

**THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR BEWDLEY**  
**2025-2040**  
**REGULATION 15 DRAFT, MAY 2026**

*(Version: APL.Bewdley.100.B)*



Prepared with support  
from Andrea  
Pellegram Ltd



## FOREWORD

By the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Over the last two hundred years, Bewdley has been shaped with a stream of building and construction projects. Looking back, it is difficult to find a time when the town hasn't found a way of regenerating. One of the first and most significant of these projects was the construction of the Telford Bridge, completed back in 1801. In planning and land use terms, the next twenty years are just as vital to the town's development and future as the previous two hundred years.

In a changing world, Bewdley needs to protect its unique character as a Georgian riverside market town whilst encouraging sensitive development for the future. The Neighbourhood Plan is at the heart of this task and is the gatekeeper of its future. It has been developed taking into account the views and aspirations of the people of Bewdley, aiming to ensure a preserved cultural and historical perspective, yet understanding the requirements for the future and a desire to embrace the needs of all parts of the community.

Neighbourhood Planning is a vital tool being used by local councils across England, not only to shape and influence development in their area but also to suitably and appropriately increase affordable housing, help communities become more resilient and support economic development.

Establishing a planning framework for Bewdley by agreeing a Neighbourhood Plan will address a range of issues that have faced us all, as a society and as a town. Having greater autonomy over who influences what building and development takes place, how this impacts on our future and how we feel that these changes affect our historic home is vital.

The draft plan has been developed by a Steering Group led by the Town Council and guided by wide-ranging consultations that have taken place. What we present to you now is a collective vision of how the Town can move forward in the 21st century, ensuring we remain bright, better and balanced.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Rod Stanczyszyn (Cllr) (Group Chairman)	Bewdley Town Council
Tracy Bodley (Town Clerk)	Bewdley Town Council
Sarah Billett (Cllr)	Bewdley Town Council
Calne Edginton White (Cllr)	Bewdley Town Council
Nicole Harper (Cllr)	Bewdley Town Council
Richard Brine	Community Member
Tony Leach	Community Member
Richard Perrin	Bewdley Civic Society
Robert Smith	Community Member
<b>Former Contributors</b>	
Anna Coleman	Former Cllr
Derek Killingworth	Former Cllr
Philip Edmundson	Former Cllr
Linda Candlin	Former Cllr
John Beeson	Former Cllr
Jock Gallagher	Former Community Member
Chris Jackson	Former Community Member

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# 1. Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

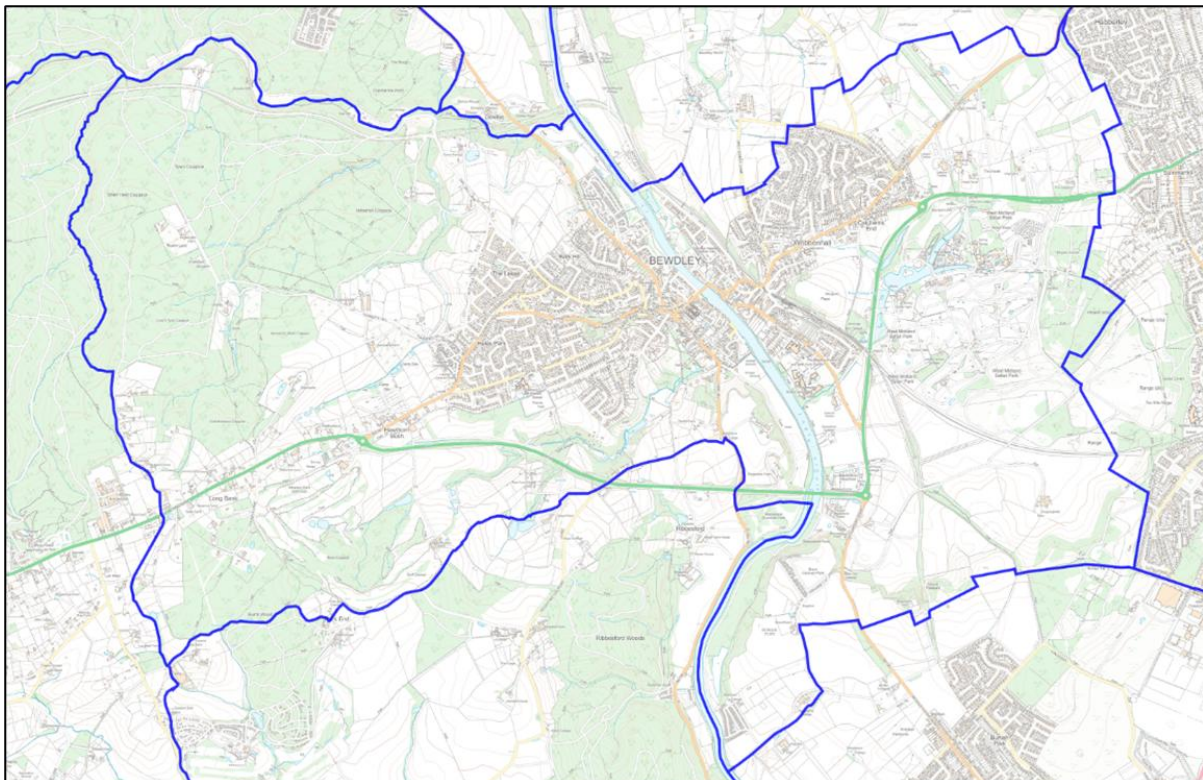
1.1. The Bewdley Neighbourhood Development Plan (Bewdley NDP) has been prepared in relation to:

- A designated Neighbourhood Area.
- Meeting Basic Conditions requirements for the preparation of neighbourhood plans.
- Contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.
- Screening of potentially significant environmental effects arising from plan proposals.
- Ensuring Bewdley NDP policies do not undermine national policies and development that would result from adopted local plan policies.
- A period for which the Bewdley NDP has been prepared.
- Extensive public consultation and engagement in the formation of the plan.

## Designated Neighbourhood Area

1.2. Following an application by Bewdley Town Council for designation of a Neighbourhood Area based on the whole parish, this was approved by Wyre Forest District Council on 10 June 2015 (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1 – Bewdley Parish Neighbourhood Area Boundary**



Source: Bewdley Town Council

## Basic Conditions Requirements

1.3. Neighbourhood plans must operate in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The current version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 and it says that succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area. NPPF paragraph 29 says that neighbourhood plans give communities the power to develop a shared

vision for their areas and through them shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.

- 1.4. Neighbourhood plans are required to meet Basic Conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood Development Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.5. Basic Conditions require that neighbourhood plan policies to have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and they must be in conformity with national policies and must not result in less development than would be delivered through the adopted development plan. The Basic Conditions Statement demonstrates how Bewdley NDP policies address this requirement.
- 1.6. Once the Bewdley NDP has been brought into force, its policies will be considered alongside Local Plan policies under section 38(6) of the 1990 Act when determining planning applications. Where they are in conflict, Bewdley NDP policies will take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the local plan covering the Neighbourhood Area.

### **Requirement to Promote Sustainable Development**

- 1.7. NPPF paragraph 8 requires the Bewdley NDP to contribute to the achievement of economic, social and environmentally sustainable development objectives. The Basic Conditions Statement published alongside the NDP demonstrates how this has been achieved.

### **Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts**

- 1.8. The NPPF says that neighbourhood plans may require Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA) or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), but only where there are potentially significant environmental effects arising from their implementation.
- 1.9. The Neighbourhood Area has environmental designations which are relevant under regulations for the consideration of screening for HRA and SEA. These include the Wyre Forest Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve and Sites of Special Scientific Interest located within the parish boundary. The River Severn and the Severn Estuary SAC and protected/notable species including white clawed crayfish and adder are relevant for purposes of HRA, according to Wyre Forest District Council.
- 1.10. Parts of the Neighbourhood Area lie within Flood Zone 3 (high risk, 1% annual probability of fluvial flooding) of the River Severn. Other potential development areas may be at flood risk given the presence of 'ordinary watercourses' which are un-modelled based on the scale and nature of the stream and receiving catchment. There is also a Source Protection Zone (1) to the southeast of the NP area. This is sensitive to development and other environmental pressures.
- 1.11. Bewdley is a historic town with a large Conservation Area and many listed buildings. Heritage Assets are sensitive and so could be affected by development. In this context, the Bewdley NDP does not propose to allocate sites for development. Bewdley NDP policies seek to improve the natural and historic environment of Bewdley. A Screening Opinion was provided by Wyre Forest District Council (September 2025) to confirm no further Environmental Report on the Bewdley NDP is required. A HRA Screening Opinion was also requested.

### Local Plans Context

- 1.12. In May 2026, the adopted development plan is made up of the following plans:
- Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036) – April 2022.
  - Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy Local Plan (2012-2027) – 15 November 2012.
  - Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan (2018-2036) – July 2022.
- 1.13. Wyre Forest District Council is preparing a new local plan. The Local Development Scheme published in March 2025 indicates that an Issue and Options Paper (Regulation 18) is being prepared for publication by June 2026. Supplementary Planning Documents are under preparation for publication in 2025 and 2026 including on Green Infrastructure, Planning Obligations, Biodiversity and the Severn Valley. Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal is to be updated by Summer 2026. The Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2022) provides an up-to-date assessment of the special interest and character of the town and forms an important evidence base for the NDP. The policies in the Bewdley NDP support the Appraisal's objectives for preserving and enhancing the town's historic environment.

### Supporting Documents

- 1.14. Supporting documents used to create the Bewdley NDP are set out below.
- a) Bewdley Design Codes
  - b) Bewdley Local Green Space Review
  - c) Review of Community Facilities in Bewdley
  - d) Town Centre Central Area Businesses Review

### NDP Time Period

- 1.15. The intention of the Bewdley NDP is to ensure that it complements adopted local plans whilst ensuring conformity with updated requirements in the NPPF. In May 2026, there are no further published emerging local plan documents.
- 1.16. It is important for the NDP to look ahead for a period sufficient to deliver its Vision and Objectives. **The proposed period for the Bewdley NDP is from 2025 to 2040.**

### Consultation with the Community

- 1.17. Effective engagement with the local community in Bewdley has been essential to develop a vision and objectives for future development policies that can make a difference to local people in the parish. A Consultation Report has been prepared to support the Bewdley NDP, and this provides details on consultation and engagement undertaken in its development. The Consultation Report provides information about the initiatives undertaken to engage the local community, talk with local businesses and organisations and consult on ideas as the NDP was developed.

## 2. Profile of Bewdley

- 2.1. This section of the Bewdley NDP provides an overview of Bewdley Parish and sets the context for the challenges and opportunities it faces.

### History of Bewdley

- 2.2. Bewdley has a long history based upon its location as a river crossing, adjacent to the ancient woodland of the Wyre Forest and as an historic inland port and market town.



- 2.3. Wribbenhall, on the east bank of the Severn, is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Over the centuries, the Wyre Forest, the River Severn and royal patronage were significant features which helped to establish and grow the importance Bewdley on the River Severn's western bank. The town's heritage and patronage, which led to its development as a market town, underpins the rich historic character and picturesque setting which makes it popular with tourists and visitors.

- 2.4. Load Street is flanked by many distinctive buildings, some medieval in origin, with Georgian facades creating the current architecture. These distinctive buildings, in contrast to the original workers' cottages of Welch Gate, Wyre Hill and Lax Lane, were built by wealthy merchants and notables of the town. Many are now Grade II Listed. Other significant buildings can be seen at Beale's Corner and on the approach to the town from Wribbenhall

- 2.5. During the 18th Century Bewdley was a fashionable centre, the scene of many balls and assemblies. In 1737 a workhouse was founded in High Street, followed in 1745 by St Anne's Church, a Grade II\* listed structure, which is still a magnificent centre piece in Load Street. The town's Grade I listed structure, Bewdley Bridge was started in 1798 and completed in 1801, to plans by the noted engineer Thomas Telford.

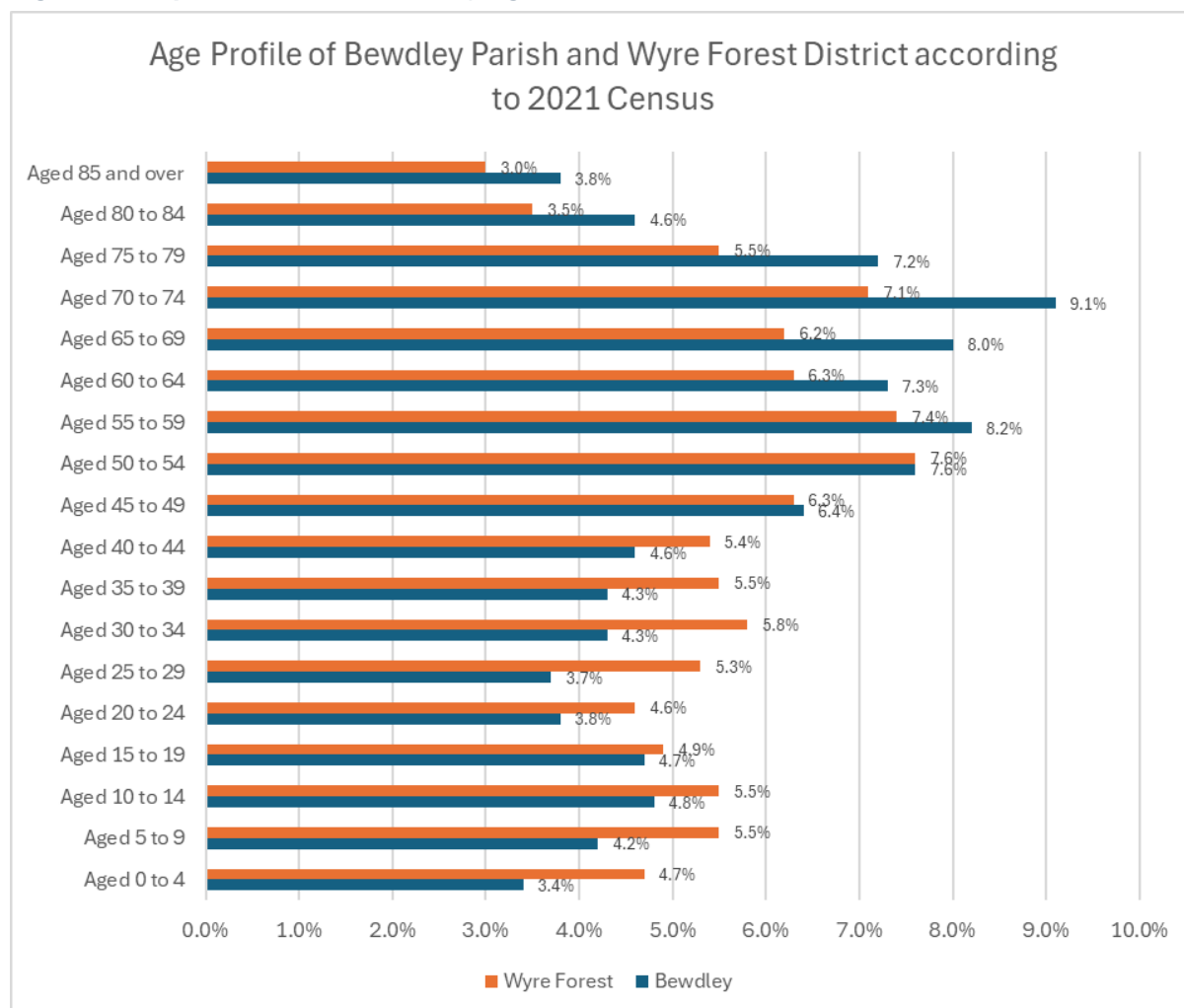


- 2.6. Bewdley's prosperity continued despite a downturn following the opening of the canal network in Stourport. The opening of the Severn Valley Railway also impacted river trade. Three times Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin was born in the town and a statue recognising his work as the local MP has been erected in the town centre. Today, Bewdley is a popular tourist destination with a thriving town centre, museum, riverside walks and a strong community spirit.

## Population

2.7. The 2021 Census recorded a population of 8,287 in the parish (8.2% of the population of Wyre Forest District). Figure 2 shows the local population structure by age. Compared to Wyre Forest District as a whole, there is a greater proportion of population in Bewdley aged 55 years and over and a lower proportion aged below 45 years.

**Figure 2 – Population Distribution by Age, 2021**



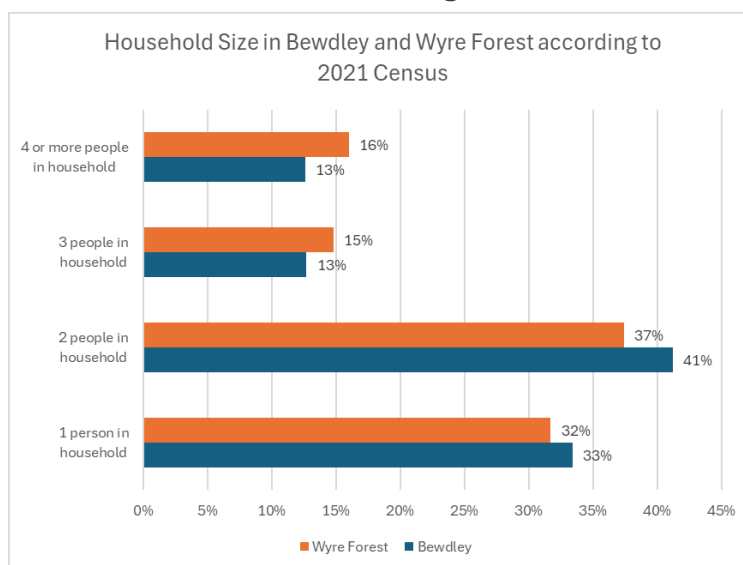
Source: ONS, 2021 Census

2.8. Nearly 32% of Bewdley’s population is 65 years or older whilst only 17% of the population is 19 years or younger. The proportion of residents over 65 is expected to increase over the next 10 years. If population trends continue along their current trajectory, then a smaller population of younger families will result in weaker provision of schools, local services and affect the social fabric of Bewdley.

2.9. Figure 3 shows the proportion of households in Bewdley and Wyre Forest with one person through to 4 or more people in the household. 74% of households in Bewdley contain one or two people whilst only 26% contain three or more. Turned into numbers, this means that there are only around 1,100 households in Bewdley that contain more than two people.

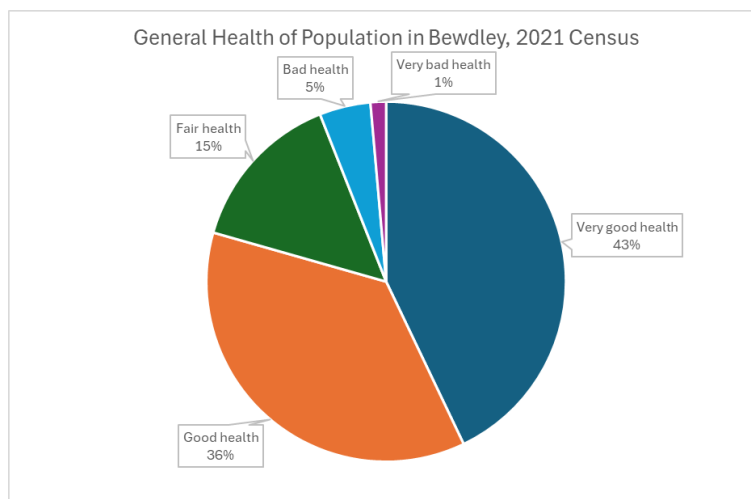
2.10. The older parts of the population tend to live in smaller households. There are 4,234 households in the parish producing an average household size of 2.0 people, below the national average of 2.4. Household sizes are predicted to decrease further in Bewdley as the population ages. Consequently, single person and couple households may increase and family households may decrease as a proportion of the whole.

**Figure 3 – Household Size**



2.11. In view of the ageing population, understanding the health of Bewdley residents is important. Figure 4 shows that there is generally very good or good health (79%), but a significant proportion are in less than good health (21%). This can have implications for the adaptability of local housing, the nature and availability of local services and accessibility to local buildings and places for people with disabilities.

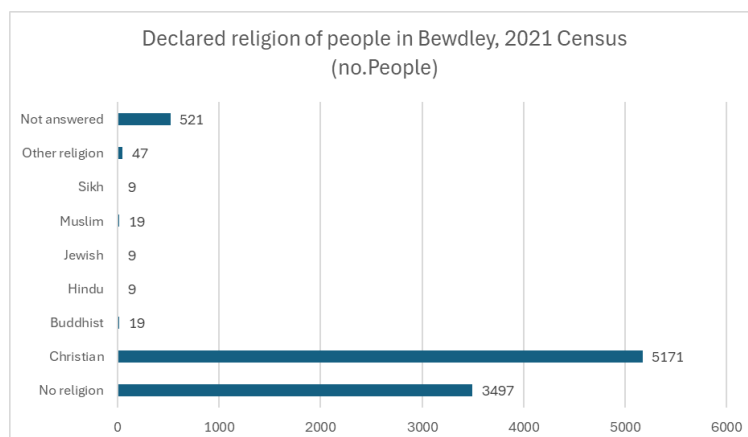
**Figure 4 – General Health of the population**



2.12. The level of ethnic diversity is very low within Bewdley. It is however not dissimilar from the overall analysis for Wyre Forest as a district. 97% of the population of Bewdley classify themselves as ‘White: British’- slightly higher than the district average of 95% but significantly higher than the national average of 80%.

**Figure 5 – Declared Religions in Bewdley**

2.13. Figure 5 shows the Religions declared by Census 2021 responses. The religion of the resident population has a bearing on requirements for burial space and cremation ash spaces. In Bewdley’s case there is a very small proportion of population who follow religions which require burial over cremation.

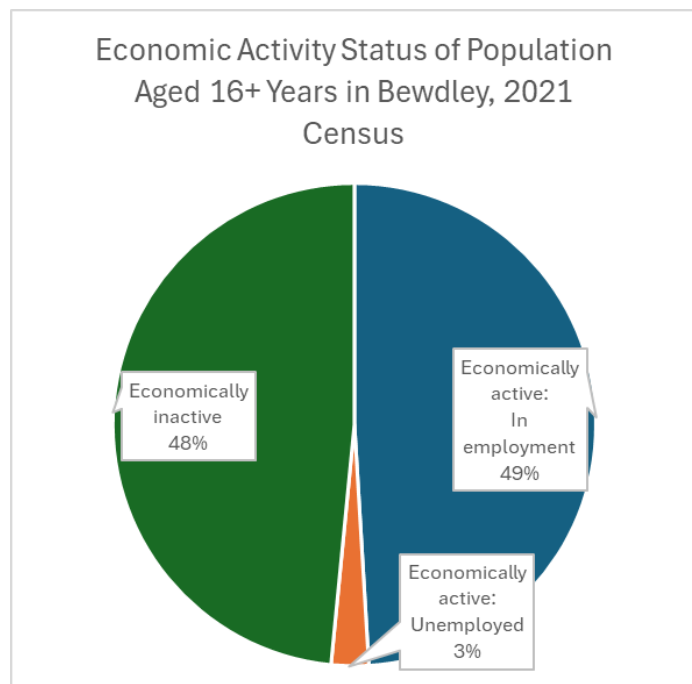


## Local Economy and Employment

- 2.14. Bewdley’s economy benefits from local business employment, local service provision, shopping facilities and tourism. The West Midlands Safari and Leisure Park are the biggest employer in the Parish, employing around 200 permanent workers with an additional 500 seasonal workers.
- 2.15. **Shopping:** The focus of Bewdley Town Centre is Load Street where most shops are located. Most are independent retailers selling gifts, antiques and interiors along with the more traditional services. These include a florist, book shop, cobbler, jeweller, pharmacies, optician, dental practice, estate agents, solicitors, a funeral parlour, community cinema and a Post Office. Food suppliers include a baker, butcher, greengrocer and several chain convenience stores. There is a desire to reintroduce twice-monthly markets between April and September and encourage larger two-day artisan festivals.
- 2.16. Bewdley Town Centre performs an important shopping function for the local population as well as for residents of the neighbouring villages. Kidderminster and Stourport provide a range of larger supermarkets and retail parks approximately three miles from Bewdley.
- 2.17. The Town Centre also includes St George’s Hall, a multi-purpose venue for music, cinema and arts. There are numerous pubs, cafes and restaurants which provide Bewdley with vibrant leisure and ‘evening economy’ activities.
- 2.18. **Services and Education:** Bewdley opened a new medical centre in 2016, located just off the main shopping area but adjacent to the main public car park in the town. The building also houses a pharmacy and the town’s library. The site of the town’s fire station in Dog Lane has been redeveloped as a local supermarket with residential dwellings above.
- 2.19. Bewdley has three schools – The Bewdley School, Bewdley Primary School and St Anne’s Primary School. The Bewdley School is located to the Southeast of the town centre. The intake numbers are 958 and the school has a capacity of 1,018. This is a popular school with students travelling to it from outside of Bewdley due to its facilities and good teaching performance.

**Figure 6 – Economic Activity Levels**

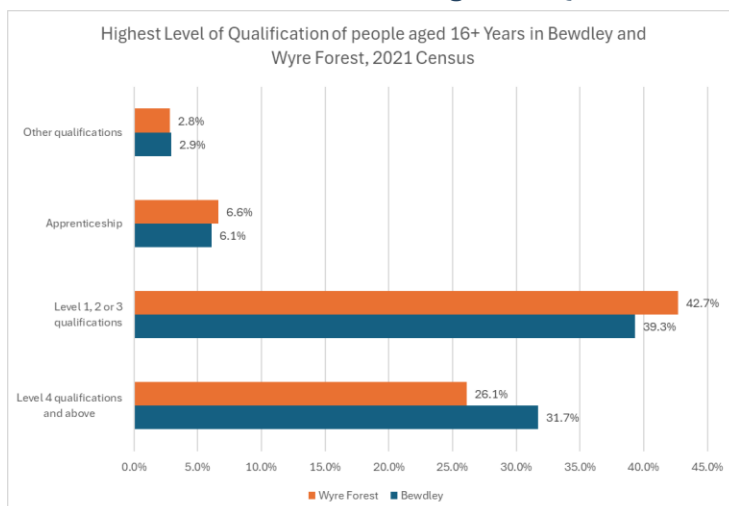
- 2.20. Education is a key source of employment in the area. The Bewdley School has a workforce of about 130 people. Together, Bewdley Primary School and St Anne’s Primary School employ around 90 staff.
- 2.21. The overall level of economic activity is low. Figure 6 shows that only 49% of the population aged 16+ years is economically active and in work, with a further 3% unemployed in the 2021 census. This means 48% of the population aged 16 or over is economically inactive and, given the population structure, for the most part retired.



