

Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group, under the direction of the Much Marcle Parish Council, has prepared this document.

The Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) is a new type of planning document that sets out the direction of growth in Much Marcle parish until 2031. It is part of the Government's new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area.

The Plan provides a vision and objectives for the future of the community and sets out clear policies to realise them.

The Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the people of Much Marcle parish and others with an interest in the community.

The Plan gives local people the opportunity to have some control over where new housing and any other new development should be built.

New development is to be focused within or adjacent to the three existing settlements, and through conversion or re-use of redundant buildings.

Settlement Boundaries have been drawn for Much Marcle, Rushall and Kynaston with the principal aims of (i) preventing coalescence between the three settlements thus preserving their historic separate identity and (ii) preventing further incursion into open countryside.

The Plan will allow for some infill in existing developed frontages, within or outside Settlement Boundaries, to enable limited and controlled growth.

Much Marcle contains a conservation area at its core. The character of this area should be preserved.

The Plan will support appropriate development in open countryside only where such proposed development meets the policies set out in the Plan and can be proved to be sustainable.

The Plan is designed to be flexible, adaptable and above all sustainable in order to ensure the future wellbeing of our community, meet the needs of a growing population, safeguard our environment and build our local economy.

2. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCESS

Roles of the Parish Council & Working Group

The Much Marcle Parish Council established a Working Group in September 2013, following an initial public meeting in July that year, to develop the Plan. The Working Group is empowered by, and reports to, the Parish Council. It has met at least monthly to oversee the development of the Plan.

The preparation of the Plan has been made possible by a funding grant from Locality, and support from Herefordshire Council and Foxley Tagg Planning Ltd.

The reports of Working Group meetings and all key documents relating to the development of the Plan are available for scrutiny on the Much Marcle Parish Council website www.muchmarcleparishcouncil.org.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Area

The parish of Much Marcle was formally designated as a Neighbourhood Development Plan Area following an application made under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (part 2 S6), consulted on from 30 August to 10 September 2013, and approved by Herefordshire Council on 11 September 2013.

The parish of Much Marcle covers an area of approximately 19.62 km² (7.58 square miles). See the Neighbourhood Plan Area at Annex A.

Planning Policy Context

Neighbourhood Development Plans are a new type of planning policy document, introduced by the Localism Act 2011, which enable local people to make decisions about development in their towns and settlements.

Neighbourhood Development Plans must accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance.

As part of the Local Plan for Herefordshire, the Plan must be in conformity with the strategic policies of the Herefordshire Core Strategy. Both the Plan and the Core Strategy will remain in force until 2031.

The Plan policies are to be considered as a whole together with the strategic policies of the Core Strategy.

The Plan will guide where new development should go, and how the parish should change. The Plan provides the local policy framework for Herefordshire

Council to determine planning applications on behalf of the people of Much Marcle parish.

Sustainability Appraisal

Herefordshire Council, on behalf of the Much Marcle Parish Council, has carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, which need to be taken into account in developing and delivering the Plan.

Status of Much Marcle Parish Design Statement

A Parish Design Statement was approved by the Much Marcle Parish Council on 13 September 1999, and endorsed by Herefordshire Council on 23 February 2000. An Addendum to the Parish Design Statement was approved in 2014.

Herefordshire Council's Local Development Scheme states such documents "*will not have a statutory basis but where they contain provisions relevant to planning and set out community aspirations, they may influence planning policy and decisions as material considerations, but will not have the formal status and weight of Development Plan Documents or Neighbourhood Development Plans*".

The Plan therefore takes full account of the Parish Design Statement and carries forward many of its provisions.

Current Local Planning Situation

The parish of Much Marcle is located in the Ross-on-Wye rural Housing Market Area (HMA) where the Core Strategy **Policy RA1 – Rural housing distribution** seeks an indicative housing growth target of 14% between 2011 and 2031.

Since April 2011, Herefordshire Council has approved 10 planning applications for a net total of 10 new residential dwellings in small scale or windfall developments. These new houses contribute to the 14% housing growth target to be achieved between 2011 and 2031. The Plan may propose more new houses than the 14% growth target requires, but it cannot propose less.

