

Aston Ingham Parish Council
Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2031

Referendum version



Church of St John the Baptist, Aston Ingham

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1. SETTING THE SCENE

The Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 gave local communities the ability to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans as part of the statutory planning framework governing the development and use of land in their area. When planning applications are made, they must be decided in accordance with this framework unless there are overriding circumstances to the contrary.
- 1.2 Aston Ingham Parish Council has decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to make use of these planning powers and help ensure that decisions on future development are guided locally.
- 1.3 This document is the referendum version of the NDP. It has been prepared by a Steering Group of Parish Councillors and other volunteers and has been subject to two rounds of consultation and an independent Examination, in accord with the procedures laid down by Government for the preparation of neighbourhood development plans (Figure 1).

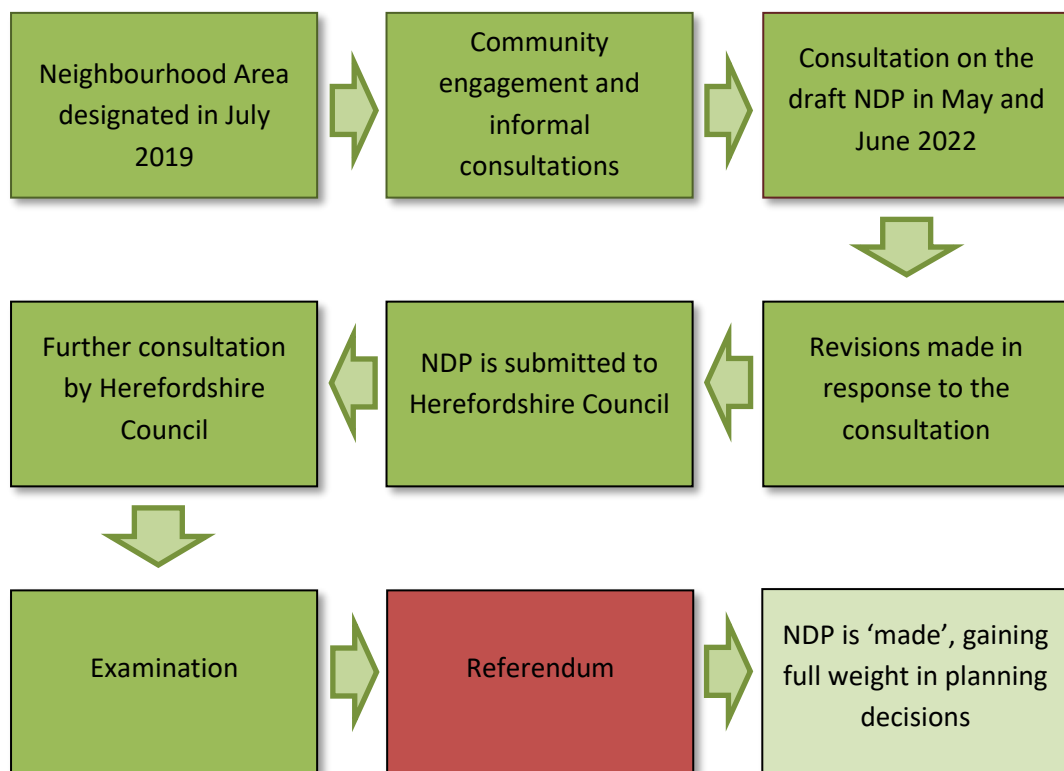


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Development Plan preparation process

- 1.4 The NDP is based on evidence about the characteristics of the parish, which has been compiled from a range of sources. Much information has been taken from reports and other documentation prepared by Herefordshire Council for the Local Plan Core Strategy. This has been supplemented by local sources, including a comprehensive residents' survey in 2021 and professional housing site assessments. The resultant 'evidence base' for the NDP is set out at Appendix A.

Format of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 1.5 The NDP begins by giving a thumbnail sketch of the main features of the Neighbourhood Area (chapter 2).
- 1.6 A Vision for the Neighbourhood Area in 2031 is defined in chapter 3, together with more detailed objectives.
- 1.7 The NDP then sets out policies on the development and use of land, on the environment (chapter 4); housing (chapter 5); community and infrastructure (chapter 6); and economic development (chapter 7). Each policy is presented in bold text within a shaded box, and is followed by a short justification. Chapter 8 explains how the NDP will be implemented. Finally, the process of preparing the NDP has highlighted a number of aspirations on non-land use matters, relating particularly to highways and transport, and these are listed in a concluding chapter as 'Community Actions'.

National and local planning policy context

- 1.8 The NDP's policies need to be read alongside the existing national and County planning policies which apply in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.9 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. National Planning Practice Guidance gives more detailed advice as to how national policy is to be implemented.
- 1.10 Herefordshire Council adopted the Local Plan Core Strategy (the 'Local Plan') in October 2015, setting out strategic planning policies for the development of the County from 2011 to 2031. The Local Plan designates Aston Ingham village as one of a number of settlements to receive some new housing. It also deals with the rural economy, the environment and community facilities. The NDP has been written to complement and add local detail to Local Plan policies.
- 1.11 Herefordshire Council undertook a review of the Local Plan in 2020 and decided that it needed updating. The process is at an early stage. For the purposes of the NDP and the assessment of general conformity, the relevant strategic policies contained in the adopted development plan for the area are those in the 2015 Local Plan Core Strategy. Where reference is made in the NDP to strategic policies, this should be taken to include any replacement policies arising from the update.
- 1.12 The NDP, like all development plans, is subject to an assessment process known as Strategic Environmental Assessment. It must also undergo an Appropriate Assessment under the

Habitat Regulations because of the proximity of the River Wye and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites Special Areas of Conservation. The Assessments are undertaken independently by Herefordshire Council. To this end, Assessments of the NDP at the earlier draft and submission stages have been carried out.

- 1.13 The NDP covers the period 2022 to 2031. Aston Ingham Parish Council is the 'Qualifying Body' for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. The Neighbourhood Area was designated in July 2019.

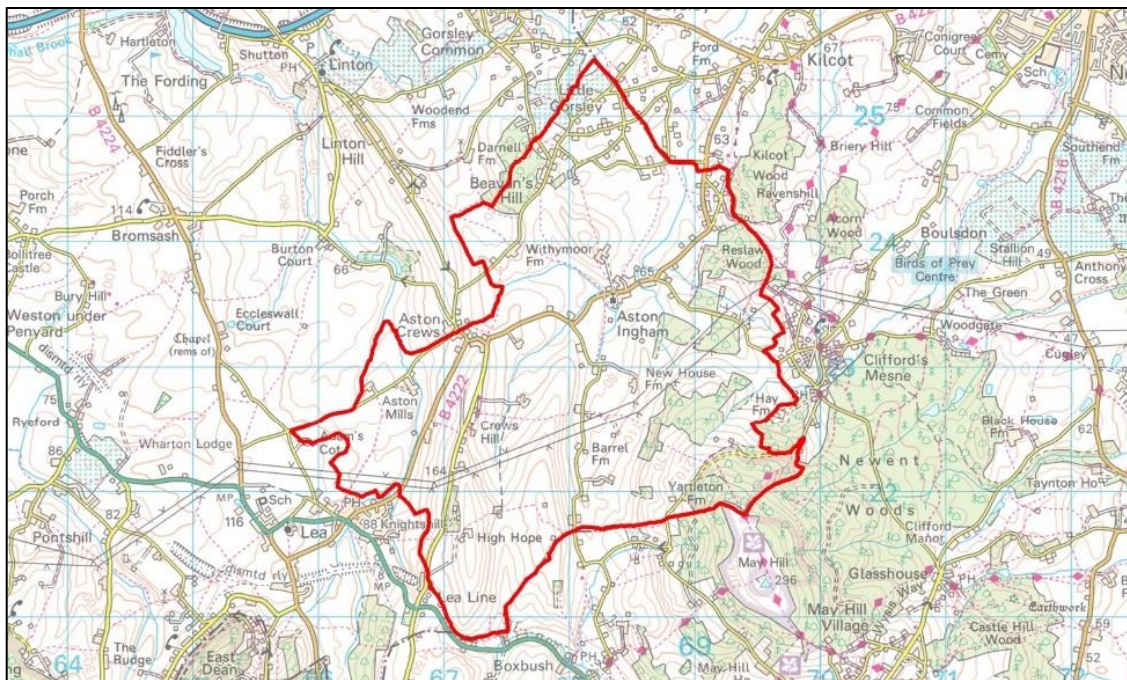
2. ASTON INGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

2.1 Aston Ingham Neighbourhood Area covers the parish of the same name, an area of 909 hectares in the south-east of Herefordshire (Plan 1) and abutting the County border with Gloucestershire to the east. This chapter describes the Neighbourhood Area in terms of the social, environmental and economic aspects which contribute to sustainability and to a distinctive and rural sense of place.


Community

2.2 The Neighbourhood Area is rural in character with scattered wayside dwellings, historic farmsteads, modern farm development and other country properties set amongst pasture, arable farmland, orchards and woodland. The striking topography affords extensive views over the surrounding countryside, particularly from the local landmark of May Hill which adjoins to the south.

2.3 The largest settlement is the village of Aston Ingham, which lies towards the centre of the Neighbourhood Area alongside the B4222. It has a parish church, Village Hall, scout hut and bowling club, but no scheduled bus service. The Penny Farthing Inn public house is at Aston Crews to the west, a small hamlet sitting astride the parish boundary.



Plan 1: Aston Ingham Neighbourhood Area

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- 2.4 The population of the Neighbourhood Area was 398 in 2011. This equates to a population density of 0.4 persons per hectare – notably less than in the Herefordshire as a whole (0.8), and much less than for England (4.1). The latest estimate is that by 2020 the population had increased to 473.
- 2.5 In 2011, Aston Ingham parish had a generally lower proportion of younger resident adults than the County or England; those aged 30-44 for instance represented 12% of parish residents compared to 21% for England as a whole. Conversely, older age groups between 45 and 84 were over-represented locally; those aged 65-74 for example accounted for 14% of the parish population compared to 9% at the national level (Figure 2). It is estimated that in 2020 20% of the parish population were aged 65-74.
- 2.6 There were 171 households in the parish in 2011, an average household size of 2.3 persons per household. Compared to Herefordshire and England, there was a higher proportion of one family households, families where all members were aged 65 and over (almost twice the proportion at national level) and of married or same-sex civil partnership couples. Conversely, the parish had a lower proportion of one-person households, lone pensioner households, and lone parent households.

