



Abberley Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 – 2030



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Trig point, Abberley Hill

1. SETTING THE SCENE

Introduction

- 1.1 New planning powers were given to local communities by the Localism Act 2011. These include the ability to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans as part of the statutory planning framework governing the development and use of land in the area. When planning applications are made, they must be decided in accordance with this framework unless there are overriding circumstances to the contrary.
- 1.2 Abberley Parish Council has decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to make use of the new planning powers and help ensure that decisions on future development are guided locally.
- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan preparation process is outlined in Figure 1. The Parish Council consulted on a draft NDP in June – August 2020. The draft was revised to take account of comments received and the amended NDP was submitted to Malvern Hills District Council in November 2020. Following submission, Malvern Hills District Council consulted on the draft NDP between December 2020 and January 2021 and appointed an independent Examiner. Examination of the NDP was undertaken in March / April 2021. The Examiner’s Report, published in April 2021, concluded that, subject to recommended modifications, the NDP meets the Basic Conditions and could proceed to referendum. A local referendum was held in Abberley on 24 June 2021. 89% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan. Following the referendum, Malvern Hills District Council decided on 20 July 2021 to make (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan so that it is part of the statutory Development Plan for Malvern Hills District, sitting alongside the South Worcestershire Development Plan and other material considerations in determining planning applications in Abberley parish.

Format of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 1.4 The NDP begins by giving a thumbnail sketch of the main features of the Neighbourhood Area (chapter 2).
- 1.5 A vision for the Neighbourhood Area in 2030 is set out in chapter 3, together with more detailed objectives. In line with national and South Worcestershire planning policies, the NDP seeks to contribute to sustainable development by addressing social, environmental and economic matters together. Chapter 4 sets out an overarching policy for the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.6 The NDP then sets out policies on the development and use of land, grouped around the themes of community (chapter 5), the natural and built environments (chapters 6 and 7), and the economy (chapter 8). A concluding chapter explains how the NDP will be delivered, and includes a set of Community Actions to capture aspirations on non-land use matters.

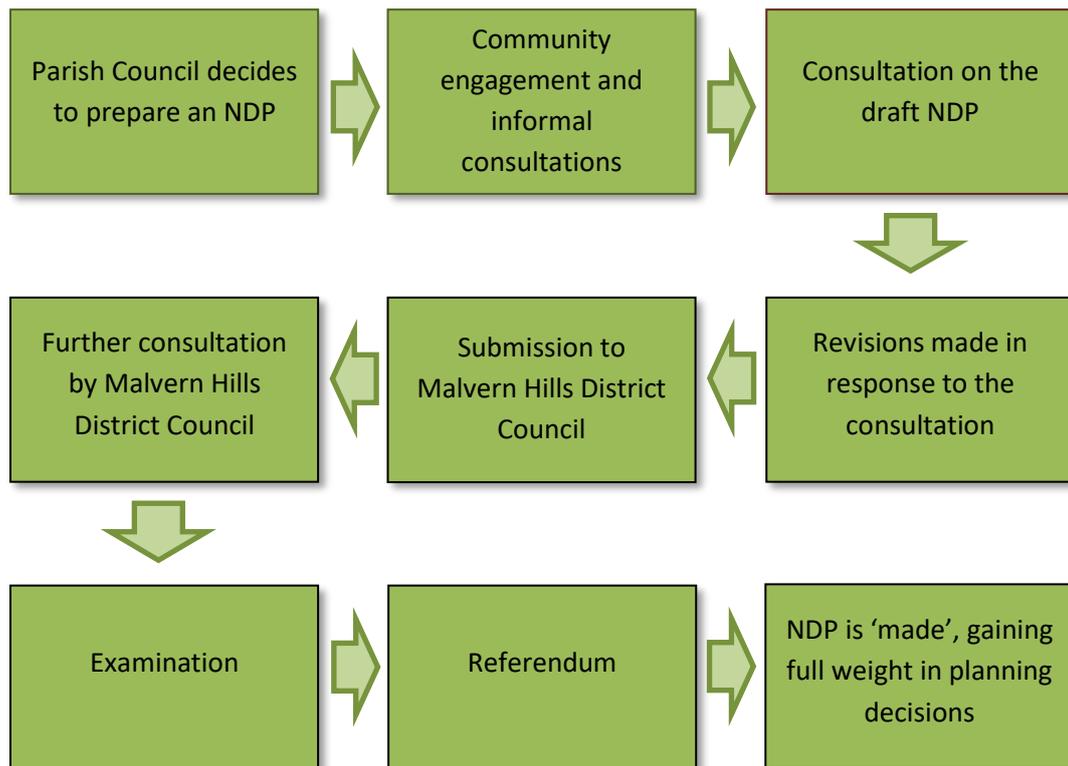


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Development Plan preparation process

1.7 The NDP has been prepared using evidence gathered from a range of sources. Much information has been taken from reports and other documentation prepared for the South Worcestershire Development Plan. This has been supplemented by local sources, including the earlier Parish Plan; a questionnaire survey of residents undertaken for the NDP; and other commissioned work on housing needs and design. The resultant ‘evidence base’ for the NDP is set out at Appendix A.

National and local planning policy context

1.8 The NDP’s policies need to be read alongside the existing national and South Worcestershire planning policies which apply in the Neighbourhood Area.

1.9 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Planning Practice Guidance gives more detailed advice as to how national policy is to be implemented.

1.10 The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) was adopted in February 2016 for the administrative areas of Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District.¹ The

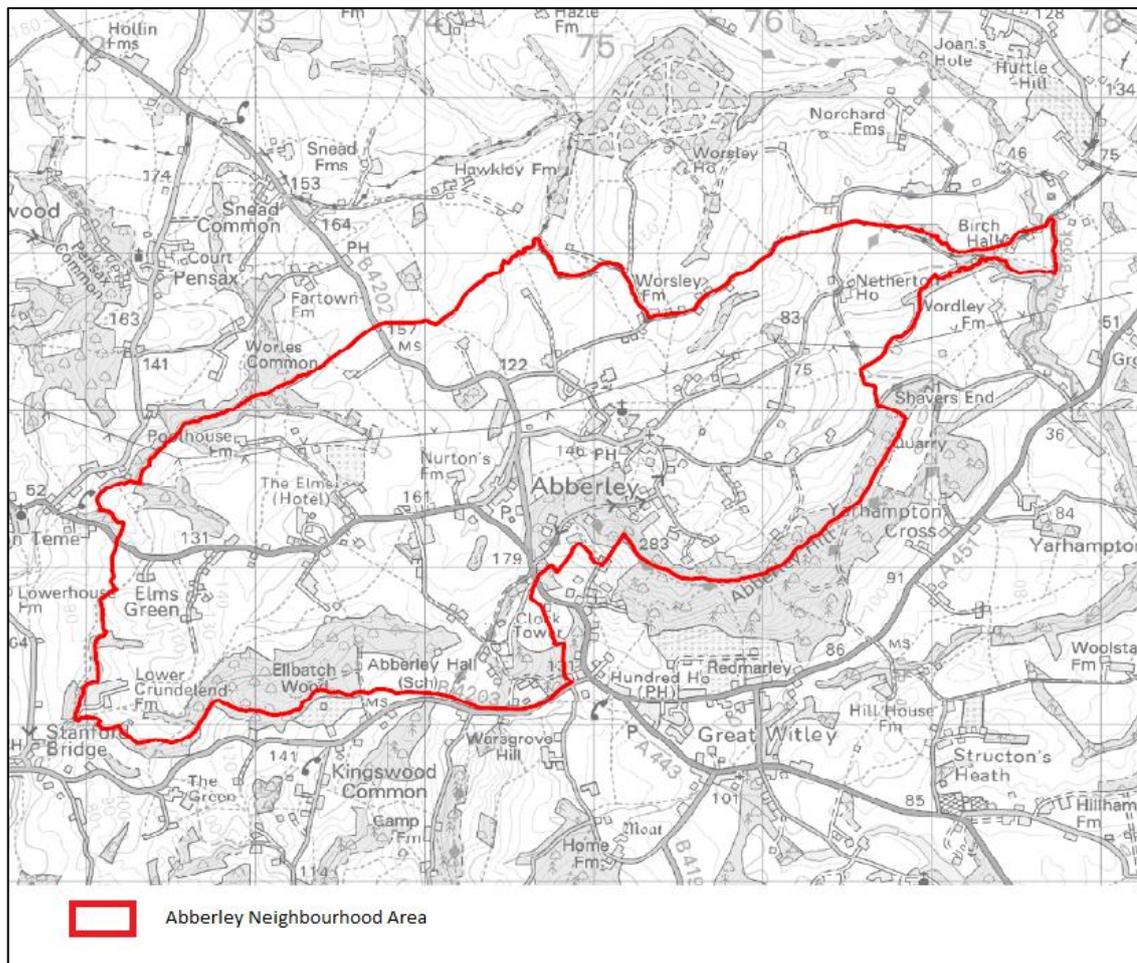
¹ Abberley parish and the Neighbourhood Area is in the administrative area of Malvern Hills District Council.

SWDP sets out strategic and non-strategic planning policies for the development of South Worcestershire up to 2030, and includes specific provisions for the Neighbourhood Area.

- 1.11 Abberley Common is a Category 2 village in the SWDP's settlement hierarchy. These are settlements with at least two key services including a shop and access to daily services for employment and shopping purposes, and where some new development will be acceptable to meet local housing and employment needs. The SWDP defines a development boundary around Abberley Common to guide such growth and establish the extent of the settlement for planning purposes. Infill development inside the boundary is acceptable in principle, subject to more detailed planning policies including those set out in the NDP. Land outside the boundary, comprising the rest of the Neighbourhood Area, is open countryside where development is strictly controlled.
- 1.12 The SWDP also allocates three sites for new housing at Abberley Common. At the time of writing, two of the sites have planning permission. The NDP includes a policy to guide the development of the remaining site, land at The Orchard.
- 1.13 In addition, mineral and waste matters are addressed in Local Plans prepared by Worcestershire County Council. The NDP has been written to complement rather than duplicate these existing policies.
- 1.14 The SWDP is currently under review, to extend the plan period and meet the development needs of South Worcestershire up to 2041. A Preferred Options consultation was undertaken in 2019 and it is intended to complete the Review and submit the plan to the Secretary of State for examination by March 2022. The NDP has been prepared to take into account emerging amendments to adopted SWDP policies as far as possible, to ensure that complementary policies are produced. Reference is made to emerging SWDP policies, as set out in the Preferred Options document, as appropriate.
- 1.15 In preparing the NDP, consideration has been given to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations. Malvern Hills District Council have determined in a screening opinion that the draft NDP does not require a full SEA or a full Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations. This is because the draft NDP is considered to be in general conformity with the SWDP and does not deviate from the land allocations for development made in the SWDP.
- 1.16 The NDP covers the period 2020 to 2030, co-terminous with the adopted SWDP.

2. ABBERLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

- 2.1 This chapter describes the Neighbourhood Area in terms of the social, economic and environmental aspects which contribute to sustainability and to a sense of place.
- 2.2 The Neighbourhood Area was designated in August 2015 for the parish of Abberley, an area of 975 hectares in the north-west of Malvern Hills District, Worcestershire (Plan 1). The Neighbourhood Area is midway between Tenbury Wells and Worcester along the A443; Worcester is some 13 km to the east. The qualifying body is Abberley Parish Council.



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Plan 1: Abberley Neighbourhood Area

The community of Abberley

- 2.3 The population of the Neighbourhood Area was 836 usual residents at the time of the 2011 Census. There was little change on the 2001 Census figure (832). The population density was 0.9 persons per hectare (ppha), less than that of Malvern Hills District (1.3 ppha) or England overall (4.1 ppha).
- 2.4 In 2011, some 87.9% of residents lived in households and 12.1% lived in communal establishments (accounted for by Abberley Hall School). Some 20% of all households were single person. The number of households rose 10% between 2001 and 2011, so that despite the slight increase in population the average size of households decreased from 2.63 persons to 2.53 in this period.
- 2.5 Between 2001 and 2011 the parish population aged significantly, with those aged 60 and over increasing by 45% (154 to 223), and those aged 75 and over increasing by 20%. The number of children (0 to 15) decreased by 4%. Nonetheless the age profile in 2011 was younger than the District average, with those aged 0-15 making up 28.7% of the population (District 16.6%) and older people aged 60 and over accounting for 26.7% (District 32.2%).
- 2.6 In 2011 80.7% of homes were owner occupied, either outright or with a mortgage or loan, more than the District average (71.9%). Only 3.8% were social rented (District 14.1), with 9.7% being privately rented (District 11.5%).
- 2.7 The principal areas of settlement are in the centre of the Neighbourhood Area, to the north of the A443 (Stockton Road) at its junction with the B4202 to Cleobury Mortimer (Clows Top Road). The largest is Abberley Common, which has a primary school (Abberley Parochial VC Primary School), a modern village hall, motor repair garage and a village shop/Post Office. Abberley Common has seen housing growth in the 20th century, and further residential development is proposed by the SWDP on three sites in the north, south and centre of the settlement. The NDP includes policies to guide their development.
- 2.8 To the east, separated from Abberley Common by farmland and the B4202, is the older part of Abberley (known as The Village), with a public house, The Manor Arms Inn, and the 12th century parish church of St. Michael's. To the north of the Village Green is St. Mary's, a Victorian church built to replace St. Michael's in 1850-52. At the time, St. Michael's had fallen into disrepair; however, the chancel was restored in the 20th century and both churches are now in use. Suffolk Lane runs northwards to connect to the B4202 giving access to further scattered housing and farms. To the south of The Village lies a small hamlet known as The Hill, accessed via Wynniattes Way which runs between The Village and the A443. The hamlet of Elms Green lies to the west of Abberley Common, on the A443.
- 2.9 Abberley Hall lies to the south of the A443. The property was constructed in 1836 with the iconic clock tower being built in 1883-4; from 1910 it was unoccupied, being later leased and then sold to become Abberley Hall School in 1916. Today the building is home to a coeducational preparatory day and boarding school with about 300 pupils.

2.10 The Neighbourhood Area is crossed by numerous public rights of way giving access for local use and tourists. These include a section of the Worcestershire Way, a long-distance trail between Bewdley and Great Malvern. There are direct public transport connections to Tenbury Wells, Cleobury Mortimer and Worcester. The nearest rail stations are at Hartlebury, Droitwich Spa, Kidderminster and Worcester. There is no mains gas supply.

Environment

2.11 The landscape of the Neighbourhood Area is dominated by the ridgeline of Abberley Hill, which rises to 283m and forms much of the south-eastern boundary of the parish. Abberley Hill is part of a series of ridges forming a continuation of the Malvern Hills; it lies within the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark, an area of nationally significant geological landscape which spans five counties stretching from Gloucester to Bridgnorth. Quarrying for limestone has been important both historically and in more recent times; the Shavers End Quarry just outside the Neighbourhood Area to the east closed in 2002. The Geopark Way long distance footpath runs along the crest of Abberley Hill through the Neighbourhood Area, following the line of the Worcestershire Way. The remainder of the Neighbourhood Area is typified by an undulating mosaic of agricultural fields framed by tree and hedge boundaries, with significant areas of woodland.

2.12 In terms of biodiversity and geodiversity, there are four Local Wildlife Sites and seven Local Geological Sites either wholly or partly within or immediately adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area. There is a scattered mosaic of deciduous woodland, traditional orchards, wood-pasture and parkland, and areas of ancient replanted woodland (Ellbatch Wood). There are several adjacent Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the nearest of which is the River Teme which flows to the south-west.



St. Michael's Church, The Village

- 2.13 The Neighbourhood Area is in the Worcestershire Middle Severn catchment, draining to the east. Priority issues in the catchment are to reduce urban and rural diffuse pollution, and to look for opportunities for natural solutions such as woodlands for water. Whilst there are no areas of Flood Zone 2 or 3 within the Neighbourhood Area, there are areas of high, medium and low flood risk associated with the corridors of local watercourses, including affecting the A443 west of Abberley General Stores, at Stud Lane and the B4202 at Suffolk Lane.
- 2.14 The Neighbourhood Area has a range of heritage assets. There are a number of listed buildings, mostly grade II, including several at The Village and others scattered throughout the Neighbourhood Area. Many of these are associated with farmsteads. The church of St. Michael, Abberley Hall and the Clock Tower are listed grade II*. The Village is included in a Conservation Area, designated in 1975 and whose boundary was reviewed in 2010. The grade II registered park and garden at Abberley Hall lies largely in the Neighbourhood Area. There are no scheduled ancient monuments. A number of locally valued heritage features have also been identified in drawing up the NDP.

Economy

- 2.15 The main land use is agriculture. The majority of the farmland is grade 3 (good to moderate), with pockets of grade 2 (very good). Farm-based enterprises, local services such as the village shop and the long-established Owen and Sons garage at Abberley Common, and other small businesses provide local employment. The presence of many businesses 'on the ground' is not immediately obvious because they are carried out from home. There are no industrial or trading estates, or larger-scale manufacturing firms. Notable employers are Abberley Hall School and The Elms, a country house hotel and spa located west of Abberley Common. The following occupational categories occur more frequently than the district average: managers, directors and senior officials; professional occupations; and associate professional and technical occupations. The rate of self-employment was 20.2% in 2011 (District 14.2%).
- 2.16 Looking further afield, significant employment is provided at Worcester and Droitwich. Commuting flows eastwards to these towns and to the M5 causes notable traffic congestion at the River Severn crossings at Holt Fleet, Stourport-on-Severn, Bewdley and Worcester.

Key issues

- 2.17 The NDP addresses a range of land use and development issues in working towards delivering the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Area. These have been identified through work on the NDP including the questionnaire survey. Here, priority community issues were related to the situation of Abberley in open countryside: panoramic views of hills and woodlands, peace and tranquillity, access to countryside for walking, cycling and running; and dark skies. Residents wanted to see any development sited and designed so as to fit into the landscape. The issues are listed below in the order in which they are tackled in the NDP.

- The need to ensure that new housing is of a suitable type and size to meet community requirements.
- Encouraging greater energy efficiency in new development.

- That development of the three SWDP allocations at Abberley Common should be sensitive to the character of the settlement and take account of the contribution of each of the sites to local distinctiveness.
- The needs of the community for social, recreational and other services and facilities.
- The need to protect the distinctive landscape character and associated views of the Neighbourhood Area for future generations to enjoy.
- The need to protect the open countryside character of the Neighbourhood Area, particularly on the edge of settlement areas so as to maintain a sense of place and the distinct rural character of the village communities, such as between Abberley Common and The Village.
- That the biodiversity of the Neighbourhood Area should be protected.
- That Local Green Spaces of importance to the community should be identified.
- The design of new development to reflect and enhance local character.
- Preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Abberley Conservation Area.
- That new development for economic purposes should be balanced with potential impacts including on the environment and amenity.



St. Mary's Church, The Village

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

3.1 The NDP aims to deliver the following Vision:

In 2030, Abberley will be:

- A home for healthy and thriving local communities, where the differing housing needs of all ages (including those of the younger generation) can be met; and
- A place where high-quality and sustainable community services are available, with additional provision delivered by or in step with new development; and
- A sustainable rural environment where the distinctive character of the villages, important green spaces, the separation between settlements, the natural beauty of the landscape, wildlife and historic heritage are conserved and enhanced, providing an attractive and peaceful countryside for all to enjoy; and
- A location which supports successful and environmentally-sustainable farming enterprises and other small businesses compatible in scale with the rural surroundings, providing local employment.

Objectives

3.2 The following objectives are defined for each of the main policy areas of the NDP. The objectives will be supported and further delivered through Community Actions.

Objectives for the community

- To help meet housing requirements by requiring a mix of type of properties in line with community needs.
- To provide for the development of land at The Orchard, Abberley Common, helping to deliver the SWDP allocation for this site in a manner consistent with settlement character.
- To sustain and improve the health and wellbeing of the community by retaining, protecting and enhancing community facilities.

Objectives for the natural environment

- To protect, enhance and strengthen the distinctive landscape character of the Neighbourhood Area.
- To identify and safeguard key public views of the landscape and settlements.
- To identify and safeguard Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites, as well as other features of biodiversity or geodiversity interest, recognising their contribution to ecological networks and to green infrastructure.
- To enable and support healthy lifestyles by protecting green areas of particular importance to the local community by designating them as Local Green Space.

Objectives for the built environment

- To ensure new development is designed to respect and enhance its context, maintain local distinctiveness, enable healthy lifestyles and support local resilience to climate change.
- To ensure that the special interest, character and appearance of the Abberley Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced.

Objectives for the economy

- To support local employment of a type and scale appropriate to the rural character of the parish, providing for consideration of potential impacts.
- To support the provision of new local retail and other services.



Village shop and Post Office, Abberley Common

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Policy ABY1: Sustainable development

Development proposals which contribute to the sustainable development of the Abberley Neighbourhood Area will be supported. In making this assessment of sustainability, the following considerations will be sought and balanced, as relevant to the proposal:

- 1. retaining and enhancing social and community infrastructure and promoting and enabling new provision, to meet a range of needs and support quality of life;**
- 2. ensuring that new housing addresses community needs;**
- 3. conserving and enhancing the distinctive natural and historic environment of the Neighbourhood Area, with development avoiding undue loss of amenity or impacts on landscape character and biodiversity;**
- 4. supporting existing, new and diversified employment opportunities which are compatible and in scale with the rural nature of the Neighbourhood Area.**

- 4.1 National and local planning policies place the achievement of sustainable development at the heart of the planning system. The objective of sustainable development is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.²
- 4.2 The planning system has three overarching and interdependent objectives - economic, social and environmental. These need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that net gains can be secured across each objective.
- 4.3 The NDP seeks to play an active role in guiding development towards a sustainable solution. It does this by setting out the character of the area, identifying needs and opportunities, and providing appropriate land-use planning policies to manage change.
- 4.4 Some development proposals may entail a mix of gains and losses when assessed against the Vision and its supporting objectives. Planning decisions will need to balance such variable impacts against each other in considering how individual projects contribute to sustainability, taking into account the character, needs and opportunities of the Neighbourhood Area.

