

Cusop Parish Council

**CUSOP
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN
2011-2031**

final draft

August 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. The Cusop Neighbourhood Development Plan (hereafter referred to as "the Plan") is a neighbourhood development plan under Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. The Plan will have effect from 2011 to 2031.
3. The Plan relates to the whole of the Cusop Parish Neighbourhood Area which was designated by Herefordshire Council on 6th September 2012 at the request of Cusop Parish Council. The Neighbourhood Area covers the same area as the Civil Parish of Cusop and is shown on Map 1.
4. Cusop Parish Council decided in 2012 to make a neighbourhood development plan and set up the Cusop Planning Project Group, "to act on behalf of the Parish Council as a volunteer steering group to organise the drafting of a Cusop Parish Development Plan and Parish Plan Update, following good practice".
5. The main activity of the Project Group was to organise a thorough consultation of the residents of Cusop to ensure that the Plan so far as possible reflected the consensus view of the Parish. In 2013 there was a well-publicised "drop-in event" at which residents were encouraged to identify the main matters of concern. In 2014 a questionnaire about the policy options relating to those matters was drawn up and distributed to and collected by hand from every resident aged 16 and over. The return rate was 79% and decisive preferences were expressed for most policies. The scope of the Plan and its Policies were determined by these consultations. Formal 'Regulation 14' public consultation of a draft Plan was undertaken in August/September 2015 and a number of helpful comments were received. The final amended draft Plan was submitted to Herefordshire Council early in 2017.

Objectives of the Plan

6. The Plan contributes to sustainable development as defined by the English 'National Planning Policy Framework'. This identifies three dimensions - social, economic, and environmental - to such development. The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 (hereafter referred to as the "Core Strategy") carries these forward through three strategic objectives of Social Progress, Economic Prosperity, and Environmental Quality. In its turn the Plan addresses these in three sections - Homes, Business, and Environment - with one overarching place-shaping policy for Location of Development.

7. Thus the Plan is designed to sit within the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy and is founded largely on its evidence base. The Plan amplifies these with the following objectives which reflect the particular needs of the parish and which were identified during consultation and drafting as being of special concern to the community:

- (a) To enable development while protecting the local environment by maintaining a clear visual and functional distinction between built-up areas and countryside.
- (b) To enable sufficient new housing while maintaining or improving the balance of housing in terms of size, design and neighbourhood impact.
- (c) To enable the growth of the local economy while protecting and strengthening its distinctive character.
- (d) To protect the local environment by identifying locally distinctive assets.

8. On many matters the detailed policies of the Core Strategy can be applied to proposals in Cusop without need of additional policies in the Plan, but, where there could be uncertainty about this, the Plan says so. It sets out policies only on matters that benefit from greater detail at the parish level than the Core Strategy provides.

Background

9. Cusop is a typically rural west Herefordshire parish with a small population settled in extensive and beautiful hilly countryside. It is smaller than some such parishes: just 2,300 acres wedged between the Welsh communities of Llanigon and Hay in the west and Clifford parish in the east. It descends from the slopes of the Black Mountains in the south - where it borders the parishes of Dorstone, Michaelchurch Escley and Craswall - down to the River Wye in the north - where it faces Clyro community across the river. It has a resident population of 356 in 159 households (2011 Census), mostly clustered around the Hay-to-Bredwardine road and the lower end of the Cusop Dingle road. There is another cluster of housing, and also of employment land, around the Hay-to-Clifford road where the parish adjoins neighbouring Hay. Typically for the rural west it has an unusually high proportion of self-employed people and small businesses.

10. Cusop is defined in the Core Strategy as a rural settlement and is subject to its "place-shaping policies" for Rural Areas. It falls within the exclusively rural Golden Valley Housing Market Area for the development of strategic housing policy and within the Rural Heartland area for employment strategy.

11. One distinctive feature of Cusop as a rural parish is its closeness to the Welsh town of Hay-on-Wye which is within walking distance of much of the parish and provides some of the jobs and services of Cusop residents. It is thus influenced by the economy

of Hay, and also makes a contribution to it. This has been taken into account in the Plan. Nevertheless Cusop remains a distinctive community, as it has been since the Domesday Book in which it appears as a parish, separated then as now from Wales by the Dulas Brook.

