



Whitbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031

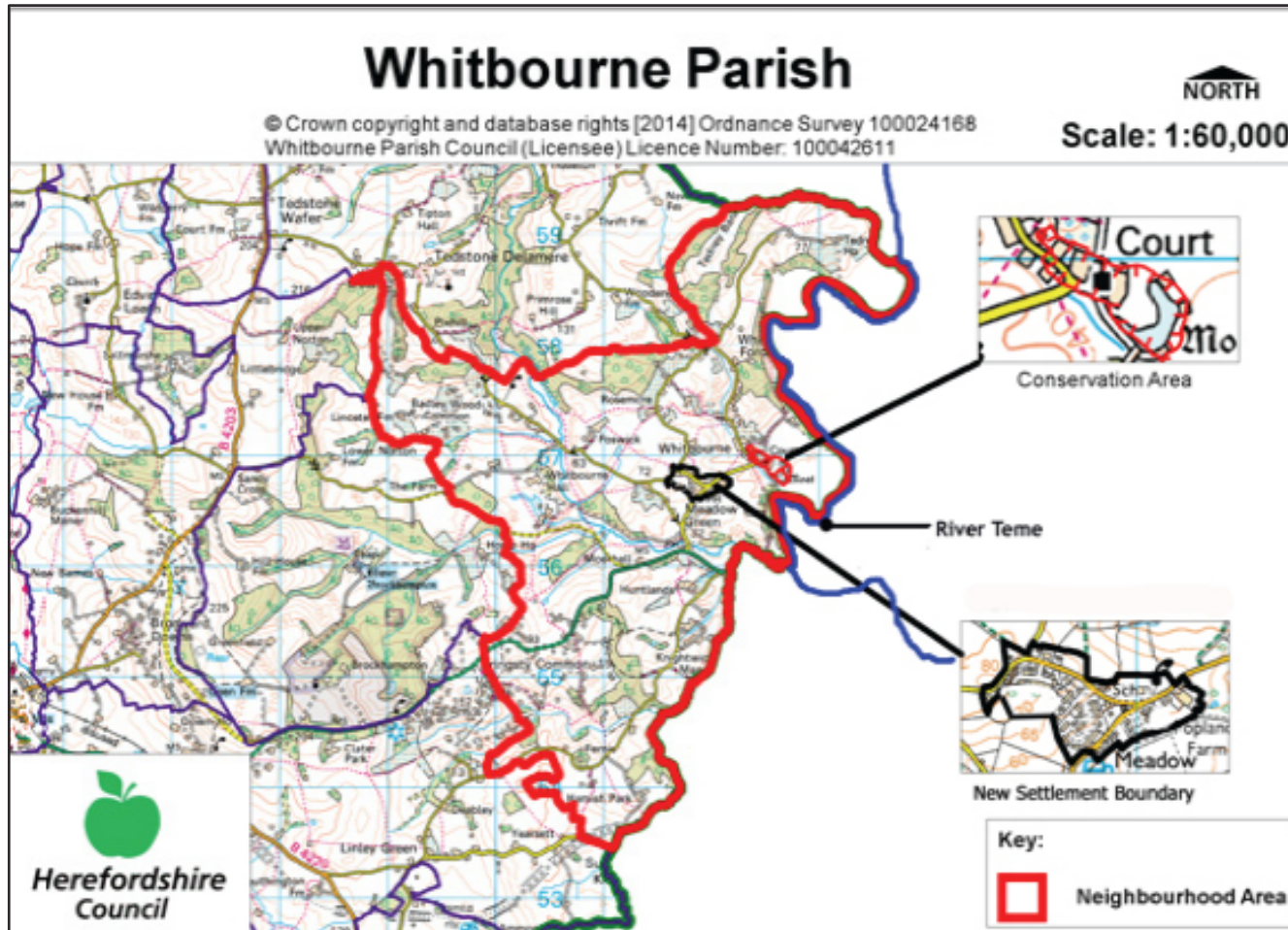
Whitbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan

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Neighbourhood Area

The Whitbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan Area is the entire geographical area covering the parish of Whitbourne.



Introduction

A) Whitbourne Today

The parish of Whitbourne is situated in the north east of Herefordshire, 5 miles from the town of Bromyard. Its eastern boundary runs along the River Teme, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

There is evidence of human settlement and farming in the parish area going back to pre-Roman times. Although then somewhat scattered, in time an appreciable cluster of housing developed around the present site of the Norman church and more recently in the area called 'Meadow Green'.

The name Whitbourne is believed to be derived from the brook that runs through the area of the village where this early development took place and means 'at the white brook'. Adjacent to the church, Whitbourne Court also stands alongside Whitbourne Brook. This is built on the site of an early moated manor house and became a summer palace for the Bishops of Hereford.

Whitbourne as a parish still remains somewhat dispersed, comprising in addition to the two main centres of housing the smaller groupings of Tedney, Rosemore, Poswick and Gaines. It also has two areas of common land, Badley Wood Common and Bringsty Common. In spite of this diversity Whitbourne is a thriving community with a church, village hall, a public house and a shop.

The Register of Electors for Whitbourne parish in force from 1st March 2011 contained 584 names. Mutatis mutandis, much the same number would appear today.



St John the Baptist Church

B) The Plan

The Neighbourhood Development Plan for the parish of Whitbourne is important because it is the first chance a place as small as Whitbourne parish has had to influence its own future.

Under powers granted by the Localism Act 2011, the Parish Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the parish of Whitbourne. In essence, it concerns the use of land. If adopted, it must be used by Herefordshire Council as part of the planning decision-making process. The Plan will be limited in time. To fit in with the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, it will apply only until 2031.