Much Marcle is identified in the Core Strategy **Policy RA2 – Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns** as one of 31 settlements in the Ross-on-Wye rural HMA which will be the main focus of proportionate housing development; and Rushall is identified as one of 24 settlements where proportionate housing is appropriate, subject to particular attention to form, layout, character, location and setting of the site, and contribution to social well-being.

Kynaston is not identified in the Core Strategy as a settlement for proportionate growth and is treated within the scope of **Policy RA3 – Herefordshire’s countryside**. However, Kynaston is quite clearly a ‘settlement’, and has been so for generations - it had a Chapel, which was destroyed in 1571 by the landslip known as ‘The Wonder’¹. It has a clearly defined settlement pattern and 12 dwellings within the main settlement area, of which 6 are council built houses. It is not part of Rushall, being separated by open country either side of Hall Court, and is acknowledged to be a separate hamlet in the Much Marcle Parish Design Statement which was approved by Herefordshire Council.

Therefore, because Kynaston is located in close proximity to Rushall and Much Marcle (both identified in Policy RA2) and the three settlements are connected by road, and to allow a wider range of housing size, type and tenure to meet local need and demand, the Much Marcle Parish Council has decided to treat Kynaston as a ‘settlement’ within the meaning of Core strategy **Policy RA2**, rather than rely on the possibility that housing land can be identified within the scope of **Policy H2 – Rural exception sites** where:

- 1) a proposal could assist in meeting a proven local need for affordable housing; and ☐
- 2) affordable housing provided is made available to, and retained in perpetuity for local people in need of affordable housing; and ☐
- 3) a site respects the characteristics of its surroundings, demonstrates good design and offers reasonable access to a range of services and facilities normally in a settlement identified in **Policy RA2**. ☐

Agriculture is the major land use within the parish and so proposals for dwellings associated with agriculture, forestry and rural enterprises may be supported where they comply with the Core Strategy **Policy RA4**.

Nineteen sites with redundant or disused buildings with potential for conversion and re-use have been identified throughout the parish of Much Marcle. These fall within the scope of Core Strategy **Policy RA5 – Re-use of rural buildings** and are expected to make a significant contribution to housing growth.

¹ The Kynaston Landslip. www.newmanlocalhistory.org.uk.

3. PARISH DESCRIPTION – EVIDENCE BASE SUMMARY

The parish of Much Marcle comprises the village of Much Marcle and the two smaller linear settlements of Rushall and Kynaston, which are locally recognised as hamlets of Much Marcle. Elsewhere the settlement pattern is more dispersed with isolated farms, houses and cottages.

The village of Much Marcle contains most of the dwellings, centred around the A449/B4024 crossroads, including the post office and general store, garage and one of the village's three public houses.

There is no dominant style of domestic building, many of which are randomly spaced and located at various orientations in relation to neighbouring buildings and along minor roads and country lanes.

Detached dwellings (including bungalows) make up 73% of the housing stock, but overall the parish has a wide choice of properties and a type and size of homes that is broadly in line with the trend for England as a whole.

The parish has a population of 660 people (an increase of 2% since 2001 according to the 2011 census), living in 286 households. The average household size is 2.3 persons, broadly in line with the averages for Herefordshire (2.34) and England (2.40).

The full Evidence Base Summary report is available for scrutiny on www.muchmarcleparishcouncil.org.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – CONSULTATION SUMMARY

The Plan has been produced by, and belongs to, the people of Much Marcle parish. It has been informed by the views of local people gathered using a variety of different consultation approaches including a village-wide questionnaire survey, three Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Events at Much Marcle Memorial Hall, and written comments.

In November 2014, a Neighbourhood Development Plan Questionnaire was distributed to more than 500 residents aged 18 or over. It later became apparent that a few residents were unintentionally omitted from the questionnaire distribution.

191 responses were received equating to 39% of the adult population as recorded in the 2011 census.

Who Returned The Residents' Questionnaire?

- More than 33% were aged sixty-five or over.
- Less than 15% were under forty-five.
- More than 50% have lived here for more than 15 years – a settled community?

