on or adjacent to heritage assets must:
  - a. Meet the criteria contained in Policies SP.21 - Historic Environment and DM.23 - Safeguarding the Historic Environment



- b. Reflect traditional signage compatible with the design and age of the heritage asset.
  - c. Avoid the use of internally illuminated signage or box fascias.
  - d. Avoid the use of non-traditional materials such as UPVC, Perspex and Plastics.
  - e. Be in scale and proportion to the heritage asset on which they are displayed.
4. Advance Warning Signs that would result in harm to the amenity of the townscape or landscape will not be permitted.
  5. Freestanding signs, in addition to meeting the criteria set out in Section 1 above, must:
    - a. Relate well to the business of the site.
    - b. Not lead to a predominance of such signage.
    - c. Be sited within the forecourt or curtilage of the building to which they relate

### Reasoned Justification

**26.31** The display of advertisements is subject to a separate consent process within the planning system and is principally set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#) as amended.

**26.32** In assessing applications to display advertisements the Planning Authority will have regard to the desirability of preserving the character and appearance of the general locality and the architectural quality or character of buildings when considering amenity issues.

**26.33** Illuminated signage will only be permitted where lighting is unobtrusive or not considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the site or surroundings. When internal illumination is proposed individual illuminated letters are preferred.

**26.34** Advertisement hoardings may harm the visual integrity of buildings if they are placed without due regard for the building's design and fenestration pattern. Proposals for externally mounted advertisement hoardings should demonstrate that the visual amenity of the building or area will not be compromised.

**26.35** The maintenance of public safety will be of paramount concern when considering applications for advertisements adjacent to railways, navigable waterways and highways.

**26.36** The placing of an advertisement on or close to listed buildings is unlikely to preserve their special interest and is best avoided. Proposals affecting a Conservation Area should demonstrate that its character will be preserved or enhanced.

**26.37** Consent will be granted for outdoor advertisements (including poster hoardings) provided the display will not adversely affect the amenity of the area or impact on public safety. Large hoardings in rural areas are likely to be out of place because of their urbanising effect.



**Policy DM.28 - Wyre Forest Waterways****1. River Severn**

Within the towns of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley developments and initiatives that make a positive contribution to the creation of a high quality riverside environment will be supported where these do not conflict or otherwise harm the character of the Conservation Areas or the wider landscape.

**2. River Stour**

The opening up and enhancement of the River Stour in Kidderminster town centre will be encouraged. Within the towns of Stourport-on-Severn and Kidderminster developments and initiatives that make a positive contribution to the creation of a high quality riverside environment will be supported where these do not conflict or otherwise harm the character of the Conservation Areas or the wider landscape.

**3. Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal**

Developments and initiatives that make a positive contribution to the creation of an attractive and high quality canal-side environment will be supported.

Development adjacent to the canal should, where appropriate, provide a strong, active frontage onto the waterside providing natural surveillance and promoting high levels of activity during the day.

Development in proximity to the canal should promote its use as a sustainable pedestrian and cycle route with towpath surfacing appropriate to the area through which the canal passes and its likely use. Canal-side landscaping should be appropriate for the location, set back to allow for future growth, allow for safe navigation and feature robust barriers to ensure vehicles do not enter the waterway.

All development proposals affecting the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset) must comply with the requirements of Policy DM.23 Safeguarding the Historic Environment.

**Reasoned Justification**

**26.38** The District's two major rivers are fundamental to the history, heritage and future of the District.

**River Severn**

**26.39** The River Severn shaped the historic development of Bewdley as an inland river port, later overtaken by Stourport-on-Severn, Britain's first canal town. Although the industrial role of the river has ceased it remains an important dominant feature both culturally and economically.

**26.40** Whilst the River Severn plays an important role in attracting tourism to both Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley, the potential for tourism associated with the River Stour and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal in Kidderminster has yet to be exploited.

### River Stour

**26.41** The River Stour, running north to south through the district powered medieval fulling mills and encouraged iron production at several semi-rural locations. Running through the centre of Kidderminster it was vital to the rapid industrial growth of the town, and, at a slightly later date, the industrialisation of Stourport. Unlike the navigable River Severn, the Stour ran through culverts in Kidderminster powering manufactories and serving dye-houses. Recent developments have exposed more of the river to view, however the town has yet to make the most of the opportunities this provides.

**26.42** The River Stour enters the River Severn at Stourport-on-Severn. The potential of the river at this location has been largely over-looked in recent years; however, there is potential for sensitive development adjacent to the river on former industrial sites where flood risk assessment allows.

### Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal - Stourport-on-Severn

**26.43** Stourport-on-Severn is unique as the only town in Britain built solely as a consequence of the construction of a canal. At one time only second to Birmingham as the Midlands' busiest inland port, despite the significant decline in industry in the town the canal remains crucial to the local tourism offer.

**26.44** The historic and cultural significance of the canal to the development of Stourport-on-Severn and to the industrialisation of the wider District is explained within the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area Appraisal.

**26.45** Whilst Stourport Basins have benefited from successful restoration schemes, their potential as a visitor attraction remains secondary to that of the River Severn and the amusements lining its banks. Longer visitor stays could be encouraged by capitalising on heritage-based tourism.

### Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal – Kidderminster

**26.46** The canal runs through the town centre and adjacent to several large retailers as well as places to eat and drink, however the potential of the canal has yet to be fulfilled.

**26.47** There is great economic potential yet to be unlocked in Kidderminster provided by canal-based tourism. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that a fear of anti-social behaviour and a perceived remoteness from the town centre deter all but brief stops. The canal does not benefit from much natural surveillance and litter, graffiti and poorly surfaced and signposted pedestrian routes contribute to a perception that the town does not relate well to the canal.

Given the close proximity to the canal of supermarkets and restaurants easily accessible by car consideration must be given to supporting development which forges stronger links between the canal and the town, whilst providing activity throughout the day.

### **Nature**

**26.48** The District's waterways present an opportunity to provide essential green infrastructure and biodiversity corridors and habitats. This policy should be read in conjunction with policies SP.23 - Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity, SP.24 Protecting and Enhancing Geodiversity and SP.28 Green Infrastructure.

**Policy DM.29 - Re-use and adaptation of rural buildings**

1. Development proposals for the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings designed for any new use will be considered in accordance with the following criteria:
  - a. The rural building(s) are permanent structures of a size which makes them suitable for conversion without the need for additional extensions, substantial alterations, significant building works (or complete reconstruction), or the addition of any new buildings within the curtilage.
  - b. The rural building(s) are in keeping with their surroundings and the conversion works would have no significant detrimental effect on the fabric, character or setting of the building.
  - c. The proposed development enhances and safeguards heritage assets and the pattern and form of the buildings within historic farmsteads.
  - d. Suitable access arrangements can be made, without the need for extensive new access roads onto the public highway or within the site itself.
  - e. There is no adverse impact on the countryside, landscape and wildlife or local amenities.
  - f. Appropriate drainage and flood risk mitigation, including safe access requirements, can be provided and maintained for the lifetime of the development.
2. Development proposals which provide economic activity supportive of local needs will be encouraged and considered on their merits, assessed against the criteria in section 1 above.
3. Development proposals for residential use must demonstrate that a suitable economic development use is not viable and provide clear and convincing justification for residential use.
4. In addition to the criteria in section 1 above, development proposals for residential use must also demonstrate that:
  - a. The proposals do not lead to the dispersal of economic activity which would have an adverse impact on the local economy or prejudice the vitality of nearby town centres or villages.
  - b. The proposals do not involve the conversion of domestic outbuildings.
5. Where permission has been granted previously (whether through this policy or former policies) for the conversion of rural buildings to other uses, the provisions of Policy DM.24 - Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness will apply to all new development proposals affecting those buildings.
6. Where previous development has relied upon this policy or an earlier equivalent no further development (including extensions) will be permitted within the curtilage.
7. Where a rural building has been converted to residential use under permitted development legislation, permitted development rights will be withdrawn on commencement of that use and no further development (including extensions) will be permitted within the curtilage.

## Reasoned Justification

**27.1** The re-use and adaption of existing rural buildings is an important planning consideration. With the changing structure of the rural economy many agricultural and rural buildings are becoming surplus to requirements. The re-use of such buildings may provide economic benefits to rural areas, allowing farm diversification for uses such as commercial, leisure, tourism and sport and recreation. The re-use of rural buildings can also help to reduce the need for new buildings to be erected in the countryside.

**27.2** It is important that the architectural or historic characteristics of rural buildings are not destroyed through conversion. Residential conversion can result in the greatest change and can be detrimental to both the fabric and character of historic rural buildings and their appearance in the landscape.

**27.3** Proposals for the residential use of rural buildings will be considered in the light of physical effects of the conversion on the character of the building, its significance, existing wildlife, and its appearance in the landscape.

**27.4** New windows and doors and external domestic features such as gardens and parking can be detrimental to a rural building and its setting.

**27.5** The degree of harm on the character and appearance of the countryside is an important consideration when assessing the effects of residential curtilage or establishing the likely demand for further buildings on the site. The Council is unlikely to give permission for proposals for residential conversion where this requires extensive alteration or rebuilding, or if the creation of a residential curtilage would have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside. To this end, no extensions to dwellings created (whether through Policy DM.29 and earlier rural building policies or via implementation of permitted development rights) will be permitted, and neither will the introduction of new buildings into the curtilage of these dwellings.

**27.6** The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project and subsequent guidance provides a key element of the evidence base and provides support for the policy approach of Policy DM.29. The District Council will use evidence contained within the West Midlands Historic Farmsteads and Landscapes Project to inform its decision making.

### Policy DM.30 - Chalets, Caravans, Mobile Homes

Mobile home and caravan sites represent one of the biggest development pressures in the rural areas of the District. The issue is most prevalent along (but not confined to) the River Severn and to the west of the River Severn around the Wyre Forest itself.

1. Further caravan, mobile home and chalet developments or changes of these developments from holiday use to permanent residential occupation within the District will be resisted due to the collective impact which existing sites have on the landscape.
2. Extensions to existing chalets should be subservient to and enhance the appearance of the building. They should not have a significant adverse impact on adjacent occupiers or the surrounding landscape and should comply with all other relevant policy.

3. Changes to permanent residential occupation of individual chalets will only be allowed where:
  - a. there is adequate road access and car parking adjacent
  - b. there is reasonable access to facilities by sustainable transport (walking or cycling) or public transport
  - c. the building is of a permanent construction, is not liable to heave or subsidence, and is not liable to flooding or located within the floodplain
4. The replacement of a holiday use chalet by a permanent residential dwelling will not be permitted
5. Replacement of chalets should be on a “like for like” basis in terms of size and materials and should result in a reduction in the visual impact on the landscape. For sites that are located within the floodplain, consideration should be given to relocating chalets to an area of lower flood risk and it must be demonstrated that the development can be made safe for the lifetime of the development.

### Reasoned Justification

**27.7** There are around 3000 caravans in the District, of which only 200 are permanent dwellings, the remainder being licensed for holiday use.

**27.8** There are almost 400 chalets constructed before the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act.

**27.9** Pressures to further extend and modernise holiday chalets may lead to chalet sites evolving into permanent residential estates. This is highly undesirable as they are usually located in areas where residential development would not normally be permitted. They are often found in inaccessible locations with poor access roads, remote from shops and schools and often in areas liable to flooding, heave or subsidence. There is a particular issue with these developments along the River Severn and within the Wyre Forest itself. Historically, these chalets were used at weekends and during the summer but they are increasingly being used as permanent dwellings, often with the addition of a brick skin.

### Policy DM.31 - Equestrian Development

1. All proposals for equestrian related development will be assessed to ensure that they will not individually or cumulatively affect the quality and character of the landscape and the amenity of any adjacent residential areas. Appropriate landscaping and screening should be provided.
2. All proposals for equestrian related development will be required to demonstrate that they have taken full account of their potential impact on local biodiversity and habitats and, wherever possible, should incorporate measures to promote and protect biodiversity.

3. Proposals for equestrian related development should not have an adverse impact on the safety and capacity of the local highway and public rights of way networks. Any new access from the highway and on-site parking should be provided in accordance with the appropriate highways and parking standards.
4. Proposals for new menages must not cause a harmful impact on the character of the landscape or on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. They should be sited near to the stables to limit the visual impact on the landscape.
5. Proposals for flood lighting will also require planning permission and, where it is accepted that such lighting is essential, its use will be controlled through conditions restricting its maximum height, minimal glare and operating times in order to protect the amenity of the area and local residents.
6. Commercial Equestrian Facilities
  - a. New developments associated with commercial equestrian uses such as livery stables, riding schools, racing stables and stud farms must not impact on the purposes and visual amenity of the Green Belt or open countryside. Within the Green Belt, applications will also be strictly assessed against the criteria listed within Policy DM.22
  - b. The conversion of existing buildings to genuine related uses, rather than new build, will be encouraged where the existing buildings are suitable for and capable of conversion.
7. Equestrian Facilities for Leisure Use
 

In considering proposals for smaller scale equestrian developments relating to non-commercial leisure use, applicants should have regard for the need for stables/field shelters/feed stores/tack rooms/menages to:

  - a. Be sited within or immediately adjoining an existing building or complex, or alongside an existing hedgerow.
  - b. Be of traditional design and blend naturally into the landscape.
  - c. Comply with the space standards for stables as recommended by the British Horse Society.<sup>(45)</sup>
  - d. Provide sufficient facilities so as to be fit for purpose without the need for additional extensions or addition of new permanent or temporary structures on the site.

## Reasoned Justification

**27.10** The keeping of horses on agricultural land usually requires planning permission for the change of use.

45 Code of practice for the welfare of HORSES, PONIES, DONKEYS AND THEIR HYBRIDS  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/700200/horses-welfare-codes-of-practice-april2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700200/horses-welfare-codes-of-practice-april2018.pdf)  
 In line with recommendations from the British Horse Society, and in recognising the need to allow suitable stables, developments to address horse welfare, whilst managing the impact on the countryside, the Council considers that the maximum size for a single stable for leisure use should be 3.65m x 4.25m. The roof should be a reasonable clear space (at least 1m) above the withers of the horse.



**27.11** Physical development on the land such as stables, tack rooms, feed stores and menages also requires planning permission.

**27.12** Careful consideration will be given to the impact of proposals on the landscape character of the surrounding area. The cumulative impact of temporary stores and stables and new field divisions adjacent to permanent facilities can have a harmful impact on the surrounding countryside or Green Belt. Relevant conditions or S.106 agreements may be imposed on planning permissions where necessary.

**27.13** Applicants will be required to submit evidence alongside their proposals to demonstrate that they have taken full account of the potential impacts on local habitat and biodiversity such as the retention of existing hedgerows at field boundaries. Mitigation measures such as the installation of bird and bat boxes should be incorporated wherever possible.

#### **Policy DM.32 - Agricultural Land Quality**

- A. Applications for development on best and most versatile agricultural land of higher quality grades will be resisted where the site has not been allocated in the Local Plan and is considered worthy of protection.

#### **Reasoned Justification**

**27.14** The grade of agricultural land should be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations when determining planning applications.

**27.15** Protecting higher grade agricultural land from development will indirectly protect water resources by protecting infiltration capacity.

**27.16** Best and most versatile agricultural land is defined within the NPPF Glossary as Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

**27.17** To assist in understanding agricultural land quality within the plan area and to safeguard 'best and most versatile' agricultural land in line with paragraph 174 of the NPPF, strategic scale Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Maps are available on the [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk) website. Natural England also has an archive of more detailed ALC surveys for selected locations which can be supplied digitally by contacting Natural England. Where no reliable information is available, the Council will reasonably expect developers to commission a new ALC survey to support a planning application for a site they wish to develop

**28.1** The Development Strategy (Chapter 5) describes the overall level of development required and the type of development that is appropriate in each of the broad areas of the District. This section allocates the sites which will deliver the required development.

**28.2** Policy SP.1 sets out a housing requirement of 5,520 dwellings plus 487 C2/Institutional (eg Care Homes) bedspaces to be built in the 20 year plan period to 2036. This number was set through the Housing Need Study using the Government's latest guidance and will be regarded as a minimum rather than a target by the District. It is also necessary for the District Council to provide some flexibility through an apparent over-provision: this is to make allowances for sites not coming forward (eg for reasons associated with deliverability). This section reflects the settlement hierarchy described at Policy SP.2

### **How have the housing sites been selected?**

**28.3** An ongoing 'call for sites' was initiated in the autumn of 2014 which led to the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) being published in May 2016. This was updated in 2018 and then completely refreshed in 2019. Essentially the role of the HELAA is to identify a range of sites that may have potential for housing development over the coming years. It is important to note that a site's inclusion in the HELAA does not necessarily mean it is suitable for development – merely that it has been put forward (most often by the landowner) as a possibility for consideration by the Council for future allocation. The HELAA therefore provided a basket of sites from which choices have been made during the preparation of the Plan.

**28.4** Sites have also been put forward for inclusion on the Brownfield Land Register and some of these are suitable for allocation.

**28.5** The site allocations have to be based on evidence. All of the sites have been assessed against the same planning criteria to assess the suitability of each of them for development, focussing on the three elements of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) and incorporate consideration of other technical evidence generated in the preparation of the Local Plan, including:

- Green Belt Study
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Water Cycle Study
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Viability Assessment
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan

**28.6** In making the decision as to whether to include a site or not in these allocations, it is important to note that there is rarely a site that satisfies all criteria: therefore this means that judgement has to be exercised and aspects of evidence balanced against each other.

## The Site Allocations

**28.7** Policies in Chapters 29 to 36 describe details of the sites that are allocated in this Local Plan. Each chapter covers a different area of the district. Policies also set out specific requirements for the individual sites. As well as these specific requirements, the relevant provisions of other policies contained in the Plan will apply to development on the allocated sites. The individual housing site policies include provisional 5 year phasing periods for their development which relate to those shown in the detailed housing trajectory. The figure for the number of dwellings in the site allocations is an indicative figure that takes account of the site area and any known constraints (e.g. where parts of the site have a risk of flooding or ecological constraints) and, unless more specific details are available, is calculated to a density in sympathy with the surrounding area.

## Infrastructure requirements

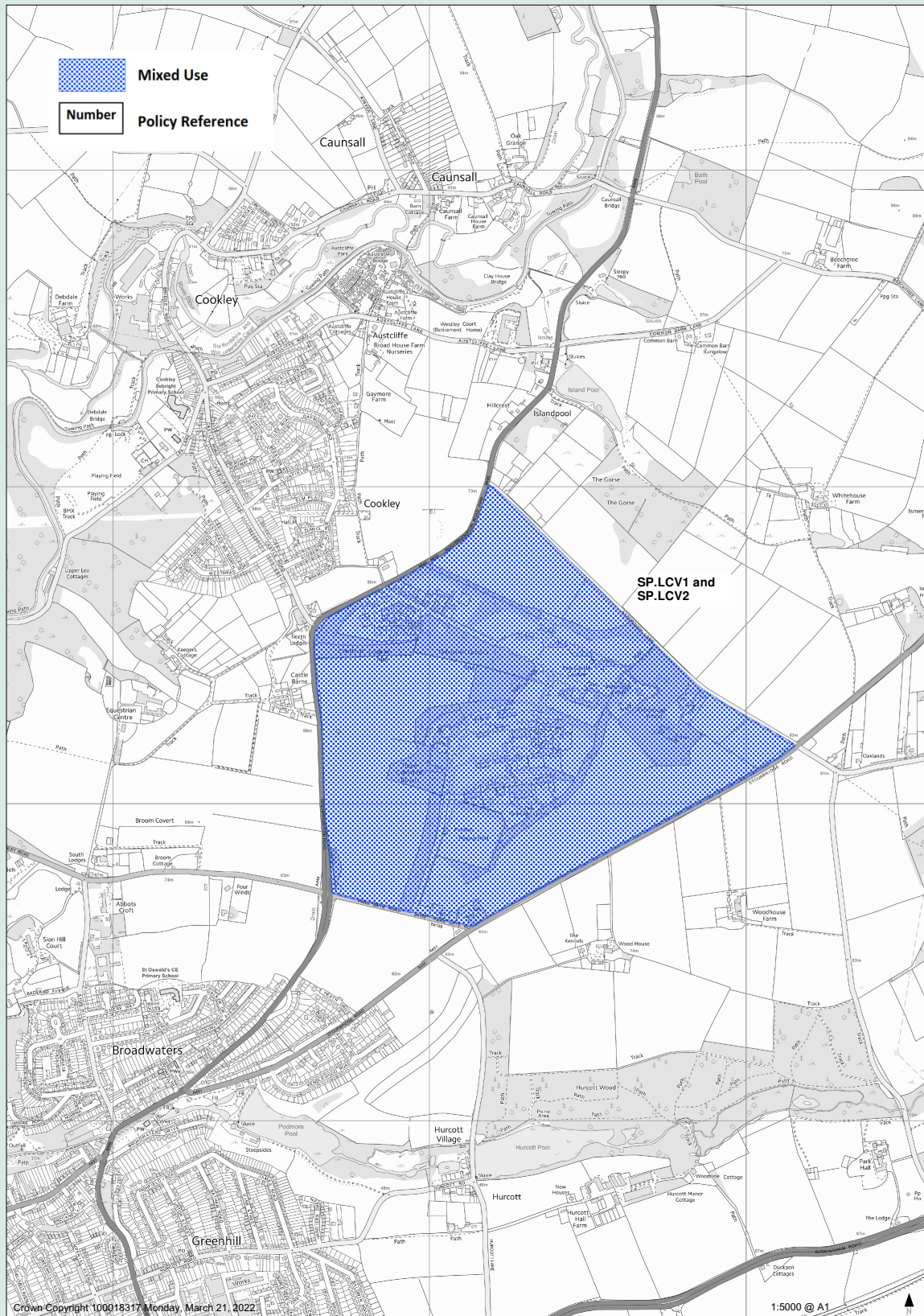
**28.8** All the relevant infrastructure requirements for the site contained in the following policies are set out in the Wyre Forest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which forms part of the evidence base. Particular reference should be made to the chapters on transport and education.

## Site Plans

**28.9** Each individual site policy includes a map showing the location of the site on an Ordnance Survey basemap Copyright 100018317

**28.10** Minerals and Waste Allocations where minerals resource safeguarding has been highlighted together with those sites potentially affecting minerals infrastructure and waste management facilities are listed in Chapter 15 – Pollution, Minerals and Waste.

## Overview of Allocated Sites in Chapter 29: Lea Castle Village (please refer to Policies Map for further information)





## Lea Castle Village (120ha)

### Reasoned Justification

**29.1** Lea Castle Village is centred on the former hospital site and is bounded by the A449 (Wolverhampton Road), Axborough Lane, the A451 (Stourbridge Road) and the B4190 (Park Gate Road). The vision is to create a new sustainable village with enough housing to generate a new village centre with its own local shop, primary school and perhaps a GP surgery in order for the development to provide for the needs of the new community and minimise impact on nearby social infrastructure. Housing will be provided to cater for all sections of the community with a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures. It is envisaged that Lea Castle Village will also provide land for employment uses as well as new and upgraded sports pitches. All of this will be provided in an extensive woodland/landscape setting.

**29.2** The allocation is for the whole site. The central area has outline planning approval (17/0205/OUTL) for up to 600 dwellings, up to 3,350sqm B1, 150sqm A1/A3/D1 uses (local shop/ cafe/ community space), public open space, ecological mitigation, drainage works, infrastructure and ancillary works. (Main access to be from Park Gate Road with secondary access from The Crescent and limited access from Axborough Lane). Development of the 600 dwellings is now well advanced under planning approval 19/0724/RESE.

#### Policy SP.LCV1 - Lea Castle vision

The site is allocated for development of a sustainable village of high quality design. The development of Lea Castle Village over the plan period will be achieved through:

- i. Delivery of around 1,400 new dwellings (600 of these already have planning permission)
- ii. Provision of around 7 hectares for employment development to meet the requirements of a range of businesses
- iii. Provision of around 2 hectares for a 420 place primary school
- iv. Creation of a village centre to include:
  - a. Retail provision appropriate to local needs; and
  - b. A flexible community facility able to accommodate a meeting room, cafe and potentially a GP surgery together with some C2 provision
- v. Retention and upgrading of 3 existing grass playing pitches and changing facilities together with provision of land for either an artificial grass pitch (3G) or alternative suitable outdoor sport/recreation facilities
- vi. Retention of existing woodland and hedgerows (other than where access is required) with additional native planting to provide substantial buffering around new development
- vii. Incorporation of additional green infrastructure including the creation of an area of acid grassland adjacent to Axborough Wood
- viii. Provision of allotments or community orchard
- ix. Provision of pedestrian and cycle links both within and off the site to connect to facilities in Cookley and Broadwaters as well as to nearby schools

**Site specific Principles of Development**

**29.3** In addition to the requirements set out in Policy SP.LCV1, the following points should also be adhered to.

**Policy SP.LCV2 - Lea Castle Village Principles of Development****Overall Design**

- i. The site must be planned and developed on a comprehensive basis. Design principles will be agreed in accordance with an approved indicative masterplan for the entire site to ensure a sustainable and high quality development and all developers will be expected to adhere to these agreed principles. Any mitigation required in terms of noise, air quality, drainage and ecology should be determined at an early stage
- ii. The development will aim to achieve Building for a Healthy Life and Building with Nature accreditation
- iii. Development off Axborough Lane will consist of areas of lower density housing
- iv. Recording of above ground heritage assets is required along with a further desk-based archaeological assessment to identify potential for archaeology and inform any requirements about the scope and scale of any preservation and mitigation

**Physical infrastructure**

- v. The development will be expected to deliver highway improvements at nearby junctions as required and provide bus, walking and cycling links throughout the site
- vi. A through route serving the school/community facility and the residential development should be provided to allow for buses to be diverted through the centre of the site to enable quality public transport provision and encourage active travel
- vii. The employment area should incorporate sustainability measures into the design and include start-up units

**Social Infrastructure**

- viii. Opportunities for community-led housing schemes will be considered and local community-led groups will be encouraged to work with selected developers in order to meet housing needs
- ix. Self-build plots should be provided on an appropriate part of the site
- x. The provision of some custom-build dwellings should be made where viable to do so
- xi. Provision must be made early on in the development phases for a community facility that contains space that can be used for a number of uses on a flexible basis

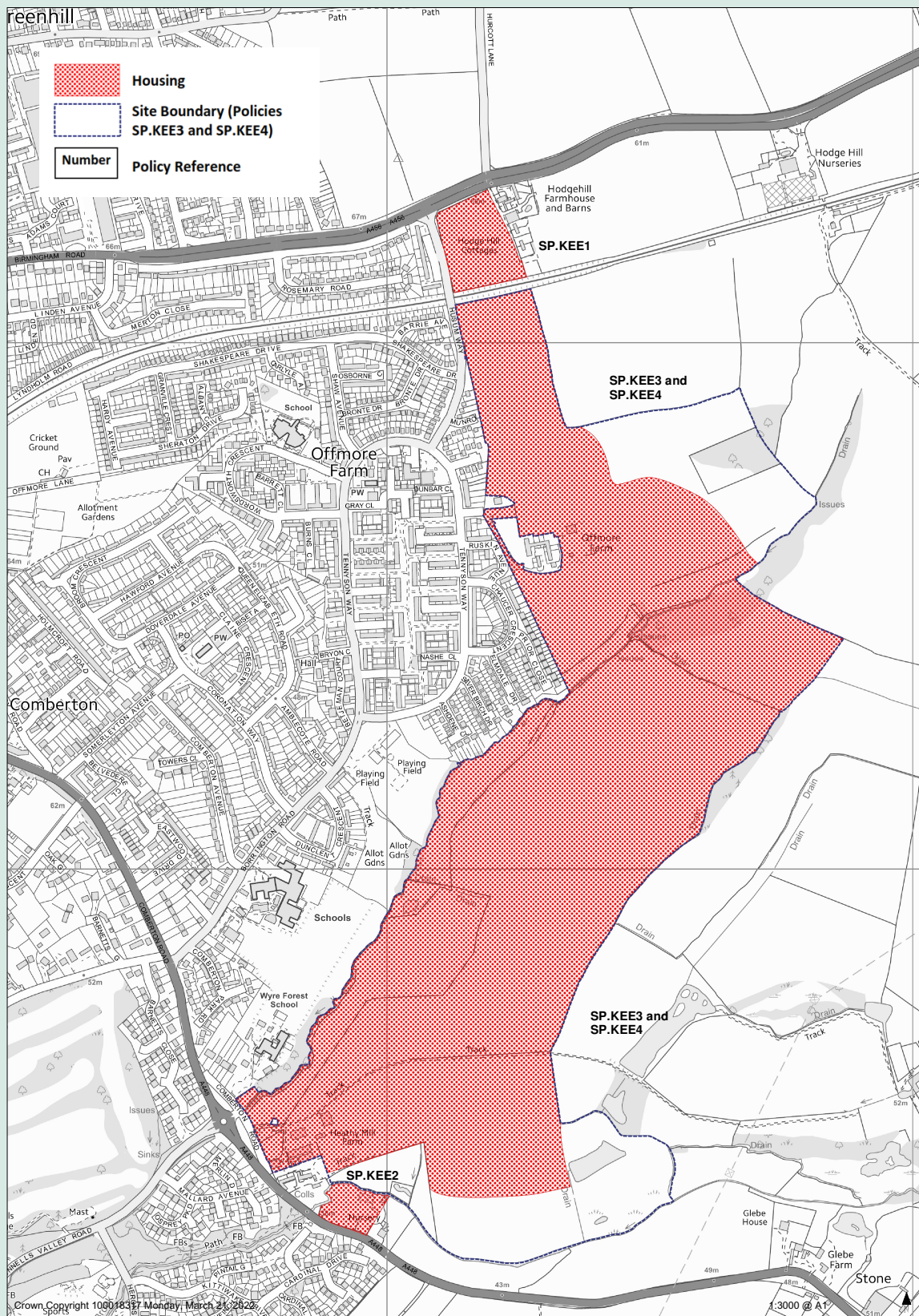
**Environmental Infrastructure**

- xii. Developments will be expected to make a net positive effect on the local green infrastructure network

- xiii. Developments should protect and contribute to connectivity for wildlife, ensuring that an appropriate buffer is provided for existing and new woodland to minimise impacts of lighting and noise on protected species
- xiv. Axborough Wood (ancient woodland) must be appropriately buffered from any new development
- xv. No development will be allowed in the north-east corner of the site at the junction between the A451 and Axborough Lane as a mains gas pipeline crosses the site at this location. Development should be kept below the ridgeline on the A451 in order to preserve the existing linear treeline
- xvi. Landscaping will be required around all development outside of the former hospital site in order to soften the impact on the landscape and wider views
- xvii. On-site physical activity should be encouraged with a network of circular routes created around the site. It should provide pedestrian and cycle links within the site and from the site to give convenient safe routes to local facilities and into the surrounding area. This should include circular woodland trails / nature trails/ trim trails within the site to encourage active lifestyles within the development and limit additional pressure on the nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest at Hurcott
- xviii. Recreational activities should be discouraged within areas known to support light-and-disturbance-sensitive statutorily protected species (the horseshoe bats and dormice)
- xix. A habitat management plan will be required
- xx. Biodiversity measures will be expected to be incorporated into building design eg. green roofs, green walls, bat boxes, nesting boxes
- xxi. All proposals are to take into consideration the Kidderminster North Green Infrastructure Concept Statement
- xxii. Existing mature boundary trees should be retained where possible and supplemented to partially screen and allow filtered views of the development
- xxiii. Light pollution should be kept to a minimum to protect wildlife, especially bat colonies. Only minimal lighting is to be used through woodland areas
- xxiv. Planting along the western boundary with the A449 should be extended to provide screening to the west and enhance the wider Lea Castle site GI network. Any development on the north-west of the site must buffer the setting of Lea Castle Farm and avoid visual coalescence with Cookley



**Map Overview of Allocated Sites in Chapter 30: Kidderminster Eastern Extension (Please refer to Policies Map for further information)**



**Land at Husum Way 2.11ha 30 dwellings 2031-36**

**30.1** This site is immediately adjacent to the built-up area and is in arable use. The site fronts the A456 on its northern edge with the main railway line to the south (in a cutting). It is bordered by Husum Way to the west which serves Offmore Farm Estate and connects through to Comberton Estate and to the east the site is bounded by Hodge Hill Farmhouse, barns and cottages. This complex is accessed via a track running alongside the site which also provides the existing access to the field.

**Policy SP.KEE1- Land at Husum Way**

The site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

- i. Access to the site will be taken from Husum Way
- ii. Part of the site may be required for a revised junction at the end of Husum Way
- iii. Development should be set back from the A456 and from Hodge Hill Farmhouse and Barns behind a substantial landscape buffer in order to soften the transition from rural to suburban character and protect the setting of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Hodge Hill Farm complex
- iv. Any new development should, in terms of form, scale and massing respect the orientation and setting of the farmstead and historic views from and towards the farmstead
- v. A further landscape buffer will be required alongside the edge of the railway to enhance this wildlife corridor
- vi. Sensitive lighting will be required to protect habitats and their use by protected species, along the road and rail embankments
- vii. Existing boundary hedgerows and trees should be retained and supplemented with additional native planting other than where access is required
- viii. Building heights should reflect neighbouring development especially on the eastern part of the site nearest Hodge Hill Farm Barns
- ix. Densities should be much lower in the eastern part of the site to allow for additional soft landscaping among the dwellings in order to create a more rural feel

**Reasoned Justification**

**30.2** This development will become the new edge to Kidderminster when travelling into the town from Blakedown and Hagley along the A456. It is important that this site gives a well-designed transition from a rural character of isolated dwellings into a suburban development of the urban area. High quality landscaping and building design will be very important at this gateway site.

**Comberton Lodge Nursery (0.80ha) 9 dwellings 2021-26**

**30.3** This former plant nursery is presently used by a landscaping firm. It has frontage to the A448 Bromsgrove Road. It lies just beyond the built-up area and is in the Green Belt. The land is bounded by the Hoo Brook to the north and west and Comberton Lodge and its grounds to the east. Immediately to the east of the site, the Hoo and Barnett Brook is a designated Local Wildlife Site.

**Policy SP.KEE2 - Comberton Lodge Nursery**

The site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

- i. Access to the development must be taken from the A448 and not from the larger site to the rear
- ii. The adjacent Comberton Lodge and Heathy Mill Farm complex are both on the local heritage list and their settings should be protected from development
- iii. The rear part of the site falls within the flood zone associated with the brook (approximately 0.24ha) and should be left undeveloped and managed as a green corridor
- iv. Mature trees along the watercourse and the road frontage form part of a wooded east-west corridor across the wider landscape and should be retained
- v. An ecologically functional buffer zone should be retained around the woodland and brook with development kept to the central part of the site
- vi. Bat and otter surveys will be required to inform the site design, layout and lighting
- vii. The Hoo Brook corridor must be protected from lighting, surface water run-off and other pollutants likely to arise from any development
- viii. A detailed site-specific flood risk assessment will be required to inform the developable area and ensure a safe and sustainable development. Opportunities to help improve flood storage and flood flow conveyance, linked to blue infrastructure enhancements, should be implemented where possible.

**Reasoned Justification**

**30.4** This small former plant nursery consists of a number of rundown polytunnels and a large area of hardstanding. A carefully designed low density development set back from the road behind substantial landscaping would help to improve the setting of the neighbouring Locally Listed buildings at Heathy Mill and Comberton Lodge. The Hoo Brook forms the northern and western boundaries to the site and its flood zone affects part of the site.