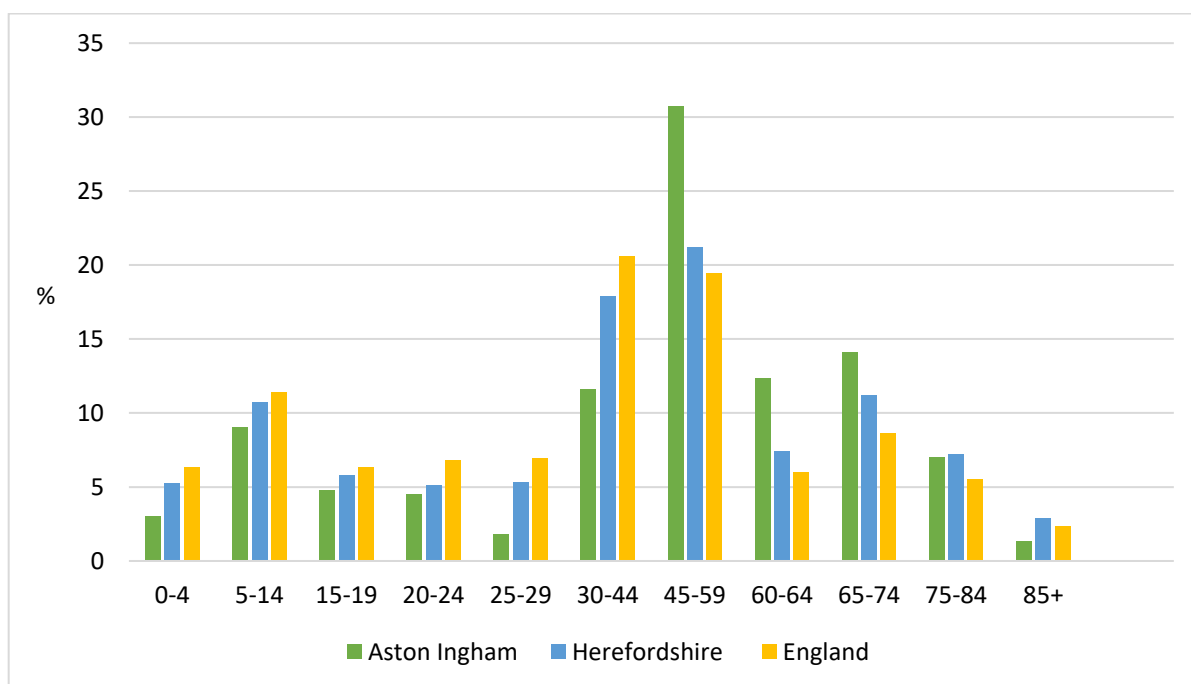


Figure 2: Age structure in 2011

Source: ONS - 2011 Census (KS102EW)

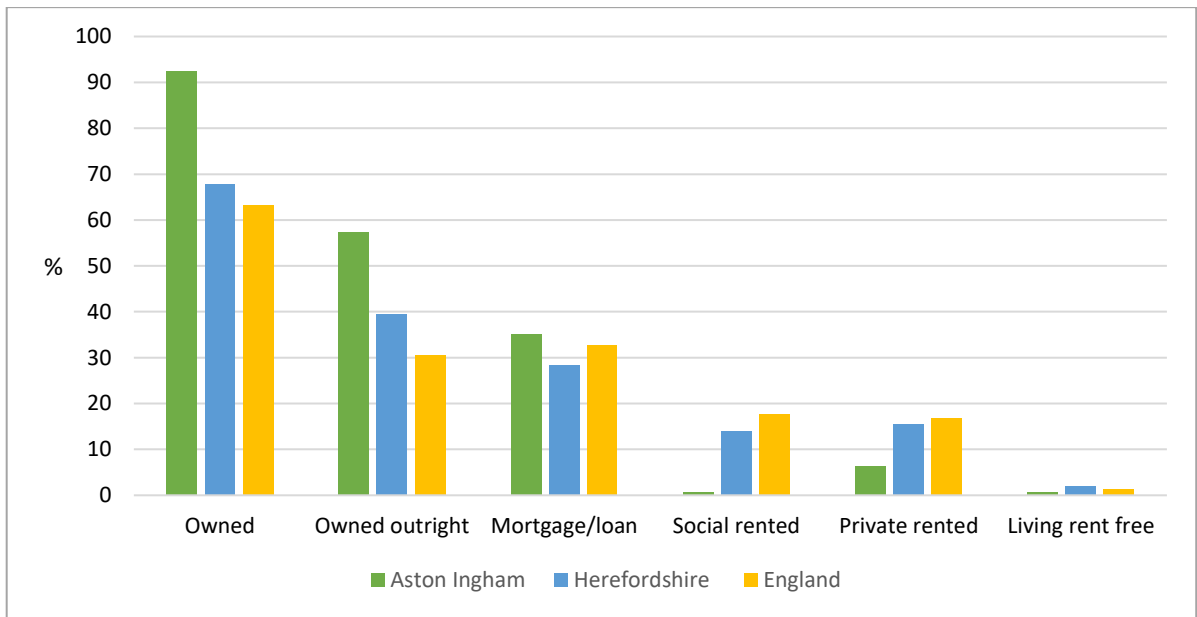


Figure 3: Tenure in 2011

Source: ONS -2011 Census (KS402EW)

- 2.7 In 2011 93% of homes in Aston Ingham parish were owner-occupied, either outright or with a mortgage or loan, more than for the County as a whole or nationally (Figure 3). Some 57% of all homes were owned outright, notably more than at County level or nationally (England 31%). There were less social or private rented homes compared to Herefordshire and England.
- 2.8 There were 182 ‘household spaces’ in the parish at the time of the Census, meaning 11 properties were vacant, with no usual resident – similar to the County and national rates. Almost all of the dwellings (93%) were houses or bungalows. There were no purpose-built flats or maisonettes in the parish, a category which accounts for 17% of dwellings nationally. There are 10 apartments following sub-division and conversion at Aston Court.
- 2.9 Almost four-fifths of houses were detached, with most of the remainder being semi-detached and few terraced properties. This contrasts with the national position, where only 22% of dwellings were detached and almost one-quarter terraced.
- 2.10 The B4222 provides the main line of communication through the parish, linking the Neighbourhood Area to Lea and the A40 in the south-west and to Kilcot and Newent in the north-east. Passing through Aston Ingham village, the road creates intimidating conditions for pedestrians which is exacerbated by limited footway provision. A survey undertaken for Balfour Beatty and the Parish Council in March 2019 showed that over 2000 vehicles passed through the village on an average weekday, with more than three-quarters exceeding the 30-mph speed limit. Around one-third of vehicles were travelling at or above speeds regarded by

the police as enforceable.¹ Of the weekly total, 10% were goods vehicles, the remainder being predominantly cars and light goods vehicles.

- 2.11 Minor roads and often single-track rural lanes provide local access and connections to neighbouring settlements outside the Neighbourhood Area such as Linton, Gorsley and (in Gloucestershire) Clifford's Mesne and May Hill village.
- 2.12 The nearest public transport provision is at Lea, with services to Ross-on-Wye and Gloucester. There are railway stations at Hereford, Ledbury and Gloucester. The Neighbourhood Area is crossed by numerous public rights of way (footpaths and bridleways) giving access for local use and tourists.

Environment

- 2.13 The Neighbourhood Area lies wholly within the South Herefordshire and Over Severn National Character Area, as defined by Natural England and whose character is summarised as follows:

"A picturesque, rural, well-wooded landscape with substantial areas of ancient semi-natural woodland, parkland and traditional orchards and a network of ancient hedgerows with hedgerow trees contributing to a timbered feel. Remnants of common land and neutral and calcareous grassland ... form a highly fragmented semi-natural grassland resource. Land use is mainly a mix of livestock and arable farming.... Key ecosystem services include water regulation as a part of the Wye and Severn catchments, food production through extensive agriculture, an important genetic resource of local fruit varieties and a sense of tranquillity inherent in the scenic rural character of the landscape".²

- 2.14 The County Landscape Character Assessment identifies a range of landscape types in the Neighbourhood Area, principally Estate Farmlands north of the B4222 and Principal Wooded Hills to the south and east. Agriculture is typically mixed farming with fields bounded by hedgerows, with a greater emphasis on woodland in the east where Hay Wood is contiguous with the extensive Newent Woods in Gloucestershire.
- 2.15 In terms of biodiversity, the nationally-important Aston Ingham Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies to the north-east of the village, between the Ell Brook and the B4222. It comprises two unimproved neutral hay meadows some 5.22 hectares in extent, and is in favourable condition. The SSSI citation notes the meadows are the finest known example of this type of habitat surviving in Herefordshire.
- 2.16 There are also Habitats of Principal Importance throughout the Neighbourhood Area in the form of deciduous woodland, lowland meadows, and traditional orchards, the latter particularly at Little Gorsley.³ Hedgerows are also a Habitat of Principal Importance and are

¹ 110% of the posted speed limit of 30 mph + 2mph.

² Natural England: National Character Area profiles, 104: South Herefordshire and Over Severn, 2014.

³ Identified by Natural England pursuant to section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and shown in the Priority Habitat Inventory; see [Magic Map Application \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://defra.gov.uk/magic-map-application).

the predominant field boundary in the Neighbourhood Area. Much of the woodland comprises ancient and semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland.

- 2.17 There are five Local Wildlife Sites⁴ wholly or partly within the Neighbourhood Area, representing woodland and grassland habitats of importance at County level. They are:
- Withymoor and Baldwin Wood.
 - Aston Ingham Meadows.
 - Reslaw and New House Wood and adjoining woodlands.
 - Meadows near The Moate (formerly Coldwell Cottage).
 - May Hill.
- 2.18 The western part of the Neighbourhood Area (that is, west of the ridgeline at Crews Hill) lies at the southern end of the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark, an area of nationally significant geological landscape which spans five counties stretching from Gloucester to Bridgnorth.
- 2.19 The majority of the Neighbourhood Area drains to the east. Local watercourses meet at Aston Ingham village to form the Ell Brook which flows to the north-east to join the River Leadon and then the Severn. There are areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 associated with the Ell and Rudhall Brooks, and properties in Aston Ingham village are also reported to be affected by flooding due to surface water run-off, reflecting the local topography. Detailed flood risk information can be found on the Flood Map for Planning at <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>.
- 2.20 A small part of the Neighbourhood Area west of Crews Hill drains via the Rudhall Brook to the River Wye, which is recognised internationally as a Special Area of Conservation due to the flora and fauna it supports. A notable issue in the Wye catchment is excessive concentrations of nutrients, principally phosphates, affecting river water quality. Development proposals draining to the Wye catchment must be assessed to ensure they will not have any likely significant effects on the integrity of the Special Area of Conservation. Such effects could arise through proposals for foul and surface water drainage creating new pathways for phosphates to enter the river. There is no mains drainage in the Neighbourhood Area, save for a small Severn Trent wastewater treatment plant serving properties at Aston Bank in Aston Ingham village.
- 2.21 There are eight listed buildings in the parish. The Church of St John the Baptist at Aston Ingham is listed grade II*, with the remainder being grade II. They include two tomb chests and a churchyard cross, together with Aston Mill, Gaston House, and Warren and Knightshill Farmhouses and adjoining farm buildings.
- 2.22 Plans 2 and 3 are taken from Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report produced by Herefordshire Council in 2020. They show the areas and features of heritage, landscape, flood risk, and biodiversity interest in the Neighbourhood Area.

