



**Lickey & Blackwell and  
Cofton Hackett**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**THE NEIGHBOURHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2018 to 2030**

**SUBMISSION PLAN  
– AUTUMN 2018**

PRESENTED BY  
THE NDP STEERING COMMITTEE

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## NDP STEERING GROUP

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Louise Kirkup, Kirkwells - consultants  
Keith Woolford, Arch Media - design and principal photography  
and the many residents who have attended the consultation events and sent comments.

July 2018 NDP Consultations



Members of the NDP at the Water Trough, Lickey

**FOREWORD**

As Chair of the Steering Group for the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan, it is my pleasure to welcome everyone reading this important document.

The Localism Act of 2011 gave new rights and powers to local communities which will help us to shape future development at a local level. This document has been prepared after several years of consultation, consideration, research and hard work, and we have endeavoured to ensure the policies in the NDP provide a strong local framework to guide future development in the area.

It is essential that the Neighbourhood Development Plan deals with the main issues facing our two parishes and this Plan has been put together against a background of the adopted Bromsgrove District Plan and the Green Belt Review.

We hope you will agree that it encapsulates our aspirations for Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett as great places for everyone to live in, work in, and visit.

**Nick Forknell**

Chair of NDP Steering Group  
November 2018

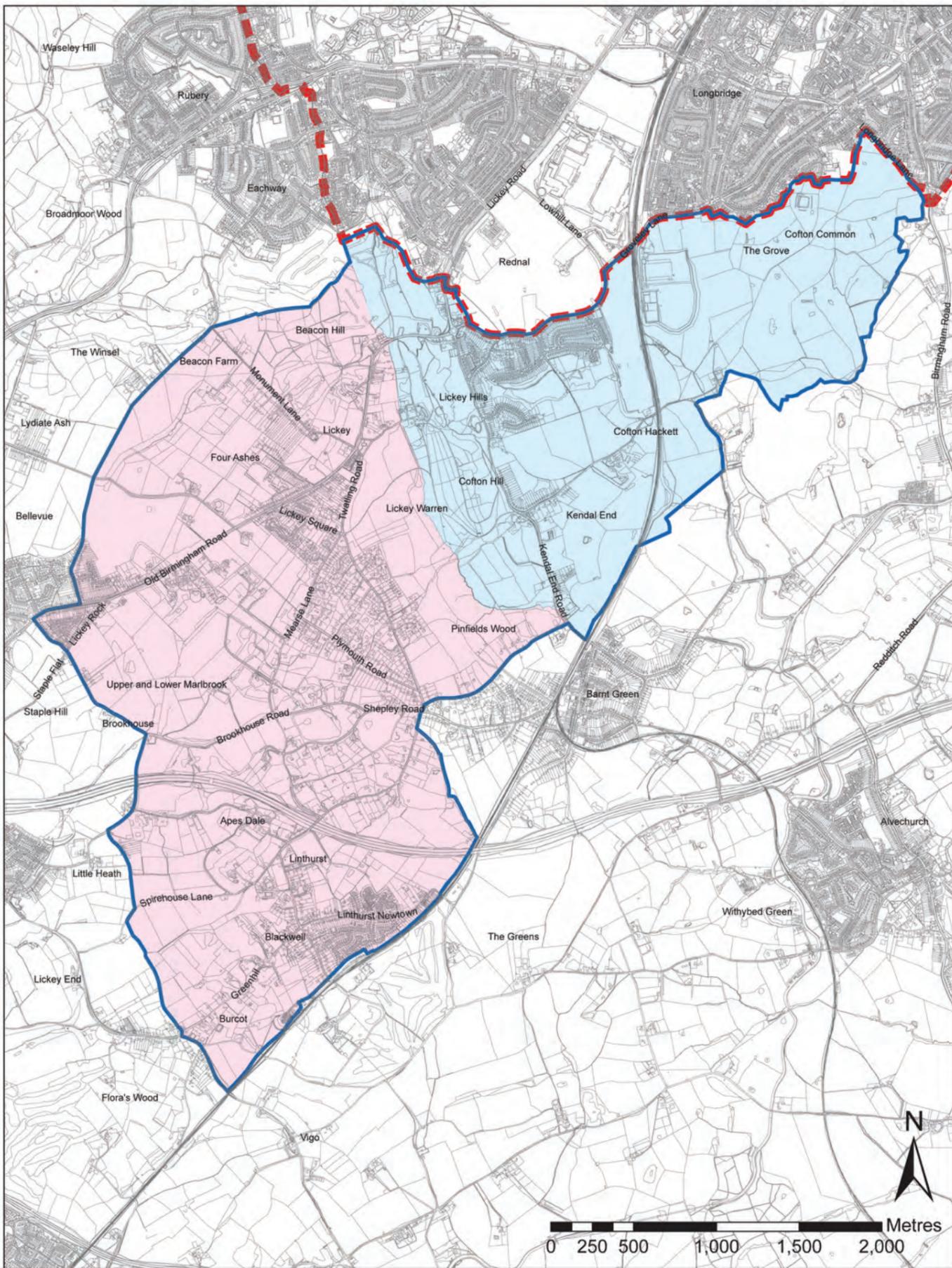


Visitors to the Blackwell, Cofton and Lickey events



NDP Committee Members

LtoR: Cllrs. Keith Duncan and Roger Westbury, consultant Louise Kirkup, Cllr. Nick Forknell, Margaret Hanrahan, Cllrs. Janet King and Jill Harvey



Lickey Road, Cofton Hackett - looking south

# 1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

“What do you like and dislike about your neighbourhood?”

## WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

- 1.1 This is the Submission Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett for the plan period up to 2030. The Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett NDP has been submitted to Bromsgrove District Council who will publish it for a further six weeks consultation.
- 1.2 NDPs are a new type of planning policy document, introduced in the Localism Act 2011, and are prepared by Parish Councils (and some other relevant bodies), in close consultation with local residents and other stakeholders. They sit alongside the national and local authority

## Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan Area

Scale 1:21,000

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- Lickey and Blackwell Parish
- Cofton Hackett Parish
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- District Boundary



**Bromsgrove**  
District Council  
[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

planning policy documents and provide part of the local framework to guide decisions about development. They can include both planning policies and site allocations.

- 1.3 NDPs have to be in general conformity with the local strategic planning framework (in this area provided by Bromsgrove District Council), the Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy and the saved policies of the County of Hereford and Worcester Minerals Local Plan, and have regard to national planning policies such as those set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Overall NDPs have to promote sustainable development by, for example, supporting appropriate development, and protecting and enhancing local character and green spaces.

### NDP PROCESS AND PREPARATION

- 1.4 In December 2013 the two Parish Councils decided to work jointly to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to guide new development in the area.
- 1.5 The process for preparing a NDP is complex and lengthy, and there are a number of key steps. These are set out in Figure 1, below. The Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett NDP is now at the fourth stage - submitting the NDP to Bromsgrove District Council.

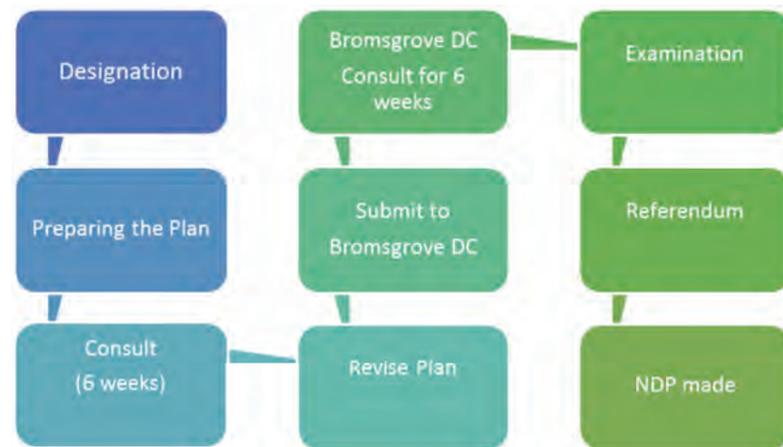


Fig 1. NDP Process



- 1.6 Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parish Councils applied for designation as a neighbourhood area on 1 July 2014 and the designated neighbourhood area was approved by Bromsgrove District Council on 13 October 2014. The designated neighbourhood area is shown on Map 1 (page 4).
- 1.7 A steering group of local residents and Parish Councillors and interested local residents from both Parishes has met regularly to oversee the preparation of the NDP. From the beginning of the plan preparation process there has been a strong intention to engage and consult with as many local people and stakeholders as possible.

1.8 To date, several consultation processes have taken place. These included:

Dates	Event												
July 2013 - 2015	Informal public consultation including Blackwell Festivals. Mainly asking the question "What do you like and dislike about your neighbourhood?"												
April 2014	Questionnaire to Lickey & Blackwell residents												
Summer 2014	Above questionnaire to Cofton Hackett residents												
October 2014 and 2015	Residents' meetings with a simple questionnaire												
October 2016	Three residents' consultation meetings												
June - July 2017	Four consultation meetings on the First Draft Plan												
March 2018	Open Forum Q&A session and update, The Wheel, Blackwell												
July 2018	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Sat 7</td> <td>10-noon</td> <td>The Trinity Centre, Lickey</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1-3pm</td> <td>The Wheel, Blackwell</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>4-6pm</td> <td>Cofton Hackett Village Hall</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wed 11</td> <td>7-9pm</td> <td>The Wheel, Blackwell</td> </tr> </table>	Sat 7	10-noon	The Trinity Centre, Lickey		1-3pm	The Wheel, Blackwell		4-6pm	Cofton Hackett Village Hall	Wed 11	7-9pm	The Wheel, Blackwell
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	1-3pm	The Wheel, Blackwell											
	4-6pm	Cofton Hackett Village Hall											
Wed 11	7-9pm	The Wheel, Blackwell											

Table 1. Consultations



NDP at Blackwell First School Summer Fete, 2013



Consultation Event, Lickey 2017

- 1.9 A number of key themes emerged from this consultation process:
- Appreciation for the green and leafy environment and rural/semi-rural character;
  - Concerns about the impact and design of new development and the need to use the Village Design Statement for Lickey & Blackwell when planning applications are being considered;
  - The need to protect and improve local community facilities;
  - Concerns about traffic volume and speed, parking, bus services and the need for improved broadband and mobile phone signals in parts of the Parish.



Dale Lane, Blackwell



Yew Tree Farm, Brockhouse Road, Blackwell

- 1.10 An Issues and Options document was prepared to draw out the main planning policy related issues from the above themes and to suggest possible planning policy options for addressing them. The document was published for informal public consultation from October to November 2016.
- 1.11 Three drop in consultation events were arranged on Saturday 1 October 2016 at the Trinity Centre, Lickey, Cofton Hackett Village Hall and at The Wheel, Blackwell and another, evening event was held on Wednesday 5 October 2016. Over 80 residents attended, and more than 40 completed questionnaires (see Consultation Statement) were returned.
- 1.12 The completed questionnaires were used to help inform the content of the First Draft Plan. The responses were largely consistent, with overall support for the various approaches to policy options. Comments were more mixed in relation to some policy options including supporting small scale residential development (policy option 5), encouraging a range of housing types (policy option 6), commercial development (policy option 7) and protecting and supporting investment in local community facilities (policy option 8).
- 1.13 The full report of the consultation responses is available as a background document on the NDP websites<sup>1</sup>.

#### LICKEY & BLACKWELL AND COFTON HACKETT FIRST DRAFT PLAN

- 1.14 The First Draft of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was prepared building on the responses to the Issues and Options consultation undertaken in Autumn 2016.
- 1.15 The First Draft Plan was published for a few weeks informal public consultation from 24 June to 14 July 2017, and the online questionnaire survey continued until the end of July 2017. The First Draft Plan was placed on the Parish Councils' websites and hard copies were available on request from the clerk. Comments were invited in writing or by using a comments form. Three public drop in events were held on 24 June at Cofton Hackett Village Hall, The Trinity Centre, Lickey and The Wheel, Blackwell and a further event was held at the Trinity Centre, Lickey on 28 June.
- 1.16 The summary of the responses is provided in the Consultation Statement.

#### REGULATION 14 DRAFT PLAN

- 1.17 This Regulation 14 Draft NDP was revised taking into consideration the responses submitted to the First Draft Plan. The Draft NDP was published for at least six weeks formal public consultation (Regulation 14) from 4 June until 16 July 2018. Consultees and stakeholders were invited to submit representations using a response form or in writing and were invited to a series of open events at the Trinity Centre, The Wheel and at Cofton Hackett Village Hall. A range of representations were submitted from consultation bodies, landowners and developers, and local residents and these are set out in three comments tables which accompany the Consultation Statement. The Submission NDP has been revised further taking into consideration many of the submitted comments and suggestions, with some revisions to the supporting text, amendments and additions to policies and a couple of new policies.

<sup>1</sup> [www.lickeyandblackwellpc.org/neighbourhood-plan/](http://www.lickeyandblackwellpc.org/neighbourhood-plan/) and [www.coftonhackettpc.org/neighbourhood-plan/](http://www.coftonhackettpc.org/neighbourhood-plan/)



The Bilbury Hill Centre, Rose Hill, Cofton Hackett

## 2. A PORTRAIT OF LICKEY & BLACKWELL AND COFTON HACKETT

“...retain open landscape for recreation, exercise and for local wildlife

- 2.1 The two Parishes of Lickey & Blackwell and of Cofton Hackett are located south of the City of Birmingham, and within Bromsgrove, close to the M42 and M5 motorways. The area is protected by Green Belt, with the small residential settlements of Blackwell, Lickey Hills and Cofton Hackett inset within the Green Belt. Barnt Green is the commercial and medical hub with a rail station, but it has a lower population than Lickey & Blackwell. The Lickey Hills Country Park runs approximately north / south in the north of the area, and part of the Longbridge redevelopment site lies within the boundary to the north.



Visitor Centre, Lickey Hills Country Park

2.2 Lickey & Blackwell Parish had a population of 4,058 in 2011 and Cofton Hackett had a population of 1,893 (note - this was before the new development at Longbridge), giving a total of 5,951 for the area (Census 2011<sup>2</sup>). The two Parishes extend over 1290 ha.

**LICKEY & BLACKWELL AND COFTON HACKETT NDP AREA**

2.3 Both Cofton Hackett and Lickey & Blackwell share a boundary with the local commercial centre of Barnt Green. The wooded area known as Lickey Hills Country Park is shared by both Parishes, even though it is under the control of Birmingham City Council, having been bequeathed to the city for recreational purposes. Thus, both Parishes contain a large percentage of woodland, are surrounded by Green Belt, have easy access to the motorway network and provide a pleasant semi-rural home environment for many commuters and retired people. The commonality of the Country Park, as well as the similarities of the housing, together with adjacent geographical location, make the case for a united approach to the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**LICKEY & BLACKWELL - PARISH DESCRIPTION**

2.4 The Lickey Hills run from Rubery down to Barnt Green and are the last line of hills stretching along the western side of the Midlands Plateau. Evidence of a Roman road and subsequent Norman dwellings exist, together with a number of nailers' cottages dating from the Industrial Revolution. Several houses have medieval foundations and are still occupied, such as Twatling Farm. What is now known as Blackwell was noted in the Domesday Book as Lindearde, which later became Linthurst. Former farmsteads such as Twatling Farm may be found throughout the area, their outbuildings now converted to provide upmarket homes.

2.5 The construction of the Birmingham to Gloucester Railway had a profound effect on the area in the 19th century making it popular for the homes of prominent Birmingham industrialists including the Cadburys (chocolate), Oslers (glass), Mitchells (pens) and Brookes (saddles), as well as a multitude of professionals.

2.6 The Parish is effectively split into two parts, now divided by the M42 - to the north a ribbon development roughly following the line of the Rednal to Bromsgrove road (Lickey) and, to the south the village of Blackwell. Between these two are mainly straight residential roads with large houses built at low density. The Parish contains a total of about 1700 homes, three schools (one

residential for Birmingham City Council) and two churches (one for each area). There is some commercial activity including two shops, one garage, a petrol station with small convenience store, a residential conference centre, two hotels and two residential homes for the elderly. A small number of commercial businesses are home-based and an increasing number of residents work partly or fully from home.



Burcot Grange, Greenhill



Lickey Hills Primary School & Nursery



Linthurst Newtown, Blackwell



Blackwell Stores

<sup>2</sup> www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011

## COFTON HACKETT - PARISH DESCRIPTION

- 2.7 Cofton Hackett is a small and hilly parish, covering an area of 467 ha. Bilberry Hill (260m) and Cofton Hill (263m), both part of the Lickey Hills, bound Cofton Hackett to the west. The village is situated about 14.5km (9 miles) south-west of the centre of Birmingham on the eastern slopes of the Lickey Hills. The village is small and scattered.
- 2.8 A settlement was evident here from about 300 years before the Domesday Book and the area still contains a number of sites and buildings of historic interest.
- 2.9 Although there is no obvious village centre, there are two distinct areas of shops including a post office, public house and restaurant, fast food outlets, other services and a vacated motorcar and motorcycle showrooms.
- 2.10 There is a church and a manor house (Cofton Hall) down a long cul-de-sac. Although the area contains a number of pre-Georgian houses, the majority of dwellings are almost entirely private houses built since the First World War.
- 2.11 There has been some commercial development in recent years and the development of the ex-Austin/Rover site of Longbridge has brought a number of new houses into the Parish, such that the population is set to double within the next five years.



'East Works' new housing, Cofton Hackett



1930s Porritt House



Shops, Groveley Lane



Lickey Road, Cofton Hackett



# 3. NDP FOR LICKEY & BLACKWELL AND COFTON HACKETT

*“ ...should not be too prescriptive  
– we also need diversity not pastiche*

- 3.1 The NDP must have regard to national policies and be in general conformity with strategic policies in the Local Plan. The national planning policy context of this NDP may be found in Appendix I. The revised NPPF was published in July 2018. The NDP has been prepared in line with the previous NPPF in line with the NPPF 2018 paragraph 214. which sets out that *“The policies in the previous Framework will apply for the purpose of examining plans, where those plans are submitted on or before 24 January 2019. Where such plans are withdrawn or otherwise do not proceed to become part of the development plan, the policies contained in this Framework will apply to any subsequent plan produced for the area concerned.”*

- 3.2 The current local planning policy framework for the Neighbourhood Development Plan area is the new Bromsgrove District Plan<sup>3</sup>. The Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 was adopted by Bromsgrove District Council on 25 January 2017. The statutory development plan also includes the Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire Adopted Waste Local Plan 2012-27<sup>4</sup> and the “saved” policies of the 1997 Hereford and Worcester Minerals Local Plan<sup>5</sup>. Worcestershire County Council is developing a new Minerals Local Plan for Worcestershire. This will supersede the saved policies of the County of Hereford and Worcester Minerals Local Plan once it is adopted.
- 3.3 The purpose of the Bromsgrove District Plan is to set out the vision for how Bromsgrove Town, the villages and countryside will develop and change in the period up to 2030. The Plan sets out how this vision will be delivered through a strategy of promoting, distributing and delivering sustainable development and growth. The key diagram is reproduced below in Figure 2.
- 3.4 Key Bromsgrove planning policies set out in the Bromsgrove District Plan which provide the framework for this NDP include Policies BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles, BDP2 Settlement Hierarchy and BDP3 Future Housing and Employment Growth. Policy BDP4 Green Belt sets out that the Green Belt will be reviewed before 2023, to help deliver the objectively assessed housing requirement for Bromsgrove District and the West Midlands Conurbation up to 2030. Other important Policies relevant to the NDP include BDP6 Infrastructure Contributions, BDP7 Housing Mix and Density, BDP12 Sustainable Communities, BDP16 Sustainable Transport, BDP19 High Quality Design, BDP20 Managing the Historic Environment, BDP21 Natural Environment, BDP 22 Climate Change, BDP24 Green Infrastructure and BDP25 Health and Well Being.
- 3.5 This NDP has been prepared within this national and local planning policy framework.



