

Almeley Neighbourhood Development Plan

(2011 to 2031)

CONSULTATION: DRAFT VISION & OBJECTIVES

WHAT IS THE ALMELEY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) contain planning policies and proposals specific to each local area. These policies form the basis for decisions about where and how development should take place and include those covering housing, employment and enterprise, open spaces, community facilities, environmental considerations and other land uses. Within the framework set by National and County Council planning policy, a Neighbourhood Development Plan will allow the community of Almeley a real influence over planning decisions where little currently exists.

The NDP once finished will be a policy document that sits alongside Herefordshire Council planning policies and considered as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONSULTATION?

Almeley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, on behalf of Almeley Parish Council would like your feedback on the draft vision, emerging objectives and policy directions being developed. These are evidence based on what the community have said so far (mainly in the Parish Plan and residents' surveys in 2014). The draft Vision and Objectives cover a number of possible forms of development and views are sought on some of the initial policies and criteria that will enable the community to deliver the NDP.

Your views are important so that we can produce an Almeley Neighbourhood Development Plan that represents the community. Your input will also be required for the formal consultation of the final draft plan, and then your mandate through a referendum vote.

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO DO:

- 1. Please read the display material (organised into themes).**
- 2. Indicate your views by using the questionnaire provided.**

Members of the Steering Group and a representative from Herefordshire Council will be present at the meeting to provide guidance.

A Vision for Almeley Neighbourhood Development Plan:

“That in 2031, Almeley Parish will remain an unspoilt, rural, tranquil and scenic part of Herefordshire; providing homes for families and elderly residents, supporting local businesses, traditional farms and an increase in home working through a fast-broadband network.”

Do you agree?

See questions 1 and 2

1. Parish Environment, Character and Heritage

Local Context

There is broad support for preserving and enhancing the natural beauty, amenity, heritage and landscape assets in the parish. The preservation of traditional buildings, existing woodlands, traditional orchards, commons, dingles, as well as safeguarding views is considered important. Almeley Conservation Area and other environmental features are fundamental to the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The need to accommodate development sensitively within environmental constraints should be given a high priority.

We propose two objectives to cover the environment

Objective 1: To maintain the rural character of the Parish, its village and hamlets.

This means:

- a) Landscape character, views and features of the Parish are preserved, especially the views across to the Brecon Beacons National Park and the Wye Valley.
- b) The historic aspect of the village, especially its historic buildings, their settings, conservation area and hamlets are preserved or enhanced.
- c) The Parish's commons and open spaces are protected, conserved and maintained.
- d) The contribution made by traditional agriculture and other rural businesses to the community and local environment are recognised.

Objective 2: To minimise the effect of further developments on the countryside, landscape and ecosystems. This means:

- a) There is no net-loss in biodiversity and the opportunities to preserve and enhance wildlife have been taken.
- b) The rural and tranquil nature of the parish is maintained.
- c) Any new development is sensitively integrated to blend with existing buildings, settings and the landscape.
- d) Land is used efficiently.
- e) High quality agricultural land is protected.

Do you agree with these objectives?

Question 3 and 4

1. Parish Environment, Character and Heritage contd.

Policies will be proposed to cover the following environmental issues:

- To maintain and protect the Landscape and its Features
- To protect our historic features, in particular, the character and appearance of Almeley Conservation Area, the ancient monuments and historic buildings.
- To ensure new buildings are designed well, reflect locally distinctive features, are energy efficient and address other sustainability requirements.
- To protect our local green spaces and natural environment.

We would like to include a list of features, spaces, buildings and views which are important to our Parish.

Can you add any specific features that we ought to be aware of which have not been identified already?

Questions 5,6 and 7

Defining Local Green Space

The Steering Group has identified the Commons and the three Dingles.

Can you specify any other nearby green spaces that are special to the community or hold a particular local significance? This could be because of their beauty, historic or recreational value, their tranquillity or wildlife value.

This information will help the Steering group to consider whether they qualify as “Local Green Space.”

We would like to know if there are other green spaces?

See question 8

2. Supporting Business and Rural Enterprise

Local Context

There are no major employers within the Parish and the emphasis is upon supporting traditional agriculture, diversification of local businesses, tourism and home working. The NDP will promote the re-use of rural buildings and their use where appropriate as live/work units.

The plan supports traditional agriculture and diversification sited in appropriate locations.

Our objective to support business and rural enterprise is:

Objective 3: To support the rural economy within the Parish through:

- a) Enabling diversification of business enterprise;
- b) Supporting home-working;
- c) Encouraging live-work units;
- d) Protecting high quality agricultural land.

