

**Withington Group Neighbourhood Development Plan – Preliminary Draft
Comments from Open Days 26th, 27th January 2018**

Topic	Public Comments	Steering Group response/action
Context	Too many technical words!	As a legal document some technical language/jargon is unavoidable – however we will review the document to reduce where possible jargon expressions.
	Are there any other major or minor builds scheduled for Withington – Duke Street can't cope!	There is no proposed development in the plan which would take access from Duke Street.
Vision and Objectives	There is no further demand or requirement for any further development in Withington. Existing recent development has changed village. Stop further development.	The new Neighbourhood Development Plan cannot propose a total ban on all new building – that would be impractical and would not comply with national or county planning policies. However, it does not have to provide for new large scale developments above and beyond existing and historic commitments.
	Enough or too much mass building has already been done. The new builds next to the Worcester Road are more than enough. Certainly no need for the proposed site next to The Coppice (leaving the rural aspect of this alone).	The development next to the Coppice already has planning permission. The rural character (and setting) of Withington is proposed to be protected by use of the Settlement Boundary policy.
	Stop building	A total embargo on all new building would not be practical or comply with national and county planning policies. However, such growth as does take place can be managed through this plan.
	[Site] Number 7 is <u>not</u> happening- Withington will be purely a place to put any housing the powers think fit. But why am I bothering to write this – the opinions of the people have no power!	Site number 7 is not proposed for development and is outside the proposed Settlement Boundary. Local option does need to be taken into account – and there will be a local referendum on the final plan before it can be adopted.
	Withington had great countryside which is slowly being eroded. Need to conserve this great asset.	Agreed – the Settlement Boundary policy is intended to protect the rural setting of the village.
	Please preserve rural –conservation environment.	Preservation of the rural character of the plan area is very important – the policies aim to achieve this by carefully limiting where development can take place.
	Lack of pavement in Withies Road. Definitely NO SLEEPING POLICEMEN. Install drain to bottom of Withies Road to eliminate LAKE.	These matters can be referred to Herefordshire Council's highways team to see if practical measures can be taken.

	Are we in danger of becoming a small town? Will the infrastructure cope?	The relationship between new development and infrastructure is important. Developer contributions can be used for a variety of purposes provided they are directly related to the development in question and not used to ameliorate existing problems. As and when the Community Infrastructure Levy become effective the Parish Council will have a source of income for wider purposes where it can be justified.
	Withington does not have the infrastructure to cope with more houses, more cars, etc. etc.	[see above response]
	No way that the current infrastructure can cope as it is. STOP BUILDING houses until the village is capable of sustaining the eventual occupants.	[see above response]
	Further development/building should be avoided at all costs! What has already been approved in enough.	No large scale new developments are proposed above and beyond existing and historic commitments. However, it is not practical or compliant with national and county planning policies to prevent all new development.
	There could not be sufficient amenities to satisfy 213 [new houses].	[see above responses]
	Vision should include a section on environmentally innovative construction. Needs to seek to reduce demand on electrical grid.	This is addressed in the later section on renewable energy.
New Housing and Development	With the design of new homes (especially terraced housing) can provision be made for the tidy storage of household bins e.g. black bins and recycling bins?	Agreed – proposed policy wording to be reviewed to take this point forward.
	Rural. Rural. Rural. Please consider!!	The Settlement Boundary policy is intended to protect the rural setting of the villages in the plan area.
	It would be good to see the “safe” pathways and roads. Withies Lane and Duke Street are race tracks.	Traffic management on these roads is an issue that the parish council can take up with the highways team of Herefordshire Council.
	Rural! Please.	The Settlement Boundary policy is intended to protect the rural setting of the villages in the plan area.
	Minimum requirement 127 – surely we have reached that and more. DO NOT BUILD ON CONSERVATION AREAS such as Mintons Meadow!	No further large scale build is proposed. The protection of the setting of the conservation area will be included as a policy
	Please ensure any new building in not only in keeping with current dwellings <u>but</u> also in keeping with village like e.g. no street lights	Agreed – this needs taking forward in the design policy.
	The comments make no reference to the fact that the infrastructure can’t	There are no new developments proposed of Duke Street. Unfortunately

