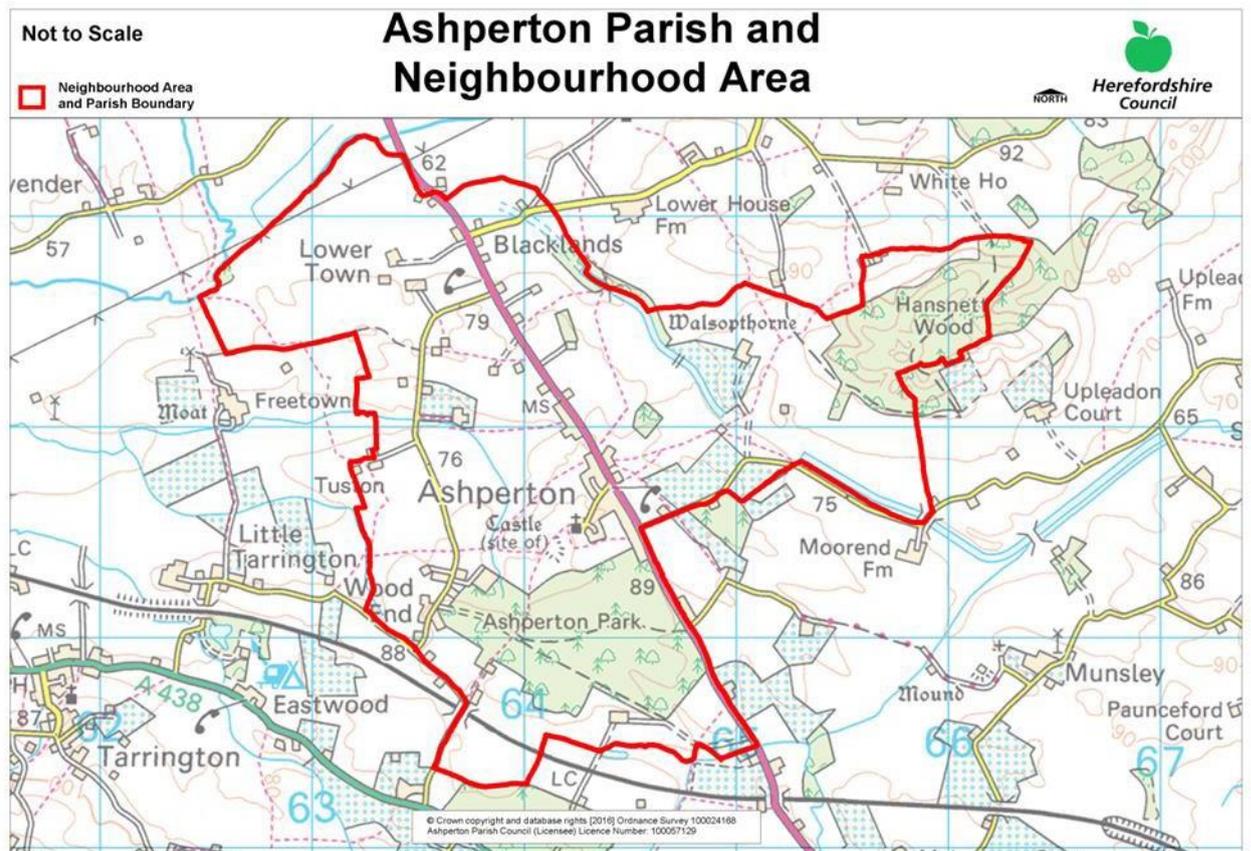


# ASHPERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018-2031



Referendum

Version

March 2020



## **PREFACE**

The report by the Independent Examiner on the final Submission Draft has now been received and is available on the Ashperton Parish Council website. The Examiner concluded that, subject to a number of modifications set out in her report, the Ashperton Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the 'Basic Conditions' and she recommended that the Plan should proceed to referendum. This version incorporates the recommended modifications.

Rowland Eustace, Chair Ashperton Parish Council

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## Section 1 Introduction and Background

### 1.1 Purpose

1. The Localism Act 2011 amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the Act) introducing new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development in their communities by preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan through which general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood can be established.
2. The Ashperton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is a new type of planning document based on the views of our local residents, businesses, services and community groups, and on the evidence of survey and statistical information concerning the wider area.
3. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (2018) (NPPF 2018) explains, at paragraph 29, that Neighbourhood Plans can shape, direct and help deliver sustainable development by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Furthermore, the Framework explains, at paragraph 21, that strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies.
4. The Plan reflects the enthusiasm of the residents, demonstrated throughout the NDP preparation process, for taking the opportunity to make our Parish an even better place in which to live.
5. The Plan will now be the subject of a local referendum which will ask “Do you want Herefordshire Council to use the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Ashperton to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?”.
6. Provided more than 50% of those voting, vote ‘yes’ the Plan can move forward towards being formally ‘made’ by Herefordshire Council.
7. Once the Plan has been made the Ashperton Neighbourhood Development Plan will have the force of law and, as an integral part of the Development Plan for Herefordshire, will become the starting point for deciding what developments should and should not take place in the Parish.



(Strictly speaking neighbourhood development plans are not adopted but “made” by the local authority)

## 1.2 Context

8. Because the Neighbourhood Development Plan will have legal status, the Plan must meet each of a set of basic conditions. The basic conditions for both neighbourhood development plans and neighbourhood development orders<sup>1</sup> are:
  - a. having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).
  - b. having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.
  - c. having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.
  - d. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
  - e. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).

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<sup>1</sup> A neighbourhood development order allows a community to grant planning permission for certain types of development. There are no plans for such an order for Ashperton

- f. the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, [current] EU obligations.
  - g. prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).
9. The Policies in the Plan take account of these requirements, in particular, that the rural settlements within Ledbury Rural Housing Market Area are required by the Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy RA2 to set a minimum housing growth target of 14% between 2011 and 2031.
10. This draft Plan is submitted by Ashperton Parish Council which is the “qualifying body” defined by the Localism Act 2011. The Plan applies only to the Parish of Ashperton in Herefordshire.

### **1.3 Plan Period, Monitoring and Review**

11. The Ashperton Neighbourhood Development Plan will run concurrently with the Herefordshire Council Core Strategy and apply until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2031. It is, however, a response to the needs and aspirations of the local community as understood today and it is recognized that challenges and concerns are likely to change over the plan period.
12. Ashperton Parish Council, as the Neighbourhood Plan Authority, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery, as described later in the Plan.

## Section 2: Our Parish

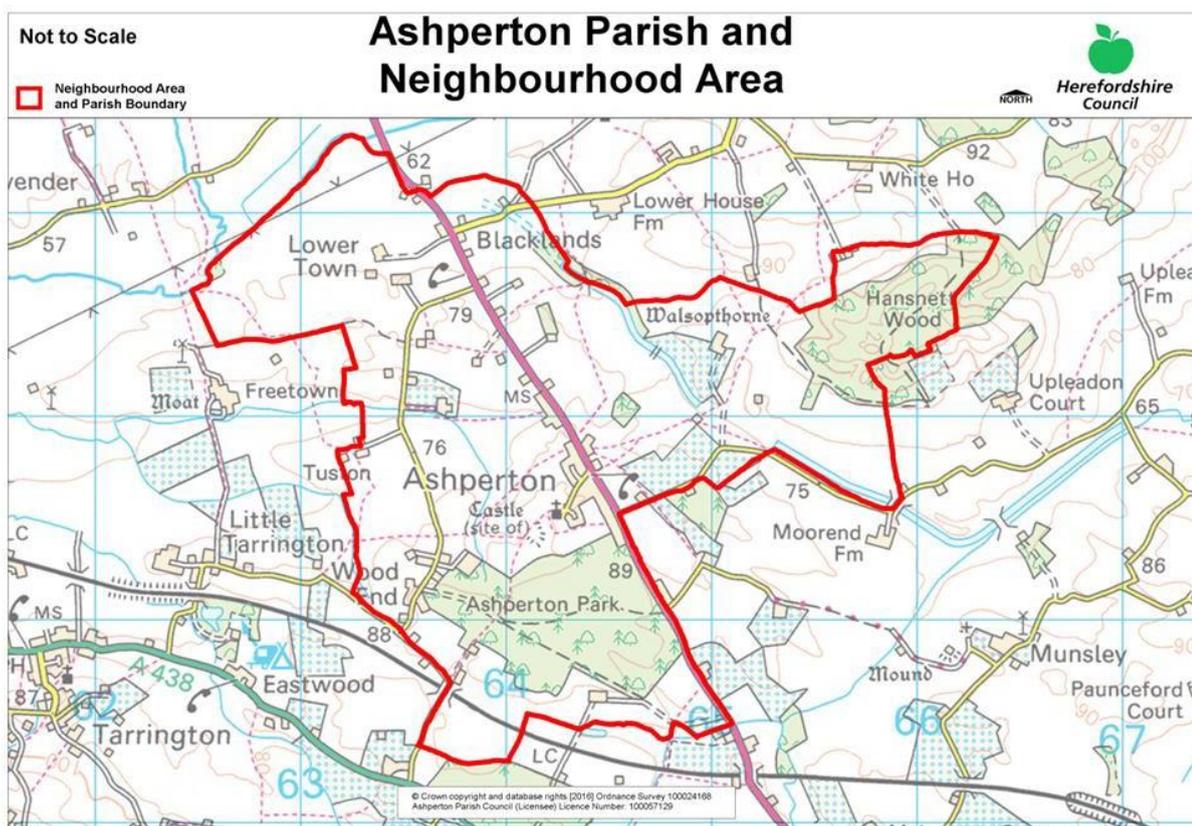
### 2.1 Introduction

13. This section of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) presents factual evidence about Ashperton Parish covering a range of topics relevant to planning and development. The evidence provided here has, together with the public consultations, helped shape the NDP's policies by describing the Parish's attributes and helping to identify where development would and would not be appropriate.
14. Further, more lengthy information is provided in Supplementary Information (available at [www.ashperton.org.uk](http://www.ashperton.org.uk)). References and/or links to website information sources are given throughout.

### 2.2 Parish Location and Size

15. Any neighbourhood development plan applies to its set 'neighbourhood area'. The neighbourhood area of this plan matches Ashperton Parish.
16. Ashperton Parish is located in the centre-east of Herefordshire County within England's West Midlands region. It is 12 miles east of Hereford and 5 miles north west of Ledbury. Ashperton is a small and rural Parish typical of Herefordshire – one of the least populated counties in the UK. The Parish covers approximately 543 hectares (1344 acres).

PLAN 1



### 2.3 Geology and Soils

17. The underlying solid geology of the Parish is Raglan Mudstone Formation, a mix of sedimentary siltstones and mudstones. They were formed in the Silurian period (~400 million years ago).
18. Adjacent to watercourses are superficial deposits of alluvium - clay, silt, sands and gravels deposited by the watercourses within the Quaternary Period. Head deposits are also present in small areas.

Above information sourced from and further information available at: [British Geological Survey, www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk).

19. The soils deriving from the above geology are 'slightly acidic loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage'. Near to watercourses the soils are 'freely draining floodplain soils'.

Above information sourced from and further information available at: [Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute, www.landis.org.uk](http://www.landis.org.uk).

20. In terms of agricultural use, Defra's 'England and Wales Agricultural Land Classification' ranks most of Ashperton's soils as 'grade 2 very good' with areas near watercourses rated as 'grade 3 good to moderate'.

Above information sourced from and further information available at: [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk).

21. There are no designated Local Geological Sites and no geological sites of local interest.

### 2.4 Hydrology

22. The Parish lies largely within the catchment of the River Lugg. Several streams and ditches cross through the Parish heading north to the River Frome, a tributary of the Lugg. Towards the southeast of the Parish, water, such as that overflowing from the old canal, flows southeast towards Ledbury and to the River Leadon, a tributary of the Severn.
23. Several areas within the Parish are located in flood zones as identified by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency flood maps are presented on the following pages:



Enter a postcode or place name:

Other topics for this area...

Go

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

View other Interactive Maps

### Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

Surface water flooding happens when rainwater does not drain away through the normal drainage systems or soak into the ground but lies on or flows over the ground instead.

