

ALVECHURCH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIORITIES STATEMENT (NPS)

2026–2044

Alvechurch Parish, Bromsgrove District, Worcestershire

Adopted: 12 October 2026
Planning period: 2026–2044

Purpose

This Neighbourhood Priorities Statement presents a shared vision for Alvechurch parish as a distinctive, attractive, sustainable and resilient part of North Worcestershire: a parish of several settlements, with Alvechurch village as its main focus for shops, services and community life, and with a strong village identity, valued historic centre and green belt protected countryside setting.

The Statement has been prepared at a time of significant planning change and development pressure in Bromsgrove district. It has been informed by engagement with residents and reflects the priorities people have identified for the future of the parish. It is a clear statement of what the community values, what it wishes to protect and enhance, and the outcomes it expects future development and investment to deliver.

The Statement's priorities are grounded in local views. They draw on the comprehensive resident survey undertaken by Alvechurch Parish Council in summer 2025, together with earlier community evidence gathered through the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan, which received overwhelming resident support at referendum.

It complements, rather than replaces, the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2011–2030 and must be read, particularly by housing developers, alongside that Plan, the Alvechurch Parish Design Statement and relevant Bromsgrove District planning evidence.

It must also be considered by Bromsgrove District Council to help shape policies within the emerging Local Plan and to inform decisions on planning applications.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Alvechurch[1] parish is a distinctive Worcestershire parish within Bromsgrove District. It comprises Alvechurch village and the surrounding rural settlements and hamlets, with a historic village centre, established neighbourhoods, valued community facilities, a railway station, the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, public rights of way and a close relationship with the surrounding countryside. It also adjoins the boundaries of the major urban centres of Birmingham and Redditch.

1.2 Most of the parish outside Alvechurch village is washed over by the West Midlands Green Belt, which plays a vital role in protecting the character and setting of Alvechurch and surrounding villages. This has helped secure the openness of the countryside, maintain separation between settlements and manage the location of their growth to the benefit of residents and visitors to rural north Worcestershire.

1.3 Recent national planning reforms, changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the lack of a current Bromsgrove District Plan mean the parish will face continuing development pressure during the period to 2044.

1.4 The Bromsgrove District Plan (2011–2030) [1] was adopted in 2017 and the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2019 [2]. While the Neighbourhood Plan remains part of the statutory development plan, this Neighbourhood Priorities Statement provides an up-to-date expression of local priorities to support emerging plan-making and development management by Bromsgrove District Council.

1.5 Bromsgrove District faces significant housing-delivery challenges, arising from an outdated plan and a shortfall against the five-year housing land supply requirement. This makes the Neighbourhood Priorities Statement especially important as a clear, positive and evidence-based expression of where growth can be planned effectively, and of the infrastructure and safeguards required.

1.6 This Statement therefore focuses on the matters that can most directly influence planning policymaking and decisions: housing mix and location, infrastructure, movement, landscape, biodiversity, village-centre vitality, community facilities, design and heritage.

2. ALVECHURCH PARISH - DISTINCTIVE SETTLEMENTS AND PLACES

2.1 Alvechurch parish must not be regarded simply as a location for accommodating housing and employment growth; it is a parish of connected settlements, historic places, valued landscapes and active communities.

2.2 Its identity is shaped by Alvechurch village, Withybed Green, Rowney Green, Hopwood, Bordesley and Weatheroak, each with its own setting, building traditions, landscape context and

[1] In this Statement, 'Alvechurch Parish' means the whole civil parish, including Alvechurch village and the surrounding settlements and hamlets. 'Alvechurch village' means the distinct main settlement and its village centre. References to 'the parish' and 'the village' should be understood accordingly.

relationship with the wider countryside. These are distinct communities in their own right, not ancillary settlements, and each requires equal recognition and robust protection for its identity, character and rural setting.

2.3 The characteristics valued by the community include:

- the historic village centre, most of which is a Conservation Area[2];
- the surrounding countryside, farming and agricultural activities;
- important landscape character and open rural views;
- the distinction between Alvechurch and neighbouring settlements (facilitated by Green Belt)
- local shops and services;
- community organisations;
- recreational facilities;
- public rights of way; and access to the countryside for walking, recreation and wellbeing.
- wildlife and biodiversity - including important habitat features and wildlife corridors.
- local heritage; and
- a strong sense of community.

2.4 These characteristics are important planning considerations and must inform decisions about the scale, location, design and infrastructure requirements of future development, so that growth responds positively to the parish's distinct character, landscape setting and community needs.

2.5 The Alvechurch Parish Design Statement, set out within the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan [2], provides detailed local design guidance for these places, including settlement form, landscape setting, buildings, highways, boundaries, planting and materials. Future development must use that guidance from the earliest design stage, not as an afterthought.

3. OUR CHALLENGES

3.1 Residents recognise that Alvechurch parish must plan positively for housing development and the associated change, but they also identify clear challenges that must be addressed if growth is to be sustainable and locally supported.

3.2 These challenges include excessive development pressure on Green Belt land, potential Grey Belt allocation, the need to maintain separation between settlements, highway safety, parking, school and healthcare capacity, drainage and flood risk, biodiversity loss, protection of the village centre, access to the railway station, and the need for new homes designed to meet local needs rather than simply maximise numbers.

3.3 Alvechurch station is an important asset, but it must not be assumed that its presence alone makes major growth sustainable. Accessible transport options across the parish are limited: bus services are infrequent, and access to the station from the village centre is constrained by a steep

[2] An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

route, narrow pavements, limited cycling provision and a small, unsurfaced station car park that has experienced flooding and drainage problems. Rail services are also limited, due to track arrangements and passing places, with only 2 trains an hour in each direction on the cross-city line that serves Redditch and Four Oaks via Birmingham New Street. Growth that relies on public transport must therefore address these practical access and service constraints.

3.4 The summer 2025 resident survey [3] shows that the community wants planning decisions to be shaped by local evidence, existing and additional infrastructure capacity and the character of Alvechurch Parish. This Statement translates those resident views into clear priorities for plan-making and development management.