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

12. For planning purposes Cusop has had a Settlement Boundary around its main residential area since at least 1989 (a detached commercial and residential area at Newport Street was added to the Boundary in 2007). The Plan retains this Settlement Boundary as an effective and well-established means of guiding development to appropriate areas and helping to maintain a clear visual and functional distinction between built-up areas and countryside. The close approach of open countryside to the boundaries of the Cusop and Hay settlements is much valued by their communities and is important to tourism. The Boundary by its location also ensures that development is whenever appropriate within walking or cycling distance of the facilities of Cusop and Hay, including bus services. To ensure consistency and transparency for existing and future property owners, the Boundary line has been retained unchanged except where new development has been allocated adjoining it.

Policy 1 - Settlement Boundary

New housing and other development should normally be located within the Cusop Settlement Boundary (Map 2). All land outside this Boundary for planning purposes will be treated as countryside and will be subject to Core Strategy Policies RA3, RA4, RA5, and RA6.

HOMES

13. The number and type of new homes promoted in the Plan are derived from the strategic and place-shaping policies of the Core Strategy and its housing evidence base. Cusop falls within the Golden Valley Housing Market Area and is one of eighteen settlements in that Area identified by the Core Strategy for proportionate housing development. The Core Strategy minimum housing target for these settlements is an increase of 12% in the number of dwellings in the parish over the period 2011-2031. For Cusop which has 183 dwellings within the parish (2011 census) this means at least 22 new homes by 2031.

14. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority confirmed to Herefordshire Council during the preparation of the Core Strategy that it was not seeking to meet any of the Park's new housing or other land use needs on the Herefordshire side of the border. Its own Local Development Plan which was adopted in 2013 fully addressed its needs and this included the development of new housing in Hay. The Plan therefore does not address Hay's housing requirements.

15. The 2007 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan allocated a site for 25 new homes on the east side of Newport Street. Outline planning permission for its development was given in 2013 and its development would therefore fall within the period of the Plan and contribute to the achievement of the Core Strategy's housing target for Cusop. In effect, there is an established commitment to this site, but regardless of this it is an appropriate location for high-density housing because it is close to services and adjoins an established settlement.

16. In addition 6 windfall housing developments have received permission in the first five years of the Plan. Projected forward this could mean about 24 windfall homes over the Plan period. Together with the allocated Newport Street site this could lead to a total of 49 new homes over the period. Even if the rate of windfall development slows down, new housing in Cusop will still substantially exceed the Core Strategy minimum housing target. The proximity to services and the state of the immediate housing market may make this level of development viable, but anything beyond would amount to excessive pressure on a small community and on local services. The community of Cusop is therefore satisfied that no additional sites should be allocated in the Plan.

17. The Newport Street allocated site is prominent and, in addition to applying the general housing and design policies of the Plan, the design of the development should

have regard for its prominent position on a main approach road into Hay. In particular the Newport Street frontage should present a continuation in position and massing of the existing houses on the same side of the street to the south. In addition the silhouette and location of houses across the site should be such as to minimise their visual impact when viewed from countryside to the east. Buildings should not exceed two storeys.

18. A housing needs survey has identified the need for new affordable housing units. Because of this and because the Newport Street allocation is the only large site that will come forward during the Plan period, it is important that the Core Strategy Policy H1 indicative target for affordable housing in the development is met in full. Given the proximity to services, housing for older people is encouraged. The developer should also make a contribution to improving pedestrian movement to and from the site.

Policy 2 - Newport Street Housing Allocation

Land on the east side of Newport Street (Map 2) is allocated for the development of at least twenty-five new dwellings including affordable housing. The design of the development should have regard for its location on a main approach road to Hay and should minimise its visual impact when viewed from countryside to the east.

Policy 3 - New dwellings within the Settlement Boundary

New dwellings may be developed elsewhere within the Settlement Boundary provided that they meet the requirements of all the other relevant policies in this neighbourhood plan and the development plan generally.

19. The Core Strategy seeks a range and mix of new housing that helps create balanced and inclusive communities. Its study of the Golden Valley housing market has identified that the need for new housing, both market and affordable, is overwhelmingly for units of three or fewer bedrooms. Cusop, like the rest of the Golden Valley, already has proportionately more dwellings of four or more bedrooms than the county as a whole. With its established areas of settlement, including employment land, and its closeness to the services of Hay, Cusop is well-placed to help redress the balance by encouraging new dwellings with three or fewer bedrooms.

