

Cradley and Storrige

Neighbourhood Development Plan

2011 to 2031

Consultation Draft

[suitable photograph]

First Draft Text

November 2015

Contents

Page

Foreword

1 Introduction and Background

2 History

3 Vision and Objectives

4 Strategic Framework

5 Housing

6 Economy and Facilities

7 Natural Environment

8 Built Environment

9 Transport and Communications

10 Plan Delivery and Implementation

11 The Next Steps

Map of Designated Area

Proposals Map

References

Appendices

1 2011 Census: Key Statistics

2 Questionnaire Results

3 Herefordshire Core Strategy - Index of Policies

4 Extract from Landscape Assessment

5 The Neighbourhood Plan Process

Foreword

Neighbourhood plans are one of the most significant initiatives in town and country planning since the system established by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 took effect. Neighbourhood plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and gave communities the right to shape their future development.

Brief reference is made to neighbourhood plans in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in March 2012, and more detailed guidance is found in the web-based National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), launched in March 2014. Herefordshire Council, which strongly supports neighbourhood plans in the County, has published 36 guidance notes (NPGN) on the subject.

The Cradley and Storrige Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by a Neighbourhood Plan group consisting of parish councillors **together with other members of the community and** with the assistance of the Neighbourhood Plan team at Herefordshire Council, and Estcourt Planning, Gloucester. In particular, it draws on a Landscape Assessment undertaken by Carly Tinkler CMLI, published in March 2015.

This stage of the neighbourhood planning process is covered by Regulations 14 and 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Plan also represents the first formal document in the process, following the Parish Council's application in 2013 to Herefordshire Council for its area to be designated, and the village survey undertaken in August and September 2015. It also represents Stage 2 of the neighbourhood planning process as outlined in NPGN4: A Guide to Procedures.

The draft Plan will be out for consultation among all electors in the parish from *** to ***. Consultation forms will be issued to all households.

Looking ahead, the final stages of the neighbourhood plan process involve a referendum of all electors in the parish. If the outcome is favourable, the Cradley and Storrige Neighbourhood Plan will be “made” (that is, adopted) by Herefordshire Council. It will then become part of the development plan, alongside the Herefordshire Core Strategy, against which all proposals for development will be considered.

1 Introduction and Background

Introduction

Cradley and Storridge is one of the largest parishes in area in the County of Herefordshire, covering 2,339 hectares (23.4 square kilometres). It is located on the eastern edge of the County, bordering Worcestershire, and close to the main ridge of the Malvern Hills. At the time of the 2011 Census, the parish had a population of 1,667 in 699 households. Key statistics from the Census covering such topics as age structure, housing tenure, car ownership and method of travel to work are set out in summary form in **Appendix 1**.

Most of the parish population is concentrated in two distinct settlements to the south of the A4103 on each side of Cradley Brook, a tributary of the River Teme which runs south to north through the parish. Cradley itself is the older; it is located to the east of the brook, and contains the parish church of St James the Great (Grade II* listed), which is of Norman origin, and most of the historic buildings. It is a loose knit settlement, in contrast with the compact more recent settlement of West Cradley, located to the west of the brook. The two are separated by a gap **which varies in width between 300 and 400 metres**.

Cradley and West Cradley are the names appearing on the Ordnance Survey sheets of the area at 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 scale. However, in the rest of this document, local usage – East Cradley and West Cradley respectively – is followed.

Storridge is a smaller dispersed settlement around the A4103 about 2 km north east of Cradley. It has its own parish church, St John (Grade II listed), designed by the nineteenth century church architect Frederick Preedy. This church, St James the Great, and the parish church in the separate civil parish of Mathon to the south, form the current benefice.

The rest of the parish contains scattered farms and dwellings in an attractive rural landscape, mostly open in the west, hillier and quite heavily wooded in the east. Section 2 deals with the history of the parish in a little more detail.

Location and Communications

The A4103 bisects the parish and connects Hereford with Worcester. The parish's two main settlements are located about 27 km from the former and 18 km from the latter. Other nearby larger towns include Ledbury (13 km) and Great Malvern (8 km); Bromyard lies about 12 km to the north west. The nearest

railway stations are at Great Malvern and Colwall. Section 9 deals with transport and communications.

Background

The Parish Council and others have been active in the last fifteen years or so in producing plans for the benefit of the community. The most important of these are summarised below.

Parish Plan 2004

The Parish Plan (PP2004) arose out of work begun in 2001 on a Village Design Statement (VDS) and proceeded in parallel with it. PP2004 provides among other things history of the parish and a portrait of the contemporary scene.

Village Design Statement

The Cradley and Storrige Village Design Statement (VDS) concerns issues relating to land use planning more directly. It describes the landscape in which the village is set, and provides a brief history of the parish (like PP2004) and an account of its most notable buildings. It includes a comprehensive description of building styles, design characteristics and materials in the parish. The latter include brick, stone and half timbering, all well represented and featuring in a number of significant buildings ranging in age from St James the Great, of Norman foundation, to the Victorian house Queenswood.

Building in the 20th century, and so far in the 21st, has been predominantly of brick.

The VDS is not solely concerned with buildings; it also addresses the spaces, gateways and views which provide the setting for existing development and for possible future development. The importance of the strategic gap **between East and West Cradley** is dealt with in Section 7 Natural Environment. Other features referred to in the VDS include the green lawns and trees associated with a number of houses in East Cradley, orchards, and the setting of the Maclean memorial village cross, close to the Old Rectory and St James the Great.

Parish Questionnaire 2010

The questionnaire sought information on which the Parish Plan 2010 was then partly based. 700 questionnaires were issued; 411 (58%) were returned.