**Land at Comberton Road (84.36ha) 1400 dwellings plus community facilities****Reasoned Justification**

**30.5** The site is allocated for the development of 1400 dwellings, a community hub and extensive open space. The site is currently predominantly arable land divided by hedgerows. There is one public right of way which crosses the southern part of the site from near the Spennells Valley Road /Comberton Road roundabout and connects through to Harvington village. The Hoo Brook Local Wildlife Site lies adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. The land immediately to the north of the Hoo Brook will be left undeveloped together with land alongside the western boundary (delineated by a tributary of the Hoo Brook) which will be designated as a new linear wetland nature reserve. A detailed site specific flood risk assessment will be required to inform the developable areas and ensure a safe and sustainable development. Opportunities to help improve flood storage and flood flow conveyance, linked to blue and green infrastructure enhancements, will be implemented where possible. The overall vision is to create an attractive mixed tenure residential development offering a choice of high quality new homes to meet local needs set within an extensive area of green space which is readily accessible to everyone in the area. The aim is to create a place where people want to live and local residents can easily access nature.

**Policy SP.KEE3 - Land at Comberton Road Overall Vision**

The development of this site over the Local Plan period will be achieved through:

- i. The delivery of around 1,400 new dwellings
- ii. The creation of a community hub to include:
  - a. 2 hectares of land for a 420 place primary school
  - b. Retail provision appropriate to local needs
  - c. A community facility able to accommodate a meeting room, cafe and potentially a GP surgery
  - d. Playing pitches
- iii. The main site access will be from the existing roundabout on the A448 by Spennells Valley Road. A secondary access will be taken off Husum Way to the south of the railway bridge. The spine road will be a single carriageway suitable for buses with a 20 mph speed limit with cycle and pedestrian provision alongside
- iv. Pedestrian and cycle links will be provided from the site to connect with existing development on Comberton Estate (through Borrington Park) and on Offmore Estate (via Offmore Farm Close) and on through to the rail station and town centre together with diversion of buses to serve the new development
- v. A linear nature reserve will be created along the western edge of the site offering new ecological wetland habitats and providing a buffer zone between the existing and proposed developments
- vi. An area of allotments or community orchard will be provided on the northern part of the site in the vicinity of Offmore Farm barns



- vii. Play facilities should include opportunities for natural play
- viii. Existing hedgerows and natural features should be retained and supplemented as part of a comprehensive GI strategy taking into account the Kidderminster East GI Concept Statement
- ix. The Hoo Brook and its tributaries will require an ecological buffer to protect existing wildlife as well as appropriate blue and green infrastructure enhancements including flood storage reduction measures where possible
- x. The rising land to the north-east of Offmore Farm Court will form part of an extensive area of natural open greenspace with a network of footpaths running around the site boundary and connecting across the development to encourage recreational use. Those areas of open space along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site will remain undeveloped and within the Green Belt

### **Site Specific Principles of Development for Land at Comberton Road**

#### **SP.KEE4 - Land at Comberton Road Principles of Development**

##### **Overall Design**

- i. A masterplan should be drawn up as part of any outline planning application which should include information on phasing and implementation to ensure effective integration with provision of the school
- ii. Approximately 50% of the site area should be retained as green space with a linked network of paths/cycleways throughout the site. A number of circular routes should be provided on the site to encourage people away from more sensitive sites nearby. Areas of new woodland planting should be at least 30 metres wide where possible
- iii. The site will be split into distinct character areas based around 'village greens'. The overall design will be expected to adhere to an agreed design code
- iv. The development will aim to achieve Building For a Healthy Life and Building with Nature accreditation
- v. The existing GI framework should be fully integrated into the masterplan, avoid and minimise landscape and visual impacts of built development. The north-south woodland corridor that forms the western site boundary and the historic north-south hedgerow that forms the eastern boundary should be supplemented and buffered to soften the transition from suburban to rural landscape
- vi. The site has potential for below ground archaeology and should be assessed as part of a programme of works that will potentially include geophysical survey, trial trenching, environmental sampling and mitigation through more detailed investigations. A programme of trial trench evaluation should be agreed with the archaeological advisor to the LPA with the results informing the scope of any further archaeological works required before any development commences. Appropriate archaeological assessment should accompany or be incorporated into a Heritage Statement submitted with the planning application to identify the significance of on-site assets that may be affected and to assess the impact of development on them and their settings. An assessment of impact on the setting of designated heritage assets is also required

### Physical Infrastructure

- vii. The main site access road will need to be carefully designed to minimise ecological impact, in particular where it crosses the watercourse to the rear of Prior Close
- viii. Sufficient detailed hydraulic modelling will be required to confirm actual floodplain extents. The brook along the western boundary currently discharges into a culvert under the A448. Improvements to the watercourse should be sought as part of any road proposals to improve species migration between the nature reserve and the wet woodland corridor.
- ix. As the site sits on an aquifer, any treatment of road run-off must use sealed systems to discharge to on-site treatment before infiltration or discharge off-site.

### Social Infrastructure

- x. Provision must be made for a community facility in the early phases of development that contains space that can be used for a number of uses on a flexible basis.
- xi. The provision of some custom-build dwellings should be made where viable to do so
- xii. Self-build plots should be provided on an appropriate part of the site

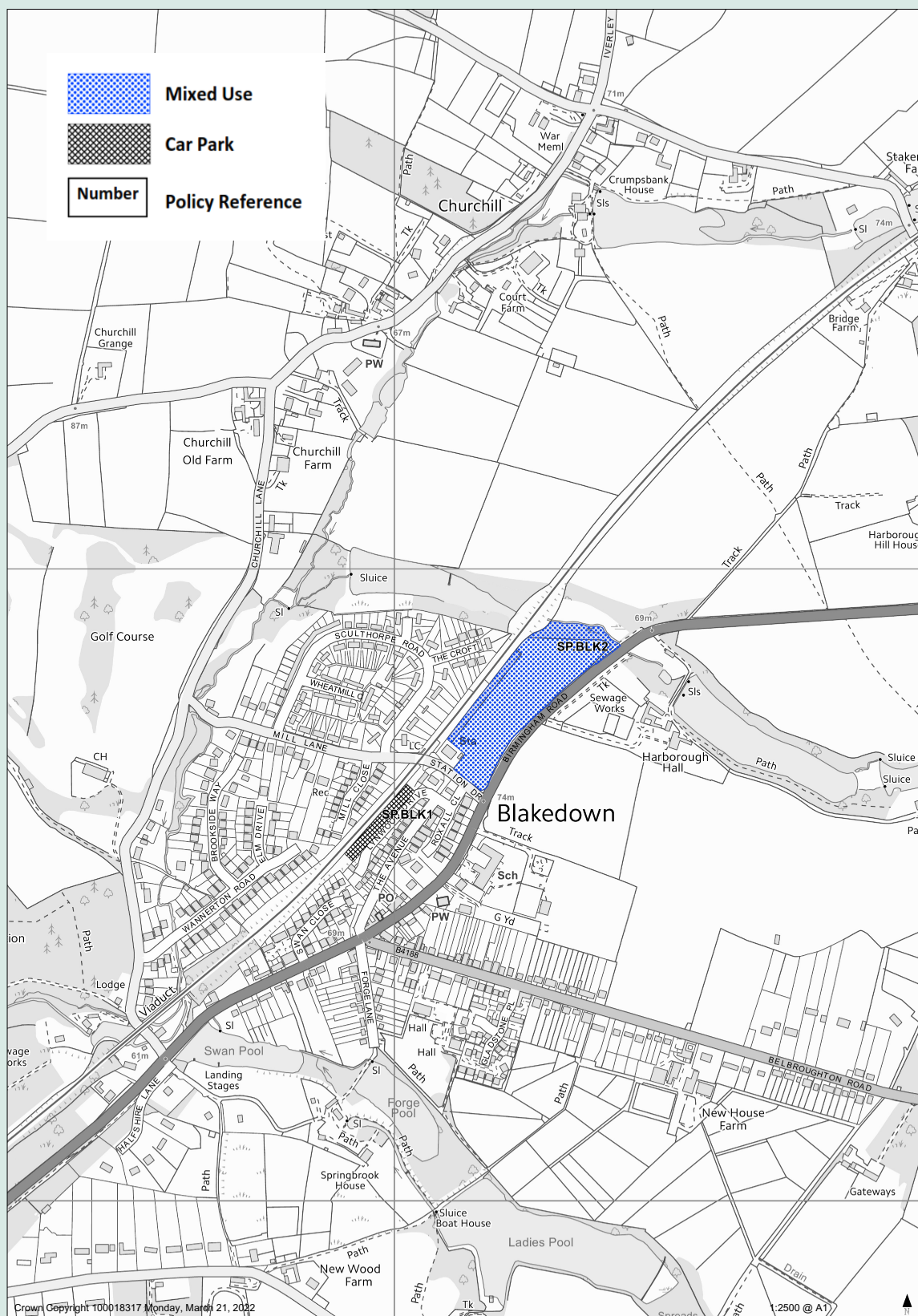
### Environmental Infrastructure

- xiii. The eastern edge of the development will be planted up to give a substantial green buffer to the development. This will help to provide an additional quieter north south wildlife corridor
- xiv. The Hoo Brook Local Wildlife Site and its associated wet meadow will be buffered from development
- xv. Opportunities should be sought to improve ecological and pedestrian links between the western wooded stream corridor on the edge of the site, the Hoo Brook LWS and the Spennells Valley nature reserve to the south of the A448.
- xvi. Where feasible, historic features and water bodies relating to Lord Foley's irrigation system should be retained as boundary features or as part of open space. The potential to sensitively integrate these into the site's SuDS should be examined and implemented where possible. Opportunities to promote the historic and landscape significance of this 17<sup>th</sup> century example of agricultural design and innovation as part of open space management should also be considered.
- xvii. A long-term habitat management and monitoring plan should be agreed as part of any planning application.

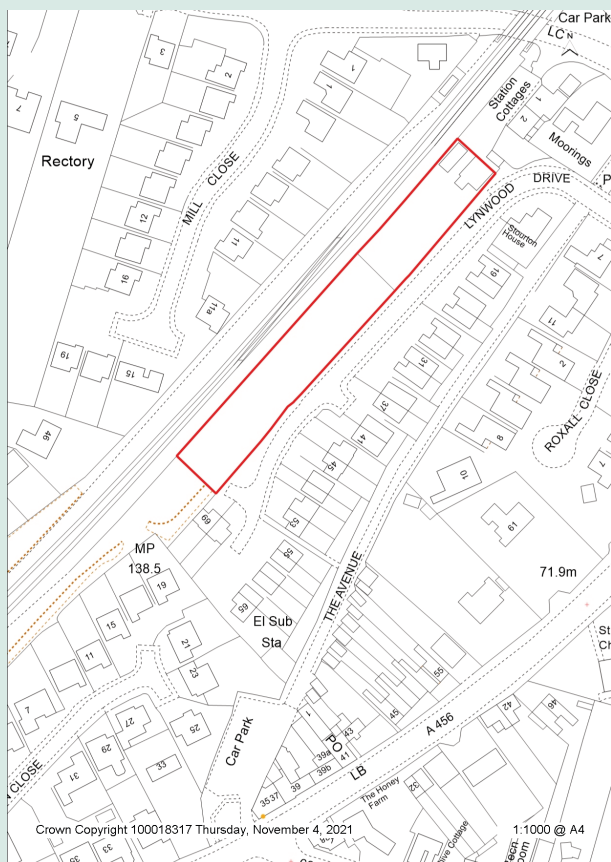


## Strategic Allocations Blakedown

**Overview of Allocated Sites in Chapter 31: Blakedown (Please refer to Policies Map (for further information)**



### Station Yard Blakedown (0.27ha) Station car parking 2021-26



**31.1** This narrow site has a frontage to Lynwood Drive and lies adjacent to the main railway line. A previous residential application was dismissed at appeal on grounds of poor amenity for future residents in terms of noise from passing trains and limited garden space.

#### Policy SP.BLK1 - Station Yard Blakedown

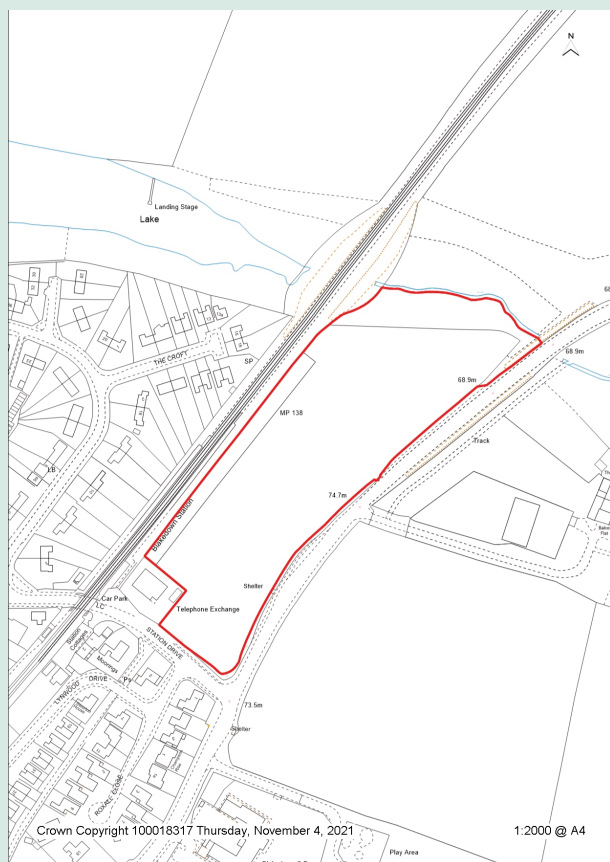
This site is allocated for station car parking for up to 120 spaces. The development should meet the following requirements:

- i. The potential to provide a small retail kiosk on the site should be explored and it should be incorporated into the development, if feasible
- ii. Lighting should be designed to have minimal disturbance to existing residents on Lynwood Drive
- iii. Landscaping should be provided to the site boundaries to buffer the site from neighbouring dwellings

#### Reasoned Justification

**31.2** This small site is unsuitable for residential use. Its location adjacent to Blakedown Station makes it an ideal site for station car parking. The Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy (2017) identifies Blakedown as one of 5 locations under consideration for additional car parking to address the current shortfall and provide capacity for passenger growth. Further details are included in the Transport evidence paper and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

## Land off Station Drive, Blakedown (2.74ha) 50 dwellings 2026-31 and safeguarding for future car parking need



**31.3** This land on the northern edge of Blakedown lies between the A456 and the railway line and is adjacent to Blakedown station. It is proposed to safeguard part of the site for station car parking and develop the remainder for housing. The site has direct pedestrian access to both the station platform and the adjacent bus stop (A456 Birmingham Road).

### Policy SP.BLK2 Land off Station Drive, Blakedown

This site is allocated in part for residential development with the remainder safeguarded for future rail station car parking, the location of which will be established by the Council and the site owner following an appropriate study. The need for safeguarding the land will be kept under review during the Plan Period, having regard to demand for car parking at the station, projected future demand for car parking at the station and other relevant matters. The development should meet the following requirements:

- i. Vehicular access should be taken from Station Drive
- ii. The plantation woodland alongside the railway line should be retained and supplemented with additional planting where required
- iii. The existing hedgerow along the A456 boundary should be retained and supplemented where required
- iv. A pedestrian access onto the station platform and onto the A456 adjacent to the bus shelter should be incorporated into the development
- v. Churchill and Blakedown Valleys Local Wildlife Site (LWS) partially overlaps the site to the north. The development should provide buffering for the LWS with the embankment and woodland retained as open space. The development should optimise

- the potential for SuDs and the creation of a mosaic of semi-natural marshland and wet woodland on the site. Much of the LWS falls within Flood Zones 2 or 3
- vi. The development should be designed to retain and protect the mature trees on the Station Drive frontage with canopies kept free of lighting for ecological reasons. Where trees cannot be retained, full justification must be provided as part of a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, and any unavoidable losses should be replaced within the proposed development
  - vii. Any potential adverse impacts on views from/of Harbrough Hall (Grade II Listed) should be mitigated for by additional planting along the eastern boundary where required, and by sensitive design of the development
  - viii. The new housing should be provided in accordance with policies elsewhere in Local Plan and also to meet any local housing need as shown in a Parish Housing Needs Survey and/or the Housing Register
  - ix. The car parking provision should be brought forward sequentially following the provision of car parking on the allocated site at Station Yard (Policy SP.BLK1) and only if future demand justifies it

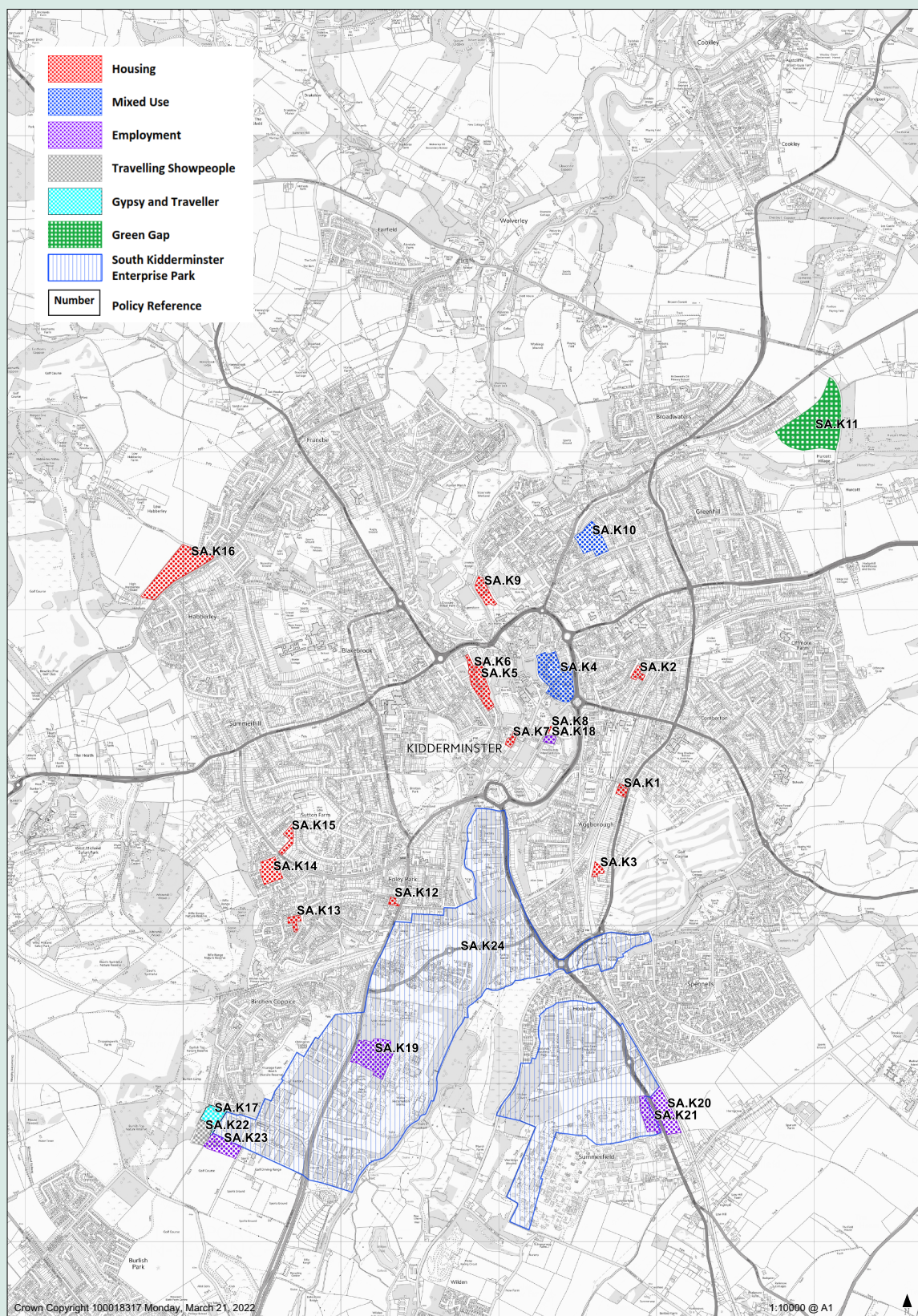
### Reasoned Justification

**31.4** Development of this site would constitute a rounding off of the settlement of Blakedown and provide a strong and defensible Green Belt boundary using the stream, pools and woodland to the north and the A456 to the east. Blakedown is a well-served village with easy access to local shops, primary school, sports facilities and regular train services into Hagley and Kidderminster for other services. Housing development on this site would also help towards meeting future housing needs in Blakedown village.

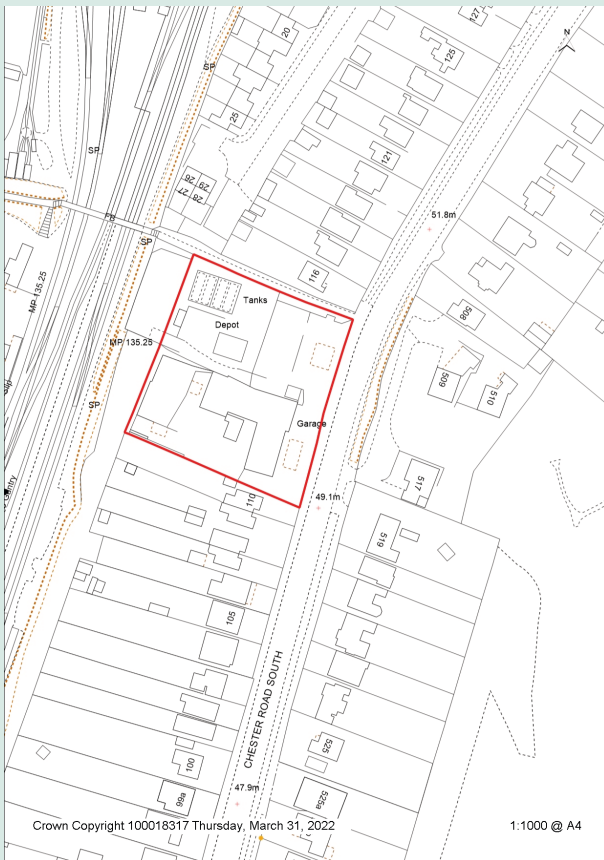
**31.5** Additional car parking may be needed in the Plan Period at Blakedown railway station to meet the demand for car parking spaces for rail users on the commuter line to the Black Country and Birmingham as evidenced in the SLC Rail document. Although the northern end of the site falls within Flood Zones 2 or 3, this area will be left undeveloped as it is protected by its designation as a Local Wildlife Site. A detailed site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required at the planning stage to inform the developable area and ensure a safe and sustainable development. Opportunities to help improve flood storage and flood flow conveyance, linked to blue infrastructure enhancements, will be implemented where feasible.



## Overview of Allocated Sites in Chapter 32: Kidderminster Town (please refer to Policies Map for further information)



## Chester Road South Service Station (0.41ha) 15 dwellings 2021-26



**32.1** This former petrol and gas station site has full planning permission for 15 dwellings.

### Policy SA.K1 - Chester Road South Service Station

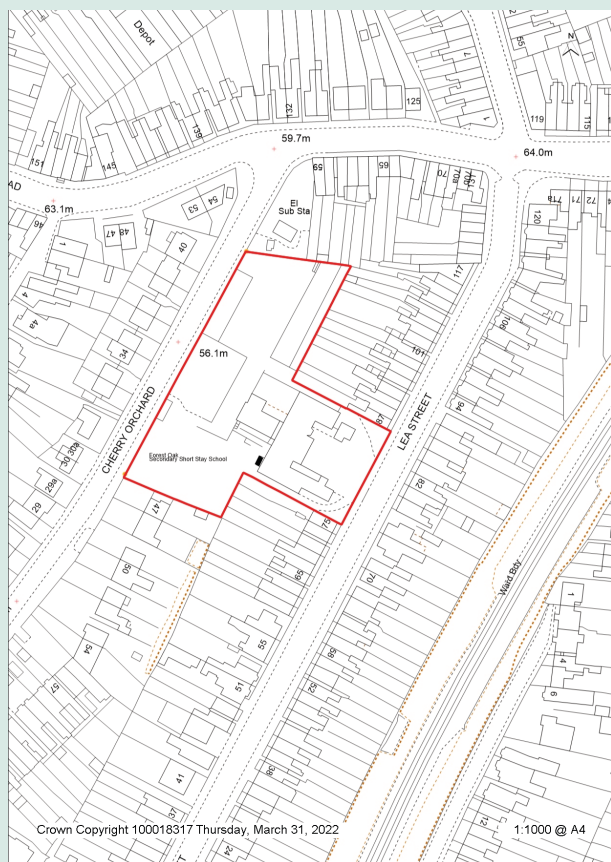
Development of this site should:

- Ensure, where feasible, that housing faces the main road to continue the strong building line along Chester Road South
- Fully consider and address, as necessary, any contamination issues on the site
- Protect and supplement existing mature vegetation adjacent to the railway line

### Reasoned Justification

**32.2** This site currently detracts from what is a residential area. Proposals should respect the streetscene.



**Lea Street School (0.47ha) 24 dwellings 2021-26**

**32.3** This former school sits in a densely populated residential area near the railway station characterised by Victorian terraced housing. It occupies a plot with frontages to both Lea Street and Cherry Orchard. It was constructed in 1883 and is on the Kidderminster Local Heritage List. It is built across a steeply sloping site with buildings at 3 different levels.

**Policy SA.K2 - Lea Street School**

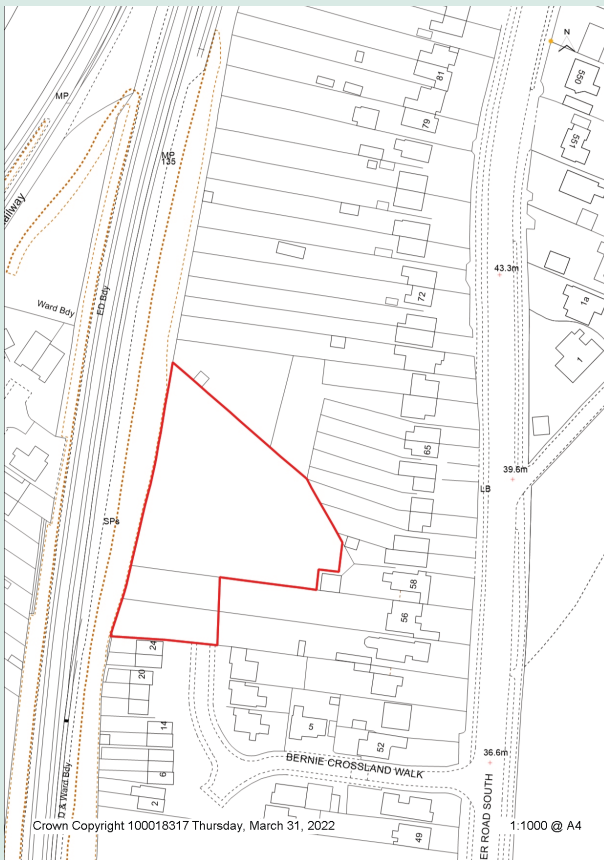
This site is allocated for residential uses.

- i. Proposals should, where possible, look to retain the original board school buildings
- ii. Mature trees fronting Cherry Orchard should be retained as part of the development
- iii. Layout, design and materials used should be sensitive to location and overcome any adverse impacts on the heritage asset
- iv. Proposals should take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement

**Reasoned Justification**

**32.4** This very attractive building is a rare example of a well-preserved board school. It is the only surviving example built by the Borough of Kidderminster School Board. The entire original fixtures and fittings are still intact. A conversion of the building would be supported. The playground area on Cherry Orchard would be suitable for a new-build housing development.

### Land North of Bernie Crossland Walk (0.41ha) 9 dwellings 2026-31



**32.5** This area of garden land adjacent to the railway line currently forms part of rear gardens to dwellings on Chester Road South. It forms a logical extension to Bernie Crossland Walk.

#### Policy SA.K3 - Land North of Bernie Crossland Walk

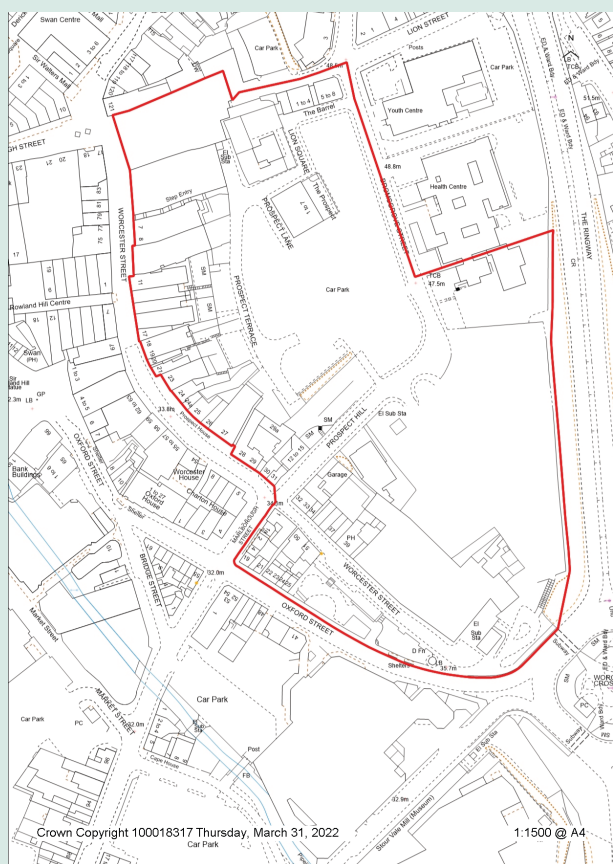
This site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:-

- i. Vehicular access should be taken from Bernie Crossland Walk
- ii. The existing trees alongside the railway corridor should be supplemented as part of the wider Green Infrastructure network
- iii. The development should continue the building line of Bernie Crossland Walk with the majority of plots backing onto the railway line

#### Reasoned Justification

**32.6** This small Greenfield site is suitable for development subject to any issues with ransom strips being overcome.

## Land at Bromsgrove Street (Lion Fields) (4.87ha) minimum of 35 dwellings plus commercial uses 2026-31



**32.7** This large town centre site includes the cleared site of the former Glades Leisure Centre, the former Magistrates' Court (Worcester Cross Factory), extensive car parking and shops on the northern side of Worcester Street. The NHS buildings and Youth Centre on Bromsgrove Street will remain in situ and are outside of this allocation. The former Magistrates' Court buildings were listed Grade II in 2018. Levels rise 10 metres across the site from the south to the north. Much of the land is owned and controlled by the District Council. A large part of the £20.5 million secured from the Future High Streets Fund (announced in December 2020) will be used to kick-start the regeneration of the former Magistrates' Court and Worcester Street area.

### Policy SA.K4 - Land at Bromsgrove Street (Lion Fields)

This site is allocated for a mix of residential and commercial development which is expected to deliver the following:

- i. On the former Glades site - a cinema and leisure complex with ancillary food and drink together with car parking
- ii. The former Magistrates' Court building and indoor market - refurbishment and conversion to a Creative Hub for businesses in the digital and creative industries sectors
- iii. Acquisition and demolition of properties at northern end of Worcester Street to improve connectivity from the town centre into Lion Fields
- iv. Rationalisation of existing car parking on Bromsgrove Street to release land for mixed use development including residential (both C3 and C2)
- v. All development must be of the highest design quality as this site is a key part of the planned renaissance of the town centre
- vi. The historic street patterns should inform the design layout of the new development on the northern part of the site, with consideration in particular given to the height and massing of buildings as this will impact on the skyline and wider views across the town
- vii. Layout, design, scale and materials used in the development should take into consideration the designated heritage assets on the southern part of Worcester Street

- viii. The area of mature woodland to the rear of the former Glades Leisure Centre site adjacent to the ring road island should be extended north along the ring road to link with mature trees at Lion Street
- ix. The adjacent NHS buildings and the youth centre should have additional landscaping to soften their setting and help to integrate them into the new development
- x. The development should deliver enhanced public amenity space with SuDS and habitat benefits and include green walls where possible
- xi. The development should take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement
- xii. In the southern part of Worcester Street (outside of the area shown as primary shopping frontage), proposals for non-retail (including residential) uses at ground floor level will be considered on their merit (see Policy DM.13)

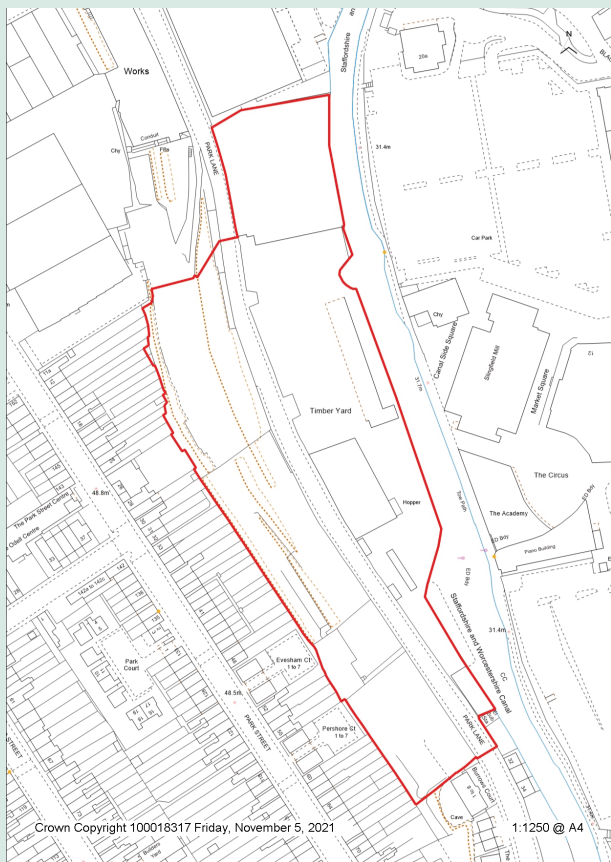
### Reasoned Justification

**32.8** The Council adopted the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework In June 2016. 'Lion Fields' is a large site occupying an area historically developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as workers housing and redeveloped in the mid-late C20 when the adjacent ring road was constructed. The northern part of the site occupies a plateau at the top of Prospect Hill and it may be possible to reinstate parts of the historical street pattern as part of any redevelopment. The southern part of the site is largely occupied by the recently designated Former Worcester Cross Factory which is a landmark feature at the gateway to the town approaching from the east. The site has a history of pre-industrial development and there is high potential for archaeological remains below ground.

**32.9** It is proposed to bring Lion Fields forward for development in phases. A preferred developer for the former Glades site was appointed at the end of 2017. A mixed-use leisure scheme is proposed in this first phase. The next phase of development will include the former Magistrates' Court building, the former covered market area to the rear and the land in front which is currently laid out as a small urban park. Funding for this area has been secured through the Future High Streets Fund. A planning application is expected in 2021.

**32.10** Worcester Street marks the southern boundary to Lion Fields and the County Council reopened the street to one-way traffic and allowed on-street parking in 2019. This has already brought benefits to the area. Future High Streets Funds will also be used to fund the acquisition of empty buildings on Worcester Street to allow for their demolition in order to improve pedestrian links between Worcester Street and Bromsgrove Street as part of any residential proposals on the existing car park. The southern part of Worcester Street has seen a number of conversions to residential uses in recent years and further conversions should be encouraged.

**Timber Yard Park Lane (2.11ha) 100 dwellings 2026-31**



**32.11** This site includes the former timber yard together with steeply sloping wooded land on the other side of Park Lane. Some of the site is owned by the District Council. It is an important canalside location in the heart of the town centre. This area provides an opportunity to bring the canal back into focus and rejuvenate this area of the town. Much of the site falls within flood zone 2.

