

Westbury-on-Severn

Introduction

- 48.1 Westbury-on-Severn is a small attractive village situated on low lying ground close to the River Severn and surrounded by an open agricultural landscape. The village is predominantly linear in form, stretching along the busy A.48. The volume of traffic is intrusive. Recently additional traffic management measures have been implemented.
- 48.2 Virtually the whole village is designated as a Conservation Area. Prominent buildings include the old police station, church spire and Westbury Court Gardens. The Garden is a restored Dutch water garden of national importance which is owned and managed by the National Trust and is a significant tourist attraction. There are several prominent open spaces within the village.
- 48.3 The village has a reasonable level of services which include a school, church, post office, public house, dentists and doctors surgery. A large recreation ground including various sports pitches and a hall is situated outside the village.
- 48.4 There are a few local businesses that provide employment in the village, including a residential home for the elderly.
- 48.5 Following the fairly significant housing development at Colchester Close in the 1980s the village has not increased in size in terms of new dwellings and the population has remained stable. In 2001 the village's population was approximately 230 and there were 82 dwellings. There were outstanding planning consents for 7 dwellings in January 2004.

Development Strategy

- 48.6 The Plan strategy allows for some residential development in the form of infilling and small groups of dwellings within the settlement boundary of Westbury together with an allocation for approximately 10 new dwellings providing a modest addition to the village. Otherwise little change is expected to take place over the Plan period as there are few opportunities remaining for further development within the village. Incursions into the surrounding countryside will be resisted. The high quality of the built environment in Westbury is fundamental to the village's character and development proposals will be required to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area. During the Plan period the potential for traffic management will be further investigated on the A.48 to reduce the impact of through traffic. The long history of the settlement means that an archaeological assessment may be required as part of development proposals.
- 48.7 Important open spaces including Westbury Court Garden and the churchyard and other open areas which contribute to visual amenity will be protected. The school playing fields and the recreation ground situated outside the village are protected from development as important recreational resources and as attractive amenity space.

Housing

Housing Allocation - The Coalyard

(R)F.Westbury 1

Approximately 0.2 hectares of land at the Coalyard will be allocated for the provision of about 10 new dwellings. Development will be required to:

1. Provide vehicular access from the A48
2. Provide an appropriate number of affordable housing units
3. Provide for landscaping to the site boundaries where they adjoin the open countryside
4. An appropriate contribution to educational provision for the future occupiers of the site.
5. Any proposal must be accompanied by a flood risk assessment and incorporate any necessary flood prevention measures.

48.8 The above site is located to the east of Westbury settlement and is partly in use as a coalyard. It is suitable for the development of approximately 10 dwellings in total, inclusive of a current planning permission on the site. The Plan will require proposals to bring forward a development which secures a mix of dwelling types. The Forest of Dean District Council will negotiate an appropriate number of affordable housing units to meet local needs during the Plan period.

49.9 The site is on the edge of the settlement but less than 100m from the centre of the village. The site is within the Conservation Area boundary and any new development should therefore reflect the quality of the built environment. Any development will need to have regard to the requirements of the Environment Agency with respect to any potential flood risk and include appropriate measures to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency. As the site will mark the built up boundary to Westbury, adjacent to high quality landscape, particular attention must be paid to the establishment of a well-defined and landscaped boundary to the site. A development brief has been prepared for the site.

Whitecroft and Pillowell

Introduction

- 49.1 Whitecroft is part of the Forest Ring of settlements which follow the coal outcrop around the edge of the Statutory Forest. It lies on the southern perimeter of this ring about 6 Kilometres north of Lydney, and astride the B.4234. Whitecroft and Pillowell are part of a ring of settlements around the fringes of the Statutory Forest. It is the close relationship of these settlements to the Statutory Forest itself and the extent, nature and variety of the open spaces within the settlements, which gives this landscape its special character.
- 49.2 To the east lies Pillowell, an attractive relatively open settlement on a hillside. It is joined to Whitecroft and to Yorkley but has a distinct much more open character than either. This is largely due to the generally low levels of development that have been permitted in the past in Pillowell where relief and access together with planning policy have led to a situation where there has been very little change over the last 25 years. Pillowell consequently exemplifies many of the settlement characteristics that typify the Forest Ring and for this reason much of the settlement is designated as a Conservation Area.
- 49.3 The villages owe their origins to the history of mineral extraction and metal based industries in the area. The older housing is typical of this early industrial period and can be readily identified in Pillowell and in parts of Whitecroft. However, the original settlement of Whitecroft with the exception of the eastern part of the village has been developed in such a way as to mask this original settlement pattern. The eastern part of Whitecroft is included within the Conservation Area. Areas of more recent (mainly post war) housing estate development now comprise by far the largest part of Whitecroft. This development has continued into recent years. Whitecroft is an important source of employment for a more than local area, with several substantial employers located within the village.
- 49.4 Whitecroft has a relatively limited range of services even though it is a village with a large population. These include a Post Office, a fish and chip shop, three public houses and two recreation grounds. As indicated above, there are significant manufacturing businesses in the village, producing metal fasteners, insulation materials, a tyre sales depot and a vehicle repairer. Pillowell by contrast has a school and no other services though there is some local employment in the form of a coach depot. It does however take advantage of its close proximity to Yorkley where there are a good range of services and some additional employment.

