

OUR PLAN

BERRY HILL
EDGE END
CHRISTCHURCH

'Committed to our Community'

2016
-2026

Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End Neighbourhood Development Plan



CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	4
HOUSING	14
TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT	25
COUNTRYSIDE AND ENVIRONMENT	30
ECONOMY	39
COMMUNITY	45
FIVE ACRES: LEISURE AND CULTURE SITE	56
DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION	61
REVIEW AND OUTCOME	61
NON LAND USE PROPOSALS	62
REFERENCES	63
GLOSSARY	65
APPENDICES	67
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	67

FOREWORD

This Plan is effective for the period 2016-2026. It is in conformance with the Forest of Dean District Council's Core Strategy,¹ which is effective until 2026. A major review of the plan will be undertaken in 2026.

Our Neighbourhood Development Plan is a unique and very special document designed to enable the community to respond constructively to future challenges and develop sustainable communities for the area.

It encapsulates the work of a group of dedicated representatives from a broad range of the community who have driven this initiative forward in a cohesive and cooperative way for the benefit of the whole community and beyond.

Our policies align with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework² and the Forest of Dean District Council Core Strategy and Basic Conditions.

The main issues arising out of community consultations are:

- Five Acres (Gloscol) site
- Local distinctiveness
- Community facilities
- Environment
- Employment, education and training

Our vision:

To protect and enhance the natural beauty of our area, retain the traditional Forest villages and rural nature of our environment, whilst creating economic regeneration, employment and leisure opportunities.

The aims for the area are:

- To further develop a resilient and economically stable framework that enables our Neighbourhood Development Plan community to set the standard for all our local spaces and facilities.
- To support sustainable development of the local economy, enhance the prospects for local employment and to maximise the opportunities for local people to enrich their space.
- To enshrine green and ethical principles in all local decisions and developments.
- To hold our local authority to account and to ensure they support the community in taking over responsibility for facilities and spaces where provision falls short of the community's needs.
- To work with designers, developers and land owners from the outset in shaping developments that are in keeping with the ambience of the area and that will help improve the emotional, spiritual and economic well-being of residents, as well as promoting tourism.
- To provide a supply of housing that complies with local strategic requirements, respects the integrity of the area's unique landscape, respects its special places and provides appropriate

homes for members of the community.

- To ensure that sustainable development will support and enhance our community and its infrastructure.
- To maximise the opportunities for local people who are best placed to enrich their space.
- To improve and expand the leisure, recreational and educational hub for the local and wider community.

Sustainable development:

Sustainable communities require housing appropriate for the existing and future demographics. Sustainable development will be achieved by taking into consideration the economic, social and environmental aspects of our community. Well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. Sustainable development must be accompanied by appropriate infrastructure, so that it will not negatively impact on existing infrastructure such as schools, healthcare, transport, roads, drainage and sewerage.

This will be achieved by:

- Supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities
- Providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations.
- Creating a high-quality built environment with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and supports its health, social and cultural well-being.
- Protecting, preserving and enhancing our natural built and historic environment.
- Seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life including (but not limited to):
 - Replacing poor design with better design, which sits well within the environment.
 - Widening the choice of quality homes.
 - Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and use their leisure time.
 - Sustaining biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, mitigating and adapting to climate change and endeavouring to move to a low-carbon economy.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Localism Act, 2011³ introduced neighbourhood planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England. This gives communities the right to shape their future development at a local level.

A Neighbourhood Plan provides a chance for the community to have a real say over local decision-making to achieve its long-term goals and address the opportunities and challenges facing the future vitality of the area and development planning decisions.

The Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End Neighbourhood Development Plan draws together community-wide comments, observations and concerns about its future. This research has been brought together with evidence from the West Dean parish and community-led plan (Parish Plan 2012),⁴ the local Housing Needs Survey (HNS 2013)⁵ census information and strategic statistical evidence. We have created a 'living promise' that mirrors the community's overwhelming desire to make the area an even better place to live and work, both now and for future generations.

The Plan has been produced by a Steering Group which contains representatives from: District (Forest of Dean) and Parish (West Dean) councillors, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Lakers Cooperative Secondary School, Berry Hill Primary School, the Forestry Commission, Five Acres Not for Sale (FANS) community action group, Berry Hill Rugby Club, Berry Hill Memorial Institute (The Hut) community building, Coleford Town Council, local businesses and community volunteers.

An advisor from Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC), although not a member of the Steering group, played an integral part in advising the group through the process.

Acronyms have been used for the following major bodies and terms throughout this Plan:

■ Neighbourhood Development Plan;
NDP ('Our Plan')

■ Forest of Dean District Council;
FoDDC

■ West Dean Parish Council;
WDPC

■ National Planning Policy Framework;
NPPF

■ Core Strategy;
CS

All other acronyms used are referenced on their first occurrence. The Five Acres (Gloscol) site may be alternatively known as or referenced in documents by other organisations as: the Gloucestershire College Five Acres site, the Gloscol Royal Forest of Dean College, the Five Acres Campus or College, the Royal Forest Dean Campus and the Forest Leisure Coleford Campus.

Figure 1: Poster from **open consultation event 1** introducing why local involvement is important.





Community consultation and priorities

The Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP will become a statutory document that will be considered alongside the FoDDC's Local Plan policies. Our Plan will guide decision-making on when and where development should take place and the type and quality of that development.

Location and history:

The Forest of Dean lies in West Gloucestershire in the angle formed by the rivers Wye and Sever. It began as a large area of woodland and wasteland, reserved for Royal hunting in Saxon and mediaeval times. It was the most significant producer of oak timber used for ship building and the geology of the area supported many local industries including: mining of coal and ores, charcoal burning, tanneries and other crafts. It is one of England's most valuable and ancient woodlands covering 10,600 hectares. This

Figure 2: Map demonstrating the location and size of West Dean Parish Council within the wider Forest of Dean area.

event is all about a new scheme with your help, outlines how your area gets planned, which is called a neighbourhood Development Plan



ancient mixed woodland was the first designated National Forest Park - designated in 1938⁶ and called 'The Queen of the Forests'. The Wye Valley, at the edge of our area, is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The Forest of Dean was an extra-parochial area in the historic St Briavels' Hundred. In 1974 West Dean Parish Council became one of the 41 civil parishes in the Forest of Dean.⁷ West Dean is the largest civil parish in the Forest of Dean District in terms of geographical size and population.

Our Plan - the Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End (in purple) NDP covers a cohesive northern part of the parish of West Dean, serving a population of 2,477 at the time of compiling this Plan (Office for National Statistics 2011 census data).⁽⁸⁾

Figure 3a: Berry Hill and Christchurch - Extract from Allocations Proposals Map Submission Version 2016.

See larger map provided Map 2

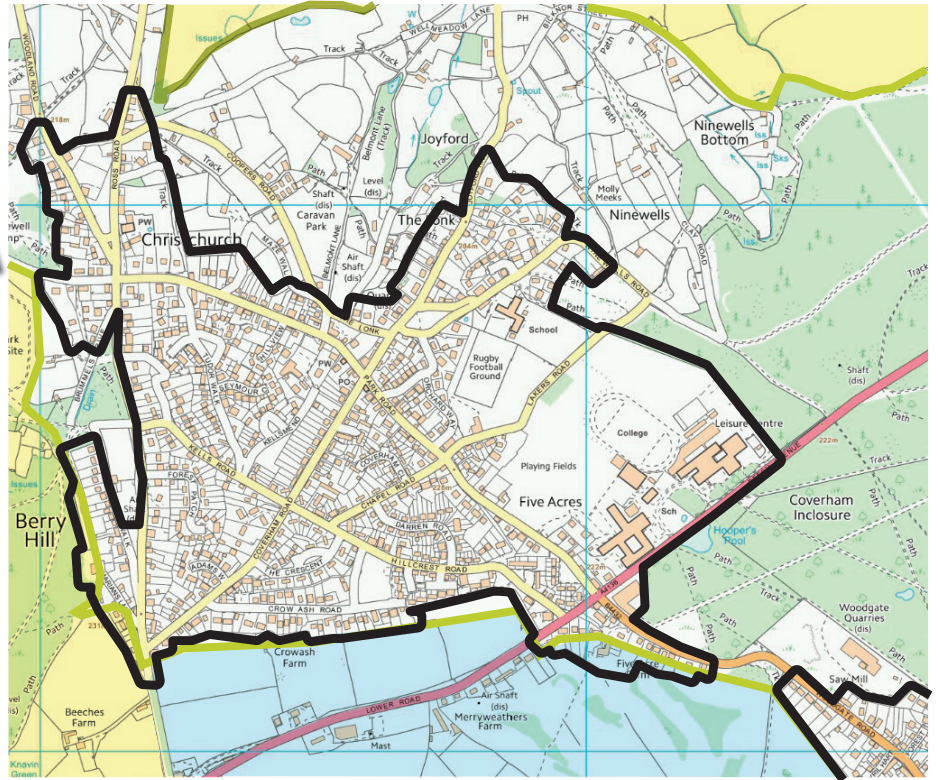
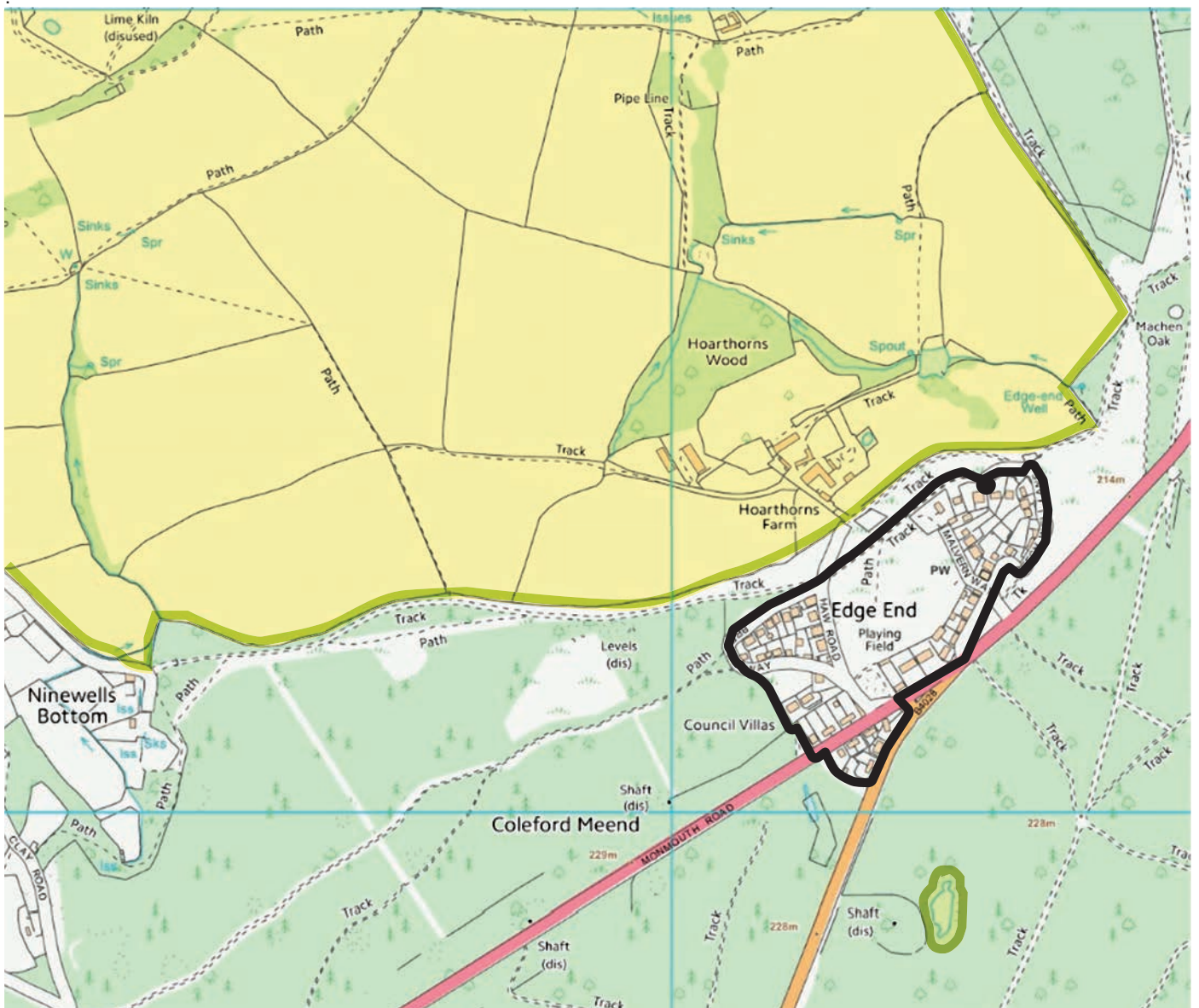


Figure 3b: Edge End - Extract from Allocations Proposals Map Submission Version 2016.



The area includes the whole of the ward of Berry Hill, and the contiguous inhabited areas of the Christchurch ward extended to include the settlement of Edge End.

The boundary of the area follows the parish boundary with Coleford from Woodgate Road, Berry Hill, in a clockwise direction to the boundary with the English Bicknor parish at Bracelands.

From that point it follows the English Bicknor boundary north and east for about 1.8 kilometres as far as Bicknor Street, Joyford.

From there the boundary line enters the West Dean parish area to Ninewells Bottom, then follows the Statutory Forest boundary, veering northwards slightly to include Hoarthorns Farm to the B4432 about 400 metres east of the junction of the B4432 and the B4028.

This boundary enables the adjoining community of Edge End to be included in the Plan.

The boundary then follows the B4432 westwards to the Five Acres Leisure Centre, and thereafter southwards to the boundary with Coleford at the Woodgate Saw Mills.

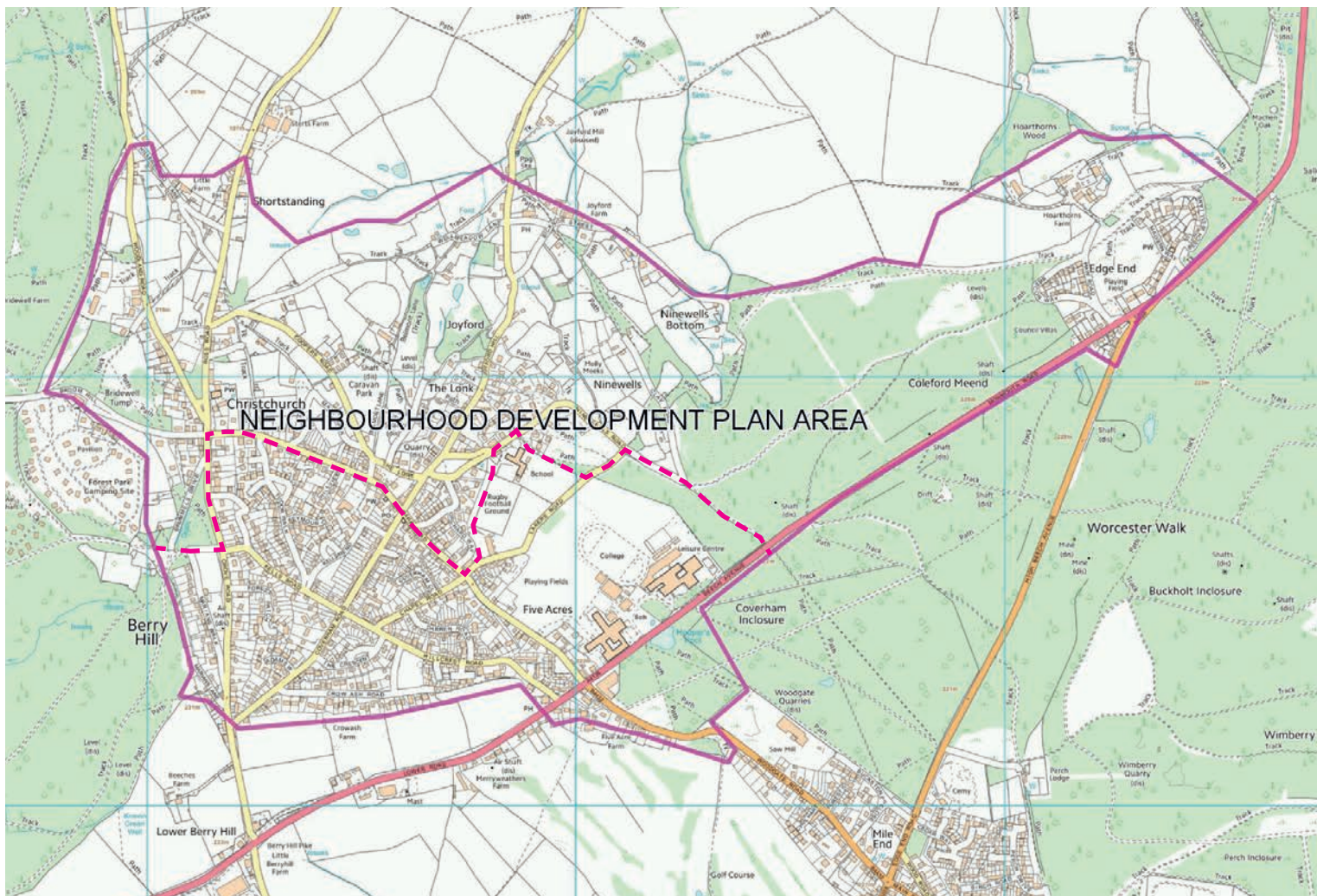
This area has been carefully selected at a working party of West Dean councillors and representatives of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council.

Berry Hill and Christchurch are contiguous traditional Forest villages, with a diversity of housing styles and a strong community spirit.

Edge End village, which is within the Christchurch ward of West Dean parish and the Christchurch and English Bicknor ward of the FoDDC, has close social and commercial links with the adjoining villages of Christchurch and Berry Hill.

See larger map provided Map 1

Figure 4: Following an application by West Dean Parish Council on 16th November 2012,⁹ the designated NDP area as outlined in magenta was approved on 21st January 2013¹⁰ by the Forest of Dean District Council. The dotted line represents the boundary between the Berry Hill and Christchurch wards of the West Dean parish.



Distinctive character:

The ambience of our NDP area is very special. It is significant in offering a high-quality living environment and a 'pull' for visitors.

Reasons that make this area special include:

- **The easy access to mixed woodland and Statutory Forest areas.**
- **It is the gateway to Symonds Yat and the Wye Valley.**
- **Close proximity to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).**
- **Outstanding views at the periphery of Our Plan areas.**
- **An historic industrial legacy including coal mining.**
- **An abundance of wild fauna and flora.**



Figures 5a - 5e: Posters and marketing materials from the community consultation events (Oct 2013 and June 2014) telling the story of our NDP area, memorable events and how the community has developed

Area Aims

After collecting all your comments and ideas, West Dean Parish Council, the steering group and volunteers, have drawn up 'Area Aims' that hope to paint a picture of the things, we as a community, consider important for the area to flourish. These cover x 6 themes;

- 1 | Housing
- 2 | Countryside & Environment
- 3 | Economy
- 4 | Five Acres site
- 5 | The Community
- 6 | Transport & Traffic

EVIDENCE

What YOU have asked for

- Core Strategy
- Parish Plan
- Housing needs survey
- PANS' community consultation
- Enquiry by Design public consultation
- OUR PLAN Neighbourhood Development Plan community consultation

Volunteers have been out about collecting local info to help fill in the 'Character & Landmarks' part of 'OUR PLAN'

OBJECTIVES

Area Aims

POLICIES

Area Aims are developed into a set of policies that become a plan for the area, which if passed, becomes a legal document, which developers must recognise.

Welcome back! 2ND EVENT! or, hello (if you missed Event 1)

WHAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED
EVENT 1 | October 2013

You came, we listened.

What an amazing turnout! About 250 of you came over the two days, many of you staying for an hour to read, discuss and give your ideas and feedback. So a huge thank-you to all who got involved.

One of the things that people were asked about was what they value in the area. Here are some of the key points from these comments.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR COMMENTS BETWEEN Oct 2013 - and now

Start of OUR PLAN.

We collated all your comments and ideas, and found out things like: What were your top priorities for the area?

- 1 | Improved sports facilities for the community
- 2 | Places to meet & socialise
- 3 | Job opportunities in tourism & service industries
- 4 | Facilities for tourists & local people
- 5 | Surgery and health services locally
- 6 | More young people living & working in the area
- 7 | Job opportunities in the creative & IT industries locally

These comments were added to the steering group research, and other existing council plans and documents commissioned by West Dean Parish Council (See the 'working pot picture' for all that went into the mix to get us this far).

Together they have begun to form the rough draft of possible planning options for the area.

In your hands. At the next and final stage (Event 2) we get to vote to accept OUR PLAN. If it doesn't get enough votes, the plan won't go through. It is a legal requirement for all councils to have a housing allocation plan in place. In effect, without one we leave ourselves vulnerable to any developers coming into the area wanting to build.

OUR PLAN

Neighbourhood Development Plan

BERRY HILL | OCT 10 | CHRISTOPHER

What we ask you to do next...

- 1 | You could look through some of the boards from EVENT 1 to refresh your memory. (look for orange corners on boards)
- 2 | See the 'Area Aims' + 'Our Unique Place' displays + look at the maps. All invite you to leave your feedback. These will be taken on board and OUR PLAN developed to reflect them. (look for blue boards)

A unique place

Volunteers from the steering group have gone out and about collecting information and taking photos to record the character of the area and assessing sites needed to develop 'OUR PLAN'. These, together with all your comments from Event 1, became the basis for this summary, with photographs highlighting some of the main themes.

KEY WORDS

- Character Summary**
 - The Five Acres tradition of independence sets the tone
 - Green spaces between open buildings offer a setting for the countryside and rural side, and offering panoramic views to the wider landscape
 - Highly visible local landmarks have developed and worked the landscape on which they have made their mark. Buildings into what houses that complement rather than compete with the landscape and maintaining large gardens
- Key Views & Landmarks**
 - Extensive green and natural features provide all over views, all linked to open spaces, fields, lanes and public rights of way and offering panoramic views to the wider landscape
 - Cycle paths and woodland walks, both ancient track ways and recent developments encourage accessibility to the heart of rural landscape
- Landscape Description**
 - The pattern of buildings offers a sense of connection with an expansive sky
 - The distinctive pattern of winding, single-track roads, connected by single-track lanes. Features directly emerging towards the centre with most areas detached from the village and double-track roads.
 - Open spaces, wide roads, offer the basics
 - Family life embedded in open schools, churches and community in villages
- Settlement Pattern**
 - Character villages and surrounding communities with a delightful sense of rural setting
 - The winding areas of the area have a sense of individuality, connected by single-track lanes. Features directly emerging towards the centre with most areas detached from the village and double-track roads.
 - Open spaces, wide roads, offer the basics
 - Family life embedded in open schools, churches and community in villages

Hot off the PRESS!

