

10. The public response to COVID-19, including much greater use of green spaces, and increased walking and cycling, has also highlighted the importance to people of green spaces, homes with gardens, and facilities that are easily accessible by non-car modes. The proposed Local Plan includes significant new areas of publicly accessible green space. The Eastern Extension site will convert 88ha of farmland into 1400 homes including more than 40ha of green infrastructure, with public footpaths linking the site to an extensive network of footpaths beyond the site (including the long-distance Monarchs Way). The Eastern Extension site also adjoins the Offmore Farm and Comberton Estate neighbourhoods, both of which have very little publicly accessible open space, and so would significantly improve existing local residents' access to open space. Lea Castle Village includes significant amounts of green space with paths/cycleways. In accordance with the reasoned justification paragraph 33.38 for Policy 33.21 of the Local Plan, the Burlish golf course is being managed by the local authority as a nature reserve as part of a long term vision to create a Country Park. Funding has been sought to develop a cycle route through it, further increasing residents' access to green spaces.

11. **Conclusion:** The three changes in circumstance between September 2019 and June 2020 discussed above pull in different directions:

Change in circumstance	Expected changes: June 2020 compared to Sep. 2019	
	No. homes required to 2036	Employment land required to 2036
Brexit	↓	↓
Population projections	↑	↑
COVID-19	↓ with more access to green space	↓ temporarily, then possibly ↑ post 2020

12. Brexit and COVID-19 suggest that the Wyre Forest Local Plan would need to change its housing and employment land numbers downward, at least in the short to medium term. In contrast, the most recent population projections suggest that the Local Plan should change its housing and employment land numbers upward. Open space is expected to become more valued.

13. Given the volatility of circumstances – it is not yet clear whether Brexit will be hard or soft, whether coronavirus will have a second spike or not etc. – the alternatives considered for the Wyre Forest Local Plan, in terms of number and location of development, continue to be reasonable, as do the choices of preferred alternatives. The Local Plan review, which will be carried out within five years of plan adoption, will provide an opportunity to revisit these alternatives depending on how the next year or two work out.