## Policy SA.K5 - Timber Yard Park Lane

This land is allocated for residential development (C3 and C2) which should:

- i. Provide an active frontage onto both the canal and Park Lane
- ii. Create a high quality pedestrian canalside environment and public realm
- iii. Where practicable, retain and incorporate the historic building fronting Park Lane
- iv. Aim to deliver a new landmark pedestrian bridge over the canal to Weavers Wharf
- v. Incorporate an area of public open space adjacent to the canal to act as a focal point for the scheme
- vi. Investigate the potential for additional mooring facilities on the canal and if feasible, integrate them into the development
- vii. Take into account any potential flooding issues on site and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures
- viii. Retain and enhance the wooded escarpment on Park Lane where possible as part of a wider GI network and backdrop to the town centre
- ix. Use SuDS to control drainage on site
- x. Integrate features such as living walls, green roofs and bat/bird bricks into development

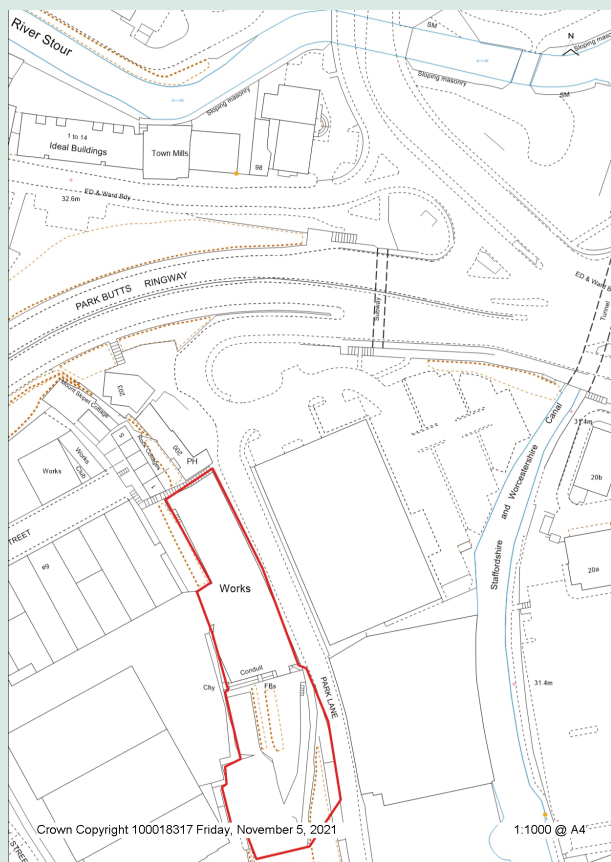


- xi. Relate well in form, scale, massing and materials to the canal and those designated heritage assets on the east side of the canal, as well as seeking to conserve or enhance the appearance of the canal Conservation Area
- xii. Take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement

### Reasoned Justification

**32.12** This site is located in a sensitive historic valley setting with an historic urban industrial townscape character and mature regenerated woodland on the site of former 19<sup>th</sup> century housing. It offers opportunities to create a canal frontage that respects the historic buildings opposite on the Weavers Wharf development, retain and frame the visual line of the valley setting and historic Park Lane and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure. The retention of the building to the rear of Matalan should be investigated as the loss of this feature would despoil Park Lane of its industrial character which would thus harm the setting of the adjacent heritage assets to the north of the site. As a large recently vacated site, it has a negative impact on the town centre where it can be viewed from Weavers Wharf. Redevelopment of this site will bring with it increased surveillance of the canal towpath which is currently hidden from view. A footbridge would help to extend the town centre across the canal and revitalise this area of Kidderminster. Footings for the bridge have been provided as part of the Weavers Wharf development opposite. Any new bridge should reflect and complement the existing character and quality of the historic environment adjacent to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, respond to the setting of any Listed Buildings and ensure no detrimental impact to users of the canal corridor. New links to the canal towpath should be accompanied by appropriate signage and route finding for pedestrians and cyclists. The Canal and River Trust's agreement will be required for any such crossing.



**Rock Works (0.36ha) 22 dwellings 2021-26**

**32.13** The Rock Works on Park Lane is a redundant 19<sup>th</sup> century carpet factory building. It is on the Local Heritage List and is in a bad state of repair. Its principal feature is the roof and its north lights. It is built into the cliff face. Steep stone steps that are cut into the hillside connect Rock Works with the Park Street Industrial Estate above. The southern part of the site consists of woodland which has regenerated on the site of Victorian terraced dwellings.

**Policy SA.K6 - Rock Works**

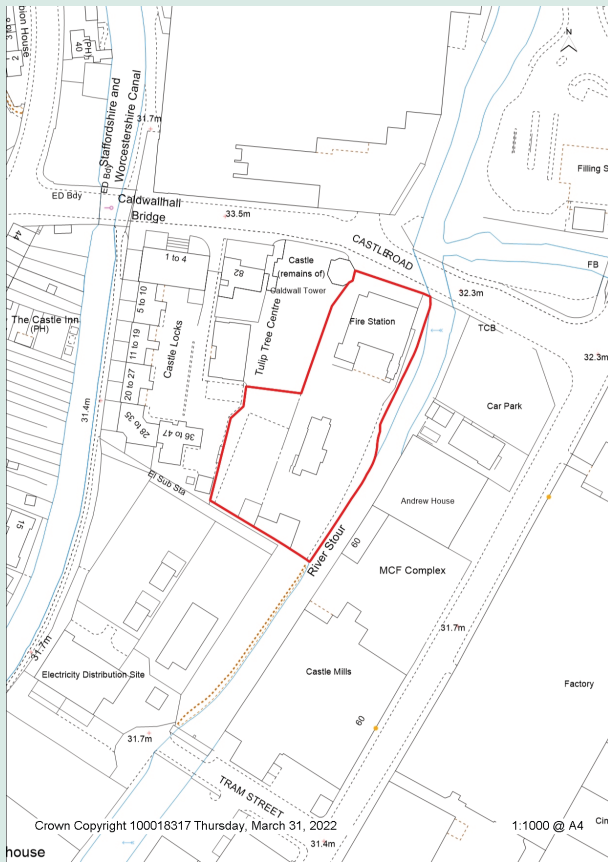
The site is allocated for residential use. Development of the site should ensure that:

- i. The buildings on the site are refurbished and brought back into active use
- ii. A full ecological appraisal of the site including a bat survey is undertaken prior to the refurbishment and the development is carried out in accordance with its recommendation
- iii. The opportunity to supplement the regenerated woodland on the southern part of the site is realised as part of the development scheme

**Reasoned Justification**

**32.14** The site has approval for conversion to 22 apartments.

## Kidderminster Fire Station (0.37ha) 20 dwellings 2026-31



**32.15** Kidderminster Fire Station has relocated to the Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub on Stourport Road. This has freed up this town centre site for conversion of the main building and redevelopment to the rear for residential use.

### Policy SA.K7 - Kidderminster Fire Station

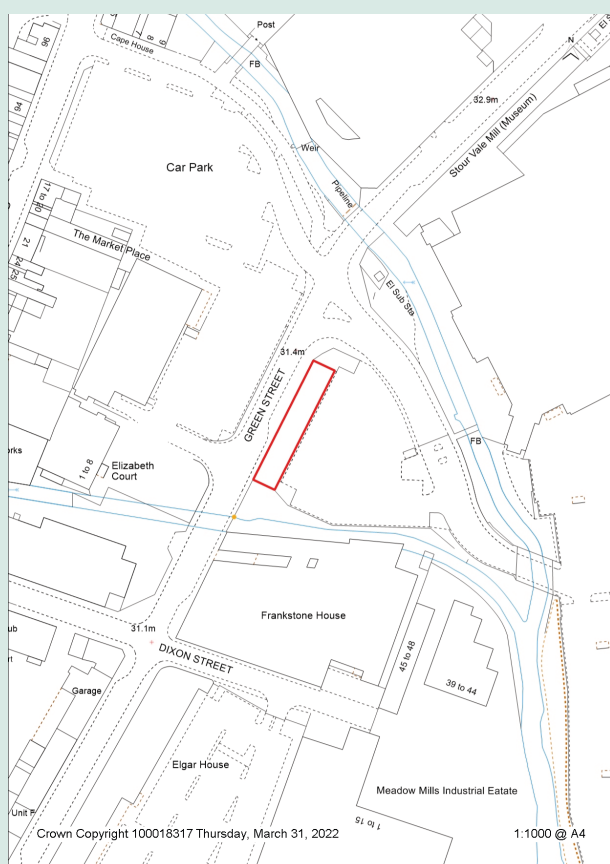
This site is suitable for a mixed conversion/new build residential scheme.

- i. The main building should be retained and converted
- ii. The close proximity to Caldwell Tower requires a bespoke approach to the design of any replacement buildings. There will be a need for careful consideration of the layout, design, scale and materials used within any development to ensure that the development contributes positively to this sensitive location
- iii. Depending on the significance of archaeological heritage assets found, development may not be feasible on certain parts of the site
- iv. The grassy bank along the River Stour should be retained to reduce the impact of development on protected species such as otter. Natural cover should be increased in this area to encourage wildlife
- v. Proposals should take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement
- vi. Proposals should take into account any potential flooding issues on site and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures

## Reasoned Justification

**32.16** Kidderminster Fire Station lies within the Green Street Conservation Area adjacent to Caldwell Tower (Grade II\*) and the River Stour Local Wildlife Site. Much of the site is also within flood zone 2. The rear of the site is also affected by flood zone 3 (defended). The facade of the fire station is included on the local heritage list. It was built in 1929 and designed by the borough engineer. The adjacent single octagonal tower of Caldwell Hall is the surviving fragment of a fortified medieval manor house and is Kidderminster's oldest building apart from St Mary's Church. It sat in a deer park and later formal gardens (of which the development site forms a part). There is a high probability of buried archaeological remains on the site.

## Boucher Building Green Street (0.04ha) 10 dwellings 2026-31



**32.17** The Boucher Building fronts Green Street with the Morrisons' supermarket car park to the rear. It is located within the Green Street Conservation Area and is on the Local Heritage List. It sits adjacent to the River Stour with the entire site within Flood zone 2.

### Policy SA.K8 - Boucher Building Green Street

The building is proposed for residential conversion.

- i. Development should take account of any flood risk and a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment is required
- ii. The development scheme should have full regard to the Green Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- iii. A bat survey should be submitted as part of any planning application
- iv. The development scheme should take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement

## Reasoned Justification

**32.18** This building fronts Green Street and has been unused for a number of years. A conversion scheme would make a significant improvement to the streetscene. It is important to retain this building as part of the 'Heritage Processions' which characterise this area of town with former carpet buildings lining the street at 'back of pavement'. The ground floor of the building could potentially be used for cycle/bin storage/ drying room with flats on the upper floors. The Flood Risk Assessment should detail the possibility of overtopping, flood management and warning and contribution to defence maintenance.

## Limekiln Bridge (1.15ha) 30 dwellings 2021-26, 50 dwellings 2026-31



**32.19** This site comprises an engineering works and a Council owned parcel of open space with a redundant basketball court. The site lies alongside the canal with a supermarket and car parking area situated across the canal. The site slopes down from Clensmore Street to the canal.

## Policy SA.K9 - Limekiln Bridge

The redevelopment of this area for residential use should:

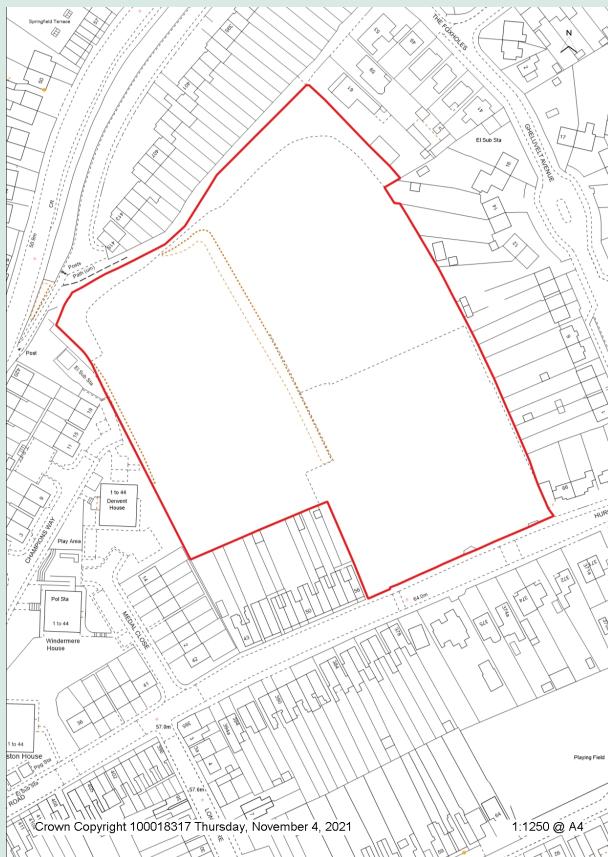
- i. Provide an active frontage onto both the canal and Clensmore Street

- ii. Be sympathetic to the character of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area and the setting of St. Mary's Church and graveyard
- iii. Compensate for the loss of existing open space
- iv. Carefully consider layout, design, scale and materials
- v. Enhance the already excellent Green Infrastructure connectivity and retain mature trees on site
- vi. Take account of any remediation and decontamination required
- vii. Take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement

### Reasoned Justification

**32.20** A historic wharf once stood near Limekiln Bridge and archaeological investigation will be required on this site. Old maps also show a chemical works on this site together with rows of tiny terraced housing fronting Clensmore Street. Compensatory open space will need to be provided elsewhere in the area. Any new development on this site will be expected to make a contribution towards this. Development on this prominent site should reflect and complement the existing character and quality of the historic environment in this locality.

### Sladen School Site (2.58ha) 36 dwellings plus school 2021-26



**32.21** Sladen Middle School closed in July 2007 and was subsequently demolished. There are extensive playing fields on the site which is surrounded by residential properties on all sides. The site has 3 distinct land parcels with trees to the boundaries.

**Policy SA.K10 - Sladen School Site**

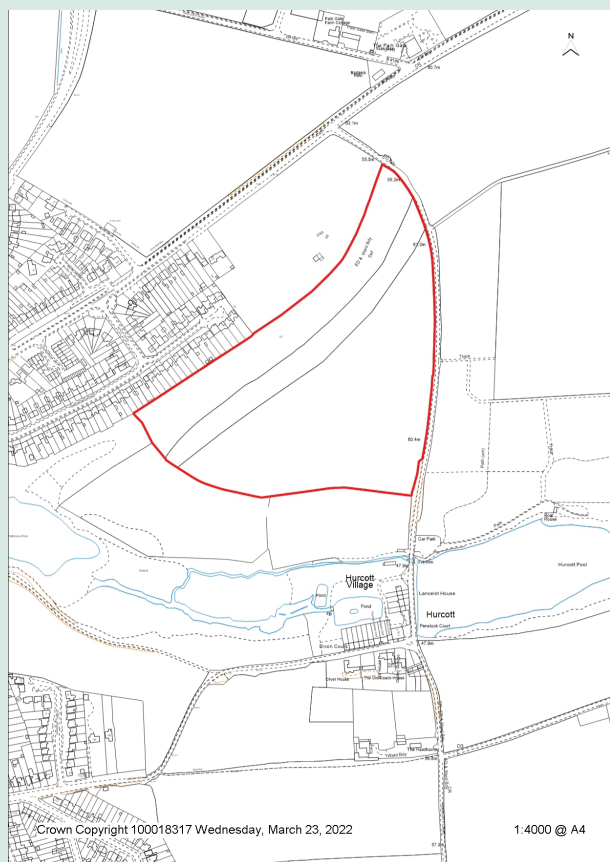
This land is allocated as a mixed use site comprising of a new school and residential development. Development should:

- i. Safeguard land required for a new 60 place school and associated infrastructure
- ii. Deliver class C3 dwelling houses
- iii. Provide vehicular access from Hurcott Road to the new school and from Medal Close to the new residential development
- iv. Compensate for the loss of playing fields with alternative provision either on site or contribute to provision elsewhere
- v. Provide pedestrian links through to Hurcott Road
- vi. Design the layout to maximise natural surveillance throughout
- vii. Retain and strengthen the existing green infrastructure network, in particular the trees along the Hurcott Road frontage
- viii. Take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement

**Reasoned Justification**

**32.22** This site is in the ownership of Worcestershire County Council. It is proposed to develop it to deliver a new school and approximately 36 class C3 dwellings. It will be necessary to ensure that both parts of the scheme are appropriately integrated with each other and the neighbouring areas. The role of Green Infrastructure in and around the whole landholding will be an important component of this.



**Land at Stourbridge Road (10.33ha)**

**32.23** This site is allocated as a green gap in order to protect the setting of Hurcott Village and the adjacent Sites of Special Scientific Interest. No built development will be allowed on this parcel of land.

**Policy SA.K11 - Land at Stourbridge Road**

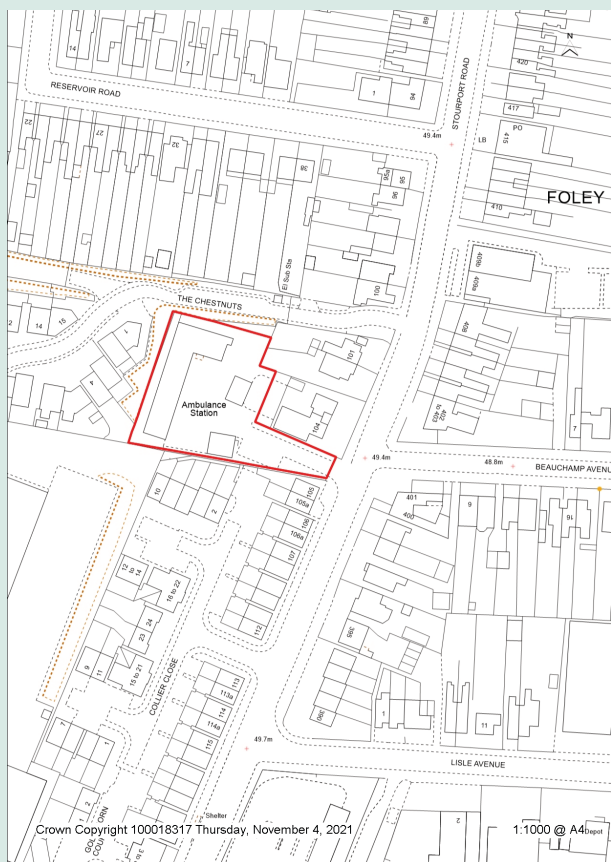
The land is designated as a green gap and will not be released for development in order to protect the Hurcott Pastures SSSI and the setting of the historic Hurcott Village

**Reasoned Justification**

**32.24** There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) adjacent to this site. One is a wetland – Hurcott and Podmore Pools, the other is dry grassland – Hurcott Pastures. The dry grassland SSSI was designated after the land was taken out of the Green Belt and safeguarded for future housing development as an Area of Development Restraint. This SSSI is very sensitive to disturbance and the hydrological impacts of developing on the southern parcel would be difficult to mitigate for. Habitat deterioration is also an issue.

**32.25** The only access to the southern parcel would be from the northern site across a dry valley which separates the two parcels as the Highways Authority proposes to stop up Hurcott Lane which runs alongside the site to protect the historic village and, more importantly, protect the historic lane itself from further damage by heavy traffic.

## Kidderminster Ambulance Station (0.22ha) 6 dwellings 2021-26



**32.26** The former site of the ambulance station is now completely surrounded by residential uses.

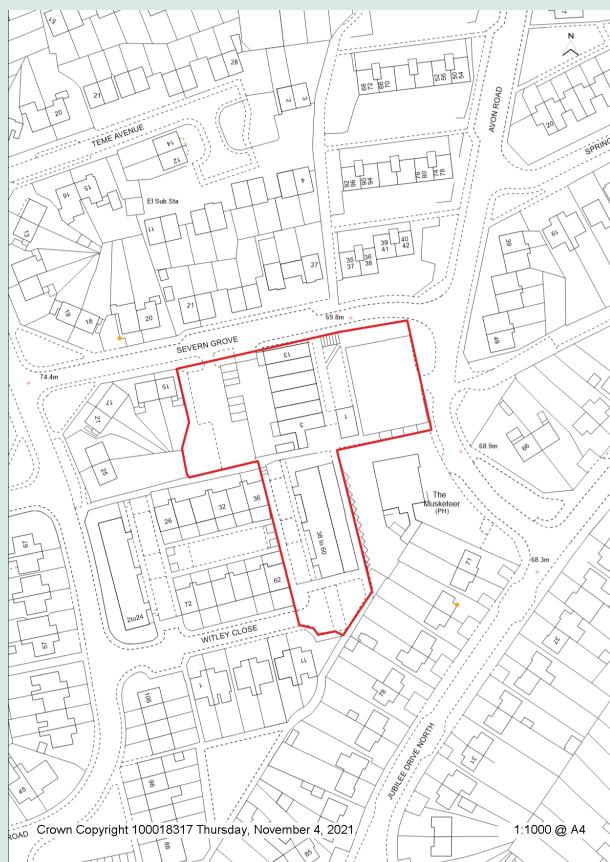
### Policy SA.K12 - Kidderminster Ambulance Station

The site is allocated for residential development.

- Mature trees on site should be retained and opportunities taken to enhance the green infrastructure network
- Appropriate ecological surveys should accompany any planning application
- Development should respect the scale, morphology and materials of the adjacent historic suburban character

### Reasoned Justification

**32.27** This small site is now surrounded by residential development following the redevelopment of the Reilloc Chain factory site and a small well-designed development should be brought forward on this site to complement recent development nearby.

**Severn Grove Shops (0.48ha) 12 dwellings (net) 2021-26**

**32.28** This small site is allocated for redevelopment. It consists of a parade of shops with flats over together with a block of maisonettes. The neighbouring public house is being redeveloped for housing. Redevelopment of this adjacent site would help to improve the poor urban environment on this estate.

**Policy SA.K13 - Severn Grove Shops**

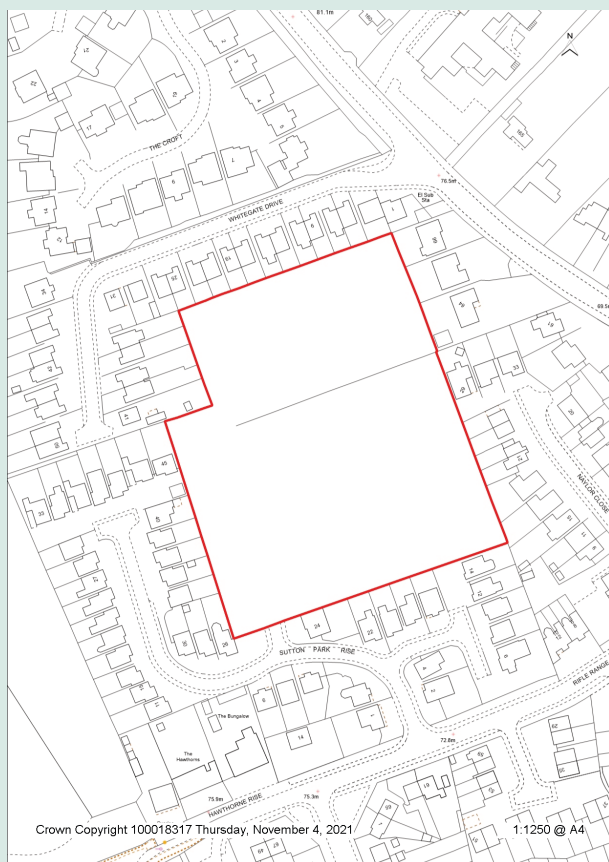
Development of this site should:

- i. Provide replacement affordable homes
- ii. Provide landscaping to improve the public realm

**Reasoned Justification**

**32.29** This site is in the ownership of The Community Housing Group and is ripe for redevelopment subject to funding becoming available.

### Naylor's Field, Sutton Park Rise (1.65ha) 35 dwellings 2026-31



**32.30** This Greenfield site is surplus to educational requirements. It is completely surrounded by residential development. There is an existing access from Sutton Park Rise.

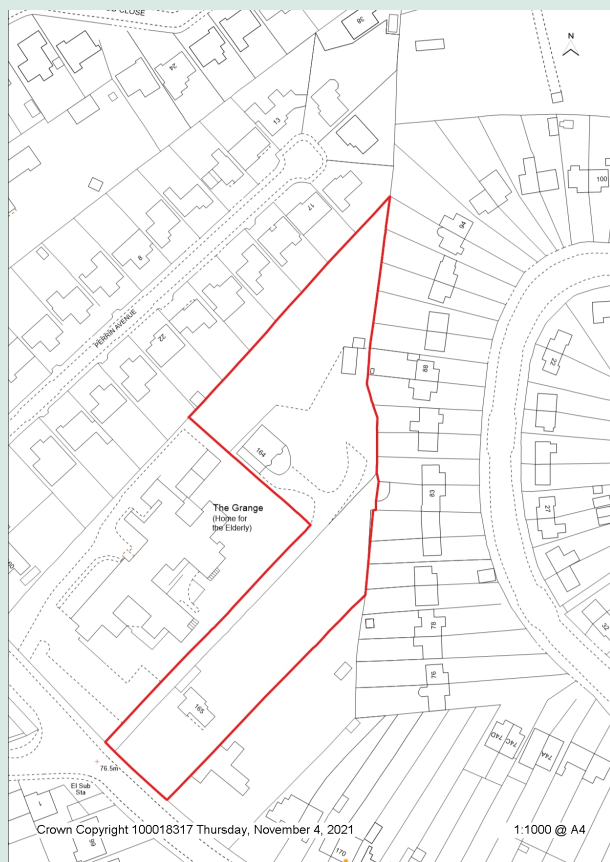
#### Policy SA.K14 - Naylor's Field, Sutton Park Rise

This site is allocated for residential development. Development should:

- i. Retain and supplement the existing late 19<sup>th</sup> century hedgerow which runs across the centre of the site to provide Green Infrastructure connectivity through and off the site out onto the nearby Rifle Range SSSI
- ii. Use the existing access from Sutton Park Rise
- iii. Retain land to the north of the hedgerow as public open space

#### Reasoned Justification

**32.31** This site is used for informal recreation and local events. By retaining the area to the rear of the hedgerow as open space, these functions could be continued.

**164/5 Sutton Park Road (0.72ha) 3 dwellings 2021-26**

**32.32** This site consists of 2 substantial garden plots. Proposals have been drawn up to develop a small number of additional dwellings. There are a number of protected trees on the site.

**Policy SA.K15 - 164/5 Sutton Park Road**

The site is allocated for residential development which should:

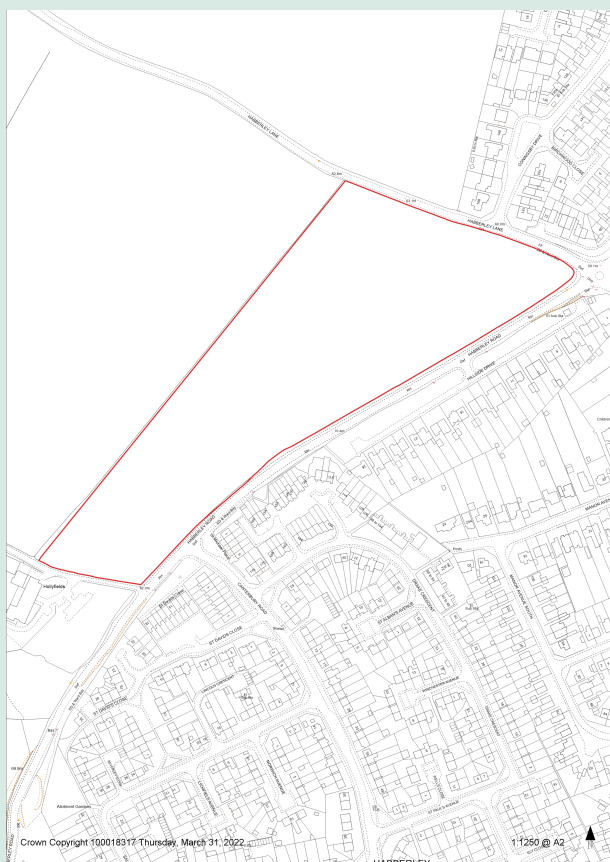
- i. Retain mature trees on site and safeguard them during construction
- ii. Retain existing dwellings
- iii. Respect the character of surrounding development in terms of plot size, materials and design

**Reasoned Justification**

**32.33** A limited number of dwellings could be provided off a single private access road (5 including 2 retained dwellings). This part of Kidderminster is characterised by large dwellings in substantial plots and any infill development should respect this character.



## Land at Low Habberley (5.57ha) 124 dwellings 2021-26



**32.34** The arable field to the north of Habberley Road opposite Hillside Drive is allocated for residential development. It is bounded by Habberley Road and the Habberley Estate to the south, Habberley Lane (leading to the hamlet of Low Habberley) to the east and a bridgeway / access to High Habberley House to the west. The northern boundary is a hedgeline.

### Policy SA.K16 - Land at Low Habberley

This land is allocated for residential development. Development of the site should meet the following requirements:

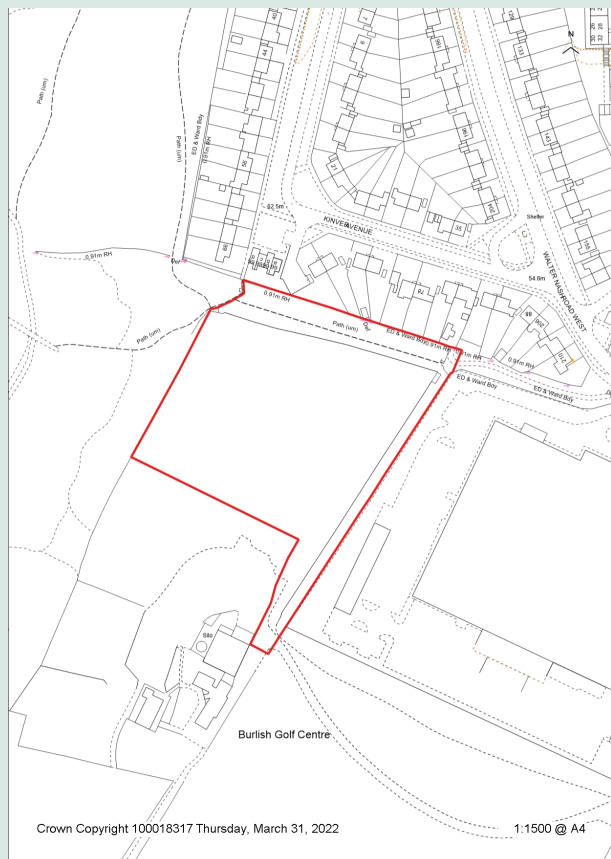
- i. The access should be taken from Habberley Road
- ii. The existing hedgerows and trees should be retained and supplemented to soften the impact of development and provide biodiversity net gain
- iii. The development should be set back from the bridgeway to protect the setting of High Habberley House
- iv. The rear hedgeline should be strengthened to provide a new defensible boundary to the Green Belt
- v. The scale and design of the development should be sympathetic to the character and setting of Low Habberley
- vi. The impact of any development on the nearby Habberley Valley Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site should be balanced out through biodiversity net gain
- vii. Proposals should specify how existing and surrounding habitats including Habberley Valley and Eastham's Coppice will be taken into consideration. Measures to protect and mitigate for bats and brown hare should also be considered



## Reasoned Justification

**32.35** The site is located on the NW edge of Kidderminster's urban area. The retention and enhancement of the western hedgerow boundary will allow for an improved residential edge to Habberley when seen from the north and provide a strong defensible Green Belt boundary. The site has good access to local shops and schools.

### Land rear of Zortech Avenue (1.48ha) 16 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers 2021-26



**32.36** This site was formerly part of the Burlish Golf Course and has been extensively tipped with hardcore. There was a proposal to level the site for a junior academy golf course in 2016 which was never implemented. The site was originally used as an overspill car park. Access can be taken from the main drive off Zortech Avenue. It is adjacent to a large refurbished industrial unit and adjoins the Burlish Top nature reserve.

### Policy SA.K17 - Land rear of Zortech Avenue

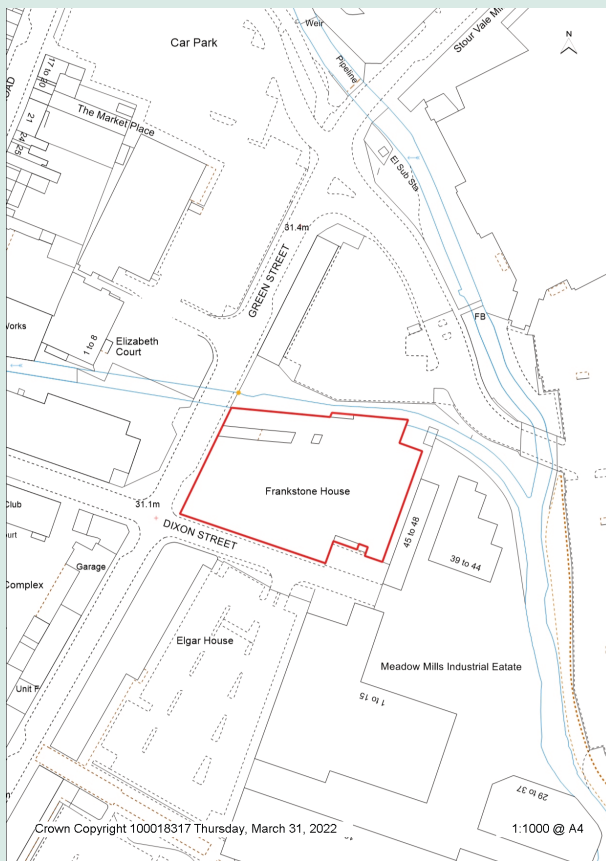
This land is allocated as a gypsy and traveller site. Development of the site should ensure that:

- i. Appropriate buffering is provided for the adjacent Burlish Top nature reserve and to screen the development from the adjacent dwellings on Birchen Coppice
- ii. Vehicular access is taken from either Zortech Avenue or, if feasible, from Walter Nash Road West
- iii. The site standards for Gypsy and Traveller pitches set out in Policy DM.5 are met

## Reasoned Justification

**32.37** The allocation of this site will help to meet the identified need for accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller families in the District during the Plan period. The site is adjacent to the proposed site for the travelling showpeople and it shares an access drive from Zortech Avenue with the neighbouring allocation. While adjacent to an industrial unit, it is also close to a residential area with easy access to a range of facilities including education. However, the potential for a separate access from Walter Nash Road West should be explored as this would provide a more direct route for residents of the site to access local schools, shops and the nearby play facilities.

## Frank Stone Building Green Street (0.32ha) employment uses



**32.38** This former carpet works is located within the Green Street Conservation Area and has been empty for many years. It is currently being marketed for either commercial or residential uses.

**32.39** The building straddles the River Stour. There is an opportunity to remove part of the building which is cantilevered over the river. River corridor enhancements will be expected as part of any proposal.

### Policy SA.K18 - Frank Stone Building, Green Street

This site is allocated for employment uses (B2, B8 and light industrial). Any development should:

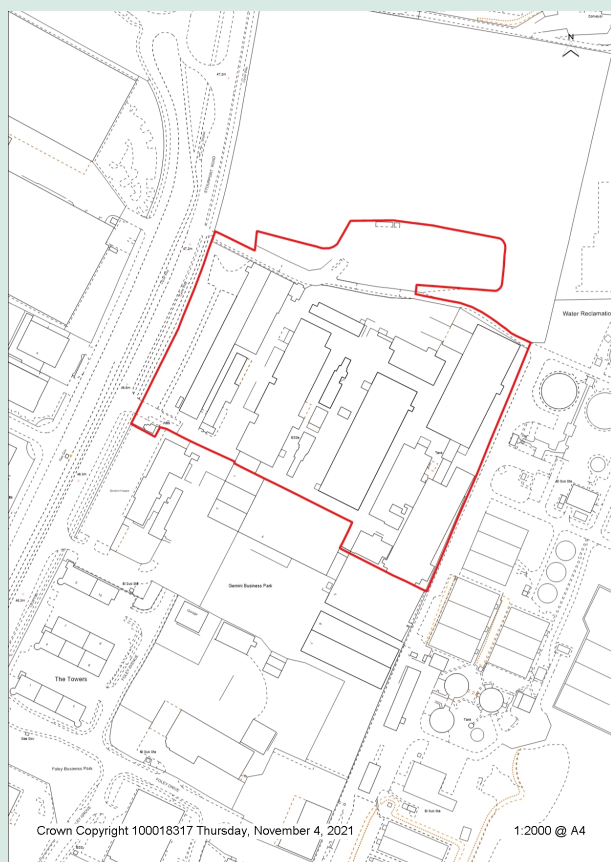
- Provide a positive relationship with the river and contribute to the improvement of the riverside environment and enhancement of the green infrastructure
- Retain the existing building frontage having regard to the Green Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan
- Be of high quality design to enhance the character of the Conservation Area
- Address potential contamination and carry out appropriate remediation in order to protect groundwater

- v. Ensure that if partial demolition is necessary, proportionate recording of the building and any archaeological interests is carried out
- vi. Ensure that the design of the development satisfactorily addresses any potential flood risk

### Reasoned Justification

**32.40** The Frank Stone building is on the Local Heritage List. The front of the building facing onto Green Street forms a strong frontage and sense of enclosure. To the rear of the site lies the Meadow Mills Industrial Estate.

