



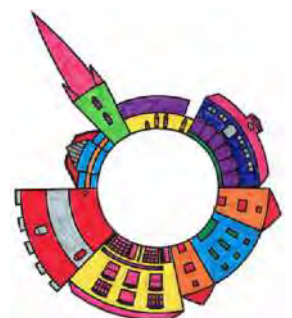
Ross-on-Wye

Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 - 2032

Consultation Draft
November 2018



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LOTTERY FUNDED





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Finding your way through this plan!

This plan is key to the future of Ross-on-Wye. Yet, for some, its content and format (and its length) will be unfamiliar, perhaps off-putting. This brief guide aims to help with that because it is so important that as many people as possible read it and comment.

There are two main reasons for the length and style of this draft plan. First, Ross is a big town with lots happening and local people raised lots of different issues for the plan to address. Secondly, for the plan to gain its full legal status, there are a number of things it must contain and some, especially the policies, have to be written in formal planning language.

So here is what we hope is a useful guide.

- The **Introduction** (p. 8-23) sets the scene about Neighbourhood Plans generally but mostly about this plan in particular, with lots of basic facts and figures.
- The **Vision** (p.24-25) (every Neighbourhood Plan must have one) is very important. It describes, in a very accessible way, what Ross-on-Wye could be like in 2031 (the end of the plan period) if the plan is as successful as hoped.
- The five main **Objectives** are listed on page 26. These are also required legally because they say what the plan hopes to achieve; later sections detail how that will be done.
- The **Development Strategy and Sites** section (p.76-94) is a summary of how the key objectives will be achieved, especially what new developments will happen where.

Perhaps the key things to read in full from the above are the Vision and the Development Strategy (Objectives appear again later).

Now the really key detail – the **Policies** (p.27-75). They are in five overall sections, related to the five Objectives mentioned above.

Each policy has a big heading like this:

Planning Policy EN1: Ross Design Policy

For each policy there is one or more detailed **objectives**, some **explanation** of the why and what of the policy, then the **policy** itself in the coloured boxes (the real planning language bits).

The policies are the most important part of the Neighbourhood Plan because, once the plan is fully agreed, it will then be Herefordshire Council planning officers who must take account of it in deciding if future planning applications satisfy (or not) the policies in the plan. The policies must be right for Ross and also strong enough to prevent inappropriate developments getting through (hence the formal language).

We suggest a quick skip through all the policies, then come back to look in detail at those that are of most interest to you.

The final section, starting on page 95, lists a medley of practical **Projects** that will be set in motion to support what is in all the earlier sections. The projects are not a formal, legal part of the Neighbourhood Plan but they can often be crucial to making it really effective.

Finally, you will notice lots of mentions of supporting **Evidence**. That is key to justifying the policies and is available on the Ross Town Council website at: <http://www.rosstcherefordshire.gov.uk/ndp.php>



Foreword

Where to start? The obvious response would be ‘at the beginning’ but the origins of Ross are unclear. Earliest evidence of settlement is at Chase Wood Camp during the Bronze and Iron ages when the population may have reached about 1,400 – a figure that the later town was not to reach again until some time in the 18th century. The Romans settled at Ariconium, in Weston-under-Penyard, about 50 BC where they established a significant iron smelting and smithing centre – a trade that was to continue in Ross into the 20th century (the eagle-eyed can still see castings from local foundries in use around the town).

One of the iron businesses was that of the Blake Brothers who had a foundry in The Crofts making items which were sold from their hardware store on the corner of Station Street and Broad Street. In 1825 Thomas Blake was born above that shop; he became a wealthy ‘self-made’ man who continued to live and work in Ross. Although a successful businessman he was generous with his time; serving as Mayor of Ross and an MP. Arguably the town’s biggest benefactor, Blake continued and eclipsed in the 19th Century what his more famous predecessor, John Kyrle, had started in the 17th Century; bringing about many changes, a safe and secure water supply being perhaps the most notable. In his lifetime the coming of the railways had a big impact on the town — bricks and other non-local materials fuelled steady growth. By 1877 Littlebury’s Directory and Gazetteer of Herefordshire recorded that “*There is no special staple trade or manufacture, though formerly it was one of the seats of the iron trade. A brisk business is maintained with the Forest of Dean and neighbouring villages.*” That importance as a business centre was not new – but received new impetus from the improved transport links. The town’s strategic position on the mail route from London to the Irish Sea port at Goodwick (Fishguard) had already stood it in good stead for what became the tourist industry that grew from the establishment of the Wye Tour in 1745 when the Reverend John Egerton, then Rector of Ross, started organised boat trips down the River Wye to admire what was to be come known as “the picturesque”.

The livestock trading and tourist industries no longer provide the volume of trade that they once did but Ross developed new trades through the twentieth century and although, in common with many market towns, it lost its rail connections it gained an enviable position on the motorway network. The polymer products industry has had its ebb and flow but continues to be a substantial element of the local economy; accessibility has encouraged warehousing and establishment of national or regional bases for other businesses.

The constant, however, through all these changes has been the River Wye; perhaps the reason that Ross-on-Wye was in 2016 voted as the nation’s favourite market town. The continuing relaxed and gentle attractiveness of Ross in its gateway setting and its unique status as the only Town in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has fuelled its growth as a retirement and commuting centre.

Against that background, the Town Council set the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group the challenge of ensuring that Ross would continue to be a favourite tourist destination but also enable development to ensure that our locally born young people have access to affordable housing, employment for a wide range of skills and a high quality of life within the town. I believe that, within the framework of the Local Plan developed by Herefordshire Council to address government requirements and constraints, that group has done a good job of treading the fine line between development & conservation, of understanding the wishes of the Ross community, and of translating those into a plan for the town’s development over the next decade or so. However, the verdict is yours. Please make your comments on the proposals in the following pages to the Town Council by whichever means suits best; they will all be taken into account in preparing the final Neighbourhood Development Plan for Ross-on-Wye.

Mayor of Ross-on-Wye.



Thank you

Ross-on-Wye Town Council would like to thank all those people, organisations and groups who have contributed to the development of the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Particular thanks are due to the volunteer members of the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group and Working Group.

Particular acknowledgement must be made of the contributions made by the following Steering Group members:

Melvin Reynolds, who unstintingly gave of his time to chair the Steering Group. His wholehearted commitment, energy and dogged determination kept the process on track. His belief in the Plan will ensure that Ross-on-Wye sees sympathetic and sustainable development inkeeping with the natural environment for many years to come.

Jeanette Draper, who, alongside her multiple other practical and cultural interests in the local community, tirelessly contributed to many aspects of the Plan until her untimely death in April 2018.

Helen Saunders, who has always been willing to work on aspects of the Plan that have not been in the mainstream but which have resulted in much more more balanced content.

Ian Murray for uncomplainingly keeping the website files and background information updated.

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

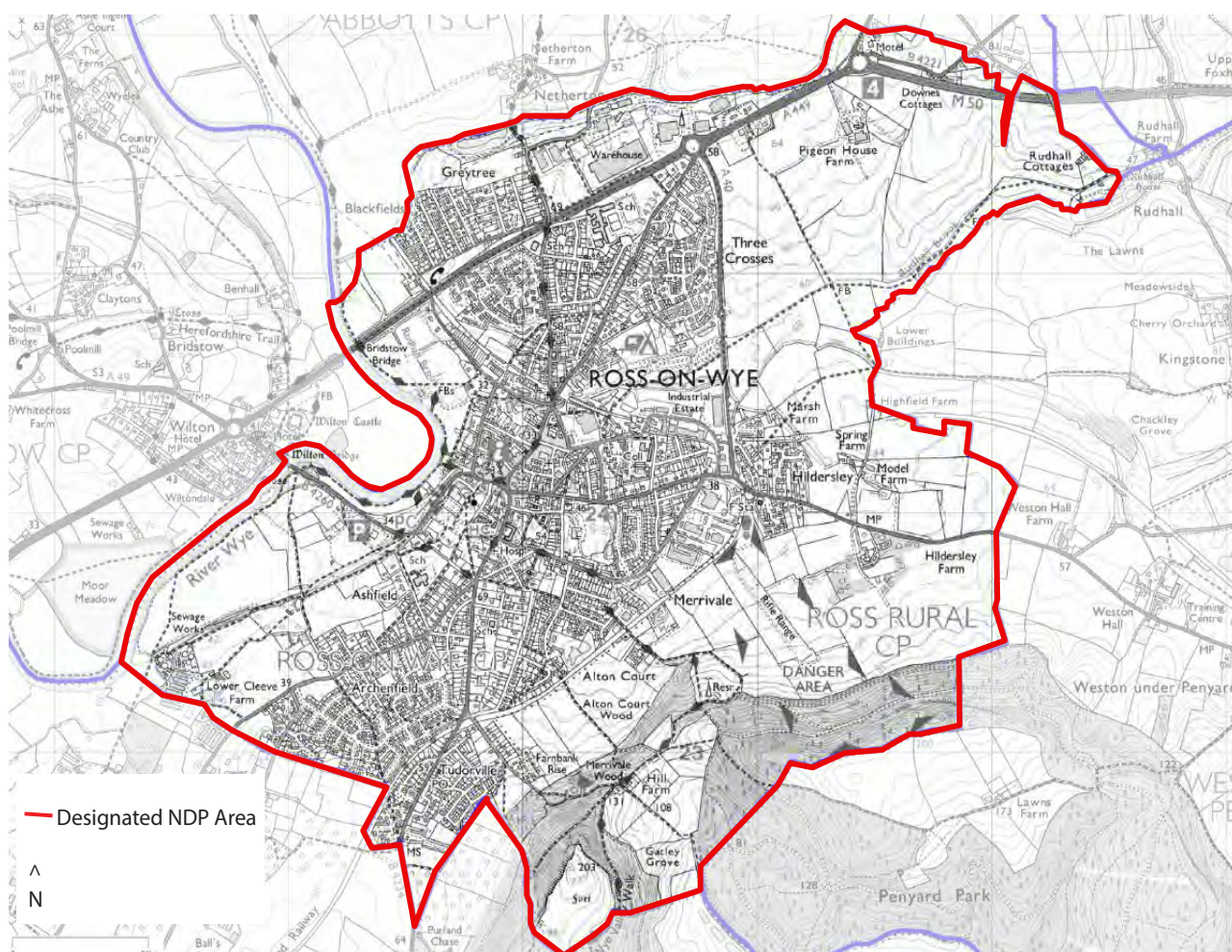
1.1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development and promote better land use in their community by preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans. Such Plans would establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in legally designated areas.

1.1.2 The designated neighbourhood area for this plan is that covered by Ross-on-Wye

Town Council and therefore covers not only the built area of the town but also some of the town's surrounding landscape. The legislation requires a series of stages and Regulations to be followed; these are mentioned below.

1.1.3 The Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan (hereinafter the Plan) is based on the views of our local residents, businesses, services and community groups, and on the evidence from new

Figure 1: Map of Ross-on-Wye Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area





surveys and pre-existing statistical information about the designated area. Though the Plan is a formal document, it is hoped that the enthusiasm and commitment of local people to make Ross-on-Wye an even better place shows through clearly.

1.1.4 This is the first Draft of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is being made available for the first formal consultation stage - Regulation 14 - to local people and many others, including those on a list of statutory consultees agreed with Herefordshire Council. Subject to comments received and amendments made, the final version will be examined by an appointed, independent Examiner. Again subject to any changes, if the Examiner recommends that the Plan (or a revised version) can go to referendum (as per Regulation 16). If the referendum demonstrates community support, the Plan is then 'made', giving it the force of law and becoming a part of Herefordshire Council's Statutory Development Plan. It will then form a material consideration in the determination of subsequent planning applications in Ross-on-Wye.



1.1.5 Once made, the Plan will follow the same timeframe as that of the Herefordshire Local Plan, from 2011-2031. Changes to the context and the Local Plan are likely to take place within that period so Ross-on-Wye Town Council, as the Neighbourhood Plan Authority, will monitor and if necessary amend the Plan over the plan period.



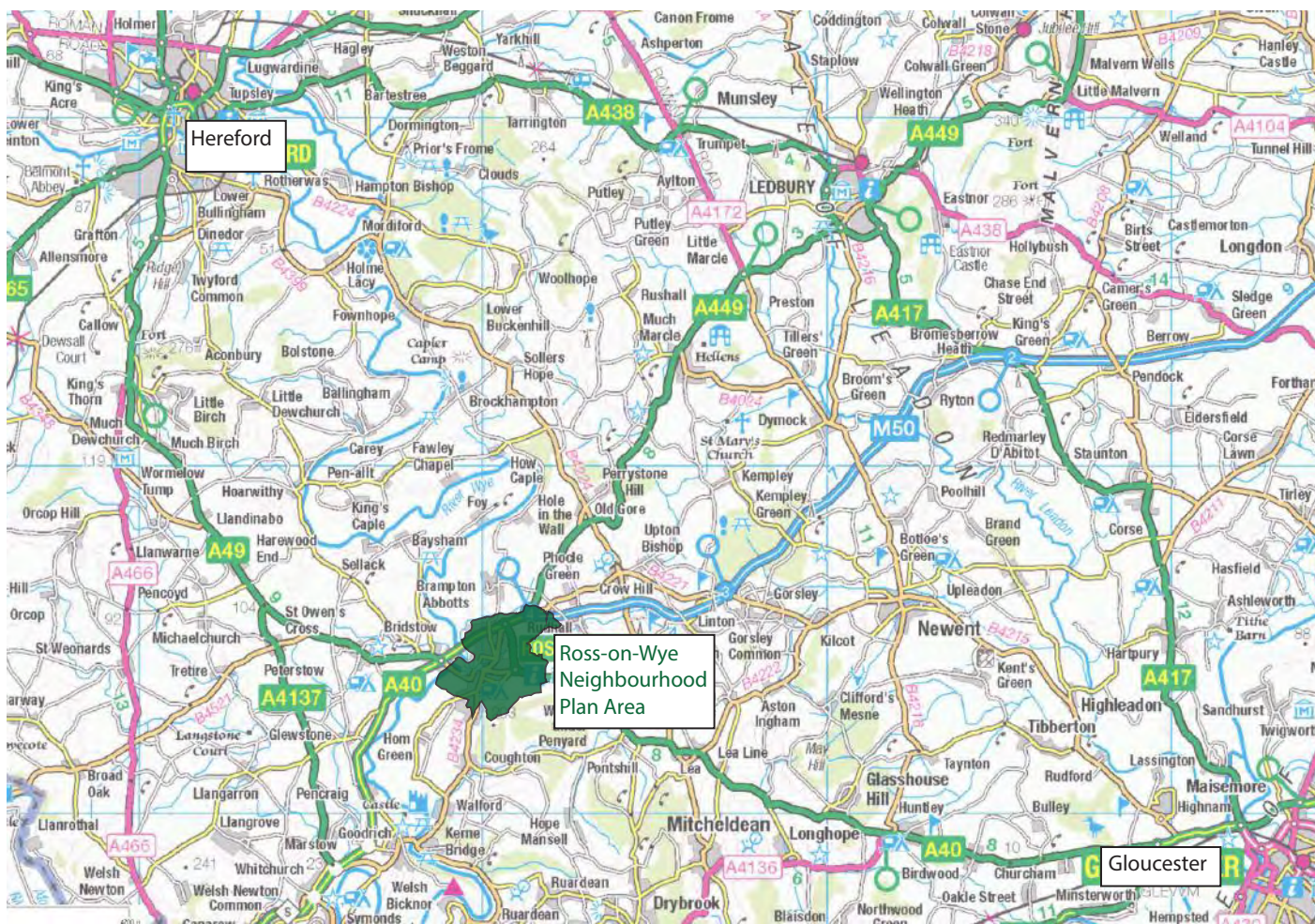


1.2 Ross-on-Wye: A Summary Description

1.2.1 Ross-on-Wye is located approximately 16 miles south of Hereford. It is around 12 miles north east of Monmouth and 17 miles west of Gloucester. It is located on the A40 which runs through Gloucester to Abergavenny and beyond. The town also has good road links to Birmingham and the Midlands via the M50 motorway (known as the 'Ross-on-Wye spur' from the M5) and to South Wales via the A40/A449 dual carriageway.

1.2.2 Ross-on-Wye – the full title given to it in 1931 but often shortened hereafter to Ross - is a very attractive town with buildings of many periods: medieval, Georgian, Victorian, inter-war, post-war and post millennium. It has been a market town since 1138, acting as a focus for the mainly agricultural areas around, although, as for many similar towns, that form of market role has declined significantly in recent years (there is still, however, an agricultural/livestock market on the edge

Figure 2: Ross-on-Wye Location Map



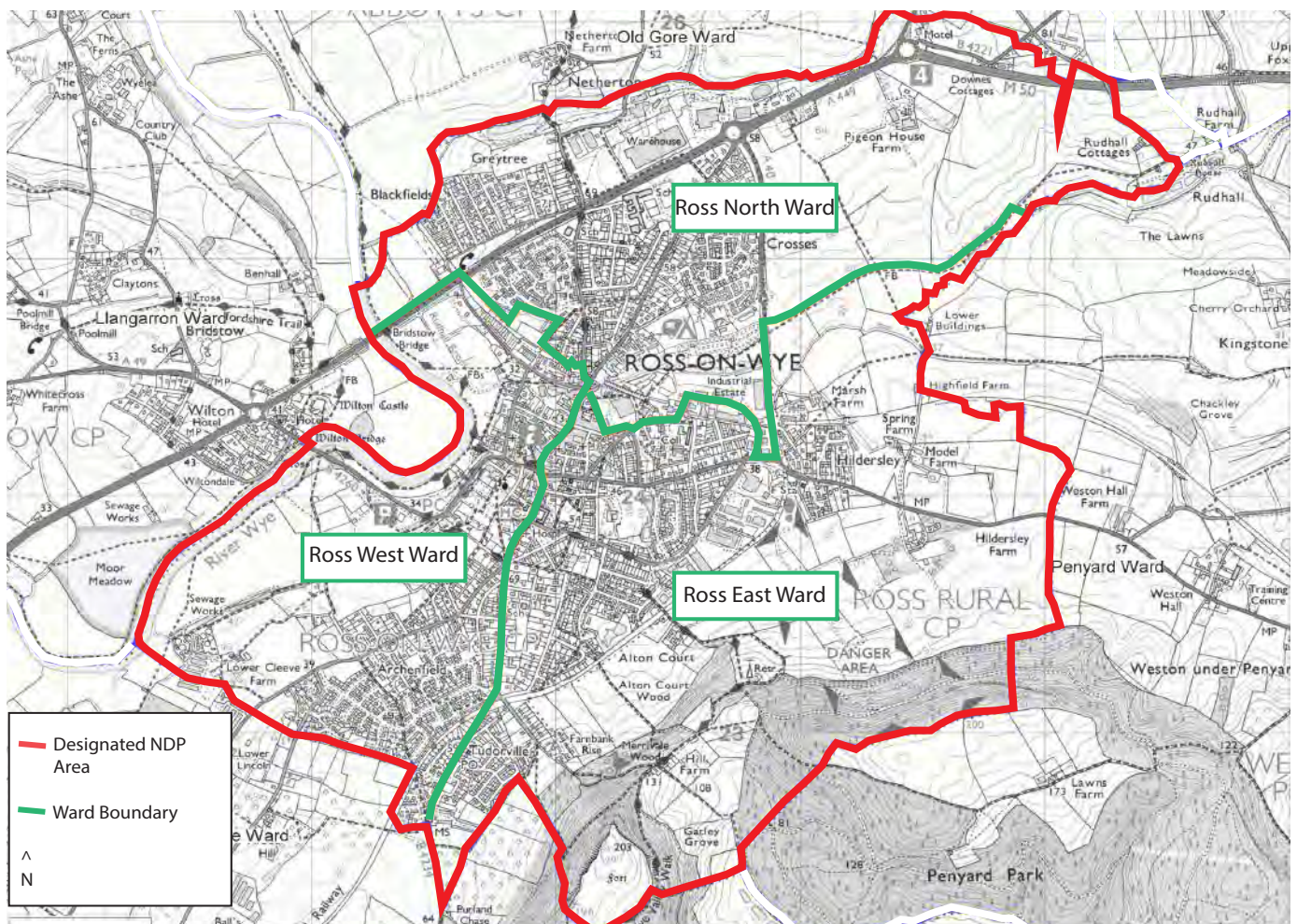


of the town). The town is nevertheless a service centre for a population estimated to be around 26,000 people.

that the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan is also a material consideration for all proposals within the AONB area and those just outside that may have an impact on it.

1.2.3 Ross-on-Wye is set in a very attractive landscape, most of which is in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Much of the Ross Neighbourhood Plan area is within the AONB. For the most part Ross lies within the “South Herefordshire and Over Severn” National Character Area. In the south, it includes the northern fringe of the Forest of Dean and Lower Wye Character Area. It is important to note

Figure 3: Ross-on-Wye Town and Wards Map





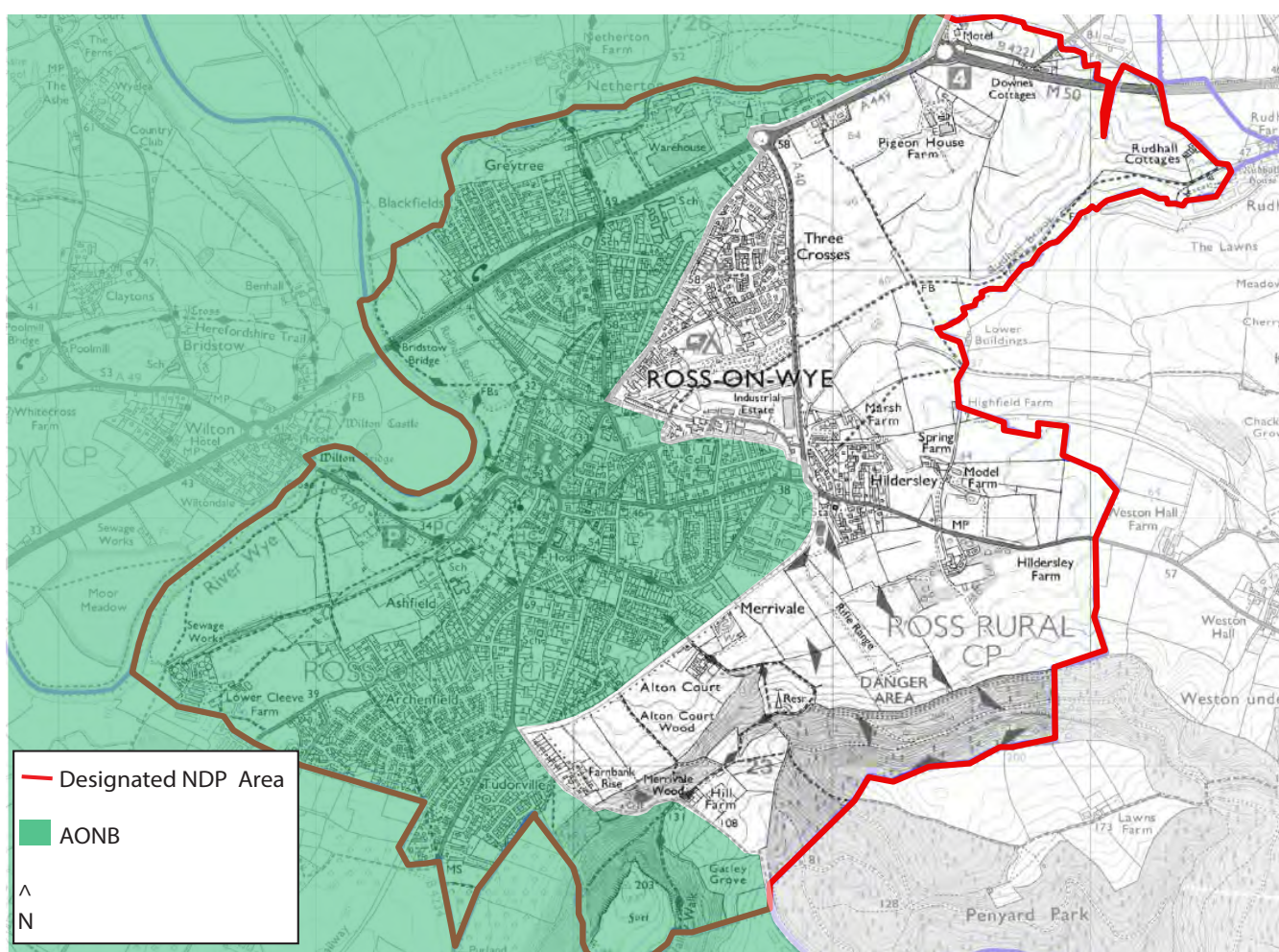
1.2.4 Parts of the Ross Neighbourhood Plan area are liable to flooding. This affects in particular much of the Wye river valley itself (just to the north of the town centre), parts of the lower town centre, the Broadmeadows site and out towards and beyond the A40. Although remedial measures have been put into place over the last ten years to prevent and manage flooding; the risk still has implications for future development and has been taken account of in this plan.