	cope with the extra traffic flow that the new developments will cause. Added to – in Duke Street especially there is an increase in very large farm vehicles using it as a shortcut.	the Parish Council has no control over the size of farm vehicles! It is unlikely that a weight restriction would be agreed for the C1129 (Duke Street)
	That roads/pavements/safety of schoolchildren is improved. Speed limits, crossings, improved signs will be needed.	This needs a comprehensive review with the Herefordshire Council highways team.
	Before long there will be no countryside left! (Some village preservation should be considered!!)	The Settlement Boundary policy is intended to protect the rural setting of the villages in the plan area.
	There should be no more homes than is presently planned for Withington Village. The number has already significantly increased in the last few years with much more traffic on unsuitable roads.	No large scale new developments are proposed above and beyond existing and historic commitments. However, it is not practical or compliant with national and county planning policies to prevent all new development.
	Policy required for no more allocated sites. Only infill in Settlement Boundaries.	Agreed – that is part of the role of the Settlement Boundary policy.
	Commitments total 213. Twice the quota of 127 [for up to] 2031. So we don't need further housing.	That is the very reason why no significant new allocations are proposed.
	Permissions granted already exceed the 127 and that's just in Withington – <u>no</u> more development or <u>approvals</u> .	No large scale new developments are proposed above and beyond existing and historic commitments. However, it is not practical or compliant with national and county planning policies to prevent all new development.
Settlement Boundaries	What is the status of the ex-Caravan and Camping Club site and the field next door in Bromyard Road opposite Hawkin's strawberry farm. More and more caravans are being installed and occupied now (January) so can't be used by migrant fruit pickers?	This point needs taking up with the Development Management/Enforcement Teams of Herefordshire Council's planning services. (There is some "Permitted Development" for seasonal workers' accommodation – but it needs checking that this development is compliant with the relevant permissions and licenses).
	Open up the canal again understanding it is sort of underway. This would solve a lot of the flooding issues. Also bring tourists to the village.	Agreed – there is a proposed policy to ensure land is available for future canal re-instatement/development.
	In view of Withington Marsh being liable to flood how can development be allowed!! All houses on the side of the lane have been flooded.	Flood protection is an important issue and a suitable policy is included in the current draft plan. The Core Strategy identifies WM as a settlement which could accommodate growth
	Withington. There is no mention of a "vehicle park" behind Norcroft cottage in Duke Street which started being used about 2 weeks ago.	This point needs taking up with the Development Management/Enforcement Teams of Herefordshire Council's planning services.
	Complete mess – old vehicles, furniture, piles of "stuff" – is there going to be gypsy caravans next?	This point needs taking up with the Development Management/Enforcement

		Teams of Herefordshire Council's planning services.
Local Distinctiveness	When new houses such as at Mintons are supposed to be clad in stone and are not – why?	Design details are submitted to and approved by Herefordshire Council's planning team – if suitable policies can be developed in this plan then greater control can hopefully be exercised over design details such as this.
	Design should be sympathetic with the village environment – NOT standard house types imported from suburbs.	Agreed – hence the “Local Distinctiveness” policy. However, we need to be practical; ultimately housebuilding companies will only build what they perceive they can sell and what their customers want and can afford.
Affordable Housing	Please ensure listed proposed development have affordable housing – families needed to enliven village and school.	The policy on Affordable Housing is guided by national planning policies and by Herefordshire Council's policies (which must also be compliant with the national “rules”). The occupancy of new houses (in the sense of a whether the occupiers are a “family” or not) cannot be controlled by bodies such as the Parish Council – although by building house types that are suitable for families some influence can be achieved.
	Please ensure that “Affordable Housing” is only double storey high e.g. no flat blocks that would not be in keeping with the area.	Affordable Housing needs to be matched to accommodation needs wherever practical – and so some smaller units may be required. The perceived Affordable Housing needs for Withington do not suggest that developments of flats would be appropriate and, of course, tower blocks would not be in keeping with the character of the area.
Open Space	Need to include Withington Conservation Area	Agreed – a policy to be added regarding “Heritage Assets” including the Withington Conservation Area.
	The pond on Mintons Meadow and south of Duke Street was of special interest with its great crested newts 20 years ago. The whole field is a conservation area – Red Kites, hares etc. – please don't let us use it!	There is no proposal in the plan to develop the land immediately south of Duke Street.
	We support the above request regarding Mintons Meadow – it should be preserved as a conservation area.	There is no proposal in the plan to develop the land immediately south of Duke Street.
	Maintenance of hedges, ditches to give walkers safety.	Landowners are responsible for maintenance but lengthsman can assist
	The land between Veldo Lane and Duke Street should be designated as special “Green Space” and included in Core Strategy. There is important wildlife in this area.	This site is outside the proposed Settlement Boundary and so is not proposed for development. It could also be identified on the Proposals map as an important “Green Space”.