4. OUR VISION FOR ALVECHURCH PARISH

4.1 Our vision is for Alvechurch to remain a distinctive, attractive, sustainable and resilient parish, where its diverse settlements, historic centre, valued landscapes and rich biodiversity are protected and enhanced, and residents benefit from accessible services, strong connections and a thriving community.

4.2 New, small-scale housing and employment development will be welcomed where it is proportionate to the size, character and role of the parish; appropriately located and well designed; supported by timely infrastructure; and shaped by residents' views. Development must respond to genuine local needs, strengthen the parish and safeguard the qualities that make Alvechurch distinctive.

5. OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

5.1 This section summarises the main priorities identified by residents. It distinguishes between priorities that can be addressed through planning policy and development decisions, and wider community priorities and wishes that may also require action by public bodies, service providers, landowners, community organisations or funding partners.

Planning priorities

5.2 These are matters where planning policy and decisions can help shape outcomes, including the location and scale of development, housing mix, design quality, infrastructure delivery, access, landscape impact, biodiversity, heritage and the protection of local character.

1. Protect landscape, Green Belt and village identity

- The release of land from the Green Belt must protect the openness of the West Midlands Green Belt, its valued local landscapes and the important gaps that prevent Alvechurch parish from merging with Redditch, Birmingham or neighbouring settlements. Clear landscape, settlement-gap and village-identity tests must be applied to any Green Belt or potential Grey Belt proposals. Those tests must apply equally at the edges of Rowney Green, Bordesley, Weatheroak, Hopwood and the parish's other smaller villages, resisting development that would erode their separate identities, extend them into surrounding countryside, or redirect development from Alvechurch village to the parish's smaller villages.

2. Plan the right new homes in the right places

- Prioritise brownfield and infill opportunities, and only support edge-of-settlement development where it is well connected to the village centre, schools, and services and forms a natural extension of Alvechurch village rather than a separate outlying estate.
- Avoid isolated development in open countryside and resist proposals that would weaken the rural setting of the parish.
- Ensure new housing reflects local needs, including size, affordability, tenure, accessibility and opportunities for residents at different stages of life.

3. Secure high-quality design and heritage protection

- Require development to respond positively to local character and to follow the Alvechurch Parish Design Statement, including its guidance on settlement form, building scale, materials, boundaries, planting, highways and landscape setting.
- Require proposals to demonstrate high standards of energy efficiency, climate resilience, low-carbon design and sustainable construction, with measures considered from the outset as part of the layout, building form, materials, drainage, landscaping and access strategy.

4. Match development with infrastructure

- Require new housing, especially where Grey Belt designation applies to former Green Belt land [4], to be supported by the necessary infrastructure, including education, healthcare, safe access, drainage, utilities, public open space and community facilities, with clear commitments on funding, delivery and timing so that essential facilities are provided before or alongside development, rather than being delayed until after homes are occupied.
- Secure clear, timely infrastructure funding from new development so that growth directly supports the schools, healthcare, transport, drainage, open space and community facilities needed by residents.

5. Improve transport, walking and cycling

- Create safe, attractive and accessible walking and cycling routes, particularly between new housing sites, schools, the village centre, the railway station and neighbouring settlements.
- Support measures that can be secured through planning requirements [4] [5] [6] including safe junctions, pedestrian crossings, cycle parking, electric vehicle charging, traffic-calming measures, public-transport access and improved walking and cycling connections.

6. Protect green spaces and improve biodiversity

- Protect and enhance Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity, avoid impacts to priority and irreplaceable habitats, existing trees, hedgerows, and the extent, connectedness and quality of habitats across the parish. Require development to provide on-site Biodiversity Net Gain [7] and long-term management.

7. Support the village centre, local business and employment

- Support a vibrant local economy by protecting the role of Alvechurch village centre, directing new commercial development to appropriate parish locations, supporting well-located employment and ensuring that business proposals are compatible with nearby homes, historic buildings and settings, landscape character and highway capacity.

Community priorities and wishes

5.3 These are wider issues raised by residents that may not always be secured directly through planning policy and approval decisions but have a clear link to planning and must guide partnership working, funding bids, local projects and discussions with service providers.

1. Improve access to healthcare and community wellbeing

- Work with NHS bodies, local partners and community organisations to improve access to local health, care and wellbeing services, including the pressing need for a new medical centre serving Alvechurch Parish and resolution of the cross-boundary issues that make it difficult for patients to access the local and integrated care they need, as envisaged in the Government's ten-year plan for the NHS [8].

2. Support children, young people and families

- Ensure access to local nursery and school places, youth activities, play, sport and safe routes to school, so that new and existing residents can benefit from growth.

3. Strengthen the village centre and everyday local services

- Encourage projects and partnerships that support local shops, services, community spaces, evening activities, events and improvements to streets, pavements, public spaces and village centre parking provision, helping Alvechurch remain a lively and welcoming village centre.

4. Improve walking, cycling and public transport choices

- Work with transport providers and highway authorities to secure a regular bus service for Alvechurch Parish, between Redditch, Bromsgrove and Birmingham, including a practical link between the village centre and the railway station, and better connections to nearby settlements.

5. Maintain and improve green spaces, countryside and biodiversity

- Support practical local projects to maintain and improve access to high-quality open space, including parks, recreation land, footpaths, trees, hedgerows, wildlife corridors, waterways and valued views, and encourage residents, schools and community groups to take part in biodiversity improvements.

6. Maintain a strong, inclusive parish community

- Support activities, facilities and meeting places that bring people together across Alvechurch village and the wider parish, including older residents, young people, families and residents in smaller settlements.

6. DETAILED OBJECTIVES

6.0.1 The objectives below set out the Parish Council's detailed priorities for future planning decisions and investment. Infrastructure delivery is a cross-cutting requirement across these objectives: growth must be supported by timely, funded and locally accountable provision for health, education, transport, drainage, utilities, open space, green infrastructure and community facilities. In short, we envisage the production of an accompanying BDC infrastructure development plan for Alvechurch parish.

6.1 Housing Need

6.1.1 The Parish Council accepts that new housing will be required over the plan period and supports positively planned growth that responds to local need. New homes must be located where they can form a natural, well-connected part of the village and wider parish rather than simply maximise overall numbers. The priority is for a balanced mix of homes that helps younger people and families from the parish and district, as well as older residents and those with changing needs to remain in or move within the parish.

