

BRIDSTOW NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Submission Draft Version

**A report to Herefordshire Council
into the examination of the
Bridstow Neighbourhood Development Plan
by Independent Examiner, Rosemary Kidd**

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1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Bridstow Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared to set out the community's wishes for the parish of Bridstow which contains the small settlements of Bannuttree Lane, Buckcastle Hill, the Claytons and Wilton..
- 1.2 I have made a number of recommendations in this report in order to make the wording of the policies and their application clearer, including improvements to the mapping of sites referred to in policies to ensure that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions. Section 6 of the report sets out a schedule of the recommended modifications.
- 1.3 The main recommendations concern:
 - Revisions to the objectives;
 - The deletion of Policies BR11 and BR22;
 - The amalgamation of Policies BR13 and BR14;
 - Clarification of the wording of policies;
 - Clarification to the supporting text; and
 - Improvements to the mapping of policies.
- 1.4 Subject to the recommended modifications being made to the Neighbourhood Development Plan, I am able to confirm that I am satisfied that the Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan satisfies the Basic Conditions and that the Plan should proceed to referendum.

2.0 Introduction

Background Context

- 2.1 This report sets out the findings of the examination into the Bridstow Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2.2 The Parish of Bridstow covers a substantial rural area immediately to the west of Ross-on-Wye which it abuts. It lies 17km south east of Hereford. The parish is bounded to the east and south by the River Wye. The A40 road linking the M50 motorway to South Wales runs through the parish, crossing the Wye at Bridstow Bridge. The whole of the plan area lies within the Wye Valley AONB. The parish had a population of 906 in 2011.

Appointment of the Independent Examiner

- 2.3 I was appointed as an independent examiner to conduct the examination on the Bridstow Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP) by Herefordshire Council (HC) with the consent of Bridstow Parish Council in June 2021. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the BNDP nor do I have any professional commissions in the area currently and I possess appropriate qualifications and experience. I am a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute with over 30 years' experience in local authorities preparing Local Plans and associated policies.

Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.4 As an independent Examiner, I am required to determine, under paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, whether the legislative requirements are met:
- The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body as defined in Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
 - The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
 - The Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, that is the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provisions relating to 'excluded development', and must not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area; and
 - The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated Neighbourhood Area in line with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 38A.

- 2.5 An Independent Examiner must consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the “Basic Conditions”. The Basic Conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Basic Conditions are:
1. having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
 2. the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 3. the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
 4. the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and
 5. prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan. The following prescribed condition relates to neighbourhood plans:
 - o Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (various Amendments) Regulations 2018) sets out a further Basic Condition in addition to those set out in the primary legislation: that the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

2.6 The role of an Independent Examiner of a neighbourhood plan is defined. I am not examining the test of soundness provided for in respect of examination of Local Plans. It is not within my role to comment on how the plan could be improved but rather to focus on whether the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and Convention rights, and the other statutory requirements.

2.7 It is a requirement that my report must give reasons for each of its recommendations and contain a summary of its main findings. I have only recommended modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan (presented in bold type) where I consider they need to be made so that the plan meets the Basic Conditions and the other requirements.

The Examination Process

2.8 The presumption is that the neighbourhood plan will proceed by way of an examination of written evidence only. However the Examiner can ask for a public hearing in order to hear oral evidence on matters which he or she wishes to explore further or so that a person has a fair chance to put a case.

- 2.9 I have sought clarification on a number of factual matters from the Qualifying Body and/or the local planning authority in writing. I am satisfied that the responses received have enabled me to come to a conclusion on these matters without the need for a hearing.
- 2.10 I had before me background evidence to the plan which has assisted me in understanding the background to the matters raised in the Neighbourhood Plan. I have considered the documents set out in Section 5 of this report in addition to the Submission draft of the BNDP dated November 2020.
- 2.11 I have considered the Basic Conditions Statement and the Consultation Statement as well as the Environmental Report and Habitats Regulation Assessment. In my assessment of each policy I have commented on how the policy has had regard to national policies and advice and whether the policy is in general conformity with relevant strategic policies, as appropriate.
- 2.12 I have undertaken an unaccompanied site visit to the Plan area.

Legislative Requirements

- 2.13 The neighbourhood plan making process has been led by Bridstow Parish Council which is a “qualifying body” under the Neighbourhood Planning legislation which entitles them to lead the plan making process.
- 2.14 The Basic Conditions Statement confirms that the Neighbourhood Plan area is co-terminus with the parish of Bridstow and that there are no other neighbourhood plans relating to that area. The area was designated by Herefordshire Council on 23 September 2013 as a Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.15 A neighbourhood plan must specify the period during which it is to have effect. The front cover of the Neighbourhood Plan states that this is from 2011 to 2031, in line with the Herefordshire Core Strategy. It is recommended that the commencement date should be the year that the Plan was submitted as this is the earliest date that the Plan can carry any weight in decision making.
- 2.16 The Plan does not include provision for any excluded development: county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2.17 The Neighbourhood Development Plan should only contain policies relating to the development and use of land. The BNDP policies are compliant with this requirement.
- 2.18 The Basic Conditions Statement confirms the above points and I am satisfied therefore that the BNDP satisfies all the legal requirements set out in paragraph 2.4 above.

Recommendation 1:

Revise the date of the Plan to “2020 – 2031” and show on the front cover of the BNDP.

The Basic Conditions

Basic Condition 1 – Has regard to National Policy

- 2.19 The first Basic Condition is for the neighbourhood plan “*to have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State*”. The requirement to determine whether it is appropriate that the plan is made includes the words “*having regard to*”. This is not the same as compliance, nor is it the same as part of the test of soundness provided for in respect of examinations of Local Plans which requires plans to be “*consistent with national policy*”.
- 2.20 The Planning Practice Guidance assists in understanding “appropriate”. In answer to the question “What does having regard to national policy mean?” the Guidance states a neighbourhood plan “*must not constrain the delivery of important national policy objectives.*”
- 2.21 In considering the policies contained in the Plan, I have been mindful of the guidance in the Planning Practice Guide (PPG) that:
- “Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like.”*
- 2.22 The NPPF of July 2021 is referred to in this examination in accordance with paragraph 214 of Appendix 1, as the plan was submitted to the Council after 24 January 2019. Any references in the BNDP to paragraphs in the 2019 NPPF should be updated.
- 2.23 The Planning Practice Guidance on Neighbourhood Plans states that neighbourhood plans should “*support the strategic policies set out in the Local Plan or spatial development strategy and should shape and direct development that is outside of those strategic policies*” and further states that “*A neighbourhood plan should, however, contain policies for the development and use of land. This is because, if successful at examination and referendum, the neighbourhood plan becomes part of the statutory development plan.*”

- 2.24 Table 2 of the Basic Conditions Statement includes an assessment of how the policies of the BNDP have had regard to the core principles of the plan led system from the NPPF. Section 3 sets out comments on the compliance of the BNDP with the NPPF and the Herefordshire Core Strategy under headings on Place Shaping, Economic, Social and Environmental roles. I consider the extent to which the plan meets this Basic Condition No 1 in Section 3 below.

Basic Condition 2 - Contributes to sustainable development

- 2.25 A qualifying body must demonstrate how a neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF as a whole constitutes the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for planning. The NPPF explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.
- 2.26 Table 3 of the Basic Conditions Statement sets out how the BNDP delivers on Placemaking and the 3 overarching objectives of sustainable development.
- 2.27 I am satisfied that the Plan contributes to the delivery of sustainable development and therefore meets this Basic Condition.

Basic Condition 3 – is in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan

- 2.28 The third Basic Condition is for the neighbourhood plan to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the area. The Development Plan relevant to the area comprises the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 which was adopted in October 2015.
- 2.29 Table 3 of the Basic Conditions Statement sets out the way that the Neighbourhood Plan conforms to the relevant strategic planning policies in the Core Strategy.
- 2.30 I consider in further detail in Section 3 below the matter of general conformity of the Neighbourhood Plan policies with the strategic policies.

Basic Condition 4 – Compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements

- 2.31 A neighbourhood plan must be compatible with European Union obligations as incorporated into UK law, in order to be legally compliant. Key directives relate to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives. A neighbourhood plan should also take account of the requirements to consider human rights.
- 2.32 Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations as amended in 2015 requires either that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is submitted with a Neighbourhood Plan proposal or a determination from the responsible

authority (Herefordshire Council) that the plan is not likely to have “significant effects.”

