



Winchcombe and Sudeley

Neighbourhood Plan

... shaping the future of our town and its setting

2011 – 2031

DRAFT

Winchcombe Town Council, Abbeyfields Community Centre,
Back Lane, Winchcombe, GL54 5BQ

Phone
01242
604087

Web Mail
info@winchcombetowncouncil.co.uk

Winchcombe and Sudeley
Neighbourhood Plan 2011 - 2031

A message from the Chairs of Winchcombe Town Council and Sudeley Parish Meeting

Winchcombe Town Council and Sudeley Parish Meeting have jointly completed a number of consultations with their communities in order to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. They have now formally agreed the plan below and submitted it to Tewkesbury Borough Council.

Reaching this stage of our Plan is a significant achievement. There has been lively debate at various stages and a great deal of interest at our open sessions in the Library. When it came to the formal consultation, every household and business received a draft plan, with an invitation to comment and contribute ideas. All the comments made by residents, businesses and interest groups were properly recorded and analysed by an independent consultant. The Town Council re-examined every aspect of the plan in the light of these comments. This public response is not an official secret; all the individual responses from the formal consultation may be viewed at the Winchcombe Town Council Office during normal office hours. The full analysis, along with the Town Council's decisions on how to respond, is published as a separate document – again available from the Town Council office or on the Winchcombe Town Council website.

We are grateful for all the input from our communities in Winchcombe and Sudeley. But we could not satisfy every resident on every aspect of our Plan. For example, we know that many people are concerned about the impact of new development on community services – a particularly sensitive issue as we absorb the pressure of three major housing developments over just a few years. But a neighbourhood plan cannot dictate health, education, transport and other service policies or investments even though these are - of course - all affected by new development.

Many of the comments focused on these aspects and, although the Town Council will note many of them for future reference, and raise them with the responsible bodies concerned, they could not be incorporated into the plan itself. Another concern was that Winchcombe simply could not take any more development. But we could not produce a plan that completely opposed or prohibited any new building here at all. The national media continue to report the evidence that housebuilding is simply not keeping up with need. National government planning policy insists that new housing should be planned for. Both the strategic plans of Tewkesbury Borough Council and our Neighbourhood Plan must, by law, be generally consistent with government planning policies. And Tewkesbury Borough Council have made clear that, as a “rural service centre”, Winchcombe must take a share of new housing over the coming years. This does not leave us powerless over housing development. If Tewkesbury Borough requires Winchcombe to provide a certain amount of additional housing during the plan period (up to 2031), with a Neighbourhood Plan in place we can:

- Say where we want the new development to go
- Indicate what style the homes are built in
- Make provision for particular needs (e.g. accommodation for the elderly, or affordable homes)

- Add other reasonable conditions we feel may be necessary.

On some issues residents were divided. This is not surprising: although we all want Winchcombe to flourish, we are quite entitled as individuals to hold different views on how this might be achieved. Where there has been disagreement, the Town Council (as elected representatives of the local community) has needed to decide what - in the light of all the comments, other evidence and the legalities of planning law - would be in the best interests of the town and surrounding areas.

For all of these reasons, not all of the comments made could be reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan. It was simply not achievable to please everyone on every aspect. We nevertheless hope that our communities will appreciate the difficulties of the task we faced, and will respect the conclusions we reached. We believe that we have produced a Plan which broadly reflects the wishes of the Winchcombe and Sudeley communities and which, if adopted, can be used to encourage sensitive development that contributes to our needs. If adopted, our Plan will be more likely to protect Winchcombe and Sudeley from future speculative developments that are not in the best interest of the town, or would lead to significant damage of the nationally designated (AONB) landscape that surrounds it.

Many people commented that the Plan is long, difficult to understand and uses technical terms. And we sympathise with this – having grappled with it for over four years! We have tried wherever possible to keep things short and understandable. But sometimes it is essential that technical terms are used so there is no ambiguity when the Plan is used by planners and lawyers. Our overall message is: whilst you may not agree with everything, we hope that on balance you feel that the future of Winchcombe and Sudeley will be secured and improved, that this plan has the best interests of Winchcombe at heart and that, when the time comes, you will vote in favour of it.

JIM MASON, Chair, Winchcombe Town Council

TRISTAN BAILEY, Chair, Sudeley Parish Meeting

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Introduction

This is the Winchcombe and Sudeley Neighbourhood Plan for the period 2011- 2031, approved by both the Winchcombe Town Council and by the Sudeley Parish Meeting Chair on 4th November 2015.

