

# Mitcheldean Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 - 2026

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Our Vibrant Village



2016 - 2026



## **Mitcheldean Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) 2016 - 2026**

*The Mitcheldean Neighbourhood  
Development Plan was made official on  
1 March 2020 following the referendum  
on 6 February 2020.*

### **Acknowledgements**

- Kirkwells – The Planning People
- GRCC – Kate Baugh
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- FoDDC
- *Photographs courtesy of  
David Fleming and Thomas Mockford*

**In memory of Tom Mockford**

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# Executive Summary

**Mitcheldean's Neighbourhood Development Plan has actively advocated and encouraged community involvement, consultation and engagement in issues that affect the community through information, drop in events, and surveys. It provides a vision for the future of Mitcheldean parish setting out clear planning policies for economic and social sustainability.**

The Plan is effective from 2019 to 2026 in line with the Forest of Dean District Council's Local Plan. The policies conform to the updated National Planning Policy Framework (2018), the Forest of Dean District Council's Core Strategy (adopted February 2012) and, through discussions with Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC), conforms to the Adopted Allocations Plan (June 2018 to 2026).

The Forest of Dean Core Strategy Policy 16 defines Mitcheldean as 'a major village with employment and services important to a wider area with some scope for additional development. The availability of extensive employment space is recognised and the identification of land for additional housing is proposed.' Mitcheldean Neighbourhood Plan consultations identified 6 key planning priorities linking 3 key issues identified in the Allocations Plan<sup>1</sup>.

AP Key Issues:

- 1. Supporting the continued evolution of the village and providing scope for change in keeping with the Core Strategy while conserving the setting and overall character.**
- 2. The surrounding landforms are quite limiting and the steeper hillsides are unsuitable for development.**
- 3. The Conservation Area which centres on the two main routes through the centre of the village is quite diverse and there is scope for physical improvement to certain buildings as well as more general enhancement**

Although change is expected, Mitcheldean Neighbourhood Plan aims to ensure that infrastructure will grow with any increase in housing development and seeks to prevent expansion into the sensitive surrounding areas such as Abenhall/Castiard Valley, Wigpool, and the Gateways to the parish.

There are constraints for future development opportunities as Mitcheldean parish is at capacity with its infrastructure

- Drainage
  - Sewerage
  - Transport/Roads
  - Accessibility
  - Doctors
- additional constraints include
- Topography
  - Valued Landscape Character and Setting
  - Rare and Priority Species, habitats & sensitive ecological networks

## Policies

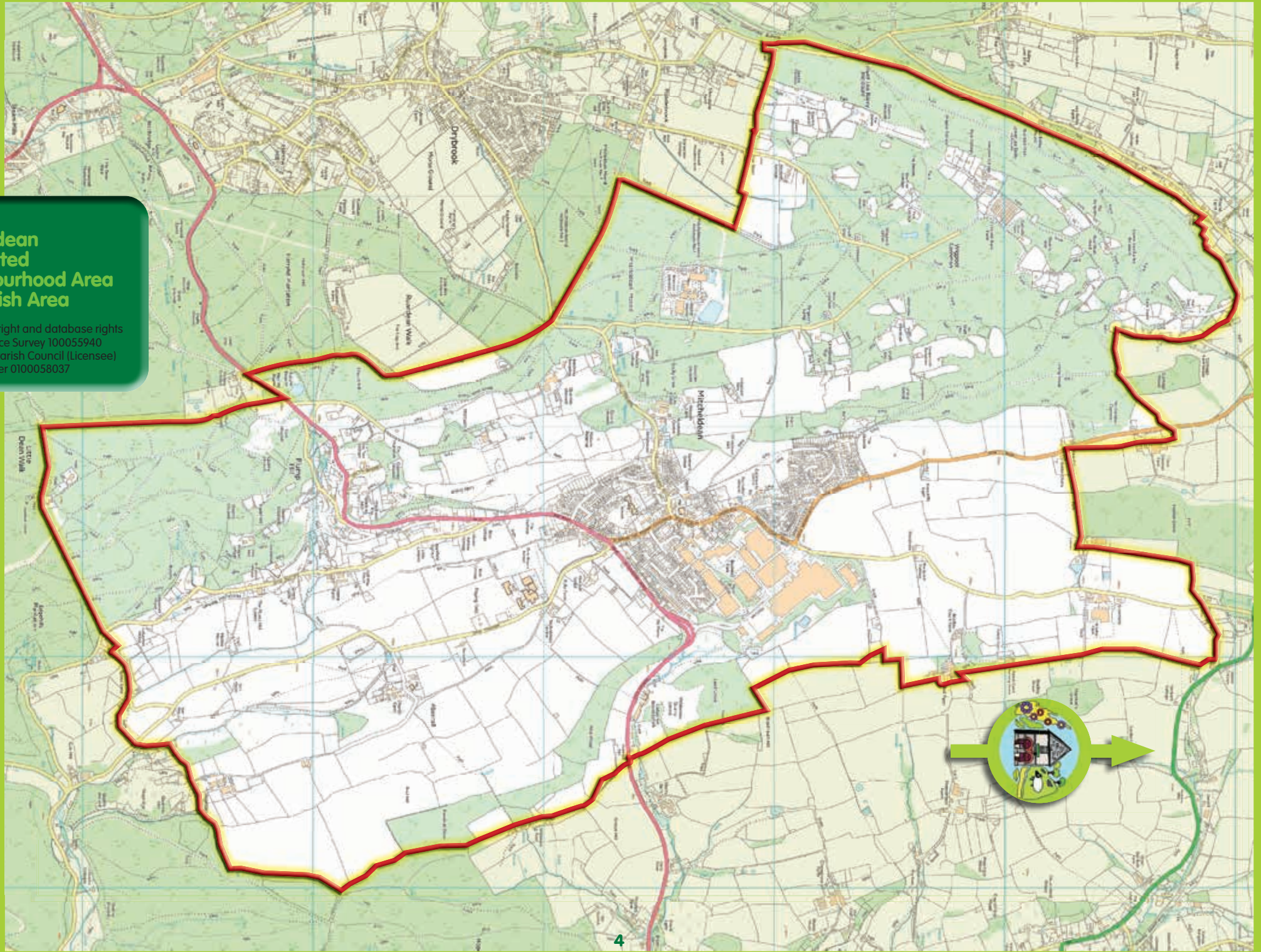
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*Mitcheldean Town Hall*

**Map 1**  
**Mitcheldean**  
**Designated**  
**Neighbourhood Area**  
**and Parish Area**

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# What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)?

## Introduction and Background

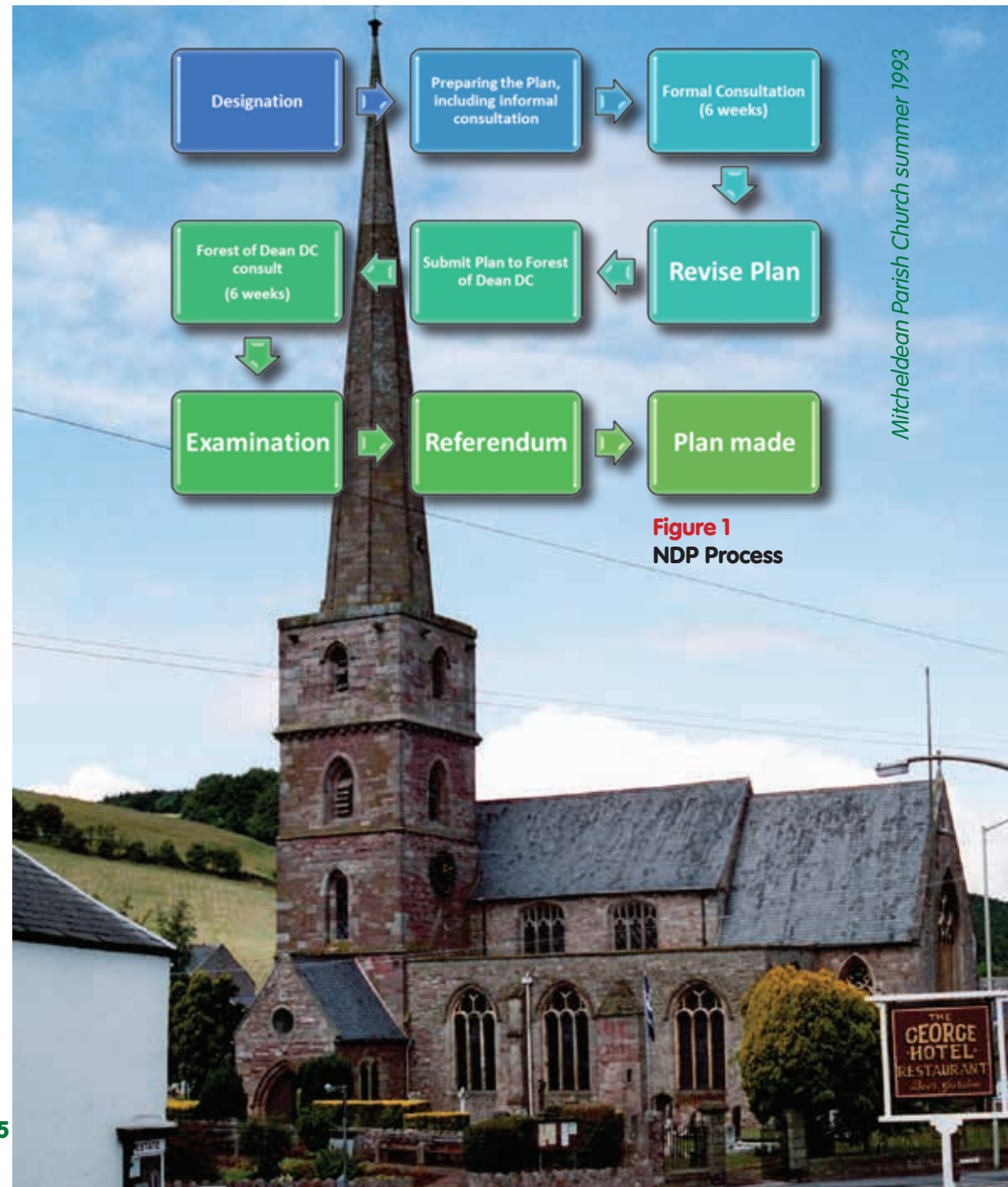
**1.1** Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) are a new type of planning policy document, introduced in the Localism Act 2011. They are prepared by Parish Councils and some other relevant bodies, in close consultation with local residents, businesses and stakeholders.

**1.2** NDPs have to be in general conformity with the local strategic planning framework (in this area provided by Forest of Dean District Council) and take account of current national planning policies and guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). They sit alongside these national and local authority planning policy documents, and form part of the local planning policy framework to guide decisions about development.

**1.3** NDPs can include both planning policies and site allocations, identifying how and where new development should take place. Overall they have to plan positively and promote sustainable development.

**1.4** The process for preparing a NDP is complex and lengthy, and there are a number of key steps. These are set out in Figure 1 top right:

**1.5** Mitcheldean Parish Council applied to Forest of Dean District Council for designation as a neighbourhood area on 1st July 2014. The designated area was approved by the District Council on 18th September 2014.



**1.6** A Steering Committee of Parish Councillors and interested local residents was set up in October 2014. Since then the Committee has worked hard on drawing together local evidence and undertaking informal public consultation to support the preparation of a Draft Plan. This has included:



*Mitcheldean High Street*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>
<b>Decided Jan 2015 Live Jan 2016</b>	Website: <a href="http://www.mitcheldeancouncil.co.uk/neighbourhood-development-plan.html">http://www.mitcheldeancouncil.co.uk/neighbourhood-development-plan.html</a> <a href="http://www.ourvibrantvillage.co.uk/">http://www.ourvibrantvillage.co.uk/</a>
<b>Duration of draft plan</b>	Parish Council Facebook Page: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/mitcheldeanparish/">https://www.facebook.com/mitcheldeanparish/</a> Mitcheldean Noticeboard on Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/418031001579587/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/418031001579587/</a>
<b>Duration of draft Plan</b>	Information leaflets and in local parish council Magazine (The Goat) delivered to all Mitcheldean Parish households to advertise events and ask for comments.
<b>Duration of draft Plan</b>	NDP information displayed on noticeboards and other public places (Community Library, Community Centre, shops).
<b>2015 and 2016</b>	Two main NDP drop in events (March 2015 and March 2016) charting Mitcheldean development over the last century, information about the Neighbourhood Plan process, developer plans, Core Strategy, draft Allocations plan, Parish statistics (ACRE profiles) Event 2 included a questionnaire and asked for specific comments on topics raised in Event 1 and comments concerning future development, infrastructure and What is Special/ Distinctive. Meetings with identified stakeholders in the community – Schools, Doctors Surgery and Vantage Point Business Park , Questionnaires hand delivered to all businesses
<b>2017</b>	Meeting with relevant Forest of Dean District Council Officers to discuss main priorities and site allocations
<b>2017</b>	Draft Plan prepared by Kirkwells drawing on evidence from Steering Group
<b>January 2018</b>	Third and final public drop in event- to launch the draft plan, to engage the community, elicit comments and make amendments to the draft plan
<b>25 August 2018</b>	Regulation 14 Statutory Consultation. Draft Plan sent to statutory consultees, stakeholders and available on Parish website. Hard copies available to view at Town Hall and Community Library. Advertised through systems as mentioned above.

