

# GREAT BOWDEN

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

2021 – 2041

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# Foreword

The Parish of Great Bowden is an attractive and popular place to live.

Great Bowden Parish Council took the decision to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan to enable the local community to gain control over the shape of development in the Parish.

The Neighbourhood Plan passed Referendum on 21 June 2018 with a 96% vote in favour with a turnout of 41%. The Neighbourhood Plan was formally Made by Harborough District Council on 26 June 2018. In March 2020, the Neighbourhood Plan was subject to a non-material Review which helped to update the Neighbourhood Plan policies but offered little additional protection.

In undertaking a material Review of the Made Neighbourhood Plan, we are doing so at a time of significant change.

The new Labour Government is committed to delivering growth through the vehicle of residential development as confirmed by the 2024 revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Harborough District Council, meanwhile, is reviewing its Local Plan and setting new housing requirements for Parishes such as Great Bowden.

The Review of the Made Neighbourhood Plan is being undertaken to update the document in light of numerous legislative changes to retain control over local development activity and make sure that future development is of a size, type and tenure that reflects local need.

We will continue to support development that meets the requirements outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan, and to oppose development which does not take the views of local people into account and is in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan Review.

We would like to thank Officers from Harborough District Council for their support as we have undertaken this work, to YourLocale for the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan based on community aspirations and for the grant funding received from Locality, without which the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan would not have been possible.

*Peter Mitchell, Chair*

*Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan*

*Monitoring & Review Committee*

*Bob Hooper, Chair*

*Great Bowden Parish Council*

# 1. What changes have been made?

The following changes (other than planning policy updates and formatting amendments) have been made to the Neighbourhood Plan which was Made by Harborough District Council on 26 June 2018.

## **The following policies relate to those in the Made Neighbourhood Plan**

Policy H1 – Housing Provision. This policy intent has been removed as a policy and incorporated into the narrative.

Policy H2 – Limits to Development. This is now Policy G1 and retitled ‘Settlement Boundary’. The red line has been updated to incorporate recent planning approvals.

Policy H3 – Windfall Site is now Policy H4 but otherwise remains unchanged.

Policy H4 – Housing Mix is now Policy H2. It has been updated to take into account the recommendations from the Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix 3).

Policy H5 – Affordable Housing is now Policy H3. It has been updated to take into account the recommendations from the Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix 3).

Policy H6 – Design Standards is now Policy G2. The policy has been updated to take into account the findings from the Design Guides and Codes document that was commissioned as part of the Review (Appendix 1).

Policy Env 1 – Areas of Separation policy wording is unchanged however the area covered has been amended.

Policy Env 2 – Protection of Local Green Space has been updated to have regard for the eligibility criteria and relevant paragraphs of the 2024 NPPF. A newly established candidate open space (Hursley Park Country Park) has been assessed under the criteria and added

Policy Env 3 – Other Important Open Space has been renamed Important Open Spaces and updated to have regard for the eligibility criteria and relevant paragraphs of the 2024 NPPF in respect of its provisions for protection of Open Spaces for Sport & Recreation (OSSRs). The list of sites covered by the policy has been extended by the inclusion of all existing and new (since 2015) OSSRs recognised as such by Harborough Council

Policy Env 4 – Protection of Other Sites of Historical Environment Significance has been renamed Sites of Historic Environment Significance, and now covers (as two sets) eligible sites in the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record and sites identified by the community as having at least local significance

Policy Env 5 – Ridge and Furrow has been updated with new supporting evidence, including published comparative research, and with a new map showing the results of a 2024 re-survey for the Plan

Policy Env 6 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets has been updated to better reflect the relevant paragraphs in the 2024 NPPF. It includes 23 assets in the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (of which 19 were first identified in the Made Plan) and 8 assets identified by the community as having at least local significance

Policy Env 7 – Protection of Important Views has been updated by the addition of views whose viewpoints have been created by the inclusion of open spaces in the new (post 2015) residential developments

Policy Env 8 – Protection of Other Sites and Features of Natural Environment Significance has been renamed Sites and Features of Natural Environment Significance. It now covers all relevant existing designations (Natural England, Leicestershire Environmental Records centre data) and habitat sites identified by the community as

having at least local significance. The policy itself has been updated to have regard for the relevant paragraphs in the 2024 NPPF, including the new measures for Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy Env 9 – Biodiversity has been strengthened to have regard for the relevant paragraphs in the 2024 NPPF, including the new measures for Biodiversity Net Gain. It clarifies the distinction between protecting identified habitat sites and protecting biodiversity across the Neighbourhood Area, including bats, newts, trees and hedges, and habitat connectivity (wildlife corridors)

Policy Env 10 – Footpaths and Cycleways becomes Policy ENV 11. The wording has been updated to better have regard for the relevant paragraphs in the 2024 NPPF

Policy CAF 1 – Protection of Existing Community Amenities and Facilities. The policy is the same as in the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy CAF2 – Provision of New or the Extension of Existing Community Amenities and Facilities. The policy is the same as in the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy CAF 3 – Expansion of Great Bowden Academy. The narrative has been updated, but otherwise the policy is the same as in the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy T1 – Parking Provision and New Dwellings. The policy is the same as in the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy T2 – Community Car Parks. The policy is the same as in the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy T3 – Cycle Routes and Bridleways. The policy is the same as in the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy T4 – Supporting Public Transport. The policy is the same as in the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy Emp 1 – Support for Existing Employment Opportunities. The policy is the same as in the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy Emp 2 – New Employment Opportunities. The policy is the same as in the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy Emp 3 – Broadband Infrastructure. This policy has been updated to reflect technological advances since the Neighbourhood Plan was made.

Policy Inf 1 – Developer Contributions. The policy has been updated to reflect the Local Plan (2019).

## **New Policies**

Policy G3 Understanding Local Character and Heritage – helps to ensure that development respects the parish's historic form, character and setting.

Policy H1 – Residential Allocation. The Neighbourhood Plan Review allocates a site for residential development to help meet a local housing need.

Policy ENV 10 – Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain. The Neighbourhood Area includes land covered by a new initiative by Harborough Council and its partners to create a landscape-scale Nature Recovery Area, including sites for rewilding and biodiversity net gain

Policy ENV 12 Flood Risk Resilience and Climate Change. The Neighbourhood Plan Review recognises the new local and national concern about the effects of new development on flood resilience. Supporting evidence makes use of the latest Environment Agency mapping of risk both from rivers and surface water

## 2. Introduction

This is the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan Review for Great Bowden Parish. It has been prepared by the Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring and Review Committee, which brings together members of the local community and Parish Councillors and has been led by the Parish Council.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a relatively new type of planning document that gives local people greater control and say over how their community develops and evolves. It is an opportunity for local people to create a framework for delivering a sustainable future for the benefit of all who live or work in that community, or who visit it.

As the Plain English Guide to the Localism Act 2011 states, “Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live”.

(<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a79a0b740f0b642860d98a2/1896534.pdf>)

It enables a community to create a vision and set clear planning policies for the use and development of land at the neighbourhood level to realise this vision. This includes, for example, where new homes, shops and industrial units should be built, what new buildings and extensions should look like, and which areas of land should be protected from development.

Neighbourhood Plans can be general or more detailed, depending on what local people want. They must, however, be in general conformity with District-wide planning policies, have regard for national planning policies and must be prepared in a prescribed manner.

All comments received through the pre-submission consultation process have been taken on board and the Neighbourhood Plan amended where appropriate. The current Neighbourhood Plan will remain in place until the review document is formally Made by Harborough District Council.

After being ‘Made’, each time a planning decision relating to development in the Parish has to be taken by Harborough District Council, or any other body, they will be required to refer to the Neighbourhood Plan Review (alongside Harborough District Council’s own Local Plan and other relevant documents) and check whether the proposed development is in accordance with the policies the community has developed.

This Neighbourhood Plan contains a range of policies designed to address locally important issues.

Whether or not a Parish has a Neighbourhood Plan development will still take place. However, without the policies in this Review Plan decisions about development would be based on Harborough District’s broad policies rather than on those seeking to preserve the distinctive local character of Great Bowden Parish as set out in the policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan Review.

### 3. How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the Planning System

The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established through the Localism Act 2011, which set out the general rules governing their preparation. A Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the area in which it is prepared. This statutory status means that it must be taken into account when considering planning decisions affecting that area.

A Neighbourhood Plan is not prepared in isolation. It also needs to be in general conformity with relevant national and local (i.e. Harborough) planning policies. For Great Bowden, the most significant planning document is the Harborough Local Plan (2011-2031), adopted on 30 April 2019. However, the new Local Plan (up to 2041) is now in the early stages of preparation, so the Neighbourhood Plan Review has taken the emerging evidence base into account (including the evolving housing requirement).

Also important is the NPPF, updated in 2024. This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF requires the planning system (including Neighbourhood Plans) to promote sustainable development and details three dimensions to that development:

- An economic dimension – they should contribute to economic development;
- A social dimension – they should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the right supply of housing and creating a high quality-built environment with accessible local services;
- An environmental dimension – they should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

The Labour Government has indicated its desire to review the NPPF. The Neighbourhood Plan Review includes references to the latest version of the NPPF, December 2024.

In addition, Neighbourhood Plans must be compatible with European Union (EU) legislation. Relevant EU obligations in relation to the Neighbourhood Planning process are those relating to Strategic Environmental Assessments, protected European Habitats and Human Rights Legislation. Although the United Kingdom has formally left the EU, these requirements remain and have been incorporated into UK law. This Plan and the policies it contains are consistent with the NPPF, Harborough Local Plan and relevant EU law which is retained following Brexit. Full details of how the Plan complies with these legislative requirements are set out in the Basic Conditions Statement (which will accompany the Submission version of this Neighbourhood Plan Review). Furthermore, these policies are specific to Great Bowden and reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

## 4. The Plan, its vision, objectives and what we want it to achieve

The Neighbourhood Area encompasses the whole of the Parish of Great Bowden and covers the period up to 2041, a timescale which deliberately mirrors that for the Harborough Local Plan Review.

The Neighbourhood Plan is not intended to replace or supersede the Harborough Local Plan, but rather it sits alongside it, to add additional or more detailed policies specific to Great Bowden. Where the Local Plan contains policies that meet the needs and requirements of Great Bowden they are not repeated here. Instead, it focuses on those planning issues which consultation shows matter most to the community, and to which the Neighbourhood Plan can add the greatest additional value.

It is important to note that when using the Neighbourhood Plan to form a view on a development proposal or a policy issue all of the document and the policies contained in it must be considered together.

The Advisory Committee (later renamed the Monitoring & Review Committee) developed a vision for Great Bowden from the Made Neighbourhood Plan 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 6th and 7th of May 2016 and reaffirmed through consultation for the Review Neighbourhood Plan.

### 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 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.

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. These objectives were identified through the preparation of the Made Neighbourhood Plan and remain relevant today. They are:

### 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; and
- 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; and
- 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; and
- Efforts will be made to ensure that the Primary School thrives as an important local resource.

### Employment

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

The Plan will be kept under further review and may change over time in response to new and changing needs and requirements.



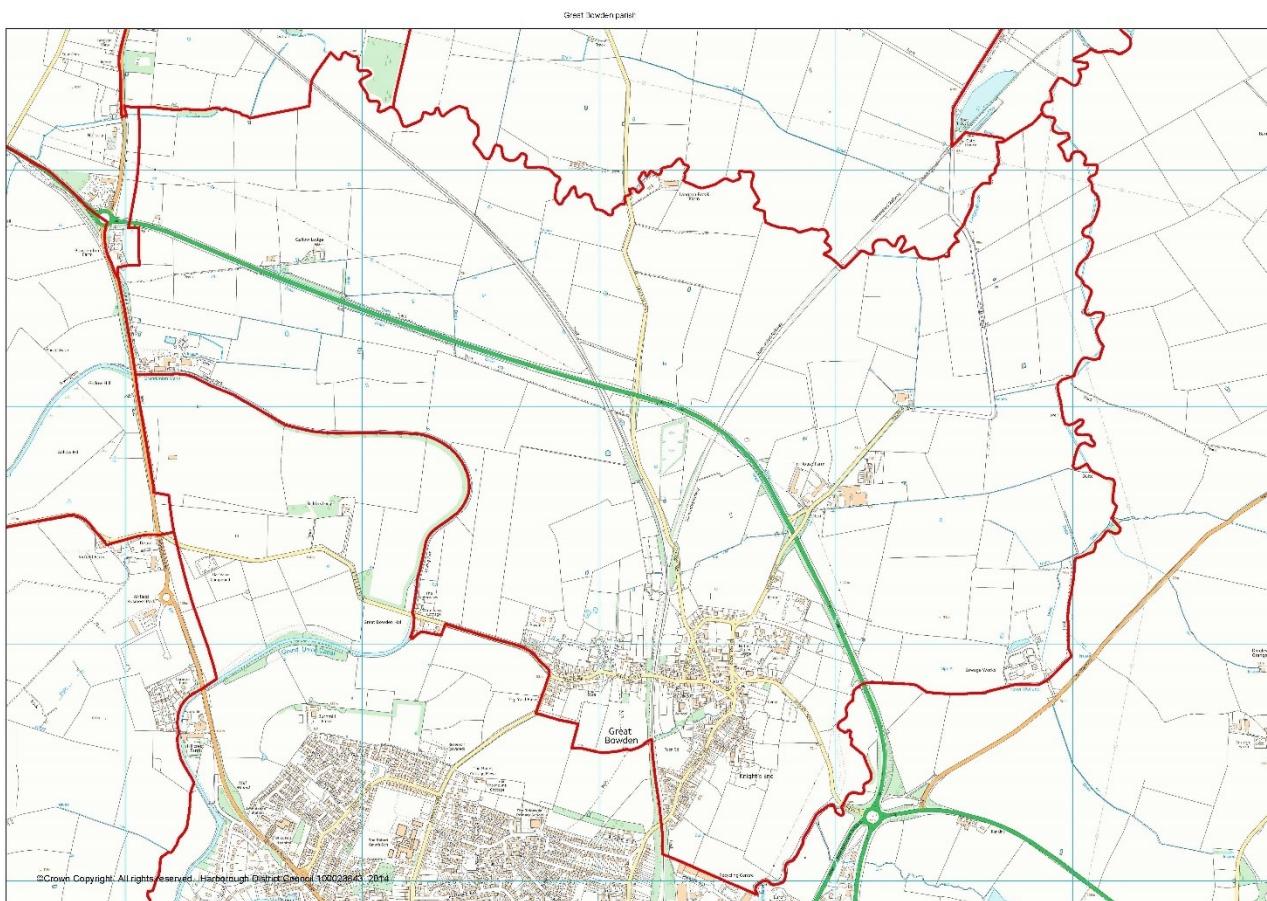
## 5. How the Plan was prepared

Once the Parish Council decided to undertake a neighbourhood plan, it appointed an Advisory Committee to drive the process forward and appointed Neighbourhood Plan Consultants YourLocale who undertook a range of consultation events with the community.

The whole parish of Great Bowden was formally designated as a Neighbourhood Area by Harborough District Council on 5 December 2015.

The designated 'Great Bowden Neighbourhood Area' is illustrated below.

Figure 1 – Neighbourhood Area



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 questionnaire was distributed to every household in the Parish (summer 2016) and received 259 returns, almost 40% of the adult population. A separate questionnaire was provided for children in the Parish.

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. 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.

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

When the decision was taken to review the Neighbourhood Plan, the Advisory Committee was re-engaged and re-named the Monitoring & Review Committee and met throughout the review process to drive the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan forward. Two Theme Groups, one looking at updating the housing policies and the other considering updates to the environment chapter, were established and met over the period 2022-2025.

The members of M&RC were Peter Mitchell (Chair), Councillors Paul Claxton & Bob Hooper and residents: Chris Attenborough, Emma Fletcher-Brewer, Richard Lawrence, Andy Poore, Paul & Suzanne Simons and Andrew Worrall.

The members of M&RC that were responsible for instigating the Neighbourhood Plan lived in the well-established part of GB. However, for this review of the Neighbourhood Plan, GB Parish Council felt that it was important to include new residents living in Hursley Park, off Welham Lane, Heathcote Grange off Leicester Lane and Bowden Chase off Berry Close so that they could play a part in creating policies that will shape our village over the foreseeable future. After all, the newer residents of Great Bowden now represent over 40% of the population of Great Bowden!



The members of the Housing, Employment & Transport Theme Group were Paul Claxton (Chair), Emma Fletcher-Brewer, Richard Lawrence, Peter Mitchell and Andrew Worrall.

The members of the Environment & Community Assets Theme Group were Chris Attenborough, Bob Hooper (Chair), Andy Poore and Paul & Suzanne Simons

Thanks are due to Carolyn Ford who has made a valuable contribution to this reviewed plan by suggesting modifications to the wording of the preamble to and the wording of several policies.

