



**Stretton Grandison**  
**Neighbourhood Development Plan**  
**Issues and Options**  
**February 2017**

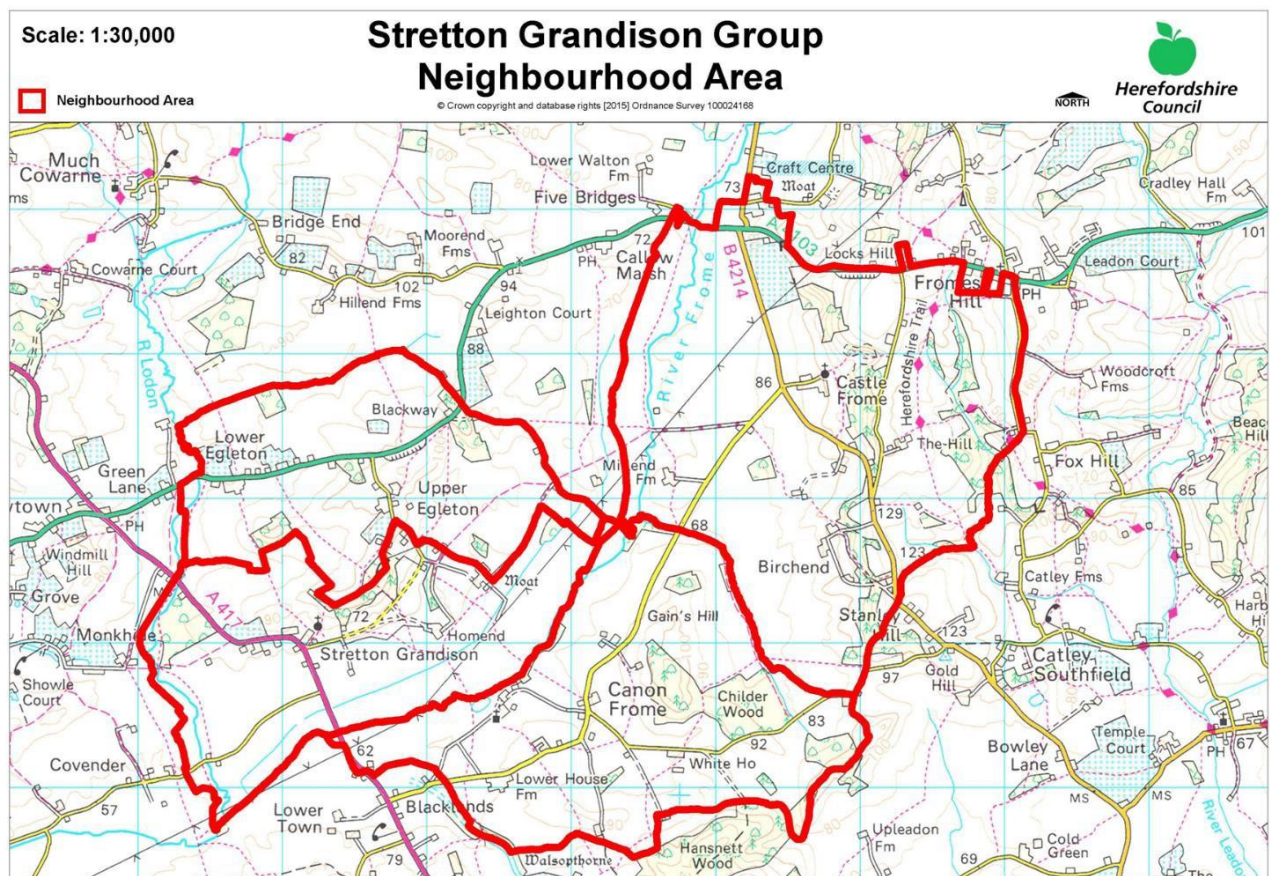


**Stretton Grandison Neighbourhood Plan Working Group**  
**On behalf of Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council**

## 1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) are a new type of planning policy document which are prepared by Parish Councils (and other relevant bodies) to guide new development within a defined area such as a parish, alongside local authority (here, Herefordshire Council) and national planning policy documents. Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council has decided to prepare a NDP for this area, and this document has been prepared for public consultation as a first step in the process.
- 1.2 The neighbourhood area for the proposed NDP was designated by Herefordshire Council on 21st September 2015 and is shown on Map 1 below. A Steering Group of interested local residents and Parish Councillors was set up to oversee the preparation of the NDP on behalf of the Parish Council in May 2016.