### SDF site, Stourport Road (4.28ha) employment uses



**32.41** Employee numbers on this site have fallen dramatically in recent years. It is expected to come forward for redevelopment during the plan period. The woodland immediately adjoining the site to the north is classed as ancient woodland and must be protected.

### Policy SA.K19 - SDF site, Stourport Road

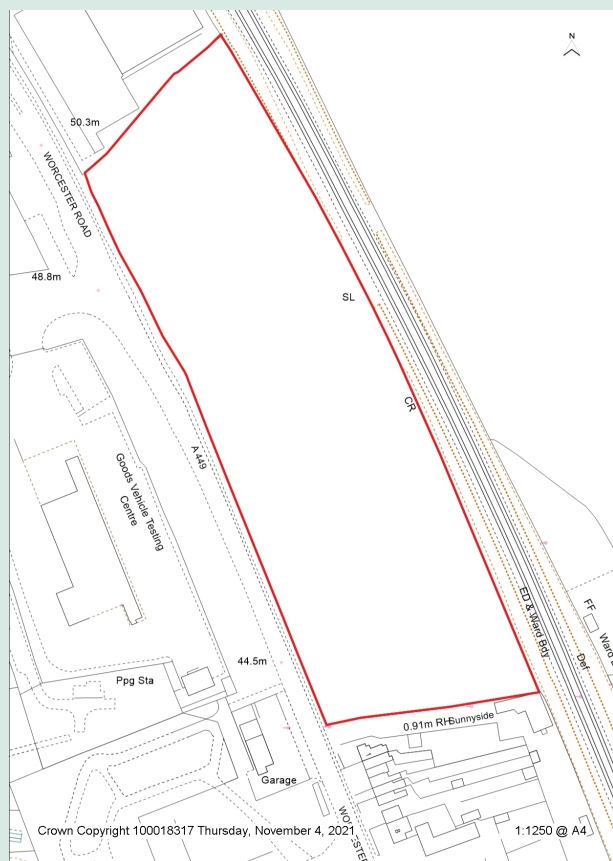
Any redevelopment of this site in the Stourport Road Employment Corridor for light industrial, B2 or B8 uses should:

- i. Provide a minimum 15m buffer to the ancient woodland fronting Stourport Road
- ii. Provide additional tree planting along the road frontage

## Reasoned Justification

**32.42** The woodland on Stourport Road is a remnant of the much larger Oldington Wood. It is classified as ancient woodland and protected by an area Tree Preservation Order. Any redevelopment proposals will need to be set back behind a minimum 15m buffer from the woodland.

## Easter Park extension, Worcester Road (2.51ha) employment uses



**32.43** This area of grassland is proposed for an extension of the employment units at Easter Park.

### Policy SA.K20 - Easter Park Extension, Worcester Road

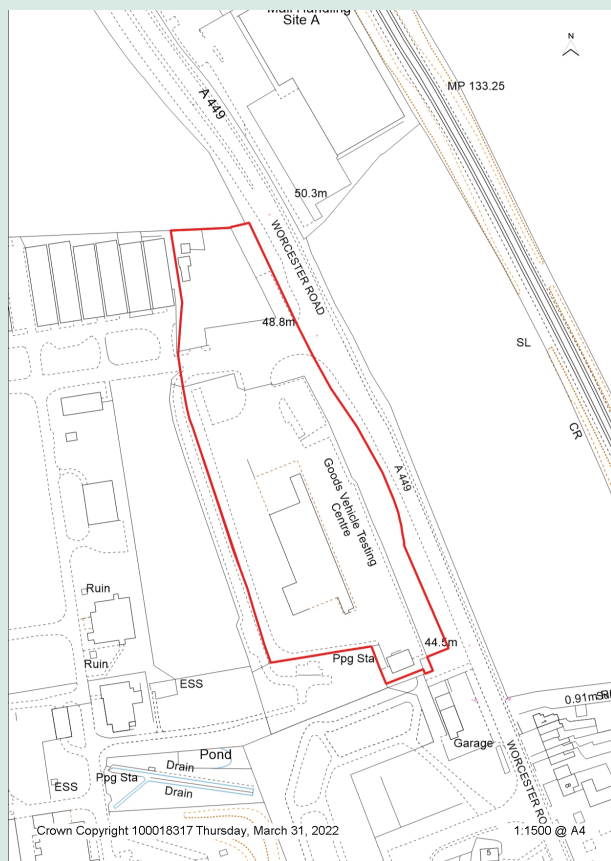
The land at Worcester Road is allocated for employment development (light industrial, B2 and B8). Development of the site should:

- Retain an area of grassland around the units and screen the development from the adjacent dwellings to the south
- Be accessed from the existing roundabout using the service road to the rear of the units alongside the railway
- Provide landscaping along the A449 and the rail corridor
- Where feasible, provide green roofs to create an attractive entrance to the town
- Discharge surface water so as not to exacerbate flooding issues to the south

## Reasoned Justification

**32.44** This area of land acts as a gateway to Kidderminster from the Worcester direction. It is adjacent to existing industrial development and subject to high quality design and landscaping, its development will help to meet employment needs in the District over the Plan period. Dwellings to the south will need to be buffered from any adverse impacts arising from the development.

## VOSA Testing Station Worcester Road (1.75ha) employment uses



**32.45** This site lies opposite the Easter Park extension site. It is suitable for redevelopment for employment uses. The northern part of the site is used for commercial van sales.

### Policy SA.K21 - VOSA Testing Station, Worcester Road

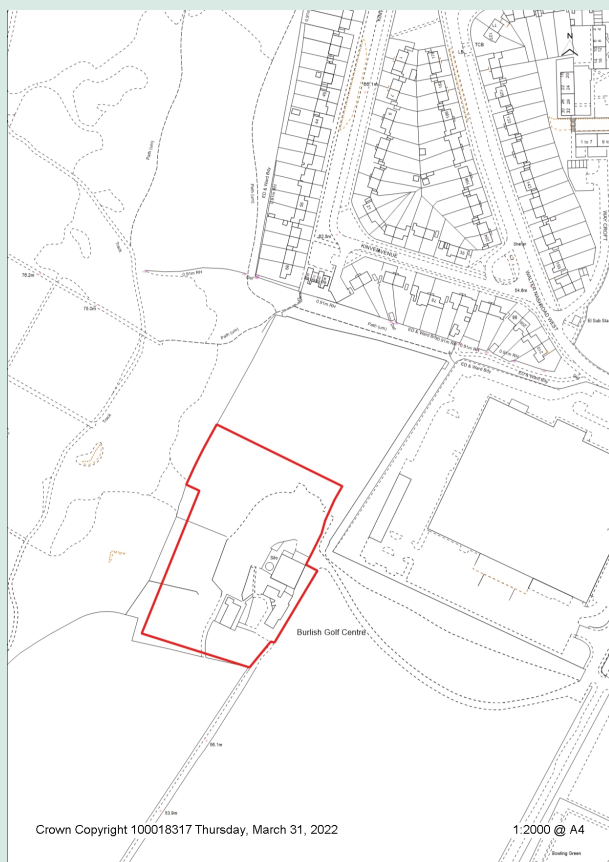
The land currently occupied by the vehicle testing station is allocated for light industrial, B2 and B8 uses. Any redevelopment of the site should meet the following criteria:

- i. Vehicular access should be taken from the existing access road
- ii. The front of the site should be landscaped with native planting
- iii. Development should be compatible with neighbouring uses

## Reasoned Justification

**32.46** This site backs onto the Roxel research station. Any redevelopment would need to be compatible with this use. This is a large site with limited employment and could, together with the site opposite, form a new gateway into Kidderminster.

### Former Burlish Golf Course Clubhouse site (1.35ha) Travelling Showpeople site



**32.47** This site contains the former club house and associated buildings. They have been subject to arson attacks and may require demolition. The land is allocated for a travelling showpeople site.

#### Policy SA.K22 - Former Burlish Golf Course Clubhouse

This land is allocated for development as a site for travelling showpeople subject to the following requirements:

- i. Access will be taken from Zortech Avenue
- ii. The site should be landscaped with native plants to provide screening from adjacent sites
- iii. Arrangements for drainage measures and sewerage treatment should be implemented in accordance with details submitted and approved by the Council
- iv. The scale of the development should meet the specific housing needs of the existing family

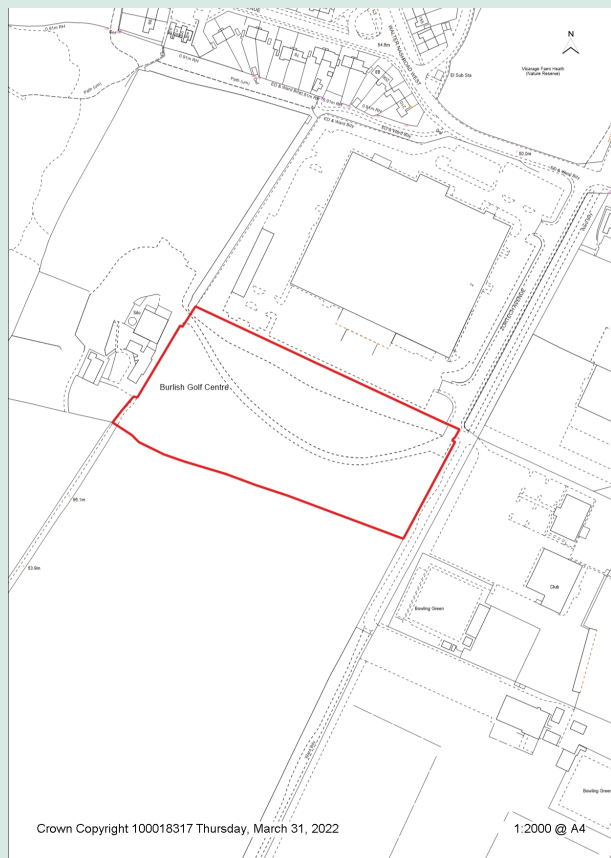
#### Reasoned Justification

**32.48** The Council has been working to find a new site for a locally-based family of travelling showpeople for several years. They need to vacate their current winter home. The allocated site is now in the Council's control following the closure of the Golf Club. It is considered to be ideal for the proposed use as it is adjacent to industrial units but also on the edge of a residential area with easy access to education and other facilities required by the family. The site will be



used mainly in the winter months for maintenance and storage of fairground equipment. The family will also live on the site when they are not travelling around the country. There is good road access for their long vehicles.

### Land off Zortech Avenue (1.96ha) employment uses



**32.49** This land lies adjacent to the access drive to the former Burlish Golf Course Club House and car park. It is allocated for further employment development as it lies adjacent to the edge of the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park.

### Policy SA.K23 - Land off Zortech Avenue

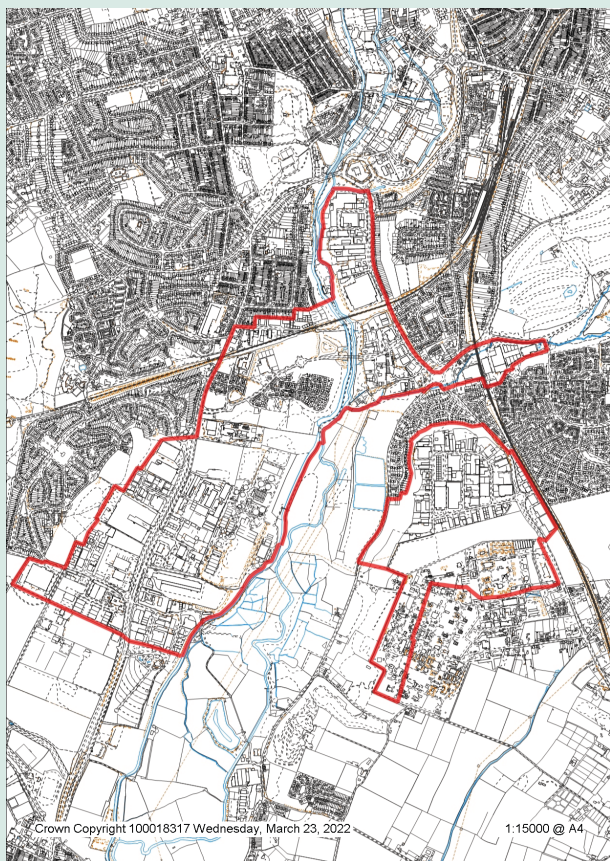
This site is allocated for employment development (light industrial, B2 and B8), subject to the following requirements:

- i. Development should be designed to minimise impact on the neighbouring nature reserve
- ii. Building heights should be a maximum of 2 storeys and incorporate green roofs where practicable
- iii. Landscaping of boundaries with native planting will be required to minimise impact on the adjacent nature reserve, improve connectivity with surrounding wildlife corridors and provide biodiversity net gain

## Reasoned Justification

**32.50** The site is part of the former Burlish Golf Course which returned to local authority ownership in 2018 following the closure of the Golf Club. Land immediately to the south has been transferred to management by the Ranger Service and will form part of a country park. This land will act as a green buffer between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn. The allocation offers the opportunity for a well-designed scheme in an edge of town location with direct access to the adjoining nature reserve, while helping to meet employment needs in the District over the Plan period.

## South Kidderminster Enterprise Park



**32.51** The area to the south of Kidderminster Town Centre provides many development opportunities. It is a thriving mix of businesses and residential uses combined with some of the most important natural habitat in Worcestershire. In recent years, large-scale redevelopment has begun at the former British Sugar site and the former Romwire site. The completion of the Hoo Brook Link Road has connected the Stourport Road Employment Corridor with the Worcester Road Employment Corridor and provided further development opportunities.

### Policy SA.K24 - South Kidderminster Enterprise Park (SKEP)

Development proposals within the SKEP area should:

- i. Positively contribute to the economic well-being of the District
- ii. Ensure that they are compatible with neighbouring areas and should not prejudice the operation and amenity of existing employment in the area
- iii. Enhance the relationship between sites and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and the River Stour corridor where appropriate
- iv. Positively enhance the Wilden Marsh and Meadows SSSI where appropriate
- v. Ensure they incorporate appropriate remediation, building and drainage design in order to deal with any land contamination

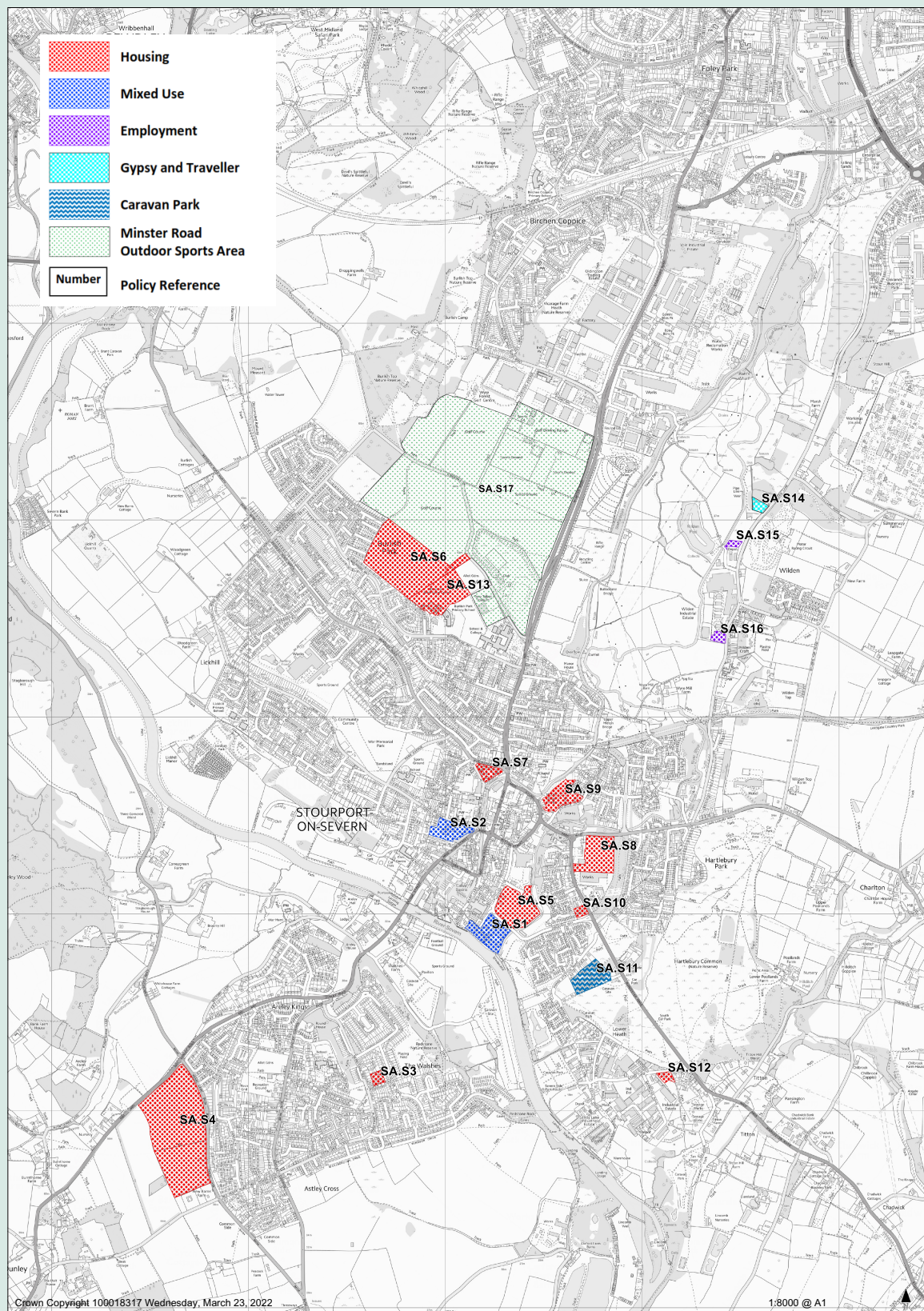
- vi. Strengthen the visual harmony of the Stourport Road with its strong tradition of tree-lining and service roads and prominent set-back of the building line
- vii. Safeguard and promote the development of new enterprise units for start-up businesses
- viii. Take account of any flood risk

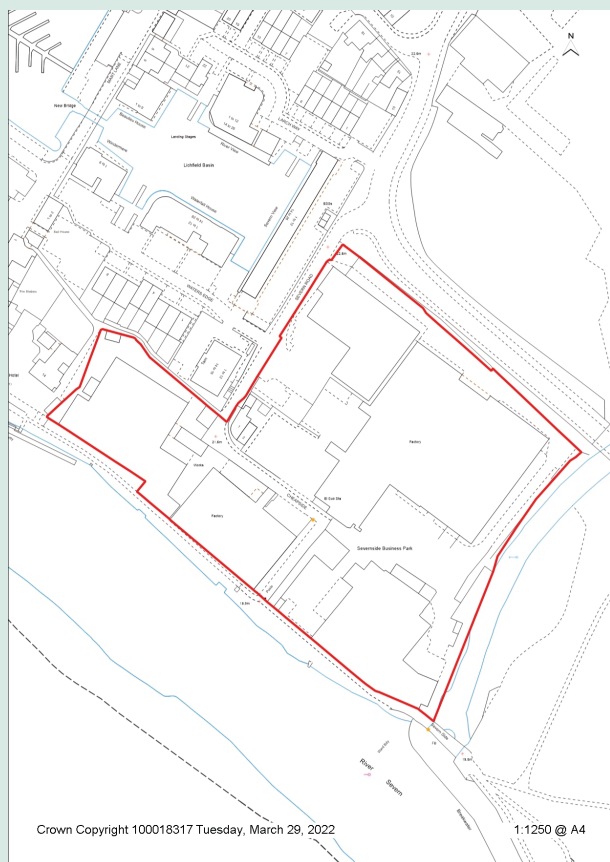
### Reasoned Justification

**32.52** Although the area of the SKEP covers some natural features and Green Belt land, development will only be permitted on previously developed sites. The site designation lies adjacent to Wilden Marsh and Meadows SSSI and the associated former settling ponds west of Wilden Lane. Impacts on this land are to be considered as part of any application for development and positive benefits consistent with Policy SP.23 secured to enhance this area.



## Overview of Allocated sites in Chapter 33: Stourport-on-Severn (please refer to Policies Map for further information)



**Cheapside (2.20ha) 72 dwellings plus some commercial uses 2026-31**

**33.1** This former manufacturing site is located at the confluence of the Rivers Stour and Severn. It contains a former vinegar works factory, the site of gas works and a former canal basin. Much of the site is in the flood zone. It is located within the Stourport-on-Severn No.1 Conservation Area.

**Policy SA.S1 - Cheapside**

The site is allocated for a mix of residential and business and/or commercial development which should meet the following requirements:

- i. The Listed Buildings and Local Heritage List assets within the site boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible. The most significant surviving elements of the Vinegar Works, the Gas Works and the former canal basin (eg: retaining walls) should be retained in order to preserve some industrial characteristics of the Stourport-on-Severn No.1 Conservation Area and these should be incorporated into any new development. The development must take into account the positive contribution made by the heritage assets to the Conservation Area
- ii. The development should incorporate and enhance the natural assets of the site, including the environment of the rivers that surround the site
- iii. Full regard should be had to flood risk
- iv. Appropriate remediation and drainage should be incorporated into the development to deal with any contamination
- v. A full assessment of the existing non-designated heritage assets on the site together with building recording to Historic England Level 4 is required to mitigate for any demolition

- vi. A desk based assessment to assess the potential for below ground archaeology should be undertaken
- vii. Any redevelopment should reflect the historic street pattern of Cheapside, the sloping path to the River Severn towpath and the location of the former basin
- viii. The development should take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement
- ix. The potential for excavation of the site of the former Cheapside Basin to create a landscape feature associated with Green Infrastructure through the site from the Rivers Severn and Stour should be investigated

### Reasoned Justification

**33.2** Cheapside is the site of the oldest vinegar brewery in the county (built 1798). Remaining buildings on the site appear to date from the early-mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The complex forms an important part in the industrial history of Stourport, and the buildings form important facades to the river frontage. This is the only part of the Conservation Area with any industrial-related uses remaining. Proposals which retain the site of the basin undeveloped, retain the Ginnell and repair the former Upper Severn Bridge will be encouraged. The repair and re-use of 1&2 Cheapside (Grade II listed derelict dwellings) will help to mitigate against the impact of redevelopment in the adjacent area. Careful removal of the less significant elements of the Vinegar Works may enhance the remaining elements and encourage their re-use for alternative purposes. Further information on the site can be found in the Stourport-on-Severn No.1 Conservation Area Character Appraisal.



**Swan Hotel / Working Men's Club (1.52ha) 20 dwellings 2026-36**

**33.3** This site fronting Lickhill Road comprises the refurbished Swan Hotel and car park, social clubs and their associated bowling greens plus Lickhill Garage. Much of the land to the rear of the High Street is underused and this provides the opportunity for some infill development in a central location.

**Policy SA.S2 - Swan Hotel/Working Men's Club**

Proposals for this site should provide for a mix of uses including residential, commercial and leisure. Development should:

- i. Enhance and complement the adjacent Conservation Area
- ii. Remove the modern rear extensions to the Swan Hotel
- iii. Redevelop the Lickhill Road frontage whilst still allowing rear access for servicing for shops on High Street
- iv. Reflect the grain and scale of development which has historically taken place to the rear of the High Street with building heights lower than the buildings within the surrounding Conservation Area
- v. Retain the existing social clubs and their associated leisure facilities and parking

**Reasoned Justification**

**33.4** Proposals for residential development to the rear of the Swan Hotel would improve the streetscene and provide easy access to facilities with its central town centre location. New development here would enhance the Conservation Area. Removal of the poor quality extensions to the rear of the Swan Hotel will better reveal its original form and construction, and enhance its setting.

### Queens Road Shops (0.37ha) 12 dwellings (net) 2021-31



**33.5** This site consists of a parade of shops with residential flats above. It is owned by The Community Housing Group.

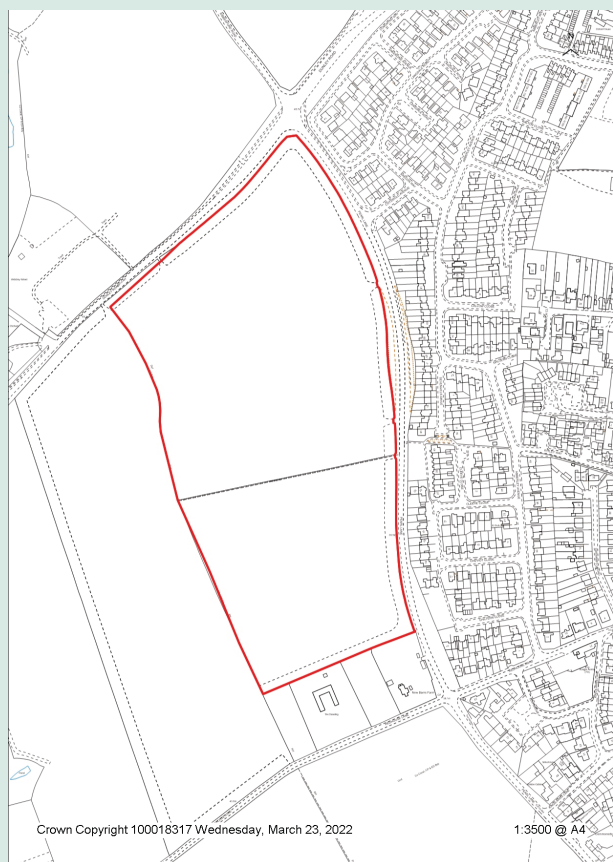
#### Policy SA.S3 - Queens Road Shops

This site is allocated for residential development. Development should:

- i. Provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to suit the local need
- ii. Provide additional landscaping to link the development into the wider green infrastructure provision

#### Reasoned Justification

**33.6** The potential to relocate a retail unit and community meeting facility to the nearby site of the former Walsley Community Centre is being investigated. Additional dwellings could also be located at this site.

**Pearl Lane (15.03ha) 250 dwellings 2021-31**

**33.7** This Greenfield site lies on the western boundary of Wyre Forest District with Malvern Hills District. It comprises two fields separated by a hedgerow. It has a northern boundary with Dunley Road (A451), an eastern boundary with Pearl Lane and a southern field boundary adjacent to New Farm Barns. The western boundary is an established hedgerow with oak trees.

**Policy SA.S4 - Pearl Lane**

This site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

- i. Access should be taken from Dunley Road and Pearl Lane
- ii. Additional boundary tree planting should be provided along the northern, western and southern boundaries in particular to mitigate the impact on the rural landscape and screen the development from the A451 and Redhouse Lane
- iii. The design, layout and landscaping of the development should be sympathetic to the setting of the historic buildings in Dunley, especially Dunley Hall
- iv. The proposed development should be informed by a full impact assessment on any below ground archaeological assets which should be included as part of a Heritage Statement at the planning application stage
- v. The development scheme should take into account the Blackstone to Astley Aqueduct which runs north to south through the site
- vi. The public footpath alongside the culverted watercourse should be further buffered from development to maintain the views out into the wider rural landscape
- vii. No additional discharge must be made from the development as there are issues of surface water flooding on the estate opposite. This should be dealt with on site by SuDS and integrated into the wider green infrastructure provision

## Reasoned Justification

**33.8** This site gives the opportunity to deliver a high quality residential development with significant areas of landscaping. As part of the development, there is also the opportunity to potentially ameliorate flooding issues on the adjoining development. The site lies in a sustainable location with good access to local shops, schools and bus services. It is also outside of the Green Belt. The development capacity may be limited to 250 dwellings by the ability of local schools to absorb the additional pupil numbers. The capacity may be exceeded if information is provided to demonstrate that local highways and education capacity is not constrained and subject to meeting all of the other policy requirements. Archaeological records show evidence of a Roman villa in the vicinity of the site. This may have an impact on the developable area.

### Former Carpets of Worth (3.31ha) 129 dwellings 2021-26



**33.9** This site is the remaining parcel of the much larger former Bond Worth carpet factory site. The northern part has been redeveloped for a superstore and petrol station. A new link road over the River Stour and through to the Worcester Road has also been provided as part of this development. The site is mostly cleared but there are three buildings remaining which have been extensively vandalised.

#### Policy SA.S5 - Former Carpets of Worth

The site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

- i. The development should provide for residential uses, together with a riverside ecological corridor
- ii. The development should be sympathetic to the Stourport-on-Severn No.1 Conservation Area and the riverside setting

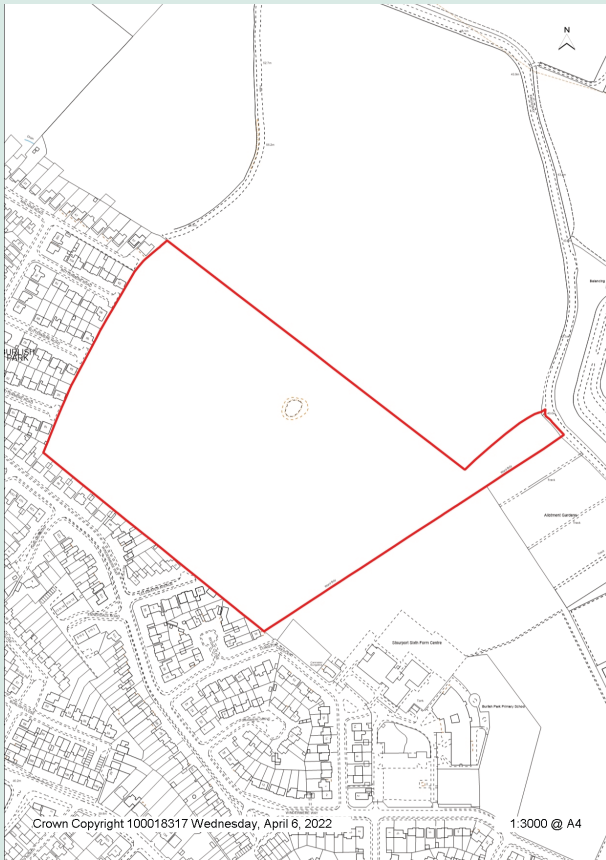
- iii. Any development on the site must reflect and complement the existing character and quality of the historic buildings to the west, and specifically the former route leading east from Lichfield Street towards the River Stour should be retained
- iv. The site layout should provide a clear and logical block structure that connects with Lichfield Street and provide private backs and public fronts to all streets and spaces
- v. The development should take the opportunity to buffer and enhance the major Green Infrastructure corridor associated with the River Stour and ensure Green Infrastructure connectivity with Severn Road
- vi. Ecological surveys will be required prior to submission of any planning application and potential for habitat creation along the river-bank should be investigated together with opportunities for creating nesting places for owls and bats and provision for otters. These ecological measures should be incorporated into the development where feasible.
- vii. The development should safeguard and enhance the natural assets provided by the River Stour whilst taking into account and mitigating against any flood risk. Control of drainage and pollution/SuDS should be a priority
- viii. The development should incorporate appropriate remediation, building and drainage design in order to deal with any land contamination
- ix. The development should take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement

### **Reasoned Justification**

**33.10** This site previously had planning approval for 159 dwellings in a scheme that included the refurbishment of the remaining buildings. This permission lapsed in 2016. The remaining buildings are now so dilapidated that they can no longer be refurbished. Any scheme on this site must be of the highest quality as this is a gateway site into Stourport-on-Severn from the new river crossing immediately to the south of the site. The riverside should be an integral part of any proposals.



## Land west of former school site Coniston Crescent (9.76ha) 200 dwellings 2026-31



**33.11** This land was formerly part of the Burlish Golf Course which has ceased operations and is now returned to the District Council's ownership.

### Policy SA.S6 - Land west of former school site Coniston Crescent

This site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

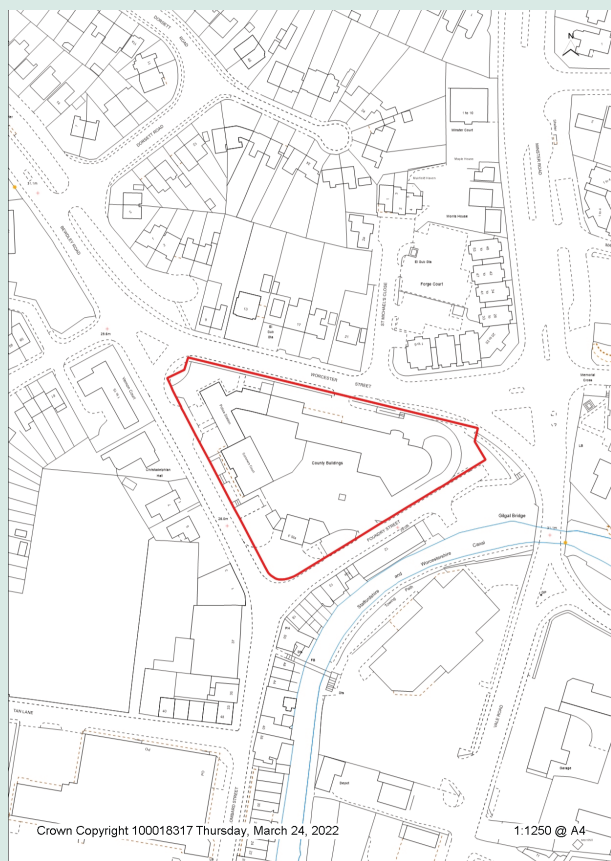
- i. Vehicular access should be taken from the Kingsway adjacent to the allotments
- ii. The potential to provide parking for allotment users should be investigated as part of any proposal and incorporated in the development where feasible
- iii. Opportunities for pedestrian links from the site to existing residential developments should be explored to aid permeability and incorporated in the development where feasible
- iv. A substantial landscaping buffer should be provided along the northern edge to form a new Green Belt boundary
- v. The layout of the development should take into account the development site to the east and impacts on surrounding land uses
- vi. Potential to recreate an area of acid grassland on site should be investigated and incorporated into the development where feasible



## Reasoned Justification

**33.12** This site would allow the ‘rounding-off’ of the settlement edge of Stourport-on-Severn. Significant landscaping will be required to limit the impact on the open landscape to the north. Acid grassland habitat has recently been successfully created on the neighbouring Stourport Sports Club site and this land would also be suitable for a similar scheme. Development should be designed in conjunction with the neighbouring site at Stourport High School (Policy SA.S13)

## County Buildings (0.70ha) 40 dwellings 2021-26



**33.13** This triangular shaped site on the northern edge of the town centre has frontages to Worcester Street to the north, Foundry Street to the east and Bewdley Road to the west. Lombard Street leads up to the southern corner of the site. It was home to a number of community uses, many of which have now vacated the site and relocated elsewhere in the town. The library, coroners court and police station now all occupy space in the Civic Centre. The Fire Station has relocated to the Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub. Stourport Health Centre is relocating to a new medical centre on Dunley Road in late 2021.

