

ORLETON AND RICHARDS CASTLE

**Neighbourhood Development Plan
2011-2031**

April 2017

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Acknowledgements

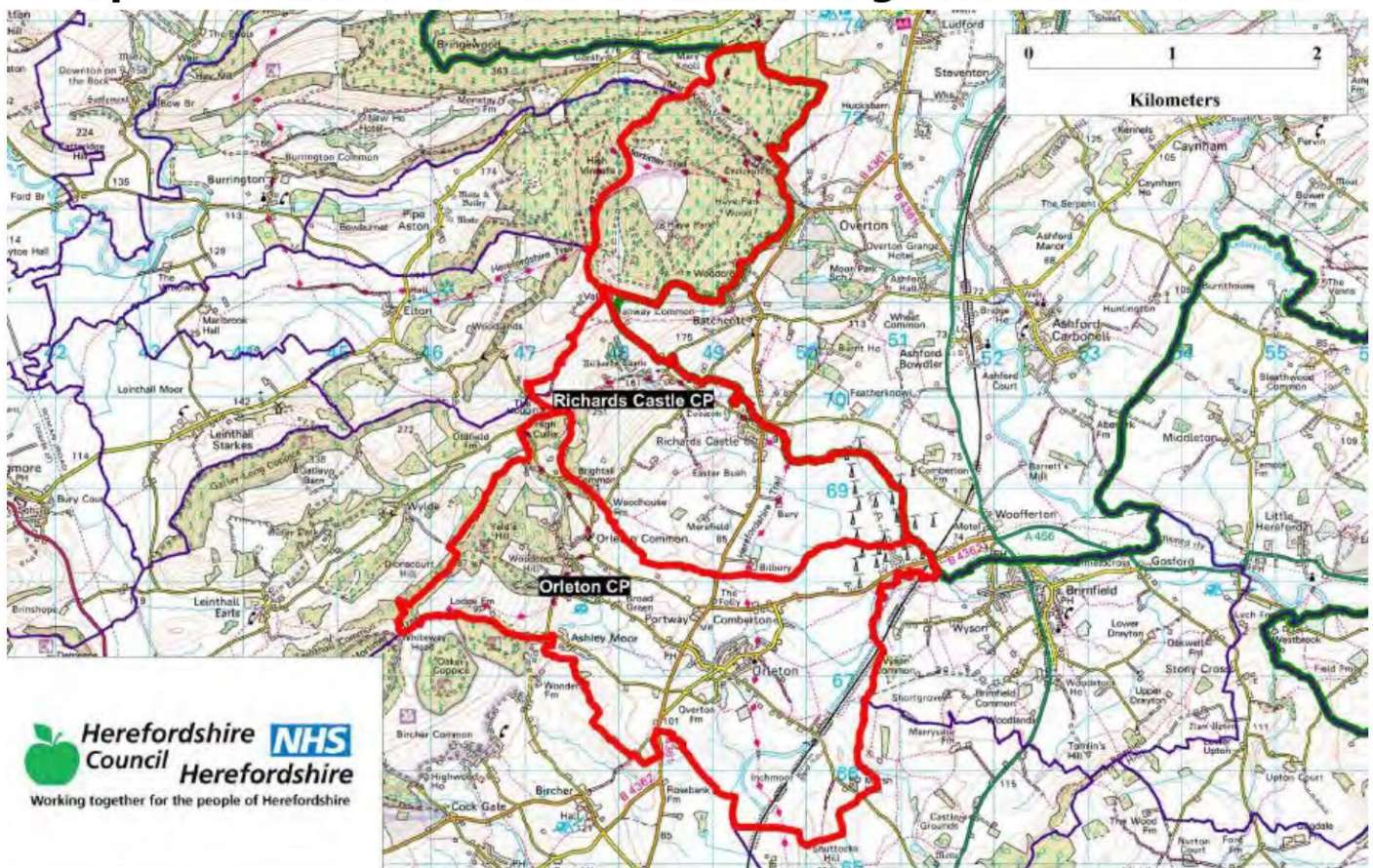
Thanks go to Alf Jenkins for his notes on the history of Orleton village and Parish; David English for his notes on the history of Richards Castle village and Parish; and Bob Prosser for his notes on the topography, geomorphology and geology of the two parishes.

Photographs courtesy of Pauline Betteridge and David English

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Orleton and Richards Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan (the NDP) is a new type of planning document introduced by the Localism Act of 2011. It enables local communities to make a major contribution to some of the planning decisions that will be needed in order to meet the requirements for development.
- 1.2 Orleton and Richards Castle Parish Councils have agreed to prepare a Joint Neighbourhood Development Plan. They made a formal submission to Herefordshire Council to designate the Group Parish as a Neighbourhood Plan Area under the Localism Act 2011 on 7th June 2013, with the intention of preparing this NDP. Following a consultation period this was designated on 29th July 2013 by Herefordshire Council. A Steering Group to prepare the plan was established in February 2014. This draft NDP has been prepared following the adoption of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy by Herefordshire Council on 16th October 2015.

Map 1 – Orleton and Richards Castle Neighbourhood Plan Area



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- 1.3 The reason for preparing a joint plan was to share resources as both parishes use similar facilities, including school, medical surgery and bus service, and as neighbouring rural parishes, broadly have many of the same challenges and opportunities. Also both are designated RA1 settlements in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 1.4 This draft NDP has been prepared on the basis of the evidence gathered from surveys undertaken in relation to the preparation of Parish Plans, parish consultation events held in the area's two village halls during July 2014 where issues and opinions were gathered, and subsequently a parish questionnaire survey undertaken during February and March 2015 based upon the comments gained in 2014. In addition, other evidence utilised included that used as the basis for Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy and other information arising from issues raised by the Parish Councils and by the Steering Group. The NDP is considered to comply with the broad criteria for sustainable development within Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and also with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 1.5 Policies and proposals are set out in this document prefixed by 'ORC' (i.e. Orleton and Richards Castle). These will become part of the development plan guiding what might receive planning permission as well as indicating what measures are to be promoted to guide new development.
- 1.6 This NDP has been approved by both Orleton and Richards Castle Parish Councils.

Community Involvement

- 1.7 Orleton and Richards Castle Parish Councils established a Steering Group to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan and it first met in April 2014. This included members from the community involved in addition to parish councillors. Orleton Parish Council had previously prepared a Parish Plan and Richards Castle Parish Council used its work in preparing a Parish Plan (May 2014) to explain the Neighbourhood Plan process. Local neighbourhood plan consultation events were held in each parish during the summer 2014 in order to identify issues of concern to their residents and inform questions that might be asked about these within a residents' questionnaire. A general household questionnaire was circulated in both parishes during February and March 2015 accompanied by both a housing needs and a landowner's questionnaire. The response to the general questionnaire was 66%. The draft Neighbourhood Plan was made available for comments by the local community and stakeholders between 7th May and 20th June 2016.
- 1.8 The Steering Group consists of 2 members from each of the two Parish Councils and 5 members from the wider community.
- 1.9 The Steering Group has written these policies with professional support from Bill Bloxsome MRTPI of Data Orchard and Gemma Webster of the Herefordshire Council's Neighbourhood Planning Team.

2. Background to the Plan Area

- 2.1 The parishes of Orleton and Richards Castle cover a large rural area within north Herefordshire between the market towns of Leominster some 5 miles to the south and Ludlow 2 miles to the north.

Its People

- 2.2 Both parishes saw their population drop by 30 people between 2001 and 2011. Orleton fell from 824 to 794, and Richards Castle fell from 280 to 250. The two parishes sit within Bircher ward and the 2011 Census shows the age structure for this ward has a higher proportion of elderly present compared to the County as a whole. In turn Herefordshire has a higher proportion of elderly compared to England and Wales as a whole.
- 2.3 There is a primary school in Orleton and its catchment also serves Richards Castle. Most secondary age children travel to Wigmore although since the recent change to Herefordshire Council's policy upon school transport children can only have free transport to their nearest secondary school. This has resulted in more children travelling to other schools such as Ludlow, Leominster and Tenbury Wells. Orleton has a village hall, local shop, two public houses, one church, one chapel and a substantial area of local green space that incorporates a children's play area, woodland walk and well used football pitch. Richards Castle Parish straddles a border with Shropshire and its village hall lies within the adjacent County. It possesses a village pub and Church. Residents of both parishes can choose to travel to either of the nearby market towns for weekly shopping, or either Hereford or Shrewsbury for major shopping.
- 2.4 There is no large employer within either of the two parishes although agriculture is an important sector in terms of land use. Residents must travel to the nearby towns for work, although working from home presents an alternative for some.
- 2.5 Although not a major employer, the BBC's transmission station at Woofferton is a significant item of infrastructure covering a large area in both Orleton and Richards Castle parishes. It also extends across the County boundary into Shropshire. Originally built during World War II by the BBC to house shortwave broadcasting transmitters the site has been modernised many times and can now provide daily BBC World Service digital programmes to Europe, Russia, North, Central and South America, the Middle East and Vietnam. The site is also used for satellite communication and monitoring. The site has been owned by Babcock International since 2010 and it is understood that they propose to continue the site's current use until at least 2022.

- 2.6 Just over the border with Shropshire between the transmitter station and the Salwey Arms public house on the A49 is a small employment area that provides some local employment opportunities.

History and Settlements

Orleton village and Parish

- 2.7 The North Herefordshire village of Orleton is an ancient settlement. In Domesday Book it was given the name of ALRETUNE, the enclosure of the alders. The Ice Age left a fertile plain with water running through it, perfect for habitation, growing crops and grinding corn. Alders were planted all along its water course to absorb rainfall and minimise flooding, also later to produce clog making material which was supplied to North Country cotton and woollen towns. Apart from its ancient mill, medieval black and white and red brick houses were its trade mark. Although having far fewer houses, prior to the 1960s the population was of a similar size to today due to very large families of ten, eleven and even twelve being common.
- 2.8 Early in the 1960s Orleton obtained modern services of electricity, water and sewerage. Many households could not afford the £8 fee to be connected. To recoup costs, the local council insisted on building properties all along the service lines within the village creating what we see in 2016, a pleasant mix of medieval, modern bungalows and houses. The building of a modern village hall on the present site, replacing a tin roofed parish room on the side of the main road, coincided with a housing explosion, so providing necessary social amenities. This was again replaced by the present hall in 1997 supplementing Orleton's surgery, village post office and store, bus services and excellent public houses.
- 2.9 In the 1980s the village hall necessitated additional parking and recreational facilities. Eleven and a half acres of land was acquired alongside, which provided a first class site for sports, fetes and to establish a wooded area, planted in 1989. The Victorian school was replaced with a modern building in the 1960s to provide education for the villages of Little Hereford, Brimfield and Orleton. Orleton Wesleyan Chapel of 1890 and St George's medieval church continue as active, integral components providing spiritual support. St George's is one thousand years old and richly deserves its visitors from all over the world. Dedicated to St George, the dragon weather vane proudly indicates wind direction and the lovely gilded clock of 1887 gives accurate time. The church interior contains invaluable artefacts. Its Norman font has christened children for nearly a thousand years and has nine of the twelve apostles around its exterior. Its windows include examples of Norman, Early English and Decorated periods. There are dedications to Sir Arthur Keysell Yapp, founder of the YMCA, the Blounts and Proctors. There is an excellent Jacobean pulpit and two very ancient oak chests, one adzed out from a solid oak trunk aged a thousand years and a nine-hundred-year-old churchwarden's chest. In the graveyard is an ancient

preaching cross with a much older base; also graves of the Salweys and Proctors of Proctor and Gamble fame.