Further consultation took place in May 2025 with an open event for residents of Great Bowden, and in September and October 2025 to share the draft revised policies with the community through Regulation 14 Consultation.

## 6. About Great Bowden

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.

### The Parish today

The Office for National Statistics mid-2020 population estimate for Great Bowden is 1,371 individuals, showing an increase of 354 individuals since the 2011 Census.

At the time of the 2011 Census, Great Bowden had a smaller proportion of 16-24 and 25-44 year olds and a larger proportion of those aged 45-64 and 65-84 compared to wider averages. Therefore, it can be said that Great Bowden has a relatively old population. However, estimated population change since 2011 indicates a significant increase in younger age groups as a result of recent development, which is counteracting the ageing of the population.

The composition of one person households is made up of a higher proportion of people aged 65 and over compared to Harborough and England. Great Bowden has a higher proportion of family households compared to England. There is a higher proportion of families aged 65 and over compared to Harborough and England. There is also a higher proportion of families with no children in comparison to England. GB has a lower proportion of households with non-dependent children compared to Harborough and England.

There has been some development in Great Bowden since 2011 with the development of over 230 dwellings.

78.4% of properties in Great Bowden are owned, with 10.0% private rented, 8.2% social rented and

0.7% purchased through shared ownership. Median house prices have grown by 45.9% between 2012 and 2021, with the highest increase of 73.4% being amongst semi-detached properties.

Both Great Bowden and Harborough have a larger proportion of bungalows and detached properties compared to England. Great Bowden also has a larger proportion of semi-detached dwellings compared to Harborough and England. On the other hand, Great Bowden and Harborough have a much lower proportion of flats (significantly lower in Great Bowden) and terraced properties.

Great Bowden has a higher proportion of three-bedroom properties in comparison to Harborough and England, and Great Bowden and Harborough have a higher proportion of 4 and 5+ bedroom properties compared to England. However, Great Bowden and Harborough have a smaller proportion of 1 and 2 bed properties compared to the national average.



## 7. Meeting the requirement for sustainable development

The NPPF states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: social, environmental and economic, all of which are important and interrelated:

### a) Social

We have sought, through the Neighbourhood Plan, to safeguard existing open spaces for the future enjoyment of residents. We are also seeking to protect existing community facilities and to deliver a mix of housing types so that we can meet the needs of present and future generations and ensure that we support the community's needs and its health, social and cultural wellbeing.

### b) Environmental

In order to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, we are seeking to ensure that housing development is of the right type in the right location, so that it does not harm but instead positively reflects the existing historic character of the area in order to:

- Protect the parish identity and conserve the rural nature of its surroundings;
- Recognise the need to protect and, where possible, improve biodiversity and important habitats; and
- Provide improved pedestrian connectivity.

### c) Economic

Whilst the built-up parts of the parish of Great Bowden are primarily residential, there is a small commercial and retail element within the parish and a desire to ensure that appropriate economic activity is maintained as long as the local infrastructure supports it. We therefore wish to encourage employment opportunities in our area by:

- Supporting appropriate existing business development and expansion where the local infrastructure would not be adversely affected by the proposals; and
- Encourage start-up businesses and home working.

This document sets out local considerations for delivering sustainable development across Great Bowden Parish.

## 8. Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### A: General policies

#### Settlement Boundary

The purpose of a Settlement Boundary 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 Harborough District Council in order to clarify where new development is best located. They can be 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 Harborough Local Plan (2011-2031) removed Limits to Development as a planning tool, but the Neighbourhood Plan Review has decided to retain the Limits to Development as identified within the Made Neighbourhood Plan and update them as a Settlement Boundary within the Review. The Regulation 19 Local Plan for Harborough continues to exclude Limits to Development.

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 a Settlement Boundary for the built-up part of Great Bowden. The redefined Settlement Boundary takes into account recent planning permissions and supersedes the 'limits' previously set by Harborough District Council and the 'Made' Neighbourhood Plan.

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

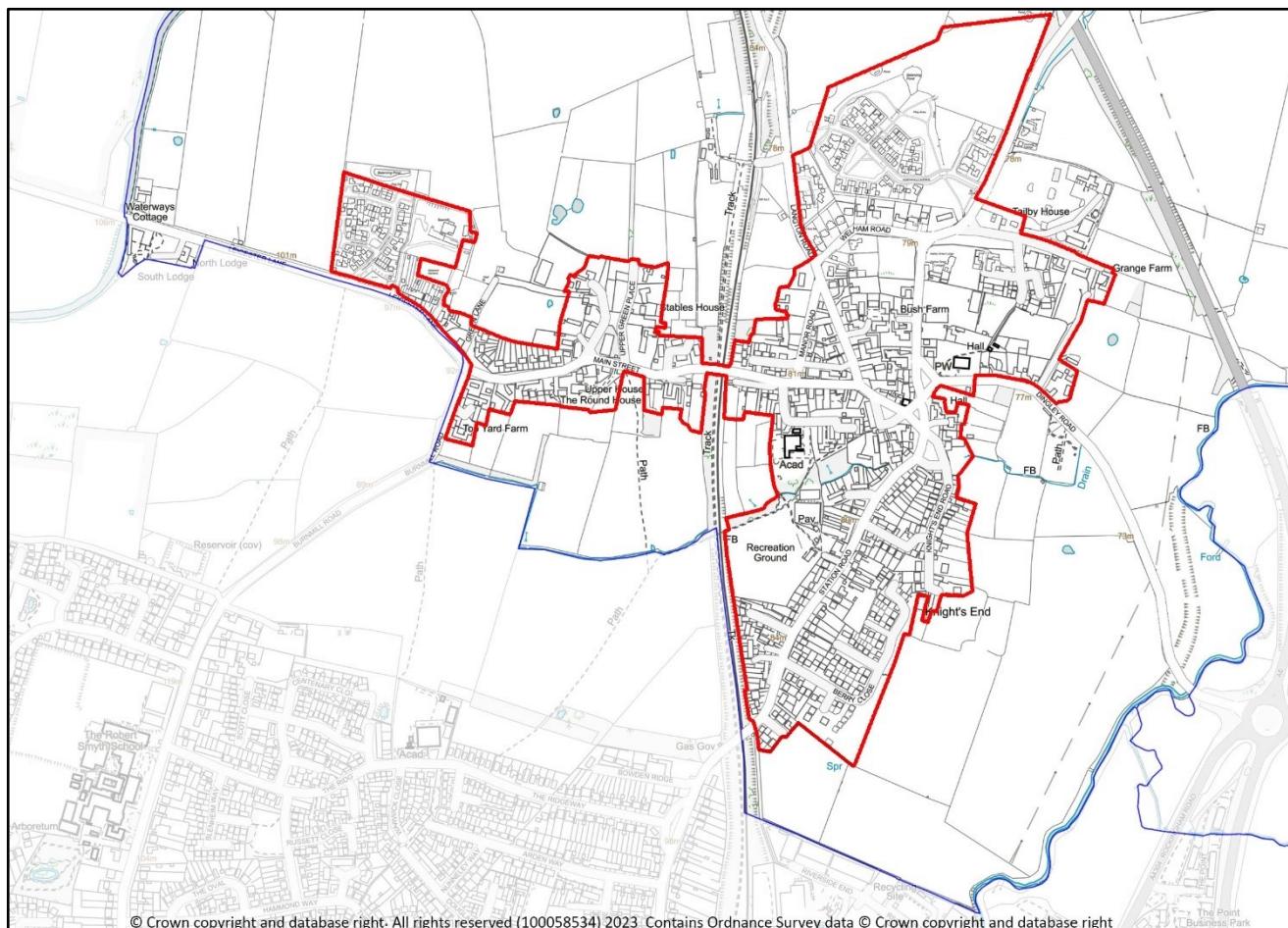
It is national and local planning policy that development in the countryside should be carefully controlled. Supporting "the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it" is a core planning principle in the NPPF. This approach is also supported by this Plan, in particular, because it will help ensure that development is focused in the built-up area 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 Settlement Boundary will help to support existing services within villages and help to protect the countryside and the remainder of The Neighbourhood Area from inappropriate development.

## Methodology

In drawing up the Settlement Boundary, the Plan Review 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;
- Isolated or sporadic development that is detached from the main built-up area is excluded.

Figure 2: Settlement Boundary



**POLICY G1: Settlement Boundary - Development proposals will be supported within the Settlement Boundary (or within any future Local Plan allocations) as identified in Figure 2.**

Land outside the defined Settlement Boundary will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled.

Appropriate development in the countryside includes:

- a) For the purposes of agriculture – including farm diversification and other land-based rural

- businesses;
- b) For the provision of affordable housing through a rural exception site, where local need has been identified;
  - c) For the provision of a formal recreation or sport use or for rural tourism that respects the character of the countryside.

## 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.

The NPPF notes that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies.

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, development 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 provide 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, cafes, 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 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 is now over 20 years old and the opportunity has been taken through the Neighbourhood Plan Review to refresh the approach to design within the Parish. These renewed design criteria, which build on the VDS, are detailed in Great Bowden Design Guidelines & Design Codes (see Appendix 1).

Objective 9 of the Local Plan (2011-31) requires new development is ‘of high quality and sustainable design which reflects local character and distinctiveness, provides attractive, healthy and safe environments, respects residential amenity and promotes sustainable behaviours ...’. Policy GD8 permits development which achieves a high standard of design.

**POLICY G2: DESIGN STANDARDS** – All development proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design, layout and use of materials which make a positive contribution to the special character of the Neighbourhood Area.

Any new development application should make specific reference to how the design guide and codes (Appendix 1) have been taken into account in the design proposals. Development within the Conservation Area will require conformity with the Great Bowden Conservation Area character statement. New development should consider the prevailing character area in which the proposal resides and seek to contribute to and enhance the existing character.

## Local Character and Heritage

The Plan seeks to ensure that all development proposals (including minor works) are of good quality and designed sensitively to ensure that the generally good-quality built environment of the Parish is maintained and enhanced, particularly where they are located within or in close proximity to the Conservation Areas and/or a Listed Building or its setting. New designs should respond in a positive way to the local character through careful and appropriate layout use of high-quality materials and detail. Proposals should also demonstrate consideration of height, scale and massing, to ensure that new development delivers a positive contribution to the street scene and adds value to the distinctive character of the area in which it is proposed to be situated.

### **POLICY G3: UNDERSTANDING LOCAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE.**

- a) All development proposals within Great Bowden Parish must demonstrate a clear understanding of the village’s historic form, character, and setting. Proposals should respond positively to the established pattern of development, the relationships between buildings and spaces, and the special qualities that contribute to the village’s distinctive identity.
- b) To ensure high quality and contextually sensitive design, applicants are required to submit a Heritage Impact Assessment and a Character Assessment proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. These should:

- Identify any heritage assets affected (designated and non- designated) and assess the contribution their setting makes to their significance;
  - Describe the key characteristics of the site and its surroundings, including building form, materials, plot pattern, landscape features, and the relationship to historic routes, greens, and spaces;
  - Demonstrate how the proposed design has been informed by, and responds positively to, the identified heritage significance and local character.
- c) Proposals that fail to demonstrate an adequate understanding of, or a positive response to, the historic character and setting of Great Bowden will not be supported.

## B: Housing

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.

Previous 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.

The Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan Review is a key part of securing sustainable development as described in Section 2 of the NPPF (2024) which states that all plans should provide a positive vision for the future of its area and provide a framework for meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings. (Paragraph 15).

The Plan takes a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Through the process of reviewing the Made Neighbourhood Plan, consideration has been given to the type and extent of new development required, where it should be located in the Parish, and how it should be designed.

The adopted Local Plan (2019) makes provision for 12,800 dwellings across the District between 2011 to 2031. Of this, 8,150 dwellings had 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.

In March 2025, Harborough District Council issued the Regulation 19 version of its new Local Plan.

The Regulation 19 Local Plan (the emerging local plan) identifies the housing requirement for Harborough District as 13,182 between 2020 and 2041. Of this, 8,417 dwellings are built or committed with planning permission or allocated in Neighbourhood Plans); or are expected to come forward as windfall sites by 2041. (See para 4.8, Regulation 19 Local Plan)

The emerging Local Plan establishes a hierarchy of settlements to help to determine the most appropriate locations for strategic growth. Great Bowden is classified as a 'Medium Village' along with Husbands Bosworth, Houghton on the Hill, Ullesthorpe and Billesdon.

Policy DS01 in the emerging Local Plan identifies a strategic growth requirement of 100 homes for Great Bowden. (This housing growth for Great Bowden is a minimum strategic requirement and is in addition to the 65 completions and commitments from 2020 to 1st April 2023).

Policy SA01 allocates two sites for residential development for 100 dwellings on land north of Dingley Road and land off Dingley Road and Nether Green within the Neighbourhood Area.

## Residential Allocation

In considering development proposals, the Neighbourhood Plan takes a positive and supportive approach with a presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF and Harborough Local Plan.

Through the Neighbourhood Plan, the opportunity has been taken to positively plan for development within Great Bowden that meets a local need. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan supports a single residential site for 8 bungalows (see Policy H1.) This housing allocation enables our NP to remain applicable for at least 5 years. (See Para 14, NPPF 2024).

The Neighbourhood Plan also states how new housing should be designed through an updated design guide and code (Appendix 1); shows the housing mix and tenure required in Great Bowden based on an updated Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix 3) which utilises Census data from 2021; and promotes the improvements to infrastructure that is needed locally.

There are 13 known potential development sites within the Great Bowden Neighbourhood Area. These have been identified following a review of Harborough District Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and one site submitted to the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites. Each site was assessed both through the SHELAA and an independent site assessment process, commissioned through Locality's technical support programme and included as Appendix 2.

As a result of these processes, the following site is allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan Review

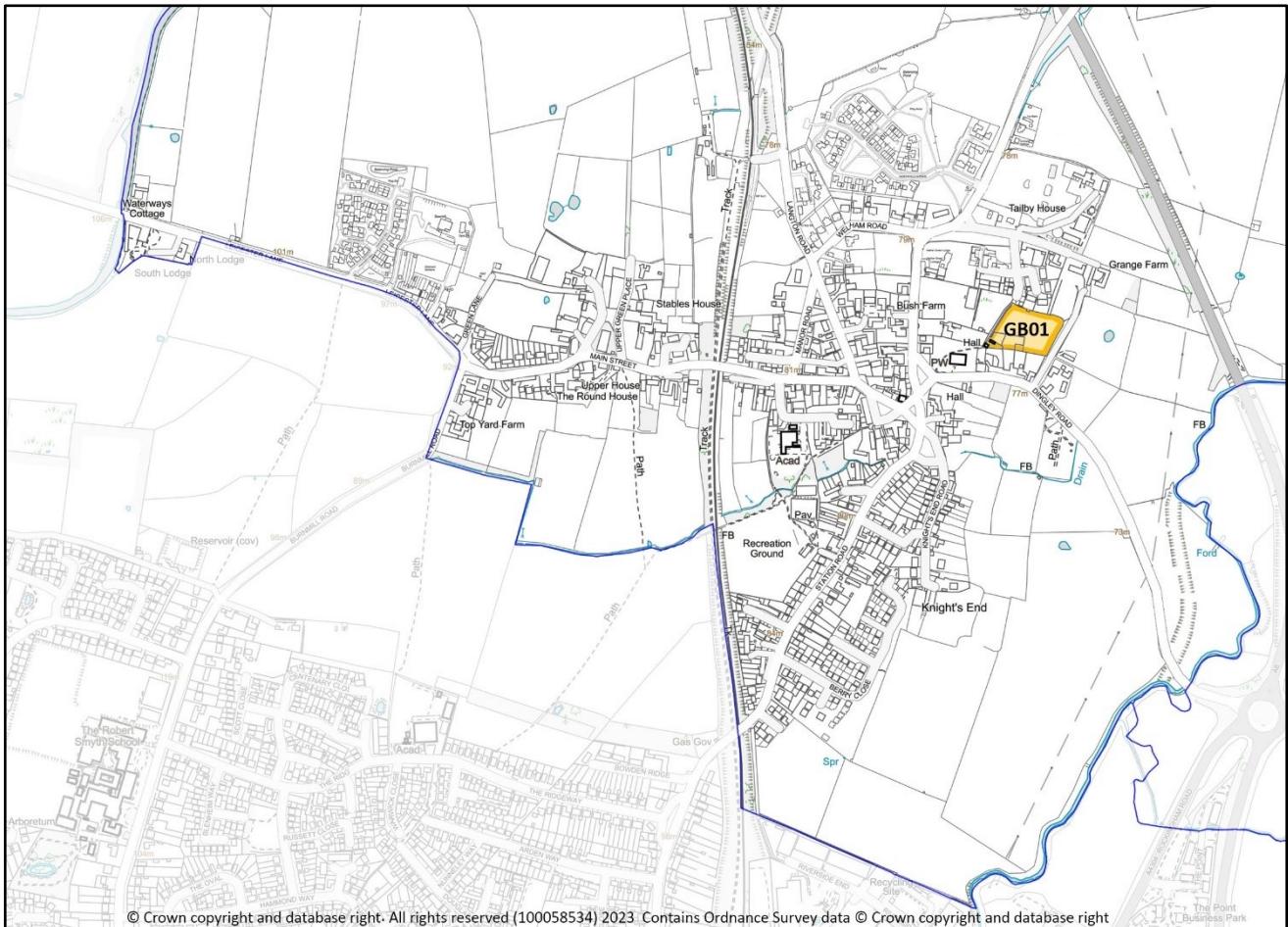
**POLICY H1: RESIDENTIAL SITE ALLOCATIONS** - The plan makes provision for 8 new dwellings in Great Bowden up to 2041. This is met by land being allocated for residential development at the following location as shown in figure 3.