**Figure 7 - Qualifications**

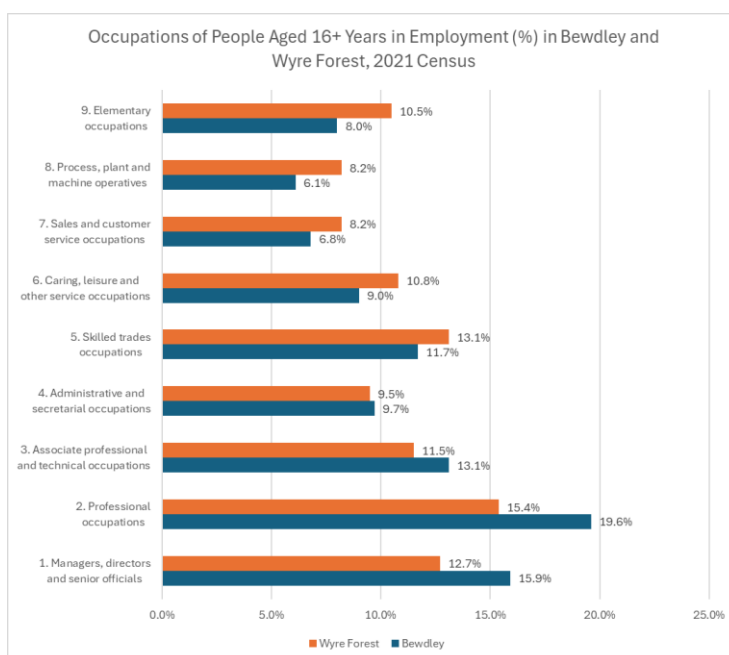
2.22. Figure 7 shows that the level of qualifications achieved by people in Bewdley is proportionally higher in the highest level of qualifications and lower in all others.

2.23. Figure 8 shows that of those in work, a higher proportion are in higher level occupations than Wyre Forest generally with a larger proportion of Bewdley-resident workers present in each of the four highest categories.



**Figure 8 – Occupations**

2.24. A combination of high levels of qualifications and higher-level qualifications may indicate good quality employment for a significant proportion of those in work in Bewdley. However, higher level qualifications will include those of people who have retired already and so the relationship only goes so far.



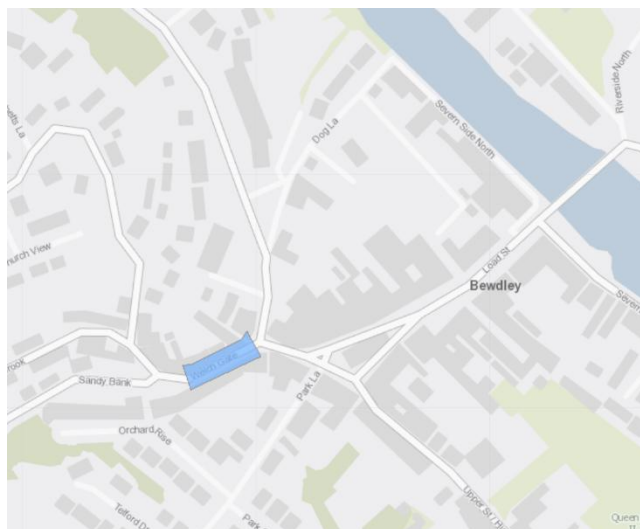
**Travel and Transport**

2.25. Bewdley is well connected by road to the neighbouring towns of Kidderminster and Stourport with onward rail services from Kidderminster station. There is a very high level of car ownership and use within the town.

2.26. The A456 provides a bypass to the town for through-traffic. The bypass route is not used sufficiently by residents from the west who favour the simple route through the town centre, which adds congestion to the narrow streets. These narrow roads are also used by those travelling toward Highley and Bridgnorth. An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared by Wyre Forest District Council for exceedance of the annual mean objective for nitrogen oxide (NO2) in Welch Gate, Bewdley. This is shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9 – AQMA at Welch Gate**

2.27. Bewdley is a compact town with many public rights of way connecting the town with the surrounding countryside. Pedestrian connections across the river using the Telford bridge are poor, with walkers having to negotiate the narrow pavements alongside the cars and heavy goods vehicles accessing the town centre and car parks.



2.28. The nearest Network Rail station to the town is in Kidderminster. Bus services operate until around 7pm, running hourly into Kidderminster from Hales Park via Wribbenhall and Habberley. Less frequent services operate to Tenbury, Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Stourbridge and Worcester via Stourport. There are no bus links at all on a Sunday. The quality of the bus vehicles has been of concern and the future use of eco-friendly buses using Welch Gate may help to reduce pollution in the AQMA.

### Natural Environment Assets

2.29. Significant environmental factors in planning the future of Bewdley are set out below:

- **Flooding:** development must be sensitive to issues of flooding.
- **Landscape and views:** the River Valley is a key part of the historic character of Bewdley. New development must be sensitive to the landscape setting and the views across this area. The Plan does not support large-scale development on the western side of the River Sever.
- **Open spaces:** these perform many different roles - some are important for recreation, whilst other spaces surrounding the town are ecologically important. Local people feel that open spaces should be retained and enhanced for recreation, particularly providing younger people and children with play facilities.
- **Natural Assets:** the protection of biodiversity and natural environment assets, particularly within areas proposed for housing development, is a key environmental consideration and an integral part of the NDP. All development will be expected to mitigate risks to the natural environment and countryside and seek measures to enhance and integrate with the existing green infrastructure and biodiversity assets.
- **Mineral resources:** Worcestershire County Council’s Minerals Local Plan shows that there are some potential building stone resources in the parish. Two areas identified for sand and gravel are Brant Farm and Blackstone. Neither site has been safeguarded.



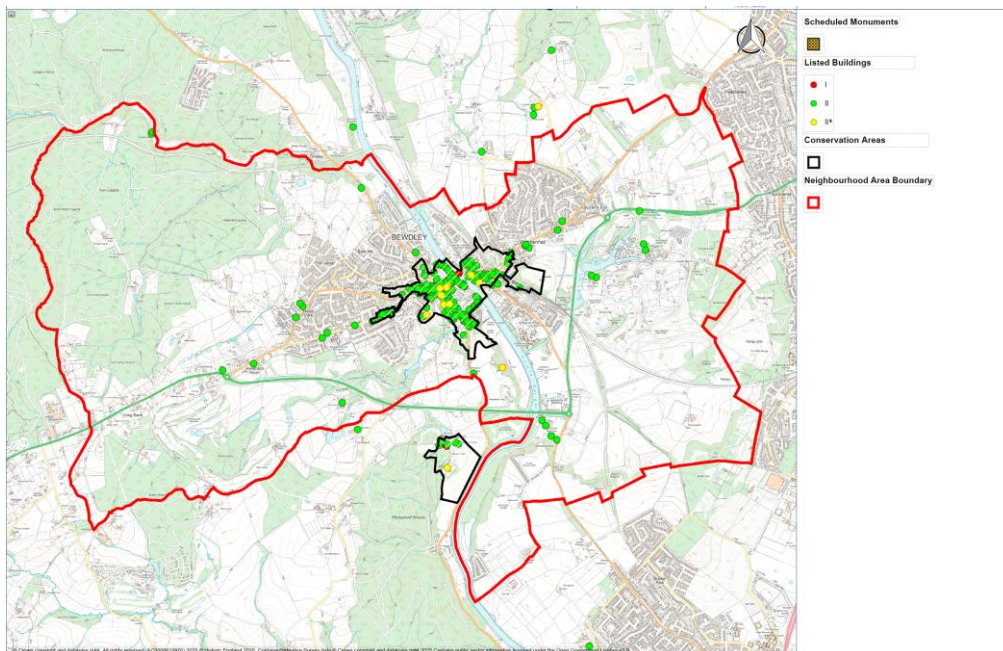
## Heritage

- 2.30. Figure 10 shows the distribution of Heritage Assets within the Parish, which are concentrated in the centre of Bewdley. Bewdley Conservation Area is a key positive heritage feature of the town and a significant constraint on development, which must be undertaken carefully to avoid impacts on Conservation Area characteristics and individual heritage assets. Notable among these is the Grade 1 Listed Severn Bridge including the flanking arches and balustrade. There are nine Grade II\* Listed properties including the Town Hall, the Church of St Anne, the Roman Catholic Church of The Holy Family and several residential properties including rows of houses.



- 2.31. There are many Grade II Listed Buildings within the town including most of the buildings on Load Street, High Street and Lax Lane as well as some other areas of distinct character such as the ancient settlements of Wribbenhall and Wyre Hill. There are also many other local buildings, features and monuments of significant local architectural or historic interest which are held on the Wyre Forest Local Heritage List. These non-designated heritage assets make an important contribution to the town's historic character and sense of place.

**Figure 10 – Heritage Assets in Bewdley**



Source: Andrea Pellegram Ltd

### 3. Our Vision and Development Objectives

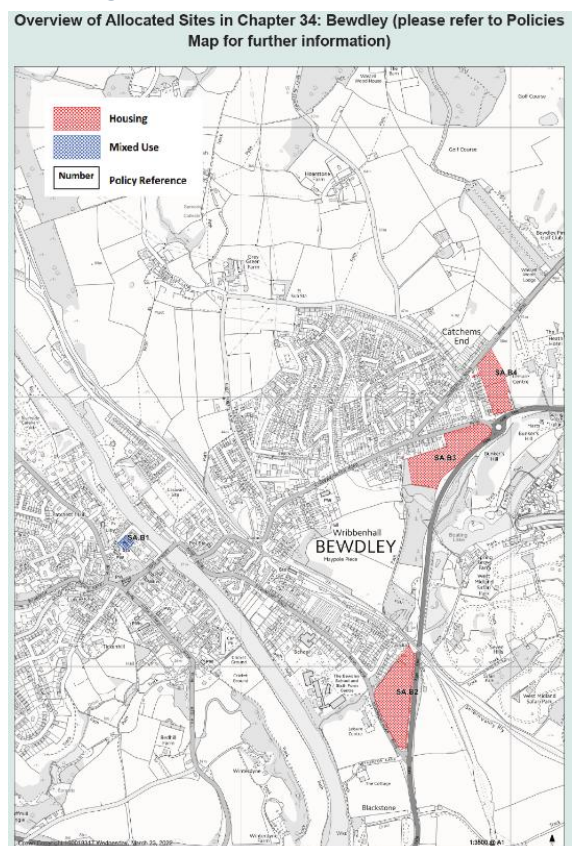
#### Bewdley Parish within The Local Plan Context

- 3.1. The Wyre Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted in 2022. The Local Plan Vision looks forward to Bewdley maintaining its distinctive and separate identity as one of the three main towns of the District alongside Kidderminster and Stourport. The importance of the water environment, natural habitats and historic character to communities in the district will continue. The Local Plan Vision recognises that Bewdley will remain a thriving market town which meets the local community’s needs. The town’s historic character will be preserved, and its flourishing riverside environment will continue to attract visitors.
- 3.2. The Local Plan Vision looks forward to Bewdley being well-served by a sustainable transport network with an urban environment that will experience reduced levels of traffic congestion and improved air quality within the town centre. People will walk and cycle more and there will be improved access to green spaces. People will lead healthier lifestyles. New development will provide suitable infrastructure in a timely manner.
- 3.3. The Local Plan Spatial Development Strategy makes provision for housing, employment and other land uses to meet requirements over the period 2016-2036. For Bewdley, 227 net additional dwellings were identified as the minimum expected growth delivery. Allocation sites have come forward to deliver less than was allocated, but in combination with other windfall housing developments, a NDP local housing requirement of 15 dwellings was confirmed (in January 2025) for the NDP period of 2025-2040. Future local plan strategic policy proposals may lead to a revision of this requirement.

- 3.4. Within the Settlement Hierarchy for Wyre Forest, Bewdley is identified as a Market Town - a third-tier settlement below a Main Town (Kidderminster) and a Large Market Town (Stourport-on-Severn). Bewdley’s role is to provide local services and employment opportunities, tourism and leisure. Suitable development is identified to include retail to meet local needs, employment, offices and commerce, housing to meet local needs & ensure long-term vitality and viability of leisure; business; tourism and local services.

- 3.5. Policy SP.5 of the local plan says that Bewdley’s contribution to District housing need will be limited to the development of allocated sites for Bewdley, reflecting the town’s conservation context and limited availability of jobs and services. The Local Plan allocates four sites in Bewdley to meet local plan requirements in full, shown in Figure 11.

**Figure 11 – Local Plan Allocation Sites**



- 3.6. The role of Bewdley as a sustainable tourism destination would be enhanced through sustainable transport links where practical and viable.
- 3.7. The Local Plan refers to the town's setting within the countryside as an important factor in its attractiveness for tourism. The ability to accommodate brownfield land development within or adjacent to the town centre is limited due to the heritage setting of the town, its topography and the presence of the Welch Gate AQMA. Development within Bewdley's Conservation Area is sensitive to the requirement to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area. This covers most of the Town Centre.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

- 3.8. There is a clear challenge arising from the matters discussed in the Local Plan. On the one hand, there is a need to ensure some development in Bewdley to safeguard the long-term viability and vitality of the town. There is an opportunity to promote sustainable tourism in relation to the enjoyment of the historic town, its riverside and the adjacent Wyre Forest.
- 3.9. On the other hand, there is a need to ensure development in Bewdley is sensitive to historic character which will limit the scope for development. There is a need to avoid exacerbating air quality issues in the town centre which will also limit development. There is a concern over the concentration of traffic over the River Severn bridge into the town centre. Improved public transport and improved walking and cycling routes might help.
- 3.10. Following the publication of updated national planning policy in December 2024, there is a greater prospect of speculative planning proposals challenging the constraints identified in the Local Plan based on the benefits to sustainable development of new housing development.
- 3.11. A substantial uplift in Local Housing Needs for Wyre Forest will be addressed in an updated local plan within three years. This will set out a local housing requirement for Bewdley in accordance with an updated spatial development strategy.

### **Our Vision**

**To make Bewdley a vibrant, exciting, accessible town founded on the town's history, character and picturesque setting, to build on Bewdley's past to guide its future and make Bewdley a Bright, Better and Balanced place to live, work and visit.**

- 3.12. The NDP is an important framework which gives the people of Bewdley a real say over future development in the town. Through community consultations and collaborations, it has been created to establish Bewdley's planning and land use requirements established for the period 2025 to 2040.
- 3.13. The purpose of the NDP is to set out specific development objectives for certain defined areas within the Town. It provides local objectives, evidence, principles and criteria within policies which complement the strategic policies of the Wyre Forest District Local Plan for use in the determination of development proposals within Bewdley Parish.
- 3.14. The NDP establishes the necessary planning framework for Bewdley to develop in ways which reflect the priorities established during engagement with residents and businesses during the development of the NDP. This highlighted a key challenge and opportunity to create a strong and vibrant community in Bewdley town whilst retaining and improving its historic character.

## **Our Objectives**

- 3.15. Bewdley is uniquely placed as a well-preserved historic town of great character located on the banks of the River Severn. Bewdley is directly adjacent to the Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve which provides valuable natural habitat and an important landscape setting for the town. These natural and historic environment features are central to the story of Bewdley. It is not backward-looking. Local people recognise that Bewdley's future prosperity in part rests on maintaining, enhancing and making better use of the area's natural and historic assets.
- 3.16. The future prosperity of Bewdley requires sensitive development to unlock economic potential in the town primarily through shopping, tourism and leisure activities, as well as a range of housing types at small scale. This will ensure that the demographic structure and social/economic capacity of the population remain in balance to support a local economy and continued local services.
- 3.17. The NDP's objectives set out below reflect this dual requirement to protect and enhance key local assets to provide support for local economic prosperity and improved community services.

### **NDP Objectives**

**To protect and enhance the historic environmental and architectural characteristics of Bewdley through positive local policies for the new development.**

**To ensure the green and blue infrastructure in Bewdley contributes to the local historic and natural landscape character, improves biodiversity, and promotes opportunities for play, recreation and sports.**

**To encourage a thriving local economy in Bewdley through support for local businesses, investment in the public realm and the promotion of markets and other events to increase economic activity in the town.**

**To reduce the impact of traffic congestion in the town centre, increase parking facilities, promote bus and rail services, and encourage walking and cycling.**

**To ensure that housing development in Bewdley provides a mix of dwelling types to meet identified local housing needs.**

## 4. Community And Wellbeing

- 4.1. This section of the NDP sets out land use planning priorities for local community infrastructure, assets and services.

### NDP Objectives

**To ensure that green and blue infrastructure in Bewdley contributes to local historic and natural landscape character, improves biodiversity, and promotes opportunities for play, recreation and sports.**

### Community Facilities and Services

- 4.2. Bewdley is a thriving community with education, health, social and leisure facilities which contribute greatly to the local quality of life. As a market town, Bewdley is relied upon by a wider rural hinterland of small villages and hamlets to provide essential community services such as schools, doctors' surgeries, pharmacies, library, community centres, and post office.
- 4.3. In recent years, there has been a significant growth in internet banking and a corresponding decline in the use of bank branches. This has led to a loss of high street banks which has created challenges for the town's residents who still rely on in-person banking services as they no longer have access to a local branch. The Post Office has taken on core functions and services to provide a local point of access to banking. The community is concerned that there should be no further loss of banking or other facilities and would support the establishment of a banking hub.
- 4.4. It is important that Bewdley retains its community facilities and services and provides new services also. The NDP aims to strengthen Bewdley's role as a market town in line with the district settlement hierarchy.
- 4.5. The NDP sets out the important role local community facilities and services play and indicates their current capacity and future requirements.
- 4.6. NDP policy ensures that the current and future capacity and role of local community facilities is considered appropriately in development proposals, to ensure important local facilities are retained and that support for improved provision is given where appropriate.
- 4.7. More widely, encouragement is given to new development that would enhance connections with the natural environment and wildlife or create a positive visitor experience which encourage repeat visits to Bewdley.

### Policy Considerations

- 4.8. The NPPF paragraphs 84 and 85 provide a clear framework for the promotion, retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship to promote a healthy community. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF makes it clear that planning policy should "guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs".
- 4.9. It is important to understand the current provision and use of local community facilities and what is needed to maintain and improve them so they can continue to fulfil their important functions.

The NDP evidence base identifies facilities in local community use and demonstrates their current use, capacity and future development needs.

- 4.10. NDP policy seeks to retain community facilities in community uses and will expect new developments to contribute towards improvements where they are likely to give rise to increased demands on their use. Bewdley Town Council will continue its wider engagement with key partners to ensure local community facilities are improved over time.

#### **BEWDLEY 1 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Proposals which would lead to the loss of sites in local community use or which otherwise provide essential local facilities and services will not be supported, unless:**

- a) **Equivalent alternative provision exists within a suitable distance, or is proposed; or,**
- b) **It can be clearly demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed. To demonstrate lack of need, developers should submit evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to market the site/facility for its current use without success over the preceding 18 months.**

**Sites in Local Community Use or which provide important local community facilities and services in Bewdley are listed below and shown on the Policies Map:**

##### **Sites in Local Community Use:**

- a) **St George’s Hall and Community Cafe**
- b) **Wribbenhall Parish Rooms**
- c) **Shaw Hedge Road Community Centre**
- d) **Wyre Community Land Trust Ruskin Land – St George’s Farm**
- e) **Guildhall**
- f) **St. Anne’s Church**
- g) **Elim Riverside Church**
- h) **Bewdley Baptist Church**
- i) **Quaker Meeting House**
- j) **Bewdley Institute**
- k) **Scout Hut**

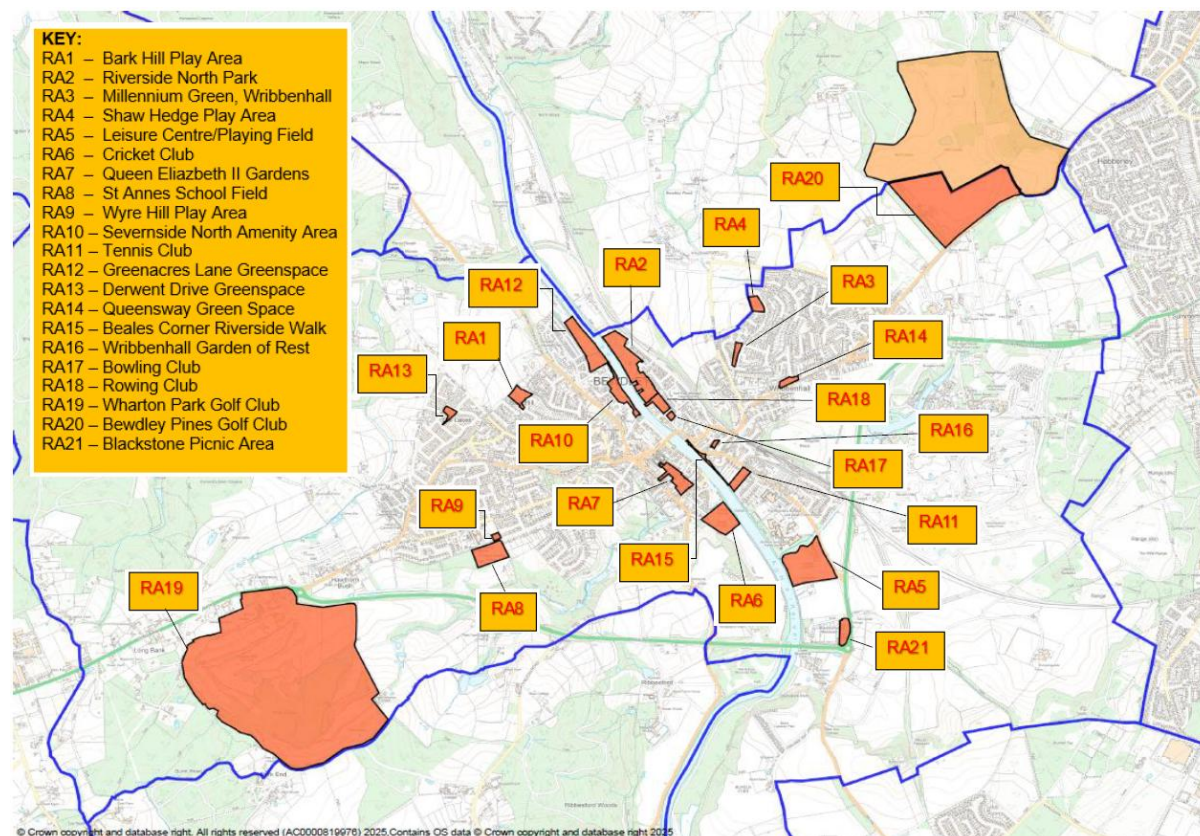
##### **Other essential local facilities:**

- l) **Bewdley Museum**
- m) **Bewdley Leisure Centre & Sports Fields**
- n) **Wharton Park Golf & Country Club**
- o) **Bewdley Pines Golf Club**
- p) **Bewdley Rowing Club**
- q) **Bewdley Bowling Club**
- r) **Bewdley Cricket Club**
- s) **Bewdley Tennis Club**

## Sports, Play and Recreation Areas

- 4.11. Figure 12 shows sports, play and recreation facilities in Bewdley. Along with sporting benefits, good quality, accessible playing fields also contribute to maintaining active and healthy communities and securing wide reaching benefits for the wider community. The local community value Bewdley’s open spaces and the NDP provides evidence about their role and value.

**Figure 12 – Sports, Play and Recreation Spaces and Facilities in Bewdley**



Source: Bewdley Town Council

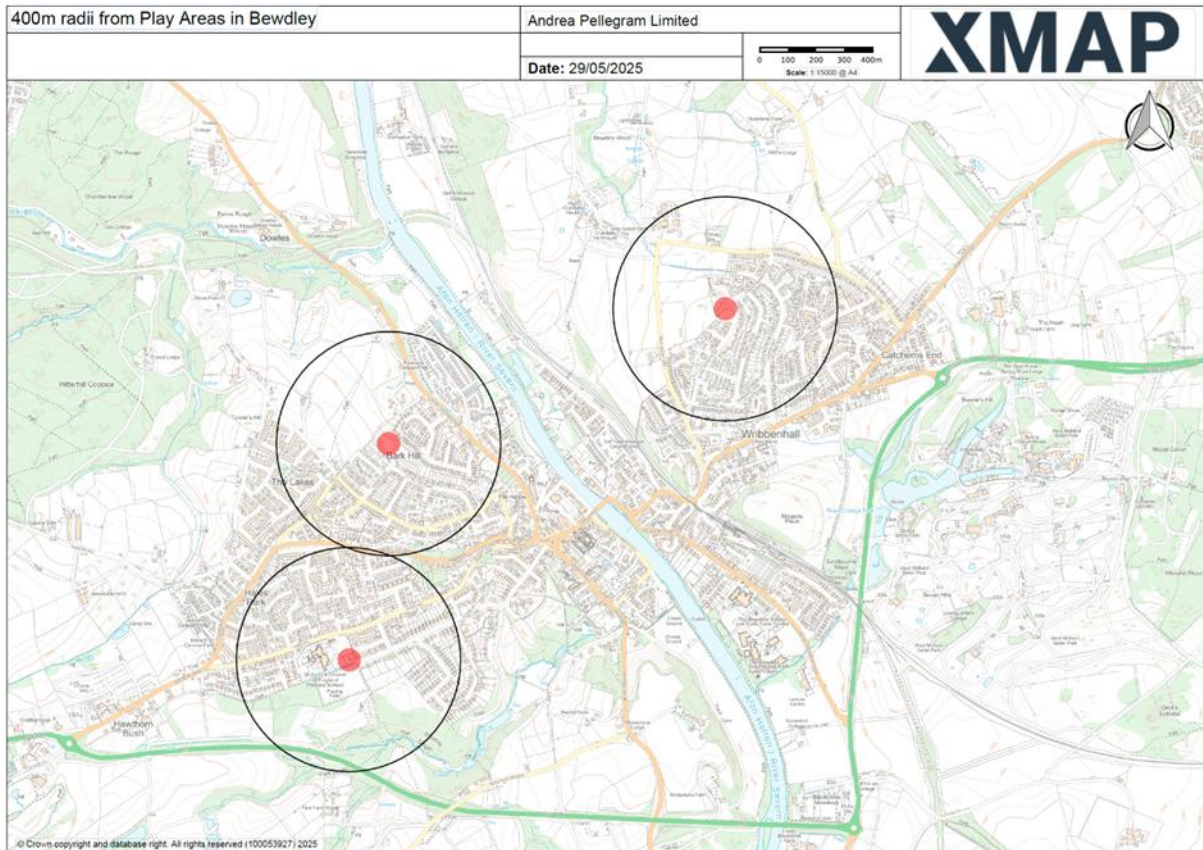
- 4.12. Open spaces in Bewdley include Jubilee Gardens, Riverside North Park with its children’s play area, the Millennium Green in Wribbenhall, Sevenside North Amenity Area and an extensive network of public footpaths that lead into the wider countryside. Bewdley Leisure Centre and St Anne’s School with its outdoor sporting facilities is accessible to members of the community outside school hours, via the vehicle of a dual use agreement between Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council, acting on behalf of the school.
- 4.13. The Town also has three dedicated children’s play areas based around local housing estates. Bewdley Rowing Club, established in 1877, whose building and car park are located on the east bank of the river, provides and promotes competitive rowing and sculling, as well as coaching and training for newcomers wanting to try rowing.

