

**Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood  
Development Plan 2011-31**

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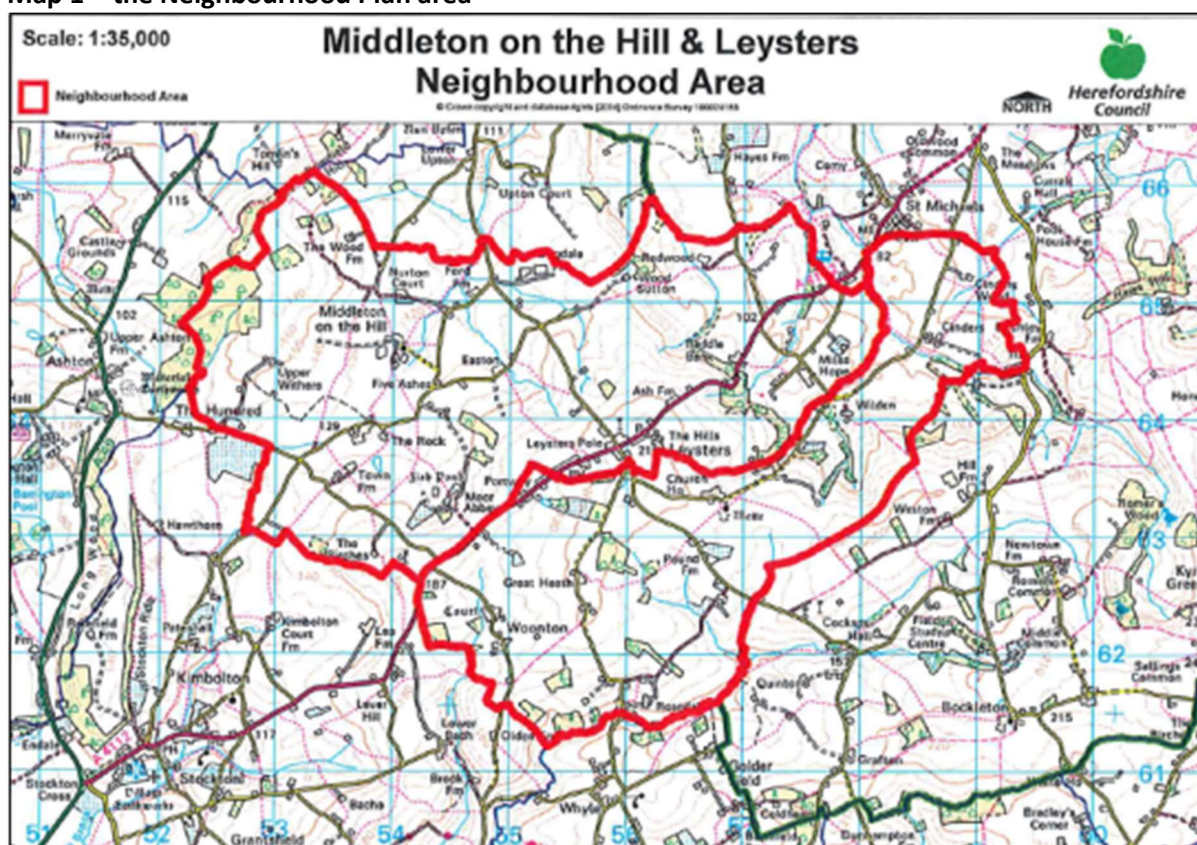
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## 1.0 Introduction and background

1.0.1 Middleton on the Hill and Leysters is a small, rural group Parish in north-east Herefordshire, three miles to the east of the market town of Leominster. It consists of two Parishes – Middleton on the Hill, which forms the northern part of the area, and Leysters to the south as shown on Map 1 below.

Map 1 – the Neighbourhood Plan area



1.0.2 The area is deeply rural, tranquil and retains much of its traditional historic character, having largely escaped the pressures of modern development. The countryside is elevated and gently rolling, rising steeply out of the Teme Valley to the east and the Herefordshire Lowlands to the west. This provides a number of spectacular far-reaching views to the Shropshire Hills, Black Mountains of Wales and much of central Herefordshire.

1.0.3 The dense network of fields are enclosed by well-established hedgerows which together with areas of ancient woodland and native broadleaf woodland give an extensive tree cover. There are significant concentrations of traditional orchards that are important habitats for a number of species including beetles and bats.

- 1.0.4 The area has a low density of development characterised by two small villages each with an imposing medieval church. The largest of these villages is Leysters, containing 45 homes, the Parish Hall, Post Office and Public house. It has a distinct linear form and retains much of its pre-20<sup>th</sup> century character. The nature of the Parish boundaries means that the majority of houses in Leysters village are located in the Parish of Middleton on the Hill. For this reason, the name 'Leysters village' is used throughout this Neighbourhood Plan to distinguish it from the wider Parish.
- 1.0.5 Middleton on the Hill is an isolated historic hamlet with a distinctive and very attractive cluster of important listed buildings at its core. There are less than ten dwellings and the settlement also contains a number of modern agricultural units.
- 1.0.6 Outside the two villages the settlement pattern is one of scattered farmsteads, small groups of houses and isolated dwellings, typically built of locally sourced materials and of a traditional, domestic scale. It is within this wider countryside that the majority of the population live.
- 1.0.7 The A4112 runs through Leysters village, linking it to Leominster in the west and Tenbury Wells to the east. There is also an extensive network of quiet lanes, bridleways and footpaths, often enclosed by hedgerows.
- 1.0.8 The area has a population of 358 people and has remained broadly stable in number since the 1960s. The population is generally in good health with high levels of economic activity and low unemployment. Agriculture remains the most significant employer of local people and levels of self-employment and working from home are relatively high.
- 1.0.9 However, like much of rural Herefordshire, the average age of the population is rising and there is a relatively small number of young people. The low population density makes it difficult to sustain key services including public transport, increasing reliance on the private car. The housing stock is disproportionately skewed towards larger detached houses and there is a paucity of low cost accommodation particularly in the social rented sector.
- 1.0.10 For many years successive planning strategies have adopted a Policy of severely restricting new development in the area. This Policy was rigorously applied and has been largely successful in preventing development from coming forward that could have eroded the special character of the area. It has though, come at a cost – a lack of different types and tenures of new housing being delivered, and the profile of the existing stock has made the area largely unaffordable and/or unsuitable for many households, particularly elderly people, young families or the children of local people who wish to remain living in the area.

- 1.0.11 In 2015 Herefordshire Council adopted a new Plan for the County – the Core Strategy. This new Plan has taken a different approach from previous planning strategies – one which promotes rural regeneration by allocating significant levels of growth to villages across the County including those previously classified as being within ‘open countryside’. For the first time, both Leysters and Middleton on the Hill are identified as settlements where new housing development will be promoted, and the Parish has been given a minimum ‘target’ of new homes to deliver up to 2031.
- 1.0.12 The Core Strategy has devolved responsibility for delivering growth to local communities through the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans. Neighbourhood Plans are still relatively new - a key element of the Localism Act 2011 and give Parish Councils and other relevant bodies new powers to prepare statutory Plans to help guide development in their local areas. These powers give local people the opportunity to shape new development, as planning applications are determined in accordance with national planning policies and the local development plan, and neighbourhood plans form part of this framework. Other new powers include Community Right to Build Orders, whereby local communities have the ability to grant planning permission for new buildings.
- 1.0.13 This Neighbourhood Plan is the community’s response to the challenges and opportunities that the new Core Strategy has given us. It enables us to plan for some new growth to meet the needs of our existing population, to attract new people to the area, and to protect and enhance what makes the area special. It also presents an opportunity to address long-standing community concerns and priorities including the speed and impact of traffic travelling through Leysters village and the speed and reliability of telecommunications infrastructure.

## 2.0 The development of the Plan

- 2.0.1 In early 2014 the Parish Council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Group Parish. Herefordshire Council formally designated the area on 1 May 2014.
- 2.0.2 The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has been led by the Steering Group made up of Parish Councillors and local residents. The Steering Group was established in February 2015 and meets on a regular basis and all meetings are open to the public. Minutes of all meetings have been published on the Neighbourhood Plan website.
- 2.0.3 The Neighbourhood Plan builds on earlier work including the preparation of a community led Parish Plan in 2004. The Parish Plan identified a number of issues that remain significant to local people, many of which are relevant to spatial planning and have been used to inform the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.0.4 A Local Affordable Housing Needs Survey was completed by Herefordshire Council in 2012. This provides information on local housing need and the findings of this Survey have been used to inform the planning policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan related to housing types, tenures and the number of needs.
- 2.0.5 The Neighbourhood Plan was formally launched at a community meeting in June 2015 and was followed up by a community questionnaire, circulated to local residents in November 2015 building on the issues raised at the Launch Event and to understand the aspirations and priorities of the community in more detail.
- 2.0.6 A summary of the various comments received to the community survey is set out below in Table 1 and these have been used to inform the vision, objectives, development strategy and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. Some suggestions lie outside the influence of the Neighbourhood Plan and some have been addressed through other mechanisms led by the Parish Council.

**Table 1 – Summary of Community Survey findings**

Issue / theme	Comments
Likes and dislikes	Local people like living in the area. The most important ‘likes’ are the unspoilt and beautiful countryside and the peace and quiet. The most frequently identified dislikes are traffic, poor public transport and a lack of facilities. A reduced speed limit through Leysters village, better mobile phone and Internet coverage, and a bus service were the most popular changes that people would like to see



Issue / theme	Comments
Housing	The overwhelming majority of responses either support the level of proposed in the Core Strategy (23 new homes 2011- 2031), or would like to see more if this paid for better local facilities or was for local people only. The responses support a strategy of focussing development into Leysters and to a lesser extent Middleton on the Hill with some new housing created through the conversion of buildings in the countryside. Small scale schemes of 1-2 private semi-detached homes in infill sites was the most popular form of new housing.
Environment and Local Character	The elements which were identified as being most important to making up the character of the area were the views, trees and hedgerows and network of fields. The most significant threats were seen as overdevelopment and additional traffic. People would like to see a traditional approach to the design of new development using local materials.
Infrastructure	Better broadband, investment in roads and better mobile phone coverage ranked as the most important priorities for investment. Water supply, sewerage and drainage were not regarded as major issues
Transport	The great majority of people were concerned about the speed of traffic through Leysters village. The most popular solutions were traffic calming, reducing the speed limit and speed checks
Community facilities	The key community facility priorities were extra parking at the Parish Hall, keeping the village pub and post office and a new village shop

2.0.7 These findings informed the preparation of a draft Vision and set of Objectives which were discussed and agreed at a Public meeting on 12 March 2016.

2.0.8 At the same time the Steering Group has prepared a Character Assessment of the area to help to develop a better understanding of the special qualities of the area and to build on the key messages from the Community Survey. The Character Assessment was published in November 2015.

2.0.9 In January 2016 the Parish Council issued a 'Call for Sites' in order to help identify potential locations to accommodate new housing development, reflecting the direction provided by the Community Survey. The Call for Sites notice was advertised in the Parish Magazine, on the Neighbourhood Plan website and on all noticeboards in the Parish. 17 submissions were made and these formed the basis of a Housing Options consultation in May 2016. The Housing Options consultation sought the views of the community on the various sites put forward, and included a public workshop meeting held on 16 May 2016. 55 written responses were made and over 60 people attended the workshop. A preferred option was presented at a

follow up meeting in September 2016 and has been carried forward into the draft plan.

2.0.10 Traffic and Transport has been a major issue at all stages of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, most significantly during the Housing Options consultation. The Parish Council commissioned a Transport Study to understand these issues in more detail and to present a package of measures to address them. A transport workshop was held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and the subsequent Report and Action Plan is attached as Appendix 1.

2.0.11 The Regulation 14 consultation took place between December 2016 and February 2017. 13 individuals or organisations responded, making 32 specific comments – in the main of a supportive nature. In the light of these comments the Parish Council agreed to make a number of minor amendments to the Plan at its meeting in March 2017. The submission stage (Regulation 16) consultation took place between 7<sup>th</sup> June and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and the Examiners Report received in December 2017.