1.2.5 The town is located on a bluff above a bend in the river Wye, in the River Wye Special Area of Conservation. Its location on that river was important historically

in shaping its market town role. These factors, and the town's location on the river Wye and close to nationally valued areas such as the Forest of Dean, combine to make Ross-on-Wye a key centre for short term and longer term visitors to the area. Ross-on-Wye is in fact accepted to be the birthplace of what we now call tourism. In 1745, the town's rector, Dr. Egerton, started taking friends on river trips and, by 1808, there were eight boats offering regular excursions for the Wye Valley Tour.

1.2.6 As well as visitors, from nearby and further afield, seeing Ross-on-Wye as a centre for wider exploration, the town itself is also noted for its picturesque buildings –

Figure 4: Ross-on-Wye within the AONB





most notably the Market House – for its independent shops and, more recently, its cafes and restaurants. Those exploring the town often visit The Prospect, a garden above St. Mary’s church laid out on land gifted by the town’s most famous resident, John Kyrle – the ‘Man of Ross’. The garden’s name betrays its major value; it offers remarkable views of the Wye Valley and areas well beyond. As a follow-up to this, Thomas Blake, a 19th century benefactor, finally purchased The Prospect for the town and also funded many other public improvement works such as restoring the churchyard steps and providing a new water supply from his land at Alton Court.

1.2.7 Much of the centre of Ross-on-Wye is in a Conservation Area (though some of the Conservation Area lies outside the designated area of the Neighbourhood Plan). There are 3 Grade 1 Listed Buildings, 8 Grade 2* and 143 Grade 2.

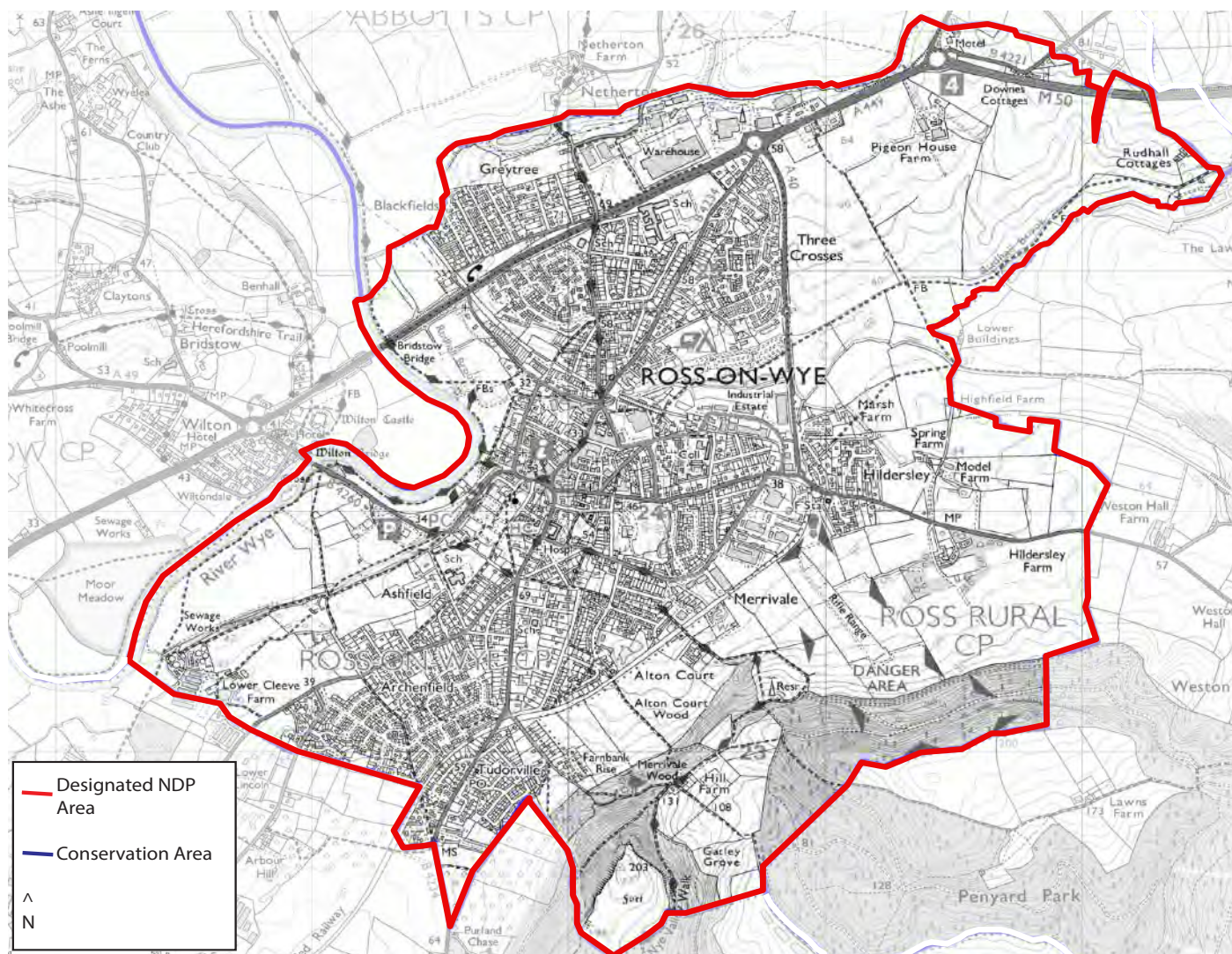
1.2.8 The town is very active culturally and socially, with many varied groups and organisations and there are annual town-wide events such as the Carnival (held in August). It is also active in sporting terms, some of this activity relating directly to the River Wye, for example the annual regatta.

Figure 5: Ross-on-Wye Environmental Designations (excluding AONB)





Figure 6: Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area







1.2.9 Facts and Figures

1.2.10 The following figures below are drawn from the 2011 census. Please note that a number of houses have been built since the census, so the population will have increased and there may have been changes to some of the percentages listed below.

- Ross-on-Wye is part of the parliamentary constituency of Hereford and South Herefordshire. For Herefordshire Council, there are three political wards – North, West and East – each with its own councillor. The Town Council comprises six members elected by each of the three wards. The population is just over 11,000 with almost 5,000 households, i.e. an average household size of 2.2. The age structure reflects fairly closely that of Herefordshire as a whole, although with slightly fewer people in the 5-14 age group and slightly more in the 75+ age groups. The population is overwhelmingly white British (c. 94%).
- Of the c.5,000 households, the census showed that c.35% lived in detached houses, c.23% in semi-detached, c.20% in terraced and c.22% in flats. In terms of tenure c.68% of households are owner occupiers, the remainder renting. The low average household size and the slightly higher percentage of older people no doubt links to a high percentage of households having more rooms than 'required' (c. 74%). Over 70% of households have access to one or two cars.
- Of the 7,500 or so residents aged 16-74 years, c.70% were economically active in 2011 (c.40% full-time), over

half of the other 30% were retired, students, carers or permanently sick/disabled. The most common forms of employment were in distribution, transport, accommodation and food (c.30%), public administration, education and health (c.25%), production (c.14%) and business service activities (c.10%). Roughly equal numbers were employed in professional, sales, administrative and operative roles.

- Of those who travelled to work, c.67% travelled by car and c.22% walked. Only 2% used public transport. Only 3.8% stated that they work from home (though the 2011 census added them to the numbers travelling to work if they noted that they ticked a mode of travel).
- The picture for levels of multiple types of deprivation is mixed. The south west and east of the area are amongst the least deprived in the county and across England. On the other hand, an area in the north remains one of the 10% most deprived areas of Herefordshire, and is amongst the 25% most deprived in England.

1.2.11 The following information is drawn from the Understanding Herefordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016 and Zoopla at April 2018.

1.2.12 While the average house price in Ross is slightly lower than the national average (£258K compared to a national average of £275K), the average gross annual earnings for a full time worker on adult rates in Herefordshire are considerably lower than the national figure (£23K compared to a national average of £29K). This means that homes at the lower



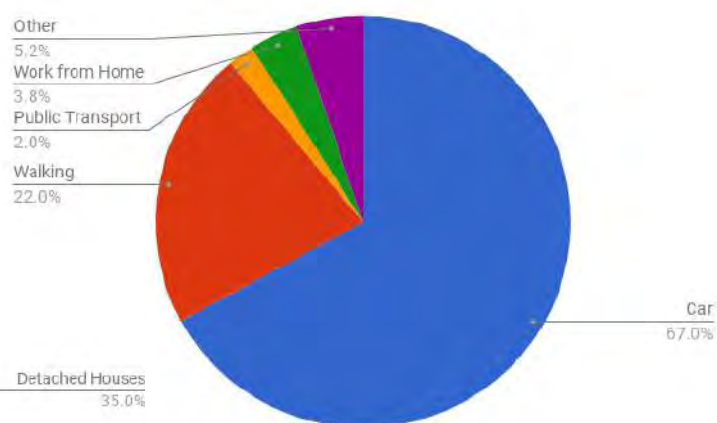
end of the market in Ross cost around 11 times the average annual earnings compared to around 8.9 times nationally.

1.2.13 There are three primary schools within Ross-on-Wye, although around 50% of primary school age children go to schools outside the town. There is also a Children's Centre and some private nursery provision. There is one secondary school, the John Kyrle High School. This attracts many of its students from well beyond Ross-on-Wye. The town has two doctors' surgeries and a Community Hospital. There is currently a Police Station near the town centre but its future is uncertain. The town centre offers a range of shops serving a variety of needs. There are a Sainsbury's store and Aldi store close to the centre and a Morrison's supermarket on the edge of the centre.

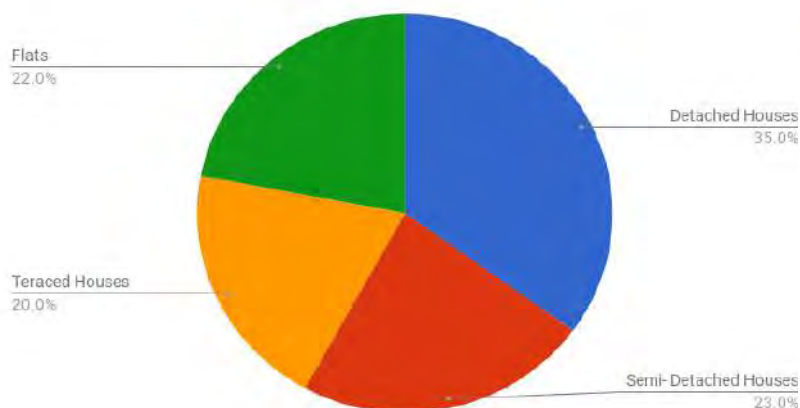
1.2.14 The town is served by buses and coaches to various places such as Hereford, Gloucester, Cardiff, Birmingham and London. The town's rail services ceased in 1959 and there is a lack of integration between local bus services and rail services in nearby towns. The nearest train stations are now in Ledbury, Hereford and Gloucester (and Newport is also accessible for trains towards London).

1.2.15 The town serves as the centre for a much wider area, considered by Herefordshire Council as the 'Ross-on-Wye Market Area'. This has a total population of around 26,000.

Modes of travel to work in Ross-on-Wye



Mix of housing types in Ross-on-Wye





1.3 Issues, Challenges, Aspirations

1.3.1 Many issues, positive and negative, and many ideas, were raised by people in the Ross community (and by others such as visitors) in the first consultation events; far too many to list here. Inevitably, some people highlighted points that a Neighbourhood Plan cannot address. Some issues were clearly appropriate to be addressed through plan policies and projects, so it is a selection of those on which we focus here (for full detail, see the Consultation Statement).

1.3.2 The issues raised suggested some broad themes as used below. Following further work, this generated the themes or headings used for the plan objectives and policies that follow later. Though not strictly one-to-one with later objectives, the continuity should be clear. Though presented below as similar length lists, the most frequently recorded issues were about community facilities, parks, open spaces etc., and the two most commonly addressed themes were Environment and Getting Around.

1.3.3 Environment

- The design of new buildings and shopfronts should be sympathetic to the character of Ross.
- Good quality local character benefits tourism.
- The highly valued landscape setting of Ross is threatened by further development.
- The quality of the Conservation Area is declining and historic/listed buildings are at risk.
- Flooding remains a problem in some areas of the town.
- Public spaces in the town centre need improving.

- Stop people using hard paving in front gardens.
- The huge area behind Morrison's is an eyesore.
- Promoting renewable energy is important.

1.3.4 Housing

- Poor variety of house types, sizes, prices etc. in new developments.
- New house designs not in character with Ross.
- Lack of affordable housing for local people.
- New houses not designed for people who want to work from home.
- Nowhere for people who want to build their own houses.
- Developers don't include green spaces, footpaths etc.
- Not enough parking in new developments.

1.3.5 Working and Shopping

- Keep local shops in the town centre.
- We need some more national chain shops in the centre.
- Too many empty town centre shops and properties.
- Create a clear brand for Ross town centre.
- (Mixed views on) Need another supermarket.
- Losing the small shops in our neighbourhoods.
- Not enough good quality new places to work.
- Land needed for employment developments.



1.3.6 Getting Around

- Public transport poor.
- Traffic congestion in the town centre.
- Quite a few unsafe junctions.
- Poor signage for drivers into and around the centre.
- Not enough parking in the town centre (and too expensive).
- May need some more pedestrian priority areas in the town centre.
- New developments have poor pedestrian links into town.
- Parking provision in new developments is never enough.

1.3.7 Leisure and Wellbeing

- Must keep all our existing community facilities (pool etc.).
- Some new facilities are needed (especially with lots more development).
- Must keep and improve all our existing parks, open spaces, play areas.
- New developments should contribute properly to paths, open spaces etc.
- Make more use of the riverside, put on more events.
- Need more allotments.
- Not enough information to get visitors to the town and keep them there.

1.3.8 One particular area of the town attracted frequent comments. That is the whole area usually called Broadmeadows but also including the field off Tanyard Lane. The latter is a large but unused field not easily visible from within the town and the former is a large and largely derelict and poorly used area used also as the access to the Caravan and Camping site. People were concerned that this, in total, forms a large, mainly unused 'wedge' out of the town as a whole, up to the current A40. There was a general feeling that this 'wedge' should be developed before any peripheral sites were considered.





1.4 The Planning Context

1.4.1 The Herefordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 describes Ross-on-Wye as follows (4.7.1):

“Ross-on-Wye, as the market town serving the south of the county, will be supported in continuing to fulfil a diverse range of roles as a centre for residential, employment, recreational and cultural services. The town will also continue to act as an important service centre for the surrounding rural area.”

The Local Plan Objectives as applied to Ross-on-Wye (4.7.2) focus on:

“enabling some strategic growth on the town’s peripheries and also some smaller scale growth in and around the town itself. The proposed development of Ross-on-Wye is planned taking account of the town’s very significant environmental constraints, including the floodplain of the River Wye, and the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.”

1.4.2 This then translates into the following more specific proposals (Policy RW1). In summary:

1. Providing at least 900 new homes. 200 of the 900 to be in a strategic location in Hildersley, the remainder to be delivered “on a range of, primarily, smaller sites of less than 100 dwellings” to be determined by the Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Identifying suitable employment sites both within or adjoining the town and including opportunities for people to work from home (“live/work”).
3. Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre. (Impacts of proposals for new retail, leisure or office development outside

the centre will be checked to avoid adverse effects.)

4. Improving accessibility within Ross-on-Wye by walking, cycling and public transport, particularly where they enhance connectivity with local facilities, the town centre and existing employment areas.
5. Contributing towards new or improved community facilities.
6. All developments to reflect and enhance the characteristic natural and built historic elements of the town and its natural setting overlooking the River Wye;
7. Enhancing green infrastructure (see later) and biodiversity.

1.4.3 Policies on all of the above are supported by the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which is important in ensuring plan implementation. As will be seen, a similar approach is taken in this Neighbourhood Plan.

1.4.4 In relation to bullet point 3 above, it is important to note that the town centre boundary as shown in the Local Plan (as used in the earlier Unitary Development Plan) refers solely to the area of primary and secondary shop frontages. The map below shows a broader area that reflects the main boundary to parking restrictions and includes car parks, town centre businesses and leisure and other centre-related facilities. This boundary was used for two Action for Market Towns survey rounds.

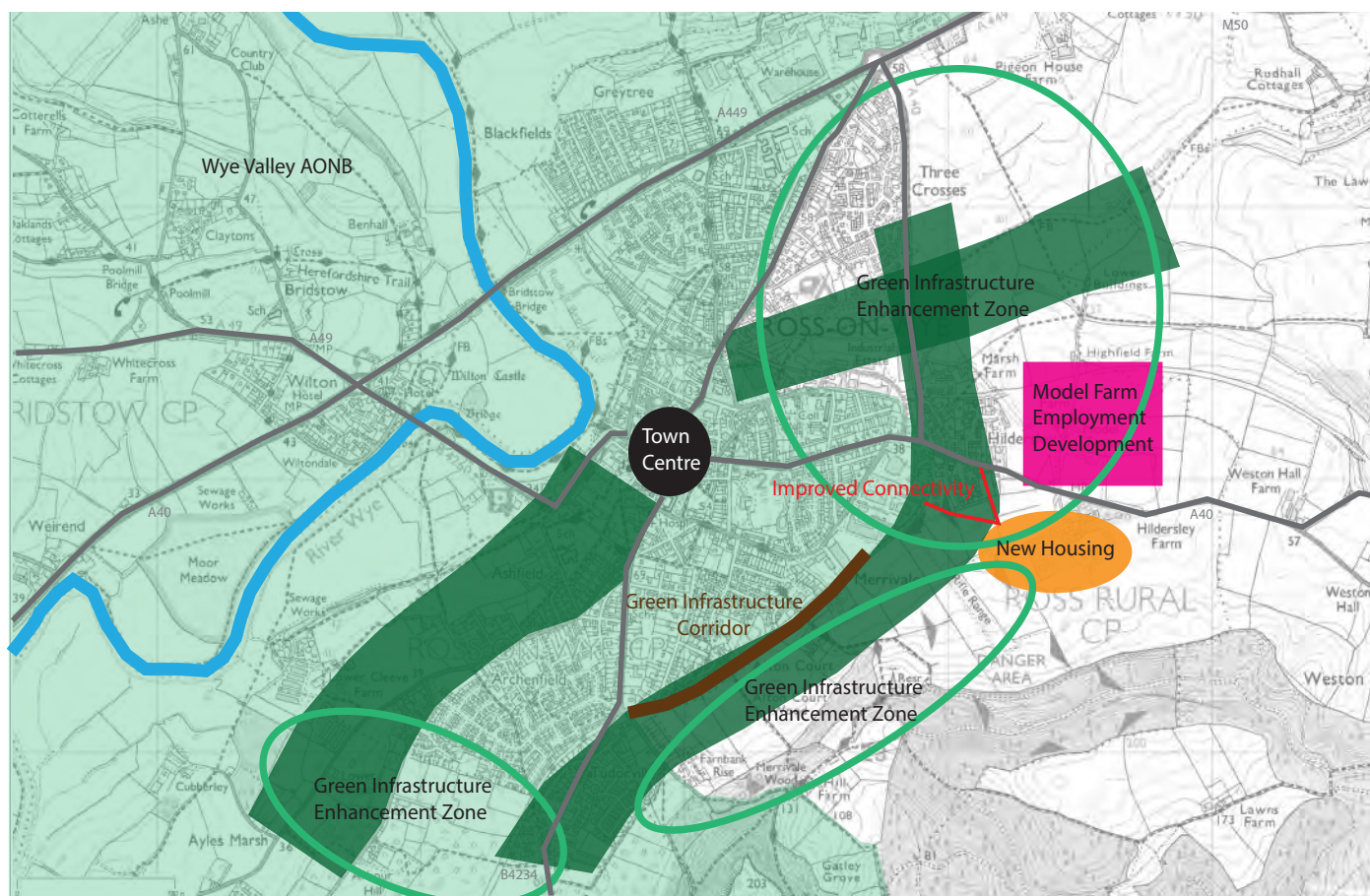
1.4.5 The Local Plan (p. 48) also states that any developments should “have demonstrated engagement and consultation with the community, including the town/parish council”.



- 1.4.6 At the time of writing three important contextual factors had changed:
- Herefordshire Council announced that they could not provide a 5 year housing land supply. The current figure is 4.8 years.
 - A decision was taken to put on hold any further work on establishing a Community Infrastructure Levy scheme; no scheme was in force at August 2018.
 - In May 2017 Herefordshire Council agreed a strategy review relating to its land holdings that span the eastern town boundary into Weston-under-Penyard. The timescale for this, and hence its impact on the plan, is unclear (See also Section 6).

- 1.4.7 In addition to the Local Plan, Herefordshire Council are, at the present time, preparing a Traveller Development Plan Document. This is a statutory planning document that will seek to allocate sites.
- 1.4.8 A Neighbourhood Plan for the neighbouring parish of Weston-under-Penyard has already been made. Plans are under preparation in the other neighbouring parishes of Walford, Bridstow and Brampton Abbots, and the Ross team has made efforts to coordinate with these nearby parishes.

Figure 7: Herefordshire Local Plan Extract - strategy relating to Ross-on-Wye





1.5 Basic Conditions, Evidence and Consultation

1.5.1 The Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan will have legal status so it will need to meet the basic conditions for a Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan needs to:

1. Comply with requirements of the Localism Act.
2. Have appropriate regard to the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. Be in general conformity with the Herefordshire Local Plan.
4. Be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements .
5. Contribute to sustainable development.

For full details of the Plan's compliance with these requirements see the draft 'Basic Conditions Statement'. Completed in draft

1.5.2 Appendix 1 to this plan is a 'Summary Evidence Report' which details where all the supporting evidence can be found.

1.5.3 The Plan is also written in accordance with the evidence and information provided from the consultation activities undertaken during its preparation. These can be seen in the draft 'Consultation Statement July 2018' and the associated reports.

1.6 The Structure of the Plan

1.6.1 Throughout the preparation work for the plan, especially the consultation, several factors led to the format that follows.

1.6.2 First, there was a clear need to place particular emphasis on sustaining and revitalising the town centre. This is reflected in the plan through objectives, policies and projects that relate primarily to the centre. Various Herefordshire Council

reports use different geographic definitions of the town centre. Work by local people, and the issues to be addressed, resulted in the definition used in the Plan, as on the map above. Some objectives apply to different areas of the town as follows:

- **Whole Town:** Everything within the settlement boundary (defined later).

- **Town Centre:** The area as defined in the map above.

- **Wider Town:** The remaining areas of the 'whole town' other than the town centre.

1.6.3 Secondly, it is important to point out that, although the emphasis of any plan of this type is on 'development', and hence mainly on the town's built environment, the relationship between the town and its surrounding landscape is of central importance to its identity and distinctiveness, so policies and projects about that wider landscape, and about issues of ecology, are also addressed in the plan.

