



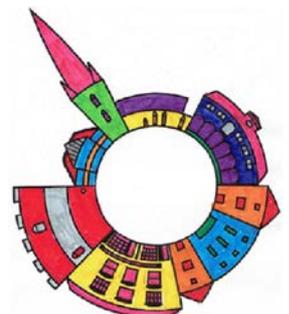
# Ross-on-Wye

## Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 - 2031

Referendum Version  
with Appendices 2020



NATIONAL  
LOTTERY FUNDED





## Thank you

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Foreword

This plan is the result of several years' work by very many residents of Ross-on-Wye, all of them volunteers. We are grateful to them, especially to Melvin Reynolds, who has carefully and wisely chaired and coordinated the process from its very early stages. We are also grateful to the team's professional advisers in Herefordshire Council and Place Studio. The journey has been long, and progress sometimes much slower than desired or deserved, but it is the end-product that matters. The Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan sets out to enhance existing planning guidance by making use of local knowledge, and the views of the people who live here, to shape the future of the town.

Change is sometimes feared and often resisted, but the truism that change is the only constant has been around since ancient times. And it is not change itself that is disliked perhaps, so much as changes over which we sense we have little control. This Plan seeks to put Ross itself into the driving seat of its own destiny over the next 12 years, to the maximum extent that this is possible.

The continuing relaxed and gentle attractiveness of Ross in its gateway setting and its unique status as the only Town in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has fuelled its growth as a retirement and commuting centre. Against that background, the Town Council set the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group the challenge of ensuring that Ross would continue to be a favourite tourist destination but also enable development to ensure that our locally born young people have access to affordable housing, employment for a wide range of skills and a high quality of life within the town.

I believe that, within the framework of the Local Plan developed by Herefordshire Council to address government requirements and constraints, that group has done a good job of treading the fine line between development & conservation, of understanding the wishes of the Ross community, and of translating those into a plan for the town's development over the next decade or so. However, the verdict is yours. This final version of the Plan will be put to the Town in a referendum in the coming weeks, ensuring that it has the support of the community. Please do read the contents and use your vote!

Cllr. Jane Roberts

Mayor, Ross-on-Wye 2019-20



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

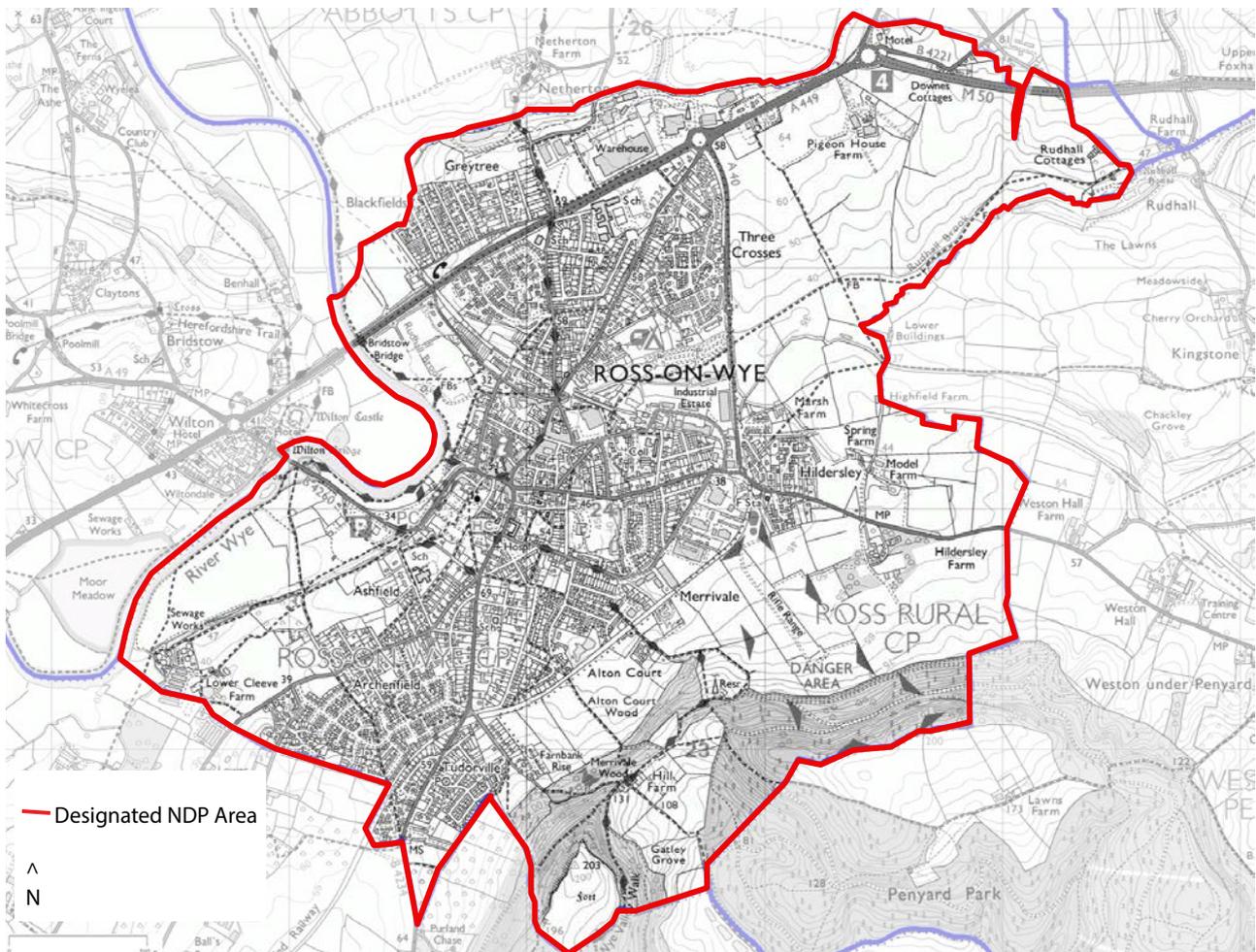
1.1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development and promote better land use in their community by preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans. Such Plans would establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in legally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

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

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

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

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





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

- 1.1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan period is 2019 to 2031. This falls within the plan period of the Herefordshire Local Plan.



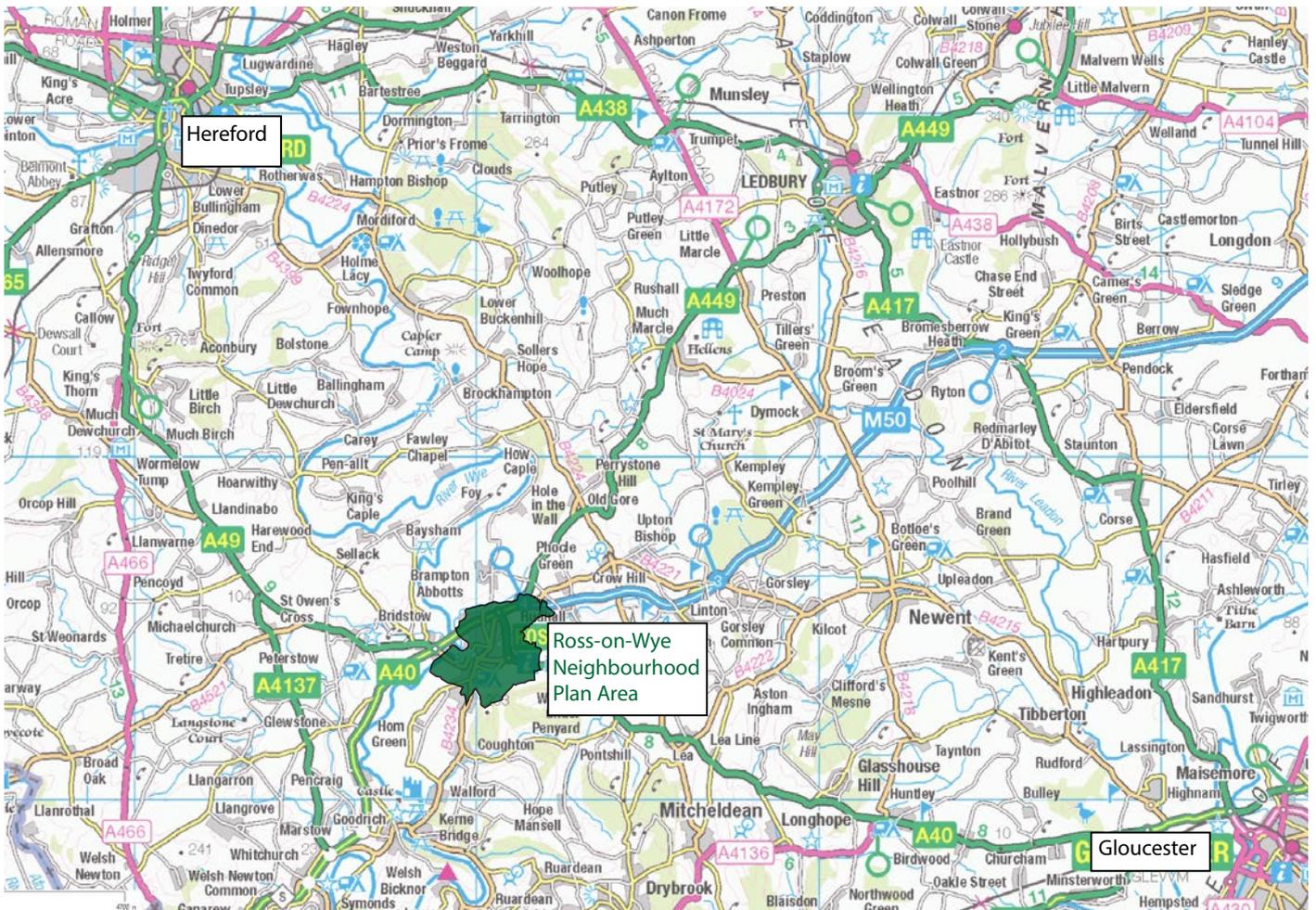


## 1.2 Ross-on-Wye: A Summary Description

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

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

Figure 2: Ross-on-Wye Location Map



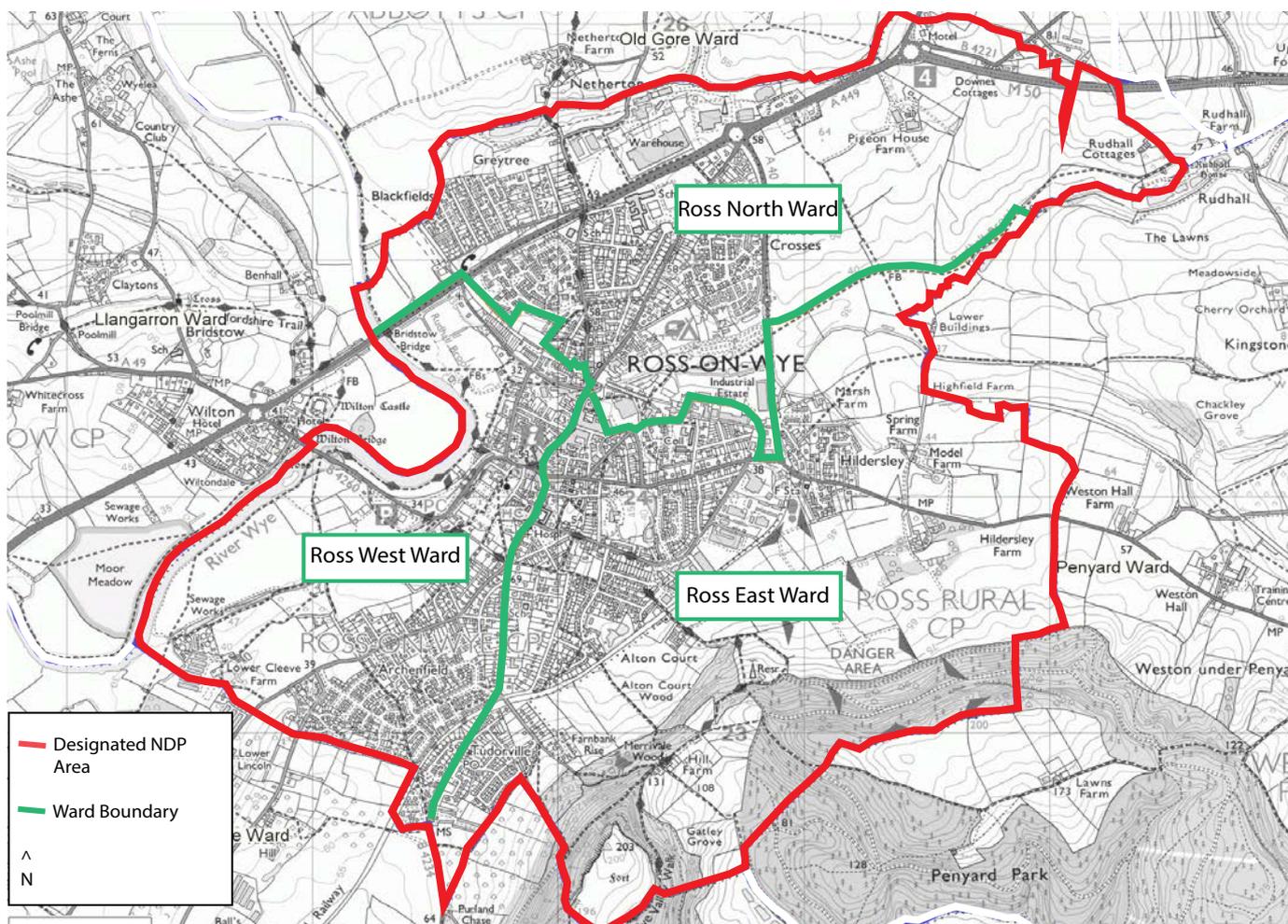


of the town). The town is nevertheless a service centre for a population estimated to be around 26,000 people.

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

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

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





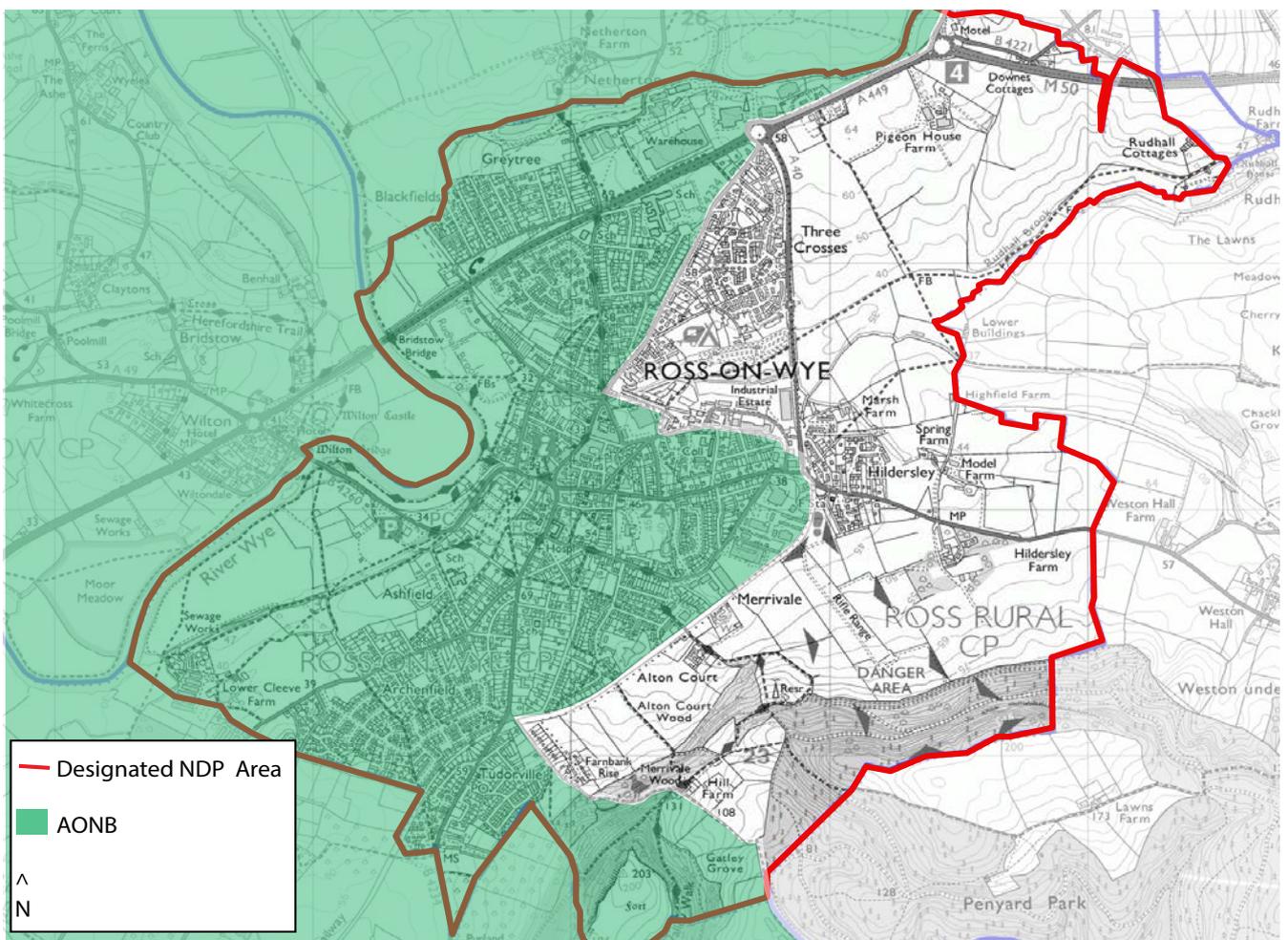
1.2.4 Parts of the Ross Neighbourhood Plan area are liable to flooding. This affects in particular much of the Wye river valley itself (just to the north of the town centre), parts of the lower town centre, the Broadmeadows site and out towards and beyond the A40. Although remedial measures have been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

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

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

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

Figure 4: Ross-on-Wye within the AONB





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

- 1.2.7 Much of the centre of Ross-on-Wye is in a Conservation Area (though some of the Conservation Area lies outside the designated area of the Neighbourhood Plan). There are 3 Grade 1 Listed Buildings, 8 Grade 2\* and 143 Grade 2.
- 1.2.8 The town is very active culturally and socially, with many varied groups and organisations and there are annual town-wide events such as the Carnival (held in August). It is also active in sporting terms, some of this activity relating directly to the River Wye, for example the annual regatta.