### 3.0 Vision and Objectives

#### **Vision**

Our Neighbourhood Plan sets out the vision for the area that reflects the thoughts and feelings of local people.

By 2031 Middleton on the Hill and Leysters will have grown a little, remaining a predominantly rural Parish with an active and strong local community. It will continue to contain quintessentially beautiful Herefordshire countryside.

There will be a sufficient range and number of new high quality sustainable homes to meet a variety of needs and budgets and allowing older residents and the children of local people to buy in the area. The nature and scale of housing will have enhanced our rural appearance, feel and identity and protected the countryside. Necessary services – broadband, water, and roads – will be provided, improved and supported locally. There will be opportunities for working from home as well as locally, in activities that positively enhance our natural environment. Continuing agricultural and other business activities in the Parish will also enhance our natural and built environment. Village amenities will be improved by enhancing access to local shopping facilities, improving parking for the Parish Hall and bringing forward a package of measures, which address concerns over road safety.

#### **Objectives**

1. To ensure that new housing is provided across the area in a suitable range of tenures, types, sizes, affordability ranges and is flexible in usage so that local people of all ages can continue to live in the Parish, while families are attracted to the area and local housing needs are met.
2. Leysters village which provides key services and community facilities will be the main focus for new housing development. The scale of new housing growth will be proportionate to the size of the village without being detrimental to its rural character and setting.
3. To ensure that housing development in Middleton on the Hill is of a scale and design which supports its distinctive character and setting as a historic rural hamlet.
4. To ensure that the natural and built environment of the Parish is protected and enhanced for future generations by protecting key environmental assets including

important views, the network of fields and hedgerows, historic farmsteads and the distinctive character and setting of our settlements

5. Ensure that appropriate sewage treatment, water supply, energy and telecommunications infrastructure is provided to meet the current needs of the community and support future growth. Broadband and mobile communications in particular need to be greatly improved to ensure the well-being of the residents in a rural area and to offer more opportunity for business growth and home working.
6. To ensure the highways and pavement infrastructure meets the existing and evolving requirements of the village, residents and local businesses. There is a particular need to address community concerns by identifying measures that establish safer environments for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in Leysters village.
7. To welcome employment opportunities, including working from home and those connected with visitors and tourism, whilst ensuring that these fit in sympathetically with the existing environment and residences.
8. To provide for the needs of our community as locally as possible through the retention and improvement of our existing facilities including the Parish Hall, Post Office and Duke of York Pub.
9. To provide small play areas for the village children and to acquire a village green or have permanent use of a pasture, ideally close to the Parish Hall where village sports can be played.
10. To always be mindful of the needs of the old, the young, the disabled and the vulnerable and to make provision for these needs wherever possible.

## 4.0 The Plan Policies

- 4.0.1 Planning decisions are guided by policies that are referred to when planning applications are made to Herefordshire Council. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan policies, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Localism Act allows communities to develop their own policies, provided that they are based on sound evidence, community input and proper principles of planning. The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan must follow the statutory process.
- 4.0.2 The following section of the Plan identifies a series of Policy Areas, which correspond to the key issues identified by the Community. Relevant Herefordshire Core Strategy policies that need to be considered are set out and shown in blue text.
- 4.0.3 21 policies have been developed under seven Policy Areas that seek to influence planning and development outcomes in order that they meet the requirements of the community.

## 4.1 A Strategy for Middleton on the Hill and Leysters

### Relevant Herefordshire Core Strategy Policies

RA2 – Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns

RA3 – Herefordshire’s countryside

### Neighbourhood Plan Policies

#### **Policy ML 1 - Promoting a Sustainable Community**

Support will be given to positive measures that promote sustainable development in accordance with the Vision, Objectives and Policies set out in this Neighbourhood Plan. Where relevant, development proposals should address the following priorities that are considered essential for maintaining a cohesive and resilient community:

1. The highest priority will be given to maintaining and enhancing the rural character and local distinctiveness within the Parish. This includes the settings and amenity of the settlements, landscape and views.
2. Development should be accommodated within infrastructure limits in particular for sewage treatment, highway safety, and measures brought forward for adapting to or mitigating climate change.
3. Improvements to community facilities will be sought.
4. Housing provision should meet the on-going identified needs of the community with a suitable mix of size, style and tenure.
5. Emphasis should be on promoting employment which is appropriate in terms of scale and contributes positively to the character of the parish.

#### **4.1.1 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.1.2 Under section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This overarching policy covers the essential elements for sustainable development in Middleton on the Hill and Leysters. It reflects the approach promoted in the Herefordshire Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Parish Plan together with community priorities reflected in the various consultation events. It is intended to

implement this Policy through the resulting detailed Neighbourhood Plan policies ML2-21. These are to be used as a reference for all planning decisions made by Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Parish Council and Herefordshire Council.

#### **Policy ML 2 - Development Strategy**

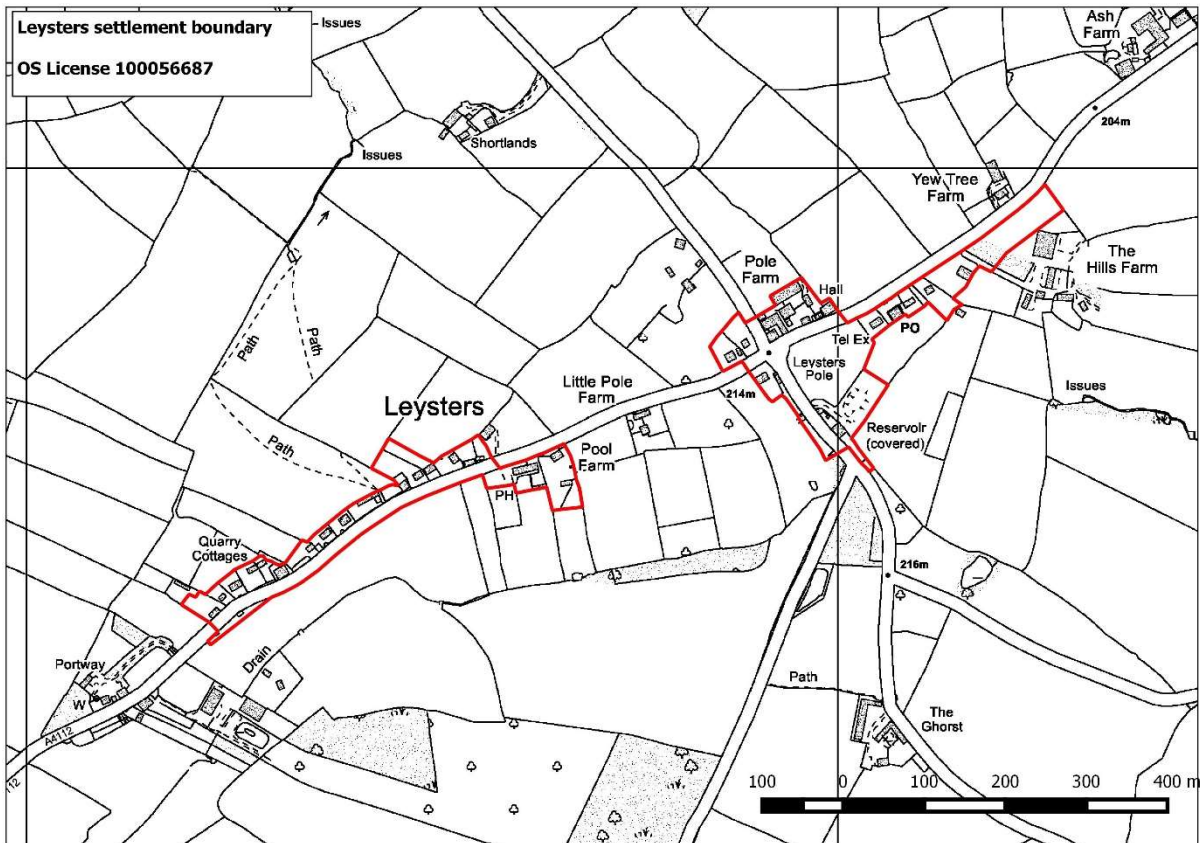
The villages of Leysters and Middleton on the Hill will be the focus for development within the Parish.

In addition particular regard shall be had to utilising brownfield land and protecting Grades 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land unless land of a lower grade is not available or the need for the development outweighs this requirement.

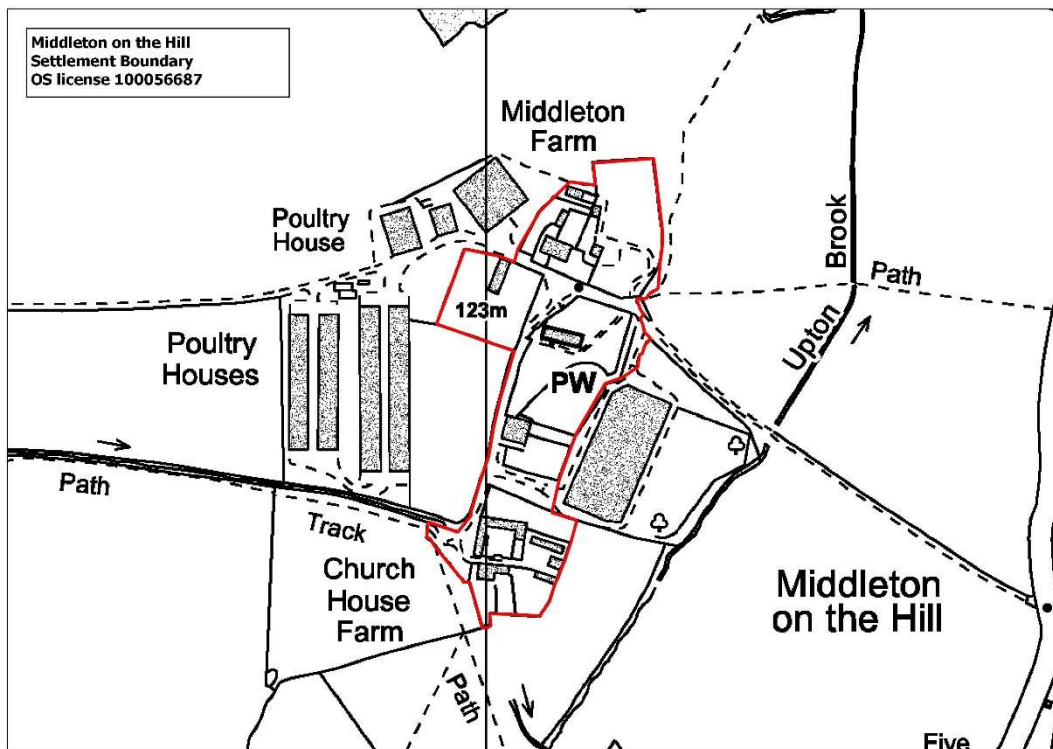
The accommodation of development to meet the needs of the Parish and contribute to County requirements will be based upon the following approach:

1. Leysters village will continue to play a major role as a centre providing a range of facilities for the Parish. To allow for residential and other development within the village of Leysters a settlement boundary is defined as shown on Map 2. Development should take place within this boundary in accordance with relevant policies set out in this Neighbourhood Plan including ML 5.
2. To accommodate limited development in Middleton on the Hill, a settlement boundary is defined for the main group of properties comprising the core of the built-up part of the settlement as shown on Map 3. Development should take place within this boundary in accordance with relevant policies set out in this Neighbourhood Plan including ML 5.
3. Development outside of the villages listed above will only be permitted in accordance with relevant policies in the Herefordshire Core Strategy, and this Neighbourhood Development Plan.
4. The countryside will continue to accommodate development in association with agricultural and rural enterprises where these reflect the scale and nature of the landscape within which they sit.