⁴ Local Wildlife Sites were formerly known as Special Wildlife Sites.

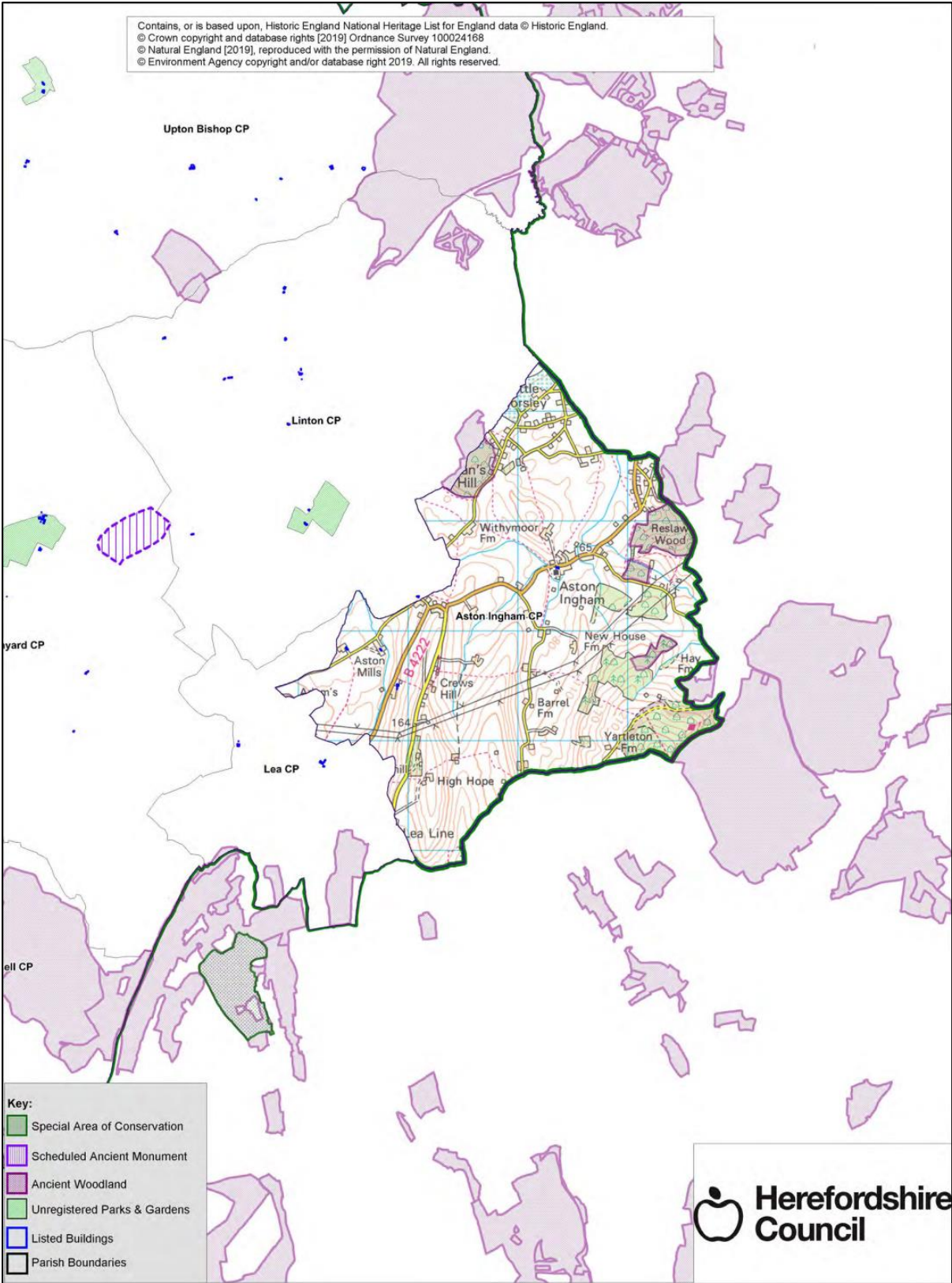
2.23 There are no Conservation Areas, scheduled ancient monuments, registered or unregistered historic parks and gardens or designated landscapes in the Neighbourhood Area.

Economy

2.24 The prevailing land use is mixed agriculture, with most of the farmland rated as either grade 3 (good to moderate) to the west, or grade 4 (poor) to the east. Farms, local services and other small businesses including home-working provide employment, and there are no purpose-built business or commercial trading estates. In 2011, 19% of working-age residents were self-employed, notably more than at County (14%) and national (10%) levels. Retired residents made up 23% of those aged 16-74, again well above the County and national rates.

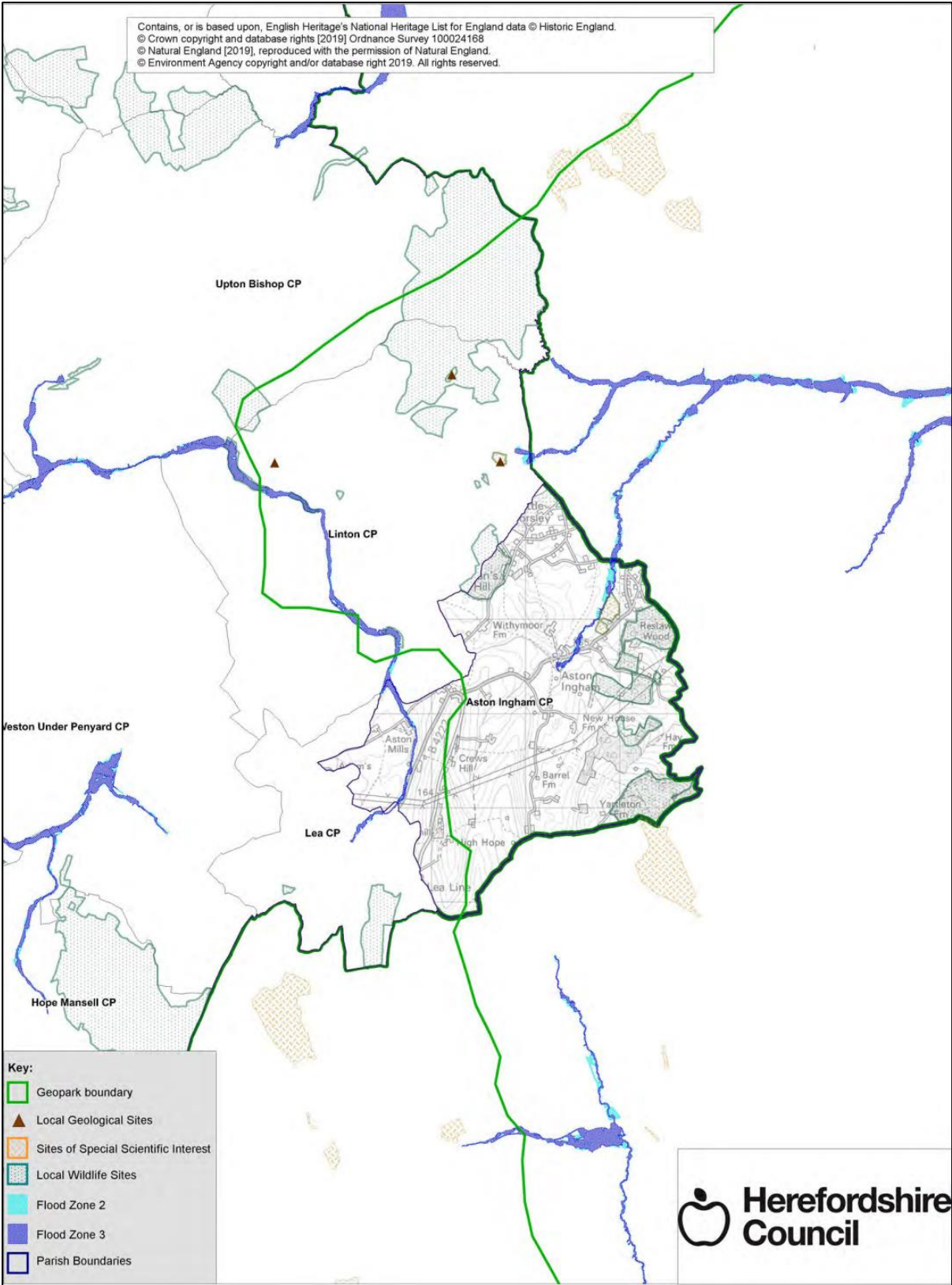
2.25 Car ownership rates were relatively high with 72% of households having access to at least two cars or vans in 2011, almost twice the national rate (32%). Conversely, only 2% of households did not have a car or van, compared to 26% across England.

2.26 For those travelling to work, in 2011 this was most commonly by driving a car or van, the proportion at 46% of working-age residents being higher than in the County or nationally, reflecting the rural surroundings and the limited availability of public transport. Other modes of travel to work were generally lower than the Herefordshire or English equivalents. The parish also had a higher proportion of working-age residents who worked mainly at or from home – 14% locally compared to 3.5% nationally, a proportion which has undoubtedly increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic.




Plan 2: Aston Ingham Strategic Environmental Assessment: Heritage and landscape.

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Plan 3: Aston Ingham Strategic Environmental Assessment: Biodiversity and flood zones.

