

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR WYTHALL PARISH
REGULATION 15 DRAFT
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Prepared with
support from Andrea
Pellegram Ltd



Andrea Pellegram Ltd.

FOREWORD

Wythall Parish Council formed a Steering Group to develop this Neighbourhood Plan in 2020. The group, consisting of committed local volunteers; both councillors and members of the public, has worked hard over the intervening period to formulate a plan that will, once formally adopted by our community at referendum, form a part of the legal planning process.

Wythall is in a unique position, situated in the northeastern corner of Worcestershire and Bromsgrove, sharing borders with Solihull, Stratford Upon Avon and Birmingham as well as other Parishes within Bromsgrove. The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the whole civil Parish of Wythall, some 4,768 acres or 1,929 hectares and a population of 12,269.

The population is spread amongst several settlements including Hollywood, Major's Green, Drakes Cross and the village of Wythall, as well as several smaller areas and rural hamlets including Headley Heath, Walkers Heath, Tanners Green and Inkford. Preserving the distinct character of each locality is of paramount importance.

Outside of the settlement boundaries of Hollywood, Wythall, Major's Green and Walkers Heath, all of the Neighbourhood Area falls within the Green Belt, the landscape of which reflects the farming history of the area.

The Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 is being reviewed to meet the future development needs of the area, driven by new Government housing targets. The Neighbourhood Plan emerges as an important tool for guiding future development within Wythall Parish where development strategy options include significant housing provision in the area.

Wythall (including Drakes Cross, Hollywood and Grimes Hill) is categorised as a Large Settlement by Bromsgrove District Council. There is significant developer interest in development within the area on land which is at present Green Belt. The Neighbourhood Plan strives to safeguard Wythall's rural heritage while expecting to accommodate a share of new housing development.

Wythall enjoys 'the best of both worlds' with connectivity to Birmingham and surrounding towns, as well as a rural character with the countryside 'on our doorstep'. This Neighbourhood Plan serves as a unique opportunity to influence development and shape the future of the Parish.

I extend my gratitude to all who have contributed to this endeavour, from those who participated in public consultations to the diligent members of the Steering Group, dedicatedly led by Cllr Les Turner and guided by Lee Searles from Andrea Pellegram Ltd and our Deputy Clerk Anne-Louise Henderson. Together, we have laid the foundation for a vibrant and sustainable future for Wythall.

Councillor Dianne Taylor
Chair, Wythall Parish Council

Contents

Contents	3
1. Introduction to Wythall Parish.....	5
2. The Role and Scope of the Neighbourhood Plan	10
3. Our Vision and Development Objectives	17
4. Community Infrastructure, Assets and Services	20
Wider Actions to Deliver Community Aspirations and Priorities	20
Neighbourhood Plan priorities for Community Infrastructure	21
5. Housing Requirements	27
Wythall Housing Needs Assessment	27
6. Design and Development Form	36
Character Areas	36
Development Form and Density	45
Sustainable Buildings	48
7. Local Heritage	50
Local Heritage Assets	52
8. Green Infrastructure	55
Local Green Space Sites	56
Biodiversity Gains from New Development	57
9. Sustainable Travel	60
Public Transport Service in Wythall Parish	60
Rail Services from Wythall Station	63
Access to local services on foot	64
10. Monitoring, Delivery and Review	77
APPENDIX A - Wythall Parish Local Heritage Sites.....	78
APPENDIX B - Local Green Space Sites Assessment	79

Tables and Figures

Table 1 - Achievement of Sustainable Development objectives	12
Table 2 - Basic Condition for broad conformity and no conflict with Strategic Policies	14
Table 3 – Community Aspirations and Priorities	20
Table 4 – Design Principles for Wythall Parish Character Areas	38
Table 5 – Design Guidance Codes for New Development in Wythall Parish	39
Table 6 – Approximate Housing Densities within Wythall Parish Character Areas	46
Table 7 – Densities achieved within selected housing developments in Wythall Parish	47
Table 8 – Nationally Designated Heritage Assets in Wythall Parish – Grading and Locations	51
Table 9 - Assessment of priority walking and cycling routes – quality and investment priorities	72
Table 10 - Monitoring for Neighbourhood Plan delivery	77

Figure 1 – Wythall Neighbourhood Area Boundary	10
Figure 2 – Neighbourhood Plan Survey Main Findings, May-July 2021.....	16
Figure 3 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for Wythall Parish	18
Figure 4 – Housing Tenure of Household in Wythall Parish in 2021.....	28
Figure 5 – House Price Trends in Wythall Parish, 2012-2021	29
Figure 6 – Affordability Thresholds for different types of home in Wythall	30
Figure 7 –Accommodation Types in Wythall Parish, Bromsgrove and England, 2021	33
Figure 8 – Accommodation size in Wythall Parish, Bromsgrove and England, 2021	34
Figure 9 – Character Areas within Wythall Parish	37
Figure 10 – Local Character Areas within Wythall	46
Figure 11 – Nationally Designated Heritage Assets in Wythall Parish – Mapped Locations	50
Figure 12 – Criteria for Non-Designated Heritage Assets	53
Figure 13 – NPPF policy on Local Green Space Designation	56
Figure 14 – Opportunities for habitat network enhancement, expansion and connection	59
Figure 15 – Bus Service 50A from Redditch to Birmingham through Wythall Parish	61
Figure 16 – Bus Services 664 and 665 Around Wythall Parish	62
Figure 17 – Bus Service 150 Route through Wythall Parish.....	62
Figure 18 – Key Parish Facilities	65
Figure 19 – Walking access times to community facilities	66
Figure 20 - Priority walking and cycling routes in Wythall Parish	69
Figure 21 - Close up of location of Potential Parking Area 2.....	69

