

## Drybrook and Harrow Hill

### Introduction

- 16.1 Drybrook and Harrow Hill are two settlements which are physically joined together. Their joint population in January 2000 was approximately 1700, making one of the larger villages in the District. Located on the edge of the coalfield outcrop on the fringes of the Statutory Forest, Drybrook and Harrow Hill form part of the Forest Ring of villages.
- 16.2 Drybrook is larger than Harrow Hill and has undergone greater levels of change. Between 1981 - 1991 Drybrook experienced a relatively high level of growth bringing forward 53 new dwellings. Following a period of relatively little change, there has been considerable recent activity in terms of new dwelling construction, with the redevelopment of flats in the centre of Drybrook.
- 16.3 Drybrook and Harrow Hill have experienced two main periods of growth, firstly during the last century as the coal and metal industries expanded and secondly in more recent years through the construction of large Local Authority housing estates in Drybrook. Smaller private housing developments have also been constructed in Drybrook, producing a consolidated and quite intensively developed form. Whilst Drybrook and Harrow Hill are physically joined together the two have different characters.
- 16.4 Drybrook displays evidence of its industrial heritage. Much of the built form is quite plain in character and suffers particularly from external influences such as the intrusive nature of heavy lorries originating from Drybrook Quarry. This heavy traffic has a detrimental effect upon the local environment in terms of noise, vibration, fumes and intrusion. Other traffic also has a detrimental effect. Within the centre of the village are a variety of shops, supported by other services such as the school, doctors surgery, village hall and several churches. Due to the linear nature and compact form of the village there is little open space within the built up area. A play area and rugby field are located on the edge of the village.
- 16.5 There is a wide range of local employment available in Drybrook, both within the village centre and the area of Nailbridge located to the south of the village. In addition both Cinderford and Mitcheldean are accessible and offer a range of employment opportunities.
- 16.6 Harrow Hill displays characteristics which are typical of a Forest Ring settlement, despite recent residential infilling. There are very large areas of forest waste remaining within the open and disaggregated settlement form, together with enclosed paddocks and small fields. An extensive network of tracks and paths interweave through the blocks of development. Traditional Forest cottages and the use of local materials are all quite evident. Harrow Hill has no facilities or services other than the Holy Trinity Forest Church and a social club. The only formal recreation spaces are two private football club grounds. However access is available to extensive informal recreational space on forest waste areas.
- 16.7 Both Drybrook and Harrow Hill are visually prominent within the landscape as they are situated on elevated hillsides. Drybrook and Harrow Hill are one of a number of nearly continuous settlements around the fringes of the forest. It is the close relationship of these settlements to the forest itself and the extent, nature and variety of the open spaces within the settlements, which gives this landscape its special character.

### Development Strategy

- 16.8 The strategy for Drybrook and Harrow Hill is to provide for future housing development within Drybrook where potential exists for the development of groups of dwellings, single dwellings and infilling, together with two sites for residential development which will bring forward approximately 40 new dwellings over the Plan period. It is an important consideration of the Plan to ensure that new development respects the character and settled nature of Harrow Hill.

- 16.9 The Plan will promote employment opportunities over the Plan period. The strategy provides for additional employment development in the Nailbridge area, offering the opportunity for further development or redevelopment. Development proposals on this site will be required to implement a programme of environmental improvements.
- 16.10 The strategy will continue to support proposals for environmental improvements within the centre of Drybrook. The success of any proposals to revitalise the village centre will depend on the support of local residents and businesses. Any proposal for environmental improvements will have to have a realistic regard to the continued impact of through traffic, including that generated by Drybrook Quarry.
- 16.11 The overall landscape setting of Drybrook and Harrow Hill is particularly attractive containing a range of open areas, which provide opportunities for informal recreation and small scale agricultural activity, including sheep grazing. The strategy will give special protection to these open areas and the surrounding countryside.