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

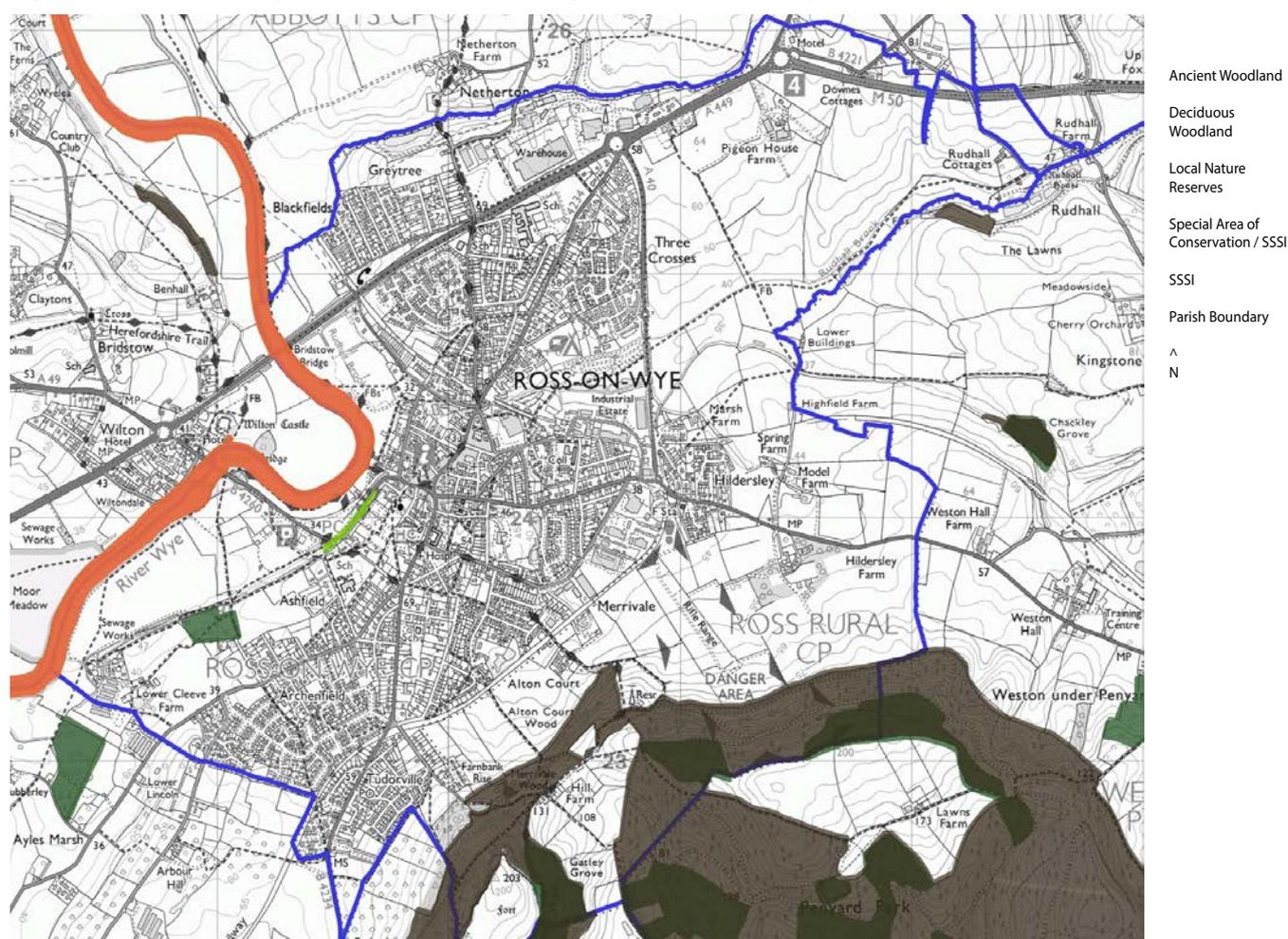
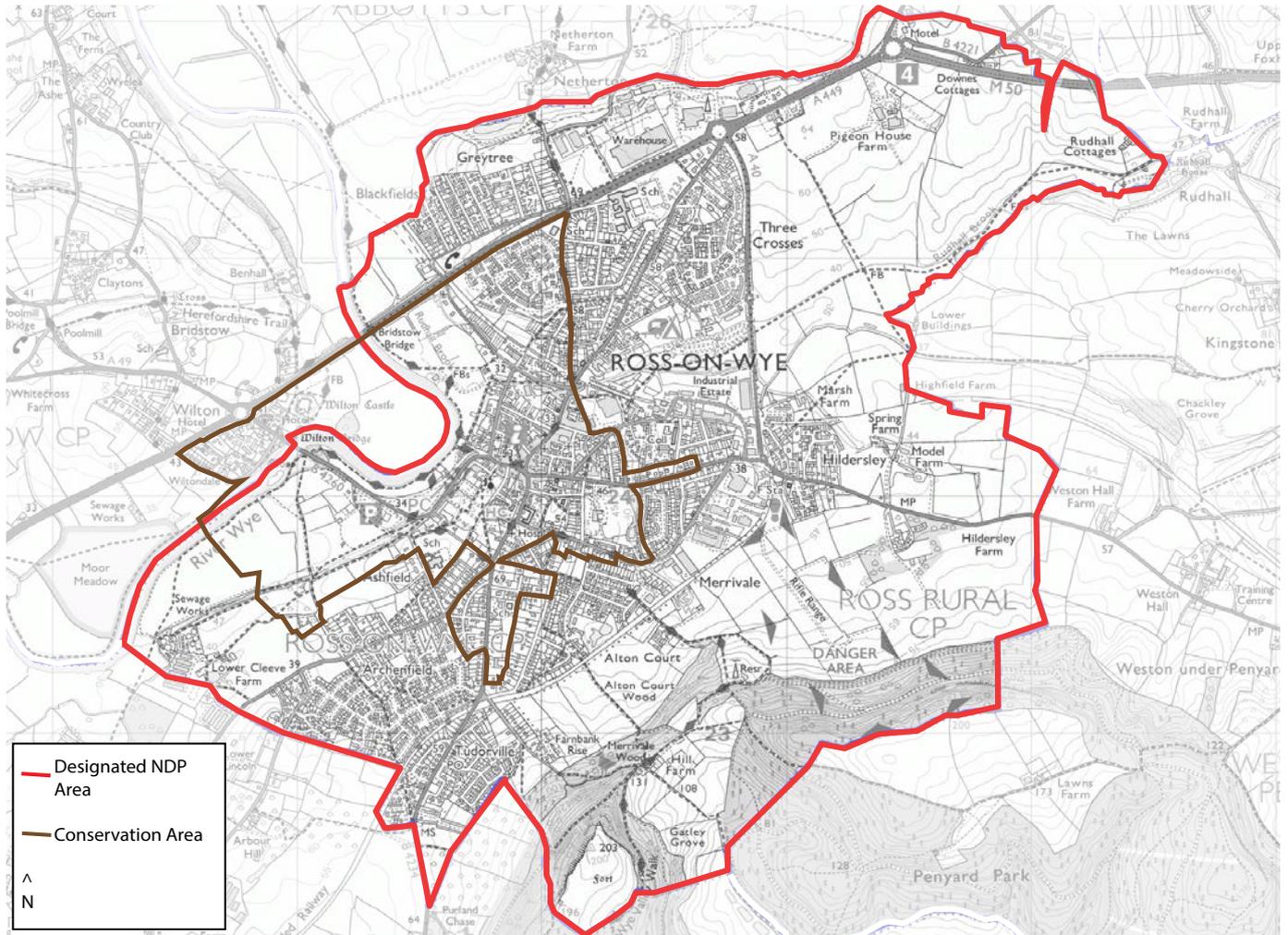




Figure 6: Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area







## 1.2.9 Facts and Figures

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

- Ross-on-Wye is part of the parliamentary constituency of Hereford and South Herefordshire. For Herefordshire Council, there are three political wards – North, West and East – each with its own councillor. The Town Council comprises six members elected by each of the three wards. The population is just over 11,000 with almost 5,000 households, i.e. an average household size of 2.2. The age structure reflects fairly closely that of Herefordshire as a whole, although with slightly fewer people in the 5-14 age group and slightly more in the 75+ age groups. The population is overwhelmingly white British (c. 94%).
- Of the c.5,000 households, the census showed that c.35% lived in detached houses, c.23% in semi-detached, c.20% in terraced and c.22% in flats. In terms of tenure c.68% of households are owner occupiers, the remainder renting. The low average household size and the slightly higher percentage of older people no doubt links to a high percentage of households having more rooms than 'required' (c. 74%). Over 70% of households have access to one or two cars.
- Of the 7,500 or so residents aged 16-74 years, c.70% were economically active in 2011 (c.40% full-time), over half of the other 30% were retired, students, carers or permanently sick/

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

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

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

1.2.12 While the average house price in Ross is slightly lower than the national average (£258K compared to a national average of £275K), the average gross annual earnings for a full time worker on adult rates in Herefordshire are considerably lower than the national figure (£23K compared to a national average of £29K). This means that homes at the lower end of the market in Ross cost around 11 times the average annual earnings compared to around 8.9 times nationally



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

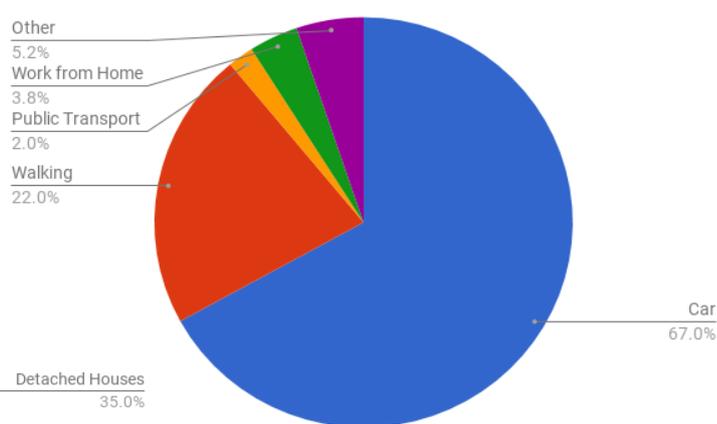
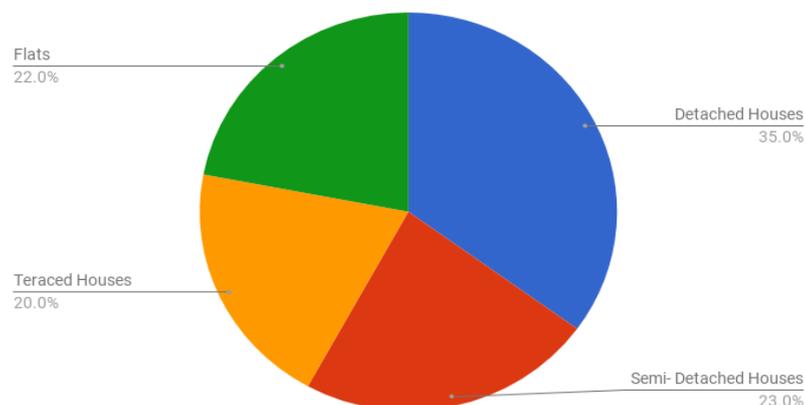
1.2.14 The town is served by buses and coaches to various places such as Hereford, Gloucester, Cardiff,

Birmingham and London. The town's rail services ceased in 1959 and there is a lack of integration between local bus services and rail services in nearby towns. The nearest train stations are now in Ledbury, Hereford and Gloucester (and Newport is also accessible for trains towards London).

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

*Modes of travel to work in Ross-on-Wye*

*Mix of housing types in Ross-on-Wye*





## 1.3 Issues, Challenges, Aspirations

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

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

1.3.3 The issues listed are not necessarily evidence-based (e.g. unsafe junctions); they are based on the perceptions of local people at community involvement events.

### 1.3.4 Environment

- The design of new buildings and shopfronts should be sympathetic to the character of Ross.
- Good quality local character benefits tourism.
- The highly valued landscape setting of Ross is threatened by further development.
- The quality of the Conservation Area is declining and historic/listed

buildings are at risk\*.

- Flooding remains a problem in some areas of the town.
- Public spaces in the town centre need improving.
- Stop people using hard paving in front gardens.
- The huge area behind Morrison's is an eyesore.
- Promoting renewable energy is important.

\* As assessed by Herefordshire Council, this is in terms of high shop vacancy rates, and in accomodation above shops and the poor condition of some buildings as well as the public realm.

### 1.3.5 Housing

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

### 1.3.6 Working and Shopping

- Keep local shops in the town centre.
- We need some more national chain shops in the centre.
- Too many empty town centre shops and properties.
- Create a clear brand for Ross town



- centre.
- (Mixed views on) Need another supermarket.
- Losing the small shops in our neighbourhoods.
- Not enough good quality new places to work.
- Land needed for employment developments.

- Must keep and improve all our existing parks, open spaces, play areas.
- New developments should contribute properly to paths, open spaces etc.
- Make more use of the riverside, put on more events.
- Need more allotments.
- Not enough information to get visitors to the town and keep them there.

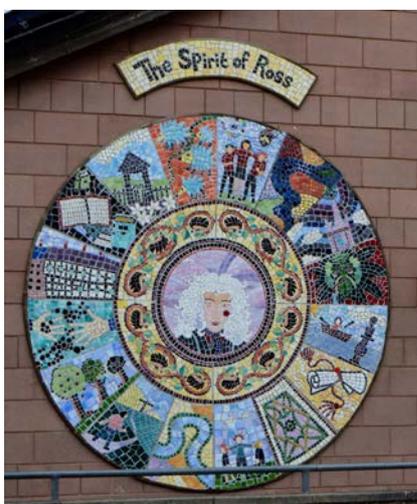
### 1.3.7 Getting Around

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

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

### 1.3.8 Leisure and Wellbeing

- Must keep all our existing community facilities (pool etc.).
- Some new facilities are needed (especially with lots more development).





## 1.4 The Planning Context

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

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

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

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

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

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

the centre will be checked to avoid adverse effects.)

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

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

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

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

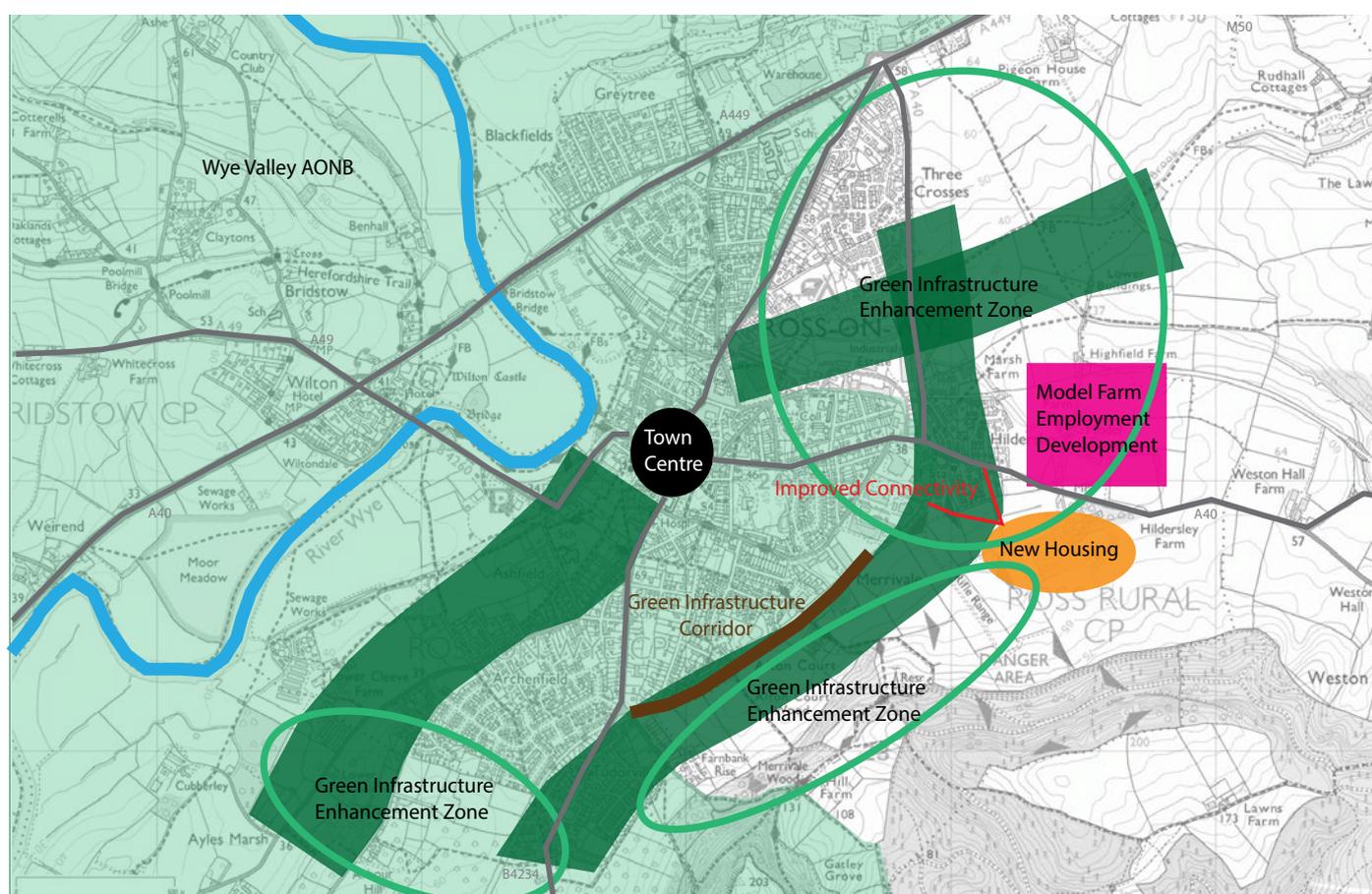


- 1.4.6 At the time of writing three important contextual factors had changed:
- Herefordshire Council announced that they could not provide a 5 year housing land supply. The supply in April 2018 was 4.55.
  - A decision was taken to put on hold any further work on establishing a Community Infrastructure Levy scheme; no scheme was in force at August 2018.
  - In May 2017 Herefordshire Council agreed a strategy review relating to its land holdings that span the eastern town boundary into Weston-under-Penyard. The timescale for this, and hence its impact on the plan, is unclear (See also Section 6).

1.4.7 In addition to the Local Plan, Herefordshire Council are, at the present time, preparing a Traveller Development Plan Document. This is a statutory planning document that will seek to allocate sites.

1.4.8 A Neighbourhood Plan for the neighbouring parish of Weston-under-Penyard has already been made. Plans are under preparation in the other neighbouring parishes of Walford, Bridstow and Brampton Abbots, and the Ross team has made efforts to coordinate with these nearby parishes.

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





## 1.5 Basic Conditions, Evidence and Consultation

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

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

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

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

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

## 1.6 The Structure of the Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

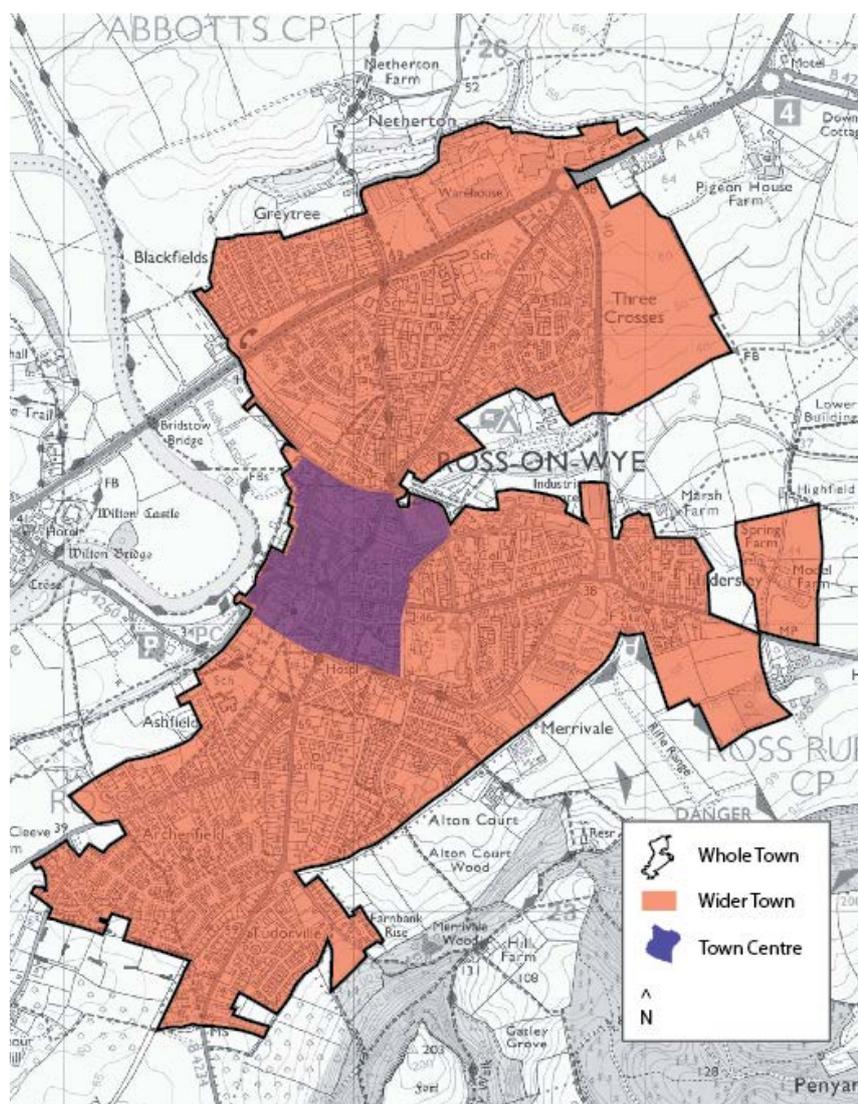
1.6.4 Thirdly, as work proceeded, it also became clear that many of the issues and aspirations raised could not be addressed fully through land use policies alone; their eventual implementation needed to be backed up by projects led by the Town Council or other groups within Ross-on-Wye. Thus, in addition to the most important part of the Neighbourhood Plan – its Policies, the document also provides for the consideration of non-policy matters. As such, the Policy section of the Plan is followed by two further levels of proposals as overleaf.