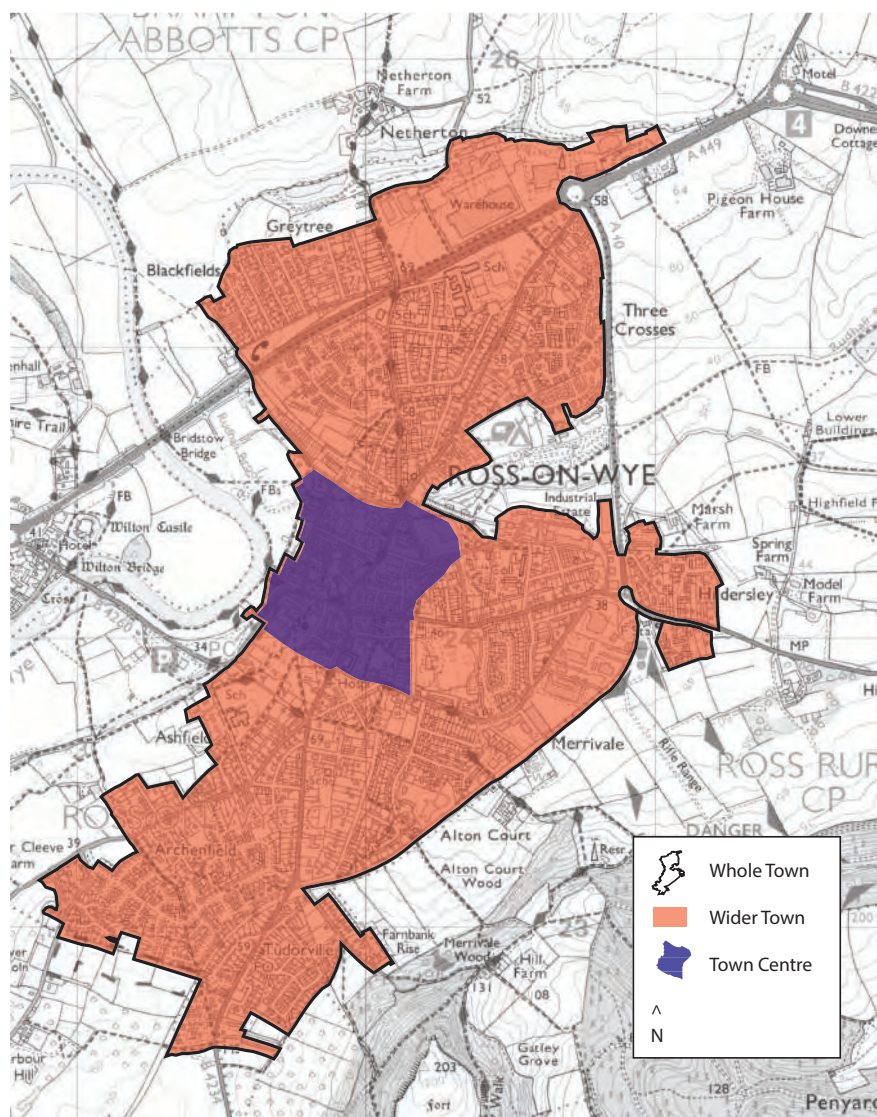
1.6.4 Thirdly, as work proceeded, it also became clear that many of the issues and aspirations raised could not be addressed fully through land use policies alone; their eventual implementation needed to be backed up by projects led by the Town Council or other groups within Ross-on-Wye. This has resulted in a two-tier approach as follows overleaf:



- **Level 1: Policies:** These address those aspects such as housing development that can be managed directly through spatial or land use policies. It is recognised that it is only these that can be formally examined. This covers sections 5 and 6 below.
- **Level 2: Action Projects:** These are grouped under broad themes that would support the policies, for example promotion of the town centre. This is covered in section 7 below.

1.6.5 Level 2 might best be thought of as a supportive 'Infrastructure Delivery Plan' and can then be related in the future to the use by both the Town Council and Herefordshire Council of Community Infrastructure Levy and/or Section 106 contributions (NB. At the time of writing Herefordshire Council had not taken forward a CIL regime).

Figure 8: Indicative map to show Ross-on-Wye Whole Town area, Wider Town and Town Centre





2 The Vision

It is now 2031 and Joanna Kyrle has written the following article for the Ross Gazette.

The Ross Gazette Wednesday April 20th 2031

Ross-on-Wye is a vision to

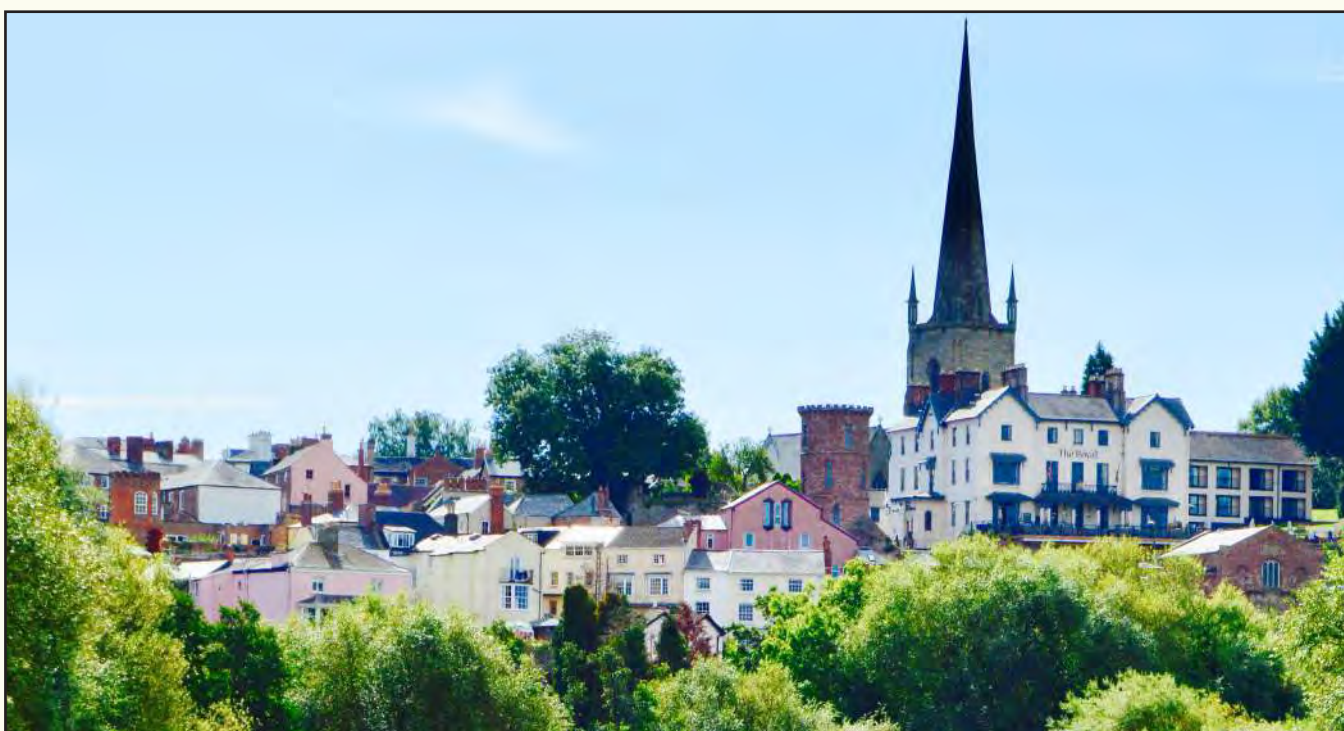
Joanna Kyrle

I was born in Ross, brought up here, left in 2017 and have just returned. Ross was a lovely town to be brought up in. The town and its surroundings were really attractive and interesting and there was always plenty going on for just about everybody, including the many that just came to visit. At the same time, I also remember, for example, that quite a few buildings were run-down, there were a good few empty shops and traffic and parking were a real problem.

So now the surprise - and a really pleasant one to return to!

The transformation has been wonderful and Ross is even more attractive for me and my family as a place to live in, and also for people to visit (now many more than there used to be). All the extra houses (nicely designed to reflect the distinctive character of Ross) have not swamped the town, in fact they – or rather their new occupants – seem to have added to the vitality of the town, certainly to its various shops (no longer empty), cafes, places to meet and general feel (so many old buildings now spruced up).

I myself love the 'vintage' shops, apparently something for which Ross is now so well-known that it brings in lots more shoppers



Wonderful transformation: Ross is now even more attractive for individuals and families to live in and to visit



return to after 17 years away

(and their money!). But they haven't forgotten the older bits of history, so it is good to see the new Museum as well as all the boards and information sheets about Ross as the 'Cradle of Tourism'.

It's particularly good to see more happening in and alongside the river and there are also better links between the riverside and the town centre; (I remember that people often went to one or the other, rarely both). We were also really pleased to see that the Community Hospital is still there and thriving.

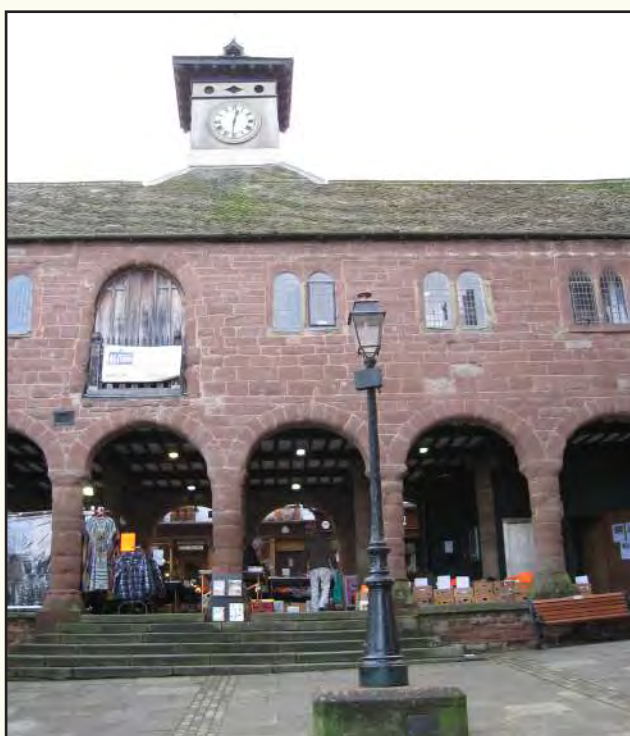
The town centre is certainly a nicer place; safer to walk around and use. There seems to

be less unnecessary through traffic, so getting around on wheels is simpler, and finding parking also seems easier than in many other places. We as a family have also really enjoyed getting out into the surrounding countryside, now so much easier with regular, clear, well-designed signs. And all the footpaths now link together; a real novelty and extremely welcome. It's also great to be able to walk and cycle in and around town on green corridors that are environmentally friendly, ecological, bio-diverse and wildlife friendly.

There are some really interesting new developments and buildings as well. We visited some old friends who now live in the house they built for themselves, full of all sorts of energy-saving measures and something they called a 'grey water' system. The area behind Morrisons that used to be an embarrassment is now looking really good and we love using the new brookside walk to get to easily reached friends who live on the east of the A40 (still known as the relief road by longer-term Ross residents). (I remember that the Broadmeadows area used to flood but they seem to have coped with that now.)

People tell me the Neighbourhood Plan had something to do with this. If that's true then well done to the people of Ross.

I am really glad to be back.



Not forgotten: the historic environment is protected and enhanced



3 Objectives

3.1 The objectives of the Plan derive directly from the issues, challenges and aspirations outlined in Section 1.3. There are five prime Overall Policy Objectives:

1. To protect and enhance all aspects of the environment.

2. To deliver more housing, in particular to meet local needs.

3. To protect, enhance and diversify the local economy.

4. To ensure an accessible and well-connected town for all.

5. To protect, enhance and diversify the town's social and cultural assets.

3.2 Sub-objectives were developed for all of the above in order to support the specific policies that follow in Section 4. As explained in para. 1.6.2, these are divided as appropriate into objectives for the Whole Plan Area, the Town Centre and the Wider Town. Policies and projects linked to each objective are noted in the final two columns.

3.3 Sub-objectives are listed out in Section 4 (Planning Policies).

3.4 The five main themes above, and the sub-objectives listed in the following section, do not have one-to-one relationships with the three dimensions of sustainable development as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework – Environmental, Social and Economic. Appendix 2 therefore includes a chart that addresses this by illustrating how the plan objectives address the dimensions of sustainable development.



4 Planning Policies

The planning policies will be the subject of an independent examination, followed by a community referendum. Each planning policy has a unique reference number which can be quoted when comments are made on planning applications, and which will be referred to by planning officers.

The policies are set out under the five overall objective areas as set out in Section 3. Sub-objectives have been developed for each to support the specific policies that follow.

An introductory table for each objective area outlines the policies and projects linked to each (sub-) objective.

The planning policies included in the Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help determine planning applications within the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood area.

Herefordshire Council planning officers will assess every planning application in relation to the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan but also in the light of national and local policies. This is never an absolute process; it is always a matter of balancing all the relevant policies against specific content of each application, weighing up the specific likely harm or benefit.

Ross-on-Wye Town Council Planning Committee will ensure that the relevance of any planning application to specific Neighbourhood Plan policies will be highlighted in their comments on that application.



Delivering Overall Policy Objective 1: Protect and enhance all aspects of the environment

Whole Plan Area: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
<p>1a: Improve all aspects of the appearance of the town as a whole.</p> <p>1b: Respect and enrich the town's historic, social and cultural character and features.</p> <p>1c: Ensure a high standard of locally distinctive design in new built developments that responds to specific local and particularly historic styles.</p> <p>1d: Promote well-designed and appropriately located renewable energy projects.</p> <p>1e: Protect and enhance the landscape around Ross-on-Wye, especially in designated areas, and the town's setting within it.</p> <p>1f: Protect key views into and out of the town.</p> <p>1g: Protect and enhance ecology, wildlife and biodiversity, in particular by reference to the River Wye SAC.</p> <p>1h: Vigorously promote and encourage early pre-application community involvement by developers/applicants.</p> <p>1i: Ensure all new developments take a positive approach to carbon reduction measures in design and construction.</p>	EN1 EN2	P1 P2
	EN1 EN2	P3
	EN1 EN2	
	EN5 EN6	P4 P5
	EN1 EN2 EN3 EN4 EN7	
	EN8	
	EN3 EN4	P6 P7 P8
	EN11	
	EN5 EN6	



Town Centre: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
1j: Make the town centre a welcoming, safe and secure place where people (locals and visitors) are encouraged to spend time.	EN1 EN2	
1k: Ensure that the design of shopfronts is appropriate to local character.	EN1 EN2	P5
1l: Improve the appearance of the public realm through surfacing, lighting, 'greening' (eg. planters), the use of public art and so forth.	EN1 EN2	P10 P11 P6
Wider Town: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
1m: Link existing (and new) green assets into a coherent, related pattern to improve connectivity for ecological and aesthetic benefit - what is termed 'green infrastructure'.	EN9	P12
1n: Ensuring the use of permeable surfacing of house drives and front gardens and in employment areas and car parks	EN10	P13



4.1 Design and Character

Sub-objectives: 1a,1b, 1c, 1e, 1j, 1k, 1l

Planning Policy EN1: Ross Design Policy

The design of all new development within the town, while being clearly of its time, should demonstrate its relationship and applicability to its site, setting and context in terms of scale, materials, form, details, layout, public realm and historic character. This is of particular importance within the Conservation Area and Town Centre (Ross Town Centre is defined on Figure 13, the Conservation Area on Figure 6).

Planning Applications should demonstrate how new development contributes positively to Ross with reference to the criteria above and utilising the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio (2017).

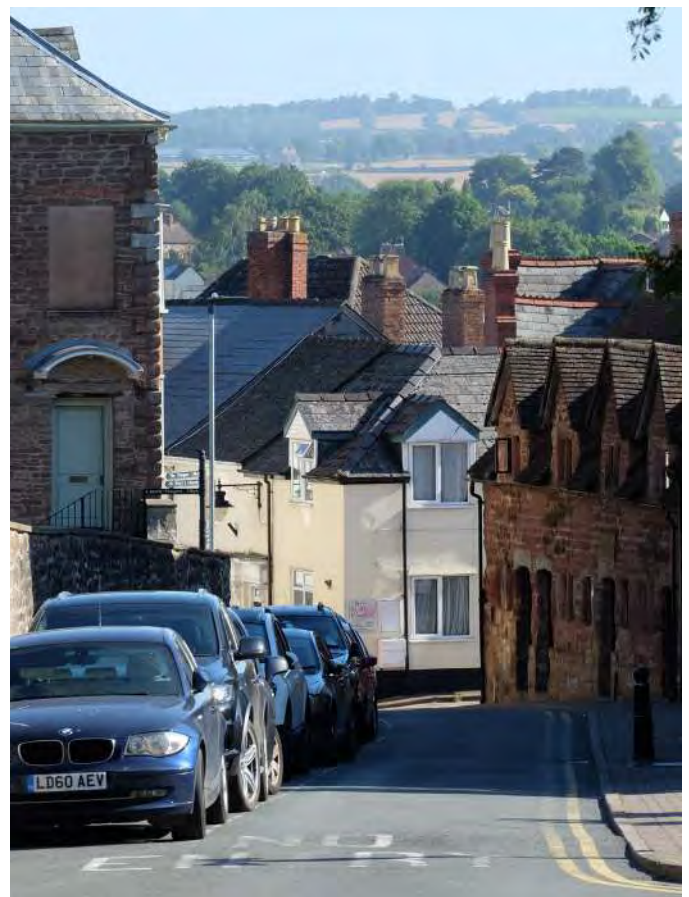
Planning Policy EN2: Shopfronts and Signage

Shopfronts and any associated commercial signage should respect the specific character of their local context, especially within the Conservation Area and Town Centre.

Planning Applications should demonstrate how shopfronts and signage development contributes positively to the street scene utilising the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio (2017).

Explanation

- 4.1.1 Ross-on-Wye is recognised nationally as an attractive market town to both live in and to visit. Much of this attraction comes from the quality of its built environment and public spaces, most importantly within and around the town centre. Much of the centre and some other areas, including a stretch of the river Wye, are in a Conservation Area. However, there was not previously a full Character Assessment in place and the Conservation Area is currently regarded as 'at risk'. Other economic and traffic pressures have also led to some deterioration in the visual quality of the centre so, in relation to all of this, the policies on design are crucial.





4.1 Design and Character (...continued)

Sub-objectives: 1a,1b, 1c, 1e, 1j, 1k, 1l

4.1.2 A high quality of design is therefore vital in all parts of the town both for residents and visitors, particularly so in the town centre where there are a large number of listed buildings, and it should be considered in all terms, not just for new buildings but also for shopfronts, paving, street furniture, lighting, signage and so forth. The government's National Planning Policy Framework (2018) states that '*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (and) creates better places in which to live and work*' (paragraph 124). It also highlights the important role that Neighbourhood Plans can play in identifying the special qualities of areas and explaining how this should be reflected in development (paragraph 125).

4.1.3 In order to help to deliver Neighbourhood Plan policies EN1 and EN2, Herefordshire Council already has in place for Ross-on-Wye:

- A draft Appraisal of the Conservation Area;
- A county-wide Landscape Character Assessment;
- An Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis and;
- A Rapid Townscape Assessment.

4.1.4 Work by the local community has consolidated and extended all this material with their own Ross Character Assessment of both the town centre and the whole plan area. All this material is in the 'Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio' (see Appendix 1 - the Summary Evidence Report').

4.1.5 Designs should also be developed collaboratively with the local community using the Pre-Application Protocol (Policy EN11 below).





4.2 Settlement Boundary and Infill Development

Sub-objectives: 1e, 1g, 2b, 2g

Planning Policy EN3: Settlement Boundary

Development will be limited to within the Settlement Boundary as shown on Figure 9. Exceptional circumstances would have to be elaborated and justified for developments outside this boundary.

Planning Policy EN4: Infill and Backland Development

Infill development, where small gaps in an otherwise built up frontage are developed, can be supported where:

- Development has regard to the character of the surrounding townscape.
- The proposed development reflects the density, form and pattern of existing development in Ross (as addressed in the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio), or otherwise enhances character.

Backland development could be supported where:

- It is not contrary to the character of the area (as addressed in the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio).
- It is well related and appropriate in height, scale, mass and form to the frontage buildings.
- There is no adverse impact to the character, appearance and safety of the frontage development.
- It is not harmful to residential amenity.

Planning Applications should demonstrate how infill or backland development contributes positively to Ross with reference to the criteria above and utilising the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio.





4.2 Settlement Boundary and Infill Development (...continued)

Sub-objectives: 1e, 1g, 2b, 2g

Explanation

4.2.1 As introduced in the Development Strategy section above, Ross-on-Wye currently benefits from a clear settlement boundary, including along the A40, though this particular boundary is subject to change in the future. The Settlement Boundary Report (see Appendix 1 - the 'Summary Evidence Report') elaborates the rationale for the boundary. With a settlement boundary in place as per the policy below, proper consideration can be given to proposed development sites that lie within and on the edge of it, in particular Broadmeadows/Tanyard. The boundary for this area and other sites described later will be amended on the completion of any of the planned developments, at which point the built boundaries will finally be clear.

4.2.2 In addition, recent years have seen a number of developments in Ross-on-Wye take place within the built form of the town, either within the gardens of properties which are then retained, through demolition of an existing large house and its replacement by a number of smaller houses or flats, or by development in small, backland areas. There are a number of such backland spaces in Ross-on-Wye, especially in the town centre, that are underused or poorly used and sometimes derelict. Consultation results suggest that some but not all of these areas are seen to be appropriate for development.

4.2.3 Proposals to develop in gardens and small backland areas, whether by the addition of houses to a retained house or by demolition and complete new build, may be appropriate in certain circumstances, but not others, and should be supported. This is addressed as Infill as per policy EN4.





4.2 Settlement Boundary and Infill Development (...continued)

Sub-objectives: 1e, 1g, 2b, 2g

Figure 9: Ross-on-Wye Settlement Boundary, as defined by the Neighbourhood Plan





4.3 Sustainable Design and Renewable Energy

Sub-objective: 1d

Planning Policy EN5: Eco-building

Support will be given to design proposals that make use of a range of eco-building methods such as low carbon and renewable energy, water use reduction, waste water management, waste reduction and the use of locally sourced materials.

Planning Policy EN6: Solar/Photovoltaic Energy

Where planning permission is required, proposals by householders, businesses or community groups owning premises to use solar/photovoltaic panels will be supported if it can be demonstrated that there is no unacceptable harm to visual amenity.

Explanation

- 4.3.1 Issues around sustainable development generally were raised quite regularly during the community engagement work. Some of these are picked up elsewhere while some were related to aspects of design and construction (energy conservation, waste water management, local materials etc.), and especially to the promotion of the use of renewable energy throughout the town. There are as yet very few examples of 'eco-building' in Ross and informal visual survey suggests a very low take-up of photovoltaic/solar panels.
- 4.3.4 Applicants will still be required to demonstrate how their designs respond successfully to local character as in Policy EN1 above, and especially in the Conservation Area.



4.4 The Setting of Ross-on-Wye in its Landscape

Sub-objective: 1e

Planning Policy EN7: Landscape Setting

Proposed developments of any type within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be subject to the controls in place within the Herefordshire Local Plan and the Wye Valley AONB Management plan.

The slopes below Penyard Park and Chase Wood, the distinctive junction of National Character Areas 104 and 105, as shown in Figure 10, form an important part of the landscape setting of Ross and should remain free from development.

Explanation

- 4.4.1 A key part of the nationally recognised attractiveness and special nature of Ross-on-Wye - its social and cultural assets - lies in the town's relationship to its surrounding landscape, straddling as it does the 'South Herefordshire and Over Severn' and 'Forest of Dean and Lower Wye National Character Areas. More detail is in the Landscape section in the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio and the Settlement Boundary Report (see Appendix 1 - the 'Summary Evidence Report').
- 4.4.2 Much of this is picked up in the AONB Management Plan which notes that Ross-on-Wye is a Landscape Management Zone within the plan, the features of which are the distinctive

spire and skyline, Devonian Old Red Sandstone cliffs and use of that stone in buildings. The mix of stone and rendered buildings on the escarpment overlooking the river, and the cultural association with the Wye Tour and the Picturesque Movement, are also noted. As a result, three of the special qualities of the AONB are found in these features: Devonian Lower Old Red Sandstone, picturesque extensive and dramatic views, and vernacular architecture. (NB. Key Views are picked up in the following section and policy, Natural Environment issues in section F.)