**Map 1 Stretton Grandison Neighbourhood Area**



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- 1.3 Stretton Grandison Group Parish comprises the parishes of Castle Frome, Eggleton, Stretton Grandison and Canon Frome. The Group Parish extends over 1697 ha and had a combined population of 360 in 2011 (see Census 2011 Neighbourhood Statistics<sup>1</sup>). The area lies about 10 miles to the north east of the City of Hereford, and 8 miles north west of Ledbury.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination>



- 1.4 The neighbourhood area is very rural in character with several scattered settlements including Stretton Grandison, Canon Frome, Castle Frome, Upper Eggleton and Lower Eggleton. The River Frome flows roughly north east to south west through the area and parts of the area are at risk of flooding (Middle Frome Catchment).
- 1.5 There are a number of sites of wildlife interest and many built heritage assets including Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in the Group Parish, and a Conservation Area in Stretton Grandison.
- 1.6 The key policy documents which are relevant to the area are: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>2</sup>, and Herefordshire Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.7 The NPPF sets out the national planning policy framework within which NDPs have to sit. Paragraph 6 sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 advises that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.
- 1.8 Paragraphs 183 – 185 provide more detailed advice about Neighbourhood Plans.

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

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

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

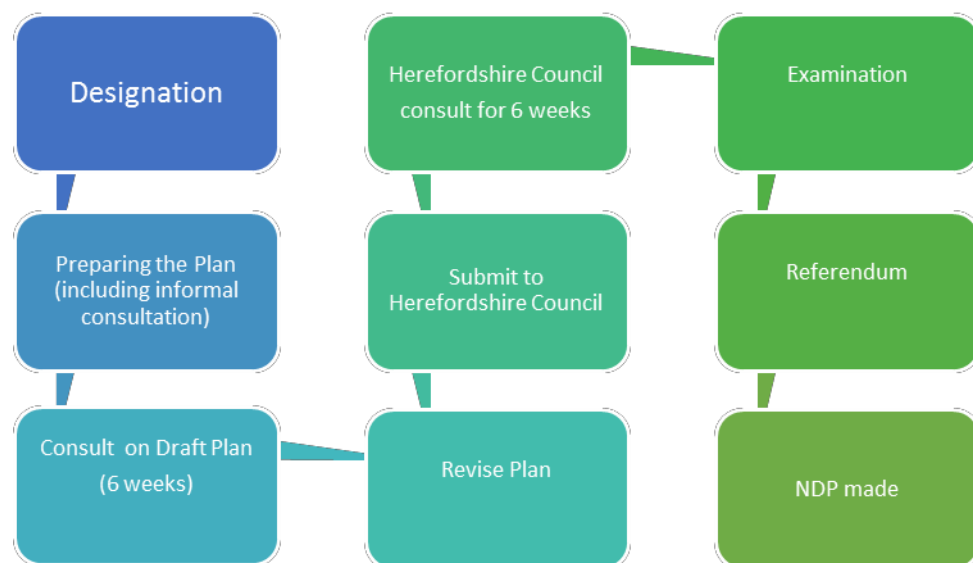
*185. Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take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

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ldf>

- 1.9 In the Herefordshire Core Strategy Local Plan, Stretton Grandison Group Parish falls within the Ledbury Rural Housing Market Area which is required to grow by 14% over the Plan period up to 2031.
- 1.10 **Lower Eggleton and Fromes Hill** (both on the edge of the neighbourhood area, and partly within other parishes) are identified as settlements which will be **the main focus of proportionate housing development** (Fig 4.14 in the Core Strategy). **Stretton Grandison, Canon Frome and Eggleton** are identified as **other settlements where proportionate housing is appropriate** in Fig 4.15. This means that new housing development in the Parish should be concentrated in these identified settlements.
- 1.11 The Core Strategy sets the local strategic planning framework for the Group Parish with a range of planning policies which support limited housing and economic growth, protect and enhance wildlife and special landscapes, and protects community facilities. Overall the Core Strategy aims to promote sustainable development across the County.
- 1.12 The NDP for Stretton Grandison Group Parish has a role in providing the local detail for these higher level policies; providing more information about the Group Parish context to inform planning decisions. NDP policies could identify the location of development (through site allocations and settlement boundaries), encourage particular house types and sizes, and promote high quality design. NDPs also have a role in identifying those special built and natural features in settlements and the local landscape which should be protected and enhanced.
- 1.13 The preparation of a NDP is a complex and lengthy process, taking around 2 years. The Group Parish is at the very beginning of this process (Preparing the Plan), and the main steps are set out below.



- 1.14 This “Issues and Options” document explains more about the key planning issues identified so far by the Steering Group. We need your help and ideas about the various issues the Plan should address in order to move forward to the next stage, preparing a draft plan. **Local**

households and residents are being invited to provide responses to the key questions set out in this document, and which are also provided separately in a Questionnaire.