Policies

WYTHALL 1 – Local Community Facilities.....	24
WYTHALL 2 - Affordable Housing Tenure	32
WYTHALL 3 - Housing Types and Sizes in Wythall	35
WYTHALL 4 – Good Design and Development Form in Wythall Parish	48
WYTHALL 5 – Environmental Performance of Buildings	49
WYTHALL 6 - Wythall Parish Local Heritage Assets	53
WYTHALL 7 - Local Green Space Sites	57
WYTHALL 8 – Biodiversity Gains from new development in Wythall Parish	59
WYTHALL 9 – Support for Bus Services.....	63
WYTHALL 10 – Support for Rail Services and Station improvements	64
WYTHALL 11 – Support for improvements to priority walking and cycling routes	71

1. Introduction to Wythall Parish

History and Character of Wythall Parish

1. Wythall is a civil Parish, of some 4,768 acres or 1,929 hectares, situated in the northeastern corner of Worcestershire. The civil Parish was created in 1911 when Wythall was divorced from the Parish of King's Norton which was absorbed into Birmingham. Wythall has since shared the county boundaries with Birmingham and Warwickshire.
2. The name Wythall is said to be derived from the name Wythworth, with 'worth' meaning an enclosure where Withies or Osiers (typically used for thatching, basket making, and constructing woven wattle hurdles) are grown or prepared.
3. Wythall has a rural heritage with a pastoral farming landscape which is still evident in the western parts of the Parish away from the main settlements of Wythall, Hollywood and Majors Green. There is some industrial heritage too, with flax production and tanning being significant industries in the Parish up until the 19th century.
4. Wythall has 19 historic buildings designated as Listed Buildings by Historic England. The buildings are dispersed throughout the Parish, reflecting a settlement pattern historically characterised by farmsteads and clusters of dwellings along ancient thoroughfares.
5. Chapel Lane and Station Road appear on the oldest existing road map dated 1330 and were used on the route from Droitwich to Coventry. Both roads are where some of the Neighbourhood Area's oldest buildings are located, including several Listed buildings such as St Mary's Church and The Old School House. Silver Street is another historic road, once a salt track extending between Houndsfield and Droitwich used for carrying timber to the salt works.
6. Between 1904 and 1917 historic mapping demonstrates residential development underway at Inkford, Tanners Green and Grimes Hill, and by the time of the 4th edition OS Map 1938 settlement is also underway at Hollywood and Major's Green.
7. Clay pits are present throughout the Parish suggesting Brick Kiln sites are likely to have been more frequent than recorded on the available historic mapping.
8. In the south of the Parish, the site of the current Phoenix Group headquarters and surrounding land was previously RAF Wythall (from 1939 to 1960). The military base was a balloon barrage centre (No.6 Barrage Balloon Centre) defending southern Birmingham and Coventry during the Second World War. After the war it became a demobilisation centre for all Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) members nationally. Then, between 1952 and 1957, it was a Joint Services School for Linguists, which catered for all three services by teaching servicemen Russian, Chinese, Polish, Czech, and German, for them to become interpreters and translators.
9. There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Neighbourhood Area; Berry Mound Pastures, an 11.84 hectare site comprising of horse grazed pastureland and meadow. The site was first designated in 1994 due to diverse seminatural grassland. The site lies to the southwest of Berry Mound Camp.
10. The Neighbourhood Area is served by a network of 20 miles of Public Rights of Way (PROW), most of which are footpaths providing connectivity throughout the area's open landscape. These are well used for recreational purposes and many PROW provide active travel links between key

places within the Neighbourhood Area, including between Hollywood and Wythall and north from Hollywood to Birmingham.

11. As well as footpaths, there are several bridleways to the north of Kings Norton Golf Course as well as around Gay Hill further north. These are well used by horse riders and recreational walkers alike.
12. Route 55 of the National Cycle Network runs through the northwest of the Neighbourhood Area, entering via Primrose Hill before following Icknield Street where it leaves the area at the junction with Redhill Road.

Wythall Parish Today

13. Whilst situated just beyond the edge of a major conurbation, Wythall Parish lies within Green Belt open countryside with a landscape which has many of its historical elements preserved. The protection afforded to the green belt has meant that essential rural characteristics of quiet lanes, rural footpaths, heritage features remain in place, alongside more modern settlements which grew up within defined settlement boundaries and which support commuting by train, bus and car into Birmingham, out to Stratford upon Avon and, through connections to the M42 motorway, by road to the wider area. The A435 provides a dual carriageway link to the M42 and into Birmingham, whilst Wythall Rail Station provides services into Birmingham.
14. The main settlements of the Parish are Hollywood, Wythall village and Majors Green. These are set within settlement boundaries and are separated from each other by Green Belt. Walkers Heath, whilst within the Parish, is part of the Birmingham conurbation. With the exception of the Wythall Green Business Park, other smaller settlements including Shawbrook, Tanners Green, Silver Street and Bateman's Green are washed over by Green Belt.
15. The settlements of the Parish are served by local community services – There are primary schools and a secondary school, a leisure centre and a medical practice located in Hollywood, where most of the key services located in the Parish are based. Other than that, each settlement has a local shopping parade and a pub. Petrol Filling Stations are located at two locations within the Parish, in Hollywood and on the A435 south of Wythall at Shawbrook.
16. Business and Retail activities are located to the west of Wythall village off the A435, including a retail village, the Wythall Transport Museum, a Caravan park and the current Phoenix Group. Other businesses are located throughout the Parish in rural locations.
17. The countryside within the Parish hosts a number of urban fringe activities including golf courses, animal sanctuaries and equestrian facilities.
18. Bromsgrove District Council's 2019 Green Belt Purposes Review indicated that the Green Belt of Wythall Parish plays an important role in preventing sprawl beyond the current edge of Birmingham. The main settlements in the Parish are separated by Green Belt and it plays an important role in preventing the coalescence of these communities to form a larger urban area. As of January 2025, Bromsgrove District Council has not published further technical work or policy proposals regarding the future status of Green Belt in Wythall. This is a strategic policy consideration beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.
19. Notwithstanding strategic planning considerations which will unfold over time, the residents and businesses of Wythall Parish are, through this Neighbourhood Plan, setting out a positive vision for the future of the community, clear objectives to contribute to the achievement of the vision, and concrete policies which will guide new development along their path.