Policy areas for local business development could include:

- Diversification through live/work units, re-use of rural buildings and home working where this is in scale with the character of the area and does not impact on the amenity of others.
- The plan supports traditional agriculture. Industrial and commercial activities should be sited where they will not affect residential amenity, environment, local green spaces or important views.

Do you agree with this objective?

Questions 9,10, 11 and 12

3. Housing

Local Context

Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy (the main planning policy document for the County) requires Almeley Parish to accommodate 12% housing growth. This means the number of new homes that need to be built here between 2011 and 2031 is 33. We have to write a plan that can deliver this.

We can't change this minimum target as Herefordshire Council has determined that figure.

To date with houses built since 2011 and those with planning permission, there are already 19 dwellings contributing to the minimum level of proportional growth. Hence a plan to deliver 14 further dwellings (to date) is necessary to meet our minimum requirement.

The plan can provide for more if the community considers this beneficial.

What people said in the 2014 Parish survey:

- Most respondents to the survey supported developments of single dwellings with some support for sites of up to 5 houses.
- There was significant support for 2/3 bed roomed properties.
- There was also support for 'exception sites' such as those providing for houses for farmers' families, agricultural and local workers.
- Providing opportunities for self-build also featured significantly.
- The only categories where more people opposed provision of particular types of dwellings than supported were for social housing and semi-detached bungalows.
- There was a majority wishing to see no further development inside of the current Almeley village boundary.

Our suggested objective for housing is:

Objective 4: To provide opportunities for housing for existing and future residents of the parish, including affordable, private and self-build homes. This means:

- a) The amount of new housing meets the strategic requirements of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.
- b) A mix of housing, including housing for older people, should be considered.
- c) New development is of a scale that fits sensitively into and is proportionate to the relevant settlement.
- d) New housing has been designed to a high standard in terms of character and appearance.

Do you agree with this objective?

Questions 13 and 14

3. Housing contd.

Given the level of commitments the options for locating further housing, currently 14, are considered to be:

Option 1 – *SMALL DEVELOPMENT IN ALMELEY, NO MORE IN WOONTON*

To provide for a small extension to Almeley village to accommodate the outstanding housing requirement and restrict any further development at Woonton to that recently granted planning permission.

Option 2 – *RETAIN CURRENT SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY AND RELY ON PARISH WINDFALL*

To retain the current boundary for Almeley village and restrict any further development at Woonton to that recently granted planning permission. Recent trends suggest that windfall development would meet the parish's requirement for proportional growth especially through rural building conversions.

Option 3 – *LARGER DEVELOPMENT IN ALMELEY, NO MORE IN WOONTON*

To provide an extension to Almeley that would be large enough to include an element of affordable housing (at least 10 houses required before provision is made for affordable housing) and to restrict any further development at Woonton to that recently granted planning permission.

Option 4 - *LARGER DEVELOPMENT IN ALMELEY, SMALL DEVELOPMENT IN WOONTON*

To provide an extension to Almeley that would be large enough to include an element of affordable housing and provide for limited further development at Woonton.

Option 5 – *RETAIN CURRENT SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY, SMALL DEVELOPMENT IN WOONTON*

To retain the current boundary for Almeley village and provide for limited further development at Woonton in addition to that already granted planning permission.

Option 6 - *SMALL DEVELOPMENTS IN BOTH ALMELEY AND WOONTON*

To provide for a small extension to Almeley village and provide for limited further development at Woonton.

We will need to be sure whichever option is chosen can deliver at least the minimum number required to meet Herefordshire Council's target.

Can you list these options in order of preference?