- 4.4.3 On a broader canvas, this is all reinforced by the overall Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment, which places Ross-on-Wye as an urban area mainly within a Character Area described as 'Principal Settled Farmlands' but also in part within an area of 'Principal Wooded Hills'. The Wye riverside meadows are also highlighted. More locally, Ross-on-Wye is identified separately in the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis report produced by Herefordshire Council.
- 4.4.4 (There are also several other relevant designations that must be respected, notably SSSIs and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are also several recorded Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees. Maps for all of these are in the evidence folder.)



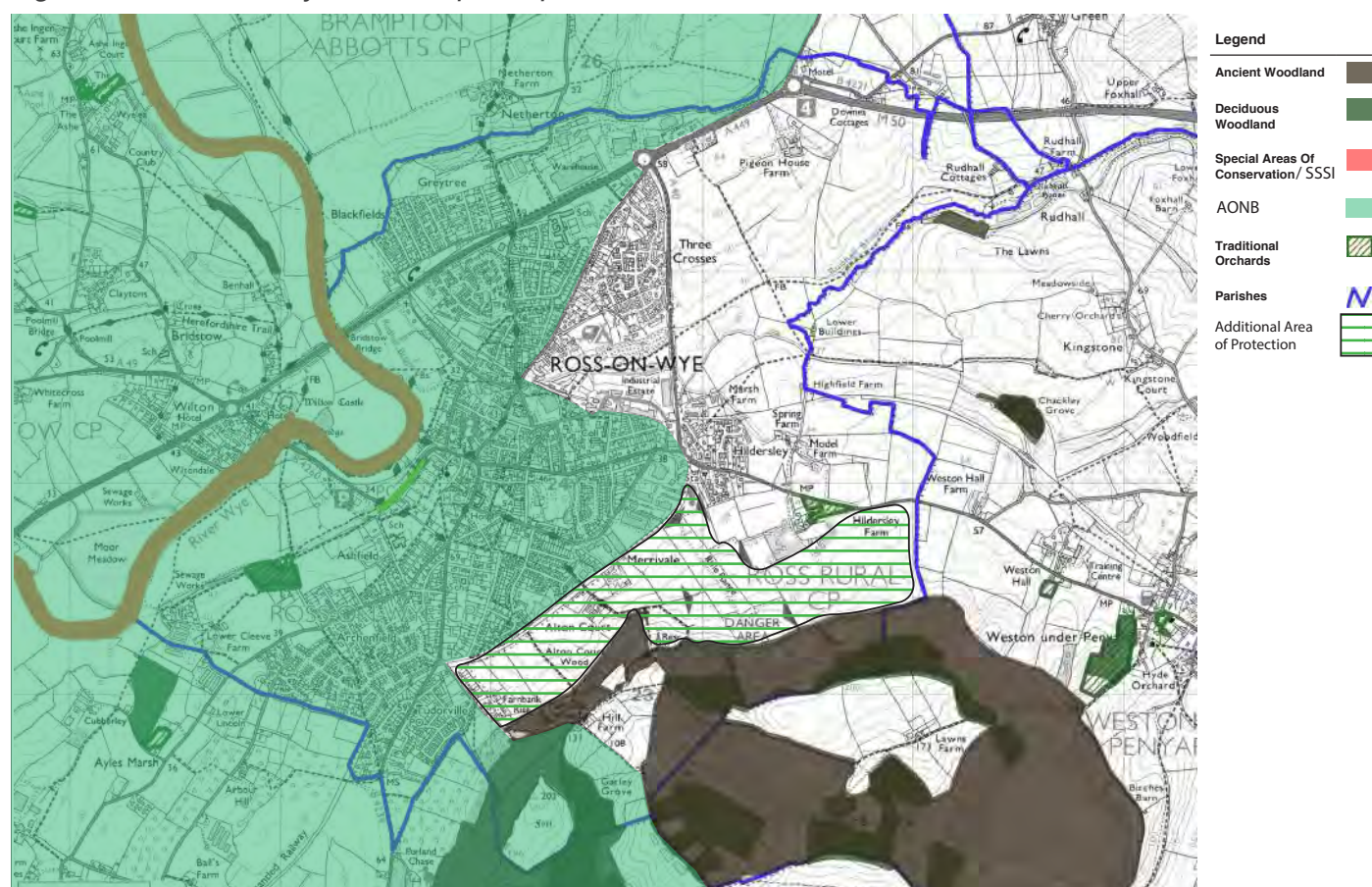
4.4 The Setting of Ross-on-Wye in its Landscape (...continued)

Sub-objective 1e

4.4.5 New build developments within the AONB are well controlled in general in landscape impact terms by the Herefordshire Local Plan, reinforced by the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan. There are, however, parts of the overall Neighbourhood Plan designated area to the east and south east that are not in the AONB. One particular area outside the AONB is of major importance to the setting of the town. That is the currently green and largely undeveloped fields to the south east leading up to,

and then including, the woodland on the hills of Penyard Park and Chase Wood. The hills in particular provide a backdrop to many views from the Wye Valley and from many locations in the town itself (see next section). The importance of this area is reinforced by how it is shown with the relevant Natural England Character Areas map (in the Landscape section of the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio – see Appendix 1).

Figure 10: Ross-on-Wye Landscape Map





4.5 Key Views

Sub-objective: 1f

Planning Policy EN8: Key Views

Development should respond to the key views, along with the illustrative views, as identified in the Ross-on-Wye Key Views Report.

The four key views highlighted in Figure 11 should be maintained and protected. Any application which might impact on a Key View should demonstrate how it will be seen, what impacts development would have on that view and include mitigation proposals to remove or reduce any negative impacts.

Explanation

- 4.5.1 Ross-on-Wye as a town is highly distinctive; this is recognised at a regional and national level. It is also distinctive in its landscape context, notably its relationship to the Wye valley. The valley is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which in itself sets rigorous parameters about landscape, development, views and so forth.
- 4.5.2 The connection between town and landscape is therefore a key factor in shaping the town's distinctiveness in terms of views both into the town and out from it. The Key Views Report (in the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio) locates a number of illustrative and specific views.
- 4.5.3 The Key Views report draws from

information from Herefordshire Council, notably the Landscape Assessment and the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis of Hereford and the Market Towns, including Ross-on-Wye, and from survey and analysis work by local people. Four Key Views have been identified from the illustrative and specific views identified in the report.

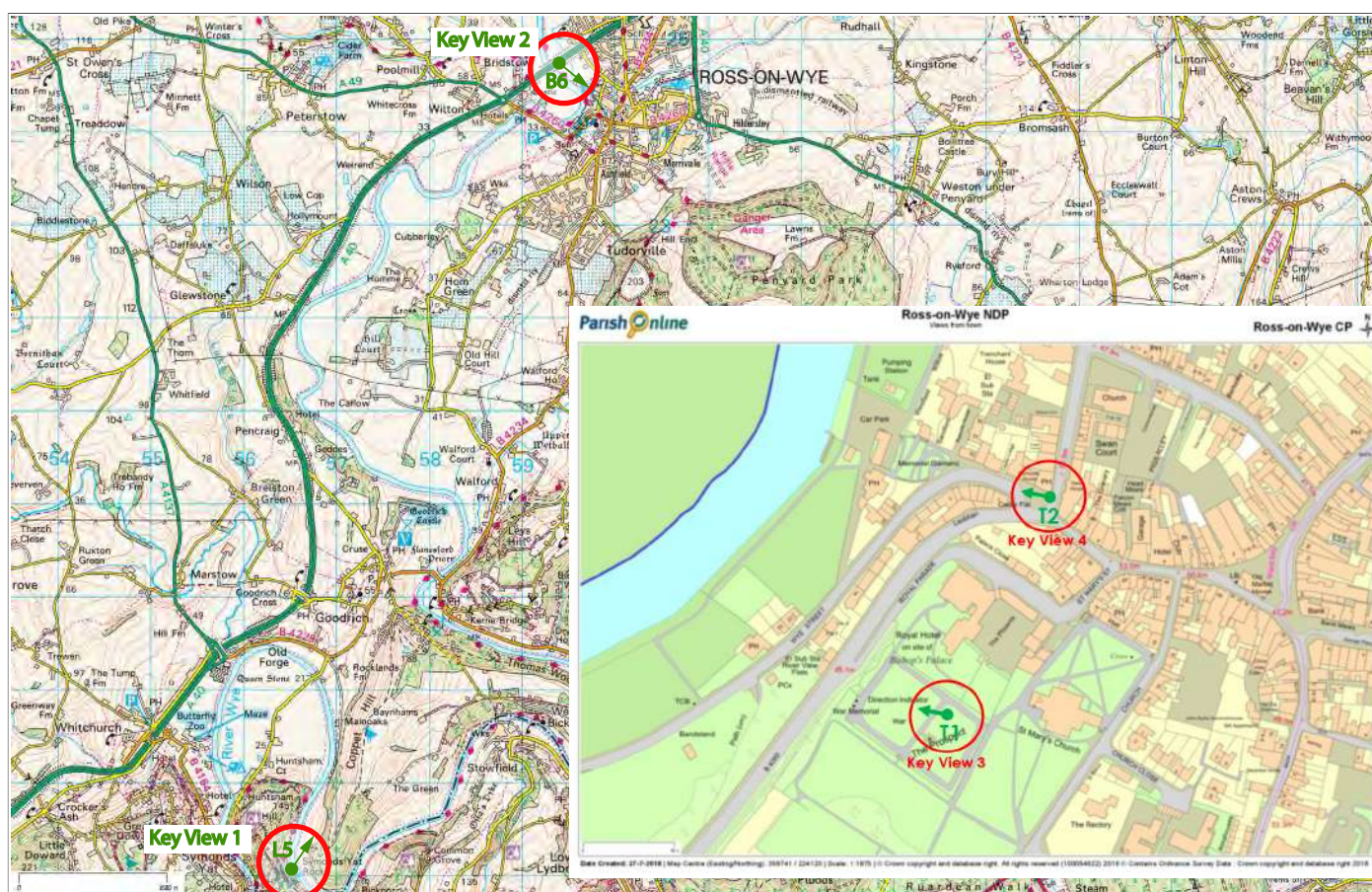
- 4.5.4 In some cases, no development at all should be permitted to interrupt the Key Views, and all other views identified in the Key Views Report should be taken into consideration when plans are being prepared. Careful design can ensure no negative impacts and can, on occasion, improve the sharpness and focus of any view.
- 4.5.6 The section on Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire Council's Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis (in the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio) highlights many other sensitive views of the town in its landscape context. The policy below can also be seen in the context of Local Plan LD1: Landscape and townscape. (See Appendix 1 - the 'Summary Evidence Report' for access to the Key Views Report.)



4.5 Key Views (...continued)

Sub-objective: 1f

Figure 11: Ross-on-Wye Key Views Map





4.6 Green Infrastructure

Sub-objective: 1m

Planning Policy EN9: Green Infrastructure

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the establishment of a green infrastructure network connecting green spaces across the whole plan area, as indicated in the Green Infrastructure Report.

Any development proposed on land within or adjoining the green infrastructure network will be required to demonstrate how it will enhance and maintain green links and support biodiversity.

Any development proposals on the edge of the settlement will be required to demonstrate how they contribute to the town's green infrastructure network, and that they enhance green and open space provision in the town, addressing the needs arising from the new development and providing good connections for people and wildlife.

Explanation

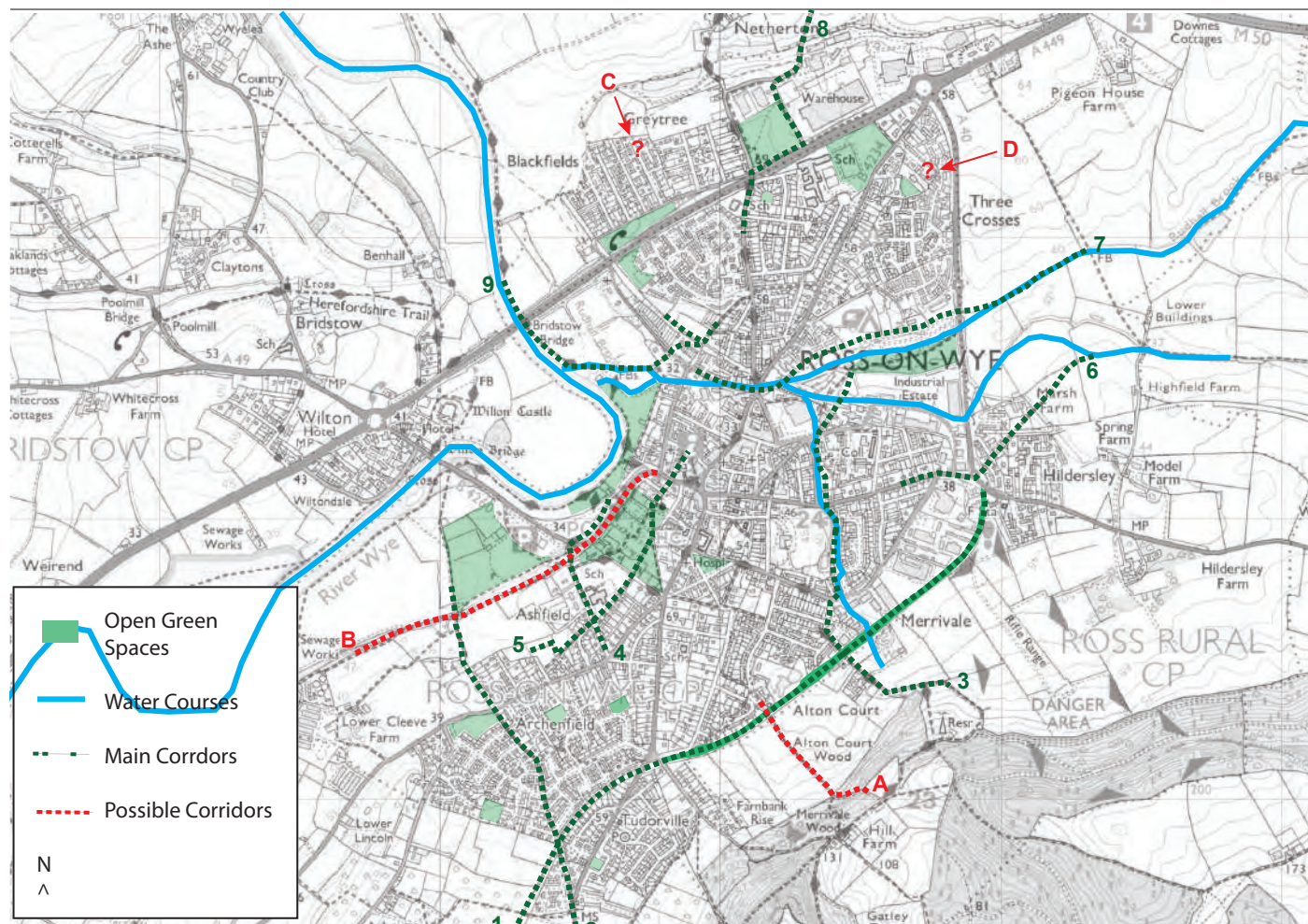
- 4.6.1 The parish of Ross-on-Wye does not just include the existing built area of the town. There are open, green areas within the parish and that is all set in the context of the wider landscape (see section 4.4 above). There are also potential, major, future proposals for all of the important Broadmeadows/ Tanyard area and some of the land east of the A40 (see p. 87-93). A number of hedgerows, tree lines and watercourses serve to link the built area to its surrounding landscape, but currently rather poorly with few links into the built area. There are a number of Public Rights of Way (and some informally used footpaths) that connect town to country and two major long distance walks – the Herefordshire Trail and the Wye Valley Walk - pass into and through the town.
- 4.6.2 The Herefordshire Core Strategy Green Infrastructure map shows three 'Local Enhancement Zones' – to the east, south east and south of the current built area, and three 'Strategic Corridors' – to the east, south east and south west. These are considered in the Green Infrastructure Report (see Appendix 1 - the Summary Evidence Report') along with more detailed local information. This reinforces the need to retain as much as possible of the existing green infrastructure and, in places, add to it in the layout and design of new developments.



4.6 Green Infrastructure (...continued)

Sub-objective: 1m

Figure 12: Ross-on-Wye Green Infrastructure Map





4.7 Permeable Surfacing of Drives and Parking Areas

Sub-objective: 1n

Planning Policy EN10: Hard Surfacing of Drives and Parking Areas

Where Planning Permission is required, permeable paving of front gardens and hardstandings will be supported where it is in keeping with the character of the street, and where boundary treatment features such as walls, railings and hedges can be retained or enhanced.

Proposals for surface treatments in residential, commercial and public parking and hard-standing areas should demonstrate how surface water and associated run off will be managed in a sustainable way.

Explanation

- 4.7.1 Hard surfacing of house drives and the removal of vegetation can have a number of negative effects. This includes in particular the risk of flooding (further afield as well as in the immediate environment), damage to local character (e.g. by the removal of front garden boundary walls, grass, shrubs etc.), the introduction of inappropriate materials and pollution. (See <http://www.ealingfrontgardens.org.uk/43-reasons-not-to-pave>)
- 4.7.2 This is also an issue in parking areas linked to employment sites and in public car parking areas.

- 4.7.3 Retaining appropriate water levels in the ground is important to limit flash-flooding; important for householders and businesses but also to avoid overloading the street drain system. It is also important in helping to prevent subsidence damage to properties. There are now a number of reasonably priced and easy to maintain technical solutions to creating permeable or semi-permeable surfaces for drives and parking areas. This is what the policy seeks to promote and ensure.
- 4.7.4 In some cases, paving front gardens and installing hardstanding can be undertaken without the need for planning permission via permitted development rules. However, careful planning in the design and construction of driveways can reduce and control water run-off. (See: https://www.planningportal.co.uk/directory_record/718/guidance_on_the_permeable_surfacing_of_front_gardens). Planning permission may also not be needed for some aspects of commercial and public parking areas but, for new developments, permeable surfaces are also strongly encouraged.



4.8 Pre-Application Community Engagement

Sub-objective: 1h

Planning Policy EN11: Pre-Application Community Engagement

In order to ensure positive and structured pre-application community engagement, potential applicants are strongly encouraged to follow the procedure set out in the Ross-on-Wye Pre-Application Community Engagement Protocol. §

Explanation

- 4.8.1 People in Ross-on-Wye have consistently argued that the eventual effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan is dependent on establishing early, open and mutual discussions with potential applicants to maximise the likely achievement of developments that add to the sustainability of the town and avoid possible conflicts. Although applicants cannot legally be required to do this, putting in place a coherent and consistent approach to pre-application community involvement is a key way to deliver this mutual benefit.
- 4.8.2 The original NPPF of 2012 encouraged all developers to undertake pre-application community involvement. This was aimed mainly at design issues but also at all aspects of potential developments such as uses, density and access. This approach has now been supported even more strongly in the further supported in the Revised NPPF of 2018. In paragraph 39, for example, the

Revised NPPF states that:

- 4.8.3 “Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”
- 4.8.4 Ross-on-Wye Town Council has therefore produced a ‘Pre-Application Community Engagement Protocol’ which potential applicants can access. This is included in Appendix 2. This extends the Local Plan policy RW1: Development in Ross-on-Wye which states that developments will be encouraged where they “have demonstrated engagement and consultation with the community, including the Town Council”. This Protocol will be widely promoted to potential applicants, local community groups and others to ensure its regular use.



4.9 Natural Environment

Sub-objective: 1g

Explanation

4.9.1 There are many features and aspects of the natural environment within the town itself as well as within the wider landscape of the parish (and many of these connect to features beyond the parish, see Green Infrastructure below). These have been well documented in the evidence for the Herefordshire Local Plan (see Appendix 1 - the Summary Evidence Report'), which lists details of the following, not all of which apply to Ross:

- Designated areas
- Nature reserves
- Common land
- Habitats
- Priority species
- Veteran trees
- Hedgerows
- Rivers and ponds

4.9.2 These are all highly valued by the local community but the level of detail already available is such that no Neighbourhood Plan policy is required to ensure their protection and enhancement. Applicants should nevertheless demonstrate how they have taken such features into account in any applications.





4.10 Historic Environments

Sub-objective: 1b

Explanation

- 4.10.1 Around one third of the built area of Ross-on-Wye is in a Conservation Area, as yet with only a draft appraisal. (Part of this area lies outside Ross-on-Wye parish.) The town centre represents a large part of the Conservation Area and this is also where the vast majority of Listed Buildings (almost all Grade 2) are located. There are also four Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the parish.
- 4.10.2 In 2016, a statement was provided by Historic England to the effect that the Conservation Area was 'at risk'. No detail is given for the particular risks faced by the Conservation Area but local people themselves have highlighted the often poor quality of shopfronts in the centre and the underuse and poor maintenance of centre buildings above the shops. There is also local concern over the poor quality of the public realm in the town centre.
- 4.10.3 It is considered that the Herefordshire Core Strategy, Historic England guidance and criteria and the policies above, notably policies EN1 and EN2 provide appropriate protection for the historic environments of the town so no separate policy is thought to be necessary.
- 4.10.4 More detailed information is contained in the Historic Environments section of the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio (see Appendix 1 - the Summary Evidence Report').





Delivering Overall Policy Objective 2: Provide new housing

Whole Plan Area: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
2a: Deliver a locally appropriate amount of new housing over and above the 900 homes allocated.	See Section 6	
2b: Encourage housing development on empty, derelict or underused land where this does not result in damage to local character, over-development or the loss of important biodiversity assets.	EN3 EN4	
2c: Encourage development of self-build new housing.	H1	P14
2d: Design new housing to enable people to work from home.	H2	
2e: Encourage the delivery of affordable housing by a Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust.	H3	P15
Town Centre: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
2f: Encourage the development of housing, perhaps as part of mixed developments on town centre sites.	H4	
2g: Optimise opportunities for people to live over town centre shops.	H5	
Wider Town: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy	NDP Action Project
2h: Encourage appropriate infill while resisting over-development in residential gardens.	EN3 EN4	



4.11 Housing Development

Sub-objectives: 2a, 2b

Introduction

- development but no figures are included here.
- 4.11.1 The Herefordshire Local Plan requires the delivery of at least 900 new homes in Ross-on-Wye by 2031, plus some contingency. A 10% contingency (90) would create a total target of 990, a 15% contingency (130) would create a total target of 1,035.
- 4.11.2 At the time of writing this Plan (March 2018), Herefordshire Council's figures of built, committed and strategic site (Hildersley) totalled 914.
- 4.11.3 This includes 200 for the strategic site at Hildersley but the latest permission is for 212. There is also a current application for 34 houses at Cawdor Arch Road and one shortly to be submitted for the Old Laundry site, Ledbury Road for 21. If delivered, this totals a further 67.
- 4.11.4 This plan allocates sites (see Section 6) as follows:
- Cleeve Field: c.18-20
 - Merrivale Lane: c.30
 - Stoney Stile: c.25
 - Total: c.75
- 4.11.5 The very large Broadmeadows/Tanyard site (p.87) is included on a criteria-led basis only as explained later. If taken forward, that could deliver in the order of at least 300 homes.
- 4.11.6 These figures show that the plan can deliver up to, perhaps more than, the allocated figure of 900 plus 15% contingency.
- 4.11.7 One other small potential site is included later and criteria given for its
- 4.11.8 Many more sites than those noted above have been submitted during Herefordshire Council's SHLAA processes. The Evidence Summary Report (see Appendix 1) refers to a "Development Sites Appraisal" about which sites to include and which to exclude.
- 4.11.9 *See Section 5.2 Development Sites for detailed proposals on the above.*
- 4.11.10 Herefordshire Council is currently consulting on its Travellers' Sites Document, in which there are no proposed sites in the Ross-on-Wye neighbourhood area.



4.12 Custom and Self-Build Housing

Sub-objective: 2c

Planning Policy H1: Custom and Self-Build

In principle support will be given to self-build or custom-build projects proposed on suitable development sites within Ross-on-Wye. To be supported in detail, such schemes must satisfy all other policies within this plan.

Explanation

- 4.12.1 There is growing demand to provide sites for forms of self-build housing, either self-build in the sense that a site owner personally builds their home or custom-build in the sense that a designer and builder are commissioned to construct the house for the eventual owner.
- 4.12.2 The government introduced the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) to support the delivery of self-build and custom-build housing and to define it in planning terms.
- 4.12.3 People in Ross-on-Wye have voiced their support for providing sites for either form of self-build housing and, at the end of the first reporting period of the self-build register in October 2016, there were over 100 people on the Herefordshire Council Self-Build Register interested in sites in urban areas. (The government support came too late for this to be included in policies in the Herefordshire Local Plan.)



