4.0 Cinderford

4.1 Introduction

Historically, Cinderford developed very rapidly in the mid 19th century around Cinderford Bridge, with urbanisation due to the influx of workers required for increasingly commercialised mining. The development of Cinderford echoes the earlier history of encroachment settlements in the Forest, in that it is essentially unplanned and ad-hoc in nature. By the late 19th century a town centre had developed to the north of the bridge, with schools, shops, civic buildings and churches. In the 20th century public transport came to the town with a train and tram station.

In the early to mid 20th century the commercial industry declined due to depletion of iron and coal and the flooding of mine shafts, often caused by existing workings. By the 1960s all the mines in and around Cinderford had closed, along with the town’s passenger rail station. The town faced a major challenge in finding new and diversified employment opportunities.

Today, Cinderford has a population of approximately 8,000 people, with a high proportion of children. A high proportion of people commute out of the town, especially those in professional jobs. The town has lower than average owner occupation percentage and a high proportion of affordable housing. Most of the town lies within the Statutory Forest Boundary.

Cinderford has a programme of regeneration, being brought together under the Cinderford Regeneration Board (CRB) and being led by the Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC), Gloucester County Council, SWRDA, the Forestry Comission and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The Local Plan identifies proposals across the town. The CRB has commissioned a Business Plan, that has some overlap with elements of the Local Plan, but specifically develops the regeneration aspects for the town.

This section of the baseline report covers the following subjects on the Cinderford scale:

- Forest of Dean Local Development Scheme
- Forest of Dean District Council planning context
- Cinderford Business Plan
- Local property review
- Socio-economic context
- Historical development of Cinderford
- Urban morphology and townscape
- Building typologies
- Landscape
- Land use, heritage and facilities
- Movement
- Land-use
- Urban morphology and Townscape
- Building typologies
4.2 Local Development Scheme

Introduction
The purpose of this section is to provide a detailed overview of the context for the preparation of the Cinderford Northern Quarter Area Action Plan (AAP). It comprises a review of the strategic AAP context, analysis of the existing planning policy context and a detailed summary of the Cinderford Business Plan. The final section summarises key issues for consideration and next steps for the AAP.

Local Development Scheme
The current LDS was published in June 2007, and it sets out the timescales for the Core Strategy and Cinderford AAP. The Council is reviewing the dates in the most recent LDS and it is understood that publication of the Core Strategy, which is currently at Preferred Option stage, will be affected by delays to the Regional Spatial Strategy. The following dates set out the current estimated timescale but could be subject to change:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Submission</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Strategy</td>
<td>September 2009</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinderford AAP</td>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>February / March 2010</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
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The Council intends to review this in January 2009 and it is understood that publication of the Core Strategy, which is currently at Preferred Option stage, may be affected by delays to the Regional Spatial Strategy. Consequently, publication may not take place until May 2009, with submission in October 2009 and adoption in November 2010. The Core Strategy programme indicates that the submission draft of the AAP is likely to come forward in November 2009 which implies considerable overlap in terms of the Examination process.
4.2 Local Development Scheme

Relationship with Core Strategy

The Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) Local Development Scheme (LDS) (June 2007) originally indicated that the Core Strategy and Cinderford AAP would have very similar timescales with simultaneous submission, and a subsequent one month lag through the Examination process between Core Strategy and AAP. Feedback from the Planning Inspectorate at the time indicated that there were some concerns about submitting both DPDs at the same time. The feedback stated that in exceptional circumstances (which would need to be agreed between GOSW and FoDDC) and where “there is a need to press on”, the Inspector would be prepared to start with the subsequent DPDs before the Core Strategy report is complete, even in draft form. This could be four weeks after the hearing sessions into the Core Strategy have closed.

It should be noted that Government guidance states that in general no Development Plan Documents (e.g. the AAP) should come forward in advance of the Core Strategy (the District wide strategy which outlines the overarching spatial strategy and framework for, amongst other things, land use change).

The AAP process will therefore need to be managed to ensure that the AAP does not overtake the Core Strategy. It will need to ensure that the Core Strategy is fully resolved in terms of the broad spatial strategy for Cinderford and any contentious issues relating to the Northern Quarter are incorporated within the AAP rather than the Core Strategy. Potential issues will be consulted upon and tested as part of the preferred options process for the AAP and resolved in broad terms of environmental / sustainability and during the masterplanning phase.

The consultant team attended a meeting with representatives of the Government Office in February 2009. It was confirmed that the Planning Inspectorate has recently indicated that the Examination process in the region is estimated to be six or seven months rather than 12 months. In this context, GOSW feel comfortable in principle with a February 2010 submission as this will enable any amendments to be made to the AAP following initial informal feedback from the Inspector in relation to the Core Strategy.

Relationship with previous Business Plan study

The Cinderford Business Plan was commissioned by the Cinderford Regeneration Board in April 2006 in order to plan out and drive forward the regeneration of Cinderford over a ten year period. The Cinderford Business Plan Issues and Options Report was published in February 2007 and contains issues and four different spatial options for Cinderford. These were consulted on in detail and comprise the Issues and Options stage of this AAP process.

In order to take these issues and options through to Preferred Option stage as part of the AAP production, the Business Plan issues and spatial options will be reviewed and assessed through a masterplanning process. From this, strategic policies and design guidance will be drawn up which can be adopted in the form of a statutory AAP. The AAP will also articulate the planning rationale behind each of the Business Plan options, and demonstrate robust grounds for choosing the preferred option, informed by an up-to-date review of planning policy, the local evidence base and issues and Options consultation feedback.

Retail capacity study and town centre context

The Forest of Dean District Retail Study (October 2008) provides an up-to-date review of national, regional and local retail policies and trends. In view of these, the study evaluates retail provision within the Forest of Dean in order to make a series of policy recommendations.

Cinderford is the second largest town centre in the district in terms of retail and commercial unit numbers and is identified in the Gloucester Local Plan as a principal retail centre. The settlement experiences significant leakage of comparison expenditure to nearby regional shopping centres Bristol, Gloucester and Cheltenham and the proximity of the Forest of Dean market towns (Lydney, Cinderford and Coleford) to each other creates local competition, which has limited the level of retail expansion experienced by them. Alongside good access to nearby regional shopping centres, comparison expenditure leakage is also attributed to a shortage of car parking, poor quality of existing parking capacity and poor visual appearance of the town centre. Within the town centre, comparison uses are below the national average and vacancy rates are currently high.

In view of this, the retail study recommends provision of higher levels of comparison floorspace (quantitative need of 1,150sq m net by 2012, rising to 2,290sq m net by 2021), provided within the town centre boundary. The study also sees a clear justification for a new large foodstore which can help retain greater levels of main food shopping trips, taking into consideration its impact on the financial performance of surrounding settlements, particularly Coleford.

In support of this, the strategy supports enhancements to Cinderford which will make it more attractive to visitors, particularly regarding pedestrian movement and access to parking provision, and measures to reduce vacancies. A study has recently been undertaken to examine opportunities to improve the public realm in Cinderford which would play a key role in enhancing the retail experience.

Overall, the study identifies clear potential and justification for a revised market share approach to convenience retailing in Cinderford. Assuming a 100% retention of all convenience shopping from Cinderford and there being no change in the level of inflow from within or outside of the study area, then there will be capacity for an additional 1,070sq m net by 2012, rising to 1,260sq m net by 2021. This approach is in line with policy options for the other key towns (i.e. self containment), although there is potential for this capacity level to increase where convenience expenditure from other parts of the study area is utilised to support a new store.

The Retail Capacity Study states that “...the rugby club site is the most appropriate for large scale retail provision, in addition to smaller sites elsewhere in the town centre which are likely to be more suitable for smaller scale retail uses. However, in order for the rugby club site to function as a true extension to the core shopping area there will need to be a reasonable prospect of pedestrian linkages between the store and centre.”
4.3 Forest of Dean District Council planning context

The Forest of Dean District Council Core Strategy (2008) offers a spatial vision for the district, with strategies for each of the Forest of Dean settlements. Cinderford’s range of employment uses are to be increased to widen the town’s service base and address educational achievement and deprivation. The Northern Quarter is considered the suitable location for a mixed use scheme which will help meet employment and residential needs. Crucially, Cinderford’s excellent physical setting is seen as pivotal to the success of the scheme, and development will therefore need to be of the highest quality.

The strategy provides for 700 dwellings up to the year 2026, 40% to be affordable and 60% on previously developed land. It also provides for development of 26ha employment land, including sites for educational use, a hotel, a biomass plant and office accommodation as part of mixed use development at Steam Mills.

