

# **WHITCHURCH AND GANAREW GROUP PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011 - 2031**



**September 2019**



<b>Contents</b>		
<b>Section</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> <b>Community Involvement</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>An overview of the Neighbourhood Plan Area</b> <b>Introduction</b> <b>Landscape and Natural Environment</b> <b>Heritage and Settlements</b> <b>People and the Community</b> <b>Enterprise and Employment</b> <b>Infrastructure and Communications</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Issues</b> <b>Introduction</b> <b>Housing</b> <b>Supporting Enterprise and Employment</b> <b>Roads, Traffic and Transport</b> <b>Sustaining the Natural and Built Environment</b> <b>Community, Social and Health Needs</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Vision and Objectives</b> <b>Our Vision</b> <b>Our Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Environmental Sustainability</li> <li>• Roads and Traffic</li> <li>• Community services and facilities</li> </ul> <b>Response from the Community</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Strategy for Sustainable Development</b> <b>Options for Housing Development</b> <b>Promoting Sustainable Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG1</li> </ul> <b>Development Strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG2</li> </ul>	<b>24</b>

<b>6</b>	<b>Housing Policies</b> <b>Introduction</b> <b>Housing Development in Whitchurch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG3</li> <li>• Policy WG4</li> </ul> <b>Housing Development in Symonds Yat West</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG5</li> </ul> <b>Achieving the housing target</b> <b>Affordable Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG6</li> </ul> <b>Housing Design and Appearance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG7</li> </ul> <b>Sustainable building and site design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG8</li> </ul>	<b>29</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Economic Development</b> <b>Introduction</b> <b>Land adjacent to the River Wye</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG9</li> </ul> <b>Industrial and Commercial Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG10</li> </ul> <b>Use of Rural Buildings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG11</li> </ul> <b>Working from Home</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG12</li> </ul> <b>Poly-tunnel use</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG13</li> </ul>	<b>41</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Environmental and Heritage Policies</b> <b>Introduction</b> <b>Conserving the landscape and scenic beauty, both within and outside of the Wye Valley AONB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG14</li> </ul> <b>Enhancement of the natural environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG15</li> </ul> <b>Protection of Heritage assets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG16</li> </ul> <b>Protection from Flood-risk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG17</li> </ul> <b>Sewerage Infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy WG18</li> </ul>	<b>48</b>

	<b>Renewable and low-carbon energy</b> • Policy WG19	
<b>9</b>	<b>Highways, Transport and Road Safety</b> <b>Introduction</b> <b>Highway Design requirements</b> • Policy WG21 <b>Traffic Measures within the Parish</b> • Supporting Action – Promoting Traffic Measures	<b>57</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Community services and facilities</b> <b>Introduction</b> <b>Protection and enhancements of Parish services and facilities</b> • Policy WG22 <b>Contributions to Parish services, youth provision and recreation facilities</b> • Policy WG23 <b>Broadband Infrastructure</b> • Policy WG24	<b>61</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Delivering the Plan</b>	<b>65</b>
	<b>Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West Policies Maps</b>	<b>67/68</b>
	<b>References:</b> Housing Report Strategic Environmental Assessment Habitat Regulations Assessment	<b>69</b>
	<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>70</b>

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**Front cover photograph - The Doward and Symonds Yat West**

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) are a new type of planning document introduced by the Localism Act of 2011. They enable the local community to make a major contribution to some of the planning decisions that will be needed to meet the requirements for sustainable development within their parish.
- 1.1.2 Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish Council agreed to prepare an NDP and made a formal submission to Herefordshire Council to designate the Parish as a Neighbourhood Plan Area under the Localism Act 2011 on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2013, with the intention of preparing this NDP. Following a consultation period, this was approved on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013.
- 1.1.3 A Steering Group to prepare the Plan first met on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014. The group comprised residents and parish councillors and those involved had to gain not just evidence to inform the Plan but also knowledge of the system and processes involved in producing the plan. This draft NDP has been prepared following the adoption of Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy by Herefordshire Council on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015.
- 1.1.4 In drafting our Neighbourhood Development Plan we have included evidence from Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy. In addition, evidence and views were gathered from a range of sources relating to the Plan including: the Parish Plan of October 2014, research undertaken by Steering Group members, a Parish-wide questionnaire survey<sup>1</sup> undertaken during March 2016 (to which there was a 49% response from residents) and a Parish consultation event held on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The NDP was made available for the public and other stakeholders to comment upon under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations between 9<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2018.
- 1.1.5 Throughout the process of evidence gathering and preparation of this Plan we have been mindful of the need to comply with the broad criteria for sustainable development within the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 1.1.6 Sustainable development seeks to ensure that proposals are advanced that will respond to "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". It covers social and economic factors as well as the environment so that the community is provided with sufficient and appropriate housing, jobs, opportunity for enterprise and access to community facilities which will help to maintain healthy and thriving communities as well as

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<sup>1</sup> See Evidence Base on Whitchurch and Ganarew Parish Council website under Neighbourhood Plan (<http://www.wagpcnp.org.uk/wagpcNP-20-Evidence.html>) for the Residents' Survey Report Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031 – September 2019

protecting our natural and historic environment all of which contribute to our quality of life.

- 1.1.7 Policies and proposals are set out in this document and prefixed by 'WG' (i.e. for Whitchurch and Ganarew). These will become part of the development plan which will guide what may receive planning permission as well as indicating which measures are to be promoted to guide new development.

## 1.2 Community involvement

- 1.2.1 This NDP has been prepared by Whitchurch and Ganarew Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with the invaluable help of other volunteers from the Parish. The Steering Group has had flexible membership involving up to 3 members drawn from the Group Parish Council and up to 7 members from the wider community. All Steering Group meetings have been open to the public who could contribute as they wished. Further information about the work of the Group can be found on-line at [www.wagpcnp.org.uk](http://www.wagpcnp.org.uk)
- 1.2.2 This Neighbourhood Plan has been approved by Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish Council.
- 1.2.3 The Steering Group and Parish Council have written these policies with professional support from Data Orchard and in consultation with Herefordshire Council's Neighbourhood Planning Team.



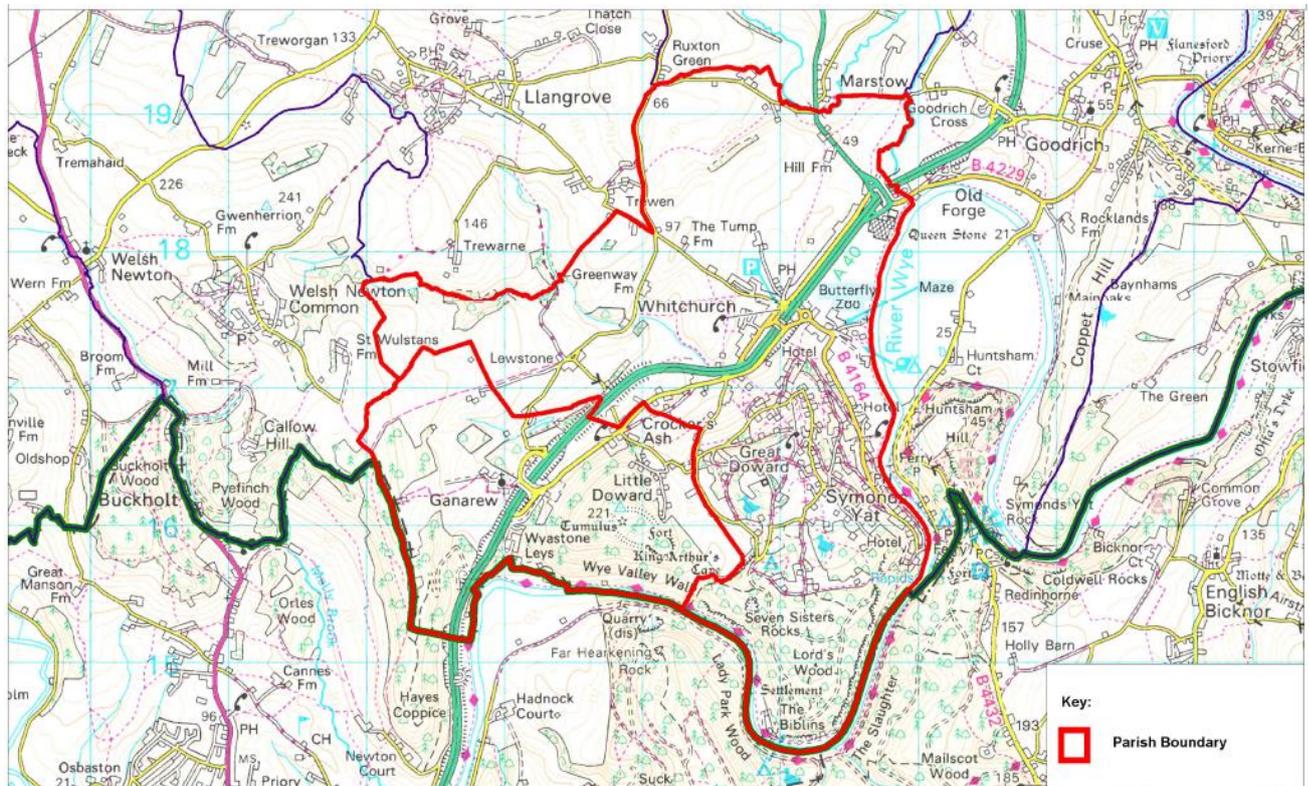
Figure 1: View towards Little Doward and Ganarew

## 2. An overview of the Neighbourhood Plan area

### 2.1 The Area of the Parish

2.1.1 Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish covers a rural area within south Herefordshire to the south-west of Ross-on-Wye. It borders Monmouthshire and Wales along its south-western edge, the Herefordshire parishes of Welsh Newton and Llanrothal, Llangrove, Marstow and Goodrich to the north and east and English Bicknor in Gloucestershire to the south.

### Map 1 – Whitchurch and Ganarew Neighbourhood Plan Area



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### 2.2 Our Parish's landscape and natural environment

2.2.1 The Parish is known for its uniquely beautiful landscape with its range of impressive views and vistas and its rich biodiversity, all greatly valued by residents and visitors alike. It is recognised internationally as of significant ecological importance. Only 5% of its land is occupied by residential buildings, business premises, amenities and transport infrastructure. Much of the Parish is protected by a statutory designation: around 85% is in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and around 10% of the total Parish area is

designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), comprising the Upper Wye Gorge SSSI, the Great Doward SSSI and the River Wye SSSI. The latter has been given the international designation of "Special Area of Conservation" (SAC).

- 2.2.2 In addition to the SSSIs and SAC there are two areas within the Parish designated as "Special Wildlife Sites"; the Garren Brook SWS and the Doward and Huntsham Hill SWS. Other important nature conservation sites lie just outside the Parish border, including the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC and Lady Park Wood National Nature Reserve. Herefordshire Council's Ecological Network Map shows most of the Parish to be covered by core areas (areas of high nature conservation value) and buffer zones (areas that protect core areas from adverse effects of the wider environment) indicating the breadth of biodiversity present. Land in the north-west of the Parish is crossed by a number of corridors and stepping-stones (spaces that improve connectivity between conservation areas, enabling species to move, feed, disperse, migrate or reproduce). Some 50% of the land is used for agriculture and a further 40% for woodland and commercial forestry.
- 2.2.3 The geology of the Parish is a continuation of the Forest of Dean limestone and sandstone formations and the River Wye has carved out a deep gorge through the dolomitic limestone of the area, creating spectacular scenery. The Doward is one of the few places in the area where the geological succession from the early Devonian to the Early Carboniferous era (spanning about 55 million years) can be seen. There are seven Local Geological Sites in the Parish, designated as important for geo-diversity and which form material considerations where relevant to any future development.
- 2.2.4. Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment<sup>2</sup> identifies four landscape types within the Parish: (a) Principal Settled Farmlands to the north and west of the A40, (b) Principal Wooded Hills to the south of the Parish, (c) Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings on the Doward and in Symonds Yat West and (d) a narrow corridor bordering the River Wye described as Riverside Meadows.
- Development within **Principal Settled Farmlands** is considered capable of accommodating only limited new development, modest in size to preserve the settlement character.
  - **Principal Wooded Hills** are often highly visible landscapes and their visual integrity is of paramount importance. Future management should ensure extremely low-density housing.
  - The settlement character of **Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings** is of strings of wayside cottages, associated smallholdings and lanes dispersed in a random, opportunistic, ad hoc pattern particularly vulnerable to changes in character brought about by built development often through

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[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2069/landscape\\_character\\_assessment\\_for\\_herefordshire.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2069/landscape_character_assessment_for_herefordshire.pdf)

extending or remodeling the original modest cottages. Infill development must be managed to avoid pressure on the landscape. The conversion of small pastures to paddocks can lead to degradation and loss of hedgerows.

- **Riverside Meadows landscape** is prone to occasional flooding. The sense of unity in these landscapes relies heavily on extensive views along the length of river corridor and new-build development within them should be discouraged.

2.2.5 Agricultural land within the Parish is graded either "Poor or Very Poor" according to the Agricultural Land Classification although the flatter lands closer to the River Wye are rated good to moderate. To the north-west the land ranges between "very good" or "good to moderate". No areas of derelict land have been identified. Areas identified as mineral sites are located across the south-east of the Parish incorporating Symonds Yat West and the Doward, and a small area just to the west of the Old Ross Road to the north of Whitchurch. As mineral reserves, they should be safeguarded although whether it would be appropriate or even practical to exploit them is doubted. The extent of brown-field land has not been surveyed but is understood to be limited.

2.2.6 The River Wye is a major watercourse in the River Severn Catchment Area and is of internationally ecological importance as well as a popular site locally for recreational and leisure pursuits particularly where it flows through the Wye Gorge at Symonds Yat. Areas of the Parish close to the River have a high risk of serious flooding as shown by the Environment Agency Flood Map.

2.2.7 There are other sources of flood water in the Parish. The Garron Brook rises on Garway Hill then flows south through St Weonards, Llangarron and Marstow and joins the Wye at the Old Forge area of the Parish. Other streams from Llangrove, Welsh Newton and The Doward join as the brook at Whitchurch. This brook then flows under the A40 towards Symonds Yat West and joins the River Wye close to St Dubricius Church.

2.2.8 Nowhere in the Parish is more than 3 miles from the river and this short distance severely limits the possibility of filtering out pollution before it reaches the water. Currently the Parish is identified as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. Water quality measures have made some improvements of late, but phosphates remain a problem. Run-off water from agricultural land can transport chemicals and sediment, particularly if the land is compacted with no significant 'buffer zones' of natural vegetation and is one of the causes of low water quality.

