

THE PARISHES OF LEIGH AND BRANSFORD

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Regulation 16 Submission March 2022

2022 to 2041



Leigh and Bransford Parish Council

Record of issued documents

Date	Issue	Amendments	Issued by
14/03/2019	LandB_Draft_NP_Informal_Comment_PCK_14 0319: Issued to Parish Council and NP Group		PCK
01/07/2019	LandB_NP_draft_v1.0_informal_community_ comment: First draft for public informal comment	Text corrections only	PCK
01/05/2020	Land B draft Regulation 14 NP for informal public comment	Multiple minor text amendments/updates. Material changes to Section 5.1 Housing. Removal of some bulk texts (quoted reports) to Appendices. Revised Appendix: Criteria for Assessing Potential Development Sites	PCK
20/07/20	Revised Draft informally assessed by MHDC to ensure basic conditions met.	Multiple amendments. Text restructured for relevant Evidence and Justification to follow each separate Policy	PCK
01/09/21	Regulation 14 Pre-Submission	Detailed text amendments. Additional maps and assessment tables for SHELAA	PCK/DF/ JS
10/03/22	Regulation 15 Submission	Detailed amendments following responses from Reg 14 submission.	PCK/DF/ JS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for Leigh and Bransford to provide an opportunity for local communities to influence developments in their area. It is intended that this Plan (LBNP) will provide a basis for sustainable, organic growth in the Parishes.

The Localism Act (2011) gave local communities the right to prepare Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) which can be used to choose where new homes, shops and offices should be built, and to have a say on what those new buildings should look like. The strategic national planning document is the Nation Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The local planning document, the Local Plan, is the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), which itself is consistent with the NPPF. The NP is a statutory document, which “sits beneath” the SWDP and must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of it. When the NP has been adopted it will become part of the Development Plan. The Development Plan for the NP area consists of the SWDP, the NP, The Waste Core Strategy and the Minerals Local Plan. Waste and minerals are not addressed in the NP because they are County Council matters.

Consultation with the community indicated overwhelmingly that they liked the quality of life that comes from living in a rural/semi-rural setting that has access to amenities in Worcester and Malvern and which also has amenities such as a shop/post office, pub and school. The community greatly values the local landscape, heritage, historic buildings and biodiversity. These factors make the parishes special, and have been key issues in guiding the development of the LBNP. Recently, larger developments have meant that the Neighbourhood Area, and Leigh Sinton in particular, grown in large steps. A number of issues cause concern in the parish:

- disconnection between the villages,
- a decreasing requirement for an agricultural workforce, leading to more commuting
- additional population likely to need to commute; urbanisation and “commuterisation”
- difficulty in maintaining local character in development
- difficulties in providing adequate infrastructure, particularly for mobile phone signal, broadband, and the increase in traffic

The South Worcestershire Councils (SWC) are in the process of reviewing the SWDP and have proposed an allocation of housing to Leigh Sinton; the LBNP cannot over-ride the allocation and should not promote less development than set out in strategic policies. The LBNP proposes the same site as suitable and available for development to meet the indicative housing requirement. The South Worcestershire Councils and the Parish Council have been working constructively together to ensure that the SWDP Revision and LBNP are in general conformity.

Neighbourhood planning policies and the justifications for them are included under the following topics:

- Housing
- Design
- Landscape, Heritage, and Biodiversity
- Infrastructure and Energy
- Amenities, Health and Well Being

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Localism Act (2011) introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development in their community by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood.

1.2 A neighbourhood plan relates to the use and development of land. The primary purpose of the LBNP is to provide policies for the determination of planning applications in the parishes of Leigh and Bransford.

1.3 Neighbourhood plans must (a) have appropriate regard to national planning policy, (b) contribute to sustainable development, (c) be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area, and (d) be compatible human rights requirements.

1.4 The parishes of Leigh and Bransford are part of Malvern Hills District. The local strategic context (condition (c) above) is set by the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)⁽¹⁾ which was adopted in 2016, and which is in the process of being reviewed.

1.5 This report is the Regulation 16 Neighbourhood Plan for the parishes of Leigh and Bransford. Details of the process of developing the LBNP are in Section 2. The Plan relates to the combined parishes of Leigh, and Bransford, which is the Designated Neighbourhood Area for this NP (See Map 1). The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by Leigh & Bransford Parish Council, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011. The LBNP has been developed by a Steering Group involving Parish Councillors and local residents.

1.6 Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the SWDP and the LBNP, and any other material considerations. The LBNP covers the period to 2022-2041.

1.7 The SWDP sets out Development Management policies to ensure that development in south Worcestershire is appropriately located and designed. Whilst the SWDP provides the strategic framework within which the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared, the LBNP concentrates on key issues facing Leigh and Bransford and includes emerging planning policies that aim to deliver the right types of development for the parishes. It should be noted that the LBNP does not need to cover every planning issue in the area. Some planning issues important to the local community may already be adequately addressed in the SWDP.

1.8 The LBNP could influence local developments until 2041 so it is vital that it delivers the local vision and objectives. The LBNP is based on evidence from the local community; it takes into account a comprehensive local survey carried out by questionnaire by the LBNP team in 2015, feedback from public meetings, and responses from the Leigh and Bransford community.

1.9 From the 2016 SWDP the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) to 2030 in south Worcestershire was 28,370 dwellings and the SWDP made provision for around 28,400 dwellings to meet this need. Between 2001 and 2011 the number of dwellings in the parishes of Leigh and Bransford increased by 7. A further 147 dwellings were built by 2021, including 18 affordable homes in Bransford and 34 in Leigh Sinton; this results in an approximate increase in dwellings in Leigh Sinton of about 20% in just a few years. However, the current SWDP Review suggests that a further 14,000 dwellings will be required in South Worcestershire by 2040, with a small addition to

the original 2030 target. The emerging SWDP Review proposes a further allocation in Neighbourhood Area.

1.10 In 2020 the Parish Council requested an indicative housing requirement figure from MHDC, which was for a minimum of one dwelling from 2021- 2030, and a further 32 dwellings to 2041. Following a “call for sites” as part of the review of the SWDP, South Worcestershire Councils identified a preferred site for Leigh Sinton with potential for 52 dwellings. This NP will propose the same site for allocation.

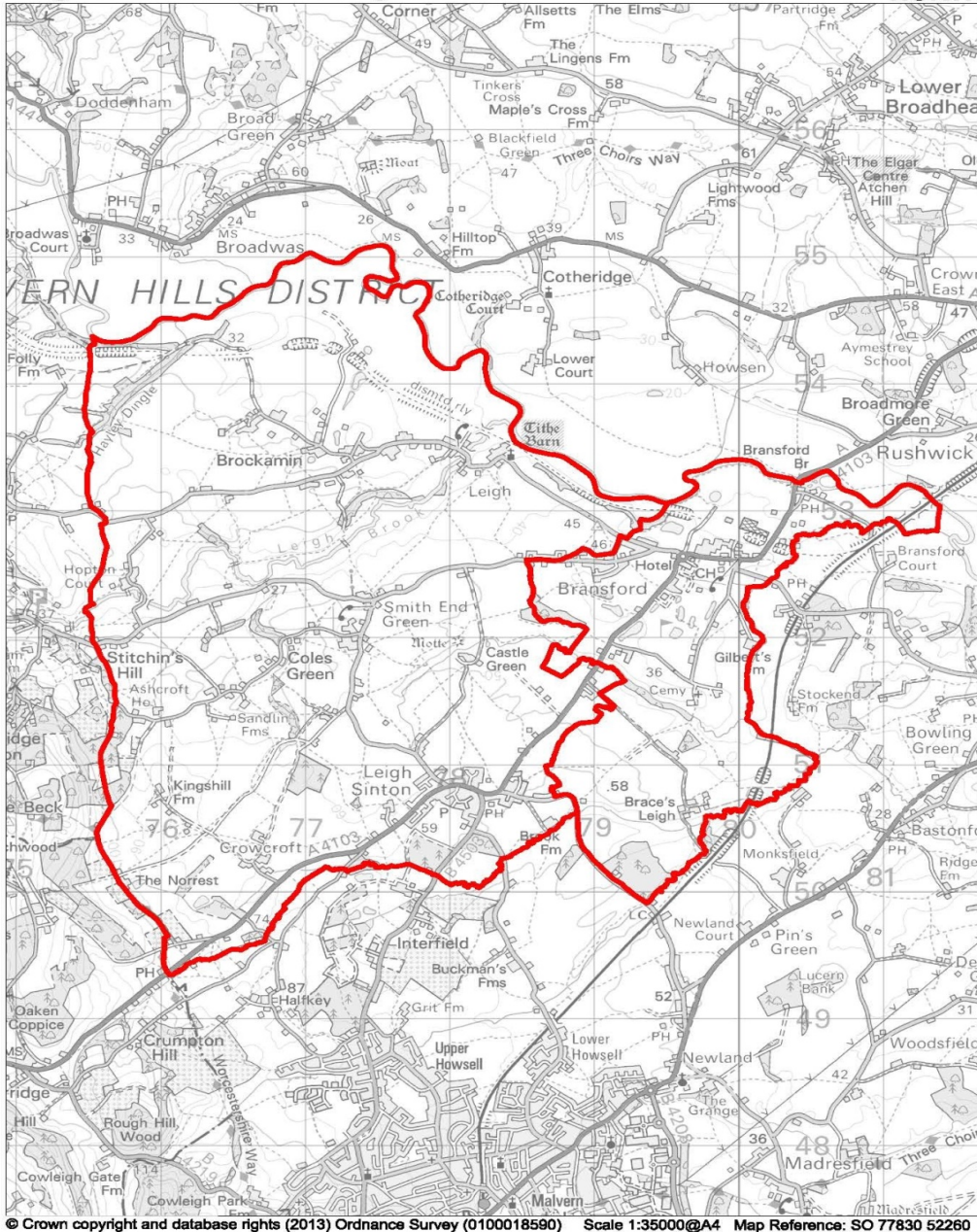
1.11 The LBNP is being prepared so that the residents of Leigh and Bransford can have more influence over what development takes place, where it takes place and the design of any new development. Following local consultation there are several key issues that the LBNP is seeking to address including housing, design, landscape, heritage, and biodiversity. The LBNP describes the general background to the parishes, and presents overall vision and objectives. The more specific nature of the parishes is discussed in a series of strategic topics, where the corresponding policies are presented.

1.12 Members of the community received training in heritage, historic landscape and landscape characterisation. The Parish Council and the LBNP group gratefully acknowledge that this training and the production of the Historic Environment Record search for the Neighbourhood Area by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, was made possible through an Historic England Regional Capacity Grant.



Looking north towards A4103 from Leigh Sinton

Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Area



Map 1

(Not to scale at this size)
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Leigh and Bransford Designated Neighbourhood Area

2. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Planning Policy Context

2.1 The Localism Act (2011) gave local communities the right to prepare Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) which can be used to choose where new homes, shops and offices should be built, and to have a say on what those new buildings should look like. The strategic national planning document is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁽²⁾. The Local Plan is the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), which has to be consistent with national policy. The NP is a statutory document, which “sits beneath” the Development Plan and has to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the SWDP. The Development Plan for the LBNP area consists of the SWDP, The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy⁽³⁾, and the saved policies of the County of Hereford and Worcester Minerals Local Plan⁽⁴⁾. A new Minerals Local Plan is being prepared for Worcestershire and the Publication Version of the Minerals Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Community and Local Government in December 2019 for independent examination.

2.2 When the LBNP has been adopted as part of the Development Plan it will form the basis for determining planning applications in the area. There are some issues, including transport, development for education, and minerals and waste, for which Worcestershire County Council is the lead authority. A Neighbourhood Plan provides a mechanism for local communities to influence developments in their area.

2.3 Paragraphs 28 to 30 of The National Planning Policy Framework refer to Neighbourhood Plans. Planning Practice Guidance provides additional guidance on the application and implementation of the Framework’s approach.

2.4 In an area where a parish or town council exist these are the only bodies that can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst this LBNP is being prepared by Leigh and Bransford Parish Council it has been developed in consultation with the whole community.

Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan: The Process

2.5 The Process: The main steps already carried out in moving towards an NP for Leigh and Bransford are:

- The decision by Leigh and Bransford Parish Council in 2013 to develop an NP (rather than a Parish Plan)
- Formed a working group (Carried out in 2013)
- Engaged with the community to identify the key issues and objectives
- Defined and agreed the boundaries of the neighbourhood area with MHDC. The combined parishes of Leigh and Bransford Parish were designated as a Neighbourhood Area on 24th September 2013
- Consulted with community. This process has been in progress formally, and informally, since 2013. In 2015 an extensive questionnaire was delivered to every household in the Designated Neighbourhood Area and collated responses were made generally available early in 2016.
- Created vision and objectives that could be developed into policies. The draft vision, objectives, and policies are included in this LBNP.

- In the summer of 2019 a draft was prepared for informal public comment. Each household in the parish was notified and public meetings held.
- The District Council prepare a “Screening Opinion” to determine whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required. The SEA/HRA Screening Opinion will be submitted with the Regulation 15 draft of the LBNP.
- Regulation 14 NP was published for comment and feedback in September 2021. The submitted LBNP was subject to a formal minimum 6 week consultation, with a wide range of statutory consultees.

Current stage

- Prepare Regulation 15 Final Plan Proposal and SEA /HRA and submit to MHDC.
- MHDC undertake statutory Regulation 16 consultation on draft LBNP

The next steps

- MHDC appoint independent Examiner.
- MHDC collate responses and supply to Examiner
- Examiner will recommend whether any amendments are required to meet the Basic Conditions.
- Examiner examines LBNP and publishes report setting out whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum. Amendments may be required subject to Inspector’s comments and requirements.
- MHDC consider the Examiner’s recommendations and decide whether the LBNP should proceed to referendum. If the decision is to proceed then a Referendum version of the LBNP will be published.
- MHDC hold a referendum of parishioners.
- If a majority of those voting in the referendum vote in favour of the Plan MHDC will “make” (adopt) the LBNP.



Looking west along A4103 Bransford

3. GENERAL BACKGROUND TO PARISH

Background and History

3.1 The combined rural Parish of Leigh and Bransford is situated in the west of Worcestershire, just to the south of the river Teme. The landscape is gently undulating with no significant hills or valleys but the west of the parish leads rapidly to the Suckley Hills at the north of the Malvern ridge. The parishes consists of three main centres of population, Bransford, Leigh, and Leigh Sinton, with smaller settlements such as Brockamin, Coles Green, Sandlin and Smith End Green, all set in a predominantly rural landscape.

3.2 There is archaeological evidence of human activity in the area dating back to about 4000BC. Leigh is mentioned in charters of 972 AD, when King Edgar granted land at Leigh to Pershore Abbey and defined the parish boundaries. As with most places in England the earliest recorded history occurs in the Domesday Book of 1086. The current administrative parish boundary was created in 1971. Further history is available in the “The Book of Leigh and Bransford”⁽⁵⁾ commissioned by the parish council and published in 2002, and in a follow up book, “The Second Book of Leigh and Bransford”⁽⁵⁾ published in 2005. Four further books have been published by local historian, Geoff Wright, and copies have been deposited in Worcestershire County Council Record Office.

3.3 Whilst the diversity of character between each of the three villages and their surroundings adds to the overall character of the parishes, it has a drawback; there is no obvious centre to the overall parishes and each village or settlement tends to have its own community and identity. Whilst in some terms it is right to say that, “the whole is greater than the sum of the parts” this disconnection is a challenge in providing planning policies for area.

3.4 The parishes have always been predominantly rural and there was little development of significance until after the Second World War; some small groups of houses were also built after the First World War. Traditionally the main source of employment was agricultural but changes in farming operations, and increased mechanisation, have led to a drastically reduced requirement for an agricultural workforce. Consequently most parishioners now commute out of the area for employment.

Profile of Parishes

3.5 The Neighbourhood Area (the combined Parishes of Leigh and Bransford) covers an area of 1894 hectares and is the 7th largest parish in Malvern Hills.

3.6 The following figures have been extracted from the 2001 and 2011 Census:

- Population: The population rose from 1775 in 2001 to 1832 in 2011, a rise of 3.2% compared with the district average of 3.4%. The number of persons aged 60 and over increased from 442 to 629, an increase of 42%. Similarly, the number of persons aged 75 and over increased by 22% from 154 to 188. The number of persons aged 15 or less decreased by 14% from 309 to 265; this downward trend is in common with two-thirds of local parishes.
- Households: The number of dwellings increased from 719 to 790 (a 9.9% increase), with household size reducing slightly from 2.48 persons to 2.35. (Between 2011 and 2021 a further 147 dwellings will have been completed or granted consent; a further increase of

about 20%). The number of single person households increased by 19%, from 137 to 163. A further 49% of single person households are single pensioner households, an increase of 5%.

- Employment: 68% of persons were economically active, about average for the district, with 0.3% claiming Job Seekers Allowance, lower than the district average of 1.2%.
- Cars and vans: The number of households with no access to car or van increased from 47 to 52; this means that 7% of households are reliant on other means of transport. However, about 64% households have two or more cars.
- Deprivation: The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that 16 households (2.1%) are deprived in three or four of the dimensions of employment, education, housing and health and disability, compared with a district level of 3.4%.
- Fuel Poverty: About 22% of households suffered Fuel Poverty, about average for the district. However, 62% had no access to mains gas, about double the district average.
- Health: 80% of persons reported their health as good, with 18% having Limiting Long Term Illness.
- Provision of Unpaid Care: 9.7% of persons were providing 1-19 hours a week unpaid care, 1.8% were providing 20-49 hours, and 2.3% were providing more than 50 hours.

Employment

3.7 There is a range of employment within the Neighbourhood Area but there are no significantly large employers. Most people travel out of the parishes to work but about 23% regularly work from home. Some of the major employers within the Neighbourhood Area are in agriculture, including a large nursery. There are also a community enterprise with Café and managed small artisan units, and a hotel conference centre and golf course. There are a number of smaller businesses, including two pubs, light industrial and commercial units, shops, gym, post office, take-away, and a petrol station.

3.8 According to data from the 2011 Census the main industries for employment of people living within the Neighbourhood Area are:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| • Wholesale and retail trade and motor repairs | 15.5% |
| • Education | 12.5% |
| • Human health and social work activities | 12.1% |
| • Professional, scientific and technical activities | 9.5% |
| • Manufacturing | 9.1% |
| • Construction | 8.2% |
| • Agriculture | 4.2% |

This listing takes no account of where work is located. Statistics from the 2011 Census indicate that over 50% of all the usual residents aged 16 to 74 in employment travelled more than 5km to work. Home working accounts for over 11% in south Worcestershire. The number of people working from home in the Neighbourhood Area is about 23%, much higher than the local and national average.

3.9 The settlements in the Neighbourhood Area are within a predominantly agricultural landscape. There is a long history of agriculture in the area of hop growing, fruit growing, and generally mixed farming. Hop growing has almost disappeared and local farmers have diversified activities. Nevertheless, agriculture may still be the largest employer within the Neighbourhood Area.

Reduction in food miles and food security are becoming increasingly important, not just in economic terms but for sustainability. Continuing loss of productive agricultural land is a concern. Several respondents to the 2015 Questionnaire said that they would like to see more support from the parish council and others for local agriculture.

Community Amenities

3.10 Many in the community regard their rural surroundings and semi-rural location as their prime amenity. The Neighbourhood Area has: Infant/Primary School, hotel/conference centre and golf course, two shops (one with Post Office), petrol station, take aways in Leigh Sinton and Bransford, two churches, Memorial Hall, a community enterprise with Café and managed small artisan units, managed football pitches, livery stables, two pubs (one an Asset of Community Value), and childrens' play areas at Bransford and Kiln Lane, Leigh Sinton. A further play area (LEAP) was provided with the development at Bluebell Walk in Leigh Sinton in 2021. A wide range of activities take place in the Memorial (village) Hall.

However, there is no doctor's surgery, or pharmacy within the Neighbourhood Area. Some of the nearest doctors' surgeries do not accept patients from the Neighbourhood Area.

A more comprehensive list of amenities is included in Appendix G.

Transport and Moving Around

3.11 The A4103 Hereford to Worcester road cuts across the Neighbourhood Area south west/north east, passing through Leigh Sinton and Bransford. With the exception of a short length of B4503 (Malvern Road) between Leigh Sinton and Interfields, the other roads are Class C, and Unclassified routes. The nearest Motorway junction is M5 junction 7, about 7 miles distant. The nearest railway stations are at Malvern, and Malvern Link, about 3-4 miles distant, but there is no linking public transport to either. Public transport is limited. A few daily services to Worcester/ Ledbury, including Leigh, and Bransford, operate outside of commuting times; there are no buses to Malvern. The limited timetables mean that buses are unsuitable for commuting for employment, or evening leisure. Most residents are reliant on private cars. Occupants of dwellings, or anyone connected with businesses, for existing and new developments will also be reliant on private transport. Whilst there is a substantial rural public footpath network, many roads in the area do not have adjacent formal footways or cycleways. A number of key footway/ cycleway routes do not exist and many local people perceive it is not safe to walk or cycle. Coupled with the lack of public transport this is a serious issue.

Heritage, Landscape and Biodiversity

3.12 Heritage, landscape, and biodiversity are inextricably linked. The long history of habitation within the parish has left a legacy of historic buildings, monuments, and landscapes; all contribute to the natural, built and historic environment. The area has a number of nationally designated buildings and scheduled monuments. However, many other undesigned assets are viewed locally, and by

visitors, to have special historic, and local value. There are a number of notable Biodiversity Action Plan⁽⁶⁾ habitats in the Neighbourhood Area. Specifically these include, ancient woodland, specific rich grassland, traditional orchards, and to a lesser extent but equally important, species-rich hedgerows, flowing and standing water, and scrub and agricultural field margins.

3.13 The area is rich in biodiversity. Worcestershire retains many quintessential elements of the English countryside and it is essential that they are protected and enhanced. Traditional orchards provide habitats for insects and hole-nesting and insect eating birds. Hedgerows support a variety of wildlife combining the benefits of scrub, woodland and woodland edge habitat. It has been estimated that 80% of Worcestershire's botanical diversity is to be found in road-side verges; many of the existing roads are re-engineered from Roman and mediaeval routes and may support some of the last remaining fragments of our natural vegetation. 97% of natural pastures and lowland hay meadows have been lost in England since the Second World War. Worcestershire retains 20% of the remaining species-rich meadow and pasture on neutral soils that still exist in England. Woodlands of all types provide shelter and food for many species. Semi-natural ancient woodlands contain species that arrived here naturally since the last ice age. Grasslands include species-rich semi-natural grasslands, grazed pasture, and parks and gardens, each with their own biodiversity. The native, wild flora found within arable fields is the most critically threatened group of plants in Britain. The biodiversity in cropped land, including fallow or setaside, cereals, vegetables etc, will vary considerably depending on the type of farming adopted but nearly all are represented in the area.

Tourism

3.14 The Neighbourhood Area abuts the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); it has a good network of public footpaths and bridleways and good views to and from the Malverns and surrounding area. Many of the footpaths are of historic importance within the landscape; furthermore they provide views to and from the Malverns and surrounding area. The locality, with its rural landscape, scattered farmsteads, and historic churches and monuments, has intrinsic interest and adds to the overall attractiveness of the greater area. There are several outstanding buildings and monuments:

- 12th century Church of St Edburga in Leigh
- 14th century Leigh Court Tithe Barn (the largest cruck framed structure in Great Britain)
- 11th century Church of St John the Baptist, Bransford
- Norman motte at Castle Green Leigh Sinton

3.15 For accommodation there is a large hotel and conference centre in Bransford (The Bank House) and a small number of properties offering bed and breakfast accommodation. There are also a number of holiday lets.

