

Settlement Boundaries in the NDP Area

- 4.5 Herefordshire Council (and its predecessor authorities) typically used the concept of Settlement Boundaries to manage new development in the rural areas. Land outside Settlement Boundaries was treated as Open Countryside whereby development must comply with restrictive policies to avoid speculative housing development in the countryside. The NDP area has one Settlement Boundary for Withington which was inherited from the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan. This NDP provides the opportunity to review that boundary and assess whether other identifiable groups of housing and other development should be included in a Settlement Boundary. Anywhere outside the revised Settlement Boundary will be treated as Open Countryside where new development needs to accord with Core Strategy Policy RA3 – Herefordshire’s Countryside.

Development Within the three Parishes in the NDP Area

- 4.6 The three parishes are of different sizes and have distinct characteristics, hence a different approach is proposed in each case with the overall intention of maintaining local distinctiveness.

Withington

- 4.7 Withington is the largest of the three settlements by a considerable margin, provides the most services and facilities and has experienced significant recent growth. It also has its historic Settlement Boundary from previous Local Plans (notably the former Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan). Some of the sites considered for development at the Options stage of the NDP were within and several outside the old Settlement Boundary. Likewise the permissions recently granted are not all within the old Settlement Boundary. It is therefore proposed to amend the Settlement Boundary to take in current significant commitments as, principally, an updating exercise. It is not intended to release new development areas in the light of the current generous housing land supply. The revised boundary also includes the Whitestone Business Park.
- 4.8 Withington Parish also includes a number of smaller settlements with their own identities: notably Withington Marsh, and the much smaller groups of houses such as those at Eau Withington, Nunnington and West Lydiatt. Of all the groups of houses in the parish, but outside Withington central village, only Withington Marsh would appear to be an area where inconspicuous infill could be achieved within the existing “envelope” formed by the burgage plots along the Marsh and by the houses associated with the old canal development. Indeed, the Core Strategy includes a specific policy regarding the canal (see Policy P7 below) and there may be some potential for new development associated with canal restoration works. Consequently it is proposed that a new Settlement Boundary is created at Withington Marsh as shown on the Proposals Map. Whilst all the larger sites have planning permission there is a possibility that one adjoining the Whitestone Chapel may not come forward early. It is thus allocated for development along with the care home site (paragraph 4.3) and included in the settlement boundary.

Policy P1 Withington Settlement Boundary

The Settlement Boundaries for Withington and Withington Marsh are defined as shown on the Proposals Map. Land within the Parish but outside these Settlement

Boundaries will be regarded as Open Countryside to which Core Strategy Policy RA3 - Herefordshire's Countryside will apply to all new development.

- 4.9 If development other than on the allocated site takes place within the Settlement Boundaries it will be regarded as “Windfall” development for the purposes of plan monitoring. Where development takes place it will be considered against the Local Distinctiveness policy, P3, below.

Westhide

- 4.10 Westhide did not have a Settlement Boundary in the former Unitary Development Plan and is substantially smaller than Withington with far fewer services and facilities. In population terms it is the smallest of the three parishes in the NDP Group. In the absence of any outstanding need for the NDP area overall there is no need to allocate any new sites in Westhide. However as it is a named village in the core strategy it is therefore considered necessary to create a Settlement Boundary. Any development within the settlement boundary is to be restricted to infill plots of no more than 2 dwellings, or as redevelopment or refurbishment of redundant sites and buildings. The remaining area of Westhide parish will be considered as Open Countryside. Note also that the Core Strategy Policy RA1 requirement for “proportional growth” applies to the NDP area taken as a whole and does not need to be applied separately to Westhide in isolation.

Preston Wynne

- 4.11 Preston Wynne is, in common with Westhide, a very small settlement with a scattered development pattern and is in the lower category of villages for the purposes of Core Strategy Policy RA2. In the absence of any identified need no new site allocations are proposed. The only area which can be identified as “a settlement” within the parish is at Preston Marsh and a settlement boundary is proposed to include existing development and recent sites granted planning permission. It is considered that within the settlement boundary only infill development of 1 or 2 houses will be acceptable. The remaining area of the parish it is to be treated as Open Countryside subject to Core Strategy Policy RA3, Herefordshire's Countryside. In common with Westhide it is acknowledged that the “Core Strategy Policy RA1 requirement for “proportional growth” applies to the NDP area taken as a whole and does not need to be applied separately to Preston Wynne.

Policy P2 Westhide and Preston Wynne

The Settlement Boundaries for Westhide and Preston Wynne are defined as shown on the Proposals Map. Land within these parishes but outside the Settlement Boundaries will be regarded as Open Countryside to which Core Strategy Policy RA3 - Herefordshire's Countryside will apply to all new development.