Withington Group Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan







Withington Group Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031

Signed off by Withington Group Parish on 20th September 2018

Foreword

The Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Withington Group of Parishes will be part of the planning framework of policies that guide and direct development in the three parishes. It is a formal document that has to pass certain "tests" before it can be adopted, including compliance with national and County policies, being based on sound evidence, and approval through a referendum for the local community. As a formal document it may seem a bit daunting at first glance – but to do its job it has to fall squarely within the remit of planning law. Thus, it deals with "Development" in the planning sense – i.e. projects that need planning permission.

It is important that the theme of "Sustainable Development" runs through the whole document—and one aspect of sustainability is the meaningful engagement of the public with the process.

Thus, whilst consultants have been involved in the preparation—the plan is definitely "Ours"—i.e. one that the communities of the Withington Group can "own" as their own work.

Once adopted the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be a formal document used to assess relevant planning applications for development in the area.

Neighbourhood Development Plans were brought into existence by the Localism Act 2011 (and related regulations). The intention was to allow local communities to come together, typically through Parish Councils, to say where they think new development should go and what such development should look like.

The basic process is:

The Parish Council applied for permission to be a Neighbourhood Planning body and, once approved, set about the following:

- Consult with local communities and interest groups and take their views into account
- Prepare any new evidence required and make use of existing evidence such as the documents drawn up by Herefordshire Council as local planning authority
- Draw up and publish the draft plan with an initial re-consultation at this stage to look at any options before formal publication
- *Undertake formal consultation with statutory consultees and the public*
- Draw up a revised plan and submit it to the local planning authority (Herefordshire Council) who then organise:
- A period of formal consultation
- Examination by an independent Examiner
- A referendum on the plan for the local communities
- *Final adoption of the plan.*

More details of this process and the key dates are included in Appendix I to this document.

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1. Context

The policies and proposals contained within the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) 1.1 for Withington relate to the whole administrative area of the Group Parish as illustrated in the Map 1. The Plan sets out a number of neighbourhood planning policies to govern land use and development within the parish for the period 2011 to 2031 (i.e. consistent with the Herefordshire Core Strategy which has the same plan period). These policies need to be read alongside existing national and County planning policies which apply within the parish. They have been written to complement the policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Local Plan and the actions resulting from the Community Led Plan produced in 2010. Where appropriate, reference is made to these three documents in the text of the NDP and links to them, and to the key sources providing the evidence on which the NDP is based.



Map 1 The Neighbourhood Plan Area

- National planning policy is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework, which was published in March 2012 and is due to be updated during 2018. The companion Planning Practice Guidance provides more practical advice as to how national policy is to be implemented and is also updated from time to time.
- 1.3 Herefordshire Council is responsible for the production of the Local Plan which currently sets out strategic planning policies governing development in the County up to 2031. The first document to be produced as part of the Local Plan was the Core Strategy. This sets out the overall context for the preparation of NDPs, notably housing requirements, as well as many other policies on relevant issues such as employment, open space and infrastructure.

2. The Parishes and the Villages

2.1 Withington Group Parish Council covers three rural parishes located between 3 and 8 miles to the east/north east of Hereford City. The group covers some 6.7 sq. miles, and had a population of 1760 based in 680 household in 2011. The main development is in Withington. Westhide is the smallest parish with a population of 69. Preston Wynne is a parish of dispersed development along three miles of loop road, and small developments at Eau Withington, and Withington Marsh form other groups of development, the whole being separated by agricultural land and scattered dwellings. Whitestone Business Park provides the largest employment area. The parish is crossed by the A465 linking Hereford to Bromyard, and the A4103, Hereford to Worcester road. The main land use is agriculture, with both arable and livestock farms. The cultivation of hops played an important role in the agriculture of the three parishes but in recent years this has been replaced by other crops. 72% of dwellings are owner occupied and 26 % rented. 83 % of journeys to work are by private car, reflecting the rural nature of the area and the infrequency of public transport.