Richards Castle village and Parish

- 2.10 The castle at Richards Castle is situated almost one mile north-west of the current village centre in an elevated location commanding an extensive view of the valley to the east and south. It was constructed by Richard le Scrob, a Norman nobleman, before the Conquest, one of only three stone castles in the country at that time. It was reconstructed with a large tower and curtain walls in 12th century but is now largely collapsed into the very substantial earthworks. Adjoining it is St. Bartholomew's Church (late 11th c with 14/15th c additions) and a detached bell tower built about 1300. It was superseded by All Saints Church in Batchcott in 1892, and is now in the care of the Historic Churches Trust. By 1340 the township around the castle and church had 103 burgages with a weekly market and an annual fair. In the 19th century, the county boundary was moved south from the river Teme at Ludlow to divide the ecclesiastical parish of Richards Castle in two, with the hamlets of Batchcott, Overton and Woofferton as well as the large estate of Moor Park becoming part of Shropshire. The Salwey family have lived at Overton and farmed the estate for 400 years and still have some land holdings in the Herefordshire part of Richards Castle. Moor Park House is now an independent school.
- 2.11 The village of Richards Castle developed downhill from the castle with the market place reputedly at Rock crossroads and the substantial Court House with adjacent dovecote and unknown (monastic?) buildings further down. What is now the village centre grew up along the Leominster – Ludlow road about one mile SE of the old castle and church, but much of the population was scattered around the parish with relatively small farms. This situation remains little changed today except that many of the farms are now residential only with the land being farmed as part of larger holdings. There has been a substantial afforestation of the hill areas in the last century, especially the approximately 4 sq.km northern section of the parish which is almost isolated from the rest. The village centre is mainly in Herefordshire, but the total population of the Herefordshire parish council area has fluctuated but only slightly increasing from 239 in 1951 to 250 in 2011, during which time the school (in Shropshire) and the shop have closed. Ten now ex-council houses were built before 1951 and there has been about 40 houses built in the lower part of Castle Road and Orchard Rise immediately off this in the period 1975 – 2000. The current lower house occupancy confirms the census analysis that the age profile is advancing, and there is now a high proportion of pensioners. The village hall (in Shropshire) and Castle Inn remain busy and Richards Castle retains a strong community feel, ignoring the potential divide of the county boundary.
- 2.12 The former Leominster District Council defined a village envelope in their planning policy, but this has lapsed and the developments have now virtually filled up the former defined area. There has been no significant new building outside the core of the village apart from

a few conversions. As Shropshire County Council classify their part of Richards Castle as a rural area with only affordable housing permitted, any future housing demand will have to be satisfied on the Herefordshire side of the border preferably in the vicinity of the village core.



Figure 1 – Richards Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument

The Environment within the Two Parishes

- 2.13 The land within the two parishes lies between low lying meadows in its south east and east to wooded hills to the north-west where it approaches High Vinnalls.
- 2.14 The topographical landscape of the parishes falls into two broad divisions, a western section across the flanks of the Goggin-Vinnalls ridge and an eastern section of lower, more subdued terrain. The boundary between them follows roughly the line of the Orleton - Richard's Castle road, a long-standing alignment which suggests an understanding of the juncture between the two landscape types.
- 2.15 The sweep of the ridge slope is controlled by the angle of dip of the limestones which dominate the western section, giving thin, pale soils. These limestones are well-bedded and jointed, making fine building materials, as evidenced by the pockmarks of small quarries and the pale blocks in walls and many of the older buildings. Across the lower slopes there are several outcrops of red, fine-grained sandstone which overlie the limestone beds, e.g. the mound on which the lower part of Richard's Castle village stands, and indicated by reddish soils. A series of streams drain these slopes and in places have become sharply incised, reflecting colder, wetter periods when stream energies were greater.

- 2.16 Across the eastern division the solid geology is masked by a veneer of superficial deposits laid down by the work of ice and water. The final advance of ice across the region began around 30,000 years BP (before the present), reaching a maximum some 18,000 years BP. A tongue of ice known as the Wye Glacier pushed westwards, reaching as far as the site of Orleton village. As the ice ablated (melted) along the stationary ice front it dumped a mound of debris known as a terminal moraine which remained after the ice disappeared by around 10,000 years BP. This can be seen today as the low, rounded ridge which curves in an arc from The Knoll to Line Farm, indicated by the line of Tunnel Lane. Much of the original Orleton village is sited on this mound of better-drained land.



Figure 2 – Little development extends into the open parkland aspect to south beyond glacial ridge running along edge of Orleton Village which is a characteristic of this part of the Conservation Area.

- 2.17 In front of this moraine, meltwaters from the glacier spread from today's Comberton towards Richard's Castle, depositing sands, gravels and silts up to 4m thick. The confused stream pattern creating these fluvio-glacial deposits explains the flat terrain and varied soil and drainage characteristics of this low-lying land. In the post-glacial period the development of the stream system seen today has produced spreads of fine, brown alluvium across floodplains of varying width. Although the solid geology is hidden, it has played an important role in the settlement of the parishes. The limestones allow the passage of groundwater while the overlying sandstone beds hold water effectively, acting as an aquifer which in the past was an important source of water for parishioners, via wells sunk down to the sandstone.
- 2.18 The majority of agricultural land within the two parishes is either Grade 2 (Very Good) or Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) according to the Agricultural Land Classification although there are areas of poor land (Grade 4) to the east of Orleton and west of Richards Castle. The higher land in the north of Richards Castle parish is graded as very poor (Grade 5). None falls within the category of Excellent. Neither parish possesses any derelict land or areas of

land identified for regeneration. Areas to the west of Richards Castle village and within the parish are identified as mineral reserves that should be safeguarded although none would impinge upon any anticipated extensions to the village's built up area. Significant areas to the west and east of Orleton village are shown to be at risk of flooding and this extends more narrowly but significantly through the village. The extent of brownfield land has not been surveyed but understood to be negligible if any.

- 2.19 A variety of landscapes fall within the two parishes with Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment identifying four particular types within its area. To the east of Orleton village is an area defined as Wooded Estatelands; to its north and south are bands defined as Wet Pasture Meadow; another band running north-south parallel and to the west of the B4361 is area defined as Principal Settled Farmlands; and in the north-west and extreme north of Richards Castle parish are Principal Timbered Farmlands. Within the first of these landscapes woodland blocks are important needing to be conserved and restocked, with an emphasis on native tree species, especially oak, and any large scale planting created in scale with the particular area's character. Linkages between woodland blocks such as through hedgerows should be promoted. Where parkland exists it too should be conserved or restored, and veteran trees protected. Any small scale estate villages or hamlets should retain their integrity. Where permanent pasture exists within Wet Pasture Meadows, it should be retained and where opportunities exist, arable converted back to create new wet habitats. Linear tree cover should be encouraged especially along watercourses, ditches and hedgerows. Activities likely to increase drainage or a change in the water table should be discouraged as should any settlement or building operations. Within Principal Settled Farmlands the hedgerow pattern and tree cover should be retained or strengthened. Traditional standard orchards should be maintained or where possible increased. The integrity of any dispersed settlement pattern should be retained. In the last landscape type, Principal Timbered Farmlands, the emphasis is on conserving and restoring the existing pattern of hedgerows with tree planting. Native broadleaved woods and coppices should be retained and tree cover enhanced especially along road sides and in other non-farmed locations. New small woods should be encouraged where they reflect local character, favouring oaks. The organic character of the local lane network should be conserved as should any dispersed settlement pattern.
- 2.20 In terms of richness of biodiversity, the area to the north west of Richards Castle village has the greatest importance. Parts of Mortimer's Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest pass along Mary Knoll Valley and also near Woodcroft. Other parts lie just to the west of Richard's Castle parish boundary. These combine both biodiversity and geodiversity interest. A number of local wildlife sites also lie on the western periphery of Richards Castle parish. Consequently, Herefordshire Council's Ecological Network Map emphasises the biodiversity core areas, buffers and corridors along the western side of the plan area. Only very small pockets of significant interest are highlighted within the central portion of the plan, with one just to the south of Richards Castle village. An important core area does however lie along the eastern edge of Orleton parish. There is however a number of locally

important ecological corridors and stepping stones running north-south through the centre of the plan area including through both villages.

- 2.21 In terms of the historic environment there are no English Heritage Registered Parks and Gardens within either parish. There are also limited numbers of Scheduled Ancient Monuments. However, the most notable is Richards Castle Scheduled Monument which is extensive but some way to the west of Richards Castle village. Both villages do however have indications of archaeological interest and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policies Map show a Monument on their edges. Despite its historic origins Richards Castle village only contains four Listed Buildings within or on the edge of its built up area. Orleton village contains many more although they are spread throughout the settlement with a small concentration within its historic core.
- 2.22 Orleton was designated a Conservation Area in 1976. No detailed conservation area appraisal has been prepared in accordance with guidance issued by Historic England. The area covered by the conservation area is extensive, in particular to protect the setting of the village, most notably from the north, south and south-east. The character of Richards Castle village is such that a conservation area was suggested for it in the mid-1970s and although the subject was raised again in the 1990s designation did not follow. Nevertheless, this is an indication that the village has particular qualities that are relevant when determining where and how development might take place.
- 2.23 The NDP relies on the policies in the adopted Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy and saved policies from Herefordshire UDP on a number of environmental matters, including mineral reserves, the historic environment and local wildlife sites.