Population

20. In 2021, the population of Wythall was around 12,269 people living in 5,100 households. The population grew from 11,678 in 2011. The population is weighted towards older people, with Wythall's population containing comparatively few people in every age cohort under the age of 50 than the England average, and comparatively more in every age cohort from 50 years and older. There are approaching double the proportion of people 75 years and older than the England average. More of the population is female than male, with a proportion of females greater than the England average (over one percentage point more at 52.1% of the population of Wythall). Less than 35% of households in Wythall contain more than two people. Around 43% of people aged 16 years and over are economically inactive.
21. At the time of the Census in 2021, working patterns were affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic – Over 34% of people in employment were working mainly from home. 31% travelled less than 10km to their place of work and a further nearly 18% travelled between 10km and 30km. Despite the presence of bus and train services serving the Parish, nearly 59% of the working population travelled to work by car or van. 2.3% took the bus or train and 3.5% percent walked or cycled.
22. By and large, occupation and socio-economic classification information confirms that people are generally employed in higher-level occupations and are in more comfortable socio-economic positions than the England average.
23. The overwhelming majority of people living in Wythall own their own home (84%), many outright without a mortgage (49.5%). The homes are mostly houses and not flats, and they are larger properties than the England average in terms of bedrooms – 77.5% are three or more bedroomed properties. On the whole, with smaller households than average, homes are under-occupied with 77% of households having at least one spare bedroom. A larger proportion of residential properties in Wythall are Bungalows than in the rest of Bromsgrove or England as a whole.

Economy

24. The economic landscape of Wythall is diverse, shaped by a mix of industries, businesses, and employment opportunities.
25. The farming heritage of Wythall is still evident with working farms maintaining the local landscape. Additionally, the popularity of horse-riding schools, livery stables, catteries, dog kennels, veterinary practices, and animal sanctuaries underscores the community's affinity for animals.
26. Only one single employment site is designated in the Parish in the Bromsgrove District Plan, at Wythall Green, currently home to Phoenix Insurance Group and others. However, Wythall hosts various other commercial and industrial sites, including industrial parks, packaging and printing firms, car maintenance and fuel sales, construction industry firms, landscaping and roofing centres, and the Head Office of Acorns Children's Hospice charity. These businesses contribute to the local economy and provide employment opportunities.
27. There are numerous self-employed individuals and small businesses, including consultancy firms, which operate from residential addresses, reflecting the entrepreneurial spirit of the community.
28. While lacking a central retail area, Wythall has several smaller shopping areas dispersed throughout populated areas, offering groceries, hairdressing services, pharmacies, and food

outlets. There is however, a lack of local shops in Major's Green and, the facilities provided in neighbouring Birmingham are closer and more convenient for Walkers Heath residents.

29. The hospitality industry is also growing, with pubs, coffee shops, and takeaways providing a variety of food options.
30. Perhaps reflecting the demographic of Wythall residents, there are several care homes in the area, the biggest being Moundsley Hall Ltd in Walkers Heath. At the other end of the spectrum, several children's nurseries and child minders add to the local economy reflecting the needs of local families with working parents.
31. Sports enthusiasts are well catered for with three golf clubs, a driving range, local amateur football and rugby clubs, and a gym/sports and fitness centre. A recent planning permission for a swimming pool further enhances recreational opportunities.
32. Attractions like the Transport Museum and Camping and Caravanning Club approved campsite at Chapel Lane attract visitors, contributing to the local tourism industry.
33. Wythall benefits from good road transportation links, thanks to its proximity to Junction 3 of the M42 and other major roads, providing connectivity for businesses and residents alike.
34. Commuters can also use the local train service to Birmingham and Stratford Upon Avon (although this is only once per hour each way). Wythall Station has no car park but there is a large car park at Whitlocks End (just over the Solihull border but still on the same railway line).
35. The local bus services, although not particularly regular, take residents to Solihull, Redditch, Kings Heath and Birmingham.
36. Overall, the economic landscape of Wythall is characterized by a mix of traditional industries, growing sectors like hospitality and tourism, and supportive infrastructure that contributes to the community's vitality and resilience.

Culture

37. Wythall may be unusual in that it does not have a specific 'centre' but rather is spread over several smaller settlement areas. Nevertheless, there is a rich cultural life, with a strong sense of community and a multitude of activities and events available to residents.
38. Wythall has a vibrant community life with various clubs, activities, and events catering to different interests and age groups. This includes sports clubs, golf clubs, a library, a comedy club and a memory café for those living with dementia and their carers, fostering a sense of belonging and engagement among residents.
39. The presence of parks, play areas, sports facilities, allotments, and local coffee shops indicates a focus on recreation and leisure activities within the community. This provides opportunities for relaxation, socialization, and outdoor enjoyment.
40. Wythall hosts a range of cultural events throughout the year, such as bonfire displays, pantomimes, craft markets, and seasonal celebrations like Christmas lights switch-on and Remembrance services. These events contribute to the cultural identity of the community and provide opportunities for people to come together and celebrate.
41. There is a strong connection to the area's heritage and history including the War Memorial, historic buildings like Wythall Village Hall, Kingswood Meeting House and the Church of St Mary.

