WALFORD

Neighbourhood Development Plan
2011 - 2031

Submission Draft Plan

March 2022

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Acknowledgements

History of the parish – the reference source mainly used was '*A History of Walford and Bishopswood'* compiled and edited by Virginia Morgan and Bridget Vine and published by Logaston Press in 2002 as a Walford Parish Residents' Association Millennium project.

The Parish Council would wish to thank those permitting their photographs to be used in this document.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Walford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is a new type of planning document introduced by the Localism Act of 2011. It enables local communities to shape some of the planning decisions that will be needed to meet the requirements for development within their areas. It does this by enabling local communities to set planning policies that will be used in determining planning applications. Once it is adopted it becomes part of the Development Plan, which includes Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (The Core Strategy), guiding what might receive planning permission as well as indicating what measures are to be promoted to guide new development.

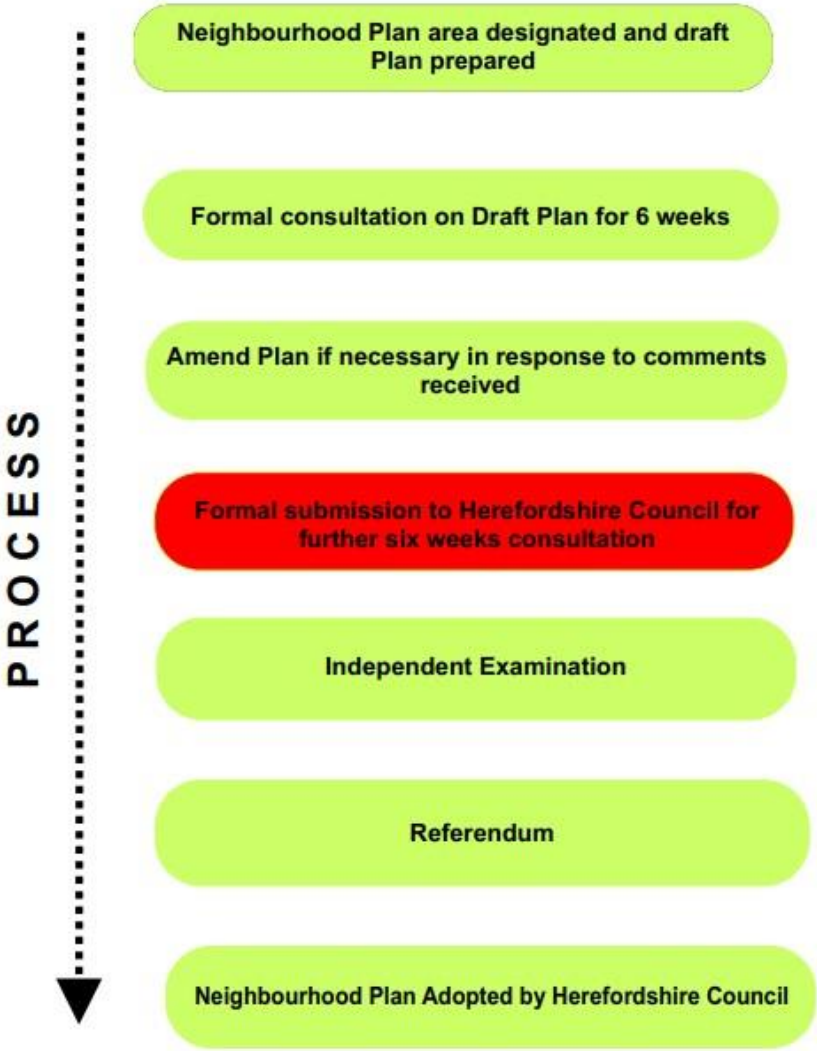
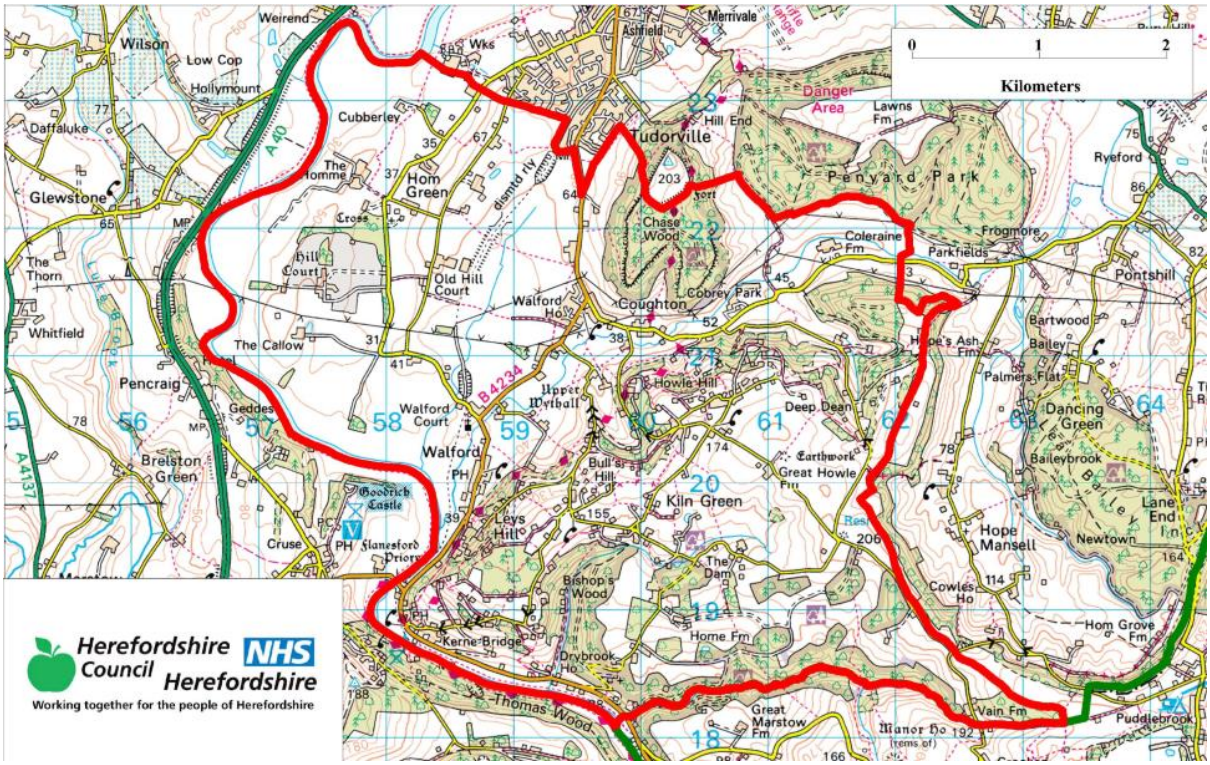


Figure 1 – Neighbourhood Plan Process

1.2 Walford Parish Council applied for designation of the Parish a Neighbourhood Area in order to prepare an NDP on 12th September 2012. After a period for publicity, Herefordshire Council approved its designation on 7th November 2012. This NDP has

been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations and following the adoption of the Core Strategy by Herefordshire Council on 16th October 2015. The NDP must have regard to the principles of sustainable development within Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and support the delivery of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.

Map 1 – Walford Neighbourhood Plan Area



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1.3 Walford Parish Council established a Steering Group for drawing up the NDP and initial work was undertaken during 2016, including a resident's survey. Work recommenced in 2019 with a Steering Group comprising 3 members from the Parish Council and 3 other members from the community. For a short period commencing in November 2020 the Parish Council established a NDP Committee but agreed to reform the Steering Group in June 2021 to include additional members from the community.

1.4 The Core Strategy identifies three settlements within the Parish. These are indicated as Walford (Coughton), Bishopswood and Howle Hill. It is understood that the reference to Coughton is to distinguish Walford to the south of Ross-on-Wye from another settlement named Walford in the north of the County. Furthermore, the local community refer to the settlement's northern end around the junction of the B4234 with the road leading to Coughton Farm as Coughton. For the purposes of clarity, this NDP refers to the settlement as Walford and Coughton, reflecting descriptions used to define the settlement by Herefordshire Council's planning officers.

1.5 Policies and proposals are set out in this document prefixed by 'WALF' (i.e. for name of Walford).

Community Involvement

1.6 The involvement of the community during the preparation of the NDP was seen as crucial to ensuring its support and to give confidence to those involved in its preparation. In summary community involvement included:

- An initial household survey undertaken in June 2014 ~~gave residents the opportunity to express views upon~~ to identify issues that might be covered in the NDP ~~and~~ (achieved a 25% response). ~~Work commenced again upon preparing the NDP in June 2018. The responses from the initial survey, content~~
- Input from the Parish Plan which itself was subject to consultation. ~~and~~
- An assessment of recent matters raised within the Parish, including through a re-launch of work on the NDP during November 2019, ~~were used~~ in order to define a vision and objectives. ~~The relaunch events were held.~~
- The community was then consulted upon the vision, objectives and criteria to be used for the choice of housing sites during February 2020.
- A community consultation was undertaken in April 2021 upon housing sites and options following ~~a number of on-line~~ presentations setting out details of site assessments and ~~also~~ policy areas that might be covered from issues raised. Some 296 responses were received.

2. Background to Our Parish

2.1 The Parish of Walford covers a rural area within the south of the County of Herefordshire immediately upon the southern edge of the market town of Ross-on-Wye. It lies to the east of the A40 trunk road although is separated from this by the River Wye. Hereford, the County town, sits within the centre of the County some 15 miles to the north. Approximately three quarters ~~two thirds~~ of the Parish fall within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ("AONB"), including all three of the settlements identified for development within the Core Strategy.

People and the Community

2.2 Walford Parish had a population of 1,514 in 2011 which represents an increase of 15% since 2001. The Parish falls within Kerne Bridge ward and, together with Goodrich and Welsh Bicknor Parish, forms the Greater Walford sub area for which Census statistics are available. The population structure within this sub area in 2011 contained a higher proportion of people 65 years of age and over compared to the County as a whole. Herefordshire itself had a higher proportion of elderly people compared to England and Wales. Correspondingly, the proportions of young and middle-aged adults and children under 16 in the Parish are lower than for the whole County.

2.3 There is a primary school within the Parish. Older children would normally attend John Kyrle High School in Ross-on-Wye. The Parish has no shop or post office within any of its settlements although there is a shop with petrol station and post office associated with a static caravan site at Wyeside Park on its eastern edge. There are two village halls, one in the south at Walford and another at Bishopswood. There are also two

Anglican Churches in the Parish, St Michael's Church at Walford and All Saints Church at Bishopswood, and two public houses. Access to a wider range of shops and other facilities is available in the market town of Ross-on-Wye. Both Hereford and Gloucester are large centres to which residents might travel for higher order shopping.

2.4 There are no 'A' roads within the Parish. The B4234 travels generally north-south linking Ross-on-Wye with Lydbrook. Walford and Coughton and Bishopswood sit along this route. Several relatively lightly trafficked minor roads lead off the B4234 serving small clusters of dwellings and farmsteads and some routes to the east serve the small hamlet of Howle Hill, the Parish's third and smallest settlement. The density of public rights of way varies across the Parish with there being a far greater number to the east of the B4234 than to the west. That part of the Wye Valley Walk linking Monmouth with Ross-on-Wye passes through the Parish from Kerne Bridge over Howle Hill and skirting to the north of Walford and Coughton. Public transport along the B4234 road through the Parish is greater than for many rural parts of the County and comprises three routes passing through or close to Walford and Coughton and Bishopswood on their way to or from Ross-on-Wye. In total they provide some 15 services throughout the day in both directions.

2.5 Walford and Coughton is the largest settlement containing around 220 dwellings and the primary school. Walford village hall is within a cluster of dwellings at the southern end. Bishopswood comprises a cluster of dwellings just to the south of Kerne Bridge extending along the B4234 to incorporate Bishopswood Village Hall, the adjacent canoe launch and a number of houses beyond. It also extends along Leys Hill and is estimated to comprise under 50 dwellings. The settlement of Howle Hill is no more than a hamlet comprising a loose assemblage of wayside cottages separated by small orchards and pasture rather than a clustered settlement.

2.6 Agriculture is the predominant business land use and there are 3 large farms with a number producing asparagus and soft fruit under polytunnels. These are accompanied by both large packaging buildings and regimented accommodation blocks in the form of static caravans and remodelled containers. The Parish hosts the national headquarters of Rehau UK, a global company offering products made from polymers for construction, automotive, office furniture, transport and windows industries. A container storage business is located on the northern border of the Parish and Walford Timber produces sawmill and timber products on the B4234 to the south of Walford and Coughton. There are numerous relatively small tourism and leisure businesses spread throughout the Parish and a nursing home.

History of the Parish

2.7 The name Walford is thought to be derived from *Walecford* meaning the Welsh ford. This could have been the ancient ford near Flanesford Priory or perhaps the one across the River Wye opposite Goodrich Castle. Roman occupation of the parish area was confirmed when a hoard of coins (minted around AD 290-360) were unearthed in 1895 near All Saints Church in Bishopswood. Before and after the Roman occupation the history of the area is unclear with several occupying tribes and the hill fort on Chase Hill probably being a tribal stronghold controlling this area before the Romans left Britain.

2.8 Saxon invaders reached the Wye around AD 590 and Saxon tenants-in-chief who held manors from the king were expected to build a church in their manor, to install a priest and provide him with enough land (glebe land) to make his living. The glebe land in Walford parish extended from St Michael and All Angels church as far as the land, given in 1873 by the church authorities, where Walford Primary School is now situated. It also included the land on the opposite side of the B4234 on the site of a former builder's yard and which is now a small housing development.

2.9 In Norman times, the Domesday book, completed in 1086, documents Walford as 1 of the 22 Manors in the Bromsash Hundred. The parish area was around 150 acres and the Bishop of Hereford was the Lord of the Manor. In 1559 Queen Elizabeth 1 took possession of the manors around Ross and after her death the estates changed hands several times until by the 1800s the parish was divided under several different ownerships.

2.10 The Walford Tithe Map of 1841 shows and lists the land usage of the parish at that time. There were 1878 acres of arable land, 1159 acres of meadow/pasture and 985 acres of woodland plus glebeland, common, roads etc to a total of 4200 acres. Around this time the majority of the parish was owned by 3 estate landowners. The Tithe Map shows where housing was situated and the size of associated plots of land. There was no 'village' of Walford although the church and nearby a large house, Walford Court existed. The site of the Walford parish church of St Michael and All Angels dates back to Saxon times, but the present building is Norman with the central part thought to be the oldest in Herefordshire.

2.11 The feudal management system was replaced by the Vestry system of local administration and in 1894 the Local Government Act established elected Parish Councils with 'the Vestry' looking after ecclesiastical matters. In 1894 the parish comprised 4340 acres in area with a population of 1,116 people. This compares with the current area of 4990 acres and a population of 1,514 people (2011 census).

2.12 Walford has remained a scattered rural parish with several settlements spread over a large area and with no clearly defined 'classic' village centre. The parish lies alongside the river Wye and is framed by the wooded slopes above. Recent housing development has been built near the roads and the main settlement area which gives Walford parish its name is scattered along the B4234 from the Coughton area to the Kerne Bridge river crossing. Several small housing developments have now replaced former larger dwellings no longer required as such and where it's more easily possible to connect main services.

2.13 Over the years a wide range of dwelling types have been built in the parish. Large houses, farms and artisan houses were situated along the lines of the roads and smaller cottages were built on the steep and often wooded slopes in the parish. Newer developments started after the 2nd World War and due to the protection of the AONB status very little building is permitted in the open countryside although conversion of redundant barns into dwellings has taken place.

2.14 The area of the parish known as Bishopswood largely developed at the bottom of the wooded slopes of Leys Hill as a result of the building and opening of the road bridge across the river at Kerne Bridge in 1828 and the railway station in 1873. The

designated ancient woodland was prized by such as the Bishop of Hereford as a hunting area and also for the value of the timber. Listings in the commercial directories of the time show a wide range of activities taking place in this 'busy' locality. All Saints Church in Bishopswood was built in 1841 with the work funded by John Partridge, a local ironmaster who was also the main financial backer of the Kerne Bridge project. Tolls were charged for the river crossing up until 1948 and passenger trains continued until 1964 and goods traffic until 1965.

2.15 The Howle Hill area with its wooded slopes has always been a settlement of scattered cottages where artisans lived and carried out a range of activities eg. timber felling, open cast coal mining, charcoal and lime burning with many of the lime burners also being quarry owners and stone hauliers. Previously in the locality there was a church and associated schoolroom, several chapels, an inn, post office and a workhouse - all of which no longer exist or have been converted into dwellings.

2.16 Coughton was originally a small hamlet which had an inn, a smithy, a mill, a toll cottage, a large house and many smaller cottages. After the 2nd World War there have been several housing developments in this area: Norland Place (1947), Coughton Place (early 1950s), Fowbridge Gardens (1960s), Cedar Grove and Priory Lea estates (1990s) and Alder and Willow Closes (2003/4).

2.17 As a result of local government boundary changes the Hom Green area has only been part of the parish since 1931. It has remained largely unchanged and comprises the Hill Court estate, Hom farm, several cottages and a small new housing development at Green Meadows, built on the site of an old engineering works.

2.18 The chief activity in the parish has always been agriculture with a mixture of smallholders mainly in the upland areas and larger estate holders on the more fertile lower valley areas. Dairy farming and sugar beet production were popular in the 1920s and the commercial cultivation of soft fruit is now the major agricultural business in the parish. Many skills were required to support and maintain the farming community such as wheelwrights, blacksmiths, carpenters and more recently the engineers and mechanics. Natural resources also provided a means of making a living and a wide range of activities were carried out in the parish including forestry, iron smelting and associated charcoal burning, quarrying, lime burning, coal-mining, brick making, milling. Trade directory entries and census details show the wide variety of occupations located throughout the parish over the years.

Environment and Natural Resources

2.19 The Parish contains parcels of all grades of agricultural land except the very poorest. The highest grades are found generally in the west of the Parish with the higher land to the south-east being of lower grade. No notable areas of derelict or unused previously developed land have been identified within the Parish. An extensive area comprising the higher land within the south-eastern half of the Parish comprises a mineral protection area with a smaller area near The Homme to the west. Areas along the River Wye and the Castle Brook are shown to be at risk of flooding according to the Environment Agency's Flood Map, most being within Flood Risk Zone 3. Local knowledge indicates that there are areas that suffer from storm water flooding, mostly in the vicinity of the

Daycroft Lane. There is a public sewer serving most of the Coughton section of Walford and Coughton and this drains to the Lower Cleeve Wastewater Treatment Works. There is no public sewer serving either Bishopswood or Howle Hill. The majority of the Parish falls within a Nitrate Protection Zone with only the triangular area between Kerne Bridge, Kiln Green and the south-eastern tip of the Parish excluded.

2.20 Approximately three quarters of the Parish falls within the Wye Valley AONB, including all three settlements with the exception of the eastern end of Howle Hill. That part of the Parish within the AONB falls within two Landscape Management Zones identified within the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan[1]. The western portion is defined as Walford Lowlands and the eastern portion falls within the Wye Gorge zone. Walford Lowlands equates generally with the Principal Settled Farmlands Landscape Type defined in Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment, while the Wye Gorge encompasses both the Principal Wooded Hills and Wooded Hills and Farmland Landscape Types. The settlement of Walford and Coughton falls within the first while Bishopswood and Howle Hill in the second. The area outside of the AONB falls along the eastern side of the Parish. Nevertheless, it exhibits similar landscape characteristics with the Wye Gorge zone being on its periphery. Other landscape types within the Parish include River Meadows and Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings. There are two Natural Character Areas defined by Natural England that cover the Parish: South Herefordshire and Over Severn (area no. 104)[2] and Forest of Dean and Lower Wye (area no. 105)[3]. The first sits generally to the west of the B4234 as far as Kerne Bridge, with the second to the east.

2.21 The division of the Parish's landscape into two is readily apparent. Within the lowland area, generally on the western side of the B4234, there is an open aspect with medium distance views, and the land is generally flat or sits on the gentle lower slopes of steeper land. Land use is a combination of arable and horticultural farming. Landscape objectives would be to conserve or enhance hedgerows, tree cover and wetland habitats along watercourses. Strengthening tree cover and traditional orchard planting would be an objective. Walford and Coughton would not be a typical settlement within the landscape type, which would normally be dispersed with occasional linear developments. Proximity to Ross-on-Wye has placed considerable pressure for development in this village such that this feature has been lost, but this may have protected the historic pattern elsewhere within the wider landscape. Other important features of the landscape include those connecting important habitats, including the River Wye Special Area of Conservation, and comprising the banks of waterways, hedgerows and woodlands; important veteran and specimen trees; and the historic settlement pattern, comprising its parklands, historic farmsteads and rural cottages. The key ecosystem services for this part of the Parish are seen as water regulation, as a part of the Wye catchment, food production through extensive agriculture, an important genetic resource of local fruit varieties, and a sense of tranquillity intrinsic in the scenic rural character of the landscape.

2.22 Much of the area to the east of the B4234, forming part of the Wye Gorge Zone, comprises a hilly landform with land rising up steeply from the floodplain or hilltops.

[1] See https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/management-plans/
[2] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5018311469301760?category=587130
[3] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3526102?category=587130

Where the land is lower it would be a narrow floodplain on the valley floor. There are large and medium sized blocks of ancient semi natural and mixed broadleaf woodlands, many visible along the skyline. As with the previous zone there is a network of hedgerows and mature trees, but the land use is based upon mixed farming. Normally settlement would be on the valley floor with only small clusters of dwellings based on squatter settlements on the higher slopes that are well integrated with their surroundings. Medium and long distant panoramic views would be available. The woodlands are of high ecological value. In addition, the area is important for heritage, local culture and publicly accessible land. Future challenges include changes in agricultural practice impacting grazing management, changes to forestry practices and increased pressures from recreational use.