One last thing before you voice your opinion.



What do you LOVE in your NDP area (and want to treasure) & what DON'T YOU LOVE? (and want to transform)

We need YOUR photographic evidence!

Photographs of your love & hate are our photographic evidence. We need YOUR photographic evidence!

Please email your images, either a JPEG or a PDF with your name and a reference to which event you took, and let us know how to contact you. Email: info@westdeanparish.org.uk

See your photographs printed onto large displays at the next event that become part of OUR PLAN

23

What's this about the community being able to buy the Five Acres site?

£30M FUNDING FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The £30m Community Ownership of Assets in their control of a local area such as a pub, shop or leisure. The Community Right to Bid in the autumn, when that funding will become available. The Community Right to Bid will allow £1.5m of grants available in consultation with West Dean Parish Council.

Enquiry by Design at Berry Hill

There are also other things happening around this NDP process

A new initiative to allow to gather community opinion will be supported by Enquiry by Design, which is organised by the Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) and focuses on the future of the Five Acres site. The HCA are the current owners of the site, which includes the village hall and most of the surrounding green space. The Enquiry by Design will be asking for your views about what happens on that specific site.

5-day event from 10th - 21st October

Look out for the next event!

How does this Neighbourhood Development process work?

- 1 We ask you for your views on what you think should happen in OUR Neighbourhood Development PLAN area
- 2 There might also be other issues about the area that you want to add and comment on
- 3 All comments and opinions from last event are taken as 'evidence'. Feedback will be taken from the Parish Plan & NDP community consultation event
- 4 The comments gathered will be the start of the vision for the area, based on what you have said and what research that need further research
- 5 The steering group and volunteers will form working groups to link into the identified areas to now start collecting photographic evidence of what is other facts about the area
- 6 OUR PLAN will be formed from all the evidence gathered from the community, through research and studies from the Enquiry by Design process
- 7 The Area Aims will be written, taking together all the evidence gathered from the community, through research and studies from the Enquiry by Design process
- 8 The outline plan for Berry Hill, Edg End and Christchurch will be presented to the community at the next event
- 9 Finally a general independent consultation, who make sure it meets all the requirements and are prepared to the community voting in a referendum
- 10 The community will vote on the plan, which will become a legal document, which is a requirement for all councils to have a housing allocation plan in place

In the end, it all comes down to you.

Like all good things, OUR PLAN will take some time to build. If you get involved, voice your opinion, vote in the referendum or become a volunteer you'll know you have been heard and your ideas form part of this communities future

What will this community come together for?

Could we create inspirational self build housing → developments with child friendly homes → community enhancing & tourist housing leisure facilities → design housing that local people need → make recreational spaces for all ages → develop a hub for the community → demand smaller retail sites to grow the housing allocation for the area (small clusters of development rather than big centres) → work spaces for community projects or business units for small businesses → improve the look of the neighbourhood by encouraging the use of good local materials to create sustainable architecture → new cycle tracks to connect more areas, even things like tree walks?

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Approach to our character and site assessments:

Members of the Steering Committee carried out a detailed review of the character and sites of our NDP area. The three villages of Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End were subdivided into manageable areas. Steering Committee members volunteered to cover areas close to where they lived so that they could apply their local knowledge and complete the detailed forms whilst having a reasonable work load. This process included walking around each area and taking notes in response to a comprehensive set of standard questions. The questions were based on the character and sites of each area. A summary of the character and site assessments has been used as evidence throughout this document.

The assessments (character¹¹ and site¹² documents were designed by Localism Network and commissioned for use by the Forest of Dean District Council.

The summary¹³ of our character and site assessments serves to celebrate a unique area, rich in opportunities for well-being and essential for wildlife conservation. Copies of the assessment summaries were given to attendees at the second open consultation event (June 2014).

Topography and land form:

The main residential areas in Berry Hill are flat, although they are undulating to the western side of Park Road. Christchurch residential buildings are built on flat or shallow, hilly, terrain. At the periphery of the east side of Park Road there are steep-sided valleys including Nine Wells, The Lonk/Coopers Road, Joyford and Edge End.

Layout, land cover and use:

The NDP area lies directly off the main A4136, Gloucester to Monmouth road. This road forms the major artery from Wales to Gloucester, avoiding a Severn crossing. It is a twisting scenic route, exclusively single-lane through the Forest, carrying major commercial traffic. At the Five Acres cross-roads,

Park Road forms the main artery into Berry Hill and dissects the village. The west of the village is mainly residential; the east merges into rural farm land and forestry, with some houses and community facilities.

Christchurch is a linear development along two forks of road: the B4432 Christchurch to Symonds Yat road, in Herefordshire, via Hillersland and a rural road from Christchurch to Ross-on-Wye, in Herefordshire, via English Bicknor and Lydbrook.

Shortstanding is a scattered settlement of larger plots that borders the Forest of Dean and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Joyford/Coopers Road is a very scattered community on a steep slope toward the River Wye. It is served by a single-track road that dips down toward Ross-on-Wye near English Bicknor.

Edge End is a relatively isolated island development, well served by the A4136, although the narrow lanes and gradient make winter travel difficult and the size of turning spaces is a challenge. There is a private recreational ground serving the community of Edge End.

Settlements have developed into main residential areas at: Grove Road, Hillcrest Road, Park Road and Edge End, with houses close to the road. These are comprised of mainly relatively large plots in linear layout with front and back gardens. At the periphery of the NDP area there are more detached properties within large plots. Nine Wells Road, The Lonk/Coopers Road and Joyford are comprised of more winding, narrow and often single-track roads with larger plots approaching the size of small holdings. Land cover in this area is a mixture of residential, farmland, mixed forestry and grazing, while some areas have old mine works.

Data from the national census of 2010 (published in 2011) records the presence of 1,038 dwellings¹⁴ registered for our NDP area.

Buildings and predominant building materials:

Even in the most heavily populated residential area of Berry Hill there are mainly large detached or semi-detached properties. Two-storey dormer bungalows and cottages pervade the area; there are only a few terraces of houses within the Berry Hill area of this NDP. Buildings are generally of varied shapes, construction and sizes, which promoting diversity across our unique environment. Most buildings are from the 20th century. However there are some older buildings as well, notably including ex-foresters' cottages, and most are constructed from stone, brick and many rendered, with pitched roofs of tiles or slate. There is still some council housing (most here became privately owned) as well as some sheltered accommodation.



There are two Grade II listed buildings (Christchurch Church and The Old Vicarage, Christchurch)¹⁵ within the NDP area, together with many older stone properties across all three locations. There are also two Grade II listed buildings (Hoarthorns Farmhouse and a milestone on the A4136) just outside the designated NPD area at Edge End.

Settlement area:

This NDP area is essentially rural, close to the Wye Valley (AONB)¹⁶. It is comprised of three villages and their surroundings: Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End. The highest point is over 600 feet above sea level, with steep gradients around the perimeter of settlements.

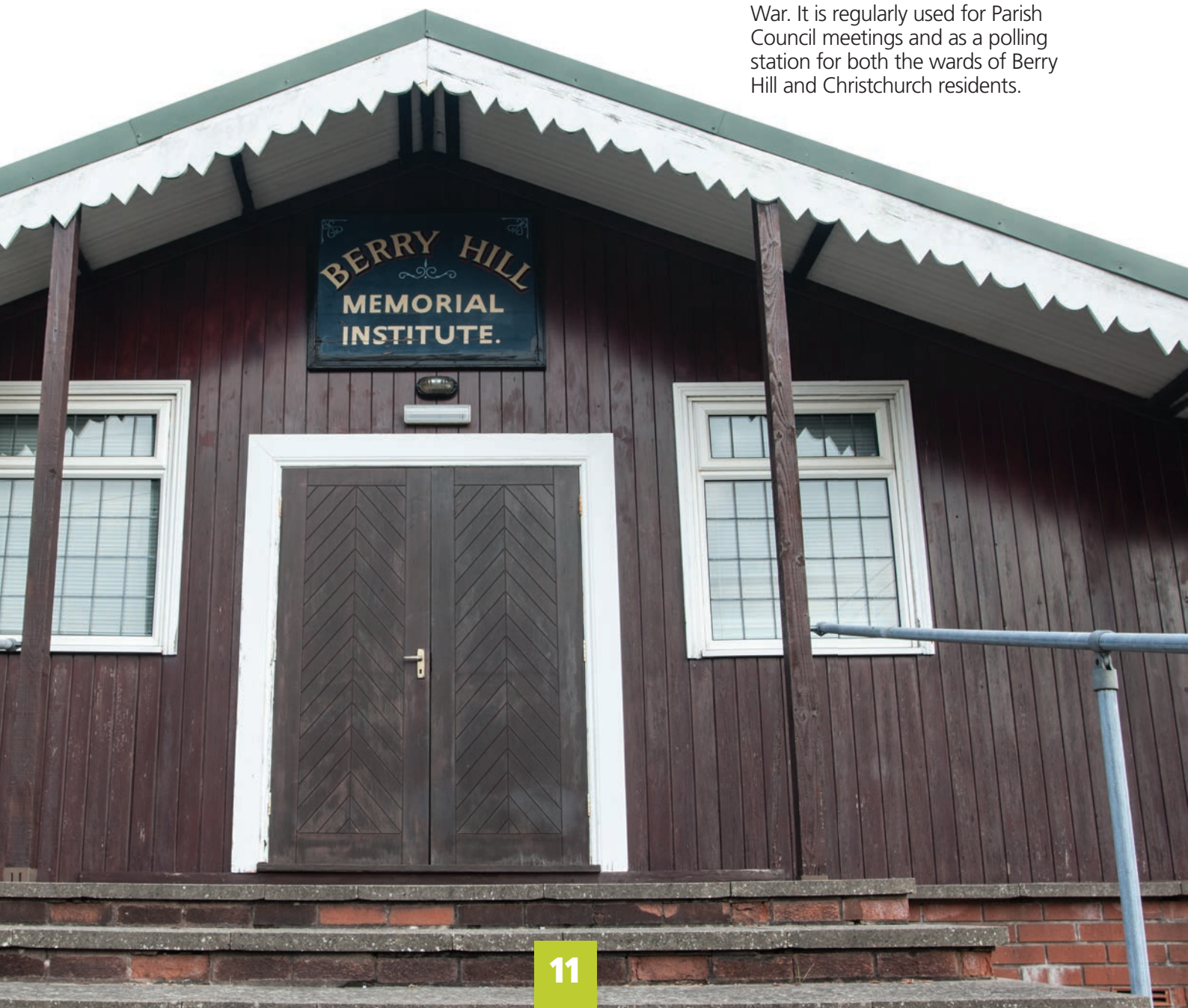
Home Guard outside the Hut in Berry Hill in wartime

Berry Hill:

Berry Hill is located 1.5 miles north of the town of Coleford and includes the areas of Five Acres to the east. There has been scattered building on Berry Hill since the 16th century. The 1836 extra-parochial part was called Upper Berry Hill, to distinguish it from Lower Berry Hill in Coleford. The 18th century residents of Berry Hill are recorded as working as stone cutters and in the 19th century there were working coal mines. New cottages and houses were built from the 1840s to the current density. Berry Hill was the location of one of the first day schools in the Forest of Dean.



Berry Hill Memorial Institute is widely used by the community for leisure, cultural, educational and fitness activities. The basic structure, which still remains, was an army hut moved from Salisbury Plain to Berry Hill in the late 1930s. The facility has been registered as a War Memorial for local people who gave their lives in the World War I, II and the Korean War. It is regularly used for Parish Council meetings and as a polling station for both the wards of Berry Hill and Christchurch residents.



Christchurch:

Christchurch, Hillersland Lane and Shortstanding lie in the north of the NDP area and, with Joyford to the north-east, are part of the Christchurch electoral ward.

Christchurch Church, Grade II listed, is situated at the crossroads of Park Road (Berry Hill) and the roads to Ross-on-Wye and Symonds Yat. This is opposite the village green, which is the heart of the village.

Edge End:

Edge End is also 1.5 miles north-east of Coleford.

The village surrounds a village recreational ground, which is co-owned in a Trust by the residents and forms the hub of their community. Split into two by the village green, this community houses many traditional Foresters who can trace their lineage back through the village's history. Here is a true community spirit.

There are extensive views into the edge of our area over Joyford Hill, The Lonk and Nine Wells from Shortstanding on the road to Ross-on-Wye.



There are generally limited or enclosed views into the centre of our area because the area is in effect a hill top plateau.



Avenues of lime trees¹⁷ (protected by a preservation order) which are on the periphery of the Berry Hill Rugby Club grounds and the Five Acres site.



Edge End playing field

HOUSING

INTRODUCTION:

Delivering a choice of high-quality homes, using local material where appropriate is essential to support sustainable mixed and inclusive communities. In our NDP areas this will underpin a well-balanced population that is vital to the on-going viability of local services and prosperity to the community, particularly in light of the district's increasing ageing population.

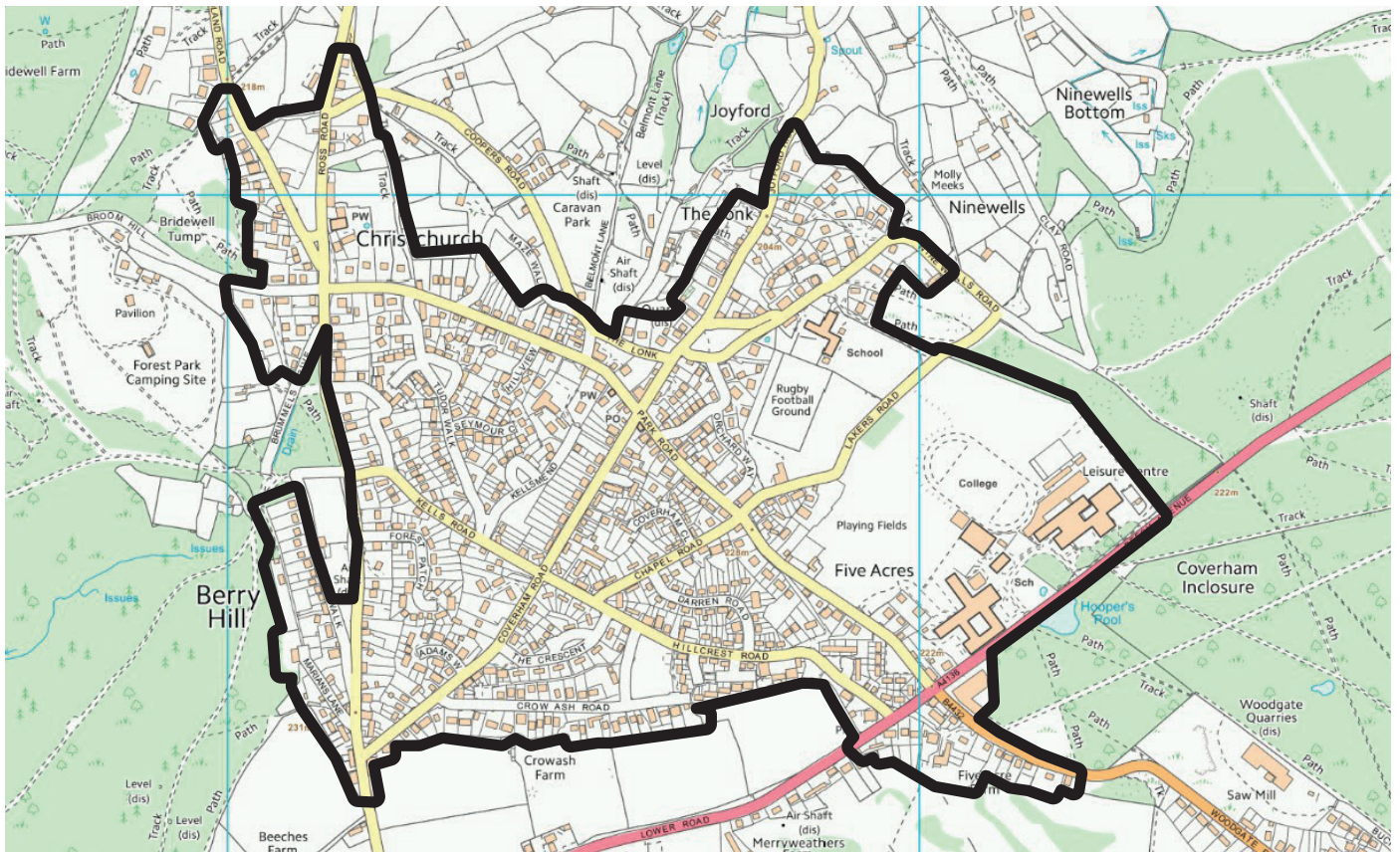
The Core Strategy identifies the majority of the NDP areas as being within a Coleford town group of settlements including Coalway, Mile End, Berry Hill and Milkwall. The Forest of Dean District Council's emerging allocations plan and current proposed modifications (September 2016) allocates sites across the district based on the housing Objectively Assess Needs and in line with the Core Strategy's settlement hierarchy. The allocations plan also provides a range of other allocations including an updated defined settlement boundary. The NDP operates within this context and whilst it can be expected that unallocated housing sites will come forward (in housing number terms often called

windfall sites) no additional housing allocations are proposed in the NDP and it can be expected that the quantum of housing development within the NDP area will be in line with that expected in the Allocations Plan.

Our housing policies seek to secure a housing supply which meets local needs whilst ensuring that sufficient land comes forward to meet those needs over the Plan period. The delivery of a wide choice of quality housing will be implemented by public and private developers and monitored by recording permissions and completions and any other requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Forest of Dean Core Strategy, especially the provision of employment. Collaborative partnerships will be developed with one or more housing associations or private developers to bring forward both social/affordable and private housing on exception and other sites. Small-scale infill sites, conversions, self-builds and rebuilding of derelict properties within the Plan area will be supported and also the redevelopment of some brownfield (previously used) sites to mixed

Figures 6a: Settlement boundary map (outlined in black) for Berry Hill and Christchurch.

Berry Hill and Christchurch are included in the Coleford settlement plan and are therefore included in the wider Allocations Plan (FoDDC Allocations Plan, Submission Version, March 2015).¹⁸



use. The exception to this will be where the community has already designated that site for another community use.

The Forestry Commission are the largest land manager in the area; the majority of this land is contiguous across the landscape except for areas close to or within the villages and towns that make up the Forest of Dean. Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End have such parcels of land, all of which are classified as Forest Waste (land that is not in timber production which makes up an array of habitats). The Core Strategy (CSP9) and Allocations Plan strongly protect Forest Waste. The Forestry Commission are not obligated to sell or acquire any land. These parcels of land are not available for development, although the Forestry Commission (FC) can be approached by a purchaser/developer wishing to acquire a parcel of land that is part of the FC's holdings. Any development or proposal relating to a change of use of Forest Waste will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the FC

District Office with further approval required by the National Office in Bristol. Any disposal within the Statutory Forest of Dean must be completed as part of a land exchange to ensure no net loss of Public Forest Estate. The land to be exchanged must be within the Statutory Boundary and meet Forestry Commission requirements.

Figure 7: based on a Forestry Commission map of the Five Acres site and adjacent areas, highlighting important sites within our NDP area with covenants or disposal restrictions (yellow shaded areas).



Figure 6b: Settlement boundary map (outlined in black) for Edge End.

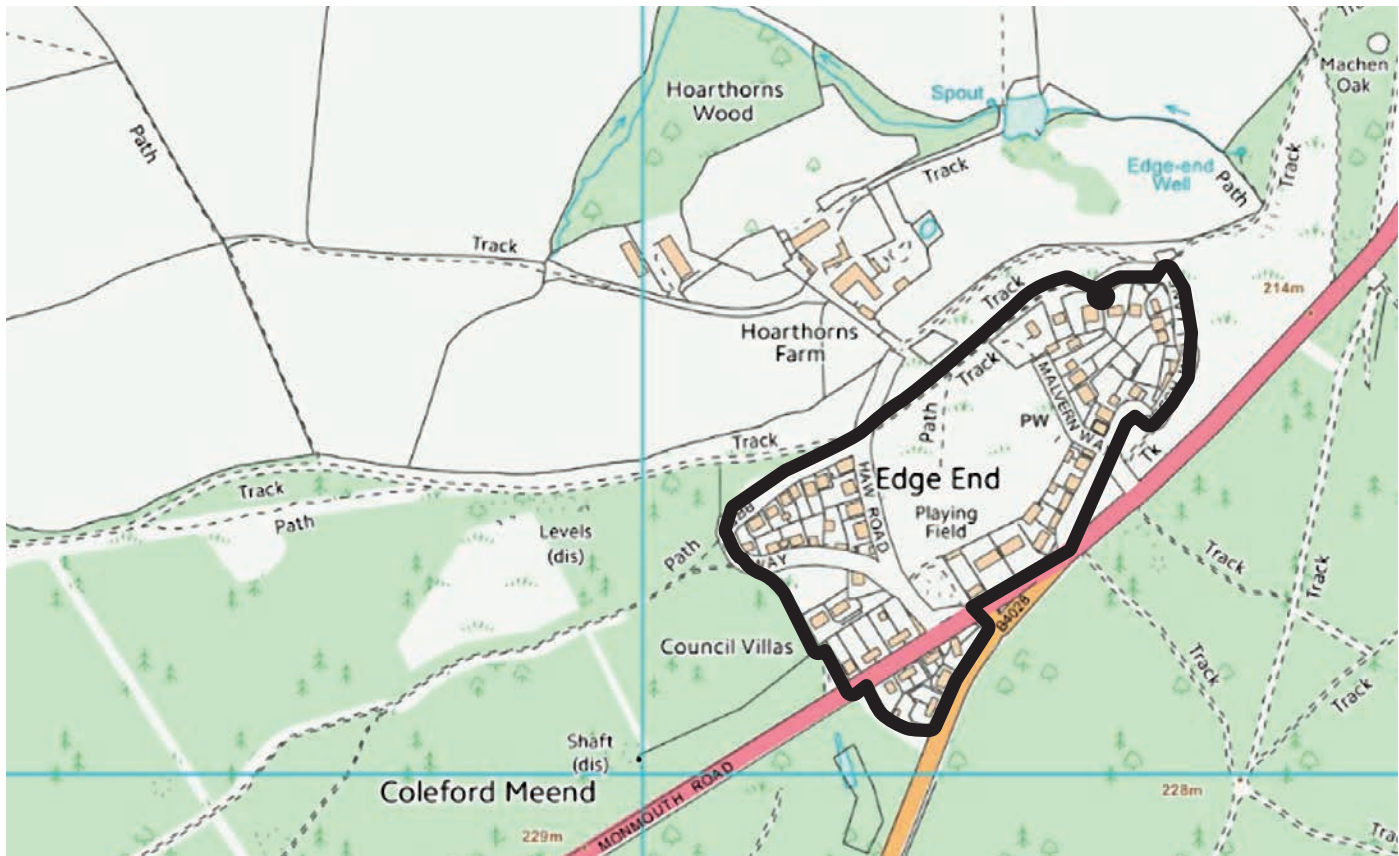




Figure 8: Information featured on a presentation board at our first public consultation event in 2013.

