

## Great Bowden's Neighbourhood Plan

Our Neighbourhood  
Our Future



2016 to 2031

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## Foreword

We are delighted to share the Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan with you.

Great Bowden is a popular and attractive village in which to live as demonstrated by the developer interest over recent years. The changes which are inevitable in future years, will be welcomed if it makes a positive difference to the lives of local people and the future of the community.

The Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan, led by the Parish Council through an Advisory Committee of Parish Councillors and residents, started in September 2015 when an application for area designation was made to Harborough District Council.

The Parish Council wants the people of Great Bowden to have a say in all aspects of the future of the village and parish, but more importantly wants the local community to decide what changes should occur rather than leaving such decisions to others.

Great Bowden's Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the area that reflects the thoughts and feelings of local people with an interest in their community. The Plan sets objectives on the key identified themes of housing, environment, community facilities, transport and employment. It says what the Parish Council and its partners want the parish to look like in the future.

There is a wide range of *supporting information* underpinning this Neighbourhood Plan. Links to this information are provided in the text where appropriate and a summary of the policies and community actions is available for easy reference. The Contents page has been *bookmarked* to make it easier to find the relevant sections within the document.

The Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee wish to thank members of the community who joined the Theme groups and helped move The Plan forward. They gave up their time and shared their local knowledge and expertise to help produce this document as a reflection of the agreed vision. We would also like to thank those residents who attended the numerous public meetings and completed the surveys and whose comments form the basis of this Plan.

This is the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan for Great Bowden.

The six-week Regulation 14 consultation of the draft Plan was completed on 27 July 2017 and subsequent amendments made following comments from residents and stakeholders. This revised Plan is now submitted to Harborough District Council for a further period of consultation prior to being passed to an Independent Examiner. If found satisfactory, the document will be presented to the Parish residents in a referendum vote to 'Make' the Neighbourhood Plan.

I would like to thank all members of the various groups that have helped us to get to where we are now. We are also grateful to Officers at Harborough District Council and the wider community for their involvement in the development of our Neighbourhood Plan.

This Neighbourhood Plan represents the culmination of work by many people whose views, comments and ideas have shaped this document and we believe it reflects the hopes and aspirations of the community for the next 14 years.

**Peter Mitchell, Chair,**

**Great Bowden Neighbourhood  
Plan Advisory Committee**

**Adam Shepherd, Chair,**

**Great Bowden Parish Council**



# 1. Planning Context

## National Planning Policy Context

The Localism Act (2011) introduced a new planning initiative which gives Parish Councils the opportunity to engage with their local communities and prepare a Neighbourhood Plan (hereinafter referred to as 'The Plan'), which will help to shape future development in their areas. Once 'made', these plans will become part of the strategic development plan produced by district councils and therefore carry full legal weight in the determination of planning applications.

The procedure for the making of The Plan is prescribed within the Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Regulations have informed the preparation of policies for the Great Bowden Plan and in particular ensuring that The Plan:

- Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development; and
- Is in general conformity with the strategic policies of HDC and has regard for the policies contained within the, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as well as meeting a range of EU obligations.

The NPPF, published in March 2012, sets out the Government's approach to sustainable development. At the heart of the NPPF is the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Essentially, it is about positive growth with economic, social and environmental gains being sought simultaneously through the planning system. The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), an accessible web based resource which is actively managed and updated as necessary.

Neighbourhood Planning forms part of the NPPF in allowing local communities to shape sustainable development within their area and to enable local communities to address their detailed needs and priorities.

The NPPF defined broad and specific guidelines for planning policy in England. The opening paragraph in the introduction to the NPPF explains the overarching principle as follows:

*'The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities'.*

The Ministerial foreword in the NPPF includes the following statement from the Rt. Hon. Greg Clark MP, then Minister for Planning:

*‘In part, people have been put off from getting involved because planning policy itself has become so elaborate and forbidding – the preserve of specialists, rather than people in communities’.*

*‘This National Planning Policy Framework changes that. By replacing over a thousand pages of national policy with around fifty, written simply and clearly, we are allowing people and communities back into planning’.*

The NPPF sets out 12 ‘core planning principles’ the first of which specifies that local decision making should *“be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area.”*

The Plans carry some statutory weight from the point at which they are submitted to the local planning authority, but do not take full effect until they pass a community referendum with the support of over 50% of the votes cast. Plans must also pass an independent examination to test conformity with local, national and EU strategic planning policies before they can be put to a community referendum and legally come into force. These are known as ‘Basic Conditions’.

The Basic Conditions require neighbourhood plans to:

- Have regard for national planning policy (primarily through the NPPF and PPG);
- Be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area (i.e. such as in a core strategy);
- Be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

An independent and suitably qualified person will check that The Plan appropriately meets these conditions before it can be voted on in a local community referendum. This is to make sure that referenda only take place when proposals are workable and fully compliant.

## Local Planning Policy Context

The Plan takes into account the existing Harborough Core Strategy and the evidence which feeds into the emerging Local Plan, which is expected to be adopted in November 2018.

The Plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.



## Sustainable Development

A definition of sustainable development is provided within the NPPF. It describes three dimensions to sustainable development and that these dimensions give rise to the need for planning to perform a number of roles:

An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.

Whilst the community is primarily residential, there is a desire to safeguard its employment outlets which includes the farming community. We therefore wish to retain the current level of employment, and develop it further where possible, in our area by:

- Retaining the existing businesses and encouraging new businesses to provide valued community facilities within the village;
- Supporting self-employed and home-based workers with meeting and internet facilities.

A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by promoting the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being. Through The Plan we are seeking to ensure that any new housing delivers a mix of housing to achieve this objective. We are particularly keen that bungalows are provided for older people, as well as some smaller and more affordable homes.

We are also seeking to support and enhance existing community facilities and connectivity within the village.

An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including supporting the move to a low carbon economy.

In order to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, we are seeking to ensure that:

- The special open spaces within our village are protected from development, to protect the village identity and retain the rural nature of its surroundings;
- Development preserves and contributes to the attractive local countryside including maintenance or replacement of any hedging; and
- Development recognises the need to protect and, where possible, improve

biodiversity and important habitats and includes adding hedging to boundaries of new developments;

This document sets out local considerations for delivering sustainable development across Great Bowden. Development proposals should meet the requirements of all relevant policies in The Plan and be in line with Harborough District and national policies.

## 2. Background and Context

### A Neighbourhood Plan for Great Bowden

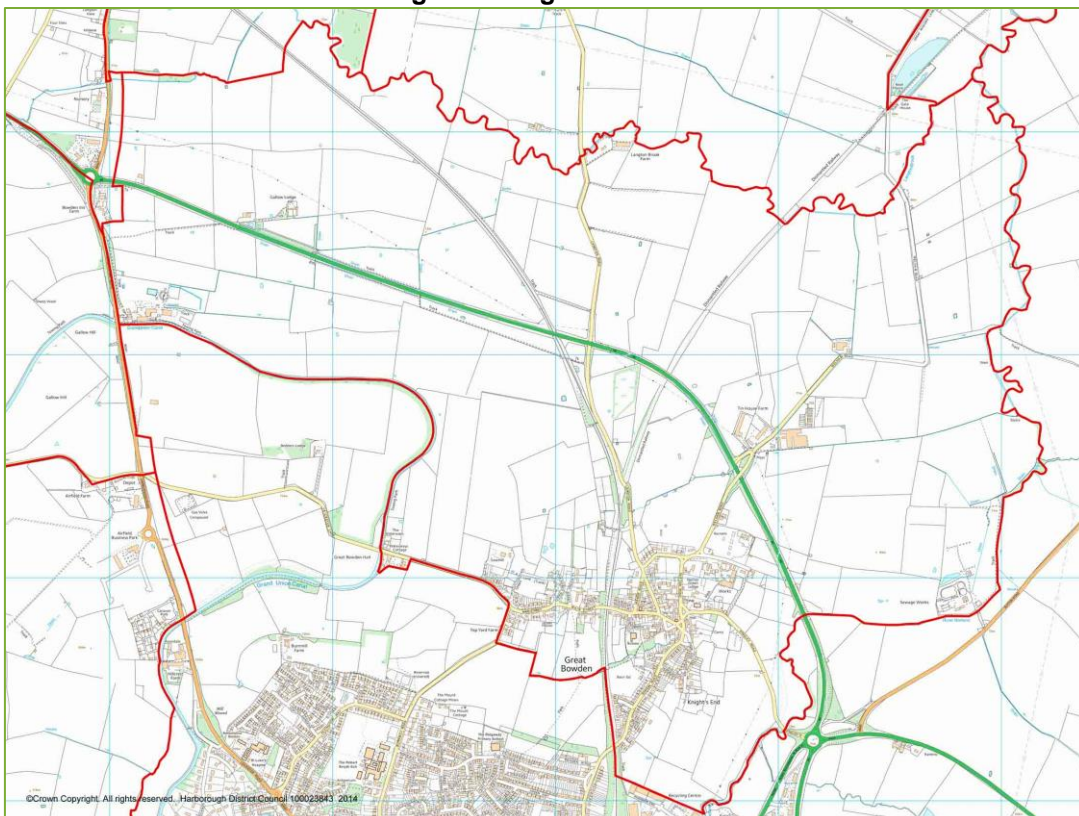
With an increasing number of planning applications being submitted for development in the Parish, allied to the potential for change within the village and surrounding landscape, the Parish Council took the decision that it would be timely to consider a Neighbourhood Plan for Great Bowden.

The Plan gives local people an opportunity to help formulate policies on the type, scale and design of any new development within the Parish and help determine what would be acceptable and appropriate in the local environment.

It sets out how they would like to see the village develop over the next fifteen years or so, and ensures that local people have a stronger influence over the way change and development takes place in the area and helps to protect and possibly enhance the features they most value.

In September 2015, Great Bowden Parish Council approached HDC (HDC) with an application for designation as The Plan area. The Portfolio Holder for Planning Services approved the application on 5 December 2015. The area to be covered by The Plan is delineated by the parish boundary as shown on the map below.

**Fig. 1 Designated Area.**



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## Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee

The work of driving The Plan forward was carried out by a small Advisory Committee comprising Parish Councillors Peter Mitchell (Chair) and Paul Claxton, along with Great Bowden residents, Natalie Holmes (Vice Chair and Secretary), John Coombs, Jim Culkin, and Tony Hipgrave.

Particularly valuable contributions were made by Natalie Holmes, John Coombs, Tony Hipgrave, Jim Culkin and Peter Mitchell relating to the construction of the community questionnaire and the overall guidance that they gave for the process.

The preparation of The Plan has to conform to guidelines laid down by government and involves extensive consultation not only with the local community, but also the district council, businesses and landowners. There is a prescribed procedure with appropriate checks and formal consultation processes. The Terms of Reference under which the committee was set up can be found in the [supporting information](#).

The detailed work developing the content of The Plan and gathering the evidence base has been undertaken within three 'Theme Groups' looking at Housing and the Built Environment; the Natural and Historical Environment and at Community Amenities and Facilities, Employment and Transport. The individuals involved in the Theme Groups were:

**Housing and the Built Environment**

Paul Claxton (Chair)  
Derek Doran (Consultant)  
Joe Cowen  
Jenny Driver  
Nick Manners  
Annette Oakley

**The Natural and Historical Environment**

Jim Culkin (Chair)  
John Martin (Consultant)  
Paul Atkinson  
Rosemary Culkin  
Carolyn Ford

**Community Amenities & Facilities, Employment & Transport**

Tony Hipgrave (Chair)  
Karen Edwards (Consultant)  
John Coombs  
Isabel Dupey  
Natalie Holmes  
Peter Mitchell  
Bill Somerton

We are extremely grateful for the many hours put in to the task of preparing The Plan by the members of the Theme Groups, particularly the Chairs of each Group.

Recognition should be given to Councillor Richard Henwood for helping to upload all the necessary documents onto the parish website and for his individual support to the process when it was needed.

Due recognition is given to our Consultant, Gary Kirk of YourLocale, and his team,

for giving us the benefit of their vast knowledge and experience in the Planning, and for extensive help and guidance drafting documents and policies.

**Liz Thomas (1948 - 2016)**

Acknowledgement is given to the contribution made by Liz Thomas during the early stages of the work of the Advisory Committee.

## 3. Great Bowden

### A brief history

The rural parish of Great Bowden is situated in South Leicestershire and lies midway between Leicester and Northampton, surrounded by the rich pastureland of the Welland Valley and located in hunting country.

Great Bowden, mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086), was once the centre of a Saxon royal estate. By royal charter (1203) its neighbour, Market Harborough, was established as a trading centre, which became the commercial staging post in the district. Although Market Harborough now dominates the area, Great Bowden still maintains its separate identity, with agriculture continuing to be the main local economy.

Towards the end of the 19th century until the 1920's Great Bowden was well known for its horse breeding, which has since been replaced by its hunting interests, being the base for the Fernie Hunt.

The construction of the Grand Union Canal in 1809 provided a fuel supply and transport system for the local brickyard, whose products are still in evidence in the village. The canal's brief period of importance was challenged by the construction of the local railway in 1850, which split the village in half, compromising its historic integrity.

In recognition of its special character a large part of the settlement has been designated a Conservation Area, which includes most of the older buildings within the village. Stricter planning controls apply to this area in respect of new development, demolitions, alterations and work to trees.

### Great Bowden today

Although almost contiguous to the town of Market Harborough, Great Bowden retains its individuality and village character.

The two settlements were formally separated in 1995 when Great Bowden was granted parish status. The village comprises approximately 449 houses and had a population of 1017 (according to the 2011 Census).

The parish of Great Bowden, predominately surrounded by an undulating countryside consisting mainly of grazing and arable land, covers approximately 3 square miles (8.3 square kilometres). The parish is bisected by the Market Harborough (A6) bypass, which runs from southeast to northwest and a Midlands mainline railway, running from the south northwards towards Leicester and beyond.



The parish boundaries are mainly watercourses with the River Welland to the east, Langton Brook to the north and the Grand Union Canal forming part of the western boundary. An area of open land between Great Bowden and Market Harborough has been designated a Separation Area under Policy EV/3 of the Harborough District Local Plan.

A distinctive feature of the village is the amount of open space enhanced by the various Greens, of which only three remain in an undisturbed state.

The collection of greens in the village centre is complemented by Nether Green and Upper Green; little remains of Middle Green, having been almost completely developed. The Greens and several parts of the village are well provided with numerous mature native broad leaf trees, mostly limes and horse chestnuts, which form both backdrops and inviting 'gateways' to new vistas.

It is this unique combination of open greens and spaces throughout the village combined with an abundance of trees, which creates an overall feeling of a natural setting complemented by the buildings and houses, which have appeared over the last few hundred years. The impression of space is also promoted by well-spaced dwellings with garden frontages standing back from the road.

Throughout the village there has been in-fill development between and on the original Greens during the last two centuries, resulting in a mosaic of buildings of different ages. The village is characterised by a great diversity of housing in terms of age, style and size; from early cruck<sup>1</sup> construction, 17th century timber-framed and stone built farmers' houses culminating in the more modern and regular development of the 1960s and 1970s.

A notable feature of the village is the number of large houses of the 17th-19th centuries, mostly still retaining their large gardens. The 19th century also saw the construction of several brick built terraces. Many of these smaller houses, nearly all with a long, narrow front garden, remain and form a distinct feature of the village.

The large hunting lodges and stable blocks built around the beginning of the 20th century by John Henry Stokes to house his clients and his horse breeding ventures are mostly around Nether Green and Sutton Road. He was also responsible for the Village Hall, originally a temperance club for his grooms and stable lads.

The functional core of the village is centred around the main group of Greens, in close proximity to which are located the church, the church hall, the village hall, shops and public houses.

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<sup>1</sup> A curved timber, one of a pair, which supports the roof of a building.

## Profile

At the time of the 2011 Census, Great Bowden had a population of 1,017 which represented an increase of 6.6% since 2001.

Levels of deprivation are measured by 4 dimensions – deprivation relating to employment, education, health and overcrowding. Great Bowden is below the District, regional and national averages. 57% of households are classified as not deprived in any dimension compared to 54.1% across Harborough and 42% in the East Midlands and England. The levels of health are in line with District levels and above those for the East Midlands and England with the proportion of residents who consider that their health is very good being 50.7% in Great Bowden compared to 50.9% across Harborough, 45.3% regionally and 47.2% in England.

The levels of unemployment are very low at 0.7% compared to 2.5% across Harborough generally and are only 16.7% of regional and national levels. Levels of self-employment at 15.2% are high. Levels of economic activity, at 71.3%, are slightly lower than district levels (74%) but above region (69%) and England (70%) levels. There are limited employment opportunities in the village.

The proportion of households with no car is 10.7%, below district (11.8%); region (22.1%) and national (25.8%) levels. The proportion of working age residents who state they work from home (7.1%) is greater than the district average (5.7%) and more than double regional and national averages.

The Parish is a popular area to live and demand for housing is strong. The main tenure is owner occupied (78%). There are fewer detached houses (46%) than across Harborough (48%) but proportionately more semi-detached and terraced houses. There are more two and three bedroomed houses than across the district and fewer large houses (4+ bedroomed).

### Number of bedrooms

Bedrooms	Great Bowden		Harborough District	
1	14	3%	2,033	6%
2	129	29%	7,853	22%
3	176	39%	13,018	37%
4	90	20%	8,975	26%
5+	40	9%	2,968	8.5%

There is also an ageing population in Great Bowden. 22.5% of the population is aged 65+ compared to 18% across Harborough.

## 4. Process

### Community Engagement



At the start of the process, an Advisory Committee was established by the Parish Council and members of the community were invited to open events in the Village Hall on 6/7 May 2016. These events set out the context and stages of the project and asked questions about people's thoughts about Great Bowden. An analysis of the event is included in the [supporting information](#).

The views expressed by the residents were used to shape the strategy in preparing The Plan for Great Bowden.

A further Open Event was held in June 2017 which sought comments about the emerging policies.

### Questionnaires

Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to every household in the Parish. The level of response from the community was good, there being 259 returns, this represents a return from 25.5% of the total population of 1017 and over 38.5% of the adult population of 672, excluding children for whom a separate questionnaire was created. The number of responses represents 57.7% of the 449 households. The outcome from the questionnaire were fed back to the community at a village meeting held on 12 November 2016 (see [supporting information](#)).

## Theme Groups

Following the Open Event in May 2016, residents signed up to become part of 'theme groups' to explore the detail of The Plan; to build the evidence base and to lay the foundation for the draft Plan (see [supporting information](#)). An environmental Theme Group was established, along with a theme group on housing and the built environment and another group looking at community facilities; transport and employment.

There was a further open event in June 2017 at which the draft policies were tested. The outcome of this consultation exercise, designed to share the emerging policies with the local community, will be incorporated into The Plan revisions after the Regulation 14 consultation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> **Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 states:**

*Before submitting a plan proposal to the local planning authority, a qualifying body must:*

*(a) publicise, in a manner that is likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area;*

*(i) details of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan;*

*(ii) details of where and when the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan may be inspected;*

*(iii) details of how to make representations; and*

*(iv) the date by which those representations must be received, being not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the draft proposal is first publicised;*

*(b) consult any consultation body referred to in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan; and*

*(c) send a copy of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan to the local planning authority.*

## 5. Vision

### A vision for Great Bowden

The Advisory Committee developed a vision for Great Bowden that reflects the community's aspirations over The Plan period.

