

CHAPTER 26 - LONGHOPE

Policy (R)F.Longhope 1 – Housing Allocation – Rectory Meadow

Objections

29/51280	Diocese of Gloucester
29/51283	Diocese of Gloucester
41/51162	Countryside Agency
101/52507	Mr & Mrs N Beard
101/52508	Mr & Mrs N Beard
132/52524	Mr & Mrs Brace
165/52512	Mr I Cameron
182/50147	Mr E G Clark
184/50150	Ms M J Clark
132/52523	Mr & Mrs Brace
165/52514	Mr I Cameron
182/50148	Mr E G Clark
184/50151	Ms M J Clark
216/52435	Environment Agency
218/50154	Mr Davis & Miss Roberts
218/50153	Mr Davis & Miss Roberts
239/52545	Mr C Eaglen & Miss S Lloyd
263/50368	Mrs W Evans
239/52544	Mr C Eaglen & Miss S Lloyd
263/50366	Mrs W Evans
328/50004	Mr A R Hay
328/50006	Mr A R Hay
452/52537	Mr L V Meadows
452/52536	Mr L V Meadows
455/50298	Mrs P Meek
514/52530	Mrs J L Pearce
514/53086	Mrs J L Pearce
514/52531	Mrs J L Pearce
653/52491	Rectory Meadow Action Group
653/52492	Rectory Meadow Action Group
654/52499	Miss P Tilling
654/52498	Miss P Tilling
693/51620	Longhope Parish Council
709/50292	Mr A & Mrs M Williams
709/50326	Mr A & Mrs M Williams

Supporting Statements

80/50141	Ms D Bailey
693/51615	Longhope Parish Council

Issues

- a. Principle of development regarding use of greenfield land, local character, employment and services.
- b. Access, accessibility, road safety and car parking.
- c. Crime prevention.
- d. Stability of buildings.
- e. Landscape impact.
- f. Infrastructure and developer contributions to open space education.

- g. Living conditions of neighbours regarding loss of view and noise and property value.
- h. Affordable housing for local need.
- i. Watercourses and flooding.
- j. Extent of the site.

Reasoning and Conclusions

Principle of development

- 36.1 Longhope is a large village with a population of about 890 and benefits from a range of services, facilities and some local employment. A new primary school with a playing field has recently been constructed in the village. There are frequent bus services to Cinderford, Mitcheldean and other settlements along the A4136 and a daytime bus service approximately hourly along the A40 north of the village to Gloucester, Ross-on-Wye and Hereford. I consider that Longhope is in principle a suitable settlement to locate a modest amount of new housing development.
- 36.2 The Council confirmed orally at the Inquiry that the proposed allocation of 0.98ha is intended to include 0.5ha of recreational open space to address a shortfall in provision in the village as a whole. That would leave 0.48ha for housing development. However the wording of the Policy misleadingly indicates that the 0.5ha of open space might be additional to the 0.98ha of housing. The Policy wording needs to be amended to accord with the Council’s oral evidence to the Inquiry as above.
- 36.3 There are also apparent errors in the Development Brief LPD.35.28. These include a reference to the site area as being 1.48ha and an indication that the open space provision would lie outside the allocation. A site area of 1.48ha would be difficult to reconcile with the statement at paragraph 4.4 of the Development Brief that the density of development should be a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare. That density would result in a total of at least 29 or 30 dwellings rather than the 15 dwellings stated in the policy and the Brief. The unscaled indicative plan in the brief also suggests, inaccurately, that housing development would occupy more than half of the allocated site.
- 36.4 Part of the allocation would be the former school site for which a new use is needed. This is previously-developed land within the Conservation Area. The existing stone buildings have potential for residential re-use and there is scope for additional suitably-designed dwellings elsewhere on the school site. These would replace existing pre-fabricated buildings, toilets and playground areas whilst retaining the mature trees which make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. I conclude that the redevelopment of the school site is acceptable in principle. At the Inquiry the Council estimated that this part of the site would accommodate between 5 and 7 dwellings leaving 8 to 10 to be accommodated elsewhere.
- 36.5 The remainder of the proposed allocation comprises adjoining greenfield agricultural land. As greenfield land has a lower priority for housing development in the sequential test advised in national and local planning policy, account needs to be taken of other factors including whether better-performing sites exist elsewhere in Longhope, as well as the site-specific objections which are considered below.

Access, Accessibility and Traffic

- 36.6 The site is close to the Parish Church and is only about 400m from the A40 bus services. However it is about 600-1000m from most other village services and facilities and the more frequent bus services on the A4136. The latter distances are a little beyond the maximum walking distances advised by Annex A to RPG10. However I consider that many people would be willing to walk or cycle this distance along this quiet and pleasant road through the village and that residents would not need to rely excessively on travel by car.
- 36.7 There is no evidence to support the contention of some objectors that Church Road could not safely support the modest increase in overall traffic levels likely to result from the proposed development.
- 36.8 The Policy requires the sole vehicular access to the site itself to be from Rectory Meadow. However the former school was served from School Lane and I consider that this lane would be suitable to serve the redevelopment of the school site.
- 36.9 Rectory Meadow is a narrow estate road and some residents and their visitors evidently prefer to park on the street, close to their homes, rather than in the communal car park which adjoins the proposed site. I acknowledge that the development would introduce additional traffic with an associated increase in conflicting traffic movements, both during and after construction, with the potential also for a little additional noise and disturbance. On-street parking currently affects the two-way flow of traffic. However the Policy would require improved off-street parking provision, traffic speeds would be low and the growth in traffic movements can be mitigated by providing access to part of the development from School Lane. Alternative access points have been suggested but would generally involve land in separate ownership, which may not be available, and would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There is no evidence that the development would result in an increase in car crime.
- 36.10 I do not consider that access or accessibility considerations would warrant the deletion of the allocation. However vehicular access should be divided between School Lane and Rectory Meadow and not taken entirely from Rectory Meadow.

Landscape Impact.

- 36.11 The proposed development would be little seen from nearby roads. New buildings on the greenfield part of the site would be contained by existing built development to the south and east and the proposed open space can be sited to separate that part of the development from the adjoining Conservation Area to the north, as indicated in the Development Brief.
- 36.12 The Council added text to paragraph 26.12 at the Revised Deposit stage in response to the Countryside Agency’s objection and this requires the layout and design to complement the landscape and to take account of the Conservation Area assessment. In this regard the site is not contained by landscape features on its western boundary and can at present be clearly seen from public footpaths which include the long-distance Gloucestershire Way path. I consider that screen planting would be more necessary along the western and southern boundaries than to the east where it is indicated in the development brief. There are also important trees within the existing school site which should be retained as they contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Subject to suitable landscape treatment to

contain the development and soften its appearance from the open countryside, I consider that the degree of landscape impact due to the proposal would be acceptable.

Infrastructure

- 36.13 The Policy seeks the provision of 0.5ha of amenity open space ‘to be provided for by the development of housing’. The Council claims that there is shortfall of open space provision in Longhope of 0.688ha. The main shortfall is in children’s playspace. It is thus appropriate in principle to include 0.5ha of open space as part of a mixed-use allocation. However the provision would substantially exceed the need for about 0.1ha open space generated by occupiers of the housing development itself, as the Council agreed at the Inquiry. It is therefore unreasonable that it should be fully funded by the development as the policy implies. I acknowledge the Council’s point at the Inquiry that the funding could be offset in negotiation by waiving some or all of the other infrastructure contributions required by the Policy. However that is not how the policy is presented. The wording should make clear that the financial contribution of the development to recreational open space provision is to be limited to the need generated by the prospective occupiers in accordance with policy (R)FBE.11.
- 36.14 I do not support the landowner’s proposal during the Inquiry that the open space area should be reduced from 0.5ha to 0.36ha to allow for the development of additional housing. That would leave a greater shortfall of open space provision and would reduce the separation between one of the housing areas and the adjoining Conservation Area.
- 36.15 The landowner seeks the deletion of the requirement for an appropriate contribution to educational provision for the prospective occupiers of the site on the basis that a new primary school has recently been provided. However the requirement is not specific to primary education and there is no information before me to establish either that the new primary school has adequate spare capacity, or that there is no need for additional secondary or other education provision. The requirement should thus remain.

Living Conditions of Neighbours

- 36.16 The development would affect the views from adjoining private property. However there is no right to maintain unchanged a view from private land. To prevent development on these grounds would not be in the public interest as very little development would then be possible anywhere.
- 36.17 Some noise would be generated by the construction and occupation of the dwellings, including extra traffic movements. However, noise from the development once completed would be unlikely to exceed background levels significantly where dwellings are already present. Noise levels on the school site might even be less than in its former use.
- 36.18 The development may have an effect on the values of adjoining property but no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the effect would be so substantial as to amount to a potential violation of the objector’s human rights.
- 36.19 I conclude that, whereas there would be a degree of adverse impact on the living conditions of some neighbouring residents, this would not be such as to outweigh the wider public benefit of the development.

Affordable Housing

- 36.20 The Policy would require that an appropriate number of affordable housing units be included. The Housing Chapter 2 of Part One of the Plan expands on the requirements for affordable housing. Several objectors who generally oppose the development in principle have expressed the view that the affordable housing might not go to local people or, more particularly, would not be occupied by young people from the village.
- 36.21 In this respect, the Revised Deposit version of Policy (R)FH.12 includes a ‘cascade test’, whereby people resident or working in the same village or Parish would have priority in the allocation of affordable housing. However, for reasons I explain in considering that policy, I do not consider such a test to be justified in the case of affordable housing provided by the negotiated share method, as here, and I have recommended that the policy be modified. To seek to direct the occupation of property by individuals by way of planning policy would cut across the objective to allocate of homes on the basis of need and would be harmful to the creation of the mixed communities sought by PPG3. In my view, such an approach is only justified where housing is to be provided under exceptions policies to meet a specific local need in locations where housing development would otherwise be inappropriate, and that does not apply here.

Watercourses and Flooding

- 36.22 The Environment Agency is concerned that the development should not impinge on a watercourse which is said to run along the site’s southern boundary. Paragraph 26.12a was amended at the Revised Deposit stage to refer to this watercourse. However whereas the watercourse would be close to a misleading boundary shown in the development brief, it is some distance from the site allocation shown on Inset Map 26 and would not be affected by the development. The reference in Paragraph 26.12a should therefore be removed.
- 36.23 Several objectors are concerned that the development would cause flooding as a result of an increase in surface water run-off. However, no evidence has been submitted to substantiate these objections. In any event, policy (R)FBE.2 requires development to make satisfactory provision for infrastructure including surface water disposal and any problems in this respect can be addressed at the development control stage. No modification is needed to the Plan.

Extent of Site

- 36.24 During the Inquiry, the Diocese of Gloucester confirmed that it did not wish to pursue the enlargement of the site area of the allocation, notwithstanding an earlier objection. However the objector did wish to see the proportion used for recreational open space reduced from 0.5ha to 0.36ha with an associated increase in the number of dwellings to between 18 and 20. I consider this above in relation to infrastructure provision.

Overall Conclusions

- 36.25 Longhope is a suitable location for modest housing development and some general market and affordable housing is needed in the area. The former school site is previously-developed land which needs a new use and would be appropriately re-used for residential purposes with access from School Lane and subject to a design and layout which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation

Area. No other previously-developed sites of comparable size have been put forward in Longhope which would be more suitable for development than the greenfield part of the site. Whilst there would be some adverse impact on the landscape, access and the living conditions of neighbours, this can be satisfactorily mitigated, and any residual harm would be outweighed by the public interest of providing necessary housing.