The Forest of Dean Local Plan Review (2005) contains a set of district-wide and settlement-focused policies. This will be superseded once the Core Strategy is adopted. Of the Forest of Dean settlements, Cinderford has the largest employment base, mostly focused on the Forest of Vale Industrial Estate, but the settlement is also in greatest need of new employment and revitalisation. The local plan recommends augmenting Cinderford’s employment base through redevelopment of brownfield sites, accompanied by new housing stock, including affordable housing, and investment into infrastructure and community facilities.

The local plan acknowledges that the surrounding Forest of Dean restricts development opportunities on the one hand, but gives the settlement enormous potential as an attractive location on the other.

The plan also identifies industrial archaeological potential in Cinderford, and requires that development proposals on sites where archaeological interest may be affected should be subject to archaeological assessment.

Within Cinderford, the plan provides for 26ha for employment use and for 585 dwellings, with land allocations for the Northern Quarter as follows:

- **Cinderford 3** - 8.7ha for B1, B2 and B8 employment use. Proposals to contribute to the proposed western access road to Cinderford and to access by walking, cycling and public transport.
- **Cinderford 5** - 6ha land at Newtown for 70 dwellings and 3.4ha employment land for B1 and B2, plus contributions to new sustainable transport links, affordable housing, educational and youth provision, landscaping and the Forest Vale spine road extension and environmental mitigation measures.
- **Cinderford 12** - Safeguarding of land for Western Access route with appropriate mitigation and compensatory provision to address environmental impacts arising from the development.
- **Cinderford 13** - Safeguarding of land for construction of Forest Vale spine road extension to Steam Mills with appropriate mitigation and compensatory provision to address environmental impacts arising from the development.
- **Cinderford 14** - Land comprising the Cinderford Linear Park will be further developed for leisure and recreational use with additional land to be allocated as an extension to the Linear Park at Nailbridge.
- **Cinderford 15** - 11.3ha surrounding the Steam Mills Lake for leisure and recreation. Contributions are expected towards the construction of the Western access road to Cinderford and to environmental mitigation measures.
4.4 Cinderford Business Plan

Overview

In 2007, a client team led by Cinderford Regeneration Board (CRB) and also including Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC), English Partnerships (EP) and South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) prepared the Cinderford Business Plan. In addition to setting out key strategies and project-based interventions, the Business Plan also forms part of the evidence base for the Area Action Plan. The content in the final Business Plan document (December 2007) is articulated as a preferred option and is supported in the context of a thorough analysis of issues and options as set out in the Business Plan Issues and Options Report (February 2007).

The Business Plan draws on a detailed Baseline Report which identifies a wide range of statistics and information about Cinderford and outlines the key opportunities and constraints which will shape the future development of the area. The Baseline Report considers the following topics:

- Strategic and local policy framework;
- Economic baseline;
- Social and community facilities baseline;
- Market appraisal;
- Transport infrastructure and movement;
- Landscape character and ecology; and
- Townscape and built heritage.

The Baseline Report informed the development of an Issues and Options report, published in February 2007. The purpose of this document was to:

- Explore the possible actions, projects and initiatives that could be taken forward to contribute towards Cinderford’s regeneration;
- Consider the availability of land on which new facilities could be built – it concluded that the Northern Quarter and the town centre were the two key sites that would play the most critical role in Cinderford’s future;
- Put forward a range of options for how the Northern Quarter could be developed - either with a recreation, residential, employment/learning, or mixed use focus; and
- Identify options for the redevelopment of the town centre, based on various extents of change.

In line with guidance in PPS12, the process of generating and reviewing issues and options included significant ongoing consultation and participation with the community and stakeholders. The Business Plan summarises the consultation as follows:

- Both the full Issues and Options report and a short Executive Summary were made available on the project website www.cinderford2016.net. Copies of the Executive Summary were also made available in a range of public buildings. Stakeholders were informed about this phase of the consultation by letter.
- Comments were also invited via a short feedback form. 96 completed feedback forms were returned to the District Council. In addition a number of letters were received.
- The Issues and Options Report was the subject of discussions and meetings between individuals, local businesses and officers from partner organisations, and therefore a depth of qualitative feedback was obtained.
- The Cinderford Consultative Group has been involved in commenting on the emerging Business Plan throughout the process.
- Cinderford Regeneration Board received regular presentations on the emerging Business Plan which also included a number of interactive workshops.

Following the completion of the issues and options stage, the final report of the Business Plan was completed in December 2007. The purpose of this section is to review the following information from the Business Plan:

- Strategic objectives – a summary of aims and objectives which underpin the Business plan;
- Key issues and opportunities identified in the evidence base;
- Northern Quarter – summary of the site context;
- Summary of options – review of the four options which were generated during the course of the project; and
- Preferred option summary – the core components of the preferred option.
4.4 Cinderford Business Plan

Strategic objectives
The Cinderford Business Plan sets out a series of strategic objectives which emerged from public consultation at the early stages of Business Plan preparation and consultation stakeholders and funding bodies.

Chapter 3 of the Business Plan final report sets out a detailed and comprehensive narrative for each of the strategic objective. Each objective is amplified with a statement of aims and is justified in a concise statement of rationale which draws upon the evidence base and policy requirements and strategic policies or initiatives. It is likely that the Preferred Options report and AAP will draw on these objectives and supporting statements in detail as they have a clear rationale in relation to evidence based research and consultation, and are coherent in planning terms. A brief summary of each strategic objective is provided below.

Strategic objective: A model of sustainable new development
Aim
To promote Cinderford as a regional model of sustainable new development and management, and reduce the town’s “carbon footprint”.

Rationale and evidence base:
- Policy agenda at all scales to achieve sustainable use of resources.
- To prioritise sustainability and differentiate Cinderford from other towns.
- Key message is that eco-principles are increasingly underpinning many funding criteria and therefore the very highest standards should be met to secure funding.
- Sustainability concepts received widespread public support through consultation.

Key policy references
- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) - social inclusion, protection and enhancement of the environment, prudent use of resources and good design.
- Code for Sustainable Homes – supporting higher standards of sustainability in relation to the building and operation of homes (and where appropriate employment and community uses) to be achieved through greater energy efficiency, water efficiency, surface water management, site waste management, household waste management and use of materials. Meeting recommended standards in relation to Lifetime Homes, additional sound insulation, private external space, higher daylighting standards and improved security will also be required.
- South West Regional Economic Strategy 2006-15 – promoting a reduced environmental footprint and a low carbon approach to economic development at a regional scale.

Strategic objective: A desirable and affordable place to live
Aim
To provide a mix of new housing types, deliver more affordable housing for first time buyers and low income families and make better use of the existing housing stock.

Rationale and evidence base:
- Housing need and demand
  - Growing housing need within the town and district - Cinderford has a lower level of owner occupation than the district and regional levels. Rate of increase of prices is much higher for lower end properties (flats, maisonettes and terraces) than higher-end properties. Wage increases in the district are not keeping pace with regional and national trends.
  - Strong housing demand – local demand for modern two-bedroom accommodation and shared ownership housing. Limited demand for higher end properties.
  - Population size has increased by 6% between 1991 and 2001 with growth in 35-44 and 45-49 age bands but the younger age bands have experienced declining or only marginal population increases. Potential “pricing out” of younger groups from the housing market and need for entry-level housing.

Housing allocations
- Regional policy constrains supply of housing to that allocated in the current Local Plan over the period to 2026. There is an apparent need to speed up the delivery of allocated sites as relocation and infrastructure issues has caused inertia in the development of peripheral sites.
- The Council has confirmed that it would be acceptable to redistribute district housing targets to enable an additional 150 dwellings to be provided in Cinderford beyond 2011.
- There is a need for allocation of land for housing giving consideration to housing need, RSS requirements, the need for mixed and sustainable communities, maximisation of affordable housing provision and best use of previously developed sites.

Balancing housing and employment uses
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the balance of housing and employment in the context of creating a balanced community.
- Based on 2001 census figures Cinderford has a population of 8,120 of which 4,862 are of working age. However, Cinderford only has 4,186 jobs which means that a significant proportion of the working age population must commute out of Cinderford for work. The Business Plan recommends that one job be provided for each house built.
- To safeguard the long-term future of the town there is a need to ensure that sites come forward for housing, but that these are complementary to necessary employment growth in the town.
4.4 Cinderford Business Plan

Strategic objective: An exciting place to work and do business

Aim
To stimulate economic development which raises the skills level of the local workforce, providing higher skilled and higher paid employment and opportunities for self employment.