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3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Key issues

- 3.1 The Steering Group has identified the following key issues from the questionnaire survey of residents undertaken in 2021 and the Neighbourhood Area characteristics set out in chapter 2. The Plan addresses these issues as far as possible through its Vision, objectives, and the planning policies on the development and use of land in chapters 4 to 7. Concerns and aspirations raised by residents which are not related to development and land use, such as with existing traffic, road safety and highway conditions and flood risk at Aston Ingham village, are addressed as Community Actions in chapter 9.
- 3.2 The key planning issues tackled by the Plan are as follows:
- Protection and enhancement of the local environment including landscape character, key views, biodiversity and river water quality.
 - The design of new development to respect residential amenity, the character of the village and of the rural parts of the Neighbourhood Area.
 - Delivering the proportionate housing growth required by the Local Plan.
 - Matching the size and type of new housing to the housing needs of the community.
 - Protecting community facilities and enabling new provision.
 - Supporting infrastructure for communications and renewable and low carbon energy.
 - Providing for development to enable small-scale employment and for agricultural and forestry purposes.

Vision

In 2031 the parish of Aston Ingham will be:

- **A home for a thriving local community with a clear parish identity where local facilities support health, social and cultural well-being and where walking and cycling are realistic travel options; and**
- **A sustainable rural environment where the distinctive landscape, wildlife and heritage are protected and enhanced, providing an attractive and peaceful countryside for all to enjoy; and**
- **A Parish with well-designed, sustainable new development providing the size and type of new homes that are needed; and**
- **A place where appropriate economic development is supported, helping to provide local employment in businesses, farming and other land-based rural enterprises.**

Objectives

3.3 The following objectives reflect the community priorities and concerns identified in the residents' survey. They will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development:

Environment

- To protect and enhance the natural environment, open spaces, landscapes, views, and wildlife.
- To promote development, which is well-designed, respects its surrounding and is sustainable in its design, operation and means of access.

Housing

- To provide new homes to meet the requirements of Herefordshire Council's Local Plan.
- To require a mix of size and type of dwellings to meet the community's needs.
- To define a settlement boundary for Aston Ingham village.

Community facilities and infrastructure

- To protect existing community facilities.
- To enable new provision of community facilities and to improve connectivity wherever possible including by enabling and promoting active travel.
- To foster new infrastructure in an appropriate manner.

Economic development

- To support economic development which is in scale and keeping with the character of the Neighbourhood Area and appropriate to its location.

Delivering the Vision

3.4 To deliver the Vision and meet the objectives, the NDP sets out planning policies as follows:

- Policies on the environment (chapter 4): landscape, biodiversity and building design.
- Policies on housing (chapter 5): settlement boundary for Aston Ingham village, land for housing development, housing mix and householder development.
- Policies on community and infrastructure (chapter 6): facilities, infrastructure, renewable and low carbon energy, and surface water and flood risk.
- Policies on economic development (chapter 7): small-scale employment and agricultural and forestry development.

3.5 Concerns and aspirations on non-land use matters are listed in chapter 9 as 'Community Actions'.

4. ENVIRONMENT

Landscape

Policy AST1: Landscape

The siting, scale, layout and design of development proposals should respect the surrounding landscape character as defined in the County Landscape Character Assessment. Schemes for new landscaping put forward as part of development proposals should be compatible with and serve to consolidate the established landscape character, and include details of arrangements for their maintenance and management.

Development which would have an adverse effect upon the landscape and rural setting of Aston Ingham village will not be supported.

Where a development proposal within the Neighbourhood Area would have a significant visual impact on the key views (KV) listed below and shown on Plan 4 and the accompanying photographs, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or similar study should be provided to demonstrate that the levels of effects are acceptable, and that the scheme has been sited and designed sensitively and appropriately reflecting, respecting, and where possible, enhancing its landscape context:

KV1 and KV2: views from Beavan's Hill towards Dymock Forest and the Malverns (KV1) and May Hill (KV2).

KV3: the view from Oaks Lane towards looking Dymock Forest and the Malverns.

KV4 and KV5: views from May Hill towards the Malverns (KV4) and the Black Mountains (KV5).

KV6, KV7 and KV8: views from Lea Line towards Ross-on-Wye, Chase Hill and the Black Mountains (KV6), Linton ridge (KV7) and Bromsash and Linton ridge (KV8).

KV9 and KV10: views from Aston Crews towards Aston Ingham village and the Malverns (KV9) and May Hill (KV10).

4.1 The countryside of the Neighbourhood Area is greatly appreciated; 93% of respondents to the residents' survey listed natural habitats and the countryside as a valued aspect of life in Aston Ingham, and 70% wanted to see the natural environment maintained including by protecting views over and from Aston Ingham village (32%).

4.2 The County Landscape Character Assessment⁵ identifies two main types of landscape within the Neighbourhood Area:

- **Estate Farmlands** north of the B4222. This is a mixed farming landscape with medium to large fields defined by hedgerows.

⁵ Landscape Character Assessment, 2009.

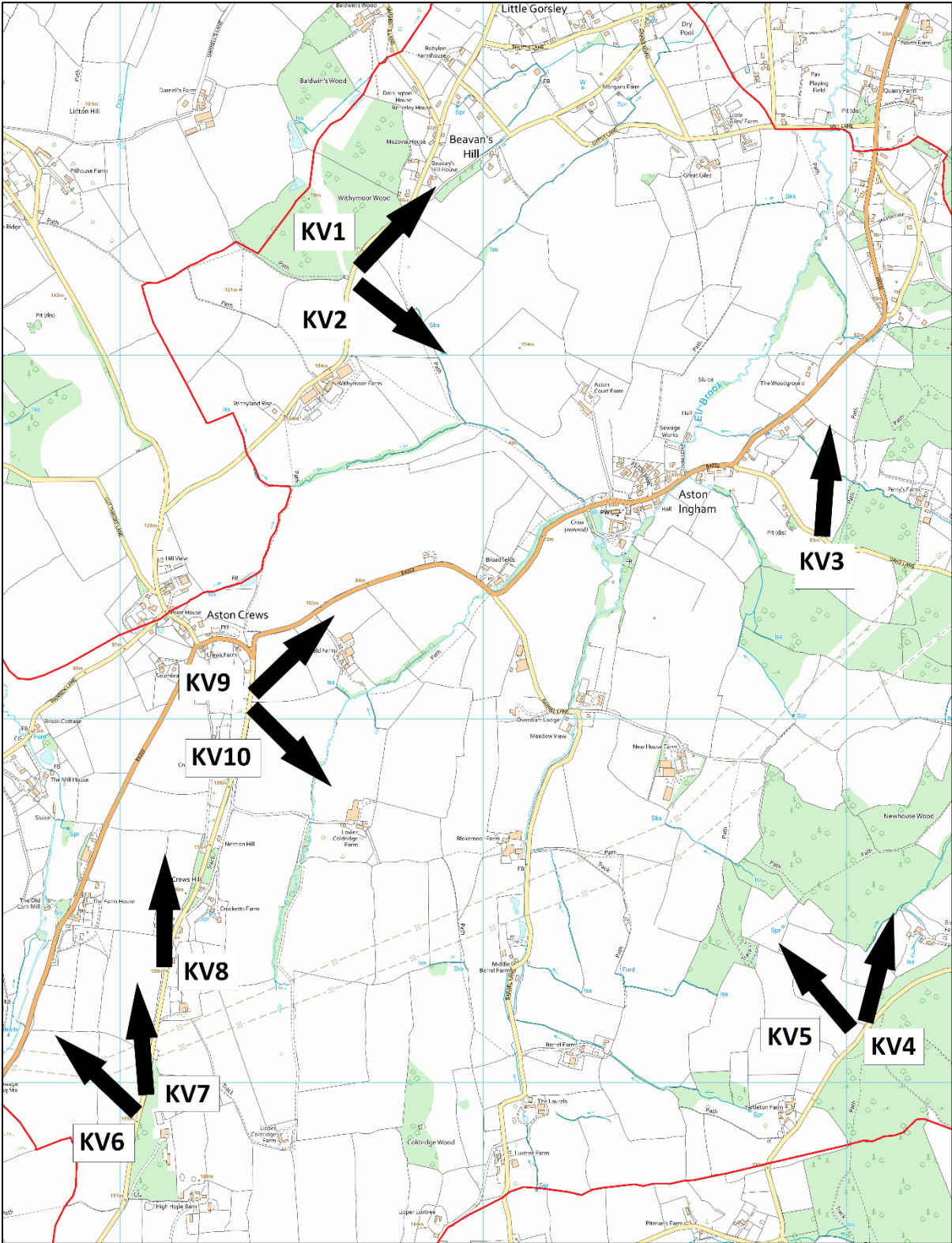
- **Principal Wooded Hills** to the south and east of the main road towards the County border with Gloucestershire. The key features of this landscape type are a varied and often steeply sloping topography and an ancient wooded character made up of mixed broadleaved woodlands with pasture and a scattered settlement pattern.
- There are smaller areas of the following landscape types on the borders of the parish: **Wooded Hills and Farmlands**, around Aston Crews; **Unenclosed Commons**, east of Yartleton Farm; and **Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings** at Little Gorsley in the north.


4.3 The Assessment identifies that a significant factor harming landscape character is the loss and deterioration of hedgerows and of hedgerow and streamside trees through for instance the intensification of arable farming. This harm arises from the loss of hedgerows and trees themselves and associated impacts on historic field boundaries. For this reason, the further loss of important⁶ or other hedgerows and of wayside trees will generally be resisted.

4.4 The topography of the Neighbourhood Area affords notable views of both the countryside around Aston Ingham village and longer distance vistas as far afield as the Malverns. Key views for protection have been identified by the Steering Group, informed by public consultation and responses to the residents' survey. These key views are listed below and shown on Plan 4 and the accompanying photographs. All views are available from public highway or public rights of way in the Neighbourhood Area.

- Key View 1 (KV1): the view from Beavan's Hill looking north-east towards Dymock Forest and the Malverns (grid ref SO67632420).
- Key View 2 (KV2): the view from Beavan's Hill looking south-east towards May Hill (grid ref SO67632420).
- Key View 3 (KV3): the view from Oaks Lane looking north towards Dymock Forest and the Malverns (SO68942349).
- Key View 4 (KV4): the view from May Hill looking north-east towards the Malverns (grid ref OS69042212)
- Key View 5 (KV5): the view from May Hill looking north-west towards the Black Mountains (grid ref OS69042212)
- Key View 6 (KV6): the view from Lea Line looking north-west towards Ross-on-Wye, Chase Hill and the Black Mountains (grid ref SO67012171).
- Key View 7 (KV7): the view from Lea Line looking north towards Linton ridge (grid ref SO67012171).
- Key View 8 (KV8): the view from Lea Line looking north towards Bromsash and Linton ridge (grid ref SO67152266).
- Key View 9 (KV9): the view from Aston Crews looking north-east towards Aston Ingham village and the Malverns (grid ref SO67362310).
- Key View 10 (KV10): the view from Aston Crews looking south-east towards May Hill (grid ref SO67362310).