4.13 Design for Home-working

Sub-objective: 2d

Planning Policy H2: Home-working

Where Planning Permission is required, building alterations that support home working will be supported where there is no unacceptable impact on residential amenity.

Developers of new housing schemes are encouraged to provide spaces suitable for home working in a proportion of new houses; such proposals should be indicated clearly on plans.

Explanation

- 4.13.1 Although there is no statistical evidence for the number of people in Ross-on-Wye working from home, this issue was raised on several occasions during the plan consultation and people have commented on its importance generally and the need for further provision, especially in new developments. In terms of its impact on car-based commuting, this is also supported nationally. (Provision for home working should not be confused with the provision of 'live/work' units; it is only about the availability of spaces in homes from which the home owner, perhaps with one other person, could either operate a small business or 'tele-commute'.)
- 4.13.2 Policy E3 in the Herefordshire Local Plan supports home working and provides criteria to be used to assess its appropriateness for house extensions. This is fully supported but this plan also wishes to encourage developers of housing schemes to provide appropriate spaces in new houses.





4.14 Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust

Sub-objective: 2e

Planning Policy H3: A Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust

Where developments are of a scale that triggers a proportion of affordable housing, the first option of delivery of that affordable housing should be offered to the Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust.

Explanation

- 4.14.1 Policy RA 2 in the Herefordshire Core Strategy states (inter alia) that “Specific proposals for the delivery of local need housing will be particularly supported where they meet an identified need and their long-term retention as local needs housing is secured as such.” Long term retention is difficult to guarantee except through the involvement of a locally-based Community Land Trust (CLT). There is now (autumn 2018) a Herefordshire Centre for Community Led Housing helping to support the development of CLTs across the county and it appears very likely that a group will be formed to develop a Ross-specific CLT.
- 4.14.2 In order to avoid delay for the applicant, the effective delivery of this policy is particularly dependent on a Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust being established, or close to being established, before any planning permission is granted.



4.15 Town Centre Housing

Sub-objective: 2f, 2g

Planning Policy H4: Town Centre Housing

New housing will be supported in the defined town centre if meeting the following criteria:

- Access to flats above ground floor should be from a separate ground level entrance, on the main street frontage wherever possible.

Explanation

- 4.15.1 There are currently a number of residential properties within the defined town centre boundary, some houses, some flats, some of the latter above other uses. Residential use is encouraged within the town centre to help to deliver vitality and reduce car use.
- 4.15.2 The most recent collation of housing land availability in the town centre is from 2011, so is not included in detail here. The evolving nature of all of the town centre in recent years suggests that further sites are very likely to become available during the plan period. While many may be appropriate for housing, any of the currently known and future sites may also be considered for mixed use.
- 4.15.3 Consideration can be given to car-free development proposals. There may also be scope in certain circumstances for parking arrangements to be made off-site, for example by agreement with nearby landowners or with the authority managing public car parks.
- 4.15.4 Policy H4 relates to the definition of the Ross-on-Wye Town Centre as shown on Figure 13 and explained in the Town Centre Overall Review (See Appendix 1 - Summary Evidence Report).



4.16 Living and Working Over Shops

Sub-objectives: 2g, 3i

Planning Policy H5: Living and Working Over Shops

Support will be given to proposals for the use of space above town centre shops for residential or business purposes.

Individual applications will need to assess the suitability of pedestrian access to the property, access arrangements within the property and any necessary parking/cycling provision.

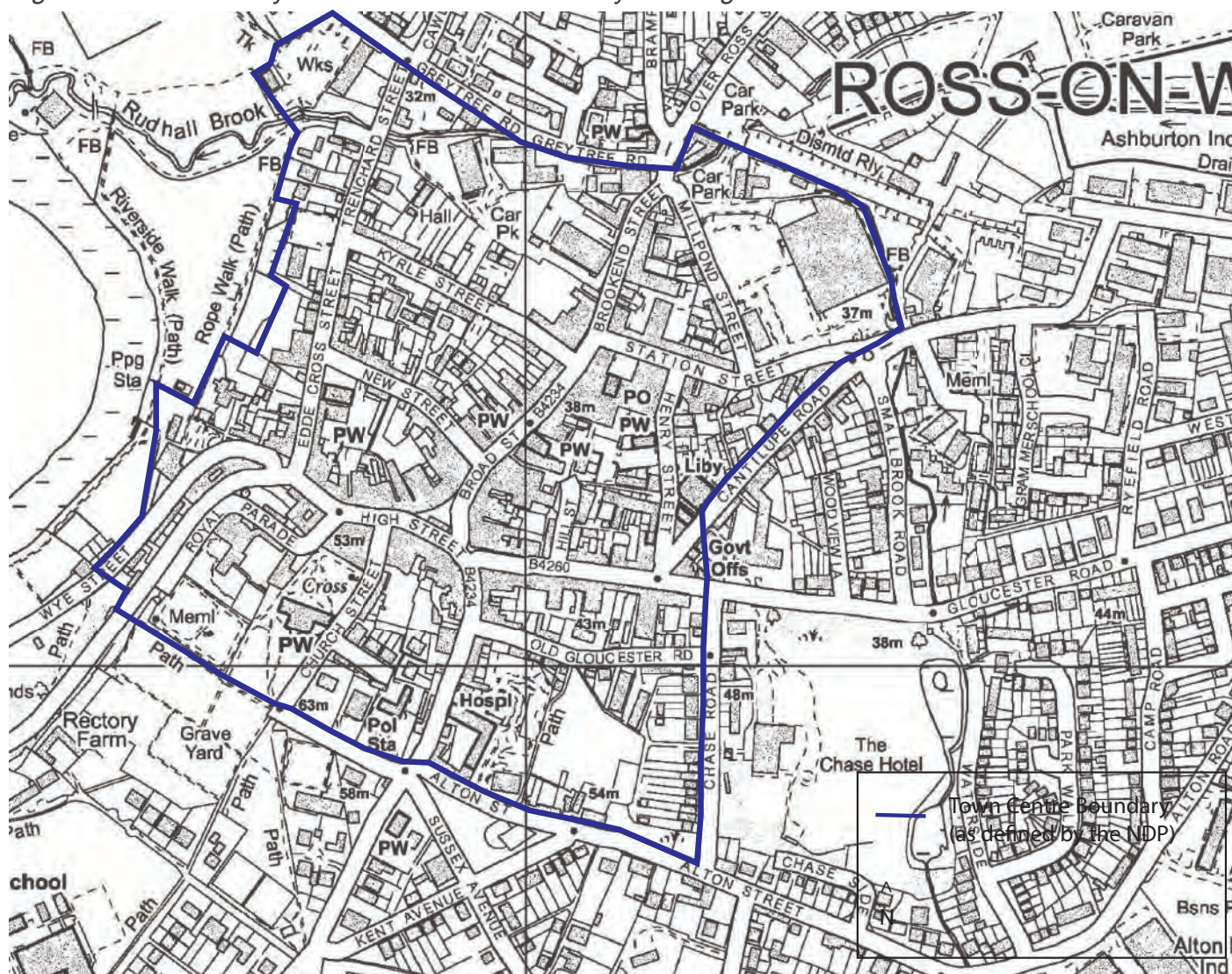
Explanation

- 4.16.1 *NB. This section also covers working over shops to avoid repetition.*
- 4.16.2 A community-led survey* established that there are currently numerous spaces over shops in the town centre, at first floor level, second floor level or both that are either underused or empty. Bringing such spaces back into residential or business use would have several benefits in terms of sustainability. It would make good use of valuable space, it would help to maintain the physical structure of many properties (all of which are in the Conservation Area), it would add to the vitality of the centre and help to reduce the need to travel by car. (*This report is in the Town Centre Review, see Appendix 1.)
- 4.16.3 Bringing more space into residential or business use will however be conditional on the specific circumstances of each property, notably in terms of access and any impacts on ground floor uses. This policy is supported by Local Plan policy E5: Town Centres.
- 4.16.4 Consideration can be given to car-free development proposals. There may also be scope in certain circumstances for parking arrangements to be made off-site, for example by agreement with nearby landowners or with the authority managing public car parks.
- 4.16.5 Policy H5 relates to the definition of the Ross-on-Wye Town Centre as shown on Figure 13 and explained in the Town Centre Overall Review (see Appendix 1 - Summary Evidence Report).





Figure 13: Ross-on-Wye Town Centre as defined by the Neighbourhood Plan



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Delivering Overall Policy Objective 3: Protect, enhance and diversify the local economy

Whole Plan Area: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
3a: Support new employment developments.	E1	P16 P17
3b: Encourage starter units, shared serviced accommodation, managed workspace etc. for existing small or new businesses.	E1	P18
3c: Encourage employment developments that provide higher-grade jobs, especially in tourism.	E1	
3d: Retain existing employment except where inappropriately located.	E3	
3e: Resist proposals for out of town centre retail.	E2	
Town Centre: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
3f: Support existing and welcome new independent businesses, including shops, cafes and market traders, especially where this makes a positive contribution to tourism.	E3 E4	P21 P22
3g: Support the existing street market and enhance it in terms of scale and frequency.	E3	
3h: Optimise opportunities for people to work over town centre shops.		
3i: Take steps to reduce the number of empty shops.	E3 H5	
Wider Town: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
None		



4.16 New Employment Development

Sub-objectives: 3a, 3b, 3c

Planning Policy E1: New Employment Development

New employment development is encouraged within the wider town area, especially proposals that address one or more of the following:

- The provision of starter units and/or shared serviced accommodation.
- Enhancement to the leisure and tourism offer of the town as a whole, while not threatening the vitality and viability of the town centre or conflicting with established uses.
- The provision of higher grade jobs.

Explanation

- 4.16.1 The economy of Ross-on-Wye has undergone a level of rebalancing in the last five years and has seen reduction in sectors such as retail, financial services and business administration and growth in production, distribution and automotive trades. This could be in part due to the area's proximity to a major road network and available industrial accommodation, and the possible effect of the recession on local high streets, which has been experienced elsewhere nationally.
- 4.16.2 See Section 5, in particular the proposals for Broadmeadows/Tanyard.

4.17 Resisting Out of Centre Retail

Sub-objectives: 3e

Planning Policy E2: Resisting Out of Town Retail

Further out of town centre retail will be resisted.

- Proposals for new retail provision of over 400m² gross floor space and located outside the town centre will need to be subject to a sequential test and supported by an impact assessment to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the town centre.

Explanation

- 4.17.1 Ross-on-Wye has no further retail capacity during the current Local Plan period but is subject to retail development pressure outside of the town centre, notably along the A49. Further retail development outside the town centre should be resisted because of potential damage to the centre.



4.18 Town Centre Uses

Sub-objectives: 3d, 3g, 3i

Planning Policy E3: Town Centre Uses

The town centre will continue to be a focus for retail, commercial, leisure, cultural and tourism uses. Proposals for new or changed uses which contribute to the vitality and viability of Ross will be supported provided that they:

- Can demonstrate that the original use is no longer viable and has sustained a vacancy period of over 12 months and has been suitably marketed within the Ross Market Area.
- Are of a scale and design appropriate to the size, role, character and heritage of the centre.
- Enhance the town centre as a tourism and cultural destination.

Explanation

- 4.18.1 The Ross-on-Wye economy has grown slowly over the last five years and has not experienced the same level of growth as the county. Retail is the largest employment sector, and has a significantly higher proportion of people employed in the sector than the county or national averages. However, the sector has reduced in size since 2010, experiencing losses in the level of employment and businesses.
- 4.18.2 The benchmarking* highlights shortfalls in the non-retail offer of the high street which, if counteracted, could help the town centre of Ross-on-Wye to become

more of a destination, increasing footfall and spend. This is related to the trend from across the country for retail uses to be under increasing pressure from digital sales, a pressure now spreading to lower cost food outlets. As elsewhere, shops, restaurants and other outlets are evolving to meet general consumer demands at a rate similar to that experienced over the last 10 years. As of now, this trend appears to offer the best scenario for the period to 2032 although it is possible that digital retail will evolve more quickly so it will be essential to monitor progress.

4.18.3 The town centre as defined by the Neighbourhood Plan is shown on Figure 13 (p. 53) and explained and illustrated in the Town Centre Overall Review (see Appendix 1).

4.18.4 While there is always some degree of turnover in the occupation of business, commercial and industrial developments, any net loss would be damaging to the sustainability of the town. The Herefordshire Local Plan includes appropriate policies for the retention of employment in general so this plan does not add to this. However, there is particular concern locally for the loss of business premises in the town centre and their replacement by residential uses, hence the policy E3.

(*This report is in the Town Centre Overall Review, see Appendix 1.)

(Also see section 4.31)



4.19 Retail Frontages

Sub-objective: 3f

Explanation

4.19.1 This brief section is only included here because early drafts of the plan proposed slight changes to the primary and secondary retail frontages in the Local Plan. However, the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (2018) now removes any requirement for plans to specify such frontages. In light of that national decision, no frontage definitions are included in this plan.





Delivering Overall Policy Objective 4: Ensure an accessible and well-connected town for all

4.20 Introduction

- 4.20.1 Issues related to vehicular traffic and transport were among those most commonly mentioned during the community consultation. They were clearly of significant importance to local people to the extent that they considered that many of the developments suggested elsewhere in this plan should not proceed unless improvements were also made to the vehicular movement and access systems in the town. At the same time, it is essential to note that Neighbourhood Plans can only include policies that relate to actions requiring planning permissions rather than highways permissions. There are therefore only five policies following this introduction.
- 4.20.2 The two key issues for the local community, on which Neighbourhood Plan policies would not be appropriate were about traffic circulation (especially in and around the town centre and on the 'school run') and public transport.
- 4.20.3 Concerns about traffic circulation focused on congestion, constrictions in key places (e.g. by the old Rosswyn Hotel) service vehicle on-street parking and the perceived problems created by the current one-way systems. Although traffic incident records show very few serious problems, there are still public perceptions of a lack of safety as a result of the above problems, which in turn are often said to be a disincentive to usage of the town centre. Surveys of visitors accessing the town by car have also highlighted difficulties for people in finding their way into, around and out of the centre (see Policy A3 below).
- 4.20.4 Concerns about public transport relate mainly to the fact that services to and from Ross-on-Wye have been declining over recent years and are now perceived to be at a minimal level. This is not improved by the quality of the informal (if recently slightly improved) 'bus station' area in Cantilupe Road. Some of the bus stops around the town are also poorly located and in bad condition. In addition, it currently appears that the vehicles used for the bus services are well towards the end of their useful life, with higher emissions. There is an opportunity for renewable fuel sources to be utilised. None of this encourages the use of public transport, and improvements are needed.
- 4.20.5 At the same time, the continued viability of public transport, particularly of buses, needs considering in the context of the expected growth of electric and perhaps even autonomous vehicles. This is particularly important for meeting the transport demands of the elderly and people with disabilities, given that Ross-on-Wye has a current and projected above average share of older residents.
- 4.20.6 Addressing these core concerns over the plan period will depend less on this plan and more on the community, through individuals, local groups and the formal channel of the Town Council, continuing to lobby for the changes they wish to see, both with Herefordshire Council and with potential applicants. Section 6 of this plan includes some specific action projects that have the support of the community and which, if implemented, could help to make positive progress on the key issues.



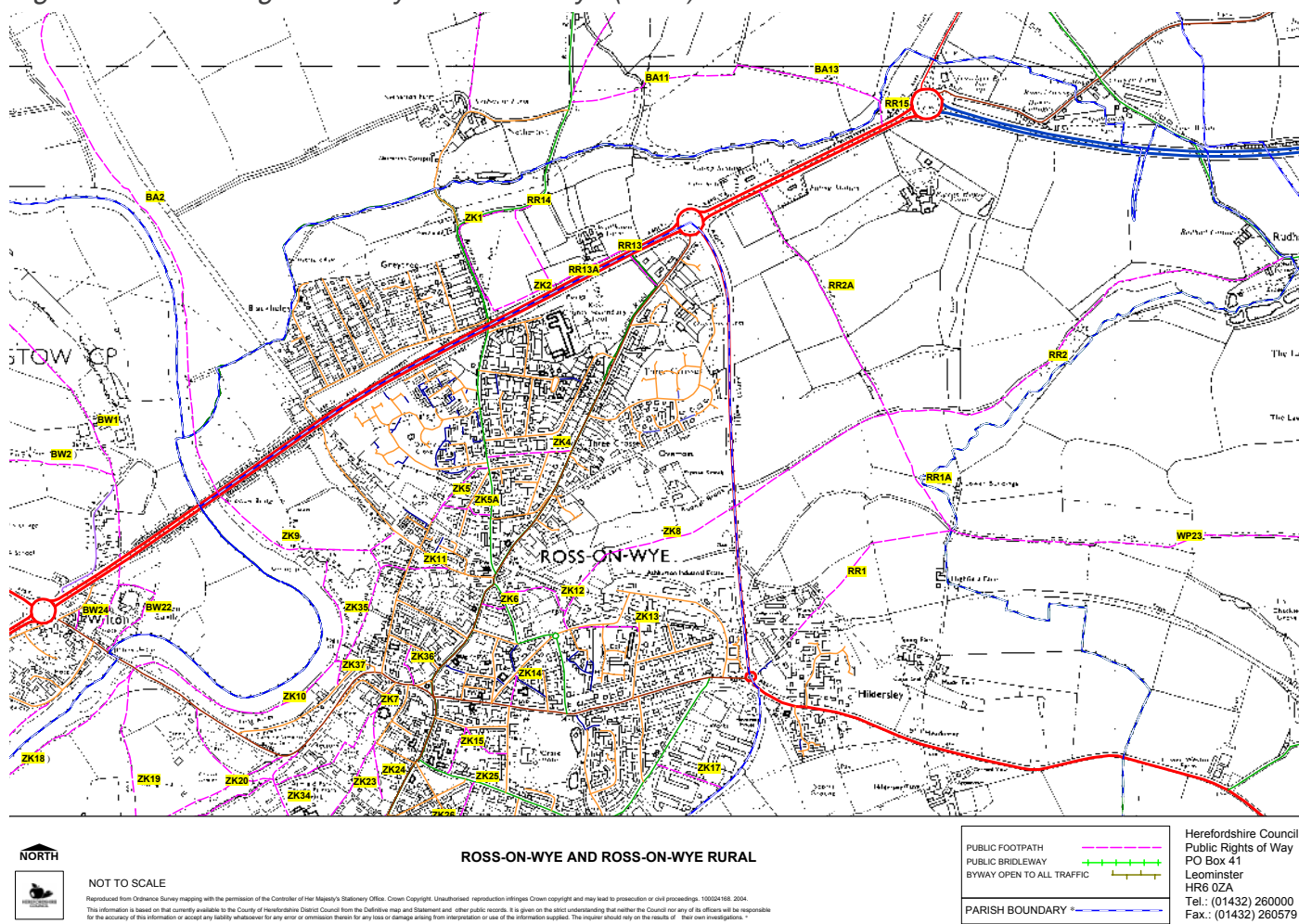
Whole Plan Area: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
4a: Ensure that all proposals and projects work towards delivering sustainable movement and access.	A1	P23
4b: Support, promote and develop local bus and coach services.		P24
4c: Improve walking and cycling access into, around and out of the town and to/from the surrounding countryside, including for all new developments.	A2	P25 P27 P31
4d: Provide signage to local places of historic interest.	A2	
4e: Provide infrastructure to support the nationally proposed shift to electric vehicles.	A5	P25
Town Centre: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
4f: Improve the usability of the town centre by pedestrians, cyclists and those facing mobility challenges.	A2	P28 P29
4g: Seek opportunities to improve traffic routes and circulation into and around the town centre.		P29
4h: Rationalise the locations and arrangements of car parks that serve the town centre to enable easy and safe access for residents and visitors.	A4	P29
4i: Provide safe, well-connected, convenient, well signposted vehicle routes to car parks.	A3	P29
4j: Put in place a coherent sign system in and around the centre for pedestrians, cyclists and those facing mobility challenges, also linking from the centre out to neighbourhoods and the network of public footpaths and bridleways in the wider countryside.	A3	P11 P29
4k: Encourage appropriate charging arrangements for town centre car parks.	A5	



Delivering Overall Objective 4: Ensure an accessible and well-connected town for all (...continued)

Wider Town: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
4l: Provide clearer signage and 'gateways' into and around the town from main routes, for roads, footpaths and bridleways. §	A3	P30 §
4m: Support proposals for the creation of strategic cycle and footpath links between Ross and other towns. §	A2	

Figure 14: Public Rights of Way - Ross-on-Wye (north)





4.21 Sustainable Movement and Access

Sub-objective: 4a

Planning Policy A1: Sustainable Transport

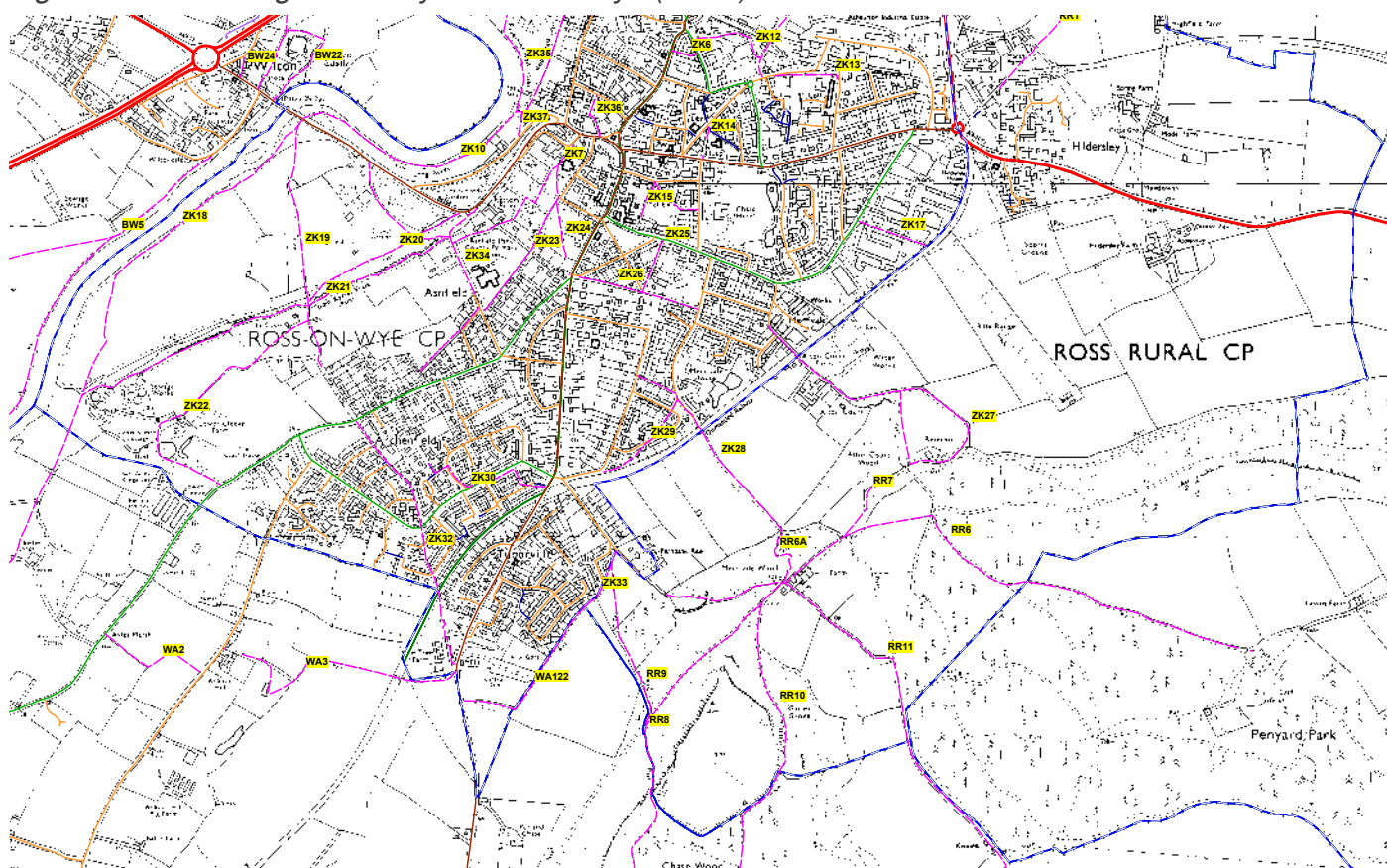
Developments within the town, in particular major developments, will be expected to show how they contribute to delivering sustainable movement and access, including high quality walking and cycling routes within and connecting beyond the site, safe routes to the town centre and to key facilities such as the schools, and public transport provision.