This connection is emphasized by the existence of the Wythall History Society. Preserving and celebrating this heritage adds depth to the community's cultural fabric.

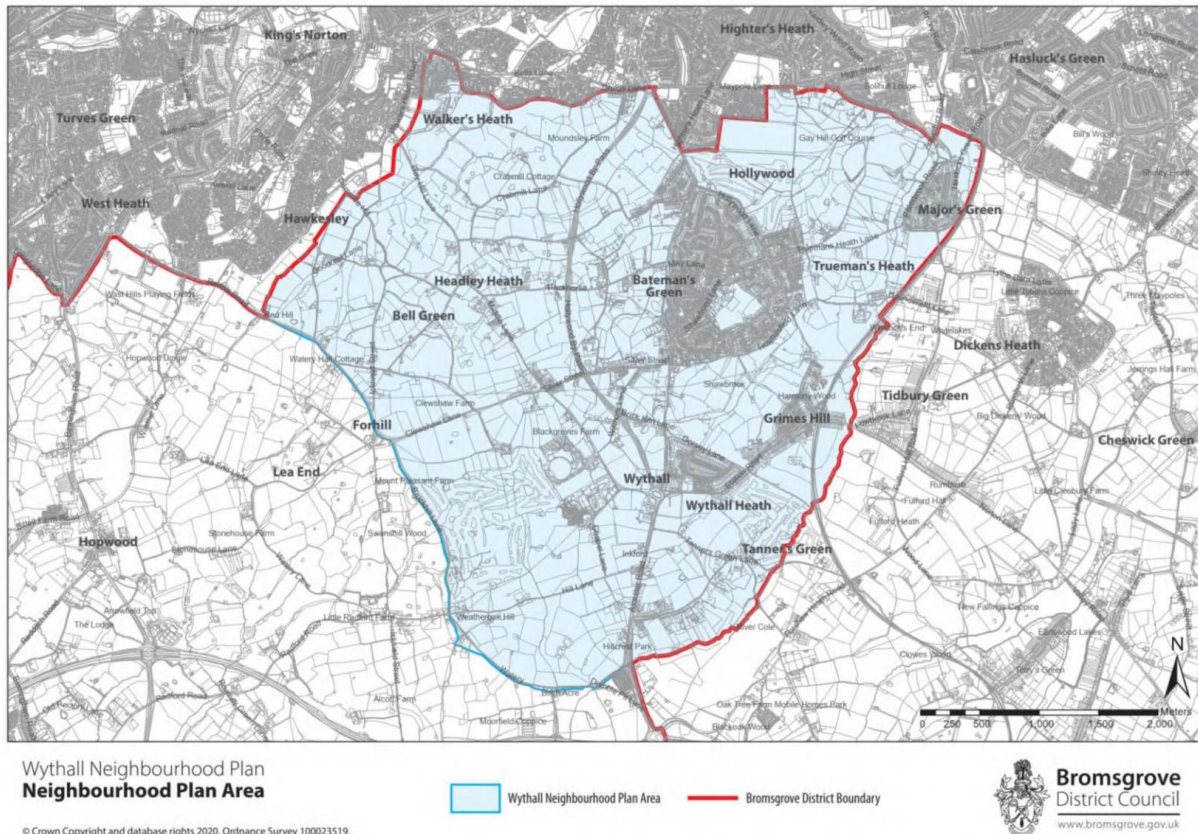
42. The active involvement of volunteers in various community initiatives, from litter picking to maintaining public rights of way, demonstrates a strong spirit of volunteerism and civic engagement among residents. This volunteerism plays a crucial role in sustaining community activities and amenities.
43. Local schools, churches and the library serve as focal points for community activities, including educational programmes, social gatherings, and religious services. These institutions contribute to the holistic development and well-being of residents.
44. The emphasis on outdoor activities like walking, cycling, and horse riding, as well as initiatives to improve the local train station with planters and art installations, highlights the community's appreciation for nature and the environment. This integration of natural elements into the cultural landscape enhances the quality of life for residents.
45. Overall, the cultural scene in Wythall is driven by a strong sense of community spirit, historical consciousness, and a commitment to fostering engagement and well-being among its residents.

2. The Role and Scope of the Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plan Area

46. Wythall Parish Council applied for designation of the Neighbourhood Area for its Neighbourhood Plan with an area based on the boundary of the Parish. This was approved by Bromsgrove District Council on 15th September 2020. The Neighbourhood Area is set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Wythall Neighbourhood Area Boundary



Policy Framework for the Neighbourhood Plan

47. Neighbourhood plans must operate in accordance with guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which says that succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings. This applies to plans at all levels and so neighbourhood plans should play their part in the planning system in the same way.
48. A key reference to the role of neighbourhood planning is set out in Paragraph 30 of the NPPF. Here, it says neighbourhood plans give communities the power to develop a shared vision for their areas and through them shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.
49. Neighbourhood plans are required to meet Basic Conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood Development Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A Basic Conditions Statement has been prepared alongside the neighbourhood plan to demonstrate how the plan meets basic conditions.

50. Importantly, neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies. A key requirement is that neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area.
51. Once the neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, its policies will be considered alongside Local Plan policies under section 38(6) of the 1990 Act when determining planning applications. Where they are in conflict, neighbourhood plan policies will take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the local plan covering the Neighbourhood Area, until they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.