Development

3.16 Each of the three main villages has had past development to some extent. The least has been in Leigh, where there have only been a few replacement cottages, a handful of new properties, and a number of barn conversions. In Bransford there were three smaller post-war schemes, a larger development in the early 1970's, and two further developments in 2013/2014, and 2018/19. The majority of the development has been in Leigh Sinton, where there have been six or seven post-war, but mainly more recent, developments. A large development was completed in 2018/19 and a further development was completed in 2021. In all 147 dwellings were completed in Leigh and Bransford between 2011 and 2021. The review of the SWDP by the SWC proposes a further development of 52 dwellings, with a preferred site to meet the housing requirement to 2041. The SWDP Review of 2019/20 has yet to be examined or adopted.

3.17. Recently, larger developments have meant that the Neighbourhood Area, and Leigh Sinton in particular, grown in large steps. A number of issues cause concern in the parish:

- disconnection between the villages,
- a decreasing requirement for an agricultural workforce, leading to more commuting
- additional population likely to need to commute; urbanisation and “commuterisation”
- difficulty in maintaining local character in development
- difficulties in providing adequate infrastructure, particularly for mobile phone signal, broadband, and the increase in traffic

3.18 Each of the topics in this Section are discussed in further detail in Section 5: Policies



4. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The following Vision and Objectives are based on feedback from the local community. They will not be delivered through development alone but represent wider action required through Leigh and Bransford Parish Council, Malvern Hills District Council, and the community at large. However, any new development should at least seek to promote and achieve the Objectives. The Parish Council also has a list of tasks, some of which are connected with the delivery of the LBNP; some are more general. For completeness the list is included in Appendix A.

Vision:

4.2 Leigh and Bransford will be a rewarding place to live and work. There will be a strength of community spirit, and strong and positive feeling of local identity in the dispersed communities. Heritage, landscape and biodiversity will thrive in a protected, enhanced, sustainable and resilient environment.

Objectives:

4.3

1. Protect and enhance the natural and built heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and local character, for the existing community, visitors, and future generations through sustainable, organic growth.
2. Provide opportunities for a rewarding way of life within a rural environment with safe, sustainable access to the wider countryside, towns and services.
3. Provide safe access and travel for work and recreation, extending accessibility to all so far as reasonably possible, with emphasis on walking and cycling. Protect and enhance public transport. The provision of a footway between Leigh Sinton and Interfields, connecting to footways to Malvern, is seen as a priority.
4. Enrich the health and well-being of the community with opportunities for recreation, sport, collective social activity, and leisure. Secure the future of facilities for leisure, community, and health and education, and the provision of new facilities, where required.
5. Protect the Significant Gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton and manage organic, sustainable development to provide an appropriate housing mix.
6. Provide and maintain opportunities for appropriate employment within the existing landscape character.
7. Liaise with other bodies to enhance local infrastructure. Reduce fuel poverty and improve local sustainability. Provide access to new technology, mobile 'phone signal, and enhanced broadband to increase the opportunity for home working and reduced travel.
8. Eliminate flooding hot-spots and ensure new design for development and maintenance of existing drainage infrastructure reduces future risk.
9. Ensure that footways, public footpaths/bridleways, ditches, hedges and verges, provide not only safe access but takes the opportunity to enhance the general environment and biodiversity.

5. POLICIES AND JUSTIFICATIONS

In the following sections Policies are presented in a table, followed by the Evidence and Justification for the policies.



Looking west near Bransford Chapel

5.1 Policies: Housing



Leigh Sinton

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Housing: New Residential Development within the Leigh Sinton and Bransford Development Boundaries

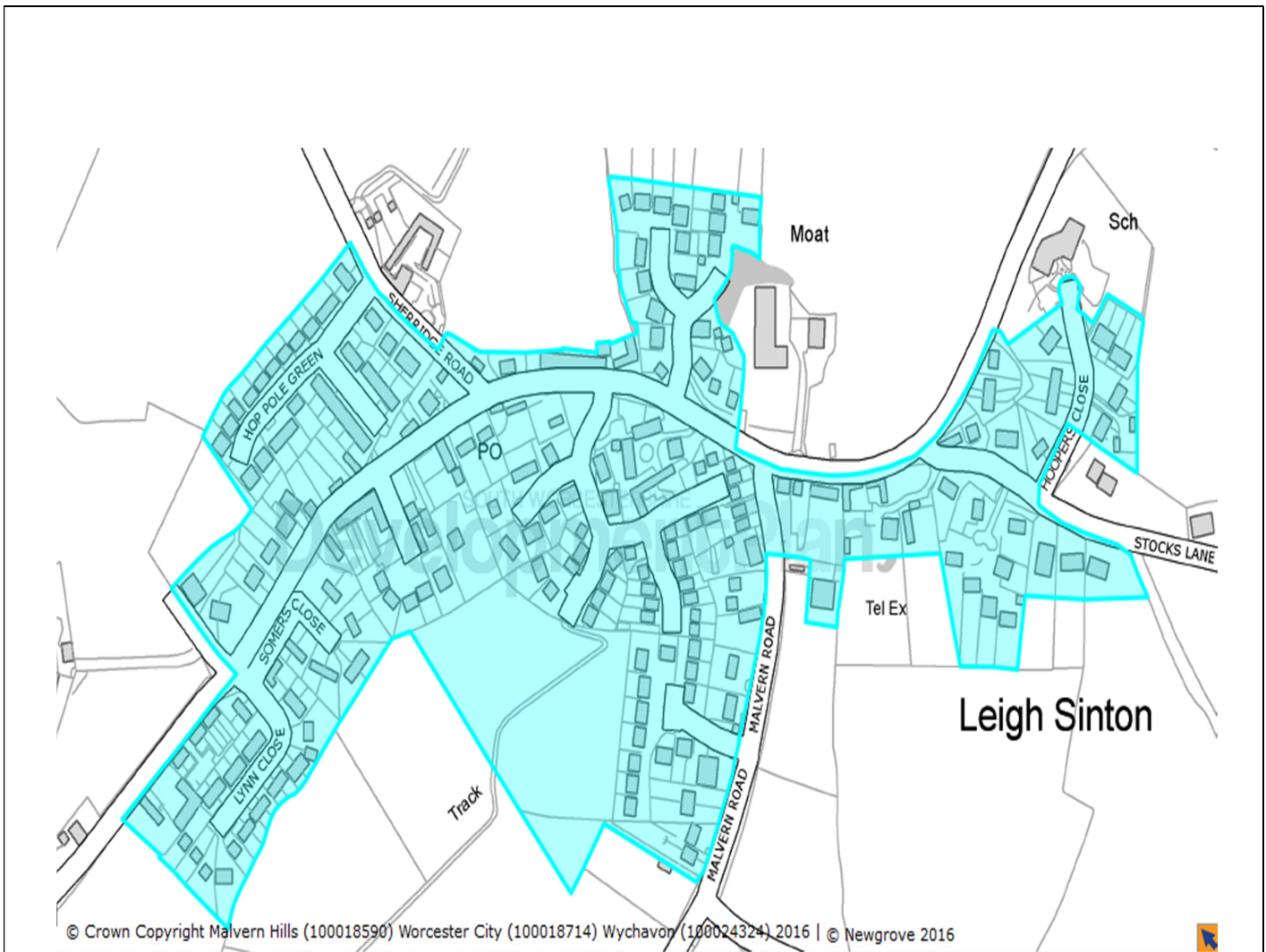
Policy LB/H/1:

New housing within the Leigh Sinton and Bransford Development Boundaries (as shown on Maps 2a and 2b) will be supported if it meets all the following criteria:

- a. It does not lead to the loss of community or recreation facilities, or local employment opportunities**
- b. It accords with other relevant policies of the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan and the South Worcestershire Development Plan.**
- c. Extensions to the Leigh Sinton Development Boundary are proposed and indicated on Map 2a.**
- d. A new Development Boundary is proposed for Bransford and is indicated on Map 2b.**

Policies: Housing: Leigh Sinton Development Boundary: Evidence and Justification

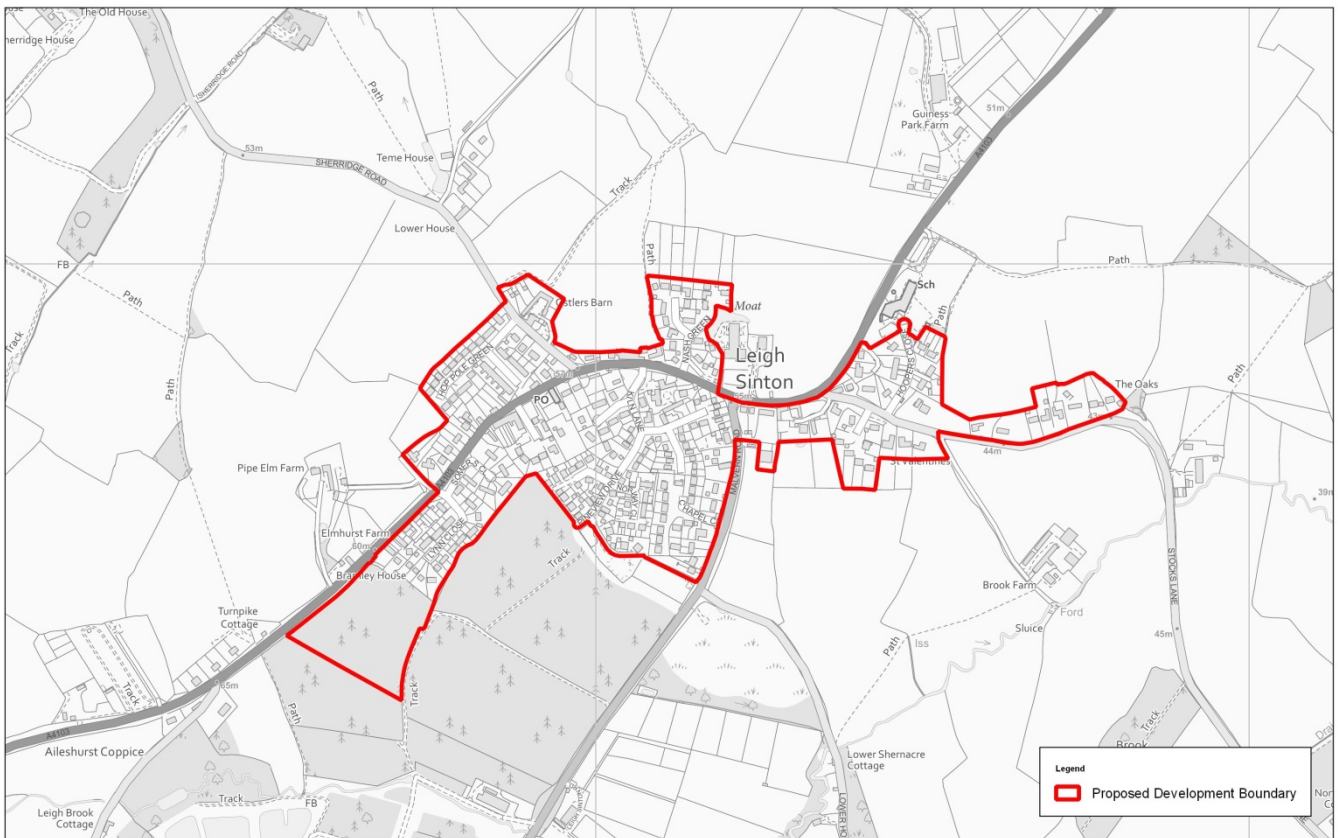
5.1.1 This policy seeks to be in general conformity with SWDP 2, or its successor policy. The Development Boundary at Leigh Sinton is tightly drawn and provides little scope for development. Except for extensions and subdivisions there are limited possibilities within the existing Development Boundary. This Neighbourhood Plan identifies and proposes a site for development to meet housing need (See Policy LB/H/5); the site is contiguous with the existing Development Boundary, which the LBNP amends to enclose the proposed allocation. There are also several other changes to rationalise, and update the boundary. Currently there is no Development Area for Bransford. However, the South Worcestershire Councils are proposing that growth is focussed on Worcester and the towns, and the Category 1, 2, and 3 villages. Therefore, a Development Area is proposed for Bransford. The proposed allocation for development in Leigh Sinton is indicated against the existing development Boundary on Map 4. The existing Development Boundary for Leigh Sinton is shown on Map 2. Proposed Development Boundaries for Leigh Sinton and Bransford are shown on Maps 2a, and 2b.



Map 2
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Leigh Sinton
Existing Development Area



Legend
 Proposed Development Boundary



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Leigh Sinton Neighbourhood Plan



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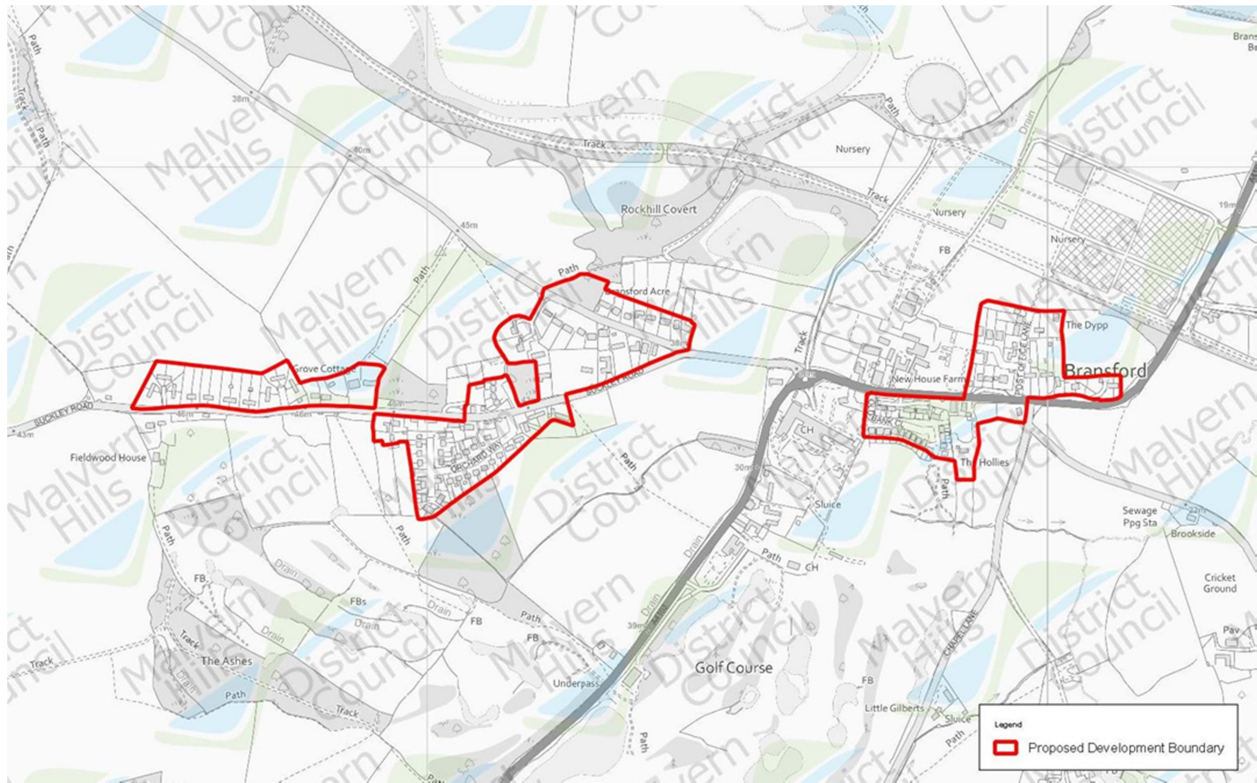
Map 2a

(Not to scale at this size)

Leigh Sinton

Proposed Development Boundary

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Map 2b

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Bransford

Proposed Development Boundary

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Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Housing: Development in Open Countryside

Policy LB/H/2:

New housing development in open countryside, outside the Development Boundary (as shown on Maps 2a and 2b) will be supported if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- a. There is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.**
- b. It represents the optimum viable use of a heritage asset or would be an appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets**
- c. It is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help raise the standards of design more generally in rural areas, and would significantly enhance its immediate setting.**
- d. Affordable housing on an exception site is required to meet an identified local need.**
- e. It is a replacement of an existing dwelling with established use rights and where the replacement dwelling is not disproportionately larger than the existing dwelling and will not exceed the existing gross internal floorspace by more than 30%.**
- f. In addition proposals must accord with other relevant policies of the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan and the South Worcestershire Development Plan.**

Policies: Housing: Development in Open Countryside: Evidence and Justification

5.1.2 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF outlines circumstances where development of isolated homes in the countryside may be acceptable. This policy seeks to have regard to the NPPF, in particular Para 80, and to be in general conformity with SWDP 2, SWDP 16, SWDP 18, and SWDP 19, or their successor policies.

5.1.3 The SWDP Policy 2: Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy is based on a range of local services and facilities. Rural areas such as Leigh and Bransford are in lower categories. The definition of the Role of Category 1, 2, and 3 villages is, *“These villages provide varying ranges of local services and facilities. However, the larger settlements generally tend to provide the largest range. Their role is predominantly aimed at meeting locally identified housing and employment needs. They are, therefore, suited to accommodate market and affordable housing needs alongside limited employment for local needs”*. The relevant Policy Implementation is, *“A number of housing sites of an appropriate scale are allocated in Category 1, 2, and 3 villages to address the need for housing and support local services. Rural employment opportunities of an appropriate scale are also encouraged. Directly relevant policies include SWDP 12 and 16 together with allocation policy SWDP 59. Infill development within the defined development boundaries is acceptable in principle subject to the more detailed Plan policies”*. The SWDP Review 2019/20 says of Category 1-3 settlements, *“Typically these are the relatively larger villages, some of which perform a local service centre function and retain a bus service”*. Housing allocations of 5-80 dwellings are made for Category 1-3 villages in the Review.

5.1.4 Similarly, the Role of lower category villages is, *“These villages tend to be very small and at best offer one or two local services. Their role in providing additional future development is limited”*. The relevant Policy Implementation is, *“Infill development within the defined development boundaries is acceptable in principle subject to the more detailed Plan policies. Small scale employment development and rural exception sites are acceptable in principle, as set out in Policies*

SWDP 12 and 16". In the SWDP Review Category 4 villages and unclassified villages are described, "These villages have minimal local service provision and no peak hour bus services so generally an unsustainable location for facilitating growth". With regard to allocations in these Categories the SWDP Revision says, "No allocations, rather limited potential for small scale windfall development within defined development boundaries"

5.1.5 Villages are categorised according to a score based on local services and public transport using information in the Village Facilities and Public Transport Survey⁽⁷⁾. In the LBNP Area the Categories are: Leigh Sinton Category; 3, Bransford Category; 3, Smith End Green; Category 4A, Leigh; Category 4B, and Brockamin; Open Countryside. In the 2019 Village Facilities and Rural Transport Study Leigh Sinton was identified as a Category 3 village, having formerly been a Category 2. The main reason for the change was the withdrawal of public transport at commuting times.

5.1.6 Whilst there are a range of industries and employers in the Neighbourhood Area there is no single employer with a significant number of employees. There appears to be no immediate need for associated development in the Neighbourhood Area. However, there may be cases where small developments may be useful to provide housing for new or expanding businesses.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Extensions and Subdivisions of Existing Dwellings

Policy LB/H/3:

- a. Extensions to existing dwellings will be supported providing that they are subordinate to, and do not dominate the character and appearance of the original, or adjacent, dwellings. Extensions should respect the character and significance of the original building.**
- b. The subdivision of an existing residential dwelling will be supported providing that the development does not have an adversely harmful impact on the area's visual amenity and landscape character. (See also Policy LB/D/2 Parking)**

Policies: Housing: Extensions and Subdivisions: Evidence and Justification

5.1.7 The SWDP has no specific policy for extensions or subdivisions. The LBNP accepts that extensions and subdivisions of dwellings could be justified and appropriate within a development boundary, or in open countryside. Equally, some constraints are necessary to protect adjacent properties and the immediate environment.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Conversion and Re-use of Redundant or Disused Buildings.

Policy LB/H/4:

The conversion and re-use of redundant or disused buildings for dwellings will be supported providing:

- a) there is an enhancement to the building's immediate setting and there is no need for substantial reconstruction and large extensions**
- b) the character and significance of the original building is respected**
- c) there is adequate access**
- d) there is adequate access to utilities, including broadband**

Policies: Housing: Conversion and Re-use of redundant or Disused Buildings: Evidence and Justification

5.1.8 Para 80 of the NPPF says that policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless certain circumstances apply. Disused or redundant buildings in rural areas will often be in open countryside. Many traditional farm buildings are inappropriate and inadequate for modern farm machinery. The conversion or subdivision of isolated homes in the countryside may be appropriate under the conditions in Para 80. Para 85 also says that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Housing: Significant Gap

Policy LB/H/5:

The open character of the Significant Gap within the Neighbourhood Area will be retained in order to maintain the separation between Leigh Sinton and Malvern that protects their individual identities. The Gap protects the existing character of the area, including the views from and to the Malvern Hills (AONB). The Significant Gap is shown on Map 3.

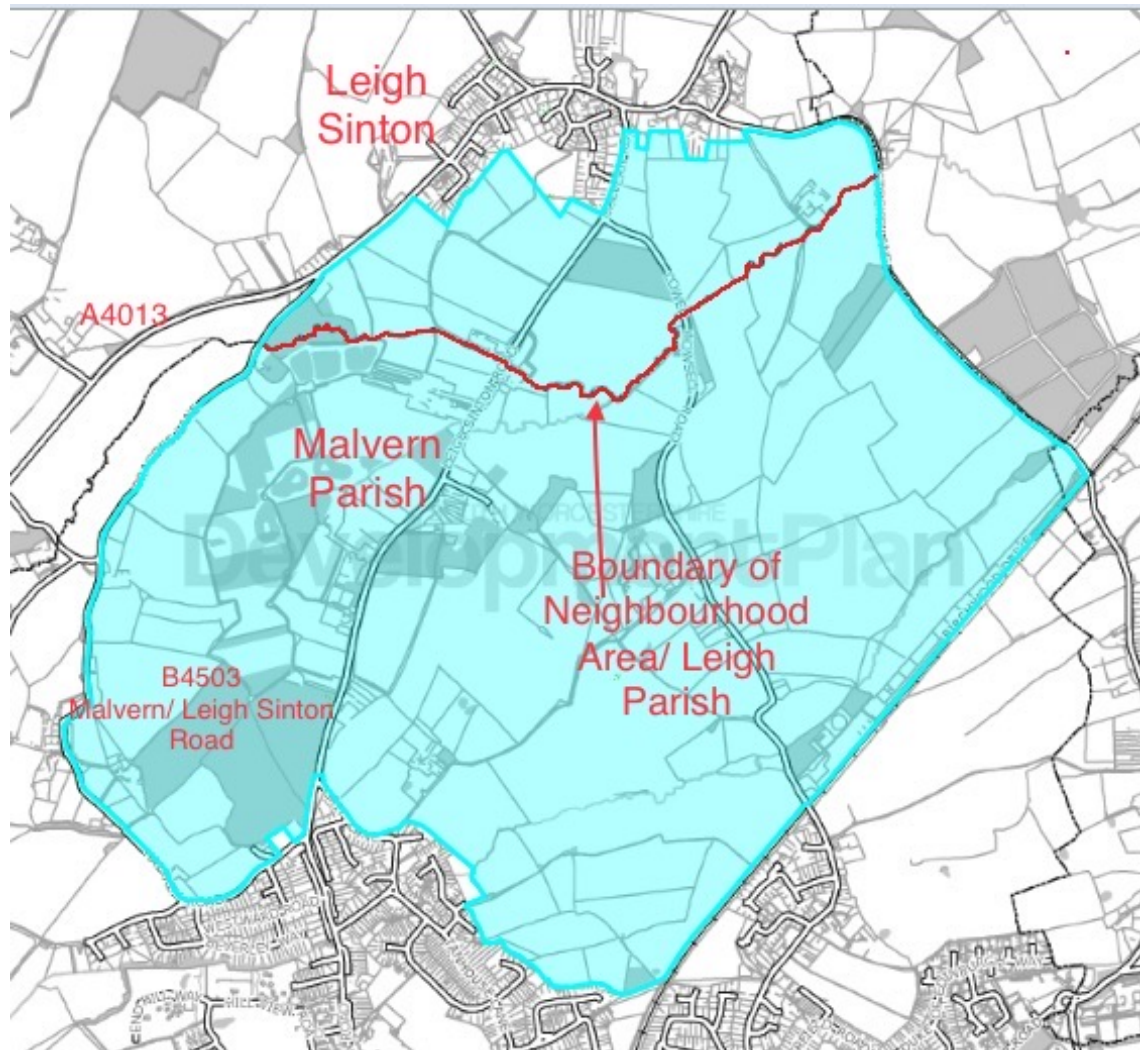
Acceptable developments may include:

- **The re-use of rural buildings;**
- **Agricultural and forestry-related development;**
- **Playing fields**
- **Other open land uses that maintain the openness of the gap; and**
- **Minor extensions to existing dwellings.**

Policies: Housing: Significant Gap: Evidence and Justification

5.1.9 The SWDP includes a number of Significant Gaps, intended to, *“maintain a clear separation between smaller settlements and urban areas in order to retain their individual identity”*. There is a Significant Gap between Leigh Sinton and Malvern (see Map 3). Leigh Sinton has a defined development boundary contiguous with the Significant Gap (See Map 3). SWDP Policy2D deals specifically with Significant Gaps, their function in maintaining clear separation between smaller settlements and more urban areas. Further, in relation to SWDP2, the SWDP identifies the types of development that may be acceptable. This policy seeks to be in general conformity with SWDP 2, or its successor policy.