There was strongest support for affordable housing and small to medium family homes. 52 respondents stated that there was a young person in the household who wished to stay in the village if possible.

Of five potential locations for a variety of development, including sports facilities and a new doctor's surgery as well as social housing, in the vicinity of the new school was the most popular.

Parish Plan 2010

The Parish Plan (PP2010) updates PP2004. Its section on planning refers to the early stages of consultation on the Herefordshire Local Development Framework (LDF), noting that "*it is proposed that Cradley will not be earmarked for considerable numbers of new houses or social housing*"; new development would be for local needs only.

The recent adoption of the Herefordshire Core Strategy, the final stage of the LDF process at the strategic level, show that a different approach was subsequently taken, based on a proportionate distribution of new housing in the rural areas. The two sides of the housing equation, requirements and supply, are discussed in Sections 4 and 5.

PP2010 covers a number of other issues, some less directly relevant to land use planning, but all important in relation to the quality of life in the parish. These include footpaths, wildlife and environment, business, employment and tourism, and transport. Speed limits on local roads were identified as a particular issue.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Survey 2014

74 responses were received. There were mixed views on how housing development should be managed in Cradley. There was greatest support for infill and the conversion of existing buildings. More respondents preferred the dispersal of new development as opposed to its concentration on the smallest number of sites.

There was very strong support for protecting the environment through the planning process.

Landscape Assessment

In November 2014 the Parish Council and the Malvern Hills AONB Unit jointly commissioned a landscape assessment from Carly Tinkler CMLI. Its purpose was

to determine the potential capacity of 82 separate parcels of land surrounding Cradley and West Cradley “to accept new residential development, from a landscape and environmental perspective”. Its findings and implications for the NDP are described in Section 7 Natural Environment.

Status of Earlier Plans and Documents

All these documents are very important, but as Herefordshire Council’s Local Development Scheme (LDS) puts it, such documents “*will not have a statutory basis but where they contain provisions relevant to planning and set out community aspirations, they may influence planning policy and decisions as material considerations, but will not have the formal status and weight of Development Plan Documents or Neighbourhood Development Plans*”.

The Neighbourhood Plan therefore takes full account of these documents and carries forward many of their provisions.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Questionnaire

The Neighbourhood Plan also takes full account of the result of the survey undertaken in August and September 2015. A summary of the results forms **Appendix 2**.

A total of 301 responses was received, a return of 23%. Question 1 concerned the provision in the NDP for a second shop and or café in addition to the butchery and general stores. About half of respondents favoured such provision; 38% did not.

Question 2 asked whether people wanted the NDP to make provision new sports pitches with car parking. 60% of respondents said ‘yes’.

Question 3 dealt with the **strategic** green gap between **between East and West Cradley**. 70% of respondents were in favour of retaining it.

Question 4 concerned whether or not restrictions should be placed on the level of new housing provision. 90% agreed that the NDP should make such restrictions.

The supplementary Question 5 concerned the appropriate size for a housing development. 23% of respondents favoured 1 to 3 units, 22% 3 to 5 units, 36% 5 to 10 units, and 8% over 10 units.

[Page for map of designated area]

2 History

This section provides a very brief account of the early history of the parish. More detail is found in PP2004 and the Landscape Assessment; the most comprehensive treatment is in Cradley – A Village History by local historian Wynnell M Hunt.

There is much evidence of pre-Roman settlement in the area. This includes a Bronze Age cemetery (c 1000 BCE) at Southend Farm near Mathon. Iron Age hillforts in the area include those at British Camp and Midsummer Hill.

Notable landmarks in the development of the village include...

The period of most rapid growth in the parish was in the 1970s and 1980s, mostly in West Cradley. The VDS states that the parish population stood at 346 in 1963, and explains that in the early 1970s the parish was “*designated for housing development to absorb the overspill of population from Birmingham, Worcester and Malvern*”. Ledbury and Bromyard were also designated, but Cradley was the only village. This expansion was enabled, as the VDS notes, by the arrival in the 1960s of mains water and drainage.

Development and population growth have been more modest in recent years, with the parish population rising from 1,627 in 1991 to 1,655 in 2001 and 1,667 in 2011. Some housebuilding has taken place in the last twenty or so years; but there has been no significant increase in population, as the effect of any housebuilding has been largely offset by the continuing decline in average household size. The Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (HUDP), adopted in 2007, allocated sites for housing in a number of the County’s larger villages, but not in Cradley.

3 Vision and Objectives

Vision

The Parish Plans and Village Design Statement make it clear that the Parish Council wishes Cradley to continue to thrive as a vibrant and distinctive place, to continue to respect and reflect the views of its community, to evolve while retaining its unique and distinctive character, and to provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations of residents.

The Parish Council will do this by:

- Encouraging a thriving and prosperous community that delivers a high quality of life for all its residents
- Promoting a distinctive and flourishing local economy that exhibits vitality and dynamism
- Supporting measured, proportionate, timely and sustainable development to meet local requirements
- Endorsing policies that have a positive effect on the environment, including those that remove or minimise flood risk, mitigate climate change and reduce the carbon footprint
- Maintaining a high quality natural environment

Objectives

- To adopt policies for housing consistent with the needs and context of the parish
- To encourage sensitive development which protects and enhances the built environment and landscape setting
- To sustain and improve high quality local facilities for existing and new residents
- To strengthen and support economic activity
- To seek improvements to transport, utility infrastructure and digital connectivity
- To give priority to local distinctiveness in every element of change and growth
- To protect greenspace, the landscape and support nature conservation
- Involve local people in the process of plan-making, monitoring and delivery of development

It is important to recognise that the vision and objectives will be achieved partly through the town and country planning system, but by other means also, for example the improvement of broadband connections. Above all, the skills and energies of people in the parish will be needed to make a real difference.