Communications with the FC will be needed before any developments are undertaken to ensure that no covenants or potential restrictions exist on the site.

Lewis James, Assistant Area Land Agent, Forestry Commission, West England Forest District advises:¹⁹ 'The Plan represents the disposals that are applicable to the site, the conveyances of which contain various covenants, potential restrictions in some cases and exceptions and reservations'.

The NDP area which is included within the Coleford allocations plan has within it an allocation of no more than 80 new dwellings on land described as Berry Hill/Five Acres

as per the FoDDC Allocations Plan. The remaining NDP area has NO allocations assigned. The Berry Hill/Five Acres allocation is detailed in the Housing policy (HP1) and Five Acres policy (FA1).

Community consultation feedback:

Community consultation feedback, following parish and community-led plan questionnaire, Housing Needs Survey and the open consultation events 1²⁰ and 2²¹, revealed support of the housing objectives.

Key issues:

- 81% believe it is important to keep local character of buildings.
- 91% want limited development.
- Over 90% of respondents live in a house or a bungalow.

- 70% are one or two person households.
- Respondents supported the objective for low-density, good-quality housing which encourages a sense of community and pride in the area.
- Respondents care about the design and appearance of buildings.
- 96% of respondents agreed that mixed housing types should be developed.
- 97% wished to ensure that any new developments are of high quality design.
- 100% wanted to encourage building by local contractors and using local materials.
- 97% wanted developments to use infill sites and the rebuilding of derelict buildings.

HOUSING POLICY 1

OBJECTIVE:

Small-scale developments that will meet the demands of the local community to return to low-density housing, with traditional style houses and productive family gardens.

POLICY

HP.1.1: Proposals for housing developments, on sites in the defined settlement boundary, will be supported.

HP.1.2: Proposals for the development of the Berry Hill Primary School, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported.

HP.1.3: All development should:

- Harmonise with the current properties in the immediate locality of the proposed development; and
- Have no negative impact on existing home owners.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HOUSING POLICY 1:

Evidence from the WDPC's HNS indicates demand for a small number of a range of property sizes and types in our NDP area. Housing development must therefore provide a mixture of housing to meet the needs of the community including infill plots. Although there is no formal definition of what makes an infill plot one frequently adopted by councils for countryside locations is 'the infilling of a small gap within an otherwise built-up frontage or group of houses'.²² A 'small gap' would usually be big enough for only one, or at the most three, houses set in a plot of a broadly similar width to those next door. 'Within' indicates that the site should normally have houses on either side and not be an add-on to a row of houses. 'Otherwise built-up frontage' suggests a dense and uniform pattern of development, rather than a loose grouping of houses with lots of gaps and spaces in-between, meaning 'groups of houses' must apply to situations where there is development in depth, such as a tight-knit cluster of housing. So an infill plot could typically be a large garden, an area of outbuildings between two houses or maybe an access way and some redundant garages. The development of an infill plot should broadly conform to the design of surrounding houses and allow adequate privacy and access for new and surrounding houses.

It is important to maintain 'buffer areas' between settlements, for example between Coleford and the surrounding settlements, described as 'Strategic Open Space to be safeguarded' in the 2005 Local Plan⁽²³⁾ and the Area Assessment (AP64).

During the production of this document a number of sites have been put forward by members of the public as potential development sites. As a committee we have held discussions on these sites with the Forest of Dean District Council planning officials. The settlement boundary safeguards the unique landscape, environment and character of the area.

The NDP supports the existing settlement boundary as proposed, in the AP, and does not support new housing outside the settlement boundary, excluding affordable housing on Rural Exception sites.

1 and 5 are potential sites for development and 4 already has approval.

1 Land between Woodland Road and Ross Road: This has been included in the settlement boundary by FoDDC in 2013 following a request from the landowner.

2 Land at Coopers Road and plots in Joyford Hill: Coopers Road is outside the current settlement boundary and therefore not included in any housing allocation. This forms an important part of the character of that area between the Statutory Forest and the open countryside.

Joyford Hill infill development will be assessed on each individual planning application in accordance with the infill policy and with regard to the nearby designated AONB.

3 Land between Grove Road and Marians Walk: This area is outside the current settlement boundary so may not be included in any housing allocation. However it could be considered for affordable housing.

4 Land at the Old Stagecoach Park, Lakers Road: At the time of production of this document, outline planning permission has been granted for the development of seven dwellings. It is envisioned that this site would create a sustainable mixed development. Potential dwellings should fit in with the surroundings.

5 Berry Hill Primary School site: The largest area of land in our NDP area that may become available for development is Berry Hill Primary School if it moves from its current site. Any development will be of low-density, similar to adjacent developments, to make use of the land and also provide space between existing homes and the new development. Around 40 houses on this site will be supported in accordance with community consultation, FoDDC CS housing policy and any FC covenants.

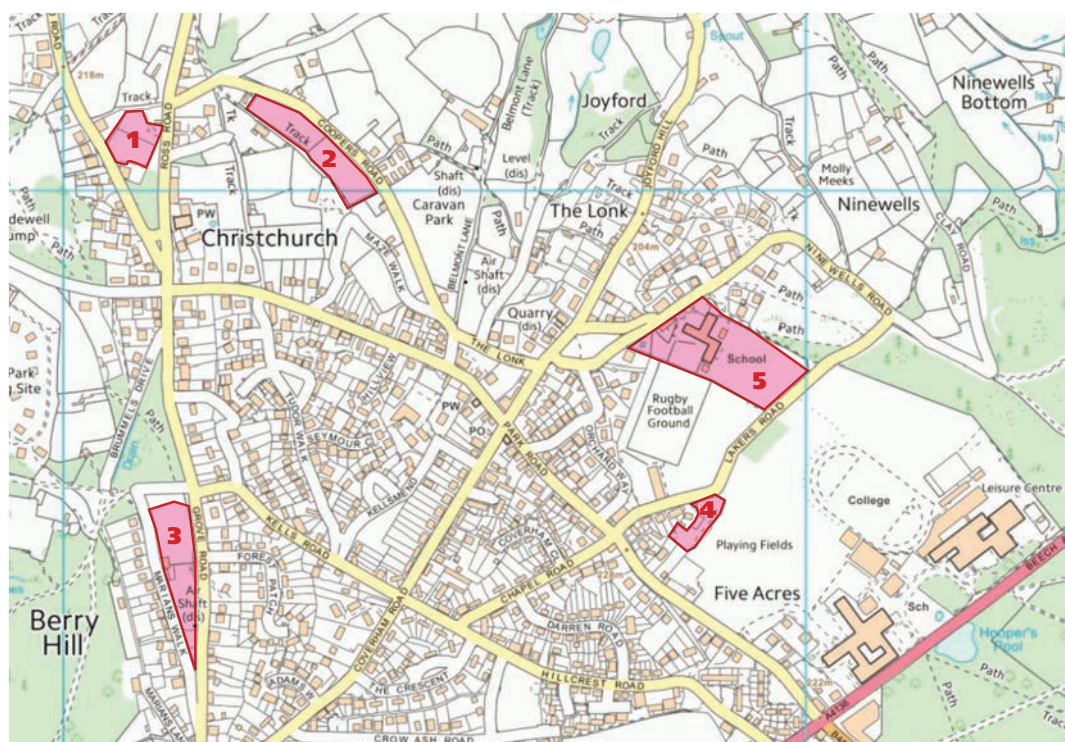


Figure 9: Map of Berry Hill and Christchurch showing representations of sites that were made during community consultation.

Table 1:
BERRY HILL, CHRISTCHURCH AND EDGE END
PLANNING APPLICATIONS IN THE NDP AREA, 2011- 2016

Ref no	Date received	FoDDC Ref No	Address	Development type	Net Additional	Decision
1	July 2016	P0901/16/FUL	26 Park Road	2 dwellings	2	Await decision
2	Feb 2016	P0144/16/FUL	20 Chapel Road	Detached dwelling	1	Approved
3	July 2016	P0631/16/FUL	3 Marians Walk Sunnyside,	Demolish 1, build 3	2(net)	Await decision
4	Oct 2015	P1597/15/FUL	Crow Ash Road	Detached dwelling	1	Approved
5	July 2015	P0989/15/OUT	Joyford Hill	3 dwellings (outline)	3	Approved
6	Sept 2015	P1263/15/FUL	Former Christchurch schoolrooms Sycamore Gardens,	6 dwellings	6	Approved
7	Nov 2015	P1662/15/FUL	Ninewells	2 dormer bungalows	2	Approved
8	Sept 2015	P1645/12/OUT	Lakers Road Garage	7 dwellings	7	Approved
9	July 2015	P1928/14/OUT	44 Grove Road Whitehall,	Demolish 1, build 3	2(net)	Approved
10	Dec 2014	P1727/14/FUL	Brummels Drive Box Cottage, Chapel Walk,	Detached dwelling	1	Approved
11	Nov 2014	P1507/14/FUL	Edge End	Detached dwelling	1	Approved
12	Feb 2014	P1903/14/FUL	28 Coverham Road	Detached dwelling	1	Approved
13	Oct 2013	P1317/13/FUL	10 Coverham Road 5 Beech Avenue,	2 semi-detached	2	Approved
14	Aug 2013	P1092/13/OUT	Five Acres	Detached bungalow	1	Approved
15	Aug 2013	P0666/13/FUL	Adjacent New House, Hillcroft Road 22 The Crescent,	Detached dwelling	1	Approved
16	April 2013	P0348/13/FUL	Berry Hill	Detached dwelling	1	Approved
17	Aug 2012	P0581/12/FUL	26 Tudor Walk	Detached dwellings	2	Approved
18	April 2012	P0449/12/FUL	5 Marians Lane	Detached dwelling	1	Approved
19	Nov 2011	P2237/11/FUL	73 Park Road	1 dwelling	1	Refused, allowed on appeal
20	Oct 2011	P0885/11/FUL	5 Park Road	Detached house	1	Approved
21	Oct 2011	P1857/11/FUL	4 Tudor Walk	Detached dwelling	1	Approved

TOTAL DWELLINGS 40

Two sites adjacent to the NDP area have been identified as natural land barriers ('buffer zones').

■ **The area locally referred to as Lower Lane**, lies outside our designated NDP area and adjoins the Coleford NDP area. It is Grade 2 agricultural land, and is outside the Coleford settlement boundary. Any planning application submitted for this site would be regarded as an attempt to undermine the 'buffer zone', as it forms the essential boundary between the settlement at Berry Hill and the town of Coleford.

The open land between the houses and the main road (A4136) forms the boundary between the Coleford parish and our NDP area.

The Berry Hill Action Group (BHAG)²⁴ was formed by local residents in response to a planning application submitted by a developer for up to 180 houses on the fields north of Lower Lane, Berry Hill.

■ **Sterts Farm:** The site known as 'Sterts Farm' is agricultural land which forms a buffer between settlements at Christchurch, Shortstanding, Joyford Hill, The Lonk and the Nine Wells area of Berry Hill. This should be retained to enable each of these settlements to maintain their distinctive character.

Figure 10a: Locations of planning applications, for Berry Hill and Christchurch, extracted from Table 1 data. This demonstrates a widespread distribution of housing developments, to date, within Berry Hill and Christchurch.

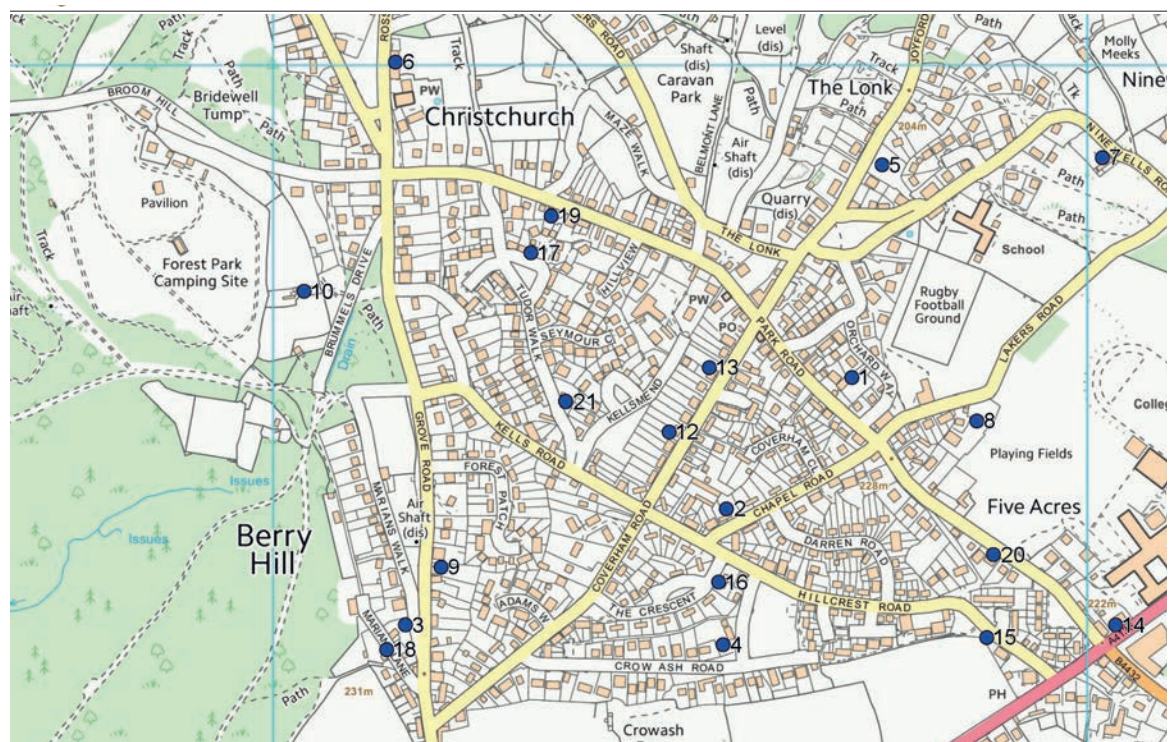


Figure 10b: Location of the planning application, for Edge End, extracted from Table 1 data. It should be noted that Edge End has no developments assigned to this area in the FoDDC Allocations Plan, due to the narrow lanes and steepness of the roads in this small village.



Land at Lower Lane acting as buffer between Berry Hill and Coleford and valued open space



HOUSING POLICY 2

OBJECTIVE:

To plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic and market trends and the needs of different age groups in the community, such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people and people with disabilities as well as people wishing to build their own homes.

POLICY

HP.2.1: Proposals that deliver new housing proposals will be supported where their design and distribution do not differentiate between open market and social housing. Proposals for new housing must deliver a range of house types and mixed tenures. Proposals must clearly demonstrate how the development addresses the needs of current and future households.

HP.2.2: Future developments should be in keeping with the size and type of dwellings already prevalent in the surrounding area except where there is a demonstrable need for an alternative type or size of home and these can be designed to be in keeping with the surrounding area.

HP.2.3: Self-build opportunities and other new housing style/identity that embraces modern design and meets the identified housing needs of local people will be supported where they conform with policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and other development plan policies.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HOUSING POLICY 2:

It is possible to provide sites or support housing of a type that matches local needs through the units which would be available to all.

Evidence has shown a need for the provision of mixed housing types and tenures (rental/shared/ownership and self-builds), including smaller homes for the elderly who wish to downsize and for young singles, couples or families needing their first home, to maintain a balanced and sustainable population.

The HNS shows that 63% of households have lived within the parish for over 20 years. This compares with 58% of respondents in the Parish Plan survey in 2012. 8% have lived within their village for less than 5 years.

Our Plan supports the provision of housing and employment opportunities to attract and retain young people in the area.

Affordable housing developments, together with employment potential, are essential to redress the imbalance of the younger population within our area. The 18 to 44 year-olds are vital for employment and family life. With the exception of the 25 to 29 year-

olds in our NDP area, compared to the whole Forest of Dean, the population in the age range 18 to 44 is lower in percentage terms than the whole of the Forest of Dean, the South West region and England (ONS data - 2011 Census).²⁵

Data from the HNS shows the need for both single level and one and two bedroom homes.

Single level homes are required especially for the known and expected further increase of elderly residents within the area. According to the census data of 2011, Berry Hill, which has the largest number of residents within our NDP, has a higher percentage of persons in the age ranges 65-75 years, 75-85 years and 85-90 years compared with the Forest of Dean District, the South West region and England data, as shown above (Table 2).

Data from the ONS Census 2011, long-term health and disability figures,²⁶ demonstrates the requirements for dwellings either of single level or built to accommodate the needs of disabled persons to a sufficient standard as described in the Optional Building Regulations²⁷ document.

The number of disabled persons within our NDP area is:

- A total of 489 persons with some disability out of a total of 2,477 persons of the survey, equal to 19.7 % of our population with some limited activity.
- Of the total, 233 (9.4%) persons have day-to-day activities limited a lot.
- The remaining 256 (10.3%) persons have day-to-day activities limited a little.

The provision of dropped kerbs will facilitate access into and around Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End. The design of new hard surfacing will contribute to flood reduction measures. Promotion of pedestrian and cyclist safety will encourage a reduction in car use.

Table 2:

AGE PROFILES TABLE, SELECTED TO DEMONSTRATE HOUSING NEEDS FOR THE TARGETED GROUPS I.E. WORKING AGE, FAMILIES AND THE ELDERLY.

Age range	Berry Hill %	Forest of Dean %	South West region %	England %
18 - 19	1.8	2.5	2.6	2.6
20 - 24	4.5	5.1	6.3	6.8
25 - 29	5.1	4.4	5.8	6.9
30 - 44	17.3	17.5	18.8	20.6
45 - 64	Data not relevant			
65 - 74	11.5	11.4	10.1	8.6
75 - 84	7.3	6.6	6.6	5.5
85 - 89	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.5
90+	Data not available			

HOUSING POLICY 3

OBJECTIVE:

Affordable housing to meet the needs of local people.

POLICY

HP.3.1: Proposals which deliver houses to meet the needs of first-time buyers and families will be supported where they conform with policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and other development plan policies. (See Table 2).

HP.3.2: Proposals which deliver houses to meet the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities will be supported where they are located close to facilities.

Evidence supports the creation of diverse communities from all walks, classes and backgrounds to maintain a balanced and sustainable community. The concept of 'pepper-potting' will enhance 'inclusion' and minimise 'stigma'. The value of the NDP is that everyone deserves the opportunity to prove worthy of any home or position. This NDP will not stigmatise social or affordable residents in new developments by differentiating between those homes and those built for the private sector; neither will it ghettoise such developments by allowing such homes to be grouped together in a particular part of that development.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HOUSING POLICY 3:

Affordability remains a key housing issue for the NDP area. Sites must have 40% affordable units with a provision of both intermediate and affordable rent. Affordable units will be provided for those individuals in housing need with a local connection as defined in this NDP and will remain affordable in perpetuity.

The FoDDC CS, (CSP5) states: *'The housing proposed must be capable of management by a Registered Provider, Parish Council, Village Trust or other similar organisations and must be provided in perpetuity for qualifying local people.'*

The following statement was provided by Mr Keith Chaplin, Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer⁽²⁸⁾ of the FoDDC; *'Any affordable housing which is provided should include provision for these homes to remain as affordable homes for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.'*

Open market housing will be permitted on sites to provide cross-subsidy for affordable housing on the same site. As with FoDDC Core Strategy, this will be on developments of 10 or more homes.



HOUSING POLICY 4

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HOUSING POLICY 4.

The FoDDC CS (CSP.1) states that the design and construction of new developments must take into account important characteristics of the environment.

The map right which has been extracted from the Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide²⁹ demonstrates that the smaller settlements of Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End straddle the designated areas of the Forest Core (1) and Common (2) at the northern border of the map.

■ The Forest Core is the most elevated part of the District with extensive tall trees and many veteran trees which give the area its great attraction. This area creates a backdrop and edge to our settlement areas with long views to distant ridges.

■ The Commons is a more open area between the Forest Core and the Wye Valley. The area comprises of open country with hedgerows, some unenclosed area and a few wooded areas.

The Residential Design Guide for any developments within these areas has two fundamental issues which are:

■ The design of individual dwellings and the grouping of buildings should reflect the local characteristics which give the area a sense of place and identity.

■ Applications should demonstrate how environmental concerns and the issue of sustainability have been incorporated into the design.

Both of the above issues have been documented in the character and site assessments of the whole of our NDP area and are supported by the community as evidenced from results from local surveys (Parish Plan and HNS) and both open consultation events.

There are no hard and fast guidelines on densities, especially for smaller sites. The Forest of Dean assess against a yardstick of 30 per hectare but with reference to the Forest of Dean Residential Design guide. This will vary dependent on whether the development is within the Core Forest or Commons areas, as well as giving consideration to the distance between properties. Design and layout is generally considered more important than adherence to particular densities.

Infill development and the conversion of buildings contribute positively to fulfilling housing allocations within the District.

The overwhelming response at the second open event was for the wish for the provision of high-quality mixed housing developments which would retain the village feel of our area.

OBJECTIVE:

Ensure that new developments or re-developments are of high-quality design, built to high sustainability standards and reinforce local distinctiveness which meets the needs of all sections of society.

POLICY

HP.4.1: Proposals for all forms of new development or re-developments should present high-quality and inclusive design, at the same time demonstrating they will conserve local distinctiveness and the aesthetic qualities of traditional rural settlements and buildings. Applications proposing unsympathetic designs which fail to respect the connections between people and places, or are inappropriate to its location, or pay inadequate regard to issues of renewable energy technologies, landscape and biodiversity considerations will not be supported.

All developments should otherwise conform to the Forest of Dean Council Residential Design Guide or its equivalent if replaced or updated in the Plan period.

HP.4.2: Developments should create safe, accessible environments and secure layouts which minimise conflict between traffic, cyclists and pedestrians, avoid street clutter, accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and services. They should also consider the needs of people with disabilities, including the provision of dropped kerbs to facilitate access into and around Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End. They should also provide and encourage footways and cycle paths which facilitate convenient links between Forest, community spaces and developed areas.

HP.4.3: New development proposals should provide off road parking spaces to development plan standards.

Artificial styles, innovation, originality or initiative should not be stifled. However it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness by using local materials such as Forest stone and wood. Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high-quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations, as it is important to address the connection between people and places and the integration of any new development into the natural environment.

