

Westhide

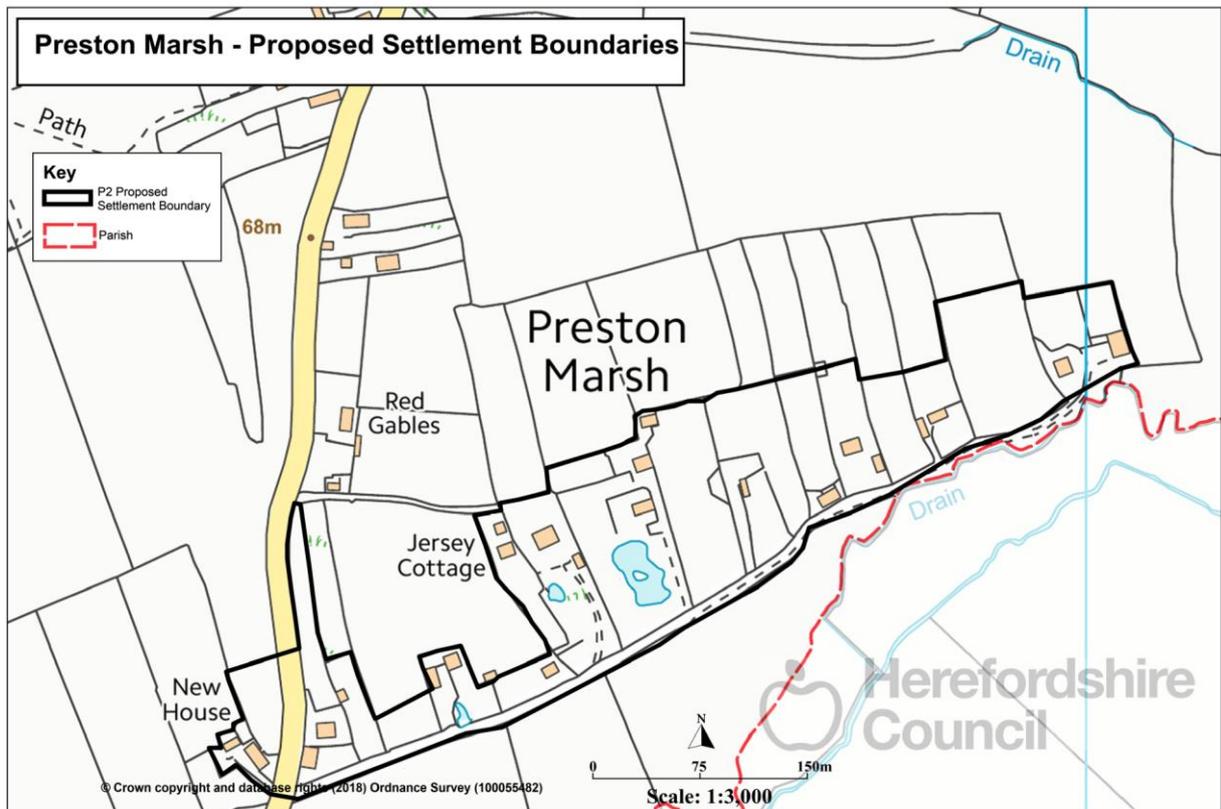
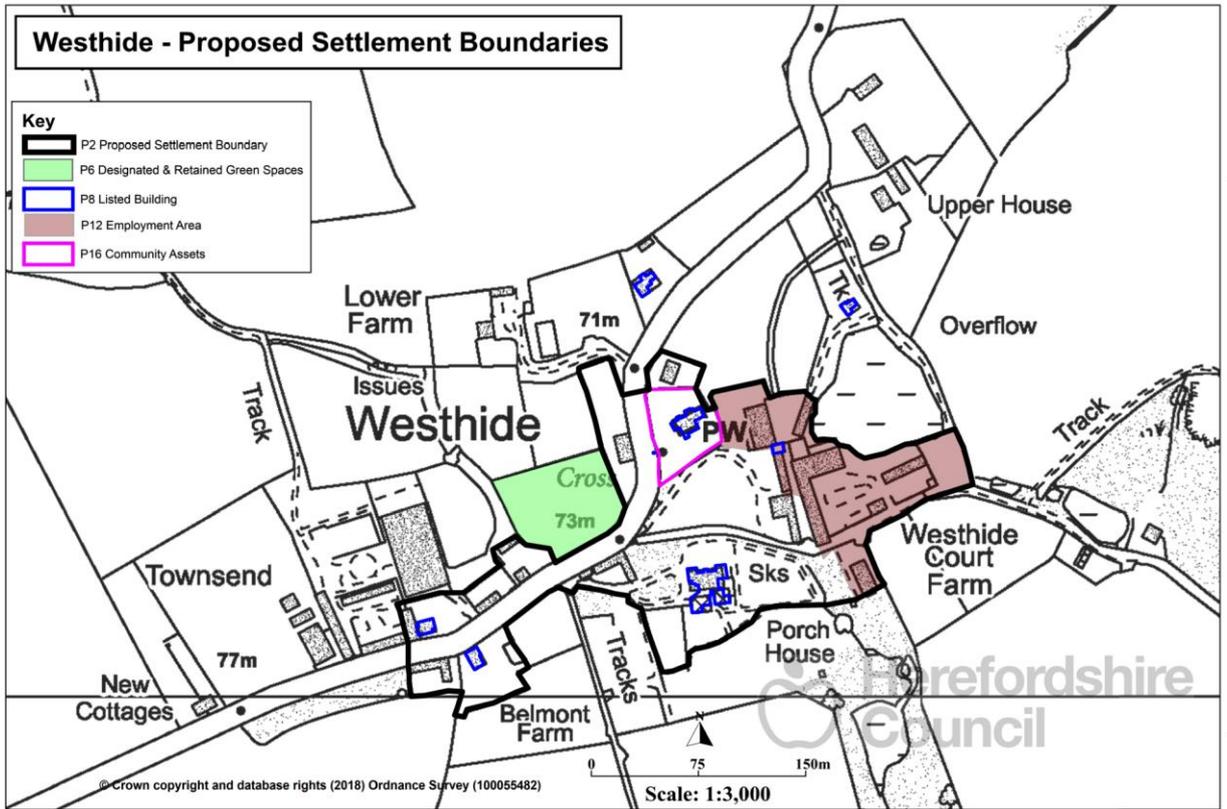
- 4.16 Westhide did not have a Settlement Boundary in the former Unitary Development Plan and is substantially smaller than Withington with far fewer services and facilities. In population terms it is the smallest of the three parishes in the NDP Group. In the absence of any outstanding need for the 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. No individual redundant site or adjacent sites taken together should provide for more than three dwellings. This will safeguard the character of the settlement which has had no significant new build since the end of the 19th century. 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

