

Design and Local distinctiveness.

- 4.12 Where new housing is proposed it is important that it should add to the character of the locality and not detract from it; the quality of design is critical for these purposes. In the national context this was seen as so important that “Design” was included in the meaning of “Sustainable Development” by means of primary legislation: Planning Act 2010, Section 10. This, in turn, was carried forward into the National Planning Policy Framework of March 2012 where an entire section of the document, section 7, is devoted to “Requiring Good Design”. (Note: note *requiring* – not merely *promoting*.)
- 4.13 In Westhide and Preston Wynne there has been little recent development other than conversion and individual infill sites, but Withington has experienced substantial growth with a very mixed approach to design, not all of them reflecting the established character of the core of the historic village. The original Withington Village developed around the church (broadly speaking in what is now the Conservation Area) where stone and Victorian brick were the predominant external materials. In this immediate locality the exposed timber frame “Black and white” style of new housing would be out of place. Elsewhere in the NDP area alternative approaches could reasonably be taken where they result in a high quality of design on their own merits.
- 4.14 Whilst density of development in terms of new houses per hectare will be of use for monitoring land use it is not seen as helpful in guiding detailed design in small sites, especially individual houses. The relationship between plot size and number of dwellings will need to be assessed on a site by site basis.
- 4.15 In terms of layout the following principles should be applied in order to present an attractive appearance to the public domain and to provide reasonable levels of amenity to the new occupants:

**Policy P3 Local Distinctiveness - Housing Layout and Design**

**In order to promote good design of new developments in the NDP area the following principles should be applied to all new development:**

- a. All developments fronting the main roads through the village should face those roads. This can be achieved either through direct front access or by the provision of a service road parallel to the village road.
- b. Within developments houses should front each other rather than use layouts whereby front elevations face towards rear gardens or courtyards
- c. Larger developments comprising more than 10 new dwellings should feature a central open space typically in the form of a village green as has been achieved with the developments at Vine Tree Close and Springfield.
- d. Individual dwellings either in stand alone developments or as part of a larger scheme should be designed to reflect their prime purpose i.e. accommodation for people. In this context garage elements should not project beyond the principal front elevation of the main dwelling.
- e. External materials should respect and complement their setting and context. In the conservation area in Withington stone predominates with some brick and render. Elsewhere the predominant material is brick but the quality and colour of bricks used must also be taken into account. In Westhide the predominant materials to be used are stone and brick, and in Preston Wynne there is a wider range of materials. Each proposal should be considered in the context of its surroundings.