

Newnham - on - Severn

Introduction

- 31.1 Newnham is one of the larger villages in the Forest of Dean District with a population of 1175 at January 2000. The village is situated on the west bank of the River Severn approximately 21 kilometres from Gloucester. Newnham is located at a former crossing point over the River Severn which probably developed in the Roman period. The medieval town developed at the junction of this route with the one along the River Severn. A castle and a church were built soon after the Norman Conquest. The medieval borough had a characteristic plan with a central market place and long thin burgage plots stretching back from the main street; this layout can still clearly be seen in the plan of the existing settlement. Newnham used to be a port on the River Severn, and the river front reflects this former use. A large part of the village has been designated a Conservation Area in recognition of its attractive built form and concentration of listed buildings.
- 31.2 Newnham lies astride the A.48 which links the Forest of Dean with Gloucester and Cheltenham to the north and Chepstow, the M48 and M5 to the south. This busy route does cause disturbance to the amenity of the High Street area, especially from heavy goods vehicles which use the A.48 route travelling south as a diversion from Severn Bridge Tolls.
- 31.3 Newnham is tightly constrained on most sides. To the east is the River Severn, to the south there is a marked change of levels as the ground falls steeply away, and to the west is the main railway line between Gloucester and Cardiff. To the north there is a clear divide between the village edge and open agricultural land. The outward expansion of Newnham is physically constrained on three sides therefore, and the fourth is limited by the policies of the Plan which protect the open countryside.
- 31.4 Within the south Forest Newnham functions as a local service centre. The High Street area of Newnham contains a wide range of local shops. The village also has a primary school, doctors surgery, several assembly halls, Church, public houses, an hotel and a library. There is little employment other than in local service businesses, but these are quite numerous. There is a significant level of out-commuting to work, particularly to Gloucester. There has been a period of quite considerable recent housing and population growth.

Development Strategy

- 31.5 The defined settlement boundary closely follows the existing edge of the built up area. Outward expansion to the north and the south of the village into the open countryside will be restricted. The strategy allocates 0.72ha of land adjacent Sheens Meadow for the development of approximately 21 new dwellings. Development of this site will be supported in addition to opportunities for the development of small groups of dwellings, single dwellings and infilling within the settlement boundary. New housing development arising from these policies and proposals will provide continued support for the village as a service centre and contribute to local housing needs over the Plan period.
- 31.6 The designated Conservation Area will continue to be protected by Plan policies. Proposals for development may be required to be accompanied by an archaeological assessment. The strategy will protect the historic core of Newnham from inappropriate pressure for change including development which might lead to the loss of the historic pattern of plots lying behind the High Street frontage.
- 31.7 No new employment sites are available within or adjacent to the defined settlement boundary of the village, however potential exists to generate further employment opportunities within the village centre through existing businesses and tourism enterprises.

- 31.8 A strategy for the implementation of safety measures on the A.48 and mitigating the impact of heavy goods vehicles on settlements is outlined within Gloucestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan. The Forest of Dean District Council will continue to work together with the Highways Authority to implement these measures including the diversion of long distance and through traffic away from the A.48. The Plan will investigate additional sites for the provision of off street car parking.
- 31.9 Newnham is an important location for providing recreational access to the bank of the River Severn. Opportunities to develop informal recreation and tourism through improved access to the riverbank will be investigated.

Built Environment

- 31.10 The built form of the village reflects the importance of the settlement over a long period. The core comprises a wide main street which has a continuous development frontage. There are many imposing buildings in this area, most of which date from the 18th and 19th Centuries, although some are much older. The pattern of land use reflects the historic nature of the settlement, with the medieval pattern of long narrow plots lying behind the main street frontages still a fundamental part of the village plan.
- 31.11 The core of Newnham was designated a Conservation Area in 1980 and contains 90 listed buildings and monuments. New development will be required to complement and enhance these qualities. Any future proposals for development may be required to be accompanied by an archaeological assessment.

Protection for the Historic Core

(R)F.Newnham 1

Development which would be likely to impair or lead to the loss of important townscape features within the historic core of Newnham as identified on the Inset Map will not be permitted. In particular, the form and layout of the High Street area will be protected, including the historical pattern of plot layout.

- 31.12 Policy (R)F.Newnham 1 encompasses a considerable part of the Newnham Conservation Area, and in particular the historic core of the settlement. This Policy emphasises the need to take care that development does not detract from the outstanding qualities of individual buildings and groups of buildings. A particular concern is that the historic pattern of the layout of plots behind the High Street frontage should be protected from a continuing process of residential infilling. It is accepted that further development will and should occur within the centre of the village as the functions of the area continue to evolve to meet changing needs. However, this should not be at the expense of the historic and architectural values of this area.

Traffic Management

- 31.13 In recent years Newnham has grown resulting in an increase in the movement of traffic through the village. This problem of increased traffic is exacerbated by the alignment of the A.48 which runs directly through the centre of Newnham, having a detrimental effect upon the village. During the previous Plan period a number of traffic management measures were implemented including a zebra crossing and waiting restrictions and the introduction of a village gateway as part of the A.48 Accident Reduction Measures implemented by the Highways Authority. Further traffic management measures identified in the Local Transport Plan will be implemented during the Plan period in co-ordination with the Highways Authority.
- 31.14 The lack of off street car parking is a further factor which contributes to the problems of traffic movements through the village. In 1997 additional car parking spaces for free public use were made available off the High Street at the Masonic Lodge car park. The Plan will continue to investigate further potential sites for off street car parking.
- 31.15 In recent years a study commissioned by the County Council examined the potential for rail station re-opening in a number of locations, including Newnham. The results of this study were not particularly favourable, partly due to the high capital costs which would be involved.