### Standards of Provision

- 4.14. Table 1 provides information on each of the facilities identified in Figure 12, grouped into open space types where appropriate. This allows for a review of the standards of provision in Bewdley set against the standards in the Wyre Forest Local Plan for the District (Table 20.0.1 and policy DM.8 of the Local Plan).

- 4.15. Children’s play space provision is more than the required amount based on the area standard. However, provision is located at only three sites, two of which might be considered large at over 0.5ha each (see Figure 13). This indicates that a finer grain of smaller play areas may be lacking and creates a likelihood of a deficiency of Local Areas for Play within 100m safe walking distance of residential areas and Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP) within 400m. A further Local Plan standard is for provision of Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) within 1km. Play space provision in Bewdley consists of LEAPs. It is noted that consented developments on allocated sites at Catchem’s End and Stourport Road should provide LEAPs in due course.

**Figure 13 – Children’s Play Areas in Bewdley with 400m catchment**



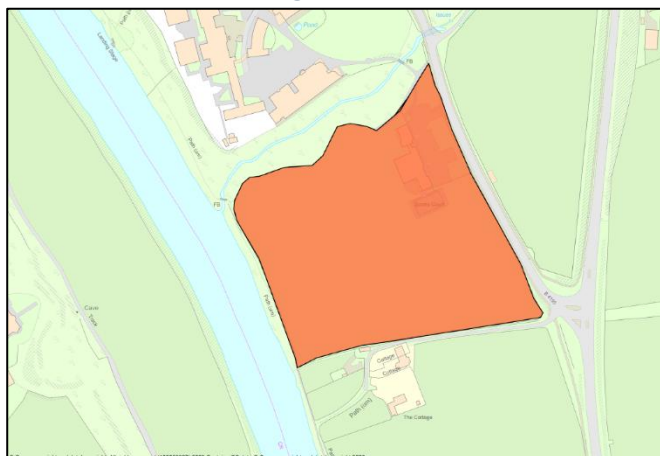
Source: Andrea Pellegram Ltd (2025)

- 4.16. Provision of Parks and Gardens in Bewdley is also more than standards based on the population. Again, this provision is relatively concentrated along the river corridor with no formal parks and gardens provided in other parts of the town.
- 4.17. Amenity Green Space provision is significantly below standard in Bewdley. There are 7 sites, but these are small and again the largest amount of land in this category is along the River.
- 4.18. Taken together, given the concentration of open areas along the river and the absolute lack of amenity green space elsewhere, it is likely that residents make use of informal open areas alongside public rights of way in countryside areas outside of the town. This supports the notion of the community value of open areas outside of Bewdley to local people who rely on them for their open space.

- 4.19. Current playing field provision within Bewdley is limited to two locations at the leisure centre and St Anne’s School. This provision meets local plan standards to ensure provision within 1.2km of the population or within 20 minutes’ drive if Bewdley is considered to be a rural area.
- 4.20. Bewdley has a range of other sports and leisure provision through the Leisure Centre, Bowling Club, Tennis Club, Rowing Club, Cricket Club and Golf Clubs. Apart from the Leisure Centre, these are privately owned and operated, available to members.

**Figure 14 – Leisure Centre Site**

- 4.21. The Bewdley Football Club (Figure 14) is an important asset for the local economy, and for the health and well-being of local people. Currently, the club’s ground is located on the banks of the River Severn in the parish of Ribbesford to the south of Bewdley. The venue is not easily accessible from the town, and the ground regularly floods as it is in the floodplain. A location is needed within Bewdley to provide a home ground for the town’s football club.



**Table 1 – Standards of Open Space Provision in Bewdley**

Site	Type	Area	Standard based on parish population of 8,287 in 2021
RA2 – Riverside North Park	Parks and Gardens	3.5ha	The Local Plan standard is 0.56ha per 1,000 population, to produce a requirement of 4.89ha in Bewdley
RA7 – Queen Elizabeth II Gardens	Parks and Gardens	1.87ha	
<b>Total Parks and Gardens</b>		<b>5.37ha</b>	
RA3 – Millennium Green, Wribbenhall	Amenity Green Space	0.3ha	The Local Plan standard is 0.78ha per 1,000 population, to produce a requirement of 6.46ha in Bewdley
RA10 – Severnside North Amenity Area	Amenity Green Space	1.1ha	
RA12 – Greenacres Lane Greenspace	Amenity Green Space	0.69ha	
RA13 – Derwent Drive Greenspace	Amenity Green Space	0.28ha	
RA14 – Queensway Greenspace	Amenity Green Space	0.29ha	
RA15 – Beales Corner Riverside Walk	Amenity Green Space	0.34ha	
RA16 – Wribbenhall Garden of Rest	Amenity Green Space	0.1ha	
<b>Total Amenity Green Space</b>		<b>3.1ha</b>	
RA1 – Bark Hill Play Area	Provision for Children and Young People	0.67ha	The Local Plan standard is 0.12ha per 1,000 population,

Site	Type	Area	Standard based on parish population of 8,287 in 2021
RA4 – Shaw Hedge Play Area	Provision for Children and Young People	0.5ha	to produce a requirement of 0.99ha in Bewdley. Whilst the area requirement is met, there may be lack of provision within required distances of housing.
RA9 – Wyre Hill Play Area	Provision for Children and Young People	0.13ha	
<b>Total Provision for Children and Young People</b>		1.3ha	
RA5 – Leisure Centre/ Playing Field	Sports	3.6ha for playing field plus 0.59ha for facilities	
RA6 – Cricket Club	Sports	1.74ha for pitch and nets plus 0.1ha for facilities	
RA8 – St Annes School Field	Sports	1.62ha for playing fields	
RA11 – Tennis Club	Sports	0.39ha for courts plus 0.19 for facilities	
RA17 – Bowling Club	Sports	0.13ha for bowling green plus 0.15ha for facilities	
RA18 – Rowing Club	Other	0.19ha private club and no open space	
RA19 – Wharton Park Golf Club	Other	65.5ha not publicly accessible open space	
RA20 – Bewdley Pines Golf Club	Other	45ha not publicly accessible open space	
RA21 – Blackstone Picnic Area	Other	0.65ha	

Source: Andrea Pellegram Ltd (2025)

### Policy Considerations

- 4.22. The NPPF, paragraphs 92 and 93, require new developments to include recreational facilities and public open spaces to promote healthy communities. Encouraging new sport and recreation facilities to Bewdley can increase opportunities to boost health and well-being amongst the community, provide jobs and has the potential to increase visitor numbers to the town.
- 4.23. Local Plan policy DM.8 provides a detailed framework of principles, standards and accessibility standards for the provision of open space, sports pitches and outdoor community uses in housing developments. This will govern decision making in relation to planning applications in Bewdley Parish.
- 4.24. NDP policy supports applications for new recreational spaces which enhance connections to and are sympathetic towards the town's natural environment and historic setting.

## **BEWDLEY 2 – SPORTS, PLAY AND RECREATION SPACES AND FACILITIES**

The loss of sports, play and recreation spaces and facilities in Bewdley Parish will only be supported where robust evidence has been provided to demonstrate one or more of the following requirements are met:

- a. Equivalent or better alternative provision exists or is proposed.
- b. It can be clearly demonstrated that the sports, play and recreation space or facility is no longer needed or viable and is not suitable for alternative similar uses.

Evidence to support this criterion may include robust marketing evidence over a period of six months.

Proposals for new sports, play and recreational spaces and facilities that would help to meet existing needs and improve local provision will be welcomed in principle. Proposals should demonstrate how they would maintain and enhance the historic character, landscape character and natural environment setting of Bewdley.

### Sports, Play and Recreational spaces and facilities in Bewdley:

- RA1 – Bark Hill Play Area
- RA2 – Riverside North Park
- RA3 – Millennium Green, Wribbenhall
- RA4 – Shaw Hedge Road Play Area
- RA5 – Leisure Centre/Playing Field
- RA6 – Cricket Club
- RA7 – Queen Elizabeth II Gardens
- RA8 – St Annes School Field
- RA9 – Wyre Hill Play Area
- RA10 – Severnside North Amenity Area
- RA11 – Tennis Club
- RA12 – Greenacres Lane Greenspace
- RA13 – Derwent Drive Greenspace
- RA14 – Queensway Greenspace
- RA15 – Beales Corner Riverside Walk
- RA16 – Wribbenhall Garden of Rest
- RA17 – Bowling Club
- RA18 – Rowing Club
- RA19 – Wharton Park Golf Club
- RA20 – Bewdley Pines Golf Club
- RA21 – Blackstone Picnic Area

## 5. Housing Requirements

### NDP Objectives

**To protect and enhance the historic environmental and architectural characteristics of Bewdley through positive local policies for the design of new development.**

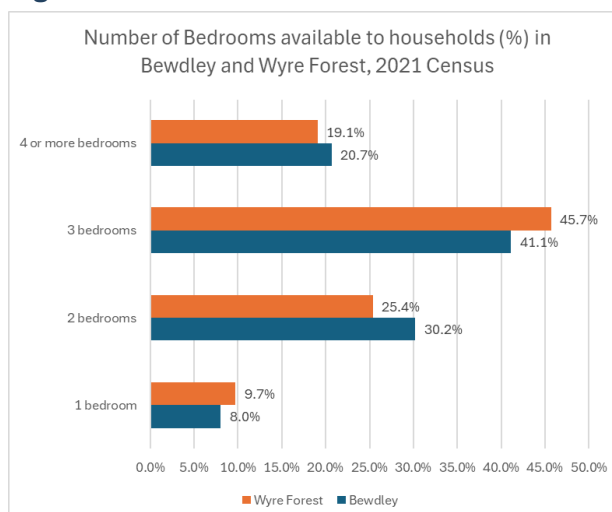
**To ensure that housing development in Bewdley provides a mix of dwelling types to meet identified local housing needs.**

- 5.1. This section of the NDP addresses the future housing needs of Bewdley. Local Plan strategic policies identify the land required to deliver sufficient housing to ensure the long-term viability of Bewdley, whilst taking account of the constraints on development arising from lower levels of access and services, and larger environmental constraints. The Local Plan set a Local Housing Requirement of 227 homes to be delivered in Bewdley over the period 2016-2036 and allocated four sites in Bewdley to assist in the delivery of this requirement. These sites have been completed or are being built out to deliver 205 homes.
- 5.2. The latest Wyre Forest Housing Land Supply Report shows that in addition to housing delivery on allocated sites, further housing has been completed, is under construction or is consented but not started, all of which contribute to the local housing requirement. As of 1 April 2025, housing windfall completions stood at 31 homes. 18 homes under construction and extant planning consents were in place for a further 6 homes. Together, these add further 55 homes to help meet the local plan housing requirement in Bewdley to 2036. A further 50 homes are potentially coming forward on sites where there is a resolution to grant planning permission with delivery anticipated within the local plan period.
- 5.3. The NDP period is 2025-2040. Considering housing completions and consents including from allocation sites and through windfall, Wyre Forest District Council confirmed (April 2025) a local housing requirement in Bewdley parish of 15 dwellings over the NDP period, primarily during the period 2036-2040. Current delivery of housing through windfall development would indicate that this requirement should be comfortably exceeded. Wyre Forest District Council will issue an updated Local Housing Requirement in due course.

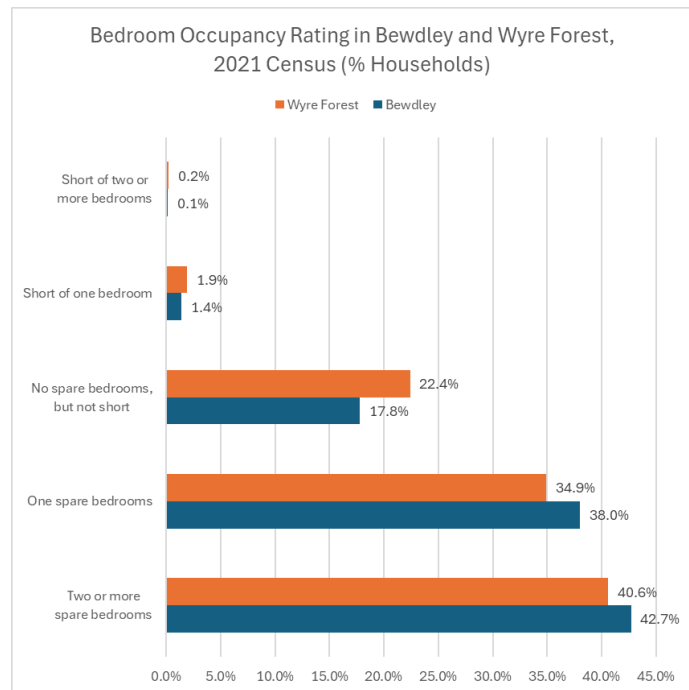
### Current Housing Profile

- 5.4. Bewdley has a greater proportion of homes with two bedrooms and with four or more bedrooms than Wyre Forest as a whole. Bewdley has a smaller proportion of homes with 3 bedrooms and with one bedroom (see Figure 15).
- 5.5. Households in Bewdley are ageing and so the proportion of one-person households is likely to increase, leading to increased demand for smaller properties. The relatively small proportion of one-bedroom homes does not address the ageing demographic of the town.

**Figure 15 – Bedrooms Available to Households**



**Figure 16 – Bedroom Occupancy Rating in Bewdley**



5.6. Over 76% of households in Bewdley own their homes either outright or with a mortgage. Households who live in private rented (14.7%) and social rented homes (9.2%) form a smaller proportion than in Wyre Forest (2021 Census).

5.7. Given small household size and larger home sizes, households in Bewdley tend to under-occupy their housing. Figure 16 shows that only 1.5% of households lack one bedroom or more, whilst nearly 81% have at least one spare bedroom

5.8. The population is living longer, staying healthy and staying longer in family homes for a range of reasons which may include a lack of suitable downsizing alternatives.

### Housing Needs and Types

5.9. Housing needs information is periodically updated by Wyre Forest District Council – a Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in 2023. This provides a survey of expressed demand for housing. The results indicate a predominant requirement for two and three bedroomed properties in Bewdley. Older households occupying larger homes are looking for smaller accommodation to meet their requirements and, for reasons of affordability, younger family households are also looking for smaller accommodation based on what they can afford. Reflecting the downsizing element, there is a need for bungalows to provide adaptable/accessible accommodation.

5.10. Because of high house prices, the potential for larger homes released to the market by downsizers to provide purchase opportunities for most local households on average incomes may be limited. Equally, high rents may limit opportunities for downsizing households on fixed incomes to rent properties. The result could be that downsizers may utilise their equity to purchase smaller homes outright. This will make it important to provide affordable home ownership but also affordable and social rented properties for younger households.

5.11. The Housing Needs Survey indicates a level of housing need in Bewdley over the next ten years in exceedance of the provision made in the Local Plan. Given constraints on development in Bewdley that are identified in the Local Plan, there is limited scope to increase housing provision further, except through development on previously developed land and through other windfall development inside Bewdley in a strong heritage conservation context.

### Development on Previously Developed Land

5.12. There are no sites in Bewdley which are shown on the Wyre Forest Brownfield Land Register, though the Mercure Hotel site is clearly previously developed land. Given the history and character of Bewdley, opportunities to redevelop previously developed land are likely to involve either current employment sites or heritage buildings within the Conservation Area.

- 5.13. If Bewdley is to have a successful future economically, it will need to retain an attractive built environment that encourages people to live in, work in and visit heritage buildings and areas in the town. The potential for new development in Bewdley to secure a viable future for heritage buildings and support regeneration will be supported. This could include large heritage buildings plots in need of restoration and upper floors of buildings in the town centre.



### Housing Policy Considerations

- 5.14. Policy SP.1 of the Wyre Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 sets a clear contribution for Bewdley of 227 net additional dwellings for the period 2016-2036. The outstanding local housing requirement for Bewdley is 15 dwellings taking into consideration the latest Housing Need Survey figure minus the housing being delivered on the Local Plan Allocated sites and windfall developments in the town.
- 5.15. Policy SP.9 of the Local Plan sets policy for housing density and mix. Table 7.0.1 provides a clear requirement for the provision of one, two and three-bedroom homes that broadly reflect the housing needs of Bewdley as expressed in the 2023 housing needs survey and requires that proposals justify their approach in the context of the latest housing needs information.
- 5.16. Policy SP.9 on the density of new housing provision in Bewdley reflects the potential for local consideration of character and surroundings to affect densities. A typical 35 dwellings per hectare is indicated, significantly lower than for Stourport and Kidderminster town centres.
- 5.17. Policy SP.10 sets a minimum requirement for 25% affordable housing on major development sites (of 10 or more dwellings). In designated rural areas, this threshold is reduced to 6 dwellings. Vacant Building Credit will apply to brownfield sites where empty or redundant buildings are being reused or redeveloped. Policy SP.10 sets an indicative tenure split of 65% rented (primarily social rent) and 35% intermediate (shared ownership) units.

### BEWDLEY 3 – HOUSING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Proposals for housing development in Bewdley that meet the requirements of Local Plan policies SP.1 Spatial Distribution, SP.9 Housing Density and Mix and SP.10 Affordable Housing will be supported in principle.

Proposals for housing development within heritage buildings in Bewdley will be supported where they demonstrate through high-quality design that they will restore, maintain or enhance building features, character and setting.

## 6. Design and Development Form

### NDP Objectives

**To protect and enhance the historic environmental and architectural characteristics of Bewdley through positive local policies for the design of new development.**

**To ensure that green and blue infrastructure in Bewdley contributes to local historic and natural landscape character, improves biodiversity, and promotes opportunities for play, recreation and sports.**

**To encourage a thriving local economy in Bewdley through support for local businesses, investment in the public realm and the promotion of markets and other events to increase economic activity in the town.**

- 6.1. The original pronunciation of the name Bewdley meant ‘beautiful place’ and this is still evident today. As has already been noted in the NDP, the town sits in a unique position adjacent important habitats, landscape and Green Belt, and on a major river to which it owed its growth to prominence. The town itself has a substantial and important Georgian core filled with Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area which covers an important town centre. The town is also interesting topographically, rising steeply from the River Severn on both banks.
- 6.2. In this context, significant development is constrained and all development must pay careful respect to the local context and surroundings. There are important policies and guidance documents already in place, provided by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council. These are used to ensure that new development is well-designed and well-thought out for the specific opportunities and constraints that present in locations. Development proposals within or adjoining the Conservation Area should have full regard to the Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2022) and demonstrate how they respect its identified character areas, architectural qualities and key views.
- 6.3. The residents of Bewdley care deeply about how new development looks and complements the valued environment in which they live. This was made clear in engagement on development of the NDP. Clear local guidance and policy in the NDP assists developers and, if followed, reduces the potential for adverse reaction to proposed developments.
- 6.4. Technical Support was obtained from AECOM to prepare the Bewdley NDP Design Code, published in 2020. The Design Code consists of 36 separate codes covering different areas of the parish and different design themes. The code content is based on best practice recommendations following an in-depth review of the character of the parish and specific areas within it. Several different Character Areas were assessed and from these six Spatial Areas were identified to which the design codes apply (described in Figure 17). Figure 18 shows the Spatial Areas of the Parish and the Design Code headings as they apply in each of them.

**Figure 17 - Spatial Areas for Coding**

<b>A) Conservation Area:</b> The main threats to the Conservation Area are an erosion of the setting and context of its heritage assets and historic character. Codes will seek to preserve this character and ensure the historic vernacular is protected.
<b>B) Riverside Corridor:</b> The Riverside is the area most subject to flood risk within Bewdley. Codes for this area will have regard to flood risk and seek to maintain the attractiveness and accessibility of the riverside setting.
<b>C) Residential Areas:</b> The priority for the Residential area is to secure high-quality residential design within the suburban extensions to Bewdley. Coding will encourage the adoption of best practice design principals whilst also allowing for architectural flexibility.
<b>D) Forest Edge:</b> Development within the Forest Edge Spatial Area has the potential to erode the setting of the Wyre Forest. Codes will help protect this sensitive landscape from inappropriate development.
<b>E) South-west Plateau:</b> The South-west Plateau area accounts for land between the settlement edge and the strategic road network. Codes will protect the recreational value of this space and ensure any development acknowledges its relationship to the A456.
<b>F) Kidderminster Gap:</b> The Kidderminster Gap is Green Belt land and is important in maintaining separation between the Bewdley and Kidderminster settlement areas. Codes will seek to protect the openness of this area.

6.5. Clear and sensible rules are proposed for development in different contexts. Within Bewdley itself, clear design rules are set out for development design within the Riverside Corridor, the Conservation Area (in the context Conservation Area character features) and the remaining residential area of Bewdley.

6.6. Significant landscape sensitivities are identified in other areas outside the built area of Bewdley, on the Forest Edge and what is termed South-west Plateau. The Kidderminster Gap area is Green Belt land.

**Policy Considerations**

6.7. Several key Supplementary Planning Documents referred to in the Design Code report remain in place, including the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Bewdley (Revised January 2015), Worcester County Council Landscape Character Assessment (October 2011), Design Guidance SPD (2015) and Shop Front Design Guidance for the Historic Environment SPD (June 2004).

6.8. In the context of infill development within Bewdley, particularly where this affects the Conservation and/or Listed Buildings, the Design Codes identify important rules for developing infill plots and back land particularly in relation to long narrow plots. It provides important guidance on the development of frontages which should maintain the closed continuous frontage evident within the Conservation Area. Where variety is introduced, this should be done carefully.

6.9. Codes relating to shop frontages and the street scene are important to development within the town centre to create an attractive environment which encourages visitors to stay longer and at the same time enhance the Conservation Area by improving character features as small scale shop front developments occur. Where appropriate, shop fronts should remove poor quality features that detract from the quality of the environment to restore traditional design features. Street furniture and planting should be harmonious in design and should avoid clashing styles and poor materials. Street paving materials are important in creating a pedestrian friendly environment.

6.10. Building materials and design features should contribute to the distinctive character of Bewdley and should have regard to local external materials, colour palettes and roof designs. The Design Codes provide specific guidance for the development of local plan allocation sites in Bewdley.