Withington

- 2.2 The village of Withington lies towards the south side of the parish, to the north of the Hereford to Worcester railway. The settlement was mentioned in the Doomsday Book (1085 7) and there was a Saxon church on the site of St Peters Church.
- 2.3 In earlier years people were more widely distributed in the parish among various hamlets Duke Street, Old Grove, Withington Marsh, Nunnington, EauWithington, White Stone, West Lydiatt, Veldo and the central area around Withington church. In 1851 there was a population of 713 with a variety of local craftsmen serving the agricultural community. Withington and its manors are mentioned in the Domesday book(1085-7), the name being spelt 'Widingtune'. As with most rural villages the church was an important feature in the community. Two large private houses, two large farmhouses and several historic cottages are close to the church forming the old core of the settlement and located at the eastern end of an old 'ridgeway' (Veldo Lane).
 - In 1728 money was collected from the great and the good. £100 went towards a school the original school at the Stallenge of that £10 built the school and £90 purchased land, the rent of which would pay the schoolmistress' salary. At the same time £550 was collected to build a new house for the Rector! It remained a predominantly agricultural village until recent times with many of the residents supporting farming. The farms produced a variety of crops and many had cattle. In the twentieth century, the main farms also grew hops and until recently hop yards were an obvious feature of the area. The hop harvest needed significant seasonal labour. Their presence and the aroma of the drying hops were a feature of every September.
 - In 1851 record show that the trades of blacksmith and agricultural implement maker, carpenter, wheelwright, basket-maker and tanner were present. There was also a cooper who presumably supported the various public houses.
- 2.4 In 1844 the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire canal reached Withington at Withington Marsh having 'entered' the area at the northern edge of Westhide. Several buildings were developed around the canal basin at Withington Marsh. Very soon a new railway from Ledbury to Hereford was constructed on the southern edge of the parish and a station was opened in 1861, only to close exactly 100 years later in 1961. A tile works was developed adjoining the station. The site of the works is now the thriving Whitestone Business Park. Another site to the north of the A4103 became Anvil Enterprises, a business developing timber frame buildings and then the original out-of-town supermarket known as Meadow

- Market, and later, as Norman's. The area today has been developed for housing and the village shop. The Post Office is close by and will shortly include a fish and chip shop.
- 2.5 A major change took place some forty + years ago when the then council built Withies Close, a relatively large social housing development in a small village. While some residents had local connections, many came from the city or elsewhere, and in the last 40 years Withington has continued to expand primarily southwards towards the Hereford to Worcester Road (A4103). In 2011 there were 610 dwellings in the Withington Parish. Many of the old cottages have been extended and modernised and houses and bungalows have been built as in-fill and five new housing estates have been erected. In addition, since 2011, over 140 dwellings have been approved and an 80 place age restricted residential development. With the exception of White Stone all the original small settlements are still identifiable. (paragraph 2.3). The village has a Primary School, Village Hall, Church, Chapel, Village Store and Post Office. The nearest public house is the Cross Keys at Withington Marsh. The new village hall was built in 1999 with greater and more modern facilities than the 1920's hall in Veldo Lane A new public open space, Withington Fields, has been developed by the parish council for formal and informal recreation next to the Village Hall. This 2.43 hectares site became a Fields in Trust in 2013 and has a BMX track, play equipment and football pitches. A more recent addition is a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA).



Withington Fields

2.6 The development of the Whitestone Business Park with its wide range of business activity is a major source of employment even if the majority of people working there do not actually live in Withington. Elsewhere there are still a wide range of independent businesses based in or close to the village. Some are obvious like the garden centre, garage, car sales operation, furniture producers and kennels, but many operate more discreetly using the internet or phone to serve their customers. The major farms employ less direct labour for traditional arable and cattle work but much of this is done by those who work as local contractors. Diversification has created employment in trees, turf, chickens, soft fruit etc