6.1.2 This mix must include smaller homes, genuinely affordable homes, accessible and adaptable homes, and a range of tenures that reflect local circumstances rather than a narrow focus on larger market housing.

6.1.3 Brownfield and infill opportunities must be prioritised. Edge-of-settlement development will only be supported where it is well connected to the village centre, schools, services, open spaces and public transport, respects settlement gaps and landscape sensitivity, and avoids creating a separate outlying estate or isolated development in the open countryside. Assessment must consider cumulative growth around every parish settlement, including the potential for development near Rowney Green, Bordesley and Weatheroak to expand or coalesce villages, weaken established settlement boundaries or harm their individual character and landscape setting.

6.1.4 These priorities draw on the adopted Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan and the views expressed through the Parish Council's summer 2025 community survey. Together, that evidence shows consistent support for development that meets local housing needs, is modest and proportionate in scale, is well connected to existing services, and protects the character, landscape setting and infrastructure capacity of Alvechurch Parish.

6.1.5 Against those principles, the sites identified by Bromsgrove District Council in its 2025 Draft Development Strategy, ALV01 for approximately 400 dwellings near the railway station and ALV02 for approximately 100 dwellings off Old Rectory Lane, are considered wholly inappropriate as currently proposed. Their scale and form would conflict with the parish's established settlement pattern and would place unacceptable pressure on Green Belt openness, landscape and biodiversity, highways and station access, drainage, schools, primary care and other community infrastructure. Proximity to the settlement edge or railway station does not, by itself, make development of this scale sustainable.

6.1.6 The Parish Council's autumn 2025 response suggested substantially reduced concepts: up to 65 dwellings at ALV02 and around 190 dwellings within a smaller, mixed-use area at ALV01, as a pragmatic response to proposals already advanced through consultation. Those concepts were intended to demonstrate the scale of change needed to reduce harm and secure community

facilities; they must not be treated as acceptance of either site allocation or as the starting point for the new Local Plan.

6.1.7 Bromsgrove District Council's revised plan-making timetable, introduced on 29 June 2026, creates a new planning phase and must be treated as an opportunity to reconsider Alvechurch's development strategy from first principles. Earlier work may inform the evidence base, but the new plan must not simply carry forward ALV01 and ALV02 or assume that development must be concentrated on those two large Green Belt sites.

6.1.8 The Parish Council therefore calls for an updated Green Belt and Grey Belt assessment and a fresh, transparent review of development options around Alvechurch. In accepting that new housing will be required, the Council seeks a positive strategy that considers a wider range of suitable small- to medium-scale sites, rather than relying on two disproportionately large allocations. Any preferred strategy must distribute and phase growth to 2044, prioritise brownfield and infill opportunities, provide the mix of homes the parish needs, integrate with the village, and secure the necessary health, education, transport, drainage, green-space and other infrastructure from the outset.

6.2 Health and Primary Care

6.2.1 The summer 2025 resident survey [3]identified accessible primary care as already a major concern for Alvechurch residents which will become an even more urgent issue should further housing be allocated. Residents viewed primary medical care as being the highest improvement priority through developer-funded infrastructure.

6.2.2 The current medical centre is not fit for the needs of the parish. The issue cannot realistically be solved by minor expansion, short-term funding or developer contributions that currently the National Health Service (NHS) allocates elsewhere outside the parish. Alvechurch needs a clear plan for a new, accessible medical centre serving the parish.

6.2.3 The complication to be addressed is that Alvechurch sits close to the boundary between South Birmingham and Worcestershire health-planning arrangements. The existing surgery operates as a branch of a South Birmingham GP service, while developer contributions from growth in Alvechurch are generally considered through Worcestershire planning and health processes. This split has made it harder to secure funding for visible, local improvements for residents.

6.2.4 The issue is therefore not simply more funding for current arrangements, but a joined-up NHS and planning solution. Any major new housing in Alvechurch Parish must be supported by a funded, deliverable and locally accountable primary-care strategy, including a new medical centre for Alvechurch. Bromsgrove District Council, the relevant Integrated Care Boards, NHS estates and service commissioners must work with the Parish Council and residents to resolve the South Birmingham/Worcestershire commissioning and developer-contribution issues.

6.2.5 Accessible, inclusive and well-connected green spaces, allotments, play opportunities and recreational facilities are essential to physical and mental wellbeing, enabling exercise, access to nature and social connection for people of all ages. New development and infrastructure investment must therefore protect, provide and improve these community wellbeing facilities, connect them through safe walking and cycling routes, and ensure they are delivered in step with housing growth (further information in Appendix 2)

6.3 Green spaces, countryside and biodiversity

6.3.1 Alvechurch Parish is shaped by its countryside, woodlands, watercourses, parks, playing fields, informal green spaces, the canal, motorway, railway local wildlife corridors and historical settings. These green and blue spaces are valued by residents and many visitors for access to open countryside, wildlife, views, recreation, wellbeing and local character. They also form part of a wider ecological network, helping to support biodiversity, manage flood risk, respond to climate change and maintain landscape quality. Important features include irreplaceable habitats such as ancient and veteran trees, ridge and furrow fields, priority habitats including lowland mixed deciduous woodland and native hedgerows and traditional orchard habitat, several of which are recognised for their ecological importance through designation as Local Wildlife Sites. The Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy [9] also identifies much of the land around parish settlements as 'Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity', underlining the need to limit development in sensitive greenfield locations and prioritise infill and brownfield opportunities.

6.3.2 Residents are concerned that future development could lead to the loss of wildlife habitats, protected and priority species, productive agricultural land (including Grade 3a, Best and Most Versatile), mature trees, hedgerows and other features that contribute to local character. Building on greenfield land could also worsen flood risk and drainage problems where permeable soils, vegetation and natural drainage features are replaced by hard surfaces and additional runoff.

6.3.3 Where development does come forward, it must protect and improve biodiversity from the outset. Proposals must avoid harm to irreplaceable and priority habitats, deliver measurable on-site biodiversity net gain, and prioritise the enhancement, restoration and creation of habitats that strengthen the existing ecological network. Existing habitats such as hedgerows, tree lines and watercourses must be retained and improved, with long-term management secured and ecological links strengthened through corridors such as the River Arrow, the canal, trees and hedgerows. This would also bring wider benefits for nature recovery, flood resilience, access to nature, landscape quality and wellbeing.