Figure 18 -Bewdley NDP Design Codes

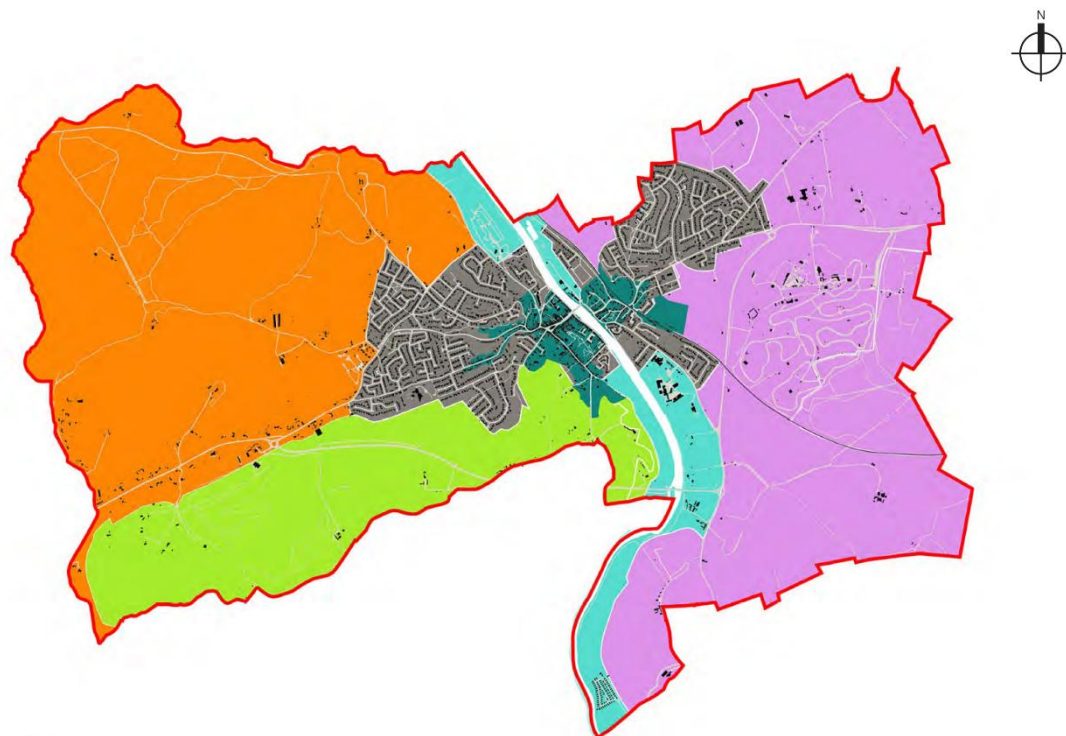


Figure 12: Spatial Areas for Coding

		Forest Edge	South-west Plateau	Residential Area	Riverside Corridor	Conservation Area	Kidderminster Gap
Code Theme	Code Reference	Conservation Area	Riverside Corridor	Residential Area	Forest Edge	South-West Plateau	Kidderminster Gap
Structure and Layout (SL)	Code SL1 Structure and Layout	X	X	X	X	X	X
Built Form (BF)	Code BF1 Built Form	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code BF2 Conservation Area	X	X	-	-	-	-
Heritage Assets (HA)	Code HA1 Heritage Assets	X	X	X	X	X	X
Site Edges (SE)	Code SE1 Landscaped Edges	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code SE2 Strategic Road Screening	-	X	X	-	X	X
	Code SE3 Built Edges	X	X	X	X	X	X
Views (VEW)	Code VE1 Views	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code VE2 Forest Views	-	-	-	-	X	-
	Code VE3 River Views	X	X	X	-	-	-
Water and Drainage (WD)	Code WD1 Water and Drainage	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code WD2 Flood Resilient Housing	X	X	X	-	-	-
Movement Network (MN)	Code MN1 All Streets	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code MN2 Primary Routes	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code MN3 Primary Routes (Town Centre)	X	X	-	-	-	-
	Code MN4 Secondary Routes	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code MN5 Residential Streets	-	-	X	-	-	-
	Code MN6 Rural Lanes	-	-	-	X	X	X
Parking PK	Code PK1 Parking	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code PK2 Courtyard	X	X	X	-	-	-
	Code PK3 On-Plot Parking	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code PK4 On-Street Parking	X	X	X	-	-	-
	Code PK5 Cycle Parking	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code PK6 Visitor Cycle Parking	X	X	-	-	-	-
Shop Frontages (SF)	Code SF1 Shop Frontages	X	X	-	-	-	-
Boundary Treatments (BT)	Code BT1 Boundary Treatments	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code BT2 Landscaped Edges	-	-	-	X	X	X
	Code BT3 Urban Edges	-	-	X	-	-	-
	Code BT4 Boundary Treatments (Cons. Area)	X	X	-	-	-	-
Streetscene (ST)	Code ST1 Streetscene	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code ST2 Streetscene (Cons. Area)	X	X	-	-	-	-
Green-Blue Infrastructure	Code GB1 Green-Blue Infrastructure	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code GB2 Biodiversity	X	X	X	X	X	X
Building Material (BM)	Code BM1 Building Material	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Code BM2 Conservation Area Materiality	X	X	-	-	-	-
Eco-Friendly Design (EF)	Code EF1 Eco-Friendly Design	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Bewdley NDP Design Code (AECOM)

#### **BEWDLEY 4 – HIGH QUALITY DESIGN**

Proposals for development in Bewdley should, where relevant, demonstrate how development will be undertaken in accordance with the Design Codes set out in Figure 18 and with reference to the supporting Bewdley NDP Design Codes. It is important to maintain and enhance positive design characteristics in different areas of Bewdley and applications should demonstrate clearly how they will do this.

Applications for new residential development should have regard to the density of surrounding development in the area. They should set out specific design measures to avoid overbearing development on neighbouring development, design of boundary treatments appropriate to the location, and landscape proposals that respond to the specific locational context, having regard to the Design Codes. Particular care should be taken to ensure that development design proposals will maintain or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

All proposals for new development should include measures to create and/or enhance habitats in accordance with Design Code GB2 and Green/Blue Infrastructure in accordance with GB1. Measures to meet Biodiversity Net Gain requirements should be provided on site wherever possible.

Development should also demonstrate a positive relationship with the wider townscape and landscape setting of Bewdley. Particular attention should be given to the protection of key views to and from the River Severn, the rising topography surrounding the town and the approaches to the Conservation Area. Proposals should maintain or enhance these views and avoid any harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting.

## 7. Local Heritage, Landscape and the Environment

- 7.1. Protecting, preserving and enhancing the heritage and character of Bewdley is fundamental to the objectives of this NDP. The historic features and character of the town and its surroundings provide the basis for economic activity and tourism, residential amenity and the natural environment. This section of the NDP considers the different elements of Bewdley's historic environment. The 2022 Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies the qualities that make Bewdley special, including its Georgian townscape, historic river frontage and varied roofscape. This NDP seeks to reinforce those qualities through locally specific heritage and design policies.

### NDP Objectives

**To protect and enhance the historic environmental and architectural characteristics of Bewdley through positive local policies for the design of new development.**

**To ensure that green and blue infrastructure in Bewdley contributes to local historic and natural landscape character, improves biodiversity, and promotes opportunities for play, recreation and sports.**

### Bewdley Conservation Area

- 7.2. The designation of the Bewdley Conservation Area in 1968 (with reviews in 1978 and 2022), led to a more sensitive approach to the redevelopment of riverside warehouses for residential use and the existing listed buildings. Styles Mill and Old Tannery Court are both examples of Bewdley's 19th century commercial trade, and these warehouses are now redeveloped for housing. Beyond the Conservation Area are various Listed Buildings including several further to the west of Wyre Hill and the All Saints Church to the east of the Severn.

### Heritage Assets in Bewdley

- 7.3. The highest graded listed structure in Bewdley is the gateway bridge over the River Severn built by Thomas Telford in 1798-1801. This was the third Bewdley bridge and is located on the site of the first bridge built in 1447. This Grade I listed structure is currently registered "at risk" and requires improved maintenance. The Telford Bridge Toll House was removed in the 1960s. The quay walls and the site of the old bridge (now used as a civic space) provides a setting for twice-yearly Riverside markets.
- 7.4. In 1984 the Bewdley bypass and a second river bridge was built downstream at Blackstone. This new road was built to reduce congestion, pollution in Welch Gate and to reduce traffic on the Telford Bridge and in the Conservation Area.
- 7.5. In addition to nationally Listed Buildings there are many other local buildings, features and monuments of significant local architectural or historic interest which have been registered on the Wyre Forest Local Heritage List produced by the local planning authority in collaboration with the community. The Severn Valley Railway buildings and station are individually listed for their distinctive features. The Local Heritage list includes heritage assets that are valued by the community and the local authority as distinctive elements of the local historic environment.
- 7.6. The local list includes cottages, buildings, the old school, old pubs, a telephone box and walls. The many historic features of the Severn Valley Railway including viaducts, the station buildings,

goods sheds, bridges and signal boxes also feature in the Local Heritage List. Many of the assets on the Local Heritage List can be found beyond the designated Conservation Area in Wribbenhall and west of the town centre. The NPPF highlights the need for supporting a positive strategy for conservation and preservation of the historic environment, particularly those heritage assets most at risk due to neglect, or decay or other threats. A small number of listed and locally significant buildings in Bewdley have been identified as being at risk through vacancy, deterioration or inappropriate alteration. The Town Council will work with Wyre Forest District Council, Historic England and property owners to encourage the repair, reuse and long-term maintenance of such buildings to ensure their continued contribution to the town's historic environment

- 7.7. Parts of Bewdley's historic landscape setting with slopes adorned by fruit trees, ancient woodland and farmland were lost in the mid-20th century to make way for housing developments. Historic buildings along the river front were also lost due to insufficient care for the town's historic character and heritage. In recent years, more sensitive development and conservation within the town centre and the designation of a Conservation Area provides an opportunity to restore the heritage character of the town. A proactive attitude towards protection, preservation and enhancement of our heritage assets and the promotion of the town's historic character for tourism is at the heart of this NDP.
- 7.8. There are many significant trees within the townscape on the valley slopes, in town parkland in Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens and Riverside North Park and in gardens and back land all contributing to the Conservation Areas historic setting. An active programme of tree and hedgerow preservation and managed planting in the built area is essential to complement the surrounding countryside setting. Maintenance of the riverbanks, tow paths, the Worcestershire Way paths and views up and downstream from the Grade 1 listed Telford Bridge is important to preserve, protect and enhance the historic character and setting of the town.

### **Heritage Asset Policy Considerations**

- 7.9. A heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework is "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".
- 7.10. The NPPF also defines a non-designated heritage asset as a, "building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance but which is not afforded statutory protection through Listed Building, Scheduled Monument etc".
- 7.11. Paragraph 135 of the Framework states that non-designated heritage assets can merit consideration in planning matters, "taking a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset".
- 7.12. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 7.13. Section 12 (paragraphs 126-141) of the NPPF covers all aspects of the historic environment. Paragraph 126 states that "Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment".
- 7.14. The Wyre Forest Local Plan (para 10.14) recognises the important role of Bewdley in the development of river economy with port activities at Bewdley and the development of the

railways to the town, both of which have left important legacies which are important from a heritage perspective.

- 7.15. Policy SP.21 says that ‘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 to sustain the historic quality, sense of place, environmental quality and economic vibrancy of Wyre Forest District.’ Sub-section (f) of the policy applies this in particular to ‘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.’
- 7.16. Policy DM.23 provides comprehensive policy requirements to safeguard the historic environment which includes requirements to identify and assess the potential impacts of development proposals on heritage assets, with an understanding of the contribution that is made by its settings or any important views or vistas. Decision-making will be taken in accordance with the requirements set out in the NPPF regarding impact-significance on Heritage Assets of different kinds.

#### **BEWDLEY 5 - HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE ASSETS**

**Proposals for development in Bewdley which secure productive and viable uses of heritage buildings and areas will be welcomed in principle where they would contribute to the delivery of NDP objectives and policies relating to maintaining the heritage environment of the town, the growth of its economy and its attractiveness for visitors.**

**All development proposals within Bewdley’s Conservation Area should demonstrate how they will maintain and where possible enhance the area’s historic character features set out in the Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal.**

**In addition, through their design approaches, applications will need to demonstrate how they have considered and responded to sensitive heritage receptors, including the following:**

- a) Designated Heritage assets including Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments.**
- b) Heritage assets on the adopted Local Heritage Lists for Bewdley and the Severn Valley Railway.**
- c) Other historic sites and monuments, including the Statue of Stanley Baldwin, 1st Earl Baldwin of Bewdley.**
- d) The setting for Bewdley’s historic environment and heritage assets comprised of the River Severn and the surrounding elevated landscape setting for the town.**

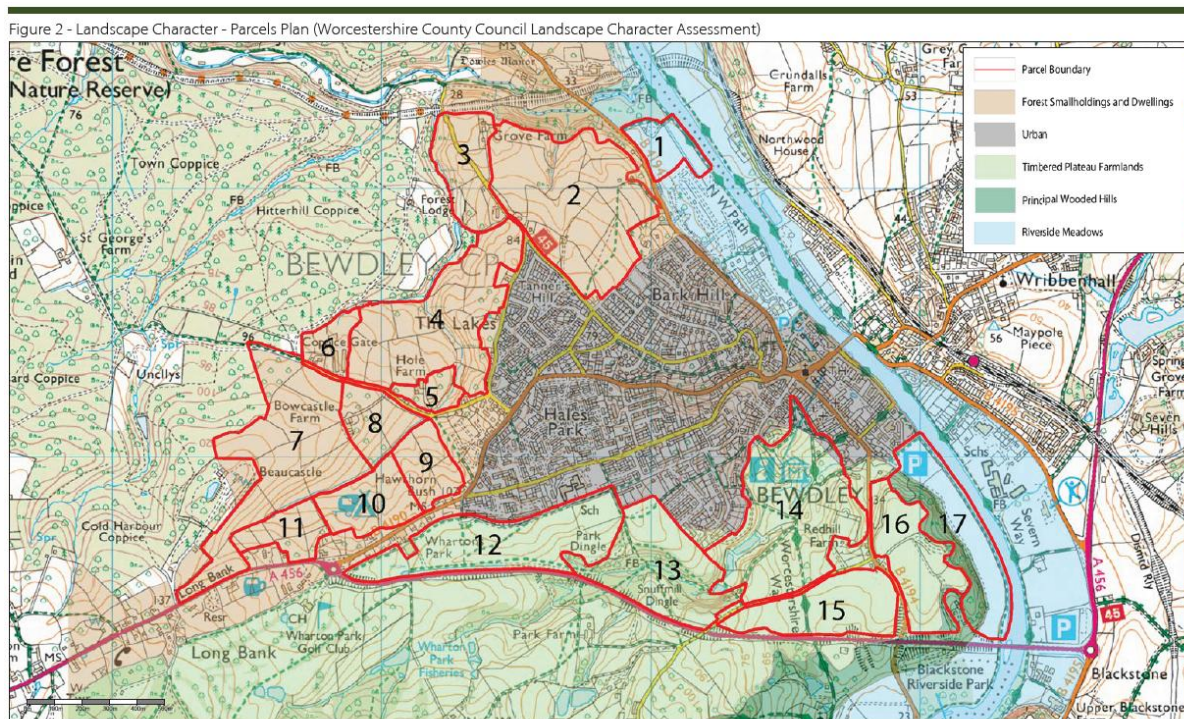
### **Historic Landscape Character and Setting**

- 7.17. The collected heritage assets and Conservation Area character features of Bewdley form a set-piece which is centred on the River Severn and framed by surrounding high-quality historic landscape on slopes down to the river. Development within the countryside immediately outside the settlement boundary of the town is therefore highly sensitive to the potential to create negative visual and character impacts on the setting of important historic environment features.

Given the importance of the historic environment in Bewdley and its role in promoting the town’s sense of community and its economy, it is important for the NDP to set out how development should take account of historic landscape character and setting considerations.

- 7.18. Early engagement in 2016 was undertaken through a workshop with the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service and Historic England to better understand the historic environment of the western slopes and landscape surrounding the historic town of Bewdley and its importance to local community, environment and economy. This flagged up the sensitive landscape surrounding Bewdley’s historic town and between it and the Wyre Forest and in framing the River Severn.
- 7.19. In 2019, Bewdley Town Council commissioned the Bewdley Local Green Space Assessment, which was prepared by Pleydell Smithyman Limited. Parcels of land to the west of the River Severn in Bewdley were identified in liaison with Bewdley Town Council and Wyre Forest District Council. The parcels covered all land around Bewdley outside the Green Belt that was in reasonably close proximity to the town. The purpose was to assess their potential for designation as Local Green Space, but it also identified important historic landscape character features and published development guidelines that apply.
- 7.20. The assessment was undertaken with reference to the Worcestershire County Landscape Character Assessment Technical handbook which identified both the Landscape Condition and Landscape Sensitivity of the parcels. There was also a field survey undertaken on foot with a photographic record taken of each parcel. The area covered by the assessment and the parcels identified are shown in Figure 19.

**Figure 19 – Landscape Character Parcels around Bewdley**






PleydellSmithyman  
M18.140.R.002  
20a The Wharfrage, Ironbridge,  
Shropshire, TF8 7NH  
www.pleydellsmithyman.co.uk

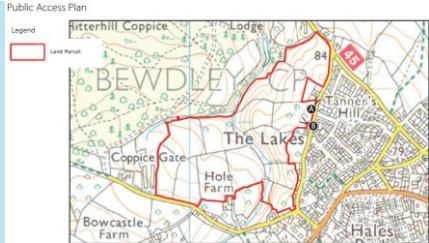

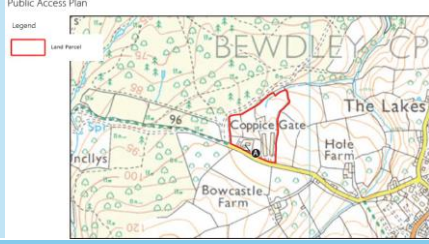
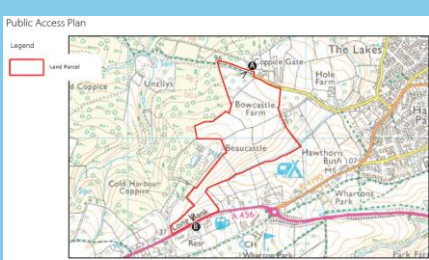
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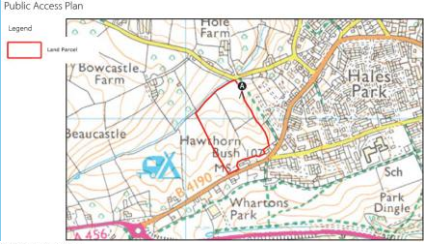
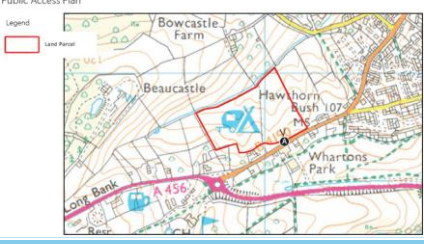
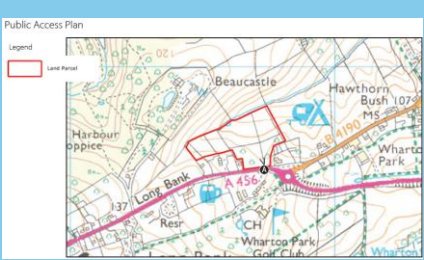
Source: Bewdley Local Green Space Assessment

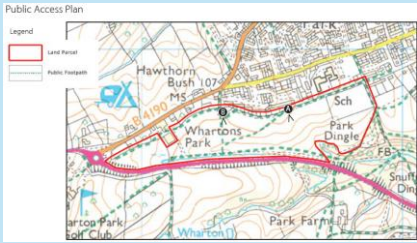
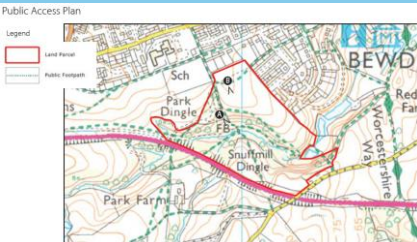
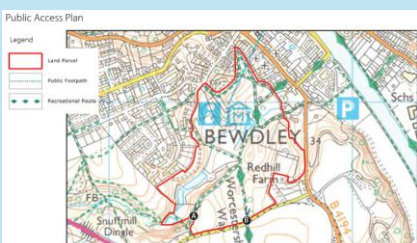
- 7.21. Most of the areas identified to the west of Bewdley and the River Severn fall into two landscape types identified in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment, for which development guidelines were available:
- Parcels 2 to 11 were identified as Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings, the development guidelines stated - 'New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.'
  - Parcels 12 to 16 were identified as Timbered Plateau Farmlands for which the development guidelines stated - '*Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets*' and the enclosure pattern stated '*Opportunities to reflect the organic field pattern may materialise through the shape of newly planted hedgerows, the outline of new woodland planting, the definition of roadside boundaries and verges, the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings, avoiding uniformity of pattern in all cases.*'
- 7.22. The assessment considered the sensitivity of land parcels to change and many were considered to exhibit high sensitivity, as shown in Figure 21. Individual site assessment sheets set out relevant information and guidelines from the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). These are summarised in Table 2 along with the advice provided from the Worcestershire LCA. The assessments demonstrate the good condition and high sensitivity of the landscape surrounding Bewdley.
- 7.23. The slopes on the west side of the River Severn valley are comprised of riverside and tributary meadows, farmland, valley side woodland and the ancient woodland of the Wyre Forest to the north-west. This area is drained by the small watercourses of Snuffmill Brook in the south and Hitterhill Brook in the north which drains into Dowles Brook 650m west of its confluence with the Severn. This land and these watercourse running down into the River Severn also perform floodplain functions.
- 7.24. Much of the area is crossed by numerous bridleways and footpaths which are public rights of way (see Figure 20). These link Bewdley with the wooded parcels of Snuffmill, Rock Coppice and Burnt Wood to the south as well as Wyre Forest to the north. They form part of natural wildlife corridors containing a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna and supporting the designations of National Nature Reserve for Wyre and several small plots given SSSI classification.
- 7.25. The area provides many examples of the historic landscape characteristics and setting for Bewdley and its Conservation Area. Protecting and preserving the views and landscape west of the Severn is a priority for its residents as evidenced by the overwhelming community support at consultation events.

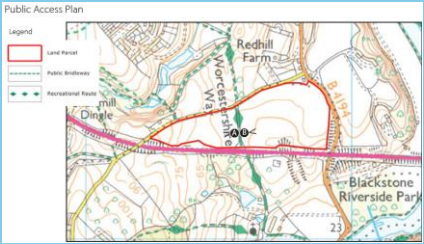
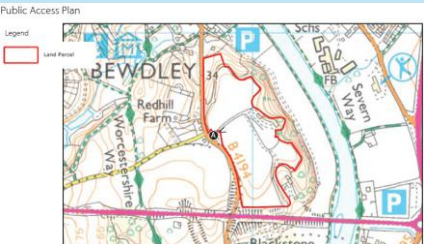
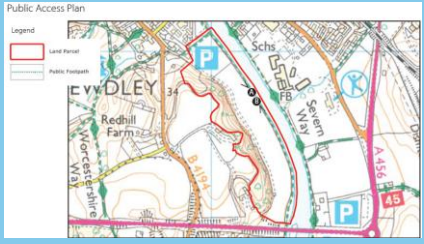
**Table 2 – Landscape Character Assessment of Bewdley Landscape**

NDP Local Greenspace Assessment		Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment		
Land Parcel	Public Access Plan	Landscape Type	Landscape Condition and Sensitivity	LCA Planning Advice
1 - River Severn & Dowles Road Parcel		Riverside Meadows Landscape Type and the LDU WP11 Bewdley to Upper Arley Riverside Meadows Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development there is no information or planning advice for the Riverside Meadows Landscape Type.
2 - Lakes Road and Dry Mill Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and the LDU WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: 'New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.'
3 - Grove Farm Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and the LDU WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: 'New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.'

NDP Local Greenspace Assessment		Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment		
Land Parcel	Public Access Plan	Landscape Type	Landscape Condition and Sensitivity	LCA Planning Advice
4 - The Lakes Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and the LDU WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: ‘New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.’
5 - Hole Farm Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and the LDU WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: ‘New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.’
6 - Coppice Gate Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and the LDU WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: ‘New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.’
7 - Beaucastle Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and the LDU WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit. Also intersects with the WP07.2 Pound Bank Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: ‘New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.’

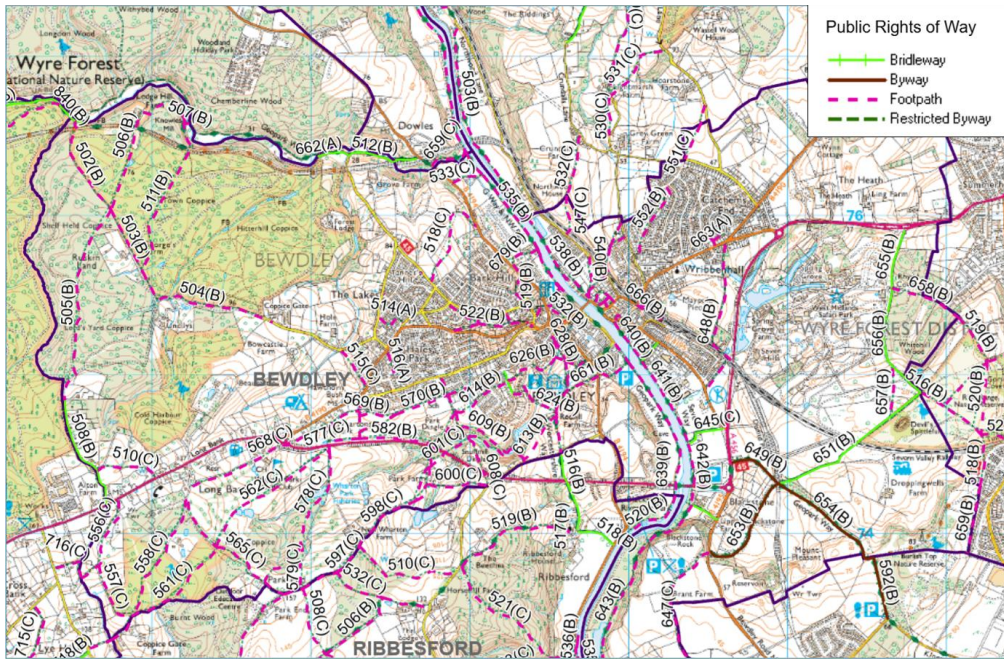
NDP Local Greenspace Assessment		Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment		
Land Parcel	Public Access Plan	Landscape Type	Landscape Condition and Sensitivity	LCA Planning Advice
8 - Bowcastle Farm Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type LDU WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: ‘New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.’
9 - Tanners Hill & Cleobury Road Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and the LDU WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: ‘New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.’
10 - Hopleys Camping Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and the LDU WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: ‘New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.’
11 - Long Bank Parcel		Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and the LDU WP07.2 Pound Bank Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit. Also intersects with the WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to the settlement pattern of new development it is stated: ‘New development must respect the historical ad-hoc development of the settlement pattern of these landscapes and avoiding standardisation of design and layout. Additional individual dwellings may be accommodated in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Clustered groups of new housing however would not be appropriate. The retention of small pastures/orchards between houses is important.’

NDP Local Greenspace Assessment		Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment		
Land Parcel	Public Access Plan	Landscape Type	Landscape Condition and Sensitivity	LCA Planning Advice
12 - Whartons Park Parcel		Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Type and the LDU WP04 Ribbesford Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Description Unit. Also intersects with the WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit	Condition – GOOD  Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to Key Characteristics, the parcel has a ‘Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets’ and the enclosure pattern states ‘Opportunities to reflect the organic field pattern may materialise through the shape of newly planted hedgerows, the outline of new woodland planting, the definition of roadside boundaries and verges, the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings, avoiding uniformity of pattern in all cases.’
13 - Snuffmill Dingle		Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Type and the LDU WP04 Ribbesford Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Description Unit. Also intersects with the WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD  Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to Key Characteristics, the parcel has a ‘Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets’ and the enclosure pattern states ‘Opportunities to reflect the organic field pattern may materialise through the shape of newly planted hedgerows, the outline of new woodland planting, the definition of roadside boundaries and verges, the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings, avoiding uniformity of pattern in all cases.’
14 - South of Bewdley Centre Parcel		Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Type and the LDU WP04 Ribbesford Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Description Unit. Also intersects with the WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – GOOD  Sensitivity - HIGH	With respect to Key Characteristics, the parcel has a ‘Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets’ and the enclosure pattern states ‘Opportunities to reflect the organic field pattern may materialise through the shape of newly planted hedgerows, the outline of new woodland planting, the definition of roadside boundaries and verges, the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings, avoiding uniformity of pattern in all cases.’