- 36.26 There is an apparent need for enhanced recreational open space provision in Longhope using the NPFA standard. That would justify the inclusion of 0.5ha at this location provided that the contribution from this development were limited to the need to be generated by the prospective occupiers and that any shortfall in expenditure could be made up from other sources.

Recommendations

- 36.27 **I recommend that Policy (R)F.Longhope 1, including its title, be modified to:**

Housing Allocation – Rectory Meadow and School Lane

(R)F.Longhope 1

0.98ha hectares of land between School Lane and Rectory Meadow will be allocated for the provision of about 15 dwellings by new-build and conversion and to include 0.5ha of open space. The development will be required to:

- 1. Provide vehicular access from School Lane and Rectory Meadow.**
- 2. Provide improved off street car parking for the residents of Rectory Meadow.**
- 3. Provide for strategic landscaping to the southern and western boundaries, and within the site, incorporating existing, trees, hedgerows and other landscape features where appropriate.**
- 4. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and cycling links to local services.**
- 5. Provide for an appropriate number of affordable housing units.**
- 6. Provide an appropriate contribution to educational provision for prospective occupiers of the site.**
- 7. Provide an appropriate contribution to the provision or enhancement of community facilities.**

- 36.28 **I recommend that Paragraphs 26.12a be modified by the deletion of the first two sentences.**

Policy (R)F.Longhope 2 – Restriction on Development

Objections

36/52034	Three Counties Planning Consultancy
277/52142	Ms A Fry
277/52139	Ms A Fry
294/50635	Dr M Grayson
294/50637	Dr M Grayson
847/70769	Mr J Kendrick

Issues

- a. Justification for the restriction.
- b. Proposed deletion of certain sites from the policy area.

Reasoning and Conclusions

Objection in principle

- 36.29 (R)F.Longhope 2 is intended to apply to two areas of the village, both of which are within the Defined Settlement Boundary [DSB]. The eastern area around the Old Monmouth Road comprises mainly mature detached dwellings. This is mostly within the Longhope Conservation Area, for which a Character Appraisal was adopted by the Council in 2001. The smaller western area is to the north and west of the junction of the A4136 with the Latchen and is not in the Conservation Area.
- 36.30 The Restriction on Development would only apply to residential development and would not affect other types of built development such as employment. Longhope is a village covered by Policy (R)FH.4 which would permit limited residential infilling within the DSB subject to certain criteria. Policy (R)FBE.1 contains additional design criteria including that it respect the character of its surroundings, and policy (R)FHE.1 will not permit development which would detract from the character of the Conservation Area or its setting.
- 36.31 In Part 1 Chapter 6 after policy (R)FBE.1 I conclude generally that Restriction on Development policies should be deleted. Paragraph 26.14 of the Longhope chapter acknowledges that development in these areas is already constrained by Conservation Area status or by access, topography and other constraints, and it applies only to residential development when other forms of built development could have an equivalent or greater impact. Further it has loosely defined exceptions which are highly subjective and would invite dispute as to the meaning of terms such as ‘amenity of the area’. Moreover, it unreasonably seeks to go further even than Conservation Area designation in that the exceptions require a positive enhancement in all circumstances where residential development is to be permitted.
- 36.32 The definition of the policy area arbitrarily excludes other parts of the village and the Conservation Area with similar characteristics. Neither is it clear why some peripheral areas have been included in the DSB, only to be subject to development restrictions little different to those applying to nearby groups of housing which are excluded from the DSB. Accordingly, policy (R)F.Longhope 2 should be deleted.

Removal of certain areas of land

- 36.33 Deletion of the policy removes the disputed sites from its provisions, although it does not follow that I necessarily consider these sites suitable for housing development.

Each site is too small to be considered for an allocation for development in the Plan and any planning applications will now fall to be considered against other Plan policies, including those concerned with the protection of the character and appearance of the area.

Recommendation

36.34 **I recommend that Policy (R)F.Longhope 2 and Paragraph 26.14 be deleted.**

Policy (R)F.Longhope 3 – Employment Redevelopment

Objections

41/51165 Countryside Agency

Issues

Landscape impact.

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.35 Objection 41/51165 was submitted at the First Deposit stage. Elsewhere I support the Council’s decision to delete the Special Landscape Area at the Revised Deposit stage. At the same time the Council added text to paragraph 26.15 which requires the siting and design of development on this site to be sensitive to the character of the surrounding landscape. Paragraph 6.2 of Document FOD/P6.34 refers to a further proposed change to the Plan but I have not seen the text of such a change and I do not consider any further modification is necessary.

Recommendation

36.36 **I recommend no further modification in respect of Objection 41/51165.**

PRE-INQUIRY CHANGE 12

Deletion of reference to Special Landscape Area from Paragraph 26.15

Objection

273/80039 Mr R Freshwater

Issues

Lack of democracy

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.37 Pre-Inquiry Change 12 would remove a redundant reference to a Special Landscape Area. The latter designation has previously been deleted from the Plan. The Change was published for public comment, as this objection confirms. I do not consider that this process was undemocratic.

Recommendation

36.38 **I recommend that paragraph 26.15 be modified in accordance with Pre-Inquiry Change 12.**

PRE-INQUIRY CHANGE 14**Policy (R)F.Longhope 4 – Relocation of Longhope Primary School****Objection**

216/52439	Environment Agency
273/80041	Mr R Freshwater
273/80040	Mr R Freshwater

Issues

- a. Need for policy
- b. Brook as a natural corridor

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.39 The primary school has now been built and Pre-Inquiry Change proposes that the policy and its supporting text be deleted. An alternative wording of paragraph 26.17 is proposed relating to permissible community use of the site. I support that modification and proposed due modification to the Inset Map.

36.40 The Council responded to the objector’s request with the view that this is a matter for the planning application stage. That stage has now passed and the school has been built. There would now be no purpose in including this reference in the Plan.

Recommendation

36.41 **I recommend that Policy (R)F.Longhope 4 be deleted and Paragraph 26.17 be modified in accordance with Pre-Inquiry Change 12.**

36.42 **I recommend that Inset Map 26 be modified to delete the notation for Policy (R)F.Longhope 4.**

Omission Site OH26.1 – Allotments, Latchen/Nupend Gardens**Objection**

201/52711	Gloucestershire Housing Association
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Issues

Proposed deletion of policy (R)FBE.9 designation to allow housing development of allotments.

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.43 The objection concerns a prominent area of low-lying land within the designated Conservation Area. Part of the land is in active use as allotments and the remainder is closely mown grass which may have some informal recreational use. According to Document LPD.34, its additional designation under Policy (R)FBE.7 as an Important Open Area was deleted at the Revised Deposit stage although this is not reflected either in the Responses Document LPD26 or in the Council’s Proof FOD/P 6.34. I shall rely on Document LPD.34. Policy (R)FBE.9 seeks to protect allotments and other public or private outdoor recreational space. Exceptions may be made where compensatory provision is made or where it is evident that there is no over-riding community need for the space now or in the future.

36.44 The allotments are in active use and the protection of such recreational uses is in line with national advice in PPG17. The objector claims the support of the Parish Council for a bungalow development but I have no direct evidence of this. I consider that Policy (R)FBE.9 would allow the consideration of such a development proposal were the conditions set out for exceptions to that policy to be met. However that evidence is not before me. In the meantime I consider that it is appropriate to retain the protection provided by Policy (R)FBE.9. Were a housing development proposed, there may also be other important site specific considerations here including the impact of any development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Recommendation

36.45 **I recommend that the designation of the Allotments, Latchen/Nupend Gardens under Policy (R)FBE.9 be retained.**

Omission Site OH26.2 – Land adjacent to the Farmers Boy PH, Boxbush

Objection

493/52204

Dr J Norris

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.46 This site lies well outside the Defined Settlement Boundary [DSB] of Longhope and within the hamlet of Boxbush which has no DSB. The hamlet appears to be entirely lacking in services and facilities within walking distance other than the adjacent public house. Although there is a bus service to Gloucester, Ross on Wye and Hereford, residents of a development here would be likely to rely on the car to reach services, employment and facilities in other settlements. Such development would thus undermine the Plan strategy to concentrate development in settlements with good access by means other than the car. The site directly adjoins a narrow but fast and busy stretch of the A40 and development would increase turning movements on and off that road, to the detriment of the safety and free flow of traffic. Development would also intrude into the rural landscape. I conclude that this is an inappropriate location for housing development.

Recommendation

36.47 **I recommend that the Land adjacent to the Farmers Boy PH be not allocated for development nor included in any Defined Settlement Boundary.**

Omission Site OH26.3 – Land off Nupend Lane

Objection

290/50344

Mrs M Goode

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.48 This land forms part of the extensive grounds of a private dwelling. It occupies high ground on the east side of the valley in which Longhope lies and is planted with trees and shrubbery. The land is at a higher level than the adjoining lane to the west. The

site adjoins the Defined Settlement Boundary to the south. I consider that housing development on this site would intrude into open countryside and the landscape setting of the village. Such development would be especially prominent due to the elevation of the site relative to the adjoining land and lane, and the probable loss of trees. I conclude that the site has been appropriately excluded from the DSB.

Recommendation

36.49 **I recommend that the Land off Nupend Lane be not allocated for development nor included in the Defined Settlement Boundary of Longhope.**

Omission Site OH26.4 – Land adjacent to the A4136

Objection

666/50289 Mr D Tweed

Issue

Important Open Area designation.

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.50 This is an attractive open area of land without buildings which appears to be maintained and used as part of the garden of the dwelling to the east. The site is especially prominent at the entrance to the village and is almost entirely surrounded by roads. Trees along the southern boundary are part of a continuous belt along the northern side of the by-pass which substantially shield the village from view and help to protect nearby residents from the sight and noise of the traffic. The natural and rural appearance of the site also helps to offset the impact of unsightly business development nearby which detracts from the otherwise rural character of the village setting. Were the site to be developed with one or more dwellings, these benefits would be lost.

36.51 I consider that the site satisfies the criteria which I recommend for the designation of Important Open Areas in that it lies within the settlement, is visible from public places, and makes a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the locality.

Recommendation

36.52 **I recommend that the Important Open Area designation be retained over the land adjacent to the A4136.**

Omission Site OH26.5 – Land at Court Farm

Objection

505/51384 Palmer Bros

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.53 This is a large area of greenfield agricultural land outside the Defined Settlement Boundary but within the designated Conservation Area. The land makes an important contribution to the spacious and rural character of the Conservation Area and the

setting of the Parish Church. Housing development would be likely to have an adverse impact on these qualities and the Plan already makes adequate provision for housing development in Longhope.

Recommendation

36.54 **I recommend that the Land at Court Farm be not allocated for development nor included in the Defined Settlement Boundary of Longhope.**

Omission Site OH26.6 – Land at the Temple

Objection

277/52139 Ms A Fry

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.55 I cover this objection, with other similar representations, in connection with Policy (R)F.Longhope 2 above.