The cultural heritage will be continued through the use of local place names for any new, small developments.

ONS 2011 Census data³⁰ shows that levels of car availability for our NDP area is similar to that of the Forest of Dean area as a whole. This demonstrates the higher availability of cars/vans compared to the rest of England, reflecting our rural location, and therefore confirms the need for adequate off-street parking facilities for all developments.

Building for Life 12³¹ is an industry standard, endorsed by Government, for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. It lists 12 headings which should be considered and integrated into neighbourhood developments.

Under the section 'Street and Home', item 10 relates to car parking. In any development, consideration should be given to the provision of sufficient resident and visitor parking so that it does not dominate the street. As many of the roads at the periphery of our area are narrow, sometimes steep and single track, it is important that adequate off-street parking should be included in any development.

Reference documents including the Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide and Building for Life 12 advise that open space should be considered and paths through any site should give easy access to facilities, footpaths and cycle tracks.

Any developments should also include the need for secure cycle stores, where applicable, as well as bin and recycling stores so as not to reduce the quality of the street scenes as described in the Building for Life document (12a).



**Table 3:
CAR OR VAN AVAILABILITY**

Number of cars/vans per household	Berry Hill %	Forest of Dean %	Glo'shire %	England %
None	17.3	14.4	17.3	25.8
1	37.4	39.2	41.8	42.2
2	32.3	32.9	30.8	24.7
3	9.5	9.5	7.4	5.5
4 or more	3.5	4.0	2.9	1.9





Figure 11: Structure and character of the areas of the Forest of Dean.

- 1 Forest Core**
- 2 Commons**
- 3 Wye Valley**
- 4 Severn Vale**
- 5 Northern Farlands**
- 6 May Hill**



TRANSPORT AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION:

Our transport policies are designed to manage the traffic arising from new local development and to improve access to alternative forms of transport.

Roads, streets and route ways:

There is one main road which connects Berry Hill and Edge End - the A4136; this is the northern arterial road through the Forest. Roads wide enough to take-two way flow of traffic include the main roads and those serving the largest residential areas. All other roads within the NDP area are narrow, winding and many are cul-de-sacs of varying lengths. These roads become very steep where they enter the peripheral valleys surrounding all three areas, often with no pavements or kerbs and limited passing or turning places. These roads are consistent with the countryside location and generally slow traffic to appropriate speeds and curb excessive noise pollution.

Grove Road and Park Road are the main traffic arteries for Berry Hill, with the focus for all the current retail, community and educational facilities sited on Park Road. Christchurch has some facilities of its own, namely the Church, a pub at Shortstanding and a tearoom and pottery/gallery at the House of Bread, which was previously the bakery and the village shop. This establishes the sense of a heart to this rather scattered village.

Bus services³² link this NDP area with: Coleford, Gloucester, Monmouth, Ross-on-Wye, Lydney and villages along the routes as follows: 23 - Coleford, Lydney and Gloucester on week days only; 24 - school bus route from the Five Acres Campus to Gloucester, via many small villages along the route, which runs just once in the morning and the evening; and 30 and 31 - Gloucester, Cinderford and Coleford via Five Acres, available seven days a week. There is a bus route that services the campsite on its way to and from Ross-on-Wye. The bus services however are limited at night, at weekends and on bank holidays. They present difficulties for some potential users because bus stops are at too great a distance from some elderly and disabled residents' homes. This problem may be ameliorated through the Forest of Dean Community Transport Partnership system³³ i.e. dial a ride

services, Lydcare and some voluntary car services. *All this information is correct as of July 2016.*

Considering the particular travel, transport and safety needs of young families, the elderly and the disabled, evidence of traffic management is currently limited to the traffic lights at the Berry Hill cross-roads and the pelican crossing outside Lakers School. The nearest rail link at Lydney reaches Cardiff and Gloucester.

The Plan will support new ways of managing the traffic in and around Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End, encouraging pedestrian and cyclist safety through lower traffic speeds and traffic volumes.

Most local employment, retail services, GP and health centre services, dentists, police hub and other services are provided outside of our NDP area and therefore accessibility and links with these facilities must be maintained.

Community consultation feedback: Community consultation feedback, following the parish and community-led plan questionnaire and the open consultation events 1 and 2, revealed support of the transport objectives.

Key issues:

- Respondents would like a more frequent bus service.
- There should be more bus services during peak travel times, during the evenings and at the weekends.
- 99% of respondents support the linking of developments to the villages, a community hub, footpaths and cycle tracks.
- 97% want any developments to be within easy walking distance of all facilities including bus stops and schools.
- 97% wish any developments to take into account potential congestion, road safety and/or parking problems.

Residents expressed strong concern about traffic and transport issues, highlighting: problems of speed; the dangers caused by on-street parking; the impact of heavy traffic past education and leisure facilities; and risks to pedestrian and cyclist safety.

The community also expressed a desire to improve the opportunities for cyclists, both local and tourist, and to encourage cycling and walking as safe options. Accordingly, our Plan aims to take opportunities to improve highway safety and minimise conflicts between road traffic, cyclists and pedestrians. Highway improvements and new developments will be encouraged to take the opportunity to create cycle ways where appropriate.

Car parking standards have been carefully considered and are included because car availability levels in the area are above national averages. This reflects our rural location, commuting out of the area and the limited availability and accessibility to public transport. The Plan's parking standards reflect these local factors and seek to make sure that new development does not add to the current levels of congestion and danger to road users caused by on-street parking.

Photographs demonstrating the rural nature of our area with narrow winding roads at the periphery of our NDP area.



TRANSPORT POLICY 1

OBJECTIVE:

To provide good traffic management, reduce road traffic congestion, promote road safety and, where possible, minimise the need to travel by car and shorten the length and duration of journeys.

POLICY

TR.1.1: Proposals for new development should be designed to ensure that they can be satisfactorily located within the highway network. Where development would add significantly and unacceptably to traffic congestion in the villages or inappropriate traffic on rural lanes, the developer should submit proposals to mitigate any traffic impact or contribute funding towards local transport schemes.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT TRANSPORT POLICY 1:

Requirements to ensure safe and appropriate access will be addressed in accordance with local and national standards by the local highway authority.

Our policies are supported by data and objectives from:

1 The FoDDC CS (CSP 1), which, in achieving design and environmental protection and additional infrastructure provision, will be required if existing infrastructure is found to be inadequate.

2 The Forest of Dean Area Transport Strategy and Gloucestershire LTP3³⁴ which aim to:

- Provide transport infrastructure to accommodate new developments.
- Support the local economy and provide access to employment for local residents.
- Encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- Improve air quality.
- Make the transport network more resilient.
- Minimise the negative impacts of traffic for local communities.

Analysis of the parish and community-led questionnaire demonstrates that car usage is currently essential for 70-80% of households for employment, shopping and appointments to hospital, doctors' surgeries and the dentist. Reducing the use of cars can only be achieved by locating services and employment closer or by increasing the availability of public and community transport, as well as enhancing the cycle routes to these facilities.

Industry guidelines e.g. Building for Life 12, recommend that facilities, services and public transport should be provided as close as possible to any new developments. This includes easy access to schools, shops, workplaces, parks and other amenities.

Community Transport is made up of not-for-profit organisations which offer a door-to-door service for those who do not have access to their own transport. This is an essential service to take people to the hospitals and doctors' appointments, as currently the nearest surgery is in Coleford town centre and the main district hospitals are in Gloucester (over 20 miles away) and Cheltenham (over 25 miles away).

Our Plan will improve traffic management by reducing traffic speeds and car use. These improvements of safety and access for pedestrians and cyclists, in a way which respects the amenity of the locality, are high priority. There are two schools within our area and it is important that speed and traffic management is addressed. The area around Berry Hill Primary School which is busy and congested with parking on inappropriate sites at school opening and closing times, will be improved by increasing safe walking and cycle routes. Lakers School is situated on the main road which links Gloucester and Monmouth. Lakers Road and Park Road are key areas where road safety issues relating to schools will be implemented.

Traffic management of the key junction of the A4136 at Five Acres needs to be considered in the event of any increased quarry activity planned for Stowe quarry.

The reduction of traffic speeds and reducing car use will improve safety and access for pedestrians and cyclists, and do so in a way which respects the amenity of the locality. This initiative should be in place before any potential relocation of the Primary School within our NDP area. Similarly partnership working with Forest Holidays and Gloucestershire Highways will be addressed to improve and enhance traffic management in the Christchurch area near the holiday cabin area and new or existing foot and cycle paths. Similarly it is proposed that any road

aligned to a designated playing field have a reduction to 20mph.

Reduction of the traffic speed in the vicinity of the school has already been reduced from 40mph to 30mph but a 20mph limit at relevant times needs to be considered. This has been implemented around many other school sites within Forest of Dean villages³⁵ including those at Parkend, Yorkley, Bream, Coalway, Redbrook, Mitcheldean and English Bicknor.

Other traffic and road problems raised by the community include:

- Speeding traffic, especially on narrow roads.
- The general maintenance of the roads and footpaths.
- Safety issues due to potholes.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT TRANSPORT POLICY 2:

Transport and traffic management both within the area and into other areas where frequent access is required, such as towns, leisure and tourist attractions and neighbouring education facilities, must be taken into consideration. This will be done by working with relevant local authorities and both public and private transport initiatives. The aim is to ensure that Five Acres becomes a major drop-off and pick-up point for many public routes.

A key partnership will be with the Forestry Commission to explore the opening of new cycle ways linking the holiday camp site at Christchurch to the proposed leisure facility at Five Acres. From this proposed 'destination tourist and leisure site' would spring new cycle and pedestrian paths leading to the local towns Coleford and Cinderford and other tourist attractions such as Cannop and Symonds Yat.

There are already extensive cycle routes within the Forest of Dean area. [36, 37](#)

The Forestry Commission is working with partners to improve the links between communities, both for local residents and

TRANSPORT POLICY 2

OBJECTIVE:

To link all developments to village/community facilities with footpaths and cycle tracks where appropriate and to encourage improved networks throughout and outside the NDP area.

POLICY

TR.2.1: Proposals that would maximise the opportunity for local residents to walk or cycle between new development and bus stops, schools, shops and other community facilities will be supported where they otherwise comply with policies in this Plan and with other development plan policies.

visitors. There are plans for a cycle path from Christchurch campsite (Forest Holidays) through the FC managed woodland and then across privately-owned land to Coleford. The planned route is being confirmed and planning sought. This will link to the central circular track and there is proposed linking to Lydney which will provide a dedicated cycle track from the Severn to the Wye through Berry Hill and Christchurch. The Park Run, in Coverham Enclosure, opposite Lakers School and the College site, is a 5km path, used for running in particular, that makes use of forest tracks. At present the run is squeezed into one small part of the woodland. The aspiration is to improve the track and create

a 5km run throughout the whole area. This would then allow a multi-use path from Edge End to Five Acres to link the two residential areas, create a route to the school, and link the whole area to the mountain biking area of Sallow Vallets. This would join Edge End to the Berry Hill community without the need for walking/cycling along the A40.

There are other walking routes and rights of way across the area, some of which are overgrown, including from Christchurch to Symonds Yat Rock and to the River Wye. Wildlife corridors to farmland and forest abound and are crucial to the ecology of the area





COUNTRYSIDE AND

INTRODUCTION:

Looking out from the area, some residents of Berry Hill, The Lonk, Joyford and Coopers Road, as well as Christchurch and Edge End, enjoy extensive views of farmland, forest, valleys and views as far as the Malvern Hills, the Brecon Beacons, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire. The area of land along Lower Lane and Crow Ash Road is seen as a natural buffer between the town of Coleford and this NDP area and is protected as such in the CS and this NDP. This will prevent urban sprawl from neighbouring areas into a site not already protected by forest woodland.

Views into the area are generally limited or enclosed because the land is in effect a hill top plateau. Relatively speaking, open and green spaces are within easy reach of most residents. Fields, forest land and an orchard within a private garden, for example on Joyford Hill, can be found toward the edges of the NDP area. Extensive green and natural features pervade all the villages. All residential areas are linked to open spaces, field, forest and public rights of way. Trees with preservation orders are found in the Nine Wells and Five Acres site areas. There is a green backdrop for many residential areas, along with substantial gardens. The seasonal variations, e.g. the beautiful leaf colours along Beech Road (A4136) and exquisite views across the valleys in winter are a very special and treasured feature of our area.

The Forest of Dean, which our NDP area falls within, was the first area to be designated as a National Forest Park, by the Forestry Commission designation in 1938 under the Forestry Act 1919, and adjoins Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOBs).³⁸

As far as forestry is concerned, the Hands Off Our Forest (HOOF) campaign of July 2012 underlined how much local residents value our Forest. The Bishop of Liverpool as Chair of the Independent Panel Report on Forestry,³⁹ summarised as follows:

Public Forests should remain in public ownership and be defined in statute as land held in trust for the nation

The main points raised by the Independent Panel Report on Forestry are:

- **Public forest must be kept in public ownership.**
- **The Forest must be expanded and safeguarded by charter.**
- **Long-term planning and financial freedom is essential.**
- **Involvement of local groups must be assured.**
- **Access to woods is to be increased across England.**



Seating might be provided and the community, as well as others, might use it as a quiet place for rest and contemplation.

It is expected that CS policies (CSP1, Design and environmental protection), will apply.

Environment vision:

The Plan will be sympathetic to the natural environment, ensuring connectivity is maintained and improved, enhancing the biodiversity and maintaining the cultural landscape to the benefit of all the communities. Any development must take in to consideration the proximity of the AONB boundaries, the protected species that inhabit our wooded landscape and the landscape characteristics that make the Forest of Dean unique.

Community consultation feedback:

Community consultation feedback, following the parish and community-led plan questionnaire and the open consultation events 1 and 2, revealed support of the countryside and environment objectives.

Key issues:

- 79% believe energy conservation is important.
- 83% think wildlife conservation in our area is important.
- 78% of respondents do not want building on open spaces and parks.
- The importance of the natural environment was one of the top 6 priorities from respondents at the first open event.
- 78% think it is important to protect Forest Waste.
- 100% of respondents at the second open event supported the proposal to conserve and enhance the biodiversity, preserve and protect the Forest and the village environment within our NDP area.
- 98% wanted to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and views.
- 99% wanted opportunities for landscape, recreational and ecological gain.

ENVIRONMENT

This is an area which presents a balance of pleasant, gentle environmental variations and cohesion. There are no fields within the main residential areas of Berry Hill. Boundaries are varied, including hedgerows, fences, trees and walls. Across the whole NDP area there are small, medium and large acreages of farm land. The small mowed grassy areas, many of which are Forestry Commission owned, are interspersed through the more residential areas and offer crucial small breathing spaces in all our NDP areas. These add significantly to the rural ambience of the area.

The variety of wildlife that abounds across the area and its ecology are crucial to the quality of life for one and all be they human, wild animals, birds or insects. We can claim with confidence that this is an essential wildlife area with wildlife corridors permeating all settlements. There is clear evidence of many wild mammals, birds, amphibians, insects, trees, plants, wild flowers and fungi thriving in our environment. The prevalence of large, expansive gardens provide for diversity of garden plants, hedges and trees. The richness and ecological diversity of our area includes, for example, wild boar, deer, badgers, foxes and a wide variety of birds including goshawk,

red legged partridges, peregrine falcons, sparrow hawks, wood peckers, pheasants and a range of smaller wild and garden birds (RSPB annual bird survey 2015).⁴⁰

Conservation is a high priority and protection of the countryside and the environment are major considerations when assessing potential sites, and weighed heavily in the selection process.

Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End residents place a high value on the woodland, and open spaces across the area. The protection of Statutory Forest including what is described as Forest Waste are seen as important priorities for the NDP. Development of Forest Waste must only be allowed if the development is of higher environmental value (designated wildlife site) or for use by the community, and has the wide agreement of the community (such as community orchards and gardens). One such proposal is the development of FC owned Forest Waste land on Lakers Road, known locally as 'The Ferns', into a community-managed orchard. This orchard would encourage the planting and harvesting of proven local varieties of fruit and nut. The local schools would be encouraged to become involved with the orchard.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COUNTRYSIDE AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY 1:

The FoDDC CS (CSP 2.3.1) deals with biodiversity and states that:

1. Developments must support green infrastructure corridors that link to existing habitat features and networks. They must show that the integrity of any affected nature conservation sites is not compromised by the development proposed. Proposals that prevent or restrict network connections will not be supported.

2. Developments will be required to make long-lasting biodiversity enhancements which could include the creation of new habitats where these would be appropriate. They should support existing features (trees, ponds, hedgerows etc), provide and manage public open space and should also provide additional features for a wide variety of species and habitats in appropriate locations throughout the development. Additional features provided should be consistent with the characteristics of the surrounding area.

COUNTRYSIDE & ENVIRONMENT POLICY 1

OBJECTIVE:

To maintain and enhance the green and natural features of the villages.

POLICY

CE.1.1: Proposals for new development should safeguard and where possible enhance the natural environment in the Plan area. Particular attention should be given in the design of development proposals to the retention of native trees, hedgerows, wetland areas and wildlife corridors. Proposals which would detract from the conservation and natural wildlife value of the Plan will not be supported.

Figure 12: Our NDP area contains several areas of Forest Waste (outlined in green) which cannot be changed without consultation with the Forestry Commission. As documented in the FoDDC CS (CSP9) and the proposed AP the areas of Forest Waste are strongly protected by the Council.



The publication by Natural England 2012 of profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs)⁴¹ will help communities on critical issues to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future. These are areas which share similar landscapes and characteristics and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making a good decision-making framework for the natural environment. Profile 105 specifically refers to the area of the Forest of Dean and Lower Wye.

Key specific characteristics from this report which apply to our NDP area are:

- Picturesque inward as well as extensive views outward for much of our NDP area.
- Extensive woodland including ancient woodland continuously wooded since 1600.
- Part of the largest remaining area of broadleaf semi-natural woodland in the country.
- Wildlife rich habitats.
- Historic industrial landscape of coal extraction.

Our NDP area is within this profile and is described as a mosaic of woodland and open ground. The whole NCA profile 105 makes an important national contribution to timber provision, a range of woodland stand types, woodland birds, butterflies and internationally important populations of lesser and greater horseshoe bats all of which can be applied to our NDP area.

Because of field patterns surrounded by ancient hedgerows, our area contains hedgerows connecting the woodland to the open countryside and provides important hibernacula flight lines and roosts for lesser and greater horseshoe bats. Grazed sheltered fields surrounded by Forest provide feeding areas for lesser and greater horseshoe bats which feed on invertebrates from animal dung.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Part 3 Wildlife)⁴² documents that everyone has a duty to conserve biodiversity. It states that every public authority, which includes the FoDDC and WDPC, must in exercising its function have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This conservation of diversity includes living organisms, types of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat. The Secretary of State publishes, after consultation with Natural England, lists of organisms or habitats of importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Under the Act above, in conserving the natural beauty in the countryside, the fact that an area in England consists of land used for agriculture and woodland or any areas whose flora, fauna or physiological features are partly the product of human intervention in the landscape does not prevent it from being treated as an area of natural beauty - all of which apply to our NDP area. Peregrine and goshawk are often seen in the area and great crested newts have been found (historically) in local ponds. The area is also bound by the Wye Valley AONB, designated in 1971 and two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are found in the wider

landscape (Wye Valley Gorge - plant assemblages/endemic species) & Forest of Dean (bats). Areas adjacent to SACs are to be managed in a considerate manner.

These demonstrate the biodiversity and importance of conservation and wildlife corridors within our NDP area

This is in line with the Lawton Review (Making Space for Nature)⁴³ which recommended the establishment of ecological restoration zones in order to enhance existing wildlife sites by making them part of a connected and expanded national ecological network.

The Environmental White Paper (The Natural Choice: securing value for nature)⁴⁴ promoted the restoration zone theme and established competition across England whereby partnerships could bid for funding and formal recognition for Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs). The Forestry Commission has submitted a Landscape Partnership Scheme to the Heritage Lottery Fund to bring together the rich cultural history of the Forest of Dean, including a proposed ecological network which will see the important open areas of the Forest linked to create a diverse and sustainably managed landscape.

By ensuring this, Our Plan will enhance the ecosystem services of the landscape and conserve the wildlife and their habitats.

Open spaces, including gardens, recreational space, fields and Forest are important for the health and well-being of a community. Our natural environment is highly valued by the local residents, not just for recreational value but also for the unique character of our area that offers a quiet and bio-diverse environment. Green space needs to be safeguarded.



COUNTRYSIDE & ENVIRONMENT POLICY 2

OBJECTIVE:

Retain Local Green Space, open spaces sports and recreational buildings and land.

POLICY

CE.2.1: The following parcels of land as shown on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Space:

Land opposite the Christchurch Church (LGS 1)

The Ready Penny (LGS 2)

Berry Hill Community Orchard (LGS 5)

Berry Hill Playground (LGS 3)

Playing Fields on the Lakers and the Gloscol sites (LGS 4)

Edge End Recreation Ground (EE LGS 1)

Edge End (EE LGS 2)

New development will not be supported on land designated as Local Green Space except in very special circumstances.

The following parcels of land as shown on the Policies Map are identified as open space areas.

Kells Meend (OGS 6)

Tudor Walk (OGS 7)

Glencarn Place (OGS 8)

Nine Wells A (OGS 9)

Nine Wells B (OGS 10)

Proposals for development on the open spaces areas will not be supported unless:

- It can be demonstrated that the open space concerned is surplus to requirements; or
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by an equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- The proposed development itself is for alternative recreational provision and which would serve the local community in an equivalent or enhanced fashion.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COUNTRYSIDE AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY 2:

Our NDP area is a beautiful landscape rich in a wide, diverse range and populations of fauna and flora with quality wildlife habitats. These habitats provide a rich source of foods and homes for birds, insects and mammals. It is vital to protect existing areas of green spaces, including gardens. We also have an abundance of footpaths, bridle paths and cycleways within and adjacent to our NDP area. The visual impact of any development must be considered to ensure that residents and visitors to the area can continue to enjoy these features. An Environmental Impact Survey will be undertaken to minimise any loss of habitats and/or species.

The NPPF (DGLG 2012, paragraph 74) states that local communities and NDPs should be able to identify for special protection, green areas of particular importance to them. When designated as LGS, local communities can rule out new developments other than in very special circumstances.

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

a: Assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

b: The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

c: The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

The areas listed in CE.2.1 conform to the NPPF guidelines for the designation of LGSs as:

They are in close proximity to our community.

They are special to the local community because of either their beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity and/or the richness of their wildlife, as demonstrated right.

There are some other open green spaces (OGS), listed in Table 4, which are not being listed as LGSs but are valued by the community.