6.4 Education and young people

6.4.1 Alvechurch Parish is served by a three-tier school system, with Crown Meadow First School and Nursery, Alvechurch Middle School and allocated high-school places in Bromsgrove. There is also private nursery provision within the parish. These facilities are already under pressure, and residents are concerned that significant new housing could place further strain on school and nursery capacity.

6.4.2 The scale and location of future development will be important. New homes are likely to increase demand for first-school, middle-school and nursery places, while growth around Bromsgrove and Barnt Green could also affect high-school catchments and transition between schools. Capacity must therefore be considered across the whole local education pathway, not just through individual site-by-site responses.

6.4.3 Crown Meadow First School and Alvechurch Middle School share a constrained site that also includes the public library, whose visitors and activities add to vehicle movements and parking demand. Although increased pupil numbers could help support long-term school viability, the existing buildings, outdoor space, sports provision, parking and access arrangements limit the scope for simple expansion. Any major development must therefore be

accompanied by a clear, funded and deliverable education strategy, prepared with the schools and education authority from the outset.

6.4.4 Potential solutions may include a new first-school site linked to major housing growth, changes to how existing school buildings are used, improved nursery provision, and better facilities for out-of-hours community use. Major development must be supported by a coordinated education and childcare strategy covering school and nursery capacity, safe access, parking, active travel, specialist provision and community use of facilities, with infrastructure planned and funded before demand arises. These options would need careful assessment, including implications for the current Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract, specialist provision, sports land, access, parking and safe walking and cycling routes to school.

6.4.5 Nursery provision is also important for working families and must be planned alongside school capacity. Existing nursery settings have limited room to expand, and specialist outdoor nursery provision will almost certainly be affected by nearby development. Future growth must protect valued early-years provision and ensure that any new or relocated facilities are accessible, safe and designed to meet local needs (Further information in Appendix 3).

6.5 Village centre and local economy

6.5.1 Alvechurch village centre is a valued community hub and designated Conservation Area, centred on the Square, Red Lion Street, Swan Street and Bear Hill. Its independent shops, pubs, services and meeting places are central to parish life. Residents want the centre to remain active, accessible and attractive, while retaining its historic village character.

6.5.2 Survey responses highlighted strong support for everyday local services, particularly a post office, fresh food shops, small independent businesses, cafés and places that encourage people to use the village centre throughout the day and into the evening. Residents also raised the importance of premises for small businesses, including workshops, light industrial uses and flexible workspace, where these can be provided in suitable locations without harming nearby homes, heritage, parking or highway capacity.

6.5.3 There is limited scope for significant new commercial or employment development within Alvechurch village itself. The parish has very few brownfield or infill opportunities, employment is mainly in retail, hospitality and local services, and the Conservation Area's narrow historic roads, parking constraints and sensitive setting make it unsuitable for major intensification of employment uses. Future business proposals must therefore be small-scale, well located and sensitively designed, making good use of existing premises or sites without creating unacceptable traffic, parking, heritage or amenity impacts.

6.5.4 Hopwood Services is primarily a motorway service area serving strategic road users, not a neighbourhood centre or everyday local destination. Whilst it is a major local employer, access is poor for staff without a car. Better walking, cycling and public transport links must be secured to Hopwood Services and to other employment locations, particularly where jobs are suitable for younger workers, shift workers and residents who do not drive.

6.5.5 Parking and accessibility are central to the success of the village centre. Residents support keeping central car parks available for short-stay local use, improving enforcement where long-stay parking reduces turnover, addressing unsafe on-street parking and managing commuter overflow from the railway station. Any new or improved parking must also support accessibility, electric vehicle charging and wider improvements to streets and public spaces.

6.5.6 Community facilities and meeting places are also important to the centre's role. Opportunities must be taken to support flexible, inclusive spaces for older residents, young people, families, community groups and residents from the wider parish, whether through existing premises, school and community use, local projects or developer contributions where these are directly related to new development.

6.6 Transport and movement

6.6.1 Transport is one of the most immediate infrastructure concerns for residents. Routes through the parish also perform an important arterial function, carrying through-traffic between the motorway network and neighbouring urban areas: Hopwood provides a route towards the Birmingham conurbation, while the route through Bordesley and the centre of Alvechurch is a principal connection towards Redditch. The current Alvechurch village road system is based on a village dating back to the 1600s, with narrow roads and pavements fronting historic buildings, and was not designed to cope with the resulting volumes of traffic or with large vehicles travelling at speed. Speeding is a major problem across the village, particularly in and around the village centre, and further traffic-calming measures, particularly on the B4120, must be treated as an urgent priority. Measures are needed to make local streets safer while also reducing the attractiveness of Alvechurch as a through-route for traffic.

6.6.2 Reviewing parking restrictions and residents' parking arrangements could support this aim. In particular, reconsidering the double yellow lines on Red Lion Street, Swan Street and Bear Hill could increase residents' parking, calm traffic and discourage rat-running through the village centre.

6.6.3 Alvechurch station is an asset, but access is poor for many residents of the wider parish. The route from the village centre is steep, pavements are narrow, cycling provision is limited, speeding up and down Station Road and Bear Hill is a problem and the road is too constrained to assume that a conventional direct bus route would be practical. Growth must not rely on the station as evidence of sustainability unless realistic access improvements are identified, such as safer walking and cycling routes, demand-responsive or shuttle transport, better station approach arrangements, more parking and its better management and measures to reduce traffic speeds.

6.6.4 Safe cycling also needs considerable improvement. There is no safe cycle route between Alvechurch, Redditch and Bromsgrove, the nearest urban centres, and connecting roads are often congested or affected by speeding traffic. Within the village, narrow pavements and pavement parking create further safety and accessibility problems, particularly on Birmingham Road between the village centre and the schools.

6.6.5 Any future development must contribute to a safer, more accessible and better-managed transport network, including traffic calming, resident and centre visitor parking improvements, safer school routes, improved pavements, practical walking and cycling links, and realistic solutions to station access.