Rationale and evidence base:
• Cinderford has a relatively poor skills base with higher than average proportion of local working age population having no qualification.
• The area has a high concentration in manufacturing and employment with lower proportions in tertiary employment sectors. There is a need to maintain the traditional manufacturing strengths and skills as well as expanding in areas such as office employment.
• Commuting patterns are complex with a significant element of out-commuting and in-commuting (58% of the workforce live in Cinderford or the Area of Influence). Just under 4,300 people commute out of the Core Area and Area of Influence for work and 4,000 commute in.
• There is an acknowledged shortage of available land as identified in the emerging Core Strategy and the Employment and Tourism Issues and Options Consultation paper (2006). There is a need for the AAP to identify sufficient supply of sites to meet local requirements, make best use of previously developed land, make best use of infrastructure provision and provide land in proportion with housing provision.
• The Business Plan confirms that there is a limited supply of land for employment and there is a need to diversify the employment to generate a more sustainable and balanced town. Quality of employment is regarded as a higher priority than quantity of development.
• Market demand analysis undertaken as part of the Business Plan process identified that office development could be attracted if high quality sites are provided in an attractive setting with good access. In relation to small industrial units, small firms could be encouraged to locate in Cinderford if appropriate sites and premises are provided. Analysis of available premises and enquiries for general industrial sites indicates that there is a mismatch between supply and demand with sites being too small and inflexible to meet needs of prospective businesses.
• In addition to enhancing the quality and quantity of land supply, there is a need to rejuvenate and intensify existing employment sites, particularly on industrial estates.

Strategic objective: An accessible place which is well connected

Aim
To provide better road, pedestrian and cycle access both to, and within, Cinderford.

Rationale and evidence base:
• There is a perception that Cinderford is remote, particularly in relation to potential businesses who view travel time from M5 as a constraint. Poor accessibility from the A4136 to the north is considered to be a major constraint to economic prosperity and constrains development sites at Steam Mills. Provision of a new link road on an alternative alignment has been identified as a way to improve perceptions of accessibility and to unlock the potential of development sites.

Strategic objective: A more active community with better facilities

Aim
To provide significantly improved community facilities, to serve both the local population and also a wider catchment area.

Rationale and evidence base:
• Work associated with the SRB6 Regeneration Programme and more recent consultation has confirmed that there is strong public support for a range of community facilities to be provided in Cinderford. These range from youth facilities such as an indoor skate park facility to leisure pools and spa facilities. There is also a demand for facilities and community halls from existing clubs and groups in the area. There is also major shortfall of playspace and sports pitches in the town.

Strategic objective: An attractive, green and sustainable environment

Aim
To bring the quality of the Forest and environment surrounding Cinderford into the town itself and ensure that any new development respects its forest setting.

Rationale and evidence base:
• The physical links between the town and the Forest are weak and regeneration proposals should place distinctive natural assets and features at the heart of proposals. The Business Plan emphasises the importance of an appealing environmental setting in attracting new businesses and securing inward investment.

Strategic objective: A fun and imaginative place to visit

Aim
To put Cinderford ‘on the map’ and ensure that more people who visit the Forest come into Cinderford itself.

Rationale and evidence base:
• The Forest of Dean is recognised as a successful and popular tourist and visitor destination but Cinderford fails to capture the benefits of this potential market. A wide range of interventions are identified which would benefit both visitors and residents. These include retail, food and leisure enhancements, provision of improved sports and community facilities, greater accommodation offer including a new hotel, heritage interpretation facilities and exemplar buildings and features from a sustainability perspective.
4.4 Cinderford Business Plan

Strategic objective: A supportive and inclusive place to learn

Aim
Promote lifelong learning to deliver sustainable economic development, social progress and health and well-being.

Rationale and evidence base:

- The Index of Multiple Deprivation illustrates that parts of Cinderford rank within the top 10% of most deprived areas in the country for education skills and training.
- There is clearly a need to raise skills levels in order to open up a wider range of employment opportunities for individuals and provide a skills base which will support the attraction of business investment into Cinderford.
- The key opportunity identified relates to the provision of a new campus for Royal Forest of Dean College. The Business Plan also emphasises Cinderford's strength in relation to the creative sector which is also a priority identified in the South West RDA's Regional Economic Strategy and Corporate Plan.

Key issues and opportunities identified in the evidence base

The Business Plan identifies a series of major opportunities based on a review of the evidence base and are summarised as follows. It is important to ensure that the Northern Quarter site is not treated in isolation and that proposals for the AAP area are set within an understanding of social, economic and environmental dynamics at local and sub-regional scales.

Opportunities of greatest relevance to the Northern Quarter are marked with an asterisk.

New office development *
Objective: To help diversify the local economy.
Location: A high quality new development, potentially set around Steam Mills Lake.

New industrial development *
Objective: To respond to strong demand for industrial based employment.
Location: Use should be made of space on the existing industrial estates, subsequently new sites at Steam Mills, Newtown or Northern United could be considered.

New ground for football club *
Objective: To identify a site for Cinderford Football Club which will enable provision of improved facilities and access.
Location: Steam Mills Lake/Hawkwell Enclosure area, subject to ecological and landscape constraints and reasonable sharing of facilities.

New biomass facility *
Objective: To generate power in a green, sustainable way (by utilising forest waste products).
Location: There is interest from the private sector in developing a site either at Northern United or within the Forest Vale Industrial Estate.

Improvements to the Linear Park *
Objective: To harness the potential of the park for leisure and conservation.
Location: The Linear Park south of the sewage treatment works, subject to a detailed management plan, possibly creating a formal park at its southern end.

New mixed tenure housing *
Objective: To enable young people to get on the housing ladder and to provide more top-level housing.
Location: A mix of housing types, to include affordable housing, not only on allocated sites, but also at Steam Mills and St Whites and as part of mixed use schemes elsewhere.

New road link to A4136 *
Objective: To improve access to Cinderford from the north and improve perceptions of accessibility to encourage inward investment.
Location: Aspiration to extend the Valley Road spine road by providing a new tree lined avenue, either between the A4136 and Valley Road or between the A4151 and Valley Road. This would create an attractive new entrance to the town.

Greening of key transport routes *
Objective: To improve the image of Cinderford in relation to enhancing the experience of roads in Cinderford.
Location: Key links from A48 and A4136, to enhance wildlife links and bring the Forest to the town.

New multi-use activity centre *
Objective: To provide indoor leisure facilities, such as skate park, climbing wall and leisure pool, to offer diversion and interest for residents and wet weather facilities for visitors.
Location: Possibly the Steam Mills area or the rugby training ground.
New campus for Royal Forest of Dean College *
Objective: To improve education and skills in Cinderford and to provide new community facilities and confidence.
Location: Subject to the findings of a separate study – Steam Mills Lake.

An Environment Centre *
Objective: To provide an educational resource based on interpretation of the natural environment.
Location: Potentially within close proximity of the Linear Park or the Natural England grassland site.

A ‘Gateway’ Centre *
Objective: To act as a focus for tourist information. Potentially to link with/double up as an Environment Centre.
Location: At a prominent location on the approach to Cinderford.

Public transport provision
Objective: To improve public transport connections to outlying villages and connections to major towns particularly at evenings and weekends.
Location: All new developments proposed will only proceed if a public transport plan can be implemented.

New retail development
Objective: To improve the range of shops, and prevent ‘leakage’ of shopping trips to other towns.
Location: In the town centre, potentially linked to the proposed Tesco store and to car parks.

New leisure facilities such as cafés, restaurants and bars
Objective: To help make Cinderford more attractive to visitors, and provide improved leisure facilities for residents.
Location: In the town centre.

New tourist attraction at Drybrook Quarry
Objective: To provide new tourist facilities of real interest in the east of the Forest, and this site could offer considerable potential.
Location: Drybrook Quarry, subject to landowners’ support and results of costed feasibility study.

Improved management of parking provision
Objective: To improve the perception of inadequate parking and signing.
Location: Existing car parks, in particular Heywood Road. Possible new parking in association with new town centre development. Improve management and provide better footways to car parks.

Greening of Forest Vale Industrial Estate
Objective: To create a higher quality environment and attract new employers, using new trees, shrubs, lighting and public art.
Location: Throughout the industrial estate, focusing on the entrances and key transport routes.

Intensification of Forest Vale Industrial Estate
Objective: To create sites for new employers and be able to cater for expansion needs of existing employers.
Location: Unused or inefficiently used sites throughout the estate, but especially near Broadmoor Brickworks and the cricket ground.

Improved traffic management
Objective: To reduce the impact of traffic on the town centre.
Location: Options include improving alternative routes such as St. Whites Road and Valley Road, improving signing to encourage heavy vehicles to access the industrial areas from the north or alternations to traffic flow in the town centre, including the potential creation of a one-way system.