It must comply with the strategy of the Local Plan, as well as national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This means the Plan must encourage sustainable development. The NPPF quotes a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly to define sustainable development as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

We base our Plan squarely on that definition. Whitbourne itself is the product of sustainable development. Over one generation we have seen the building of Bannercroft (a social housing development), the rebuilding of the village hall, the creation and equipping of the playing area, the establishment of the community run village shop, the re-development of Poplands and Wishmore (former farm buildings) and the refurbishment of the parish church, all enterprises in which incomers co-operated with older residents in promoting growth for the benefit of the community.

Many parishioners have stated their views about the future of Whitbourne. All these have been considered in developing this Plan.

The purpose of the Plan is clearly set out in the referendum question, to be answered by a simple Yes or No:

Do you want Herefordshire Council to use the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Whitbourne to help it decide planning applications in Whitbourne?

The Plan is in two parts - Part One deals with matters directly pertaining to land use. Part Two deals with other issues of concern within the parish. All the policies in the Plan conform to the Local Plan Core Strategy and the NPPF. The relevant references in these are set out in each section of this Plan.

C) Vision and Objectives

Vision

By vision we mean our picture of Whitbourne Parish as we hope it will develop up until 2031. It will preserve the best of what we have inherited, both in our buildings and in our landscape, but be open to the changes necessary to enable our community to develop naturally and sustainably.

Objectives

By objectives we mean the targets aimed at by the detailed measures that we should take in order to help the vision become reality.

They include steps to:

1. Promote a level of housing growth as required by Herefordshire Council that retains the rural and agricultural character of the parish
2. Protect and promote the built and environmental assets of the community
3. Protect the landscape heritage and green infrastructure
4. Ensure that new housing promotes opportunities for local people of all ages to continue to live in the parish
5. Encourage home based employment
6. Protect open countryside and agricultural land
7. Preserve designated areas where people can refresh themselves and maintain their physical and mental well-being
8. Encourage and facilitate wherever possible the use of renewable energy
9. Ensure that land management and any proposed new building do not increase flood risk
10. Encourage employment in the parish generally

D) Housing Calculations

In the context of future housing needs (affordable and open-market combined), Herefordshire Council's Local Plan Core Strategy requirement is based around a specified percentage increase on the current housing stock within a parish. We quote from a letter from the Herefordshire Neighbourhood Planning Team Leader, dated 17th April 2015:

"The table below indicates the potential indicative proportional growth for your parish in accordance with the proposed Modification MM036".

<i>Parish/Group</i>	<i>Settlements in fig 4.20 and 4.21</i>	<i>Number of households in parish</i>	<i>% growth in Local Plan Core Strategy</i>	<i>Number of new houses required to 2031</i>	<i>Housing Completions 2011-2014</i>	<i>Housing commitments as at 1 April 2014</i>	<i>Total housing remaining</i>
<i>Whitbourne</i>	<i>Whitbourne</i>	<i>330</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>39</i>

The figure of 39 houses is reduced to 19 by the subtraction of the 20 houses approved by the Herefordshire Council Planning Committee on 29th October 2014 (see Page 7).

Furthermore there are commitments for 10 houses (see Page 31).

In addition, the parish is permitted to take windfall development into consideration. Taking into account houses built in the last 20 years, together with the potential availability of identified sites, it appears reasonable to predict that our housing needs as specified by Herefordshire Council will be comfortably met in the period up to 2031.

Please refer to Appendix A – Housing Needs, for the evidential basis for the above calculations.

Ref: **Objective 1**

It follows that this Plan comfortably meets the requirements of the Core Strategy Policies RA1 and RA2 as now adopted.

Part One : Land Use

Obviously the Plan cannot anticipate every proposal that may be made for the use of every piece of land in Whitbourne up to 2031. What it can do is set out policies, to ensure that the objectives mentioned above are met.

So the following policies are proposed:

Policy LU1 - Settlement Boundary

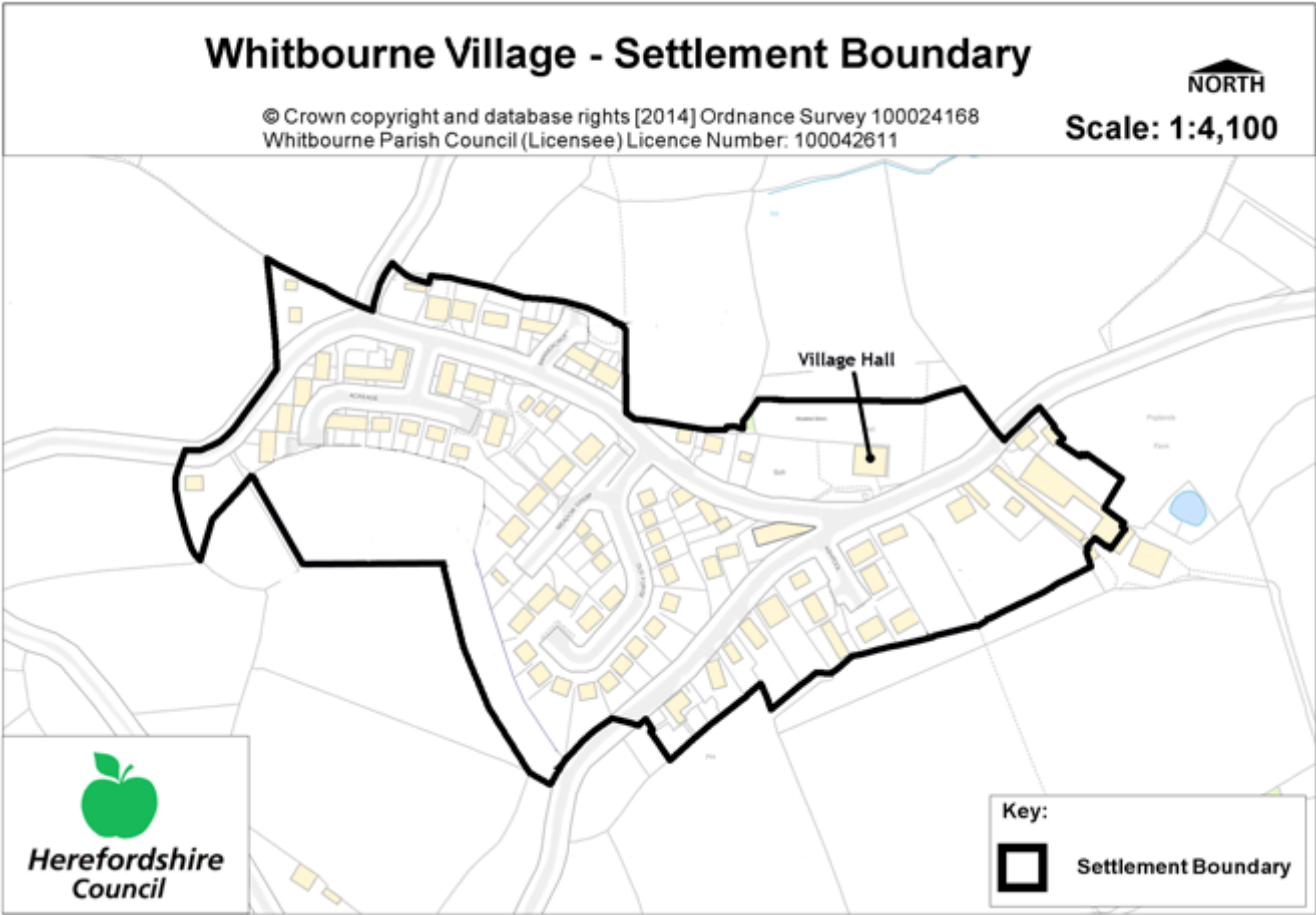
A Settlement Boundary is defined for Whitbourne, as shown on the map on Page 8, in order to establish the main built up area of the settlement within the boundary. New housing and other development within the boundary should be in accordance with the relevant policies of this Plan. The Countryside policies of the Herefordshire Local Plan will apply outside the boundary.

The reason for a Settlement Boundary can be found in the meaning of the word 'settlement', namely "*a place where people establish a community*" (O.E.D). Such a place needs coherence. The alternative is sprawl, often at the expense of open countryside and agricultural land.

On 29th October 2014 the Herefordshire Council Planning Committee approved an application for the building of 20 dwellings on a site adjacent to the Acreage. This development will contain 10 dwellings classed as 'affordable'. The application was opposed by 53 persons, who wrote to the Council's Planning Department; whereas 7 persons wrote in support. Because this Plan's preparation had not reached the appropriate stage specified in the National Planning Policy Framework, members of the Planning Committee were advised to attach no weight to it. For the avoidance of doubt, the Parish Council opposes any scheme that would increase the density of housing on this site. Such a scheme cannot be justified by our housing strategy, as detailed in Section LU4.

The Settlement Boundary as proposed in the map on Page 8 is seen as vital by the great majority of Whitbourne people, in order to prevent any further development on agricultural land. The evidence of the great majority can be found in Appendix 4 of the Consultation Statement. Outside the Settlement Boundary any housing development will be restricted to the conversion of redundant rural buildings. (Reference Section LU2 of this Plan), save for any dwellings considered appropriate under LU10 (Forestry).

In order to avoid inappropriate forms of development and to maintain the quality of the landscape, attention should be paid to the scale, style and materials that are in view when all planning applications are being assessed.



*Ref: **Objectives 1,2 & 3**
Core Strategy Policies SD1, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, ID1 & RA2*

Policy LU2 - Redundant Rural Buildings

Where Planning Permission is required and it can be demonstrated that rural buildings are no longer appropriate for agricultural use, the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings into dwellings will be supported. Proposals should:

- i. Respect the character of existing buildings and their layout**
- ii. Support the local economy**
- iii. Be compatible with the uses of neighbouring land**
- iv. Ensure all species and habitats are protected using appropriate detailed surveys**

This policy will not apply to the demolition and reconstruction of modern portal framed or similar agricultural, storage or commercial buildings or to the demolition and reconstruction of temporary buildings and structures.

The importance of these buildings as potential housing lies in the fact that they remove the need for new housing in open countryside and/or on agricultural land. They also benefit the environment in that derelict and unsightly ruins become houses. Moreover, an access problem should not arise because access would normally be present. However, new development proposals should be supported by adequate surveys so as to prevent adverse impact on legally protected species.