4 Strategic Context

The strategic planning framework for the NDP is provided by the Herefordshire Core Strategy (HCS), adopted in October 2015. The adoption of this plan provides a firm foundation for the production of neighbourhood plans across the County. The HCS runs from 2011 to 2031, and it is appropriate that this and other NDPs cover the same timescale.

The HCS makes only two specific references to Cradley, identifying it as a local centre in the retail hierarchy, and as one of ten villages in the Ledbury Housing Market Area (HMA) which are the main focus for proportionate housing development.

The HCS nevertheless contains a number of general policies which apply across the County, and others which apply specifically to rural areas. The NDP need not duplicate these, but must be in conformity with them.

The Core Strategy makes provision in Policy SS2 for 16,500 new dwellings in the County as a whole in the Plan period. It also divides the County into seven housing market areas, including Ledbury and surrounding parishes, among them Cradley, for the purposes of the distribution of housing.

HCS Policy RA1 makes provision for 5,300 new dwellings in the rural areas in the Plan period. Of these, 565 are to be accommodated in the Ledbury HMA on a basis proportionate to the number of existing dwellings in the constituent parishes. A footnote to the policy explicitly states that *“targets for villages are indicative and provided as a starting point for work on Neighbourhood Development Plans...”*. Herefordshire Council has calculated the figure for Cradley parish to be 101 dwellings.

Herefordshire Council hopes that a significant proportion of the County will be covered by Neighbourhood Plans. To that end the Council has produced 36 guidance notes (NPGN) on various topics, concerning both procedures and content, to enable such plans to be drawn up. These were originally produced in 2013 and all updated in summer 2015.

The alternative for parishes (or groups of parishes) which do not wish to produce a neighbourhood plan (or perhaps do not have the resources to do so) is to wait for Herefordshire Council's Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP). This will contain locally distinctive policies, and in particular will identify sites for housing where

considered necessary. A first draft of this plan is not however expected until 2017.

Some of the more detailed policies of the HCS's predecessor, the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (HUDP), have been saved and will remain in force. However, all of the detailed policies of the UDP, including the six policies referred to in the key to HUDP Inset Map 11, relevant to Cradley fell with the adoption of the HCS. Appendix 1 to the HCS lists the HUDP policies which have been retained and those which have been deleted. In particular, Appendix 1 makes it clear that settlement boundaries *"may be carried forward through Neighbourhood Development Plans or other Development Plan Documents"*. It is therefore the responsibility of the Neighbourhood Plan to carry these policies forward if required.

An index of relevant policies in the HCS forms **Appendix 3**.

5 Housing

Introduction

Of the 699 households present at the time of the 2011 Census, 562 (80%) were owner occupied, 9 in shared ownership, 67 (about 10%) social rented, 49 (7%) private rented and 12 rent free.

As indicated above, the HCS sets a housing requirement for the parish of 101 new dwellings in accordance with Policy RA1.

Since 2011, the base date of the HCS, 9 dwellings have been completed in the parish. Planning permission has been granted on smaller sites for a further 20 dwellings; these include the dwellings currently under construction at Fairlea Close, West Cradley.

Planning permission was also granted in outline in January 2015 for 60 dwellings on land off Pixiefield, West Cradley.

Completions and commitments therefore total 89 dwellings, 12 dwellings short of the requirement.

The consequence of the Pixiefield permission is that the NDP will not have to allocate any sites for housing. It is likely that the shortfall of completions and commitments in relation to requirements can be made up of further windfall sites over the remainder of the Plan period. A windfall site is any which has not been allocated in a development plan, but which has been granted planning permission in accordance with the criterion based policies in the development plan, in this case the HCS and, when made, the NDP itself.

Housing Land Supply

The NPPF requires local planning authorities to maintain a five **year** supply of housing at all times. If a five year supply cannot be shown, housing policies are considered out of date, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is reinforced. The yardstick against which supply is measured is the housing requirement in the development plan, in this case the newly adopted Core Strategy. Housing land supply is almost always measured at the level of the whole local authority, rather than any smaller areas within it.

The most recent Annual Monitoring Report, published in December 2014 and covering the year from April 2013 to March 2014, shows that there is a 2.47 year supply of land for housing in the County.

Settlement Boundaries

Settlement boundaries for **East and West Cradley** were defined in the HUDP. Settlement boundaries have long been used by local planning authorities, especially in rural areas, as means of controlling development and to provide clarity on where development will be considered more or less appropriate. Some local authorities no longer include settlement boundaries in their plans. The NPPF and NPPG make no reference to them, so the Government's stance appears to be neutral.

As is customary, settlement boundaries were drawn tightly around both **East and West Cradley**. In the case of **East Cradley**, the new school on the north side of the village lies at present outside the settlement boundary. At **West Cradley**, the settlement boundary includes the ribbon development along the B4220 leading north to the A4103.

NPGN20 Meeting Your Housing Requirements sets out the advantages and disadvantages of settlement boundaries. It is considered that in this case, the setting of such boundaries continues to be essential to prevent unsustainable growth, and in particular to prevent the coalescence of **East and West Cradley**.

Since the settlement boundary was lifted when the HUDP was superseded by the HCS, it falls to the Neighbourhood Plan to remake it.

It is proposed to make two substantial extensions to the settlement boundary: to incorporate the proposed Pixiefield development, and the primary school. Since as already acknowledged the NDP will not need to allocate sites for housing, no other major changes to the settlement boundary are proposed.