The Plan period is designed to align with that of the relevant Joint Core Strategy and forthcoming Tewkesbury Borough Plan.

In preparing this Plan, the Town Council and Parish Meeting Chair have reflected the strongly expressed views of local people that Winchcombe and Sudeley should be a living, working community, with the town at its heart providing a range of services.

People have said that they want good services to meet their needs, and these can also benefit residents of smaller neighbouring communities and visitors to the town.

To address economic, social and environmental needs - the Plan provides for modest, incremental development and investment in the town and surrounding area over the next fifteen years or so. The words “modest” and “incremental” are important, given that the whole area of the Plan is either adjacent to or within the nationally important Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty landscape setting, in which there is a presumption against “major” development.

Like many neighbourhood plans, this one focuses mainly on where new houses, businesses and shops should be located and how they should be designed. The policies are designed to be in conformity with the strategic policies of the saved Tewkesbury Borough Council development plan. It is relevant to note that, during the plan-making process, a wide range of information was taken into account, including that relating to the first draft Tewkesbury Borough Plan and the emerging Joint Core Strategy.

The Plan is in six sections, each with an introductory text explaining the overall approach. That introductory text is followed by the policies themselves (in bold typeface) and explanatory text justifying the need, policy by policy.

Given the scale of recent residential development in the town, the Town Council intends to monitor the delivery of policies in this plan, evaluate their effectiveness and review the Plan in 2020 to ensure that it continues to meet the full needs of the communities of Winchcombe and Sudeley.

The Neighbourhood Plan itself covers the whole of the two parishes of Winchcombe and Sudeley. A map of part of that area is included at the end, following Section 6, showing the specific areas covered by particular policies.

There is an accompanying **Environmental Report**, prepared to demonstrate the full evidence underpinning the Plan and to satisfy the statutory requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment. This Plan is also accompanied by a **Community Engagement Statement** and a statement showing how the Plan meets the requirements of the national legislation on Neighbourhood Plans.

1. General Policies for Sustainable Development

The parishes of Winchcombe and Sudeley are special. To maintain their special qualities and guide development compatible with the principles of sustainable development, our Neighbourhood Plan needs to: respect the distinctive character of the town and its surroundings; protect land in agricultural use for future generations; encourage development in locations that encourage cycling and walking and thus reduce dependence on car journeys to reach local services; ensure that flood risk is managed, when climate change means we can expect heavier storms; and put in place protected green space close to the community. This section of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out general policies to apply to all development to help deliver a place we can still be proud of in the 2030s.

Policy 1.1 Protecting the Distinctive Character of the Area

Development should respect local character and where relevant, must protect and enhance the Cotswolds AONB. Development should protect areas of ecological importance and proposals to enhance biodiversity are encouraged.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Winchcombe and the surrounding area share a distinctive character, which makes it an attractive place to live and helps to underpin the visitor economy. The Town Council and Sudeley Parish Meeting therefore want to maintain and enhance the physical character of our town and surroundings for future generations.

In particular in all our public consultation events, people have told us how important it is to protect both the appearance of the town as seen from the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the attractiveness of the AONB viewed from the town and elsewhere. Almost all the area covered by this Plan is designated as AONB. In AONBs the Government's National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that there is a presumption against granting permission for major development except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated as being in the public interest (National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 116).

For any development, major or otherwise, "protecting and enhancing" the AONB is to be judged with particular reference to the relevant elements of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment – areas 1B, 2D, 2E, 7C, 19D.

Maintaining local biodiversity and wildlife habitats, flora and fauna, are also important elements of the sustainable development goals we aspire to.

Policy 1.2 Local Green Spaces

The "Dell" and land between the River Isbourne and the B4632 are designated as Local Green Space (see Map below), where new development is ruled out other than in very special circumstances.

[INSERT NEW MAP 'Local Green Space Boundaries'](#)

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Winchcombe benefits from open land reasonably close to the community, which is demonstrably special to people and holds a particular local significance because of the tranquillity and richness of wildlife, beauty, history and recreational value. Much is effectively protected and conserved as a result of being a part of the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but other demonstrably special areas are of such local importance to warrant designation as Local Green Space (as defined in paragraphs 76-78 of the National Planning Policy Framework) to reinforce protection from development that would run counter to the purposes for which this Plan has designated it.