Recommendation

36.56 **I recommend no further modification in response to this objection.**

Inset Map 26 - Longhope

Objections

29/51283	Diocese of Gloucester
101/52508	Mr & Mrs N Beard
132/52524	Mr & Mrs Brace
165/52512	Mr I Cameron
182/50147	Mr E G Clark
184/50150	Ms M J Clark
201/52711	Gloucestershire Housing Association
218/50153	Mr Davis & Miss Roberts
239/52545	Mr C Eaglen & Miss S Lloyd
263/50368	Mrs W Evans
273/80040	Mr R Freshwater
277/52139	Ms A Fry
290/50344	Mrs M Goode
294/50637	Dr M Grayson
328/50006	Mr A R Hay
452/52537	Mr L V Meadows
493/52204	Dr J Norris
505/51384	Palmer Bros
514/52531	Mrs J L Pearce
666/50289	Mr D Tweed
653/52492	Rectory Meadow Action Group
654/52499	Miss P Tilling
709/50326	Mr A & Mrs M Williams

Supporting Statements

693/51632	Longhope Parish Council
693/51634	Longhope Parish Council
730/52778	Mr C J Allan

Reasoning and Conclusions

36.57 I deal with all objections to the Inset Map above and propose only a single consequential modification.

Recommendation

36.58 **I recommend Inset Map 26 be modified by deleting the notation for Policy (R)F.Longhope 4.**

CHAPTER 28 - LYDBROOK/JOYS GREEN

General

Objection

464/52702 Mr S Mills

Issues

- a. Industrial development at The Reddings, Lydbrook, ignored in the text.
- b. Concern regarding proposed residential development of an industrial land referred to at paragraph 28.13.

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 38.1 It is in paragraph 28.4 that reference is made to an existing planning permission for 63 dwellings in the village. This would add 20% to the stock of 324 dwellings existing in January 2000. Whether the objector is referring to that planning permission or to a planning application which may have been current at the date of the objection is not clear. However whatever the merits of the matter the objector raises, it is not a matter for the Local Plan which is primarily concerned with future proposals.
- 38.2 The Plan would not override an existing planning permission and itself allocates no sites for future housing development in Lydbrook. Should other planning applications come forward, policy (R)FH.4 would only permit single dwellings or small groups of dwellings up to 12 on sites within the Defined Settlement Boundary, subject to policy criteria.

Recommendation

- 38.3 **I recommend no modification in respect of this objection.**

Policy (R)F.Lydbrook 2 – Built Environment - Restriction on Development

Objections

394/70602	Mr & Mrs M J Jones
833/70617	Mr & Mrs D Coe
834/70647	Mr B Whittington
837/70685	Clearwell Caves

Supporting Statements

682/51343	The Ramblers Association
847/70770	Mr J Kendrick

Issues

- a. Policy justification
- b. Statutory Forest status

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 38.4 Paragraph 28.16 is the supporting text to Policy (R)F.Lydbrook 2 which seeks to define an area at Camomile Green where there should be a presumption against residential development - subject to exceptions. I have recommended the deletion of

similar policies elsewhere in the Plan on the basis that they are unreasonably restrictive and that their objective of protecting the character of an area can be met by other plan policies. To be consistent Policy (R)F.Lydbrook 2 should also be deleted. However it is appropriate that the chapters relating to specific settlements should describe those aspects of an area’s character which merit protection. Paragraph 28.16 should therefore be deleted and replaced with an additional paragraph in the Environment section of the Chapter.

- 38.5 Camomile Green does lie within the Statutory Forest, as do some other parts of Lydbrook and Joys Green, where Policy (R)F.Lydbrook 2 would not apply. I have recommended elsewhere that the boundary of the Statutory Forest be shown on the Proposals Map and that Policy (R)FBE.8 be amended to apply generally to Forest Waste and other Crown Land within the Statutory Forest. Privately owned land in the Statutory Forest is not subject to the same Statutory Forest laws and I conclude that it would be misleading to insert the statement sought by the objectors. The Statutory Forest location is already mentioned in text para 28.1 in any event.

Recommendation

- 38.6 **I recommend that the Plan be modified by the deletion of Policy (R)F.Lydbrook 2.**
- 38.7 **I recommend that Paragraph 28.16 be deleted and replaced by:**
- Camomile Green and adjacent housing is located on higher ground in a small valley overlooking the main Lydbrook valley. It is made up of Forest cottages and houses built for the Local Authority set in large gardens, all of which gives it a distinctive and very settled character. Vehicular access to parts of this area is poor. The general character and appearance of this area could be adversely affected by unsympathetic new development.**
- 38.8 **I recommend that the Inset Map 28 be modified by the deletion of the notation for Policy (R)F.Lydbrook 2.**
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CHAPTER 29 - MITCHELDEAN

General

Objections

288/51062 Gloucestershire County Council

Supporting Statements

847/70772 Mr J Kendrick

Issues

Archaeological interests.

Reasoning and Conclusions

39.1 I note that the Council emphasises archaeological interests in the development briefs for site allocations in Mitcheldean. As those documents do not form part of the statutory Plan, I consider that brief reference to archaeological interests, as a material consideration, should be made in Introductory paragraph 29.3. However, I do not consider it necessary to expand on the description of the Conservation Area, and I take the view that sufficient policy protection is accorded by policies (R)FHE.6-7.

Recommendation

39.2 **I recommend that Paragraph 29.3 be modified to include a brief reference to potential archaeological interests, consistent with paragraph 3.9 of LPD35.29 and paragraph 3.8 of LPD35.30.**

Policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 1 – Housing Allocation – Gloucester Road

Objections

41/51168	Countryside Agency
96/52882	Mr S Batt
158/51801	Mr W R Burden
340/50196	Mr M R Hook
605/52087	Miss J Smith
668/52364	Mr A Tyndall
712/50558	Mrs M A Williams
847/70774	Mr J Kendrick

Supporting Statements

96/52881	Mr S Batt
96/70013	Mr S Batt
96/70015	Mr S Batt
847/70773	Mr J Kendrick

Issues

- a. Use of greenfield land.
- b. Landscape impact
- c. Extent of allocation in area and number of dwellings.

- d. Relationship to employment
- e. Access and traffic.

Reasoning and Conclusions

Greenfield Land

- 39.3 In connection with Chapters 1 and 2 of Part 1 of the Plan I conclude that the overall strategic location of the development allocations around the District is appropriate, but that sites for some 286 dwellings should be allocated in larger villages such as Mitcheldean, 55 more than the Revised Deposit total. I now assess the Gloucester Road site in terms of its local planning effects but in the light of the need for additional housing in such settlements.
- 39.4 I have regard to the evidence from the Council that an alternative previously developed site suggested by objectors is now subject to planning permission, and I have not been made aware of any other suitable previously developed land being available in Mitcheldean.
- 39.5 The allocation land is accessible and well-related to the centre of Mitcheldean with its range of community facilities. Notwithstanding its current greenfield state, I consider it to be in principle a suitable location for residential development.
- 39.6 I also take into account that I have identified a shortfall of housing provision in Cinderford by way of site allocations, and that Mitcheldean would provide a reasonably sustainable alternative home location for employees at the projected major business sites there.

Landscape

- 39.7 The site comprises open grassland sloping away from the present settlement edge down toward the main road approach to Mitcheldean from Gloucester. It is thus undoubtedly prominent in views from both outside and within the existing built settlement. However, there is scope within the allocation, highlighted in policy Criterion 4, for substantial landscape screening to integrate the development into the village, as part of a scheme in line with the Council's published design guidance in conjunction with the general development control provisions of the Plan.
- 39.8 I am satisfied that not only can the site be developed in an acceptable manner with respect to the landscape, irrespective of any special landscape designation, but it can make the positive contribution to the setting of Mitcheldean foreseen in text para 29.12.
- 39.9 The development and landscape changes will have implications for wildlife, but I am not aware of any insurmountable nature conservation objections that cannot be addressed by the protective provisions of Part 1 Chapter 8 on the Natural Environment.

Extent of Allocation

- 39.10 Reference to Areas A and B of the site in the policy and text are potentially confusing in the absence of corresponding notation on Inset Map 29. However, for convenience I refer to that nomenclature. The housing Area A was extended in the Revised Deposit version of the policy [and development brief LPD35.30] to a field boundary near the centre of the land. I see potential for extending built development further to

the north east, into Area B, without compromising the ability of any scheme to include sufficient strategic landscaping. Having regard to the contribution such an extension would make to both local and District wide shortfall in Plan housing allocations, I consider that the number of units should be further increased, and stated as up to 35. The distinction between Areas A and B should be removed from the policy and text, leaving all aspects of the design concept to a revised design brief and the development control process.

Employment

- 39.11 I do not accept that the site is poorly located with respect to employment as suggested by one objector – it is close to the safeguarded major Vantage [Xerox] employment site as well as others not very far distant, including in Cinderford.
- 39.12 It follows that, in the absence of reasoned evidence that the existing commercial garage on the land is of overriding importance to local employment, its presence is no planning impediment to the housing allocation. Whether and for how long that particular business continues to function are matters bound up also with land ownership, not directly relevant planning.

Access

- 39.13 The projected site access off Gloucester Road, between the junctions at the Vantage Site entrance and Main Street, will have implications for traffic generation and road safety. However, I have seen no evidence that these effects cannot be accommodated by way of appropriate junction design linked, if necessary, with due traffic management measures, in the context of this essentially urban section of Gloucester Road.

Overall Assessment

- 39.14 I have considered every objection to this allocation and found no factor related to infrastructure capacity or any other considerations that affects my overall assessment. I conclude that the allocation should stand with my recommended modifications.

Recommendation

- 39.15 **I recommend that Policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 1 be modified to:**
1.68ha of land at Gloucester Road is allocated for up to about 35 dwellings with strategic landscaping. The development will be required to:
[Criteria as Revised Deposit version]
- 39.16 **I recommend that Paragraph 29.12 be modified by inserting ‘structural’ before ‘landscaping’ in the first sentence and by deleting the final sentence in parentheses.**
- 39.17 **I recommend that Paragraph 29.13 be deleted.**

Policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 2 – Housing Allocation – Lining Wood House

Objections

19/52058	Carisbrook Residents Assn
36/52011	Three Counties Planning Consultancy
41/51171	Countryside Agency
118/50342	Mr & Mrs D Birch
125/52335	Mr L Boait
129/52109	The Boocock Family
129/52110	The Boocock Family
129/52111	The Boocock Family
156/52082	Mr K Buffry
157/52062	Mr N Buffry
162/52118	Mr & Mrs O Burrows
178/52092	Mr M Christopher
181/50432	Mr & Mrs D K Clark
279/50208	Mr I J Furnival
286/50202	Mrs M Gillette
305/50684	Ms S Griffiths & Mr P Hewlett
340/50197	Mr M R Hook
355/50459	Mr & Mrs R L Hyett
358/50209	Mrs V Jackson
371/50193	Mrs C Jenkins
409/52101	Mr G Kibble
414/51670	Forest of Dean Badger patrol
444/52050	Mr N Maxfield
473/52104	Mr I Morris
554/51587	Mr D Richards
605/52089	Miss J Smith
649/52086	Mrs J A Thomas
656/50133	Mr & Mrs D Tippins
676/52095	Mr W T Waddell
691/50204	Mr G L Whaley
706/50213	Mrs V Wilkes
711/50549	Mr K E Williams
847/70776	Mr J Kendrick
847/70777	Mr J Kendrick Supporting Statements
106/50794	Mr K W Bell
129/52105	The Boocock Family

Issues

- a. Strategic considerations.
- b. Access, highway safety and other transportation matters.
- c. Intrusion into rural landscape.
- d. Developer contributions.
- e. Badger survey.

Reasoning and Conclusions

Strategic Matters

39.18 In connection with Chapters 1 and 2 of Part 1 of the Plan I conclude that the overall strategic location of the development allocations around the District is appropriate, but that sites for some 286 dwellings should be allocated in larger villages such as Mitcheldean, 55 more than the Revised Deposit total. I now assess the Lining Wood

House site in terms of its local planning effects but in the light of the need for additional housing in such settlements. I have not seen substantial evidence that alternative previously developed sites suggested by objectors are available in Mitcheldean.

