

# Withington Group Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2031

## Background Paper No. 1 – Land for Housing

### Options Considered in Preparing The Plan

#### Background

The primary issue arising from the Herefordshire Core Strategy (HCS) which the Withington Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has to address is the appropriate level of housing growth and development.

There are no requirements to provide specifically for other land uses and their spatial aspects will be determined mainly through the strategic approach set out in the HCS. There is, however, the opportunity to advocate promotional aspects for these other land uses and forms of development and to expand upon matters of detail where this still conforms with the HCS.

In advance of the HCS being adopted an initial public consultation was carried out so that the Group Parish Council could make its own assessment of potential housing land in the NDP area.

#### Initial public consultation: Open Days, Public Meetings and Questionnaires

These community consultations took place over an extended period from January to July 2014 following the designation of the NDP area in 2013. They covered a wide range of topics and identified many issues of concern and interest to the local community. Amongst the various matters covered at this initial stage was the identification of 13 potential sites for new residential development which might be called upon should the need arise.

Those sites are listed in the table below and described further (along with the community responses) in the separate Consultation Statement.

<b>Potential Land for Housing in Withington considered at initial (pre-draft) stage January to July 2014</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Approximate Area and Capacity</b>	
01	Land South of Southbank	2.9 ha.	80 dwellings
02	Land south of A4103	10.33 ha	300 dwellings
03	Land west of village, north of A4103	3.68 ha	110 dwellings
04	Land to rear of Bank Cottage	2.8 ha	84 dwellings
05	Land south of A4103 and Whitestone Chapel	5 ha	150 dwellings
06	Land to rear of Vine Tree Close	2.5 ha	75 dwellings
07	Land North of Veldo Lane and west of Duke Street	2.3 ha	70 dwellings
08	Land north of Withington School	0.8 ha	25 dwellings
09	Land to east of Lock Road	2.8 ha	80 dwellings
10	Land south of A4103 and Orchard View	(small site)	5 dwellings
11	Land adjacent Style House	(small site)	4-6 dwellings
12	Land adjacent to the Primary School	(small site)	4-5 dwellings

13	Land adjacent to Village Hall	(small site)	4 dwellings
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Work on the NDP then awaited the completion of work on the Herefordshire Core Strategy which was finally adopted in October 2015. The new Core Strategy redefined the requirements for housing land supply and the status of the various settlements in the Withington Group Parish. Site no. 01 above received planning permission and was already committed to development before this NDP reached the consultation stage as a draft plan (regulation 14) in June and July 2018.

### Options Considered in drawing up the Draft Plan.

The HCS sets out a targets for housing growth in Policy RA1 – Rural Housing Distribution using the concept of “Proportionate housing development”. The Withington Group falls within an area where “Proportionate” is set at a target of 18%.

Figures provided by Herefordshire Council (as the Local Planning Authority – LPA) for April 2018 establish that the 18% target results in a total for the NDP area of 127 new dwellings in the plan period. The same source also identified a total housing supply already established of 254 (see table 1 in the NDP) – i.e. double the required amount.

Various options for dealing with level of oversupply have been the subject of public consultation and have been discussed with officers of the LPA throughout the plan preparation process are summarised below.

#### Option 1 – Do Nothing

This would mean relying solely on Development Management practices of the LPA to ensure that the existing commitments are developed in a manner that meets the needs of the local community and that any further oversupply is limited by HCS policy and National Planning Policy Guidance. By implication this would allow only ad-hoc influence from the local community through responding to planning applications. It also depends on developer-led initiatives which may or may not meet local needs. A further “sub-option” would be to rely on the LPA bringing forward its Rural Areas Development Plan Document and including policies for this NDP area within it.

#### Option 2 – Seek to reduce the oversupply

The inherent risk of a high level of oversupply is that it would not be “Proportionate” for the Withington Group of parishes and may draw development away from other parishes in the same HCS sub-area thereby preventing them reaching their appropriate proportionate development needs. Planning permissions can, in theory, be revoked under Section 97 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 but that was not considered as a realistic option and has not been offered by the LPA anyway. Should existing permissions expire before development commences then the LPA has the option of not renewing permission, but that would need to be considered in the context at the time. It was not considered realistic to actively plan for existing permissions to expire and to depend on that for managing housing supply.

#### Option 3 – Seek to restrict further oversupply

A moratorium on all new permissions has not been offered by the LPA and would be a very restrictive approach that would not allow for changes in circumstances or any specific local needs. Hence that concept has not been pursued. Instead the Steering

Group has looked to the concept of establishing Settlement Boundaries within which limited, and small scale, future growth can take place, along with detailed design policies to influence the nature of development, and protection of key open spaces where they are either within Settlement Boundaries or integral to their setting. (The settings of listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments are protected through legislation in any event).

This Option has involved detailed consideration of proposed Settlement Boundaries which have also been the subject of informal consultations through local publicity and an exhibition. The updating of Withington Settlement Boundary and the creation of new ones for Westhide, Withington Marsh and Preston Wynne will enable additional small scale development to take place where it meets national and local planning policies generally such as those relating to design.

### Choice of Preferred Option

The option which emerged as the most achievable and had support from both the LPA officers and the local community was Option 3 above, i.e. to restrict further over supply through a combination of detailed Settlement Boundaries, design guidance within them, and identification of key open spaces for both amenity and recreation/sports purposes. The 13 potential sites referred to above have been assessed in detail and the draft Settlement Boundaries publicised and community opinion sought. Existing un-implemented planning permissions have been identified as allocations – but no significant new allocations have been made as such allocations would be unlikely to conform to the HCS and may even raise further environmental issues which have not been considered. (In this context it is worth noting that whilst there are no scheduled wildlife sites within the NDP area the whole area is within the River Wye SAC catchment and thus any large scale new development over and above that already committed may require detailed assessment for HRA purposes). A key aspect of the Option chosen is that it has allowed the local community to influence the plan within the constraints of National Planning Policy Guidance and the HCS particularly through publicising and assessing realistic options for development in the NDP area.

Withington Group Parish NDP  
28<sup>th</sup> August 2018