2. Development for a Thriving Economy

Winchcombe is a "rural service centre". This means that it is a living, working community, where there is a wide range of services available to local people and visitors. These services provide local employment, but there are fewer employees in farming and land based activity than in the past, and more in tourism. The Town Council's vision for the future of our town is a strong and diverse economy to ensure prosperity in and around Winchcombe, capitalising on our natural and cultural resources. We believe that there are employment opportunities in tourism, retail, hi-tech and other small business development, as well as home based businesses and care services for elderly and vulnerable people. The Sudeley Parish Meeting looks to retain the essential character of the local economy, based on land-based businesses but also including the major attraction of Sudeley Castle. The general and site specific policies proposed below are designed to achieve the vision of the Town Council and Parish Meeting.

Policy 2.1 New Commercial and Light Industrial Development

New or expanded business uses will be encouraged within the Town Centre¹, and at Isbourne Business Park, the Winchcombe Station yard, the telephone exchange in Greet Road, former farm buildings at Almsbury Farm², Sudeley Old Dairy and Withytrees Farm. In these and other locations, re-use, conversion, extension and adaptation of rural buildings for small business, training, recreation or tourism uses will be encouraged, provided that:

- a. **the relevant building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial reconstruction;**
- b. **its proposed use is appropriate to its setting;**
- c. **the conversion or restoration work respects the character of the immediate area and/or buildings;**
- d. **the local road system is capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed use; and**
- e. **parking is provided on-site to the extent needed to avoid any increase in on-street parking.**

REASON FOR THE POLICY

To support sustainable economic growth and competitiveness, and provide opportunities for private sector investment, our main goal is to increase local employment by encouraging new business investment and making it easier for customers and employees to engage with businesses. We want to attract a variety of businesses to invest in the town and its surroundings. We can help this by protecting employment land and safeguarding buildings in business use. There is also a need to support ways of giving local people the skills that existing and new businesses require. In order to encourage local farming and forestry, businesses and homes should be encouraged to provide heat sources that draw on locally sourced crops and wood (as biofuel).

Policy 2.2 Postlip Paper Mill

New buildings or further alterations or extensions to the range of buildings at Postlip Paper Mill will be supported, where needed to enable the business to continue to thrive, while meeting

environmental and pollution control standards. Such development must be of sensitive design given the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty setting.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

One long established business in Winchcombe is the Postlip Paper Mill. Although located in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, its importance to the community justifies a reasonable positive approach to the new buildings and equipment such a business will need to invest in so as to remain competitive.

Policy 2.3 Retail development.

Within the Town Centre (as shown on the plan accompanying this document), and subject to its impact on nearby residents:

- a. **new retail development will be encouraged;**
- b. **conversion of former town centre shops from residential or office use back into to retail use will be encouraged.**

Outside that area, new retail development will be discouraged unless:

- a. **there is a proven local need AND no suitable premises are available elsewhere in town; or**
- b. **it is proposed as an element within a tourist attraction.**

REASON FOR THE POLICY

To improve the vitality and viability of Winchcombe town centre, our goal is to encourage the improvement or redevelopment of shops to meet the needs of local people and visitors. The Joint Core Strategy suggests that Winchcombe should encourage 445 sq m of extra "comparison goods" retail space, and 248 sq m of extra space for convenience goods shops. These figures predate the conversion of the former Sun Inn into a shop, and the permission given for a significant convenience goods shop in Greet Road near the town centre.

Policy 2.4 Protection of business premises.

Development that would result in the loss of any retail or business premises in the designated Town Centre area must demonstrate that the existing use is no longer commercially viable, further to an active marketing period of at least 12 months.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

The high price of residential property may lead to pressure to convert retail and other commercial premises to residential use. The Town Council is keen to protect retail businesses from such pressure, in order to guard against trends that could undermine the town's economic vitality and sustainability.

Policy 2.5 Tourist accommodation.

Strong support will be given to proposals to provide hotel or other new accommodation to meet the needs of visitors to Winchcombe and Sudeley.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

To develop tourism specifically, our goal is to improve the image and attractiveness of the town through:

- I. improving existing buildings, streets and spaces
- II. creating new high quality buildings, streets and spaces
- III. encouraging new and improved tourist facilities and attractions
- IV. encouraging the development of a new hotel and smaller scale visitor accommodation to fill the gap created by the loss of bed and breakfast establishments.