5.1.10 Responses to a questionnaire of 2015 the community expressed a wish to retain the Significant Gap, views which were echoed in responses to the Cala Homes public meeting, exhibition and survey in July 2015 in connection with a proposed development. Following the current consultation the view of the community is that the Significant Gap between Malvern and Leigh Sinton should be maintained to protect the identity of Leigh Sinton and prevent progressive coalescence. A review of Significant Gaps in the SWDP Review concluded that the Leigh Sinton/ Malvern Significant Gap should not be amended or deleted.



Map 3
(Not to scale at this size)

**Leigh Sinton - Malvern:
Significant Gap**

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Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Housing: Site Allocation

Policy LB/H/6:

a. This Neighbourhood Plan proposes the following site allocation for development to meet the indicative housing requirement to 2041. The site is indicated on Map 4.

- **Site CFS0009, Land off the A4103, Leigh Sinton**
- **Site area: 3.3 Ha for residential use for approximately 52 dwellings**
- **Approximately 5.5 Ha potentially for sports and recreation use.**
-

b. In addition to SWDP requirements for Affordable Housing the housing mix shall be informed by available Housing Needs Surveys and community consultation.

c. The development must be designed to ensure that it connects safely to local amenities, and the existing footway, cycleway, and footpath network.

c. The development shall be in accordance with other relevant policies of the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan and the South Worcestershire Development Plan.

Policies: Housing: Site Allocation: Evidence and Justification.

5.1.11 Urbanisation and commuterisation are seen as detrimental to what has always made villages pleasant places to live. If villages are to grow it should be organically, in a sustainable manner relating to space, community, mix of dwellings, and a subsequent social mix.

5.1.12 The 2011 Census records 790 dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area, (Bransford; 179, Leigh Hurst; 140, Leigh Sinton; 471), increasing from 719 in 2001. Housing needs surveys were carried out in Leigh and Leigh Sinton in 2009, and in Bransford in 2011. Since 2011, 31 houses have been built on two adjacent sites in Bransford,. There are seven further dwellings and six more dwellings have planning permission. In Leigh Sinton 51 houses have been built in Kiln Lane and 16 others in different locations. In addition, another 35 houses at Elmhurst, Leigh Sinton were completed in 2021. It can be seen that, including current applications for which building has yet to be completed, there will have been a total of 147 new dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area since 2011, most since 2017/18. In Leigh Sinton there will have been an increase of 98 dwellings, an increase of more than 20 %. The totals include 18 Affordable Homes in Bransford and 34 in Leigh Sinton.

5.1.13 From the 2016 SWDP The Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) to 2030 in South Worcestershire was 28,370 dwellings. The 2016 SWDP made provision for around 28,400 dwellings to meet this need. However, the SWDP Review carried out in 2018/19 suggests that a further 14,000 dwellings will be required in South Worcestershire by 2040, with a small addition to the original 2030 target; this may involve a potential allocation in the Neighbourhood Area. Paragraph 66 of the NPPF says, *“Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations”*.

5.1.14 In 2020, as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council requested an indicative housing requirement figure from MHDC; effectively this is Leigh and Bransford’s “share” of the overall total. The indicative housing requirement was for a minimum of one dwelling from 2021- 2030, and a minimum of a further 32 dwellings to 2041. Following a “Call for Sites” as

part of the SWDP review MHDC proposed a preferred site in Leigh Sinton for 52 dwellings. In order to meet the requirement this Neighbourhood Plan has proposed site for allocation for 52 houses in Leigh Sinton. This would increase the number of dwellings in Leigh Sinton, largely since 2017, by 150, an increase of more than 30%. The view of the community was largely for organic, sustainable growth to avoid urbanisation and commuterisation. The housing requirement could possibly have been met over the next twenty years by windfall sites. However, this would not constitute a plan-led approach and there was no certainty that the requirement would have been met. Therefore, it was considered that the Neighbourhood Plan should propose an allocation acceptable to the community to meet the indicative housing requirement.

Table of new dwellings in Leigh and Bransford Parishes since the 2011 Census. (Correct at 01/12/2020)

Housing Completions	Leigh	Bransford	Total
2011/12	3	0	3
2012/13	2	0	2
2013/14	2	12	14
2014/15	1	0	1
2015/16	1	0	1
2016/17	2	0	2
2017/18	29	0	29
2018/19	27	26	53
2019/20	0	0	0
Sub-Total	67	38	105
Commitments; Not started	30	3	33
Commitments: Under Construction	6	3	9
Total	103	44	147
Affordable Homes included	34	18	52
Approximate Totals Assuming the Proposed Allocated Site is Completed			
Total Dwellings	155	-	199
Affordable Homes included	54	18	72

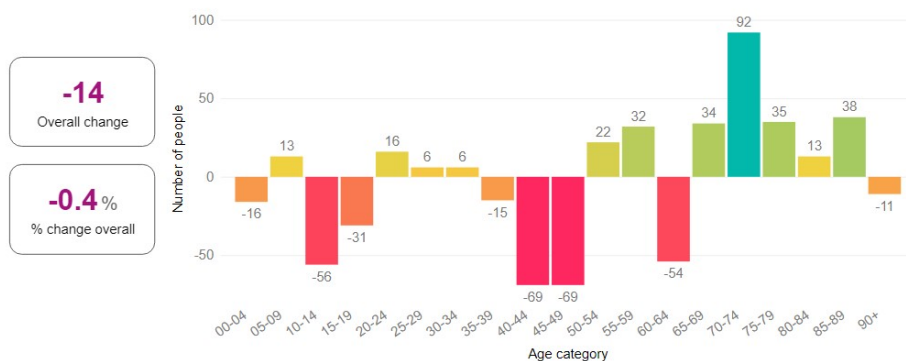
5.1.15 The review of the SWDP by the South Worcestershire Councils began in 2018. Part of the review included a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). A “call for sites” was carried out to invite landowners to put forward land they wished to be considered for future development. These sites were assessed by the South Worcestershire Councils for their suitability/ availability and whether they could be delivered in the plan period. The process included an assessment of the impact of any proposed development on each individual site against a list of more than thirty criteria. The criteria included but were not limited to, site availability, flooding, sewerage and water supplies, bio-diversity, heritage, impact on Significant Gap, public transport, contaminated land, and local services.

5.1.16 The SWC assessment resulted in a proposed site allocation on Site CFS 0009, adjacent to the A4103. The sites in the call for sites were re-assessed against the SWC criteria as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, also taking into account views expressed by the community. The site assessment was reviewed by Leigh and Bransford Parish Council with an added a number of specific criteria including, linearity, local drainage issues, wildlife corridors, and community facilities. It was considered that the most suitable site was the site proposed by SWC. Therefore, this Neighbourhood Plan proposes to allocate the site shown on Map 4 to meet the indicative housing requirement. The criteria and assessment for the site is contained in Appendix J.

5.1.17 Supplementary Design Report Planning for Health in South Worcestershire says, *“As well as encouraging physical activity and thereby reducing obesity, access to green space, sports and other recreational facilities promotes relaxation and reduction in stress, and can also bring about social interaction within communities”*. One reason for SWC’s choice of preferred site was that it provided, *“...a large area of community sports facility”*. Leigh Sinton has no green recreational/sports space. There is a playing field at the Memorial Hall but that is about a mile away along a winding lane with no footway or verge. Feedback from the community had not shown a clear preference for community facilities except that there should have general green playing space (a “kick-about area”), additional play facilities, and possibly a community room. It was also known that Leigh and Bransford Badgers Football Club (LBBFC) were seeking a significant area to consolidate their disparate pitches in the area to one site, with a clubhouse. The Malvern Hills District Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan⁽²¹⁾ (Dec 2021) indicates there will be insufficient provision of football pitches. It also notes that LBBFC currently have pitches in Leigh Sinton at Ralph’s Field but have no security of tenure. It says that, *“The site features poor quality ancillary provision due to being extremely basic”*. The report also says that if long term tenure cannot be assured then, *“Alternatively, investigate options to secure other pitch/facility provision within the vicinity aligned to developer contributions”*. The development proposal provides approximately 5 Ha of land for sports and recreational facilities. An indicative layout for the site is indicated on Map 4a. The parish council commissioned a Housing Needs Survey in the summer of 2021 and included additional questions regarding community facilities. Whilst the survey did not clearly identify any particular facility it highlighted the overall lack of current facilities. The open space would effectively provide a village green and space for village events in addition to general green space. The use of the pitches by LBBFC would not be exclusive. The HNS survey and further consultation with the community will assist the decision making process for new amenities.

5.1.18 Census data from 2011 indicated that about 34% of the population in the Neighbourhood Area was aged over 60, including about 10% over 75. About 16% of the population was aged 20 or less. A graph below indicates demographic change between 2011 and 2017. In addition, a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) was commissioned by Leigh and Bransford Parish council in 2021. A summary of the information is included as Appendix B. The HNS factors should be taken into account when determining the housing mix for the proposed allocation. Community feedback indicated a wish for housing developments to have a mix of housing types and sizes. In an area with an ageing population the feedback also suggested support for single-storey properties. SWDP Policy 14 (Market Housing Mix) states, *“All new residential developments of five or more units, having regard to location, size and scheme viability, should contain a mixture of types and sizes of market housing. The mix will be informed by the latest Strategic Market Assessment and/ or other local data, for example, Neighbourhood Plans, Parish Surveys, Parish Plans and developers’ assessments”*.

The chart below shows the differences between the latest 2017 population estimates and those from the 2011 Census for all five year age categories.



5.1.19 SWDP Policy 15 (Meeting Affordable Housing Needs) states that within set criteria “All new residential development.....will contribute to the provision of affordable housing” and that, “The number, size, type, tenure and distribution of affordable dwellings to be provided will be subject to negotiation, dependent on recognised local housing need, specific site and location factors and development viability.....” Specifically SWDP Policy 15Bi states, “On sites of 15 or more dwellings on greenfield land, 40% of the units should be affordable and provided on site.”

5.1.20 In addition, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils have a Rural Lettings Policy⁽⁸⁾, which, “.. ensures that applicants with a local connection to the parish, and adjoining parishes, will receive preference when an affordable home is being rented or sold there. This will apply on first and subsequent lettings or sales”. The aim of which is to enable people to remain or return to a locality with which they have an association, relating to current or past residence, family connections, or employment.

5.1.21 There had been discussion in the community about whether a new development should extend Leigh Sinton further along the A4103, or whether there should be a more central location. The proposed allocation does extend the north side of the village eastward beyond the length already developed on the south side. However, it does give the village a better balance between north and south of the A4103. In addition, although the allocation is somewhat larger than a section of the community would have wanted, there was also a wish for some affordable housing. The proposed allocation will provide about 20 affordable dwellings with the advantage of being in a mixed development. In addition, as 5.1.18 the development should provide a mix of housing based upon community consultation. Community views on housing mix were sought when a Housing Needs Survey was carried out in the summer of 2021.

5.1.22 There are four designated assets (listed buildings) in close proximity to the proposed site for allocation. A map and details of the properties are included in Appendix C. A Screening Opinion for a Strategic Environmental Assessment concluded that:

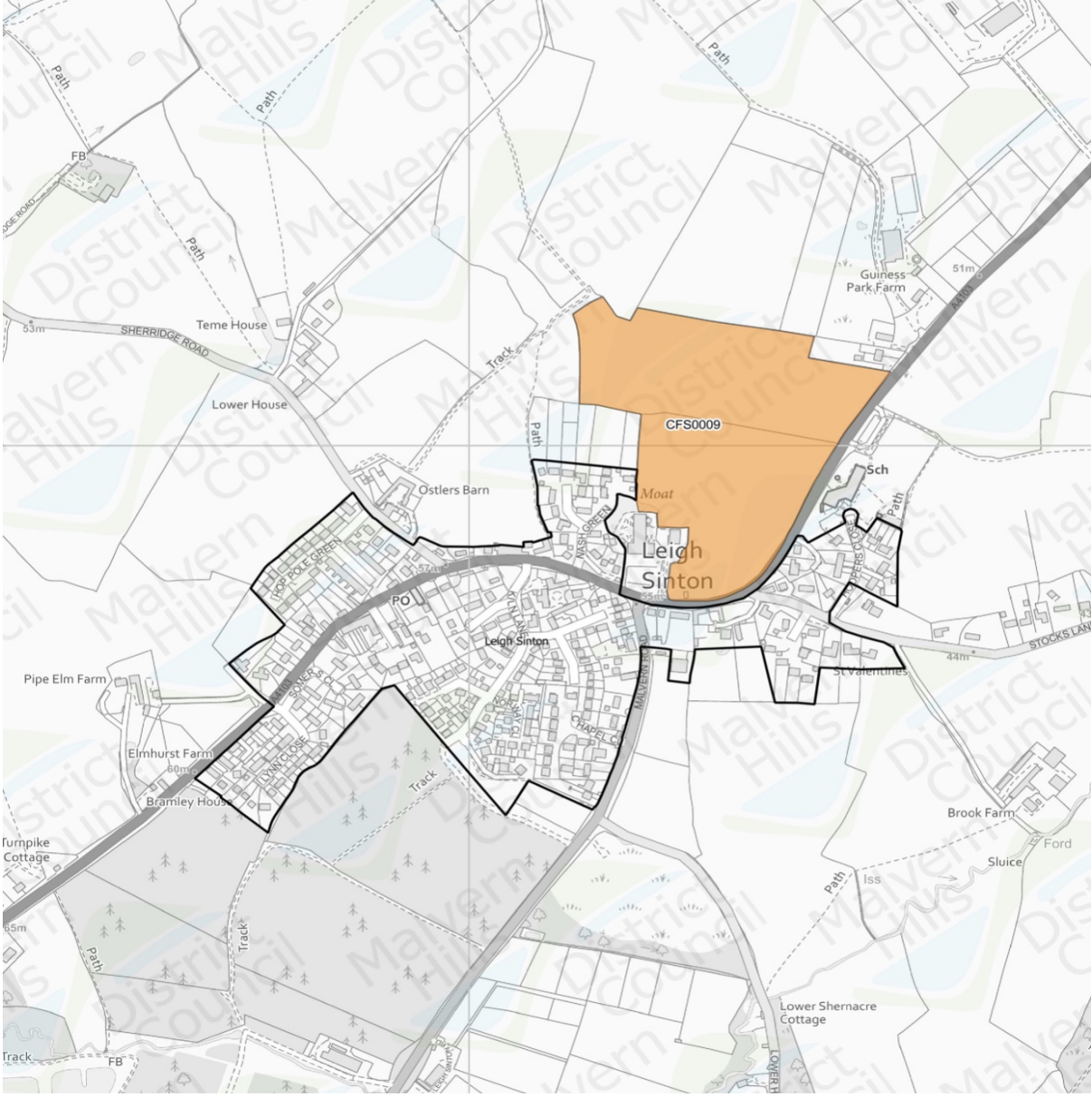
“Further to Historic England’s advice, input was sought from Malvern Hills District Council’s Senior Conservation Officer and Archaeology and Planning Advisor, with the following conclusions drawn: “It is considered that the proposed housing allocation site, if developed, would not cause substantial harm to the heritage assets in the vicinity, though a lower level of less than substantial harm could result. Consequently, it is not considered that the proposal would require a Strategic Environmental Assessment”.

5.1.23 In relation to the effect on wildlife the HRA Screening Opinion concluded that:

As a result of the above assessment, it is considered that the policies of the draft Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan are in general conformity with those contained in the SWDP. Although the draft Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan does deviate from the land allocations contained within the SWDP, the level of such allocation is considered small enough not to have an impact on internationally designated wildlife sites. It is therefore concluded that the draft Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a negative impact on any internationally designated wildlife sites and as such, the recommendation is made that a full AA is not required.



A view from A4103 looking north at south side of proposed allocation.



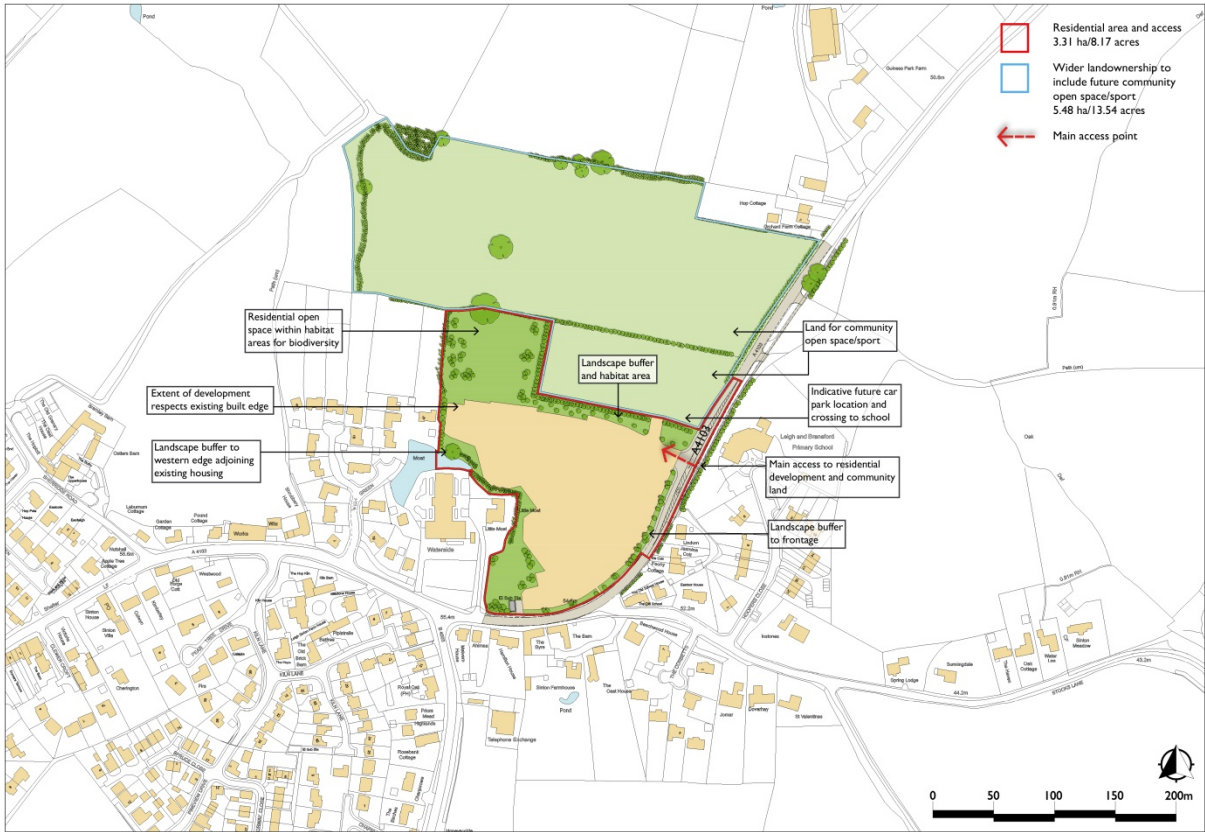
Map 4

(Not to scale at this size)

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Leigh Sinton

**Proposed Site Allocation for Development
in Relation to Existing Development
Boundary**



Map 4a

(Not to scale at this size)

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Leigh Sinton

Proposed Site Allocation for Development
Indicative Layout

5.2 Policies: Design

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Design: Maintaining Local Character

Policy LB/D/1

- a. Developments will be supported where the general scale, mass, height, and layout of the site, building, or extension responds to and integrates with local surroundings. Materials must be chosen to complement the development and add character to the surrounding environment. Proposals for new developments must provide evidence to show how they will enhance and retain the local distinctiveness of an area and to show how the existing conditions and the locally distinctive character of the area have been assessed and translated into proposals.**
- b. Innovative designs, including visual impact and approach to energy efficiency and sustainability, will be supported where they make a positive contribution to the character of the area and contribute to local distinctiveness.**

Policies: Design: Maintaining Local Character: Evidence and Justification

5.2.1 There is a danger that unless consideration is given to the design of individual buildings, and to the position and layout of developments of groups of buildings, the outskirts of rural settlements, regardless of their age and character, will all appear the same.

5.2.2 Respondents to the 2015 Questionnaire felt strongly that future developments should take the overall character of the immediate area and parish into account. The design of new property should reflect the existing size, scale and layout of surrounding properties, and materials should be in keeping with other properties in the locality. One comment was that, "Good design engenders pride in built environments but poor design is a blight and leaves a lamentable legacy for the future". Respondents also felt that new homes should have appropriate garden space. Dwellings should provide sufficient private garden amenity space in scale with the dwelling and local landscape. Boundaries, hedges, trees, fences, walls, should be in keeping with the local landscape.

5.2.3 It is not possible to define the characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area which is a diverse mixture of small dispersed settlements, isolated properties, and isolated small groups of properties; Leigh Sinton is the only significant nucleated settlement. The settlements have evolved slowly over many years resulting in buildings of many styles and ages. It will be necessary to assess each area and proposal discretely. Para 130 of the NPPF states the policies and decisions should ensure developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, and are sympathetic to local character and history. The policy seeks to have regard to Chapter 12 Achieving Well-Designed Places of the NPPF which says that, the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Design: Parking

Policy LB/D/2

All residential developments will provide adequate in-curtilage parking spaces. Parking provision must comply with Worcestershire County Council's Streetscape Design Guide⁽⁹⁾

In addition:

- a) For residential developments greater than five dwellings visitor parking should be provided at one space for every five bedrooms.
- b) The division of dwellings for use as Houses of Multiple Occupancy shall not result in additional on-street parking. With the exception of care homes a sheltered, secure, easily accessible cycle store should be provided for each unit.
- c) Where extensions to existing dwellings result in additional bedrooms the property must comply with the Streetscape Design Guide for parking.
- d) All new employment sites should include provision for sheltered, secure cycle parking

Policies: Design: Parking Provision: Evidence and Justification

5.2.4 On road/street parking is an increasing problem in the area. The lack of effective public transport means that car ownership, and use, is generally high. There are issues with parking on rural verges, in narrow lanes, and on the A4103 through Leigh Sinton, where residential parking often restricts not only the road but the safe use of footways. The organic growth of vehicle ownership has outgrown older developments that did not cater adequately for parking. The design of layouts for new developments, providing adequate parking, will not ease the existing situation but must prevent it from getting even worse. The lack of adequate parking for some existing developments is causing problems; vehicles are parked on footways and verges. The 2011 census indicated that 64% of households in the Neighbourhood Area have 2 cars or more. There is little public transport in Leigh Sinton and none at normal commuting times. In rural and semi-rural environments there is rarely alternative safe on-street parking outside of development areas; adequate provision for parking is essential. WCC Streetscape Design Guide:

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10113/streetscape_design_guide.pdf

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Design: Construction Waste and Recycling

Policy LB/D/3: Evidence should be provided to show that consideration has been given to the re-use of waste arising from the construction process.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Design: Construction Waste and Recycling: Evidence and Justification

5.2.5 Re-using construction waste not only reduces waste to landfill but reduces lorry movements in the area of the development site and beyond.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Design: Household Waste and Recycling

Policy LB/D/4

In addition to the requirements of the Waste Core Strategy integrated or well screened bin storage or recycling facilities should be provided in residential development to minimise visual impact.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Design: Household Waste and Recycling: Evidence and Justification

5.2.6 Malvern Hills District Council currently provides residential properties with two wheelie-bins. Sufficient storage space should be available to encourage recycling and avoid visual intrusion from bins, bags etc.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Design: Dark Skies

Policy LB/D/5:

Where external lighting is proposed in a development it must be demonstrated that it is essential for the maintenance of health and safety by road users and building occupiers. Where external lighting is essential for security or safety it should avoid undue adverse impacts on amenity, wildlife and dark skies.