- 39.19 I also take into account that I have identified a shortfall of provision in Cinderford by way of site allocations, and that Mitcheldean could provide a reasonably sustainable alternative home location for employees at the projected major business sites there. Accordingly, notwithstanding its current greenfield state, I consider the site to be, in principle, a suitable location for residential development.

Access, Highway Safety and Transportation

- 39.20 The seemingly prime concern of both objectors and promoters of the site is the question of highway safety, in relation to appropriate vehicular access as well as pedestrian and cycle links to the town and its community facilities.
- 39.21 The Council concedes, and from my own observations I agree, that the site would need to be provided with a single point of vehicular access from a mini-roundabout. This would lie close to the present settlement boundary at the south eastern corner of the site, and would need to be accompanied by traffic calming measures, including the extension of the speed limit northward on Ross Road, beyond the site frontage. Such a solution is illustrated in a specialist highway report appended to Council Document FOD/P6.39, albeit opposed by the County Highway Authority on visibility and other grounds.
- 39.22 I recognise that this proposal is not ideal with respect to approach vision standards and the need for off-site works to induce speed reduction at the settlement boundary. This would need careful design and appropriate highway orders and signing to create a successful transition on Ross Road from rural lane to village street. However, I am satisfied that this could be achieved in such a way as to establish a distinctive, physical gateway feature with overall benefits to speed control in the locality. Once speeds were brought down, I believe an acceptable compromise could be reached on vision standards in the resulting urban context.
- 39.23 Moreover, any permission could properly be made subject to a negative planning condition preventing development until the combined ingenuity of the developers, highway and local planning authorities came up with a workable design! Personally, I think it can be done within the scope of the policy terms, which need no modification in this respect. However, text para 29.15 should be updated to reflect my foregoing comments.
- 39.24 I turn to the question of safe pedestrian and cycle links to the town. I recognise that the site is not best located in terms of its distance from certain schools and other facilities, being at the northern fringe of the settlement. This means that local journeys would become unattractive in circumstances where pedestrians and cyclists might to feel insecure or unsafe. However, with traffic calming associated with the new site access and provision of roadside footways, also to be secured by condition, an acceptable route could be created in my opinion. Added to that is the prospect of certain local footpaths being upgraded to provide an off-road alternative route.
- 39.25 In my judgement the allocation land is not so far distant from employment and town centre sites as to be regarded as unsuitable or unsustainable for residential use.

Indeed the Vantage and MEWS sites are fairly near to hand. I do not find there to be any substantial objections to the allocation on transportation grounds.

Intrusion into Rural Landscape

39.26 There is no doubt that the projected residential use of the site would carry built development into currently agricultural land in open countryside. Even so, the track along its outer edge already provides a degree of severance from the wider areas of farmland to the north and offers a potential defensible boundary to the enlarged settlement, obviating the danger of precedent. I think that, controlled by the strategic landscape requirement of policy criterion 2, any development could be physically and visually integrated into the town without causing overriding harm to the landscape, irrespective of any particular designation. Moreover the settlement boundary, thus redefined, would read well with any newly created gateway feature consequent upon access requirements so as appropriately to emphasise the distinction between town and country.

Developer Contributions

39.27 Given the circumstances of the site assessed above, I consider it reasonable that the development be required to make duly negotiated provision for access, pedestrian and cycle links, affordable housing and other community facilities likely to be justified by needs generated by the development itself.

Badger Survey

39.28 I have seen no detailed evidence that more than the broad protection general policies, such as (R)FNE.11 on species protection, is necessary for badgers resorting to the site.

Overall Assessment

39.29 I recognise that there is very strong feeling on both sides of the argument for and against this allocation. Local residents opposing the development were well represented at the Inquiry, whilst the site promoters went to some length to resolve the conflicting highway evidence between the District and County Councils. I have carefully considered all of the evidence and arrived at the overall conclusion that the allocation should stand in the terms of the Revised Deposit Plan.

Recommendation

39.30 **I recommend no modification to Policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 2 or its supporting text.**

Policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 3 – Xerox Employment Site - Safeguarding

Objection

216/52445 Environment Agency

Issues

Contaminated land and need for remediation

Reasoning and Conclusions

39.31 In the context of this safeguarding policy, I consider that the Revised Deposit addition to text para 29.20 adequately signals to potential developers the potential need for remedial work to reverse land contamination on the Xerox [Vantage] site following previous uses.

Recommendation

39.32 **I recommend no further modification to the text in response to this representation.**

Policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 4 – Stenders Employment Site – Safeguarding [Omission Site OE29.1]

Objections

36/52162	Three Counties Planning Consultancy
41/51104	Countryside Agency
41/70737	Countryside Agency
216/52446	Environment Agency
288/70301	Gloucestershire County Council (Database details no comments)
847/70779	Mr J Kendrick

Issues

- a. Proposed formal employment allocation
- b. Proposed extension of the site south-eastward [Omission site OE29.1]
- c. Proposed additions to text.
- d. Proposed restriction to ClassB1 uses.
- e. Landscape impact.
- f. Contaminated land and need for remediation.

Reasoning and Conclusions

39.33 I quickly recognise the importance to Mitcheldean of safeguarding the Stenders employment site in the wake of the loss of many jobs at the Xerox site. However, I have seen no reasoned evidence to support formal allocation of this site, lying outside the settlement, in the absence of general shortfall in employment land supply, and given the strategic priority to development in the four main towns.

39.34 The proposal to extend the site south-eastward would require even more justification, given the open and undeveloped nature of the rural land concerned. I see no reason for such an allocation which would be contrary to the interest of countryside

protection. In that context, I consider that text paras 29.21-22 provide adequate justification for the safeguarding provision, without further embellishment.

- 39.35 In the context of safeguarding this site in open countryside outside the settlement, I consider that the protection to the landscape accorded by the general policies of Part 1 of the Plan to be sufficient to control any potential harm due to any redevelopment proposal.
- 39.36 I also consider that the general policies of the Plan provide enough restraint on any new uses coming forward, without a specific restriction to class B1.
- 39.37 In the context of this safeguarding policy, I consider that the Revised Deposit addition to text para 29.21 adequately signals to potential developers the potential need for remedial work to reverse land contamination on the site following previous uses.

Recommendation

- 39.38 **I recommend no modifications to Policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 4 or its supporting text.**

OMISSION SITES

Note: For Omission Site OE29.1 - see policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 4.

Omission Site OH29.2 – Land at Dean Magna School

Objection

740/52137

Astam GBC Consultancy

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 39.39 The proposal is for a farm style, residential courtyard development with opportunities for affordable homes in a comparatively sustainable location with respect to Mitcheldean. I acknowledge that this would support the school financially and could no doubt be designed in keeping with its largely rural surroundings.
- 39.40 However, it is the rural nature of the site, substantially removed from the defined settlement of Mitcheldean, that militates against the allocation of the land for that purpose. The overriding consideration is the protection of the countryside, notwithstanding that I have identified a need for new housing in extensions to the town under policies (R)F.Mitcheldean 1 and 2 above. That is not to rule out some other form of development favoured by other policies of the Plan, but there is no justification, in my judgement, for a specific allocation here.

Recommendation

- 39.41 **I recommend that the Land at Dean Magna School be not allocated for development.**
-

Omission Site OH29.3 – Land between Silver Street and Pump Hill

Objection

457/52445 Mr P A Merrell

Reasoning and Conclusions

39.42 The objector wishes to develop land adjacent to his garden for residential use and proposes its inclusion within the settlement boundary to which it is adjacent. No plan accompanies the objection but, as far as the Council have ascertained, the site lies in a finger of green land reaching into the settlement opposite existing dwellings at the bottom of Pump Hill. That being so, the site is visually important to the approach to Mitcheldean, maintaining an open frontage on one side of the road and providing a gradual transition from countryside to town. I find this to be an attractive aspect of the locality and I think it should continue to be protected as part of the countryside.

Recommendation

39.43 **I recommend no modification to the Defined Settlement Boundary of Mitcheldean consequent upon this objection.**

Inset Map 29 - Mitcheldean

Objections

19/52258	Carisbrook Residents A L
106/51086	Mr K W Bell
118/50343	Mr & Mrs D Birch
125/52334	Mr L Boait
156/52085	Mr K Buffry
157/52065	Mr N Buffry
158/51803	Mr W R Burden
162/52122	Mr & Mrs O Burrows
279/50207	Mr I J Furnival
286/50201	Mrs M Gillette
305/50687	Ms S Griffiths & Mr P Hewlett
340/50199	Mr M R Hook
358/50211	Mrs V Jackson
371/50194	Mrs C Jenkins
444/52054	Mr N Maxfield
457/52455	Mr P A Merrell
554/51593	Mr D Richards
649/53011	Mrs J A Thomas
656/50135	Mr & Mrs D Tippins
668/52365	Mr A Tyndall
676/52096	Mr W T Waddell
691/50205	Mr G L Whaley
706/50212	Mrs V Wilkes
711/50556	Mr K E Williams
712/50561	Mrs M A Williams
740/52137	Astam GBC Consultancy
847/70775	Mr J Kendrick

Supporting Statements

129/52108 The Boocock Family

355/50464

Mr & Mrs R L Hyett

Issues

These objections raise site-specific issues covered in connection with the policies or omission sites elsewhere in Chapter 29.

Reasoning and Conclusions

39.44 My sole recommendation on Inset Map 29 is consequent upon my consideration of policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 1 above.

Recommendation

39.45 I recommend that Inset Map 29 be modified by extending the housing annotation over the whole of the allocated site.

CHAPTER 31 - NEWNHAM ON SEVERN

General

Objections

53/52865 Mr C T Aggett
62/51515 Ms S A Aggett

Supporting Statements

288/51069 Gloucestershire County Council

Issues

- a. Objections to text regarding population growth, proposed development, employment, tourism growth, social mix, traffic issues and educational issues.
- b. Conflict of interest relating to the provision of free parking at the Masonic Lodge

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 41.1 These First Deposit objections criticise various aspects of the text of the Newnham Chapter but are not specific as to how the text should be amended. Insofar as they relate to an objection to the proposed housing allocation at Sheens Meadow. They are addressed below along with similar objections.
- 41.2 The objectors do not explain how the provision of free parking at the Masonic Lodge creates a conflict of interest.