Explanation

4.21.1 Most importantly, any proposals and projects should operate within the principles of the well-established transport hierarchy that suggests that, to deliver genuinely sustainable movement and access, priority in any plan or development proposal should always be given to those higher up the list below:

- Pedestrians
- Cyclists
- Public Transport
- Private vehicles.

Figure 15: Public Rights of Way - Ross-on-Wye (south)



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ROSS-ON-WYE AND ROSS-ON-WYE RURAL

PUBLIC FOOTPATH	
PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY	
BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC	
PARISH BOUNDARY	

Herefordshire Council
Public Rights of Way
PO Box 41
Leominster
HR6 0ZA
Tel.: (01432) 260000
Fax.: (01432) 260579



4.22 Walking and Cycling

Sub-objectives: 4c, 4d, 4f, 4m

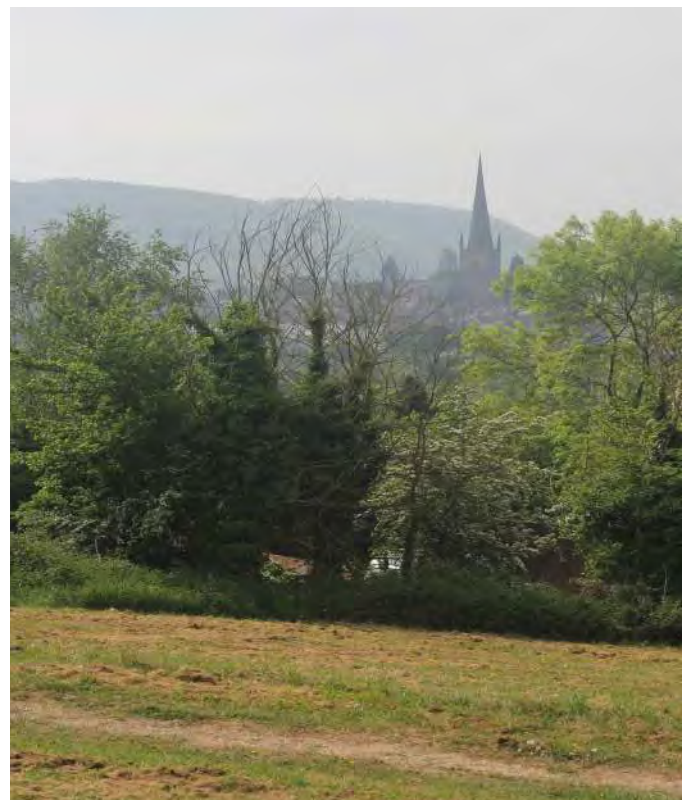
Planning Policy A2: Walking and Cycling

Over the plan period, opportunities will be sought to make movement for walkers, cyclists and those facing mobility challenges more attractive, safer, better linked together and overall, their use to be favoured over car use where at all possible. This will be achieved through the following measures:

- Improving existing footpaths into and around the town generally, the town centre and into the wider landscape in terms of (inter alia) surfacing, lighting and signage.
- New developments, especially those outside the current built area of the town, should ensure links into and the enhancement of associated paths and also ensure full access for those with limited mobility.
- Proposals for new development will also be required to include School Travel Plans.
- 'Safe Routes to School' initiatives will be supported.

Explanation

- 4.22.1 The public footpath system around and into Ross-on-Wye is reasonably comprehensive (see Figures 14 and 15 above) but poorly integrated and there is little provision for cycling or for movement for those with limited mobility. Community evidence suggests numerous specific problems of movement around the town centre for pedestrians, cyclists and those with limited mobility (e.g. in terms of width, dropped kerbs and good surface maintenance). It also suggests problems of access and movement elsewhere in the town and into/out of the surrounding countryside. (This evidence – the Walking/Cycling Report - is in the Town Centre Overall Review, see Appendix 1.)





4.23 Signage Into and Around the Town

Sub-objectives: 4i, 4j, 4l

Planning Policy A3: Walking and Cycling Signs

Developments in the town centre will contribute to a coherent sign system for walkers, cyclists and those with limited mobility. Designs and locations will follow that used in the system as a whole.

Proposals for new developments will be expected to include signs consistent with the new system both within the developments and to direct people to clear routes to the town centre and into the countryside.

Explanation

- 4.23.1 One of the problems for pedestrians and cyclists into and around Ross is the lack of clear and integrated signage. In parallel with this, there are concerns that the town is not adequately highlighted to those passing by on the A40 and arrival into the town is not celebrated at key points for those who choose to turn in.
- 4.23.2 A coherent, fully integrated sign system is needed*, as well as some form of clear 'gateways' on arrival at the town and within the town to encourage people (notably but not solely visitors) to move from the centre into (or from) the surrounding countryside. Given the existence of the Conservation Area and the fact that parts of the town and its surroundings are within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a very high standard of coherent design will be required for all signs and 'gateways'. (* A report on Signage is in the Town Centre Overall Review, see Appendix 1)
- 4.23.3 Much of this ambition cannot be addressed through Neighbourhood Plan policies but through action projects, see Section 6. However, one policy is appropriate, as opposite.





4.24 Rationalising Car Parks

Sub-objective: 4h

Planning Policy A4: Changes to Car Parks

Any proposals to develop on town centre car parks will need to demonstrate that such development does not prejudice car parking provision overall.

Explanation

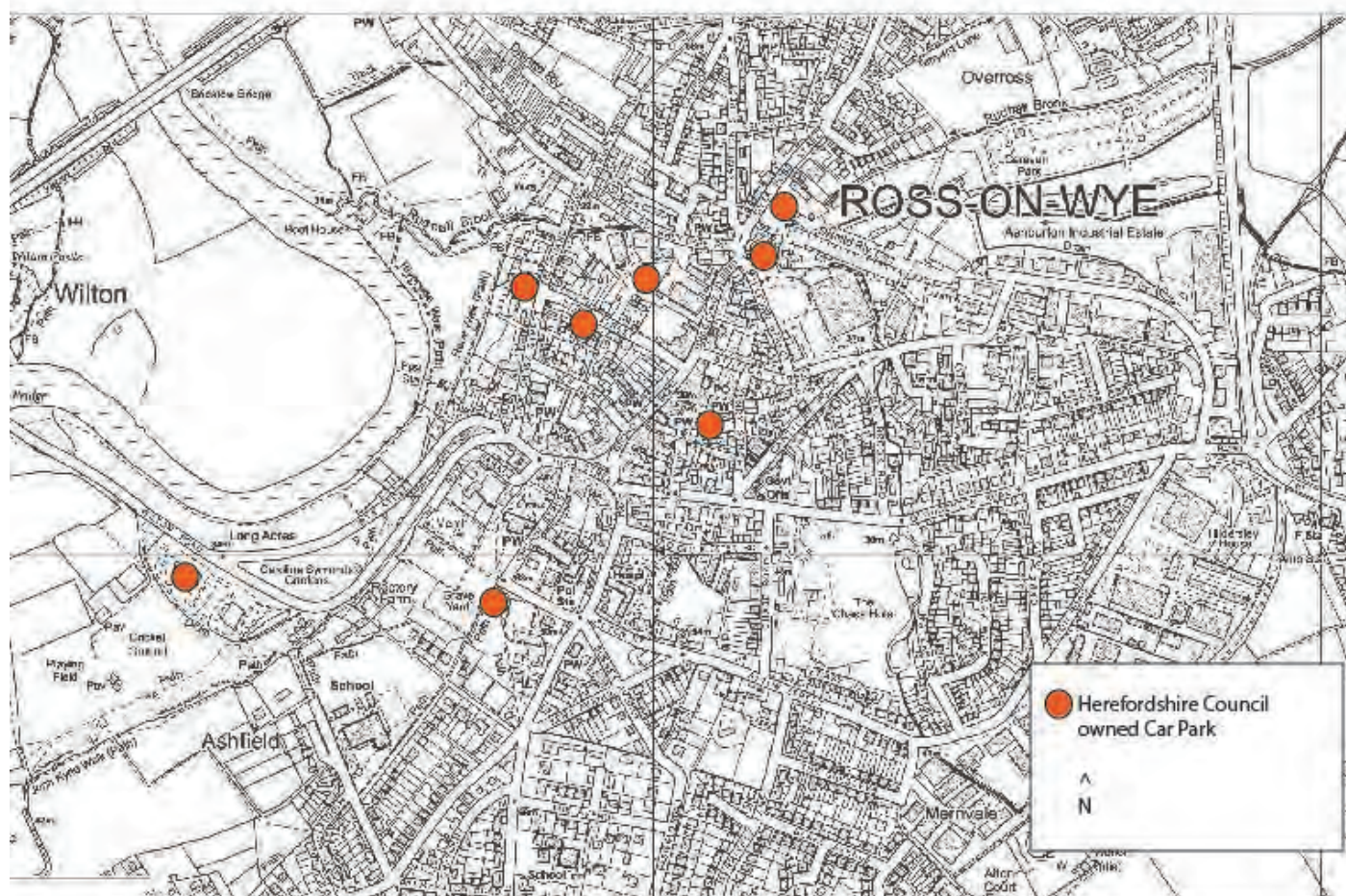
- 4.24.1 The town centre is served by several car parks managed by Herefordshire Council at which charges apply. These provide for short term access by residents and visitors as well as longer term provision for those working in the centre. There are also some private car parks, either linked to facilities such as supermarkets (e.g. Aldi) or strictly for those working in or visiting specific businesses.
- 4.24.2 Herefordshire Council data from 2011 and 2012 suggests that none of the car parks is ever full and some are poorly used; this is unlikely to be different in 2018. The limited usage may be a result of poor location, a lack of clear signage (something visitors have noted) and/or concern about charges.
- 4.24.3 While there is at present no reason to suggest that any of the car parks may no longer be necessary, and given other policies and projects to promote more use of the town centre, it may be the case over the plan period that one or more car park sites is no longer needed and can be put forward for development.
- 4.24.4 Much of this ambition cannot be addressed through Neighbourhood Plan policies but through action projects, see Section 6. However, one policy is appropriate, as opposite.



4.24 Rationalising Car Parks (...continued)

Sub-objective: 4h

Figure 16: Car parks owned and managed by Herefordshire Council in Ross-on-Wye





4.25 Electric Charging Points

Sub-objective: 4e

Planning Policy A5: Provision of Electric Charging Points

All new houses where dedicated parking per house is provided will be required to have an appropriately located charging point. Where general parking areas are included in housing developments, these are required to provide 1 charging point.

Those proposing new employment, leisure or retail developments are encouraged to provide electric charging points for staff and/or users

Explanation

- 4.25.1 There is now a national commitment to phase out carbon fuel road vehicles and replace these with electric vehicles. Though the target date for the transfer is some way ahead, it is essential to start now to provide the necessary infrastructure to support electric vehicles; indeed action is already being taken to support the growing number of electric vehicles already on the road.
- 4.25.2 A key element of this infrastructure is the provision of electric charging points at homes, at places of work, at places of leisure and so forth and at general public (and private) car parks. While all this plan can do for existing developments and car parks is to encourage the provision of charging points, it can include, as below, a policy to require them in all new developments. Each domestic charging point adds only c. £100 to the cost of any new house; that cost is more for public areas but these are, and will be, much more fully used and those places that provide charging points will be at a commercial advantage.



Delivering Overall Policy Objective 5: Protect, enhance and diversify the town's social and cultural assets

Whole Plan Area: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
5a: Retain and enhance existing social/ community facilities and deliver as appropriate in or from new developments.	SC1	P32
5b: Improve broadband and mobile phone access and connectivity.	SC6	P33
5c: Diversify town-based facilities and events for residents and visitors.		
5d: Consolidate and expand information, services and facilities for visitors.		P34 P35
5e: Encourage more river-based and riverside activities that respect their landscape context.	SC2	
5f: Promote better and more access to, and recreational use of, the wider landscape, for walking, cycling and, where appropriate, horse riding.		P36
Town Centre: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy Reference	NDP Action Project reference
5g: Support further development to create a 'Health Hub'.		
5h: Encourage and support the development of additional community facilities in the town centre.	SC2	P37
Wider Town: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
5i: Retain small shops in town neighbourhoods.		
5j: Designate Local Green Spaces of significant community value.	SC5	P38
5k: Improve existing and develop new allotment areas and play facilities, especially in or associated with major new housing developments.	SC3 SC4	P39



4.26 Retaining Community Facilities

Sub-objective: 5a

Planning Policy SC1: Retaining Community Facilities

There will be a presumption in favour of safeguarding existing facilities against any adverse proposals that would result in their loss. Proposals that would result in loss of a community facility will only be supported where it is clearly demonstrated they are no longer fit for purpose or viable, or that an equivalent alternative facility is available within Ross.

New developments will be expected to contribute towards enhancing existing facilities and, where appropriate, providing new facilities, whether within their developments or elsewhere in the town. Such proposals should ensure that:

- They meet a need identified by the community concerned or by a body with statutory responsibility for a particular service.
- They do not create unacceptable environmental impacts, including traffic and parking impacts. Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required.

Explanation

4.26.1 Ross-on-Wye is relatively well supplied with public, private and voluntary/ community facilities* and many of these serve an area well beyond just Ross-on-Wye itself. Maps in the Facilities Report (which are not exhaustive)

identify the main community facilities and assets in Ross-on-Wye. All such facilities face challenges of viability, but new developments will add additional people and therefore a possible need both for the retention of current facilities and further provision. The conversion of pubs to residential use is a particular local concern. (*The Facilities Report is referred to in the Summary Evidence Report, see Appendix 1, and includes two maps of facilities, north and south.)

- 4.26.2 For a town of its size, and the resulting distances from some peripheral neighbourhoods to the shops in the centre – over 1.5 km in some cases – it is notable that there are only three neighbourhood shops in Ross-on-Wye: a shop with post office and a fish and chip shop, both in Tudorville and a shop in Springfield Road. Some of those who will live in new developments east of the A40 will be 2 km from their nearest shops.
- 4.26.3 It is important that existing, viable facilities are retained wherever possible and that new developments contribute to their retention and improvements and/ or to the provision of new facilities. The Community Hospital is a particularly valued local facility, serving as it does an area well beyond Ross itself. Along with nearby doctors' and dentists' surgeries it almost forms a 'health hub'. This focus is particularly important to retain, ideally to enhance.



4.27 New Community Facilities

Sub-objective: 5e, 5h

Planning Policy SC2: New Community Facilities

Proposals for further community facilities in the town centre will be supported if the applicants can demonstrate the benefits of such facilities and their development generates no negative neighbour impacts.

Should funding be available for a cinema, arts centre or museum, and an appropriate site be identified, applications will be supported if the proposals conform with other town centre policies.

Should funding be available for river-based facilities, whether close to the river or in the town centre, these will be supported if the applicants can meet criteria in the relevant Management Plans and in this plan.

Explanation

4.27.1 As shown on the Facilities Report, the town centre of Ross is generally well served with community facilities and there is a wish to ensure that further facilities are located in the centre. There are currently no large areas of likely future development in the centre. If larger developments come forward, funding for further new facilities in the centre should be considered as part of those developments. (Broadmeadows/Tanyard is just outside the centre but could be considered for some facilities not best suited to the tight, urban pattern of the main town centre.)

4.27.2 There are, however, some gaps in provision identified by the local community:

- There is no dedicated cinema for Ross-on-Wye. The nearest ones are in Cinderford, Coleford, Hereford, Monmouth and Gloucester, all now inaccessible by evening public transport.
- Ross-on-Wye has a very active arts community, several of the members of which have, for some time, been seeking accommodation for studio and display space in the town centre.
- There are also ambitions for a small museum with general exhibits about Ross-on-Wye and its history but dedicated in particular to celebrating the town's role as 'the birthplace of tourism'.
- There is an aspiration to provide a greater and wider range of river-based activities.
- There is only informal provision for camping alongside the current Rowing Club. Further provision would be of value (notwithstanding development implications for anything within the main flood plan). This would be particularly important if the current Caravan and Camping site on Broadmeadows closes.



4.28 Allotments

Sub-objective: 5k

Planning Policy SC3: Allotments

Existing allotments as shown on Figure 19 should be retained, unless equivalent or improved provision can be provided nearby.

Opportunities should be sought for the provision of allotments on smaller sites within the wider town.

Developments of over 100 houses should provide allotment sites within their schemes or contribute to allotments elsewhere.

Explanation

- 4.28.1 Until recently there were a number of conventional allotments and sites for community food-growing in Ross-on-Wye. Those at Cawdor are soon to be closed (because of a potential development), leaving only those at Tudorville. The Community Garden is not technically an allotment, but is also shown on Figure 17 opposite. The spaces at both the Community Garden and Tudorville are well-used. The larger, organic rotation growing plots at Model Farm have an uncertain future and suffer from wild animal predation. (See the Summary Evidence Report in Appendix 1 for further information. This also covers Play as outlined below.)
- 4.28.2 There are issues of ownership of land, management and maintenance for the allotments, and most of the town now has no genuinely neighbourhood allotments. Both issues need to be addressed. There are also some relatively large, new housing developments planned and these should include allotments. Figure 17 on p.71 includes both allotments and play areas – the topic that follows.).

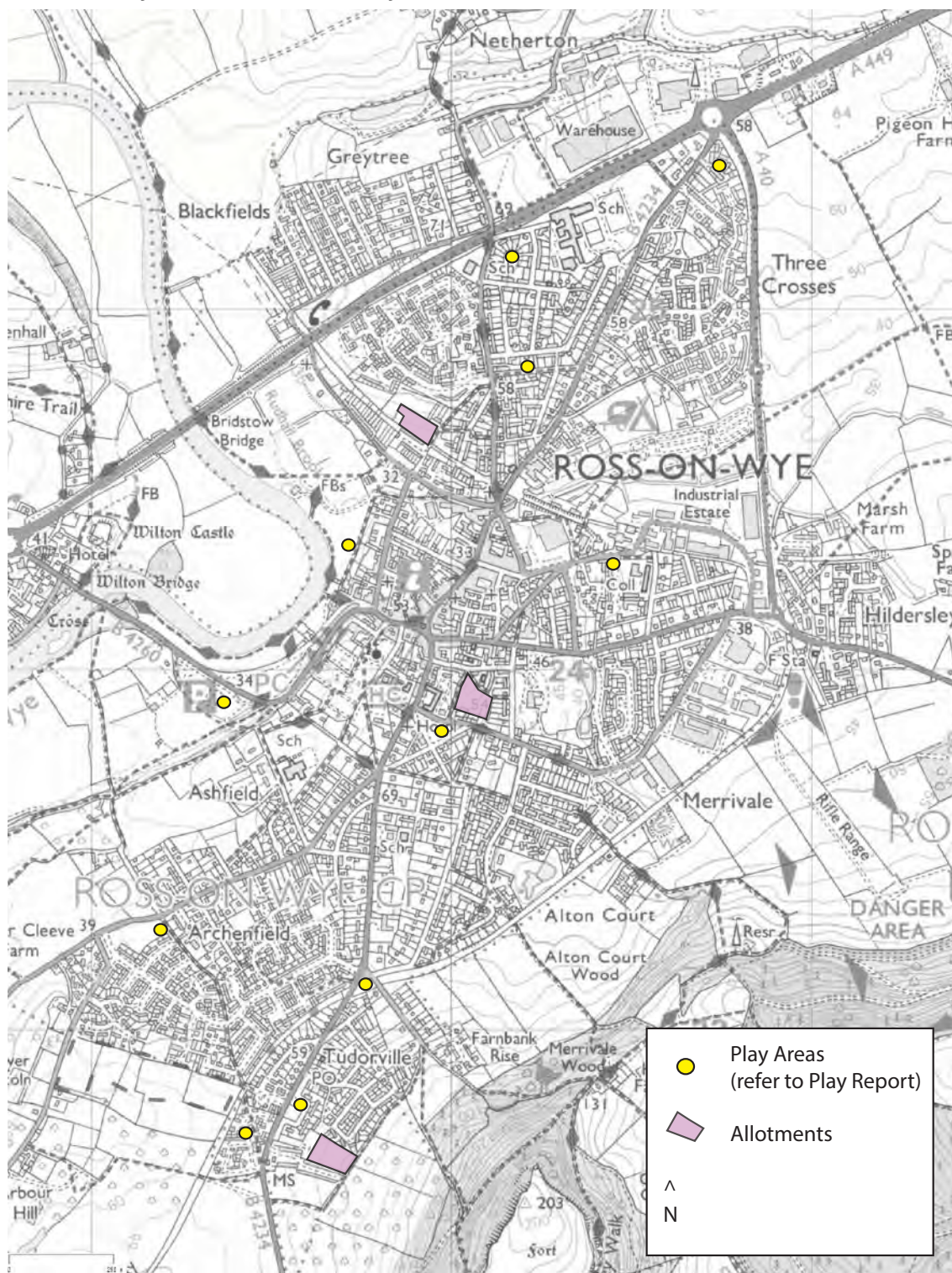




Allotments and Play Areas

Sub-objective: 5k

Figure 17: Ross-on-Wye Allotments and Play Areas



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4.29 Play Areas

Sub-objective: 5k

Planning Policy SC4: Play Areas

Existing play areas as shown on Figure 17 should be retained, unless equivalent or improved provision can be provided nearby.

New housing developments will be required to provide all forms of play provision, including, for example, Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) in line with saved policy H19 from the Herefordshire Unitary Plan.

Explanation

- 4.29.1 The play areas in Ross are shown on Figure 19. The recent assessment of these (see Appendix 1 and the Play Report) shows that some are in poor condition and have minimal equipment and inappropriate surfacing. Some, however, are in good condition although general maintenance of all is minimal. The distribution of play areas is also not regular, leaving some neighbourhoods without easy access to one for both children and parents.
- 4.29.2 The designation of some areas as Local Green Spaces, several of which contain play equipment, will help to avoid any loss of provision. Play areas in other locations need protection and it will be important for new developments to include play provision in line with Local Plan policy.





4.30 Local Green Spaces

Sub-objective: 5j

Planning Policy SC5: Local Green Space Designations

The Plan proposes that the areas as shown on Figure 18 be designated as Local Green Spaces in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Explanation

4.30.1 A community survey was undertaken to locate potential green spaces that meet the following criteria. As well as not being overly extensive, they must be demonstrably special in terms of:

- Beauty
- Historic significance
- Recreational value
- Tranquillity
- Richness of wildlife

4.30.2 A number of spaces were identified and judged to meet the criteria, see Figure 18 overleaf. Landowners of each were contacted, as were immediate neighbours. The results are included in the 'Local Green Spaces Appraisal Report' (see the Summary Evidence Report in Appendix 1).