- 4.17 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 P3 Westhide and Preston Wynne

The Settlement Boundaries for Westhide and Preston Wynne (Preston Marsh) are defined as shown on their respective Village Policies Map. Within these Settlement Boundaries development will be limited to infill developments of one or two houses. Other 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.



Design and Local Distinctiveness.

- 4.18 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*.)
- 4.19 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.

Good Design in Withington Conservation Area

- 4.20 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.
- 4.21 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 whilst protecting the key characteristics of the locality.

Policy P4 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. In this context external stone finishes are to be favoured for new developments in and close to the Conservation Area. 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.**
- f. **Provision must be made for each dwelling and within each development for well designed waste storage and collection facilities; wheeled bins and other waste storage should not intrude into the streetscape or local landscape.**
- g. **Street lighting should only be provided with new developments where it can be shown that such lighting is typical of, and appropriate to, the locality.**

4.22 Core Strategy Policy H1, Affordable Housing Thresholds and Targets, sets out a requirement for the provision of Affordable Housing in all residential schemes of more than 10 houses. In the case of Withington the overall housing growth target arising from Core Strategy Policy RA1 amounted to around 127 dwellings of which 42 should be affordable. However, once existing commitments (March 2017) have been taken into account there is no residual balance of Affordable Houses to be provided. The view of residents, as expressed in the consultations, is that this provision should be met through low cost housing to buy rather than through social rented housing of which Withington already has a significant proportion in its overall housing stock.

4.23 The consultations also resulted in a clear view of residents that there is an unmet demand for assistance to enable people to get on to the housing ladder. This can be achieved through several affordable homes options including:

- a. Shared ownership (purchase up to 80% of the market value and rent the remainder)
- b. Low Cost Market Housing (i.e. housing sold below market value subject to a covenant to maintain that status)
- c. Intermediate Rent (Saving to buy: rent at no more than 80% of market rent)
- d. Rent to buy (as c. above but paying more rent towards acquisition)

These alternatives to social rented accommodation are summarised in the National Planning Policy Framework thus:

- Affordable rented housing subject to rent controls that require no more than 80% of the local market rent
- Intermediate homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels.