- **Level 1: Policies:** These address those aspects such as housing development that can be managed directly through spatial or land use policies.
- **Level 2: Opportunities:** There are also a number of 'opportunity sites' that could not be addressed through policy at this stage but which will be important to consider in the future, especially at plan review stage.
- **Level 3: Action Projects:** These are grouped under broad themes, having regard to the land use planning policies

set out in the Neighbourhood Plan. For clarity, the Action Projects reflect locally agreed aims and do not comprise land use planning policies.

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





## 2 The Vision

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

The Ross Gazette Wednesday April 20th 2031

# Ross-on-Wye is a vision to

Joanna Kyrle

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

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

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

I myself love the 'vintage' shops, apparently something for which Ross is now so well-



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

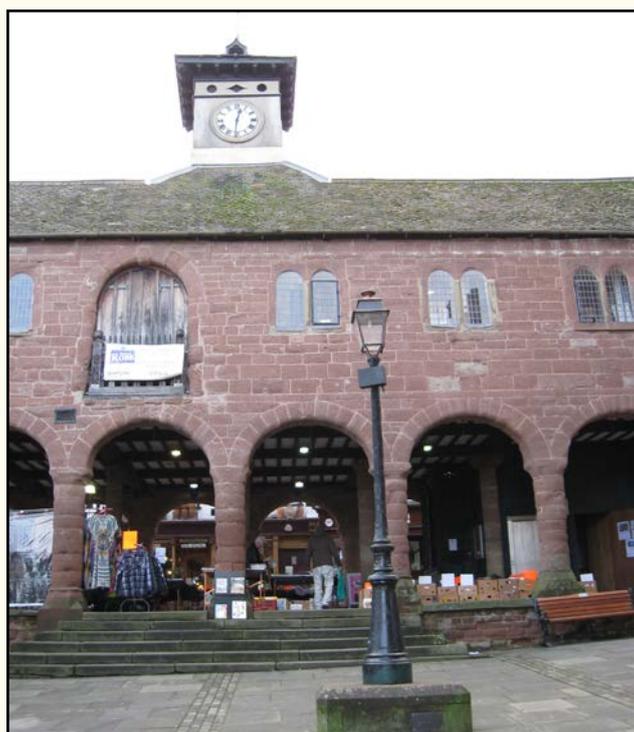


# return to after 17 years away

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

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

The town centre is certainly a nicer place;



Not forgotten: the historic environment is protected and enhanced

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

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

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

I am really glad to be back.



### 3 Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.3 Sub-objectives are listed out below, with columns setting out their links to the Neighbourhood Plan's Policies and Action Projects.

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



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

Whole Plan Area: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
1a: Improve all aspects of the appearance of the town as a whole.	EN1   EN2	P1   P2
1b: Respect and enrich the town's historic, social and cultural character and features.	EN1   EN2	P3
1c: Ensure a high standard of locally distinctive design in new built developments that responds to specific local and particularly historic styles.	EN1   EN2	
1d: Promote well-designed and appropriately located renewable energy projects.	EN5   EN6	P4   P5
1e: Protect and enhance the landscape around Ross-on-Wye, especially in designated areas, and the town's setting within it.	EN1   EN2   EN3   EN4   EN7	
1f: Protect key views into and out of the town as well as in to and out of the Wye Valley AONB.	EN7	
1g: Protect and enhance ecology, wildlife and biodiversity, in particular by reference to the River Wye SAC.	EN3 EN4	P6   P7   P8
1h: Vigorously promote and encourage early pre-application community involvement by developers/applicants.	EN11	
1i: Ensure all new developments take a positive approach to carbon reduction measures in design and construction.	EN5   EN6	
1j: Ensure proper consideration of all flood risk, groundwater management and waste treatment, using a sequential approach for all built development located within current flood zones.	EN5   EN9	P13



Town Centre: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
1j: Make the town centre a welcoming, safe and secure place where people (locals and visitors) are encouraged to spend time.	EN1   EN2	
1k: Ensure that the design of shopfronts is appropriate to local character.	EN1   EN2	P5
1l: Improve the appearance of the public realm through surfacing, lighting, 'greening' (eg. planters), the use of public art and so forth.	EN1   EN2	P10   P11   P6
Wider Town: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
1m: Retain existing open green spaces and playing fields	EN8	P6   P12
1n: Link existing (and new) green assets into a coherent, related pattern to improve connectivity for ecological and aesthetic benefit - what is termed 'green infrastructure'.	EN8	P12
1o: Ensuring the use of permeable surfacing of house drives and front gardens and in employment areas and car parks	EN9	P13



## Delivering Overall Policy Objective 2: Provide new housing

Whole Plan Area: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
2a: Deliver a locally appropriate amount of new housing over and above the 900 homes allocated.	See Section 5	
2b: Encourage housing development on empty, derelict or underused land where this does not result in damage to local character, over-development, the loss of important biodiversity assets, or increase problems arising from noise, dust or odours. Issues of contamination must also have been addressed.	EN3   EN4	
2c: Encourage development of self-build new housing.	H1	P14
2d: Design new housing to enable people to work from home.	H2	
2e: Encourage the delivery of affordable housing by a Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust.		P15
Town Centre: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy reference	NDP Action Project reference
2f: Encourage the development of housing, perhaps as part of mixed developments on town centre sites.	H4	
2g: Optimise opportunities for people to live over town centre shops.	H5	
Wider Town: Sub-objectives	NDP Policy	NDP Action Project
2h: Encourage appropriate infill while resisting over-development in residential gardens.	EN3   EN4	



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

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



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

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



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



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

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



## 4 Planning Policies

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

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

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



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

### 4.1 Design and Character

#### Planning Policy EN1: Ross Design Policy

All new development should be of good design and make a positive contribution to the character of Ross. Development should have regard to the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio (2017) and respond to its surroundings in terms of scale, materials, form, details, layout, public realm and historic character.

#### Planning Policy EN2: Shopfronts and Signage

Shopfronts, signs and advertisements requiring planning permission must respect local character and should make a positive contribution to their surroundings.

#### Explanation



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

4.1.2 A high quality of design is therefore vital in all parts of the town both for residents and visitors, not least in the town centre where there are a large number of listed buildings. The government’s National Planning Policy Framework (2019) states that ‘*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (and) creates better places in which to live and work*’ (paragraph 124). It also highlights the important role that Neighbourhood Plans



## 4.1 Design and Character (...continued)

can play in identifying the special qualities of areas and explaining how this should be reflected in development (paragraph 125).

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

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

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





## 4.2 Settlement Boundary and Infill Development

### **Planning Policy EN3: Settlement Boundary**

**Development in the Neighbourhood Area will be focused within the Ross-on-Wye settlement boundary.**

### **Planning Policy EN4: Infill and Backland Development**

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

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

**Backland development will be supported where:**

- i. It is not contrary to the character of the area (as addressed in the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio).**
- ii. It is well related and appropriate in height, scale, mass and form to the frontage buildings.**
- iii. The proposal respects the character, appearance and safety of the frontage development.**
- iv. The proposal respects residential amenity.**

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





## 4.2 Settlement Boundary and Infill Development

(...continued)

### Explanation

4.2.1 As introduced in the Development Strategy section above, Ross-on-Wye currently benefits from a clear settlement boundary. With a settlement boundary in place as per the policy above, proper consideration can be given to proposed development sites that lie within and on the edge of it, in particular the large area of Broadmeadows/Tanyard (see p.89) and all of the 'Land East of the A40 (see p.95). Developments here may in the future change the boundary in these locations. (For more detail see the 'Settlement Boundary Report' in the Evidence folder.)

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

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

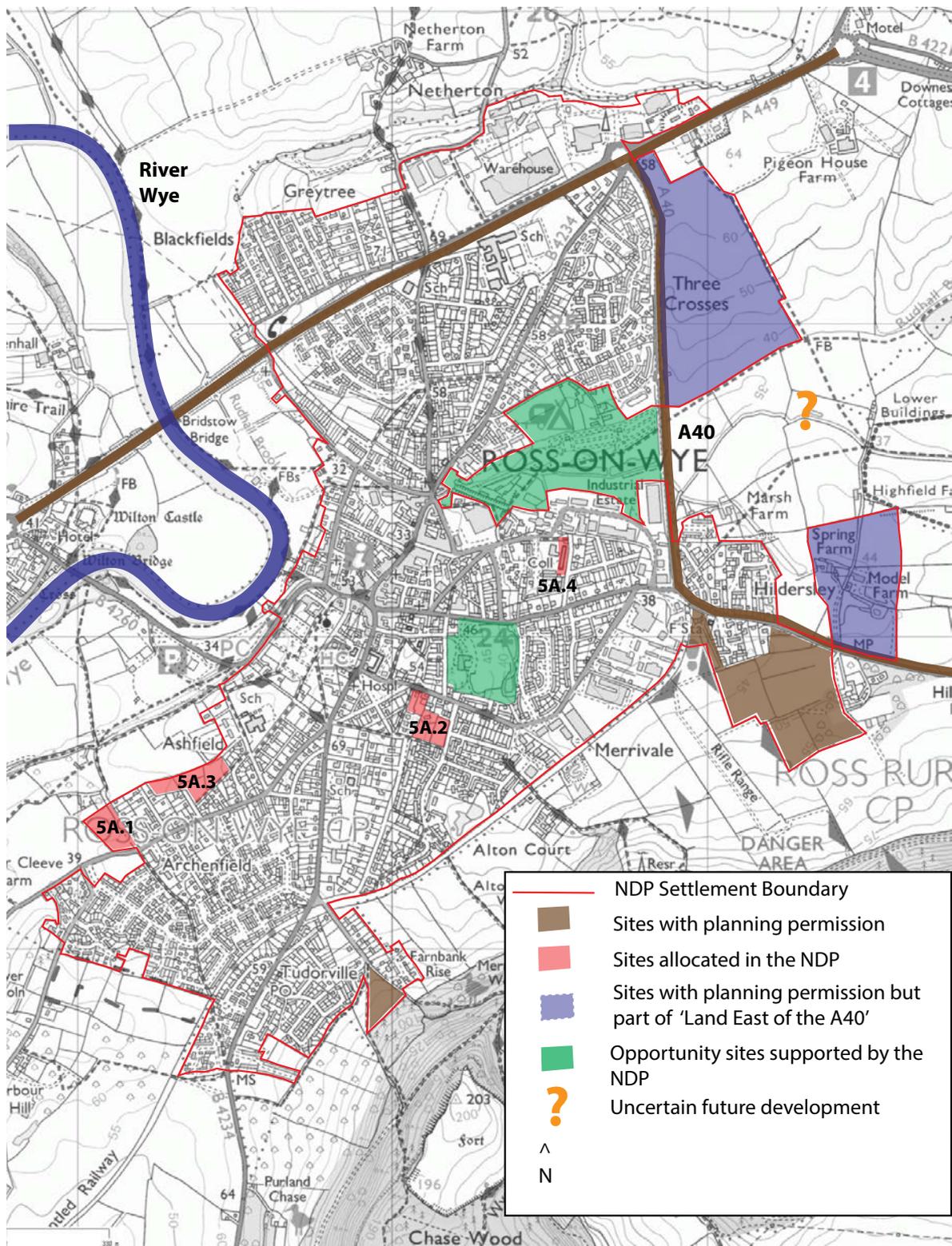
4.2.4 Additional development outside the boundary, and not addressed in this plan, would only be considered in exceptional circumstances, notably as 'exceptions sites' in line with national and Herefordshire Council policy.





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

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





## 4.3 Sustainable Design and Renewable Energy

### **Planning Policy EN5: Eco-building**

**Eco-building methods such as low carbon and renewable energy, water use reduction, waste water management, waste reduction and the use of locally sourced materials, will be supported.**

### **Planning Policy EN6: Solar/Photovoltaic Energy**

**The use of solar/photovoltaic panels requiring planning permission will be supported where such development respects local character and residential amenity.**

### **Explanation**

- 4.3.1 Issues around sustainable development generally were raised quite regularly during the community engagement work. Some of these are picked up elsewhere while some were related to aspects of design and construction (energy conservation, waste water management, local materials etc.), and especially to the promotion of the use of renewable energy throughout the town. There are as yet very few examples of 'eco-building' in Ross and informal visual survey suggests a very low take-up of photovoltaic/solar panels.



## 4.4 Key Views

### Planning Policy EN7: Key Views

**Development proposals likely to affect the Key Views shown on Figure 10 should assess the effect of the proposals on the view(s) and demonstrate how any adverse impacts have been addressed.**

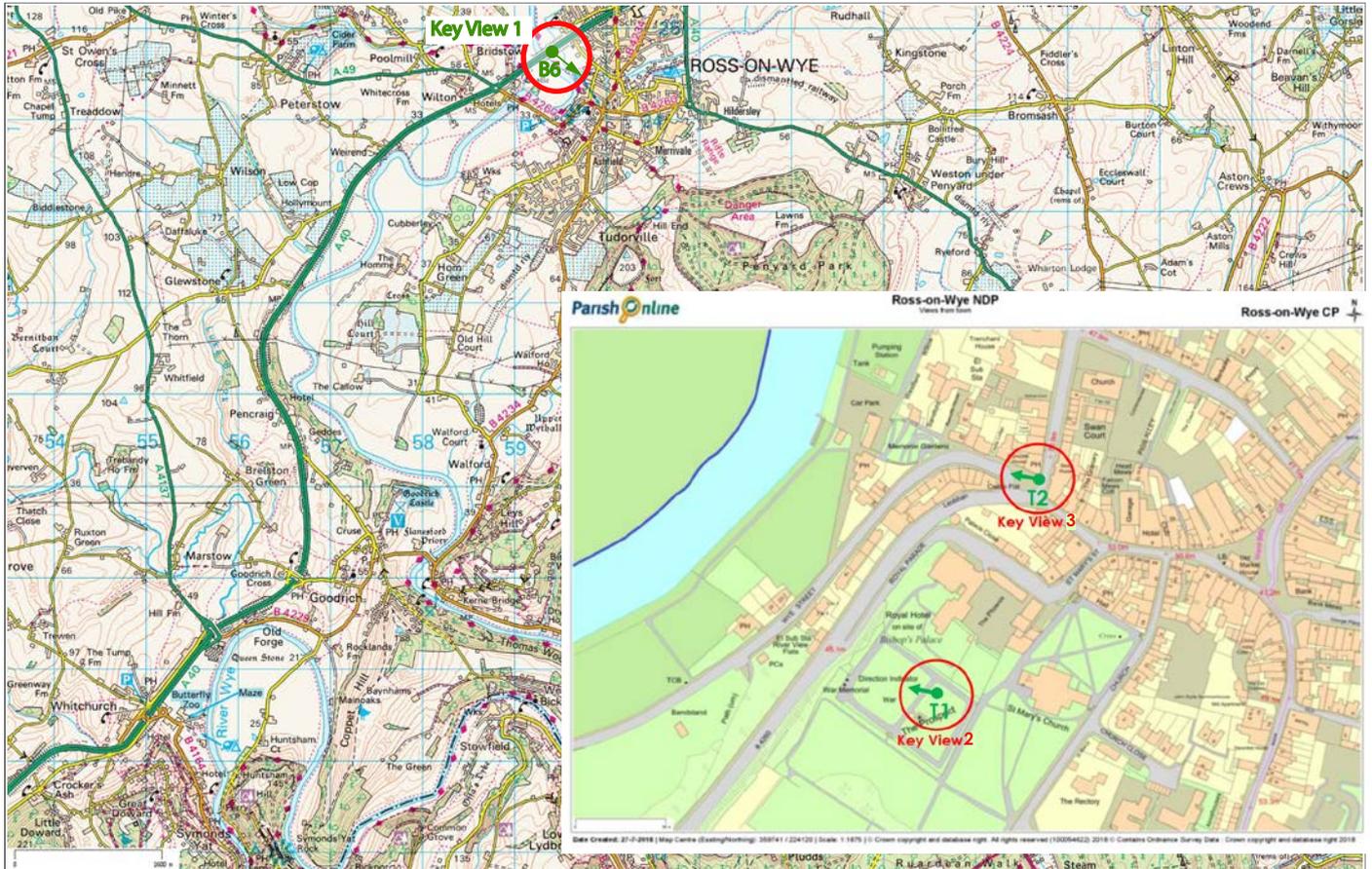
### Explanation

- 4.4.1 Ross-on-Wye as a town is highly distinctive; this is recognised at a regional and national level. It is also distinctive in its landscape context, notably its relationship to the Wye valley. The valley is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which has the highest status of protection in relation to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty.
- 4.4.2 The connection between town and landscape is therefore a key factor in shaping the town's distinctiveness in terms of views both into the town and out from it. The Key Views Report (in the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio) locates a number of illustrative and specific views.
- 4.4.3 The Key Views report draws from information from Herefordshire Council, notably the Landscape Assessment and the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis of Hereford and the Market Towns, including Ross-on-Wye, and from survey and analysis work by local people. Three Key Views have been identified from the illustrative and specific views identified in the report.
- 4.4.4 The section on Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire Council's Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis (in the Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio) highlights many other sensitive views of the town in its landscape context. The policy below can also be seen in the context of Local Plan LD1: Landscape and townscape. (See Appendix 1 - the 'Summary Evidence Report' for access to the Key Views Report.)