## **2.0 Draft Vision and Objectives**

2.1 The Draft Vision and Objectives have been prepared by the Steering Group.

### **Draft Vision for Stretton Grandison Group Parish**

**To maintain the rural environment and character of the Group Parish.**

**To support the provision of affordable housing as part of an overall increase in housing stock of 14% across the area.**

**To promote energy efficiency.**

***Q1. Do you agree with the Draft Vision?***

### **Draft Objectives for Housing**

**HO1. To identify the scale of housing growth across the identified settlements in the Core Strategy.**

**HO2. To work closely with neighbouring parishes to promote a joint approach to growth at Fromes Hill and Lower Eggleton.**

**HO3. To identify a range of suitable sites through a Call for Sites and Site Assessment process.**

***Q2: Do you agree with The Draft Objectives for Housing?***

### **Draft Objectives for the Environment**

**ENO1. To conserve and protect Homend Park.**

**ENO2. To protect and enhance local natural environmental assets such as wildlife, hedgerows, water courses and ponds, traditional orchards, ancient woodlands, the line of the old canal and important views such as to Woolhope Dome.**

**ENO3.** To ensure development is guided towards areas of lowest flood risk and to promote designs and layout which do not exacerbate flood risk eg from surface water.

**ENO4.** To ensure new agricultural development such as poly tunnels and large agricultural buildings are designed and sited sensitively within the landscape.

***Q3: Do you agree with the draft Environmental Objectives?***

**Draft Objectives for the Economy**

**ECO1.** To support the sensitive conversion of redundant farm buildings to create more local employment opportunities.

**ECO2.** To support investment in local infrastructure eg broadband and transport.

**ECO3.** To encourage the use of renewable energy schemes, for instance through community heating schemes.

***Q4: Do you agree with the Draft Objectives for the Economy?***

### 3.0 Housing in our Parishes



Houses at Fromes Hill, on corner opposite The Wheatsheaf

- 3.1 A key area for consideration in the NDP will be providing a positive planning framework to support limited housing growth in the neighbourhood area. The minimum housing growth required in the Group Parish is set out in the Core Strategy Policies RA1 and RA2. Policy RA1 sets the housing growth figure for Ledbury rural Housing Market Area (within which Stretton Grandison Group Parish lies) as 14% of the number of dwellings in the Parish. **This equates to 18 dwellings over the Plan period from 2011 – 2031.**
- 3.2 Policy RA2 identifies the settlements where growth should be focussed (in Figures 4.14 and 4.15). The Policy sets out that “*Neighbourhood Development Plans will allocate land for new housing or otherwise demonstrate delivery to provide levels of housing to meet the various targets, by indicating levels of suitable and available capacity.*”

*Housing proposals will be permitted where the following criteria are met:*

1. *Their design and layout should reflect the size, role and function of each settlement and be located within or adjacent to the main built up area. In relation to smaller settlements identified in fig 4.15 proposals will be expected to demonstrate particular attention to the form, layout, character and setting of the site and its location in that settlement and/or they result in development that contributes to or is essential to the social well-being of the settlement concerned;*
2. *Their locations make best and full use of suitable brownfield sites wherever possible;*
3. *They result in the development of high quality, sustainable schemes which are appropriate to their context and make a positive contribution to the surrounding environment and its landscape setting; and*
4. *They result in the delivery of schemes that generate the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular settlements, reflecting local demand.*

*Specific proposals for the delivery of local need housing will be particularly supported where they meet an identified need and their long-term retention as local needs housing is secured as such.”*

- 3.3 In Stretton Grandison Group Parish there are several identified settlements for new housing growth. These are:

**Settlements which will be the main focus of proportionate housing development:**

- Lower Eggleton and
- Fromes Hill.

**Other settlements where proportionate housing is appropriate:**

- Stretton Grandison,
- Canon Frome, and
- Eggleton.

- 3.4 There are several options for preparing a local planning policy framework for new housing which require consideration.

**Policy Option 1 - Identification of a settlement boundary for all identified settlements in the Core Strategy.**

This would be a line on a map, identifying where new development would be acceptable in a settlement. It is usually drawn quite tightly around the existing built form, but may include identified site allocations for new development.

The settlement boundaries will eventually include any sites identified for new housing through the site allocation process – see Policy Option 2 below.

Outside this line, the area is considered to be wider countryside and new development will only be acceptable where it is “rural exception housing”.

The Core Strategy identifies Lower Eggleton and Fromes Hill as the focus for new housing.

See proposed Settlement Boundary Maps below.

