**Wookey Hole**

**(Secondary Village)**

**Working Draft of Emerging Preferred Options**

**Village assessment**

Local Plan Part I designates Wookey Hole as a Secondary Village and allocated a minimum of 15 houses to be delivered here, a comparatively low figure on account of the village’s environmental sensitivity.

16 houses have been built or permitted to date and no sites were put forward prior to or during the Issues and Options consultation. On account of this and Wookey Hole’s environmental significance (including falling within the Mendip Bat Consultation Zone and bordering the AONB) it is therefore not proposed that any substantial further housing should be provided here in the short or longer term.

**Parish Council Comments**

St Cuthbert Out Parish Council responded only to highlight that Wookey Hole has no post office, no shop and no school.

**Public Comments**

**Summary of issues raised in the consultation:**

6 individuals and organisations commented on the issues and options put forward in Wookey Hole.

A number of these drew attention to the error in the facilities section of consultation paper, highlighting that Wookey Hole has no post office, no shop and no school.

Other issues raised included:

* Commercial leisure facility brings no benefit to the village. The Plan should include a commitment to preserving the character of the village and future commercial development should respect the character and demonstrate a positive benefit for the community.
* The village needs car parking to relieve problems on school hill, a recreation area and a village hall.
* Concern at the loss of wildlife on OALSWOOKH005 and comment that It used to provide more protection from light, noise and pollution.
* Would support amount of housing on the Wookey hole road on a good footway to Wells and bus routes and development of light industry employment sites.
* Concern at loss of views towards The Mill.
* Low level of street lighting should be used as the lights at the caves are too bright.
* Irregular road widths should be protected as this slows traffic.
* Concern at the loss of bats in the Mendip Bat Consultation Area.

**Preferred Options**

**Site allocations**

* No sites are proposed for housing in Wookey Hole.

**Local Green Spaces**

Five sites currently designated as Open Areas of Local Significance in the Local Plan Part I were assessed for their suitability for designation as Local Green Spaces. It is felt that three of these areas met the Local Green Space criteria, a summary of the assessments can be found below. No additional Local Green Spaces were proposed during the consultation.

**OALSWOOKH001 – Wooded area**

This wooded green area provides a natural break between clusters of development and forms a distinctive wooded green “wedge” in the heart of the village which adds to the village’s sense of rurality and character. This site is also demonstrably special for its richness of wildlife, falling within a consideration zone for the Brown Hairstreak Bat and representing a highly suitable habitat for the soprano pipistrelle bat. The site also falls within a dispersal area of the SAMSEN ecological network. Site should be designated as an LGS

**OALSWOOKH002 – Hard standing picnic area and play area**

The site (comprising hard standing picnic and play areas) does not fulfil the criteria for the LGS designation. Site should not be designated as an LGS

**OALSWOOKH003 – Gardens of Wookey House and Ebbor House**

Whilst the site comprises two large private gardens of Wookey House and Ebbor House, they are enclosed by stone walling and do not afford public views towards the houses. There are many gardens in the immediate vicinity and there is no apparent reason why this site is demonstrably special. Site should not be designated as an LGS

**OALSWOOKH004 – Campsite, car park, river and grassed areas**

The site as a whole is extensive and covers a range of areas, some unsuitable for the LGS designation. However, parts of the site do have demonstrable merit and it is proposed to designate a smaller area, excluding the car parks and built up section at the northern end. Much of the site forms a green area around which the village is developed and is integral to the character of the village. Whilst the hardstanding car park has little aesthetic merit, the green spaces beyond and around this area provide the green heart of the village. Site should not be designated as an LGS in its entirety

**OALSWOOKH005 – Church and churchyard of St Mary Magdalene’s Church**

The site is an important space around St Mary Magdalene’s Church which is a significant feature of the village. The space contributes to the character of the village by providing the setting for Church. Site should be designated as an LGS

**Local Green Space Allocations**

Identify the following sites as LGS in the preferred Options Paper:

* **OALSWOOKH001** – Wooded area **(New Ref: LGSWOOKH001)**
* **OALSWOOKH005** – Church and churchyard of St Mary Magdalene’s Church **(New Ref: LGSWOOKH002)**
* **OALSWOOKH004 (IN PART)** – Campsite, car park, river and grassed areas **(New Ref: LGSWOOKH003)**