## 4.4 Key Views (...continued)

Figure 10: Ross-on-Wye Key Views Map





## 4.5 Green Infrastructure

### Planning Policy EN8: Green Infrastructure

**Figure 11 sets out a green infrastructure network for the Neighbourhood Area. The maintenance and enhancement of the green infrastructure network will be supported. Development proposed on land within or adjoining the green infrastructure network must respect the green infrastructure network and should, where possible, provide net gains for biodiversity.**

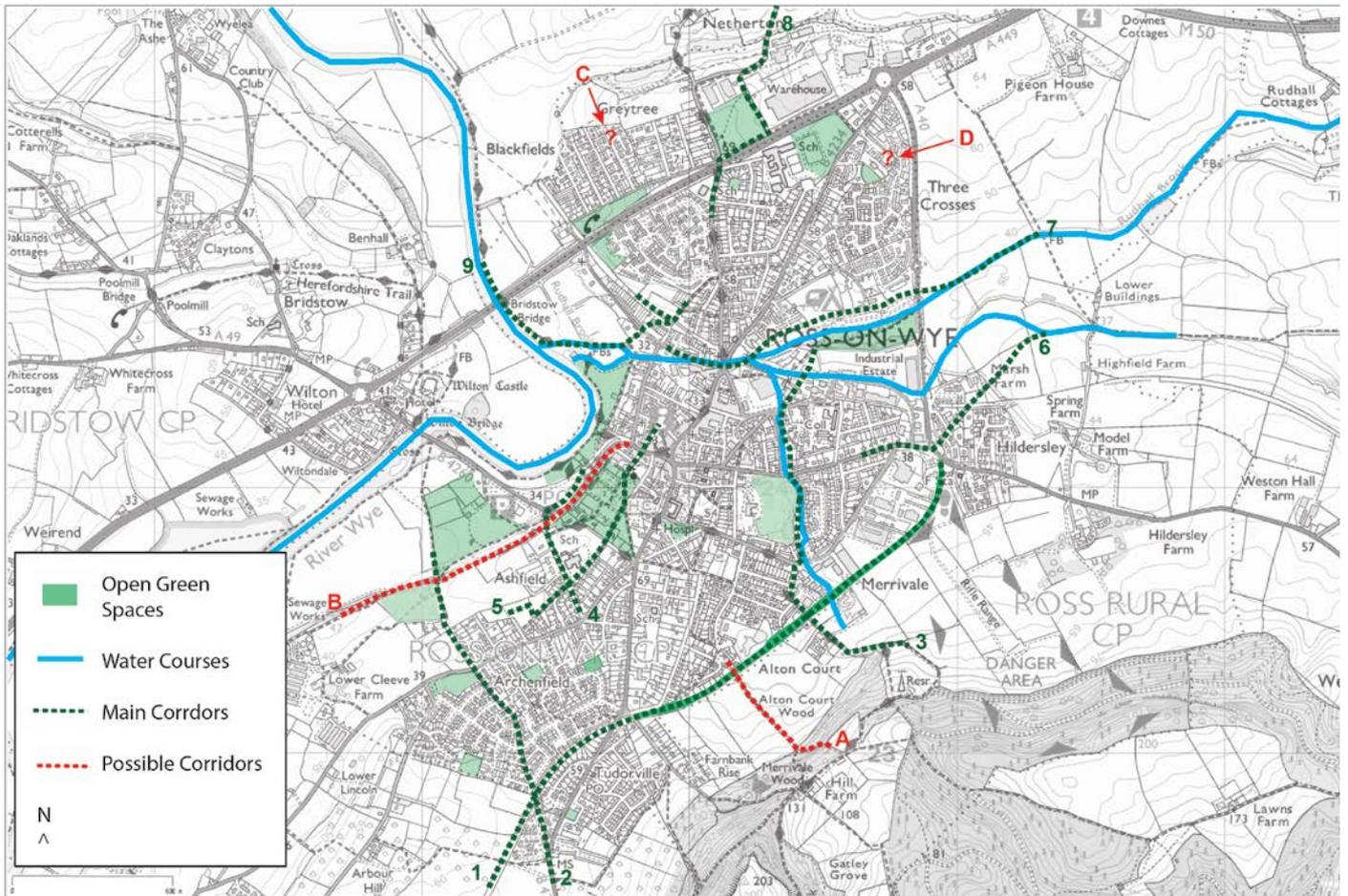
### Explanation

- 4.5.1 The parish of Ross-on-Wye does not just include the existing built area of the town. There are open, green areas within the parish and that is all set in the context of the wider landscape. There are also potential, major, future proposals for all of the important Broadmeadows/Tanyard area and some of the land east of the A40 (see p. 89-95). A number of hedgerows, tree lines and watercourses serve to link the built area to its surrounding landscape, but currently rather poorly with few links into the built area. There are a number of Public Rights of Way (and some informally used footpaths) that connect town to country and two major long distance walks – the Herefordshire Trail and the Wye Valley Walk - pass into and through the town.
- 4.5.2 The Herefordshire Core Strategy Green Infrastructure map shows three ‘Local Enhancement Zones’ – to the east, south east and south of the current built area, and three ‘Strategic Corridors’ – to the east, south east and south west. These are considered in the Green Infrastructure Report (see Appendix 1 - the Summary Evidence Report’) along with more detailed local information. This reinforces the need to retain as much as possible of the existing green infrastructure and, in places, add to it in the layout and design of new developments.



## 4.5 Green Infrastructure (...continued)

Figure 11: Ross-on-Wye Green Infrastructure Map





## 4.6 Permeable Surfacing of Drives and Parking Areas

### **Planning Policy EN9: Hard Surfacing of Drives and Parking Areas**

**Where planning permission is required, the development of permeable paving to front gardens and hardstandings should be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area, including boundary treatments, having regard to relevant Character Area Appraisals in the Character Assessment Portfolio**

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

### **Explanation**

- 4.6.1 Hard surfacing of house drives and the removal of vegetation can have a number of negative effects. This includes in particular the risk of flooding (further afield as well as in the immediate environment), damage to local character (e.g. by the removal of front garden boundary walls, grass, shrubs etc.), the introduction of inappropriate materials and pollution. (See <http://www.ealingfrontgardens.org.uk/43-reasons-not-to-pave>)
- 4.6.2 This is also an issue in parking areas linked to employment sites and in public car parking areas.
- 4.6.3 Retaining appropriate water levels in the ground is important to limit flash-flooding; important for householders and businesses but also to avoid overloading the street drain system. It is also important in helping to prevent subsidence damage to properties. There are now a number of reasonably priced and easy to maintain technical solutions to creating permeable or semi-permeable surfaces for drives and parking areas. This is what the policy seeks to promote and ensure.
- 4.6.4 In some cases, paving front gardens and installing hardstanding can be undertaken without the need for planning permission via permitted development rules. However, careful planning in the design and construction of driveways can reduce and control water run-off. (See: [https://www.planningportal.co.uk/directory\\_record/718/guidance\\_on\\_the\\_permeable\\_surfacing\\_of\\_front\\_gardens](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/directory_record/718/guidance_on_the_permeable_surfacing_of_front_gardens)). Planning permission may also not be needed for some aspects of commercial and public parking areas but, for new developments, permeable surfaces are also strongly encouraged.



## 4.7 Ross-on-Wye Pre-Application Community Engagement Protocol

- 4.7.1 People in Ross-on-Wye have consistently argued that the eventual effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan is dependent on establishing early, open and mutual discussions with potential applicants to maximise the likely achievement of developments that add to the sustainability of the town and avoid possible conflicts. Although applicants cannot legally be required to do this, putting in place a coherent and consistent approach to pre-application community involvement is a key way to deliver this mutual benefit.
- 4.7.2 The NPPF of 2012 encouraged all developers to undertake pre-application community involvement. This was aimed mainly at design issues but also at all aspects of potential developments (uses, density, access etc.). This approach is now supported even more strongly in the Revised NPPF of 2019. In paragraph 39, for example, the Revised NPPF states that:
- “Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”
- 4.7.3 In the same way that introducing information and judgement on issues such as conservation and movement early in the process (as other policies in this plan require), when introduced at a similarly early stage, community involvement can change the form and nature of a development for the better – it affects land use. In just the same way that engaging early through formal pre-application discussions with planning officers can change a development for the better, community involvement undertaken early in the process can improve developments in all senses – it affects land use. (A similar policy passed examination for the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan.)
- 4.7.4 Ross-on-Wye Town Council has therefore produced a ‘Pre-Application Community Engagement Protocol’ which potential applicants can access. This is included in Appendix 2. This extends the Local Plan policy RW1: Development in Ross-on-Wye which states that developments will be encouraged where they “have demonstrated engagement and consultation with the community, including the Town Council”. This Protocol will be widely promoted to potential applicants, local community groups and others to ensure its regular use.



## 4.8 Natural Environment

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

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

4.8.2 It is noted that these natural features, and areas of open and green space, that are highly valued by the local community are already protected by national and local planning policy.





## 4.9 Historic Environments

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





## Delivering Overall Policy Objective 2: Provide new housing

### 4.10 Housing Development

#### Introduction

- 4.10.1 The Herefordshire Local Plan requires the delivery of at least 900 new homes in Ross-on-Wye by 2031, plus some contingency. A 10% contingency (90) would create a total target of 990, a 15% contingency (130) would create a total target of 1,035.
- 4.10.2 Herefordshire Council's latest figure for housing permissions and completions (including built, committed and strategic sites (Hildersley)) totals 943 (figure from April 2018).
- 4.10.3 This includes 200 for the strategic site at Hildersley but the latest permission is for 212. There is also a current application for 34 houses at Cawdor Arch Road and one shortly to be submitted for the Old Laundry site, Ledbury Road for 21. If delivered, this totals a further 67.
- 4.10.4 This plan allocates sites (see Section 5) as follows:
- Cleeve Field: c.18
  - Merrivale Lane: c.20
  - Stoney Stile: c.15
  - Ryefield: c.10
  - **Total: c.63**



## 4.11 Custom and Self-Build Housing

### **Planning Policy H1: Custom and Self-Build**

**Self-build and custom-build housing will be supported, subject to it respecting local character, residential amenity and highway safety.**

### **Explanation**

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



## 4.12 Design for Home-working

### Planning Policy H2: Home-working

Development to provide for home working will be supported, subject to it respecting local character, residential amenity and highway safety.

### Explanation

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





## 4.13 Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust

- 4.13.1 The Town Council strongly supports the creation of the Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust. Once established, it is anticipated that the Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust will deliver and support the management of affordable housing in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.13.2 Policy RA 2 in the Herefordshire Core Strategy states (inter alia) that “Specific proposals for the delivery of local need housing will be particularly supported where they meet an identified need and their long-term retention as local needs housing is secured as such.” Long term retention is difficult to guarantee except through the involvement of a locally-based Community Land Trust (CLT). There is now (autumn 2018) a Herefordshire Centre for Community Led Housing helping to support the development of CLTs across the county and it appears very likely that a group will be formed to develop a Ross-specific CLT.



## 4.14 Town Centre Housing

### **Planning Policy H4: Town Centre Housing**

**The development of new housing in the town centre that respects local character, residential amenity and highway safety, will be supported. Where residential development requiring planning permission is proposed above other ground floor uses, access should be from a separate ground level entrance.**

### **Explanation**

- 4.14.1 There are currently a number of residential properties within the defined town centre boundary, some houses, some flats, some of the latter above other uses. Residential use is encouraged within the town centre to help to deliver vitality and reduce car use.
- 4.14.2 The most recent collation of housing land availability in the town centre is from 2011, so is not included in detail here. The evolving nature of all of the town centre in recent years suggests that further sites are very likely to become available during the plan period. While many may be appropriate for housing, any of the currently known and future sites may also be considered for mixed use.
- 4.14.3 There may be scope in certain circumstances for parking arrangements to be made off-site, for example by agreement with nearby landowners or with the authority managing public car parks.
- 4.14.4 Policy H4 relates to the definition of the Ross-on-Wye Town Centre as shown on Figure 14 and explained in the Town Centre Overall Review (See Appendix 1 - Summary Evidence Report).



## 4.15 Living and Working Over Shops

### Planning Policy H5: Living and Working Over Shops

Where planning permission is required, the development of space above town centre shops for residential or appropriate business use (use class B1), will be supported.

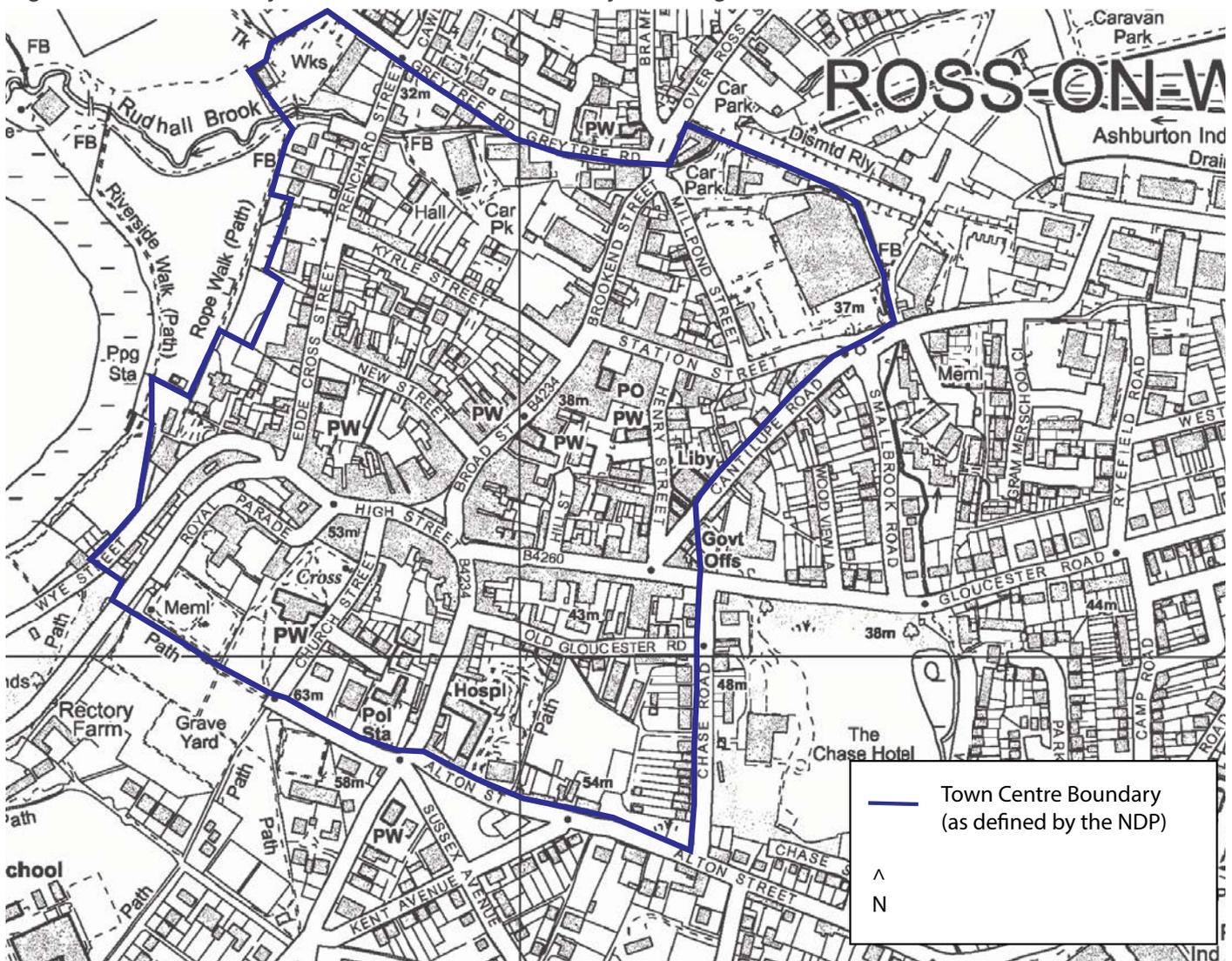
### Explanation

- 4.15.1 *NB. This section also covers working over shops to avoid repetition.*
- 4.15.2 A community-led survey\* established that there are currently numerous spaces over shops in the town centre, at first floor level, second floor level or both that are either underused or empty. Bringing such spaces back into residential or business use would have several benefits in terms of sustainability. It would make good use of valuable space, it would help to maintain the physical structure of many properties (all of which are in the Conservation Area), it would add to the vitality of the centre and help to reduce the need to travel by car. (\*This report is in the Town Centre Review, see Appendix 1.)
- 4.15.3 Bringing more space into residential or business use will however be conditional on the specific circumstances of each property, notably in terms of access and any impacts on ground floor uses. This policy is supported by Local Plan policy E5: Town Centres.
- 4.15.4 Consideration can be given to car-free development proposals. There may also be scope in certain circumstances for parking arrangements to be made off-site, for example by agreement with nearby landowners or with the authority managing public car parks.
- 4.15.5 Policy H5 relates to the definition of the Ross-on-Wye Town Centre as shown on Figure 12 and explained in the Town Centre Overall Review (see Appendix 1 - Summary Evidence Report).





Figure 12: Ross-on-Wye Town Centre as defined by the Neighbourhood Plan



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

### 4.16 New Employment Development

#### **Planning Policy E1: New Employment Development**

**New employment development, including but not limited to the provision of starter units and/or shared service accommodation and the development of offices will be supported. Tourism and leisure development that enhances the offer and which does not detract from the vitality and viability of the town centre will be supported. All employment development should respect local character, residential amenity and highway safety.**

#### **Explanation**

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



## 4.17 Resisting Out of Centre Retail

### Planning Policy E2: Resisting Out of Town Retail

Further edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail development, especially large scale, will normally be resisted. If applications are forthcoming, all schemes with a gross floorspace of 400 sq metres (or more) must be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment in addition to the normal sequential testing.

### Explanation

- 4.17.1 Ross-on-Wye has no further retail capacity during the current Local Plan period but is subject to retail development pressure outside of the town centre, notably along the A449. Further retail development outside the town centre is likely to have significant adverse impacts on the town centre. Ross-on-Wye's town centre lies at the heart of the local community and planning for its long term success has emerged as a vital component of the Neighbourhood Plan.





## 4.18 Town Centre Uses

### Planning Policy E3: Town Centre Uses

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

**Development resulting in a reduction in the overall provision of retail, commercial, leisure, cultural and tourism uses in the town centre must demonstrate that it contributes to the vitality and viability of the town centre and should demonstrate that the original use is no longer viable and sustained a vacancy period of over 12 months and has been suitably marketed within the Ross Market Area.**

### Explanation

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

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

- 4.18.3 The town centre as defined by the Neighbourhood Plan is shown on Figure 12 (p. 55) and explained and illustrated in the Town Centre Overall Review (see Appendix 1).
- 4.18.4 While there is always some degree of turnover in the occupation of business, commercial and industrial developments, any net loss would be damaging to the sustainability of the town. The Herefordshire Local Plan includes appropriate policies for the retention of employment in general so this plan does not add to this. However, there is particular concern locally for the loss of business premises in the town centre and their replacement by residential uses, hence the policy E3.

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



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

### 4.19 Introduction

4.19.1 Issues related to vehicular traffic and transport were among those most commonly mentioned during the community consultation. They were clearly of significant importance to local people to the extent that they considered that many of the developments suggested elsewhere in this plan should not proceed unless improvements were also made to the vehicular movement and access systems in the town. At the same time, it is noted that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot seek to determine matters that are the responsibility of Herefordshire Council as highway authority. There are therefore only five policies following this introduction.

4.19.2 The two key issues for the local community, on which Neighbourhood Plan policies would not be appropriate were about traffic circulation (especially in and around the town centre and on the 'school run') and public transport.

4.19.3 Concerns about traffic circulation focused on congestion, constrictions in key places (e.g. by the old Rosswyn Hotel) service vehicle on-street parking and the perceived problems created by the current one-way systems. Although traffic incident records show very few serious problems, there are still public perceptions of a lack of safety as a result of the above problems, which in turn are often said to be a disincentive to usage of the town centre. Surveys of visitors accessing the town by car have also highlighted difficulties for people in finding their way into, around and out of the centre (see 4.24 below).