Map 2 – Leysters village settlement boundary



Map 3 – Middleton on the Hill settlement boundary





### **4.1.3 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

- 4.1.4 This Policy is aligned with Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy RA2, which identifies two settlements as locations where new housing will be supported. In particular this Policy indicates that new housing should be located within or adjacent to main built up areas. Leysters village is the main settlement and possesses a number of facilities including a public house, post office and Parish Hall. Consequently it should accommodate the major part of the housing target set for the Neighbourhood Plan area. Although Middleton on the Hill is listed in the Core Strategy as a settlement it has no facilities or services apart from the Parish Church. Middleton on the Hill is a historic settlement in a deeply rural and very tranquil setting and given its lack of services and distinct, sensitive setting Policy ML5 provides that development there should be restricted to infill within the settlement boundary.
- 4.1.5 Outside of these two settlements, development proposals will need to accord with the rural Policies set out in the Herefordshire Core Strategy.
- 4.1.6 Other forms of development will come forward in the Parish and this Policy directs where these might be. They include land for employment, services, facilities and infrastructure. Those considered most required are explained in greater detail in the policies and proposals of this Plan. Where proposals are not covered by a specific Neighbourhood Plan policy then the Herefordshire Core Strategy will be used. .
- 4.1.7 The approach set out in Policy ML 2 is consistent with the findings of the Community Survey. Question C2 requested views on the balance of new residential development across the area. The Survey put forward four 'spatial' options with Option 3 (development focussed on Leysters and Middleton on the Hill with some converted buildings outside the villages) emerging as the most popular choice.

### **Evidence**

Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey (2016)  
Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment (2015)  
Parish Plan for Leysters and Middleton on the Hill (2003)

## 4.2 Providing New Housing

### **Relevant Objectives:**

- 1 To ensure that new housing is provided across the area in a suitable range of tenures, types, sizes, affordability ranges and is flexible in usage so that local people of all ages can continue to live in the Parish, while families are attracted to the area and local housing needs are met.
- 2 Leysters village which provides key services and community facilities will be the main focus for new housing development. The scale of new housing growth will be proportionate to the size of the village without being detrimental to its rural character and setting.
- 3 To ensure that housing development in Middleton on the Hill is of a scale and design, which supports its distinctive character and setting as a historic rural hamlet.

### **Relevant Herefordshire Core Strategy Policies**

Policy RA1 – Rural housing distribution

Policy RA2 – Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns

Policy RA3 – Herefordshire’s countryside

Policy RA4 – Agricultural, forestry and rural enterprise dwellings

Policy RA5 – Re-use of rural buildings

Policy H1 – Affordable Housing

Policy H2 – Rural exception sites

Policy H3 – Ensuring a range and mix of housing

Policy SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency

Policy SD3 – Sustainable water management and water resources

Policy SD4 – Wastewater treatment and river water quality

### **Neighbourhood Plan Policies:**

<b>Policy ML 3 – The scale of new housing</b>
<p>The Plan will provide for a minimum of 30 new homes to meet demonstrated local housing needs and contribute to the supply of homes to serve the wider housing market over the plan period between 2011 and 2031.</p>

This figure will comprise:

1. Around 13 new dwellings constructed or with planning permission granted between April 2011 and March 2017; and
2. 9 new dwellings on sites identified for housing development listed in Neighbourhood Plan Policy ML4; and
3. Through windfall development of sites within the defined settlement boundaries as set out in Neighbourhood Plan Policy ML5; and
4. Appropriate development in the countryside as set out in Neighbourhood Plan Policy ML6, including on rural exception sites

#### **4.2.1 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.2.2 Policy RA1 of the Herefordshire Core Strategy provides the rural housing strategy and states that within the Leominster Housing Market Area approximately 730 dwellings will be required over the Plan period and villages should have a target of 14% growth.

4.2.3 Policy RA2 of the Core Strategy states that the minimum growth target in each rural Housing Market Area will be used to inform the level of housing development to be delivered in the various settlements set out in Figures 4.14 and 4.15 of the Core Strategy. Neighbourhood Development Plans will allocate land for new housing or otherwise demonstrate delivery to provide levels of housing to meet the various targets by indicating levels of suitable and available capacity.

4.2.4 The Core Strategy indicates that the proportional growth is based on the number of dwellings in the Parish. This has been identified as a figure of 165 (local property gazetteer). Applying the housing target growth rate of 14% for the Plan period, Middleton on the Hill and Leysters is required to find a minimum of 23 new dwellings. However, planning completions and commitments to date account for 13 new homes, and allowing for some of these permissions to 'lapse' this reduces the target for this Neighbourhood Plan to identify to 10 new dwellings.

4.2.5 The Core Strategy identifies Leysters as being the settlement that will be the main focus of proportionate housing development, with Middleton on the Hill being identified as a settlement where proportionate housing is appropriate.

4.2.6 Core Strategy Policy RA2 is not just concerned with the allowed amount of new housing. Within the settlements identified in the Policy, new housing development should result in the delivery of schemes that generate the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular settlements, reflecting local demand. The Policy adds that specific proposals for the delivery of local need housing will be

supported where this meets an identified need and their long term retention as local needs housing is secured as such. The Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base Report (March 2016), provides a summary of key elements of the Local Plan evidence base relevant to housing need – the Housing Needs Survey and the Local Housing Market Assessment. The Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Housing Needs Study reveals a need for four affordable homes to meet the needs of existing and emerging households. The Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment also identifies a need for affordable housing in the rural areas, with a focus on social rented accommodation in smaller homes with over 55.6% of need being for one and two bed accommodation.

4.2.7 The Neighbourhood Plan can deliver affordable housing in two ways – firstly through the bringing forward of development on sites of more than ten new homes where Core Strategy Policy H1 requires that 40% are affordable. The second delivery route is through ‘exceptions sites’ subject to Core Strategy Policies RA3 and H2 – sites that would not normally be released for housing where it would meet a proven local need and offer access to a range of services and facilities normally available in a settlement identified in Policy RA2 (Leysters and Middleton on the Hill).

4.2.8 In the context of the Core Strategy Policy requirements and evidence base, the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey sought to understand the views of the community on the amount, type, location and tenure of new housing to be provided over the Plan period. The survey revealed the following key findings relevant to housing issues:

- The overwhelming majority of responses supported either the current Core Strategy minimum growth figure of 23 new homes, or would like to see more if this paid for better local facilities or was for local people only.
- Support for a strategy of focussing development into the settlements of Leysters and to a lesser extent Middleton on the Hill with some new housing created through the conversion of buildings in the countryside.
- Small scale schemes of 1-2 on infill sites were preferred, with affordable homes for sale and rent being the most popular choice in terms of tenure.
- The key community facility priorities were extra parking at the Parish Hall, keeping the village pub and post office and a new village shop.

4.2.9 The Call for Sites exercise in early 2016 invited landowners and their agents to submit sites for potential inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. No minimum size threshold was identified in order to understand the range and type of sites potentially available for development in the area. A total of 17 individual Call for Sites Forms were submitted and these sites have the potential to provide 70 homes based on the capacity identified on the submission form.

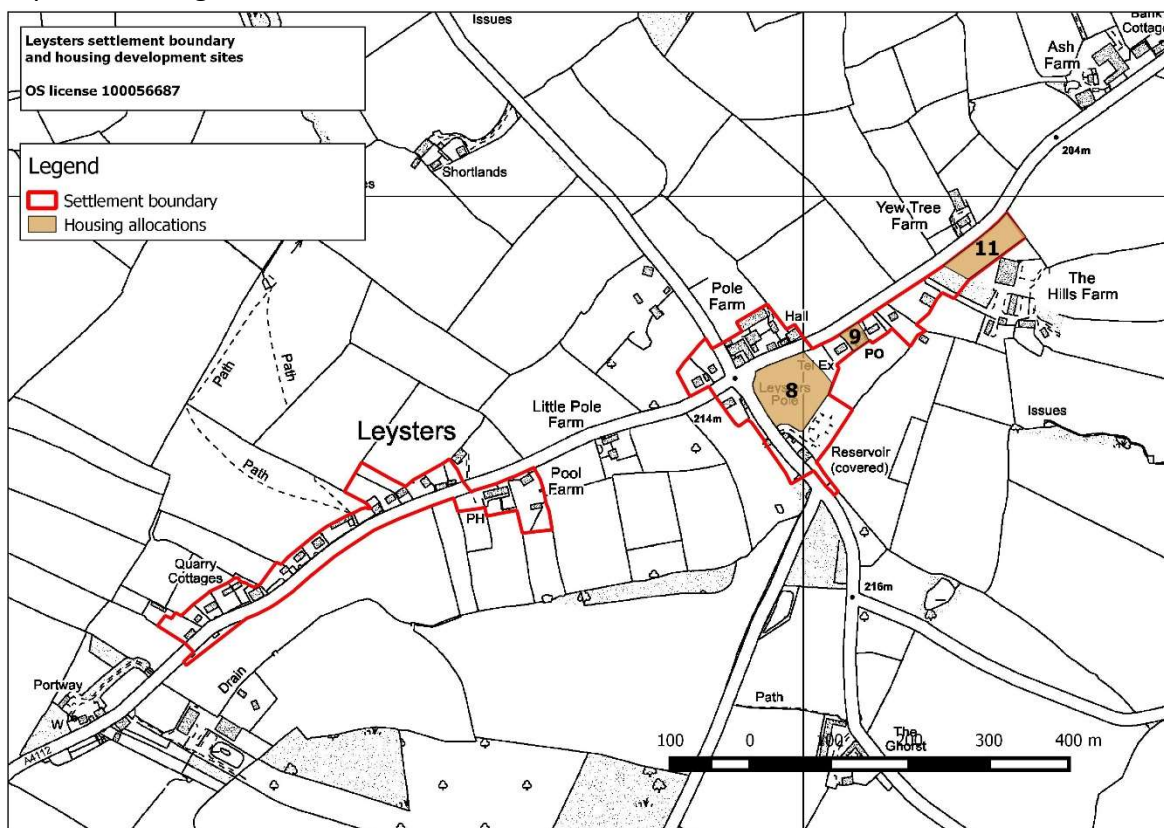
- 4.2.10 The submissions were considered by the Neighbourhood Planning Consultant and the findings are set out in the Settlement Boundary and Call for Sites Report (May 2016). The Report explains that seven were rejected as part of the Stage 1 assessment on the grounds of them being located in the open countryside for the purposes of Core Strategy Policy RA2. A further three sites, with the potential to provide up to eight new homes, have the potential to be brought forward in accordance with Core Strategy Policy RA2 on the basis of them involving the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside. If all of these sites were to be brought forward then the Core Strategy Policy RA2 housing target of a minimum of 10 additional homes over and above current commitments for the Neighbourhood Plan would be largely met.
- 4.2.11 However, a number of these sites are subject to constraints and so they cannot be relied upon as a definitive source of capacity. In addition, these sites will not provide the type of housing needs of the area as set out in the Housing Needs Survey and Housing Market Assessment, nor will they assist with the delivery of key community priorities identified through the Community Survey.
- 4.2.12 Six sites were taken forward for consideration through Stage 2 on the basis of them being within or on the edge of the built form of Leysters village as defined by the proposed settlement boundary. These sites each had a number of advantages and disadvantages and so in order to ensure that the Plan reflected the priorities and preferences of local people, the Parish Council undertook a Housing Options Consultation in May 2016 based on the recommendations of the Settlement Boundary and Call for Sites Report. The key findings of the Housing Options Consultation were:
- Support for the proposed settlement boundary and for the Neighbourhood Plan identifying development sites in Leysters village.
  - A preference for the development of a number of small sites distributed around the village and to respect the linear form as identified in the Character Assessment.
  - Support specifically for the identification of site 8 (Leysters Pole Field) for development, but no more than five homes.
- 4.2.13 On the basis of these responses a Preferred Option was identified and discussed at a Public meeting in September 2016. This preferred option identifies four sites – three for market housing and one exception site to provide affordable housing. The largest site (Site 8 - Leysters Pole Field) provides the opportunity to include car parking to serve the Parish Hall – a key priority identified in the Community Survey.
- 4.2.14 The effect of the Preferred Option is that the Neighbourhood Plan will provide a level of housing in excess of the minimum figure required by the Core Strategy.
-

However, this level of housing is consistent with the character of the Parish, provides the opportunity to deliver a range of types and tenures in order to meet identified needs, and will help to support important community priorities.

**Policy ML 4 – Housing allocations**

The following sites are allocated for housing development:

Map 4 – Housing allocations



**Site 8 – Leysters Pole Field**

Development of up to five homes laid out in a linear form facing the A4112 and of a harmonious mix of traditional architectural styles and materials in order to respect the character and appearance of the settlement. Vehicular access to be provided from the A4112 to retain the rural character of the lane to the south of the site (C1052).