New tourism accommodation is an important part of this goal.

Policy 2.6 Home based working.

Home working proposals will be encouraged where it can be shown that there will be no unreasonable adverse impact affecting nearby residents, or the character and appearance of the locality.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Information technology and the growth in the number of self-employed businesses are enabling many more people to work from home. Such enterprise is to be welcomed, given its contribution to other employment and expenditure in the town.

Community Action: Farmers Market.

The Town Council will encourage the creation of a regularly available space for local producers' market stalls for food, drink or other products.

A farmers' market operated in Winchcombe previously, but at some distance from the town centre. The Town Council wants to encourage local entrepreneurs and small business start-ups operating at a scale that falls short of supporting a full time retail outlet. This would also encourage footfall to benefit other businesses in town.

Policy 2.7 Sudeley Castle.

Development that supports Sudeley Castle as a tourist attraction whilst preserving the significance of the heritage asset will be supported.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Sudeley Castle is a significant attraction, bringing in about 70,000 visitors a year and guests at weddings, and thereby contributing to the wider economy of the town.

Policy 2.8 Winchcombe Pottery.

The expansion of Winchcombe Pottery, including other businesses or attractions related to pottery and crafts, will be supported.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

In promoting rural development, it is important to consider how local assets might make a stronger contribution to our economy. Winchcombe Pottery may be one such asset capable of diversifying into a wide range of craft based uses. The land opposite could be used as car parking to facilitate development in and around the pottery site, or developed as a complementary attraction.

Policy 2.9 The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway.

Development of new enterprises or attractions of interest to visitors close to the railway station will be encouraged.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

This preserved railway is an important local tourist attraction, but with its extension north to Broadway, there may be less reason for visitors to get off the train and contribute to Winchcombe's economy. There is a need for better pedestrian routes to link the station with Winchcombe Pottery and with the town centre attractions of Winchcombe.

3. Development of Places to Live

Neighbourhood plans can specify where new houses should be located, what sectors of the community they should be designed for and what they should look like. But the overall scale of new housing development in the Borough is a strategic decision to be taken through the Joint Core Strategy and Local Development Plan processes, which identify Winchcombe as a place for more housing. What's more important for the Winchcombe and Sudeley Neighbourhood Plan is not the precise number, but the needs to be met, the best locations for further development and the design and style of development.

The neighbourhood plan has been prepared taking into account the latest figures³ for the objectively assessed housing need for the wider local area (Tewkesbury borough), which sits within the context of the Gloucestershire housing market area. The objectively assessed need for the Tewkesbury borough area, as set out in the evidence base for the emerging Joint Core Strategy, indicates 10,100 homes need to be provided during the Joint Core Strategy plan period 2011-2031. It is against this figure that the 5 year housing land supply is calculated. At the strategic level Tewkesbury borough has agreed to contribute to fulfilling unmet need from Cheltenham and Gloucester under the duty to cooperate as set out in Policy SP2. Consequently it is on that basis that the neighbourhood plan's housing needs have been considered.

For the purposes of providing sufficient homes the Joint Core Strategy Policy SP2 sets out a spatial strategy for delivering housing that primarily seeks to concentrate new development in and around the existing urban areas of Cheltenham and Gloucester and elsewhere in Tewkesbury borough following a hierarchical approach to allocating housing by identifying Tewkesbury town, Rural Service Centres and Service Villages as locations for lower levels of housing development.

Winchcombe town, along with Bishop's Cleeve, have been identified as Rural Service Centres. Together these settlements are expected to accommodate 1,860 homes over the 20 year plan period. This figure has been derived through a consideration of historic housing delivery across the rural parts of the borough along with an uplift to provide flexibility and a boost to housing supply. As a 'rural service centre', Winchcombe needs to provide for a share of the new homes that the draft Joint Core Strategy and Tewkesbury Borough Plan are likely to identify as needed.

These lower levels of development for Tewkesbury borough are to be determined through the Tewkesbury Borough Plan and neighbourhood plans. An indicative housing disaggregation process was undertaken for the Tewkesbury Borough Plan Draft Site Allocations and Policies document (February 2015). The methodology followed the requirements in the emerging Joint Core Strategy and identified a 67:33 proportional housing split between Bishop's Cleeve and Winchcombe for the 1,860 homes. However, as of September 2015 there has already been 1,746 units committed between the two Rural Service Centres (Bishop's Cleeve 1,494 and Winchcombe 252) leaving a balance of 114 to be found up to 2031 (shared between the two settlements of Winchcombe and Bishops Cleeve), which equates to just over one year's housing requirement remaining. Consequently, on the basis of the most up to date figures, it was noted that housing requirements for the majority of the plan period have already been permitted across the two Rural Service Centres.