An invitation to make other minor changes, in order to achieve consistency in the treatment of domestic curtilages on the edge of the village, was made in a consultation which took place in October 2015. These and the major changes are incorporated on the Proposals Map.

Policy CSNDP 1: Settlement Boundary

A settlement boundary is defined on the Proposals Map. The provision of housing will be restricted to sites within the identified boundary, save for exception schemes covered by HCS Policy H2. Residential development will be permitted, where proposals are in accordance with the housing, design and other policies of the HCS and this Plan.

Policy CSNDP 2: Housing Provision

Planning permission will be granted for infilling development only within the settlement boundary in accordance with the policies of the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the policies of this Plan. **Housing design should be in sympathy with immediate surroundings and the character of the village as a whole.**

Elsewhere, planning permission for housing will be confined to that essential to agriculture, forestry or other defined rural activities.

6 Economy and Facilities

Economy

The context for this topic is partly set by data from the 2011 Census.

In terms of industry, the largest categories in which the 814 parish residents aged 16 to 74 in employment fall are as follows: Group C manufacturing 78 (about 10%), Group G wholesale, retail and motor vehicle repair 108 (13%), Group P education 114 (14%) and Group Q health 106 (13%). Only 31 people were recorded as working in agriculture. The percentage figures for these major categories are broadly similar to those for the County as a whole.

The mode of travel to work data show that 73% of the parish's workforce relies on the private car. 13% work at or from home; about 4% walk. Use of other modes is negligible.

These figures confirm the widely recognised fact that most of the people in the parish who are employed work outside it.

In terms of qualifications, the 1,400 or so residents aged 16 or over had higher levels of qualifications than people in Herefordshire. 16% of parish residents had no recognised qualifications, compared with 23% in the County; at the other end of the spectrum, 42% of residents had qualifications at NVQ Level 4 and above (degree level or higher) compared with 27% in the County. This again illustrates the fact that a large number of residents work outside the parish in larger centres, where employment generally, and in higher skilled occupations in particular, is concentrated.

The Ashvale Industrial Estate is located in West Cradley. Some economic activity is located along the A4103; the rest consists of scattered small businesses and farms throughout the parish where as indicated above, a significant proportion of the economically active population works at or from home.

Tourist and visitor accommodation includes eight bed and breakfast establishments, a number of self-catering cottages and camping at Ridgeway Cross.

Policy CSNDP 3: Economic Development

The Parish Council will support proposals for economic development in accordance with Core Strategy policies RA3, RA4, RA5 and RA6, in particular for the re-use or conversion of redundant buildings.

The Ashvale Industrial Estate will be protected from proposals for alternative uses.

Facilities

The village hall, located close to St James the Great, is a hub of the community. The original 16th century (Grade II* listed) structure has been carefully conserved, and a sympathetic extension to the rear provides modern facilities. The Parish Council offices are housed in the extension and its meetings take place in the main hall. The building also holds the village archive, and hosts a mobile post office on Monday morning and Thursday afternoon.

Cradley Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School is located at Buryfields on the northern edge of Cradley. It opened in **** (insert date), replacing the old school near the centre of the village. It is a 1 form entry school, with 99 pupils on roll at September 2015. A planning application was recently submitted for an additional classroom. PP2010 noted that some primary age pupils living in the village go elsewhere; some pupils at the school come from nearby villages such as Suckley and Leigh Sinton.

The nearest secondary schools in the County are the John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre at Ledbury and the Queen Elizabeth Humanities College at Bromyard.

Cradley Surgery is housed in modern premises on Bosbury Road, West Cradley. It is open from 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday. The two doctors are assisted by three RGNs, a health care assistant and support staff. The practice is currently accepting new patients.

There is a long established butchery and convenience store located on Bosbury Road, West Cradley, and a farm shop at Cowleigh Road, Storrige which opens four days a week. However, the Post Office and shop, housed in a Grade II listed half-timbered building in East Cradley, closed in **** (insert date).

The nearest major supermarkets are at Malvern Link, Great Malvern and Ledbury. A significant range of comparison goods (for example clothing, furniture and white goods) can be obtained in Hereford and Worcester, and to a lesser extent in Great Malvern.

There are two public houses in the parish, the Red Lion at Stiffords Bridge and the New Inn at Storrige, both on the A4103. The Prancing Pony, also at Stiffords Bridge, recently closed. There are no public houses in East or West Cradley. The

Cradley, Storridge and Mathon Royal British Legion Club is one of four such clubs in Herefordshire and is located on Bosbury Road.

Overall, Cradley is well served in terms of primary education and primary health care. However, the paucity of retail facilities obliges residents to travel elsewhere for many food and drink requirements, as well as nearly all comparison goods.

Public houses often provide another hub in rural communities; the absence of a public house in a historic settlement such as East Cradley, or as large a village as West Cradley, is unusual. However, the Royal British Legion Club is a popular local facility, not only serving food and drinks but providing a meeting place for and supporting community activities, including charitable work on behalf of ex-service people and their dependants.

Policy CSNDP 4: Community Facilities

The Parish Council will support the provision of additional community facilities in accordance with the policies of the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the other policies of this Plan.

7 Natural Environment

Landscape Designations

A significant part of the parish lies in the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), one of about three dozen such areas in England and Wales. First introduced in the 1950s, AONBs are nationally defined and provide, among other things, additional protection from development which may harm their important landscapes.

The Malvern Hills AONB was designated in 1959 and covers 105 square kilometres. It includes not just the hills themselves but an extensive area to the north of the A4103, and the foreground to the east and west of the main ridge, locally extending westward as far as to include a substantial part of Cradley village.