6.7 Heritage and Design

6.7.1 Alvechurch parish has a rich and distinctive heritage stretching back more than a thousand years. Its historic core retains the form of a planned medieval settlement centred on the Grade II* listed Church of St Laurence. Nearby, the nationally important Bishop's Palace Scheduled Monument preserves moats, fishponds, water-management features and cultivation remains associated with the medieval Bishops of Worcester. Its significance is not limited to the surviving

archaeological remains, but also derives from its setting, including the open landscape context. Historic buildings, lanes, waterways, hedgerows, field boundaries and surviving ridge-and-furrow earthworks illustrate how generations lived and worked within the surrounding agricultural landscape. Together, these features give Alvechurch its special rural character, identity and sense of place [10].

6.7.2 Future development must strengthen, not dilute, the distinctive character of Alvechurch Parish. New buildings must be designed as part of the village and wider parish, not as standard estate layouts that could sit anywhere. Proposals must respond to the scale, form, materials, rooflines, boundary treatments, planting and street patterns found in Alvechurch village and the surrounding settlements, with particular care taken where development affects the Conservation Area, historic buildings, important views or the rural edge of the village.

6.7.3 The community will support housing development that feels locally rooted, modest in scale and well-integrated with its setting. Building heights, density and layout must respect nearby homes, village lanes and landscape character. Larger sites must avoid uniform house types, over-engineered roads and hard urban edges. They must instead use varied layouts, connected streets, generous landscaping, retained trees and hedgerows, and clear walking routes that connect naturally with the village centre, schools, green spaces and the wider countryside.

6.7.4 Materials and detailing must take cues from local building traditions, including brick, render, natural tones, simple roof forms, well-proportioned windows, boundary walls, hedgerows and planting that soften development within the landscape. Contemporary design may be appropriate where it is high quality, sensitive to context and clearly responds to local character. Poor-quality pastiche, standardised suburban layouts, prominent parking courts and materials that appear out of keeping with the parish must be avoided.

6.7.5 Climate resilience and long-term quality must be designed in from the outset. New buildings must make efficient use of energy and water, incorporate sustainable drainage, reduce overheating and flood risk, support biodiversity, provide usable private and shared outdoor space, and be capable of adapting to changing household needs. The Alvechurch Parish Design Statement [2] must be used from the earliest stage of site selection, layout and design, so that future development protects the parish's heritage, landscape setting and village identity while meeting modern needs.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Alvechurch Parish Council undertook a comprehensive resident survey in summer 2025 to understand local views on development, infrastructure, transport, design, the environment and community facilities. The survey was publicised widely over several weeks and received 615 questionnaire responses between 13 June 2025 and 26 August 2025. Further details of the survey are included in Appendix 1.

7.2 Residents provided substantial input through both completed survey responses and detailed written comments. That evidence has been used directly to shape the priorities and conclusions in this Statement.

7.3 Residents views were sought through:

- wide publicity for the resident survey over several weeks;
- high levels of survey engagement and completion;

- detailed written comments submitted through the survey;
- consultation at community events e.g. Picnic in the Park; the Annual Parish Meeting; and
- earlier community consultation undertaken for the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan, which received very strong resident support at referendum before being made part of the statutory development plan.

7.4 The Statement has therefore been prepared from a strong existing evidence base whilst allowing the Parish Council to respond quickly to current development pressure. Residents are invited to attend Parish Council meetings where the draft is discussed and considered for adoption.

7.5 Alvechurch Parish accepts that change through housing development will take place and can bring associated community benefits. It does, however, require development that is:

- appropriate;
- sustainable;
- properly planned;
- supported by infrastructure;
- environmentally responsible;
- well designed; and
- responsive to local needs.

7.6 Our residents' message is clear: Alvechurch needs the right development, in the right places, at the right scale and with the right infrastructure, so that future planning strengthens the village's identity and the quality of parish life rather than diminishing it.

8. SHAPING THE NEW BROMSGROVE LOCAL PLAN

8.1 Bromsgrove District Council's revised plan-making timetable marks a new planning phase for the district. It provides an opportunity to reconsider the strategy for Alvechurch Parish from first principles, rather than treating earlier proposals or site options as predetermined. This Neighbourhood Priorities Statement is the Parish Council's constructive, up-to-date and evidence-based contribution to that process, translating residents' views into clear expectations for the location, scale and form of development and for the infrastructure, environmental safeguards and community benefits that must accompany growth.

8.2 The Parish Council therefore asks Bromsgrove District Council to give significant weight to this Neighbourhood Priorities Statement, once adopted, and to the resident evidence on which it is based throughout the preparation of the new Local Plan, including when:

- identifying housing allocations.
- assessing settlement capacity.
- determining development locations.
- planning infrastructure.
- preparing policies; and
- considering major planning applications.

8.3 The Statement must be read alongside the made Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan, the Alvechurch Parish Design Statement and other relevant planning evidence. Where

circumstances or evidence have changed, this Statement provides the current expression of residents' priorities for the new plan period to 2044.

8.4 The new Bromsgrove Local Plan must carry forward the established principles of maintaining Green Belt openness, protecting settlement identity, local character and heritage, improving road safety and sustainable transport, and supporting facilities, services and the local environment. It must also respond directly and transparently to the more recent resident evidence set out in this Statement. Bromsgrove District Council must: engage and listen to Alvechurch Parish Council and residents as the strategy develops, explain how their views have influenced the preferred approach, demonstrate how any proposed growth will meet local needs, respect the parish's distinctive settlements and be supported by timely, funded infrastructure.

Bromsgrove District Council must include Alvechurch Parish Council in discussions and decisions about how Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funding arising from development in the parish is directed, so that contributions respond to local needs and deliver benefits within Alvechurch Parish.

9. APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Residents' views on the future of Alvechurch Parish

1. Purpose and scope

This appendix summarises evidence from the summer 2025 resident survey about the future of Alvechurch Parish. Although several questions responded to proposed housing sites and housing numbers, residents' answers addressed a much wider set of issues: the identity and character of the parish, infrastructure and public services, transport and movement, schools and healthcare, the village centre, the countryside and environment, and the type and scale of change that residents consider sustainable.