Notwithstanding this, earlier local consultation has suggested that many people regard staying in Winchcombe as a high priority. Dedicated housing for older people also emerged as important, not only to meet a need, but also because it may release homes locally for younger families. But in the view of most people responding to our earlier consultation, and taking account of a recent

Landscape Assessment, further developments on the scale of recent major estates in Winchcombe would not fit well with landscape and environmental constraints.

Drawing on the Sustainability Appraisal 2014 and earlier community contributions, the Town Council has agreed the following goals and identified sites on the accompanying map (following Section 6) that are most suitable within the tight landscape, built heritage and traffic management constraints we face.

Policy 3.1 Infill development.

Residential development on infill and redevelopment sites will be supported, provided that they are within the built up areas (as shown on the map in this Plan after Section 6), well designed and meet all relevant requirements set out in this plan. Replacement dwellings must respect the size and scale of the surrounding buildings.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

As a small market town that has evolved over the centuries, Winchcombe has seen a great deal of infilling. In terms of sustainability, urban density is to be welcomed as it makes it easier to walk or cycle to shops and services. In terms of design, density differentiates historic Winchcombe from more recent suburban settlements.

Policy 3.2 Meeting local needs for new homes for those with modest incomes.

Where six or more homes are proposed (or 11 or more outside the designated AONB area) the development must include provision for affordable housing. The applicant will be required to submit a "Winchcombe and Sudeley Affordable Housing and Dwellings Provision" statement. This should clearly set out the affordable housing needs that the proposed development is intended to address, how those needs will be met and how they will be maintained after completion of the development.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Our goal is to maintain a strong community spirit through housing developments to meet the recognised needs of our community confirmed in the initial consultations, in particular affordable housing (for sale and/or rent) for those on lower incomes. With a population close to 6,000, Winchcombe is properly regarded as a market town. Affordable housing provision should be made within the town; and developments on AONB sites at the edge of the town should be assessed against the policies in this plan rather than through any "rural exceptions" policy. The rural exceptions policy is, however, relevant to the rural area of Sudeley Parish.

Policy 3.3 Bungalow development.

Infill developments of almshouses or small bungalows suitable for older people will be encouraged where appropriate to the urban context, and must be built to wheelchair accessible standards.

Proposals to extend such new or existing dwellings into their roof space will be resisted.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

There is a demand for single storey bungalows, and yet many homes originally built as bungalows have been effectively enlarged and extended into significantly sized houses, which no longer meet the needs of those looking to buy or rent a single storey bungalow. The goal of this policy is to discourage extensions into the roof space that effectively convert bungalows into houses, while also encouraging more bungalow development to meet the needs of older people wanting to live independently.

4. Services that Support a Good Quality of Life and Wellbeing

In preparing this Neighbourhood Plan, residents have emphasised the importance of a good quality of life for those living in the town and surrounding area. This requires more than just wise development and good design. One particular need identified by younger people and supported by many respondents to the public consultations in 2014 was an informal activity area where safe skateboarding and BMX cycling can be encouraged. Another need expressed was for a bowling green, as a focus for older people and others to gather and be active.

Winchcombe Town Council and Sudeley Parish Meeting has set out its goals below, and draft Neighbourhood Plan policies that will help deliver them. Some of these goals will require action outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan, which the law requires to focus on development and use of land and buildings. Winchcombe Town Council and Sudeley Parish Meeting will take these forward and champion them as part of their day-to-day business. Goals such as ensuring an excellent medical centre are a matter for other agencies and cannot feature in Neighbourhood Plan policies beyond ensuring that expansion is feasible and appropriate as the local population increases, and seeking Section 106 contributions or making a contribution from Community Infrastructure Levy when implemented so that necessary services can keep pace with the demands of an increased population.

Policy 4.1 Protection and improvement of Community Facilities.