⁶ As defined in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 SI No. 1160.



 Neighbourhood Area

Plan 4: Key views



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KV1: Beavan's Hill to the Malverns



KV2: Beavan's Hill to May Hill



KV3: Oaks Lane to the Malverns



KV4: May Hill to the Malverns



KV5: May Hill to the Black Mountains



KV6: Lea Line to the Black Mountains



KV7: Lea Line to Linton ridge



KV8: Lea Line to Linton ridge



KV9: Aston Crews to the Malverns



KV10: Aston Crews to May Hill

Biodiversity

Policy AST2: Biodiversity

Development proposals should protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the Neighbourhood Area.

Any development draining to the Lower Wye catchment must be shown not to have an adverse effect on the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC). In particular, planning permission will only be granted if clear and convincing evidence is provided which shows that the proposed development would not increase nutrient inputs to the SAC. This could include the delivery of mitigation measures to make a proposal nutrient neutral. Reference should be made to Herefordshire Council's Phosphate Calculator and associated guidance.

Proposals should contribute to a net gain for biodiversity by:

- 1. identifying and retaining existing green infrastructure within the development site such as trees, hedgerows and water features, and providing for enhancement wherever possible; and**
- 2. wherever possible, promoting the conservation, restoration and enhancement of sites of biodiversity interest in accordance with their status, including those identified in the Priority Habitats Inventory, Local Wildlife Sites, irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and veteran trees, ponds and watercourses; and**
- 3. maintaining, restoring and where possible enhancing the contribution of habitats to the coherence and connectivity of the Herefordshire Ecological Network.**

- 4.5 A small part of the Neighbourhood Area west of Crews Hill drains to the River Wye via the Rudhall Brook. The River Wye is designated at European level as a Special Area of Conservation, whose favourable condition is at risk of being adversely affected by the levels of nutrients in the river, particularly phosphate. The NDP does not make any specific development allocations in this part of the Neighbourhood Area, i.e. in the Lower Wye catchment. However, proposals could arise as planning applications. Development which drains to the River Wye and which may increase nutrient inputs to the river can only proceed if it can be shown with certainty that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site. To assist those preparing planning applications to demonstrate nutrient neutrality, Herefordshire Council has made available a spreadsheet tool and other guidance⁷ to assist in calculating a scheme's phosphate budget.

⁷ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/2039/development_in_the_river_lugg_catchment

- 4.6 Aston Ingham Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) comprises two unimproved neutral and species-rich hay meadows, 5.22 ha. in extent. Its condition was assessed as favourable when last surveyed in 2019.
- 4.7 The Neighbourhood Area has a range of other natural environmental features. Habitats of Principal Importance⁸ comprise a scattered mosaic of deciduous woodland, including ancient and semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland; traditional orchards; and lowland meadows together with hedgerows which are the predominant field boundary. As noted in chapter 2, there are five Local Wildlife Sites wholly or partly within the Neighbourhood Area, representing woodland and grassland habitats of importance at County level (Plan 3). They are:
- Withymoor and Baldwin Wood.
 - Aston Ingham Meadows.
 - Reslaw and New House Wood and adjoining woodlands.
 - Meadows near The Moate (formerly Coldwell Cottage).
 - May Hill.
- 4.8 Other landscape features such as trees, ponds and watercourses throughout the Neighbourhood Area also have value to wildlife and form part of green infrastructure, a collective term for open spaces and other natural features which together deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits. Every effort should be made to retain such features – this was a top priority for 73% of respondents to the residents’ survey.
- 4.9 Development should include new green infrastructure where possible, such as by:
- Delivering benefits for wildlife and green space when sustainable drainage is used.
 - Specifying green roofs and walls, and native species.
 - Creating new habitats, habitat enhancements and other measures supporting wildlife, particularly where such provision serves to link existing features to enhance the green infrastructure network.
- 4.10 Herefordshire Council’s Ecological Network Map provides a detailed picture of wildlife habitats in the Neighbourhood Area, based on data held by the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre. It identifies the role that individual wildlife habitats play in the network and shows how they provide ecological connections within the more intensively managed areas of farmland and to neighbouring areas.⁹ The woodland areas in the east of the Neighbourhood Area are significant core areas.

⁸ As listed in the Priority Habitat Inventory which is maintained by Natural England pursuant to section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

⁹ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/77/ecological_network_map

Building design

Policy AST3: Building design

Development proposals should achieve a high quality of sustainable design by:

- 1. being in character with adjoining development with respect to siting, height, scale, architectural detailing, density, building to building distances, private amenity space, means of enclosure, landscaping and the use of materials; and**
- 2. incorporating sustainability measures including energy and water conservation, renewable energy generation, sustainable drainage, and provision for the recycling of waste, cycle storage, and electric vehicle charging; and**
- 3. avoiding creating unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring property including as a result of the volume and nature of traffic generated, noise, dust or odour. External lighting should avoid undue adverse impacts on amenity, wildlife and dark skies; and**
- 4. being safely accessible from the highway network without undue impacts on the character of the locality and on biodiversity which cannot be mitigated, not result in additional on-road parking, and taking every available opportunity to promote walking and cycling.**

4.11 The residents' survey resulted in many comments on the design and sustainability of new development. Key priorities for respondents were a sympathetic design (80%), the retention of trees and other natural features (73%), resource efficiency (71%) and acceptable impacts on residents and on infrastructure (64% and 62% respectively).

4.12 The above policy is applicable to all forms of development although it is expected to be mainly applied to proposals for new housing. It responds to the survey findings, which favour minimising the carbon footprint of development and using materials that blend with existing properties. New build dwellings and residential conversions are expected to use renewable energy sources such as solar panels and air source heat pumps, and to promote water conservation such as by water harvesting.

4.13 The creation of new or improved accesses to serve development can have notable environmental impacts. For example, impacts on rural character and appearance and on biodiversity may arise from the loss of hedgerows to achieve required sight lines. Proposals should seek to mitigate such adverse impacts to an acceptable level, with hedgerows retained as far as possible.

4.14 Historic farmsteads are a feature of the Neighbourhood Area and development proposals should have regard to their distinctive character including their plan form and layout. Due reference should be made, and full consideration be given to the Herefordshire Farmsteads Characterisation Project.

5. HOUSING

Housing requirement and delivery

5.1 The amount of new housing to be delivered by Neighbourhood Development Plans in Herefordshire is set by the Local Plan. The Aston Ingham NDP is required to show how at least 25 new houses will be delivered between 2011 and 2031. This is to be met as follows:

- By taking account of dwellings already built since 2011, and of existing planning permissions for new houses which have not yet been implemented. Between 2011 to 2021, eight dwellings had been completed and a further six had planning permission (at April 2021).¹⁰
- By allocating land in the Plan for housing development. A Housing Site Assessment has been undertaken. Through this process and subsequent public consultation on site options, land at Ellsmere has been identified as suitable and available for development. This site is expected to deliver five new dwellings.
- By making an allowance for 'windfalls' - sites not specifically identified in a development plan. All of the dwellings which have been built or granted planning permission since 2011 comprise windfalls. Such sites are expected to continue to arise, either as smaller areas of land within the village settlement boundary, or outside the boundary under Local Plan policy RA3 *Herefordshire's countryside*, for instance through the conversion of a redundant building in the countryside. In assessing an appropriate allowance to make for windfalls, the Housing Site Assessment takes account of past rates of supply and expected future trends including having regard to the operation of NDP policies. Taking account of these factors the Plan makes an allowance for up to seven dwellings from this source over the remainder of the Plan period.

5.2 Table 1 shows the resultant position with regard to housing delivery in the Neighbourhood Area, taking into account completions, commitments, the proposed site allocation at Ellsmere, and a realistic windfall allowance.

ASTON INGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA HOUSING REQUIREMENT 2011-2031	25
Dwellings completed 2011 – April 2021	8
Dwellings with planning permission at April 2021	6
Land at Ellsmere, Aston Ingham	5
Windfall allowance	7
TOTAL HOUSING DELIVERY	26

Table 1: Housing delivery, Aston Ingham Neighbourhood Area 2011-2031

¹⁰ Herefordshire Council Authority Monitoring Report Section 3 Neighbourhood Plans, July 2021.

Aston Ingham village settlement boundary

Policy AST4: Aston Ingham village settlement boundary

A settlement boundary is defined for Aston Ingham village as shown on Plan 5. Within the boundary, new housing and other development which is in accordance with other development plan policies will be supported. Local Plan policy RA3 or its replacement will apply to housing proposals outside the boundary.

- 5.3 Aston Ingham village is identified in Local Plan policy RA2 *Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns* as one of a number of rural settlements where proportionate housing growth is appropriate. The Local Plan indicates that NDPs should define settlement boundaries for these villages. This is so that new housing can be best situated in relation to existing services and facilities, and to avoid unnecessary, isolated development in the open countryside, in line with national planning policy. Local Plan policy RA3 *Herefordshire's countryside* defines the exceptional circumstances in which residential development will be permitted in rural locations outside of settlements, as their boundaries are defined in NDPs.
- 5.4 Aston Ingham has a compact and linear form with most properties fronting onto the main road. The historic core of the village is in the west around the Church of St John the Baptist, Aston Court, and Church House, with the former village school and a burial ground opposite. To the east lies the Village Hall, the modern cul-de-sac Aston Bank, and Cowley Lane which gives access to the Scout Hut. After the junction of the B4222 with Oaks Lane, scattered development continues on the east side of the road as far as the bowling green.
- 5.5 The village settlement boundary is shown on Plan 5. It includes the housing development which is proposed at Ellsmere by policy AST5. The settlement boundary generally follows physical features, principally curtilages marked by fence or hedgerows, in accord with criteria in Herefordshire Council guidance.¹¹ In certain cases the boundary cuts across property boundaries where there is a justifiable need to exclude land which if developed could harm settlement character.
- 5.6 Proposals for new housing inside the settlement boundary will be supported where they are in accord with other development plan policies. This includes meeting local needs for different types and sizes of housing as set out in policy AST6.
- 5.7 For the avoidance of doubt, land outside the settlement boundary is defined as countryside in planning terms and subject to Local Plan policy RA3 or its replacement. This includes land and sites immediately abutting the boundary.