Reference number	Name of Green Space	Ownership
LGS 1	Land opposite Christchurch Church	Forestry Commission (F)
LGS 2	The Ready Penny	FC
LGS 3	Berry Hill Playground	West Dean Parish Council
LGS 4	Playing Fields (Gloscol site)	Homes and Community Agency
LGS 5	Berry Hill Community Orchard	FC
EE LGS 1	Edge End Recreational Ground	Community owned
EE LGS 2	Edge End	FC
OGS 6	Kells Meend	FC
OGS 7	Tudor Walk	FC
OGS 8	Glencarn Place	Two Rivers
OGS 9	Nine Wells A	FC
OGS 10	Nine Wells B	FC



Table 4:
DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED DESIGNATED LGS AND OPEN GREEN SPACES (OGS): PROVIDED AS EVIDENCE AT PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS 1 AND 2 AND IN CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS OF OUR NDP AREA.

For exact locations see Figures 14a and 14b in the Community section.

<i>Close proximity to community</i>	<i>Reasons why special</i>	<i>Size (hectares)</i>
C) Surrounded by local community and church	Important gateway to villages and mature trees offering key wildlife routes and habitat.	0.34
On road to Symonds Yat and surrounded by houses	Entry point of pathway to Symonds Yat. Important gateway to villages and mature trees offering key wildlife routes and habitat.	0.15
In the centre of a residential area	Playground for local children	0.49
Within current College, leisure facilities, local community and Lakers School	Fields used by local and wider community and enormous potential future options for the whole site.	2.0
In forest location with primary school and houses to one side	Community project for residents of all ages, local schools and scouts Mature and heritage fruit trees and key location near schools.	1.4
Integral part of the whole village	Used local area. Important and valued views of the Malvern Hills and the Welsh Mountains.	0.88
Within the village residential area	Used local area. Important and valued views of the Malvern Hills and the Welsh Mountains,	0.2
Surrounded by residential housing	Open area for local residents and a valued habitat	0.25
Surrounded by residential housing	Open area for local residents and a valued habitat	0.1
Close to sheltered housing development	Key open space, with seating for sheltered housing residents. Important road junction and entrance to Berry Hill village	0.1
Within a well-spaced residential area	Key local landmark, local space for community use, a wildlife area and part of walking, cycling and equestrian routes	0.32
Within a well-spaced triangle of housing	Key local relaxation area and part of the route as above. Also a view point towards farm land and beyond	0.21

There is also a need to preserve areas of separation between all three villages, as well as Coleford town and its surrounding areas, in order to ensure that the identity and distinctiveness of each settlement is preserved.



COUNTRYSIDE & ENVIRONMENT POLICY 3

OBJECTIVE:

To seek opportunities for landscape, recreational and ecological gain whilst minimising the environmental impact of new developments by ensuring that any development maintains green features and safeguards the natural character.

POLICY

CE.3.1: Wherever appropriate, the planting of additional trees should be included in new developments, particularly local species that are in keeping with the character of the area. Planting that contributes to the biodiversity of the area and supports green corridors is particularly encouraged. Proposals should be accompanied by an indicative planting scheme to demonstrate an adequate level of sustainable planting can be achieved.

CE.3.2: Development proposals should be designed so that they are assimilated into the character of its immediate locality as set out in the Plan's character assessments. Development proposals should maintain any access from the site into the Forest.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COUNTRYSIDE AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY 3:

Our policies support, where applicable, the ethos of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) report on Ecosystems and Human Wellbeing⁴⁵ produced under the umbrella United Nations organisation. It is intended to be used by communities:

- To identify priorities for action.
- As a benchmark for future assessments.
- As a framework and source of tools for assessment, planning, and management.
- To gain foresight concerning the consequences of decisions affecting ecosystems.
- To identify response options to achieve human development and sustainability goals.
- To help build individual and institutional capacity to undertake integrated ecosystem assessments and act on the findings.
- To guide future research.

The MA examines how changes in ecosystem services influence human well-being. Human well-being is assumed to have multiple constituents, including the basic material for a good life, such as secure and adequate livelihoods, enough food at all times, shelter, clothing, and access to goods; health, including feeling well and having a healthy physical environment, such as clean air and access to clean water; good social relations, including social cohesion, mutual respect, and the ability to help others and provide for children; security, including secure access to

natural and other resources, personal safety, and security from natural and human-made disasters and freedom of choice and action, including the opportunity to achieve what an individual values doing and being.

The Natural England document (NCAs) has Statements of Environment Opportunities (SEOs) as guidance for communities with respect to their environment. The following applies to our environment.

SEO1: Encourages communities to protect and manage the extensive internationally important woodland for its biodiversity and landscape. Communities should recognise the woodland's recreational value and heritage and its contribution to place and tranquillity.

COUNTRYSIDE & ENVIRONMENT POLICY 4

OBJECTIVE:

To safeguard and enhance the character and historic environment of the NDP area, whilst supporting the use of renewable energy.

POLICY

CE.4.1: Proposals for energy generating infrastructure using renewable or low-carbon energy sources to serve individual properties or groups of properties will be supported provided that:

- The energy generating infrastructure is located as close as practicable and in proportion to the scale of the existing buildings or proposed development it is intended to serve.
- The siting, scale, design and impact on landscape, views and wildlife of the energy generating infrastructure is minimized and does not compromise public safety and allows continued safe use of public rights of way.
- Adjoining properties and residents are not adversely impacted in terms of noise, vibration, or electromagnetic interference and any mitigations must be met.
- Where appropriate, the energy generating infrastructure and its installation complies with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme or equivalent standard.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COUNTRYSIDE AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY 4:

Our plan supports the FoDDC CS (CSP.3) which states that all major developments and other developments involving construction of one or more dwellings will be expected to provide sufficient on-site renewable energy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from energy use by 15% from 2015 and 20% from 2020.

With respect to planning of solar panels WDPC does not have a policy and a planning application for a solar farm within the parish at Yorkley Court was not objected to. This was because there was no significant visual impact made by this development which is off the beaten track and not overlooked by any other dwelling.

In the case of our NDP area there are no sites that would not have a significant visual impact (as evidenced in our character and site assessments), with respect to either solar or wind turbine farms, on other properties and that therefore any application for a solar or wind turbine farm in our area will not be supported.

The Natural England document (NCAs) SEO 3 aims to maintain and enhance the distinctive settlement patterns of small villages such as those of Our Plan. It advises that future developments recognise and retain the value of the area's landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, access and heritage - all of which are recognised within our countryside and environment policies.

Berry Hill developed as a distinct settlement pattern on one edge of the central Forest due to the influence of minerals' exploitation during the late 18th and early 19th century. Much of the development of this village was as a result of the encroachment by squatters onto areas of former Forest common. The early developments in Berry Hill with their terraces of miners' houses had more the feel of a Welsh mining village and therefore the historic legacy should not be lost with any unsympathetic developments.



COUNTRYSIDE & ENVIRONMENT POLICY 5

OBJECTIVE:

To ensure there is no significant impact or adverse affect to the amenities of residents or harm to the environment in the area, as a result of pollution (including light), noise, privacy issues, odour and air.

POLICY

CE.5.1: Where planning permission is required for an external lighting scheme or where external lighting is required as part of a development proposal, applications will only be supported where:

- The lighting scheme will not exceed that which is required for the satisfactory undertaking of the task involved.
- Glare and spillage is minimised through good design, particularly on the edge of residential areas, adjacent to highways, nature reserves or other environmentally sensitive settings.
- Lighting schemes are energy efficient and appropriate to the surroundings and character of the areas as a whole, taking account of the Historic Landscape Character studies for the Plan area.
- Lighting is positioned and directed to minimise the impact on the surroundings, with the use of unobtrusive exterior lighting.
- Lighting systems on buildings and roadways mitigate the potential of light pollution to the surrounding area.
- There is no significant adverse impact on sites of nature conservation and other sites of biodiversity or the general enjoyment of the local dark sky.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COUNTRYSIDE AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY 5:

Although our area is not a designated dark skies area and as can be seen from the light pollution maps of 1993 and 2000, for South West England⁴⁶ published by Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). our area does fall within the blue skies designation and therefore is still excellent for non light polluted skies.



ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION:

The economy in the NDP area is based on local businesses, tourism and employment opportunities in many micro-businesses. Our main businesses are: Lakers School (106 staff), Goscol RFDC site, Berry Hill School, Five Acres Garage (approx. 40 staff), shops and tourism. Across the whole Forest relatively more people are employed in the manufacturing sector compared with national and South West averages; however, our NDP area is not a prime manufacturing zone. Similarly, across the Forest, Forest of Dean District Council information⁴⁷ from 2012 cites tourism as a significant sector, accounting for 9% of all employment, which has seen an increase from 7.5% in the previous survey carried out in 2009.



Lakers School

Data for the NDP area shows that there is a low proportion of long-term unemployment.

Many people work in multiple part-time low-paid jobs and or zero hours contracts to make a living, allowing little family/leisure time. The main trend is to travel out of the area for better paid jobs and wider access to more diverse and highly skilled work. The employment and education carbon foot print, therefore, is of significant concern.

The nearest large employers, neighbouring our NDP area are Suntory, formerly Glaxo Smith Kline (approx. 500 employees) and SPP Pumps (approx. 190 employees).

There are two major facilities for tourists in our NDP area: Forest Holidays and Forest Leisure Coleford (Five Acres). Local bed and breakfast businesses and the two caravan sites, at Forest Holidays and on Joyford Hill,

service tourists. The Caravan Club hire Lakers School playing fields and the Rugby Club on an annual basis. Tourists access the numerous attractions which are within easy reach of the NDP area (loosely within ten miles): Symonds Yat Rock, Cannop Cycle Centre, The Nags Head Reserve (RSPB), Whitemead Woodland Park, Kingfisher Cruises on the River Wye, Dean Forest Railway, Beechenhurst Lodge: sculpture trail and climbing facility, Go Ape Treetop Adventure, Dean Heritage Centre, Clearwell Caves, Puzzlewood, Littledean Jail, the Cathedral of the Forest at Newland, Goodrich Castle, Tintern Abbey and Forestry trails through 35 square miles of beautiful woodland for walking, cycling and horse riding. Other commercial facilities neighbouring our NDP area include: Forest Adventure (rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, caving, archery and mountain biking), Forest Bush Craft and cycle hire. Arts venues include:

the Hot Pot Pottery within our NDP, Marianna Art in St Briavels, Taurus Crafts in Lydney and Missfire-blacksmith in Clearwell.

The proposed redevelopment of the Five Acres site into a major leisure and cultural amenity for visitors and local people alike represents an additional potential enabler to the policies and the achievement of the key objectives below. The potential economic effect, both in terms of employment opportunities and business to business commercial activity, would be a major boost not only to the economy of the NDP area but the Forest of Dean as a whole. The pre-feasibility study carried out by Locality Consultants and published in July 2014⁴⁸ on behalf of the West Dean Parish Council highlights many of these benefits and is cited as evidence in support of many of the policies. That said, at this time, there are no guarantees that the aims and aspirations embodied in the Five Acres proposals will be

achievable. This does not prevent the implementation of the policies in this section, but it does mean that they may be less effective in achieving the key objective in the long term.

For further detail see the Five Acres section within this document.

Consultation with residents and businesses in our NDP area has indicated that they wish to promote economic and social prosperity by encouraging local employment for this and future generations. This Plan is intended to help existing employers to stay in the area and retain staff. We will encourage new businesses, especially small-scale employment space, to invest and be able to create a wide range of jobs for local people and therefore strengthen the local economy.

The limited workspace and jobs in rural communities like ours means that local people of working age either leave the area or travel daily outside our area in search of work. This loss of working age populations has social and economic consequence for our three villages. The ability to provide local employment gives people a sense of community and reduces the need to travel to other areas, so minimising the carbon footprint.

We also recognise the importance of balancing employment opportunities with adequate housing to meet those needs. Any developments must be sustainable and would require ecological and transport assessments before being implemented which will ensure that the development will not have any adverse impact on local residents, the transport network or environment and respect the character of our area. Our Plan seeks support for a strong, positive, flexible, innovative and responsive local economy that will enhance tourism, particularly green tourism and cultural and leisure activities, for the local and surrounding communities as well as visitors to the region.

The overall key objective is therefore to develop the local economy in order to enhance the opportunities for local employment and training.

This objective is consistent with the Government's National Planning Policy Objective (Section 3, Para 28, Supporting a prosperous rural economy).

The NDP's objectives are also in alignment with the FoDDC CS which seeks to provide a wide range of employment opportunities and to encourage a more diverse economy.

Community consultation feedback:

Community consultation feedback, following the parish and community-led plan questionnaire and the open consultation events 1 and 2, revealed support of the economy objectives. Key issues:

- Evidence from the Parish Plan shows the top priority for residents was for small businesses employing less than 10 people.
- Businesses such as technology/creative industry companies and retail/shops also figure highly in responses.
- 99% of respondents wanted to enhance the prospects for local employment and training.
- 99% supported initiatives to increase visitor accommodation.
- 95% wish to see increased tourism and visitor spend.
- 99% felt that fast and secure broadband services were essential.
- 98% want to support and encourage home working.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ECONOMY POLICY 1:

Community consultation identified concerns over the perceived demographic imbalance in the area between young and old. This is supported by the census data (See Table 2) which shows that the Berry Hill area has a larger proportion of older residents in the age range of 65-89 years, than the Forest of Dean as a whole, as well as the South West region and England. Conversely it has a lower proportion of younger people aged 16-17 years, and those who might generally be considered of working age (18 to 44 years). The figure of 4.4% for the Forest of Dean is the only percentage for the age range of 16 - 44 years where the percentage for Berry Hill is lower than for the whole of the Forest of Dean, but it is still lower compared with the data from the South West region and England.

It is reasonable to infer from this data that proportionally more people in this age range are leaving the area due to lack of employment opportunities and/or suitable affordable housing.

In order to counter this apparent demographic trend it is therefore important that the economic health and vitality of the local area is supported through the strategic application of these policies and that long-term, sustainable employment opportunities are thereby generated.

The FoDDC CS (CSP.7) encourages new and more diverse types of employment and supporting infrastructure.



ECONOMY POLICY 1

The Forest economic effect:

Further strategic support for NDP policies comes from the Independent Panel on Forestry in the form of evidence that woods and trees are good for the green economy. Recommendations:

- Government to ensure development of wood-based industries and technology.
- Local partnerships to bid for funding to invest in the wood industry and the supply chain for a revitalised woodland economy.
- Local authorities should use the Local Plans to introduce a 'Wood First' policy. They should create a positive planning environment for sustainable wood and forestry businesses, as well as those based on woodland leisure and tourism.

The following evidence from the Forest Skills⁴⁹ document demonstrates the employment potential in an area such as ours which is an integral part of a Statutory Forest environment:

- Despite a positive outlook for forestry, businesses are having recruitment difficulties. Skilled workers are urgently needed to take advantage of green growth opportunities. At the time of publication:
 - 17% of establishments report a vacancy.
 - 43% of these vacancies are considered hard to fill, with the majority attributed to skills shortages.
 - 53% of the workforce is over 40 years old, indicating worse skills shortages in the future.
 - This offers a unique opportunity to develop forestry skill and perhaps help redress the loss of young working age people from our area.
 - Further details are supplied within the document.

OBJECTIVE:

To increase the potential for economic growth and development and to encourage the prospect for local employment and training within our NDP area.

POLICY

EC.1.1: New retail/business start-ups or the expansion of existing businesses will be supported, where they will be sensitive to the local setting and the surrounding environment.

EC.1.2: Proposals to upgrade or extend existing employment sites will be supported where the impact on the amenities of the surrounding properties is acceptable.

EC.1.3: Proposals that would stimulate tourism activity will be supported.

EC.1.4: Insofar as planning permission is required proposals for home working will be supported where the development is:

- In keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings.
- Does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of residents in the area.
- Does not unacceptably increase vehicular traffic flow.
- Has safe and suitable access to the site for all people.

Home working:

■ According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) there were 4.2million home workers in the first three months of 2014, amounting to 13.9% of the workforce. This is the highest proportion of people doing so since 1998. The majority of these people (63%) regard themselves as self-employed compared to 34% who were employed by a company or organisation. It is important therefore that the NDP adopts policies that support this trend.

■ In our NDP area, ONS data⁵⁰ shows a total of 135 residents (16-74 years) work mainly or wholly at home and 180 residents (16-74 years) consider themselves self-employed.

■ The potential provision of a business services hub to assist people working from home as part of the Five Acres proposal is supported by the NDP. See Five Acres Pre-feasibility Study Section 2.5.1 to 2.5.5. (Appendix 9).





*Edge End
phone box*

ECONOMY POLICY 2

OBJECTIVE:

To work with partners to increase tourism and visitor spend.

POLICY

EC.2.1: Proposals for the expansion of tourism and related attractions will be supported where they:

- Provide innovative offers which would widen and enhance the tourism of the area.
- Involve the appropriate conversion or change of use of a permanent and soundly constructed building which sensitively retains any historic interest and character.
- Complement the character and qualities of the site's immediate surroundings.
- Do not adversely impact on the wider tranquillity of the area.

Development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the River Wye and the Wye Valley Woodlands SACs.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ECONOMY POLICY 2:

The FoDDC CS (CSP3.18) recognises that the hotel and catering sector of the economy is under-represented in the Forest of Dean, compared with the South West.

Nationally the leisure and tourism sector has grown year on year and the Council is seeking to improve the area's income from tourism. Any growth must be achieved in a manner that is compatible with the natural and historic environment and should be sustainable.

Quality accommodation and attractions, in particular those that interpret the history, culture or natural history of the area will be supported.

Increased tourism and visitor spend will develop the local economy and offer increased opportunities for employment and training.

Consultation with the local community indicated overwhelming support for this policy. A series of reports produced by South West Research Ltd from 2006 to 2012 for the FoDDC and Wydean tourism figures⁵¹ show the increasing economic importance of tourism to the area. There is no separate data for the West Dean area and the surrounding locality, but it is clear that local tourist numbers will increase as a result of the Forest Holidays development of the former Christchurch campsite and the enlargement of the Bracelands Campsite (Camping in The Forest) to include static caravans and improved service amenities. The reports show the economic value that overnight visitors bring to the Forest.

The Five Acres Pre-feasibility Study for WDPC prepared by Locality Consultants (Section 1, 1.3.) further emphasises the importance of tourism to the Forest of Dean as a whole and goes on to state that although the main attraction of the Forest is the scenery and outdoor activities ...the new destination management plan currently in preparation aims to reduce seasonality by improving year-round provision. The plans to offer high-quality leisure and sporting amenities at the Five Acres site is consistent with this overall aim of increasing tourism and visitor spend and supports the FoDDC CS (CSP.7)

On a regional basis the Strategic Economic Plan for Gloucestershire, presented by Gloucestershire First LEP presented in March 2014⁵², talk about establishing a Growth Hub to support companies with high growth potential. It states that the importance of tourism to Gloucestershire from both an economic and an employment perspective is considerable. We plan to support the tourism sector through our Growth Hub proposals where tourism businesses with high growth potential will be able to access appropriate support.

This is consistent with the achievement of the key economic objective.

Working in partnership with hotels, guest houses and bed and breakfast establishments will bring wealth to local businesses including public houses, eating places, craft businesses and the wider economic communities.

These can be a valuable source of local employment especially in a rural environment such as ours where tourism is core to the local economy. Our Plan recognises the benefits, locally and countywide, if additional tourists are attracted to the area.

An example of this policy is reflected in the investment by Forest Holidays in enlarged facilities at the old Christchurch campsite. A further 44 lodges were built in the spring and summer of 2014 and are now bringing additional visitors to the area with beneficial consequences for local businesses. The NDP is committed to working in partnership with Forest Holidays to promote the policy of increasing visitor accommodation.

The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourist Association is the main umbrella organisation for businesses offering accommodation and amenities in the area. Its website is an important portal for visitors to source accommodation and to make decisions about what they wish to do when they are staying in the area. The vast majority of locally based businesses geared to tourist needs are members and advertise through this Association.

The Five Acres Pre-feasibility Study (Section 2. 2.2.4) concludes early research suggests a market opportunity exists for a hotel offering more budget-priced accommodation to be built on the Five Acres site. This would enhance the tourism accommodation on offer in the Forest while creating employment, training and work opportunities for residents.

Section 1.3.of the Study suggests the Lodges based at Christchurch can provide an important economic stimulus to the area bringing many visitors throughout the year. It is important that the local area offers suitable amenities to take advantage of the spending potential that these visitors bring. Existing local businesses including pubs and restaurants and those offering accommodation and other tourist-based amenities need to be supported in their efforts to cater for visitors' requirements. The potential development at Five Acres, with all the amenities that it will offer can also benefit hugely from this increased visitor presence.

In similar fashion Section 2.3 of the Study highlights the potential for a Jamie Oliver-style training facility offering apprenticeship opportunities for young people wishing to start a career in the catering and hospitality industry. Utilising in part the existing catering facilities. It also identifies the opportunities for creating a related restaurant facility to serve local and tourist visitors to the Five Acres site.

ECONOMY POLICY 3

OBJECTIVE:

The ongoing improvement of connectivity including broadband and mobile phone access and improvement and upgrading of ancillary land-based infrastructure and telecommunications.

POLICY

EC.3.1: Proposals for the consolidation, extension or upgrading of the fibre connectivity and internet access will be supported.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ECONOMY POLICY 3:

Depending on the mobile service provider, there are places within our NDP area which have particularly poor reception; these includes The Lonk, the Myre, the bottom of Joyford Hill and Beechwell Lane.

Broadband connection is also of a poor standard in these areas, particularly in the evenings when use is increased.

In order to support economic, employment potential and social development within our area, both the issue of mobile phone and broadband connectivity need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Consultation with the local community has indicated strong support for the policy of securing fast broadband services. Improvements to mobile phone network coverage would also be welcomed. In general, coverage is good across all the networks in the Berry Hill areas of the NDP. In Christchurch and Edge End the picture is more varied, with some networks offering better coverage than others.

Evidence below suggests that there is an increasing trend for people to work from home. The above policy of securing high-speed broadband within the NDP area clearly feeds in to this.

Instrumental to the implementation of this policy of upgrading broadband speeds is the The Fastershire Partnership between Hereford Council and Gloucestershire County Council and BT has as its purpose to build a future proof world class broadband network for the two counties.

By the end of 2016, around 90% of both counties will have access to fibre broadband services. The ultimate aim is that by 2018 there will be access to broadband speeds of 24Mbps and above for all who need it.

There is local evidence that progress has been made in achieving this aim and high speed-fibre-optic broadband is available within some of the Berry Hill and Christchurch area of the NDP.

However, concise economic evidence to support the above policy is difficult to source, especially at a local level.