Whitestone Business Park

Westhide

- 2.7 (Extract from Littlebury's Directory and Gazetteer of Herefordshire 1876-7) "Westhide is a parish situated between the main road leading to Worcester (over Fromes Hill) and the Bromyard Road. The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire canal forms its northern boundary. Westhide is situated 6 miles NE of Hereford, 9½ miles SW of Bromyard and approximately 2 miles NE of Withington station on the Worcester Hereford branch of the Great Western Railway (West Midlands Section). It is in the Radlow hundred, Hereford union, petty sessional division, and county court district, and Ocle-Pychard (Burley Gate) polling district. The population in 1861 was 174. The soil is deep clay, subsoil is red marl, chief produce is wheat, hops, beans, fruit, roots etc. The land is very fertile and well wooded, but rather hilly. There are two quarries in the parish, one of road stone the other of an inferior kind of wall stone."
- 2.8 Westhide has changed somewhat from the detailed description above. The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire canal, which arrived in the 1840's, forms the northern boundary of the parish. The canal was never a financial success and closed within 30 years. It is now being restored by volunteers.
 - The number of houses now is only 33. There are very few children under the age of 17. The Church, dedicated to St Bartholomew, still holds regular services and is an important feature of the community, holding several village events. The school which was built to accommodate 42 children at the cost of £400 in 1863 is now a private dwelling. The land is still very fertile with a wide range of crops.

Preston Wynne

2.9 Preston Wynne is a small village situated to the north of the A465 Hereford to Bromyard road. There are just over 60 houses on a 3 mile loop through the parish, and at Preston Marsh. There is a variety of building stock, the oldest being a Grade 2 listed C14 hall house and the newest built in the last decade. There is no identifiable village centre. The land is mainly used for farming. The church of the Holy Trinity was built in 1727, probably on the site of an earlier chapel. It has a marble monument to Henrietta Pugh who left an endowment to the poor.

The old local school is now a private house, and the designated schools today are Burley Gate VC primary school and Queen Elizabeth Humanities College in Bromyard. The local children utilise a bus service to get to these schools. The Memorial Hall was erected by the villagers of Preston Wynne and Felton to remember those who fought in the Great War 1914-1918. The building was originally a receiving station on the south coast for returning wounded soldiers. After the war it was brought to Withington by train and from there it was transported to Preston Wynne.

3. Vision and Objectives

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group have carefully considered the responses to the earlier community consultations, including those from the Community Led Plan (Parish Plan) produced in 2010, and set out the overall vision for the Plan thus:
 - The villages should evolve, but ensure that their integrity is kept and not developed into a suburb or a small town of urban sprawl. The parishioners have chosen to live in a rural village.
 - To take into consideration the existing needs of the community. To ensure the community facilities (transport, employment etc.) are developed and maintained in line with this.
 - Monitor and control traffic flows and infrastructure through the villages.
- 3.2 To achieve our vision for the Withington Group of Parishes up to 2031, the Steering Group has identified the following objectives for the Withington Group Neighbourhood Development Plan, based on the outcomes of questionnaires undertaken by residents.
 - To ensure that the growth of housing in Withington is proportionate to the size and scale of the settlements and the surrounding countryside so that it retains its rural character.
 - 2. To deliver housing development in the surrounding areas that are in line with Objective 1.
 - 3. To ensure that all new development takes into consideration the style and substance of local housing, being designed to be in keeping with the surrounding character of the parish.
 - 4. To ensure that new housing is developed in a suitable range of tenures, types, size, affordability ranges and is flexible in usage so that local people of all ages can live in the parish in a suitable home while attracting families to the area and local housing needs are met.
 - 5. To ensure that there are appropriate local and community facilities, which incorporate the latest technological advances in such areas as mobile phone reception and broadband as is suitable, which can support present demand, future projected growth and demographic change. Such developments must make a positive and tangible impact on the range and availability of community facilities throughout the parish.

- 6. To continue to develop local employment opportunities, including small businesses and tourism, which continue to be sympathetic to the largely agricultural nature of the parish.
- 7. To ensure that the natural and built environment of the parish is protected and enhanced for future generations through sustainable development by protecting key environmental and heritage assets (including listed buildings, conservation areas, green spaces and landscapes)
- 8. To ensure any new development does not increase flood risk, and to restrict any new development in flood risk areas.
- 9. To ensure development of a safe and well-maintained network of roads and pavements and footpaths within the parish.
- 10. To continue to seek the opinions of parishioners at regular intervals in connection with all the above objectives, in order to make the Neighbourhood Plan a fully inclusive on-going document.