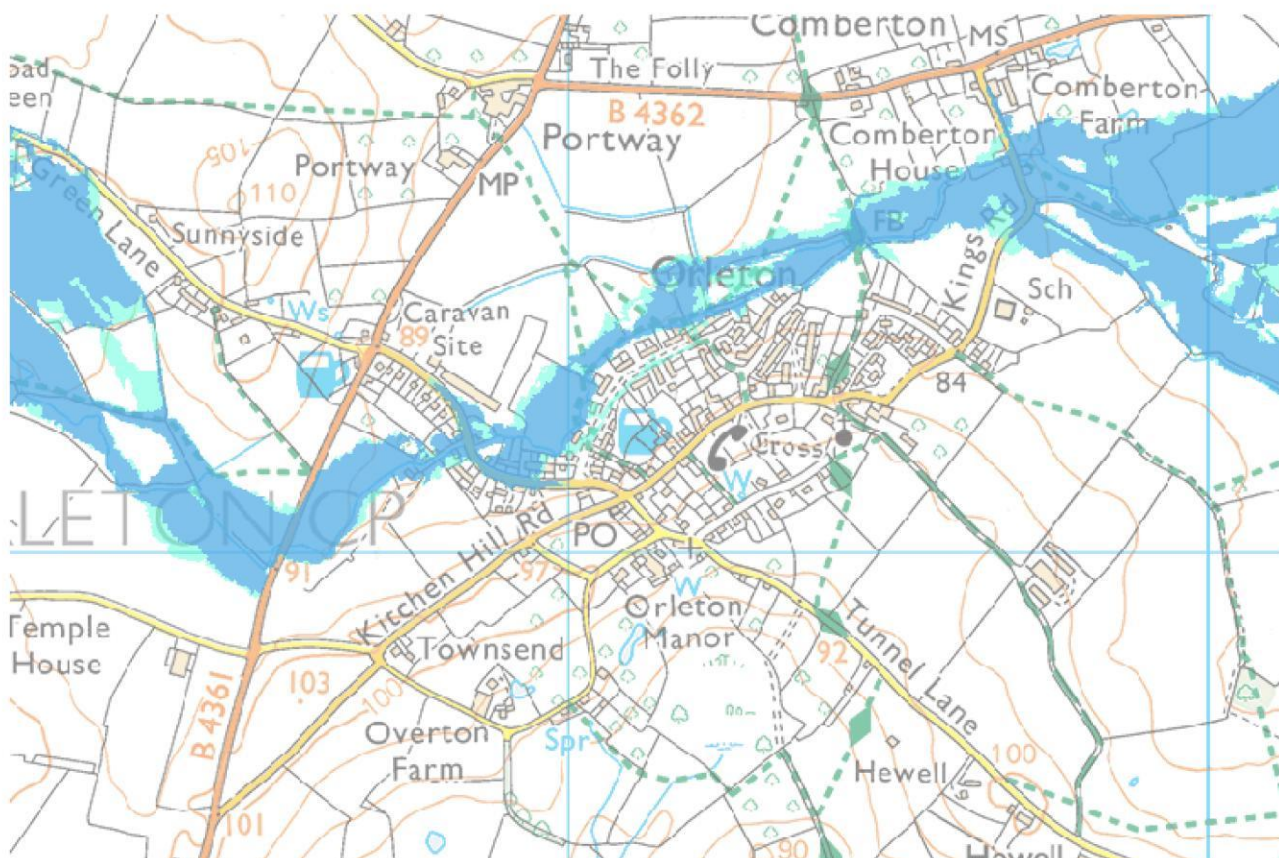
3. Informing the Plan

- 3.1 The background information above provides an initial basis for further exploratory work undertaken to inform the plan. In addition, Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy prepared by Herefordshire Council has an extensive evidence base. Some of this evidence base has already been used to describe the local environment. Other parts of this evidence base will be referred to where necessary and relevant to issues which this plan seeks to address. Other sources of information have also been explored where necessary, for example advice received from Severn Trent Water in relation to the issue of sewerage capacity within Orleton.
- 3.2 In addition the residents' survey has provided valuable information and views, for example upon what the communities stated to be the level of local housing need and approaches to addressing provision for this.

- 3.3 Two matters are of particular concern in formulating this neighbourhood plan have been recognised as requiring more detailed analysis – local environment and housing need.

Local Environment

- 3.4 The ability to accommodate development within environmental constraints is given a high priority. There are a range of such constraints and they vary across the plan area. The majority of new development will occur within or adjacent to the two villages within the plan area – Orleton and Richards Castle.
- 3.5 Orleton village has a number of significant local constraints. One of the most critical is to avoid land that falls within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 defined by the Environment Agency¹. In addition, regard should be had to the impact of climate change upon these zones and consequently more detailed flood risk assessments will need to be undertaken should sites be identified adjacent to them. These would need to be undertaken by landowners or developers who may present them for development.



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Figure 3: Environment Agency Flood Map – September 2016 (Light Blue = Zone 2; Dark Blue = Zone 3). NB - Environment Agency Flood Maps do change over time so reference should be made to the latest flood mapping information available from the Environment Agency.

¹ http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?topic=floodmap&layerGroups=default&lang=_e&ep=map&scale=7&x=531500&y=181500

- 3.6 Severn Trent Water has acknowledged that there is a problem with the public sewer running through Orleton village and that it may need to be re-laid. A new route for this has been identified. However, the water company is waiting for verified modelling to confirm that the measure will address the problem. The effect of this issue upon any potential development sites will depend upon their location in relation to where the problem exists. No indication has been given that any works are included within Severn Trent Water's programme of works.



Figure 4: Orleton Village Broad Character Areas and Key Features

- 3.7 Orleton's Conservation Area is extensive indicating that the village's setting is important as well as its particular character and appearance. Figure 4 is a characterisation² indicating those broad principles that are considered relevant to determining where future development might take place. The village is hardly visible from the B4361 main road which runs along its western edge. However, it sits on the north facing slopes where its historic core extends from the flatter parts of the Brook floodplain up to the ridge which marks the extent of the glacier that extended southwards during the last ice-age. Beyond this is the south facing gentle slopes which have a parkland character with intermittent development. Its importance to the village setting from this direction is reflected by the approach being included within Orleton Conservation Area. To the west of the village is an area marked by narrow local lanes and a low density organic development form. To the north of the historic core and between this and the area identified to be at risk of flooding from the Brook lies

² Approach based upon Heritage England's advocacy of Rapid Townscape Assessments.

See – Heritage England - http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf and <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/character-and-identity.pdf>

an extensive area of 20th century development. This development also extends in a form of peripheral ribbon development along Millbrook Way and extending beyond the cross roads with the B4361 Leominster to Ludlow Road.

- 3.8 Richards Castle village does not possess any flooding and sewer capacity constraints. Although not designated a conservation area parts do have an historic character. Figure 5 provides a similar broad characterisation for this village that might usefully inform decisions about the location of future development.
- 3.9 The main part of the village sits astride the B4361 Leominster to Ludlow Road while more recent development extends along Castle Road. The village is overlooked from the west by the remains of the Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument adjacent to which once stood the ancient village of Richards Castle before it moved to straddle the main road. To the west of the village core lies more modern development which includes a small estate commenced during the 1970s.

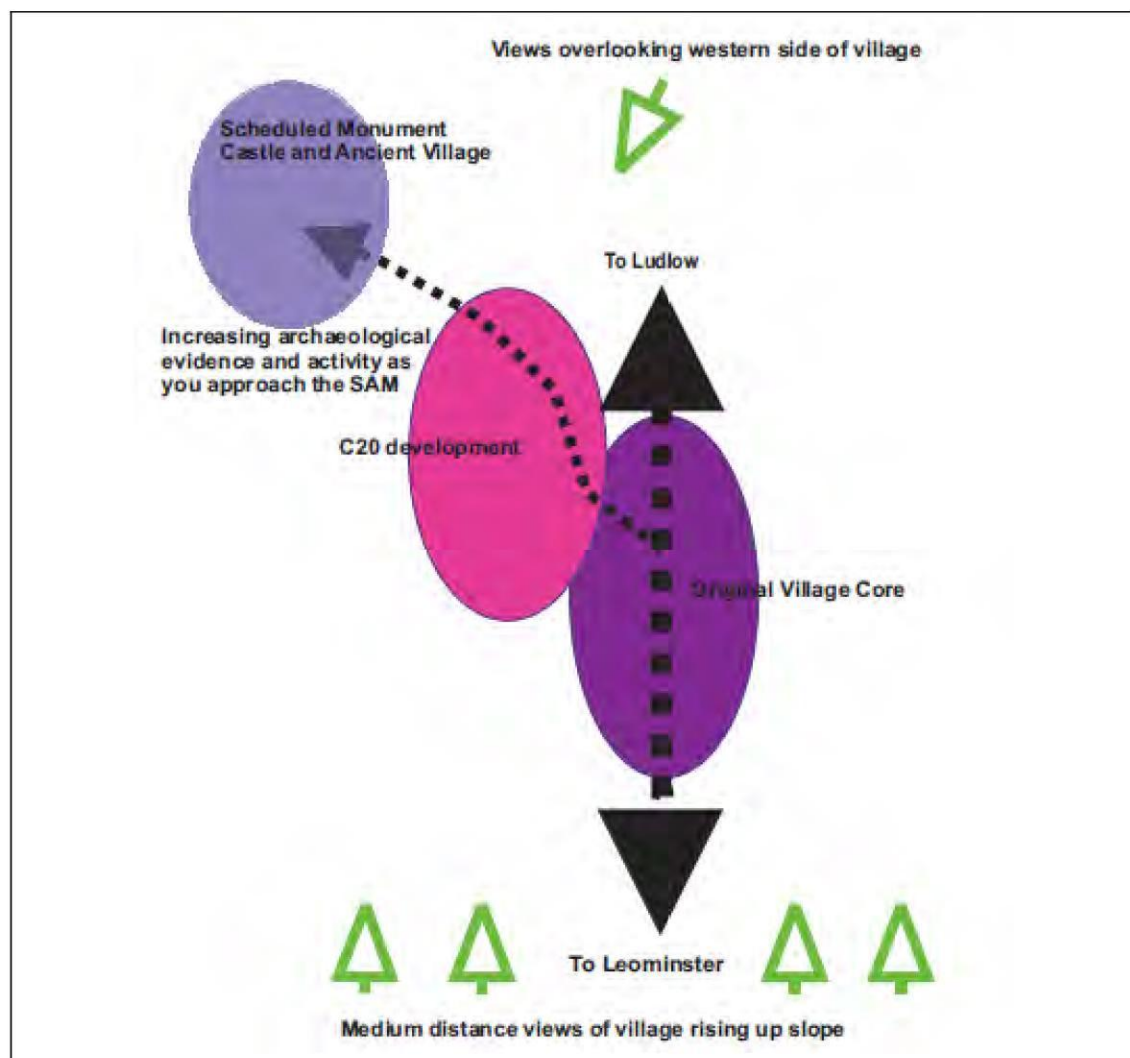


Figure 5: Richards Castle Broad Character Areas and Key Features

- 3.10 The village is most visible from the south where there are medium distance views of its southern edge clearly visible on rising land. From the north views are more limited as you

approach the village where you look down upon a number of properties on the western side of the main road where they settle into the small east-west running valley. Herefordshire Historic Environment record shows numerous records in the gap between the village and the Castle suggesting that there is potential for remains to be increasingly present as you progress towards the monument.



Figure 6: Approaching Richards Castle village from the south.

Housing Need

- 3.11 When residents were surveyed Herefordshire Council was advocating an approach to determining the number of houses to be built in Orleton and Richards Castle villages based upon proportional growth of dwellings within the two settlements. At that time the estimated requirement was for 25 and 8 dwellings respectively. Most residents of the two parishes felt these levels of development were about right (47% and 42% respectively). However, there were a significant number of people who felt it was too high for Orleton village (36%). This was not the case for Richards Castle village although those disagreeing with the majority were nearly equally split between the number being too many and too few, with a slightly higher figure for the latter.
- 3.12 Herefordshire Council subsequently changed its approach and has indicated different minimum levels of new residential development that must be accommodated over the period 2011 to 2031 based upon proportional growth of the number of houses in each parish. In relation to Orleton parish this is 53 and for Richards Castle parish 18 new dwellings. The Council has also suggested that over the period 2011 to 2014 no new

dwelling was constructed in Orleton but it had outstanding planning permissions for 28 dwellings. Some of these have since been constructed including a rural affordable housing scheme off of Kitchen Hill Road. For the same period the Council suggests that within Richards Castle, one new dwelling had been built and a further two were granted planning permission. A review of information upon Herefordshire Council's website showing planning applications for Orleton parish does however suggest that there were planning permissions outstanding for only 20 dwellings over that period. Subsequently by April 2016 one further dwelling had received planning permission but outside of the village therefore falling within the rural windfall allowance. The Richards Castle information however does appear to be correct although again a further planning permission for a dwelling has been granted since 2014 and this was within the village.