- 2.33 A screening opinion was carried out by Herefordshire Council on the draft Bridstow NDP and it concluded that due to the range of environmental designations in and around the parish, there may be significant environmental effects and consequently an SEA and HRA would be required. The Screening Opinion is set out in the Environmental Report dated January 2021.
- 2.34 The Environmental Report includes an assessment of the plan’s objectives, the policies, 3 growth options and 18 site options. The policies have been assessed against the SEA objectives. It has assisted in the choice of sites to be allocated for housing development.
- 2.35 The SEA (July 2019) for the Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan concluded that: *“On the whole, it is considered that the Bridstow NDP is in general conformity with both national planning policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and strategic policies set within the Herefordshire Local Plan (Core Strategy).”* (Non-Technical summary)
- 2.36 It also concluded that: *The assessment against the sustainability framework “reveals that the objectives and policies contained in the Bridstow NDP are by and large in general conformity with the Local Plan (Core Strategy), which means that the cumulative effect of the plan will contribute to the achievement of the SEA objectives.”* (Paragraph 6.8)
- 2.37 Therefore, no significant changes to the BNDP were recommended as a result of the SEA. The detailed analysis within this assessment was reviewed following changes to the draft plan to produce the Submission Draft BNDP. Changes included several amendments to objectives and changes to a number of policies of which those to policies BR10, BR11, BR12 and BR15 (previously BR16) are the most notable and required re-screening. Regulation 14 draft policy BR14 was deleted.
- 2.38 The conclusions of the SEA for the Submission draft BNDP (January 2021) concluded that these changes had not specifically changed the outcomes of the SEA .
- 2.39 Consultation on the Environmental Report were carried out alongside that on the Submission Draft Plan with the four statutory environmental bodies; no responses were received.
- 2.40 The Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment was carried out in January 2020. Paragraph 7.1 – 2 states *“ None of the draft Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan (January 2021) policies were concluded to be likely to have a significant effect on the River Wye SAC, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites and Wye Valley Woodlands SAC. 7.2 This is party down to scale and extent of plan also the Bridstow Plan small scale site allocations. For the policies*

contained in the plan there is sufficient policy criteria in Core Strategy policies LD2, SD3 and SD4 to ensure that development can only occur if these criteria are met.” Furthermore, paragraph 7.10 states that “This review and rescreening in addition to the revisions to the policies..... have been found to be unlikely to result in significant effects on the River Wye SAC. It is therefore concluded that the Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC, Wye Valley Woodland SAC and Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat site SACs.”

- 2.41 The overall conclusion in section 9 states “..... the modifications to the BNDP are not considered to affect the findings of the previous HRA report in a positive way as in many cases policies have been strengthened by adding protective criteria to avoid negative impacts on the SAC’s and environmental assets. The review in light of the Sweetman case is also not considered to affect the previous findings. Therefore the earlier conclusions that the Bridstow NDP will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC, Wye Valley Woodlands and Wye Valley and forest of Dean Bat sites SAC has been strengthened.”
- 2.42 However, in response to the consultation on the HRA Screening, Natural England has not agreed with this conclusion. They state that the Neighbourhood Plan allocates a certain number of houses within the Bridstow area and appears to be connecting to mains drainage, in the form of Lower Cleeve Waste Water Treatment Works. The sewage treatment works and waste water will eventually discharge to the River Wye SAC. Therefore, there is an environmental pathway here to be considered between the proposed development and the watercourse, which would result in a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC. The Plan also has a reliance on Policy SD4 of the adopted Core Strategy, to make development acceptable, which is also considered a form of mitigation. Natural England have recommended for this be assessed at Appropriate Assessment stage, to show how the above mentioned works can adequately mitigate the proposed development.
- 2.43 Herefordshire Council has noted Natural England’s response, and referred me to a position statement that has indicated that within the River Wye catchment Policy SD4 is seen as a plan policy which is not considered as mitigation. The Council’s legal advice has indicated that Appropriate Assessments are currently only required within the Lugg catchment, rather than the whole of the Wye SAC length.
- 2.44 I am satisfied that the SEA and HRA screening opinions have been carried out in accordance with the legal requirements.
- 2.45 The Basic Conditions Statement considers the impact of the Plan on Human Rights and concludes that: “The policies within the Plan are considered to comply with the requirements of the EU obligations in relation to human rights.”

- 2.46 From my review of the Consultation Statement, I have concluded that appropriate consultation on the BNDP has been carried out and the BNDP has had appropriate regard to Human Rights.
- 2.47 The Basic Conditions Statement notes that the Environment Agency has not indicated that any proposals within this Plan would conflict with measures and provisions it is advocating to meet its obligations under the Waste Water Framework Directive as set out in the Severn River Basin Management Plan or the River Wye Nutrient Management Plan.
- 2.48 I am not aware of any other European Directives which apply to this particular Neighbourhood Plan and no representations at pre or post-submission stage have drawn any others to my attention. Taking all of the above into account, I am satisfied that the BNDP is compatible with EU obligations and therefore with Basic Conditions Nos 4 and 5.

Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.49 I am required under The Localism Act 2011 to check the consultation process that has led to the production of the Plan. The requirements are set out in Regulation 14 in The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 2.50 The key stages of consultation on the preparation of BNDP were:
- 23rd November 2014 - Launch event held in Bridstow Village Hall to inform residents about the BNDP.
 - January/February 2016 - The Steering Group distributed and collected a Resident's Questionnaire to identify issues that the community felt might be covered in the BNDP. This had a response rate of 55%.
 - A Youth Forum was also held.
 - 8th and 9th July 2016 - BNDP Open Day: The Steering Group held the consultation event on the results of the Resident's Survey and to seek views upon objectives and policy directions which were devised from the survey's results.
 - April 2017 - Meetings were held at which landowners/developers were able to present their proposals for submitted sites. These were open to the public and well attended.
 - March to October 2019 - Parish Council commenced its consideration of the NDP at specific Parish Council BNDP meetings. These meetings provided opportunities for public participation.
 - 31st October to 16th December 2019 - Regulation 14 consultation period. The Public Consultation Notice was posted on all public Parish Council notice boards around the Parish. A leaflet promoting the consultation was delivered to every household within the parish at the beginning of the consultation period. Reports and information were published on the Parish Council website. Paper copies of the BNDP, together with all other

documents and the response sheets were made available at Ross Library and Ross Town Council Offices. Statutory consultees, landowners and stakeholders were notified.

- 23 November 2019 - An open session was held for residents.
- Representations were received from 25 members of the community along with those from 10 stakeholder organisations.
- 3 February to 17 March 2021 - Regulation 16 consultation was carried out by HC. Responses were received from 25 individuals or organisations and from internal consultees at HC.

2.51 It is clear from the evidence presented to me in the Consultation Statement, that extensive consultation has been carried out during the preparation of the BNDP.

2.52 I am satisfied that the pre-submission consultation and publicity has met the requirements of Regulations 14, 15 and 16 in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

3.0 Neighbourhood Plan – As a whole

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan is considered against the Basic Conditions in this section of the Report following the structure and headings in the Plan. Given the findings in Section 2 above that the plan as a whole is compliant with Basic Conditions No 4 (EU obligations) and other prescribed conditions, this section largely focuses on Basic Conditions No 1 (Having regard to National Policy), No 2 (Contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development) and No 3 (General conformity with strategic policies of the Development Plan).
- 3.2 Where modifications are recommended, they are presented and clearly marked as such and highlighted in bold print, with any proposed new wording in italics.
- 3.3 Basic Condition 1 requires that the examiner considers whether the plan as a whole has had regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Before considering the policies individually, I have considered whether the plan as a whole has had regard to national planning policies and supports the delivery of sustainable development.
- 3.4 The PPG states that *“a policy should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area”*. I will consider this requirement as I examine each policy.
- 3.5 The BNDP contains policies on the environment, highways and transportation, housing, economic development, and community facilities.
- 3.6 The Plan sets out a clear introduction with a description of the plan area, its environment and the issues facing the various communities in the parish. Three options have been considered to deliver the need for additional housing in the plan and a comprehensive assessment of potential sites has been carried out. Representations have raised concerns about the cumulative impact of the allocated sites in the Buckcastle Hill area on the local highway network. I give more detailed consideration to this under Policy BR15.
- 3.7 The policies are clearly distinguishable from the supporting text by surrounding coloured boxes. I am satisfied that the BNDP policies address the matters of concern in the parish. I have recommended modifications to the policies to address concerns raised in the representations and to improve their clarity.
- 3.8 The Plan contains a map of the plan area, a Policies Map for Bridstow parish and Policies Maps for Bannuttree, Buckcastle Hill, Claytons and Wilton. It would be helpful to plan users if the sites shown as housing allocations were

numbered on the maps and the curtilages of community facilities identified under Policy BR20 were shown on the maps.

- 3.9 Several policies state that certain forms of development will or will not be permitted under certain circumstances. Policies cannot stipulate whether any form of development will or will not be permitted. NPPF paragraph 2 states that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. I have made recommendations under the relevant policies to avoid this form of wording.