20. The more intensive use of existing dwellings can be another valuable source of housing provision, either by the sub-division of an existing dwelling or by dividing the curtilage of an existing dwelling and constructing a new dwelling within it. However, it is important that such changes do not have a negative impact of the character and amenity of the properties immediately surrounding them.

Policy 4 - Size of Dwellings

New dwellings should be of three or fewer bedrooms. Exceptionally proposals for new dwellings of four or more bedrooms will be permitted where they are for single dwellings on small plots and match the character of their immediate neighbourhood.

Policy 5 - Extension of Dwellings

Extension to an existing dwelling will be permitted where the original building (that is, as at 1 July 1948 or as originally built if constructed later than this date, and not including any subsequent extensions) would remain the dominant feature, and where it does not have a negative impact on the character of the dwelling or on the amenity of adjoining dwellings or on the character of the immediate neighbourhood.

Policy 6 - Conversion of residential buildings.

Sub-division, and/or change between or within use classes C2 and C3, of existing dwellings or residential institutions will be permitted where it does not require significant extension to, or additional outbuilding within the curtilage of, the existing building and where it does not have a negative impact on the character of the building or on the amenity of adjoining dwellings or on the character of the immediate neighbourhood. Proposals to provide accommodation for the elderly will be especially welcome.

Policy 7 - New dwellings within the curtilage of existing dwellings

Division of the curtilage of an existing dwelling within the Settlement Boundary for the development of one or more new dwellings will be permitted where it does not have a negative impact on the character of the dwelling or on the amenity of adjoining dwellings or on the character of the immediate neighbourhood.

21. The minor roads of Cusop are mostly narrow with very few places where vehicles can park constantly without obstructing passing vehicles or pedestrians.

Policy - 8 Parking.

All proposals under Policies 4, 6, and 7 must incorporate enough off-road parking spaces to meet the normal requirements of all retained and new residential units in full occupation. In the case of proposals under Policy 5 there must be no net loss of off-road parking spaces.

Infrastructure

22. Many of the social, community, sports and recreation facilities used by Cusop residents are in neighbouring Hay. Cusop also has its own much-valued Village Hall and Playing Field (children's playground) and these are to be safeguarded: Core Strategy Policies SC1 and OS3 address this need without need of further detailed policies in the Plan.

BUSINESS

23. The business policies of the Plan are built on the rural employment policies of the Core Strategy, notably Policy RA6, and draw on its employment evidence base. Because Cusop's economy also has much in common with that of Hay and its hinterland, the Plan also draws on the evidence base of the Brecon Beacons National Park and Powys Local Development Plans.

24. The economy of Cusop has the characteristics of the Herefordshire "Rural Heartland", but it is also influenced by the nearby market town of Hay. Cusop residents rely on Hay for some jobs and services. The predominant Cusop land use is still agricultural, but this supports not just farming, but indirectly tourism too because of the beauty of Cusop's farmed landscape. This benefits Hay which is the focus for tourism, and thus Cusop itself. The view from Hay of Cusop's countryside is an important element of the town's attractiveness to visitors.

25. Cusop has a relatively low level of formal employment, mainly because of a high proportion of retired people (30% of the population is 65 years or over compared with 21% for Herefordshire as a whole - 2011 census). However, they should not be considered economically inactive in any but the formal sense: most remain healthy and contribute substantially to the wider social and cultural economy of the area, often as volunteers, and their expenditure is injected into the local economy. Among the formally employed nearly half are self-employed, often working from home or from premises in Hay, and this generates the characteristic economic profile of the area, being overwhelmingly small businesses. This predominance of small and varied businesses makes for a flexible, sociable and thriving local economy, buffered from the pressures and risks of dependence on large enterprises, and is much valued by the community.

26. The aim of the Plan is to encourage the growth of this distinctive economy, while protecting the environment that underpins it, especially by directing development to the most appropriate locations within the settlement or where necessary within the countryside.

27. A large number of people work at or from home and allowing as much flexibility as possible for this, while protecting the local environment and residential amenity, is the highest economic priority of the Plan. Core Strategy Policy E3 provides this flexibility. Good communications, especially broadband and mobile phone reception, are also very important, but not directly a matter for the Plan.