## Key Planning issues affecting the Parish

**1.7** The community consultation held in March 2015 identified the following six top priorities:

- 1. The landscape setting of Mitcheldean and its views;**
- 2. Design and quality of building.**
- 3. Wildlife habitats and trees;**
- 4. Community interaction;**
- 5. The quality of the park and playing fields;**
- 6. Public transport** – the importance of affordable bus services to rural communities as well as the environmental benefit of their use by reducing private car journeys;



*Mitcheldean High Street*

Other areas of concern were:

- 1.** Appropriate development (having regard to Mitcheldean Character Appraisal) and use of unused sites and premises.
- 2.** Requiring new developments to be of a scale, quality and design that respects and complements the existing character of the parish to preserve the existing character of the parish, protecting open countryside and green spaces within the parish boundary,
- 3.** Ensure adequate infrastructure is timetabled with any new development including schools, medical services, and statutory services e.g. sewers and drainage in general.
- 4.** Manage traffic flow through the village and the provision of adequate off street parking and enforcement of parking restrictions including on pavement parking, and speed limits.
- 5.** Ensure future development will be restricted to brown field sites, with infilling where appropriate.
- 6.** To secure the provision of additional appropriate retail outlets.
- 7.** To ensure considerate provision of renewable energy sources bearing in mind the visual impact on the surrounding area.

**1.8** Following the second community consultation held in Mitcheldean Community Library on Saturday 19th March 2016, from the responses to the questionnaires the following priorities were identified in order of precedence:

## 1. Housing/Development

The Forest of Dean Allocations Plan provides for no more than 100 new dwellings to be provided in the Parish. Brown field sites are to be preferred over green field sites. Thus The George, the bus garage site and Building 5 at Vantage Point are the main sites to be considered. Where possible the housing should be on level plots with the provision of a minimum of at least two parking spaces per unit plus visitor parking provision.

A minimum of 40% of the new stock is to be affordable housing. Building on green field sites only to be considered where no appropriate brown field land is available. Housing to be provided for both private ownership and a mix of private and social renting i.e. local authority and housing association landlords in the latter case. Development is not supported on the south-side of the A4136 Gloucester Road, the Castiard Valley and Wigpool.



## 2. Business/Employment

Business and employment is to continue to be encouraged at Vantage Point, Stenders Business Park and Ladygrove Business Park. There is little scope for additional retail development, but further Fast Food outlets are to be discouraged.



## 3. Amenities and Community

Preserve green spaces and open views. Public footpaths to be cleared and kept cleared and maintained. Recreational facilities to be maintained and use thereof encouraged. Support of the library to be encouraged, as is support of the pharmacy in Churchill Way.

Encourage support and use of community facilities such as the various clubs, the community centre, the community library and community event.

The importance of retaining a doctor's surgery cannot be overemphasised, as well as the retention of a pharmacy in Mitcheldean.

Retain a police presence, or as a minimum a delegated Community Support Officer. Register The White Horse public house a community asset.

Promote the encouragement to use the retail facilities in Mitcheldean.



#### 4. Environment

Every effort to be made to protect our heritage.

Construction materials should be in keeping with the character of the older, original housing stock. Forest stone, forest stone cladding and/or appropriate render to be used as opposed to Cotswold Stone. Good Examples include Dean Meadows and Townsend in the High Street. See photographs of good examples in section 6.1.7

*Townsend*



#### 6. Transport and Parking

Double yellow lines to replace current single yellow lines in the High Street and at Mill End. Additional parking restriction signage to be provided and improved signage to free parking and car park area behind the library. No parking at pedestrian crossing zig zags to be enforced. Encourage road drain and gutter and public footpath clearance and discourage pavement parking in the High Street.

Work towards improving the connectivity of Mitcheldean with improved affordable bus services.

Traffic flow needs to be looked at. Provision of solar powered speed restriction signs on all roads approaching the village to be provided, as well as in the High Street. Weight restrictions on lorries to be enforced. Vantage Point to be requested to notify all businesses that HGV access is from the A4136 only, and not through the village. Encourage people to walk or to ride bicycles. Discourage the "school run" where possible.

As far as new residential development is concerned, government guidelines must be adhered to with a minimum of two parking spaces per property plus visitor parking provision.

1.9 These identified Issues are addressed through the NDP planning policies set out in Section 6.0.

1.10 Non-planning related issues are referred to the Parish Council for consideration and possible action where appropriate.

*Forest House, Hawker Hill*



*Entrance to public car park rear of High Street shops*



*Shops in Churchill Way*







## Historical Development

**2.1** The town of Mitcheldean grew as a centre for industries based on the products of the adjacent Forest. A market charter was granted in 1328 and the early development of the town was focussed around the area known as The Cross, following the erection of a cross in 1430. To the north-west, on the south side of the churchyard brook, stood the church and, further west, a medieval manor house.

**2.2** Mitcheldean was a centre of ironworks by the early 13th century, when itinerant forges or smithies were worked in Mitcheldean or the nearby demesne woodland of the Forest. Ironworking continued in the later Middle Ages, when furnaces were supplied with ore mined at the Wilderness or in the adjoining royal demesne. Slag from the works was tipped in many parts of the town to form cinder hills, the most notable being in Brook Street. By the 1540s, when several smithies were used for other purposes, the town's iron industry was in decline.

**2.3** The cloth industry was established in Mitcheldean by the later 13th century with many clothiers and weavers living and working in the town. The manufacture of coarse cloth gave way to pinmaking as the town's chief industry by the end of the 17th century and had disappeared by the end of the 18th. Pinmaking, which had been established in Mitcheldean by 1628, provided much employment in the early 18th century when, together with the market and fairs, it was the mainstay of the town's trade. The craft, which was in the hands of small masters, died out in the 18th century with a lack of investment.

**2.4** The town, which had changed little in extent from the late 14th century, expanded considerably after the Second World War. The growth was stimulated by the factory of British Acoustic Films (later Rank Xerox), which was established in the Brook Street brewery. Many council houses were built particularly on the east side of the town near the factory, beginning in 1949 with the Eastern Avenue estate at the Bull Ring, and private housing was provided later in estates on the west side of the town and west of the Ross road. The factory was itself considerably enlarged, notably in the early 1970s when farmland to the north-east was levelled for the construction of workshops, and it came to dominate the town's appearance as well as its economic and social life.



*Court Farm Lane*



*General Stores*



*Overlooking Vantage Point Business Village*



## A Portrait of Mitcheldean

**The Parish of Mitcheldean had a population of 2,783 in 2011 - and covers an area of 1,039 hectares (2567 acres) (Census 2011, Neighbourhood Statistics). The Parish is in Forest of Dean District and is about 12 miles west of Gloucester and about 6.5 miles south east of Ross on Wye. The Parish includes the main settlement of Mitcheldean and several smaller settlements such as Abenhall and Wigpool.**

The extent of the Parish is shown on Map 1. The Parish is set in a valley, with land rising steeply to the east and west. To the south of the A4136 the valley widens out. The village is located immediately to the east of the Forest of Dean. It extends from Bradley Farm on Bradley Court Road and Dean Common Farm on the B4224 Ross on Wye road. In the north to Shapridge Farm and Spout lane in the south, and from Old Mill Farm in the east to the lanes leading to The Rocks and to The Wilderness from the A4136 in the west. There is another access to Mitcheldean from Drybrook down Stenders Road, a steep winding hill.

*Platts Row*



The centre of Mitcheldean village was designated a conservation area Map 2 in June 1989 and there are a number of individual buildings of distinctive character including some medieval buildings. The 14th century Parish church of St Michael and all Angels dates from the 13th century and boasts one of the few remaining Doom Paintings (Last Judgement) in the country. Other historic buildings include the former Wintles Brewery (The Mews), The White Horse public house, and the Town Hall which dates from 1710. There are thirty listed buildings in Mitcheldean Parish – Appendix I.

*Town Hall and The White Horse*

The A4136 acts as a natural boundary between the village of Mitcheldean and the old Parish of Abenhall. They were joined as part of Mitcheldean civil parish, in the Forest of Dean district in 1974.



*The former Wintle's Brewery, Mitcheldean*



Abenhall is a unique area with landscape much valued by the local communities who live in and around this area. Abenhall stands at the head of the Castiard Vale, Map 1 one of the most prominent, distinctive and historic features of the Forest of Dean's landscape both in terms of built and natural environment. The area is one of a series of ancient woods, fields, hedges and narrow lanes. There are areas of dispersed, settled habitation with listed buildings and sites which reflect the industrial past of Iron smelting, with evidence of occupation from the Mesolithic and Roman periods. Development on the Abenhall side of Gloucester road (A4136) would be an unacceptable encroachment into this important landscape.

Plump Hill, Jubilee Road and The Rocks are a fine example of the evidence of the historic squatter settlement patterns following the Enclosures Act that is unique to the Forest Of Dean. (Ruardean Walk Enclosures Map – the original map is held at Dean Heritage Centre)

The Eastern Avenue residential estate area consists of 3 housing estates, Eastern Ave with Parks Rd and the Bull Ring (constructed from 1949 onwards) This estate was intended to accommodate employees of initially Bell & Howell (Cine Equipment under licence) and later in the 1960's Rank Xerox Ltd as it expanded.

*The White Horse, Mitcheldean*

Dean Meadows (constructed in the late 1980s) and Woodland View/Vicarage Road (constructed circa 2014). (See Character Assessment)

Rank Xerox Ltd was a photocopier factory constructed in 1969. It was situated on a 67 acre (27 hectares) site on the A4136 outside Mitcheldean village and at one time the largest employer in the Forest of Dean with 5000 employees. Vantage Point Business Village was established in 2002 is now located on this site and designated for use as offices/light industrial/warehousing accommodation and is the largest employment area in Mitcheldean with approximately 100 businesses employing about 3,000 people.

Other areas of employment are Ladygrove Business Park and Stenders Business Centre.

There are several retail outlets located in and around the village centre and within the Mews including a butchers, a supermarket with post office, convenience store, florist, chemist, pharmacy and a charity shop, 2 hardware outlets ( trade & retail). Plus service outlets of two hairdressers, two car repair outlets and a petrol station. There are four fast food outlets, a café and two public houses plus a brewery with retail outlet, and a cider house.

The recreation field and community centre to the west of Townsend is a major asset to the community as is the Community Library in the High Street whose services for the community include: a computer club with IT taster sessions, weekly chess club, knit and natter group and gardening club. Mitcheldean has a secondary school (Dene Magna School), and a primary (Mitcheldean C of E). There is also a doctors' surgery in purpose-built premises on Brook Street, near the centre of the village. There is a private care home, Bradley Court (specialising in dementia care). Townsend House, a care trust residential facility, closed in 2018.