The Gloucestershire First LEP (Local Economic Partnership) has a stated aim of bringing Next Generation Access broadband to around 90% of homes in both urban and rural parts of the county, resulting in an estimated boost to the local economy of approximately £419m over 10 years.

A detailed Broadband Impact Study, published in 2013⁵³ carried out by consultants SQW and commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport,



addresses these questions by assessing the economic, social and environmental impacts for the UK from faster broadband and from publicly funded intervention.

This detailed study discusses the impact of improvements in broad performance across the UK and sets out its findings, including estimates of the positive impact on GDP between the present time and 2024.

Commenting on the benefits to business, the Fastershire website states that faster broadband helps small businesses to work faster and more efficiently, reducing the need to travel. Having faster upload and download speeds also means small businesses can benefit from job creation and business expansion.

Consultation with the local community indicated unanimous support for this policy. The introduction to this Economy section stated that the employment and education carbon footprint, due to travel out of the area, is a significant concern. This policy is therefore consistent with the stated Transport policy of reducing the need to travel by car and the shortening of journeys and the environmental policies of reducing pollution.



COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION:

The Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP has its origins in 2010, before Localism had become a political reality. In that year, West Dean Parish Council embarked on a series of Village Surveys (Parish Plans) throughout its large area. These anticipated the Evidence Base required in NDPs. The Berry Hill ward and the Christchurch ward (which includes Edge End) demonstrated its great sense of identity and community involvement.

It is vital to maintain and enhance the character and vitality of the area. Our beautiful Forest is the main reason people come and visit. However, we do need to be mindful to find the balance between catering for tourists and maintaining the Forest and its traditions for the local residents.

In 2012, it was announced that Gloucestershire College was to move from its site at Five Acres, Berry Hill, to a new purpose-built development area at Cinderford. Described full in the Five Acres section of Our Plan, the threatened loss of the educational and leisure facilities was at the time deeply resented by the local population. A community action group called Five Acres Not for Sale (FANS) sprang up to resist the retreat of the College from the area. FANS also consulted the community and assembled a great deal of evidence.

When it became clear that the College move would go ahead, the focus became directed towards the maintaining of the cultural and recreational facilities of the site, comprising its sports fields, leisure centre, tennis courts, theatre and well-equipped restaurant

The potential loss of the College was one factor behind the initiation of the NDP. Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End are proud traditional villages, anxious to preserve their strong Forest identity while bringing new life and opportunities to the area and recognising the need for economic regeneration.

Infrastructure:

Services impacting on the quality of life across the NDP area are:

Water:

Severn Trent and Welsh Water companies, along with the sewerage plants in Edge End and on Joyford Hill, are probably the most significant supply companies. The majority of effluent for Berry Hill and Christchurch is dealt with through the Coleford sewerage works. Many outlying properties have their own waste disposal systems, i.e. septic tanks. There are natural springs, and at least one stream and several ponds are located in The Lonk area, Edge End, and in and around the Joyford Valley. Some of these are privately owned.

Gas:

This is piped into the main villages; outlying areas rely on cylinders if they have any gas at all.

Electricity:

This supplied through a system of poles and cables, mainly above ground.

Waste management and recycling: The FoDDC is responsible for collecting all domestic waste within the district. Since April 2013, the oversight of waste management, recycling and street care services was passed to a Joint Waste Committee.

This is a partnership comprising Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and the FoDDC. There is an alternate fortnightly land fill and



green waste collection and a weekly collection of food waste, glass, cans, selected plastic, cardboard and paper waste. There is an annual charge for garden waste and the disposal of bulky items. There is a recycling, drive-to facility, managed by May Gurney on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council (correct at 2016).

Communications services, in particular telecommunications: Broadband fibre-optic cabling is currently only supplied to the Five Acres site. However, the local exchange in Coleford has been recently upgraded to accept fibre-optic cables across the area. So far this has not been provided to the wider community within our NDP area. Current broadband speeds for virtually all of the NDP area operate at the basic minimum required for

connectivity. The community and business infrastructure needs high speed-broadband as a priority.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

Historical heritage:

There are two Grade II listed buildings within our NDP area: Christchurch Church and the Old Vicarage, Christchurch.

Berry Hill was the location of one of the first day schools in the Forest of Dean when P.M. Procter opened a day school in his new chapel in 1813, which subsequently became part of Christchurch Church.

The school house on the Ross Road, which adjoins the listed buildings in Christchurch, has historical and architectural interest. It dates back to the mid-19th century and was constructed as an infants' school. The school was attended during the 1940s by the famous author Dennis Potter. The school was used until approximately 20 years ago when it was replaced by a new primary school in the locality. It was later used by various community groups such as cubs and scouts, but gradually fell into disuse.



Table 5:
EDUCATIONALLY, THE AREA IS CURRENTLY SERVED BY:

2-5 years

Berry Hill Under Fives - 48 (2014)

Little Stars Nursery - currently on the Gloscol site.

5-11 years

Berry Hill Primary School - 159 (January 2014 census)

11-16 years

Lakers School - 635 (May 2014)

16-18 years

Gloscol Royal Forest of Dean Campus - current sixth-form provision

Education:

Lakers School is an essential educational facility for the children and young people of our NDP and the wider area. We have been given assurance that the location of this resource is not in question.⁵⁴

Sports and leisure:

Currently the area is served by a leisure centre on the Gloscol Royal Forest of Dean site. This includes a swimming pool, squash courts, sports hall, tennis courts and gymnasium. The Gloscol site at Five Acres also serves as a centre for a much more extensive catchment area and its facilities are of value to residents outside our NDP area. Through the development of this site its facilities and services will be

improved. Lakers School site has playing fields and a sports hall which it hires out to local groups, e.g. the Rugby Club, Broadwell Football Youth Teams (weekly pitch use, spring/autumn training and weekend games throughout the year). There is also a running track which Lakers School rent, at a peppercorn rent, to the Royal Forest of Dean Athletics Club. The site also hosts the Forest of Dean Gymnastics Club and Fitzone Fitness Gym, a not-for-profit sports charity and high performance training venue. It was a training venue for the London 2012 Olympic Games and included in the London 2012 Training Camp Guide. Berry Hill Rugby Club is adjacent to Five Acres (Gloscol) site.

Opposite Christchurch Church is a piece of land belonging to the Forestry Commission. This is a focal point for the village but is only used as a cut through by walkers. This area could be improved by being better maintained and benches added to provide a resting place for walkers and cyclists. Likewise, the area opposite the graveyard could be improved to aid parking for visitors to the church and for tourists. Unofficially the green at Christchurch is used for casual football activities.

There is one small recreational area adjacent to Hillcrest and Crow Ash Road.

Although lacking in facilities, Edge End has valuable open spaces and



its own recreation field; owned and managed by the residents, this the focal point of the village.

As far as public spaces and buildings are concerned, there is a theatre on the Gloscol site. This is the only theatre in the Forest and is the second largest in the county. Writer, journalist and TV playwright Dennis Potter was born in Berry Hill. His fusion of fantasy and fact celebrated our area and remoulded expectations of creative writing. Three of his great-grandfathers were Forest miners. His influence on the Forest leads to an enthusiasm to retain and develop theatre facilities under his name with national support from Lord Melvyn Bragg, Dame Joan Bakewell and colleagues within the arts establishment.

There are four public houses offering a range of activities such as pub quizzes, free pool and live music. Offering a community multi-use facility, Christchurch Church is used not only as a church but also as a village meeting place by many other groups: children's play, fundraising activities, Christchurch Beavers and Cubs, pudding evenings, messy Church, friends of Christchurch coffee mornings and table sales.

There are a limited number of shops on Park Road in Berry Hill: newsagent/post office/general stores, fish and chip shop/Chinese take away, pharmacy and hairdresser. Forest Holidays, a site on the edge of Christchurch, offers a cafe and shop. The nearest town, Coleford, located one to two miles outside the NDP area, offers a full range of more specialist shops, including supermarkets.

The area is more blessed with community spaces: Berry Hill Memorial Institute is a registered charity and War Memorial providing sports, cultural and leisure activities for the local residents and surrounding communities; Berry Hill Social Club, is a licensed facility for the community; and Berry Hill Rugby Club is hired for private use and community events. In addition, there is a community room for the elderly in George's Place.



A suggestion has been raised about the potential for the development of allotments in the Joyford area on FoDDC owned land. A community orchard project, situated at the end of Nine Wells Road on land owned by the Forestry Commission has been developed. This is a community project as a direct outcome of the NDP consultation.

Health facilities:

These are limited to a pharmacy on Park Road and a leisure centre at Five Acres which is used for GP referrals for health and fitness. The nearest GP-run health facilities are two surgeries in Coleford. This is a key deficiency within our NDP area. Any developments within our NDP area should ensure appropriate provision for the current and future demands for health-care facilities.

Safety and crime:

From the results of the Parish Plan there are no issues relating to crime within our NDP area. This is backed up by the latest reported crime figures for our NDP area, where only six reported crimes were registered for the period June to July 2015⁵⁵. The only issues respondents raised through the Parish Plan were speeding on the roads and the lack of visible policing.

To safeguard the 'community spirit' strongly identified by the community, development proposals which involve the loss of community facilities, including schools, shops, post offices, public houses, halls, places of worship, or health services, will not be permitted unless alternative suitable and convenient facilities are available or will be made available as part of the proposal. Exceptions will only apply where it can be evidenced that, in the case of commercially provided services, the facilities concerned are no longer viable and cannot be made so. In the case of all others, it must be established that there is no longer a need for such facilities. Any change of use to designated or currently used playing and sports fields will not be permitted unless that new use is of leisure, well-being, recreation or sport in nature.

Through Our Plan we aim to maintain and enhance the character, vitality and prosperity of the area. It is essential to preserve and where possible to enhance important assets and services to sustain the vitality of our villages and provide a balance of new homes for both young families and single person's accommodation for both young and old. Our Plan aims to encourage tourists to stay longer by providing enhanced facilities and to provide more employment opportunities for local residents.

Any developments within our NDP area should contain plans for any Community Infrastructure Levy receipts or Section 106 monies to be used to deliver new or enhanced infrastructure and services, in order to strengthen the links with the community, local economy and the local environment.

Community consultation feedback:

Community consultation feedback, following the parish and community-led plan questionnaire, FANS events⁵⁶ and the open consultation events 1 and 2, revealed support of the community objectives.

Key issues:

- From responses to the Parish Plan questionnaire respondents think that the swimming pool, together with facilities and play areas for children and young people, are important.
- Respondents want improved sports facilities for the community.
- 100% of respondents wanted our important village assets to be protected and enhanced. The most important asset identified was the cultural, sporting and educational site occupied by the College. Due to the importance of this asset a separate section has been presented (see Five Acres section).
- The community supports the provision of services and facilities locally which the whole community and visitors can gain access to.
- 99% wanted the character and vitality of the area to be retained and to enhance access to local health and well-being facilities.
- 97% were supportive of any

initiatives to encourage locally grown produce including the implementation of a community orchard.

As can be seen from the following maps, our NDP area is rich in landmarks, green spaces, recreational areas and historical features. Churches are an important historical feature of the NDP area. The derelict school buildings adjacent to the church in Christchurch have been sold and are to be developed. Retaining the current character will be crucial to maintaining the aesthetics of the area. There are old or converted chapels in Berry Hill, on Joyford Hill and Edge End, whilst Salem Chapel is still in use in Berry Hill. Former Tanyards, a one-time open-air tannery, represents the oldest building in Berry Hill. The House of Bread, now privately owned, was previously the bakery and village shop.

'Brick House', the birthplace of Dennis Potter, and 'Spion Kop' his former residence are recognised as local heritage assets.

More service or industrial sites include the Forest Water sewerage works in Edge End and Joyford Hill. The whole NDP area is scattered with residual mine workings including gales (areas granted to Forest Freeminers under ancient rights to carry out mining), slag heaps and sections of old mine buildings. Many of these have been made safe. The Deputy Gaveler based at Bank House, Coleford oversees all mines and minerals in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley.

Our Plan is embarking on an ambitious project on the Five Acres College and leisure site to renew and/or upgrade the leisure centre, swimming pool and restaurant and to introduce new attractions for wet weather activities. The Forest of Dean is known for its special qualities of tranquillity, wildlife, heritage and history where people can walk, cycle, climb and canoe. Our Plan will be aiming to market 'Destination Forest' encouraging longer staying visitors and more tourism. The community wants the Five Acres site to be its hub and that, by increasing leisure and community opportunities and

COMMUNITY POLICY 1

OBJECTIVE:

To maintain and enhance the distinctive character and vitality of the area by protecting and preserving community facilities, village assets which the community value and resist any inappropriate loss.

POLICY

CO.1.1: The buildings set out below and shown on Figure 14a are identified as character buildings:

- Tanyard
- Spion Kop
- The House of Bread
- Christchurch School House
- Salem Chapel and Band Hut
- Brick House

Proposals for the demolition, redevelopment or substantial alterations to the important character buildings should demonstrate the consideration that has been given to retaining:

- The important character building itself;
- Its most distinctive and important features;
- The positive elements of its setting and its relationship to its immediate surroundings; and
- The contribution that the building and its setting makes to the character of the local area.

CO.1.2: Development proposals which conserve and enhance a heritage asset will be supported where this is clearly and convincingly demonstrated by way of an assessment of the significance of the asset or its setting.

CO.1.3: The sustainable re-use, maintenance and repair of heritage assets will be supported, particularly for those identified as being at risk.

CO.1.4: The existing community areas identified on Figure 14a will be safeguarded as community facilities:

- Berry Hill Memorial Institute (The Hut).
- Berry Hill Social Club.
- The Five Acres site (which is already registered as an Asset of Community Value).

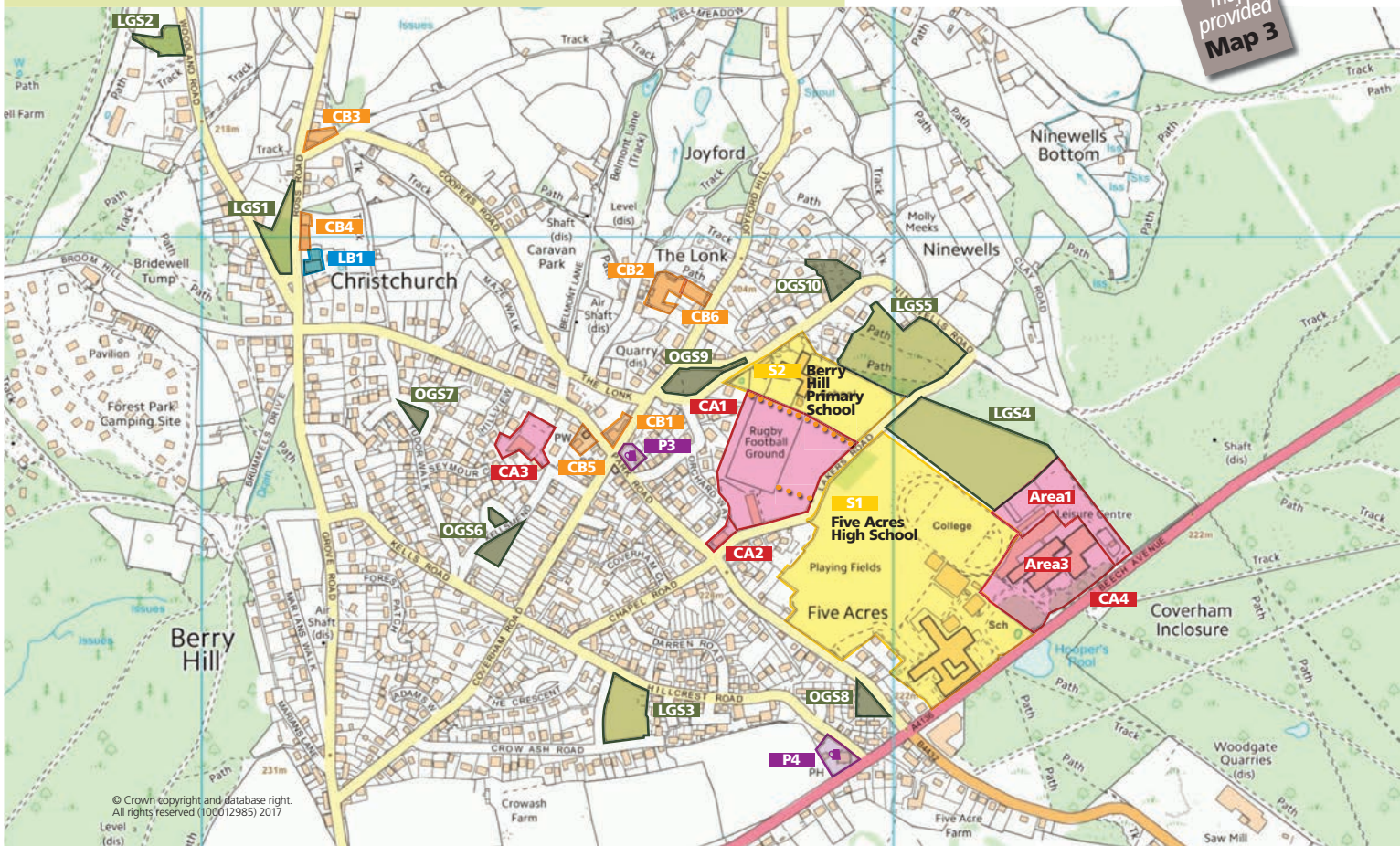
JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY POLICY 1:

For Local Green Space information, see policy CE.2 and Table 4.

- CA1: Berry Hill Rugby Club,
- CA2: Berry Hill Memorial Institute,
- CA3: Berry Hill Social Club,
- CA5: Five Acres buildings and tennis courts,
- CA6: Pubs -
 - a: The Dog and Muffler,
 - b: The New Inn,
 - c: The Globe,
 - d: The Gamekeeper.
- LB1: Christchurch Church (Grade II),
- LB2: Old Vicarage (Grade II).
- S1: Lakers, including the Under Fives,
- S2: Berry Hill Primary School.
- CB1: Tanyards,
- CB2: Spion Kop,
- CB3: The House of Bread,
- CB4: Christchurch school house,
- CB5: Salem Chapel and Band Hut,
- CB6: Brick House.

Figure 14a: Berry Hill and Christchurch - Local Green Spaces including recreational spaces (LGS) and Open Green Spaces (OGS), Community assets including public houses (CA), Listed Buildings (LB), Schools (S), and Character Buildings (CB).

See larger map provided Map 3



encouraging tourism and highly skilled small business to move into the area, we can improve the economy and vibrancy of the area. Whilst the Five Acres site is identified as a community facility in policy CO1.4 of this Plan it is recognised that the implementation of Policy FA 1 will have an impact on the overall mix of uses on this site. That policy sets out appropriate guidance on this matter.

The theatre on the Five Acres Campus used to be a vibrant meeting place with many people being able to take advantage of live theatre on their doorstep. Over the last few years this vital facility has been allowed to decline and is now in need of some considerable updating and re-inventing to make it a major part of our regeneration plan. In a predominantly local survey, carried out in 2013,⁵⁷ 83% of respondents believed that the theatre was very important and 16% thought it was important for the community.

Our plans for the new theatre will reach out not only across the Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire but also across bordering counties. The development of the theatre would create employment opportunities and valuable learning opportunities both on stage and behind the scenes.

There are currently plans to improve the cycle routes in the area linking Christchurch, Coleford, Parkend, Lydney, Cannop and Five Acres. This will have the benefit of providing safe routes for local residents to use and enjoy and safer routes for children on their way to and from school. It will also provide more cycle routes for visiting cyclists, with the added benefit of reducing the number of cyclists needing to use the roads to get around the Forest.

We have many fields and open spaces in both Edge End and Christchurch and it is important that these are not lost to development. They provide grazing for livestock and valuable nesting places for our wildlife.

The NPPF provides a clear framework for the promotion and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. The FoDDC CS also introduces policies (CSP5, CSP8 and CSP9 together with section 7.60) which state the FoDDC aims and objectives for villages and rural areas such as ours. These aim to protect and enhance existing facilities and resist any inappropriate loss. In this NDP area there is a thriving community with educational, social, cultural and leisure facilities which contribute greatly to the quality of life of local people. Notwithstanding Core Strategy policies the area is being threatened with the loss of its College; the community is rightly concerned that there should be no further loss of facilities. There is strong support for the NDP to seek retention and improvement of vital community assets in the interests of community well-being and sustainability.

There is currently a facility (Berry Hill Under 5's) based on the Lakers site which takes children independently from the age of two years old; however, parents need to pay for this service. If parents are on income support or a low income they can get help through 'Achieving for 2 year olds' (A2YO). The parents receive free funding from the Government, to cover 15 hours per week, from the term after the child's third birthday.

In doing this it is therefore logical that we need to provide adequate childcare facilities for our young families without the need to travel to Coleford. There is also a nursery (Little Stars), currently located on the Five Acres campus who take children from three months old up until school age. This facility is open 50 weeks a year and is available for families from 7.30am to 6pm.

It is important that facilities to support working families are readily available within our NDP area.

The importance of our villages is valued by the residents who support

the development of a local hub. Considering the importance to the community, the Five Acres College site has been registered as an Asset of Community Value.

The hub will contribute to sustainable development by promoting community participation in a diverse range of sporting, recreational and cultural activities.

Our NDP area contains active communities with many social and voluntary events centred round village halls, churches, schools, theatre and leisure centres. The local public houses are not only gathering places for the local community, but offer a variety of eating places for both locals and tourists. The Berry Hill Primary School and Lakers Business School are seen as essential community resources, as are the small number of shops, post office, pharmacy and hairdresser. Our bus service is vital, but is at all times under threat.

We must ensure that all new developments in the NDP area are of the highest quality, in keeping with the landscape and conserve its wildlife, historic character and other special qualities and local distinctiveness. New developments or conversions must use traditional and local materials, be as carbon-neutral and water efficient as reasonably practicable and incorporate appropriate renewable energy sources.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)⁵⁸ was brought into force on 6th April 2010 and amended in April 2011 and 2013. The Coalition Government's intention was to enable people to influence planning decisions about new and modified building development decisions that affect them. This NDP will establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in our area, such as where new homes and offices should be built and what they should look like allowing people to get the right type of development for our community. Councils can charge CIL on new developments in their areas and use the proceeds to pool funding for essential infrastructure.

COMMUNITY POLICY 2

OBJECTIVE:

To support community health and well-being provision.

POLICY

CO.2.1: Proposals for health care and health outreach facilities will be supported.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY POLICY 2:

However, as already demonstrated in the Housing section, data from the 2011 Census demonstrates that our NDP area has a high percentage of 65 to 89 year-olds compared with the Forest of Dean as a whole, the South West region and England. The nearest surgery for all our inhabitants is in Coleford town centre. Although this may only be one to four miles away, this may be difficult for the elderly, the disabled, those patients having to visit the surgery frequently and those without access to car transport.