Duck Pond, Lickey Hills Country Park

# 4. VISION & OBJECTIVES

“...retain open landscape for recreation, exercise and for local wildlife

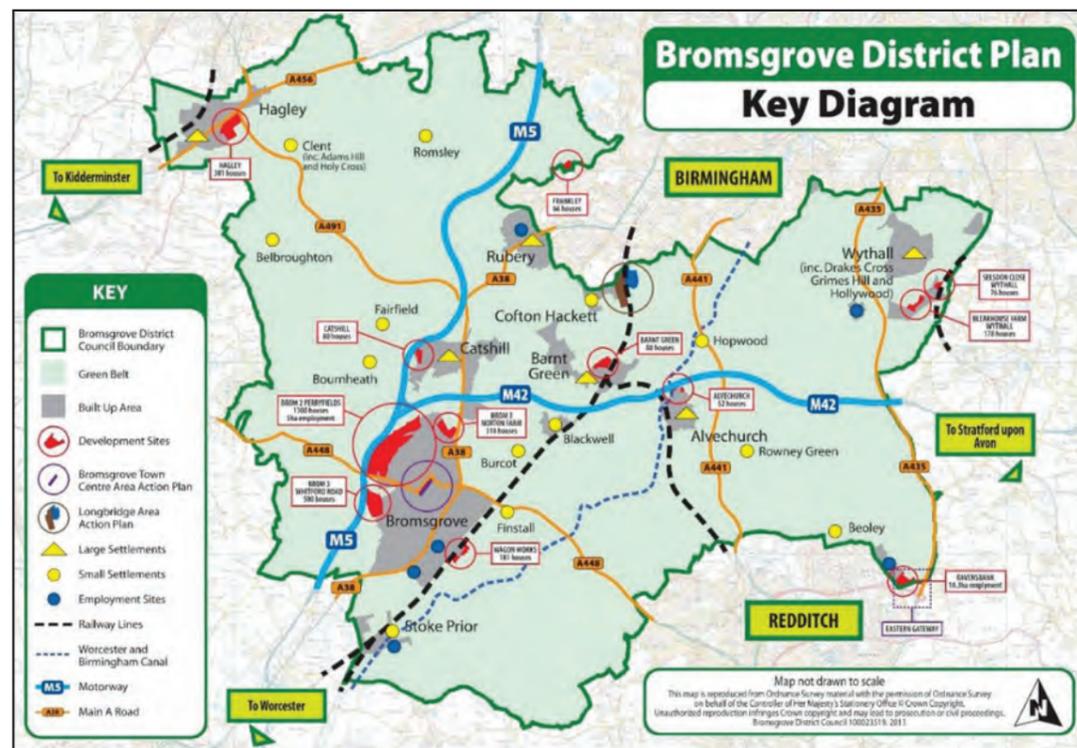


Fig 2. Bromsgrove District Plan Key Diagram

3 <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/policy-and-strategy/planning-policies/local-development-plan/the-bromsgrove-district-plan-2011-30/adopted-bdp.aspx>

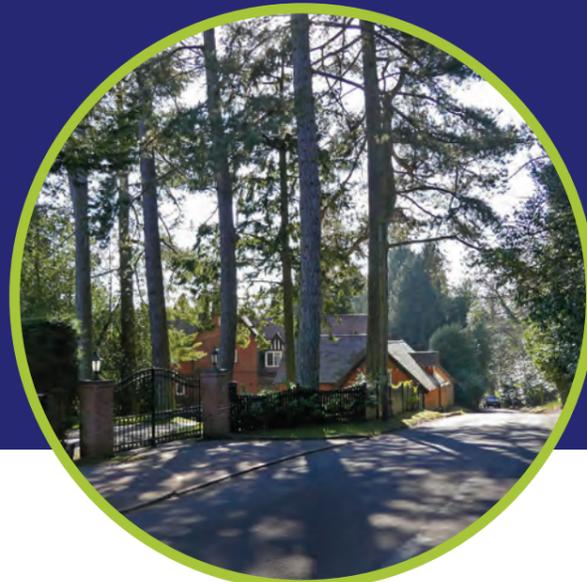
4 [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/940/waste\\_core\\_strategy\\_local\\_plan](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/940/waste_core_strategy_local_plan)

5 [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_strategy/250/emerging\\_minerals\\_local\\_plan](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning_policy_and_strategy/250/emerging_minerals_local_plan)

4.1 The Vision and Objectives have been prepared by the steering group and were consulted upon as part of the Issues and Options consultation and included in the First Draft Plan. There was general support at the drop-in events for the draft vision and objectives, to guide the content and scope of the NDP.

## VISION

Our Vision for the area for the 20 years (2018-38) is to sustainably maintain and enhance the life of our community, retaining its rural character and building on its heritage to shape its future.



Mearse Lane, Shepley

4.2 To achieve this Vision, the NDP has the following Objectives:

## OBJECTIVES

### Objective 1.

We will protect the built, historical and natural environment ensuring that our green spaces, and, where possible, the Green Belt are protected.

(Through Policies NE1 Local Landscape Character, NE2 Protecting and Enhancing Local Biodiversity, NE3 Green Infrastructure (GI), NE4 Geodiversity, BD1 Barnt Green Conservation Area, BD2 Encouraging High Quality Design and BD3 Garden and Backland Development.)

### Objective 2.

Where possible we will retain open land between individual settlements and use this plan to help engage in the wider strategic Green Belt Review of Bromsgrove District Council.

(Through Policies NE1 Local Landscape Character and BD2 Encouraging High Quality Design.)

### Objective 3.

We will promote nature conservation and protect areas of special environmental value.

(Through Policies NE2 Protecting and Enhancing Local Biodiversity, NE4 Geodiversity, and CF3 Local Green Spaces.)



Old Birmingham Road - Marlbrook to Lickey (credit: Google)

### Objective 4.

We will support residential developments of modest size that are in scale with the character of the surrounding area.

(Through Policies H1 New Housing Within Existing Settlements and H2 Housing Mix.)

### Objective 5.

We will seek to ensure any development is suitable in terms of existing and planned infrastructure and road networks.

(Through Policies INF1 Supporting Walking and Cycling and Improvements in Local Transport Infrastructure, INF2 Providing Safe and Accessible Environments For All, and INF3 Communication Technologies.)



Laural Bank Mews, Blackwell

### Objective 6.

We will support sustainable economic and social growth and development and will seek to enhance facilities for all local people in order that the community can take further advantage of a full social and active life style.

(Through Policies B1 Supporting Appropriate Local Enterprise, B2 Supporting Home Working, CF1 Protecting Existing Community Facilities and Supporting Investment in New Facilities, and CF2 Protecting Existing Open Spaces and Recreational Facilities and Supporting Investment in New Facilities.)



Tri-golf, bowling green and tennis courts, Rose Hill

### Objective 7.

To ensure that our Parishes develop over the coming years we will support the local economy to expand by encouraging suitable small business and employment opportunities for people of all ages.

(Through Policies B1 Supporting Appropriate Local Enterprise and B2 Supporting Home Working.)

### Objective 8.

We will prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan which embraces the concept of local distinctiveness and contributes to a sense of place and well-being for the community and future generations.

(Through All NDP Policies.)



Protected Heathland on the Lickey Hills



off Greenhill, Blackwell

## 5. KEY ISSUES & NDP PLANNING POLICIES

“Landscape is a valuable asset, which if lost cannot be replaced”

- 5.1 The policies in this section will be applied in the consideration of any planning applications submitted within the designated NDP area. These policies are necessarily wide ranging in their scope, and taken together, should help to deliver sustainable development within the two Parishes.



Wildflower Verge and the Holy Trinity church, Lickey

5.2 A NDP has the same legal status as the Local Plan once it has been agreed at a referendum and is made (brought into legal force) by the local planning authority. At this point it becomes part of the statutory development plan. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.3 The policies have been prepared following the identification of the key planning issues for the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett neighbourhood area. The key issues were identified by the Neighbourhood Development Plan steering group, taking into consideration the responses from early informal consultations. The key planning issues the NDP addresses are:

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

The neighbourhood area is fortunate to have a range of local community facilities ranging from community halls and churches to public houses. There are also a number of recreational facilities and all these facilities contribute to a better quality of life and health and wellbeing. The NDP includes policies which protect these facilities and support future investment in them to ensure they continue to meet local needs. The NDP also identifies several proposed Local Green Spaces which are protected from development.

**COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS INTERESTS**

Large scale employment related development would not be appropriate in the neighbourhood area, but the NDP supports small scale business development to support the sustainability of the area and reduce the need for travel. There has been growth in the number of people working from home across the UK and locally and the NDP supports development which would help more residents to work from home, subject to certain criteria.



Myhill Playground, Cofton Hackett



Adventure Playground, Country Park



Lickey Hills Garage

**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

A defining characteristic of the neighbourhood area is its “greenness”. Located within the Green Belt, the various settlements are surrounded by an attractive rolling landscape of pasture, woodland and the slopes of the Lickey Hills. The built-up areas have many mature trees and many properties are built at a relatively low density with large gardens. Planning policies aim to protect and enhance the geology, landscape character and wildlife of the neighbourhood area.

**BUILT HERITAGE AND DESIGN**

The neighbourhood area includes a number of listed buildings and a conservation area. Policies have been prepared to help protect the distinctive character of different parts of the settlements and aim to ensure that any new development is designed sensitively, taking into consideration local materials, scale and detailing.

**HOUSING**

The neighbourhood area’s location within the Green Belt means that extensive new housing developments would be inappropriate. However, it is likely that some small-scale infill development may come forward over the Plan period and the NDP supports this subject to certain criteria. The NDP also encourages developers to provide smaller housing to meet the needs of first time buyers, smaller households and older residents.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

The various informal consultations have shown that traffic and accessibility are key issues for the neighbourhood area. The NDP identifies areas where improvements could be made to improve accessibility and reduce reliance on the car. The NDP also includes a policy which promotes improved access to communication technologies.



Shepley Steps, Linhurst Road



Old and new - Station Road, Blackwell



NDP Consultation Event

- 5.4 The implementation of the NDP will be monitored on a regular basis by the Parish Councils. There will be a full or partial review of the NDP following the completion of the Green Belt Review which will be undertaken by approximately 2023, and the subsequent adoption of the Local Plan Review.



Cofton Lake

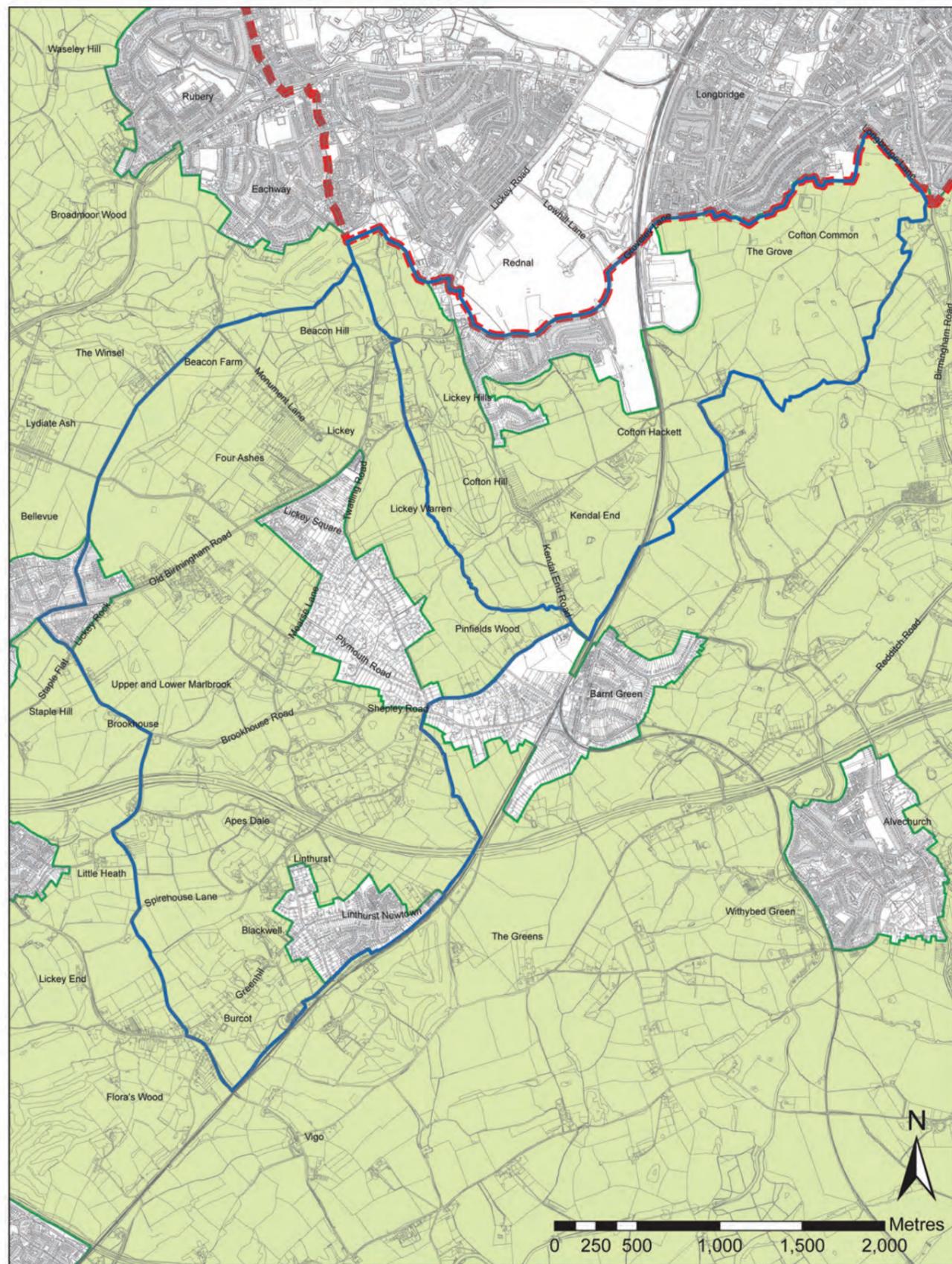


Orchid, Lickey Wildflower Verge

## 6. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

“ Retain open landscape for recreation, exercise and for local wildlife

- 6.1 Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett are largely located within the Green Belt (see Map 2, page 24) and only very limited development is appropriate. The attractive countryside is highly valued by local residents and has a distinctive character, with rolling hills, pastures, woodlands and an extensive country park with a small lake.



Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett  
**Green Belt**

- Green Belt
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- District Boundary



Map 2

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Upper Bittell Reservoir

- 6.2 In the public consultations carried out in 2013 and 2014, comments included: "Keep Blackwell a village, leave green fields alone" and "Enjoy living in such a green and leafy area". The most "liked" aspects of living in the area included "green fields, rural aspect, Lickey Hills, woodland, open spaces and countryside".
- 6.3 The value local residents place on the natural environment of the neighbourhood area was also evident in the Issues and Options consultation when comments included "landscape is a valuable asset, which if lost cannot be replaced", "the protection of woodland seems especially important" and "retain open landscape for recreation, exercise and for local wildlife".
- 6.4 The Policies in this section seek to protect and enhance the natural environment in terms of geology, landscape character and wildlife, and aim to ensure that new development is designed and sited sensitively to ensure that change is successfully accommodated.
- 6.5 The landscape character of the rural area is described in terms of landscape types in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance 2012<sup>6</sup> and includes:

**URBAN**

The very small percentage of the NDP (Map 3, page 26) area which is considered to be 'urban' is the residential part of Cofton Hackett bordering Birmingham City.

**WOODED HILLS AND FARMLANDS**

These are medium to large scale upstanding, wooded landscapes with a sloping topography and well-defined character. The woods tend to occur as discrete blocks framing larger areas of enclosed fields.

**SETTLED FARMLANDS WITH PASTORAL LAND USE**

These are small-scale rolling lowland, settled agricultural landscapes with a dominant pastoral land use, defined by their hedged fields. Hedgerow and streamside trees, together with those associated with settlement provide tree cover in a landscape with a notable network of winding lanes, scattered farms and clusters of wayside settlements.

**ENCLOSED COMMONS**

These have an ordered pattern of large fields of regular outline, straight roads and estate plantations. This is an open, formal landscape with a visual clarity primarily defined by the straightness of the field boundaries.

- 6.6 These areas are shown on Map 3 over the page.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4788/landscape\\_character\\_assessment\\_supplementary\\_guidance](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4788/landscape_character_assessment_supplementary_guidance)

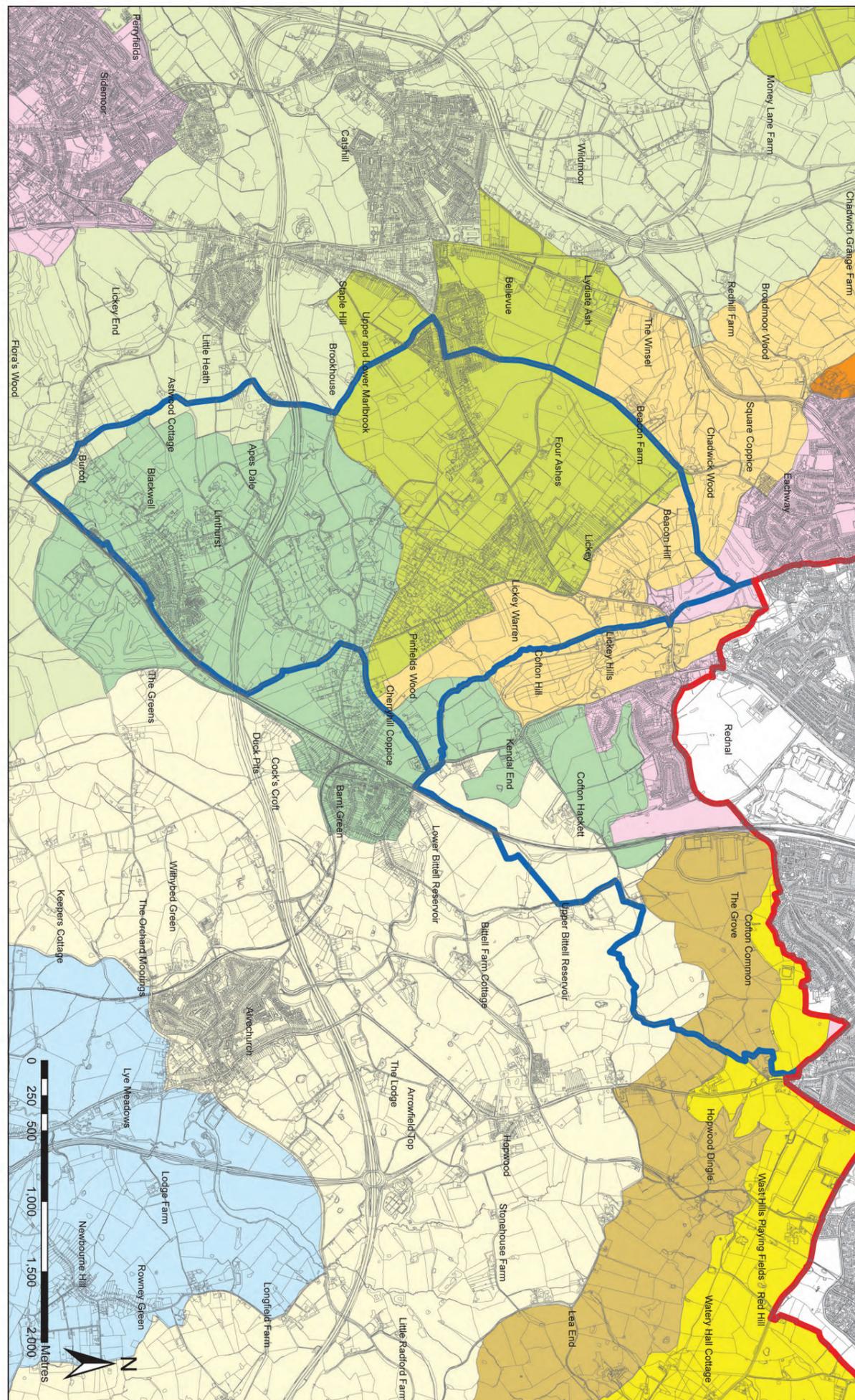


6.7 At a local level Lickey & Blackwell is dominated by regular planned enclosure, which is particularly evident in the northern area west of Lickey Warren. Here the grid pattern of fields and relatively straight lanes suggest this was an area of once open grazed common which was enclosed during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The southern part of the Parish around Blackwell has a more irregular field pattern created over generations probably dating back to mediaeval land divisions.

6.8 In their response to the Regulation 14 consultation, Worcestershire County Council suggested that the NDP should include a reference to the Worcestershire Farmsteads Assessment Framework to inform the development/re-development of traditional farmsteads. Historic farmsteads and their buildings contribute to local distinctiveness and the varied character of our countryside by reflecting local geology, building traditions and farming practices. The future of the majority of historic farm buildings is increasingly dependent on a new role outside mainstream agricultural use. Since 2009 Worcestershire County Council has been involved with a series of projects aimed at enhancing understanding of farmstead character and survival within Worcestershire, and the wider West Midlands region, and developing conservation guidance that can be used to inform the sustainable development or re-development of historic farmsteads and their landscapes.