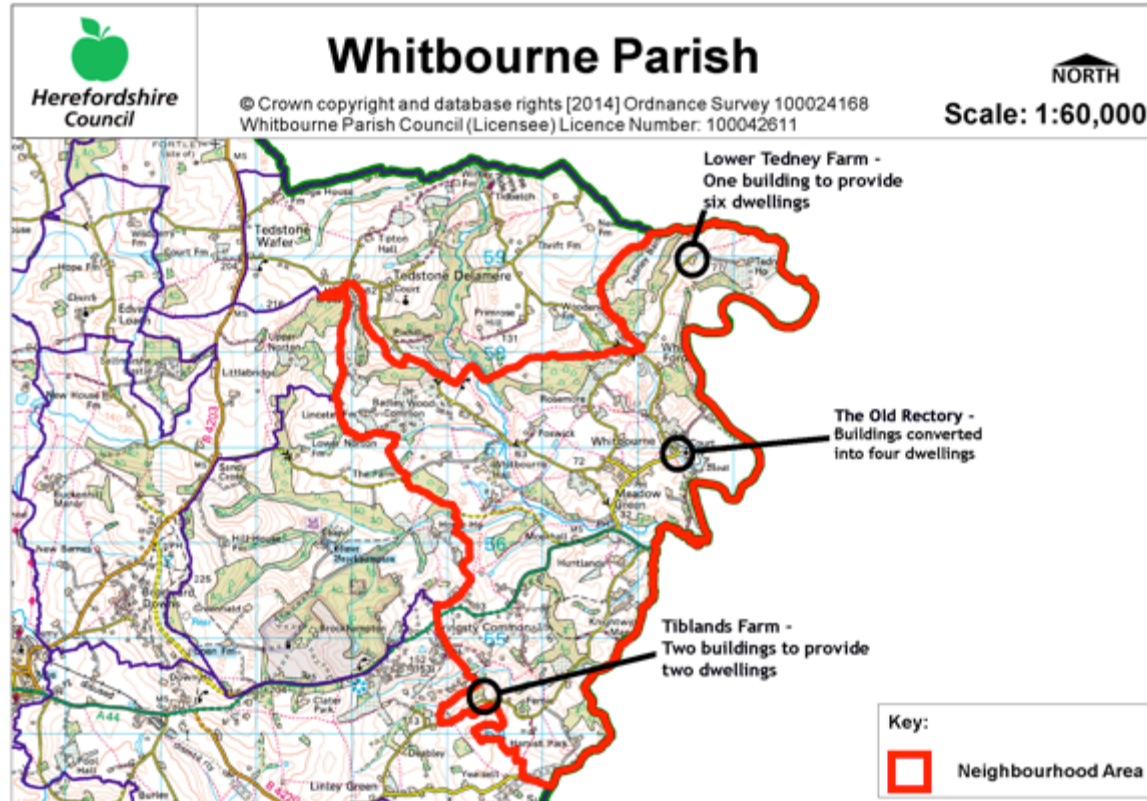
It is worthy of note that in talks with members of the Working Group, all five major landowners in the parish agreed in principle to the conversion of rural buildings into housing as and when they became available.

At the present time the following buildings have come to notice:-

One building with planning consent to provide 6 dwellings

Two buildings intended to provide 2 dwellings

In addition 4 converted buildings in the conservation area are becoming available as dwellings



See Appendix A - Housing Needs, for evidential details.



Redundant Rural Building at Lower Tedney Farm

There are a number of rural building owners within the parish, so there is a likelihood of other suitable buildings becoming available in the future.

Ref: **Objectives 1,2,3,4 & 5**

Appendix A

Core Strategy Policy RA5

National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 47, 48 & 51

Policy LU3 - Conservation Area

To ensure that the character of the Conservation Area of Whitbourne is preserved and enhanced, proposals should:

- i. Be in keeping with the character of their surroundings by virtue of their siting and layout
- ii. Make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area through high quality design with buildings respecting the height, size, scale and massing of adjacent buildings
- iii. Protect, conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets and their setting

A 'conservation area' is defined by the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as *"being of special architectural and historic interest requiring extra protection in planning terms, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance"*.

Planning applications should satisfy and enhance the character of the Conservation Area. Close attention should be paid to the design, location and materials used in any proposed development.



Ref: **Objectives 1 & 2**

Core Strategy Policy LD1, Glossary 255

Policy LU4 - Housing Strategy

A minimum of 39 new dwellings will be provided in the Plan area up to 2031.

No sites have been allocated for development therefore the housing requirement will be met through windfall schemes coming forward within the Whitbourne settlement boundary, or in the rural area through the Redundant Rural Buildings Policy LU2 and the Countryside policies of the Local Plan.

Housing or development proposals should:

- i. Be in keeping with the character of their surroundings by virtue of their siting and layout, density, scale, massing, design, landscaping and choice of materials
- ii. Deliver a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local housing requirements
- iii. Not adversely affect the amenity and privacy of any adjoining properties
- iv. Ensure suitable and safe access to the highway
- v. Not result in inappropriate development in residential gardens

The Settlement Boundary now encompasses the area that had planning approval for 20 dwellings granted on 29th October 2014.

Ref: **Objectives 1, 2, 3 & 4**

Appendix A

Core Strategy Policy RA2

National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 47, 48 & 51

Policy LU5 - Affordable Housing

The provision of affordable housing for rent; for shared ownership and for discounted sale will be supported, in accordance with the Affordable Housing policies within the Local Plan.

The successful application in 2014 to build 20 houses adjacent to Acreage includes the provision of 10 affordable dwellings.

The conversion of redundant rural buildings at Lower Tedney and the Old Rectory will also provide affordable dwellings.



Bannercroft

Ref: **Objectives 1 & 4**

Core Strategy Policy H2

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 50

Policy LU6 - Land Protection

No new residential building should be permitted in open countryside or on agricultural land, save as provided in this Plan, or in accordance with the Countryside policies of the Local Plan.