- 3.13 Most of the new dwellings are to be located within or adjacent to the built up areas of the two settlements within the parishes, i.e. Orleton village and Richards Castle village. However, an allowance can be made for dwellings built away from these settlements such as dwellings needed for agriculture, converted rural buildings, dwellings needed to support rural enterprises and affordable housing on exception sites. Any allowance needs to be based on past trends and in relation to Orleton parish such trends indicate a modest total of around 10 dwellings might be expected while for Richards Castle parish this would be some 3 dwellings.
- 3.14 Taking the above information into account between 15 and 23 further new dwellings would be needed to meet Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy's minimum housing requirement at Orleton village and 11 at Richards Castle village. However, this does require Herefordshire Council to be convinced that the rural windfall allowance will materialise.
- 3.15 In order to determine the extent of local housing need within the two parishes, a housing survey was undertaken in order to provide up-to-date information (January 2015). This revealed a current need for 11 dwellings within the two parishes of which over half sought two-bedroomed properties. With only one exception those indicating a need were seeking market housing or low cost home ownership. The survey also suggested that a further but less than immediate potential need for 40 dwellings over the next 5-years with, again, most seeking two-bedroomed accommodation although nearly one third three bed houses. The level of certainty over this figure is however lower in that it suggests current aspirations, some of which might alter over time. In addition, 16 households indicated they had a close relative with a need to move into either of the two parishes but were unable to obtain suitable accommodation. The majority of these were adult children. The most common reason for close relatives moving into the two parishes was to care for someone living there.
- 3.16 At a public meeting held in the village to consider a particular development proposal concern was raised about the falling roll at Orleton VC Primary School. The potential benefit

to retaining the current level of pupils that additional development would provide is acknowledged.

- 3.17 In conclusion in order to meet the aspirations of the two communities and to plan positively for growth and the retention of existing services and facilities, it is suggested that around 60 further new houses over the remaining 15 years of the plan period, amounting to an average of 4 dwellings per year, was a reasonable level to provide for within the two villages. Orleton being the larger village with many more facilities might usefully accommodate a higher proportion of this growth. There was also recognition that the areas of land available would not exactly match the number proposed.

4. Issues and Options

- 4.1 Issues have been drawn substantially from those raised within Parish Plans, community consultation and matters identified as relevant to the two parishes within Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. Both Parish Councils have prepared Parish Plans.

Housing

- 4.2 Housing is considered very important by both communities – both recognised the need for affordable housing, starter homes and to provide accommodation for the elderly requiring the provision of one or more sites to cater for these needs. Paragraphs 3.11– 3.17 above explain this in greater detail. In addition, there is concern that new dwellings should be well designed, reflect local character, and achieve high levels of sustainability especially through energy conservation. However, variation in style was also supported to add diversity. Although the preference is for small developments, infilling, building conversion and bringing vacant properties back into use, the opportunities for this in both villages are limited. There is however opposition to further large detached houses which it is felt will not serve local needs.
- 4.3 In terms of design the greatest concerns of residents were the need for developments to have off-road parking (95% considered this either very or fairly important) and that properties should have a back garden (88% considering this very or fairly important). The size and appearance of properties should be similar to those nearby (81% considering this very or fairly important). Space between properties, external energy efficient design, front gardens and the use of traditional design also rated positively. In terms of house size, the greatest need was considered to be for two and three bedroom properties (73% and 84% respectively). However, the need for smaller homes was considered greater in Richards Castle than Orleton and there was also stronger opposition to properties with more than 4 bedrooms in Richards Castle.
- 4.4 Both parishes supported smaller dwellings in the form of sheltered housing and housing for special needs, but this was higher in Orleton. Most residents of Orleton felt that

developments should comprise sites capable of accommodating up to 5 dwellings, while those of Richards Castle considered they should be up to 4 dwellings. This would however depend upon the size of potential sites that were available. Ribbon development along an existing road was generally opposed with support for sites on purpose built roads connecting to a public road although there was recognition that this would depend upon the nature or location of preferred sites. Generally, there was no support for particular constraints upon extensions, development within gardens and conversion of outbuildings unless the amenity of nearby property is affected.

Economic Development

- 4.5 Although welcoming new business enterprises there is concern that these should generally be small scale to reflect the nature and character of the rural area. There is support for the conversion of rural buildings to accommodate small businesses and even for the construction of new small premises. Larger scale proposals, such as warehousing, were opposed on the basis that such buildings and the traffic they might generate were inappropriate to the area's rural character. There is also concern to protect residential amenity. Again good design is considered important for both new build and conversion proposals.
- 4.6 The need to protect good quality agricultural land is recognised as important for the retention of the existing pattern of land-use and to support farming and other associated agricultural enterprises.
- 4.7 Facilitating improved and faster broadband services is seen as essential.

Highways and Transport

- 4.8 Localised areas where there are potential dangers from traffic, such as through high speed, inappropriate size of vehicles along lanes, on-street parking and lack of visibility, have been identified. Addressing any of these issues where possible would be welcome. New development should be capable of being accommodated safely. Locations where measures may be needed should be monitored with the intention that should the need arise Herefordshire Council might be pressed to address these.
- 4.9 Parts of both villages suffer from the absence of pedestrian footpaths although this is most acute in Richards Castle village.

Community, Social and Health Needs

- 4.10 Both communities possess village halls and these are well used although offer further potential. Moor Park School just over the border in Shropshire provides high quality recreational facilities that can be used by local communities during school holidays. Orleton Primary School offers some further potential.

- 4.11 Orleton has an extensive area of open accessible greenspace comprising playing fields, children's play area and woodland area. This is an area with further potential. Richards Castle does not possess a similar facility but would look to deliver a local village green, play area and small playing field if the opportunity arose. Initiatives are suggested to encourage greater use of public rights of way, for example by creating circular walks and links with increased accessibility to local heritage sites.

Other Infrastructure

- 4.12 Reference has already been made in section 3 to flood risk, sewerage and sewage treatment.
- 4.13 Orleton village possesses street lighting and the community wishes this to be provided at the appropriate level.



Figure 6: View down upon Richards Castle village and across the low lying meadows to its east and to the north of Orleton.

The Environment

- 4.14 Preserving the rural character of and historic environment within the two parishes should be given a high priority. The approach to accommodating new development while protecting local character and distinctiveness which should be promoted is to support local agriculture and forestry; ensuring the level of new development is in keeping with this

character and distinctiveness; and promoting high quality design in particular in terms of scale, appearance and quality of materials.

- 4.15 Protection of heritage sites and buildings should be supported, as are efforts to increase public accessibility and provision of information.

Options

- 4.16 The options in terms of the approach to accommodating development within the two parishes considered included:
- Option 1** - Producing a Neighbourhood Plan that provides a range of house types in terms of size and tenures but concentrated new housing development in Orleton with minimal provision in Richards Castle;
- Option 2** - Producing a Neighbourhood Plan that provides a range of house types in terms of size and tenures through spreading development on a pro-rata basis between the two villages according to their relative sizes;
- Option 3** – To limit development to the minimum required to meet Herefordshire Council’s housing growth target for the respective parishes;
- Option 4** - Not to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan but rely upon Herefordshire Core Strategy, developer pressures and any subsequent Rural Areas Local Plan that Herefordshire Council might produce.
- 4.17 With regard to Option 1 although Orleton possesses more facilities there are a number of constraints that restrict where development might take place. It may be possible to concentrate the major part of the combined housing requirement within Orleton but this would be to the detriment of achieving sustainable growth within Richards Castle, reducing its ability to provide flexibly for its local housing need.
- 4.18 Spreading housing provision on a pro-rata basis, i.e. Option 2, would offer a fair distribution between the two villages, placing less pressure upon the local environments and, if spread sufficiently over the plan period, allowing better integration of new residents into the respective communities. To provide flexibly for the range of house types and tenures needed to meet local needs may result in more houses being built than required by Herefordshire Core Strategy but this would represent a positive approach to addressing need provided mechanisms are put in place to safeguard the local environment. The assessment of local housing need should also include benefits to local services and facilities and supporting the local economy.
- 4.19 Option 3 would require restrictive policies that may not be acceptable in terms of complying with Government’s National Planning Policy Framework. Furthermore, it would be difficult to restrict developments on sites available to specific numbers or the release of only parts of sites that might be considered appropriate for development.

- 4.20 Not to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, Option 4, was rejected on the basis that it would reduce the local communities' abilities to contribute fully to a process that was available to them to form a view about planning for their area. Although Herefordshire Council might subsequently produce a plan covering the two villages the timescale for this is uncertain, and meanwhile even greater pressures to release land for development may come forwards that could be difficult to resist.
- 4.21 The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group chose to recommend Option 2 to the two Parish Councils and has based this Neighbourhood Plan upon that approach.

5. Vision, Objectives and Strategic Policy

- 5.1 In preparing Orleton and Richards Castle Neighbourhood Plan the following vision sets the basis for what it is hoped to achieve through the planning system by the end of the plan period:

"Orleton and Richards Castle will be thriving and prosperous communities that offer a high quality of life for residents of all ages, a resilient economy, a sustainable use of resources, and an excellent natural environment."

- 5.2 To achieve this vision the following objectives have been set:
- (i) To develop the built environment in a way that maintains and enhances its distinctiveness and attractiveness whilst catering for the housing needs of all age groups;
 - (ii) To encourage successful farming and small businesses, where members of the community can find employment;
 - (iii) To maintain and enhance the natural environment and the local heritage.
- 5.3 The community expressed significant support for both the vision and objectives within the residents' survey with 90% considering the first objective either very or fairly important, 89% the second objective, and 93% the third objective similarly so.

Strategy for Sustainable Development

- 5.3 Sustainable development seeks to ensure proposals are advanced that will "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"³. It covers social and economic factors as well as the environment so that the community is provided with sufficient and appropriate housing, jobs, opportunities for enterprise, and access to community facilities which will help to maintain healthy and

³ National Planning Policy Framework, page 2.

thriving communities as well as protecting our natural and historic environment, all of which contribute to our quality of life.

- 5.4 Although based upon policies for the environment and housing this plan brings forward measures intended indirectly to benefit suitable economic activity and community infrastructure. The following policy forms the basis for the overall approach being pursued.

Policy ORC1: Promoting Sustainable Development

Positive measures that promote sustainable development within Orleton and Richards Castle Parishes will be supported where they meet the principles and policies set out in this Neighbourhood Plan. Where development proposals are advanced, they should, in particular, address the following high level priorities that are considered essential by the local community for maintaining sustainable development within the two Parishes:

- a) The Neighbourhood Development Plan supports the delivery of 71 houses in the neighbourhood plan area over the period 2011-2031 to meet the needs of both the local and wider community through development that contributes to meeting identified needs in terms of size, type and tenure;**
- b) A high priority will be given to ensuring new development, and particularly housing, achieves a high standard of architecture, fits sensitively into the landscape and street scene, reflects local character and features although not to the extent of stifling innovation and diversity, and achieves high standards in terms of sustainable design;**
- c) High priority will also be given to preserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment within the Parishes, and maintaining its local distinctiveness;**
- d) Infrastructure will be sought to enable ease of access to services, including by sustainable transport, and to avoid the potential adverse effects of development on amenity;**
- e) Measures to retain community facilities and services will be supported; improvements to community services and facilities will be sought to benefit the health and wellbeing of both new and existing residents.**

Where this Plan does not cover a proposal, any decision should reflect, where possible, the above priorities as well as the policies in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. Benefits will be sought in relation to the priorities set out in this policy where compensatory or mitigation measures may be needed as part of any proposal.