Amongst the most notable buildings in our NDP area are a small number of historic farmsteads, which were the subject of a study in 2009-12 by a team of local residents working with the Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council. Their work was included in the Historic Farmstead Characterisation report. The following farmsteads are all in use as dwellings (the number of homes provided by the conversion of farm buildings is given in brackets) and two are still farmed but no farming family lives in the modern former farmhouses, which are mostly occupied by professional or business families:

- Lower Shepley Farm, Littleheath Lane, Lickey End (two homes and small commercial units).
- New House Farm, Greenhill, Blackwell.
- The Old Rose and Crown, Rose Hill, Lickey (now a hotel).
- Twatling Farm, 19 Twatling Road.
- Upper Shepley Farm, Dale Lane, Lickey End (four homes) - present farmer lives in modern house.
- Yew Tree Farm, Brookhouse Road, Lickey (five homes) - farmed by tenant.
- Cofton Hackett farmsteads.
- Ten Ashes Farm, goes back to the early 1600 hundreds - now a private dwelling.
- Parsonage Farm - this was covered over by the shadow factory built in 1937/38 to build aircraft in WWII. Now becoming a new housing estate with a community centre.
- Cofton Richards Farm - one of the old manors of Cofton Hackett. No longer a working farm but a private dwelling.
- Lowhill Farm - situated in Cofton Park and was part of Cofton Hackett. No longer a farm but has tenants in two or more flats. Various facilities for use by users of Cofton Park.
- Cofton Hall Farm - no longer a farm, now a private dwelling.
- Cofton Common Farm - located near to Longbridge Lane. No longer exists as a building.
- Kendal End Farm - farm house exists as a private dwelling, all the farm buildings converted into private dwellings.



6.9 Greenhill was once predominantly farmland as house names suggest, such as New House Farm. Today most of the farm houses are residential dwellings although some farms in the area are still working farms and these include Yew Tree Farm, Brookhouse Road near Mearse Lane, Lickey where dairy farming is still pursued, although the thriving watercress industry ended many years ago. It is fair to say that each discrete settlement within the neighbourhood area is currently protected by areas of pasture and woodland which provide a buffer against coalescence of each residential area. These are very necessary 'green lungs', providing a green vista at the entrance to villages and giving a rural feel to the area, which is so valued by local residents.



Greenhill – entrance to Blackwell Village

6.10 The Lickey Hills are owned and maintained by Birmingham City Council. The Lickey Hills County Park straddles the Parish Council areas of Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett. At a height of 298 metres, the summit near Monument Lane is the highest point until the Ural Mountains to the east. The Lickey Hills are an important watershed with the Arrow flowing southward into the rivers Avon and Severn and streams flowing into the Rea on their way to the Trent and the North Sea. The Lickey & Blackwell Village Design Statement sets out landscape guidelines for the Country Park and surrounding area these include the following:



Tai Chi on Beacon Hill, Lickey

- A landscape plan is essential when any development is contemplated near to the Country Park;
- Developments on the boundary of the Park should include a Buffer / Transition Zone of existing trees and hedges or new planting using locally appropriate species;
- Pre-application discussions;
- Ensuring planned development does not endanger wildlife - see para 6.23;
- Consideration of any visual impact of development from key viewpoints including the top of Old Birmingham Road from all directions, Brookhouse Lane, looking up towards Gorse Hill, Junction of St Catherine's Road and Linthurst Road, views west and north over Apes Dale;
- Protection of open skylines by limiting building heights;
- Open spaces, fields, and gaps are essential to the character of the area; and
- Consideration of flooding.

6.11 In terms of the settlement pattern, the north and south of Lickey & Blackwell Parish are very different. Lickey is served by the fairly wide straight Old Birmingham Road and Rose Hill linking Birmingham and Bromsgrove and following in parts the Roman road from Droitwich to Metchley. Ribbon housing development along the road has a suburban, low density character of buildings surrounded by fields of pasture bounded by hedgerows and with stands of mature trees.



Linehouse Lane, Marlbrook

6.12 Blackwell's roads are much narrower and winding denoting their Mediaeval origins. Here the roads are mainly tree-lined and often without footways. Access to Blackwell Village is restricted by the width of the entrance roads, the railway bridge in the north (Linthurst Newtown) and the winding, and quite steep, Greenhill in the south.

6.13 Trees and hedges are an extremely important feature of much of the area and are described in both section 10.0 of the Lickey & Blackwell Village Design Statement<sup>7</sup> and in a series of tree walks leaflets (see Appendix II) published and printed by Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council. In parts of the Parish the old pattern of ash next to oak along field boundaries can still be found and they are the basis of the natural landscape in the Parish. Overall the many mature trees and hedgerows add to the overall "greenness" of the two Parishes and it is important that any new development protects and enhances this aspect of the local character.



Balancing Pools, Blackwell

6.14 The Parish contains numerous trees which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) although some have been lost to development. All trees in Barnt Green Conservation Area are protected. Hedges are particularly at risk from development and their important function of maintaining the semi-rural character of the Parish, which is becoming more suburbanised, cannot be overstated. Trees and hedges give attractive village entrances and provide protection from the M42 as well as providing habitats to a variety of wildlife. Much of the local hedging is of native species with hawthorn being particularly prevalent. Although this paragraph refers specifically to Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council's Village Design Statement, the aim would be to give Cofton Hackett's trees and hedges the same protection.



Linehouse Lane, Marlbrook

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/media/1076569/Lickey-and-Blackwell-Village-Design-Statement.pdf>

- 6.15 There is concern that the extensive areas of Green Belt (Map 2, page 24), with their predominantly semi-rural character will be under pressure from development when the Green Belt is reviewed in the future. There are particular local concerns about farmland at Yew Tree Farm, the quarry on Brookhouse Road and land on Linehouse Lane, which together act as a buffer between Blackwell and Barnt Green and Lickey Grange and Marlbrook. Land on Old Birmingham Road, Lickey, acts as a buffer between Lickey Hills and Lickey Grange and Marlbrook. On one side of the road is the former Marlbrook Tip and on the other a smallholding. Residents have expressed concerns that if housing were allowed along the former smallholding site an important green gap along Old Birmingham Road would be lost.
- 6.16 Green Belt is one of the strongest forms of protection against inappropriate development in UK planning. The NDP acknowledges the importance to its area of the Green Belt designation, which has protected Bromsgrove from major Birmingham overspill housing for 60 years. The NDP provides robust evidence for the forthcoming Green Belt Review about to be prepared by Bromsgrove District Council.
- 6.17 However, the NDP can include planning policies to help protect the special landscape character of the area and to help ensure that new landscaping schemes use appropriate species and building materials to enhance landscape character.



The Stocken, Cofton Hackett

- 6.18 NPPF paragraph 109 sets out that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Paragraph 113 advises that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged.
- 6.19 Relevant Bromsgrove District Plan Policies include BDP19.1 Policy High Quality Design which will deliver high quality people-focused space through, amongst other things:
- e. *Ensuring development enhances the character and distinctiveness of the local area; ...*
  - p. *Ensuring all trees that are appropriate (e.g. in terms of size, species, conditions and predicted climate) are retained and integrated within new development; and*
  - q. *Ensuring development incorporates sufficient, appropriate soft landscaping and measures to reduce the potential impact of pollution (air, noise, vibration, light, water) to occupants, wildlife and the environment;*



Cofton Hackett from the Lickey Hills

- 6.20 Policy DP20.2 Managing the Historic Environment supports development proposals which sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets including their setting. This includes:
- c. *The historic landscape of the District, including locally distinctive settlement patterns, field systems, woodlands and historic farmsteads; and*
  - d. *Designed landscapes, including parks and gardens, cemeteries, churchyards, public parks and urban open spaces.*
- 6.21 In Policy BDP21.1 Natural Environment the Council will seek to achieve better management of Bromsgrove's natural environment by expecting developments to:
- g) *Protect and enhance the distinctive landscape character of Bromsgrove, as identified in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment, and take account of the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance.*
- 6.22 Policy NE1 Local Landscape Character encourages development to protect and enhance our distinctive local landscapes.

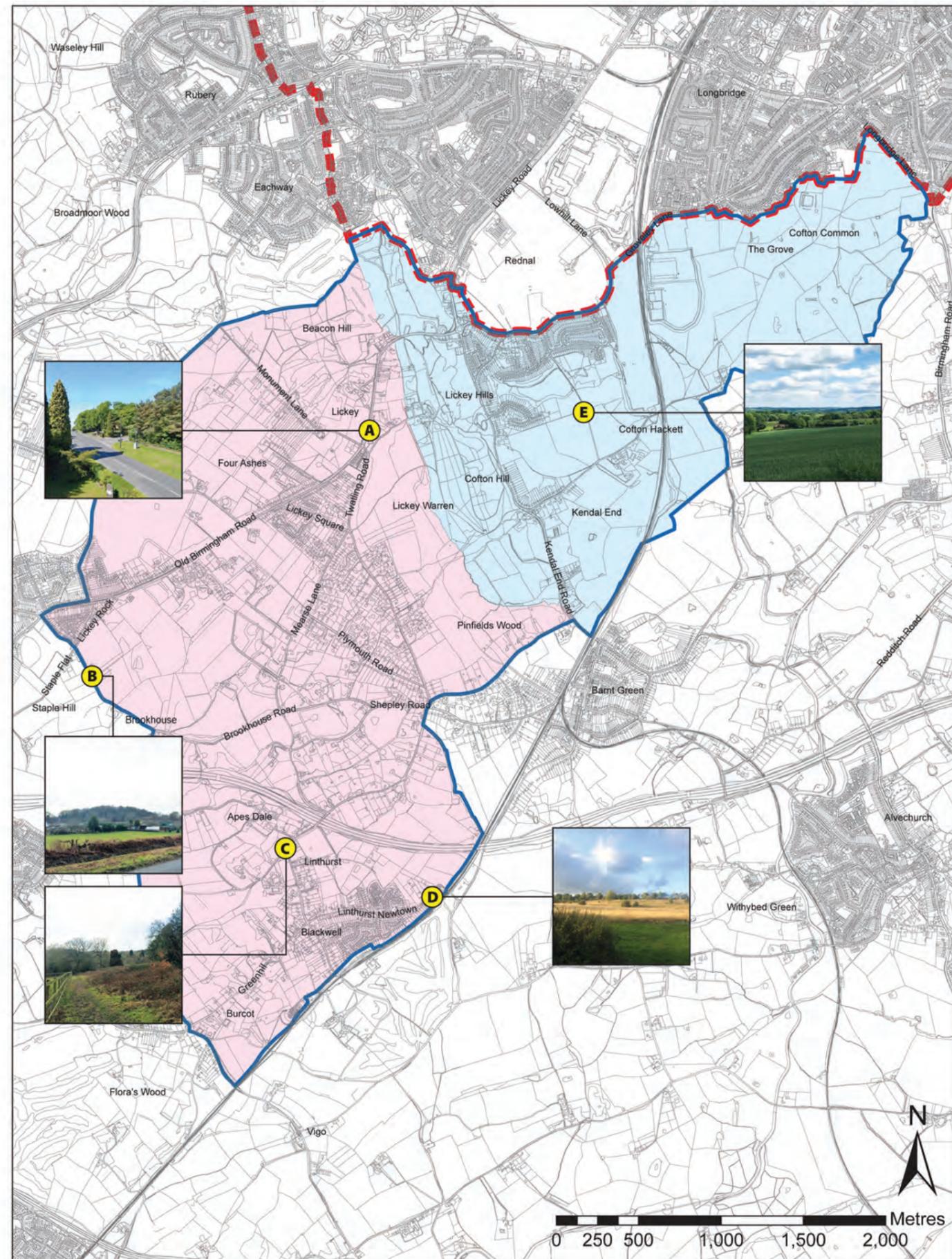
## POLICY NE1 LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Landscaping proposals in new development should take into account the latest Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment and its guidelines in accordance with Policy BDP21.1.

Landscaping schemes should be designed to protect and enhance the distinctive elements which contribute to local landscape character in Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett. Where appropriate, schemes should take account of the following guidelines:

- Hedgerow patterns should be conserved and restored with priority given to primary hedgerows. Boundary treatments should include use of hedges comprising locally appropriate species such as beech, holly, hawthorn, and native berberis and pyracantha. Mature trees should be protected on site wherever possible, and any felled trees replaced with native species which grows to an appropriate scale.
- Tree cover along water courses should be conserved and enhanced where possible.
- Areas of ancient woodland are protected, and planting of new woodlands is encouraged which reflects the scale, shape and composition of the existing ancient woodland character, favouring oak as the major species. Traditional orchard priority habitat is also protected.
- Where possible, remaining areas of permanent pasture around the edges of existing settlements should be protected from development to avoid merging together of settlements. Historic field patterns should be maintained.
- The visual impacts of development seen from key viewpoints should be considered including:
  - The top of Old Birmingham Road from all directions,
  - Brookhouse Lane, looking up towards Gorse Hill,
  - Junction of St Catherine's Road and Linthurst Road and views west and north over Apes Dale,
  - Linthurst Newtown towards motorway / Barnt Green, and
  - The Stocken towards the Reservoir and Cofton Church Lane

These are shown on Map 4.
- Where a development proposal impacts on an identified Key Viewpoint (see Map 4), a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or similar study should be carried out to ensure that the landscape is not compromised.
- Developments on the boundary of the Lickey Hills Country Park should include a buffer / transition zone of existing trees and hedges or new planting using locally appropriate species.
- Designs should ensure that developments consider the wider landscape and impact on the open skyline.
- Redevelopment, alteration or extension of historic farmsteads and agricultural buildings within the Parishes for employment or residential uses should be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials and form. Due reference should be made, and full consideration be given to the Worcestershire Farmsteads Characterisation Project."
- Schemes should minimise flood risk both to the development and other built up areas, by taking into consideration the local topography and hill slopes and direction of rain water flow.



Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett  
**Photographic Locations**

- Lickey and Blackwell Parish
- Cofton Hackett Parish
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- District Boundary



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## WILDLIFE

6.23 Areas of wildlife importance in the NDP area are shown on Map 5. The Bromsgrove Green Infrastructure Baseline Report 2013<sup>8</sup> identifies a number of natural environment assets in the neighbourhood area. These are shown on Map 5 and include:

- A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Bittell Reservoirs (partly within the neighbourhood area)
- Six Local Wildlife Sites at Spinneyfields off Monument Lane, Lickey; Green Hill off Spirehouse Lane, Blackwell; The Quarry, Brookhouse Road; Linthurst Road and two sites in the Lickey Hills Country Park



Orchid, Lickey Wildflower Verge

6.24 Lickey Hills Country Park contains important heathland presently being restored. Over 380 species of flowering plants, 350 species of fungi and 17 species of fern have been found at Lickey Hills so far. The tops of Bilberry, Cofton and Rednal Hills boast fine expanses of rare heathland. Unusually this is dominated by bilberry, a plant more typical of true upland areas. The woodlands here were planted less than 150 years ago. Nearer to the Visitor Centre, over 70 species of tree are found in the arboretum including exotic pines, spruces, cypresses, redwoods, maples and birches along with beeches and oaks.

6.25 Pinfield Wood is an area of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and is at least 400 years old. Beech, oak, hazel, rowan and birch are common here. In the spring the whole area around the wood is covered by bluebells. Adding to the array of colour are white flowered wood sorrel, wood anemone, foxgloves, speedwells, stitchworts and buttercups. Pinfield Wood also provides a habitat for bluebells and bog-loving plants including nine very rare species.

6.26 There is also an area of Ancient Woodland at Cherry Hill Road within Lickey & Blackwell Parish area and near Barnt Green. The Grove, after which Groveley Lane is named; is thought to be an ancient wood which appears on the earliest maps of Cofton Common and Cofton Hackett. It forms an important part of the Green Belt buffer between the Urban area of Birmingham and Cofton Hackett.

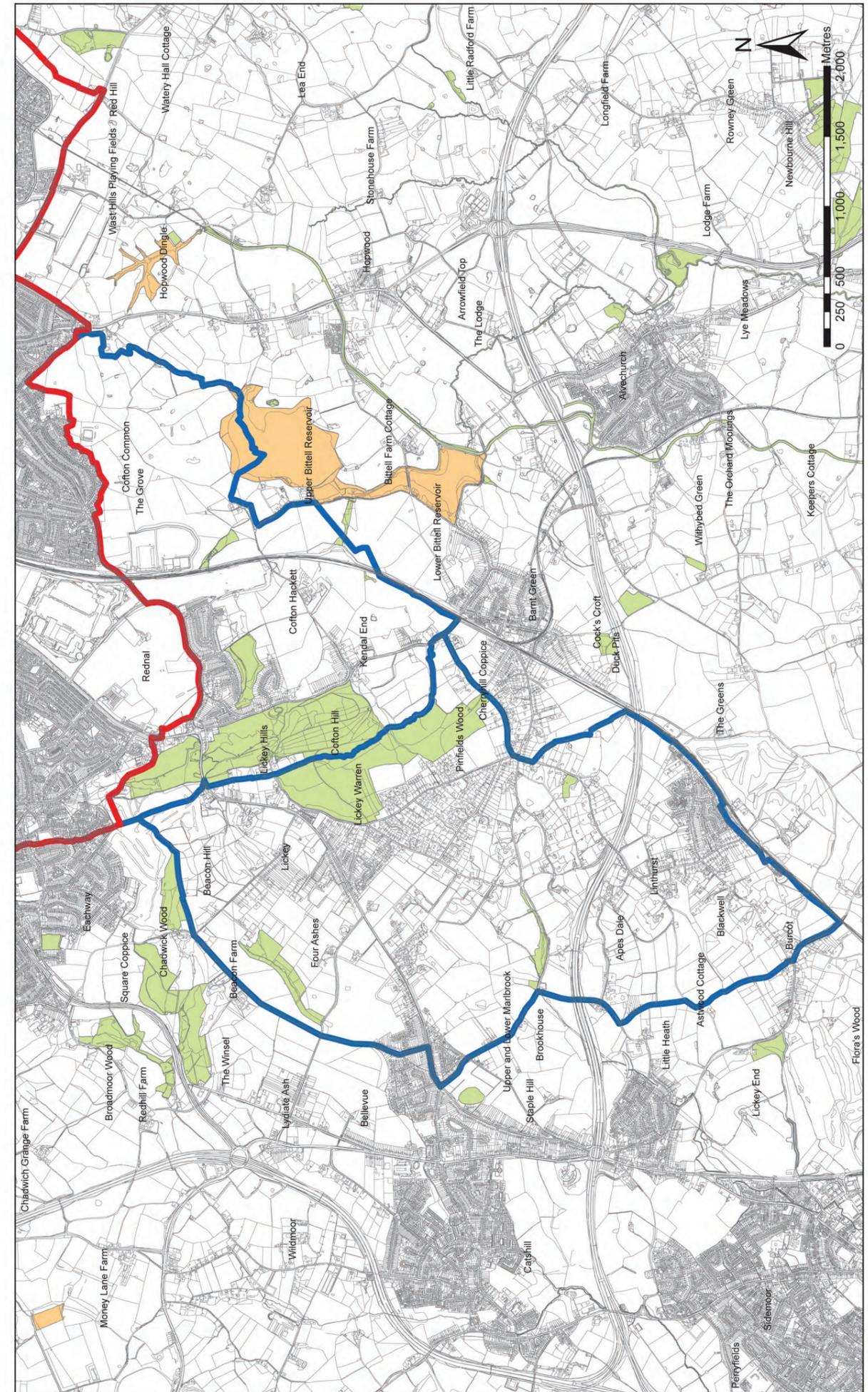
6.27 Important local species and habitats identified in the Bromsgrove Biodiversity Action Plan<sup>9</sup> (BAP) include: Bats, Hay meadows, Acid grassland, Veteran Trees, Canals, Urban. Badgers are to be found at several sites throughout the NDP area.

6.28 Since 1986 Bittell Reservoirs have been designated by Natural England as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and are unique in Worcestershire. The site is 65 Ha and is classified as a Biological Conservation Area for birds, butterflies, dragonflies, wild animals as well as having important fauna and flora. The Site is managed by Barnt Green Waters Ltd, a nonprofit making company who own the sporting rights which are licenced to Barnt Green Sailing Club and Fishing Club. There is also a bird watching club and a triathlon club who use the reservoir and surrounding area. Membership of all these clubs is open to the general public although the area is not generally open for public access.