The appendix covers 615 questionnaire responses received between 13 June 2025 and 26 August 2025. It draws on questions concerning age, ALV01, ALV02, alternative sites and the proposed 500 homes over 15 years. The findings provide supporting evidence for the priorities, objectives and conclusions in the wider NPS.

2. Headline findings

Table 1: Overview of resident responses on housing development numbers

Preferred level of new homes	Respondents	% of all 615	% of 595 answering
Under 250	503	81.8%	84.5%
251–500	55	8.9%	9.2%
500 exactly	16	2.6%	2.7%
501–750	5	0.8%	0.8%
750+	16	2.6%	2.7%
No response	20	3.3%	—

Important interpretation: The lowest number respondents could select in the survey was 250 new homes. A response at that level should not therefore be interpreted as indicating that the respondent wanted 250 new homes; the survey structure did not allow respondents to indicate support for a lower number.

Among those who answered, 503 (81.8% of respondents) selected under 250 homes. 55 respondents (8.9%) selected 251 - 500. Only 37 respondents (6.2% of those answering) selected 500 homes or more. The principal finding is therefore opposition to the proposed scale and concentration of development rather than an absolute rejection of all housing.

3. Principal themes

Table 2: Overview of resident responses on key concerns relating to housing development proposals

Theme	Respondents	% of 615
Village character, identity and over-development	423	68.8%
Infrastructure and local services	339	55.1%
Traffic, congestion and road capacity	294	47.8%
Schools and education capacity	294	47.8%
Scale/number of houses	274	44.6%
Green Belt, countryside and green space	234	38.0%
Healthcare / GP / medical provision	233+	37.9%+
Parking	150	24.4%
Public transport	123	20.0%
Environmental/ecological impacts	103	16.7%
Shops, employment and local economy	94	15.3%
Brownfield / smaller-site alternatives	80	13.0%
Leisure, recreation and sports facilities	61	9.9%
Affordable/local housing need	46	7.5%
Walking and cycling	43	7.0%

4. Illustrative qualitative evidence

The written responses add important context to the numerical findings. The following points paraphrase recurring comments and concerns identified through the thematic analysis; they are not presented as verbatim quotations from individual respondents.

Village identity and character: residents repeatedly described Alvechurch as a village and parish with a distinctive identity, historic centre, rural setting and strong sense of community. Their concern was that development of an excessive scale or in a single concentrated location

could change that identity and make Alvechurch feel more like an urban extension or large housing estate. This supports the NPS emphasis on proportionate growth, settlement identity, local design and protection of the parish's landscape settings.

Infrastructure before or alongside growth: many comments argued that roads, schools, healthcare, drainage, parking and other services are already under pressure. Residents did not regard housing numbers as a stand-alone issue; they expected infrastructure to be planned, funded and delivered before or alongside development. This supports the NPS requirement for timely and locally accountable infrastructure provision.

Traffic, access and movement: residents frequently referred to narrow roads, congestion, speeding, constrained junctions, school-time parking and difficult pedestrian access. Comments about ALV01 and ALV02 also raised the practical limitations of Station Road, Bear Hill, Rectory Lane and surrounding routes. This supports the NPS conclusions that proximity to the railway station does not by itself make major development sustainable and that realistic access, road-safety, walking and cycling measures are required.

Schools, healthcare and community services: respondents expressed concern that additional residents would increase demand for school places, GP appointments, dental care and other local services before existing shortcomings had been resolved. These comments support the detailed NPS objectives for a funded education and childcare strategy and for an accessible, deliverable primary-care solution serving Alvechurch Parish.

Countryside, Green Belt and biodiversity: comments referred to the loss of countryside, green space, wildlife habitats, trees, hedgerows and the rural separation between settlements. Residents linked these environmental concerns to the character, wellbeing and identity of the parish, supporting the NPS priorities for Green Belt openness, settlement gaps, biodiversity and access to nature.

A constructive approach to housing: the responses were not simply opposed to all housing. Some residents supported smaller sites, brownfield or infill development, phased growth, affordable homes and housing that responds to local needs. Their comments support the NPS position that Alvechurch must accommodate the right development, in the right places, at a proportionate scale and with the necessary infrastructure.

5. Site-specific findings

ALV01, proposed for 400 homes, attracted the strongest concern: village character was mentioned by 381 (62%), infrastructure and services by 302 (49.1%), schools by 247 (40.2%), healthcare/dental provision by 218 (35.5%), traffic and roads by 207 (33.7%), Greenbelt/countryside by 180 (29.3%), parking by 133 (21.6%) and public transport by 109 (17.7%).

For ALV02, proposed for 100 homes, village character was mentioned by 219 (35.6%) respondents, traffic and roads by 187 (30.4%), infrastructure and services by 179 (29.1%), schools by 132 (21.5%), healthcare/dental provision by 93(15.1%), Greenbelt/countryside by 92 (15%), parking by 55 (8.9%) and public transport by 25 (4.1%). Some respondents regarded ALV02 as preferable to ALV01, but concerns remained about access, Rectory Lane traffic, countryside and the overall number of homes. There were 53 ALV02 responses stating 'as above', 'same as above' or similar (see methodological note).

6. Age profile and interpretation

The largest age groups were 26-49 (278 respondents; 45.2%) and 50-69 (199; 32.4%), together accounting for 477 respondents or 77.6% of the sample. The preference for under 250 homes was strong across the larger groups: 243 of 278 (87%) respondents aged 26-49, 157 of 199 (79%) aged 50-69 and 58 of 86 (67%) aged 70-84 selected under 250. Smaller age groups should be interpreted cautiously.

7. Evidence message for the NPS

The evidence indicates that residents' central concern is whether Alvechurch can absorb the proposed scale and concentration of housing without unacceptable cumulative effects on village character, roads, schools, healthcare, parking, services and the environment. The consultation also contains a constructive alternative: smaller sites, phased development, infrastructure investment and use of brownfield land. Housing need was explicitly raised by 46 respondents (7.5%), showing that the evidence must not be characterised as simply anti-housing.

8. Methodological note

The qualitative counts are based on respondent-level thematic coding of the 615-row dataset. Themes overlap, so one respondent may contribute to several themes; the percentages describe prevalence and are not mutually exclusive voting categories. For ALV02, "as above", "same as above" and similar responses were linked to the respondent's ALV01 response where appropriate. The preferred-number question is different because its categories are mutually exclusive.