The shading on the map shows the risk of flooding from surface water in this particular area.

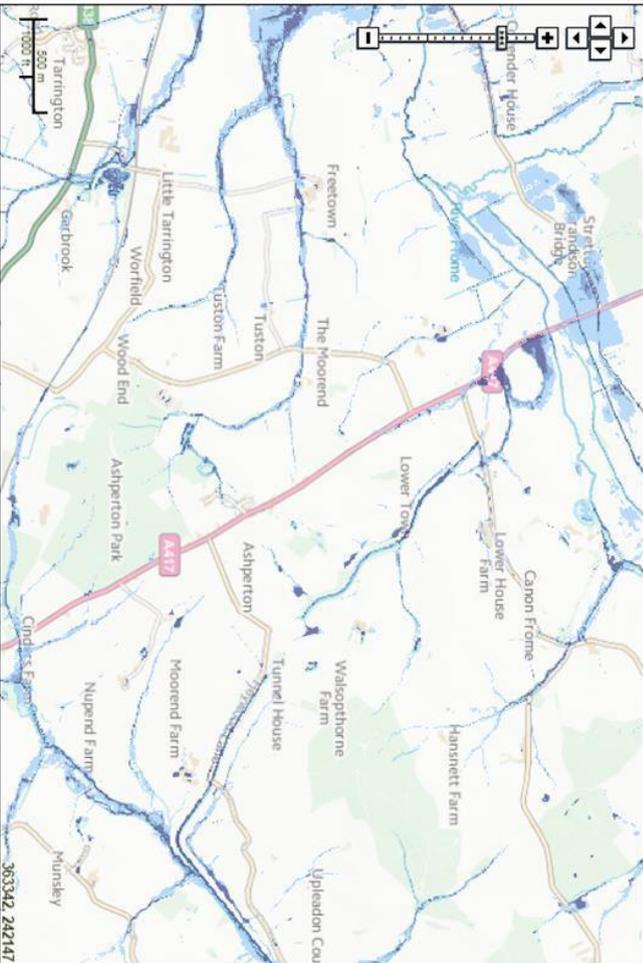
Click on the map for a more detailed explanation.

Map of X: 364,253; Y: 242,141 at scale 1:20,000

Data search

**Map legend**

- Risk of Flooding from Surface Water
  - High
  - Medium
  - Low
  - Very Low
- Other national environmental organisations
- Natural Resources Wales Area of responsibility
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency Area of responsibility



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Enter a postcode or place name:

Other topics for this area...

### Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea

River flooding happens when a river cannot cope with the amount of water draining into it from the surrounding land. Sea flooding happens when there are high tides and stormy conditions.

The shading on the map shows the risk of flooding from rivers and the sea in this particular area.

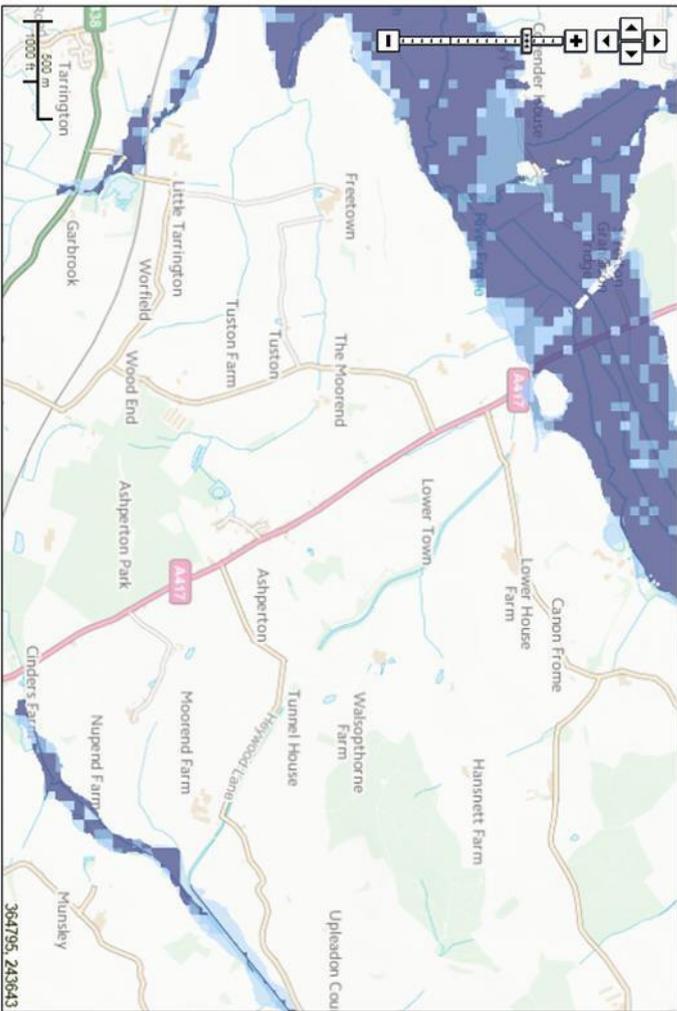
Click on the map for a more detailed explanation.

Map of X: 364,253; Y: 242,141 at scale 1:20,000

Data search

**Map legend**

- Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea
  - High
  - Medium
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- Scottish Environment Protection Agency Area of responsibility



Customers in Wales - From 1 April 2013 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) will take over the responsibilities of the Environment Agency in Wales.  
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## 2.5 Landscape and Views

### *Landscape Character*

24. The land of the Parish is a part of a much larger plateau and as such it gently undulates across its length. The lowest part at 60m (above mean sea level) is found in the north alongside the River Frome. From here the land rises up to a height of 97m near the village school. The only significant hill is Hansnett Hill which peaks at 137m.
25. The wider landscape in which the Parish sits has been analysed and described chiefly by two pieces of work. The first, by Natural England, places Ashperton in the 'Herefordshire Lowlands' National Character Area (NCA). The NCA profile summarises the area as:

*“The Herefordshire Lowlands National Character Area (NCA) lies almost entirely within Herefordshire, with small areas to the north and east in Shropshire and Worcestershire and to the south-east in Gloucestershire. It is largely tranquil and rural in character but does include the larger settlements of Hereford and Leominster. There are small dispersed settlements of hamlets and villages, many of which contain older buildings with the local vernacular of black-and-white timber-framed buildings. Restored cider barns with characteristic double doors and historic farmsteads are also common. The landscape is gently undulating with steep-sided cornstone hills in the central area dominated by ancient woodland of ash and field maple or oak and bracken.*

*Woodland within the area is a significant landscape feature, typically on the hill tops and valley sides. Many of these woodlands are actively managed (commercially) to produce quality timber, for example Garnons Estate. The NCA is an important area for commercial agriculture supported by the fertile and high-grade agricultural soils; the farming is mixed arable and livestock.*

*Traditional orchards are still to be found, though suffering decline, with new orchards and dwarf varieties of trees also common. The area is also important for commercial production of soft fruit under polytunnels, supplying much of the UK. Historic parklands such as at Berrington Hall have many veteran trees that are important for invertebrates.*

*There are many rivers in the area, the largest of which are the rivers Wye, Lugg and Frome flowing through wide, fertile mudstone valleys. Old Red Sandstone is commonly found in the west and east of the area and here the soils take on a distinctive red colour. The River Wye Special Area of Conservation is of international importance, designated for its natural river habitat, which includes species such as migratory fish (lamprey, shad and salmon), and the wide, meandering river valley creates a unique and beautiful landscape. Recreational opportunity is offered by long-distance trails including the Wye Valley Walk which links to the Shropshire Hills and the Herefordshire Trail which links the market towns in Herefordshire. Views can be expansive across to neighbouring NCAs, looking west to the Black Mountains, north to the Clun and Shropshire Hills, and east to the Malvern Hills.*

### *Statements of Environmental Opportunity*

*SEO 2: Protect and enhance the natural and historic environment, integrating new development through the use of green infrastructure principles informed by existing heritage, geodiversity and biodiversity assets. Protect the agrarian character of the area by making the most of versatile and fertile soils to produce food while integrating semi-natural features and protecting above- and below-ground heritage assets and geological assets and reinforcing the strong sense of character.*

*SEO 3: Protect, manage and restore semi-natural habitats, in particular woodlands, grasslands, orchards and wet meadows within the rural and urban areas to improve ecological connectivity, biodiversity, landscape character, the historic environment, and flood water storage capacity and the ability of the landscape to adapt to the impacts of climate change. In particular, manage, restore and create new woodland, and develop connectivity in other semi-natural habitats such as the hedgerow networks and orchards.”*

Defra [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles)

26. Secondly, Herefordshire Council has undertaken a county-wide landscape character assessment and here Ashperton Parish has three landscape character types identified within it.
27. These are: ‘Principal Settled Farmlands’ covering the northern third of the Parish, ‘Estate Farmlands’ covering the southern half and finally ‘Riverside Meadows’ covering land immediately adjacent to the River Frome. The document describes each type in detail with the key characteristics identified (available in Supplementary Information).

Above information sourced from and further information available at Herefordshire Council. (The landscape character assessment was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in 2004 and updated in 2009).

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/environmental-protection/conservation-and-sustainability/planning-landscape-character-assessment](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/environmental-protection/conservation-and-sustainability/planning-landscape-character-assessment)

Additional ‘historic landscape character assessment’ information is available from Herefordshire Council.

28. There is no local landscape character assessment that studies the Parish in a finer level of detail.

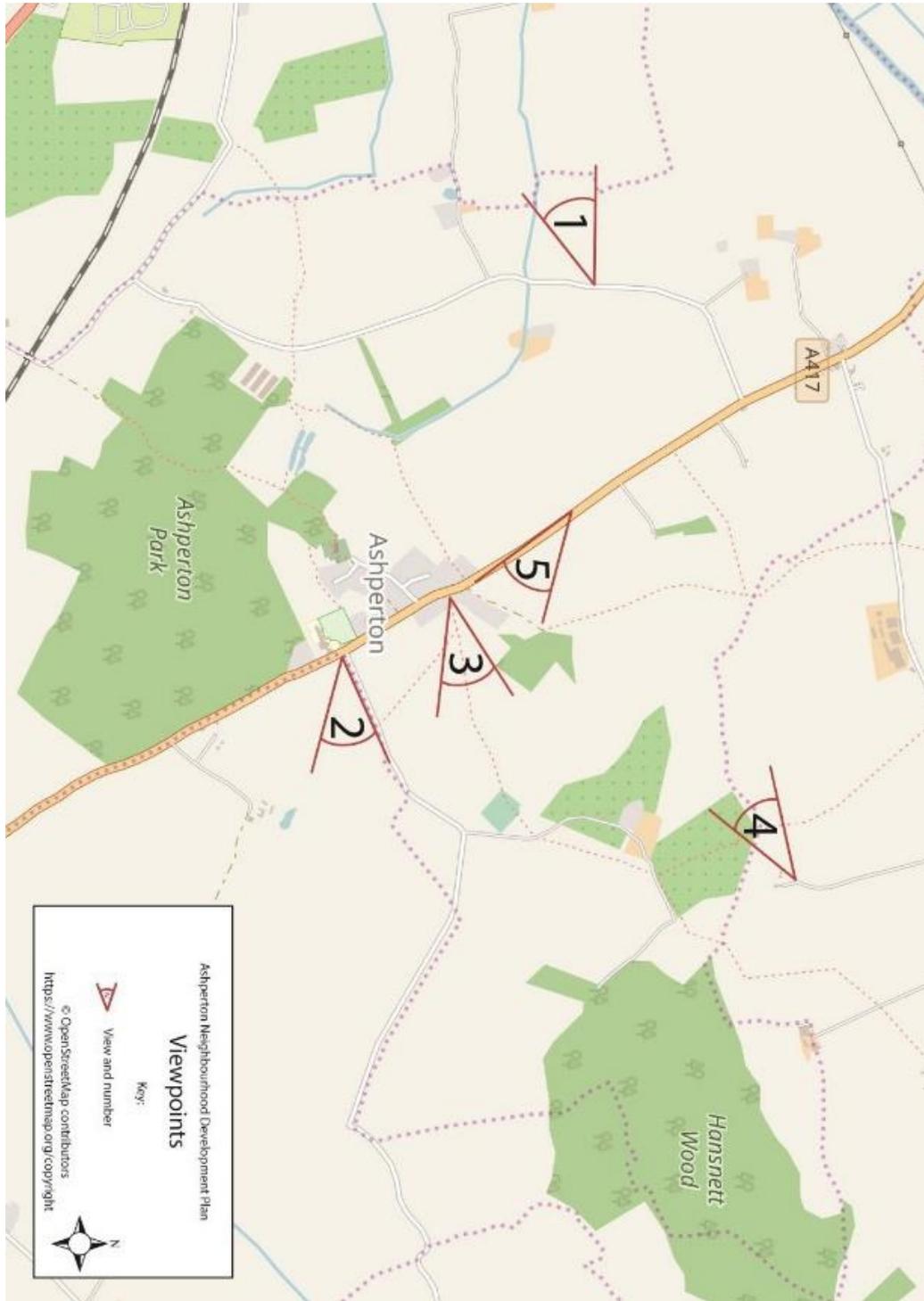
### **Views**

29. With mixed land uses and little obstruction from buildings, the Parish has many attractive views both across the Parish itself and also, in places, to much further afield. Ashperton village and surroundings are sited on one of the higher points affording superb views of the immediate surrounding land and also of the Black Mountains to the west, Bromyard Downs to the northeast and the Malvern Hills to the east.
30. These views are much-cherished by local people and visitors alike. Here follows a table of the more popular views:

**TABLE 1 POPULAR VIEWS**

	<b>View from:</b>	<b>Bearing:</b>	<b>Looking to:</b>
1	Woodend Lane	W	Black Mountains
2	Ashperton School and surroundings	E	Malvern Hills
3	The Croft	E	Malvern Hills
4	Around Hansnett Hill	SW	The Parish
5	A417	SSE	Village Hall

PLAN 4 VIEWPOINTS



## View 1



**Photo1: looking out of Ashperton Parish from Woodend Lane towards the Black Mountains**

## View 2



**Photo 2: Looking out of the Parish from opposite Ashperton Primary Academy towards the Malvern Hills**

### View 3



**Photo 3: looking out across 'The Croft' towards the Malvern Hills**

## View 4



**Photo 4: Looking across Ashperton from near Hansnett Wood towards the Black Mountains**

## View 5



**Photo 5: Looking southwards on A417 towards the Village Hall**

## 2.6 Land Use

31. The main land use within the Parish is agriculture. The land has historically been used for a variety of agricultural purposes many of which are still active today although the proportions of each have changed. The broad categories are estimated as:  
pasture 30%, orchards 6%, woodland 20%, arable 40%, hops 3%, buildings/gardens/roads 1%
32. There is no registered common land in the Parish. There is one registered village green beside the village hall. This green is owned for the most part by the Parish Council. As a registered village green it is afforded legal protection under the Commons Act 2006. Actions such as digging, access and erection of structures are only via formal application and approval from the Secretary of State for the Environment.

## 2.7 Settlements and Demographics

### *Distribution of Buildings*

33. Buildings are distributed across the whole Parish. The main concentration is in the village of Ashperton where they are mainly located along the A417 and off Church Lane. Satellite farmsteads are frequent across the Parish, such as Walsopthorne, and some have associated cottages creating the hamlets of Wood End and Lower Town.

### *Building Types*

34. The National Planning Policy Framework explains, at paragraph 127(c), that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).
35. Archaeological evidence suggests buildings have been present in the Parish since at least the Iron Age. Extant buildings include a large proportion of post-medieval and 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed cottages, farms and barns. The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought modern buildings as infill and as new developments such as the bungalows of Church Lane, Web's Orchard and The Ryders.
36. However, for the most part, the village has evolved gradually with the construction of single dwellings or very small developments such as Bramley House and The Hawthorns to the south of the Village Green. The defining character of the village is one that displays a wide variety of style of modest dwellings arranged in an irregular pattern or grain, yet which conform to a common vernacular incorporating locally distinctive features, for example local sandstone and/or timber framing and typical red brickwork. The lack of suburban style development means that the village retains substantially this distinctive character.

### *Listed Buildings*

37. Historic England and Herefordshire Council recognise 28 buildings/structures as of national importance by listing them. All listed buildings/structures are identified in the Supporting Information.



**Photo 6: St Bartholomew's Church with native Daffodils in the foreground. The Church is Grade II\* listed**

***Built Conservation Areas and Tree Preservation Orders***

38. There are no built conservation areas and one tree preservation order within the garden of 'The Ditch', 44 Ashperton Road (Herefordshire Council).

***Amenities***

39. The Parish benefits from the following amenities: village church, village primary school, village hall, a village green and a post box.

***Demographics***

40. The 2011 census recorded 226 residents at a density of 0.4 people per hectare (compared to an average density of 4.1 across England). The number of households recorded was 102.

Demographic information above sourced from and further information available at: Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics, 2011. [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

## 2.8 Access and Infrastructure

### *Roads and Public Transport*

41. The Parish is dissected by the route of the old Roman road now the A417. A main carriageway used by both local traffic and regional traffic including frequent use by HGVs. Leading from this main road is a network of minor roads and tracks that reach most parts of the Parish.
42. The Parish has only a very limited weekday bus service. No other forms of public transport are available.

### *Public Rights of Way and Open Access Land*

43. The Parish is criss-crossed by Public Rights of Way all of which are public footpaths giving the public access on foot to most parts. Paths are concentrated around Ashperton Village. There are no public bridleways and no byways. The village green (0.1ha) has open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000.

### *Drainage*

44. There is no mains drainage within Ashperton and all foul water drainage is via private treatment works. Any permission for new development should be subject to a condition requiring the approval, before commencement of works, of a scheme of foul and surface water drainage, in compliance with current regulations including the General Binding Rules, together with implementation prior to first occupation. This is a matter for the Local Planning Authority.

## 2.9 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

45. Archaeological features from a variety of ages are present across the Parish. These features are unique opportunities from which to study our past and help tell Ashperton's story. Many archaeological features are recorded by Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Record (see Supplementary Information), with the most important assets designated as Scheduled Monuments. These are protected by law and are of national importance.
46. A selection of the heritage assets includes:
  - Earthworks of medieval fortified manor house and moat 'Ashperton Castle' (Scheduled Monument)
  - Roman Road
  - Many 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed houses
  - Canal and associated tunnel
  - Medieval ridge and furrow, parkland and enclosure at 'The Croft'
  - World War Memorial
  - Deserted medieval village north of Ashperton Church
  - Prehistoric trackway
  - Church of St Bartholomew
  - The old village water pump
47. There is no Registered Parkland in the Parish.

- 48. Many of the more long-standing forms of land use are maintaining cultural traditions such as traditional orchard management (often undergrazed by livestock) and hay meadows.

**2.10 Ecology**

- 49. The Parish contains a mixture of habitats typical of traditional, rural England with mixed farmland interrupted by small woodlands, watercourses and a good network of hedges that connects many habitats together.
- 50. There are no internationally or nationally important designated sites (these would include: RAMSAR, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, World Heritage Sites, National Nature Reserves or Sites of Special Scientific Interest).
- 51. The Parish does contain 5 sites designated as Local Wildlife Sites. These are shown on the map on page 23 and the Ashperton Parish Policies Map on page 29. These are: the old canal, Hansnett Wood, River Frome, Ashperton Park and the boundary of Eastwood.
- 52. Several ‘priority habitats’ are present, as identified by Natural England. These include: species-rich grassland, ponds, ancient woodland, traditional orchards and hedgerows. Some of these habitats have been mapped by Natural England and presented in the Supplementary Information (priority habitats as recognised by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006, Section 41).
- 53. In addition to the 5 Local Wildlife Sites there are 8 further important sites with several priority habitats which have been identified. These are:

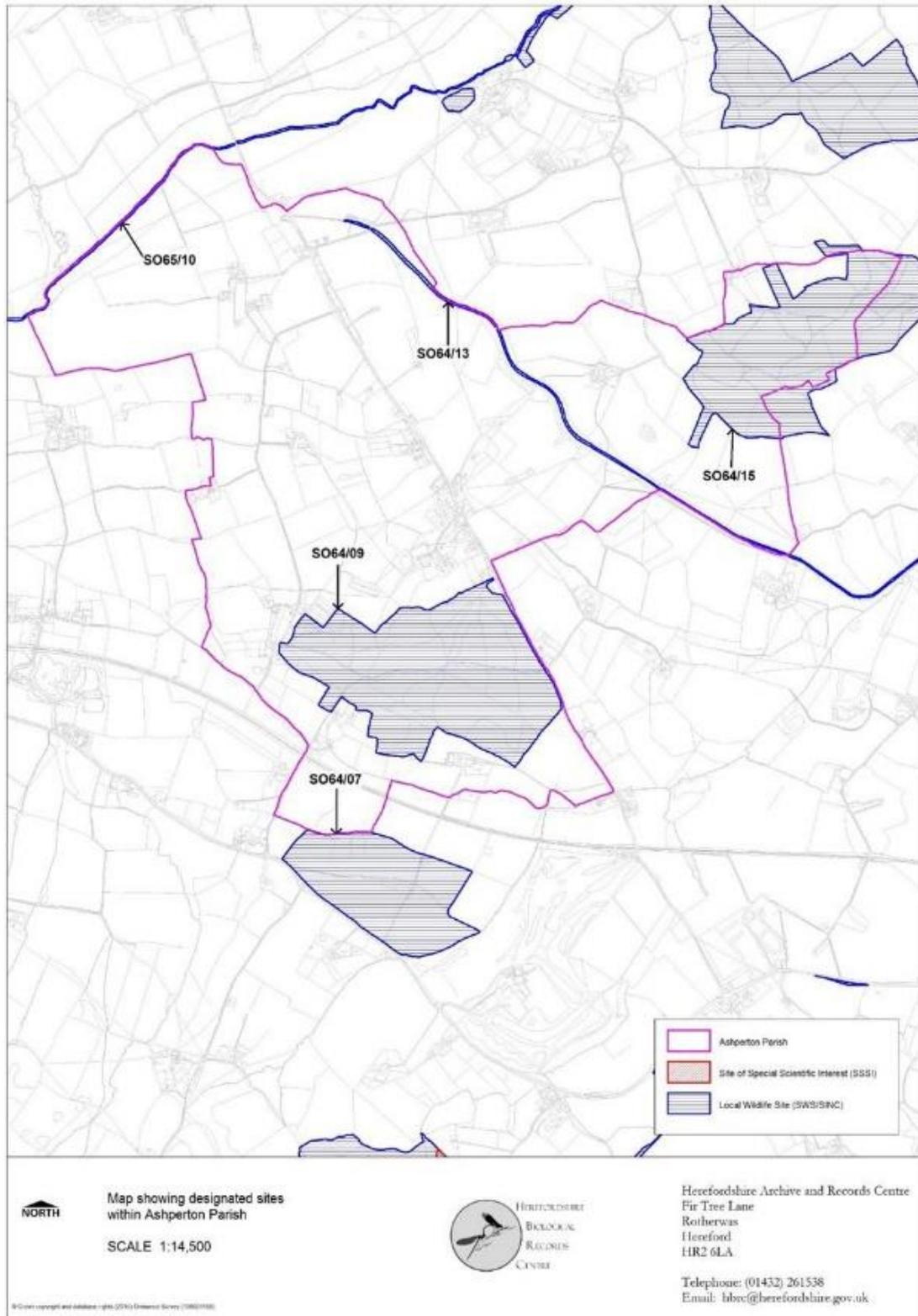
**Table 2 WILDLIFE SITES**

<b>Site name / area:</b>	<b>Grid Ref: SO</b>	<b>Habitat / species:</b>
Church Coppice	641414	Ancient woodland
Orchard at Woodend	636413	Old orchard Species-rich grassland
The Croft and adjacent field	645418	Species-rich Grassland Veteran trees Bats
Village Green pond and nearby ponds	644418	Pond Great crested newts Palmate newts Common frog
Orchard at Hackell’s Green	636421	Old orchard
Woodland off Dognall Lane	645420	Ancient Woodland
Woodland and stream	638417	Ancient Woodland Stream
Church field	642414	Wild daffodil meadow



**Photo 7: Old orchard with species-rich grassland including Green-winged Orchids at Wood End.**

### PLAN 5: DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES



54. Information above sourced from and further information available at: Herefordshire Biological Records Centre and Natural England/Magic [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)
55. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre collate and hold records of species in the county. Certain species and their dwellings are protected by law, these and priority species must be taken into account in any planning process.
56. Ashperton Parish is home to many legally protected species including: Bats (7 species), Badgers, Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly, Violet Helleborine and Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The area is particularly notable for its amphibian and reptile populations – Toad, Common Frog, Slow Worm, Adder, Palmate Newt, Smooth Newt and Grass Snake have all been recorded. Great Crested Newts are particularly numerous here, the latter spending summer in the many ponds and the remainder of the time on land. All birds and their nests are protected from reckless disturbance/destruction.