Recommendation

- 41.3 **I recommend no modifications to the text in relation to these objections.**

(R)F.Newnham 2 – Housing Allocation – Sheens Meadow

Objections

45/51733 The Haie Estate
45/70144 The Haie Estate
62/51513 Ms S A Aggett
73/50866 Mrs A Assirati
76/51185 Mr J Avis
76/51510 Mr J Avis
91/50874 Ms M Barnett
97/50870 Mrs C Baugh
163/51525 Mr J Butler
176/50872 Ms D Christian
186/50875 Mr J Cliffe
220/50856 Ms D Davis
224/50869 Mrs Y Davis
264/50848 Ms N Faria-Vare
267/50873 Ms M Farrell
268/50851 Mr T J Farris
278/50772 Misses A & J Furninger
295/51519 Ms C Green
316/50222 Mr E Harper
332/50838 Ms N Hewitt

342/52553	Mr R C Hooper
354/50345	Mr G & Mrs M Hyett
367/51267	Mr R Jamieson
372/50871	Ms D Jenkins
396/50868	Miss S Jones
407/50827	Mrs A Key
414/51672	Forest of Dean Badger patrol
427/52348	Mr N J Lewis
435/52561	Mrs D G Marfell
469/50832	Mr & Mrs J D Morgan
476/50841	Mrs N Moscrop
480/50159	Mr G A Murray
480/51026	Mr G A Murray
497/52888	Mr F O'Leary
497/52889	Mr F O'Leary
497/52890	Mr F O'Leary
497/52922	Mr F O'Leary
531/51526	Mr A Porter
534/50861	Mr & Mrs M Powell
555/51532	Mr A Richards
560/50867	Mr L Rigbey
600/50224	Mr D A Sleeman
602/50179	Mr H Smelling
612/50824	Mrs S Smith
617/52558	Mrs P Snell
618/50829	Mr & Ms D & H Sollis
619/52563	Mr W A Spencer
623/50424	Mr G L Stephens
630/50853	Ms A Still
635/50496	Mrs D M Swann
636/50501	Mr K Swann
670/50845	Mr P Vare
694/52603	Miss E J Whitfifeld
76/51034	Mr J Avis
77/51508	Ms L Avis
163/51521	Mr J Butler
278/51124	Misses A & J Furninger
295/51520	Ms C Green
316/50223	Mr E Harper
354/50346	Mr G & Mrs M Hyett
427/52349	Mr N J Lewis
480/50160	Mr G A Murray
480/51031	Mr G A Murray
508/52935	Mr M Parry
531/51609	Mr A Porter
555/51535	Mr A Richards
600/50226	Mr D A Sleeman
602/50180	Mr H Smelling
623/50427	Mr G L Stephens
635/50499	Mrs D M Swann
636/50503	Mr K Swann
694/52601	Miss E J Whitfifeld

Supporting Statements

45/51735	The Haie Estate
591/50087	Mrs E Sheen
592/50084	Mr P Sheen

Issues

- a. Principle of development with reference to greenfield land, need, employment, environmental and community interests, village character and transportation matters.
- b. Access, traffic, road safety and parking.
- c. Infrastructure and developer contributions.
- d. Wildlife protection.
- e. Living conditions and health of present and future residents with reference to air and noise pollution, railway vibration and property values.
- f. Foul drainage works
- g. Housing mix and affordable homes.

Reasoning and Conclusions

Principle of Development

- 41.4 All but one of the objections submitted to this allocation were made at the First Deposit stage when a 1.7ha development of 40 dwellings was proposed. The allocation was reduced to 0.72ha and 21 dwellings at the Revised Deposit stage. However many of the original objections remain outstanding. The single Revised Deposit objection to the reduction in scale is by the landowner, and I consider this below as Omission Site OH31.1.
- 41.5 The site is an area of greenfield land. However it is on the edge of a settlement which has a good range of services within walking distance. The greenfield status should not preclude its development unless it can be shown that the identified need for the housing can be accommodated on previously-developed land in locations with good access to employment, services and facilities by means other than the car. The Urban Capacity Study demonstrated that some of the need for housing could be so accommodated and thus contributed to the decision to reduce the size of the allocation. However I accept that some greenfield development is still needed to meet the identified need for housing in the District.
- 41.6 The reduced site is well contained by existing development on three sides and would have little adverse impact on the landscape of the countryside or on the setting of Newnham.
- 41.7 I acknowledge that Newnham has experienced significant population and housing growth over the last two decades. However the concentration of new development in centres such as this which have good local services helps to maintain those services for the benefit of the local population in this and nearby villages. It would also reduce the need for travel to access the services. The Revised Deposit policy provides that the development should contribute to the enhanced education provision and community facilities which are necessary to meet the needs of the increased population. The reduction in the size of the proposed allocation will have reduced the potential increase in the population. There is no evidence before me to support assertions that this level of population growth would be intrinsically harmful or damaging to the community. The Plan provides for greater levels of population growth in the District’s four main towns.

- 41.8 The Plan acknowledges that employment provision in Newnham is limited and it does not seek to quantify or otherwise substantiate its assertion that existing tourism and other service employment in the village could be significantly expanded – although this may be possible. There is nevertheless a significant risk that additional housing would contribute to an increase in commuting to other centres, including Lydney, Cinderford and Gloucester. However bus services are available which could accommodate some of those trips and the reduction in scale to 20 dwellings means that the overall number of trips would not add significantly to existing movements.
- 41.9 In relation to an objection that the Plan seeks to return to a ‘predict and provide’ approach to housing, it would be irresponsible for the Council not to Plan for housing provision on the basis of the projections of need set out in the Structure Plan and elsewhere. The Government advises that a proportion of the forecast need should be the subject of specific site allocations. However, in pursuance of the Plan, Monitor and Manage approach advised by the Government, the Plan does provide for the monitoring of housing provision and the phasing of provision within the towns. There are opportunities to manage and review the provision of housing during the life of the Plan according to changing needs, and I make recommendations for expanding Part 1 Chapter 10 to give a stronger lead in this regard.

Access and Traffic

- 41.10 The objections to the access arrangements for the site were submitted at the First Deposit stage. The reduction in the scale of the allocation at the Revised Deposit stage will have approximately halved the amount of vehicular traffic which would be generated during construction or subsequently. Given the narrow width of Hyde Lane and its level relative to the site, vehicular access from Sheens Meadow is the only realistic option and it is appropriate that this be set out in the policy.
- 41.11 I acknowledge that Sheens Meadow and Kings Mead [from which it leads] is sometimes reduced to single lane width in places by on-street parking, even though most residents benefit from off-street parking provision. However I do not consider that this would result in unacceptable levels of congestion. The parking would itself limit traffic speeds, to the benefit of highway safety. Construction traffic may cause some noise and disturbance but would only be experienced over a relatively short period given the reduced scale of the proposed development, and it is subject also to separate legislation.
- 41.12 Dean Road is narrow in places, as are many rural roads in the District. However the policy provides for contributions to off-site highway improvements. Paragraph 31.23 refers to a need for such improvements between the A48 and Dean Road. The Development Brief gives a more accurate detailed description that should be adopted in the Plan.
- 41.13 Criterion 2 of the policy requires provision for safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links and the Development Brief refers to a particular need for access from the north to facilitate access to the primary school and recreation ground.
- 41.14 I conclude that the highway arrangements set out in the Plan are appropriate, would not result in unacceptable harm to the highway safety or the free flow of traffic and are adequately detailed.

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

- 41.15 The Policy appropriately includes a series of development requirements, which are amplified in the Development Brief as supplementary planning guidance. The actual level of contributions and other detailed arrangements would necessarily be the subject of negotiation and any associated planning conditions or Section 106 Planning Obligations would be the subject of the usual tests set out in Government guidance. Policy (R)FBE.2 of the Plan is also relevant.
- 41.16 As the policy provides for necessary improvements to infrastructure and facilities, there is no need to limit the size of the development according to whatever spare capacity may currently exist, as some objectors suggest. In particular, a requirement was introduced in the policy at the Revised Deposit stage to respond to demands that provision be made for additional educational provision.

Wildlife

- 41.17 The reduction in the size of the site at the Revised Deposit stage will have reduced the potential impact on wildlife which was the subject of objections at the First Deposit stage. The development brief refers at paragraph 5.8 to the wildlife habitat value of hedgerows and trees on the site. These are mainly at the site perimeter and it would be unnecessary to remove all such features for the development to proceed. This issue can be suitably addressed at the development control stage and does not warrant the deletion of the allocation.
- 41.18 An amendment to paragraph 8.65 of Part One of the Plan at the Revised Deposit stage refers to the protection of badgers as a species and advises that developers will need to employ reputable consultants to provide the necessary specialist advice. In Document FOD/P6.18 at paragraph 9.1, the Council indicates that it will propose a further reference to the protection of badger setts on proposed development sites. However no such modification has been included in Document LPD.75 or elsewhere. In my opinion, in the absence of particular evidence regarding badgers on this site, that interest is adequately covered by policy (R)FNE.11.

Living Conditions

- 41.19 There is no evidence to substantiate assertions that the development would result in a significant increase in airborne pollution, affect the health of existing residents, or expose existing or future residents to unacceptable levels of noise and vibration during or after construction.
- 41.20 There is no right to maintain unchanged a view from private land and to do so would not be in the public interest as it would severely inhibit development in most locations. Many of the properties from which views might in this case alter are themselves relatively recent developments which would in turn have altered other views.
- 41.21 The development may have an effect on the values of adjoining property although no evidence of any likely substantial reduction in value has been submitted in support of this claim or to show that the impact would be so great as to constitute a potential violation of the human rights of the affected persons.

Foul Drainage

41.22 Paragraph 31.26 of the Plan states that a new foul drainage plant for Newnham was scheduled for completion in 2000 to address a recognised deficiency. I have not been advised as to whether this has been completed. If not, the application of Policy (R)FBE.2 would, in any event require necessary infrastructure to be available before the development could proceed.

Housing Mix and Affordable Homes

41.23 It is an important objective of PPG3 to meet the housing needs of all parts of the community and to promote mixed and diverse communities. The Housing Needs Survey recorded a need in 1999 for 19 affordable dwellings in Newnham and Westbury. That figure excludes those on the Council’s Waiting List and would not take account of newly emerging households in need during the life of the Local Plan. A failure to provide housing to meet the needs of all parts of the community would be damaging, as would the exclusion from this village of all persons in need. As it is, the proposed allocation would be unlikely to provide more than 8 or 9 affordable dwellings. It is right therefore that the policy requires appropriate affordable housing provision. Policy (R)FH.11 in particular would require a range of house types, to include smaller dwellings where appropriate. The mix of dwellings can thus be secured through the development control process.

Overall Conclusion

41.24 My overall conclusion is that the allocation for housing of the Sheens Meadow site is appropriate and should be retained

Recommendation

41.25 **I recommend only that paragraph 31.23 be modified by the deletion of the sentence commencing: ‘Development of the site ...’ and the substitution of the following sentence:**

Development of the site will be required to make an appropriate contribution towards various minor highway improvements on Dean Road from its junction with the A48 to its junction with Kings Mead.

Omission Site OH31.1 – Land to the West of Kings Mead/Sheens Meadow

Objection

45/70144	The Haie Estate
45/70145	The Haie Estate

Issues

- a. Logical extent of allocation to make best use of land with reference to the Urban Capacity Study and other greenfield sites.
- b. Potential to meet community needs such as affordable housing.

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 41.26 These objections concern the reduction in size of the allocation at the Revised Deposit stage and seek the reinstatement of the larger First Deposit allocation. [see policy (R)F.Newnham 2 above]
- 41.27 This is a greenfield site and as such should have a lower priority for development than previously-developed land in urban areas. It would not make the best use of land to develop this site if sufficient land exists in urban areas to accommodate development needs.
- 41.28 Elsewhere in this report I conclude, taking into account the Urban Capacity Study with all other evidence on land supply, that the Plan strategy is essentially sound and that some greenfield development is needed. I support the allocation of the smaller adjacent area to meet local needs. However I consider that further greenfield development is better concentrated in or adjacent to larger settlements with more services, facilities and employment and where a concentration of development will better meet the needs of the wider community including those in need of affordable housing. Additional development at this location would have a number of adverse site specific impacts including increased traffic and increased landscape impact.
- 41.29 I conclude that the larger allocation should not be reinstated.