4.19.4 Concerns have been expressed by members of the community about a number of public transport issues. These relate mainly to the fact that services to and from Ross-on-Wye have been declining over recent years and are now perceived to be at a minimal level. This is not improved by the quality of the informal (if recently slightly improved) 'bus station' area in Cantilupe Road. Some of the bus stops around the town are also poorly located and in bad condition\*. In addition, it currently appears that the vehicles used for the bus services are well towards the end of their useful life, with higher emissions. There is an opportunity for renewable fuel sources to be utilised. None of this encourages the use of public transport, and improvements are needed. (\*All new bus stops across Herefordshire will in future show real time information.)

4.19.5 At the same time, the continued viability of public transport, particularly of buses, needs considering in the context of the expected growth of electric and perhaps even autonomous vehicles. This is particularly important for meeting the transport demands of the elderly and people with disabilities, given that Ross-on-Wye has a current and projected above average share of older residents.

4.19.6 Addressing these core concerns over the plan period will depend less on this plan and more on the community, through individuals, local groups and the formal channel of the Town Council, continuing to lobby for the changes they wish to see, both with Herefordshire Council and with potential applicants. Section 7 of this plan includes some specific action projects that have the support of the



community and which, if implemented, could help to make positive progress on the key issues.

- 4.19.7 Herefordshire Council's Highway design guide for new development informs the design of new developments.



## 4.20 Sustainable Movement and Access

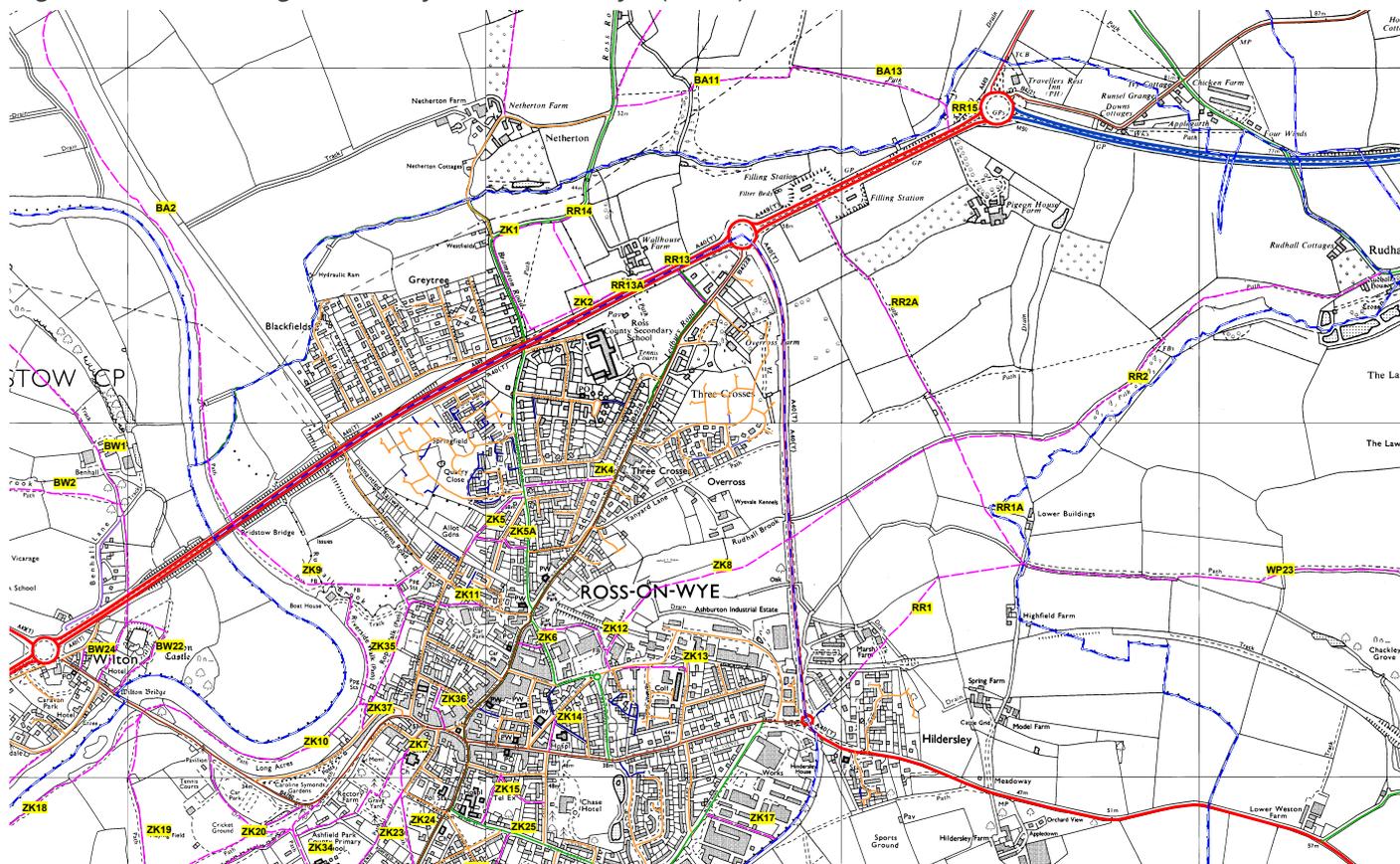
### Planning Policy A1: Active Travel

Major development proposals should demonstrate how they will contribute to encouraging active travel - more and safer walking, cycling, disabled access and/ or use of public transport. The provision and/or enhancement of safe walking and cycling routes and/or networks and cycle parking facilities will be supported.

### Explanation

4.20.1 Policy A1 seeks to encourage sustainable patterns of movement. In this regard, the Town Council is keen to see that major development proposals, as defined by national policy, place the prioritisation of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport before that of private vehicles.

Figure 13: Public Rights of Way - Ross-on-Wye (north)



NOT TO SCALE

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

PUBLIC FOOTPATH	
PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY	
BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC	
PARISH BOUNDARY	

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





## 4.21 Walking and Cycling

### **Planning Policy A2: Walking and Cycling**

**The protection and/or enhancement of the Neighbourhood Area's public rights of way network will be supported.**

### **Explanation**

- 4.21.1 The public footpath system around and into Ross-on-Wye is reasonably comprehensive (see Figures 15 and 16 above) but poorly integrated and there is little provision for cycling or for movement for those with limited mobility. Community evidence suggests numerous specific problems of movement around the town centre for pedestrians, cyclists and those with limited mobility (e.g. in terms of width, dropped kerbs and good surface maintenance). It also suggests problems of access and movement elsewhere in the town and into/out of the surrounding countryside. (This evidence – the Walking/Cycling Report - is in the Town Centre Overall Review, see Appendix 1.)
- 4.21.2 The Town Council would like to see and will work to encourage, developments making a significant contribution to making walking and cycling an attractive travel preference for those who end up living or working there.





## 4.22 Signage Into and Around the Town

- 4.22.1 One of the problems for pedestrians and cyclists into and around Ross is the lack of clear and integrated signage. In parallel with this, there are concerns that the town is not adequately highlighted to those passing by on the A40 and arrival into the town is not celebrated at key points for those who choose to turn in.
- 4.22.2 The Town Council would like to see and will work to encourage a fully integrated sign system, as well as some form of clear 'gateways' on arrival at the town and within the town to encourage people (notably but not solely visitors) to move from the centre into (or from) the surrounding countryside. Given the existence of the Conservation Area and the fact that parts of the town and its surroundings are within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it will be important for signs to be of a high standard. (\* A report on Signage is in the Town Centre Overall Review, see Appendix 1)
- 4.22.3 Much of this ambition cannot be addressed through Neighbourhood Plan policies but through action projects, see Section 7.





## 4.23 Rationalising Car Parks

### **Planning Policy A3: Changes to Car Parks**

**Proposals that would result in the loss of parking spaces on town centre car parks must be accompanied by a report to demonstrate the impacts on overall town centre parking and how these will be addressed.**

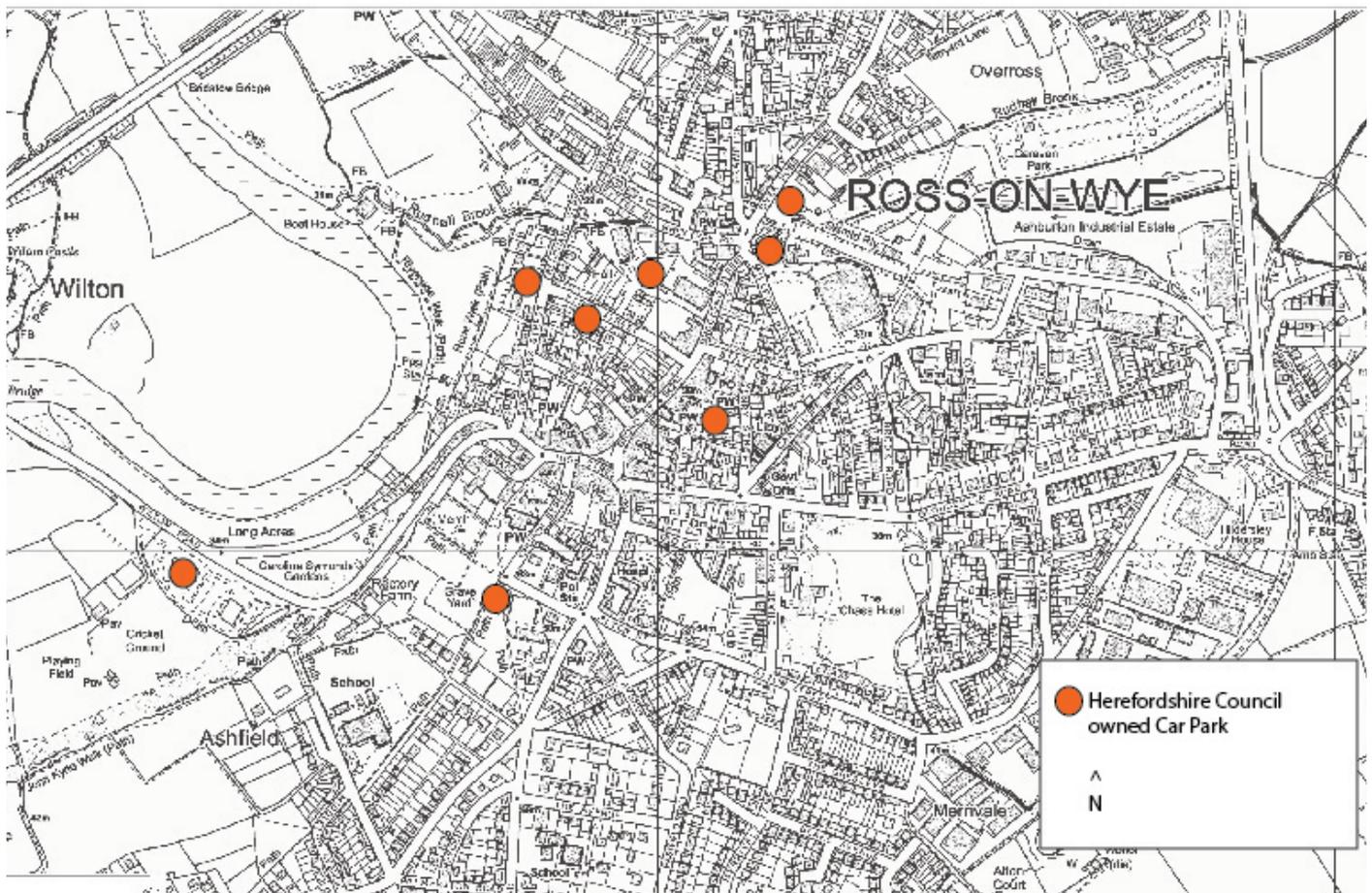
### **Explanation**

- 4.23.1 The town centre is served by several car parks managed by Herefordshire Council at which charges apply. These provide for short term access by residents and visitors as well as longer term provision for those working in the centre. There are also some private car parks, either linked to facilities such as supermarkets (e.g. Aldi) or strictly for those working in or visiting specific businesses.
- 4.23.2 Herefordshire Council data from 2011 and 2012 suggests that none of the car parks is ever full and some are poorly used; this is unlikely to be different in 2019. The limited usage may be a result of poor location, a lack of clear signage (something visitors have noted) and/or concern about charges.
- 4.23.3 While there is at present no reason to suggest that any of the car parks may no longer be necessary, and given other policies and projects to promote more use of the town centre, it may be the case over the plan period that one or more car park sites is no longer needed and can be put forward for development.
- 4.23.4 Action projects in Section 7 also seek to address related matters.



## 4.23 Rationalising Car Parks (...continued)

Figure 15: Car parks owned and managed by Herefordshire Council in Ross-on-Wye





## 4.24 Electric Charging Points

### **Planning Policy A4: Provision of Electric Charging Points**

**Provision should be made for charging of electric vehicles for all new houses where this can be achieved onplot. The addition of charging facilities to places of work or leisure will be supported.**

### **Explanation**

- 4.24.1 In 2018, the government welcomed the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee's report "Electric vehicles: driving the transition", stating that it "shares the Committee's view that electric vehicles represent exciting opportunities for the UK as a tool to address greenhouse gas emissions, reduce air pollution, and as a new economic opportunity." This was followed up in July 2019 when the Department for Transport, Office of Low Emission Vehicles, launched a consultation on "proposing that new-build homes are fitted with an electric car charging point".
- 4.24.2 A key element of the necessary infrastructure for low emission vehicles is currently the provision of electric charging points at homes, at places of work, at places of leisure and so forth and at general public (and private) car parks. This Policy seeks to secure such provision in new housing developments and supports provision elsewhere.
- 4.24.3 While the emphasis of the Policy been on charging points for cars, the Town Council will encourage consideration to be given to provision for vehicle charging at non-domestic locations for e-bikes.



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

### 4.25 Retaining Community Facilities

#### Planning Policy SC1: Retaining Community Facilities

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

#### Explanation

- 4.25.1 Ross-on-Wye is relatively well supplied with public, private and voluntary/ community facilities\* and many of these serve an area well beyond just Ross-on-Wye itself. Maps in the Facilities Report (which are not exhaustive) identify the main community facilities and assets in Ross-on-Wye. All such facilities face challenges of viability, but new developments will add additional people and therefore a possible need both for the retention of current facilities and further provision. The conversion of pubs to residential use is a particular local concern. (\*The Facilities Report is referred to in the Summary Evidence Report, see Appendix 1, and includes two maps of facilities, north and south.)
- 4.25.2 For a town of its size, and the resulting distances from some peripheral neighbourhoods to the shops in the centre – over 1.5 km in some cases – it is notable that there are only three

neighbourhood shops in Ross-on-Wye: a shop with post office and a fish and chip shop, both in Tudorville and a shop in Springfield Road. Some of those who will live in new developments east of the A40 will be 2 km from their nearest shops.

- 4.25.3 It is important that existing, viable facilities are retained wherever possible and the Town Council would like to see new developments contributing to their retention and improvement and where possible, the the provision of new facilities. The Community Hospital is a particularly valued local facility, serving as it does an area well beyond Ross itself. Along with nearby doctors' and dentists' surgeries it almost forms a 'health hub'. This focus is particularly important to retain, ideally to enhance.
- 4.25.4 Towards the end of the Regulation 14 consultation, the owners of the Chase hotel announced that they would be closing the hotel in September 2019. That closure has now taken place. This is a serious loss for the town in terms of its tourism role but also in terms of its long-standing use as a local venue for community events. It is also a loss that has caused considerable local concern, even a petition about keeping the hotel open. Any opportunities bring the hotel back into use would be greatly valued, either through the existing owners or new owners.



## 4.26 New Community Facilities

### Planning Policy SC2: New Community Facilities

**New community facilities in the town centre will be supported, subject to respecting local character, residential amenity and highway safety.**

#### Explanation

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

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

- There is no dedicated cinema for Ross-on-Wye. The nearest ones are in Cinderford, Coleford, Hereford, Monmouth and Gloucester, all now inaccessible by evening public transport.
- Ross-on-Wye has a very active arts community, several of the members of which have, for some time, been seeking accommodation for studio and display space in the town centre.
- There are also ambitions for a small museum with general exhibits about

Ross-on-Wye and its history but dedicated in particular to celebrating the town's role as 'the birthplace of tourism'.

- There is an aspiration to provide a greater and wider range of river-based activities.
- There is only informal provision for camping alongside the current Rowing Club. Further provision would be of value (notwithstanding development implications for anything within the main flood plain). This would be particularly important if the current Caravan and Camping site on Broadmeadows closes.



## 4.27 Sports Facilities

- 4.27.1 Ross-on-Wye is currently well-provided with sports fields and facilities, serving not just Ross but a much wider catchment area, although some are not of genuine quality and new developments will increase the need both to improve existing provision and add further provision.
- 4.27.2 Open spaces and playing fields (and therefore pavilions etc.) are shown on Figure 13 (p.44) and the facilities (sport as well as other) are shown on the map in the Facilities Report (see 4.25 above).
- 4.27.3 This is an important issue, hence this separate section, but it is adequately covered by Core Strategy Policies OS1 and OS2, so no separate policy is included here.

## 4.28 Health Provision

- 4.28.1 Considerable concern was expressed by people within the local community, and from further afield, about the current health service provision in Ross, and about the implications of large scale new developments for that provision. (Although representatives of the NHS had stated that a study was underway on future health provision for the town, and other areas, this had not apparently been completed by the time this plan was being produced.)
- 4.28.2 There was a very high level of community support for the existing Community Hospital and a strong wish that this should be retained in the town. At the same time, concerns were raised about the pressure of patient numbers on the two doctors' surgeries in the town and about their location. Though near the Community Hospital, both surgeries generate problems of access and parking, hence queries about the need for further provision given the likely increase in population with new developments. Those queries were not raised solely about numbers but about finding the most appropriate location for new or relocated surgeries in relation to the new developments (which would also help with current access and parking problems).
- 4.28.3 This is an important issue, hence this separate section, but it is adequately covered by Core Strategy Policies OS1, OS2, OS3 and SC1 so no separate policy is included here.