## 2.3 The Parish's Heritage and Settlements

2.3.1 Human activity in this part of the Wye Valley and the hills of the Doward can be traced back for 12,000 years. Pre-historic remains have been found in caves around the valley, notably in King Arthur's cave and Merlin's cave. These remains include bones from hyenas, sabre-toothed cats and a mammoth in caves around the valley. Iron Age hill forts on the Doward and at Symonds Yat

Rock provided defensible settlements for the local inhabitants. During Roman times these forts became focal points in the region and the importance of iron ore here and in the Forest of Dean made this a valuable prize for the conquerors. In the 8th Century Offa's Dyke was built to separate England from Wales. Prior to the 9th Century this area was within the Welsh kingdom of Ergyng. It was then absorbed by the Kingdom of Mercia. After the Norman Conquest the area became known as Archenfield and was governed as part of the Welsh Marches. It became part of Herefordshire and England in the 16th Century.

### **Whitchurch**

- 2.3.2 The Welsh name for the village of Whitchurch is Llandywynnog. Within the village is the Old Court Hotel, an interesting example of a stone-built manor-house of the 16th and 17th centuries, which was the ancestral home of the Gwillim family and was lived in for a while by John Graves Simcoe, first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada (1791 – 1796) and founder of Toronto.
- 2.3.3 The village now straddles the A40 although most of its more recent development is upon its western side.

### **Symonds Yat West**

- 2.3.4 Symonds Yat West is located on the steep slopes of the Wye Valley below the Doward. Its name is said to be derived from Robert Symonds, a 17th Century Sheriff of Herefordshire and "Yat", an old word for a gate or pass. The church of St Dubricius stands on the right bank of the Wye and dates from the 19th Century though the oldest existing part goes back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The church was restored in 1860.

### **Ganarew**

- 2.3.5 Ganarew, may derive from the Briton "Gan", from genau, meaning "a mouth or opening off a pass", while "Rhiw" is the Welsh word for a hill. Contained within the Parish is the adjacent small settlement of Little Doward, a hill of historical significance since it contains an Iron Age fortified settlement. St Swithin's church dating from 1860 and the adjacent Ganarew Manor, are both Grade II listed buildings.

### **Elsewhere in the Parish:**

- 2.3.6 **Great Doward, Little Doward, Crocker's Ash and Lewstone** are other generally small settlements within the Parish and together with **Ganarew** are not identified as locations for further housing development within Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 2.3.7 There are five Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Parish: a churchyard cross at St Swithin's Churchyard, Little Doward Camp, King Arthur's Cave and Merlin's Cave both on Great Doward and a further churchyard cross in St Dubricius Churchyard. The Parish possesses a number of Listed Buildings.

Despite its history, there are no English Heritage Registered Parks and Gardens although there are three identified as locally important: Wyastone Leys, Sellarsbrooke Park and Huntsham Court which sits on the border of the Parish.

## **2.4 People and the Community**

- 2.4.1 The Parish's population remained relatively stable between 2001 and 2011, increasing from 1116 to 1141 in that period. The 2011 Census shows the age structure for this ward had a higher proportion of elderly people present compared to the County as a whole. Correspondingly, the proportion of young and middle-aged adults was lower although the proportion of children of school age reflected that within the County. Herefordshire itself has a higher proportion of elderly people compared to England and Wales as a whole.
- 2.4.2 There is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in Whitchurch which serves the Parish, on the east side of the A40. Currently the school roll is 120 and has been rising for several years with most classes full. The pupil admission number is 20. Around one third of pupils live within the Parish. Other pupils come from Ross-on-Wye, Monmouth and the Forest of Dean. Some local children walk to the school. For those arriving by car there is limited safe parking available. For secondary education, children travel to state schools in Ross-on-Wye, Monmouth or the Forest of Dean or to other, independent schools.
- 2.4.3 There is a reasonable range of other local services or facilities within the Parish. In Whitchurch there is a village shop (with coffee shop and an art gallery), the Memorial Hall, a retained fire station, a dental practice and the church of St Dubricius. Outdoor activities, especially those that are river based exist for residents and visitors. Service stations on either side of the A40 provide further shopping and café facilities. There are a number of hotels, restaurants, public houses and cafés which benefit from their proximity to the River Wye and close access to the A40 trunk road and the nearby motorway network of the M50, M5 and M4.
- 2.4.4 A wide range of shops and other facilities is available in the nearby market towns of Ross-on-Wye and Monmouth which are accessible for most daily and weekly shopping requirements. Residents can also visit Hereford, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Bristol, Birmingham and Cardiff which are centres for major shopping.

## **2.5 Enterprise and Employment in the Parish**

- 2.5.1 British tourism was born in the Wye Valley with the development of the "Wye Tour" in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Artists, poets and writers were guided from Ross to Chepstow to explore the picturesque sites, whether natural or industrial. The railway widened access and although the railway was closed in the 1960's the

Wye Valley today is one of the most-visited locations in southern Britain. Tourism has had a significant impact on the Parish.

- 2.5.2 Tourism remains one of the most important elements of the Parish's economy. The number of visitors can outnumber the resident population, bringing major benefit to the local economy but an environmental burden to local roads with increased disturbance and pressure on facilities.
- 2.5.3 Business activity is vibrant throughout the Parish which accommodates more than 150 enterprises. In addition to employment in various tourism and leisure activities, there are 3 small industrial and commercial estates at Stoney Hills, Martins Grove and Wyastone Leys. At the north end of the Parish in the Old Forge Area a steel fabrication company, a retail garage, a commercial vehicle garage, a motor caravan centre and a wholesale horticultural nursery are located. In addition, proximity to Ross-on-Wye and Monmouth provides centres for employment and commuting by car to other centres such as Hereford, Gloucester, Malvern and Cheltenham is not uncommon. Working from home presents an alternative for some people.

## **2.6 Infrastructure and Communications**

- 2.6.1 The Parish and specifically the village of Whitchurch, is bisected by the A40 trunk road. This road provides excellent road access to the north and to the east via the M50 and the Midlands' motorway network beyond and also to the south and west into Wales and to the South West. However, with 5 access points in both directions to the A40 within the Parish and with high traffic speeds, this is a very busy and potentially dangerous length of road. In addition, the noise level from traffic is high.
- 2.6.2 A good network of public footpaths criss-crosses the Parish and is particularly dense across the Doward and Symonds Yat West reflecting historically significant local public interest in keeping with retaining public access to woodland. The Wye Valley Walk passes through the Parish and National Cycle Trail 423 links the Parish with Goodrich, Symonds Yat East and Monmouth. The hand-ferries provide access to the east side of the Wye and the footpaths to Symonds Yat Rock e.g. "The Peregrine Trail" and the cycleway to Monmouth and beyond.
- 2.6.3 Public transport is limited, there is a bus service which runs between Ross and Monmouth each day, passing through Whitchurch operating at an approximate 2-hourly frequency from early in the morning until early afternoon and then hourly until the early evening. There is also a weekly service on Thursdays that runs from Whitchurch through the village of Llangrove and Glewstone to Ross during the morning and returning during the afternoon. A similar service operates on Wednesdays from Ross through Walford and Goodrich to Whitchurch and on to Llangrove, Llangarron, Harewood End, Much Birch and Wormelow to Hereford during the morning, again returning in the afternoon. There are also community/voluntary transport services, but they are minimal in their extent and associated mainly with health care.

2.6.4 Provision of mobile telephone and broadband services is still variable in the Parish and some properties have no service at all. The telecommunications infrastructure is still incomplete.

## **3. Issues**

### **3.1 Identifying Issues**

- 3.1 A number of issues has been identified from the Steering Group's wide-ranging search for evidence to guide this draft Plan. The evidence has raised issues which are to be addressed in our NDP. These are presented in greater detail within the evidence-base available on the Parish Council website. The following are considered particularly pertinent to the preparation of the NDP: housing, the local economy, the environment and heritage, roads and transport and community facilities. The Parish Plan of 2014 further assisted this process.

### **3.2 Housing**

- 3.2.1 Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy defines levels of proportionate housing growth which neighbourhood plans should seek to achieve and in Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish this is a growth level of 14% equating to a minimum of 65 new houses over the period 2011 to 2031. Between 2011 and December 2017 some 53 new dwellings had either been built or committed through planning permissions and these can count towards this target. Consequently, 12 more dwellings are needed to meet the minimum level of proportionate growth. Whereas Neighbourhood Development Plans are not necessarily required to allocate all their indicative proportionate growth, the primary objective is to show that the levels of growth allocated to parishes is achievable subject to local and environmental constraints.
- 3.2.2 Despite the fact that development potential in our Parish is constrained by statutory designations, the challenges of the terrain and flooding from the river Wye and other waterways, we believe that we can meet the required proportionate growth level of 65 houses for the years 2011 to 2031.
- 3.2.3 Although 52% of all respondents to the Parish Plan questionnaire of 2014 said they were in favour of more housing within the Parish, in the Residents' Survey for the NDP of 2016, there was a majority (56%) who indicated that this new housing should not exceed the minimum level of proportionate growth. The current level of developed land for housing was considered to be "about right" (57%). In respect of developing new housing, there was significant support for the conversion of redundant buildings, the use of previously used ("brown-field") sites and the use of infill development. It is noteworthy that 57% thought that there should be some limit on new house-building.
- 3.2.4 "Affordability" has been identified as relevant to the Parish. The average house price within Whitchurch is understood to be close to that for Herefordshire as a whole which is around 25% higher than the overall average for the UK. The average price in Symonds Yat is slightly lower than that for Whitchurch and the neighbouring parish of Goodrich. There is recognition that within the County

fewer families are able to buy and that there is increased pressure on the existing affordable housing stock. In addition, owner-occupation has fallen while there has been a substantial growth in the private rented sector reflecting the trend regionally and nationally although possibly less pronounced in Herefordshire than in other parts of the country. The Parish has a low proportion of socially-rented stock although Home Point Herefordshire shows Whitchurch to be within the top third of areas within the County where applicants would like to live. With respect to meeting local housing needs, starter homes, family homes and 'easy-access' homes have the greatest support.

- 3.2.5 The requirement for up-to-date information on local housing need was recognised in preparing the NDP and a voluntary survey of all households to assess what the occupants believed to be the housing need within the Parish was undertaken in April 2016. This identified a current need for 17 new homes of which 3 should be single-bedroomed; 10 needed two bedrooms and 4 required three-bedroom accommodation. Homes for low-cost purchase were the most commonly required type. A further 8 dwellings were identified as likely to be required within the Parish over the following five years. Although there is preference for low-cost home-ownership, a need for some rented accommodation through a housing association was identified.
- 3.2.6 Herefordshire Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment only considered Whitchurch with only one site being suggested as having medium suitability for housing development although the availability of this site was uncertain. Others were found to have no potential within the Plan period. A separate 'call for sites' was undertaken as part of the process for preparing the NDP and the summary of site analysis for the sites submitted is set out in Appendix 1. The results have been incorporated into the NDP.
- 3.2.7 Past trends suggest an allowance for windfall would add reasonably to any housing allocations made. These come from both small sites within settlement boundaries and development outside of settlements that complies with Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy policy RA3.

### **3.3 Supporting Enterprise and Employment**

- 3.3.1 For a small rural parish the breadth and extent of local businesses are significant. There is no wish to restrict suitable extensions to premises where they would be in scale with the location, have no significant adverse impact on the landscape and where all residential amenity is protected. There are, however, physical constraints, such as flood-risk, that may affect the ability to expand. The Stoneyhills Industrial Estate, just to the south of Whitchurch, was assessed in Herefordshire Council's Employment Land Study as a good-quality site with very good access to the highway network. No other sites were assessed despite there being three other notable employment areas within the Parish at Wyastone Leys Business Park, Martins Grove Business Park and a range of businesses located in the vicinity of The Old Forge.

- 3.3.2 The concentration of various leisure and tourism facilities between Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West is an area that may see change over the Plan period. There is expected to be increased demand through local, regional and national population growth adding to the number of tourists and day-trippers who may wish to visit the area because of its ease of access, the range of visitor-accommodation types, attractions and the unique landscape. This in turn may stimulate private investment and the need to improve or enhance the amenity while protecting the value of the environmental assets to which they are attracted. The encouragement of farm diversification may benefit from growth in this sector.
- 3.3.3 The Parish is connected to super-fast broadband though a significant minority of premises cannot access it. It will increase the ability of many local firms to expand and to work from home with consequent effects on the demand for homes, increased house-sizes and more flexible use of space.

## **3.4 Conserving our Natural Environment and Built Heritage**

- 3.4.1 The ability to accommodate development within the Parish's environmental constraints is considered a significant issue. There are many such constraints that apply either across the Plan area or within its parts. Housing development is to take place within, or adjacent to, the two Settlements Areas in the Parish that are named within Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 3.4.2 Conserving our heritage and the scenic beauty and biodiversity of that part of the Parish falling within the Wye Valley AONB and its Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is a major consideration in planning policy, since these have the highest levels of environmental protection. The historic environment should also be preserved, and this was reflected in residents' responses to the questionnaire in that 86% indicated that archaeological sites should be better protected and presented and 75% suggested a similar process for Historic and Listed Buildings. In addition, 89% wanted green open space to be maintained and 18% felt that land or natural features needed more protection. Some 55% felt there was a need to establish a local wildlife group. Major development should be refused except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest<sup>3</sup>. The characteristics of the landscapes within the Parish are described in paragraph 2.2.1 to 2.2.8.
- 3.4.3 The wildlife value of the River Wye is acknowledged through its national (SSSI) and international (SAC) designations and its corridor of influence is significant. Herefordshire Council has defined a 200m wide corridor that forms a "core area buffer"<sup>4</sup> along the river. This highlights proximity to natural features where the potential for an impact on nature conservation interests should be assessed,

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<sup>3</sup> See National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 115 and 116

<sup>4</sup> See Building Biodiversity into Herefordshire's Local Development framework, Herefordshire Council – December 2009.

because the presence of certain habitats and their associated species may be an absolute or partial constraint to development or influence choices of development locations and/or design options. It is understood that Natural England has supported policies that would seek to avoid development within 100 m of the River Wye unless the potential adverse effects can be shown to be avoided or be capable of mitigation<sup>5</sup>.

- 3.4.4 There is support for recording local landscape and other features, identifying valued landscapes and suggesting improvements to areas in need of enhancement, in particular so that the visual impact of new development can be minimised and valued landscape features remain open to view. These might include features such as woods, streams, trees, meadows and other important habitats and locally important buildings.
- 3.4.5 Another environmental constraint that affects the Parish is that parts fall within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3, defined by the Environment Agency<sup>6</sup>. These cover a large area to its north-east and parts of the River Wye banks where it passes through the Wye Gorge. This affects parts of both Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West. There is also some flooding along the Whitchurch and the Garren Brooks including where they flow through Whitchurch. The extent to which climate change<sup>7</sup> may increase flooding within these areas is currently unknown but would need to be part of more detailed flood-risk assessments should development in these locations be contemplated.
- 3.4.6 The condition of the River Wye is not classified as "favourable" and concerns have been expressed about high levels of phosphate which affect its water quality and subsequently its ecological status. Point source pollution from farmland and Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) is understood to be a significant contributory factor. Waste water from Whitchurch is understood to be directed to Goodrich WwTWs which also serves adjacent parishes. A Nutrient Management Plan is being prepared to address the nutrient issue and although the current performance of the WwTWs is considered good and growth can potentially be accepted, future flow would need to be assessed to confirm if headroom is available and liaison with Welsh Water is recommended before significant growth is permitted. A review during the period 2020-2025 may be required. A precautionary approach may be required to suggest phasing of development should there be any temporary limit on the ability to accommodate development across the catchment. There are some very substantial local concerns over the ability of the public sewer to accommodate current demand and more so for proposed development.
- 3.4.7 Although the extent of designated heritage assets is limited, there is understood to be significant archaeological evidence of notable human activity within the Parish. Herefordshire Council's Archaeological service has undertaken a number of studies in association with the Wye Valley AONB office. Opportunities should

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<sup>5</sup> See Fownhope Neighbourhood Development Plan, Policy FW5

<sup>6</sup> <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk>

<sup>7</sup> See National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 100

be taken to identify and record further evidence when and where development is proposed.