The Neighbourhood Plan

Vision and Objectives

- 3.10 The Plan includes a clear vision statement and 6 objectives. Each objective includes 3 or 4 actions to explain how the objective is to be delivered.
- 3.11 Objective 2b) refers to “significant danger resulting from contact with vehicles”. I consider that this form of wording is unclear. I have asked the QB and LPA to agree an alternative form of wording which I am recommending.
- 3.12 Objectives 3b) and 3c) do not relate to any policies in the plan. It is appreciated that the objectives were set at an early stage of plan making and were agreed following community consultation and in the case of Objective 3c) at the request of HC’s Transportation Section; however, their purpose is to provide the underpinning direction to the development of the plan’s policies. As they have not been progressed into policies, I am recommending that they should be deleted from the plan.
- 3.13 HC’s Environmental Health Service has raised concerns about the need to take account of the impacts of noise from road traffic on the A40 and A49. They have suggested that an additional statement should be included in the objectives to address this point in view of the high levels of traffic noise in the parish associated with the trunk roads. NPPF paragraph 174 identifies the need to prevent new development being put at risk from unacceptable levels of noise pollution. To reflect national guidance, I am recommending that the effects of pollution should be considered in the design and layout of housing schemes in objective 4c).
- 3.14 As objections to the impact of traffic noise have been raised in considering potential housing sites close to the trunk roads, it may be helpful to plan users to explain these concerns in the issues section and to make it more explicit that sites with unacceptable levels of highway noise have been rejected by plan makers and should be avoided when considering infill sites.

Recommendation 2: Revise the objectives as follows:

Revise Objective 2b) to read “Avoiding development where this would result in significant danger through conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.”

Delete Objectives 3b) and 3c).

Add the following new objective after 4c): “Avoiding noise sensitive development on sites with unacceptable levels of traffic noise close to the trunk roads.”

Include a paragraph in the Issues section to explain the background to concerns about the impact of traffic noise from the trunk roads and refer to the decision taken on sites with unacceptable levels of highway noise.

Policy BR1: Promoting Sustainable Development

- 3.15 The policy sets out “high level priorities that are considered essential for maintaining sustainable development” and summarises the main areas addressed in the plan. There is a degree of repetition of points in this policy with other policies in the plan. However, the policy provides the framework to the rest of the Plan.
- 3.16 It is considered that it is unnecessary to refer to the priorities as “high level”. I recommend that these words be deleted.
- 3.17 The second sentence of point a) refers to major development in the AONB only being permitted in exceptional circumstances and goes on to paraphrase NPPF paragraph 177. I consider the matter further under Policy BR3 which refers to planning permission being refused for major development and adds further local considerations to the definition of major development. I am recommending a modification to Policy BR1 as a consequence.

Recommendation 3: Revise Policy BR1 as follows:

Delete “high-level” from the first paragraph of the policy.

Delete the second sentence of point a) “Major development ...satisfactory degree.”

Policy BR2: Development Strategy

- 3.18 The policy sets out the scale of development to be identified in each settlement and defines a settlement boundary for Wilton and development boundaries for the settlements within Bridstow. I have asked the QB why different terms have been used in different settlements. They have agreed that this is unnecessary and have advised that the term “settlement boundary” should be used for all settlements. HC has commented that it is standard practice to use the term Settlement Boundary in NDPs in the Council area.

- 3.19 Policy RA2 of the Core Strategy sets out the strategic approach to housing delivery. Sustainable housing growth will be supported in or adjacent to those settlements identified in the table following the policy. Both Bridstow and Wilton are identified as settlements that will be the main focus of proportionate housing development.
- 3.20 A representation seeks
- the addition of the wording “Ross on Wye Housing Market Area overall” in the second sentence of the policy. It is considered that this wording is unnecessary.
 - additional wording to criterion b) to secure access from allocated parcels of land to adjacent parcels of land. This relates to a further representation to secure the allocation of a parcel of land adjacent to one allocated under Policy BR15. It is considered to be an unnecessary addition to Policy BR2.
 - the deletion of “in particular but” from criterion c). It is considered that this is unnecessary.
- 3.21 Other than referring to the “settlement boundary” throughout, it is considered that the policy conforms to national and strategic policies and no further modifications are recommended.

Recommendation 4: Revise Policy BR2 as follows:

In criterion b) replace “Development boundaries” with “Settlement boundaries”.

In criterion c) delete “or development” from line 1.

Replace “development boundaries” with “settlement boundaries” elsewhere in the supporting text of the BNDP.

Policy BR3: Major Development within the Wye Valley AONB

- 3.22 The first sentence of the policy is a general statement about conserving and enhancing the AONB and its characteristics. It is considered that it accords with national and strategic policies.
- 3.23 The second and third sentences of the policy seek to add considerations to the definition of “major development in an AONB” which is set out in NPPF paragraph 177. It sets out four locally important matters to be taken into account in considering whether proposals in the AONB should be considered as “major development”. The NPPF advises that major development should usually be refused other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

3.24 NPPF paragraph 177 sets out guidance on the matters to be considered in assessing whether proposals in AONBs are major development. This states that:

“Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”*

3.25 Footnote 60 to the NPPF states that whether a proposal is a ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

3.26 The QB has commented that *“the policy provides additional guidance upon the broad criteria in the NPPF by giving further guidance upon how to look at scale, in particular settings, and defines the purposes of the designation which in addition to landscape, includes the component elements of wildlife, cultural heritage and recreational opportunities which are now purposes of AONBs.”*

3.27 I consider that this policy accords with national planning guidance and provides a local application to aid the interpretation of the NPPF guidance.

Policy BR4: Conserving the Landscape and Scenic Beauty within the Wye Valley AONB

3.28 Policy BR4 sets out more details about matters that should be taken into account in considering development proposals in the AONB to conserve and enhance its qualities. There is no need to refer to “all” development proposals in line 1 of the policy as the policy would not be applicable to permitted development or changes of use.

3.29 Point d) refers to considering the impact on the openness of the “Strategic Green Gap” between Bridstow and Wilton. This gap is defined on the Wilton Village Policies Map as the three fields to the north and north west of the junction of the A40 and A49. To be considered strategic, the area should have been identified in a higher level or strategic plan such as the Core

Strategy. This does not appear to be the case. Consequently, it is considered that the gap is of local significance only and I am recommending that the word “strategic” should be deleted.

- 3.30 The plan refers to this area as “*an important cultural landscape associated with the Castle*”. These fields are at some distance from Wilton Castle which lies to the east of the A40; no evidence has been provided of their historic association or connection with the Castle. The Old Vicarage is listed Grade II and lies to the north-west of the defined area; the impact of any development on its setting will be a necessary consideration in any development proposal. The QB has also referred me to the views over the area from “The Prospect” in Ross-on-Wye, an important viewpoint in this locally important historic garden that is a public park.
- 3.31 On my site visit I noted that the three fields are relatively flat and in use for agriculture. The proposed Green Gap is defined by the settlement boundaries of Bannuttree on the west, Ross-on-Wye on the east and Wilton and the A40 on the south. The A49 crosses the area. I have also noted the concerns made by HC’s Environmental Health Officer about high levels of traffic noise in the area from the A40 and A49. The proposed Green Gap is outside the settlement boundaries where development proposals would only be acceptable in the exceptional circumstances set out in the NPPF.
- 3.32 The QB has referred me to a similar policy in the Cradley NDP. There the strategic green gap has been identified in response to a policy in the Malvern Hills Local Plan adopted in 1998 in order to maintain the open area between two parts of the village. The policy is worded: “*Development in it, that will visually diminish the openness of the gap when viewed from public accessible locations, except for public open space, and that reasonably required for agriculture and forestry purposes or to mitigate flood risk, will not be supported*”.
- 3.33 Policy SS6 of the Core Strategy states “*Development proposals should conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county’s distinctiveness, in particular its settlement pattern, landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets and especially those with specific environmental designations.*” The supporting text to Policy SS6 states “*Although the approach will be based upon addressing issues at a landscape scale, there will be instances where detailed features and assets should be conserved when they contribute to local distinctiveness*”.
- 3.34 I am concerned that the wording of Policy BR4(d) is such that it could be construed to seek to prevent all forms of development particularly as it seeks to “*avoid an alien urban appearance within the rural landscape*”. The Plan does not explain how this is to be interpreted or applied nor does it state what forms of development may be acceptable in the way that the policy in the Cradley NDP does. Preventing two settlements from coalescing is not the same as preventing all development between them.
- 3.35 A policy defining an area where no development is to be supported would seek to establish a regime that is more restrictive than even that applying in

designated Green Belt or designated Local Green Space. Such an approach would not have sufficient regard for national policy for it to be appropriate.

- 3.36 The proposed green gap has a distinct rural character and appearance, and functions to provide a clear physical separation between the three settlements of Bannuttee, Wilton and Ross-on-Wye. The gap has a quality of openness and is visible from the important viewpoint at The Prospect in Ross-on-Wye. I am recommending a modification to the policy to provide greater clarification for decision makers that within the defined green gap, development that would visually diminish the openness of the gap, as viewed from publicly accessible locations, with the exception of development required for agriculture and forestry, and flood risk management, will not be supported.