6.29 Part of the Northern area of the SSSI site falls within Cofton Hackett so it is important for our NDP to protect the reservoirs and surrounding Green Belt area from development as required in the NPPF 118. 'Proposed Development on land within or outside SSSI likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI should not normally be permitted'.

8 <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/media/751926/GI-Baseline-Report-2013.pdf>

9 [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20252/environmental\\_policy/1155/biodiversity\\_action\\_plan](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20252/environmental_policy/1155/biodiversity_action_plan)



## POLICY NE2 PROTECTING AND ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY

Development proposals that impact on local wildlife and habitats identified on Map 5 (page 35) should demonstrate how biodiversity will be protected and enhanced.

Where possible, buildings and landscaping should incorporate features which will support wildlife such as roosting opportunities for bats, the installation of bird nest boxes including swift boxes, and the use of native species in landscape planting (see Policy NE1).

Ponds are protected, and the incorporation of new ponds and areas of wetland are encouraged as part of sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS). Where a culverted watercourse falls within the footprint of a development, the watercourse should be restored to a natural channel.

Wildlife enhancement schemes should link into and enhance existing biodiversity networks and wildlife corridors.

- 6.30 NPPF paragraph 113 advises that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.
- 6.31 Important water sources start in the Lickey Hills. The Longbridge East Works Development has storm water drains from new housing going directly into these water courses. Yellow Fish<sup>10</sup> is an Environment Agency project (in England) that builds on an international approach to protecting the environment. It involves stencilling a yellow fish symbol beside drains to remind people that any waste entering them may go directly to the nearest stream, river, lake, canal, beach or bathing water – causing pollution and killing wildlife.
- 6.32 Development proposals in Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett may present opportunities to incorporate features such as roosting opportunities for bats, the installation of bird nest boxes or the use of native species in the landscape planting to support and enhance local biodiversity, encouraging green roofs and using sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Care should be taken to ensure that badger setts are not disturbed.
- 6.33 NPPF paragraph 113 advises that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.
- 6.34 Worcestershire County Council is responsible for preparing the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)<sup>11</sup> for the County. One of the main aims of the Worcestershire BAP is to assess how the limited resources available can best be used to protect and enhance the species and habitats that remain. There are 47 Action Plans within the Worcestershire Local BAP: 19 habitats, 25 species and three generic action plans.
- 6.35 Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP21 Natural Environment sets out Bromsgrove’s approach to protecting and enhancing local biodiversity. Policy NE2 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity aims to ensure that new development protects and enhances sites and species of wildlife value in the Neighbourhood Area.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avoiding-pollution-yellow-fish-scheme>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20252/environmental\\_policy/1155/biodiversity\\_action\\_plan](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20252/environmental_policy/1155/biodiversity_action_plan)

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 6.36 The NPPF defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as “a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities”. GI comprises the planned and managed network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. GI comprises many different elements including biodiversity, the landscape, the historic environment, the water environment (also known as blue infrastructure) and publicly accessible green spaces and informal recreation sites.
- 6.37 Multifunctional green infrastructure is important to underpin the overall sustainability of a development by performing a range of functions including flood risk management, the provision of accessible green space, climate change adaptation and supporting biodiversity.
- 6.38 The Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Partnership has produced the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy<sup>12</sup> to drive forward the delivery of green infrastructure in the county. It sets out county-scale principles to inform plans and strategies being developed by partner organisations and to enable a coherent approach to delivery across a range of initiatives.



Cemetery Extension Wildflowers, Lickey



Insect Square, Lickey Hills Country Park

- 6.39 The Strategy sets out in paragraph 5.9 that good quality green infrastructure will contribute to the value and desirability of a development by providing spaces for relaxation and opportunities for healthier lifestyles, contributing to community cohesion, and making the settlement comfortable and liveable through cooling and shading which offset the impacts of climate change. Green infrastructure can also contribute to water storage and management to ameliorate the impact of flooding, incorporate renewable energy use and passive solar gain through building orientation and design. The Strategy goes on to say in paragraph 5.10 that even the most modest developments can contribute towards and benefit from the provision of green infrastructure at a local scale. Good practice examples of GI approaches have been brought forward into Policy NE3 Green Infrastructure.
- 6.40 NPPF paragraph 114 sets out that local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_strategy/1002/planning\\_for\\_green\\_infrastructure](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning_policy_and_strategy/1002/planning_for_green_infrastructure)

- 6.41 Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP24 Green Infrastructure sets out how the Council will deliver a high quality multifunctional Green Infrastructure network across Bromsgrove.
- 6.42 Policy NE3 supports a GI approach to new development in Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett with a higher level of detail relevant to the Neighbourhood Area.

### POLICY NE<sub>3</sub> GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE (GI)

New development should ensure the protection and enhancement of the existing green infrastructure assets and the creation of multifunctional green infrastructure networks as part of master planning, landscaping and building design.

GI networks should contribute to ecological enhancements, flood risk and water quality management, and the landscape and historic character of Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett.

Proposals for new development should include, where possible, examples of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), green roofs, and larger developments should aim to incorporate the following where appropriate: areas of natural habitat, informal open space, footpaths, bridleways, cycleways and street trees.

Proposals should demonstrate how these networks will be achieved and maintained in perpetuity.



- 6.45 There are two faults on both sides of these hills which have created the steep slopes on the east and west of the range. The original horizontal bed of Quartzite was pushed upward and folded into an anticline, an arched shaped fold. The Quartzite has been quarried for road stone for at least two centuries. The quarries in the area contain evidence of the tumultuous geological history of the Hills. Barnt Green Road Quarry in the Country Park has examples of faulting and rock folding including an impressive overfold. At the south end of the range there is a small outcrop of Pre-Cambrian rock on private land. At the end of the Ice Age, 150,000 years ago, a melting glacial lake exploited a weakness in the Quartzite, creating the gorge between Rednal and Bilberry Hills.



Rose Hill Quarry

- 6.46 NPPF paragraph 109 advises that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils. Paragraph 117 sets out that to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests.
- 6.47 Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP 21.1 sets out that *the Council will seek to achieve better management of Bromsgrove's natural environment by expecting developments to:*
  - a) *Protect and enhance core areas of high nature conservation value (including nationally protected sites and irreplaceable nature resources such as sites with geological interest, ancient woodlands and habitats of principle importance); and*
  - h) *Contribute to the conservation and enhancement of geodiversity, in line with the objectives and actions in the Worcestershire Geodiversity Action Plan, where appropriate;*
- 6.48 Policy NE4 Geodiversity seeks to minimise the impacts of development on geodiversity – our soils, landforms, rocks, minerals and fossils.

### GEOLGY OF THE LICKEY HILLS

- 6.43 The Bromsgrove Green Infrastructure Baseline Report 2013<sup>13</sup> identifies the following sites of geological importance in the neighbourhood area:

- Local Geological Sites at Kendal End Farm (inland outcrops) and Lickey Hill Quarry (quarry, disused); and
- Numerous Sites of Geological Interest in Lickey Hills Country Park

- 6.44 The Lickey Hills form a significant landscape feature and are a natural barrier to development. The highest point is on Beacon Hill which is composed of Clent Breccia from the Permian period, 299 million years ago. However, the most interesting area geologically is the north-south oriented ridge of older hills of Cambrian Lickey Quartzite – Cofton Hill, Bilberry Hill and Rednal Hill – which were laid down around 488 million years ago.



The 'Boulders' (bedrock outcrops), Bilberry Hill

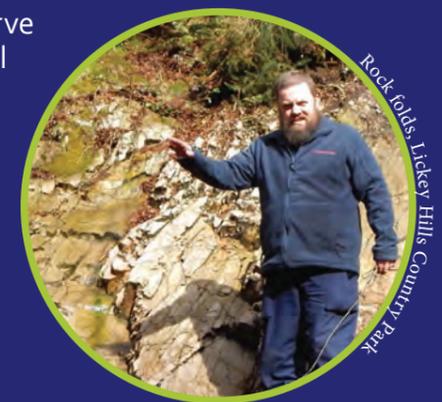
<sup>13</sup> <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/media/751926/GI-Baseline-Report-2013.pdf>

### POLICY NE<sub>4</sub> GEODIVERSITY

Development proposals should seek to preserve and enhance the neighbourhood area's natural geodiversity and the man-made legacy of quarrying and stone working.

Particular regard should be had to soils and landforms and the great variety in the geology of the area. There are rocks from the Triassic, Permian, Carboniferous, Ordovician and Pre-Cambrian periods, and the places where these are visible show faults, folds and overfolds, revealing the turbulent geological history.

Where development proposals affect areas with considerable potential for important palaeontological and geological discoveries, applicants may be required to undertake surveys of the natural geology, for the purposes of assessing the importance of a particular site, and where planning permission is to be granted, for the purposes of recording and sample collection.





The Monument, Lickey



Blackwell First School and new build

## 7. BUILT HERITAGE & DESIGN

“*Design and site of new buildings are absolutely crucial to their acceptability*”

7.1 The neighbourhood area has a number of built heritage assets and a high quality residential environment. Heritage assets include Lickey obelisk on Monument Lane, a restored Victorian/Edwardian horse trough, and our two churches (Holy Trinity, Lickey with good Victorian stained glass and memorials to famous former residents such as Lord Austin, Cadbury family and St Catherine's, Blackwell built in 1939, which is the last remaining church designed by architect Henry North, in Norwegian style). Throughout the area can be found examples of good Georgian

and Victorian domestic architecture and farmsteads. The local materials were sandstone, wood and brick and there was for many years a brick works in Blackwell (Linthurst Newtown). An example of a Blackwell brick can be viewed at Avoncroft Buildings Museum, Bromsgrove. The Steering Group have prepared detailed character appraisals of all the areas as an important part of the evidence base of the NDP. The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record<sup>14</sup> is the county's primary source of undesignated archaeological information and developers are encouraged to access this information at an early stage.

7.2 There are six listed buildings and scheduled monuments in Lickey and Blackwell Parish, all Grade II. These are:

- Lickey Monument
- The Clock House (formerly Twatling Farm)
- 19 Twatling Road, Briarwood
- 19 Warren Lane
- Trinity Methodist Memorial Church
- Church of St Catherine

There are five listed buildings and scheduled monuments in Cofton Hackett Parish. These are:

- Green Memorial and Railings - about 10 mtrs South East of Church of St Michael (all Grade II)
- Barn, Stables and Cow House - about 100 mtrs North of Cofton Hall (all Grade II)
- Churchyard Cross - about five metres South of Church of St Michael (Grade II)
- Cofton Hall and Church of St Michael, both Grade II\*



7.3 The neighbourhood area also includes part of the Barnt Green Conservation Area, which was designated by Bromsgrove District Council in December 2000.

7.4 The public consultations in 2014 and 2015 included comments suggesting "restrictions on inappropriate development", concerns about "back garden development" and the "need for continued use of the Lickey & Blackwell Village Design Statement". The consultation on Issues and Options in Autumn 2016 also demonstrated local residents' concerns that the built heritage should be protected and new development designed sensitively to enhance the area. Comments included: "Design and site of new buildings are absolutely crucial to their acceptability", "Any new development should be sympathetic and appropriate to the areas in which they are sited" and "Much of the Conservation Area is of a semi-rural nature. Any new development must not spoil this aspect". There was also a comment that we "should not be too prescriptive - we also need diversity not pastiche".

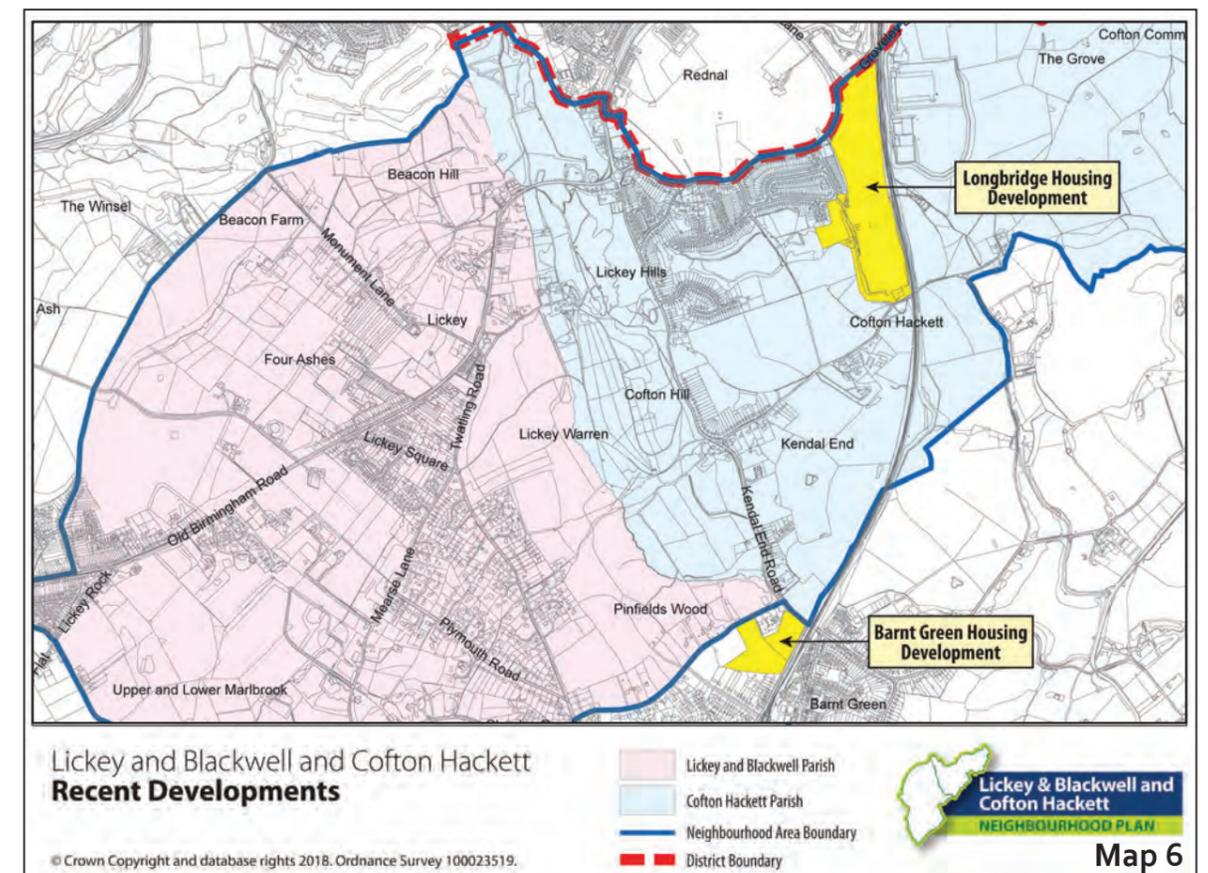
<sup>14</sup> See: [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20189/search\\_our\\_records/249/accessing\\_archaeological\\_and\\_historic\\_environment\\_information](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20189/search_our_records/249/accessing_archaeological_and_historic_environment_information)  
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20007/travel\\_and\\_roads/284/transport\\_guidance\\_for\\_developers/2](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20007/travel_and_roads/284/transport_guidance_for_developers/2)

## COFTON HACKETT

7.5 Before the First World War the predominant housing in Cofton Hackett consisted of Cofton Hall, cottages along Lickey Road and around where Rednal Island is now, some farms, Ten Ashes Farm, Parsonage Farm and Cofton Richards Farm and later some ribbon development along Barnt Green Road.

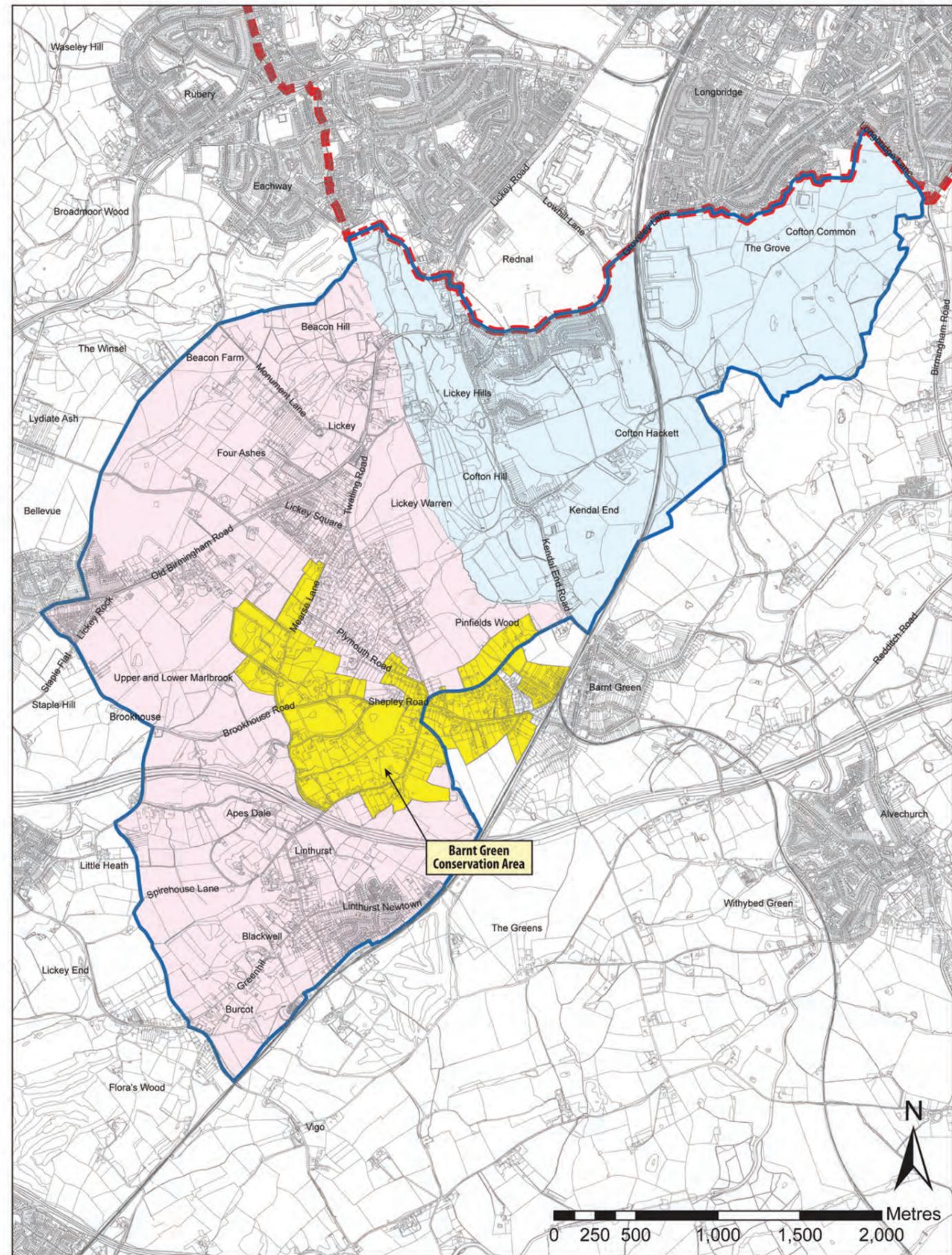
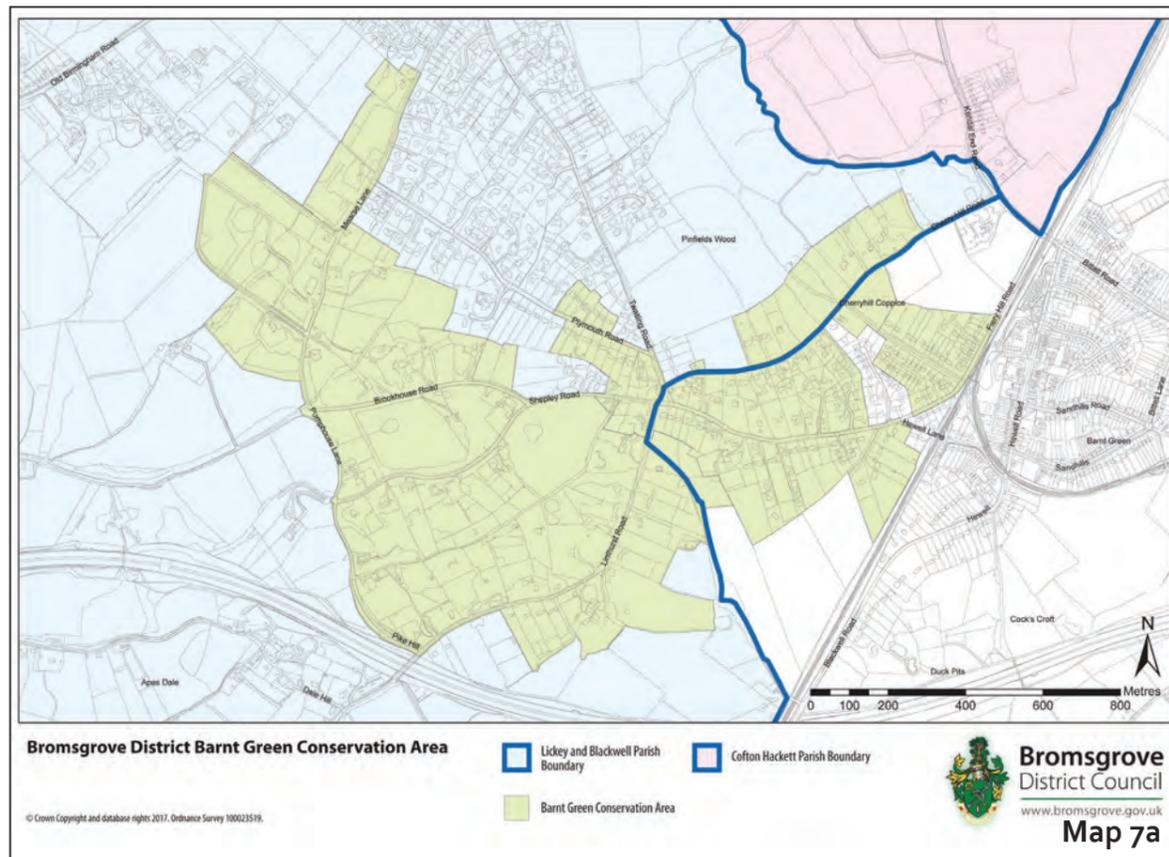
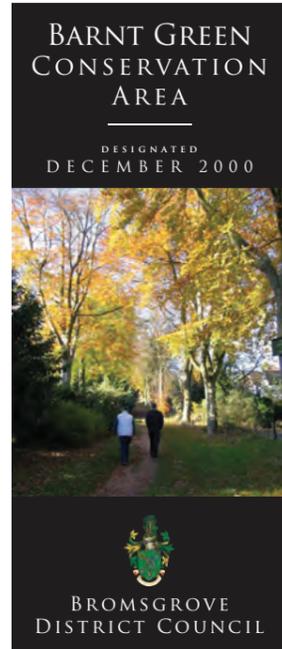
7.6 From around 1936-1937 the Shadow factory was built on what was to become the Austin Motor Company East works site. This development required alterations to Groveley Lane and the building of an island at the junctions with Barnt Green Road, Rose Hill and Lickey Road. At the same time an estate of houses was built by Harrison Porritt by Cofton Park to accommodate workers at the ever-expanding motor works and Cadburys. Housing density was low and plots had large gardens and access to a good road system. A second development was built on Reservoir Road and Cofton Lake Road but plans to build further towards Cofton Church Lane were abandoned with the outbreak of the Second World War.