4.24 As a further consideration it should be noted that, in the likely absence of more large (i.e. developments of more than 10 dwellings or which have a gross floorspace of more than 1,000 m²) coming forward in the remaining plan period, the threshold of 10 dwellings for Core Strategy Policy H1 may result in no new Affordable Houses being provided, except on 'Rural Exception sites'. Care, however, needs to be taken where one site is subdivided and developed in sections in order to avoid the threshold of 10. In such cases, and where there is a clear connection between sites either through proximity or ownership, their cumulative totals will be taken into account when assessing them against the threshold.

Policy P5 Affordable Housing

In accordance with Core Strategy Policy H1 each future residential development of more than 10 dwellings (with a combined floor area of more than 1,000 m² gross floor area) shall include an element of Affordable Housing meeting the definition of Affordable Housing in the Core Strategy. Where schemes of less than 10 dwellings/1,000 m² can be shown to have a connection through either proximity or ownership then they will be considered together for the purposes of the threshold. Affordable Housing provided on-site should take one of the following forms:

- a. Affordable rented housing subject to rent controls that require no more than 80% of the local market rent
- b. Intermediate homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels.

4.25 The Core Strategy also makes provision for Rural Exception sites in Policy H2 and that may result in additional Affordable Houses over and above those resulting from Policy P5 above. In which case it will be necessary to monitor the overall delivery of Affordable Housing to ensure that a balance of open market and Affordable Housing is maintained throughout the plan period.

Open Space

4.26 There are some key open spaces within the Settlement Boundaries of Withington and Westhild in particular and, as land within a Settlement Boundary, these would benefit from the additional protection of being formally identified as important local “Green Spaces”. This concept is part of the NPPF and is taken forward in the Core Strategy by Policy LD3 in respect of Green Spaces valued for their landscape, biodiversity or heritage value, and OS3 in respect of development that may otherwise involve the loss of playing fields. In addition there are key Green Spaces between the settlement of Duke Street and (Old) Withington that, whilst they are partially outside the Settlement Boundary, are surrounded by development and are a very important part of the setting of the Conservation Area and associated listed buildings. The vulnerability of this land to development pressures (as evidenced by planning applications on it), and its importance to the local community as an open area of meadow on the one side and a field and school playing fields on the other, is such that it also warrants Green Space designation for its future protection.



Withington Village Hall and Withington Fields

4.27 The Green Spaces are all shown on the Proposals Maps for each settlement.

Policy P6 Green Spaces

Core Strategy Policies LD3 and OS3 will be applied in particular to the Amenity and Local Green Spaces identified on the Policies Map and listed below in order to protect them from development which would otherwise detract from their appearance and function.

Protected sites – Withington

1. Withington Fields and Copse,
2. Withies Close,
3. Vine Tree Close,
4. Springfield Road,
5. Hill View Avenue,
6. Duke Street (Strategic Gap)

Protected Site – Westhide

1. Land north side of C1131

Transport

- 4.28 In common with most rural communities there is a desire to improve transport links and reduce extraneous traffic on unsuitable rural roads. A particular issue in Withington is the pedestrian access to the Primary School due to road widths that are too narrow for pedestrian pavements. The Parish Council can lobby for better transport links but ultimately decisions on these aspects are made by Herefordshire Council and the companies that currently provide public transport. Improved transport links could be seen as a way of bringing working professionals to the village and giving them better transport options. The introduction of cycle paths and traffic calming would also be advantageous to the local community. A safe cycle route to Hereford City would be particularly welcome. Whilst none of these measures are matters that can be directly the subject of NDP proposals they can be specified as priorities for use of developer contributions through either Section 106 agreements or, in due course, Community Infrastructure Levy.

Policy P7 Transport and Traffic

Where developer contributions can be directed towards highway and public transport programmes the priority areas are:

- a. Measures to improve safe pedestrian access to the Primary School**
- b. Improvements to public transport links to Hereford**
- c. Introduction of cycle lanes and signposted cycle routes**
- d. Traffic calming measures to improve public safety**
- e. Improvement and provision of footpaths within the parish, including the provision of a footpath cycle route alongside the historic or restored route of the canal.**

Conserving Historic Character

- 4.29 The Parish has some 62 heritage assets, ranging from milestones, bridges and cottages to Grade II* listed buildings. As already noted there is a Conservation Area in Withington. The NPPF advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Appendix 2 is a schedule of the listed buildings and two scheduled monuments in the three parishes. In applying Core Strategy Policy LD4 the principles in Policy P8 below will apply.