HBRC species information is presented in the Supplementary Information.

#### ***Veteran/ancient trees***

57. The Parish is home to many notable trees some of which hold great cultural and ecological value too, these are our veteran trees and several of these are ancient. Of particular note is the collection of ancient oaks present from the village hall to Tunnel Cottage. These trees are estimated to be about 5-600 years old (born in ~1450!).

### **2.11 Tranquillity**

58. The rural nature of the Parish coupled with a lack of light pollution from street lighting together with sensitive domestic lighting is key to the achievement of excellent levels of tranquillity enjoyed by the Parish in the form of peace and quiet, natural landscape and dark night skies. The A417 does bring a corridor of noise and light pollution but this varies with traffic numbers through the day. Tranquillity improves local people's lives contributing to a sense of wellbeing and 'getting away from it all'.
59. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) have assessed and mapped tranquillity across the UK. Ashperton is recorded as higher or medial scores in tranquillity across the Parish. Herefordshire is the top ranked darkest English County. (Source night blight mapping England's light pollution and dark skies. CPRE.)

Information above sourced from and further information at: CPRE <http://maps.cpre.org.uk/>

## Section 3: Vision and Objectives

### 3.1 Background

60. The National Planning Policy Framework (2018) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government’s requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. At the heart of the Framework there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
61. The Framework explains that “Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a) An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - b) A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - c) An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

“These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions, but in doing so **should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.**” [emphasis added]

62. At paragraph 16 the Framework adds that plans should be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and, at paragraph 125, that “plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding of each area’s defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.”

63. The Vision and Objectives were developed from opinions of residents following an initial questionnaire in August 2015 and community consultation in October 2015, and a second questionnaire and community consultation in April 2016.

### **3.2 The Vision**

64. To be a parish where an excellent quality of life is available to all, where people are valued and where there are homes and facilities to meet the needs of a sustainable rural community with a high quality environment.
65. This will mean that by 2031:
- There is sufficient housing to meet the needs of local people and which is of mixed types, well designed, in keeping with local character and suitably located individually or in small clusters so as to maintain the individual character of the parish;
  - Existing local facilities including the village hall and school are supported and enhanced;
  - Future developments do not unacceptably impact on heritage features of the village, particularly the Church, moat and village green; and are sympathetic to the local character, landscape and views;
  - Roads and footpaths, particularly the A417 are safer, well maintained and in good condition; and
  - New residents are welcomed, people feel safe and community involvement and spirit is actively encouraged.

### **3.3 The Objectives**

#### ***Housing***

66. Policies incorporated in the Plan will ensure that new housing contributes to a sustainable and balanced community, in particular through:
- providing a mix of properties in terms of size and tenure;
  - designs and layout that are sensitive to and in keeping with our local character;
  - satisfying locally identified needs for all life stages;
  - controlling the level of new housing such that there are sufficient numbers but without over-provision; and
  - controlling development such that individual or small clusters of houses are developed at a gradual rate in keeping with the historic evolution and defining character of the Parish, which could be irrevocably harmed by unsympathetic suburban style development.

***Environmental Sustainability***

67. The Plan will contribute towards sustainable development through:
- protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, especially the Parish’s heritage, habitats and open spaces, safeguarding agricultural land;
  - maintaining a high quality landscape, built environment and settings of settlements;
  - reducing flood risk; and
  - moving towards being carbon neutral.

***Roads and Traffic***

68. Within the Plan are proposals to reduce the effects of traffic on the community so that:
- residents are safe using local roads and footpaths;
  - traffic can move freely but without excessive speed;
  - new development does not make road conditions worse; and
  - footpaths and cycle lanes are created where practicable to provide carbon free transport alternatives.

***Community Services and Facilities***

69. To foster community spirit by:
- supporting the maintenance and improvement of existing services and facilities; and
  - promoting the expansion of fibre optic broadband and mobile phone coverage in all parts of the Parish.

## Section 4: The Policies

### 4.1 Structure of the Policies Sections

70. The following Sections 4 through 9 contain policies derived from the vision and objectives set out in Section 3. The views of the residents, as expressed in questionnaire surveys and live consultations, were fully taken into account in the development of these policies.
71. It is important that development applicants and decision-makers consider the policies as a whole in order to assess whether a proposal would be acceptable. Every policy has been framed in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the Hereford Local Plan Core Strategy and subsequently reviewed in the light of the revised Framework (2018)

“The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development.

Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves does not mean worse lives for future generations.

Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they certainly will be worse if things stagnate.

Sustainable development is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment.

Our historic environment- buildings, landscapes, towns and villages – can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives rather than withers.

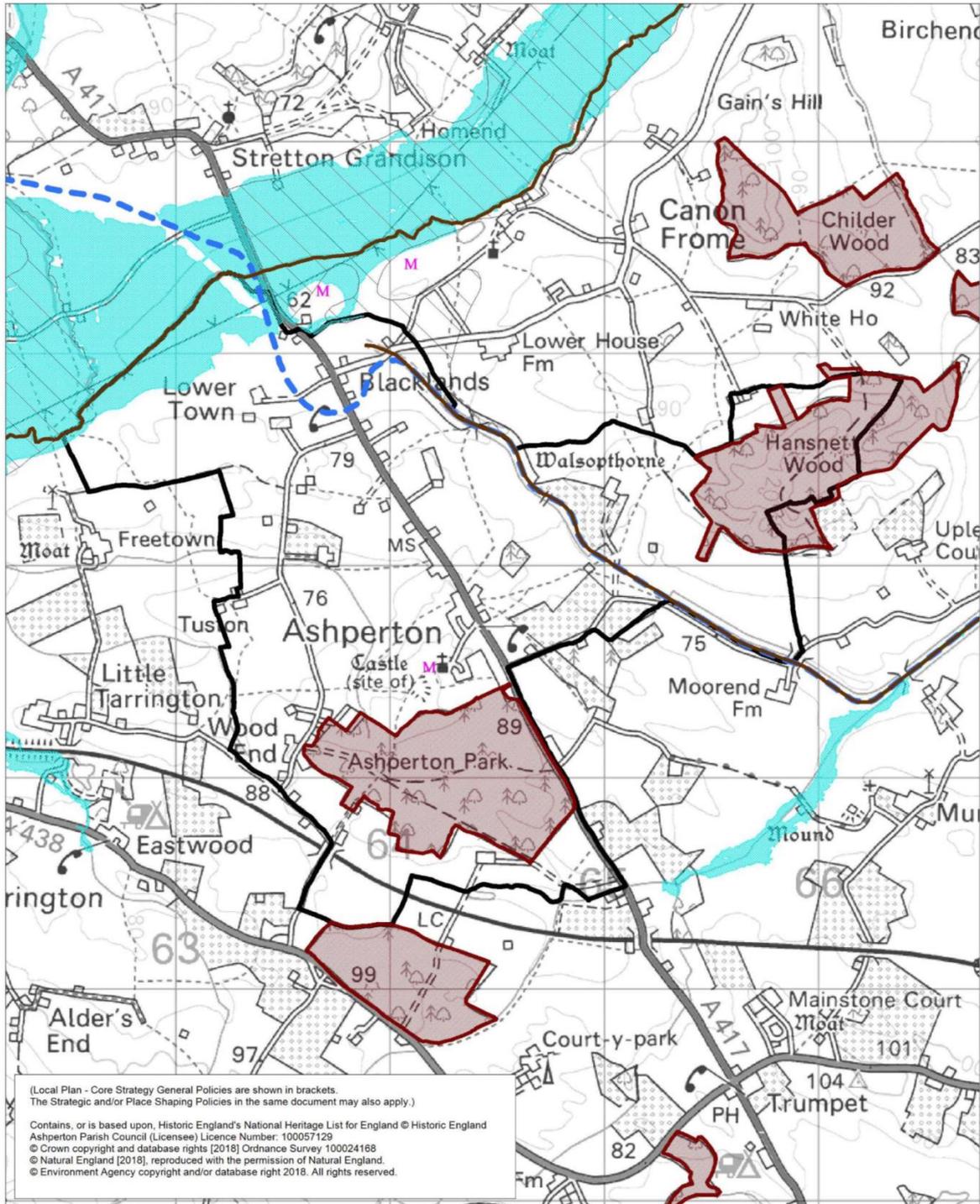
Our standards of design can be so much higher. We are a nation renowned worldwide for creative excellence, yet, confidence in development itself has been eroded by the too frequent experience of mediocrity.

So sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations.

The planning system is about helping to make this happen.”

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP (then) Minister for Planning, Forward to the National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Plan 6



Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (LD2)

Land Liable to Flood (SD3)

Scheduled Ancient Monuments (LD4)

Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal (E4, LD4)

Safeguarding Mineral Reserves

Neighbourhood Area

Scale 1: 22,500  
at A3 size

## Ashperton Parish Policies Map



**TABLE 3: POLICY AREAS**

<b>Policy Area</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Section Number</b>
Housing Policies	H	5
Design Policies	D	6
Transport Policies	ST	7
Supporting Local Business	SB	8
Environmental Policies	E	9
Renewable Energy Policies	RE	10

To aid identification, policies have been coded as indicated in the table.

**4.2 Policies to Meet the Objectives**

**TABLE 4**

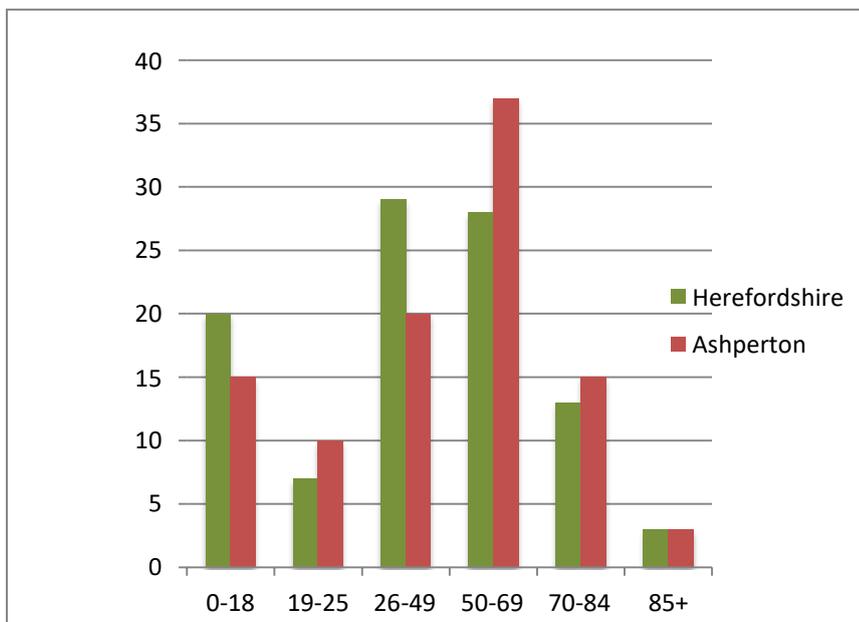
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>POLICIES</b>
Housing	H1: Number of New Houses H2: Settlement Boundary H3: Housing Mix and Tenure H4: Type of Housing H5: Rural Exception Sites D1: Design D2: Technical Design
Environmental Sustainability	E1: Landscape E2: Tranquillity E3: Cultural Heritage E4: Wildlife and the Natural Environment RE1: Small Scale Renewable Energy RE2: Commercial Renewable Energy
Roads and Traffic	ST1: Accommodating Traffic Within the Parish
Community Services and Facilities	SB1: Supporting Local Business SB2: Work Space Development SB3: Change of Use SB4: Provision of Broadband and Mobile Telephone Services

## Section 5: Housing Policies

### 5.1 Introduction

- 72. The Parish of Ashperton lies in rolling countryside approximately five miles to the north west of the market town of Ledbury. The main settlement of the village is to the east of the Parish and is bisected by the A417 which is a major road between Ledbury and Leominster. It provides the amenities of a school, village hall, and church. There is no shop. The core of Ashperton village is where most new housing has been built since 2001.
- 73. In September 2015 102 homes were recorded throughout the Parish, 73% of the homes are grouped in the two main settlements; Ashperton Village and Woodend.
- 74. Away from the A417 all the settlements are connected by a network of minor roads. There is a regular but infrequent bus service to Ledbury and to Hereford with one bus-stop in Ashperton village. Private transport is therefore essential for many residents.
- 75. The population of the Parish remained static between 2001 and 2011 with a resident population of 226. This differs from the population for The County of Herefordshire where the population grew by 5%.
- 76. The Parish has a resident population that is older than the percentage for the County of Herefordshire as a whole with over 35% of the population being between 50 and 69.