Policies: Design: Dark Skies: Evidence and Justification

5.2.7 The Neighbourhood Area has predominantly dark skies; there is no street lighting. Feedback from the rural community is that this should continue. Artificial light can be harmful to nocturnal creatures, particularly bats, and can obscure views and enjoyment of the night sky.

5.3 Policies: Heritage, Landscape and Biodiversity

Heritage, landscape, and biodiversity are inextricably linked. The long history of habitation within the parish has left a legacy of historic buildings, monuments, and landscapes, all of which contribute to the natural, built and historic environment. The relatively diverse nature of the area is such that it is outside the scope, or requirements, of the LBNP to describe in full. Each development will need to be sustainable and pay careful attention to heritage, landscape and biodiversity.



Woods in Bransford

Policies: Landscape

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Landscape Character

Policy LB/ E/1:

Development proposals must demonstrate each of the following:

- a. The characteristics and guidelines for the Landscape Type of the proposed site, as defined in the latest Landscape Character Assessment, have positively influenced the siting, design, scale, layout, landscaping and boundary treatment of the proposal.**
- b. Every available opportunity has been taken to strengthen the landscape character of the relevant Landscape Type, by retaining and conserving existing features such as trees, woodland and hedgerows, ditches and watercourses, and by restoring, enhancing and making new provision where this is appropriate.**

Policies: Landscape: Evidence and Justification

5.3.1 The local pastoral landscape reflects its largely agricultural past. The Neighbourhood Area is predominantly an agriculturally improved landscape. The field patterns exhibit evidence of common lands, and farmhouses and farmsteads. In the Teme Plain the river itself, and the valley floor habitats, support a very distinctive flora along its length. Where stream valleys descend towards the Teme they are highly incised and in these areas semi-natural habitats have survived. The pattern of both land use and tenure and farming practice is different; hop and fruit growing were widespread and these forms of agriculture were less destructive for wildlife. In terms of geology, the area is generally underlain by the relatively impermeable Eldersfield Mudstone Formation, weathered red clays of the Mercia Mudstone Group (formerly called Keuper Marl). The red clays weather to form gently rolling landscapes; harder bands, called skerries, weather less readily and can cause ridges and other features.

5.3.2 The character of the local landscape reflects its past use; there are still some areas of unenclosed (common) land, or visible signs of their existence. Since medieval times settlements and farmsteads have been created, and large areas enclosed to form the farmland, field patterns and woodlands visible today.

5.3.3 The south west boundary of the area abuts the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and much of the western boundary is close to the AONB.

5.3.4 A document produced by Worcestershire County Council provides valuable information at planning and development stage. Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance (Worcestershire County Council 2011)⁽¹⁰⁾ is a local document targeted at planning and land management, and enables communities, and developers, to identify the elements that contribute to local distinctiveness. Proposals for development would be expected to refer to, and follow the guidance. The report characterises different types of landscape; the Neighbourhood Area is predominantly within the landscape character area of “Principal Timbered Farmlands” with areas of “Riverside Meadows” along Leigh Brook and the River Teme (See Map 5). The guidance document includes Character Descriptions and also guidelines for the protecting each landscape type:

Principal Timbered Farmlands

“Principal Timbered Farmlands are rolling lowland landscapes with occasional steep sided hills and low escarpments. They have small scale, wooded, agricultural appearance characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. These are complex, in some places intimate, landscapes of irregularly shaped woodlands, winding lanes and frequent wayside dwellings and farmsteads

The Principal Timbered Farmlands are characterised by a mosaic of agricultural land cleared from woodland, on a piecemeal basis, together with land enclosed from former localised areas of open fields resulting in their dispersed pattern of farmsteads and wayside cottages and lack of strong settlement nuclei “.

Landscape Guidelines

- Maintain the tree cover character of hedgerow oaks, and enhance the age structure of the hedgerow oak population.
- Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species.
- Seek to bring about coalescence of fragmented relic ancient woodlands.
- Encourage the planting of new woodlands, reflecting the scale, shape and composition of the existing ancient woodland character, favouring oak as the major species.
- Conserve and restore tree cover along water courses and streamlines.
- Seek opportunities to enhance tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations.
- Conserve and restore the pattern and composition of the hedgerow structure through appropriate management, and replanting.
- Conserve the organic pattern and character of the lane networks.
- Maintain the historic dispersed settlement pattern.

Riverside Meadows

“Riverside Meadows are linear riverine landscapes associated with a flat, generally well-defined alluvial floodplain, in places framed by steeply rising ground. These are secluded pastoral landscapes, characterised by meandering, tree-lined rivers, flanked by alluvial meadows which are defined by hedge and ditch boundaries. Settlement is typically absent”.

Landscape Guidelines

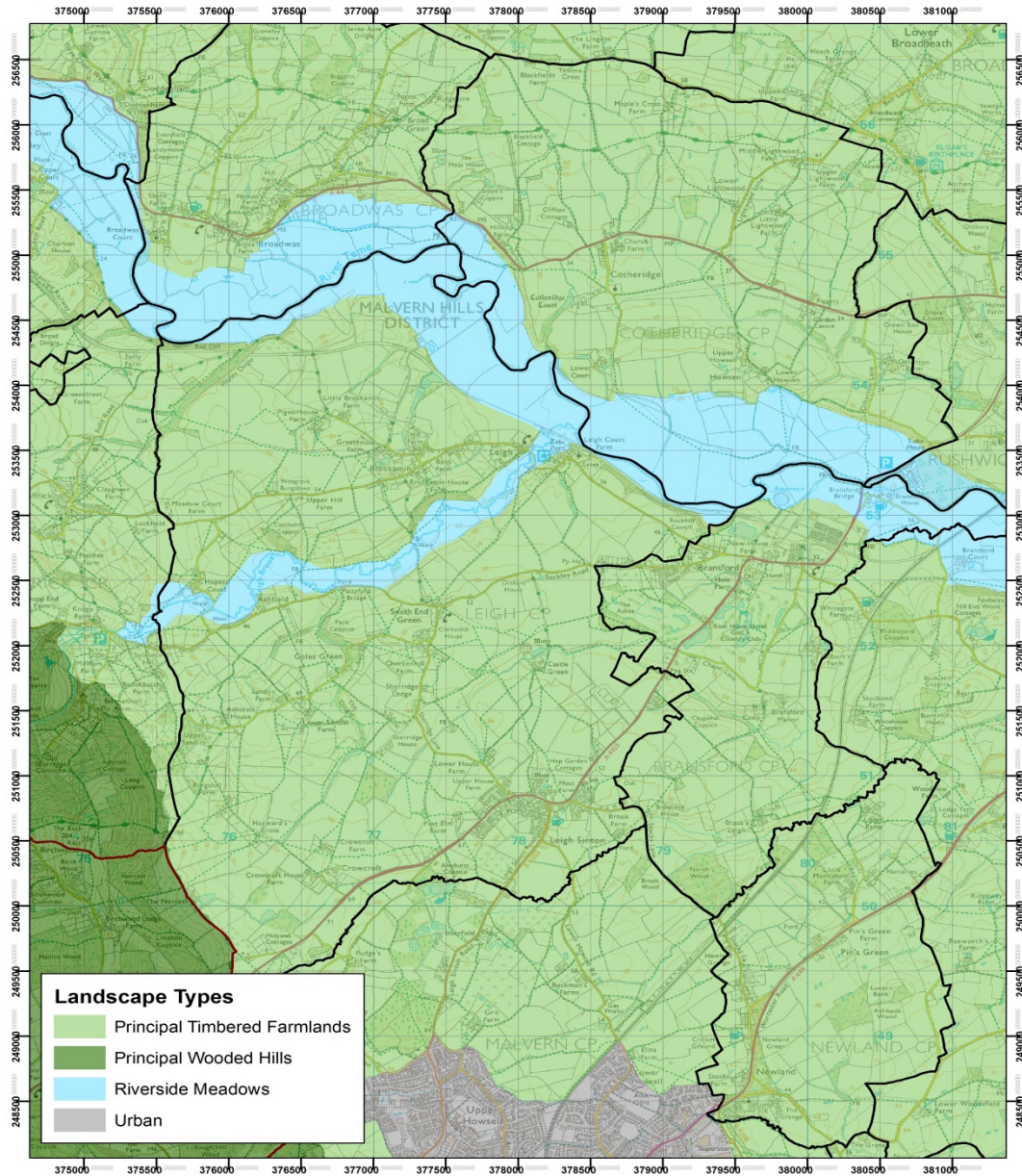
- *Seek to retain the unity of the linear form of these landscapes.*
- *Conserve all existing areas of permanent pasture.*
- *Seek opportunities to encourage the conversion of arable land back to pasture.*
- *Conserve and enhance continuous tree cover along hedgelines, ditches and watercourses.*
- *Conserve existing wetland habitats and seek opportunities for further wetland habitat creation.*
- *Avoid building or road construction works.*
- *Avoid further drainage of waterside meadows.*
- *Explore opportunities to return to patterns and processes of natural flooding cycles.*

5.3.5 The Neighbourhood Area lies wholly within Natural England's National Character Area 106⁽¹¹⁾ Severn and Avon Vales, but abuts Area 103: Malvern Hills, to the west.

5.3.6 The overwhelming feedback from the local community is that they like the quality of life that living in the parish brings. They enjoy living in a quiet rural/ semi-rural landscape within, and close to, the unspoilt countryside. They are aware of, and value, the biodiversity in the local hedgerows, verges, and along footpaths, and feel that it should be protected. It is felt that any development should be "in character" with its surroundings, and integrate with the local environment.

5.3.7 Worcestershire County Council have produced a document that provides further assistance with development and planning. Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework (Worcestershire County Council 2013)⁽¹³⁾ is a series of technical briefing papers in which Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined as: *"..the network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. It is the open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage and open countryside.* Policies in the LBNP seek to address issues in relation to GI.

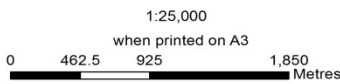
Title



Landscape Types

- Principal Timbered Farmlands
- Principal Wooded Hills
- Riverside Meadows
- Urban

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The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts,
Worcester. WR1 3PD
Telephone 01905 845618

Map 5
(Not to scale at this size)

**Worcestershire Landscape Types in
Relation to Leigh and Bransford**

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Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Landscape: Local Green Spaces

Policy LB/ E/2:

The following areas of land shown on Figures 1 and 2 are proposed as Local Green Space:

- Land adjacent to Brockamin Lane, Bransford
- The orchard adjacent to Kiln Lane

Development that would result in the loss or partial loss of the Local Green Spaces will not be supported unless very special circumstances arise which outweigh the need for protection.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Landscape: Local Green Spaces

5.3.8 Paras 101-103 in the NPPF provide an opportunity for communities to protect Green Space. Green Spaces can be in private ownership and the designation of Green Space does not grant public access. There are strict criteria for the designation of Green Space:

“Para 101. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs, and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

Para 102. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

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

Para 103. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts”

5.3.9 The following Local Green Spaces have been identified and are shown on Figures 1 and 2:

Local Green Space 1. Meadow land adjacent to Brockamin Lane, Bransford; known locally as The Glebe Lands. It is immediately adjacent to the edge of the main body of dwellings in Bransford, local in character, and is a relatively small parcel of land. It is valued in its own right within the landscape and for the access it provides to the larger local area via public footpaths. The area is crossed by a public footpath and is widely used by local walkers and dog walkers. There are views to the Malvern Hills to the west.



Figure 1: Local Green Space 1, adjacent to Brockamin Lane, Bransford



Picture: Local Green Space 1 viewed from Brockamin Lane, looking south west

5.3.10 Local Green Space 2. Orchard adjacent to Kiln Lane development. This area is immediately adjacent to the Development Area of Leigh Sinton. Local residents value the traditional orchard and the wildlife it sustains. It was a planning condition for the Kiln Lane development that, *“Prior to the occupation of the dwellings on site in connection with this development an ecological enhancement and future maintenance plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing in accordance with the recommendations set out set out in the Ecological Assessment and Protected Species Survey dated July 2013, with particular reference to future management of the old orchard abutting the eastern side of the SuDs feature along with the number, design and siting of bat boxes.”*

Reason: To ensure the details of the ecological enhancement scheme are secured in the interests of achieving a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.”

The landowner currently permits public access to the orchard. The orchard and the adjacent play area, and SUDS areas are maintained as part of a contract with the Residents Association of the adjacent residential development.

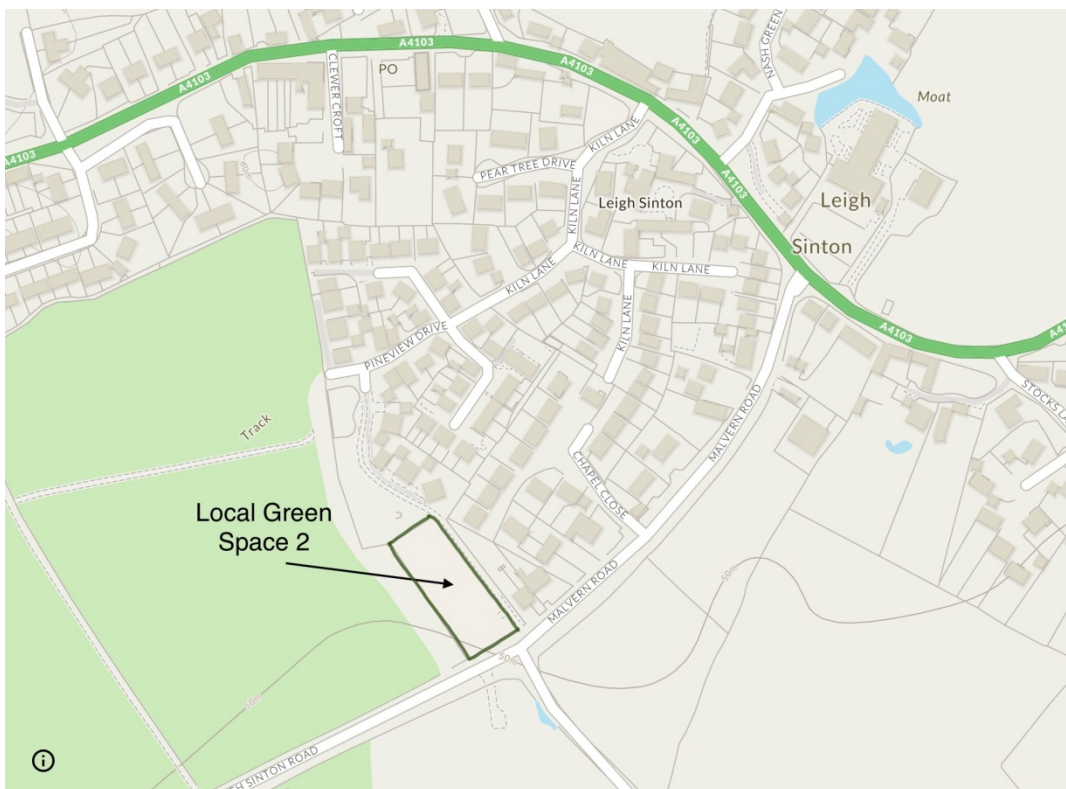


Figure 2: Local Green Space 2, adjacent to Malvern Road, Leigh Sinton



Picture: Local Green Space 2 viewed from Malvern Rise development

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Landscape: Key Views
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Policy LB/ E/3

To be supported development proposals must demonstrate that they are sited, designed and of such a scale that they do not substantially harm the key views (identified on Fig 3) when seen from locations that are freely accessible to members of the general public.

Policies: Landscape: Key Views: Evidence and Justification

5.3.11 Views relating to Policy LB/E/3/ are shown on Figure 3 and listed below. The views have been assessed based on a looks towards the Malvern Hills AONB and has the Malvern Hills predominating in the distance but each has a different viewpoint and intermediate landscape. Views were assessed using a report from Environmental, Landscape and Colour Consultancy ⁽¹⁴⁾

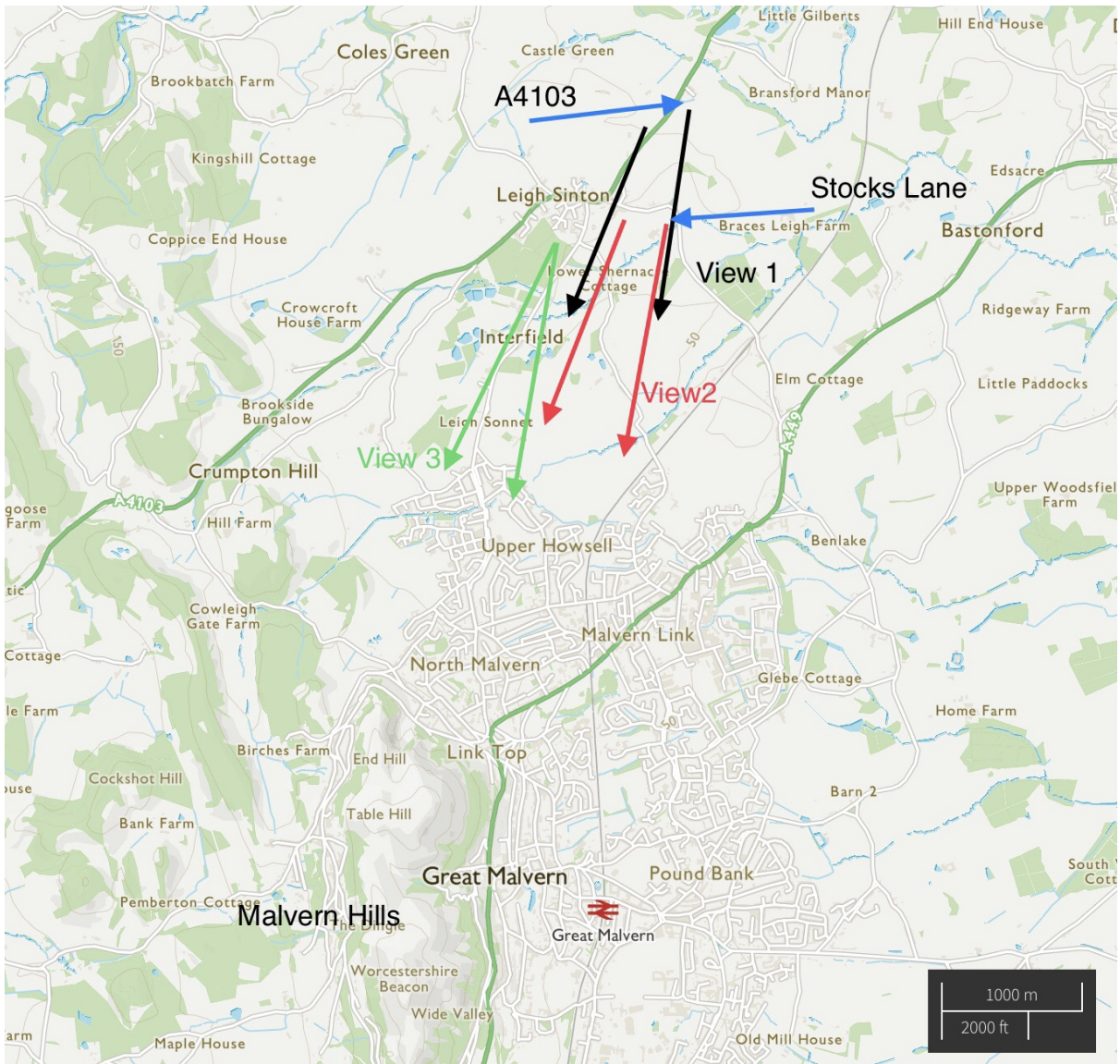


Fig 3: Key Views

View 1. The entry into Leigh Sinton looking across farmland to the Malvern Hills from the A4103. This panoramic view has the Malvern Hills as the dominant part of the skyline; in context the view is linked to the Malverns by unspoilt pasture land. From the criteria in Appendix F the Level of Visual Value is High/ Very High being a view towards the Malvern Hills AOAB and of High/ Outstanding scenic beauty. The view also has High contribution to the understanding of the local landscape within the larger overall landscape. The view is seen from the A4103, approaching Leigh Sinton from the east. There is a formal footway adjacent to the A4103 and the view is seen by large numbers of people.



View 1 Looking to Malverns from A4103 approaching Leigh Sinton

View 2. The entry into Leigh Sinton along Stocks Lane from the east, looking across farmland to the Malvern Hills. This view has the Malverns as a prominent part of the skyline. In context the view is enhanced by the intervening land of mixed arable and grazing land. It is an unspoilt access to the village from the south. From the criteria in Appendix F the Level of Visual Value is High/ Very High being a view towards the Malvern Hills AOAB and of High scenic beauty. The view also has High contribution to the understanding of the contribution of the local landscape within the larger overall landscape. The view is seen by large numbers of people travelling and walking along Stocks Lane.



View 2 Looking to Malverns from Stocks Lane approaching Leigh Sinton

View 3. Looking towards the Malvern Hills from Kiln Lane (Malvern Rise), Leigh Sinton. This panoramic view has the Malvern Hills as the dominant part of the skyline; in context the view is linked to the Malverns by pasture land, recently used for the growing of Christmas trees. It provides an open aspect to the developed edge of the village. From the criteria in Appendix F the Level of Visual Value is High/ Very High being a view towards the Malvern Hills AOAB and of High scenic beauty. The view also has High contribution to the understanding of the contribution of the local landscape within the larger overall landscape. The view is visible from the Kiln Lane development.



View 3: Looking from Kiln Lane/ Malvern Rise

Policies: Heritage

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Protecting Local Heritage Assets

Policy LB/ E/4:

a. To be supported, proposals which affect a non-designated heritage asset (a building or structure on the Local List following adoption by Malvern Hills District Council] must demonstrate how they protect or enhance the heritage asset.

b. To be supported, proposals for the renovation or alteration of a non-designated heritage asset (building or structure) must be designed sensitively, and with careful regard to the heritage asset's historical and architectural interest and setting.

Policies: Heritage: Protecting Local Heritage Assets: Evidence and Justification

5.3.12 Buildings do not have to be old or historically significant to have a character that is important to people's understanding and enjoyment of an area. In addition to the designated heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Area (which enjoy significant protection provided under national planning policy) there are a number of buildings/ assets within the Neighbourhood Area that have local heritage value. These may not be appropriate for national listing, but could be locally listed. The Local List will be designated and maintained by Malvern Hills District Council.

5.3.13 The Parish Council will nominate non-designated heritage assets for consideration in the MHDC Local List SPD. As non-designated heritage assets these buildings would be afforded some protection through local planning policy. The identification of proposed non-designated assets is included in Appendix A, Parish Tasks (Task 2).