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 in 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	Withington/Withington Marsh	10 (new) 2 (demolished)		
2011 to 31st March 2017		= net 8 gains		
	Westhide	0		
	Preston Wynne	1 (new), 1 (demolished)		
	Total	8 (net)		
Commitments (permissions	Withington:			
granted, allocations and under	Adj. Whitestone chapel	33		
construction)	Southbank	69		
	Rear of Vine Tree Close	31		
	Care Home at Whitestone	80		
Individual permissions of 1 or 2 dwellings (i.e. "windfall")	Withington	3		
	Westhide	0		
	Preston Wynne	10		
Total		234		
Allocations/Permissions (net				
figure allowing for				
demolitions in table above)				
Proposed windfall allowance to	(includes Withington,	20		
2031	Westhide, Preston Wynne,			
	Withington Marsh and			
7.111 : 0 !	remaining rural area)	054		
Total Housing Supply Identified		254		

4.3 From Table 1 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 age restricted residential development rather than for general housing, for which it is considered unsuitable due to its location on the south side of the A4103. Further explanation of the options considered in drawing up the policies below are set out in Background Paper No. 1 which accompanies this plan.

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 were 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.

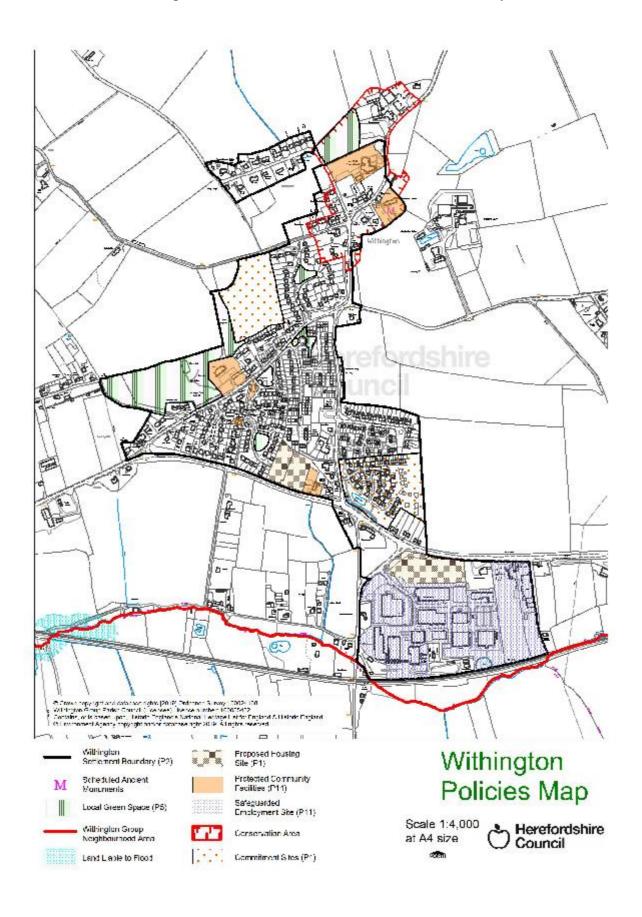
- 4.9 In summary, some 7 years into the plan period 254 new dwelling units, have either been constructed or approved out of a minimum requirement of 127 by 2031.
- 4.10 Two of the above sites both at Whitestone, the site for 33 new dwellings adjacent to Whitestone Chapel and the proposed Care Home on 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 and as shown on the Withington Polocies Map 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 proposed age restricted residential development
- 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. No further changes were made to the Settlement Boundary following consultation on the Draft Plan in June and July 2018.
- 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 precise boundary of the Withington Marsh boundary has been amended slightly following consultation on the Draft Plan by the addition of part of the frontage to The Stallange at the rear of the Cross Keys PH. 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