The statement below was tested and amended through consultation with the broader community in the open event held over two days on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2016. The Vision Statement was also published in the May 2016 edition of Great Bowden's Newsletter which is delivered to every household in Great Bowden. Comments were invited from residents, particularly from those who couldn't attend the May open events.

#### **Vision statement**

*'Our vision for Great Bowden, in 20 years' time, is that it will still be a pleasant and thriving place to live and an enjoyable place to visit, offering a range of local activities to a diverse, multi-generational population.'*

*It will have increased in size through managed and sustainable growth in keeping with Great Bowden's village character. New housing developments will have been located on sites that minimise negative impacts on the environment, existing traffic, parking or community resources while providing the residents who will live there with all of the attractions that Great Bowden can offer. New residents will be enabled to contribute positively to the social and commercial life of the village. New housing developments will also provide opportunities for existing residents to find accommodation suitable to their circumstances.*

*Traffic and parking issues will have been managed as a priority, in order to mitigate safety risks arising from new developments, especially at all of the entrances to Great Bowden. The village will feel a safe place in which to live and move around, whether by car or bicycle or on foot, offering easy and continuing access to a range of countryside activities such as walking, cycling, horse-riding and exercising dogs.*

*Because of its setting, there will be a continuing risk that the village will be taken into the wider urban development of Market Harborough. Our vision sees Great Bowden, in 20 years' time, remaining an independent and distinct separate settlement within attractive countryside, thereby maintaining its character and agricultural setting. Transport connections and other community resources appropriate to a village population will continue to be available. It will feel socially inclusive and have its own school, shops and pubs which will continue to serve an important integrating function for the community. Great Bowden will offer all of the residents the opportunity to have a sense of well being and to be proud to live in the village.'*

## Objectives

To help achieve the vision, the following objectives have been established:

### **Housing**

- Any growth will be managed and sustainable in keeping with Great Bowden's village character;
- Any new housing developments will be located on sites that minimise negative impact on existing traffic, parking, community resources and amenities, and meet a locally demonstrated housing need including homes for older people and for young couples;
- New housing developments will provide existing residents with accommodation suitable for their (changing) circumstances.

### **The Natural and Built Environment**

- To maintain Great Bowden as an independent and distinctly separate settlement and to protect and, where possible, enhance the open spaces within and surrounding the village;
- To protect the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets and to avoid harm to the Conservation area;
- To preserve the character of Great Bowden by retaining important views and areas of separation;
- To improve access to countryside and thus promote recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages to enjoy.

### **Community facilities and amenities**

- Valued existing facilities will be protected and where possible enhanced;
- New facilities will be welcomed where they are needed by the community;
- Efforts will be made to ensure that the Primary School thrives as an important local resource.

### **Transport/getting about**

- Traffic and parking issues will be managed to mitigate safety risks arising from new developments: and
- Transport connections and other community resources appropriate to a village population will be promoted.

### **Employment**

- To support employment in Great Bowden where there is no detrimental impact on local amenities.



## 6. Policies

### Strategy

At the heart of The Plan for Great Bowden is the principle of ensuring sustainable development, which is defined in the NPPF as ‘providing for the needs of the current generation while not making make life worse for future generations’.

Through the process of developing The Plan, consideration has been given to the type and extent of new development required to meet the needs of the local community, where it should best be located in the Parish, and how it should be designed. The Plan includes in its scope everything from small-scale development, such as a minor extension to a house, to small-scale housing developments and employment proposals.

The Plan is not intended to replace the policies contained in the Harborough Core Strategy, Harborough Local Plan (when adopted) and the NPPF. It sits alongside these to add additional, more detailed policies, that are specific to Great Bowden and which help achieve the community’s vision. Where suitable policies already exist in the Harborough Core Strategy or NPPF they are not duplicated in this Plan.

## Housing and the Built Environment

### Housing provision

It is recognised that the provision of new housing helps to support existing community facilities such as shops and pubs and helps to achieve the aim of providing a balanced and sustainable community.

Various consultation activities have shown that residents are not opposed to development, but are concerned that house building is not disproportionate and that where it takes place it does not have an adverse impact on the character of the Parish, or result in inadequate infrastructure.

As the draft Harborough Local Plan (July 2017) states 'The full objectively assessed housing need for the Leicester and Leicestershire HMA is 4,829 dwellings per annum between 2011 and 2031 (96,580 total) and for Harborough District is 532 dwellings per annum between 2011 and 2031 (HEDNA), giving a total plan requirement across the 20 year plan period of 10,640 dwellings'.

The draft Local Plan incorporates a 20% buffer and therefore makes provision for 12,800 dwellings from 2011 to 2031. Of this, 8,150 dwellings have already been built or committed (through the granting of planning permission, or through allocation in neighbourhood plans) leaving a residual requirement of 4,650 dwellings up to 2031.

The draft Local Plan (July 2017) establishes a hierarchy of settlements to help to determine the most appropriate locations for development.

On the basis of this hierarchy, Great Bowden (as well as 15 other settlements) is identified as a Selected Rural Village. These are identified on the basis of the presence of at least 2 of the 6 key services (food shop, GP surgery, library, post office, primary school and pubs) together with a scheduled bus service. Development in Selected Rural Villages should be 'primarily in the form of small-scale infill developments or limited extensions to help address economic, social or community objectives'. This could include schemes to enable more social housing, small-scale market housing and development aimed at meeting the needs of local people'. (Draft Local Plan consultation, HDC, 2015).

Although the emerging Local Plan is yet to be finalised, the latest minimum housing target for Great Bowden is for no further residential dwellings up to 2031. This target takes into account the high level of residential development over recent years within the parish.

For this reason, no additional residential allocation is proposed in The Plan. Any new housing development will be secured through windfall development (see page 24) in line with Policy H3. The Plan will be kept under review and any increase in housing need will trigger a reconsideration of this situation.

This review will take into account the J. G. Pears site on the periphery of the parish, which is currently a commercial site but for which there is an expressed intention by the owners to develop the site for residential units in the future.

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**POLICY H1: HOUSING PROVISION** - Having regard to the high number of dwellings already constructed and existing sites with planning permission since April 2016, the Parish has exceeded its housing requirement over The Plan period. Therefore, until such a time as there is an increase in housing need across the Harborough District which is reflected in an agreed increase in the housing target for Great Bowden, or unless there is a failure to deliver the existing commitments, further housing development in the Parish will be restricted to Windfall development in line with Policy H3.

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## Limits to development

The purpose of Limits to Development is to ensure that sufficient housing and economic activity is available in appropriate locations that will avoid overloading the transport infrastructure and intruding into the local countryside.

Limits to Development were established by HDC in order to clarify where new development is best located. They are used to define the extent of a built-up part of a settlement and distinguish between areas where, in planning terms, development would be acceptable in principle, such as in the main settlements, and where it would be unacceptable, generally in the least sustainable locations such as in the open countryside. Developments in the open countryside risk the creation of ribbon development, the merging of settlements and generally detract from the visual amenity of the area.

The village of Great Bowden is the main settlement within the parish. In order to maintain its character there is a need to carefully control where development occurs to protect its open and rural nature.

To direct development to those areas within the settlement that are considered most suitable, The Plan designates Limits to Development for the built-up part of Great Bowden. The redefined Limits to Development takes into account recent planning permissions and business developments and supersedes the 'limits' previously set by HDC ([See supporting information](#)).

Within the limits to development, suitably designed and located development is, in principle, acceptable. Some sites within the limits are protected from further development but all new developments must comply with the policies in The Plan.

In planning terms, land outside a defined Limits to Development, including any small groups of buildings or small settlements, is treated as countryside.

It is national and local planning policy that development in the countryside should be carefully controlled. Supporting “the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it” is a core planning principle in the NPPF. This approach is also supported by this Plan, in particular, because it will help ensure that development is focused in more sustainable settlements with a greater range of services and facilities and infrastructure that has capacity for the expansion, as well as helping to maintain the special landscape character of the Parish and protecting the countryside for its own sake as an attractive, accessible and non-renewable natural resource.

Focusing development within the agreed Limits to Development will help to support existing services within villages and help to protect the countryside and the remainder of the Plan area from inappropriate development.

## Methodology

In drawing up the Limits to Development, The Plan has adopted the following principles:

- Clearly defined physical features such as walls, fences, hedgerows and roads have been followed;
- Residential gardens are within the boundary;
- Allotments are outside the boundary;
- Generally, open areas of countryside – agricultural land, meadows, woodland and other greenfield land (with the exception of residential land) – have been excluded;
- Planning permissions that already exist for residential or employment development on the fringes of the settlement are included; and
- Isolated or sporadic development that is detached from the main built-up area is excluded.

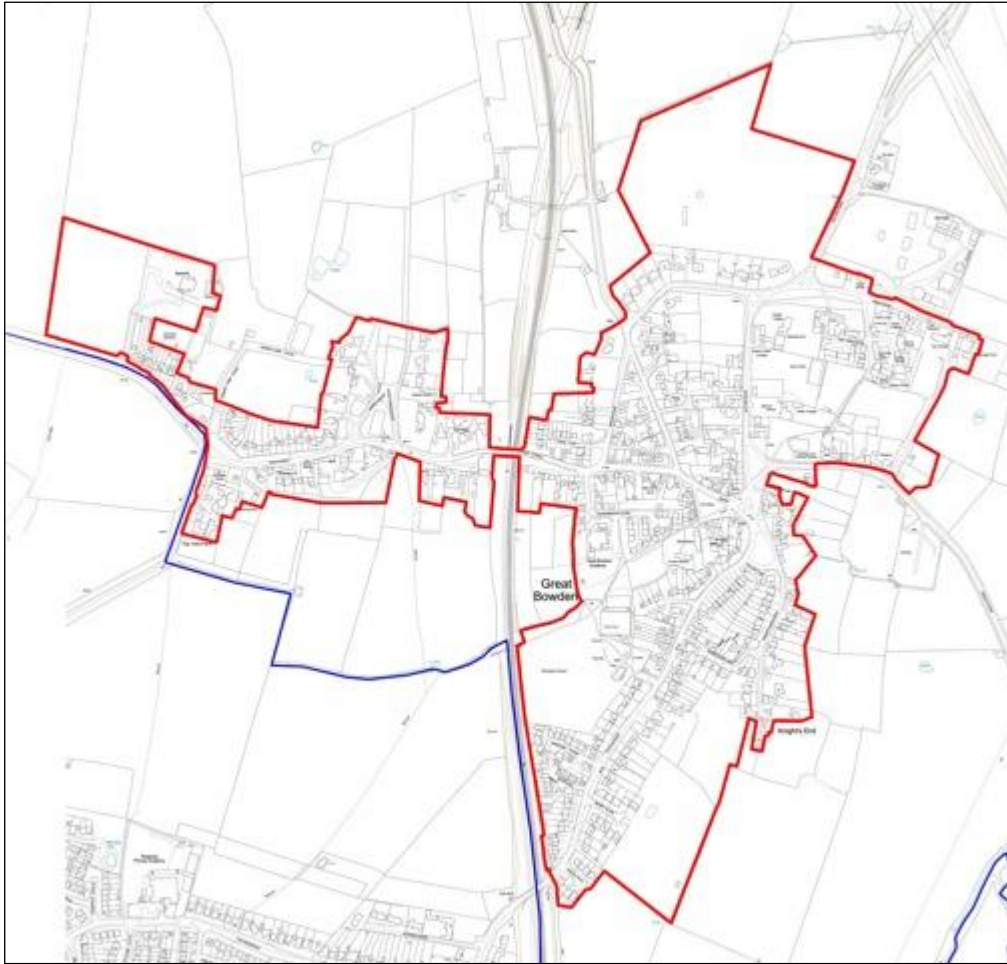
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**POLICY H2: LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT – Development proposals within The Plan area on sites within the Limits to Development, or in terms of new sporting or recreational facilities close or adjacent to the Limits to Development as identified in Fig. 2, will be supported where they respect the shape and form of Great Bowden and comply with the policies of The Plan.**

**Land outside the defined Limits to Development will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies.**

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**Fig. 2 Limits to development**



## Windfall sites

Windfall sites are small infill or redevelopment sites that come forward. These sites can comprise redundant or vacant buildings including barns, or gaps between existing properties in a built-up area.

Such sites have made a regular contribution towards the housing supply in the Parish. For example, in the last four years, 16 units have been provided. There remain opportunities for windfall development within the updated Limits to Development, and it is recognised that they will continue to make a contribution to housing provision in the Parish over the lifetime of The Plan.

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**POLICY H3: WINDFALL SITES – Development proposals for infill and redevelopment sites (three dwellings or fewer) will be supported where:**

- a) They are within the Limits to Development of Great Bowden;**
- b) They help to meet the identified housing requirement for Great Bowden in**

terms of housing mix (Policy H4);

- c) They reflect the character and historic context of existing developments within Great Bowden;
  - d) They retain existing important natural boundaries such as trees, hedges and streams;
  - e) They provide for a safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site and any traffic generation and parking impact created does not result in a severe direct or cumulative impact on congestion or road and pedestrian safety unless appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken;
  - f) They do not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring occupiers by reason of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion or noise; and
  - g) They do not reduce garden space to an extent where it adversely impacts on the character of the area, or the amenity of neighbours and the occupiers of the dwelling.
- 

## Housing mix

Providing a wide choice of high quality homes is essential to supporting sustainable, mixed and inclusive community. This will help underpin a well-balanced population vital to the on-going viability of local services and the prosperity of the community, particularly in light of its increasingly ageing population.

The parish has a higher than average representation of older people (aged 65+) accounting for 22% of total residents which is above the district (18%), region (17%) and national (16%) rates.

The elderly population is increasing with the number of residents aged 65+ increasing to 22% of the population from 19% between 2001 and 2011.

Home ownership levels are relatively high with around 78% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage or loan which is somewhat higher than the district (72%), regional (67%) and national (63%) averages. Affordable housing properties account for 9% of tenure which is below the district (10%), region (16%) and England (18%) rates. Around 10% of households live in privately rented homes which is below the district (11%), regional (15%) and England (16%) rates.

Data from the 2011 Census (see [supporting information](#)) shows that the majority (46%) of residential dwellings are detached which is below the district (48%), but above regional (32%) and national (22%) share. Semi-detached housing accounts for 33% of residential housing stock compared with 29% for the district, 35% for the region and 31% for England as a whole. Terraced housing and flats provide 21% of accommodation spaces, again, lower than elsewhere.



Results from the 2011 Census show that 8.5% of households live in housing with 5 or more bedrooms which is higher than the district rate (8%), regional (4%) and England (5%) averages. There is also an under representation of housing for single people with just 3% of dwellings having one bedroom against 6% for the district, 8% for the region and 12% for England as a whole.

In summary, an analysis of the Census data shows that between 2001 and 2011 the parish population increased by around 7% and the number of households by 6%. There is evidence that the population demographic is ageing and in line with national trends the local population is likely to get older as average life expectancy continues to rise.

Home ownership is high and there is a high proportion of detached and semi-detached housing and under occupied dwellings, particularly those with 4 or more bedrooms. 45% of the 58 new house sales registered in the parish between 1995 and 2015 were detached dwellings.

The high level of under occupancy suggests a need for smaller homes of one to two bedrooms which would be suitable for residents wishing to downsize, small families and those entering the housing market. Providing suitable accommodation for elderly residents will enable them to remain in the local community and release under-occupied larger properties onto the market which would be suitable for growing families (see [HAPP13 Report June 2016](#)).

The NPPF (see [supporting information](#)) calls for 'custom build' opportunities to be included in local plans as part of the housing mix. This is accommodated within the Plan and referred to as 'self-build'. These opportunities offer benefits in terms of affordability, local engagement and encourage bespoke design appropriate to the area. This will ensure the fit within the overall design of the scheme and provide flexibility to meet a range of different needs.

A detailed study of the housing need across the Parish is provided in the [supporting information](#).

Policy CS1 of the Harborough Core Strategy requires new housing to meet the varied housing needs of the community in terms of issues that include tenure and affordability.

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**POLICY H4: HOUSING MIX – Any new housing development proposals should provide a mixture of housing types specifically to meet identified local needs in Great Bowden. Support will be given to dwellings of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms and to homes suitable for older people and those with restricted mobility. The**

provision of self-build units is supported. 4+ bedroom dwellings may be included in the mix of dwellings, but will be expected to comprise a clear minority.

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## Affordable housing

Affordable housing is defined in the NPPF (Annex 2) as “social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market”. The PPG (2a-022) describes affordable housing need as being an estimate of “the number of households and projected households who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing and who cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market.”

With average house prices too high for those on average incomes, housing affordability remains a key housing issue for the Parish and there is a clear case to meet local targets for affordable housing provision. The emerging Local Plan contains a requirement to provide 40% affordable units on-site for all developments with 11 or more dwellings.

Consultation has demonstrated support for affordable units to be provided for those individuals in housing need who have a local connection so that local need is prioritised. Similarly, the provision of Starter Homes or Shared Ownership Homes will be supported to help achieve a balanced community.

The Plan supports the provision of more affordable housing within the Great Bowden Parish. It is also felt that development should make provision for the increasing numbers and demand of older members of the population and those with specialist care needs. Although The Plan does not allocate large sites for development, some large scale existing permissions are outline only therefore this policy will affect these developments as they progress.

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**POLICY H5: AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION - Development proposals for new housing where there is a net gain of 11 or more dwellings should provide at least 40% affordable housing (or other figure as required by the emerging Local Plan) in accordance with district-wide planning policies that are suitable to meet the current and future housing needs of the parish.**

**Development proposals that make affordable housing available for local people through shared ownership and starter homes will be supported.**

**Priority for affordable housing should be given to those with a “local connection” to the parish**

**In the event that no-one comes forward within a period of six weeks, the residence criteria can be extended to people living across the District.**

**Developments should be ‘tenure blind’, so that affordable housing is indistinguishable from other dwellings and are distributed throughout the development wherever possible.**

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## **Housing design**

Great Bowden Parish has a rich and attractive built environment from its long history, resulting in a wide range of heritage assets, attractive landscapes and distinctive character, as reflected, in part, by the Conservation Area. The Plan seeks to protect this character and heritage

We seek to ensure that the high quality built environment is retained through the village and that development is in keeping with the existing housing design.

The fragmentation and irregular shape of the Greens is reflected in the interesting juxtaposition of groups of houses and their outbuildings. It is the breaking up of housing into many small, intimate areas that lends such character to Great Bowden. There is even a mud cottage originally built for the poor, now much altered but representing many others demolished in the 19th century. Historically, building has been concentrated around the Greens and along the village approaches.

Overall, the impression created is of a well-spaced settlement with its discrete centres being defined informally by the Greens.

A number of cottages were demolished from the 1930's onwards for redevelopment. The main construction at this time was in the area of Station Road and Knights End Road. After the Second World War the first areas of building were the council houses in Station Road and Main Street. The largest areas of post-war development were along and leading off Station Road and Horseshoe lane and in Chater Close off Manor Road. In fact along Station Road, both sides have been fully developed leaving no open fields adjacent to the road. Small in-fill developments of two or three houses have taken place throughout the village.