² NPPF paragraph 7; Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly.

5. SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY

5.1 This chapter of the NDP deals with the provision of new housing in the Neighbourhood Area, setting out policies on the type of new dwellings that are sought generally and to govern the development of the three sites at Abberley Common that are allocated in the SWDP for housing. A final policy covers community facilities.

Type of new housing

Policy ABY2: Type of new housing

To be supported, all new housing development proposals of five or more units must demonstrate, subject to viability considerations, that they provide a range of types, size and tenure of dwellings to meet local housing need. There is a particular need in the Neighbourhood Area for:

- **Smaller family housing of 3 bedrooms or less**
- **Housing designed to meet the needs of older people including bungalows.**

Applicants should take account of the requirements of the most up to-date local Housing Needs Assessment.

5.2 It is important that housing of the right kind is provided to help meet local requirements. National planning policy requires that local policies support housing developments that reflect local needs.³ SWDP 14 *Market Housing Mix* requires all new residential developments of five or more units to contain a mix of types and sizes of market housing, as informed by the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and other local data including that collected for Neighbourhood Plans. This approach is set to continue in the SWDPR.

5.3 SWDP supplementary guidance⁴ shows that a greater number of 1, 2- and 3-bedroom market homes are required in Malvern Hills and Wychavon Districts, to help meet identified needs including the increasing number of smaller households. In light of the ageing population, the provision of 1, 2- and 3-bedroom market bungalows will be particularly welcomed.

5.4 Indicative housing requirement figures for the Neighbourhood Area were provided by the South Worcestershire Councils in July 2019.⁵ These figures are to be considered as a minimum requirement and could be subject to change. They take account of the level of growth already directed to the Neighbourhood Area through site allocations in the SWDP. The indicative requirement up to 2030 is for less than a single dwelling. This requirement has been

³ NPPF paragraph 61.

⁴ South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, Market Housing Mix Position Statement.

⁵ South Worcestershire Councils, Indicative Housing Requirements for Abberley Neighbourhood Area, 2021-2030 and 2031-2041.

met by windfall development since February 2016 (the Indicative Housing Requirements paper confirms that windfall development since the adoption of the SWDP on this date will contribute to meeting the indicative requirement). Moreover, planning permissions granted on two of the three SWDP allocation sites have yielded a total of 22 additional dwellings over and above the indicative number of dwellings assumed in the SWDP allocations.

- 5.5 A local Housing Needs Assessment was undertaken for the Neighbourhood Area by AECOM in 2019.⁶ The AECOM Assessment considers the type, size and tenure of housing required and this is relevant to both the current planned growth of the village and any windfall proposals which may arise in the plan period. The AECOM Assessment recognises there is less of a need to include dwellings containing four bedrooms and above in the required housing mix, because downsizing households will free up larger dwellings thereby meeting demand for that type. This will also allow the increase of smaller properties necessary to retain a younger population and is in line with residents' comments as to preferences.



The Manor Arms, The Village

⁶ AECOM, Abberley Housing Needs Assessment.

Criteria for development of Land at The Orchard

Policy ABY3: Criteria for development of Land at The Orchard

Proposals for the development of land at The Orchard which meet the following requirements will be supported:

- 1. an indicative figure of six dwellings are provided which accord with policy ABY2; and**
- 2. 20% of the dwellings are provided as affordable housing available in perpetuity for those in local housing need unless it can be satisfactorily and independently demonstrated that the affordable housing provision sought would not be viable in which case the maximum proportion of affordable housing (either on or off-site) will be sought that does not undermine the development's viability; and**
- 3. the scheme is designed in accord with policy ABY9 and the principles in the Abberley Design Guide, illustrated in the concept plan (Plan 2); and**
- 4. the existing dwelling and outbuilding are retained and incorporated in the scheme. If the condition of the existing house is found to prohibit a design-led scheme as illustrated in the concept plan, then the footprint of the house and its outbuildings should influence the overall design of any scheme; and**
- 5. vehicular access is taken from Clows Top Road, incorporating traffic calming as required to meet highway requirements and retaining as much of the existing roadside hedge as is consistent with junction design requirements; and**
- 6. the new dwellings are positioned with their principal frontages to Clows Top Road or the site access/green space, and are sited and are of a design and height so as to retain existing views across the site from Clows Top Road and Churchfield Terrace as far as possible; and**
- 7. a sustainable urban drainage strategy is provided to satisfactorily address surface water and foul drainage. The strategy should avoid discharging surface water to the public sewerage system where possible; and**
- 8. provision is made for green space and outdoor community uses in accord with SWDP 39 or its successor, incorporating pedestrian footpaths, pedestrian access between Clows Top Road and The Common to maximise connectivity to village facilities, and native species planting to consolidate the existing orchard trees.**

5.6 Land at The Orchard, Abberley Common is allocated in the SWDP for new housing, with an indicative capacity of six dwellings. This NDP policy sets criteria for the development of the site, to help deliver the SWDP allocation in a manner consistent with settlement character.

5.7 The site is 0.85 ha. in area with boundaries to Clows Top Road, Churchfield Terrace and The Common. There are wide-ranging views across the site and village to the countryside beyond from Clows Top Road. The site falls from east to west, the gradient being particularly steep in the descent to The Common, and tapers to the south. There are neighbouring residential

properties on all sides save for the south, where the site abuts woodland (a Priority Habitat Inventory site). A public right of way runs along Churchfield Terrace alongside the northern boundary. There is a vacant dwelling in the centre of the site, accessed from Clows Top Road. The site contributes to the distinctive character of the village and demonstrates the historical evolution of the settlement, including through its former orchard use.

5.8 The SWDP's site assessment⁷ concludes that the site's characteristics and access requirements limit capacity to a maximum of six dwellings subject to being able to achieve the required gradient, visibility splays and storm water disposal arrangements.

5.9 Policy ABY3 recognises these factors. It requires the provision of some affordable housing, pursuant to SWDP 15.⁸ It has been informed by an NDP site assessment and the Abberley Design Guide.⁹ The policy sets out requirements as to areas for development (along Clows Top Road) and parts of the site to be kept free from building (towards The Common, to reflect the topography). The concept plan (Plan 2) illustrates the desired approach, which will help to preserve and protect settlement character and residential amenity, retain some views across the site at the highest point, and avoid the risk of over-bearing development positioned above The Common road. The concept plan features:

- establishment of large central park to the settlement, connecting different areas of The Common and the B4202 Clows Top Road;
- existing property integrated into the development;
- development to the road frontage and building line at Clows Top Road maintained;
- new orchard integrated into the landscape;
- existing vehicular access maintained and enhanced; and
- multi pedestrian connections and links to public rights of way.



Land at The Orchard from Clows Top Road

⁷ SWDP Non-strategic Housing Allocations Background Paper, page 123, December 2012.

⁸ The Housing (Right to Buy) (Designated Rural Areas and Designated Regions) (England) Order 2016 SI 2016 No. 587 specifies Abberley as a designated rural area wherein affordable housing may be sought for residential developments that are not major developments.

⁹ NDP Housing Delivery Report, May 2019, and Abberley Design Guide, section 5.



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Plan 2: Concept plan for development of Land at The Orchard

Community facilities

Policy ABY4: Community facilities

Development proposals that would result in the loss of existing community facilities will only be supported when the criteria in policy SWDP 37B or its successor can be shown to be met. Proposals in the vicinity of an existing community facility should not have a significant adverse effect on its operation, taking account of any mitigation proposed.

The existing community facilities covered by this policy are shown on Plan 3 and are:

- 1. Abberley Village Hall**
- 2. Abberley Parochial VC Primary School**
- 3. St. Michael's Church**
- 4. St. Mary's Church**
- 5. The Manor Arms**
- 6. Abberley Hall School**
- 7. The Elms Hotel and Spa.**

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

- 1. the siting, scale and design respects the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets; and**
- 2. the local road network can accommodate the additional traffic without compromising highway safety; and**
- 3. adequate off-road vehicle and cycle parking is provided on the site; and**
- 4. there will be no significant harmful impacts on residential amenity.**

5.10 Community facilities contribute to the quality of life in the Neighbourhood Area, meeting a wide variety of educational, religious, health and wellbeing, and community needs. It is important in sustaining the social fabric of the parish that they are retained.

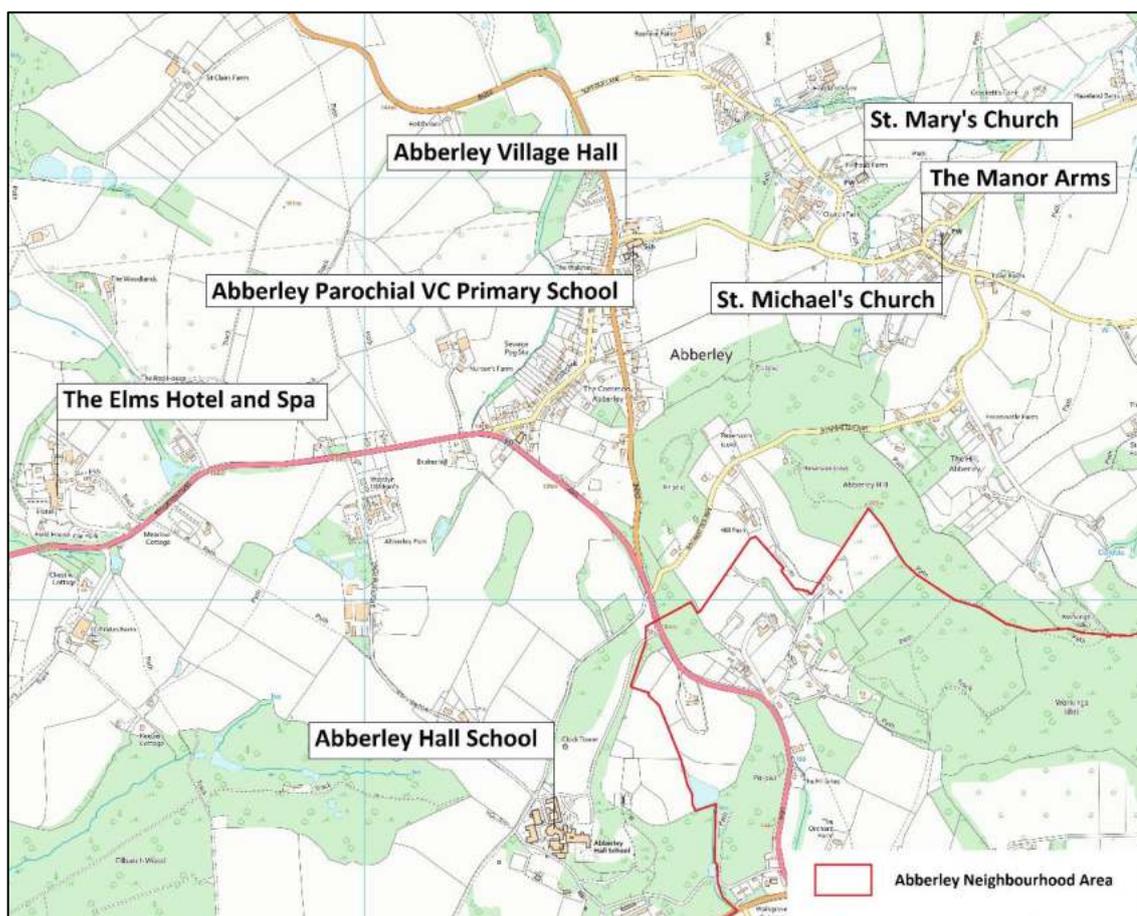
5.11 SWDP 37 *Built Community Facilities* supports the provision of new facilities and the enhancement of existing provision, and sets out criteria which must be met by any proposals that would result in the loss of a site or building currently or last used as a community facility. Policy ABY4 lists the community facilities in the Neighbourhood Area to be considered under these criteria. It applies to both the buildings concerned and associated areas of land and car parking.