## **3.5 Roads, Traffic and Transport**

3.5.1 Because Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish is split by the A40 trunk road which forms part of the Strategic Road Network, there are high levels of traffic noise and light pollution which are considered to be serious nuisance to many local residents. Access and exit roads to the A40 are a major concern. There are also specific locations which create potential accident black-spots and require better traffic management or road reconfiguration. These and issues associated with the lack of speed-control require attention in advance of the generation of increased levels of traffic resulting from future development. The A40 road is the responsibility of Highways England. The fact that the road bisects the community adds to safety concerns. There are also safety concerns about the local network of roads. Many of the local roads serving the Parish's communities have particularly narrow sections for considerable lengths and lack footways that would either serve the communities through which they run or enable these to be linked with each other. The existing roads infrastructure is variable in its condition and in parts very poor. Pedestrian safety is of serious concern. There is no road-defined cycleway within the Parish. Whitchurch does, however, sit on the bus network although the level of public transport services has significant limitations, especially for people commuting to work. In common with many rural areas, there is a reliance on private transport.

3.5.2 Specific issues include:

- A need to slow traffic and increase pedestrian safety in the vicinity of the primary school, including changes to the speed limit.
- A need to review the location and provision of speed limits more generally across the Parish, including the introduction of traffic-calming measures and enforcement.
- The need for a significant number of junction improvements.
- Improvements to and increased provision of footpaths to serve both residents and the many visitors to the area.
- The need for a better-organised and managed approach to the range of transport-related issues associated with accommodating visitors and tourists, including signage, car parking, inadequate road infrastructure in the vicinity of Symonds Yat West especially the size of transport vehicles and trailers used by some business operators.
- The need for a co-ordinated approach and programme for improvements to public rights of way, Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) and cycleways to enable their more effective use by tourists and also residents. This should include improved maintenance which is currently a major constraint to both housing and economic development within parts of the Parish.

3.5.3 The A40 acts as a barrier to many activities. It is to be hoped that the Parish will be able to benefit from Government's commitment to improving active travel from its £100 million Investment Plan to improve cycling and walking across and alongside existing stretches of the Strategic Road Network which could assist in addressing many of the issues highlighted above. Herefordshire Council is also promoting active travel by taking into account the needs of walkers and cyclists and therefore a partnership approach within the Parish will have significant health and well-being benefits not just for residents but also for visitors.

3.5.4 Herefordshire Council has indicated it will work with local communities to design and deliver local improvements such as village gateways and other infrastructure to support growth arising from the Core Strategy. It is understood Herefordshire Council will support measures to ensure access for all rural communities that are brought forward through neighbourhood plans, and these might include negotiating with private developers to ensure on- and offsite measures to limit the traffic demands from new developments and encourage the advancement of road safety. Herefordshire Council promotes working in partnership with schools to develop and implement a Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy to encourage more walking and cycling to school and reduce the numbers of short-distance car journeys. Herefordshire Council also seeks to maintain the Public Rights of Way network to help the tourist industry and residents.



Figure 2: Whitchurch Memorial Hall

## **3.6 Community, Social and Health Needs**

- 3.6.1 For a rural area within Herefordshire, the Parish possesses a fair range of local services and facilities enhanced by a range of others, particularly leisure facilities, which provide for visitors and tourists. Proximity to Ross-on-Wye and Monmouth provides for the Parish's wider needs for many higher-order services and facilities although access to medical facilities would benefit from better public transport. The lack of local General Practice medical facilities has been raised by parishioners; perhaps the opportunity exists to consider an Inter-Parish community facility especially in view of the lack of effective public transport services and the frequency of traffic delays on the A40 into Monmouth.
- 3.6.2 There are only limited safe, communal play areas. For younger children, there are no designated areas for participative sports such as football and cricket. There is potential for greater use of the Parish's Memorial Hall. There is no local post office and parts of the Parish are still in need of higher-speed broadband. Improved care facilities would also benefit the community.
- 3.6.3 Other issues relating to noise pollution, light pollution, litter concerns (especially from the A40), the lack of effective road signage, the increase of unauthorised advertising and the lack of re-cycling facilities have all been raised by parishioners. These things impact on health and well-being for individuals as well as for the wider community.

## 4. Vision and Objectives

### 4.1 Our Vision

4.1.1 In preparing Whitchurch and Ganarew Neighbourhood Development Plan the following vision, guided by responses to the residents' survey and confirmed at the subsequent community consultation, sets the basis for what it is hoped to achieve within the Parish through the planning system by the end of the Plan period:

**"To be a Parish where an excellent quality of life is available to all, where people and their environment are valued and where there are homes, businesses and facilities to meet the needs of a sustainable community."**

4.1.2 This will mean that by 2031:

- We are in control of the future development of our Parish and, in particular, the boundaries of our settlements are respected, and any changes will have been made with care and consideration.
- There is sufficient housing to meet the needs of local people and which is of mixed types, well-designed, in keeping with our local character, suitably located and including affordable homes.
- Encouragement is given for more businesses providing additional employment opportunities and tourism is supported and the quality and quantity of any developments are given due weight.
- Our natural environment and historical heritage is protected and enhanced.
- Roads, footpaths and cycle-ways meet the needs of the community and are safe and maintained in good condition.
- Local facilities including the memorial hall, school, sport & leisure areas and green spaces are supported and enhanced.
- New residents are welcomed, people feel safe, and community involvement and spirit is actively encouraged.

### 4.2 Our Objectives

4.2.1 To achieve our vision the Plan sets the following objectives:

#### 1. Housing

New housing should contribute to a sustainable and balanced community, in particular through:

- Providing a mix of properties in terms of size and tenure.

- Requiring designs that are sensitive to, and in keeping with, our settlements.
- Satisfying locally-identified needs and including affordable homes.
- Controlling the level of new housing such that there are sufficient numbers but without over-provision

## **2 Opportunities for employment**

More people should be able to work where they live closer to their homes by:

- Attracting businesses and employment suitable for a rural area.
- Supporting the appropriate expansion of existing businesses.
- Supporting appropriate development, diversification of agriculture, tourism and hospitality within the rural economy.

## **3 Environmental sustainability**

Sustainable development will be sought through:

- Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, especially the Parish's heritage, habitats and open spaces.
- Maintaining a high-quality landscape, built environment and settings of settlements.
- Reducing flood risk to dwellings.
- Moving towards carbon-neutrality.

## **4 Roads and traffic**

The adverse effects of traffic on the community will be reduced so that:

- Residents and visitors are safe using local roads, cycleways and footpaths.
- Roads do not create an unreasonable physical barrier between residents.
- Traffic can move freely but without excessive speed.
- New developments do not worsen road conditions.
- Footpaths, cycleways and bridleways are improved to promote their use, reducing demand on carbon-generating transport.

## **5 Community services and facilities.**

Community spirit will be fostered by:

- Maintaining and supporting existing services and facilities.
- Enhancing the present educational, leisure and recreational facilities.
- The introduction of high-quality broadband and mobile phone coverage in all parts of the Parish.

4.2.2 During consultations, residents expressed full support for the vision and objectives.



**Figure 3: Ferry Lane, Symonds Yat West**

## 5. Our strategy for sustainable development

### 5.1. Consideration of Options for development

5.1.1 Considerable thought and care have been given to determining an acceptable approach to achieving the housing required. This is based upon applying a series of Site Assessment Criteria to each site that had been suggested for development by the landowner or agent at the time of the "Call for Sites" within the Neighbourhood Plan process. These assessment criteria are given in the Housing Report as Appendix 1 to this report. By applying these criteria, the appropriateness of each site can be assessed. This then provided the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with the information to support the location of settlement boundaries and to present Options for Housing Development. The options that were considered by the Steering Group included:

**Option 1:** Not to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan but to rely on Herefordshire's Core Strategy, accept pressures from housing developers and any Rural Areas Local Plan that Herefordshire Council might produce.

**Option 2:** Limiting housing growth to that needed to meet the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy requirements to sites already committed and sensitive infilling within defined settlement boundaries for Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West.

**Option 3:** In addition to Option 2, identifying a number of small sites (i.e. sites of up to 5 - 10 dwellings) that would be in keeping with the scale of development for the settlement boundary of Whitchurch.

**Option 4:** In addition to Option 2, identifying a mix of very small, small and medium-sized sites in Whitchurch that would be in keeping with the scale of development for the settlement boundary of Whitchurch and that would provide up to 65 new dwellings.

5.1.2 Option 1 was dismissed as being inappropriate when considering the mandate given by the community. Option 2 assumed that sufficient houses would be developed by natural growth through infilling within both the Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West settlement boundaries, and this was considered to be unwise in that it would not provide sufficient certainty that the amount of housing required would be delivered, enable appropriately planned development, or result in a plan that had the greatest possible likelihood of being supported at all levels of planning decision making. In the latter regard, it is understood that a NDP is stronger with site allocations. Option 3 was considered to be in line with the wishes of the community in that it allowed for the development of only small sites in the parish, including existing commitments. Option 4 was considered likely to exceed the target by too great a degree and be unacceptable to the community.

5.1.3 Option 3 was considered to best reflect the community's aspirations and environmental constraints and chosen to guide the approach in this NDP.

## **5.2. Promoting Sustainable Development**

5.2.1 The importance of protecting landscape within the Parish is recognised with regard to both its national designation and the community's appreciation of its value to their lives. Its aesthetic, cultural and biodiversity values will be major determinants of the approach to be taken in bringing forward measures to accommodate suitable housing, economic activity and community infrastructure. Of similar concern and influence upon the plan will be the effect of traffic upon the community, especially because of the major trunk road that runs through the Parish. To ensure these major concerns are taken into account when promoting sustainable development, the following policy forms the basis for the overall approach pursued through the NDP.

### **Policy WG1: Promoting sustainable development**

**Positive measures that promote sustainable development within Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish will be supported where they meet the principles and policies set out in the Neighbourhood Plan and other documents which comprise the development plan. Where development proposals are advanced, they should, in particular, address the following high-level priorities that are considered essential by the local community for maintaining sustainable development within the Parish:**

- a) The Neighbourhood Development Plan supports the delivery of a minimum of 65 houses in the neighbourhood plan area over the period 2011-2031 to meet the needs of both the local and wider community through development that contributes to meeting identified needs in respect of size, type and tenure.**
- b) Economic development, including proposals to diversify the local economy, will be supported where it can be accommodated within environmental and infrastructure constraints and is in scale with the area's rural character.**
- c) A high priority will be given to ensuring new development fits sensitively into the landscape of the Parish, and in particular the Wye Valley AONB; reflects local character and features although not to the extent of stifling innovation and diversity; achieves high standards of sustainable design; and incorporates measures to contribute towards climate change adaptation.**
- d) The natural, built and historic environment within the Parish will be conserved and enhanced, and local distinctiveness maintained.**

- e) Highway safety and the avoidance of detrimental effects of traffic on the local environment will be given a high priority, ensuring new development does not result in any increased danger or unacceptable intrusion into residential areas, the high-quality landscape and the historic and natural environment.**
- f) Infrastructure will be sought to enable ease of access to services, including by sustainable transport and to avoid the potential adverse effects of development on amenity.**
- g) Measures to retain, expand or add to existing community facilities and services will be supported to meet the needs of an expanding community, especially those aimed at benefiting the day-to-day requirements and the health and wellbeing of residents.**

**Where the Plan does not cover a proposal, any decision should reflect, where possible, the above priorities as well as the policies in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. Benefits will be sought in relation to the priorities set out in this policy where compensatory or mitigation measures may be needed as part of any proposal.**

This policy supports all our NDP objectives (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

- 5.3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all planning applications to be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This overarching strategic policy sets out the essential sustainable development requirements which the local community considers important to achieve its vision and objectives. The subsequent provisions within the NDP will be measured against this policy. Where exceptional reasons for development are advanced that might over-ride the policies in the Plan, then the principles that this policy sets out should be used to determine what mitigation or compensation measures should be brought forward.

## **5.3. Development Strategy**

- 5.3.2 Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy indicates a preference for settlement boundaries to be defined which provide sufficient development opportunities to meet the required housing target. A settlement boundary had not previously been defined for Symonds Yat West although the former Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan contained such a boundary for Whitchurch. There are notable areas of development outside of these, including significant employment areas. Other parts of the Parish, more specifically upland slopes, contain particular forms of rural settlement that do not conform to a built-up settlement area approach. The community's aspirations for sustainable development require a flexible approach to guide growth that is required during the Plan period and is set out in the following policy.