*St Michael and All Angels*



*St Michael and All Angels*



*The Wilderness Centre*



*Cedar tree at The Wilderness Centre*



MITCHELDEAN

*Views from the top of The Plump across to the River Severn*



*Abenhall Church*

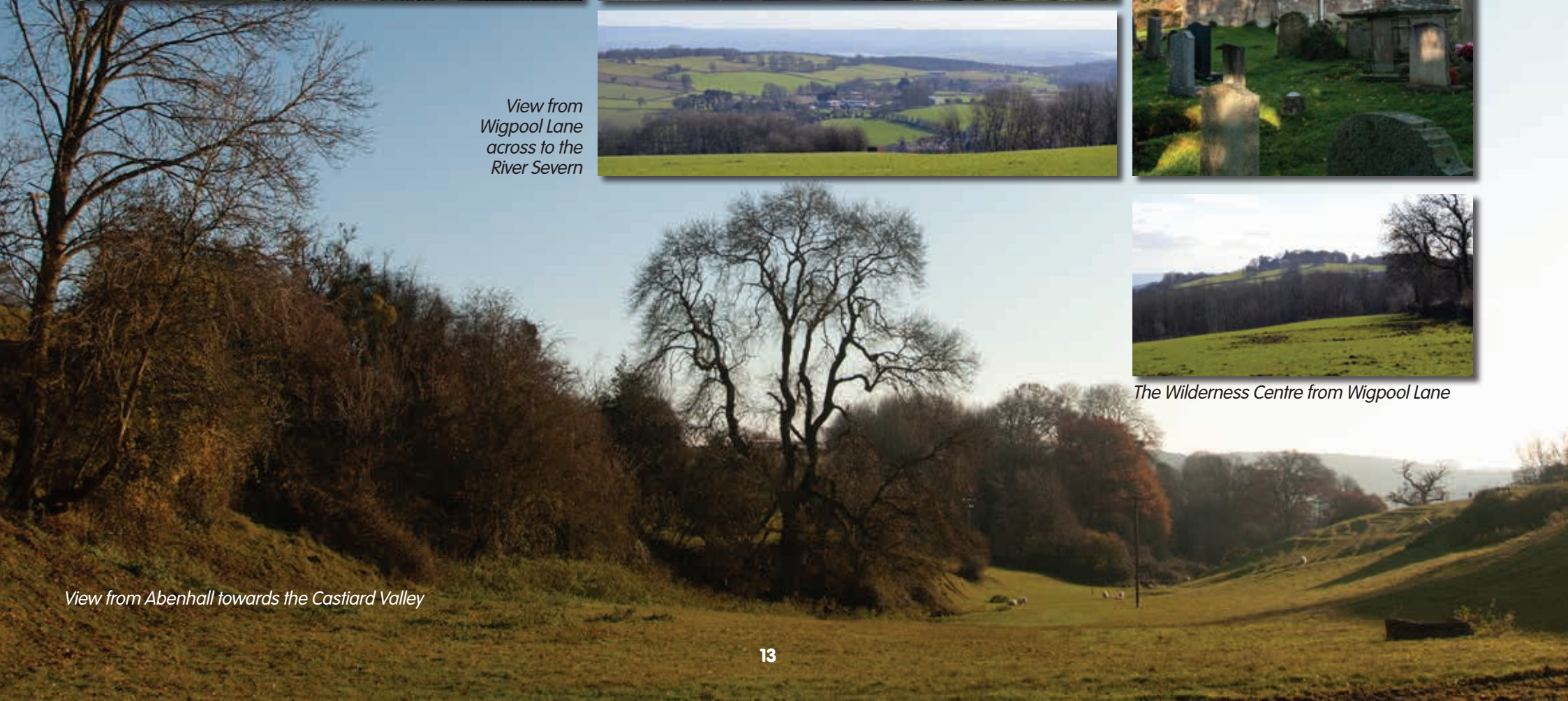


*View from  
Wigpool Lane  
across to the  
River Severn*



*The Wilderness Centre from Wigpool Lane*

*View from Abenhall towards the Castiard Valley*



*Bluebells, looking towards Carisbrook Field*



The Wilderness Centre dates back 2000 years when it was an iron ore mine. The mansion house was rebuilt in 1824 by the Colchester family, sold in 1884 and used first as a Sanatorium for Women, then an isolation hospital for children. In 1968 it was bought by Gloucestershire County Council and set up as a residential centre for field studies along with Plump Hill School on Jubilee Road. The Wilderness is now a privately owned residential field study centre and Plump Hill School a privately owned residential outdoor educational centre, renamed Oakraven.

Outside the main village the wider Parish is of a rural character of mixed arable and livestock farming, bounded by woodland. Some areas such as Wigpool, Shapridge and wooded land at the top of The Plump is public forest estate that is managed by the Forestry Commission. There are pleasant and valued views to be had from many view points in the village to The Malvern Hills to the north, to May Hill to the east, to Minchinhampton Common and the southern Cotswolds to the south east and from The Point at the top of Plump Hill across the River Severn again to the southern Cotswold Hills. There are several footpaths including the Gloucestershire Way and Wysis Way, (see Appendix III) in the Parish, the majority, although not all are passable and well used.

There is a wide diversity of flora and fauna to be seen along with nature reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation relating to the rare priority species of Lesser and Greater Horseshoe Bats. The woodland is mainly indigenous deciduous hardwood, although there are areas of firs and evergreens.

High grade farmland (the best and most versatile soils), has been recorded on fields to the north of Carisbrook Road (Grade 1) and to the south of Gloucester Road (Grade 3a and 3b). Remaining farmland has not been tested/recorded. (Ref Magic Maps)



*The Plump from Abenhall Church*



*The Plump from Shapridge Lane*



*Entrance to Farmplan*





**4.1** Neighbourhood Development Plans are required to be in general conformity with local strategic planning policies and to have regard to national planning policies and advice contained in guidance. It is therefore important that as the Plan is prepared, the emerging draft policies reflect this higher level planning framework.

**4.2** National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated in July 2018. This sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and that the planning system has to perform an economic role, a social role and an environmental role.

**4.3** Neighbourhood planning is addressed in paragraphs 183-185:

**183. Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes and neighbourhood forums can use neighbourhood planning to:**

- set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications; and
- grant planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order.

**184. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.**

**185. Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict. Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non-strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation.**

**4.4** Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was launched in March 2014 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as a web-based resource. The section on neighbourhood planning provides advice on the neighbourhood planning system including key stages and decisions (e.g. deciding neighbourhood areas, the legal tests for neighbourhood plans, and the process of independent examination and referendum).

**4.5** Local Strategic Planning Policy is set out in several local development plan documents (DPDs). The Forest of Dean adopted Core Strategy (2012) sets out an overall vision setting out how the district and places within it should evolve, strategic objectives for the area focusing on key issues, a strategy for the delivery of these objectives, and an explanation of how the delivery process will be monitored.

**4.6** The Adopted Allocations Plan shows how the proposals in the Core Strategy will be implemented. It contains the allocations for development but also protective designations and also includes revised defined settlement boundaries. Mitcheldean Parish has had no changes to its settlement boundary.

**4.7** The Allocations Plan sits within the context of the Core Strategy and is in conformity with it. The new document include sites for housing, employment, shopping and other built development but also areas that need to be protected including the green spaces within settlements and sites of ecological and historical importance. The Allocation plan was adopted in June 2018

**4.9** Most policies which allocate or identify land are still in force. Those policies which still remain are shown in Appendix A Core Strategy - Replacement Policies or can be found in Appendix A (page 100) of the Forest of Dean District Adopted Core Strategy. The remaining site specific policies and allocations which were held over from the 2005 Local Plan are replaced by the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.





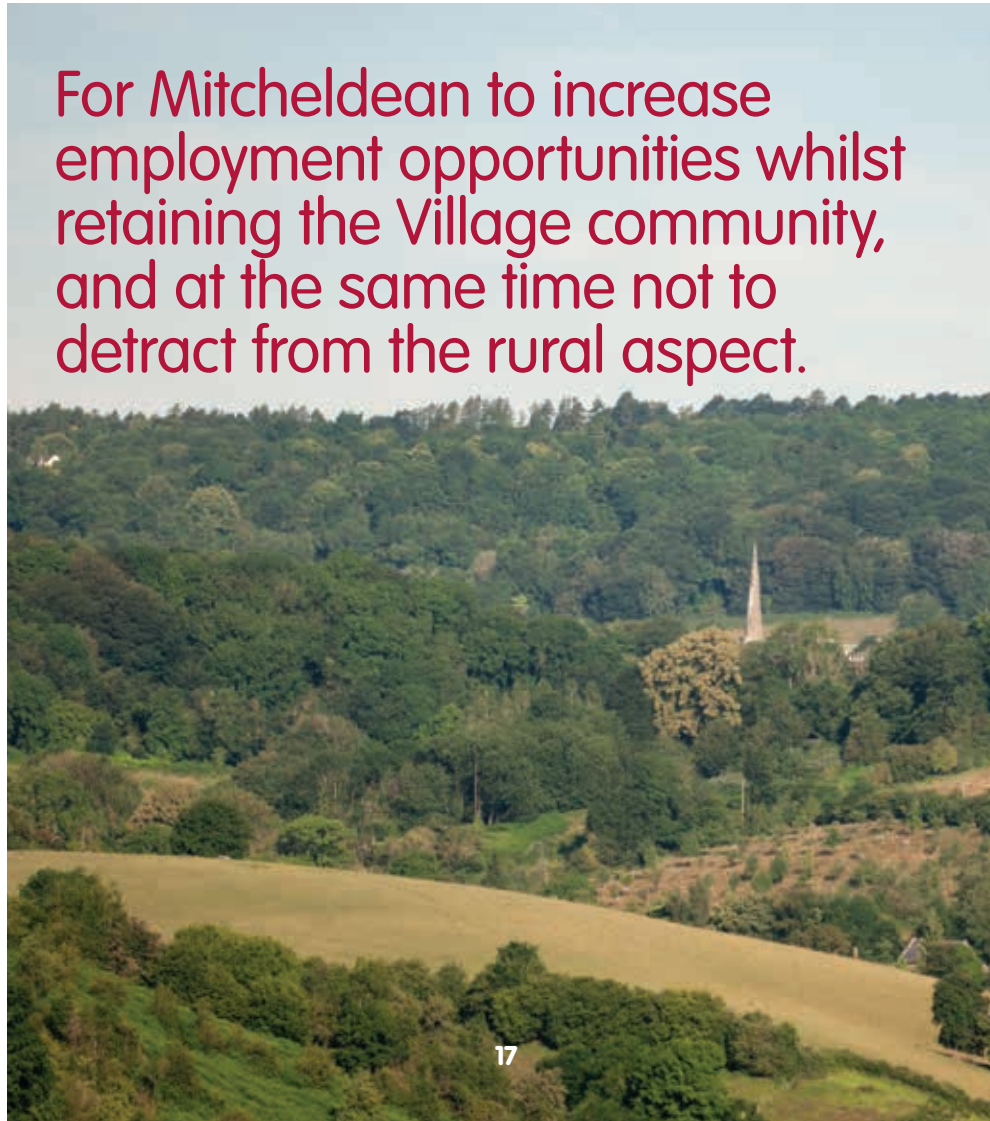


## Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives

### 5.1 Vision

The communal vision for the future of Mitcheldean forms the basis for this Neighbourhood Development Plan.

For Mitcheldean to increase employment opportunities whilst retaining the Village community, and at the same time not to detract from the rural aspect.



#### Objective 1

To protect the local character not only of the village itself, but also the outlying open countryside and forested areas of Abenhall, Wigpool, Plump Hill, Wilderness, Jubilee Road.

#### Objective 2

To encourage employment particularly at Vantage Point Business Village, Stenders Business Park and Ladygrove Business Park so that there is less migration of people of working age during the daytime

#### Objective 3

To avoid Mitcheldean becoming a dormitory town.

#### Objective 4

To encourage a community where people at all stages of life will contribute to and benefit from its outstanding rural location.

### Objective 5

To support new housing in appropriate locations at the Old Bus Depot, Building 5 at Vantage Point and redevelopment of The George. Any future development to be focussed on brownfield sites within the settlement boundary.

### Objective 6

To ensure that appropriate infrastructure plans are in place with any new development especially health services and transport

### Objective 7

To ensure a sustainable village 40% affordable housing will be required in developments over 10 dwellings.

### Objective 8

Not to support development in the sensitive outlying areas of the village envelope (including Wigpool, land adjoining Gloucester Road, Castiard Valley, The Wilderness, and land north of Carisbrook Rd) in order to protect the countryside, landscapes, rare ecology, valued views and character setting of the village.

### Objective 9

Any new development must retain the local character of the village and be constructed using local materials where appropriate.

**5.3** The Neighbourhood Development Plan is built around the vision and objectives, and the policies are designed to guide future development to ensure that quality schemes are in harmony with the local surroundings and will enhance the general area.

#### Sustainable Development

**5.4** The NPPF sets out that the purpose of planning is to contribute towards sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

■ **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

■ **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services

that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

■ **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

**5.5** This Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks appropriate opportunities to meet the future development needs in the medium term by promoting sustainable development:

**1.** By using recent forecasts and projections to assume a growth rate that allows a certain amount of flexibility during the plan's lifespan.

