



Little Birch &
Aconbury
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Little Birch and Aconbury Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031

Basic Conditions Statement

August 2018

Little Birch Parish Council and Aconbury Parish Meeting

Prepared by DJN Planning Ltd.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A draft Neighbourhood Development Plan must meet each of a set of basic conditions before it can be put to a referendum and be made. The basic conditions are 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.
- 1.2 This Statement has been prepared for Little Birch Parish Council and Aconbury Parish Meeting to demonstrate that the Little Birch and Aconbury Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031 (NDP) meets legal requirements and the prescribed basic conditions.
- 1.3 The Statement confirms that:
- the legal requirements have been met (section 2)
 - having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the NDP (section 3)
 - the NDP contributes to sustainable development (section 4)
 - the NDP is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the relevant development plan, the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (section 5)
 - the NDP does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations, and its making is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects (section 6).

2. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 The NDP relates to the area that was designated by Herefordshire Council as a Neighbourhood Area on 24 May 2016. The NDP relates only to this Area. No other Neighbourhood Development Plan has or is being made for the Area.
- 2.2 Little Birch Parish Council and Aconbury Parish Meeting are qualifying bodies.
- 2.3 The NDP is a plan which sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in the Neighbourhood Area and which has been prepared in accordance with the statutory provisions.
- 2.4 The NDP specifies the period for which it is to have effect, which is 2011-2031.
- 2.5 The NDP does not include provision about development that is excluded development, such as mineral and waste matters, nationally significant infrastructure projects or other prescribed development under section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. REGARD TO NATIONAL POLICY

- 3.1 The NDP has been prepared with appropriate regard to the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).¹ The NDP reflects the core planning principles set out in the NPPF and will help achieve national planning policies at the parish level.
- 3.2 NPPF paragraph 16 sets out requirements for how communities engage in neighbourhood planning. In accordance with this national policy, the NDP supports the strategic development needs set out in the Local Plan, including its policies for housing and economic development, and plans positively to support local development.
- 3.3 The NPPF sets out more specific guidance on neighbourhood plans at paragraphs 183 to 185:
- NPPF paragraph 183: Little Birch Parish Council and Aconbury Parish Meeting have used neighbourhood planning powers to develop a local vision for the Neighbourhood Area and to set planning policies in the NDP.
 - NPPF paragraph 184: the NDP is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. In Herefordshire, these are the policies set out in the adopted Core Strategy.² The NDP reflects the strategic policies and plans positively to support them. It does not promote less development than set out in the Core Strategy, or undermine its strategic policies. The NDP defines a settlement boundary for Aconbury and provides criteria-based planning policies to guide housing growth, economic development and environmental protection. The general conformity of the NDP with the strategic policies of the Core Strategy is set out in more detail in section 5 below.
 - NPPF paragraph 185: the NDP shapes and direct sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Area, through the provision of a balanced set of objectives and policies which deal with social, economic and environmental matters.
- 3.4 NPPF paragraph 17 sets out twelve core planning principles, to which the NDP has had regard as set out below (Table 1).

¹ The original NPPF was published in March 2012. It was replaced in July 2018 by a revised and updated version. Paragraph 214 of the revised NPPF provides that the policies in the previous Framework will apply for the purpose of examining plans, where those plans are submitted on or before 24 January 2019. It is envisaged that the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP will be submitted to the local planning authority by this date. Accordingly, this Basic Conditions Statement confirms that it is appropriate to make the NDP having regard to the policies of the March 2012 Framework. All references in the main text to NPPF paragraph numbers and core planning principles are to the March 2012 Framework.

² Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031, October 2015, paragraph 1.14.

Table 1: NPPF core planning principles

NPPF Core Planning Principle	How the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP has had regard to the guidance
<p>Planning should be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency.</p>	<p>The NDP embodies a positive vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Area in 2031, within the broader framework set by the Core Strategy. Its preparation in consultation with those who live and work in the parishes has enabled local people to shape their surroundings. It covers the key areas of housing, economy, environment and community in order that the future development of the Neighbourhood Area is plan-led. A concise and succinct set of planning policies provide a practical framework for development management.</p>
<p>Planning should not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives.</p>	<p>The preparation of the NDP has been based on consultation which has enabled the community to positively engage with the future of the parish. This has been achieved through Open Days, public meetings, a residents’ survey, and the pre-submission consultation and publicity given to the draft NDP. The preparation of the draft NDP has been overseen by a Steering Group comprising parish councillors and other local volunteers.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Area will be enhanced and improved <i>inter alia</i> by NDP objectives and policies to: deliver new housing to meet requirements and achieve a sustainable pattern of development; encourage new housing to meet community needs; support the local economy and deliver infrastructure; protect, conserve and enhance the natural, historic and built environments; and support community facilities.</p>

NPPF Core Planning Principle	How the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP has had regard to the guidance
<p>Planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities.</p>	<p>The NDP has considered how best to provide for housing and business needs within the framework of the Core Strategy. New housing will be delivered through a combination of completions since 2011, commitments, smaller village sites, and windfall development both within settlements and in the rural area. On this basis, the NDP provides for the minimum indicative housing requirement set by the Core Strategy to be met.</p> <p>Policy LBA2 sets out the overall approach to meeting development needs and requirements for both housing and employment. More detailed planning policies guide development in Little Birch and Aconbury. A criteria-based approach is taken at Little Birch, reflecting the dispersed settlement pattern (LBA3 and LBA4), with a settlement boundary being defined for Aconbury (LBA5). Policy LBA6 is supportive of small-scale proposals to generate employment and diversify the rural economy, in line with the established strategic approach.</p>
<p>Planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.</p>	<p>The NDP's objectives require new development to respect the character of adjoining development and the wider area and support modern design approaches that make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.</p> <p>Policy LBA11 requires all forms of new development to respect the character of adjoining development, having regard to siting, scale, height, massing, detailing, and materials. Modern design approaches will be welcomed where they make a positive contribution to the character of the area and contribute to local distinctiveness. The policy also protects amenity, as do policies LBA4 and LBA5 for development in the villages of Little Birch and Aconbury respectively.</p>