Redevelopment in the town centre
Objective: To provide a layout able to attract retail and leisure investment and make the centre more attractive and safer.
Location: A number of key sites for potentially significant redevelopment have been identified, these include land between the Triangle and the Coop and land between the Westgate Store and the Miners Welfare Hall.

Intensified residential uses in town centre
Objective: To introduce new housing in the town centre to make it more vibrant and make better use of space above shops.
Location: Conversion/upgrading of space above shops and redevelopment of shops outside core retail area.

Relocation of the abattoir
Objective: To promote re-location of the existing site which is close to residential development to an alternative site in Cinderford with a view to retaining jobs locally, and enabling the existing site to be redeveloped for housing.
Location: A large site, away from housing with good road connections in line with the emerging development concept for the town as a whole.
4.5 Local property market review

Overview
The UK property market is currently experiencing a significant downturn as a result of the credit crunch and the turmoil in global financial markets. The housing market correction continues, with price deflation approaching 13% and significantly fewer transactions as a result of the restriction on mortgage availability. The commercial property market has also been severely affected, with lower demand for commercial space and reduced availability of funding contributing to a lack of market activity. The retail and leisure markets, which rode the early phase of the economic downturn, are now being adversely affected due to the reduction in consumer spending and the increase in unemployment, and are likely to experience increased stress as the general lack of confidence, ongoing limitation on debt. Macro economic weakness also acts to increase caution and decrease activity in these sectors.

There has been a lack of investment in the town for many years both in terms of new development and within the current built form. There are limited employment opportunities in the Forest, partly due to the relatively inaccessible location compared to settlements off the M4 and M5 corridors. The lack of requirements/interest from occupiers and developers reflects limited catchment within the Forest, poor socio-economic demographics and therefore relatively small market value to be derived. Also, compared to opportunities within major settlements and competing towns in close proximity such as Ross-on-Wye, Gloucester, Dursley, Stroud etc, the Forest of Dean is often overlooked and bypassed because of the poor quality of offer. This lack of investment also presents an opportunity for the public sector regeneration agencies to lead the way for high quality sustainable development the like of which has not been seen in this area to date. This will generate confidence and a new quality of accommodation that will place Cinderford on the map, enabling it to attract occupiers, investors and new residents.

Residential
Market conditions are not favourable for residential development at present but once the market improves the opportunity for good quality sustainable housing is likely to be a key value driver for the site. The existing housing stock is of mixed quality and generally consists of small housing units. There have been a couple of small developments near to the Steam Mills site, by Bloor Homes and Bell Homes, which are nearing completion and demonstrate the market demand for lower-mid end market housing. There is a sizeable development of 180 units proposed in Cinderford by Bloor Homes, which will be the biggest scheme in the town, and which will potentially be nearing completion by the time units could be offered for sale on Steam Mills.

- **Land value range** - £400,000 - £600,000 per net developable clean acre of land for standard housing product (30-50 units per hectare).
- **Sales revenue** - £165-£185 per square foot saleable gross internal area for housing.
- **Sales rate** – approximately 24-36 units per annum, assuming improved market trading conditions and mixed tenure housing provision.
- **Product** – two and three bed traditional houses most saleable, supplemented by larger family homes and limited apartments, which would cater for the local population of first time buyers, trading up, and also new residents from outside the area.
- **Developers** – limited national house builder interest (even during the peak of the property market), small local/regional developer interest and possibly one or two developing housing associations will form the main interest for opportunities in this location.

Commercial
**Offices**
There is limited office provision in Cinderford and that which has been available has often been small poor quality space by modern standards, let at very low rentals. However, Vantage Point Business Village located just three miles north of Cinderford illustrates that the area does have the potential to attract substantial occupiers: Vantage Point Business Village is a development of both office and industrial space provided on the site and buildings of the former Xerox factory, with approximately 1.3 million square feet of floor space. Vantage Point has the ability to provide flexible space of varying qualities and therefore price, at speed, as most of the space is by conversion of existing buildings. The development has recently reported a sizeable letting of 30,000 sq ft to London & General.

- **Rental values** - £8-10 per square foot (NIA)
- **Yield** – 8 -10% (NIY)
- **Land value** – no direct evidence to support land value, but general employment land values in the area would be in the order of £100,000 per net developable clean acre, although achievable rental values suggest this would be difficult to achieve. In reality any office development, particularly with high design and sustainability standards, would need some form of gap funding.
- **Demand** - It is unlikely that any developer would undertake any speculative development in the area and it would be difficult to attract national or large regional developers to the area, unless a large pre-let is in place. There are small local developers that have been active, but Vantage Point seems to control much of the market place and could soak up emerging demand at the former Xerox factory. Office development is likely to be slow unless an early large anchor occupier is secured, and any future supply is likely to be reliant on smaller, niche occupiers being attracted to the high quality environment that could be produced, and proximity to the town centre.

We are aware of a potential requirement in the Forest, which could require as much as 7,500 sq m (80,730 sq ft), although it should be noted that this would be a one-off for the Forest should it be realised. It is nonetheless further evidence of potential demand and a need for the Forest to be able to respond to such a requirement.
4.5 Local property market review

Industrial

The majority of industrial space in Cinderford was constructed in the 1970s and 1980s with supply provided in units of circa 2,000 – 5,000 square feet, mirroring demand requirements. The development area adjoins the town’s main industrial area, with Forest Vale Industrial Estate providing a number of opportunities for a range of modern industrial units through to open storage land. As mentioned above, Vantage Point is a significant development that offers various grades and sizes of industrial space. Vantage Developments also have a number of interests in the Forest Vale Industrial Estate, and have a couple of units currently available. Also, Vantage Developments recently completed and let a new build facility for CKS Ltd, associated with electronic recycling. However, the company recently went into receivership and the 56,000 sq ft unit is likely to come back on to the market.

It is also worth noting that SWRDA developed high quality office/industrial units at Parkend, Bream, providing 17,000 square feet, but these units did not let very quickly and rents were as low as £3.50 per square foot. These units were remote and probably demonstrated the lack of demand for units of this type away from the main roads and lack of connectivity with local facilities. The property was recently acquired by Vantage Developments at a yield of 8.25%. SWRDA have also facilitated the development of 7,900 square meter bespoke industrial units for the Dezac Groupe, who manufacture toiletry products in Cinderford.

- Rental values - £2.00-5.00 per square foot (NIA)
- Yield – 8-10% (NIY)
- Land values - £150,000 per clean developable acre
- Demand - There is a good supply of industrial property available in the area and therefore demand will be limited. Due to the provision of the new link road, there could be an opportunity for small units within the scheme to complement the mix of employment provision in the development. As with the office market, there are limited national or large regional developers that would consider Cinderford, preferring locations with good communications along the M4 and M5 motorways.

Leisure

The leisure market covers a wide spectrum of users, from restaurants through to activity centres. We have not been able to obtain any significant evidence in relation to activity in the leisure market in the area. Most restaurants, pubs, hotels and guest houses in the area are run by individuals or small independents. We are not aware of any requirements from national chains or independent groups for the area.

Summary

Whilst trading conditions remain difficult across all sectors, it should be noted that the development of the Steam Mills area will be a long term project enabling private sector investment to be made as the property market returns to its long term upward trend. The proposed relocation of the Royal Forest of Dean College to Cinderford is key to the redevelopment proposals that may act as a catalyst for regeneration and provide activity on the ground.

The development proposal under consideration at Cinderford is similar in nature to the successful regeneration of the former Lister Petter site in Dursley, where St. Modwen and SWRDA have just completed the first phase of a new business park totalling 1,858 sq m (20,000 sq ft) accommodation, over half of which has already been sold to light industrial and warehousing occupiers.
4.6 Socio-economic context

Introduction
This section summarises the socio-economic situation in Cinderford. The Cinderford ward is one of the most deprived areas in the Forest, as measured by a set of deprivation indices including employment, educational levels and housing quality and tenure.

The ward is also characterised by a relatively youthful population and a high dependency on the secondary manufacturing sector for employment. Large numbers of people commute in and out of the town for work, raising interesting questions about the availability of employment in both the town and the wider area.

Population
• A very high proportion of population is aged 0-15, compared to national levels.
• There is a lower proportion of working age people compared to county or national levels.
• An average proportion of the population is of retired age.
• There is a low average population density across the ward (less than 10 people per hectare).