GB01 Buckminster Close. Development will be supported subject to:

- a) The development providing only bungalows to a total number of 8;
- b) The bungalows will be a mixture of 2 and 3 bed dwellings; and
- c) A restrictive covenant is imposed on each bungalow which prevents the conversion into a house with one or more upper storey or the creation of living space in the eaves with dorma windows.
- d) Any subsequent planning application being accompanied by an assessment of the potential mineral resource adjacent and within the allocation in line with Policy M11 of the Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2019).

Priority is to be given to the marketing of the bungalows to residents of Great Bowden in the first instance.

Figure 3 – Residential allocation



## Housing Mix

It is important that any local housing growth helps to meet the changing population and needs of the Parish. This is especially important as there is some evidence that the housing type of the Parish is unbalanced. In particular, there are relatively larger properties and relatively less small dwellings. There is also evidence of under-occupancy of properties.

The Housing Needs Assessment (August 2022) confirmed that Great Bowden has a higher proportion of three-bedroom properties in comparison to Harborough and England, and Great Bowden and Harborough have a higher proportion of 4 and 5+ bedroom properties compared to England. However, Great Bowden and Harborough have a smaller proportion of 1 and 2 bed properties compared to the national average.

87% of households in Great Bowden have at least one extra bedroom in their homes, whilst 47% of households have at least two. The Housing Needs Assessment concluded that population growth can be expected to be driven by the oldest households, with a 71.0% change in those aged 65 and over throughout the plan period.

**POLICY H2: HOUSING MIX** - In order to meet the future needs of the residents of the Neighbourhood Area in line with Appendix 3 Housing Needs Assessment, new housing development proposals:

- a) Should seek to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities by providing a mix of house types and size that reflect up to date published evidence of local need in Great Bowden; and
- b) Are encouraged to construct building regulations 2015 M4(2) “accessible housing” standard and to include some housing at M4(3) “wheelchair housing” standard.

## Affordable Housing

Housing affordability is an issue within the Parish. There is a high and above average disparity between average house prices (both for sale and rent) and average income.

The NPPF (2024) defines affordable housing as ‘housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)’. The definition goes on to list different types including affordable housing for rent (including social rent); starter homes, discounted market sale housing and other affordable housing routes to home ownership. The Government has subsequently introduced ‘First Homes’ as an Affordable Housing product.

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 Local Plan contains a requirement to provide 40% affordable units on-site for all developments with 10 or more dwellings.

The Housing Needs Assessment (2022) confirmed that 78.4% of properties in Great Bowden are owned, with 10.0% private rented, 8.2% social rented and 0.7% purchased through shared ownership. Median house prices have grown by 45.9% between 2012 and 2021, with the highest increase of 73.4% being amongst semi-detached properties.

The average total household income locally was £52,700 in 2018. Harborough District Council’s gross individual lower quartile annual earnings were £17,982 in 2020. To estimate the income of households with two lower quartile earners, this figure is doubled to £35,964. It is clear that there is a large gap between the spending power of average earning households and those earning the lowest 25% of incomes, particularly where the household has one earner only.

Local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher-than-average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The median house price would require an annual income double the current average. Also, households made up of two lower quartile earners cannot afford the given rental thresholds. The Housing Needs Assessment concludes that First Homes with a discount of 50% or more would be required as the income needed for First Homes with a 30% or 40% discount falls above the average for the Neighbourhood Area.

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 also 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.

**Policy H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING** – Where affordable housing is to be provided as part of a development, it should be designed and delivered to be indistinguishable from market housing and be distributed evenly through the development.

The provision of smaller homes, especially for young families and young people and for older people, will be supported, as is the provision of affordable housing for people with a local connection.

The provision of First Homes at a discount of 50% is supported, subject to viability.

## Windfall sites

These are sites that come forward during the plan period, but which have not been specifically identified in the development plan. These are usually small infill or redevelopment sites; they often comprise redundant or vacant buildings including barns, or gaps between existing properties in the built up area. Such sites have made a regular contribution towards the housing supply in the Parish. For example, in the last four years, 33 dwellings were approved at the former Bowden Fencing site. There remain opportunities for windfall development within the updated Settlement Boundary, and it is recognised that they will continue to make a contribution to housing provision in the Parish over the lifetime of the Plan.

**POLICY H4: WINDFALL SITES** – Development proposals for infill and redevelopment sites will be supported where:

- a) They are within the Settlement Boundary of Great Bowden;
- b) They help to meet the identified housing requirement for Great Bowden in terms of housing mix (Policy H2);
- 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;
- g) Development does not cause harm to the significance of heritage assets, unless such harm is clearly outweighed by demonstrable public benefits; and
- h) 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.

## C: The Natural, Historical and Social 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 southwest 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 hilltop.

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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> century and the nave from the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and the village was for a period from 1927 to 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.

## Geology and landscape

The whole Neighbourhood Area is underlain by Jurassic (c. 200 million years old) rocks (figure 4.1). 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).

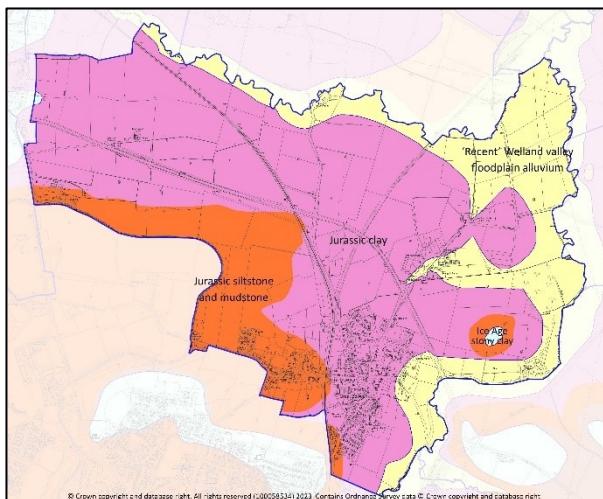


Figure 4.1: Geology of the Neighbourhood Area

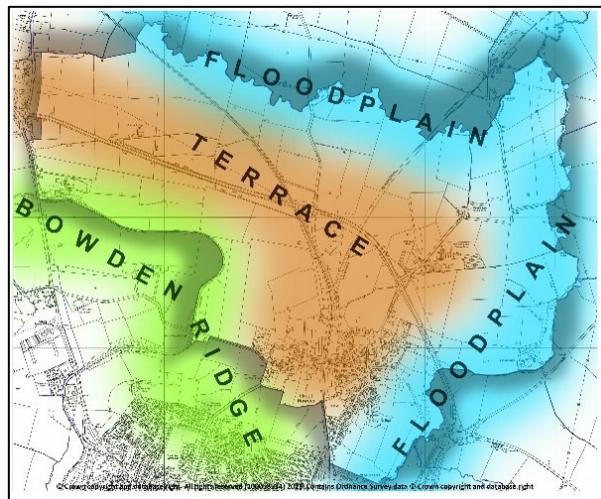


Figure 4.2: Topographic areas in the Neighbourhood Area, showing Great Bowden's position between the Bowden Ridge and the river floodplain

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 (figure 4.2).

## Natural environment

The length of human occupation in the parish, especially agriculture in this productive area, means that nowhere is 'wild' and there is very little 'natural' habitat. 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 Neighbourhood Area and the District.

## Environmentally significant characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area

- Protection of the significant landscapes of the parish is supported by Harborough District Council Local Plan (2011-2031) Policy GD5;
- 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 Neighbourhood 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 Neighbourhood Area.

## Environmental inventory

The full environmental inventory of the Neighbourhood Area compiled for the previous Neighbourhood Plan was comprehensively updated in support of this Review. The work comprised two elements:

- Review of all new existing designations and other externally available information; and
- Fieldwork to check and update evidence for sites and features of natural and historical environment significance in the Neighbourhood Area

The *review* collated 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, old maps (Ordnance Survey, manuscript), British History Online, local history and archaeology publications, and local knowledge.

The *fieldwork* to update the evidence for statutory, designated, non-designated, and locally-identified environmental sites and features of relevance to the planning system was undertaken between April and September 2022. These data, along with all relevant site-specific information from the existing information review, were mapped and tabulated, and every site of local environmental significance was evaluated using a system (see Appendix 4) based on the seven criteria for Local Green Space

selection in the NPPF December 2024.

## Areas of separation

### Relationship of the Neighbourhood 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 proposed medium village through the emerging Local Plan 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 of the latter 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 (HDC Local Plan Policy GD5).

This continued geographical independence is important in its own right and as a justifiable sustainable development aspiration. Currently, two formal areas of separation are designated to the south and east of Great Bowden as shown in Fig 5 which is strongly supported by the community.

The draft Harborough Local Plan 2021-2041 proposes the building of approximately 850 new homes east of Market Harborough Road, designated MH2, which is bounded on three sides by the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area and will be situated west of Great Bowden.

This potential expansion of Market Harborough across the southern loop of the Grand Union Canal would not bring the town closer to Great Bowden than it is at present. It would, however, weaken the current distinction that landform provides between the lower-lying Great Bowden and the more elevated setting of Market Harborough in this area. Although the canal and adjacent tree cover would maintain a boundary along the edge of the allocated site but proximity to the western edge of Great Bowden, linked by Leicester Lane, would nonetheless be likely to create some sense of Great Bowden becoming contained on two sides by Market Harborough.

It is, therefore, proposed that a third formal Area of Separation is created which would be west of the canal and north of Leicester Lane and would serve to prevent any erosion of the remaining gap in this area as shown in Figure 5.

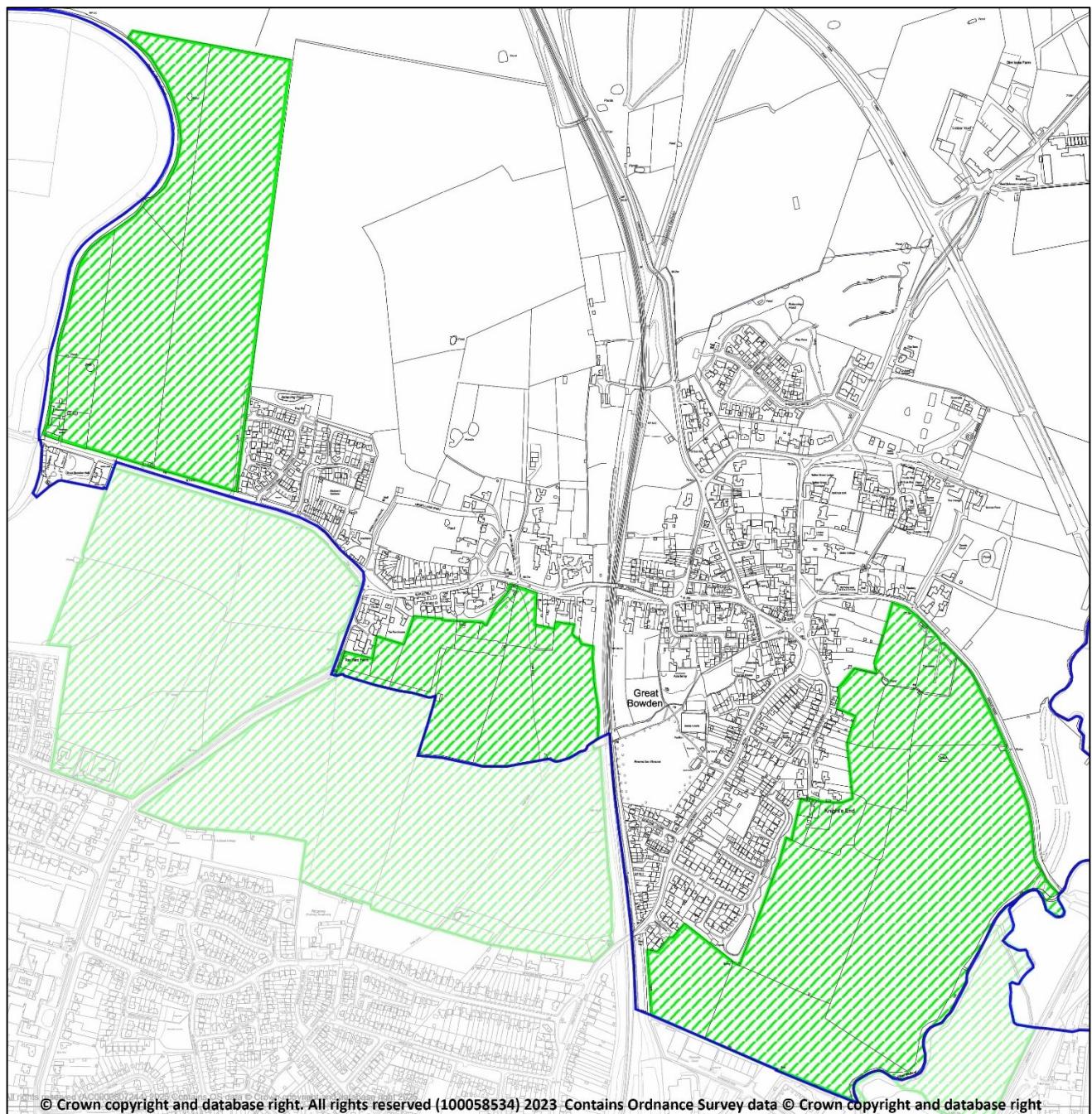
This proposed separation land to the north of Leicester Lane would seem a logical and reasonable extension to the existing Areas of Separation in the Neighbourhood Plan, adding to the wider, strategic designation in the adopted Local Plan and would be justifiable to continue with the policy of protecting the identity and character of Great Bowden.

## Land outside the Neighbourhood Area

It is noted that because the Plan is unable to control development outside the designated Neighbourhood 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

**POLICY ENV 1: AREAS OF SEPARATION** – Development in the Areas of Separation (figure 5) will be permitted where it would not compromise, either alone or in conjunction with other existing or proposed development, the effectiveness of the Area of Separation in protecting the separate identity and distinctiveness of Great Bowden.

Figure 5: Areas of Separation



# Local Green Spaces

Of the 218 inventoried parcels of open land in the parish, 99 were identified as having notable environmental (natural, historical and/or social) features. As described above, these sites were scored, using the seven criteria for Local Green Space designation noted in the NPPF, December 2024 paragraphs 106 – 108. Six sites (figure 6) score highly under all relevant criteria in the Environmental Inventory (Appendix 4) and meet the essential requirements for designation as Local Green Space as outlined in NPPF. Full evidence for the designations is in Appendix 5. Statutory protection of these sites will ensure their protection for future generations.

**POLICY ENV 2: LOCAL GREEN SPACES** – Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following Local Green Spaces (details Appendix 5; locations figure 6) will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances.