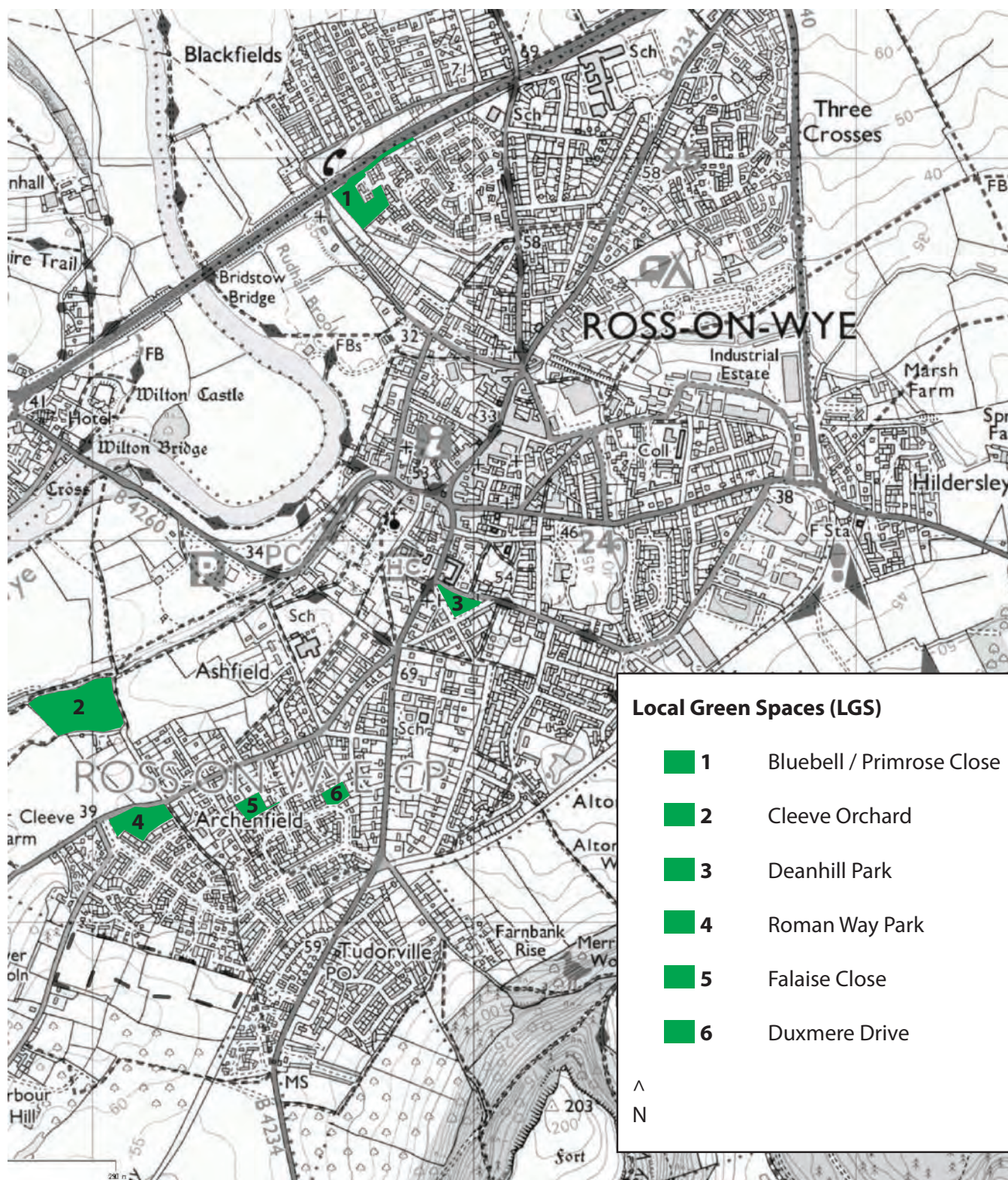




4.30 Local Green Spaces (...continued)

Sub-objective: 5j

Figure 18: Ross-on-Wye Proposed Local Green Spaces



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4.31 Telecommunications Infrastructure

Sub-objective: 5b

Planning Policy SC6: Telecommunications Infrastructure

Proposals to enhance the present and create additional telecommunications infrastructure will be supported, including to those working from home.

New development proposals will be expected 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.

Explanation

- 4.31.1 Anecdotal evidence during the consultation highlighted numerous if not permanent or geographically specific problems that local people, both residents and those in business, experienced in accessing broadband services (any services, not just the super-fast). This uncertainty is recognised by broadband providers. Mobile phone accessibility is also poor and intermittent in many parts of town.
- 4.31.2 Improvements to services are crucial to the future performance of the Ross-on-Wye economy, particularly retail, notably in the town centre and especially for places such as restaurants. (See section 4.18 – Town Centre uses).



5 Development Strategy and Sites

5.1 Development Strategy

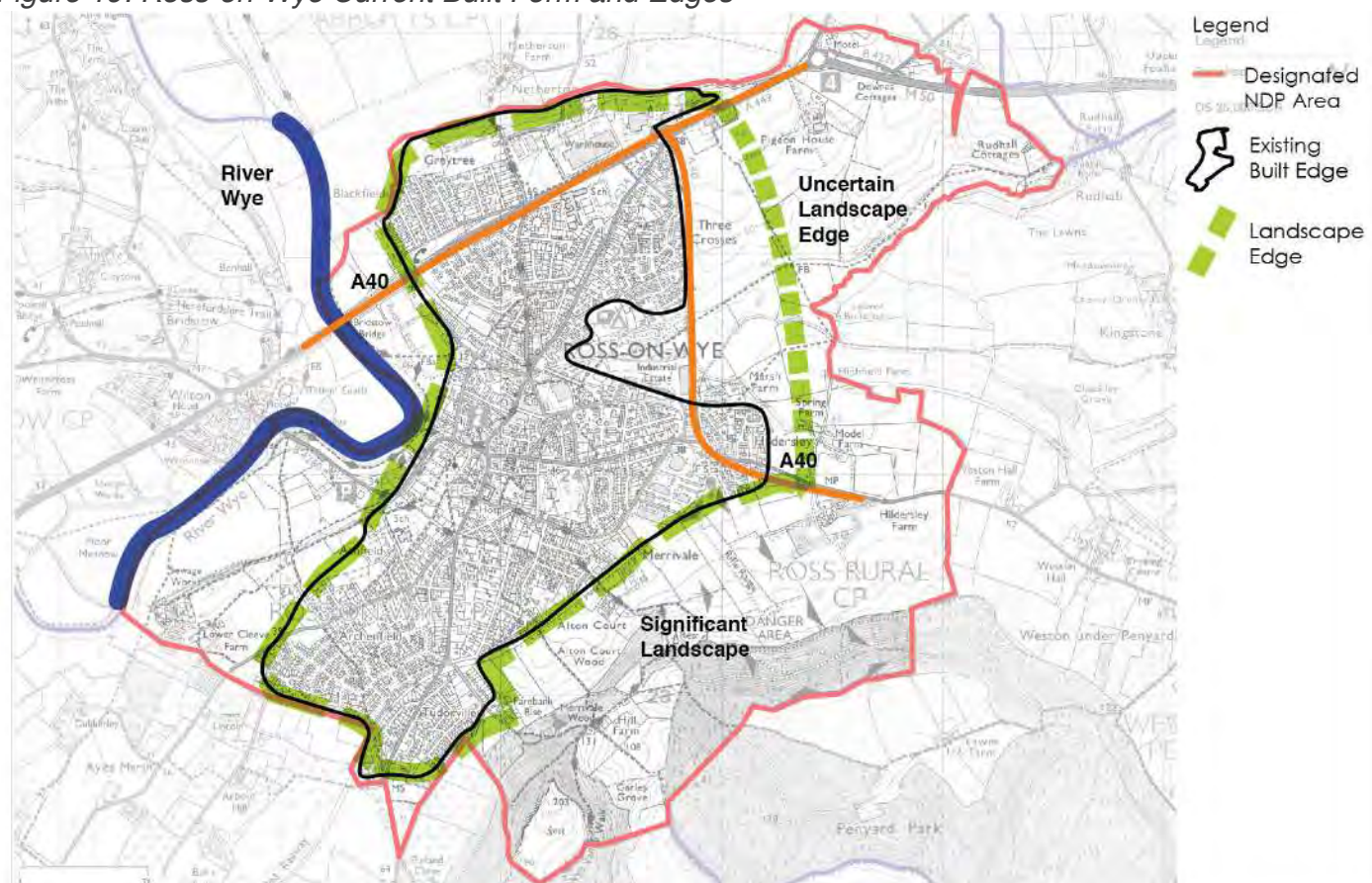
5.1.1 Ross-on-Wye is one of five Market Towns identified in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy as warranting a different approach to that for the county town of Hereford and the rural areas. The other four are Bromyard and Kington – both far smaller than Ross, and Leominster and Ledbury – of a broadly similar size to Ross. Although this Neighbourhood Plan focuses, as it should, on the Ross-on-Wye Parish area (recently incorporating Ross Rural), Ross is seen to also have a catchment area of around 26,000 people, somewhat over double its population of 11,000.

5.1.2 The town currently has clear built form and landscape edges and boundaries:

very firmly to the west along the river Wye, firmly to the north beyond the A40 and bounded by the Wye Valley AONB, to the east along the A40, very firmly to the south east along the Town and Country Trail and under Penyard Park and Chase Wood, and to the south west along the parish boundary. These are highlighted on the map below.

5.1.3 Development to the south west is currently resisted by Herefordshire Council (which Ross Town Council supports) because of the problems for vehicular traffic from this direction both into and through the town centre and for landscape sensitivity reasons. The adjacent Parish Council to the south west – Walford – is however preparing its own Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 19: Ross-on-Wye Current Built Form and Edges





Although developments on the Ross boundary have been considered, they are, in August 2018, being discounted on landscape grounds.

that as much development as possible during the plan period is within the scope and influence of this plan.

5.1.4 With the limitations as above, development to the east, beyond the A40, is being considered by Herefordshire Council and some permissions have already been given. This is complicated by the large area of as yet undeveloped land – here called Broadmeadows/Tanyard - from the A40 west almost to Ross town centre; a considerable ‘wedge’ out of the town’s otherwise clear development pattern. Breaking the A40 barrier is therefore the obvious future opportunity for significant new development but this is currently beyond the scope of this plan except in terms of broad principles. It is also important to note that, having broken the A40 barrier, there are few clear criteria to then determine a further settlement boundary. This is one reason why this plan includes criteria for this development. (The Herefordshire Council land also extends beyond the Ross-on-Wye parish boundary).

5.1.6 Accepting the boundaries as listed above limits the locations for new development (assuming that development east of the A40 will be counted in the next plan period and be considered strategic). Although there are (inter alia) serious flooding and possible contamination issues around the development of the extremely important Broadmeadows/Tanyard area, it is considered that innovative technical solutions and the appropriate quantum and type of development could generate the funding necessary to deal with the challenges. This alone would address the housing numbers challenge and add further employment land, all ensuring that this important ‘wedge’ becomes, as it should, a key part of the overall built form of Ross.

5.1.5 The Local Plan and Core Strategy includes a target for Ross-on-Wye of 900 more houses and 10 hectares of employment land during the plan period. As of 2018, over 900 houses had either been completed or permissions had been granted and the (now approved) Model Farm development will deliver at least the amount of employment land needed. It is therefore the responsibility of the Neighbourhood Plan to provide for the remaining house numbers, also including a contingency of around 10-15%. The plan Steering Group accept this and have looked at possible developments to achieve beyond these numbers to ensure

5.1.7 Beyond that, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group consider that a number of smaller sites, identified positively during Herefordshire Council’s SHLAA processes, can and should also be taken forward through this plan either as formal allocations or through criteria-based approaches. These, and Broadmeadows/Tanyard, are shown on the map overleaf. There are then a number of very small sites better considered as infill and therefore not identified separately.



5.1.8 To support these developments and ensure that they contribute positively to the overall character and sustainability of Ross-on-Wye, the plan, as above, also includes policies on (inter alia):

- Character and Design
- Enhancing the town centre
- The setting of the town in its landscape
- Green infrastructure
- Local Green Spaces
- Retaining existing, encouraging new employment
- Retaining existing, encouraging new community facilities.

5.2 Development Sites

5.2.1 The remainder of this section includes two different approaches to potential site development, as identified in Figure 20:

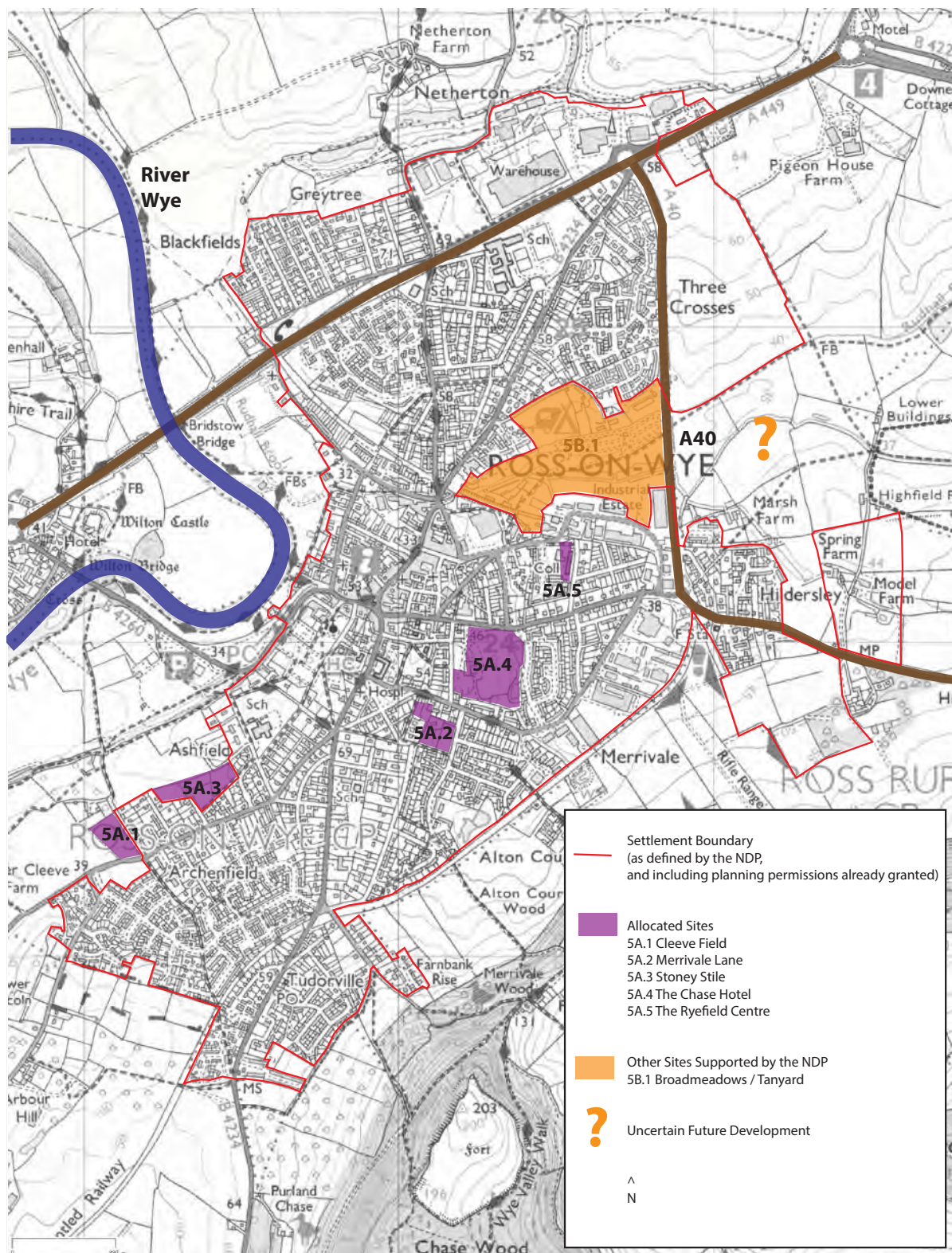
A) Sites fully allocated (Section 5.3)

B) Other sites: those for which all necessary information for allocation is not currently available so they are included with development criteria only, and those with a less certain, perhaps longer term future (Section 5.4).

5.2.2 All the sites covered below, and others submitted during Herefordshire SHLAA processes, have been assessed in the “Development Sites Appraisal” (see Appendix 1).



Figure 20: Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan Development Strategy and Sites



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5.3 Allocated Sites

5A.1 Cleeve Field Allocation

This site is allocated for custom-build housing. The following criteria would apply:

- A 'Site and Services' layout to be used.
- Design Codes to be developed and agreed with the Town Council.
- A strong landscape edge to be provided along the south west boundary.
- Occasional glimpse views to be included through to the wider landscape from Cleeve Lane towards the south west.
- Existing hedgerows to be retained and reinforced except where road and footpath access is required.
- Road access to be off Archenfield Road.
- Proposals should demonstrate how safe access will be secured for pedestrians to (a) the footpath in Archenfield Road that starts just to the east of the site and (b) the open space and play area across Archenfield Road.
- Water courses at the northern edge of the site to be fully surveyed and, if appropriate, a Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme included.

The site is adjacent to Character Area 9. Plot sizes and shapes, the use of front gardens and building heights to be consistent with that immediate local character.

The site could accommodate in the order of 16-18 houses, maximum 20.

Timing: End of the plan period.

Cleeve Field Explanatory Text

- 5.3.1 This site is currently greenfield. The gross site area is 1.2 hectares. It is bounded on two sides by Cleeve Lane and Archenfield Road, at the edge of the main town area, within the AONB and adjacent to the Conservation Area. It is flat and surrounded on all sides by hedgerows.
- 5.3.2 It is part of a larger site submitted in the 2011 SHLAA process: 'HLAA/177/001: South of Cleeve Lane'. Part only – the part shown here - was assessed as suitable, achievable and available. Although the site is within the AONB, it is not considered 'major' and appropriate development would provide a clearer settlement boundary.
- 5.3.3 Constraints identified in the SHLAA assessment were as follows:
- Adjacent to the Conservation Area to the North West.
 - Area sewer system currently overloaded.
 - Increased traffic along Archenfield Road.
 - No/poor footpath access to the town centre.



Map 1: Cleeve Field



5A.2 Merrivale Lane Allocation

This site is allocated for housing. The following criteria would apply:

- Existing hedgerows to be retained and reinforced except where road and footpath access is required or frontage development is proposed.
- Subject to detailed arboricultural survey, and site-specific design considerations, the group of trees around the existing house and the trees in the upper garden to be retained.
- A desk-based archaeological study to be undertaken.
- Road access to be off Merrivale Lane.
- Additional pedestrian access to be provided from the path to the north west.

Design

In line with the Revised NPPF (para. 127) the design should be “sympathetic to local character and history”. The site is within Character Area 7. Plot sizes and shapes, direct access off the road frontage, the use of front gardens and building heights should therefore be consistent with that of the immediate local area. Proposals should show in particular their response to the Conservation Area context.

The site could accommodate in the order of 25-30 houses, maximum 36.

Timing: Early in the plan period.

Merrivale Lane Explanatory Text

- 5.3.4 This site is currently greenfield. It is on Merrivale Lane and slopes up gently from the road. It is used on occasion as a paddock. There is one house on the north west part of the site. The gross site area is 1.2 hectares. There are two parts to the site. The paddock is adjacent to the Conservation Area, the garden to the north west is within the Conservation Area.
- 5.3.5 The paddock was assessed as suitable, achievable and available in the 2001 Urban Capacity study numbered Ross/2. The upper garden (as per ‘SHLAA text’ on the plan) was submitted as a potential site in the UDP, numbered P969. The 2001 SHLAA identifies just the upper garden and assesses this as suitable, achievable and available. There is a covenant on the upper garden area. The only significant issue identified in the 2011 assessment was the need to attend carefully to high historic environmental values.





5A.3 Stoney Stile Allocation

This site is allocated for housing and public open space or allotments. The following criteria would apply:

- Access would only be possible from Middleton Avenue if Ashton Park Primary School is relocated.
- A small amount of housing development is possible, with the remainder of the site being dedicated as allotments.
- Proposed layouts should include proposed re-routing of the public path if it is not retained in its current route.

The site is within Character Area 9. Plot sizes and shapes, the use of front gardens and building heights to be consistent with that immediate local character.

The site could accommodate in the order of 15 houses according to final access agreements, quantum of open space etc.

Timing: Late in the plan period.

Stoney Stile Explanatory Text

5.3.6 This site is currently greenfield and flat. The gross site area is around 1.7 hectares. The site is bounded by some substantial, some minimal hedgerows and trees. There is a Public Right of Way (PROW) footpath along the south eastern edge of the site. Though not a formal PROW, another east-west diagonal path is very well-used, has also been for over 50 years and is shown on several current maps. Hawthorne Lane is a narrow private road lacking footpaths. The site was assessed in the 2011 SHLAA: 'HLAA/192/001: Stoney Stile' as suitable, achievable and available. It adjoins the Wye Valley AONB. It is not in the Conservation Area but that starts towards the north across an open field, so it must be given consideration.

5.3.7 Constraints identified in the SHLAA assessment):

- Close to the Wye Valley AONB.
- Vehicular access difficult.
- Sewage provision currently poor.
- Semi-natural habitats and wildlife corridors.





- 5.3.8 The site was initially considered as potential Local Green Space (LGS) but the evidence from the community, though lengthy, did not suggest that the site would meet the criteria for LGS designation. This aspiration is, however, considered in the following by proposing the inclusion of allotments. (As outlined for Policy 5C, there is now a severe lack of allotments in the town.)
- 5.3.9 The highways authority have highlighted two concerns about access. First, that vehicular access would not be possible from Hawthorne Lane. Secondly that, even if space could be created for an access off Middleton Avenue, this would not be supported because of the congestion caused by the nearby Primary School. However, the school is being considered for relocation, at which point that particular access issues would cease to be relevant. This is why, as below, the development is currently suggested for later in the plan period.
- 5.3.10 NB. 'Stoney Stile' is the name given to this site during the Herefordshire Call for Sites procedure. Please be aware that other fields to the north of this site are also sometimes referred to as 'Stoney Stile' locally.



5A.4 The Chase Hotel Allocation

Part only of this site is allocated for housing. The following criteria would apply:

- Development to take place in the north of the site, perhaps also in the south of the site.
- Existing trees to be retained and new trees and hedgerows added to shield the development from the main part of the currently grassed central area.
- Design to be of the highest quality to reflect the site as a whole and its setting within the Conservation Area.
- A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should accompany any application.

The site could accommodate around 5 houses with development at the north only, around 12 if there is also development at the south.

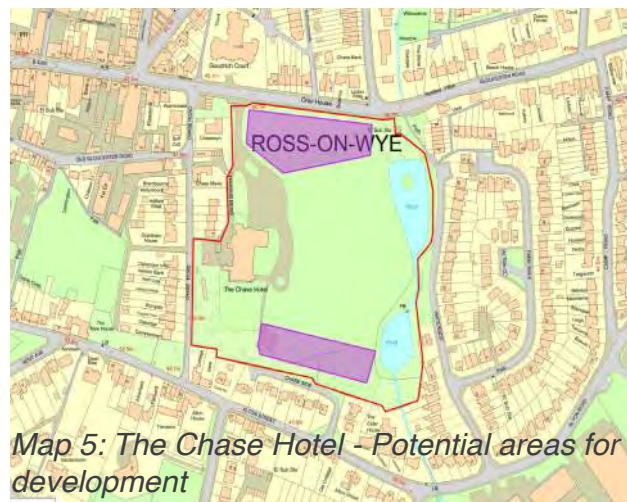
Timing: Early in the plan period.

The Chase Hotel Explanatory Text

- 5.3.11 The site in total, around 4.9 hectares, comprises the grounds of The Chase Hotel. The site is within the Conservation Area and the grounds are recorded by Herefordshire Council as an 'unregistered park or garden', though it is not open to the public. Around 20% of the site is occupied by the hotel and its associated parking, around 20% is covered by trees and around 15% is ponds and watercourses. The remainder is mainly grassed. Access is off Gloucester Road to the north.
- 5.3.12 The site was submitted during the 2016 SHLAA process, (though that had been intended solely for the rural areas of the county). The submission stated the applicant's opinion that 'further development on this site could take place'. The submission is yet to be assessed but informal discussions with council officers made clear that they would not support any application because of the historic importance of the landscape and potential negative impacts of development on that. Discussions with the applicant moved



Map 4: The Chase Hotel Site



Map 5: The Chase Hotel - Potential areas for development



more into detail than the simple ‘*further development*’ as above. They clarified that the proposed development would be of houses and it would be limited to small areas of the site, one to the north, perhaps also one to the south, using in total less than 10% of the overall site. This would deliver a likely total of around 5 or 6 houses if just the area to the north was used, around 12-15 if the area to the south was also used. The applicants have also commissioned a formal Heritage Assessment which concludes that:

- 5.3.13 *“Sensitive development of parcels of land on the northern and southern edges of the site could be achieved. This would need to include appropriate and sensitive planting which would reduce the potential impact of any development to the significance of the surrounding heritage assets and as such, it would be possible for the grounds to accommodate some development without causing a prohibitive level of harm. In the event that some harm was identified, the level of harm would, at worst, likely to be less than substantial in the context of the levels of harm prescribed in the NPPF*.”*

(* This was a reference to the original NPPF but the point reappears in the revised version.)