5.3.14 Natural heritage is described in Landscape (paras 5.3.1 to 5.3.11) and Biodiversity (paras 5.3.20 to 5.3.26). This section relates to the built heritage of the Neighbourhood Area. Generally the area has a dispersed settlement pattern, the exceptions being the more nucleated settlements in Bransford, Leigh, and Leigh Sinton. The interaction of buildings and their landscape is described in Worcestershire County Council report, "Your Place Matters: Understanding Buildings and their Setting in Rural Worcestershire⁽¹²⁾", which says, "*The relationship of buildings to each other and to surrounding features, including routeways, gardens and the surrounding landscape, can shape the character of a settlement. This relationship can be regular, indicating a high degree of 'planning' or irregular- suggesting haphazard or unplanned growth (Roberts1987, 24). For example, a settlement with a linear, consistent building line with buildings set within narrow plots, close to the road looks and feels very different to a settlement with a winding, inconsistent building line with buildings set within wide building plots, set back from the road*". Rural buildings reflect local styles, and their evolution reflects changing patterns of community life. Our sense of place is largely embodied in these buildings.

5.3.15 See also 5.1.22 relating to the effect of the proposed site allocation on designated assets

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Heritage: Archaeology

Policy LB/E/5:

To be supported development proposals should meet all of the following criteria:

- a. Avoid or minimise any conflict with known surface and sub-surface archaeology included in the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.
- b. Ensure unknown and potentially significant deposits are identified and appropriately considered during development. Lack of current evidence of surface or sub-surface archaeology must not be taken as proof of absence.
- c. Where proposals are likely to affect heritage assets with archaeological interest, they should be accompanied by a description informed by available evidence, desk-based assessment and, where appropriate, field evaluation to establish the significance of known or potential heritage assets.

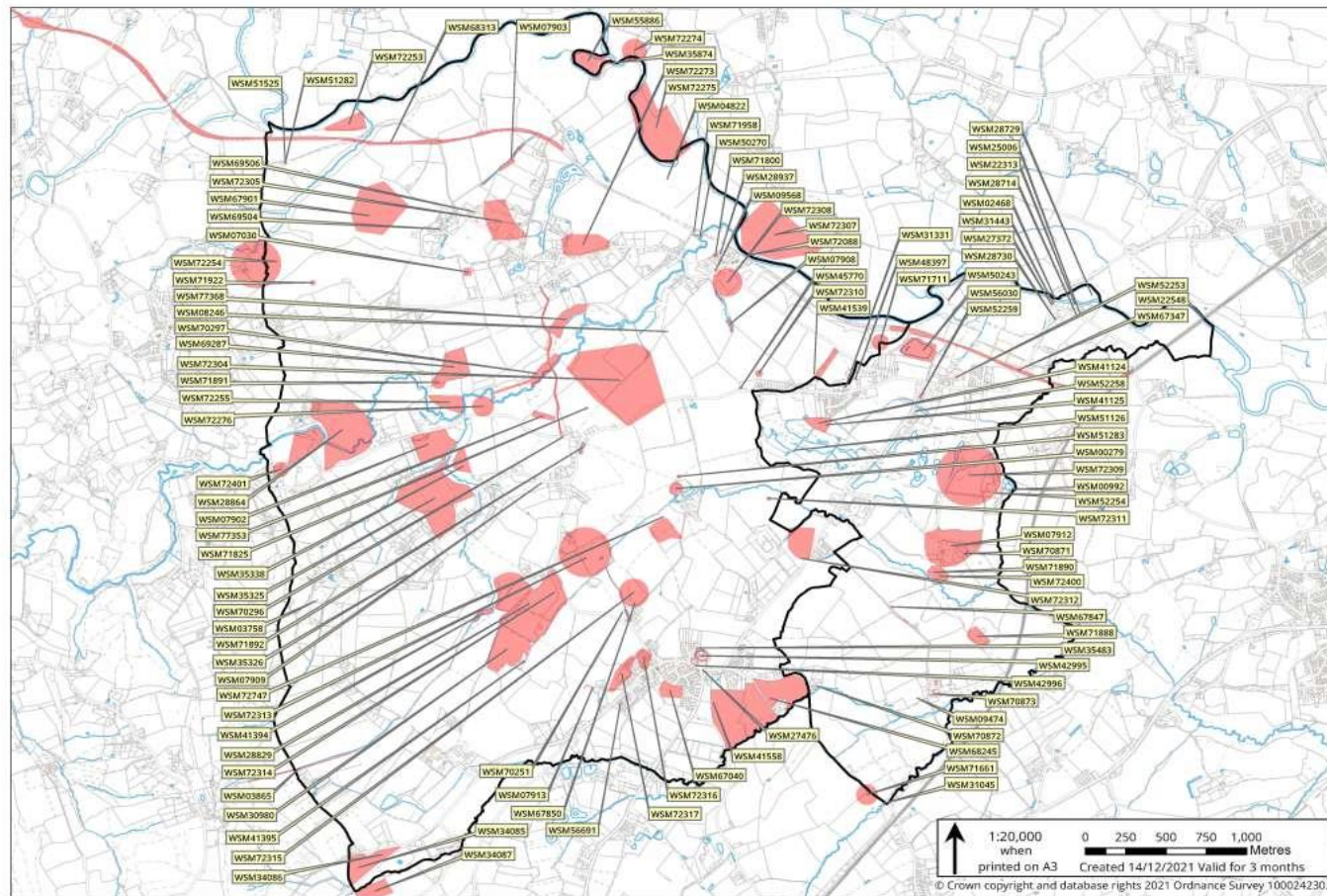
Policies: Heritage: Archaeology: Evidence and Justification

5.3.16 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF says that where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should, "require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting." SWDP 24 (Management of the Historic Environment) says that where proposals are likely to affect heritage assets with archaeological interest they should be accompanied by a description informed by available evidence, desk-based assessment and, where appropriate, field evaluation to establish the significance of known or potential heritage assets.

5.3.17 In preparation for the LBNP the parish council commissioned Historic Environment Record (HER) searches for the areas of Leigh, and Bransford⁽¹⁵⁾. Summaries of the searches are reproduced in Appendix D. It should be noted that the searches were deemed correct at the time of search but are subject to change, especially if buildings are re-Designated by Historic England. Also the absence of archaeological records should not be interpreted as an absence of archaeology. Map 6 indicates known sites of surface and subsurface archaeology.

HER Searches for Leigh and Bransford:

<http://www.leighandbransford.org.uk/parish-council/neighbourhood-plan/>



Map 6

(Not to scale at this size)

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Sites of Known Surface and Subsurface Archaeology

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Heritage: Farmsteads and Agricultural Buildings

Policy LB/E/6:

Redevelopment, alteration or extension of historic farmsteads and agricultural buildings within the Neighbourhood Area (as shown on Map 7) should be sensitive to their local distinctiveness, materials and form. Due reference and consideration should be made to the Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework.

Policies: Heritage: Farmsteads and Agricultural Buildings: Evidence and Justification

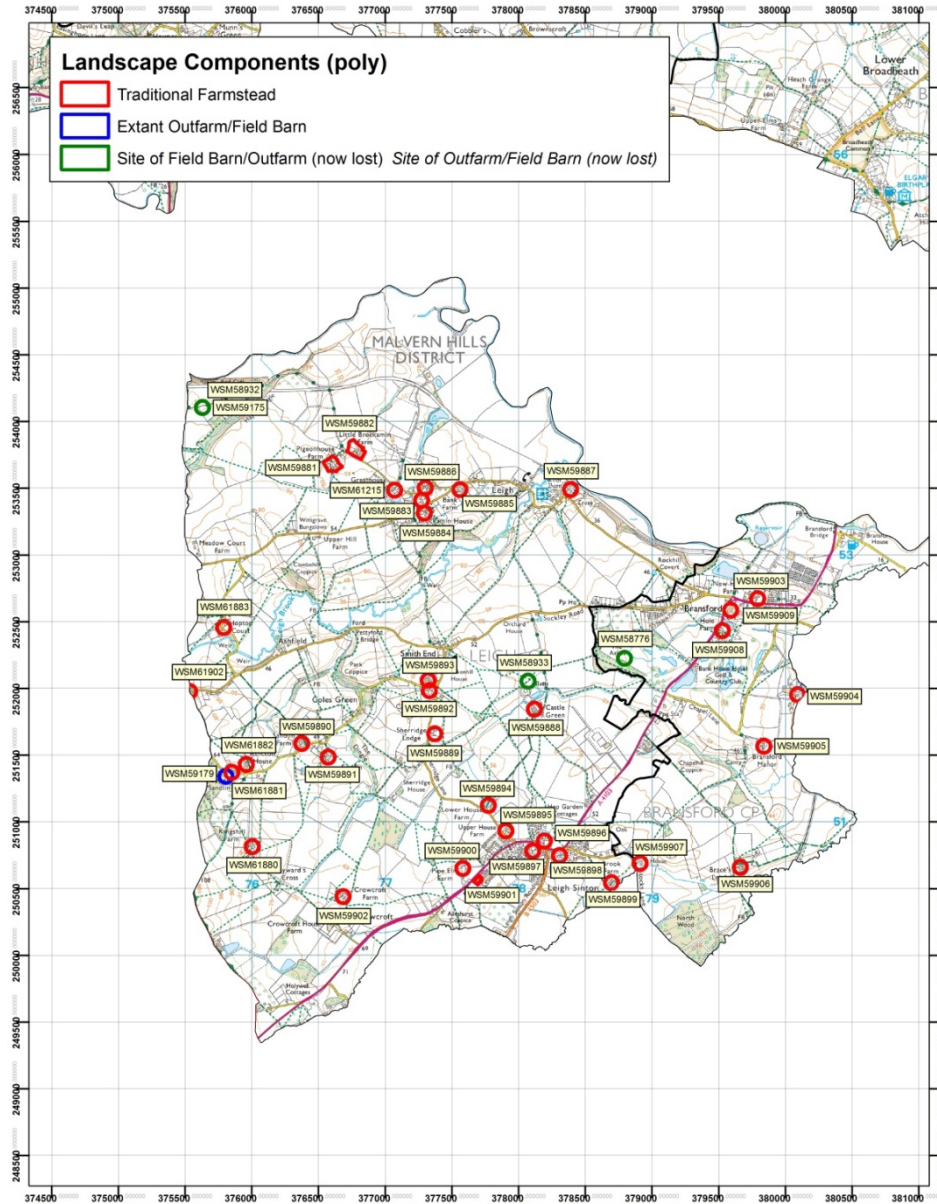
5.3.18 Farmsteads form an important part of the local landscape. The Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework⁽¹⁶⁾ says, “A farmstead is the place where the farmhouse and the working buildings of a farm are located, some farms having field barns or outfarms sited away from the main building. Most traditional buildings date from the 19th century and few were built after the 1880’s. They display an immense variation in their architectural form, detail, and use of materials, reflecting differences in key functions such as the need to house and process harvested crops and shelter farm animals. Traditional farmsteads plans are similarly varied in their layout and scale.....

Traditional farmsteads and buildings are heritage assets which make a significant contribution to both landscape character and local distinctiveness. In addition, through a diversity of uses, they also influence local communities and economies. As agricultural practices and the rural economy change, many such farmsteads and buildings become redundant from their original use, and are difficult to adapt to modern farming needs; without appropriate uses they will not be maintained and may disappear from the landscape. New uses, which both enhance and are sensitive to their historic character and significance, are to be encouraged”. (See Map 7: Traditional Farmsteads and Outfarms).

Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework

<https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Worcestershire-Farmsteads-Assessment-Framework-2014-tagged.pdf>

Title



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2018 Ordnance Survey 100024230.
0 465 930 1,860 Metres
The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts,
Worcester, WR1 3PD
Telephone 01905 845618

Map 7
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**Traditional Farmsteads and Outfarms/
Field Barns in Leigh and Bransford**
(Reference numbers refer to HER records)



Farmhouse Leigh Sinton

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Heritage: Conservation Areas

Policy LB/E/7:

Development proposals within Leigh Conservation Area or its setting should preserve or enhance its character or appearance, having regard to its significance and special interest.

Proposals will be supported provided that they meet all of the following criteria:

- a. serve to preserve or positively enhance the Conservation Area by virtue of their use, character and design; and**
- b. avoid any demolition of a building or structure if its loss would be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area; and**
- c. respect the prevailing density of buildings and their plan form, recognising the variations that occur in these factors within the Conservation Area; and**
- d. reflect the size, height, scale, form, proportions and detailing of the existing and surrounding built form; and**
- e. use local materials and vernacular techniques wherever possible; and**
- f. ensure that any extensions and service buildings are subsidiary to the main property, are not unduly prominent in the street scene, and use sympathetic materials to the main property; and**
- g. retain important views, open spaces, boundary features, trees and hedgerows; and**
- h. specify local materials or native species for any new boundary treatments such as walls, railings, fencing or hedging; and**
- i. preserve the open countryside setting of the Conservation Area.”**

The Conservation Area at Leigh is indicated on Map 8.

Policies: Heritage: Conservation Areas: Evidence and Justification

5.3.19 An area of Leigh is designated as a Conservation Area (See Map 8). Every local authority is obliged under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to prepare conservation area appraisals and management strategies, including a review of boundaries. The existing appraisal for Leigh was prepared in 1996. The following text is an extract from the appraisal.

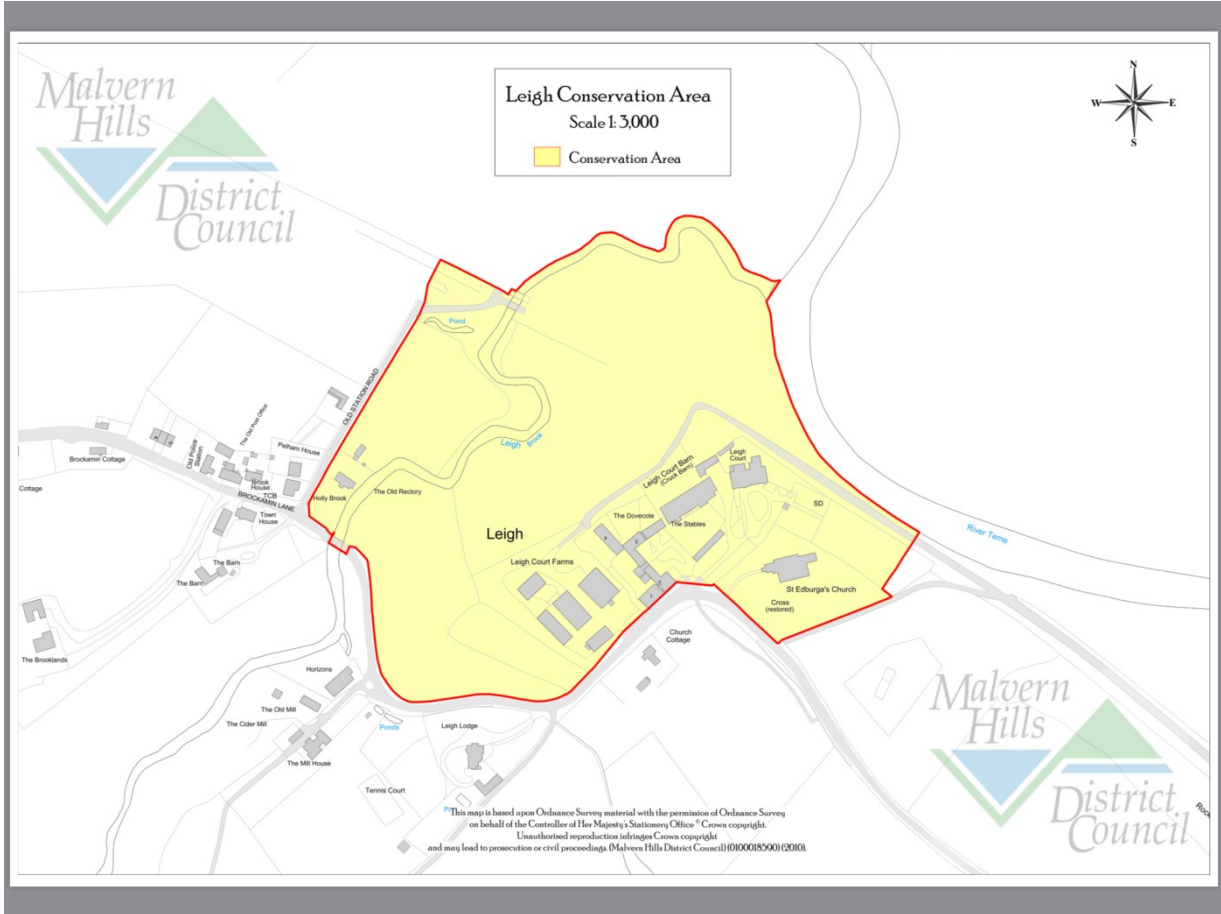
“Leigh is a small rural settlement, set amongst countryside rich in agricultural tradition, with tree lined lanes, open fields, the meandering Leigh Brook and the River Teme.

Leigh The focal point of the village is centred around the Grade I listed Church of St Edburga, which dates from the 12th century. And the surrounding group of farm buildings which include a hop kiln, dovecot, cruck barn and farmhouse. Although these buildings are listed for their group value, they are dominated by the cruck barn which is a Grade I listed building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is the largest medieval barn of its type in Worcestershire. It is thought to be 14th century, with a likely date of 1325. Other listed buildings include the 19th century Leigh Court Farmhouse with 17th century remains and its 19th century dovecot, both of which are Grade II listed, and a pair of Grade II listed lodges and garden wall to the east of the farmhouse. Although individually of differing periods and styles these buildings are drawn harmoniously together and are complemented by mature trees and surrounding fields.

The Conservation Area includes significant areas of important open space, particularly to the north west of the Cruck Barn and Leigh court Farmhouse, which provide both the fine views and setting presently afforded to this group of buildings”.



Leigh



Map 8
(Not to scale at this size)

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Leigh: Conservation Area

Policies: Biodiversity

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Biodiversity

Policy LB/E/8

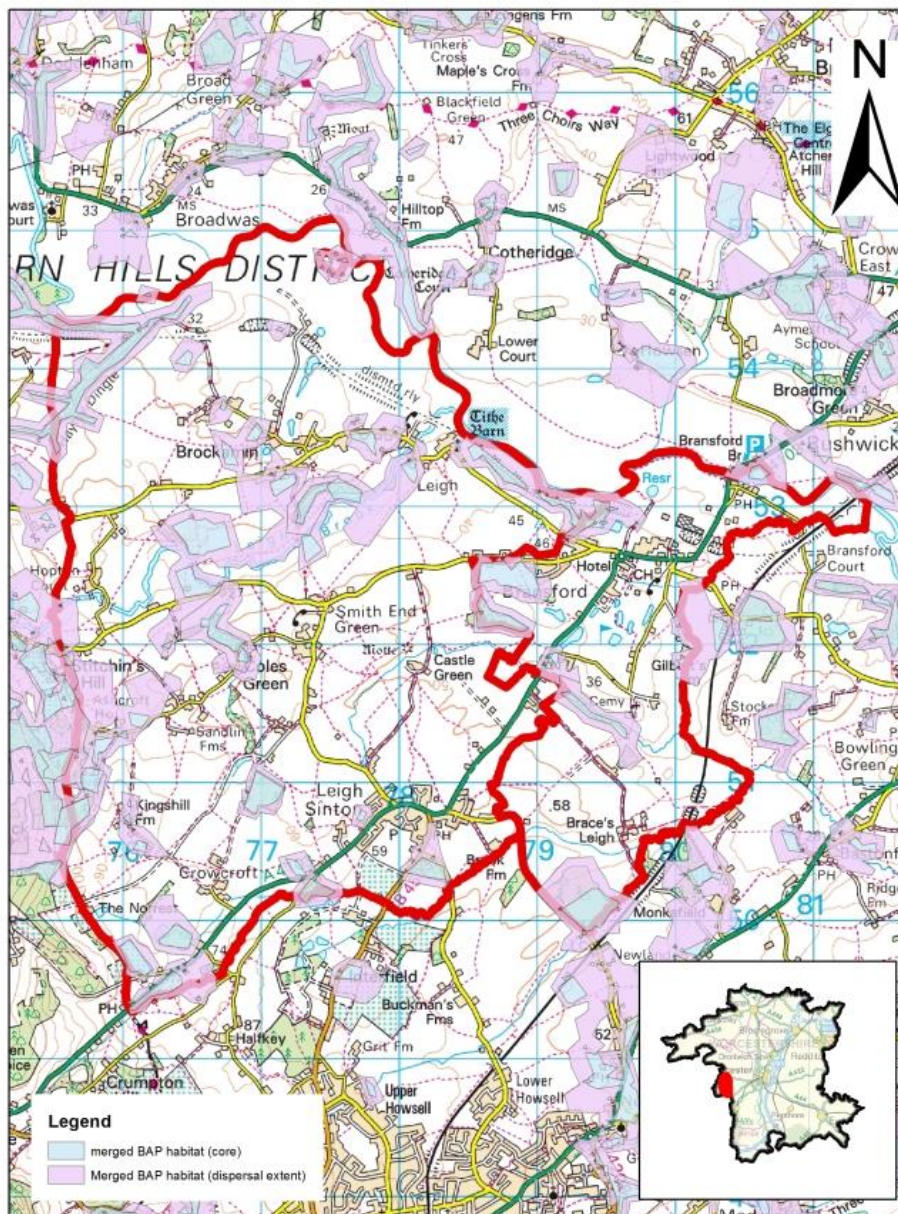
All development proposals that impact on local wildlife and habitats, must demonstrate how biodiversity will be protected and enhanced. Map 9 and Map 10 indicate sites already identified as designated sites for importance for nature conservation, and merged habitat networks.

Policies: Biodiversity: Protect and Enhance: Evidence and Justification

5.3.20 When biodiversity is lost it can take a long time and be expensive to replace; in most cases true replacement is impossible. Generally, damage is irreversible. Some aspects of local biodiversity are fragile and renewal, as well as enhancement, will provide security for the future. Para 8 of the NPPF refers to three over-arching objectives. The environmental objective includes, “...*protecting and enhancing our natural, built, and historic environment, ...helping to improve biodiversity*”. SWDP 21 and SWDP22 deal with the principle in more detail. Therefore, it is important that developments should consider protecting and enhancing and restoring features such as mature/ancient/veteran trees, traditional orchards, rivers, streams, ponds, existing areas of woodland, verges, and important and species-rich hedgerows and all features of high nature conservation of landscape value. Proposals should also include for re-naturalisation of water courses, incorporation of ponds, woodland planting, and installation of roosting/ nesting boxes for small birds, owls and bats. Priority should be given to on-site enhancement measures for particular opportunities for horseshoe bats, barn owls and dormice. Boundaries should be replanted with species rich hedgerows, where possible using original tree, plants and seed materials when creating new semi-natural habitats.