Recommendation

- 41.30 **I recommend no modification with respect to the proposal to enlarge the Sheens Meadow site from that allocated by the Revised Deposit version of Policy (R)F.Newnham 2.**

Omission Site OH31.2 – Land off Littledean Road above Railway Tunnel

Objection

592/50081	Mr P Sheen
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Reasoning and Conclusions

- 41.31 This land was put forward at the First Deposit stage as a further extension to the then larger Sheens Meadow housing allocation then proposed. The allocation was reduced at the Revised Deposit stage. I give my reasons above for not supporting the reinstatement of the deleted part of the Sheens Meadow allocation.

41.32 For similar reasons I reject this omission site also. This site is greenfield and, with the reduction of the adjoining housing allocation the site would be detached from the proposed built up area and intrusive in the countryside landscape. The housing is not needed, as sufficient housing supply has been identified elsewhere in the Plan area on previously-developed land or in locations with better access to services, facilities and employment. I conclude that the site should not be included within the Defined Settlement Boundary and should not be allocated for development.

Recommendation

41.33 **I recommend that the Land off Littledean Road above Railway Tunnel be not allocated for development nor included in the Defined Settlement Boundary.**

Omission Site OH31.3 – Land at Unlawater Farm

Objection

480/50160 Mr P Sheen

Reasoning and Conclusions

41.34 The objection seeks development at Unlawater Farm in preference to that proposed at Sheens Meadow. However I support the allocation at Sheen Meadow and additional housing development is not needed. Also the objection lacks sufficient information to identify which part of Unlawater Farm the objector wishes to be developed.

Recommendation

41.35 **I recommend no modification in respect of this site.**

Inset Map 31 - Newnham

Objections

45/70145	The Haie Estate
76/51034	Mr J Avis
77/51508	Ms L Avis
163/51521	Mr J Butler
278/51124	Misses A & J Furninger
295/51520	Ms C Green
316/50223	Mr E Harper
354/50346	Mr G & Mrs M Hyett
427/52349	Mr N J Lewis
480/50160	Mr G A Murray
480/51031	Mr G A Murray
497/52892	Mr F O'Leary
531/51609	Mr A Porter
555/51535	Mr A Richards
592/50081	Mr P Sheen
600/50226	Mr D A Sleeman
602/50180	Mr H Smelling
623/50427	Mr G L Stephens
635/50499	Mrs D M Swann
636/50503	Mr K Swann
694/52601	Miss E J Whitfield

Supporting Statement

591/50086 Mrs E Sheen

Reasoning and Conclusions

41.36 See above.

Recommendation

41.37 **I recommend no modification to Inset Map 31.**

CHAPTER 32 - NORTHWOOD GREEN

General

- 42.1 Northwood Green lies about 3 km north of Westbury-on-Severn within the North Forest Area of the Plan. It is an east-west aligned linear settlement, although some residential development has extended northwards along Ampney Close. It contains about 70 houses with a population of approximately 200. The village has a very limited range of services, possessing only a church, an adjoining village hall and a recreation ground fronting onto the north side of the main road through the village. The village contains no shops and limited employment. The nearest school is situated in Westbury-on-Severn. There is only a weekly bus service.

Omission Site OH32.1 - Land rear of Gordon Cottage and Gordon House

Objection

440/52132

Mrs A J Martin

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 42.2 This greenfield site of about 0.25ha at the rear of Gordon Cottage and Gordon House is to the north of the village, and due west of a small group of properties known as The Crescent. It lies outside the Defined Settlement Boundary [DSB] in the substantive Revised Deposit Plan.
- 42.3 The site is unaffected by any landscape designations. There is no public highway frontage but public views of the land are possible from the field to the north, which has a footpath running diagonally across it from Ampney Lane. The site is level, and it contains a few small trees that suggest it may have formerly been an orchard. The southern and western boundaries consist mainly of mature bushes and hedgerows. The eastern boundary with the rear gardens of The Crescent and the northern boundary are fenced. There is a dried up pond in the far north west corner.
- 42.4 The objector argues that the DSB should be extended to include the site as it cannot be used as commercial agricultural land without a suitable access. It is unclear to me why the lack of an access would make the site inherently more suitable for housing. However, my main concern centres on the very limited range of facilities in the village, and the extremely restricted bus service. It is these factors that lead the Plan to identify Northwood Green for only limited infilling under policy (R)FH.5. Any additional residential development would be likely to lead to an increase in private car use. I consider the site performs poorly when assessed against the locational criteria advised by PPG3.
- 42.5 I consider that the DSB has been appropriately drawn to exclude the site, showing the clear distinction between the residential character of the adjoining area, and the more rural character of the omission site. I do not consider the site suitable as an additional housing allocation, or for inclusion within the DSB.

Recommendation

- 42.6 **I recommend that the Land at the rear of Gordon Cottage and Gordon House, be not allocated for development nor enclosed within the Defined Settlement Boundary of Northwood Green.**

Omission Site OH32.2 - Land at Grange Court

Objections

731/50446	Estate of Philip Hoddell
731/50450	Estate of Philip Hoddell

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 42.7 The land adjoining Grange Court Road is an irregularly-shaped plot of about 1, bounded by Grange Court Road to the west, the main road through the village to the north, agricultural land to the east, and the Chepstow-Gloucester railway line to the south. It lies outside and to the east of the Defined Settlement Boundary [DSB]. Much of the site is screened, notably from the main road, by a tall, mature hedgerow on the northern boundary. The only clear view of the site is eastwards from Grange Court Road. The land slopes steeply southward towards the railway line and consists mainly of uncultivated rough grazing land. Within the site are a number of mature trees of various species. The objector contends that the site should be included within the DSB, and should be identified within the Plan as a housing allocation, on the basis that the site’s location in relation to the existing village makes it a potential infill site.
- 42.8 The location of the site, in sustainability terms, is poor, due to the low level of community facilities and its distance from any reasonable level of services. The limited nature of the public transport network restricts opportunities for non-car modes of transport. I therefore believe that if the site were developed for housing, there would be a significant increase in private car usage, contrary to national guidance which aims to reduce reliance on the car as a means of travel.
- 42.9 Although the site does not lie within a specific landscape designation, such as an AONB, it does occupy a very prominent location and can be viewed from a considerable distance. In my opinion, any development on this site would have an unacceptably detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the area, as it would encroach into the open countryside.
- 42.10 I do not accept the contention that the site is virtually surrounded by development. To the east is open countryside and to the south are the extensive grounds of Grange Court, itself some distance from the boundary of the omission site and separated by the railway line. The land is thus visually very different from the rest of the village within the DSB and appears to me as part of the open countryside.
- 42.11 For these reasons I conclude that the site is unsuitable for inclusion within the DSB.

Recommendation

- 42.12 **I recommend that the Land adjoining Grange Court Road be not allocated for development nor enclosed within the Defined Settlement Boundary of Northwood Green.**

Inset Map 32 - Northwood Green

Objection

440/80044

Mrs A J Martin

Issues

Alignment of Defined Settlement Boundary

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 42.13 Map 3 appended to the Council’s proposed Pre-Inquiry Changes proposes to exclude from the Defined Settlement Boundary [DSB] an area of land to the north of the Mission Church. This followed the refusal by the Council of planning permission for its development.
- 42.14 The land is immediately south of Omission Site OH32.1 and is within the same ownership. I have concluded above that Omission Site OH32.1 is appropriately excluded from the DSB. The subject land is bounded to the east and west by the existing property within the DSB, and to the south by land within the DSB designated as an Important Open Area [IOA] and a Protected Outdoor Recreation Space [policies (R)FBE.7 and (R)FBE.9]. Only along the short northern boundary does it adjoin open countryside.
- 42.15 The site lacks a highway frontage and it is not obvious how access could be achieved for any infill development. The openness of the site permits an attractive view of open countryside from the adjacent IOA and Outdoor Recreation Space and thereby contributes positively to the setting of the village. It does not appear that the site has been previously-developed and I conclude that the proposed Pre-Inquiry Change appropriately defines the land as part of the countryside and not as part of the built-up area. I conclude that it is thus appropriately excluded from the DSB.

Recommendation

I recommend that Inset Map 32 be modified only in accordance with Map 3 attached to the published Pre Inquiry Changes.

CHAPTER 33 - OLDCROFT/VINEY HILL

General

Objections

394/70603	Mr & Mrs M J Jones
833/70618	Mr & Mrs D Coe
834/70648	Mr B Whittington
837/70686	Clearwell Caves

Supporting Statements

422/52768	West Dean Parish Council
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Issues

Statutory Forest status.

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 43.1 Elsewhere in this report I recommend that the boundary of the Statutory Forest be shown on the Proposals Map. The settlement of Oldcroft/Viney Hill lies within that boundary and Policy (R)FBE.8, modified as I recommend, will set out the planning policy for the change of use of Forest Waste or other Crown Land within the Statutory Forest. Whether other legislation will affect the use or development of land within the Statutory Forest is considered elsewhere in this report and is not a matter that it would be necessary or appropriate to address by the modification of this chapter, other than the minor textual change below.

Recommendation

- 43.2 **I recommend that Paragraph 33.1 be modified by adding to the second sentence after ‘Forest Ring’: ‘within the Statutory Forest’.**
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CHAPTER 34 - PARKEND

Introduction and Development Strategy

Policy (R)F.Parkend 1 – Employment – Former Rail Sidings

Inset Map 34 - Parkend

Objections

28/52731	Forest of Dean Railway Company Ltd
28/52733	Forest of Dean Railway Company Ltd
28/52731	Forest of Dean Railway Company Ltd
41/51172	Countryside Agency
216/52447	Environment Agency
273/52879	Mr R Freshwater
273/52878	Mr R Freshwater
273/52877	Mr R Freshwater
394/70604	Mr & Mrs M J Jones
394/70605	Mr & Mrs M J Jones
394/70606	Mr & Mrs M J Jones
422/52688	West Dean Parish Council
422/52772	West Dean Parish Council
533/50291	Mr A Powell
533/50293	Mr A Powell
533/50296	Mr A Powell
533/50299	Mr A Powell
533/50293	Mr A Powell
533/50295	Mr A Powell
651/51876	Watts of Lydney Group Ltd
779/70130	Railtrack plc
779/70131	Railtrack plc
779/70132	Railtrack plc
779/70133	Railtrack plc
779/70134	Railtrack plc
833/70619	Mr & Mrs D Coe
833/70620	Mr & Mrs D Coe
833/70621	Mr & Mrs D Coe
834/70649	Mr B Whittington
834/70650	Mr B Whittington
834/70651	Mr B Whittington
837/70687	Clearwell Caves
837/70688	Clearwell Caves
837/70689	Clearwell Caves

Supporting Statement

28/70311	Forest of Dean Railway Company Ltd
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Issues

- a. Statutory Forest status.
- b. Support for and control of tourism development.
- c. Car parking problems.
- d. Description of Former Rail Sidings allocation in (R)F.Parkend 1.
- e. Rail freight development with reference to its extent and effects of associated lorry transport.
- f. Potential for rail passenger services.

- g. Safeguarding for public footpath access
- h. Proposed Important Open Area or Protected Outdoor Recreation Space designations along railway track.
- i. Type of employment development and screening with regard to village role as a centre of tourism.
- j. Landscape impact.
- k. Accommodation of watercourses.

Reasoning and Conclusions

Statutory Forest

- 44.1 The entire settlement lies within the Statutory Forest, however much of the land within the settlement is private enclosed land. The statutory forest law to which the objectors refer applies only to Crown forest land and it would be misleading to insert the wording requested by the objectors. I have recommended elsewhere in the Report that Policy (R)FBE.8 be broadened to apply to all Forest Waste and Other Crown Land within the forest and that the boundary of the Statutory Forest be shown on the Proposals Map including the Inset Maps. No modification is needed to this chapter in this respect.

