

See also
Character
Assessment
(Appendix A)
and Map 1 for
whole NDP area

section 5.0

5.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

5.1 Coleford Town Centre

5.1.1 The Character Assessment for the town centre and Conservation Area¹¹ explains that Coleford town centre is located in the shallow bowl towards which the gateways lead (see Maps 2, 11 and 12). Much of the town was razed to the ground during the Battle of Coleford on February 20 1643, and it took some time to re-establish the economic centre (although the market charter was granted in 1661). Hence, the dominant look of the architecture in the Conservation Area is Georgian, with some modern infill. On the edge of this, there is a Victorian expansion especially to the north.

5.1.2 The Market Place is the central focus of the town, and this is where the market was held up to the 1950s/60s. This was a sheep market as well as for other local produce. A small country market has been held on occasions, and there are market festivals. The current layout works well for the staging of events such as the Carnival of Transport, when the central roads are closed to traffic. The Clock Tower is iconic, and can be seen from numerous places round the town.

5.1.3 The Angel, The Feathers and the White Hart remain as important public houses, and were the original coaching inns on the Gloucester to Monmouth route. However, others like the Kings Head, Red Lion and Vaults are closed and standing empty or have changed use. The area around the Market Place is the focus for independent shops. St John St and Market Place is the focus for independent shops, but included there is The Doghouse which has been awarded FOREST OF DEAN PUB OF THE YEAR 2017, by the Forest of Dean CAMRA.



¹¹ Appendix A Coleford Character Assessment

Map 3 Gateways into town centre

1 The Gorse

2 Gloucester Rd

3 Speech House Rd

4 Coalway Rd

5 Perrygrove, High Nash, Old Station Way

6 Newland St Whitecliff

7 Staunton Rd

8 Cycle Path from Parkend

Coleford

Broadwell

Coalway

Tufthorn

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Scale 1:5910
23 August 2017

Map 3 Gateways into town centre

1 The Gorse

2 Gloucester Rd

3 Speech House Rd

4 Coalway Rd

5 Perrygrove, High Nash, Old Station Way

6 Newland St Whitecliff

7 Staunton Rd

8 Cycle Path from Parkend

Coleford

Coalway

Tufthorn

North Arrow

Town Centre

Gateways

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23 August 2017

Map 3 Gateways into town centre

1 The Gorse

2 Gloucester Rd

3 Speech House Rd

4 Coalway Rd

5 Perrygrove, High Nash, Old Station Way

6 Newland St Whitecliff

7 Staunton Rd

8 Cycle Path from Parkend

Coleford

Coalway

Tufthorn

Legend:

- Town Centre
- Gateways

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Scale 1:5910
23 August 2017

5.1.4 The Market Place has pavements and there are crossing points for pedestrians to the Tump, which has been designed to give pedestrian-friendly access. Nevertheless, it does function as a traffic roundabout with the associated noise and emissions. Buses leave from the west of the Market Place. Some lorries also travel through here, although the passing HGVs go through Gloucester Road/Market Place lights, which can put pressure on traffic movement¹². There is little soft landscaping and planting and the public realm offers significant opportunities for physical enhancement. The tree in the centre with the seating around gives one of only four places to sit in the centre of town.

Positive features and special qualities

- Market Place focus
- economic functions, shopping and professional services
- flats over shops
- entertainment: cinema and pubs/cafes
- heritage value in Conservation Area, especially Georgian
- amphitheatre event space in the middle
- cohesion of Georgian centre
- murals
- definite layout of roads, cycle access, and pedestrian ways
- health and social functions
- emergency services

Negative features and detracting elements

- main through routes use Market Place as a traffic island
- Market Place/Gloucester Rd traffic lights with congestion
- air quality
- traffic noise and emissions outweigh pedestrian friendly design
- limited range of shops

- empty shops
- shabby shop fronts and key gateway buildings
- some key buildings in disrepair e.g. Kings Head
- uncertainty on certain sites e.g. Kings Head
- surface water flooding with intense rain at car park and bottom of Lords Hill

Looking ahead

- improve the look and working of the Market Place/Conservation Area/Gateways
- find appropriate use for empty/underused buildings especially Kings Head
- address pluvial flooding issues at Lords Hill
- set up Heritage Trail and information boards
- plan events to use Market Place amphitheatre space
- monitor traffic and junctions and improve traffic flow
- increase access for pedestrians and cyclists (sign cycle tracks)

Forest of Dean Adopted Core Strategy, 2012

5.1.5 The Spatial Strategy of the Core Strategy sets out that Coleford will develop its service and tourism focus along with providing a range of new housing and employment. The changes will be directed to the sites identified in the proposals map. Increased retailing and other services will also be provided in the centre, see Core Strategy Proposals Map, Appendix Q.