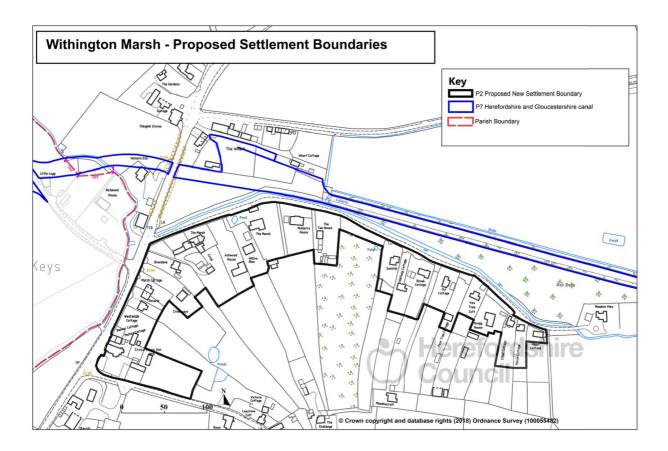
come forward early. It is thus allocated for development along with the "age restricted residential development" site and included in the settlement boundary.



Policy P2 Withington Settlement Boundary and Withington Marsh 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.

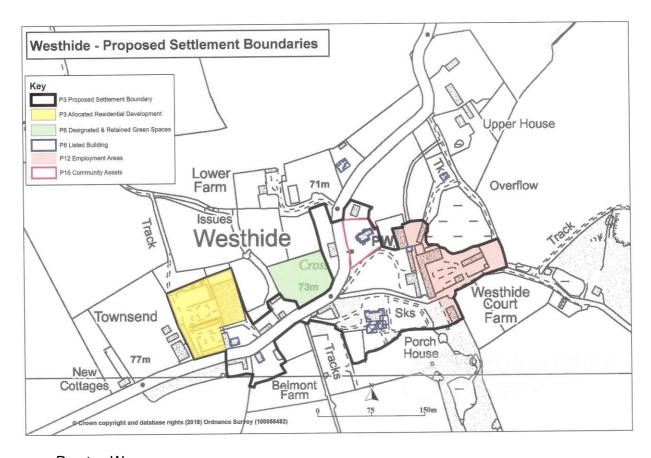


Westhide

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 considered necessary to create a Settlement Boundary. Within this boundary a cluster of mostly redundant farm buildings create an eyesore in the village. This site is therefore allocated for residential development for approximately 6 dwellings. Any further development within the settlement boundary is to be restricted to infill plots of no more than 3 dwellings, or as redevelopment or refurbishment of redundant sites and buildings. 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. The Settlement Boundary shown in the Draft Plan has had two minor amendments in response to representations made at Draft Plan stage:

- 1. to allow for development (maximum of 6 dwellings) adjoining Townsend Farmhouse on the C1131, and
- 2. to accommodate a minor adjustment to the boundary in the immediate vicinity of St Bartholomew's church, a grade I listed building

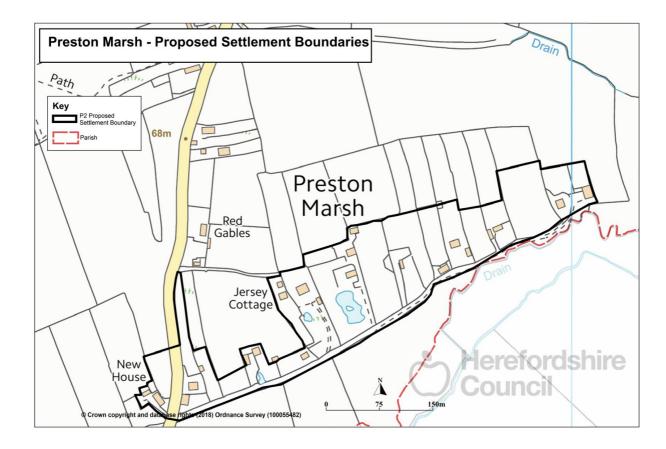


Preston Wynne

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 no more than three dwelling 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. A site is allocated for up to approximately six dwellings at Townsend Farm in Westhide. Within the remaining areas in the Settlement Boundaries development will be limited to infill developments of no more than three dwellings. 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. Detached garages to dwellings should not usually project beyond the front or principal elevation of the dwelling and attached garages should be designed to appear subservient to the main dwelling and not visually dominate the street scene
- 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.

h. If the amenity of new residential occupiers might be adversely affected by existing agricultural or commercial activity, suitable mitigation measures must be included in the design of the scheme and its layout. Where it is not possible to satisfactorily mitigate against any potential harm, planning permission will not be granted.