National Planning Policies

52. The current version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024. The NPPF sets out national planning policies in a single document and in so doing sets the framework for plan-making and decision-making on development proposals. The Framework explains the relationship between the NPPF, Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. This influences how local planning authorities approach the development of local plan policies and how they regard policies as strategic or non-strategic in nature. The NPPF identifies matters on which the government thinks local communities through Neighbourhood Plans can contribute to the achievement of national policy goals and also express their own ambitions and objectives.

Local Plans Context

53. The adopted Development Plan for the area is made up of the following documents:
 - Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 (adopted 25 January 2017)
 - Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire, Adopted Waste Local Plan 2012-2027 (adopted November 2012)
 - Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan 2018-2036 (adopted July 2022)

Emerging Local Plan Review

54. In accordance with a Local Development Scheme published in February 2025, Bromsgrove District Council is preparing a Bromsgrove District Local Plan to set out where new housing, employment and other development, alongside its supporting infrastructure, will take place over the plan period to 2043.

Setting a Time Period for the Neighbourhood Plan

55. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to ensure it conforms with strategic policies in the development plan, the NPPF and, as far as possible in the emerging local plan in preparation. The Neighbourhood Plan end date has been set to 2040 which was the end date of the emerging local plan during Neighbourhood Plan Preparation, but which has since been extended to 2043.

The proposed time period for the Neighbourhood Plan is 2021-2040.

Supporting Documents to the Neighbourhood Plan

56. Several documents were prepared or are referred to as supporting documents to the Neighbourhood Plan, as follows:

- Wythall Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM) (October 2022)
- Wythall Design Guidelines & Design Codes (AECOM) (October 2023)
- Wythall Audit of Community Facilities and Infrastructure (July 2024)
- Wythall Parish Habitats, Nature Networks & Agricultural Land (January 2024)
- Historic Environment Record (November 2022)
- Assessment of existing housing developments in Wythall – Good design and development form in relation to achieved housing densities (2024)
- Local Bus Services
- Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulation Assessment (July 2024)
- National Trust 8 Hills Regional Park Spatial Framework Report (June 2023)

Neighbourhood Plan Contribution to Sustainable Development

57. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that plans seek to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through meeting economic, social and environmental objectives (set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF). The Wythall Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with these requirements in mind. Table 1 below demonstrates how each of the policies within the plan contribute to the achievement of one or more of the overarching objectives which mutually support the achievement of sustainable development.

Table 1 - Achievement of Sustainable Development objectives

Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Economic objective	Social Objective	Environmental Objective
WYTHALL 1 – Local Community Facilities	Ensuring a good network of community facilities and assets supports a well-balanced community which is an economic advantage. Would support the retention of services in Wythall Parish.	It is an important aspect of sustainable development that community facilities are present and available locally. Would meet an important community objective to retain existing local facilities used by schools and residents.	Local community facilities allow people to use their cars less in accessing key local services. Would support local availability of facilities reducing the need to travel to other places for services used by the local community.
WYTHALL 2 - Affordable Housing Tenure	Supports the availability of homes affordable to the local working population on average incomes.	Supports the retention of a balanced community and over-concentration of the elderly, based on affordable housing provision.	A supply of homes affordable to people who work in the area should contribute to objectives which seek to reduce the need to travel by car.
WYTHALL 3 - Housing Types and Sizes in Wythall	Local policies which support a range of housing to meet identified local needs will help the	The policy targets specific requirements where lack of provision may be preventing life stage-related access to the right kind of housing, which	Local housing provision to meet local needs will reduce the need for people to move away and

Wythall Parish Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 15 – February 2025

	economy of the area to function better.	supports a balanced community.	travel back to work in the area by car.
WYTHALL 4 – Good Design and Development Form in Wythall Parish	Promotes an attractive living environment which is important to attract workers.	Ensures that new developments complement existing communities and integrate with them.	Will ensure that the character of the villages is retained as new housing is provided.
WYTHALL 5 – Environmental Performance of Buildings	Will support businesses in reducing and managing energy costs.	More energy efficient buildings will support local people to manage energy costs more effectively.	Will make a contribution to net zero carbon objectives
WYTHALL 6 - Wythall Parish Local Heritage Assets	Supports retention of interesting features which add to the attractiveness of the area.	Provides support for local features of heritage cultural value to local residents.	
WYTHALL 7 - Local Green Space Sites	A key part of providing a high-quality local environment which is attractive.	Supports health and well-being for local residents.	Supports linked-up and improved green spaces and habitats and supports local alternatives in the Parish to reduce pressure on sensitive habitats.
WYTHALL 8 – Biodiversity Gains from new development in Wythall Parish	An attractive and biodiverse local environment will be more attractive to businesses for people to locate within the area.	Greater local biodiversity encourages local people to appreciate and connect with nature and to foster well-being.	Clear environmental benefits accrue from a co-ordinated attempt to improve biodiversity from new development and to ensure habitats are strengthened and connected.
WYTHALL 9 – Support for Bus Services	Good public transport services facilitate take-up of available job, shopping and leisure opportunities for a wider section of the population.	Supports greater mobility and access to jobs and services for sections of the population who rely on public transport.	Greater use of bus services helps to reduce carbon emissions from private cars
WYTHALL 10 – Support for Rail Services and Station improvements	Good public transport services facilitate take-up of available job, shopping and leisure opportunities for a wider section of the population.	Supports greater mobility and access to jobs and services for sections of the population who rely on public transport.	Greater use of train services helps to reduce carbon emissions from private cars
WYTHALL 11 – Support for improvements to priority walking and cycling routes	Safe and convenient routes to key services, places of work or transport hubs increase the available employment opportunities for local people and support healthy living	Supports healthy living and provides means of sustainable travel for all sections of the population.	Greater active travel reduces carbon emission from all forms of transport and encourages healthy living.