## **Policy WG2: Development strategy**

**Whitchurch will be the focus for most housing development during the Plan period although Symonds Yat West will receive a proportionate amount of new housing. The level and extent of housing development will meet identified needs in relation to the range of house types and tenures while ensuring this takes place within national and local environmental capacities and other constraints. Sensitive expansion of employment areas providing local job opportunities will be supported. There will be an emphasis on conserving and enhancing the landscape quality, character and beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. There will also be emphasis on protecting high-grade agricultural land. The accommodation of development to meet the needs of the Parish and contribute to County requirements will be based upon the following approach:**

- a) A settlement boundary is defined for Whitchurch within which appropriate infilling may take place, incorporating a number of small sized housing sites and retaining existing commitments. Other appropriate forms of development may also take place where this retains the village's local distinctiveness and protects amenity.**
- b) A settlement boundary is defined for Symonds Yat West within which infilling may take place where this matches the scale and form of the settlement and is designed both to fit sensitively into the landscape and result in the enhancement of the natural and historic environment.**
- c) Housing development outside of the two settlements, including adjacent to their boundaries should be exceptional and located in accordance with relevant policies in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, in particular, but not exclusively Policy RA3. The countryside will continue to accommodate economic development and particularly that associated with agricultural, tourism and other rural enterprises where these reflect the scale and nature of the landscape within which they sit and can be accommodated on the road network.**
- d) Stoney Hills Industrial Estate and the complex of industrial and commercial buildings between the Old Ross Road and The Old Forge will remain in business use and their small-scale expansion to increase local job opportunities will be supported through enabling the improvement of existing sites and their appropriate**

- extension. Further development at the business parks at Martin's Grove and Wyastone Leys has not been identified.**
- e) Increased use of land adjacent to the River Wye to the east of Whitchurch for visitor and tourism facilities will be supported where this is consistent with conserving or enhancing the historic and natural environment, especially the Wye Valley AONB, the River Wye Special Area of Conservation and designated heritage assets and where appropriate protection from flooding is provided. Measures to enhance the area will be supported.**
- f) Diversification of the rural economy will be encouraged where proposals are of an appropriate scale, environmentally sound and fit sensitively into the landscape and preserve or enhance local heritage assets.**

This policy supports our objectives 1, 2 and 3 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

- 5.3.3 This strategy directs where most forms of development are likely to take place within the Parish. Most development will be located within Whitchurch and rather less in Symonds Yat West. Except for housing, no specific strategic development requirements are identified for the Parish within Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy. The strategy is based upon defining areas where new housing development might take place and retaining employment areas, enabling their limited expansion to meet the needs of local businesses.
- 5.3.4 Development in the Parish focuses primarily on how much new housing should there be and where might it be located. The same criteria apply to business development and related facilities.
- 5.3.5 The other forms of development that may come forward within the Parish include land and premises for employment, services, facilities and infrastructure. Some of these are covered through more detailed policies included later within this Plan or through policies in Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy. Regard should be had, however, to the protection of the Wye Valley AONB in particular, and the use of brown-field land where it is available and also to the protection of higher-grade agricultural land where that of lower grade is available, all of which are requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 6. Housing Policies

### 6.1. Introduction

- 6.1.1 Herefordshire's Core Strategy identifies a target for new housing that should be provided within the Parish and most of these dwellings should be provided within or adjacent to the built-up areas of Whitchurch and/or Symonds Yat West. Settlement boundaries will define these combinations outside of which new dwellings will be exceptional. This target is considered a minimum. An allowance can be made for windfalls outside the settlement boundaries but if this is relied upon to achieve the target, then there needs to be strong evidence that any dwellings comply with the exceptions set out in Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy Policy RA3.
- 6.1.2 The minimum housing target for 2011 to 2031 set by Herefordshire Council for the parish is 65 dwellings and at December 2017 only a further 12 dwellings needed to be provided through the NDP to meet this in view of commitments at that time. The NDP includes policies that would seek to provide a minimum total target of 65 new dwellings between 2016 and 2031. This should be achieved without there being an adverse effect on the local environment and to meet the Group Parish's needs and ambitions for sustainable development.
- 6.1.3 The approach adopted recognises that there are sufficient suitable and available sites to bring forward enough land to achieve the minimum target within or adjacent to the built-up area of Whitchurch while allowing limited development in Symonds Yat West to reflect the views of the community and add a degree of flexibility to the Plan. It shows that the provision of housing has been addressed positively and enables enhancement opportunities to be taken where these are available. The historic, architectural and cultural qualities of Symonds Yat West are considered important for this area within the Wye Valley AONB and should inform its enhancement. An analysis of the landscape qualities of this settlement and surroundings and how it should be managed has also been undertaken.
- 6.1.4 Consultation with the community established that a significant proportion (40%) of residents accepted sites of modest size (5 – 10 homes) released over the Plan period, while a similar proportion (39%) preferred sites of up to 4 dwellings. However, given the limited additional housing requirement, the locational requirements set out in Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy and the sites submitted through the local call for land, the proposed site allocations are considered the best fit to achieve a satisfactory form of development.
- 6.1.5 The community also considered that the greatest housing need was for 2- and 3-bedroom properties (69% and 65% respectively indicated either a need or strong need). In addition, properties that provided easy access or could be adapted to provide it, such as bungalows, were required (46%). To meet the community's concerns while recognising that the housing target is a minimum,

a range of policies is set out to direct housing development in what is considered to be the most appropriate way.

## **6.2. Housing Development in Whitchurch**

### **Policy WG3: Housing development in Whitchurch**

**New housing within Whitchurch will primarily be restricted to sensitive infilling within a settlement boundary, sites already committed through planning permissions and on the site identified for development shown on Whitchurch Village Policies Map.**

**Within the settlement boundary, infilling will be permitted where it meets appropriate design and other criteria set out within relevant policies contained within this plan, (in particular, WG7 and WG8) and also addresses policies set out in Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy.**

**Outside of the settlement boundary, but adjacent or in close proximity to the settlement boundary, housing development in sustainable locations will be supported where, in addition to complying with other policies in this Plan, it comprises one of the following:**

- i) Small plots for self-build dwellings where each initial owner has primary input into the final design and layout;**
- ii) A development of affordable housing sufficient to meet the local needs identified during the plan-period.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1, 3, 4 and 5 (paragraph 4.2.1)

#### **Policy Justification**

- 6.2.1 The settlement boundary includes that previously identified in Herefordshire's Unitary Development Plan with additions to accommodate recently-developed or approved sites, and a site allocation. It incorporates properties on the east side of the A40 now that development has extended in that direction. The boundary extensions follow physical features, such as buildings, field boundaries or curtilages where possible. In this regard it is considered to follow Herefordshire Council's advice in its Guidance Note 20. In parts of the settlement boundary, it may be possible for limited infilling to take place provided it can be designed to fit sensitively into the village street-scene and meet several other requirements. This would include the conversion of barns adjacent to the Old Court Hotel which was granted planning permission for three dwellings in 2005 but has yet to be completed although there is evidence that development has commenced. No major constraints

have been identified such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments or nationally designated nature conservation sites. An area to be safeguarded for minerals is located to the south-west of properties along the Old Ross Road although the ribbon of development along this route has a well-defined edge in that direction. There is some potential flood risk which would require the provisions of Policy WG17 to be met.

- 6.2.2 A range of design requirements is covered by other policies. There may be instances where it is necessary to show in detail how a development has addressed important design requirements. For example, Policy WG8 covers essential sustainable design elements.
- 6.2.3 There are local housing needs that it may not be possible to meet within the settlement boundary or through the allocated site. These include opportunities for local people to undertake self-build schemes and the provision of affordable housing to meet identified needs. Such sites should be located in sustainable locations on the edge of Whitchurch village defined by its settlement boundary. Whitchurch is the most sustainable location offering reasonable access to a range of services and facilities within the terms of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy H2. It may not be possible to find such sites immediately adjoining the boundary, but the sites should, at least, be connected to it by a public footpath. The requirement for the initial owner of a self-build home to have primary input into its final design and layout meets the advice set out in Planning Practice Guidance. With regard to a scheme for affordable housing, this needs to be supported by evidence that there is a local need that will be met through the proposal. This provision complies with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy H2.

## **Policy WG4: Housing Site in Whitchurch**

**Land amounting to approximately 1.0 hectare adjacent to Yew Tree Close shown on Whitchurch Village Policies Map is allocated for housing development where it complies with policies set out in this plan.**

This policy supports our NDP objective 1 (paragraph 4.2.1)

### **Policy Justification**

- 6.2.4 This site is expected to provide some 10 additional dwellings which reflects the density of dwellings on adjacent sites.
- 6.2.5 The allocated site forms part of a larger field, some of which already has planning permission for a further 9 dwellings. Should the whole field be developed it is considered this would amount to major development within the Wye Valley AONB. However, development of a smaller parcel in a sensitive manner with structural landscaping to mitigate effects on distant views from the south-west

should be acceptable. The combined site would require access from Llangrove Road, which is very narrow in places, and this is considered to place a limit on further development in the area concerned. There is no need to add further to the allocation to meet the required level of proportional housing growth to which this site is expected to add. The area is similar in size to the site for 9 dwellings that has planning permission. A combined site would meet the threshold for affordable housing to be required should a comprehensive proposal be advanced.

### **6.3. Housing Development in Symonds Yat West**

#### **Policy WG5: Housing development in Symonds Yat West**

**A Settlement boundary is defined for Symonds Yat West. Proportionate housing growth may take place within this boundary that will be restricted to developments which reflect the historic character of development, respects the landscape form and features along the north-east facing valley slopes, and result in enhancements to the environment. The emphasis will be upon maintaining the settlement pattern of the predominant landscape character area. Proposals should:**

- a) Comprise individual dwellings or small terraces close to road frontages that reflect the form and massing found within the settlement with no development in depth or new clustered groups of houses.**
- b) Utilise clearly perceptible infill plots when viewed in relation to the character of the frontage, bearing in mind the grain, rhythm and density that predominates in that particular part of the settlement.**
- c) Ensure dwellings are of an appropriate size to reflect wayside cottages and dwellings within small holdings.**
- d) Retain small fields and deciduous woodlands.**
- e) Not result in the loss of the small-scale enclosure pattern.**
- f) Ensure tree and hedgerow-cover is retained, especially through the use of Tree Preservation Orders in relation to trees.**
- g) Be capable of being accommodated upon the narrow lane network and not result in the need for them to be widened, although, where appropriate and necessary, providing new or improved passing spaces.**

**The restoration or replacement of existing premises within the settlement boundary will be permitted where this results in an enhancement of the settlement and reflects its historic character.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1 and 3 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

- 6.3.1 Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy identifies Symonds Yat West as a settlement where proportional growth is appropriate although development must pay attention to the form, layout, character and setting of the location. The settlement has a particular form reflecting its historic evolution as a relatively low-density cluster of dwellings along the side of the River Wye and rising up the steep sides of the valley. Its historic pattern of small fields, narrow lanes and small deciduous woodlands has been retained. Its character is well-defined within Herefordshire's Landscape Character Assessment which has informed this policy to guide housing development within the settlement boundary.
- 6.3.2 Having not previously had a settlement boundary, one has been defined based upon what is considered to be the relatively more compact part of the otherwise sporadic and scattered settlement form. It extends generally to single plot depth along Ferrie Lane and Washings Lane, the B4164, Meeks Well Lane and a short length of Wye View Lane where it does not extend too far up the wooded hill slopes. Where possible it follows the curtilage boundaries of dwellings or the edge of any woodland where this extends into any curtilage. The purpose of the latter is to avoid development that removes trees and woodland which is a significant characteristic of the area.
- 6.3.3 Its settlement characteristics are defined as a pattern of scattered smallholdings and wayside cottages separated by small orchards, woodlands and pasture; distinctive individual small dwellings constructed out of appropriate brick or stone; and a complex and intimate network of narrow intersecting lanes which form a distinctive pattern. The settlement pattern has developed in a random, opportunistic manner, the corresponding density, scale and ad hoc pattern of both dwellings and lanes being distinctive characteristics today. Parcels of land are usually small, comprising pasture although in this location there are significant areas of deciduous woodland. The hedgerows often have significant associated tree-cover and provide an important structural element to the landscape. The purpose of the criteria listed in the policy is to ensure these characteristics are retained. The nature of the narrow lanes will also be a major constraint.
- 6.3.4 Any additional dwellings should predominantly be individual where the scale and character of the original settlement would not be compromised. In this regard, infill plots should be obvious with the development reflecting the density of the area within which it is found. The resultant development should not give the impression of being squeezed into gaps that do not reflect the current frontage density, nor utilise wider spaces that form part of the historic pattern of small fields within this important landscape. Clustered groups of new dwellings, as typically proposed by developers, would not be sympathetic to the settlement's

landscape character. An emphasis on self-build would complement the traditional form of development within this area.

## 6.4. Achieving the Housing Target

6.4.1. With the proposed allocations, dwellings already built or committed through planning permissions and allowance for windfall developments within Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West and also the rural area, the Parish's minimum target of 65 dwellings is expected to be met.

6.4.2 An allowance for windfalls based on the past trend of 0.75 dwellings per annum within the rural area parts of the Parish between 2001 and 2017 suggests an overall level of 15 new houses outside of settlements over the 20-year plan period. Excluding a large site that appears to be an anomaly, there have been 7 dwellings granted planning permission since 2011 in the open countryside parts of the Parish leaving some 8 dwellings to be expected based on past trends. Additional dwellings may also come forwards as infill within the settlement boundaries, particularly in Symonds Yat West. For the purposes of assessing the potential contribution to the required housing growth, a modest nominal figure of 4 dwellings is suggested based on sites submitted, although recognising this would most likely prove to be higher. The achievement of the housing target set by Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy does not, however, depend upon the windfall allowance. Scope for further developments is however afforded through enabling self-build schemes. A similar modest allowance of 4 more dwellings would appear reasonable through this policy provision. Given the level of uncertainty involved, no provision is included to take into account the possibility that an affordable housing scheme will be advanced.

6.4.3 Table 1 below shows how it is intended that Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy housing target should be met through the approach adopted.

**Table 1: Achieving the housing target 2011-2031**

		Number of dwellings
HC Core Strategy Minimum Requirement 2011 – 2031: 65 dwellings		
1	Number of completions and sites with outstanding planning permissions 2011-2017	55
2	Land adjacent to Yew Tree Close, Whitchurch	10
3	Windfall allowance, including conversion of barns adjacent to Old Court Hotel (3) and through NDP Policies WG3 and WG5	8
4	Rural windfall allowance	8
<b>Planned total during Plan period</b>		<b>81</b>

The estimate of dwellings under each heading is for the purposes of showing how Herefordshire Local Core Strategy target for the Parish might be met.

6.4.4 A survey of the Parish identified support for a variety of properties, especially to serve local housing needs. There was significant support for a range of house sizes comprising 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms. Housing comprising young family starter homes, family homes or homes for the elderly, such as bungalows were identified as appropriate. This reflects analysis undertaken by Herefordshire Council for the Ross-on-Wye Housing Market Area<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, any further planning permissions should reflect the balance - of housing mix and range, including that shown for affordable housing, in order to comply with the provisions of Herefordshire's Core Strategy policy H3. Table 2 indicates the current housing need analysis for the local housing market area. Developers should ascertain the most up-to-date information in relation to this at the time they put forward proposals. Opportunities for self-build and custom-built housing, including those with the potential to be live-work accommodation will be encouraged as a way of meeting local housing need within the Parish.

**Table 2: Proportion of houses required by size within rural part of the Ross-on-Wye housing market area**

House type by size	Market housing Proportion required	Affordable housing Proportion required
1 bedroom	7.4%	21.5%
2. bedrooms	24.3%	40.1%
3 bedrooms	63.2%	34.5%
4+ bedrooms	5.1%	3.9%

(Source - Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment 2012 Update)

## 6.5. Affordable Housing

6.5.1 Provision for affordable housing made through Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy policies H1 and H2 should aim to meet local needs. These policies allow for both affordable and intermediate housing<sup>9</sup>. The level and type of housing identified to meet local need within the Parish are set out in section 3.2. A range of affordable housing types should be provided, including shared

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/7673526/herefordshire\\_local\\_housing\\_market\\_assessment\\_final\\_amended.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/7673526/herefordshire_local_housing_market_assessment_final_amended.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Affordable housing comprises social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Social rented housing is owned by private registered providers. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency. Affordable rented housing is let by private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent. Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition. These can include shared, other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

ownership. The extent of each form should be considered at the time of relevant planning applications. It would be expected that provision of affordable housing through Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy policy H2 should be determined by an up-to-date housing needs survey. Given the Parish's location within the Wye Valley AONB, it is important that such accommodation meets the needs of the local community to support the social and economic needs of residents.