The newer houses in the village pose a variety of styles and types with no attempt to create an accord with the older existing properties. This situation has been improved by some features of the development at Top Yard Farm.

Attempts to use suitable designs can be spoilt by the addition of such incongruities as the wrong roof colour or a conspicuous porch.

The functional core of the village is centred around the main group of Greens, in close proximity to which are located the church, the original church school, the village hall, shops, public houses and a listed old style red telephone box.

This history is an important component in the distinctive character of the Parish, and consultation shows that it is important to local people. All new housing should therefore reflect the character and historic context of existing developments.

The Parish Council and the wider community have produced a Village Design Statement (VDS) (Adopted by HDC in August 2000). Its aim is to safeguard the distinctive character and rich heritage of Great Bowden, and to guide any new development in a way that ensures it is sympathetic to the existing village and enhances its special identity and character.

The VDS has been reviewed and together with the guide lines, incorporated into The Plan as [supporting information](#). It is recognised that by incorporating the VDS into The Plan, gives it added importance and 'weight' in planning terms. Furthermore, HDC in the draft local plan of July 2017 states under GD8.1 that: ' the Council encourages neighbourhood plans to develop appropriate design guides, through incorporation of Village Design Statements.....'

The Parish Council is aware of the environmental benefits of reducing street and security lighting; the amenity benefits to households of limiting intrusive security lighting on adjacent properties and the economic benefits of reducing the cost of lighting. This is supported by the NPPF, paragraph 125 which states that planning policies 'should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation'.

NPPF paragraphs 95 and 97 support low carbon emission and a reduction in energy consumption. Accordingly, The Plan will require that any developments within the Parish should only feature on-street and external wall mounted lighting that is appropriate and sympathetic to the context, and consistent with the density and output of the lighting used in the surrounding area. Consideration should be made to maximise energy efficiency and minimise light pollution, all light being directed ground-ward.

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**POLICY H6: DESIGN STANDARDS - Development proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design, layout and use of materials in order to make a positive contribution to the special character of the Parish.**

**Development proposals must meet the relevant guidelines in the Village Design Statement and are encouraged to have regard to the following design principles to a degree that is proportionate to the development:**

- a. New development should enhance and reinforce the local distinctiveness and character of the area in which it is situated and proposals should clearly show how the general character, scale, mass, density and layout of the site, of the building or extension fits in with the aspect of the surrounding area. Care should be taken to ensure that the development does not disrupt the visual amenities of the street scene and impact negatively on any significant wider landscape views;**

- b. New buildings should follow a consistent design approach in the use of materials, fenestration and the roofline to the building. Materials should be chosen to complement the design of the development and add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment;
  - c. New housing should reflect the character and historic context of existing developments within the Parish. However, contemporary and innovative materials and design will be supported where positive improvement can be robustly demonstrated without detracting from the historic context;
  - d. Redevelopment, alteration or extension of historic farmsteads and agricultural buildings within the Parish should be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials and form;
  - e. Proposals should minimise the impact on general amenity and give careful consideration to noise, odour and light. Light pollution should be minimised wherever possible. Proposals to install street lighting in undeveloped areas of the Parish that are currently dark at night (more than 50 metres from an existing street light) will not be supported. The use of on-street lighting will be appropriate and sympathetic to the context and consistent with the density and output of the lighting used in the surrounding area;
  - f. Development should be enhanced by biodiversity and relate well to the topography of the area, with existing trees and hedges preserved whenever possible. Provision should be made for wildlife including roof design, bird boxes and the use of hedges to meet Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) guidelines;
  - g. Where possible, enclosure of plots should be of native hedging, wooden fencing, or stone/brick wall. Any enclosures that are necessarily removed through the development process should be reinstated in keeping with the original;
  - h. Housing plots should accommodate storage containers compliant with the refuse collection system;
  - i. Development should incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy and water efficiency, including the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology; and
  - j. Development should incorporate low carbon energy technology and sustainable drainage systems with maintenance regimes to minimise vulnerability to flooding and climate change; ensuring appropriate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable materials.
-

## Support for brownfield sites

Economic derelict sites (brownfield sites remain across The Plan area and these often create a drag on its vibrancy and attractiveness.

This is also a core principle of the NPPF (paragraph 17) which is to “encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that is it not of high environmental value”.

Development that addresses these issues will be supported.

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**POLICY H7: SUPPORT FOR BROWNFIELD SITES – Within the Limits to Development, proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of redundant land or buildings will be supported over non-brownfield sites, where the site has limited environmental, amenity or ecological value.**

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## Natural and Historical Environment

### Historical introduction

The earliest known settlement in Great Bowden appears to have been an Iron Age to Romano-British settlement on the high ground south west of the village with evidence of a possible isolated homestead near the centre of the current village in 2014. No trace of the early Anglo-Saxons has been found in the valley and they too may have settled the hill top.

The name Bowden is Anglo-Saxon in origin. There have been many variations of the spelling over the centuries from BugeDONE in Domesday to Boudone in the 14th century. The second syllable refers to a Dun, the Anglo-Saxon description for a long flat-topped hill. This is a good description of the hill that rises south of the village, separates it from Market Harborough and winds round from the railway in the east to Leicester Road in the west. The hill is referred to as Bowden Ridge in this Plan. The first syllable is thought to be a personal name Bugga or Bucga. Man or woman, they would have been important in the Saxon community.

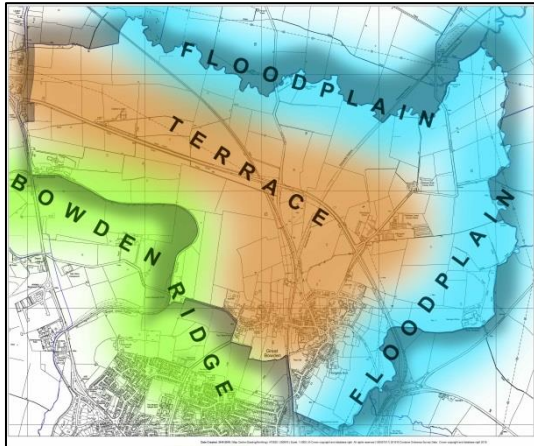
Great Bowden quickly rose in importance during the 9th century and evidence of a late Anglo-Saxon settlement covering much of the currently occupied area of the village has been found in recent years through excavated pottery of that period. It is thought that the church of St Mary in Arden may have been founded during this period too.

By Domesday there were two manors, one belonging to the king, and the village was the head place of an administrative soke covering villages to the north. The church with its dedication to Saints Peter and Paul, this dedication often associated with royal estates, is first mentioned in 1220 and was able to acquire its first bell, still in place, in 1599 after the advowson was passed to Christchurch Oxford by Henry VIII. The earliest part of the present church dates from the 13th Century, with the tower dating from the 14th Century and the nave from the 15th Century. A chantry was established in 1472 but this was lost with Dissolution. The village survived the Black Death of the 14<sup>th</sup> century better than most villages in the east of England, again shown through excavated evidence, but was on a slow decline with the emergence of Market Harborough and its market from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Bowden's South Field and part of the West Field were gradually lost to Market Harborough's northern development during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries and the village was for a period from 1927-1995 incorporated into the Civil Parish of Market Harborough.

The modern parish, although now bounded to the south by Market Harborough and to the west by the Grand Union Canal, retains the north and east boundaries of the historic parish, including its mostly agricultural land ([see supporting information](#)).

## Geological setting

The whole Plan Area is underlain by Jurassic (c. 200 million years old) rocks. The higher ground of Bowden Ridge is an outcrop of Dyrham Formation siltstone, which stands above the softer Charmouth Formation clays on which the village is situated. The Welland valley cuts into and exposes the clay but contains a strip of 'recent' alluvium coinciding with the river floodplain. The highest ground on Bowden Ridge is covered with glacial deposits from the Ice Age (less than 1 million years old)



Topographic areas in the parish, showing Great Bowden's position between the Bowden Ridge and the river floodplain

All these rock types tend to produce relatively heavy clay soils, which have two effects on the character of the place: medieval plough lands have survived (as ridge and furrow earthworks) where not ploughed out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and surface water flooding is prevalent due to the soil's relative impermeability.

The original Romano-British settlement site on Bowden Ridge was located on the drier, better drained siltstone outcrop on the north-facing flank of the hill. The late Anglo-Saxon village developed on the lower

terrace, above the wide floodplain of the Welland (diagram, left).

## Natural environment

Woodland is scarce, hedges are mostly of hawthorn. However there are several sites where semi-natural habitats have developed relatively recently, and these are of high significance for biodiversity in the context of The Plan Area and the District

## Environmentally significant characteristics of The Plan area

- Protection of the significant landscapes of the parish is supported by HDC's Core Strategy Policy CS17;
- The setting of the village between Bowden Ridge, High East Leicestershire and the Welland Valley provides distinctive views;
- The village has maintained its present site, established in the late Anglo Saxon period, and its polyfocal layout, around several surviving greens, namely Upper Green, Nether Green, Middle Green and the Central Greens, and paddocks close to the village core.
- The concentration on cattle farming, on semi-natural permanent pastures, after

the Enclosure in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century has preserved a number of small hedged fields typical of that period;

- This 18<sup>th</sup> century farming has also resulted in a relatively large area of surviving ridge and furrow, providing a good visible record of the parish's medieval landscape;
- The post-enclosure grassland facilitated the sport of hunting which in turn led to the construction of large residential properties in the village;
- A network of ancient 'ways' survives as footpaths, green lanes and modern roads in the village and wider parish;
- There are a number of sites of local and district level biodiversity importance; and
- Features of early industrial history significance survive in the parish and are still in many cases operational, including the canal, turnpike road, several railway lines and small industrial sites.

Great Bowden residents are aware of the contribution The Plan can make to sustainable development, in particular the balance between development and the environment that is the foundation of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF. The environmental inventory conducted for The Plan, and the following Policies, provide a template for strategic land use planning in The Plan area.

## Environmental inventory

An environmental inventory ([see supporting information](#)) of Great Bowden was carried out during September-November 2016. The work comprised two elements:

- Review of all existing designations and available information; and
- Fieldwork to identify sites and features of natural and historical environment significance in the context of The Plan Area.

The review compiled information from many sources, including:

- DEFRA
- Natural England
- Historic England
- Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Records
- Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Record Centre (biodiversity and geology)
- Environment Agency

- British Geological Survey
- Leicestershire County Council Phase 1 Habitat Surveys
- Old maps (Ordnance Survey, manuscript)
- British History Online
- Local history and archaeology publications
- Local knowledge

The fieldwork to gather the necessary supporting evidence was conducted in September-October 2016. All accessible open land in The Plan Area was visited and its significant species, habitats, landscape characteristics, earthworks and other extant features were recorded.

These data, along with all relevant site-specific data from the existing information review, were mapped and tabulated, and each site was scored and evaluated using the nine criteria for Local Green Space selection cited in the NPPF (Fig.3):

**Fig. 3 Environmental inventory scoring system used in The Plan**

Criterion (NPPF 2012)	Score range			Notes
ACCESSIBILITY	0	1-3	4	e.g. private, no access (0) – could be made accessible – accessed via PRoW – fully open to the public (4)
PROXIMITY / LOCAL	0	1-3	4	Distant (0) --- fairly near to --- adjoins (3) or is within (4) settlement
BOUNDED	0	1-3	4	Individual parcel of land (not an undefined or large area)
SPECIAL TO COMMUNITY	0	1-3	4	Opinion of local people via questionnaire or at consultation events
RECREATIONAL / EDUCATIONAL USE	0	1-3	4	Actual or potential, informal sports, dog-walking, Forest School use, informal or official open space, etc.
BEAUTY (including views)	0	1	2	Subjective, relative (give justification); use consultation map results
TRANQUILITY	0	1	2	Subjective, relative (give justification)
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE	0	1-3	4	Extant, visible evidence. Number of periods/features/records etc. / Relevant existing designations (Historic Environment Records)
WILDLIFE SIGNIFICANCE, GEOLOGY	0	1-3	4	Richness of species and habitats (Priority (BAP) spp. / Priority habitats) / relevant existing designations (Habitat Survey, Local Wildlife Sites / site of geological/industrial history significance)
[Maximum possible score]	32			

## Areas of separation

### Relationship of The Plan area to Market Harborough

The two communities were separated for centuries by open fields. This separation was compromised in the 19th century, first by the canal and then by the railway and associated ribbon development. Market Harborough grew as an industrial town and new housing gradually spread northwards onto green fields. This development has now reached the top of Bowden Ridge but is still not visible from the village below. The fields, half in Great Bowden and half in Market Harborough, are used by both communities for walking between village and town, for recreation, dog walking, etc. and are therefore an important asset to the community.

The historical significance of Great Bowden as the principal village in the original Anglo Saxon estate and now as a selected rural village will only be demonstrably retained if the village maintains its identity as an independent, largely rural, settlement separate from 21st century urban, suburban and commercial Market Harborough. Any further northern development would destroy the quality of the remaining landscape, the distinctness of the two settlements, the excellent views and viewpoints from the top and bottom of Bowden Ridge and the exceptional ridge and furrow earthworks that are visible on these northern slopes (Policy CS17).

This continued geographical independence is important in its own right and as a justifiable sustainable development aspiration, and designation of two formal areas of separation, as shown here, is strongly supported by the community.

### Land outside the Plan area

It is noted that because The Plan is unable to control development outside The Plan area, the present open areas (west of the railway line and south of Main Street/Leicester Lane, but within the boundaries of Harborough) that separate the village from Market Harborough cannot be protected by Policy ENV 1. Community Action ENV 1 expresses a community aspiration to work with HDC to preclude future northwards expansion of Harborough over the ridge and onto the northern slopes of Bowden Ridge (see [supporting information](#)).

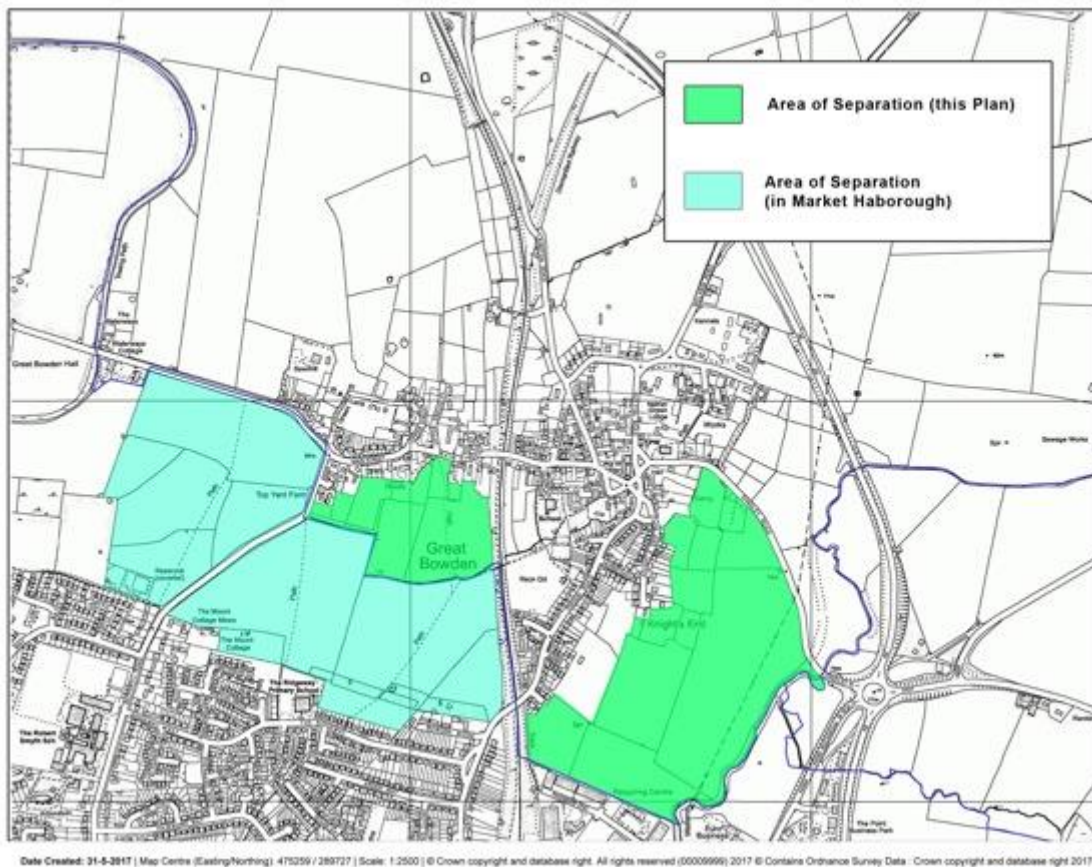
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**POLICY ENV 1: AREAS OF SEPARATION - To retain the geographical distinction and visual separation between Market Harborough and Great Bowden village, the two areas of open and undeveloped land shown on Fig. 4 are designated as Areas of Separation. Development proposals in the delineated areas should be controlled, and any permitted developments will be located and designed to maintain and, wherever possible, enhance the separation of Great Bowden village from Market Harborough.**

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Fig. 4 Areas of Separation



**COMMUNITY ACTION ENV 1: MAINTAINING THE SEPARATION BETWEEN GREAT BOWDEN AND MARKET HARBOROUGH –** Great Bowden residents and the Parish Council will work with HDC to protect the open space between the two settlements by designating complementary Areas of Separation on the Market Harborough side of the Parish boundary, as shown in Fig. 4.

## Local green space

Of the approximately 150 inventoried parcels of open land in the parish, some 90 were identified as having notable environmental (natural, historical and/or cultural) features. These sites were scored, using the nine criteria for Local Green Space designation outlined in the NPPF (see Fig. 3 for the criteria and scoring system adopted for The Plan) (see [supporting information](#)).