Question 15 – choice 1 most preferred – choice 6 least preferred

3. Housing contd.

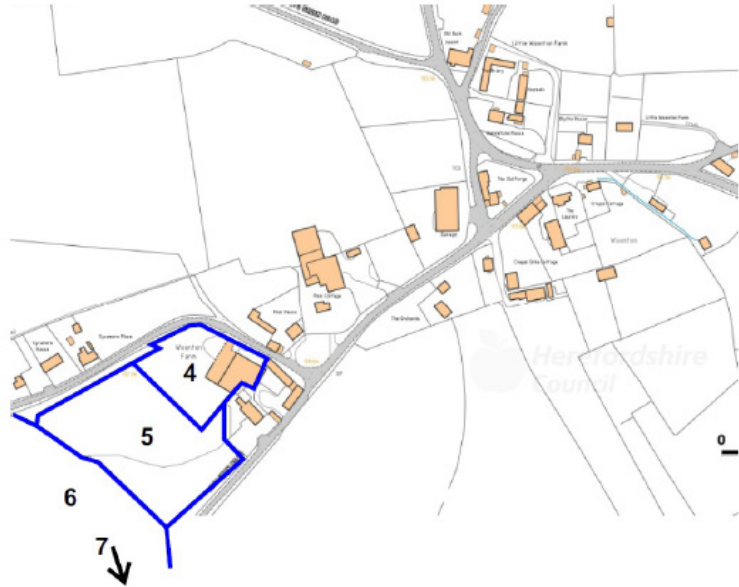
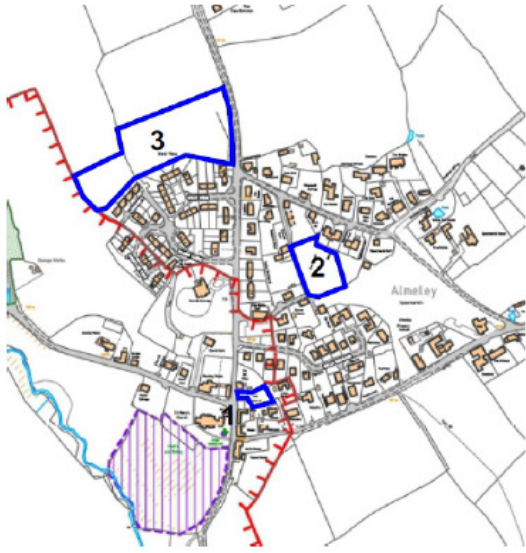
Choosing Potential Housing Sites:

Local Context

From the survey the majority of residents would prefer single dwellings and there was some support for small developments of up to 5 dwellings on each site, with notable opposition to larger developments. This may be possible given the relatively small shortfall of 14 dwellings. However, it may depend upon the sites submitted for development within the two settlements where we should locate most development. From the call for land the sites that have been submitted are listed below. Herefordshire Council has stated that the NDP should look for sites within or adjacent to the built-up areas of Almeley and Woonton.

Those sites are shown on the maps below the list. Qualifying sites are highlighted in red. The other sites do not meet the criteria set by Herefordshire Council and therefore will not be put forward for development as part of this plan. As expressed in the survey, in accordance with the wishes of the parish the larger sites put forward need to be considered to ensure development is proportional to the relevant settlement.

Call for land Submitted Sites	
1. Almeley	Land at the Old Shop, Almeley
2. Almeley	Orchard adjacent to Brick House
3. Almeley	Land to rear of West View
4. Woonton	Sheds and brickyards at Woonton Farm
5. Woonton	Redundant traditional orchard at Woonton Farm
6. Woonton	SW of orchard at Woonton Farm
7. Woonton	Land off Logaston Road at Woonton Farm below site 6
8. Away from settlements	1 acre paddock at The Stocks (Hopleys Green)
9. Away from settlements	2 acre field at The Stocks (Hopleys Green)
10. Away from settlements	1.5 acre field adjacent to Ferney Cottage
11. Away from settlements	2 acre field adjacent to Ferney Cottage
12. Away from settlements	Land at Cherry Tree Farm



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3. Housing contd.

The Steering Group suggests the following criteria should be used to determine whether sites are acceptable for housing development:

1. Sites should fit sensitively into or against the settlement, its wider setting and surrounding landscape and reflect our local distinctiveness. Any opportunity to provide enhancement should be maximised.
2. Development proposals should not adversely affect but also positively enhance Almeley Conservation area, historic buildings, ancient monuments or their settings, wildlife sites including traditional orchards and natural features.
3. Residential amenity should be protected as a priority.
4. Vehicular access and the capacity of the existing highway network should be adequate for the development proposed.
5. Existing facilities and amenities should not be adversely affected and any development should benefit and enhance the community and its environment.
6. Appropriate services should be available or provided, including sewerage, water supply, electricity and reliable, fast broadband.
7. Sites should not flood, pollute or create the risk of flooding, contamination or pollution elsewhere.
8. Brownfield sites should be used where possible and good quality agricultural land preserved.
9. Preference will be given to small developments.

These criteria will be used by the professional planning consultant employed by Almeley Parish Council to recommend which sites or sections of sites are most appropriate.

Do you agree with these criteria?

Question 16 and 17

3. Housing contd.

Types of Housing:

In meeting housing needs the types of housing that we would like to see built on any site brought forward through this plan are:

- Starter homes for young people
- Family homes
- Retirement homes with easy access
- Self-build homes
- Live/work homes

Do you agree?