2.23 There is a range of important wildlife sites within the Parish. The River Wye that forms the western edge of the Parish is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), as well as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As a SAC the River Wye is a site of European importance and a Nutrient Management Plan has been prepared in order to address some of the issues leading to its unfavourable conservation status. Coughton Wood and Marsh in the north of the Parish is also a SSSI. This too is in unfavourable conservation condition. There are also a number of locally important wildlife sites and ancient woodlands, mostly upon the higher land in the southwestern half of the Parish to the east of the B4234, although there are a number on the western side of this road, including the disused railway line between Ross and Kerne Bridge. Herefordshire Council's Ecological Network Map identifies extensive core areas for biodiversity together with their buffers across the Parish although there is a significant concentration in the central and eastern parts. However, a wide 200m buffer has been defined by Herefordshire Council[4] along the River Wye on its western edge. Numerous locally important ecological corridors and stepping-stones are intermingled among the higher order sites, adding to connectivity and supporting important wildlife species. Connectivity in this part of the Wye Valley AONB is especially important with the Parish falling within the areas of influence for the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC (3.24 miles) and Wye Valley Woodlands SAC (7.04 miles).

2.24 The area's heritage value is also important. Although the extent of its heritage assets may not be as great as that in other Parishes, its historic landscape contributes significantly to the Wye Valley. The Parish contains one Scheduled Ancient Monuments - Great Howle Camp to the south-east of Howle Hill, although another, the Camp in Chase Wood, sits immediately upon but outside of its northern border. A limited number of Listed Buildings are spread throughout the Parish although there are no notable concentrations.

The Character of its Settlements

2.25 Defining the character of the three settlements identified within the Parish is important to determining the sense of place that should influence how development should take place.

4 https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1607/building_biodiversity_into_the_local_development_framework_2009.pdf

Walford and Coughton

2.26 The settlement comprises three clusters of dwellings along the B4234. The largest cluster surrounds the junction of that road with the C1275 road running eastwards towards Pontshill. It comprises predominantly inward looking small modern housing estates along the B4234. None of the cluster extends to the south or east of the Castle Brook. A metalled footpath runs mainly on one or other side along the main road and extends northwards to Ross and southwards to the southern cluster near Walford Sawmills. The imposing Walford House on the western side of the main road is an indication of the area's former character. Hedgerows, some of notable height, and mature trees line much of the road reducing the impact of development as you travel through. The tunnel effect opens up on the east side at Fowbridge Gardens, a small complex of bungalows for elderly people and this marks the end of the northern cluster giving way to open views between its southern end and the next cluster of dwellings. Properties along the C1275 display a rural character comprising predominantly older wayside cottages sitting above relatively high grass verges or stone walls on its northern edge with more recent development on its southern side. The Listed Barn House and its associated Listed barns, the absence of a roadside footpath, and the reducing scale of development as you move eastwards, emphasises its rustic character.

2.27 The second and central cluster again comprises modern dwellings just to the south of the main road's junction with Bulls Hill Lane. Semi-detached properties on that junction are outward looking as are most properties on the west side of the road although those to the rear of the more recently constructed Alder Close overlook an internal space. The cluster is, however, dominated by Walford Primary School set back from the main road and which must once have sat in relative isolation but has recently been enlarged through a sympathetic extension. Its playing field extends to match the southern extent of the cluster of houses on the western side of the road although the Old Vicarage, the oldest property within this cluster, comprises a substantial large property with outbuildings standing back from the road in its own grounds and surrounded by high hedges with mature trees on the road front. This punctuates that southern end of this cluster of dwellings. Notwithstanding the vegetation surrounding this property, the general absence of mature trees and hedgerows within this part of the settlement is in stark contrast to the northern cluster. Again, none of the cluster extends to the east of the Castle Brook.

2.28 The southern cluster forming the settlement is a ribbon of development along the B4234, formerly comprising occasional wayside cottages but now interspersed with modern development, although there are a number of small cul-de-sacs leading off the main road but not to any great depth. The Old Bakery at its northern edge is an outlying cottage characteristic of many that you often see separated from and on the approach to small Herefordshire villages. Walford village hall marks the start of the built-up area of the cluster from the north on the east side of the cluster and Walford Sawmills just beyond the cluster of dwellings, indicates its southern extent. There are modest amounts of tree and hedgerow planting, mostly fragmented in nature although the narrow woodland extending down from Bull's Hill meets the main road opposite the sawmills.

2.29 The three clusters forming the settlement all fit into the Principal Settled Landscape type defined in Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment[5]. It contains many of the typical characteristics of that landscape type comprising an agriculturally settled landscape with dispersed farmsteads and small villages or hamlets. It is a lowland area of mixed farming and with good soils, hedged fields and thinly scattered hedgerow trees, groups of trees around dwellings and trees along watercourses. Guidance upon new development indicates that additional housing in hamlets and villages should be modest in size in order to preserve the character of the original settlement. In addition, new dwellings should not lead to coalescence compromising the prominent wayside settlement pattern. The separation of Walford and Coughton into clusters with intervening gaps is considered an important characteristic in this respect in that it maintains the dispersed nature and scale of settlement typical within the landscape. All parts of the settlement are framed to the north by the steeply rising and domed Chase Wood and to the east by the wooded slopes of Howle Hill, Bull's Hill and Ley's Hill, all of which provide an attractive backcloth, in contrast to the flat land to the west. The central cluster of dwellings has the most open aspect with fewest landscape features of note nearby.

Bishopswood

2.30 Bishopswood is a small settlement immediately to the south of Kerne Bridge on the east side and inside bend of the River Wye. With very limited exceptions, its dwellings also sit on the east side of the B4234 upon the gentler lower slopes of Leys Hill. Development extends along the front of the B4234 and also up Leys Hill Lane. The greatest concentration is around the junction of this lane with the main road. Properties along the B4234 generally face onto that main road overlooking the river. The properties rising up Leys Hill Lane are also generally orientated to achieve this view although as a consequence they look away from the lane itself. Most properties are relatively large, detached, sit within unusually shaped plots and have no consistency in terms of design features. Housing density declines as you rise up Leys Hill. Vegetation is heavy with many trees and high hedgerows although planting is often a mixture of native and ornamental varieties.

2.31 The backdrop to the settlement comprises small to medium sized blocks of woodland planting, many comprising ancient woodlands, on steeply sloping topography, this being typical of the 'Principal Wooded Hills' landscape type[6] within which the settlement sits. Typically, at least three quarters of the land area of this Landscape Type is under tree cover. It is a very visible landscape although few long-distance views reveal the presence of any significant settlement form as a consequence of the heavy vegetation along this side of the river valley at a point where the previous wider floodplain narrows. Visual integrity is considered to be of paramount importance in this landscape. The density of dwellings should remain low and of organic composition. Any clearance should be in the form of irregular parcels bounded by hedges. New planting associated with development should respect the historical pattern of boundaries and comprise native deciduous species with a mixed age structure. Hazlehurst unregistered park and

[5] https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2069/landscape_character_assessment_for_herefordshire.pdf

[6] Ibid

garden sits on its south-eastern edge although properties have started to encroach into this parkland setting. Further along Leys Hill Lane landscape character changes to that defined as Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings[7]. Clustered groups of dwellings would not be sympathetic to this landscape type indicating the settlement should not extend into this area.

Howle Hill

2.32 As a settlement, Howle Hill is difficult to define and, as such, is the smallest of the three identified within the Parish. Two clusters of built-up form are evident, one as you climb up Sharman's Pitch and the second concentrated along Church Lane. The first is concentrated around a complex of narrow lanes and driveways as the steep incline of Sharman's Pitch tails off. Dwellings comprise a combination of much altered traditional cottages and newer properties forming a fairly tight-knit form in relative terms although there is little evidence of this density of development visible from the lanes because of the topography, high hedgerows and heavy tree presence. Many dwellings are served off tracks that disappear behind this vegetation. There is no consistency in terms of design or built form. The second cluster comprises a ribbon of development along a very narrow and winding lane, which finishes at a dead-end just beyond the edge of the loosely defined built-up area. Dwellings are generally detached properties and sit close to the lane, although a number at its western end are set back along private tracks and this area is the densest part of the cluster. As you travel eastwards dwellings are interspersed with generous gaps and then larger fields. Again, the dwellings comprise a combination of much altered traditional cottages and newer properties, although there are more of the former than in the previous cluster. A converted church marks the eastern end of the cluster.

2.33 The settlement falls within the Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type[8]. The settlement reflects the description for this landscape type where the pattern has developed in a random, opportunistic manner along narrow intersecting lanes fringed by wayside cottages. The associated, usually small, parcels of pasture and pockets of remaining rough ground with heathy/acid grassland vegetation contribute to the scale and are reminders of the origin of these landscapes. Clustered groups of new housing would not be sympathetic to the landscape character but opportunities for individual dwellings may be appropriate in some circumstances where in scale with the original settlement. Priority should be given to conserving the settlement pattern and setting by maintaining the scale and detailing of the cottages and smallholdings. The retention of the open spaces within the settlement and between its ~~two~~ three compartments should be encouraged, paying particular attention to the areas of permanent pasture and to the hedgerow structure. Management should resist the temptation to "tidy" and thus urbanise these landscapes, which rely on an overgrown quality to maintain their rustic charm.

Ross-on-Wye Urban Fringe

[7] Ibid
[8] Ibid

2.34 Walford Parish abuts Ross-on-Wye's built-up urban area on its northern border with between the B4234 and Lincoln Hill, in an area defined by Herefordshire Council as Land South of Tudorville and Archenfield. That Council's Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis[9] defines the landscape in this location as having a high level of sensitivity. In terms of landscape character, it falls within the Principal Settled Farmlands landscape type and sensitivity analysis identifies a sharp differentiation between the modern housing development at Tudorville and Archenfield compared with the land to the south. Along the B4234 corridor between Ross-on-Wye and Coughton the land is considered to have maintained a rural character, despite the fact there is only 1km between the two settlements.

2.35 On the periphery of the housing estates that comprise the edge of Ross-on-Wye, the dwellings generally face outwards to overlook the countryside. Looking towards Ross from Lincoln's Hill, your view over the town is restricted by a high verge and hedgerow. Where development is visible the view is across the roof tops and visibility of houses in the foreground is mitigated by them being within a dip, with properties relatively low lying behind a low hedge. The topography rising above the current edge of development upon the slopes down from Lincoln's Hill makes it one of the more sensitive parts of the town's urban fringe. From the B4234, development sits above the top of a ridge and is visible on both sides of the road despite attempts on the western side to reduce its impact through tree planting. However, the impact is mostly upon near views as you approach the suburban form of the town, emphasised by the mini roundabout. The undeveloped land on the eastern side of the road, rising relatively steeply up towards Chase Wood is particularly sensitive. The regimented form, emphasised by straight hedgerows, gives a strong urban edge marking the change from town to countryside.

2.36 On the Walford side of the boundary Arbour Hill is identified as having maintained a rural, tranquil character with a very low density of settlement, comprising mainly dispersed farms. Lower Lincoln and Arbour Hill form part of the rural backdrop to the approach to Ross-on-Wye and the high quality of this landscape includes the mature trees at Lincoln Hill House, an Unregistered Historic Garden. The area covered by the Council's analysis does not extend beyond the footpath running east-west from the northern end of Walford and Coughton to Hom Green.

2.37 Further to the north-west are areas defined in the analysis as 'Lower Cleeve' and 'Ashfield Escarpment' although these do not comprise areas of housing that abut Walford Parish. The first contains Lower Cleeve Wastewater Treatment Works and a group of storage units comprising containers. Most of this zone falls within the floodplain whereas that just outside is assessed as high to medium sensitivity. The latter escarpment includes unregistered parkland that comprises part of the John Kyrle Walk.

3. Issues and Options

3.1 The following issues were identified as matters to be addressed within this NDP.

[9] See Map 3.6 in Part 3 of the Analysis.
https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/187/urban_fringe_sensitivity_analysis_2010

Environment

3.2 Some 88 % of residents responding to the household survey in 2014 considered the Wye Valley AONB to be very or highly important as an essential characteristic of the Parish. The River Wye was also considered to be very or highly important to the Parish's character by 85% of those responding. Other characteristics considered important included the character of the Parish's settlements and their separation by open countryside. Easy access to the countryside and its public rights of way network were also highly rated. The rural atmosphere and relative tranquillity through quiet rural life were also appreciated.

3.3 More specifically it is considered that the protection and enhancement of landscape, biodiversity and cultural history of the Parish should be given a high priority and its overall character retained. Regard should be given to maintaining the landscape and Special Qualities of that part of the Parish falling within the Wye Valley AONB. The different characteristics of the settlements within the Parish should also be recognised and retained. Development should be accommodated sensitively, and major developments avoided within the AONB. A sensitive approach is also necessary as a major contributor to the local economy of the County where tourism is a significant source of income with the emphasis being upon the scale and character of Herefordshire's small-scale settlement pattern.

3.4 With Coughton part of Walford and Coughton being the only settlement on a public sewer, the ability to treat wastewater is a potential constraint in other parts of the Parish. Proposals for new development outside of that village will need to show that there will be no adverse effects on residents and the environment, especially upon the River Wye SAC.

3.5 Location specific issues include maintaining the green gap between Ross and Walford and Coughton and the separation between the villages; the need to underground electricity wires; and achieving increased access to countryside from settlements.

Climate Change

3.6 Responding to the climate change emergency has now become a major consideration that needs to be addressed where possible through the NDP. The most noticeable effect of climate change within the Parish is experienced through increased flooding, not only associated with the River Wye but also the Castle Brook that flows by and through Walford and Coughton and southwards to connect with the River Wye. In addition, there is concern about the effects of storm water flooding, especially that flowing down from higher land, affecting not only the highway but also some dwellings. Any new development should make appropriate provision to ensure that both new dwellings and those that already exist are suitably protected.

3.7 The community is understood to want to play its part in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. Energy conservation and appropriate forms of renewable and low carbon energy should be promoted. There is support for renewable or low carbon

energy such as solar, biomass and capturing natural heat in the ground where proposals are brought forward by individuals, the community or to serve particular businesses. However, there is unlikely to be local support for large scale commercial operations.

Community, Social and Health Needs

3.8 Promoting greater community spirit has been recognised as a matter that would increase social cohesion. There is, however, a limited range of local services and community facilities within the Parish. The shop with petrol station and post office to the east of Bishopswood, two village halls, Walford Primary School and the public houses at Bishopswood and Walford currently meet some of the community's needs with many other services and facilities available in nearby Ross-on-Wye. Nevertheless, the aim should be to protect and enhance those that are available through promoting their greater use where possible.

Housing

3.9 Initially the Parish was required to provide some 31 dwellings, which many residents considered about right. Subsequent modifications to Herefordshire Core Strategy increased that figure considerably. The level of proportional housing growth that neighbourhood plans should seek to achieve in this part of the County is 14% equating to a minimum of 91 new houses over the period 2011 to 2031. Herefordshire Council has confirmed that between April 2011 and April 2021, 14 dwellings had been built and a further 39 had been granted planning permission. Subsequently planning permissions granted after April 2021 provide for a further 9 dwellings close to Howle Hill. To meet the required level of proportional housing growth, 29 further dwellings is the minimum required to be planned for.

3.10 Some allowance may be made for windfall development outside of the three settlements or through small infill sites within settlement boundaries. The first category are dwellings such as agricultural dwellings, the conversion of rural buildings to dwellings, or dwellings in association with a rural enterprise. These are exceptions to the restriction on new dwellings within the countryside set out in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy RA3. The second category comprises individual or very small sites coming forward in an ad-hoc manner within settlement boundaries. Assessment of these is set out in section 7 of this NDP.

3.11 In terms of how housing should be accommodated, residents responding to the household survey expressed a preference for provision to be divided between a number of sites rather than upon a large site. The preference was for family housing, although there was also support for bungalows, self-build opportunities and low-cost small market housing, and developments should comprise a mixture of house and plot sizes. Houses should generally match traditional styles although, again a mixture of traditional and modern designs were also supported. Earlier work undertaken in relation to the Parish Plan identified little demand for affordable housing and the wish for the size of development to be sites for up to 20 dwellings.

Economic Activity and Employment

3.12 A majority of residents responding to the household survey considered that commercial development should not be encouraged, although arguably this might refer to larger scale operations because there was support for tourism, agricultural related operations and local services. The Parish Plan, however, highlighted concerns about intensive agricultural operations, but recognised there needed to be a balance between these, tourism and community aspirations. Small and home-based businesses are felt to be important as is farm diversification. The issue of scale is important to the high quality of the Parish's landscape and the limitations of the highway network.

Infrastructure

3.13 Highway maintenance is a significant issue for residents although this is not a matter that can be addressed directly through the NDP. The only road of any note passing through the Parish is the B4234 and there are concerns about traffic speeding along it, especially close to Walford Primary School. There are concerns about the ability of other roads in the Parish to accommodate new development. There is support for extensions to its footpath, most notably between Walford Sawmill and Kerne Bridge. There are aspirations to develop National Cycle Network route 44 (Shrewsbury - Cinderford) which would pass through the parish. Herefordshire Council has indicated it will work with local communities to design and deliver local improvements to support growth arising from the Core Strategy including measures that might be brought forward through neighbourhood plans. The measures considered necessary by the community should be defined. The lack of transport options, high car ownership and the promotion of sustainable transport measures to promote active lifestyles and mitigate climate change have been identified within the environmental scoping report for the NDP.

3.14 The combination of limited connections to a public sewer and treatment works with the Parish being a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone may limit some forms of development.

3.15 Improvements to broadband and mobile phone reception are considered important, as is the need for a more reliable electricity supply.

Options

3.16 The options presented relate to how new housing might be accommodated. Development needs in terms of businesses and facilities cannot easily be identified and determining how they will be accommodated will rely upon general policies rather than specific proposals, although any policies will ensure protection of the environment, residential amenity and highway safety, among others. Based upon the sites indicated to be available and suitable for housing, the options that were considered included:

Option 1 - To meet the required housing needs through the allocation of one large site. This would meet and exceed the minimum required level of proportional housing growth.

Option 2 – To meet the required housing need through the allocation of medium and small sites. Again, depending upon the sites chosen, this option would meet or exceed the minimum required level of proportional housing growth.

Option 3 – To utilise all the suitable and available small sites and a reasonable assessment for a windfall allowance based on recent trends.

Option 4 – Not to include any housing land allocations but rely upon a policy to define how new dwellings will be accommodated. This might utilise specifically related policies for settlements in Walford Parish or, if not possible, rely upon Core Strategy policy RA2.

3.17 The options comprise a range of different scales of development consistent with advice set out in the NPPF and avoiding large sites that might be considered major development. In determining which option is most appropriate, the Parish Council is conscious that all its settlements fall within the Wye Valley AONB, a nationally important landscape to which attention must be given to conserving and enhancing its natural beauty with special provisions being included within the NPPF. Scale of development is important in this regard and Option 3 is considered to best meet the landscape requirements. The use of small sites together with a highly likely level of windfall planning permissions based on recent trends will have least adverse effects upon the AONB. It also meets with the community's wish to see small housing sites which has been expressed throughout public consultations upon the NDP and resulted in 82% support for this form of development by respondents to the most recent survey upon housing options. The medium sized sites offered that would be utilised in Option 2 would be significant in terms of scale of development in relation to settlement character, as well as having implications in terms of flood risk and biodiversity. As such, they were considered unsuitable. Option 1 was rejected by the community when consulted.

4. Vision, Objectives and Strategic Policies

4.1 In preparing Walford NDP the following vision, guided by responses to the residents' questionnaire and confirmed at a subsequent community consultation, sets the basis for what it is hoped to achieve within the Parish through the planning system by the end of the Plan Period:

> *"By 2031 the unique landscape character and settlement pattern of Walford Parish will be enhanced through small scale, sustainable development that meets the needs and desires of our community today and for future generations"*

4.2 To achieve this vision the NDP sets the following objectives:

1. Local Environment:

To ensure that development contributes positively ~~the~~ to Walford Parish's environment through:

i) Conserving, and where possible, enhancing its landscape character, views, features and tranquillity, especially within the Wye Valley AONB where its inherent qualities as a nationally important landscape should be retained, restored and not despoiled.

ii) Protecting its national and international important wildlife sites and increasing the quality and quantity of the natural environment through adding to the overall extent of its wildlife features, especially those that will enhance its network of habitats and sites.

iii) Promoting measures that will reduce the contributors to climate change and also those that would mitigate the consequences of the growth which must be accommodated.

iv) Preserving the character, landscape and natural settings of the settlements of Walford, Howle Hill and Bishopswood, in particular by maintaining the landscape gap that separates Walford and Coughton from Ross-on-Wye.

v) Retaining the extent of its historic environment by protecting and enhancing the significance of important heritage assets, including those of local interest.

vi) Ensuring the location of development does not result in pollution that would adversely affect the health of residents or the natural environment, including in combination with other uses in the vicinity.

vii) Retaining high quality agricultural land.

viii) Protecting existing and future development from the effects of flooding, including from storm water.

2. Community Facilities:

To meet as many of the community's needs for services and facilities as possible and promote a sense of community spirit by:

i) Supporting measures aimed at retaining Walford and Bishopswood village halls, St Michael's Church, All Saint's Church, the Parish's two public houses, canoe launch, Wyeside Park shop with petrol station and post office, and Walford Primary School.

ii) Enabling the development of these facilities to enhance provision and their expansion as hubs for activities within the community.

iii) Supporting proposals for new facilities to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the Parish if and when any arise.

iv) Protecting sports and recreational activities for all ages, including public rights of way.

v) Promoting informal recreation activities for the whole community based upon access to the countryside and promoting walking and cycling.

vi) Requiring housing developments to make provision for public open space and/or appropriate garden space to meet the recreational and leisure needs of residents.

vii) Promoting the improvement of public and/or community transport facilities and solutions that would increase access to facilities that cannot be provided within the Parish and enable more transport choice.

viii) Ensuring developments are designed to provide environments that feel safe and where community cohesion and spirit is actively encouraged.

ix) Ensuring the needs of elderly people, especially the very elderly, and people with disabilities are met fully.

3. New Housing:

To accommodate the required level of proportional housing growth in a way that meets the needs of the Parish and comprises sensitive and sustainable forms of development. This will be through:

i) Locating most dwellings on small sites within or adjacent to the built-up areas of Walford and Coughton, ~~as well as some proportionate development in~~ Bishopswood and Howle Hill, taking into account their character, nature and any constraints.

ii) Ensuring mixtures of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs, e.g. starter homes for young people, family housing and self-build opportunities.

iii) Meeting the housing needs of elderly people, including the very elderly, through mobility, sheltered and other specialist forms of housing.

iv) Requiring high quality site layouts, building design and landscaping that reflect local densities, character and distinctiveness; protect landscape character, especially within the Wye Valley AONB, and incorporate modern services and facilities.

v) Incorporating sustainable design features, in particular, achieving the highest level of carbon neutrality and water conservation.