At the time of compiling this document, data supplied by Bridget Docking, Practice Manager at Coleford Health Centre,⁵⁹ the largest of only two local surgeries in Coleford gives a current list size of 7,138 people. Of those 716 are Berry Hill residents, 168 are Christchurch residents and 67 are from Edge End.

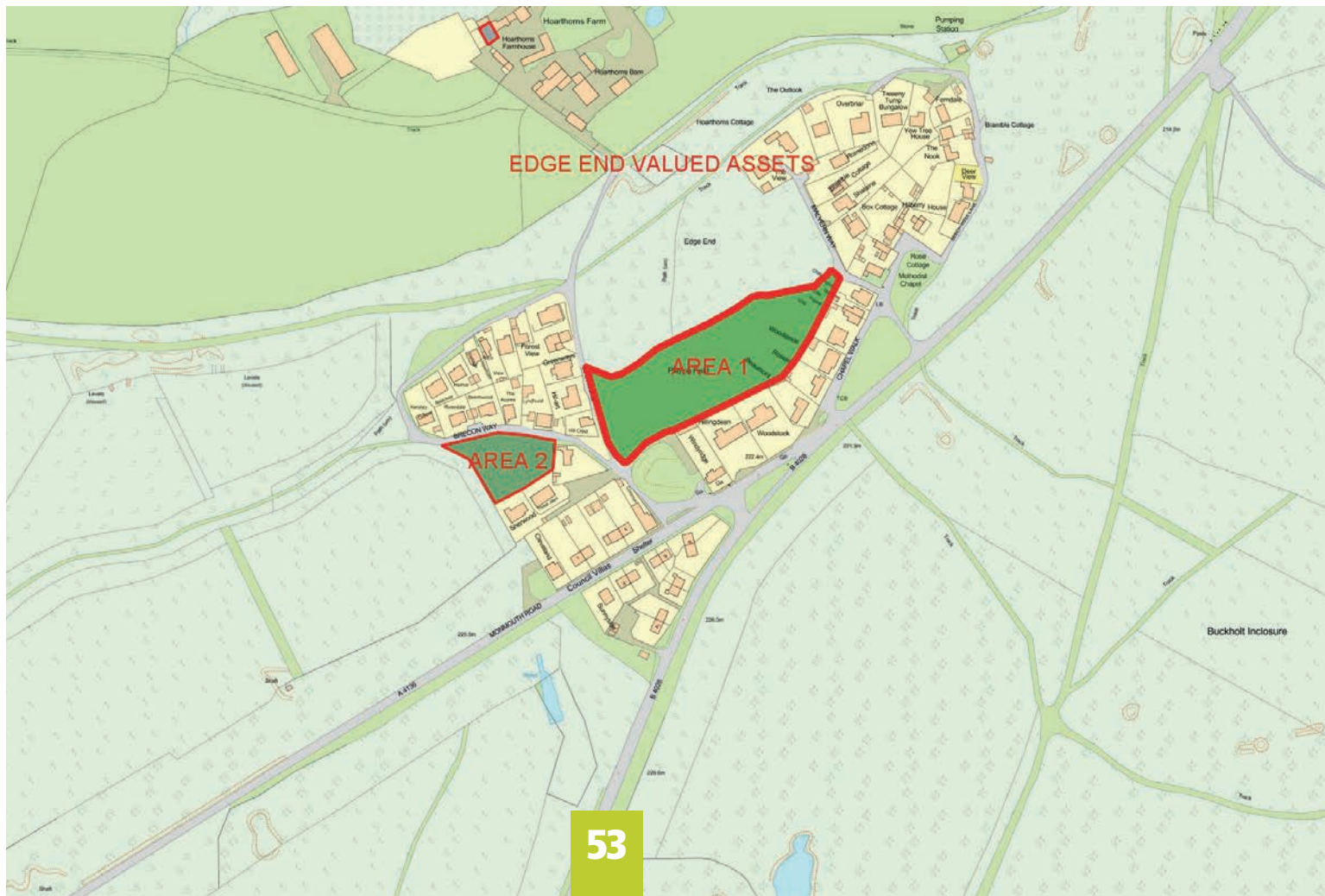
If a patient wants to see a specific GP, (many want to see the same person each time they visit the surgery), then the waiting times are on average ten days. If a patient is happy to see any available GP then they can usually get an appointment within two days (except at weekends). A triage and urgent on-call doctor service is available if needed.

Any further developments resulting in a potential increase in population size within the NDP area or the wider Coleford areas will put pressure on already stretched services. With these pressures, as well as a growing population and with many elderly residents already in our area, the development of a surgery and a Community Health and Well-being Centre will not only relieve the pressure on the surgeries in Coleford but provide much needed facilities for our community. The lack of facilities in the three villages within our area result in the need to travel to Coleford and beyond, which is a barrier to improving the wellbeing of the residents, especially the old and the young.

Under regulations made in 2013 Parish and Town Councils receiving new development are allocated a proportion of 15% (or, when this Neighbourhood Plan is in place, 25%) of the CIL collected in their area to help towards the funding of infrastructure and facilities for our community. All developments will be subject to either Section 106 contribution on CIL monies as set out by FoDDC rules and regulations or any subsequent national approved initiatives.

At the time of compiling our NDP the FoDDC has not yet introduced the CIL, but state in the Allocations Document (March 2015) that: 'If the scheme is introduced it will in part replace the Section 106 contributions presently sought and can deliver increased certainty for developers and the community that there are adequate means in place to deliver the infrastructure concerned.'

Figure 14b: Map of Edge End - Local Green Spaces including recreational spaces (LGS). There is a Listed Building (Hoarthorns Farmhouse) but this is just outside the Edge End NDP area. There are **none** of the following in this area: Community Assets including public houses (CA), Schools (S), and Character Buildings (CB).



COMMUNITY POLICY 3

OBJECTIVE:

To encourage locally grown produce, community orchards and/or allotments.

POLICY

CO.3.1: Proposals to use land for a community orchard project or for other initiatives that would produce locally-grown produce will be supported.

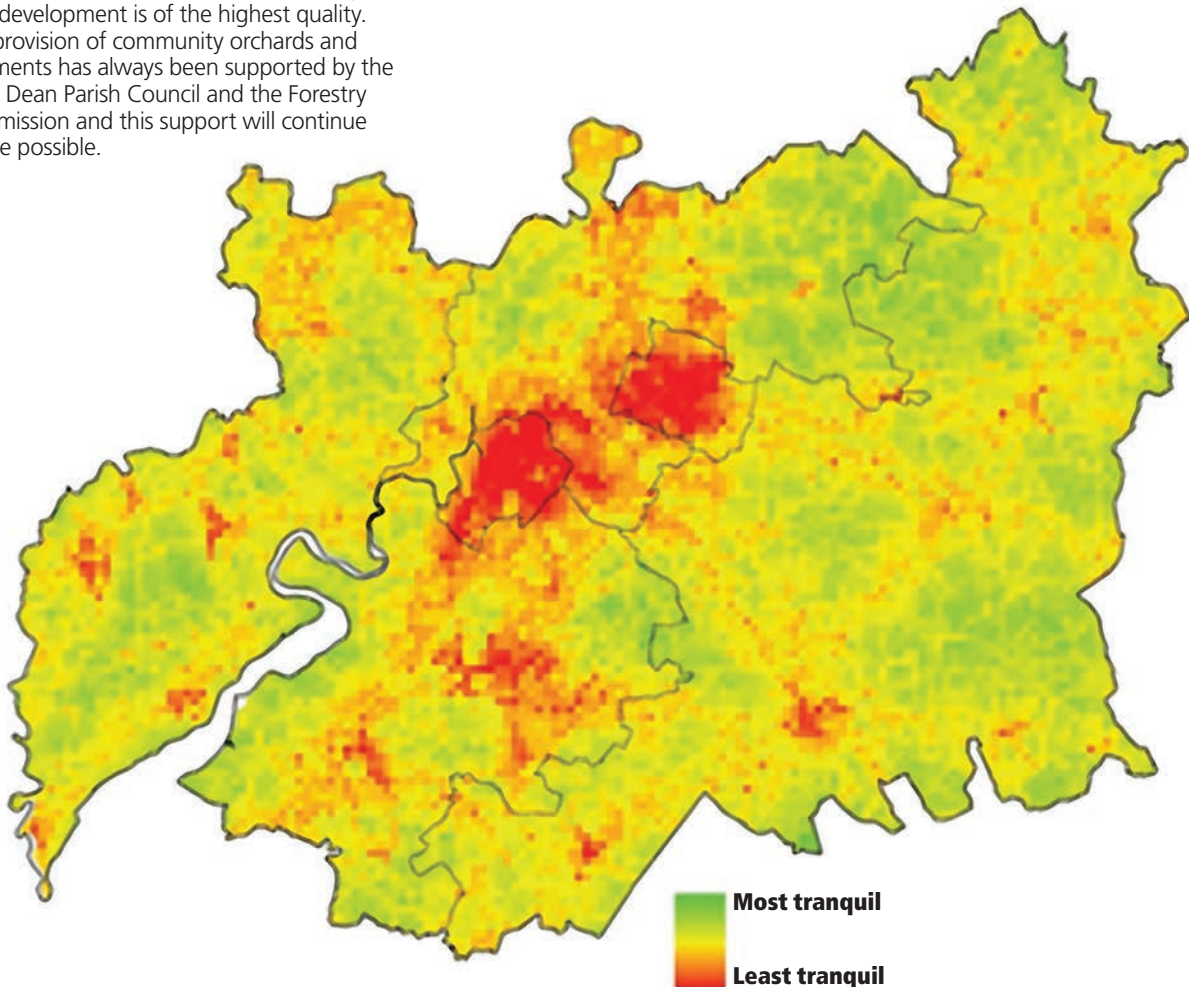
JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY POLICY 3:

We need to encourage people to continue to live and work within their communities by supporting community-based projects that provide locally needed goods and services with economic links between surrounding towns through the 'Making it Local' initiative. We also need to encourage suitable and appropriate reuse of rural buildings and existing employment premises for sustainable economic activities and to ensure that any new development is of the highest quality. The provision of community orchards and allotments has always been supported by the West Dean Parish Council and the Forestry Commission and this support will continue where possible.

The Independent Panel on Forestry states that trees and woods are good for people. They recommend that community groups should be supported through grants and that management organisations should engage with local communities. This recommendation has been implemented through the setting up of a community orchard in the Nine Wells area and includes representatives from the NDP area, West Dean Parish Council, the Forestry Commission, Lakers School and a Forest Scout group.

The implementation of community orchards within our NDP area also supports the recommendations from the Natural England (NCAs) profiles, particularly SEO 2 and SEO 3; which both highlight the need for conserving, managing, enhancing and restocking of traditional and heritage fruit varieties within orchards.

Further details of the first orchard project within our area can be found under the Projects document.



Campaign to Protect Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

Reproduced courtesy of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Revised edition 2007.

Most tranquil
Least tranquil

Figure 15: Tranquillity map for Gloucestershire. As can be demonstrated above, our NDP area sits within a very tranquil area which adds greatly to the health, well-being and sense of place, not only for residents but also for visitors to the area.



Figure 16: The 5km Park Run is located directly opposite the Five Acres site, on the Coverham Enclosure. Although not directly part of our designated NDP area, it is within the parish. A weekly organised run, open to anyone, uses parking and refreshment services, in the NDP area, on the Five Acres site.

FIVE ACRES LEISURE AND CULTURE SITE:

BACKGROUND:

**For this document where:
The Gloucestershire College
Five Acres site, The Five Acres
Campus site, The Five Acres
College site and The Royal
Forest of Dean Campus,
may be used in different
documents which, for Our
Plan, will henceforth be
referred to as Five Acres
(Gloscol) site.**

The Five Acres (Gloscol) site (4.7 hectares) and the adjoining Lakers School (7.8 hectares) is set in a total area of 12.5 hectares in a glorious Forest setting at the edge of the Statutory Forest. The site is on the A4136 to Gloucester and part of the Wye Valley designated AONB; it is located near cycle tracks and public footpaths and benefits from access to the sports fields and facilities. There are future plans for cycle tracks to connect to the centre of Coleford, Five Acres and the wider Forest cycle network. *See maps (right).*

Our Plan will form part of the proposed redevelopment of the Five Acres (Gloscol site), working with partners, including Lakers School, to assist in its redevelopment as well as the development of the site in line with community aspirations.

ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE:

The Five Acres (Gloscol) site was listed as an Asset of Community Value by WDPC on 16th May 2013 (see FoDDC Asset of Community Value register).

WDPC is working with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and FoDDC to acquire ownership of the site to a WDPC and FoDDC partnership, as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 13th January 2016 - see key documents.

The Five Acres Pre-feasibility Study for WDPC prepared by Locality Consultants (Section 1, 1.3.) further emphasises the importance of tourism to the Forest of Dean as a whole and goes on to state that although the main attraction of the Forest is the scenery and outdoor activities ...the new destination management plan currently in preparation aims to reduce seasonality by improving year-round provision. The plans to offer high-quality leisure and sporting amenities at the Five Acres site is consistent with this overall aim of increasing tourism and visitor spend and supports the FoDDC CS (CSP.7)

It has been clearly evidenced from the Parish Plan and the FANS community consultation that the facilities offered at the site are highly valued. Working with the community, voluntary and statutory partners, the development of the site as a community and tourist hub has been investigated.

To this end a Community and Business group was set up in 2013 to look specifically at the development of the Five Acres (Gloscol) site. Community aspirations are reinforced by the HCA's detailed 'Enquiry by Design' investigation in October 2013 - see key documents.



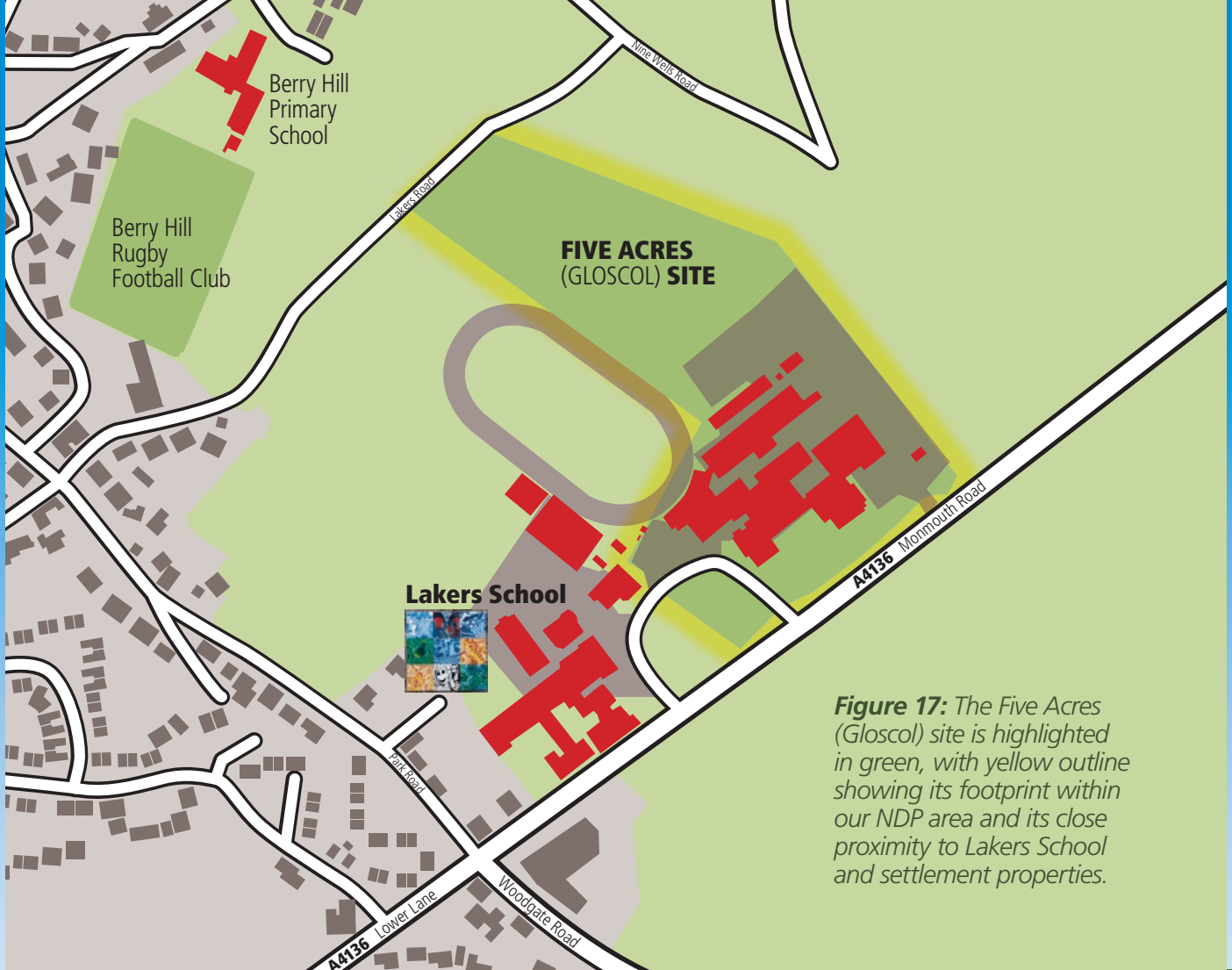
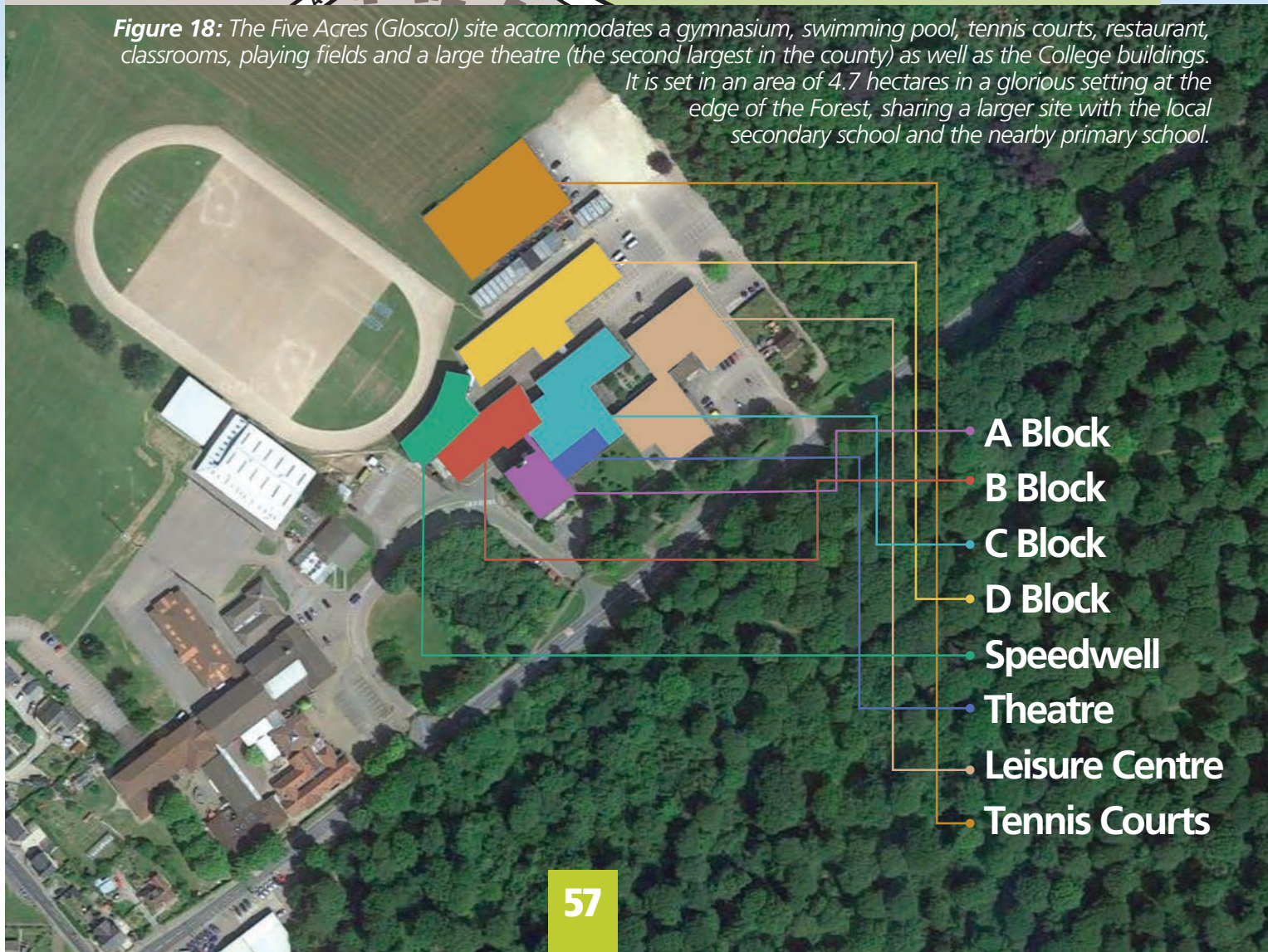



Figure 17: The Five Acres (Gloscol) site is highlighted in green, with yellow outline showing its footprint within our NDP area and its close proximity to Lakers School and settlement properties.

Figure 18: The Five Acres (Gloscol) site accommodates a gymnasium, swimming pool, tennis courts, restaurant, classrooms, playing fields and a large theatre (the second largest in the county) as well as the College buildings. It is set in an area of 4.7 hectares in a glorious setting at the edge of the Forest, sharing a larger site with the local secondary school and the nearby primary school.



- A Block
- B Block
- C Block
- D Block
- Speedwell
- Theatre
- Leisure Centre
- Tennis Courts



The green areas of the site offer an opportunity for the development of modern sporting facilities. The adjoining rugby club and schools will benefit from all-weather sports fields which will provide the additional outdoor capacity they require.

An NDP community orchard project has been developed on Forestry Commission-owned Forest Waste near the site (see Projects document).

The Forestry Commission's leisure arm, Forest Holidays (Bracelands), has camping and expanding luxury cabin accommodation for tourists in this area.

The facilities on the site, although highly valued by the local community, are not all in a state to be regarded as 'fit for purpose'.

The theatre facilities have been used for community and professional events for many years, but have not been a priority for the present management.

The sports fields are widely used and the indoor leisure facilities are in urgent need of upgrade.


In partnership with the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, WDPC made a successful bid for £10,000 to the Social Investment Fund for a pre-feasibility study in the form of a Constructive Review, to determine the viability of this aspiration as a serious project.