**Site 9 – Leysters Garage**

Development of up to two homes subject to meeting the requirements of Policy ML 19 relating to the loss of the village Post Office.

**Site 11 – The Hills Farm**

Development of two homes with access from the existing track serving the Hills Farm. A direct access from the A4112 will not be supported due to the need to remove the existing hedgerow and trees which form an important element of the character of this part of the settlement.

#### **4.2.15 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.2.16 Policy ML 4 allocates three sites in Leysters village for residential development. These sites provide for a mix of housing types to meet a variety of needs. While it is normal practice for development plans to allocate sites of five units or more, it is considered that in the case of Leysters, the Housing Options consultation revealed that the community wish to see the Neighbourhood Plan take a more detailed approach. It is accepted that while other small windfall sites may come forward for development within the settlement boundary and subject to Policy ML5, it is appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to provide specific guidance on the sites identified in Policy ML4 due to their prominence and significance in the context of the character of the settlement.

4.2.17 Site 8 is the largest of the three sites. The Housing Options consultation identified two possible Options and the preferred Option for site 8 is consistent with Option 2, but with a more dispersed approach to housing across the village as a whole to reflect the responses to the consultation. This Option provides for a development of a scale consistent with the existing density and character of the settlement. A larger scale development of 11 homes (Option3) would also have provided some much needed affordable housing and a village green but this Option was considered to be at too high a density to be consistent with the character of the settlement. The Submission draft Plan included an additional site to be brought forward for affordable housing (site 17). This allocation was deleted in accordance with the recommendations of the Examiners Report and may become available as a rural exception site subject to Policy ML10.

<b>Policy ML 5 – Housing development within the settlement boundaries</b>
<p>Development of infill sites within the defined Settlement Boundaries of Leysters and Middleton on the Hill in addition to those allocated in Policy ML4 will be supported where all of the following criteria are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. It is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings subject to Policy ML 11.</li><li>2. It does not impact adversely on the amenity of neighbouring properties.</li><li>3. It does not result in inappropriate development in residential gardens.</li></ol>



#### **4.2.18 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.2.19 The Characterisation Study shows how both Middleton on the Hill and Leysters village have grown in an organic, piecemeal manner and have avoided 'estate' style housing developments, which unfortunately are now typical of many rural villages.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports further growth within the two settlements, but only where it is small scale, preferably in single plot developments and consistent with this character.

4.2.20 The settlement boundary has therefore been tightly drawn around the existing domestic curtilages to reflect the existing built form and to facilitate some new development consistent with the communities priorities as identified in the Community Survey and Housing Options consultation.

#### **Policy ML 6 – Housing in the countryside**

New housing development in areas outside the defined Settlement Boundaries will be limited to proposals which satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

1. Where it has been demonstrated that there is a functional and financial requirement for an agricultural or forestry workers dwelling on an existing or proposed holding subject to Core Strategy Policy RA4; or
2. Where it accompanies and is necessary to the establishment or growth of a rural enterprise, and complies with Core Strategy Policy RA4; or
3. Where it involves the replacement of an existing dwelling subject to Core Strategy Policy RA3; or
4. Where it would result in the sustainable re-use of a redundant or disused building(s) subject to Core Strategy Policy RA3; or
5. Where it can assist in meeting a proven local need for affordable housing subject to Core Strategy Policy H2 and is located on the edge of the defined settlement boundaries with safe and suitable access to local facilities listed in Neighbourhood Plan Policy ML 19.

Permitted development rights for extensions, boundary treatments or surfacing may be removed exceptionally within particularly sensitive locations such as those listed in part 8 of Policy ML11.

#### **4.2.21 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.2.22 New development in the open countryside is now largely precluded in the National Planning Policy Framework and Herefordshire Core Strategy. Both set a very restrictive approach and the Neighbourhood Plan must be in conformity with these policies. In summary, residential development in the countryside is largely limited to the replacement or extension of existing dwellings, provision of homes for those employed in agriculture and forestry and conversion of redundant or under-used barns and other rural buildings. In addition, and on sites on the edge of settlements only, affordable housing may be permitted. The Neighbourhood Plan Characterisation Report shows that the Leysters and Middleton on the Hill is a deeply tranquil rural area which retains much of its traditional historic character and



has largely survived the pressures of modern development. This makes it sensitive to new development – particularly in the open countryside and so in some cases – for example in highly visible locations or in areas of special character, it may be appropriate to remove permitted development rights exceptionally and only in particularly sensitive locations in order to protect this character through preventing inappropriate extensions, boundary treatments or surfacing.

#### **Policy ML7 – Extensions to dwellings**

Planning applications will be supported for extensions to dwellings subject to meeting the following criteria:

1. The overall design, size, appearance, scale, height and mass remain visually subservient to the main dwelling; and
2. The external facing materials should complement or be sympathetic to the materials in the main dwelling; and
3. No significant and adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

#### **4.2.23 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.2.24 This Policy seeks to ensure that extensions to dwellings are designed to complement and / or enhance the existing property and surrounding area. This is necessary in order to protect the character of the area and to retain variety and choice in the housing stock to meet a range of needs. .

#### **Policy ML 8 – Design of new housing**

An integrated approach to achieve a high standard of design will be required in particular to achieve the maximum possible reduction in the carbon footprint of any development. Where it is practicable and feasible to do so, development proposals should contain a coordinated package of design measures to include the following:

1. Incorporating locally distinctive features and materials - although new innovative design or features will not necessarily be resisted where they fit sensitively within the particular village frontage and street scene.
2. Utilising physical sustainability measures associated with buildings that include, in particular, orientation of buildings, the provision of energy and water conservation measures, cycle and recycling storage, broadband infrastructure and renewable energy infrastructure such as photovoltaic panels
3. Including adequate parking and ensuring that movement to, within, around and through the development is acceptable.
4. Retaining important features such as tree cover, ponds, orchards and hedgerows, adding to the natural assets of the Parish where opportunities are available.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. Hard and soft landscape proposals not resulting in a suburbanised appearance, for example through the planting of boundaries with non-native species, the use of timber board or panel fencing, extensive use of pavers or tarmac, or use of uncharacteristic gravel;</li><li>6. Seeking on-site measures that support energy conservation, such as through tree planting and other forms of green infrastructure to provide shade and shelter, the inclusion of sustainable drainage systems, the maximum use of permeable surfaces and minimising the use of external lighting to that which is necessary.</li></ol> |
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#### **4.2.25 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.2.26 The special character of the Neighbourhood Plan area reflects a variety of building materials and designs. Responses to the community survey show that local people have a preference for small scale infill development and have a preference for the use of local materials in traditional architectural styles. Part 6 of the Policy takes account of bullet point 6 in paragraph 17 of the NPPF (Core Planning Principles) in putting forward measures to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. An assessment of the adequacy of any parking within new housing will be judged against the provisions of Policy MT1 in the Herefordshire Core Strategy.

<b>Policy ML 9 – Ensuring an appropriate range of tenures, types and sizes of houses</b>
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All proposals for new housing development will have to demonstrate how they contribute to maintaining a mix of tenures, types and sizes of dwelling in the Parish. In particular, smaller dwellings of two or three bedrooms will be encouraged in order to even out the size range of dwellings available in the Parish and meet identified needs.
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#### **4.2.27 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.2.28 Policy H1 of the Herefordshire Core Strategy states that residential developments should provide a range and mix of housing which can contribute to the creation of balanced and inclusive communities. Policy RA2 of the Core Strategy also requires that within the settlements identified in the Policy (Leysters village and Middleton on the Hill), new housing development should result in the delivery of schemes that generate the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular settlements, reflecting local demand.

4.2.29 The Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base Report shows that the existing housing stock of the area is disproportionately skewed towards larger detached houses and there is a paucity of smaller lower cost accommodation. The 2013 update of the 2012 Herefordshire Local Housing Assessment shows that within the rural parts of the

Leominster Housing Market area (within which the Neighbourhood Plan area is located), and for the period to 2031, the most needed forms of new market housing are 3 bedroom houses (59% of estimated need) followed by 2 bedroom (26% of estimated needs). Larger 4+ bedroom dwellings form only 9% of estimated needs and 1 bedroom 6%

#### **Policy ML 10 – Affordable Housing**

The need for affordable housing as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework, which can be provided by registered providers and community housing groups, will be met by:

1. Rural exception sites consistent with Neighbourhood Plan Policy ML 6 and subject to the provisions below; or
2. On allocated sites or windfall developments providing more than ten homes which have a combined floorspace of more than 1,000sq metres, a minimum of 40% of properties are made available to meet local housing needs to rent and for shared ownership.

On rural exception sites affordable homes will be subject to a Section 106 Obligation ensuring that priority for allocation, on the first and subsequent lettings, is first given to those with a local connection.

A ‘cascade’ arrangement will be in place to ensure that where nobody with a local connection is forthcoming then properties will be offered at a second stage to those from the neighbouring Herefordshire parishes of Kimbolton, Brimfield & Little Hereford, Luston Group and Hatfield & District Group.

On rural exception sites, a subordinate element of low-cost housing for sale may be permitted where it is demonstrated, under the terms of the Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy H2, that such housing would be necessary to subsidise affordable housing provision on the site, ensure viability and achieve the successful delivery of the whole development.

Any low-cost housing will be permitted only subject to a section 106 obligation which provides for any future sale of the dwelling(s) to be set at a percentage below the market value of the property at that time, set at a level estimated to be affordable for those with a local connection, or otherwise in accordance with the cascade arrangements described above.

#### **4.2.30 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.2.31 The Community Survey identified affordable homes for sale or rent as the most needed form of new housing in the area. The Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Housing Needs Study reveals a need for four affordable homes to meet the needs of

existing and emerging households. The Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment also identifies a need for affordable housing in the rural areas, with a focus on social rented accommodation in smaller homes with 55.6% of need being for one and two bed accommodation.

4.2.32 It is also important to ensure that those houses remain affordable to meet the needs of future generations. This will be achieved by the provision of section 106 agreements.

4.2.33 Policy ML10 permits, on rural exception sites, a subordinate element of low-cost housing for sale to be permitted where it is demonstrated, under the terms of the Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy H2, that such housing would be necessary to subsidise affordable housing provision on the site, ensure viability and achieve the successful delivery of the whole development. Any low-cost housing will be permitted only subject to a section 106 obligation which provides for any future sale of the dwelling(s) to be set at a percentage below the market value of the property at that time. This discount should be at a level to meet local needs as defined in para 4.2.34 below, or otherwise in accordance with the cascade arrangements described in Policy ML10. To assess affordability, both house prices and incomes should be taken into account using the approach set out in the Herefordshire Council 2008 'Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document' and the associated 'Provision of Affordable Housing – Technical data to support the Supplementary Planning Document for Planning Obligations (April 2008) updated annually.

4.2.34 Herefordshire Council define a local connection to mean a person within the household who has a connection to a locality or parish. Generally speaking, this can be someone who has lived in an area for a period of time, or is working, usually 16 hours or more, in the area where the properties are located. It is also possible to have a local connection if a family member has a proven need to give or receive support from family members. This can be personal or physical care to enable the person to live independently within the community.

## **Evidence**

Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey (2016)  
Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment (2015)  
Local Affordable Housing Needs Survey for Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Group Parish (2012)  
Parish Plan for Leysters and Middleton on the Hill (2003)

## 4.3 Protecting and Enhancing Local Character

### **Relevant Objectives:**

1. To ensure that the natural and built environment of the Parish is protected and enhanced for future generations by protecting key environmental assets including important views, the network of fields and hedgerows, historic farmsteads and the distinctive character and setting of our settlements

### **Relevant Core Strategy Policies:**

Policy LD1 – Landscape and townscape

Policy LD2 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy LD3 – Green Infrastructure

Policy LD4 – Historic environment and heritage assets

### **Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

#### **Policy ML 11 – Protecting and Enhancing Local Character**

All development proposals will be expected to respect, reinforce and promote the special qualities, historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in order to help maintain its cultural identity and strong sense of place. Development proposals should sustain and, where appropriate, enhance local character and those aspects of the historic and natural environment together with their settings which are recognised as being of special historic, archaeological, architectural, landscape or biodiversity value in accordance with the following principles:

1. Within and on the edge of the settlements of Middleton on the Hill and Leysters, development proposals should be sensitively designed to:
  - i. Respect their rural setting and the impact on significant local views as defined in the Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment;
  - ii. Be consistent and compatible with the existing prevailing density of the settlement. Developments of up to three dwellings are the optimum size.
  - iii. Be well related to village streets and frontages and not result in 'back land' development;
  - iv. Be consistent with the height, size and massing of buildings and plot width;
  - v. Use materials, architectural detailing and form that respects the surrounding the development.
  - vi. Minimise street furniture and ensure where necessary, it is appropriate to

the character of the village.