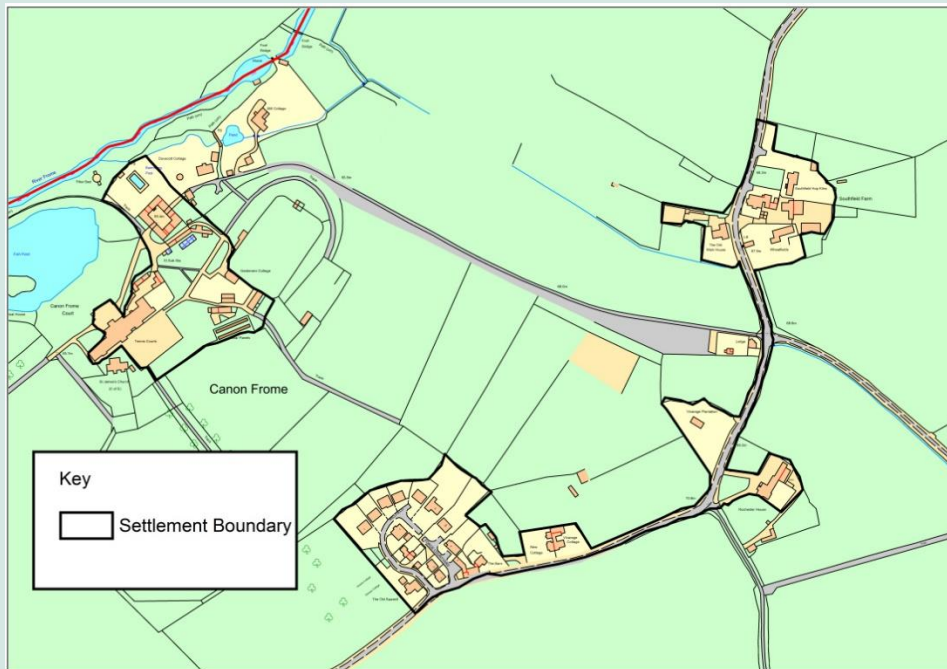






- **Canon Frome** - It is proposed to include the following areas within the settlement boundary, including Canon Frome Court.

Map 5 Canon Frome



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- **Eggletton** - It was proposed by the Steering Group that there should be no new build housing in Upper Eggletton subject to consultation responses. Therefore, no settlement boundary for Upper Eggletton has been identified.

***Q5: Do you agree with the settlement boundaries marked in black on the maps?***

- 3.5 The summary schedule and maps for the rural settlements from the 2012 SHLAA does not include any sites identified in the Group Parish.
- 3.6 The NDP could allocate one or more new housing sites. This is usually done through a Call for Sites process and then a technical Site Assessment based on an agreed set of criteria. This should provide a ranking of possible sites, with some suggested as Preferred Options for informal consultation and then possibly taken forward into the Draft Plan as proposed Site Allocations.
- 3.7 In terms of Fromes Hill there should be a joint approach with Bishops Frome NDP.

## **Policy Option 2 – Site Allocations and Criteria**

Residents may wish to focus development on 1 or more of the above settlements and limit development in other smaller settlements.

To some extent this may be determined by the sites put forward through a Call for Sites process. This would invite landowners to put forward possible development sites for consideration and possible inclusion in the Plan. If no sites come forward from landowners in a given settlement, then it would be difficult to allocate any site(s) there. It is proposed that a Call for Sites process will follow this first consultation. Sites would be assessed according to locally agreed criteria.

The NDP could also set out in a planning policy the criteria against which planning applications for new housing such as windfall development may be considered.

Each identified settlement could have its own policy or paragraph in a policy, reflecting the particular characteristics and needs of that community.

The criteria could include for instance requiring new housing to be infill development within a settlement boundary, on brownfield sites, and of a scale and design that responds to the distinctive character of the surrounding area. The criteria will be decided on following results of questionnaire.

**Q6:** *Should the site allocation process include sites in all the above settlements or only some?*

**Q7:** *Please identify, in order of preference, settlements where development would be acceptable. You must give a reason for your first and last choices. You may give a reason for other choices if you wish.*

## **Policy Option 3 – Housing Numbers and Types**

The NDP could advise that some settlements are less suitable for new housing than others ie identify which areas are the priority for local growth.