What People Said About Housing

- Centre and edge of settlement locations were preferred areas for new homes.
- Conversions of existing buildings and brownfield sites were by far the most popular.
- 85% opted for new homes created from redundant buildings.
- 50% opted for open market properties.
- Between 35% and 44% favoured self-build, social and sheltered housing.
- Strong preference for traditional style buildings.

What People Said About Employment, Built & Natural Environment

- Agriculture, tourism, leisure, crafts, holiday accommodation, food and drink employers should be encouraged.
- 148 people identified 882 environmental and historic assets that need preserving or enhancing.
- 40% favoured positive options to address climate change, 23% were in favour of mineral extraction with 20% in favour of fracking.

What People Said About Infrastructure

- Better maintenance of roads, hedges and verges, with less large vehicles.
- Lower speed limits, improved maintenance of footpaths and introduction of cycleways.
- Faster broadband and better mobile phone reception.

Views of Local Businesses, School & Parochial Church Council

Local businesses were consulted using a paper-based questionnaire survey, and the views of the Governing Body of Much Marcle Primary School and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) were sought in separate meetings.

The Governing Body of Much Marcle Primary School was consulted at a meeting in May 2014 about shortfalls in facilities and infrastructure that make it hard for the school to function well, and changes over the next 20 years that would enable the school to do a better job and play an increasing part in the local community. The Governing Body raised the following issues:

- Lower speed limit to 20mph along the B4024 from the Walwyn Arms to St Bartholomew's Church.
- Lack of adequate car parking/hardstanding areas.
- Possible extension of school land to provide sports facilities for use by the wider community as well as the school.
- Possible extension of the school hall and increased use by the community.
- Encouraging young families to return/remain/settle in the village.
- More affordable housing to keep the village vibrant and the school thriving.
- Broadband facilities that are reliable and at a good speed.

12 local businesses responded to a questionnaire, which was analysed in June 2015 and produced similar conclusions to the earlier residents' questionnaire:

- Existing buildings should be used wherever possible, either solely for small businesses or live/work premises.
- Broadband speed is not fast enough to meet business requirements.
- Few new/extended business premises are required over the Plan period to 2031.

The PCC was consulted at a meeting in July 2015 and commented as follows:

- Importance of attracting families to the village.
- Affordable housing, particularly for families, is required.
- It was felt desirable that there should be a vicarage in the village.

Consultation Events

Three consultation events were held in Much Marcle Memorial Hall in March 2015 and April 2016, having been publicised by posters around the village, in the Mercury magazine and by flyers delivered by the local postman. The following issues were raised:

Sunday 22 March 2015

- The minimum requirement for the parish to have 14% housing growth (following examination and adoption of the Core Strategy) over the Plan period to 2031 was confirmed.
- The minimum size of a single development required to include affordable housing was given as 10 new houses. A rural exception site could potentially allow affordable housing outside the Settlement Boundaries. □
- Responses to the residents' questionnaire about potential development of the Slip Tavern and surrounding land had indicated a preference to retain the pub as a community asset.
- Capacity of the sewage works and handling of grey water in developments greater than 10 new houses was a concern. □
- Three storey housing, popular in some modern developments, is not a style of housing that is consistent with more traditional forms for which

responses to the residents' questionnaire preferred.

Monday 23 March 2015

- New houses should be designed to fit into plots of land available.
- Developments already within the planning process would be included in the number of new houses required by 2031. □
- Peak traffic congestion in Much Marcle village centre could be resolved by moving the school towards the A449 Ross road, including other community facilities on the same site.
- Brownfield status of the plot of land opposite the Rushall Club was questioned as no structure or building had ever been at that location.
- A definition of affordable housing was explained.
- As indicated in the residents' questionnaire responses, there was a preference for new developments in each of the three settlements.
- Land opposite Glebe Orchard could potentially accommodate new housing, but this site is outside the proposed Much Marcle Settlement Boundary and has material constraints that would need to be addressed – a stream, boggy ground, current land use and a traditional standard orchard. □

Written Comments Received After March 2015 Consultation Events

Traffic congestion would be reduced by building a footpath from the A449 crossroads to an entrance at the rear of the school. Parents could drop off children at the crossroads so that the problems close to the school would be relieved. □

The barn at Swan Cottage was proposed as a potential development site. □

Monday 11 April 2016

A member of the PCC raised concerns about the capacity of the burial ground at St Bartholomew's Church, and whether an extension to the burial ground and more parking for weddings, funerals and concerts etc., could be addressed by the Plan. Among other issues raised were the small size of the proposed Much Marcle Settlement Boundary, and the need for additional sporting facilities.

