

## Littledean

### Introduction

- 25.1 Littledean is located less than 2 kilometres from Cinderford, however it has a very different identity being more closely related to the surrounding agricultural land rather than to the statutory forest area and its coalfields. Littledean is set within an attractive agricultural landscape on the floor and lower slopes of a valley. That part of the village on the hillside is prominent in the landscape.
- 25.2 The village is quite substantial with a housing stock in the region of 314 and an approximate population of 770, which has changed little in recent years. At January 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 there were 14 outstanding commitments for dwellings.
- 25.3 Littledean has a range of services including a hairdressers, a school, an hotel, several shops, two public houses, a community hall and a recreation ground.

### Development Strategy

- 25.4 Littledean is an attractive village surrounded by a high quality agricultural and wooded landscape. Any outward expansion of the village would be likely to infringe upon this attractive area of open countryside, which forms part of the Special Landscape Area. The strategy of the Plan is to contain development within the tightly drawn defined settlement boundary. The strategy will allow infilling, single dwellings and small groups of dwellings within the village. A large part of the village is a Conservation Area, reflecting the quality of the built environment. New development will be expected to complement these attributes. Archaeological assessments may be required to accompany development proposals.

### Employment

- 25.5 There is only limited employment available within the village. However a small area of approximately 0.45 hectares at Court Garage is presently used for various business purposes. The main use of the site is for car repairs. The site is quite prominent in the Conservation Area and therefore any proposals must offer an improvement to the existing quality of the site, whilst retaining the site in employment use unless a change can be justified under Policy (R) FE3 or other exceptional reasons apply.

### Environment

- 25.6 The settlement has a long history and by implication may contain significant archaeological remains. The historic core has been designated a Conservation Area. It is likely that archaeological investigations will be required as part of any development proposals.
- 25.7 Through traffic on the relatively narrow A.4151 causes some environmental problems. A car park has been provided in George Street. However roadside parking on the main road continues to cause congestion, although helping to reduce speed within the village. There will be a need to consider the potential for further reducing the environmental impact of vehicles by supplementing the limited traffic calming "gateway" measures that have already been established.
- 25.8 There are a number of open areas on both sides of Church Street which make a significant contribution to the appearance of the village. In 1996 an amenity area was created off Broad Street, which leads to the extended cemetery to the south of the village.



## Longhope

### Introduction

- 26.1 Longhope is a large village within the north Forest, located approximately 8 kilometres from Cinderford and 14 Kilometres from Gloucester. The village stretches along a north-south valley between the A.40 in the north and the A.4136 in the south. The close proximity of the village to the principal road network provides good accessibility to surrounding towns and villages.
- 26.2 Longhope is set within attractive countryside characterised by wooded ridges and agricultural valleys which run north to south. The built up area of the village lies along the valley floor and reaches onto the lower slopes of the surrounding hillsides which rise steeply to the west of the village. The valley floor opens out around the southern end of Longhope and provides an attractive rural landscape which is visible from the surrounding open countryside. There is generally a sharply defined boundary between the settlement and the surrounding agricultural land, which includes significant areas of woodland and orchards. A large part of the village was designated a Conservation Area in 1990, reflecting the early development of the village and the quality of the built environment.
- 26.3 Longhope has a range of local services including a post office, public houses, primary school, village hall and recreation ground. Further services are available in Hopes Hill which is situated to the south east of Longhope and supports a chapel. Alongside the provision of local services Longhope offers a wide range of local employment, including a small industrial estate with a variety of business users and a large transport and warehousing depot.
- 26.4 Longhope has experienced a continued process of change. The village grew rapidly during the 1970's with the development of an extensive housing estate. Whilst this level of growth subsided during the 1980's, the village has continued to absorb small scale residential infilling. The present population of Longhope is approximately 890 with a housing stock of about 330 in January 2000. There have been 42 dwelling completions since 1981. In January 2004 there were 4 outstanding consents.