28. The nature of the local economy is such that there is relatively little demand for allocated employment land. Much of the demand is satisfied by a wide variety of existing premises in nearby Hay, especially retail and office space. In addition there is a substantial allocation of employment land in Cusop itself, on the west side of Newport Street. Although classed as only 'moderate' by Herefordshire standards, the existence and integrity of this stretch of land is an important element of the parish's economic mix. It is also provides significant services and employment for neighbouring Hay. So the Plan strengthens the safeguarding of this land.

29. It is also prudent to allow for some extension of the Newport Street allocation. The very small scale of the local market makes the extent and timing of this need hard to quantify at this stage. Moreover, new employment land has already been allocated by the Powys LDP to the west of Hay and this is likely to satisfy demand in the wider area for the first part of the period of the Plan. To promote the distinctive local economy the extended allocation will be available for small workshops and industrial units. Storage, retail and office space are not an appropriate part of this mix except as a lesser element of another workshop-based use.

30. Where growing local businesses need dedicated employment land, existing and prospective employment land in Cusop and Hay should meet this need and developers will be guided towards this land. While some businesses may prefer to be located in the countryside, most can be based satisfactorily within existing settlements.

31. Nevertheless there are land-based businesses, mainly farming and some tourism enterprises, that need to be based in the countryside and these enterprises are important: as well as providing direct and indirect employment, they help maintain a landscape that is highly valued by residents and visitors. It is another priority of the Plan to enable such business to grow and diversify, while protecting the most sensitive locations from negative impact.

Policy 9 - Safeguarding of Newport Street employment land

The existing employment land on the west side of Newport Street (Map 2) will be safeguarded from redevelopment for non-employment uses unless there is clear evidence of a long-term market surplus of employment land in Cusop, Hay and the neighbouring communities.

Policy 10 - Extension of Newport Street employment land

Land to the north of the existing Newport Street employment land (Map 2) is allocated for Class B1 employment use. The land may be developed from 2021 onward provided that there is clear evidence of unmet market need at the time for employment land in Cusop, Hay and the neighbouring communities. The land should be developed as small workshops or light industrial units. Storage, retail or office use will not be appropriate except as a lesser element of a workshop or light industrial use. This land will be safeguarded for employment use until so developed, and once developed, this land will be safeguarded from redevelopment for non-employment uses unless there is clear evidence of a long-term market surplus of employment land in Cusop, Hay and the neighbouring communities. Development proposals will need to be accompanied by a flood risk assessment.

Policy 11 - Employment-generating proposals outside the Settlement Boundary

Employment-generating proposals will be permitted outside the Settlement Boundary only where they

- (a) re-use existing redundant buildings in accordance with Core Strategy Policy RA5, or
- (b) are activities such as farming or some types of tourism that can function effectively only if based within the countryside, or
- (c) are small-scale extensions or diversifications of existing businesses at their existing locations.

In the case of proposals that would have a significant effect on any of Cusop's Locally Distinctive Assets (Policies 12, 13, and 14), their impact will be considered exceptionally carefully and applicants will be expected to provide evidence of why the proposal cannot be located elsewhere.

ENVIRONMENT

32. All of Cusop's environment is of high quality and requires the rigorous application of Core Strategy Policies LD1-4 and SD1-4. In addition, there are three locally distinctive assets that are much valued by the community and by visitors and for which the Plan provides more detailed policies. The Plan also includes more detailed policies on Avoiding Light Pollution and on Design.

33. Cusop also has a number of heritage or natural assets which are valued by the community as local assets, but these are protected by Core Strategy Policies LD1-LD4 without need of additional detailed policies in the Plan. In particular, Cusop Church, Castle and Mill form a much valued group and their collective setting should be protected by the rigorous application of Policy LD4.

34. The Plan acknowledges the importance of the development of renewable energy, especially small-scale schemes appropriate to Cusop's environment, but this is fully addressed by Core Strategy Policy SD2, subject to the application of the other policies in the Plan, and the Plan does not require more detailed policies. The Plan does not identify sites suitable for wind energy generation.

Locally Distinctive Assets

35. *Cusop Hill*. The most important and extensive locally distinctive asset is the Cusop Hill ridge which stretches from Mousecastle Wood in the north as far as Cefn Hill (outside the Parish) to the south. It is a dominant landscape feature which can be seen not just from within Cusop, but from a wide area of countryside beyond. It is especially important to the setting of Hay town and the approaches to the town. It also connects with the Black Mountain ridges to the west within the Brecon Beacons National Park and is thus important to the setting of the Park as well. It has special environmental value for the people of Cusop and Hay, but also economic value through tourism.