The rest of the parish was defined as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) at the time (from 1974 to 1998) when the parish formed part of Malvern Hills District, before the County of Herefordshire was re-created as a unitary authority. Government policy has long discouraged the use of such local landscape designations; the NPPF makes no reference to them. Nevertheless, the fact that the parts of the parish not included in the AONB were previously defined as an AGLV is an indication of the quality of the landscape in the parish as a whole.

The parish, and indeed much of this part of Herefordshire and neighbouring Worcestershire, are overlooked by North Hill (398m AOD), the northernmost of the Malvern Hills. The foothills in the parish themselves reach a considerable height, up to 245m AOD in the vicinity of Higher Grove Wood.

Since the AONB is nationally defined, neither Herefordshire Council nor the Parish Council has the power to alter its boundaries. The extent of the AONB in the vicinity of Cradley is nevertheless shown on the Proposals Map for information and clarity.

Policy CSNDP 5: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Priority will be given to the protection and enhancement of the natural beauty and amenity of the area, in accordance with the relevant management plans. Development will only be permitted where it is small scale, does not adversely affect the intrinsic natural beauty of the landscape, and is necessary to promote

the economic and social well-being of the designated areas and their communities or can enhance the quality of the landscape or biodiversity.

Exceptions to this policy will only be permitted when all the following criteria are met:

1. the development is of greater national interest than the purpose of the AONB;
2. there is unlikely to be any adverse impact upon the local economy ;
3. no alternative site is available, including outside of the AONB; and
4. any detrimental effect on the landscape, biodiversity and historic assets can be adequately mitigated and, where appropriate, compensatory measures provided.

Landscape Assessment March 2015

This was undertaken, as indicated earlier, by Carly Tinkler CMLI. In fulfilling its main purpose, it provides a comprehensive account of the characteristics and qualities of the landscape in the parish.

The parish includes parts of two Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). This is a different kind of classification from designations such as National Parks and AONBs; instead, it is based on common characteristics usually arising from the underlying geology. LCAs bear no relationship to administrative boundaries. In this case, the parish is covered by LCA 103 Malvern Hills in the east, and LCA 100 Herefordshire Lowlands in the west.

A more detailed assessment was made in Herefordshire Council's own Landscape Assessment, published in 2004, updated in 2009, and which has the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance. Its sub-regional character areas are based on the national classification; the Malvern and Abberley Hills correspond to LCA 103, and the Bromyard Plateau to LCA 100.

Figure 6 from the Landscape Assessment is reproduced in **Appendix 4**. Table A2 of the Assessment lists the 82 parcels of land in the order of their capacity to accommodate **residential** development, from an environmental and landscape perspective.

Only one parcel (Parcel 36, west of Bosbury Road) was considered to have a high capacity to accommodate development. Three parcels were assessed as having medium to high capacity, five as having medium capacity, 22 as having low to

medium capacity, 40 as having low capacity, and 14 as having very low to low capacity.

The site at Pixiefield (Parcel 34), which now has planning permission for 60 dwellings, fell into the medium to high category.

Thus it can be concluded that from an environmental and landscape perspective, the parish has a very limited capacity to accommodate further residential development without significant adverse effects.

Nature Conservation

The parish contains no European or national designations for nature conservation.

Local Wildlife Sites (formerly known as Special Wildlife Sites and Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation) are local designations. One such site covers three fields east of Cradley, and is depicted on the HUDP Inset Map 11. Part of this area lies within the Conservation Area, part without; all of it lies in the AONB. The area is designated for... .The area is crossed by a well-used public right of way.

Notwithstanding the absence of any high level nature conservation designations in the parish, the Parish Council regards nature conservation as being of great importance.

Policy CSNDP 6: Local Wildlife Sites

The extent of a Local Wildlife Site is defined on the Proposals Map.

Development proposals which could directly or indirectly this site will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there would be no harm to the substantive nature conservation value of the site, or that appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures can be taken, or that the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site.

The Parish Council will continue to work with Natural England and other relevant bodies to assess the nature conservation potential of sites in the parish and to identify areas and measures for improvement in biodiversity.

Flood Risk

Inset Map 11 depicted an area at risk of flooding alongside Cradley Brook, formerly covered by HUDP Policy DR7. Insofar as the scale of mapping allows

comparisons to be made, this area broadly coincides with the areas at risk of flooding shown on the maps available to view on the Environment Agency's website. National planning guidance covers the types of development which may be permissible in areas of flood risk. The Proposals Map carries forward the area covered by Policy DR7.

Severe flooding occurred in the parish in 2007 and 2008. A report by a Flooding Issues Group consisting of parish councillors was issued in June 2009. It recognised that incidents of flooding were now more frequent and severe than they had been until the mid-1990s. Problems extended much further than the banks of the Brook; and were attributed to blocked culverts, spreading vegetation and the narrowness of the watercourse under Pound Bridge. **In addition, some land in the vicinity of Kings Bridge, upstream from Pound Bridge, has on occasion been inundated in recent years, where again the restricted space allowed by the bridge arch has contributed to the difficulties. So too has the narrowness of a pipe discharging surface water from nearby fields into the Brook at Kings Bridge.** Such problems must however be alleviated by means outside the planning system. This nevertheless has a contribution to make, in terms of identifying areas in which development should not take place.

Policy CSNDP 7: Areas of Flood Risk

Areas at risk of flooding alongside Cradley Brook are defined on the Proposals Map. Development proposals likely to exacerbate the risk of flooding will not be permitted.