Recommendation 5: Revise Policy BR4 as follows:

Delete “All” from the first line of the policy.

Revise criterion d) to read “Development within the Green Gap defined on the Policies Map between Bridstow and Wilton that will visually diminish the openness of the Green Gap when viewed from publicly accessible locations, except for *that reasonably required for agriculture and forestry purposes or to mitigate flood risk, will not be supported*”.

Policy BR5: Protecting Heritage Assets

- 3.37 The policy seeks to preserve and enhance the significance of various types of heritage asset. I have concerns that some of the wording of the policy does not fully reflect that of the NPPF. Core Strategy Policy LD4 includes further policy on the subject.
- 3.38 The first sentence should be worded to reflect Policy LD4 and refer to “*protect, conserve and where possible enhance*”.
- 3.39 Point a) addresses assets of the highest significance (Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Grade I and II* Listed Buildings). NPPF para 200b) states that “substantial harm to these assets should be wholly exceptional”. I am recommending a modification to better reflect this requirement. The listing in Appendix I of the Plan includes other properties of highest significance and I am recommending that all should be included in the policy wording. Grade II listed buildings will be considered against national and Core Strategy Policies.
- 3.40 Point b) It is considered that this part of the policy is unnecessary as it is addressed in national and strategic policies. The recording of the significance of any heritage asset to be lost is addressed in NPPF paragraph 205 and Policy LD4. NPPF paragraph 194 covers the need for archaeological assessment. I am recommending that the criterion should be deleted.

- 3.41 Point c) It is considered that this part of the policy is unnecessary as it is addressed in NPPF paragraph 200.
- 3.42 Point d) It is considered that the word “conserve” better reflects national policies than “preserve” in this context.
- 3.43 Point f) There are two unregistered parks and garden in the parish. These are locally designated and included in the HC’s Historic Environment Record and listed in Appendix 1. HC has informed me that they only include Registered Parks and Gardens on the Core Strategy Policies map. It may be helpful to plan users to show them on a diagram within the text of the BNDP.
- 3.44 Point g) Heritage Impact Assessments are prepared to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development proposals. The need for them and level of detail is addressed in NPPF paragraph 194. It is unnecessary to set this out as a requirement in a neighbourhood plan policy.
- 3.45 Point h) Policies cannot stipulate whether any form of development will or will not be permitted. NPPF paragraph 2 states that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Modifications to the wording are recommended to overcome this. Core Strategy Policy RA3(6) relates to new housing development in the countryside being of “exceptional quality and innovative design”. NPPF para 80e) sets out updated wording in respect of this requirement which should be included within the policy to clarify its intention.
- 3.46 The QB may wish to consider including a cross reference in the justification to the policy to the relevant sections of the NPPF and Core Strategy policies to address those subjects that are to be deleted from the policy.
- 3.47 Historic England commends the emphasis given to the conservation of landscape character and the maintenance of local distinctiveness. The recognition of the importance of historic farmsteads is welcomed.

Recommendation 6: Revise Policy BR5 as follows:

Revise the first paragraph to read: “....*should be protected, conserved and where possible enhanced through:*”

Revise point a) to read: “Developments *that may result in substantial harm or loss of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Grade I and II* Listed Buildings at Wilton Castle and the house attached, Wilton Bridge and Sundial, Churchyard Cross at St Bridget’s Church, St Bridget’s Church and their settings should be wholly exceptional and will require clear and convincing justification.*”

Delete points b), c) and g).

Revise point d) to read “.....that *conserves or enhances*....”

Revise the second sentence of point h) to read: “.....New development associated with historic farmsteads *should* respect the historic form of the farmstead as demonstrated through thorough research of historic documents to *secure a design of exceptional quality.*”

Additional text may be added to the justification to reference the sections of the NPPF and Core Strategy policies to address those subjects that are to be deleted from the policy.

Policy BR6: Enhancement of the Natural Environment

- 3.48 It is considered that the policy conforms to national policy on biodiversity net gain and Core Strategy Policy LD2. The route of the ecological corridors referred to in the policy should be shown on the Policies Map to improve the clarity of the policy.
- 3.49 A representation has suggested amendments to the wording of the policy to add “where practical to do so” after hedgerows; to delete “where absolutely necessary” and to add “but proportionate” before compensatory measures. It is considered that the amendments are unnecessary and do not help to clarify the interpretation of the policy.

Recommendation 7: Show the ecological corridors along the River Wye, Wells Brook and the tributary to that Brook on the Policies Map or on a diagram within the text of the BNDP.

Policy BR7: Protection from Flood Risk

- 3.50 It is considered that the Policy helps to deliver national policy on flood risk and conforms to Core Strategy Policy BR7. It adds to the strategic policies by highlighting the issue of flood risk in the area and the measures to manage drainage in new development in this rural area. The justification identifies the areas at risk of flooding.

Policy BR8: Sewerage and Sewage Infrastructure

- 3.51 Welsh Water has commented to say that the reinforcement work at the Lower Cleeve WwTW has been completed. The QB has proposed the following revision to paragraph 6.9 to reflect this:

“This policy is considered consistent with Herefordshire Core Strategy policy SD4. The Ross Lower Cleeve WwTWs serves a wide area comprising Ross-on-Wye and some surrounding villages, including those within Bridstow Parish. Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water recently completed a reinforcement scheme

at this WwTW. However, the River Wye is a Special Area of Conservation requiring a high priority to be given to maintaining good water quality. Consequently, should there be a future shortfall in WwTWs capacity, this policy maintains a precautionary approach to ensure appropriate protection.”

- 3.52 A representation has been made suggesting the addition of a statement concerning development on sites with non mains drainage. This is addressed in Policy SD4 of the Core Strategy and there is no need to repeat it here.

Recommendation 8:

Revise paragraph 6.9 to read: “This policy is considered consistent with Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy SD4. *The Ross Lower Cleeve WwTWs serves a wide area comprising Ross-on-Wye and some surrounding villages, including those within Bridstow Parish. Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water recently completed a reinforcement scheme at this WwTW. However, the River Wye is a Special Area of Conservation requiring a high priority to be given to maintaining good water quality. Consequently, should there be a future shortfall in WwTWs capacity, this policy maintains a precautionary approach to ensure appropriate protection.”*

Policy BR9: Sustainable Design Policy

- 3.53 The policy conforms with and builds on Core Strategy Policy SD1. There is some repetition but on the whole the policy includes more specific details of requirements and reflects local aspirations as advised in NPPF paragraph 127.
- 3.54 It may not be possible to apply all the design measures to all developments; a modification is recommended to the first paragraph to introduce some flexibility.
- 3.55 Examples should be included in the justification by way of explanation instead of in the policy wording. I am recommending modifications to points a) and b) in this respect. Additional text may be added to the justification if necessary to explain how the policy could be applied. This could include an explanation of how sustainable drainage systems may be applied as set out in criterion d).
- 3.56 The QB has confirmed that point g) refers to construction waste. It is recommended that the word “construction” is added in order to improve the clarity of the criterion.
- 3.57 Point h) relates to innovative designs which is also addressed in Policy BR10 point b). It is recommended that they are amalgamated to improve the clarity of the policies.

- 3.58 A representation has suggested that electric charging points could be included in the policy. I agree that this may be helpful.
- 3.59 In response to the concerns about noise levels from the traffic on the A40 and A49 in the plan area raised by HC's Environmental Health Officer, it is recommended that an additional design measures should be included to address this subject.

Recommendation 9: Revise Policy BR9 as follows:

Revise the first paragraph second sentence to read “...which *could* include:”

Point a) delete “such as photovoltaic panels”.

Point b) replace “such as through” with “*including*”.

Revise point g) to read “...and reducing *construction* waste.”

Revise point h) to read: “.....they should be of a high quality and fit sensitively within the streetscene and landscape and reflect locally distinctive features to maintain the area’s cohesive character.”

Add a new point: “*For proposals requiring vehicle parking, provision of electric vehicle charging points at an appropriate level, which should be for each dwelling in residential developments, and for other forms of development to suit the needs of the expected level of traffic generation.*”

Add new point: “*Locating noise sensitive development, including housing, in locations that are not subject to unacceptable levels of noise from highways and ensuring effective measures are taken to ensure that ambient noise levels both indoors and outdoors are acceptable.*”

Revise paragraph 6.11 to include examples of renewable energy infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems that may be employed. Additional text may be added to the justification to explain how these new criteria are to be applied.

Policy BR10: Housing Design and Appearance

- 3.60 The policy addresses further aspect of design in relation to new housing, including extensions. It conforms to Core Strategy Policy SD1. The justification incorrectly refers to Policy SD2 which relates to renewable energy. The last sentence of paragraph 6.12 is a repetition and incorrectly refers to Policy HD2.