### **Policy WG6: Affordable, including intermediate Homes**

**Where affordable, including intermediate dwellings are to be retained for that purpose under Section 106 agreements, the priority for their allocation, on the first and all subsequent lettings, should first be given to those demonstrating a local housing need within Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish. Should at the time of allocation there be nobody with such a connection the accommodation may be allocated to those from the adjacent parishes and subsequently to those within the Ross-on-Wye Housing Market Area, then Herefordshire, West Gloucestershire and North Monmouthshire.**

**For the purposes of identifying a local need these shall be:**

- (a) Those who live within the Parish.**
- (b) Those who have lived within the Parish within the past 6 out of 12 months and 3 out of 5 years.**
- (c) Those who work or are coming to work within the Parish.**
- (d) Those with an essential need to support or be supported by a current resident within the Parish.**

**(In each instance the qualifying criteria may apply to other adjacent parishes and areas specified when they become relevant.)**

This policy supports our NDP objective 1 (paragraph 4.2.1).

#### **Policy Justification**

- 6.5.2 Priority for affordable housing should focus on those already living or working in the Parish and those supporting or needing support by close family members. It is understood Herefordshire Council's approach favours these groups when negotiating priority arrangements. Residents also favoured these groups. This list of preferences might usefully be indicated to Herefordshire Council if and when appropriate planning applications arise. The Council or appropriate housing provider may wish to use local knowledge of the potential need at the time should there have been no recent survey.

## **6.6. Housing Design and Appearance**

6.6.1 Housing design should ensure that new developments fit into their surroundings and contribute to the health and well-being of the community. It should take account of the form and terrain of the location and respect the character of established properties in this area of AONB.

### **Policy WG7: Housing Design and Appearance**

**New development is encouraged to adhere to best practice in construction standards to ensure safety and sustainability. Design variations should respect local distinctiveness and fit coherently in the locality. This will be achieved by:**

- a) Respecting the scale, density and character of local buildings by using a range of materials and styles that are sympathetic to the development's surroundings.**
- b) Ensuring that innovative designs are of high quality and fit sensitively into the landscape and surrounding properties.**
- c) Ensuring that the design of affordable homes are in keeping with market homes.**
- d) Ensuring that new developments do not adversely affect the amenity, privacy or aspects of adjacent properties, are not adversely affected by existing agricultural or commercial activities, or interrupt views and vistas.**
- e) Ensuring that there is no net loss of biodiversity by preserving existing trees, hedgerows, orchards and ponds and should there be any such losses, that they be offset. The natural assets of the Parish should be enhanced whenever appropriate, including, where appropriate, native planting, orchard creation, and other specific measures which would enhance biodiversity interest and local amenity.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1 and 3 (paragraph 4.2.1).

#### **Policy Justification**

6.6.2 There is increasing recognition that design is important to ensure not only that new development fits sensitively with their surroundings but also contributes towards the health and well-being of the community. This policy expands upon Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy SD2 relating to sustainable design. Design should especially take into account the form and character of the particular settlement or rural area within which it is to be located. This is especially the

case for development within most of the Parish, including its villages, which falls within the Wye Valley AONB. Consequently, all the design features referred to in the policy are considered pertinent and important. This policy expands on Herefordshire's Core Strategy Policy HD2 relating to sustainable design.



Figure 4: The ferry at Symonds Yat

## 6.7. Sustainable Design

6.7.1 Residents have expressed support for sustainable design and energy efficiency. The NDP therefore sets out criteria that should be considered as part of a co-ordinated approach directed at this objective.

### Policy WG8: Sustainable design

**An integrated approach to achieve a high standard of sustainable design is encouraged to achieve the maximum possible reduction in the carbon**

**footprint of any development. Development proposals are encouraged to contain a co-ordinated package of design measures which, in addition to regulatory requirements, include:**

- a) Utilising physical sustainability measures associated with buildings that include orientation of buildings, the provision of energy- and water-conservation measures, storage for bicycles and storage for waste including provision for recycling, broadband infrastructure and renewable energy infrastructure such as photovoltaic or photo-thermal panels, air-source and ground-source heat pumps, where these do not detract from any historic fabric or settings;**

**New development should:**

- b) Provide tree-planting and other forms of green infrastructure to provide shade and shelter, and maximise use of permeable surfaces;**
- c) Support infrastructure to promote sustainable travel wherever possible;**
- d) Enable a sustainable drainage system to serve a wider range of properties where such opportunities exist;**
- e) Ensure that an assessment is carried out to establish the extent and nature of any contamination where there is good reason to believe that contamination of land may exist on any site, including through agricultural processes and make sure that effective measures are taken to ensure that potential occupiers and the wider environment are not put at unacceptable risk;**
- f) Minimise construction traffic and reduce waste; and**
- g) Ensure that where external lighting is required, it is appropriate to its purpose and supported by a lighting plan that demonstrates that it will not have an adverse effect through unnecessary glare, light-trespass, scenic intrusion or sky-glow;**

**New homes must be fully integrated into the existing neighbourhood and support a pedestrian-friendly environment through convenient links to local facilities and public transport connections which are suitable for those with pushchairs, in wheelchairs, walking with aids or using mobility scooters.**

**Where new innovative sustainable design or features are incorporated, they should fit sensitively within the street scene and incorporate a number of locally distinctive features to maintain the Parish's cohesive character.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1, 3, 4 and 5 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

6.7.2 The approach to sustainable design should be undertaken in an integrated way addressing measures related to individual buildings, site layout and landscaping and support for off-site measures where these are appropriate such as links to the public footpath network and supporting public transport through such facilities as bus shelters. Measures to promote the health and wellbeing of residents should also be undertaken, for example, by providing links to the Public Rights of Way network and provision of open space. These are detailed design issues that would support Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy SD1. This Policy applies to all forms of development, where relevant, and not just those for new housing or residential extensions.

## **7 Economic Development**

### **7.1. Introduction**

- 7.1.1 For a rural Parish, Whitchurch and Ganarew contains a significant number of local businesses across a wide range of activities. In addition, proximity to Ross-on-Wye and Monmouth provides easy access to an even wider range of employment opportunities. An approach based upon supporting services, tourism, agricultural diversification and enabling working from home is favoured by the Parish. Although there was less support for manufacturing or similar forms of industry, the ability for local businesses to expand where this does not adversely affect residential amenity will not be restricted where it is of appropriate scale. This includes protecting the nationally important landscape, nature-conservation interests and the pattern of the local and national road network.
- 7.1.2 Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy contains a number of broad strategic economic development policies that are considered relevant to the Parish and need not be duplicated in the NDP. These include Policy RA5 which permits the re-use of redundant or disused rural buildings for business, enterprise, live-work units and other economic and social enterprises; Policy RA6 supports employment-generating proposals that diversify the rural economy including agricultural diversification, tourism, small-scale extensions to businesses and rural services and facilities; Policy E1 encourages the enhancement of employment provision through extensions and existing business diversification are appropriate; policy E2 safeguards good employment-land and buildings from redevelopment to non-employment uses; Policy E3 allows home-working; Policy E4 promotes tourism measures and attractions based on the area's natural and historic qualities, and provision of accommodation.
- 7.1.3 A number of more detailed policies are included in this NDP which clarify or amplify strategic policies for relevant areas within the Parish.

### **7.2 Land adjacent to the River Wye**

- 7.2.1 The area to the east of Whitchurch accommodates a range of leisure and tourism-related activities including many of which are directly or indirectly associated with the River Wye and the Wye Valley AONB. There are also a number of non-visitor related undertakings within this location including St Dubricius Church, Whitchurch House Care Home and Old Court Farm, Whitchurch.

## **Policy WG9: Land adjacent to the River Wye to the east of Whitchurch**

**Land identified to the east of Whitchurch and adjacent to the River Wye, as identified on the Whitchurch Policies Map, will continue to accommodate tourism and visitor facilities and related intensification and regeneration proposals will be supported where these meet the following criteria:**

- a) There will be no adverse effects on biodiversity and the integrity of the River Wye, in particular.**
- b) Measures can be used to mitigate any adverse effects on the landscape.**
- c) There will be no adverse effects upon any heritage assets, including their viability.**
- d) Appropriate access and off-road parking can be provided for visitors.**
- e) Traffic generated can be accommodated on the highway network.**
- f) Appropriate footpath and cycleway provision will be made.**
- g) Particular regard will be had to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**
- h) Any development will need to take account of the site's location within a Flood Zone in accordance with the NPPF, Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies and Policy WG19.**

**Proposals that enhance the environment and attractiveness of this area and those that do not further compromise the water quality of the area will, in particular, be encouraged.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 2,3 and 4 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

7.2.2 This area should continue to accommodate leisure and tourism-related businesses and expansion within the defined area will be supported where they are of an appropriate scale and reflect the landscape quality of the Wye Valley AONB and biodiversity value of the River Wye. The area does possess parts that might be enhanced, and this will be encouraged through regeneration proposals. It also contains a small business park comprising a number of small units that accommodate a range of activities, and this policy is not intended to alter their use but to provide flexibility to enable them to be used to support the general use within the defined area. Traffic generation is an additional issue that needs to be considered, especially in view of the area's proximity to the primary school.

Some of the area falls within the area at risk of flooding and consequently regard will need to be had to NDP policy WG17.

### **7.3. Industrial and Commercial Development**

7.3.1 There are well established sites at Stoney Hills Industrial Estate and in the Old Forge area, where there is a steel fabrication company, a horticultural unit, a VW garage and a motor caravan centre. Both sites have good access to the strategic highway network. Stoney Hills Industrial Estate is identified within Herefordshire Council's Employment Land Study 2012 as "good". Despite its size and its variety of business uses, the area of employment land between the Old Ross Road and the Old Forge was not assessed in that study as an area of employment land. The land and premises are of importance similar to that at Stoney Hills, are well-kept and should continue to perform an important role as a location for businesses. Other smaller scale employment activities are located along and just off the A40 route.

#### **Policy WG10: Stoney Hills Industrial Estate and the complex of industrial and commercial buildings between the Old Ross Road and The Old Forge**

**Land at Stoney Hills Industrial Estate and the complex of industrial and commercial buildings between the Old Ross Road and The Old Forge will be retained for employment uses. Intensification of use and appropriate extensions to their sites will be permitted provided:**

- a) There is no significant effect upon residential amenity;**
- b) Safe access can be provided onto the public highway, and appropriate space is available for manoeuvring and vehicle parking;**
- c) External storage is screened to mitigate any adverse effects upon the Wye Valley AONB;**
- d) The scale, design and size of any extension, diversification or intensification proposal are appropriate to the location;**

**With regard to land in the vicinity of the Old Forge, a detailed flood- risk assessment will be required, and development should comply with the sequential and exception tests set out in the Technical Guidance to the NPPF. In addition, any proposals should not result in increased flooding to other properties.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 2, 3, and 4 (paragraph 4.2.1).

## Policy Justification

- 7.3.2 Both sites meet the provisions of Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy Policy E1 as locations where expansion or intensification of appropriate scale should be encouraged. However, any proposals will need to meet a number of criteria to protect amenity, highway safety and the environment, in particular the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB. Some of the land in the vicinity of the Old Forge is at risk of flooding and the Plan will need to ensure the requirements in relation to flood protection are met, including avoiding any increase in flooding to other properties. Both employment areas should be safeguarded from redevelopment to other non-employment uses in accordance with Core Strategy Policy E2.
- 7.3.3 There is also a small commercial estate at Martin's Grove on the B4164 between Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West and other commercial enterprises are located throughout the Parish.

## 7.4. Use of Rural Buildings

- 7.4.1 Wyastone Leys Business Park at Ganarew, is an example of a successful change of use of a large rural building. Although Herefordshire Council acknowledges certain types of businesses assist rural diversification such as the knowledge-based creative industries and environmental technologies, there are other forms of traditional activities, including service industries and tourism that may be accommodated through such an approach. Whether buildings are redundant is also very difficult to determine and it may be better to enable a business to utilise a building for alternative employment activities before it deteriorates than to wait until it is obviously obsolescent. A flexible approach acknowledges this and is proposed more in line with the NPPF which does not require buildings to be redundant. In addition, the NPPF supports well-designed new buildings.

### Policy WG11: Use of rural buildings

**The change of use of large country houses and farmsteads, the re-use of rural buildings, and extensions to or intensification of use in such buildings, including through associated small scale and well-designed new buildings, that enable rural business or enterprise, including live/work units, will be supported provided:**

- a) The nature and scale of the use reflects the rural landscape and has an acceptable impact on the highway network;**
- b) Where the use requires external storage to support the rural-based activity, external screening is provided to fully mitigate the effects upon the local landscape from all publicly visible locations;**
- c) The residential amenity of adjacent properties is not adversely affected from the operation of the enterprise itself or any associated traffic movements;**

- d) Limited additional buildings may be provided to support the enterprise or reduce external storage where these are well designed and reflect small- scale traditional agricultural or rural buildings within the landscape; and**
- e) Where the rural buildings involved comprise a historic farmstead, such buildings under d) should be informed by an analysis of these historic settlements.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 2, 3 and 4 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

7.4.2 In addition to promoting the conversion of rural buildings to employment this policy also supports the use of large country properties for such purposes and there are many examples of this across the County. In the past they have been significant in terms of providing local employment and they need alternative uses to be found for them to support their retention and contribution to the landscape.

7.4.3 There are some historic farmsteads within the Parish in addition to modern complexes and some of these may have potential to accommodate businesses, either through new uses or diversification. Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy Policy RA5 would enable such changes, including small-scale extensions, and this policy seeks to clarify the requirements in respect of extensions and, more particularly, outside storage which can be an issue in relation to the more traditional rural-based enterprises. Flexibility continues to be provided but with appropriate safeguards, especially for historic farmsteads.

## **7.5. Working from Home**

7.5.1 There is significant support for working from home.

### **Policy WG12: Working from home**

**Proposals for home working will be supported where this requires planning permission, including for the erection of an extension to a property, or a new building, or use of an existing building within the curtilage, providing there is no adverse effects on residential amenity, including those resulting from traffic generation, noise or light pollution.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

In supporting home working, where planning permission is required, safeguards are needed to protect the amenity of adjoining properties and also the wider amenity of residential areas where these may be affected by high levels of traffic generation, noise and light-pollution. Where appropriate criteria within Policies

WG7 and WG8 will be relevant. Should businesses grow beyond the capacity of the areas in which they are located, they should seek accommodation within designated employment areas or seek rural buildings that might be converted to business use.