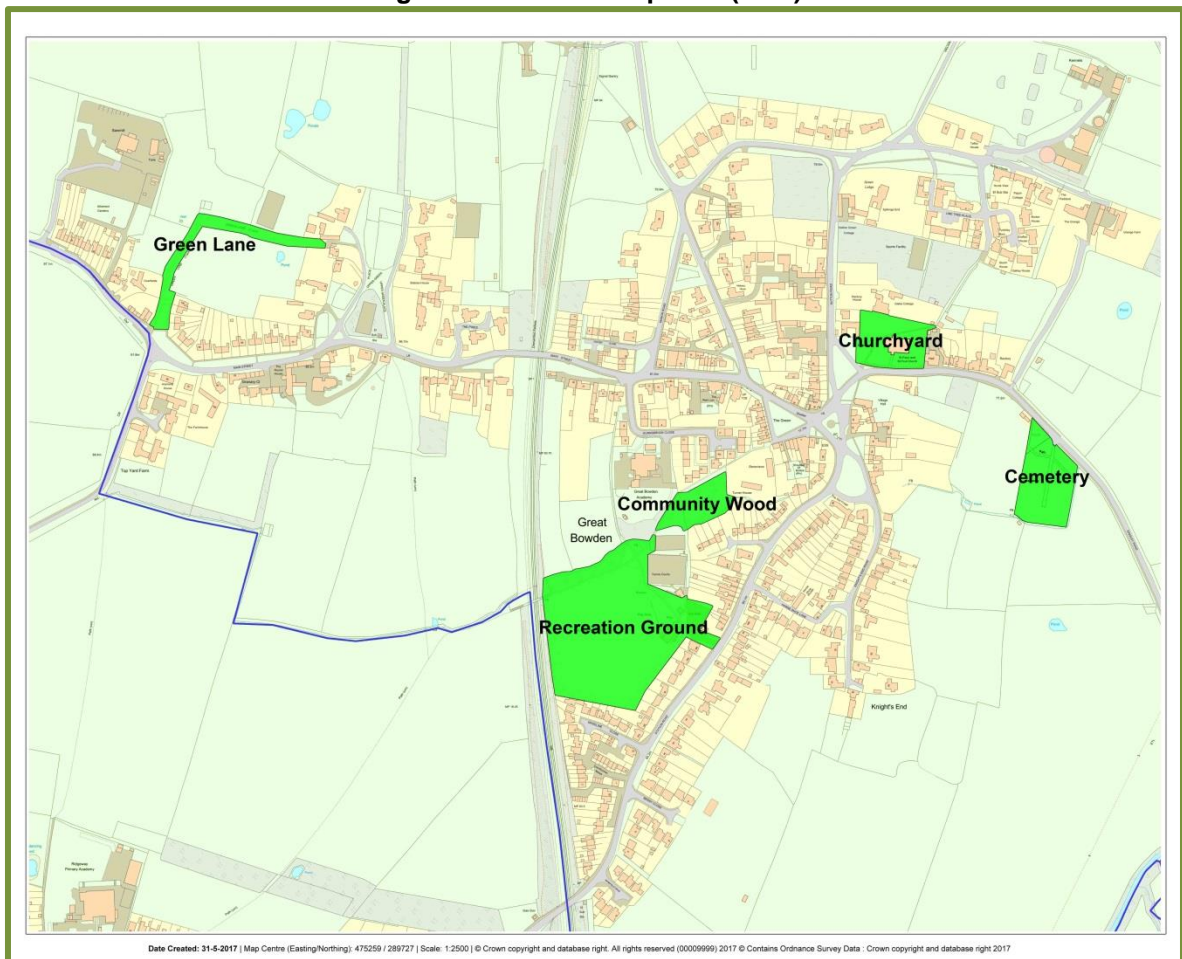
Five sites score 75% (24/32) or more of the maximum possible are eligible for designation as Local Green Spaces. Their statutory protection will ensure the preservation of these most important places in Great Bowden.



**POLICY ENV 2: PROTECTION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE** – Within the area of Local Green Space sites designated in this policy, detailed in the [supporting information](#) and identified on Fig. 5, development is ruled out, other than in exceptional circumstances.

- a) Churchyard of St Peter and St Paul parish church
- b) Great Bowden Cemetery
- c) Green Lane
- d) Great Bowden Recreation Ground
- e) Community Wood

**Fig. 5 Local Green Spaces (LGS)**



## Important open spaces, village greens, common land and green lanes

A group of sites scored highly in the Inventory for their outstanding community value. They have been identified in community consultations and fieldwork, and in Parish records; some are existing Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) sites i.e. in HDC Consultation documents for Local Green Space, Open Spaces Strategy and Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2015-2016) carried out in preparation for the HDC Local Plan (2017).

In Great Bowden these sites include recreation grounds, play areas, informal open spaces of recreational value, paddocks and other open spaces among buildings, village greens, wide grass verges of historical and aesthetic value, registered common land, green lanes and allotments. The paddocks are regarded as being particularly important because they are known to have been open spaces since at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and probably long before).

The value of all these sites as open spaces within and close to the built-up areas and/or their current, or potential, value, as community resources are recognised in the following Policy and Community Action (see [supporting information](#)). See also Common Land [supporting information](#).

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**POLICY ENV 3: OTHER IMPORTANT OPEN SPACE - Important Open Spaces, listed below, will be safeguarded by ensuring that development does not compromise their integrity or value.**

**A. Green Lane** (also designated as Local Green Space)

**B. Upper Green** (Common Land CL70; de-registered Common Land CL76, and roadside verges)

**C. Central Village Greens** (Common Land and Registered Village Green VG81)

**D. Nether Green** (Common Land CL75)

**E. – G. Middle Green** (Common Land CL71, 72, 73; de-registered CL77)

**H. Leicester Lane verge**

**I. Great Bowden cemetery** (also designated as Local Green Space)

**J. Community Wood** (also designated as Local Green Space)

**K. Welham Lane allotments**

**L. Great Bowden Academy playing fields and woodland**

**M. Market Harborough lawn tennis club courts and facilities**

**N. Churchyard of St. Peter and St. Paul** (also designated as Local Green Space)

**O. Great Bowden Recreation Ground** (also designated as Local Green Space)

**P. Fernie Hunt paddock**

Q. Buckminster Close paddock

R. Green Lane paddock

S. Corner paddock, Sutton and Welham Roads

T. Main Street verge

U. Main Street verges (four)

V. Leicester Lane Allotments

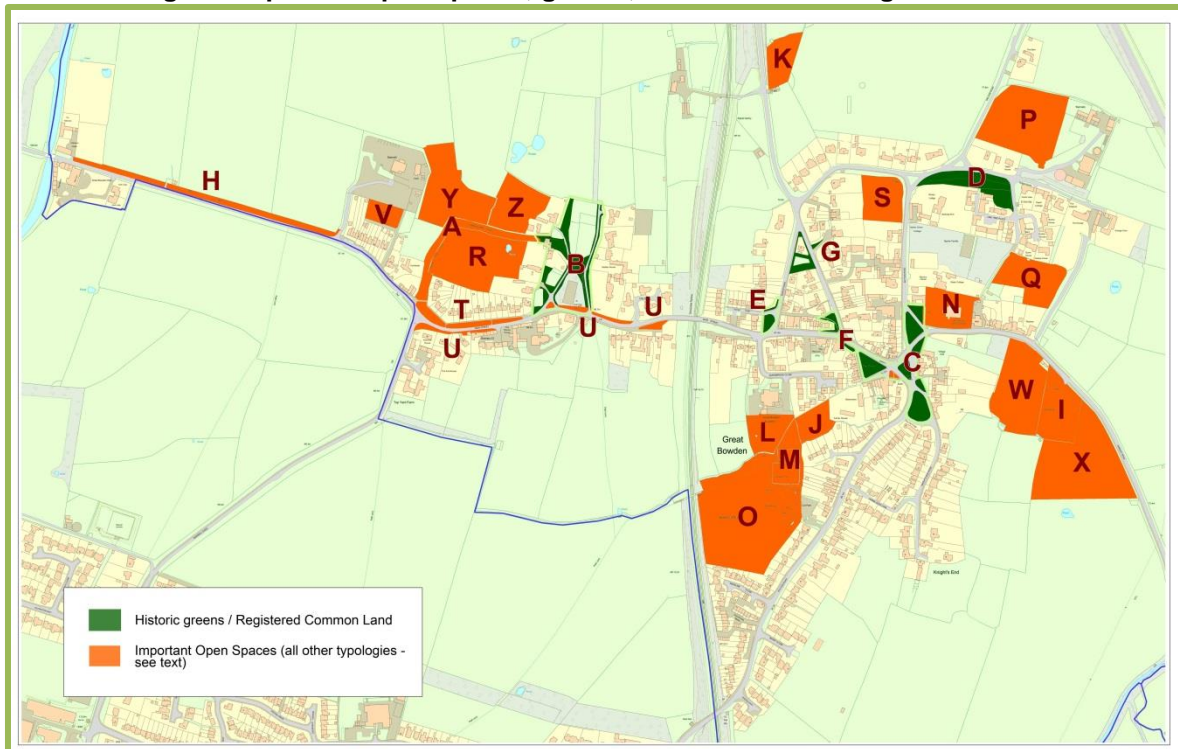
W. Christchurch paddock

X. Cemetery field

Y. Wood Yard paddock

Z. Manege field

**Fig. 6 Important open spaces, greens, common land and green lanes**



**COMMUNITY ACTION ENV 2: OTHER IMPORTANT OPEN SPACE - The Parish Council will work actively with HDC, landowners, the community and other partners to secure the protection of the locations and features of the sites listed in Policy ENV 3 and mapped in Fig. 6 through confirmation as existing, or designation as new, Open Space, Sport and Recreation (OSSR) sites in appropriate typologies.**

## Sites of historical environmental significance

A group of inventory sites scores highly for 'history' but, because their community value scores are not high enough they do not qualify for Local Green Space designation. The features for which the identified sites have been selected and notified are listed in the environmental inventory (see [supporting information](#)). Fig. 7 shows their locations.

The historical environment sites comprise all parcels of land of known local history significance (Historic England; Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Records; local knowledge) which have extant, visible expression in the landscape. These sites are essential for the preservation of Great Bowden's historical and cultural heritage.

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**POLICY ENV 4: PROTECTION OF OTHER SITES OF HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE** – seven sites listed below and shown in Fig. 7 have been identified as being of at least local historical significance. They are important in their own right and are valued locally. Development proposals that affect them will be expected to protect the identified features.

1. and 2. Green Lane group (Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval)

5. Buckminster Close, Nether Green (medieval to early modern)

3. Green Lane paddock (medieval)

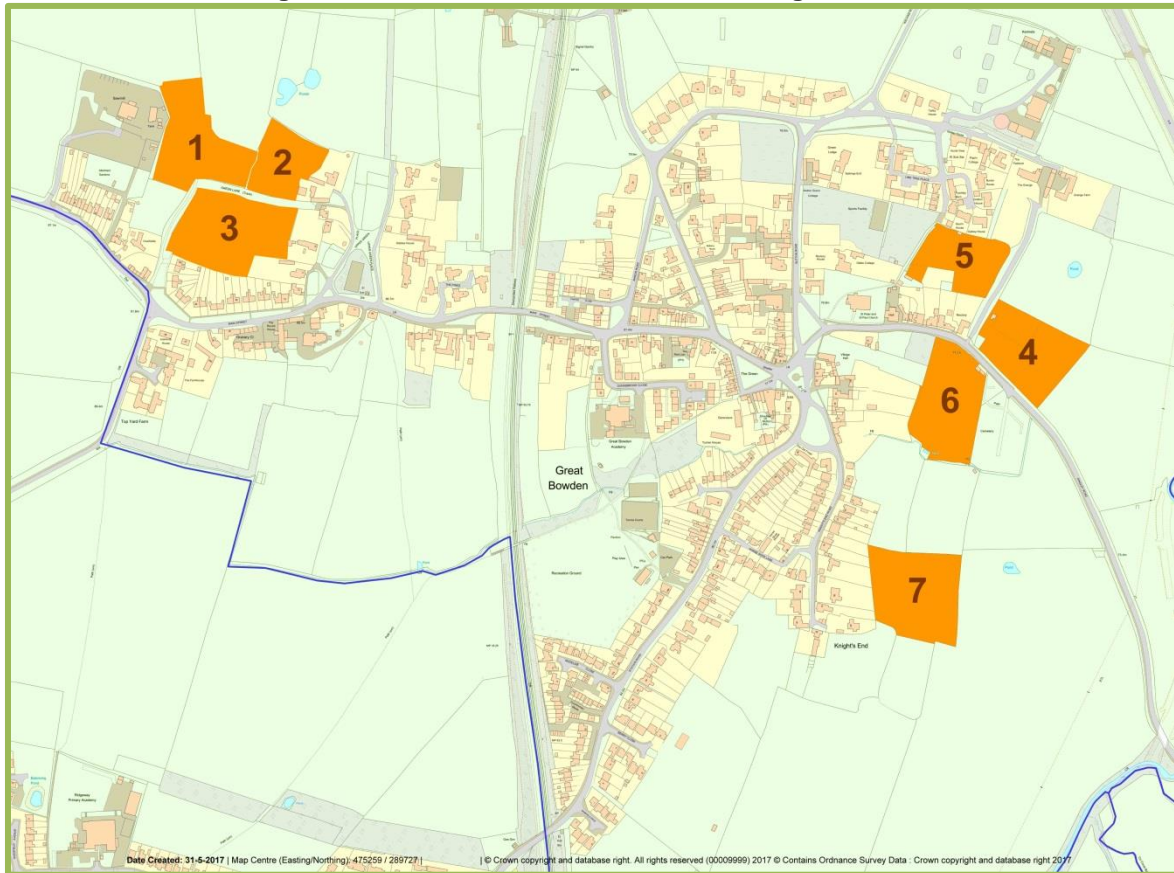
6. Christchurch paddock (medieval to early modern)

4. Dingley Road paddocks (Iron Age to medieval)

7. Knights End Close (medieval)

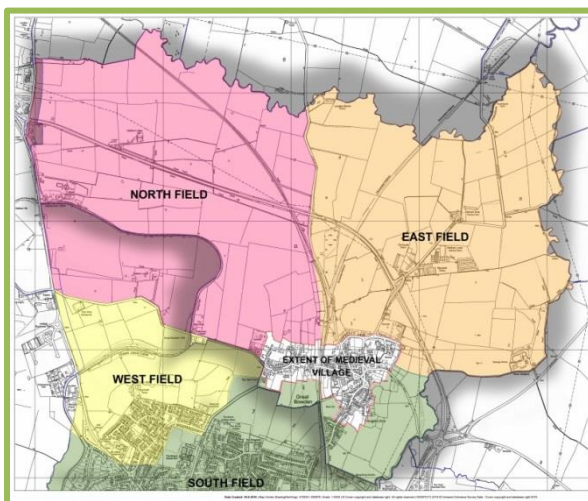
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**Fig. 7 Sites of historical environmental significance**

## Ridge and furrow

A characteristic and very important feature of Great Bowden is the survival of a significant area of ridge and furrow remaining in the modern fields. A desk based survey was done, field by field, in 2016 to record visible earthworks throughout the parish using satellite photographs and Lidar<sup>3</sup> images. The survey also recorded other historical earthworks, including possible pits and buildings. Fig. 8 is a visual inventory of the results and represents the current situation.



The historical parish of Great Bowden, with the village at its centre, was farmed using the 'open field' system for nearly a thousand years, from its establishment in the Early Medieval Period until 1776, the date of its Enclosure. Most townships (parishes) had three open fields, but Great Bowden had four (see map, left). Cultivation - arable crops and pasturage - was rotated on a 3-year basis (East Field and West Field were worked as

<sup>3</sup> Aerial photography laser images (Light Detection And Ranging)

one combined) and the land was managed communally. Ploughing was by oxen; the medieval plough did not have a reversible coulter,<sup>4</sup> so when the land was ploughed in a clockwise spiral the soil was always thrown to the same side, forming ridges and furrows with a height difference of up to 2 metres. After the Enclosure, the fields were subdivided and almost all were converted to permanent grazing land, thus 'fossilising' all the features of the medieval farmed landscape.

A return to arable farming, using modern ploughs, during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century caused the destruction of most ridge and furrow across the Midlands (Hall, D 2001. *Turning the Plough. Midland open fields: landscape character and proposals for management*. English Heritage and Northamptonshire County Council). The national trend has been a loss of between 85% and 100% per parish, most since 1940.

Great Bowden, in a precious exception to this trend, is one of only a handful of parishes in Leicestershire to have retained substantial evidence of its medieval agricultural landscape. Of the c.110 agricultural fields in The Plan Area, some 45 (41%) still retain traces of ridge and furrow (roughly 380 hectares of the c.700 hectares of open land, 54% by area).

In English legislation (except for the few that are also Scheduled Monuments) ridge and furrow fields are not statutorily protected, despite a recognition that "as the open field system was once commonplace in NW Europe, these surviving sites take on an international importance" (English Heritage, 2012). Individual fields in Great Bowden are not claimed to be of international importance, but the survival of a large group of well-preserved ridge and furrow fields here is highly valued by the local community, and any loss would be significantly detrimental to both local and national heritage. While this policy is primarily aimed at non agricultural developers, the involvement of farmers and agricultural landowners on a case by case basis will be necessary to achieve a sustainable balance between this important heritage asset and the viability of local agriculture.

A detailed, desk-based survey of all the fields in the parish has been undertaken and is to be found in [supporting information](#). The survey identifies the location of the ridge and furrow areas by field number and map reference.

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**POLICY ENV 5: RIDGE AND FURROW - The areas of ridge and furrow earthworks, mapped in Fig. 8, are non-designated heritage assets.**

**Any loss or damage arising from a development proposal (or a change of land use requiring planning permission) is to be avoided; the demonstrable benefits of such development must be balanced against the significance of the ridge and furrow features as heritage assets.**

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<sup>4</sup> Iron blade



**Fig. 8 Ridge and furrow in Great Bowden**

**Note:** the ridge and furrow shown here has been identified and mapped using the following principal sources: LIDAR imagery 2015; Google Earth images 2001, 2006, 2010, 2011; Surveyor's MS map, 1815; Great Bowden Heritage & Archaeology research (furlong names) c.1336. Other earthworks are also shown.

## Buildings and structures of historical environmental significance

The human landscape of Great Bowden is very highly valued by residents, with good reason: the contemporary layout of the village is a palimpsest<sup>5</sup> of at least a millennium of building, rebuilding and subtle re-arrangement. In addition to the 55 structures with Listed Building status, 19 buildings or structures have been identified by residents as having local or wider importance for historical or architectural merit and will be recognised as non-designated heritage assets.

Part of the character of the parish derives from the relationships between buildings and the spaces in which they sit. The arrangement of buildings to the historic

<sup>5</sup> Altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form



greens, paths and greenways is dealt with elsewhere in The Plan; however the settings of the Listed Buildings and those recognised here as non-designated heritage assets, while being more subtle than physical open space, is essential for the preservation of the village's layout and its ambience – the way people experience the village.

Developers will be required to take the settings of heritage assets into consideration in their proposals, and the Planning Authorities should apply Historic England guidelines on Local Heritage Listing and on the setting of heritage assets when determining planning consent in respect of proposals in Great Bowden.

### Listed buildings in Great Bowden

These structures are statutorily protected beyond the level that can be provided in The Plan.

A list of the statutorily listed buildings is in the [supporting information](#). It has been adopted from the February 2017 schedule on the online Historic England National Heritage List for England (NHLE), with a few (noted) minor modifications to record local name changes.

### Other notable buildings and structures in Great Bowden: the 'Local List'

A number of buildings and other structures were identified, from local knowledge, consultation and in inventory fieldwork, as being of local importance for their historical, architectural or aesthetic merit. They will be recognised as non-designated heritage assets for Planning purposes. Fig. 9 shows the buildings and structures in the built-up area; a further six features are outside the built-up area and details of all of the buildings and structures can be found in the [supporting information](#).

All the Local List features are listed in Community Action ENV 3.

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**POLICY ENV 6: SETTING OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OF HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST** – The structures and buildings as listed and shown in Fig. 9 are non-designated heritage assets and their features and settings will be protected wherever possible. Any harm arising from a development proposal, or a change of land use requiring planning approval, will need to be balanced against their significance as heritage assets.