NDP Local Greenspace Assessment		Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment		
Land Parcel	Public Access Plan	Landscape Type	Landscape Condition and Sensitivity	LCA Planning Advice
15 - Heightington Road Parcel		Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Type and the LDU WP04 Ribbesford Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Description Unit. Also intersects with the WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – MODERATE  Sensitivity - MEDIUM	With respect to Key Characteristics, the parcel has a ‘Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets’ and the enclosure pattern states ‘Opportunities to reflect the organic field pattern may materialise through the shape of newly planted hedgerows, the outline of new woodland planting, the definition of roadside boundaries and verges, the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings, avoiding uniformity of pattern in all cases.’
16 - Winterdyne Parcel		Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Type and the LDU WP04 Ribbesford Timbered Plateau Farmlands Landscape Description Unit. Also intersects with the WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – MODERATE  Sensitivity - MEDIUM	With respect to Key Characteristics, the parcel has a ‘Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets’ and the enclosure pattern states ‘Opportunities to reflect the organic field pattern may materialise through the shape of newly planted hedgerows, the outline of new woodland planting, the definition of roadside boundaries and verges, the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings, avoiding uniformity of pattern in all cases.’
17 - River Severn To Winterdyne Parcel		Riverside Meadows Landscape Type and the Principal Wooded Hills Landscape Type. Intersects with the LDU KS03 River Severn – Bewdley to Winnall Riverside Meadows Landscape Description Unit. Also intersects with the WP07.3 Dowles Brook Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Description Unit.	Condition – MODERATE  Sensitivity - MEDIUM	With respect to Key Characteristics, the parcel has a ‘Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets’ and the enclosure pattern states ‘Opportunities to reflect the organic field pattern may materialise through the shape of newly planted hedgerows, the outline of new woodland planting, the definition of roadside boundaries and verges, the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings, avoiding uniformity of pattern in all cases.’

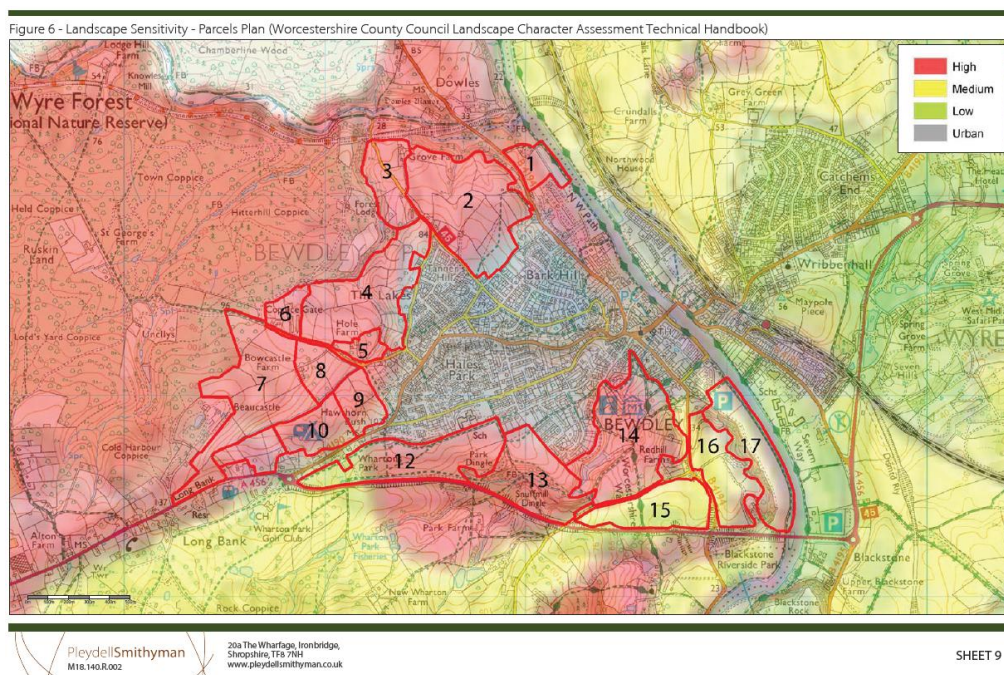
Source: Andrea Pellegram Ltd drawing from Local Green Space Assessment (2019)

Figure 20 – Public Rights of Way in Bewdley Parish



Source: <https://gis.worcestershire.gov.uk/website/Countryside/>

Figure 21 – Landscape Sensitivity around Bewdley



Source: Bewdley Local Green Space Assessment

### Heritage Landscape Policy Considerations

7.26. Local Plan policies recognise the role played by land surrounding Bewdley in providing a high-quality setting for the historic environment of the town. The River Sever also plays a role in this particularly in relation to the town centre river frontage and heritage assets on the eastern side of the river. Policies SP.21 and DM.23 (referred to above) underline the importance of setting, views and vista in the consideration of the maintenance and enhancement of the historic environment.

- 7.27. Local Plan policy DM.28 on Wyre Forest Waterways supports developments that will make a positive contribution to the creation of a high-quality riverside environment that do not conflict with or otherwise harm the character of the Bewdley Conservation Area and wider landscape.
- 7.28. Open countryside east of the river is Green Belt for the most part. As such development can only take place there if it is appropriate development in the Green Belt or, if inappropriate, there are very special circumstances that would allow it. The setting of and changes to Green Belt boundaries at a strategic scale are a strategic policy matter beyond the scope of the NDP.
- 7.29. Open areas to the north, west and south of Bewdley on the western side of the river contribute to the setting of the town's historic character and to the setting of the river forest, whilst also providing a transition between the town and the surrounding Wyre Forest. As such it is an area which is highly sensitive to development which should be limited and in keeping with landscape character guidelines, historic environment considerations and to avoid impacts on sensitive ecological sites. The open landscapes to the west of the River Severn and the wooded slopes to the east form an integral part of the town's historic setting and make a vital contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

#### **BEWDLEY 6 – BEWDLEY'S LANDSCAPE**

**Proposals for development within the open landscape to the west of the River Severn should be limited in scale and of good design. Development proposals should conserve and, where possible, enhance the landscape character of Bewdley and the surrounding countryside, including the setting of the Conservation Area and key heritage assets.**

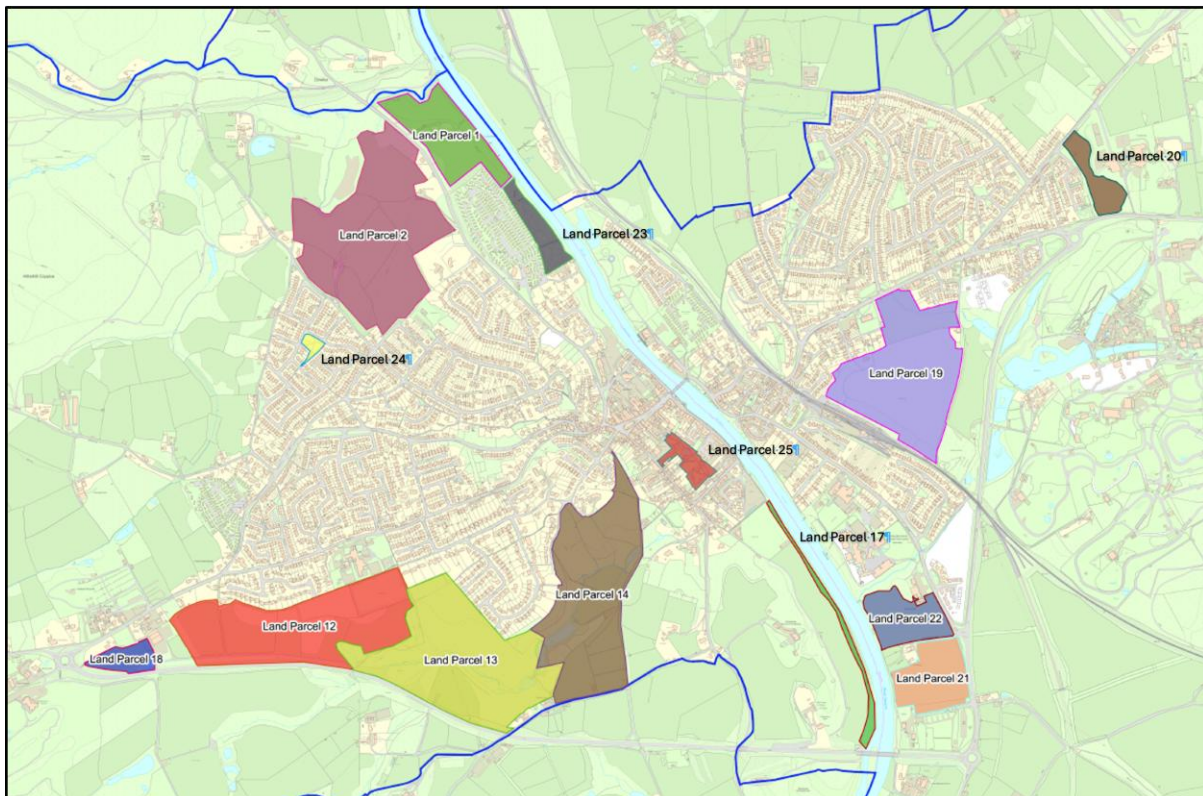
**Where relevant, planning applications should have regard to landscape condition and sensitivity, key characteristics and advice on new settlement patterns set out in Table 2 and Figure 21. Applications should demonstrate how they have contributed to the maintenance and enhancement of landscape character features, historic landscape character and improved public access. They should consider the value of these areas to the local community as open areas for recreation and/or nature and as local green spaces.**

- a) River Severn & Dowles Road Parcel**
- b) Lakes Road and Dry Mill Parcel**
- c) Grove Farm Parcel**
- d) The Lakes Parcel**
- e) Hole Farm Parcel**
- f) Coppice Gate Parcel**
- g) Beaucastle Parcel**
- h) Bowcastle Farm Parcel**
- i) Tanners Hill & Cleobury Road Parcel**
- j) Hopleys Camping Parcel**
- k) Long Bank Parcel**
- l) Whartons Park Parcel**
- m) Snuff Mill Dingle Parcel**
- n) South of Bewdley Centre Parcel**
- o) Heightington Road Parcel**
- p) Winterdyne Parcel**
- q) River Severn To Winterdyne Parcel**

## Local Green Spaces

- 7.30. A Local Green Space Assessment (2019) was prepared to support the development of policies for the NDP. The report contained assessment sheets for land parcels surrounding Bewdley to consider their suitability for potential designation as Local Green Space against criteria set out in the NPPF (2019) under which the assessment was prepared. Whilst NPPF paragraph references have changed since then, the criteria for Local Green Space have not changed and so the assessment remains valid in those terms. The assessment concluded that 7 parcels were potentially suitable for Local Green Space designation when considered against the NPPF criteria.
- 7.31. The Bewdley NDP Steering Group has drawn on the Local Green Space Assessment to develop proposals for Local Green Space designation. Background information and justification for the proposed designations are set out in Figure 22 and Appendix A to the NDP.

**Figure 22 –Proposed Local Green Space Designation**



Source: Bewdley NDP Steering Group (2026) drawing on Local Green Space Assessment

- 7.32. The Local Green Space designations identified in this Plan have been subject to a comprehensive review process following earlier iterations of the NDP. This has included detailed reassessment of previously proposed sites, informed by updated site surveys, community evidence and engagement with Planning Officers at Wyre Forest District Council. As a result of this process, proportionate revisions have been made to ensure that all designated parcels are tightly defined, locally distinctive and clearly demonstrable in terms of their special value to the community. The NDP Steering Group was asked to consider the identification of further sites for Local Green Space designation and this has been done with three further sites included.
- 7.33. This review by the NDP Steering Group has led to:

- refinement and reduction of certain parcel boundaries to focus on areas of strongest community value
- reconfiguration of larger parcels into smaller, more clearly defined areas or corridors
- removal of parcels where evidence did not sufficiently meet national policy criteria
- retention of parcels where strong and robust evidence supports designation
- identification of new parcels reflecting community use, biodiversity value, and local landscape character

7.34. These changes demonstrate a positive and constructive response to professional advice and ensure that all Local Green Space designations are consistent with the requirements of national planning policy, particularly in relation to scale, proximity, local character and the avoidance of designating extensive tracts of land. The resulting portfolio of Local Green Spaces represents a balanced, evidence-led approach to protecting those areas that are demonstrably special to the community of Bewdley.

### **Local Green Space Policy Considerations**

Paragraphs 105-107 of the NPPF (December 2024) sets out policy for the designation of Local Green Space. As indicated above, the assessment of land parcels undertaken in 2019 utilised the criteria for designation available at the time and these have not changed. In 2025, the Bewdley NDP Steering Group reviewed the land parcels that for potentially suitability for designation and recommended several sites for designation. Following consultation, further work has been undertaken to respond to comments from WFDC and, detailed in Appendix A.

#### **BEWDLEY 7 – LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

The following sites, shown on Figure 22 and in Appendix A, are designated Local Green Spaces where development proposals should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts. No development will be permitted within them that would harm their green character and reason for designation.

- 1 – River Severn / Dowles Road
- 2 – Land north of Bark Hill / Lakes Road and Dry Mill 22
- 12 – Park Dingle and St Anne’s Playing Fields
- 13 – Snuff Mill Dingle
- 14 – South of Bewdley Centre
- 17 – Winterdyne / River Severn
- 18 – Wharton Park / Blackmanstitch Edge
- 19 – Kidderminster Road / Cordle Marsh Ridge / Maypole Piece
- 20 – Wribbenhall Gardens
- 21 – Land off Netherton Lane
- 22 – Leisure Centre Fields
- 23 – Riverside Meadow
- 24 – Derwent Drive
- 25 – QE II Jubilee Gardens

## 8. Green Infrastructure and the Water Environment

### NDP Objectives

**To ensure that green and blue infrastructure in Bewdley contributes to local historic and natural landscape character, improves biodiversity, and promotes opportunities for play, recreation and sports.**

- 8.1. This section of the NDP addresses local priorities for the protection and improvement of green infrastructure and the environment in Bewdley – rivers, watercourses, drainage and habitats.
- 8.2. Bewdley town sits on the banks of the River Severn. The historic town centre is surrounded by a sloping historic landscape, rural in character with small agricultural fields, hedgerows, coppice, orchards, and the ancient woodland of the Wyre Forest on the slopes to the west of the river. There are many footpaths and bridleways across fields and along the riverside creating the opportunity for recreational access to green and open spaces. The fields, hedgerows and trees maintain a rich biodiversity which supports several rare species of flora and fauna which rely on corridors between the Wyre Forest and areas of Special Scientific Interest and the rivers and brooks. This is a rich area for walking and appreciating beautiful historic natural vistas.

- 8.3. In the 19th Century orchards adorned the slopes west of the river and Bewdley was the second largest producer of cherries in the UK, having large cherry markets and Apple Days celebrating the apple harvest. Since the 1950s and 1960s, these orchards have given way to the development of substantial



- housing estates including, Hales Park and Blossom Hill. There is now a move to reinstate small orchards and to restore a balance between housing need and the protection of the remaining green fields and Landscape Character on the Western slopes beyond the built settlement boundary. Protecting the remaining beautiful historic natural landscape, situated on the rising western slopes from the Severn Valley and the historic landscape character of the area surrounding the historic town of Bewdley, are priorities in the NDP.
- 8.4. East of the river, Wribbenhall has a more sustainable road infrastructure, and the priorities of this plan are to protect the countryside, woodland and escarpment land. Careful management of this area will ensure that we can maintain the separation of the three towns while providing some affordable housing and growth for Bewdley. The fields, farmland and Wassell Wood to the north of Habberley Road down to the river valley also serve to protect separation from the urban areas. They also preserve the historic landscape character on both sides of the river including the wildlife corridors and the recreational vistas surrounding the ancient woodland and the locally listed Severn Valley Railway.

- 8.5. Protecting the riverside meadows and maintaining these valuable wildlife habitats and the green spaces, which provide rich leisure and recreation opportunities, is supported by residents in their consultation responses. The protection and enhancement of the picnic areas, riverside park, footpaths, bridleways and the formal sports grounds have also gained significant support throughout the consultations.
- 8.6. Trees in the town gardens and back land including into the Golden Valley through the Park and on the railway slopes on the east of the river make a significant contribution to the local environment enhancing the Conservation Area and the locally listed buildings.
- 8.7. The rich historical and landscape context of the area is matched by its importance for habitats and species, reflected in overlapping nationally and locally recognised habitats.

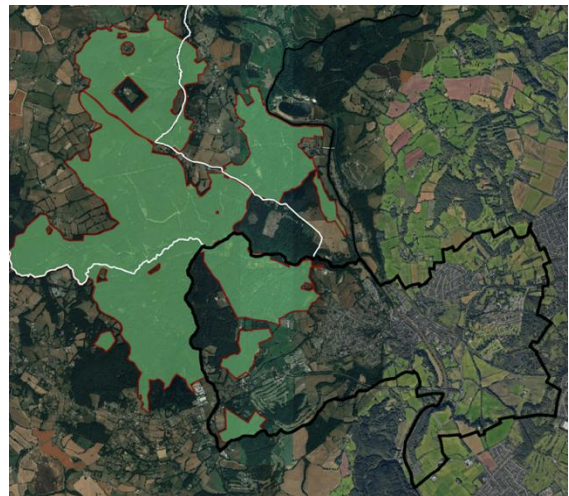
8.8. **Ancient Woodland:** Ancient Woodland occupies the entire western part of the parish as well as outside the Neighbourhood Area to the south. The western area sits above the town of Bewdley, as shown. There is only a small parcel of Ancient Woodland in the parish to the east of the River Severn.



8.9. The historic ancient woodland of the Wyre Forest supported many forest crafts and was the economic heart of the area. Economic forestry continues and with collaboration from the Wyre Community Land Trust (WCLT), Forestry England and Natural England, they actively manage the conservation of the Wyre Forest and Wassell Wood east of the river.

8.10. The farmland beyond the forest at Ruskin Land is managed by the Guild of St George. Through collaboration with the Wyre Community Land Trust (WCLT), conservation of the forest and agricultural land and restoration of heritage practices, conservation and landscape protection is undertaken. Given the rich history and heritage of the town it is crucial that the historic environment is protected.

8.11. **Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve:** The National Nature Reserve (NNR) sits within the area of Ancient Woodland in the parish and extends into neighbouring areas. Bewdley is known for its position as a key entry point into the Wyre Forest which brings visitors to, and through, the town.

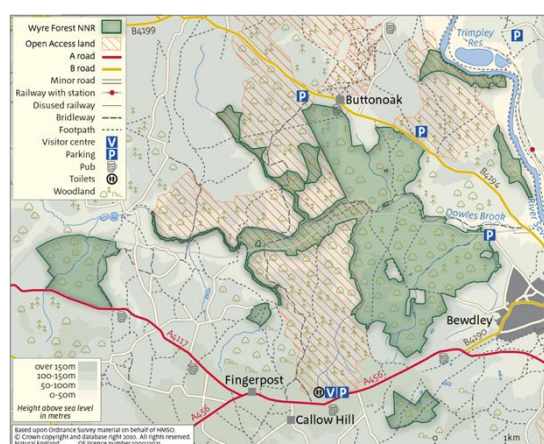


8.12. The Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve (NNR) is jointly managed by Natural England and Forestry England. A NNR Plan was prepared in 2016 with a 50-year horizon. The overarching aim of the plan is to enhance the value of the Wyre Forest and its outliers for wildlife and for people whilst maintaining a viable timber output.

8.13. The social, economic and environmental objectives of management are to:

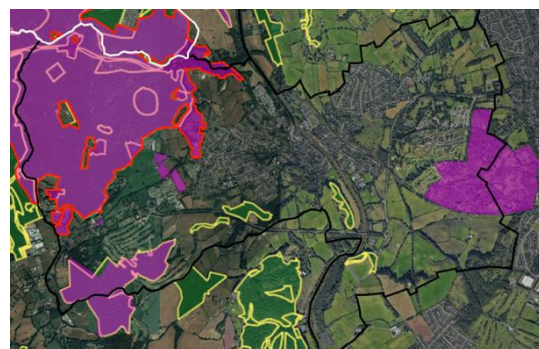
- Diversify woodland species and structure for greater ecological and economic resilience
- Protect and enhance woodland and open habitats and their associated species
- Restore and manage the Wyre Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Conserve, maintain and enhance the cultural and heritage assets of the forest
- Provide and maintain well-managed recreation facilities
- Sustain a careful balance between recreation and sensitive wildlife sites
- Continue to produce sustainable and marketable woodland products
- Deliver well-designed proposals that comply with landscape design principles in keeping with the local landscape character

8.14. The management of the forest environment is complex, involving the need to protect and enhance the wildlife, habitat, historical, economic and social value of different parts of the Wyre Forest from the position/state they are currently in following activities that have taken place over a long period.



8.15. The Wyre Forest within Bewdley contains a significant proportion of the remaining native tree species in the Wyre Forest NNR. Only 24% of the Wyre Forest consists of native tree species whilst over 80% of the NNR within Bewdley is native species.

8.16. More open areas of the ancient woodland of the Wyre Forest within Bewdley have formed good habitats for a wide variety of species including Adder. The NNR is accessed by visitors from Bewdley and a former railway track bed provides a main route through the forest.



8.17. **Wyre Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest:** The Wyre Forest SSSI (magenta) is shown in relation to the Ancient Woodland (green) and it can be seen to overlap in most cases, but there are some exceptions. The SSSI also covers the area of the National Nature Reserve in the parish, with one small area excepted.



**Devil's Spittleful SSSI:** The SSSI is in the east of Bewdley and straddles the boundary with the adjacent area.

8.18. **Traditional Orchards:** There are a significant number of traditional orchards (orange) in Bewdley and these are, with two small exceptions, located to the west of Bewdley town and can be seen to form the eastern end of an extensive area of orchards reaching into adjacent parishes.



8.19. **Burlish Top Local Nature Reserve:** There is one Local Nature Reserve in Bewdley, which is located to the south of the Devil’s Spittleful SSSI in the east of the parish.

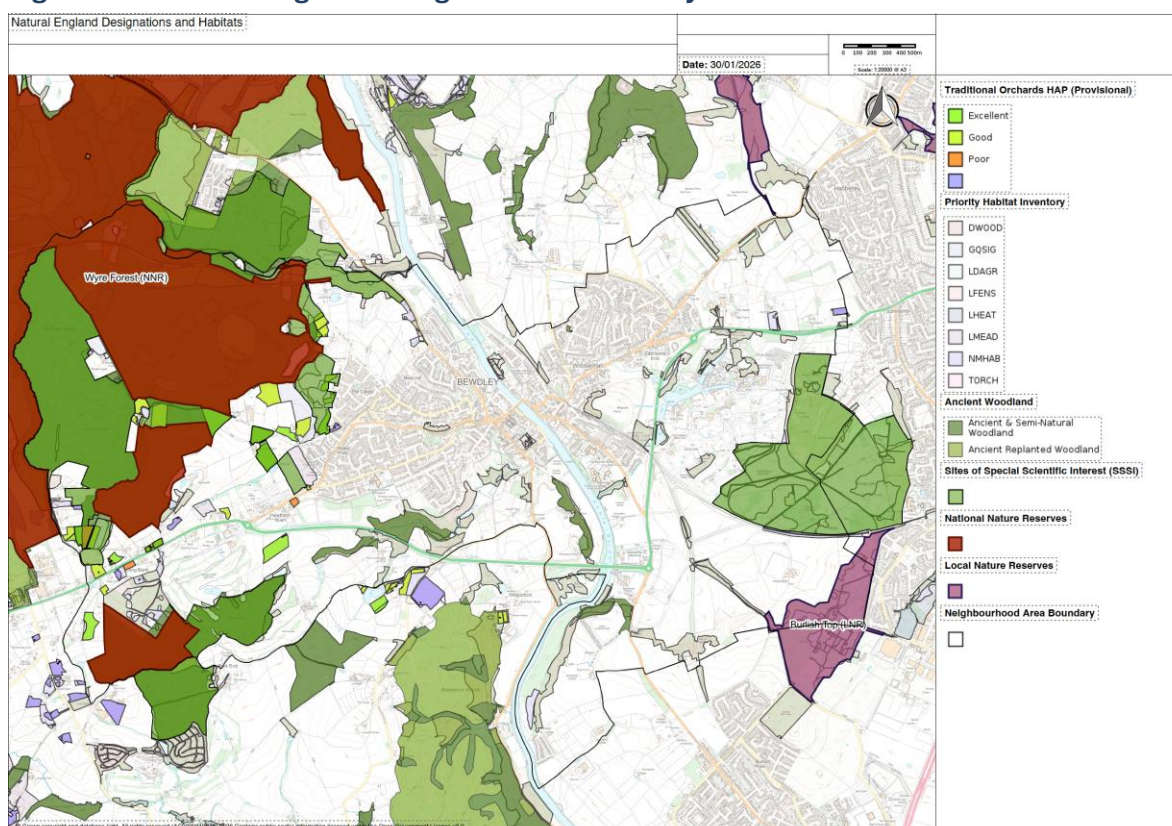


8.20. **Haberley Valley Local Nature Reserve:** This site is located mostly outside the north of the parish but is narrowly connected via a corridor along the parish boundary.

8.21. **Local Wildlife Sites:** The Wyre Forest District Local Plan designates local wildlife sites in Bewdley

8.22. Figure 23 shows Natural England designations within Bewdley Parish. The Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve lies to the west of Bewdley Town and extends into adjacent areas.