## **7.6 Poly-tunnel use**

7.6.1 The impact of poly-tunnels on the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB can be significant and affect wider economic potential within the Parish. Herefordshire Council had previously adopted a Poly-tunnels Supplementary Planning Document although changes since that document was produced in 2008 include the adoption of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, which superseded Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan, and the introduction of the NPPF where the approach set out in its paragraph 116 is particularly relevant.

### **Policy WG13: Poly-tunnel Policy**

**Proposals for poly-tunnels should comply with the following requirements:**

- a) Proposals should not adversely affect the natural beauty, landscape character or important features, including through the cumulative effect in association with other proposals;**
- b) They should not adversely affect the rural character or setting of any settlement;**
- c) They should not adversely affect heritage assets such as archaeological sites and historic buildings, including their settings;**
- d) They should not adversely affect biodiversity, especially features that contribute towards the local ecological network;**
- e) Local and residential amenity should be protected, in particular, from noise- and air-pollution;**
- f) Any traffic that is generated must be capable of being accommodated safely upon the local road network;**
- g) They should not have a significant adverse effect on the residential amenity of nearby dwellings;**
- h) They should not result in the stopping up of any public right of way or an unreasonable diversion in terms of length or convenience;**
- i) They should not result in additional flood-risk to nearby properties.**

**Where proposals amount to major development, protecting the scenic beauty and landscape of the AONB will be given priority and such proposals will not be acceptable except in exceptional circumstances and it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the proposal is in the**

**public interest, there is no viable alternative location outside of the AONB, and the environmental effects can be mitigated to an acceptable degree.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 2, 3 and 4 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

- 7.6.2 The policy contains a range of safeguards to protect the environment, amenity and highway safety. Scale of development is important in order that it does not adversely affect the intrinsic natural beauty of the landscape. Poly-tunnel developments tend to be notable in size and most would normally fall within the description of major development in terms of the area they cover and effect upon the landscape. Where this is the case, such proposals would not necessarily comply with NPPF paragraph 116.
- 7.6.3 Where proposals are not considered to be major development, it is still essential that the effects on the environment, and particularly the natural beauty of the landscape, are considered fully. The protection of the nationally designated landscape is still of utmost importance and development that adversely effects it should not generally be permitted. A landscape assessment will be required to assess any proposal, and this should ensure that future development is compatible with the Parish's landscape character.
- 7.6.4 Notwithstanding the above changes to national and local policy which are encompassed within this policy, much of the detailed advice within Herefordshire Council's Poly-tunnels Supplementary Planning Document remains relevant and useful.

## 8 Environmental and Heritage Policies

### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Protecting and enhancing the landscape, natural environment and local heritage, are given a high priority by the Parish and a number of broad-based policies for this are set out in Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy, including LD1, LD2 and LD4. With most of the Parish falling within the Wye Valley AONB, the effects of development on the nationally important landscape is an important consideration. In protecting landscape character, there is also a particular concern to ensure that the settings of the Parish's villages have high priority. Accordingly, the NDP includes policies that are also considered to reflect that importance. There is also a need for specific environmental policies or components of policies that cover other matters where the environment might be a constraint or a matter that needs to be addressed positively such as to enhancement measures. In addition, the Parish recognises the need to respond to the identified causes of climate change and strongly supports actions to mitigate its effects. The following policies seek to address the environmental objectives set out in the NDP.

### 8.2. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

8.2.1 AONBs are areas of high landscape-quality with a national statutory designation where considerable care should be given to protecting and enhancing their natural beauty and character. Most of the Parish falls within the Wye Valley AONB. Development outside it may still have an effect on the setting of the AONB. Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy Policy LD1 specifically refers to the need to protect its character, enabling appropriate uses and management. As such, they should be recognised for their importance with an approach based upon the principles set out in the European Landscape Convention. The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan will assist considerably in its protection, management and planning, as will Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment.

#### **Policy WG14: Conserving the landscape and scenic beauty, both within and outside of the Wye Valley AONB**

**Within the Wye Valley AONB, development should not harm the character or scenic beauty of the landscape, its wildlife or cultural heritage and the settings of its settlements. These should be conserved or enhanced. Planning permission will be refused for major development except in exceptional circumstances and where here is a proven public interest, no viable alternative sites are available to accommodate this**

**development elsewhere, and its environmental effects can be mitigated to a satisfactory degree.**

**Development outside the AONB should not adversely affect landscape character or features.**

**Development proposals which are acceptable in principle should contribute positively to the Parish's rural character, ensuring the features contributing to its character type, are conserved, restored or enhanced through measures consistent with their characterisation. Landscape features such as trees, vistas and panoramic views that are assessed as important should also be protected. To achieve this, landscape proposals should form an integral part of the design for the development, retaining as many natural features within or surrounding the site as possible.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1, 2, 3 and 5 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

- 8.2.2 It is national policy to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs. In addition, it is also national policy to refuse planning permission for major development within these areas although exceptions can be made. There is no specific definition of 'major development' and each case should be taken on its merits. The character of the Wye Valley AONB within the Parish varies and the relevant character areas and their characteristics and features are highlighted in paragraph 2.2.4 of the NDP. In addition to the considerations in this policy and Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy policy LD1, there is guidance included in Herefordshire's Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document that needs to be taken into account. Recent planning appeals have also highlighted the need for development to be in scale with the locations and particularly the size of the settlement. In this regard, it has been noted that Symonds Yat West comprises a particular settlement pattern that would be degraded through any notable degree of infilling and hence the approach advocated in Policy WG5. Whitchurch has a different character although any development within it is highly visible from the surrounding higher ground. Government's NPPF paragraph 116 sets out considerations to be taken into account when determining how exceptions might be assessed in relation to major development. Landscape quality and character outside the AONB is still important and requires an appropriate level of protection.
- 8.2.3 Where development does not amount to 'major development' and is generally acceptable, there is still a need for sites to reduce their effects on any Settlement's setting and the wider landscape. This can be done through requiring detailed landscaping schemes to address this and related issues.

## **Policy WG15: Enhancement of the natural environment**

**The natural assets of the Parish should be added to where opportunities are available. New development should comply with the requirements of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policies SD3 and LD2, and in particular and where appropriate, enhance the biodiversity value of the ecological corridors along the River Wye, Whitchurch Brook and Garron Brook. Other measures to enhance connectivity within the local ecological network will be sought through creating, retaining and enhancing important natural habitats and features such as woodland tree buffers, ancient trees, tree-cover in general, ponds, orchards and hedgerows. There should be no net loss of biodiversity and the loss of any features, including those which potentially reduce the coherence and effectiveness of the ecological network of sites, will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where satisfactory offset and compensatory measures can be brought forward.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 3 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

8.2.4 Wildlife is acknowledged as an important contributor to the character and scenic beauty of the Wye Valley. The River Wye SAC passes through the Parish. The importance of biodiversity networks within the Parish is described in paragraph 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 and the high level of connectivity is important and should be maintained and enhanced. Adding new wildlife features through development proposals would contribute to the national objective to increase biodiversity. There should certainly be no net loss and, where features must be removed, full compensatory measures must be proposed within any planning application.

## **8.3. Protection of Heritage Assets**

### **Policy WG16: Protecting heritage assets**

**The significance of heritage assets and their settings within the Parish will be preserved and enhanced through:**

- a) Resisting development that would adversely affect Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their settings, and specifically in relation to Churchyard crosses in the churchyards of both St Swithin's and St Dubricius Churches; Little Doward Camp; King Arthur's Cave and Merlin's Cave, both on Great Doward.**
- b) Requiring appropriate development proposals elsewhere to be accompanied by full archaeological investigations and, in the event**

- of significant and / or extensive remains being found they should be preserved in-situ wherever possible.**
- c) Resisting development that adversely affects features or the setting of Listed Buildings and other similar heritage assets.**
  - d) Ensuring every effort is made to retain and conserve buildings and heritage assets of local importance, including traditional rural buildings.**
  - e) Allowing development within unregistered parks and gardens at Wyastone Leys, Sellarsbrooke Park and that part of Huntsham Court within the plan area to proceed only if an assessment has shown the effects of works will fit sensitively into the garden design. In addition, the contribution that such parks and gardens make to the wider landscape will be relevant to this consideration.**
  - f) Promoting development that would conserve the character of the Parish's historic farmsteads through allowing sensitive conversions where appropriate. New development may be permitted in association with such farmsteads where this respects the historic form of the farmstead as indicated through a thorough research of historic documents in order to comply with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies RA3(6) and RA5.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1, 2 and 3 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

8.3.1 The Parish's heritage is reflected in the presence of a number of Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and other locally important monuments, buildings and other heritage assets. There are also potential archaeological sites and historic landscapes that contribute to the Parish's character. These assets and, where appropriate, their settings<sup>10</sup> are important and need to be preserved. These features are important to both the Wye Valley AONB landscape, local economy and cultural heritage and should be retained and enhanced where appropriate. The importance of locally-acknowledged buildings, archaeology, parks and gardens and other assets should be recognised for their contribution to the Parish's landscape character. This policy should not restrict development but influence the approach taken and even stimulate development where their re-use and regeneration bring benefits.

8.3.2 Historic England has sponsored a project to characterise the historic farmsteads within the County and would like to see a positive approach to their conservation. Historic farmsteads are particularly important to the Wye Valley AONB since they reflect its character of dispersed settlements. The project study has identified that Herefordshire's landscape has one of the most intact anciently enclosed landscapes with farmsteads comprising loose courtyard forms within its lowlands and regular courtyard plans on its great estates. The Agency promotes designs that will conserve, protect and sustain these forms, protecting their features,

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<sup>10</sup> NPPF paragraph 128

settings and cultural significance. They form important environmental capital, particularly within the Wye Valley AONB, contributing to its local distinctiveness and character. The study does not rule out the development of new structures within such farmsteads but urges that future growth respects the historic relationship between the farm buildings and farmhouse, the character of the farmstead as a whole, and its landscape setting. These must be carefully considered. Where dereliction of such farmsteads may be likely, innovative approaches may offer the potential for their retention. The final component of this policy seeks to address this through firstly retaining and enhancing those buildings that may remain and secondly through using historic information about previous building layouts to offer the opportunity for enabling development and utilising NPPF paragraph 55 (bullet point 4). This may contribute to the housing target for the Parish through increasing the potential for windfall development. The use of enabling development might be considered where farmsteads are particularly important.

## **8.4. Protection from flood-risk**

### **Policy WG17: Protection from flood-risk**

**New development shall be subject to the flood-risk 'sequential' and 'exception' tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where development is necessary in areas at risk of flooding, full and effective mitigation measures must be provided. No development will be permitted that will result in increased flood-risk to properties elsewhere.**

**Where flood-risk is identified, developers shall undertake full and detailed flood-risk assessments, including taking into account climate change, to inform decisions on planning applications. Development should not cause or increase surface water flooding or risk of pollution. Opportunities to address storm-flooding problems should be taken where available**

**Where the management of drainage needs to be addressed, developers should utilise or contribute to sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) where this is practicable, including measures to support biodiversity.**

This policy supports our NDP objective 3 (paragraph 4.2.1).



Figure 5: The River Wye in flood

### **Policy Justification**

8.4.1 Flooding is an issue within the Parish, being not only a constraint along the River Wye but also Whitchurch and Garren Brooks. The area of flood-risk generally follows narrow corridors along the River Wye, Whitchurch and Garren Brooks, although most of the area to the west of the River Wye between the B4164 road to Symonds Yat West and the A40 is shown to be at risk. Surface water run-off from fields and the highway has also been identified as a problem in some areas. Where appropriate, developers must show that the flooding issue has been fully addressed and include measures to protect development without adversely affecting other properties. This reinforces Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SD3.

## 8.5 Sewerage Infrastructure

### Policy WG18: Sewerage infrastructure

**Development should connect to the public sewer where this is available. Should it be shown that there is a lack of capacity through the pipe under the A40 or that there be a temporary lack of capacity at Goodrich WwTWs, development upon sites which should connect to the public sewer may need to be delayed until such time as works are carried out to provide sufficient sewage treatment capacity. In such instances developers may contribute towards remedial works to the WwTWs in order to expedite any under-capacity and to advance their proposals more swiftly. Similarly, should there be insufficient capacity within the public sewer or any development be considered likely to result in pollution through overflows within the system elsewhere, developer contributions to address any such problems may be required in order to protect the amenity of existing residents and the status of the River Wye.**

This policy supports our NDP objective 3 (paragraph 4.2.1).

#### **Policy Justification**

- 8.5.1 It is to be expected that new development will connect to the public sewer where this is available in order to minimise the potential of any pollution, especially that which might affect the River Wye SAC. This policy is considered consistent with Herefordshire's Core Strategy policy SD4 given the particular circumstances at Goodrich Cleeve WwTWs which serves a wider area comprising other surrounding villages. Although Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water has not identified the need for any works within its current programme, it has indicated that a review will be undertaken for the period 2020-2025. In the meantime, should there be a temporary shortfall, this precautionary policy would be relevant.
- 8.5.2 There are known to be problems associated with the public sewer in certain areas within Whitchurch. It will be necessary for developers to establish whether there is sufficient capacity within this public sewer to serve any new housing or other uses. Should there be no public sewer within a reasonable distance, then developers should propose an alternative sewage disposal facility in accordance with Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy policy SD4.

## 8.6 Renewable and low-carbon energy

### Policy WG19: Renewable and low-carbon energy

**Small scale renewable or low-carbon energy proposals that will benefit individual properties, the local community or local businesses will be encouraged where:**

- a) They will not adversely affect landscape character or features;**
- b) They respect the rural and/or settlement character;**
- c) They do not adversely affect heritage assets such as archaeological sites and historic buildings, including their settings;**
- d) They will not adversely affect biodiversity, especially features that contribute towards the local ecological network;**
- e) Local and residential amenity is protected;**
- f) Any traffic that is generated can be accommodated safely upon the local road network;**
- g) With regard to community projects their scale reflects the community's needs;**
- h) With regard to local businesses, they are ancillary to the business operation.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1, 2, and 5 (paragraph 4.2.1).

#### **Policy Justification**

8.6.1 The Parish recognises the economic environmental benefits of promoting renewable energy and is keen to reduce its carbon footprint, particularly through small-scale proposals which serve individuals, the local community or provide energy to local businesses. However, renewable or low-carbon energy proposals need to be in scale with the landscape and character of the area. With most of the Parish being located within the Wye Valley AONB, a judgement will need to be made about whether any proposal amounts to major development in order to comply with NPPF paragraph 116. Other safeguards are also considered necessary to ensure proposals are brought forward sensitively and at an appropriate scale. Herefordshire Council's Renewable Energy Study indicates that the Parish falls outside of the resource area for large-scale wind energy generation although there is an area within its western edge may be suitable as a medium-scale resource but despite being outside the Wye Valley AONB, it may have an adverse visual effect upon it, being clearly visible from the Doward, in particular.



**Figure 6: St Swithins Church, Ganarew**

## 9. Highways, transport and road safety

### 9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 There are serious concerns about the level and speed of traffic passing through the Group Parish and the pollution it creates. There are also local problems and safety concerns that have been identified within the highway network. In addition, there is support for measures to promote sustainable transport, to encourage walking and cycling, and to ensure that traffic increase from new development is accommodated safely.