Developments that would lead to the loss of existing well-used community facilities will not be supported unless, by relocation or other means, alternative facilities providing an equal or improved level of service and access for users has first been made available.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Winchcombe already hosts a good range of facilities that help deliver good health and social inclusion. These must be maintained. Beyond that there may be options to improve those facilities, in consultation with those who will use them, and those who will fund and manage the improvements. These include allotments to meet demand, social and community activities through facilities such as the Winchcombe Day Centre and community transport, leisure facilities for all, especially those that support integration of young and old in community leisure facilities, more opportunities for elderly people to meet and relax with the wider community, facilities that local schools can offer to share with the community, and facilities needed for festivals and events.

Policy 4.2 Facilities for older residents.

Development at Winchcombe Day Care Centre to generate a wider range or better quality facilities for older people will be supported

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Winchcombe hosts an increasing population of retired people - partly because settled households appreciate the strong community, and partly because the area is attractive to older people recently retired or approaching retirement age. Policies are needed to encourage community facilities for this sector of the community, so that Winchcombe remains a lively place.

Policy 4.3 Facilities for younger residents.

Development of a Youth Activity Park will be supported on the Greet Road playing fields on the site identified on the map after Section 6 of this Plan.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Over the past few years and during the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process, younger people have pressed for investment in a skateboard park or BMX bike facility where energy can be expended without damage or community disturbance. The majority of those responding to the Neighbourhood Plan consultation were happy to see a site provided on the new playing fields site, close to the Medical Centre where minor injuries can be handled.

Policy 4.4 Walking and cycling routes.

The existing network of public rights of way will be supported and extended with developer contributions where possible, including dedicated foot and cycle paths:

- a. alongside Greet Road linking Winchcombe School to Littleworth, with suitable traffic management at the GWR railway bridge**
- b. linking Riverside, Wyndham Way and Pennylands with Winchcombe Garage and Isbourne Business Park**
- c. alongside the B4632, under the Broadway Rd rail bridge to provide a safe, segregated, route between Isbourne Business Park and, Winchcombe Pottery**
- d. from Corndean Lane to Vineyard Street, and on to Castle Street and Footbridge linking to the routes through Riverside to Winchcombe School and the Isbourne Business Park.**

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Health and wellbeing are important goals for our populations and visitors alike. One particular need is to encourage sustainable transport decisions by creating and signposting new pedestrian and cycle routes to encourage more walking and safe cycling for health (as well as encouraging tourism, as championed by the Winchcombe Walkers are Welcome group). Public consultation revealed some demand for off road cycle routes, provided that these were not bridleways also accessible to horses in view of the damage they can create.

Policy 4.5 Provision of new allotments.

The development of allotments alongside the proposed cemetery above Mount View Drive will provide for those who want to grow food or other produce for their own use.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

There are existing allotments, but the main site off Broadway Road suffers from a lack of water for irrigation and is a long walk from most homes. The Town Council owns a site (shown on the proposals map) and plans to develop it for allotments if there is sufficient public demand.

5. Design Standards for Development

In the design of new buildings and alterations to existing ones, the Town Council and the Sudeley Parish Meeting are looking to reflect the character of the area while also being open to contemporary designs, while creating places that will meet the needs of future generations. This points to a need for policies that address a wide range of issues including the need to reduce water and energy consumption in buildings, to increase the use of energy from renewable resources, to protect and manage the character of the town and its designated Conservation Area, and to address the risk of crime and improve waste management.

Policy 5.1 Design of new development.

New development should reflect the character of its surroundings. Where appropriate, planning applications will need to demonstrate an understanding of those qualities and features that make up this character, and show how their proposals will respect and complement what is already there.

The design of new development will be expected to:

- a. **Complement and enhance, where appropriate, the prevailing size, height, scale, materials, layout, density and access of any surrounding development;**
- b. **Demonstrate that the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers are not unduly affected through overlooking, loss of light, over-dominance or disturbance**
- c. **Provide landscaping, where necessary to complement and enhance the characteristics of the surrounding area.**

REASON FOR THE POLICY

The Town Council wants to maintain and strengthen local distinctiveness and sense of place which means development should:

- i. enhance the built quality of the area generally, as well as including individual buildings or structures that contribute to local distinctiveness
- ii. prioritise and enabling modest incremental developments rather than extensive housing estates in a single style
- iii. encourage innovative design that complements its surroundings and promotes sustainability

Policy 5.2 Off street parking.

