

4. Policies for New Housing and Development

Core Strategy

- 4.1 The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 (the “Core Strategy”) was adopted in October 2015 and sets the overall context for housing growth throughout the County. (The NDP has to be in conformity with the Core Strategy.) Policy RA1 – Rural Housing Distribution of the Core Strategy specifies how new housing will be distributed throughout the rural areas using the concept of “Proportionate housing development” i.e. a percentage growth figure based on the number of houses in the named settlements as they existed in 2011. The policy sets the target of 18% growth for the Hereford Sub Area which includes the Withington Group of parishes. However, there is a key difference between Withington which is the list of “Settlements which will be the main focus of proportionate housing development” and Preston Wynne, Westhide and Withington Marsh which are in a second table of “Other settlements where proportionate housing is appropriate”.
- 4.2 The following table sets out known commitments and completions since 2011. Note that the “Growth figure” of 18% is intended to apply to the whole of the NDP area rather than separately to the individual settlements within it.

Table 1 Withington Group NDP Source of Housing Supply and Requirements (Data from 2011 to 31st March 2017)		
Existing dwellings in 2011	Withington/Withington Marsh	610
	Westhide	33
	Preston Wynne	60
	Total	703
Minimum requirement to 2031 in accordance with Core Strategy Policy RA1		
	18% of 703	=127
Completions and demolitions 2011 to 31 st March 2017	Withington/Withington Marsh	10 (new) 2 (demolished) = net 8 gains
	Westhide	0
	Preston Wynne	1 (new), 1 (demolished)
	Total	8 (net)
Commitments (permissions granted, allocations and under construction)	Withington: Adj. Whitestone chapel Southbank Rear of Vine Tree Close Care Home at Whitestone	33 69 31 80
Individual permissions of 1 or 2 dwellings (i.e. “windfall”)	Withington	3
	Westhide	0
	Preston Wynne	10
Total Allocations/Permissions (net figure allowing for demolitions in table above)		234
Proposed windfall allowance to 2031	(includes Withington, Westhide, Preston Wynne, Withington Marsh and remaining rural area)	20
Total Housing Supply Identified		254

- 4.3 From Table 1 above it can be seen that the target of “proportionate growth” has already been achieved by April 2017 and, if all existing commitments come to fruition, will be significantly exceeded early on in the plan period. This raises the possibility of having no further housing growth in the NDP between now and 2031 but a moratorium on all new housing for that length of time would not be realistic. Consequently, whilst this NDP has no outstanding need to identify any significant new sites, it would be prudent to have policies to allow for occasional infill and other specific housing needs in the settlements that make up the Group and to allow for the possibility that all the currently permitted sites might not be fully developed. Two of the current sites with planning permission are allocated for development as both have shown little progress in being brought forward. The care home site at Whitestone is specifically allocated for residential care rather than for general housing, for which it is considered unsuitable due to its location on the south side of the A4103.

Rural Areas Site Allocations Development Plan Document

- 4.4 In June 2017 Herefordshire Council published an Issues and Options Paper in preparation of a new document to allocate housing development to the rural areas of the County. However, that Issues and Options Paper is intended to cover only those parts of the County without adequate coverage of Neighbourhood Development Plans – thus any future housing growth in the Withington Group of parishes over and above that already achieved since 2011 can now be managed through this Neighbourhood Development Plan.

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).
- 4.8 At the start of the Plan period, Withington was designated as a main village in the Unitary Development Plan. In 2014 there were 14 identified sites for possible development. The Neighbourhood Plan Group was in the process of assessing these sites with the residents through public participation when the target requirement was increased from 65 dwellings to a minimum of 127 dwellings. At the same time the three settlements of Westhide, Preston Wynne and Withington Marsh were included as settlements where growth could be

accommodated. Since April 2011, 3 large sites, 2 at Whitestone and one to the rear of Vine Tree Close have been granted planning permission totalling 133 dwellings, and a care home development of 80 units has been approved also at Whitestone. 19 individual dwellings have also been completed or approved in the neighbourhood plan area. (5 dwellings have been or are proposed for demolition). Table 1 above shows the latest (February 2018) figures for new housing requirements and commitments.

- 4.9 In summary, some 7 years into the plan period 254 new dwelling units, have either been constructed or approved out of a minimum requirement of 127 by 2031.
- 4.10 Two of the above sites both at Whitestone, the site for 33 new dwellings adjacent to Whitestone Chapel and the proposed Care Home on the south side of the A4103, are allocated for development as there has been little progress in bringing them forward since planning permission was granted, although there are no apparent physical constraints to their implementation. They are therefore identified on the Proposals Map as allocations that may come forward during the Plan Period.