- 5.5 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all planning applications to be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This overarching strategic policy sets out the essential sustainable development requirements which the local community considers important to achieve its vision. In particular the provisions within this Neighbourhood Plan will be measured against this policy. Where exceptional reasons are such that the

community's expression of priorities might be overridden then the effects upon the principles that this policy sets out should be mitigated or compensated for.

- 5.6 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy indicates a preference for settlement boundaries to be defined within which development might take place. This might incorporate any site allocations as well as individual sites or small plots that could be accommodated satisfactorily as infilling. The approach to the location of development to meet the community's aspirations for and contribution to sustainable development while complying with the provisions of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy will be in accordance with the following policy.

Policy ORC2: Development Strategy

The settlements of Orleton and Richards Castle will be the focus for development within the two Parishes. The level and extent of development will meet identified needs in particular in relation to the range of house types and tenures while ensuring this occurs within local environmental capacities and other constraints. There will be an emphasis on protecting Grade 2 agricultural land unless land of a lower grade is not available and the need for the development outweighs this requirement. The accommodation of development to meet the needs of the Parish and contribute to County requirements will be based upon the following approach:

- a) A settlement boundary is defined for and a site allocated for development in Orleton within which new housing and other appropriate forms of development may take place. The settlement's local distinctiveness will be retained and the character and appearance of its conservation area will be conserved or enhanced.**
- b) A settlement boundary is defined for and sites allocated for development in Richards Castle within which new housing and other appropriate forms of development may take place. The settlement's local distinctiveness will be retained.**
- c) Housing development outside of the settlements identified above should be located in accordance with relevant policies in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, in particular but not exclusively Policy RA3, and where necessary the more detailed policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.**
- d) Limited small scale employment opportunities will be provided for, including enabling limited new and extended premises outside of the parish's settlements in association with rural enterprises or through utilising brownfield land or existing rural buildings. The countryside will continue to accommodate economic development and particularly that associated with agricultural and**

- 5.7 This strategy directs where most forms of development should take place that are likely to occur within the two Parishes. Most will be located within the named villages although development can take place in the countryside where this will support the rural economy and the needs of the community. With the exception of housing no specific strategic development requirements are identified for the two Parishes within Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 5.8 The other forms of development that may come forward within the two Parishes include land and premises for employment, services, facilities and infrastructure. Some of these are covered through more detailed policies included later within this plan or through Policies in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. Particular regard should be had however to the use of brownfield land and existing sites and the protection of high grade agricultural land where that of lower grade is not available.

6 Environmental Policies

- 6.1 The environment of the two Parishes is recognised at a range of levels. Policies for landscape character and features, biodiversity and the historic environment are set out in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, including LD1, LD2 and LD4. It is not intended to duplicate these policies within this plan. Relevant environmental characteristics and features within the two Parishes are highlighted in previous sections of this plan. Their significance in relation to Core Strategy policies will be assessed at such a time as proposals are advanced. However, this Neighbourhood Plan should and does include policies that are considered to be of local importance. These may be specific environmental policies or components of policies covering other matters where the environment might be a constraint or a matter that needs to be addressed positively such as to enhancement measures.
- 6.2 Those forms of development that can take place outside of the two villages will be required to be in scale with the landscape and this will be judged against Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy LD1 and guidance included in Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document. However, there may be areas that are on the edge of settlement boundaries that are important to a village's setting. The defining of a settlement boundary should protect those areas from encroachment through village extensions where this is necessary. They may however be affected by other forms of development and where such areas are considered of such importance to the community that no development should take place, they might usefully be designated as Local Green Space. The Local Green Space designation can also be used to protect important areas within a settlement boundary, such as amenity areas, recreation areas and areas

supporting heritage assets or biodiversity. However, they should not be used to cover extensive tracts of land.

Policy ORC3: Local Green Space

The following areas identified on Orleton and Richards Castle Village Maps are designated as Local Green Space:

- a) Land comprising playing fields and community woodland to the west and north of Millbrook, Orleton;**
- b) Amenity land between Hallets Well and Kings Road, Orleton;**
- c) Woodland to south of Kitchen Hill Road and north of Orleton Manor, Orleton;**
- d) Orleton Primary School playing fields;**
- e) Land to the east of Westbrook and north of the Brook in Richards Castle.**

No development shall be permitted in these areas that will adversely affect the contribution they make to the particular village's environment.

6.3 The areas identified in this policy are considered important green space. Development is not totally restricted within these but any proposals should be for the benefit of the site's current use. Designation as Local Green Space does not indicate a right of public access if it is not already public space, neither does it change the current use. The reasons advanced for the designation of each site are as follows:

a) Recreation Ground to the west and north of Millbrook, Orleton: This designation continues protection afforded in previous planning policy documents. As a formally constituted charity, the ground is held by the Parish Council on behalf of the community and administered by the Orleton Recreation Association. It comprises 4.5 hectares (11 acres) of land including 1.5 hectares of community woodland and provides space for a range of recreational activities for all, including football pitches and children's play areas. There are two adult and five junior football teams based on the ground operating from an aged pavilion requiring urgent replacement. The Association hosts Orleton Youth Club which provides activities for Orleton youth and those of surrounding villages. It is housed in a prefabricated ex-classroom and plans are being developed to provide a modern building, combining youth club and sports pavilion which would in principle be permitted under this policy.

b) Land between Hallets Well and Kings Road, Orleton: this is amenity land between residential development and the village street, accommodating a pleasant footway through the village and particularly to the Primary School. Again it was protected in a previous planning document.

c) Woodland to south of Kitchen Hill Road and north of Orleton Manor, Orleton: This fairly recently planted woodland area had previously been identified in a planning policy document⁴ as important to the character at the southern end of the village and conservation area including part of their settings. It also protects the setting of Orleton Manor, one of the villages Listed Buildings. It forms part of the transition from countryside to village in association with the narrow lane and glacial ridge-line.

d) Orleton Primary School playing fields: The previous protection provided through Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan is continued recognising that the area is important to the community as school playing field and that this should endure beyond the end of the plan-period. It will not however restrict any development that would support the playing field use.

e) Land to the east of Westbrook and north of the Brook in Richards Castle: This area is important to the setting and outlook of Westbrook, an imposing property at the northern entrance to the village and to the character of the village. It will also protect the setting and biodiversity value of the Brook before it passes under the B4361.



Figure 7 – Orleton Recreation Ground

⁴ The former Leominster District Local Plan

- 6.4 Other open areas and natural features may also be important to the settings of the two villages but Government advice is that protection cannot be afforded through this designation to larger areas. Other forms of protection may be appropriate utilising particular policies in this plan or through policies in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 6.5 Where sites are proposed for development on the edge of the two villages it is still important to reduce their effects on the settlement's setting and wider landscape. This can be done through requiring detailed landscaping schemes to address this and related issues.
- 6.6 Two particular environmental infrastructure constraints have been identified in particular in relation to Orleton village – flood risk and sewerage capacity. The community's concerns include:
- Flooding of the Brook flowing along the north edge of the main part of the village as a consequence of heavy rain within its catchment to the west;
 - Storm water connections into to foul sewer resulting in flows in excess of its capacity;
 - Insufficient capacity at the village pumping station causing flows to back up from that point;
 - The suggestion that mains sewer vertical alignment has been affected by ground movements such that it rises and falls at various points; and
 - Anecdotal evidence that localised storm water runs down the escarpment across the main village street in some locations.
- 6.7 Policies covering these issues are considered necessary.

Policy ORC4: Protection from Flood Risk

New development shall be subject to the Flood Risk 'sequential' and 'exception' tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and housing development, in particular, will not be permitted in areas identified as flood zones 2 and 3. Where other forms of development are necessary in areas at risk of flooding full and effective mitigation measures must be provided. No development will be permitted that will result in increased flood risk to properties elsewhere.

Where flood risk is identified as an issue, developers shall undertake full and detailed flood risk assessments, including taking into account climate change, to inform decisions on planning applications. Development should not cause or increase surface water flooding or risk of pollution. Opportunities to address storm flooding problems should be taken where available

Where the management of drainage needs to be addressed, developers should utilise or contribute to sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) where this is practicable, including measures to support biodiversity.

- 6.8 Limited areas where flooding is a potential constraint exist in Richards Castle village. Surface water run-off is a potential problem in parts of the village and should not be exacerbated through any development. Consequently, all development proposals within Richards Castle village should include consideration of this issue. Flooding has been identified as a major issue within Orleton principally caused by the streams running through the village. Nearly 70% of residents recognised the need to avoid building upon land identified to be within Orleton's flood zone even if such development could be protected. Sufficient land is available to meet housing development requirements in or adjacent to Orleton village to avoid the need to develop within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. The area at flood risk extends both the west and east of the village and covers an extensive area. Consequently, the issue is not just one restricted to Orleton village and may affect development proposals elsewhere. Surface water run-off from fields and the highway have also been identified as a problem in some areas. Under both this policy and those for specific sites identified for housing development within the villages, developers must show that the flooding issue has been fully addressed and includes measures brought forward as necessary to protect development without adversely affecting other properties. This reinforces Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SD3 and the need for development to take into account the *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 2009* for Herefordshire, or any successor document, is emphasised as part of any flood risk assessment.
- 6.9 In addition to flooding caused by the Brook through Orleton, problems associated with storm water is also a cause of flooding to some properties, in particular where this runs northward down the slope through the village. This policy would also apply where such flooding occurs and will need to be addressed when relevant development proposals are brought forward. Opportunities to reduce any such current effects should be taken where possible.

Policy ORC5: Sewerage Infrastructure

No development will be permitted which will exacerbate pollution overflows from the public sewer running through Orleton village. Development upon sites where this may result will need to be delayed until such time as works are carried out to provide sufficient sewerage capacity to remove the current polluting effects within the mains sewer. Developers may contribute towards remedial works to the mains sewer in order to expedite the current under-capacity in order to advance their proposals more swiftly.

- 6.10 This policy is considered consistent with Herefordshire Core Strategy policy SD4 given the particular circumstances within Orleton village. Although Severn Trent Water is confident it has identified the problem, works to rectify the consequent polluting effects caused by problems with the mains sewer have yet to be brought forward. This policy may not affect sites that would connect below the main sewer's problem area although the local

community's strong impression is that the sewerage backs up from close to the pumping station to the east of the village and therefore any new connections would be likely to exacerbate the current unsatisfactory flooding and pollution affecting residential properties.

- 6.11 Both communities have expressed support for a proactive approach to sustainable design. This Neighbourhood Plan therefore contains a policy directed at this objective.

Policy ORC6: Sustainable Design

An integrated approach to achieve a high standard of sustainable design will be required to, in particular, achieve the maximum possible reduction in the carbon footprint of any development. Development proposals should contain a co-ordinated package of design measures which, in addition to regulatory requirements, include:

- a) Utilising physical sustainability measures associated with buildings that include, in particular, orientation of buildings, the provision of energy and water conservation measures, storage for bicycles and storage for waste including provision for recycling, broadband infrastructure, and renewable energy infrastructure such as photovoltaic panels where these do not detract from any historic fabric or settings;**
- b) Seeking on site measures that support energy conservation such as through tree planting and other forms of green infrastructure to provide shade and shelter, the maximum use of permeable surfaces, and minimising the use of external lighting to that which is necessary;**
- c) Ensuring that new homes are fully integrated into the existing neighbourhood and support a more pedestrian and cyclist friendly environment through convenient links to local facilities and public transport connections which are suitable for those with mobility restrictions;**
- d) Assisting offsite measures such as supporting infrastructure to promote sustainable travel and enabling a sustainable drainage system to serve a wider range of properties where opportunities exist;**
- e) Where external lighting is required it should be supported by a lighting plan that demonstrates that it will not have an adverse effect through unnecessary glare, light trespass, scenic intrusion or sky glow;**
- f) Minimising construction traffic and reducing waste;**
- g) Retaining important natural habitats and features such as tree cover, ponds, orchards and hedgerows while ensuring there is no net loss of biodiversity through providing offsetting for any loss and adding to the natural assets of the parish where opportunities are available;**
- h) Where there is good reason to believe that contamination of land may exist on any site, including through agricultural processes, carrying out an assessment to establish the extent and nature of the contamination, and ensuring that effective measures are taken to ensure potential occupiers, and the wider environment, are not put at unacceptable risk; and**

Where new innovative sustainable design or features are incorporated, they should fit sensitively within the street scene and incorporate a number of locally distinctive features to maintain the areas cohesive character.