Open Space

4.22 There are some key open spaces within the Settlement Boundaries of Withington and Westhide 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, heritage value and 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 Local Green Space designation for its future protection. Similarly, in Westhide the proposed Local Green Space is outside, but adjacent to, the proposed new Settlement Boundary and is considered of sufficient local importance to be worthy of Local Green Space Designation. The justification for the selection of Local Green Spaces is further set out in Background Paper No 2 accompanying this Plan.



Withington Village Hall and Withington Fields

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

Policy P5 Local Green Spaces

The following green spaces and identified on the Policies Maps are designated as Local Green Spaces. These are protected from development which would detract from the character, 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,

Protected Site - Westhide

1. Land north side of C1131

Transport

4.24 In common with most rural communities there is a desire to improve transport links and reduce extraneous traffic on unsuitable rural roads. Active travel measures as promoted by Herefordshire Council are to be welcomed. 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 P6 Transport and Traffic

Where appropriate, development will be required to make a proportionate contribution towards the provision of transport infrastructure in the Parish. The priority list includes:

- 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

4.25 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 P7 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

4.26 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 P8 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

4.27 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 P9 Telecommunications - Broadband

Improvements to broadband 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 P10 Telecommunications – Mobile Phone Coverage Improvements to the quality of mobile phone coverage 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

4.28 The Withington Business Park is a very important source of jobs for the surrounding area and the local economy generally.

Policy P11 Employment

The continued operation of Withington Business Park for employment purposes is supported.

Agriculture and Tourism

4.29 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 P12 Polytunnels.

Proposals for new polytunnels *must take account of* existing landform, trees and hedgerows on and near the site *and demonstrate that the effect on the character and appearance of the landscape will be acceptable. Measures to ensure proper management of any rainwater run-off from the site should also be detailed at the planning application stage.*

Renewable Energy

4.30 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 P13 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;
- 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

- 4.31 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.
- 4.32 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.
- 4.33 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 P14 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. Where appropriate, development will be required to make a proportionate contribution towards the provision of community infrastructure in the Parish. The priority list includes (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
 - f. Improved cycle access to village facilities and connectivity generally

Flooding

- 4.34 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 polices 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.
- 4.35 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 polices (and possible future Design Code) are applied in a manner to take account of the specific circumstances of Withington Marsh.
- 4.36 In any event significant new development sites must be subject to the sequential and exception tests set out in the NPPF. Regard should also be had to the Strategic Flood Rick Assessment for Herefordshire 2009.

Policy P15 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.

5 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The Withington Group Parish Council will review progress towards the achievement of the policies in the Neighbourhood Development Plan primarily through a process of reporting to the Annual Parish Council meeting.

Appendix 1 - The NDP process and key dates for the Withington Group NDP

When Neighbourhood Development Plans were first introduced in the Localism Act 2011 the then Government Minister of State for Decentralisation, Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, described them thus¹:

"Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live. The Act introduces a new right for communities to draw up a neighbourhood plan.

"Neighbourhood planning will allow communities, both residents, employees and business, to come together through a local parish council or neighbourhood forum and say where they think new houses, businesses and shops should go – and what they should look like.

"These plans can be very simple and concise, or go into considerable detail where people want. Local communities will be able to use neighbourhood planning to grant full or outline planning permission in areas where they most want to see new homes and businesses, making it easier and quicker for development to go ahead.

"Provided a neighbourhood development plan or order is in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and with other legal requirements, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority of those who vote, then the local authority will bring it into force."

