

## Mitcheldean

### Introduction

- 29.1 Mitcheldean is a large settlement with a population of approximately 2110 in January 2000. The village is set in a narrow valley bottom with land rising steeply both to the east and west. On the latter side the topography is particularly steep, and the edge of the built up area joins onto a very exposed hillside. On the east the village is hemmed in by the large Xerox employment site. To the north and south Mitcheldean is bounded very closely by open agricultural land. The setting and landform of Mitcheldean acts as a constraint to the outward expansion of the settlement.
- 29.2 Mitcheldean is located immediately adjacent to the A.4136, approximately 19 kilometres west of Gloucester and approximately 6 kilometres north of Cinderford. The A.4136 is designated a County Principal route and Primary Lorry route, forming an important part of the highway infrastructure of the Forest of Dean. A strategic improvement scheme for the whole of the A.4136 is included within Gloucestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan. Proposals include physical improvements to the road as it rises steeply out of Mitcheldean to the south and traffic speed reduction measures.
- 29.3 Mitcheldean is an old settlement which acts as an important local service centre within the South Forest area. Mitcheldean contains a good range of local shops, a library, health centre, bank, a primary and a secondary school. A number of individual buildings of distinctive character and quality are located within the centre of the village which forms the nucleus of the Conservation Area, designated in June 1989. Archaeological evaluations may be necessary in connection with development proposed in this area. Part of the centre has undergone redevelopment which has provided valuable additional services, but at some loss to the character of the built environment.
- 29.4 Despite physical constraints to development Mitcheldean grew very rapidly between the mid 1960's and mid 1970's with the development of Xerox. At its peak the company employed nearly 5000 people, leading to the development of new housing estates. There was a reduction of employment at Xerox during the mid 1980's and again more recently at the end of 1998. At that time the company was the largest employer in the District with some 2000 employees. Further reductions meant that by 2002, much of the site had been vacated by Xerox, but it has now become a major business park offering a variety of office and industrial accommodation.
- 29.5 A number of important open areas exist within Mitcheldean, including a large recreation ground to the north west of the village which the Plan seeks to protect. Other sites have also been identified as important open areas because of their visual importance and amenity value. These include the open space around the primary school, St. Michaels Church and the entrance to the Xerox site adjacent to the A.4136.

### Development Strategy

- 29.6 Mitcheldean is an important employment and service centre and should remain so. The strategy will seek to promote these roles. The strategy will provide for the development of further housing to provide for local needs over the Plan period in addition to existing commitments.
- 29.7 Further employment development and redevelopment for employment purposes within the former Xerox site (now known as Vantage Point) will be supported as an important component of the promotion of economic development opportunities in the south Forest Area. The Forest of Dean District Council will support the priority given to the further improvement of the A.4136 in the Local Transport Plan as a principal traffic route into the Forest of Dean, improving access to Mitcheldean.

- 29.8 A number of constraints will limit the outward expansion of Mitcheldean including the topography and landscape character of the countryside surrounding the village. The quality of the built environment of the Conservation Area is an additional constraint to development which will be protected and enhanced by specific Plan policies.
- 29.9 New development within the core of Mitcheldean will need to respect the quality of the existing Conservation Area. The long history of Mitcheldean may give rise to the need for archaeological investigations to accompany development proposals.

**Housing**

29.10 The population of Mitcheldean in January 2000 was approximately 2110 with an estimated dwelling stock of 844. From the end of 1991 to the beginning of 2004 some 59 dwellings had been completed, including the development of 38 dwellings on one site at Gloucester Road. Further land is expected to be developed within the Plan period include one large site in the vicinity of the junction of the High Street with the A.4136, which has outline planning consent for 25 dwellings, and land off Gloucester Road which has had outline consent for 14 dwellings.

Population (Village)		Housing Stock (Village)	
1981-	1752	1981-	701
1991	1970	1991-	788
2000-	2110	2000-	844

29.11 Up until 1981 the population of Mitcheldean grew rapidly primarily through the development of new housing estates to support the expansion of Xerox. More recently the rate of development has slowed down with relatively modest house building over the past 15 years. In addition to the number of dwellings coming forward through development on committed sites there is scope for further residential development in the form of infilling, single dwellings and small groups of houses on appropriate sites.