A questionnaire in December 2012 and a drop-in session in May 2013 showed that an overwhelming majority backed this policy. This policy has even greater relevance after the decision of the Herefordshire Council Planning Committee on 29th October 2014 (outlined in Section LU1 of this Plan).



Grazing Land behind the Rectory



Wishmore Farm Orchards

Ref: **Objectives 1, 2 & 6**

Core Strategy Policies LD4 & S56

National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 7 & 71

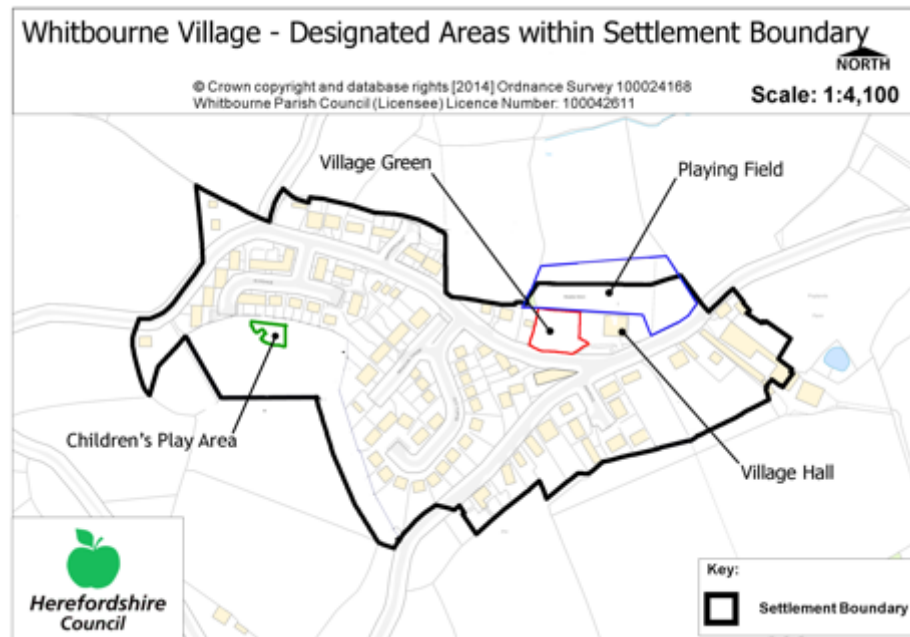
Policy LU7 - Designated Areas

To ensure the future public benefit, the following areas should continue to be protected and enhanced as part of future development proposals within the parish:

- i. The Churchyard
- ii. Playing Field
- iii. Village Green
- iv. Specified area designated as a Play Area, as part of the approved development adjacent to Acreage

Even in a rural parish areas must be preserved for the relaxation and recreation of the public. Physical fitness is increasingly a major concern. The Playing Field contains not merely equipment for children's play, but a fitness trail and basketball facility for adults.

The Village Green, however, is officially so designated and contains benches where people can simply relax and enjoy the surroundings.





Playing Field



Village Green

Ref: **Objectives 2 & 7**

Core Strategy Policy SC1

National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 73 & 74

Policy LU8 - Renewable Energy

Proposals that encourage the use of renewable energy will be supported, particularly small scale schemes, provided that there are no undue adverse impacts, either individual or cumulative on:

- i. The existing green infrastructure
- ii. Landscape heritage and settlement character
- iii. Local and residential amenity

The Whitbourne Estate is monitoring the possibility of water power to generate electricity on a limited scale.

No area in the parish has been identified as suitable for wind energy development.

It has been pointed out that our Plan makes no mention of solar power. Our attitude is that domestic use should be encouraged, but not its use on an industrial scale.

Weir on Sapey Brook



Ref: **Objectives 2, 3 & 8**

Core Strategy Policies SD1, SD2 & SD3

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 97

Policy LU9 - Flooding

All development proposals with flood risk implications should:

- i. Demonstrate that flood risk is not increased elsewhere
- ii. Demonstrate that the development is suitably resilient and resistant
- iii. Ensure that surface water run off does not exceed the existing rate through the use of sustainable drainage

Periodic flooding by surface water in the parish is an issue that needs to be addressed by the relevant authorities.



Flooding on Bottom Lane

Areas particularly prone to flooding are shown on the map.



Ref: Objective 9

Core Strategy Policies SS5, SD1, SD2, SD3, SD4, LD3, MN1-6 & W1-5

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 9

Policy LU10 - Forestry

Forestry within the parish should be encouraged and the existing areas of forestry protected. Any development proposals will only be permitted where:

- i. There is a sustained and functional need**
- ii. The scale and design should be in keeping with the surrounding area**
- iii. There is an appropriate means of access**
- iv. The location and siting of the new development respects and enhances the natural environment**

Since the end of World War II Whitbourne Estate has pursued an ambitious programme of afforestation, and many thousands of specimens have been planted. Mr Bill Evans, the present manager, is an authority of national reputation.

Forestry provides employment, adds a valued feature to the landscape, sustains various forms of wildlife and helps to mitigate the damage caused by industrial or traffic pollution.

A number of landowners in the parish own woodland, and the construction of timber-built dwellings for their workers - if needed - seems a development to encourage. Such dwellings should meet a sustained and functional need. The scale and design should be in keeping with the surroundings and should be served by an appropriate means of access. They should be located where they respect the natural environment.

Ref: **Objective 10**

Core Strategy Policies RA3 & RA4

Policy LU11 - Open Spaces

The following local Open Spaces, shown on the proposals map, must be preserved and protected from development proposals:

- i. Bringsty Common
- ii. Badley Wood
- iii. The Glebe

These are not just recreational assets- important as they are - for they also encourage tourism, to the benefit of the local economy. The Chairman of Bringsty Common Manorial Court has written to the Working Party as follows:

“Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Plan.