NPPF Core Planning Principle	How the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP has had regard to the guidance
<p>Planning should take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.</p>	<p>The NDP’s vision identifies the role and character of the Neighbourhood Area in 2031 as rural parishes where the natural and historic environments are protected, where all ages can enjoy a good quality of life, where community life thrives and where there are homes, businesses, and facilities to meet the needs of vibrant, rural communities. The Plan supports the community by providing for new housing, economic development and local facilities, and by defining the extent of settlements in order to manage development and protect the countryside.</p> <p>Policy LBA10 serves to protect, conserve and enhance the natural, historic and built environment of the Neighbourhood Area, including its landscape character and the setting of settlements.</p>
<p>Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy).</p>	<p>The NDP encourages the re-use of existing resources by supporting the conversion of redundant rural buildings in line with strategic policy, to provide housing (policy LBA2) and employment (policy LBA6). Policies LBA1, LBA4 and LBA7 seek sustainable transport provision in new development and support improvements to public transport provision including connectivity, thereby fostering active travel and the reduction of carbon emissions. Policy LBA11 requires sustainability measures to be incorporated into development proposals and for provision to be made for cycle storage. Policy LBA8 provides for renewable energy.</p>
<p>Planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.</p>	<p>The NDP provides for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment through policy LBA10. The NDP does not include any allocations of land. The delivery of new housing is managed by defining the extent of settlements, to promote a sustainable pattern of development.</p>
<p>Planning should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.</p>	<p>The effective use of land is supported by defining the extent of the settlements of Little Birch and Aconbury. There are no significant areas of previously developed land, reflecting the rural environment of the Neighbourhood Area. The conversion of existing rural buildings for housing and employment uses in line with strategic policy is supported by policies LBA2 and LBA6 respectively.</p>

NPPF Core Planning Principle	How the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP has had regard to the guidance
<p>Planning should promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage or food production).</p>	<p>The NDP encourages multiple benefits from the use of land in the Neighbourhood Area. It provides for a range of land uses including housing, employment and community facilities. The definition of the extent of settlement at Little Birch and Aconbury will protect the surrounding countryside enabling continued use for farming. The countryside is also a valued natural and historic environment, protected by policy LBA10.</p>
<p>Planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.</p>	<p>NDP policy LBA10 addresses the historic environment, identifying heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Area to complement statutory protection and Core Strategy policy LD4.</p>
<p>Planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.</p>	<p>Little Birch and Aconbury are settlements identified for sustainable housing growth within Core Strategy policy RA2. The NDP implements this strategic approach through policy LBA2 and subsequent policies LBA3, LBA4 and LBA5, with development focussed within the defined settlements thereby promoting a sustainable pattern of development. Policy LBA1 includes the principle of fostering sustainable transport provision in new development and of making use of opportunities to provide or support the provision of new or improved public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and connectivity, and this principle is also reflected in policies LBA4, LBA7 and LBA11.</p>
<p>Planning should take account of, and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural services to meet local needs.</p>	<p>The NDP's vision is for the Neighbourhood Area in 2031 to comprise rural parishes where the natural and historic environments are protected, where all ages can enjoy a good quality of life, where community life thrives and where there are homes, businesses, and facilities to meet the needs of vibrant, rural communities.</p> <p>Economic and social infrastructure is provided for by policy LBA7, and policy LBA9 supports the enhancement of existing community facilities and new provision.</p>

4. ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The making of the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

4.2 The NPPF sets out that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental (paragraph 7). These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.3 The NPPF emphasises that to achieve sustainable development the economic, social and environmental roles should be sought jointly and simultaneously as they are mutually dependent. The three roles are then set out in greater detail in the NPPF’s core planning principles. Each of these is supported by the NDP, confirming that the Plan as a whole will contribute to sustainable development (see Table 1).

4.4 The NDP is also in general conformity with the Core Strategy (see section 5). This sets out a spatial strategy to achieve the sustainable development of the County based on the three themes of social progress, economic prosperity, and environmental quality. These themes echo the three roles as defined in the NPPF. The NDP will deliver sustainable development by virtue of setting out a balanced set of policies which address each of the strategic themes.

4.5 Policy LBA1 explains how the NDP will play an active role in guiding development in the Neighbourhood Area to a sustainable solution. The aim will be to consider how individual proposals contribute to sustainability, assessed across the three roles, to best deliver the NDP’s vision and objectives. Table 2 sets out how the Plan’s policies will help achieve sustainable development, by contributing to each of the three roles.

Table 2: Sustainable development

Sustainable development role	How the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP contributes
Economic	The NDP provides positively for development needs and requirements, including enabling new housing to meet strategic requirements and supporting employment-generating proposals of an appropriate scale and nature (policies LBA1 and LBA2). It recognises the importance of supporting the rural economy through the re-use of buildings, live/work and home-based businesses, extensions to existing businesses, farm diversification, and tourism and leisure proposals (policy LBA6). The NDP also supports improvements to communications and broadband infrastructure which will benefit local business and support economic activity (policy LBA7).
Social	The NDP addresses requirements for new housing through policy LBA2, including for dwellings of a type and size that positively contribute to meeting housing needs. The NDP further meets social needs through support for communications and broadband infrastructure (policy LBA7), renewable energy proposals, including those which are community-led (policy LBA8) and community facilities (policy LBA9).
Environmental	The NDP supports housing and other development in the settlements identified for housing growth where this is appropriate in scale and in keeping with their established character (policy LBA2). The definition of the extent of Little Birch by means of a criteria-based approach (policies LBA3 and LBA4) will respect the dispersed character of the village and protect the open countryside. Aconbury is defined by means of a settlement boundary (policy LBA5). Both approaches will serve to promote a sustainable pattern of development. Policy LBA11 sets out a range of requirements to deliver sustainable development at the site and building scale. Other policies serve to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and historic environments (policy LBA10) and to support renewable energy (policy LBA8).