4. Business and Economic Development:

To support development proposals for local businesses where these reflect the nature and scale of the Parish, in particular farm diversification, tourism and working from home through:

i) Promoting proposals for the conversion of rural buildings to employment uses where these fit into the local environment and the capacity of the local road network.
ii) Retaining those local businesses operating in appropriate locations, supporting extensions where these can be achieved without adversely affecting the landscape and residential amenity.
iii) Enabling farm diversification where this does not harm the character and appearance of the Parish and the Wye Valley AONB, paying particular regard to scale and location.
iv) Facilitating working from home in particular by seeking modern infrastructure and appropriate layouts within new developments.
v) Enabling the development of the tourism sector where this fits sensitively into the landscape and general environment of the Wye Valley AONB;

vi) Supporting small rural craft-style workshops where residential amenity can be protected.

5. Infrastructure and Roads:

To ensure development within the Parish can be accommodated within the capacities of local infrastructure or that upgraded provision meets modern needs and promotes greater self-reliance by:

i) Ensuring development is located where it can be accommodated safely and within the capacity of the local network, especially taking into account the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.
ii) Promoting walking and cycling.
iii) Ensuring the provision of infrastructure needed to provide high-quality telecommunications.
iv) Ensuring development connects to the public sewer either directly or through any economically viable extension where possible.
v) Limiting development to that within the capacity of the Ross Lower Cleeve Wastewater Treatment Works.
vi) Any development using private means for treating wastewater must demonstrate that it will not contribute towards any significant adverse effect upon the River Wye SAC or cause pollution more generally, including in combination with existing developments.
vi) Supporting low carbon and renewable energy initiatives serving individual and community needs where consistent with important environmental requirements, e.g. community energy groups.

4.4 During consultations, the community expressed full support for these objectives.

Strategy for Sustainable Development within Walford Parish

4.5 Sustainable development seeks to ensure proposals are advanced that will "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"[10]. It covers social and economic factors as well as the environment so that the community is provided with sufficient and appropriate housing, opportunities for enterprise, and access to community facilities which will help to maintain healthy and thriving communities as well as protecting our natural and historic environment, all of which contribute to our quality of life.

4.6 To ensure these major concerns are considered when promoting sustainable development through this NDP the following policy forms the basis for the overall approach pursued through the NDP.

[10] National Planning Policy Framework, page 2.

Policy WALF1: Promoting Sustainable Development

Positive measures that promote sustainable development within Walford Parish will be supported. Where development proposals are advanced, they should address the following ~~high-level~~ priorities that are considered essential by the local community for maintaining sustainable development within the Parish:

a) The highest priority will be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty and special qualities of the Wye Valley AONB and to the protection of its important natural habitats. Enhancement proposals will be required where appropriate.

b) The wider natural and historic environment will also be protected by ensuring development does not have any significant adverse effects through poor design; being sited in inappropriate locations, in particular avoiding wherever possible the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land; or spoiling the quiet enjoyment appreciated by those who live, work or visit the area.

c) Particular attention should be paid to considering whether and, if so, what measures should be incorporated to mitigate or adapt to the effects of climate change.

d) Community facilities and services should be retained and enhanced where possible including through contributions that will enable pressures resulting from growth to be accommodated satisfactorily.

e) New housing shall be located where this is in scale with the area concerned and to provide a range of accommodation.

f) Local employment opportunities will be supported where these promote diversification of the local economy, especially tourism, working from home, and activities that reflect the scale of the rural area.

g) The capacity of local infrastructure, including roads and utilities, should be sufficient to accommodate the development proposed.

Benefits will be sought in relation to the priorities set out in this policy where compensatory or mitigation measures are needed as part of any proposal.

(Supporting Objectives 1 to 6)

Justification

4.7 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all planning applications to be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This overarching strategic policy sets out the essential sustainable development requirements which the local community considers important to achieve its vision and objectives. The provisions within this NDP will be measured against this policy.

4.8 The Wye Valley AONB is a national designation and places obligations upon those making decisions about development within it, which the first part of the policy provides. It also seeks to protect important habitats. The River Wye is a Special Area of

Conservation that has the highest level of protection. The integrity of both these designations is supported by networks of landscape features, including cultural assets, and habitats. These need to be protected according to their importance and enhanced where necessary. In addition, the climate emergency needs to be addressed and measures used wherever possible to ensure development is at least carbon neutral. Scale of development is important to both housing and economic development and local needs should be provided for through a mix of housing, especially for young people and families, and promoting diversification of the rural economy. Infrastructure and community facilities are limited, and some are constrained in particular parts of the Parish. Growth through development should be capable of being accommodated within these constraints or improvements made to accommodate these, provided they can be shown to be effective. Where development requires improvements or enhancements it should contribute towards their provision.

Policy WALF2: Development Strategy

Housing growth within defined settlement boundaries will be promoted at Walford and Coughton, Bishopswood and Howle Hill, predominantly through infilling, where this reflects the character of the particular settlement. In addition, a site is proposed within Walford Parish ~~but on Ross-on-Wye urban fringe~~ adjacent to Ross-on-Wye settlement boundary.

Outside of these boundaries, housing development should comply with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy RA3.

New or improved community facilities within the Parish will normally be located in or adjacent to these settlements or in association with existing provision where a need is identified.

Small scale employment opportunities will continue to be supported both within and outside of the settlements provided they are of an appropriate scale and especially where they use 'Brownfield' sites. The conversion of rural buildings will also contribute to meeting employment and housing requirements.

(Supporting Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6)

Justification

4.9 The approach to accommodating sustainable development within Walford Parish reflects Herefordshire Core Strategy Policies RA1 to RA6, and in particular Policy RA2 in relation to housing accommodated through this NDP. The emphasis provided through Policy RA2 is to promote housing within those settlements defined within tables 4.14 and 4.15 of the Core Strategy which for Walford Parish comprise Walford and Coughton, Bishopswood and Howle Hill. In addition, Ross-on-Wye urban fringe lies just beyond the edge of its settlement boundary where it borders immediately upon the Parish boundary. Core Strategy policy RW1 for the market town indicates that new homes should be delivered in a dispersed manner between a single strategic site and on other smaller sites within and around the Ross to spread the effect of new buildings across this sensitive town and

its surroundings, which is predominantly within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The area to the south of the town is very sensitive and is described in some detail in paragraphs 2.34 to 2.37. Section 7 contains policies that define settlement boundaries and allocate housing sites where appropriate.

4.10 Development outside of the development boundaries will be determined in accordance with Core Strategy policies, especially Policy RA3 – Herefordshire's Countryside – which limits housing development to proposals which meet one or more specific criteria. There may be some scope for rural building conversions under Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy RA5 across the Neighbourhood Plan area.

4.11 Community facilities and services are spread across the Parish. Those that exist need to be supported wherever possible through enabling them to extend and diversify. The forms of business development that the community would like to see should be based on tourism and agriculture where they fit sensitively into the Parish's landscape and rural character, and these could be undertaken across the area. The use of previously developed land (brownfield sites) can bring benefits such as avoiding the use of greenfield sites and the loss of agricultural land; removing untidy areas or obsolescent and unsympathetic buildings; or enabling unsatisfactory uses to move to other locations. Although such opportunities are considered limited within the Parish, a number do exist. The conversion of rural buildings to employment uses, in particular, can ensure the retention of historic assets within the landscape if treated sensitively.

Policy WALF3: Major Development Within the Wye Valley AONB

Proposals should not harm the character or scenic beauty of the landscape, wildlife or cultural heritage of the Wye Valley AONB. In determining whether a development proposal amounts to major development within the AONB, the following are relevant when considering compliance with the criteria set out in the NPPF:

a) The level of detrimental effect on the landscape, its features and other important qualities identified as contributing to its character and scenic beauty.

b) The ability to satisfactorily mitigate the environmental effects to maintain landscape character and the characteristics defined for the particular National Character Area and landscape type.

c) Where development is adjacent or close to a settlement, the scale of development should not be excessive in relation to that which comprises its current size, form and character.

d) For development elsewhere, the scale in relation to the locality.

e) The effect upon wildlife, cultural heritage, tourism and recreational opportunities.

f) The availability of viable alternative sites elsewhere outside of the AONB or in more acceptable locations within the AONB.

(Supporting Objective 1)

Justification

4.12 NPPF paragraph 177 indicates that planning permission should be refused for 'major development' other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. The NPPF sets out the exceptional circumstances. However, the decision upon what amounts to 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker. Major development is considered to be development, including by virtue of its cumulative effect in association with other recent developments in the location, that has the potential to be of more than local significance and which will have a long-term impact on the landscape, wildlife or cultural heritage of the Wye Valley AONB. Scale and character are important considerations. This policy sets out those considerations that should be taken into account when determining whether a proposal amounts to major development and those considerations that should be taken into account that are particularly relevant to the Parish given its landscape characteristics and settlement pattern. Scale in relation to the location and particularly the size of any nearby settlement is pertinent. The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan will assist considerably in relation to protection, management and planning. It identifies the particular qualities of its area which contribute towards designation as a national important landscape, and these are considered relevant to determining whether a proposal would affect its character. Regard has been taken to decisions made, including at appeal, in informing this policy. The Parish contains areas within and outside of the AONB and also areas falling within different landscape types defined in Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment and Natural England's Natural Character Areas, and consequently the ability to accommodate development will vary across its area. Appendix 3 describes the AONB's special qualities suggesting whether and, if so, what needs to be considered in determining if a proposal has the potential to be major development. There is an emphasis on scale of development, and this will vary according to location. Scale is not just indicated by size, but also degree of impact on the qualities highlighted, for example effect of significant traffic generation on small rural lanes and excessive light pollution. The cumulative effect on the range of qualities should also be considered.

5 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment of the Parish

5.1 Protecting and enhancing the landscape must have a high priority, not just because it is important to the local community, but also because much of the Parish falls within the Wye Valley AONB which is a national landscape designation. Similarly, ensuring the conservation objectives for the River Wye Special Area of Conservation to achieve good ecological status is also a national requirement. The supporting landscape features, including those of historic interest, and the ecological network within the Parish are important components that will contribute towards supporting both these important designations. Although the number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and listed buildings present is relatively small, they also emphasise its sense of 'place'. The following policies seek to address the environmental objectives set out for this NDP.

Policy WALF4: Conserving the Landscape and Scenic Beauty of the Parish

Measures to maintain and reinforce landscape character within Walford Parish, especially within the Wye Valley AONB, will be promoted wherever possible.

To ensure development contributes positively to the area's character and does not adversely affect it, proposals should:

a) Be accompanied by a landscape scheme, informed by an analysis of the site's setting and containing measures forming an integral part of the design for the development, retaining and enhancing as many natural features within or surrounding the site as possible.

b) Conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities, including the local distinctiveness, particularly within the ~~of~~ Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including in accordance with its Management Plan, where sites fall within its area, or affect~~ing~~ its setting.

c) Promote positively the landscape character of the Parish, in particular ensuring the features, including settlement pattern, contributing to their identification as 'Principal Settled Farmlands', 'Principal Wooded Hills', 'Wooded Hills and Farmlands', 'Riverside Meadows' and 'Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings' landscape types as appropriate, are conserved, restored or enhanced through measures consistent with their particular characterisation.

d) Protect and enhance the visual integrity of the River Wye and its banks.

e) Retain, wherever possible, enhance important landscape features such as orchards, hedgerows and water courses, and maintain and preferably extend tree cover using native species, where opportunities are available.

f) Trees considered to be of amenity value should be protected through the use of Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate.

g) Tree planting should be consistent with good arboricultural practice.

(Supporting Objective 1)

Justification

5.2 The character of the Parish, its characteristics and features are highlighted principally in paragraphs 2.9 to 2.11 of this NDP. The measures included in this policy are aimed at protecting the landscape and to reduce any adverse effects on both the local and wider landscape, including the settings of settlements. In addition to the considerations in this policy and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy LD1 there is guidance included in Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance that needs to be considered. Importantly, The Wye Valley AONB is an area of high landscape quality with a national statutory designation. It is national policy to conserve their landscape and scenic beauty. The current separation between Ross-on-Wye and Walford and Coughton is important to protect a number of cultural and natural assets that contribute to the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB as well as their settings. These include Chase Wood SSSI and its associated Hill Fort Scheduled Ancient Monument, Bollin Farm Listed Building, Hill Court Registered Park and garden and Listed Building,

and Lincoln Hill House unregistered parks and garden. Their in-combination effect needs to be taken into account through extending protection beyond their individual settings than might otherwise be the case. In addition, Herefordshire Council has highlighted this area as having high landscape sensitivity[11]. The requirement for landscape schemes to address those issues identified through analysis of any site and its surroundings will be required in most instances other than minor developments.

Policy WALF5: Protecting Important Views within the Parish and the Settings of its Settlements

Important vistas and panoramas revealing the character of the Wye Valley AONB and the settings of its settlements within the landscape should be protected from the adverse effects of development, especially in the following areas:

<u>The Urban Fringe of Ross-on-Wye</u>

- **The view across the ridge above Ross-on-Wye that marks the boundary of the Wye Valley AONB looking from Lincoln Hill to Chase Wood (View 2).**

<u>Views in and around Walford and Coughton</u>

- **The series of views along the B4234 through the important gaps between its clusters that reveal the wooded slopes upon Howle Hill, Bulls Hill and Leys Hill as they rise relatively steeply above the flat valley floor (Views 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7).**
- **The panoramic views from the public rights of way on the higher slopes of Bulls Hill and Leys Hill (Views 8 and 9).**

<u>Views in and around Bishopswood</u>

- **The setting of Bishopswood (Views 10, 11 and 12).**

<u>Views in and around Howle Hill</u>

- **The setting of Sharman's Pitch viewed from the south (View 13).**

<u>Views elsewhere around the Parish</u>

- **The vistas and panoramas from viewing points from public rights of way sitting above and parallel to the Wye Valley Walk where it passes through the Parish (Views 14 and 15).**

NB the view references also correspond to the Figure references for the photographs below

[11] See Map 3.6 - https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2268/urban_fringe_sensitivity_analysis_part_3.pdf

5.3 To conserve the landscape, in particular that within the Wye Valley AONB, it is important to maintain its important features as well as its character. This will include the settings of its settlements where most development is likely to take place as well as key views that represent its landscape quality. Vistas and panoramic views and settings identified in this policy represent those identified as sensitive during studies for the preparation of this NDP. There will be others identified through landscape sensitivity analysis if and when other relevant proposals are advanced. Elements of the views and settings referred to in this policy are presented below with the locations from where they can be seen shown on Maps 2, 3 and 4 that follow.

View across ridge above Ross-on-Wye

The ridge line and associated plateau above provides an expansive view exhibiting a parkland appearance and marking the distinction between the settlement of Ross-on-Wye and the important scenic landscape comprising a number of cultural and natural assets. These include Chase Wood SSSI and its associated Hill Fort Scheduled Ancient Monument, Bollin Farm Listed Building, Hill Court Registered Park and garden and Listed Building, and Lincoln Hill House unregistered parks and garden. Their in-combination effect adds significantly to the landscape's importance highlighting the even greater importance that protection beyond their individual settings might otherwise be given. Herefordshire Council has highlighted this area as having high landscape sensitivity[12]. Its protection as a gap between Ross-on-Wye and the setting of Walford and Coughton is also important in that should development extend over the ridge then this would change the rural context of the AONB landscape within which this settlement currently sits.

Figure 2 – View of the landscape that sits above Ross-on-Wye with Chase Wood forming the back cloth.

Series of views towards Howle Hill, Bulls Hill and Leys Hill

[12] See Map 3.6 - https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2268/urban_fringe_sensitivity_analysis_part_3.pdf

The three heavily wooded hills sit prominently in the landscape rising up from the relatively flat river plain. The gaps between the various clusters of the settlement enable the views to be seen in turn, being the first signs of Wye Valley uplands as the AONB is entered from Ross-on-Wye. They add to the sense of anticipation of the variety of quality nationally important landscapes that will be revealed as the traveller progresses southwards through the AONB. Lower Wythall, a Listed Building, is prominent within the view of Bulls Hill from the centre of the settlement, sitting just at the rise on the lower slope.

Figures 3 and 4 – The first is the view from the gap in the middle of Coughton showing Howle Hill and Bulls Hill. The second shows Lower Wythall within its setting.

Figure 5 – View of Bulls Hill from Walford Church in the gap between Coughton and Walford

Figures 6 and 7 – Firstly view of Bulls Hill from the Coughton – Walford Gap. Secondly the view of Leys Hill from Walford Sawmills

Panoramic views from the public rights of way on the higher slopes of Bulls Hill and Leys Hill

Views from the public rights of way running on the higher slopes of Bulls Hill and Leys Hill show the scale of the three clusters forming the settlement of Walford and Coughton emphasised by the intervening gaps that enable them to retain the small-scale dispersed pattern characteristic of this landscape type. In this regard the views show how the clusters sit in the particular settled agricultural landscape of this part of the AONB characterised by mixed farming of arable and grazing. The absence of any significant woodland is in contrast to that of the hill slopes from which the landscape is viewed.

Figures 8 and 9 – Firstly view from Bulls Hill overlooking the gap between Coughton and Walford clusters with Walford Church in the centre. The second is the panoramic view from Leys Hill.

The setting of Bishopswood

The setting and character of Bishopswood is one of sitting upon the heavily wooded slopes of Leys Hill with very small groups of properties visible among the vegetation

from the valley bottom to mid-way up the hill. The significant woodland presence emphasises the extremely low development density. Views of the settlement tend to be limited to close range, and consequently any that enable its setting to be appreciated from mid to long distance are particularly important. Unsympathetic development that would be visible within views highlighting the settlements setting should be avoided. The adjacent historic Kerne Bridge provides one of the iconic views within the Wye Valley AONB although it is most readily appreciated from views outside of the Parish. Visually both the settlement and bridge would not be tolerant of more than a small degree of change, if any.

Figures 10 and 11 - The first shows the relationship between Kerne Bridge and the settlement of Bishopswood. The second is the reverse showing the wooded setting of the Bridge with sawmills at Walford in the background.

Figure 12 – Approach to Bishopswood from the south-east along the B4234 indicating the start of the settlement upon the wooded slopes of leys Hill

<u>The setting of Sharman's Pitch viewed from the south</u>

From the south Sharman's Pitch sits within a rural upland farming landscape below the brow of Howle Hill. Presenting as a very small cluster of wayside cottages in a dip with predominantly its roofscape visible, it represents small scale organic growth consistent with the random and opportunistic approach identified as characteristic of the pattern within this particular landscape type. The importance of the view from the south is heightened because it lies on the periphery of the Wye Valley AONB.

Figure 13 – View from public right of way WA77 overlooking Sharman's Pitch

Vistas and Panoramas on public rights of way sitting above and parallel to the Wye Valley Walk where it passes through the Parish.

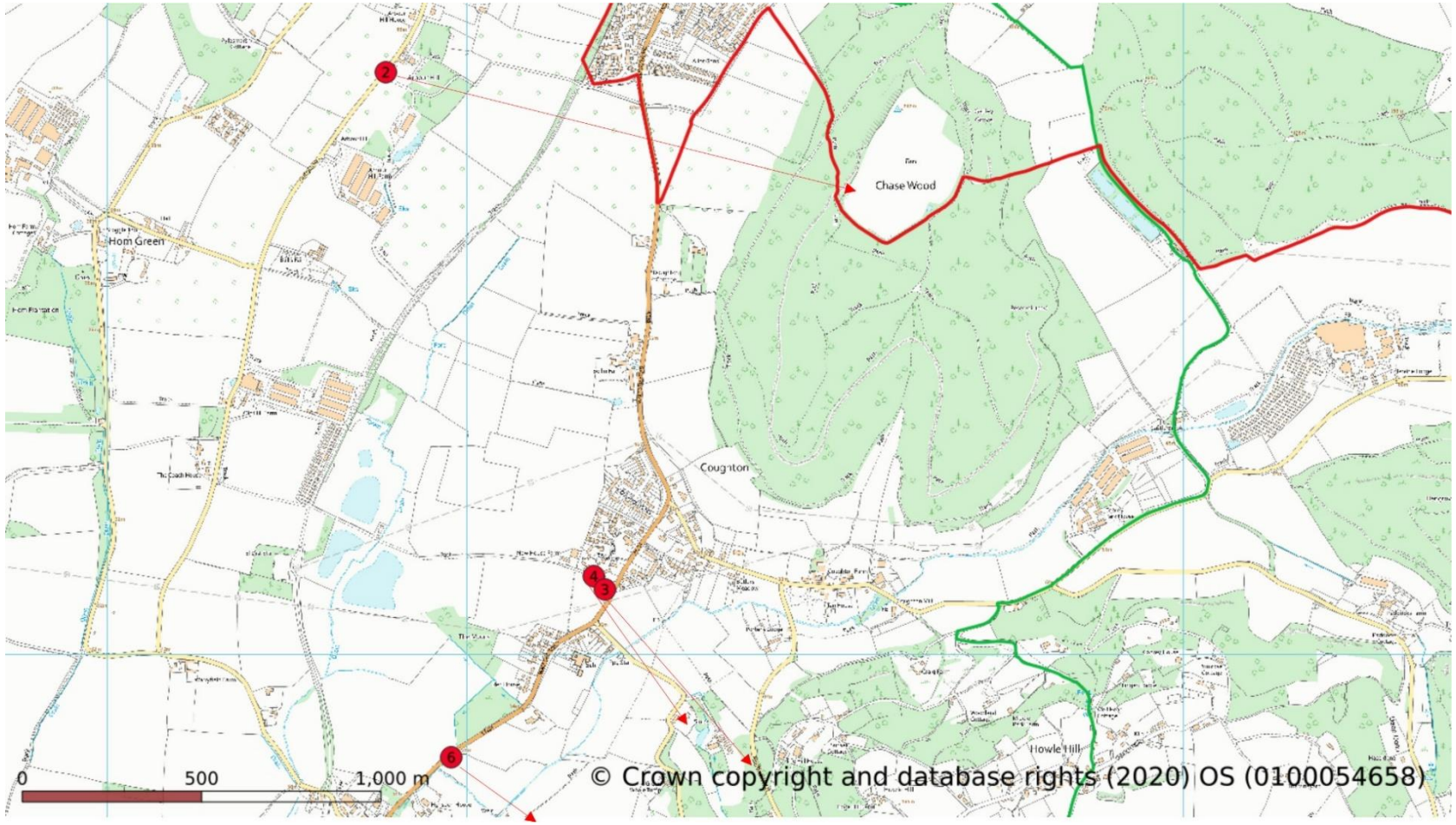
Much of the Wye Valley Walk within the Parish passes through woodland with limited views. A number of public rights of way have links to this walk and lead to higher ground from which there are viewpoints that show the varied local landscape and more distant views, its features and also its changing geomorphology. They present the opportunity for attractive circular walks associated with the Wye Valley Walk, contributing to the recreational purpose identified as important to the Wye Valley AONB.