5.1.6 The Settlement Policies include a section on Coleford - a market town for the Forest. It is proposed that Coleford will continue to serve its current area of influence, and will develop better facilities in its centre. Some additional housing and employment out of the centre will be built,

but the emphasis will be on the provision of services and the town's role as a service centre for residents and tourists. Increased retail provision and other services will benefit the locality without detriment to the district or its other towns. The strategy is to support the town and to increase its range of employment, including tourism enterprises and to widen its service base. This will be achieved both by a widening of the range of opportunities on offer and by developing new housing and services.

Forest of Dean Retail Keynote Update, 2014¹³

5.1.7 The Forest of Dean Retail Keynote Update identifies a number of significant issues for Coleford. Among these there appears to be an increasing trend of uses coming into Coleford town centre that fall outside the A group¹⁴ of uses. This can be seen as positive in that any use providing a town centre function is better than a unit standing vacant for long periods of time which could possibly end up being converted to a residential dwelling. Any residential development at ground floor level in the town centre will undermine the centre's function for retailing, but it should be encouraged above ground floor level.

Figure 7 Summary for Coleford Town Centre
Extracted from FoDDC's Core Strategy

Settlement and subject area	Provision and implementation
Town centre additional retail space	Up to about 1200m ² convenience and 1300m ² comparison goods floor space to be developed mainly on land presently identified for this purpose to provide greater range in the centre and retain/clawback some lost trade from centres such as Monmouth
Town centre public realm	Some limited further improvements may take place, otherwise new development should provide better integration of the centre
Town centre other development	New mixed developments on sites currently in public ownership, following recent construction of new enterprise centre
Tourism	Increased focus through marketing
Recreation	Continued provision and review, both for recreation and tourism

¹² Appendix J NDP Traffic surveys Feb 2016

¹³ www.fdean.gov.uk/media/3937/keynote-01-retail.pdf

¹⁴ Appendix P Use Classes Order

5.1.8 In terms of primary retail frontages, the report notes that Market Place is the central focus of the town's retailing and is predominantly where the retail frontages are located in Coleford. The central Clock Tower is a unique and distinguishing feature of the town that acts as a central public space to the town. The retail frontage in this central area of town covers most units surrounding the central Clock Tower remains. The units on these frontages are mostly retail units selling a mix of convenience and comparison goods. Uses here include public houses, charity shops, clothes shops, takeaways, a bakery, a DIY shop, furniture shop, a bank, newsagents, butchers and more. Apart from a few office uses such as solicitors' offices and estate agents, most shops are retail traders.

5.1.9 The Keynote Update notes potential for environmental enhancement, the few small areas that could be suitable through permanent or temporary soft landscaping schemes in the town centre of Coleford. Most of these relate to the very centre core of the town centre surrounding Market Place and the Clock Tower. Some of these areas relate specifically to paved pedestrian open spaces that are plain and could benefit from additional planting, whilst others refer to pedestrian crossing points associated with the highways junctions. These differing areas may be suitable for a mix of landscaping types to include more permanent features especially on the central Clock Tower area and temporary planting where the gateways come into the town centre. Infrastructure improvements, including in the town centre, e.g. improved pedestrian routes, junctions, roundabouts are addressed under Infrastructure 5.7. All of these would contribute positively to the public spaces and overall environmental qualities of Coleford town centre.

Community Consultation¹⁵

5.1.10 The extensive community consultation and engagement activity has provided a range of suggestions for improving the town centre (Fig 8) which has led to the policies following. Consultation evidence for improving the town centre note (Appendix B):

- Increase the public art and murals: By encouraging heritage themes for art/sculpture, promoting Mushet and industrial archaeology, Battle of Coleford, Railways, providing Trails with information on appropriately designed boards and pamphlet/App with Clock Tower as a centre
- Encourage owners to increase the standard of their shop frontages:

By investigating a scheme to improve the look of the Market Place/Conservation Area by match funding and preparing design guidelines for shop fronts, promoting use of local materials and skills

- Improve the area to support markets and public use of the space:

By looking at cover/canopy designs, public seating and an amphitheatre design

- Use soft landscaping and planting around the Clock Tower to soften the hard urban form and provide a more attractive public realm
- Improve provision of disabled and child-friendly parking and taxi ranks

5.1.11 A number of general green space comments emerged from community consultation too, some of which were:

- Lawnstone – green area
- Green area by Railway Museum kept green
- Long term plan for Marshes including landscape gardens, crafts, farm shop etc
- Look at possibilities for the Marshes
- Donate Marshes as a Green space for the community 'Bath Park'



Figure 8 Town Centre:
Initial Consultation Findings

Proposed Development Sites in the Town Centre

5.1.12 Coleford has several development sites located in and around the town centre which are identified in the FoDDC's emerging Allocations Plan, which will contain not just allocations for development but also protective designations.