The Constructive Review (Oct 2013) from Locality Consultants clearly confirms the viability of the project, recommending full feasibility and a business plan. WDPC is now preparing to move forward to this stage.

The project, successfully implemented, will transform the economy of the area and the quality of life of its residents.

The development, management, funding and governance of the site through all its stages from feasibility through to staged implementation will require backing from advisors, partnerships, politicians and our colleagues in the local public sector.

The area will also provide leisure and cultural facilities to local residents, including the adjoining rugby club and schools, who will be able to add value to their resources and facilities, thereby increasing their services. The benefits to the local and the wider economy have the potential to be enormous. Increased tourism is the key to employment and prosperity in the area, and a properly designed



and managed leisure centre in this area would support the growth of tourism.

Community consultation feedback:

Community consultation feedback, following the parish and community-led plan questionnaire, FANS events and the open consultation events 1 and 2, revealed support of the community objectives.

Key issues:

- **95%** of respondents want a multi functional sports and leisure facility on the Five Acres (Gloscol) site including indoor and all-weather activities.
- **96%** want to preserve and enhance the theatre facilities.
- **98%** wish to work with partners to develop and improve the facilities encompassing culture, education, health and wellbeing, sports and leisure

facilities for the benefit of the community and region.

- **98%** want to create a safe and inclusive community hub.
- **97%** want the site developed to provide an all-embracing sustainable regional tourist attraction.

The Vision:

To create a leisure and cultural destination at the Five Acres site which, as well as preserving and enhancing the existing facilities, will become a tourist and community hub to develop employment, tourism, health and education.

The project aims to encourage **economic regeneration** in the villages around Five Acres in the Forest of Dean District.

FIVE ACRES POLICY 1

OBJECTIVE:

To create a leisure and cultural destination at the Five Acres (Gloscol) site which, as well as preserving and enhancing its existing facilities, will become a tourist and community hub to develop employment, tourism, health and education.

To undertake an economic regeneration project that will bring employment and tourism to the area, protect and enhance a cultural and recreational centre in the Forest of Dean, and create a vibrant community hub.

To create starter/affordable homes in partnership with the FoDDC on an agreed part of the site in line with identified aims of WDPC, partners and West Dean residents.

POLICY

FA.1.1: Proposals for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Five Acres (Gloscol) site as shown on Figure 17 will be supported.

All proposals should demonstrate how they relate to and secure the implementation of a master plan for the delivery of education, recreation, tourism, employment, community health and open space development.

Within the context of a comprehensive redevelopment of the site proposals for up to 80 dwellings will be supported where the dwellings concerned:

- act as enabling development to support community health or other recreational uses; and/or
- form part of a mixed development in the event that there is not a viable community use for the wider site; and/or
- form part of a mixed development in the event that the entire site is not required for community uses and where part of the community provision is made elsewhere in the site included in the Allocations Plan AP59 or within the wider Plan area.

The wider development package should be designed and arranged to ensure that it will have no significant adverse effects on the integrity of the River Wye and the Wye Valley Woodlands Special Area of Conservation.

JUSTIFICATION, EVIDENCE, PLANS, DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT FIVE ACRES POLICY 1:

This policy is intended to guide development in a manner that provides for changes that make the best use of the land available and best contributes to the provision of a focal point for Berry Hill. The policy is written so that the prescribed land uses and extents can be accommodated in a variety of ways. The policy takes advantage of the likely availability of the site and provides guidance towards a solution that is both deliverable and is compatible with and, importantly, furthers the FoDDC CS aim of promoting tourism and recreation. The area covered by this policy is a significant part of the wider site included in Policy AP59 of the emerging Forest of Dean Allocations Plan including the possible retention of some existing uses. Its future development should include education, recreation, cultural, tourism, open space, employment, sport, health and community uses. It may include some measure of housing uses subject to:

- It acting as enabling development to support community or other recreational uses;

- In the event that there is not a viable community use for the entire area or:-
- Where the entire site is not required for community uses (for example where part of the provision is made elsewhere in the area). It may be delivered in phases either wholly in accord with the policy and plan or by way of an agreed master plan which distributes the development referred to in the policy in an alternative manner.

The current sports fields and open areas must remain as open land usable for recreation and sport unless developed by the community and those assisting them for the provision and enhancement of its sports and recreation provision. The policy recommends using existing trees where possible to provide an overall enhancement to the site through landscaping of the various elements. The College, leisure centre and theatre may be retained or replaced or enhanced in justification.

A regeneration board has been set up to develop a master plan for the site and to take the project forward in line with community aspirations within this document.

The wider package is likely to include the relocation of Gloscol to Cinderford, Northern Quarter and the transfer of the existing site to the Parish Council and to the District Council. These matters will be developed as the project evolves. In the case of the relocation of the Gloscol facility this will be subject to its own separate planning process.

For further evidence and detail see the following **Key documents**, all of which can be found on the West Dean parish Council website (www.westdeanpc.org.uk):

Parish Plan

FANS consultation

Vision document

Scrutiny report

Enquiry by Design

Pre-feasibility document

Memorandum of Understanding

West Dean and Coleford Regeneration Board

Planning for local development should be genuinely community-plan led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings and setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Our Plan will be kept up to date, based on joint working and cooperation, be a creative exercise in finding ways to protect, enhance and improve the places and surroundings in which people live their lives.

Once the Plan has been made, following a favourable local referendum, the Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP will form part of the FoDDC Local Plan. It will be the starting point for deciding where developments should take place and the type and quality of that development.

Our Plan will be delivered and implemented over a 20-year period and by different stakeholders and partners. It is not a rigid 'blue-print', but instead provides a clear direction for the community through its vision, aims, objectives and policies.

There will be three strands of activity which will direct the delivery and each is important in shaping Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End in the years ahead.

These comprise:

- **Securing investment in our area through new development will be crucial. The statutory planning process will direct and control private developer and investor interest.**
- **Investment in and management of public services, assets and other measures to support local services, vitality and viability for our three villages. In the context of the economic climate and public funding, there is a recognition that public investment in the villages will be challenging to secure.**
- **The voluntary and community (third) sector will have a strong role to play particularly in terms of local community infrastructure, events and village life.**

We will work together with the Highway Authority, public and community transport providers, local schools and developers to develop a long-term sustainable strategy for improvements to the highway network and the management of traffic in and around our NDP area and to reduce the impact of development on the community by:

- **Encouraging better access to and increased use of public transport.**
- **Encouraging the use of community transport.**
- **Ensuring that new development takes place adjacent to the built-up area where there are good travel choices.**
- **Improving links within the existing built-up area for walking, cycling and bus provision.**
- **Encouraging 'safe routes to schools' schemes and ensuring that adequate and appropriate signage is in place to enable the local community and visitors to travel safely within our NDP area**

Developments will be permitted which promote improved traffic management by reducing traffic speeds and seeking to reduce car use, including the reduction in the speed limit at key times to around the schools, College and major community sites.



DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION

NON LAND USE PROPOSALS

OUR PLAN

BERRY HILL
EDGE END
CHRISTCHURCH

REVIEW AND OUTCOMES

Reviews of this NDP will be conducted by WDPC at its Annual Council Meetings. Major reviews will be conducted 2021 and 2026 to ensure conformance with the FoDDC CS and the examined FoDDC AP and to take into account any changes or new policies arising from a new or equivalent Core Strategy.

Policies Review and outcomes

<p>Housing (HO)</p>	<p>The WDPC will review the NDP in line with the examined FoDDC AP.</p> <p>The WDPC will produce a document showing how many new developments or conversions have occurred within the settlement boundaries.</p> <p>The review will include the percentage of affordable housing that has been provided in any development.</p> <p>The WDPC will liaise with developers, housing associations or other bodies and the local authority to deliver incremental growth (including affordable housing) over the Plan period. It will take into account allocations, landscape, infrastructure and the community needs when accepting applications.</p>
<p>Transport (TR)</p>	<p>The WDPC Public Safety committee will review and work with the District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Highways to ensure improvements in road safety address speed and parking issues covered by our policies.</p> <p>It will support local and district strategic traffic management which reduces HGV/LGV vehicles through the area in order to minimise their adverse impact, whilst managing new developments so that they do not have an unacceptable traffic impact on local residents.</p> <p>The review, with stakeholders, will explore the possibilities of extending and/or the opening of new cycle paths and walkways.</p>
<p>Countryside and Environment (CE)</p>	<p>The WDPC will review with the Forestry Commission and landowners to ensure that wildlife, the countryside and the Forest within our NDP area are protected, and that the Forest remains in public ownership.</p>
<p>Economy (EC)</p>	<p>The WDPC will review as required.</p>
<p>Community (CO)</p>	<p>The WDPC will review as required.</p>
<p>Five Acres (FA)</p>	<p>West Dean and Coleford Regeneration Board will review as required.</p>

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- 1** Forest of Dean District Local Development Framework Core Strategy - Adopted version February 2012. www.fdean.gov.uk/corestrategy
- 2** National Planning Policy Framework 2012; Town and County Planning Act 1990. www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework
- 3** Localism Act 2011 - Department for Communities and Local Government. www.gov.uk/government/publications/localismact
- 4** Parish and community-led plan questionnaire 2013 (Berry Hill, Christchurch, Edge End and Cannop).
- 5** Berry Hill, Christchurch, Edge End and Cannop Housing Needs Survey Report, March 2013.
- 6** Forestry Act 1919 - Commission designation in 1938.
- 7** West Dean Parish Council website www.westdeanpc.org.uk
- 8** Office for National Statistics (ONS) - population data from the 2011 Census.
- 9** Correspondence: West Dean Parish Council to Forest of Dean District Council (16th November 2012) requesting designation of NDP area.
- 10** Correspondence: Forest of Dean District Council to West Dean Parish Council (21st January 2013) approving designation of Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP area.
- 11** Character assessment document produced by Place Studio for the Forest of Dean District Council 2013.
- 12** Site assessment document produced by Place Studio for the Forest of Dean District Council 2013.
- 13** Character and site assessment summary collated by Dot Sharp and Alison Elliot and approved by the NDP Steering Committee 2013.
- 14** Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census, reference QS418EW, dwellings data.
- 15** Historic England listed buildings register www.historicengland.org.uk/listing
- 16** Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/maps
- 17** Forest of Dean District Council, Planning Department, Tree Preservation Order 1981.
- 18** Forest of Dean District Council Allocations Plan, Publication Version, March 2015.
- 19** Personal correspondence: Lewis James, April 2015, Assistant Area Land Agent, Forestry Commission, West England Forest District.
- 20** Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP - first public consultation event - 3rd and 4th October 2013. Event 1 analysis compiled by GRCC.
- 21** Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP - second public consultation event - 19th and 20th June 2014. Event 2 analysis compiled by GRCC.
- 22** Personal correspondence: Roger James, March 2015, Steering Group member. Information supplied from the internet.
- 23** Forest of Dean District Council District Local Plan Review, November 2005 Part 1 District Wide Policies and Proposals. www.fdean.gov.uk/localplan2005
- 24** Berry Hill Action Group report - October 2014.
- 25** Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census - age profile, reference KS102EW.
- 26** Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census - long-term health problem or disability, reference QS303EW.
- 27** Optional Building Regulations: 2010 - 2015 Government policy: building regulation. www.gov.uk/government/publications/buildingpolicyregulation
- 28** Personal communications: Keith Chaplin, March 2015, Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer, Forest of Dean District Council.
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- 30** Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census - car availability data.
- 31** Building For Life 12 - 2012 produced by the Building for Life Partnership and Nottingham Trent University. www.buildingforlife12
- 32** Bus timetables www.gloucestershire.uk/ForestofDean/Bustimetables
- 33** Forest of Dean Community Transport Partnership. www.forestroutes.org/communitytransport
- 34** The Forest of Dean Area Transport Strategy and Gloucestershire LTP3, July 2010 www.fdean/areatransportstrategy
- 35** Personal communication: Brian Watkins, April 2015, Local Highways Manager, Commissioning Team.

- 36** South West Cycle Adventure - Forest of Dean Cycle Trails. www.1sw.org.uk
- 37** Pedalabikeaway Cycle Centre, Cannop, FOD - Cycle Hire and Trails. www.pedalabikeaway.co.uk/bikehire
- 38** Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designated through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- 39** Independent Panel on Forestry, 2012. www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel
- 40** RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch results 2015. www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch
- 41** National Character Area Profiles - 105 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye - Natural England. www.naturalengland.org.uk/ncaprofiles/105
- 42** National Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. www.legislation.gov.uk/nationalenvironmentandruralcommunitiesact
- 43** The Lawton Review (Making Space for Nature). www.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/makingspacefornature/Lawtonreview
- 44** Environmental White Paper (The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature) www.gov.uk/government/publications/thenaturalchoice/securingthevalueofnature
- 45** Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) - Ecosystems and Human Wellbeing, 2005. www.millenniumassessment.org/ecosystemsandhumanwellbeing
- 46** Campaign to Protect Rural England - Night Blight in the South West, 2003. www.cpre.org.uk/nightblightinthesouthwest
- 47** The Economic Impact of Gloucestershire's Visitor Economy 2012 (Forest of Dean) produces on behalf of Forest of Dean District Council by The South West Research Company Ltd - February 2014.
- 48** Proposed Development of Five Acres Site, Berry Hill - Pre-feasibility report, July 2014. www.thepool-locality.co.uk
- 49** Forest Skills Action Plan, June 2011. www.forestry.gov.uk/forestskillsactionplan
- 50** Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census - home working and self-employment data.
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- 52** Gloucestershire LEP Skills Statement - Strategic Economic Plan for Gloucestershire - Gloucestershire First (LEP), March 2014, produced by Marchmont Observatory, University of Exeter.
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- 54** Personal communication: Jo Grills, 21st December 2015, Director: Education, Learning and Libraries, Gloucestershire County Council.
- 55** West Dean Parish Council Crime Comparison Statistics, June to July 2015.
- 56** Five Acres Not for Sale Action Group - Open event summary, September 2012.
- 57** Theatre survey and analysis - July 2013
- 58** Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 with updated guidance June 2014.
- 59** Personal communications: Bridget Docking, March 2015, Practice Manager, Coleford Health Centre.

GLOSSARY

Affordable housing:

Affordable housing is not available on the open market. It is available as social rented, affordable rented or as shared ownership housing, and is managed by a Registered Social Landlord, who may be the local authority. Affordable/social housing: Affordable and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. Affordable housing does not include low cost market housing. Affordable rented housing: This is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable rent: This is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

This is a potential financial levy on developments to help communities towards funding the development of facilities and infrastructure within the NDP area. With an NDP in place WDPC should receive 25% of any CIL monies.

Conservation area:

An area designated by the District Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are additional controls over demolition, minor developments and the felling of trees.

Core Strategy (CS):

The Development Plan document setting out long-term spatial vision and objectives, and containing both strategic policies and generic policies which will apply to all development proposals in the Forest of Dean authority area as a whole.

Dwelling mix:

The mix of different types of homes provided on a site: this may typically include a range of types from, say, two bedroom houses up to larger four and five bedroom houses.

Evidence Base:

The researched, documented, analysed and verified basis for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. It consists of many documents produced over a period of years, many of which have been produced by the Forest of Dean District Council, as part of the process of developing its Core Strategy.

Evidence Base Summary:

A document produced as part of the process of developing the Neighbourhood Plan. It supports the Plan by setting out a summary of the relevant Evidence Base and explaining how decisions were made.

Examination:

An independent review of the Neighbourhood Plan carried out in public by an Independent Examiner.

FANS:

A local action group (Five Acres Not for Sale) set up to ensure the retention and enhancement of the community facilities on the Five Acres site. In 2014 this local action group changed their name to Five Acres New Start still retaining the acronym FANS.

Floodplain/Flood Zones:

Areas identified by the Environment Agency marking areas as high risk (Zone 3), low to medium risk (Zone 2), or little or no risk (Zone 1).

Flood Risk Assessment:

An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and flood mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

Forest Waste:

Land that is managed/owned by the FC that is not being used for the production of timber - some Forest Waste are SSSIs and afforded protection through the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Green corridors:

Green spaces that provide avenues for wildlife movement, often along streams, rivers, hedgerows or other natural features. They connect green spaces together and often provide pleasant walks for the public away from main roads.

Green infrastructure:

The network of accessible, multi-functional green and open spaces.

Green Living Plan:

The Green Living Plan is an initiative that will bring together new and existing projects and initiatives to provide a coordinated approach to sustainable living.

Gross density: The number of dwellings per hectare when the calculation of the site area includes the entire site area (see also net density).

Habitats Regulations:

The European Union Habitats Directive aims to protect the wild plants, animals and habitats that make up our diverse natural environment. The Directive created a network of protected areas around the European Union of national and international importance. They are called Nature 2000 sites. If development is likely to affect a Nature 2000 site, an assessment under the Habitats Regulations is required.

Hectare: An area of land of 10,000 square metres - equivalent to a square with sides 100m x 100m.

Highway authority:

Highway authorities are responsible for producing the local transport plan and for managing existing or proposed new local roads in the area. In our case Gloucestershire County Council.

Housing Needs Survey:

A housing survey of an area (usually undertaken by a housing enabler) to determine how many people are in need of affordable housing, what type of housing will help them and what they are able to afford.

Independent Examiner:

Anyone with appropriate qualifications and skills who meet certain requirements set out in the Localism Act. This could be a planning consultant or other planning professional, an employee of another local authority or a planning inspector.

Infill: This means the building of a small number of houses (no more than three) in a gap within an otherwise built-up frontage or group of houses.

Infrastructure: All the basic works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, electricity, sewers, water, education, health facilities and so on.

Listed buildings:

Buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest, which are listed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with Grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior with protection and maintenance being the subject of special legislation. Listed building consent is required before any works are carried out on a listed building.

Localism Act: An Act of Parliament that became law in April 2012. The Act introduces a new right for local people to draw up 'Neighbourhood Development Plans' for their local area. Market housing; Housing for sale or for rent where prices are set in the open market.

Mixed-use developments: Where more than one use is constructed. Uses may be mixed within the same building (e.g. offices above shops) or may be mixed across the site (e.g. houses next to shops and community facilities).

National Character Areas (NCAs): These are sub-divisions of England, each with a characteristic association of wildlife and natural features. Every NCA, which do not follow administrative boundaries, has a unique identity due to wildlife, landforms, geology, land use and human impact.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): The National Planning Policy Framework was published by the Government in March 2012. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP): This a Plan document for defined area subject to examination in public and approval by referendum. It will be used on approval in the determination of applications.

Net density: The number of dwellings per hectare when the calculation of the site area excludes features such as open spaces for the benefit of the wider community, significant landscape buffers and major access roads (see also gross density).

Open space: Land that is of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and also including areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which can offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can also act as a visual amenity or a haven for wildlife

Parish council: Parish councils are the tier of governance closest to the community. Around 30% of England's population is governed by a parish council, predominantly in rural areas. Parish councils are elected bodies and have powers to raise taxes. Their responsibilities vary, but can include provision of parks and allotments, maintenance of village halls, litter control and maintenance of local landmarks.

Pepperpotting: This is the practice of distributing different types of property, affordable, social and market, across a development so as not to stigmatise or disadvantage any resident or groups of residents.

Planning permission: Formal approval which needs to be obtained from a local planning authority to allow a proposed development to proceed. Permission may be applied for in principle through outline planning applications, or in detail through full planning applications.

Policy: A policy is a principle to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol.

Publicly accessible open space: Open space that is open to the public and is normally owned and managed by a private owner.

Public open space: Open space where public access may or may not be formally established, but which fulfils or can fulfil a recreational or non-recreational role (for example, amenity, ecological, educational, social or cultural usages), and is normally owned and managed by a public organisation such as the Forestry Commission, West Dean Parish Council or the Forest of Dean District Council.

Referendum: A general vote by the electorate on a single question that has been referred to them for a direct decision. In the case of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the referendum will decide whether or not to adopt the Plan.

Section 106 Agreement: A legal agreement under Section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. Section 106 Agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs): Based on integrated information, SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Assessments made compulsory by a European Directive (the SEA Directive), to be implemented in planning through Sustainability Appraisal of Development Plan documents and Neighbourhood Plans where required.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): A process of appraising policies for their social, economic and environmental effects to ensure that it would contribute to achieving sustainable development, which must be applied to all Development Plan documents including Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS): A drainage system that controls the rate and quantity of run-off of surface water from developments. It replaces the conventional practice of routing run-off through a pipe to a watercourse, which can cause problems with flooding. SUDS minimises run-off by putting surface water back into the ground on site through measures such as permeable paving, underground infiltration blankets and drainage swales (similar to traditional ditches). Where surface water must still be taken off-site (because, for example, the site is underlain by clay that reduces the permeability of the ground), features to slow down the rate of run-off are used - that may include ponds or underground storage tanks to store water and oversized pipes.

KEY DOCUMENTS

Unless otherwise stated the key documents can be found at:

www.westdeanpc.org.uk

Forest of Dean District Local Development Framework Core Strategy – Adopted version February 2012.

www.fdean.gov.uk/corestrategy

National Planning Policy Framework 2012; Town and County Planning Act 1990.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework

Localism Act 2011 – Department for Communities and Local Government.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/localismact

Parish and community-led plan questionnaire 2013 (Berry Hill, Christchurch, Edge End and Cannop).

Berry Hill, Christchurch, Edge End and Cannop Housing Needs Survey Report, March 2013.

Forest of Dean District Council Allocations Plan, Publication Version, March 2015. **www.fdean.gov.uk**

Character and site assessment summary collated by Dot Sharp and Alison Elliot and approved by the NDP Steering Committee 2013.

Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP – first public consultation event – 3rd and 4th October 2013.

Event 1 analysis compiled by GRCC.

Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP - second public consultation event - 19th

Optional Building Regulations: 2010 – 2015 Government policy: building regulation.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/buildingpolicyregulation

Residential Design Guide, produced by the University of the West of England for Forest of Dean District Council and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, 6th August 1998.

www.forestofdean/residentialdesignguide

Building For Life 12 – 2012 produced by the Building for Life Partnership and Nottingham Trent University.

www.buildingforlife12

National Character Area Profiles - 105 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye – Natural England.

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ncaprofiles/105

FANS consultation document.

Five Acres Vision document.

Scrutiny report.

Enquiry by Design.

Proposed Development of Five Acres Site, Berry Hill – Pre-feasibility report, July 2014.

Memorandum of Understanding.

West Dean and Coleford Regeneration Board.

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■ **Berry Hill Memorial Institute**

■ **Berry Hill Under 5s**

■ **Berry Hill Primary School**

■ **Lakers School**

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OUR PLAN

BERRY HILL

EDGE END

CHRISTCHURCH