	Calming measures at the entrance to Withies Road and Worcester Road, i.e. roundabout or traffic lights. Speed calming measures [in] Withies Road from new development , need pavements etc. for new residents. Cycle routes. Ensure we keep open spaces.	Most of this comment is relevant to the Transport Section below – but the final comment “ensure we keep open spaces” is also important in the context of this section. Key Green Spaces will be identified on the Proposals Map.
	Constant litter in play area and woods to the rear of the village hall. Appropriate litter bin provision by shop owners.	The Parish Council can review the provision of litter bins and take the matter up with local businesses. Education also has a role.
Transport and Traffic	Transport Withington. Pot holes near the bends don't help! Would help of the hedges down past the school were cut back regularly down the hill and round the dangerous bend. Has <u>never</u> been done regularly <u>if at all</u> in over two years!	This needs to be taken up with the Highways team of Herefordshire Council, who should pursue the landowner.
	Traffic calming and mini roundabout on main road? Pavements on to new development. The amount of cars going through the village doing so + is obscene!	This needs to be taken up with the Highways team of Herefordshire Council
	Create cycle paths using the old footpaths.	A balance needs to be sought between the needs of walkers/ramblers/dog walkers and the needs of cyclists. Improved facilities for both would be welcome but needs to be paid for – and developers can only be expected to fund the infrastructure requirements of their own developments – not seek to address existing problems elsewhere.
	There has been a massive increase in traffic through Duke Street, to and from the Cross keys (C1129). More housing will increase the numbers.	New housing is not proposed off Duke Street. Existing traffic flows along public highways are not something that the Neighbourhood Development Plan can directly influence.
	Bus service very poor for size of village. Not everyone has their own transport.	The Parish Council could make representations to the bus company but this would need co-ordination with the relevant officers of Herefordshire Council
	Bus service is <u>very</u> infrequent even for rural position!	The Parish Council could make representations to the bus company but this would need co-ordination with the relevant officers of Herefordshire Council
	Signage and restricted parking measures in Springfield Road to prevent Post Office customers obstructing access to properties at the rear of the Post Office. This measure should be in place before the provision of the Fish and Chip shop which will only compound the number of traffic problems in Springfield Road.	This needs to be taken up with the Highways team of Herefordshire Council