### Policy SA.S7 - County Buildings

This site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

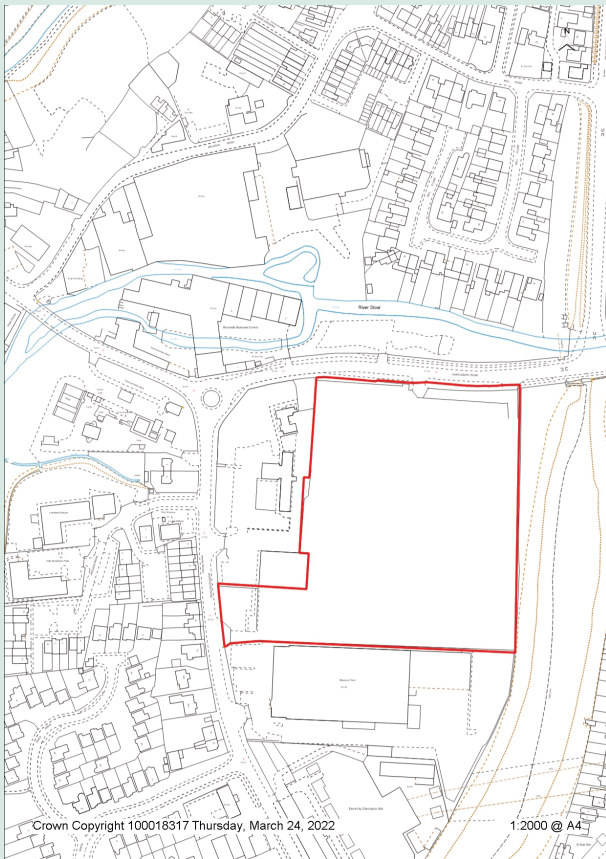
- i. The development should reference the historic townscape character alongside the canal and its transition to early 20<sup>th</sup> Century residential development beyond the site
- ii. A street frontage to Foundry Street should be reintroduced and its scale, form and massing should respect the scale and orientation of the Listed Buildings lining Foundry Street
- iii. Development on the site should be sympathetic to the adjacent Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area
- iv. The design of the site should address differences in levels between Worcester Street (higher level) and Lombard Street

- v. The development should take the opportunity to enhance existing Green Infrastructure permeability through the site and connect with the River Stour and Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Local Wildlife Sites' GI corridors
- vi. Building recording is required prior to any demolition as the building is on the Historic Environment Record

### Reasoned Justification

**33.14** This triangular site would be ideal for a redevelopment for residential uses as it is now surrounded by housing on two sides and is located in the town centre.

### Parsons Chain (2.91ha) 100 dwellings plus care home 2026-31



**33.15** This site was a former chain making factory. The site was cleared of buildings around 2008. It is dominated by the former railway embankment that forms its eastern boundary. This was previously safeguarded as a route for the Stourport Relief Road. It abuts the Hartlebury Common SSSI at its southern tip. Natural woodland has regenerated along the length of the former railway line. The site has most recently been used as a storage compound for the Birmingham Pipeline Resilience Project.

### Policy SA.S8 - Parsons Chain

This site is allocated for residential development including care home (Class C2), which should meet the following requirements:

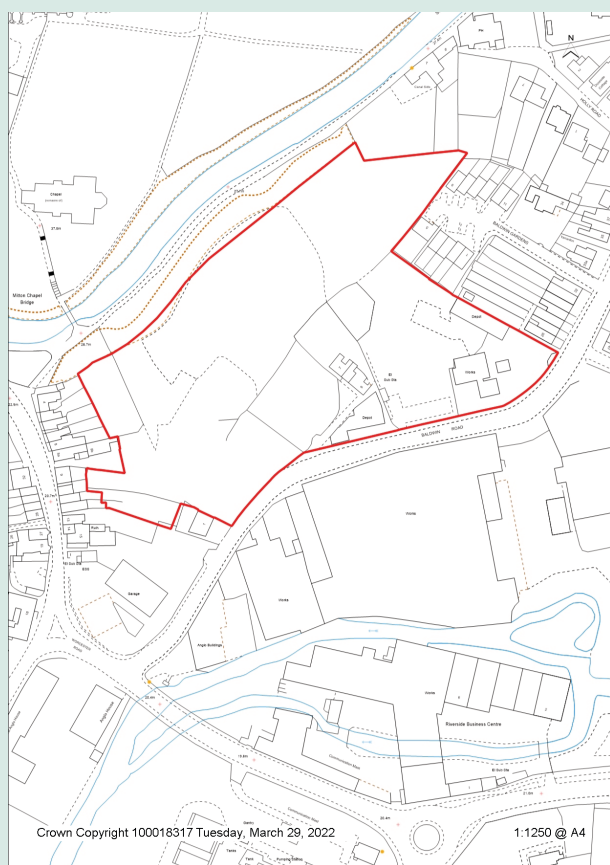
- i. The layout of the development should take account of the adjacent employment uses to ensure that any development does not prejudice their viability

- ii. The Grade II listed house to the NW of the site should be buffered from any development by additional landscaping. Building heights on the new development should respect the setting of this Listed Building
- iii. The railway embankment should be retained as an important green corridor and recreational route

### Reasoned Justification

**33.16** Further ecological appraisal of this site is set out in the evidence base for the Plan. The railway embankment has been safeguarded as the route of the Stourport Relief Road for many years. This scheme is no longer in Worcestershire County Council's transport plan. The silver birch woodland along the top of the embankment is important as both a wildlife corridor and a recreational route and helps to deflect footfall from the more sensitive adjacent SSSI at Hartlebury Common.

### Baldwin Road (1.75ha) 87-92 dwellings 2021-26



**33.17** This site has had a number of planning approvals for residential development (totalling 72 dwellings) and is made up of several land parcels. A masterplan has been provided showing how the various planning approvals / applications link together to form a comprehensive redevelopment plan. The site contains a number of commercial uses, many of which have now ceased operations. Proposals are being drawn up by the developer to bring forward these remaining parcels with the potential to provide a further 15 - 20 dwellings. The site is bounded by the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and towpath to the north- west and Baldwin Road forms the eastern boundary. Rear gardens of dwellings in the Gilgal Conservation Area abut the western boundary.

### Policy SA.S9 - Baldwin Road

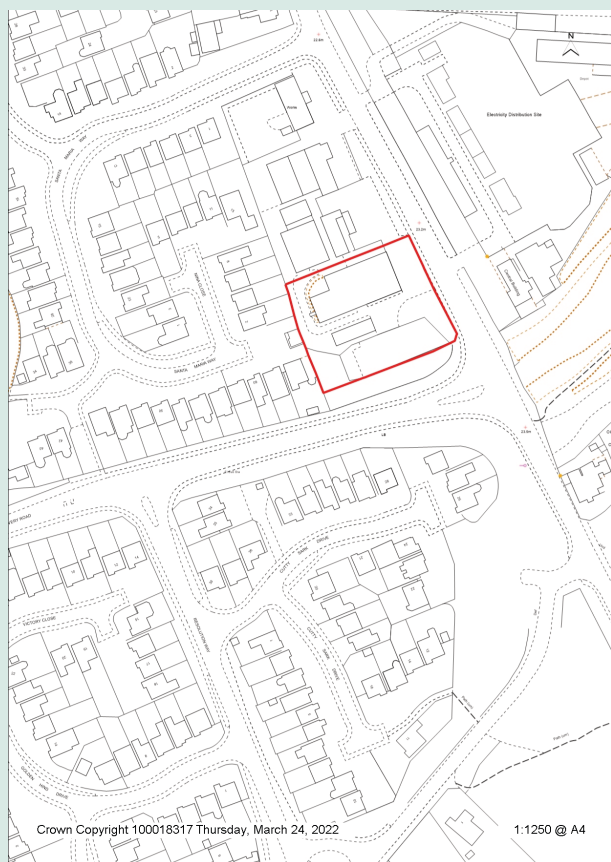
This site is allocated for residential development.

- i. The affordable housing thresholds will be applied pro-rata to the entire site

- ii. The development should avoid demolition of the historic cottages at 6 & 7 Baldwin Road and instead incorporate these into the scheme, including their curtilage and access
- iii. The development should retain and enhance the area of open space and integrate the scrub and woodland into the overall residential development
- iv. Green Infrastructure connections should be provided throughout the site to connect into the wider network
- v. Links from the site onto the adjacent canal towpath for walking and cycling trips into Stourport-on-Severn town centre and further afield should be provided
- vi. Proposals should take into consideration the Kidderminster and Stourport Urban and Waterfront Strategic Development Corridor Green Infrastructure Concept Statement
- vii. A holistic drainage strategy is required for the entire site
- viii. The development should ensure that buildings front onto Baldwin Road where possible
- ix. The development should not have an adverse impact on either the Gilgal Conservation Area or the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area
- x. The development should incorporate appropriate remediation, building and drainage design to deal with any potential contamination issues

### Reasoned Justification

It is important that this site is dealt with holistically and does not come forward for development in a piecemeal fashion. Planning approval is in place for the majority of the site with a total of 72 dwellings approved under several different applications.

**Worcester Road Car Sales (southern part) (0.30ha) 15 dwellings 2026-31**

**33.18** This site is located on the main Worcester Road. To the north of the site is a car sales business. To the west and south there are residential uses. A large electricity sub-station occupies the land opposite. A new development here would improve the streetscene.

**Policy SA.S10 - Worcester Road Car Sales (southern part)**

The site is allocated for residential development which should:

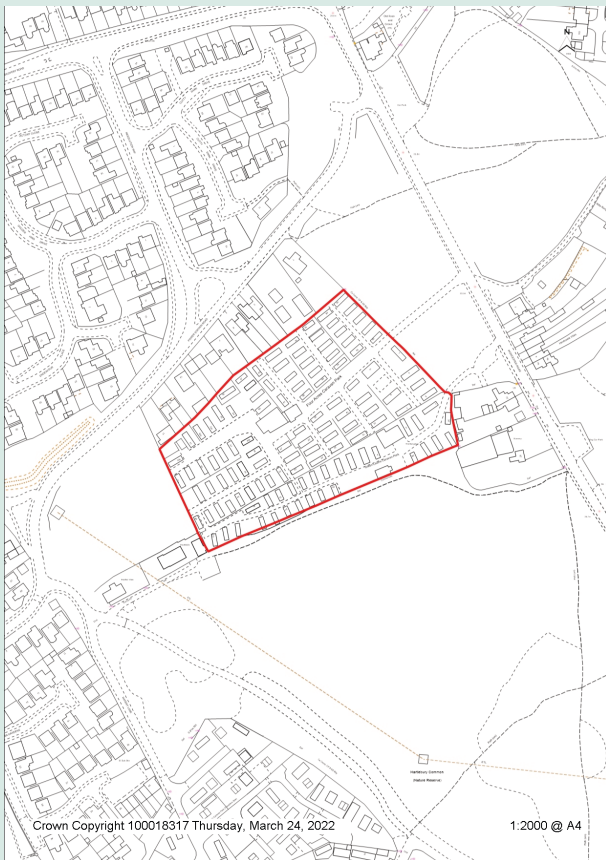
- i. Retain and enhance existing screening along the southern boundary
- ii. Ensure that development fronts onto Worcester Road
- iii. Incorporate appropriate remediation, building and drainage design in order to deal with any land contamination

**Reasoned Justification**

**33.19** This site contains a number of run-down buildings including the former canteen building from the Stourport Power Station. They are in a poor state of repair and previous proposals for redevelopment for employment uses were found to be unviable.



## Four Acres Caravan Park (2ha)



**33.20** Land at Worcester Road is allocated as a caravan site. Previous Local Plans allocated the land as an Area of Development Restraint. It is occupied by two caravan sites - Four Acres and Greenlawns. It is adjacent to Hartlebury Common SSSI.

### Policy SA.S11 - Four Acres Caravan Park

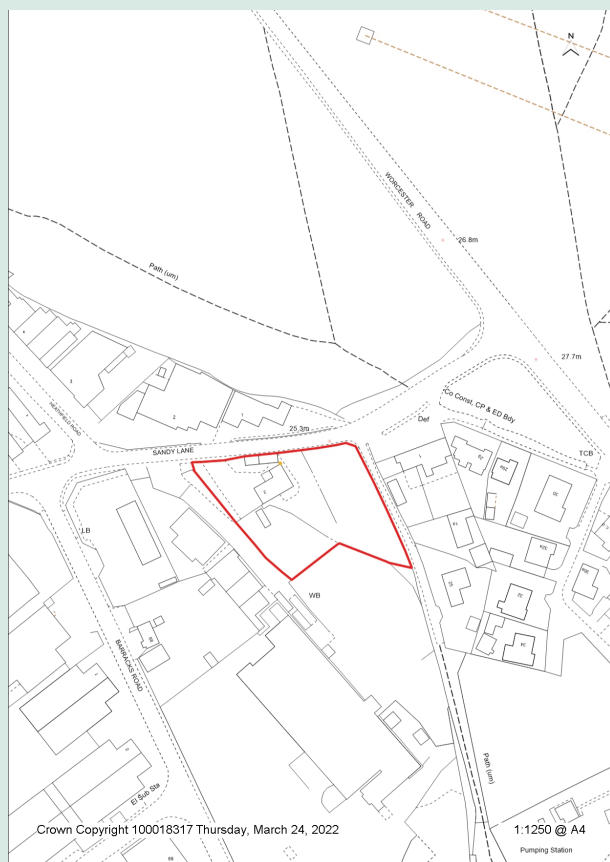
The land is allocated as a caravan park:

- i. If, in the future, the use of the land as a caravan park ceases, the site will be released for residential redevelopment

## Reasoned Justification

**33.21** There are over 100 caravans on the sites - most of them are used as permanent residences which are licensed for 11.5 month occupancy. If the site is developed for housing in the future, there would be a greatly reduced number of dwellings compared to the current number of mobile homes as ecological constraints would limit development in the areas nearest to Hartlebury Common.



**Land at 3 Sandy Lane Titton (0.32ha) 10 dwellings 2021-26**

**33.22** This site is located on the edge of Sandy Lane Industrial Estate and is very near to Hartlebury Common and Hillditch Coppice SSSI. The site was previously used as a scrap yard. The house on the site is still occupied and was part of the original Sands Farm. Some of the original outbuildings still remain. It was previously allocated for employment as part of the Sandy Lane Industrial Estate. A public footpath runs along the eastern site boundary

**Policy SA.S12 - Land at 3 Sandy Lane Titton**

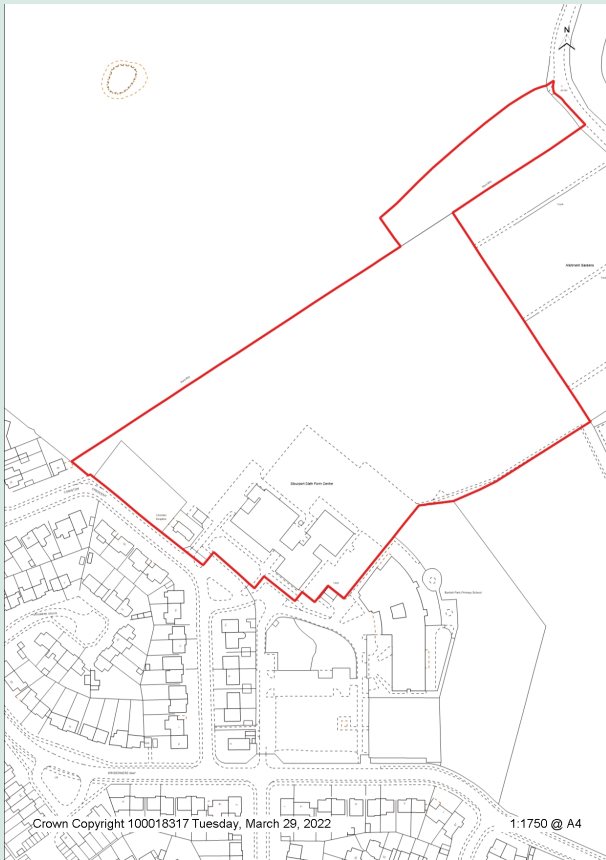
The site is allocated for residential development:

- i. Development should be sensitively designed so as to have no negative impacts on SSSI. Thick hedges should be retained around site with non-native species replaced with tall and dense native ones so as to minimise light spillage
- ii. If possible, the roadside barn should be considered for retention as a bat roost. Full bat activity surveys will be required to establish how bats use the wider site. These can then be used to inform site layout, density and lighting

**Reasoned Justification**

**33.23** This site is adjacent to residential development and a well-designed low density scheme would be suitable at this location. There is already a dwelling on the site.

## School site Coniston Crescent (4.08ha) 109 dwellings 2021-26



**33.24** This former school site is surplus to education requirements.

### Policy SA.S13 - School site Coniston Crescent

This site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

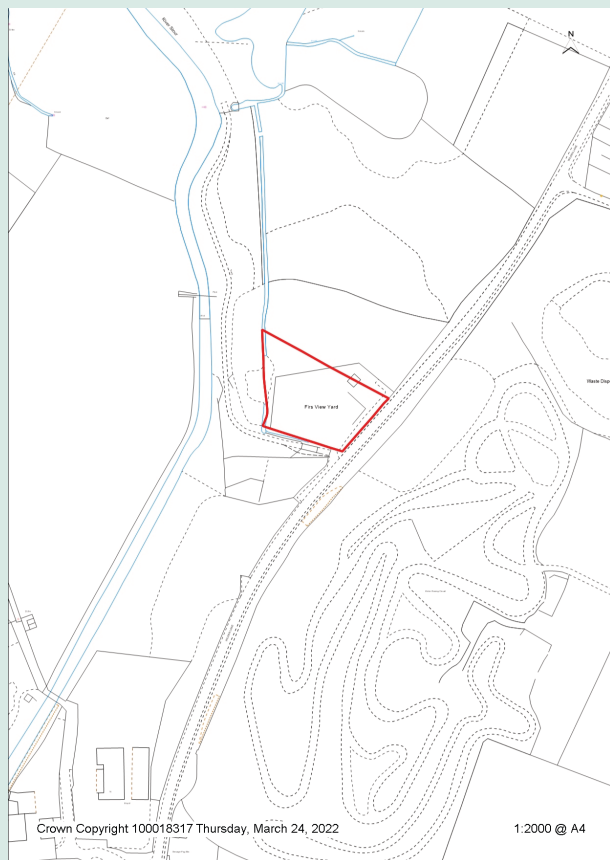
- Vehicular access should be taken from the Kingsway adjacent to the allotments or from Coniston Crescent
- The existing trees on the site should be supplemented to develop a buffer between the existing dwellings on Coniston Crescent and the new development
- An ecological appraisal should be submitted as part of any future planning application and measures for the protection and enhancement of ecological interests should be incorporated in the development

### Reasoned Justification

**33.25** This site is surplus to educational requirements. It was, until recently, used as a sixth form block by the neighbouring Stourport High School. A new sixth form block has been provided elsewhere on site. The playing fields were part of the provision for Burlish Middle School which closed following the Wyre Forest schools' reorganisation in 2007. The High School has in excess of the playing pitch requirement and also has agreement to use the Stourport Sports Club

facilities on the adjacent land. A major rebuilding of the High School is required and the sale of this site will help towards the funding. Development should be designed in conjunction with the neighbouring site (see Policy SA.S6)

### **Firs View Yard Wilden Lane (0.41ha) 4 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers**



**33.26** This site lies partly within the Wilden Marsh and Meadows SSSI and is adjacent to the River Stour floodplain SSSI. Most of the site lies within flood zones 2 or 3. It is currently in use as a gypsy site with inhabited caravans. A vehicle storage and reclamation business is run from the yard. Much of the site is naturally regenerated wet woodland which is dominated by alder, silver birch and willow. This allocation will regularise the use.

#### **Policy SA.S14 - Firs View Yard Wilden Lane**

The land is allocated as a private gypsy site for 4 pitches which should meet the following requirements:

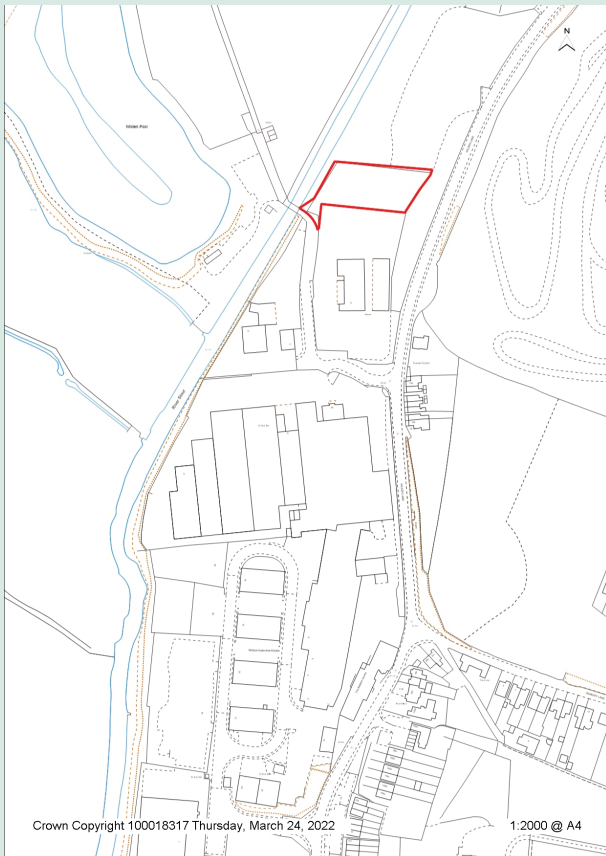
- i. Measures should be put in place to prevent surface water and pollutants washing off the yard into the surrounding highly sensitive habitat
- ii. Fencing around the yard should be retained and maintained
- iii. The number of pitches should be restricted to 4 and they should be located along the edge of the site nearest to the road which lies outside the floodplain
- iv. External lighting should be restricted to protect light sensitive habitats
- v. No trees are to be removed from the site boundary
- vi. A full ecological survey will be required to inform the site layout and recommend biodiversity enhancements. This should include a full bat survey

## Reasoned Justification

**33.27** A carefully controlled change of use can deliver significant improvements to the site and enhance the SSSI. This allocation regularises an existing use. No further caravan pitches should be provided on this site as they are classed as 'Highly Vulnerable' in the floodplain.

## Employment Allocations

### North of Wilden Lane Industrial Estate (0.22ha) employment development



**33.28** This site has a certificate of lawfulness for open storage not associated with agriculture. The site is formally allocated as part of the Wilden Industrial Estate employment area.

### Policy SA.S15 - North of Wilden Lane Industrial Estate

The land is allocated for employment uses (light industrial Classes B2 and B8) which should meet the following requirements:

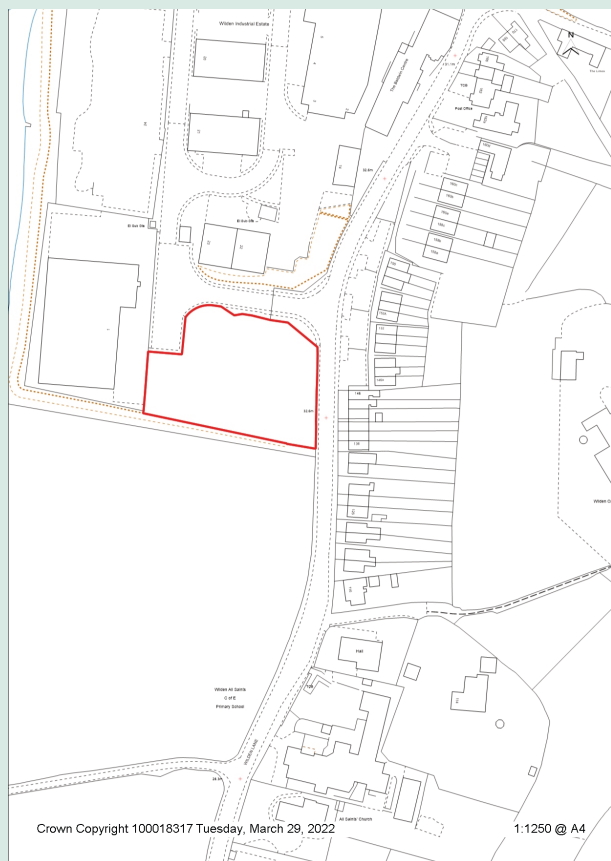
- i. The access should be taken from the existing access serving Wilden Pool
- ii. Additional tree screening should be provided around the site
- iii. Any future buildings on the site should be limited in height to prevent visual intrusion into views across the Stour Valley
- iv. Surface water run-off, noise and lighting should be carefully controlled to protect the adjacent River Stour Flood Plain SSSI
- v. Trees on the site must be protected as they form part of the River Stour ecological corridor

- vi. A detailed ecological survey will be required to inform any proposals for further development on the site

### Reasoned Justification

**33.29** This site has had a certificate of lawfulness for open storage since 2005 and is part of the wider Wilden Industrial Estate employment area. This allocation regularises the situation.

### Wilden Lane Industrial Estate (0.34ha) employment development



**33.30** There is a large vacant plot adjacent to the main entrance to the industrial estate which is safeguarded as a potential expansion plot for the neighbouring firm. This site is located opposite a row of cottages included on the Local Heritage List and sits within the plain of the River Stour.

### Policy SA.S16 - Wilden Lane Industrial Estate

This site is allocated for employment development (light industrial, B2 and B8) which should meet the following requirements:

- i. Any development of this site should contribute positively to this location through careful consideration of the layout, design, scale and materials used in its construction
- ii. Development should be well-screened from the residential dwellings opposite on Wilden Lane



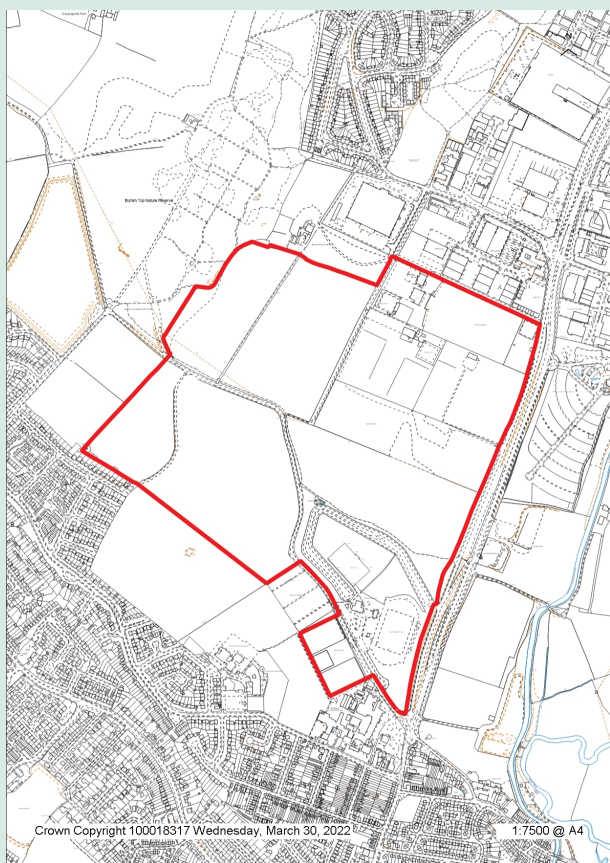
## Reasoned Justification

**33.31** This site is the last remaining unused parcel on the industrial estate. As the gateway site, the design should be carefully considered.

## Other Allocations

### Minster Road Outdoor Sports Area

**33.32** The Council will continue to safeguard an area north-west of Minster Road, Stourport-on-Severn for outdoor sports use. This area lies within the Green Belt and has an important function in terms of sports facilities as well as preventing Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn from merging together.



### Policy SA.S17 - Minster Road Outdoor Sports Area

- i. Proposals for the development of outdoor sports facilities will be encouraged within this area subject to compatibility with Green Belt and landscape and nature conservation policies.
- ii. Proposals will be delivered via developer contributions and other funding sources and will be informed by the Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Sports Facilities Strategy.

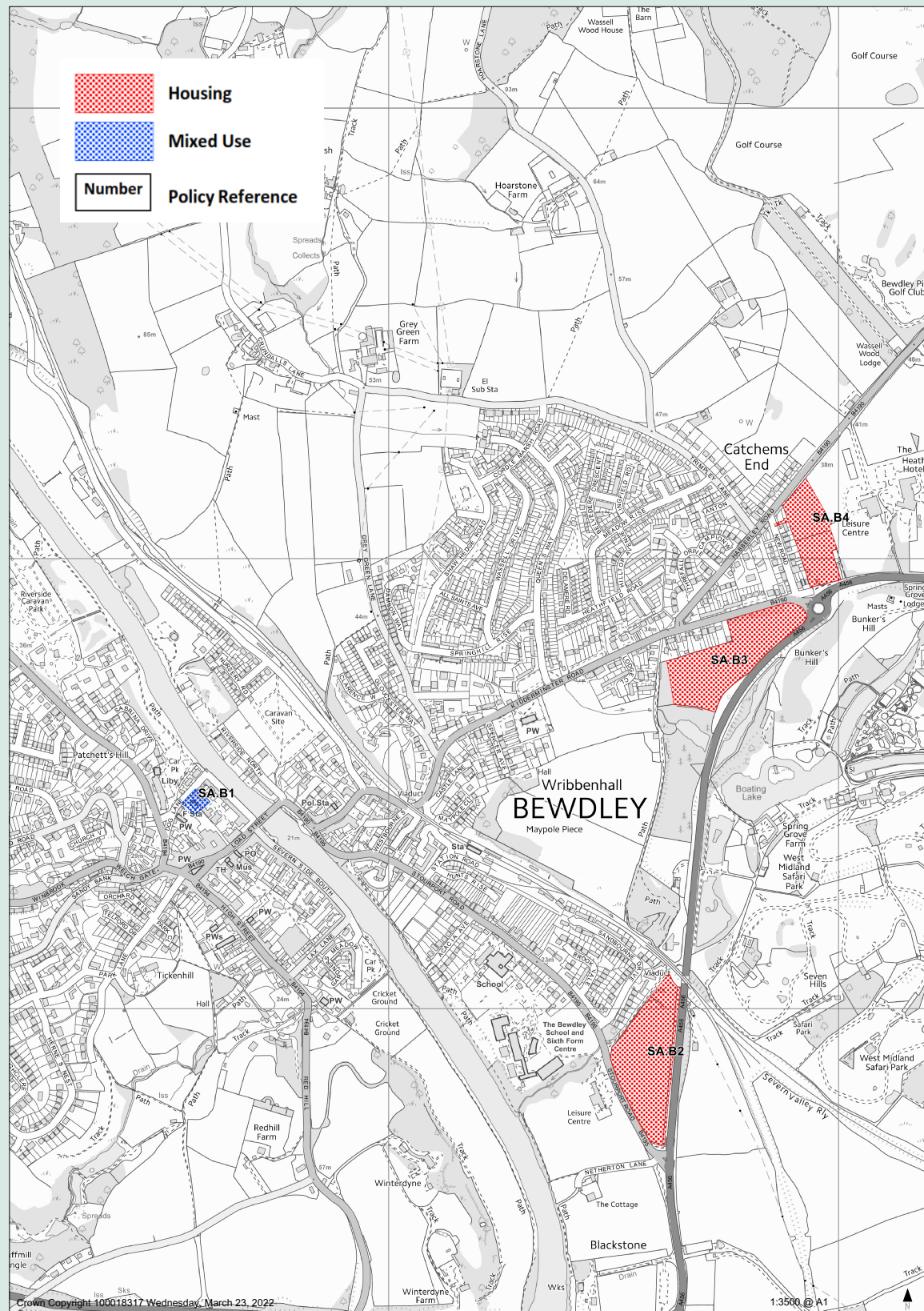
## Reasoned Justification

**33.33** Approximately 77 hectares of Green Belt land between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn will be safeguarded for outdoor sports and recreation. Until 2016, much of the site was in use as a golf course. The site returned to local authority ownership in June

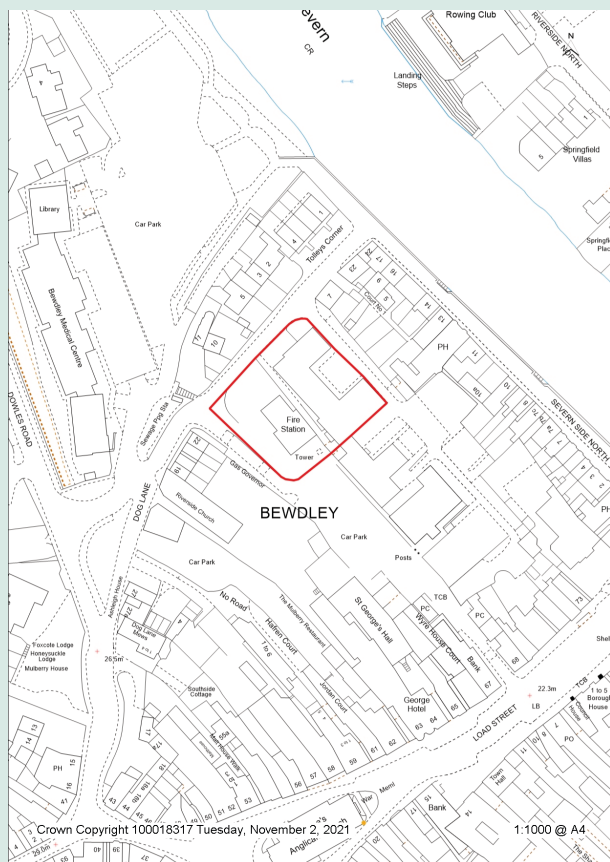


2018. The Wyre Forest Golf Facility Review (2019) sets out why this course is considered to be surplus to requirements. Parts of the site have now been brought under management by the Council's ranger service as part of a long term vision to create a Country Park. Part of the site will be managed as an extension to the adjacent Burlish Top Nature Reserve. The land has been made available for public access with footpaths, signage, gates and fencing. Cattle have also been brought in to graze the wildflower meadow. A proposal to develop a 3.24km cycling route on land to the south of Kingsway is also being discussed with British Cycling. Any funding secured would be match funded from S106 contributions. There are also plans to create a new area of woodland on 10 ha in conjunction with the Woodland Trust. A visitor car park has been provided adjacent to the Kingsway. Existing sports facilities include a number of football pitches adjacent to Minster Road and the extensive facilities at Stourport Sports Club including netball courts (some under cover) hockey/football pitches (artificial grass pitches), cycling track and athletics tracks.

## Overview of Allocated Sites in Chapter 34: Bewdley (please refer to Policies Map for further information)



## Bewdley Fire Station (0.19ha) mixed use with 6 dwellings 2021-26



**34.1** The site of Bewdley Fire Station and the vacant plot to the rear is allocated for a foodstore with residential apartments above. This site is located in the centre of the Conservation Area and is surrounded by Listed Buildings and town centre car parking. Part of the land was formerly occupied by the medical centre which has relocated to a new building on part of the Dog Lane car park.

### Policy SA.B1 - Bewdley Fire Station

This site is allocated for a foodstore and residential development which should meet the following requirements:

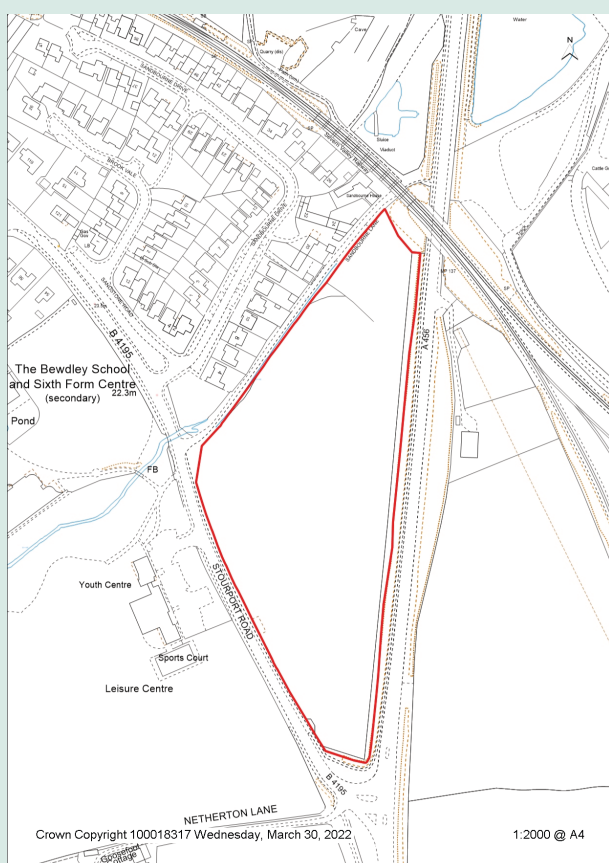
- i. The development should address and provide betterment to flood risk. Part of this site is located in flood zone 3 (defended by demountable barriers) and flood zone 2 (undefended). There should be no habitable rooms at ground floor level. Contributions to flood defence maintenance / improvements and flood warning may be required. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment should determine levels with Climate Change allowances and take into account defence overtopping scenarios
- ii. The development should be sympathetic to nearby Heritage Assets including the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings
- iii. Development on the site should utilise the change in levels across the site to reduce the overall height of the built form, so that any impact on designated assets on the opposite side of Dog Lane is reduced to a minimum.
- iv. The impact of development on views across the town from the north, towards the church tower, and across the town from the Bridge should be analysed and used to determine the form of any new buildings on the site.
- v. A programme of archaeological works will be required including below ground archaeological investigations. Archaeological assessment should accompany or be

incorporated into a Heritage Statement submitted with the planning application to identify the significance of on-site assets that may be affected and to assess the impact of development on them and their settings.