**2.** To ensure that the new homes are commensurate with the needs of the local populace and demographics.

**3.** To preserve the existing character of the Parish by way of protecting open countryside and green spaces within the Parish boundary and requiring new developments to be of a scale, quality and design that respects and complements the existing character of the Parish.

## 6.1 Housing



### Neighbourhood Plan Policies

**6.1.1** The Forest of Dean Core Strategy identified Mitcheldean as a major village. These are “*large villages with employment and/or services important to a wider area. Some scope for additional development*” (para 7.65). Paragraph 7.70 sets out the strategic planning approach to Mitcheldean village: “... *although the services in the centre have declined over recent years there is still a range including a library and health centre. The review of settlement boundaries to be undertaken is unlikely to make major changes and as a result the village is likely to experience steady development, including some intensification within the existing built up area and realisation of existing commitments over the next few years.*”

**6.1.2** Small settlements without defined settlement boundaries such as Abenhall and Wigpool “will be regarded as part of the open countryside for most purposes, but may be appropriate locations for limited affordable housing and rural employment as defined in Core Policies.” *Paragraph 7.75 of the Core Strategy advises “these small settlements will not be treated in any way different to national and regional planning policy and for most purposes therefore they will be regarded as part of the open countryside. The settlements concerned will not be generally suitable for new housing, with the possible exception of very modest developments of affordable housing under policy CSP5, and exceptionally conversions.”*

**6.1.3** The Core Strategy **Policy CSP.5** – Housing identifies that Mitcheldean should provide around 100 houses by 2026.

The Adopted Allocations Plan (June 2018) identifies 3 housing sites in Mitcheldean:

■ **AP84 Land off Bradley Court Road** (Vantage Point) – 1.7ha (4.2 acres), 40 dwellings, 40% affordable sought. Landscaping required to protect housing from neighbouring uses, especially north east and south east of allocation.

■ **AP85 Old Bus Depot** – 0.4 ha (1 acre), 12 to 15 dwellings, 40% affordable sought. Site adjoins conservation area and is part of setting of church.

■ **AP86 Former George Hotel** – 0.3ha (0.74 acres), around 30 dwellings mix of flats and houses, 40% affordable sought. Retention of barn to north is required, retention of former pub is desirable and its redevelopment will need to be fully justified in terms of its potential for refurbishment and taking account of its historic significance in its own right and as part of the Conservation Area. The development overall must result in enhancement of the Conservation Area and preserve the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. Any development must take appropriate account of archaeological interests on the site.

Planning permission was passed in 2015 for 31 retirement apartment dwellings (category 2 sheltered accommodations)

**6.1.4** These are shown on the proposals map for Mitcheldean reproduced as **Map 2** left.

**6.1.5** In addition, the Council published a draft list of additional potential new/ revised allocations. These accompanied the September 2016 proposed Main Modifications to the Allocations Plan. The sites are identified on a series of maps. Mitcheldean had included a ribbon of land as an extension to the old bus depo site for around 15 dwellings but was rejected by inspectors due to the close proximity to the conservation area. (Ref Map 3)

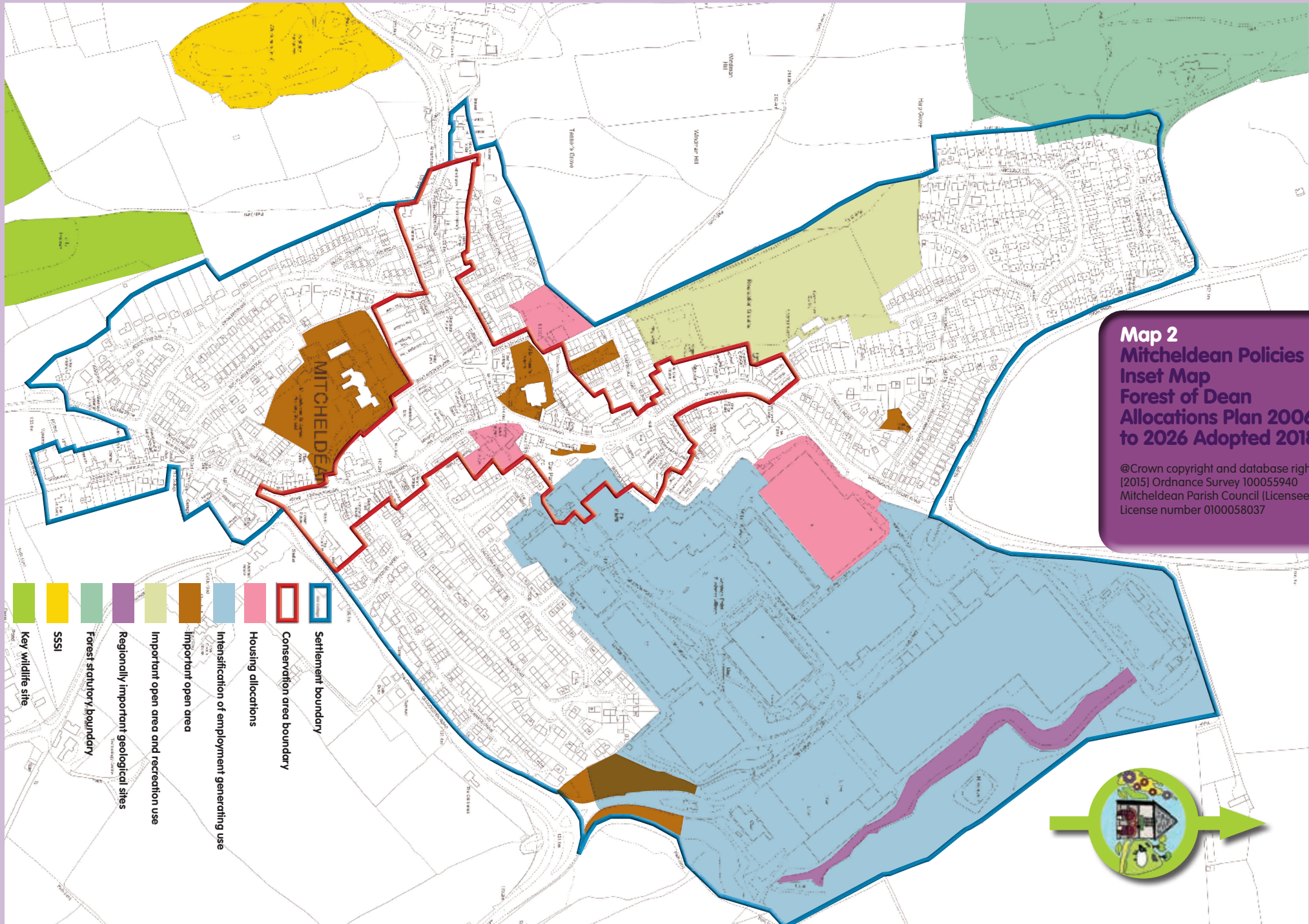
*The derelict George Hotel*



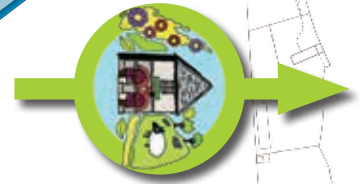
*The Old Bus Depot*



*Building 5 Vantage Point Business Village from Bradley Court Road*



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**6.1.6 Old Bus Depot, Mitcheldean** - The former bus depot at St Michaels Close (0.7ha, (1.72 acres)) is allocated in the Adopted Allocations Plan for 12 to 15 dwellings.

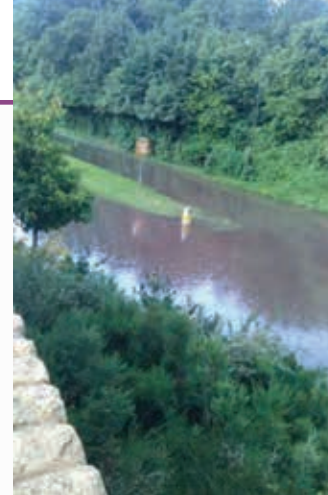
This policy identifies the site of a former bus depot for redevelopment for housing. *“This site has been vacant for a number of years. Although employment sites such as this are generally expected to remain in employment use (CSP7), there is a great deal of easily accessible employment space available in Mitcheldean and it is considered that the location of this former depot makes it best suited to an alternative use for housing. The redevelopment of the site must bring an overall enhancement to the area and to the setting of both the conservation area and St Michaels and All Angels church.*

*Although not a requirement of the policy it is considered that the site is best suited to a group of smaller dwellings.”*

**6.1.7** Sites for housing allocations should be within the settlement boundary but due to the topography and nature of the landscape the steering committee has been unable to identify any further housing sites within the settlement boundary or exception sites outside the settlement boundary that comply with National Planning and Core Strategy policies. With the proposed closure of Townsend House (Sept 2018) the future of this site could be considered for social/sheltered housing.

The NDP Steering committee has established documented/photographs flood risk areas and high grade agricultural land. Appendix VI MAFF Map 4a & 4b) Gloucester Road and Carisbrook Rd.

Subject	Requirements
<b>Access for vehicles</b>	From existing accesses, either St Michaels Close or Churchill Way or both.
<b>Access connections</b>	As above with footpaths to recreation ground and to Churchill Way and St Michaels Close and Tusculum Way
<b>Open space</b>	Integral to site
<b>Features of site</b>	None - adjoins Conservation Area and is part of setting of church. The currently undeveloped portion will need careful design to minimise impact on the locality.
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	40% sought in accordance with Core Strategy policy CSP5.



**Map 3**  
**Bus Depot,**  
**Mitcheldean**

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REF Map Gloucester Road and Carisbrook Rd.- see Appendix VI

Flooding from June 2016- Flooding on Gloucester Road between Vantage Point corner and Vicarage Drive.

**6.1.8** The results from the community consultations indicated that local residents would like proposals to relate well to the local character of the surrounding area. Where possible, the housing should be on level plots with the provision of two parking spaces per unit plus visitor parking provision. Building on green field sites should only be considered where no appropriate brown field land is available. With the many brownfield sites and vacant deteriorating properties identified within the village envelope there can be no acceptable justification for building outside the envelope/settlement boundary. Housing should be provided for both private ownership and a mix of private and social renting, i.e. local authority and housing association landlords in the latter case.

*Examples of new development that relates well to the local character*



### Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

**6.1.9** The Gloucestershire SHMA Update Paper 2014 sets out in Table 4.3 that (in 18 years' time from 2014) 67.3% of new housing should be in the market sector, 7.2% should be shared ownership properties and 16.2% Affordable Rent.

**6.1.10** Table 4.4 in the SHMA 2014 Update presents the size of market accommodation required in Forest of Dean in 18 years' time in comparison to the size profile recorded

in the sector currently. The implied change to the housing stock is also presented. The table shows that some 43.4% of new market dwellings should be three bedroom properties, with 31.5% having two bedrooms, 15.0% containing four or more bedrooms and 10.1% having one bedroom.

**6.1.11** Table 4.9 in the Update shows that there will be a need for 399 Affordable one-bedroom properties and 96 Affordable two-bedroom properties for older people. Table 4.10 shows the size of market homes required in the Forest of Dean including

older persons' accommodation over the next 18 years. In terms of older persons' accommodation there will be a need for 179 one-bedroom properties and 259 two-bedroom properties.

**6.1.12** Mitcheldean Parish Plan was adopted in April 2012

Parish survey said:

- More in favour of "brownfield" development, and using local materials
- Most in favour of affordable housing
- Starter homes seen as biggest need



Housing Needs Survey Report June 2013 concluded that there is a shortage of affordable properties in Mitcheldean for rent and shared ownership. The survey determined that there are 12 households with a local connection who have self-identified themselves in need of affordable housing in the Parish.

**6.1.13** There is limited parking availability in the village of Mitcheldean and in common with other rural areas many residents are reliant on cars to access employment and services. Existing car or van ownership is relatively high; Census 2011 statistics show that of the 1,110 households in 2011. Only 13.4% of households had no car or van compared to 14.4% in the Forest of Dean and 25.8% in England. A significantly high proportion of households had 2 cars or vans available for use; 33.5% of households

in Mitcheldean compared to 32.9% in the Forest of Dean and 24.7% in England. There are already pressures from existing congestion and on street parking in some parts of the village such as Stars Pitch, High Street, outside the surgery, Stenders outside the block of flats, and Churchill Way. Therefore there is a need to ensure that adequate parking provision in new developments is provided on site. Sufficient parking should be available within a development to ensure that environmental and safety problems do not occur in the surrounding area as a result of overflow parking generated from the development. The parking facilities should be integrated within the overall design of the development so that they are easy, safe and attractive to use, and so that parking in inappropriate areas is deterred.