Policy P8 Conserving Historic Character

All applications affecting heritage assets in the Group Parish will be required to consider the significance of any heritage asset affected including any contribution made by their setting.

Significant weight will be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and any harm or loss will require clear and convincing justification in line with national policy.

Within the Withington Conservation Area, new development must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Development adjacent to heritage assets, including the conservation area, listed buildings and scheduled monuments, their curtilage and their settings, should be carefully considered to ensure that no harmful effects arise.

The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal

- 4.30 The route of the former canal passes through the NDP area and the Parish Council would be happy to support its restoration. Whilst there are no specific plans for the development of canal related facilities at Withington Marsh any plans which could impact on such developments will be carefully scrutinised. The original alignment of the canal is protected

through Core Strategy Policy E4 Tourism, paragraph 5 and as such is shown on the Proposals Map.

Policy P9 Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal

The line of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal will be protected from development that would compromise the route of the canal in accordance with Core Strategy Policy E4 – Tourism, paragraph 5. This protection extends to the historic line of both the canal along its length and the former canal basin at Withington Marsh as shown on the Policies Map.

Telecommunications

- 4.31 The quality of Broadband and Mobile Phone coverage is an issue for parishioners and local businesses alike. This becomes an increasingly important issue for rural areas and the Withington Group area is no exception. Developments to improve Broadband and Mobile Phone reception are to be welcomed provided any infrastructure can be successfully incorporated into the landscape in an acceptable manner. Broadband infrastructure in particular may be a suitable matter for developer contributions. Poor mobile phone coverage is a concern for various parts of the NDP area.

Policy P10 Telecommunications - Broadband

Improvements to broadband and are welcomed and, if appropriate, may be supported through developer contributions provided that any relevant development can be incorporated into the landscape without conflict with Core Strategy Policy LD1 - Landscape and Townscape. All new developments should include proposals to connect to high speed broadband as a minimum by means of providing suitable ducting for fibre connectivity within development sites, linked to the local and national networks as appropriate.

Policy P11 Telecommunications – Mobile Phone Coverage

Improvements to the quality of mobile phone coverage and are to be welcomed provided that any relevant development can be incorporated into the landscape without conflict with Core Strategy Policy LD1 - Landscape and Townscape.

Employment Development and the Withington Business Park

- 4.32 The Withington Business Park is a very important source of jobs for the surrounding area and the local economy generally. The Parish Council fully supports its continued operation provided that there is no undue nuisance to nearby residential properties, including the proposed adjacent care home. An additional source of employment can be provided through live/work units as anticipated by Core Strategy Policy E3 Homeworking.

Policy P12 Employment

The continued operation of Withington Business Park for employment purposes is supported provided that any adverse affects on nearby residential properties can be suitably mitigated. The employment area at Westhide should be restricted to B1 uses only due to the proximity of dwellings and the inadequate highway infrastructure for any major traffic generating use. Homeworking throughout the NDP area is also supported in accordance with Core Strategy Policy E3 – Homeworking.

Agriculture and Tourism

- 4.33 The predominant land use throughout the NDP area is agriculture and as such the future wellbeing of agriculture is of great importance to the local community. Farm diversification has an important role to play in supporting a thriving agricultural economy. Tourism in the form of holiday lets can provide additional farm income without undue environmental

consequences or compromising agricultural production and is therefore supported in principle.

Policy P13 Agriculture and Tourism.

Farm diversification throughout the NDP area will be supported in accordance with Core Strategy Policy RA6 - Rural Economy and Policy E4 - Tourism

- 4.34 The use of Poly tunnels is to be expected as part of modern agricultural practice but care needs to be taken in their implementation to minimise both intrusion into valued landscapes and to manage rainwater run-off which can adversely affect both roads and nearby dwellings. To ensure adequate protection of local landscapes it is important that any removal of existing hedges and trees is minimised and suitable landscaping impact assessments are included in any planning application. Proposals must also include full assessments and provision for the management of rainwater run-off.

Policy P14 Poly tunnels.