### 9.2 Highway Design

#### Policy WG20: Transport related requirements

**Development proposals should ensure:**

- a) Satisfactory access is provided for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians;**
- b) That satisfactory off-street parking is provided including, where appropriate, provision for cycle parking and storage, in accordance with Herefordshire Council's car parking standards and, where appropriate, take every available opportunity to address or improve parking problems that exist in the vicinity of the site. In addition, off-road parking spaces should be constructed using permeable materials;**
- c) The volume of traffic generated is acceptable in relation to the capacity and nature of the local road network;**
- d) Internal road layouts should comply with Herefordshire Council's Design Guide for New Development, and in particular ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and of children in areas designed and located for their play;**
- e) The nature of the development does not lead to pressure for the provision of street lighting where this is not currently present within the area concerned.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1, 3, 4 and 5 (paragraph 4.2.1).

#### **Policy Justification**

9.2.1 With the need to accommodate further development, it is essential that the highway safety requirements of all residents and especially children and older people, are met in order that the network can cope with increases in traffic generated. This applies not only in the settlements where growth is proposed but also elsewhere in the Parish. It is also important that local amenity is protected from the impact of traffic. Parking is a particular problem given the area's attractiveness to visitors. Herefordshire Council utilises appropriate highway standards to ensure the network can accommodate new development and this policy supports their use outlining important issues that should be addressed as part of any planning application where traffic is generated. Tranquillity within the Parish is also something that residents appreciate and the absence of street lighting in much of the Parish is a contributory factor. The design and layout of any new development should avoid the need for street lighting where this is not currently present. This policy does not restrict improvements where there is an overriding safety requirement.



Figure 7: The A40 through Whitchurch

## 9.3 Traffic measures in the Parish

### **Supporting Action: Promoting Traffic Measures within the Parish**

**Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish Council will work with Highways England, Herefordshire Council and developers to introduce measures to improve the road network, to ensure greater safety, increase transport choices and reduce the impact upon its residents of vehicles resulting from development. Development proposals should, where possible, include positive measures to address problems caused by vehicles by:**

- 1. Slowing vehicle speed on entry to villages;**
- 2. Managing vehicle speed through villages;**
- 3. Facilitating safer parking adjacent to Whitchurch Primary School;**
- 4. Reducing the traffic effects of any proposed development upon village and residential amenity;**
- 5. Addressing safety problems at junctions for all road users, cyclists and pedestrians;**
- 6. Promoting walking and cycling.**

**It is to be hoped that proposals would be introduced progressively during the Plan period in association with the Highways Agency and Herefordshire Council and include, where possible, utilising developer contributions resulting from development within the Plan area.**

These measures support our NDP objectives 1, 3, 4 and 5 (paragraph 4.2.1).

9.3.1 Residents have identified a range of concerns relating to traffic, highlighting areas where vehicles are considered to cause problems of safety, both to the traffic itself and also to pedestrians and the effect on amenity. They have also identified measures that might reduce the need to travel by car. Consequently, there is a need for measures to be promoted in association with planning policies to accommodate the growth proposed within the Parish. Such measures cannot form planning policies within the NDP but have been included as community aspirations.

9.3.2 The following proposals for action are made:

- Manage vehicle speed on the A40 trunk road through the Parish.
- Slow vehicles' speed on entry into Whitchurch north, Whitchurch centre, Crocker's Ash and into Ganarew.

- Improve the safe delivery and collection of pupils to Whitchurch C of E Primary School.
- Manage vehicles' speed throughout Whitchurch and Crocker's Ash.
- Reduce the effects of increased traffic related to any proposed developments within the Parish associated with the NDP.
- Improve the existing infrastructure to provide safer road and pavement conditions in the Parish.
- Improve the access to public transport facilities and to cycling and walking routes.
- Assess road signage and visitor traffic-management to reduce unnecessary visitor vehicle movement and to reduce inconvenience for residents in the vicinity of Symonds Yat West and its approaches.
- Provide pavements and cycle paths in built-up areas enabling residents to walk, cycle or use mobility vehicles safely from their homes to connect with existing footways in order to gain access to Parish facilities and services.
- Provide public transport infrastructure features such as car share and public transport parking hubs and bus shelters with digital display of arrival times.
- Provide safer pedestrian and cycleways on rural lanes linking settlements where no pavements exist, e.g. between Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West and between Whitchurch and Crocker's Ash and Ganarew, by installing road markings to identify protected areas at the side of lanes.
- Provide where possible new pedestrian and cycle routes where new developments might be located.
- Improve the provision of public transport information with up-to-date bus timetables on Parish notice-boards and on the Parish website.

9.3.3 These actions comprise locally determined measures aimed at improving road safety and offering greater transport choices in accordance with Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy policy SS4. Many of these initiatives were identified during the preparation of the Whitchurch and Ganarew Parish Plan.

## **10. Community facilities**

### **10.1 Introduction**

10.1.1 Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish possesses a fair range of community services and facilities for its size most of which are located at Whitchurch. These are valued by many residents although the division of the Parish by the A40 trunk road and the dispersed location of settlements is a challenge to the cohesiveness of the community.

10.1.2 Nevertheless, the Primary School, the young children's play area, pubs and hotels in Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West, as well as the Memorial Hall and the village shops provide opportunity for social engagement in the whole Parish area.

10.1.3 Residents have suggested that the community would greatly benefit from more facilities for older children and young people for example an extension to the play area and facilities for team sports. Recently there has been an increase in events and services provided in the Memorial Hall and this can be further developed. The provision of areas of accessible green space which are well-maintained and expanded, particularly where this will support activity by young people, should be encouraged.

10.1.4 The absence of a post office and doctors' surgery was also highlighted. Funds received through development might also ensure the retention, improvement and operation of existing facilities. Increased pressure will be placed upon present provision and it is likely that they will need to be upgraded or improved to accommodate growth.

### **10.2 Protection and Enhancement of Facilities**

#### **Policy WG21: Protection and enhancement of Parish facilities and services**

**Existing Parish facilities shall be retained and protected from development that might restrict unnecessarily their current use unless alternative provision is made in accordance with this policy. The retention of services will be supported where possible through enabling development that would enhance their viability.**

**Proposals to enhance existing or to provide new or additional community facilities and services within the Parish will be supported where:**

- (a) They do not create unacceptable noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance that would adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.**
- (b) They do not cause traffic congestion, adverse traffic impact upon local amenity or adverse impact on traffic flow on local roads.**
- (c) Access and off-street parking can be satisfactorily provided where required without harming existing residential and other uses.**
- (d) They include measures that encourage and promote active travel to and from the facility.**
- (e) They would not adversely affect the natural environment or heritage assets.**

**The loss of key services or facilities through the change of use of premises to an alternative will be opposed unless it is clear that the service or facility concerned is no longer viable or where a replacement facility or service of equivalent or better provision is provided in a suitable location.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 3, 4 and 5 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

10.2.1 Parish residents value the present level of services and facilities available (see paragraphs 2.4.2 and 2.4.3) . They do not wish to see development take place that would reduce the utility and effectiveness of such services and facilities through, for example, locating new development where this might result in calls for restrictions on community use. The need for new and improved facilities may be expected to arise during the Plan period as a consequence of growth. This policy enables sites and proposals to be brought forward in the future subject to appropriate safeguards.

## **10.3 Contributions to Parish Services**

### **Policy WG22: Contributions to Parish services, youth provision and recreation facilities**

**Where appropriate, new development within Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish should contribute towards necessary community infrastructure in order to address the demands that such development places on the area and to support the social dimension of sustainable**

**development. Contributions should be made through Section 106 Agreements, CIL or other developer contribution mechanisms that may be available during the period of the Plan.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 3, 4 and 5 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

10.3.1 Increasing demands resulting from growth will put pressure upon existing facilities, requiring their enhancement and improvement to ensure continued performance of their function. Additional facilities may also be required. Herefordshire Council intends to introduce a charging system for the Community Infrastructure Levy during the Plan period. Currently it operates a system for related payments through Planning Obligations. The pressure from growth will have effects upon Parish infrastructure. Contributions should be made towards their improvement either through the CIL process, should this come into operation, or in accordance with sections 3.4 and 3.9 of Herefordshire Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations, in particular, paragraphs 3.4.8. and 3.9.12. The Parish Council will use the contribution it receives from either of these primarily to ensure its existing facilities are improved, maintained or capable of meeting increased pressures in accordance with the legislative requirements. Herefordshire Council should seek advice from the Parish Council upon what contributions are needed towards local community facilities and infrastructure at the time any relevant planning application is made.

10.3.2 In relation to open-space provision associated with new development Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy policies OS1 to OS3 are considered relevant although it is recognised that currently there are no adopted standards and consequently it is felt that for development within Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish, developers should take into account the 'Fields in Trust' Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play<sup>11</sup>.

## **10.4 Broadband Infrastructure**

### **Policy WG23: Broadband infrastructure**

**Proposals that will provide broadband and other telecommunications infrastructure will be supported where they will assist in making this available throughout the Parish by:**

- a) Supporting proposals for well-designed and unobtrusively located development, associated with the introduction of appropriate super-fast broadband equipment to provide high-quality internet connectivity for business and residential users.**

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/guidance/Guidance-for-Outdoor-Sport-and-Play-England-Apr18.pdf>

- b) Supporting proposals for well-designed and unobtrusively located development, associated with the introduction of appropriate mobile telephone equipment, to provide high-quality telecommunications for business and residential users.**
- c) Requiring new development to facilitate connection to high-speed broadband by means of providing suitable ducting for fibre connectivity within development sites, linked to the local/national network, as appropriate.**

This policy supports our NDP objectives 1, 2, and 5 (paragraph 4.2.1).

### **Policy Justification**

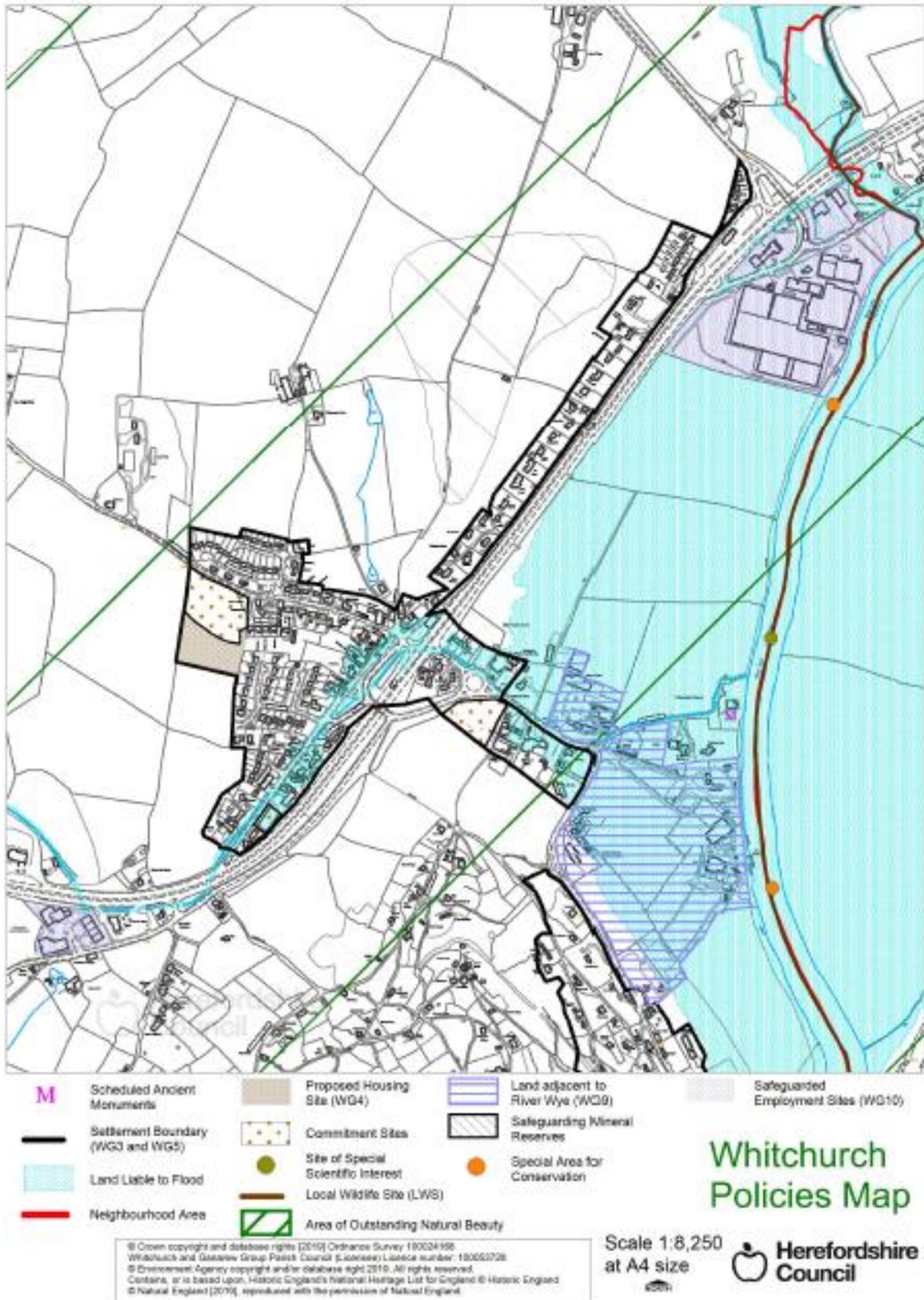
10.4.1 Although parts of the Parish are able to receive super-fast broadband this should be available throughout the Parish, in particular to support the local economy in terms of both assisting businesses located within the Parish and also to enable working from home. This is similarly the case for other telecommunication infrastructure. In addition, improvements are continually being made to increase speed and effectiveness. This policy supports the upgrading of existing and provision of new infrastructure that may be required over the Plan period. It is also important that new development make appropriate arrangements to connect to any existing mains infrastructure.