**Q8:** *If additional homes are to be built in your village, how many in total should be permitted by 2031?*



## Housing Mix



Houses in Canon Frome

- 3.8 There are concerns that recent housing development has tended to provide larger, family sized or “executive style” housing which is beyond the reach of many local residents or does not meet their needs. At the same time there is an argument that more housing is needed in the local area for residents with a local connection, such as starter homes / homes for first time buyers and housing for older residents who may wish to down size / re-size to relocate and stay within the community. NDPs can include policies to guide housing types and sizes etc but must include the evidence showing that need eg through the NDP consultation responses or local housing needs surveys.
- 3.9 In terms of Affordable Housing, a Ministerial Statement has set out that for sites of 10 units or less and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of 1,000 square metres, affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought. Therefore, if the NDP proposes site allocations for developments comprising less than 10 house, then the sites cannot be required to include Affordable Housing.

### Policy Option 4 – Housing Mix

The NDP could encourage particular house sizes or types eg starter homes, housing designed for older people etc where there is evidence of local need.

***Q9: When land is allocated for housing, what are your views on the size of each housing development that should be allowed?***

***Q10: When land is allocated for housing, what are your views on the style of housing development that should be allowed?***

***Q11: When additional houses are to be built, which size or type should they be?***

***Q12: Do you wish to make any other comments about housing?***

## Rural Housing



Canon Frome Court, looking east from main gate

- 3.10 Beyond these identified settlements, the Group Parish is considered to be “open countryside” and only exception housing under Core Strategy policies RA3, RA4, H2 or H4 will be acceptable.

### **Policy Option 5 – Housing in the Wider Countryside**

The Core Strategy allows for some limited housing in the wider countryside eg Affordable Housing, or housing required by agricultural workers or related to other rural industries which is required to be close to the work place eg forestry, charcoal burning etc.

***Q13: Should the Plan include a policy for development in the wider countryside or leave it to the Herefordshire Core Strategy?***

## 4.0 Protecting our Environment



Stretton Grandison Conservation Area from north

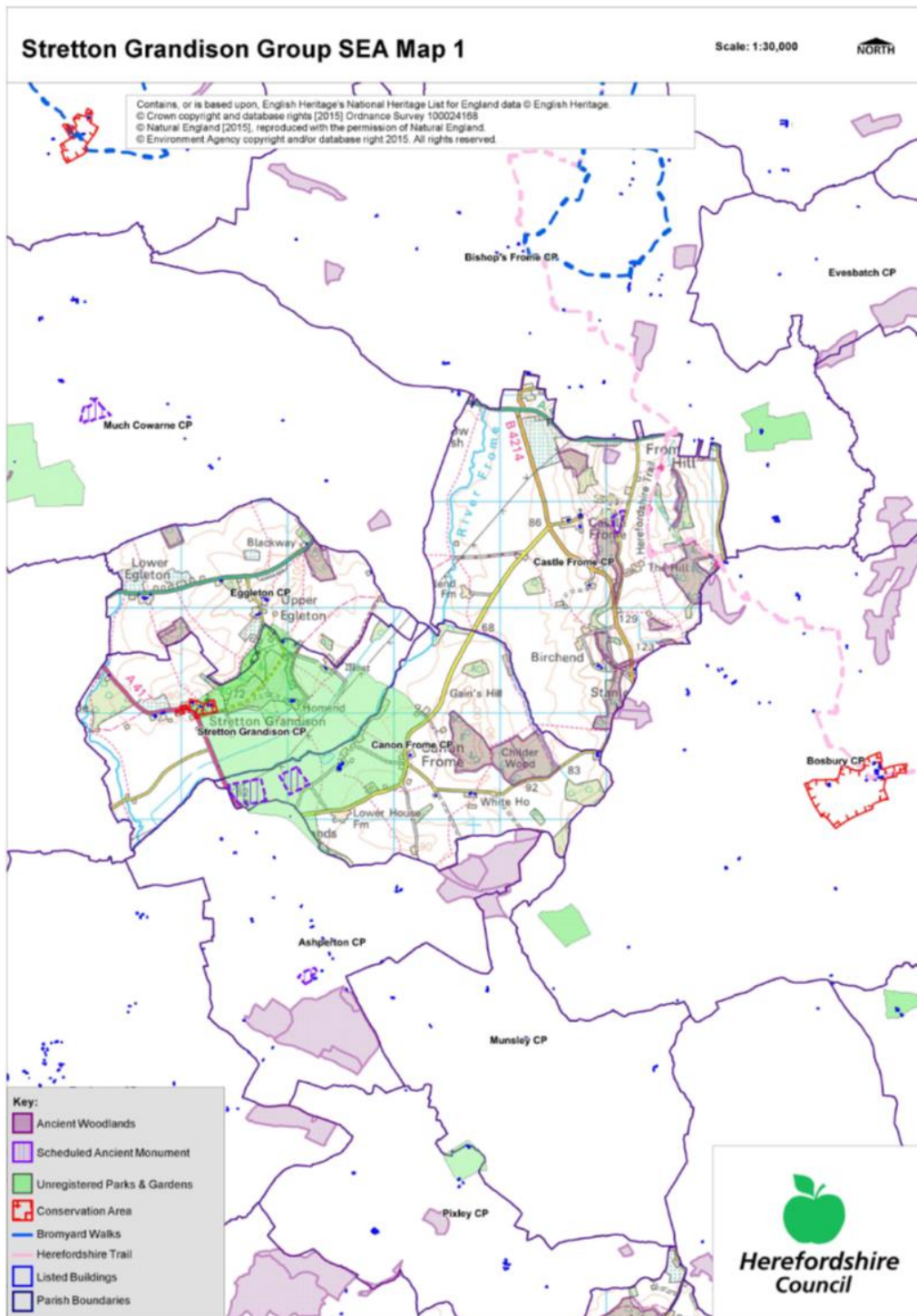
- 4.1 The Group Parish is located within a very rural area, with a high quality natural and built environment. These environmental assets are shown on Map 6.