Employment
• 40% of the working population work in manufacturing and construction: this is double the national/county averages.
• 60% work in the service sector – this is significantly lower than national/county averages.
• Unemployment is above national/county averages.
• Lowest levels of self-employment in the district

Qualifications
• Guide to qualification level:
  Level 1: GCSE/O Level/NVQ 1 etc; Level 2-3: A Level, Advanced NVQ etc; Level 4-5: Degree and higher.
• Less than 10% of the ward population hold a degree or higher qualification.
• Over 60% have no qualifications or hold only Level 1 qualifications. The workforce is generally low-skilled.
• No post-16 education is available in Cinderford: the ward is in the national top 10% for deprivation in education and skills.
4.6 Socio-economic context

Housing tenure
- The Cinderford ward has the lowest levels of owner-occupation in the district, below 36%.
- It also has the highest levels of housing association/social landlord tenure.
- Unlike other areas in the region, such as the Wye Valley and the Cotswolds, there are very low levels of second-home ownership in the ward.
- 9% of households are classed as “overcrowded”.
- Household deprivation (up to 60%) is significantly higher than county/national averages (29/35%).

Population change
- Net population growth for the district between 1991-2006 was 7.8%, consistent with growth rates across the county/nationally.
- This was solely due to in-migration: the Cinderford district had the highest number of migrant worker registrations in the county during 2003-2006.
- The majority of migrants are Eastern European, which suggests the impact may not be long-term as these are primarily economic migrants who intend to return home within a few years.

Business and industry
- The existing industrial estates feature low-density, sprawling land uses, with low levels of employment - an inefficient use of land.
- The District Council received a number of enquiries during 2007 from businesses wishing to locate in Cinderford.
- However, there was a clear mismatch between the premises available and the premises required, in terms of size, access and flexibility.

Commuting patterns
- 4186 people work in Cinderford town, of which 58% of these people live in the town, 26% commute from the district and 16% commute from further afield.
- 4300 people commute out of the Cinderford wider area for work.
- 42% of the out-commuters are employed in routine or semi-routine work, reflecting both the work available and the skills of the local workforce.
- 4000 people who live outside the area commute into the Cinderford wider area for work.

Car ownership and journey modes
- Car ownership is relatively low in the Cinderford ward at 1.13 cars per household, compared to 1.40 in the Forest of Dean as a whole. It is also slightly lower than the rate for the South West region (1.23).
- 25% of households do not have access to a car or van.
- The Cinderford ward area extends beyond the town - households outside walking distance of the services the town provides are more likely to be dependent on private transport.
- This is reflected in the high proportion of people who travel to work in private cars (77%).
- 15% of people are able to walk to work.
- The low proportion of people travelling to work by public transport reflects the limited bus service in the area and the distance to a rail station from where one could commute to larger cities in the region.

Sources:

NB: This socio-economic data references two areas; the ‘Cinderford wider area’ and ‘Cinderford town’. The former includes a number of the surrounding villages and small towns, whereas the latter is solely the town of Cinderford itself.

The division of Cinderford ward into C. East and C. West was made statutory in 2002; therefore, the 2001 census data refers to the 2001 ward of Cinderford.
4.7 Historic development of Cinderford

Introduction
Development of Cinderford echoes the earlier history of encroachment settlements in its essentially unplanned, haphazard nature. One might expect the 13th century ford (later bridge) to have acted as the nucleus of the growing town, and indeed early settlement growth was concentrated at St Whites/Stockwell Green. However, topography, the need to respect forest boundaries, and the developing road network all forced a new centre to develop to the north-east of this point.

The turnpiking of local roads in the late 18th century was followed by the construction of a new north-south road between Nailbridge and Littledean. This road played a fundamental role in shaping the form of Cinderford: a tollbooth on the road west of its junction with Dockham Road was accompanied by a small cluster of housing. Much more development took place here in the 1850s and 1860s, including two inns.

The town hall was constructed as this area became the focus of the town, which by the last quarter of the 19th century extended north towards Valley Road and south-east across Flaxley Meend. The narrowness of the north-south road – the High Street – can be linked with the dominant east-west movement route of minerals from the Forest.

Development remained patchy, with isolated groups of housing that were gradually linked by roads, rail/tram, and settlement/industry. Many of these disparate clusters have their roots in earlier encroachments. The road network remained relatively undeveloped: goods were taken out by rail until the 1950s.

Pre 19th century development
Cinderford is the only town within the statutory Forest of Dean boundary. The town has roots going back to the 13th century, but for 600 years it was just a ford over Cinder Brook and a few houses. Rapid industrialisation led to increasing urbanisation in the mid 19th century.

- 13th century - 1820: pre-commercial industrialisation.
- The name of the town was first recorded in 1258.
- The settlement developed around the point where the Littledean-Coleford Road crossed Cinder Brook.
- In 1674 Cinderford Bridge was built over the brook, and by the 18th century the settlement began to develop with a cluster of houses around the bridge.
4.7 Historic development of Cinderford

1820s-40s: rapid urbanisation in the late 1820s

- The opening of Cinderford Ironworks, along with several mines, led to rapid urbanisation over the next 40 years.
- The Bilson Colliery was deepened in the 1820s, creating many more jobs.
- The Lightmoor Colliery opened in the late 1840s to the east of Cinderford.
- Some of the ironwork and mine owners built miners cottages and terraces for their workers.
- In 1832 there were c.51 dwellings east of the brook at Cinderford Bridge.
- By 1841 the settlement around the bridge included a chapel and two beerhouses.
- In 1844 the Parish Church of St John was consecrated. It is located to the north-east of Cinderford Bridge. It is now a Grade II Listed Building. A settlement grew up around the church.
- Some housing was developed to the north, around the area which would later become the town centre.
- Some housing was also developed on the sides of the valley, whilst industry was generally located on the flat valley floor.
- Rail lines for the industry were built. Many of these rail lines are now roads or public rights of way through the town.

Fig. 4.7.3 Hawkwell Colliery, c.1830

Fig. 4.7.4 Composite map (1856)

Fig. 4.7.5 Schematic map (1850)
4.7 Historic development of Cinderford

1850s-90s: New centre

- Civic and commercial buildings began to be built around the present day town centre.
- In the 1860s the Town Hall was constructed in the present day town centre, located on the High Street. It was demolished in the 1960s to make way for wider streets in the centre of the town.
- By the 1870s a police station had been built on Station Street, just to the east of High Street.
- Shops and services began to appear on the High Street.
- Commercial Street was built, linking the High Street to the south of the settlement towards Cinderford Bridge.
- Religious buildings were also built in the new centre, three of which remain and have listed Grade II status: the Methodist Church on Belle Vue Road dating from 1849; the Baptist Church on Commercial Street dating from 1860 and St Stephen’s Church, also located on Belle Vue Road.
- By the 1880s the centre of Cinderford had fully moved from around Cinderford Bridge to the present day location.
- Steam Mills Primary School was built in 1881.
4.7 Historic development of Cinderford

1910s-30s: Passenger railway and tram

- In the early 20th century Cinderford’s public transport improved hugely, with a passenger rail station opening in 1906 and a passenger rail to Gloucester in 1921. The station has since been demolished.

- These railway lines existed previously, but were for industrial rather than passenger transport.

- Housing developments filled in areas to the south of the centre, with inter-war housing on the east of the town built overlooking the Severn Valley.

- The Northern United Colliery was deepened, creating many jobs.

- The War Memorial was erected in the centre of the town, with a bronze soldier on a stone pedestal.

- Coal production reached a peak and large collieries began to close.
4.7 Historic development of Cinderford

Postwar-1970s

- In the late 1940s terrace cottages in poor condition began to be demolished, and replaced by new council housing to the north side of the town around the Heywood Road area and the Station Street/Valley Road area.
- The last of the deep mines closed in the 1960s.
- The rail station was closed in the 1960s and all rail tracks dismantled.
4.7 Historic development of Cinderford

1980s - present day

- Forest Vale Industrial Park was established in the 1980s after the closure of heavy industry, providing an alternative source of employment.
- The Market Hall in the centre of the triangle was built in 2000, creating a civic focus for the town with a stone tower and clock turret and seating inscribed with Forest dialect. In 2000 a bronze statue of a miner at work was erected.
4.8 Urban morphology and townscape

Cinderford

The morphology in Cinderford is similar to many other towns in the UK, with a tight urban grain around the centre of the town and along the north-south High Street, and lower density residential development around the edges. The street sections in the town are generally narrow, even on the High Street, with residential and commercial buildings often having no private strip to the street, with building lines at the back of pavement. In stark contrast to the residential development, the industrial land-uses in the north west of the town show a much looser urban grain, where buildings do not relate to the street and are set back in their plots. As Cinderford lies on a slope, many streets follow the contour lines to ease movement. The effect on the street network is that it results in frequent acute angle junctions.