## 4.29 Allotments

### Planning Policy SC3: Allotments

**Existing allotments as shown on Figure 16 should be retained, unless equivalent or improved provision is delivered as near as possible to the site where allotments are lost.**

**The provision of new allotments will be supported.**

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

### Explanation

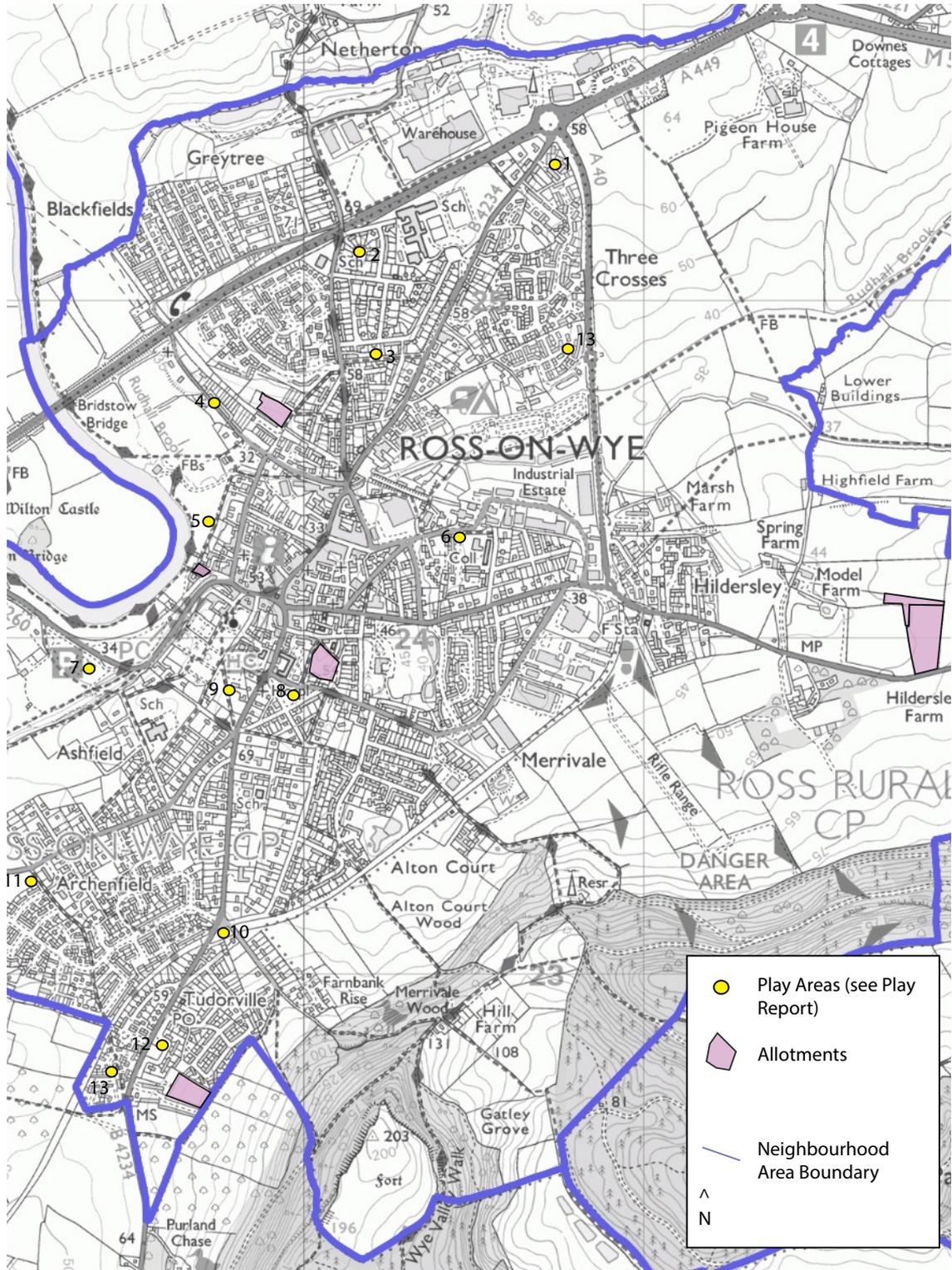
- 4.29.1 Until recently there were a number of conventional allotments and sites for community food-growing in Ross-on-Wye. Those at Cawdor are now closed (because of a potential development), leaving only those at Tudorville. In relation to those lost at Cawdor, section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925 states that ‘adequate provision will be made for plot holders displaced by any such disposal, unless any such provision is not necessary or is not reasonably practicable’.
- 4.29.2 The Community Garden is not technically an allotment, but is also shown on Figure 18 opposite. The spaces at both the Community Garden and Tudorville are well-used. The larger, organic rotation growing plots at Model Farm have an uncertain future and suffer from wild animal predation. (See the Growing Places (Allotments) Report in Appendix 1).
- 4.29.3 There are issues of ownership of land, management and maintenance for the allotments, and most of the town now has no genuinely neighbourhood allotments. Although no formal requirements exist for how many allotments a town such as Ross should provide, the current provision is now severely lacking (particularly given the increased density of new housing and increased occupancy of town centre accommodation); an issue that needs to be addressed. There are also some relatively large, new housing developments planned and these should include allotments. Figure 16 on p.72 includes both allotments and play areas – the topic that follows).





## Allotments and Play Areas

Figure 16: Ross-on-Wye Allotments and Play Areas





## 4.30 Play Areas

### Planning Policy SC4: Play Areas

Existing play areas as shown on Figure 16 should be retained, unless equivalent or improved provision can be provided nearby.

### Explanation

- 4.30.1 The play areas in Ross are shown on Figure 18. The recent assessment of these (see Appendix 1 and the Play Report) shows that some are in poor condition and have minimal equipment and inappropriate surfacing. Some, however, are in good condition although general maintenance of all is minimal. The distribution of play areas is also not regular, leaving some neighbourhoods without easy access to one for both children and parents.
- 4.30.2 Local Plan Core Strategy Policy OS1 sets out how new development should seek to provide appropriate play provision.





## 4.31 Local Green Spaces

### Planning Policy SC5: Local Green Space Designations

The six areas identified on Figure 17 and supporting plans are designated as Local Green Space, which will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt.

#### Explanation

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

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

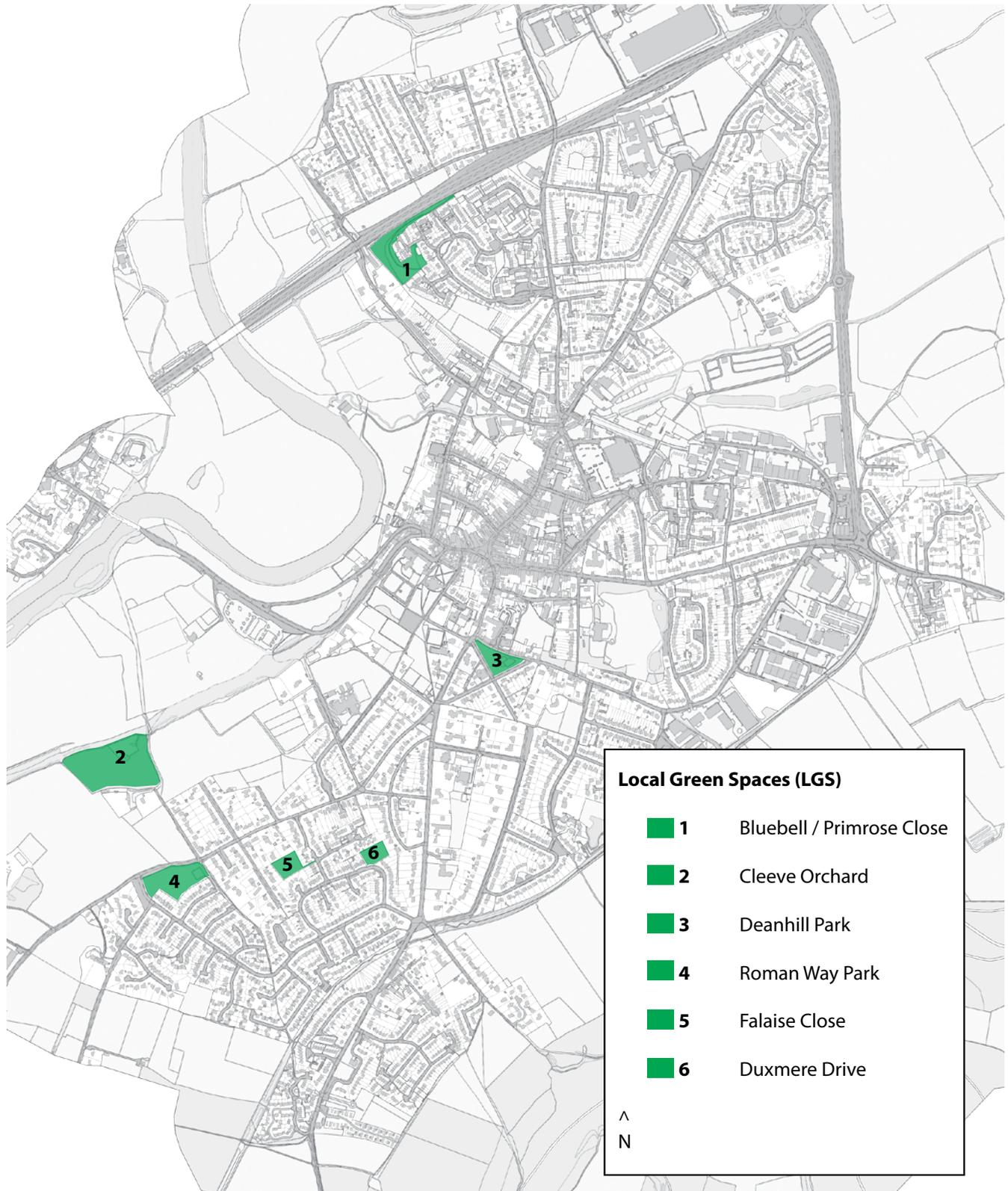
4.31.2 A number of spaces were identified and judged to meet the criteria, see Figure 17 overleaf. Landowners of each were contacted, as were immediate neighbours. The results are included in the 'Local Green Spaces Report' (see the Summary Evidence Report in Appendix 1).





## 4.31 Local Green Spaces (...continued)

Figure 17: Ross-on-Wye Proposed Local Green Spaces





## 4.31 Local Green Spaces (...continued)

Maps showing Local Green Spaces (not to scale)



Map 1: Bluebell / Primrose Close



Map 4: Roman Way Park



Map 2: Cleeve Orchard



Map 5: Falaise Close



Map 3: Deanhill Park



Map 6: Duxmere Drive



## 4.32 Telecommunications Infrastructure

### **Planning Policy SC6: Telecommunications Infrastructure**

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

#### **Explanation**

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



## 5 Development Strategy and Sites

### 5.1 Development Strategy

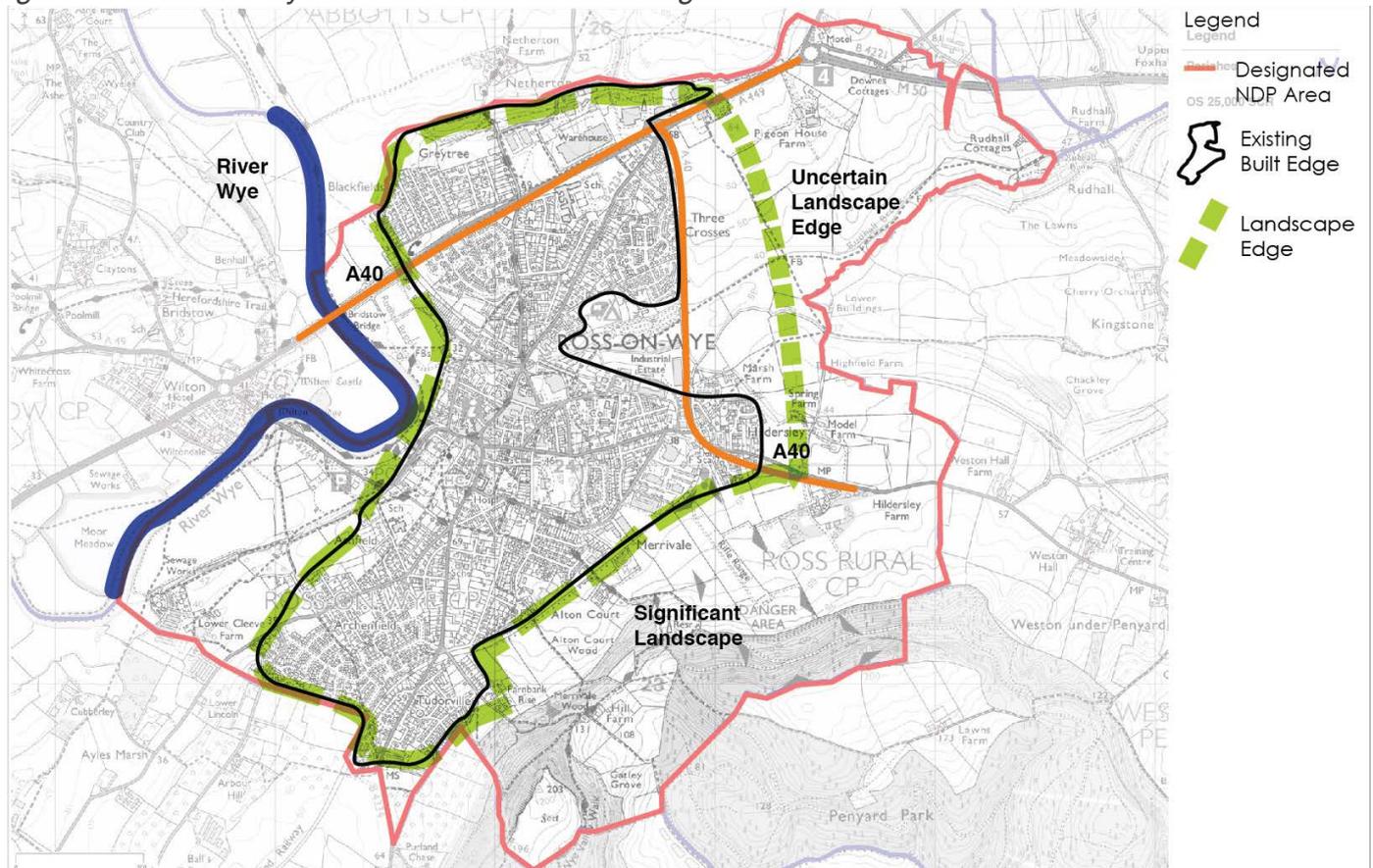
5.1.1 Ross-on-Wye is one of five Market Towns identified in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy as warranting a different approach to that for the county town of Hereford and the rural areas. The other four are Bromyard and Kington – both far smaller than Ross, and Leominster and Ledbury – of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

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

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

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

Figure 18: Ross-on-Wye Current Built Form and Edges





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

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

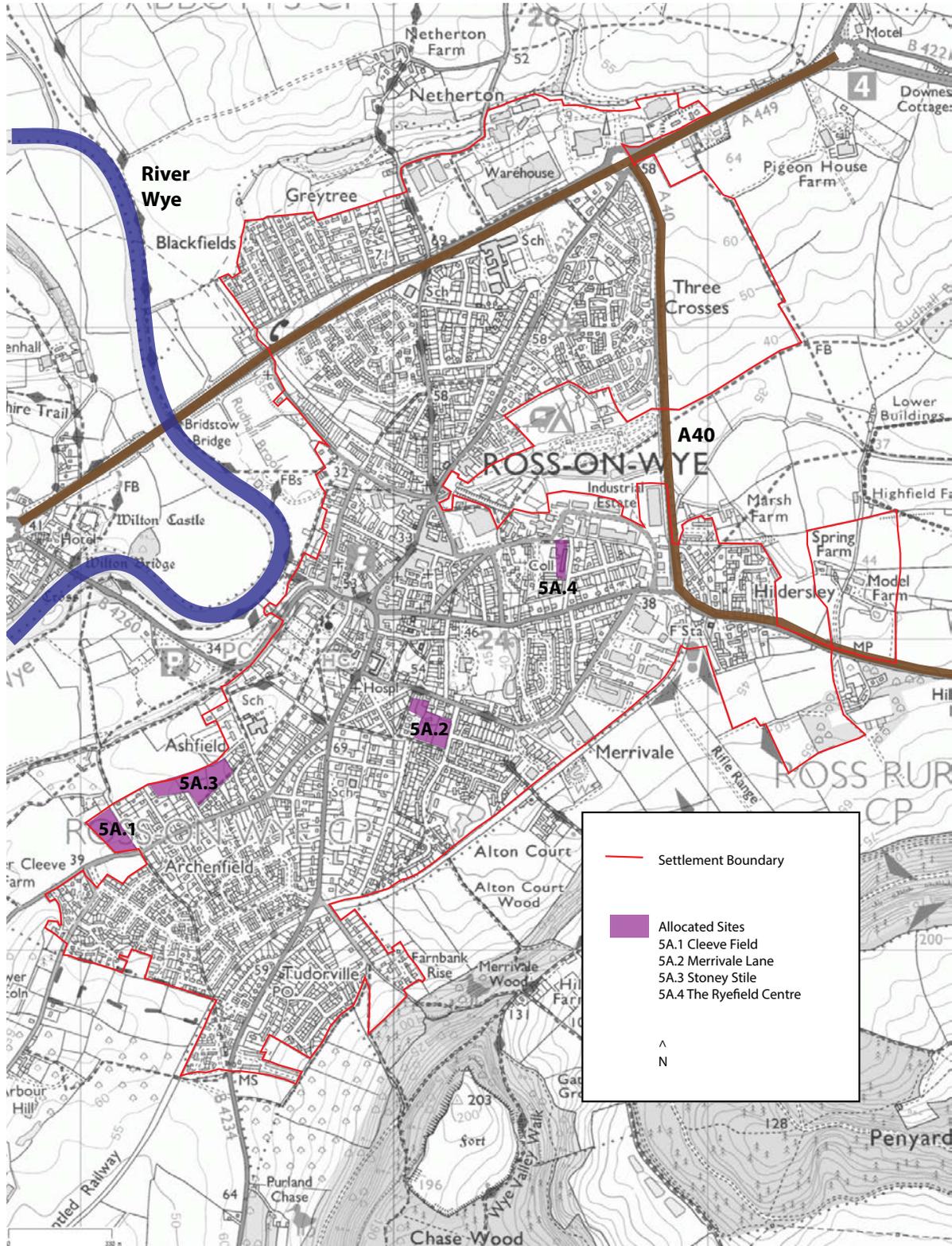
influence of this plan.

5.1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan allocates four sites for development and these are shown on Figure 19. Whilst the Town Council is also generally supportive of the development of land at the Chase and at Broadmeadows/Tanyard, these and some others do not comprise allocations in this Neighbourhood Plan. Section 6 includes information setting out how the Town Council would like to see land at these locations (also shown on Figure 21 as ‘Opportunity Sites’) come forward in the future.

5.1.7 As well as the local authority, potential applicants should discuss their proposals with Welsh Water and the Wye Valley AONB.



Figure 19: Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan Development Strategy and Sites







## 5A.2 Merrivale Lane Allocation

This site is allocated for housing subject to the following:

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

### Design

In line with the NPPF 2019 (para. 127) the design should be “sympathetic to local character and history”. The site is within Character Area 7. Plot sizes and shapes, direct access off the road frontage, the use of front gardens and building heights should therefore be consistent with that of the immediate local area. Proposals should show in particular their response to the Conservation Area context.

The site could accommodate in the order of 20-25 houses.

### Merrivale Lane Explanatory Text

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



Map 8: Merrivale Lane





- 5.2.8 The site was initially considered as potential Local Green Space (LGS) but the evidence from the community, though lengthy, did not suggest that the site would meet the criteria for LGS designation. This aspiration is, however, considered in the following by proposing the inclusion of allotments. (As outlined for Policy 5C, there is now a severe lack of allotments in the town.)
- 5.2.9 The Highway Authority have highlighted two concerns about access. First, that vehicular access would not be possible from Hawthorne Lane (Hawthorne Lane is not adopted by Herefordshire Council). Secondly that, even if space could be created for an access off Middleton Avenue, this would not be supported because of the congestion caused by the nearby Primary School. Consequently, the Policy highlights the requirement for safe access.



## 5A.4 The Ryefield Centre Allocation

This site is allocated for housing subject to the following:

- Parking to be provided on site.
- The site is within Character Area 6. Plot sizes and shapes, the use of front gardens and building heights to be consistent with that immediate local character.

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

### The Ryefield Centre Explanatory Text

5.2.15 The site, of approx. 0.3 hectare, is currently occupied by the now closed Herefordshire Council's Children's Centre and some other associated uses. Proposals are being developed for the relocation of the Children's Centre. The majority of the uses occupy attractive buildings, part of the old Ross Grammar School. To the east, the uses are all residential. There are some good quality trees, hedges and walls along the Ryefield Road site boundary.

5.2.16 Although the parking area on the land occupied by the adjacent Larruperz Centre was used by Children's Centre users, that was not formally for their use. Vehicular access would be expected to be from Ryefield Road but consideration should be given to access to the southern part of the site from Grammar School Close. Pedestrian access is possible from the Larruperz Centre direction.