Appendix 2 -Health provision: supporting evidence.

1. Purpose of this appendix

This appendix supports both the first Community Priority in Section 5, "Improve access to healthcare and community support", and the detailed Health and Primary Care objective in Section 6.2. It sets out the resident-survey evidence and local planning context behind both sections. It does not repeat those priorities and objectives but provides the supporting evidence for why improved access to local health, care and wellbeing services and a funded, deliverable and locally accountable primary-care solution as part of future growth are needed in Alvechurch Parish.

2. Links to the main NPS priority and objective

Section 5 identifies "Improve access to healthcare and community support" as the first Community Priority, calling for partnership working to improve local health, care and wellbeing services, including a new medical centre and resolution of cross-boundary access issues. Section 6.2 then sets out the detailed Health and Primary Care objective, identifying accessible primary care as a major infrastructure issue and requiring any significant new housing to be accompanied by a clear plan for improved GP and primary-care provision, including a new accessible medical centre serving Alvechurch Parish. This appendix supports both sections by setting out the survey findings, the cross-boundary NHS issue and examples of how developer contributions have not yet translated into visible local improvement.

3. What the resident survey shows

The 2025 resident survey shows that health provision is one of the clearest infrastructure concerns associated with future housing growth. Of 615 survey responses, 38% of respondents raised concerns about healthcare. The strongest concerns relate to:

- GP appointment availability;
- capacity of the existing surgery;
- medical centre capacity;
- pressure from additional population;
- dental provision; and
- the need for a new or expanded surgery.

The GP issue is frequently expressed in terms of current inadequacy, rather than merely future demand.

4. Main resident concern themes

The survey evidence indicates that residents are concerned not only about future growth, but about the ability of existing services to meet current need. The main themes are:

- difficulty obtaining GP appointments;
- concern that the existing medical-centre building is too small and unsuitable for the needs of the parish;
- limited access to local NHS dental care;
- concern that new housing will increase demand before health services improve.
- the need for accessible provision for older residents and people without easy access to transport; and
- frustration that developer contributions linked to Alvechurch housing have not necessarily delivered improved local provision within Alvechurch itself.

5. Planning and infrastructure issue

In the Bromsgrove Draft Development Strategy consultation in summer 2025, new housing at Alvechurch was discussed alongside possible health-infrastructure responses, including internal reconfiguration of the existing Alvechurch Medical Centre or a new health facility associated with site ALV01. In its response, Alvechurch Parish Council argued for new GP practice arrangements and a new building serving the parish as a whole, rather than reliance on limited alterations to the existing premises.

The planning issue is therefore not simply whether health funding is secured, but whether the service and estate planning arrangements are capable of delivering accessible local provision for Alvechurch parish residents. If Alvechurch is expected to accommodate further housing growth, primary-care provision must be treated as essential infrastructure and planned before or alongside development.

6. NHS commissioning and boundary issue

The parish's main GP service at Alvechurch Medical Centre operates as a branch of the Northwood GP service, within South Birmingham primary-care arrangements and under the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board. Alvechurch parish residents, however, live within Bromsgrove District and Worcestershire for planning purposes, where developer contributions

and local infrastructure planning are generally considered through Worcestershire-related processes.

This creates a practical gap between where development impacts arise and where health-service planning and funding decisions are made. Residents' concern is that developer contributions generated by housing in Alvechurch parish may support GP capacity elsewhere, without improving an easily accessible neighbourhood health service for Alvechurch itself.

7. Recent local development examples

Table 3: Examples of recent housing proposals and health service contribution

Development or site	Housing scale	Health contribution issue raised
Bordesley Hall, Alvechurch Parish	50+ homes	Developer Section 106 contributions were directed to GP provision in Rubery, part of Longbridge.
Hopwood affordable housing	34 homes	Developer contributions for primary healthcare were agreed for GP practices based in Redditch and Wythall.
Lye Meadow football ground	25 homes	The planning approval was associated with a Section 106 funding request for Redditch GP services.

8. Implications for future housing growth

The resident-survey evidence and recent development examples show that future housing growth cannot be considered separately from primary-care capacity. If new homes are allocated in or around Alvechurch, a clear health-infrastructure strategy must be agreed at the outset, including how GP capacity will be provided, where services will be located, how residents will access them, and how developer funding will be used for the benefit of Alvechurch Parish.

The Government's direction of travel towards neighbourhood health services reinforces the importance of local, integrated provision. For Alvechurch, this points towards a new neighbourhood health centre or medical centre capable of supporting GP-led services and wider integrated care, rather than continued reliance on a building that has already been regarded as too small for current requirements.

9. Evidence message for the NPS

The evidence supports the NPS priority that any significant new housing in Alvechurch Parish must be accompanied by a funded, deliverable and locally accountable primary-care strategy. That strategy must include provision for a new accessible medical centre or neighbourhood health facility serving Alvechurch residents, with Bromsgrove District Council, the relevant Integrated Care Boards, NHS estates and service commissioners working with the Parish Council to resolve the current commissioning and developer-contribution issues.

Without such a strategy, additional housing numbers for Alvechurch would not be supported by the essential health infrastructure needed for a properly planned and sustainable community.

Appendix 3 - Education and young people: supporting evidence.

1. Purpose of this appendix

This appendix supports the Community Priority in Section 5, "Support children, young people and families", and the detailed Education and Young People objective in Section 6.4. It sets out the evidence concerning school and nursery capacity, site constraints and the potential educational impact of housing growth in Alvechurch Parish.

Detailed development proposals would require current pupil forecasts and a formal assessment by Worcestershire County Council, taking account of the size and type of homes, phasing, catchment arrangements, parental preference, migration and the cumulative effect of other development.

2. Existing education provision

Alvechurch Parish is served by a three-tier school system. Crown Meadow First School and Nursery and Alvechurch Middle School share a site and building in Alvechurch village. Pupils then transfer to allocated high-school provision in Bromsgrove, according to the relevant catchment arrangements.