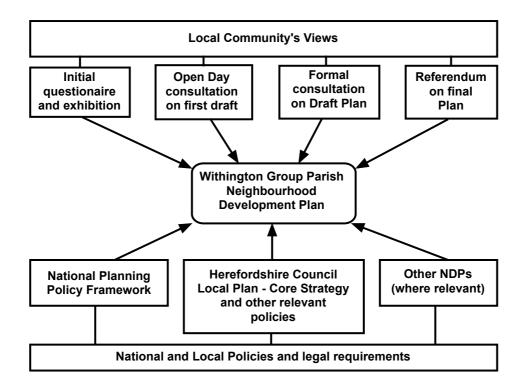
The process for making an NDP thus has to meet various tests of compliance with national planning policy, in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (the "NPPF") and Herefordshire Council's own Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 (the "Core Strategy") which was adopted in October 2015.

There is no need for this NDP to replicate the policies in the NPPF and the Core Strategy which will apply anyway – but there is a need to interpret them meaningfully where specific local issues are involved, and to do so in the light of what the Community have said through the consultation process. The Community also, and very importantly, have the final say in a Referendum which must take place before the NDP can be adopted.

Note that the local community has several points in the process at which they can have a direct influence, from the initial consultation, through the plan preparation stage, and then at the final approval stage of the Referendum.

Supporting documents will be needed at the formal submission stage to demonstrate that there has been adequate consultation and that the NDP is compliant with relevant national and local policies. (The latter includes consideration of any other NDPs nearby which may touch on similar issues) Thus the overall pattern of community involvement can be expressed in the diagram on the next page:

¹ "A plain English guide to the Localism Act" published by the Department of Communities and Local Government, November 2012



The process itself involves a series of stages including Examination by an Independent Examiner who will need to assess the NDP before it goes forward to the Referendum. These various stages are set out in the table below.

Action/Event	Responsible body	Date done/anticipated
Application for Designation as NDP body	Withington Group Parish Council	21 st May 2013
Designation agreed, NDP area established	Herefordshire Council	12 th July 2013
Initial consultation with Community – Open Days, public meetings, questionnaire	Local Community with Withington Group Parish Council	January 2014 to July 2014
Initial Draft of NDP	Withington Group Parish Council	January 2018
Open Days - Informal consultation with Local Community	Local Community with Withington Group Parish Council	26 th , 27 th January 2018
Draft "Regulation 14" NDP	Withington Group Parish Council	March 2018
Formal consultations	Statutory Consultees and Local Community	June and July 2018
NDP Revised in response to consultation	Withington Group Parish Council	September 2018
"Regulation 16" NDP formally submitted to Herefordshire Council	Withington Group Parish Council	Autumn 2018
Examination by Independent Examiner	(organised by) Herefordshire Council	Autumn 2018
Referendum	Local Community	early 2019
Adoption	Herefordshire Council	early 2019

Appendix 2 – Schedule of Heritage Assets

The Withington Group of Parishes has only one Conservation Area, at Withington focussed on St Peter's Church. There are, however, a total of 60 Listed Buildings and two scheduled monuments (one in Withington and one in Westhide) distributed around the three parishes. The information on this map reflects information correct at the time of writing the Plan. Up to date information should be sought from the local planning authority, the Parish Council or appropriate statutory body

Listed Buildings in Withington Parish (37 Listed Buildings and 1 Scheduled Monument)

Withington Court

List Entry Number: 1099313Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Eau Withington Court

List Entry Number: 1099303Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Granary at Eau Withington Court

List Entry Number: 1099314Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Barn immediately east of Eau Withington Court

List Entry Number: 1301693Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Eau Withington House plus Terrace and Railings to the south

List Entry Number: 1099304Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Barn and Cow House about 50 yds north east of Eau Withington Court

List Entry Number: 1180019Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Stables and Attached Hop Kiln c 40 yds west of Eau Withington Court

List Entry Number: 1349000Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Bridge c 25 yds south-south west of Lock Cottage

List Entry Number: 1099300Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Lock Cottage and former lock

List Entry Number: 1099299Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Bridge c 20 yds south-west of Lock Cottage

• List Entry Number: 1348997

Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Green Cottage

List Entry Number: 1099310Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Green

- List Entry Number: 1157312
- · Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Inglenook Cottage, Duke Street

- List Entry Number: 1099309
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Mile Post c 25 yds north-east of lodge to former Thinghill Grange Estate on A465