Questions 18 and 19

Affordable and Social Housing

We have not identified any specific demand for additional rented accommodation in the parish and have therefore not included that sector within the housing needs criteria. Our recommendation was informed by not just the results of previous surveys but also by the low take-up by local people of the present social housing in Almeley. We could however support provision through a variety of means such as self-build, shared ownership, low-cost homes for sale, and rented accommodation should specific local needs be identified through an additional survey undertaken during the plan period.

Do you agree?

Questions 20 and 21

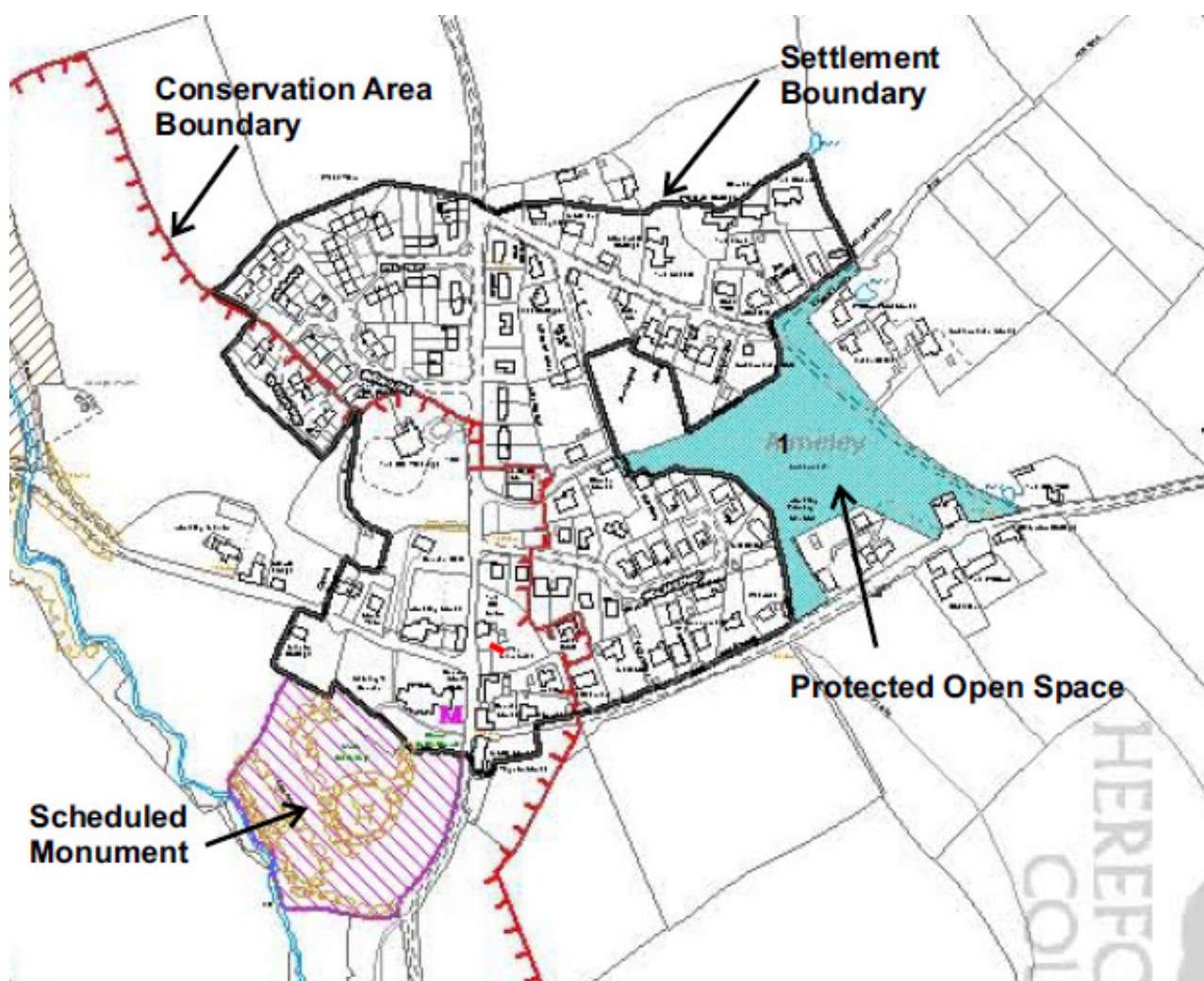
3. Housing contd.

Defining the Settlements

Local Context

Almeley has had a settlement boundary defined for it in a number of previous plans while Woonton has not previously been defined as a settlement to accommodate development.