### **Natural Environment**

- 4.2 The local landscape character is small scattered farmsteads and clustered settlements set within a rolling landscape of orchards, pasture, arable land and woodland. The patchwork of fields is defined by field boundaries of mature hedgerows rich with native species. The River Frome flows through the area and is fed by other smaller water courses. An important feature of the area is Homend Park, an old established parkland with a large number of mature oak trees.
- 4.3 Stretton Grandison Group Parish has 7 areas of ancient woodland in the Group Parish, 1 Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Birchend and 11 Special Wildlife Sites (SWS).
- 4.4 The NDP could include a planning policy aimed at protecting and enhancing this special landscape character and local biodiversity.



Map 6 SEA Map 1



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### **Policy Option 6 – Protecting Local Landscape Character and Biodiversity**

A landscaping policy could be prepared which identifies those features which contribute towards the special landscape character of the area and encourages development to protect and enhance them.

Such a policy would define local landscape character and seek to protect it, particularly isolated veteran trees.

New development should be required to protect important features and incorporate appropriate local species and landscape design to enhance local biodiversity eg planting hedgerows, using native tree species, incorporating ponds and bat boxes etc.

The NDP could also identify locally important views and require development to be sited and designed to ensure such views are protected.

Dark skies are also an important feature of the area and development should be designed to protect this.

The Steering Group are also working to agree the detail of the landscaped parkland at The Homend and to identify the veteran trees.

***Q14: Which of the following are important to you?***

- *Improved measures for the conservation of historic or listed buildings and features*
- *Enhanced protection of the natural environment*
- *Protection of views and vistas in and around the village and Parish*

***Q15: How important are dark skies to you?***

***Q16: Which important local landscape features should be protected and why?***

## Local Green Space



West gateway to Homeend Park

- 4.5 NDPs can also identify areas of land known as Local Green Space which is of particular local significance and which should be protected from new development in a similar way to Green Belt. The NDP has to set out clearly the justification for such areas if you wish to include them, and this is set out in the NPPF:

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

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

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

### Policy Option 7 – Local Green Space

**Are there areas of land within the identified settlements which the local community wish to see protected from development?**

**The Steering Group are working to identify any candidates for Local Green Spaces in addition to Questionnaire responses. One of the draft objectives seeks to conserve and protect Homend. The Steering Group is considering the significance of the Park as a candidate for a Local Green Space.**

***Q17: Which areas of Local Green Space should be protected from development? Please explain why they are important.***

### Built Environment



House at Stretton Grandison

- 4.6 The Group Parish also has a wealth of built heritage assets. There are a 17 Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in Stretton Grandison and 10 in Canon Frome. Stretton Grandison also has a Conservation Area (see Map 3).
- 4.7 Across the four settlements there is a variety of building styles. Materials used are Herefordshire sandstone, traditional red brick, black and white timber frames, slate tiled roofs, thatched roofs, predominately two storey , detached farmhouses, smaller cottages mainly older and historic buildings with modern buildings reflecting the same style.
- 4.8 The NDP could include a design policy to help ensure new development is sensitively sited and designed so that it compliments existing settlements. The NDP should not stifle new / contemporary designs, but should provide a positive policy framework to ensure that new development is appropriate and enhances the local character of this very rural area.

- 4.9 The Steering Group considers that the Conservation Area is already protected adequately by Herefordshire Council and a specific policy is not required.

**Map 7 Stretton Grandison Conservation Area**



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### **Policy Option 8 – Protecting and Enhancing the Built Heritage**

A design policy could be prepared which identifies those features and materials which contribute to the local distinctiveness of the area (eg in each settlement) and encourages new development to incorporate them.