Public Rights of Way

There is an extensive network of public rights of way in the parish, quite dense around Cradley. These are nearly all footpaths, with few bridleways or byways. The Landscape Assessment notes that "*most of them are well managed and well used*". This was confirmed in autumn 2015, when it was also noted that many stiles were new, signposting was good, and paths were clearly marked across newly ploughed fields.

Part of the Worcestershire Way, a waymarked path of 50 km running from Bewdley to Great Malvern, passes through the north eastern part of the parish, and south of the A4103 coincides with the parish boundary.

The Parish Council will continue to work alongside Herefordshire Council to ensure that the public rights of way network remains in good condition.

Strategic Green Gap

This refers to the area which lies directly between **East and West Cradley**. It is described in the Landscape Assessment as acting *“as a buffer between the two settlements, preventing coalescence and providing ... the setting to both sides of the village...”*, and in the VDS as *“the single most significant space in the village and central to its character...”*. Most of the gap lies west of Cradley Brook. Its western edge has a well-defined and defensible boundary of a lane (public footpath CD26) to the east of housing at West Cradley.

This area had also already been identified in both Parish Plans as essential to maintaining the separate identity of **East and West Cradley**. Between **West Cradley** and the Brook the gap consists **mostly** of a single very large field, identified as Parcel 50 in the Landscape Assessment. Its open character makes it all the more important that it is protected from development. In addition to the area lying directly between **East and West Cradley**, land to the north and south is also designated as part of the green gap.

Policy CSNDP 8: Strategic Green Gap

A **Strategic Green Gap**, depicted on the Proposals Map, is defined between **East and West Cradley**. It is protected from all development except that which may be required to mitigate flood risk.

Tree Preservation Orders

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are made by local planning authorities. They are independent of development plans, and so those which apply in the parish are not affected by the recent changes involving the adoption of the HCS and falling away of the HUDP. There is therefore no need for a policy in this Plan to protect them.

There are more than 40 individual trees within and around the two settlement boundaries protected by TPOs.

These trees, and the thousands more in woodlands and elsewhere, make a substantial contribution to the landscape and amenities of the parish.

8 Built Environment

Introduction

The loose knit nature of the built environment in **East Cradley** is one of its most important characteristics and one which survives, notwithstanding some recent infilling, for example on the site of the former primary school. There is development at more conventional density in **East Cradley**, for example at Buryfields, outside the Conservation Area.

Nearly all development in **West Cradley** postdates the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. Development is relatively compact; and some of the remaining opportunities for infill development have been taken up, for example at Fincher's Corner and Fairlea Close. Further opportunities for infilling appear to be limited, and there is no scope for the allocation of further sites for housing within the existing settlement boundary.

Most of the parish housing stock of 733 dwellings is located in **West Cradley**.

The contribution of the Village Design Statement in identifying the valuable characteristics of the parish's built environment has been described in Section 1.

Conservation Area

The Cradley Conservation Area (CCA) was designated in 1976 and its boundary was depicted on Inset 11 of the Proposals Map of the HUDP. It covers all of the historic part of **East Cradley**, and in addition a number of surrounding fields, included in the CCA in order to protect the setting of the village.

No extension to the CCA is considered necessary. Although like TPOs the designation of conservation areas is independent of development plans, the boundary of the CCA is now defined on the Proposals Map, following the demise of the HUDP, for clarity and information.

Policy CSNDP 9: Conservation Area

The boundary of the Cradley Conservation Area is shown in the Proposals Map. Development within it or affecting its setting will not be permitted unless it preserves or enhances its character and appearance.

Protected Areas of Open Space

The CCA includes two protected areas of open space, one around the parish church, and the other in front of housing at Brookside. These areas were covered by the HUDP; since its fall, they need to be reaffirmed by this Plan.

HUDP Policy HBA9 identified a number of characteristics of such areas, including those which provide an important amenity of value to the local community, represent a familiar or distinctive element within an attractive street scene, or represent an historic element within the origins or development of the settlement or area. All these apply to the two areas so identified in Cradley, the last in particular to the area around **the church of** St James the Great.

The Parish Council has examined other areas within and outside the CCA for their suitability but concluded that none qualified for this designation.

Policy CSNDP 10: Protected Area of Open Space

The following are identified as protected open spaces and are shown on the Proposals Map:

The church of St James the Great and environs

Brookside

Proposals which would result in the loss of or damage to these important areas, which contribute to the distinctive spatial character, form and pattern of the village, will not be permitted.

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are defined by the organisation now known as Heritage England, not by local authorities.

The parish contains a significant number of listed buildings, none in Grade I, but some in Grade II*, including St James the Great and the Village Hall, and more in Grade II.

Many local authorities have identified “locally listed” buildings which are considered to have merit despite not meeting the criteria used by Heritage England. Where they have not, neighbourhood plans may do so.

However, local listing does not confer any greater degree of protection on any buildings so identified. Listing by Heritage England has the merit of being thorough, objective, and based on nationally agreed criteria. Non-listed buildings in conservation areas, which often contribute much to the character

of those areas but without having sufficient individual merit to warrant listing, are protected against demolition. Local listing would probably require the owner's consent, which may not necessarily be forthcoming. There are thus few if any advantages of local listing, and some drawbacks.

It is therefore proposed not to identify any buildings for local listing.

The listing of buildings is independent of development plans, and so it is unnecessary to include a policy for listed buildings in this Plan.

Other Open Spaces

HUDP Inset Map 11 identified two areas to which Policy RST4 applied, both outside but adjoining the settlement boundary. The first consists of a triangular area to the north of Buryfields, in use for sports including tennis courts. The second is a rectangular plot north of Chapel Lane, **West Cradley**, a **well-**equipped playground. Both are valuable assets to the community. They are depicted on the Proposals Map and subject to the following policy.