## 11. Delivering the Plan

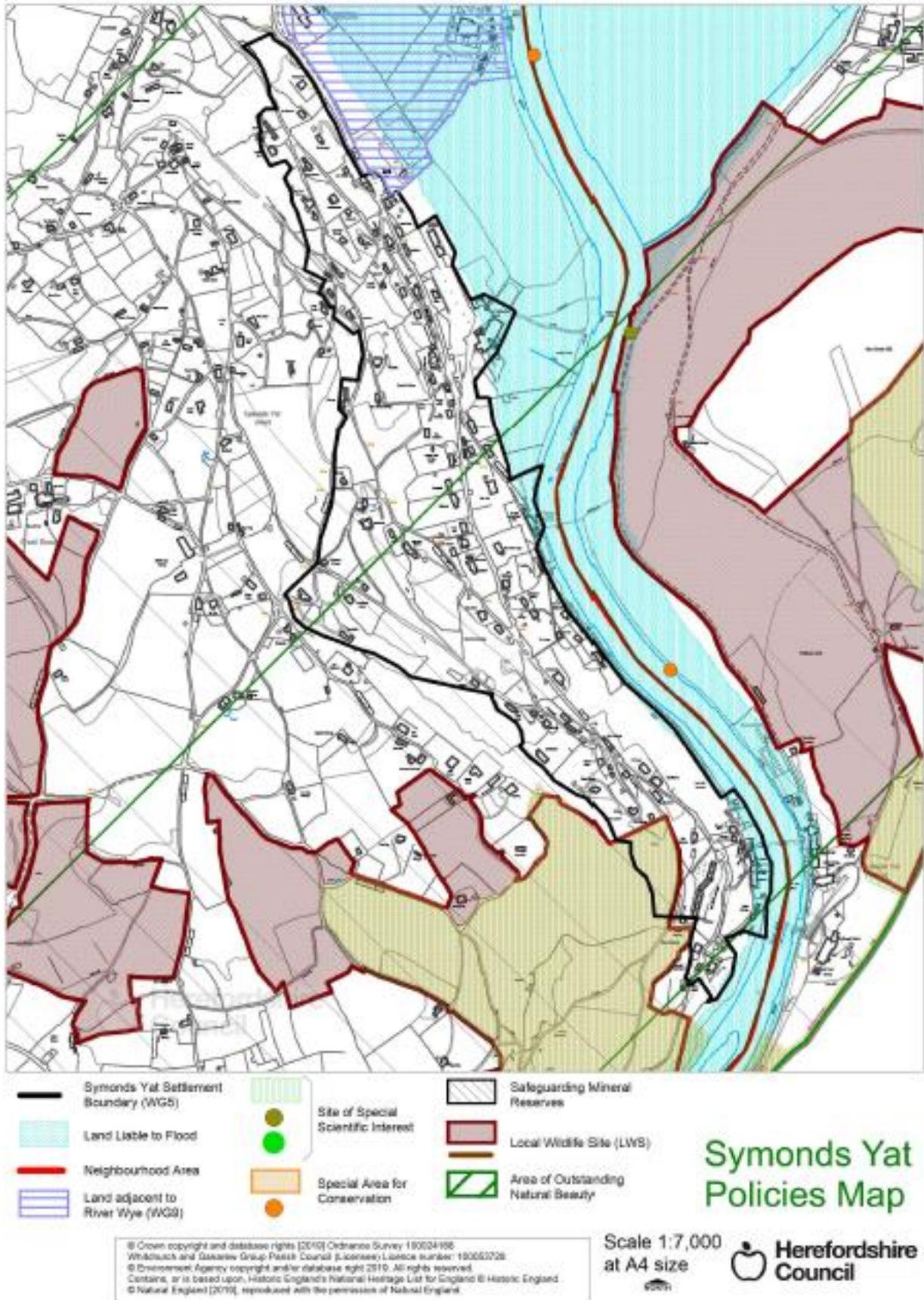
- 11.1 Landowners and developers will primarily deliver proposals that are promoted through policies in this NDP.
- 11.2 Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy contains policies for the management of development. To duplicate these within this Plan would serve no purpose particularly where the Parish Council is happy to rely upon them. Many require expertise held within Herefordshire Council.  
The NDP covers those aspects considered most relevant to the Parish-level of the Plan and the local community.
- 11.3 Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish's NDP will be implemented primarily through Herefordshire Council as the local planning authority determining planning applications for development within the Parish. Such determinations should be in accordance with the Plan unless material circumstances outweigh its provisions.
- 11.4 While the local planning authority will be responsible for development management, Whitchurch and Ganarew Group Parish Council will also use the NDP as the basis for making its representations on planning applications. The Parish Council will publicise those planning applications that are not covered by policies in the NDP. They will also publicise those planning applications that although covered by general policies, contain matters of detail which are considered important. In both instances and where necessary, Herefordshire Council will be asked to extend the time within which responses are required so that publicity can be given before the Parish Council considers the particular application.
- 11.5 Herefordshire Council is required to monitor the achievement of its targets for a range of development types including sites coming forward for development. The Parish Council will also monitor the effectiveness of the approach it has taken to the various issues it has covered in these NDP policies. This will be done through its annual report. That report will indicate:
- i. The number of dwellings granted planning permission within the Parish, including a running total covering the Plan period 2011-2031;
  - ii. A list of other planning applications for other matters received during the year indicating whether they are covered by policies in the NDP, the Parish Council's representations made, and whether they have been determined in accordance with the Plan.

- 11.6 It is anticipated that a review of the NDP will be needed, most likely when Herefordshire's Core Strategy is also reviewed. In the unlikely situation that the strategy and approach in relation to housing does not deliver the level of housing required to meet the target for the Parish, discussions will take place with Herefordshire Council upon whether an early review is necessary.
  
- 11.7 In advance of adoption of this NDP, Whitchurch and Ganarew Parish Council will produce and thereafter maintain a list of projects upon which the planning obligation contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy might be used should any be received. Other forms of potential funding will also be investigated, including in association with relevant local organisations where relevant. The detailed list of appropriate projects to support growth will be updated as required to inform relevant heads of agreement in relation to those proposals where planning obligation contributions are expected until such a time as the Community Infrastructure Levy comes into operation.

## Map 2: Whitchurch Village Policies Map



### Map 3: Symonds Yat West Policies Map



## References:

**Whitchurch and Ganarew Housing Report:** This report describes arrangements made to identify where housing development should take place through the Neighbourhood Plan and covers:

- The assessment of land submitted through the Call for Sites
- Identification, assessment and housing allocations and the defining of settlement boundaries.

This report has been produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and is included as part of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan documentation pack.

**The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** This report is an important part of the evidence base which underpins our Neighbourhood Development Plan; it is produced by Herefordshire Council and aims to ensure that environmental assets are considered effectively in plan making. This SEA has been undertaken in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes Regulation 2004.

This report is included as part of our Draft Neighbourhood Plan documentation pack.

**The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA):** This report has been carried out by Herefordshire Council as the Group Parish lies within the catchment for the River Wye (including River Lugg) and Wye Valley Woodlands SAC (Special Area of Conservation). Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat sites are 9.1 km away from the Parish and are therefore within 10 km of these European SACs. The HRA assesses the potential effects of the NDP on the River Wye, Wye Valley Woodlands and Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SACs.

This report is also therefore included as part of our Draft Neighbourhood Plan documentation pack.

## **Glossary of Terms:**

### **THESE TERMS MAY BE FOUND WITHIN OUR NDP OR ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

**ADOPTION** – The final confirmation of a development plan by a local planning authority.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING** – Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

**AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)** – A formal designation of an area where planning control is based on the protection and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area.

**BIODIVERSITY** – The degree of variation of life forms within a particular ecosystem. Biodiversity is a measure of the health of an ecosystem. Human activity generally tends to reduce biodiversity, so special measures often need to be taken to offset the impact of development on natural habitats.

**BROWN-FIELD LAND** – Land that has been previously developed.

**CHANGE OF USE** – A material change in the use of land or buildings that is of significance for planning purposes e.g. from retail to residential.

**COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY** – Allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their areas. Money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure such as transport schemes, schools and leisure centres.

**CONDITIONS** – Planning conditions are provisions attached to the granting of planning permission.

**CONFORMITY** – There is a requirement for neighbourhood plans to have appropriate regard to national policy and to be in conformity with local policy.

**CONSERVATION AREA** – An area designated as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which should be preserved or enhanced.

**CONSULTATION** – A communication process with the local community that informs planning decision-making

**CORE STRATEGY** – A development plan document forming part of a local authority's Local Plan, which sets out a vision and core policies for the development of an area.

**DEVELOPMENT** – Legal definition is “the carrying out of building, mining, engineering or other operations in, on, under or over land, and the making of any material change in the use of buildings or other land.”

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL** (also Development Management) – The process of administering and making decisions on different kinds of planning applications.

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN** –A series of statutory documents setting out the local planning authority’s policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the area.

**DUTY TO CO-OPERATE** – A requirement introduced by the Localism Act 2011 for local authorities to work together in dealing with cross-boundary issues such as public transport, housing allocations or large retail parks.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** – Improvement of an area’s economy through investment, development, job creation, and other measures.

**EVIDENCE BASE** –The evidence upon which a development plan is based, principally the background facts and statistics about an area, and the views of stakeholders.

**FLOOD PLAIN** – An area prone to flooding.

**GREEN-FIELD SITE** – Land where there has been no previous development

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE** – Landscape, biodiversity, trees, allotments, parks, open spaces and other natural assets.

**GREEN SPACE** – Those parts of an area which are occupied by natural, designed or agricultural landscape as opposed to built-development; open space, parkland, woodland, sports fields, gardens, allotments, and the like.

**HIGHWAY AUTHORITY** – The body with legal responsibility for the management and maintenance of public roads. In the UK the highway authority is usually the county council or the unitary authority for a particular area, which can delegate some functions to the district council.

**HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS REGISTER** – The national register managed by English Heritage which provides a listing and classification system for historic parks and gardens.

**HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS** – Not-for-profit organisations providing homes mainly to those in housing need.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION** – An examination of a proposed neighbourhood plan, carried out by an independent person, set up to consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions required.

**INFRASTRUCTURE** – Basic services necessary for development to take place e.g. roads, electricity, water, education and health facilities.

**LISTED BUILDINGS** – Any building or structure which is included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) – see Local Plan.

LOCAL AUTHORITY – The administrative body that governs local services such as education, planning and social services.

LOCAL PLAN – A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY – Local government body responsible for formulating planning policies and controlling development; a district council, metropolitan council, a county council, a unitary authority or national park authority.

LOCAL REFERENDUM – A direct vote in which communities will be asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal.

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN – Plans that set out a local authority's policies on transport on a five-yearly basis.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS – Factors which are relevant in the making of planning decisions, such as sustainability, impact on residential amenity, design and traffic impacts.

MINERALS PLAN – A statement of the policy, advice and guidance provided by local authorities regarding the extraction of minerals.

MIXED USE – The development of a single building or site with two or more complementary uses.

NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE – Major infrastructure developments such as power plants, airports, railways, major roads, etc.

NATIONAL PARK – An area of natural or semi-natural land designated in order to maintain the special ecological, geomorphological or aesthetic features of the area.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK – This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. It must be taken into account in preparing the development plan (which includes neighbourhood plans) and is a material consideration in planning decisions. It should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes).

NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA – The local area in which a neighbourhood plan or Neighbourhood Development Order can be introduced.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – A planning document created by a parish or town council or a neighbourhood forum, which sets out vision for the neighbourhood area, and contains policies for the development and use of land in the area. Neighbourhood plans must be subjected to an independent examination to confirm that they meet legal requirements, and then to a local referendum. If approved by a majority vote of

the local community, the neighbourhood plan will then form part of the statutory development plan.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING** – A community-initiated process in which people get together through a local forum or parish or town council and produce a plan for their neighbourhood setting out policies and proposals for the development they wish to see in their area.

**PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT** – Certain minor building works that don't need planning permission e.g. a boundary wall below a certain height.

**POLICY** – A concise statement of the principles that a particular kind of development proposal should satisfy in order to obtain planning permission.

**PARISH PLAN** – A plan produced by a parish council that sets out a vision for the future of a parish community and outlines how that can be achieved in an action plan.

**PARKING STANDARDS** – The requirements of a local authority in respect of the level of car parking provided for different kinds of development.

**PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990** – The primary piece of legislation covering listed buildings and conservation areas.

**PLANNING OBLIGATION** – Planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, secured by a local planning authority through negotiations with a developer to offset the public cost of permitting a development proposal. They cover things like highway improvements or open space provision.

**PLANNING PERMISSION** – Formal approval granted by a council allowing a proposed development to proceed.

**PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** – The concept set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2018) which requires plans (including neighbourhood plans) to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change. It defines what strategic policies should do in terms of providing for houses and other uses subject to protecting assets of particular importance which are defined in the NPPF. Neighbourhood plans must confirm with adopted and up-to-date strategic policies. It also sets out how policies should be used when determining planning applications also when there are no relevant policies or they are out of date.

**PUBLIC OPEN SPACE** – Open space to which the public has free access.

**REFERENDUM** – A vote by the eligible population of an electoral area may decide on a matter of public policy. Neighbourhood plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are made by a referendum of the eligible voters within a neighbourhood area.

**RURAL** – Areas of land which are generally not urbanised; usually with low population densities and a high proportion of land devoted to agriculture.

**SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT** – A nationally important archaeological site, building or structure which is protected against unauthorised change by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

**SECTION 106** – see Planning Obligation.

**SETTING** – The immediate context in which a building is situated, for example, the setting of a listed building could include neighbouring land or development with which it is historically associated, or the surrounding townscape of which it forms a part.

**SIGNIFICANCE** – The qualities and characteristics which define the special interest of a historic building or area.

**SITE ALLOCATION PLAN** – A plan accompanying a planning policy document or statement which identifies sites within the plan area on which certain kinds of development are proposed, e.g. residential or retail development.

**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST** – A protected area designated as being of special interest by virtue of its flora, fauna, geological or geomorphological features. SSSIs are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by the official nature conservation body for the particular part of the UK in question.

**STAKEHOLDERS** – People who have an interest in an organisation or process including residents, business owners and government.

**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** – A formal statement of the process of community consultation undertaken in the preparation of a statutory plan.

**STATUTORY UNDERTAKER** – An agency or company with legal rights to carry out certain developments and highway works. Such bodies include utility companies, telecom companies, and nationalised companies. Statutory undertakers are exempt from planning permission for many minor developments and highway works they carry out.

**STRATEGIC POLICY** – A policy that is essential for the delivery of a strategy, for example, the overall scale and distribution of housing and employment in an area.

**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT** – Provides detailed thematic or site-specific guidance explaining or supporting the policies in the Local Plan.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** – Development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990** – Currently the main planning legislation for England and Wales is consolidated in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; this is regarded as the ‘principal act’.

**TENURE** – The terms and conditions under which land or property is held or occupied, e.g. five-year leasehold, freehold owner occupation, etc.

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDER** – An order made by a local planning authority to protect a specific tree, a group of trees or woodland. TPOs prevent the felling,

lopping, topping, uprooting or other deliberate damage of trees without the permission of the local planning authority.

USE CLASS – The legally defined category into which the use of a building or land falls (see Use Classes Order).

USE CLASSES ORDER – The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) is the statutory instrument that defines the categories of use of buildings or land for the purposes of planning legislation. Planning permission must usually be obtained to change the use of a building or land to another use class.

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT – A document that identifies and defines the distinctive characteristics of a locality and provides design guidance to influence its future development and improve the physical qualities of the area. Village design statements have generally been produced for rural areas, often by parish councils.

WORLD HERITAGE SITE – A place that has been designated by UNESCO as being of outstanding cultural or physical importance to the common heritage of humanity.