5.12 Policy ABY4 also recognises that restrictions might arise on the operation of existing community facilities from nearby new development. National planning policy provides that existing facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of

development permitted after they were established.¹⁰ For instance, the Village Hall is used for evening social events such as wedding receptions and barn dances, to which its edge-of-village location is ideally suited. The operation of the Hall may be compromised if its hours of use had to be reduced in the light of noise and disturbance complaints from new neighbouring noise-sensitive development.

5.13 The enhancement of Abberley Village Hall may be enabled by financial contributions from new residential development under the terms of SWDPR 42C *Built Community Facilities*. Such enhancement could include the provision of recreational facilities and additional car parking on an extended site.

5.14 The co-location of services so as to maintain and improve the viability and sustainability of existing facilities will be encouraged through a Community Action.



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Plan 3: Community facilities

¹⁰ NPPF paragraph 182.

6. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

6.1 This chapter of the NDP sets out planning policies to protect and enhance landscape character, important public views, biodiversity and Local Green Space.

Landscape character

Policy ABY5: Landscape character

Development proposals must demonstrate that:

1. 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; and
2. 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, and by restoring, enhancing and making new provision where this is appropriate.

6.2 The Neighbourhood Area is situated in the Teme Valley National Character Area (NCA), as defined by Natural England. The NCA is a tranquil rural landscape which has largely escaped the pressure of modern development and retained much of its historical built character in dispersed settlements, small villages and traditional timber-framed buildings, hop yards, hop kilns and cider houses. The Abberley Hills are identified as the most conspicuous landscape feature in the NCA. On the lower land, a complex undulating landscape with rich red soils gives rise to fertile farmlands and a mosaic of mixed agriculture.¹¹

6.3 SWDP 25 *Landscape Character* requires development proposals to show that they have taken into account the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and its guidelines; that development is appropriate to the landscape setting; and that landscape characteristics and features have been conserved and enhanced.

6.4 The Worcestershire LCA identifies four Landscape Types in the Neighbourhood Area (Plan 4). The majority of the Area comprises **Timbered Plateau Farmlands**. These are a mixed farming landscape of hedged fields, scattered farms, woods and wooded valleys, and where the landform is dominant over the pattern of tree cover and fields. Around Abberley Common, the topography and associated open vistas make it particularly important that new development on the edge of the settlement takes landscape character into account. LCA guidelines for this landscape type include:

- To conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species.
- To promote the coalescence of fragmented ancient woodlands.

¹¹ See Natural England, National Character Area profile 102: Teme Valley, 2014.

- To promote new woodland planting, favouring native broadleaves such as oak.
- To promote infilling of gaps in tree cover along watercourses and dingles.
- To conserve and restore the pattern of hedgerows, hedgerow oaks and veteran trees.
- To maintain the characteristic dispersed pattern of settlement and avoid the formation of pronounced settlement nuclei.

6.5 The western border of the Neighbourhood Area is marked by **Principal Timbered Farmlands**. These are rolling lowland landscapes with occasional steep sided hills and low escarpments. They have a small scale, wooded, agricultural appearance characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees, irregularly shaped woodlands and winding lanes. Areas around Poolhouse Farm and Elms Green, extending to Stockton on Teme, represent the type. LCA guidelines include:

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

6.6 **Principal Wooded Hills** lie to the east of Abberley Hall school and extend along Abberley Hill. The intrinsic character is derived from the pronounced, often steep topography and the dominant woodland cover. There is typically significant cover of ancient semi-natural woodland, an important asset to nature conservation. LCA guidelines include:



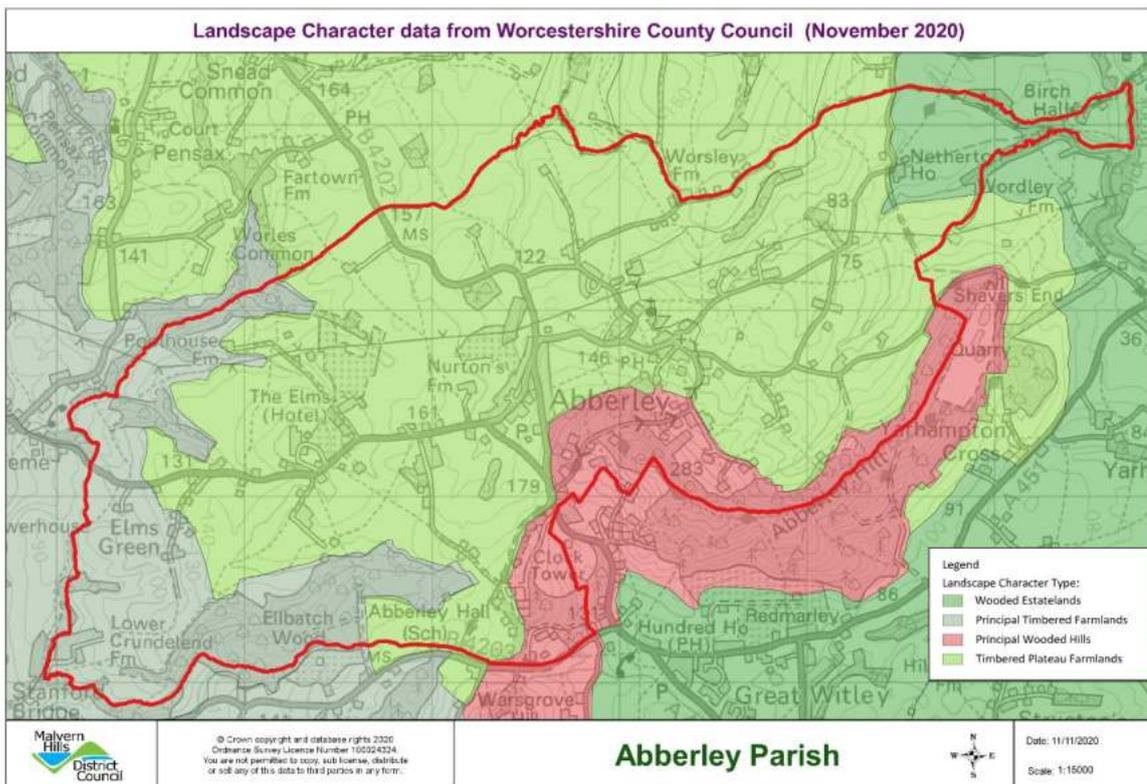
Panorama from the Worcestershire Way looking WNW-N across the Principal Timbered Farmlands of the Neighbourhood Area, including Abberley Park and The Common with the Cleve Hills in the distance

- To conserve and restore the ancient broadleaved character of all woodlands.
- To undertake large scale woodland planting where required to preserve the landscape character, taking account of visual impact.
- To strengthen the wooded character of hedgelines and streamlines.

6.7 Finally, **Wooded Estatelands** lie to the east around Nethererton House to Birch Hall. This is a large-scale, wooded farming landscape. The size, shape and composition of the woodlands is critical to its character, with an emphasis on an ancient semi-natural origin and irregular outlines. LCA guidelines include:

- To conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species.
- To promote new woodland planting, favouring native broadleaves such as oak.
- To conserve and restore the pattern of hedgerows and linkages to woodland blocks.

6.8 Protecting the overall character of the landscape of Abberley was seen as a priority in the questionnaire survey, with 74% of respondents wanting to see development fit into the landscape and almost all liking the panoramic views of open countryside, hills and woodlands. Specific features contributing to this valued landscape character, such as trees, hedgerows and woodlands, also often have historic, cultural and biodiversity significance. For instance, surviving traditional orchards are reminders of the importance of fruit cultivation to the previous rural economy.