Cinderford developed in stages throughout the 19th and 20th century. The first major phase of development was residential terraces built in the early 19th century. They were erected by mine owners for those coming to work in the mining industry. These houses were generally modest two storey terrace buildings, with some ad-hoc detached and semi-detached buildings in areas between the terraces developed by mine owners. This first area to be developed was situated in the south of the town around Cinderford Bridge, where a small settlement had developed in previous centuries.

The second major phase of development was the town centre in the mid-late 19th century. This phase of development saw the settlement of Cinderford spread to the north, with schools, churches, shops and civic buildings built in the current town centre to serve the growing residential population. In addition, areas of housing were built in pockets around the town throughout this period. Development was generally packed-in, with tight street sections and minimal, if any, front private strip to the street. Development patterns differ between the areas within the forest boundary and those outside. Outside the boundary, which runs between Church Road and Woodside Street south of the centre and along Heywood Road north of the centre, settlement patterns are more regular and follow clearly designed road networks, whereas inside the boundary settlements follow a more organic growth pattern.

The third phase of development between the wars in the 20th century saw larger detached residential properties developed on the edge of the plateaus east and west, overlooking the valleys. These houses differ from those in previous phases of development in that the buildings are larger, with a higher quality of architectural detailing, are in larger plots set back from the street and generally have gables.

The fourth phase of development was post-war local authority housing to the north of the town, on sites that had either not been developed previously or where sub-standard buildings had been demolished to make way for new development. These buildings generally followed the established vernacular of two storey buildings with pitched roofs, some brick, and some render. The grain of these developments is generally looser than the 19th century residential properties, but the architectural detailing is generally weaker.

The fifth phase of development in the 1980s and ‘90s saw the large industrial park developed to the north west of the town, with large shed-like buildings with a poor relationship to the street. The industrial park is on the flatter land of the valley, between the residential development of the town and the Forest to the west. Residential development in these years was infilling sections of the town that had not been built on, often with brick two storey terraces or bungalows.

The sixth and most recent phase of development in the last 10 years has seen high quality residential developments in the centre of the town. These houses are generally two storey brick terraces which are 3 bays wide and have pitched roofs and porches.

In summary, the building types are varied with a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraces throughout the town. With the exception of the High Street, streets generally do not have a continuous frontage, with frequent gaps between buildings. A unifying element of the residential buildings are the height, roof type and building materials, where buildings are generally two storey, with pitched roofs, and elevations that are render or brick.

Summary of urban morphology

- Cinderford’s urban morphology is built around the triangle in the centre and the north-south High Street.
- The industrial park to the north-west of the centre shows large buildings in isolation.
- The density is approximately 25-30 dwellings per hectare (dph) in the majority of the residential areas of the town.
- The road system shows an ad-hoc radial pattern towards the centre of the town. The roads in the residential areas, especially in the post-war areas of the town, include several cul-de-sacs.
4.8 Urban morphology and townscape

Fig. 4.8.1 Urban structure

Fig. 4.8.2 Cinderford town centre

Fig. 4.8.3 Urban grain

Forest Boundary
4.8 Urban morphology and townscape

Littledean
Of the three surrounding villages Littledean (to the east of Cinderford) is the oldest, with a history going back to medieval times. Church Street contains a mixture of 18th and 19th century buildings with good enclosure to the street, with a narrow carriageway and footway. The houses, like Cinderford, are two storey with pitched roofs. Housing in the latter half of the 20th century has been developed on a grid to the north of the historic village. Much of the village now lies within a Conservation Area.

Morphology:
- Historically, Littledean is built around a zig-zag main road, where there is reasonable enclosure to the street.
- Post-war residential areas are located to the north of the village, which are clearly planned and built on a grid.

Ruardean Hill
Ruardean Hill is a small village to the north-west of Cinderford, beyond the A4136. The settlement is defined by scattered dwellings on relatively spacious plots, the majority of which are bungalows or semi-detached/detached two storey houses. There are few historic buildings and some plots are occupied by new-build housing. The village has two pubs, a social club and a small number of shops.

Morphology:
- Ruardean Hill – shown in the centre of the image – is a loose settlement of low density in terms of morphology, mainly due to its topography.

Drybrook
Drybrook has a population of around 3000 and supports a good range of amenities, including a primary school, rugby club, doctors surgery and numerous shops. Unlike Ruardean Hill, the village has a number of historic buildings including two Grade II Listed churches. There are a range of housing types in the village, from terraced houses to large detached dwellings.

Morphology:
- Drybrook has a low density with little enclosure around the main road. The exception is the village centre to the north of the settlement.
4.9 Building typologies

Building typologies
The plan opposite shows the location of 11 different townscape and building typology studies across Cinderford, Littledean, and Ruardean Hill.

1. Cinderford: Mixed-use terraces, mid 19th century

Example: High Street
The buildings of the High Street are predominantly two storey terraces with ground floor shops. They form a contiguous but varying building frontage. Despite their location in the contemporary town centre, they have rear gardens, suggesting they were originally residential properties. The buildings are located directly on the footway, which is rather narrow for a central shopping location. There is very little car parking, except some courtyard parking. Building materials are stone, brick and render. Roof material is typically slate.

Fig. 4.9.1 High Street sketch plan

Fig. 4.9.2 High Street

Fig. 4.9.3 Urban grain (typology 1)
4.9 Building typologies

2. Cinderford: Residential terraces, mid to late 19th century

Example: Woodside Street
The buildings of Woodside Street are two storey terraces, some of which are detached by a small gap from one another. They are all aligned along the straight laid-out streets, as planned by the Land Society in the mid 19th century, with a small setback of 1.5 to 2 metres. The houses were developed piecemeal rather than by a single development, resulting in distinct properties. The boundary treatment towards the road is low walls. Car parking is predominantly on-street, but some courtyard parking and driveways have been established. The materials are stone, brick and render. The density of this type of development is about 30 dph. Other areas of this typology are: Steam Mills Road, New Town, Abbey Road, Flaxley Street and Abbey Street.

Fig. 4.9.4 Woodside Street sketch plan

Fig. 4.9.5 Woodside Street

Fig. 4.9.6 Urban grain (typology 2)
4.9 Building typologies

3. Cinderford: Residential mixed-typology blocks, late 19th to early 20th century

Example: Forest Road/ Commercial Street

These blocks are characterised by a lack of one predominant building typology and have semi-formal internal lanes, for access to housing units within the block. Plot and unit sizes vary largely, but the buildings are not taller than two storeys. Access lanes frequently have no footway and instead have a mix of grass verges, which are also used for car parking.

Fig. 4.9.7 Forest Road area sketch plan

Fig. 4.9.8 Forest Road

Fig. 4.9.9 Urban grain (typology 3)
4. Cinderford: Residential detached, early-mid 20th Century

Example: Littledean Hill
This typology represents the more affluent, pre-war residential development in Cinderford. The two storey units are set in large gardens, which now also accommodate on-plot car parking. The units follow the road alignment and the properties are bound to the street by walls. The density is low with about 15 dph. The architectural language is richly detailed and a variety of materials is used.
4.9 Building typologies

5. Cinderford: Residential terraces, 1980s

Example: Hastings Road
This development comprises fairly narrow two storey terraces, which are frequently set back from each other. The setting of the units does not immediately relate to the road alignment, which is curvy and includes cul-de-sacs. The road layouts are generous and designed for vehicles. The cul-de-sacs and front gardens are used for car-parking. There are no fences separating the properties from the public realm. The building materials are predominantly brick and tile roofing. The density is high at about 50dph.

Fig. 4.9.13 Hastings Road sketch plan

Fig. 4.9.14 Hastings Road

Fig. 4.9.15 Urban grain (typology 5)
4.9 Building typologies

6. Cinderford: Residential semi detached and terraces mid 20th century

**Example: Latimer Road**

This example location was designed in the 1920s (OS map from 1922 shows layout) but was not constructed until the 1950s, with the roads laid out long before the properties. It is a cul-de-sac development in which a semi-public car park sits centrally. The units are semi-detached or terrace houses of two storeys, fronting the car park. The corners of the development remain grassed and public footways run through it. The materials are brick and timber cladding. The density is about 25 dph. Other areas of this typology are: Edge Hill Road and Oak Way in Littledean.