5. GENERAL CONFORMITY WITH STRATEGIC POLICY

- 5.1 The Little Birch and Aconbury NDP is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area, namely the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. Herefordshire Council has confirmed this position in its consultation response to the draft Plan. That response identifies equivalent Core Strategy policies to each of the NDP policies. The NDP also supports the implementation and delivery of other Core Strategy policies. Table 3 sets out more detail as to how each of the NDP's policies align with the strategic policies. The text of the Core Strategy policies referred to can be seen at Appendix 1, and the full Core Strategy viewed here <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>.
- 5.2 Remaining saved policies of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan are not relevant to the NDP.

Table 3: General conformity of NDP policies with strategic policies.

NDP policies	Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy
<p>Policy LBA1: Sustainable development</p> <p>The following principles will be sought and balanced in considering the overall contribution of development proposals, in terms of their costs and benefits, to the achievement of the sustainable development of Little Birch and Aconbury:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. enabling new housing to meet the needs and requirements of the Local Plan Core Strategy and the communities in Little Birch and Aconbury; and 2. supporting proposals to deliver new and diversified employment opportunities which are compatible and in scale with the rural nature of the area; and 3. wherever possible, retaining community infrastructure and promoting and enabling new provision to meet a range of needs and promote quality of life; and 4. taking all opportunities to protect and enhance the distinctive natural, historic and built environments, with development avoiding undue loss of amenity or visual impact; and 5. fostering sustainable transport provision in new housing, 	<p>Policy LBA1 is in general conformity with strategic policies SS1 <i>Presumption in favour of sustainable development</i> and SS4 <i>Movement and transportation</i>, adding local detail as to the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the Neighbourhood Area.</p>

NDP policies	Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy
<p>employment and other development, and making use of opportunities to provide or support the provision of new or improved public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and connectivity.</p>	
<p>Policy LBA2: Development needs and requirements</p> <p>The main focus for meeting housing, employment and other development needs and requirements in the Neighbourhood Area will be Little Birch village, followed by Aconbury hamlet. This will be enabled by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. setting out a definition of the extent of Little Birch village which recognises and protects the distinctive dispersed pattern of development; and 2. defining a settlement boundary for Aconbury; and 3. supporting housing, employment and other development in the settlements where this is appropriate in scale and in keeping with the established character. <p>Outside the two settlements, proposals for new residential development will need to satisfy the requirements of Local Plan Core Strategy policy RA3 and allied policies.</p> <p>In all cases, housing proposals should be of a type and size that contribute to meeting the latest assessment of housing needs.</p> <p>Proposals to generate employment and to support and diversify the rural economy will be supported in the countryside where they are of a scale and nature appropriate to their location and setting.</p>	<p>Policy LBA2 is in general conformity with strategic policy SS2 <i>Delivering new homes</i>, SS5 <i>Employment provision</i>, RA2 <i>Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns</i>, RA3 <i>Herefordshire's countryside</i> and RA6 <i>Rural economy</i>, and supports H3 <i>Ensuring an appropriate range and mix of housing</i>. It adds local detail by setting out how the strategic requirement for new housing and employment will be met in the Neighbourhood Area.</p>
<p>Policy LBA3: Little Birch village</p> <p>The village of Little Birch comprises residential curtilages or other</p>	<p>The HC consultation response identifies that there are no applicable strategic policies and that the policy is in general conformity.</p>

NDP policies	Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy
<p>developed plots fronting onto or directly served by lanes and tracks giving vehicular access from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrack Hill • Castle Nibole Road • Pendant Pitch • Chapel Pitch between School Lane and Vaughan Lane • Newtown Lane • School Lane • New Road • Crows Nest Lane • Bannutree Lane • Ruff Lane between Bowlers Lane and Lower House Farm to include the Church • Mense Lane north side • Parish Lane east side. 	
<p>Policy LBA4: Development in Little Birch</p> <p>Development proposals for housing and other purposes on land in the village of Little Birch as defined in policy LBA3 will be permitted provided that they:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. are part of a developed area/plot of the village and do not intrude into open countryside, taking into account the size and use of the plot, its relationship to existing development, and the enclosure provided by established natural boundaries; and 2. can be integrated through plot sub-division, rounding-off or consolidation without undue harm to the dispersed settlement pattern; and 3. comprise frontage development and will not result in backland or tandem development; and 4. will result in dwelling(s) with a curtilage similar in size to 	<p>Policy LBA4 is in general conformity with strategic policies RA2 <i>Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns</i>, LD1 <i>Landscape and townscape</i>, MT1 <i>Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel</i> and SD1 <i>Sustainable design and energy efficiency</i>. It adds local detail by setting out criteria for development in Little Birch settlement.</p>

NDP policies	Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy
<p>those in the immediate vicinity and otherwise respect the character of adjoining development and the wider area; and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. do not result in the loss of open spaces, trees and hedgerows which contribute to village character; and 6. do not unduly affect the amenity of adjoining dwellings and are not adversely affected by the operation of existing uses; and 7. where practicable provide for new or improved connectivity to public transport provision and community facilities. 	
<p>Policy LBA5: Development in Aconbury</p> <p>A settlement boundary is defined for Aconbury within which development proposals for housing and other purposes will be permitted provided that they will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. respect the character of adjoining development and the wider area; and 2. not result in the loss of open spaces, trees and hedgerows which contribute to the character of the hamlet; and 3. not unduly affect the amenity of adjoining dwellings and are not adversely affected by the operation of existing uses; and 4. serve to protect and enhance heritage assets in the hamlet, including the redundant church of St. John the Baptist, and their settings. 	<p>Policy LBA5 is in general conformity with strategic policies RA2 <i>Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns</i>, LD1 <i>Landscape and townscape</i>, and SD1 <i>Sustainable design and energy efficiency</i>. It adds local detail by defining a settlement boundary for Aconbury and setting out criteria for development in the hamlet.</p>
<p>Policy LBA6: Rural economic development</p> <p>A range of proposals for employment development and rural diversification will be supported, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the provision or extension of commercial facilities in Little Birch village, such as a village shop; 2. home working, such as through extending existing dwellings; 	<p>Policy LBA6 is in general conformity with strategic policies SS5 <i>Employment provision</i>, RA5 <i>Re-use of rural buildings</i>, RA6 <i>Rural economy</i>, E3 <i>Homeworking</i>, and E4 <i>Tourism</i>. It adds local detail in respect of the type and pattern of employment that is sought, including rural tourism and leisure proposals.</p>