Meeting the Basic Conditions

58. Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet Basic Conditions one of which is that policies in the Neighbourhood Plan must be in broad conformity and must not conflict with the NPPF, guidance from the Secretary of State and with adopted local plans. Table 2 below provides references to the NPPF and adopted local plans which are relevant to and support the inclusion of policies within the Wythall Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 2 - Basic Condition for broad conformity and no conflict with Strategic Policies

Neighbourhood Plan Policy	NPPF 2024 References	Adopted Bromsgrove District Plan Policy Support
WYTHALL 1 – Local Community Facilities	NPPF Para 88(d), 98, 100, 101 109, 110, 111, 128	BDP6 (Infrastructure Contributions), BDP12 (Sustainable Communities), BDP25 (Health and Well-being)
WYTHALL 2 - Affordable Housing Tenure	NPPF Para 64-66,	BDP7 (Housing Mix and Density), BDP8 (Affordable Housing), BDP9 (Rural Exception Sites) and BDP10 (Homes for the elderly)
WYTHALL 3 - Housing Types and Sizes in Wythall	NPPF Para 64-66 and 71	BDP7 (Housing Mix and Density), BDP8 (Affordable Housing), BDP9 (Rural Exception Sites) and BDP10 (Homes for the elderly)
WYTHALL 4 – Good Design and Development Form in Wythall Parish	NPPF Para 29, 115(c) 125(e), 129-130, 131-136, 139	BDP19 (High Quality Design)
WYTHALL 5 – Environmental Performance of Buildings	NPPF Para 164-165, 167	BDP19 (High Quality Design), BDP22 (Climate Change)
WYTHALL 6 - Wythall Parish Local Heritage Assets	NPPF Para 202-203, 216 and footnote 75	BDP20 (Managing the Historic Environment)
WYTHALL 7 - Local Green Space Sites	NPPF Para 106-108	BDP24 (Green Infrastructure, BDP25 (Health and Well-being)
WYTHALL 8 – Biodiversity Gains from new development in Wythall Parish	NPPF Para 187(d), 192	BDP21 (Natural Environment), BDP24 (Green Infrastructure,
WYTHALL 9 – Support for Bus Services	NPPF Para 109-110	BDP16 (Sustainable Transport)
WYTHALL 10 – Support for Rail Services and Station improvements	NPPF Para 109-110	BDP16 (Sustainable Transport)
WYTHALL 11 – Support for improvements to priority walking and cycling routes	NPPF Para 109, 111(d)	BDP16 (Sustainable Transport)

Consultation With The Community

59. Engagement of the local community is regarded as essential in developing a vision and objectives for the future development of neighbourhoods and to provide the detailed information to support non-strategic policies that can make a difference to localities. The Wythall Neighbourhood Plan has been supported by engagement and consultation in a variety of forms. These are detailed in the Consultation Report published alongside the Neighbourhood Plan with a brief summary below..

Survey of Residents, May-July 2021

60. From May to July 2021, Wythall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group invited responses to an online questionnaire. The purpose was to invite residents to identify the main issues and challenges facing the Parish and to inform the development of key priorities for the NDP. It asked residents to indicate what they valued most about the Parish and what they would like to see improved. It covered community, environmental, transport and services-related matters. The results are presented in the Consultation Report. A total of 518 responses were received.
61. Figure 2 summarises the main points which demonstrate that local residents value the area's position within and close to local countryside but with (potentially at least) good access to metropolitan services. Public transport is a key concern. The need to provide a better local offer and to retain existing commercial services and community facilities is also a high priority. The

survey also indicates support for greater investment in environmental and public realm infrastructure. With regard to new housing development, planned and controlled development is a key priority so that impacts can be minimised and current settlement characteristics can be maintained.

Wythall Unlocked, 14 August 2021.

62. As part of the Parish Council's work to engage with the local community on the development of the NDP, the Parish Council ran a stall at the Wythall Unlocked 2 fair which took place on 14 August 2021. A map of the Parish was set out and visitors were invited to review the sites which had been submitted as part of the Bromsgrove District Council's call for development sites for housing and employment exercise and indicate where they viewed development would be potentially acceptable or potentially undesirable.

NDP Consultation Event, 2 February 2022

63. The NDP consultation event was held at Wythall Village Hall. Around 65 people from the Parish attended the event. Members from the Parish Council, District and County Council members also attended. Many people participated in discussion and at the end of the event, residents came forward who expressed an interest in contributing to the development of the NDP.

Formation of NDP Working Groups

64. Based on the matters identified through consultation and engagement on the development of the NDP, a number of suggested policy themes were discussed with potential actions. This led to the formation of the following working groups:

- Sustainable Transport – traffic generation and routes, car parking, rail and bus services, cycling and pedestrian routes and access.
- Maintaining and protecting local identity and assets (including design approach and the protection of local non-designated heritage assets).
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure (linked with pedestrian and cycle networks and local identity).
- Community infrastructure, assets and services.
- Housing Mix.

Annual Meeting of the Parish, 20 April 2023

65. The Annual Meeting of Wythall Parish takes place every year between March and June and is designed to provide a forum for local residents to hear about the work of the council and to raise issues with the council. The Annual Meeting attracted approximately 30 attendees. A presentation was given and this was followed by questions and answers about local planning matters and the role of the NDP.

Regulation 14 Consultation

66. Regulation 14 Consultation was carried out between 10th October 2024 and 20th December 2024. The Consultation Report published alongside the NDP provides full details of the consultation.