The Bringsty Common Manorial Court has considered the consultation document carefully. Bringsty Common Manorial Court is an annually elected body of residents and others with Common Right; part of its role is to represent the views of residents and commoners. The Manorial Court acts as a managed agent of Herefordshire Council, the owners of the common.

The common lies immediately to the west and south-west of Whitbourne parish and part of the common on its eastern side lies within that parish. The common is both a recreational resource for the people of Whitbourne and a powerful attraction from far afield.

Bringsty Common is a protected green space. Our view is that any further housing development on Bringsty Common, apart from the upgrading and extending of existing properties within any current legislation, is neither desirable nor necessary.

The importance of Bringsty Common for flora and fauna is reflected in Natural England awarding Bringsty Manorial Court financial support, through the Higher Level Scheme of management, to maintain and develop the common for some rare and important insect and mammal species.

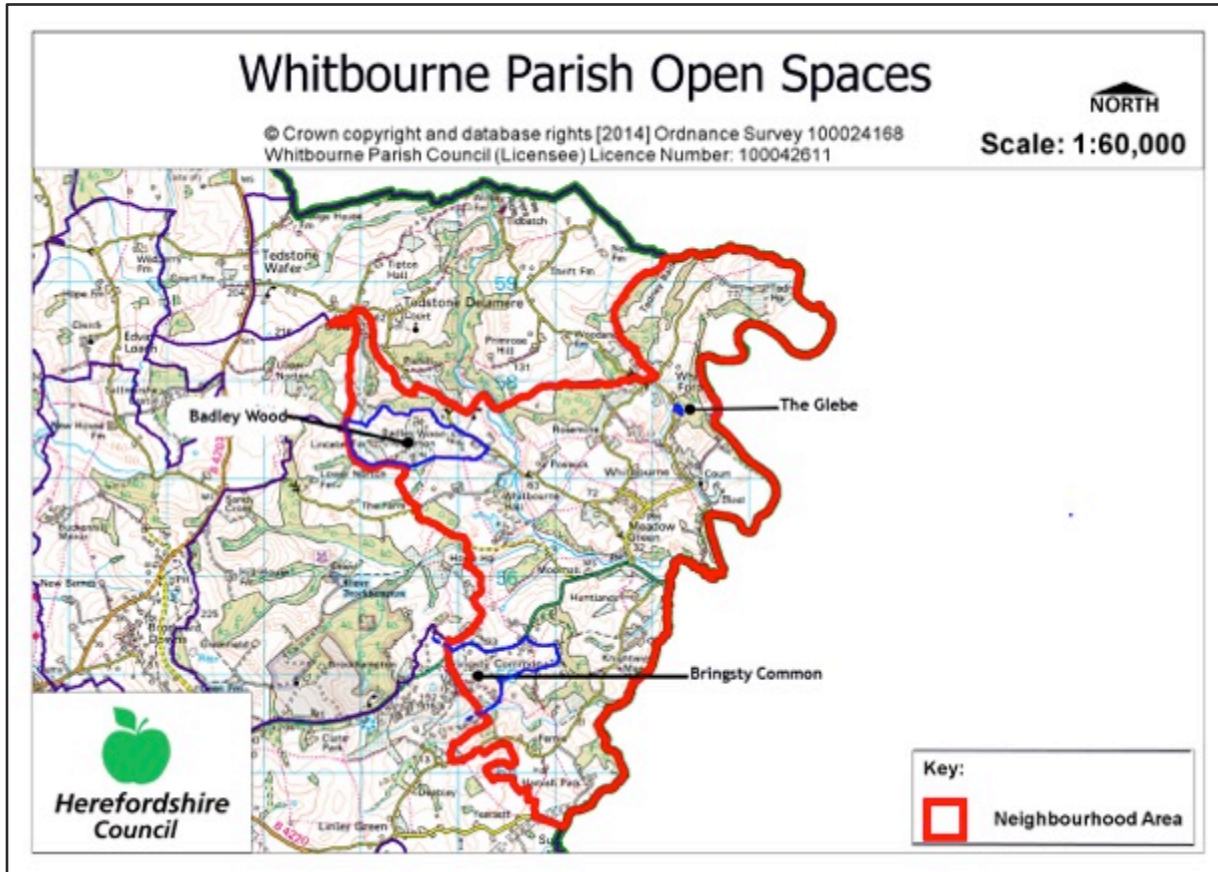
We recognize that the natural development of Whitbourne parish over the next 15-20 years may involve the provision of new residential properties, but we are satisfied that sufficient room for any such properties exists elsewhere in the parish.

*Yours sincerely, Paul Friend
Chairman, Bringsty Manorial Court”*

Badley Wood is valued by residents and walkers. Local volunteers help to maintain it as an area of recreation and the study of wildlife.

The Glebe is an area of woodland just off Bottom Lane much enjoyed for the study of birds and other wildlife, and as a quiet retreat. Again, volunteers do much to preserve it.

All three named open spaces should be designated Local Green Spaces.



Bringsty Common

Ref: **Objectives 3, 6 & 7**

Core Strategy Policies E4 & RA1

National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 76 & 77

Policy LU12 - Building Standards

New building development within the parish (including conversion) must conform to best practice in construction and sustainability and respect the built and natural environment.

This means that it must respect the low density and dispersed settlement patterns of the parish. It must preserve and enhance local character by responding to the inherited features of the parish, built or natural. It must demonstrate that it satisfies the sustainable design standard in force at the time.