Woods at Bransford



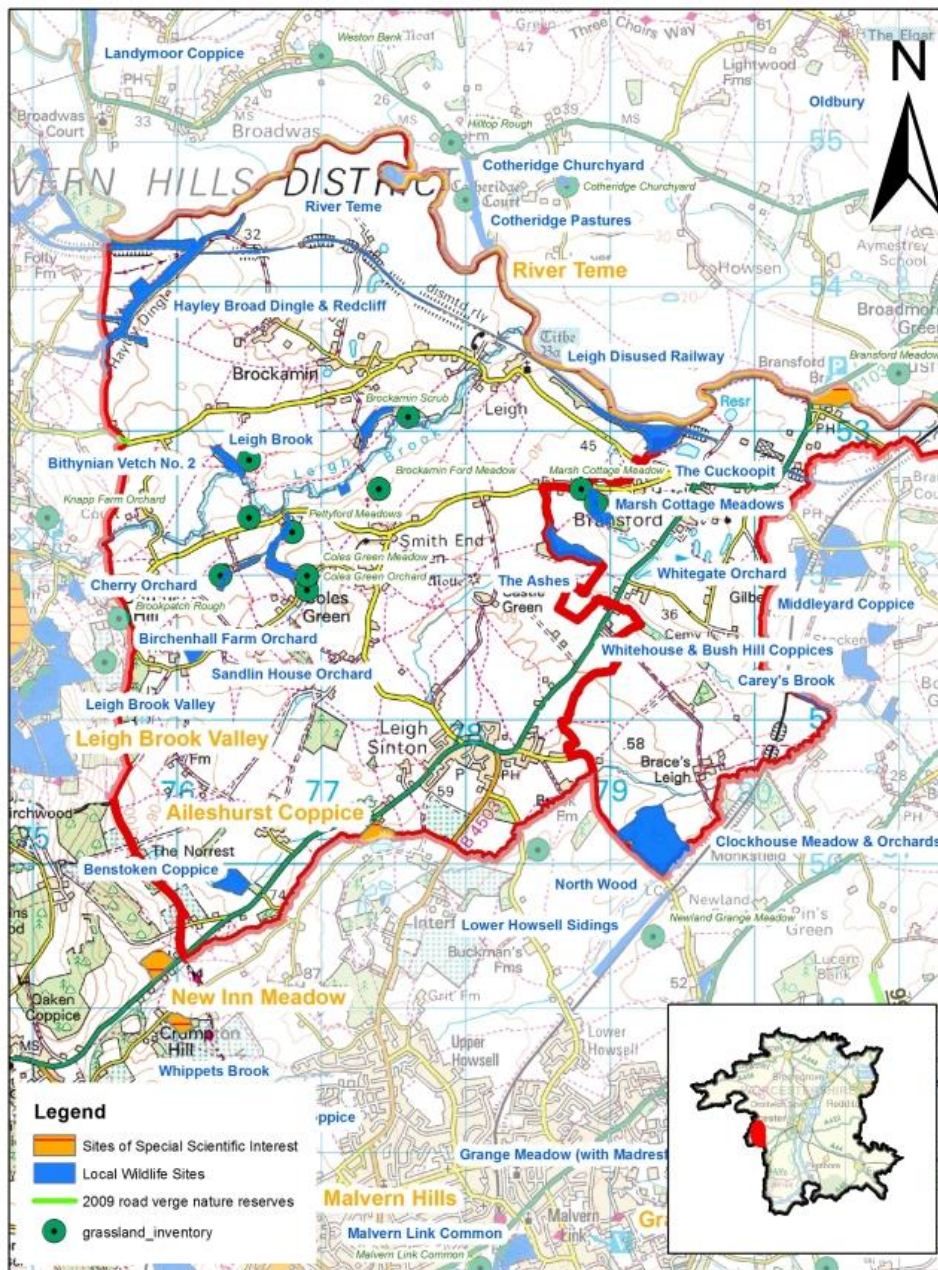
<p>worcestershire county council</p>	<p>Scale: 1:35,600</p>	<p>0 1250 500 750 1,000 1,250 1,500 1,750 2,000 2,250 2,500</p> <p>Metres</p>
		<p>0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 1.2 1.4</p> <p>Miles</p>
<p>County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP</p>	<p>The Parishes of Leigh and Bransford showing merged BAP habitat network</p>	<p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100024230.</p>

Map 9

(Not to scale at this size)

Merged Biodiversity Action Plan Networks

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worcestershire
county council

County Hall,
Spetchley Road,
Worcester
WR5 2NP

The Parishes of Leigh and Bransford
showing designated sites of importance
for nature conservation

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Map 10

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Designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Leigh and Bransford

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy LB/E/9

To be supported development proposals must demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity wherever practical and viable by meeting all of the following criteria:

- a. Retaining existing wildlife habitats and landscape features (such as watercourses, ponds, unimproved grassland, and orchards) to support biodiversity.
- b. Creating new wildlife habitats
- c. Including native flora in replacement planting, and new planting, such as hedgerows, landscaping, and open spaces.
- d. Creating a biodiversity-friendly environment by including features such as bat boxes, bird boxes, nest cups, and bee bricks
- e. Including wildlife friendly boundary treatments that facilitate the movement of species.

See also Policy LB/I/4e

Policies: Biodiversity: Net Gain: Evidence and Justification

5.3.21 The area is rich in biodiversity. Worcestershire retains many quintessential elements of the English countryside and it is essential that they are protected and enhanced. Traditional orchards provide habitats for insects and hole-nesting and insect eating birds. Hedgerows support a variety of wildlife combining the benefits of scrub, woodland and woodland edge habitat. It has been estimated that 80% of Worcestershire's botanical diversity is to be found in road-side verges; many of the existing roads are re-engineered from Roman and mediaeval routes and may support some of the last remaining fragments of our natural vegetation. 97% of natural pastures and lowland hay meadows have been lost in England since the Second World War. Worcestershire retains 20% of the remaining species-rich meadow and pasture on neutral soils that still exist in England. Woodlands of all types provide shelter and food for many species. Semi-natural ancient woodlands contain species that arrived here naturally since the last ice age. Grasslands include species-rich semi-natural grasslands, grazed pasture, and parks and gardens, each with their own biodiversity. The native, wild flora found within arable fields is the most critically threatened group of plants in Britain. The biodiversity in cropped land, including fallow or setaside, cereals, vegetables etc, will vary considerably depending on the type of farming adopted but nearly all are represented in the area.

5.3.22 In the Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan there is overwhelming evidence that Worcestershire, in common with the rest of the UK, has suffered huge losses of habitats and species. The aim of the Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was to assess how limited resources can be best used to protect and enhance what remains. The information included is another valuable resource in assessing development. (See Map 9 for The BAP habitat network).

5.3.23 To assist with the preparation of the LBNP report Worcestershire County Council was commissioned to prepare a Biodiversity Report for the Neighbourhood Area: Ecological Search for Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan⁽¹⁷⁾. The report contains a significant amount of information and data for the neighbourhood area. A Summary of the report, describing some key features is included as Appendix E. Ecological Search for Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan: <http://www.leighandbransford.org.uk/parish-council/neighbourhood-plan/>

5.3.24 The report includes individual Site Designation Reports. There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Neighbourhood Area: The Teme Valley, and Aileshurst Coppice. A further SSSI (New Inn Meadow) abuts the south-west corner of the area. The report also identifies a significant number of Local Wildlife Sites and two Roadside Verge Nature Reserves. The report includes a series of maps of the Neighbourhood Area that have resulted from a systematic survey of Worcestershire on a field by field basis indicating different types of landscape and habitat. The results include information from the Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan. (See Map 10 for designated sites).

5.3.25 The principle of “biodiversity net gain” should be considered in all developments. Para 174 of the NPPF refers to, “...*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.....recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.....minimising impacts on and providing net gains in biodiversity*”. SWDP 21 and SWDP22 deal with the principle in more detail.

5.3.26 See also 5.1.23 regarding the Screening Opinion for HRA.



Bransford Orchard

5.4 Infrastructure and Energy

Policies: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Infrastructure: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Policy LB/I/1 To increase the supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, all new developments over 100 m² gross or one or more dwellings should incorporate the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon sources equivalent to at least 20% of predicted energy requirements unless it has been demonstrated that this would make the development unviable.

Policy LB/I/2 With the exception of wind turbines proposals for stand-alone renewable or low carbon energy projects and associated infrastructure in the Leigh & Bransford Neighbourhood Area will be supported where they can demonstrate that all the following requirements can be met. In making this assessment, any other existing, permitted or proposed similar developments in the locality will be taken into account so that cumulative impacts are considered. Wherever possible, proposals should be situated on previously-developed or non-agricultural land which is not of high environmental value. The requirements are that:

- a. any proposed use of agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, that poorer quality land has been used in preference to land of higher quality, and that the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and practicable, and encourages biodiversity improvements; and
- b. the impacts on landscape character, views and visual amenity are acceptable, or are capable of being satisfactorily mitigated by a landscaping scheme which is itself acceptable; and
- c. there will be no undue loss of amenity to the occupiers of residential properties, including by way of security fencing, noise, lighting or the design and siting of any installation; and
- d. the local highway network and the proposed means of vehicular access can cater safely for both the volume and type of vehicles anticipated, and the proposed access is environmentally acceptable; and
- e. where relevant, sustainable drainage proposals are included to acceptably manage surface water and avoid risk of pollution, soil erosion and damage to wildlife habitats; and
- f. there are no unacceptable impacts on the natural and historic environments, taking account of the impact on views important to the setting of heritage assets; and
- g. there are no unacceptable impacts on the utility and enjoyment of public rights of way.

Where appropriate, planning conditions will be imposed to ensure that installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use and condition.

Policies: Infrastructure and Energy: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy: Evidence and Justification

5.4.1 Paragraph 153 of the NPPF refers to Planning for Climate Change, *“Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.”* SWDP 27C says, *“With the exception of wind turbines proposals for stand-alone renewable and other low carbon energy schemes are welcomed and will be considered favourably having regard to the provisions of other relevant policies in the Plan”* With the exception of wind turbines, Policies LB/I/1 and 2 support proposals for stand-alone renewable or low carbon energy projects and associated infrastructure where they can demonstrate specific requirements can be met. The LBNP does not identify sites or areas suitable for the generation of electricity by wind power.

5.4.2 In July 2019, Malvern Hills District Councillors unanimously supported a motion for the Council to declare a Climate Emergency and prepare an action plan by way of response. The following text is taken from the action plan: Destination Zero: *“We need to ensure the homes we are planning now are fit for the future. This means that not only must they not add excessive amounts of carbon emissions to the atmosphere during construction, but they must be designed in ways that can protect people from excessive heat, flooding etc.*

Households across Malvern currently generate on average 4.9 tonnes of carbon emissions per person, every year, including transport. According to the latest five year housing land supply report, 217 homes per year need to be built across the district up until 2030, with a further 1,940 proposed to 2041 as part of the SWDP Review. Based on an average household size of 2.35, and without any changes to the way homes are built, heated, supplied with electricity or lifestyle behaviour change from the public, this would add close to 48,000 tonnes of carbon emissions to the district’s annual total. This would require further measures to reduce or offset these emissions. It should be noted the Government’s preferred position is to use Building Regulations to achieve low carbon development. Its current consultation proposes measures including changing Part L to ensure no new home is connected to the gas grid from 2025 and a new design code”.

5.4.3 About 62% of homes in the area do not have access to mains gas; many do not have access to mains drainage. About 22% of households in the area are considered to be fuel poor, and this is above the district, county, and national averages. Fuel poverty results from a number of factors including high energy prices and under occupation but the main reasons are low income and energy efficient housing. It is particularly prevalent where there is no access to mains gas services, and/or where properties are difficult or expensive to insulate. A new Fuel Poverty Strategy for Worcestershire⁽¹⁸⁾ is being prepared by Worcestershire County Council. Tackling fuel poverty is strongly linked to energy efficiency in homes and to community energy generation. SWDP 27: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, already states that developments over 100m² or one or more dwellings, should incorporate the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon energy requirement, unless this makes the development unviable. Respondents to the 2015 Questionnaire were in favour of additional energy saving measures in new developments.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Infrastructure: Electric Vehicle Charging

Policy LB/1/3

Proposals for any new dwelling where parking is provided must have an appropriately located electric vehicle charging point. Proposals for new employment, leisure or retail developments must provide electric charging points for staff and/or users.
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Policies: Infrastructure and Energy: Electric Vehicle Charging: Evidence and Justification

5.4.4: It is government policy that there will be no further sales of petrol or diesel powered cars from 2030. The Worcestershire County Council Streetscape Design Guide says, *“Worcestershire County Council strongly encourages all properties to be equipped with Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) charging points including provision where communal parking is provided. This position is supported*

by the NPPF". Currently the only freely available technology is that of electric powered vehicles operating with rechargeable batteries. It is vital that the infrastructure for charging electric vehicles is readily available at household level where possible.

Policies: Infrastructure: Drainage

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Infrastructure: Flooding and Drainage

LB/1/4

In addition to the requirements of SWDP28 (Management of Flood Risk) and SWDP 29 (Sustainable Drainage Systems) to be supported all developments will be required to meet all of the following:

- a. Adopt the principles of the South Worcestershire Water Management and Flooding SPD and the Worcestershire County Council Sustainable Drainage Design and Evaluation Guide.
- b. Demonstrate that all surface water discharges have been carried out in accordance with the principles laid out within the drainage hierarchy, in such that a discharge to the public sewerage systems are avoided, where possible.
- c. As a minimum, demonstrate that for a greenfield site, the post-development surface water run-off rate will not increase and for brownfield sites show that post development run-off will result in a 30% reduction in surface water run-off compared with the brownfield situation. .
- d. Where any soakaway drainage/ infiltration solutions are proposed or required: Undertake permeability / porosity tests from guidance in BRE Digest 365 "Soakaway Design" by a suitably qualified professional and provide full test results.
- e. Take opportunities for drainage (ditches, swales, balancing ponds etc) to enhance biodiversity and biodiversity corridors
- f. Provide details of future maintenance requirements for solutions adopted



Typical roadside "muddy" flooding

Policies: Infrastructure: Flooding: Evidence and Justification

5.4.5 Paragraphs 159-161 of the Framework say:

- Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future).
- Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, and should manage flood risk from all sources.
- All plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property.

Relevant strategic policies in the SWDP are SWDP28 (Management of Flood Risk) and SWDP 29 (Sustainable Drainage Systems). SWDP takes sequential approach to the assessment of flooding and drainage. Policy LB/1/4 supplements the sequential approach with a site-based approach, taking local conditions into account, ensuring that sites not identified at strategic level do not cause local flooding issues, and to ensure developments do not cause or exacerbate flooding within the development site.

5.4.6 The area generally overlies the relatively impermeable clays of the Mercia Mudstone (Keuper Marl) and in some cases has a high or perched water table. Much of the drainage network adjacent to public roads began as ditched boundary markers that served a secondary purpose for rudimentary drainage. Much of this drainage has not been developed or improved; it is not unusual for ditches to have no flow to an outfall. Even when well maintained, in its current state it is not adequate to provide the resilience from flooding the road network requires. Flash floods and “muddy floods”, where run-off from adjacent fields flows across roads are common. The resulting water does not always make roads unpassable to normal vehicles but nevertheless it is hazardous and impedes cyclists and pedestrians.

5.4.7 The impermeable nature of the underlying soils, combined with some high and perched water tables, will mean that soakaway (infiltration) drainage alone might not be practicable.

5.4.8 Watercourses, including dry ditches, form a vital part of the water cycle and enable developments to discharge surface water in a sustainable way. Watercourses should be retained in open space where they provide valuable habitats and resources for wildlife, and also minimises flood risk.

5.4.9 There are a number of flooding hot-spots in the area, some of which result in roads becoming impassable. Worcestershire County Council Flood Risk Management Team holds useful information on local issues.

5.4.10 SWDP 29: Sustainable Drainage Systems requires new developments to “*Manage surface water through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)*”. At surface level SuDS provide the most opportunity for multiple benefits and should be considered before below ground SuDS. The creation of swales, balancing ponds and ditches can provide opportunities for new habitats. In addition, re-naturalising existing watercourses will have significant benefits for biodiversity. Proposals must ensure appropriate maintenance of SuDS for the lifetime of the development.

5.4.11 For soakaways, in addition to the understanding of underlying ground conditions it will be necessary to consider site conditions such as available space for minimum clearances to structures, sub-structures, site boundaries, root protection zones, and other drainage systems.



Flooding at Stocks Lane Leigh Sinton

Policies: Infrastructure: Communications

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Infrastructure: Communications

Policy LB/1/5

Any new development within the Neighbourhood Area should be served by full fibre broadband connections unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with the NGA Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or commercially viable. In such circumstances, suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate future installation.

LB/1/6

Improvement and development of new mobile telecommunication infrastructure will be supported provided that it meets all the following :

- a. Its design and placement seeks to minimise impact on the visual amenity, character or appearance of the surrounding area; and
- b. Its design and siting does not have an unacceptable effect on historical features and buildings, visually sensitive landscape or views.
- c. Where freestanding masts are proposed it is demonstrated that there are no viable options for siting the equipment on or in existing buildings or structures.

Policies: Infrastructure: Communications: Evidence and Justification

5.4.12 The NPPF (para 114) recognises the role of high quality communications in creating sustainable economic growth and social well-being. Public transport in the area is poor and unlikely to improve to any great extent. Good internet/ broadband connections are vital for home-working and for leisure, in each case especially for people with mobility and access problems. Whilst home working alone will not solve local traffic problems it will help to reduce congestion, reduce accidents, and reduce pollution. About 25% of people in employment in the area work at, or mainly from, home; this is significantly above the local and national average. In addition to reduction in travelling, the choice of flexible working from home for social and domestic reasons can be governed by access to reasonable broadband connections. Setting of school and college coursework and assessments, and marking and feedback is now routinely web-based. Many of the providers of banking services are withdrawing high street premises; access to stable networks for internet banking are vital in rural areas. It is imperative that new developments are served with superfast broadband connections to each dwelling.

Policies: Infrastructure: Moving Around the Neighbourhood Area and Beyond

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Infrastructure: Moving Around

Policy LB/I/7

Where possible, new housing should be designed to ensure that it connects safely to local amenities, and the existing footway, cycleway, and footpath network.

Policies: Infrastructure: Moving Around the Neighbourhood Area and Beyond: Evidence and Justification

5.4.13 The response from the community to the 2015 survey was that even in a relatively rural environment, traffic is blighting many people's lives; the problem was most acute in Leigh Sinton. There are concerns about speeding, heavy goods vehicles, and parking. On street parking, including parking on footways and verges, is seen as an increasing problem; it is vital that these issues are "designed out" of future developments as far as possible.

5.4.14 Responses to the 2015 Questionnaire showed that on a scale of 1 -5 (1 not safe ...5 very safe) about 50% of respondents gave a score of 3 or less when walking or cycling locally. 55% recorded that safety played a part in their choice of travel. These figures seem to suggest that in the absence of footways/ cycleways, speeding and the overall volume of traffic is preventing people from walking and cycling in the Neighbourhood Area.

5.4.15 MHDC report, The Village Facilities and Rural Transport Survey (VFRTS:2012) stated that, "*Malvern provides the primary focus of services for settlements located in the west of the South Worcestershire area. Villages such asLeigh Sinton...are heavily influenced by the services and facilities offered in Malvern*". However, there is no public transport service to Malvern from Leigh Sinton or Bransford. In the SWDP Annex D: Hierarchy of Settlements, Leigh Sinton was allocated a Category 2 status. Following a revised VFRTS in 2019 this has been changed to Category 3 in the

2019/20 SWDP Review; there is no longer a bus service to/from Leigh Sinton adequate for “Journey to Work” The only service operating in Leigh Sinton is the 417, sponsored by Herefordshire Council; this calls at two” allocated towns”, Worcester and Ledbury. The 423 service operates a round trip between Worcester-Alfrick- Suckley, including stops in Bransford and Leigh. The only allocated town stop is Worcester and there is no return trip after 5pm.



Leigh Sinton

5.4.16 The nearest doctor’s surgery, and pharmacy are about 5km from most areas of the parish. There is no doctor’s surgery directly accessible by public transport on a single route. The nearest surgery accessible by public transport is in the St John’s area of Worcester city; the surgery no longer accepts patients from the Neighbourhood Area. The nearest pharmacies accessible by public transport are on the outskirts of Worcester.

5.4.17 The nearest hospital with minor injuries unit is in Malvern, with no public transport links. The main hospital in the area is Worcestershire Royal Hospital. This is accessible from Bransford, Leigh, and Leigh Sinton, by bus, changing in Worcester City. Given the restrictions of the limited bus services appointments/ visiting must be carefully arranged.

5.4.18 The nearest railway stations are in Malvern Link and Great Malvern. Malvern Link Station is about 5km from Leigh Sinton. There are no public transport links, and no continuous footways or cycleways.

5.4.19 There are two additional important points. Many parishioners are already disadvantaged by the lack of public transport. However, the Parish Profile, taken from the 2011 census, indicates that about 7% of parishioners have no access to a car or van at all. Secondly, people moving into new developments will almost certainly have to use the car for work, shopping and ad hoc daily trips; this

will cause further increases to the general volume of traffic, more pollution, and is not sustainable under current or foreseeable circumstances. 64% of households already have two or more cars.

5.4.20 Whilst there is a substantial rural public footpath network in the LBNP area, many roads in the area do not have formal footways or cycleways. Several key footway/ cycleway routes do not exist and many local people perceive it is not safe to walk or cycle. Coupled with the lack of public transport, this is a serious issue. Many respondents to the 2015 survey indicated they wished to see more footways/ cycleways in the area. In particular a footway between Leigh Sinton and Interfields would provide a continuous link to Malvern, and to additional bus services at Malvern Vale. These views were repeated in the responses to Cala Homes in July 2015. This footway/ cycleway is included in Worcestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP4) as a priority route in the Strategic Active Travel Corridor Schemes for South Worcestershire.

5.5 Policies: Amenities, Health and Well Being

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Amenities, Health and Well Being: Community Facilities

LB/WB/1

The following are identified as important community facilities in the Plan area:

- Royal Oak Public House, Leigh Sinton (Asset of Community Value)
- Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall
- Leigh Sinton Shop and Post Office
- Leigh and Bransford Primary School
- 1st Leigh Scout Group HQ

Any proposal that would result in the loss of any of these community facilities will only be supported if the criteria set out in SWDP Policy 37B or successor Policies are met. (Fig 4 below shows the location of the community facilities)

Policies: Health and Well Being: Community Facilities: Evidence and Justification

5.5.1 There are number of amenities in the Neighbourhood Area: They are listed in Appendix G. The remaining village pub in Leigh Sinton, The Royal Oak, has been designated an Asset of Community Value.

5.5.2 The Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall is probably the largest village hall in Worcestershire and has a large playing field adjacent. It is used by a wide range of organisations such as the Women's Institute and indoor bowls club, and by a number of hirers who offer exercise classes. It is also used for private functions such as parties and weddings. The Guide and Scout HQ is within the grounds of the hall and is used extensively; it is used to provide a wide range of activities. As public transport is so poor the Leigh Sinton village shop and post office serves a vital function selling groceries, newspapers, and some take away food. The Post Office effectively serves as a local cash point and can also be used to make transactions with major banks.



Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall

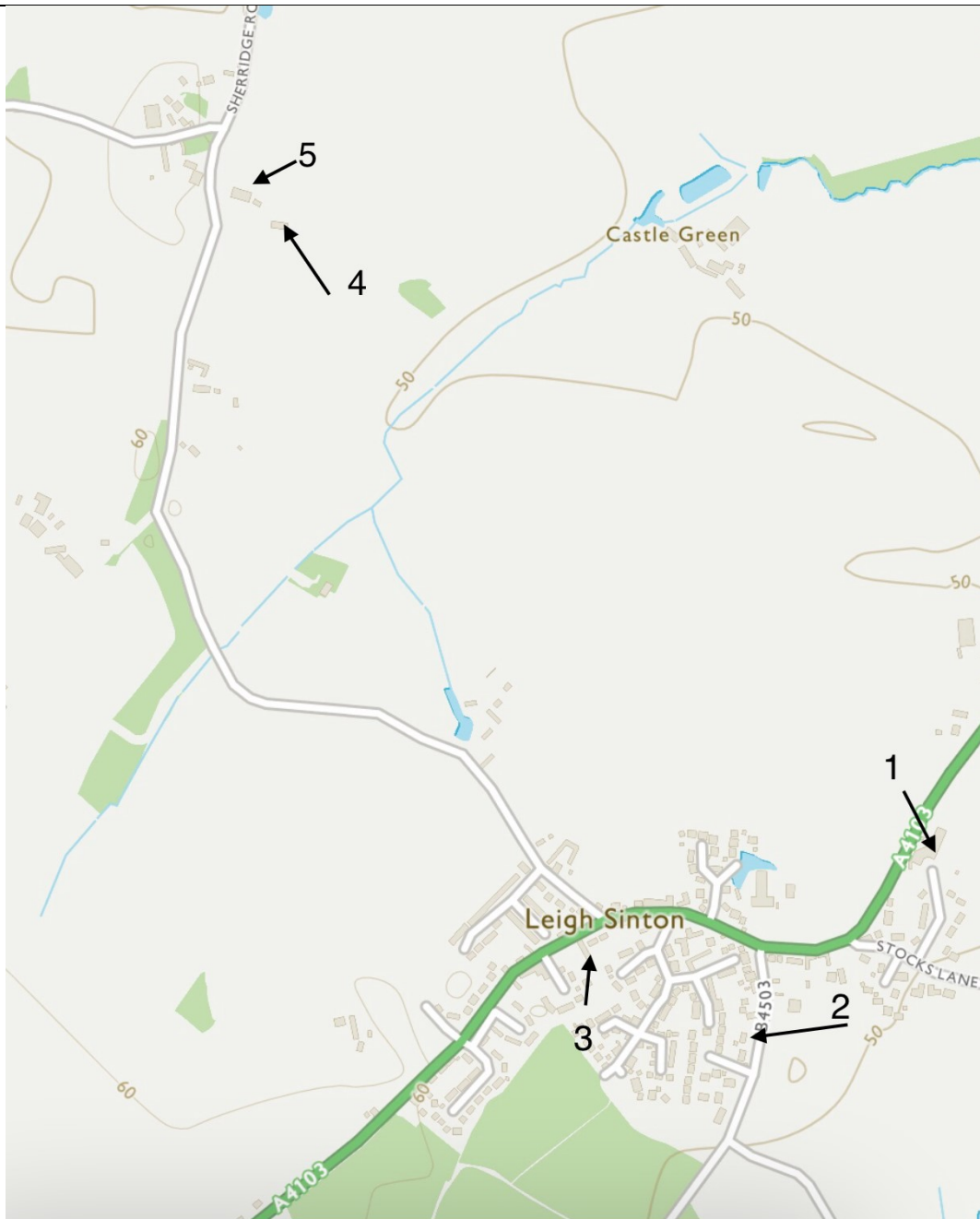


Fig 4

Policy LB/WB/1: Community Facilities

1. Leigh and Bransford Primary School
2. Royal Oak Public House
3. Leigh Sinton Post Office
4. 1st Leigh Scout Group HQ
- 5 Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Amenities, Health and Well Being: Community Facilities

LB/WB/2

The provision of new built community facilities or the enhancement of existing facilities will be required to demonstrate all of the following:

- a. The siting, scale and design respects the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets.**
- b. The local road network can accommodate the additional traffic without compromising highway safety.**
- c. Adequate off-road vehicle and cycle parking is provided on the site.**
- d. There will be no significant adverse impact on residential amenity.**

Policies: Health and Well Being: Community Facilities: Evidence and Justification

5.5.3 The results of the questionnaire to all households in 2015 did not give a clear outcome of what community facilities the community wanted in the area (see para 5.1.18). As part of a Housing Needs survey in May 2021 community views were sought again but with more targeted questions; proposals for developments will be expected to take community views into consideration. See Para 5.1.17.

5.5.4 In September 2016, as part of the South Worcestershire Rural Communities Programme, a “Door Knock” survey was carried out to gain feedback from the community. Amongst the varied responses there were concerns about the lack of footways, and lack of public transport (car ownership was seen as an unfortunate essential), and the volume and excess speed of traffic. People said the shop in Leigh Sinton was well regarded. Facilities reported as being well used included: school, village (memorial) hall, the tennis courts in Alfrick (just out of parish), and those buses that are available.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies: Amenities, Health and Well Being: Health Impact Assessments

LB/WB/3

In accordance with the South Worcestershire Supplementary Planning Document, Planning for Health⁽¹⁹⁾, Health Impact Assessments (HIA) will be required for development proposals:

- Residential and mixed use sites of 25 or more dwellings
- Employment sites of 5 hectares or greater
- Retail developments of 500 square metres or more.
- Any other proposals considered by the local planning authority to require a HIA.

In order to be supported proposals should demonstrate how they have addressed the Health and Well Being principles in the HIA

Policies: Amenities: Health and Well-Being: Health Impact Assessments: Evidence and Justification

5.5.5 It is increasingly recognised that the places and spaces where we live and work can have an impact on health and well-being and that an individual's actions to improve their lifestyle or health status are likely to be influenced by the environmental and socio-economic context in which they take place. The design of the built environment can have a significant impact on physical and mental health and how people perceive their environments. The location, density and mix of land uses can have wide-reaching implications on how individuals live their lives; it can affect user experience of access to, and provision of, key community facilities such as public services, employment opportunities, healthy food choices and parks and green spaces. How areas and buildings connect to one another through street layout, footpaths, cycleways and open spaces can impact on mental health and well-being and the amount of physical activity people undertake. Well connected and attractive streets, footpaths and cycle networks can encourage more people to use them, promote physical activity and consequently reduce the frequency of car usage. Feedback from the community suggests the amenity they value most is the local rural environment, and access to the countryside.

5.5.6 Worcestershire County Council have published a Health Impact Assessments in Planning Toolkit⁽²⁰⁾, which, "is intended to support the creation of healthy communities through health promoting planning policies and development management in Worcestershire. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process which ensures that the effect of development on both health and health inequalities are considered and responded to during the process." The Toolkit will support developers and planning agents, to screen and scope the health impact of their development proposals.

The Toolkit states, "It would be expected that an HIA of a planning proposal would be undertaken **by the applicant**. It would be the planning department's role to request such an assessment.

- Where local policy on HIA's is in place it would be a statutory requirement.
- Where there is no HIA policy in place, the applicant should be asked to undertake an HIA on a voluntary basis."

APPENDIX A: Proposed Parish Council Tasks

- 1 Liaise with parishioners and Planning Authorities in assessing planning applications to try to ensure outcomes meet community aspirations and needs and the objectives of the LBNP.
- 2 Liaise with property owners, landowners and the general community about the most appropriate actions to maintain the historic and rural landscape.
- 3 The Parish Council will identify potential non-designated heritage assets for consideration in the MHDC Local List SPD.
- 4 Liaise with relevant authorities and local landowners to ensure the most appropriate methods of mowing verges, cutting hedges, clearing ditches, and other such operations to ensure the maximum benefit to biodiversity whilst maintaining necessary safety.
- 5 Liaise with appropriate organisations to improve delivery of all utility services for energy and communications. Reduce the hardship of fuel poverty. Consider community based energy schemes and group purchasing schemes.
- 6 Identify flooding problems, receive feedback from parishioners, liaise with drainage authorities, and adopt services of lengthsman to eliminate local problems with grips and ditches...
- 7 Liaise with Malvern Hills District Council and Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council, to try to maintain and improve public transport.
- 8 Liaise with local employers, especially those in agriculture, and Malvern Hills District Council to maximise employment opportunities.
- 9 Ensure the parish area is attractive to local people and visitors. Ensure there are sufficient litter/ dog waste bins, and footpaths and footways are accessible.
- 10 The population is ageing and health and welfare services need to adapt to face changing needs. The Parish Council will liaise with, and where possible, facilitate liaison between, volunteer groups and those needing support. Improve the quality of life and independence of older people and those with a long-term illness or disability
- 11 Liaise with West Mercia Police, Highways Safety Partnership, and MHDC enforcement officers regarding parking and speeding issues.
- 12 Pursue provision and maintenance of formal footways/ cycleways, in particular the provision of a formal footway between Leigh Sinton and Malvern.
- 13 Support Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall Committee to maximise the use of a valuable community space.
- 14 Facilities such as those listed in Appendix G are vital to the community. The Parish Council will support all organisations to enable them to fulfil their role in the community
- 15 Green space is a precious resource and its maintenance can be costly. The Parish Council will liaise with owners and other bodies to provide opportunities to maximise use and long term sustainability.
- 16 Endeavour to establish greater community spirit within and between the individual settlements within the parish

APPENDIX B:

Leigh and Bransford Housing Need Survey: Summary (2021)

A housing needs survey was conducted by the Housing Services Team at Malvern Hills District Council in the summer of 2021. This survey was responded to by 28% of the parish household base (251 responses out of 893 households, across Leigh and Bransford). Of the 251 respondents, 43 households identified that they would require an additional housing need within the next 5 years (5% of total parish population, but 17% of survey respondents):

- **10** households within the next 12 months
- **20** households within the next 1 – 3 years
- **13** households within the next 3 – 5 years).

The reasons for requiring to move were identified as follows:

- Need a larger home – **10**
- Need a smaller home - **9**
- Need an adapted property – **2**
- Need a cheaper home - **1**
- Current home in poor state of repair – **1**
- Set up an independent home – **7**
- Other – **13**

Others included: ground floor accommodation, wish to buy (as currently renting), better access to shops, medical services, transport links, to be near family, and decreased mobility.

Of the 43 households who require alternative accommodation within the next 5 years, 29 (67%) households stated that they would be looking at alternative accommodation within Leigh or Bransford (respondents could state more than one location to the current or surrounding parishes).

It was identified that 53% of respondents stated that there were a lack of suitable properties, 33% stated that they were not able to afford suitable properties, 8% stated that they were saving to purchase a property and 6% stated other (funding a self-building, age and planning permission).

Respondents were asked the type of accommodation they would be considering, and this is shown in the table below:

House	Bungalow	Flat/Apartment	Mobile Home	Static Caravan / Park Home	Other	Total
25	13	1	0	1	3	43
59%	30%	2%	0%	2%	7%	100%

Of the 43 households, 42 (98%) provided an answer on the size of property that they would want to consider, the majority choosing, 2, 3 and 4+ bed roomed accommodation:

1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
2	14	18	8	42
5%	33%	43%	19%	100%

The tenure split identified to meet the unmet housing need was identified as:

Buy on the open market	Shared Ownership / Discounted Market Sales	Rent from a Housing Association	Rent from a private landlord	Self-Build	Starter Home	Rent to Buy	Gvmt Backed Scheme	Total
26	2	7	1	3	1	2	1	43
60%	5%	16%	2%	7%	2%	5%	2%	100%

The overall population for the Ward of Alfrick and Leigh, which Leigh and Bransford are part of, reduced by 14 people between 2011 and 2017. The largest decrease was seen in ages 40 – 49 and then ages 60 – 64. There is also a reduction in ages 10 – 14 (this is in line with the 40 – 49 breakdown, meaning families have moved away from this ward.) *2021 Census data is likely to be made available in the spring / summer of 2022.*

The average buy on the open market property for the ward is calculated as £333,758. As part of the report, the previous 12 months open market purchases were identified, which showed that 14 homes had been sold, varying from 2 to 5 bed homes, with a value of between £110,000 to £645,000 showing a 12-month average of £373,464.29 (which is much higher than the ward average).

At the time of the housing needs survey was completed, 15 properties were listed for sale within one mile of Leigh and Bransford, with a maximum value of £1,500,000 and minimum value of £97,500. This provides an average house price of £411,230.00. If you look at the average buy on the open market sale price, removing affordable home ownership, the average property price is £482,912.50. This is considerably higher than the average ward sales price of £333,758.00. Properties available ranged from 5-bedroom detached properties to 2-bedroom terraced houses through shared ownership schemes.

With the average house price for the ward being £333,758 this identifies a difficulty for those looking to set up an independent home within the local Ward or Parish, as many first time buyers would be looking to spend up to £250,000 to be able to afford a suitable deposit, and be able to borrow the remaining via an affordable mortgage. This identifies need for discount market sales properties and first homes (of which 6 households responded saying).

Also those aged 65+ who are living in larger family homes, who are living along or as a couple, are unable to find suitable smaller accommodation within the Parish, to enable them to move to more suitable smaller accommodation which would then free up a larger family home, for those looking for a larger property.

Affordable rented accommodation also needs to be addressed with 7 households stating they needed this type of accommodation (6 of these were already living in housing association properties but that accommodation did not now meet their current need).

APPENDIX C: Designated Assets Impacted by the Proposed Site for Allocation



There are four designated properties in proximity to the proposed site for allocation. These are indicated on the map above. (Number listing refers to map). See also text paragraph 5.1.22

1. Ahimsa (Formerly part of Malvern House): HER Ref: WSM35128. Grade II listed ref: 1098769
2. Sinton House Farm: HER Ref: WSM59898/ 52248. Grade II listed ref: 1157713
3. Oast House: HER Ref: WSM49115. Grade II listed ref: 1349247
4. Iris/ Peony/ Jasmine Cottages: HER Ref: WSM49116. Grade II listed ref: 1098770

APPENDIX D: Historic Environment Records (HER) Surveys for Leigh and Bransford

In preparation for the LBNP the Parish Council commissioned Historic Environment Record (HER) searches for the areas of Leigh, and Bransford⁽¹⁵⁾. Summaries of the searches are reproduced below:

Archaeology Summary for the Parish of Bransford

5.3.13 An HER search was carried out for the parish of Bransford during February 2016.

“62 records were identified for the parish including, 26 buildings, 26 Monuments and 10 other records relating to the Historic Environment.

Within the search area lie 7 Listed Historic Buildings and a further 19 unlisted historic buildings. A Historic England funded project to identify Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire also recorded 7 historic farmsteads and 1 outfarm within the parish. Only 3 of the existing buildings were constructed prior to the 17th century, the church St John the Baptist has its origins in the 13th century and two farmhouses date to the 1400s. The majority of historic buildings surviving within Bransford parish date to the 17th and 18th centuries and include a number of farmsteads and two public houses. Bransford House and Bransford Mill are both recorded as 19th century buildings. A hop kiln and hopper’s huts relating to the 19th and early 20th century also exist and may indicate hop agriculture as important in this region during this period. The introduction of the railway in the 19th century is also recorded here as well as several further farmstead buildings. The Historic Buildings of Worcestershire Project recorded 64 standing buildings within the parish that were also extant on the 1st edition OS map (See Map 11). Although these buildings were not all recorded on the HER a map of their location points has been provided. Please note that for many parishes these points have not yet been verified on the ground and it is highly possible that buildings have been demolished and replaced by a modern building with a similar footprint.

The earliest archaeological deposits within the parish are two geological members with the potential for archaeology dating back to the Palaeolithic period, 476050 BC. No other prehistoric evidence is recorded. In the medieval period the site of a shrunken village and manor house are recorded within the parish, as well as a moated site, bridge and watermill. The manor house at Brace’s Leigh is first mentioned in 1316 and was held to Elmley Castle, whilst the bridge is known to have been built in 1338 by the Bishop of Worcester, Wulstan de Branford, but was destroyed during the civil war.

Few further archaeological monuments are recorded for later periods aside from the site of a number of 19th century farmsteads and 7 records related to the defence of Worcester Bridge during the Second World War which was heavily focussed on defending the Bransford Railway Bridge.

Within the parish boundaries a number of Historic England Designated Assets are also recorded. These sites, monuments and buildings are already protected under planning policy and, therefore, other undesignated heritage should have a stronger focus within the neighbourhood plan.

- *There are 7 Historic England Listed buildings within the Parish of Bransford. No Scheduled Monuments or Registered battlefields or parks are currently recorded”*

Archaeology Summary for the Parish of Leigh

5.3.14 An HER search was carried out for the parish of Leigh during March 2016.

“189 records were identified in the parish including 91 buildings, 38 monuments and 60 other records relating to the historic environment.

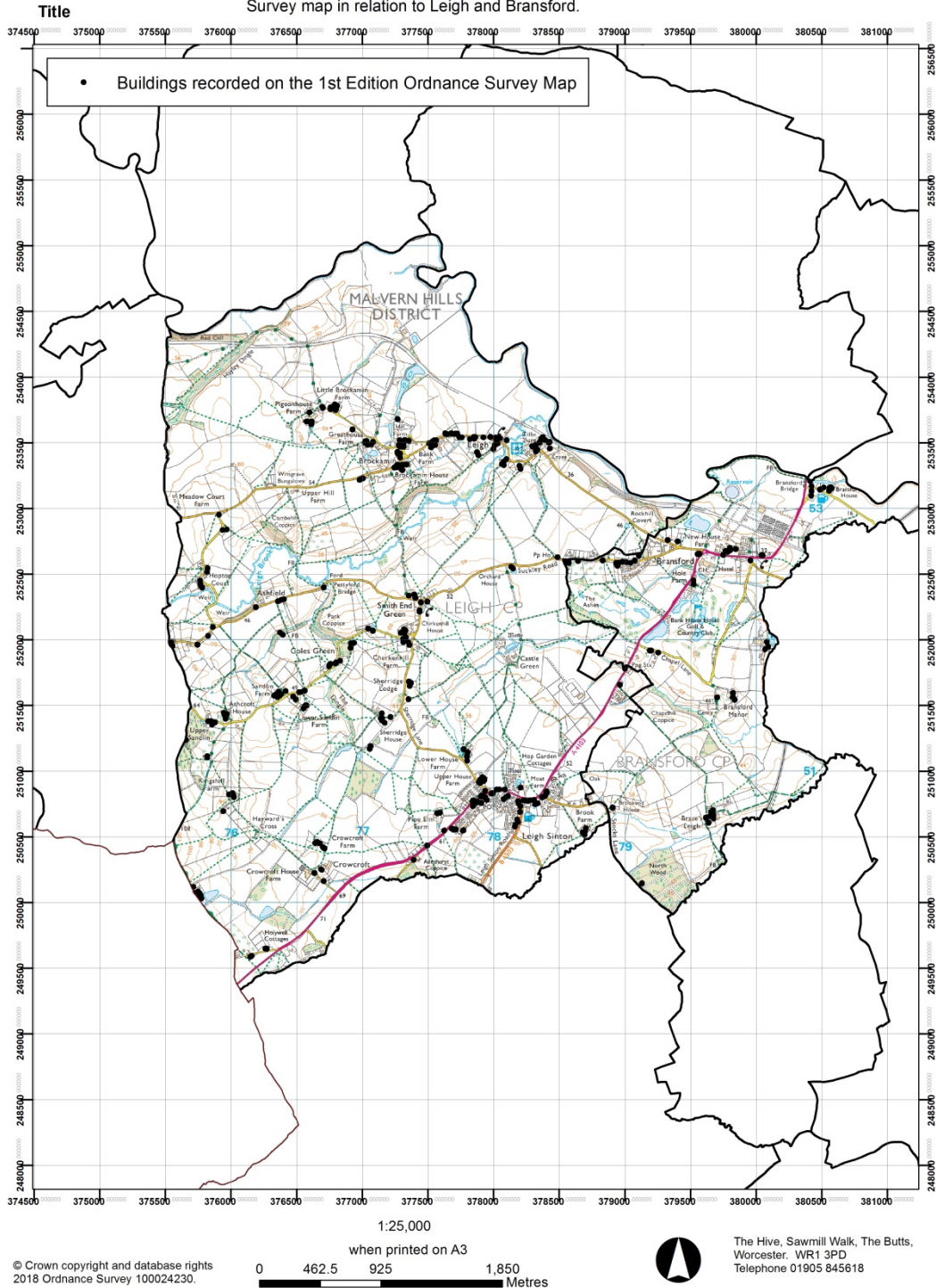
Within the search area lie 34 Listed historic buildings and a further 57 unlisted historic buildings. A Historic England funded project to identify Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire also recorded 28 historic farmsteads and 4 outfarms within the parish. There are 7 buildings in the parish that relate to the medieval period, including the tithe barn, St Edburga’s church and a church yard cross. Significantly more buildings are recorded from the post-medieval period, including numerous farm buildings and yet more buildings are developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, including hop kilns and a possible World War Two bunker [additional note; since identified as a possible Star Fish Site].

The Historic Buildings of Worcestershire Project recorded 307 standing buildings within the parish that were extant on the 1st edition OS map. Although these buildings are not all recorded on the HER, a map of their location points has also been provided. (See Map 11) Please note that for many parishes these points have not yet been verified on the ground and it is possible that buildings have been demolished and replaced by a modern building with a similar footprint.

The earliest recorded archaeological site in the parish is a conjectural area of Mesolithic and Neolithic activity, indicated by copious quantities of surface finds. Other sites, dating back to before the medieval period include an enclosure of possible Bronze Age to Iron Age date and a possible Roman Road. The medieval period is better represented and includes a motte, a moat and numerous instances of ridge and furrow. The motte is located at Castle Green and includes an earthwork and the buried remains of a motte and bailey castle. Monuments from the post-medieval period include several farm buildings. Several monuments from the 19th and 20th century are present, including the sites of hopper’s huts and a Type Fw3/26 pillbox from World War Two.

Within the parish boundaries a number of Historic England Designated Assets are also recorded. These sites, monuments and buildings are already protected under planning policy and, therefore, other undesignated heritage should have a stronger focus within the neighbourhood plan.

- *There are 34 Historic England Listed buildings within the Parish of Leigh. 2 Scheduled Monuments are currently recorded”*



Map 11
(Not to scale at this size)

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**Buildings in Leigh and Bransford
Recorded on 1st Edition Ordnance
Survey Map**

APPENDIX E: Ecological Search for the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan: Worcestershire County Council

To assist with the preparation of the LBNP report Worcestershire County Council was commissioned to prepare a Biodiversity Report for the Neighbourhood Area: Ecological Search for Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan ⁽¹³⁾. The Summary is reproduced below. *“The area becomes more pastoral travelling west to east: Although predominated by improved grassland, some botanically diverse grasslands can still be found scattered and fragmented through the landscape. Unimproved grasslands and remnant features of biodiversity interest can still be found on steep slopes, within hedgerows and verges. (See Map 12)*

Scattered pockets of ancient woodland with some ancient woodland remaining: Notable stands of ancient woodland can be found along Hayley Dingle, south of Brockamin House Farm, Park Coppice and “The Ashes”, Chapplehill Coppice and, to the south of the NP area, parcels of land within North Wood, Aileshurst Coppice and near Holywell Cottages. The overall picture is one of a fragmented woodland network. (See Map 13)

Fragmented network of orchards: The network of orchard is highly fragmented with no discernible pattern at a landscape scale, but remnants are likely to hold significant biodiversity value such as the veteran trees noted at Sandlin House Orchard. (See Map 14)

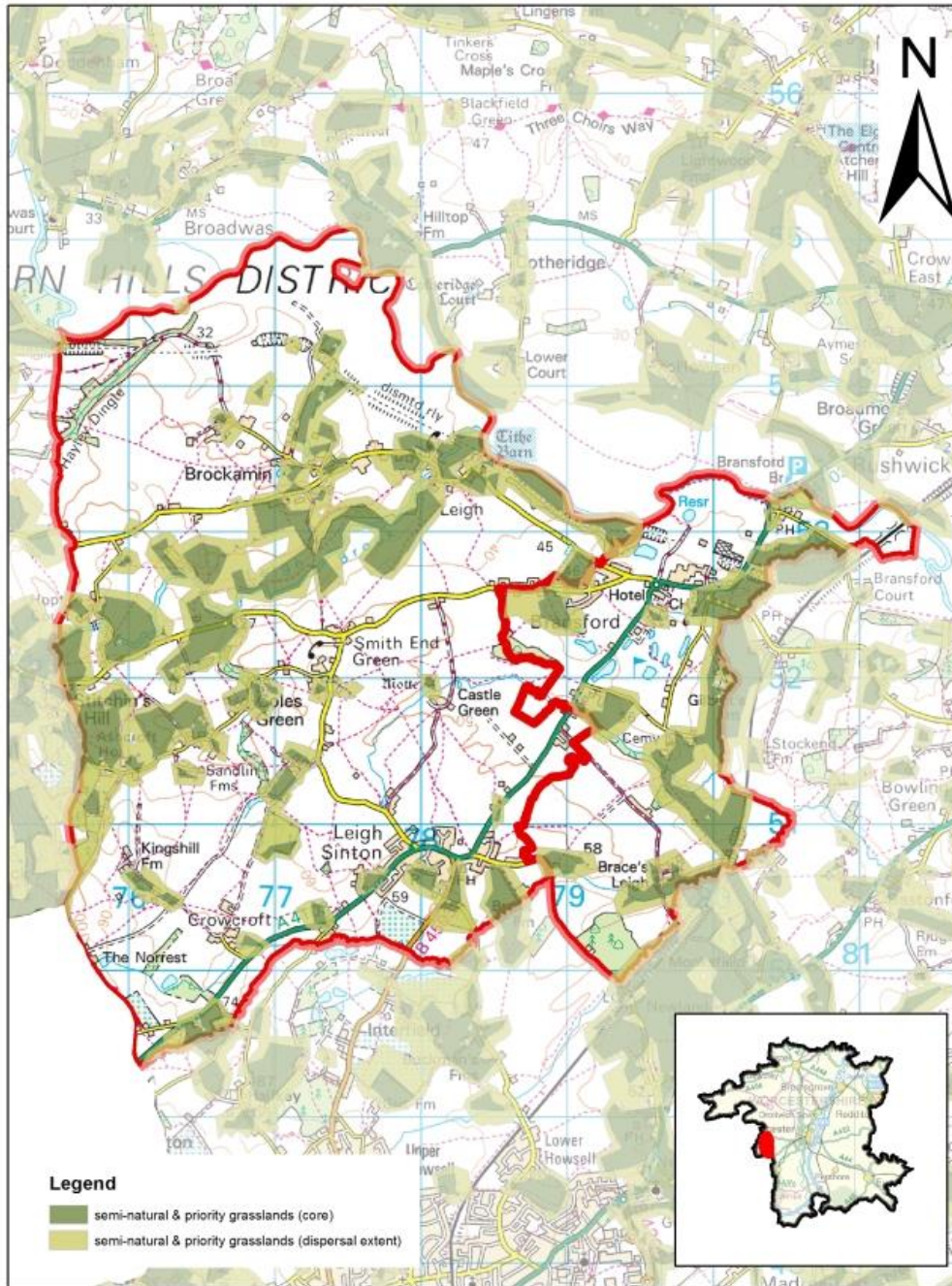
Fragmented pond network; strongest in the north east of the NP area: the greatest cluster of ponds can be found around the residential properties in the village of Bransford (likely to be associated with the golf course, although the suitability of these features for wildlife is not known from desktop-assessments alone) and also between Brockamin and the dismantled railway to the north of the NP area.