**Table 5: Age Distribution (2011)**



77. Regarding housing in the Parish, in 2011 there were:

- 91 detached houses, representing 89% of the housing stock, which is over 4 times the average for England of 22%;
- 11 attached houses (including one house attached to the Village Hall);
- 0 terraced houses;
- 99 owner-occupied dwellings, i.e. 97% of the total number of households and well above the average for England of 64%;
- A very small number of privately rented; and
- 0 homes rented from registered housing providers or the local authority.

78. Housing prices, especially of large executive homes, in Ashperton village and other villages around the town of Ledbury tend to be at the top of the range compared with properties in Ledbury. The average sale price of properties between May 2103 and May 2016 was £350,000 [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk) compared to the national average for March 2016 of £214,811 <http://static.halifax.co.uk/assets/pdf/mortgages/pdf/March-2016-Halifax-House-Price-index.pdf>

79. The community has indicated that it considers the building of new houses is necessary to meet the needs through to 2031 and to sustain the long term well-being of Ashperton. Opinions have been expressed that the Parish needs more young families to create a better age balance, which in turn would require more homes that are affordable. When asked what type of housing was needed in the Parish, family homes and starter homes were selected as most needed. Such homes would address the needs of those seeking to downsize and those wishing to start a home in the area where typically they previously lived with their parents. Most residents would prefer to have limited housing development with the priority given to small sites of up to three houses and infilling within the proposed settlement boundary, thus maintaining the defining character of the village as described above. In the absence of sufficient suitable land within the present settlement boundary, building may be considered on suitable adjacent land. The strong response to the residents' questionnaires provided a representative view of the community with respect to housing matters, covering the number, sort, type, style and location. Each of these categories is described in more detail in the following sections.

## 5.2 Housing Numbers

80. The Herefordshire Core Strategy for 2011 to 2031 requires a minimum housing growth target of 14% for the Housing Market Area (HMA) of Ledbury, which encompasses the Parish of Ashperton. As an action arising from the Examination of the HC Core Strategy in February 2015, Herefordshire Council (HC) revised the method of calculation used to determine the actual numbers of dwellings required in the rural areas.

### *Accompanying Notes:*

- The baseline year of the Core Strategy is April 2011 and this is the date which has been used to calculate proportional growth figures. These statistics are based on the Local Property Gazetteer (April 2011). This calculation accurately reflects Parish boundaries.
- See the Ashperton Parish website [www.ashperton.org.uk](http://www.ashperton.org.uk)

**TABLE 6: HOUSING GROWTH**

Parish	Settlements	Number of Households in Parish	% growth in Local Plan Core Strategy	Minimum Number of New Houses required to 2031	Housing Completions 2011 - 2014	Housing commitments as at March 2020 <sup>2</sup>
Ashperton	Ashperton, Woodend	102	14	14	0	18

- 81. Therefore the total minimum number of houses that should be delivered between April 2015 and 2031 is 14 houses. Windfall development includes non-allocated development that may come forward both within and outside settlement boundaries.
- 82. The commitment of 18 dwellings in the table above includes the 10 dwellings to the north of Ashperton Village Hall but there is currently no indication as regards any start date on site.
- 83. It should be noted that in order to become a formalised element of the HC Local Plan, this Plan is required to demonstrate that the housing numbers can be delivered in the timescales described above, as prescribed by the HC Core Strategy.

**Supporting Statement**

This policy sets out the basis for housing development over the plan period that is considered the most appropriate given the level of need, compliance with the HC Core Strategy Policy RA1 including Ashperton HMA 14% growth requirement, site considerations and the aim to achieve an improved population structure.

**Community feedback from the Questionnaire Project (August 2014)**

A large majority of residents did not wish to see major new housing developments in the Parish because they feel that this would inevitably lead to a significant change in the character of Ashperton. The Residents' Survey Report 71% of respondents stated their view that new development should be developments of 3 properties or less.

Over 90% of the respondents believed that such development should take place gradually over the Core Strategy period.

<sup>2</sup> Dwellings with outline or full planning permission

**Policy H1: Number of New Houses**

A minimum of 14 dwellings in the Parish should be delivered in the NDP period of 2011 – 2031. Any development would be expected to be within or adjacent to the Ashperton Settlement Boundary as defined in the Ashperton Policies Map on page 36.

**5.3 Areas Considered for New Development**

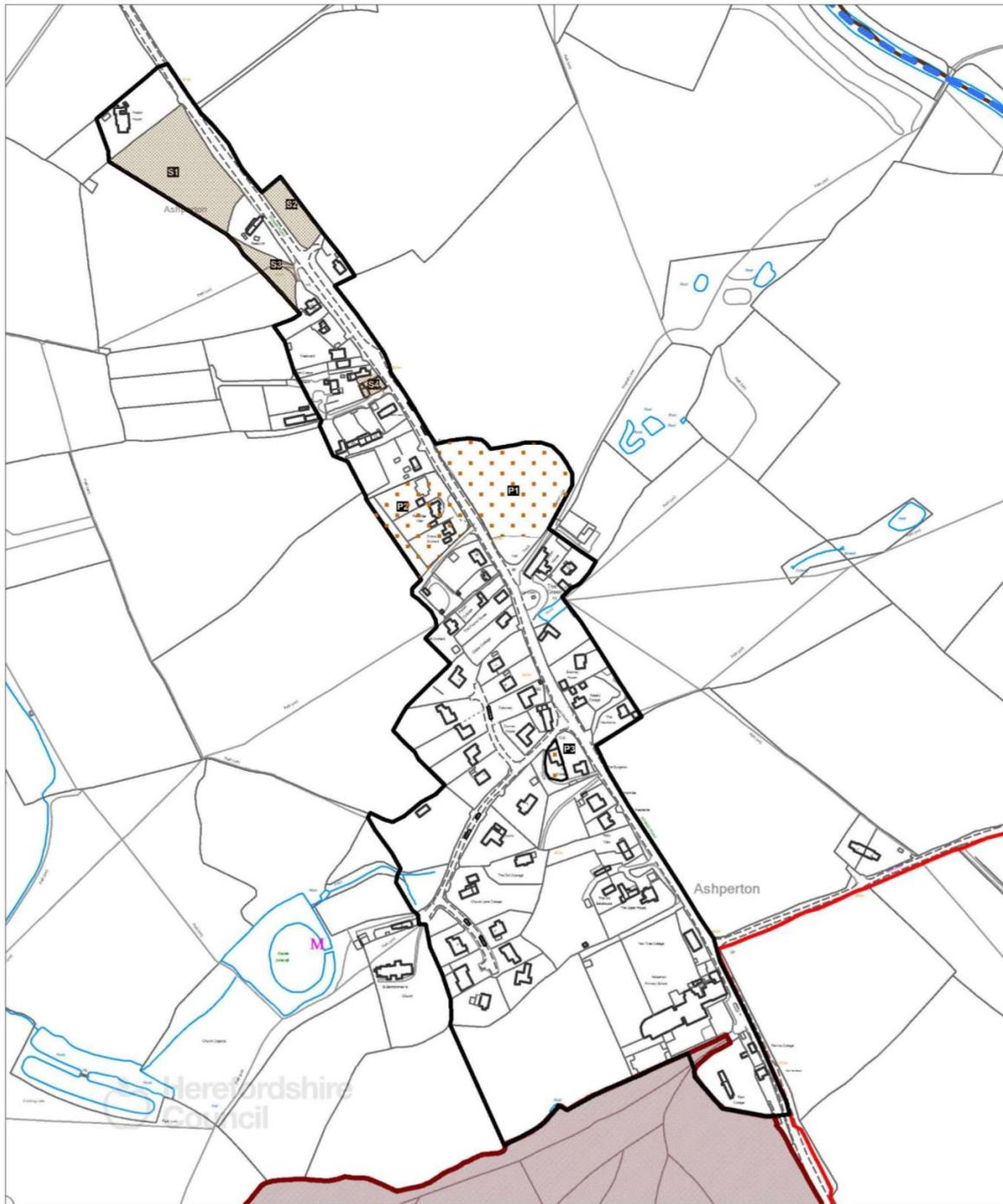
***HC Core Strategy Requirements***

- 84. In accordance with Policy RA1 of the HC Core Strategy residential development should be located within or adjacent to the main built up area(s) of the settlements. This will ensure that unnecessary isolated, non-characteristic and discordant dwellings do not arise which would adversely affect the character and setting of a settlement and its local environment.
- 85. In the case of Ashperton the one "settlement" considered in Policy RA1 of the HC Core Strategy is the core of Ashperton Village.

***Ashperton Village***

- 86. Ashperton village is therefore expected to be the main focus for housing development because it is the largest centre of population and provides the community amenities and local services. In April 2016 residents were questioned over the establishment of a settlement boundary around the village core. 70% of residents were supportive of the establishment of the proposed settlement boundary (see opposite).
- 87. Listed buildings and other heritage assets are spread throughout the village such that many potential development sites would lie within the setting of one or more heritage asset. Therefore careful consideration of the design and layout of such developments would be essential to ensure that any harm to the asset or its setting would be less than substantial and outweighed by the benefits of the proposal.





- M Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Ashperton Settlement Boundary
- Neighbourhood Area
- Proposed Housing Site
- Housing Commitment Sites
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
- Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal

## Ashperton Policies Map

Scale 1:4,500  
at A4 size



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NORTH

#### 5.4 Sites for Development Ashperton Village

88. Following a call for sites the steering group received 11 proposals to include sites for residential development in the NDP. This was in addition to the three sites within the village which then had extant planning permissions.

##### ***Sites with extant planning permission.***

###### ***P.1 Land to the north of the Village Hall***

89. Despite overwhelming local opposition this site was granted outline planning permission P152041/O for 10 dwellings on 24 August 2016. [UPDATE: An application for approval of reserved matters and matters reserved by condition was received by Herefordshire Council on 19 March 2019 but has not been determined as of March 2020.]
90. Since the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy advises that sites that have received planning permission should be included within the settlement boundary, the site is included within the settlement boundary as defined on the Ashperton Policies Map on page 36.

###### ***P.2 Land adjacent to 44 and 45/46 Ashperton Road***

91. This site was granted planning permission P132420/F for 3 dwellings. A new application P/164097/F was approved by the Council on 22 February 2017. This development is currently under construction. [UPDATE: As of March 2020 two of these properties have been completed and occupied and the third is nearing completion.]

###### ***P.3 The Cottage, Church Lane***

92. Planning permission for the conversion of an existing outbuilding to a live/work unit (Ref P153022) was granted on 30 December 2015. Planning permission P184375/F was granted for a revised scheme on 28 February 2019. As of March 2020 conversion works are underway.