For example, the NDP could set out height, scale and massing of new development and identify preferred materials such as traditional red brick, slate roofs etc.

The Steering Group are working to identify locally distinctive design. Design and scale should be congruous and sympathetic with immediate surrounding environment.

**Q18: Please describe any local built features which are distinctive in this area.**



## 5.0 Local Economy



Farm at Upper Eggleton

- 5.1 The Group Parish has a number of local businesses which provide a diverse range of employment opportunities. The main local employment is agriculture. Other employment areas include farm diversification businesses, tourist accommodation, nursery school, dog kennels, blacksmith and other small businesses some run from home.
- 5.2 There is a need to support investment in local businesses to help provide increased employment opportunities in the area so that it continues to be a thriving living and working environment.

### **Agricultural Buildings**

- 5.3 Farming practices continue to undergo rapid change and in recent years there have been pressures for larger, industrial sized agricultural units for intensive livestock rearing and increases in the extent and size of polytunnels and glass houses. Not all such development requires planning permission (ie new development under given size thresholds) but the NDP could provide a policy for assessing new development when planning consent is required.
- 5.4 At the same time older, traditional farm buildings have become disused and redundant and offer opportunities for sensitive re-use and conversion to small workshops and offices etc.
- 5.5 The NDP has a role in seeking to manage these changes and to ensure that the re-use of existing agricultural buildings and the development of new large scale buildings are undertaken sensitively.

#### **Policy Option 9 – Supporting Economic Re-Use of Redundant Agricultural Buildings**

**A policy could be prepared which supports the sensitive re-use of disused agricultural buildings for new appropriate economic activity eg workshops, offices etc.**

***Q19: What should be included in a policy to guide the re-use of existing disused farm buildings for employment uses?***

### **Policy Option 10 – New Agricultural Buildings**

A policy could be prepared which requires new large agricultural buildings to be sited and designed as sensitively as possible to reduce industrialisation of the landscape.

***Q20: What should be included in a policy to guide new agricultural development of large farm buildings?***

### **Local Energy Schemes**

- 5.6 A Ministerial Statement has set out that suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been allocated clearly in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan. A site allocation for wind turbines could prove controversial, but a criteria based policy which supports other forms of community energy schemes, subject to sensitive siting, landscaping and design may be appropriate.
- 5.7 The Steering Group is in favour of the plan including a policy to support local, community led low carbon energy schemes but there is a need to understand better local residents' views. A working group is being set up to explore local interest.

### **Policy Option 11 – Supporting Community Energy Schemes**

A policy could be prepared which provides criteria to guide proposals for community based energy schemes.