Dean Meadows

## Policy H1 Housing within Mitcheldean village

(to be read in conjunction with NDP Policy E1)

**Within the settlement boundary of Mitcheldean village, new housing developments will be supported where they:**

- 1. Re-use brown field sites or buildings, or comprise the conversion or alteration of existing buildings to provide residential accommodation; and**
- 2. Do not lead to a loss of existing community facilities or green space; and**
- 3. Do not lead to a loss of employment opportunities other than Building 5 at Vantage Point (as in allocations plan), and the redundant/vacant Farmplan building**
- 4. Contribute towards a mix of house types, tenures and sizes, including affordable housing and housing designed to meet the needs of older persons and for starter homes.**

Development should reflect the Housing Needs Survey Report June 2013 that concluded there is a shortage of affordable properties in Mitcheldean for rent and shared ownership.

- 5. Enhance the character of the area by respecting the local vernacular and using appropriate designs and materials.**

Development proposals should provide car parking to development plan standards.



**1** From the Monmouth and Cinderford Direction the A4136 at the top of The Plump.

**2** The A4136 at the junction with Jubilee Road, with Mitcheldean in the background

**3** Abenhall Road gateway from the Abenhall and Flaxley direction, adjacent to Dene Magna School

**4** Bradley Court Road with the closed entrance to Vantage Point Business village to the left, approaching the junction with the B4224 Carisbrook Road.

**5** The A4136 at Barton Corner from the Gloucester/Longhope direction at the junction with the entrance to Vantage point Business Village looking westwards with Woodlands view estate to the right.

**6** The B4224 Lea Road approaching the mini roundabout at the entrance to Lining Wood estate The mini roundabout on the B4224 with the entrance to Lining Wood estate on the right looking towards Mitcheldean.

**7** The approach to Mitcheldean from Drybrook near the foot of Stenders and prior to the road narrowing at the junction adjacent to Mitcheldean Parish Church.



## Mitcheldean Gateways In/Out of the Village





3



4



7



5



6



6

## Policy H2

### Gateway and outside settlement boundary

(outside the village)

(to be read in conjunction with Landscape Impact Policy, Business Policies and Environmental Policies)

Proposed residential development outside the settlement boundary will be supported where one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting; or
- the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling.

*View from Breakheart Hill*



*Shapridge Farm*



## 6.2 Business and Employment

**6.2.1** Mitcheldean includes a major employment site and numerous other smaller businesses are located throughout the village and wider Parish. The Core Strategy notes Mitcheldean's significance as a local employment centre. Paragraph 7.70 advises that *"Mitcheldean with a population of over 2200 is also the location of Vantage Point, a business estate which with its neighbouring MEWS workshops covers about 28ha. This includes by far the largest range of workspace available for rent in the district ranging from high quality offices to large areas suitable for manufacturing or warehousing. The Core Strategy recognises this and will permit further intensification of employment on existing sites in Mitcheldean. There are other smaller employment sites at Mitcheldean"*.

**6.2.2** The Core Strategy also sets out in paragraph 5.18 that *"in rural areas including the villages, the emphasis will be on sustainable rural development to be promoted where it supports the local economy and is compatible with the conservation of the countryside. The strategy is to reinforce the role of the villages, especially the larger ones and groups where this will make a positive contribution to the sustainable long term future of the area, and especially its economy."* It goes to advise *"5.19 Within the villages there is a clear and distinctive settlement pattern and hierarchy. Amongst the group of the major villages, Mitcheldean stands out as having a very large employment site and this will continue to be supported."*

**6.2.3 Policy CSP. 7 Economy** sets out that *"Economic development will be promoted throughout the district in accordance with the spatial strategy and its allocations. This will encourage new and more diverse types of employment and supporting infrastructure to be established by making land and premises available..."*

**6.2.4** Vantage Point Business Village was built by Rank Xerox as their main manufacturing plant in the United Kingdom. The estate was originally started by British Acoustic Films in 1941 and subsequently in 1948 became part of The Rank Organisation. From 1964 concentration was the production of xerographic machines and in 1965 it became the main manufacturing plant for Rank Xerox Ltd. Rank Xerox was at one time the largest employer in the Forest of Dean, having some 4,800 employees, and contributed towards the explosion of housing needs in the village during the mid-1960s/early 1970s. At the end of 1998 there were still 2,000 employees of Rank Xerox but this reduced until by 2002 most of the site had been vacated by Rank Xerox. The site was subsequently acquired by a local businessman and renamed Vantage Point Business Village, and is now designated for use as offices/light industrial/warehousing accommodation.

The XEROX logo is displayed in a large, bold, red, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving it a three-dimensional appearance. The logo is centered horizontally within the text block.

**6.2.5** The site covers 27 hectares (67 acres) and has one million square feet of industrial and warehousing space together with two hundred thousand square feet of commercial office space. The Mews was formerly Wintle's Brewery and is now part of the Vantage Point Business Village. There are two retail outlets on the ground floor and first floor, with the remaining two floors being used as an auction house and general offices. At the rear is a small brewery. The other part of The Mews is used as a mixture of storage, cafeteria, licenced premises, and offices.

**6.2.6** The Allocations Plan identifies Vantage Point as an employment allocation: *"AP 87 Employment Intensification/Retention Vantage Point Mitcheldean Vantage Point employment area (28.4ha) will be safeguarded for continuing use for employment generating uses. New development and redevelopment for employment generating uses within the site will be permitted subject to other policies in the plan."*

**6.2.7** Paragraph 29.6 advises that *"this large site is capable of a wide range of uses, although they should be compatible with one another. The allocation is intended as a means of making clear the potential of the site which in this case may be for new development or redevelopment. It is also allocated in order to emphasise the plan's support for this major venue for a variety of employment. Opportunities may be relatively limited for new development*

*but redevelopment will also be supported. Generally the site is well buffered from its surroundings but some areas adjoin or are close to housing in the village and some are quite prominent. Design will therefore be required to take account of these factors. The older Mews buildings which lie within the Conservation Area are very important and must be retained and respected in any redevelopment."*

### Other local business/employment development and tourism

**6.2.8** The Forest of Dean District Council Review Of Economic Forecasts Final Report, June 2015 identified a number of issues in the Forest of Dean:

- The number of employee jobs in the District has fallen since the recession, compared to national employment growth. The fall in jobs has been driven by decline in the Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities sector, along with Transportation & Storage and Wholesale & Retail Trade;
- There are a low number of jobs per working age resident, leading to high levels of out-commuting, and low workplace-based earnings;
- The number of retail jobs has declined since 2009 and more sharply than across England, and rateable retail floor space has decreased over the past ten years;
- There are conflicting reports on the scale of jobs in tourism-related sectors. BRES data suggests that tourism related jobs have declined year-on-year since 2010 whereas the District Tourism Study suggests

a substantive increase in jobs and value of tourism over the same period;

■ The number of enterprises in the Forest of Dean has declined since 2008, compared to strong growth across the rest of Gloucestershire and England, caused by both a fall in the number of new businesses and a rise in the number of business closures.

■ The decline in the number of businesses has been driven by decline in the number of Construction, Transport & Storage, Wholesale, and Business Administration & Support Services businesses.

**6.2.9** The results from the public consultations for Mitcheldean showed that local people recognise the importance of supporting appropriate local business development to enhance local employment and training opportunities as part of the future sustainability of the Parish.

**6.2.10** Mitcheldean, with its industrial heritage, conservation area and many listed buildings set within an attractive rural landscape and close to the Forest of Dean, presents opportunities for further employment linked to tourism and the visitor economy. Mitcheldean is served by three public houses, The White Horse situated beside the Town Hall, The Brewery Tap (limited opening hours) is situated in The Mews complex, and The Lamb which is situated on the A4136 at the bottom of Plump Hill. If other refreshments are required there is the Wellwisher's Cafe (limited opening hours) located in The

Mews complex, and also for use by Vantage Point employees a dining room at Vantage Point. There are three take away shops (limited opening times) in the main part of the village, and a further take away shop on the A4136 next to Mitcheldean Garage, and near The Lamb. There are two short stay properties for group accommodation (holiday/business). There are approximately 10 other self-catering holiday cottages out of the village, plus two educational field centres offering group accommodation at Oakraven on Jubilee Road and at the Wilderness Centre. Policy B2 sets out the Plan's approach to tourism-related development. Its ambition is to support development that is in scale with the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area, and respects its wildlife, peace and tranquillity in particular. It also supports the conversion of historic agricultural buildings for tourism purposes.

**6.2.11** There are three modern shops fronting the High Street with a mixture of residential, hairdressing salon and storage at first floor level, adjacent to which is a small memorial area. There is also a pharmacy, a florist and charity shop situated on Churchill Way. Further specialist retail and food and drink provision could enhance Mitcheldean's potential role as a visitor destination, contributing to local economic growth in service and tourism sectors. Additional visitor numbers directly and indirectly could also help to support existing shops and services in the village centre. Mitcheldean has not been identified

## Policy B1 Supporting Local Businesses Development and Tourism

**Employment development that would help to diversify the local economy will be supported on sites within the parish (with the exception of within the Protection Zones)**

**New or expanded employment development should:**

- 1. Not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on residential amenity;**
- 2. Not result in an unacceptable impact on the environment in terms of noise, smells, pollution, light pollution and visual intrusion;**
- 3. Where practicable, re-use brownfield land;**
- 4. Not lead to the loss of open space;**
- 5. Respect the character of the local area;**
- 6. Incorporate landscaping around the site to screen buildings and parking areas and provide ponds or wetlands as part of SuDS (sustainable drainage);**
- 7. Have a means of access that can accommodate the number and type of vehicles associated with the business;**
- 8. Not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the local highway network; and**
- 9. Make adequate provision for parking for employees and visitors within the employment site.**

**Proposals for new retail, food and drink and service facilities that enhance the vitality and viability of the existing village centre will be supported. Additional fast food takeaways would not be supported.**



Chinese takeaway,  
High Street

## Policy B2 Supporting Local Businesses Development and Tourism in the Protection Zones

Proposals for new or expanded tourism-based enterprises will be supported where they are:

- compatible in scale, massing and design with their surroundings and landscape;
- are sustainably-located;
- respect the countryside in the neighbourhood area, including its wildlife, peace and tranquillity;
- respect the ecology and biodiversity of the neighbourhood area; and
- maintain its dark skies environment

Proposals for new or expanded tourism-based enterprises within Mitcheldean will be supported. Proposals which would support the village as a central tourism hub and/or the development of a series of heritage trails will be particularly supported.

Proposals for the conversion of redundant historic agricultural buildings for tourism use will be supported where they:

- are sympathetic to the building concerned;
- are proportionate in scale and impact to their surroundings; and
- do not have unacceptable impact on the amenities of any residential properties in the immediate locality

as one of the market towns for tourism (Destinations Management Plan) but has the potential on the business estates to provide tertiary services to the tourism industry such as commercial launderette, marketing base, trade peoples etc. or for indoor "wet weather" entertainment facilities/attractions etc.

**6.2.12** The Parish Council are the guardians of a small museum of Rank Xerox memorabilia situated at the Town Hall which is open to the public by request and is also open on the Local Heritage Days in

September. This is now being developed by a group of volunteers called the Friends of the Xerox Museum and also the Town Hall is undergoing refurbishment with a view to encouraging more community use of the building. The Parish Council is also supporting the Heritage Lottery bid for the restoration of Gunn's Mill blast furnace which is of international importance and when restored would be a popular tourist destination. The parish council would also like to produce a footpath map to assist local visitors to explore the area on foot.

## 6.3 Amenities and Community

**6.3.1** Mitcheldean is fortunate to have a good range of local amenities and there is a strong sense of community. Local amenities which are valued and enjoyed by local residents include the following:

### Community Facilities

**6.3.2** Mitcheldean has a primary school off Merrin Street, Dene Magna Academy School in Abenhall Road, an Early Learning Centre off Colchester Close and the Sunbeam Day Nursery at Hawker Hill. The Wilderness Centre is a field study centre in private ownership as is the education field centre on Jubilee Road at Oakraven. It also has a recreational field with a Community Centre and a Sports Pavilion, library on the High Street along with a Doctor's Surgery and at Forest Gate Community Church there is a weekly Youth Club and they also run a Luncheon Club for the elderly members of the village. At the heart of the village is St Michaels & All Angels Church with daily services and regular events. There are weekly services at St Michaels Church, Abenhall. The Mews Centre houses a cafe, a real ale brewery and a cider house. The White Horse Public House is situated on the High Street and The Lamb Inn is just outside the village at the beginning of Abenhall Road.