### Development Strategy

- 26.5 Longhope is a large village with a range of services and employment. The attractive countryside around the village forms a general constraint to development beyond the Defined Settlement Boundary. Further outward expansion of the village into the surrounding high quality and attractive landscape will be resisted.
- 26.6 The strategy allocates a site of 0.98 hectares for the development of housing and amenity open space. The site is capable of accommodating approximately 15 new dwellings, including a proportion of houses to meet local (affordable) needs. Development of this site will be supported in addition to opportunities for the development of small groups and single dwellings within the settlement boundary.
- 26.7 A large part of the village was designated as a Conservation Area in March 1990 and will continue to be protected by specific Plan policies. Particular attention will be paid to proposals for development within this area. It may be necessary to submit archaeological appraisals with development proposals.
- 26.8 There are several employment sites in Longhope, which offer, potential for additional job opportunities arising from intensification or redevelopment. These sites make a significant environmental impact upon the village both through their location and the use of heavy goods vehicles. Future development will be restricted within the boundaries of the sites. Proposals for further employment development will be supported where there are accompanying environmental improvements.

- 26.9 A number of Important Open Areas have been identified on the Inset Map. These include the recreation ground, churchyard, an open area of amenity value between Church Road and the Wend and a prominent open area alongside the A.4136. These areas will be protected from development to ensure that they continue to provide for local amenity and contribute to the form and setting of the village.

## Housing

### Housing Allocation - Rectory Meadow and School Lane

#### (R)F.Longhope 1

0.98 hectares of land between School Lane and Rectory Meadow will be allocated for the provision of approximately 15 new dwellings by new build and conversion and to include 0.5 hectares 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 the prospective occupiers of the site
7. Provide an appropriate contribution to the provision or enhancement of community facilities.

- 26.10 The above site is located to the north west of Longhope and is identified as an area suitable for the development of approximately 15 new dwellings and associated open space. The Plan will support proposals which bring forward a development which secures a mix of dwelling sizes. The Forest of Dean District Council will seek to negotiate an appropriate number of affordable housing units to meet local need for housing over the Plan period. The allocation includes the site of Longhope Primary School which will provide the opportunity for redevelopment following the recent relocation of the school to a site within the centre of the village.
- 26.11 The site is open in nature and whilst forming part of the open countryside is well contained by the rising contour of the land to the north-west, by existing hedgerows, and by existing development. Longhope is within the ridges and valleys landscape as described in the Landscape Character Assessment which has been published as supplementary guidance. The layout and design of new development should complement the characteristics of this landscape. It should also take into account the characteristics identified in the Conservation Area Assessment and propose a design suitable for that area. Careful consideration should be given to enhance the setting of the development.
- 26.12 Access to the site should provide for safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to the centre of the village, its services and facilities. The site lies adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary and should therefore reflect the high quality of the built environment. Development of the site brings forward the opportunity to redevelop Longhope school following its relocation to a site within the centre of the village. Further detailed guidance is provided in a development brief prepared for the site.
- 26.13 Elsewhere within the Defined Settlement Boundary there are likely to be only limited opportunities for further residential development. The Plan will restrict development to small groups and single dwellings only, reflecting the compact nature of the core of the village and other areas of a more spacious appearance and settled character which should remain largely undisturbed.
- 26.14 Longhope's Conservation Area is not uniform in character and there are certain areas exhibiting special characteristics. Around the centre of the village a fairly tight form of development has evolved, with the stone boundary walls adding to the sense of enclosure. Other parts of the village have a more open and spacious development pattern created by the arrangement of detached dwellings, private gardens,

small orchards and agricultural enclosures. In the south eastern extremity of the Conservation Area, a scatter of dwellings served by a narrow and steep lane ascends the side of the hill, providing attractive views from the western approach. Any proposals for development within the Conservation Area will be expected to complement the established character of the settlement.

### Employment Redevelopment

#### (R)F.Longhope 2

Proposals for the further development or redevelopment for employment purposes of the sites listed below and identified on the Inset Map will be supported where the proposals meet the requirements of Policy (R)FE.2. Development for other purposes will not be permitted.