The provision of off-street parking areas as part of development proposals, to minimise additional on-street parking, is supported. Off-street parking areas should be constructed so as to minimise run off during heavy rain.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

In all communities, parking can be a challenge. Inadequate off-street provision can have an adverse effect on urban design and create tensions between neighbours. Where off-street provision takes the shape of garages, householders can easily remove that provision under permitted development rights to provide extra rooms - and add their vehicles to those on the public highway in a way that creates obstruction and unnecessary congestion.

On the other hand, keeping additional car parking spaces to a minimum can also encourage more efficient use of land through increased density and encourage residents to use sustainable transport options such as buses, walking and cycling.

New development proposals must demonstrate a high quality of design, therefore, which provides a good standard of amenity for current and future occupants, and also demonstrate that the amenities of adjoining properties are not adversely affected.

Policy 5.3 Winchcombe Conservation Area.

Development within the designated Conservation Area will be expected to conserve the Winchcombe Conservation Area.

Development proposals should:

- a. clearly identify any heritage assets potentially affected,**
- b. provide an assessment of their significance and of the impact of any proposal on those assets, and**
- c. justify the design approach intended.**

REASON FOR THE POLICY

The designated Conservation Area is important to the sense of place in central Winchcombe, which is in turn an important driver of its tourism economy. The Town Council would like development proposals to enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

Policy 5.4 Illuminated signs and shop front design.

Within Winchcombe's historic town centre, new shop fronts will be expected to preserve an appropriate traditional appearance by:

- a. keeping fascias and projecting signs to a minimum;**
- b. avoiding internally illuminated signs;**
- c. limiting external lighting to appropriately located spotlights constructed of traditional or composite materials.**

All signs and advertisements must be designed to a high standard and located on, and related well to, the business and premises they serve. They must also be in keeping with the general street scene or, where located in the wider rural area, be in character with the locality and landscape. Illuminated signs will be confined to areas that have street lighting.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

Policies are needed to guide retailers and others towards illumination that is effective in signposting customers, but respectful of the environment of a small country town.

Policy 5.5 Extensions and alterations to existing buildings.

Proposed extensions and alterations should normally be:

- a. subservient in size and scale to the existing "host" building**

- b. constructed of complementary materials and,**
- c. while possibly innovative or modern, nevertheless reasonably accord with the character and appearance of nearby existing buildings.**

New roofs are to be pitched unless this is out of character with the existing roofscape of the immediate area, or where a flat roof would complement or enhance the character of the original or nearby building.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

It is impossible for a development plan to define and deliver best design practice. Even so, clumsy and unprofessional design can result in buildings that undermine the special character of the town or the rural areas around it. Policies are needed to concentrate the minds of property owners and developers at the start of designing proposals to improve and extend property.

Policy 5.6 Gardens.

Residential development should normally provide private garden space where possible - in addition to appropriate landscaping and children's playspace.

REASON FOR THE POLICY

In Winchcombe and the surrounding area, the prevailing character is of homes with gardens. There is a need to continue this, partly to respect overall town design objectives and also to ensure that residents have access to private open space - whether for young children's play or vegetable growing.

Community Action: Safety.

The Town Council is keen for development proposals to accord with "Secured by Design"⁴ principles.

Winchcombe is a safe place to live in and visit. The Town Council wants to keep it that way and reduce the fear of crime.

Monitoring the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Winchcombe Town Council Planning Committee will monitor the implementation of this Neighbourhood Plan and make an annual report to the public Parish Meeting in April of each year.

The annual report should include an assessment of any change in the relevant elements of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment – areas 1B, 2D, 2E, 7C, 19D – as a result of development.

By the end of 2020, the Town Council will have reviewed the need and availability of housing at a reasonable price for younger families - whether for rent or for purchase - and will if necessary consult the community and bring forward amendments to this Plan to make provision for the period 2021/2031.

That review will also take account of the need for any expanded off-street vehicle parking which may be necessary as a result of increased tourism.