###### ***P.4 "The Ditch" (44 Ashperton Road)***

93. Planning permission P182827/F for a dwelling adjacent to "The Ditch" (44 Ashperton Road) was granted on 15 October 2018. This site was not identified in the call for sites but has come forward since. An application has been submitted for a further dwelling behind "The Ditch" but has been refused.

##### ***Sites listed for inclusion in the NDP subsequently granted planning permission***

[Two sites originally listed for inclusion in the NDP have subsequently been granted planning permission.]

###### ***S.3 Land behind Milestone Cottage and Peasecroft***

94. Although described as behind the 2 dwellings this site is predominantly behind their gardens which run alongside the road. Although the garden of one of the approved dwellings directly adjoins that of Peasecroft, a Grade II listed building, the application plans were amended to mitigate harm to the setting of the listed building, following which the Council's Historic Building Officer concluded " - I think the level of harm this

*development would cause to the setting of Peascroft would be categorised as a low to moderate level of less than substantial harm - not a degree that would cause objection on building conservation grounds in this instance. If a condition was imposed to maintain the screening at a height of at least 1.5 metres this would mitigate some of the harm to the setting of Peascroft."*

#### *S.4 Land adjacent to 'The Farm'*

95. Planning permission P173678/F was granted for stabling on 19 July 2018 and planning permission Ref P173679/F was granted for a dwelling on 30 July 2018. Although located behind "The Farm" a Grade II listed building, both developments would be situated within the existing farmyard area and no objection was raised with regard to impact on the setting of "The Farm", which could be categorised as a cluster of dwellings and farm buildings.
96. There are therefore extant planning permissions for 15 new dwellings as of July 2019 plus 3 dwellings completed or nearing completion.

#### **Sites for inclusion in the NDP**

97. Of the sites put forward the following are included within the plan:

##### *S.1 Land between Peascroft and Hopton House*

98. This site is within the approved settlement boundary and lies to the west of the A417. It has a road frontage of some 100m and an area of around 0.4 hectares. The site is level grazing land with an existing field access direct onto the A417 within the 40 mph speed limit. The site is set behind a mature hedgerow. Although to the immediate north of Peascroft, a Grade II listed building, due to the extensive road frontage it is considered that the site could readily accommodate 4 dwellings, possibly in two stages, in a manner which would cause less than substantial harm to the setting of Peascroft. Subject to limited cutback of the hedgerow, visibility splays of 2.4m by 300m plus would be achievable in both directions.
99. Although there are indications of a clay pit/brickworks and area of fill may have existed on this land, a condition on any permission could require a land contamination survey and mitigation of any contamination as may be necessary.
100. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of fluvial flooding. It is also not at risk from other sources of flooding as might be identified in the Herefordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2019).
101. Any permission for development would require, by condition, approval of details of proposed foul and surface water drainage arrangements and their implementation prior to first occupation, so as to comply with Core Strategy Policies SD3 and SD4

##### *S.2 Land opposite Peasecroft*

102. This site comprises former garden land of Peasecroft, albeit that it is to the opposite side of the A417. Being outside of a 'built-up area' the site may therefore be classed as previously developed land, the re-use of which is encouraged by the National Planning Policy Framework. The site has a road frontage of some 70m and an area of some 0.2 hectares. There is an existing access to the A417 which currently serves 'The Old Police House'. Whilst the site is above the A417, there is a substantial belt of trees and hedge to the roadside, the retention of which would ensure that a scheme causing less than substantial harm to the setting of Peasecroft could be devised. That 'less than substantial harm' would still need to be weighed against the public benefits of the development, namely the provision of additional housing, in accordance with the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The site could accommodate up to 3 dwellings at a density of 16 dwellings per hectare. A good standard of highway visibility would be achievable in both directions from the existing access.
103. It has been suggested that there may be contamination present due to spraying of orchard apple trees, a condition on any permission could require a land contamination survey and

mitigation of any contamination as may be necessary.

104. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of fluvial flooding. It is also not at risk from other sources of flooding as might be identified in the Herefordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2019).
105. Any permission for development would require, by condition, approval of details of proposed foul and surface water drainage arrangements and their implementation prior to first occupation, so as to comply with Core Strategy Policies SD3 and SD4.
106. This plan therefore puts forward sites with a potential for a further 7 dwellings. Together with existing commitments and planning consents, this results in a total potential of 25 dwellings during the plan period.

### ***Sites put forward but not included in the NDP***

#### *N.1 Land to the south of 'The Old Police House*

107. This land was originally included in application P152041/O but the application was amended following opposition to the scheme due to the impact on the character and appearance of the village. The first stage consultation on the Plan revealed that the majority of respondents were wholeheartedly opposed to the development of this site and, therefore, it could not be included in a Plan going forward to a local referendum for approval.

#### *N.2 Land to the rear of Holmlea*

108. This land comprises backland development which was the subject of a previous application DCNE2006/0401/O for outline permission for two dwellings. This was refused by Herefordshire Council and dismissed on appeal Ref APP/W1850/A/06/2019811. Whilst circumstances, and national policy, have changed since 2006, one of the reasons for dismissal of the appeal was that highway visibility from the only means of access onto the A417 being severely restricted in both directions and way below that required by the Highway Authority. Without some resolution of that problem the site could not be supported in the Plan. A further outline application P180147/O for 2 dwellings was withdrawn. Subsequently a revised application P/184628/O was refused, again on highway safety grounds.

#### *N.3 & N.4 Sites in Heywood Lane*

109. Two sites for potential residential development were identified in Heywood Lane. These lie outside of the settlement boundary and their development would therefore be contrary to the Hereford Core Strategy with which the NDP must comply.

#### *N.5 & N.6*

110. These two sites relate to the conversion of accommodation currently used for bed and breakfast and the conversion of a former agricultural building at Woodend. As with the sites in Heywood Lane, these lie outside the settlement boundary.

#### *N.7 Church Lane*

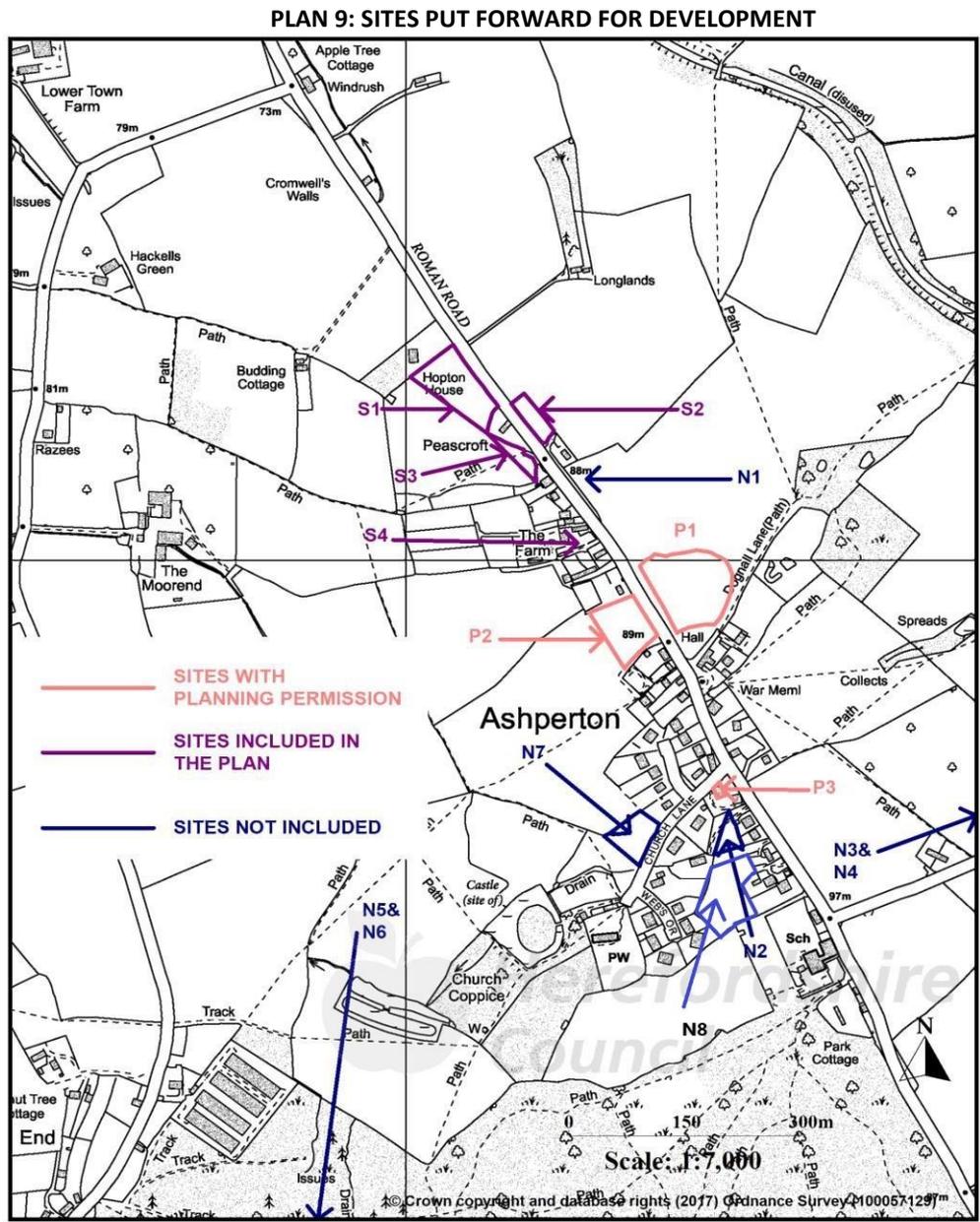
111. An extensive site to the north-west of Church Lane has been put forward as having potential for development. However much of the site is clearly outside the settlement boundary and part, towards the Church and the moat, would be constrained by archaeological considerations.
112. In addition, highway visibility limitations at the junction of Church Lane with the A417 would almost certainly make further development off Church Lane unacceptable on highway safety grounds. The site, has therefore, not been identified as a proposed development site within the plan. However, a small part of the site may be without archaeological constraints and lies within

the settlement boundary and could physically accommodate one or two dwellings.

*N.8 Land to the rear of The Old Bakehouse*

- 113. At a late stage consultants acting on behalf of the owners put forward land to the rear of The Old Bakehouse as a potential site for 9 dwellings. As with the nearby 'N.2' it is considered that it would not be possible to provide adequate highway visibility splays at any access onto the A417.

**PLEASE NOTE** The following plan shows the approximate location and boundaries of the sites. The plan should not be interpreted as definitive and the precise boundaries may change to take account of measures to avoid undue impact on neighbouring properties including listed buildings.



Note: Sites S.3 and S.4 benefit from planning permission granted in 2018  
N8 has been proposed after the Regulation 14 consultation

## 5.5 Housing Mix and Tenure

### Community feedback from the Questionnaire

92% of respondents considered that the new homes to be built should be sold at market prices. There was less support for other types of development

- Homes for registered housing providers let (16%)
- Sheltered homes to buy (26%)
- Homes with live-work potential (69%)
- Self-build homes, (42%)
- Homes with shared ownership (42%)
- Starter Homes (71%)
- Sheltered homes to rent. (19%)

The 2014 Residents' Survey confirmed a need for an increase in housing, in particular starter homes for young families.

### Policy H3: Housing Mix and Tenure

Any proposals for development on sites of more than 10 dwellings should take into account local housing needs and should normally provide a tenure mix of up to 40% of Affordable Homes, in order to comply with Core Strategy policies.

### Supporting Statements

- a. In the recent consultation residents have not expressed any need for affordable homes. The most recent Housing Needs Survey demonstrated a minimal demand. The 2008 Housing Needs Survey for Ashperton indicated 5 residents requiring affordable housing before 2013. Current actual demand should be taken into account when a planning application is under consideration.
- b. These policies seek to address the needs of those seeking to downsize and those wishing to start a home in the area where typically they previously lived with their parents.
- c. If the Parish is to thrive, the balance of age has to be redressed and the working age population has to grow again.
- d. Consultation has shown that residents want a range of housing which, whilst suiting the needs of an ageing population, also caters for the needs of young first-time buyers and families and a marked preference for increasing provision of starter homes.
- e. Delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes is a necessary part of growing sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities. In Ashperton a well-balanced population is essential for the ongoing viability of local facilities.