Tourism

- 44.2 Tourism already makes a significant contribution to the local economy of Parkend and there is potential to expand tourism here with the re-opening of the railway station. That can be expected to bring more visitors to the village. The Final Report of the Tourism Development Potential Study of June 2002 [Document LPD 66] proposes Parkend as a key service location for tourism, to provide access to the core of the Forest with, in addition to the steam railway terminal, park-and-ride facilities, orientation centre, cycle facilities including hire and self-catering accommodation. However these do not form proposals in the Plan and the study itself lacks detail as to the land-use and built development implications of these suggestions, which are at an early stage. Any firm proposals which come forward during the Plan period would fall to be considered under Policy (R)FTRL.2 and other plan policies. These have a range of criteria which it is unnecessary to repeat in the settlement chapters.
- 44.3 Para 4.22 of the supporting text to Policy (R)FTRL.1 requires tourism development proposals to provide for minimisation of car use. The provision of an improved rail service can assist in that aim. Some intending rail users will arrive at Parkend on foot, cycle and bus and others will come by train from Lydney where there are rail and bus connections. Whether parking problems will arise in Parkend will depend on how the railway is managed and marketed. At present the railway seeks to direct visitors arriving by car to use an intermediate station at Norchard which has car parking. It would be premature for the Plan to propose the development of a large car park at Parkend.

Allocation Site Description

- 44.4 The Parish Council disputes that this site is properly described as the Former Railway Sidings. However photographic evidence presented at the Inquiry indicates that it was formerly occupied by multiple railway tracks close to the Coleford Junction. There is a lack of evidence before me as to exactly how these were used, but the site

is now widely referred to as the former railway sidings and this seems an appropriate description.

Railway Development

- 44.5 Railtrack plc [now Network Rail] claim that the Former Rail Sidings are a ‘designated freight site’ in the Railtrack – BR transfer scheme and should take precedence over the development of rail freight facilities at Lydney. However this claim is not supported by documentary evidence that there is any contractual or other protection against non-freight development and it is difficult to relate to the situation on the ground. Much of the land is controlled by Forest Enterprise, there are at present no rail tracks or facilities, and the nearest rail connection at Parkend station is owned by the Forest of Dean Railway Company.
- 44.6 I accept that the Government supports the expansion of rail freight and that it would theoretically be possible to develop freight services from this location over the latter company’s tracks, which connect to the Network Rail tracks at Lydney. Indeed this possibility was allowed for in the First Deposit Plan. However that appears to have attracted significant opposition including Objection 651/51876 which was not withdrawn in spite of the deletion of the references to freight facilities in the Revised Deposit Plan. Lydney has a greater concentration of industry and distribution activity and large new employment allocations are proposed there, close to the Network Rail tracks. That would appear to be a more appropriate location for the development of rail freight facilities.
- 44.7 The Forest of Dean Railway Company is shortly to re-open Parkend Station to passenger services and has planning permission to reinstate the tracks as far as the B4234, immediately to the south of the proposed employment allocation. The original railway track continued through the allocation site and on to Speech House Road and Cinderford, with a branch to Coleford leaving the line at the allocation site. Were the site to be fully developed for employment purposes, as proposed, that would end all realistic prospect of further extending the railway. The railway is developing into a major tourist attraction in its own right and also has a significant role to play in encouraging sustainable travel by means other than the car.
- 44.8 The railway is developing into a major tourist attraction in its own right and also has a significant role to play in encouraging sustainable travel by means other than the car. Policies T.6 and T.7 of the Gloucestershire Structure Plan Second Review are supportive of the safeguarding of disused railway lines which have potential for future use. Addendum 10 of Document 28E records the resolution of the Council in February 2003 to support the railway and to consider its possible access to the allocation site. I have not been advised of the outcome of the subsequent referral of this resolution to the Council’s Executive Committee. The railway company claims the support of Forest Enterprise as landowner.
- 44.9 The Forest of Dean Railway Company explained at the Inquiry that they seek to extend a single track across the B4234 via a level crossing and through the site to reach a proposed platform and loop to the north of the site, to enable the provision of locomotive-hauled passenger services. The line would terminate just short of the B4234, close to the point where a Forest Enterprise Cycle Trail follows the route of the former railway as it continues northwards through the Nags Head Nature Reserve towards Cannop Ponds.

- 44.10 The direct additional tourism and transport benefits of the railway extension would be limited, in that the proposed platform would only be about 900m north of Parkend station. However there would be a more direct connection to the cycle trail and I consider that the railway extension would be compatible with the continued provision of the cycle route to the west, subject to any necessary minor realignment.
- 44.11 Of possibly greater importance is that the extension would keep open the option of any possible future reinstatement of the railway beyond Parkend. I recognise that there would be significant constraints including the need to reinstate the B4234 road bridge and to assess the environmental consequences of crossing the Nags Head Nature Reserve. However it would be premature to permanently rule out the reinstatement of the railway on those grounds.
- 44.12 The cycle track does not appear to be a public right of way as one objector believes but is rather a forest track, within the control of Forest Enterprise, as part of the Dean Forest National Forest Park. However Policy (R)F.Parkend 1 should refer to the need to retain a cycle route.
- 44.13 Objection 422/52772 appears to refer to the extension of the railway from Parkend station to the B4234 and seeks a footpath and open space beside the railway. However my understanding is that planning permission has already been granted for this development and this section of the railway would be double track to provide a storage siding for excursion trains. This would leave inadequate space for a footpath and an alternative route exists beside the road. I do not consider that it would be appropriate for the Plan to propose a public footpath beside the extension of the railway through the employment area. Again a better route is available beside the road.
- 44.14 Whereas the narrow corridor required for the single railway line would not prevent employment development on the rest of the allocation site, it would constrain the layout to a degree and might limit the development potential of an area currently used for lorry parking to the west of the route. However, I do not consider that this outweighs the overall potential benefits of including the railway extension on the allocation and providing for the northward extension of the allocation to include the site of the platform and loop.

Type of Development

- 44.15 It would be impractical for the Plan to define in more detail the type of employment development to take place on the allocated site. This would be a matter best addressed at the development control stage, when there are statutory requirements for further public consultation.

Landscape

- 44.16 The Countryside Agency’s First Deposit objection sought additional clarification as to how the proposal can be accommodated in locations adjoining the Special Landscape Area. However, the Special Landscape Area was deleted at the Revised Deposit stage and I share the Council’s view that it should not be reinstated. [Part1 Chapter 8]. Paragraph 34.9 was amended at the Revised Deposit stage to require consideration of the setting of the development and ensure that views of it are mitigated. Also Policy (R)FBE.1, among other provisions, requires new development to be compatible with its surroundings with respect to character, landscape and land use. I do not consider that further control is necessary in this chapter.

Watercourses

44.17 At the First Deposit stage the Environment Agency sought a reference to the watercourses which flow through the village on the grounds that they contribute to its character and any development should deal sympathetically with them in relation to conservation and amenity ideals. At the Revised Deposit stage the Council added text to paragraph 34.6 which I consider adequately addresses these concerns. No further modification is necessary.

Recommendation

44.18 **I recommend that Policy (R)F.Parkend 1 be modified to:**

Land at the former Parkend rail sidings will be allocated for employment uses, classes B1, B2 and B8. The development will be required to make satisfactory provision for managing lorry movements on the highway network and for vehicular access to the site. Land within the allocated site will be safeguarded for the provision of a single track railway line through the site with a platform and loop at its northern end to enable the northward extension of passenger services from Parkend station to the former Coleford Junction. The existing cycle track must be retained or diverted to a suitable route if affected by the development and should be directly accessible from the proposed station.

44.19 **I recommend that Inset Map 34 be modified as necessary to reserve within the (R)F.Parkend 1 policy area the land required for the railway track and platform.**

44.20 **I recommend that paragraph 34.9 be modified by the addition of the following words before the final sentence:**

The current plans of the Dean Forest Railway will extend the line to the B.4234 to the south of the allocated site. The further extension of the line to provide passenger services to the former Coleford Junction at the north end of the site will require a level crossing.

CHAPTER 35 - REDBROOK

Policy (R)F.Redbrook 1 – Restriction on Development

Objections

353/70481 CPRW

Issues

Justification for and terms of the Restriction on Development.

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 45.1 On consideration of the Plan as a whole I have reached the general conclusion, for reasons set out after policy (R)BE.1 in Chapter 6 of Part 1 of this report, that the Restriction on Development policies are inappropriate and that due protection is accorded the settlement areas concerned by policy (R)FBE.1 when read in conjunction with the descriptive text for each settlement in Part 2. For general consistency I therefore recommend below the deletion of policy (R)F.Redbrook 1.
- 45.2 The supporting text sets down an appropriately balanced approach that contemplates small scale new development in certain circumstances, and thus duly supplements the provisions of policy (R)FBE.1. However, I regard these considerations as applying to all development, not only residential, and text para 35.12 should be modified accordingly.
- 45.3 I believe that the modification I recommend meets the objection by CPRW.

Recommendation

- 45.4 **I recommend that Policy (R)F.Redbrook 1 be deleted and that Paragraph 35.12 be modified to:**

Land adjacent to the B4231 retains much of its historic character and displays an established and settled form. All new development will be required to complement the established character of this area.

Inset Map 35 - Redbrook

Objections

394/52885 Mr & Mrs M J Jones
394/70791 Mr & Mrs M J Jones

Issues

Omission of lands from the Defined Settlement Boundary.

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 45.5 The first objection seeks a small addition to the Defined Settlement high above the property aptly named Wye View within the Tinmans Green development just east of the road junction with the main A466. Significantly, the Council has already granted permission for a dwelling hard against the Defined Settlement Boundary as drawn. The objectors say that they wish to move the position of the dwelling up and back into the steep valley side to reduce overlooking with respect other dwellings below. There

may well be other constructional advantages, but the issue to be decided is whether the degree of betterment to privacy overrides any additional impact the repositioning of the dwelling would cause to the surrounding Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- 45.6 I understand the Council’s reluctance to entertain this objection having already made the judgement to allow the dwelling as originally submitted, and I support the constraint placed on further development by the Defined Settlement Boundary, given the importance of protecting the appearance of the AONB. However, in relation to the floor and roof levels of other outlying properties, I do not think the repositioned dwelling would seem excessively prominent or detached from the main body of the settlement. Taking account of the benefit to privacy, I conclude that on balance the proposed Defined Settlement Boundary extension is acceptable, but only to the limited extent illustrated on the plan attached to Document 394a, and not the larger area assumed by the Council.
- 45.7 The second objection is to the annotation of the site occupied by an electricity substation at the eastern end of the Tinmans Green development. This was omitted at the First Deposit stage but properly encompassed by the Revised Deposit version of the Defined Settlement Boundary. The objection is to the annotation to the modification on Inset Map 35 of Document LPD34, confining development to the valley floor. The Council responds that this is merely explanatory and will not appear on the adopted Inset Map. This appears to meet the objection.
- 45.8 I make a further recommendation consequent upon my consideration of policy (R)F.Redbrook 1 above.