Whitecroft

- 49.5 The present population of Whitecroft is approximately 650, with a housing stock of 267, having increased quite significantly in recent years as a result of 104 dwelling completions since 1981. On 1st January 2004 there were outstanding planning consents for 7 additional dwellings in Whitecroft.

Pillowell

- 49.6 No new dwellings have been completed over the past 14 years, though several building conversions have taken place. The present population of the village is about 250 with a housing stock of 101. There were no outstanding consents within Pillowell on 1st January 2004.

Development Strategy and Settlement Character

- 49.7 Much of Whitecroft has been intensively developed by a process of housing estate construction which has left very few remaining opportunities for development. The original distinctive pattern of dispersed Forest style cottages now is only evident in the extreme east of the settlement. The strategy of the Plan is to restrict new residential development to infilling, small groups and single dwellings within a relatively tightly drawn settlement boundary. Development outside the defined settlement boundary will be

resisted, and the open countryside will be protected from inappropriate development. Plan policies will permit the further development of the important employment sites within Whitecroft.

- 49.8 The entire settlement of Pillowell is one where the effects of past infilling and changes have not obscured the overall open and spacious character that was once commonplace in both the larger and the smaller settlements in the Forest Ring. This spacious and open character is now most obvious in smaller settlements that have not in the past been regarded as suitable locations for further development. The strategy for Pillowell is therefore dominated by the need to protect the form and character of the settlement. This will leave only very limited development opportunities.
- 49.9 Most of Pillowell is a designated Conservation Area which exemplifies the sporadic and open pattern of development in the forest Ring of Settlements. Its buildings are set within a framework of open areas which include Forest Waste, woodland, paddock, small agricultural enclosures, large gardens and amenity spaces. All development will be expected to complement the established character of the settlement. Policy (R)FBE.2 will be used in the assessment of proposals for new development within the locally distinctive area

Employment

Employment Areas - Safeguarding

(R)F.Whitecroft/Pillowell 1

Proposals for the development or redevelopment of land identified on the Inset Map for employment purposes will be permitted where the proposals meet the requirements of policy (R)FE.2. Development for other purposes will not be permitted.

- 49.10 Large sites occupied by local employers comprise substantial areas on the outskirts of Whitecroft. One of the two large employers in the village has recently undergone a major expansion, but there may be further scope for additional development on the site. The other has a substantial undeveloped area of land. The intention of Policy (R)F.Pillowell/Whitecroft 1 is to recognise the potential which exists to increase the level of employment within the village through business development or redevelopment. However, it will be expected that any further development will have regard to the prominent nature of the sites and be fully compatible with the nearby residential areas especially with regard to potential noise and disturbance. Proposals should aim to produce a high quality of development and an overall improvement to the environment and amenity of the sites allocated by policy (R)F.Pillowell/Whitecroft 1. Proposals for the intensification of the business use of the sites will be supported where the foregoing environmental gains can be made. The sites will be safeguarded for employment use as important contributors to employment for an area wider than the settlement.