1. Canal bridge, Leicester Lane (NGR SP 732891)

2. Railway over-bridge, Langton Road (NGR SP 743894)

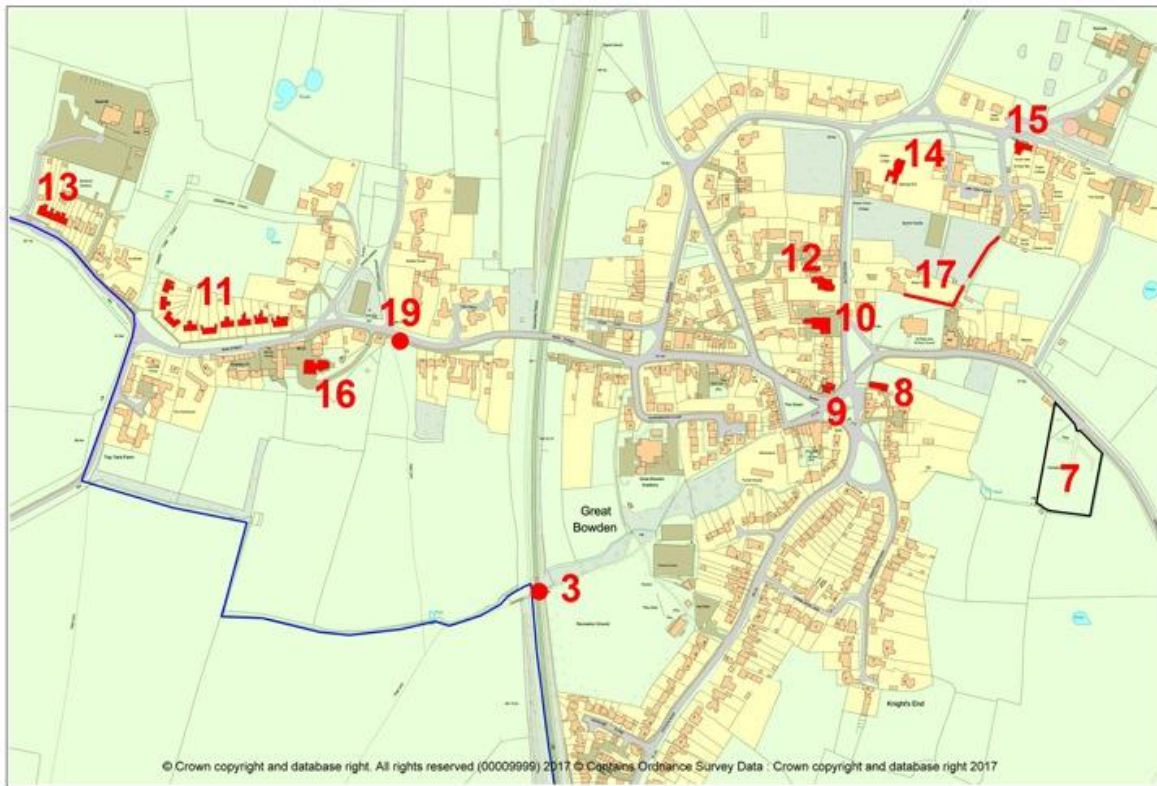
3. Railway footbridge

4. Disused railway embankment south of A6 By-Pass (NGR SP 743896)

- 5. Bridge over Langton brook (NGR SP 741908)
- 6. Old turnpike Road (NGR SP 720904)
- 7. Cemetery, Dingley Road
- 8. Village Hall
- 9. Bowden Stores – façade
- 10. Bishop's House
- 11. Nos. 74 - 108 Main Street
- 12. Green Lodge

- 13. Navvies' Row, Leicester Lane
- 14. Nether Green Lodge
- 15. Nether House
- 16. Upper House
- 17. Mud walls, Rectory House
- 18. J.G. Pears factory site (NGR SP 720902)
- 19. Victorian letterbox

**Fig. 9 Buildings and structures of historical environmental significance (central area)**



**COMMUNITY ACTION ENV 3: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS** - The structures and buildings listed here (map above) are non-designated heritage assets. They are locally important for their contribution to the layout and characteristic mix of architectural styles in the village, and their features and settings will be protected wherever possible. Any harm arising from a development proposal, or a change of land use requiring planning approval, will need to be balanced against their significance as heritage assets.

The Parish Council will survey the parish and identify other buildings that should have listed status and have these buildings formally listed.

## Important views

Consultation during The Plan's preparation identified a widely-held wish to protect the rural settings of Great Bowden and its surroundings. One of the ways in which residents expressed this wish was by identifying a number of important views within, away from and toward the village.

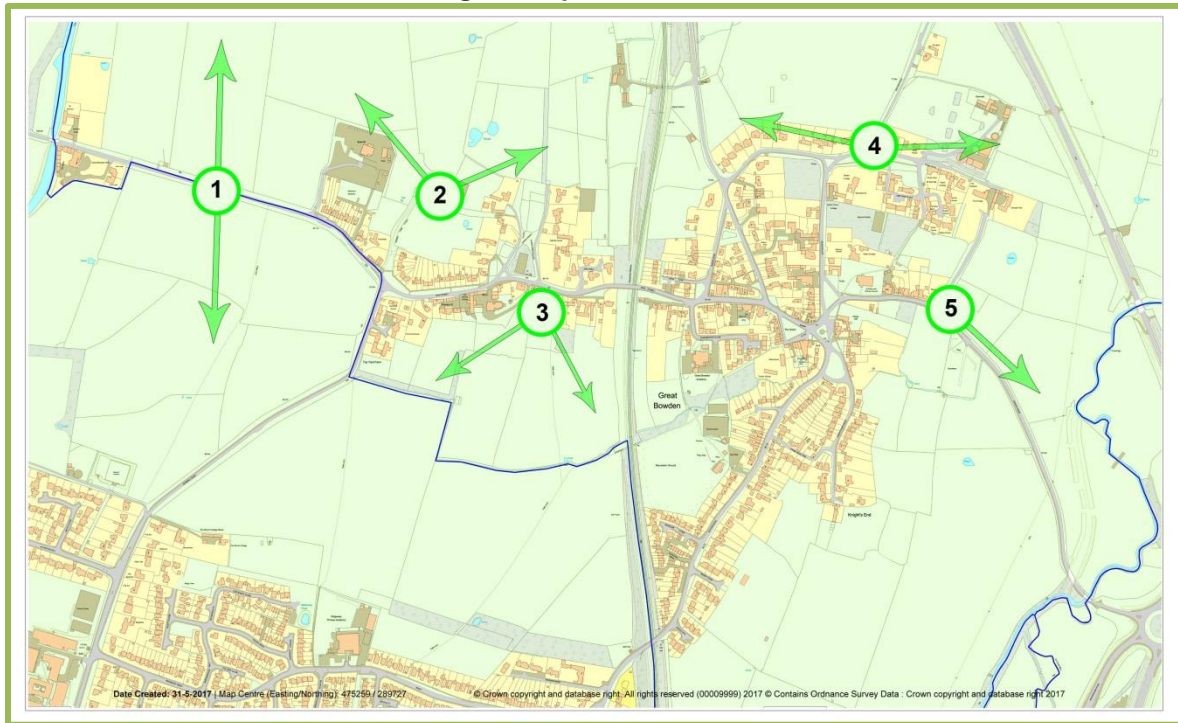
The general community wish has been confirmed by the environmental inventory, which, although principally concerned with identifying sites of environmental significance, also mapped the sight-lines and scopes of local views.

Further details of these views are in the [supporting information](#).

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**POLICY ENV 7: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS – The views listed are important for the setting of Great Bowden. Development should respect these important views which are also shown in Fig. 10:**

1. 360° from Leicester Lane north to the Langtons and south to Bowden Ridge The southern vista includes the important open country separating Bowden from Harborough;
  2. From Green Lane, from northwest to east, i.e. from the high ground of Kibworth Ridge to Upper Green;
  3. 180° panorama south from Main Street to the rising land of Bowden Ridge, where very well preserved ridge and furrow can be seen clearly;
  4. From Welham Road/Sutton Road junction northwards, west to east, including Nether Green and a large paddock: characteristic Great Bowden scene linking the built environment with historic open spaces; and
  5. From Dingley Road southeast over the Welland valley floodplain to the river, This has been undeveloped boundary land for at least 11 centuries.
-

**Fig. 10 Important views**

## Other sites and features of natural environmental significance

A third group of inventory sites scores highly for ‘wildlife’ but, because their community value scores are not high enough they do not qualify for Local Green Space designation. The features for which the identified sites have been selected and notified are listed in the environmental inventory (see [supporting information](#)). The map (Fig. 11) shows their locations.

The natural environment sites comprise:

- a) those where priority habitats occur or where priority species have been recorded as breeding or as regular visitors;
- b) confirmed, candidate and potential Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) identified in a Phase I Habitat Survey (2014) by Leicestershire County Council; and
- c) sites identified during the inventory process as being of high biodiversity significance in the context of The Plan Area.

Together, these sites are essential for biodiversity conservation within the Parish.

There are 28 sites of ecological interest with the Parish. The most well-known and important is Great Bowden Borrowpit (aka Great Bowden Brick Pit) off Langton Road at SP743898. This is a 2.4 ha Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife & Countryside Acts of 1949 and 1981, being designated under the 1949 Act in 1981 and under the 1981 Act in 1983. It was created during the construction of the nearby railway and has since developed an

atypical marsh flora and tall fen plant community in poor-base soils, which is unusual in Leicestershire and uncommon in the Midlands. The site is on private land owned by the Market Harborough & Bowdens Charity and managed occasionally by the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust.

The Market Harborough Arm of the Grand Union Canal where it forms part of the Parish boundary from SP732891 to SP720901 is ecologically important at county level and is classified as a Local Wildlife Site.

A study undertaken in 1990 identified four Parish Level Wildlife Sites. These were the old railway embankment at SP744897 (1.1 ha), a fenced dry pond at SP757901 (0.01 ha), Langton Brook in general along the northern Parish boundary, and the River Welland in general along the south-eastern Parish boundary.

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) surveys also identified 9 new potential Local Wildlife Sites (pLWS) (i.e. locations which are likely to meet LWS criteria but further surveys are required for confirmation), and 4 new candidate Local Wildlife Sites (cLWS) (i.e. locations which meet LWS criteria but have not yet been designated).

Many species of fauna can be highly dynamic on a variety of scales, and thus it is important to make allowances for them to move easily and uninterrupted throughout the Parish and beyond. This often leads to the creation and protection of wildlife corridors or 'greenways' so that fauna can move between areas and habitats and thus ensures a population is not isolated. These corridors can include hedgerows, tree lines, watercourses, railways, and gardens especially if gaps are provided beneath fences for hedgehogs to roam for example. Several of these corridors exist within the Parish (Fig. 12). Roadways, especially wide, fast and heavily-used ones, are not conducive to ground-based faunal movement.

The Parish is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna species including amphibians, reptiles, birds, butterflies, dragonflies & damselflies, fish, mammals, moths, other insects and creatures; fungi, grasses, flowering and nonflowering plants and flowers, trees; lichens and mosses.

Several groups such as birds, mammals, plants and trees have been well-recorded, but others such as moths, insects, fungi, mosses and lichens are under-recorded. There are also very few records of what fish/aquatic creatures are present in the Parish's waterways.

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**POLICY ENV 8: PROTECTION OF OTHER SITES AND FEATURES OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE – Twenty-eight sites, listed below, and shown in Fig. 11 have been identified as being of at least local significance for wildlife. They are important in their own right and are locally valued. Development proposals that affect them will be expected to protect or enhance the identified features.**



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Great Bowden borrow pit (SSSI)                  | 17. Ash trees, Knights End ( LWS & cLWS)                                 |
| 2. Grand Union Canal (LWS)                         | 18. Ash trees, Langton Road (cLWS))                                      |
| 3. Old railway embankment ( pLWS)                  | 19. – 22. Species-rich and/or pre-Enclosure hedgerows (not mapped)       |
| 4. Dry ponds (pLWS)                                | 23. Priority habitat, good quality, species-rich semi-improved grassland |
| 5. Langton Brook (pLWS)                            | 24. Priority habitat, good quality, species-rich semi-improved grassland |
| 6. River Welland (pLWS)                            | 25. Priority habitat, good quality, species-rich semi-improved grassland |
| 7. Ash tree 1, Welham Lane (pLWS)                  | 26. Priority habitat, good quality, species-rich semi-improved grassland |
| 8. Group of parkland trees (pLWS)                  | 27. Priority habitat, good quality, species-rich semi-improved grassland |
| 9. Horses railway bridge (fern site) (pLWS)        | 28. Ash trees, Dingley Road (cLWS)                                       |
| 10. Langton Road railway bridge (fern site) (pLWS) |  |
| 11. Collapsed willow, Welham Lane (pLWS)           |  |
| 12. Ash tree, Dingley Road (pLWS)                  |  |
| 13. Railway bridge (fern site) (pLWS)              |  |
| 14. Ash trees, Green Lane (pLWS)                   |  |
| 15. Lime trees, churchyard (pLWS)                  |  |
| 16. Ash tree, Welham Lane 2 (pLWS)                 |  |

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## Woodland, trees and hedges

The trees and hedges of the Parish, whether they are classified as environmentally important or otherwise, are intrinsic components of the village's rural setting. Additionally they aid the influx of wildlife into the village and across the parish in their role as wildlife corridors, thus also enhancing community wellbeing.

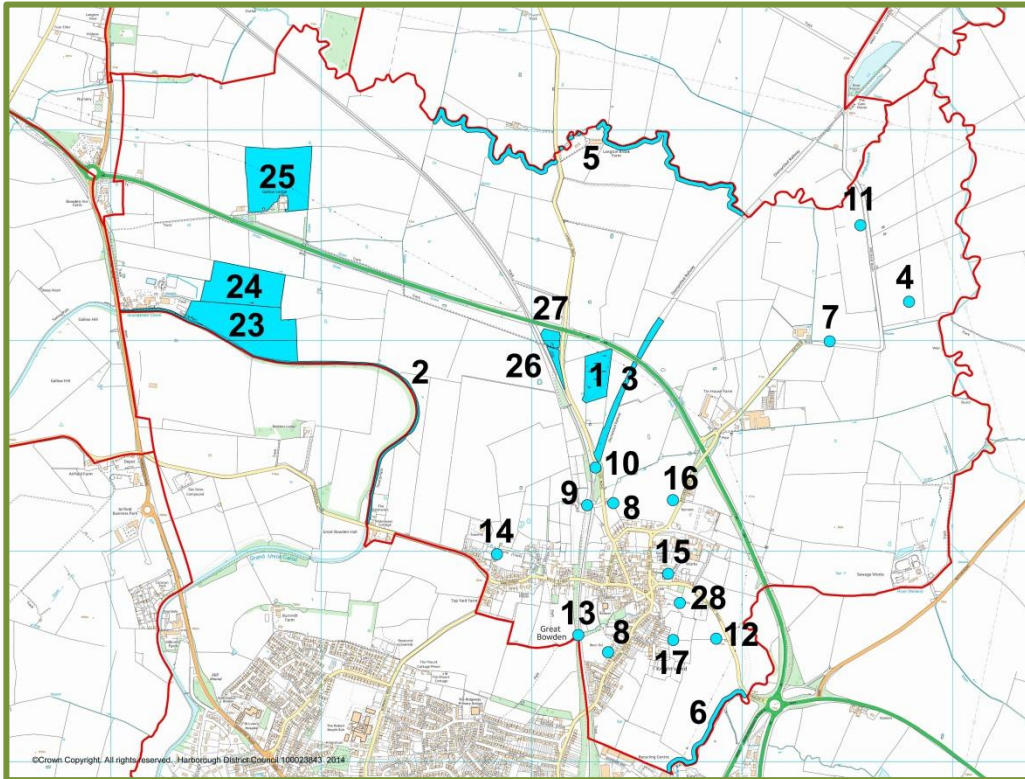
In the parish we have 10 important individual or groups of mature trees, most of which also carry a variety of Local Wildlife Site designations, and four sections of species-rich hedgerow. These tree and hedges are listed and mapped in the Biodiversity section. There are no areas of important woodland as such in the Parish. The 'next best' include the trees of the Recreation Ground, the tree avenue along Leicester Lane, and the plantations associating with A6 Bypass shielding (see [supporting information](#)).

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**POLICY ENV 9: WOODLAND, TREES AND HEDGES - Development proposals that damage or result in the loss of woodland (Fig. 11) or individual trees of arboricultural, landscape or ecological significance and amenity value will not**

be supported. Development that harms the areas of species-rich hedgerows identified in the map below will not be supported.

**Fig. 11 Other sites of natural environment significance**



## Biodiversity

For a relatively small Parish, there is a variety of different habitats, environmentally important wildlife sites and wildlife corridors, and these support a fine array of species of flora and fauna. Together this extensive collection ensures that the Parish has a high level of biodiversity which enhances community wellbeing generally, and can provide opportunities for recreation and leisure (e.g. birdwatching). Thus the biodiversity of the Parish is worthy of protection for these reasons, as well as for nature's intrinsic value.

The different habitats of the Parish include: Recreation Ground (1.31 ha) and gardens; open farmland including fields/grassland for pasture and arable; hedgerows (of which 1.1 miles are species-rich); small areas of trees or copses (young to mature); several small areas of 'un-tended' scrub (8.29 ha); small areas of plantation (mainly associated with A6 bypass screening) (9.4 ha); a marsh; a variety of grassland types (species-rich mesotrophic<sup>6</sup> semi-improved or non-improved (0.03 ha), species-poor semi-improved (40.64 ha), improved (105.5 ha), 'unknown'); bare ground (0.17 ha); tall ruderals<sup>7</sup> (4.11 ha); minor riparian<sup>8</sup> zones;

<sup>6</sup> Water with moderate amounts of dissolved minerals

<sup>7</sup> Plants growing on disturbed ground

<sup>8</sup> River bank



standing water; running water (1.3 ha or 2,553 m); and a floodable area (see [supporting information](#)).

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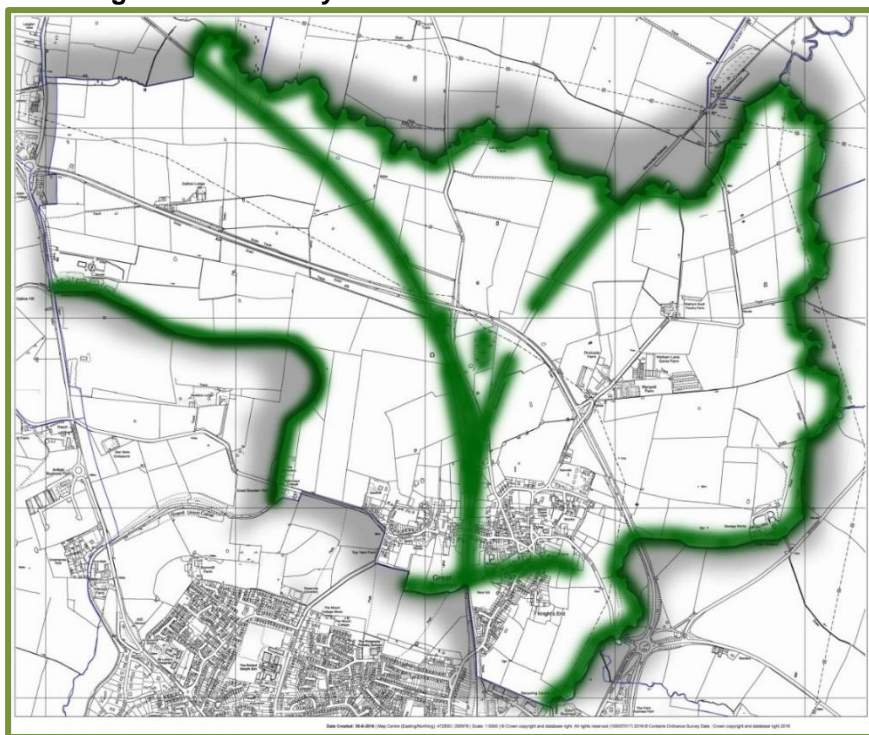
## **POLICY ENV 10: BIODIVERSITY**

a) Development proposals will be expected to protect local habitats and species and where possible and viable, to create new habitats for wildlife and promote and increase biodiversity;

b) The wildlife corridors shown in Fig. 12 and listed in the supporting information will be maintained, promoted and supported as a biodiversity resource. Development proposals which impact on this corridor will be resisted.