Figures 14 – View over Walford from the Wye Valley Walk

Figure 15 – View from Bulls Hill showing the gap between Ross-on-Wye and Coughton with Chase Wood on the right. Ross sits below the ridge minimising its effect on the medium distance view. The clusters that form Coughton minimise the effect of development below Chase Hill and in the wider landscape where the small-scale settlement pattern is consistent with the landscape type.

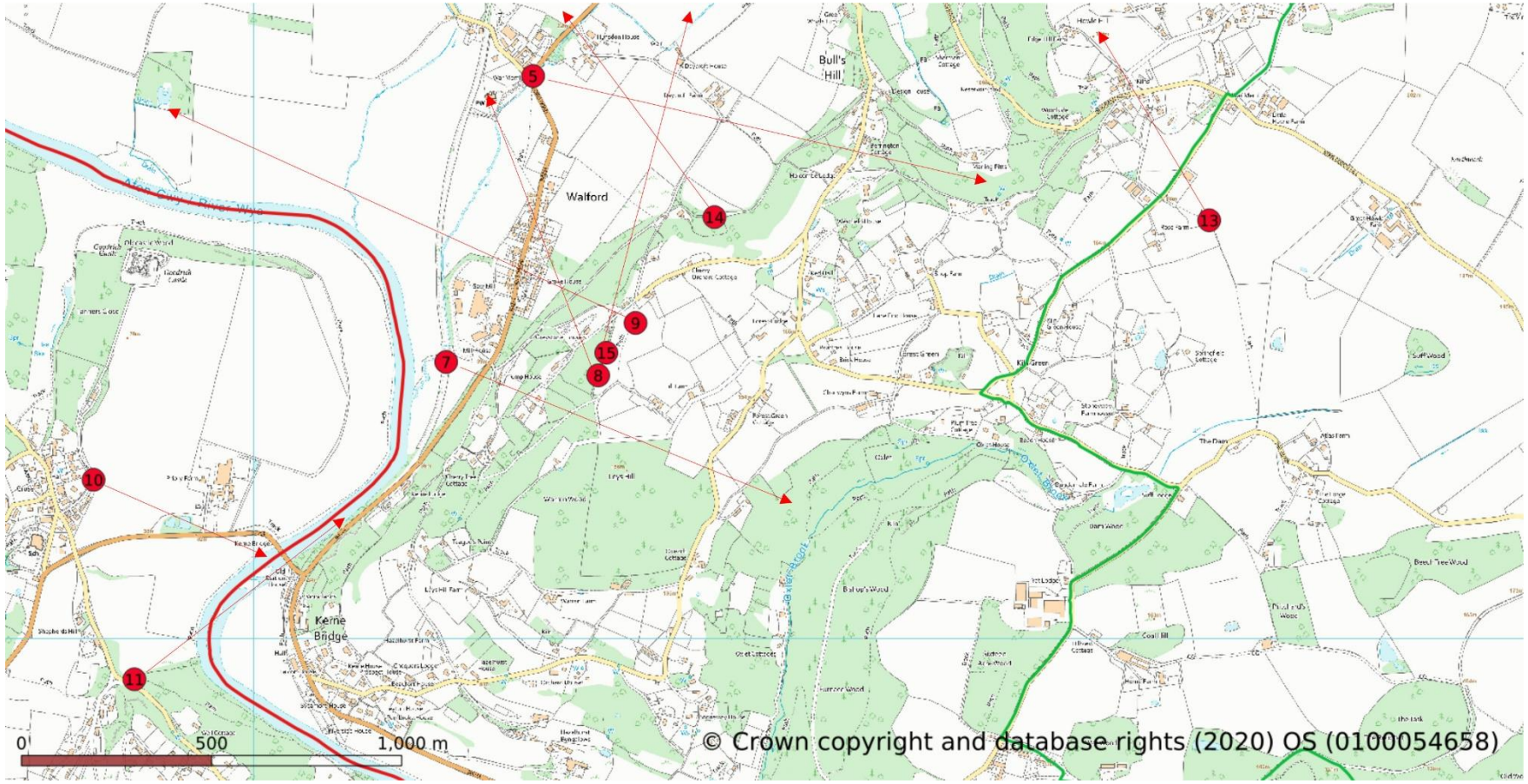
Map 2: Location of positions from which views have been presented for Ross Urban Fringe and Coughton

(Numbers refer to the Figures above)



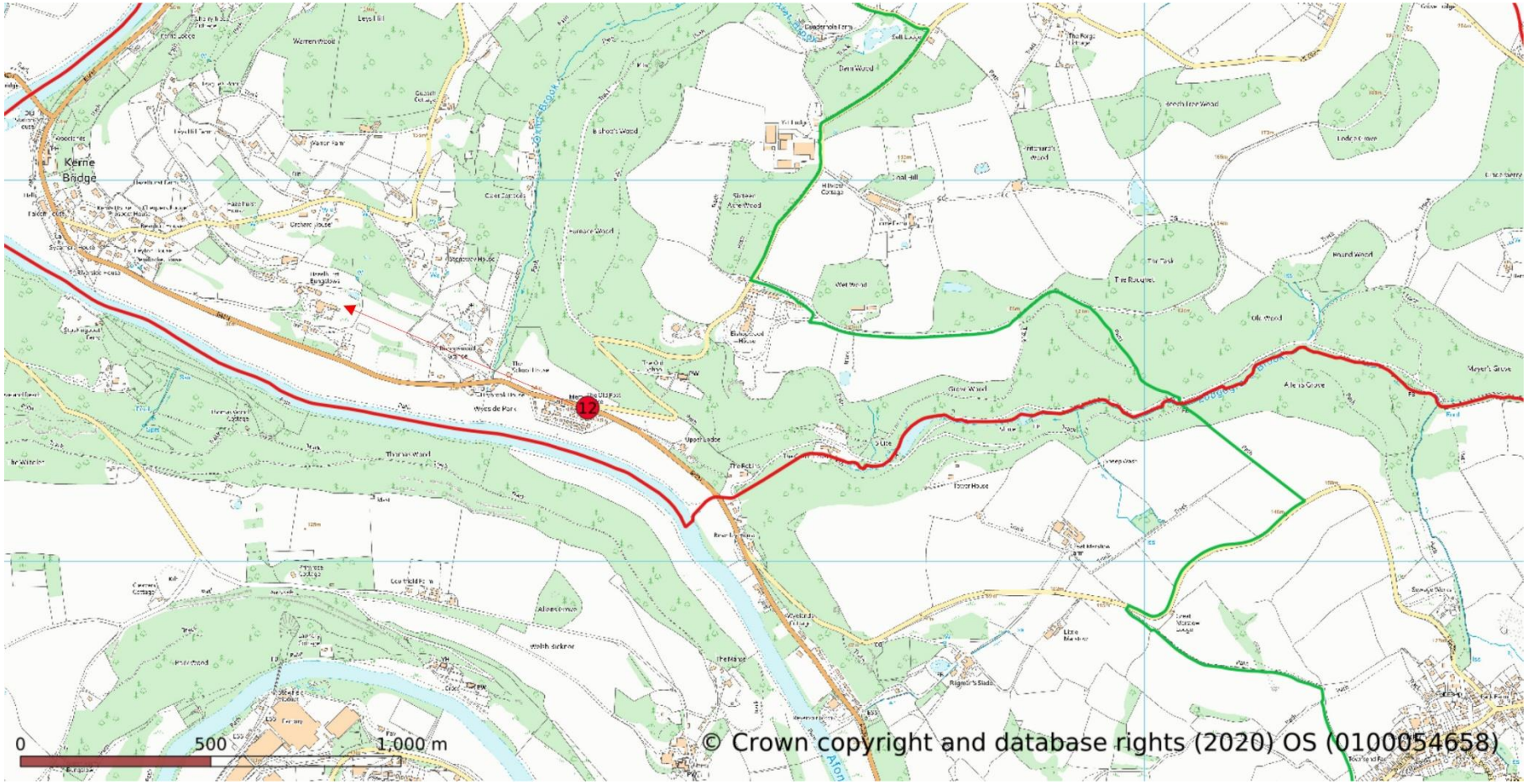
Map 3: Location of positions from which views have been presented for Walford, Bishopswood (West) and Sharman's Pitch

(Numbers refer to the Figures above)



Map 4: Location of position from which the view has been presented for Bishopswood (South-East)

(Numbers refer to the Figures above)



Policy WALF6: Enhancement of the Natural Environment

The conservation, recovery and enhancement of biodiversity habitats and geological features, including sites identified in the Priority Habitats Inventory and Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, local wildlife sites, trees (especially veteran trees), woodlands, orchards, hedgerows, ponds, water courses and grasslands, in accordance with Core Strategy policy LD2 will be supported in order to maintain and expand wildlife[13]. Proposals resulting in a net gain of biodiversity will be supported.

To facilitate this, development should achieve at least the appropriate level of biodiversity net gain through measures that:

a) Ensure the integrity of the River Wye SAC and Coughton Wood and Marsh SSSI, maintaining or enhancing their conservation status.

b) Contribute towards connectivity in the wider ecological network within the Parish by enhancing the ecological corridors and stepping-stones identified by Herefordshire Council in its Ecological Network Map 2013(and any subsequent successor).

c) Ensure, where possible, that the ecological network within the Parish contributes to that for the Wye Valley AONB.

d) Protect the biodiversity value of local wildlife and geological sites, ancient woodlands and other important habitats within the Parish.

e) Add to the green infrastructure[14] network where possible, improving the ecological value of its constituent sites and features.

Proposals that promote the creation and/or active management of sites to maximise habitat diversity, including woodlands, orchards, streams and wetlands, will be supported, as will those that result in additional and new natural areas capable of becoming local wildlife sites.

Development proposals must, in particular, demonstrate that they will not have a significant adverse effect on the River Wye Special Area of Conservation and species of European importance. In the event that the integrity of the Lower River Wye catchment[15] is found to be failing to meet its favourable conservation status, planning permission will only be granted where it is shown that the proposal will not increase nutrient inputs into the SAC. This could include through the delivery of mitigation to make a proposal nutrient neutral. Reference should be made to Herefordshire Council's Phosphate calculator and associated guidance.

(Supporting Objective 1)

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[13] For more information on habitats and other environmental assets you can utilise Magic map which can be found at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx and for green infrastructure Natural England's GI map at https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Map.aspx

[14] Green Infrastructure can be defined as a network of multi-functional green space and other green features, both urban and rural, which can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities. Examples of green spaces and features within and surrounding the settlement include, among others, parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, orchards, rivers and streams, street trees and allotments. For Natural England's Green Infrastructure Principles see https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/GreenInfrastructurePrinciples.pdf

[15] This comprises that River Wye sub-catchment below the confluence of the River Wye with the River Lugg.

Justification

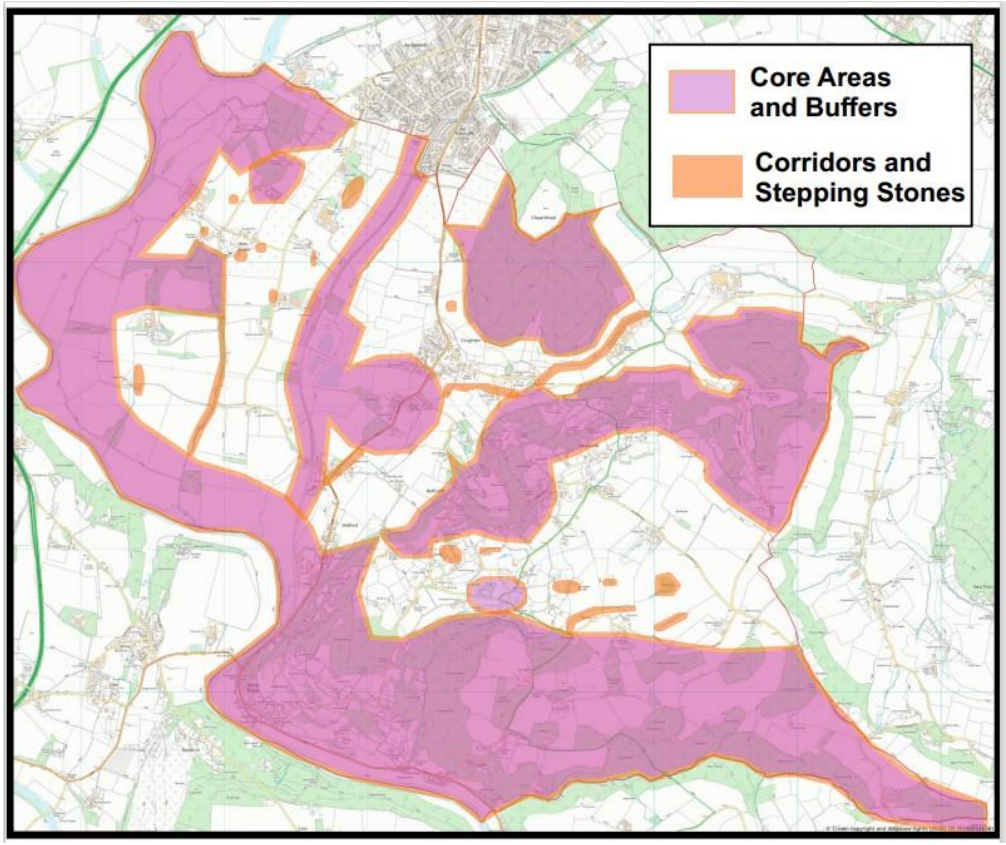
5.4 Government proposes to back its objective to drive further improvements for nature by introducing mandatory biodiversity net-gain in the planning system. This policy sets out the broad measures that developers should consider in order to improve the local natural environment. Walford's location adjacent to the River Wye and within the Wye Valley AONB is such that geological features as well as biodiversity are important. Herefordshire Council's Ecological Network Map indicates there are extensive areas across the Parish that contribute towards its integrity and Map 5 provides an extract from this. This policy identifies those habitats and features that should be conserved and enhanced in accordance with Core Strategy policy LD2. In addition, wildlife is an important contributor to the character and scenic beauty of the Wye Valley AONB[16] within its wider context. The River Wye SAC has the highest level of protection and Herefordshire Council has defined a 200m corridor[17] within which particular care must be taken to ensure any development does not adversely affect its special features. The River Wye is also a SSSI and measures should be considered, where possible, to address concerns about its unfavourable conservation status. Other features similarly contribute to the network, including Coughton Wood and Marsh SSSI; the ancient woodlands across Howle Hill, Bulls Hill, Ley's Hill and Bishopswood (See Map 10); the dismantled railway leading from Ross to Kerne Bridge; a number of local wildlife sites; and Castle Brook. These also comprise elements within the Parish's ecological network and regard should be had to other important habitats defined in Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan[18]. The Parish's wider green infrastructure network includes areas of open space, individual tree planting such as small woodlands, veteran and specimen trees and coppices, recreation areas, and domestic gardens, among others. Opportunities should be taken to increase the overall network through adding new wildlife features and stepping-stones in association with development proposals to contribute to the national objective to increase biodiversity. There should certainly be no net loss and where features must be removed, full compensatory measures must be proposed within any planning application.

5.5 The River Wye SAC is monitored at regular intervals to inform its status and trends in terms of its habitat and associated species for which the site is protected. This is to ensure that its primary management objective of achieving Favourable Conservation Status is met. Parts of the wider catchment are of such concern that restrictions have been placed on new development. Although the Lower Wye sub-catchment, within which Walford Parish sits, is not currently in that position, a precautionary approach has been taken to ensure the longer-term potential of the NDP's policies. Proposals have been put forward to cover the eventuality that the sub-catchment finds itself in a position where it may fail in ecological terms at some stage in the future. In addition to complying with Local Plan Core Strategy policy LD2, this policy also supports Local Plan Core Strategy policies SD3, SD4, LD1, and LD3.

[16] See Wye Valley AONB Management Plan - https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/management-plans/

[17] See Building Biodiversity into the Local Development Framework - https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1607/building_biodiversity_into_the_local_development_framework_2009.pdf

[18] https://herefordshirewildlifelink.wordpress.com/biodiversity-action-plan/



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Map 5: Ecological Network within Walford Parish

(Source: Herefordshire Council's Ecological Network Map)

Policy WALF7: Protecting Heritage Assets

The significance of heritage assets and their settings within the Parish shall be protected, conserved and where possible enhanced through:

a) Resisting development that would adversely affect the Great Howle Camp and Kerne Bridge Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their settings, and the setting of the camp at Chase Wood Scheduled Ancient Monument.

b) Where appropriate requiring ~~appropriate~~ development proposals ~~elsewhere~~ to be accompanied by ~~full~~ archaeological investigations. ~~and~~ In the event of significant and/or extensive remains being found they should be preserved in-situ wherever possible.

c) ~~Resisting~~ Development that ~~adversely affects~~ would result in substantial harm to or the loss of ~~features or the setting of~~ Listed Buildings or their settings should be wholly exceptional and will require clear and convincing justification ~~and other similar heritage assets~~.

d) Resisting development that would adversely affect the character of Hill Court Registered Park and Garden.

e) Only allowing development within unregistered parks and gardens at Lincoln Hill House; Cobrey Park; Upper Wythall; Bishopswood; and Hazelhurst to proceed if an assessment has shown the effects of works will fit sensitively into the garden design. In addition, the contribution that such parks and gardens make to the wider landscape will be relevant to this consideration.

f) Ensuring every effort is made to retain and conserve buildings and other heritage assets of local importance, including traditional rural buildings.

g) Promoting development that would conserve the character of the Parish's historic farmsteads through allowing sensitive conversions where appropriate. New development ~~may be permitted in~~ associated with ~~such~~ historic farmsteads ~~where this~~ should respect the historic form of the farmstead as indicated through a thorough research of historic documents ~~in order~~ to ~~comply with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, especially policy RA3(6) where this involves housing~~ secure a design of exceptional quality.

(Supporting Objective 1)

Justification

5.6 The Parish has a range of designated heritage assets. These include two Scheduled Ancient Monuments although another lies immediately upon but outside its boundary such that its setting might be affected by development within it. There are currently 275 entries on Herefordshire's Historic Environmental Record, including an unusual number of Lime Kilns, indicating a significant potential for archaeological remains to be present such that provision should be made to require archaeological investigations in appropriate instances. NPPF paragraph 194 sets out requirements for describing the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by development, including where there is potential for such assets with archaeological interest. The approach should be proportionate to the asset's importance or potential and may be presented through a Heritage Impact Assessment. NPPF paragraph 200 describes the levels of protection that should be afforded to designated heritage assets. These requirements are supported by Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy LD4. The Parish also contains some 40 Listed Buildings, of which two are Grade 1 and one Grade 2*. Hill Court is one of the Grade 1 Listed Buildings and it is also within a Historic England Registered Park and Garden. There are a number of locally important Unregistered Parks and Gardens which are of local importance. The significance of locally important buildings and other heritage features should be recognised for the contribution they make to the Parish's character and local distinctiveness, especially within the Wye Valley AONB, of which historic farmsteads are of particular importance to its historic landscape. This policy does not restrict development but influences the approach taken to it. It also stimulates development where regeneration brings benefits. Nevertheless, these assets and, where appropriate, their settings[19] are important and need to be preserved.

5.7 Herefordshire's Historic Environmental Record identifies 22 historic farmsteads within the Parish, identified within a Historic Farmstead Characterisation Project. By utilising information from the that Record and the County Archive, an understanding of their

[19] NPPF paragraph 194

heritage value can be identified and information about their previous historic layout which could be reflected in any development to enable additional buildings, including dwellings, to be added based on previous historical layout. This might be presented in a form that would comply with Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy RA3 (6). This historic form, represented by the character and setting of the settlement concerned, should determine both the principle of development and the form it should take. Historic England has also produced advice that might be utilised[20]. Development on historic farmsteads might provide accommodation to enable families to support elderly members of the family, facilitate the development of farming enterprises and give scope for new small businesses to develop through conversion to workshops, including the provision of live-work units. In this way development on these farmsteads might not only make a contribution to the 2011-2031 housing target but also will have considerable benefit to the heritage of this area.

Policy WALF8: Wastewater Drainage

Within Coughton part of Walford and Coughton, should there be a temporary lack of capacity at Ross Lower Cleeve WwTWs or within the sewer generally, development upon sites may need to be delayed until such time as works are carried out to provide sufficient capacity. Developers may contribute towards remedial works in order to remove any capacity constraint and to advance their proposals more swiftly.

For developments within the Walford part of Walford and Coughton, Bishopswood, Howle Hill and elsewhere away from the public sewer, developers should show, through appropriate evidence, that waste ~~foul~~ drainage can be accommodated without causing pollution to the River Wye SAC, other properties and land. Developers should ensure any proposed scheme that meets the above requirement is fully implemented before development is brought into use. Developers should utilise or contribute to wet systems where this is practicable, including measures to support biodiversity.