Churchyard of St Peter and St Paul *Inventory reference 198*

Great Bowden cemetery *Inventory reference 116*

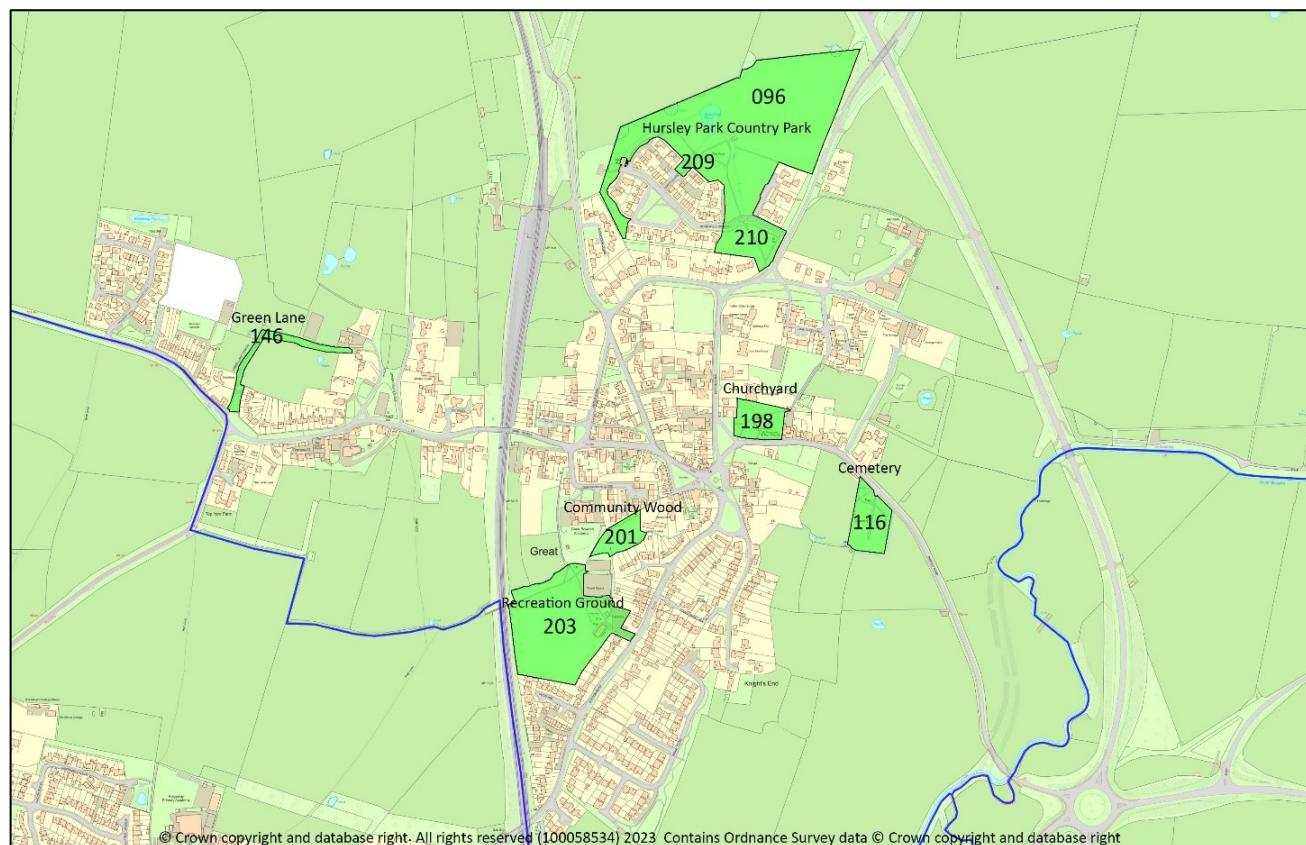
Green Lane *Inventory reference 146*

Great Bowden recreation ground *Inventory reference 203*

Community Wood *Inventory reference 201*

Hursley Park Country Park, including contiguous amenity open spaces and play area *Inventory reference 096/209/210*

Figure 6: Local Green Spaces



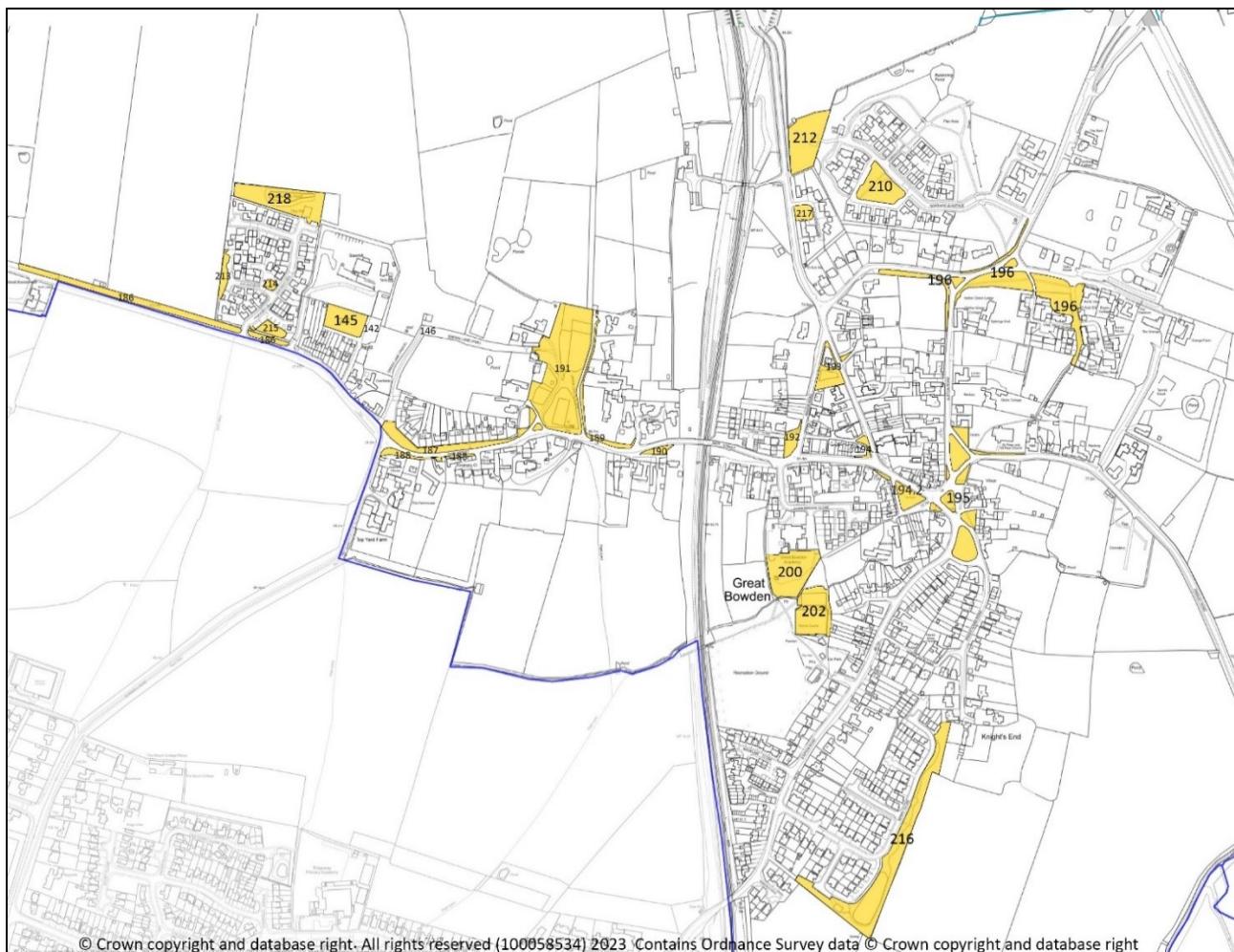
## Important Open Spaces (OSSRs)

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; many are existing Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) sites in the Harborough District Council Open Spaces audit (as shown on the Local Plan (2019) Policies Map). Several other open spaces with OSSR-equivalent functions or characteristics have been recognised by this Plan, while a number are new, having been provided as part of the agreed masterplans of recent residential developments.

In Great Bowden these sites include facilities for formal and informal sport and recreation, play areas, informal open spaces of recreational and wellbeing value, open spaces among buildings defining the layout of the settlement, Village Greens (several Registered), wide grass verges of historical and aesthetic value, Registered Common Land, green lanes and allotments. 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 (2016) selected the greens as the most valued village characteristic.

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 Policy ENV 3. The policy adds local detail to, and is in conformity with, HDC Policy G12.

Figure 7: Important Open Spaces (for Local Green Spaces see figure 6 and policy ENV 2)



**POLICY ENV 3: IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES** – The following open spaces (locations, figure 7) are of high local value for sport, recreation, or amenity. Development proposals that result in their loss, or have a significant adverse effect on them, will not be supported unless the open space's function is replaced by at least equivalent provision in an equally suitable location, or unless it can be demonstrated that the open space is no longer required by the community.

1. Open Spaces designated by Harborough District Council (Open Space, Sport & Recreation site on HDC Local Plan policies map):

Upper Green (Common Land CL70) main part (Inventory reference 191 (part); reference A in 2018 Plan)

Middle Green 1 (Common Land CL71) (Inventory reference 192, reference I in 2018 Plan)

Central Village Greens, group 1 (part): Stock's Green (Inventory reference 194.2; reference J (part) in 2018 Plan)

Central Village Greens, group 2 (parts) (Common Land (CL74, in parts); Registered Village Green VG81): Pond Green, Memorial Green, East Section and North Section (Inventory reference 195; reference G in 2018 Plan)

Nether Green (Common Land CL 75) (parts) (Inventory reference 196, reference H in 2018 Plan)

Great Bowden Academy playing fields and woodland (Inventory reference 200, reference M in 2018 Plan)

Market Harborough lawn tennis club courts and facilities (Inventory reference 202, reference N in 2018 Plan)

2. Open Spaces designated by this Neighbourhood Plan:

Leicester Lane verges (Inventory reference 186; reference L in 2018 Plan)

Main Street verges north 1 (inventory reference 187; reference O in 2018 Plan)

Main Street verges south 1 (inventory reference 188; reference P (part) in 2018 Plan)

Main Street verges north 2 (inventory reference 189; reference P (part) in 2018 Plan)

Main Street verges south 2 (inventory reference 190; reference P (part) in 2018 Plan)

Leicester Lane allotment gardens (Inventory reference 145, reference Q in 2018 Plan)

Upper Green (Common Land CL70); parts not designated by HDC and roadside verges (Inventory reference 191 (parts); reference A in 2018 Plan)

Middle Green 2 (Common Land CL72) (Inventory reference 194.1, reference J (part) in 2018 Plan)

Middle Green 3 (Common Land CL73) (Inventory reference 193, reference K in 2018 Plan)

Central Village Greens, group 1 (part): Roadside verge and 'Phil's Green' (Inventory reference 194.2; reference J (part) in 2018 Plan)

Central Village Greens, group 2 (parts) (Common Land (CL74, in parts); Registered Village Green VG81. Village Hall Green and roadside verge opposite, church verge (Inventory reference 195; reference G in 2018 Plan)

Nether Green (Common Land CL 75) (parts) Roadside verges and green lane to Buckminster Close (Inventory reference 196, reference H in 2018 Plan)

Hursley Park open space: 'Central Green' (Inventory reference 211)

Hursley Park open space: Welham Lane Allotments (Inventory reference 212)

Isaac Martin Lane Open Space (Inventory reference 213)

- Frank Burditt Drive Open Space (Inventory reference 214)
- Heathcote Grange children's playground (Inventory reference 215)
- Berry Close open space (Bowden Chase) (Inventory reference 216)
- The Paddocks Open Space (Inventory reference 217)
- Frank Burditt Drive balancing pond open space (Inventory reference 218)

Note: The following open spaces with Open Space, Sport & Recreation functions (five are in the HDC open spaces audit, as listed, two are new) are now designated as Local Green Space by this Plan, Policy ENV 2: they are noted here for reference, but to avoid inconsistency when policy decisions are being made they are *not* covered by Policy ENV 3:

Churchyard of St Peter and St Paul parish church (HDC Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) site; Inventory reference 198; LGS reference A in 2018 Plan)

Great Bowden Cemetery (HDC Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) site; Inventory reference 116; LGS reference B in 2018 Plan)

Green Lane (HDC Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) site; Inventory reference 146; LGS reference C in 2018 Plan)

Great Bowden Recreation Ground (HDC Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) site; Inventory reference 203; LGS reference D in 2018 Plan)

Community Wood (HDC Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) site; Inventory reference 201; LGS reference E in 2018 Plan)

Hursley Park Country Park, amenity open space and play area (new; Inventory references 096 and 209)

Hursley Park 'Welham Green', amenity open space (new; Inventory reference 210)

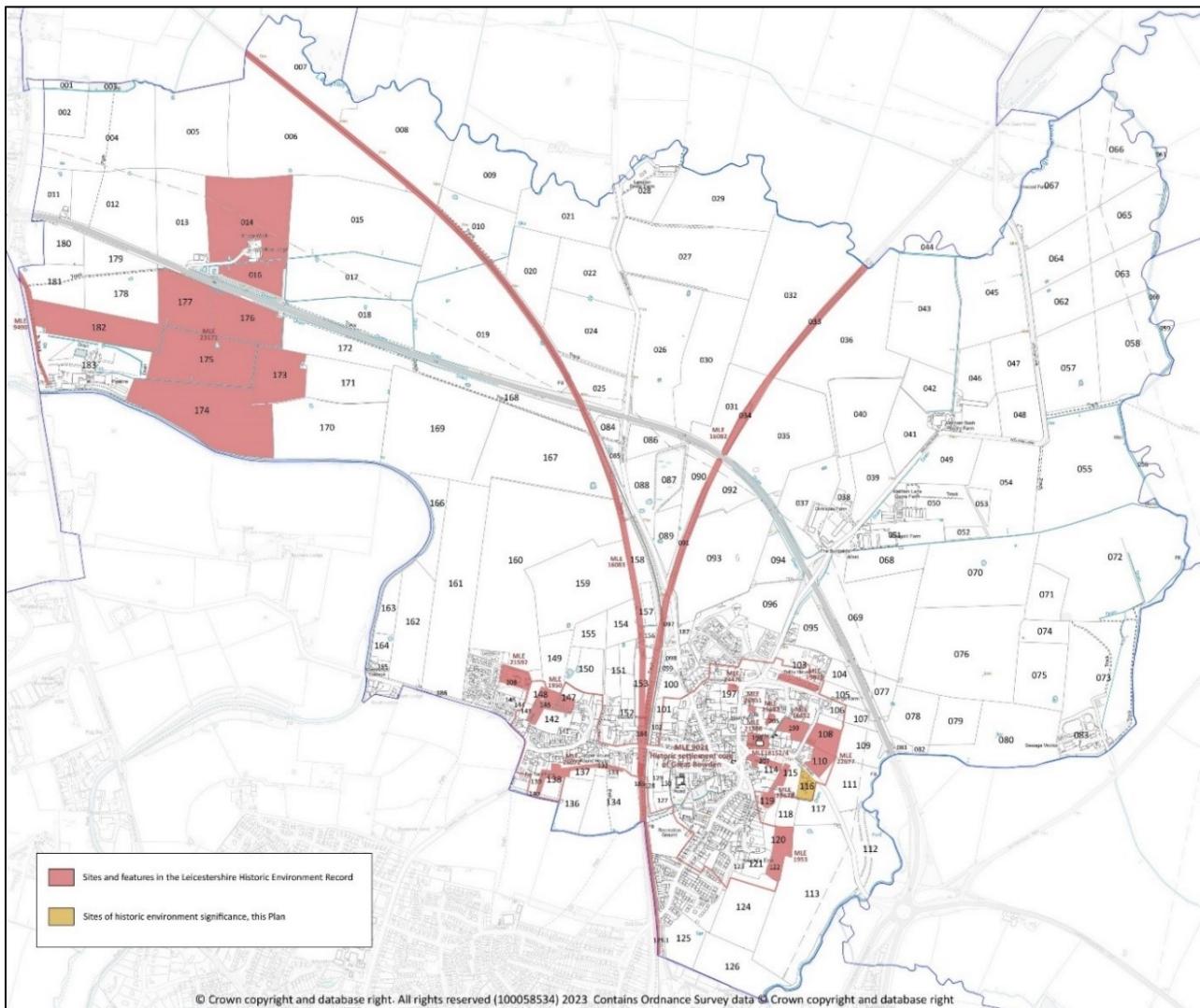
## Sites of historic environmental significance

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 Appendix 4.

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

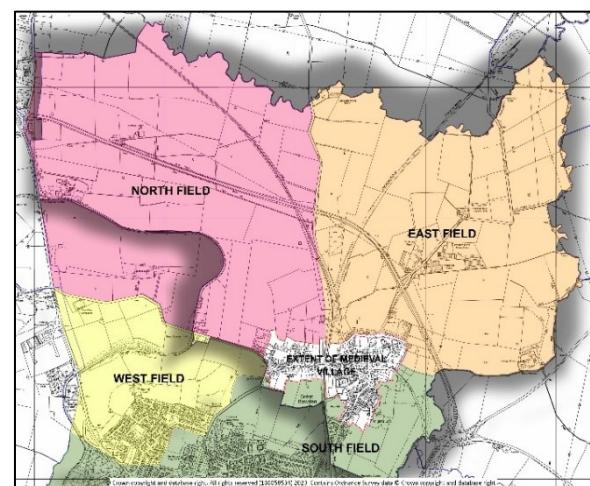
**POLICY ENV 4: SITES OF HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE** – The sites mapped in figure 8 (details in Appendix 4) have been identified as being of local or wider significance for history. The features are extant and have visible expression or there is proven buried archaeology on the site, and they are locally valued. The significance of the features present should be balanced against the benefit of any development that would affect or damage them.