Written Comments Received After April 2016 Consultation Event

A number of letters from local residents were received which stated reasons for objection to land identified for possible affordable housing at Old Pike.

The PCC and others wrote letters seeking support for extension of the burial ground and more parking provision.

5. VISION & OBJECTIVES FOR 2031 □

Vision Statement

Our vision is that we, as the present guardians of our built and natural heritage:

- maintain and enhance the characteristic features which define our particular sense of place and local distinctiveness; and
- create a sustainable and resilient community where people want to live and work.

To fulfil our vision we have identified the following objectives:

Issues	Objectives
Sustainable Development	Ensure all new development makes a positive contribution to sense of place and local distinctiveness, has a low carbon footprint and low embedded energy. Minimise flood risk to homes, employment and the environment. Support renewable energy development in appropriate scale and locations.
Housing	Identify housing land allocations, to achieve a minimum of 14% housing growth by 2031, with an appropriate mix of market, social and affordable units.
Employment & Economy	Encourage and support employment that is locally based, sustainable and diverse. Value and support agriculture as an integral part of our community.
Built Environment, Heritage & Historic Assets	Protect and maintain the setting, fabric and visual character of the Much Marcle Conservation Area, listed buildings, and Homme House park and garden.
Natural Environment	Avoid, or mitigate (to minimize), harm to important landscape views (e.g. Marcle Ridge and the Malvern Hills), and maintain open views to surrounding countryside. Value, protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity features, especially where they provide ecological connectivity. Avoid or mitigate (to minimize) harm, and compensate to offset residual unavoidable harm, to biodiversity and geodiversity features so that the aggregate level and quality of those features does not decline.
Community, Sport & Leisure	Maintain existing community facilities, increase the range of activities they provide, and support new and/or improved facilities.
Transport & Infrastructure	Reduce speed limits on parts of the A449 and some adjoining roads. Identify a cycle loop/route similar to and linking with the Ledbury and Newent cycle loops by end of 2017, and establish by 2020.
Broadband & Mobile Reception	Research and establish ways to attain the highest practicable broadband speed and mobile reception, and coverage for both, in the parish.

6. PLAN POLICIES

Sustainable Development

Objectives

Ensure all new development makes a positive contribution to sense of place and local distinctiveness, has a low carbon footprint and low embedded energy.

Minimise flood risk to homes, employment and the environment.

Support renewable energy development in appropriate scale and locations.

Building design guidelines

All new development and alterations to existing buildings and structures should be designed and built to the highest possible standards, taking account of historic details and layouts and maximizing the contribution to sense of place and local distinctiveness. This basic requirement does not necessarily promote any particular type or style, or rule out innovation and modern design solutions that are of high quality in their own right or which may add to the visual enjoyment and character of settlements within the parish. It does, however, imply the need to avoid standardized solutions, based on limited range of type, style, size and design; and insensitive, badly detailed and inappropriately scaled buildings.

The guidelines in Section 8 of the Much Marcle Parish Design Statement should be followed, unless there are material reasons for not doing so, to ensure that local character and distinctiveness is maintained and, where possible, enhanced.

Flood risk management

The Environment Agency Flood Map for Much Marcle shows an extensive area of land within Flood Zone 3 (land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding - See Annex B) and a wider area within Flood Zone 2 (land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding), extending from Bodenham Bank to The Walwyn Arms, Ryemeadows and north to the parish boundary at Kynaston.

Policy MM1 – Sustainable Development

All development proposals should seek to achieve high standards of sustainable building design and, in particular, demonstrate how the location, scale, density, design, form, construction and operation:

- a) comply with the guidance in the Parish Design Statement;**
- b) work with the site and its context, taking account of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), biodiversity, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates;**

- c) **reduce use of fossil fuels, adopt and facilitate low and zero carbon energy infrastructure, and promote the production and consumption of renewable sources of heat and electricity;**
- d) **promote efficient use, re-use and recycling of natural resources;**
- e) **adopt best practice in sustainable urban drainage;**
- f) **avoid land which is liable to flood (Flood Zone 3), or which would exacerbate flood risk to adjacent properties.**

Renewable energy

The parish has some installed capacity of solar voltaic panels and there is considerable potential for further development of solar, as well as biomass, geothermal and wind renewable energy resources.