(Supporting Objectives 1 and 5)

Justification

5.8 New development should preferably be located where it can connect to the public sewer, although it is recognised that the northern and central clusters of Walford and Coughton are the only areas where there is a public sewer, and there is understood to be limited capacity serving the latter in the vicinity of Alder Close. ~~Wastewater from that sewer is treated at Ross Lower Cleeve WwTWs and it has restricted capacity although works are to be undertaken to rectify the shortfall. Although these works are imminent, the first part of this policy is precautionary in the event that there might be some delay, including to addressing problems with the sewer, which it is also understood Dwr Cymru Welsh Water is assessing.~~ Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water recently completed a reinforcement scheme at this WwTWs. However, the River Wye is a Special Area of Conservation

[20] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/wm-county-summaries/herefordshire-county/

requiring a high priority to be given to maintaining good water quality. Consequently, should there be a future shortfall in WwTWs capacity, this policy maintains a precautionary approach to ensure appropriate protection. Elsewhere, including the southern cluster of dwellings within Walford and Coughton, where it is not possible to connect to the public sewer, it will be important to ensure the treatment of wastewater does not result in pollution that would adversely affect the River Wye, other properties or land. There are known to be locations where wastewater drainage currently causes problems. The River Wye is in unfavourable condition, and it may be necessary to show that development does not have any significant adverse effect upon its integrity as an important habitat. This may restrict the amount and some forms of new development away from the public sewer. The Parish is also a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. Developers should present clear technical evidence to show that their proposals can be accommodated. Where drainage measures are brought forward, these can contribute towards biodiversity and may include wet infiltration systems.

Climate Change

5.9 Protecting the natural environment, especially biodiversity, goes hand in hand with the need to mitigate and adapt to effects of climate change. NDP and other planning policies can only address a small proportion of what needs to be done to tackle the climate emergency. The Parish Council wishes to promote a range of actions in addition to its planning policies so that an integrated approach is adopted across the Parish. These are included within Appendix 1. The following environmentally based policies form part of that approach.

Policy WALF9: Protection from Flood Risk

New development shall be subject to the Flood Risk 'sequential' and 'exception' tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, including taking into account surface water drainage. Where development is necessary in areas at risk of flooding, full and effective mitigation measures must be provided. No development will be permitted that will result in increased flood risk to properties elsewhere.

Where flood risk is identified as an issue, developers shall undertake full and detailed flood risk assessments, including taking into account current and future effects of climate change, to inform decisions on planning applications. Development should show through appropriate evidence that development would not cause or increase surface water flooding or risk of pollution. Opportunities to address surface flooding problems should be taken where available.

Where the management of drainage needs to be addressed, developers should utilise or contribute to sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) where this is practicable, including measures to support biodiversity.

(Supporting Objective 1)

5.10 Flooding is a major issue where the Castle Brook flows through Walford and Coughton. The area at flood risk extends along the east side of the settlement at its northern end before crossing the B4234 where it includes an extensive area by St Michael's Church at the junction of the B4234 and Daycroft Lane. It then passes down the west side of the southern cluster, incorporating the rear of a number of properties and Walford Sawmills. It is also a constraint along the River Wye to the west of Bishopswood and the B4234. Flooding does not just restrict development within these settlements but may affect development proposals elsewhere and it can cause off-site problems such as access and flooding in other locations. Surface water run-off from fields have also been identified as a problem in some areas. Areas in and around Walford and Coughton are particularly affected by surface water flooding, especially affecting the B4234 and on its eastern side in the vicinity of Daycroft Lane and below Bulls Hill with properties being flooded and forcing road closures. More recently significant surface water flooding has arisen at the bottom of Bulls Hill Lane. Development on the slopes of both Bulls Hill and Howle Hill can contribute towards flooding below. Further information about areas where surface water flooding is present can be found on the Environment Agency's surface water flooding map. Developers must show that the flooding issue has been fully addressed with appropriate evidence, including where necessary percolation tests, and proposals should include measures, as necessary, to protect development without adversely affecting other properties. This reinforces Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SD3.

Policy WALF10: Sustainable Design

An integrated approach to achieve a high standard of sustainable design will be required to achieve the maximum possible reduction in the carbon footprint of any development. Development proposals, including alterations and extensions to buildings, should contain a co-ordinated package of design measures which could include, as appropriate:

a) Utilising ~~physical~~ sustainability measures associated with buildings that include their orientation to maximise solar gain, installation of photovoltaic cells, the provision of the highest possible energy and water conservation measures, storage for bicycles and for waste including provision for recycling, broadband infrastructure, and renewable energy infrastructure such as photovoltaic panels where these do not detract unacceptably from any historic ~~fabric~~ features or the settings of historic assets.

b) Seeking on site measures that support energy conservation such as through tree planting and other forms of green infrastructure ~~to~~ that provide shade, shelter and ~~for~~ promote physical activity. ~~, and the maximum use of permeable surfaces.~~

c) Integrating new homes fully into the existing neighbourhood and supporting a more pedestrian friendly environment through the use of permeable surfaces and convenient links to local facilities and public transport connections which are suitable for those pushing pushchairs, in a wheelchair, walking with aids or using mobility scooters.

d) Assisting offsite measures such as supporting infrastructure to promote sustainable travel and enabling a sustainable drainage system to serve the widest range of properties where opportunities exist.

e) Avoiding or fully mitigating the loss of woodlands, orchards, grassland and other features that absorb carbon.

f) In addition, providing opportunities for tree and woodland planting to offset the full extent of carbon used during manufacturing of building materials and construction works[21].

g) Where there is good reason to believe that contamination of land may exist on any site, including through agricultural processes, ensuring an assessment is carried out to establish the extent and nature of the contamination, and effective measures taken to ensure potential occupiers, and the wider environment, are not put at unacceptable risk.

h) Where external lighting is required and to avoid or reduce light spill to external areas generated from within buildings, development ~~it should be appropriate to its purpose and~~ proposals should be supported by a lighting plan that demonstrates it will not have an adverse effect on residential and local amenity or the safety of road users through unnecessary glare or light trespass; ~~scenic intrusion or sky glow~~, protect the night sky from light pollution, especially on intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation; and should use reduced energy consumption infrastructure and renewable energy sources where possible.

i) Minimising construction traffic and reducing waste.

j) Where new innovative sustainable design or features are incorporated, they should fit sensitively within the street scene and incorporate locally distinctive features to maintain the area's cohesive character.

k) Locating noise sensitive development, including housing, in locations that are not subject to unacceptable levels of noise from highways and ensuring effective measures are taken to ensure that ambient noise levels both indoors and outdoors are acceptable.

Developments that seek to achieve the highest levels of sustainable design will, in particular, be encouraged, including those certified under the Code for Sustainable Homes scheme in relation to dwellings.

(Supporting Objective 1)

Justification

5.11 The community supports sustainable development, and this requires a comprehensive approach to be taken that encompasses a range of sustainable design elements. This policy sets out criteria that, taken with other policies in this plan, should be considered as part of a co-ordinated approach aimed at achieving zero carbon covering both construction and subsequent use. Although all the various elements covered in this policy may not apply to every form of development, some will be

[21] See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69261/pb13297-soil-strategy-090910.pdf especially paragraph 4.10

applicable to most. The approach to sustainable design should be undertaken in an integrated way addressing measures related to individual buildings, site layout and landscaping and support for off-site measures. Other considerations are covered by Policy WAL11 which promotes links to the public footpath and supports public transport. Elements within this policy are detailed design issues, covering matters such as energy and water use efficiency, provision of sustainability infrastructure such as cycle storage, sustainable site design measures, and the construction process. These detailed matters support the more general provisions within Core Strategy policy SD1. Energy conservation is considered an extremely important design element yet currently this is addressed through Building Regulations and nationally set standards. There are higher standards included in such schemes as Passivhaus and BREEAM~~, and the Code for Sustainable Homes,~~ and developers are encouraged to meet the highest level possible in order to make the maximum contribution to achieving a zero-carbon development. Again, developers should set out their design approach in sufficient detail to show how all the criteria included in this policy have been addressed. Light pollution should be minimised for a number of reasons through design. A lighting plan should show how the requisite purpose and level of safety has been achieved for the development while minimising the effect of lighting on the external environment. In this regard the lighting plan should define, in particular, how the following considerations have been addressed to minimise light pollution: the number, location and specification of infrastructure; shielding arrangements; building design to avoid or reduce upward glare; avoidance of recesses; and choice of site location and orientation of buildings.

Policy WALF11: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

Renewable or low carbon energy generation proposals will be encouraged where:

a) They comprise small-scale operations serving individual or local community needs and businesses.
b) They will not adversely affect landscape character or features.
c) They respect the rural setting and~~/or~~ settlement character.
d) They do not adversely affect heritage assets such as archaeological sites and historic buildings, including their settings.
e) They will not adversely affect biodiversity, especially features that contribute towards the local ecological network.
f) Local and residential amenity is protected.
g) Any traffic that is generated can be accommodated safely upon the local road network.
h) With regard to community projects, their scale reflects the community's needs.
i) With regard to local businesses, proposals are ancillary to the business operation.
j) The proposal would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Large and medium scale renewable or low carbon energy generation proposals that amount to major development within the Wye Valley AONB will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be

demonstrated they are in the public interest, and they do not have a significant adverse effect on the natural beauty and scenic qualities of the AONB.

(Supporting Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)

Justification

5.12 The need to contribute towards tackling climate change is accepted and there is local support for certain types of individual and community scale renewable energy schemes. A range of technologies are available to provide renewable or low carbon energy although opportunities within the Parish are most likely to arise from biomass, air source heat pumps and solar energy production. It is expected that most would be at the individual scale such as photovoltaic cells. Community led schemes for solar panels and capturing ground heat are especially considered likely to be supported. Criteria are set to ensure proposals fit sensitively into the landscape and do not adversely affect other environmental features, residential amenity or the highway network and these are consistent with planning practice guidance. Herefordshire Core Strategy policy SD2 requires proposals for wind turbines to receive local backing. Herefordshire Council's Renewable Energy Study indicates that the Wye Valley AONB may not be suitable for wind turbines. Wind turbines at or below 100kw would be small scale and normally used by individual homeowners or farmers for on-site electricity consumption and may be appropriate subject to criteria within this policy. In terms of local opinion, it is considered unlikely that large and medium scale wind turbine proposals would receive a positive response. Special protection must be given to development within the Wye Valley AONB where some medium and large-scale proposals amounting to major development would normally be refused. In determining whether the scale of buildings and infrastructure associated with renewable or low carbon energy generation would amount to major development, proposals would need to comply with Wye Valley AONB Management Plan policy WV-U1 and criteria listed in NDP policy WALF3.

6 Infrastructure

6.1 Herefordshire Council is responsible for roads and public rights of way within the Parish. The main highway is the B4234 which runs through Walford and Coughton then along the northern bank of the River Wye past Bishopswood until it leaves the Parish at its south-east corner. All other roads are either C roads or unclassified reflecting the rural nature of the Parish. The Parish is criss-crossed by a number of public rights of way with the greatest density being in the centre linking the three settlements. The Wye Valley Walk passes north-south through the Parish. Both Walford and Coughton and Bishopswood sit on a public transport route that is relatively frequent in Herefordshire terms providing a link with Ross on Wye. There are no cycle paths or defined cycle routes. Dwr Cymru - Welsh Water, also provide the Parish with its water supply in addition to the public sewer serving the Coughton part of Walford and Coughton. The Parish has two village halls, one within Walford and Coughton and one at Bishopswood. Walford Primary School is located fairly centrally within Walford and Coughton.

Policy WALF12: Highway Design Requirements

Where development proposals are advanced, these should ensure:

a) There is safe access onto the highway including adjacent roads.
b) Proposals will not lead to a significant increase in the volume of traffic travelling on roads that do not have sufficient capacity or where this would adversely affect residential amenity.
c) New development is designed in accordance with Herefordshire Council's Highway Design Guide for New Developments. The requirements of service vehicles such as refuse lorries, should be accommodated.
d) Layouts for new homes are fully integrated into the existing neighbourhood to support a pedestrian and cyclist friendly environment suitable for all users, including people with disabilities and reduced mobility, through convenient links to public transport connections and local facilities where these are available.
e) Highway layouts within new developments minimise the impact of roads on the environment and encourage reduced speeds.
f) The safety of pedestrians and of cyclists is protected and enhanced where possible, especially where there are no public footpaths.
g) ~~Where proposals include areas designed for children's play, these should be located to avoid conflict with vehicles.~~ Housing layouts provide for the safety of children in areas designed and located for their play.
h) Where appropriate, travel plans[22] are provided that include offsite measures such as supporting infrastructure to promote active travel, e.g. walking and cycling.
i) There are no adverse effects upon the public right of way network within the Parish and that opportunities are taken to link new development to the existing network and provide connections between routes where practicable.
j) Off-road parking spaces and appropriate public hard landscaped areas are constructed using permeable materials.
k) All new developments with parking make provision for electric vehicle charging at an appropriate level, including for each dwelling in residential developments and, for other forms of development, to suit the needs of the expected level of traffic generation.
l) The nature of the development does not lead to pressure for the provision of street lighting where this is not currently present within the area concerned and that necessary for public safety should be kept to a minimum to avoid light pollution in the immediate environment.

(Supporting Objectives 1 and 5)

Justification

6.2 With the need to accommodate further development, it is essential that the highway requirements are met through a comprehensive approach covering design requirements, promoting active travel, managing parking and ensuring associated infrastructure are incorporated. Safety of all residents in housing areas, and especially children, older

[22] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/9-promoting-sustainable-transport#para111

people and those with disabilities, is paramount and the network should be capable of coping with the traffic generated. This applies not only in the locations where growth is proposed but also elsewhere in the plan area. It is also important that residential amenity and the wider environment are protected from the impact of traffic. Design measures should be used to calm traffic, fit layouts into the landscape and avoid clutter. Encouraging residents to minimise the use of cars is becoming increasingly important and all measures to promote this should be utilised. Layouts should emphasise active travel components ensuring easy and the most direct connection to footways that provide access to the Ross-on-Wye, areas of employment and other facilities. Larger housing sites will need to provide areas for children's play, and they should be in safe locations as well as having easy access. Travel plans are key to ensuring an integrated approach. Measures to encourage active travel, not just through making provision for cycle parking, but through a range of measures, including accommodating the needs of the disabled should be considered according to the proposed use. Measures to promote the health and wellbeing of residents should also be undertaken, for example by providing links to the Public Rights of Way network. Vehicle parking should be sufficient for the needs of the particular proposal yet located in such ways as to avoid a range of adverse effects. Existing parking problems may need to be addressed where this would constrain a particular use or where development may exacerbate a problem, including taking into account potential intensification of activity. Careful thought needs to be given to highway related infrastructure to assist with storm water drainage and future proof for the transition to electric cars. Tranquillity within the plan area is something that residents and visitors to the Wye Valley appreciate. The design and layout of any new development should minimise the need for street lighting. This requirement should not restrict provision or improvements where there is an overriding safety requirement.

Policy WALF13: Traffic Measures within the Parish

Walford Parish Council will work with Herefordshire Council, developers and others to bring forward positive measures to encourage active travel and increase transport choices. These measures will be introduced progressively during the Plan period and include utilising developer contributions resulting from development within the Plan area where these have been received.

(Supporting Objectives 1 and 5)

Justification

6.3 This policy seeks to contribute towards mitigating the effects of climate change and promote health and wellbeing in accordance with Core Strategy policy SS4. That Core Strategy policy makes specific reference to working with local communities upon transport matters. Potential initiatives that might be brought forward during the plan period include.

- Increasing opportunities to promote walking to Walford Primary School.
- Additional traffic management measures.
- Establishing a cycle routes.
- Improved pedestrian links between the various parts of the Parish.
- Improving the provision of public transport information with up-to-date bus timetables on Parish noticeboards and on the Parish website.

Policy WALF14: Protection and Enhancement of Community Facilities and Businesses serving the Local Community.

Existing community facilities and businesses serving the local community shall be retained and protected from development that might restrict unnecessarily their current use. The retention of key businesses serving the local community and facilities will be supported where possible through enabling development that would enhance their viability.

Community facilities and businesses serving the local community and covered by this policy include:

- **Walford Village Hall and adjacent Children's Play Area**
- **Bishopswood Village Hall**
- **Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch**
- **The Mill Race Public House and Restaurant**
- **The Inn on the Wye Public House**
- **St Michael's Church at Walford**
- **All Saints Church at Bishopswood**
- **Wyeside Park Shop**
- **Playing Field to the south of Corinium Road, Ross-on-Wye**

Proposals to enhance existing, replace or provide new or additional community facilities and businesses serving the local community within the Parish will be supported where:

a) They fit within the local setting and do not create unacceptable noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance that would adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.
b) They do not cause traffic congestion, adverse traffic impact upon local amenity or adverse impact on traffic flow on local roads.
c) Access and off-street parking can be satisfactorily provided where required without harming existing residential and other uses.
d) The facility or service is fully accessible by those with mobility constraints.
e) They include measures that encourage and promote active travel to and from the facility.

The loss of key businesses serving the local community or community facilities through the change of use of premises to an alternative will be opposed unless it is clear that the service or facility concerned is no longer viable or alternative provision is made in accordance with this policy.

(Supporting Objectives 2 and 4)

Justification

6.4 Although it is considered that the current community facilities serving the local community are capable of meeting current needs, changes to accommodate growth and enhance

utility may be necessary. The provision of allotments has, however, been identified as one community facility lacking within the Parish. Businesses serving the community are limited by the nature of the area and proximity to Ross-on-Wye, further provision cannot be discounted. This policy sets out important requirements, in addition to those covered elsewhere in the NDP, that would ensure improvements are undertaken without adversely affecting neighbouring properties and address key transport issues. The policy also encourages developments that might increase viability of existing facilities, for example through diversification. The community would not wish to see the loss of its facilities, including its shop and local inns unless there is clear evidence that they are no longer viable, taking into account the flexibility offered through this policy. The facilities listed are those that are currently available within the Parish including Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch, located adjacent to Bishopswood Village Hall and which is provided by the Parish Council for residents and visitors. Residents must travel to Ross-on-Wye for secondary education, other leisure and recreation activities and higher order shopping. Improvements to, and the maintenance and operation of facilities is a key concern of residents. Although the playing field to the south of Corinium Road serves the residents on the adjacent housing estates on the southern edge and within the boundary of Ross-on-Wye, it does fall within the Parish of Walford. It remains a well-used area for recreation and should be retained for that purpose.

Policy WALF15: Contributions to Community Facilities.

Where appropriate, new development within Walford Parish should contribute towards necessary community infrastructure to address the demands that such development places on the area and to support the social and climate change (environmental) dimensions of sustainable development. Contributions should be made through Section 106 Agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or other developer contribution mechanisms that may be available during the period of the NDP.

(Supporting Objectives 1, 2 and 5)

Justification

6.5 Provision, improvement and maintenance of community facilities is important to promoting community spirit and involvement. Increasing demands resulting from growth will put pressure upon existing facilities, requiring their enhancement and improvement to ensure continued contribution to community cohesion. Additional facilities may also be required. Contributions towards mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change are also essential. Herefordshire Council intends to introduce a charging system for the Community Infrastructure Levy during the Plan Period. Currently it operates a system for related payments through Planning Obligations. Contributions should be made towards their improvement either through the CIL process, when this comes into operation, or in accordance with sections 3.4 and 3.9 of Herefordshire Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations, in particular, paragraphs 3.4.8. and 3.9.12. Contributions towards measures aimed at addressing climate change might be achieved through provisions at 3.1 (transport related); 3.3 (biodiversity); 3.6 (flooding); and 3.8 (landscape). The Parish Council will use the contributions it receives from either of these sources to address social and environmental issues in accordance with the legislative

requirements. Herefordshire Council should seek advice from the Parish Council upon what contributions are needed towards local community facilities, the environment and infrastructure at the time any relevant planning application is made.

Policy WALF16: High Speed Broadband and Telecommunications

Development of high-speed broadband, mobile communications and any other communications systems, current or future, which respect the scale, setting and nature of the area in which they are located, will be encouraged where the design and location does not adversely affect the landscape and particularly the scenic beauty of Wye Valley AONB and there is no adverse effect on residential amenity.

(Supporting Objective 6)

6.6 Such infrastructure will assist in supporting high quality remote employment opportunities, especially rural businesses and home working; ~~to~~ reducing the need for vehicle movements; ~~and~~ enhancing opportunities and quality of life within the Parish; and enabling ~~measures to ensure~~ the community ~~is able~~ to adapt as necessary to advancements and other changes in new technologies ~~should be supported~~. It is permitted without the need for planning permission in many instances. However, where design and location are factors that are controlled, the landscape and residential amenity are important considerations.

7 Providing New Homes

7.1 The NDP must provide development opportunities for a minimum of 35 further houses to comply with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy's proportional housing growth requirement. The approach is based upon utilising suitable and available sites identified through an assessment process[23] and taking into account an appropriate windfall allowance. Policies setting out how this will be achieved are included within this section, including how development should be undertaken. These reflect the need to ensure development is sympathetic to the form, character and setting of each settlement and especially their locations within the Wye Valley AONB so that its natural features and important spaces and views are protected. More specific requirements for development within each of the three settlements is provided in the following policies and this has been informed by an assessment of their characters included in paragraphs 2.26 to 2.37. Housing proposals should also comply with other policies set out within this NDP including. The following design policy includes criteria that should apply to development throughout the Parish and not just within its settlements.