Figure 8: Sites of historical environment significance (For Ridge and Furrow see figure 9.3)



## Ridge and furrow

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, right). Cultivation - arable crops and pasturage - was rotated on a 3-year basis (East Field and West Field were worked as one combined) and the land was managed communally. Ploughing was by oxen; the medieval plough did not have a reversible coulter, 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.

Figure 9.1 Ridge and furrow in Great Bowden c.1947 as mapped by Hartley (Leics. CC)

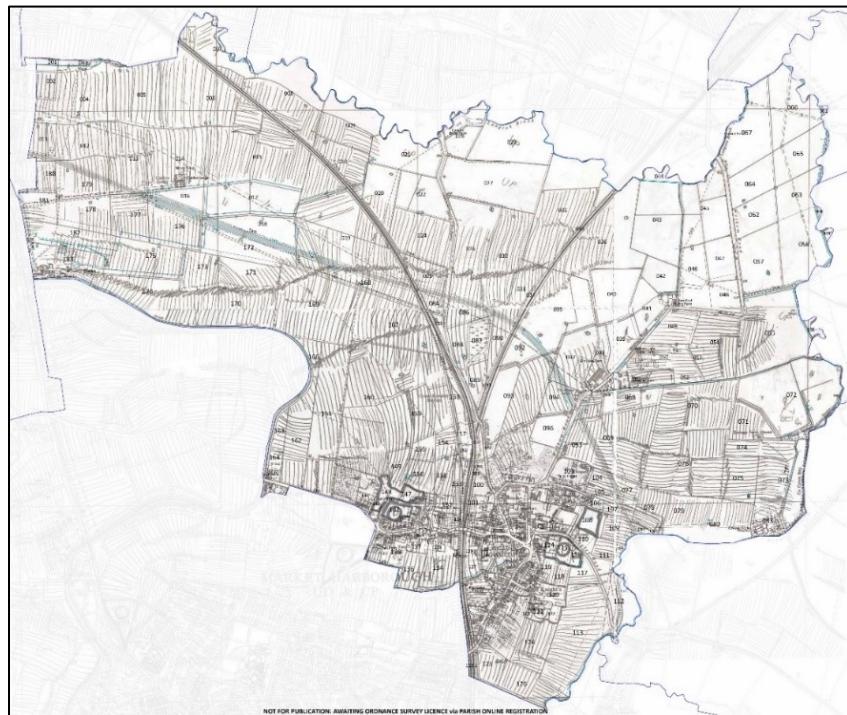
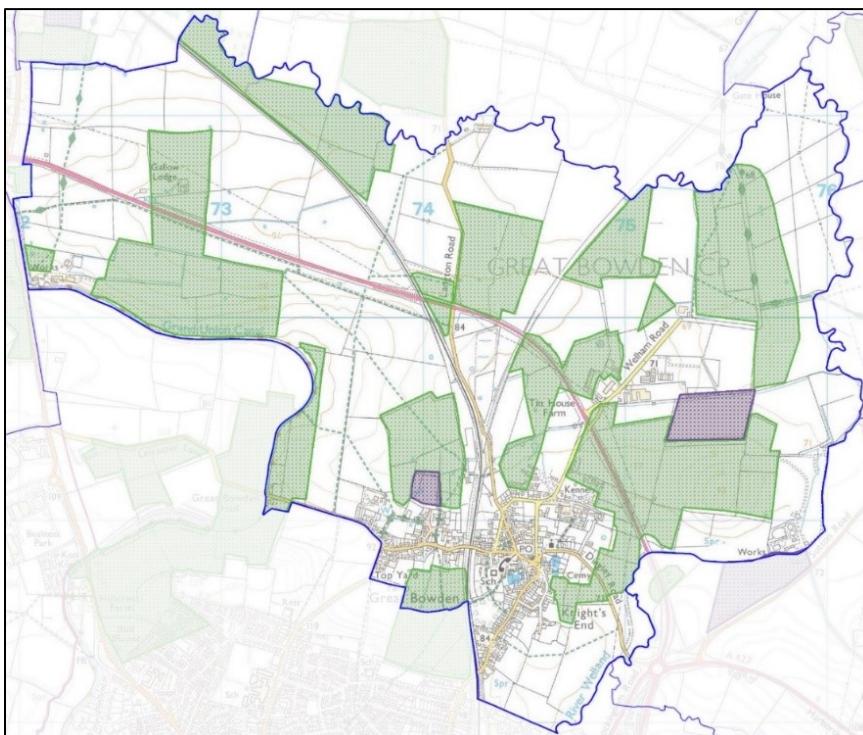


Figure 9.2 Ridge and furrow as mapped for *Turning the Plough*, c.1999 (English Heritage)



The full extent of ridge and furrow in Leicestershire, including Great Bowden, immediately after WW2 was mapped by Hartley (Leics. CC) in the 1980s from aerial photographs and fieldwork (figure 9.1). In the late 1990s, English Heritage (now Historic England), realising the scale of the loss since WW2, undertook the first of a series of surveys ('*Turning the Plough*', see above) across the Midlands and made

recommendations for protection and management. The ridge and furrow in Great Bowden mapped for *Turning the Plough* in about 1999 (figure 9.2) provides a baseline for a new survey undertaken for this Plan in 2016, and this has been updated again in 2022 (figure 9.3). The summary results show the decline since World War II; because the detailed, fieldwork-based 2022 survey identified on the ground some areas missed by the 1999 study\*\*, the situation is now as follows:

1940s	[estimated] 535 ha
1999	c.340** ha
2022	c.370 ha

Great Bowden, in a precious exception to this trend, is therefore 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 Neighbourhood Area, some 44 (40%) still retain traces of ridge and furrow (roughly 370 hectares of the c.740 hectares of open land, 50% by area).

Figure 9.3 Ridge and furrow in 2024 as mapped for this Plan



In English legislation, ridge and furrow fields (except for the few that are also Scheduled Monuments) 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 intrinsically important and highly valued by the local community; 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.

In future, and whenever possible, increased local housing need or development to deliver new targets required at a higher level in the planning system should only be fulfilled in the Neighbourhood Area by allocating development to available sites where there is no surviving ridge and furrow. The policy has regard for NPPF (2024) paragraph 216.

**POLICY ENV 5: RIDGE AND FURROW** - The areas of ridge and furrow earthworks mapped in figure 9.3 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 significance of the ridge and furrow features as heritage assets must be weighed against the demonstrable benefits of such development.

## Buildings and structures of historic environment significance

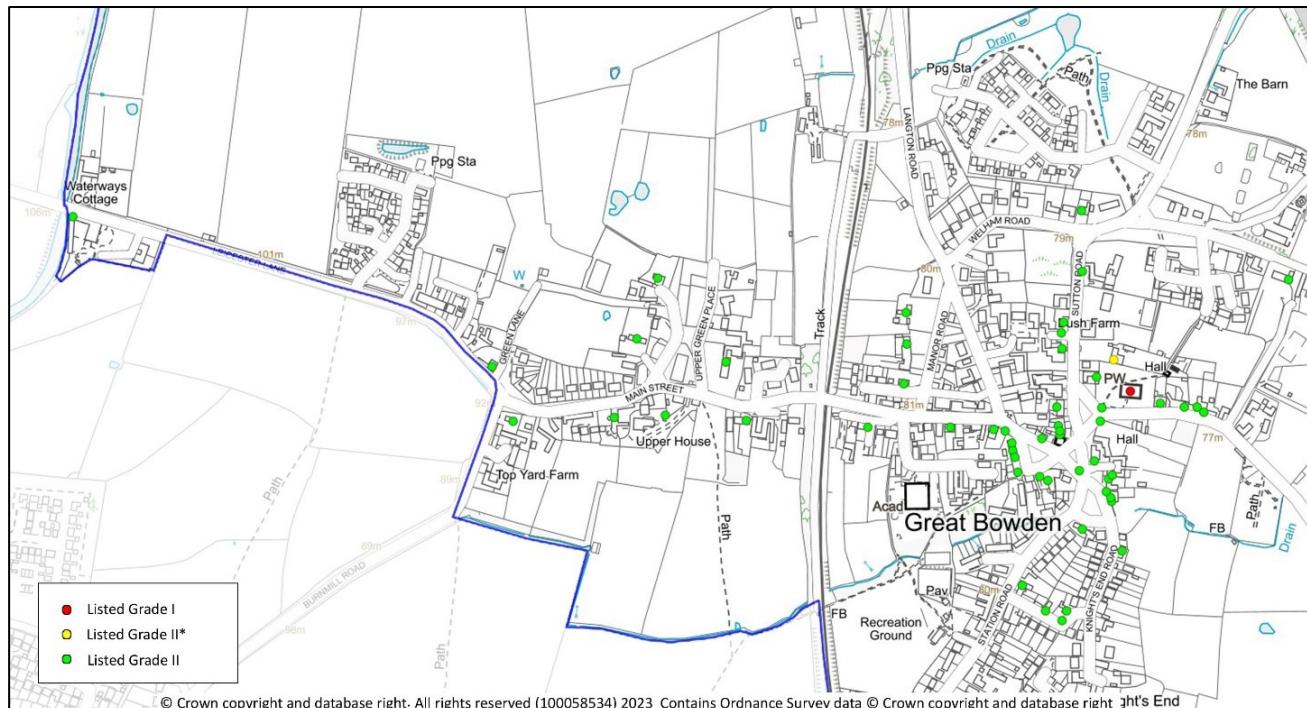
The human landscape of Great Bowden is very highly valued by residents, with good reason. The contemporary layout of the village is a palimpsest of at least a millennium of building, rebuilding and subtle re-arrangement. In addition to the 55 structures with Listed Building status, 19 buildings or structures 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 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 and the list (taken from the January 2023 schedule on the online Historic England National Heritage List for England (NHLE). This is stated for reference and to ensure their *settings* are taken into account when planning policies are drafted and proposals are being determined. (See Appendix 7).

Figure 10: Listed Buildings in Great Bowden (for reference)



## Non-designated Heritage Assets (the ‘local list’)

A number of buildings and other structures were identified during the preparation of the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan, from local knowledge, consultation and in inventory fieldwork, as being of local importance for their historical, architectural or aesthetic merit. Most of them were subsequently added to the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record as *non-Listed buildings*, but others, and a few added as important locally in 2022-24, are all recognised in this Plan as *Non-Designated Heritage Assets* for Planning purposes.

The Parish Council website will update the list of non-designated heritage assets as appropriate.

**POLICY ENV 6: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS** – The buildings listed here (locations figure 11, as numbered here) are non-designated heritage assets. They are important for their contribution to the layout and characteristic mix of architectural styles in the village and Neighbourhood Area. The benefits of a development proposal, or of a change of use requiring planning approval, will need to be judged against their significance as heritage assets, and their features and settings should be protected wherever possible.

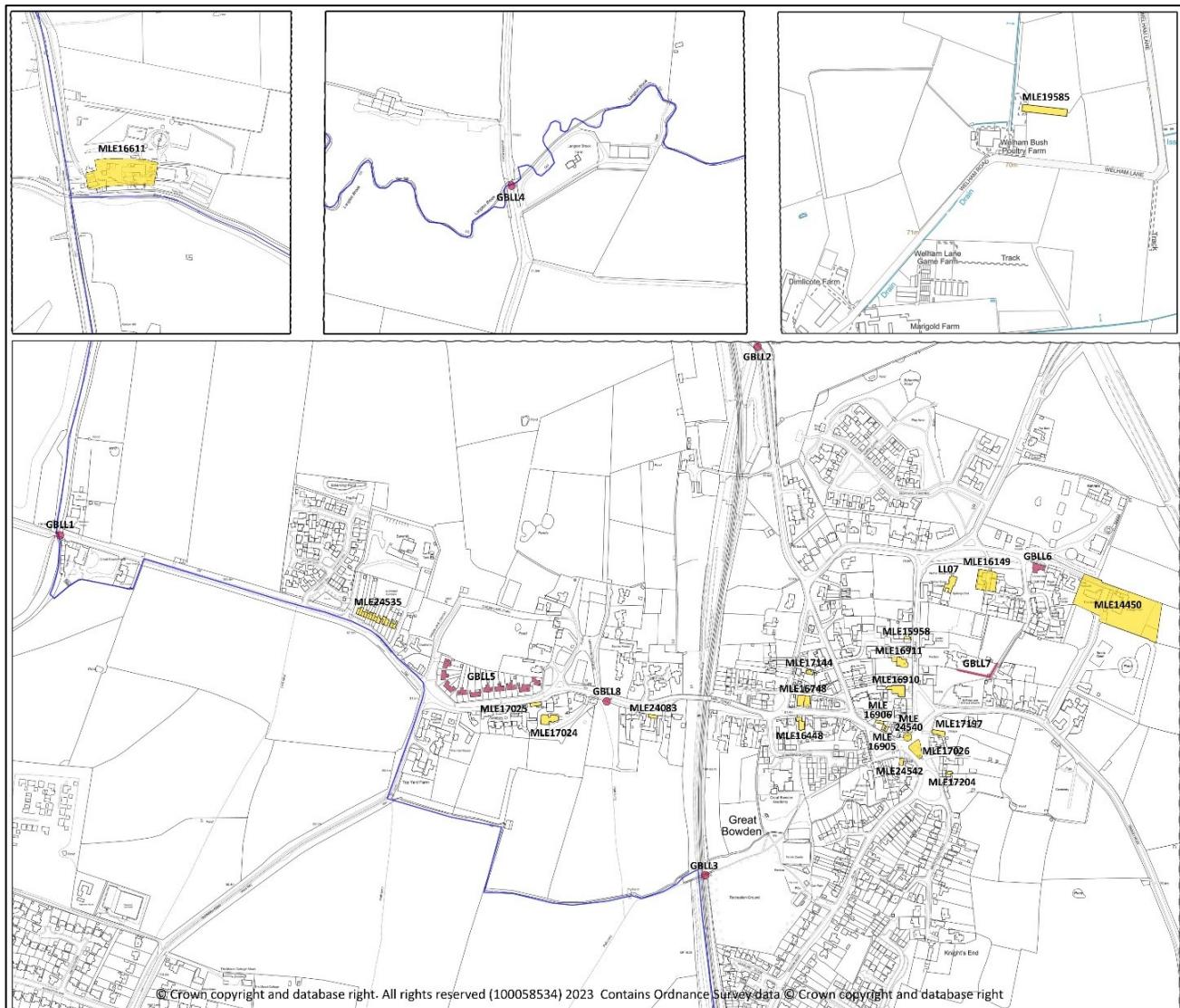
1. Buildings and structures in the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) as ‘*Non-Listed historic buildings*’:

MLE15958	Garage at The White Cottage, 9 Sutton Road, Great Bowden
MLE16149	Fernie Hunt Stables, Nether Green, Great Bowden
MLE16448	13 Main Street, Great Bowden
MLE16611	Gallow Hill Bone Mill, Great Bowden
MLE16748	Great Bowden Congregational Church, Main Street, Great Bowden
MLE16833	Footbridge over railway, Great Bowden
MLE16905	24 & 25, The Green, Great Bowden
MLE16906	Sybil's Cottage, 23, The Green, Great Bowden
MLE16910	Bishop's House, 37, The Green, Great Bowden
MLE16911	Green Lodge, Sutton Road, Great Bowden
MLE17024	Upper House, Main Street, Great Bowden
MLE17025	Stable block, Upper House, Great Bowden
MLE17026	Memorial Green, Great Bowden
MLE17144	8, Manor Road, Great Bowden
MLE17197	Village Hall, 40 The Green, Great Bowden
MLE17198	Nether Green Lodge, Sutton Road, Great Bowden
MLE17204	Outbuilding to rear of 45, The Green, Great Bowden
MLE19585	Stables, Welham Bush Farm, Great Bowden
MLE20483	49, Main Street, Great Bowden
MLE24450	Outbuildings east of The Grange, Nether Green (east side), Great Bowden
MLE24535	Navvies' Row, 14 - 38 (even no.'s), Leicester Lane, Great Bowden
MLE24540	C20th Post Box 1m from 28, The Green, Great Bowden
MLE24542	Bowden Stores, 3 The Green, Great Bowden

## 2. Buildings and structures identified by the Plan as additional *Non-designated Heritage Assets*:

GBLL1	Canal bridge, Leicester Lane (NGR SP 732891)
GBLL2	Railway over-bridge, Langton Road (NGR SP 743894)
GBLL3	Railway footbridge
GBLL4	Bridge over Langton brook (NGR SP 741908)
GBLL5	Nos. 74 – 108 Main Street
GBLL6	Nether House. <i>Note that this building was included in the LCC HER list (as part of MLE16063) but the whole site has since been redeveloped except for Nether House, which retains its heritage significance</i>
GBLL7	Mud walls, Rectory House
GBLL8	Victorian letterbox