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Plan 4: Landscape types

Key views

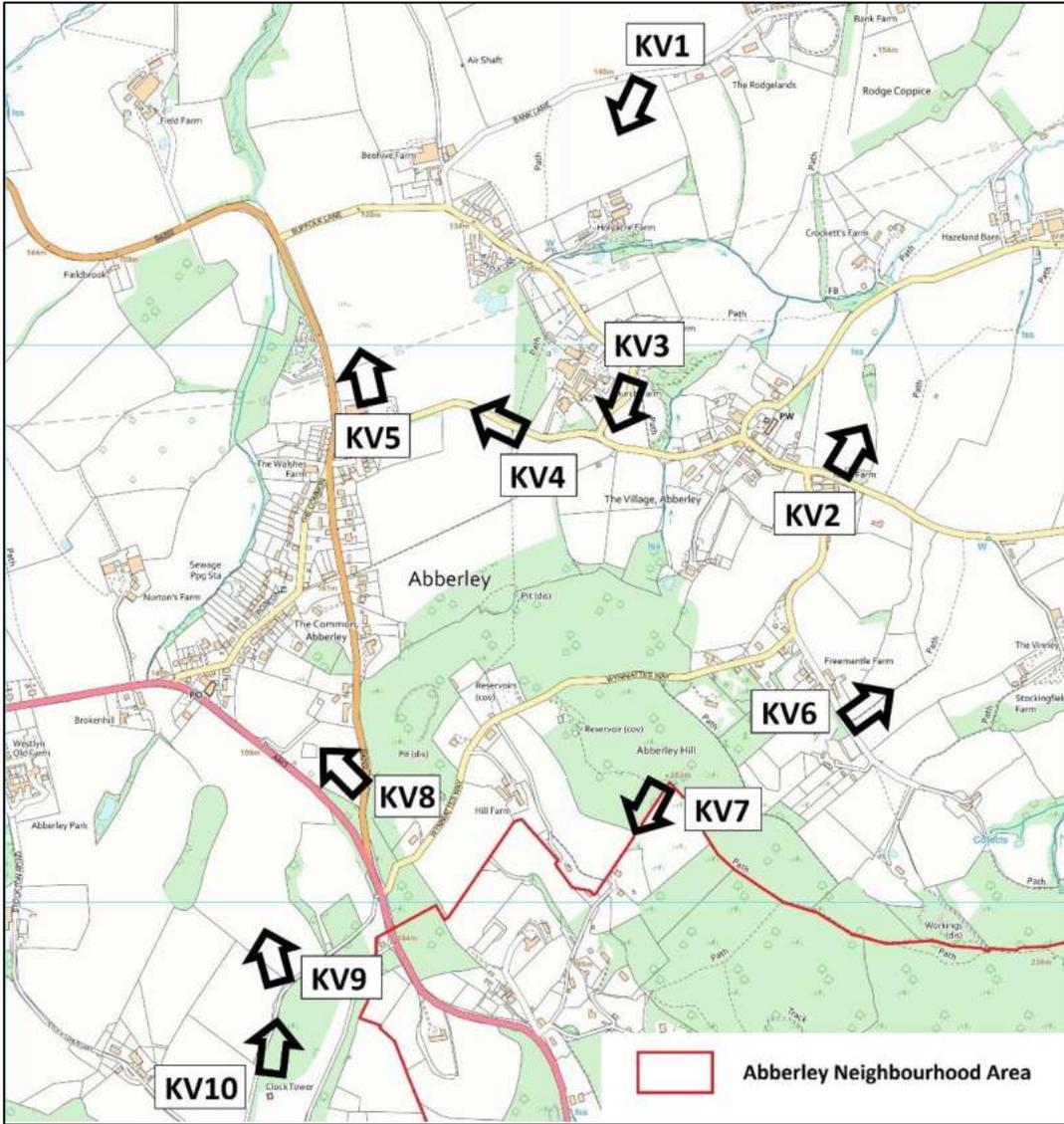
Policy ABY6: Key Views

To be supported, development proposals must demonstrate that they are sited, designed and of a scale so that they do not have a detrimental impact on the key features of the Key Views identified in Table 1 and on Plan 5.

- 6.9 An important part of recognising the intrinsic character and scenic beauty of the countryside is to acknowledge and protect the part played by views of the wider landscape and settlements.
- 6.10 The undulating and elevated topography of much of the Neighbourhood Area affords many striking views across the landscape. In the questionnaire survey, almost all respondents (97.6%) valued the panoramic views of the open countryside, hills and woodlands. Key views to be protected have been identified by the Steering Group. They are listed below in Table 1, and are shown on Plan 5 and the accompanying photographs. They can all be seen from publicly-accessible rights of way and viewpoints. They are an important element of local distinctiveness, giving opportunities for the appreciation of landscape character and the setting of Abberley Common and The Village. Proposals which would substantially harm these views, for instance by blocking or materially intruding into them, should be avoided.

| No. on Plan 5 | Description of view |
|---------------|---|
| KV1 | Looking south from Bank Lane towards Abberley Hill, Tump House, the Village Hall and School, and houses bordering Clows Top Road. |
| KV2 | Looking east across the valley from Shaver's End Road in The Village. |
| KV3 | Looking south from Suffolk Lane towards Abberley Hill with the Village Green on the left. |
| KV4 | Looking west on the road between The Village and Abberley Common. |
| KV5 | Looking north west from the rear of the Village Hall. |
| KV6 | From the Hill looking east with the Shaver's End Road bounded by hedging in the distance. |
| KV7 | Looking south from the top of Abberley Hill to Abberley Hall School and the Clocktower, Woodbury Hill and the Malverns. |
| KV8 | Looking north west from Clows Top Road towards The Common and Abberley Park. |
| KV9 | Looking north east from the Worcestershire Way towards Abberley Common. |
| KV10 | The Common from Abberley Clocktower. |

Table 1: Key views



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Plan 5: Key views



KV1: looking S from Bank Lane



KV2: looking east from Shavers End Road



KV3: looking S from Suffolk Lane



KV4: looking W towards Abberley Common



KV5: looking NW from the Village Hall



KV6: looking E from the Hill



KV7: looking S from the top of Abberley Hill



KV8: looking NW from Clows Top Road



KV9: looking NE from the Worcestershire Way



KV10: The Common from Abberley Clocktower

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy ABY7: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The following sites of local biodiversity and geodiversity importance wholly or partly within the Neighbourhood Area are identified for protection in accordance with SWDP 22D or its successor:

Local Wildlife Sites (Plan 6)

- Abberley Hill
- Dick Brook
- Ellbatch and Meneatt Woods
- Ridding Coppice and Hall Wood

Local Geological Sites (Plan 7)

- Abberley Hall (South Terrace)
- Abberley Parish Quarry
- Abberley Village Quarry
- Shewards Quarry
- The Woodlands Quarry

Grassland Inventory Sites (Plan 7)

- Hill Farm Meadows.

6.11 National policy supports the protection and enhancement of sites of biodiversity or geological value, in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality. SWDP 22 *Biodiversity and Geodiversity* explains how this will be implemented in South Worcestershire, providing protection for sites, habitats and features of European, national and local importance and for protected species. This includes species and habitats of principal importance recognised in the Biodiversity Action Plan or listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (the Priority Habitat Inventory).¹² The strategic policy also requires development to enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, and to promote the coherence and connectivity of ecological corridors and networks.

¹² ¹² The Priority Habitat Inventory is maintained by Natural England pursuant to section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. It lists habitats of principal importance for the purposes of conserving biodiversity. In the Neighbourhood Area these include deciduous woodland, ancient replanted woodland, and traditional orchards.

6.12 There are a number of sites in the Neighbourhood Area which have been designated for their biodiversity and/or geological interest at the local level.¹³ They are shown on Plans 6 and 7 and are identified pursuant to SWDP 22. There are four Local Wildlife Sites in the Neighbourhood Area, all of which extend beyond the parish boundary:

- Abberley Hill (LWS SO76/16) on the southern and south-eastern border of the Neighbourhood Area. This site extends to 122 ha. of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, plantation on ancient sites and secondary woodland. Wet woodland occurs along brooks and there are small areas of semi-improved grassland adjacent to the wood.
- Dick Brook (LWS SO76/18) to the north and east of the Neighbourhood Area. The main value of the brook is that it forms an important wildlife corridor through the landscape; otters are known to use it and there are also past records for dipper, grey wagtail and kingfisher.
- Ellbatch and Meneatt Woods (LWS SO76/06) on the south-western border of the Neighbourhood Area. This is a large 60 ha. complex of broadleaved woodland, most of which is semi-natural ancient in origin, following a stream flowing from Abberley in the east to near Stanford Bridge in the west where it joins the River Teme.
- Ridding Coppice and Hall Wood (LWS SO76/05) on the western border of the Neighbourhood Area. This is 41 ha. of broadleaved woodland, much of which is semi-natural ancient in origin, following a narrow stream (a minor tributary of the River Teme) southwards from Pensax to Stockton-on-Teme.

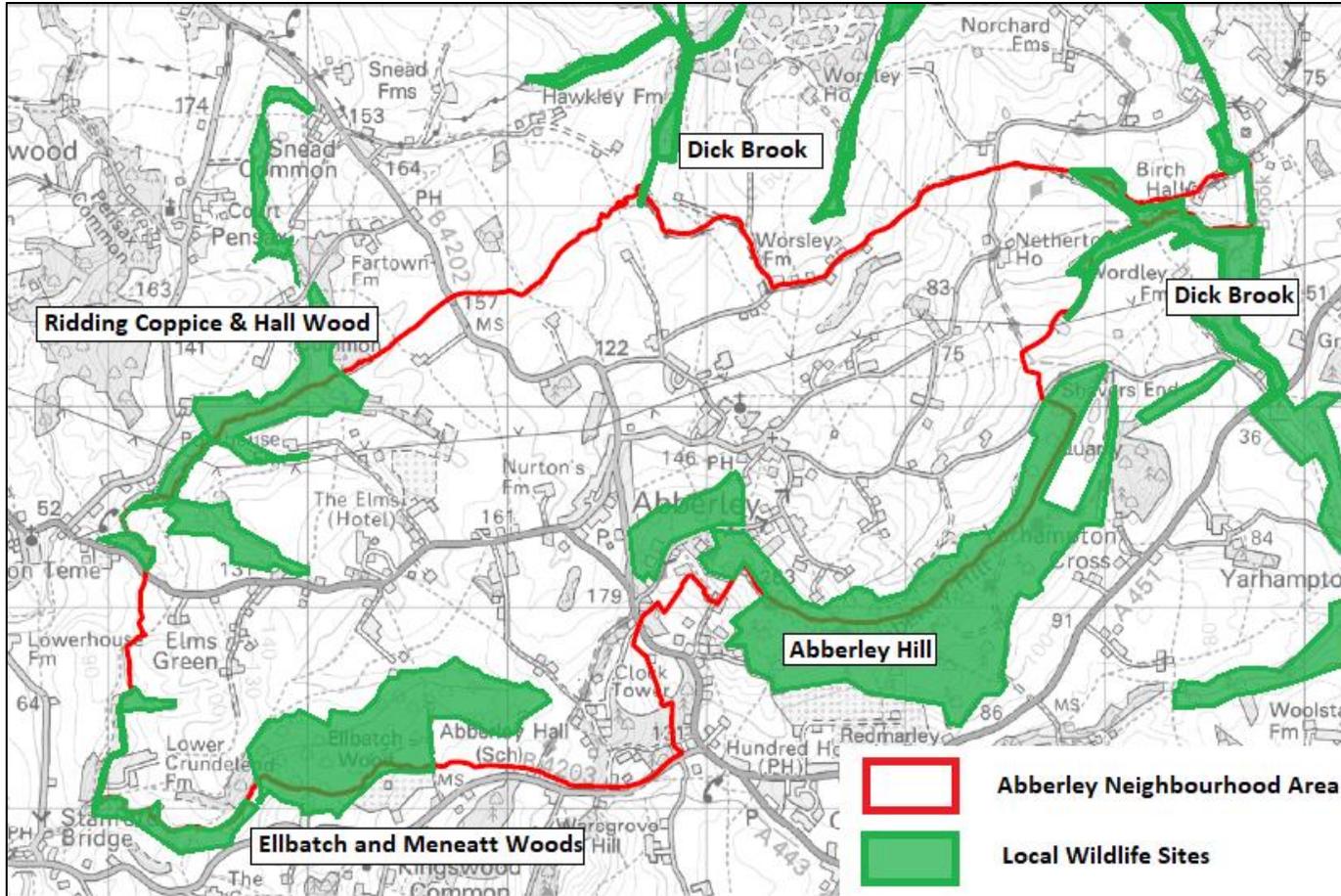
6.13 There are five Local Geological Sites within the Neighbourhood Area, listed for their scientific and educational value (Abberley Village Quarry is also designated for its historical value). Two sites, Abberley Hall East and Shavers End also adjoin the Plan area. It is possible that development within the Plan area may compromise their favourable condition and this should be noted by developers.