Policy WALF17: Design and Appearance

[23] See Meeting Housing Needs and Site Assessment Report at https://walford-ndp.co.uk/project-documents/the-neighbourhood-plan/

New dwellings, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings, will be required to achieve good standards and variety of architecture and design particularly where there is a need to respect local distinctiveness and the traditional qualities and characteristics of the settlement or rural area within which it will be located. This will be achieved by requiring development to:

a) Respect the current settlement or rural character in terms of scale, density, form and layout in the vicinity. This should include characteristics such as established building heights, frontages, massing and plot sizes as appropriate.

b) Adopt a design approach utilising a range of materials and architectural styles that are sympathetic to the development's surroundings and incorporating appropriate locally distinctive features.

c) With regard to new innovative design or features, these will not necessarily be resisted but should be of high quality and fit sensitively within the area concerned.

d) Fit sensitively into the landscape, informed by a Visual Landscape Impact Assessments where appropriate, and incorporating high quality landscape design which should integrate fully with building design and layout, ensuring hard and soft landscape proposals do not result in a suburbanised appearance and making provision for tree planting with appropriate species.

e) Avoid the subdivision of gardens where this would result in an uncharacteristic form of development.

f) Protect the amenity and privacy of adjacent existing residential properties and ensure new residential development avoids locations where residents may suffer significant adverse effects from adjacent uses or the adverse impacts of light pollution.

g) Provide sufficient garden space to enable residents to enjoy their use with appropriate degrees of privacy and functionality in terms of providing for young children's outdoor play, private clothes drying facilities and gardening.

h) Make a meaningful contribution to the housing needs of the community in terms of size, type, tenure. Local needs include 2 and 3 bedroomed family housing and housing to meet the needs of elderly people, including those with mobility requirements.

i) Where relevant, provide play space and amenity open space in accordance with Core Strategy Policy OS2.

j) Sites for 6 or more dwellings proposed within the Wye Valley AONB should provide an element of affordable housing at the rate of 40% unless there is evidence that the need at the time of a planning application is lower, in which case the proportion can be reduced accordingly.

(Supporting Objectives 1 and 3)

Justification

7.2 Housing design and layout are important to ensure not only that new development fits sensitively with their surroundings but also contributes towards the health and well-

being of the community. This policy expands upon Herefordshire Core Strategy policy SD1 relating to sustainable design, among others. Design should especially take into account the form and character of the settlement or rural area within which it is to be located. This is especially the case for development within the Wye Valley AONB. Consequently, all the design features referred to in the policy are considered pertinent and important and will be added to through other settlement specific policies. It is considered important that properties should have gardens that meet the needs of the type of housing to be developed through being of sufficient size and configuration to provide for a variety of purposes such as children's play and the growing of produce. This will add to the sustainability of any development. Developers should remain aware of the types of houses required within the Housing Market Area (including any review of the current information) and these are shown in Table 1 which emphasises the need for 2 and 3 bedroomed family housing. The range of house types provided should also consider more specific needs, especially providing for elderly people given the age profile within the ward and views of residents expressed when preparing the Parish Plan[24]. It is noted that since Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy was approved and adopted, the NPPF[25] has changed provisions in relation to provision of affordable housing within AONBs such that developments of 6 dwellings or more can be required to provide such dwellings. Given the need for small scale housing developments necessary to maintain local character identified in Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment, the ability to meet local housing needs through larger sites would not be available. Although evidence[26] suggests that there is currently little if any local need for affordable housing within the Parish, there may be opportunities to contribute to the wider need with an emphasis on low-cost home ownership.

Table 1: Proportion of houses required by size within rural part of the Ross-on-Wye Housing Market Area

House type by size	Market housing Proportion required	Affordable housing[27] Proportion required
1 bedroom	7.4%	21.5%
2. bedrooms	24.3%	40.1%
3 bedrooms	63.2%	34.5%
4+ bedrooms	5.1%	3.9%

[24] See paragraphs 2.2 and 3.11.

[25] NPPF paragraph 64 and definition of designated rural areas in its Appendix 2.

[26] See paragraph 3.11.

[27] Affordable housing comprises social rented, affordable rented 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. Social rented housing is owned by private registered providers. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency. Affordable rented housing is let by private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent. Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition. These can include shared, other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

(Source - Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment 2012 Update)

7.3 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy indicates that where appropriate, settlement boundaries should be defined in neighbourhood plans. Policy RA2 requires these to be based upon their built-up areas. Parish residents have indicated support for defining such boundaries. In defining these for the three settlements identified in the Core Strategy, advice contained in Herefordshire Council's Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 20 has been used. Further detail about how the built-up areas for the three settlements and how the potential housing sites were assessed are presented in a main report with a number of addendums which can be found on the Parish Council's NDP website[28].

Policy WALF18: Housing Development in Walford and Coughton

New housing within Walford and Coughton will be ~~restricted to~~ supported where it comprises sensitive infilling within ~~a~~ the settlement boundary ~~identified for development~~ shown on Walford and Coughton Policies Map.

As an exception, new development comprising accommodation for assisted or supported living for elderly people will be permitted outside of Walford and Coughton settlement boundary provided the site has reasonable access to facilities within the settlement. Proposals should also respect the scale of the settlement and the characteristics of its surroundings, especially conserving the landscape and scenic value of the Wye Valley AONB through demonstrating good design.

(Supporting Objectives 1 and 3)

Justification

7.4 A settlement boundary was previously defined for Coughton in Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan[29] (UDP). That boundary comprised two compartments and they are still considered to define the settlement in this location with the addition of two recently constructed dwellings in the area of Butler's Meadow. Another cluster of dwellings is located further to the south along the B4234 and although not previously defined as part of the settlement within the UDP or a previous local plan, there is evidence that Herefordshire Council planning officers have considered it to be part of the settlement of Walford and Coughton under Core Strategy policy RA2[30]. A boundary has been drawn around this cluster that reflects its current built-up area including Walford Village Hall. Its inclusion is also supported by reference to the settlement having a village hall and employment site within

[28] https://walford-ndp.co.uk/project-documents/the-neighbourhood-plan/
[29] See https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5438/walford_map.pdf
[30] See Planning Officers report at: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=170596&search=P170596/F

the Rural Housing Background Paper[31] prepared for the Core Strategy. Further small clusters of dwellings based upon Coughton Farm and Walford Court have been excluded because they comprise relatively isolated farmstead complexes rather than parts of a settlement cluster. They sit within rural strategic gaps that separate the main settlement clusters and are rural in nature.

7.5 Those seeking planning permission for new dwellings should show how their designs meet the criteria set out in policy WALF17 and fit sensitively into their surroundings, especially noting effect on the character and setting of the three clusters that comprise this settlement which are described in paragraphs 2.26 to 2.29. The provision of supported housing for elderly people is encouraged in order to enable people to downsize. There will also be other sectors of the community with mobility needs and those organisations responsible for health and well-being in the community should be consulted. Scale is important with the existing scheme at Fowbridge Gardens providing an example that has fitted well into the settlement. Scale is also important to protect the scenic value of the AONB.

Policy WALF19: Housing Development in Bishopswood

New housing within Bishopswood will be supported where it comprises ~~restricted to~~ sensitive infilling within ~~a~~ the settlement boundary and on sites identified for development shown on Bishopswood Policies Map.

(Supporting Objectives 1 and 3)

Justification

7.6 No settlement boundary has previously been defined for Bishopswood. The built-up area located on the east side of the B4234 on the opposite side to Bishopswood village hall is considered to comprise the settlement. Land and properties on the south-west side of that road falls within the River Wye floodplain. The boundary generally follows the edges of readily visible borders shown on the Ordnance Survey Map for properties that front onto B4234 and along Leys Hill. It also includes land that has extant planning permission and sites allocated for housing in this NDP. A number of properties sit beyond the north-eastern edge of the settlement boundary, but these are generally at a lower density and more reflective of wayside dwellings and the smallholding pattern typical of the Forest Smallholdings Landscape Character Type[32] which should sit beyond the defined edge further along Leys Hill. Areas of ancient woodland are generally excluded from the built-up area.

[31] See https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1705/rural_housing_background_paper_march_2013.pdf

[32] See Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2069/landscape_character_assessment_for_herefordshire.pdf

7.7 In terms of meeting the design requirements for policy WALF17, the character and setting of Bishopswood is described in paragraphs 2.30 to 2.31.

Policy WALF20: Housing Development in Howle Hill

New housing within Howle Hill will be supported where it comprises ~~restricted to~~ sensitive infilling within ~~a~~ the settlement boundary identified for development shown on Howle Hill Policies Map. The gaps between the clusters that form the settlement shall be retained in order maintain the settlement pattern identified for the Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type and preserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Wye Valley AONB.

(Supporting Objectives 1 and 3)

Justification

7.8 Like Bishopswood, Howle Hill has never previously had a settlement boundary defined for it as it had not been considered a settlement. Previous planning decisions and settlement characteristics defined in Herefordshire Council's Landscape Characteristic SPD have been utilised to define clusters of existing built-form consistent with the settlement's location within the Forest Smallholdings Landscape Type[33]. Two clusters ~~have been~~ were originally identified that would form the 'built-up' area of Howle Hill, the first from Chapel House along Church Road Howle and its extension along Church Road to Crown Cottage and St John's Church; and the second based upon a cluster as you climb Sharman's Pitch. The boundary has been drawn around property curtilages on the edge of its built-up area for each of the two clusters.

7.9 Recently two sites were granted planning permissions that provide for 12 dwellings in total close to Howle Hill Crossroads where two rural wayside cottages already exist. The smaller of the two sites, land to the south of 1 and 2 Crossways (Code 172215/O), was granted planning permission for two market dwellings and 2 affordable dwellings, with the latter being an important consideration. It is understood that an agreement under S106 has been entered into for the provision of the two affordable dwellings. The decision appears to utilise NPPF paragraph 78 which provides for rural affordable housing exception sites with some market housing to help to facilitate this development. Consequently, should the site be included within a settlement boundary it would afford the opportunity for a new planning permission to be granted that would exclude the affordable housing element. Herefordshire Council has acknowledged that this may result although its advice that the site might be included on the proviso that it delivers affordable housing as per the existing approval - i.e., that the existing permissions are treated akin to an allocation is still considered to carry a significant risk that the affordable housing may be lost. Consequently, the approach considered most appropriate is to wait until development is substantially complete before reviewing the

[33] Ibid

settlement boundary. In this way, it should provide a high degree of certainty that the affordable housing will be retained[34].

7.10 The combination of the larger site with planning permission for 8 dwellings at Howle Hill Nursery (Water's Edge) and 1 and 2 Crossways will form a third cluster to the settlement of Howle Hill. A characteristic of the current settlement acknowledged by the Planning Inspector that granted planning permission was that each cluster was separated by field parcels that permeate the settlement form representing a fragmented low-density pattern of development, reflective of its rural character and setting. Another appeal Inspector has determined that Little Howle Farm, which lies just to the east of this potential cluster, does not form part of the settlement of Howle Hill. These factors, together with that explained in the previous paragraph, have informed the boundary for a third cluster and also the need to maintain recognisable gaps between each in order to protect the character of the settlement and its contribution to the landscape and scenic beauty of the Wye Valley AONB.

7.11 Paragraphs 2.32 to 2.33 describes the character and setting of the current clusters comprising the built-up part of the settlement of Howle Hill and which should inform the design of development within their ~~settlement~~ boundaries. The character of the third cluster will need to be defined within any review of the NDP when development is completed.

Policy WALF21: Proposed Housing Sites

The following sites identified on Bishopswood, Ross on Wye Urban Fringe and Walford and Coughton Policies Maps are allocated for housing development during the plan period:

a) Land amounting to approximately 0.45 ha on north side of Leys Hill Lane, Bishopswood.
b) Land amounting to approximately 0.65 ha at Arthur's Dingle adjacent to the B4234, Bishopswood.
c) Land amounting to approximately 0.8 ha at Lower Field, Orchards Heights, Bishopswood.
d) Land amounting to approximately 0.45 ha off Watling Street, Ross on Wye.
e) Land amounting to approximately 0.45 ha south of Cedar Grove, Coughton.

(Supporting Objectives 1 and 3)

Justification

[34] Should development of the site to the south of 1 and 2 Crossways proceed swiftly, the NDP Examiner might be advised to include this site within a settlement boundary prior to referendum. Should development proceed more slowly, it might await a review of the NDP which would be expected following the review of the Core Strategy.

7.12 For the purposes of contributing to the housing requirement indicated for Walford Parish 4 housing sites are proposed. These are located at Bishopswood and on Ross on Wye Urban Fringe and should provide around 16 dwellings.

7.13 Relatively low development densities are expected upon these sites and this should be seen within the context of the environmental and highway constraints to which significant regard must be given, in particular because of the AONB designation, the protection of residential amenity, and the effect upon the highway network. This NDP contains detailed design policies that also seek to mitigate adverse effects. The community's preference is for family homes to be provided, in particular through opportunities for self-build schemes. The form of development is important with the need to avoid urban or suburban appearance at Bishopswood. Site-specific issues and requirements need to be addressed in many instances in order to meet design and other policies in this NDP and the Core Strategy, and these are described below. In relation to the sites at Bishopswood, transport assessments may be required to assess the impact of development on the highway network in accordance with policy WALF12. Herefordshire Council has expressed concerns in the past about the junction of Leys Hill with the B4234.

Land on north side of Leys Hill Lane, Bishopswood.

7.14 This relatively small site where a contribution of some 3 dwellings is suggested as the contribution to the required level of proportional housing growth in order to be in keeping with the density in this general area. There should be protection of ancient woodland along southern edge, including during construction. Ecological surveys would be necessary and biodiversity mitigation included within any landscape scheme.

Land at Arthur's Dingle adjacent to the B4234, Bishopswood

7.15 A contribution of 5 dwellings on this site served by a private shared drive is suggested for this site with dwellings set back at varying depths. Each dwelling should be individually designed so as not to present a regimented form and appearance in order to reflect the settlement's character. It is suggested that the dwelling at the eastern end of the site should exhibit the appearance of a gatehouse with a reasonable gap between this and dwellings extending further into the site from the east. A landscape and visual assessment should inform the design and landscape scheme. Tree protection should be provided both during construction and for the longer term. Planting should replace any trees lost for visibility onto B4234.

Land at Lower Field, Orchards Heights, Bishopswood.

7.16 This is a relatively small site where development should sit close to the top of the site close to Leys Hill Road. House design should reflect variety of form and detail to respect the character of the settlement and excessive engineering works upon the sloping site should be avoided to protect the settlement's setting within the Wye Valley AONB and the wider landscape. The layout and design should also avoid overlooking of new dwellings to the south. The tree cover in the western corner should be assessed and retained and reinforced with appropriate species to maintain character and reduce effect

on the landscape. A maximum contribution of 3 dwellings is considered more appropriate within this context.

Land off Watling Street, Ross-on-Wye

7.17 The developable area is limited to that which sits as low as possible below the brow of the ridge and below the bottom of the bank running east-west across the site. More specific requirements include:

- The location of development and construction works should ensure there is no loss of the two notable trees within the parcel of land.
- Development should not restrict the use of the adjacent playing field.
- The site's extent and configuration should ~~reflect~~ tie in with the finger of development to the east.
- The amenity of adjacent dwellings should be protected.
- Landscape measures should be informed by a visual sensitivity assessment with provision made for structural landscaping along the southern edge of the site to mitigate the effect on views from south (PROW). Other landscape measures should be included.
- Provision should be made for sustainable drainage to accommodate peak greenfield flows so that land and properties further to the north are protected from increased flooding.
- Provision should also be made to add biodiversity value and complement to the ecological network.
- Provision should be made for a footpath wide enough to accommodate cycles and link to the footpath and cycle network to the east.
- Development should connect to the public sewer.

7.18 Two proposals have been suggested for the site during the preparation of the plan, the first for housing and the second for a care home. Either would be suitable provided the criteria referred to above can be met. In addition, the width of the access from Watling Street appears to be limited and likely to be limited to a private shared drive with a contribution towards the required level of proportional housing growth of up to 5 dwellings or equivalent[35].

Land south of Cedar Grove, Coughton

7.19 This site should be capable of accommodating 5 dwellings. It comprises part of a relatively flat arable field separated from a modern housing estate by a narrow track leading to New House Farm. This track also comprises a public right of way. There are few natural features although the hedgerow along its northern edge should be retained. A further public right of way marks the western edge of the site and its use should not be impeded. No specific building design parameters are defined although attention needs to be paid to protecting the residential amenity of dwellings to the north.

Windfall Allowance

[35] See Herefordshire Council's 5 Year Housing land Supply (2021-2026), paragraphs 5.12 and 5.13 - https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/22647/amr-2021-appendix-b-five-year-land-supply-document

7.20 Trend data indicates that some 54 dwellings within the rural parts of the plan area were granted planning permission between 2000 to 2021 indicating an average of nearly 2.6 dwellings per year. On this trend some further 26 dwellings might be expected over the remaining 10 years covered by this NDP. Many of the planning permissions involved the conversion of rural buildings, which by their nature, comprise a diminishing resource, although the ability to gain planning permission for these properties has eased during recent times. For the purposes of the NDP, a modest further allowance for rural windfalls over the remaining 10 years of up to 13 dwellings might be reasonable in terms of high degree of certainty (50% of the current trend). A modest allowance for additional windfall development within the Parish's three settlements of 5 dwellings is considered reasonable based upon past trends and knowledge of the area. In combination a windfall allowance of 18 dwellings is estimated. To add greater certainty that the required level of proportional housing growth can be met, Walford Parish Council has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Ross-on-Wye Town Council whereby the latter has agreed to notionally allocate up to 10 dwellings from its own expected excess provision to help meet any shortfall within Walford. This is dependent upon Walford Parish Council using its best efforts to meet its housing target by including within the proposed Plan all small suitable sites and its entire calculated windfall allowance for the Parish.

7.21 Through dwellings built, commitments, expected windfall housing development and the above policies the target for proportional housing growth of 91 dwellings is expected to be met and exceeded. Table 2 below shows how it is intended that the outstanding Herefordshire Core Strategy housing target will be met.

Table 2: Achieving the Housing Target 2011-2031

	Number of Dwellings
Housing Requirement 2011 – 2031: 91 Dwellings	
Dwellings built 2011 to April (Source Herefordshire Council)	14
Dwellings with planning permission April 2011 to April 2021 (Source Herefordshire Council)	39
Dwellings with planning permission April 2021 to September 2021 (Source: Herefordshire Council's website)	9
Site Allocations* i) North side of Leys Hill Lane, Bishopswood. ii) Arthur's Dingle adjacent to the B4234, Bishopswood iii) Lower Field at Orchards Heights, Bishopswood. iv) Off Watling Street, Ross-on-Wye v) Land south of Cedar Grove, Coughton	 3 5 3 5 5
Windfall allowance (See para 7.17)	18
Estimated Housing Potential during Plan Period	**~~96~~ 101**

* The estimate of dwellings under each heading is for the purposes of showing how Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy target for the Parish might be met. It is possible that the number of dwellings may be higher or lower on some sites/areas than indicated, depending upon the type of dwellings provided and unexpected constraints.

8 Supporting and Encouraging Business

8.1 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy contains a range of economic development policies that are considered relevant to Walford Parish and which do not need to be duplicated in this NDP. They cover working from home; tourism; promoting live/work units; development providing new employment opportunities, most particularly in terms of sites and workshops and extensions to existing businesses including those based on food and drink production and agricultural diversification; and re-use of rural buildings for business and rural enterprises. The emphasis in this NDP for enterprise is to support and encourage the development of small scale and home-based businesses and agricultural diversification. One issue that was highlighted within the Parish Plan is the need to balance the requirements of farmers, the community generally and tourism, particularly with regard to producing food in polytunnels.

Working from home

8.2 Core Strategy policy E3 provides safeguards to protect residential amenity in instances where working from home involves development requiring planning permission. In addition, this NDP contains a number of policies that would strengthen those safeguards, in particular policy WAL16 protects general residential amenity, WAL12 protects amenity from the effects of traffic on residential amenity and WAL10 seeks to minimise external lighting.

Tourism

8.3 The Core Strategy (policy E4) supports the development of sustainable tourism opportunities, capitalising on assets such as the county's landscape, rivers, other waterways and attractive rural settlements, where there is no detrimental impact on the county's varied natural and heritage assets or on the overall character and quality of the environment. It recognises the need to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It also supports retaining and enhancing existing, and encouraging new, accommodation and attractions that will help to diversify tourist provision, extend the tourist season and increase the number of visitors staying overnight. In this regard the scale, character and nature of the particular area would be safeguarded. Residential amenity, including through traffic generation, noise, small or light pollution would be protected by other policies, included within this NDP.

Live/Work Units

8.4 Core Strategy policy E1 encourages these within mixed use schemes. Such schemes are unlikely within new residential developments within the Parish although might arise through schemes for the conversion of rural buildings where these comprise larger complexes. The expectation is, nevertheless, that the demand will be extremely limited, and no specific policy is necessary for this form of development. Should any proposal arise, then provisions in other policies should be sufficient to provide positively for this while protecting residential and local amenity.

New Employment Sites and Extensions

8.5 In combination Core Strategy policies E1 and RA6 provide appropriate safeguards relating to scale, protection of amenity, highway capacity and water pollution. It is considered that other matters, such as effect on the landscape are already covered by policies within the Core Strategy or this NDP.

Re-use of Rural Buildings

8.6 Core Strategy policy RA5 supports the re-use of individual and groups of redundant or disused buildings, including farmsteads where they can make a positive contribution to rural businesses and enterprise and support the local economy. There is also potential to utilise large country houses.

Policy WALF22: Use of Rural Buildings for Business

The change of use of large country houses and farmsteads, the re-use of rural buildings, and extensions to or intensification of use in such buildings, including through associated small scale and well-designed new buildings, that enable rural business or enterprise, including live/work units, will be supported provided:

a) The nature and scale of the use reflects the rural landscape and has an acceptable impact on the highway network.

b) Features or the setting of Listed Buildings and other similar heritage assets is not adversely affected.

c) Where the use requires external storage to support the rural-based activity, external screening is provided to fully mitigate the effects upon the local landscape from all publicly visible locations.

d) The residential amenity of adjacent properties is not adversely affected from the operation of the enterprise itself or any associated traffic movements.

e) Limited additional buildings may be provided to support the enterprise or reduce external storage where the development addresses the full site comprehensively, and buildings are well designed to contribute positively to the landscape.

f) Where the rural buildings comprise a historic farmstead, any new buildings proposed under e) should be informed by a heritage impact assessment.