NDP policies	Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy
<p>3. the re-use of rural buildings for business use, including live work units;</p> <p>4. the development and diversification of existing farm, forestry and other land-based rural businesses;</p> <p>5. rural tourism and leisure proposals, including those which seek to improve the understanding of and public access to Aconbury Hill Fort scheduled ancient monument, and to other areas of woodland.</p>	
<p>Policy LBA7: Infrastructure</p> <p>Proposals for the provision of communications and broadband infrastructure will be supported by ensuring that development for communications and broadband services is well-designed and sited, where this is consistent with technical and operational requirements and the delivery of service improvements.</p> <p>Proposals which provide for the provision or improvement of walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure will be supported wherever feasible and appropriate, particularly where they deliver enhanced connectivity to existing facilities. This includes a cycle/footway link alongside the A49 between the Kings Pitt Road and the C1263 at Cross in Hand Farm to provide enhanced access to the existing bus stop on the trunk road.</p>	<p>Draft policy LBA7 dealt solely with communications and broadband: the HC consultation response identified that there were no applicable strategic policies and that the draft policy was in general conformity.</p> <p>The amended submission policy includes support for sustainable transport provision and is in general conformity with strategic policy MT1 <i>Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel</i>.</p>
<p>Policy LBA8: Renewable energy</p> <p>Proposals for renewable energy generation will be supported where it is shown that the individual and cumulative impacts on the natural and historic environment, amenity and highway safety and capacity are or can be made acceptable, including the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB.</p> <p>Community-led renewable energy proposals where benefits can be</p>	<p>Policy LBA8 is in general conformity with strategic policy SD2 <i>Renewable and low carbon energy generation</i> and adds local detail in respect of highway safety and capacity, cumulative impacts and community-led proposals.</p>

NDP policies	Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy
demonstrated are encouraged.	
<p>Policy LBA9: Community facilities</p> <p>Proposals for the enhancement of community facilities, and for new provision in and adjacent to Little Birch village which is accessible by a choice of transport modes, will be supported. Proposals should take account of the potential for the co-location of services in achieving viability. Support will be given to diversification proposals where these can be shown to enable viability. Existing social and community facilities at Little Birch village hall, the Castle Inn and St. Mary’s Church will be retained in accordance with Local Plan Core Strategy policy SC1.</p>	<p>Policy LBA9 is in general conformity with strategic policy SC1 <i>Social and community facilities</i> and adds local detail in respect of the preferred location of Little Birch village, the support to be given to diversification proposals and the identification of specific facilities to be retained in accordance with the strategic policy.</p>
<p>Policy LBA10: Protecting the local environment</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate that they protect, conserve and enhance the local natural, historic and built environment in accordance with the principles in Local Plan Core Strategy policies LD1 to LD4. This includes the following, as is relevant to the proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. giving the highest priority to conserving and enhancing the landscape, natural beauty and wildlife of the Wye Valley AONB; 2. ensuring that development within the catchment of the River Wye avoids adverse effects on the River Wye Special Area of Conservation / Site of Special Scientific Interest; 3. protecting, conserving and where possible enhancing the Aconbury Hill Fort Scheduled Ancient Monument and listed buildings in a manner appropriate to their significance; and 4. conserving, restoring and enhancing sites and habitats of local biodiversity interest, including Local Wildlife Sites, other woodland, veteran trees, traditional orchards and 	<p>Policy LBA10 is in general conformity with strategic policies SS6 <i>Environmental quality and local distinctiveness</i>, LD1 <i>Landscape and townscape</i>, LD2 <i>Biodiversity and geodiversity</i>, LD3 <i>Green infrastructure</i>, and LD4 <i>Historic environment and heritage assets</i>. It adds local detail by identifying natural environmental and heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Area.</p>

NDP policies	Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy
<p>watercourses, in accordance with their status and taking account of their contribution to the coherence of the ecological network and as green infrastructure. Substantial harm to or loss of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland should be wholly exceptional;</p> <p>5. supporting appropriate new tree planting both in woodland areas and elsewhere including as part of landscaping schemes submitted with development proposals; and</p> <p>6. ensuring that proposals respect the character of the landscape and townscape including views, trees and hedgerows and local features of interest; take into account the amenity value of green lanes; and serve to protect and enhance the setting of the settlements of Little Birch and Aconbury.</p>	
<p>Policy LBA11: Building design</p> <p>Development proposals should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. respect the character of adjoining development and the wider area by virtue of the siting of buildings on plots, scale, height, massing, architectural detailing and the choice of materials; and 2. incorporate relevant sustainability measures to include building orientation and design, energy and water conservation, the use of sustainable construction methods and materials, and provision for the recycling of waste, cycle storage, communications and broadband technologies, and the generation of renewable energy; and 3. Where external lighting is proposed, ensure it is appropriate to its purpose and avoid adverse amenity and environmental impacts occurring through light spillage; and 4. retain and incorporate existing site features of amenity and biodiversity value, such as trees, ponds and hedgerows, as far 	<p>Policy LBA11 is in general conformity with strategic policies SS6 <i>Environmental quality and local distinctiveness</i>, SD1 <i>Sustainable design and energy efficiency</i>, and SD2 <i>Renewable and low carbon energy generation</i>. It adds local detail by reflecting issues of concern, such as in respect of light pollution and support for modern design approaches.</p>

NDP policies	Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy
<p>as practicable; and</p> <p>5. provide for new landscaping to integrate new buildings within their surroundings and to support the green infrastructure of the area.</p> <p>Modern design approaches which take an innovative approach, including to energy efficiency and sustainability, will be welcomed where they make a positive contribution to the character of the area and contribute to local distinctiveness.</p>	

6. EU OBLIGATIONS

6.1 The Little Birch and Aconbury NDP is compatible with European Union obligations as detailed in Table 4 and as transposed into UK law.