- Abberley Hall (South Terrace).
- Abberley Parish Quarry.
- Abberley Village Quarry.
- Shewards Quarry.
- The Woodland Quarry

6.14 Hill Farm Meadows, south of Wynniattes Way, are included in the Worcestershire Grassland Inventory lists (sites 2729 and 2730).

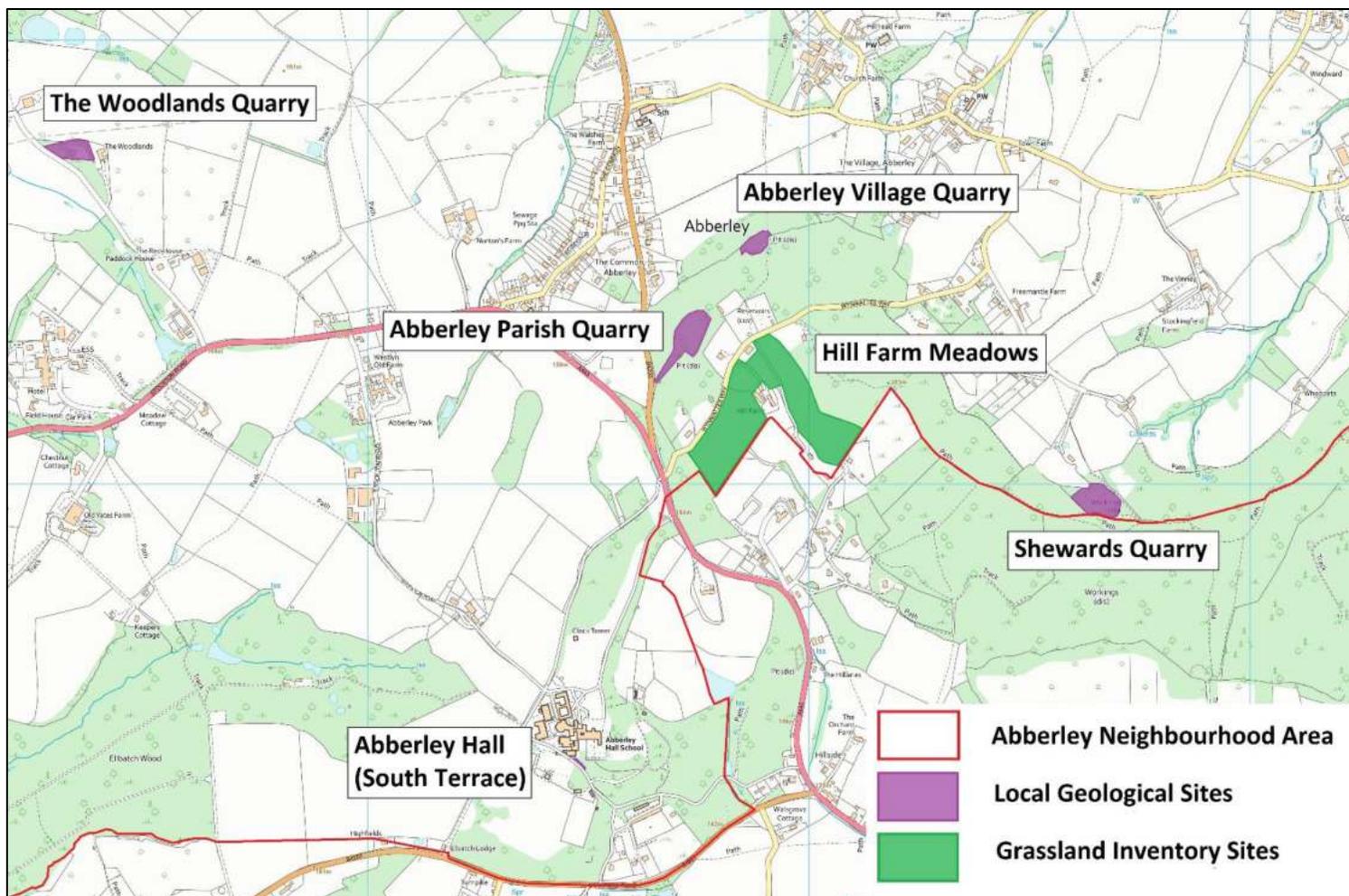
6.15 In addition to the designated sites, the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre holds numerous records for protected species throughout the Neighbourhood Area, and there are three ancient trees in the grounds of The Elms Hotel and Spa.

¹³ Information provided by Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (LWS and GIS) and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust (LGS).



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Plan 6: Local Wildlife Sites



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Plan 7: Local Geological Sites and Grassland Inventory Sites

Local Green Spaces

Policy ABY8: Local Green Spaces

The following areas of land shown on Plan 8 are designated as Local Green Space:

- 1. LGS1 St. Mary's Churchyard**
- 2. LGS2 Abberley Village Green**
- 3. LGS3 St. Michael's Churchyard**
- 4. LGS4 Village Hall green space**
- 5. LGS5 Rosedale, Abberley Common**
- 6. LGS6 Abberley Parish Quarry.**

Development in the Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts.

6.16 Local Green Spaces are areas of particular importance to the local community. Such designation should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period, i.e. after 2030. They should be in reasonably close proximity to the community served, demonstrably special and hold a particular local significance, local in character and not an extensive tract of land.¹⁴

6.17 Land has been identified at Abberley Common and The Village which meets these requirements. These areas are shown on Plan 8 and proposed to be designated as Local Green Space through policy ABY8. The proposed designations are consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. The NDP considers the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development together in its Vision, objectives and policy ABY1; and seeks to make planning policy provision for each of these areas. Each of the proposed Local Green Spaces are capable of enduring beyond 2030 by virtue of their public or trust ownership, existing open space use or their location in open countryside away from likely areas of development after the end of the plan period. Appendix B details how each proposed Local Green Space meets the remaining criteria. In summary:

- all are close to the local community;
- by virtue of the uses they represent and benefits they offer, all are special to the community, for the reasons set out in Appendix B, and are of local significance; and
- they are all local in character and none is extensive in area.

¹⁴ NPPF paragraphs 99 and 100.



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Plan 8: Local Green Spaces



LGS2 Abberley Village Green



The Common, looking south, with LGS5 Rosedale Local Green Space on the right

7. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

7.1 This chapter of the NDP deals with the design of new development throughout the Neighbourhood Area, including the Abberley Conservation Area.

Building design

Policy ABY9: Building design

Development proposals should maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of the Abberley Neighbourhood Area, achieve a high quality of sustainable design, enable healthy lifestyles and support local resilience to climate change by:

- 1. having regard to the design guidelines set out in the Abberley Design Guide. A Design and Access Statement or similar should be provided to show how the design guidelines have been addressed and positively influenced the proposed design solution. Proposals for historic farmsteads should be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials and form; and**
- 2. incorporating sustainability measures to include building orientation and design, energy and water conservation, sustainable construction methods and materials, the generation of renewable energy, and provision for the recycling of waste, cycle storage, communications and broadband technologies, and electric vehicle charging points; and**
- 3. being capable of being safely accessed from the local road network without undue local environmental impacts which cannot be mitigated, not resulting in additional on-road parking, and take every available opportunity to promote walking and cycling; and**
- 4. avoiding creating unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and the tranquillity of the countryside from noise, volume and nature of traffic generated, dust or odour. External lighting should avoid undue adverse impacts on amenity, wildlife and dark skies; and**
- 5. locating and designing new housing to avoid adverse impacts on the amenity of the future occupants from the operation of existing uses, including agricultural, business and community uses, where such impacts could lead to unreasonable restrictions being placed on them.**

Modern design approaches which take an innovative approach, including to energy efficiency and sustainability, will be welcomed where they make a positive contribution to the character of the area and contribute to local distinctiveness.

7.2 The design of individual buildings and their relationship to each other and their surroundings is an important aspect of the local environment already recognised in planning policy at national and County levels. National policy is that good design is a key aspect of sustainable

development and that neighbourhood plans can play an important role by identifying the special qualities of an area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.¹⁵

- 7.3 SWDP 21 *Design* requires all development to be of a high design quality and specifies a wide range of factors that are to be addressed. Enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles are addressed in the Planning for Health in South Worcestershire Supplementary Planning Document, including use of Health Impact Assessments.¹⁶ In addition, Worcestershire County Council's Streetscape Design Guide provides guidance on highway and transport infrastructure.¹⁷
- 7.4 Locally, replies to the questionnaire survey showed that residents wanted to see housing of a style in keeping with the rest of the village, avoiding generic treatments, as well as being sustainable.
- 7.5 The policy encourages sustainable design to help new development adapt to or mitigate climate change, in support of the Worcestershire Partnership Climate Change Strategy. This includes such design features as:
- energy efficiency, using the highest modern standards of insulation;
 - renewable energy generation e.g. by solar panels;
 - minimising carbon footprint;
 - specifying materials with regard to their life cycle, such as from reclaimed, salvaged or recycled sources;
 - rainwater harvesting, including the provision of water butts;
 - the on-site growing of produce and options for composting, including compost bins;
 - using permeable surfaces in developments to reduce run-off and enable groundwater recharge.
- 7.6 The Abberley Design Guide addresses these and other concerns.¹⁸ The Guide identifies a number of positive aspects of character at Abberley Common and The Village which should be sustained, reinforced or enhanced. Any new development should respect these qualities and demonstrate how they have been incorporated into the design.
- 7.7 At Abberley Common, examples include low settlement densities, with no estate roads accessing development in depth; use of timber-framing at gables, echoing Abberley Hall; low housing densities and the incorporation of off-road parking; and a linear morphology delivering active frontage and good relationships between dwellings and the settlement. For Abberley Conservation Area (The Village) the Guide highlights such aspects as a diverse range of building styles and scales and a consistent aesthetic through the dominant use of brick.

¹⁵ NPPF paragraphs 124 and 125.

¹⁶ South Worcestershire Councils in conjunction with Worcestershire County Council, Planning for Health in South Worcestershire Supplementary Planning Document, September 2017.

¹⁷ Worcestershire County Council, Streetscape Design Guide.

¹⁸ <https://www.abberleyparish.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DDC-Abberley-FINAL-SH-19.10.08.pdf>

7.8 The Guide identifies and explains a set of design guidelines which will help deliver sustainable design which responds to the character of the locality.¹⁹ These guidelines advocate character-led design which responds to and enhances the existing village townscape. The objective is to take inspiration from the context to form a contemporary approach which is in harmony with the surroundings and local vernacular. The guidelines address:

- Townscape structure
- Green spaces, public realm and street scape
- Pattern and layout of buildings
- Views and landmarks
- Building line and boundary treatment
- Building heights and roofline
- Building modifications, extension and plot infill
- Architectural details
- Materials, including brick bonds and colour.

7.9 The Guide continues to provide specific design guidelines for Abberley Conservation Area and Abberley Common. These principles provide detailed and locally-derived design guidance for these locations which should be taken into account by new development. Full details can be found in the Guide. Further guidance in respect of Abberley Conservation Area can be found at policy ABY10.