- 6.12 The approach to sustainable design should be undertaken in an integrated way addressing measures related to individual buildings, site layout and landscaping and support for off-site measures where these are appropriate such as links to the public footpath network and supporting public transport through such facilities as providing bus shelters. Measures to promote the health and wellbeing of residents should also be undertaken, for example by providing links to the Public Rights of Way network and provision of open space. These are detailed design issues that would support Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy SD1.
- 6.13 In relation to the heritage assets that would be protected by Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy LD4 residents of the two parishes expressed the need, in particular, to safeguard the following buildings from inappropriate development. This would also include their settings:
- St George's Church, Orleton, including ancient cross in churchyard;
 - The Castle, Richards Castle;
 - Site of the Old Village, Richards Castle;
 - St Bartholomew's Church, Richards Castle;
 - Dove Cot in Castle Road, Richards Castle.

7 Housing in Orleton

- 7.1 Orleton village grew relatively substantially during the 1980s largely as a consequence of development between Millbrook Close and Mortimer Drive. Subsequently planning policy sought to slow this expansion in order not only to enable consolidation but to avoid development which might lead to unnecessary increases in commuting and to retain the rural character upon which Orleton Conservation Area is based.
- 7.2 The change in approach to providing homes throughout the rural area of the County proposed within Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy requires land for at least a further 25 dwellings over and above dwellings built or committed since 2011, to achieve a growth of at least 53 dwellings within the parish. The majority of the new development needs to be within or adjacent to the built-up area of Orleton village although a windfall allowance for 10 dwellings over the plan period outside of the village is considered appropriate based on past trends. Although it is considered that a minimum number of 15 dwellings is required within Orleton village to meet Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy target, local needs over the plan period suggest a higher number is required provided it can be accommodated within the environmental constraints present, in particular the capacity of sewers serving the village, the extensive area at risk of flooding, and the need to conserve village character and setting, especially as the village falls within Orleton Conservation Area.

Policy ORC7: Housing Development in Orleton

New housing within Orleton will be restricted to sensitive infilling within a settlement boundary and sites identified for development defined upon Orleton Village Map. Within the settlement boundary infilling will be permitted where it meets the following criteria:

- a) Development will only be permitted if and when there is sufficient capacity within the public sewer to which it will need to connect;**
- b) Development is protected from risk of flooding and will not result in increased flooding to other properties;**
- c) Development shall preserve or, where necessary, enhance the character and appearance of Orleton Conservation Area;**
- d) Dwellings shall be of a scale, massing, density, building line and layout compatible with the character, size and form of the particular part of the settlement within which they are located and not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent properties;**
- e) Development shall not result in the loss of important features such as trees, hedgerows, or significant frontage gaps or green spaces that contribute to the unique character of the village;**
- f) Development shall not adversely affect heritage assets within the village, including their settings;**
- g) There should be safe access for vehicles, and parking arrangements should not detract from the village street scene but be an integral part of the overall design.**
- h) Comply with other relevant policies contained within this plan and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.**

- 7.3 The settlement boundary remains generally as defined in Herefordshire UDP. To the north east it has been extended to include the housing site north of Kings Road and opposite Orleton Primary School which is allocated in ORC8. It has also been extended to include the Primary School Playing Fields designated as ORC3(d). Within the settlement boundary it may be possible for infilling to take place provided the criteria set out in Policy OCR7 are met. Of particular concern is the ability of the village sewerage system to cope with any further connections and regard must be had to Policy ORC5. An extensive area which is prone to flooding has been identified and there is no need to utilise land falling within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 defined by the Environment Agency.
- 7.4 When asked about defining a settlement boundary for Orleton 36% of residents indicated they would like to keep the existing boundary while 39% were happy to see it extended. Responses in terms of reducing or scrapping the boundary were minimal (1% and 2% respectively).

- 7.5 The settlement boundary is defined in particular to avoid the extension of development into the more sensitive parts of Orleton village's setting. These areas lie predominantly to the south whereby development extending beyond and over the glacial ridge is avoided and the boundary maintains this edge to ensure the village continues to nestle upon its north side. The area prone to flooding on the north side of the village also forms a natural barrier as does the need to avoid creating new accesses onto the B4361. The narrow nature of the rural lanes on the approach to the village from the south-west, the character of which is important, will be retained by restricting development in that direction. The most appropriate direction for growth has therefore been concluded as eastwards.
- 7.6 A range of design requirements are also included in order to ensure developments fits sensitively into the Conservation Area, the character of the village street, retains important natural features such as trees and hedgerows, protects local heritage assets and provides appropriately for car access and parking.
- 7.7 Sustainable design is also important in order to contribute towards a low-carbon economy. Policy ORC 6 and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SD1 are therefore relevant.



Figure 8 – Kitchen Hill Road within Village Historic Core

Policy ORC8: Housing Site in Orleton

Land to the north of Kings Road and opposite Orleton Primary School identified on Orleton Village Map is identified for new housing development provided it meets the following requirements:

- a) Development of any part of this site should not contribute to the pollution effects caused by deficiencies in the public sewer running through the village in accordance with policy ORC5.**
- b) A detailed flood risk assessment should identify the extent of the developable land, taking into account the potential effects of climate change and meeting the provisions of Policy ORC4, in particular no development shall take place on land that falls within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3.**
- c) The vehicular entrance onto a main route through the village should be designed to reflect the rural character of the village.**
- d) Landscape proposals should form an integral part of the design for the development, retaining as many natural features within or surrounding the site as possible.**
- e) Buildings should be designed to avoid repetition of form and detail that would result in an urban appearance, and utilise a mixture of materials, styles and aspects that reflect the existing village character.**
- f) Particular emphasis should be upon preserving or enhancing Orleton Conservation Area.**
- g) Sufficient garden space should be provided that would enable residents to enjoy their use with appropriate degrees of privacy.**
- h) Sufficient off street parking should be provided to avoid on-street parking for residents. In addition, regard should be had to highway safety in the vicinity of Orleton VC Primary School and comprehensive proposals will be required to address the combined effects of additional access points and traffic generated within the school's vicinity in order to avoid increasing the danger to pedestrians, especially children.**
- i) Appropriate amenity open space and children's play space should be provided to meet the requirements set by Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.**
- j) New housing development should provide a mix of house types and tenures, with an emphasis upon family accommodation for young people.**
- k) Affordable housing should be provided in accordance with the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy H1.**
- l) The amenity of adjacent properties should be protected.**
- m) Appropriate archaeological investigations shall be carried out and in the event of significant and/or extensive remains being found they should be preserved in-situ in accordance with para. 135 of the NPPF.**

7.8 The area of land identified upon Orleton Village Map that might be developed for housing continues the most recent development form of the village. It includes parts falling within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 and the exact area that might be developed would need to be ascertained through site specific flood risk assessments in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 103. As a consequence, only parts of the land can be developed. The detailed assessment should also ensure flood risk is not exacerbated elsewhere. Herefordshire Council has now granted outline planning permission for 39 houses

on this site (28th October 2016) following an agreement being entered into covering a number of matters, primarily relating to planning obligations. An application for approval of reserved matters is awaited. The site development area was identified following an initial flood risk assessment that would allow a settlement boundary to be defined to include this area.

- 7.9 The choice of site results from an assessment of those submitted following a call for sites. Although the level of development exceeds the number required by Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, the area concerned is considered a logical extension to the village that best suits its form and character. Development in other directions will, in particular, adversely affect important environmental and amenity considerations such as the setting of the village and particular features of importance. Extension to the south would extend the village uncharacteristically beyond the glacial ridge into the parkland setting and approach to the village. To the south-west around Kitchen Hill, there is a particular form of loose knit development separated from the village by woodland and served by narrow lanes. Its particular character should be conserved. To the north-west only limited development extends beyond the B4361 while that between the village and this road comprises ribbon development although Fairview Holiday Caravan Park does extend northwards for some depth. There is no indication that the caravan park use will cease.
- 7.10 A major constraint upon development is the current capacity of the public sewerage system through the village. This has been a cause of considerable concern for some time and Severn Trent Water has been undertaking a study to determine what measures might be taken to address the issue. Until the results of this are known and proposals advanced to rectify the problem development should not take place where it would add to the problems encountered as required by Policy ORC5.



Figure 9 – Detailed Flood Risk Assessments are required to determine the exact boundary for development upon the low lying land adjacent to

- 7.11 The public sewer crosses the site and development should not restrict access to this for improvement or maintenance. Connection to this should only take place if there is sufficient capacity. The site is relatively close to the village Sewage Pumping Station.
- 7.12 Although outline planning permission is expected to be granted following the applicant entering into a Section 106 agreement there will still be a need to agree matters of detail and consequently the criteria set out in policy ORC8 will apply to this area. In particular, Kings Road is heavily trafficked at times when children are dropped off or picked up from Orleton Primary School. The site has however been advanced on the basis that the issue will be addressed and provide a long term solution that would benefit the safety of children. The hedgerows between the site and Kings Road is an important natural features.

8 Housing in Richards Castle

- 8.1 Richards Castle village is significantly smaller than Orleton. It has had a settlement boundary defined for it in the past which straddled the B4361. However more recently it was defined as a settlement where development might take place within small gaps. A particular characteristic of the village, which was previously identified and has been maintained, is its loose knit nature along the B4361 together with its setting when viewed from this road as the village is approached. From the south the village sits astride a low east-west ridge and is commanded by higher ground to the north and those buildings on its northern and southern edges are particularly prominent. The village roofscape on its eastern side is also particularly visible from the north with properties nestling along a shallow valley created by the Brook which forms the County boundary with Shropshire. Here the gaps between buildings reflect its historical development.
- 8.2 The housing target for Richards Castle Parish is 18 dwellings although commitments since 2011 provide for 3 dwellings. Trends suggest a relatively low level of windfall rural dwellings of no more than a further 3 dwellings over the plan period. Consequently, the minimum housing target that needs to be met within or adjacent to Richards Castle village is 12 dwellings. A conservative estimate of future housing need based on the local Housing Need Survey in 2015 suggests a need for 15-20 houses of which at least 3 should be affordable houses.
- 8.3 The important character and appearance of Richards Castle village should be recognised even though it has not been designated a conservation area. Its setting is important and this includes the approaches from both the north and south which present different but notable characteristics. There is no indication that areas within the village are at risk of flooding or that the capacity of the public sewer is insufficient to accommodate the limited growth required.



Figure 10 – Open space in the foreground to Westbrook, Richards Castle.