2. Outside the two settlements, retain the development form of scattered hamlets and farmsteads including historic farmsteads within the wider setting of the area. Redevelopment, alteration or extension of historic farmsteads and traditional agricultural buildings within the Parish must be sensitive to their historic character, materials and form.
3. Retain existing field patterns and boundaries. When constructing new boundaries native tree species should be used in preference to timber fence panels or the planting of “Leylandii / conifer”. Walls in keeping with existing boundary walls will be acceptable. Existing hedgerows should be retained and the establishment of new native hedges encouraged.
4. Take full account of known surface and sub-surface archaeology and potential significant deposits are identified and appropriately considered during development after consultation with the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HER). Lack of current evidence of sub-surface archaeology must not be taken as proof of absence.
5. Provide for the protection and enhancement of local habitats and wildlife corridors.
6. Mature and established trees of amenity value should be protected and incorporated into landscaping schemes wherever possible. The planting of local species will be encouraged. Species should be appropriate to the location and setting in terms of type, height, density and the need for ongoing management.
7. Protect and enhance areas of woodland including traditional orchards.
8. Panoramic views across the Parish shown on Map 5 in Appendix 2, and defined below will be protected by ensuring that the visual impact of development on these views is carefully controlled. They are:
  - i. The view across the Parish looking north from around the Parish Hall at Leysters towards Clee Hill
  - ii. The views from the bridleway between Redwood and Wood Sutton looking north-east over the Teme Valley.
  - iii. The views from above the Poets Stone
  - iv. The views from near Great Heath looking south west with the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons in the distance.

Development that would potentially have an impact of any of the above distinctive elements should be supported by a statement which demonstrates that all aspects of character and distinctiveness have been fully assessed and used to inform proposals, having regard to the detailed analysis set out in the Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment Report.

#### **4.3.1 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.3.2 Middleton on the Hill and Leysters is a deeply tranquil area which retains much of its traditional historic character and has largely escaped the impact of modern development. This character is evident in the survival of individual historic assets

such as scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings and in the local character and distinctiveness of the broader landscape.

- 4.3.3 This character is under constant threat of erosion from modern development, often small scale, incremental and homogenising in nature. Whilst a legislative framework supported by national guidance exists to provide for the protection of statutorily designated assets the key challenge for the Neighbourhood Plan is to manage change in a way that protects this special character of the area.
- 4.3.4 The Community Survey found that the beautiful countryside and peace and quiet are very highly valued by local people. Views, trees and the network of fields and hedgerows are cited as the most important elements which make up the character of the area.
- 4.3.5 A Characterisation Study has been prepared to support the Neighbourhood Plan to understand in more detail the components of this character and how planning policies can protect and enhance it. The Character Assessment contains a series of recommendations that are reflected in Policy ML 11.

## **Evidence**

Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey (2016)  
Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment (2015)  
Parish Plan for Leysters and Middleton on the Hill (2003)  
Herefordshire Landscape Characterisation Assessment Study (2004)

## 4.4 Providing New Infrastructure

### **Relevant Objectives:**

2. Ensure that appropriate sewage treatment, water supply, energy and telecommunications infrastructure is provided to meet the current needs of the community and support future growth. Broadband and mobile communications in particular need to be greatly improved to ensure the well-being of the residents in a rural area and to offer more opportunity for business growth and home working.

### **Relevant Core Strategy Policies:**

[Policy ID1 – Infrastructure Delivery](#)

[Policy SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency](#)

[Policy SD2 – Renewable and low carbon energy generation](#)

### **Neighbourhood Plan Policies:**

<b>Policy ML 12 – Broadband</b>
Where planning permission is required, development proposals for the provision of high speed broadband infrastructure to serve the parish should not adversely affect the landscape and rural character of the surrounding environment. All new development will be required to make provision for high- speed broadband and other communication networks where it is practicable to do so.

#### **4.4.1 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

- 4.4.2 Herefordshire Council is looking to work with appropriate providers to roll out superfast broadband into rural areas. Phase 1 of the Fastershire broadband project is scheduled to complete in this area by 31 December 2016 and already some properties have been connected to the faster service - offering speeds of over 70 mbps for houses closest to the broadband cabinets. More distant houses will receive enhanced but less rapid connection. Phase 2 of the broadband project has been funded and contracts are due to be let in January 2017 which aims to connect all remaining properties in the Parish not covered by Phase 1.



4.4.3 The Community Survey identified improvements to the speed and reliability of broadband services as a priority, particularly for those who operate local businesses. Policy ML12 is intended to urge Herefordshire Council and Internet providers to bring forward proposals for faster Internet connection at the earliest opportunity.

4.4.4 New development should enable all potential occupants to have easy connection to faster broadband services.

#### **Policy ML 13 – Renewable Energy**

Renewable energy proposals that will benefit the community and other measures aimed at carbon reduction will be supported and encouraged where they respect the rural and/or settlement character of the locality and their scale reflects the community's needs.

Proposals, not including wind turbines, should not substantially increase traffic volumes or have a detrimental impact on the landscape and rural character of the surrounding environment.

The form of development should be appropriate in size and is relevant to its surroundings and not of an industrial nature that is considered inappropriate within the rural setting. There must be no detrimental impact upon the visual amenity of the parish or the surrounding landscape.

#### **4.4.5 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.4.6 The Neighbourhood Plan supports opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of the area, including exploring the potential of renewable energy. This includes schemes with communal or individual benefit. Safeguards are however considered necessary to ensure proposals are brought forward in a sensitive manner.

#### **Evidence**

Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey (2016)

## 4.5 Accommodating traffic and improving accessibility

### **Relevant Objectives:**

3. To ensure the highways and pavement infrastructure meets the existing and evolving requirements of the village, residents and local businesses. There is a particular need to address community concerns by identifying measures that establish safer environments for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in Leysters.

### **Relevant Core Strategy Policies:**

Policy SS4 – Movement and transportation

Policy MT1 – Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel

### **Neighbourhood Plan Policies:**

#### **Policy ML 14 – Sustainable Transport Measures**

Proposals for new development will need to show:

1. The traffic generated can be accommodated safely on the road network and access arrangements for new development is designed to ensure that there will be no harm to highway safety and that full account has been taken of the need to protect the safety of cyclists and pedestrians on adjacent roads and footways.
2. Satisfactory provision for off-street parking within residential development including parking for visitors, based on the characteristics of the site and amount of development.
3. Improved accessibility to existing business and community facilities.
4. Provide permeable surface construction for parking facilities to reduce surface water run-off and contribute to local flood reduction;
5. That they take every available opportunity to ensure that the site is linked to village facilities by an existing footway/cycleway.
6. No provision is made for any additional street lighting within or beyond new developments, unless this is essential for public safety.

#### **4.5.7 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.5.8 Policy SS4 of the Herefordshire Core Strategy states that new developments should be designed and located to minimise the impacts on the transportation network; ensuring that journey times and the efficient and safe operation of the network are not detrimentally impacted. Furthermore, where practicable, development proposals should be accessible by and facilitate a genuine choice of modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport.

#### **Evidence**

Neighbourhood Plan Transport and Access Action Plan (November 2016)

## 4.6 Supporting Employment and Business

### **Relevant Objectives:**

7. To welcome employment opportunities, including working from home and those connected with visitors and tourism, whilst ensuring that these fit in sympathetically with the existing environment and residences.

### **Relevant Local Plan Policies:**

Policy RA5 – Re-use of rural buildings

Policy RA6 – Rural economy

Policy E1 - Employment provision

Policy E2 – Redevelopment of existing employment land and buildings

Policy E3 – Home working

Policy E4 - Tourism

### **Neighbourhood Plan Policies:**

#### **Policy ML 15 – Business development**

Development proposals that support the local economy by way of investment in small and medium enterprises and start-up businesses will be encouraged. A range of economic activities will be supported with priority being given to proposals which:

1. Support and strengthen local food and drink production or
2. Support and/or protect the vitality and viability of commercial facilities of an appropriate type and scale such as village shops, petrol filling stations and public houses or
3. Involve the small-scale extension of existing businesses or
4. Promote tourism proposals of an appropriate scale and in accordance with Core Strategy Policy E4 or
5. Promote the sustainable use of the historic environment as an asset to be valued, conserved and enhanced.

All development proposals must:

1. Retain, or preferably enhance, the character of the rural parts of the parish or settlement in which the site is located.
2. Not have a significant adverse effect upon the parish's ecological network.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Not adversely affect the amenity of nearby residents by virtue of design and mass, noise and dust, lighting and smell.</li><li>4. Be undertaken within the capacity of local infrastructure including the local highway network.</li></ol> |
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#### **4.6.1 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

- 4.6.2 The Parish Council is keen to support small scale, rural enterprises to help ensure opportunities for local employment and training are provided and to help prevent the area from becoming a dormitory for surrounding towns. As is the case across much of rural Herefordshire, the challenge is to invest in activity that supports the diversification of the economy towards higher waged, knowledge intensive employment whilst continuing to develop the more robust aspect of the existing economy of food and farming, tourism and creative industries.
- 4.6.3 The area is associated with significant levels of economic activity and low unemployment, with a high proportion of self-employed and people who work from home. Self-employment helps the viability of the local economy and home working reduces outward commuting and unnecessary private car journeys
- 4.6.4 Historically farming has been the key industry in the area and it remains the most significant employer of local people. However, the number of farmers and agricultural employees has reduced dramatically, and a number of farm buildings have been converted to other uses including those associated with diversification projects.
- 4.6.5 There are a number of tourism businesses in the area taking advantage of the beautiful countryside and access to a wide range of things to do in the surrounding area.
- 4.6.6 The key constraints to economic growth are the lack of high speed, reliable telecommunications and the nature of the local highway network. While measures can be implemented to improve broadband speed, the narrow lanes that characterise much of the area and the need to protect the intimate and deeply rural landscape are likely to preclude any new large-scale employment activity.

<b>Policy ML 16 – Protection of existing employment premises</b>
Existing sources of local employment will be protected from change from business to residential use.

Redevelopment or change of use of existing employment premises will only be permitted when:

1. The employment premises have been empty for a significant period of time and during that time actively marketed without securing a viable alternative employment use; or
2. Equivalent, or better, provision is made, to replace the proposed loss of local employment space; or
3. In exceptional circumstances where the existing permitted operation is causing particular environmental problems for the residents of nearby properties by virtue of noise, smell, dust and traffic generation.

#### **4.6.7 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.6.8 In addition to promoting new employment generating development it is important that the Plan protects existing viable premises from being lost to other, more profitable uses.

#### **Policy ML 17 – Agriculture and forestry enterprises**

Where planning permission is required proposals for agricultural, forestry or rural enterprises will be supported where:

1. They do not generate an unacceptable increase in traffic volumes and HGV movements through settlements.
2. In the case of new buildings, proposals should be well related to existing development and the landscape in terms of scale, design, colour and materials. Development should be sited with existing groups of buildings where practicable. Where new buildings cannot be located with existing buildings, new development should not be sited in isolated or skyline locations and take advantage of natural landform.
3. There is no significant adverse effect arising from the cumulative effects of too many developments of a similar nature.
4. There is no significant adverse effect from noise, smell and traffic movements on the amenity of occupiers and users of buildings within proximity of the proposed site.
5. There is no detrimental effect upon water courses
6. All reasonable measures are taken to reduce any negative impact upon the carbon footprint of the parish.
7. Any additional requirements for transport, accommodation and amenities for workers, particularly seasonal workers, is fully and appropriately catered for and any potential negative impact upon the parish mitigated.
8. With regard to agricultural development requiring planning permission, in addition to the general criteria in this policy, particular regard will be given to

ensuring the potential polluting effects are fully mitigated, and where they cannot, permission should be refused.