7.10 The Guide mainly deals with residential development since this is likely to be the main form of new building at Abberley Common and The Village. However, it should also be taken into account in the design of non-residential buildings, and be used to inform development throughout the Neighbourhood Area as appropriate. The Worcestershire Farmsteads Assessment Framework also provides guidance to achieve the sustainable development of historic farmsteads, including their conservation and enhancement.²⁰

7.11 The creation of new points of access to serve development will be carefully considered in terms of their environmental impacts. For example, achieving the required sightlines for new or improved junctions may lead to undue impacts on local character through the loss of roadside vegetation, with a general “opening up” of what may have been a relatively closed landscape setting. Proposals which cannot satisfactorily mitigate such environmental impacts will not be supported.

7.12 It is important to minimise noise and light pollution in order to protect the rural character, tranquillity and local distinctiveness of the Neighbourhood Area. The dark skies of the Neighbourhood Area are highly valued by residents; in the questionnaire survey, 76% of respondents identified the lack of light pollution and dark skies as one of the best things about living in Abberley. It is also recognised that lighting has adverse impacts on wildlife. To this end, external security and other lighting should be kept to a minimum and be designed to be energy efficient, unobtrusive and avoid light spillage. The introduction of street lighting will

¹⁹ Abberley Design Guide, section 1.5.

²⁰ Worcestershire County Council and English Heritage, Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework.

be resisted by the Parish Council when its views are sought pursuant to highway planning and design by Worcestershire County Council or developers.



Finger post road sign, junction of The Common and Clows Top Road

Abberley Conservation Area

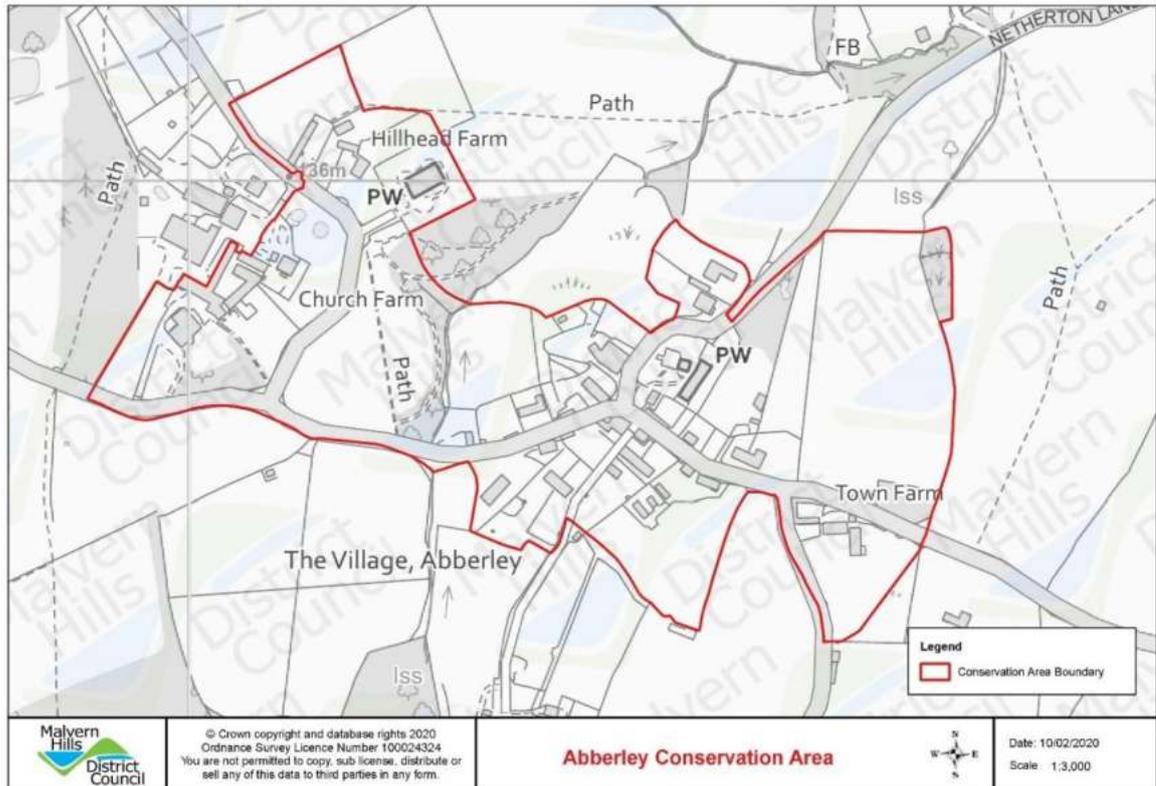
Policy ABY10: Abberley Conservation Area

Development proposals within Abberley Conservation Area or its setting should preserve or enhance its character or appearance, having regard to its significance and special interest as set out in the Appraisal and Management Strategy. Proposals will be supported provided that they:

- 1. serve to preserve or positively enhance the Conservation Area by virtue of their use, character and design; and**
- 2. avoid any demolition of a building or structure if its loss would be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area; and**
- 3. respect the prevailing density of buildings and their plan form, recognising the variations that occur in these factors within the Conservation Area; and**
- 4. reflect the size, height, scale, form, proportions and detailing of the existing and surrounding built form; and**
- 5. use local materials and vernacular techniques wherever possible; and**
- 6. 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**
- 7. retain the important views, open spaces, boundary features, trees and hedgerows identified in the Appraisal and Management Strategy; and**
- 8. specify local materials or native species for any new boundary treatments such as walls, railings, fencing or hedging; and**
- 9. preserve the open countryside setting of the Conservation Area.**

7.13 Abberley Conservation Area was designated in 1975 in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest. The nature of that special interest is set out in the District Council's Appraisal and Management Strategy, prepared in 2010. The Appraisal included a review of the extent of the Conservation Area which led to the boundary being drawn more tightly around the settlement and the zones of substantive interest. The present Conservation Area boundary is shown on Plan 9.

7.14 Abberley Conservation Area comprises a small hamlet set in undulating countryside north of the wooded Abberley Hill. The Appraisal explains that the main characteristic of the Conservation Area is its division into two zones. In the east is the oldest part of the village, of Saxon origin, grouped around the partly ruinous St. Michael's Church. This is the heart of the village where the buildings form a small square with boundary walls creating an intimate density. To the west lies the Victorian church of St. Mary's, with the village green and woodland between. Here, the settlement pattern is looser, with the church positioned amongst farms and barns. Mature trees and orchards are a feature of this part of the Conservation Area.



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Plan 9: Abberley Conservation Area

7.15 The interest of the village also lies in the informal mix of building types that exist side by side. Mostly of red brick and with some stone, the ages of the buildings (with the exception of the ancient St Michael’s Church) are from the early 1400’s onwards with several 18th century houses and 19th century cottages and, on the village boundaries, some 20th century properties. This creates a fairly homogenous mix that helps to bind the settlement together.

7.16 A further factor contributing to character and appearance is the plan form and density of buildings. Properties are densely-packed around the square, loosening off towards the edges of the settlement. The area around St. Mary’s has a scattered pattern of development. These existing proportions of space, plot division and density should be respected.

7.17 The Appraisal highlights a number of problems and pressures for change. These are:

The zone around St. Michael’s:

- The height and massing of properties, especially close to the Square
- The design quality of additions and the use of materials, including uPVC
- Retaining gaps between buildings and trees/hedges

- Boundary treatments and fences

The zone around St. Mary's:

- Boundary walls and fences
- Retaining spaces between buildings
- Retaining trees/hedges

Throughout the Conservation Area:

- Proliferation of poles and wires
- Untidy areas
- Importance of retaining the open parkland and trees between the two zones and the open fields around the village to maintain identity of place and its setting.

7.18 National planning policy requires that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. It sets out a graduated approach to apply when considering the impacts of a proposed development on designated heritage assets such as Conservation Areas. This approach is reflected in SWDP 6 *Historic Environment* and SWDP 24 *Management of the Historic Environment*. Within this framework, policy ABY10 draws on the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy to set out guidance on how development proposals should be assessed so that its character and appearance can best be preserved and enhanced. It is complementary to the Abberley Design Guide.

Non-designated heritage assets

7.19 A number of buildings and other structures of local heritage interest in the Neighbourhood Area have been identified by the NDP Steering Group. The Parish Council will seek the inclusion of these buildings and features on the District Council's Local List of non-designated heritage assets, in line with the guidance set out in the Local List Supplementary Planning Document. A Community Action is included to that effect in Table 2. They are as follows:

- Nos. 36, 37, 38 and 42 The Village
- Wall-mounted VR post box, Jaylands, The Village
- Cast iron telephone box, Clows Top Road
- Old Cobbler's Shop, between 57 and 59 The Common
- Fingerpost road sign, junction of The Common and Clows Top Road
- Fingerpost pole, junction of The Common and A443.

7.20 The Appraisal identifies The Manor Arms and Church Farm as unlisted buildings of local interest. National planning policy requires that in considering proposals affecting such non-designated heritage assets regard should be had to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.²¹

²¹ NPPF paragraph 197.

8. ECONOMY

- 8.1 Planning policies can enable new employment uses, foster farm diversification, and support additional local retail and service facilities, provided in all cases that these are of an appropriate scale and meet relevant criteria.

Employment and farm diversification

Policy ABY11: Employment and farm diversification

Development proposals for employment uses and farm diversification in accord with SWDP 12 or its successor will be supported provided that:

- 1. they are of a scale, type and nature appropriate to their location and setting; and**
- 2. the impacts on highway safety and capacity are or can be made acceptable, with adequate parking provided for staff, delivery vehicles and visitors; and**
- 3. there are no undue impacts on residential or visual amenity, or on the built and natural environments.**

- 8.2 Abberley is a strongly rural area with employment opportunities at businesses such as The Elms Hotel and Spa, farm and land-based enterprises throughout the parish, and retail and other services in the villages. This is likely to continue in the plan period. There was some qualified support for additional local employment in the questionnaire survey (from 19% of respondents). SWDP 12 *Employment in Rural Areas* is supportive of farm diversification, subject to various criteria. There is little scope at Abberley Common for new building in the development boundary for employment purposes, which would be at odds with the residential character of the village. The motor vehicle repair business at The Common is safeguarded for employment-generating uses under the terms of SWDP 12.
- 8.3 The NDP promotes sustaining existing businesses and enables suitable small-scale development for employment purposes provided such proposals are of a scale and nature which are appropriate to their location and setting and in accord with the SWDP policy. This includes farm diversification, the conversion and re-use of redundant rural buildings, and home working (when planning permission is required). The aim is to enable small-scale employment in the Neighbourhood Area to continue to evolve, with a flexible approach to growing enterprises and to enabling self-employment.
- 8.4 Improvements to communications and broadband and to public transport were identified as key elements of economic growth in responses to the questionnaire survey. These are outside the scope of the Plan and are therefore addressed through Community Actions.