Natural Environment

- 31.16 The natural environment contributes to the setting of Newnham, particularly the River Severn which is designated a Ramsar Site, Special Protection Area, and a possible Special Area of Conservation. There are important open areas alongside the river and riverside areas which have particular value for amenity and informal recreation. Other important open areas include the Green, Castle Mound and the churchyard to the south, open areas close to the A.48 to the north and a continuous area along the High Street which together help to form an attractive setting for the village. The Plan will protect these important areas.
- 31.17 Newnham has several areas used for recreation, both informal and formal. The informal areas close to the river have potential for further enhancement, both as a local amenity and as a facility for visitors. Formal recreation is provided for by the playing fields adjoining Station Road. However the level of adult play space does not meet space standards set out by the National Playing Fields Association.
- 31.18 Newnham is an important location for providing access for residents and visitors to the bank of the River Severn for informal recreation. The Plan will support proposals to further develop facilities for visitor access to the river bank. These will be considered alongside the tourism policies of the Plan.

Housing

- 31.19 The population of Newnham was 1175 in January 2004 with an estimated dwelling stock of 427. From 1991 to the beginning of 2004 41 dwellings had been completed, including the development of 18 dwellings on one site at Brightlands. There were at the start of 2004, outstanding planning consents for 9 dwellings.

Population (Village)	Housing Stock (Village)
1981 - 770	1981 - 285
1991 - 1040	1991 - 393
2000 - 1175	2000 - 420 (2004 – 427)

- 31.20 Newnham experienced a period of substantial growth during the 1980's and early 1990's. This period of rapid and relatively intensive house building in Newnham has led to the development of areas of previously open land, the redevelopment of some sites, and infilling to the west behind the historic frontage onto the High Street. This period of major development has left the historic core of the village largely undisturbed in its overall appearance. However, there have been increased problems of traffic movement at junctions onto the High Street, and additional problems of providing adequate car parking in the High Street area.
- 31.21 The period of relatively rapid growth within the village of Newnham has now subsided. Within the framework of the village there are now more limited opportunities remaining for further housing development. The Plan however proposes the allocation of land to the west of the village for the development of approximately 21 dwellings.
- 31.22 The provision for approximately 21 new dwellings in Newnham reflects the status of the village as a local service centre and recognises the need to continue to provide housing for the local community to the end of the Plan period 2011. The Plan strategy provides for the limited growth of Newnham, offering continued support for the social and economic needs of those living and working within the locality.

Housing Allocation - Sheens Meadow

(R)F.Newnham 2

0.72ha of land adjacent to Sheens Meadow will be allocated for the provision of about 21 new dwellings. Development will be required to:

1. Provide a single point of access off Dean Road via Sheens Meadow
2. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to the village centre, primary school and recreation ground
3. Provide for an appropriate number of affordable housing units.
4. An appropriate contribution to educational provision for the prospective occupiers of the site.
5. An appropriate contribution to the provision or enhancement of community facilities in Newnham
6. An appropriate contribution to off-site highway improvements to provide safe access.

- 31.23 The site adjacent Sheens Meadow is identified as an area suitable for the development of 21 new dwellings. The site is self contained and well related to the village centre. Vehicular access will be achieved off Dean Road utilising the existing highway infrastructure of Sheens Meadow. Development of the site will be required to make an appropriate contribution towards various minor highway improvements on Dean Road from its junction with the A48 to its junction with Kings Mead. The location of the site close to local services and facilities offers the opportunity to provide new pedestrian and cycle links and improve existing links thereby encouraging the use of alternative modes of transport for short journeys.
- 31.24 The Plan will support proposals which bring forward a development which secures a mix of dwelling sizes and affordability to meet local need for housing up to the end of the Plan period 2011. Proposals should adopt a high standard of design which reflects the characteristics of Newnham. Development of the site should take into account the requirement for amenity open space and links to the town centre, primary school and recreation ground by walking and cycling.
- 31.25 A corridor of planting along the western boundary of the site should be integrated into any development proposal in order to limit any disturbance which may be experienced from the adjacent railway line and provide amenity screening. Further detailed guidance is provided in a development brief prepared for the site.
- 31.26 The recent provision of new sewage treatment infrastructure is expected to meet the requirements of any development proposal brought forward on land allocated for residential use at Sheens Meadow. Development proposals will be required to comply with Principal Policy (R)FBE.3 which requires that satisfactory arrangements for essential infrastructure provision are a prerequisite for development to proceed.

Employment

- 31.27 Employment in Newnham is largely limited to that provided by local service businesses, including businesses which support local tourism. Newnham has the potential to develop and benefit further from the tourism industry due to the quality of the built environment, the riverside position, and location in relation to the Forest of Dean. The Plan through the implementation of Policy (R)FTRL.2 will continue to support proposals which offer further potential for the development of tourism enterprises within the village.