7.7 With the demise of the motor works in 2005 the area of Longbridge East Works (see Map 6) was designated for new housing, at a much higher density than the previous estates on small plots with small gardens. Some 605 houses are to be built on the site, including a high percentage of affordable housing and a new Village Hall. This will effectively double the number of dwellings in Cofton Hackett.



**BARNT GREEN CONSERVATION AREA**

- 7.8 The Barnt Green Conservation Area (Maps 7a and 7b) was designated in September 2000 and is for the most part within Lickey & Blackwell Parish, although a smaller part closer to Barnt Green rail station is in Barnt Green Parish and neighbourhood area.
- 7.9 The Conservation Area comprises three areas: Shepley; Fiery Hill; and Cherry Hill, of which the largest area is Shepley (comprising Pike Hill, Pumphouse Lane, Shepley Road, parts of Brookhouse Road and Mearse Lane) which lies within this NDP area. The Conservation Area varies in character from the lower density more dispersed pattern of well-crafted three storey palatial dwellings on the west side, to the higher density, two storey, early 20th century more formal housing layout on the eastern flanks.
- 7.10 In Shepley notable features are the individual three-storey architect designed houses dating from the 1890s to 1930s and their lodges, alongside earlier farm buildings and cottages. Typically, older buildings have large landscaped gardens with mature trees and hedges fronting tree-lined roads.
- 7.11 The Conservation Area is a very green and wooded area where buildings are substantial, on large plots and built from high quality materials. The distinctive character of the many Victorian and Edwardian properties, many of which have their roots in the Arts and Craft movement of the late nineteenth and twentieth century is a feature of the Conservation Area.



Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett  
**Barnt Green Conservation Area**

- Lickey and Blackwell Parish
- Cofton Hackett Parish
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- District Boundary

**Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett**  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
Map 7b

- 7.12 The trees and shrubs, building fabric, type of construction, materials used, scale, detailing and elevational details are important to the aesthetic quality of the area. It is important to protect these features in any changes to existing properties and new developments should be sensitive to the historic context.
- 7.13 Dwellings in the Conservation Area have a variety of external finishes from brick, concrete, tile and timber. Woodwork is generally painted and this provides a harmonious appearance. The pitch and style of rooflines, design details in the eaves, fascias and parapets are important to buildings in the area. The colour of bricks and tiles as well as the method of using them is important. The use of UPVC should be avoided in windows and doors unless it is keeping with the high quality finish of the original timber. Chimneys are also an important architectural feature of many of these properties and as well as being useful are a significant part of the design.



Stretton Court, Shepley Road



House in Barnt Green Conservation Area

- 7.14 Mature trees and shrubs are a feature of front and rear gardens, and the retention of mature trees is important to the green feel and look of not only the conservation area, but the whole of the Neighbourhood Development Plan area.
- 7.15 Bromsgrove District Council has published a leaflet providing some information about Barnt Green Conservation Area. This explains that:

*“The settlement of Barnt Green meaning ‘a burned clearing in the Royal Forest’ was established around the junction station where the Redditch branch railway leaves the main Birmingham to Gloucester line. The station was built in 1846 at the request of Lord Windsor, Earl of Plymouth. Indeed, the village has close connections with the Earls of Plymouth who owned Hewell Grange. They were the original Windsor Family, whose name was taken by the present Royal Family in 1915.*

*However, sale of plots by the Plymouth estate in the 1890’s opened the area around Barnt Green railway station for development. Earlier buildings, such as Barnt Green Farmhouse (now the Red House, grade II listed) were remodelled in period styles.*

*To the west of the railway, large plots of one acre and more were laid out with landscaped gardens as the setting for architect-designed houses for businessmen and industrialists who travelled to work by train using the nearby railway station.*

*A further land sale in 1919 brought about a second phase of building and development has increased throughout the second half of the 20th Century which has made Barnt Green a well-established residential area.*

*Growing concern in the community in 2000 regarding the erosion of the character of the area from higher density cul de sac development led to the designation of the conservation area in 2001. The Conservation Area (made up of three areas, Shepley, Fiery Hill and Cherry Hill) varies in character from the lower density more sporadic pattern of well crafted three storey palatial dwellings on the west side, to the higher density two storey early 20th century more formal housing layout on the eastern flanks.”*

- 7.16 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out the national planning policy approach to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 126 advises that local planning authorities should have a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. They should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 137 goes on to say that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.
- 7.17 Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP19 High Quality Design explains how the Council will deliver high quality people-focused space. BDP20.1 Managing the Historic Environment the District Council advocates a holistic approach to the proactive management of the historic environment which encompasses all heritage assets recognised as being of significance for their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. BDP20.2 goes on to explain how the District Council will support development proposals which sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets including their setting.
- 7.18 Policy BD1 provides more local detail to help ensure new development in the Conservation Area is sympathetic to the local historic character.

## POLICY BD1 BARNT GREEN CONSERVATION AREA

Proposals for new development and alterations to existing buildings in or adjacent to, and impacting on, the Barnt Green Conservation Area will be required to demonstrate careful consideration of any potential impacts on the setting of the conservation area, and other nearby heritage assets above or underground, and to put in place measures to avoid or minimise impact or mitigate damage.

### Significance of the Heritage Asset

Proposals will be required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Development proposals should protect, conserve, and where possible enhance heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance.

### Appropriate Scale and Design

Overall, development must reflect the scale, mass, height and form and detailing of existing locally characteristic buildings, and design details and materials should be chosen to be harmonious with neighbouring properties as described in the Character Appraisals.

Contemporary and sustainable designs will be acceptable where they are of exceptional quality and where they clearly demonstrate that they are appropriate to their context.

## PROMOTING HIGH QUALITY DESIGN ACROSS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

- 7.19 Following a training course led by Worcestershire County Council Archive and Archaeology Service, the NDP steering group and residents mapped parts of the area and produced a character appraisal of three particular areas ie Blackwell, Lickey and Cofton Hackett settlements. This information is provided as a background document in the evidence base section of the NDP webpages.
- 7.20 A Village Design Statement (VDS) was prepared for Lickey & Blackwell in 2001. The VDS was adopted by Bromsgrove District Council in 2001 as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), but the NDP provides the opportunity to bring the design principles forward into the NDP in order to give the guidelines greater weight in planning decisions.
- 7.21 The VDS includes settlement and building guidelines. Settlement Guidelines include the need to ensure that Lickey & Blackwell remain as separate villages, protected from urban sprawl and with the rural character enhanced. Building guidelines promote the need to conserve Victorian and Edwardian properties and to ensure new development reflects existing character. The guidelines have been reviewed and used to inform a design policy which applies to the wider neighbourhood area.
- 7.22 Planning policy as a whole should promote sustainable development. Policies in the NDP could encourage sustainable design and development which responds to the challenges of climate change.
- 7.23 The NPPF sets out Core Planning Principles in paragraph 17 and these include that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, and take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.
- 7.24 Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP19 High Quality Design explains how the Council will deliver high quality people-focused space.
- 7.25 Policy BD2 draws on the Village Design Statement to help encourage new development across the neighbourhood area to be of a high quality, sustainable design which will enhance the local area.



Example of a well-designed refurbishment, Old Birmingham Road

## POLICY BD2 ENCOURAGING HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

Development proposals for new buildings and extensions in the neighbourhood area should take into consideration the character appraisals of the different character areas.

Designs for new development are required to respond positively to the following settlement and building design principles:

### Settlement Guidelines

1. The existing settlements of Lickey, Blackwell, Cofton Hackett, Barnt Green and Marlbrook are separate, distinctive villages and hamlets, each with its own individual character and sense of place. These characteristics are important and will be considered when the Green Belt is reviewed by Bromsgrove District Council.
2. Subdivision of plots and infill development will only be supported where additional buildings would not lead to significant and unacceptable increases in plot density, compared to the character of the surrounding area in line with Policy BD3.
3. The impact of traffic on rural roads should be taken into careful consideration. Development should provide adequate provision of parking on site wherever possible in line with Worcestershire County Council Parking Standards<sup>15</sup>. Suitable access should be provided and measures should be taken to protect existing roadside trees, hedges and green verges at junctions with access roads.
4. When new roads and footpaths are provided, development should be sympathetic to the local character.

### Building Guidelines

5. Development should aim to re-enforce the distinctive character of the local historic environment as described in the local character appraisals, and identify and include opportunities for positive change.
6. The distinctive character of the many Victorian and Edwardian properties is a defining characteristic of the neighbourhood area. New development should respond positively to its setting and where possible include references to the local context through detailing, appropriate use of materials, scale, height and massing. Overall designs should consider the character appraisal undertaken by the Neighbourhood Development Plan steering group) and clearly demonstrate how schemes enhance and add visual interest to the local area.
7. Contemporary, high quality designs may also be acceptable. New development proposals need not imitate earlier architectural periods or styles and could be the stimulus for the use of imaginative modern design using high quality traditional materials such as local brick in innovative ways. New buildings should follow a consistent design approach in the use of materials, fenestration and the roofline to the building. Materials should be chosen to complement the design of a development and add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment.

## GARDEN AND BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

- 7.26 Although the NDP supports new development within existing settlements subject to criteria set out in H1 (page 54), new housing in rear gardens of existing properties (“backland development” or “unwanted garden grabbing”) can have a significant adverse impact on local character and the amenity of neighbouring residents. Concerns about increased densities resulting from such proposals, and impacts on neighbouring residents have been set out in objections to recent appeal decisions (such as APP/P1805/W/17/3169630).
- 7.27 The character appraisal work describes how low density development of substantial detached properties set within extensive garden plots make a significant contribution to the character of the area of some parts of the two parishes. Overall, large gardens provide a very “green” setting, enhancing the built form and providing habitats for local wildlife. The many large mature trees, hedgerows and other shrubbery of residential gardens are an intrinsic part of the area’s local character, and should be protected.
- 7.28 NPPF paragraph 53. sets out that local planning authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area. The Government’s recently published Housing White Paper, Fixing our Broken Housing Market<sup>16</sup> sets out in paragraph 1.31 that the Government “will ensure councils can continue to protect valued areas of open space and the character of residential neighbourhoods, and stop unwanted garden grabbing.” Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BD19 High Quality Design aims to ensure development enhances the character and distinctiveness of the local area.

## POLICY BD<sub>3</sub> GARDEN AND BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

Residential development in rear gardens will be resisted where there would be an unacceptable impact on the character of the local area in terms of loss of openness, mature trees, hedges and shrubbery, and a substantial increase in the density of built form.

Development proposals which would result in the loss of private gardens which make a significant contribution to the character of the surrounding residential area, will be required to provide clear justification to support the need for higher density development, and should demonstrate how full and effective integration into the surrounding built form and townscape will be achieved.

Where such development schemes are considered acceptable, buildings should be sited and designed to protect existing mature trees and hedgerows on the site, and should provide adequate screening to protect the residential amenity and privacy of neighbouring occupiers.

<sup>16</sup> Fixing our broken housing market, Housing White Paper DCLG, February 2017  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>



New development in Cofton Hackett

# 8. HOUSING

“A range of properties will give a more sustainable community”

## NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1 New housing development in the NDP area is constrained by the protection afforded through the neighbourhood area’s location within the Green Belt. Bromsgrove District Council is reviewing the Green Belt during the Plan period as this is a strategic matter. Therefore, NDP planning policies for new housing will focus on guiding relatively small-scale development within the existing village envelopes and their boundaries.



8.2 The NPPF sets out in paragraph 16 that neighbourhoods should develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development, and plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

8.3 By 2021 a full Green Belt Review will have been completed and further sites will have been allocated to contribute approximately 2,300 dwellings towards the 7,000 target required by the district council. Bromsgrove District Council Policy Green Belt BDP4.3 sets out that:

*The Green Belt boundary review will follow sustainable development principles and take into account up to date evidence and any proposals in Neighbourhood Plans. Where appropriate, settlement boundaries and village envelopes on the Policies Map will be revised to accommodate development.*

8.4 Policy BDP2 Settlement Hierarchy Policy sets out in BDP2.1 that:

*Initially there will be four main facets to the delivery of housing to meet the needs of Bromsgrove District consisting of the following:*

- a) Development of previously developed land or buildings within existing settlement boundaries which are not in the designated Green Belt;*
- b) Expansion Sites around Bromsgrove Town (as identified in BDP 5A);*
- c) Development Sites in or adjacent to large settlements (as identified in BDP 5B);*
- d) Exceptionally, affordable housing will be allowed in or on the edge of settlements in the Green Belt where a proven local need has been established through a comprehensive and recent survey and where the choice of site meets relevant planning criteria. Where viability is a concern the inclusion of other tenures within a scheme may be acceptable where full justification is provided. Where a proposed site is within the boundaries of a settlement, which is not in the Green Belt, a local need for housing would not need to be justified.*

*Proposals for development for any needs arising outside the District will be fully justified and based on principles of sustainable development and evidence indicating the most appropriate location for such development across the West Midlands area.*

Policy BDP2.2 goes on to say that *proposals for new development for Bromsgrove's needs should be located in accordance with the District's settlement hierarchy as shown in table 2 within this policy, if up to date evidence supports this.*

8.5 In the settlement hierarchy Barnt Green (including Lickey), which is partially within the neighbourhood area, is identified as a large settlement, and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett are small settlements.

8.6 The results of the public consultations in 2013 and 2014 included concerns about "over-building", "green belt and inappropriate development" and were positive about "enjoyment of homes set in own grounds".

8.7 The consultation on Issues and Options in Autumn 2016 showed that provided traffic impacts on the existing road network were managed properly, schemes were designed sympathetically, and there was not over development of rear garden plots, then infill development may be acceptable. Comments included: "Just infill; Blackwell hasn't got the roads for big development. Linthurst Newtown and Greenhill cannot cope with more traffic", "Highways not to be overloaded, too much traffic already in Cofton Hackett", "Greenhill and Linthurst Newtown Blackwell will not be able to take more cars, lorries and buses", "Yes - If this policy is included it would enable the local community to exert a degree of control over each development. One of the main issues with our sites is transport/access, and the visual impact of cramped rear garden development", "We strongly object to developments which would link existing settlements together, or increase 'ribbon developments along roads" and "Yes - This could be a good way to allow new plots without changing the character of the area".



8.8 Bromsgrove District Council intends to review its adopted District Plan to consider future development needs and review the Green Belt; it is hoped the Green Belt Review will be in place by 2021. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>17</sup> already lists a number of sites within our NDP area identified as having development potential. When the Green Belt Review consultation process begins our two parish councils will take part and the policies within this Plan will form an important part of their responses. They will also encourage local residents to respond to the consultation.



<sup>17</sup> The SHLAA looks at the housing potential of sites to cover the plan period up to 2030. If a site has been included within the SHLAA please remember that this document is evidence for plan preparation and does not itself, determine whether a site should be allocated for development. See <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/policy-and-strategy/planning-policies/local-development-plan/evidence-base/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment.aspx>



Plaque of Lord Austin – entrance to Lickey Grange

- 8.9 It is very important to residents and Parish Councils alike that the rural character of our area should be maintained. The Lickey Hills form the central part of this area and are protected from housing or industrial development but their foothills, apart from the Barnt Green Conservation Area, do not enjoy such legal protection. The Green Belt was introduced to protect areas like our own, which border large, expanding cities. Both parish councils are actively represented on the local CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) group and will use the policies in this NDP to engage in the wider Green Belt Review. As has been noted Blackwell began to grow as a residential village in the nineteenth century because city dwellers appreciated the improvements to their health brought about by the area's tranquillity and beauty. It was the area chosen for a residential school for TB sufferers (now Hunters Hill College run by Birmingham City Council) and for a Sanitarium (later Blackwell Recovery Hospital - now demolished).
- 8.10 The consultation on Issues and Options demonstrated very little local support for identifying any site allocations for small infill development and therefore the NDP will not seek to allocate any housing sites. Instead, Policy H1 sets out criteria against which any proposals coming forward for sites within the settlements may be assessed.

## LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

- 8.11 In 2010 Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council with the help of the then Rural Housing Officer and Bromsgrove District Council Housing Officer conducted a Local Housing Needs Survey in the whole Parish. The result showed a realistic need to provide 10 new affordable dwellings in Blackwell. These were never built due to affordable land not being available and a small number of local objections.
- 8.12 The NPPF paragraph 50 sets out that to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, those with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes).



- 8.13 Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP2.1 d) sets out that
- d) Exceptionally, affordable housing will be allowed in or on the edge of settlements in the Green Belt where a proven local need has been established through a comprehensive and recent survey and where the choice of site meets relevant planning criteria. Where viability is a concern the inclusion of other tenures within a scheme may be acceptable where full justification is provided. Where a proposed site is within the boundaries of a settlement, which is not in the Green Belt, a local need for housing would not need to be justified.*

There is little, if anything, that the NDP can add to this Policy.

- 8.14 Bromsgrove District Plan BDP8 Policy Affordable Housing sets out the Council's approach to delivering affordable housing and a range of house types, sizes and tenures to meet local needs. Given that most infill sites in the neighbourhood area are likely to be fairly small, the thresholds for developers to provide affordable housing on site (ie 10 or more dwellings, or the site size is equal to or greater than 0.4 hectares) are unlikely to be applied.
- 8.15 The District Plan therefore includes sufficient policies to manage the provision of Affordable Housing in the neighbourhood area. However, it would be appropriate for the NDP to promote and encourage more smaller market housing to meet local needs.
- 8.16 The consultation on Issues and Options in Autumn 2016, demonstrated support for development to provide a mix of accommodation, but particularly housing for older people. Comments included: "A range of properties will give a more sustainable community", "Starter homes and older people my need to be closer to all amenities i.e. bus routes, Doctor etc", "Homes for older people we are an ageing population", "Yes - A wider cross section of types of housing would give a better balanced development, but not focusing on any particular type", "Yes - It's important for the vitality of the community to have a mix of housing" and "Yes - A range of different housing types is needed. In particular, smaller starter homes suitable for an ageing population, as there is an over-supply, at the moment, of large homes". There was no demand for the NDP to identify site allocations for small scale new housing development.