Policy MM2 – Renewable Energy

Development proposals for biomass, geothermal, solar and wind renewable energy resources will be supported in appropriate scale and locations where they:

- a) **comply with Policy MM1;**
- b) **comply with Policy MM7;**
- c) **comply with Policy MM8; and**
- d) **comply with Policy MM9.**

Housing

Objective

Identify housing land allocations to achieve a minimum of 14% housing growth by 2031, with an appropriate mix of market, social and affordable units.

Housing Need

The Herefordshire Local Housing Assessment (HLMA) found that in the Ross-on-Wye HMA the greatest need for market housing was for 3 bedroom properties (57%) and 2 bedroom properties (24.7%). Of the additional dwellings required in the Ross-on-Wye HMA over 95% are required to be houses.

In terms of affordable housing, the HLMA found that in the Ross-on-Wye HMA the size of affordable homes required to meet the need was fairly evenly split between 1 bedroom (29%), 2 bedroom (37%) and 3 bedroom (31%) properties. The need for houses (73%) was considered greater than the need for flats (27%).

Reference was also made to 'Assessment of Land with Housing Potential' (Much Marcle) 2015, (Herefordshire Council); and 'Housing Needs Study for Much Marcle Parish', June 2008 (Keith Parry, Rural Housing Enabler for Herefordshire).

Affordable Housing

The HLMA found that the average indicative income required to buy a 2-bed property in the Ross-on-Wye HMA is £32,860, while the average wage in the area is £22,947. The proportion of households unable to afford market housing without subsidy in Ross-on-Wye HMA is 53.4%.

Identified Housing Land

Land potentially suitable for housing, including affordable housing, was identified by a sub-group of the Working Group which met on 30 January 2015 to review the locations suggested for building new residential properties in responses to the Residents' Questionnaire.

A revised housing land assessment, based on the Core Strategy modifications following examination, subject to the same rigorous Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), was completed and agreed by the Working Group and Parish Council in June 2015.

Identified housing land within Settlement Boundaries is shown on the map at Annex C.

Rural Exception Sites

Land identified as rural exception sites, outside and adjacent to Settlement Boundaries, within the scope of Core Strategy **Policy H2 – Rural exception sites** as suitable for affordable housing, is shown on the map at Annex C.

Convertible Buildings

A survey, which identified 19 existing redundant or disused buildings suitable for conversion and re-use for housing, was completed and agreed by the Working Group and Parish Council in June 2015. Locations of convertible buildings identified throughout the parish are shown on the dot map at Annex D.

Settlement Boundaries

The Settlement Boundaries for Much Marcle, Rushall and Kynaston shown on the map at Annex C were drawn following the guidance and criteria set out in 'Neighbourhood Planning Guide to Settlement Boundaries' (Herefordshire Council), April 2013 – Revised June 2015.

Housing Infill

Some development may be proposed as infill in an existing developed frontage, within or outside Settlement Boundaries. Infill sites may provide appropriate locations for self-build or custom build and affordable housing.

Policy MM3 – Housing Sites

Development proposals for good quality market housing, self-build or custom build, and affordable homes for local people will be supported where they:

- a) make best and full use of brownfield sites and identified housing land within Settlement Boundaries, and land identified as rural exception sites in accordance with Core Strategy Policy H2; or**
- b) would result in the sustainable conversion and re-use of a redundant or disused building(s) where it complies with Core Strategy Policy RA5; or**
- c) meet an agricultural or forestry need or other farm diversification enterprise for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work and complies with Core Strategy Policy RA4; and**
- d) provide an appropriate range of housing size, type and tenure that is required to meet local need and demand;**
- e) complement adjacent properties, would not result in loss of amenity for existing residents and comply with Policy MM1;**
- f) would achieve BREEAM Home Quality Mark (HQM)² standards and, wherever possible, use suitable local materials; and**
- g) are accompanied by appropriate provisions for permeable off street parking, safe access, storage of waste and recycling, and a garden.**