**Figure 23 – Natural England Designations in Bewdley Parish**



Source: Defra Magic Maps (2026)

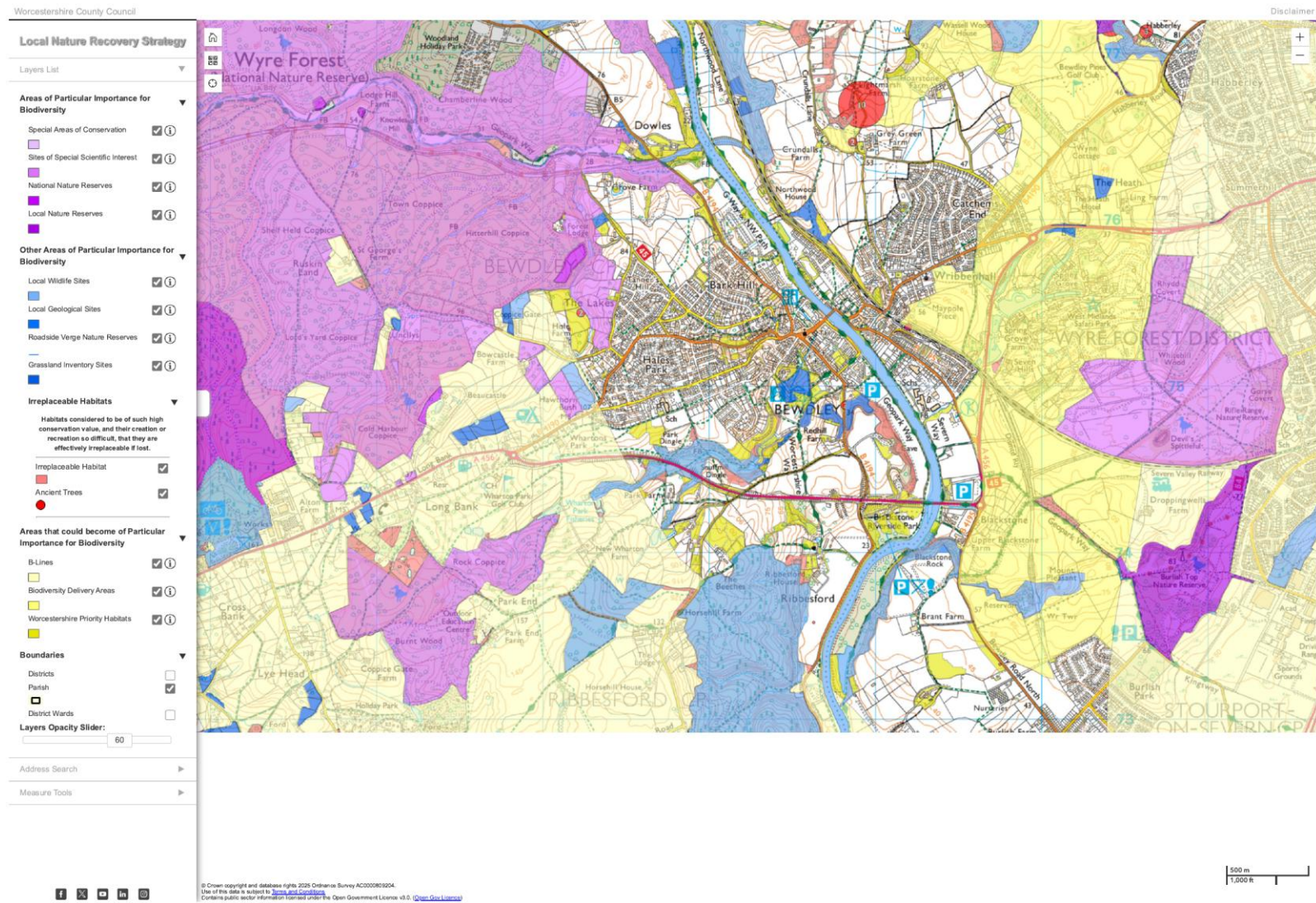
### **Local Plan Policy**

- 8.23. The Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036) Policy SP.23 aims to protect and enhance biodiversity. Part 1 of the policy expects the delivery of measurable net gains in biodiversity from new development, designed to support the delivery of the identified biodiversity network. Parts 2 and 3 of the policy set out comprehensive requirements for the provision of ecological assessments and a demonstration of how ecological features have influenced design and layout. It says that development should support conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity across the area and makes specific provisions relating to the hierarchy of protected sites, including those in Bewdley set out above.
- 8.24. Policy SP.23 also seeks to secure lasting enhancements through management and monitoring arrangements for onsite and offsite compensation (Part 4). Part 5 sets the expectation that where biodiversity compensation cannot be accommodated within a proposed development, that it should be brought at a scale and proximity to the proposed development. Further specific design requirements are set for housing developments (Part 6). Reference is made to the Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document.

### **Local Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Improvement**

- 8.25. The Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (WLNRS) is in preparation. Information published in spring 2025 provides a useful portrayal of the existing and potential future role of land within the area in improving biodiversity.
- 8.26. Figure 24 shows sites designated for their importance to nature conservation. It also identifies local wildlife sites and other areas not covered by any designations which may have a role. Figure 25 shows the WLNRS areas of the parish which may have a future role in biodiversity improvement and nature recovery without other designations shown.
- 8.27. Local Plan Policy says that developments should contribute to the enhance of key ecological networks in the area. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy in combination with the objectives related to the enhancement of protected sites in Bewdley, provide a clear basis for mitigation and enhancement of local biodiversity in accordance with strategic policies and objectives.

**Figure 24 – Area of Importance for Biodiversity in Bewdley**



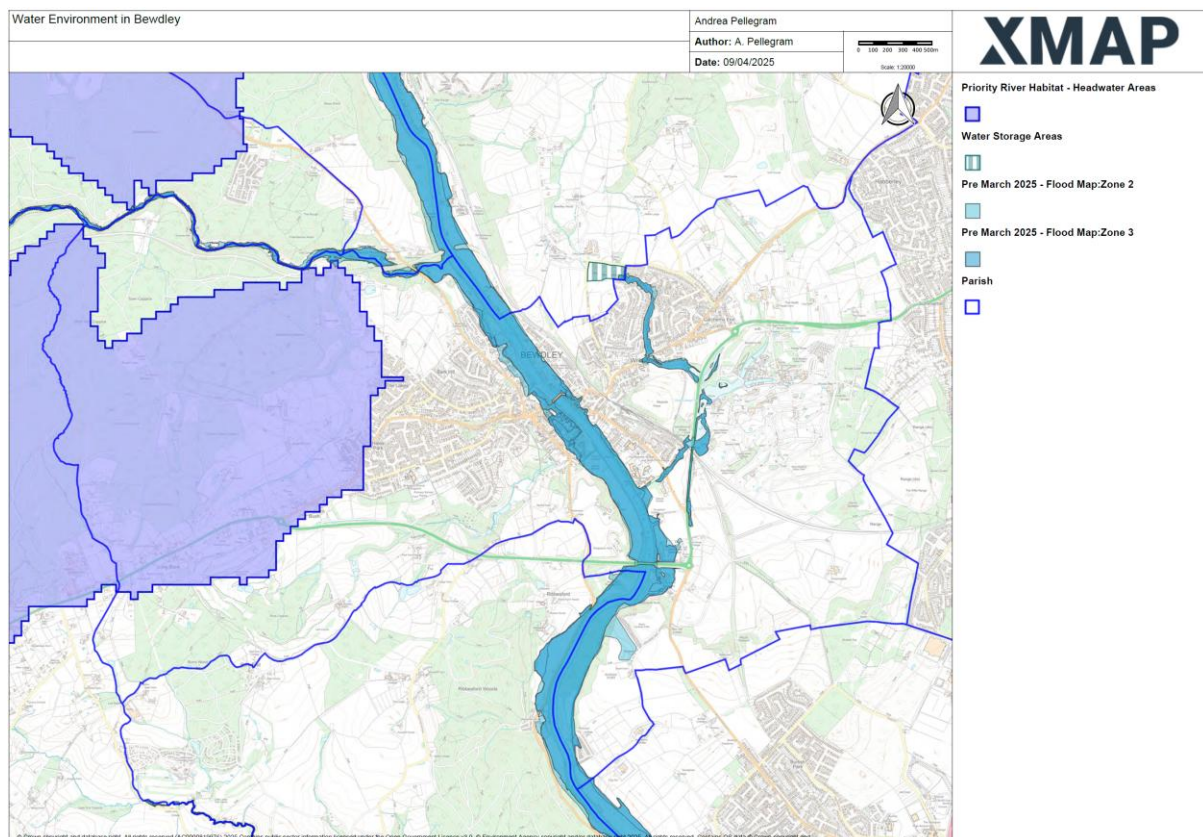
Source: Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy interactive map



## The Water Environment

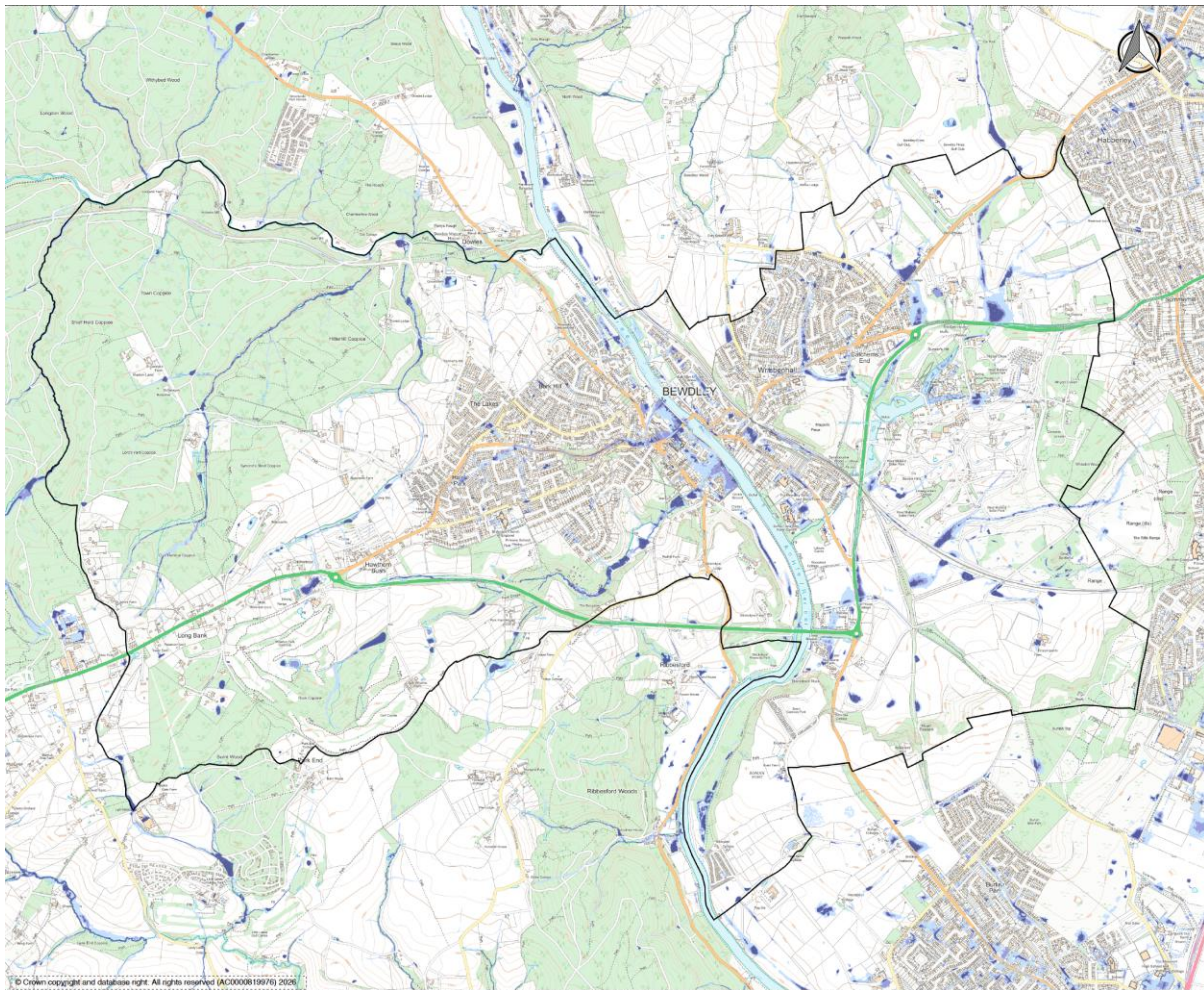
- 8.28. Figure 26 and Figure 27 show the water environment in Bewdley, with the River Sever flowing through the town and important watercourses bringing water to it from higher ground which, to the west, also provides important water storage capacity.
- 8.29. The plan recognises the importance of sensitive water management of the area. The River Sever and the three main brooks, Snuff Mill and Dowles to the west and Riddings Brook in Wribbenhall, are important water courses across the whole plan area. Each of these must be sensitively managed regarding any proposed development.
- 8.30. Careful control of future development and management of water courses is vital to prevent water pollution, to avert flooding and erosion and to maintain the natural biodiversity of the area including wildlife corridors to and from the river and the forest.
- 8.31. The River Sever and its influence on Bewdley is very important to the residents of Bewdley and protecting the water courses is strongly supported by the community. The majority of the parcels indicated suitable for Local Green Space Designation contain a watercourse (Snuff Mill Brook or tributaries of Dowles Brook) or are adjacent to the River Sever. These parcels therefore perform, or could perform, a function to store flood water.
- 8.32. For the NDP, there is a clear priority to ensure that the River Sever floodplain can fulfil its primary role in providing water storage in times of flood, and to ensure that the watercourses feeding into the River Sever function effectively.

**Figure 26 – The Water Environment of Bewdley**



Source: Andrea Pellegam Ltd (2025)

**Figure 27 – Surface Water Flood Risk in Bewdley Parish**



Source: Andrea Pellegram Ltd (2026)

- 8.33. It is important that all developments are designed to minimise the risk of flooding to the development and avoid downstream impacts to other areas of the town. The Bewdley Design Codes WD1 and WD2 provide guidance which should be followed, alongside reference to Worcestershire County Council guidance.
- 8.34. Some areas of the parish lack adequate protection from flooding, strategic support is required to deliver improvements on the scale required in such locations. In particular, and given the topography of the area, the potential for development in elevated positions to create increased run-off impacts needs to be carefully considered. Also given the propensity for flooding in the area, building design should be resilient to flooding.
- 8.35. Beyond this, there is a clear aspiration to enhance the riverside and watercourse environment for nature but also for recreational benefit. The NDP supports the expansion of existing areas which are important for biodiversity as an important way to protect and strengthen existing biodiversity. It also supports initiatives that would connect areas of biodiversity importance to strengthen the nature network in the area. Local parks and amenity spaces along both banks for the River Sever provide a clear opportunity to deliver this improvement.

## **BEWDLEY 8 – GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE WATER ENVIRONMENT**

In accordance with policy framework set out in the Wyre Forest District Local Plan, proposals for development that seek to deliver biodiversity mitigation and enhancement off site should have regard to local priorities for local nature recovery and the water environment in the following ways:

- a) **Contribute to the delivery of Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve Plan objectives including through expansion and enhancement of habitats to support protected species present in the area. Proposals should also consider how they can contribute to the delivery of objectives to improve access to the Wyre Forest from Bewdley and provide opportunities for education and awareness of the benefits the Wyre Forest brings to the local community and environment.**
- b) **Include proposals to mitigate impacts on, expand, strengthen and connect areas of importance for nature in Bewdley, including Devil’s Spittleful SSSI, Burlish Top and Habberley Valley Local Nature Reserves (the areas within Bewdley), Traditional Orchards, Local Wildlife Sites and other Ancient Woodland within the parish.**
- c) **Deliver an integrated approach to flood risk avoidance and mitigation and utilise design approaches to reduce flood impacts, maintain the effectiveness of watercourses and create environmental benefits for nature and recreation, particularly in relation to the River Severn, Dowles Brook, Snuff Mill Brook and Riddings Brook.**
- d) **Use land management techniques such as riparian buffers alongside sustainable drainage techniques.**
- e) **Enhance the River Severn riverside to provide a multi-functional area suitable for public recreational use, natural habitat and flood defence/storage.**

## 9. Jobs and the Local Economy

### NDP Objectives

**To encourage a thriving local economy in Bewdley through support for local businesses, investment in the public realm and the promotion of markets and other events to increase economic activity in the town.**

- 9.1. Bewdley has been a thriving market town since 1376 when the first market was held. In the 1700s, manufacturing was the backbone of the local economy but the creation of the canals and railways in the 19th century put an end to this. While this would have been a blow to the local economy at the time, it led to the town becoming the picturesque tourist town that exists today.
- 9.2. The biggest employment sector in Bewdley today is wholesale and retail. Bewdley faces the same challenges as other market towns in retaining a vibrant retail offer. As more use is made of online shopping it is vital to ensure the long-term viability of local shops which remain important for residents and visitors.
- 9.3. Public consultation has shown support for the maintenance and enhancement of the market town status of Bewdley to strengthen the retail offerings and to attract more office or light industry to the area. As Bewdley lies within a commuter belt to larger conurbations such as Birmingham and Worcester, it is vital to create and maintain employment locally to reduce unnecessary commuting and boost the local economy. The consultation also highlighted concerns regarding the lack of banking facilities and the shortage of parking spaces.
- 9.4. Bewdley town centre and Primary Business/Retail zone contains a broad range of shops and businesses that not only serve the local community but also encourage visitors to the town. In addition to several supermarket local stores, the town benefits from a variety of independent shops as well as cafes, restaurants, hairdressers, chemists, and public houses. Bewdley's rural, riverside setting is an added attraction for shoppers, particularly during the summer months. Twice yearly markets selling a variety of craft, food and artisan items also serve to help maintain a strong sense of community and vibrancy.
- 9.5. Load Street, the main thoroughfare of Bewdley, and whose name derives from lode, an old word for ferry, is notable for its width: this is because it once also served as the town's marketplace. It contains a variety of Georgian properties which are residential, i.e., mixed category flats above, with shops below. The business and primary retail zone sits within the town's Conservation Area therefore business owners are encouraged to comply with the Planning Authority's 'Shop Front and Design' policy, which recognises that high quality design plays an important part in the viability and vitality of shopping areas.
- 9.6. Bewdley may be the smallest town within Wyre Forest District, but its retailing function also serves a wide, rural community. Shoppers travel in from surrounding villages which are themselves limited in their choice of services and stores. The variety of shops in Bewdley enables people to make one trip for many reasons and avoid the necessity and expense of travelling further afield.

9.7. The range of shops and businesses is not the main reason for people loving the town according to the consultation summary of June 2016. However, it is recognised that the town centre is the heart of the community and, as such, planning policies need to support it as a positive and competitive environment which remains viable and vital to thrive.



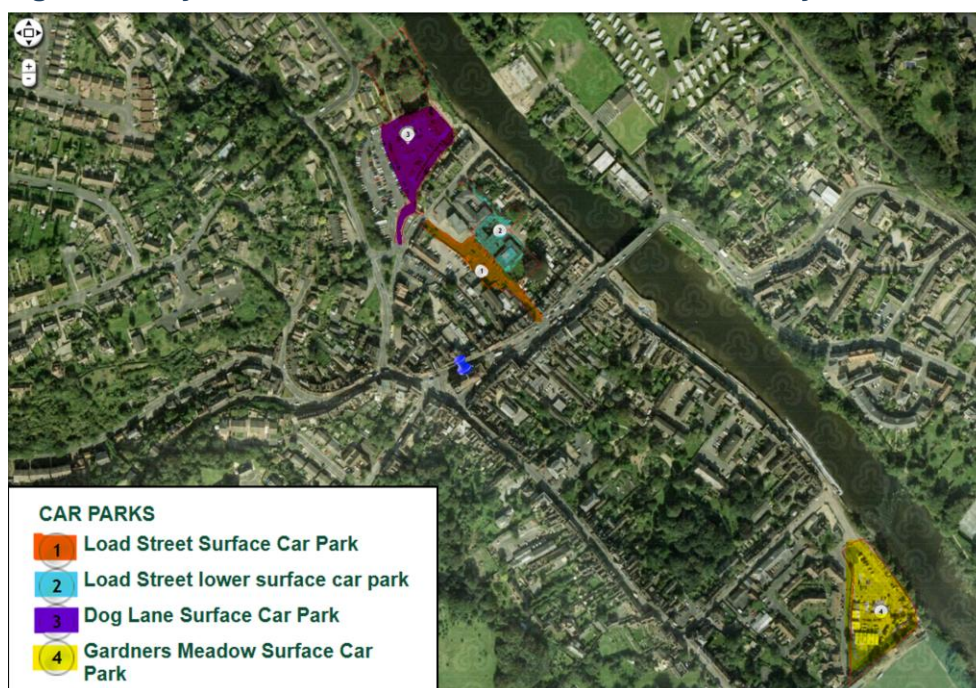
9.8. A key challenge is how to grow business in the town centre through increased visits for longer stays. The resident population is ageing and, increasingly, retired and so it is unlikely that existing residents are going to trigger this growth. This is more likely to rely on new visitors to the town. How to encourage more visitors, accommodate them in the town’s car parks, on the town’s roads and in the town’s shops, restaurants and hotels are important issues to examine further in the NDP.

### Town Centre Car Parking

9.9. Bewdley Town Centre lacks sufficient car parking to support economic growth of the town centre. Town Centre residents, businesses, shoppers and tourists compete for limited space.

9.10. Wyre Forest District Council car parking provision to serve Bewdley Town Centre is shown on Figure 28. These provide a total of 368 car parking spaces (including 23 disabled parking bays), split between 345 long stay spaces and 23 short stay spaces.

**Figure 28 – Wyre Forest District Council Car Parks in Bewdley**



9.11. Wyre Forest District Council has provided data on the number of tickets bought in each car park each month during 2024. Whilst this does not allow proper analysis of the length of stays, it provides a crude picture of car park use in terms of separate stays per space each month.

- 9.12. Table 3 shows this in the form of a colour-chart with deeper colours indicating greater purchase of stays per parking space. Clearly, high turnover short stay spaces are used more frequently than long stay spaces.
- 9.13. Gardners Meadow Long Stay Car Park has significant capacity (150 spaces) and appears to sell small numbers of tickets per space each month compared to other car parks. This could be related to long length of stay use or under-use of the car park. Improved signage to this car park is needed.
- 9.14. Dog Lane Car Park is also a long stay car park which is closer to the town centre, but also serves facilities located at the site including a library, health centre and offices. Its number of stays per space is larger than Gardners Meadow but significantly fewer than the Load Street Car Parks.
- 9.15. The Load Street Upper Short Stay Car Park is a small car park serving the supermarket at this location and the town centre directly (5 of the 23 spaces are disabled bays). With a two-hour limit, this has the highest number of tickets sold per space. Load Street Lower Car Park is long stay with 50 spaces, but with a similar price structure to the short stay car park adjacent for 0-2 hour visits, it will clearly attract short stay users to the supermarket and town centre.

**Table 3 – Car park tickets sold per space**

Capacity	Dog Lane Long Stay	Load Street Upper Short Stay	Load Street Lower Long Stay	Gardners Meadow Long Stay
All Car Parking Spaces	145	23	50	150
<b>Crude count of tickets issued per space per month</b>				
January	42	130	58	14
February	42	109	68	19
March	58	139	78	22
April	59	139	78	25
May	67	152	80	33
June	58	130	72	31
July	72	152	84	27
August	77	152	88	38
September	57	143	74	22
October	64	143	78	23
November	5	135	62	17
December	35	104	58	19

Source: Wyre Forest District Council data

**Other car parks**

- 9.16. The privately-run Redthorne House Car Park on High Street is well located in relation to the town centre and provides a further 57 car parking spaces (none are disabled bays). The fees charged are hourly and it is not clear whether a maximum length of stay applies (which means it could cater for long stay users). There is no data available on the use of this car park.
- 9.17. Located on the eastern side of the River Severn, there is one further private car park serving the Severn Valley Railway Station. This provides 50 long stay car park spaces with no disabled bays. The car park is located approximately 550m from the town centre across the bridge. There is no data available on the use of this car park.

### **Policy Considerations**

- 9.18. To encourage greater use of the town centre requires facilitation of visits and the nature of these visits needs to be considered in the context of related objectives to reduce town centre traffic impacts (through better flows but also through lower volumes).
- 9.19. Load Street Lower Car Park functions as a short stay car park for the most part given it costs the same to park there as the long stay car park adjacent – they are effectively one car park. Nevertheless, given that most spaces across the two are long stay, there is potential for some of these to be taken up by workers and residents of the immediate area. This could reduce capacity for visitors in the most popular part of the town.
- 9.20. From the data, there is a lack of understanding of the use made of long stay parking and whether this is for workers in the town, tourists staying in hotels or residents who lack private off-street or public on-street parking options.
- 9.21. An objective is to improve town centre footfall through turnover of visits whilst encouraging visitors to stay a little longer for visits to cultural facilities/events, shopping and eating/drinking. There may be a need to increase parking capacity for visitors to facilitate this objective. A potential option would be to make Load Street Upper and Load Street Lower into a single short stay only car park with a three-hour limit (up from 2 hours) to encourage longer short stays.

#### **BEWDLEY 9 – TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS**

**Development proposals which provide additional public car parking capacity to serve Bewdley Town Centre will be supported in principle, subject to the following considerations:**

- a) The parking is short stay parking (up to three hours).**
- b) The location is convenient for town centre users.**
- c) The development is consistent with historic environment objectives and policies.**

**Support in principle will also be given to a reorganisation of existing car parking to provide more spaces for visitors whilst meeting the needs of town centre residents and businesses. Proposals to provide improved signage to existing car parks would be welcomed.**

### **Visitor Accommodation in Bewdley**

- 9.22. Bewdley has tourist attractions which are important to the town and wider Wyre Forest economy. It is on the Severn Valley Railway, and the West Midlands Safari Park is in the east of the Parish. The Wyre Forest itself, located on the western side of Bewdley is becoming an important visitor destination for nature lovers, walkers and others who want to enjoy the area's scenery.
- 9.23. Many tourist visitors are day trippers, and it is an important local objective to grow the tourism economy by encouraging overnight stays. For this to succeed, a key requirement is for sufficient good quality visitor accommodation.

### **Hotel and Guest House Accommodation**

- 9.24. Bewdley has 11 hotels and guesthouses which together with accommodation at Wharton Park Golf Club, provides 189 bedspaces in 83 rooms. Only one of these facilities (The George Hotel)

has more than 10 rooms, making it difficult for large wedding, conference or other events to be held in Bewdley in a single venue.

- 9.25. Local hoteliers report significant use of hotel accommodation by people who are working in and around Bewdley over a long period and for other business tourists. Occupancy varies widely between 50% and 80%.