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**Fig. 12 Biodiversity - wildlife corridors in Great Bowden**



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**COMMUNITY ACTION ENV 4: BIODIVERSITY** - The Parish Council, in conjunction with other bodies, will prepare and keep updated an environmental inventory list of known sites of biodiversity interest.

The Parish Council will actively seek to work with community groups and other bodies to enhance the biodiversity of the designated wildlife corridor.

The Parish Council will seek to work with landowners, community groups, appropriate charities and other organisations to identify, acquire and manage sites for habitat creation.

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## Public rights of way

Many of our public rights of way are ancient and historic ways externally linking the village to neighbouring communities for trade and communication. They also offer social cohesion internally by connecting different parts of the village together and thus enhancing community wellbeing. Footpaths criss-cross the village and parish, and one of the most important is probably a medieval Portgate or market road.

Nowadays, our footpaths are perhaps used less for trade and communication but more for recreation and leisure, especially for walkers, exercising dogs, and for fast access to the wider countryside, enabling immediate connection with the environment and for viewing the array of biodiverse settings and species discussed above.

Cycle routes are a relatively new form of rights of way, but fulfil a similar role to footpaths in terms of community wellbeing (e.g. exercise, exploration, access to the countryside). The two most important cycle routes are NCN6 and NCN64 which are part of the Sustrans national network.

There are 28 pedestrian public rights of way comprising footpaths (FP), bridleways (BR), byways (BY) and 7 cycle routes (CR) in the Parish; as shown in Fig. 13. The list and map do not show pavements (where footpaths immediately adjoin roadways). A list and map are shown in [supporting Information](#).

The historic and contemporary nature of our rights of way requires them to be protected for current and future generations.

It will be important to encourage the residents in the new developments, particularly those on the boundaries of the village, to walk to the village centre instead of driving. Footpaths will need to be designed or enhanced to make them wheelchair and pushchair friendly with drop curbs and safe crossing places.

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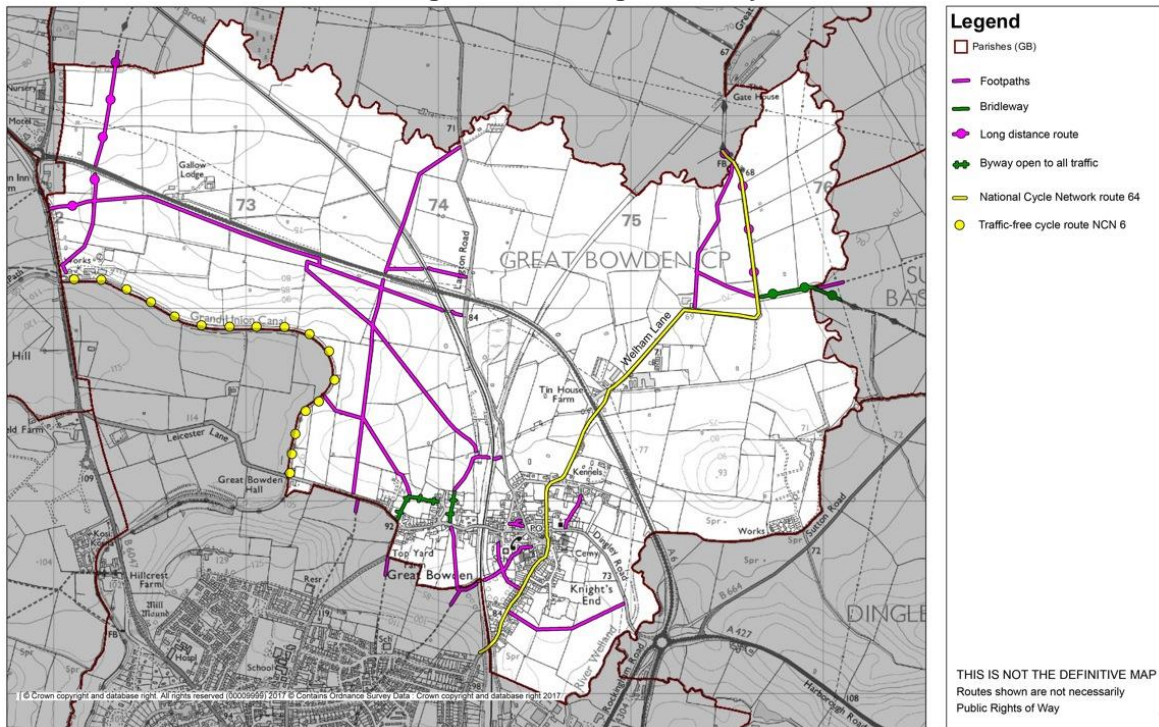
**POLICY ENV 11: FOOTPATHS AND CYCLEWAYS - Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths and cycleways will not be supported.**

**‘Urbanisation’ of the rural character and setting of existing footpaths and cycleways as a consequence of diversion around or absorption into new development will be resisted.**

**The creation of new footpaths, or the enhancement of existing footpaths, to encourage walking from the new developments to the village amenities for leisure and wellbeing, is supported.**

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Fig. 13 Public Rights of Way



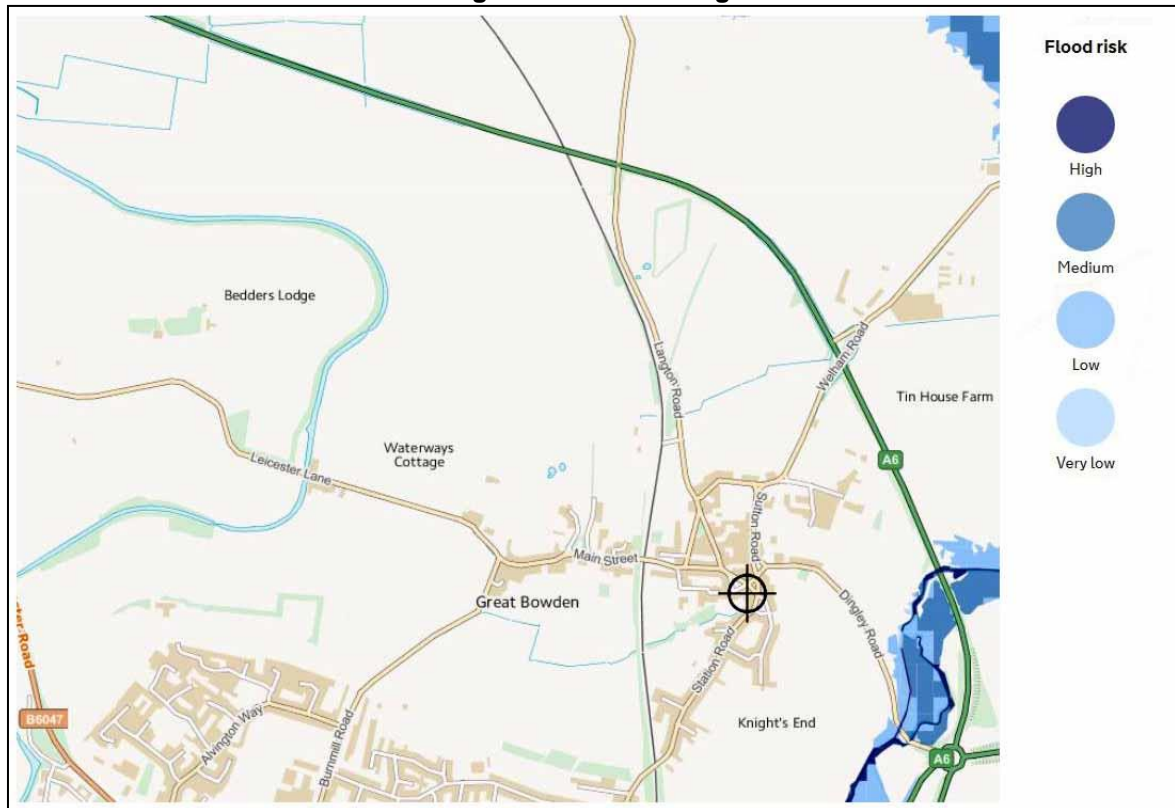
**COMMUNITY ACTION ENV 5: FOOTPATHS AND CYCLEWAYS** - Footways within the Recreation Ground and into it from the public road and car park will be maintained to the standards required for access by disabled persons and wheelchair users.

The Parish Council, with community volunteers, will monitor the condition of the existing network of footpaths, and work with the responsible Local Authority departments, the community and landowners to ensure that the network is maintained in a safe, accessible condition.

## Flooding and Water Management.

Great Bowden itself is not at risk of flooding from rivers, but the floodplain of the River Welland forms the southeast boundary of The Plan Area and this area is in Flood Zone 3 (high risk; Fig. 14 ).

Fig. 14 River Flooding



The main concern for residents is flooding from surface water (Fig. 15), whose frequency and effects on property are believed to have increased in the parish over recent years; possible causes are increased rainfall overall, more intensive rainfall events, intensification of agriculture, and new development being permitted without recognition of its effects on local hydrology. Small-scale, local flooding by surface water may not be newsworthy but it is distressing for the people affected and, countrywide, is the most widespread type.

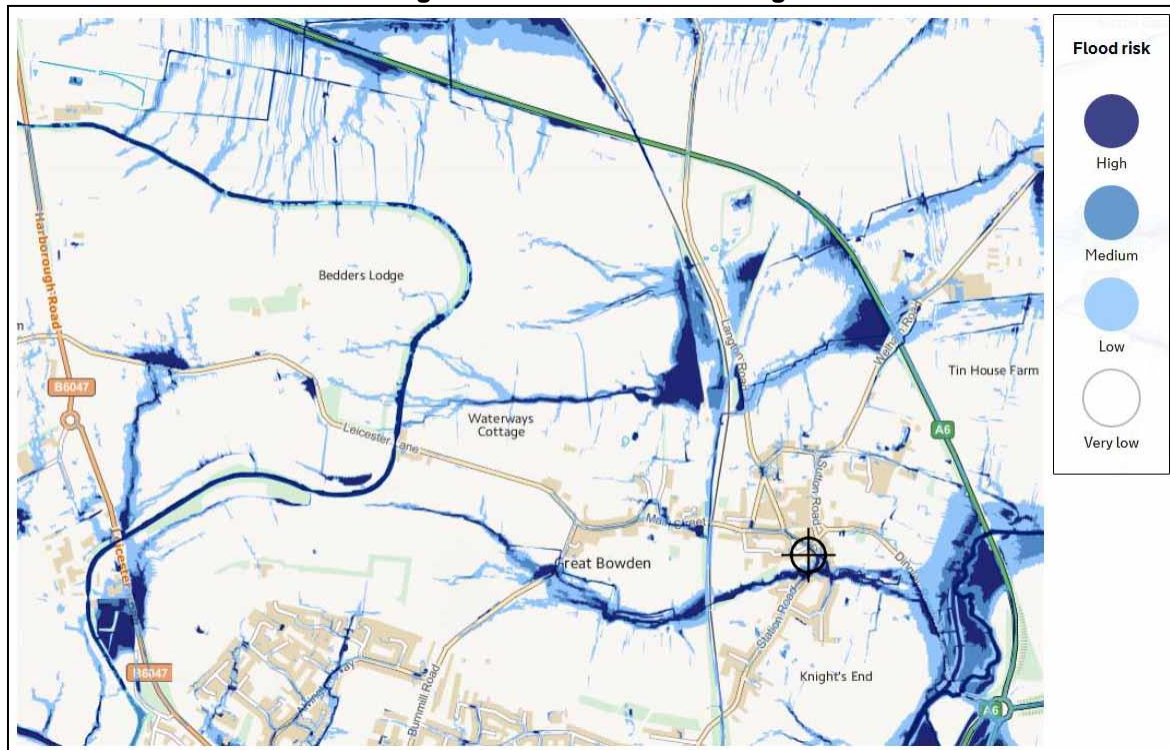
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**POLICY ENV 12: RIVERS AND FLOODING – Development proposals of appropriate scale and where relevant will be required to demonstrate that:**

- a) Its location takes geology, flood risk and natural drainage into account, including undertaking a hydrogeological study whose findings must be complied with in respect of design, groundworks and construction;
  - b) Its design includes, as appropriate, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), other surface water management measures and permeable surfaces;
  - c) It does not increase the risk of flooding downstream.
-



Fig. 15 Surface Water Flooding



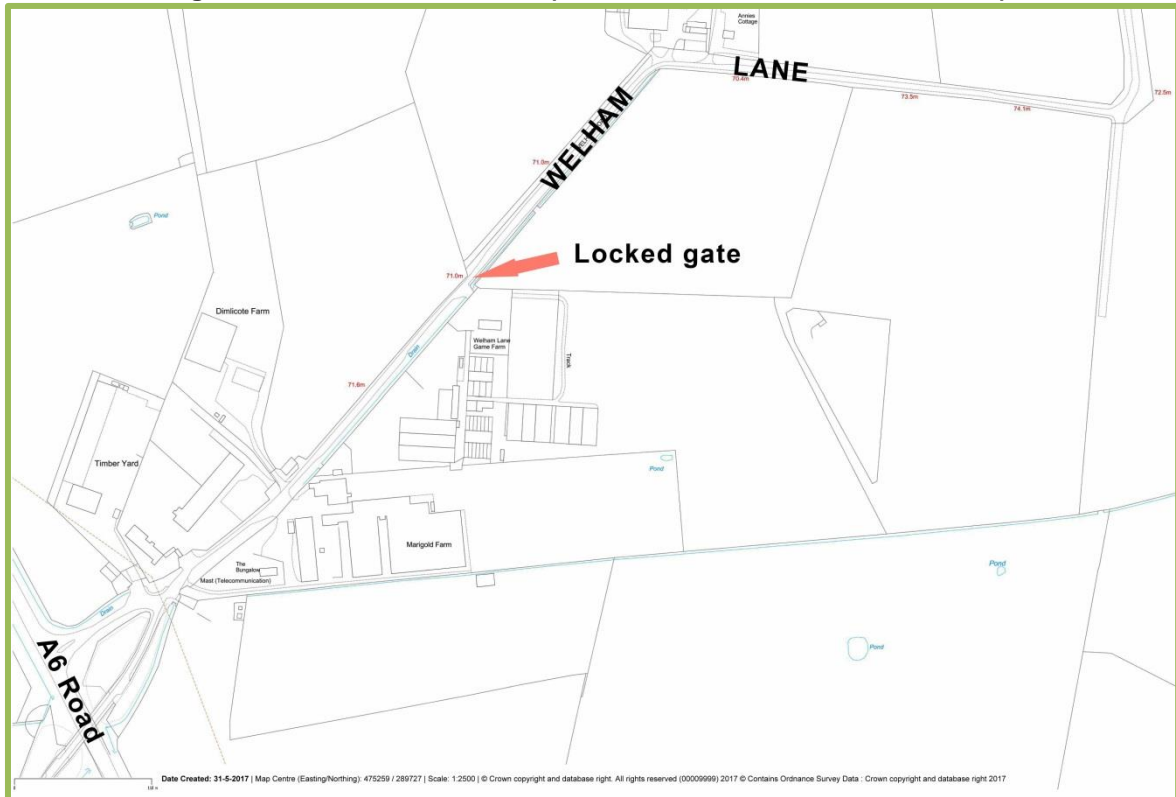
## Fly tipping

Fly tipping of domestic and builders' waste is a problem on the rural section of Welham Lane that can be accessed from Great Bowden village and, more closely, from the A6 Market Harborough by-pass. It is only wide enough for single lane traffic as far as the Langton Brook where there is a foot bridge restriction. It winds through attractive countryside, is used by local farmers and the Fernie Hunt (who exercise horses and hounds) and is a popular local and district recreational route: it is part of National Cycle Route 64 and is a link to several footpaths and three bridleways in this part of The Plan Area.

This section of Welham Lane is in isolated countryside, so fly-tippers can illegally discharge waste without being observed. In consultation for this Plan, 82% of residents supported a proposal for the gate across the road immediately north of Welham Lane Game Farm to be locked (to allow only authorised and farm vehicle access) with a side pedestrian gate free to be opened to admit cyclists, pedestrians, horses and riders. This arrangement would allow residents to continue to use the lane safely for recreation while protecting the environment from fly tipping. The gates are installed and were placed there some years ago to protect the lane from illegal parking of caravans.

This community action supports English legislation and HDC regulations and policies, but also recognises that landowners have responsibility for preventative measures on private land, and that they and local communities can play a valuable educational and monitoring role in respect of this social nuisance.

**Fig. 16 Gate on Welham Lane (National Grid Reference SP 751898)**



**COMMUNITY ACTION ENV 6: GATES ON WELHAM LANE - Great Bowden Parish Council will work with landowners, HDC and Leicestershire County Council (Highways Department) to arrange for installation, monitoring and maintenance of lock(s) and keys for controlling vehicle access at the vehicle and pedestrian gates(s) on Welham Lane at the location shown in Fig. 16 above.**

# Community Facilities and Amenities and the Provision of a Sense of Wellbeing

## Introduction

The community amenities and facilities in Great Bowden provide a focus for village life and are important for good mental and physical health and the long-term sustainability of the village. Retention and enhancement of these services and facilities has been identified as a priority for The Plan to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

## Existing community facilities and amenities

Great Bowden has a good range of community facilities, as follows:

### Meeting and Activity Venues

These consist of a Village Hall, Church Hall, Community Pavilion and St Peter & St Paul's Church. All but the Community Pavilion are in the heart of the village and the Community Pavilion is a short walk away.

The Village Hall is the most used community venue which is used by 79% of respondents. The Church Hall is used by 47% of residents and the Community Pavilion is used by 28% of the community. Both the Village Hall and Church Hall provide a large range of classes, a meeting venue for village societies, open village events and a well-attended pre-school. They have little spare capacity.

The Community Pavilion is home to Great Bowden Cricket Club and is less busy. Its availability is curtailed to the broader community during the evenings of the summer months. However, during the day it is under-utilised. The room available for community use in the Pavilion is smaller than those available in the Village Hall and Church Hall and this may restrict its broader appeal.

### Amenities

There are two shops and two pubs in the village. Welton's Deli, (a café, grocers, newsagents and Post Office), Bowden Stores (a café selling homewares), The Shoulder of Mutton public house and The Red Lion public house (which closed for business in February 2017 and whose future is currently uncertain). Both pubs are well loved and well used by the community with 75% of respondents to the questionnaire using the Shoulder of Mutton and 69% using the Red Lion.