Map 10: The Ryefield Centre



## 6 Opportunity Sites

- 6.1 The Town Council is generally supportive of the opportunities identified below. Whilst these do not form allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan itself, the Town Council has set out its ideas in how the opportunities might come forward and this information is set out over the following pages.



## 60.1 The Chase

### The Chase Explanatory Text

#### *Background*

6.2.1 In winter 2018 the owners of the Chase Hotel notified the plan Steering Group that the hotel was no longer viable, that they had tried unsuccessfully to find buyers for it as an hotel and that they would therefore be closing the hotel and seeking permission to develop housing on part of the site. To follow this up, the owners set up a consultation about thir emerging proposals for housing development.

6.2.2 These proposals caused considerable concern locally and pressure was placed on the Steering Group to consider options to (a) allocate the site for an hotel in this plan and/or (b) designate much of the current open area as a Local Green Space. Neither option was judged to be viable and the conclusion was that the appropriate way forward in planning terms was to include a section, as here, about support in principle for housing development on the site.

6.2.3 Before this was agreed, however, a survey was undertaken – specifically of opinions about the site. Details of the above events and activities are contained in the Chase Site Process Report.

#### *Proposal*

6.2.4 Drawing on the results of the work outlined above and feedback from Herefordshire Council, the decision was made that development of housing on the Chase site could be supported in line with the following criteria, based in part on the fact that the site is the Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area.

- A Heritage Assessment to be prepared.
- A Landscape Assessment to be prepared.
- An Ecology Assessment to be prepared, with particular attention to the impact on the known bat population.
- The current more modern block of bedrooms for the hotel to be demolished.
- The original main house to be retained and converted primarily for housing use.
- Other compatible uses, for example an on-site café or restaurant could be considered (helping to recover the loss of local and visitor functions).
- All surrounding tree and shrub belts to be retained to limit views into and out of the site.
- The majority of the grassed area east of the main house to be kept as open space.



Map 11: The Chase



- Coverage of the site by buildings, roads and parking areas to be kept to a minimum.
- Surfacing in parking areas to be permeable.
- No building heights to exceed the height of the top of the original main house.
- Lighting on site to be low key and downward facing.
- Public access to parts of the site (notably around the ponds) to be considered.

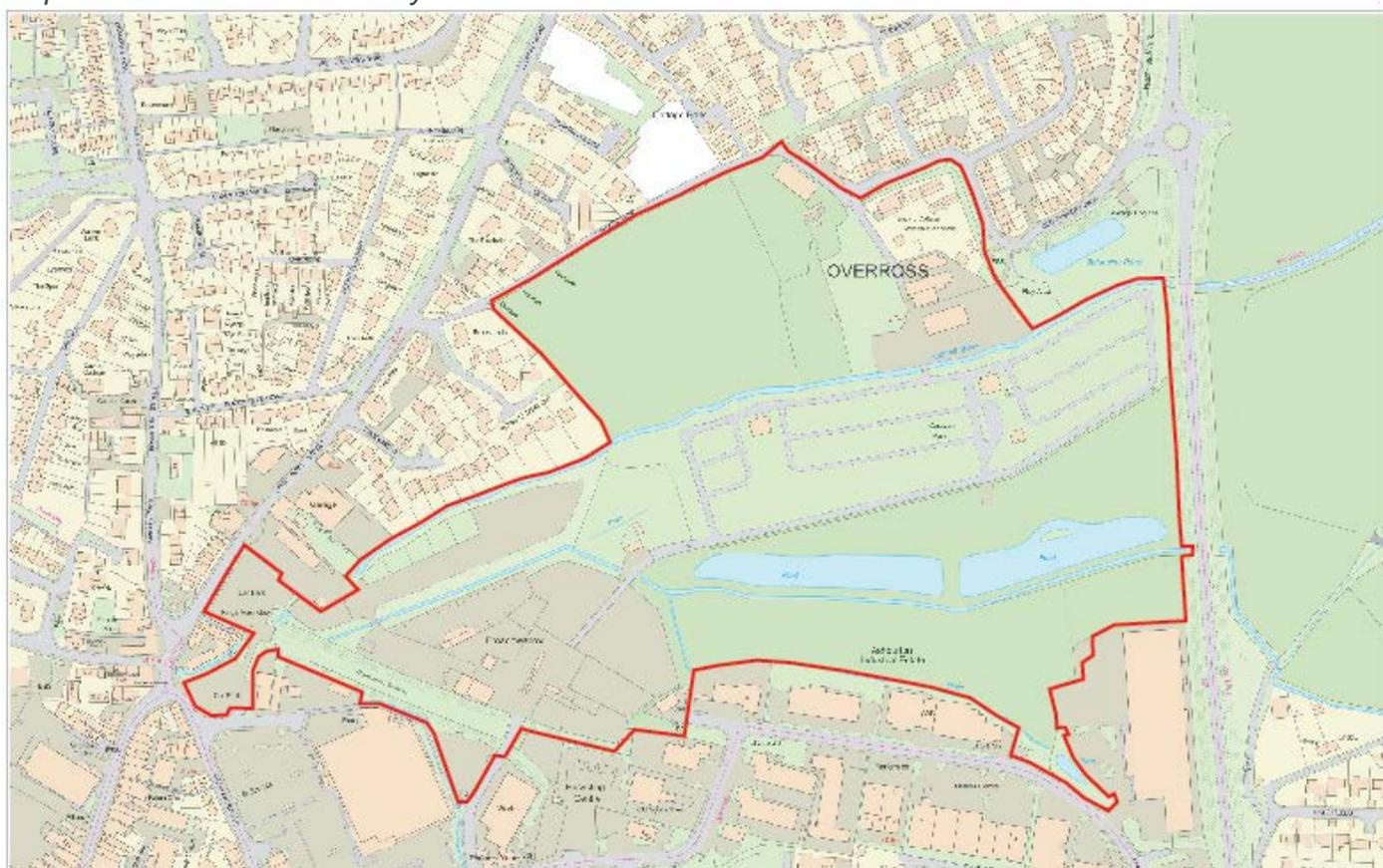
6.2.5 Emphasis should also be placed on ensuring that the construction is as sustainable and environmentally neutral as possible in terms of, for example, insulation, renewable energy, use of grey water, waste management, materials sourcing and construction techniques (e.g. green roofs and or walls).

6.2.6 The criteria above apply to what is understood to be the proposal for housing on the site. If other, perhaps mixed, uses are proposed, notably if the site is purchased by another hotel operator, the above criteria would still apply.



## 60.2 Broadmeadows/ Tanyard

Map 12: Broadmeadows / Tanyard



### Broadmeadows / Tanyard Explanatory Text

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

6.2.8 Almost all of the area shown on Map 6 – just over 18 hectares - was considered in the 2011 SHLAA: ‘W461: Land at Broadmeadows’, with the exception of (a) the three areas to the west – the Kings Acre car park, the lower car

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



such, is a clear priority for development. Development of this site would also help to create a strong link to any developments east of the A40.

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

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

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

- Fully in Zone 3 so subject to flooding.
- Sewerage and water as above.
- Historic and archaeological issues also as above. (Though not mentioned, the site is also subject to the same constraints as above in terms of biodiversity.)

6.2.11 Local assessment has highlighted that the King's Acre car parks, especially the upper one, provide a poor quality environment at what is in effect a gateway to the town centre. The lower car park is also in Flood Zone 3. There are also questions about vehicular access to the western part of the site given the currently poor access (in technical and visual terms) of the small access road adjacent to the blank side and back of the Morrisons store.

6.2.12 Demonstrating the **deliverability** of any project of this scale and complexity is a key factor in determining whether it might proceed to successful completion. There is a clear need to find and agree technical solutions to several aspects. First, the significant flooding issues on much of the lower part of the whole site, although flooding back from the river Wye appears to have been solved since recent protection works. (Two possible technical solutions are introduced below). Secondly, the contamination on the Tanyard Lane field. The field has been remediated recently, although further remediation may be required if the site was to be used for housing in particular. Thirdly, vehicular access also needs addressing before large parts of the site could be developed successfully. (Illustrative proposals for this are also introduced later.) It is considered that all of these are resolvable.



Demonstrating the deliverability of any project is also a matter of financial viability. In this case, it is clear that parts of the site could be considered conventionally viable, but other areas (notably the core of Broadmeadows) would not be viable for a use such as housing. The solution, though complex (but certainly not unique) would be to bring landowners together in some form of consortium and agree overall financial equalisation, at which point the overall scheme is likely to be viable. To that end, all landowners have been contacted and most have agreed informally that development can only proceed within an agreed masterplan for the site as a whole, and with some form of financial equalisation. (See Consultation Statement).

### Criteria

6.2.13 A mixed use development on this site would not just be supported in principle but encouraged because of the importance to Ross as a whole of such a large area stretching from the town centre to the A40.

6.2.14 In relation to potential mixed uses, it is important to note that Herefordshire Council policy would currently preclude retail. However, no proper Retail Assessment has been undertaken since 2012, yet economic and other circumstances have changed considerably since that time and the Revised NPPF 2019 recommends a more open and responsive approach to town centre vitality. There is therefore a criterion in the list below requiring a new Retail Assessment. Subject to the outcome of that assessment, some

specific retail uses may be included.

6.2.15 The following criteria would apply:

- A single, overall masterplan to be produced and agreed with the Town Council and Herefordshire Council.
- The masterplan to be based on the principle of financial equalization between all parts of the site.
- A clear and technically justified proposal to be made for mitigating flooding impacts on the lower parts of the site and addressing any remaining contamination across all of the site.
- A Retail Assessment to be undertaken to establish whether some element of retail may be appropriate within the overall development and, if appropriate, to also identify the specific nature and scale of any such development.
- The site is not part of or linked to any of the main Character Areas of the town so there is an opportunity to create an area with its own distinctive character while drawing from and extending the character of the town centre in particular. Design Codes will need to be developed and agreed.
- There is in particular an opportunity to be taken in the housing design and the site design to significantly enhance the setting of Ross-on-Wye and views across to the Parish church from the east – principles described by Persimmon’s consultants and a Herefordshire Council study in 2005. This should be complemented by retention and enhancement of appropriate green infrastructure.
- Adequate public green space



and play areas to be provided to a stated, recognised standard within the housing areas and in any public spaces.

- Clear, safe and lit footpaths and cycle path links to be created from the town centre to and from future developments east of the A40. These must also be direct, not part of internal path systems within developments along the routes, and any substantial areas of open space should have clear, direct path/cycle links between them.
- Every opportunity should be taken to enhance the safety of all users of the A40 road and footways to the satisfaction of Highways England, Herefordshire Council and the Town Council.
- Any proposal for development of the Tanyard Lane site will require confirmation of prior archaeological investigation as being appropriate. In the event of significant and/or extensive remains being found, they should be preserved in-situ in accordance with paragraph 189 of the Revised NPPF.
- Any planning application should show how development would be brought forward in phases to minimize adverse effects.

6.2.16 The appropriate uses include the following:

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

Development as outlined will almost certainly result in the loss of the current caravan/camping site. Alternative sites should be sought.

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

### Illustrative Proposals

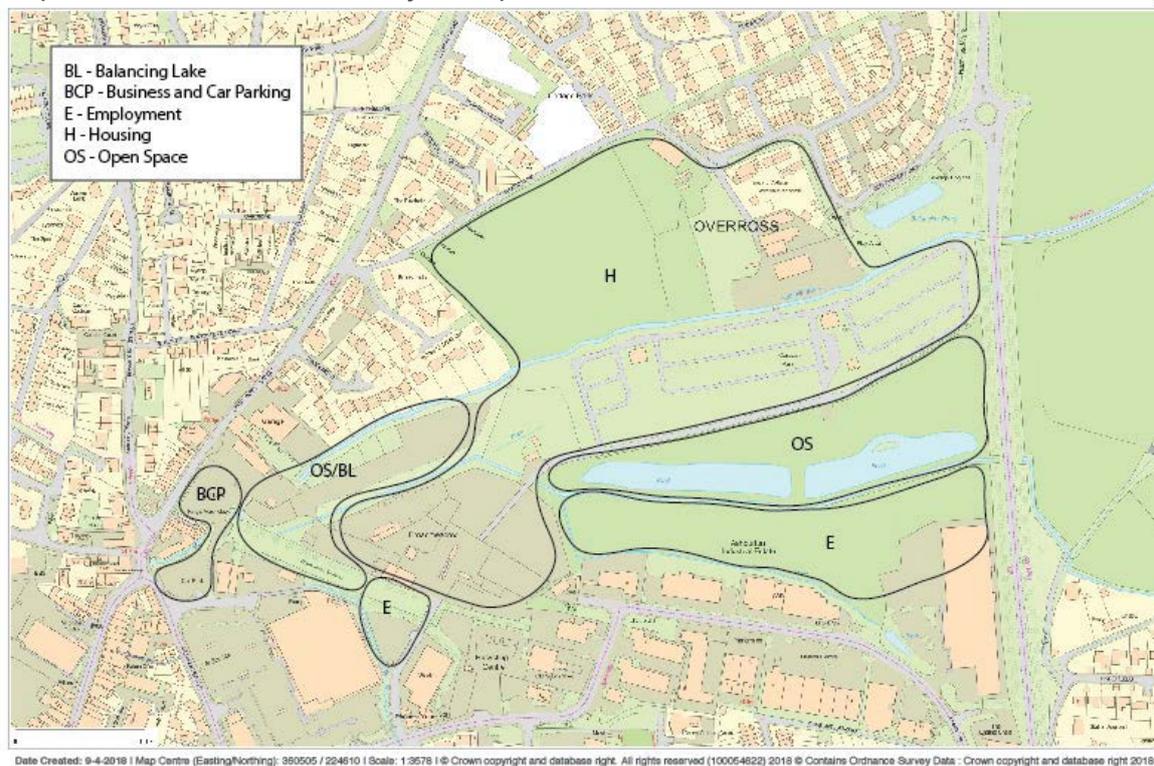
6.2.18 Some initial options testing has taken place in terms of the locations for potential uses on the site, the quantum of development, access and so forth. The two sketch layouts that follow below are purely illustrative but provide the outline figures for the scale of likely development as introduced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

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

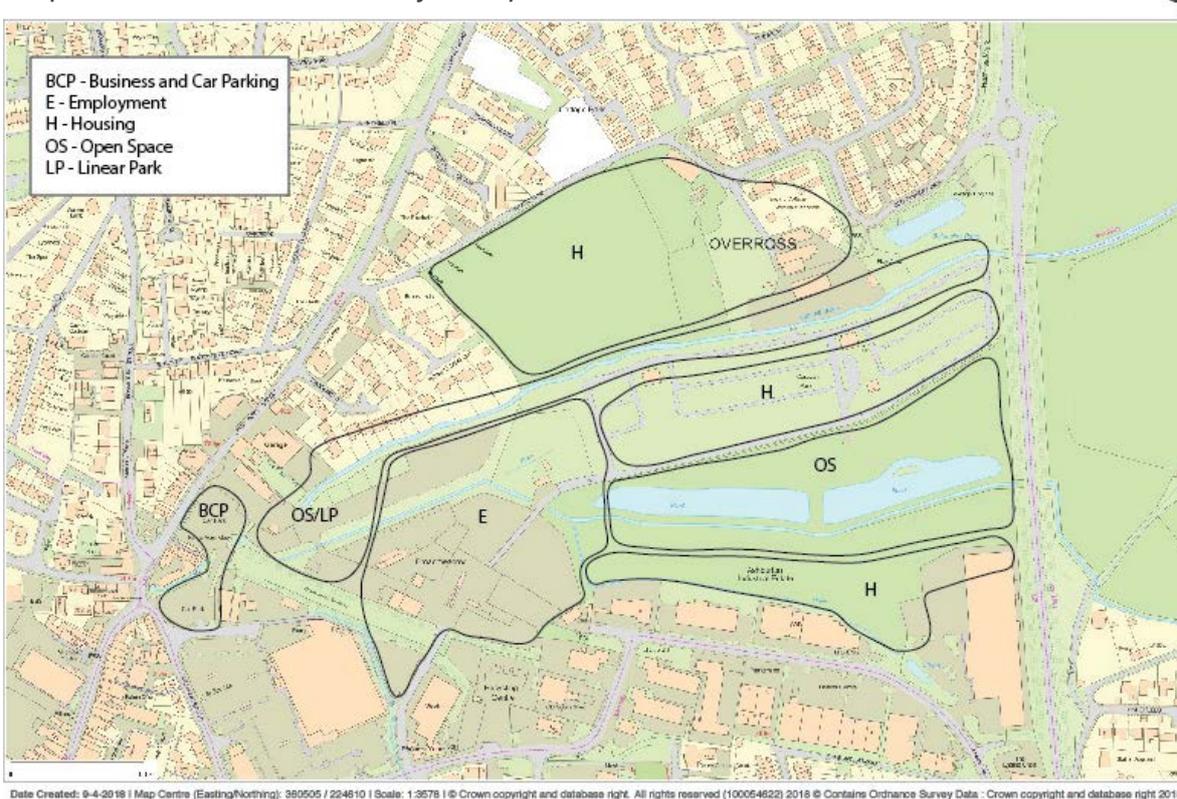
6.2.20 In terms of overall layout and design, the



Map 13: Broadmeadows / Tanyard Option 1



Map 14: Broadmeadows / Tanyard Option 2





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

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

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

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

6.2.24 Option 2 above takes a slightly different approach both to the flooding issue and the general location of development. Uses on the King's Acre area would remain as in Option 1 above.

6.2.25 This version addresses the flooding issue through the creation of what would in effect be a long, continuous balancing lake but this time as the core of a linear park running along the full length of the Rudhall Brook across the site. This linear park would also form a very valuable wildfire corridor and the obvious location for a major footpath and cycleway from the town centre to across the A40.

6.2.26 Also, in this option, the area towards the town centre and behind the unsightly Morrison's store would be predominantly for employment uses. This would mean that all the housing would be towards the east, including on the land below the Ashburton Estate.



## 60.3 Land East of the A40

### Land East of A40 Explanatory Text

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

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

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

### Criteria

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

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

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

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

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



## 60.4 Future Primary School Provision

### Future Primary School Provision Explanatory Text

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

### Criteria

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

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

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

- The new building to be of high quality and sustainable design.
- The new building to be suitable for wider community use. Particular consideration should be given to co-location of a school with any replacement Children's Centre and additional or alternative primary health care provision.
- New school playing fields will be provided to meet the needs of the school and to promote community use of the school's sports facilities.

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

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



## 7 Practical Projects

- 7.1 The planning policies described in Section 4 will be supported by a range of practical projects. These projects emerged from a very large number of suggestions made at all stages in the plan preparation (see the Consultation Statement). All suggestions were considered by the Steering Group, which resulted in the priority shortlist that follows.
- 7.2 There is also an intention within Ross to create a Development Trust to lead on the implementation of many of the projects. Developers would be expected to contribute to relevant Projects listed below (via Herefordshire Council's Section 106 contribution agreements or CIL if that is implemented in the county).
- 7.3 It is not possible to suggest a project for every objective and policy; this would be both inappropriate and undeliverable. The following text lists the proposed projects, many of which build on groups and activities already underway, and relates them to the plan objectives. The list was developed with, and then agreed with, representatives of the local community and most of the local groups mentioned.