- 5.3.14 The full assessment and other material has been brought together into a ‘**Chase Hotel Evaluation Report**’ in the overall Evidence Report.
- 5.3.15 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are of the opinion that such a small amount of development could be supported.



5A.5 The Ryefield Centre Allocation

This site is allocated for housing. The following criteria would apply:

- A study to be undertaken about the potential re-use of the old Grammar School buildings as houses/flats.
- Parking to be provided on site.
- The site is within Character Area 6. Plot sizes and shapes, the use of front gardens and building heights to be consistent with that immediate local character.

The site could accommodate in the order of 10-12 houses.

Timing: Subject to final agreement on the closure of the Centre and sale of the land.

The Ryefield Centre Explanatory Text

- 5.3.16 The site, of approx. 0.3 hectare, is currently occupied by Herefordshire Council's Children's Centre and some other associated uses. Proposals are being developed for the relocation of the Children's Centre. The majority of the uses occupy attractive buildings, part of the old Ross Grammar School. To the east, the uses are all residential. There are some good quality trees, hedges and walls along the Ryefield Road site boundary.
- 5.3.17 Although the parking area on the land occupied by the adjacent Larruperz Centre is currently used by Children's Centre users, that is not formally for their use. Vehicular access would only be from Ryefield Road, although pedestrian access is possible from the Larruprez Centre direction.



Map 6: The Ryefield Centre



5.4 Other Sites

5B.1 Broadmeadows / Tanyard

Map 7: Broadmeadows / Tanyard



Broadmeadows / Tanyard Explanatory Text

5.4.1 *This is an extremely significant and complex site. Only key text is included below. A fuller appraisal of the site – ‘Broadmeadows and Tanyard in Detail’ – is in the Evidence folder (see Appendix 1), covering more about ownerships, site conditions, the site’s planning history and so forth.*

5.4.2 Almost all of the area shown on Map 7 – around 17.6 hectares - was considered in the 2011 SHLAA: ‘W461: Land at Broadmeadows’, with the exception of (a) the two small areas to the west – the Kings Acre car park and the lower car

park, (b) the open space area to the south of the camping site that includes the two balancing ponds and (c) the area between the previous area and the Ashburton Industrial estate. These have been added, as has the area assessed in the 2011 SHLAA as site ‘4ZPP: Land adjacent to Ashburton Estate’. The area to the north east (outside the red line above) has now been developed for housing, since the SHLAA stage. In total, this area is a significant proportion of the whole built area of Ross; it is an undeveloped and mostly poor quality environment (other than the area around the ponds) across a considerable ‘wedge’ of the town and, as such, is a clear priority for



development. Development of this site would also help to create a strong link to any developments east of the A40.

5.4.3 Constraints identified in the assessment of the Broadmeadows SHLAA area were as follows:

- A large part of the lower area of the site is in Zone 3 so subject to flooding.
- There is known contamination on the Tanyard Lane area of the site which has recently been remediated. Given previous uses, some contamination is to be expected on the Broadmeadows area; probably not on the caravan/camp site area.
- There is currently no suitable vehicular access to the Tanyard Lane area.
- Sewage provision is currently poor.
- There are groundwater quality and supply constraints (groundwater Zone 2 across much of the site).
- There are likely to be historic and archaeological sensitivities. (A survey for proposals in 2005 identified only some foundations of the 19th century tannery.)
- Biodiversity is likely to be significant close to the balancing ponds immediately south of the site and, perhaps on the Tanyard Lane field. Nearly all the area is in a Green infrastructure 'Local Strategic Corridor' in the Core Strategy.

5.4.4 Constraints identified in the SHLAA assessment of the area adjacent to the Ashburton Estate were as follows:

- Fully in Zone 3 so subject to flooding.
- Sewerage and water as above.

- Historic and archaeological issues also as above. (Though not mentioned, the site is also subject to the same constraints as above in terms of biodiversity.)

5.4.5 Local assessment has highlighted that the King's Acre car parks, especially the upper one, provide a poor quality environment at what is in effect the gateway to the town centre. The lower car park is also in flood Zone 3.

5.4.6 There is a clear need to agree potential solutions to the significant flooding issues on much of the lower part of the whole site before any development could be supported even in principle. Two possible technical solutions are introduced later. The contamination on the Tanyard Lane field has been remediated although further remediation may be required if the site was to be used for housing. Vehicular access also needs addressing before large parts of the site could be developed successfully. Illustrative proposals for this are also introduced later. Development is also subject to viability. To that end, all landowners have been contacted and have agreed that development can only proceed within an agreed masterplan for the site as a whole. All but one of the landowners also supports the use of methods of financial equalisation. (See **Landowner Contacts Report**).

Criteria

5.4.7 A mixed use development on this site would not just be supported in principle but encouraged because of the importance to Ross as a whole of such a large area.



5.4.8 In relation to potential mixed uses, it is important to note that Herefordshire Council policy would currently preclude retail. However, no proper Retail Assessment has been undertaken since 2012, yet economic and other circumstances have changed considerably since that time and the Revised NPPF 2018 recommends a more open and responsive approach to town centre vitality. There is therefore a criterion in the list below requiring a new Retail Assessment. Subject to the outcome of that assessment, some specific retail uses may be included.

5.4.9 The following criteria would apply:

- A single, overall masterplan to be produced and agreed with the Town Council and Herefordshire Council.
 - The masterplan to be based on the principle of financial equalisation between all parts of the site.
 - A clear and technically justified proposal to be made for mitigating flooding impacts on the lower parts of the site and addressing any remaining contamination across all of the site.
 - A Retail Assessment to be undertaken to establish whether some element of retail may be appropriate within the overall development and, if appropriate, to also identify the specific nature and scale of any such development.
 - The site is not part of or linked to any of the main Character Areas of the town so there is an opportunity to create an area with its own distinctive character while drawing from and extending the character of the town centre in particular. Design Codes will need to be developed and agreed.
- There is in particular an opportunity to be taken in the housing design and the site design to significantly enhance the setting of Ross-on-Wye and views across to the Parish church from the east – principles described by Persimmon’s consultants and a Herefordshire Council study in 2005. This should be complemented by retention and enhancement of appropriate green infrastructure.
 - Adequate public green space and play areas to be provided to a stated, recognised standard within the housing areas and in any public spaces.
 - Clear, direct, safe and lit footpaths and cycle path links to be created from the town centre to and from future developments east of the A40.
 - Every opportunity should be taken to enhance the safety of all users of the A40 road and footways to the satisfaction of Highways England, Herefordshire Council and the Town Council.
 - Any proposal for development of the Tanyard Lane site will require confirmation of prior archaeological investigation as being appropriate. In the event of significant and/or extensive remains being found, they should be preserved in-situ in accordance with paragraph 189 of the Revised NPPF.
 - Any planning application should show how development would be brought forward in phases to minimise adverse effects.



5.4.11 The appropriate uses to include the following:

- C3a: Housing, including Herefordshire Council's standard requirement for affordable homes.
- B1a: Offices
- B1a and B1c: R&D and light industry
- Public Open Spaces and squares.

5.4.12 There may be scope for a hotel (C1), some restaurants and cafes (A3) specifically and solely to serve employment areas and some professional and financial services (A2) linked to offices as above.

Illustrative Proposals

5.4.13 Some initial options testing has taken place in terms of the locations for potential uses on the site, the quantum of development, access and so forth. The two sketch layouts that follow below are purely illustrative but provide the outline figures for the scale of likely development as introduced above. This is explained more fully in the "Broadmeadows and Tanyard Detail" report.

5.4.14 Option 1 below would address the key flooding issue with the introduction of a balancing lake towards the western part of the site. Working together with the existing balancing ponds to the east, this should have the potential to provide suitable attenuation, although various other minor improvements to streams and culverts and the existing balancing lakes would almost certainly also be necessary. This location to the west has the benefit of being able to deal with high levels of run-off from the east down the

brooks as well as back-up from the River Wye should water levels rise dramatically from that direction.

5.4.15 In terms of overall layout and design, the balancing lake (BL) would be an attractive feature on entering the main site from the town centre. The lake would also relate to an open space or public square (OS) under the old railway embankment. All of the existing green around and including the existing balancing ponds would also be retained as public open space. In addition, though not shown on the sketch layout, there would be other public footpaths through the site - notably along the Rudhall Brook from the town centre to and across the A40 - and other paths and smaller open spaces within the main development areas.

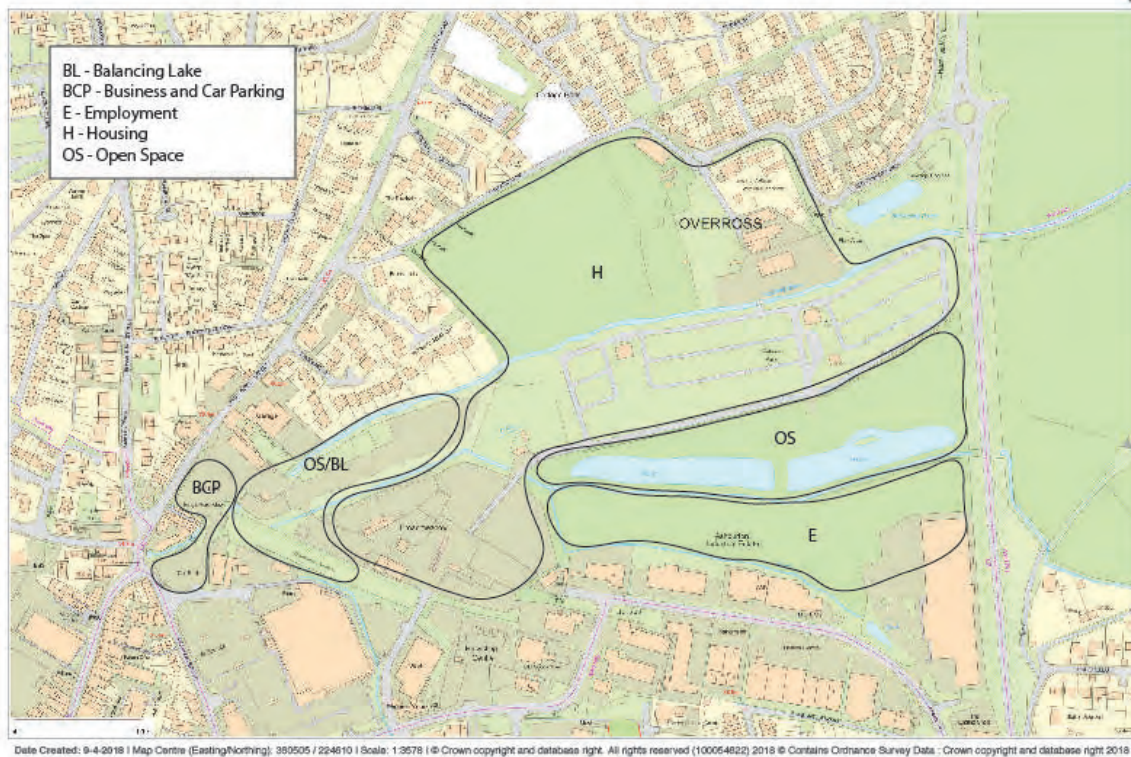
5.4.16 The upper part of the King's Acre area to the far west would be developed along the main road frontage with offices (E) and some dedicated parking, creating a more attractive entrance to the town centre at this point. Most of the existing upper and lower car parking areas would remain as such.

5.4.17 The majority of the currently poorly used part of Broadmeadows site would be used for housing (H), and housing would continue along either side of the Rudhall Brook to include the current caravan site and the main Tanyard field.

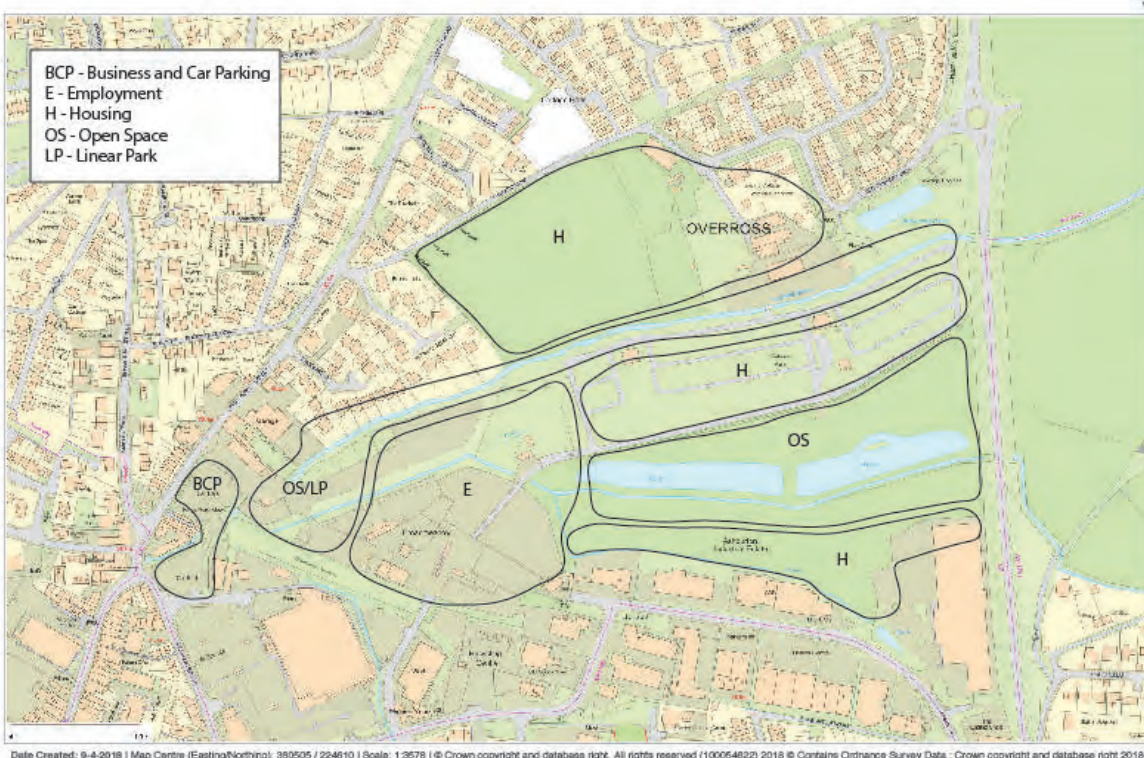
5.4.18 The land immediately north of the Ashburton Industrial estate would be for employment (E), accessed from the main estate road to the south.



Map 8: Broadmeadows / Tanyard Option 1



Map 9: Broadmeadows / Tanyard Option 2





- 5.4.19 Option 2 above takes a slightly different approach both to the flooding issue and the general location of development. (Uses on the King's Acre area would remain as in example 1 above.)
- 5.4.20 This version addresses the flooding issue through the creation of what would in effect be a long, continuous balancing lake but this time as the core of a linear park running along the full length of the Rudhall Brook across the site.
- 5.4.21 Also, in this example, the area towards the town centre and behind the unsightly Morrison's store (if mostly hidden by the old rail embankment) would be predominantly for employment uses. This would mean that all the housing would be towards the east, including on the land below the Ashburton Estate.



5B.2 Land East of A40

Land East of A40 Explanatory Text

5.4.22 This is an as yet unspecified area in detail but a large part of it is owned Herefordshire Council and is currently under strategic review. Outline permission is already in place for one large development and an application is in preparation for another large area; both on land not owned by the authority. Permission was granted (early 2018) for economic development on the southern part of the Model Farm parcel and development has now started (summer 2018).

5.4.23 In total, development of all this land would have major significance for Ross-on-Wye but it is outside the scope of this Neighbourhood Plan. (It is also likely that plans will consider land over the parish boundary into Weston-under-Penyard parish. That parish has a made Neighbourhood Plan so they would also need to be consulted.)

5.4.24 At present there is no overall masterplan, an issue of serious concern to the community in Ross as it would all, in total, represent a significant addition to the town with implications for traffic, jobs, local services and so forth.

Criteria

5.4.25 New development proposals to the east of the A40 are to be considered and advanced through a single masterplan, developed in close association with Ross-on-Wye Town Council* and with wider community consultation in line with the Pre-Application Protocol. This masterplan should consider and reflect the impact of the proposed new uses

and development on the town as a whole, if necessary proposing changes to other areas of the town to address the implications. (*And, if necessary, Weston-under-Penyard Parish Council.)

5.4.26 The masterplan will accord with all the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. In addition it will:

- Break down the 'barrier' effect of the A40, enabling walking and cycling links between the developments and the town, not just the town centre (via the Broadmeadows and Tanyard Lane area) but also to the west of town (for example via the Town and Country Trail) and to the north (notably to John Kyrle High School.)
- Deal positively with the landscape impacts of developments on the Wye Valley AONB, on the eastern edge of Ross and on areas further east.
- Create a clear, strong and sensitive eastern, southern and northern landscaped boundary.
- Include design codes, drawing from the current character of Ross-on-Wye in terms of settlement patterns as well as building styles.

5.4.27 The masterplan should also (a) consider the case for re-routing/de-trunking the current A40 'relief road' and (b) include proposals to address traffic, shopping and other implications for Ross-on-Wye as a whole from such a large development.



5B.3 Future Primary School Provision

Future Primary School Provision Explanatory Text

5.4.28 Studies have been underway for new school provision to support the anticipated population growth in Ross. As of August 2018 no specific site has yet been proposed but it is understood that the ambition remains to find a new site. With that in mind, this plan suggests criteria that should be used in selecting a new site and developing the new buildings.

Criteria

5.4.29 Selection and development of a new school site is supported in principle. The following criteria shall apply to any new site:

- The site to be in close proximity to new and existing homes.
- The site should not be at risk of flooding and, where necessary, suitable mitigation measures should be included.
- The school to be sited and designed to incorporate facilities for children, parents, staff and other users to walk and cycle to the school.
- The site to be well related to public transport services and facilities, and located to reduce and prevent vehicle congestion in the centre of the town and on access routes.
- The site layout to be capable of incorporating safe, off-road pick-up/drop-off space for cars, enable

suitable access and turning facilities for buses and coaches and include adequate car parking for staff and visitors.

- The new building to be of high quality and sustainable design.
- The new building to be suitable for wider community use. Particular consideration should be given to co-location of a school with any replacement Children's Centre and additional or alternative primary care provision.

5.4.30 These criteria should also be applied to any rebuilding or expansion of capacity at an existing primary school site.

5.4.31 According to the site's location, an assessment of any impact on the settlement boundary, Conservation Area and AONB should be included, and, where necessary, proposals should include suitable mitigation measures.



6 Practical Projects

- 6.1 The planning policies described in Section 4 will be supported by a range of practical projects. There is also an intention within Ross to create a Development Trust to lead on the implementation of many of the projects. Developers would be expected to contribute to relevant projects listed below (via Herefordshire Council's Section 106 contribution agreements).
- 6.2 It is not possible to suggest a project for every objective and policy; this would be both inappropriate and undeliverable. The following text lists the proposed projects, many of which build on groups and activities already underway, and relates them to the plan objectives. The list was developed with, and then agreed with, representatives of the local community and most of the local groups mentioned.





6.3 Objectives and Practical Projects

Overall Objective 1: Protect and enhance all aspects of the environment

Whole Plan Area

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P1	<p>Work through 'createRoss' (set up in 2017) to set up a public art and 'greening' programme, engaging local artists and suppliers and promoting wider public appreciation of the arts.</p> <p>More specifically, to (a) establish a 'Gallery Without Walls'; an outdoor art trail around Ross-on-Wye not just the town centre), linked to the existing digitisation project by the Ross Gazette and (b) a 'Ross in the Frame' project involving open frames around the town to highlight and interpret key views, local history and so forth.</p> <p>Work through Ross-on-Wye Town Council, createRoss and the Ross-on-Wye Tourism Association to install historic interpretation signs (ideally interactive) around the town, supported by trails and information sheets, linked to the existing visitor-oriented website (www.visitrossonwye.com) and to the already existing walking trails celebrating local benefactors.</p> <p>Develop an information pack for residents on renewable energy (and energy saving) options with local contacts.</p> <p>Establish a community-based solar/photovoltaic energy scheme (which can reduce costs per household by c.25%).</p> <p>Establish a project to create, preserve and maintain local woodland, trees and hedgerows (and their habitats for insects, birds etc.), including the appointment of a Tree Warden (Herefordshire has a county-wide scheme) and engaging existing local groups: The Blake Garden Volunteers, The Community Garden, U3a, Ross Rotary Club, Ross Lions Club, Ross-on-Wye Town Council.</p> <p>Promote/encourage wetland planting, including a 'Swan Island', continuing the work by the Town Council with the Wye Valley AONB, Usk and Wye Foundation and Natural England.</p> <p>Put in place (and promote to developers) hedgehog shelters in green spaces. This links to the existing Hedgehog Festival and work about hedgehogs with local schools.</p> <p>Promote quality landscaping on access routes.</p>	1a
P2		1a
P3		1b
P4		1d
P5		1d
P6		1f
P7		1g
P8		1g
P9		1c 1e 1g 1m



Town Centre

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P10	Set up a programme of hanging shop signs by local artists.	1k
P11	Promote and implement a single, coherent sign system.	1l 4d 4j 4l

Wider Town

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P12	Establish a support group to manage, maintain and promote the green infrastructure	1m
P13	Develop an information pack for residents on choosing and implementing permeable surface options.	1n

Overall Objective 2: Provide new housing Whole Plan Area

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P14	Develop a local information pack for people who might wish to self-build	2c
P15	Set up a Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust	2e



Overall Objective 3: Protect, enhance and diversify the local economy
Whole Plan Area

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P15	Provide targeted training for local people especially young people.	Overall objective 3
P16	Develop a programme of work experience/job placements linked to John Kyrle High School.	3a
P17	Promote local apprenticeship schemes.	3a
P18	Produce (and keep up to date) a register of small businesses, their current accommodation and potential future needs.	3b

Town Centre

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P19	Develop and promote a distinctive identity for the town centre, e.g. around shop themes (notably 'Vintage'), history, link to the river etc.	1j
P20	Produce a guidance pack for new shop owners/tenants linking to local tradespeople, artists, suppliers etc.	1k
P21	Employ a full- or part-time or short term contract Town Centre Manager.	3f
P22	Produce a Vintage Shopping Trail around the centre (early work already underway).	3f



Overall Objective 4: Ensure an accessible and well-connected town for all Whole Plan Area

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P23	Establish a 'Transport Innovation Group' to speed access to innovations such as self-drive cars, car share schemes etc.	4a
P24	Establish a walking and cycling group to advise developers on including appropriate provision.	4b
P25	Encourage existing home owners, businesses, service providers and the managers of public car parks to install electric charging points.	4e
P26	Produce a mainly on-road cycling trail to link Ross to other nearby towns, villages and historic locations.	4b

Town Centre

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P27	Lobby Herefordshire Council with specific, evidence-based proposals for improvements such as dropped kerbs, cycle parking.	4d
P28	Develop a Shopmobility scheme to improve disability access.	4d
P29	Establish a 'Town Centre Traffic and Parking Group' of traders, residents etc. to produce evidence and options to promote to Herefordshire Council (building on earlier town work).	4e 4f 4g 4h 4i

Wider Town

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P30	Develop locally distinctive 'gateways' to Ross along main access routes.	4j
P31	Promote initiatives to re-establish a full route along the Town and Country Trail to link with other national footpath provision.	4k



Overall Objective 5: Protect, enhance and diversify the town's social and cultural assets
Whole Plan Area

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P32	Create one single information source for local groups and organisations and places to meet.	5a
P33	Establish a volunteer ICT network to advise on maximising ICT usage.	5b
P34	Promote Ross as a centre for River Wye based activities.	5d
P35	Promote better/more diverse use of the bandstand.	5d
P36	Develop a 'Trim-Trail' along key footpath/cycle routes.	5f

Town Centre

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P37	Establish a group to develop proposals for further facilities as on p.73.	5h

Wider Town

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P38	Promote Local Green Space designation and encourage more/wider use by all.	5j
P39	Establish a community group to maintain and improve play areas.	5k



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