Policy CSNDP 11: Recreational Open Space

Development proposals that would result in the loss of public or private open spaces with recreational value, or facilities that help meet the recreational needs of the community will not be permitted unless:

1. there is a clear excess of outdoor playing space provision and/or open space in the area taking account of the wider recreational value of such provision; or
2. alternative provision of at least equivalent community benefit is provided in a convenient and accessible location.

9 Transport and Communications

Roads

The A4103, connecting Worcester to Hereford, is the principal road in the parish and runs east west through it. It is a single carriageway road, with numerous bends and some steep hills. It has a 50 mph speed limit on much of its length through the parish. The B4219 runs from the A4103 at Storridge towards Great Malvern. It is narrow in places and has a number of awkward bends. The B4220 runs from Stony Cross on the A4103, through **West Cradley** and then south west towards Bosbury and Ledbury. From a junction about 400 metres further west on the A4103, the B4220 leads in a north-westerly direction to Bromyard. Otherwise, the road network in the parish consists entirely of C class roads, all of them depicted on the Ordnance Survey Explorer Sheet 190 (1:25,000 scale) as being generally less than 4 metres wide, and unclassified roads.

For reasons of resources and landscape, major improvements to the road network in the parish are unlikely.

Under a Herefordshire County Council initiative, Cradley Parish Council operates both Lengthman and P3 Schemes [Parish Path Partnership]. A lengthman is employed whose duties are to maintain and care for the Public Realm Infrastructure of the parish, and include maintenance of C, U and other unmetalled roads, drainage, signage, footway clearances together with several seasonal chores which help the community .

The lengthman also assists Parish Path Officers with the repair and maintenance of the Parish's 32.45 kilometres of public rights of way.

Otherwise, the responsibility for the maintenance of roads and public rights of way in the parish remains with Herefordshire Council.

The concerns about speed limits expressed in PP2010 remain.

Car Ownership

Data from the 2011 Census show that only about 50 households (7%) in the parish lacked a car, compared with 16% in the County. 44% of households in Cradley had two cars, compared with 30% in Herefordshire. The average number of cars per household in Cradley was 1.88 (Herefordshire 1.43).

The figures for Cradley are typical of most rural areas in England, and in part reflect the scarcity of public transport.

Public Transport

Cradley is served by the bus service 417 Ledbury-Cradley-Worcester.

The 2011 Census data show that very few parish residents relied on the bus for travel to work. It is not possible to reach Ledbury by 0900; it is possible to travel to Worcester in time for a conventional start to the working day, but the last bus from Worcester to Cradley leaves at 1705.

Broadband

The parish's distance from major centres and the relatively poor quality of the roads leading to and from it make it even more important that IT connections are good.

[Add more...](#)

10 Delivery and Implementation

The Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered and implemented over the whole Plan period up to 2031, and by different stakeholders and partners. It is not a rigid blueprint. Instead, its vision and objectives provide instead a direction for change, and its policies, together with those of the Herefordshire Core Strategy, provide the flexibility to respond appropriately to proposals for development. Flexibility will also be needed as new challenges and opportunities arise over the Plan period.

The policies of the NDP are repeated here for ease of reference.

Policy CSNDP 1: Settlement Boundary

A settlement boundary is defined on the Proposals Map. The provision of housing will be restricted to sites within the identified boundary, save for exception schemes covered by HCS Policy H2. Residential development will be permitted, where proposals are in accordance with the housing, design and other policies of the HCS and this Plan.

Policy CSNDP 2: Housing Provision

Planning permission will be granted for infilling development only within the settlement boundary in accordance with the policies of the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the policies of this Plan. **Housing design should be in sympathy with immediate surroundings and the character of the village as a whole.**

Elsewhere, planning permission for housing will be confined to that essential to agriculture, forestry or other defined rural activities.

Policy CSNDP 3: Redundant Buildings

The Parish Council will support the re-use or conversion of redundant buildings for economic activity.

Policy CSNDP 4: Community Facilities

The Parish Council will support the provision of additional community facilities in accordance with the policies of the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the other policies of this Plan.

Policy CSNDP 5: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Priority will be given to the protection and enhancement of the natural beauty and amenity of the area, in accordance with the relevant management plans. Development will only be permitted where it is small scale, does not adversely affect the intrinsic natural beauty of the landscape, and is necessary to promote the economic and social well-being of the designated areas and their communities or can enhance the quality of the landscape or biodiversity.

Exceptions to this policy will only be permitted when all the following criteria are met:

1. the development is of greater national interest than the purpose of the AONB;
2. there is unlikely to be any adverse impact upon the local economy ;
3. no alternative site is available, including outside of the AONB; and
4. any detrimental effect on the landscape, biodiversity and historic assets can be adequately mitigated and, where appropriate, compensatory measures provided.

Policy CSNDP 6: Local Wildlife Sites

The extent of a Local Wildlife Site is defined on the Proposals Map.

Development proposals which could directly or indirectly affect this site will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there would be no harm to the substantive nature conservation value of the site, or that appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures can be taken, or that the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site.

The Parish Council will continue to work with Natural England and other relevant bodies to assess the nature conservation potential of sites in the parish and to identify areas and measures for improvement in biodiversity.

Policy CSNDP 7: Areas of Flood Risk

Areas at risk of flooding alongside Cradley Brook are defined on the Proposals Map. Development proposals likely to exacerbate the risk of flooding will not be permitted.