Environment

Built Environment

- 49.11 Considerable improvements have already been made in the central part of Whitecroft by the occupiers of some of the premises and by the Council itself. For example tree planting on the land west of the Lydney Road and landscaping (in connection with a major expansion scheme) to the east. However there is still potential to further improve the appearance of this area. There may be opportunities for improvements arising from the redevelopment or intensification of existing sites. Where these occur the Plan strategy will seek to ensure that appropriate environmental enhancements will be sought as part of any new development proposal.
- 49.12 The former Severn and Wye railway line runs through Whitecroft and down to Lydney. A local railway company have reopened the lower part of this route, around Lydney, and propose to open the line up to Whitecroft and on to Parkend as a tourist attraction in summer 2004. The further improvement and development of the Dean Forest Railway up to and within Whitecroft will be supported in principle because of its contribution to the development of tourism in the District.

Natural Environment

- 49.13 Whitecroft has very little of the characteristic open spaces of the Forest Ring of settlements, with only minor areas of forest waste, verges and tracks remaining. Where these do remain it will be important to protect them. There are no formal recreational spaces within Whitecroft though there is a playing field immediately to the north and another to the south. The forest edge surrounding the northern part of Whitecroft provides an attractive landscape setting which should be protected.
- 49.14 The former coal mine and spoil heap, which is located to the east of Whitecroft and identified on the Inset Map lies within the Pillowell Conservation Area. It contains substantial areas of levelled coal tip, some areas of dereliction, and important remnants of the former mineral railway. The area is designated as an important open area and has potential for restoration for informal recreation. Recently minor works have been carried out to enhance the area, and further relatively minor works may be carried out to assist with the interpretation and informal enjoyment of the site. Any scheme must have regard to safeguarding valuable elements of the industrial history of the site.
- 49.15 Pillowell in sharp contrast with Whitecroft has several large open areas. In addition the relatively large gardens, paddocks and other incidental spaces add greatly to the overall character of the settlement. The forest edge adjoining the village also adds to local amenity, as do the views out from the hillside location of Pillowell into adjoining forest. The Plan will safeguard this intrinsic character of Pillowell. The Conservation Area Character Assessment for Pillowell provides further detail of local character.

Woodcroft

Introduction

- 50.1 Woodcroft is a compact and tightly knit village served by narrow lanes. It lies about one and a half kilometres north of Tutshill on the B.4228 and is positioned immediately to the east of the Wye Gorge. Part of the village lies within the Wye Valley AONB. The village itself is a mixture of styles and types of building including traditional stone and more recent dwellings. Much of the settlement has poor access from a series of narrow lanes.
- 50.2 Woodcroft has no local services other than a public house, a bakery and a small children's play area. Most services are located in nearby Tutshill, which also has the nearest school. There is little local employment within the village.
- 50.3 The population of the village is estimated to have remained static over recent years at approximately 210 with a housing stock of about 90 dwellings. At January 2004 there was outstanding consent for one dwelling.

Development Strategy

- 50.4 Woodcroft is a compact village with few services. The scope for new development is limited by poor access to parts of the village. In some areas to the west of the B.4228 access is better, however the land here is located within the Wye Valley AONB and is generally prominent. The strategy of the Plan is to safeguard the attractive landscape around Woodcroft, which is especially vulnerable to intrusive development, by means of restricting development in the open countryside beyond the tightly drawn settlement boundary. The strategy will allow residential infilling and single dwellings although there are likely to be few opportunities.
- 50.5 There is only one large open area within Woodcroft. The area lies to the south of the village, above an old quarry, and is extremely attractive. It is privately owned but together with a smaller area close by makes an important visual contribution to the setting of the village. This open area will be protected from inappropriate development as will the small formal recreational area.

Woolaston (including Netherend)

Introduction

- 51.1 The village of Woolaston is located adjacent to the A.48, about 5 kilometres south west of Lydney. The majority of dwellings are located to the north west of the A.48 and is composed of a number of post war housing estates superimposed upon a previously dispersed settlement. Originally Woolaston comprised a loose scatter of dwellings on the lower slopes of the Severn Escarpment. The village has experienced a period of rapid growth well beyond its original boundaries, and now has a character quite different to that of 20-30 years ago. The village has the appearance of a series of housing estates, mostly formed around cul-de-sacs leading off the access roads through Woolaston. The process of change has been incremental, so that generally each new housing development has pushed further into the open countryside away from the A.48, following the alignment of the access roads. Subsequently there has been a process of infilling of spaces left within the village framework. The village has therefore grown substantially as new boundaries were successively defined for the village, and then infilled. In the last ten years there has been some slowing of the previous rapid growth rate, as new housing generally has taken the form of small groups and infilling rather than large estates. Today it contains almost 300 dwellings, together with related services.
- 51.2 The village has a school, two shops, a Post Office, a chapel, a public house and a number of small employers including a dairy and two garages all located within the defined settlement boundary of the settlement. In addition there are two assembly halls and a substantial recreation ground.
- 51.3 In 1941 there were only approximately 35 dwellings in Woolaston. The Parish population has expanded in line with the level of new housing construction. The population of Woolaston village is estimated to be 745 with a housing stock of 287 in 1999. There were no outstanding commitments on January 1st, 2004.
- 51.4 The village abuts open land, both agricultural and woodland, on much of its boundary. The lower slopes of the Severn Escarpment on which the village lies are very open to views from the upper escarpment and from the A.48 in places. In the north west quadrant of the village the built-up area abuts a series of small fields, open areas, and dispersed housing which provide a much more open settlement form. It is important to safeguard this more open area from what could be the cumulative effect of infill development which could result in the loss of this open character.