¹¹ Herefordshire Council, Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 20 Guide to settlement boundaries, June 2015.

Land at Ellsmere, Aston Ingham

Policy AST5: Land at Ellsmere, Aston Ingham

Land at Ellsmere, Aston Ingham is allocated for development for around five new dwellings and public open space. Plan 5 shows the housing site and the public open space. Proposals that are in accord with policy AST3 and meet the following requirements will be supported:

- 1. the dwellings are of a size and type which contribute to meeting the latest assessment of housing needs in accordance with policy AST6, with a preference for 2- and 3-bedroom properties including bungalows; and**
- 2. vehicular access is taken from the B4222 to the south, retaining as much of the existing hedgerow as is consistent with junction design and visibility requirements; and**
- 3. the design and layout of the new dwellings respects the privacy and seclusion of the Aston Ingham Scout Hut as far as reasonably practicable; and**
- 4. an off-road route for pedestrians and cyclists is provided through the housing and public open space from the B4222 in the east to the west. A Transport Assessment should be provided to demonstrate how the site and village facilities are to be safely accessed by all users; and**
- 5. it is demonstrated through a Flood Risk Assessment that the development will be safe and will not increase flood risk elsewhere, and is otherwise in accord with policy AST11 in respect of surface water management and flood risk. The Flood Risk Assessment should confirm the extent of Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3 within the site and demonstrate that all development is to be located within Flood Zone 1; and**
- 6. an Ecological Appraisal is provided which includes suitable avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures to address predicted impacts; and**
- 7. the proposal includes public open space as shown on Plan 5 which incorporates a management plan for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of the remaining traditional orchard priority habitat as a community orchard and of land within Flood Zones 2 and 3.**

Any proposal for the housing element of the allocated site which does not also include suitable proposals for the public open space element will not be supported.

5.8 Ellsmere is a field at Aston Ingham village. It is bounded by the Ell Brook, the B4222 and hedgerow, with village development to the west (including the Scout Hut, accessed by Cowley Lane), south and east. It is a traditional orchard and as such a Habitat of Principal Importance, with orchard trees surviving on its eastern portion.

5.9 Policy AST5 has been developed so as to strike a balance between providing proportionate housing growth to meet strategic requirements with the conservation, restoration and

enhancement of the priority habitat. It delivers public open space and also seeks to address the issue of poor pedestrian connectivity for those wishing to walk around the village. The key planning requirements are:

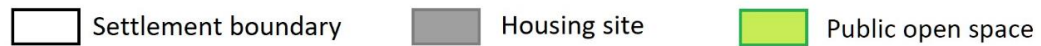
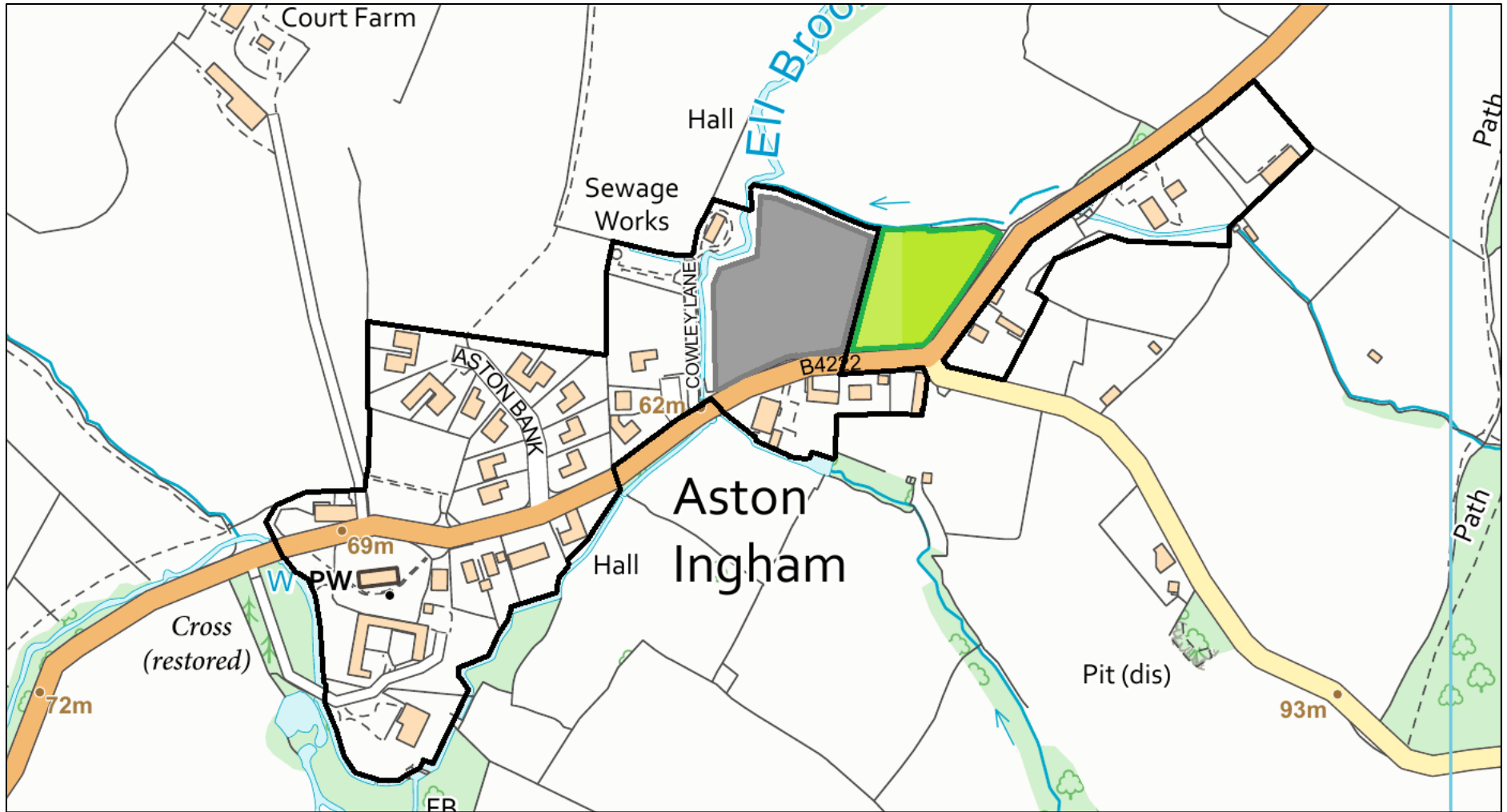
- Allocation of land for development for around five dwellings on around 0.5 ha in the western portion of the field. Vehicular access is to be taken from the B4222 to the south. The siting, orientation and design of the new dwellings should take into account and respect the privacy and seclusion of the Aston Ingham Scout Hut which lies west of the Ell Brook.
- Provision of a Transport Assessment in support of any future planning application for the development to demonstrate that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. An off-road east-west route through the allocated site should be provided to enable pedestrians and cyclists to avoid that section of the B4222 around the Oaks Lane junction. It is a Parish Council aspiration to secure improvements to the footway along the B4222 to the west of the site, between Cowley Lane and Aston Bank, as part of addressing wider highway and road safety concerns (see Community Action CA1). Such footway improvement will both improve on existing conditions for pedestrians and complement the off-road route to be provided by the development of the allocated site.
- A mix of house types and sizes is to be provided in accord with policy AST6, with a focus on meeting the local requirement for 2- and 3- bedroom dwellings and properties to meet the needs of older people.
- Provision of a Flood Risk Assessment in support of any planning application which addresses both fluvial and pluvial (surface water) flood risk. The Flood Risk Assessment should confirm the extent of Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3 within the site. The western extent of the site adjoining the Ell Brook is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. There is also a tributary watercourse to the Ell Brook along the north boundary of the site which is unmodelled. Some modelling of this tributary may be required, and the Assessment should also take account of local knowledge of recent flood events and make appropriate allowance for climate change. All development should be located in Flood Zone 1. The Flood Risk Assessment should confirm that the development will be safe and not increase flood risk elsewhere. The development of the site must also be in accord with policy AST11 in respect of the sustainable management of surface water drainage and flood risk.
- In respect of wastewater, the site drains to the east and is within the Severn Vale catchment. Suitable proposals for the treatment and disposal of wastewater should be provided in accord with Local Plan policy SD4 *Wastewater treatment and river water quality*.
- The creation of public open space as a community orchard on the eastern part of the field, on around 0.5 ha. This part of the allocated site is outside the settlement boundary. It is to be made available as public open space under the terms of a management plan which is to be included within the planning application for the housing development on the western part of the site allocation. The management plan should provide for the long-term conservation, restoration and enhancement of the traditional orchard priority habitat and be informed by an Ecological Appraisal of the

overall site provided in support of any planning application. Provision should be made for the ecological management of the land within Flood Zones 2 and 3 on the western and northern boundaries of the site to maintain and enhance biodiversity.


- The housing and public open space/community orchard elements should be formulated and implemented as a comprehensive package and as such are expected to form part of a single planning application.

5.10 Ellsmere has been used historically as an orchard and proposals should consider the possibility of a legacy of contamination from agricultural spraying.

5.11 Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water have indicated that there are water supply issues within the area and that they will advise at the planning application stage as to whether the site can be served by a public water supply without the need to await regulatory investment.



Plan 5: Settlement boundary and housing site allocation

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Housing mix

Policy AST6: Housing mix

Proposals for new housing must demonstrate, subject to viability considerations, that they provide dwellings of a type and size that positively contribute to meeting the latest assessment of housing needs. There is a particular requirement in the Neighbourhood Area for:

- **Smaller family housing of 2- or 3-bedrooms.**
- **Housing designed to meet the needs of older people including bungalows.**

Proposals for live/work units and for self-build housing will also be supported.

- 5.12 It is important to make sure that housing is provided to meet local requirements. This is all the more important in the Neighbourhood Area because housing growth will be relatively limited by virtue of the rural location. For these reasons, new dwellings should be demonstrably relevant to local requirements in order to help deliver sustainable and balanced communities.
- 5.13 Responses to the residents' survey show that the community favours smaller family homes with 3 bedrooms (53%) followed by 2-bedroom properties (19%), with much less support for larger property (4- or more bedrooms, 6%). Adapted/easy access homes such as bungalows were seen as most important by 12%.
- 5.14 There was also support for live/work homes (35%), self-build (33%) and supported/sheltered housing for older people (28%).
- 5.15 These survey findings are echoed in evidence from the latest Housing Market Area Needs Assessment.¹² Table 2 is taken from the Assessment and shows the recommended housing mix for the Ross-on-Wye Rural Housing Market Area (which includes the Aston Ingham Neighbourhood Area). For market housing the main requirement is for 3-bedroom (50%) and 2-bedroom (25%). For affordable housing, there is a reduced emphasis on larger dwellings with greater proportions of 1- and 2-bedroom homes being required for both affordable home ownership (55%) and rent (65%).