Table 4: EU obligations

EU Obligation	Compatibility of the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive	<p>Strategic environmental assessment of the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP has been undertaken by Herefordshire Council. An initial screening opinion in May 2016 concluded that the NDP would require further assessment for the purposes of Strategic Environmental Assessment. A Scoping Report was prepared in April 2017 and published for consultation. Subsequently, an SEA of the draft Plan was undertaken in September 2017 and the resultant Environmental Report was published for consultation alongside the draft Plan.</p> <p>The Environmental Report concludes that the NDP is in general conformity with both national planning policy contained in the NPPF and strategic policies set within the Herefordshire Local Plan (Core Strategy). None of the NDP policies were considered to be in direct conflict with or propose greater levels of growth and development than strategic policies contained in the Local Plan (Core Strategy), which themselves have undergone a full Sustainability Appraisal. The cumulative effect of the NDP policies will contribute to the SEA objectives.</p> <p>Amendments to the draft Plan following regulation 14 consultation were assessed in a further Environmental Report (August 2018), which confirms these conclusions.</p> <p>The NDP has been prepared in conjunction with a formal process of environmental appraisal in accordance with the SEA Directive, whose requirements are considered to have been met.</p>
Habitats Directive	<p>A process of assessment of the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP pursuant to the Habitats Directive has been undertaken by Herefordshire Council. Initial screening in May 2016 found that the Neighbourhood Area was within the hydrological catchment of the River Wye (including River Lugg) Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The initial screening concluded that the River Wye SAC would need to be taken into account in the NDP and that a full Habitats Regulation Assessment would be required.</p>

EU Obligation	Compatibility of the Little Birch and Aconbury NDP
	<p>A Screening Assessment of the draft NDP was undertaken by Herefordshire Council in September 2017. This concluded that the draft NDP will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC, either on its own or in-combination with other neighbouring NDPs.</p> <p>Amendments to the draft Plan following regulation 14 consultation were assessed in an Addendum Report dated August 2018. In addition, in light of the <i>Sweetman</i> case all policies were reviewed to ensure compliance with the ruling. The Report concludes that the earlier conclusion that the NDP will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC remains valid.</p> <p>The NDP has been prepared in conjunction with a formal screening process in accordance with the Habitats Directive, whose requirements are considered to have been met.</p>
Water Framework Directive	<p>The Local Plan Core Strategy (policies SD3 and SD4) requires that development proposals are considered against Water Framework Directive objectives, including that development should not undermine the achievement of water quality targets. These strategic policies are referenced within the NDP in justification to policy LBA7. The Water Framework Directive has been taken into account within the objectives used for the SEA of the NDP and as a source of baseline information and targets.</p> <p>The NDP is considered to be compatible with the Water Framework Directive.</p>
Human Rights	<p>The NDP is fully compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, transposed into UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998. It has been prepared within the existing framework of statute, national planning policy and guidance, and County-level strategic planning policies. In accordance with established process, its preparation has included consultation with the local community and it is subject to independent examination. The policies within the Plan are considered to comply with the requirements of EU obligations in relation to Human Rights.</p>

APPENDIX 1: STRATEGIC POLICIES

Policy SS1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

When considering development proposals Herefordshire Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within national policy. It will always work proactively to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that improves the social, economic and environmental conditions in Herefordshire.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Core Strategy (and, where relevant with policies in other Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Development Plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:

- a) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in national policy taken as a whole; or
- b) specific elements of national policy indicate that development should be restricted.

Policy SS2 – Delivering new homes

A supply of deliverable and developable land will be identified to secure the delivery of a minimum of 16,500 homes in Herefordshire between 2011 and 2031 to meet market and affordable housing need.

Hereford is the focus for new housing development to support its role as the main centre in the county. Outside Hereford, the main focus for new housing development will take place in the market towns of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross on Wye, on existing or new allocations to enhance their roles as multi-functional centres for their surrounding rural areas. In the rural areas new housing development will be acceptable where it helps to meet housing needs and requirements, supports the rural economy and local services and facilities and is responsive to the needs of its community. In the wider rural areas new housing will be carefully controlled reflecting the need to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The use of previously developed land in sustainable locations will be encouraged. Residential density will be determined by local character and good quality design. The target net density across the county is between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare, although this may be less in sensitive areas.

The broad distribution of new dwellings in the county will be a minimum of:

Place	Facilities	New homes
Hereford	Wide range of services and main focus for development	6,500
Other urban areas – Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster, Ross on Wye	Range of services and reasonable transport provision – opportunities to strengthen role in meeting requirements of surrounding communities	4,700
Rural Settlements – see list in Place - Shaping section	More limited range of services and some limited development potential but numerous locations	5,300
Total		16,500

Policy SS4 – Movement and transportation

New developments should be designed and located to minimise the impacts on the transport network; ensuring that journey times and the efficient and safe operation of the network are not detrimentally impacted. Furthermore, where practicable, development proposals should be accessible by and facilitate a genuine choice of modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport.

Development proposals that will generate high journey numbers should be in sustainable locations, accessible by means other than private car.

Alternatively, such developments will be required to demonstrate that they can be made sustainable by reducing unsustainable transport patterns and promoting travel by walking, cycling and public transport.