Housing in Old Forge

Ref: Objectives 1 & 2

Core Strategy Policies SD1, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4 & ID1

National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 56 & 57

Policy LU13 - Environmental Considerations

Any proposals for development should:

- i. **Respect the landscape and built environment**
- ii. **Respect relevant bio-diversity features and wildlife habitats of the area**
- iii. **Not have an adverse effect on the natural environment and in particular designated sites**
- iv. **Have regard to the aims of the Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Study (2010), which enjoins the protection and promotion of green infrastructure**

It is worthy of note that part of the parish is within 1 km of the northern part of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

As the plan has been in process of construction we have been repeatedly made aware of the importance our people place upon care for the environment.

Responses to the questionnaire, at the drop-in, at the public meeting, discussions with landowners and representations by individuals have all made an impression. There is general support for natural development, such as would respect the environment.

Housing needs are therefore planned to be met by development in in-fill sites or redundant rural buildings. There is strong opposition to housing estates, and in that opposition concern for the environment plays a part.

This accords with the excellent record of the parish in its care for the environment and its renewal, as in Whitbourne Estate's long-established afforestation programme and the commitment of our people to the study and promotion of wildlife at Bringsty, Badley Wood and The Glebe.

Ref: **Objectives 1, 2 & 3**

Core Strategy Policies LD1, LD2, LD3 & LD4

National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 73, 74, 115 & 117

Policy LU14 - Employment

The following forms of employment within the parish will be encouraged and supported:

- i. Agricultural
- ii. Forestry
- iii. Field sports
- iv. Tourism
- v. Local food and drink production
- vi. Home based work

Any proposal that results in a reduction of agricultural farming land, which is contrary to the basic aim of sustainable development, will not be supported.

Mechanisation of agriculture and the disappearance of the hop in local agriculture have resulted in a marked decrease in the number of those who earn a living from the land. Nonetheless farming remains a major source of employment, and the national need for home-grown produce continues.

Other sources of work – full-time, part-time or seasonal – are forestry, field sports, tourism, catering and home-based work of various kinds.

The IT revolution proceeds apace. It seems likely that more and more of our people will be able to work at home. This is a trend to be encouraged, we believe. It reduces the volume of road traffic and relieves the worker of the stress of travel.

Many of our workers still commute, however. Public transport is far from adequate and pressure needs to be maintained to improve it.

Ref: Objectives 1, 5, 6 & 10

Core Strategy Policy SS5 & E3

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 28

Policy LU15 - Road Surfaces

With any new development proposal the volume of traffic and access to the proposal should ensure that it is not to the detriment of other road users and pedestrians.

Whatever the future pattern of employment in Whitbourne, it is clear that the roads of the parish are under increasing stress. A letter dated 20th March 2013 from a parishioner of long standing, spoke of the “*inability of Whitbourne’s decaying road system to support the ever increasing traffic*”. Since then that comment has become increasingly justified, and often repeated by other parishioners.

The sustainable development of Whitbourne is prejudiced by the condition of the roads and pavements, coupled with the inadequate provision of public transport. These matters lie outside the direct jurisdiction of the Parish Council, but it will continue to make representation in the relevant quarters.



Main Access Road into the Village from the A44

Ref: **Objectives 1 & 2**

Core Strategy Policy MT1

Part Two : Parish Matters

1. School

A sight of daily regret for Whitbourne people is the empty school. This is not the place to rehearse the reasons for its closing, but the fact that it has closed is no reason why the community should take no further interest in the site. It seems to us that Whitbourne should at least be consulted about the future of a place that has such a firm hold on its affections (not to speak of its commercial value). Through our Rector and the Parish Council we must make it clear that Whitbourne wishes to be heard.

Core Strategy Policy LD4 (as applied to Policy LU12 – Building Standards) is relevant here.

Ref: Core Strategy Policies LD1 & LD4

2. Bus Services

We mention above the unpromising outlook for local bus services. It seems clear that there will be an opening for a volunteer-run minibus service. Such a scheme is commended by Herefordshire Council and also operates effectively in Gloucestershire. Car-sharing is another possibility.

Ref: Core Strategy Policy SS4

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 29

3. Post Office

Another victim of the cuts has been the post office, and we have been told that we are too near other post offices to justify one of our own. A compromise we will pursue is a travelling post office calling at Whitbourne at fixed days and times. That would at least be helpful to those parishioners without convenient use of a car.

Ref: National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 42

4. Village Shop

We should do all we can to support the community-run village shop, especially in its promotion of local food supplies.

Ref: National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 28

5. Young People

Another comment has been directed at our apparent indifference to the needs of young people. We would reply that the very popular equipment on the Playing Field is there because the Parish Council bought the land from a local land owner and volunteers, after ascertaining young people's views, obtained the equipment by means of grants. The views of the young are continually asked for and a recent result is the planned replacing of the present goalposts with a size more suitable for young people over primary school age. A further survey of young people's views is planned for the near future.

Neither the Local Plan Core Strategy nor the National Planning Policy Framework has a specific policy directed to the needs of young people, but it seems clear to us that those needs, changing as they do over time, must be addressed in a healthy community.

6. Home Working

In our comments on employment, we mentioned our support for the increasing trend to work at home. An obvious result is that the area of Whitbourne itself, the physical parish, becomes a producer of economic growth. Our support for the conversion of redundant rural buildings into dwellings would be all the stronger if the projected conversion permitted the provision of a working space, and we would view planning applications accordingly.

The provision of high-speed broadband will help home-based workers.