Figure 11: Non-Designated Heritage Assets



## 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 sightlines and scopes of local views.

POLICY ENV 7: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS – Development proposals should not have a significant adverse impact on the following views (as shown in figure 12, details Appendix 6):

1. South from Leicester Lane to the Bowden Ridge
  2. 120° panorama south from Main Street to the rising land of Bowden Ridge, where very well-preserved ridge and furrow can be seen clearly
  3. 180° panorama from Welham Road/Sutton Road junction northwards, west to east, including Nether Green and a large paddock: a characteristic Great Bowden scene linking the built

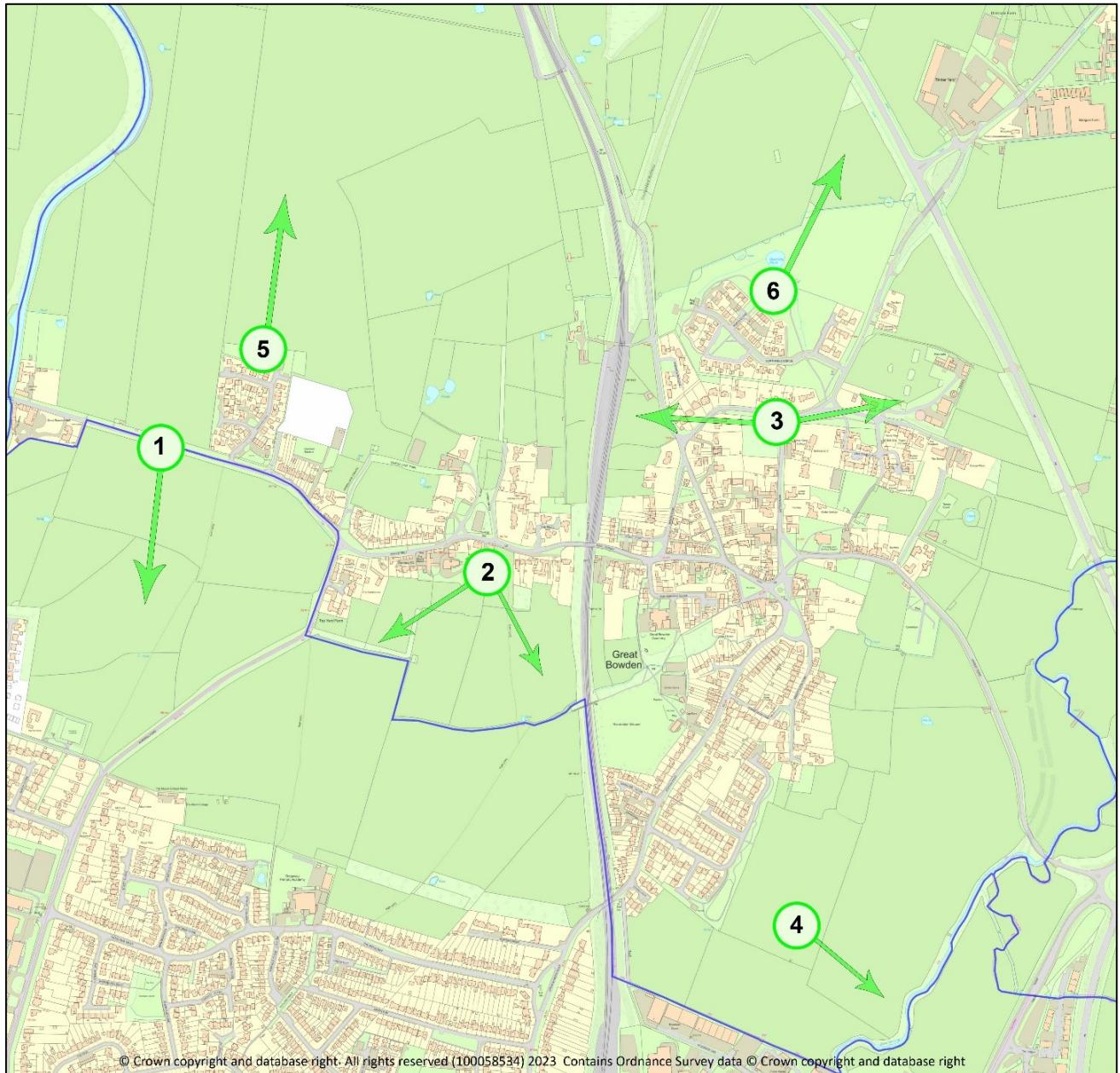
environment with historic open spaces

4. View from south end of Berry Close to the Neighbourhood Area boundary with Dingley on the ridge beyond

5. View north across open countryside from the balancing pond (open space) on Frank Burditt Drive

6. View from Hursley Park across the country park (Local Green Space) and other open spaces into open countryside, including fields in the area set aside for re-wilding (see Policy Env 10) and Great Bowden Borrow Pit SSSI.

Figure 12: Important views

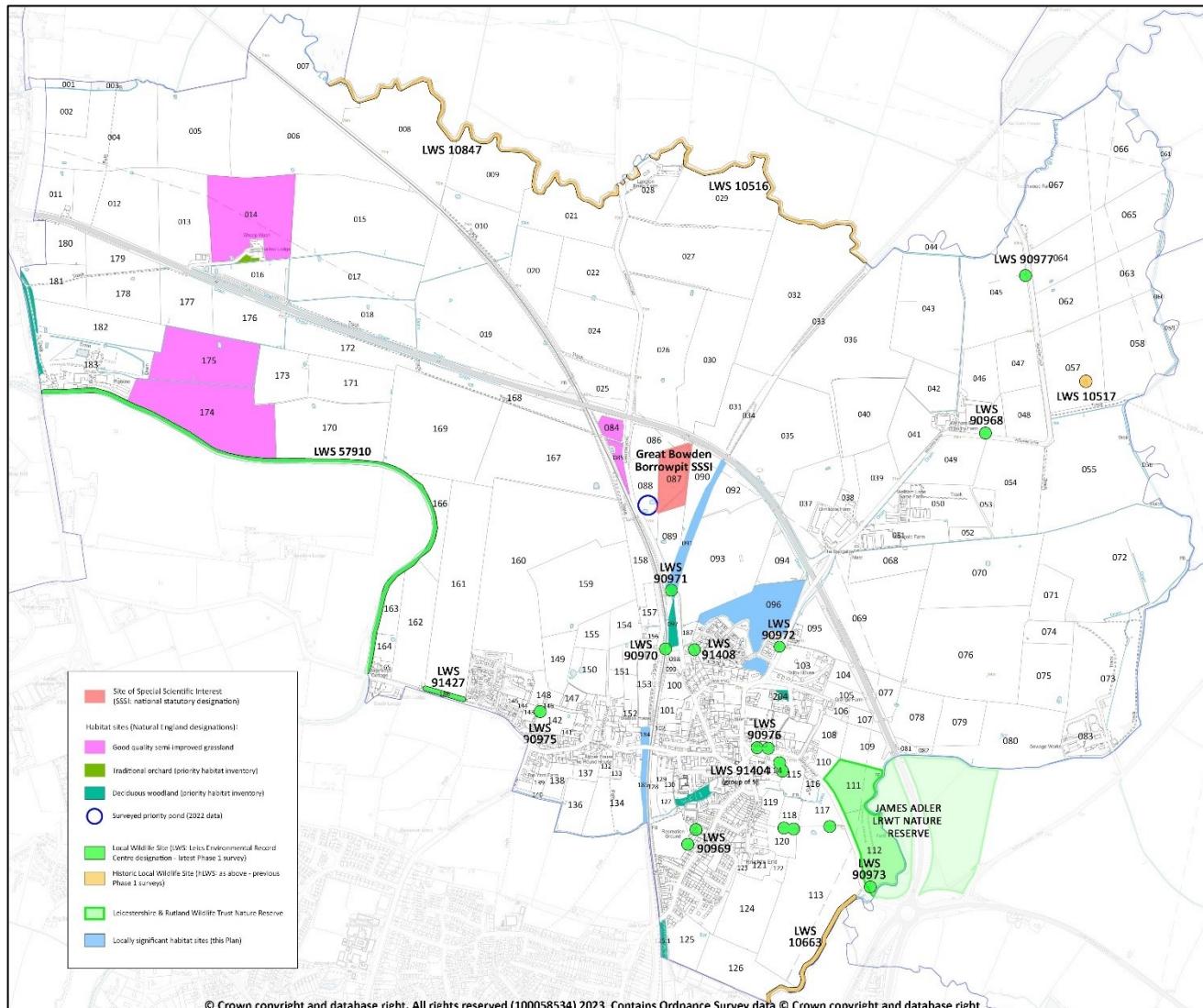


## Sites and features of natural environment significance

The environmental inventory process described above included a review of existing and potential natural environment site designations. It identified, confirmed and described the habitats, species records and features of some 36 sites of significance for wildlife (biodiversity) in the Great Bowden

Neighbourhood Neighbourhood Area. The features for which they have been designated or otherwise recognised are listed in the environmental inventory (Appendix 4). Figure 13 shows their locations. They comprise one Site of Special Scientific Interest, eleven sites where priority habitats occur (and where priority species may have been recorded as breeding or as regular visitors); 22 confirmed, candidate and potential Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) identified in Phase I Habitat Surveys by Leicestershire County Council; and six further sites identified during the inventory process as being of high biodiversity significance in the context of the Neighbourhood Area. Together, these sites are essential for biodiversity conservation within the Parish.

Figure 13: Sites and features of natural environment significance



Policy ENV 8 supports compliance with relevant environmental legislation and local planning policies at the site level within the Neighbourhood Area.

**POLICY ENV 8: SITES AND FEATURES OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE** – The sites and features mapped here (figure 13) are recognised as being of local ecological and environmental importance within the Neighbourhood Area. These areas contribute to biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and are valued by the community.

a) Development proposals affecting these sites or features must:

- I. Demonstrate how potential impacts on biodiversity and ecological value have been assessed.
- II. Provide evidence-based proposals to deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Where harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, proposals must show how impacts will be mitigated or compensated. If this is not possible, planning permission should not be supported.

b) Proposals should also:

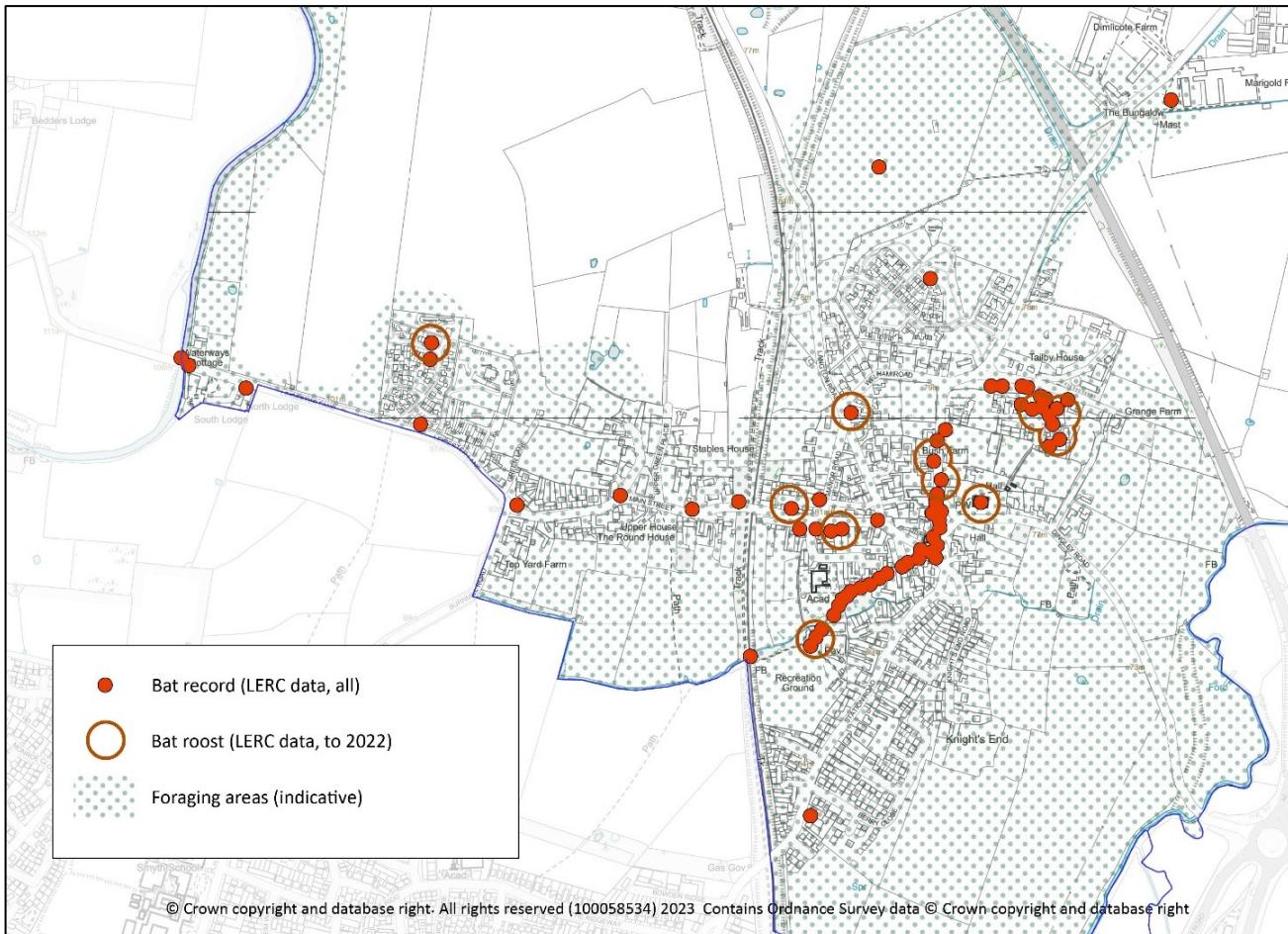
- i. Respect the ecological function and character of the identified sites.
- ii. Avoid fragmentation of habitats or disruption of ecological networks.
- iii. Where relevant, incorporate enhancements such as native planting, habitat creation, or connectivity improvements.

## Biodiversity and habitat connectivity

The Neighbourhood Area is home to a wide variety of species including amphibians, reptiles, birds, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies, fish, mammals, moths, other invertebrates; fungi, grasses, flowering and non-flowering plants, trees; lichens and mosses. Several groups such as birds, mammals, plants and trees have been reasonably 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. From the above summary, it might be said that Great Bowden is a 'typical' area of English Midlands countryside because it has no nationally rare species or large-scale, nationally important wildlife hotspots, and thus that it has little or no biodiversity significance to be taken into account in the Planning system. This would be a misunderstanding of the concept of biodiversity. England's biodiversity is entirely and only the sum of the wildlife in all of its individual parishes: Great Bowden is as important in this regard as every other parish, and residents want it to play its essential part in protecting what remains of England's threatened and diminishing biodiversity.

Regular sightings, and several professional and ongoing (including by the Leicestershire Wildlife Trust Great Bowden Group) surveys undertaken in recent years, demonstrate the relative importance of Great Bowden for bat conservation. Records of at least eleven species, including several nationally scarce or threatened types, and 20 proven roosts/breeding sites, are in the Leicestershire Environmental Records data (Leics. CC). These records suggest that there are extensive bat foraging areas in and around the village and show that particular attention should be paid to the measures necessary for protecting bats, their breeding sites and ranges (figure 14) in Great Bowden through the planning system.

Figure 14: Bat records, roosts and foraging ranges (all species, indicative)



The northern and western parts of the Neighbourhood Area are also recognised as being of relatively high significance (in the Leicestershire context) for great crested newts (illustrative map left). This is likely to be due to the survival of a number of old field ponds, hedgerows and small watercourses in this area, partly in turn thanks to the continuation in the Neighbourhood Area of pastoral farming as opposed to intensive arable.

Habitat connectivity is delivered by wildlife corridors, which are designated to prevent obstacles to the movement or spread of animals and plants that would otherwise be imposed by new developments. They also help to re-connect populations and habitats within parishes and more widely. A wildlife corridor is mapped in this Plan (figure 15) for attention when development proposals within it are under consideration.

While policy ENV 8 delivers site-specific compliance in the Neighbourhood Area with the relevant Harborough District Council Local Plan policies, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017-2019 and the UK Environment Act 2021, this policy (ENV 9) helps guide future development proposals across the Neighbourhood Area'. The policy is explicitly supported by NPPF (December 2024) paragraphs 187, 192 and 193(a), on which this policy's wording is partly based. The community also expects all planning strategies, proposals and decisions affecting the

Neighbourhood Area to comply with the requirements of the *Climate Change Act 2008*, to follow the spirit of the *Paris Agreement* (UK ratification 2017) and the UK's *25 year environment plan (2018)*, and to plan for *biodiversity net gain* through the mechanisms described in the *Environment Act 2021*, the relevant *Planning Practice Guidance* of December 14, 2023 and paragraphs 192(b) and 193(d) of the NPPF December 2024.