Context:

- See updated SHLAA 2015: <http://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/2518/submissions-fod-shlaa-2015.pdf>
- See main Allocations Page with Allocations Plan, examination of Allocations Plan and Further Changes links top right; Allocations

documents including draft policies map toward bottom of page: <http://www.fdean.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-plan-new/allocations-plan/>

- Summary of responses <http://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/3890/annex-4-summary-of-responses-allocations-plan-publication-version.pdf>
- Core Strategy adopted 2012: <http://www.fdean.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-plan-new/core-strategy/>

5.1.13 The Allocations Plan includes proposals and accompanying criteria-based policies for the following sites in the town centre:

■ **AP 56 Lawnstone** – This policy is intended to guide the redevelopment or conversion of the site in such a manner as to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the town centre.

■ **AP 57 Former Courts and Police Station** – This policy protects the allocated site for a range of community uses but would allow up to one third to be developed for housing if the present dwellings are redeveloped. The design of the site must reflect the important gateway location.

■ **King's Head Public House** – This policy is intended to enable a new use for the present building and ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the appearance and function of the town centre. It is suited to 1 and 2 bed flats for which there is a considerable need.

5.1.14 Coleford NDP undertook to make selected site assessments¹⁶ as below, using the approved FoDDC toolkit for sites which met some of the following criteria:

- there was known to be availability
- where they were included in the FoDDC Allocations Document 2015
- where recent applications/enquiries were drawn to our attention

The assessment includes baseline information; connections and access; site environment and an overall site assessment. To illustrate the text, photographs were taken, particularly to show relevant views; where appropriate reference is made to context e.g. planning applications (see Appendix D).

A summary for town centre sites is shown within Table 9: All potential housing sites, previous consultation responses & NDP recommendation.

5.1.15 Key sites/buildings in and on the edge of the town centre which are valued are St John's, Clock Tower, Lawnstone, Kings

Head, Coleford House. The Police Hub, FoDDC Council offices, 6 and 8 Lords Hill, Pyart Court are not all allocated, or available at the time of writing, but need to be mentioned for consideration should they become available in the lifetime of this NDP. In a similar way as policies CTC3 & 4 community consultation should be required in that instance.

5.1.16 A summary of NDP feedback regarding specific town centre and edge of town centre sites in the 2016 consultation is to be found in Appendix B. See also Table 9: all potential housing sites & NDP recommendation (Section 5.3).

N.B. For the remainder of sites and allocations see Housing 5.3 as they are in the Parish but not in/on the edge of the town centre.

5.1.17 The Retail Keynote Update comments on the need to protect retailing at the ground floor level in the town centre. The Core Strategy supports the need to increase retailing in the town centre. Early, and later, public consultation and engagement on the NDP also provided a range of ideas to increase available shopping and services. There were comments that there is a need for a mix of retail and heritage uses, building on the craft/artisan provision linked to the number of independent shops and businesses.

In addition, there was support for bringing in some multiples/chain stores to widen the existing retail offer and take up vacant premises. Policy CTC1 identifies a series of development sites in the town centre. They are shown on Map 5. Section 5.7.12 of this Plan identifies potential developer contributions for the sites concerned. Policy CTC2 identifies a series of development sites on the edge of the town centre. They are shown on Map 5. Section 5.7.12 of this Plan identifies potential developer contributions

for the sites concerned. Policy CTC3 identifies a series of development opportunities in the public realm. Section 5.7.12 of this Plan may also apply to sites of this nature on a case-by-case basis. Policy CTC4 offers support for new retail and commercial development. Section 5.7.12 of this Plan may also apply to sites of this nature on a case-by-case basis.

Tourism in the Town Centre or Edge of Town Centre

5.1.18 The Core Strategy recognises the growing role of Coleford as a tourism destination and that the town has potential to increase this sector of its local economic base. Community consultation and engagement has highlighted the need to balance the potential conflicts between heritage-related tourism and its potential for the economy and the existing industrial heritage and nature conservation.