¹² Housing Market Area Needs Assessment, Iceni Projects Limited for HC, July 2021.

Size	Market housing	Affordable home ownership	Affordable rented housing
1 bedroom	5%	20%	35%
2 bedroom	25%	35%	30%
3 bedroom	50%	35%	30%
4+ bedroom	20%	10%	5%

Table 2: Recommended housing mix by tenure and size, Ross-on-Wye Rural HMA 2020-2041

Source: Housing Market Area Needs Assessment table 12.11.

- 5.16 There is also evidence of an increasing requirement for housing to meet the needs of older people. The proportion of the Neighbourhood Area’s population aged 65 and over is expected to rise from 22% in 2011 to an estimated 36% in 2020, a faster rate of growth compared to the equivalent County figures (21% and 25% respectively). County-level information supports the view that developments should contain a range of house types, including, where appropriate, bungalows.¹³
- 5.17 In providing a suitable mix of housing it is particularly important that proposals address the requirement for smaller accommodation. This will help meet housing market pressures and local need. In addition, the provision of new housing suitable for older people will allow existing residents to stay in the community, enabling downsizing and so the release of existing larger homes for family occupation. Live/work and self-build dwellings will also be supported.

¹³ Herefordshire Council, A Study of the Housing and Support Needs of Older People in Herefordshire, 2012.

Householder development

Policy AST7: Householder development

Proposals for alterations and extensions to existing dwellings or for ancillary development within residential curtilages will be supported where they are in accord with policy AST3 and:

- 1. the existing dwelling remains as the dominant element of built form on the curtilage, to which the proposed development is subordinate; and**
- 2. the design of the new development respects and complements the existing dwelling in scale, height, form, materials and detailing. This does not preclude innovative proposals where these are of exceptional design quality; and**
- 3. the proposal does not lead to an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties through overlooking, loss of privacy, reduction of outlook or daylight, or noise; and**
- 4. the proposal does not lead to an unacceptable loss of on-curtilage parking resulting in additional on-street parking; and**
- 5. the proposal does not lead to an unacceptable loss of useable private amenity space, trees or other important natural site features.**

5.18 Householder developments are those within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse which require an application for planning permission. Examples include alterations and extensions, conservatories, loft conversions, home offices, dormer windows and the provision of ancillary accommodation, swimming pools, garages, car ports and annexes. Proposals to build a separate dwelling in the garden, changes of use to part or all of a property to non-residential (including business) uses, or anything outside the garden of the property (including stables if in a separate paddock) are excluded from the definition. Permitted development rights allow such work within specified limits and conditions without the need for planning permission. Nonetheless, householder development accounted for one-fifth of all planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area in the last five years (since 2017). The residents' survey emphasised the need for such development to retain trees and other natural features, maintain character and appearance and respect amenity.

5.19 Proposals for householder development are expected to continue to come forward in the Neighbourhood Area up to 2031 as the housing stock is adapted to changing demands and requirements, including a likely increase in home working which is already a significant feature of local economic activity. The above policy provides a basis to guide the determination of such planning applications. The aim is to ensure that proposals respect and complement both the existing dwelling and the immediate locality including the amenity of neighbours, and that undue adverse impacts associated with over-development, such as the loss of natural features, are avoided.

6. COMMUNITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Community facilities

Policy AST8: Community facilities

The community facilities listed below and shown on Plan 6 and the accompanying photographs will be protected, retained and enhanced in accordance with Local Plan policy SC1 or its replacement:

- **Aston Ingham Village Hall.**
- **St John the Baptist Church.**
- **Aston Ingham Scout Hut.**
- **Aston Ingham Bowling Green.**
- **The Penny Farthing Inn public house.**

Proposals for new community facilities in and adjacent to the village and which are accessible by a choice of transport modes including walking and cycling will be supported. Proposals should take account of the potential for the co-location of services in achieving viability. A village shop will be particularly welcomed.

- 6.1 Community facilities in the Neighbourhood Area comprise the Village Hall, St. John the Baptist church, a scout hut, and bowling green, all at Aston Ingham village; and a public house, The Penny Farthing Inn at Aston Crews.
- 6.2 Existing community facilities as listed in the policy will be retained, and enhancements and proposals for new provision supported, in line with Local Plan policy SC1 *Social and community facilities* or its replacement. Policy SC1 provides that facilities will be retained unless an appropriate alternative is available or can be provided, or that the facility can be shown to be no longer required, viable or fit for purpose. Where appropriate, it must have been vacant and marketed for community use without success.
- 6.3 In terms of providing new community facilities, the provision of a village shop and mobile Post Office was the top priority for the village to develop in the residents' survey, with small-scale retailing being sought by 60% of respondents. Whilst any such provision would be first and foremost a commercial decision, the policy provides a positive planning framework for the consideration of such proposals should and when they arise (see also Community Action CA9).



Neighbourhood Area

Plan 6: Community facilities

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Aston Ingham Village Hall



St. John the Baptist Church



Aston Ingham Scout Hut



Aston Ingham Bowling Green



The Penny Farthing Inn

Communications infrastructure

Policy AST9: Communications infrastructure

Proposals for the development of mobile telecommunications infrastructure will be supported provided that:

- 1. use is made of existing masts, buildings or other structures in preference to a new site wherever possible and technically appropriate; and**
- 2. the siting, design and appearance of equipment including its height and colour serves to minimise the impact on visual amenity and on the character and appearance of the locality, taking account of any mitigation proposed; and**
- 3. the proposal does not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts on landscape character and key views.**

Improvements to broadband infrastructure will be supported. New development should be served by a full fibre connection unless it can be demonstrated that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable, in which case suitable ducting should be provided from the site boundary to all properties to facilitate future provision.

6.4 The provision of new or improved communications infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Area is welcomed. This is in line with the residents' survey where improvements to broadband speeds and mobile reception were sought by 51% of respondents, and also reflects national planning policy. Such provision will help foster local business and economic activity including homeworking in line with policy AST12 as well as many other aspects of village and community life and well-being. The policy requirements for telecommunication infrastructure are intended to enable such development to proceed in a sympathetic manner by protecting amenity, landscape character and key views.

6.5 The policy is supported by Community Action CA8.

Renewable and low carbon energy

Policy AST10: Renewable and low carbon energy

Renewable and low carbon energy proposals including small-scale wind energy development that will benefit the community will be supported where:

- 1. the form of development is appropriate to its surroundings and is not of an industrial scale or nature such that this would be inappropriate to the rural character of the Neighbourhood Area; and**
- 2. there is no substantial increase in traffic volumes including HGV traffic; and**
- 3. there is no undue detrimental impact on visual and residential amenity, landscape character including the setting of Aston Ingham village, key views and biodiversity.**

6.6 The NDP is supportive of renewable energy proposals where these can be accommodated without undue impacts on visual and residential amenity and on the character and appearance of the Neighbourhood Area including its landscape, key views and biodiversity. Highway safety and capacity will be a particular concern where schemes may give rise to significant traffic movements including by heavy goods vehicles on the narrow rural lanes, for instance through the movement or import of fuel, as may be associated with biomass.

6.7 The NDP does not identify an area suitable for wind energy development.

Traffic and transport

6.8 Responses to the residents' survey highlighted many aspects of traffic and transport in and around the Neighbourhood Area which were of concern to residents. They include:

- Maintenance of roads, hedges and verges. This was the top priority for improvement.
- Speed and volume of traffic through the Neighbourhood Area and the implications for amenity, road safety for vulnerable road users, walking and cycling. This is a particular issue in and around Aston village; the volume and speed of traffic coupled with a lack of continuous footways which meet current standards means that walking alongside the B4222 to access facilities such as the Village Hall is an intimidating experience. Positive interventions to improve road safety such as reduced speed limits, enforcing existing provisions and other speed reduction measures such as traffic calming were suggested.
- Lack of any public transport provision and the implications in enabling access to services and reducing isolation for those without a car.
- Maintenance of public rights of way.

6.9 These traffic and transport issues do not generally involve land use and development and to this extent they are outside the scope of the NDP.¹⁴ For instance, Herefordshire Council sets speed limits as the highway authority, and these are enforced by West Mercia Police and the Safer Roads Partnership. Public transport is delivered by commercial operators or voluntary providers supported by public subsidy from Herefordshire Council. However, local initiatives to address such issues may be expressed in the NDP as Community Actions, and these are listed at Table 3 (Chapter 9).

6.10 When development is proposed, Local Plan policies *SS4 Movement and transportation* and *MT1 Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel* will apply as well as those in the NDP.

¹⁴ An exception to this is the traffic calming and footway improvement scheme in Aston Ingham village which is proposed by policy AST5, to be delivered in association with the development of land at Ellsmere.

Surface water and flood risk

Policy AST11: Surface water and flood risk

Development proposals should provide a surface water management strategy to accompany outline or full planning applications to demonstrate effective surface water drainage and the management of flood risk. In doing so, full use should be made of sustainable drainage systems. Designs should maximise the retention of surface water within the curtilage of the development site and minimise runoff. There should be no increase in runoff or flood risk affecting neighbouring land and property and wherever possible betterment should be achieved through a reduction in runoff rate and volumes.

- 6.11 There are areas at risk of flooding from the Ell Brook and other watercourses in and around Aston Ingham village, and from the Rudhall Brook at Aston Mills. Residents' survey and other consultation responses have also highlighted the consequences of recent flood events at Aston Ingham village associated with surface water run-off. In the survey, 79% of respondents identified flooding as a potential issue of concern associated with new housing. Policy AST11 is included to ensure these concerns are fully addressed by development proposals in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 6.12 Local Plan Core Strategy policy SD3 *Sustainable water management and water resources* provides for the sustainable management of water resources. This is supported by a checklist of information on surface water drainage and flood risk which will be required to accompany any planning application where flooding is identified as an issue.¹⁵ Proposals should be drawn up in accordance with the checklist and the Council's Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Handbook so that suitable evidence is provided to demonstrate that the proposed means of surface water drainage is a viable solution. This may include infiltration tests to the required standards and information on annual water table levels and their seasonal variation.
- 6.13 Development in the Neighbourhood Area should not exacerbate any existing drainage and flooding problems and should aim to provide betterment wherever possible. These aims and requirements may be achieved by the use of attenuation facilities such as lagoons, ponds and swales within the development area. Sustainable drainage can be enhanced by aspects of building design such as rain water harvesting (see also policy AST3).