The Community Questionnaire also suggested that the most used and highly valued amenity is Welton's Deli (95%) and Weltons Post Office (94%). Since its launch in December 2016, Bowden Stores has quickly become a popular café.

There are two schools in the village, Great Bowden Academy (a Primary School for



children aged 4 to 11) and Great Bowden Pre-school (for children aged 2 to 4).

## **Sport & Leisure**

Parks, playgrounds and playing fields play a vital role in building healthy neighbourhoods and contribute to the physical, mental and emotional well-being of local people. Play areas are included in approved developments at Berry Close and Welham Lane. Without access to these spaces the quality of life and wellbeing of residents is reduced.

The Recreation Ground is used by 75% of questionnaire respondents. It is home to Bowden Cricket Club. The cricket pitch takes up most of the available park space from April to September. The Recreation Ground is also home to Market Harborough Lawn Tennis Club which is used by 11% of respondents. It has recently purchased its site from HDC and has applied for planning permission to erect a modern clubhouse. It is noted that these important and fully supported amenities are also privately run, charge annual fees and are attended by more non-residents than residents.

The only sporting amenity in the Recreation Ground free to village residents is the small children's play area.

Footpaths run through the Recreation Ground from Station Road to Gunnsbrook Close and the school gates. They also run west, over the railway line towards Burnmill Road and the Ridgeway. These are well used by walkers, school children and dog walkers.

National Route 64 of the National Cycle Network, used by 46% of questionnaire respondents, runs from Market Harborough through Great Bowden to Lincoln via Melton Mowbray and Newark-on-Trent. It is a very popular route for both cycling groups and individuals.

The Community Wood, used by 36% of questionnaire respondents, sits between the Recreation Ground and Gunnsbrook Close. Having been set up and maintained by volunteers, responsibility for the wood has subsequently transferred to the Parish Council.

In and around Great Bowden, there is an extensive network of public footpaths, used by 78% of questionnaire respondents and bridleways, used by 43% of respondents. They provide a great opportunity to access the countryside and to exercise. Walkers, dog walkers and riders make considerable use of these and they play an important role in village life.

The greens and the open spaces in and around the Parish all contribute significantly to the character and quality of the local environment. Respondents to the community questionnaire selected the greens as the most valued village characteristic.

Allotments, used by 5% of questionnaire respondents, offer an enjoyable hobby as

well as providing low-cost food, relaxation and contact with nature. We have 10 allotments off Leicester Lane, owned and managed by HDC with a waiting list to take up any that are vacated. Additional allotments are proposed as part of the Welham Lane development.

### **Other amenities:**

The mobile library service, used by 4% of questionnaire respondents, is run by Leicestershire County Council and visits Great Bowden once per month. This service could be more effective if the mobile library could be present after school drop off, 3.30pm, so that families could access the service.

The public convenience on the Recreation Ground has been closed for a number of years. Opening these toilets and making them available for use was the most popular choice (62%) when local residents were asked to prioritise the importance of additional amenities. The Parish Council is looking to refurbish and re-open this facility but this will be dependent on securing funding.

The cemetery is located on Dingley Road and is managed by HDC. "Friends of Great Bowden Cemetery" is a group of volunteers who carry out additional works through monthly working parties to enhance the atmosphere for visitors to the cemetery. The cemetery has limited remaining capacity and additional land is needed to protect its long-term future. HDC is in discussions with landowners/developers to resolve this issue.

These community facilities and amenities are valued by the community and the Plan seeks to protect them from closure or change of use so that they remain as assets for the use of residents into the future. The growth of the local population in the coming years serves to reinforce the importance of this.

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**POLICY CAF1: PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMUNITY AMENITIES & FACILITIES - Proposals that will result in the loss of an existing community facility or amenity will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:**

- a) There is no longer any need or demand for the existing community facility; or**
  - b) The existing community facility is no longer economically viable; or**
  - c) The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish.**
-

## Promoting additional or improving existing community facilities and amenities

Great Bowden is expanding rapidly and is likely to grow by 30% during the first three years that this Plan is in force. Consequently, there is a need to take the growing population into consideration and meet the future demands of the existing and new village residents.

The local school and village hall are particularly under pressure, the church hall will need renovation and the play area at the Recreation Ground is already inadequate to meet existing demand, let alone meet the needs of the growing population.

The Plan recognises the benefits of enhancing the range of local community facilities and amenities in the Parish. The recent loss of village amenities such as a convenience store and potentially one of the pubs demonstrates the fragile nature of the provision of amenities and gives added importance to the need to encourage new community services and amenities into the settlement. Community consultation commented on the need to upgrade recreational facilities, increase the scope of village meeting facilities and to renovate or extend existing village and church halls. The waiting list for the allotments demonstrates that additional allotment capacity in The Plan area would be welcomed.

During the NP consultation, respondents requested updating the play area and one also suggested “a multi-purpose ground to include facilities for more than one specific leisure activity, for example five-a-side football, hockey, netball, basketball, etc. using 3G plastic grass”.

Great Bowden’s play space provision is below the threshold identified within the Fields in Trust (National Playing Fields Association) “Guidance for Sport and Outdoor Play” which sets out benchmark standards for playgrounds, playing fields and formal and informal parkland for urban and rural towns and villages. (Source: Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play (PDOSP) revised 2015).

The Parish Council is in negotiation with HDC to purchase the Recreation Ground which should be completed by the end of 2017. It is hoped that this will enable a wider use of this important community facility. Some ideas the Parish Council could seek funding for include: developing a range of sporting opportunities which can be accessed throughout the year; informal leisure areas towards the edge of the park (e.g. jogging and cycling circuit around the boundary, outdoor gym equipment for adults, outdoor activity trail); improving the children’s play area and refurbishing and bringing back into use the public toilets.

**POLICY CAF2: PROVISION OF NEW OR THE EXTENSION OF EXISTING COMMUNITY AMENITIES & FACILITIES** - Proposals that extend an existing community facility or diversify or enhance the range of community amenities and facilities will be supported provided that the development:

- a. Will not result in unacceptable traffic movements, noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance to residential properties;**
  - b. Will not generate a need for parking that cannot be adequately catered for;**
  - c. Meets a locally identified need and is of a type and scale appropriate to the needs of the locality and conveniently accessible for residents of the village wishing to walk or cycle; and**
  - d. Would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent users.**
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**COMMUNITY ACTION CAF1: RECREATION GROUND** - The Parish Council will explore (and where possible implement) the potential for the Recreation Ground facility to be used for alternative outdoor sports which can be accessed throughout the year. These may include:

- a) Using the Recreation Ground out of the cricket season, for other popular sports e.g. football, hockey, athletic etc;**
  - b) Providing informal leisure areas towards the edge of the park e.g. jogging or a cycling circuit around the boundary, outdoor gym equipment for adults and an outdoor activity trail;**
  - c) Enlarging, updating and widening the appeal of the children's play area to all age groups;**
  - d) Refurbishing and re-opening the public toilets; and**
  - e) Carrying out regular inspections and reviews of the outdoor recreation equipment**
- 

## **Education**

Great Bowden Academy is a popular Church of England primary school at the heart of the village. It is also part of the Learn Academies Trust. It was judged outstanding in the Ofsted assessment dated September 10/11 2014. Like most village schools, it is a great community asset and a hub for village integration.

The school moved to the Gunnsbrook Close site in 1983 when there were 70 pupils at the school. Gunnsbrook Close is a cul de sac with limited provision for staff to

park their cars and for parents to drop off and pick up their children, which causes congestion at drop-off and pick-up times. Consultation raised concerns about traffic and parking in Gunnsbrook Close.

Pupil numbers have doubled since 1986. There are 135 pupils on role (Feb 2017) and the current LEA target for the school in 2020 is 140 pupils but this will be exceeded in September 2017. Approximately 30% of children on role come from out of catchment. The school is keen to accommodate any new children who come to live in the village and believe that this will be important for social cohesion. However, in two to three years' time when families start moving into the approved new developments, only children aged 4 and below would have an opportunity of being offered a school place in reception at Great Bowden Academy. It would be necessary to cap admissions at 20 children per class due to lack of space for larger class sizes. This would mean that any children aged 5 to 11 arriving in the village, at any time, would have to be educated elsewhere.

The Plan recognises the urgent need to support the school and to plan for its continued success. Should the need arise to increase pupil numbers due to the new housing developments, the Parish Council would support the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy to contribute towards additional school buildings and facilities and the necessary parking and traffic calming. Regarding the school, funding will be necessary to replace the dilapidated temporary building with two larger classrooms and associated facilities. Regarding the parking, one possibility is the upgrading of the parking on the Recreation Ground and its path, leaving a safe walk to school of around 200 metres.

Encouraging pupils to walk, cycle or use bus services to get to school would help reduce the peak traffic volumes arising at the start and end of the school day and minimise the environmental, safety and accessibility issues arising from the high number of cars parking near the school.

This approach could include initiatives such as Safer Routes to School Schemes, or similar, which bring together a package of measures such as 20 mph zone, safer crossing points, cycle storage facilities and enhanced signing, marking and adequate lighting.



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**POLICY CAF3: EXPANSION OF GREAT BOWDEN ACADEMY** - Proposals for the expansion of Great Bowden Academy will be supported provided that:

- a.** Expansion would not create severe access related or traffic circulation problems that cannot be mitigated;
- b.** The development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent users;
- c.** The development does not conflict with other policies or proposals within The Plan; and
- d.** Safe Routes to Schools' schemes and similar initiatives are introduced wherever possible and appropriate utilising developer contributions where appropriate.

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## **Assets of community value**

The designation of a community facility as an Asset of Community Value provides the opportunity to give it added protection from inappropriate development.

The Localism Act 2011 defines an 'Asset of Community Value' as "a building or other land (whose) main use has recently been or is presently used to further the



social well-being or social interests of the local community and could do so in the future". The Localism Act states that "social interests" include cultural, recreational and sporting interests.

Where an asset is 'Listed', the Parish Council or other community organisations will be given the opportunity to bid to purchase the asset on behalf of the local community, if it comes up for sale on the open market. Its 'Listing' can also be taken into consideration when determining a planning application for a development proposal, which would affect the reason why it was listed.

Assets of special importance to the well-being of the Parish and to which local people have a strong affinity and wish to protect may come forward over the lifetime of The Plan include the Village Hall, the Church Hall, the Community Pavilion, Welton's Deli and Post Office, Bowden Stores Café and Homewares, Cemetery, the Shoulder of Mutton and Red Lion Public Houses, Great Bowden Academy, St Peter & St Paul's Church, Allotments to the north of Leicester Lane, Market Harborough Lawn Tennis Club, the Recreation Ground, Community Wood and public toilets, the Paddock adjoining Welham Road and Sutton Road, Allotments to the West of Welham Lane, Country Park at Welham Lane.

These are important amenities and facilities which contribute to the enjoyment of life in the village and the sustainability of the community.

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**COMMUNITY ACTION CAF2: ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE – The Parish Council will support the listing of Assets of Community Value in order to encourage the continuation of valued community resources**

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## Transport

### Background

Great Bowden is a picturesque, rural parish with historical significance and yet it is also home to a busy and thriving community of all ages. This is in part due to its proximity to the A6 and A14. Market Harborough station is only a mile away and provides a rail link to London approximately in one hour and to Leicester in 10 minutes.

The village is home to the Fernie Hunt Kennels and has good equine facilities. It is popular with walkers who can explore several well-used bridleways, public footpaths and walks along the Market Harborough arm of the Grand Union Canal. Cyclists are attracted to the Leicestershire countryside beyond the village; the National Sustrans cycle route 64 runs through the centre of the village.

A strong community spirit pervades village life with regular village festivals, village pantomimes, annual Music Fests, a wide range of clubs and a busy and inclusive village church. The village also enjoys an outstanding school, two pubs and well supported café and shop including a Post Office. As with most communities of this nature the existing population of Great Bowden is increasing in age.

However, Great Bowden's future as a village is uncertain due to a series of new housing development applications and approvals in, around and beyond the village and there are very real concerns that Great Bowden will be either subsumed into Market Harborough or grow beyond its means.

We recognise that to minimise the effect of the developments on village life and create a safe environment for all road users, we must plan to control traffic and parking in the village centre and on the busy, narrow roads leading to and from the village. The recent village consultation in 2016 confirms that with new developments on the way, there is a pressing need to actively manage infrastructure as the village grows. The suggestions that follow, concentrate on controlling traffic and parking and increasing the safety of residents as the housing stock in Great Bowden and the Harborough district increases over the next 15 years.

### Local traffic management

The ancient layout of the village roads is part of Great Bowden's charm but as the village and town beyond grow, life will become increasingly hazardous for residents. The nucleated settlement layout means that all roads lead to the centre. Most of the village amenities lie on the edge of a series of small angular greens and narrow lanes. Throughout the village there are old terraced cottages and other houses, without garages or off-street parking. Cars associated with the residents of these properties line the roads. The centre of the village has become a pinch point and already suffers from congestion, particularly where roads are reduced to single lane

traffic due to parking.

Consultation via the village questionnaire undertaken as part of the Plan in 2016 highlighted residents' frustrations over traffic, parking and safety. With 175 new homes already approved, with further applications pending, residents feel it is time to address these issues in order to mitigate further damage to the local environment, the increased safety risk to all road users and the further deterioration in quality of life.

The questionnaire identifies the car as overwhelmingly the most popular form of transport for residents, for the purposes of work (95%), leisure (85%) and shopping (95%). However, of the 6 roads used to leave/enter the village (Dingley Road, Station Road, Leicester Lane, Burnmill Road, Welham Lane and Langton Road) 5 are reduced to a single lane due to resident parking.

The 175 new households will inevitably own cars which will make traffic conditions in the village more challenging. Navigation of the narrow roads and lanes will become more hazardous; there will be congestion at peak times, a severe lack of parking and pedestrians will find roads more difficult to cross. The bridges on key routes within the parish will be at increased risk of damage.

Great Bowden is used as a convenience short cut for non-residents, especially:

- between the A6/ Welham Lane junction to the village centre and beyond;
- between the A6/ Dingley Road junction to the village centre and beyond;
- between the B6047 junction to the village centre and beyond;
- between Market Harborough Station to the village centre and beyond; and
- from Burnmill Hill to Main Street to the village centre and beyond.

The questionnaire identified significant concern amongst residents for the speed of traffic into the village centre. This is at the same time as approximately 160 children aged between 2 and 11 are travelling to and from the village school and village preschool, mostly on foot due to the lack of parking or drop-off facilities outside these schools. The excessive speed of many of the vehicles travelling through Great Bowden also poses a serious safety hazard to the increasing population of elderly and /or disabled residents.

The incidence of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) using the village centre and getting stuck in the sharp-angled, narrow lanes lined with parked cars in the centre of the village is on the increase, as are reports of pedestrian "close shaves" with cars (see comments in the village questionnaire).

There is a concern that over the next 15 years there will be 1800 new homes built to the west of Great Bowden at Airfield Farm, alongside 1500+ new houses to be delivered across Market Harborough. The 175 new houses approved for Great

Bowden will add to the number of local cars and vans on the local roads. The Market Harborough Transport Strategy, jointly funded by HDC and LCC, forecasts a traffic volume increase of 24% in town between 2011 and 2031. Two thirds of these journeys are driving in and out of the town. It seems inevitable that even more local traffic from Market Harborough will be tempted to use Great Bowden as a convenient link to the A6 bypass in response to increasing pressure on the town's inadequate transport infrastructure as highlighted in the Market Harborough Transport Strategy document.

The Parish Council will continue to work with LCC Highways to agree a NO RIGHT TURN policy on Leicester Road (B6047) into Leicester Lane to alleviate potential congestion through the centre of the village by those cars wishing to avoid the A6.

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**POLICY T1: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT** - The provision of traffic management solutions (which are appropriate to the character of the rural area) to address the impact of additional traffic arising, separately or cumulatively, from developments within Great Bowden will be supported. This includes either directly provided solutions or the use of developer contributions towards the costs of provision.

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**COMMUNITY ACTION T1: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT** - The Parish Council will continue to work with LCC Highways Department to agree appropriate transport management solutions to address local concerns, including prohibiting right turns from Leicester Road (B6047) INTO Leicester Lane.

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## Welham Lane

There are concerns over the safety of vehicles turning in and out of the junction of the A6 with Welham Lane to the North of the village on the basis that this junction is an A road and is hazardous without the addition of a diverging taper/lane. To turn right towards Leicester, vehicles must cross oncoming traffic travelling at speeds of 60mph. To exit the A6 at this junction, vehicles must decelerate enough to negotiate a 90-degree corner. All manoeuvres in and out of this junction carry a high level of risk. In the last 13 years, there have been six accidents at this junction (Source: [Crashmap Accident Data](#)), one of them serious and there have been 25 accidents, 3 of them fatal on this short 2 miles stretch of the A6.

In the past, because of the above risks, LCC Highways has refused planning permission for developments or in the case of refuse recycling vehicles that operate from a site on Welham Lane has a policy of left turn only when leaving or entering the junction, recognising the potential accident risk. However, the Highways

Department has relaxed its stringent safety controls recently and a new development of approximately 50 family homes has just been approved in Great Bowden, on Welham Lane, next to this junction.

The A6 road bridge on Welham Lane was originally built for use by the mushroom farm vehicles which were too slow to travel back to the village via the A6. The bridge is a single lane bridge with a blind summit to most vehicles. However, the mushroom farm no longer exists so, there is no reason to keep this bridge open to vehicles.

Through the questionnaire, 64% of residents support the closure of the southern half of Welham Lane (running south from the A6 junction and bridge, into the village) to motorised traffic other than for purposes of access, so that it can be used for leisure pursuits such as cycling along route 64, horse riding, jogging and walking. In addition, the closure would safeguard the activities of the Fernie Hunt Kennels based on Welham Lane who still use the bridge twice daily to exercise the hounds and and horses.

An advantage of the closure would be a reduction in vehicles using this entrance to the village as a convenient short cut from the A6. This would improve safety for residents in the new development who can only leave the development by pulling out onto this single lane road. It will also improve the safety of existing village residents who are seeing an increase in heavy goods vehicles and commuter cars using this junction as a short cut through the village to Market Harborough.

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**POLICY T2: WELHAM LANE - The closure of Welham Lane to 4-wheel traffic is supported.**

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The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) supports the concept of 'quiet lanes'. This issue will be considered under Community Action T2.

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**COMMUNITY ACTION T2: WELHAM LANE QUIET LANE - The Parish Council will work with the CPRE, Leicestershire County Council and other parties as necessary in support of the northern section of Welham Lane being designated as a Quiet Lane.**

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## **Traffic Speeds**

A major issue for Great Bowden residents is speeding into and through the village. Five of the six entry roads to Great Bowden cross narrow bridges:

- Dingley Road crosses the River Welham and these bridges have a 7.5-ton weight restriction which is routinely contravened;



- Welham Lane crosses the A6 bypass, is single file and the approach earthworks have settled considerably, which is mainly due to the weight and volume of traffic. The bridge is a single-track bridge with a blind summit to most cars;
- Langton Road crosses a disused railway line on a narrow, old and awkwardly-angled bridge with a blind summit.;
- Leicester Lane crosses the canal over a single file canal bridge which is circa 210 years old, and not designed to take HGV's;
- Station Road crosses the railway line and the bridge is situated next to a gas main which requires regular additional maintenance due to the vibrations of the trains and heavy traffic. These road closures cause further congestion within the village; and
- Main Street has a bridge across the railway line and carries utilities. Sight lines on this bridge are poor. This bridge is especially vulnerable to damage from HGVs.