5.1.19 The consultation process included suggestions to improve signage, parking and a Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in the town. The NDP has a role in supporting investment in tourism-related facilities such as visitor attractions and accommodation, to encourage visitors to spend more time in and around the town centre to support other businesses such as independent shops and pubs. **The Town Council has already implemented the provision of a TIC by the Market Place/Gloucester Rd traffic lights.**

5.1.20 The Conservation Area and historic core offer significant potential as an attractive visitor destination, linked to local facilities such as the Railway Museum¹⁷ and the cinema. Suggestions also include the development of a heritage trail(s) and provision of heritage information.

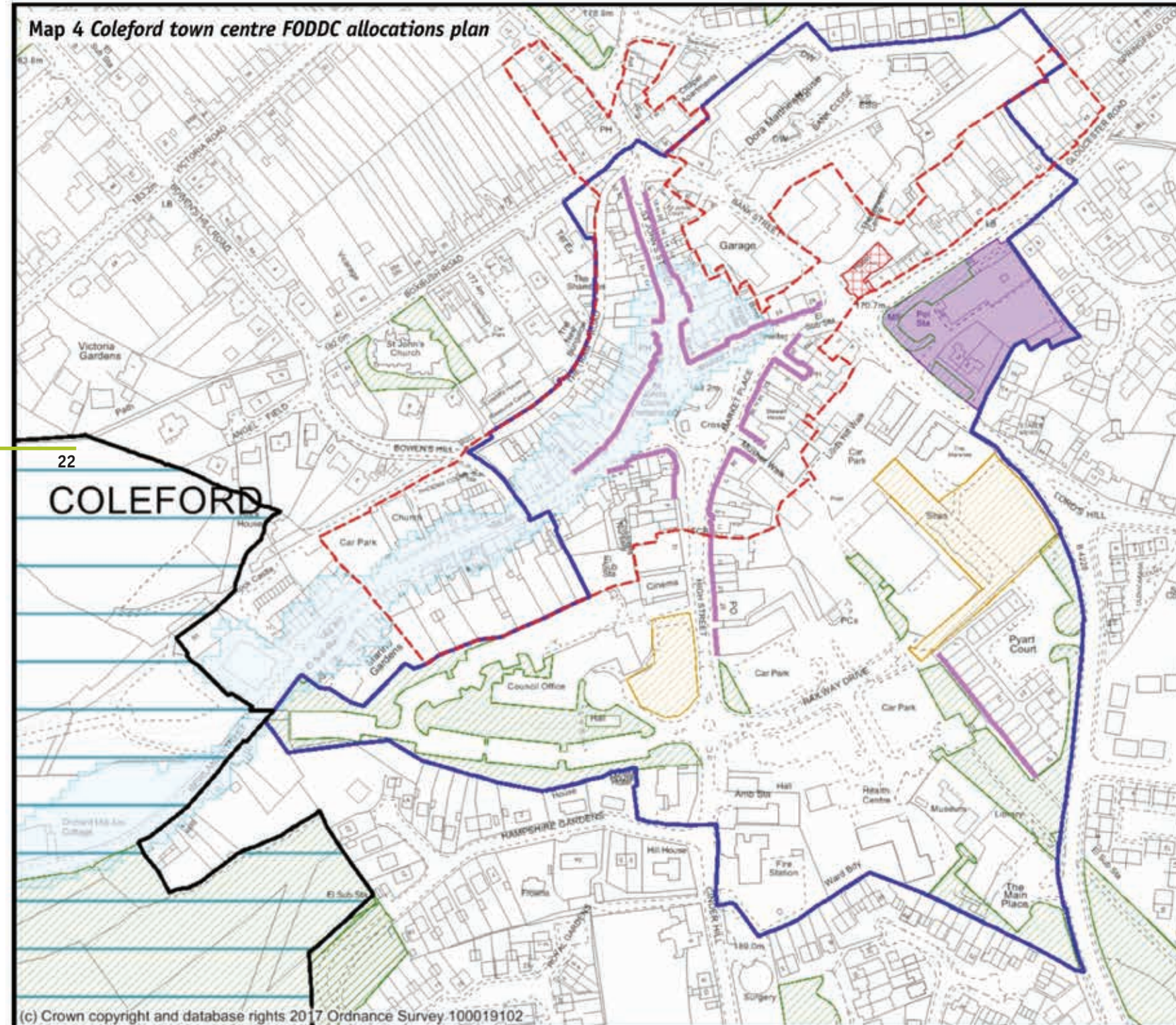
See CE1 Supporting Tourism Development for detail in the town centre.