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Fig. 4.9.16 Latimer Road sketch plan

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Fig. 4.9.17 Semi-detached property on Latimer Road

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Fig. 4.9.18 Urban grain (typology 6)
4.9  Building typologies

7. Cinderford: Bungalows

Example: Coronation Street
These one storey units are the first in the town designed to accommodate car-parking on-site. They are set back from the footway and have front gardens, which are bound by fences and hedges. The material palette is brick and render. The density is about 23 dph.
4.9 Building typologies

8. Cinderford: Residential semi detached and terraces early 21st century

**Example: Somerset Road**
This example mixes semi-detached and terraces, all two storeys high. The buildings sit close to the footway or internal courtyards and have no front gardens. The courtyards and internal lanes are used for on-plot car parking, with units overlooking these areas. The materials are brick and render. The density is about 45 dph.

Fig. 4.9.22 Somerset Road sketch plan

Fig. 4.9.23 Housing on Somerset Road

Fig. 4.9.24 Urban grain (typology 8)
4.9 Building typologies

9. Cinderford: Industrial units, late 20th century

Example: Business Park Forest Vale Road
The business park is characterised by large industrial sheds. They are accessed from courtyards and do not front onto the road. The road has a generous layout to allow for easy movement of large vehicles. The footway is separated from the carriageway by a grass verge.
4.9 Building typologies

10. Littledean: 18th and 19th century village houses and farms

Example: Church Street
Church Street in Littledean is generally characterised by old houses and farm buildings, with the odd section of terraced cottages. Plots are very large, despite the houses and farms being sub-divided into smaller residential units. The buildings date from the 18th and 19th century and are generally two storey in height, with pitched roofs and chimneys, and are generally three bays wide. The building materials are predominantly render and stone, with slate roofs: there is a coherent palette but with variety in scale and style of the buildings. Despite a non-continuous building frontage, the road has good enclosure with boundary walls filling in the gaps between buildings. Church Street is narrow in section, with a narrow carriageway and footway. The density is about 21 dph.

Fig. 4.9.28 Church Street sketch plan

Fig. 4.9.29 Littledean centre

Fig. 4.9.30 Urban grain (typology 10)
4.9 Building typologies

11. Ruardean Hill: 19th and 20th century scattered development in green landscape

**Example: The Hollow**

Ruardean Hill consists of scattered development across a hillside. This is a historical form of development around the outskirts of the Forest; dispersed habitation as a result of the encroachment process. Houses are in large plots set back from the street. The buildings are generally two storey with pitched roofs, chimneys and gables. Materials are render and stone. The density is very low at about 4 dph.

Fig. 4.9.31 The Hollow, Ruardean Hill sketch plan

Fig. 4.9.32 Morse Road, Ruardean Hill

Fig. 4.9.33 Urban grain (typology 11)
4.9 Building typologies

Building typologies and urban morphology: conclusions

The essentially unplanned nature of Cinderford is fundamental to the understanding of its layout and architecture, and strongly shapes its character.

The street layout in parts is planned (e.g. Woodside/Abbey streets) as a result of Land Society involvement. Even there, however, while houses form continuous terraces, these terraces typically comprise contiguous but clear individual properties which may have been developed several years apart. Terraces are not necessarily of uniform design and all built as part of the same development.

In other places (e.g. Character area 3, Forest Road/Commercial Street), the street layout also takes on a haphazard character, with semi-formal internal lanes and varied plot/building sizes. Some historic routes, e.g. Mousell Lane, survive. The unplanned nature of the layout and the predominance of detached properties is seen especially clearly in the greyscale building plans included in the characterisation studies. The result is that, away from the very centre, Cinderford lacks much of a focus or a coherent road pattern.

Subsequent estates (e.g. 1980s) are introverted in their own layout (cul-de-sac) and result from infill pattern of development. Again, individual properties plus street patterns give a relatively loose feel that is brought out well in the greyscale drawings – it is not possible to guess where the roads might be in the same way as is possible for e.g. Abbey St. The introverted nature of these areas, plus their piecemeal development, again makes for an essentially incoherent, rather unfocussed street scene.

Various improvement schemes have attempted to give the town a more clearly defined centre, and to resolve the issue of a narrow main street that results from its ad hoc development. It is possible that properties along the main street currently used for retail have been converted from residential uses.

In summary, there is no clear local typology/vernacular, other than the individual property, which may be contiguous with others or detached but is nonetheless clearly a distinct unit.
4.10 Landscape

Geology

The geology of the Forest of Dean dates from the Carboniferous period, 360 million years ago. Cinderford is situated on a mixture of glacial and alluvial drift deposits, sandstone, and coal measures of the Supra-Pennant Group. The eastern edge of the town rises up a limestone ridge, consisting of dolomite and limestone of the Drybrook Sandstone Group. The same Group resurfaces on the western edge of the Forest at Coleford. Beyond the limestone, the geology descends towards the alluvial plains of the River Severn through brownstones of the Old Red Sandstone foundation.

A number of faults cross the Forest in an east-west direction, and the major Cannop Fault Group begins just south of Lydbrook, continuing south to an area just west of Yorkley. Where these faults cross a coal measure, it is temporarily disrupted, and in the case of the Cannop Belt, brought closer to the surface.

Section A-A illustrates how the coal measures curve up towards the surface east and west of the New Fancy Colliery. The shallow depths made the coal accessible to low-tech mining methods such as those employed by the Freeminers. With their deep shafts and pump technology, the major collieries - such as New Fancy - could be located where the coal was deeper under the surface.
4.10 Landscape

Topography

Cinderford at the side of a valley in an area of broadly undulating topography. In some areas, the slopes can become steep and the changing valleys is a common theme in the built environment of the town. The topography can be described as follows:

- The topography of the area is broadly undulating and level differences range from 140 AOD to 310 AOD.
- The topography of the Cinderford area comprises a ridgeline to the east, a valley stretching north to south in the centre which is framed by gently rising slopes to the west and north.
- The residential areas of Cinderford are located halfway up the slope until the ridgeline.
- The valley floor is occupied by the Forest Vale Industrial Estate.

Key (AOD = Above Ordnance Datum)

- 110m-120m AOD
- 120m-130m AOD
- 130m-140m AOD
- 140m-150m AOD
- 150m-160m AOD
- 160m-170m AOD
- 170m-180m AOD
- 189m-190m AOD
- 190m-200m AOD
- 210m-220m AOD
- 220m-230m AOD
- 230m-240m AOD
- 240m-250m AOD
- 250m-260m AOD
- 260m-270m AOD
- 270m-280m AOD
- 280m-290m AOD
- 290m-300m AOD
- 300m-310m AOD
4.10 Landscape

Landscape and natural features

The landscape of the Forest has been shaped by geological features and has been influenced by human activity early on. It is a complex mosaic of habitats, including woodland, grassland, clear fell sites, rides and wetlands. The key characteristics of today’s Forest are extensive areas of coniferous plantations and deciduous woodlands, which occupy a syncline or basin feature. This basin is moulded by rivers and streams into numerous valleys. The Forest covers the area as an almost continuous and dense blanket, significantly limiting long distance views, but also providing clear boundaries to its edges and a distinct differentiation from the woodland to the open landscape.

It is thought that the Forest was initially managed by the Saxons, which have used it as a hunting ground. Since then, the Forest has been used for hunting, industrial and commercial activities. These activities have led to episodes of felling and replanting and the present Forest is characterised by areas of reforesting initiatives, resulting in a large variety of different woodlands and ages. Deciduous woodlands, which occupy approximately half of the forested areas, are characteristically oak, although birch, Sweet Chestnut and sycamore are also prevalent. The dominant coniferous species are larch, but some pines, Douglas Fir and Norway Spruce are also common.

The acid soils of the Forest support bracken in clearings, where pine or oak have been felled. Some of these open areas support damp grasslands, which sometimes grade to wet heath and bog habitats. The ground flora of the Forest is generally scarce.

The Forest is being considered to become an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in recognition of its assets and to support tourism, sustainable development, to protect the Forest and to attract funds. The boundaries of the area have not yet been defined and would exclude built up areas.
The settlement patterns of the Forest had been characterised as ‘Forest Fringes and Settlements’. This describes the unique settlement pattern of the Forest, where mostly sprawling ribbon development forms an almost continuous ring of settlements around the Forest fringes. Even though Cinderford lies within the forest boundary and is surrounded by forest on three sides, it is part of this ring and is connecting to Rurdean Hill in the north and Ruspidge in the south.

As mentioned under ‘Topography’, Cinderford lies partly on a slope and the industrial estate at the valley floor. The area has been characterised as ‘Ridges and Valleys’, an area which bounds the core forest.

To the east, the landscape surrounding Cinderford is distinctly different, as it is open pasture land, including hedges and farm land. The absence of the forest combined with the topography allows long-distance view to the Severn estuary, in striking contrast to other views around Cinderford, which have the Forest as a backdrop. Landmark features in Cinderford are the spire of St Johns Church and several chimneys from the industrial estate.