Policy ORC9: Housing Development in Richards Castle

New housing within Richards Castle will be restricted to sensitive infilling within a settlement boundary and sites identified for development defined upon Richards Castle Village Map. Within the settlement boundary infilling will be permitted where it meets the following criteria:

- a) Special attention will be given to retaining the character and appearance of the street scene along the B4361 composed of buildings, the gaps between them and the natural vegetation which form the historic core to Richards Castle village;**
- b) Dwellings shall be of a scale, massing, density, building line and layout compatible with the character, size and form of the particular part of the settlement within which they are located and not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent properties;**
- c) Development shall not result in the loss of important features such as trees, hedgerows, or significant frontage gaps or green spaces that contribute to the unique character of the village;**
- d) Development shall not adversely affect heritage assets within the village, including their settings;**
- e) There should be safe access for vehicles, and parking arrangements should not detract from the village street scene but be an integral part of the overall design.**

- 8.4 The settlement boundary to the south, east and west of the village remains generally the same as has been previously defined. The nature of the B4361 is such that access onto it should be carefully engineered to afford safe visibility arcs. To the north it has been extended to include land proposed for development and this is covered in more detail within policy ORC10. Development southwards would have a significant landscape impact. However, a small site within the existing south-facing building line is available provided a safe vehicular access can be achieved. An area in front of Westbrook House incorporating the Brook and its banks is important to the setting of both the house and the village and is indicated as Local Green Space in policy ORC3.
- 8.5 Very limited opportunities in terms of infilling are available and the principal approach to meeting housing need is through the allocation of land for housing. A range of design requirements are set out in order to ensure developments fits sensitively into the village street, retains important natural features such as trees and hedgerows, protects local heritage assets and provides appropriately for car access and parking. Again sustainable design is also important in order to contribute towards a low-carbon economy. Policy ORC6 and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SD1 are also relevant.

Policy ORC10: Housing Sites in Richards Castle

The following areas of land are identified on Richards Castle Village Map where new housing development may take place where they meet the following requirements:

i) Land amounting to 0.55 hectares at Spout House Field, which was granted outline planning permission in April 2016.

ii) Land amounting to 0.44 hectare to the north of Westbrook House.

Housing development of these sites will be permitted where it meets the following requirements:

a) A detailed flood risk assessment should identify the extent of the developable land, taking into account the potential effects of climate change and meeting the provisions of Policy ORC4, in particular no development shall take place on land that falls within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3.

b) The vehicular entrance onto the adjacent road should be designed to reflect the rural character of the village.

c) Landscape proposals should form an integral part of the design for the development, retaining as many natural features within or surrounding the site as possible.

- d) Buildings should be designed to avoid repetition of form and detail that would result in an urban appearance, and utilise a mixture of materials, styles and aspects that reflect the existing village character.**
- e) Sufficient garden space should be provided that would enable residents to enjoy their use with appropriate degrees of privacy.**
- f) Sufficient off street parking should be provided to avoid on-street parking for residents.**
- g) Appropriate amenity open space and children's play space should be provided to meet the requirements set by Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.**
- h) New housing development should provide a mix of house types and tenures, with an emphasis upon family accommodation for young people.**
- i) Affordable housing should be provided in accordance with the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy H1.**
- j) The amenity of adjacent properties should be protected.**
- k) Appropriate archaeological investigations shall be carried out and in the event of significant and/or extensive remains being found they should be preserved in-situ in accordance with para. 135 of the NPPF.**
- l) A pedestrian route through the sites shall be formed to enable the opportunity to create a foot link with the footpath on the B4361.**
- m) Contributions should be made to enable an area to be provided that will be effective in providing for both an infant's and a children's play area that would serve the wider village in addition to the development itself;**

- 8.6 The chosen sites are considered to form the most logical extensions to the village so that its consolidated settlement form is retained, ribbon development along Castle Road is substantially avoided, they would have the least likely effect upon aspects of the historic environment, and they offer the potential benefit of improving pedestrian links especially to the village hall. They are also in the area most preferred by residents. The site at Spout House Field was granted Outline Planning Permission in April 2016 and should remain a commitment during the plan-period with detailed arrangements needing to comply with the criteria listed in Policy ORC10.
- 8.7 For the purposes of determining their contribution to the housing target for the plan area a modest combined total of some 20 houses could be accommodated. Although in separate ownership there would be some benefits to the community if the owners could work together on a number of issues including affording an alternative pedestrian links that would join with the current footpath along the B4361 leading to the Village Hall and also play areas that might usefully enable the current shortfall to be met. It may also be possible to meet the need for affordable housing through a more practical approach if they were to co-operate in order to comply with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy H1. Given the relationship with Richards Castle (Shropshire) Parish Council discussions might also be useful to determine whether any scheme might incorporate any need for affordable housing from within that parish.



Figure 11 – Richards Castle has limited facilities although reasonable access to Leominster and Ludlow

- 8.8 The form of both developments will be important and the need to avoid any urban or suburban appearance essential. Roofscape is particularly important in that the sites will be looked down upon from the north as the village is approached. A gap will exist between the two sites, principally as a consequence of a covenant that restricts development upon this. Should however it be possible to create a footpath across this area to link the two sites, this would provide a safe pedestrian route from the west of the village to the footpath linking the community to the joint village hall to the north, avoiding the narrow gap at the east end of Castle Road where there is no footpath. If possible and dependent upon the terms of the covenant this 0.3-hectare gap area might also be utilised as open space and accommodate infant's and children's play space accommodating the open space requirements of the proposed housing sites and to address the identified wider shortfall.
- 8.9 The criteria included in the policy are to provide environmental and other safeguards. In addition, emphasis should be upon providing medium sized family accommodation, with a high proportion of two and three-bed properties. A range of affordable housing types will be sought.

9 Other Policy Areas

- 9.1 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy contains a large number of policies for the management of development. To duplicate these within this plan would serve no purpose particularly where the two Parish Councils are happy to rely upon them. These include for

example the encouragement of economic development of a suitable scale for rural areas (Policies RA5 – Re-use of Rural Buildings; RA6 – Rural Economy), affordable housing (Policies H1 – Affordable Housing; H2 – Rural Exception Sites), housing in the countryside (Policy RA3 – Herefordshire’s Countryside), retaining community facilities (Policy SC1 – Social and Community Facilities and Policies OS1 to OS3 covering open space and recreation facilities); and environmental protection (Policies LD1 to LD4). However, a number of issues in addition to the environment and making land available for housing within the two villages were raised during the preparation of the plan that were of particular concern to both communities which would benefit from detailed policies or other reference in this Neighbourhood Plan.



Figure 12 – Orleton Village Hall

Housing Types

- 9.2 Both communities are anxious that the new housing they are required to accommodate meet local housing needs, providing for young families and the elderly in particular. They wish new housing to contribute to overall needs rather than continue what appears to have been a concentration of larger detached properties.

Policy ORC11: Provision of a Range and Mix of Housing

New housing should meet the needs of the community in terms of size, type and tenure. In particular development upon allocated sites within Orleton and Richards Castle should include a mix of properties including predominantly small and medium sized family homes and homes for the elderly in order to address needs identified within the Local Housing Market Assessment. Applications for allocated housing sites should indicate how they propose to contribute towards the needs identified, particularly in terms of house size. Departure from proportional needs may be accepted where development provides especially for particular local community needs such as housing for the elderly or starter homes.

- 9.3 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy H3 requires residential developments to provide a range and mix of housing units which can contribute to the creation of balanced and inclusive communities. This policy reinforces that approach. In addition, the extent of housing proposed on allocated sites within the two villages has been set above the target with that positive intention in mind. Table 1 sets out the assessed need in terms of house type by size within the rural parts of the Leominster Housing Market Area.

Table 1: Proportion of Houses required by Size within Rural Part of the Leominster Housing Market Area

House Type by Size	Market Housing Proportion Required	Affordable Housing Proportion Required
1 Bedroom	5.8%	24.1%
2. Bedrooms	25.8%	31.5%
3 Bedrooms	59.1%	42.6%
4+ Bedrooms	9.2%	1.8%

(Source - Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment 2012 Update)

- 9.4 This table should be utilised by developers to inform the levels of house types within their developments. If Herefordshire Council undertakes any revision to this assessment in the future, then figures from that should be used. Developments containing excessive numbers of 4 bedroomed properties above the proportion indicated will be resisted. The Local Market Assessment also identified an increasing proportion of elderly over the plan period, including in particular the very elderly. Some of these will wish to remain in the two villages for a range of reasons, including being close to friends and relatives. Developers seeking to

provide substantial numbers of dwellings specifically for this age range will be welcome and may be permitted to vary from the proportions indicated in Table 1. Similarly, developers proposing starter homes may also be permitted to vary from the proportions indicated.

Affordable Housing

- 9.5 Provision was recently made for affordable housing through an 'exception site' in Orleton. The extent of further need for social rented accommodation will require an up-to-date survey to be carried out. Further provision of affordable and intermediate housing⁵ need will be provided for through applying Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy H1 upon allocated sites within both Orleton and Richards Castle villages. Specific reference is made to the approach necessary within Richards Castle in policy ORC10.
- 9.6 Although Orleton has recently accommodated an affordable housing development the community has a mixed view upon whether further such housing is needed. Some 50% consider there is no further need while 44% consider further should be built. The proposed allocations within this plan might result in 15 further affordable housing units. At the time of the community survey, the need for such housing at Richards Castle was understood to be 2 units. This was confirmed by the Housing Need Survey (need for 2-3 units), and was also considered about right by 60% of the parish's residents. However, 24% felt it was too few with 9% saying it was too many. The anticipated provision through the current site allocation would amount to around 5 units. For both villages these revised figures may include intermediate forms such as shared ownership and housing for sale below market value. The mix would need to be determined at the time of any planning applications.
- 9.7 Views expressed about who should have priority for affordable housing supported those already living or working in the parishes and those supporting or needing support by close family member's resident in the relevant parish. It is understood Herefordshire Council's approach favours these groups when negotiating priority arrangements. Residents favoured people being eligible where they have lived in the parish for at least one year. The preferences of the relevant communities might usefully be indicated to Herefordshire Council if and when appropriate planning applications arise together with local knowledge of the potential need at the time.

⁵ Affordable housing comprises social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Social rented housing is owned by private registered providers. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency. Affordable rented housing is let by private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent. Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition. These can include shared, other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Highway Measures and Safety

- 9.8 Concerns were expressed in terms of addressing particular locations where local problems were identified by the community within the highway network and also about how new development is accommodated safely.

Policy ORC12: Traffic Measures within Parishes

Orleton and Richards Castle Parish Councils will work with Herefordshire Council and developers to introduce measures to improve road safety, especially where the impact of development will increase adverse effects upon its communities. Development proposals should propose positive measures to address the problems caused by vehicles through:

- a) Slowing vehicle speed on entry to villages;**
- b) Managing vehicle speed through villages;**
- c) Facilitating safer parking within village cores and adjacent to Orleton Primary School;**
- d) Reducing the traffic effects of any proposed development upon village and residential amenity;**
- e) Providing better access to and use of public transport, cycling and walking links and safer routes to Orleton Primary School;**
- f) Addressing safety problems at junctions.**

Proposals will be introduced progressively during the Plan period in association with Herefordshire Council and include utilising developer contributions resulting from development within the Plan area.

- 9.9 Both parishes have identified traffic issues and measures that the local community feel are important within Parish Plans. The need for further measures may be required in order to accommodating the growth proposed within the two Parishes. This policy seeks to ensure such matters are addressed through development and other proposals.