#### **Settlement Character, Harrow Hill**

- 16.12 Harrow Hill is set within an attractive landscape on an elevated hillside. It has the characteristic open and sporadic pattern of development of the Forest Ring of Settlements, lying on the Forest ring within the Statutory Forest. It contains a mix of dwellings (often on large plots), enclosed paddocks and fields, open areas of forest waste, tracks and verges which all add to the amenity of the area. This high degree of prominence and the settlement form results in the settlement being vulnerable to the cumulative effects of residential infilling or unsympathetic development. It has poor vehicular access in places via a network of narrow tracks. Considerable restraint on new infilling is desirable in Harrow Hill, both to retain the quality of the existing form and character of the settlement, and to avoid the loss of important open areas. Any new development, including residential infilling, will be required to complement the characteristic open and sporadic pattern of the locality. Policy (R)FBE.2 provides general guidance about the considerations which apply within this locally distinctive area.

#### **Natural Environment**

- 16.13 A number of opportunities exist within the lower part of the Drybrook Valley for environmental improvements, including the extension of Cinderford Linear Park northwards and possible future land reclamation to the south-west. Environmental improvements within these areas would not only improve the entrance to the village, but also provide improved public access for informal recreation.

#### **Cinderford Linear Park Extension**

##### **(R)F.Drybrook/HarrowHill 1**

**Land identified as Quarry Hill will be developed for informal recreational use to form an extension to Cinderford Linear Park.**

- 16.14 Quarry Hill is comprised of an attractive area of forest waste which has potential to create an extension to the Linear Park, benefiting Drybrook and Harrow Hill in terms of the opportunity for enhanced informal recreational use. Detailed proposals will be drawn up to implement the scheme, which will involve only very minor changes on the ground, with the emphasis on improving public access by foot. Any proposals will need to consider how to connect to the proposed extension of Cinderford Linear Park across the A.4136, complementing Policy (R)F.Cinderford 14.

#### **Housing**

- 16.15 The combined population of Drybrook and Harrow Hill in January 2000 was approximately 1700 with an estimated dwelling stock of 710. From 1991 to January 2004 60 dwellings had been completed in Drybrook and Harrow Hill. Planning consent exists for a further 25 new dwellings, 24 in Drybrook and 1 in Harrow Hill.

Population (parish)	Housing Stock	
	Drybrook	Harrow Hill
1981 - 2750	514	117
1991 - 2917	567	131
2000 - 2947	577	133
2004 - 3000 (approx)	Total	758

## Drybrook

### Housing Allocation - Drybrook Road

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0.9 hectares of land off Drybrook Road will be allocated to accommodate approximately 25 new housing units. Development will be required to:

1. Provide sole vehicular access from High Street
2. Provide an appropriate number of affordable housing units
3. Provide for strategic landscaping to the site boundaries and within the site, incorporating existing landscape features and hedgerows where appropriate
4. Provide a wide landscape screen around the southern site boundary
5. Provide for pedestrian and cycle links to the centre of Drybrook and the nearby employment area of Nailbridge.

16.16 The above site is located to the south-east of Drybrook village centre. The site is generally well contained to the west and north by the existing built up area, however to the east and south the site forms part of a larger group of fields which form a distinct pattern within the local landscape.

16.17 The site offers the best possible option to meet local housing need to the end of the Plan period 2011. Development of the site should provide for safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access to the centre of Drybrook, its services and facilities and access to nearby Nailbridge. Further detailed guidance is provided in a development brief prepared for the site.

### Housing Allocation - Woodland Road

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0.65 hectares of land off Woodland Road will be allocated to accommodate 15 new housing units. Development will be required to:

1. Provide an appropriate number of affordable housing units
2. Provide for safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to the centre of Drybrook.

16.18 The above site is located to the north of Drybrook and is surrounded on three sides by existing residential development. A previous application for housing development on this site was refused on access issues. However the Highway Authority indicate that access could now be achieved from Mannings Road overcoming previous highway constraints. The area is within the Forest Ring of settlements and any development should be designed with sensitivity for the character of the landscape. Careful consideration should be given to enhance/improve the setting of the development and ensure that views of the development are mitigated.

## Employment

### Employment - Redevelopment

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Proposals for the development or redevelopment of land for employment uses within the site identified as Nailbridge on the Inset Map will be supported where the proposals meet the requirements of Policy (R)FE.2.