To the west of Cinderford, the Linear Park stretches in a north-south direction, and forms a transition zone between the town and the forest. The Linear Park extends to the Northern Quarter site and accommodates several foot and cycle paths, ponds and water courses and semi-natural grass land. It also includes display boards and exhibits relating to the railway and Ruspidge station that had been located in the park.

The green spaces within Cinderford are predominantly playing fields. One area of special interest is the Hollyhill Wood. The Hollyhill Wood had been part of an enclosure comprising oak trees and has been considered as ancient woodland before the area became comprehensively developed. Now only a small area has survived. Another landscape area of note is the cemetery garden of St John’s Church. Cinderford has also a large resource of undeveloped brownfield sites which are scattered throughout the industrial estate.

The distinct landscape features of Cinderford can be described as follows:

- Continuous forest (pine and broad leaved) surrounds three sides of the town;
- The forest has clear defined edges;
- Views out of the town are dominated by the forest to the north, south and west;
- Extensive views to the Severn estuary to the east;
- The ridgeline of Little Dean Hill Rd provides a clear distinction between agricultural land to the east and forest and forest waste to the west;
- The chimneys of the industrial estate in the valley floor form distinct vertical features;
- The predominant landscape is forest, forest waste, semi-natural grass land, frequent ponds and small watercourses; and
- There are limited green spaces in the town, which are predominantly playing fields.
4.10 Landscape

Photo 2: View to east over Severn estuary valley, from Littledean Hill Road

Photo 3: View south within Hollyhill Wood

Photo 4: View over Forest Vale Industrial Park, from Hollyhill Wood

Photo 5: View north within the Linear Park
4.11 Land use, heritage and facilities

Land use

As is typical for towns across the UK, retail facilities are located in the centre of the town. Schools and churches are spread throughout the town, with the Heywood Secondary school to the north-east. The largest employment area in the town is the Forest Vale Industrial Park, separating the site from Cinderford Town Centre. The rest of the town generally consists of residential development.
4.11 Land use, heritage and facilities

Conservation areas and listed buildings

- There is a scattering of listed buildings across the Cinderford and the wider context around the town, most notably in Littledean.
- Cinderford contains four listed buildings, all of which are churches.
- There are no conservation areas in Cinderford.

Key
- Conservation Area
- Grade II Listed building
- Grade II* Listed building
- Site boundary
4.11 Land use, heritage and facilities

Community facilities

- There is one small (424 pupils) secondary school in Cinderford (serving ages 11-16) and five primary schools (serving ages 3-11).
- Cinderford also has a library, a public leisure centre, numerous places of worship (for various Christian denominations) and sports pitches (football, cricket and rugby).

Fig. 4.11.3 Community facilities
4.12 Movement

Road network
The A4151 Steam Mills Road/High Street/Belle Vue Road is the main route through Cinderford. The B4227 route to the west of the town runs north-south approximately parallel to the A4151 from the B4226 in the south to a junction with the A4151 near Steam Mills to the north of the town. It provides access to industrial and retail units, and also acts as a local distributor road for the residential development in the western part of Cinderford.

The A4151, which passes through the centre of Cinderford as High Street, has clear problems of pedestrian/vehicle conflict in the centre of the town. It is mainly on a steep incline, descending towards the north. The road width is between 6m to 7m along its length, and operates as a single carriage way road.

To the north of Cinderford the A4136 runs east-west leading to Mitcheldean (2.3 miles) and Gloucester (15 miles) to the east and Coleford (6 miles) and Wales to the west. To the south of Cinderford the A4151 runs east to Lottedean (1.3 miles) and Gloucester via the A48 (13 miles). The B4226 is to the south of Cinderford, and runs west through the Forest to Coleford and Wales to the west. The site is well placed strategically on the road system, being on the boundary of the A4136 and the A4151.

Cycle network
The National Cycle Route 42 runs to the south-west of Cinderford, it is proposed to continue through the town and to the north to Ross-on-Wye. This National Route will be very important for the site as it can be used both for tourism, with links into the Forest and to Ross-on-Wye, and by a new local community wanting links through the town.

The local cycle route of the Coleford Valley Trail, running through the Linear Park, is a useful north-south link, which can be used to link the site to the centre of Cinderford.
4.12 Movement

Public transport
Cinderford is served by three frequent bus services leading towards Gloucester, Coleford and Lydney and a circular route within the town.

There are four additional services with limited frequency leading towards Ruardean, Lydbrook and Blakeney.

Bus operators
Stagecoach: 24A, 30-31, 746-747, 781
Chepstow Classic Buses: 710, 717

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Bus</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24A</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ruardean, Cinderford, Mitcheldean, Gloucester</td>
<td>3 buses per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coleford, Cinderford, Gloucester</td>
<td>1 bus per hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>Christchurch, Coleford, Cinderford, Gloucester</td>
<td>1 bus per hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>710</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cinderford circular (Hastings Road, Beechdean)</td>
<td>1 bus per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>717</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lydney, Blakeney, Soudley, Cinderford</td>
<td>1 bus per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>746-747</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cinderford, Ruardean Hill, Ruardean Woodside, Lydbrook</td>
<td>2 buses per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>747</td>
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<td>Cinderford, Ruardean, Lydbrook</td>
<td>4 buses per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>781</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blakeney, Cinderford, Blaisdon, Gloucester</td>
<td>1 bus per week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Not all bus routes may have been picked up. Most weekly local buses have been excluded.
4.12 Movement

Road traffic accidents

- A number of ‘slight’ accidents and one ‘serious’ accident have occurred near Cinderford High Street.
- Three ‘serious’ accidents and one fatal accident have occurred along Foxes Bridge Road and Valley Road.
- Clusters of ‘slight’ accidents are also observed at the junction of the B4226 with the A4151 at the southern edge of Cinderford, and also near the junction of the A4136 and the A4151.
- This data was collected by Gloucestershire County Council during 2005-2008.
4.13 Cinderford - summary

Population and land use

- The population of Cinderford is approximately 8,000 people.
- The site is located in Cinderford West Ward, but in close proximity to Lydbrook & Ruardean Ward to the north.
- The town has a high proportion of young people.
- 40% of the working population of the town are employed in manufacturing.
- There is a significant amount of out commuting from the town.
- There is a low percentage of owner occupation of housing.
- Cinderford is reasonably well provided for, given its small population, with shops and services, including: a library, cinema, two supermarkets, churches and several sports clubs.

History

- Cinderford is the only town within the statutory Forest of Dean boundary. The town has roots going back to the 13th century, but for 600 years it was just a ford over Cinder Brook and a few houses. Rapid industrialisation led to rapid urbanisation in the mid 19th century.
- The increasing commercialisation of the mining industry led to new and deepened mines in the area, requiring new workers. This led to further urbanisation in Cinderford in the mid-late 19th century.
- The town developed around Cinderford Bridge to the south-west of the current town. A new town centre soon developed around the old town centre, with shops, services, churches and civic buildings.
- As Cinderford developed, housing was built on the ridges, looking over the valleys east (towards the Severn Valley) and west (towards the Forest of Dean), while industry was located on the flatter ground to the north-west of current town centre.
- Rail lines were first built through and around the town for industry, and then for passengers. These lines are all closed today, and many are used for public rights of way and cycle lanes.
- Public transport in Cinderford in the early to mid 20th century was good with a passenger rail station and tram stop in the town. Today the town has poor public transport with no train station and a limited bus service.

Urban morphology, townscape and building typologies

- The morphology in Cinderford is similar to many other towns in the UK, with a tight urban grain around the centre of the town and along the north-south High Street, and lower density residential development around the edges.
- The street sections in the town are generally narrow, even on the High Street, with residential and commercial buildings often having no private strip to the street, with building lines at the back of pavement. In stark contrast to the residential development, the industrial land uses in the north west of the town show a much looser urban grain, where buildings do not relate to the street and are set back in their plots.
- Building types are varied with a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraces throughout the town. With the exception of the High Street, streets generally do not have a continuous frontage, with gaps between buildings frequent. A unifying element of the residential buildings are the height, roof type and building materials; where buildings are generally two storey, with pitched roofs, and elevations that are render or brick.
- Cinderford contains four Grade II listed buildings (all churches), and no conservation areas. The nearest conservation area is in the village of Littledean, to the east of Cinderford.
- Density is approximately 25-30 units dwellings per hectare in the majority of the residential areas of the town.
- The road system shows an ad-hoc radial pattern towards the centre of the town. The roads in the residential areas, especially in the post-war areas of the town include several cul-de-sacs.