## POLICY H1 NEW HOUSING WITHIN EXISTING SETTLEMENTS

Development of previously developed land in the Green Belt or buildings within existing settlements and built up areas will be supported in line with BDP2.1, provided that:

1. New development is designed sensitively and meets the criteria set out in our Neighbourhood Development Plan policies;
2. Sites have good access to local facilities and public transport networks;
3. Proposals minimise any adverse impacts on local residential amenity and give careful consideration to noise, odour and light;
4. Development does not lead to ribbon development along existing road networks.



Small development off Lickey Square

8.17 The need for a wider range of homes in the Bromsgrove area is set out in the most up to date Worcestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>18</sup>. This concludes in Section 4 that for Bromsgrove District:

- *The analysis of the current need for affordable housing in the authority over the next five years indicates a high demand for this tenure. An annual need of 219 affordable properties is calculated as being required to meet the future needs over the next five years and the existing backlog. This reflects the impact of rising house prices over the first half of the last decade and the continued pressures on wages as well as the availability of mortgage finance. It also reflects the fact that affordable housing makes up a relatively low proportion of the overall stock in Bromsgrove currently, approximately 10%, a proportion which is considerably below the national average of 20%.*
- *The changing age profile of the projected population of the authority indicates that there will be a high demand for smaller properties able to meet the needs of older person households. Overall the number of older persons is projected to increase significantly, indeed the projections suggest that older persons will make up approximately 33% of the total population by 2030 compared to just over 21% now.*
- *In addition to older person households the projections also indicate that in order to maintain a level of working age population to match employment opportunities that there will be a sustained need for family housing within the authority.*
- *Specifically, in terms of affordable housing the analysis indicates that there will be a high demand for smaller properties, 1 - 2 bed, with need for this size of property making up 78% of total need. Importantly, however, the lower levels of turnover in larger properties also suggests that in order to address future need and the current backlog new larger affordable properties will also be required.*

8.18 Census data from 2011 shows that the neighbourhood area has a disproportionate number of households living in larger properties, when compared with Bromsgrove District and England. Figure 3. shows that in Lickey & Blackwell, 35.4% of households were in properties of 4 bedrooms compared with 21.8% in Bromsgrove and 14.4% nationally, and 20.6% of households were in properties of 5 of more bedrooms compared with 6.6% in Bromsgrove and 4.6% in England. In Cofton Hackett there was a lower proportion of households in properties with 4 bedrooms (only 6.7%) but a higher proportion in 5 bedroom properties (7.0%). A relatively high proportion of households in Cofton Hackett were in households with 3 bedrooms; 64.0% compared with 45.4% in Bromsgrove and 41.2% in England.

8.19 The SHMA findings suggest that there is also a sustained need for family housing within the authority area. However, in Cofton Hackett and Lickey the disproportionate number of households living in 3, 4 and 5 bedroom properties would suggest that the focus for new housing development should be the provision of smaller units in order to increase the range and choice of new housing.

8.20 The provision of smaller housing units for older, single people and those on low incomes has long been the aim of our Parish Councils. Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council conducted a Local Housing Needs survey in 2010 with the support and guidance of the rural housing enabler and Bromsgrove District Council and established a need for 10 new affordable homes. These included 4 flats for older people and semi-detached starter homes. Despite a very few local objections the Parish Council persisted but was unable to find suitable land, which was affordable - catch 22.

Number of Bedrooms (Household Spaces)	Lickey & Blackwell Parish	Cofton Hackett Parish	Bromsgrove District	England
all household spaces with at least one resident	1,611	700	38,290	22,063,368
1 bedroom	2.9% 46	1.4% 10	7.1% 2,712	11.8% 2,593,893
2 bedrooms	12.0% 194	6.6% 46	19.0% 7,262	27.9% 6,145,083
3 bedrooms	29.1% 468	64.0% 448	45.4% 17,390	41.2% 9,088,213
4 bedrooms	35.4% 570	6.7% 147	21.8% 8,329	14.4% 3,166,531
5 & more bedrooms	20.6% 332	7.0% 49	6.6% 2,545	4.6% 1,014,710

Fig 3. Number of Bedrooms (2011 Census)<sup>19</sup>

8.21 The price of local land explains why developers for at least the last forty years have not been building homes in our area, which can be described as affordable to those on low incomes. There is no social housing in the area although there is a supply of private rented properties. Recent new homes have been either in small back garden developments of around six 4/5 bed roomed houses with small gardens or have been realised through the demolition or radical reconstruction of existing large houses.



<sup>18</sup> <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/media/751625/Main-SHMA-Report-February-2012.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011>

8.22 There is still a real need for well-designed cheaper, smaller homes if those down-sizing or buying for the first time are to be able to remain in this area. Fortunately the recent development at Cofton Fields off Groveley Lane, Cofton Hackett has provided a number of affordable homes. Over the longer-term the proportionate and absolute increase in older person households could place increasing pressures on existing housing stock. Failure to adequately provide for alternative forms of accommodation for the rapidly increasing pensioner population will result in most people staying in their existing family homes. This will have the effect of dramatically reducing the supply of such properties in the local housing market. There is therefore a need to provide suitable provision for older people wishing to move to smaller, more suitable accommodation within the neighbourhood area, and to release larger, family sized housing back onto the market



Traditional cottage in Blackwell

## POLICY H2 HOUSING MIX

New development will be encouraged to contribute towards a wider mix of house types and sizes in the neighbourhood area to meet local needs.

Where possible, developers should provide smaller, one and two bedroom properties suitable for first time buyers and smaller households, and properties designed to meet the changing needs of older residents. Housing designed specifically for older residents will also be supported but in view of the larger than average proportion of older people and lower proportion of younger people living in the NDP area, this should not be at the expense of reasonably priced homes for young people.

- Natural ventilation to reduce the power requirement for mechanical ventilation;
- Green roofs to slow rainwater run-off during intense periods of rainfall and reduce the risk of flooding;
- Wide gutters with emergency overflow points to provide for periods of sudden intense rainfall;
- Outdoor shading to improve liveability in hotter weather and flexible shading to windows to help to regulate internal temperatures;
- Permeable paving to reduce run off during heavy rainfall.

Policy H3 seeks to promote energy efficiency measures in new housing development.

8.23 At the Regulation 14 public consultation stage, Worcestershire County Council commented that over 9% of households in the area covered by the NDP are thought to be in fuel poverty, meaning that they struggle to afford to heat their homes effectively. Worcestershire County Council advised that the provision of affordable heating can help reduce the risk of fuel poverty and benefit the health of the local residents and the NDP should support affordable heating in line with Government Objectives. Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council has encouraged residents over several years to install renewable energy and its newsletter (sent to all residents) included a Green Page full of news and updates from central Government and other agencies about energy efficiency. An Eco Day was organised in the village for residents as far back as 2008. There has been a steady increase in the installation of solar panels.



'Green Page', L&BPC Newsletter

In order to support climate change objectives and improve energy and resource efficiency, developments should also promote sustainable design. Suitable measures could include the following:

## POLICY H3 ENERGY EFFICIENCY

All new housing should include suitable energy efficiency measures and low carbon technologies in order to contribute towards affordable heating, health and wellbeing, and wider climate change objectives.

8.24 Policy H2 aims to encourage developers to contribute towards a mix of housing in the neighbourhood area, and supports the provision of more smaller accommodation, particularly housing for older residents and starter homes. Policy H3 promotes energy efficiency in line with advice from Worcestershire County Council provided during the Regulation 14 public consultation.



Bus Stop, Old Birmingham Road

# 9. INFRASTRUCTURE

“...need for a better bus service, traffic controls, cycle routes, parking issues on verges & pavements

## TRANSPORT AND PARKING

9.1 The need to improve local infrastructure is a key issue for the local community in Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett. The neighbourhood area has good access to the national motorway network (Junction 4 of the M5 and J1 of the M42 are about 2 miles away) and there is a railway station just outside the neighbourhood area at Barnt Green with services to Birmingham New Street, Lichfield, Redditch and Worcester through to the west country.



Railway line and new housing, Cofton Hackett

9.2 The good accessibility of the area contributes to its attractiveness as a residential location, but levels of car ownership are high and increased levels of traffic in the area are putting pressures on the existing road network, which largely comprises winding country lanes linking the residential areas. In Lickey & Blackwell the 2011 Census<sup>20</sup> (Neighbourhood Statistics) showed that 48.2% of households had access to two cars or vans, and 48.1% of households in Cofton Hackett. This compares with 37.0% for Bromsgrove and 24.7% for England.

9.3 Parking in the vicinity of the two schools is a problem at arrival and departure times - parking on pavements causes obstructions for pushchairs, parking across driveways or on double yellow lines etc. This is not unique to our parishes but can be a real nuisance. Any future developments should take account of additional traffic generated and its likely influence on the existing highway networks.



9.4 Both parishes contain important 'feeder' roads and carry a large volume of commuter traffic. The roads in Lickey are generally adequate but do seem to attract a degree of speeding which is particularly undesirable when the road has houses on both sides and contains a school on Old Birmingham Road. The access and through roads at Blackwell are not adequate for the amount of traffic and the bus route at Greenhill causes real traffic problems requiring good manners and patience by drivers. Parents' car parking at school drop off and pick up times at Blackwell First School, St Catherine's Road is troublesome to some residents. Alternative methods of travel to and from school would be worth exploring again at both schools.

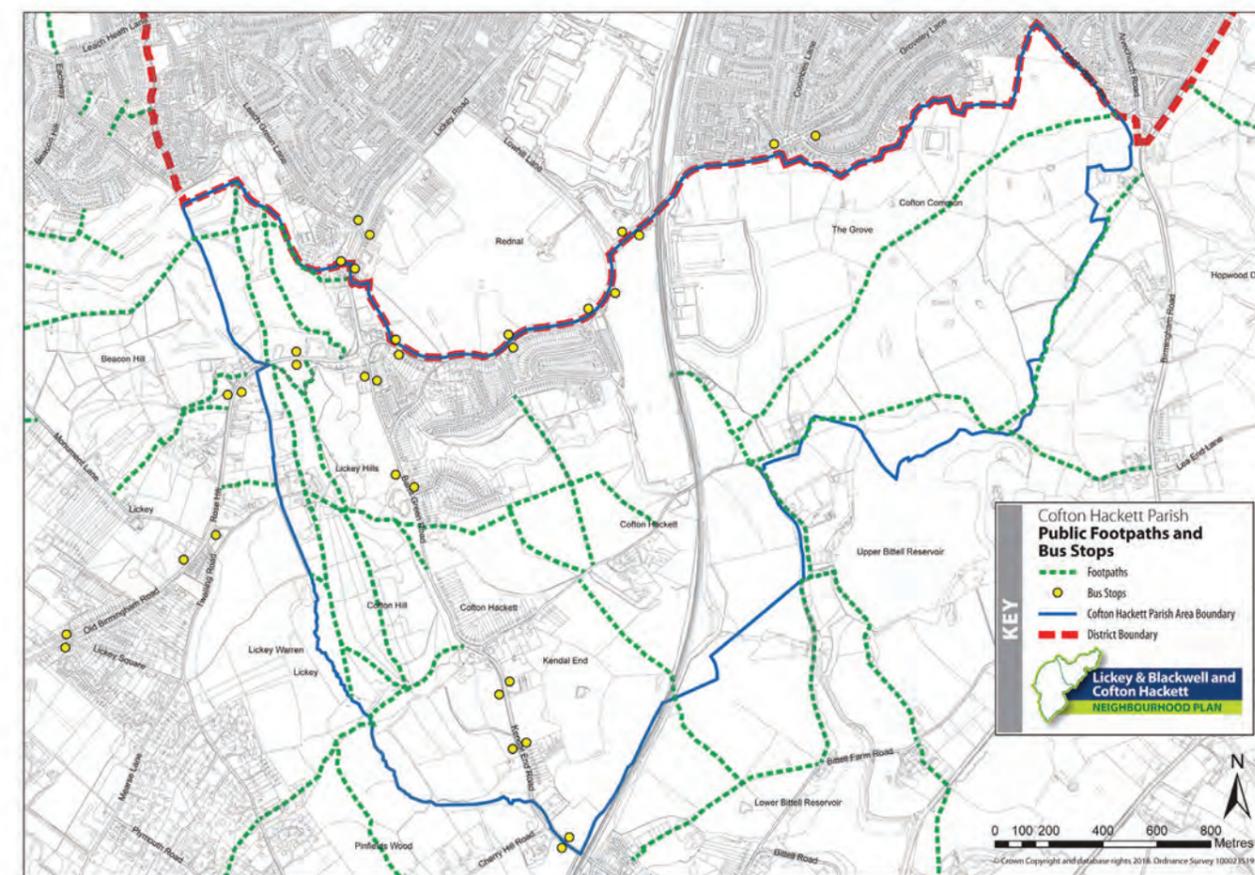


9.5 Some areas lack footways or pavements where there is a lot of footfall. The Parish Councils would like to ensure that any future development does not lead to any closure or unsuitable diversion of current routes, and that they are protected. Recent closures of the public rights of way crossing the railway, which have been requested by Network Rail for electrification on the line passing through our parishes, have had an impact on our public footpaths. In Cofton Hackett a railway bridge is to be built to protect the right of way, whereas in Blackwell the right of way has been diverted along a country lane without a pavement. The Parish Councils would like to see suitable alternatives put in place before any closures of rights of way are undertaken in order to protect public safety, as well as to maintain the benefits of these wonderful footpaths for the local residents and the many visitors we have to our area who like to enjoy our countryside.

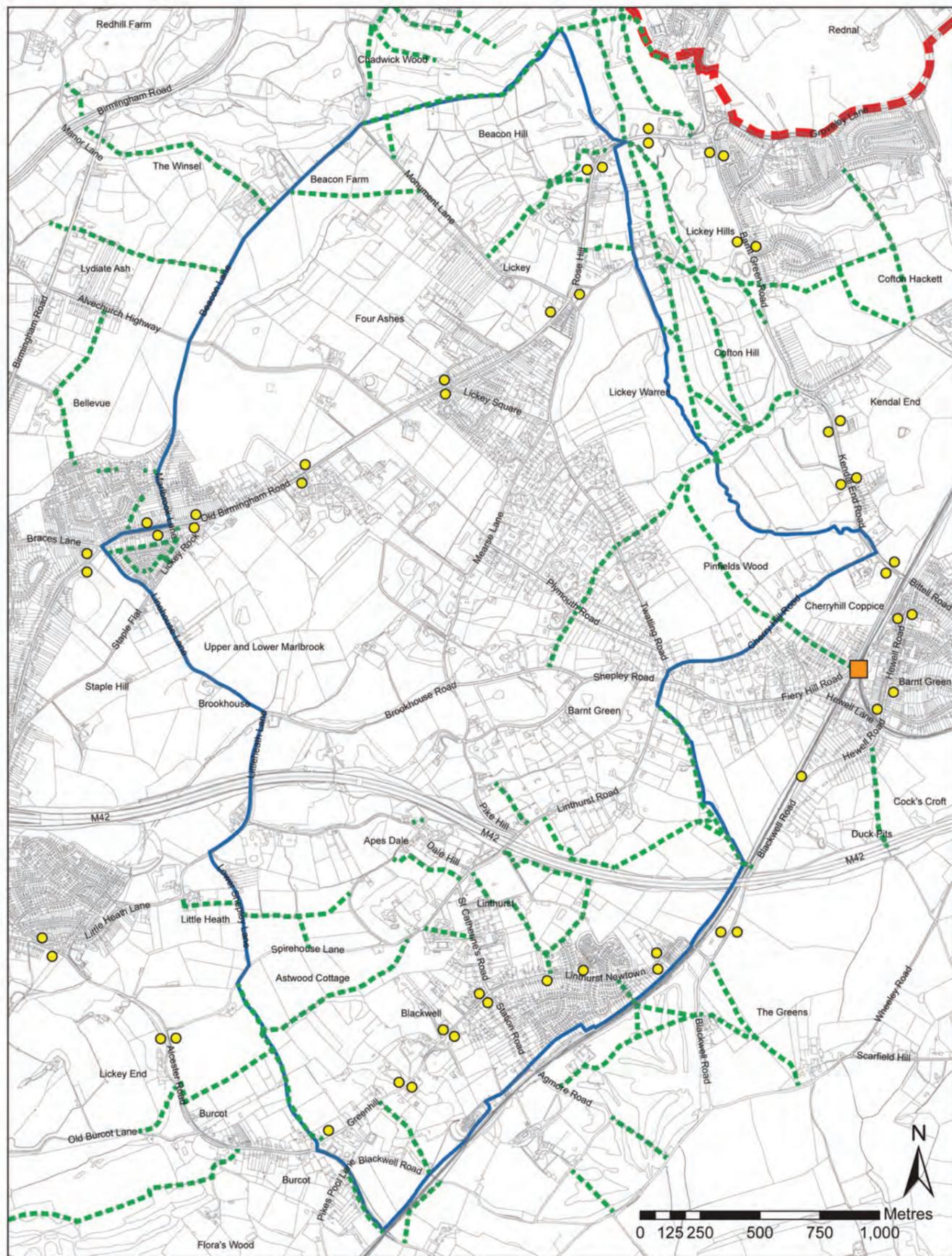
20 <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011>

9.6 Unfortunately there is a lack of cycle routes in our area, and provision ideally should be improved where possible. Cycling is a popular pastime as well as being used by local workers to reach Barnt Green rail station. Cycling is a popular pastime and there are local cycling clubs, the Wheelers in Blackwell and Chain Gang in Barnt Green. A small minority of local workers cycle to Barnt Green railway station. There is a need to consider measures which make cycling safer in the area. The same applies to horse riding. More could be done at County Council level to attract more people to bus travel eg integrated ticketing, timetables linking to rail times and better marketing of the advantages of public transport. Where possible the parish councils would like to improve safety for walkers and cyclists - any future developments should consider safe access to public transport links, local shops and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Any increase in traffic that could result from new development should also be avoided on our country lanes which are already hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists due to the nature of the local roads, lack of pavements and lack of lighting which is a feature of our highways locally.

9.7 With 18 miles of public footpaths in Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parishes, including part of the North Worcestershire Way, attractive scenery and a large number of dog owners in the area, it is not surprising that walking is popular. Even more local people would walk if all footpaths had kissing gates rather than stiles. Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council has produced a booklet of walks around the Parish as well as the map. There are current issues over footpaths in Blackwell and Cofton Hackett, both of which cross the rail line. The line will take more and faster trains after electrification, leading to further safety implications. Public footpaths are shown on Maps 8 and 9 (below and over).



Map 8



Lickey and Blackwell Parish  
Public Footpaths and Bus Stops

- - - Footpaths
- Bus Stops
- Barnt Green Railway Station
- Lickey and Blackwell Parish Area Boundary
- - - District Boundary



Map 9

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9.8 NDPs have a limited role in terms of traffic and transport, but it is possible to identify areas where investment may be targeted to meet local transport needs. Developer contributions, community infrastructure levy (CIL) and other funding could be used to support traffic calming schemes, public transport and promoting walking and cycling eg through identifying “green routes”.

9.9 The responses from the informal consultation in 2014 and 2015 suggested that there was a need to improve traffic management in the neighbourhood area. Many of the “Negative” aspects of living in the area were related to traffic issues and included, “speeding, need for a better bus service, need for traffic controls, a suggestion for a traffic free cycle route, slow signs and issues around cars parking on verges and pavements”. In particular there are problems with traffic travelling too fast.

9.10 The results of the Issues and Options consultation in Autumn 2016 showed support for the NDP to include an identified network of cycle and walking routes to improve local accessibility and encourage transport by means other than the private car, provided this was possible taking account of the constraints of the existing highways. Comments included “Walking and Cycling routes - yes, if possible”, “Our roads are too narrow where cycles routes could be developed”, “Further improvements in the footpath from Blackwell to Barnt Green would be most welcome and should not need vast expenditure”, “There are areas which need looking at e.g. the congestion in Twatling Road outside the Church and the blind junctions at each end of Lickey Square”, “Yes - nothing too “industrial” though, greenways [footpaths] are best”, “Yes - providing safe passage, proper cycle paths, walking pavements ie. Better lighting”, “Yes - Routes to shops, schools and other local facilities should be created or improved to encourage walking and cycling” and “Yes - Many people cycle into Birmingham. Important to improve the route from Blackwell/Cofton to easily get to the Birmingham cycle ways”.