### West Midlands Safari Park Accommodation

- 9.26. The West Midlands Safari Park is in the east of the Parsh outside Bewdley town. The Safari Park provides 32 lodges and two cottages capable of providing 198 bedspaces. This is a major source of accommodation geared towards visitors to the Safari Park, but who nevertheless can visit the rest of Bewdley as part of their stay.

### Camping and Caravan Site Pitches

- 9.27. There are four camping and caravan sites in the Parish. Three of these are for static full-time occupation not geared to tourist stays. The other three sites provide around 200 pitches, with this provision dominated by one site (Hopley’s Family Camping) which has up to 170 pitches.

### Holiday Lets

- 9.28. A review of accommodation websites and planning permissions led to the identification of 30 separate holiday lets in Bewdley providing around 152 bedspaces.

### Summary of provision

- 9.29. Table 4 summarises the availability of visitor accommodation in Bewdley. The data is not complete and so some assumptions are necessary. According to the data collected in support of the NDP, there are 45 tourist accommodation providers who between them provide a maximum capacity of around 460 rooms/pitches providing bedspaces for up to 543 visitors and pitches for around 500 more visitors in caravans and tents.

**Table 4 - Profile of Visitor Accommodation in Bewdley**

Accommodation type	No of Properties	Booking potential	No of bedrooms or pitches	Maximum number of bedspaces
Hotel and Guest House Accommodation	11	83	83	189
West Midlands Safari Park Accommodation	1	34	99 (est. assuming double rooms)	198
Camping and Caravan Site Pitches	3	200	200	500 (est. assuming occupancy of most plots by couples and families)
Holiday Lets	30	33	78 (est. assuming double rooms)	152
<b>Total</b>	45	150 properties or bookable rooms and 200 pitches	260 bedrooms and 200 tent or caravan pitches	543 bedspaces and 500 tent/caravan bedspaces

Source: NDP Working Group Survey, (2025)

- 9.30. This accommodation is unlikely to be utilised with perfect efficiency. The booking potential will be lower, based on the ability of separate individuals to book accommodation in Bewdley. All rooms in hotels and all pitches on caravan sites are separately bookable, whilst individual holiday lets and holiday lodges are usually booked out wholly. On this basis, at any one time, there are 146 opportunities to book bedrooms/properties and 200 bookable pitches in Bewdley.

- 9.31. It then comes down to how many people occupy each room, lodge, pitch or holiday let during stay. For example, hoteliers report significant business occupancy of hotel and guest house accommodation, and this might result in single occupancy of double rooms. Holiday let properties also might not be fully occupied, depending on the profile of tourist visits to the Bewdley. It might be expected that visits to the Safari Park accommodation (which provides large accommodation per unit) might be more fully occupied with families.

### **Policy Considerations**

- 9.32. To grow Bewdley's tourism economy based in part on longer stays, the amount of visitor accommodation it has needs to be retained and potentially increased. There is currently low-level balanced provision across different types of visitor accommodation in Bewdley, and this should also be maintained to provide choice. There is a gap in provision in the form of a larger hotel with a venue space that can provide accommodation for larger events such as weddings or conferences.
- 9.33. Whether new visitor accommodation can be provided depends on location of provision, with historic centre locations heavily constrained by Conservation Area considerations and a lack of space for visitor parking. Outlying locations will be less constrained in this regard.

#### **BEWDLEY 10 – VISITOR ACCOMMODATION IN BEWDLEY**

**Proposals for development that would deliver additional visitor accommodation within Bewdley town will be supported in principle, subject to the following considerations:**

- a) The accommodation is guest house, small hotel or pitches located within the boundaries of existing camping/caravanning sites.**
- b) Proposals for a larger hotel with significant events capacity would be particularly welcomed as this would replace lost provision and meet a clear local need.**
- c) Wherever possible, parking provision is provided on site (but local constraints are recognised).**
- d) Conversion proposals for heritage buildings into new visitor accommodation are sensitive to building and Conservation Area character features.**

### **Tourism, Markets and Cultural Development**

- 9.34. Bewdley is a popular tourist destination. The town is home to the Severn Valley Railway, a heritage railway running 16 miles between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth with Bewdley the largest intermediate station. The West Midlands Safari Park lies just out of the town, on the A456 towards Kidderminster and visitor numbers presently exceed 750,000 per year. Both venues are signposted on all motorways running through the Midlands.
- 9.35. The Bewdley Festival is held in the town each October, and Bewdley also hosts one of the largest inland river regattas in the country. The popular Bewdley Beer Festival is held each August Bank Holiday weekend. Bewdley also has a carnival which takes place every June and there is also a distinguished music scene in the town. Bewdley is particularly well known for its intimate music venues and its local festivals. Other attractions include the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens adjacent to Bewdley Museum and Severnside South.

- 9.36. There are many footpaths and cycle routes from Bewdley through the unspoilt woodlands of the Wyre Forest. There is a popular Visitor Centre situated just outside Bewdley at Callow Hill, from where many waymarked trails through the forest start.
- 9.37. Bewdley Museum explores the history of the town and has displays on local crafts and ancient skills such as coracle making, tanning, jewellery making and crochet. The Museum also stages occasional small exhibitions by contemporary local artists. It attracts around 200,000 visitors per year and includes a café, craft workshops, a programme of events, education, exhibitions, heritage weddings and a shop. It is a focal point for the local community and is joined to the Jubilee Gardens, a popular park and open space in the centre of Bewdley.
- 9.38. Tourism is of major importance to Bewdley. It is vital that future planning policy protects and enhances this aspect of the economy and at the same time protects the town's natural and historic assets. Intensification of existing tourist attractions must be carefully measured against additional traffic as well as compatibility with local road infrastructure.



- 9.39. There is limited scope for significant development in Bewdley Town Centre or on its riverside given Conservation Area character and flood risk considerations, so the emphasis must be on creating high quality spaces for events which augment the existing capacity of the town to attract visitors and encourage them to linger to spend time and money in local shops and at local events.
- 9.40. Bewdley is an historic market town. The history books show that Bewdley was granted its first market by King Edward IV in 1472. Regular markets have been held since then and become an integral part of the town centre attracting many visitors. The markets in Bewdley attract visitors, which in turn creates opportunities for local shops, cafés, and restaurants to benefit. The markets provide residents with variety and choice, create a vibrant and unique atmosphere, and help attract visitors to the town.
- 9.41. In recent years the number and variety of stalls have increased and the area they cover has been extended, with an aim to hold two markets each month. However, there is no regular indoor market as a suitably, large and well-lit venue has not been located, although potential for such a venue could be enabled in the future.

#### **BEWDLEY 11 – TOURISM, MARKETS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Sympathetic development of infrastructure, structures and buildings that would enable and support the provision of permanent and temporary markets, cultural events and tourism services within Bewdley Town Centre and on its riverside, will be supported. All development within the Bewdley Conservation Area must have regard to its character features and be designed to avoid harming them, and to flood risk.**

## Town Centre Businesses

- 9.42. In March 2025, the NDP Steering Group surveyed the ground and upper floor uses of properties in the central area of Bewdley on Load Street, Welch Gate, High Street, Dog Lane, Dog Lane Mews, Severnside North and Severnside South. The aim was to establish the range of businesses operating in the town centre and to register the use of upper floors where possible.
- 9.43. Planning use classes were recorded, and businesses were categorised into broad business functions (Table 6). Table 5 shows the number and distribution of property uses across different categories. From a resident's perspective, a wide range of shops and services are available in Bewdley to meet daily needs. There are a range of neighbourhood size national food retailers, a larger size supermarket and some specialist local food retailers. There is a good range of food and drink venues. Out of 91 recorded ground floor business premises, 7 were vacant (though 1 was in the process of preparing for a new occupant), giving a 7.7% vacancy rate

**Table 5 – Property Uses in Bewdley Central Area**

Property Uses in Bewdley	Ground Floor	Upper Floors
<b>Services/Offices</b>	10	4
<b>Retail</b>	37	0
<b>Food and Drink</b>	20	2
<b>Food Retail</b>	9	0
<b>Take away</b>	5	0
<b>Visitor Accommodation</b>	2	2
<b>Civic</b>	2	1
<b>Visitor attraction</b>	1	0
<b>Residential</b>	2	37
<b>Vacant/no recorded use</b>	7	45
<b>Total</b>	95 <sup>1</sup>	91

Source: NDP Working Group Central Area Survey (2025)

- 9.44. Use of upper floors for residential use is significant at 40.5%. This suggests scope for further residential use of upper floors in some properties. Residential presence in the town centre adds evening activity, supports local shops and food and drink outlets.
- 9.45. Apart from the Bewdley Museum, there are no recorded cultural/leisure attractions for visitors. There are emerging outline plans for a community hub at St Anne's Church. For tourism, the Bewdley town centre offer rests on the range and quality of its shops, hotels and eateries, assuming tourists tend not to make use of everyday professional services. As already noted, there is a wide range of food and drink outlets.
- 9.46. Table 6 provides a breakdown of retail shops by broad type to show the choice available for residents, workers and visitors. This is relevant to the offer available to tourist visitors and what their retail shopping priorities might be. It might be expected that they would need to utilise personal services retail less and luxury and other retail more.

<sup>1</sup> The Ground Floor total includes additional business and residential properties to the rear.

**Table 6 – Bewdley Central Area Retail Shops by Type**

Personal Services Retail	Luxury Retail	Other
<b>7 x Hair Salons</b>	3 x jewellery shops	3 x Charity Shops providing a range of homewares, gifts and clothes
<b>2 x outlets providing beauty, spa and nail services</b>	3 x gift shops	3 x homewares and home products
<b>2 x Dog Grooming services &amp; accessories</b>	2 x arts/craft gallery shops	Florist, Pharmacy, Computers, Clothing, Vapes, Pet Supplies, Books, Cobbler, Party Shop
<b>Tattoo Parlour, Optician</b>	Perfume shop	

Source: NDP Steering Group Survey (2025)

### Policy Considerations

- 9.47. Wyre Forest Local Plan paragraph 22.14 classes Bewdley as a market town which meets a local community need, important for top-up shopping, with main shopping requirements met in Kidderminster which is about 3 miles away. This may be realistic in terms of how residents access shopping, but it does not address the requirement to provide an attractive town centre offer for visitors to the town. Given the limited provision of public transport, it is recognised that residents may need to travel by car to access shopping opportunities in nearby towns.
- 9.48. Policy DM.13 applies a sequential approach to the development of largescale (more than 2,500 sqm gross floorspace) retail, commercial and leisure uses in the district and directs these to Kidderminster first, followed by Stourport and then Bewdley. Proposals for new retail development above 500 sqm gross floorspace must also follow a sequential approach and must also demonstrate that they are within the Primary Shopping Area or, if on the edge of centre, cannot be accommodated in the Primary Shopping Area.
- 9.49. Policy DM.13 provides a decision-making framework for proposals within town centres with a clear priority to retain the vitality and viability of Bewdley town centre. A distinction is made between primary shopping areas and secondary shopping frontages and in particular this relates to ground floor uses. In secondary shopping frontages, there is more potential for the development of alternative uses, including commercial and residential uses at ground floor provided they ensure the continued vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole and without compromising the core retail function of the town centre.
- 9.50. Within the primary shopping area, the policy says these are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses and that development proposals for retail use at ground floor will be permitted where the scale and type of development proposals is directly related to the role and function of the centre and its catchment area.
- 9.51. Bewdley may be the smallest town within Wyre Forest District, but its retailing function also serves a wide, rural community. Shoppers travel in from surrounding villages which are themselves limited in their choice of services and stores. The variety of shops in Bewdley enables people to make one trip for many reasons and avoid the necessity and expense of travelling further afield. Bewdley has a good town centre offer comprised of a balanced range of food & drink outlets, retail shops, food retailers and services. This is an essential resource for residents, workers, and visitors.

- 9.52. Given its age profile, it is unlikely that the local resident population of Bewdley will stimulate significant further growth in the viability and vitality of the town centre without a stimulus to encourage them to use it more and for longer periods of time during which time they spend more money on local goods and services.
- 9.53. Tourist visitors already come to Bewdley and spend money in the town centre. Growth in tourism can help to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre. For this to occur, further promotion of key existing tourism assets that attract visitors is needed, as well as exploring the potential to create new tourism assets.
- 9.54. People could be encouraged to visit Bewdley Town Centre itself to see special events or regular markets that provide interesting goods for visitors and residents. A key objective must be not to displace existing retail activity but complement it, encourage more visitors to stay for longer and spend money in shops and food and drink outlets.
- 9.55. As shown in Figure 29, Bewdley Town Centre is shown as a Primary Shopping Area defined by three frontages, on Load Street, Dog Lane, Welch Gate and the western end of High Street. The north side of Load Street is defined as primary shopping frontage, whilst the south side is entirely secondary shopping frontage, as is the top end of Load Street, High Street and Welch Gate. Beyond its junction with Load Street, Dog Lane is not defined as a primary or secondary shopping frontage. A mixed-use site allocation is identified which is the site of a supermarket.
- 9.56. In Bewdley Town Centre, less than a quarter of ground floor properties in retail or commercial use are located within a Primary Shopping Area with the remainder mostly on a secondary shopping frontage, but more than 10% are off any frontage (the Shambles, Severnside North, Severnside South and parts of Dog Lane. This means at least 75% of the town centre properties currently with a ground floor retail or commercial use are located on frontages where proposals for alternative uses (including residential) may receive more favourable consideration provided that the overall function and role of the town centre is not harmed.
- 9.57. The town centre is wholly contained within the Bewdley Conservation Area, and many town centre properties are Listed Buildings. New development is highly constrained and so changes of use away from town centre uses toward residential use are unlikely ever to be reversed and suitable

## TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

**Services:** for example, including estate agents, accountants, hairdressers, tattoo parlours, health and beauty, activity-based businesses, dog grooming etc. These are businesses which provide or sell services across a wide range and who don't primarily sell products direct to customers.

**Retail:** All types of non-food retail where the primary function of the business is to sell physical products to the public.

**Food Retail:** Relating to the purchase of foods and confectionary

**Food and Drink:** Including pubs, restaurants and cafés where customers consume on the premises.

**Takeaway:** Purchase of readymade food to consume off the premises.

**Visitor Accommodation:** Where the primary function is to provide visitor accommodation (there may also be food and drink provided).

**Civic:** including local government offices and other organisations.

**Visitor attraction:** Facilities which are designed to attract visitors for cultural or Leisure purposes.

**Residential:** On ground floors, these are properties located to the rear of commercial units whilst on upper floors, these are flats.

**Vacant/no recorded use:** On the ground floor, properties are known to be vacant, whilst on upper floors it has not been possible to confirm uses in many cases, so it is not known if these are vacant or in use for any purpose.

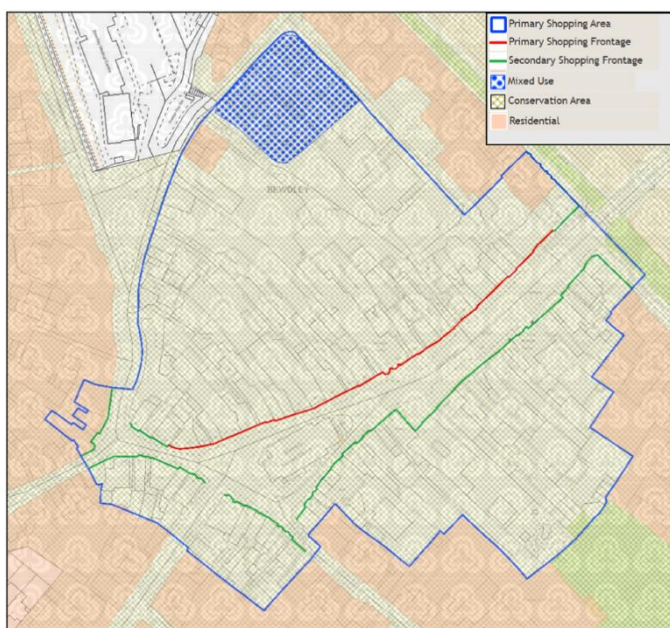
locations for ‘replacement’ town centre development are equally unlikely to be available. The current stock of town centre buildings is mostly what Bewdley must work with.

**Figure 29 – Bewdley Town Centre (Wyre Forest Local Plan)**

9.58. The NDP supports the development of Bewdley Town Centre to ensure it continues to meet residents’ needs and can meet them more effectively by reducing the need to travel by car to alternative shopping centres.

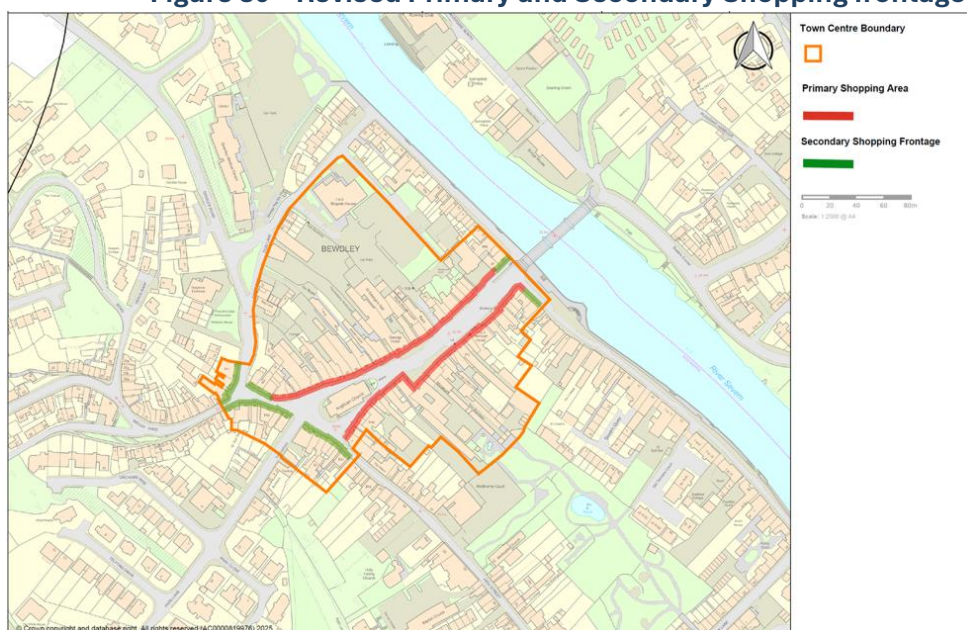
9.59. A strong town centre will support economic development by providing services to rural communities and by providing services to attract tourist and leisure visits to the town, its riverside and the Wyre Forest.

9.60. Stronger policy support is needed to protect town centre frontages which provide the bulk of the retail provision. The south side of Load Street is very important – apart from the Guildhall Hall/museum and a couple of offices, the frontage is almost entirely retail. The NDP identifies the south side of Load Street as Primary Shopping Area (a change from its designation as Secondary Shopping Frontage).



9.61. The mix of uses in the town centre needs to be maintained so that it can fulfil its various roles. Bewdley is more than simply a top-up shopping centre for residents. The NDP shows a town centre with few vacancies and a broad offer in terms of shops, restaurants and services. There is clear scope for further improvement and greater activity, and this means proposals for non-retail, non-commercial uses in the town centre should take this into account.

**Figure 30 – Revised Primary and Secondary Shopping frontages**



Source: Andrea Pellegram Ltd

## **BEWDLEY 12 – BEWDLEY TOWN CENTRE**

- a) Primary Shopping Areas and Secondary Shopping Frontages within Bewdley Town Centre are defined on Figure 30.**
- b) Proposals for development of retail uses within Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages of Bewdley Town Centre will be supported in principle as an important contribution to Bewdley’s economy.**
- c) Proposals for development of other commercial town centre uses (such as hotels, restaurants, bars and personal/professional services) will also be supported, but particularly on Secondary Shopping Frontages provided that, across the town centre as a whole, at least 50% of ground floor properties remain in retail use.**
- d) Proposals for hot food take aways will be supported where the proportion of these is less than 10% of town centre ground floor retail and commercial uses (see Table 5).**
- e) Retail development that would maintain or create active frontages at ground floor level will be supported in principle. Non-retail development that would result in dead frontages of three or more properties in a row will not be supported.**
- f) Proposals for residential development within the town centre (where this involves a change of use from a retail or other commercial use) are discouraged and should be accompanied by evidence of marketing for alternative retail/commercial uses over an 18-months period preceding the proposal.**
- g) All proposals for development within Bewdley Town Centre should demonstrate how they will retain or enhance the vitality and viability of Bewdley Town Centre to meet the needs of local residents, people from surrounding rural communities and tourist/leisure visitors to Bewdley.**
- h) All proposals for development or redevelopment of shopfronts and/or public areas within Bewdley Town Centre must have regard to the Bewdley Design Codes SF1, BT1, and BM2, and other design guidance to ensure that shopfronts and public areas to buildings make a positive contribution to the town centre and Bewdley Conservation Area.**

## 10. Sustainable Travel and Transport

### NDP Objectives

**To reduce the impact of traffic congestion in the town centre, increase parking facilities, promote bus and rail services, and encourage walking and cycling**

- 10.1. The NDP sets clear objectives to improve the town centre environment for businesses and the visitor economy to thrive and indicates clear priorities to improve the traffic environment and accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
- 10.2. Engagement with the local community in Bewdley over the development of the NDP has revealed a range of transport and accessibility issues for pedestrians, cyclists, bus users, car drivers and businesses. This section of the NDP discusses the issues raised and examines how they can be addressed in the NDP within the broader framework of WCC highways management, transport strategy, active travel objectives and investment in infrastructure.

### Car Travel

- 10.3. Car travel is the dominant mode of transport. Even for short journeys within Bewdley, car travel is popular mainly because of the hilly nature of the west bank of the River Severn. This makes walking and cycling a less attractive option from this part of the town especially for the higher proportion of older residents.
- 10.4. On street free short-term parking for shopping purposes is in short supply mainly due to the narrowness of most of the town centre streets. Charged car parks are available behind Load Street, adjacent to the Bewdley Medical Centre in Dog Lane, Gardners Meadow, Redthorne car park in High Street and the privately owned 'Pay and Display' in Dog Lane at the side of Bewdley Farm Shop. The latter is somewhat away from the shopping area. All of these are on the west bank.
- 10.5. Many residents and businesses in the Town Centre Conservation Area have limited or no parking and rely on the public car parks to park their cars. There is very limited parking on the east bank of the River Severn within walking distance of the Town Centre. An option has been explored to use significant space at the Bewdley Rowing Club for parking, but no progress has been made.
- 10.6. The bypass was built in 1985, and it has alleviated the very severe congestion that previously occurred in the Town Centre. However, it now suffers from congestion itself especially in the morning peak when work and school journeys coincide. Blocking back of eastbound traffic occurs at peak hours due to the poor design of the junction of Stourport Road and the A456 which is controlled by 4 phase traffic lights. This encourages people to continue to drive through the town centre to avoid congestion on the A456 Bypass. A roundabout at this location should be a policy aspiration to better regulate the traffic flow and prevent blocking back of traffic.
- 10.7. Bewdley Bridge over the River Severn is narrow both for vehicles and pedestrians. It has a substandard narrow pedestrian pavement on both sides which risks increased pedestrian/vehicle collision. This is a well-used route to school for both primary and secondary students. The lack of a safe walking route over the river encourages parents to use their car for home to school journeys which makes the road outside Bewdley Primary School and The Bewdley School (the secondary school), both on Stourport Road, very congested at peak school times. A separate pedestrian bridge has been considered but no progress has been made. The

other primary school, St Anne's CofE Primary School is located on Wyre Hill and serves the west bank of Bewdley.

- 10.8. Traffic congestion in the confined Town Centre Conservation Area is a continuing problem caused by narrow roads and conflicting movements. A scheme was proposed to remove conflicting movements and ease traffic flow, but this was not approved by WCC, but there is still local interest in bringing this about. The above proposals would mitigate impacts from traffic on an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) on Welch Gate. Many residents living on the west bank travel through the town centre to reach the east side despite the availability of the Bypass.

### **HGV Deliveries**

- 10.9. There is difficulty in finding safe parking for deliveries by HGV in the Town Centre.

### **Walking and Cycling in Bewdley**

- 10.10. There is a significant network of public footpaths in Bewdley but many of these are poorly maintained. Walking on the east bank of the River Severn is assisted by its relatively flat terrain. However, most of the west bank within the town can only be walked by encountering steep gradients. As already noted, walking across Bewdley Bridge leads to a risk of pedestrian/vehicle collision owing to the narrow pavements. Many other parts of the road network in the Town Centre Conservation Area have very narrow pavements which does not encourage walking. Some roads on walking to school routes have no pavements.
- 10.11. The same issues about the town's hilly topography, narrow roads and the narrow bridge apply to cycling. Bewdley is on National Route 45 but the use of cycling as a significant mode of transport is still limited by poor separation of cycles and cars on the local road network.

### **Public Transport**

#### **Bus Services**

- 10.12. Over the years, the bus network serving Bewdley has deteriorated. There is no bus service on Sundays. Evening services finish around 1830 from Kidderminster. The reliability of the services and the quality of vehicles is poor. Over the years the frequency of services has been reduced and journeys into Kidderminster have become more circuitous. Key destinations such as Kidderminster Station are difficult to reach by bus on a frequent basis. As a result, the mode share of bus is very low which encourages more car ownership and use. Bus stops are of poor quality with little, incorrect or no information.

#### **Rail Services**

- 10.13. The nearest national rail station is Kidderminster which is approximately 3 miles away. This has recently been modernised. It is fully accessible with lifts to both platforms. It has substantial paid for car parking with overflow parking available in the SVR car park immediately adjacent. Kidderminster is ranked 452 out of nearly 2,500 stations in terms of passenger numbers. The peak hour frequency of trains to Birmingham has been reduced in recent years. The journey is also circuitous with frequent stops and slow for the mileage involved.
- 10.14. Many people drive to Stourbridge Junction which has a very large free car park with a more frequent service to Birmingham. Stourbridge Junction is ranked 405 out of nearly 2,500 stations in terms of passenger numbers. There is no direct service to London or other national destinations from Kidderminster which further encourages car use for these journeys. A direct service from Kidderminster to London via Oxford and to Bristol via Worcester and Cheltenham

would encourage better use of the rail network without the need to go into Birmingham, often in the wrong direction. The last train from Birmingham to Kidderminster is too early at 23:00. The first train on Sundays to Birmingham is too late at 09:46.