Proposals to provide new and improved existing public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure will be supported. Where appropriate, land and routes will be safeguarded as required in future local or neighbourhood development plans and developer contributions, which meet the statutory tests, sought to assist with the delivery of new sustainable transport infrastructure, including that required for alternative energy cars.

Herefordshire Council will work with the Highways Agency, Network Rail, bus and train operators, developers and local communities to bring forward improvements to the local and strategic transport network to reduce congestion, improve air quality and road safety and offer greater transport choices, including the provision of the following major schemes:

- ESG Link Road (safeguarded route) and Transport Hub;
- Hereford Relief Road;
- Leominster Relief Road;
- Connect 2 Cycleway in Hereford;
- Park and Choose schemes; and
- other schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Proposals which enable the transfer of freight from road to rail will be encouraged. Development proposals incorporating commercial vehicular movements that could detrimentally impact on the environmental quality, amenity, safety and character of the surrounding locality will be expected to incorporate evidence demonstrating how the traffic impacts are to be mitigated.

Policy SS5 – Employment provision

Existing higher quality employment land countywide will be safeguarded from alternative uses. A continuous supply of 37 ha of readily available employment land will be made available over a 5 year period, with an overall target of 148 ha of employment land over the plan period. New strategic employment land, in tandem with housing growth and smaller scale employment sites, will be delivered through the plan period. New strategic employment land locations are identified at Hereford (15 ha); Leominster (up to 10 ha), Ledbury (15 ha), and Ross-on-Wye (10 ha). The Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas will continue to provide the largest focus for new employment provision in the county. Proposals for employment land provision at Bromyard and Kington will be brought forward through Neighbourhood Development Plans or other Development Plan Documents.

The continuing development of the more traditional employment sectors such as farming and food and drink manufacturing will be supported. The diversification of the business base, through the development of knowledge intensive industries, environmental technologies and creative industries as well as business hubs, live-work schemes and the adaptive design of residential development, will be facilitated where they do not have an adverse impact on the community or local environment. The provision of high speed broadband to facilitate diversification will be supported.

Policy SS6 – Environmental quality and local distinctiveness

Development proposals should conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county's distinctiveness, in particular its settlement pattern, landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets and especially those with specific environmental designations. In addition, proposals should maintain and improve the effectiveness of those ecosystems essential to the health and wellbeing of the county's residents and its economy. Development proposals should be shaped through an integrated approach to planning the following environmental components from the outset, and based upon sufficient information to determine the effect upon each where they are relevant:

- landscape, townscape and local distinctiveness, especially in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- biodiversity and geodiversity especially Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- historic environment and heritage assets, especially Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings;
- the network of green infrastructure;
- local amenity, including light pollution, air quality and tranquillity;
- agricultural and food productivity;
- physical resources, including minerals, soils, management of waste, the water environment, renewable energy and energy conservation.

The management plans and conservation objectives of the county's international and nationally important features and areas will be material to the determination of future development proposals. Furthermore assessments of local features, areas and sites, defining local distinctiveness in other development plan documents, neighbourhood development plans and supplementary planning documents should inform decisions upon proposals.

Policy RA2 – Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns.

To maintain and strengthen locally sustainable communities across the rural parts of Herefordshire, sustainable housing growth will be supported in or adjacent to those settlements identified in Figures 4.14 and 4.15. This will enable development that has the ability to bolster existing service provision, improve facilities and infrastructure and meet the needs of the communities concerned.

The minimum growth target in each rural Housing Market Area will be used to inform the level of housing development to be delivered in the various settlements set out in Figures 4.14 and 4.15. Neighbourhood Development Plans will allocate land for new housing or otherwise demonstrate delivery to provide levels of housing to meet the various targets, by indicating levels of suitable and available capacity.

Housing proposals will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

1. Their design and layout should reflect the size, role and function of each settlement and be located within or adjacent to the main built up area. In relation to smaller settlements identified in fig 4.15 proposals will be expected to demonstrate particular attention to the form, layout, character and setting of the site and its location in that settlement and/or they result in development that contributes to or is essential to the social well-being of the settlement concerned;
2. Their locations make best and full use of suitable brownfield sites wherever possible;
3. They result in the development of high quality, sustainable schemes which are appropriate to their context and make a positive contribution to the surrounding environment and its landscape setting; and
4. They result in the delivery of schemes that generate the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular settlements, reflecting local demand.

Specific proposals for the delivery of local need housing will be particularly supported where they meet an identified need and their long-term retention as local needs housing is secured as such.

Policy RA3 – Herefordshire's countryside

In rural locations outside of settlements, as to be defined in either neighbourhood development plans or the Rural Areas Sites Allocations DPD, residential development will be limited to proposals which satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

1. meets an agricultural or forestry need or other farm diversification enterprise for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work and complies with Policy RA4; or
2. accompanies and is necessary to the establishment or growth of a rural enterprise, and complies with Policy RA4; or

3. involves the replacement of an existing dwelling (with a lawful residential use) that is comparable in size and scale with, and is located in the lawful domestic curtilage, of the existing dwelling; or
4. would result in the sustainable re-use of a redundant or disused building(s) where it complies with Policy RA5 and leads to an enhancement of its immediate setting; or
5. is rural exception housing in accordance with Policy H2; or
6. is of exceptional quality and innovative design satisfying the design criteria set out in Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework and achieves sustainable standards of design and construction; or
7. is a site providing for the needs of gypsies or other travellers in accordance with Policy H4.

Policy RA5 – Re-use of rural buildings

The sustainable re-use of individual and groups of redundant or disused buildings, including farmsteads in rural areas, which will make a positive contribution to rural businesses and enterprise and support the local economy (including live work units) or which otherwise contributes to residential development, or is essential to the social well-being of the countryside, will be permitted where:

1. design proposals respect the character and significance of any redundant or disused building and demonstrate that it represents the most viable option for the long term conservation and enhancement of any heritage asset affected, together with its setting;
2. design proposals make adequate provision for protected and priority species and associated habitats;
3. the proposal is compatible with neighbouring uses, including any continued agricultural operations and does not cause undue environmental impacts and;
4. the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and
5. the building is capable of accommodating the proposed new use without the need for substantial alteration or extension, ancillary buildings, areas of hard standing or development which individually or taken together would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building or have a detrimental impact on its surroundings and landscape setting.