Policy CSNDP 8: **Strategic Green Gap**

A **Strategic** Green Gap, depicted on the Proposals Map, is defined between **East and West Cradley**. It is protected from all development except that which may be required to mitigate flood risk.

Policy CSNDP 10: Protected Area of Open Space

The following are identified as protected open spaces and are shown on the Proposals Map:

The church of St James the Great and environs

Brookside

Proposals which would result in the loss of or damage to these important areas, which contribute to the distinctive spatial character, form and pattern of the village, will not be permitted.

Policy CSNDP 11: Recreational Open Space

Development proposals that would result in the loss of public or private open spaces with recreational value, or facilities that help meet the recreational needs of the community will not be permitted unless:

1. there is a clear excess of outdoor playing space provision and/or open space in the area taking account of the wider recreational value of such provision; or
2. alternative provision of at least equivalent community benefit is provided in a convenient and accessible location.

It is expected that a review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan will follow the review of the Herefordshire Core Strategy so that its policies can be kept up to date and maintain their weight as part of the development plan.

There will be three strands of activity which will direct delivery and each is important in shaping the parish in the Plan period. These comprise:

- Securing the right private sector investment in the parish through new development. The statutory planning process will direct and control private developer and investor interest in the parish in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Herefordshire Core Strategy.

- Investment in, and management of, public services, assets and other measures to support local services and vitality and viability for the village. In the context of the prevailing economic climate and public funding it is recognised that public investment in the village will be difficult to secure.
- The voluntary and community sector will have a very important role to play, particularly in terms of local community infrastructure, events and village life.

In terms of the key areas of action, the following summarises the Parish Council's approach to delivery and implementation.

Housing

The Parish Council will work with Herefordshire Council, and developers where necessary, to ensure that any additional housing growth takes place in the right locations and is of any appropriate standard.

Re-use of Land and Buildings

The Parish Council will work with residents, owners of land and buildings, and other stakeholders to bring back into economic use any brownfield sites and vacant properties, especially those which make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

Economy

The Parish Council will encourage businesses to improve local employment opportunities.

Facilities

The Parish Council will work with local organisations and Herefordshire Council to improve facilities and services for local people. The creation of more retail units in the parish will be encouraged.

Natural and Built Environment

The Parish Council will work with all relevant bodies to ensure that wildlife and the countryside in the parish is protected.

Transport and Communications

The Parish Council will work to find ways to improve road safety, and address speed and parking issues.

High speed broadband in the parish must be a priority.

11 The Next Steps

Appendix 5 outlines the neighbourhood planning process in terms of the relevant Regulations.

The next stage is for the Parish Council to publish the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan, to provide a copy to Herefordshire Council, and to make it available to the public in the parish for comment for a minimum period of six weeks. Paragraph 41-048 of the NPPG states that the parish councils must also consult appropriate bodies defined in Schedule 1 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. These include for example Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Highways Agency, and bodies representing particular interest groups.

Once that stage has been completed, the Parish Council will submit the Plan to Herefordshire Council, to whom the baton then mainly passes. Herefordshire Council must check that statutory requirements have been met before submitting the plan for examination. Before doing so, however, it will put the Neighbourhood Plan out consultation for six weeks. The Council will not take a view on the content of a draft neighbourhood plan – that is the task of the examiner – but as local planning authority, it will also be expected to provide constructive comment on the Plan before it is submitted for examination.

The examination of neighbourhood development plans is normally expected to proceed by means of written representations; a public hearing will only take place when considered necessary.

[page for Proposals Map]

References

Parish Plan 2004

Village Design Statement 2004

Parish Plan 2010

Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan, adopted 2007

Herefordshire Council: Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Notes 1-36, 2013,
revised 2015

Landscape Assessment 2015

Herefordshire Core Strategy, adopted 2015

Appendices

Appendix 1: 2011 Census Key Statistics

The following figures are taken from key tables in the 2011 Census. They are in places condensed; in all cases, figures for the parish, and for the County of Herefordshire for comparison, are set out.

[figures from Excel spreadsheets to be inserted here]

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Results

A summary of the responses to the questionnaire issued in August 2015, with a deadline for responses of 22 September, is set out below.

A total of 1,324 questionnaires was issued to all households in the parish. 301 (23%) were returned; the response from different parts of the parish was variable.

[Cradley PC's own summary spreadsheet to be inserted here]

Appendix 3: Herefordshire Core Strategy – Index of Policies

[to be inserted]

Appendix 4: Extract from Landscape Assessment

[page for Figure 6 of the Landscape Assessment to be reproduced]

Appendix 5: The Neighbourhood Plan Process

The neighbourhood plan process is set out below in terms of the titles of the relevant Regulations and additional descriptive notes.

Regulation 14: Pre-submission Consultation and Publicity

Regulation 15: Plan Proposals

This is where we are now; these regulations concern consultation on and the content of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Regulation 16: Publicising a Plan Proposal

This is largely concerned with what the local planning authority (LPA, ie Herefordshire Council) must do, once the Parish Council has submitted its Neighbourhood Plan to the Council.

Regulation 17: Submission of a Plan Proposal to Examination

Again, this is mostly concerned with what the LPA must do.

Regulation 18: Publication of Examiner's Report and Plan Proposal Decisions

This Regulation deals with what the LPA must do, in the event that, in the light of the Examiner's report, it either considers a neighbourhood plan to be "sound", or not, as the case may be.

Regulation 19: Decision on a Plan Proposal

Describes what a LPA must do to make known its decision.

Regulation 20: Publicising a Neighbourhood Development Plan

Again, deals with the responsibilities of the LPA once it has taken decision that a neighbourhood plan should be "made", that is, adopted.