- 10.15. Discussion has taken place about the practicability of extending national rail services to Bewdley over the Severn Valley Railway (SVR). SVR owns the track which is fully integrated with the national rail network. Already, excursion services operate from the wider network to Bewdley, and the line is used extensively by operators accessing it to utilise sidings for temporary train storage. Work is needed to create a business case to extend network passenger rail services from Kidderminster to Bewdley which can also help to strengthen the commercial operations of the SVR.

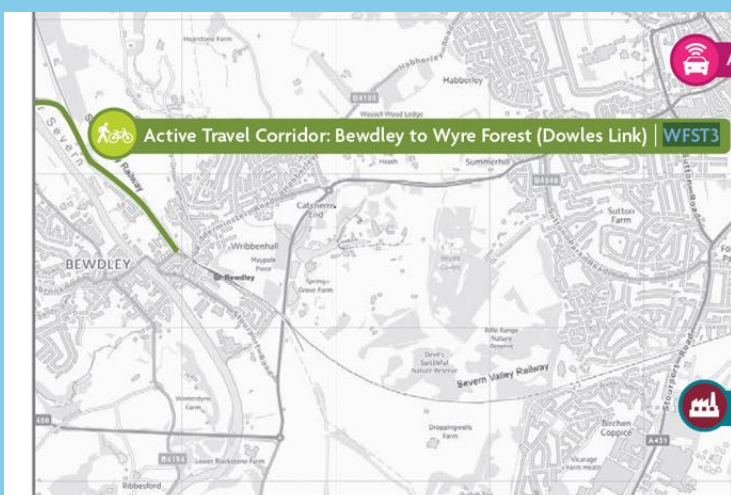
### Coaches

- 10.16. There is no coach parking in Bewdley Town Centre which adversely affects the tourism offer.

### Policy Considerations

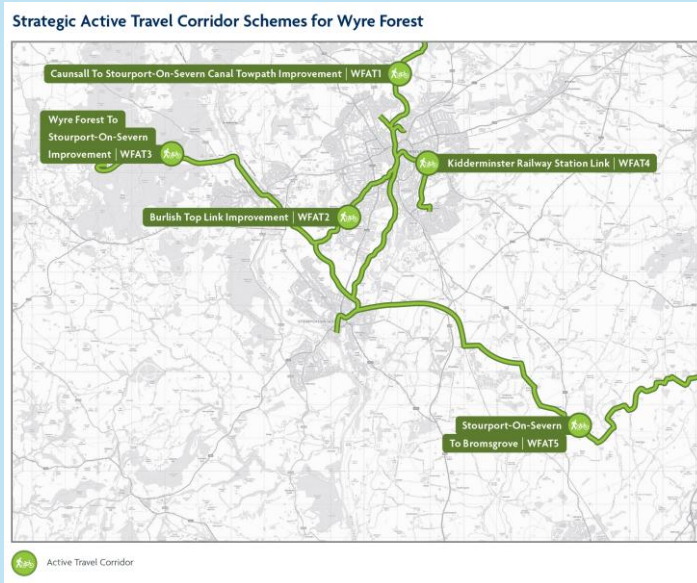
- 10.17. Worcestershire County Council (WCC) is responsible for public transport and highways. It is also responsible for managing provision of public rights of way and cycle routes. The authority produces several strategies and plans which are directly relevant to the issues raised about traffic, transport and active travel in Bewdley during the preparation of the NDP. In particular, the Local Transport Plan 4 for the period 2018-2030 (LTP4), the Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Local Walking and Cycling Improvement Plan for Bewdley (LCWIP) contain highly relevant measures and proposals. These are identified in Table 7.

**Table 7 – WCC Highways, Transport and Active Travel Proposals for Bewdley**

Plan	Measure
LTP4	<p>WFST3 Active Travel Corridor (potentially funded through LTP/Developer)</p> <p>An ‘Active Travel Corridor’ is systemic investment in walking and cycling links along the corridor to create a safe, comprehensive, integrated network linking residential areas with key trip attractors, including schools, rail stations, town centres and employment locations.</p> 
LTP4	<p>WFAT3 Wyre Forest to Stourport-On-Severn Improvement (Including the Dowles Link between Bewdley and the Wyre Forest), (potentially funded through LTP/Developer)</p> <p>An ‘Active Travel Corridor’ is systematic investment in walking and cycling links along the corridor to create a comprehensive, safe, integrated network linking key trip attractors, including schools, rail</p>

stations, town centres and employment locations. This will include surfacing, lighting and public realm improvements to create an attractive and coherent network.

Secure and sheltered secure cycling parking will be considered.



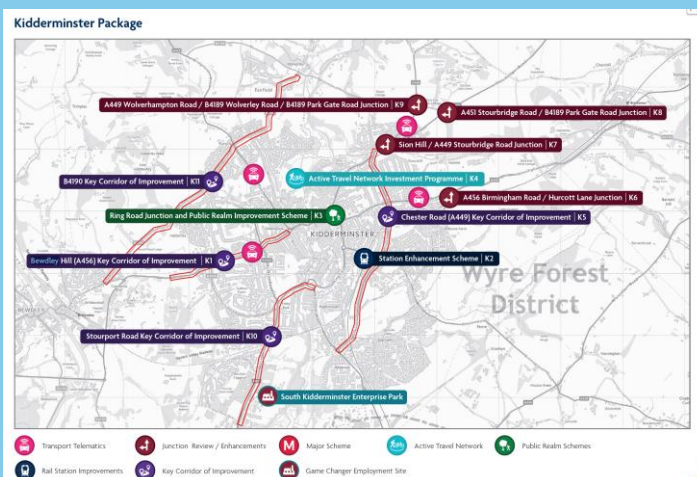
**LTP4** K1 Bewdley Hill (A456) Key Corridor of Improvement (including major junctions review including Crossley Retail Park access)

A systemic investment in a key corridor to improve infrastructure for all suitable transport modes, to enable the corridor to support increased economic activity (through quicker journey times and reduced congestion). This could include new technology (signals/signing) surfacing, lighting, enhanced walking/cycling infrastructure.

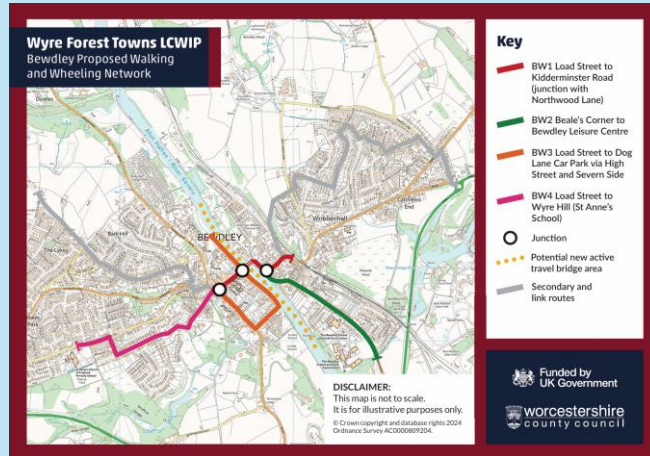
AND

K11 B4190 Key Corridor of Improvement (Wribbenhall to Wolverley, including junction with A442)

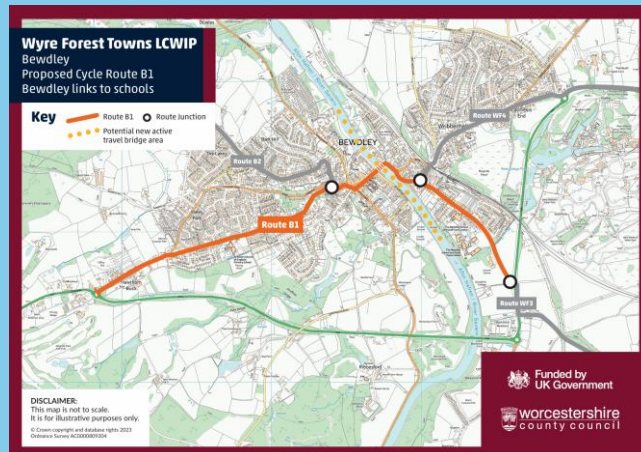
A systemic investment in a key corridor to improve infrastructure for all suitable transport modes, to enable the corridor to support increased economic activity (through quicker journey times and reduced congestion). This could include new technology (signals/signing) surfacing, lighting, enhanced walking/cycling infrastructure (which could include a pedestrian refuge on Habberley Road at the junction of Canterbury Road).



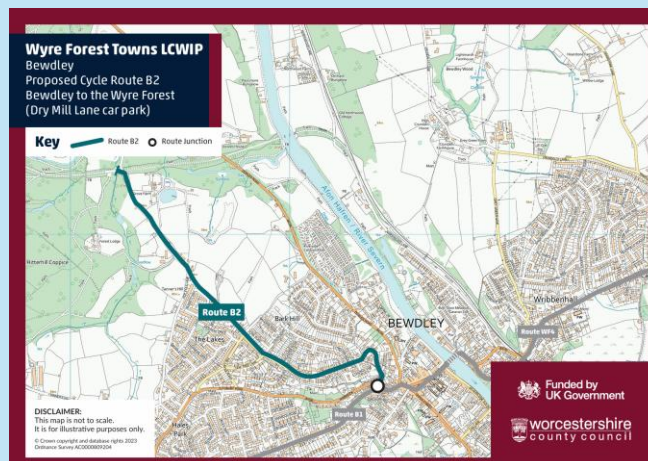
**LCWIP** Bewdley Proposed Walking and Wheeling Network




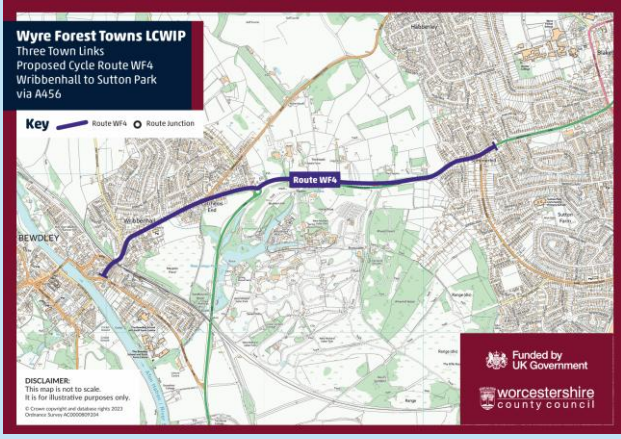
**LCWIP** Proposed Cycle Route 81 Bewdley links to Schools



**LCWIP** Proposed Cycle Route B2 Bewdley to the Wyre Forest (Dry Mill Lane car park)



**LCWIP** Proposed Cycle Route WF3 (Three Town Links) Bewdley Leisure Centre to Stourport-on-Severn via Burlish Top

	
<p><b>LCWIP</b></p>	<p>Proposed Cycle Route WF4 (Three Town Links) Wribbenhall to Sutton Park via A456</p> 
<p><b>BSIP</b></p>	<p><b>Worcestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)</b> - The Strategy focuses on road and rail passenger transport services within Worcestershire, including Home to School, bus, taxi, community transport and other community-based bespoke transport initiatives. The plan is based on the following Core Principles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Network Prioritisation:</b> Intensive services and investment on key strategic corridors, with routes that are more frequent, operate longer and are easier to understand. This will be supported by increase in bus priority. The Bewdley to Kidderminster Bus Route (No.8 Diamond Bus) is considered to be part of the strategic bus network (on a 15-30 minutes' service frequency). The WCC Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme (2025) indicates the provision of earlier bus services (from 06:10 and 06:40) between Kidderminster and Bewdley from January 2025. Priority network service is aimed to be more direct and faster services.</li> <li>• <b>Improving the image of Public Transport:</b> Local bus network presented as a safe and secure single system, with clear passenger information and branding. To provide excellent customer service (reflecting on customer surveys) supporting the delivery of our Passenger Charter.</li> <li>• <b>Alternative Service Provision:</b> Support strategic corridors through Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Community Transport with integrated service patterns with other modes. Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) may offer potential for Bewdley to improve local public transport access to the town centre for residents living up the hill and across the river. WCC is operating DRT in two pilot areas currently in Bromsgrove and Malvern Hills and in time this could be extended to other areas.</li> </ul>

- **Bus Infrastructure improvements:** Progress to a consistent, uniform and quality provision of infrastructure that is safe and secure and facilitates passenger transport use both on and off bus.
- **Modal Integration:** Focus on providing an integrated Passenger Transport network, including Hubs and Rail Stations. Bewdley lacks a mobility hub of this where bus services, parking, taxi services, coach drop off and collection, cycle parking and waiting facilities connect and integrate. A town centre location would be a sensible place for this if it could be achieved.
- **Technology and Innovation:** Recognise the importance that Technology and Systems play in the delivery of a sustainable and integrated Passenger Transport Network. The WCC Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme (2025) identifies the eastbound and westbound bus stops at Load St in Bewdley for investment to Smart Shelters with real time information facilities.
- **Fares and Ticketing:** Deliver lower and simpler fares with integrated ticketing between operator and modes.

10.18. Local aims and measures identified to improve transport and accessibility in Bewdley are considered in further detail in Table 8 in the context of the current framework of plans, strategies and delivery programmes in place in Worcestershire. Where possible, the relevant mechanisms for taking forward the identified priorities are set out and specific actions that could be taken are identified.

10.19. LCWIP identified priorities offer a clear connection to priorities to improve walking and cycling routes and these also tie-in with LTP4 proposals for active travel corridors and routes through Bewdley. These also offer scope to improve routes out of Bewdley to Stourport and Kidderminster.

10.20. The LTP4 Bewdley Transport Strategy provides a clear basis for a comprehensive assessment and promotion of measures that could deliver some improvements in accessibility, parking, traffic flow and air quality in the town centre whilst also improving tourism access and deliveries to businesses. Clearly, some aims require land/sites for delivery including potential car parking spaces, coach parking spaces and mobility hub with smart shelters and waiting facilities as indicated in the BSIP.

10.21. The LTP4 measures are indicated to be delivered through the Local Transport Programme and through development. The LCWIP will set out an indicative 15-year delivery programme which aims to prioritise those routes which offer the greatest benefit (across Wyre Forest). External funding (such as through Active Travel England), Council funding and development funding may help to deliver these schemes.

## **BEWDLEY 13 – TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT PRIORITIES IN BEWDLEY**

In commenting on and in determining planning applications for major development in Bewdley, Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest District Council should consider what opportunities there are for schemes to contribute to the delivery of local transport and accessibility priorities as outlined in Table 8 and summarised below.

**Key priorities for transport and travel improvements:**

### **Walking and Cycling**

- a) Provide separation of walking and cycling routes from car traffic.
- b) Ensure all walking routes to key local facilities and services have pavements.
- c) Improve footpaths to encourage walking.

### **Bus and Rail Travel**


- d) Re-introduce Sunday Bus Services.
- e) Extend bus services from Kidderminster later than 18:30.
- f) Increase bus service frequencies to Kidderminster and Stourport.
- g) Improve quality of bus fleet serving Bewdley.
- h) Extend national rail services to Bewdley from Kidderminster over the Severn Valley Railway.
- i) Improve bus accessibility through more direct services to Kidderminster Rail Station.

### **Car Parking and Traffic Management**

- j) Improved car parking for town centre businesses and residents.
- k) Improved car parking for visitors to the town centre.
- l) Provide coach parking for tourist visitors to Bewdley.
- m) Provide safe HGV delivery locations in the town centre.
- n) New roundabout at Junction of A456 and Stourport Road.
- o) Traffic management reorganisations in the town centre to remove conflicts, ease flow and improve air quality through Welch Gate.

**Table 8 - Bewdley Priorities for Transport and Accessibility Improvements**

Topic	Key aims for transport and travel improvements	Is there a framework for meeting these aims?	What actions are needed
<b>Vehicle Parking</b>	<p>Improved car parking for town centre businesses and residents.</p> <p>Improved car parking for visitors to the town centre.</p>	Take forward under BE1 Bewdley Transport Strategy of LTP4.	<p>A site is needed for additional car parking spaces which can serve the town centre. It would be necessary for this site to be identified.</p> <p>The Town Council reports a lack of potential sites. The only other action would be to publicise the need for car parking sites and encourage landowners to make their land available for this use.</p> <p>If there is no site, then the only available mechanism is changed management of existing off-street and on-street spaces using traffic regulations and price mechanisms.</p> <p>This would be combined with promotion of other forms of access to the town centre by non-car means.</p> <p>The Town Council should examine how much town centre car parking capacity is taken up by residents and businesses located there (and not available for shoppers/tourists).</p> <p>Improved signage is needed to direct drivers to existing car parks.</p>
<b>Vehicle Parking</b>	Provide coach parking for tourist visitors to Bewdley.	<p>Take forward under:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BE1 Bewdley Transport Strategy of LTP4</li> <li>2. BSIP principles in relation to mobility hubs.</li> </ol>	A Town Centre location designated for coach drop-off and pick-up would need to be identified (Traffic Regulation Order would be required) and an off-site coach parking area would need to be identified.
<b>Traffic Management</b>	Provide safe HGV delivery locations in the town centre.	Take forward under BE1 Bewdley Transport Strategy of LTP4.	Traffic Regulation Order would be required. On-street space designated for deliveries and traffic management restrictions on delivery hours could be considered if required.
<b>Traffic Management</b>	New roundabout at Junction of bypass and Stourport Road.	Take forward under BE1 Bewdley Transport Strategy of LTP4.	This would be a major investment with significant cost but is needed to ensure the intended benefits of the bypass are secured. At present, congestion impacts of the current traffic light junction are leading to drivers resuming use of the route through the town centre with

Topic	Key aims for transport and travel improvements	Is there a framework for meeting these aims?	What actions are needed
			consequent congestion impacts on the town centre and (especially) AQMA impacts.
<b>Traffic Management</b>	Traffic management reorganisations in the town centre to remove conflicts, ease flow and improve air quality through Welch Gate.	Take forward under BE1 Bewdley Transport Strategy of LTP4.	<p>Create case for proposed alterations as basis for engagement with WCC Highways. Traffic Regulation Order would be required.</p>  <p>PLAN A - BEWDLEY CENTRE</p>
<b>Walking</b>	Pedestrian bridge across the River Severn.	<p>Take forward under:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. WFST3 Active Travel Corridor.</li> <li>2. WFAT3 Wyre Forest to Stourport-On-Severn Improvement of LTP4.</li> </ol>	The pedestrian bridge would be a significant investment. Further work will be needed to create funding and programme delivery, as well as an agreed location and design.
<b>Walking</b>	<p>Provide separation of walking and cycling routes from car traffic.</p> <p>Ensure all walking routes to key local facilities and services have pavements.</p>	<p>Take forward under:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BE1 Bewdley Transport Strategy of LTP4.</li> <li>2. K1 Bewdley Hill (A456) Key Corridor of Improvement of LTP4.</li> <li>3. K11 B4190 Key Corridor of Improvement of LTP4.</li> <li>4. Proposed Cycle Route 81 Bewdley links to Schools of LCWIP.</li> </ol>	<p>This would be achieved through either provision of separate routes or through reallocation of the use of existing highway land.</p> <p>It is likely that there will be insufficient space to provide separation of routes, or to reallocate space on some already narrow roads where the problem is greatest in Bewdley.</p>

Topic	Key aims for transport and travel improvements	Is there a framework for meeting these aims?	What actions are needed
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Bewdley Proposed Walking and Wheeling Network of LCWIP.</li> <li>6. Proposed Cycle Route B2 Bewdley to the Wyre Forest.</li> <li>7. Proposed Cycle Route WF3 (Three Town Links) Bewdley Leisure Centre to Stourport-on-Severn via Burlish Top.</li> <li>8. Proposed Cycle Route WF4 (Three Town Links) Wribbenhall to Sutton Park via A456.</li> </ol>	<p>The Town Council could assess the quality, safety and convenience of key walking and cycling routes (for daily activities) using national LTN1/20 guidance as a broad framework.</p>
<b>Walking</b>	<p>Improve footpaths to encourage walking.</p>	<p>Take forward under:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BE1 Bewdley Transport Strategy of LTP4.</li> <li>2. K1 Bewdley Hill (A456) Key Corridor of Improvement of LTP4.</li> <li>3. K11 B4190 Key Corridor of Improvement of LTP4.</li> <li>4. Proposed Cycle Route 81 Bewdley links to Schools of LCWIP.</li> <li>5. Bewdley Proposed Walking and Wheeling Network of LCWIP.</li> <li>6. Proposed Cycle Route B2 Bewdley to the Wyre Forest.</li> <li>7. Proposed Cycle Route WF3 (Three Town Links) Bewdley Leisure Centre to Stourport-on-Severn via Burlish Top.</li> <li>8. Proposed Cycle Route WF4 (Three Town Links) Wribbenhall to Sutton Park via A456.</li> </ol>	<p>This can be achieved through investment to improve footpath conditions.</p> <p>Requires agreement of landowners to provide/improve footpaths to good standard on their land.</p> <p>Requires investment through development or through public or private investment.</p>
<b>Bus Use</b>	<p>Re-introduce Sunday Bus Services.</p>	<p>BSIP Principles</p>	<p>There may be scope to argue for this in relation to services on the priority network.</p> <p>There may be evidence that could be collected to demonstrate the benefits of a Sunday bus service to the weekend tourism economy.</p>

Topic	Key aims for transport and travel improvements	Is there a framework for meeting these aims?	What actions are needed
			Otherwise, alternative forms and transport services may need to be campaigned for.
<b>Bus Use</b>	Extend bus services from Kidderminster later than 18:30.	BSIP Principles	There may be scope to argue for this in relation to services on the priority network.  Otherwise, alternative forms and transport services may need to be campaigned for.
<b>Bus Use</b>	Increase bus service frequencies to Kidderminster and Stourport.	BSIP Principles – The No.8 Diamond Bus Service has recently been removed.	A business case is needed for direct bus services to Kidderminster and Stourport and for these to be included in the priority network.
<b>Bus Use</b>	Improve quality of bus fleet.	BSIP Principles - Through its BSIP, WCC is focused on ensuring that operators provide reliable and high-quality buses.	None identified.
<b>Rail Use</b>	Extend national rail services to Bewdley over the Severn Valley Railway.	Liaison with Worcestershire County Council, Network Rail and DfT	Work with Severn Valley Railway (SVR) to prepare a business case for the extension of network passenger rail services from Kidderminster to Bewdley on the existing SVR track.
<b>Rail Use</b>	Improve accessibility through more direct connections by rail.	Kidderminster is one of only two stations in Worcestershire on the national rail network (i.e. more than local services). The lack of direct connections out of the area is recognised as an issue.	None identified.

## 11. Monitoring, Delivery and Review

- 11.1. The NDP seeks to achieve outcomes which will require further actions, active monitoring and periodic review to determine whether objectives and policies are being achieved and observed. Key requirements are identified in Table 9 below.
- 11.2. Broad policy principles are set out in Local Plan policies and the NPPF. NDP policies are based on more detailed local evidence to support objectives and requirements. It is important for this information to be up to date. Several policies in the NDP would benefit from regular survey updates to show trend information and provide the most up-to-date information that will be important when commenting on relevant planning applications.
- 11.3. The effectiveness of NDP policies should be subject to on-going review with an annual review mechanism based on an understanding of planning outcomes.
- 11.4. Some policy measures need hard and qualitative data to answer the question whether the policy intention has been delivered.
- 11.5. On an annual basis, Bewdley Town Council will prepare a report to consider the effectiveness of the NDP and to note new or emerging issues to address in a future review.

**Table 9 - Monitoring for NDP Policies**

NDP Policy	Action required to deliver and monitor policy implementation	Timescale
BEWDLEY 1	Maintain up to date information on capacity, use and quality of local community facilities.  Engage with applicants over contributions to improved community infrastructure.  Comment on planning applications and monitor outcomes.	Annual Review of policy effectiveness based on contributions secure, state of local provision and planning decisions.
BEWDLEY 2	Maintain up to date information on forecast need, capacity, use and quality of local community facilities.  Engage with applicants over contributions to improved community infrastructure.  Comment on planning applications and monitor outcomes.	Annual Review of policy effectiveness based on contributions secure, state of local provision and planning decisions.
BEWDLEY 3	Use local understanding of housing needs to comment on planning applications.	Ongoing review of policy effectiveness based on planning application outcomes.
BEWDLEY 4	Visit to review the quality of completed development schemes against local design guidance and codes.	Every two years.
BEWDLEY 5	Comment on planning applications and listed building consent applications and monitor outcomes.	Ongoing review of policy effectiveness based on planning application outcomes.
BEWDLEY 6	Comment on planning applications and monitor outcomes.	Ongoing review.

NDP Policy	Action required to deliver and monitor policy implementation	Timescale
	Visit sensitive landscape areas to review whether there is change and if there is, how it is impacting on landscape quality.	Every two years.
BEWDLEY 7	Comment on planning applications and monitor outcomes.	Ongoing review.
BEWDLEY 8	<p>Measure the change in area devoted to biodiversity improvements and local nature recovery.</p> <p>Maintain a documentary record (date/time and photographic details) of local flood incidents and use in comments on planning applications where relevant. Monitor outcomes. Share with the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority.</p>	<p>After 3 years.</p> <p>On-going action and review.</p>
BEWDLEY 9	<p>Maintain up to date record of parking provision in Bewdley Town Centre and monitor the impact of development proposals on net provision.</p> <p>Engage with Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council over policy objectives to address parking policies, traffic management and improvements to public transport.</p>	<p>Ongoing review.</p> <p>Every two years.</p>
BEWDLEY 10	<p>Survey visitor accommodation to measure change in provision over time.</p> <p>Comment on planning applications and monitor outcomes</p>	<p>Every two years.</p> <p>Ongoing review.</p>
BEWDLEY 11	Survey visitors to markets to understand where visitors come from and what they value from the markets and the rest of the town centre.	Every two years.
BEWDLEY 12	<p>Survey town centre uses to provide current position and to measure change.</p> <p>Comment on planning applications and monitor outcomes.</p>	<p>Every two years.</p> <p>Ongoing review.</p>
BEWDLEY 13	Engage with Wyre Forest District Council, Worcestershire County Council and other stakeholders to progress priorities identified in policy. Review state of progress.	Annual Review.