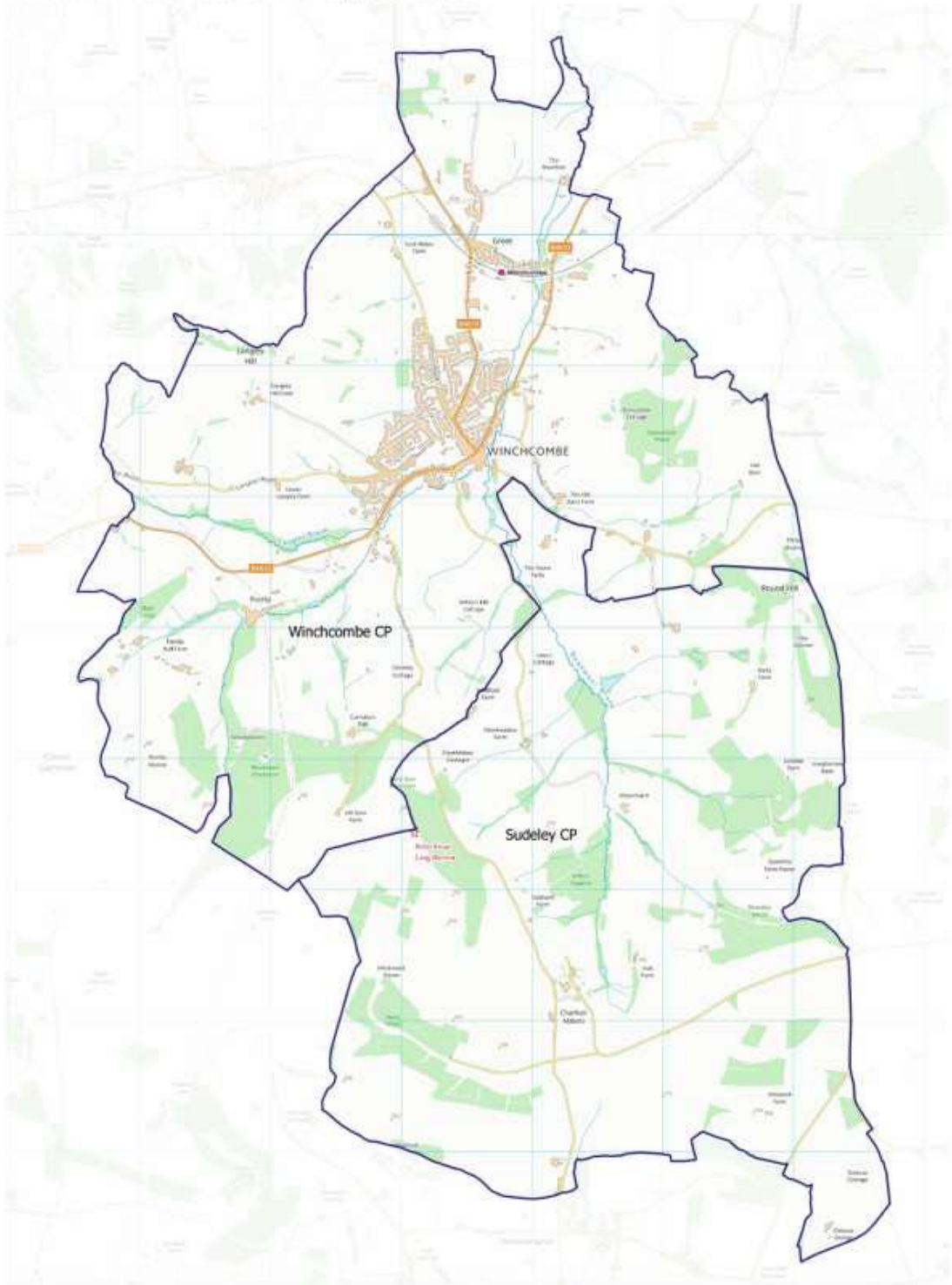
¹ *Delineated on the map showing policy areas (after Section 6 of this Plan)*

² *If not developed as part of a wider housing and care home development provided for under policy 3.5*

³ *The Joint Core Strategy housing evidence is provided primarily in the Housing Background Paper Update November 2014. At the time of preparing the neighbourhood plan the Joint Core Strategy was being examined and therefore not adopted, however the planning appeal inspector's report for Moat Farm, Gotherington, Cheltenham (23 September 2015, reference: APP/G1630/W/15/3002522) states that 'the current housing land supply is between 2.7 and 3.9 years, depending on which requirement figure the supply is measured against. The lower figure relates to the now revoked South West Regional Strategy (RS), and the higher is based on the emerging JCS... The RS figure is clearly no longer up to date, and there is no evidence that it was ever intended to be based on the district's own objectively-assessed needs. The JCS-based requirement is preferable in both of these respects.'*

⁴ <http://www.securedbydesign.com/>

Winchcombe and Sudeley parishes



Map produced by Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records
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