- 9.10 Highway issues that have been identified within the two parishes include:

- HGV and heavy agricultural traffic on the unclassified roads cause safety or road-wear problems.
- Trouble spots within Richards Castle Parish are identified at: Woodhouse Lane and the Goggin; and Castle Road.
- In Richards Castle Village, the school bus stopping place in Castle Road, just off the B4361 and before Orchard Rise.

- Trouble spots within Orleton Parish are identified at: Kings Road through parking outside Orleton Primary School at particular times of day; and traffic speeds by vehicles at the cross-roads by the Bakers Arms.
- The need for shelter for bus travellers.



Figure 13: Entrance to Richards Castle from the north (Boundary with Shropshire)

Policy ORC13: Highway Design Requirements

Where development proposals are advanced these should ensure:

- a) There should be safe access onto the adjacent roads;**
- b) Proposals should not result in on-street parking but should provide adequate off street parking for residents and visitors, and preferably address the reduction of any on-street parking problems that may exist within the vicinity;**
- c) Proposals should not lead to a significant increase in speed or the volume of traffic travelling through villages within the parish or on roads that do not have sufficient capacity.**
- d) The nature of the development does not lead to pressure for the provision of street lighting where this is not currently present within the particular locality.**

- 9.11 With the need for each of the two villages to accommodate further development, it is essential that the highway requirements in terms of safety are met in order that the network can cope with increases in traffic generated. This applies not only in the two villages where growth is proposed but also elsewhere in the two Parishes. It is also important that local amenity is protected from the impact of traffic. Herefordshire Council utilises appropriate highway standards, which include parking standards, to ensure that the network is able to accommodate new development and this policy supports their use outlining important issues that should be addressed as part of any planning application where traffic is generated. In addition, tranquillity within the two parishes is also something that residents appreciate and the absence of street lighting within much of the two parishes is a contributory factor to this. The design and layout of any new development should avoid the need for street lighting where this is not currently present. However, a number of areas within Orleton have been identified where lighting is currently present but the standard might usefully be improved. This policy does not restrict improvements where there is an overriding safety requirement for this.

The Local Economy

- 9.12 Although the future of the BBC Transmission site at Woofferton was identified as uncertain after 2022, there is no suggestion that its current operation will cease. However, the community expressed mixed views upon potential new uses for the site should this happen. These included housing, employment and renewable energy. With one exception there were slim majorities in favour of such uses should it be shown that they could be accommodated provided there was a low impact upon the community. The site's use for wind turbines was generally not supported. Should the situation change and consideration to be given to an alternative use it is understood this would be a strategic and cross-border matter that would be outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan although the concerns expressed through the residents' survey may inform the local response.
- 9.13 Specifically in relation to proposals for renewable energy residents were generally opposed to large scale proposals such as wind turbines, PV solar panels and bio-digester plants. However, where such proposals might be of a scale and nature whereby the community can buy into proposals and obtain cheaper electricity, levels of support and opposition were similar. This included individual turbines primarily for the owner's use. As a consequence, no proposals are advanced for renewable energy and it is not proposed to advocate a deviation from Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SD2. This policy in particular requires proposals for wind turbines to receive local backing. The results of the survey suggest this is unlikely for large scale proposals but the nature of any small-scale proposal providing local benefits will influence the community's response.
- 9.14 Supporting agricultural, including through diversification; the viability of existing services and facilities; and the establishment of new businesses that would serve the communities is however seen as consistent with one of the Neighbourhood Plan's objectives. Consequently,

the plan sets out a policy for these that would add to yet be consistent with Herefordshire Local Plan's Core Strategy approach.

Policy ORC14: Agricultural Diversification, Workshops, Services and Facilities

Development proposals by new or existing local businesses that would involve agricultural diversification, small workshops, new services and facilities or increase the viability of services or facilities already within the two parishes which are appropriate to their character will be encouraged where they result in sustainable economic growth. Home working and live/work units will in particular be encouraged.

In addition to Neighbourhood Plan policies safeguarding the environment and stipulating highway requirements and also relevant policies in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, the following criteria are considered important in determining whether such development is considered sustainable economic growth in the two parishes:

- (a) Development proposals should be in scale with the character of the area or settlement in which the development site is located;**
- (b) The residential amenity of nearby dwellings should not be significantly affected in any adverse way;**
- (c) Proposals should not adversely affect landscape character or heritage assets, or result in the loss of good quality agricultural land;**
- (d) Development of workshops in the countryside should utilise existing rural buildings, including small scale extensions, and brownfield sites;**
- (e) Proposals involving new buildings to enable farm diversification should result in a consolidated form, preferably in association with an existing complex of buildings;**
- (e) Potential polluting effects of any enterprise should be fully mitigated, and where they cannot, permission will be refused.**

- 9.15 This policy is aimed at promoting local employment in both agriculture and services which are considered to be of an appropriate scale for the two parishes. This includes proposals within villages and in the countryside and complements Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy which already enables the re-use of rural buildings for certain forms of enterprise. In addition, the policy seeks to support existing local businesses by enabling them to undertake development that might support their viability, such as increase car parking or provide additional accommodation in order to expand or diversify. With regard to small workshops that may seek to locate within either of the villages the need, in particular, to protect residential amenity will be paramount and require that they be restricted to light industry. Home working is also encouraged. However, there must be some safeguards and many of these are covered elsewhere in this Neighbourhood Plan or Herefordshire Local

Plan Core Strategy. Those highlighted specifically in this policy are considered important in particular to safeguard amenity.

- 9.16 Residents have shown support for certain measures that provide for the development of rural businesses including such operations as craft workshops, light manufacturing, tourism and leisure enterprises, small scale retailing, catering, and market gardening. However, there was no support for large scale buildings, not only for operations such as warehousing, but also those that involve intensive agricultural activities. It is however recognised that Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy RA6 will set the controls on the latter. Policy ORC14 includes a number of constraints that the community support including protecting residential amenity, in particular the potential polluting effects of certain businesses, such as noise and smells, and the effects of traffic; and also the need to reflect the particular area's character. The traffic effects of development are covered by policy ORC13. With regard to development in rural parts of the two parishes protecting the environment is strongly supported. The requirements for development to be in scale with the character of the particular area, to not adversely affect landscape character and to protect agricultural land are specifically referred to and these link in particular with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies LD1, LD2 and LD4.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

- 9.17 Orleton possesses a wide range of community facilities. Within Richards Castle, these are more limited and the village hall is shared with Richards Castle (Shropshire) Parish Council. Although only limited further facilities are anticipated as necessary during the plan period, increased pressure upon those present will be placed upon them and they may need to be upgraded or improved in order to accommodate growth.

Policy ORC15: Developer Contributions and future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Where appropriate new development within Orleton and Richards Castle Parishes should contribute towards necessary infrastructure in order to address the demands that such development places on the area and to support the social dimension of sustainable development. Contributions should be made through Section 106 Agreements, CIL or other agreements that may be available at the time during the period of the Plan.

- 9.18 Herefordshire Council intends to introduce a charging system for the Community Infrastructure Levy during the plan period. Currently it operates a system for related payments through Planning Obligations. The two Parish Councils will use the contribution it receives from this primarily to ensure its existing facilities are improved, maintained or capable of meeting increased pressures in accordance with the legislative requirements. In

the interim, Herefordshire Council should seek advice from the relevant Parish Council upon what contributions are needed towards local community facilities and infrastructure.

- 9.19 The residents of Orleton parish greatly value both the individual and range of community facilities and services within Orleton village. These include its Primary School, its pubs, the village hall, playing field, play area, GP surgery and the village shop. At least 9 out of 10 of Orleton parish residents expressed support for each of these and for many it was nearly 100%. In terms of new facilities that might be provided the suggestions that these might include a village green and allotments received luke-warm support. The support suggests that any funds accrued through development should be concentrated upon ensuring the retention, improvement and operation of existing facilities.
- 9.20 Facilities in Richards Castle parish are fewer and comprise the village pub, allotments and the village hall, which is jointly operated and located within Richards Castle (Shropshire). Again their safeguarding received considerable support, particularly the village hall. In terms of new facilities there was some support for a village shop, playing field, playground and village green although not quite majorities.
- 9.21 In all instances Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies SC1 and OS1 to OS3 are considered sufficient for the communities' needs to safeguard existing facilities and provide any further that each community feels are viable. The provision of a village shop in Richards Castle might also be covered by policy ORC14.

10 Delivering the Plan

- 10.1 Landowners and developers will primarily deliver proposals that are promoted through policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 10.2 Orleton and Richards Castle Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented primarily through Herefordshire Council as the local planning authority determining planning applications for development within the two Parishes. Such determinations should be in accordance with this Plan unless material circumstances outweigh its provisions.
- 10.3 While the local planning authority will be responsible for development management, Orleton and Richards Castle Parish Councils will also use this Neighbourhood Plan as the basis for making its representations on planning applications. In addition, in line with the communities' wishes the Parish Council's will publicise those planning applications that are not covered by policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. They will also publicise those planning applications that although covered by general policies, contain matters of detail which are considered important. In both instances and where necessary, Herefordshire Council will be asked to extend the time within which responses are required so that publicity can be given before the respective Parish Council considers the particular application.

- 10.4 Herefordshire Council is required to monitor the achievement of its targets for a range of development types including whether sites coming forward for development. The two Parish Councils will also monitor the effectiveness of the approach it has taken to the various issues it has covered in the neighbourhood plan policies. This will be done through its annual report. That report will indicate:
- i. The number of dwellings granted planning permission within each Parish, including a running total covering the plan period 2011-2031;
 - ii. A list of other planning applications for other matters received during the year indicating whether they are covered by policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council's representations made, and whether they have been determined in accordance with the plan.
- 10.5 It is anticipated that a review of the Neighbourhood Plan will be needed, most likely when Herefordshire Core Strategy is also reviewed. In the unlikely situation that the strategy and approach in relation to housing does not deliver the level of housing required to meet the target for the Group of Parishes, discussions will take place with Herefordshire Council upon whether an early review is necessary.

Appendix 1: Non-Statutory Enabling Policy

A1.1 The following policies are not for the purposes of land use planning but indications of actions to be pursued by either or both Orleton and Richards Castle Parish Councils to support the accommodation of growth that this Neighbourhood Plan proposes in order to meet the requirements of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. They seek to address community needs in terms of facilities, services and key infrastructure. Many of them were identified during the preparation of Parish Plans although some have been identified through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

ORC(NS)16 Associated Enabling Measures

To meet the needs of the community, especially to accommodate growth proposed within this Neighbourhood Plan, Orleton (OPC) and/or Richards Castle Parish (RCPC) Councils will seek to work in collaboration with Herefordshire Council, relevant agencies, developers and other organisations in order that the following infrastructure is provided, improved, replaced, maintained or appropriately operated:

- i) Improvements to the sewerage system through Orleton village (OPC).**
- ii) Provision of bus shelters (OPC/RCPC).**
- iii) Measures to reduce danger caused by on-street parking at Orleton Primary School (OPC).**
- iv) Provision of a children's play area at Richards Castle (RCPC)**
- v) Measures to encourage the greater use of Public Rights of Way**

A1.2 These projects are aimed at increasing the sustainability of the two parishes through addressing environmental and community concerns. They set out areas where the two parish councils, either independently or in combination, will wish to be involved with the relevant organisations, landowners or developers concerned.