Any planning permissions granted pursuant to this policy will be subject to a condition removing permitted development rights for future alterations, extensions and other developments.

Policy RA6 - Rural economy

Employment generating proposals which help diversify the rural economy such as knowledge based creative industries, environmental technologies, business diversification projects and home working will be supported. A range of economic activities will be supported, including proposals which:

- support and strengthen local food and drink production;
- support and/or protect the vitality and viability of commercial facilities of an appropriate type and scale in rural areas, such as village shops, petrol filling stations, garden centres and public houses;
- involve the small scale extension of existing businesses;
- promote sustainable tourism proposals of an appropriate scale in accordance with Policy E4 - Tourism;

- promote the sustainable use of the natural and historic environment as an asset which is valued, conserved and enhanced;
- support the retention of existing military sites;
- support the retention and/ or diversification of existing agricultural businesses;

Planning applications which are submitted in order to diversify the rural economy will be permitted where they;

- ensure that the development is of a scale which would be commensurate with its location and setting;
- do not cause unacceptable adverse impacts to the amenity of nearby residents by virtue of design and mass, noise and dust, lighting and smell;
- do not generate traffic movements that cannot safely be accommodated within the local road network and
- do not undermine the achievement of water quality targets in accordance with Policies SD3 and SD4.

Policy H3 – Ensuring an appropriate range and mix of housing

Residential developments should provide a range and mix of housing units which can contribute to the creation of balanced and inclusive communities.

In particular, on larger housing sites of more than 50 dwellings developers will be expected to:

1. provide a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all households, including younger single people;
2. provide housing capable of being adapted for people in the community with additional needs; and
3. provide housing capable of meeting the specific needs of the elderly population by:
 - providing specialist accommodation for older people in suitable locations;
 - ensuring that non-specialist new housing is built to take account of the changing needs of an ageing population;
 - ensuring that developments contain a range of house types, including where appropriate, bungalow accommodation.

The latest Local Housing Market Assessment will provide evidence of the need for an appropriate mix and range of housing types and sizes.

Policy SC1 – Social and community facilities

Development proposals which protect, retain or enhance existing social and community infrastructure or ensure that new facilities are available as locally as possible will be supported. Such proposals should be in or close to settlements, have considered the potential for co-location of facilities and where possible be safely accessible by foot, by cycle and public transport.

New development that creates a need for additional social and community facilities that cannot be met through existing social facilities - will be expected to meet the additional requirements through new, or extension of existing, provision or by developer contributions which meet the relevant tests of paragraph 204 of the NPPF.

Proposals involving the provision or expansion of social and community facilities will be expected to provide publicly accessible toilets (including facilities for disabled people and baby changing).

Existing facilities will be retained, unless it can be demonstrated that an appropriate alternative facility is available, or can be provided to meet the needs of the community affected; or it can be shown that the facility is no longer required, viable or is no longer fit for purpose; and where appropriate, it has

been vacant and marketed for community use without success. Viable alternative facilities must be equivalent to those they replace, in terms of size, quality and accessibility.

The provision or improvement of higher education facilities and the continuing enhancement of existing, or provision of new, training and skills facilities will be actively promoted.

Policy MT1 – Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel

Development proposals should incorporate the following principle requirements covering movement and transportation:

1. demonstrate that the strategic and local highway network can absorb the traffic impacts of the development without adversely affecting the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the network or that traffic impacts can be managed to acceptable levels to reduce and mitigate any adverse impacts from the development;
2. promote and, where possible, incorporate integrated transport connections and supporting infrastructure (depending on the nature and location of the site), including access to services by means other than private motorised transport;
3. encourage active travel behaviour to reduce numbers of short distance car journeys through the use of travel plans and other promotional and awareness raising activities;
4. ensure that developments are designed and laid out to achieve safe entrance and exit, have appropriate operational and manoeuvring space, accommodate provision for all modes of transport, the needs of people with disabilities and provide safe access for the emergency services;
5. protect existing local and long distance footways, cycleways and bridleways unless an alternative route of at least equal utility value can be used, and facilitate improvements to existing or provide new connections to these routes, especially where such schemes have been identified in the Local Transport Plan and/or Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
6. have regard to with both the council's Highways Development Design Guide and cycle and vehicle parking standards as prescribed in the Local Transport Plan - having regard to the location of the site and need to promote sustainable travel choices.

Where traffic management measures are introduced they should be designed in a way which respects the character of the surrounding area including its landscape character. Where appropriate, the principle of shared spaces will be encouraged.

Policy E3 – Homeworking

The value of home working will be recognised by allowing some material change of use to part of a dwelling, where the dwelling remains as the principle place of residence for the home worker; and recognising the potential to encourage and expand home working, by allowing small extensions or conversions where the proposed use and operation would be compatible with its location and heritage value, and where it would not adversely affect the amenity of the neighbourhood by **any** of the following:

- changes to the appearance of any building;
- noise disturbance from the use or any increased traffic and parking generated;
- unsociable hours of operation; and
- the storage of hazardous materials or emissions from the site.