**6.3.3** Members of the Steering Committee met with representatives from Dene Magna School in July 2016 and were informed that there will be 800 students attending Dene Magna from September 2016 and at

this point the school will have reached full capacity. The school would be happy to see more housing developments in Mitcheldean if developer contributions could be used to support expansion, possibly towards a block of 8 more classrooms. The addition of a sixth form facility would be supported.

**6.3.4** A meeting with Mitcheldean Primary School took place in July 2016. Steering group members were informed that 206 students attended Mitcheldean Primary School and that some year groups were over capacity. However, in the last three years the entry classes have been undersubscribed and therefore the school would be happy for further housing development in Mitcheldean as it could possibly increase student numbers. Also with the amount of land the school owns there is potential for further expansion to the building.

**6.3.5** A member of the Steering Committee met with representatives from the doctors' surgery in June 2016. The practice has around 6,200 patients at the present time, and until four years ago it remained steady at around 5,800 patients. The surgery would struggle to cope with additional patients resulting from new development as funding will be a problem, and the practice has to operate as a freestanding business. However, with a new GP starting in August 2016 it is hoped that some of the current pressure may ease. There is no room on site to expand due to its confined boundaries, and also the configuration of

the surgery building, and the only possible expansion would have to be downwards into the current basement rooms. Parking was also discussed as an issue, with the surgery already having explored the possibility of replacing the flower bed to the front with disabled provision with the County Council's Highways department. Unfortunately, the location of a water main and cable route mean that this would not be possible.

**6.3.6** The Core Strategy protects community facilities in Policy CSP.8 Retention of community facilities, where *"Development proposals which involve the loss of community facilities, including schools, shops, post offices, public houses, halls, places of worship, health services, will not be permitted unless alternative suitable and convenient facilities are available or will be made available as part of the proposal..."*

**6.3.7** Results from the community consultations showed that local people want to protect recreational facilities and local services such as the library, doctors' surgery and pharmacy and preserve green spaces.

**6.3.8** New housing and employment proposals as set out in the Allocations Plan may offer opportunities for further investment in local facilities and this will be supported by the Parish Council. Policy AC1 - Provision and Protection of Community Facilities

# Policy AC1

## Provision and Protection of Community Facilities

The change of use of existing facilities to other uses or redevelopment will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

1. The proposal includes alternative provision, in a suitable location, of equivalent or enhanced facilities; and
2. It is accessible to all by public transport, walking, cycling, by car and have adequate car parking.

The provision of new community facilities, and expansion of existing facilities, will be supported subject to protecting residential amenity and local character.

*Dene Magna School*



*Mitcheldean Primary School*



*Brook Street Surgery*

## Recreational Areas and Local Green Space

**6.3.9** Recreation areas are protected in Core Strategy Policy CSP.9 - Recreational and amenity land: "... Development involving the loss of existing recreational land and buildings will not be supported. Exceptions may be made where it can be shown that the use is no longer required or where the development secures satisfactory replacement or improvement of the recreational use(s) which outweighs any loss..."

**6.3.10** The NPPF allows communities to protect significant areas of local green space:

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

Name of Green Space	Ownership	Close Proximity to Local Community	Reasons why special	In Character Area	Area (in acres)	Description
<b>1. HARP GROVE</b>	Private Ownership/ Statutory Forest	Yes	Ancient woodland	At rear of 1970s housing estate	<b>2.49</b>	Private Ownership with public footpaths. Used by dog walkers
<b>2. TANNERS GROVE</b>	Gwendoline & Derek Wood	Yes	Bluebell Field & wildlife	Adjoining mid 60s housing estate. Adjacent to derelict bus depot allocated for housing		
<b>3. RECREATION FIELD</b>	Parish Council	Yes	Well used recreation area with outside gym equipment, skateboard park, children's play area, dog exercising area, basketball court and football pitches	Adjacent to Community Centre and Sports Pavilion	<b>2.97</b>	Football Field drainage maintained by a third party contractor for the parish. Grass cutting of pitch undertaken by Contractor approx. every 2 weeks. Childrens play area mowed 16 times a year and grass banks 4 times a year by contractor, PC ground staff strim & mow the more difficult areas eg around the bollards and gym equipment. Area used for football matches and events.
<b>4. GLEBE CLOSE PATCH</b>	Parish Council	Yes	Important, pleasant open green space for residents	Path from recreation area leading to Glebe Close	<b>0.18</b>	Mowed 6 times a year by contractor with vegetation cut back by ground staff as required. Open space
<b>5. DIRT JUMPS</b>	Parish Council	Yes	BMX cycle track and dog exercise area with natural spring along edge with uninterrupted views to across to Breakhart Hill and the Malverns	Adjacent to The Crescent and Glebe Close Housing Estate	<b>1.0</b>	Cut/strimmed 4 times a year by contractor with vegetation cut back as required by ground staff. Used by older children on bikes.
<b>6. SHEEP FIELD</b>	Parish Council	Yes	Dog walking area and two public footpaths. Bluebells and wildlife area with uninterrupted views to Breakhart Hill and the Malverns.	Above playing field	<b>2.58</b>	Ground staff strim around trees and footpath as required, grass cut 4 times a year by contractor. Used by dog walkers. Dog walkers encouraged to use this area rather than recreation ground
<b>7. CROSS GARDENS</b>	Parish Council	Yes	A pleasant flower area with benches and a meeting place for residents	Adjacent to church in conservation area		
<b>8. CHURCHILL WAY</b>	Two Rivers/ Parish Council	Yes	Pleasant green open space for residents	Adjacent to conservation area		
<b>9. COMMUNITY GARDEN AND MEMORIAL BENCH</b>	Parish Council	Yes	Community Garden and Memorial Bench	Adjacent to the shops in centre of village		
<b>10. LAND OFF DEANSWAY ROAD &amp; OAKHILL ROAD</b>	Unknown	Yes	Pleasant open green space in built up area	Adjacent to steps between Deansway Road and Oakhill Road		

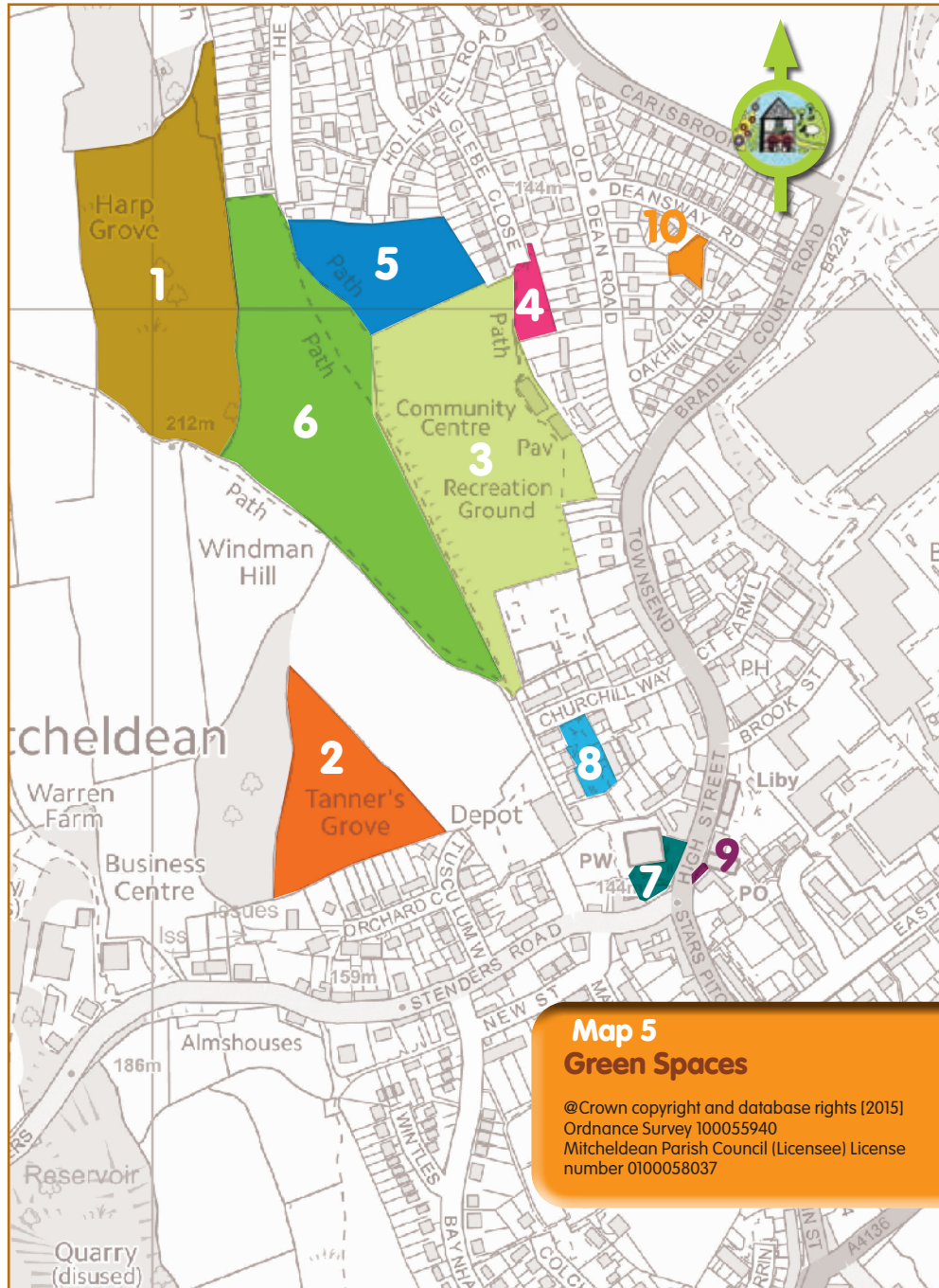


**Para 77.** The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

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

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

**6.3.11** The Parish Council considers that the areas in map 5 and table meet the above criteria and should be identified and protected as Local Green Space:



**Map 5  
Green Spaces**  
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 number 0100058037

## Policy AC2 Local Green Space and Amenity Space

The following areas shown on Map 5 - are designated as Local Green Space:

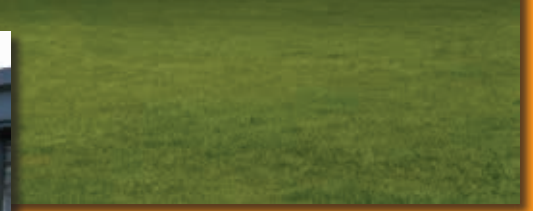
1. Harp Grove
2. Tanners Grove
3. Recreation Field
4. Glebe Close Patch
5. Dirt Jumps
6. Sheep Field (
7. Cross Gardens
8. Churchill Way
9. Community Garden and Memorial Bench
10. Land off Deansway Road and Oakhill Road

Development will not be supported on identified Local Green Spaces except in very special circumstances.

1 Harp Grove



2 Tanners Grove



3 Recreation field



4 Glebe Close



5 dirt jumps



10 land off Deansway



6 Sheep field



8 Churchill Way



9 Community Garden and Memorial Bench

# Local Green Space and Amenity Space

## 6.4 Environment

Local green areas to be protected and retained are the recreation field and playground, the sheep field, the green area at the end of Glebe Close and the green space within Churchill Way.

**6.4.1** Mitcheldean is a historic village set within an attractive rural area. The Parish is of a rural character being mixed arable and livestock farming, bounded by woodland. There are pleasant views to be had from many vantage points in the village to The Malvern Hills to the north, to May Hill to the east, to Minchinhampton Common and the southern Cotswolds to the south east and from The Point at the top of Plump Hill across the River Severn again to the southern Cotswold Hills.

**6.4.2** The rural aspect and topography of Mitcheldean need to be considered and retained in order to preserve the character of Mitcheldean notwithstanding the employment opportunities afforded by Vantage Point Business Village. There is a wide diversity of flora and fauna to be seen including many species of butterflies, birds both raptors and song birds, bees, slow worms, newts, frogs, toads, bats, squirrels, badgers, and not forgetting the ubiquitous wild boar. The woodland is mainly indigenous deciduous hardwood, although there are areas of firs and evergreens.