Cycling on Linthurst Road, Blackwell



Walking on Spirehouse Lane, Blackwell

9.11 The NPPF part 4. promotes Sustainable Travel. Paragraph 29 sets out that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. Smarter use of technologies can reduce the need to travel. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel.

9.12 Bromsgrove District Plan promotes sustainable transport in BDP16 Policy Sustainable Transport. BDP16.2 advises that financial contributions from developers will be sought for new development in respect of investment in public transport, pedestrian, cycle and highways infrastructure as detailed by the draft Bromsgrove Infrastructure Delivery Plan in conjunction with policy BDP6 Infrastructure Contributions. BDP16.6 sets out that infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, for example access routes and cycle parking, will be provided in a safe and sustainable environment within the context of green infrastructure, as an integral feature of proposed development. Developments which would worsen walking and cycling access and exacerbate motor vehicle dependence should not be permitted. At Regulation 14 consultation stage Worcestershire County Council recommended including a requirement for electric vehicle charging points in line with paragraph 35 of the NPPF.”

## POLICY INF<sub>1</sub> SUPPORTING WALKING AND CYCLING AND IMPROVEMENTS IN LOCAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Schemes which promote walking and cycling as modes of choice, particularly for local trips will be supported.

Where possible, developers should provide measures which link to safe and accessible walking and cycling routes, and public transport facilities and to achieve and maintain appropriate traffic speeds within the Plan area.

New developments should include the provision of electric vehicle charging points or ensure that they can be retrofitted easily in the future.



## POLICY INF<sub>2</sub> PROVIDING SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL

New developments should be designed to incorporate a strong focus on age- and dementia -friendly environments.

Wherever possible development proposals should include the following:

1. Flexible and adaptable designs.
2. Provision of safe and walkable environments in parks, open spaces and community areas with shading, benches and other facilities for rest stops, and incorporation of opportunities for incidental social interactions.
3. Creation of circular pathways in parks and open spaces, to provide help for those suffering with dementia to return to the same point if lost or confused. These areas should also be clearly signposted with appropriate materials, and consideration should be given to the design of surfaces and street furniture.



## POLICY INF<sub>3</sub> COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Improvement and development of new mobile telecommunication infrastructure will be actively encouraged provided that:

1. Its design and placement seeks to minimise impact on the visual amenity, character or appearance of the surrounding area; and
2. Its design and siting does not have an unacceptable effect on the Conservation Area, historical features and buildings, visually sensitive landscape or views.



Improvements to broadband infrastructure will be supported. Any new development within the neighbourhood area should be served by a superfast broadband (fibre optic) connection unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with the NGA Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In such circumstances, suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate future installation.

- 9.13 At the Regulation 14 public consultation stage Worcestershire County Council recommended a stronger focus on age- and dementia -friendly environments in the NDP. The County Council advised that older people require supportive and enabling living environments to compensate for the physical and social changes associated with ageing.

People living with dementia may experience problems in gathering their thoughts and in concentrating, as well as in the way they experience and interact with the external environment.

These limitations could be minimised by sensitive design and improvements to the places that we live in. The proposed principles have been carried forward into NDP Policy INF2.

## COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

- 9.14 The NDP has a role in helping to ensure that any new development is supported by improvements in local infrastructure. In order to support local businesses and local residents' access to goods and services there is a need to ensure that the NDP encourages investment in new communication technologies, provided that they are designed and sited carefully to protect and enhance built and natural environmental assets.
- 9.15 Generally, broadband is good with fibre optic available but mobile phone coverage is varied and poor in certain areas including Blackwell.
- 9.16 In the early informal consultations there was also mention of the need to improve local communication technologies and "faster broadband". Residents in Blackwell find mobile phone signals not available in some locations in the village.
- 9.17 In the Issues and Options consultation, there was general support for a policy which supports investment carefully designed and sited communications technology. Comments included "Mobile phone reception throughout the Parish, some areas still have no reception", "Homeworking needs fast working broadband connections", "Seems O.K. for our usage at 54mbps - but not all will get this now", "Improve mobile phone reception and fibre broadband connecting" and "No decision - Mobile phone signals are an issue in Blackwell but communications technology can be challenging to site in residential areas".
- 9.18 The NPPF notes in paragraph 42 that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services. Paragraph 43 sets out that in preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high-speed broadband.
- 9.19 Policy INF3 supports investment in new communications technologies.



Descending Pools, Lickey Hills Country Park



Cofton Hackett Village Hall

## 10. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

“...need for a new village hall & amenities in Blackwell & a library in Cofton

10.1 The neighbourhood area has a number of community facilities which are highly valued by local residents. Local community facilities are shown on Map 10 (page 71) and include:

- Trinity Centre, Lickey – used regularly and the location of the Church Office and Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council office;
- The Wheel, Blackwell – well used by community groups eg Women’s Institute (WI), Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council, regular coffee mornings;
- Methodist Hall, Blackwell – regular weekly use by sport and recreational groups;
- Village Hall, Cofton Hackett – some regular use every week.

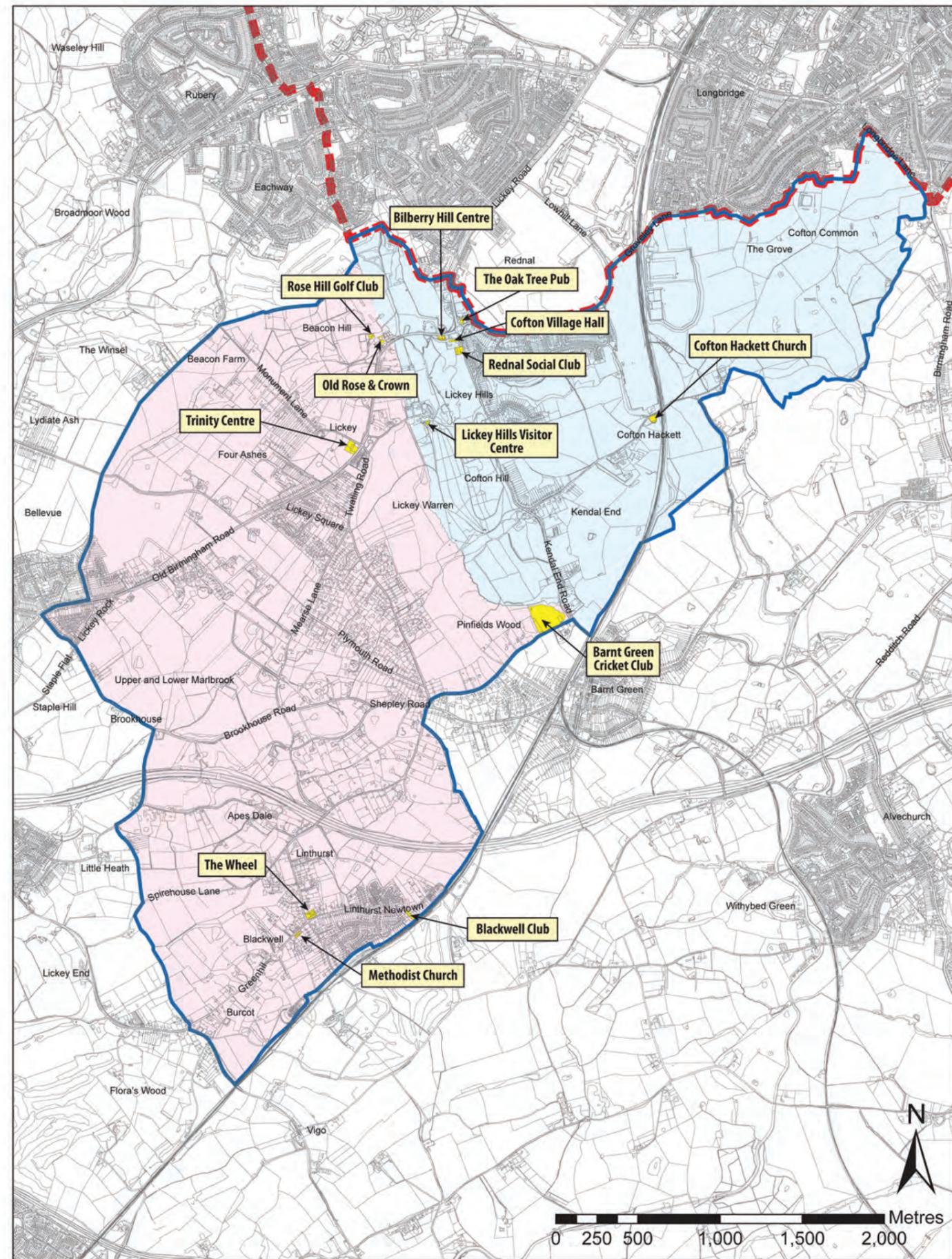


The Trinity Centre, Lickey



Blackwell Festival 2018, St Catherine's Road field

- 10.2 A new Village Hall is being planned for the new estate in Cofton Hackett provided by the developers, together with an outside recreational area.
- 10.3 The "sense of community, fetes, neighbours and the need for improved amenities" were all included in comments in consultations in 2013 and 2014. Suggestions from local people included "the need for a new village hall and amenities in Blackwell and a library in Cofton". There is certainly a need for a sports hall/meeting place in Blackwell. Community use of the modern sports hall at Hunters Hill School is not permitted.
- 10.4 In the Issues and Options consultation in Autumn 2016, there was a mixed response about whether there was any need for more new community facilities. Comments included: "Existing facilities should be protected but they are not fully booked at Blackwell", "Difficult as it would need parking spaces to be sustainable", "Is there a need, will it be used?", "No - Support and develop, where necessary, existing local community facilities" and "No - Cofton Hackett will get a new centre soon". On the other hand, there were also a number of 'Yes' comments and suggestions such as "All larger developments should consider investment in new facilities", and "Yes - An excellent site would be land at 73 Linthurst Newtown to provide a wildlife study, educational and recreational area like High House Wood for future generations". Overall there seemed to be greater support for protecting and investing in existing local community facilities.
- 10.5 The NPPF promotes the role of planning in supporting healthy communities. Paragraph 70 advises that planning policies and decisions should deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs. These facilities local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship, and shared open space. The NDP seeks to enhance the sustainability of communities and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.



Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett  
Key Community Facilities

- Lickey and Blackwell Parish
- Cofton Hackett Parish
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- District Boundary



Map 10

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10.6 The Bromsgrove District Plan sets out in Policy BDP12.1 that *the Council will ensure provision is made for services and facilities to meet the needs of the community. It will also seek to retain existing services and facilities that meet a local need or ensure adequate replacement is provided. New developments that individually or cumulatively add to requirements for infrastructure and services will be expected to contribute to the provision of necessary improvements in accordance with BDP6.*

10.7 Policy CF1 protects existing community facilities in the neighbourhood area and supports investment in enhancements to support health and wellbeing in the local community.

### POLICY CF<sub>1</sub> PROTECTING EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SUPPORTING INVESTMENT IN NEW FACILITIES

Changes of use of community facilities as identified on Map 10 will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer economically viable, or equivalent or better provision of the facility to be lost is made in an equally or more accessible location. New development to enhance and improve existing community facilities is encouraged provided that:

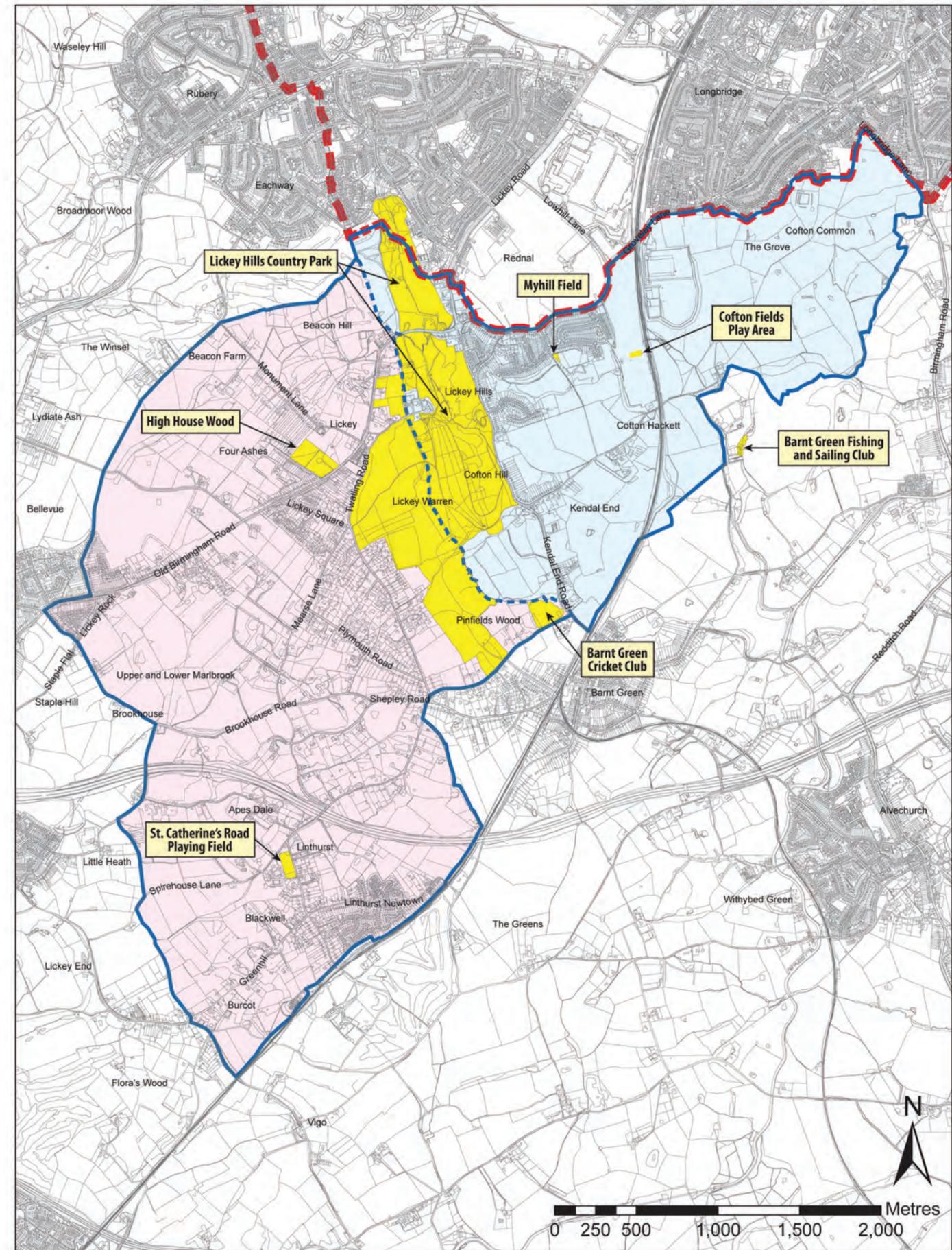
1. The siting, scale and design of any new development respect the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets; and
2. Local residential amenity is protected and suitable measures are put in place to minimise any noise, or other disturbance; and
3. The facilities are accessible to the local community; and
4. Any adverse impacts from traffic on the existing local road network are minimised through suitable traffic management measures and traffic calming schemes.

### OPEN SPACES

10.8 The area also has a number of recreational and sports facilities. These include:

- Lickey Hills Country Park offers recreational facilities including a children’s adventure playground and free table-tennis table near the Visitor Centre, a tri-golf course close to the golf clubhouse, and grassy areas for kite flying, Tai Chi. There are a number of marked walking trails of varying lengths and difficulty, bridleways, tennis courts, crown bowling green and 18 hole golf course
- St Catherine’s Road Playing Field with younger children’s play area and football area
- High House Wood - educational and recreational space
- Myhill Field - younger childrens play area
- Cofton Fields - play area
- Barnt Green Cricket Club
- Barnt Green Sailing and Fishing Club

These are shown on Map 11, opposite.



Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett  
**Open Spaces**

Lickey and Blackwell Parish  
 Cofton Hackett Parish  
 Neighbourhood Area Boundary  
 District Boundary

**Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett**  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
Map 11

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10.9 In the early 1980s former market garden land at Chestnut Drive was donated to the parish council for the use of children of the parish and creation of allotments for residents. Cofton Hackett Parish Council financed a younger childrens play area at Myhill Field and approximately 12 allotments. Over the years the play equipment has been updated with grants from Bromsgrove District Council and the play area underwent a major refurbishment in 2017 funded by Cofton Hackett Parish Council and a grant from the Tesco Bags For Good Scheme.



Myhill Field, Cofton Hackett

10.10 Another open space and play area has been created at the southern end of Cofton Fields. This is where the River Arrow has been opened up to flow through this area with some play equipment at its eastern end.

10.11 The response to the Issues and Options consultation showed that there was support for protecting local open spaces and recreational facilities. There were comments suggesting the NDP "Should encourage some sports facilities - no floodlighting", and "Yes - recreational & sports facilities must be protected and where possible enhanced. There must be opportunities for local residents to have access to such facilities for their own well-being."

10.12 NPPF paragraph 73 notes that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

10.13 Health and Well Being Policy BDP25.1 advises that the District Council will support proposals and activities that protect, retain or enhance existing sport, recreational and amenity assets, lead to the provision of additional assets, or improve access to facilities, particularly by non-car modes of transport. This will include maintaining greater access to and enjoyment of the countryside.

10.14 Policy CF2 protects existing open spaces and recreational facilities in the neighbourhood area and supports investment in enhancements to support health and wellbeing in the local community.

## POLICY CF<sub>2</sub> PROTECTING EXISTING OPEN SPACES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND SUPPORTING INVESTMENT IN NEW FACILITIES

Existing public open spaces and recreational facilities as identified on Map 10 are protected. The loss of these facilities will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer any need for the facility, or equivalent or better provision of the facility to be lost is made in an equally or more accessible location.

New development to enhance and improve existing recreational and sports facilities is encouraged provided that:

1. The siting, scale and design of any new development respect the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets; and
2. Local residential amenity is protected and suitable measures are put in place to minimise any noise, or other disturbance; and
3. The facilities are accessible to the local community.

## LOCAL GREEN SPACES

10.15 The NPPF includes new rights for local communities to identify, through their plans, Local Green Space of particular significance to them for special protection. This local significance could be because of the green area's beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. Land designated as Local Green Space should be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, be local in character and not extensive. By designating land as Local Green Space, local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances:



Bluebells in the Lickey Hills

*Para 76. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.*

*Para 77. The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:*

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

*Para 78. Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.*

10.16 Bromsgrove District Plan BDP1 Policy Sustainable Development Principles BDP1.3 sets out that where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:

- a) Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- b) Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted as stated in footnote 9 of paragraph 14 of the NPPF. For example, those policies relating to sites designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, designated Heritage Assets and locations at risk of flooding.

10.17 Candidates for Local Green Space designation in the neighbourhood area include the following:

- **The School Playing Field**, St. Catherine's Road, Blackwell – Specifically provided for "the benefit of the children of Blackwell". It is located within the community it serves and near to the school in Blackwell so is well used by pupils and residents.
- **Grounds of St Catherine's church** – recreational value for after school play.
- **High House Wood** between High House Drive and Old Birmingham Road, Lickey is managed by the community, the owners and Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council. It is used for recreation and has an educational function valued by adjacent Lickey Hills Primary School. Parents use it to walk safely to school. Its tranquillity and richness of wildlife – bats, deer etc. is valued by the whole community.
- **Land behind Blackwell Methodist Hall**, Greenhill, Blackwell. This is a small 'L' shaped area of grass, which is an important asset along with the adjacent hall (currently in the process of becoming a registered community asset) as it provides a playing area for users of the hall predominantly the local Montessori school and mother and toddlers group.
- **Wildflower Verge**, Rose Hill, Lickey.
- **Cofton Fields Play Area** in the new estate, Cofton Hackett.
- **Myhill Field Play Area and Allotments**, Cofton Hackett.