## 5.5 Type of Homes

### **Background**

114. Recent developments in and around the area of Ledbury provide an indication of the type and style of housing that is currently being offered. The most recent developments in Ashperton village have been undertaken or are proposed by private developers and have provided infill development mix of higher cost housing with farm/commercial buildings converted into family homes.
115. The National Planning Policy Framework divides affordable housing into three categories: social rented for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime; affordable rented housing subject to rent controls that require no more than 80% of the local market rent; and intermediate homes for sale and rent, provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels.
116. The Herefordshire Core Strategy requires the provision of 40% affordable homes in developments of more than 10 dwellings. It is unlikely that any such proposals will come forward during the plan period. It is therefore doubtful that there would be any provision of 'affordable' homes, as defined in the Framework within the settlement boundary. Nevertheless there is a clear need to provide suitable housing for first time buyers, including those who may be eligible for financial assistance via national schemes. Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy H2 enables provision for affordable housing outside of villages, in areas where there is generally a restraint on open market housing, so as to help meet affordable housing needs in rural areas in perpetuity.

#### **Community Feedback from the Questionnaire Project**

The community has identified a need for new housing to meet a broad range of requirements. When asked what type of housing should be built, the options most strongly supported were:

- Family homes (3-bedroom),
- Starter homes (2-bedroom),
- Living/working homes
- Executive homes

#### **Policy H4: Type of Housing**

Proposals for the following types of dwelling will be approved where they comply with other policies in the NDP. In particular the following types of dwelling will be encouraged.

- a) Family homes (three bedrooms or more) ;
- b) Starter homes (two bedrooms);
- c) Live/Work Units.

## Section 6: Design Policies

117. As the Framework emphasises, good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Policies within the plan set out design policies for development to ensure that any new development is of a high quality, is visually attractive and maintains the strong sense of place and character of Ashperton and its landscape setting.
118. Ashperton is a small village with a distinctive rural character that is highly valued by residents and visitors. Criteria to protect and maintain that character and the landscape setting of the village are essential to prevent ill-designed development which would cause substantial harm to that character.
119. The response to the community questionnaires overwhelmingly demonstrated the value placed on the character of Ashperton resulting from the gradual and piecemeal growth of the village with dwellings sharing a common vernacular of traditional building materials and basic design but with a variety of detailed design features. The grain of the village is characterised by a loose development along the A417 with no consistent building line or plot size.
120. Along the main road, with few exceptions, the dwellings are 1½ or 2 storeys in height and constructed in sandstone, brick or timber frame with brick or wattle and daub infill. For the most part roofs are gable ended and are covered in clay or slate tiles. Two residential properties are thatched. 10 houses in the core of the village are listed Grade II as being of special architectural interest. The majority of dwellings in the core of the village are detached, with a few properties attached to another of dissimilar appearance or, in one instance, to the Village Hall. ‘Mirror-image’ pairs of semi-detached houses do not feature in the core of Ashperton Village.
121. St Bartholomew’s Church and the site of Ashperton Castle are set away from and below the main road, down Church Lane off which run ‘The Ryders’ and ‘Web’s Orchard’, two 20th Century developments of 7 and 6 detached bungalows respectively. These properties, along with other recent development comprising 2 bungalows in Church Lane and two fronting the A417 together with a pair of detached 2 storey houses towards the northern end of the core village, are atypical of the well-established and valued character of the village and are more representative of suburban development.
122. Policies relating to the design and appearance of new housing development within the plan area should respond to and respect local character, including the variety of dwellings resulting from the gradual and organic growth of the village, and maintain the long established sense of place. The technical aspects of design should ensure that the designs reflect the local vernacular, are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting and that they function well in the long term, protecting the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and providing safe vehicular and pedestrian access.

Development should add to the overall quality of the environment. Paragraph 130 of the Framework (2018) states that planning permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides or supplementary planning document. The defining character of Ashperton is of a village that has developed gradually over many centuries with a distinctive local vernacular but with each property individual in its appearance. In order to preserve local distinctiveness it is essential that future development reinforces this character by avoiding development more suited to suburban settings or groups of substantially similar dwellings which would undermine the fundamental

character brought about by the variety of styles based around common themes.

123. Ashperton is poorly served by public transport and therefore residents are reliant on the private motor car to access employment and services with the result that there is inevitably a high level of car ownership which is expected to remain the case for the foreseeable future. There is therefore a need for adequate provision of car parking spaces for residents and visitors with safe access to the public highway.

#### **Policy D1: Design**

Proposals for all forms of new residential development should be of a design that reflects and respects local character and the distinctive rural character of Ashperton.

Development proposals shall contain specific design measures that:

- a) Are sympathetic to and respect the existing character and appearance of the village using an appropriate mixture of materials and architectural styles incorporating locally distinctive features, for example local sandstone and/or timber framing and typical red brickwork;
- b) Ensure that affordable housing is visually indistinguishable in character and appearance from market housing;
- c) Respect the scale, density, bulk and grain of existing development;
- d) Relate to existing properties in respect of height being no more than 2 storeys high unless specific conditions justify designs of up to 3 full storeys;
- e) Do not detract from the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties with regard to privacy and overlooking, overshadowing, outlook or noise and disturbance and where the amenity of future residential occupiers will not be compromised by existing agricultural or commercial activity;
- f) Preserve as far as practicable existing trees, hedgerows, ponds and other established landscape features and make provision for additional tree planting with locally native species; and
- g) Ensure that developments of more than two dwellings incorporate a variety of design features.

**Policy D2: Technical Design**

All proposals for development should comply with policies of the Herefordshire Core Strategy and statutory requirements and should:

- a) Provide safe and convenient access to the public highway;
- b) Provide adequate off-street parking, taking into account local car ownership levels, the paucity of public transport and the lack of on-street parking together with any site specific circumstances in line with Hereford's highway design guidelines;
- c) Include measures to maximise sustainability including the orientation of buildings, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision of energy and water conservation measures, cycle storage and recycling storage;
- d) Incorporate sustainable drainage systems taking into account the low permeability of local subsoils;
- e) Integrate new homes into the community, supporting a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment;
- f) Include measures to minimise levels of noise disturbance and air pollution arising from traffic on the public highway.

## Section 7: Sustainable Transport Policies

124. The A417 road runs diagonally through the Parish from south east to north west. It forms the boundary with the Parish of Munsley in the south east from Stony Brook to Heywood Lane. Leading off the A417 two short sections of lane head eastwards – Heywood Lane (C1156) for 0.8 km and Canon Frome Lane (C1154) for 0.4 km. To the west, Church Lane serves the more recent developments of The Ryders and Web’s Orchard; and Woodend Lane (C1151) leads through the settlement of Woodend and, after a t-junction with Little Tarrington Common Road, heads towards the A438. These Minor C roads and lanes serve farms and as such have to accommodate vehicles of all sizes.
125. A short section of the Hereford/Ledbury railway line passes through the south of the Parish. The nearest station is Ledbury, over 5 miles away, where services by West Midland Trains and First Great Western can be caught.

### Community feedback from the Questionnaire (August 2015)

In answering the questionnaire:

- 82% of respondents considered the current roads through the village as unsafe
- 64% considered that local pavements, footpaths and public rights of way are insufficiently well maintained
- The speed and density of traffic along the A417 were of particular concern as well as the narrowness of the pavement which leads from the school to 39 Ashperton Road.
- Respondents indicated support for speed cameras, speed reactive signs, extended lower speed limits and a 20mph zone outside the village school.

### Policy ST1: Accommodating Traffic Within the Parish

Measures will be promoted, in association with Herefordshire Council, to reduce the impact of traffic upon amenity and to address community concerns. The impact of development proposals on the existing environment should be comprehensively reviewed to ensure that they are sustainable in terms of infrastructure, road safety and the standards required for a peaceful and safe rural parish.

- a) Development proposals should ensure that there will be safe access onto the adjacent roads and adequate off street parking for residents and visitors;
- b) Development in the Parish does not create a significant increase in the volume of traffic on roads that do not have sufficient safe capacity;
- c) Residential and environmental amenity is not adversely affected by traffic;
- d) New and improved footpaths are provided, not just within new developments but with appropriate extensions to create safe pedestrian and cycle routes to the key locations in the Parish;
- e) Roads within new developments should be wide enough to allow vehicles (especially emergency vehicles) to pass each other without either using the footway; and
- f) New development should be designed to have positive benefits for the storm-water drainage systems in the adjoining roads.

***Supporting Statement***

Road traffic is a matter that greatly concerns most residents. All new developments should prioritise any possible transport measures which promote sustainable features of benefit to residents. There is one regular weekday bus to Ledbury with a one hour forty minutes turn around. There is no return bus from Bromyard. Access to the frequent regular bus service between Ledbury and Hereford is either by walking about 1.8 km via AP13 and AP6 or bicycling to a stop with racks: about 3.5 km to Poolend or about 5 km to Tarrington. Transport by private vehicle is a requirement for residents and should be recognised in any new development.

## Section 8: Supporting Local Business

### 8.1 Background

126. Figures from the 2011 census show that over a third of Parish residents over the age of 16 had degree level qualifications and 69% of working age residents (16-74) were employed. Most residents in employment had a profession or were working at senior level.
127. Information taken from the 2015 questionnaire would suggest that this percentage has fallen as a higher proportion of residents are now retired, and those who are in employment either currently work from home or commute outside of the Parish:
- Hereford: 17
  - Market Towns: 11
  - Village: 14
  - Outside Herefordshire (less than 25 miles): 9
  - Outside Herefordshire (more than 25 miles):13
  - Home: 29
  - None of the above: 48
128. Within the Parish, agriculture and horticulture is seen as the main commercial business, but residents work across a variety of sectors as indicated by the responses from the 2016 questionnaire:
- |                                            |                            |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ● Education: 5                             | ● Food Industry: 1         |
| ● Healthcare: 4                            | ● Police: 1                |
| ● Service Industry: 4                      | ● Property Management: 1   |
| ● Retail: 2                                | ● Engineering: 1           |
| ● Financial / Accountancy: 2               | ● Transport: 1             |
| ● Farming, Agriculture and Horticulture: 4 | ● Government: 1            |
| ● Office Work: 2                           | ● IT: 1                    |
| ● Consultancy: 2                           | ● Retired / Unanswered: 27 |

### 8.2 Business Potential

129. Ashperton Parish is predominately serviced by the A417 interlinked by narrow lanes. Despite the existence of this main road, there is inadequate infrastructure to support medium to large scale commercial development, and the public transport available for potential employees is almost non-existent. In addition, the open, rural feel of the Parish would make this kind of development inappropriate. As the results from the 2015 questionnaire show, 18% of residents would most like to encourage development that includes more work/live units and small workshops to support cottage industries and small businesses.
130. Tourism throughout Herefordshire is worth £469 million to the local economy (2011). Over 4.7

million visitors come to the county for short stays to take advantage of the outstanding countryside, rich heritage and culture. The delivery of services for this industry will be supported where a proposal capitalises on existing assets, develops sustainable walking, cycling or heritage routes, benefits the local community and the economy and is sensitive to the county's natural and built environmental qualities and heritage assets. The 2016 questionnaire indicated that 73% of respondents are in favour of encouraging tourism, leisure and crafts, whilst 50% wish to encourage more accommodation.

131. The Parish is located close to the market town of Ledbury and the Malvern Hills and has an opportunity to become a small additional base in which to stay, and from which to enjoy the many visual attractions within the Parish and beyond. Part of the disused Herefordshire Gloucestershire canal corridor which is the subject of a long term restoration project, runs through Ashperton Parish. The aim is to re-open the canal link between Hereford and the Severn at Gloucester, terminating in a canal basin in Hereford with some sections already having been restored. The recreation, tourism and economic potential of the project are recognised and the canal corridor will continue to receive protection from development through Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy E4.