## Reasoned Justification

**34.2** Redevelopment of this vacant site will need to be sympathetically designed to fit in with the surrounding Conservation Area and the many listed buildings. As a town centre plot, it is a very sustainable location to redevelop for residential uses and an element of retail on the ground floor.

### Stourport Road Triangle (3.35ha) 100 dwellings 2021-26



**34.3** This triangular shaped field is currently used for animal grazing and was formerly in arable use. The site is allocated for approximately 100 homes, with access from Stourport Road, public open space, landscaping and planting and pedestrian/cycle links to Bewdley town centre.

### Policy SA.B2 - Stourport Road Triangle

The land is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

- i. Vehicular access should be taken from Stourport Road
- ii. The northern part of the site adjacent to the Severn Valley Railway viaduct should remain as open space with no built development as this is the site of the former walled garden (non-designated heritage asset)

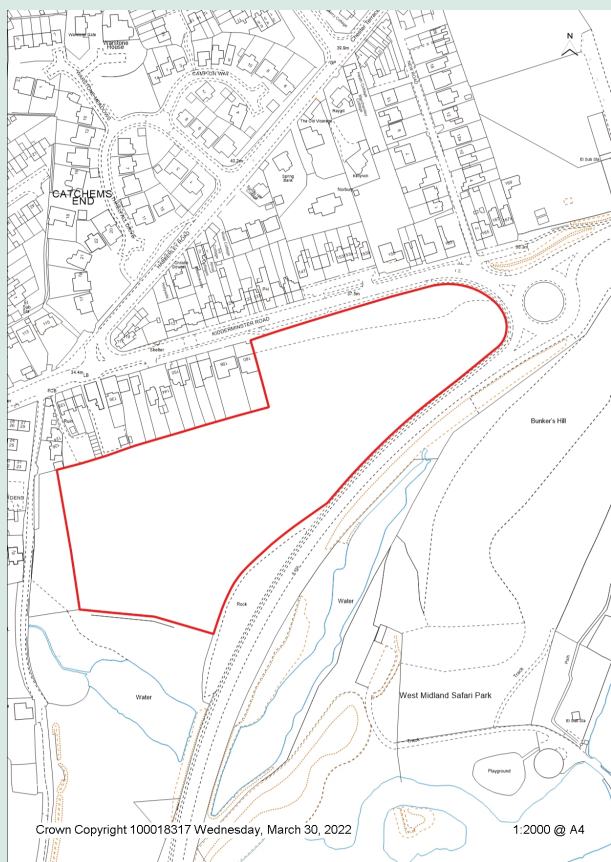


- iii. The development should respect the setting of the locally listed viaduct (northern boundary) and coach house and barn (to west of site)
- iv. The development should be designed to minimise any adverse impact on both the Severn Valley Railway and Bewdley Conservation Area. Building heights should be restricted to the equivalent of 2 storeys to minimise impact on views from/to surrounding heritage assets
- v. Enhanced green infrastructure should be provided alongside the Riddings Brook with a buffer strip provided alongside the brook
- vi. A noise survey should be undertaken to establish existing background noise levels across the site and to mitigate noise impact from road traffic. Should the findings of the survey indicate that these may adversely impact upon the amenity of new residents, then measures should be incorporated within the development to mitigate against this
- vii. Hedgerows should be protected and supplemented, especially along the northern boundary to promote connectivity to nearby woodland

### Reasoned Justification

**34.4** This site lies opposite the town's leisure centre and the adjacent schools. It also has easy access by foot to the town centre shops and medical facilities. The site is in a sustainable location and can help meet the housing requirement for Bewdley. It has good access to the wider footpath network and surrounding open countryside. The restriction imposed on building height would still allow for a third storey within the roof space if required but will not impact adversely on the wider landscape and the setting of the Conservation Area and key heritage assets.

### Catchem's End (3.26ha) 80 dwellings 2021-26



**34.5** The site is allocated for approximately 80 dwellings. The area nearest to the roundabout will be kept free of development to protect the openness of the landscape at this location. The site is bounded by a sandstone wall along the length of Kidderminster Road.

#### Policy SA.B3 - Catchem's End

The site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

- i. Access will be taken from Kidderminster Road. This access should not obstruct or cause loss of the existing layby as this provides residential parking and a pull-in for bus services. Part of the existing boundary wall should be removed only in order to provide the required visibility splay and access into the site. Any trees that are removed to facilitate site access should be replaced by new tree planting on site
- ii. The area nearest the roundabout should be left undeveloped with appropriate green and blue infrastructure to retain an open aspect and help soften the visual impact of the development from wider views within the Green Belt
- iii. An appropriate play area should be provided as part of the open space provision
- iv. The site boundaries should be buffered and enhanced to benefit Green Infrastructure connectivity. The mature broadleaved trees along the site boundaries should be retained where possible to help screen the development
- v. Building heights should be limited to 2 – 2.5 storeys to minimise any detrimental impact on the setting of All Saints Wribbenhall and Churchyard (Grade II Listed)
- vi. A noise survey should be undertaken to establish existing background noise levels across the site and to mitigate noise impact from road traffic. Should the findings of

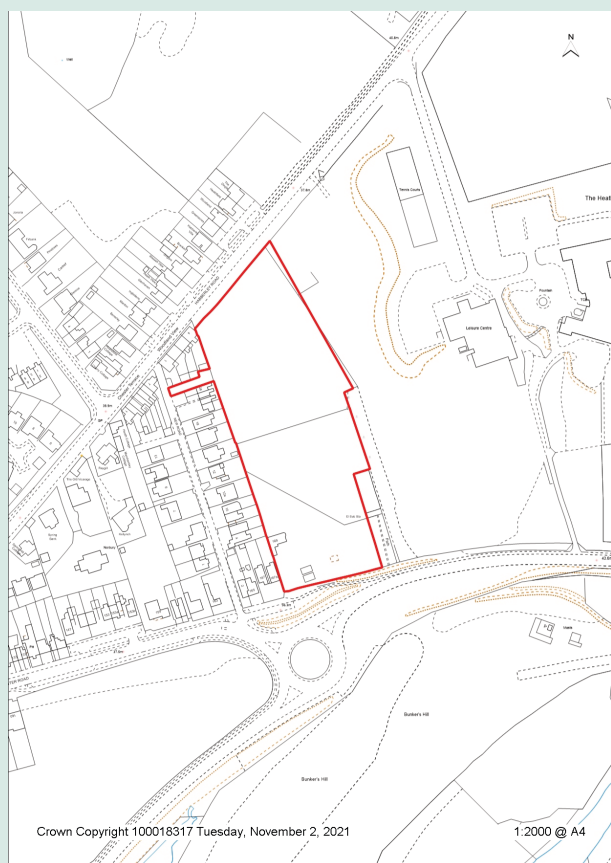


- the survey indicate that these may adversely impact upon the amenity of new residents, then measures should be incorporated within the development to mitigate against this
- vii. The possibility of providing a footpath/cycle link to rear of Lodge Close through the wet woodland should be explored and facilitated through this development, if feasible. This would connect the new housing with the wider footpath network

## Reasoned Justification

**34.6** This development will maintain the parkland setting at this gateway into Bewdley. It will provide opportunities to link into the wider footpath network. A robust Green Belt boundary is formed by the surrounding road network. The site is in a sustainable location and can help meet the housing requirement for Bewdley. Planning contributions from this development will help to bring forward improvements to the adjoining site to the rear of Lodge Close.

### Land South of Habberley Road (1.71ha) 41 dwellings 2021-26



**34.7** This site consists of paddocks and is bounded by the Habberley Road (B4190) to the north, dwellings on New Road to the west and the A456 to the south. To the east lie the grounds of a hotel. A dwelling and its associated outbuildings are situated in the south western corner of the site. The site is at a lower level than the A456. An electricity substation is immediately adjacent to the south-east corner of the site.

### Policy SA.B4 Land south of Habberley Road

The site is allocated for residential development which should meet the following requirements:

- i. The development should respect the scale, morphology and materials of the adjacent historic suburban character
- ii. The site access is to be taken from Habberley Road with the existing trees/hedgerow retained along this northern boundary except where removal is required for a visibility splay
- iii. Well established trees and hedgerows on the site should be retained/supplemented and new planting should be extended north to connect with the hedgerow along the B4190 and provide screening of the development from the hotel grounds. The development should provide robust landscaping to the eastern boundary
- iv. The potential to open up the existing highway drain to form part of the Green Infrastructure provision should be explored as part of the development proposals and implemented, if feasible
- v. Provision of a new footpath connecting the development to Kidderminster Road should be explored as part of the development proposals and implemented, if feasible

### Reasoned Justification

**34.8** This site will have a substantial area of green infrastructure running along its eastern edge. This will both help to mark the new Green Belt edge and provide an area of green space that could readily absorb any potential surface water flow. The site is in a sustainable location and can help meet the housing requirement for Bewdley.

Overview of Allocated Sites in Chapter 35: Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt (Please refer to Policies Map for further information)



### **Policy SA.PDL - Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt**

There are a number of sites that are considered to be 'Previously Developed Sites' in the Green Belt which lie within Wyre Forest District. The largest of these sites have site specific policies which identify acceptable uses within these locations.

#### **Rushock Trading Estate (14.74ha)**

Within the Previously Developed area of Rushock Trading Estate, limited infilling or redevelopment for employment uses (light industrial, B2 and B8) will be permitted.

#### **West Midland Safari and Leisure Park (WMSLP) (92ha)**

Within the Previously Developed area of WMSLP limited infilling or redevelopment proposals that support and enhance the park's operations as a leisure and tourism destination will be permitted.

#### **Cursley Distribution Park (9.98ha)**

Within the Previously Developed area of Cursley Distribution Park, limited infilling or redevelopment for employment uses (light industrial, B2 and B8) will be permitted.

### **Proposals for other Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt**

In order to protect the openness of the Green Belt, windfall development proposals for Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt should:

- i. Contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt
- ii. Not exceed the height of the existing buildings and other structures and trees
- iii. Not give rise to off-site infrastructure problems

### **Overall Design Criteria for any Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt**

Design and landscaping of development should seek to minimise the impact on the Green Belt through:

- i. Using sensitive materials and colours.
- ii. Providing extensive landscaping and tree planting to screen boundaries, where appropriate.

For other previously developed sites in the Green Belt applications for development will be considered against this policy framework and the rest of the policies in the plan.



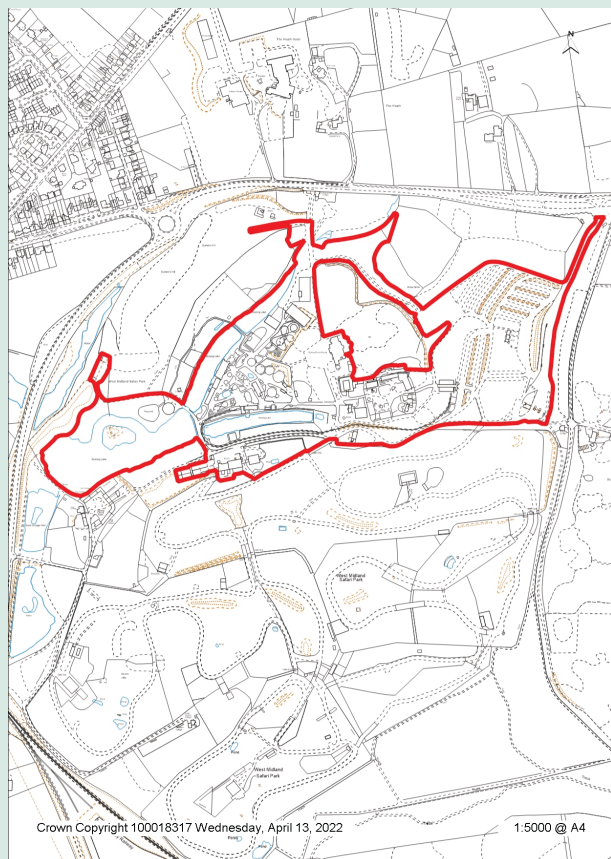
## Rushock Trading Estate

- Area: 14.74ha gross (approx.)

**35.1** Rushock Trading Estate is a former military site within the Green Belt. It is located in close proximity to Hartlebury Trading Estate and is accessed from the A442 Kidderminster – Droitwich road. The estate is a thriving business area and is owned by Hovi Developments who have recently spent money refurbishing and upgrading the facilities within the estate boundaries. As a Previously Developed Site in the Green Belt, the estate benefits from the flexibility that the planning policy framework provides, and this enables the re-use and redevelopment of sites within the curtilage to continue, subject to proposals being appropriate in terms of impact on the Green Belt.

## West Midland Safari and Leisure Park (WMSLP)

- Area: 92ha gross (approx.)



**35.2** The West Midland Safari and Leisure Park is one of the largest tourist attractions within the District. The Park is located entirely within the West Midlands Green Belt and is situated in a strategic gap between the two towns of Kidderminster and Bewdley. The park is not only important locally but is a regional and national attraction and provides a destination for visitors to the area.

**35.3** Due to the size and scale of the Park, and its importance to the local economy, it was felt important to specifically identify the site within this chapter. Due to the nature of the activities at the park, the predominant land use is open grassland, which despite the fences and ancillary animal houses, generally maintains the openness of the Green Belt. However, there is a large part of the site that is considered to be 'Previously Developed' (see plan) and this is contained primarily around the rides and leisure element of the park, as well as the associated car parking.

**35.4** The policy outlines a positive approach to development within this area identifying that development proposals that support and enhance the park's operations as a leisure and tourism destination will be permitted. The importance of the park to the local economy is also identified in Chapter 9 'A Good Place to Do Business', and in Section 23, at Policy DM.19: Supporting

Major Tourist Attractions. The potential to open up a passenger halt on the Severn Valley Railway adjacent to the Safari Park is also being explored. (see Chapter 12 Transport and Accessibility)

### **Cursley Distribution Park**

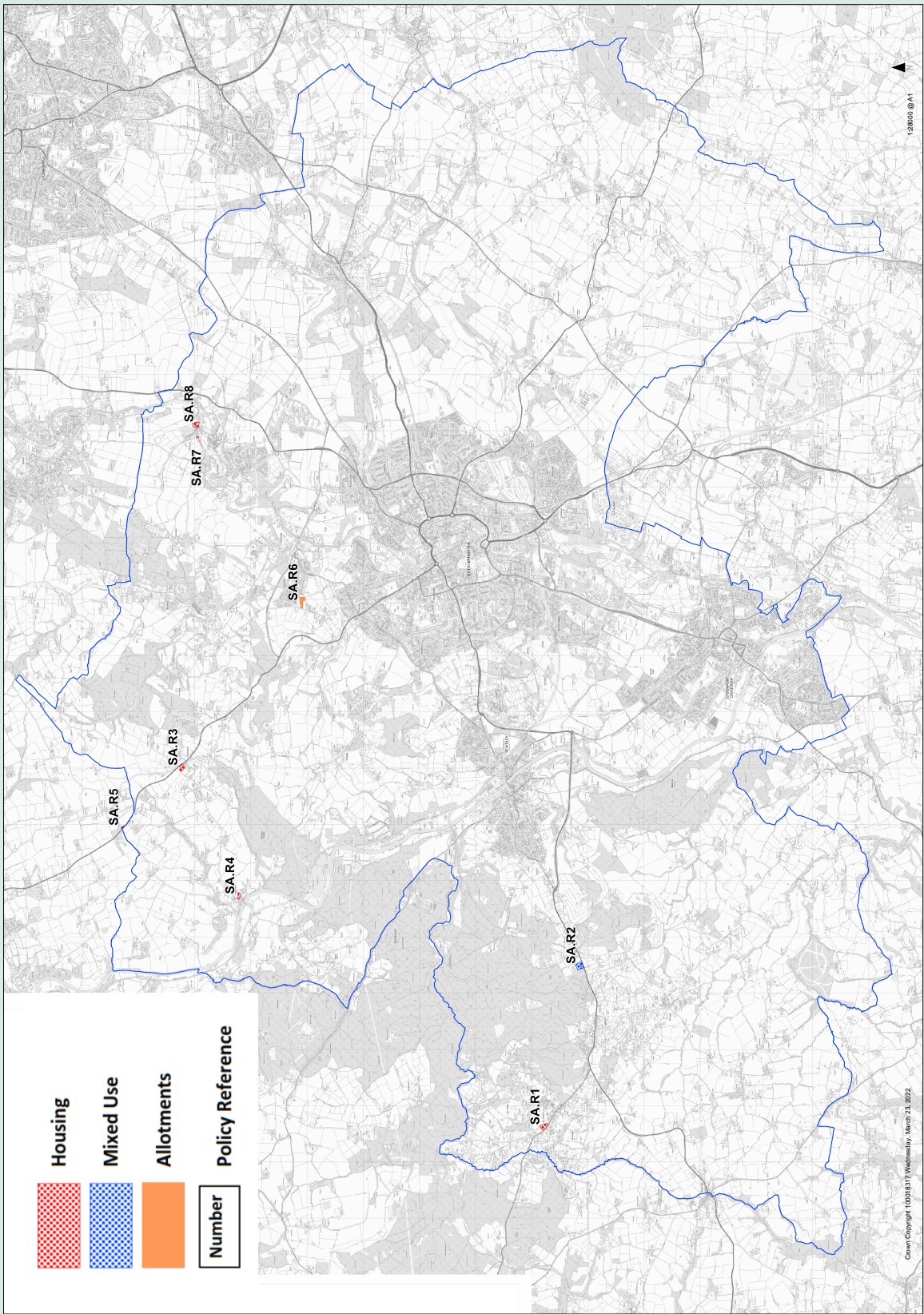
- Area: 9.98ha gross (approx.)

**35.5** Cursley Distribution Depot is a former Ministry of Defence storage depot which is now in the ownership of Hortons Estates. It contains around 22,500sqm of floorspace currently used for B2 and B8 uses with ancillary office accommodation. The site is dominated by 4 high-bay warehouses. It is accessed off the A442 from Cursley Lane. Many of the buildings now require redevelopment to keep the site attractive to potential business occupiers. As a Previously Developed Site in the Green Belt, the estate will be able to benefit from the flexibility that the planning policy framework provides, and this will enable the re-use and redevelopment of sites within the curtilage, subject to proposals being appropriate in terms of impact on the Green Belt.

**35.6** 0.7 hectares is allocated for redevelopment for employment uses under Policy SP.17.



Overview of Allocated Sites in Chapter 36: Rural Wyre Forest (please refer to Policies Map for further information)



**Bill White Nurseries, Far Forest (0.95ha) 20 dwellings 2026-31**

**36.1** This site is located just outside of the settlement boundary at Far Forest. It has no ecological constraints which would prevent it being brought forward for development.

**Policy SA.R1 - Bill White Nurseries, Far Forest**

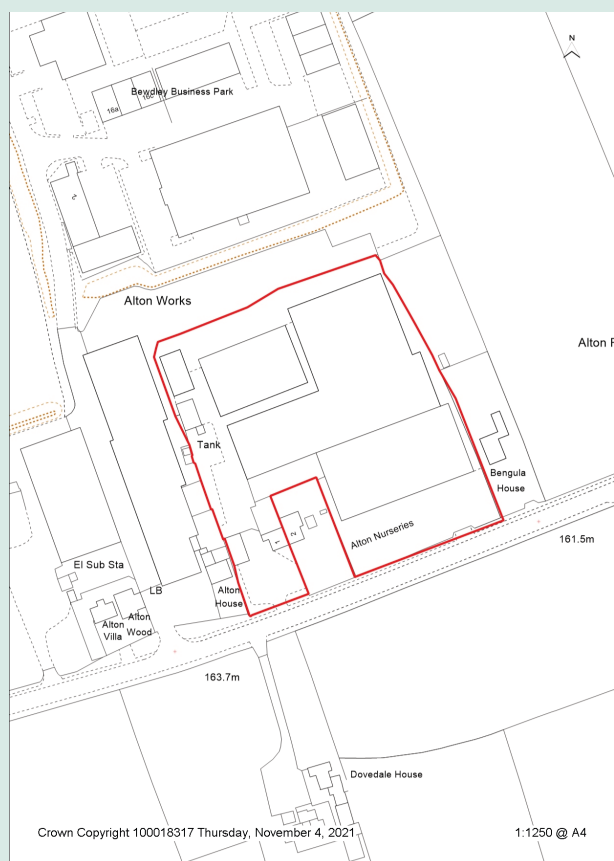
The site is allocated for residential development to meet local needs as demonstrated through a parish housing needs survey and/or the Housing Register. The development should meet the following requirements:

- i. Development should be designed to be in keeping with the rural location
- ii. Development should be set back from the main road and be served off a single point of access to retain the linear building form of the settlement
- iii. A landscape buffer should be provided to the front of the dwellings to retain the rural aspect
- iv. Boundary hedges should be retained and strengthened
- v. A tributary of Dowles Brook borders the site. Water treatment must ensure that there are no negative impacts on the watercourse which flows through the Wyre Forest SSSI further downstream

## Reasoned Justification

**36.2** Far Forest is a well-served village with a primary school, shop, public house and churches. Other sites within the settlement boundary have been considered for allocation but these have all been Greenfield and ecological constraints would mean very limited numbers of dwellings could be developed.

### Alton Nurseries Long Bank (1.29ha) 4 dwellings plus employment uses 2021-26



**36.3** This redundant plant nursery site fronts directly onto the A456 and the Bewdley Business Park lies to the rear. There are some isolated dwellings adjacent to the site. This site is allocated for a mix of residential and employment uses. Planning has been approved for 4 dwellings (18/0413/FULL).

### Policy SA.R2 - Alton Nurseries Long Bank

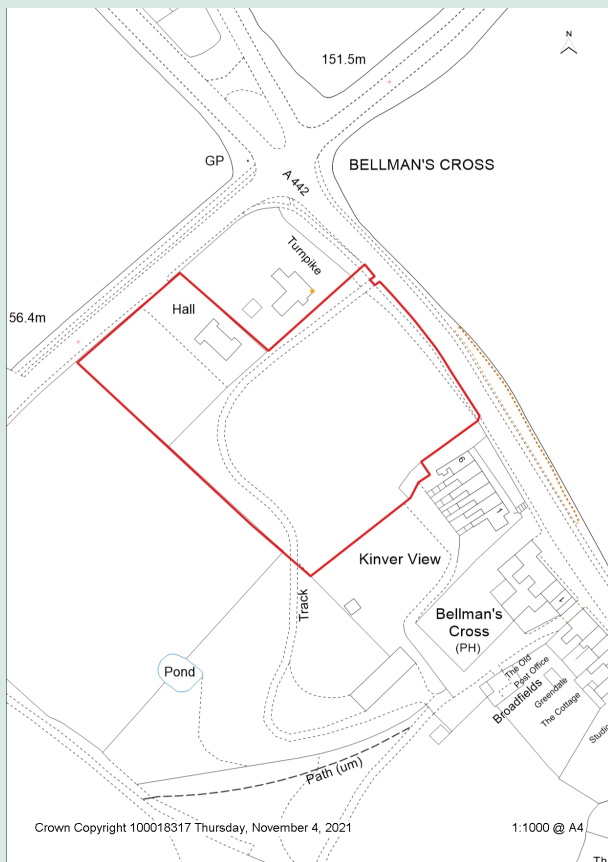
- i. The land is allocated for up to 4 dwellings along the A456 frontage.
- ii. The rear part of the site is allocated for employment uses to be developed as part of the Bewdley Business Park
- iii. Existing boundary hedgerows should be enhanced to provide effective screening. Additional buffering will be required between the housing and employment allocation

## Reasoned Justification

**36.4** The nursery business has ceased operations and, despite marketing of the site, another operator has not been found. Most of the site will be absorbed into the Bewdley Business Park site to the rear.



## Bellman's Cross Shatterford (0.79ha) 16 dwellings 2031-36



**36.5** This site is in the small hamlet of Shatterford on the A442 Bridgnorth Road. The site has frontage to both the A442 and to Arley Lane. It consists of scrubland and also contains a village hall. There is a pub/restaurant adjacent to the site and a number of dwellings. It is shown as allotment gardens on the 1926 OS map. Land to the rear is thought to have been a tile and brickworks and there is evidence of past mining activity on the site. Former miners' cottages adjoin the site. The settlement is washed over by the Green Belt.

### Policy SA.R3 - Bellman's Cross Shatterford

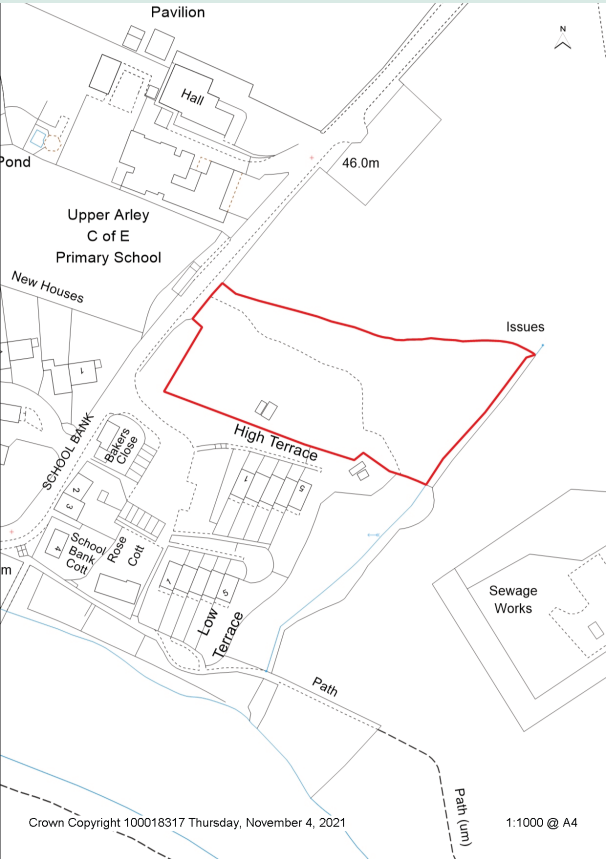
The site is allocated for residential development to meet local needs as demonstrated through a parish housing needs survey and/or the Housing Register. The development should meet the following requirements:

- Site access should only be taken from Arley Lane using the existing access to the village hall
- Proposals should consider the viability of providing a small replacement meeting facility as part of any residential development scheme
- Development should front onto the main A442 in order to continue the settlement building pattern of wayside dwellings
- Surface water discharge must not exceed existing levels. SuDS should be provided on the site
- Scrub and woodland on the site should be retained as part of the development where possible and supplemented with additional planting where required

Reasoned Justification

**36.6** Upper Arley is a designated Neighbourhood Plan area. A Parish Housing Needs survey has been undertaken as part of the evidence base for the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. This has shown a small housing requirement. As a result of this, two sites are proposed for allocation to serve the village. Shatterford is a distinct settlement on the A442 at the junction of the main lane serving the riverside village of Upper Arley. Although Shatterford no longer has a shop, it still retains a village hall and pub/restaurant and is on a bus route between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth. A primary school is located down the lane in the village of Upper Arley. This area of scrubland is available for a small residential development and it would also provide the opportunity to enhance the village hall provision. There are known surface water issues in Beacon Lane where it is thought this site discharges to. SuDS should be provided on site to remedy this situation

Allotments, Upper Arley (0.46ha) 5 dwellings 2026-31



**36.7** This area of run-down allotments lies in the centre of the village above the River Severn and is in the Conservation Area. Upper Arley is an estate village. Arley Estates is the main landowner. The allotments are in an elevated location above the River Severn. The village is washed over by the Green Belt. The site appears to be abandoned and has grassed over.

**Policy SA.R4 - Allotments, Upper Arley**

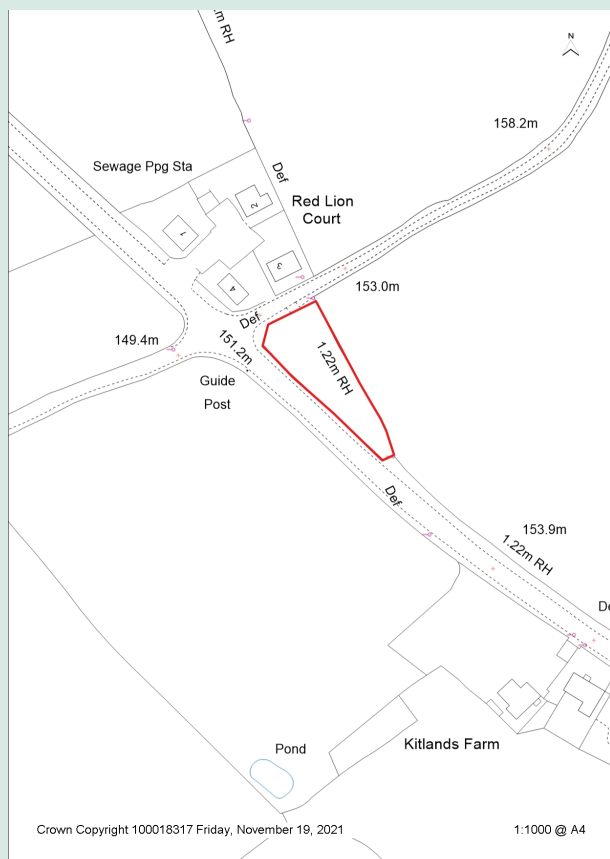
This site is allocated for residential development to meet local needs as demonstrated through a parish housing needs survey and/or the Housing Register. The development should meet the following requirements:

- i. Development should be of restricted height to minimise any impact on the setting of Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area as this site is in an elevated position and will extend built development up the hillside
- ii. Dwellings should use materials and colours to harmonise with existing buildings in Conservation Area
- iii. Proposals will need to demonstrate how the Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced. Any public benefit would need to outweigh any harm caused
- iv. The site is surrounded by mature hedgerows on the western and northern boundaries. The eastern section of the site consists of woodland. These features should be buffered from development. Future management of the woodland should be secured as part of any development
- v. Lighting should be carefully controlled to restrict spillage into adjoining sensitive habitats
- vi. Surface water run-off must not be allowed to enter the ditch/stream on the eastern boundary untreated as this flows into the River Severn

### Reasoned Justification

**36.8** Potential sites within Upper Arley village are very limited. Once ecological factors have been taken into consideration, only around 20% of this site may be available for development which is likely to limit numbers to no more than 5 dwellings. Buffers around the hedgerows and woodland will ensure the retention of rough marginal vegetation for small mammals and birds. This will mean that the bulk of any housing need will need to be met outside of the main village at the Bellman's Cross site.



**Red Lion Car Park (0.09ha) 2 dwellings 2021-26**

**36.9** This site sits adjacent to the County boundary. The group of cottages shown on the plan are in Shropshire. They were built on the site of the former Red Lion public house. The adjacent car park is now allocated for development. The site is washed over by the Green Belt. The site is remote from any service but does have a bus stop nearby serving routes between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth.

**Policy SA.R5 - Red Lion Car Park**

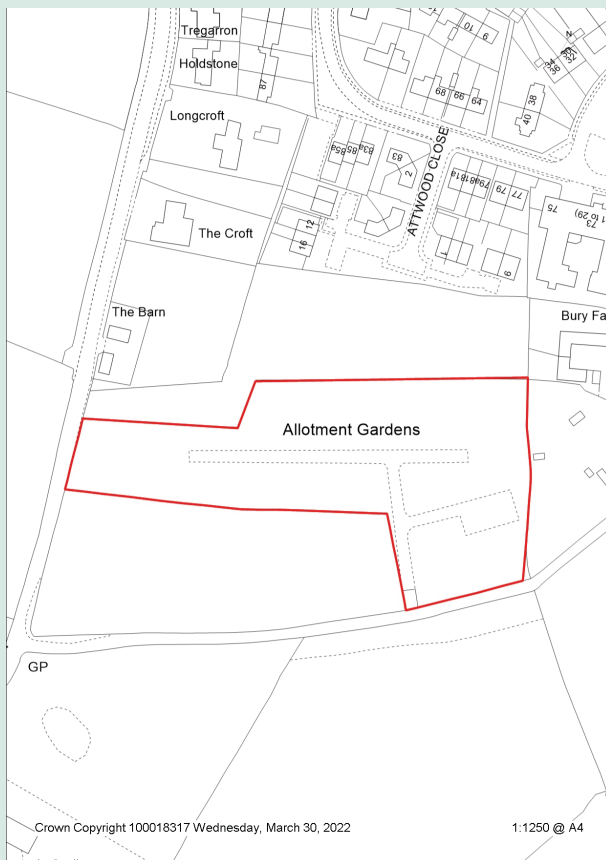
This land is allocated for residential development and should meet the following requirements:

- i. The dwellings should be built side-on to the A442
- ii. Access is to be from the lane using the existing access
- iii. Dwellings should be designed to match with those recently built on the adjacent site

**Reasoned Justification**

**36.10** This tiny site is the remaining parcel from the recent redevelopment on the adjacent site over the County boundary.

## Land at Lowe Lane Fairfield (1.15ha)



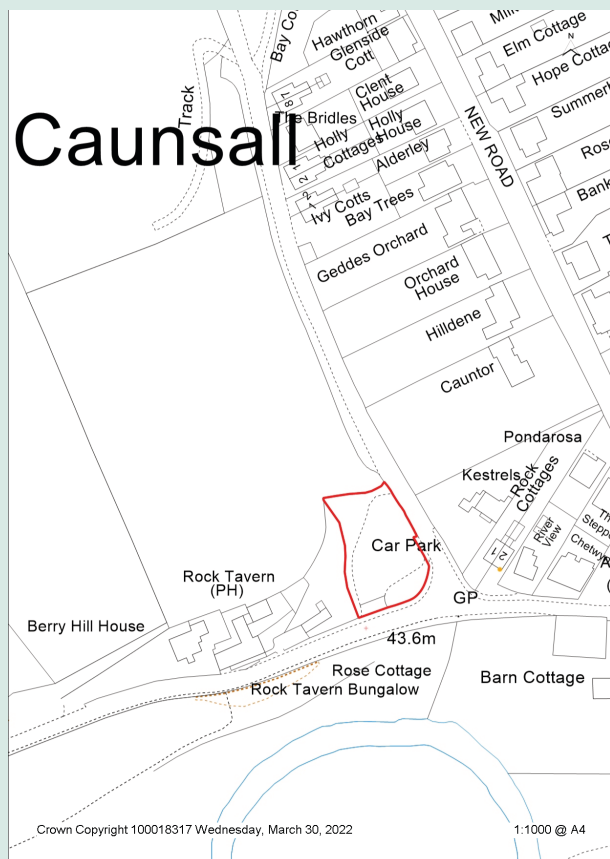
**36.11** This land is leased to the Parish Council as allotments.

### Policy SA.R6 - Land at Lowe Lane Fairfield

The site is safeguarded as allotments.