***Q21: Should the Plan include a policy which guides and supports community based energy schemes?***

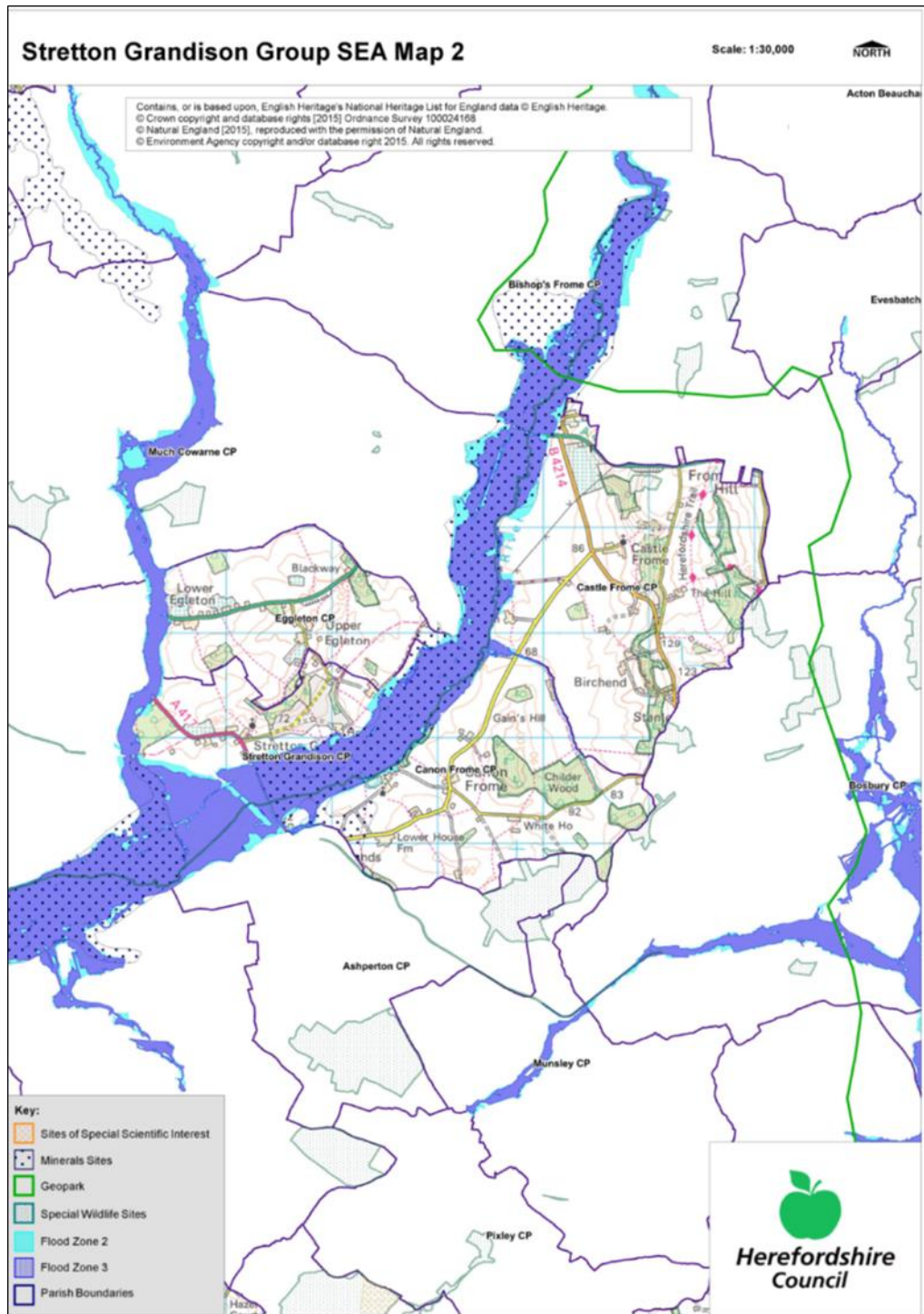
***Q22: If so, what sort of energy schemes would be appropriate here?***

- ***Solar***
- ***Water***
- ***Biomass***
- ***Windpower.***

## 6.0 Flooding

6.1 Parts of the neighbourhood area are at risk of flooding – see Map 8 below.

Map 8 SEA Map 2



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- 6.2 The NDP could identify the areas at risk of flooding and include policies to guide development away from these areas.

### **Policy Option 12 – Flooding**

**A policy could be prepared which guides development away from areas at risk of flooding and which encourages siting and design to reduce surface water flooding.**

***Q23: Do you know of any areas where flooding (eg flash floods and surface water flooding) is a problem?***

***Q24: Has your property suffered from flooding in the last 10 years because of:***

- ***River/stream overflow***
- ***Field run-off***
- ***Sewers overflowing***
- ***Road run-off (drains/ditches unable to cope)***



## 7.0 Other Issues



Houses and Orchard in Upper Eggleton

### Policy Option 13 - Creating a Sustainable Community

***Q25: What aspects of community living do you think we need to address to ensure that our parish thrives as a place in which to live, work and play over the next 20 years and beyond?***

- ***Building homes that exceed government energy-efficiency standards***
- ***Allocating land to enable residents to grow their own food***
- ***Walking, cycling and going by bus more-driving less***
- ***Attracting younger people to live in our village (and providing homes, employment so they can***
- ***Increasing the number and type of community facilities***

## **Policy Option 14 - Traffic, Transport and Access**

Your opinion on the future of road transport in your Village is very important. The topics below will help the Parish Council to prioritise the future structure of the Village.

***Q26: In your opinion, are any changes needed with regard to the following transport issues?***

***Speed and volume of vehicles through:***

- ***Stretton Grandison***
- ***Canon Frome***
- ***Castle Frome***
- ***Upper Eggleton***
- ***Lower Eggleton***

***Parking in your village***

***Road maintenance***

***Road developments***

***Footpaths***

***Bus service.***

## 8.0 Timescales and Next Steps

**Stretton Grandison NDP - Proposed Timetable**

<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
Early 2017	Consultation on Issues and Options
Spring 2017	Call for Sites and Site Assessment Process
Summer 2017	First Draft Plan (Preferred Options) published for informal consultation
Autumn 2017	Reg 14 formal 6 weeks consultation on Draft NDP
Autumn / Winter 2017	Revise NDP
Winter 2017	Submit NDP to Herefordshire Council
Early 2018	Herefordshire Council consult for 6 weeks
Spring 2018	Examination
Spring / Summer 2018	Referendum and Plan Made



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