The maintenance of these bridges due to heavy use has caused considerable traffic disruption.

The six entry roads to Great Bowden are narrow and in addition all except one are reduced to a single lane once on-street parking begins outside the village houses. This seems to take drivers by surprise, particularly when they round the blind corners and are faced with oncoming traffic on the wrong side of the road. 14% of fatal accidents on rural roads were recorded as “travelling too fast for the conditions”, compared to only 7% on urban roads. (Source: The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents). Accidents have been recorded on all but one of these roads. With 175 new houses more cars will leave and return to the village each day, which will also increase pressure on roads in the Parish.

Over 70% of residents support the use of traffic calming at all entry points to the village with 85% agreeing that traffic calming is necessary on Dingley Road, one of the most heavily used roads which necessitates one way traffic using a single lane on a blind bend. In its initial document, Market Harborough Transport Strategy identifies the A6 junction at the end of Dingley Road as one which currently performs poorly, with 3 crashes reported there in the last 15 years, one fatal (Source: [Crashmap data](#)). Residents would support traffic calming measures where new developments are built on entry roads into the village, for example:

- An extension of 30mph zones on all roads entering the village to take into consideration the narrow bridges for example, from the Dingley Road/A6 junction to the eastern wall of the cemetery;
- Width restrictions on the approaches to the bridges in Dingley Road and Leicester Lane;

- A 20mph zone in all built up areas;
- The creation of landscape design to define the village boundary (proven to influence driver behaviour), for example village gates and appropriate road markings.

The centre of Great Bowden will also be under pressure from at least 468 extra car journeys a day (Source: National Traffic Survey). Residents support traffic calming in the village centre using sympathetic landscaping and road textures in preference to signage and double yellow lines, for example planted pedestrian traffic islands to create safe crossing and reduce parking on important road junctions

Residents are also concerned about cars pulling out at a variety of blind junctions within the village due to parked cars obscuring the view and the nature of the road layout including:

- Sutton Road onto Dingley Road (around Church Green) - 1 recorded accident;
- Manor Road onto Main street - 2 fatal recorded accidents (exacerbated by the railway bridge); and
- Dingley Road slip road onto Dingley Road (next to memorial green) 1 recorded accident (Source: [Crashmap Accident Data](#)).

To safeguard the daily journeys of an increased village population and to mitigate dangerous junctions without unduly altering the visual impact of the village, the following are proposed:

- traffic calming over both railway bridges; and
- the provision of two official, child friendly drop-off and pick up zones, within walking distance of the village school, which do not impede through traffic which would include enlarging the community car park off Station Road.

These suggestions provide traffic calming for all road users particularly in the areas we already know are high risk, whilst improving pedestrian safety and encouraging a more pedestrian-friendly village environment.

## Parking

**Private parking:** car usage continues to grow and many households own more than one car. Residents' parking is a serious concern for Great Bowden. New developments which do not have enough parking provision will not be supported. Alongside an increase of new residents with the volume of new cars that new housing will bring, parking is of major concern, especially in the village centre, and this is reflected in the responses to the village questionnaire.

In addition, there has been growth in visitors to the village making use of the clubs in the village hall, church hall, community pavilion and park, the Post Office and cash point. Over half the members of the parish church live outside the parish and travel to the church by car. There is a healthy use of the shops, cafes, pubs and leisure facilities. The various village festivals and concerts are well supported. Reception class size at the village school is also increasing by 5 children per year for the next four years.

The reception class size at the village school is also increasing by 5 children per year for the next four years. Alongside an increase of new residents with the volume of new cars that the new housing will bring, parking is of major concern and this is reflected in the responses to the village questionnaire.

More consultation with residents, LCC Highways and the Parish Council will be necessary to investigate where and how parking can be improved for existing residents forced to park on the roads.

However, looking ahead it is important that developers understand that all new developments must be self-sufficient when it comes to parking and there should be no necessity for new residents or their visitors to park on the roads.

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### **POLICY T3: PARKING PROVISION AND NEW DWELLINGS**

**At least two off-street car parking spaces shall be provided for each new dwelling. A minimum of three such spaces should be provided for four-bedroom or larger dwellings.**

**The provision of tandem parking in new developments is not supported.**

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**Communal Parking:** the centre of Great Bowden will become more congested when the new developments are complete. There will be new residents using the amenities concentrated in the village centre: shops, pubs, cafes and the school (which is sited on a small cul desac).

When asked what issues were most pressing for villagers in the future, the most popular response was the need for off road parking (89%). The comments implied that villagers were keen to consider both off street parking solutions for residents, as well as central car parking for residents and visitors. There is understandable resistance towards creating car parks on any of the small village greens and an anxiety over creating urban style parking bays on the lanes around the greens because this would change the rural character of the village.

Increasing the existing community car park at the Recreation Ground received the most support (75%) although its distance from amenities people want to visit in the village centre is an issue that would need to be addressed. However, an improvement to the community car park would have an important role in helping to

create a “safe routes to school” policy for new families in the village who need to drop off children in the car on their way to work.

The most popular site for a central car park (62% for) is on the slip road next to memorial green. If this slip was blocked on Dingley Road by a path it would create room for residents parking, alongside parking for visitors to the village hall and other amenities. Residents who supported this suggestion commented that the closing of the slip road would serve as a traffic calming measure. In addition, it could be beneficial to pedestrians needing to navigate the centre of the village en route to the village hall.

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**POLICY T4: COMMUNITY CAR PARKS - The provision of car parking in the village centre, with low visual impact, and improvements to the surface and capacity of the Community Pavilion car park for residents and visitors are supported.**

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**COMMUNITY ACTION T3: CAR PARKING AT THE RECREATION GROUND -**

**The Parish Council will consider the potential improvement of the car park at the Recreation Ground to accommodate increased usage and to help facilitate parking that can be used to address parking and congestion issues at the primary school.**

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## **Pedestrian Safety**

During the consultation process villagers expressed a concern that an increase in the village population will add to pressure on the footpath and road infrastructure. At peak times, cars in the centre of the village park illegally: on pavements, on drop curbs and at road junctions. These illegally parked cars make life difficult for residents who are unable to walk on the pavements particularly around the Greens. Inconsiderate parking makes junctions hazardous for pedestrians and other road users.

In addition, there are no designated safe crossing places in the village and with the population expected to increase substantially, it is important to consider how pedestrians will manage to navigate the centre of the village with an expected 468 extra car journeys per week (Source: National Traffic Survey). There are strong links between Great Bowden Academy and the Church, with the academy pupils attending assemblies in the church regularly during term time, necessitating the safe management of over 130 children between the school and the church.

Safe crossing zones with drop-curbs, pedestrian islands alongside no parking zones around key junctions would assist to make the centre of the village safer for the growing population of pedestrians and car users. They can be handled sensitively, using landscaping and contrasting road colours and textures.

The questionnaire gave useful feedback as to where safe crossings were most needed:

- Station Road – south of Pond Green, to provide access to the Recreation Ground, Community Pavilion and the potential “safe route to school”;
- Station road near the junction with Berry Close;
- Dingley Road - Memorial Green area to Church Green with safe crossing routes across both branches of Sutton road on each side of Church Green;
- Main Street - The Green to near the bus stop;
- Main Street – close to Manor Road junction and a potential safe route to school;
- Main Street - near Upper Green Place; and
- Langton Road – from Welham Road to Manor Road.

The existence of these safe crossing places would not only increase pedestrian safety but also serve to slow traffic down in key areas of the village and help sight lines at junctions.

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#### **POLICY T5: SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

**The creation of a ‘safe routes to school’ scheme by identifying, clear pedestrian routes to the village school and pre-school and providing the relevant safe crossing places leading to schools and village amenities is supported.**

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**COMMUNITY ACTION T4: SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL - The Parish Council together with other relevant organisations will initiate Safe Routes to Schools’ schemes and similar initiatives wherever possible utilising developer contributions where appropriate.**

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## Cycling and horse riding

Cycling has become a national sport and Great Bowden's pubs, cafes and green spaces attract many cyclists passing through using the national Sustrans cycle route 64. Residents are keen on cycling and the route is used by 46% of respondents and runs from Market Harborough through the centre of the village and out via Welham Lane to Lincoln via Melton Mowbray and Newark-on-Trent. 55% of residents enjoy walking locally as a leisure activity (Community Questionnaire).

Associated with the Fernie Hunt kennels, an important part of the local economy, is a significant number of equestrians who need to access areas outside of the village in order to exercise their horses. Traffic, particularly at speed can present a serious safety hazard when horses are startled.

Traffic Calming measures referred in this document would reduce these risks, together, where practical, with additional cycle paths and safe pathways for horses.

Where practical, cycle paths and safe pathways for horses would be welcome.

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### **POLICY T6: CYCLE ROUTES AND BRIDLEWAYS**

**The provision of cycle routes and bridleways north to Welham Lane and west to Leicester Lane and the canal will be supported, as will any measures which facilitate bicycle access to the centre of the village and village amenities.**

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## Public Transport

28% of households use the bus to go shopping so it is important that the bus route continues to run regularly through the village. To make the experience for those taking the bus more comfortable, it would be useful to update bus stops to include some form of seat and shelter in keeping with the village, particularly near Berry Close where this may encourage some members of the 70 new households to catch the bus instead of using the car.

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### **POLICY T7: SUPPORTING PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**The provision of travel packs to new residents to include information on cycling and walking routes, public transport timetables and a 6 months' free bus pass per adult will be required on all developments with more than 5 houses.**

**The provision of bus shelters and benches in keeping with the village and sited close to developments will be supported.**

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## Employment and Business

### Introduction

The level of economic activity in Great Bowden, at 71.3% of 16-74 year olds is slightly below the average for the district as a whole (74%) but above regional and national levels (69.3% and 69.9% respectively). However, of those in employment, the high levels of people in managerial and professional occupations at 59% is significantly higher than the District as a whole (48%) and this is mirrored by high levels of academic qualifications. 25% of people aged 16 and over have a degree or higher degree compared with 19% across Harborough as a whole.

The number of self-employed people, at 15.2%, is higher than across the district, the region of England and 7.1% of residents work from home compared to under 6% across Harborough.

There is a relatively small number of employment opportunities in Great Bowden. This is balanced out by the proximity of Market Harborough and the range of businesses that are based within a relatively close distance.

19 businesses were identified for consultation as stakeholders. These are primarily small businesses of different types (e.g. retail, professional, services, farms and trades).

Most people who live in Great Bowden work outside the parish. Of respondents to the Community Questionnaire, approximately 15% stated that they either currently run a business from the parish or are thinking of doing so. Only 7% stated that they currently work within the parish.

Data from the Community Questionnaire suggests that there is little support for the parish generally expanding its business opportunities. 83% of respondents said that they did not want this. This is in keeping with the overall vision that Great Bowden should retain its village character in an agricultural setting, and also related to major concerns regarding the present level of traffic and related safety issues especially in the centre of the village itself.

### Support for existing employment opportunities.

There is no suggestion from the community survey that the current level and type of employment is unacceptable to residents. The challenge therefore is to identify policies which can support or enhance the existing level and type of employment in the parish.

Existing businesses include two pubs, a highly-valued delicatessen which includes a Post Office and café, a second café also selling homewares, bed and breakfast outlets, Great Bowden Fencing, J.G Pears and other small commercial premises. The recent loss of a convenience store and the possible loss of one of the pubs in

the village has reduced the range and number of amenities available locally and residents are concerned that further important employment outlets are not reduced further.

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**POLICY EMP1: SUPPORT FOR EXISTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: -**  
**There will be a presumption against the loss of commercial and retail premises or land (A -Class, B-class and sui generis) which provide employment opportunities within Great Bowden. Applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that:**

- a) The commercial premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 12 months; and**
- b) The commercial premises or land in question has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment generating uses and as demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least six months.**

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## **Support for new employment opportunities**

Whilst the community recognises that new employment sites in the right locations can boost and diversify the local economy and provide more local employment opportunities, there is concern that new employment opportunities will have a negative impact on the character of Great Bowden. Therefore any employment growth must be achieved without creating any additional problems for traffic, transport, parking or the overall feel of the parish.

The Plan therefore recognises the importance of a healthy and diverse local economy in providing employment opportunities locally for people, but wishes to minimise the negative impacts of such activity. Whilst wishing to safeguard existing employment sites it is seen as important by the local community that any new development activity enhances rather than detracts from the character of the Parish. High levels of home working and self-employment are important indicators which are recognised within The Plan.

In parishes such as Great Bowden with limited full-time employment opportunities the benefit of supporting home working is that it helps to promote and encourage local employment and reduces the dependency of the car for long journeys to employment sites outside the Parish.

The nearest facility available to support self-employed and home-based workers with meeting and internet facilities, the Innovation Centre at Airfield Farm, is currently oversubscribed. At the same time the Community Pavilion on Great Bowden Recreation Ground, which has adequate off-road parking, is under-used in

the daytime and is not in the centre of the village.

25% of respondents to the Community Questionnaire said that they would wish to create a dedicated business hub in Great Bowden with business facilities such as internet connection and meeting rooms. Others expressed concern that such a facility would add to the volume of traffic and shortage of parking places, and in order to help meet the needs of the growing numbers of home workers in the Parish, the Plan supports the provision of a business hub subject to the conditions identified in Policy EMP2 below.

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**POLICY EMP2: NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES – In supporting additional employment opportunities, new development will be required to:**

- a) Be sited in existing buildings, on areas of previously developed land or within the boundary of planned limits of development for Great Bowden; and
- b) Be of a size and scale not adversely affecting the character, infrastructure and environment of the village itself and the wider Plan area, including the countryside; and
- c) Not involve the loss of dwellings; and
- d) Not increase noise levels, fumes, odour or other nuisance to an extent that they would unacceptably disturb occupants of near-by residential property; and
- e) Not generate severe levels of traffic movement and provides on-site car parking for all employees and visitors; and
- f) Contribute to the character and vitality of the local area; and
- g) Any extension or free standing building shall be designed having regard to policies in this Plan and should not detract from the quality and character of the main building by reason of height, scale, massing, location or the facing materials used in their construction; and
- h) Be well integrated into and complement existing businesses.

Within the limits to development, the following types of employment development will be supported:

- i) Small-scale expansion of existing employment premises across the Parish subject to the conditions listed above;
- j) Small-scale new build development on brownfield sites within the Parish;

k) The creation of a facility, for example using an existing community facility, which assists small or home-based businesses in the parish by providing a hub with high speed internet, meeting rooms and suitable parking.

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## Broadband

The modern economy is changing and increasingly requires a good communications infrastructure as a basic requirement for commonly adopted and effective working practices. The internet is driving business innovation and growth, helping people access services, opening up new opportunities for learning and defining the way businesses interact with and between their employees, with their customers and with their suppliers.

This is particularly important in small rural settings where better broadband will enable home- working, reduce dependence on the car, enable small businesses to operate efficiently and compete effectively in their markets, improve access to an increasing number of on-line applications and services provided by the public and private sector to help to reduce social exclusion. It is also important for the successful functioning of the school.

The 2011 Census highlights how people are working differently to a generation ago – in Great Bowden Parish 7.1% of people work from home (above the Harborough-wide total of 5.7% and over double the regional and national percentages) and 15.2% are self-employed, again significantly higher than district, regional or national levels.

The need for high speed broadband to serve Great Bowden is therefore very important.

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**POLICY EMP 3: BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE - Proposals to provide access to a super-fast broadband service and improve the mobile telecommunication network that will serve businesses, the school and other properties within the Parish will be supported. This may require above ground network installations, which must be sympathetically located and designed to integrate into the landscape.**

Every individual dwelling in new housing developments should have access to superfast broadband of at least 30Mbps, or faster to reflect higher minimum speeds that may be prevalent through the lifetime of The Plan. Developers should take active steps to incorporate superfast broadband at the pre-planning phase and should engage with telecoms providers to ensure superfast broadband is available as soon as the development has been completed.

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## 7. Infrastructure Requirements

### Introduction

All development has the potential to impact on the environment and place pressure on local infrastructure and services. It is recognised that the planning system should be used to ensure that new development contributes positively to the local environment and helps to mitigate against any adverse impacts on infrastructure.

Appropriate infrastructure is therefore critical to support the provision of development. This is not only to ensure that the new development is properly served in respect of essential day-to-day infrastructure required by the occupants of any new development but also to minimise the impact upon existing infrastructure.

However, the NPPF stresses that the need for infrastructure accompanying development must have regard for the viability of that development. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG 46) also recognises the ability of Neighbourhood Plans to identify the need for new or enhanced infrastructure, but requires them to prioritise the infrastructure requirements.

Provision of the necessary physical and community infrastructure arising from proposed development is therefore a critical component of The Plan, which has identified a wide range of potential infrastructure requirements through its production.

Funding for new infrastructure is currently provided through a legal agreement (often referred to as a Section 106 Agreement) between the District Council and the applicant, along with other parties involved in the delivery of the specific infrastructure improvement (such as the County Council Education Department in relation to the impact on school places).

However, once the new Local Plan has been adopted, HDC will be considering the introduction of what is known as a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where charges will be applied according to the scale and type of development, and these funds used to contribute towards the infrastructure requirements of development.

The provision of these diverse elements of infrastructure needs to be timely if deficiencies are to be avoided. The infrastructure requirements identified and detailed within The Plan are summarised below:

- Business Hub (Emp 2)
- Traffic Management (T1)
- Traffic Calming at village entrances(T)
- Sensitive traffic calming measures in the centre of the village(T)

- Welham Lane closure to 4-wheel traffic (T2)
- Community car parks (T4)
- New and improved footpaths (T5)
- Safe Routes to school (T6)
- New and improved cycle routes and bridleways (T7)
- Provision of Bus Shelters and benches (T8)
- New play equipment (CAF2)
- New sporting facilities for all (CAF2)
- Additional allotment capacity (CAF2)
- Expansion of Great Bowden Academy (CAF3)
- Village Hall expansion (CAF2)

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**POLICY INF 1: DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS** - Planning applications for new developments within The Plan area must demonstrate, where appropriate, that they can contribute towards the delivery of community services. This may be through contributions via Section 106 agreement or through payment of any future Community Infrastructure levy (CIL) where applicable.

New development will be supported by the provision of new or improved infrastructure as set out in policies as above.

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## 8. Monitoring and Review

The Plan will last for a period of 15 years. During this time, it is likely that the circumstances which The Plan seeks to address will change.

The Plan will be regularly monitored. This will be led by Great Bowden Parish Council on at least an annual basis. The policies and measures contained in the Plan will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at the Parish level relevant to the delivery of the Plan will also be included.

The Parish Council proposes to formally review The Plan on a five-year cycle commencing in 2021 or to coincide with the review of the Harborough Local Plan if this cycle is different.

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