Local retail and other services

Policy ABY12: Local retail and other services

Proposals for the expansion of existing local retail and other services within the Neighbourhood Area or for new such provision will be supported provided that they:

1. are of a scale appropriate to the location; and
2. make full use of opportunities to provide access by sustainable modes of travel; and
3. avoid undue impact on residential or other local amenity; and
4. provide sufficient parking to accommodate the vehicles of all users and staff.

Wherever possible, use should be made of sites which are physically well-related to Abberley Common, and of existing buildings in preference to new development.

- 8.5 The questionnaire survey revealed support from residents for additional services and businesses such as a hairdresser, child care or a coffee shop. These are dependent on commercial decisions in the first instance, and in any event they would not necessarily fall under planning control. However, the NDP can provide a positive planning policy, giving confidence that any such appropriate provision will be supported when planning permission is required, subject to meeting the criteria set out. The policy will apply to development proposals arising from the expansion of existing services, such as the Abberley Village Stores and Post Office, as well as new provision.



Owen and Sons Garage

9. DELIVERING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 9.1 The NDP is a long-term planning document which will be implemented in the period up to 2030. Abberley Parish Council will seek to implement the objectives of the NDP in delivering the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 9.2 The principal means of doing this will be through decisions on planning applications. These are taken by Malvern Hills District Council as local planning authority, and are made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NDP will, when made, form part of the overall ‘development plan’.
- 9.3 The Parish Council will seek planning decisions which accord with the overall development plan when consulted on planning applications by the District Council. This includes supporting proposals which meet the policies of the NDP and the SWDP, and opposing proposals which do not.
- 9.4 Wherever possible, the Parish Council will work pro-actively with applicants and the local planning authority to allow planning permission to be granted for development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the Neighbourhood Area.

Community actions

- 9.5 The formal role of the NDP is the setting of planning policies which deal with land use and development. However, in preparing the NDP and in responses to the questionnaire survey the local community has identified ways of improving the Neighbourhood Area which extend beyond this remit. These generally concern infrastructure, transport, and other local services and facilities. Such issues cannot be addressed through the land use planning policies of the NDP but may be expressed as Community Actions to be undertaken or led by the Parish Council. These are set out in Table 2. Where appropriate, developer contributions will be sought to deliver, or support the delivery, of improvements to these aspects of parish life.

| Ref. | Topic area | Community Action |
|------|---|---|
| CA1 | Highways – road safety for all users | To work with Worcestershire Council Council and other partners to identify and implement measures to improve road safety, to include speed indicator devices, pavement improvements, the enforcement and lowering of speed limits, and weight/parking restrictions. |
| CA2 | Highways – road safety priority locations | To work with Worcestershire County Council and others to improve road safety at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clows Top Road at Abberley Common • A443 adjacent to Abberley Common • A443 junctions with Clows Top Road and The Common. |
| CA3 | Highways – road maintenance | To work with Worcestershire County Council to address issues of highway maintenance including drainage (road run-off, ditches and gullies) and hedge-cutting (including maintaining the ability of walkers to see over hedgerows) as they arise. |
| CA4 | Highways – other matters | To work with Worcestershire County Council to address other highway issues including the further provision of passing places in justified locations, traffic calming at the priority and other locations, and road and footpath signage. |
| CA5 | Street lighting | To resist the introduction of street lighting when the views of the Parish Council/ community are sought on highway planning and design by Worcestershire County Council or developers. |
| CA6 | Public transport provision | To work with Worcestershire County Council, bus operators and Community Transport providers to investigate ways of addressing issues identified and will continue to press the case for existing service levels to be maintained and for improvements to be delivered. |
| CA7 | Walking and cycling | To work with Worcestershire County Council and landowners to promote the maintenance of public rights of way throughout the Parish and to seek improvements to connectivity in and around the villages to foster walking and cycling as alternatives to use of the private car for short trips. |
| CA8 | Communications and broadband | To promote and support improvements to communications and broadband infrastructure by working in partnership with Worcestershire County Council and network operators. This may include consideration of a community-led scheme. |
| CA9 | Community information and communication | To continue to maintain and improve ways of providing information to and communicating with the community including use of notice boards, publications and the website. |

| | | |
|------|--------------------------------|---|
| CA10 | Community facilities | To encourage the co-location of community services in achieving and enhancing the viability of existing activities. |
| CA11 | Landscape designation | To keep under review opportunities which may arise to recognise the special qualities of the Abberley Hills landscape, including through national designation. |
| CA12 | Landscape character | To ensure that old oak trees within the area are identified and recorded for the Woodland Trust, in continuation of the work undertaken by the Medieval Abberley project. |
| CA12 | Non-designated heritage assets | To seek the inclusion of local heritage buildings and structures on the District Council's Local List. |
| CA13 | Milestones | To support the Milestone Society in re-instating missing milestones (a) on the A443 east of the Village Shop (b) close to the Village Hall on the Clows Top Road. |

Table 2: Community Actions

APPENDIX A: EVIDENCE BASE

A.1 The following planning policy documents, reports, consultation evidence and other survey material have been used in drawing up the NDP.

National level evidence

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2019.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance.

Census 2001 and 2011.

Natural England, National Character Area profile 102: Teme Valley, 2014.

Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales, Severn river basin management plan, updated December 2015, 2016.

Environment Agency, Catchment data explorer for Severn Middle Catchment.

Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales, Severn river basin, Flood risk management plan, 2016.

Environment Agency, Flood Map for Planning.

Historic England, National Heritage List for England.

Natural England, Magic Map at <http://www.magic.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> (includes Priority Habitat Inventory sites).

Natural England, Regional Agricultural Land Classification map for West Midlands, 2010.

County and district level evidence

[South Worcestershire Councils comprise Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council].

Worcestershire Partnership, Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy 2012-2020.

Worcestershire County Council and English Heritage, Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework.

Worcestershire Councils, Worcestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Appendix 3 Malvern Hills SHMA Overview Report, February 2012.

South Worcestershire Councils, SWDP Non-strategic Housing Allocations Background Paper, December 2012.

Malvern Hills District Council, Local List SPD, May 2015.

South Worcestershire Councils, South Worcestershire Development Plan 2006-2030, adopted 25 February 2016.

South Worcestershire Councils in conjunction with Worcestershire County Council, Planning for Health in South Worcestershire Supplementary Planning Document, September 2017.

South Worcestershire Councils, Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, March 2018.

South Worcestershire Councils, Village Facilities and Rural Transport Study, September 2019.

Malvern Hills District Council, Strategic Housing Market Assessment, September 2019.

South Worcestershire Councils, Preferred Options, November 2019.

Worcestershire County Council, Streetscape Design Guide, Spring 2020.

Parish and local level evidence

Abberley Parish Plan, 2008.

Malvern Hills District Council, Abberley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, February 2010

Worcestershire County Council, Landscape Character Assessment and Supplementary Guidance, August 2012, and interactive map online at http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20014/planning/1006/landscape_character_assessment

Malvern Hills District Council, Abberley Parish Profile 2014.

Abberley Hills Preservation Society, Medieval Abberley Revealed, Community Archaeology Project 2014-15.

Duncan James, An Analysis of the Historic Fabric of Medieval and Post Medieval Buildings in Abberley, Worcestershire, 2015.

Alison Arnold and Robert Howard, Tree-ring analysis of timbers, Town Farm, The Village, Abberley, Worcestershire, 2015.

Abberley Parish Council, Report on Neighbourhood Plan Survey, 2017.

Abberley NDP Steering Group, local business engagement exercise, June 2018.

South Worcestershire Councils, Indicative Housing Requirements for Abberley Neighbourhood Area 2021-2030 and 2031-2041, July 2019.

Reports by AECOM for Abberley Parish Council:

- Abberley Housing Needs Assessment, April 2019.
- Abberley Design Guide, August 2019.

Reports by DJN Planning Ltd. for Abberley Parish Council:

- Evidence base listing, October 2018.
- Housing delivery report, May 2019.

Worcestershire Biological Records Centre, Data Search for Abberley NDP, 2020.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust, Data Search for Abberley NDP, 2020.

Malvern Hills District Council, Abberley Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion, 2020.

APPENDIX B: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

B.1 The following table explains how each Local Green Space meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 100 for such designations.

| Name of Local Green Space | Close proximity to the community | Demonstrably special and of local significance | Local in character |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| LGS1 St. Mary's Churchyard | St. Mary's Churchyard is situated within The Village. | The Churchyard is special and of significance because of its role in the religious life of the local community, contributing to the health, social and cultural well-being of the community. It is also of value because of its tranquillity and amenity value. | The Churchyard is 0.25 ha. in area (excluding the church itself). |
| LGS2 Abberley Village Green | The Village Green is situated within The Village. | <p>This green space comprises amenity grassland, established and re-planted woodland, seating and a picnic area. It is owned and maintained by Abberley Village Green Trust. There is public access throughout. Footpath routes provide access from The Village and within the green space, and link to St. Mary's church to the north. A local watercourse runs on the south-eastern boundary.</p> <p>The Village Green is demonstrably special to the local community, with 45% of respondents to the Parish Plan household survey using it. It is of local significance because of its tranquillity, amenity value and the opportunities it provides for informal recreation. The main footpath (a public right of way) connects the village directly with St. Mary's church, allowing walkers to avoid the longer highway route. The seating offers opportunities for quiet contemplation of the surrounding countryside including views to Abberley Hill to the south. The woodland area in the north east adjacent to the stream is a Priority Habitat Inventory site (deciduous woodland).</p> | The green space is 1.7 ha. in area. It is a contained site whose local character reflects its position between the church and the village. |
| LGS3 St. Michael's Churchyard | St. Michael's Churchyard is situated within The Village. | The Churchyard is special and of significance because of its role in the religious life of the local community, contributing to the health, social and cultural well-being of the community. It is also of value because of its historic | The Churchyard is 0.15 ha. in area (excluding the church itself). |

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| | | significance, St. Michael's dating from the 12 th century, tranquillity and amenity. | |
| LGS4 Village Hall green space | Landscaped areas comprising the grounds of Abberley Village Hall. | This green space comprises amenity landscaping and children's play area around Abberley Village Hall. It is of landscape, amenity and recreational value to the local community. | This green space is 0.2 ha. in area (excluding the hall and car park). |
| LGS5 Rosedale, Abberley Common | Amenity housing open space within Abberley Common. | This green space comprises two parcels of amenity grassland with mature specimen trees, between The Common highway and the Rosedale service road. It is owned by and maintained on behalf of Malvern Hills District Council. It is of landscape and visual amenity value to the residents of Rosedale and to the local community, and contributes to the tranquillity and rural ambience of Abberley Common. | These small amenity areas are situated within Abberley Common. |
| LGS6 Abberley Parish Quarry | Former quarry situated above Abberley Common. | Abberley Parish Quarry provided stone for local construction. It is of historic significance to the community and of scientific and educational value. It is a Local Geological Site and is included within an area of Priority Habitat Inventory deciduous woodland. | This green space is 0.6 ha. in area. |