- List Entry Number: 1099302
- · Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Churchyard Cross and Base, Church of St Peter

- List Entry Number: 1099308
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Quarry Cottage

- List Entry Number: 1099311
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Builth Farmhouse, Eau Withington

- List Entry Number: 1179976
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Stone House

- List Entry Number: 1301630
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Lych Gate at Church of St Peter

- List Entry Number: 1301651
- · Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Old Rectory

- List Entry Number: 1301655
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Lawns, Nunnington

- List Entry Number: 1099305
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Grey House, Nunnington

- List Entry Number: 1301664
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Milestone c 250 yds east-north-east of the Whitestone, A4103

- List Entry Number: 1348999
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Style House, enclosing walls and front gateway

- List Entry Number: 1157396
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Golden Post, Eau Withington

- List Entry Number: 1349001
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Baptist Chapel, Whitestone

- List Entry Number: 1099307
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Granary and Implement Shed c 10 yds south-east of The Lawns, Nunnington

- List Entry Number: 1180054
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The White Stone and fragment of base immediately to the east, Whitestone

- List Entry Number: 1180080
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Barn c 15 yds west of Weston Farmhouse

- List Entry Number: 1301638
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Green, Station Road

- List Entry Number: 1349002
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Lodge to the former Thinghill Grange Estate and adjoining garden boundary to the east.

- List Entry Number: 1099301
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Cottage and attached outbuilding at Old Grove

- List Entry Number: 1099306
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Cider house to rear of cottage and attached building at Old Grove

- List Entry Number: 1180069
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Thinghill Grange

- List Entry Number: 1348998
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II*

Bridge over the Little Lugg at NGR SO 553433 (part in Sutton CP/Sutton Marsh and part in Withington CP)

- List Entry Number: 1099341
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Farm buildings complex and adjoining three hop kilns and animal shelter attached to north-west corner of Stone House

- List Entry Number: 1099312
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Church of St Peter

- List Entry Number: 1349003
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II*

Churchyard cross in St Peter's churchyard

- List Entry Number: 1016122
- Heritage Category: Scheduled Monument

Listed Buildings in Westhide Parish (12 Listed Buildings)

Barn and gateway at north end of Westhide Court

- List Entry Number: 1099298
- · Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Pool Head Cottage

- List Entry Number: 1099339
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Porch House

- List Entry Number: 1099297
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Churchyard Cross c 20 yds south-west of church of St Bartholomew

- List Entry Number: 1099338
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Dairy

- List Entry Number: 1179899
- · Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Glebe Cottage

- List Entry Number: 1348977
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Post Office

- List Entry Number: 1348996
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Milestone at SO 603438, A4103

- List Entry Number: 1099337
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Phoenix Cottage, Dodmarsh, Westhide

- List Entry Number: 1179885
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Thatch Cottage, Dodmarsh

- List Entry Number: 1348976
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Church of St Bartholomew

- List Entry Number: 1301742
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade I

Churchyard cross in St Bartholomew's churchyard

- List Entry Number: 1016121
- Heritage Category: Scheduled Monument

Listed Buildings in Preston Wynne (12 Listed Buildings)

Barn c 30 yds west of Court Farmhouse

- List Entry Number: 1099381
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Double hop kiln c 5 yds east of the buildings

• List Entry Number: 1099379

Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

"The Buildings"

- List Entry Number: 1179187
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The White House

- List Entry Number: 1302019
- · Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Beavan Monument c 15 yds south-west of Holy Trinity Church

- List Entry Number: 1099377
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Store house and stable c 10 yds north-east of The Buildings

- List Entry Number: 1179234
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Court Farmhouse

- List Entry Number: 1099380
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II*

Barn c 15 yds west of brick Farmhouse

- List Entry Number: 1099378
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Barn and attached building c 30 yds east of The Meadows

- List Entry Number: 1099382
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Newman Monument c 2 yds south-east of Holy Trinity Church

- List Entry Number: 1179182
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

The Meadows and attached buildings to the west

- List Entry Number: 1179254
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II

Holy Trinity Church

- List Entry Number: 1302088
- Heritage Category: Listed Grade II*