¹⁶ For each document see Site Assessments in Appendix D

¹⁷ See Appendix G Valued Heritage Assets, not designated at 2017

Map 4 Coleford town centre FODDC allocations plan



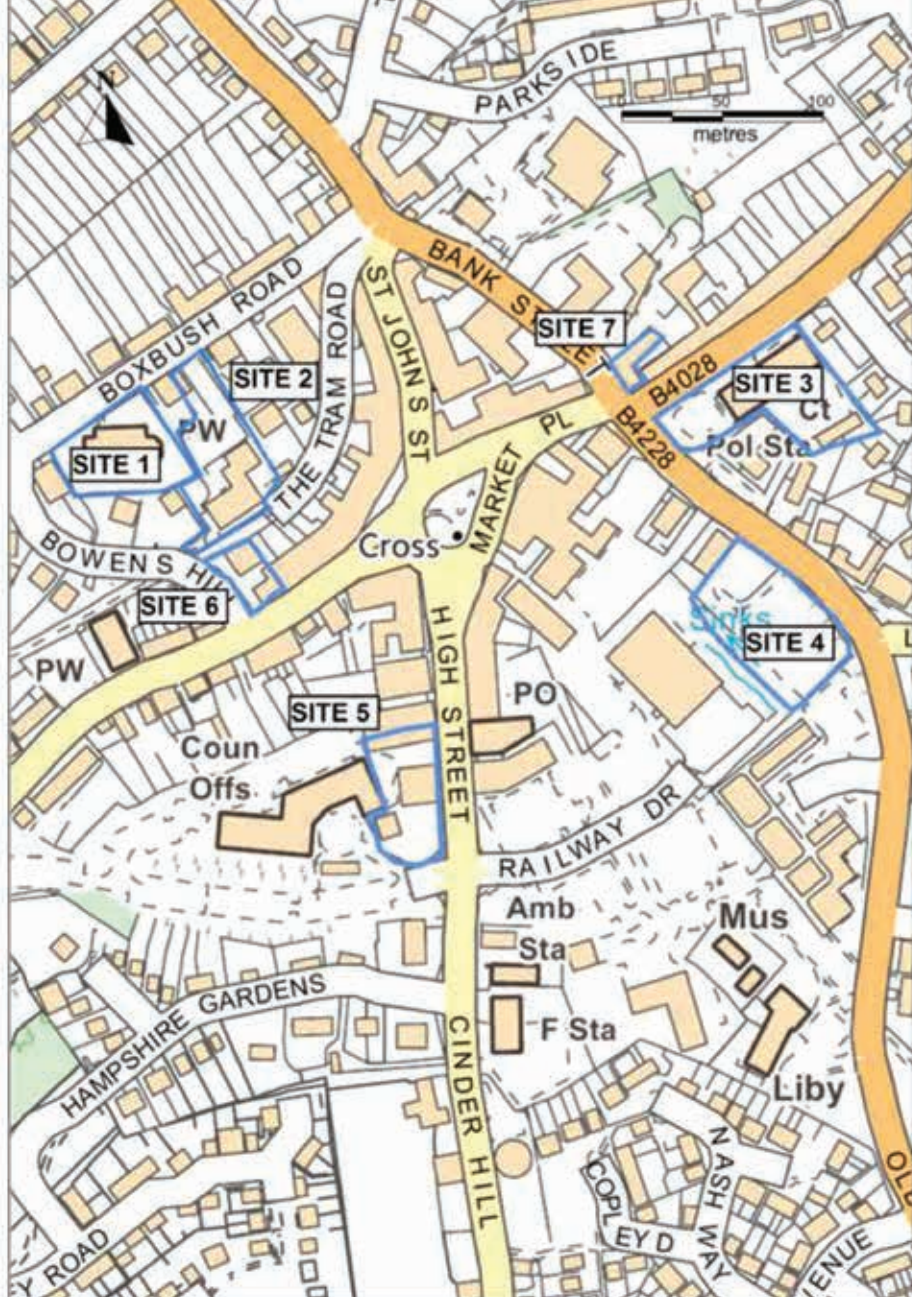
Legend

- Settlement Boundary
- Conservation Area Boundary
- Mixed Development Sites (Housing & Emp)
- Active Town Centre Frontage
- Town Centre Boundary
- Housing Allocations
- Local Policy Area
- Retail Use Allocations
- Recreation Space
- Important Open Area
- Important Open Area & Recreation Use
- Ancient Monuments
- Floodzone3