## 7.4 Objectives and Practical Projects

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

#### Whole Plan Area

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P1	Work through 'createRoss' (set up in 2017) to set up a public art and 'greening' programme, engaging local artists and suppliers and promoting wider public appreciation of the arts.	1a
P2	More specifically, to (a) establish a 'Gallery Without Walls'; an outdoor art trail around Ross-on-Wye not just the town centre), linked to the existing digitisation project by the Ross Gazette and (b) a 'Ross in the Frame' project involving open frames around the town to highlight and interpret key views, local history and so forth.	1a
P3	Work through Ross-on-Wye Town Council, createRoss and the Ross-on-Wye Tourism Association to install historic interpretation signs (possibly interactive) around the town, supported by trails and information sheets, linked to the existing visitor-oriented website ( <a href="http://www.visitrossonwye.com">www.visitrossonwye.com</a> ) and to the already existing walking trails celebrating local benefactors.	1b
P4	Develop an information pack for residents on renewable energy (and energy saving) options with local contacts.	1d
P5	Establish a community-based solar/photovoltaic energy scheme (which can reduce costs per household by c.25%).	1d
P6	Establish a project to create, preserve and maintain local woodland, trees and hedgerows (and their habitats for insects, birds etc.), including the appointment of a Tree Warden (Herefordshire has a county-wide scheme) and engaging existing local groups: The Blake Garden Volunteers, The Community Garden, U3A, Herefordshire Nature Trust, Ross Rotary Club, Ross Lions Club, Ross-on-Wye Town Council.	1f, 1m
P7	Promote/encourage wetland planting, continuing the work by the Town Council with the Wye Valley AONB, Usk and Wye Foundation and Natural England.	1g
P8	Put in place (and promote to developers) provision to enhance hedgehog numbers (e.g. shelters in green spaces and wildlife permeable barriers). This links to the existing Hedgehog Festival and work about hedgehogs with local schools.	1g
P9	Promote quality landscaping on access routes.	1c 1e 1g 1n



### Town Centre

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

### Wider Town

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

### Overall Objective 2: Provide new housing Whole Plan Area

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



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

<b>NDP Action Project reference</b>	<b>NDP Action Project</b>	<b>NDP Sub-objective</b>
P16	Provide targeted training for local people especially young people.	Overall objective 3
P17	Develop a programme of work experience/job placements linked to John Kyrle High School.	3a
P18	Promote local apprenticeship schemes.	3a
P19	Produce (and keep up to date) a register of small businesses, their current accommodation and potential future needs.	3b
P20	Produce, enable and promote additional tourism-related facilities and resources	3f 5c

**Town Centre**

<b>NDP Action Project reference</b>	<b>NDP Action Project</b>	<b>NDP Sub-objective</b>
P21	Develop and promote a distinctive identity for the town centre, e.g. around shop themes (notably 'Vintage'), history, link to the river etc.	1j
P22	Produce a guidance pack for new shop owners/tenants linking to local tradespeople, artists, suppliers etc.	1k
P23	Employ a full- or part-time or short term contract Town Centre Manager.	3f
P24	Produce a Vintage Shopping Trail around the centre (early work already underway).	3f



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

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P25	Establish a 'Transport Innovation Group' to speed access to innovations such as self-drive cars, car share schemes etc.	4a
P26	Establish a walking and cycling group to advise developers on including appropriate provision.	4b
P27	Encourage existing home owners, businesses, service providers and the managers of public car parks to install electric charging points.	4e
P28	Produce a mainly on-road cycling trail to link Ross to other nearby towns, villages and historic locations.	4b
P29	Improve and extend off-road cycle routes.	4c   4k   4l

### Town Centre

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P30	Lobby Herefordshire Council with specific, evidence-based proposals for improvements such as dropped kerbs, cycle parking.	4d
P31	Establish a 'Town Centre Traffic and Parking Group' of traders, residents etc. to produce evidence and options to promote to Herefordshire Council (building on earlier town work).	4e   4f   4g   4h   4i

### Wider Town

NDP Action Project reference	NDP Action Project	NDP Sub-objective
P32	Develop locally distinctive 'gateways' to Ross along main access routes.	4j
P33	Promote initiatives to re-establish a full route along the Town and Country Trail to link with other national footpath provision.	4k



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

<b>NDP Action Project reference</b>	<b>NDP Action Project</b>	<b>NDP Sub-objective</b>
P34	Create one single information source for local groups and organisations and places to meet.	5a
P35	Establish a volunteer ICT network to advise on maximising ICT usage.	5b
P36	Promote Ross as a centre for River Wye based activities.	5d
P37	Promote better/more diverse use of the bandstand.	5d
P38	Develop a ‘Trim-Trail’ along key footpath/cycle routes.	5f
P39	Establish improved access to health and social care provision	5a   5g

**Town Centre**

<b>NDP Action Project reference</b>	<b>NDP Action Project</b>	<b>NDP Sub-objective</b>
P40	Establish a group to develop proposals for further facilities as on p.73.	5h

**Wider Town**

<b>NDP Action Project reference</b>	<b>NDP Action Project</b>	<b>NDP Sub-objective</b>
P41	Promote Local Green Space designation and encourage more/wider use by all.	5j
P42	Establish a community group to maintain and improve play areas.	5k



## Appendix 1: Summary Evidence Report

The Neighbourhood Plan is built upon evidence from two main sources: external (material produced by others such as Herefordshire Council) and internal (material that applies specifically to Ross-on-Wye, including locally-generated material).

The majority of the internal evidence has been produced at various times during the preparation of the plan. The only exception is those reports produced by Herefordshire Council, each of which is dated. The locally-generated reports have all been checked and, where necessary, updated to relate to the plan (even if they still show an original date).

### External Evidence

The main links are listed below with appropriate hyperlinks.

**Herefordshire Council (only the main items are listed here):**

- **Core Strategy:**  
[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1788/core\\_strategy\\_sections\\_combined.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1788/core_strategy_sections_combined.pdf)
- **Core Strategy evidence base:**  
[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1791/appendix\\_2\\_-\\_evidence\\_base.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1791/appendix_2_-_evidence_base.pdf)
- **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment:**  
[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory\\_record/2143/strategic\\_housing\\_land\\_availability\\_assessment.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory_record/2143/strategic_housing_land_availability_assessment.pdf)
- **Local Housing Market Assessment:**  
[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory\\_record/2129/local\\_housing\\_market\\_assessment.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory_record/2129/local_housing_market_assessment.pdf)

- **Local Transport Plan:**  
[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel\\_and\\_transport/220/local\\_transport\\_plan](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel_and_transport/220/local_transport_plan)

- **Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis:**  
[http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory\\_record/2117/urban\\_fringe\\_sensitivity\\_analysis](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory_record/2117/urban_fringe_sensitivity_analysis)

**Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2015-2020:** <http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/about-us/management-and-guidance/management-plan-2015-2020/>

**Natural England Character Area Profiles:** <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5018311469301760?category=5871>

**Environment Agency Flood Mapping** (this is the overall Ross map): <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/confirm-location?eastings=359948&northings=224095&placeOrPostcode=ross%20on%20we>

### Internal Evidence

These are all available on the Ross-on-Wye Town Council website: <http://www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk/ndp.php>

**Broadmeadows & Tanyard Details:** A more detailed report to support the information about this site/area in the main plan. Produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

**The Chase Reports (including The Chase Site Process Report, The Chase Site Petition Report and The Chase Site Press Report):** These reports cover the work undertaken to address the closure of the Chase Hotel. Produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.



**Development Sites Appraisal:** This considers all the Ross-on-Wye sites submitted in the most recent SHLAA process and others submitted since, outlines options for which to take forward and draws conclusions. Produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

**Facilities Report:** Produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with specific evidence produced by community members.

**Green Infrastructure Report:** Produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with specific evidence produced by community members.

**Growing Places (Allotments) Survey:** Produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with specific evidence produced by community members.

**Local Green Space Report:** Produced by the plan consultants, drawing from several stages of evidence collection and decision-making to result in the sites shown in the plan.

**Play Area Report:** Produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with specific evidence produced by community members.

**Ross-on-Wye Character Assessment Portfolio:** This includes Ross-specific material from Herefordshire as well as the results of community surveys. It includes an Introduction that explains all the items.

**Settlement Boundary Report:** Produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

**Stoney Stile / Hawthorne Field Comments Report:** A collation of comments from the community on proposals for the Stoney Stile / Hawthorne Field site.

**Town Centre Overall Review:** This includes a variety of items relevant to policies for the town centre, some material from Herefordshire Council

as well as the results of community surveys. It includes an Introduction that explains all the items.

**Views Report:** Produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with specific evidence produced by community members and also drawing from the Landscape Assessment (in the Character Portfolio).

There is also internally produced evidence which generally supports the Plan, but does not support specific policies, as listed below:

**Charity Shops**  
**Pedestrian Movement Kings Acre Report**  
**Public Transport Report**  
**Shops and Flats Survey Street Plan**  
**Signage to Town Centre Car Parks Report**  
**Vacant Units Report**  
**Visitor Interview Report**

The **Consultation Statement** and its associated Folder includes an overview and detail of all consultation undertaken on the Neighbourhood Plan to date.



## Appendix 2: Objectives and Sustainability Chart

### APPENDIX 2: OBJECTIVES AND SUSTAINABILITY CHART

- ✓✓ This objective makes a notable contribution to the relevant criterion
- ✓ This objective makes some contribution to the relevant criterion

Objective	Environmental	Economic	Social
<b>1. Protect and enhance all aspects of the environment</b>			
1a: Improve all aspects of the appearance of the town as a whole.	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
1b: Respect and enrich the town's historic, social and cultural character and features.	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
1c: Ensure a high standard of locally distinctive design in new built developments that responds to specific local and particularly historic styles.	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
1d: Promote well -designed and appropriately located renewable energy projects.	✓✓	✓	✓✓
1e: Protect and enhance the landscape around Ross-on-Wye, especially in designated areas, and the town's setting within it.	✓✓	✓	✓✓
1f: Protect key views into and out of the town as well as in to the Wye Valley AONB.	✓✓		
1g: Protect and enhance ecology, wildlife and biodiversity, in particular by reference to the River Wye SAC.	✓✓	✓	✓✓
1h: Vigorously promote and encourage early pre-application community involvement by developers / applicants.	✓✓		✓✓
1i: Ensure all new developments take a positive approach to carbon reduction measures in design and construction.	✓✓	✓	
1j: Ensure proper consideration of all flood risk, groundwater management and waste treatment, using a sequential approach for all built development within current flood zones.	✓✓		
1k: Make the town centre a welcoming, safe and secure place where people (locals and visitors) are encouraged to spend time.	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
1k: Ensure that the design of shopfronts is appropriate to local character.	✓✓	✓✓	
1l: Improve the appearance of the public realm through surfacing, lighting, 'greening' (eg. planters), the use of public art and so forth.	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
1m: Retain existing open green spaces and playing fields			
1n: Link existing (and new) green assets into a coherent, related pattern to improve connectivity for ecological and aesthetic benefit – what is termed 'green infrastructure'.	✓✓	✓	✓✓
1o: Ensuring the use of permeable surfacing of house drives and front gardens and in employment areas and car parks.	✓✓		✓



Objective	Environmental	Economic	Social
<b>2. Deliver more housing, in particular to meet local needs</b>			
2a: Deliver a locally appropriate amount of new housing over and above the 900 homes allocated.		✓	✓✓
2b: Encourage housing development on empty, derelict or underused land where this does not result in damage to local character, over-development, the loss of important biodiversity assets, or increase problems arising from noise, dust or odours. Issues of cotamination must also have been addressed.	✓✓	✓	✓✓
2c: Encourage development of self-build new housing.			✓✓
2d: Design new housing to enable people to work from home.	✓	✓✓	✓✓
2e: Encourage the delivery of affordable housing by a Ross-on-Wye Community Land Trust			
2f: Encourage the development of housing, perhaps as part of mixed developments on town centre sites.	✓✓	✓	✓✓
2g: Optimise opportunities for people to live over town centre shops.	✓	✓	✓✓
2h: Encourage appropriate infill while resisting over-development in residential gardens.	✓		✓
<b>3. Protect, enhance and diversify the local economy</b>			
3a: Support new employment developments.		✓✓	✓✓
3b: Encourage starter units, shared serviced accommodation, managed workspace etc. for existing small or new businesses.		✓✓	✓✓
3c: Encourage employment developments that provide higher-grade jobs, especially in tourism.		✓✓	✓
3d: Retain existing employment except where inappropriately located.		✓✓	✓✓
3e: Resist proposals for out of town centre retail.	✓	✓✓	✓
3f: Support existing and welcome new independent businesses, including shops, cafes and market traders, especially where this makes a positive contribution to tourism.	✓	✓✓	✓
3g: Support the existing street market and enhance it in terms of scale and frequency.	✓	✓✓	✓✓
3h: Optimise opportunities for people to work over town centre shops.	✓	✓✓	✓
3i: Take steps to reduce the number of empty shops.	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓



Objective	Environmental	Economic	Social
<b>4. Ensure an accessible and well-connected town for all</b>			
4a: Ensure that all proposals and projects work towards delivering sustainable movement and access.	✓	✓	✓✓
4b: Support, promote and develop local bus and coach services.	✓	✓	✓✓
4c: Improve walking and cycling access into, around and out of the town and to/from the surrounding countryside, including for all new developments.	✓✓	✓	✓✓
4d: Provide signage to local places of historic interest.	✓✓	✓	✓✓
4e: Provide infrastructure to support the nationally proposed shift to electric vehicles.	✓	✓	✓
4f: Improve the usability of the town centre by pedestrians, cyclists and those facing mobility challenges.		✓	✓✓
4g: Seek opportunities to improve traffic routes and circulation into and around the town centre, in particular the one-way system.		✓✓	✓
4h: Rationalise the locations and arrangements of car parks that serve the town centre to enable easy and safe access for residents and visitors.	✓	✓	✓
4i: Provide safe, well-connected, convenient, well signposted vehicle routes to car parks.		✓	✓
4j: Put in place a coherent sign system in and around the centre for pedestrians, cyclists and those facing mobility challenges, also linking from the centre out to neighbourhoods and the network of public footpaths and bridleways in the wider countryside.	✓	✓	✓
4k: Provide clearer signage and 'gateways' into and around the town from main routes, for roads, footpaths and bridleways.	✓	✓	✓
4l: Support proposals for the creation of strategic cycle and footpath links between Ross and other towns.	✓✓		✓✓



Objective	Environmental	Economic	Social
<b>5. Protect, enhance and diversify the town's social and cultural assets</b>			
5a: Retain and enhance existing social/community facilities and deliver as appropriate in or from new developments.		✓	✓✓
5b: Improve broadband and mobile phone access and connectivity.		✓✓	✓✓
5c: Diversify town-based facilities and events for residents and visitors.		✓✓	✓✓
5d: Consolidate and expand information, services and facilities for visitors.		✓✓	✓✓
5e: Encourage more river-based and riverside activities that respect their landscape context.	✓	✓✓	✓
5f: Promote better and more access to, and recreational use of, the wider landscape, for walking, cycling and, where appropriate, horse riding.	✓	✓	✓✓
5g: Support further development to create a 'Health Hub'.			✓✓
5h: Encourage and support the development of additional community facilities in the town centre.			✓✓
5i: Retain small shops in town neighbourhoods.	✓	✓✓	✓✓
5j: Designate Local Green Spaces of significant community value.	✓✓		✓✓
5k: Improve existing and develop new allotment areas and play facilities, especially in or associated with major new housing developments.	✓		✓✓



## Appendix 3: Ross-on-Wye Town Council Pre-Application Community Involvement Protocol

This Protocol is part of the suite of documents that together form the **Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan**. Any proposals must accord with this plan and with those of any higher level plans, notably that of Herefordshire Council, as well as all national policy.

Because much of any pre-application community involvement will be about overall and detailed design and character, particular attention is drawn to the **Ross-on-Wye Character Portfolio**\* because applicants will be required to demonstrate how their eventual proposals will enhance the local distinctiveness of Ross-on-Wye. (\* Or the latest version at the time.)

*Use of this Protocol is without prejudice to the eventual judgement of Ross-on-Wye Town Council on the merits of any final application, even if a good community involvement process has been agreed and followed.*

The **Revised National Planning Policy Framework** (2019) states that:

*“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”*

The **“10 Commitments for Effective Pre-application Involvement”**<sup>1</sup> published by a group representing planning, industry and community groups states that:

*“Early, collaborative discussions between developers, public sector agencies and the communities affected by a new development can help to shape better quality, more accepted schemes and ensure improved outcomes for the*

*community. These discussions also avoid wasted effort and costs.”*

The Herefordshire Council **“Statement of Community Involvement”** (SCI)<sup>2</sup> states that:

*“There will be certain developments which in the view of the Council are likely to generate public interest which should be canvassed prior to any formal application.... if the development proposed is considered to be significant, it would strongly encourage the applicant to involve the community.”*

(The SCI also includes some specific suggestions for how good community involvement should be managed. These are introduced below.)

**Ross-on-Wye Town Council fully support and endorse all of the above and will play their appropriate role in delivering high quality pre-application involvement with themselves and the wider Ross-on-Wye community as proposals come forward.**

### Process

Drawing from the 10 Commitments and other guidance on best practice, we encourage potential applicants to work with Ross-on-Wye Town Council to fulfil the following principles:

- **‘Day One’ contact:** By far the best results for all emerge when contact is made with our Town Council, and through us with our local community, at the very start of any process; consulting people late with already prepared schemes is not productive.
- **Agreed Process:** A key aim of this early contact is to discuss and agree the nature, scope, timetable, information and so forth of the involvement – i.e. the process to be followed.\* (*The SCI suggests a need to*



- “agree methods for ... involvement ... (and) a timetable”.)
- **Applicant Leadership but Shared Responsibility:** Although it is the applicant’s role to lead and fund involvement, the Town Council will offer as much support as possible to any agreed process, for example by providing local information, contact details for local groups, advice on meeting places, access to newsletters and so forth.
- **Openness and Transparency:** Building trust between all and ensuring an agreed outcome depend heavily on having a process that is as open as possible on all sides, though the Town Council will respect any issues of clear commercial confidentiality.
- **Agreed Community:** A project may have an impact on a limited number of people or on all of the town. The details of those to be involved will need to be discussed and agreed for any project, as will the potential ways to contact and engage them. (*The SCI suggests the need to “identify groups and/or individuals who should be involved”.*)
- **Agreed Scope:** There will also need to be agreement about the scope of the community involvement, i.e. what is and is not open to change (e.g. layout, quantum of development, design etc.).
- **Proportionality:** The nature and scale of involvement will be balanced in appropriate proportion to the scale and likely impact of any proposals.
- **Final Reporting:** The applicant should submit, with any final application, a thorough report – a full ‘audit trail’ - describing and summarising the outcomes of the involvement, showing how the proposals have (or have not) responded to results. If they have not, a short note should be included to explain this. If the process has been followed fully, the Town Council will endorse this report; if not they may submit their own evaluation of it\*\*. (*The SCI suggests that any application should be*

*supported by a “statement on the consultation exercise (that) sets out how any feedback (has been) assessed and identifies where that feedback has resulted in a revision”.*)

\* There is considerable benefit for applicants in also sharing any process with Herefordshire Council, as planning authority, and securing their agreement to it.

\*\* As per the opening proviso, endorsement of an involvement **process** and results does not necessarily mean support for the resulting **proposals**.

Initial contact should be made with the Town Council via the Town Clerk (clerk@rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk). The Town Council commits to doing all possible to arrange an initial meeting as soon as possible following this contact.

Please note that all of the above applies to formally allocated sites. For any proposals on unallocated sites, although initial contact should still be made, the Town Council reserves the right to limit or even refuse its partnership role. If this proves necessary, the decision to not engage with an applicant, or to do so in a limited way, cannot be used against the Town Council by the applicant.



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