#### **4.6.9 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.6.10 The Plan recognises the importance of a vibrant and viable agricultural sector to the sustainability of the area. There is a variety of agricultural activity in the area – ranging from extensive orchards associated with cider making to mixed arable and livestock farms. In spite of changes in farming practices in recent years, the key elements and overall structure of the rural landscape have largely survived and the preservation and enhancement of this character is central to this Plan. The Plan supports further growth and diversification of agricultural businesses, but recognises that some agricultural activity can have a significant impact on the character and amenity of the area by virtue of the size and siting of new buildings, the impact of processes undertaken and associated levels and types of vehicle movements.

#### **Evidence**

Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey (2016)  
Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment (2015)  
Parish Plan for Leysters and Middleton on the Hill (2003)

## 4.7 Enhancing Facilities for the Community

### **Relevant Objectives:**

8. To provide for the needs of our community as locally as possible through the retention and improvement of our existing facilities including the Parish Hall, Post Office and Duke of York Pub.
9. To provide small play areas for the village children and to acquire a village green or have permanent use of a pasture, ideally close to the Parish Hall where village sports can be played.

### **Relevant Local Plan Policies:**

Policy SC1: Social and community facilities

Policy OS1: Requirement for open space, sports and recreation facilities

Policy OS2: Meeting open space, sports and recreation needs

Policy OS3: Loss of open space, sports or recreation facilities

### **Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

<b>Policy ML 18 - Enhanced Services and Facilities for the Community</b>
<p>Proposals for the development of key services and facilities including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Parking facilities to serve the Parish Hall.</li><li>2. Play facilities for primary school age children.</li><li>3. A permanent WC for Leysters Church subject to the current trial.</li><li>4. A permanent WC for Middleton on the Hill Church.</li></ol> <p>will be approved provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) They will not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties through creating unacceptable noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance</li><li>b) They will not cause any adverse traffic impact upon amenity or congestion with particular provision being made for off-street parking where this is necessary</li><li>c) They will not restrict the operation of, or be detrimental to, an existing use on adjacent land.</li></ol> <p>Land is allocated for a car park for 10 cars to serve the village hall, as shown on the Leysters</p>



Policy Map.

#### **4.7.1 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.7.2 The community survey sought views on community facility priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider and the key priorities related to both the protection and enhancement of existing facilities and what new facilities should be provided to meet the needs of the existing population and new residents.

4.7.3 The highest priority was the provision of additional car parking to serve the Parish Hall. The existing layout and number of spaces is far short of that required by the Herefordshire Council parking standards and the Community Survey found that improved car parking would encourage greater use of the Hall by the local community.

4.7.4 There are currently no formal play facilities for young children in the area, and the age profile of the existing population would suggest a limited need for such facilities. However, the preferred type and tenure of new residential development in the area, particularly in Leysters village, will attract young families who will require a range of facilities including opportunities for play. The Parish Council will work with landowners and developers to investigate potential locations for a play area over the lifetime of the Plan. To deliver the facilities listed in Policy ML18 and any other community projects identified as being required the Parish Council will use any monies received through the Community Infrastructure Levy, although this is likely to be limited, and any other sources that may become available during the period of the Plan including s106 Agreements.

#### **Policy ML 19 - Protection and enhancement of community facilities**

The redevelopment or re-use of the Duke of York Public House, the Post Office, Parish Hall, and any other assets which are provided over the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan will only be permitted where this is for other community uses or where either of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The proposal includes alternative provision, on a site within the parish, of equivalent or enhanced facilities. Such sites should meet the requirements of Policy ML18; or
2. Satisfactory evidence is provided that there is no longer a need for the facility or it is no longer economically viable and that it has been marketed for a reasonable period of time for that particular use.

#### **4.7.5 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.7.6 The area has a limited number of community facilities, which are highly valued by local residents.

4.7.7 In the case of the Post Office, this is also identified as a potential residential development opportunity in Policy ML4 on the basis that the existing operation is unlikely to be financially sustainable in the future. However, at this stage, and until alternative arrangements or business models have been thoroughly explored, it is important that the Neighbourhood Plan affords protection to the existing service.

4.7.8 The community survey sought views on community facility priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider and the key priorities related to the protection and enhancement of existing facilities:

- Keeping the village pub
- Keeping the village Post Office

4.7.9 The survey also revealed high levels of usage of the Parish Hall with over 50% of respondents using it at least once every six months.

4.7.10 In the case of the Post Office, this is also identified as a potential residential development opportunity in Policy ML4 on the basis that the existing operation is unlikely to be financially sustainable in the future. However, at this stage, and until alternative arrangements or business models have been thoroughly explored, it is important that the Neighbourhood Plan affords protection to the existing service.

#### **Assets of Community Value**

4.7.11 The Localism Act provides communities with the opportunity to nominate Assets of Community Value for Herefordshire Council to list them as part of the Community Right to Bid process. Only eligible community groups, local town and parish councils, local neighbourhood planning forums, voluntary organisations and charities can nominate a building or land to be placed on the list. The local authority considers buildings and land nominated by the community, before a decision is made on whether or not the asset meets the eligibility criteria and should be placed on the list of assets of community value. For a building/land to be eligible its current main use must further the social interests or social wellbeing of the local community and it must be realistic to think that such a use can continue, or a use in the recent past must have furthered the social interests or social wellbeing of the local community

and it must be realistic to think it could be brought back into such use within the next five years. Examples of assets that would be eligible include:

- Community centres
- The last pub or shop in an area
- Post offices

4.7.12 It should be noted that the Right to Bid only becomes effective should the owner wish to sell the property in the future. Registering a Right to Bid means that the owner will have to give the Parish Council, or community group, a six-month period in which to consider the purchase of the site and prepare a bid. The owner is not obliged to accept the community's bid.

4.7.13 The Parish Council will prepare a list of properties and areas of land to be identified as assets of community value for possible Right to Bid activity (under the Localism Act 2011). The starting point for this list is:

- The Duke of York Public House
- The Post Office
- The Parish Hall

#### **Policy ML 20: Open Space and Play Areas**

Development proposals should include the provision of new open space in accordance with Herefordshire Core Strategy policies OS1 and OS2. Where provision cannot be met on site, developers should look to enhance or extend current provision, including assisting with obtaining land for such purposes. Measures that will increase accessibility to recreational facilities such as the public rights of way network may be advanced as an alternative.

Where appropriate and possible development proposals should ensure such space and the public rights of way network are as accessible as possible, including through a choice of sustainable means, such as cycle ways and footways.

#### **4.7.14 Why we need this Policy and how to use it**

4.7.15 Core Strategy Policies OS1 and OS2 require consideration of the provision of appropriate open space, sports and recreation facilities in relation to all new residential development. Needs will be considered on a site by site basis and it is expected that facilities will be provided on-site. Off-site contributions will be sought, where appropriate, on an equally beneficial basis for the local community and will include provision for appropriate maintenance.

4.7.16 There are no formal open spaces or sports pitches in the area and the provision of a new sports field or village green was not identified as a priority in the Community Survey. However, the needs of the population will change over time and the Parish Council will continue to monitor the need for facilities in partnership with Herefordshire Council

**Evidence**

Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey (2016)

## 5.0 Implementation, Delivery and Monitoring

- 5.0.1 The Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Neighbourhood Development Plan will be implemented primarily through the decisions made by Herefordshire Council, who should make decisions in accordance with this Plan and the Core Strategy unless there are significant material considerations for departing from its policies and proposals. This Plan will be used to steer public and private investment in infrastructure by Herefordshire Council and other agencies.
- 5.0.2 Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Parish Council will use the Plan as the basis for responding to planning applications and for using any funding that may come to it through planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 5.0.3 The Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored over the period to 2031 by the Parish Council, working with statutory partners, local residents, businesses and community groups. A group of Parish Councillors and residents will be established to manage and monitor the implementation of each objective and Policy area of the Plan and progress and difficulties will be reported and discussed regularly at Parish Council meetings so that the delivery of different elements of the Plan are coordinated well. Each year, the Parish Council will prepare an Annual Monitoring Report on the progress of the Plan, based on the monitoring framework set out in Table 1 below which will form part of the agenda for the annual Parish meeting each spring.

**Table 1 – Implementation and Monitoring framework**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation and Delivery Lead</b>	<b>Monitoring Indicator</b>
ML 1 - Promoting a Sustainable Community	Herefordshire Council Planning	Proportion of planning decisions made in accordance with Neighbourhood Plan Policies.
ML 2 - Development Strategy	Herefordshire Council Planning	Proportion and type of new development permitted in Leysters, Middleton on the Hill and the rural areas.
ML 3 - The scale of new housing	Herefordshire Council Planning, housing developers.	The allowed amount of new housing built by location.
ML 4 - Housing allocations	Herefordshire Council Planning	Planning permissions granted in accordance with the requirements of the Policy.
ML 5 - Housing development	Herefordshire Council	Planning permissions

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation and Delivery Lead</b>	<b>Monitoring Indicator</b>
within the settlement boundaries	Planning	granted in accordance with the requirements of the Policy.
ML 6 - Housing in the countryside	Herefordshire Council Planning	Planning permissions granted in accordance with the requirements of the Policy.
ML 7 - Extensions to dwellings	Herefordshire Council Planning	Planning permissions granted in accordance with the requirements of the Policy.
ML 8 - Design of new housing	Herefordshire Council Planning	Planning permissions granted in accordance with the requirements of the Policy.
ML 9 - Ensuring an appropriate range of tenures, types and sizes of houses	Herefordshire Council Planning	Mix of dwelling types by tenure and number of bedrooms.
ML 10 – Affordable housing	Developers	Quantum of new affordable housing provided in line with identified needs.
ML 11 - Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character	Herefordshire Council Planning	Proportion of planning applications shown to have considered the Character Assessment.
ML 12 – Broadband	Broadband providers, Herefordshire Council, Parish Council.	Proportion of households with superfast broadband.
ML 13 - Renewable Energy	Herefordshire Council Planning.	Number and type of planning applications for renewable energy generation.
ML 14 - Sustainable Transport measures	Herefordshire Council Planning, Parish Council.	Implementation of key measures identified in Policy.
ML 15 - Business development	Herefordshire Council Planning.	Numbers of businesses located in the area.
ML 16 - Protection of existing employment premises	Herefordshire Council Planning.	Floorspace of light industrial, industrial or warehousing employment (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 uses) redeveloped for alternative uses.
ML 17 - Agriculture and forestry enterprises		Planning permissions granted in accordance with

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation and Delivery Lead</b>	<b>Monitoring Indicator</b>
		the requirements of the Policy.
MI 18 - Enhanced Services and Facilities for the Community	Parish Council	Delivery of priority measures identified in the Policy.
MI 19 - Protection and enhancement of community facilities	Parish Council	Nomination of assets of Community Value.
ML 20 - Open Space and Play Areas	Parish Council	Monitor ongoing need for play facilities and implement as required.

## Glossary

Not all terms are used in this document, some are included for reference.

### **Affordable Housing**

Social Rented, Affordable Rented and Intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. The full definition is set out in the NPPF - Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

### **Affordable Rented Housing**

Rented housing usually owned and managed by housing associations but not subject to the national rent regime, but is subject to other rent controls.

### **Amenity**

The benefit and living conditions enjoyed by residential occupiers which may be affected by development on adjacent land, including loss of privacy through overlooking, effect on daylight or sunlight, noise and smell.

### **Backland Development**

Development of 'landlocked' sites behind existing buildings, such as rear gardens and private open space, usually within predominantly residential areas. Such sites often have no street frontages.

### **Best and most versatile agricultural land**

Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

### **Biodiversity**

The variety of plants and animal life on earth, encompassing the diversity of habitats, species and genetic variation. Biodiversity provides our life support system as well as having social and economic value.

### **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**

Local BAPs identify national and local targets for species and habitats conservation and actions.