¹⁵ <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/14591/planning-applications-flood-risk-and-drainage-checklist>.

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Small-scale employment

Policy AST12: Small-scale employment

Proposals for small-scale employment development which are consistent with the rural character of the Neighbourhood Area will be supported, including:

- **extensions to existing dwellings to enable home working which are in accord with policy AST7;**
- **proposals for the change of use of redundant rural buildings for business use including for live/work units;**
- **the small-scale extension of existing business premises; and**
- **the development and diversification of existing farm, forestry and other land-based rural businesses.**

Proposals should:

1. **not create unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of local residents, including through noise or air pollution, light levels, working hours, and increases in traffic; and**
2. **demonstrate that the traffic generated can be safely accommodated on local roads without undue operational, safety or environmental consequences, including road widening or loss of hedgerows, and encourage walking and cycling.**

7.1 The residents' survey demonstrated support for small-scale farming and other land-based businesses such as horticulture, market gardening and farm diversification. Respondents were concerned that economic development could lead to increased traffic, particularly on the rural lanes (62% of respondents); that the scale of such businesses should be appropriate to the rural community, and that noise and lights impacts should be reduced.

7.2 The NDP supplements Local Plan rural economy policies by identifying forms of small-scale business development that are appropriate for the Neighbourhood Area, together with the associated planning requirements which are guided by the survey findings. Traffic levels and speed and the proportion of HGVs are existing issues of concern within the Neighbourhood Area. Proposals should take all opportunities to encourage active travel through walking and cycling.

Agricultural and forestry development

Policy AST13: Agricultural and forestry development

Proposals for agricultural and forestry development requiring planning permission should be able to demonstrate that they meet the following requirements:

- 1. the local highway network and the proposed means of vehicular access can cater safely for both the volume and type of vehicles anticipated, and the proposed access is environmentally acceptable; and**
- 2. new buildings are sited with existing development wherever possible. Where this is not possible, new buildings should be sited to take advantage of natural landform and avoid isolated or skyline locations; and**
- 3. any impacts on landscape character and visual amenity arising from the proposed siting, scale, design, colour and materials of development are acceptable, or can be satisfactorily mitigated by a landscaping scheme which is itself acceptable; and**
- 4. there will be no undue loss of amenity to the occupiers of residential properties, including by way of external lighting, the design and siting of any building or installation, traffic, or noise and air pollution including odour; and**
- 5. biodiversity is conserved and enhanced and there are no unacceptable impacts on heritage assets or the utility and enjoyment of public rights of way. The provision of safe off-road active travel links within developments is encouraged; and**
- 6. surface water is acceptably and appropriately managed through sustainable drainage, with no adverse impact on local watercourses in respect of water quality, flood risk, pollution or soil erosion.**

In assessing proposals, account will be taken of any necessary ancillary works and buildings and of any other existing, permitted or proposed similar developments in the locality so that cumulative impacts can be considered.

7.3 Some forms of agricultural development can have a significant impact on character and amenity by virtue of the size and siting of new buildings, the processes undertaken and vehicle movements. This could include larger-scale glasshouses, polytunnels and intensive livestock units which were opposed by 80% of respondents to the residents' survey, as well as other agricultural and forestry development of a size which requires planning permission.

7.4 Policy AST13 is intended to help ensure that new agricultural development is undertaken sensitively and with due regard to the environmental implications and the concerns of the community. Larger scale proposals should provide a Transport Assessment or Statement written in accord with Department of Transport guidance. Herefordshire Council's Poly tunnels Planning Guide¹⁶ will be taken into account in deciding whether polytunnel proposals requiring planning permission are to be supported.

¹⁶ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/14577/polytunnels_planning_guide_2018.pdf

8. IMPLEMENTING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 8.1 The NDP is a long-term planning document for the period up to 2031. Aston Ingham Parish Council will seek to implement the objectives and policies of the NDP with the aim of delivering the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 8.2 The principal means of doing this will be through decisions on planning applications. These are taken by Herefordshire Council as local planning authority in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NDP will, when made, form part of the overall 'development plan'.
- 8.3 When responding to consultations on planning applications, the Parish Council will base its response on development plan policies including those in the NDP, taking due account of other material considerations. Existing and new Parish Councillors will ensure that they are briefed on the NDP and its purpose, that they are familiar with its contents, and skilled in the application of its policies to development proposals.
- 8.4 The Parish Council will work pro-actively with applicants and Herefordshire Council to seek to support planning applications that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the Neighbourhood Area. This will include suggesting the use of planning conditions or obligations so as to make unacceptable development acceptable.
- 8.5 The Parish Council will monitor the implementation of the policies in the NDP and keep under review the need for the NDP to be amended and updated. Policies in this document may be superseded by other development plan policies, such as those arising from the current update of the Local Plan, or by the emergence of new evidence. Where policies in the NDP become out-of-date, the Parish Council, in consultation with Herefordshire Council, will decide how best to review and up-date the NDP.

9. COMMUNITY ACTIONS

- 9.1 The formal role of the NDP is the setting of planning policies which deal with land use and development. However, in preparing the NDP and in responding to the residents' survey the local community has identified ways of improving the local area which extend beyond this remit. These generally concern infrastructure and transport matters. Such issues cannot be addressed through the land use planning policies of the NDP but may be expressed as Community Actions. These are set out in Table 3 overleaf. Whilst the Community Actions shown reflect the concerns expressed in the residents' survey it is also the case that many of these issues reflect ongoing work by the Parish Council to address matters of concern with partner organisations.
- 9.2 Where possible and appropriate, developer contributions will be sought to deliver, or support the delivery, of improvements to these aspects of parish life, where such obligations are:
- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
 - Directly related to the development proposed.
 - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 9.3 The Community Actions do not form part of the NDP and do not constitute planning policy.

Ref.	Topic area	Community Action
CA1	Highways – road safety for all users	The Parish Council will continue to work with Herefordshire Council as Highway Authority and other partners to identify and implement measures to address the issues raised in the NDP residents’ survey where possible, including traffic speeds through Aston Ingham village. As well as the enforcement of the present speed limits this may include traffic speed indicator devices; footway provision and improvement including between Cowley Lane and Aston Bank, widening, and building out; and village gateways.
CA2	Highways – road safety priority locations	The Parish Council will continue to work with Herefordshire Council to seek road safety improvements where this can be justified.
CA3	Highways – road maintenance and drainage	The Parish Council will continue to work with Herefordshire Council to address issues of highway maintenance and drainage (road run-off, ditches and gullies) as they arise and including use of the Lengthsman scheme.
CA4	Highways – other matters	The Parish Council will continue to work with Herefordshire Council to address other highway issues including the further provision of passing places in justified locations, traffic calming, hedge and verge cutting, and road and footpath signage.
<i>CA5</i>	<i>Public transport provision</i>	The Parish Council will work with Herefordshire Council, bus operators and Community Transport providers to investigate ways of enabling a public transport service.
CA6	Walking and cycling	The Parish Council will continue to work with landowners to promote the maintenance of public rights of way and to seek safe cycle and walking routes and other measures to encourage active travel. This includes the delivery of safe off-road active travel links in association with development or as other opportunities arise. Walking and cycling along the B4222 will also be promoted by traffic speed reductions (see CA1).
CA7	Flooding at Aston Ingham village	The Parish Council will continue to work with Herefordshire Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority and landowners to address fluvial and surface water flood risk (in addition to CA3 highway drainage).
<i>CA8</i>	<i>Communications and broadband</i>	The Parish Council will promote and support improvements to communications and broadband infrastructure by working in partnership with Herefordshire Council and network operators.
<i>CA9</i>	<i>Convenience retail/Post Office</i>	The Parish Council will support the establishment of local convenience shopping facilities/Post Office at Aston Ingham village, including mobile facilities making use of the Village Hall. A community initiative to establish a pop-up pub at the Village Hall will also be supported.

Table 3: Community Actions

Actions in bold = current activities being actively worked on

Actions in italics = aspirational

APPENDIX A: EVIDENCE BASE

A.1 The following planning policy documents, reports, consultation evidence and other survey material have been used in drawing up the NDP.

HC = Herefordshire Council

National level evidence

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2021.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>.

Department of Transport guidance for Transport Assessments, Statements and Travel Plans at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements>.

Census 2011 at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>.

Office for National Statistics, Small area population estimates 2020.

Natural England, National Character Area profile 104: South Herefordshire and Over Severn, 2014.

Environment Agency, Flood Map for Planning at <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

Historic England, National Heritage List for England at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/>.

Natural England, Magic Map at <http://www.magic.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> (includes Priority Habitat Inventory sites).

County level evidence

Preece, N. and Rimmington, N., Herefordshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project Report, Herefordshire Archaeology, 2008.

HC, Landscape Character Assessment, Supplementary Planning Guidance, 2004 updated 2009.

HC, Highways Design Guide for New Developments, 2006.

HC, Green Infrastructure Strategy, 2010.

A study of the Housing and Support Needs of Older People in Herefordshire, Peter Fletcher Associates and arc4 for Herefordshire Council, 2012.

HC, Herefordshire Ecological Network Map, 2013.

HC, Herefordshire Local Plan, Core Strategy 2011-2031, 2015.

HC, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Rural Report, 2019.

HC, Polytunnels Planning Guide, June 2018.

HC, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Handbook, June 2018.

Housing Market Area Needs Assessment, Icen Projects Limited for HC, July 2021.

Parish and local level evidence

HC, Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping report for Aston Ingham Neighbourhood Area, March 2020.

HC, Authority Monitoring Report Section 3 Neighbourhood Plans, 2021.

Reports by DJN Planning Ltd for Aston Ingham Parish Council:

- Residents' questionnaire survey 2021, Results report and Comment listings, March 2021.
- Housing site assessment, July 2021, and addendum, July 2022.
- Drop-in consultation on housing site options and settlement boundary 11 September 2021, Results report, September 2021.

HC, Environmental Reports and Appropriate Assessments for Aston Ingham Neighbourhood Area, 2022.