Map 4. Coleford Town
Centre: FoDDC Submission
Allocations Plan
Larger scale maps available at
www.colefordtownplan.com/map

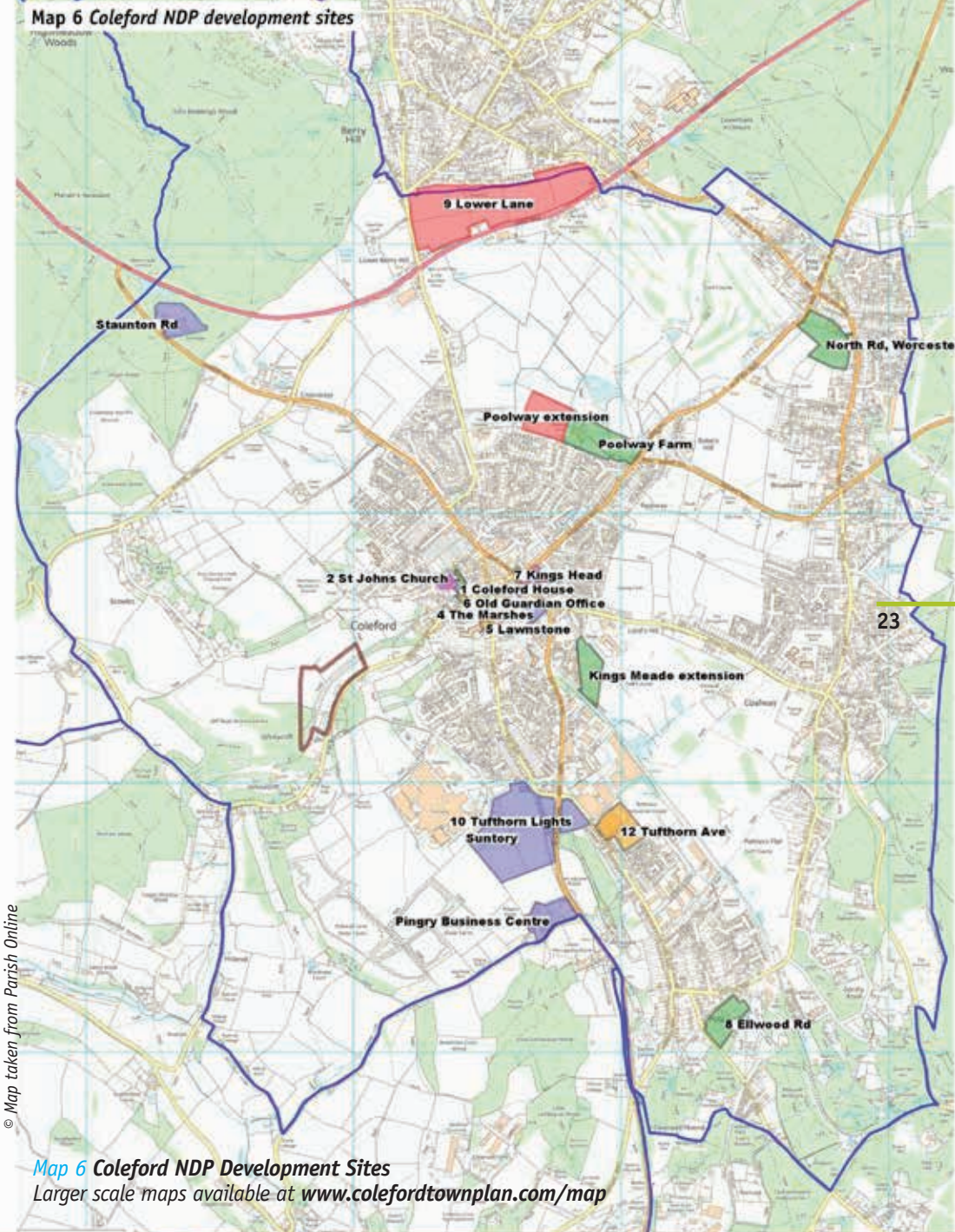
**Coleford Town Centre
Submission Version**





Map 5. Coleford Town Sites 1 to 7
Larger scale maps available at
www.colefordtownplan.com/map

- 1 St John's Church
- 2 Coleford House
- 3 Police Hub
- 4 The Marshes
- 5 Lawnstone
- 6 Old Guardian Office
- 7 King's Head



Map 6 Coleford NDP Development Sites
Larger scale maps available at www.colefordtownplan.com/map