Almeley settlement boundary (Herefordshire UDP)



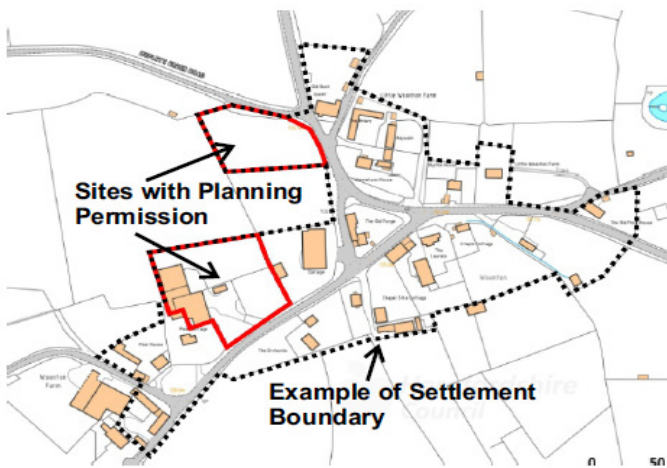
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3. Housing contd.

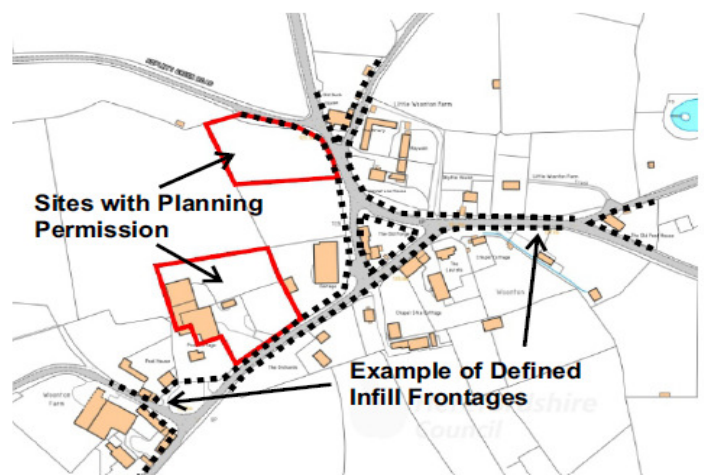
Woonton – the question is should it have a settlement boundary or perhaps an alternative such as defining a frontage within which infill might take place?

There are 3 options – 2 are outlined below but the 3rd is to leave it as it is. A settlement boundary might encourage development within it. Having no boundary would maintain the present position of all land at Woonton being considered as green-field.

Example of a possible settlement boundary



Example of a possible infill frontage



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Which options would you prefer?

Question 22 and 23

4. Local Infrastructure

Local Context

There are areas within the Parish where potential dangers from traffic exist, such as through high speed and inappropriate size of vehicles along narrow lanes. There are limited community facilities and these are located in Almeley. Areas in Woonton are affected by storm water flooding. Properties in Almeley are served by a public sewer while there is no such facility in Woonton. Both settlements have an absence of pedestrian footpaths although this may only be an issue in Woonton hamlet due to the A480. There is no street lighting within either settlement and no desire for its provision.

Our suggested objective for local infrastructure is:

Objective 5: To accommodate future development only within the capacity of local infrastructure. This means:

- a) Local services such as the village school, village hall, shop and church benefit where possible through any new development.
- b) New development does not result in on-street parking, road congestion and road safety problems.
- c) The capacity of utility services, mains water supply, mains drainage and the highway network will not be exceeded.
- d) Residential and local amenity will not be adversely affected by new development.
- e) Alternative means of transport, in particular local bus services and shared transport have been encouraged.

4. Local Infrastructure contd.

Policy areas for local infrastructure might include:

- Maintain the current level of community facilities and amenities and enhance these in order to meet the needs of any population increase resulting from new housing.
- Promoting a healthy lifestyle through access to the countryside and enhancement of natural environments.
- Ensuring the capacity of the mains water supply, sewerage system and sewage treatment works are sufficient for the level of development.
- Protection from flooding and pollution
- Ensuring the vehicle traffic generated by development can be accommodated safely.
- Identifying community infrastructure and associated measures that can be undertaken in association with the NDP.

Should the Plan cover these policy areas?

Would you wish to change or add to them, including identifying any community measures we might seek to undertake?

Questions 24,25,26 and 27

Do you have any other suggestions or comments?

Question 28

We hope you have found this presentation of value. Thank you for your interest. It is your NDP so your contribution is important.

Almeley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group