Policy MM4 – Housing Infill

Development proposals on infill sites in an existing developed frontage, within or outside Settlement Boundaries, will be supported where they:

- a) complement adjacent properties, would not result in loss of amenity for existing residents and comply with Policy MM1;**
- b) do not result in inappropriate development of residential gardens;**
- c) would achieve BREEAM HQM standards and, wherever possible, use suitable local materials; and**
- d) are accompanied by appropriate provisions for permeable off street parking, safe access, storage of waste and recycling, and a garden.**

Employment & Economy

Objectives

Encourage and support employment that is locally based, sustainable and diverse.

Value and support agriculture as an integral part of our community.

² BREEAM standards can be viewed at www.breeam.com

Support for Local Businesses

Agriculture is the major land use in Much Marcle parish and a relatively large employer of local residents - the fifth biggest sector. Nine percent of those employed in the parish work in agriculture according to the 2011 census.

There is a small, but strong, range of businesses in the parish. Weston's Cider, Much Marcle Garage and Graham Baker Motors are major employers.

The business survey carried out by the Working Group found that there were five businesses requiring additional space. Three of these were for areas less than 50m², one for more than 200m² and one identifying two buildings of over 200m².

Working From Home

Nineteen percent of working age residents of the parish is in managerial, directorial or senior official positions, and there are also more residents in professional occupations than is the case nationally. These data indicate a potential demand for live/work accommodation.

Policy MM5 – Employment & Economy

Development proposals for agriculture, tourism and leisure, recreation, crafts, holiday accommodation, and food and drink production will be supported where they:

- a) **comply with Policy MM1;**
- b) **comply with Policy MM7;**
- c) **comply with Policy MM8; and**
- d) **comply with Policy MM9.**

Policy MM6 – Business Premises

Re-development of business premises used for A1 (Shops), A2 (Financial & Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants & Cafes), and A4 (Public Houses) will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the use of the premises for these purposes is no longer viable.

Built Environment, Heritage & Historic Assets

Objective

Protect and maintain the setting, fabric and visual character of the Much Marcle Conservation Area, listed buildings, and Homme House park and garden.

Conservation Area

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to determine from time to time which parts of their area are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and to designate these areas as conservation areas.

The Much Marcle Conservation Area, shown on the map at Annex E, encompasses the historic core of the village centred around St Bartholomew's Church (dating from C13); the adjacent remains of Mortimer's Castle, motte and bailey; Hellens (dating from C13); Homme House (dating from C15) and its park and garden; and Phillips House (1703).

Herefordshire Council has a duty to protect the Conservation Area from development which would harm its special historic or architectural character and this is reflected in Core Strategy **Policy LD4 – Historic environment and heritage assets**.

The Parish Council will encourage Herefordshire Council to carry out a comprehensive appraisal of the character and special qualities of the Conservation Area to provide a sound basis for decisions about planning applications, the future management of the area, and other proposals for change.

Listed Buildings, Park and Garden

There are 90 listed buildings/ancient monuments in the parish including Homme House park and garden listed Grade 11 (shown on the list register at Annex F).

Policy MM7 – Listed Buildings

Development proposals for restoration, conversion and re-use of listed buildings will be supported where they:

- a) comply with Policy MM1;
- b) comply with Policy MM8;
- c) comply with Policy MM9; and
- d) comply with Policy MM10.

Natural Environment

Objectives

Avoid, or mitigate (to minimize), harm to important landscape views (e.g. the Marcle Ridge and the Malvern Hills), and maintain open views to surrounding countryside.

Value, protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity features, especially where they provide ecological connectivity.

Avoid, or mitigate (to minimize) harm, and compensate to offset residual unavoidable harm to biodiversity and geodiversity features so that the aggregate level and quality of those features does not decline.

Landscape

The overall character of the landscape consists of mixed farmland, orchards and hedgerows, with a large number of mature trees. To the west, Marcle Ridge reaches 231 metres above sea level and is surmounted by a high telecommunications mast visible from many miles away.