(Supporting Objectives 1, 4 and 5)

Justification

8.7 In addition to promoting the conversion of rural buildings to employment this policy also supports the use of large country houses for such purposes. In the past they have been significant in terms of providing local employment and they need alternative uses to be found for them to support their retention and contribution to the landscape. There are examples of such rural developments across the County and one successful example of this is within the Parish at Hill Court, which accommodates the national headquarters of Rehau Ltd. The Core Strategy acknowledges certain types of businesses assist rural

diversification such as the knowledge-based creative industries and environmental technologies, as well as more traditional uses such as service industries such as residential and convalescent homes and tourism. Core Strategy Policy RA5 would enable such changes, including small-scale extensions, and this policy seeks to clarify the requirements in respect of extensions and, more particularly, outside storage which can be an issue in relation to the more traditional rural-based enterprises. Whether buildings are redundant is also very difficult to determine and it may be better to enable a business to utilise a building for alternative employment activities before it deteriorates than to wait until it is obviously obsolescent. In addition, the NPPF supports well-designed new buildings. There are historic farmsteads within the Parish, and some may also have potential to accommodate businesses, either through new uses or diversification. Flexibility is provided through this policy but with appropriate safeguards, especially for historic farmsteads. The approach taken is considered consistent with the flexible approach promoted in the NPPF, which does not require a rural building to be redundant, and Core Strategy policies E1, RA5 and RA6 taken in combination.

Policy WALF23: Polytunnel Proposals

Proposals for polytunnels and any associated infrastructure, including accommodation for workers, should comply with the following requirements:

a) They should not amount to major development within the Wye Valley AONB unless there are convincing economic and other arguments in terms of national public interest and the adverse environmental effects can be fully mitigated.
b) Where proposals are not considered major development and located in the open countryside away from settlements, they should not adversely affect the natural beauty, landscape character or important features within the landscape, including through the cumulative effect in association with other proposals.
c) For locations close to the Parish's settlements, they should not adversely affect the character or settings of Walford and Coughton, Bishopswood or Howle Hill.
d) They should not adversely affect heritage assets such as archaeological sites and historic buildings, including their settings.
e) They should not adversely affect biodiversity, especially features that contribute towards designated and local sites and the ecological network.
f) Local and residential amenity should be protected.
g) Any traffic that is generated must be capable of being accommodated safely upon the local road network.
h) They should not result in additional flood risk to nearby properties and measures to address surface water run-off, such as ponds and swales, should be implemented before any polytunnels are erected.

(Supporting Objectives 1 and 4)

Justification

8.8 This policy contains a range of safeguards to protect the environment, amenity and highway safety. Scale of development is important in order that it does not adversely affect the intrinsic natural beauty of the landscape within the AONB and conservation area. Polytunnel developments can potentially fall within the description of major development within the AONB and in such instances NPPF paragraph 177 would apply. A properly evidenced case would be required should such proposals be advanced on the basis that economic and other public benefits would be provided. Where proposals are not major development or not within the AONB, it is still essential that the effects on the environment, and particularly the natural beauty of the landscape, are considered fully. A landscape assessment will be required to assess any proposal, and this should ensure that future development is compatible with the Parish's landscape character. Notwithstanding the national and local policy provisions which are encompassed within this policy, there is detailed advice within Herefordshire Council's Polytunnels Planning Guide 2018.

9 Delivering the Plan

9.1 Landowners and developers will deliver most of the proposals that are promoted through policies in this NDP.

9.2 Herefordshire Council as the local planning authority will determine planning applications for development within the Parish. Such determinations should be in accordance with this NDP.

9.3 While the local planning authority will be responsible for development management, Walford Parish Council will also use this NDP as the basis for making its representations on planning applications. The Parish Council will publicise those planning applications that are not covered by policies in this NDP. They will also publicise those planning applications that although covered by general policies, contain matters of detail which are considered important. In both instances and where necessary, Herefordshire Council will be asked to extend the time within which responses are required so that publicity can be given before the Parish Council considers the particular application.

9.4 Herefordshire Council is required to monitor the achievement of its targets for a range of development types including whether sites are coming forward for development to meet the strategy set out in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. The Parish Council will also monitor the effectiveness of the approach it has taken to the various issues covered in the NDP policies. This will be done through its annual report. That report will indicate:

i. The number of dwellings granted planning permission within the Parish, including a running total covering the Plan Period.
ii. A list of planning applications for other matters received during the year indicating whether they are covered by policies in this NDP, the Parish Council's representations made, and whether they have been determined in accordance with the NDP.

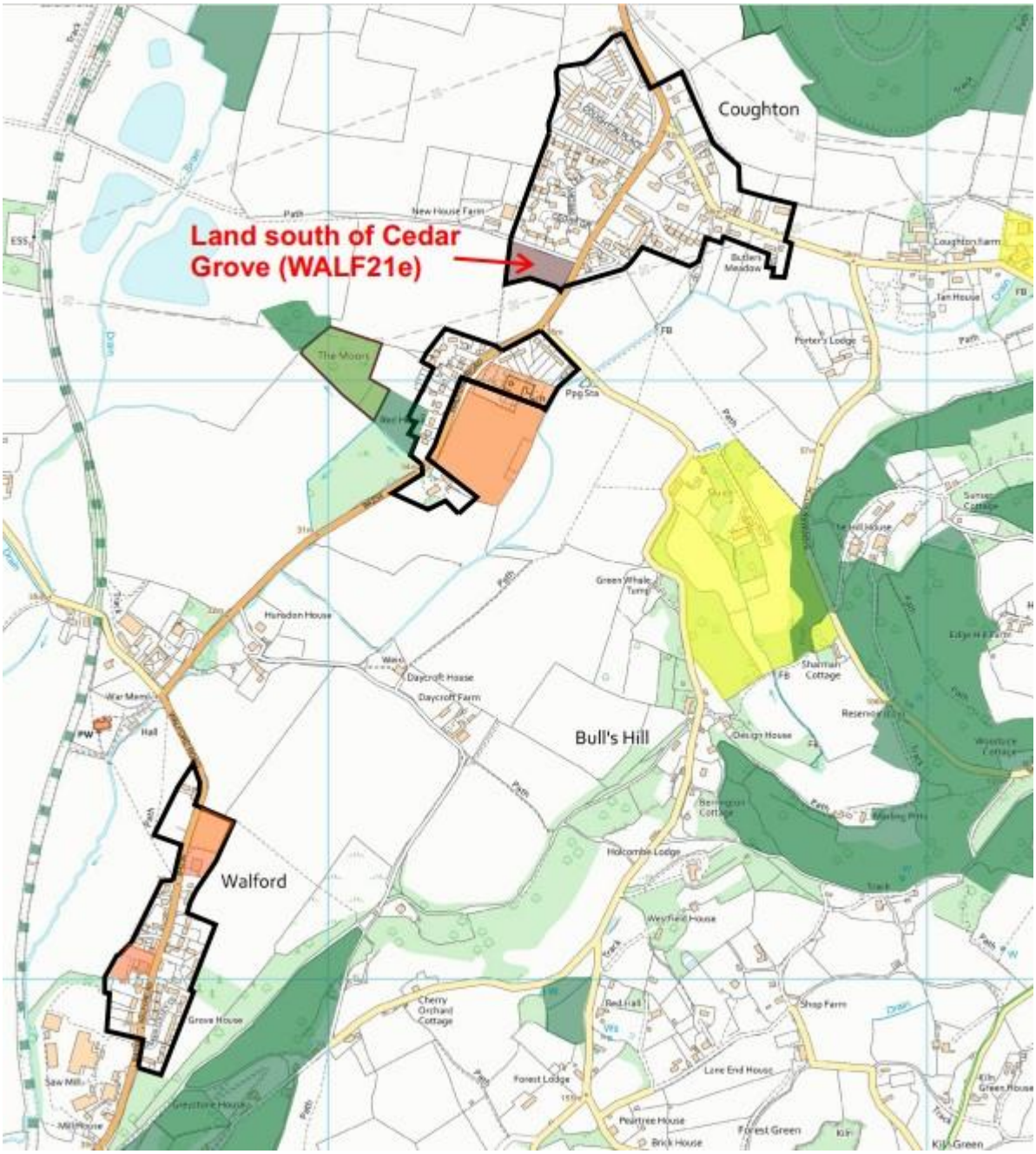
9.5 A review of the NDP may be needed when the review of Herefordshire Core Strategy has reached the stage where the NDP is considered not up to date although work may commence beforehand in order that any revised NDP is brought forward as soon as

possible after the adoption of a reviewed Core Strategy. In addition, in the unlikely situation that the NDP approach in relation to housing does not deliver the level of housing required to meet the target for the Parish, discussions will take place with Herefordshire Council upon whether an early review is necessary.

9.6 Where appropriate, the Parish Council will establish working groups to support initiatives raised by the Council or Parishioners. For initiatives that have adequate support, the Parish Council will advertise and support action to further NDP and enabling initiatives. Any Parishioners with specific proposals should initially contact the Parish Clerk so that the item can be discussed by the Council who will aid its progress where possible within the framework of the NDP's objectives.

9.7 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy SS4 commits Herefordshire Council to working with bus operators, developers and local communities to bring forward improvements to the local and strategic transport network to reduce congestion, improve air quality and road safety and offer greater transport choices. The community has significant concerns about the speed of traffic associated with the B4234 and the effects of development on its narrow minor roads and lanes. In addition, the need to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety should also be addressed. The Parish Council would also wish to address the climate emergency and also ensure appropriate levels of maintenance of roads, footpaths, verges and public rights of way is sufficient to meet both existing concerns and increased use resulting from the required level of growth. Accordingly, measures are set out in Appendix 1 that would work hand in hand with planning policies to address these in an integrated way.

Map 6: Walford and Coughton Policies Map (NB new site added)



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POLICIES MAP NOTATIONS

Settlement Boundary (Policy WALF18)

Site of Special Scientific Interest (Policy WALF6)

Special Wildlife Site (Policy WALF6)

Housing site (Policy WALF21e)

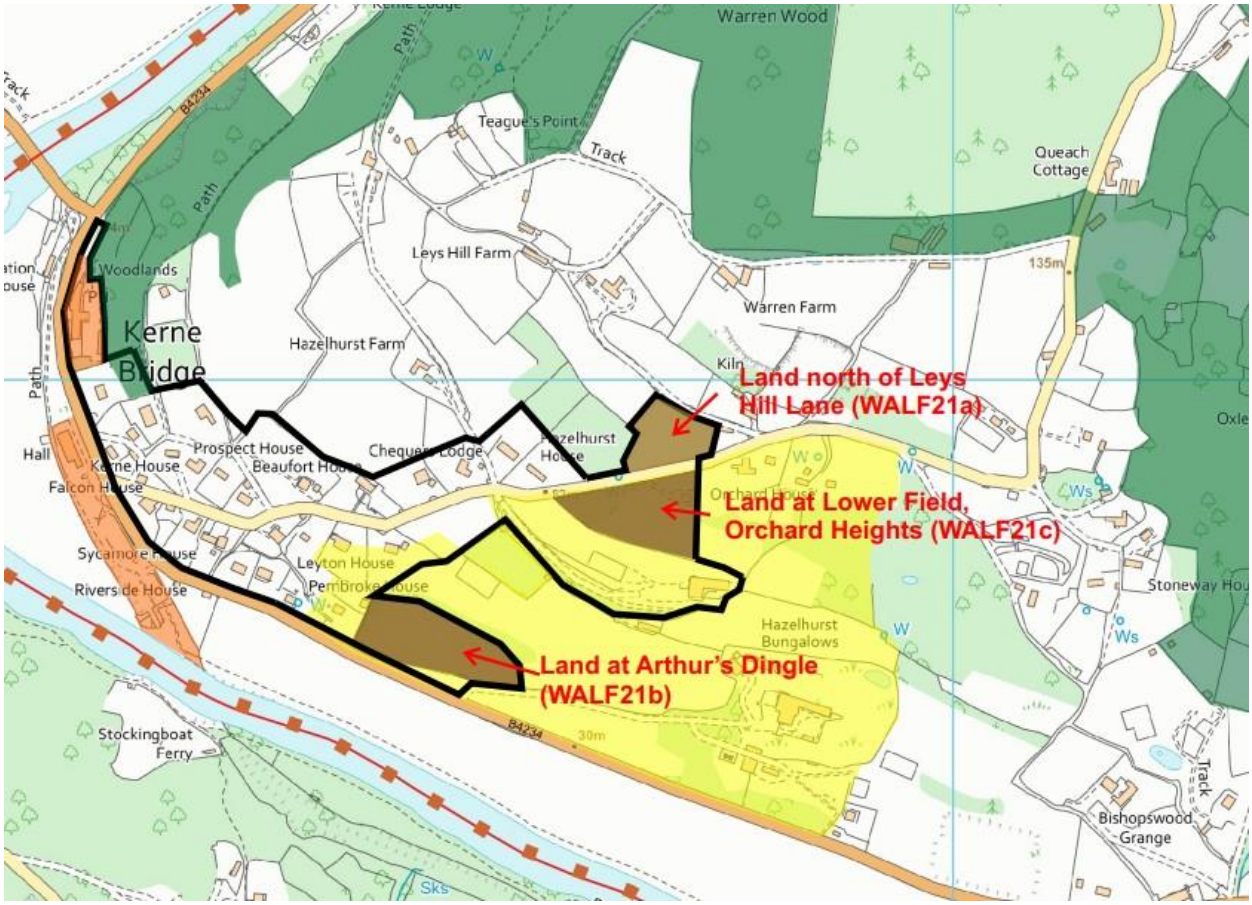
Unregistered Historic Park and Garden (Policy WALF7)

Protected Facilities (Policy WALF14)

N

NOT TO SCALE

Map 7: Bishopswood Village Policies Map



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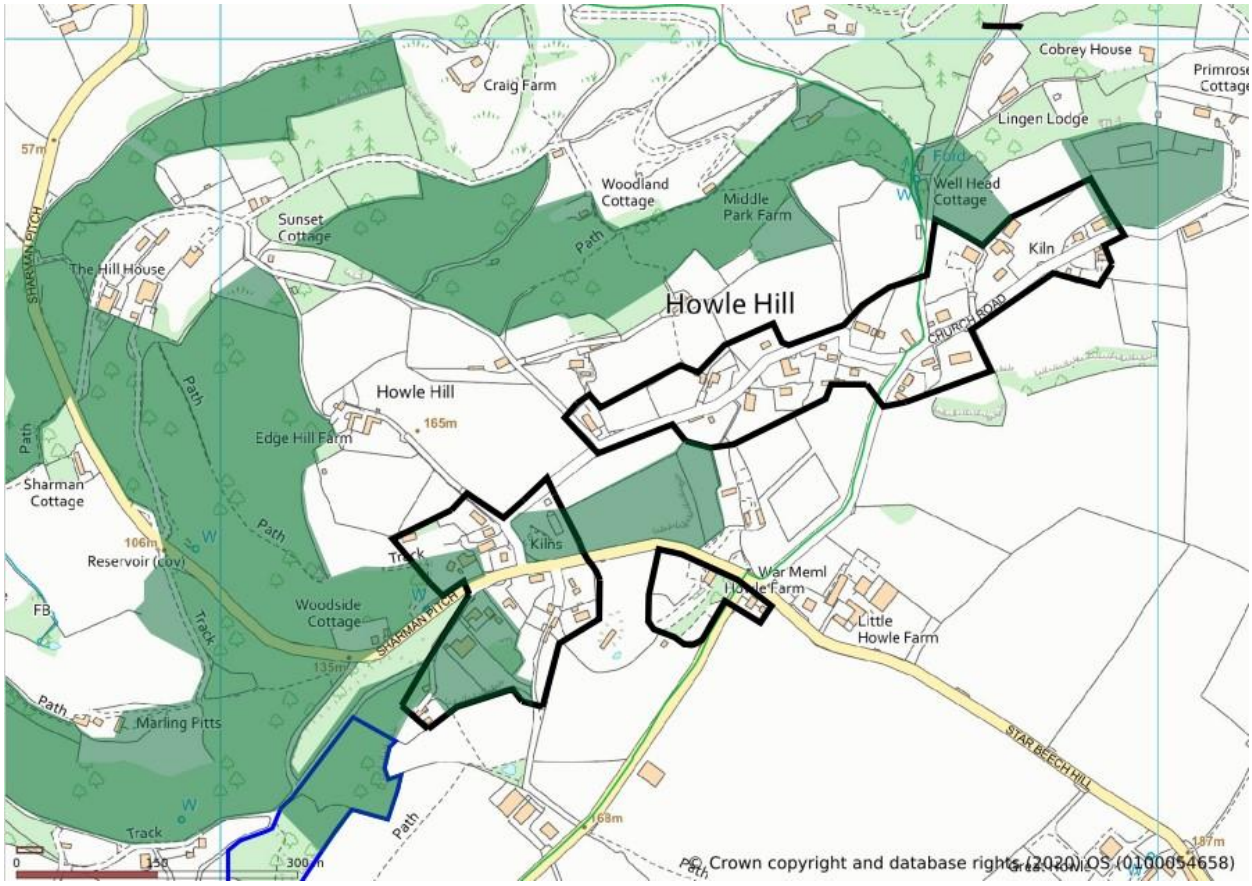
POLICIES MAP NOTATIONS

- Development Boundary (Policy WALF19)
- Housing Sites (Policy WALF21a-c)
- Special Wildlife Site (Policy WALF6)
- Parish (NDP) Boundary
- Special Area of Conservation(Policy WALF6)
- Unregistered Park and Garden (Policy WALF7)
- Protected Parish Facilities (Policy WALF14)

N

NOT TO SCALE

Map 8: Howle Hill Settlement Policies Map (Amended by adding 3rd Cluster)



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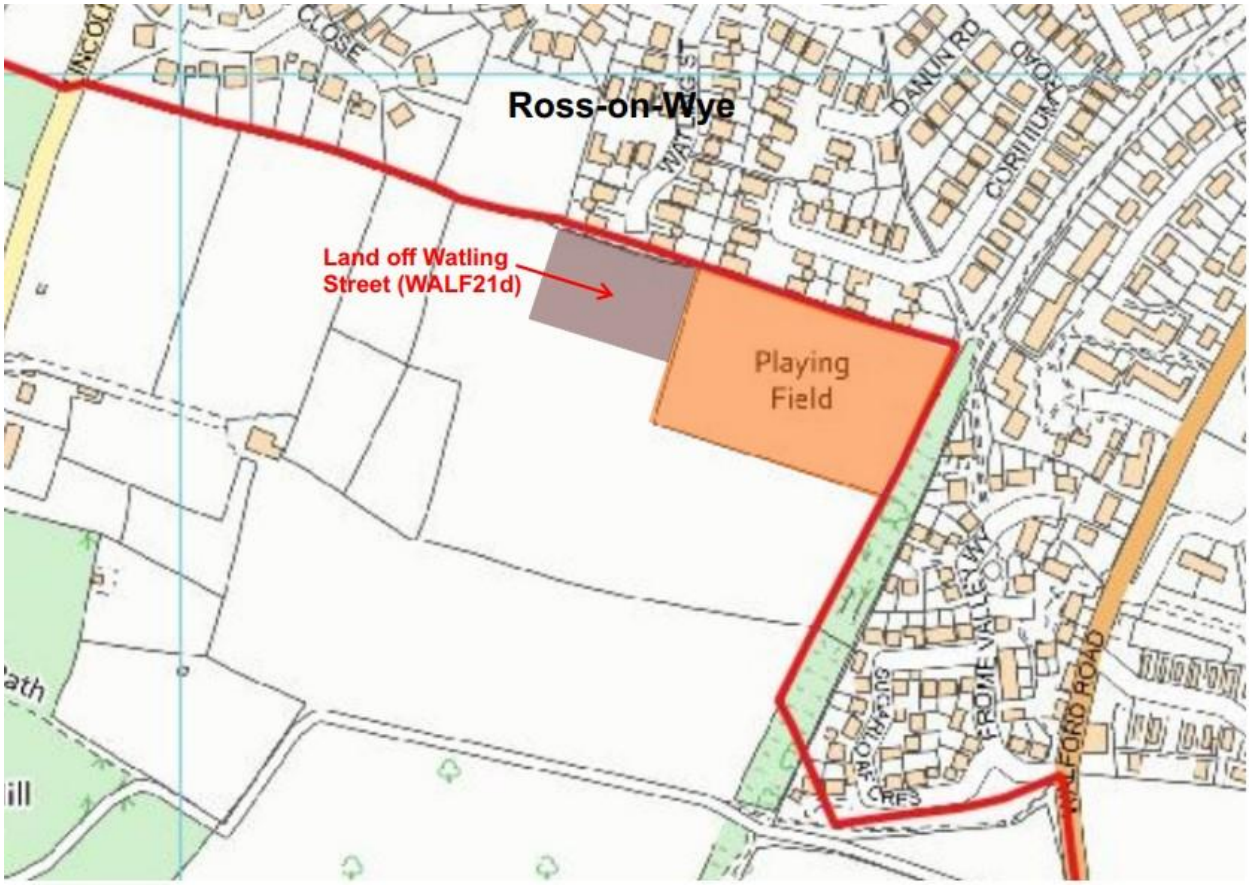
POLICIES MAP NOTATIONS

- Settlement Boundary (Policy WALF20)
- Local Geological Site (Policy WALF6)
- Special Wildlife Site (Policy WALF6)
- AONB Boundary (Policies WALF3 and WALF4)

N

NOT TO SCALE

Map 9: Ross-on-Wye Urban Fringe Policies Map



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POLICIES MAP NOTATIONS

Protected Parish Facilities (Policy WALF14)

Parish (NDP) Boundary

Proposed Housing Site (Policy WALF21d)

N

NOT TO SCALE

Appendix 1: Enabling Actions and Community Infrastructure Projects

A1.1 The following are indications of actions and measures to be pursued by Walford Parish Council to support the growth and policies that this Neighbourhood Plan proposes and to address community needs in terms of facilities, services and key infrastructure. Although they include actions aimed at a range of matters, the driving force is to address the 'climate emergency'. The Parish Council is aware that Herefordshire Council has adopted a Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, which indicates contributions from developers may be sought towards a range of measures, including biodiversity, community services, children and young people, heritage and archaeology, open space and recreation, and waste reduction and recycling. Herefordshire Council proposes to replace elements of this with payments under a Community Infrastructure Levy, some of which will be transferred to the Parish Council. The proportion of this that the Parish would receive will increase to 25% following the adoption of this NDP, when the scheme comes into being. In the meantime, Walford Parish Council might advise Herefordshire Council of measures necessary to contribute towards the improvements to community infrastructure required to accommodate growth, in accordance with its Supplementary Planning Document. Developers may also wish to consider how they might assist the Parish Council in delivering relevant community infrastructure in association with their developments.