Policy P1 – Allocated Sites in Withington

The following sites are allocated for residential development:

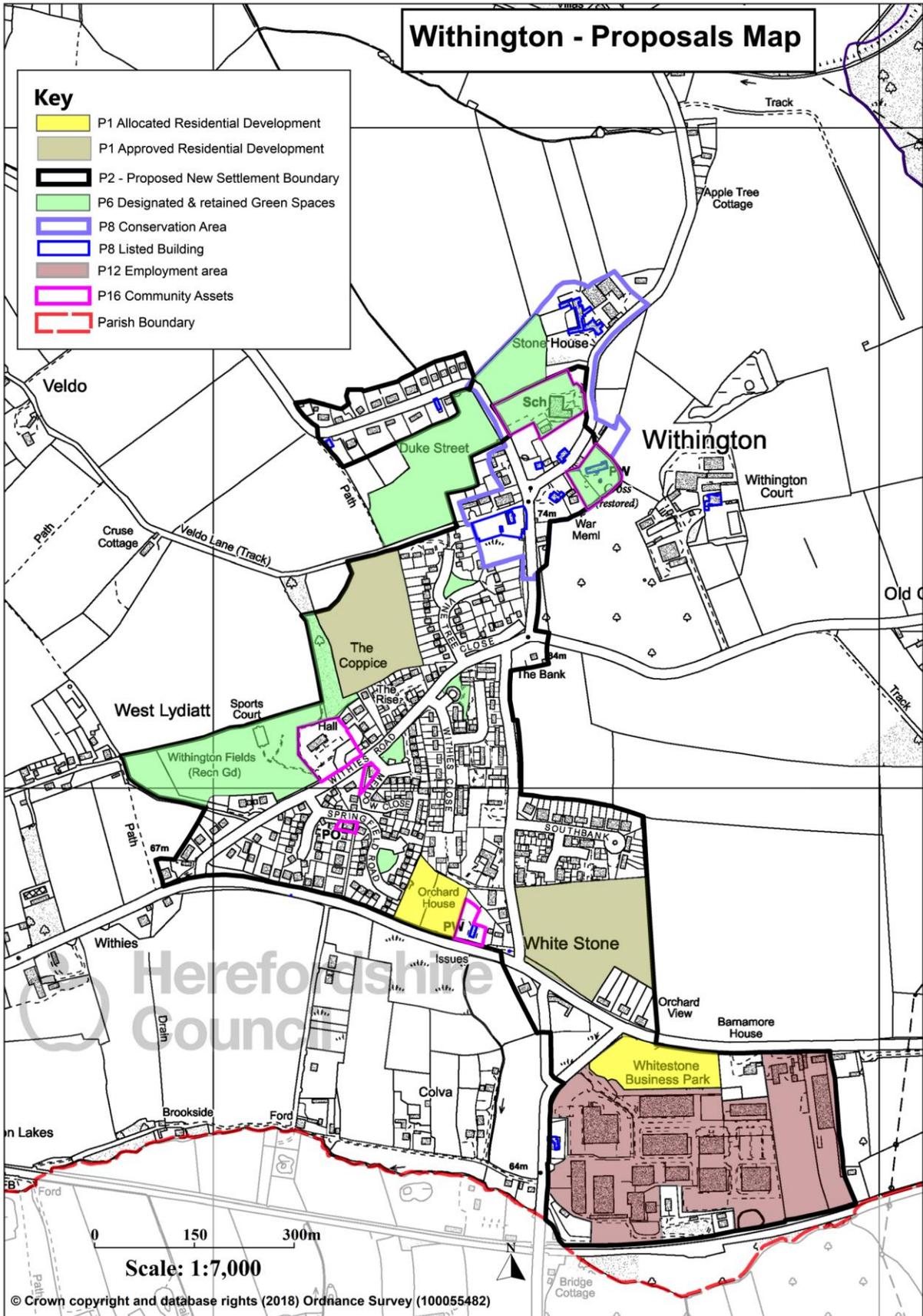
- a. Land adjacent to Whitestone Baptist Chapel for 33 new dwellings**
- b. Land on the south side of the A4103 at Whitestone for a Care Home.**

- 4.11 As it is also anticipated there will be further windfall or small scale developments, this Plan does not allocate any further sites for development.
- 4.12 Policies and guidelines for any future developments large or small and for the requirements of detailed planning applications of those already granted are contained in the Plan.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 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 Duke Street, 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. Consequently it is proposed that a new Settlement Boundary is created at Withington Marsh as shown on the Proposals Map. The Core Strategy includes a specific policy regarding the canal (see Policy P9 below) and there may be some potential for development associated with canal restoration works. Elsewhere in Withington Parish, 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 and included in the settlement boundary.

Withington - Proposals Map

Key

- P1 Allocated Residential Development
- P1 Approved Residential Development
- P2 - Proposed New Settlement Boundary
- P6 Designated & retained Green Spaces
- P8 Conservation Area
- P8 Listed Building
- P12 Employment area
- P16 Community Assets
- Parish Boundary



Scale: 1:7,000

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Policy P2 Withington Settlement Boundary

The Settlement Boundaries for Withington and Withington Marsh are defined as shown on their respective Village Policy Maps. 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.

- 4.15 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, P4, below.