### **Brownfield Land**

Both land and premises are included in this term, which refers to a site that has previously been used or developed. It may be vacant, derelict or contaminated. This excludes open spaces and land where the remains of previous use have blended into the landscape, or have been overtaken by nature conservation value or amenity use.



### **Community facilities**

Land and buildings uses to help meet health, education and social needs in terms of developing and maintaining the health and wellbeing of all.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

A mechanism that empowers local authorities to apply a levy or charge on new developments in their areas to support community infrastructure delivery.

### **Conservation Areas**

An area defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of special architectural or historical interest, requiring extra protection in planning terms, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

### **Curtilage**

The area, usually enclosed, encompassing the grounds and buildings immediately surrounding a home that is used in the daily activities of domestic life. A slightly different definition relates to listed buildings – please check with the planning department.

### **Developer Contributions**

This includes section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

### **Development**

Town and Country Planning Act 1990: S.336 and S.55 (1), (1A) are the relevant sections. The Meaning of “development” is; S.1 - The carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land. S.1A – Defines “Building Operations”, with reference to S.1.

### **Energy efficiency**

Making the best or the most efficient use of energy in order to achieve a given output of goods or services, and of comfort and convenience. This does not necessitate the use of less energy, in which respect it differs from the concept of energy conservation.

### **Environmental assets**

Features in the physical environment that are valued for a variety of cultural and scientific reasons.

### **Evidence base**

The information and data gathered by local authorities to justify the 'soundness' of the policy approach set out in Development Plan Documents, including physical, economic and social aspects of the area.

### **Exception sites**

A location where development would not otherwise be granted planning permission under normal circumstances

### **Floodplain**

This is identified as the area of land at risk of flooding, when water flowing into a watercourse channel overtops its banks.

### **Flood zone**

An area identified by the Environment Agency as being at risk of flooding, flood zone 3 having the greatest risk.

### **Geodiversity**

The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms. Greenfield land Land that has not been previously developed, often in agricultural use.

### **Green infrastructure**

A planned and delivered network of green spaces and other environmental features designed and managed as a multifunctional resource providing a range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.

### **Habitats Regulation Assessment**

A Habitats Regulations Assessment is the assessment of the impacts of implementing a plan or policy on a Natura 2000 site. Its purpose is to consider the impacts of a land use plan against conservation objectives of the site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of the site. Where significant negative effects are identified, alternative options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.

### **Heritage Asset**

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated assets and assets identified by the local planning authority.

### **Historic Landscape Characterisation**

Historic Landscape Characterisation is a new GIS-based archaeological method for defining the historic and archaeological dimension of the present-day landscape.

### **Housing affordability**

The ability of families and individuals to qualify for the purchase of a house which is especially dependent on wage levels and housing market prices in an area.

### **Housing Market Area**

Areas identified as local housing markets within Herefordshire, through an analysis of key indicators such as; tenure and housing type profile, incomes, affordability, house prices, geographical proximity and travel to work patterns.

### **Infill**

Development of vacant plots between existing buildings.

### **Informal open space**

Areas for unsupervised and unstructured outdoor play. These can consist of casual or informal playing space within housing estates, including safe shared space such as play streets or kick about areas. It includes outdoor equipped play areas for children of all ages, and play facilities that offer specific opportunities for outdoor play, such as BMX tracks.

### **Infrastructure**

A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, social services, health facilities and recycling and refuse facilities. Intermediate housing Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. L

### **Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)**

Grouping landscape into areas with similar character, based on physical and human influences. The assessment describes the physical, cultural and perceptual character of the landscape and identifies important or sensitive features. LCAs often identify objectives in respect of landscape planning, design and management of the areas.

### **Listed Buildings**

Buildings that are identified for their special architectural or historic interest. Listed building consent is required to ensure that these features are protected. There are three categories of listing depending on the importance and special interest of the building: Grade I, Grade II\* and Grade II.

### **Market housing**

Housing sold or rented at full market value.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is the framework within which Herefordshire Council has produced the Local Plan – Core Strategy.

### **Neighbourhood (Development) Plan**

The development plan written by a community which has come together through a local parish council to shape new development by saying where a development should be located and what it should look like. Introduced via the Localism Act 2011.

**Open space**

All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs), which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**Permitted development rights**

Rights to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application for planning permission.

**Perpetuity**

Meaning 'forever' regardless of changes in circumstances including land ownership.

**Planning obligations**

See section 106 Agreements.

**Previously developed land (PDL)**

See Brownfield land.

**Registered social housing providers**

Either not for profit or profit making organisations (subject to the same standards and address the same housing priorities) providing social housing and regulated by the Homes and Community Agency.

**Renewable energy**

Power derived from a source that is continually replenished, such as wind, wave, solar, hydroelectric and energy from plant material, but not fossil fuels or nuclear energy. Although not strictly renewable, geothermal energy is generally included.

**Rural housing market area (HMA)**

A term used in rural housing section to describe the rural element of each housing market area.

**Scheduled Ancient Monument**

A nationally important archaeological site or monument given legal protection.

**Section 106 agreements and obligations**

An agreement by the local authority with a landowner/developer restricting or regulating the development or use of land either permanently or temporarily, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). A developer may also offer a unilateral undertaking as a potential planning obligation should it not be possible to reach agreement with the Local Planning Authority.

### **Self-build homes and cohousing schemes.**

Self-build is the practice of creating an individual home for yourself through a variety of different methods. The term selfbuild is specifically used in the UK and Ireland when an individual obtains a building plot and then builds their own home on that plot. Co-housing schemes comprise intentional communities. They are created and run by their residents.

### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

These are legally protected sites, designated by Natural England in view of their wildlife and geological value.

### **Social rented housing**

Subsidised housing provided by a Registered Provider or local authority allocated on the basis of need.

### **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

SACs are sites designated under the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of fauna and flora). Together with Special Protection Areas they form the Natura 2000 network of sites.

### **Stakeholders**

Groups, individuals or organisations that may be affected by, or have a key interest in, a development proposal or planning policy. They may often be experts in their field or represent the views of many people.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

A formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Local authorities who prepare and adopt such a plan or programme must prepare a report on its likely environmental effects. They must consult environmental authorities and the public, and take the report and the results of the consultation into account during the preparation process, before the plan or programme is adopted.

### **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

A key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community's need for more homes. The Herefordshire SHLAA assesses the potential availability of land for housing across the county up to the end of the plan period, and explores any constraints that might affect their suitability, achievability or availability for development.

### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment**

Sub regional market analysis of housing demand and housing need which identified the key drivers in the West Housing Market Area which covers Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire.

### **Sustainable development**

In broad terms, this means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

### **Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS)**

Measures introduced in developments which aim to minimise surface water run-off and the level of waste water generated by the development. These can include use of reed beds to filter water and water storage areas.

### **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires Local Development Documents to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process that is used to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies set within a Local Development Document from the outset of the preparation process. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with sustainable development.

### **Unitary Development Plan**

Adopted on 23rd March 2007, it guides development within the county and will be in use with most of its policies 'saved' until they are superseded by other emerging Local Plan documents.

### **Windfalls**

Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.



## **Appendix 1 – Transportation Study Action Plan**

Throughout the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, concerns about the speed, volume and impact of traffic on the A4112 through Leysters village, car parking at the Parish Hall and the increase in traffic resulting from new development have been major issues for the local community.

The A4112 is both an asset and problem. On the one hand it provides easy and convenient access to the market towns of Leominster and Tenbury, but it also brings significant disadvantages associated with the speed and volume of traffic which travels along it. Road safety was identified as a major issue in the 2004 Parish Plan and reducing the speed and impact of traffic through the village was the most commonly cited suggestion for changes and improvements identified in the Community Survey. The Community Survey identified a number of potential measures to address these concerns with the priority being a reduced speed limit through the village from the existing 40 mph to 30 mph. But experience shows that a reduced speed limit on its own is unlikely to be sufficient, and it needs to be supported by a package of measures to enforce it.

The Community Survey also highlighted concerns over the shortage of car parking at the Parish Hall. The number and layout of the existing car parking spaces falls well short of what is required by the Herefordshire car parking standards and at busy times this is resulting in cars being parked on the highway in potentially dangerous locations.

These issues and views led to the Parish Council commissioning an independent Transportation Study by Integrated Transport Planning (ITP). The Study consisted of a desk-top review of available evidence and data including examples of best practise, followed up by a series of site visits and a community workshop.

These culminated in the production of an Action Plan, which is included below. The Action Plan sets out a series of measures to address the road safety concerns of the community. The implementation of these measures will require coordinated action between the Parish Council, Herefordshire Council and developers and landowners where appropriate.



**The Action Plan**

Measure	Description	Rough Cost (£)	Evidence	Action	Action by	Timescales	Developer consideration
Reduce speed limit in Leysters village	Request Herefordshire Council review and reduce the current speed limit on the A4112 through the village from 40mph to 30mph	Nil cost through 'normal' Council process, application classed as 'priority' at an agreed cost - average cost of a 'single street' Traffic Regulation Order is a minimum of £4,000.	<p>Speed of vehicles is the number one concern in Community Survey, SKEINP and workshop. 70% respondents were concerned about speeding in the area (Community Survey).</p> <p>Speed data taken in Leysters shows a mean average speed over 24hrs of 41.2 mph.</p> <p>DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04 - standard speed limit of 30 mph in villages should be the norm<sup>1</sup>. Restated in Department for Transport Circular 01/2013<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Reducing speed-limits alone are 'unlikely to have much effect on vehicle speeds...'<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Changes in speed limit need to</p>	Formal request to Herefordshire Council (see annex C). Contact Safer Roads Partnership in West Mercia for their view.	Parish Council to submit application asap under 'normal' procedure Developers of housing sites to be requested to fund accelerated approach as sites come forward.	ASAP	Developers of housing sites to be requested to fund accelerated process for reducing speed limit to 30mph.
Enforcement of speed limit	Raise speed concerns with the Safer Roads Partnership in West Mercia for review. Depending on the outcome several options are available to the Parish	All the funding secured through Safer Roads Partnership	<p>Changes in speed limit need to</p>	Investigate the opportunity to develop a Community Speed Watch scheme in the area (see Annex F) if formal enforcement is not an option	Parish Council with the potential to liaise with Kimbolton for joint approach	ASAP	N/A

<sup>1</sup> definition of a village 20 or more houses; and a minimum length of 600 metres

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/63975/circular-01-2013.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/63975/circular-01-2013.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04 - <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120606202850/http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/tal-1-04/tal-1-04.pdf>

Measure	Description	Rough Cost (£)	Evidence	Action	Action by	Timescales	Developer consideration
Traffic calming	<p>Consideration should be given to 'softer' measures that could reduce traffic speeds in the area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- graduated change in speed at the outskirts of the village (if 30mph speed limit possible)</li> <li>- clear village 'gateway' defined - subject to identifying suitable / viable locations.</li> <li>- Virtual road narrowing at existing pinch-points in and out and sections of the main road throughout the village</li> <li>- Consider Vehicle</li> </ul>	<p>Cost vary depending on location and scale of measure.</p> <p>For instance, costs of Speed Indicator Devices can be between £1k-3k, however, costs can increase if a power source or new hard standing is required.</p> <p>Herefordshire Council also subsidises some measures<sup>4</sup></p> <p>500m double white lines would be around £1,000-£1,500<sup>5</sup></p> <p>Cost of signs varies from £100 to £1,500 depending</p>	<p>be supported by relevant local measures</p> <p>Community Survey 91% support electronic signage</p> <p>67% support changing road markings</p>	<p>These measures should be considered in combination with the potential to reduce the speed limit</p>	<p>Parish Council</p>	<p>Guided by the outcomes of the above actions</p>	<p>Developers should consider where they can help the Parishes reduce the speed of traffic in the area as part of their development and associated works.</p>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/road-safety/roads-speed-limits/how-does-my-parish-council-request-a-speed-indicator-device>