**Area A** Land adjacent to the A.4136

**Area B** Land adjacent Church Road

#### 26.15 **Area A**

Land adjacent to the A.4136 comprises a large transport depot and associated warehouses which provide important local employment opportunities. The site occupies a particularly prominent position on the periphery of Longhope. The site boundary has been tightly drawn to reflect the importance attached to restricting any further extension of the site into the highly attractive surrounding landscape. Within the boundaries of the site, proposals for further employment development or redevelopment, including Class B1, B2 and B8 will be supported where they provide improvements to the local environment and amenity of the area. The design and siting of new development should be sensitive to the character of the surrounding landscape. Consideration should be given to enhancing the setting of the development and ensuring that views of the development are mitigated.

#### 26.16 **Area B**

The Inset Map identifies two employment areas within the centre of Longhope. These sites are used for a variety of employment enterprises and make a valuable contribution to the number of local employment opportunities available to the rural population. It is considered important to retain such sites in employment use. The area identified on the Inset Map straddles Church Road which runs through the centre of the village and is wholly located within the Conservation Area boundary. Policy (R)F.Longhope 2 proposes that further development or redevelopment of land adjacent Church Road should be supported where there are accompanying improvements to the local environment and amenity of the area, as required by Policy (R)FE.2. Development falling within use class B1 is most likely to be acceptable. It will be expected that most buildings and associated activities will be relatively small in scale to conform to their village location, and position within the Conservation Area.

26.17 A new school in Longhope was commenced in April 2002, on land immediately north of the recreation ground. Community uses will also be permissible within the site, including a village hall and amenity space including play space. Development will be expected to ensure that there are safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to the rest of the village.



## Lowbands

### **Introduction**

- 27.1 Lowbands is a former Chartist settlement which is designated as a Conservation Area. It is situated in the north of the District about 16 kilometres from Gloucester. It was first established in the mid 1840's as an attempt by the Chartist Movement to settle "the working classes" on the land. Although some 40 houses were built, there are now less than that number in the settlement which has no facilities or services. Although the settlement scheme failed, it left a legacy of distinctive houses set in grounds of between one and five acres. A significant number of these have been listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Along with the buildings much of the original layout remains, and in recognition of the historical significance of the remaining buildings and layout, virtually all of Lowbands has been designated a Conservation Area.

### **Development Strategy**

- 27.2 Lowbands has none of the characteristics of a settlement which would merit consideration for further development. It is instead regarded as being part of the Open countryside. Therefore no settlement boundary has been defined, and new development will be strongly resisted. The preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area will be pursued.



## Lydbrook and Joys Green

### Introduction

#### Lydbrook

- 28.1 Lydbrook is a large village set within a valley which is a tributary of the River Wye. The valley is narrow and steep-sided with the result that the village has a strong linear form, and is tightly constrained with poor access to many parts of the village located on the valley sides. The village is set partly within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with the majority of the settlement contained within the statutory boundary of the Forest.
- 28.2 Lydbrook is divided into three parts, known as upper, central and lower Lydbrook. The form and character of the village reflects the industrial history of the District. Coal, timber, and metal ores were all important elements in the early development of the settlement, followed later by metal industries, and the construction of railways, including the Severn and Wye line. The buildings on the valley floor still reflect this later period of industrial development. More recent development has occurred in the form of infilling and groups of dwellings. Lower Lydbrook was designated a Conservation Area in 1995. This designation reflects the historic importance of this part of the village and the quality of the associated buildings. The area includes some of the substantial remains of the railway and its viaduct.
- 28.3 Lydbrook has a range of local services which are dispersed along the main road through the village. Community facilities are provided by the school, Parish Church, Memorial Hall, health centre and recreation ground. The services and facilities located within the village centre provide some local employment. Service employment is complemented by traditional industrial employment which is available both inside the settlement boundary and nearby.
- 28.4 House building in Lydbrook has taken place at a slower rate than in other large villages in the District. The present population of Lydbrook is approximately 800, with a village housing stock of approximately 324 in January 2000. There have been 26 dwelling completions since 1981. In January 2004 there were 71 outstanding consents. This includes one large site with consent for approximately 63 dwellings, currently occupied largely by lorry trailers. The site is located alongside the road running through the village.

