

Withington Group Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2031

Fourth draft version 1.4 10th January 2018

Foreword

The Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Withington Group of Parishes will be part of the planning framework of policies that guide and direct development in the three parishes. It is a formal document that has to pass certain “tests” before it can be adopted, including compliance with national and County policies, being based on sound evidence, and approval through a referendum for the local community. As a formal document it may seem a bit daunting at first glance – but to do its job it has to fall squarely within the remit of planning law. Thus, it deals with “Development” in the planning sense – i.e. projects that need planning permission.

It is important that the theme of “Sustainable Development” runs through the whole document – and one aspect of sustainability is the meaningful engagement of the public with the process. Thus, whilst consultants have been involved in the preparation – the plan is definitely “Ours” – i.e. one that the communities of the Withington Group can “own” as their own work.

Once adopted the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be a formal document used to assess relevant planning applications for development in the area.

Neighbourhood Development Plans were brought into existence by the Localism Act 2011 (and related regulations). The intention was to allow local communities to come together, typically through Parish Councils, to say where they think new development should go and what such development should look like.

The basic process is:

The Parish Council applied for permission to be a Neighbourhood Planning body and, once approved, set about the following:

- *Consult with local communities and interest groups and take their views into account*
- *Prepare any new evidence required and make use of existing evidence such as the documents drawn up by Herefordshire Council as local planning authority*
- *Draw up and publish the draft plan with an initial re-consultation at this stage to look at any options before formal publication*
- *Undertake formal consultation with statutory consultees*
- *Draw up a revised plan and submit it to the local planning authority (Herefordshire Council) who then organise:*
- *Examination by a government appointed Examiner*
- *A referendum on the plan for the local communities*
- *Final adoption of the plan.*

More details of this process and the key dates are included in Appendix I to this document.