### Appendix 2 of records from Glos. Centre for Environment Records

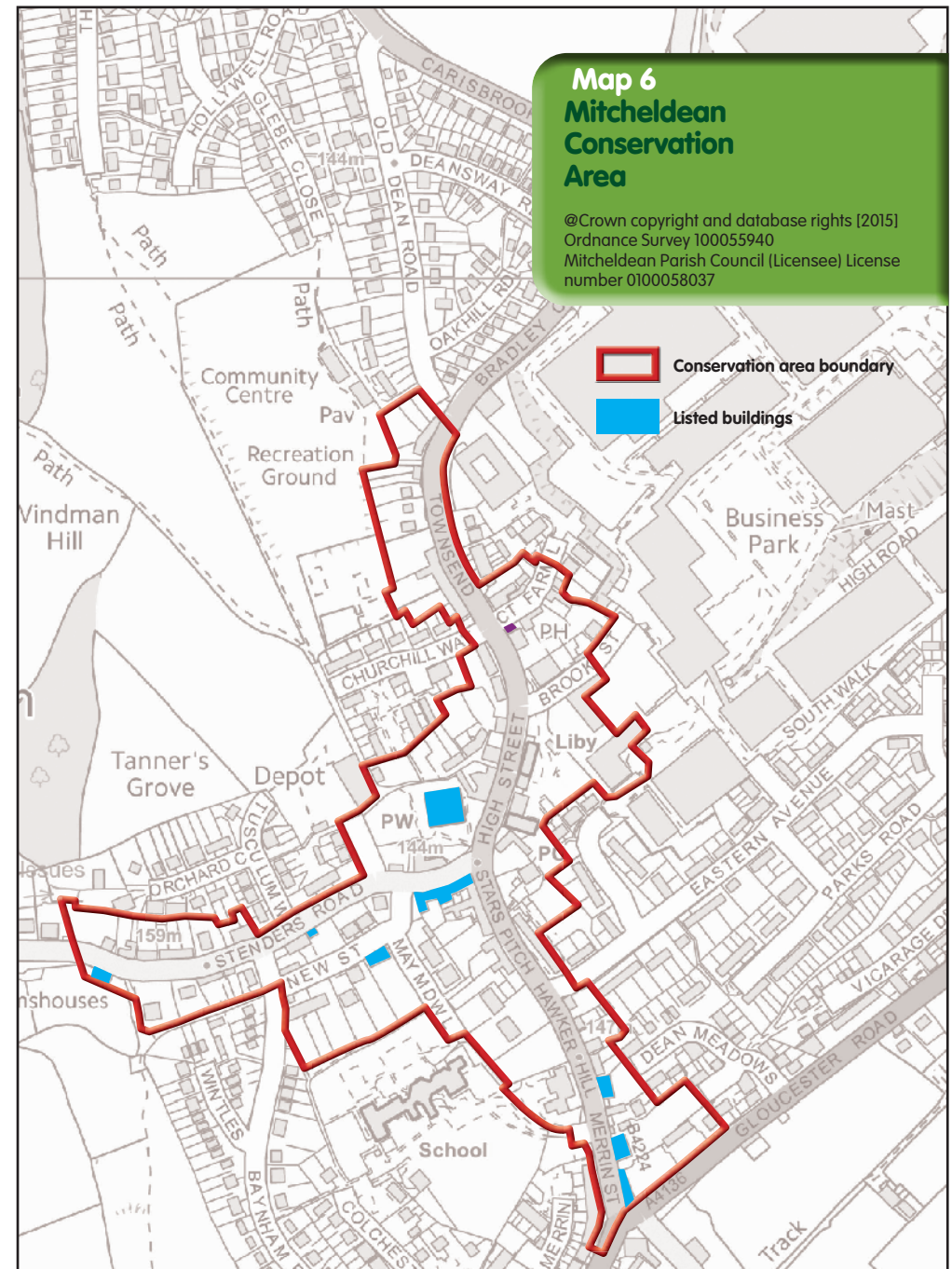
**6.4.3** Built and natural heritage assets are protected in Core Strategy Policy CSP1 Design and Environmental Protection.

### Built Heritage and Encouraging High Quality Design

**6.4.4** Mitcheldean conservation area was designated by Forest of Dean District Council in 1989. The conservation area boundary is shown on Map 6.

**6.4.5** The conservation area includes a number of listed buildings – see Appendix I which identifies listed buildings across the whole Parish. Forest of Dean District Council has not undertaken a conservation area appraisal but the neighbourhood plan Steering Committee has identified key features of the built environment which contribute towards the special character of the area and which should be protected.

**6.4.6** New development within the conservation area and development which impacts on the setting of the conservation area should respond positively to these characteristics and be designed sensitively to enhance the surrounding area. Proposed allocated housing sites which will impact on the setting of the conservation area include the Old Bus Depot, which would also impact on the setting of the listed church and the former George Hotel. The submission Allocations Plan AP86 notes that in relation



to the former George Hotel:  
*“Retention of barn to north is required, retention of former pub is desirable and its redevelopment will need to be fully justified in terms of its potential for refurbishment and taking account of its historic significance in its own right and as part of the Conservation Area. The development overall must result in enhancement of the Conservation Area and preserve the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. Any development must take appropriate account of archaeological interests on the site.”*

#### **6.4.7 Character Assessment Mitcheldean Conservation Area.**

The extent of the Mitcheldean Conservation Area is shown on the Conservation Area Mitcheldean map by a broken red verge. The conservation area extends from the Pike House in the north, opposite where Old Dean Road finishes as far south as the A4136, Gloucester Road, including Talbot Place, Brook Street, and The Mews complex. It also extends along Stenders Road as far west as the Alms houses.

There are a number of buildings within the area of distinctive character including the Town Hall, Parish Church, The Rectory, Platts Row and the buildings on the west side of the High Street, The Merrin, Stenders Road and the historic Mews complex. Included in

the conservation area is the newish parade of shops adjacent to the now derelict George public house, the fairly recently built detached houses opposite Townsend House, and Archway Court opposite The White Horse public house.

The parish church dates from the 14th century. The churchyard contains a number of graves and monuments which, including the church are designated as listed buildings.

Apart from the shops which are of modern design, ie a brick built two storey building with a sloping tiled roof, the doctors surgery which is of a modern chalet construction, Dunstone Place, the detached houses opposite Townsend House, and the bungalows in May Meadow Lane, most other buildings are as originally constructed from the fourteenth century onwards, including The Mews, The George public house and the Town Hall, and all the cottages. There is a new build two storey house in the former garden of The White Horse public house, at the bottom of Brook Street and a bungalow at the rear of the shops at Churchill Way.

The older buildings are of two storey construction with pitched slate roofs, being built of local stone in the majority of cases



*Lagers Barn*



*Footpath rear of Vantage Point Business Village*

apart from the former bookmakers, the Chinese restaurant and the cottages in Brook Street which are cement clad. The terraced house at the foot of Stenders Road are of two storey brick construction with pitched slate roofs, constructed circa 1900.

#### **6.4.8 Character Assessment: The Parish Of Mitcheldean**

The rural parish of Mitcheldean is set in a medium size valley bottom with land rising steeply to the east and west. To the south of the A4136 the valley widens out with Westbury Brook running along the centre. The village is located immediately to the east of the Forest Of Dean and extends from Bradley Farm on Bradley Court Road and Dean Common Farm (part) on the Ross on Wye road in the north to Shapridge Farm and Spout lane in the south, and from Abenhall Mill in the east to the lanes leading to The Rocks and to The Wilderness from the A4136 in the west.

There is another access to Mitcheldean from Drybrook down the steep winding hill, Stenders Road.

There are several footpaths in the parish, the majority although not all which are passable and well used. The Wysis Trail and Gloucestershire Way run through the valley and are used by walkers and ramblers. There are no cycle trails or other waymarked walks.

There are no facilities for parking within the valley with the narrow lanes bounded

by ancient hedgerows with no footpaths. Access is limited by car.

The centre of Mitcheldean was designated a conservation area in June 1989 and has a number of individual buildings of distinctive character including some medieval buildings, the parish church dating from the thirteenth century, the former Wintles Brewery now The Mews, The White Horse public house and the Town Hall which dates from 1710. There are thirty listed buildings in Mitcheldean. APPENDIX I

The building of the Eastern Avenue residential estate was started in 1949. This estate was originally started to accommodate employees of The Rank Organisation when it expanded. What is now known as Vantage Point Business Village was originally the main manufacturing plant for Rank Xerox Ltd which was at one time the largest employer in the Forest Of Dean. Vantage Point Business Village is now designated for use as offices/light industrial/warehousing accommodation and is the largest employment area in Mitcheldean.

**6.4.9** In addition to the conservation area and numerous listed buildings in the Parish there are other heritage assets which are worthy of note. Locally significant heritage assets which may be suitable for consideration as locally listed buildings by the District Council are listed in Appendix I

## **Policy E1 Protecting the Conservation Area and encouraging high quality design across the Parish**

**New residential development should demonstrate consideration of the following design principles:**

- 1. A mixture of houses types and sizes**
- 2. The height of dwellings should not be more than 2 storeys unless they are replacement dwellings where they can be of equal scale and mass to the original buildings.**
- 3. The design of new dwellings should respect existing buildings in their local context and, where practicable, use local vernacular materials in their construction. New dwellings should provide outside space for bin storage and recycling facilities appropriate to their scale. Each new dwelling should also provide a minimum of two car parking spaces.**

**Within the Mitcheldean conservation area new development should respect the scale, height and massing of existing buildings and use vernacular materials appropriate to the development and to its position within the conservation area.**

*Lane at Wigpool*



The Plump from Abenhall Church



### Natural Heritage and Landscape

**6.4.11** A Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the Forest of Dean was undertaken in 2004. The LCA explains what the landscape of each place is like and what makes one place different to another. It assumes that every place is special and distinctive and sets out to show just how and where these special qualities and distinctive features occur. The character assessment identifies fifteen landscape character types across the district and 42 landscape character areas. Mitcheldean falls within landscape character type 10 Ridges and Valleys.

**6.4.12** Within the Ridges and Valleys, Mitcheldean Parish includes 2 character areas, 10c Edge Hill and 10d Breakheart Hill. Key characteristics include:

- Distinctive rounded ridge profiles rising above the neighbouring vale landscapes and bordering the wooded inclines.
- The ridges are orientated north south which is emphasised by the orientation of hedgerow patterns and small wooded copses clinging to steeper slopes.
- Mosaic of mixed farmland and woodland cloaks the ridges.
- Extensive coniferous plantations are evident on the ridges.

## Policy E2 Protecting Heritage Assets

Designated and non-designated heritage assets enhance local distinctiveness and should be preserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. They are identified in Appendix I

The effect of any planning application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be taken having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

## Policy E3 Protecting and enhancing local landscape character

Landscaping proposals in new development should protect and enhance existing features which contribute towards the distinctive, ecologically sensitive and valued local landscape character around Mitcheldean.

Schemes should protect existing hedgerows and areas of ancient semi natural woodland and old orchards, and use locally appropriate native species in screening and landscape design.

Use of local materials such as forest stone and field/stock fencing in boundary treatments and new buildings will be supported.

Development proposals should be sited and designed to respect the identified significant views which are locally valued and which make an important contribution to the neighbourhood area's landscape character.

Edgehill Plantation from  
Shapridge Lane



- Distinctive “squatter” settlements on the upper ridge slopes close to existing woodland and the line of the Crease Limestone.
- Extensive views over the surrounding lowlands are possible from exposed ridge top locations
- A number of redundant quarries are located throughout the landscape.
- Numerous transportation routes follow the valleys created by streams and brooks as they weave through the ridges.
- Range of species rich grassland habitats, heath and bog, old orchards and ancient semi natural woodlands.

In addition to the Districts Landscape Character Assessment the NDP has identified Plump Hill, Jubilee Road and the head of the Castiard Valley as having the same characteristics as 10c Edgehills with heritage landscape value of equal significance.