36. The visual extent of the Hill is largely defined by the ridgelines which are shown on Map 3 by pecked lines. The western slopes beneath the ridgelines, viewed from the west or north-west, are extremely important and any developments on them would need very careful consideration. Depending on their nature and the directions from which they could be viewed, developments quite far down the slopes may need to be assessed for their impact on views of the Hill. Developments beyond the Hill to the

east or south-east may also need assessment if they would be visible above the ridgelines.

Policy 12 - Cusop Hill

Development proposals must protect the character and scenic beauty of Cusop Hill and views of it from the Cusop settlement and Parish. The extent of this Asset and the directions of views of it for the purposes of this Policy are shown on Map 3.

37. *Black Lion Fields*. The fields behind the Village Hall are less dramatic but are much valued by the community as an attractive green space crossed by public footpaths, including the Wye Valley Walk, and as a natural green break between the northern and southern parts of the Cusop settlement. The views across the fields, especially looking down from the line of the old Hay Town Walls, are much valued. The fields rise eastwards towards a low ridge which naturally defines the extent of the land and of views. It is shown on Map 3 by a pecked line. Any development within this area would need to be considered very carefully for its impact.

Policy 13 - Black Lion Fields

Development proposals must protect the characteristic open space and views of Black Lion Fields. The extent of this Asset and the direction of views of it for the purposes of this Policy are shown on Map 3.

38. *Dulas Brook and Cusop Dingle*. The Dulas Brook flows north-west along the western Parish boundary until it joins the River Wye (see Map 3). It delineates the border between the Cusop Parish in England and Llanigon and Hay Communities in Wales. Upstream of Cusop Castle it flows through the steep-sided valley of Cusop Dingle. Together the Brook and the Dingle form a much-loved landscape feature. In particular the public road (and higher up footpath) through the Dingle, much of it running alongside the Brook, is a popular amenity for both residents and visitors.

39. The River Wye is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which has the highest level of environmental protection under the Habitats Regulations. Any development that might affect the water quality of the Dulas Brook might in turn affect the SAC and would therefore need assessment under those Regulations. The Brook itself and its tributaries, principally the Nantylglasdwr Brook which flows down from Cusop Hill and joins the Dulas just before its confluence with the Wye, form a 'water body' that is

itself protected by the Water Framework Regulations and any development that might affect the quality of the water would need assessment under these Regulations. It should be noted that most of the Parish falls within the catchment of the Dulas water body.

40. The western side of the Brook and the Dingle fall within the area of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and it is assumed that this Policy will be supported and amplified by the appropriate application of the Authority's own policies to any developments in its area that could affect the Brook or the Dingle.

Policy 14 - Dulas Brook

Development proposals must protect the character and scenic beauty and biodiversity of the Dulas Brook and of its setting including Cusop Dingle.

Avoiding Light Pollution

41. Cusop adjoins the Brecon Beacons National Park. The whole Park was recognised as an International Dark Skies Reserve in 2013 and the Park Authority has adopted planning policies to minimise light pollution that could affect the dark skies. Those policies identify areas immediately outside the Park as an 'external zone' where light pollution could also affect the Reserve and encourage planning authorities to make provision in their own policies. The community of Cusop endorses such protection, not just to assist in the protection of the Reserve but to protect the character and amenity of the Parish itself.

42. The effects upon the Reserve of new development that includes external lighting should, in particular, be fully assessed by developers and local planning authority, preferably utilising guidance produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals. Where necessary, provisions should be made to ensure measures to reduce glare, light trespass, scenic intrusion and sky glow are complied with. Where external lighting is essential developers should explore the most appropriate means of meeting the need while mitigating wider effects.

Policy 15 - Avoiding Light Pollution

Development proposals containing external lighting should demonstrate that the lighting is essential and that its design and operation will minimise impact on dark skies. In particular, they should demonstrate that the luminance level and period of illumination are the least necessary for the lighting to perform its function and that there will be no or minimal spillage beyond the property boundary.

Design

43. The predominance of locally distinctive styles and materials in the Parish's buildings and their close relationship with the landscape is a valued feature of Cusop and should be protected in the design of new or extended buildings. At the same time the importance of satisfying modern functional needs, especially energy conservation standards is recognised. In terms of materials in some places this means local sandstone for walls and slate for roofs, although in many places other materials and styles have been used and give those immediate places their character, for example rendered cottages or Edwardian red-brick houses. The key principle is that the designs of buildings should respect their immediate neighbourhoods and take their cue in styles and materials from their neighbours insofar as this is practical to meet functional needs.