**Housing Allocation - Gloucester Road**

**(R)F.Mitcheldean 1**  
 1.68ha of land at Gloucester Road is allocated for up to 35 dwellings with strategic landscaping. The development will be required to:

1. Provide a single point of access from the A.4136 (Gloucester Road)
2. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to the village centre
3. Provide a safe and convenient crossing point to the south eastern side of Gloucester Road
4. Provide a landscaped buffer zone along the boundary of the A.4136 to limit any noise disturbance and limit the level of visual intrusion of new development
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.

29.12 1.68 hectares of land is allocated for residential development and structural landscaping adjacent Gloucester Road. Part of this site obtained planning consent early in 1995, however this permission has now expired. The site is located in a prominent position on the approach to Mitcheldean from Gloucester. It is an important site that could make a positive contribution to the setting of the village in terms of the principal approach from the east along the A.4136.

## Housing Allocation - Lining Wood House

### (R)F.Mitcheldean 2

1.7 hectares of land to the northwest of Mitcheldean adjacent to the B.4224 will be allocated to accommodate approximately 40 new dwellings. Development will be required to:

1. Provide a single point of vehicular access from the B.4224
2. Provide for strategic landscaping to the site boundaries, incorporating existing landscape features where appropriate
3. Provide for safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to areas of employment and local services and facilities located within the centre of Mitcheldean
4. Provide for an appropriate number of affordable housing units
5. Provide an appropriate contribution to educational provision for the prospective occupiers of the site
6. Provide an appropriate contribution to the provision or enhancement of community facilities in Mitcheldean.

29.13 1.7 hectares of land to the north-west of Mitcheldean is allocated for residential development. The site is well located within the built up area of Mitcheldean, adjacent to existing residential development and accessible to the village centre, local employment and services. The northern boundary of the site provides a firm boundary to the open countryside beyond. Mitcheldean is within a landscape of ridges and valleys and any new development should be designed to respect and take account of this. Careful consideration should be given to enhance/improve the setting of the development and ensure that views of the development are mitigated.

29.14 Access to the site will be limited to a single point to be provided from the B.4224. Visibility improvements will be required to achieve a satisfactory access, and consideration should be given to extending the 30mph limit beyond the site entrance. Improvements to pedestrian and cycle links to the centre of Mitcheldean will be sought as part of the development.

29.15 The site is well contained by both existing residential development and hedgerows which can be incorporated into the development. Further detailed guidance is provided in a development brief prepared for the site.

### Employment

29.16 Mitcheldean has for many years been an important employment centre for the Forest as a whole, employing in 1998 some 15% of the District's workforce. Its contribution is most important and the Council will seek to maintain it by promoting the large site formerly occupied by Xerox for employment uses.

### Former Xerox Employment Site - Safeguarding

#### (R)F.Mitcheldean 3

Employment land to the north-east of Mitcheldean will be safeguarded for employment generating uses.

29.17 The Plan recognises the site as an important component in the promotion of economic development opportunities for the south Forest Area. The Plan will support the principle of encouraging a continued investment and diversity of business uses and the full utilisation of the site.

29.18 The site will provide a wide range of floorspace, including some very large units. The redevelopment of all or part of the site or simply its re-use would be permitted by the above Policy. A variety of employment generating uses will be permitted on the site in keeping with the need to retain the important contribution made by the site to the District's employment. The uses permitted could result in a degree of diversification, though this should not be at the expense of (for example) the vitality of the nearby town centres.

- 29.19 Owing to its previous use part of the Rank Xerox site is known to contain some areas of contaminated ground. Remediation works are currently under way and is hoped that these will rectify the situation.

**Stenders Employment Site - Safeguarding**

**(R)F.Mitcheldean 4**

**Employment land to the north west of Mitcheldean will be safeguarded for employment uses.**

- 29.20 In addition to Xerox operations, Stenders business site provides additional employment opportunities. Whilst this site is located outside the Defined Settlement boundary of Mitcheldean, it remains well related to the village centre. The Stenders business site is currently operating at full capacity and has planning permission to extend the site. Policy (R)F.Mitcheldean 4 safeguards the employment use on land identified as Stenders Business site to ensure that the local economy is supported by existing employment sites. It is possible that the previous uses of part of the site have resulted in some ground contamination, and depending on the results, remedial works will be required prior to the commencement of development.
- 29.21 Further employment at Mitcheldean is provided at Wilderness Quarry, Ladygrove and the commercial businesses located within the centre of the village. The Plan will continue to support the important role of Mitcheldean as a service and employment centre for the surrounding area.