#### **Community feedback from Questionnaire (May 2016)**

The Residents' Questionnaire Survey, asked residents to indicate from a list of 12 types of employment which ones should be encouraged locally. The five categories receiving strongest support were:

- Tourism, leisure and crafts: 73%
- Tourist Accommodation: 50%
- Pubs, restaurants, cafes: 46%
- Food and drink production: 39%
- Community Services: 31%

Feedback from the community indicates that there are factors which would assist and encourage both growth and the setting up of new ventures. The top five of these were:

- Faster broadband: 81%
- Better mobile phone coverage: 51%
- Better parking facilities: 47%
- Homes for rent or sale with separate workshop space: 35%
- Homes for rent or sale with integral workshop space: 32%

**Policy SB1: Supporting Local Business**

Development proposals, particularly those which sustain or increase local business activity and offer employment in the Parish, will be supported provided that:

- a) The development can be accommodated within the rural character of the Parish;
- b) The development does not adversely affect environmental amenity. This will include protecting biodiversity, in particular ensuring no significant effects upon any sites designated Special Areas of Conservation; the landscape, the water environment; and the historic environment;
- c) The road network, access and parking provisions should be sufficient for any increase in traffic;
- d) External storage and paraphernalia should be screened effectively;
- e) Noise and light pollution is minimal; and
- f) Proposals for home working should have no loss of residential amenity such as increased traffic generation, noise or light pollution.

**Supporting Statement**

- Residents would like to encourage the development of existing and new businesses, particularly for tourism and their related business opportunities as long as the requirements of Policy SB1 are complied with.
- Residents feel strongly that new employment and small business should be encouraged but not to the detriment of residential or environmental amenity.

**8.3 Work Space Development**

**Background**

132. Working from home, or in a work space adjacent to home, can promote economic, social and environmental sustainability in terms of:
- Better use of time by reducing travel time
  - Lower carbon emissions
  - Reduced travel costs
  - Opportunities to combine work and family activities

**Community feedback from the Questionnaire (August 2015)**

- 76% of respondents wish to encourage working from home subject to policy SB2.
- 71% of respondents would support the construction of outbuildings for small scale business purposes subject to policy SB2.

**Policy SB2: Work Space Development**

In order to deliver sustainable economic growth balanced with population growth the following will be supported:

- a) New development that includes linked residential and small scale employment space, including the provision of live/work units, as long as there is no adverse impact on the character of settlements and the amenity of nearby residents
- b) Proposals for home working, where there is no adverse effect on residential amenity, including traffic generation, noise or light pollution.

## 8.4 Change of Use

### **Background**

133. Ashperton Parish has very little in terms of existing employment sites and so the potential for change of use of redundant, non-agricultural buildings to residential is minimal. Furthermore, 49% of residents support the protection of existing employment sites where possible from change of use.

### **Community feedback from the Questionnaire**

- 78% of residents would support a change of use from residential to a mixed use of residential and some other small scale specific use subject to policy SB2.
- 62% of residents would support proposals for change of use of redundant commercial premises to residential use subject to policy SB3.

### **Policy SB3: Change of use of existing employment sites**

Proposals for change of use of existing employment sites/buildings will be supported, provided that:

- a) The re-use will strengthen the local economy or
- b) It can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer economically viable i.e. that the site has been marketed at a reasonable price for at least one year for that, or any other suitable employment or service/trade use away from business use; and
- c) The change of use can be achieved in compliance with all other policies in this Plan

### **Supporting Statement**

This policy seeks to ensure that the building stock is retained with appropriate re-use in such a way as to support and strengthen the local economy and in sympathy with the character of the Parish.

## 8.5 Provision of Broadband and Mobile Phone Services

### *Background*

134. The availability of faster broadband and improved mobile phone coverage in the Parish was recognised as highly desirable by the residents with 81% wanting faster broadband and 69% wanting better mobile phone coverage.
135. 'Fibre to the cabinet' is now available in the core of the village via the new cabinet opposite the school. Further facilities will be needed to provide fast broadband to those parts of the Parish too distant from that cabinet.

### **Policy SB4: Provision of Broadband and Mobile Telephone Services**

Proposals to enhance the present broadband and mobile telephone equipment infrastructure will be supported through:

The introduction of appropriate super-fast broadband and mobile telephone equipment that will provide high quality internet connectivity for business and residential users; and the requirement for new development proposals to include provision for the connection to high speed broadband by means of suitable ducting within the development site, linked to the local/national network.

### **Supporting Statement**

To allow local businesses to operate efficiently, access to the best communication systems should be made available.

## Section 9: Environmental Policies

136. The overall objective is to conserve and enhance the Ashperton landscape and all component parts both natural and cultural.

### 9.1 Landscape character, views and the wider environment

137. The rural landscape character is strong, giving a sense of place and contributing towards Herefordshire's distinctiveness. Views of local countryside and of hills further afield are much cherished by local people.

#### Community feedback from the Questionnaire

- 84% of respondents strongly agree that unspoilt countryside is important to them.
- 95% of respondents think that future development should be in keeping with the existing landscape and setting.

#### Policy E1: Landscape

Housing development will be supported in locations set out in the NDP where:

- a) Sites must exhibit the capacity to absorb building without serious harm to landscape character or notable views as described in section 2.5.
- b) All new developments should seek to enhance the local landscape character and visual amenity.
- c) All proposers of new development will be required to consult with the Parish Council as well as Herefordshire Council to demonstrate, with reference to the County Landscape Character Assessment, how their proposals respect and accord local character.
- d) In order to support landscape character and local wildlife, landscape planting schemes in new developments would be expected to predominantly feature locally native species.

### 9.2 Tranquillity

138. The busy A-road brings significant noise and light pollution to the central corridor of the village. The remainder of the land is quiet and peaceful countryside. Light pollution is minimal, thanks to no street lighting and sensitive, neighbourly private lighting. This means residents benefit from dark night skies. Tranquillity improves people's quality of life and is an attractive feature of a rural Parish such as this but it is easily lost.

#### Community feedback from the Questionnaire

- 'Peace, quiet, a rural feel and tranquillity' are often highlighted. Together they are the top (38%) most liked quality of the Parish.
- 89% of respondents wanted the NDP to protect dark night skies.

**Policy E2: Tranquillity**

The importance of tranquillity will be respected throughout the Parish as a priority so far as possible within the planning regime. In particular:

- a) All applications should be accompanied by external lighting proposals and, in general, street lighting will not be supported;
- b) Proposed new private outside lighting will be subject to rigorous scrutiny to ensure it is sensitive, neighbourly and protects our dark night skies.

**9.3 Cultural Heritage**

139. The Parish has many cultural heritage assets including archaeology, historic buildings and traditional land uses. These assets add to the rich landscape and provide a record of Ashperton’s history. Many assets are of national importance and have legal protection. Section 16 of the Framework (2018) sets out general measures to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

**Community feedback from the Questionnaire**

- 77% of respondents voted for enhanced protection of historic features.
- The Church, the moat, the village green and listed buildings are all repeatedly highlighted as important heritage assets.

**Policy E3: Cultural Heritage**

Development proposals affecting heritage assets and the wider historic environment should seek to protect our cultural heritage. In particular, building should not take place on significant archaeological features except in exceptional circumstances. Any such development should be subject to a watching brief by the county archaeology service.

**9.4 Wildlife and the natural environment**

140. Ashperton Parish supports many important habitats and species many of which are legally protected. These contribute positively towards our local landscape and public wellbeing. All public bodies, including Parish Councils, have a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of policy or decision making.

**Community feedback from the Questionnaire**

- 77% of respondents voted for protection of local wildlife.
- The ‘local woods’ and ‘the fields either side of the village hall’ are repeatedly highlighted as important.

#### **Policy E4: Wildlife and the Natural Environment**

Development will only be supported where it has a nil or positive effect on the Parish's habitats and species. In particular:

- a) All planning applications for new dwellings and for non-residential development should be supported, before determination, by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in accordance with CIEEM guidelines.
- b) Any unavoidable damage will require mitigation measures within the Parish.
- c) Development on the Local Wildlife Sites identified in the Parish Policies Map on page 29 and Priority Habitats listed in Table 2 on page 21 will not be supported.

### **9.5 Flooding and water management**

#### **Community feedback from the Questionnaire**

- 'Areas at risk of flooding' are highlighted just once in the questionnaire feedback as a location where development should not occur.

141. Environment Agency mapping shows that parts of the Parish are potentially affected by flooding.

142. The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy contains comprehensive policies on flooding and waste management. Any development proposals would be required to comply with those policies.

#### **Supporting Information available on the Parish Council website [www.ashperton.org.uk](http://www.ashperton.org.uk)**

1: Landscape Character Types.

2: Historic Environment Record (cultural heritage).

3: Listed buildings/structures.

4: Priority habitats.

5: HBRC species data.

## Section 10: Renewable Energy Generation

143. Renewable energy makes a fundamental contribution to sustainability. The NPPF (2018) explains that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and help shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience, encourage the re-use of existing resources and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
144. Wherever practicable, all new development should include measures to provide on-site electricity generation and solar or ground source heating for internal consumption. Proposals for the installation of renewable energy equipment on existing, non-designated, and new domestic premises will be supported provided that the equipment is designed and sited so as to minimise its effect on visual amenity and residential amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties.
145. Proposals to generate electricity from renewable or low carbon sources on a commercial scale will be supported where there is no undue harm to natural, historic or residential amenity.
146. In response to consultation on commercial scale, land based, solar electricity generation, the overwhelming response was that sensitive areas should be protected, particularly areas around the Village Green, Church, Moat and areas visible from the A417 and public rights of way.
147. Particular attention would need to be paid to the visual and landscape impacts of any proposal as well as the residential amenity of local residents with particular regard to outlook.
148. However, in the case of commercial wind power proposals, permission should only be granted on sites identified in the Neighbourhood Plan or other Development Plan Document as suitable for wind energy generation and it can be demonstrated that, following consultation with local residents, identified planning impacts have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has the backing of the local community. Consultation has indicated that the majority of the local respondents were opposed to commercial scale wind turbines in the NDP area, citing that larger turbines would be visually intrusive and would dominate the landscape, given the small scale of the Parish. No area can, therefore, be designated as suitable for commercial wind energy generation and proposals would not have the backing of the local community.

### **Policy RE1: Small scale renewable energy**

Proposals to deliver renewable and low carbon energy for domestic or in-house electricity generation or heating will be supported provided that:

- a) Equipment is designed and sited so as to minimise the effects on visual amenity and residential amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties; and
- b) The proposal does not affect the character, appearance or setting of any heritage asset, including listed buildings.

**Policy RE2: Commercial renewable energy**

Proposals for commercial scale wind turbines of over 30m hub height or over 50kW output will not be supported due to the adverse effect on character of the sensitive local landscape

Proposals for other commercial renewable energy schemes, where electricity or heat would be exported, will be supported provided that:

- a) The proposal does not adversely affect any designated heritage or natural asset;
- b) The proposal does not unacceptably affect the residential amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in respect of noise and disturbance, outlook or air or water pollution;
- c) The proposal does not cause significant harm in terms of visual amenity or harm to the character of the landscape; and
- d) The proposal can be connected to the electricity infrastructure or to a local specific end user of heat in an efficient and environmentally acceptable manner.

## **Section 11: Plan Implementation and Monitoring**

149. Ashperton Parish Council will implement the Neighbourhood Development Plan by examining Planning Applications in accordance with National Policy, the guidelines laid down by Herefordshire Council and the Herefordshire Council Core Strategy, together with the policies of the plan itself.
150. The Plan will form the basis for Ashperton Parish Council to respond to planning applications, and for using any funding that may come to it through planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) if a scheme for the CIL is available.
151. Ashperton Parish Council will be guided by the parishioners, and seek their input and involvement in the Plan ensuring a successful implementation. Cooperation from Herefordshire Council, developers and other agencies with relevant members of the Parish will shape the projects for the future; always with the Parish involvement driven by Ashperton Parish Council.

### ***Regular review of the plan***

152. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is not a rigid programme governing the future development of Ashperton but a living document that will be reviewed on a regular basis and at least every three years. The plan will be implemented over the plan period and will provide a blueprint in direction for sustainable change and flexibility, meeting the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Consultation with the Community as circumstances change will be crucial to ensure that the valued characteristics of the Parish are safeguarded.