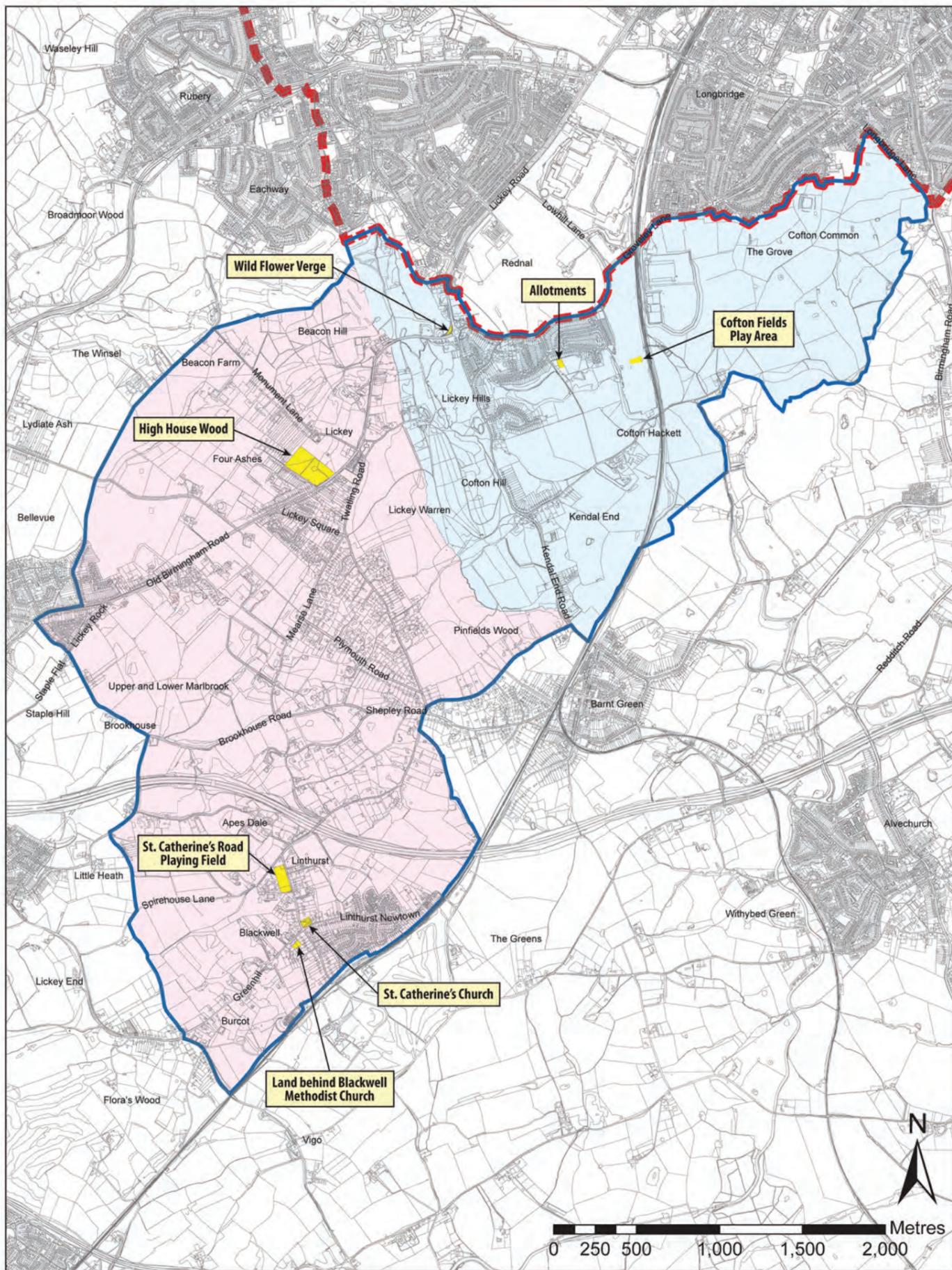
10.18 The consultation on Issues and Options showed that there was support for identifying and protecting Local Green Spaces in the neighbourhood area. Comments included: "Include the fields on each side of our public footpath, walkers do not want to walk between buildings or housing estates", "Area by Chestnut Drive leading to Cofton Church Lane needs to be preserved as it is a much used area for children's play, dog walking and socialising", "Include Marlbrook tip as a protected green space", "In principal, but would need to be discussed with owners to protect their own interests", "High House Wood in Lickey may need protection of its carpet use", "Yes - Very important factor in protecting green space that provides established, tree lined boundary. Part of the landscape and character, wildlife haven for birds and animals, noise and pollution control from nearby motorway, permanent un-spoilt beauty to land at 73 Linthurst Newtown" and "They are important for wildlife and for the well-being and health of people. Protect them or lose them!"

10.19 The proposed Local Green Spaces, together with their justification in terms of the NPPF criteria are provided in Figure 4:

Map Ref: OS 139	Local Green Space:	Proximity to Community	Demonstrably Special to Community	Local Character/Size
SO 989726	Blackwell School playing field (pics page 64 & 70)	Edge of village	Used regularly by pupils and the children of the village. Community events held annually.	Grass space with children's playground at one end and Forest School at the other. Incorporates a 12 space car park for school staff. 1 hectare
SO 991724	Grounds of St Catherine's Church (pic page 42)	Centre of the village of Blackwell	Used for community activities – Christmas tree lights, barbecues and is a 'play space' for children after school finishes during term time.	Sloping grass space with trees. 0.25 hectare
SO 992751	High House Wood (pic page 76)	Centre of Lickey, near the Trinity Centre and adjacent to Lickey Hills Country Park	Popular area. For dog walkers and bird watchers.	Mixture of mature woodland and scrubland. 3.7 hectares
SO 990721	Land behind Blackwell Methodist Hall (pic page 76)	Centre of Blackwell	Historical value to the community and an activity area for users of the hall. Registered as a Community Asset.	Flat, grassy area for play and activities. 0.1 hectare
SO 994753	Wildflower verge opposite Holy Trinity church, Lickey (pics page 20 & 76)	Centre of Lickey. Positioned alongside the B4096 route from Cofton Hackett to Lickey End	Contains varieties of wild orchid and other wildflowers.	Grass with flowers. 0.1 hectare
SO 009757	Cofton Fields Play Area, Cofton Hackett (pics page 51, 53 & 76)	Centre of new housing estate, Cofton Hackett	Landscaped with grass, plants and stream. Play equipment. Paid for and used by the community.	Sloping aspect in the centre of new residential area. 0.8 hectare
SO 005757	Myhill Field, Chestnut Drive, Cofton Hackett (pics page 20 & 74)	At the eastern edge of Cofton Hackett	Young childrens popular play ground adjacent to residential area.	Flat, grassy area with quality equipment recently refurbished. 0.1 hectare
SO 005757	Allotments, Chestnut Drive, Cofton Hackett (pic page 76)	At the eastern edge of Cofton Hackett	Important recreational area for residents. Consistent demand for its plots.	Standard allotment area with vegetable and cultivated fruit. 0.25 hectare

Fig 4. Local Green Spaces Justification

10.20 These are shown on Map 12 (over).



Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett  
Local Green Spaces

- Lickey and Blackwell Parish
- Cofton Hackett Parish
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- District Boundary



### POLICY CF<sub>3</sub> LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Green spaces as identified on Map 12 Local Green Spaces will be protected from development except in very special circumstances.

These identified local green spaces are:

- The School Playing Field  
St. Catherine's Road, Blackwell
- Grounds of St Catherine's church  
St. Catherine's Road, Blackwell
- High House Wood  
between High House Drive and Old Birmingham Road, Lickey
- Land behind Blackwell Methodist Hall  
Greenhill, Blackwell
- Wildflower Verge  
Rose Hill, Lickey
- Cofton Fields Play Area  
in the new estate in Cofton Hackett
- Myhill Field Play Area  
Chestnut Drive, Cofton Hackett
- Allotments  
Chestnut Drive, Cofton Hackett



Retail shops – Lickey Road, Coton Hackett



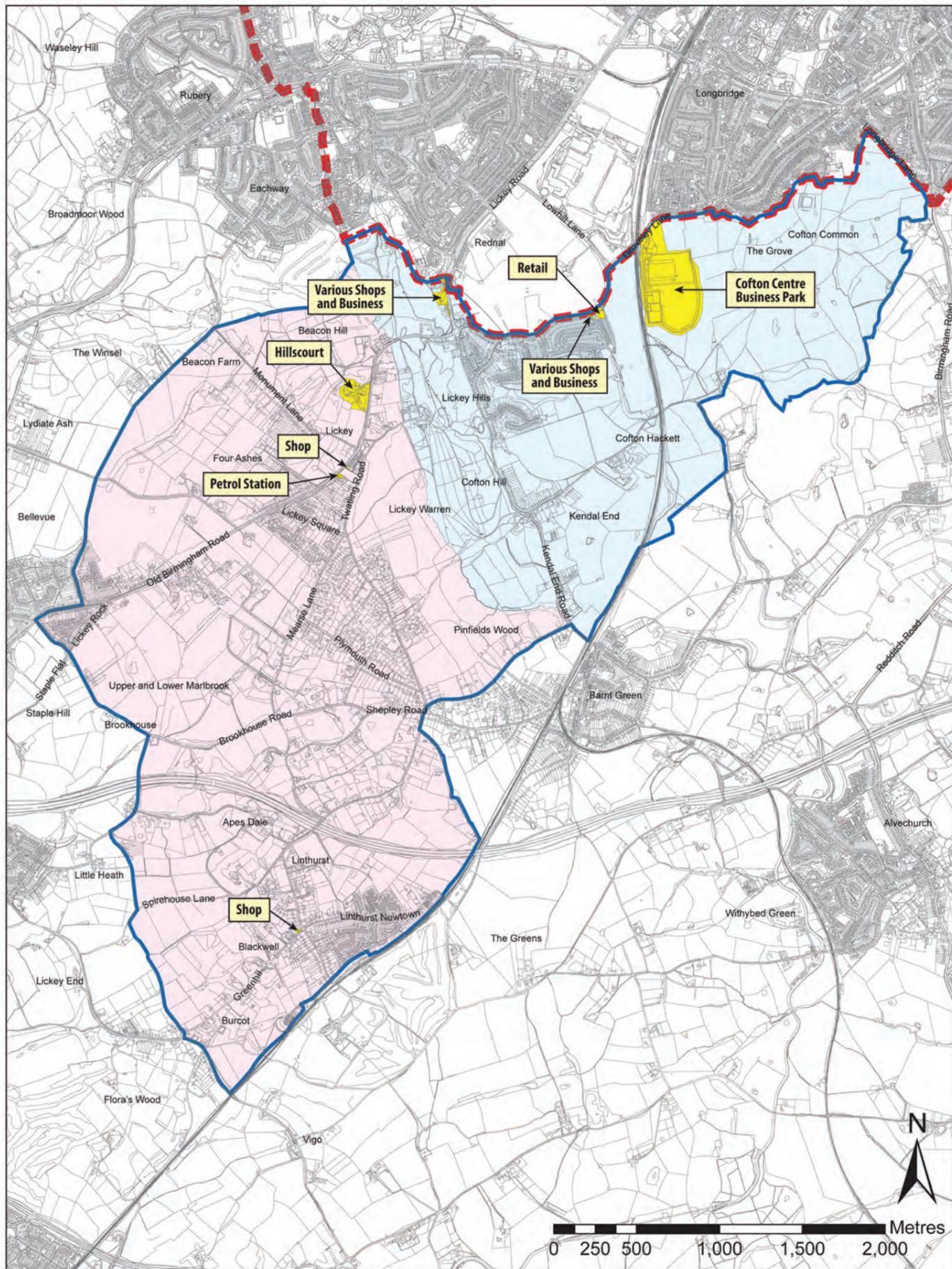
Coftron Centre, Graveley Lane

# 11. COMMERCIAL & BUSINESS INTERESTS

“ A good area for home businesses with some ‘change of use’ planning could be encouraged.”

## SUPPORTING APPROPRIATE LOCAL ENTERPRISE

11.1 The NDP area is predominantly residential in character, but there are a number of commercial premises ranging from a small village shop in Blackwell to a large warehouse facility in Coftron Hackett. Commercial development is shown on Map 13. There are a number of shops, two social clubs, a public house, two restaurants, four takeaways, two hotels, a garage, a petrol station, two vacated commercial showrooms, three cafes, two residential care homes, a post office. Furthermore, in line with national trends, an increasing number of residents work from home.



**Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett  
Retail, Commercial and Employment**

- Lickey and Blackwell Parish
- Cofton Hackett Parish
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- District Boundary



Map 13

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Hillscourt Conference Centre, Rose Hill

- 11.2 The NDP believes that our neighbourhood should be a good place to do business and that encouraging appropriate local employment opportunities will contribute to the sustainability of the area by reducing the need to travel long distances to work.
- 11.3 The consultation on Issues and Options in Autumn 2016, showed that there was some support for small scale business development, appropriate to the scale of the settlements, their position in the settlement hierarchy and locations inset within the Green Belt.
- 11.4 New development should be managed to minimise any adverse impacts on local road networks from increases in traffic, and suitable parking provision should be provided. Comments included: "Commercial business development would need the use of more vehicles", "A good area for home businesses with some 'change of use' planning could be encouraged," "A limited provision of cottage industries could be desirable but transport issues suggest large scale activities would not be appropriate", "Office/shop accommodation could be considered in the right location" and "Yes - for low impact types of businesses e.g. 'Home work' units or office units for individual/'incubator' units". On the other hand, there were a number of objections to supporting local enterprise, particularly in Blackwell where the road network is constrained - for instance "roads in Blackwell couldn't cope" and "Blackwell is a residential area". There was little, if any, appetite for a site allocation.
- 11.5 The NPPF sets out in paragraph 19 that the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.
- 11.6 Policy BDP13 New Employment Developments sets out Bromsgrove District Council's approach to new employment. BDP13.1 advises that *the Council will seek to maintain a balanced portfolio of sites by promoting the following: ...*
  - e. Sustainable economic development in rural areas through proportionate extensions to existing business or conversion of rural buildings taking into account the potential impact on the openness and the purposes of including the land in Green Belt. Proposals that can demonstrate significant benefits to the local economy and / or community will be considered favourably.



Former Lickey Post Office now a gift shop

11.7 Policy B1 aims to encourage small scale business development which is appropriate to the neighbourhood area and which does not have an unacceptably adverse impact on local roads and residential amenity.

### POLICY B1 SUPPORTING APPROPRIATE LOCAL ENTERPRISE

Development of new small-scale employment and service related business facilities will be supported when:

1. Any adverse impacts from traffic on the existing local road network are minimised through suitable traffic management measures and traffic calming schemes; and
2. There is adequate provision of parking for employees and visitors, where possible provided on site;
3. Local residential amenity is protected and suitable measures are put in place to minimise any noise or other disturbance;
4. Development is located within the existing built up areas of that part of the large settlement of Barnt Green which is within the neighbourhood area, and the small settlements of Blackwell and Cofton Hackett (as set out in BDP2 Policy Settlement Hierarchy Policy).

In the wider rural area, new business development will only be acceptable where it meets the criteria set out in Bromsgrove District Plan BDP4 Policy Green Belt.

### HOME WORKING

11.8 There is a growth in the number of people working from home across the UK and in Worcestershire. The Census 2011 figures show 231 residents in Lickey & Blackwell and 79 residents in Cofton Hackett worked mainly at or from home. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a report on the Characteristics of Home Workers in 2014<sup>21</sup> and this suggests that in the West Midlands, 12.8% of workers use their home for work (an increase of 0.9% since 2008). The Key Points in the report are:

- Of the 30.2 million people in work in January to March 2014, 4.2 million were home workers, 13.9% of those in work. This is the highest rate since comparable records began in 1998.
- The number of home workers has grown by 1.3 million, a rate of 2.8% since 1998.
- Home workers tend to work in higher skilled roles than the rest of the population and consequently earn on average a higher hourly wage.
- Almost two-thirds of home workers were self-employed in 2014.
- Using the home for work is most prevalent within the agriculture and construction industries.
- Working from home is more prevalent among individuals who are older.



Jackie Nash Art – home studio

11.9 In BDP15 Policy Rural Renaissance, BDP15.1 sets out that the Council will support proposals that satisfy the social and economic needs of rural communities by encouraging ... g) Rural diversification schemes, as well as the provision of live-work units and the principle of home working.

11.10 In many cases planning consent will not be required, such as for minor alterations to houses, but larger extensions to provide office accommodation, and development of bespoke live / work units are likely to require planning permission. Policy B2, page 86, applies to working from home where planning permission is required, for instance for live / work units and larger extensions to domestic dwelling.

<sup>21</sup> See Characteristics of Home Workers, ONS, June 2014  
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107085351/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lmac/characteristics-of-home-workers/2014/rpt-home-workers.html>

## POLICY B<sub>2</sub> SUPPORTING HOME WORKING

Development for home working will be supported where it would involve:

1. Alterations to or extending an existing dwelling where the extension is subordinate in scale to the original building, or
2. It would be part of a proposal for a dwelling house that re-uses or brings back into use an existing building.

Proposals for new housing developments are encouraged to incorporate provision for home based offices.

Development should not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, built heritage, the natural environment or landscape character.



View from the Holy Trinity church, Rose Hill

# 12. NEXT STEPS

“*If we have more people living in the village, we will need more & better facilities.*”



Former Blackwell church – now a live-work unit

12.1 Following a further six weeks consultation the Plan will be examined by an independent Examiner, who is likely to recommend further changes before the Plan is put forward to a local Referendum. If there is a “yes” vote, the NDP will be made and used by Bromsgrove District Council to help determine planning applications.

## APPENDIX I

### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National planning policies are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>22</sup> published in 2012. This advises in paragraphs 6 and 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and that the planning system has to perform an economic role, a social role and an environmental role.

Neighbourhood planning is addressed in paragraphs 183-185:

183. *Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes and neighbourhood forums can use neighbourhood planning to:*
- *set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications; and*
  - *grant planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order.*
184. *Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.*
185. *Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict. Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non-strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation.*

Planning Practice Guidance<sup>23</sup> is a web based resource that provides additional guidance on the application and implementation of the Framework's approach. There is a section on neighbourhood planning which includes key stages and decisions such as deciding neighbourhood areas, the legal tests for Neighbourhood Development Plans, and the process of independent examination and referendum.

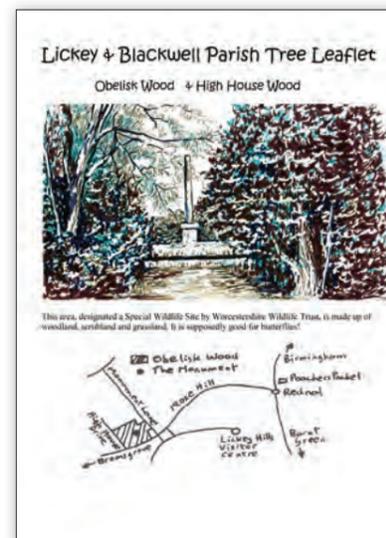
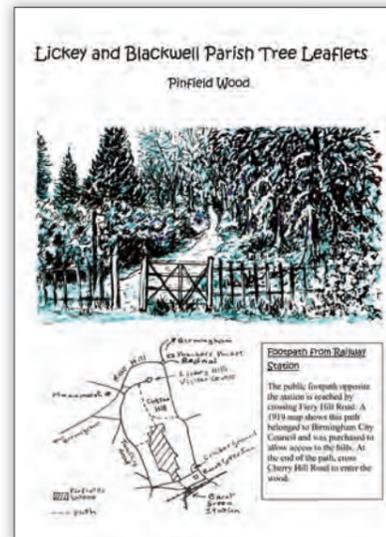
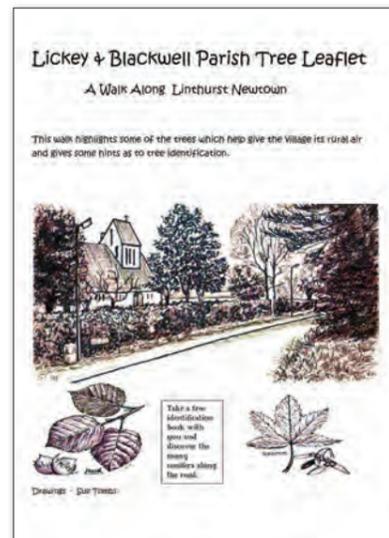
22 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

23 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance)

## APPENDIX II

### LICKEY & BLACKWELL TREE LEAFLETS WALKS AROUND THE PARISH PRODUCED BY CORAL BEAVIS

The previous Tree Warden for Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council, the late Coral Beavis, authored three leaflets detailing trees of interest in the parish. Offered as a walk, you are guided from one specimen to another passing points of interest.





**Lickey & Blackwell and  
Cofton Hackett**  
**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**