- 3.61 Point b) relates to innovative designs which is also addressed in Policy BR9 point h). I have made a recommendation under that policy that they should be amalgamated to improve the clarity of the policies.

Recommendation 10: Revise Policy BR10 as follows:

Delete point b).

Revise the second sentence of paragraph 6.12 to read “Core Strategy Policy SD1” and delete the last sentence of the paragraph.

Policy BR11: Traffic Measures within the Parish

- 3.62 The policy sets out measures that the Parish Council will seek through working with the Highways Agency, HC and developers to improve the road network, ensure greater safety, increase transport choice and reduce the impact of vehicles on residents. It is considered that it is a Community Action and not a planning policy. As such it should be included in a separate section of the Plan headed Community Actions with explanatory text to say that it is not part of the development plan.

Recommendation 11: Delete Policy BR11 and place it in an Appendix or separate section of the Plan headed Community Actions.

Policy BR12: Highway Design Requirements

- 3.63 The policy sets out aspects of highway design that are important locally. It conforms to Core Strategy Policy MT1. HC has a Highways Design Guide for New Developments (2006) which sets out the highways standards that will be required.
- 3.64 I have concerns about the deliverability of criterion b) which states that the proposal should not result in on-street parking and if possible, address any existing on-street parking problems. This should not be included in a planning policy as it cannot be controlled through a planning condition. I am recommending that adequate off-street parking should be provided for residents and visitors.
- 3.65 The implementation of criteria c) and d) will involve matters of judgment and they should be worded as “should”.

Recommendation 12: Revise Policy BR12 as follows:

Revise criterion b) to read: “Adequate provision of off-street parking for residents and visitors.”

Revise criterion c) to read: “Proposals *would* not lead to”

Revise criterion d) to read: “The nature of the development *would* not lead to”

Housing

3.66 Policy RA2 of the Core Strategy sets out the strategic approach to housing delivery. Sustainable housing growth will be supported in or adjacent to those settlements identified. Both Bridstow and Wilton are identified in the Core

Strategy as settlements that will be the main focus of proportionate housing development.

3.67 Paragraph 3.25 of the BNDP states that HC proposed a housing requirement for the plan area of 57 dwellings between 2011 and 2031. At January 2019, a total of 20 dwellings had been granted planning permission meaning provision is to be made in the plan for a minimum of 37 dwellings. An assessment of windfall suggested that an allowance should be made for 12 dwellings from windfalls. This meant that sites had to be found for a minimum of 25 dwellings.

3.68 Three development options were considered through the SEA. These were:

Option 1 – seeking one or two relatively large sites that might accommodate the Core Strategy target for the Parish.

Option 2 – identifying a number of smaller sites that would be in keeping with the scale of development within Wilton and the 3 main settlements in Bridstow.

Option 3 – locating development where this might contribute towards creating a village core for Bridstow.

3.69 The assessment results showed very little difference in the impact of the three options and only highlighted that option 1 may have an impact on the SEA objective to maintain and enhance nature conservation.

3.70 A number of representations have been received to the proposed housing allocations in the Plan. In response to the points made, the Qualifying Body has made the following comments:

There is one area of “uncertainty about whether the highway network is able safely to accommodate traffic generated by development. This applies to all proposed housing sites and not just those at Buckcastle Hill. As a consequence, the NDP contains what is considered an appropriate safeguard....”

Herefordshire Council has identified some highway constraints, especially at a pinch point adjacent to Rock Cottage between Buckcastle Hill and the Hoarwithy Road junction with the A49. However, they have not advised whether this limits the capacity for new housing development at Buckcastle Hill. Nevertheless, the NDP recognises that the constraints may limit development in this part of Bridstow and amended NDP policy BR12 following representations at the Regulation 14 stage to indicate that transport

assessments may be required. NDP Policy BR15 only allows development to proceed upon the allocated sites should the relevant design and detailed NDP policies be met, and NDP Policy BR12 is explicitly indicated in the supporting statements as one of those requirements. This also applies to NDP Policy BR16 where necessary. Through this mechanism, it is considered that appropriate safeguards are given to enable Herefordshire Council to determine whether and if so when any highway capacity limit has been reached. It is understood that a transport assessment can include effect on pedestrian movement.”

3.71 In the site assessment report, the plan makers have undertaken a suitable and proportionate assessment of potential sites against agreed criteria. However, they recognise that more detailed transport assessments are required to determine whether each site can be delivered in a way that achieves an acceptable level of highway safety. This means that there is a degree of uncertainty about the deliverability of the housing sites. Furthermore no assessment of the cumulative impact of all the proposed sites on the local highway network has been undertaken.

3.72 It is evident that the plan makers have considered the subject of highway safety carefully throughout the plan making process. The Consultation Statement Schedule 1, Appendix A paragraph 17.1 states:

“17.1 Many representations make reference to the effects of development on highway safety and this is not unsurprising given the nature of both the SRN and local network. Highway advice from both Herefordshire Council and Highways England does not specifically object to any of the allocated sites, but neither does it suggest any of them is capable of development. In all instances the need for traffic impact assessments should at least be investigated, if not prepared. As a consequence, there is uncertainty that some of the sites would be capable of delivery or delivery at reasonable cost. However, recent evidence through decisions upon planning applications and appeal decisions’ suggests that by advocating small sites, the ability to accommodate the resulting traffic is improved. This should reduce the level of uncertainty for the sites proposed in the NDP although does not remove it completely.

3.73 In recognition of the uncertainty about the deliverability of some of the sites selected for development, the plan makers have proposed the following options to address any resulting shortfall:

- higher levels of development may be possible on selected sites where this is supported through a traffic assessment;
- infill development elsewhere within settlement boundaries to increase the number of windfall sites; and
- an agreement has been reached with Ross on Wye Town Council that the Town Council will notionally allocate up to 15 dwellings from its own expected “excess provision” to meet or help meet any shortfall in provision in Bridstow parish. The Parish Council has stated that it will use its best endeavours to secure sufficient sites to meet its housing requirement.

3.74 I have concluded that the plan makers have undertaken appropriate and proportionate assessment of the potential sites and have identified alternative means of delivering the housing numbers required should more detailed assessments demonstrate that any of the sites are likely to be undeliverable. Paragraph 11.6 recognises that a review of the Plan may be needed if monitoring reveals that the parish is not able to deliver its housing requirement.

Policy BR13: Housing Development in Wilton

Policy BR14: Housing Development in Bridstow

3.75 Policy BR13 defines a settlement boundary for Wilton, whereas Policy BR14 defines development boundaries for the three settlements in Bridstow. As discussed under Policy BR2, the QB has agreed that a consistent form of wording should be used. Settlement boundary is the preferred term as this is used in other Herefordshire neighbourhood plans.

3.76 The policy supports sensitive infilling including the site allocations. A number of criteria are set out on design, landscaping, heritage assets and access considerations.

3.77 I consider that the criteria in the policies are unnecessary as they are set out in other policies in the plan. I am proposing that the policies should be amalgamated and simplified to improve their clarity. The justification to the amalgamated policy should set out the text for the settlements in alphabetical order to accord with the revised policy.

3.78 A representation has been made proposing minor changes to the wording of Policy BR14 to increase its flexibility.

3.79 A representation has been made to revise the settlement boundary to enlarge site (i) to incorporate land west of Land Acre which would double its size to about one hectare. It also suggests taking access through the allocated site.

3.80 The QB has commented that “*Land Acre lies immediately adjacent to the A40 close to Wilton roundabout. Herefordshire Council’s Environmental Health*

Section objected to the allocation of sites in similar locations because of the severe adverse effects from noise and air pollution and this led to the withdrawal of those sites as allocations (Land at Wilton Cottages, Wilton; and Land at White Cross, Bannuttree). There is every reason to believe that the same objection would be made to the allocation of this site for housing.”

- 3.81 The site was not submitted through the call for sites and the QB is of the view that land west of Land Acre is not suitable for allocation for housing in association with that at Bridruthin. Furthermore, it would not be appropriate for the NDP to require access to be made available to Land Acre through land at Bridruthin as this may reduce the capacity of the allocated site.
- 3.82 A representation has been received that land south west of Wilton Lane (shown as site W1 in the Site Assessment Report) should be allocated for nine dwellings and included in the settlement boundary. The QB has commented that *“Herefordshire Council’s Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 20 advises that in determining settlement boundaries, planning history is relevant, including recent refusals. Housing development upon the submitted site was refused planning permission and an appeal dismissed. This considered the issues referred to in the representation (see the Consultation Statement Schedule 2, Appendix A, section 12, pages 74/75). The appeal decision indicates that development on the site would have adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the area and AONB and also upon the settings of Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area.”*
- 3.83 The examiner’s role is to consider whether the submission draft Plan satisfies the Basic Conditions. It is not the examiner’s role to consider whether additional or alternative sites should be included in the plan view. I make no comments on these proposed additional housing sites.