## Reasoned Justification

**36.12** This parcel of land is leased by Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council from the District Council for allotments. The allocation will safeguard this use.

**Rock Tavern Car Park, Caunsall (0.10ha) 3 dwellings 2021-26**

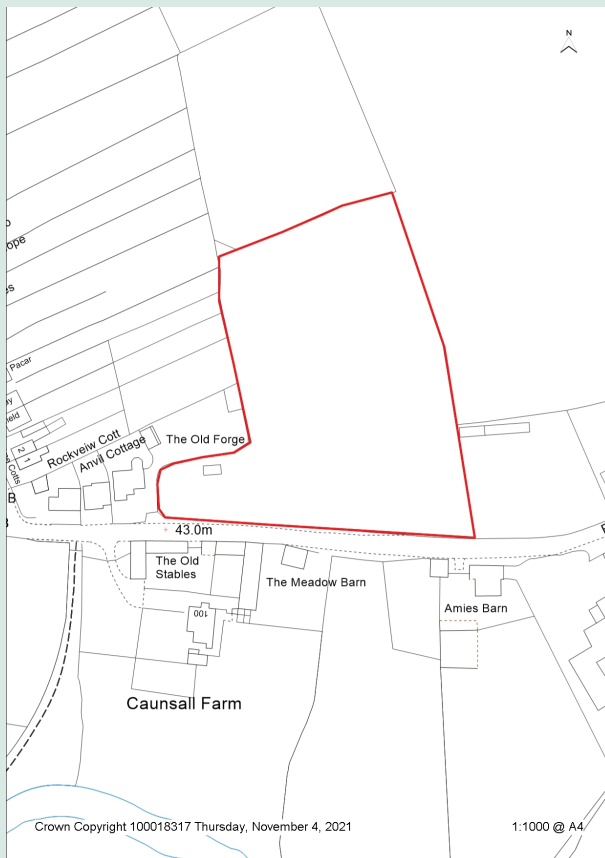
**36.13** This site consists of the former car park to the Rock Tavern public house which has been closed for some time. Plans have been approved to redevelop the public house site for housing. The former car park site is in the centre of the hamlet of Caunsall which is washed over by the Green Belt.

**Policy SA.R7 - Rock Tavern Car Park Caunsall**

The site is allocated for residential development to meet local needs as demonstrated through a parish housing needs survey and/or the Housing Register. This development should meet the following requirements:

- i. The development should respect the morphology, scale and set back of the existing historic buildings
- ii. Soft landscaping should be implemented to soften the visual impact and aid green infrastructure connectivity
- iii. Measures must be taken to protect the development from surface water flooding on Kinver Lane following heavy rainfall

## Land at Caunsall Road, Caunsall (0.85ha) 4 dwellings 2021-26



**36.14** This greenfield site in Caunsall is used as a horse paddock. It is proposed to allow frontage development only along Caunsall Road.

### Policy SA.R8 - Land at Caunsall Road Caunsall

This site is allocated for residential development to meet local needs as demonstrated through a parish housing needs survey and/or the Housing Register. The development should meet the following requirements:

- Low density development of up to 4 dwellings will be permitted along the road frontage in order to respect the wayside character of the settlement
- Dwelling design should respect the setting of Caunsall Farm and Caunsall House Farm (non-designated heritage assets)
- No additional surface water discharge must be allowed to leave the site

### Reasoned Justification

**36.15** The two small sites in Caunsall will remain washed over by the Green Belt. The new dwellings must be designed to fit in with the character and appearance of the historic settlement. There are known surface water flooding issues after heavy rainfall in the village and measures must be taken to both protect the new development from flooding and also not to exacerbate this issue any further.

### Development on Non-allocated plots in villages

**36.16** In villages and other rural settlements, there is the potential to bring forward small infill plots for up to 6 dwellings under Policy DM.2. Amendments have been made to settlement boundaries in a number of villages in Rock Parish to enable small sites to be brought forward for development. This will allow for limited development to help retain village services. Revised settlement boundaries are shown on the Policies Map. Any development will need to be carefully designed to reflect the characteristics of the settlement and take account of any existing constraints such as flooding, drainage, ecology and landscape.

**37.1** The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which is being produced alongside the Local Plan, reviews and evaluates the social, environmental and economic infrastructure that will be required to support the development and growth set out in the plan. It is a living document that details both the infrastructure required to support the proposals and development sites in the plan, the likely delivery partners e.g. developers, the district and county councils, government agencies and likely funding sources.

**37.2** The infrastructure requirements to support the specific policies and allocations in the Plan will be identified within the individual site allocation policies. Further infrastructure may be required as the detail of schemes is developed and for windfall development proposals, the infrastructure requirements and any contributions required will need to be assessed as schemes are drawn up. Infrastructure can be provided in the following ways:

1. directly by developers;
2. by planning contributions through Section 106 agreements and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) if implemented by the Council

**37.3** Contributions for infrastructure can be for provisions both off or on-site and for new or improved infrastructure.

**37.4** The following indicators will be used to monitor the Local Plan.

**Table 37.0.1 Monitoring Framework for the Wyre Forest District Local Plan**

Plan Policy	Indicator	Target	Delivery Mechanism
1. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Number of dwellings to be delivered over Plan Period	5,520 dwellings minimum (276 per annum)	Site allocations Development management process
2. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	C2 bedspaces provided over Plan Period	487 bedspaces (24 per annum)	Site allocations Development management process
3. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Amount of employment land delivered within Plan Period	29 hectares	Site allocations Development management process
4. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Kidderminster Town - net additional dwellings delivered 2021-36	1231 dwellings	Site allocations Development management process



<b>Plan Policy</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Delivery Mechanism</b>
5. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Kidderminster Town – gypsy and traveller pitches delivered	16 pitches	Site allocations Development management process
6. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Kidderminster Town – travelling showpeople pitches	6 pitches	Site allocations Development management process
7. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Kidderminster Town – net additional employment land delivered	21.82 hectares	Site allocations Development management process
8. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Lea Castle Village -Net additional dwellings delivered	1,400 dwellings	Site allocations Development management process
9. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Lea Castle Village - net additional employment land delivered	7.34 hectares	Site allocations Development management process
10. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Kidderminster Eastern Extension - net additional dwellings delivered	1,439 dwellings	Site allocations Development management process
11. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Stourport-on-Severn - net additional dwellings delivered	1,155 dwellings	Site allocations Development management process
12. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Stourport-on-Severn - gypsy and traveller pitches delivered	4 pitches	Site allocations Development management process
13. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Stourport-on-Severn - net additional employment land delivered	0.56 hectares	Site allocations Development management process

Plan Policy	Indicator	Target	Delivery Mechanism
14. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Bewdley - net additional dwellings delivered	230 dwellings	Site allocations  Development management process
15. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Rural Wyre Forest - net additional dwellings delivered	115 dwellings	Site allocations  Development management process
16. SP.1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-36	Rural Wyre Forest - net additional employment land delivered	1.7 hectares	Site allocations  Development management process
17. SP.2 Locating New development	% of dwellings completed on brownfield sites	Monitor to ensure brownfield land is prioritised	Development management process, master planning and other initiatives
18. SP.7 Strategic Green Belt Review	Hectarage of development in the Green Belt	Annual monitoring of development within Green Belt to limit encroachment beyond allocated sites  Refer to Strategic Green Belt Review document	Site allocations  Development management process
19. SP.9 Housing Mix & Density	Size / type of dwellings delivered	Targets as shown in Table 8.0.1	Site allocations  Development management process
20. SP.9 Housing Mix & Density	% of dwellings delivered which meet target densities set out in Policy 8A	Within Kidderminster Town Centre - 70 dph, adjacent to town centre and railway station - 50 dph  Stourport-on-Severn town centre - >50 dph  Bewdley - 35 dph	Development management process
21. SP.10 Affordable Housing Provision	Number of affordable homes delivered	90 affordable units per annum over plan period	Site allocations  Development management process

Plan Policy	Indicator	Target	Delivery Mechanism
	Indicative tenure split of affordable homes  Provision of affordable units within major development sites or in designated rural areas (sites >5 units)	65% for rent 35% affordable housing for sale  25% of total units to be affordable	
22. SP.12 Self and Custom Housing	Number of custom and self-build plots approved	Target to be taken from Self build and custom build register	Development management process
23. SP.13 Housing for Older People	Number of dwellings delivered which are specifically built for older people  Number of dwellings provided which meet higher access standards of Part M of Building Regulations	Requirement for 1,642 dwellings over plan period  20% of total housing requirement over plan period (applies to major applications only)	Site allocations  Development management process
24. SP.14 Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision	Number of pitches required for those who do not meet definition as set out in PPTS	22 pitches in plan period	Site allocations  Development management process
25. SP.16 Health and Wellbeing	Provision of Health Impact Assessments as set out in Policy	100% compliance	Development management process
26. SP.17 A Diverse Local Economy	Total number of jobs  Proportion of working-age residents in employment  Amount of employment land available, by type and location  Employment floorspace lost to other uses	Increasing trend  Increasing trend  Maintain good supply across different locations  Decreasing trend	Local Enterprise Partnership  North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration  Development Management Process  Site allocations
27. SP.18 Town Centre Development	Amount of new retail floorspace developed in town centres	Increasing trend  Decreasing trend  Decreasing trend	Development management process  Kidderminster BID

Plan Policy	Indicator	Target	Delivery Mechanism
	<p>Amount of retail floorspace lost to other uses</p> <p>% vacant retail premises within Primary Shopping Areas</p> <p>Amount of new office floorspace developed in town centres</p>	Increasing trend	North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration
28. SP.19 Sustainable Tourism	<p>Number of bedspaces developed for tourism</p> <p>Number of tourism related jobs</p>	<p>Increasing trend</p> <p>Increasing trend</p>	<p>Operators</p> <p>Employers</p>
29. SP.20 Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness	Number of planning applications refused as a result of poor quality design	Decreasing trend	Development management process
30. SP.21 Historic Environment	<p>Number of heritage assets at risk</p> <p>Number of heritage assets removed from the HAR register</p>	<p>Decreasing trend</p> <p>Increasing trend</p>	Historic England
31. SP.23 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity	<p>% of SSSIs by area in 'favourable' condition or 'unfavourable but recovering'</p> <p>Amount of semi-natural greenspace (hectares) created on allocated sites</p>	95%	<p>Natural England</p> <p>WFDC</p> <p>Site allocations</p> <p>Green Infrastructure Strategy</p>
32. SP.25 Regenerating the Waterways	Number of applications which include enhancement of the District's waterways	Increasing trend	Development management process
33. SP.26 Strategic Infrastructure	Bring forward necessary infrastructure required to deliver Plan - new primary schools and village	Targets to be agreed as part of planning applications	<p>Site allocations</p> <p>Development management process</p>

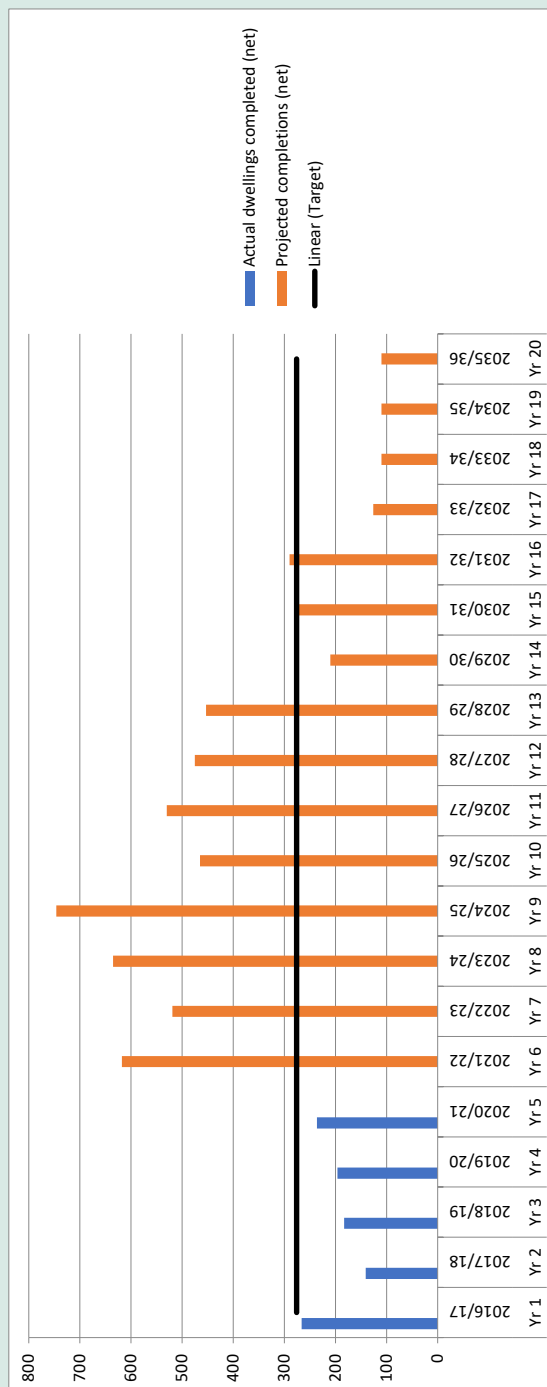
Plan Policy	Indicator	Target	Delivery Mechanism
	centres at Lea Castle and Comberton Road; improvements to A450		Worcestershire County Council  Highways England
34. SP.27 Transport and Accessibility	Length of new cycle paths provided (km)  Length of new recreational footpaths provided (km)  Completions of schemes identified in Worcestershire Local Transport Plan as specified  Provision of new bus routes  Number of additional parking spaces provided at rail stations	Increasing trend  Increasing trend  N/A  N/A	Developers  Development management process  Worcestershire County Highways  Bus Companies  Network Rail  Worcestershire County Council
35. SP.28 Green Infrastructure	Provision of GI on greenfield sites >1Ha  0.2-1Ha	40% if >1Ha  20% if 0.2-1Ha	Site allocations  Development management process
36. SP.29 Water Conservation and Efficiency	Number of dwellings completed which meet water efficiency standards	Increasing trend	Site allocations  Development management process
37. SP.31 Flood Risk Management	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice	0	Development management process
38. SP.32 Sustainable Drainage Systems	% of new developments incorporating SuDS	80%	Site allocations  Development management process
39. DM.6 Community Facilities	Number of playing pitch and indoor built facilities completed	See Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy	Site allocations  Development management process

Plan Policy	Indicator	Target	Delivery Mechanism
	Amount of active sports participation	Contextual indicator	Sport England
	Change in Health dimension of the Index of Multiple Deprivation	Contextual indicator	MHCLG



## Housing Trajectory for plan period based on Supply at 1st April 2021

	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 12	Yr 13	Yr 14	Yr 15	Yr 16	Yr 17	Yr 18	Yr 19	Yr 20
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Actual dwellings completed (net)	266	141	183	196	236															
						618	519	635	746	465	530	475	453	210	280	290	128	110	110	110
Projected completions (net)						1,640	2,159	2,794	3,540	4,005	4,535	5,010	5,463	5,673	5,953	6,243	6,369	6,479	6,589	6,699
Cumulative completions	266	407	590	786	1,022	1,640	2,159	2,794	3,540	4,005	4,535	5,010	5,463	5,673	5,953	6,243	6,369	6,479	6,589	6,699
Target	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276	276
Cumulative target	276	552	828	1,104	1,380	1,656	1,932	2,208	2,484	2,760	3,036	3,312	3,588	3,864	4,140	4,416	4,692	4,968	5,244	5,520
Monitor - difference between cumulative completions and cumulative target to date	-10	-145	-238	-318	-358	-16	227	586	1,056	1,245	1,499	1,698	1,875	1,809	1,813	1,827	1,677	1,511	1,345	1,179
Number of years left in plan	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0



**a.1** The NPPF (para 21) requires Local Plans to make explicit which policies are strategic policies. The list below sets out the strategic policies in the Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-36).

**a.2** Part A of the Local Plan is the strategic element of the document. This section of the plan contains strategic policies from SP.1 through to Policy SP.37

**a.3** Part C of the Local Plan is the site allocation policies. The list below sets out which of the site allocations are strategic policies.

### **Part A – Context and Strategic Policies**

- Policy SP.1 – Spatial Development Strategy 2016-2036
- Policy SP.2 – Locating New Development
- Policy SP.3 – Kidderminster town as the strategic centre of the District
- Policy SP.4 – Strategic Allocation Sites
- Policy SP.5 – Role of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley as Market Towns
- Policy SP.6 – Role of the existing villages and rural areas
- Policy SP.7 – Strategic Green Belt Review
- Policy SP.8 – Reserved Housing Sites in the Green Belt
- Policy SP.9 – Housing Mix & Density
- Policy SP.10 – Affordable Housing Provision
- Policy SP.11 – Addressing Rural Housing Needs
- Policy SP.12 – Self Build and Custom Housing
- Policy SP.13– Housing for Older People and others with special housing requirements
- Policy SP.14 – Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision
- Policy SP.15 – Site Provision for Travelling Showpeople
- Policy SP.16 – Health and Wellbeing
- Policy SP.17 – A Diverse Local Economy
- Policy SP.18 – Town Centre Development
- Policy SP.19 – Sustainable Tourism
- Policy SP.20 – Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy SP.21 – Historic Environment
- Policy SP.22 – Landscape Character
- Policy SP.23 – Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity
- Policy SP.24 – Protecting and Enhancing Geodiversity
- Policy SP.25 – Regenerating the Waterways
- Policy SP.26 – Strategic Infrastructure
- Policy SP.27 – Transport and Accessibility in Wyre Forest
- Policy SP.28 – Green Infrastructure
- Policy SP.29 – Water Conservation and Efficiency
- Policy SP.30 – Sewerage Systems and Water Quality
- Policy SP.31 – Flood Risk Management
- Policy SP.32 – Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- Policy SP.33 – Pollution and Land Instability
- Policy SP.34 – Minerals

- Policy SP.35 – Waste
- Policy SP.36 – Telecommunications and Broadband
- Policy SP.37 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

### **Part C – Site Allocations**

- Policy SP.LCV1 – Lea Castle Village Vision
- Policy SP.LCV2– Lea Castle Village Principles of Development
- Policy SP.KEE1 – Land at Husum Way
- Policy SP.KEE2 – Comberton Lodge Nursery
- Policy SP.KEE3 – Land at Comberton Road Overall Vision
- Policy SP.KEE4 – Land at Comberton Road Principles of Development
- Policy SP.BLK1 – Station Yard, Blakedown
- Policy SP.BLK2 – Land off Station Drive, Blakedown

## Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance

**b.1** The Local Plan contains details of existing SPD's that will be updated following adoption of the Local Plan as well as proposed SPD's that will also be undertaken following adoption. The Wyre Forest Cycling Strategy will be superseded.

**b.2** New Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Health & Wellbeing SPD
- Green Infrastructure SPD
- Severn Valley SPD

**b.3** Extant SPD/SPG's until superseded:

- Planning Obligations SPD
- Affordable Housing SPD
- Design Guidance SPD
- Shop Front Design Guide within the Historic Environment
- Severn Road Development Brief
- Public Realm Design Guide for Stourport on Severn
- Churchfields Masterplan SPD
- Bridge Street Basin Link Development Brief SPD

**b.4** Superseded Supplementary Planning Documents / Guidance:

- Wyre Forest Cycling Strategy (2002)

**Adopted Core Strategy (2010)** - this is the strategic level document within the District's Development Plan. It sets out the broad locations for delivering housing and other major development needs in the District such as employment, retail and transport. It guides the site specific policies within the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan.

**Affordable Housing** - the District Council has adopted the definition of Affordable Housing as set out in the NPPF (Annex 2 Glossary).

**Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** - areas designated by Wyre Forest District Council where the level of pollutant concentrations in the atmosphere results in the air quality not meeting the objectives set out by central government in 2005.

**Biodiversity** - The variety of different types of plant and animal life in a particular region.

**Brownfield Land** - see definition of Previously Developed Land.

**Building for a Healthy Life 12** - A measurement of the design quality of new development now supported by the Design Council.

**Building with Nature** - A framework of quality standards, an assessment and accreditation service, and national awards recognising the design and delivery of high quality green infrastructure.

**Chalets** – these are buildings, also sometimes referred to as shacks, which are primarily constructed of materials of less than average permanency and used for residential occupation.

**Climate Change** - long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind and all other aspects of the Earth's climate. Often regarded as a result of human activity and fossil fuel consumption. It is part of national government policy that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future.

**Community Facilities** - facilities which provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** - The Community Infrastructure Levy is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area. Updated rules for the CIL have now come into force from September 2019.

**Conservation Area** - an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

**Custom and Self Build Housebuilding** - Housebuilding which involves individuals or groups of individual's construction new homes from a builder, contractor or package company. Some individuals may engage in building work themselves and this is known as self build.

**Dark Corridors** - Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations in order to increase biodiversity, specifically in regard to protect foraging and community routes for light intolerant wildlife in order to avoid fragmentation of wildlife corridors by the effects of strong artificial lighting.

**Designated heritage asset** – a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

**Developer Contributions** - developer contributions are often required for major developments to make them acceptable in planning terms eg. contributions towards educational or open space provision.

**Development Plan** - the Development Plan for the District currently comprises of the Core Strategy, the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan. The emerging Local Plan will replace these documents and form part of the Development Plan once adopted. Neighbourhood Plans also form part of the Development Plan when they have been formally 'made'.

**Edge-of-Centre** - For retail purposes, a location that is well-connected to and within easy walking distance (i.e up to 300 metres) of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, this is likely to be within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge-of-centre, account should be taken of local circumstances. For example, local topography will affect pedestrians' perceptions of easy walking distance from the centre. Other considerations include barriers, such as crossing major roads and car parks, the attractiveness and perceived safety of the route and the strength of attraction and size of the town centre. A site will not be well-connected to a centre where it is physically separated from it by a barrier such as a major road, railway line or river and there is no existing or proposed pedestrian route which provides safe and convenient access to the centre.

**Evidence Base** - the information and data gathered by local authorities to inform the production of local plans.

**Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMAs)** - Economic flows often overlap local authority boundaries. This means that the functional area over which the local economy and its key markets operate will not necessarily adhere to administrative boundaries. Instead, key economic markets broadly correspond to sub-regions or city regions - known as functional economic market areas (FEMAs). There is no universal approach to defining FEMAs. Ideally, FEMAs would be defined on the basis of several markets or catchment areas which best reflect the drivers of the local economy.

**Flood Risk Assessment** - an assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

**Geodiversity** - the range of rocks, fossils, minerals, soils, landforms and natural processes that go to make up the Earth's landscape and structure.

**Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)** - Local Enterprise Partnerships are led by businesses and local authorities across natural economic areas. They provide the vision, knowledge and strategic leadership required to drive sustainable private



sector growth and job creation in their areas. The GBSLEP comprises a partnership including the local authorities of Birmingham City Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Cannock Chase District Council, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Tamworth Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council.

**Green Belt Land** - land which is situated between urban areas on which development is restricted so as to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Green Belt serves five purposes: 1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; 2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; 3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; 4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and 5. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. Wyre Forest's Green Belt is part of the wider West Midlands Green Belt.

**Green Infrastructure** - A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

**Greenfield Land** - land which has never been developed; this includes greenbelt land and areas of open countryside, as well as undeveloped land within urban areas.

**Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)** - the purpose of this assessment is to provide information on the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in order to ascertain what the appropriate number, type and distribution of additional pitches need to be provided within the area.

**Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)** - tests the impacts of a proposal on nature conservation sites of European importance, and is a requirement under EU legislation for land use plans and projects.

**Hamlet** - A small human settlement situated in a rural location. A hamlet has no central place of worship such as a church, and no central meeting point, such as a village church.

**Health Impact Assessment (HSA)** - A tool used to predict the health implications of a planning proposal on a population. It ensures that the effects of development on both health and health inequalities are considered and addressed during the planning process.

**Heritage Asset** - a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.

**Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)** - The HELAA is an evidence base document that identifies sites that may have future development potential for housing or employment uses. It does not allocate sites to be developed.

**Housing Market Area** - an area in which households search for housing. These areas cut across local authority boundaries and can be defined based on a series of indicators comprising house prices, migration and search patterns and contextual data including travel-to-work areas, retail and school catchments.

**Infrastructure** - basic services necessary for development to take place; for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

**Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (KCAAP)** - Adopted plan targeted specifically to regenerating the central area of Kidderminster.

**Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)** - an assessment of landscape character which is defined as 'a distinct, recognisable, and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape which makes one landscape different from another'.

**Listed Building** - a building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II\* or II, with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building and any buildings or permanent structures within its curtilage.

**Live/Work** - is defined as property that is specifically designed for dual use, combining both residential and employment space.

**Local Development Order (LDO)** - A Local Development Order (LDO) is a simple tool to allow a Local Planning Authority to introduce new permitted development rights. They are flexible and consistent with local determination.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** - a three year timetable setting out the type of Development Plans to be produced and the key milestones for their development.

**Local Heritage List** - the Local Heritage List identifies those heritage assets that are not protected by statutory designations. Their local interest could be related to the social and economic history of the area as well as individuals of local importance. The Local Heritage List is not restricted to buildings. It may comprise sites, places or areas such as village greens or ponds.

**Local Housing Needs** - The number of homes identified as being needed:

- At overall District level, the LHN is the number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance.
- At parish level, local housing needs are established through housing needs surveys which are undertaken in agreement and partnership with the relevant Town or Parish Council.

**Local Plans (LPs)** - the collective term given to all statutory documents that form the Development Plan for the District. At present, these comprise of the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Policies, Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan and a Policies Map.

**Major Developments** - major developments include;

- Residential development compromising at least 10 dwellings or a site area of at least 0.5 hectare if the number of dwellings is not specified.
- For non-residential development where the floor space to be built is greater than 1,000 square metres or the site area is at least 1 hectare in size.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** - the document which sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The revised NPPF was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in July 2021.

**National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)** - Web based resource of planning practice guidance, launched and maintained by Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), to enable practitioners to implement the content of the NPPF. The NPPG is currently being updated to reflect the changes from the revised NPPF.

**Natural England** - Natural England works for people, places and nature to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas.

**Natural Spaces** - Natural Spaces - Sites of biodiversity and conservation importance. This is outlined within the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. Section 41 sets out that the Secretary of State is obliged to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan produced by Worcestershire Biodiversity Partnership outlines the habitats and species of conservation priority within Worcestershire and Wyre Forest District. Semi natural habitats are also of importance to Natural Space sites where they act as habitat corridors and link designated sites of nature conservation value and priority habitats together to the wider ecological network.

**Neighbourhood Development Plans** - Neighbourhood Development Plans allow local people to come together to decide how they want their area to develop. They can be developed by Town and Parish Councils or by Neighbourhood Forums outside of the Parished areas.

**Open Space** - all space of public value, which can offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can also act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife. Areas of open space include public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs.

**Out-of-Centre** - A location which is not in or on the edge-of-centre but not necessarily outside the urban area. Planning Obligations Legally enforceable agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, which ensure that necessary planning mitigating works related to development, are undertaken; these are sometimes called section 106 agreements.

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**Previously Developed Land (PDL)** - land which is, or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

**Reserved Housing Sites** - land which lies between the urban area and the Green Belt which is identified to meet longer term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period. Safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time and planning permission should only be granted for such land following a Plan review which proposes development. Until areas of safeguarded land are identified for development, Green Belt policies apply to them. Formerly known as Areas of Development Restraint (ADR).

**ReWyre Initiative / Regeneration Prospectus** - the prospectus aims to highlight Kidderminster's challenges and opportunities in order to attract support and investment into the town.

**Section 106 Agreement** - A legal agreement between developers and a local planning authority made in accordance with Section 106 (s106) of the 1991 Planning Act, usually to secure benefits for local residents without which a planning application would be refused (see also Planning Obligations). **Scheduled Monument** - a 'nationally important' archaeological site or historic building, given protection against unauthorised change.

**Significance (for heritage policy)** – The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

**Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan** - District wide adopted plan that allocates and designates areas of land for particular uses, most notably land to deliver housing but also for other major development needs such as employment, recreation, open space and community uses.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** - a specifically defined area within which protection is afforded to ecological or geological features. Sites are officially notified by Natural England.

**Social Rented** - Housing available to rent at below market levels. The government subsidises local authorities and registered social landlords in order to meet affordable housing needs.

**Strategic Centres** - there are 25 town centres in the West Midlands region that are defined in the former Regional Spatial Strategy as 'Strategic Centres'.

**Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)** - collates information on all known sources of flooding that may affect existing or future development within the District. The SFRA identifies and maps areas that have a 'low', 'medium' and 'high' probability of flooding within the Wyre Forest.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** - provide additional information to guide and support the Development Plan.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - the purpose of SA is to ensure that the Development Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) conform to the Government principles of Sustainable Development.

**Sustainable Development** - Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The NPPF sets out a definition of sustainable development (paragraphs 7 - 14) and sets how it is to be identified and delivered.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)** - an environmentally friendly way of dealing with surface water run-off which increases the time taken for surface water to reach watercourses, thereby reducing flash flooding.

**Water Cycle Strategy** - this assesses the constraints and requirements that may arise from the scale of the proposed development on the water infrastructure in the District.

**West Midlands Green Belt** - The Wyre Forest Green Belt Land falls within the wider West Midlands Green Belt. This is within the West Midlands, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire local authorities.

**Wildlife Corridor** - Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations in order to make landscapes more permeable and to increase biodiversity.

**Windfall Site** - a site not specifically allocated for development in a development plan, but which unexpectedly becomes available for development during the lifetime of a plan. Most windfall sites are for housing.

**Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership** - Worcestershire LEP is led by private sector businesses in partnership with the public sector – comprising Worcestershire County Council and the six District councils of Worcester City, Bromsgrove, Redditch, Malvern Hills, Wyre Forest and Wychavon.

**Worcestershire Local Transport Plan** - sets out Worcestershire's transport strategy, as well as identifying major long-term transportation pressures on the County.

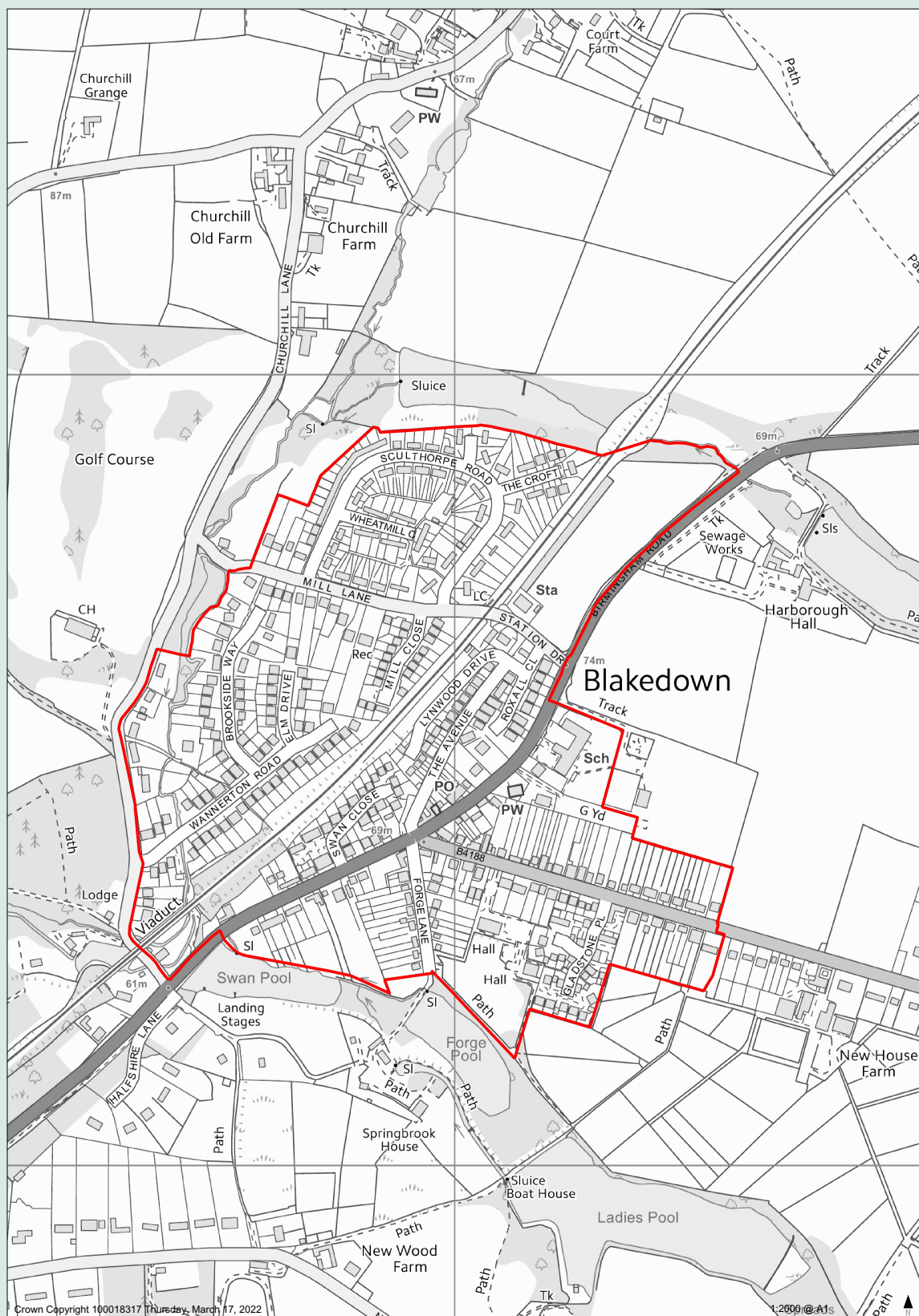
The following maps are included within this Appendix:

- Settlement boundaries for: Blakedown; Bliss Gate; Callow Hill; Clows Top; Cookley; Far Forest; Rock; Wilden and; Wolverley.
- Retail areas for Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley.

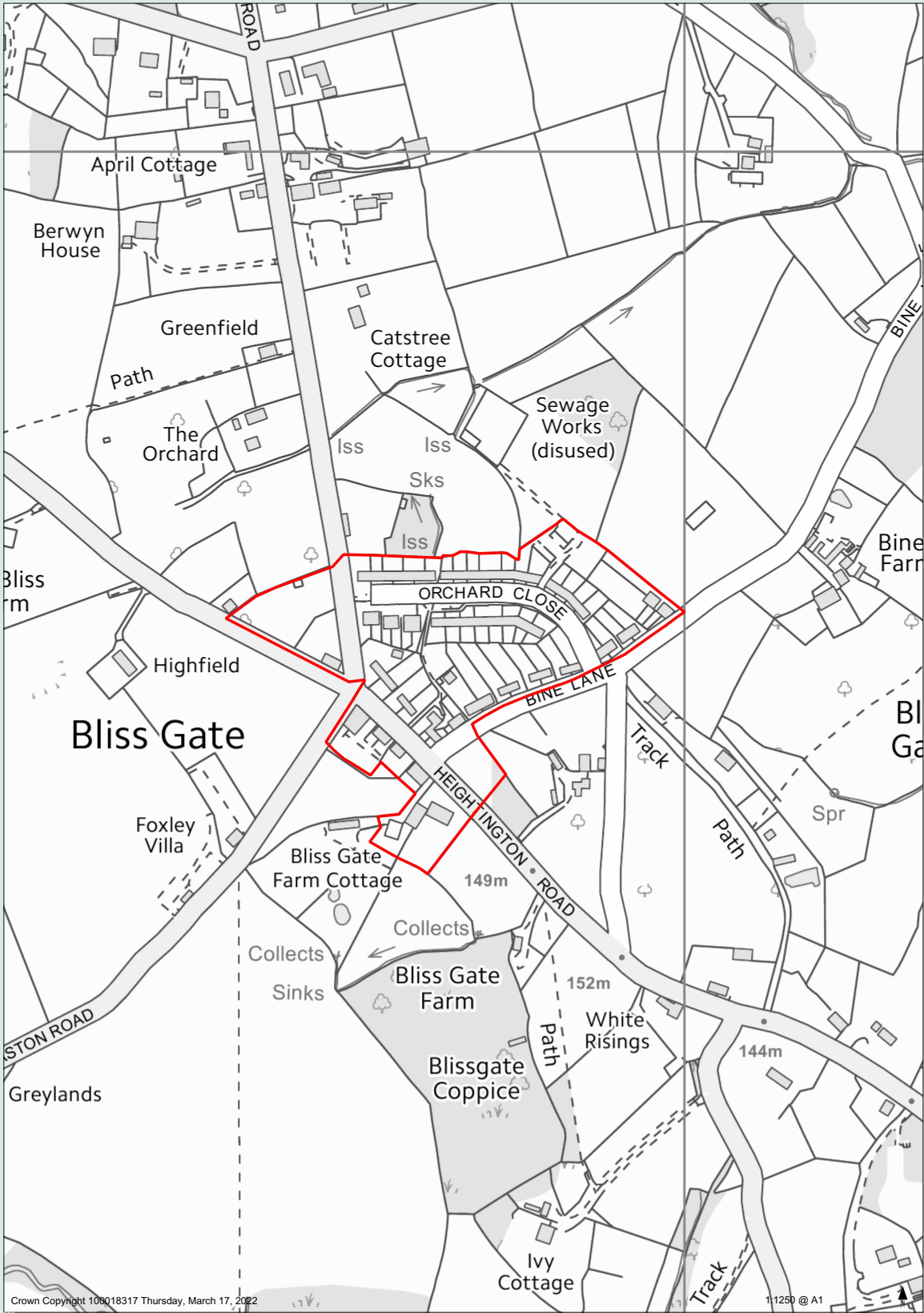
The Policies Map is available separately.