Development Strategy

- 51.5 Within the Defined Settlement Boundary of Woolaston there are likely to be only limited opportunities for further residential development. The strategy of the Plan is to safeguard the surrounding open countryside from development and resist piecemeal incursions beyond the built up area boundary. The strategy will allow development in the form of infilling, single dwellings and small groups on appropriate sites within the defined settlement boundary which follows the built-up area boundary closely. A small site capable of redevelopment for housing is allocated by the Plan.
- 51.6 The few remaining open areas in the village will be protected from development. Several important open areas have been identified on the Inset Map, these being virtually the only remaining undeveloped areas within the village. Of equal importance, but generally outside the village itself, is the extensive recreation ground and related open area.

Housing

Housing Allocation - Netherend Farm

(R)F.Woolaston 1

Approximately 1 hectares of land at Netherend Farm will be allocated for the provision of up to 30 new dwellings. The development will be required to provide:

1. An acceptable means of vehicular access
2. An appropriate number of affordable housing units
3. Appropriate landscaping to the site boundaries and within the site
4. An appropriate contribution to educational provision for the future occupiers of the site.

- 51.7 The above site is located to the south of the centre of the village and is contained within previously developed land occupied by an existing dairy farm, an area of former orchard and a garden. The site is currently bordered by residential properties to the north and east which will limit views of the development from the village but it is visible to the south west and west from the adjacent open countryside. The land has been identified as an area suitable for the development of up to 30 dwellings. The Plan will support proposals which bring forward a development which secures a mix of dwelling sizes in accord with the needs of the locality. The Forest of Dean District Council will seek to negotiate an appropriate number of affordable housing units to meet local need over the Plan period. Development will need to ensure the establishment of a firm landscaped boundary to the adjoining open countryside. A development brief has been prepared for the site and is available as supplementary planning guidance.

Worrall Hill

Introduction

- 52.1 Worrall Hill is a small settlement closely bounded by the Statutory Forest. The village lies within the boundary of the Statutory Forest as shown on the Proposals Map and Policy (R)FBE.9 would apply to proposals for the change of use of Forest Waste and other Crown Land within the Statutory Forest. It is located on the northern edge of the Forest Ring, on high ground between Lydbrook and the A.4136. The village is one of a number of located around the fringes of the forest surrounded by planted Forest and areas of forest waste. Within the settlement boundary there are a number of open areas which help to make up the form of the village and provide areas of visual and amenity importance.
- 52.2 The village is very compact in its overall form, partly due to the process of infilling which has taken place in past years. This process of infilling has left little opportunity for further development of the built up area within the village. The built environment is largely made up of a mixture of post war local authority and private housing. Older traditional forest dwellings are evident within the village, however the character of these areas has changed following the construction of modern housing estate developments.
- 52.3 The present population of Worrall Hill is approximately 400 with a dwelling stock of about 153. The village has limited local facilities, including a recreation ground with an associated social club and a chapel.

Development Strategy

- 52.4 The Plan strategy for Worrall Hill will limit new housing to infilling comprising of one or two new dwellings within the defined settlement boundary, although few appropriate sites are likely to be available. Proposals for development in Worrall Hill should be compatible with the settled and established character of the village.
- 52.5 The Inset Map identifies a number of open areas within the settlement boundary which are of amenity and visual importance. These areas will be protected from development. In addition the Plan will retain the existing tightly drawn defined settlement boundary in order to protect the surrounding countryside from development.