Policy CTC1

Site Allocations in the Town Centre

Proposals for development on the five sites listed below will be supported where they are consistent with the following development principles:

Marshes, Lords Hill. This site has permission for a retail convenience store to improve the range of existing town centre provision. The site is identified as site 4 on Map 5. Should this permission be replaced then the site should remain as town-centre use, and include:-

- substantial retail use with some possible mixed use. Any mixed use which includes artisan centre, soft landscaping and/or green space will be particularly supported.
- two storey design in keeping with the character assessment
- careful planning of access and possible alteration of the Lords Hill/Old Station Way junction to mitigate traffic congestion
- parking suitable to its use and good pedestrian access links to the Market Place, Pyart Court.

Lawnstone. This site comprises the land area remaining after demolition of Lawnstone, the Annex to the north and the Bungalow and garden to the south. The site is identified as site 5 on Map 5. The emerging Allocations Plan (Policy AP56) identifies land including Lawnstone as allocated for retail, business and/or community use and for starter homes (flats). Any proposal for this site should:-

- provide commercial development in the northern part of the site which complements and extends the existing street frontage
- have starter/affordable homes in the northern part of the site incorporated into the design (up to 8, one or two bedroomed flats) as identified for local need
- include open space provision in the southern part of the site
- be sensitively designed with a quality which reflects this important gateway location and its views (see Map 13). This will have appropriate landscaping to the southern portion, low massing and appropriate build design to the developed northern portion.

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Old Guardian Office. This site is within the town centre Conservation Area with Grade II listing to the frontage onto Newland Street. The site is identified as site 6 on Map 5. It is allocated for re-use/redevelopment for mixed town centre uses such as retail/museum/business premises with residential accommodation above with some additional space for development (possibly residential) to the rear. Any proposal should:-

- respect the heritage asset of the listed building and the frontage onto Newland St
- provide any residential portion to suit the local identified need
- provide an appropriate amount of off-street parking to the rear for any residents of the development, with suitable safe access
- provide appropriate sewerage network toward Newland (NB see CITPA4 and flood zone 3 Newland St and sewer pipe problems toward Whitecliff)

Kings Head. The Allocations Plan identifies the King's Head Public House as allocated for redevelopment and conversion to residential use. The site is identified as site 7 on Map 5. The building is within the town centre Conservation Area and is a Valued Heritage Asset [Appendix G]. Any proposal should:-

- respect the heritage asset of the building to both street-scene aspects and its important gateway location
- maintain a retail/commercial use to the ground floor
- provide for up to about 12 residential flats above
- provide for an appropriate amount of residential parking using the existing access of Spout Lane
- consider the opportunity for improvement to the traffic management at this junction in any replacement proposal, if this building is lost.

Police Hub. Policy AP 57 Former Courts and Police Station in the Allocations Plan identifies the former courts and current police station site as allocated for community uses, which may include the use of all or part of the site as a place of assembly. The site is identified as site 3 on Map 5. Any future redevelopment of the site should:-

- continue to use the majority (at least two-thirds) of this important site for community uses
- in the event that the adjoining dwellings are also proposed to be redeveloped, new housing (on up to one third of the site area) will also be supported.
- include a maximum two storey design which respects, and is in context with, the Conservation Area opposite
- schemes will be required to ensure suitable access and traffic management, particularly in the area around the Lords Hill entrance and traffic lights junction
- consider the opportunity for improvement to the traffic management at this junction.

In addition to the parking and access requirements identified for the five specific sites above proposals for residential development of over five dwellings in the town centre will be supported where they meet the requirements of other policies in this Plan and where they provide car parking provision to development plan standards.

Policy CTC2

Site Allocations on the edge of the Town Centre

Proposals for development on the two sites listed below will be supported where they are consistent with the following development principles:

St John's Church. This former traditional church building is allocated for community and visitor uses. The site is identified as site 1 on Map 5. Where appropriate, residential uses and service uses will be supported where they are essential to the wider viability of a community use project. Development proposals for these uses will be supported provided that they:

- take account of the integrity of the building and respect its status as a listed building
- use appropriate design and materials, and conserve specific memorials/1507 foundation stone/interior features as on listing. (See site assessment in Appendix D)
- be in context of the character assessment of this Victorian area at the edge of the Town Centre
- reflect its position adjoining the Conservation Area
- reflect the valued prominent position at the top of Bowens Hill, with key views in and out (see Map 13)
- mitigate any impact on sites 2 Coleford House and site 6 Old Guardian Office which adjoin the site
- include appropriate vehicular access off Boxbush Rd whilst minimising loss of the perimeter wall
- provide parking on the property, or off street within appropriate walking distance
- mitigate traffic movements/any parking on Boxbush Rd or congestion at the junction at the bottom of the hill in the Conservation Area
- provide appropriate sewerage network toward Newland (NB flood zone 3 Newland St and sewer pipe problems toward Whitecliff)