Strongest merged BAP (Bio-Diversity Action Plan) habitat network overlies existing natural corridors: The strongest corridor of biodiverse habitats runs roughly from the central-west border of the NP area (extending eastwards from old Storridge Common) to the north-eastern corner of the NP area. This follows the network of scattered woodland dingles around the Ashfield and Combehill Coppice area, to Winwood Coppice and subsequently along the Leigh Brook to Rockhill Covert and from there along the disused railway at the periphery of the NP boundary.

The list of protected species recorded within the NP area includes:

<i>Common pipistrelle bat</i>	<i>Hydraena rufipes</i>
<i>Anobium inexpectatum</i>	<i>Kingfisher</i>
<i>Badger</i>	<i>Large-Leaved Lime</i>
<i>Bithynian Vetch</i>	<i>Noctule Bat</i>
<i>Bluebell</i>	<i>Otter</i>
<i>Brown Hare</i>	<i>Unidentified Pipistrelle Bat</i>
<i>Brown Long-Eared Bat</i>	<i>Polecat</i>
<i>Common Club-tail</i>	<i>Reflexed Saltmarsh-Grass</i>
<i>Common Toad</i>	<i>Sea Lamprey</i>
<i>Corn Marigold</i>	<i>Slow-worm</i>
<i>Cuckoo</i>	<i>Small-Flowered Buttercup</i>
<i>Dorytomus tremulae</i>	<i>Soft Hornwort</i>
<i>Freshwater Crayfish</i>	<i>Song Thrush</i>
<i>Great Crested Newt</i>	<i>Soprano Pipistrelle Bat</i>
<i>Green Figwort</i>	<i>Spreading Bellflower</i>
<i>Harvest Mouse</i>	<i>Spreading Hedge Parsley</i>
<i>Hedgehog</i>	<i>Unidentified Bat</i>
<i>Henbane</i>	<i>Wild Clary</i>
<i>Hornbeam</i>	<i>Wild Marjoram</i>
<i>Hybrid Yellow Bedstraw</i>	<i>Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem</i>

It should be noted that the information in this list, whilst validated by the Worcestershire Biological Record Centre, was produced from records supplied by professional and volunteer organisations. It represents a snapshot in time and absence of a given species must not be interpreted as necessarily indicating that species does not occur within the Neighbourhood Area, but may reflect previous under-recording. Nevertheless the wide range of species listed, either given legal protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010 as amended), as well as species recorded within Schedule 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) indicates the level of care required when assessing sites for development.

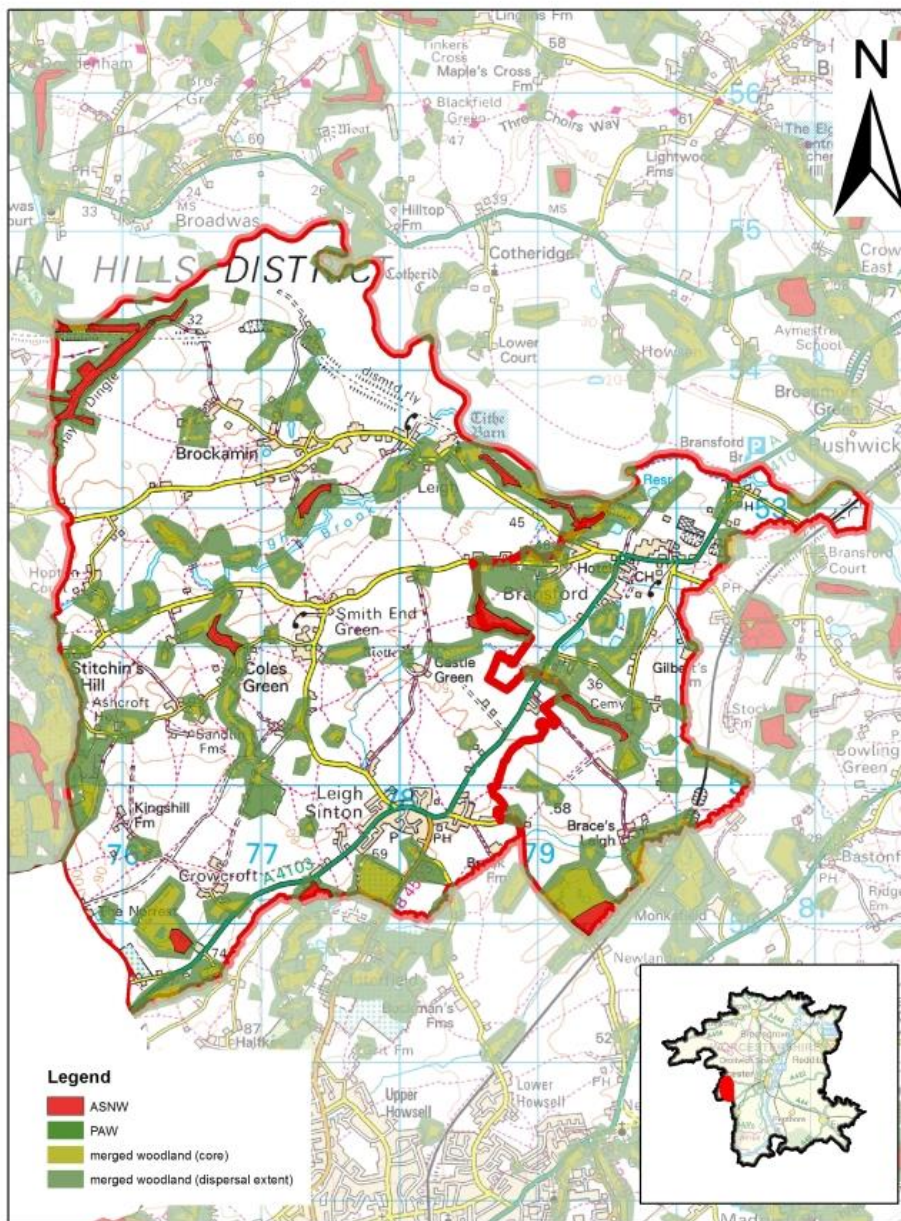


<p>worcestershire county council</p>	<p>Scale: 1:35,600</p>	<p>0 125 250 500 750 1,000 1,250 1,500 1,750 2,000 2,250 2,500</p> <p>Metres</p>
		<p>0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 1.2 1.4</p> <p>Miles</p>
<p>County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP</p>	<p>The Parishes of Leigh and Bransford showing semi-natural and priority grassland habitat network</p>	
<p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100024230.</p>		

Map 12
(Not to scale at this size)

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**Semi-Natural and Priority
Grassland Habitat**

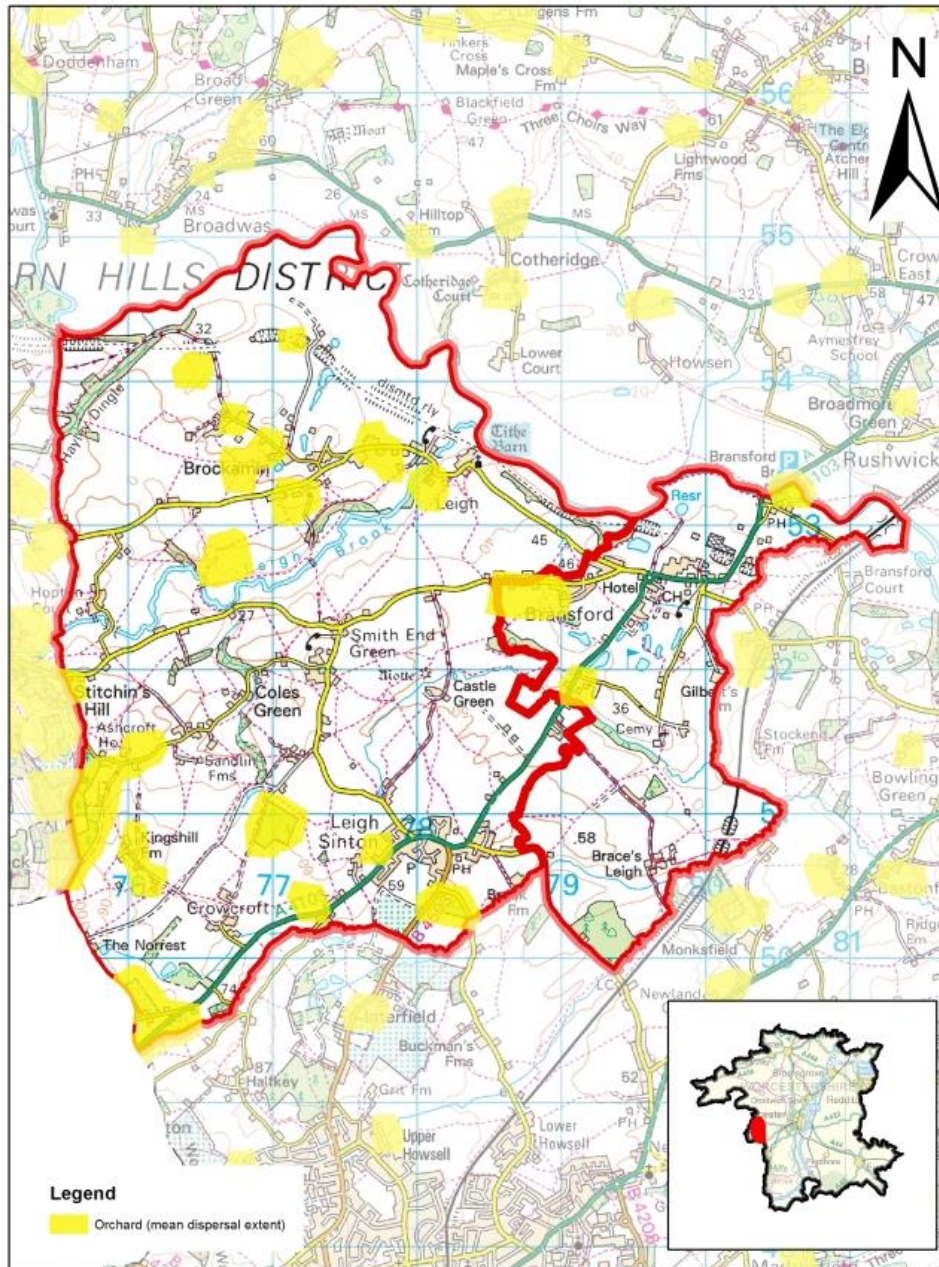


<p>worcestershire county council</p>	<p>The Parishes of Leigh and Bransford showing Ancient Woodland, Plantation on Ancient Woodland and network of Merged Woodland habitats</p>	<p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100024230.</p>

Map 13
(Not to scale at this size)

Ancient Woodlands and Merged Woodland Habitat

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<p>worcestershire county council</p>	<p>Scale: 1:35,600</p>	<p>0 125 250 500 750 1,000 1,250 1,500 1,750 2,000 2,250 2,500 Metres</p> <p>0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 1.2 1.4 Miles</p>
	<p>County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP</p>	<p>The Parishes of Leigh and Bransford showing Traditional Orchard network</p>

Map 14

(Not to scale at this size)

Traditional Orchard Network

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APPENDIX F: Criteria for Assessing the Visual Value of Views

Level of Visual Value	Criteria
Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of international and national importance e.g. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I or II* Listed Buildings etc.) especially where contributing to the significance of an asset / feature • View is of outstanding scenic beauty • View makes a highly important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution • Likely to be the subject of planning policy and / or guidance / protected views • Views from landscapes / viewpoints within highly popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, and / or from national trails, used by very large numbers of people • Views with social / cultural / historic associations (e.g. in art and literature, or an historically-important vista over a battlefield) of international / national importance • Views in which receptors have a proprietary interest, including people living in residential properties
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from within, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of regional or countywide importance e.g. Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), Country Parks, Conservation Areas, Grade II listed buildings, National Trust land etc., especially where contributing to the significance of an asset / feature • View is of high scenic beauty • View makes an important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution • Views from well-used and popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, including long-distance / themed trails, Heritage Coasts, Public Open Spaces / Local Green Spaces, used by relatively large numbers of people • Views with social / cultural / historic associations of countywide importance

<p>Moderate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from within, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of local importance • View is of moderate scenic beauty • View makes a moderate contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution • Views from locally-popular recreation areas / green open spaces / public rights of way, but not used by many visitors • Views with social / cultural / historic associations of local importance
<p>Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from within, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of site- wide importance • View is of low scenic beauty • View makes a very limited contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution • Views from landscapes / viewpoints which are not particularly popular or recognised as being destinations in their own right, including infrequently used rights of way • Views with no social / cultural / historic associations
<p>Very Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of no importance • View is of no scenic beauty - landscape may be permanently degraded

APPENDIX G: Community Facilities

- Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall.
- Churches: St Edburga Church Leigh, St John's Church Bransford
- Leigh and Bransford Primary School
- Leigh and Bransford Scouts (1st Leigh: HQ in Memorial Hall grounds)
- Leigh and Bransford Guides (1st Leigh guides: HQ in Memorial Hall grounds)
- Shop and Post Office in Leigh Sinton
- Take away in Bransford
- Petrol station in Bransford
- Play area at Bransford
- Play area at Kiln Lane, Leigh Sinton
- The Royal Oak public house and restaurant in Leigh Sinton: designated as a Community Asset
- Chinese Take-Away in Leigh Sinton
- The Fox at Bransford public house in Bransford.
- The Bank House Hotel, conference centre, spa, and golf club in Bransford
- The Fold. A community enterprise comprising café/restaurant and managed artisan retail units in Bransford
- Gym in Leigh Sinton
- Leigh and Bransford Badgers Football Club
- Managed football pitches
- Livery stables

Although it is not a formal facility, it is noted that the community regard their rural surroundings as a key facility.

APPENDIX H: Bibliography

1. South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP): South Worcestershire Councils
2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (2021).
3. Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy: Worcestershire County Council
4. County of Hereford and Worcester Minerals Local Plan: Worcestershire County Council
5. The Book of Leigh and Bransford (2002) and The Second Book of Leigh and Bransford (2005). Malcolm Scott
6. Biodiversity Action Plan: Worcestershire County Council
7. Village Facilities and Public Transport Survey: South Worcestershire Councils
8. Rural Lettings Policy: Malvern Hills District Council
9. Worcestershire County Council's Streetscape Design Guide (Spring 2020): Worcestershire County Council
10. Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance: Worcestershire County Council: 2011
11. National Character Area Profile:106: Severn and Avon Vales (Natural England)
- 12 Your Place Matters: Understanding Buildings and their Setting in Rural Worcestershire (Worcestershire County Council)
13. Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework (Worcestershire County Council 2013)
14. Environmental, Landscape and Colour Consultancy
15. Historic Environment Record (HER) searches for the areas of Leigh, and Bransford: Worcestershire County Council
16. The Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework
17. Ecological Search for the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood Plan: Worcestershire County Council
18. Fuel Poverty Strategy for Worcestershire: Worcestershire County Council
19. Health Impact Assessments in Planning Toolkit: Worcestershire County Council
20. Supplementary Planning Document: Planning for Health in South Worcestershire: South Worcestershire Councils and Worcestershire County Council
21. Malvern Hills District Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan

APPENDIX J: Assessment of Proposed Site for Allocation

Each site from the Call for Sites was assessed against a specific set of criteria. The main criteria adopted were those used by Malvern Hills District Council during the 2018/19 SWDP-Review, including the SA. The criteria are reproduced below with the assessment of the proposed site for allocation. Four additional local criteria were also used: Linearity, Wildlife Corridors, Local Drainage Conditions, and Available Space for Community Sports and Other Amenities.

Malvern Hills District Council SHELAA Assessment of preferred site	
In the table below items 1 to 11 inc are considered by MHDC as "Major Criteria", and 12 to 28 inc as "Other Criteria".	
SHELAA Site Reference and Address	CFS0009 Land off A4103
1. Is the site within or adjacent to a Town, Category 1, 2 or 3 Village?	Category 3
2. Have the landowner(s) clearly indicated that the site is available and can be developed within the plan period (eg through SHELAA)	YES
3. Is the site within Flood Zone 1 or 2? If yes state Flood Zone.	Flood Zone 1 - 100%
4. Is the site within 450 metres of hazardous pipeline or gas compression station?	NO
5. Can the site be provided with safe access onto the public highway?	Access achievable onto A4103. Impact at the junction of A4103/B4503 will need to be carefully considered. We would like this junction to be signalised but local residents and Members not supportive
6. Are the Sewerage and Water supplies adequate in the area?	MEDIUM level impact - Due to the size of the development and the significant increase in population at Leigh Sinton compared to the existing network it is recommended that hydraulic modelling is done to understand the impact. There are some known pollution issues in the downstream network.
7. Would the development of the site compromise Internationally or Nationally designated site of ecological importance?	Impact zone of SSSI Natural England must be consulted if >100 units.
8. Is the site in Green Belt?	NO
9. Is the site in the AONB, or affect the setting of?	NO
10. Is the site affected by an adopted Neighbourhood Plan policy or allocation? If yes, what?	NO
11. Are the adjacent/surrounding land uses compatible with residential amenity? Please state what they are?	YES - housing immediately adjacent; school and public house nearby
12. Would development of the site have an adverse impact on the Green Infrastructure Network?	TBC
13. Would development of the site result in a significant net loss of protected open space?	NO
14. Would development of the site have a detrimental impact on a conservation area or on archaeology?	POSSIBLY - Medieval potential; DBA, survey, targeted evaluation and possible mitigation
15. Would development of the site have a detrimental impact on listed building(s)?	YES - Site is opposite 4 grade II LBs, part of open agricultural setting. Moat nearby - potential for archaeology.
16. Would development of the site have a detrimental impact on a Scheduled Ancient Monument?	NO
17. Would development of the site have a detrimental impact on a Special Wildlife Site/ Local Nature Reserve/ Regionally Important Geological Site or any other locally designated wildlife/landscape site?	NO

Malvern Hills District Council SHELAA Assessment of preferred site....continued	
In the table below items 1 to11 inc are considered by MHDC as “Major Criteria”, and 12 to 28 inc as “Other Criteria”.	
SHELAA Site Reference and Address	CFS0009 Land off A4103
18. Would development of the site have detrimental impact on TPO’s?	NO
19. Would development of the site have detrimental impact on a Significant Gap?	NO
20. Would development of the site have detrimental impact on ancient woodland?	NO
21. Would development of the site have detrimental impact on ancient hedgerow?	Hedgerow present up through centre of site. Will need to be assessed or retained.
21. Has the site been subject to a surface water flooding event? If yes, is there a viable engineering solution to overcome it?	Not assessed
22. Would development of the site result in a loss of best or most versatile (Grade 1 or 2) agricultural land?	YES - Grade 2
23. Is the site on contaminated land? Is there contaminated land near to the site, close enough to impact its potential development?	PCL on site -Unknown filled ground (pond).Risk assessment and likely site investigation required
24. Is there a bus stop or train station within 400m of the site? Please state distance.	YES - 260m
25. How far is the site from the following key services- primary school, general store, post office, doctor’s surgery, and parish hall? Please list distance in travelling metres for each key service.	PRIMARY SCHOOL - 160m, GENERAL STORE - 400m, DOCTORS SURGERY - N / A, PARISH / VILLAGE HALL - >2km
26. Would development of the site result in an adverse impact on local health provision?	YES
27. Would development of the site assist in delivering/ supporting identified community infrastructure needs eg in Neighbourhood Plan?	NO
28. Would development of the site, including the creation of an access, materially affect the character of the settlement?	POSSIBLE - development would naturally extend the built area of the settlement; Site is opposite 4 grade II LBs, part of open agricultural setting. Moat nearby - potential for archaeology.
29. Ruled in or out of SHELAA? If out, reason?	IN
30. Should the site be carried forward for potential allocation in the SWDPR?	YES- Including sports facility
SUMMARY	Site suitable for development- large site that will be limited for what residential development it can deliver; it will however be coming forward with a large area of a community sports facility; good connectivity and well situated near to services, possible access issues; southern portion of site would be congruent with surrounding development.

APPENDIX J: Criteria for Assessing Potential Development Sites...cont

In addition the Neighbourhood Plan has assessed the following criteria.

- **Linearity**

There was no clear community view. Whilst some respondents preferred a more central location it was accepted that there might be associated problems with additional traffic and parking. For these reasons other respondents favoured a more linear development. There is no doubt that the proposed allocation extends the village eastwards along the A4103 but it also balances the village north/south along the A4103.

- **Wildlife Corridors**

The area is surrounded by a continuous hedge/hedgerow with a single hedge running north/south bisecting the site. The boundary hedge adjacent to the A4103 was severely cut back c2017. It should be possible to maintain and improve the boundary hedge. The central hedge must be assessed and could be retained in the development layout; it is understood the hedge was planted c1995 to divide the field. There are two mature trees.

- **Local Drainage**

The drainage section of the SHELAA Assessment was not completed by MHDC. However, there are local reports that in times of sustained rain, or intense rain, the adjacent section of the A4103 has been flooded to the extent it was only passable with care. Parts of the site remain waterlogged after heavy rain.

- **Community Facilities**

Leigh Sinton currently has no open green space for exercise and recreation.

No single amenity has been identified by the community. Suggestions have included: tennis courts, a green space for general recreation and “kick about”, which could also serve as a village green, children’s play equipment, outdoor adult exercise machines and exercise facilities for the more elderly. Some members of the community, mainly from Leigh Sinton, also regard the Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall as not conveniently accessible for smaller events and meetings; the hall is about a mile from Leigh Sinton centre along a lane with no footway. There may be an identified need for a meeting room or similar but in this case measures would have to be established for administration and maintenance.

It is understood that Leigh and Bransford Badgers Football Club, who are currently split on several pitches across Malvern, would like to locate some pitches and develop changing rooms and a club house at one location. They have identified the proposed allocation as a suitable location. The parish council commissioned a Housing Needs Survey in the summer of 2021 and included additional questions regarding community facilities. This survey and further consultation with the community will assist the decision making process for new amenities. See Para 5.1.17

The outcome of this assessment was to propose allocation of the site for development in this Neighbourhood Plan.