Recommendation 13: Amalgamate Policies BR13 and BR14 to read:

“Settlement boundaries have been defined for Bannutree, Buckcastle Hill, Claytons and Wilton on the Policies Maps. Housing development will be supported within the settlement boundaries that satisfy other policies in the development plan.”

Replace the term “development boundary” with “settlement boundary” in the justification.

Correct the typographical error in paragraph 8.11 second sentence “albethey”

Policy BR15: Housing Sites in Bridstow Village

- 3.84 It is evident that the plan makers have taken some time and effort to find suitable sites to deliver the housing requirement. They have drawn on the

SHLAA, undertaken two calls for sites and approached landowners directly. Potential housing sites were assessed by an independent planning consultant in a report entitled "Meeting Housing Need and Site Assessment Report March 2019". The potential sites were also assessed in the SEA Environmental Report.

- 3.85 Five sites have been allocated in the plan for housing development; two in Bannutree and three in Buckcastle Hill with an indicative yield of 29 dwellings. The assessments recognise that there are concerns on all sites about achieving satisfactory access to them and the potential impact on the highway network in the area. Transport assessments will be required on all sites to consider the impacts of the development and the mitigation measures required.
- 3.86 A number of representations have been made to the housing allocations in this Policy. Ten have objected to the disproportionately large number of dwellings at Buckcastle Hill, taking into account current commitments, and specifically to the allocation of land at Cotterell's Farm (site v). There is one objection to the allocation at Bridruthin (site i) and one to the allocation at Oaklands (site iii). Other representations suggest that there should be a better balance in allocations between Wilton and Bridstow. Comments refer to the number of new houses proposed in Buckcastle Hill area, loss of grade 2 agricultural land, impact on highway safety, impact on neighbour's privacy and amenity, impact on landscape, distance from village core, character of the proposed development.
- 3.87 In response to my question on the deliverability of sites and whether the cumulative impact of the traffic from the sites proposed for allocation has been considered, HC has responded to say "*A transport assessment would be required with any planning application and that our Highway section consider the Reg16 draft appropriate to ensuring this is considered prior to permission being granted. They have not directly suggested that any sites are not deliverable on transport terms*".
- 3.88 I can appreciate the concerns that residents may have about the potential impact of additional housing development in these communities particularly on the local highway network. The QB has sought advice from the Highways Authority on a number of occasions, however no site specific comments were made. The Highways Authority has commented to say they are supportive of the policy approach on the NP and consider that it accords with HC policies.
- 3.89 The final paragraph of Policy BR12 was included to ensure that highways assessments are undertaken as part of planning applications and any mitigation measures are included in the scheme. It is evident that the allocated sites can only proceed if the development proposals can meet the requirements of Policy BR12 on highways assessments.

- 3.90 The QB has confirmed that contingency arrangements have been included in the plan through the agreement with Ross-on-Wye Town Council for 15 dwellings. Furthermore, should highway capacity prove to be a constraint before the required level of housing growth has been met, paragraph 11.6 of the Plan recognises that an early review of the Plan may be necessary.
- 3.91 I am satisfied that the plan makers have made reasonable efforts to identify and assess the impact of development on the sites and have selected those that best meet the selection criteria in accordance with the guidance in the NPPG: “*A neighbourhood plan can allocate sites for development, including housing. A qualifying body should carry out an appraisal of options and an assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria.*”
- 3.92 Whilst both Bridstow and Wilton are identified in the Core Strategy as settlements suitable for proportionate housing development, there is no requirement for development to be accommodated in both settlements.
- 3.93 A representation refers to paragraph 2.21 concerning a brownfield site in Wilton. This site has been assessed as site W2 and ranked sixth in Table 1 of the site assessment report.
- 3.94 Since publishing the Site Assessment Report, HC’s Environmental Health have raised objections to sites adjacent to the A40 and A49 trunk roads on the grounds of noise and pollution and these have been rejected for this reason. In the interests of transparency, it is recommended that an addendum should be prepared to the site assessment report to note the objections to sites along the A40 and A49.
- 3.95 It is considered that none of the development sites proposed amount to major development in the AONB as defined in the NPPF. The justification to the policy sets out a number of considerations for each site and includes an indicative number of dwellings. Landscaping or tree planting is proposed to safeguard neighbouring amenity and privacy and to help assimilate the development into the landscape of the AONB. Proposals would result in very low density development in keeping with the nature of development in the locality.
- 3.96 The QB has commented that “*Although it would be beneficial to site new housing development where there is a range of community facilities and other services available or good access to public transport, this is not always possible, especially when there no suitable sites available in such locations.*”
- 3.97 The QB has commented that suitable sites outside of the area at risk of flooding and adjacent to the parish’s settlements are either grade 1 or grade 2 agricultural land. Hence it is not possible to utilise land of a lower quality. The site at Cotterell’s Farm amounts to around 1 hectare and is not considered significant development within the terms of Government advice upon agricultural land in NPPF paragraph 175 and footnote 58.

- 3.98 Paragraph 8.19, second bullet refers to trees forming part of the landscape design of the development being protected by Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate. A planning policy cannot stipulate where a Tree Preservation Order should be made. However, landscaping conditions may be attached to the planning permission to protect trees on development sites. I am recommending a modification to include this.
- 3.99 Paragraph 8.19 fifth bullet states that the provision of Policy BR16 should apply. However, the site lies outside of the Area of Special Character. The QB has responded to my question on the matter to say that the site was included in the Area of Special Character in the Regulation 14 draft of the Plan and no alteration to remove the site had been proposed. There appears to have been a drafting error in drawing up the boundaries in the Submission draft plan. Nonetheless I am bound to consider the plan as submitted in this respect.
- 3.100 The intention of the Area of Special Control as set out in Policy BR16 is to enable limited low density housing development of a similar scale to neighbouring properties. From my site visit, it is evident that properties adjacent to the site are not all low density. To ensure that the development on this site is designed to take account of its context, the QB has proposed that the fifth bullet point should be revised as follows: “*Care will be needed to ensure the location of dwellings, landscaping and building design reflect the built and landscape character of this part of the settlement in accordance with Policy BR10 a) and b)*”. I agree that this would be helpful to plan users and am proposing a modification to incorporate this text.
- 3.101 I have questioned the purpose of the sixth bullet point of paragraph 8.21 (Measures may be required....). It is not clear what the measures may be or the reason for this criterion. The QB has commented that the point arose from a dismissed appeal on the site which identified, amongst other things, that the impact of development on the landscape of the AONB was a significant constraint. Notwithstanding this provision, the QB considers that it is unlikely that additional development beyond that indicated in the plan would be permitted because of limited sight lines.
- 3.102 I consider that the requirement is unclear and unnecessary. If any proposals are brought forward on adjacent land these would have to be considered against the policies of the development plan; this would include the potential impact on the AONB and access arrangements. I am therefore recommending that this bullet point should be deleted.
- 3.103 The fourth bullet point of paragraph 8.21 requires a signature building reflecting a gatehouse to be provided at the entrance to the development. In response to my question about the reason and justification for this requirement, the QB has commented that HC in considering a planning application on the opposite side of the road at Littlefields has commented that the wider landscape had a parkland appearance.

- 3.104 I visited the site on my site visit and noted that it is part of an agricultural field with hedges along the roadside and the lane to the east leading to the farm. There are no parkland features on this site comparable to those in the landscape to the south of road and no evidence has been provided to justify the requirement for a signature building reflecting a gatehouse. I am therefore recommending that the 4th bullet point of paragraph 8.21 should be deleted
- 3.105 Paragraph 8.21 ninth bullet refers to an adjacent dwelling to the west of the site. In response to my question, the QB has confirmed that this relates to property to the south east of the site. A correction is recommended.
- 3.106 In order to improve the clarity of the policy I am recommending that the sites should be labelled on the Policies Maps with the site number.

Recommendation 14: Show the site numbers for Policy BR15 on the Policies Maps.

Revise paragraph 8.19 second bullet to read “.....and trees *should be protected by the use of planning conditions* or Tree Preservation Orders, where appropriate. “

Replace the fifth bullet point of paragraph 8.19 with: “*Care will be needed to ensure the location of dwellings, landscaping and building design reflect the built and landscape character of this part of the settlement in accordance with Policy BR10 a) and b).*”

Delete the sixth bullet point of paragraph 8.20.

Delete the fourth bullet point of paragraph 8.21.

Revise the ninth bullet point of paragraph 8.21 to read: “.....the dwelling to the *south east* of the site....”

Publish an Addendum to the Sites Assessment Report to include the objections from HC’s Environmental Health section to sites along the A40 and A49 on the grounds of noise and pollution.

Revise paragraph 2.21 to explain the objections to site W2 at Wilton.