Figure 2 – Neighbourhood Plan Survey Main Findings, May-July 2021

What residents value about their local area	What improvements are needed	Perspectives on housing development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Services • Wythall Park • Appearance and village feel • Open spaces, play areas and access to countryside • Community/social aspects, local facilities, accessibility, public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police presence and control of crime and anti-social behaviour • Control of traffic speeds through traffic calming in a wide number of locations • Public transport services and facilities • Pedestrian routes, surfaces, lighting and cycle lanes and crossings at key locations • Parking at key facilities such as schools and the hub • Wythall Park and facilities • Public Realm - verges, flower planting, litter, fly-tipping etc • Services and facilities - better restaurants, pubs, youth, health and recreation and community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to control of ad-hoc development. • Balance of private/ affordable /social / retirement type housing, mix of house sizes constructed – family to single person, new housing spread throughout the Parish. • Fewer new build houses in Wythall • Retain the village feel • Protect Green Belt and Open Spaces

3. Our Vision and Development Objectives

Wythall Parish Within a Wider Development Context

67. The Parish of Wythall occupies a strategic position to the south of the West Midlands Conurbation at the north-eastern end of Bromsgrove District. It borders the City of Birmingham and the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull.
68. The Parish has a long history as an agricultural area with a pattern of settled village communities which, over time, has developed transport infrastructure through and skirting the area. The Parish has become host to an important range of social, recreational and other activities and services located in the countryside green belt but serving wider urban areas as well as its own needs.
69. The area provides a good mix of heritage assets of value nationally and locally. It provides a good quality environment for residential communities in the Parish. The Parish hosts high quality leisure businesses and an important headquarters office.
70. The railway station serving Wythall Parish is located on the eastern side of Wythall Village. As such it is accessible for commuters into Birmingham from the adjacent Parish of Tidbury Green within Solihull. The Solihull MBC 'emerging' Local Plan was withdrawn in October 2024 due to concerns over a significant shortfall in housing land supply. A new Local Plan is now being prepared and is expected to propose substantial development across the borough. In the meantime, several speculative and large-scale housing schemes are already coming forward, with at least one citing the proximity to existing train stations- including Wythall - as a key advantage.
71. The M42 motorway runs west to east outside the southern boundary of the Parish but which provides a junction (Junction 3) and partly dualled A435 road connection north to Wythall and then by single carriageway into Birmingham and Solihull. Road connections from adjoining Parishes to the east into Wythall are seen as poor in the local community. The Stratford upon Avon Canal clips the north-east corner of the Parish by Majors Green.
72. The Parish has local shops and services, but supermarkets and larger shops are located at the Maypole within Birmingham to the north. Bus service connections to this location exist but have been reduced in recent years.
73. The Bromsgrove District Plan was adopted in January 2017 with an acknowledged deficit in the identification of housing land sufficient to meet housing needs over the plan period to 2030. Bromsgrove District Council is now working on a new District Local Plan with an extended period to 2043. Draft Development Strategy Options include de-designation of green belt land and new housing site allocations in Wythall Parish.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

74. Engagement with local residents helped to identify issues, challenges and opportunities for the Parish in the context of potential new development in the area, as the basis for identifying key themes and priorities in the NDP. Figure 3 summarises points raised by residents.

Figure 3 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for Wythall Parish

Strengths

- Green Belt offers clear development boundaries and should continue to do so.
- The area has excellent countryside walks and countryside resources.
- Train station.

Weaknesses

- Lack of planning with Solihull over potential development sites there. There is potential to generate significant traffic from these sites across Wythall (East-West) to access A435. These roads are local and narrow.
- Access to local shopping opportunities for pedestrians are limited.
- Bus services are limited.
- Train services are limited.
- Cycling networks are poor.

Opportunities

- Currently, there is no car parking provided at Wythall Rail Station. New development would provide an opportunity to remedy this.
- Need to upgrade telecommunications – mobile phone signals, broadband/fibre.
- Strengthen green corridors and ecology.
- New development could provide affordable housing for young people.
- Better design of new developments.

Threats

- Community infrastructure and services will come under increased pressure from new development.
- An increase in local housing development will increase traffic to local services and schools and worsen parking problems.
- Concern that changes to Green Belt to allow new development could lead to the area being overwhelmed by Birmingham and Solihull development.
- The area could lose its identity.
- Ribbon development along the A435 in the direction of the M42 Junction 3.

Challenges and Opportunities

75. In this context, the challenge for the Parish is to ensure that, in the face of new development, Wythall Parish remains recognisable as the community it has developed into and its quality of life is maintained as defined by access to green spaces, access to services, the effective management of traffic and the quality of the built environment.
76. Development also brings opportunities to improve transport services, promote more sustainable travel networks for walking and cycling, address parking issues, improve the provision of local services and establish strong networks for green infrastructure and biodiversity. New housing

development can meet specific local needs and new commercial development can create local jobs.

77. Matters of principle on strategic developments will be decided through the creation of the Local Plan. With good evidence to support its policies, the Neighbourhood Plan can make sure that development is delivered in a way which meets local needs and local aspirations.

Vision

78. The Neighbourhood Plan sets a vision for the Parish up to 2040. This matched the original end date of the emerging Bromsgrove District Local Plan, which is going to set a clear context for future development in the area. The emerging Bromsgrove District Local Plan period has since been extended to 2043 whereas the Neighbourhood Plan period remains unchanged. The Vision is formed in this context and is set out below.

By 2040, Wythall Parish will remain a distinctive local community. New development will be well-accommodated based on good design principles. People will use walking, cycling and public transport opportunities more and use their car less. Good local services will meet the needs of the local population. Local people will have a choice of housing to meet their needs. The environment, made up of heritage assets, green infrastructure and habitats for wildlife, will be much improved. Overall, the quality of life for people living in Wythall will be excellent.