	If we can't have traffic restrictions on Duke Street then at least let us have footpaths – someone will be killed/injured soon due to speeding traffic and lack of care. HEDGES nearly 3ft out in road in places.	This needs to be taken up with the Highways team of Herefordshire Council
	Why not make the upper length of C1013 one way [from?] South Bank to the junction.	This needs to be taken up with the Highways team of Herefordshire Council
	Traffic calming/restriction urgently needed, especially in Duke Street.	This needs to be taken up with the Highways team of Herefordshire Council All the traffic issues have been referred to Balfour Beatty (Herefordshire Council) by the parish council.
Canal	[no comments]	
Telecommunications	Mobile phone reception almost non-existent in Duke Street!	The telecommunications policy is intended to draw attention to the issue of mobile phone coverage generally. Care will be need with the siting of any new telecommunications infrastructure as new masts can be visually quite intrusive.
Employment	On the whole I believe most of the people employed at Business Park come from outside the parish.	Noted.
	Fish and Chip shop in totally unsuitable location.	Noted.
Agriculture and Tourism	[no comments]	
Renewable Energy	Policy dances around the desire to deter wind farms! If you don't want them you need to be more assertive. If this isn't legal then you need to think about this again. Can there be a buffer zone where they are prohibited?	A careful balance needs to be found with policies like this. The concept is desirable – but the implementation may well result development that is quite intrusive. Interestingly Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy Policy SD2 allows for Neighbourhood Development Plans to identify locations where windfarms <i>might</i> be acceptable – but doesn't support the concept of "Buffer zones". Need to clarify policy
	Any concern re. solar farm? The alternative energy?	Solar Farm proposals would need to comply with Herefordshire Council's landscape policies – and not be intrusive in the landscape.
	Renewable energy is going to be increasingly necessary as fossil fuels die out. Act now when it's not too late.	The Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy seeks to encourage suitable small-scale works.
Social and Community	<u>Concern</u> . How will the Primary School at Withington cope with more pupils? Further developments would be need to accommodate growing numbers.	The capacity of schools is dealt with by the appropriate Education policies and controls. If new large scale developments were to take place then Developer Contributions could be made to improve school capacity on a pro-rata basis.

		However, it does not always follow that new development leads directly to new pupils attending a local school.
	Constant litter is something that annoys a lot of people. Maybe as part of the lengthsman duties could be regularly clearing this up.	It is illegal to drop litter and education has a role to play. The parish council can look at this again with local businesses and the Lengthsman.
	Better social events/club for lonely members of the village. More social/activities/events for families and children.	This is a matter that can be taken up by many organisations such as churches and other local community groups, not just the Parish Council – but is ultimately not a development related issue and so cannot be part of a statutory town planning policy. To help move this forward more Volunteers are needed
	Increased housing has led to increased traffic and it is evident in the fields – the negative effect this is having on our precious countryside.	Protection of the countryside is important and has informed the relevant policies of the Plan.
	Many events and social activities have been tried in Withington with very poor take up. It [is] always the same crowd trying to organise and we are getting too old – need young blood.	This is a matter that can be taken up by many organisations such as churches and other local community groups, not just the Parish Council – but is ultimately not a development related issue and so cannot be part of a statutory town planning policy.
	Only been in the village 13 years and seen the changes over the years as walk the area daily with my dogs. I've seen litter increase especially on “Chip van” days and with increased housing. More dog owners result in mess as not responsible.	This is not directly a development related issue and so cannot be part of a statutory town planning policy.
	As the village grows community facilities need to be maintained and improved especially in St Peter's Church.	Where there is a direct relationship between a proposed development and community facilities required to serve it then developer contributions can be sought under “Section 106” – however, such contributions cannot be used to overcome existing deficiencies. Furthermore, any such expenditure needs to have a wider community benefit rather than one specific organisation or community group. If and when the Community Infrastructure Levy becomes available then the Parish Council will have wide discretion over where such monies are spent – but they are, of course, publicly accountable and will need to ensure a genuinely community benefit for any expenditure.
	The old complaint about dog droppings up Veldo lane, it's bad enough as it is without dog poo to add to it.	This is outside the scope of a neighbourhood Development Plan.

	I hope residents living in the new houses will not try to protest about the St Peter's Church clock chiming!	Noted
	The church urgently need monetary help to make the building user friendly i.e. a loo! Then more people might come to events here.	See comments above about developer contributions.
	The church should <u>not</u> receive [Section] 106 monies. They have sold land in the parish by Methodist Church for development. Also they have applied for planning for 1,200 homes via Kings Acre Road. They should be self funding. They don't pay tax. Enough is enough.	See comments above about developer contributions.
Flooding	Why are polytunnels allowed next to a brook which floods? Covering some of the flood plain?	The decisions on Polytunnels are taken based on Herefordshire Council's own policies – but this can be looked at again to see if a specific polytunnels policy can be added to the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
	Check wording “preferably seek to improve” which is too passive. Suggests “and shall seek”	Noted – wording will be reviewed.
	Ditches very poor all along Duke Street to end of Veldo Lane.	Noted – this could be referred to the landowners, Herefordshire Council, and Lengthsman.
Other comments	[policy on] Polytunnels?	To be considered.