## POLICY ENV 9: BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

### a) Biodiversity Net Gain and Habitat Protection

Development proposals for two or more dwellings, or other non-householder development, must demonstrate how they will protect and enhance biodiversity within the Neighbourhood Area, in accordance with national legislation and guidance.

Where BNG involves tree or hedge planting, species should be native or locally appropriate, and planting schemes must follow current best practice for disease control and long-term maintenance.

Planning permission should be refused where significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, mitigated, or compensated for.

### b) Bat Habitat Considerations

In areas identified as known bat habitats (see Figure 14), development proposals involving demolition, roof alterations, or changes to external building features must include evidence of consultation with the Leicestershire County Council Ecology Team. Proposals must demonstrate how ecological advice has been incorporated.

To minimise impacts on bats and their habitats, proposals should:

Avoid unnecessary artificial lighting in known bat areas.

Retain mature trees unless removal is essential and justified.

Apply lighting mitigation measures using best practice (e.g. dark buffers, low illuminance, curfews).

Include bat boxes or roosting features proportionate to the scale of development.

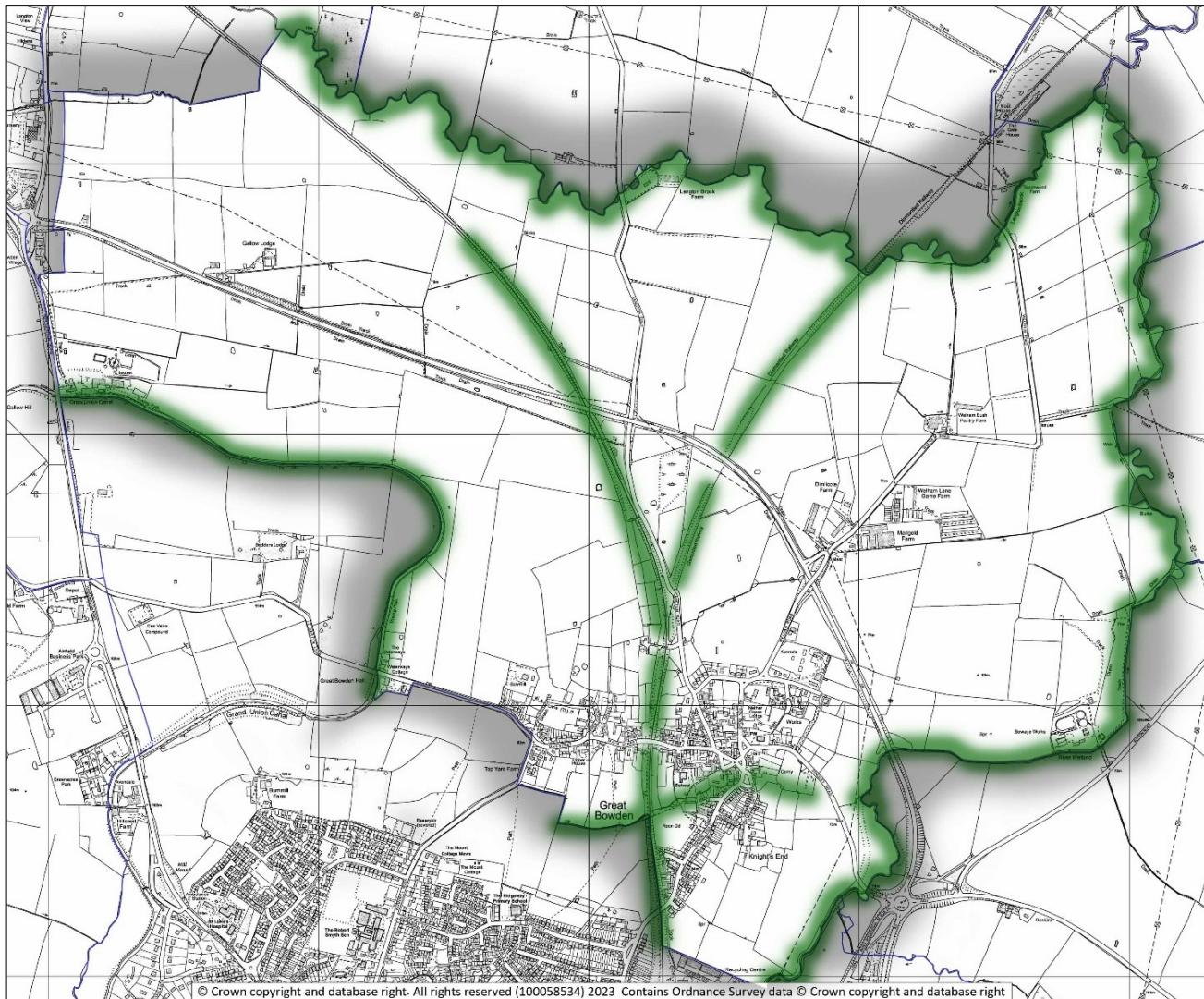
### c) Great Crested Newt Protection

In areas where great crested newts are known to occur, development proposals (excluding minor householder works on managed gardens or hardstanding) must include consultation with the Leicestershire County Council Ecology Team and demonstrate how recommendations have been addressed.

### d) Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Connectivity

Development proposals must not adversely affect the habitat connectivity provided by the wildlife corridors identified in Figure 15. Proposals should demonstrate how they maintain or enhance ecological networks across the Neighbourhood Area.

Figure 15: Wildlife corridors in Great Bowden



## Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain

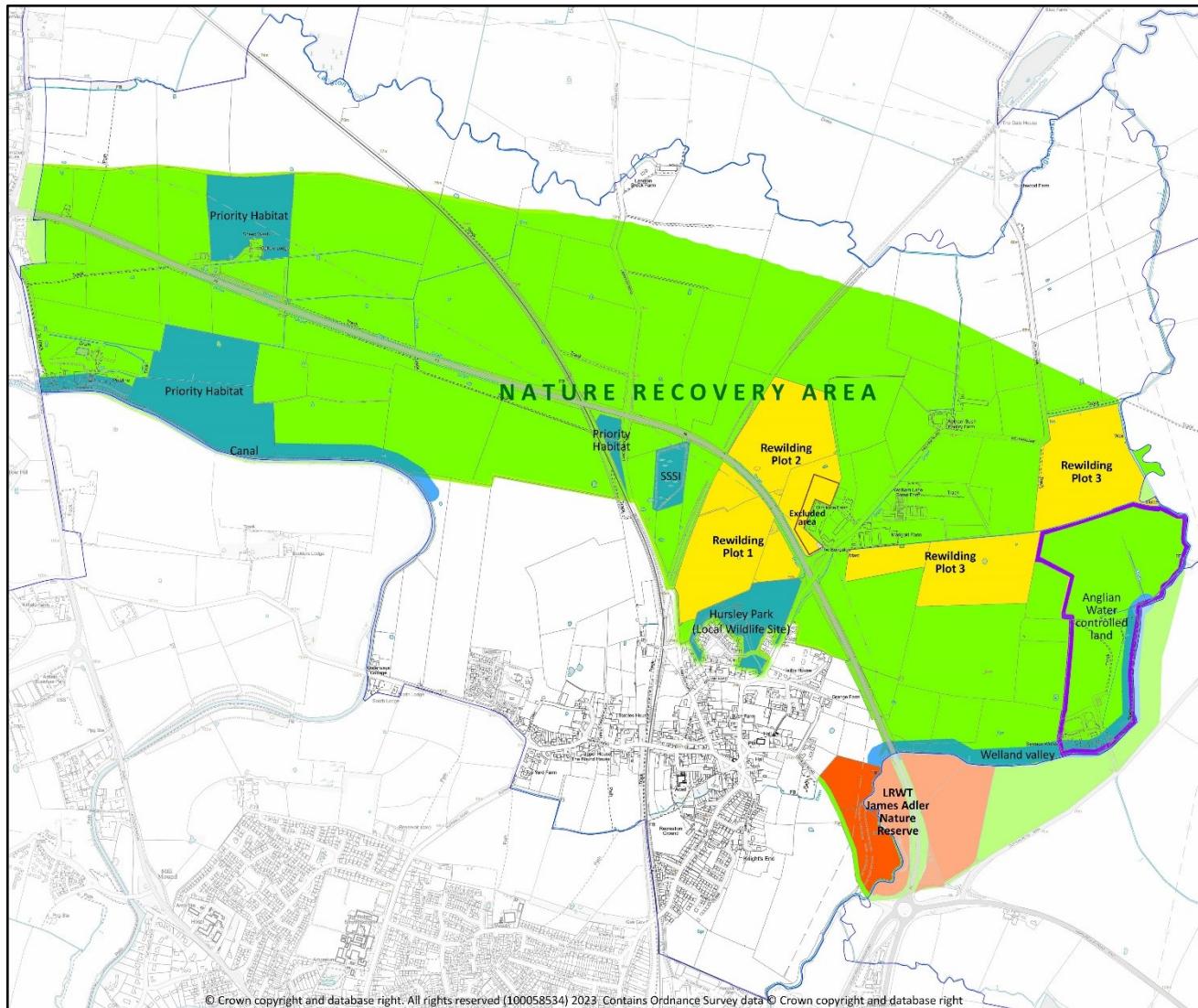
Context The planning system's purpose is to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development (as defined in the NPPF (NPPF), December 2024, paragraphs 7-10). The emerging Local Plan for Harborough District aims to deliver this – with an emphasis on the *economic* objective (growth, including new housing development to support this and to meet national need, in response to recent changes in the National Framework) across the Local Neighbourhood Area.

At the Neighbourhood Plan level in the planning system, however, there are urban and suburban Neighbourhood Areas – already largely built-up and with large Local Plan strategic development allocations – where the balance of the three sustainable development objectives (environmental, social and economic) cannot be delivered. There is insufficient open and undeveloped land *in these Areas* upon which to deliver the natural environment protection and biodiversity net gain necessitated (as NPPF requirements expressed as conditions on planning consents) by the planned new development.

The drafters of this Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan Review (and the local community) recognise the contribution this parish (the Neighbourhood Area) can make to the conundrum, thanks to its

location close to several Market Harborough Neighbourhood Areas where the problem is intractable, and to other particular land ownership and geographical/ecological circumstances. This local ambition complements a new initiative by Harborough District Council – acknowledged nationally as pioneering – to establish a landscape-scale *nature recovery area* around the northeast outskirts of Market Harborough, in Great Bowden.

Figure 16: *Rewilding Great Bowden: Nature Recovery Area and associated allocations and designations*



Rewilding Great Bowden As part of an initiative in 2020 by members of the local community to extend the area of biodiversity enhancements being carried out on the Hursley Park 'Country Park' (Local Green Space designation in this Plan) into the adjacent field to the north, advice was sought from the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (LRWT). This initial contact coincided with the first moves nationally toward Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as a component of the Planning system aimed at delivering the objectives of the *Environment Act 2021*.

By the time of drafting of this Neighbourhood Plan Review in April 2025, the *Rewilding Great Bowden* initiative described above had evolved into the first major steps to realise the aim of biodiversity enhancement of the area connecting the canal in the west with the Welland valley in the east, via Great

Bowden Pit SSSI, Hursley Park Local Green Space (which is being developed under a rewilding management plan and is now designated as a Local Wildlife Site), three land purchases by Harborough Council specifically for rewilding, the new LRWT James Adler nature reserve, and a number of other statutory and non-statutory habitat site designations.

The whole initiative, by combining land gift and purchase with rewilding, biodiversity management and Biodiversity Net Gain offsite offsetting (credits, allocations), will help deliver the objectives of the national Nature Recovery Scheme in this part of southeast Leicestershire.

Policy ENV 10 confirms the community's support and ensures as far as possible that development proposals do not prevent or inhibit Nature Recovery or potential Biodiversity Net Gain measures from being delivered here.

**POLICY ENV 10: NATURE RECOVERY AND BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN** – The area mapped in Figure 16 has been identified for delivery of Nature Recovery Network objectives (as set out in HM Government Policy Paper, February 2024).

**Objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.** Development proposals within or adjacent to this area should demonstrate how they contribute positively to nature recovery. Proposals that would significantly harm the ecological value of the area or prevent its enhancement will not be supported.

Where Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offsetting is required, applicants are encouraged to deliver BNG measures within the designated Nature Recovery Area, unless otherwise justified

Development proposals within or adjacent to areas identified for rewilding, nature recovery, county parks, and public access (as shown in Figure 16) must demonstrate that they will not compromise the future use, accessibility, or ecological integrity of these spaces. Proposals will be supported where they:

- a) Maintain or enhance public access, including safe and enjoyable pedestrian and cycle movements and
- b) Minimise vehicular movements and potential conflict with pedestrian, cycle and ecological networks and
- c) Do not result in a significant increase in traffic volumes or introduce inappropriate vehicle types that would adversely affect the character or safety of the area and
- d) Avoid negative visual impacts on the landscape and respect the area's rural and natural setting and
- e) Do not generate harmful emissions, odours, or other forms of pollution that would detract from the enjoyment or ecological value of the area and
- f) Safeguard land identified for Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), ensuring such areas remain viable for future environmental enhancement.

Development proposals that fail to meet these criteria will not be supported.

Rewilding Plots 1, 2 and 3 (figure 16) are designated by this Plan, and thus become allocations in the planning system, as sites for off-site Biodiversity Net Gain offsetting.

The area indicated in Plot 2 is excluded from the allocation as a potential area for infrastructure. Identified infrastructure requirements for waste management facilities will be supported in the excluded area of plot 2.

Only development associated with the operation and promotion of the Nature Recovery Area will be supported in the remainder of Plots 1, 2 and 3.

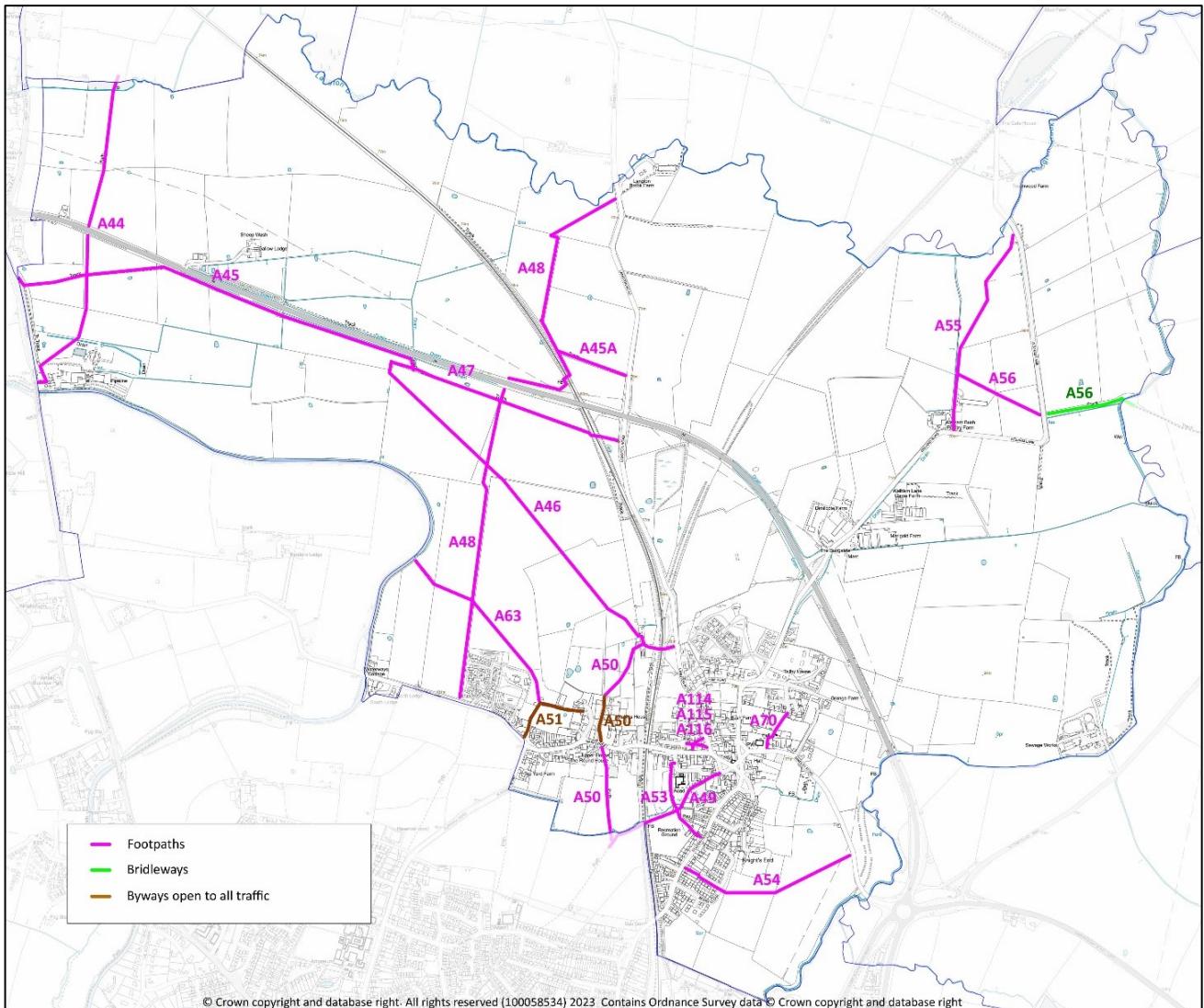
## Public rights of way

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.