Recommendation

- 45.9 **I recommend that Inset Map 35 be modified by including the proposed extension to the Defined Settlement Boundary of Redbrook indicated on Plan No 1342/3 dated August 2002 and attached to Document 394a.**
- 45.10 **I recommend that Inset Map 35 be modified by deleting reference to policy (R)F.Redbrook 1.**
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CHAPTER 36 - REDMARLEY

Inset Map 36 - Redmarley

Omission Site OH36.1 – Land adjacent to Kings End House

Objection

418/51864 Mr P T Lane
418/70161 Mr P T Lane

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 46.1 Redmarley lies to the west of the A417 within the North Forest. It contains about 70 houses and a population of approximately 150. In terms of services and facilities, the village possesses a church, school, village hall and recreational facilities including a tennis club. However, the nearest public house and post office/village store are some distance from the main part of the village at Playley Green. Most of the village lies within the Redmarley Conservation Area, which the site abuts.
- 46.2 The omission land is a greenfield site of about 1.5ha situated immediately north east of the existing settlement and outside the Defined Settlement Boundary [DSB], with a frontage on Drury Lane which runs north east out of the village. The southern boundary fronts onto a narrow lane. To the east of the site is agricultural land. Immediately north of the site are a number of dwellings, also fronting onto Drury Lane.
- 46.3 The site is generally level, although the wider surroundings fall away to the east. The site is bounded to varying degrees by mature hedgerows and trees, and the Drury Lane frontage is separated from the road by a post and wire fence. The site is uncultivated, mainly consisting of overgrown, uncut pasture. In the northernmost corner is a small copse of trees. There are no specific landscape designations covering the site.
- 46.4 It is argued that the DSB is too tightly drawn, and that inclusion of the site would round off the development limits. Further that additional residential development would assist in revitalising an area of rural decline, and assist in meeting affordable housing need. The Council responds that to amend the DSB would result in unwarranted sporadic development.
- 46.5 The relative absence of services and facilities in the village, the lack of any significant local employment, and the infrequent nature of the bus service, mean that additional housing in this location would inevitably result in a significant increase in private car journeys on a day-to-day basis. In this respect the site performs poorly in terms of the locational criteria set out in paragraph 31, PPG3. I also consider that the site, being greenfield land within a small rural settlement, also performs poorly when assessed against the sequential approach in paragraph 30. I am also concerned that the level of housing that the site would be likely to accommodate could have an adverse visual impact upon the adjoining Conservation Area in terms of scale and proximity. I do not consider that it would be appropriate to amend the DSB to accommodate additional housing here.
- 46.6 With reference to affordable housing, any identified local needs could be addressed by the development of an exceptions site rural housing proposed for local needs under Policy (R)FH.14, without the necessity of allocating a site in the Plan. I conclude overall that the site is not suitable for housing allocation or inclusion within the DSB.

Recommendation

- 46.7 **I recommend that the land adjacent to Kings End House be not allocated for development nor included within the Defined Settlement Boundary and therefore that there be no modification to Inset Map 36.**
-

CHAPTER 37 - RUARDEAN

Introduction and Development Strategy

Objections

98/52712 Mr & Mrs Baxter
464/52699 Mr S Mills

Issue

- a. Omission of land for development.
- b. Level of development in Ruardean.

Reasoning and Conclusions

47.1 I deal with omission sites below.

47.2 Ruardean lies about 4km north west of Cinderford and forms part of the Forest Ring of settlements. It is situated on a very prominent north-facing slope and is one of the larger settlements within this part of the District, having a population of about 1043, and a housing stock of approximately 400. It has a good range of services for its size, including a post office, several shops, village hall, two public houses, doctors’ surgery, school, parish church, various small industrial employers, and a large recreation ground adjoining the northern Defined Settlement Boundary (DSB). The western part of the village is designated as the Ruardean Conservation Area, within which is situated the Ruardean Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument. The westernmost edge of the village adjoins, but lies outside, the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

47.3 Policy (R)FH.4 includes Ruardean amongst those villages suitable for the development of small groups of dwellings. The supporting paragraph 2.25 of Part One defines small groups as up to 12 dwellings. Chapter 37 draws attention appropriately to the constraints on development including the need to protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the landscape setting of the village. I consider that it is appropriately included in Policy (R)FH.4 and that a more restrictive approach to development would not be justified.

Recommendation

47.4 **I recommend no modification in relation to the level of development in Ruardean.**

Policy (R)F.Ruardean 1 – Restriction on Development

Objections

None

Issue

Justification for the policy.

Reasoning and Conclusions

47.5 For reasons I explain after policy (R)FBE.1 in Part 1 Chapter 6 of this report, I have concluded that, for consistency throughout the Plan, the Restriction on Development

policies should be deleted from the settlement chapters and the text, modified accordingly, read in conjunction with other relevant policies.

Recommendation

47.6 **I recommend that Policy (R)F.Ruardean 1 be deleted and that Paragraph 37.10 modified to:**

The area of Pettycroft is located at the extreme south of Ruardean on the highest ground [retain existing wording from ‘in the village’ ... to ... ‘poor vehicular access.’] All new development in this area should complement its established character.

Policy (R)F.Ruardean 2 - Relocation of Ruardean Primary School

Objections

25/51746	Chelbury Homes Ltd
464/52700	Mr S Mills

Issues

- a. Suitability of the land for a school.
- b. Best use of land designated an Important Open Area.

Reasoning and Conclusions

47.7 Ruardean Primary School currently occupies a small site with little open space to the south of School Lane. The site proposed for its relocation is to the north of School Lane. It appears to be owned and maintained by the Education Authority and already contains prefabricated classrooms and play facilities for the school. The site is centrally located and easily accessible on foot from most of the village. The Education Authority would be unlikely to bring forward proposals to erect new school buildings on this site without first taking full account of the site’s topography and soil conditions. Due to the nature of the topography of the village and the surrounding area, the options for relocating the school on anything other than a relatively steep slope are limited. Similarly, any problems relating to the sub-strata would need to be addressed as part of an appraisal of the site, and would be subject to separate building control legislation. Development control procedures would take into account the relationship of proposed development to nearby uses but I note that the existing school is in fact nearer the Pettycroft area than the proposed site. I also attach significant weight to the fact that the site has already been identified as a potential site for the relocation of the school within the Local Plan adopted in 1996.

47.8 I conclude that no modification to the Plan is appropriate with respect to the suitability of the site. The question of making best use of land north of School Lane is covered below in connection with Omission Site OH37.1

Recommendation

47.9 **I recommend no modification to policy (R)F.Ruardean 2.**

Policy (R)F.Ruardean 3 – Housing Allocation – Norman Way

Objections

25/70141	Chelbury Homes Ltd
521/70482	Mr A Perry
798/70242	Ruardean Parish Council
798/70243	Ruardean Parish Council

Issues

- a. Character and appearance of the village.
- b. Loss of open space.
- c. Access from School Road.

Reasoning and Conclusions

Character and Appearance

- 47.10 The proposed allocation concerns two adjoining paddocks in the centre of the village. To the west and south they adjoin a proposed Important Open Area which is generally protected from built development. However the area to the south could be developed by the relocation of the school in accordance with Policy (R)F.Ruardean 2.
- 47.11 Policy (R)FH.4 could in principle permit developments of this scale [12 dwellings] within the Defined Settlement Boundary [DSB] even if the site were not specifically allocated in the Plan. Deleting the allocation would thus not prevent the development.
- 47.12 I have no reason to believe that a sympathetically designed scheme could not be produced that would suitably integrate into the location, and would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the adjoining Conservation Area, as required.
- 47.13 I note that Policy H.6 of the Gloucestershire Structure Plan states that rural residential development should be confined to settlements having access to community and employment opportunities to meet local needs and that are well-served by public transport. Ruardean clearly falls within this category and the scale of development is appropriate.
- 47.14 Whilst I would not dispute that there is an identified need for housing in other parts of the District, this is not the sole criterion for determining the location of new development. Paragraph 31 of PPG3 sets out five criteria to be considered when deciding which sites to allocate for housing. Similarly, Policy S.5 of the Structure Plan states that in determining the type, scale and location of development the adequacy of infrastructure and community services will be taken into account. I believe that due consideration has been given to this guidance in identifying Ruardean as a suitable location for development of this scale.

Access

- 47.15 The proposed development would generate only a modest amount of traffic and this which would enter School Road at its widest point via a suitable junction. The central location of the site within the village would encourage journeys on foot to reach local shops, the primary school, and other village facilities. I conclude that there is no access consideration to warrant deleting the allocation.

Recommendation

47.16 **I recommend no modification to Policy (R)F.Ruardean 3.**

Omission Site OH37.1 – Land North of School Lane

Objections

25/51746	Chelbury Homes Ltd
25/51748	Chelbury Homes Ltd

Issues

Proposed deletion of Important Open Area designation.

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 47.17 In Part 1 Chapter 6 of this report I recommend the simplification of policy (R)FBE.7 whereby, briefly, Important Open Areas should comply with at least three of four selection criteria related to location, visibility and contributions to local amenity and character.
- 47.18 The land in question is within the Defined Settlement Boundary and is fully visible from the public footpath which traverses it. More limited views are available from nearby roads, private properties and the adjoining area which is in school use and is also designated as an IOA. The site is an area of rough sloping grazing land. It is overgrown but is nevertheless attractive and appeared at the time of my visit to provide a wealth of habitat for insect and birdlife. I consider that the site contributes much to the surviving rural character of the village and also to its local character as a Forest Fringe settlement where such open areas are typically found. I thus conclude that the site satisfies all four criteria for designation.
- 47.19 The site has not previously been developed and is thus a greenfield site as defined by PPG3 with a low priority for development, even were its IOA designation removed. There is no evidence of a need for additional development in Ruardean not already provided for by the Plan. PPG17 also requires that open space such as this be assessed for its public value [including visual amenity, wildlife value and recreational value] in relation to identified needs, in order to conclude that it is surplus to requirements before it is considered for development.

Recommendation

47.20 **I recommend that the Land North of School Lane be not allocated for development and that its designation as an Important Open Area be retained.**

Omission Site OH37.2 – Land at Varnister Lane, Crooked End

Objections

98/52712 Mr & Mrs Baxter
98/52710 Mr & Mrs Baxter

Reasoning and Conclusions

- 47.21 This is a greenfield site which appears to have been last used for agriculture. It faces across Varnister Lane toward an area of housing within the Defined Settlement Boundary [DSB]. The site is not otherwise contained by built development or landscape features. As a result, development here would intrude into open countryside. Crooked End is at the eastern extremity of the settlement and the land is up to from 700 to 1000m from the main concentration of village services. This is above the maximum walking distances to facilities recommended in Annex A to RPG10 and might encourage car-borne trips to these services. As a greenfield site which would be intrusive in the landscape and with relatively poor access to services and facilities, I conclude that the site performs poorly in terms of the sequential test for the allocation of housing sites which is recommended by PPG3 and reflected in Local, Regional and Structure Plan policies.
- 47.22 The village has recently experienced significant amounts of house building and the Plan makes provision for more development within the DSB. There is no evidence before me that yet more development is needed to maintain services and the vitality of the village as the objector claims. On the contrary, the Parish Council in particular can be expected to be aware of the condition of local services and village vitality and it has expressed in its own objections its concerns that too much development is already proposed in the village.

Recommendation

- 47.23 **I recommend that the Land at Varnister Lane, Crooked End be not allocated for development nor included in the Defined Settlement Boundary of Ruardean.**
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Inset Map 37 - Ruardean

Objections

25/70142	Chelbury Homes Ltd
98/52710	Mr & Mrs Baxter
798/70243	Ruardean Parish Council

Issues

See above.

Reasoning and Conclusions

47.24 I deal with these objections above.

47.25 My sole recommendation as a consequence of my consideration of policy (R)F.Ruardean 1.

Recommendation

I recommend that Inset Map 37 be modified by deleting reference to Policy (R)F.Ruardean 1.