Policy 16 - Design

The design of new buildings and extensions to existing buildings should deploy locally distinctive styles and materials and in particular respect their immediate neighbourhoods in terms of styles, materials, siting, scale, layout, roofline, proportions and massing. Different styles and materials will be permitted if there is clear evidence that higher energy conservation standards cannot be achieved without them.

MAPS

Map 1 - Cusop Parish Neighbourhood Area

Map 2 - Cusop Village Policies Map

Map 3 - Locally Distinctive Assets

Not to Scale



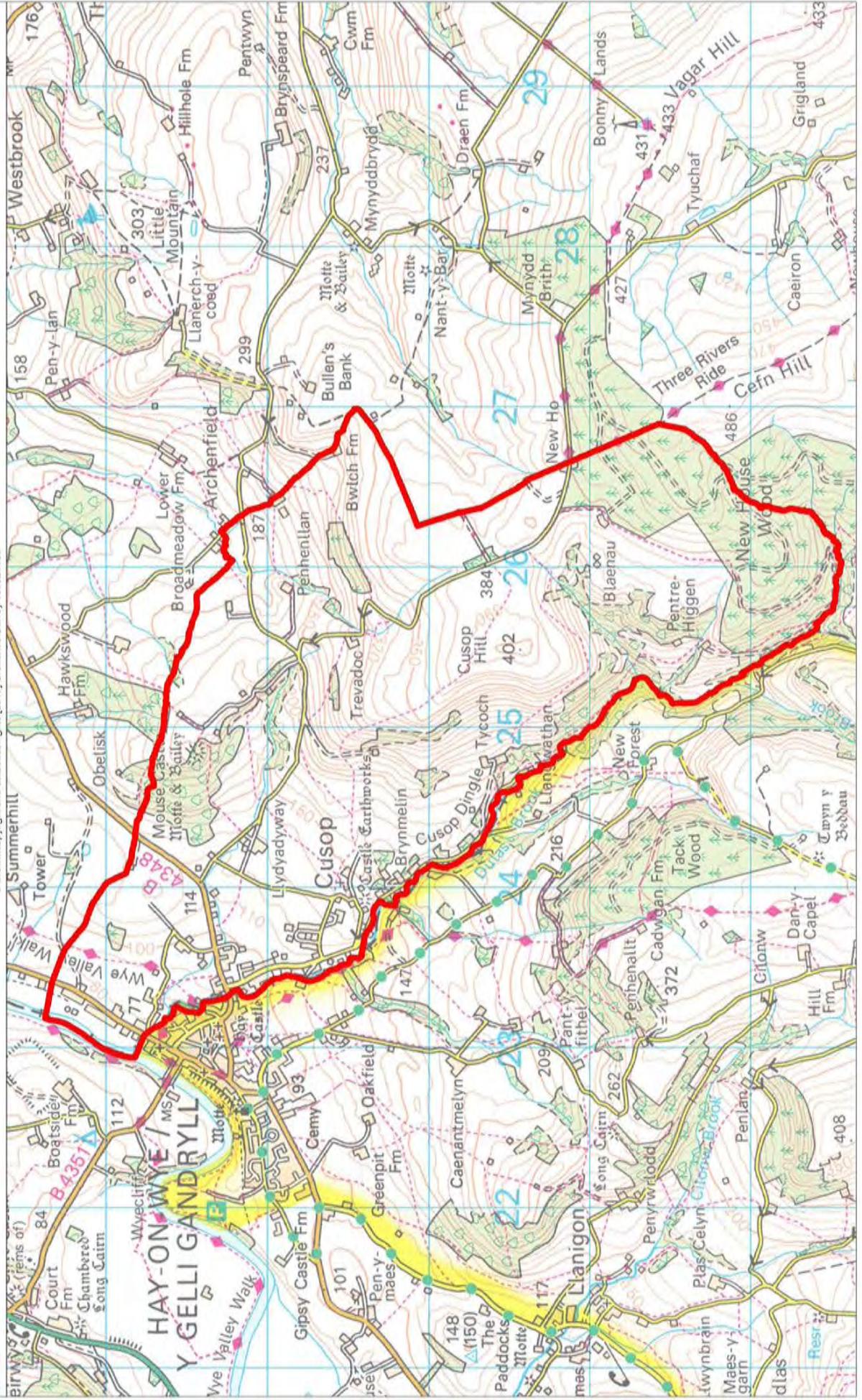
Neighbourhood Area

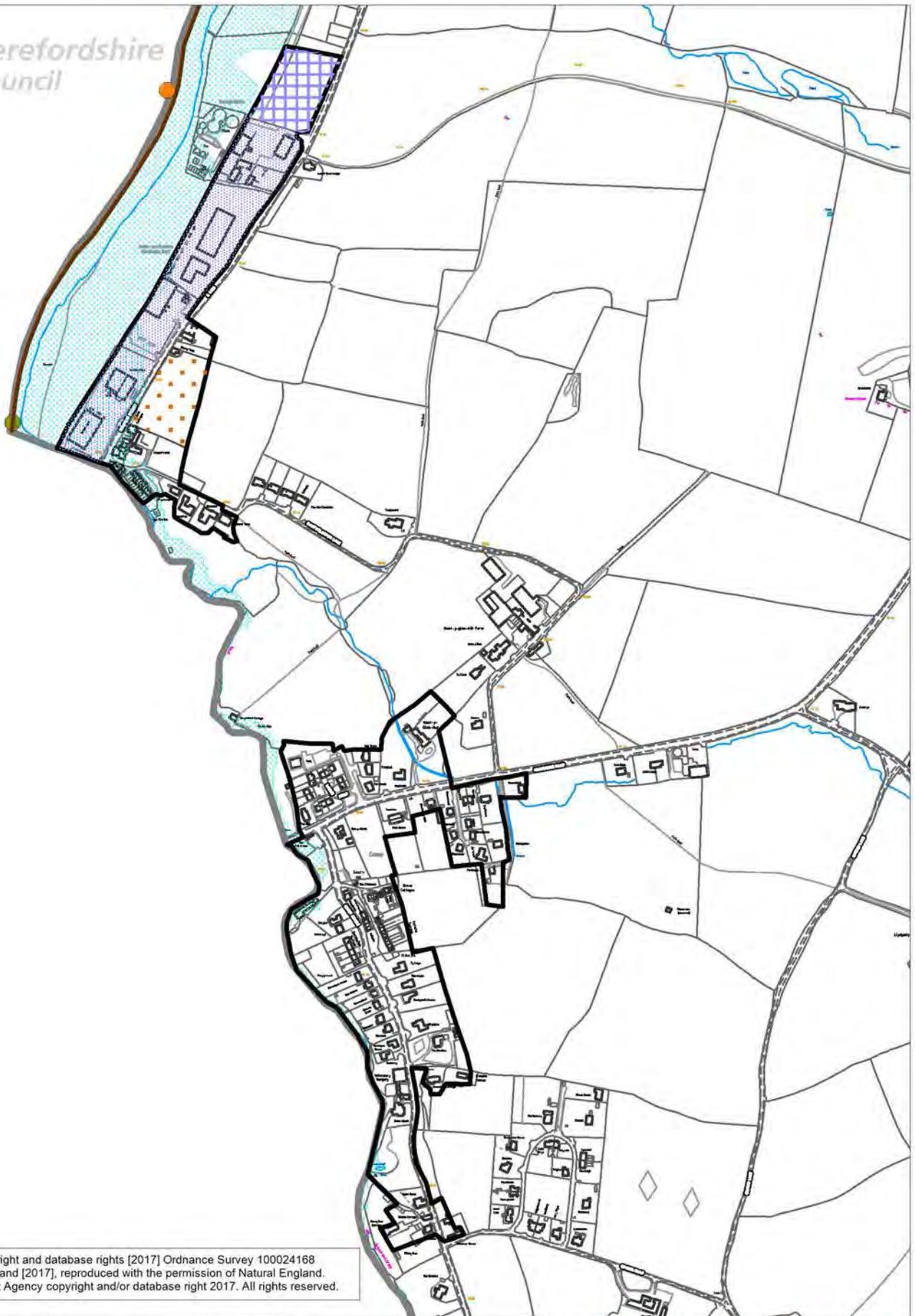
Cusop Neighbourhood Area

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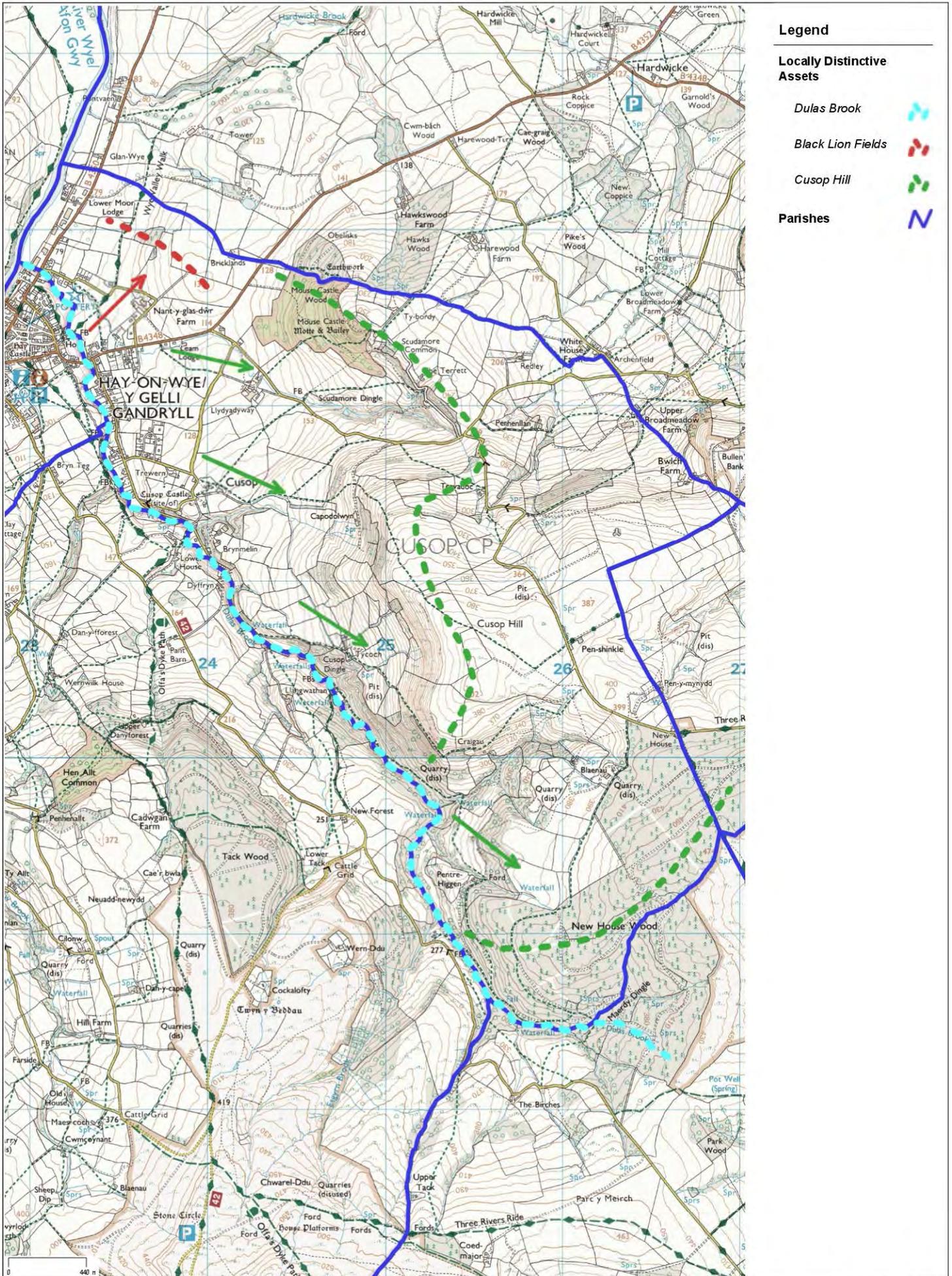
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-  Cusop Settlement Boundary (Policy 1)
-  Commitment Sites (Policy 2)
-  Land Liable to Flood
-  Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
-  Safeguarded Employment Site (Policy 9)
-  Extension to Employment Site (Policy 10)
-  Special Area for Conservation
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest

Cusop village Policies Map

Scale 1:7,500
at A4 size





Legend

Locally Distinctive Assets

Dulas Brook 

Black Lion Fields 

Cusop Hill 

Parishes

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