Coleford House. This former school building is allocated for a mixed-use conversion or for redevelopment for residential, services and tourism uses. The site is identified as site 2 on Map 5. The development will be supported provided that:

- the existing historic buildings are converted to provide eg houses/flats, small artisan attraction, administrative offices
- appropriate design and materials are used, including conservation of original Forest stone and the bell tower of the old school building (see site assessment in Appendix D)
- any part which is redeveloped would need to be well designed in context of the historic buildings and no more than two storeys high
- it respects the character assessment of this Victorian area, and the Conservation Area it adjoins
- it minimises impact upon St John's, the Grade II listed church building adjoining
- the only vehicular access is from Boxbush Rd, and parking is on site
- there is mitigation for resultant traffic movements on Boxbush Rd and/or congestion at the junction at the bottom of the hill in the Conservation Area
- access is a focus on a steep/two level site, and the pedestrian access/ steps from Bowens Hill are retained
- appropriate sewerage network is provided toward Newland (NB flood zone 3 Newland St and sewer pipe problems toward Whitecliff)
- the trees and high retaining wall on the boundary onto the Tram Rd (Conservation Area) are sensitively made good

Policy CTC3

Enhancing Coleford Town Centre

Proposals for development which allow for the enhancement of the public realm within the Town Centre as shown on Map 3 will be supported.

Such proposals will be required to be designed sensitively and should be appropriate to the historic environment in terms of materials, scale and detailing, and take into consideration views of the Clock Tower (Map 13). The following proposals will be particularly supported:

- Shop front enhancements including restoration of traditional shop fronts and signage
- Provision of public art
- Introduction of areas of soft landscaping, planting, covered areas and seating to the area around the Clock Tower
- Improved signage and accessibility including interpretation linked to the town's heritage

Policy CTC4

Supporting Town Centre Retail and Service Provision

Proposals for new retail and service facilities which enhance the vitality and viability of the existing town centre of Coleford in Map 3 will be supported, provided that:

- New commercial/retailing development will be required to demonstrate that its range of goods and services are complementary to the existing offer.
- Proposals should be of a scale and design which are sympathetic to the distinctive character of the Conservation Area.
- At any one time, the majority of ground floor units in Coleford's Town Centre should be within Class A1 retail¹⁹, or community facility/service use.

Changes of use of local retail premises to mixed offices and residential accommodation will be supported, but loss of retail premises to wholly residential use will not be supported.

¹⁹ See Use Classes Order Appendix P

²⁰ Heritage Lottery Fund, Townscape Heritage www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/townscape-heritage



5.2 Economy

5.2.1 Coleford's economy has changed considerably in the last 30 years and is now mixed and varied. The town centre provides many of the area's jobs, particularly in services and this has to some degree offset the continued weakening in manufacturing employment. The Forest of Dean District Council office (the only medium-sized, service employer) is situated to the south, within the town centre. There are also medium employers in the manufacturing sector, such as Suntory and SPP which have an international market. Most of the employers are smaller businesses, many of which link to the local community and wider tourist economy. Just under a quarter of those in employment work in the public sector, but not many in Coleford.

5.2.2 The economically active population in the area of 4,127 residents (67.8% of the population) is lower than that found nationally (69.9%) and the economically inactive population is correspondingly higher (32.2% locally compared with 30.1% nationally). More people work part-time than in the rest of the country (Fig 9) and fewer work from home (2.7% compared with 3.5% for England).

2016 community consultation evidence findings on retail are included in Tables 1a and 1b in Appendix B.

Proposed actions for the Town Council, partnerships and other interested parties (See projects section 7.1). Note for improvements

- public realm
- townscape heritage²⁰
- shop fronts
- vacant sites/shops need to be brought into use as a matter of urgency

5.2.3 Strategic planning policy, as set out in the Forest of Dean Core Strategy, sees Coleford as better serving its current area of influence by developing better facilities in the town centre, particularly services for residents and tourists. This is encompassed within the following:

- Overall the three largest sectors of the economy are manufacturing, 695 employees (18% of those in employment); retail 590 employees (15%); health and social work 420 employees (11%)