The proximity of protected landscapes (the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the Malvern Hills AONB), and the topography within the parish mean that there are important local and wider views within, looking out and into each of the three settlements. Examples of these important local and wider views are identified in a schedule with photographs and a map at Annex G.

Policy MM8 – Landscape

Development proposals will be expected to avoid, or mitigate (to minimise), harm to important landscape views (e.g. the Marcle Ridge and the Malvern Hills), and maintain open views to surrounding countryside.

Designated Sites

Herefordshire Biological Records Centre has provided the map at Annex H, which shows the location of designated sites within the parish, including Hall Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), six Local Geological Sites and six Local Wildlife Sites.

Priority Habitats

Field surveys completed in April 2016 confirmed that the parish supports good examples of UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) priority habitats - e.g. lowland meadow and unimproved pasture, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, traditional standard orchard, ponds, rivers and streams, reedbed, wood pasture and parkland (See map at Annex I); and locally important, characteristic habitats such as 'ghost' outlines of wild daffodils (a UK BAP priority species) along field margins and beneath roadside hedgerows along the B4024 Dymock Road and at Lyne Down.

Protected Species

Several species of bats, dormouse, great crested newt and common otter recorded in the parish are protected under European and UK law; a number of bird species are protected by UK law; and UK BAP priority species recorded in the parish include birds, mammals, amphibians and plants.

European protected species are listed in Schedules 2 and 4 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended); and species protected by UK law are listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The Wildlife and Countryside Act also prevents destruction of or disturbance to nesting birds, their nests, eggs and young; and so it is advisable to avoid works to vegetation during the nesting season, generally taken to be March through to August inclusive. □

The presence of protected or priority (important) species on a proposed development site is a material consideration in the planning process. Sufficient information must be presented with planning applications to identify the species present and the extent to which they may be affected by the development proposals.

Policy MM9 – Biodiversity

Development will be expected to avoid harm, mitigate to minimize, or compensate to offset residual unavoidable harm to:

- a) Designated Sites (e.g. Hall Wood SSSI and Local Geological Sites and Local Wildlife Sites);**
- b) European Protected Species;**
- c) Species protected by UK law;**
- d) UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and priority species;**
- e) Locally important, characteristic habitats and species (e.g. wild daffodils);**
- f) mature trees and hedgerows; and**
- g) streams and watercourses.**

Community, Sport & Leisure

Objective

Maintain and support existing community facilities, increase the range of activities they provide, and support new and/or improved facilities.

Community Facilities

The parish has a small number of community facilities and meeting places. In addition to St Bartholomew's Church, a primary school and an ancillary nursery school, the parish boasts Much Marcle Memorial Hall and Rushall Club. There are three pubs, a licensed restaurant, and the Much Marcle Post Office and Village Store enables the local community to withdraw cash and purchase staple foods without having to travel to Ledbury or another neighbouring town.

Policy MM10 – Community Facilities

Development proposals for new and/or improved community facilities will be supported where they:

- a) comply with Policy MM1;**
- b) comply with Policy MM7;**
- c) comply with Policy MM8; and**
- d) comply with Policy MM9.**

Policy MM11 - Loss of Community Facilities

Re-development for non-community uses will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the use of the premises for community purposes is no longer viable, or where acceptable alternative provision exists or is proposed concurrently.

Local Green Spaces

Published evidence shows that access to the natural environment benefits people's mental and physical health, their sense of wellbeing and quality of life.

Local green spaces in Much Marcle, and links to the surrounding open countryside via the public footpath network, provide a variety of public benefits, including cultural and historic heritage, wide ranging landscape views, biodiversity and public access (See map at Annex J).

Policy MM12 – Local Green Spaces

All development proposals will be expected to protect, provide and plan for the maintenance of local green spaces through:

- a) retention of existing local green spaces, corridors and linkages with the surrounding open countryside;**
- b) provision of new on-site local green space;**
- c) integration with, and connection to, the existing local green space network and the surrounding open countryside.**

Transport Infrastructure & Public Access

Objectives

Reduce speed limits on parts of the A449 and some adjoining roads.

Identify a route for cycle loop/route similar to and linking with the Ledbury and Newent cycle loops by end of 2017, and establish by 2020.