Policy BR16: Housing Development within Buckcastle Hill Area of Special Character

- 3.107 This policy identifies an area within Buckcastle Hill where limited low density housing will be permitted where it meets a number of criteria and which help to retain the character of the area. The aim is to control the type of development in the area so as to avoid an unrestricted approach to infilling. The area contains a number of houses set within large gardens with some paddocks. The area has strong hedgerows and a number of trees. the

western part of the area has steep slopes and is served by a very narrow access road and tracks. Preference is to be given to self build homes.

- 3.108 The QB has suggested that the area may result in 6 – 8 new dwellings, however the call for sites resulted in only one submission.
- 3.109 The quality of the access roads in this area is extremely poor with single track roads with poor surfacing and few passing places. Any development proposal will have to submit a transport assessment under Policy BR12 with appropriate mitigation measures, in the same way as sites allocated under Policy BR15.
- 3.110 The first paragraph of the policy refers to development being permitted. In accordance with paragraph 3.9, I am proposing a recommendation to avoid this form of wording and to refer to “very low density housing development” which better reflects the nature of the housing in the area. The justification explains that plots should normally be no smaller than 0.1 hectare.
- 3.111 A planning policy cannot stipulate where a Tree Preservation Order should be made and I am recommending a modification to delete this.
- 3.112 It is considered that the policy will support the national initiative to increase the number of self build housing and is sensitively worded so as to retain the landscape character of the area.

Recommendation 15: Revise Policy BR16 as follows:

Revise the second sentence of the first paragraph of the policy to read: “Within this area, *very low density* housing development will be supported where it retains or enhances the character *of the area and* where it meets the following requirements:”

Include a definition of “very low density” development in the glossary.

Delete “including through the use of Tree Preservation Orders in relation to trees” from criterion e).

Policy BR17: Agricultural Diversification, Tourism and other Employment Enterprises

- 3.113 The policy sets out considerations for the development or expansion of small scale employment generating businesses. It is considered that it accords with NPPF paragraphs 84-85. It conforms to and adds further detail to Core Strategy Policies RA5 and RA6.
- 3.114 Criterion d) refers to “loss of good quality agricultural land”. I am recommending a modification to better reflect the terminology used in NPPF paragraph 174. Some flexibility should be included in the policy.

3.115 Criterion h) stipulates that permission will be refused for developments that cannot provide full mitigation of potentially pollution. As stated in paragraph 3.9 above, planning law requires that planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. I am therefore recommending a modification to the criterion.

Recommendation 16: Revise Policy BR17 as follows:

Revise criterion d) to read “.....and should avoid the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, where possible.”

Revise criterion h) to read “.....enterprise can be fully mitigated.” Delete “and where they cannot, permission will be refused.”

Policy BR18: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

3.116 The policy sets out matters of local importance for the consideration of proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation. The first part of the policy conforms to Core Strategy Policy SD2 and NPPF policy to promote renewable and low carbon energy generation.

3.117 The second part of the policy addresses large and medium scale renewable or low carbon energy generation in the AONB. It is considered that the wording does not align sufficiently closely with that in NPPF paragraph 177 c) which refers to an assessment of “*any detrimental effects on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent it can be moderated*”. Nor does it conform with the wording of Policy BR3 which refers to the environmental effects being mitigated to a satisfactory degree.

3.118 To ensure that the policy can be interpreted consistently by decision makers, it is recommended that the last paragraph of the policy should be revised to cross reference it to the NPPF and Policy BR3.

3.119 I have asked the QB for the definition of larger and medium scale renewable or low carbon developments that is to be used in the interpretation of the policy. They have provided me with text to be included in paragraph 9.5 that draws on the HC’s Renewable Energy Study to explain the type of developments that may be acceptable. I am recommending that it be included in this paragraph with the deletion of reference to the Wye Valley Management Plan as this is not part of the development plan.

Recommendation 17: Revise Policy BR18 as follows:

Revise the last paragraph of the policy to read: “.....will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances as set out in the NPPF and Policy BR3.”

Revise paragraph 9.5 to read: “.....Herefordshire Council’s Renewable Energy Study indicates that the Parish falls outside of the resource area for large and medium scale wind energy *although it indicates that the Wye Valley AONB may not be suitable for wind turbines, it could still benefit from other technologies. That study defines large and medium sized wind turbines although for the purposes of this policy these would be turbines larger than 100kw. Turbines at or below this figure would normally be those used by individual homeowners or farmers for on-site electricity consumption. Of the other technologies, there may be potential for biomass and solar energy production. In determining whether the scale of buildings and infrastructure associated with these would amount to major development, proposals would need to be comply with BNDP Policies BR3 and BR17. There is no scope for hydro-electricity within the parish. Heat pumps are generally at the individual property scale.....”*

Policy BR19: Polytunnel Proposals

3.120 The policy sets out requirements to be considered in proposal for polytunnels. Herefordshire Council has adopted a Polytunnels Planning Guide in June 2018 which sets out the planning policy context and guidance to be used in considering proposals. It is considered that the policy conforms to national and strategic planning policy.

Policy BR20: Protection and Enhancement of Community Facilities

- 3.121 The first part of the policy seeks to protect the community facilities of the village hall and primary school. It is recommended that these properties including their curtilages, should be shown on the Policies Map to enable decision makers to interpret the policy consistently.
- 3.122 The second part of the policy sets out criteria to be used in considering proposals to enhance, replace, or provide new or improved community facilities and open spaces.
- 3.123 It is considered that the policy is in conformity with the principles in the Core Strategy including Policy SC1.

Recommendation 18: Show the location of the community facilities and their curtilages named in Policy BR20 on the Policies Map.

Policy BR21: Protection of Local Green Space and Areas of Open Space

- 3.124 The first part of the policy seeks to designate an area alongside the river as Local Green Space. The area is publicly owned and used for recreation purposes. It affords an attractive setting along the river. The area is a registered village green which affords legal protection. It is considered that the area satisfies the criteria set out in NPPF paragraph 102 to be designated as a Local Green Space. It is considered that the policy to manage development of the area accords with NPPF paragraph 103.
- 3.125 The second part of the policy identifies two areas of amenity open space to be safeguarded through Core Strategy Policy OS3.
- 3.126 A representation has been made that site a) should be deleted as it comprises an open arable field with no public access. This description bears no relation to the site proposed and I can only conclude that the representor is referring to the wrong area.
- 3.127 It is considered that the policy conforms to national and strategic policies.

Policy BR22: Contributions to Community Services, Youth Provision and Recreation Facilities

- 3.128 This policy adds no local details to Core Strategy Policy ID1 and I am therefore recommending that it be deleted. The justification may be retained as this sets out the background to planning obligations and CIL and the need for enhancement of local community facilities.

Recommendation 19: Delete Policy BR22.

Revise the heading by deleting “Policy BR22”. Retain the justification.

Policy BR23: High Speed Broadband and Telecommunications

- 3.129 The policy encourages improvement to broadband and communications and sets out considerations to be taken into account with such proposals. It is considered that the policy accords with NPPF section 10.

Delivering the Plan

- 3.130 Paragraph 11.2 second and third sentences are considered to be unnecessary and they do not explain how the neighbourhood plan policies are to be delivered.

- 3.131 Paragraph 11.4, second sentence to end of paragraph, contains a Community Action that should be placed in that section of the Plan. This concerns the way the Parish Council is proposing to publicise planning applications.

Recommendation 20: Revise Section 11 Delivering the Plan as follows:

Delete the second and third sentences of paragraph 11.2 “To duplicate these.....held within Herefordshire Council.”

Place the second, third and fourth sentences of paragraph 11.4 in the Section on Community Actions. “In addition, in line with... the particular application”.

Additional Sites / Proposals

- 3.132 A representation has been made that the plan does not contain any solutions to improve the parking at the school. The QB has commented that *“Discussions were undertaken with the Head Teacher who identified the need to provide a foot-link to St Bridget’s Church. It was not possible to achieve this in association with any development. Parking is also understood to be a problem close to the junction with the A49. Neither School Governors nor Herefordshire Council, who would be responsible for delivery, requested the inclusion of a car park proposal in the NDP. NDP Policy BR20 would facilitate community facilities if and when proposals such as school car parking are brought forward.”*

4.0 Referendum

4.1 The Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan reflects the views held by the community as demonstrated through the consultations and, subject to the modifications proposed, sets out a realistic and achievable vision to support the future improvement of the community.

4.2 I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan meets all the statutory requirements, in particular those set out in paragraph 8(1) of schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and, subject to the modifications I have identified, meets the Basic Conditions namely:

- has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the area; and
- does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations and human rights requirements

4.3 **I am pleased to recommend to Herefordshire Council that the Bridstow Neighbourhood Development Plan should, subject to the modifications I have put forward, proceed to referendum.**

4.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area. In all the matters I have considered I have not seen anything that suggests the referendum area should be extended beyond the boundaries of the plan area as they are currently defined. I recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum based on the neighbourhood area designated by Herefordshire Council on 23 September 2013.