Proposals for new poly tunnels must be accompanied by a Landscape Impact Assessment taking into account existing landform, trees and hedgerows on and near the site. They must also include assessments and measures to ensure proper management of any rainwater run-off from the site. Such proposals should be shown to be in scale with the landscape, include full mitigation proposals, and not conflict with the landscape character of the area.

Renewable Energy

- 4.35 The community is keen to reduce its carbon footprint, in particular by exploring the production of renewable energy. This includes schemes with communal or individual benefits. Safeguards are however considered necessary to ensure proposals are brought forward sensitively. Large wind turbines would not, for example, be welcome due to their adverse impact on the landscape character of the NDP area. **Policy P15 Renewable Energy**

Renewable energy proposals that will benefit the community will be encouraged where:

- a. **They respect the rural character of the locality;**
- b. **They do not adversely affect local heritage such as archaeological sites and historic buildings, including their settings;**
- c. **They will not adversely affect biodiversity;**
- d. **Local and residential amenity is protected;**
- e. **Their scale reflects the community's needs.**

Other measures aimed at carbon reduction will also be supported where the criteria outlined above are met.

Social and Community Facilities

- 4.36 Core Strategy SC1 sets out the basis for protecting key community assets from development which would otherwise detract from them or even prevent their use altogether. The village hall and adjoining recreation area are major assets for Withington, both providing facilities used by residents of the parish and from a much larger catchment. In addition the village hall in Preston Wynne is an important community asset. The church in Westhide meets the need for religious and secular activities. The church in Withington is also used for school and secular activities as part of the cultural life of the area. Other important facilities include the Withington Village Store, and the Post Office.
- 4.37 The Withington School is a very valuable asset to the parish ensuring that education provision is sustainable with relatively short journeys to school for local residents. Where

appropriate, developer contributions will be sought to deliver, or support the delivery of improvements to these aspects of village life.

- 4.38 Issues of road safety, traffic speed, pedestrian safety and road maintenance are considered as very important to address. Due to the continued occurrence of flooding on roads throughout the plan area the maintenance of ditches, drains and verges is considered a particular priority. In Withington Marsh there is a continual need to monitor the flood risk (see below). The restoration of the canal could assist in reducing the risk. There is also scope for improved footpath provision within Withington, particularly between the housing developments over the last 40 years, the school, shop, post office and village hall.

Policy P16 Social and Community Facilities

Local social, cultural and community facilities, including the school, shop, post office, churches, village hall and recreation areas, will be protected, retained and enhanced where possible in accordance with Core Strategy Policy SC1. In particular:

- 1. Proposals for new community facilities adjacent to the Withington Village Hall will be supported where they do not compromise residential amenity.**
- 2. Appropriate developer contributions will be sought towards meeting appropriate community needs, including (but not exclusively):**
 - a. Provision and improvement of footpaths especially those linking community facilities in Withington.**
 - b. Support for the continued use of the lengthsman scheme for highway and footpath works and maintenance;**
 - c. Traffic speed monitoring and enforcement.**
 - d. Village halls and community buildings including the churches,**
 - e. Recreation areas/open space maintenance and improvements**

Flooding

- 4.39 Core Strategy Policy SS7 is concerned with addressing climate change which, inter-alia, includes consideration of “minimising the risk of flooding and making use of sustainable drainage methods”. This is taken further in Core Strategy Policy SD3 – Sustainable Water Management and Water Resources. These two policies apply throughout the NDP area anyway and between them set out the overall principles for new development with the aim of designing out the risk of flooding. There is also a possibility of a County-wide Design Code being developed by Herefordshire Council to include consideration of flood risk.
- 4.40 Within the NDP area the greatest threat of flooding has historically occurred at Withington Marsh. Consequently it is especially important for this locality that any new development is not only not at risk of flooding itself but, just as importantly, does not exacerbate the existing risk of flooding to other properties nearby. This issue will also be particularly relevant should any canal restoration works take place. Consequently the policy below is required to ensure that the two Core Strategy policies (and possible future Design Code) are applied in a manner to take account of the specific circumstances of Withington Marsh.

Policy P17 Minimising Flood Risk in Withington Marsh

In implementing the requirements of Core Strategy Policies SS7 and SD3, all new developments in the Withington Marsh locality must take full account of the historic risk of flooding and ensure that they include measures not only to minimise the risk of flooding to the new development itself but also avoid exacerbating flood risks in the locality and shall seek to improve the resilience of the locality to flood risk generally.