Road Network

Much Marcle parish is situated on the A449, which connects Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye. This location means that the village has a good connection to Wales (via the A449 and A40) and to the Midlands (via the M50).

From Much Marcle it is possible to reach Ledbury by car in 10 minutes, Ross in around 15 minutes, Monmouth in 25 minutes, Hereford and Gloucester in less than 30 minutes, and both Worcester and Cheltenham in around 45 minutes.

Public Transport

Bus services to and from Much Marcle are sparse. There are 9 services in total serving the village during the average week. As a consequence, commuting from Much Marcle to local towns via bus is not a viable option.

The nearest railway station is in Ledbury, around 6 miles away.

Public Footpaths

The parish is well served by a local public footpath network, which connects each of the three settlements with links to the surrounding open countryside and the Marcle Ridge.

The ridge has one of the area's best footpaths along its length with open landscape views to the west over the Woolhope Dome, part of the Wye Valley AONB, to the south towards May Hill and the Forest of Dean, and to the east towards the Malvern Hills AONB and the Cotswolds AONB.

Policy MM13 – Transport Infrastructure & Public Access

All development proposals will be expected to:

- a) demonstrate that the local highway network can absorb the traffic impacts of the development, or that traffic impacts can be managed to acceptable levels;**
- b) promote walking and cycling and, where possible, incorporate supporting infrastructure (depending on the nature and location of the site) to reduce numbers of short distance car journeys; and**
- c) meet the needs of people with disabilities and provide safe and efficient access for the emergency services.**

Broadband & Mobile Reception

Objective

Research and establish ways to attain the highest practicable broadband speed and mobile reception, and coverage for both, in the parish.

Justification

In a February 2016 survey 30% of local broadband subscribers received download speeds under 4 Mbps, while half of all respondents were very or quite dissatisfied with their current broadband service.

The community consultation indicated a very strong need for significantly improved Broadband, both to address the needs of present businesses and to provide a suitable IT environment to attract new businesses. In the February 2016 survey 48% of respondents indicated that they run a business from home, with 87% of these business owners accessing the internet *at least* daily. 70% relying on a standard (copper) connection, with 39% receiving download speeds under 5 Mbps.

Over half of local business owners (52%) are either very or quite dissatisfied with their current broadband service, with an overwhelming majority (91%) indicating interest in super-fast broadband.

Policy MM14 – Broadband & Mobile Reception

All development proposals, and land within their curtilage, will be expected to have the infrastructure necessary to provide the highest practicable broadband speed and mobile reception.

7. MONITORING & REVIEW

The Much Marcle Parish Council will review the content and monitor progress of the Plan, keeping track of development proposals and approvals of planning permission. The Plan will be subject to a formal review within 5 years of its adoption by Herefordshire Council.

Annex G: Landscape Views

Local Views in Much Marcle

1. A449/B4024 cross roads south-east towards Walwyn Court and The Malverns
2. Kempley Road north towards Much Marcle – entrance to the village
3. Kempley Road south towards Awnells Farm – exit from the village
4. Kempley Road east towards Gregg's Pit
5. Causeway west towards St Bartholomew's Church
6. The Monks Walk east towards Hellens
7. Dymock Road B4024 (between Pickett's Corner and Rhonville) south towards Street Farm

Local Views in Rushall and Kynaston

8. South towards Hill End, Rushall
9. North towards Kynaston – entrance to settlement
10. West towards open countryside and Ridge Hill, Kynaston
11. East towards The Pump House and garden, Kynaston

Wider Views

12. A449 from Lyne Down road
13. Much Marcle from Bodenham Bank
14. North-east towards Moorcourt Cottages, Hall Wood SSSI and The Malverns from Gregg's Pit
15. North-west towards St Bartholomew's Church and Marcle Ridge from Gregg's Pit
16. East towards Westons, Much Marcle and The Malverns from Marcle Ridge
17. North-West towards Playford, St Bartholomew's Church and Marcle Ridge from B4024 Dymock Road – entrance to the village from south-east
18. East towards British Camp across traditional standard apple orchards, Rushall
19. South-east towards Much Marcle, Hellens, Hall Wood SSSI and the Cotswolds from Marcle Ridge.