5.0 Background Documents

5.1 In undertaking this examination, I have considered the following documents

- Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan Submission Draft Version 2011- 2031
- Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement January 2021
- Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan Environmental Report January 2021
- Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan HRA Report January 2021
- Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement November 2020
- Bridstow Parish Policies Map
- Bannuttree Policies Map
- Buckcastle Hill Policies Map
- Claytons Policies Map
- Wilton Policies Map
- Bridstow Neighbourhood Plan Meeting Housing Need and Site Assessment Report March 2019
- National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (as amended)
- Planning Practice Guidance March 2014 (as amended)
- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
- Herefordshire Core Strategy 2015
- Herefordshire SuDS Handbook
- Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2021-2026 January 2021
- Herefordshire Council Highways Design Guide for New Developments 2006
- Herefordshire Council Polytunnels Planning Guide June 2018
- Bridstow Parish Council - Meeting Housing Need and Site Assessment Report March 2019

6.0 Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Revise the date of the Plan to “2020 – 2031” and show on the front cover of the BNDP.

Recommendation 2: Revise the objectives as follows:

Revise Objective 2b) to read *“Avoiding development where this would result in significant danger through conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.”*

Delete Objectives 3b) and 3c).

Add the following new objective after 4c): *“Avoiding noise sensitive development on sites with unacceptable levels of traffic noise close to the trunk roads.”*

Include a paragraph in the Issues section to explain the background to concerns about the impact of traffic noise from the trunk roads and refer to the decision taken on sites with unacceptable levels of highway noise.

Recommendation 3: Revise Policy BR1 as follows:

Delete “high-level” from the first paragraph of the policy.

Delete the second sentence of point a) “Major development ...satisfactory degree.”

Recommendation 4: Revise Policy BR2 as follows:

In criterion b) replace “Development boundaries” with *“Settlement boundaries”*.

In criterion c) delete “or development” from line 1.

Replace “development boundaries” with “settlement boundaries” elsewhere in the supporting text of the BNDP.

Recommendation 5: Revise Policy BR4 as follows:

Delete “All” from the first line of the policy.

Revise criterion d) to read *“Development within the Green Gap defined on the Policies Map between Bridstow and Wilton that will visually diminish the openness of the Green Gap when viewed from publicly accessible locations, except for that reasonably required for agriculture and forestry purposes or to mitigate flood risk, will not be supported”*.

Recommendation 6: Revise Policy BR5 as follows:

Revise the first paragraph to read: “....*should be protected, conserved and where possible enhanced through:*”

Revise point a) to read: “Developments *that may result in substantial harm or loss of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Grade I and II* Listed Buildings at Wilton Castle and the house attached, Wilton Bridge and Sundial, Churchyard Cross at St Bridget’s Church, St Bridget’s Church and their settings should be wholly exceptional and will require clear and convincing justification.*”

Delete points b), c) and g).

Revise point d) to read “.....*that conserves or enhances....*”

Revise the second sentence of point h) to read: “.....New development associated with historic farmsteads *should respect the historic form of the farmstead as demonstrated through thorough research of historic documents to secure a design of exceptional quality.*”

Additional text may be added to the justification to reference the sections of the NPPF and Core Strategy policies to address those subjects that are to be deleted from the policy.

Recommendation 7: Show the ecological corridors along the River Wye, Wells Brook and the tributary to that Brook on the Policies Map or on a diagram within the text of the BNDP.

Recommendation 8:

Revise paragraph 6.9 to read: “This policy is considered consistent with Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy SD4. *The Ross Lower Cleeve WwTWs serves a wide area comprising Ross-on-Wye and some surrounding villages, including those within Bridstow Parish. Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water recently completed a reinforcement scheme at this WwTW. However, the River Wye is a Special Area of Conservation requiring a high priority to be given to maintaining good water quality. Consequently, should there be a future shortfall in WwTWs capacity, this policy maintains a precautionary approach to ensure appropriate protection.*”

Recommendation 9: Revise Policy BR9 as follows:

Revise the first paragraph second sentence to read “....*which could include:*”

Point a) delete “such as photovoltaic panels”.

Point b) replace “such as through” with “*including*”.

Revise point g) to read “....and reducing *construction waste.*”

Revise point h) to read: “.....they should be of a high quality and fit sensitively within the streetscene and landscape and reflect locally distinctive features to maintain the area’s cohesive character.”

Add a new point: “*For proposals requiring vehicle parking, provision of electric vehicle charging points at an appropriate level, which should be for each dwelling in residential developments, and for other forms of development to suit the needs of the expected level of traffic generation.*”

Add new point: “*Locating noise sensitive development, including housing, in locations that are not subject to unacceptable levels of noise from highways and ensuring effective measures are taken to ensure that ambient noise levels both indoors and outdoors are acceptable.*”

Revise paragraph 6.11 to include examples of renewable energy infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems that may be employed. Additional text may be added to the justification to explain how these new criteria are to be applied.

Recommendation 10: Revise Policy BR10 as follows:

Delete point b).

Revise the second sentence of paragraph 6.12 to read “Core Strategy Policy *SD1*” and delete the last sentence of the paragraph.

Recommendation 11: Delete Policy BR11 and place it in an Appendix or separate section of the Plan headed Community Actions.

Recommendation 12: Revise Policy BR12 as follows:

Revise criterion b) to read: “Adequate provision of off-street parking *for residents and visitors.*”

Revise criterion c) to read: “Proposals *would* not lead to”

Revise criterion d) to read: “The nature of the development *would* not lead to”

Recommendation 13: Amalgamate Policies BR13 and BR14 to read:

“Settlement boundaries have been defined for Bannutree, Buckcastle Hill, Claytons and Wilton on the Policies Maps. Housing development will be supported within the settlement boundaries that satisfy other policies in the development plan.”

Replace the term “development boundary” with “*settlement boundary*” in the justification.

Correct the typographical error in paragraph 8.11 second sentence “albethey”.

Recommendation 14: Show the site numbers for Policy BR15 on the Policies Maps.

Revise paragraph 8.19 second bullet to read “.....and trees *should be protected by the use of planning conditions* or Tree Preservation Orders, where appropriate. “

Replace the fifth bullet point of paragraph 8.19 with: “*Care will be needed to ensure the location of dwellings, landscaping and building design reflect the built and landscape character of this part of the settlement in accordance with Policy BR10 a) and b).*”

Delete the sixth bullet point of paragraph 8.20.

Delete the fourth bullet point of paragraph 8.21.

Revise the ninth bullet point of paragraph 8.21 to read: “.....the dwelling to the *south east* of the site....”

Publish an Addendum to the Sites Assessment Report to include the objections from HC’s Environmental Health section to sites along the A40 and A49 on the grounds of noise and pollution.

Revise paragraph 2.21 to explain the objections to site W2 at Wilton.

Recommendation 15: Revise Policy BR16 as follows:

Revise the second sentence of the first paragraph of the policy to read: “*Within this area, very low density housing development will be supported where it retains or enhances the character of the area and where it meets the following requirements:*”

Include a definition of “very low density” development in the glossary.

Delete “including through the use of Tree Preservation Orders in relation to trees” from criterion e).

Recommendation 16: Revise Policy BR17 as follows:

Revise criterion d) to read “.....*and should avoid the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, where possible.*”

Revise criterion h) to read “.....*enterprise can be fully mitigated.*” Delete “and where they cannot, permission will be refused.”

Recommendation 17: Revise Policy BR18 as follows:

Revise the last paragraph of the policy to read: “.....*will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances as set out in the NPPF and Policy BR3.*”

Revise paragraph 9.5 to read: “.....Herefordshire Council’s Renewable Energy Study indicates that the Parish falls outside of the resource area for large and medium scale wind energy *although it indicates that the Wye Valley AONB may not be suitable for wind turbines, it could still benefit from other technologies. That study defines large and medium sized wind turbines although for the purposes of this policy these would be turbines larger than 100kw. Turbines at or below this figure would normally be those used by individual homeowners or farmers for on-site electricity consumption. Of the other technologies, there may be potential for biomass and solar energy production. In determining whether the scale of buildings and infrastructure associated with these would amount to major development, proposals would need to be comply with BNDP Policies BR3 and BR17. There is no scope for hydro-electricity within the parish. Heat pumps are generally at the individual property scale.....”*

Recommendation 18: Show the location of the community facilities and their curtilages named in Policy BR20 on the Policies Map.

Recommendation 19: Delete Policy BR22.

Revise the heading by deleting “Policy BR22”. Retain the justification.

Recommendation 20: Revise Section 11 Delivering the Plan as follows:

Delete the second and third sentences of paragraph 11.2 “To duplicate these.....held within Herefordshire Council.”