Policy E4 – Tourism

Herefordshire will be promoted as a destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by utilising, conserving and enhancing the county's unique environmental and heritage assets and by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. In particular, the tourist industry will be supported by a number of measures including:

1. recognising the unique historic character of Hereford and the market towns as key visitor attractions and as locations to focus the provision of new larger scale tourist development;
2. the development of sustainable tourism opportunities, capitalising on assets such as the county's landscape, rivers, other waterways and attractive rural settlements, where there is no detrimental impact on the county's varied natural and heritage assets or on the overall character and quality of the environment. Particular regard will be had to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
3. retaining and enhancing existing, and encouraging new, accommodation and attractions throughout the county, which will help to diversify the tourist provision, extend the tourist season and increase the number of visitors staying overnight. In particular proposals for new hotels in Hereford will be encouraged. Applicants will be encouraged to provide a 'Hotel Needs Assessment' for any applications for new hotels;
4. ensuring that cycling, walking and heritage tourism is encouraged by facilitating the development of long distance walking and cycling routes, food and drink trails and heritage trails, including improvements to public rights of way, whilst having special regard for the visual amenity of such routes and trails, and for the setting of heritage assets in their vicinity; and
5. the safeguarding of the historic route of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal (shown on the Policies Map), together with its infrastructure, buildings, towpath and features. Where the original alignment cannot be re-established, a corridor allowing for deviations will be safeguarded. New developments within or immediately adjoining the safeguarded corridor will be required to incorporate land for canal restoration. Development not connected with the canal that would prevent or prejudice the restoration of a continuous route will not be permitted.

Policy LD1 – Landscape and townscape

Development proposals should:

- demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas;
- conserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nationally and locally designated parks and gardens and conservation areas; through the protection of the area's character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management;
- incorporate new landscape schemes and their management to ensure development integrates appropriately into its surroundings; and
- maintain and extend tree cover where important to amenity, through the retention of important trees, appropriate replacement of trees lost through development and new planting to support green infrastructure.

Policy LD2 – Biodiversity and geodiversity

Development proposals should conserve, restore and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity assets of Herefordshire, through the:

1. retention and protection of nature conservation sites and habitats, and important species in accordance with their status as follows:
 - a) Development that is likely to harm sites and species of European Importance will not be permitted;
 - b) Development that would be liable to harm Sites of Special Scientific Interest or nationally protected species will only be permitted if the conservation status of their habitat or important physical features can be protected by conditions or other material considerations are sufficient to outweigh nature conservation considerations;
 - c) Development that would be liable to harm the nature conservation value of a site or species of local nature conservation interest will only be permitted if the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the site, habitat or physical feature that supports important species.
 - d) Development that will potentially reduce the coherence and effectiveness of the ecological network of sites will only be permitted where adequate compensatory measures are brought forward.
2. restoration and enhancement of existing biodiversity and geodiversity features on site and connectivity to wider ecological networks; and
3. creation of new biodiversity features and wildlife habitats.

Where appropriate the council will work with developers to agree a management strategy to ensure the protection of, and prevention of adverse impacts on, biodiversity and geodiversity features.

Policy LD3 –Green infrastructure

Development proposals should protect, manage and plan for the preservation of existing and delivery of new green infrastructure, and should achieve the following objectives:

1. identification and retention of existing green infrastructure corridors and linkages; including the protection of valued landscapes, trees, hedgerows, woodlands, water courses and adjoining flood plain;
2. provision of on-site green infrastructure; in particular proposals will be supported where this enhances the network; and
3. integration with, and connection to, the surrounding green infrastructure network.

Policy LD4 –Historic environment and heritage assets

Development proposals affecting heritage assets and the wider historic environment should:

1. Protect, conserve, and where possible enhance heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance through appropriate management, uses and sympathetic design, in particular emphasising the original form and function where possible;
2. where opportunities exist, contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the townscape or wider environment, especially within conservation areas;
3. use the retention, repair and sustainable use of heritage assets to provide a focus for wider regeneration schemes;

4. record and advance the understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) and to make this evidence or archive generated publicly accessible and

5. where appropriate, improve the understanding of and public access to the heritage asset.

The scope of the works required to protect, conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings should be proportionate to their significance.

Development schemes should emphasise the original form and function of any asset and, where appropriate, improve the understanding of and public access to them.

Policy SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency

Development proposals should create safe, sustainable, well integrated environments for all members of the community. In conjunction with this, all development proposals should incorporate the following requirements:

- ensure that proposals make efficient use of land -taking into account the local context and site characteristics,
- new buildings should be designed to maintain local distinctiveness through incorporating local architectural detailing and materials and respecting scale, height, proportions and massing of surrounding development while making a positive contribution to the architectural diversity and character of the area including, where appropriate, through innovative design;
- safeguard residential amenity for existing and proposed residents;
- ensure new development does not contribute to, or suffer from, adverse impacts arising from noise, light or air contamination, land instability or cause ground water pollution;
- where contaminated land is present, undertake appropriate remediation where it can be demonstrated that this will be effective;
- ensure that distinctive features of existing buildings and their setting are safeguarded and where appropriate, restored;
- utilise physical sustainability measures that include, in particular, orientation of buildings, the provision of water conservation measures, storage for bicycles and waste including provision for recycling, and enabling renewable energy and energy conservation infrastructure;
- where possible, on-site renewable energy generation should also be incorporated;
- create safe and accessible environments, and that minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour by incorporating Secured by Design principles, and consider the incorporation of fire safety measures;
- ensuring designs can be easily adapted and accommodate new technologies to meet changing needs throughout the lifetime of the development; and
- utilise sustainable construction methods which minimise the use of non-renewable resources and maximise the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials;

All planning applications including material changes of use, will be expected to demonstrate how the above design and energy efficiency considerations have been factored into the proposal from the outset.

Policy SD2 – Renewable and low carbon energy generation

Development proposals that seek to deliver renewable and low carbon energy will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

1. the proposal does not adversely impact upon international or national designated natural and heritage assets;

2. the proposal does not adversely affect residential amenity;
3. the proposal does not result in any significant detrimental impact upon the character of the landscape and the built or historic environment and
4. the proposal can be connected efficiently to existing national grid infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that energy generation would be used on-site to meet the needs of a specific end user.

In the case of energy generation through wind power developments, permission will only be granted for such proposals where:

- the proposed site is identified in a Neighbourhood Development Plan or other Development Plan Document as a suitable site for wind energy generation; and
- following consultation with local residents, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified can be fully addressed, and therefore the proposal has the backing of the local community.