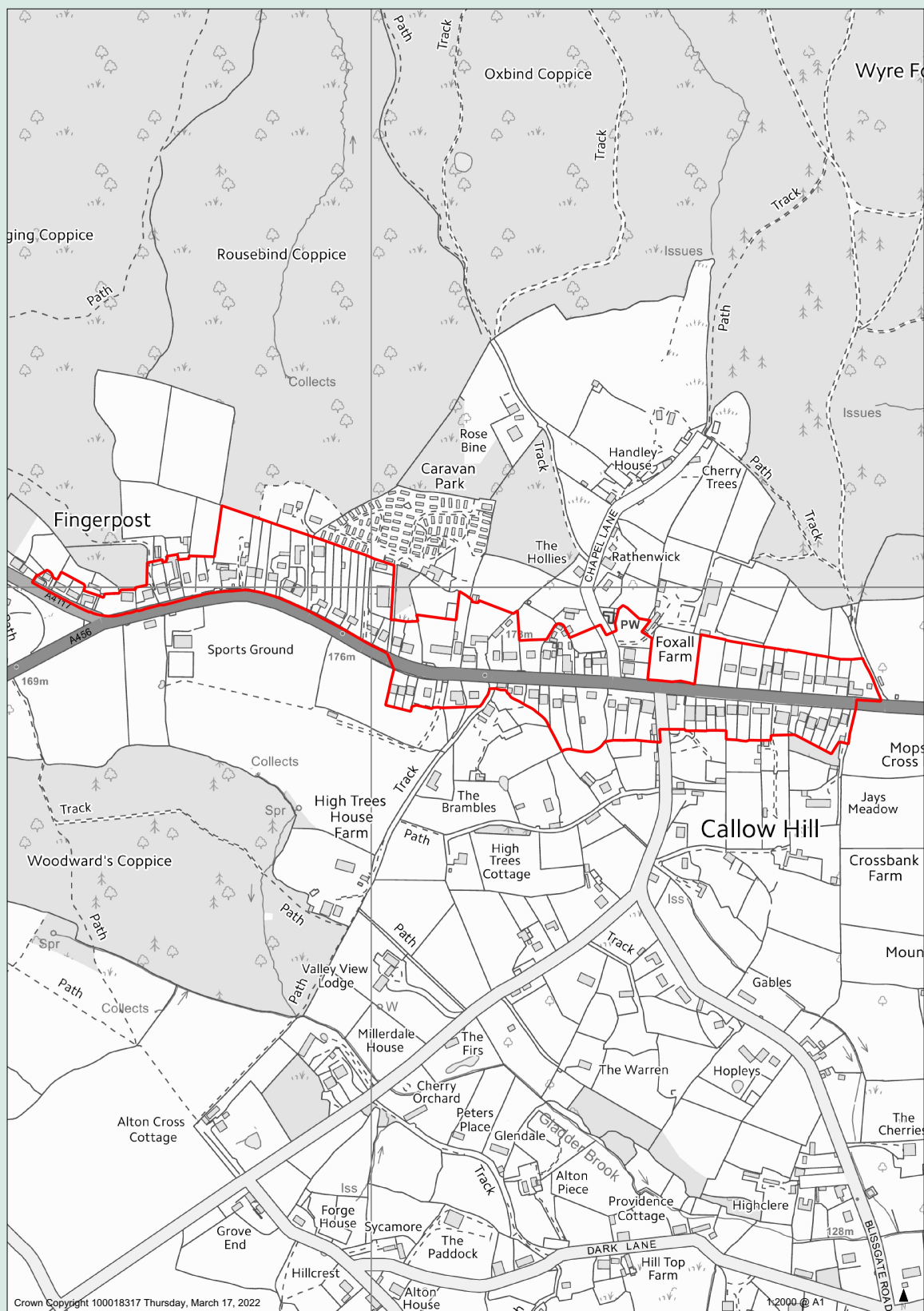
## Blakedown Settlement Boundary



Bliss Gate Settlement Boundary

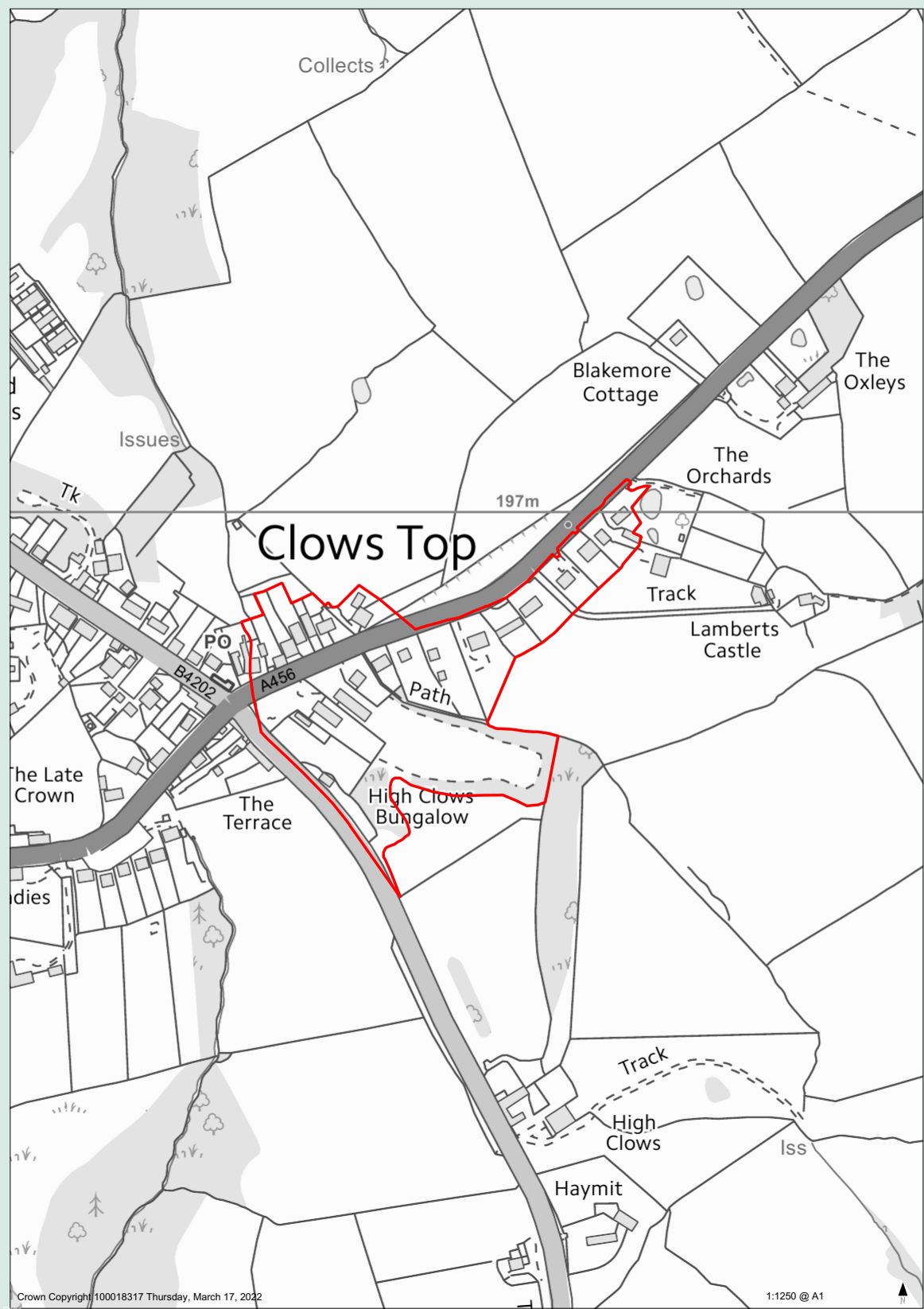


## Callow Hill Settlement Boundary

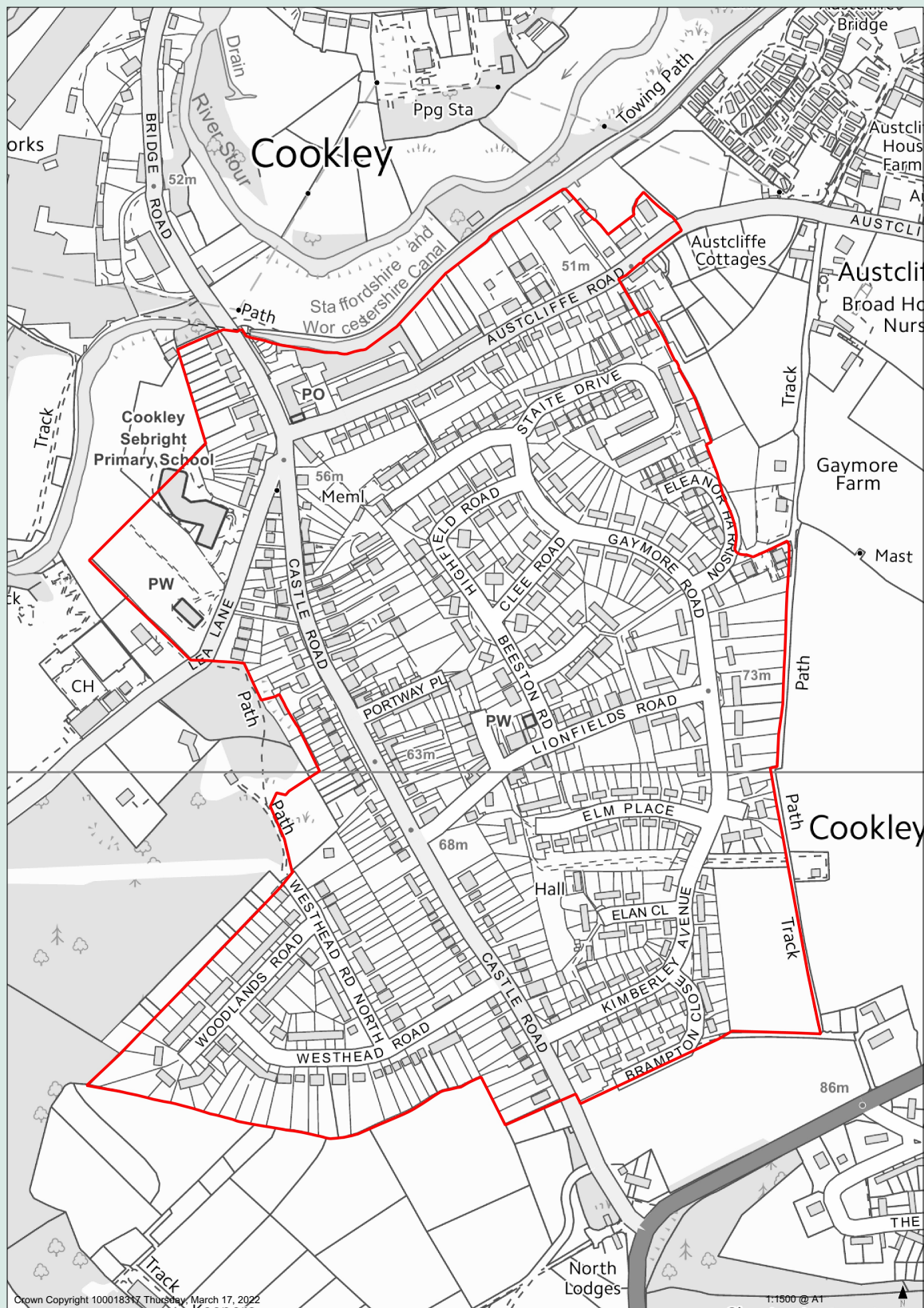




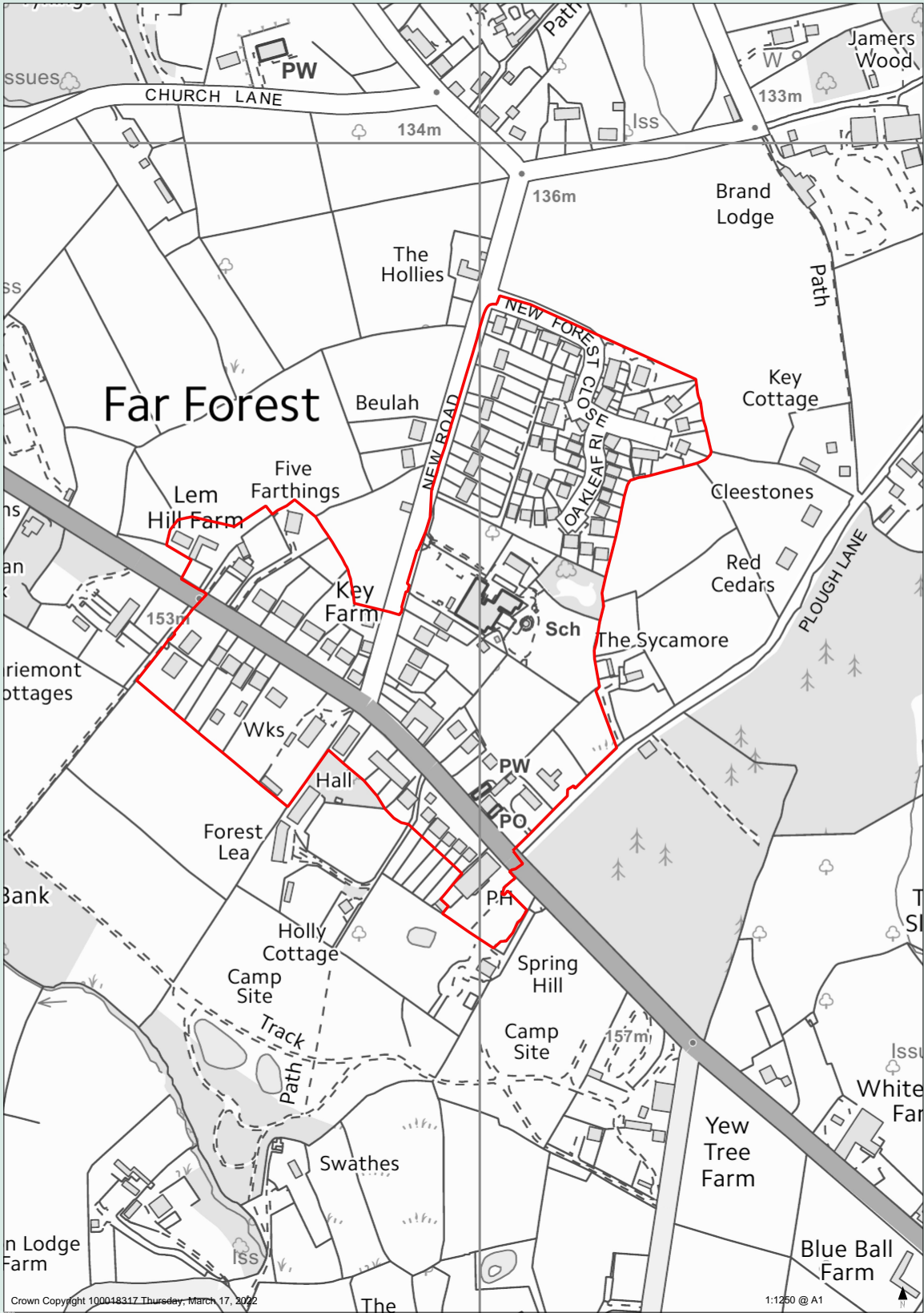
Clows Top Settlement Boundary



## Cookley Settlement Boundary

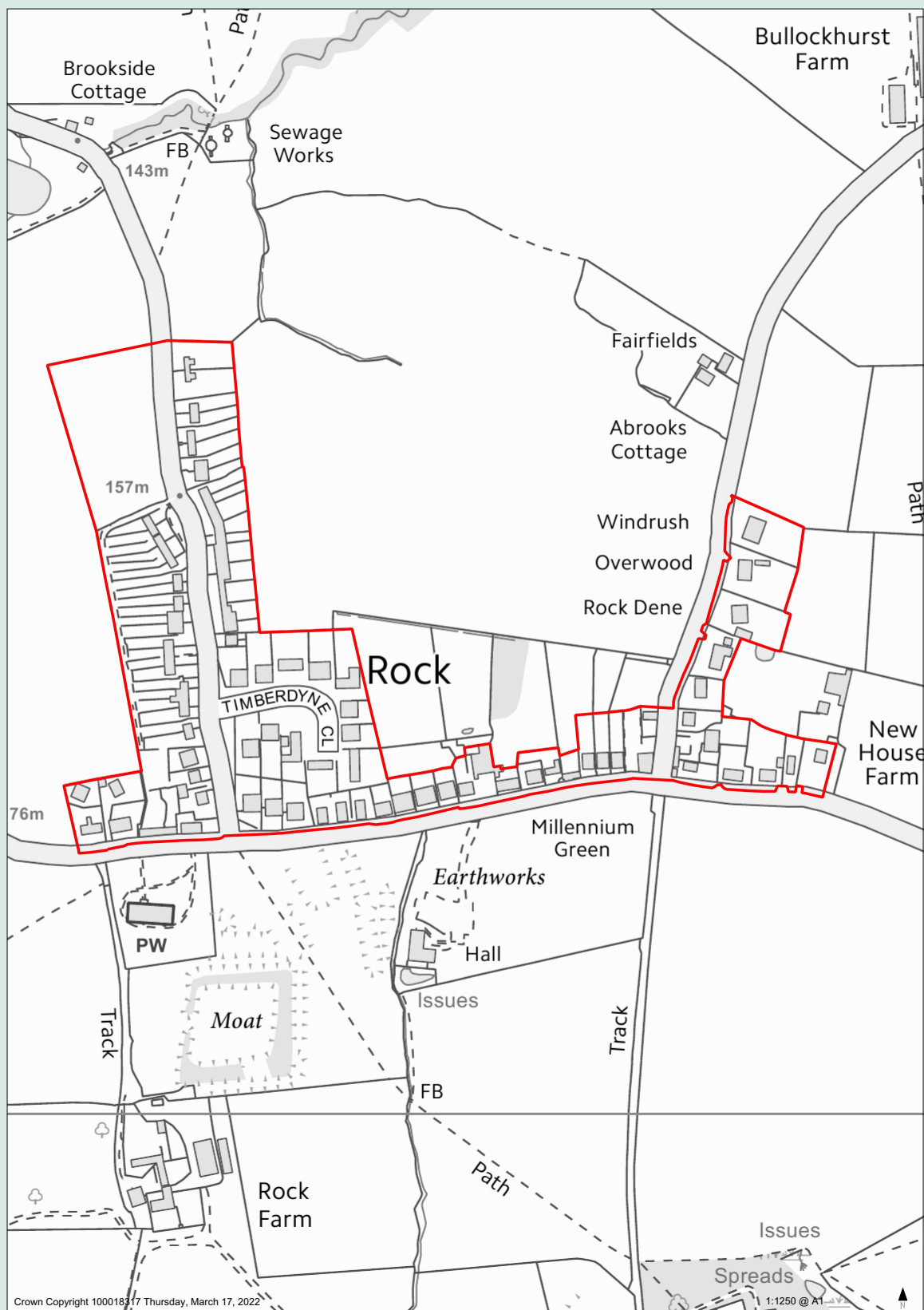


Far Forest Settlement Boundary

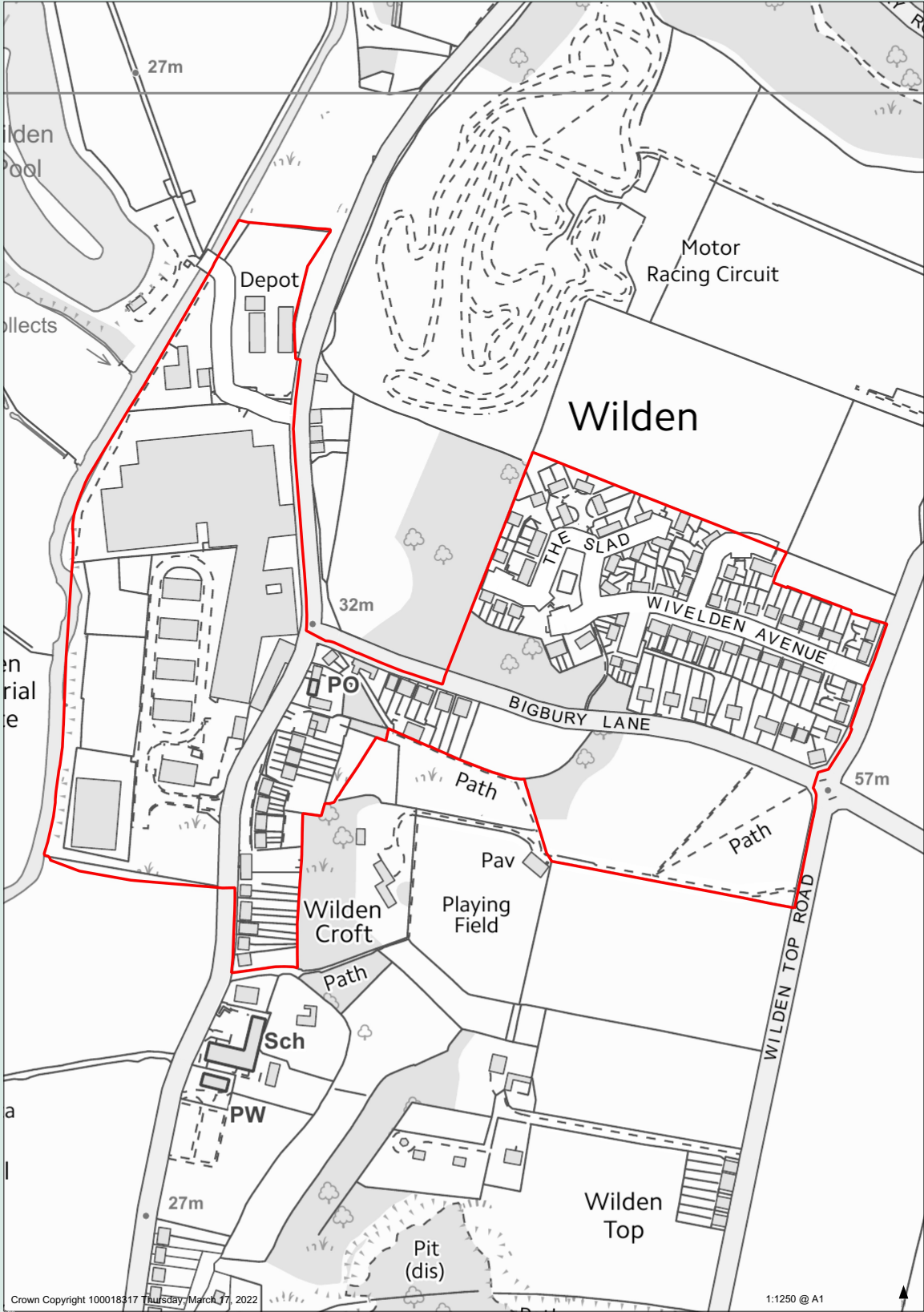




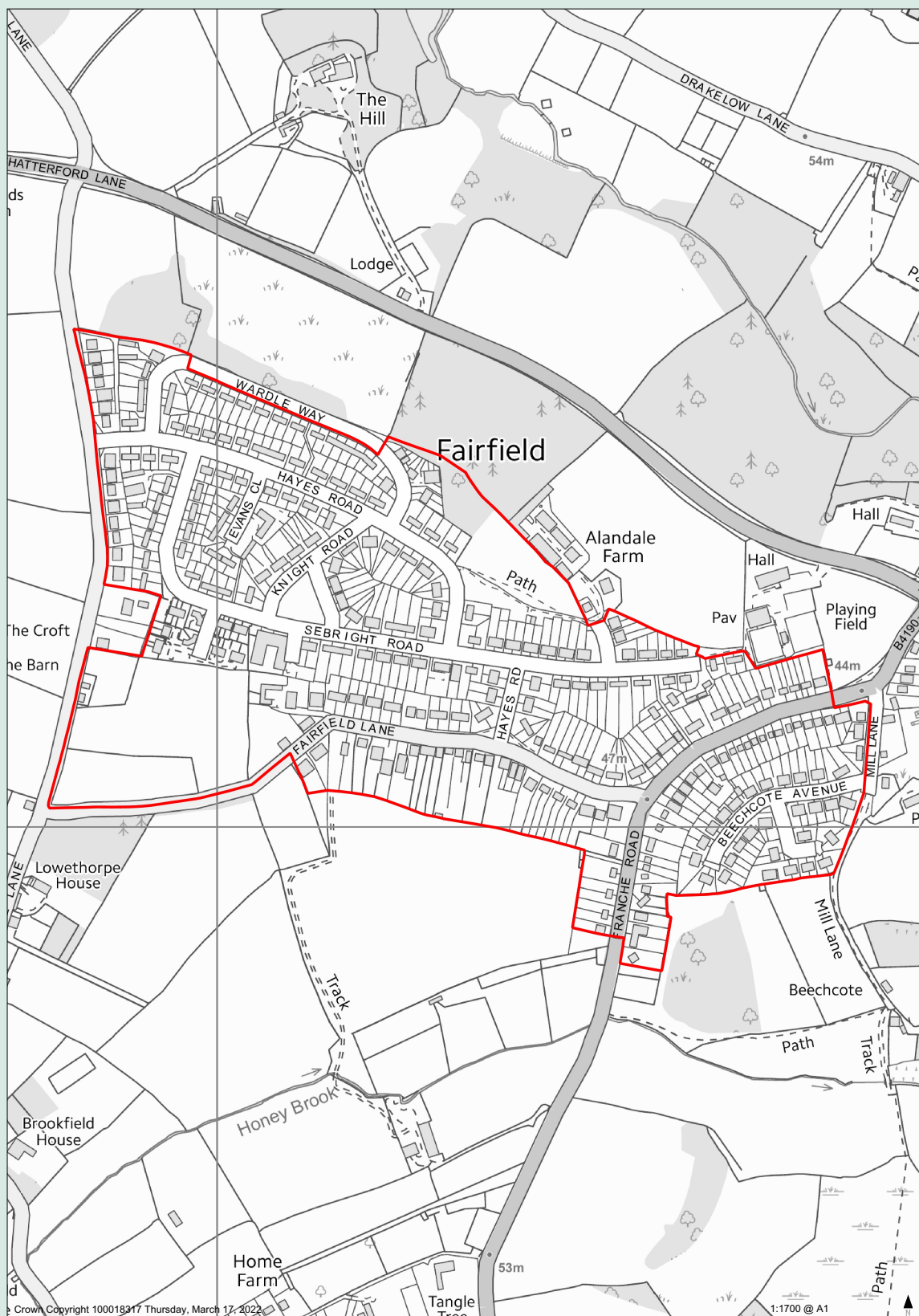
## Rock Settlement Boundary



Wilden Settlement Boundary

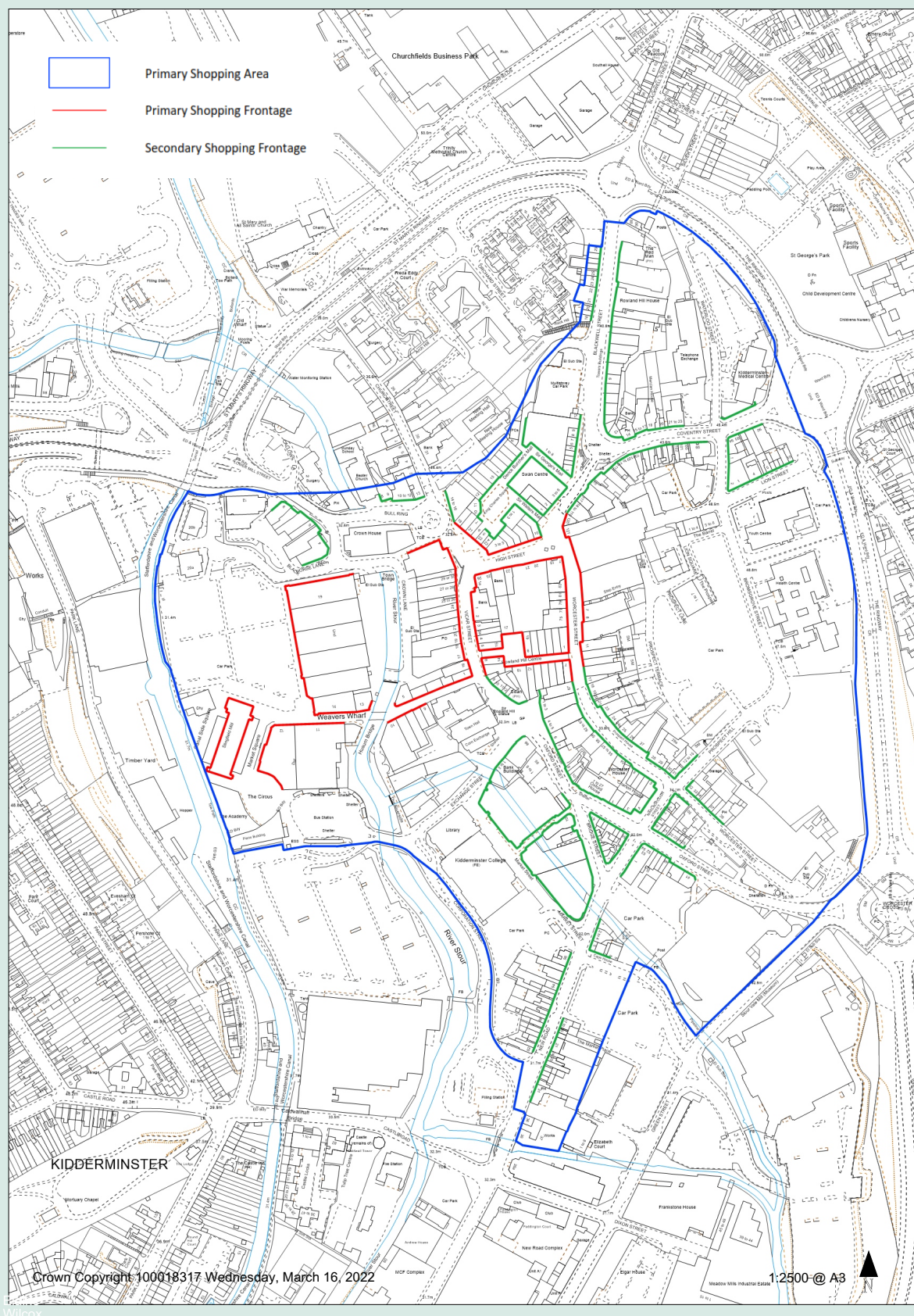


## Wolverley Settlement Boundary



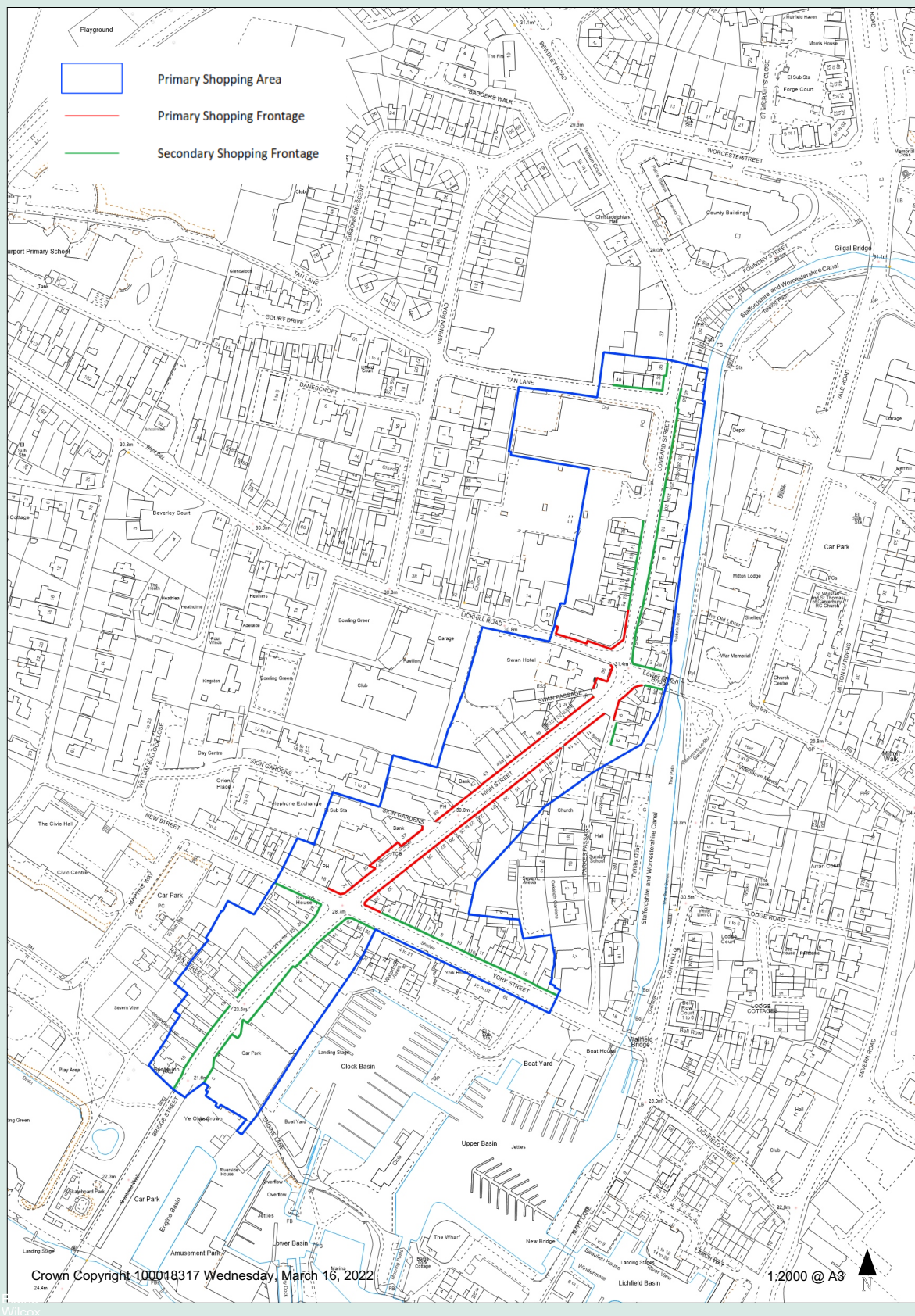


## Kidderminster Retail





## Stourport-on-Severn Retail



## Bewdley Retail