<sup>5</sup> Using 'Approximate Estimating' rates in Spons Price Book 2013

Measure	Description	Rough Cost (£)	Evidence	Action	Action by	Timescales	Developer consideration
	Activated signs	on size and works required					
Roadside maintenance	Seek regular maintenance of roadsides, verges and hedgerows - especially around key junctions	Nil. Met from existing Herefordshire highways maintenance contract and Parish Council lengthsman	Community Survey Workshop	Contact Herefordshire Council to understand current maintenance schedule and seek improvements	Parish Council and in liaison with Balfour Beatty on main road.	Ready for Spring 2017	N/A
Alternatives to public transport	Seek opportunities with Herefordshire Council to open up the college bus to fare paying passengers to Leominster	Nil.	Wish for better public transport sighted in SKEINP and Community Survey - good PT ranked 8 out of 12th in Community Survey	Contact Herefordshire Council education transport team to understand current usage and investigate opportunities	Parish Council	Before summer 2017 (ready for start of 2017/18 academic year)	N/A

Measure	Description	Rough Cost (£)	Evidence	Action	Action by	Timescales	Developer consideration
Leysters Pole Junction review	The development of new housing in the area should give opportunity for the review and identification of junction improvements, especially where adjacent to new developments	To be determined as part of planning application	Community Survey Workshop	Engagement with the developers and the council as to what opportunities maybe available	Developers / Parish Council	In line with development timescales	Key to engage at a very early stage
Woonton Junction review	Addition of mirrors to improve visibility for drivers at the junction. Replace existing warning signs for vehicles approaching the junction with yellow back warning signs to enhance their visibility.  The junction should be reviewed at the same time as any site visit associated with	£500-£1000 per mirror	Community Survey Workshop	Purchase and place mirrors (through Herefordshire Council)	Parish Council	ASAP	N/A

Measure	Description	Rough Cost (£)	Evidence	Action	Action by	Timescales	Developer consideration
	changes of speed limit in the village.						
Additional car parking for the Parish Hall	On land to the north of and adjacent to site 8, 8-10 car parking spaces to be provided for users of the Parish Hall). Access to this car parking to be taken from A4112 directly (if possible). Consideration on the need for a pedestrian refuge in A4112 as part of planning application.	Cost per space will depend on location, drainage and works - £675 - £1,025 per parking space. <sup>6</sup>	Community consultation on development sites Community Survey Workshop	Engagement with developers and the council as to what opportunities maybe available	Developers / Parish Council	In line with development timescales	Key to engage at a very early stage
'Site 8' access onto the main road	Community view is that access to the main site should be from the main road, if this is possible and complies with relevant	N/A	Community Survey Workshop	Make developers aware of the community preference	Developers / Parish Council	In line with development timescales	Key to engage at a very early stage

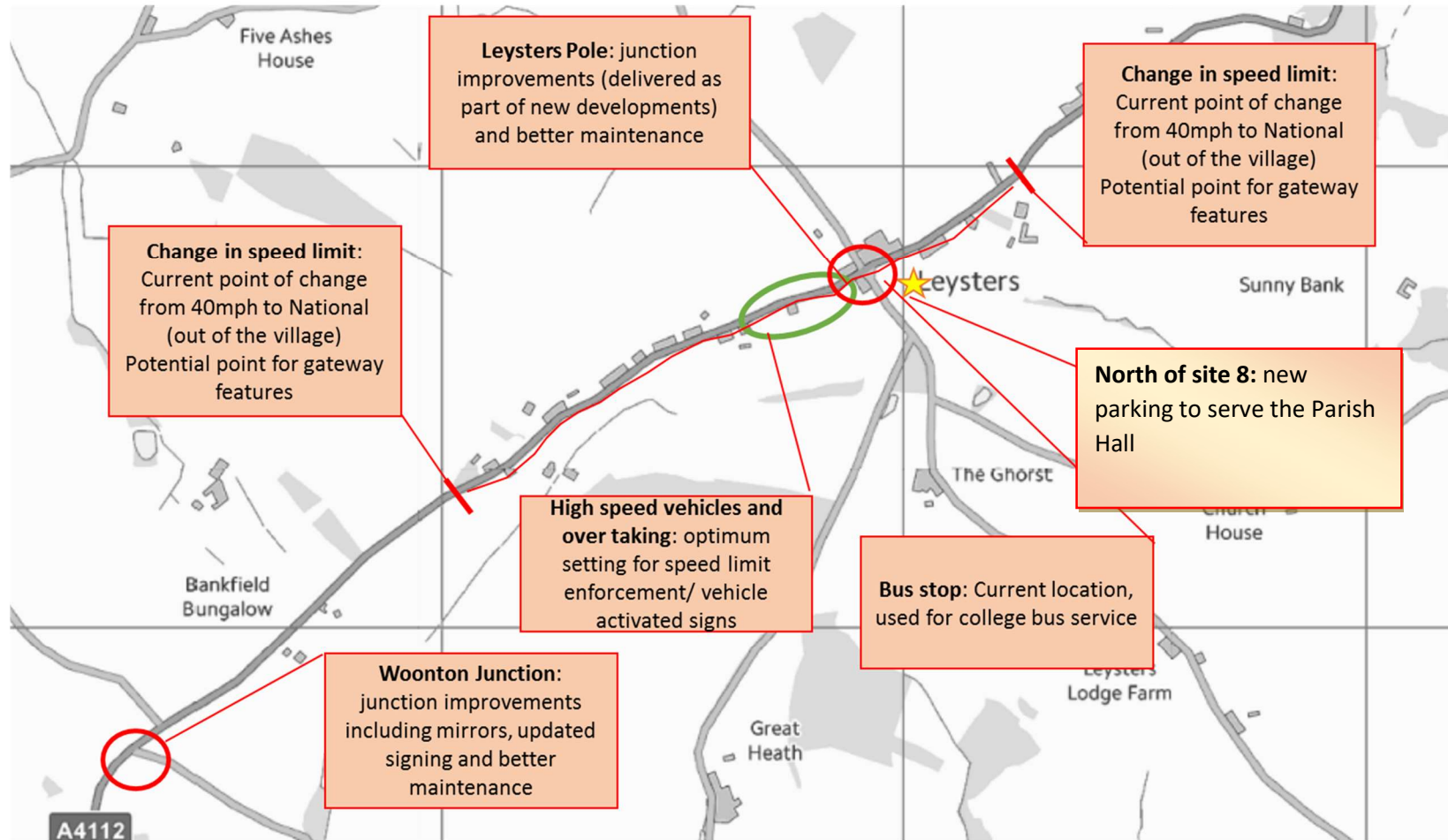
<sup>6</sup> Using 'Approximate Estimating' rates in Spons, surface car parking will cost £54 - £82 per sqm, so based on a parking space of 2.5m x 5m

Measure	Description	Rough Cost (£)	Evidence	Action	Action by	Timescales	Developer consideration
	safety and legal guidance						
Improved marketing leaflet for walking/riding routes	Review and update the current leaflet and distribute to local Tourist Information shops, hotels and Bed & Breakfasts and on the Parish website	£250 for design and printing.	Community Survey	Update the current leaflet and arrange printing	Parish Council	Depending on finances - should aim to be available ahead of the summer season	Funding could be sought as part of improvements for the local area
Review of passing places	Local review of where current passing places are located with the aim of identifying key gaps in provision	Nil	Community Survey Workshop	Short review by Parish Council.  Contact Herefordshire Council to understand what opportunities are realistically available	Parish Council	N/A	N/A unless on roads close to development sites, in which case should be raised with developer
Review of local signage on footpaths and bridleways	Local review of where there is current signage with the aim of identifying key gaps in provision. Existing	Nil. But costs associated with addressing gaps,	Community Survey Workshop	Short review by Parish Council.  Contact Herefordshire Council to understand the	Parish Council	N/A	Funding could be sought as part of improvements for the local area

Measure	Description	Rough Cost (£)	Evidence	Action	Action by	Timescales	Developer consideration
	survey completed in 2006.			mechanism for updating signage			
Options for limiting HGV movement on some lanes	It is felt that some HGV use the lanes as short-cuts, rather than using the main roads	Nil	Community Survey Workshop	Contact Herefordshire Council to understand current weight restrictions and options available to the Parish	Parish Council	N/A	N/A

**Key locations identified in the Action Plan**

**Middleton on the Hill Parish Council. License number 100056687**

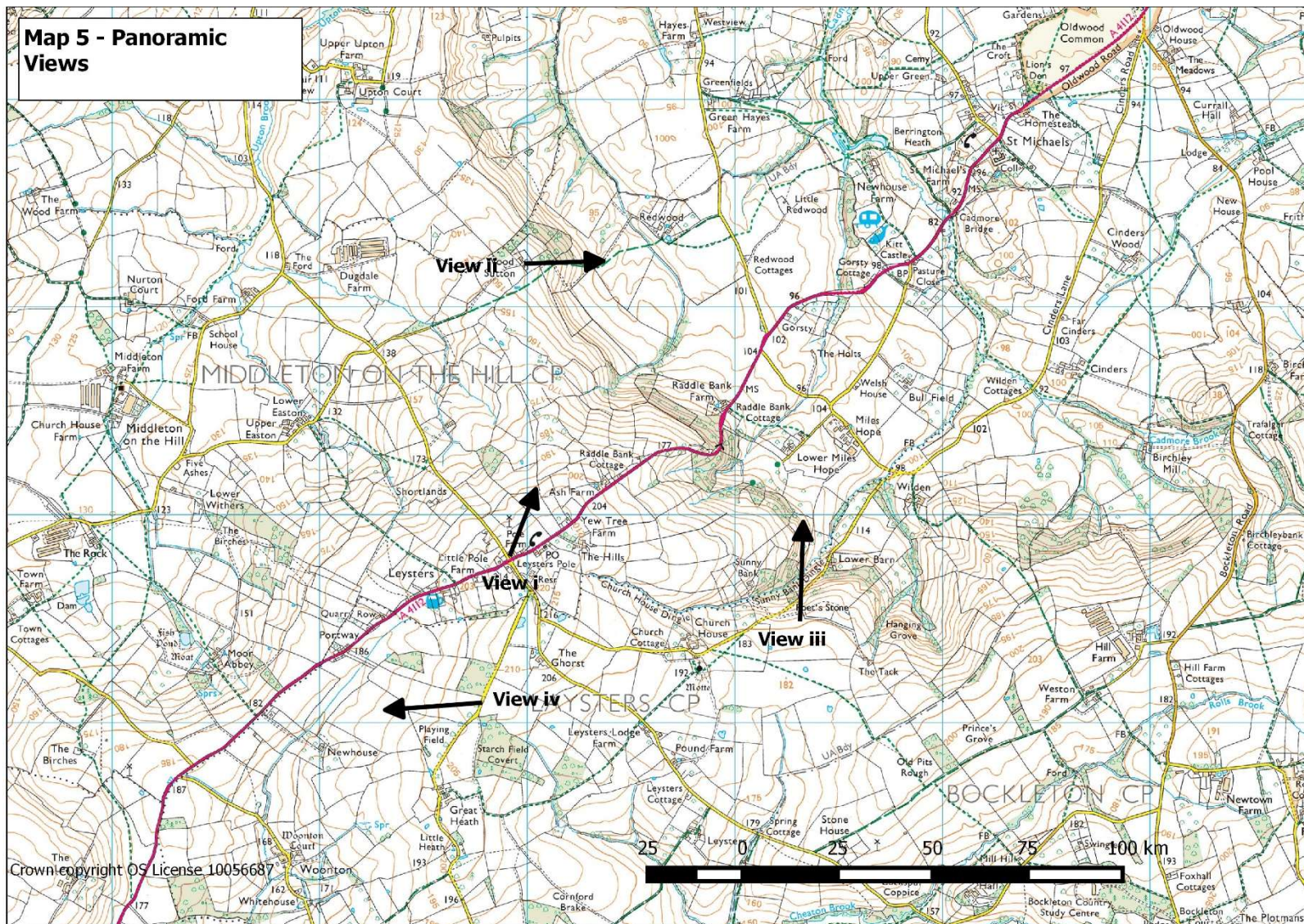






## **Appendix 2 – Panoramic views**





### Panoramic views



View i - The view across the Parish looking north from around the Parish Hall at Leysters towards Cleve Hill



View ii - The views from Wood Sutton looking east with the bridleway to Redwood in the foreground.



View iii - The views north from above the Poets Stone with the Cleve Hill in the distance



View iv - The views from near Great Heath looking south west with the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons in the distance.