16.19 The area of Nailbridge offers the greatest potential within Drybrook to increase the number of employment opportunities during the Plan period. The northern section of the site is well established with

users which include a builders merchant, saw yard and bathroom showroom. The southern section of the site is currently used for the storage of materials. Potential exists in this area to increase the level of local employment through further development or redevelopment.

- 16.20 The employment site at Nailbridge is within close proximity to both Drybrook and Harrow Hill, providing the opportunity for local businesses to utilise a site which benefits from existing infrastructure and is capable of being accessed by walking and cycling. An intensification of uses on this site will create new job opportunities to meet local employment needs over the Plan period. Any proposals will have due regard to the highly visible nature of the site. Proposals should aim to produce a high quality development which provides an overall improvement to the environment and amenity of the Nailbridge area. Proposals for the further intensification of employment uses of the site will be supported where the foregoing environmental gains can be made.

### **Minerals**

- 16.21 A further source of local employment in Drybrook and Harrow Hill is derived from Drybrook Quarry. Following a Planning Appeal in 1992 Drybrook Quarry has undergone a major expansion to the west. This expansion included a degree of site re-organisation, including the relocation of some processing plant providing significant environmental improvement to the site entrance. The expansion of the Quarry has brought benefits in terms of continued employment, but also significant costs in terms of heavy traffic on local roads and loss of amenity to the village of Drybrook.
- 16.22 Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan, 2003, identifies the site to the west of the existing Drybrook Quarry as a Preferred Area for further mineral extraction. The Plan identifies that up to 4.5 million tonnes of limestone could be worked contributing towards aggregate requirements within the Minerals Local Plan period 1997 - 2006. The Forest of Dean District Council as a statutory consultee to the Minerals Planning Authority will consider future applications for further winning and working of minerals at Drybrook Quarry. Any application will require stringent controls in regard to noise, dust, transportation and general disturbance accompanied by a detailed landscaping, restoration and after care scheme.

## Dymock

### Introduction

- 17.1 Dymock is located 6 kilometres north of Newent in the northern part of the District. It is an attractive village, the older part of which fronts directly onto the B.4215. The village has a church, school, public house, petrol station, post office, village hall and play area and there is a private recreation ground nearby. Much of the village is a Conservation Area, There is little local employment available. By virtue of its location in an area containing meadows and scenic woodlands, which contain wild Daffodils and its historic literary associations, Dymock attracts a considerable number of tourists.
- 17.2 In 2004 the population of the village was approximately 330 and the dwelling stock numbered about 137 On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 there were further consents for five dwellings within the settlement boundary.

### Development Strategy

- 17.3 Dymock is tightly constrained by the surrounding countryside and by important open areas within the village such as the old railway cutting. The need to protect the Conservation Area from inappropriate development is a further constraint. The Plan's housing policy will provide for development at a scale of small groups, single dwellings and infilling within the Defined Settlement Boundary although such opportunities are very limited. Any change that does occur through new housing or other development will need to respect the character of the Conservation Area and of the village as a whole. Partly because of the demand for parking from tourists and partly because of the need to augment the parking facilities for the village hall and church, the possibility of a new car park in the village is being explored and may be constructed during the Plan period.

### Built Environment

- 17.4 Dymock has a long history of settlement and by implication may contain significant archaeological remains. There are visible remains of the former Canal and railway which passed through the village and there is a strong possibility of artefacts from the more distant past being present. It is therefore likely that archaeological investigations will be required as part of development proposals.
- 17.5 The setting and character of the village draws heavily on the substantial number of open areas shown on the Inset Map and these will be protected from development under Policy (R)FBE.8. The Inset Map identifies an area of land on the fringe of the village which will be safeguarded to facilitate the future reinstatement of the Herefordshire Gloucestershire canal.
- 17.6 Through traffic on the relatively narrow B.4215 causes some environmental problems. There is therefore a need to consider the potential for further reducing the environmental impact of this by supplementing the limited traffic calming "gateway" measures that are already established.