Enabling Associated Measures

To meet community aspirations and support Neighbourhood Plan policies Walford Parish Council will seek to work in collaboration with Herefordshire Council, relevant agencies, developers and other organisations in the following areas:

a) Promoting tree planting in appropriate locations and other components of green infrastructure.

b) Seek additional and improved footways without adversely affecting the character of the Parish where this would promote walking.

c) Promotion of cycling and defining cycle routes.

d) Measures to support the use of public transport such as bus shelters and secure cycle parking at strategic stops to extend the reach of bus services.

e) Actively encouraging the installation of public electric vehicle charging points in appropriate locations.

f) Promoting home composting and the improvement of soils.

g) Improvements to and maintenance of local recycling facilities.

h) Explore ways in which local biodiversity and designated sites can be improved, especially to reduce the effects of climate change.

i) Investigate whether night-time lighting could be cut to reduce energy requirements and upward glare.

j) Explore the provision of premises for a pre-school facility, including potential sources of funding.

k) Identifying whether there is a demand for allotments and, if so, how they might be brought forward.

A2.2 Some measures include those that arose through the process of preparing Walford Parish Plan. Additional measures were identified during the preparation of this NDP. The need for proactive action in relation to many of these actions will increase because of growth within Walford.

Parish Projects

Walford Parish Council, in association with relevant local bodies, will prepare, and from time-to-time update, programmes for community infrastructure facilities, including those projects identified through 'Enabling Associated Matters' comprising:

a) Measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, especially those promoting health and wellbeing.
b) The upgrading of the facilities to accommodate growth.
c) Upon the adoption of the CIL, in addition to the above, appropriate improvements, replacement, operation and maintenance measures.

The current programme comprises measures, among others, for:

- **Creation of a community woodland.**
- **Creation of a community orchard.**
- **Promoting greater self-sufficiency.**
- **Encouraging tree planting by landowners.**
- **Managing vehicle speed through Walford and Coughton and Bishopswood villages.**
- **Promoting walking, including seeking a footpath along the whole of the B4234 through the Parish.**
- **Establish a Parish cycleway network.**
- **Promote the use of active travel and public/community transport as an alternative to private car use.**

A2.3 Recent consultations have shown support for community infrastructure projects and they have been identified as projects upon which the planning obligation contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy might be used should any be received. Other forms of potential funding will also be investigated, and this will be in association with relevant local organisations where relevant. Other projects may also be identified during the Neighbourhood Plan period. A detailed list of appropriate projects to support growth will be maintained and updated as required to inform relevant heads of agreement in relation to those proposals where planning obligation contributions are expected until such a time as the Community Infrastructure Levy comes into operation.

Appendix 2: List of Natural and Heritage Assets

Natural Assets

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

River Wye SAC

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

River Wye (Unfavourable Recovering)
Coughton Wood & Marsh (Unfavourable Recovering)

Local Wildlife Sites (Special Wildlife Sites; Regionally Important Geological Sites)

Disused railway line – Ross to Kerne Bridge
Chase and Merrivale Woods
Coughton Wood and Marsh
Howle Hill and Marks Well
Woodlands nr Hope Mansell
Dam Wood and Copse
Coal Hill and 16 Acre Wood
Field nr Kiln Green
Field nr Forest Green
Woodlands east of Kerne Bridge
River Wye

Ancient Woodlands[36]

Chase Wood
Penyard Park
Howle Hill Wood
Hengrove and Warmhill Woods (Hengrove Wood and Warmhill Wood)
Deep Dean
Mark's Well Wood
Purlieu Wood (Purlieu Wood and Cinderberry Wood)
Lodge Grove
Beech Tree Wood
Ferny Bank – Mayers Grove (Furnace Wood, Grove Wood, Bishops Wood, Old Wood)
Dam Wood

[36] See Map 10 below for their locations – a higher resolution copy of this map is available on the Walford NDP Website at https://walford-ndp.co.uk/project-documents/evidence-base/. NB the Environmental Scoping Report prepared by Herefordshire Council only shows the larger ancient woodlands within the Parish. Information on Map 10 has been taken from Natural England's website at - https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/a14064ca50e242c4a92d020764a6d9df_0?geometry=-2.667%2C51.869%2C-2.551%2C51.888

Wet Wood
Sixteen Acre Wood
Little Wood
Oaks Wood
Sharman's Grove
The Sough Wood (Suff Wood)
Warren Wood
Unlabelled site at Vain Farm (including Cockshoot Wood)

Heritage Assets

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Great Howle Camp
Kerne Bridge (That part in Walford)

Listed Buildings[37]

Grade I

Church of St Michael
Hill Court

Grade II*

Upper Wythall

Grade II

Barn Approximately 15 Metres West of Barn House
Barn Approximately 75 Metres South of Hill Court
Barn House
Barn, Stable and Cider House at Callow Farm
Bishopswood War Memorial
Bollin Farmhouse
Brook Farmhouse
Building on Three Sides of Stable Court South of Hill Court
Castle Brook
Cider House Approximately 5 Metres North-East of Upper Wythall
Coughton Mill House
Cross Approximately 75 Metres West of Paraclete Chapel
Dovecote Approximately 150 Metres South of Hill Court
Flaxley House
Former Chapel Approximately 20 Metres North of Upper Wythall
Howle Hill War Memorial
Kerne Bridge (That Part in Walford)
Lower Wythall

[37] For locations see - https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/walford-herefordshire#.XqB9HshKgdU

Lychgate Church of St Michael and All Angels
Milestone (1)
Milestone (2)
Old Hill Court
Outbuilding Approximately One Metre West of Barn House
Pair of Gate Piers and Gate Approximately 150 Metres South of Hill Court
Pair of Gate Piers and Gates Approximately 250 Metres South of Hill Court
Pair of Gate Piers and Gates Approximately 75 Metres East of Hill Court
Paraclete Chapel
Stable Approximately 20 Metres East of Upper Wythall
Sundial Approximately 22 Metres East of Tower of Church of St Michael and All Angels
Tan House
Two Pairs of Piers with Gates and Railings at East End of Drive to Hill Court
Upper Warryfield and Attached Cottage
Walford Court
Walford House
Wall Linking Hill Court to Buildings Around Stable Court, with Pair of Gate Piers
War Memorial at the Church of St Michael and All Angels
Warryfield Farmhouse

Historic Parks and Gardens.

Historic England Registered

Hill Court

Unregistered

Lincoln Hill House
Cobrey Park
Upper Wythall
Bishopswood
Hazelhurst

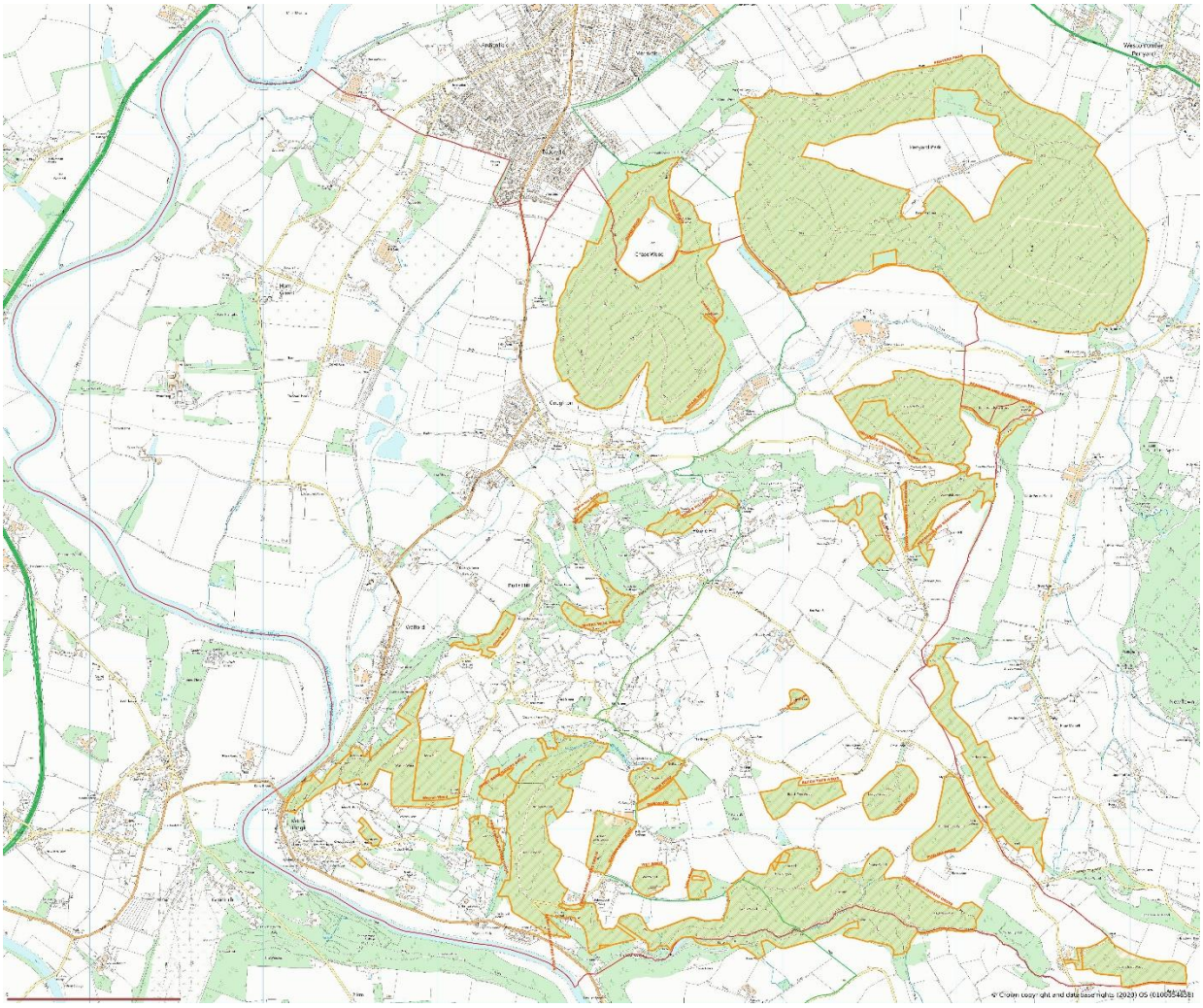
Historic Farmsteads
These are identified in Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Record and identified through its Historic Farmstead Characterisation Project and summarised in a report by Historic England[38]

47625 - Warren Farm
1910447626 - Home Farm (Coppice Farm),
1892647633 - Dunderhole Farm (Dunder Hole Farm)
1937947624 - Hazelhurst House (Hazelhurst Farm)
1890247620 - Edge Hill Farm (Edge Hill)
2059012672 - Cobrey Park
2137647616 - Ball's Farm
2210847619 - Little Howle Farm (Little Howle)
2039047615 - The Homme (Hom Farm)

[38] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/wm-county-summaries/herefordshire-county/

2234547630 - The Lodge Farm (Lodge Farm)
2104447623 - Atlas House (Atlas Farm)
1950247631 - Daycroft Farm
2042718418 - Warryfield Farm
2096547627 - Vain Farm
1820447621 - Shop Farm
1996447618 - Old Hill Farm
2170347622 - Great Howle
2009418417 - Callow Farm
2115647628 - Cubberley
2294047617 - Bollin Farm
2181347632 - Hill Farm
1962347629 - Paddock Farm

Map 10: Location of Ancient Woodlands (Source – Natural England)



Appendix 3: Special Qualities within the Wye Valley AONB – Relevance to the Determining of Major Development within Parish

Wye Valley Special Qualities and Potential Impacts	Walford and Coughton	Bishopswood	Howle Hill	Wider Countryside
Landscape Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy landscape features; (including neglect, addition of inappropriate features, ongoing loss and decline of elements that define landscape character resulting in increased uniformity and loss of distinctiveness)	Walford and Coughton sits within the Principal Settled Farmlands Landscape Type. This landscape is capable of accommodating limited new development at low density provided they do not coalesce into a prominent wayside settlement pattern. Additional housing should be modest in size in order to preserve the character of the original settlement. The separation of the settlement into three clusters helps to maintain this characteristic. The scale of housing development should therefore reflect this characteristic and any proposal that would result in significant extensions or coalescence to the settlement would be major adverse. Alternatives to accommodate such development outside of the AONB would offer greater opportunities for development beyond this scale. Other forms of development should also reflect this scale.	Bishopswood falls primarily within Principal Wooded Hills landscape type. Within this landscape there would be a scattered settlement pattern of occasional dwellings, traditionally small forestry workers cottages. Occasional additional dwelling could be assimilated but the density of dwellings should remain extremely low. Any development that presented as a notable cluster would be significantly adverse although there may be opportunities for small developments along the valley bottom. Further up Leys Hill, the landscape type landscape character changes to that defined as Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings where settlement would predominantly be wayside cottages. Additional individual dwellings may be appropriate in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Hence housing density would be low. However, clustered groups of new housing as typically proposed by	Howle Hill is within the Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Landscape Type where settlement would predominantly be wayside cottages. Additional individual dwellings may be appropriate in some circumstances where the scale of the original settlement would not be compromised. Hence housing density would be low. However, clustered groups of new housing as typically proposed by developers would not be sympathetic to the landscape character and significantly adverse.	There are 5 landscape types within the Parish, each with their own particular management requirements. These include: • Principal Settled Farmlands • Principal Wooded Hills • Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings • Riverside Meadows • Wooded Hills and Farmland. Where development is proposed within these that falls within the AONB, development that would have a significant effect on those features contrary to the management guidelines may be considered significantly adverse.

		developers would not be sympathetic to the landscape character and significantly adverse.		
Woodlands Ongoing degradation of ancient woodland sites by the continuing existence of conifers and other non-native species, including replanting of ASNW with conifers; Fragmentation of ancient woodland sites by land use changes; Degradation of features of the historic environment.	There are no Ancient Woodlands within the vicinity of Walford and Coughton. However, Coughton Marsh is an area of 'wet woodland' which is also an important habitat. It is a SSSI which should not only be protected, but because it is not in 'favourable condition', measures should be advanced where appropriate to improve its condition. Proposals that would adversely affect the SSSI would be of major significance.	A number of woodlands form a strong element to the setting of Bishopswood and a number are Ancient Woodland that are irreplaceable habitats. Development should not lead to any loss of this habitat, and this would have a major adverse effect. The loss of more than small areas of other woodland would have a major effect on the character of the landscape surrounding this settlement.	There are two Ancient Woodlands close to Howle Hill and these are irreplaceable habitat and development should not lead to any loss of this habitat. Other woodland also for a backdrop to this settlement. Development should not lead to any loss of ancient woodlands, and this would have a major adverse effect. The loss of more than small areas of other woodland would have a major effect on the character of the landscape surrounding this settlement.	Woodlands are an important landscape feature upon the hill slopes of the River Wye and most are located to the east of the B4234. Many are Ancient Woodlands that are irreplaceable habitats. Development should not lead to any loss of this habitat, and this would have a major adverse effect. Woodlands are also important to the cultural heritage of this landscape. The loss of more than small areas of other woodland would have a major effect on the character of the landscape.
Orchards Development of land for housing and other uses	No orchards of note have been identified within or close to this settlement.	No orchards of note have been identified within or close to this settlement.	No orchards of note have been identified within or close to this settlement.	Conservation of traditional orchards is only highlighted as a management measure within the Forest Small Holdings landscape type so development resulting in any loss within these areas would be significantly adverse in terms of its character. This does not mean that such orchards elsewhere are not important but can be for other (biodiversity) reasons.
Rivers and Tributaries Degradation of natural processes, including constraints on flooding; Land use impacts may degrade or destroy features e.g. loss of riverside grassland, siltation from poor soil management, loss of historic environment features,	Flood risk zones 2 and 3 are located within the vicinity of the current built-up area and surface water flooding already affects some properties. These issues are material considerations in their own right. Accommodating development may, however,	Drainage matters are a concern in relation to any development in that it might result in surface water flooding elsewhere. Similarly, development would need to show that wastewater can be accommodated without resulting in pollution to the River	Drainage matters are a concern in relation to any development in that it might result in surface water flooding below the settlement. Similarly, development would need to show that wastewater can be accommodated without resulting in pollution to	Depending upon the location and nature of the development proposed, the in-combination effects on the landscape may add to the effects of development to the extent of having major adverse effects.

engineering for recreational interests etc.; Point source pollution, including increased development overfilling old drainage and sewerage systems.	require engineering operations that would affect landscape character and the in-combination effects on the landscape may add to the effects of development to the extent of having major adverse effects.	Wye. These are technical matters that would be material considerations and unlikely, in themselves determine whether proposals are major development.	the River Wye. These are technical matters that would be material considerations and unlikely, in themselves determine whether proposals are major development.	
Species-rich grassland, including small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland Development of land for housing	Land at Coughton Marsh SSSI is identified as priority grassland habitat upon Natural England's database. Elsewhere within or surrounding this settlement the presence or otherwise of other areas of priority grassland may need to be determined through surveys in appropriate instances. The loss of such areas, and any associated small fields would be significantly adverse.	No areas of priority grassland habitats have been identified upon Natural England's database within or surrounding this settlement although their presence or otherwise may need to be determined through surveys in appropriate instances. The loss of such areas, and any associated small fields would be significantly adverse.	No areas of priority grassland habitats have been identified upon Natural England's database within or surrounding this settlement although their presence or otherwise may need to be determined through surveys in appropriate instances. The loss of such areas, and any associated small fields would be significantly adverse.	Only one area identified as priority grassland habitat upon Natural England's database within the wider countryside, opposite Old Hill Farm. Elsewhere within or surrounding this settlement the presence or otherwise of other areas of priority grassland may need to be determined through surveys in appropriate instances. The loss of such areas, and any associated small fields would be significantly adverse.
Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy the landscape viewed from a viewpoint including large single structures, large developments or the cumulative impact of small developments; Degrade or block both physical access to viewpoints and/or the view window	There are a range of views looking from the north (PROWs running along the southern edge of Ross-on-Wye) and parish-wide (higher level PROWs on Howle Hill, Bulls Hill and Leys Hill above but linked to the Wye Valley Walk), that overlook the three clusters. The clustered settlement form is readily visible and reflect settlement pattern with the landscape type. Scale of impact upon the settlement form, including cumulative impact, would be material to its setting. Development that would change the nature of the development form contrary to its accepted	Sitting upon the slopes of the River Wye, views of the settlement are extremely important to the character of the AONB and impact upon these views should be given significant weight. This form is culturally and scenically important. Proposals that have a significant effect through alter views presenting the character of settlement along the valley should be considered major adverse.	The small scale built-form and small field pattern surrounding these clusters can be viewed from a number of vantage points. This form is culturally and scenically important. That of Sharman's Pitch from the south-west is particularly notable. Development that would change the nature of these elements should be considered major adverse.	The wider countryside across the parish presents a range of landscapes. This variety is important to presenting the qualities of the AONB. Proposals should include landscape and visual sensitivity assessments to consider the effect on views.

	settlement pattern should be considered major adverse.			
Sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness / wildness Changes in land management including new or expanding development and intensification of use (i.e. inappropriate tourism and recreation or increasing road or air traffic); Change driven by new standards and legislation e.g. street lighting, highway construction.	Walford and Coughton is a relatively large settlement within the AONB landscape and does not contribute towards this characteristic.	Built-form in Bishopswood is small scale with little if any modern infrastructure and no perspectives presenting the whole of the settlement. Proposals that change the sense of this characteristic would be contrary to the level of tranquillity experiences in this location.	Built-form at Howle Hill is small scale with little if any modern infrastructure and no perspectives presenting the whole of the settlement. Proposals that change the sense of this characteristic would be contrary to the level of tranquillity experiences in this location.	Remoter areas tend to be on the slopes and hill tops within the parish although this is relative given the proximity to Ross-on-Wye which will present an illuminated skyline from many of these locations.
Historic Sites (including prehistoric, Roman, early medieval, defensive, ecclesiastical, post medieval industrial sites and associated landscapes, railway heritage, ancient and veteran trees, historic parks and gardens, and vernacular architectures including farmsteads, commoners cottages and estate houses) Inappropriate land management and land use may degrade or destroy archaeological features.	No important archaeological features have been identified within or adjacent to this settlement. Herefordshire Council's Historic Landscape Characterisation may be a consideration in terms of effect on the landscape setting of the settlement.	No important archaeological features have been identified within or adjacent to this settlement. Herefordshire Council's Historic Landscape Characterisation may be a consideration in terms of effect on the landscape setting of the settlement.	Features associated with the historical development of Howle Hill as a squatter settlement and kiln sites have some interest although a significance analysis would be required within the terms of the NPPF to determine their level of importance to any particular setting, which might include the purposes of the AONB. Herefordshire Council's Historic Landscape Characterisation may be a consideration in terms of effect on the landscape setting of the settlement.	There are few designated heritage assets within the parish but where they are present a significance analysis would be required within the terms of the NPPF to determine their level of importance to any particular setting, which might include the purposes of the AONB. Herefordshire Council's Historic Landscape Characterisation may be a consideration in terms of effect on the landscape setting of the settlement. Similarly, that Council's Historic Farmstead Characterisation Project may be relevant to development proposals affecting with relevant heritage assets.
Access and Recreation Blockage and/or obstruction of: Old tracks: often in sunken ways and/or bounded by drystone walls, Wye Valley Walk, Access land, Small commons.	A number of public rights of way pass through or skirt the current settlement. The Wye Valley walk passes to the east provide a number of views overlooking the three clusters of the settlement.	A strong pattern of public rights of way exists, particularly to the west of Leys Hill. The Wye Valley walk passes through the settlement. Protections exist for these routes and any developments would need	A strong pattern of public rights of way exists both through and around this settlement. Protections exist for these routes and any developments would need to comply with these	There is an extensive network of public rights of way criss-crossing the parish. Protections exist for these routes and any developments would need to comply with these requirements.

	Protections exist for these routes and any developments would need to comply with these requirements. Implications are unlikely to amount to major concerns	to comply with these requirements. Implications are unlikely to amount to major concerns.	requirements. Implications are unlikely to amount to major concerns.	Implications are unlikely to amount to major concerns. The line of the former Ross to Monmouth Railway Line passes between Walford and Coughton and the River Wye although has no public access.