#### Joys Green

- 28.5 Joys Green is located to the north-east of Lydbrook, situated on high ground above the Wye Valley. Joys Green differs from Lydbrook in its form and character and principally comprises a large former Local Authority housing estate together with a smaller area of other modern housing. Around the periphery of Joys Green are a number of traditional forest dwellings. Since 1981 there have been 26 dwelling completions in Joys Green including 23 on land formerly used as a coach depot. In January 2000 Joys Green had a housing stock of approximately 230.
- 28.6 Joys Green has a limited number of local services, including a school, general store and post office.

#### Development Strategy

- 28.7 Lydbrook is a large and important settlement with a wide range of local services and employment. It is a suitable location for further development. However, development opportunities are severely constrained by topography, the compact form of the settlement, poor access and the presence of large and important areas of open space which will be protected from development.
- 28.8 The Plan strategy provides for residential development in the form of infilling, single dwellings and small groups of dwellings if suitable locations with satisfactory access can be identified. The same development strategy applies to Joys Green, which is closely linked to Lydbrook, and where limited site opportunities may arise. There may be opportunities for development arising from the redevelopment or

intensification of existing sites. Where these occur the Plan strategy will seek to ensure that appropriate environmental improvements are incorporated, particularly in areas alongside the main valley floor access road. The District Council will give consideration to opportunities for localised environmental improvements, particularly in Central Lydbrook, including traffic management.

- 28.9 The theme of environmental improvements will be maintained also in relation to development proposals arising within existing land uses, particularly with respect to industrial sites within Lydbrook.
- 28.10 There are several prominent sites adjoining the principal road through Lydbrook, all of which make a significant environmental impact. Environmental enhancements will be sought as part of any new development proposals. One large site, the majority of which is currently occupied by Rothdean Ltd and which is principally used for the storage of lorry trailers, has planning consent for redevelopment for housing. The site is particularly prominent and substantial attention to design, layout and landscaping will be sought should development proceed.
- 28.11 The open spaces identified on the Inset Map will be protected from development to ensure they continue to provide for local amenity, and to contribute to the setting of the settlement. The Plan strategy will protect the former railway line from development to enable its continued use for informal recreation. Consideration will be given to further promotion of its quiet enjoyment.

#### **Environment**

- 28.12 Topography forms a major physical constraint to development in Lydbrook because of the steep valley sides and constricted valley floor. This does however have the beneficial effect of providing an attractive landscape setting to the village, with woodland and open spaces rising steeply above the village, interspersed with development. Lower Lydbrook also falls within the Wye Valley AONB, and is a designated Conservation Area. Areas of Lower Lydbrook are susceptible to flooding and there are important groundwater resources in the area which form an aquifer protection zone.
- 28.13 The industrial legacy of Lydbrook has produced a particular form and character of settlement, strongly influenced by topography. This development has formed attractive elements within the village. However there are also areas where the above influences have produced areas of poor local environmental quality, including poorly maintained buildings and some employment sites which are environmentally intrusive. These elements lie alongside the main valley floor access road which runs throughout the length of the village. There is a clear need to provide environmental improvements in such areas, particularly in conjunction with proposals for development.
- 28.14 There are many important large areas of open space in Lydbrook, which are shown on the Inset Map. They include forest waste on the fringes of Upper Lydbrook for example, and private enclosed land in Lower Lydbrook. The Former Severn and Wye Railway track bed forms a particularly notable and almost continuous feature in an elevated position along the valley side. One area at Lower Lydbrook leads out onto the riverbank of the Wye and is a well used recreational area incorporating an important area of public open space.

#### **Former Severn and Wye Railway Line**

##### **(R)F.Lydbrook 1**

**Land forming the trackbed of the former Severn and Wye railway will be safeguarded from development. Proposals to develop the land for informal recreation will be developed during the Plan period.**

- 28.15 Policy (R)F.Lydbrook 1 identifies parts of the former Severn and Wye railway track. This area is currently used for informal recreation, but does not necessarily enjoy public rights of access. The Policy will safeguard the trackbed from development and investigate ways in which greater public access can be obtained, including the establishment of a public right of way.

### **Built Environment**

- 28.16 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. Policy (R)FBE.2 will protect the important characteristics of this locally distinctive area which lies within the Statutory Forest and is identified on the Proposals map Inset.