In and around Great Bowden, there is an extensive network of public footpaths, used by 78% of questionnaire (2016) 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.

Figure 17: Existing network of footpaths and other Rights of Way (not the definitive map)



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.

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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust national network. National Route 64 of the National Cycle Network, used by 46% of questionnaire (2016) 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 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.

**POLICY ENV 11: FOOTPATHS AND CYCLEWAYS** - Development proposals should include measures to facilitate and encourage safe access by cycle and on foot; and the protection of, connection to, and extension where practicable of, existing pedestrian and cycle routes.

Where the diversion of a footpath or cycleway is necessary, or where a route is absorbed into a development proposal, the route should be designed and bounded to retain its character.

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.

## Flood risk resilience and climate change

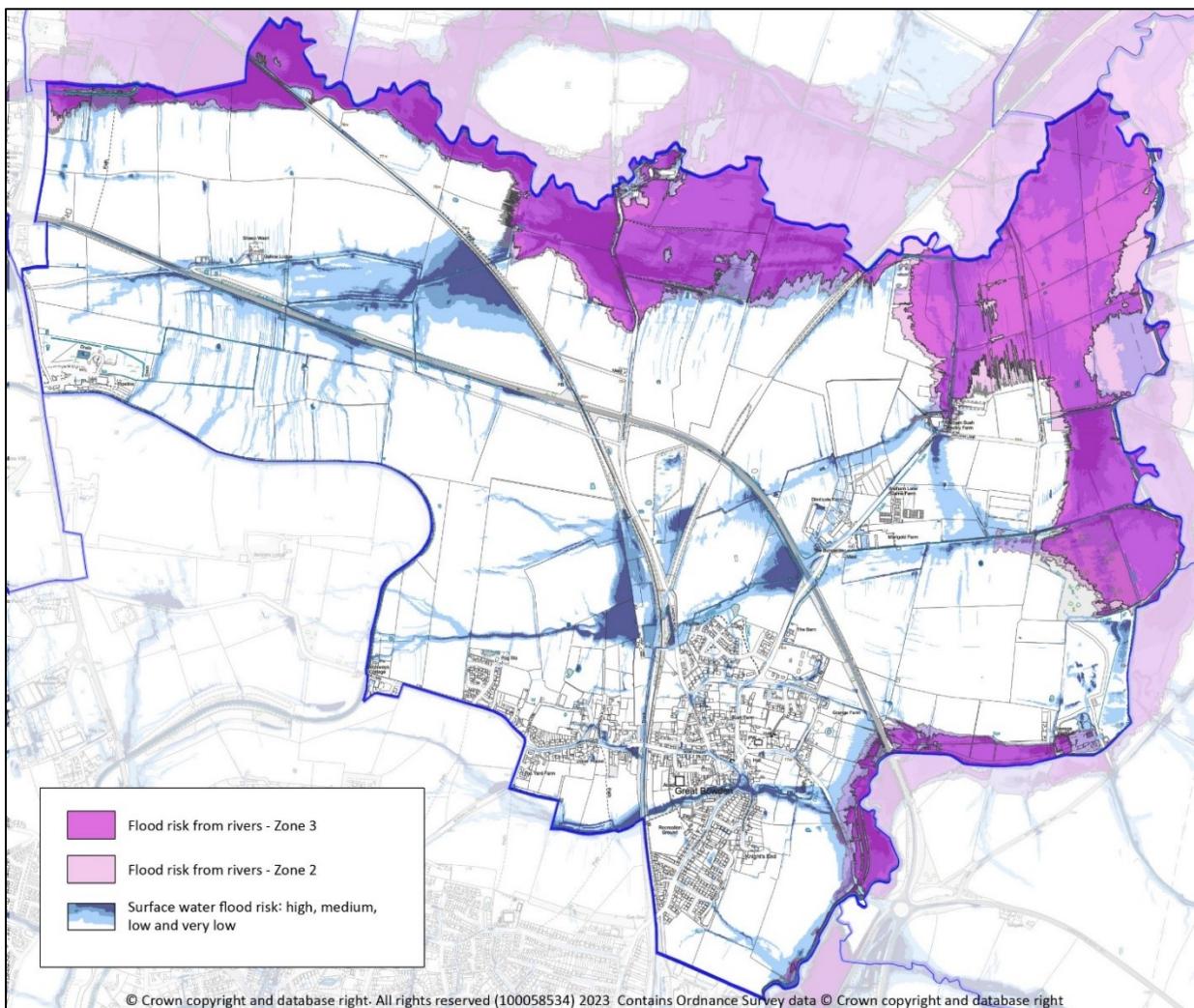
Even if international cooperation and national strategies and policies eventually succeed in halting the human and industrial contributions towards climate change, the effects of recent and current warming on weather events will likely persist for decades. It is therefore desirable to plan for at least a medium-term future, in which weather events will continue to become more extreme, by putting in place measures that manage the effects of climate change on flooding for the lifetime of this Plan and beyond. This objective is explicitly supported by the Environment Agency (EA) draft *National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England* (2019), in which the strategic emphasis shifts from mitigation to resilience; in other words from requiring new development to reduce its adverse effects on flood risk and to avoiding creating or adding to flood risk at all.

Great Bowden village is not at risk of flooding from rivers, but the floodplain of the River Welland forms the southeast boundary of The Neighbourhood Area and this area is in Flood Zone 3, high risk. The main concern for residents is flooding from surface water, 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 geology, hydrology, drains and sewage treatment capacity. 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.

In light of this, it is particularly important that the location and technical standards of all new development proposals in the Neighbourhood Area should in future be judged on their likely contribution to flooding in a climate change world. To complement this objective, the community will support proposals to improve the infrastructure within and close to the built-up area for managing flooding from watercourses and from surface water run-off events, providing this is not unduly detrimental to the historic built environment, biodiversity sites, or open and green spaces.

This policy has regard for NPPF (December 2024 updated February 2025) paragraphs 161, 162, 164(a) (and generally with 170 - 182), and with Harborough District Council Local Plan Policy CC3. It will also be in general conformity with the (currently Submission Draft) Harborough Local Plan 2020 - 2041 paragraphs 2.20 and Policies DS03(d), DM07 and DM08.

Figure 18: Flood risk from rivers (Zones 3 and 2) and surface water  
 Composite from Environment Agency online mapping, 2023



**POLICY ENV 12: FLOOD RISK RESILIENCE** – Development proposals within the areas indicated in Figure 18 will be required, where appropriate, to demonstrate that the benefit of development outweighs the harm in relation to its adverse impact on climate change targets, and on the likelihood of it conflicting with locally applicable flood mitigation strategies and infrastructure.

Proposals to construct new (or modify existing) floodwater management infrastructure (ditches, roadside gullies, retention pools, etc.), including within or close to the built-up area, will be supported, provided they do not adversely affect important open spaces, or sites and features of natural or historical environment significance.

Development proposals of one or more dwellings and/or for employment or agricultural development should demonstrate that:

- if in a location susceptible to flooding from rivers or surface water (figure 18), no alternative site is available;
- its location and design respect the geology, flood risk and natural drainage characteristics of the immediate area and is accompanied by a hydrological study whose findings must be complied with in respect of design, groundworks and construction;
- it includes a Surface Water Drainage Strategy which demonstrates that the proposed drainage

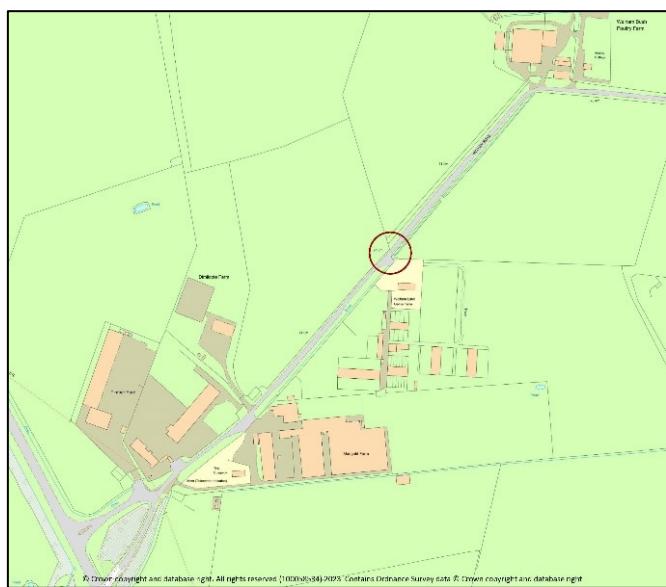
scheme, and site layout and design, will prevent properties from flooding from surface water, including allowing for climate change effects, and that flood risk elsewhere will not be exacerbated by increased levels of surface water runoff and that the development will not threaten other natural habitats and water systems;

- its design includes, as appropriate, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) with ongoing maintenance provision, other surface water management measures and permeable surfaces;
- proposed SuDS infrastructure includes, where practicable, habitat creation comprising e.g. landscaping, access and egress for aquatic and terrestrial animals, and native species planting;
- it does not increase the risk of flooding to third parties;
- it takes the effects of climate change into account;
- it includes a Surface Water Drainage Strategy which demonstrates that the proposed drainage scheme, site layout and design, will prevent properties from flooding from surface water, including allowing for climate change effects; that flood risk elsewhere will not be exacerbated by increased levels of surface water runoff and that the development will not threaten other natural habitats and water systems; and
- for all development (including brownfield) demonstrate that the peak surface water runoff rate is limited to the Qbar greenfield rate (minus 20%), or to a rate which mitigates the risk of blockage, whichever is greater

## 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 Neighbourhood 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 (map left) 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.

## D. Sustainability

### 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 is one shop, two cafés and two pubs in the village. Welton's Deli, (a café, grocers, newsagents and Post Office), Bowden Stores (a café selling homewares on the side), The Shoulder of Mutton public house and The Red Lion public house.

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).

#### Other amenities:

The public convenience on the Recreation Ground which had been closed for many years was re-opened by the Parish Council in 2019.

**POLICY CAF1: PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMUNITY AMENITIES & FACILITIES** - Proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of an existing community facility and amenity including the Village Hall, Church Hall, Community Pavilion and St Peter & St Paul's Church, Welton's Deli, Bowden Stores, the Shoulder of Mutton public house and The Red Lion public house. should demonstrate 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 has expanded rapidly and has grown by 65% since 2016 and during the years that this Plan has been 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 needs renovation to meet existing demand, let alone to 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 (Bowden Stores was converted to a café selling homewares on the side) 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 Neighbourhood 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'.

The Parish Council purchased the Recreation Ground which was completed at 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 activity trail).

**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.

## 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.

There are currently 136 pupils attending the school and the maximum capacity of the school is 150 pupils. 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, if HDC goes ahead with the building of 100 homes in Great Bowden over the period 2028 – 2032, it is highly unlikely that the school will be able to accommodate the extra children associated with this number of new houses.

The methodology used in this Neighbourhood Plan for estimating pupil yield from a housing development was developed by the DfE in association with the Office for National Statistics. (see: <https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/pupil-yields-dashboard/> w e2a48609/).

The parameters used with regard to using the DfE data dashboard are: County of Leicestershire, 3+ bedroom houses, (40% affordable, 60% market), education type & phase: mainstream primary.

The table below shows the total number of houses to be built under Policy SA01 of the emerging local plan between 2028 and 2032 within the Great Bowden Neighbourhood Area and the associated pupil yield.

Year	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	Total
Number of Houses	30	35	25	10	100
Pupil Yield	14	17	12	5	48

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 Section 106 money to contribute towards additional school buildings and facilities and the necessary parking and traffic calming. 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.

**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; and
- c) Safe Routes to Schools' schemes and similar initiatives are introduced wherever possible and appropriate utilising developer contributions where appropriate.

## 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.

## 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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust 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 over 230 new homes already built since 2016, residents feel it is more than 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 identified 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 new households own cars which is making traffic conditions in the village more challenging. Navigation of the narrow roads and lanes are more hazardous; there is congestion at peak times and a severe lack of parking. Pedestrians are finding roads more difficult to cross. The bridges on key routes within the parish are 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 (from 2018) 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 230+ new houses built in Great Bowden has added to the number of local cars and vans on 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.

## 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 relaxed its stringent safety controls and a new development, named Hursley Park, of approximately 50 family homes has been built 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 (2016), 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 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.

The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) supports the concept of 'quiet lanes'.

## 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.

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; and
- 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. Off street car parking spaces shall be provided in new residential development in accordance with the Leicestershire County Council Parking Standards and Guidance. 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 (2016).

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 shop, cafes, pubs and leisure facilities. The various village festivals and concerts are well supported.

Alongside an increase of new residents with the volume of new cars that the new housing has brought, parking is of major concern.

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 with sufficient off road parking spaces being provided to minimise the need to park on the roads.

**POLICY T1: PARKING PROVISION AND NEW DWELLINGS** - The provision of tandem parking in new developments is not supported.

**Communal Parking:** the centre of Great Bowden has become more congested with the new developments that have been completed. New residents are using the amenities concentrated in the village centre: shop, pubs, cafes and the school (which is sited on a small cul de sac).

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.

**POLICY T2: 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.

## 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 increased population 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 (2016) 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.

## 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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust 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, 2016).

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.

**POLICY T3: 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.

## 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.

**POLICY T4: 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 should be provided on developments of more than 5 dwellings in accordance with Leicestershire County Council's policy on Developer Contributions.

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

# Employment and Business

## Introduction

The level of economic activity in Great Bowden, at 50.5% of people aged 16 and over is below the average for the district as a whole (60.6%). 40% of people aged 16 and over have a level four or higher degree compared with 38% across Harborough as a whole.

41% of residents work from home compared to 35% 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 (2016), 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 (2016) 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, J.G Pears and other small commercial premises. The recent loss of a convenience store and Bowden Fencing 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.

**POLICY EMP1: SUPPORT FOR EXISTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES** - Planning applications for the change of use of or for the redevelopment of land or buildings of commercial or retail use (Use Classes A and B and *sui generis*) to a use that does not provide employment opportunities should demonstrate 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.

## 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 (2016) 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.

**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 the Settlement Boundary for Great Bowden;

- b) Be of a size and scale not adversely affecting the character, infrastructure and environment of the village itself and the wider Neighbourhood Area, including the countryside;
- c) Not involve the loss of dwellings;
- d) Not increase noise levels, fumes, odour or other nuisance to an extent that they would unacceptably disturb occupants of near-by residential property;
- e) Not generate severe levels of traffic movement and provides on-site car parking for all employees and visitors;
- f) Contribute to the character and vitality of the local area;
- 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.

## 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 2021 Census highlights how people are working differently to a generation ago – in Great Bowden Parish 41.2% of people work from home (above the Harborough-wide total of 35.8%).

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

**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 gigabit capable, full-fibre broadband infrastructure.

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.

## E. 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 (Paragraph: 045 Reference ID: 41-045-20190509) 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).

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)
- Traffic Management (T)
- Traffic Calming at village entrances(T)
- Sensitive traffic calming measures in the centre of the village(T)
- Welham Lane closure to 4-wheel traffic (T)
- Community car parks (T2)
- New and improved footpaths (T)

- Safe Routes to school (T)
- New and improved cycle routes and bridleways (T3)
- Provision of Bus Shelters and benches (T)
- New play equipment (CAF)
- New sporting facilities for all(CAF)
- Additional allotment capacity (CAF)
- Expansion of Great Bowden Academy (CAF3)
- Village Hall expansion (CAF)

POLICY INF 1: DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS - Where policies in this plan require contributions to community infrastructure, they will be made through contributions through Section 106 agreements or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where applicable in accordance with HLP Policy IN1 2019)2which is in accordance with the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period up to 2041. During this time, it is likely that the circumstances which the Plan seeks to address will change.

The Neighbourhood 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 Neighbourhood 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 Neighbourhood Plan will also be included.

The Parish Council proposes to consider the formal review of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2029 or to coincide with the review of the Harborough Local Plan if this cycle is different.