**6.4.13** Landscape Character Assessment - See **Appendix IV Landscape Character Assessment & Views**

**6.4.14** Valued Landscape Views - See **Appendix IV Landscape Character Assessment & Views**

**6.4.15** New development should be designed to protect and enhance these special characteristics that make up the distinctive and sensitive local landscape character around Mitcheldean. Policy E3 provides a context for this approach. Where

necessary and appropriate tree and hedge planting should follow the guidance in the following District Council documents:  
<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/4256/hedge-planting-specifications.pdf>  
<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/4255/tree-planting-specifications.pdf>

### Biodiversity

**6.4.16** Mitcheldean Parish is fortunate to have several important wildlife sites and habitats which support a number of important species of plants and animals. These sites include:

- Wigpool Ironstone Mine SSSI
- Puddlebrook Quarry SSSI
- Scully Grove Quarry SSSI
- Stenders Quarry SSSI
- Edgehills Quarry SSSI
- Westbrook Ironstone Mine SSSI
- Land Grove Quarry Mitcheldean SSSI

Westbury Brook and Wigpool SSSI form part of the wider valley and Forest of Dean Special Area of Conservation (SAC) relating to Lesser and Greater Horseshoe Bats. The bats use the mines as winter hibernation roosts and the surrounding landscape both and north and south of the village envelope foraging and commuting between the main maternity roosts at Littledean Hall and Blaisdon and satellite or night roosts within buildings in and around the parish, some of which have been identified. Appendix 2 Glos. Centre for Env Records and Forest of Dean Batscape Project/Strategy.

Many rare/protected species have been recorded within the parish and sensitive areas, priority and amenity habitats have been identified. Appendix 2 Glos Centre for Env Records

**The NDP has identified Protection Areas in order to:**

- **Preserve the distinctive local landscape character and views**

- **Protect the environmentally sensitive areas and support the Forest of Dean Bat Strategy**

- **Preserve the heritage “squatter settlements” and field patterns historically unique to the Forest of Dean**

- **Protect the Strategic Nature Area as identified by the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership in line with Michael Gove’s 25 Year Plan**

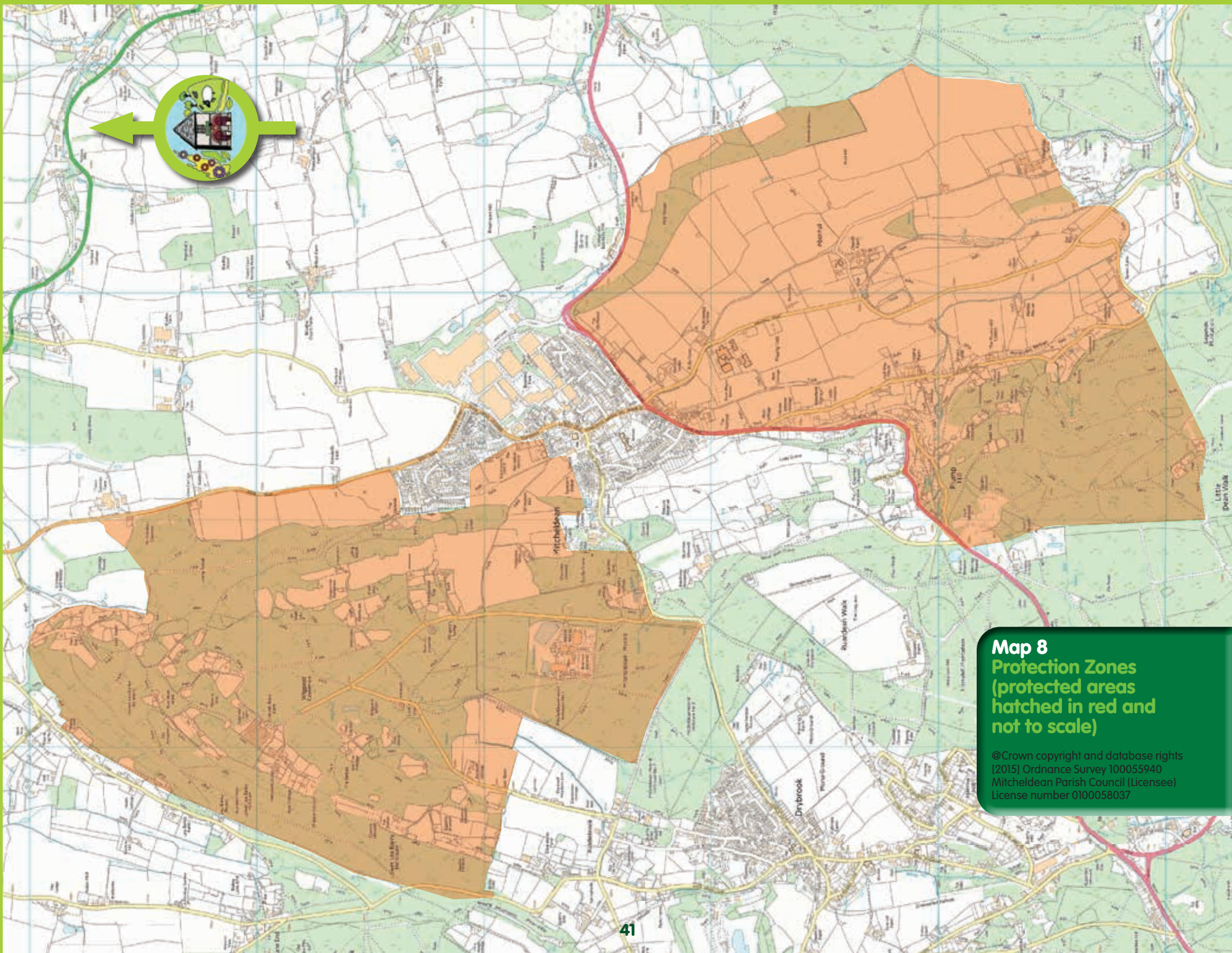
## Policy E4 Biodiversity

Wherever practical and feasible, development proposals should include measures to enhance biodiversity as part of landscaping and building design.

Where practicable, proposals should include enhancements such as sustainable drainage systems, re-naturalising watercourses, woodland planting, roosting opportunities for bats, the installation of bird nest boxes and the use of native species in the landscape planting.

The Plan identifies two Protection Zones as shown on Map 8. Development proposals within the identified Protection Zones should have regard to its priority species, important habitats, wildlife corridors and its wider ecological networks.





**Map 8**  
**Protection Zones**  
**(protected areas**  
**hatched in red and**  
**not to scale)**

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## **Policy E5**

### **Landscape impact of developments outside the settlement boundary**

Development proposals outside the settlement boundary should have regard to the landscape setting of the neighbourhood area as defined in the Landscape Character Assessment.

Where development proposals otherwise comply with other policies in the development plan, including Policy H2 of this Plan, they will be supported where they meet the following criteria insofar as they are applicable to the proposed development:

- conserve and, where practicable, enhance the local character of the landscape;
- conserve and, where practicable, enhance existing forested and woodland areas including forest waste;
- conserve agricultural land and maintain, and, where practicable, enhance hedgerows and trees;
- support the maintenance and, where practicable, the enhancement of horseshoe bat foraging and commuting landscapes;
- conserve the topographical green landscape bowl setting around the village; and
- conserve existing landscape heritage squatter settlement patterns.

## 6.5 Transport

**6.5** The steering committee have had a meeting with Highways from Glos County Council in relation to safety.

**6.5.1** Traffic, transport and accessibility are significant issues in Mitcheldean. The results of the community consultations showed that local residents would like to see the connectivity of Mitcheldean improved, with better, more affordable bus services. There is at present a frequent bus service on weekdays and Saturdays to and from Gloucester and Ross on Wye, with a very infrequent service to and from Joys Green. During the evenings and on Sundays there is a reduced service, approximately every two hours to and from Gloucester and Cinderford, except on Monday to Thursday evenings when the last bus leaves Gloucester at 21.20.

In line with proposed developments and the new college in the Northern Quarter, there should be an increase in service to Cinderford.

It is imperative that these services are retained to enable residents without access to a private car to be able to travel to and from Gloucester for shopping, hospital appointments, and bus and rail services to all parts of the nation.

**6.5.2** The village is located on the A4136 between Gloucester and Monmouth and there are concerns about the volume and speed of traffic through the centre of the village (High Street, and A4136), and the

large number of vehicles, including lorries, accessing the employment site at Vantage Point.

**6.5.3** Parking is a significant issue. There is a small public car park to the rear of the shops and library and community consultation results suggested that there was support for more on street parking provision close to the shopping facilities, together with greater restrictions such as double yellow lines in some parts of High Street.

**6.5.4** Suggestions and comments from the consultations included the following:

- Traffic flow needs to be looked at.
- Provision of solar powered speed restriction signs on all roads approaching the village to be provided, as well as in the High Street.
- Weight restrictions on lorries to be enforced.
- Vantage Point to be requested to notify all businesses that HGV access is from the A4136 only, and not through the village.
- Encourage people to walk or to ride bicycles.
- Discourage the "school run" where possible.
- Feathered parking could be considered outside the parade of shops in the High Street, but this would necessitate narrowing the pavement at this location.
- Double yellow lines or red lines to replace current single yellow lines in the High Street and at Mill End.

■ Additional parking restriction signage to be provided.

■ No parking at pedestrian crossing zig zags to be enforced. Encourage road drain and gutter and public footpath clearance.

**6.5.5** A member of the Steering Committee met with representatives from Dene Magna School in July 2016. It was explained that due to the large catchment area which includes Blakeney, Newnham, Minsterworth and Birdwood, many students are transported by bus which causes congestion at the beginning and end of the school day. Due to the difficulties of parking along the narrow lane outside of the school it was decided to extend the car park to 90 spaces for staff use and also spaces allocated for parents to use when picking up their children. This was completed in September 2015. Most local students walk to school and a cycle shed was erected to encourage cycling to school, however only 2 students ever used it.

**6.5.6** Members of the Steering Committee also met with representatives from Mitcheldean Primary School in July 2016. It was noted that the catchment area for the school is the Parish boundary, however if there are spaces available parents from outside the area can apply for their children to attend. The school would prefer the students to walk to school, however many parents drop their children off on their way to work and so use their cars, which does cause some congestion even though there are two car parks available for their use.

**6.5.7** Results from the community consultations also showed that local people want to improve accessibility on public footpaths. Encouraging walking and cycling supports sustainability objectives, such as reducing resource consumption, improving air quality and helping to combat climate change. There are also links to improved health and wellbeing.

**6.5.8** Core Strategy Policy CSP. 4 Development principles, development at settlements sets out that *"all proposals, whether at settlements or not, should be resource efficient and make the best use of available infrastructure. Where their needs cannot be met, additional infrastructure provision arising from the needs of the development will be sought by way of developer contributions. This includes social and community infrastructure, such as library or health provision, or facilities for emergency services; green infrastructure such as recreation space, protected landscapes and natural areas; and physical infrastructure which includes roads, sewers etc."*

**6.5.9** NDPs are limited in terms of planning for transport provision, but policies can be used to support measures to improve transport facilities and accessibility, and to encourage developments to be sited and designed to encourage walking and cycling. Policy T1 reflects this approach. It aims to ensure that new developments provide for their own transport requirements. Where this cannot be achieved it seeks to provide

a local dimension to that included in Policy CSP4 of the Core Strategy. Priorities for improvements include the following:

1. improved bus services to local towns and facilities;
2. traffic calming measures and speed limits;
3. footpaths and pavements linking residential areas to local facilities such as the shops on High Street and sports field.

## Policy T1 Transport and Accessibility

**New development should be designed so that accommodates its traffic impacts within either the site itself or within the existing capacity of the highway network.**

**All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment to be produced by an independent consultant. Developers will be required to identify the realistic level of traffic which development proposals are likely to generate, and to consider the impact of additional traffic on other road users and pedestrian safety.**

**Where the development is otherwise acceptable and conforms with other policies in the development plan and where the traffic impacts of the scheme cannot be fully accommodated within the site or within the highway network, developer contributions from new development will be sought where practicable and directly related to the proposed development to support and improve existing public transport links to local towns and facilities, and to improve routes and networks for walking and cycling.**

## 7.0 Monitoring and review

**7.1** The Mitcheldean Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed by Mitcheldean Town Council at its Annual Parish Meetings in April/May where a monitoring report will be presented. Major reviews will be conducted in 2021 and 2026 to ensure conformance with the FoDDC CS and the examined FoDDC AP and to take into account any changes or new policies arising from a new or equivalent Core Strategy/ Local Plan in order to consider whether any changes in circumstances warrant redrafting.

**7.2** The need or otherwise for the neighbourhood plan to be reviewed will be based on the annual monitoring information. As a minimum a review of the Plan will be considered every five years after it has been made or within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan (Plan 41).



A photograph of a street sign for 'MITCHELDEAN'. The sign is white with a black border and is mounted on a post. The background shows bare trees and a clear blue sky, suggesting a rural or countryside location. The sign is the central focus of the image.

MITCHELDEAN

*Designed and produced  
by **The Workshop**,  
Marketing Design Consultancy,  
Longhope. GL17 0PF*