Early-years provision includes the nursery at Crown Meadow and private provision at Alvechurch and Bordesley Nursery and Sandhills Nursery. The local evidence indicates that nursery settings are operating at or close to capacity and have limited scope for expansion. In addition, the specialist outdoor nursery provision will almost certainly be affected by nearby development.

Because the schools and nurseries serve existing communities across Alvechurch Parish, the impact of future development must be considered cumulatively. Assessment must include proposed allocations, committed development and any other housing that may affect the same school and nursery catchments.

3. Assessing future demand

Education planning must use current locally calculated pupil yields and school forecasts rather than relying on broad national averages. The assessment must reflect the proposed housing mix, local demographic and migration patterns, development phasing, catchment arrangements and the capacity available at each stage of the three-tier system.

The first, middle and high-school phases must be considered together. This is particularly important for Alvechurch Middle School, whose catchment includes pupils transferring from more than one first-school area and may therefore be affected by development beyond Alvechurch village.

4. Existing rolls and the effect of housing growth

Both Crown Meadow First School and Alvechurch Middle School have experienced falling rolls within their existing catchment areas. A measured increase in the number of local children could help support the schools' long-term financial viability.

However, short-term falling rolls must not be treated as evidence that major housing growth can be accommodated without additional provision. School-place planning must consider the timing and phasing of development, longer-term demographic change and the cumulative impact of all proposed and committed housing.

5. Constraints at the existing school site

Crown Meadow First School and Nursery and Alvechurch Middle School occupy a shared building constructed through a Private Finance Initiative arrangement. This creates cost and contractual considerations for any substantial alteration or reconfiguration.

The lower part of the site contains the main school buildings, additional accommodation, playgrounds and the multi-use games area. The upper part is used for shared sports fields. There appears to be little scope for substantial expansion within the lower part of the site, while any proposal affecting sports land would require careful assessment and engagement with Sport England.

Other constraints include the public library on the shared site, which generates additional visitor traffic and parking demand, as well as:

- limited space for additional classrooms and specialist facilities;
- pressure on dining, play and toilet provision;
- limited staff parking;
- dangerous and illegal parking around the schools at the beginning and end of the school day;
- congestion and pedestrian-safety concerns on surrounding roads;
- the need for safe walking and cycling routes and an effective 'school drop off' strategy; and
- the cost and complexity of altering buildings governed by the Private Finance Initiative arrangements.

These constraints mean that additional places cannot be regarded as a simple matter of extending the existing buildings.

6. Potential education options

The school evidence identifies a possible option of providing a new first school as part of major housing growth, with Alvechurch Middle School then occupying the whole of the existing shared building.

Potential benefits could include:

- sufficient first-school capacity for additional pupils;
- modern facilities designed for changing cohort needs;
- improved specialist and special educational needs provision;
- better opportunities for community and out-of-hours use;
- purpose-designed nursery provision; and
- an opportunity to improve active-travel connections and site access.

However, this option would require substantial investment and detailed assessment. Adaptation of the existing building for sole middle-school use could be complex under the current Private Finance Initiative contract and might require additional dining, play, toilet and specialist accommodation. A new school would also need an appropriate location, safe access, adequate outdoor and sports space and a funded delivery programme aligned with the occupation of new homes.

The identification of this possible option must not be interpreted as support for a particular housing allocation. It demonstrates that major housing growth could require substantial new education infrastructure rather than minor alterations to the existing schools.

7. Nursery and early-years provision

Nursery provision is an important service for families in Alvechurch Parish, particularly given the high level of employment among residents. The available evidence indicates that existing nursery settings are at capacity and have little room to expand.

Any education strategy associated with future housing growth must therefore include early-years demand from the outset. A new or relocated first school could provide an opportunity for additional nursery places, but provision would need to be accessible, safe and available when new residents require it.

Planning decisions must protect valued existing early-years facilities. Where development would affect a nursery's buildings, outdoor space or environmental provision, suitable replacement land and accommodation must be secured before existing provision is displaced.

8. Access, parking and active travel

Existing parking and traffic conditions around the shared school and public-library site are already a concern. Library visitors and activities add to vehicle movements and parking demand alongside school traffic. Additional pupil and staff demand could worsen congestion, air quality, unsafe parking and conflict between vehicles and pedestrians unless improvements are planned in advance.

Any development that increases demand for school places must therefore contribute to:

- safe and continuous walking routes;
- practical cycling connections and secure cycle parking;
- safer road crossings;
- traffic-calming and parking-management measures;
- adequate staff and visitor parking where necessary;
- school-transport provision where development is not within safe walking or cycling distance; and
- measures that avoid increasing congestion and danger for neighbouring residents.

Education capacity and transport planning must be considered together. A nominally available school place is not a sustainable solution if children cannot reach it safely and conveniently.

9. Implications for future housing growth

The education effects of development cannot be assessed by considering each housing proposal in isolation. Bromsgrove District Council and the education authority must assess the combined effects of proposed allocations, committed housing and any further development that may affect the same schools and nurseries.

Any significant housing allocation in Alvechurch Parish must be supported by a clear, funded and deliverable education and childcare strategy prepared with the education authority, schools, nursery providers, the Parish Council and local residents. The strategy must:

- use current local pupil-yield calculations and school forecasts;
- assess the full first, middle and high-school pathway;

- include early-years and specialist provision;
- consider the balance of demand between middle-school year groups;
- identify whether existing school sites can accommodate growth;
- set out whether a new first school or other major provision is required;
- protect or replace affected nursery facilities;
- resolve Private Finance Initiative and sports-land constraints;
- provide safe access, active-travel and parking measures;
- account for cumulative development across relevant catchments; and
- secure developer funding, land and delivery timescales before additional demand arises.

10. Evidence message for the NPS

The evidence supports the NPS requirement that housing growth must be matched by timely education and childcare infrastructure. Existing falling rolls may provide limited short-term flexibility and could help school viability, but they must not be assumed to provide sufficient capacity for major growth.

Bromsgrove District Council must not allocate major housing development affecting Alvechurch Parish without an agreed education strategy demonstrating where children will be educated, how the necessary places and facilities will be funded, how existing nurseries will be protected, and how safe access will be provided. Where a new or substantially reconfigured school is required, the land, funding, phasing and delivery arrangements must be secured before or alongside housing development, rather than after local schools and families experience additional pressure.

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