Ref: Core Strategy Policy SS5

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 21

7. Public Houses

The *Live and Let Live* in the village is recovering steadily under new ownership. Sadly *The Wheatsheaf*, a former coaching inn dating from 1780, is shortly to be sold and its future remains problematic.

Appendix A : Housing Needs

A Neighbourhood Development Plan for Whitbourne for 2011-2031 must have regard for our housing needs in that period, and how they are to be met.

On 17th April 2015 the Herefordshire Neighbourhood Planning Team Leader advised us that the total number of new dwellings required to 2031 was 39. We have been informed, and accept, that this number should be regarded as a minimum.

At this point it may be useful to consider calls that have been made (though by very few parishioners) for a far larger number of new houses within the Plan period.

It was claimed that a large new development would:

1. rescue the village school
2. rescue the *Live and Let Live* public house
3. increase custom for the village shop

Claims (1) and (2) had obvious flaws but have in any case been overtaken by time. The village school is closed and the *Live and Let Live* public house is busy under new ownership. As for the village shop, it will continue to flourish whilst it provides the services that the village requires.

So we see no reason to challenge the figures laid down by Herefordshire Council.

- where, then, are the 39 dwellings to be found?
- we have been advised that this Plan should either “*allocate land for new housing*” or “*demonstrate an alternative delivery mechanism*”.

We would respond that we have no powers to allocate new land for housing, but we have been able to locate sites that the owners have earmarked for housing development.

The first was created on 29th October, 2014, by Herefordshire Council Planning Committee, when it approved an application to build an estate of 20 dwellings adjacent to Acreage.

Further sites can be found, with expected windfall up to 2031, as shown in the following table :

Housing Projections	
Site	No of Units
Development adjacent to Acreage	20
Committed Units	
Lower Tedney Farm (RRB)	6
Old Rectory	4
Total	10
Expected windfall units to 2031	
The Croft	13
Tiblands Farm (RRB)	2
Virginia Cottage	1
Other windfall (estimated)	10
Total	26
Overall Total	56

The larger site at **The Croft** is owned by senior and respected members of the community who fully intend to sell the site for housing at the appropriate time. Given the ages of the parties, that time may realistically be expected to fall within the span of this Plan. The appeal of the site to developers has already been demonstrated and compelling evidence of this interest has been provided.

Natural England expressed concern that this site might not be viable for housing because its map of the area marked **The Croft** as “traditional orchard”. No such orchard is to be found at The Croft, and the owners, who are long standing, recall no such feature during their tenure.

The smaller site, adjacent to **Virginia Cottage**, in the Conservation Area, has been set aside for development within the lifetime of the Plan. It has also attracted an inaccurate report, namely that it is unsuitable for housing because of flooding. A householder directly opposite the site reports that in more than 40 years of her occupancy no such flooding has occurred. Moreover, building techniques are now available to raise a new dwelling above the threat of flood. The site is owned by a distinguished landowner whose family ties with the parish go back more than a century. Given his character and antecedents, it is inconceivable that he would permit any development in the Conservation Area that did not respect its special nature.

The foregoing sites, then, provide a realistic prospect of 14 new dwellings within the lifetime of this Plan.

As to ‘an alternative delivery mechanism’, we instance the present availability for housing development of the buildings listed under **LU2 Redundant Rural Buildings** (RRB). Whitbourne is a rural parish with an ancient farming history. It would be astonishing, given the radical changes in agriculture within living experience, if there were no RRB ripe for development.

As to those listed and located in the map on Page 10, the owner of **Lower Tedney Farm** is a respected member of the parish whose family has built up over generations an international reputation as breeders of prize cattle. He has obtained planning consent for the conversion of the RRB into 6 dwellings.

At the **Old Rectory** 4 RRB have been converted into dwellings.

Finally, **Tiblands Farm** is owned by a long established Whitbourne family whose firm intention is to develop RRB into 2 dwellings within the lifetime of the Plan.

It should be noted that all these developments will meet different kinds of housing need. They vary in size. Some are proposed for sale, others for rental.

In addition, we have been advised by Herefordshire Council that we may build into our forecast unexpected windfall sites. This is a calculation that is at best uncertain. How do we predict the unpredictable? It appears to us that the least faulty method is to take as a guide the pattern over the last twenty years, recognising always that unexpected factors may throw any calculation out of kilter. The result in Whitbourne is illuminating. In recent years 14 windfall dwellings have arisen. Three houses now occupy the site of the old post office near the village hall; four more stand at Moor Court alongside the *The Wheatsheaf* Public House. More have been from the conversion of RRB than might have been expected. In the last decade conversions of RRB at Poplands Farm and Wishmore Farm appear to confirm a trend.

Windfall units since 1995	
Moor Court	4
Old Post Office	3
Poplands Farm	4
Wishmore Farm	3
Total	14

Bearing these examples in mind and noting the condition of various properties in the parish, we believe it is reasonable to anticipate as a minimum a further windfall of 10 dwellings within the span of the Plan, as detailed in the table on Page 31.

To sum up, the minimal requirements for new housing set by Herefordshire Council and accepted by the Parish Council will be amply met by this Plan, and critically, met in a manner that satisfies the objective of sustainable development.

ENVOI

We commend this Plan to the people of Whitbourne. We believe it seeks to preserve what they value and to encourage growth, while leaving the door open for those who follow us to make those changes that they find necessary.

Please send all comments to:
The Parish Clerk (Mary Seldon)
84 Old Road, Bromyard, Herefordshire, HR7 4BQ
or
whitbournepcclerk@googlemail.com

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