Objectives

79. The Neighbourhood Plan Group has examined a number of possible actions that could be taken to help to deliver the Vision. Consultation and engagement revealed a number of clear community concerns and priorities. Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan are set out below:

OBJECTIVE 1 - To improve travel and transport to reduce traffic congestion and promote alternatives to the use of private cars, including by providing safe walking and cycle routes.

OBJECTIVE 2 - To promote good quality design in new developments which supports sustainable travel and green and blue infrastructure objectives.

OBJECTIVE 3 - To identify and deliver a green and blue infrastructure network comprised of Local Green Space, Green travel corridors, formal and incidental open spaces, watercourses, ponds, wetlands and connected habitats which meet a variety of public realm, travel, health, well-being, biodiversity and other functions.

OBJECTIVE 4 - To make sure new housing development delivers housing of a size and type and level of affordability which meets the needs of people living in the area.

OBJECTIVE 5 – To ensure that the provision of local services, community facilities and assets keeps pace with development to meet the needs of the local community.

4. Community Infrastructure, Assets and Services

80. This section of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out priorities for local community infrastructure, assets and services that it may be possible to deliver through development. The development of the Neighbourhood Plan has involved a wide-ranging conversation with the local community of the Parish. Through this dialogue, the community have raised important issues which they want to see tackled to improve their lives. Not all of these can be addressed by planning policies which are necessarily focused on influencing land use and development within carefully set limits. This section of the plan also considers the wider matters raised and provides potential ways in which action can be taken to address them. This is an important complementary strand of future priorities that sit alongside but not within Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Wider Actions to Deliver Community Aspirations and Priorities

81. Wythall Parish contains a number of distinct and culturally linked settlements surrounded by extensive Green Belt. The Communities living within Wythall, Hollywood, Majors Green, Tanners Green and other settlements in the Parish have identified specific aspirations and priorities. Some of these apply within local areas and some across the Parish as a whole. Table 3 sets out aspirations and priorities for different places within Wythall and indicates the actions required to move forward on these. Where these relate to Neighbourhood Plan policies, this is indicated otherwise actions required are outside the Neighbourhood Plan to be led by the Parish Council and/or other partners.

Table 3 – Community Aspirations and Priorities

Theme	Aspiration/Priority	Potential Actions (WPC = Wythall Parish Council)
Community	Bigger village hall site potentially incorporating community kitchen and adult learning centre	Secure provision or contributions through new development.
Community	New Parish Council office in a combined community site (eg new village hall site)	Wythall Parish Council (WPC) capital project.
Community	Elderly day care including exercise classes	WPC & Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) Revenue expenditure.
Sport & Recreation	Leisure centre with pool (depending on level of development)	Capital Spend BDC/Developer .
Sport & Recreation	Youth facilities e.g. skate park/bike track (possibly at Wythall Park?)	Secure provision or contributions through new development and plan for capital project for WPC
Employment/ Retail	Expansion of technology park, Middle Lane	Discuss with Bromsgrove DC about how to secure the expansion.
Employment/ Retail	Additional local shopping area including post office (dependent on level of development)	Secure provision through new development.
Health	Proactive health interventions – use of new village hall site	WPC & Community Groups to develop
Environment	Protect Local Green Spaces	Deliver through Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Transport/Environment	Improved/additional Public Rights of Way and bridleways	Deliver through new development in accordance with Neighbourhood Plan policies and Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP).
Transport	Improved Bus services to Birmingham, Solihull, Shirley and Bromsgrove (to enable more use of BDC funded facilities). Review locations of bus stops.	WPC to lobby Worcestershire County Council and Bus Service Providers and support Demand Responsive Transport initiative .
Transport	Increased train services from Wythall Station, to tie in with bus service to create a transport hub	WPC to lobby Worcestershire County Council and other service providers.
Transport	Improved cycle routes, including the possible introduction of 'Quiet Ways'	Deliver through new development in accordance with Neighbourhood Plan policies and Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP)
Transport	Cycle parking at local facilities including shopping parades	WPC to obtain agreement in principle from land owners of shopping parades & other facilities eg village hall to site cycle parking, then investigate funding.
Transport	Improve speeding/parking issues	WPC to lobby Worcestershire County Council and West Mercia Police.

Neighbourhood Plan priorities for Community Infrastructure

82. The Neighbourhood Plan can take two direct actions in policy to protect and enhance local community infrastructure and services. The first action is to identify important local sites in community uses and protect them from change of use where appropriate. The second is to identify the type and pattern of community infrastructure required to maintain existing communities within the Parish and to address the need for additional facilities when if and when new development comes forward.

The protection of important sites and facilities

83. The policies map (<https://shared.xmap.cloud/?map=b3b11e60-9d4b-4090-88d7-7b702a139a53>) identifies the location of important local community uses and these are listed in Important local sites in community use. Local Community Uses are identified within the Use Classes Order as F2 Local Community Uses. There are no permitted development rights to change use from F2 uses. It is possible to regard certain developments as F2 uses if they meet certain conditions. The most relevant example of this is the ability to regard local shops selling a range of day-to-day goods including food as F2 if they are located at least 1,000 metres from the next nearest similar shop (and floorspace is smaller than 280 sq.m.).
84. Other facilities may be regarded as F2 Local Community Use dependent on how they are used. For example, a church is an F1 use but may be regarded as having a F2 use alongside if used by the community for wider purposes.

85. Neighbourhood Plan policies can seek to protect Local Community Facilities by identifying that they perform these uses and meet the relevant criteria and then identifying them as to be protected in policy.
86. A supporting document to the Neighbourhood Plan is called 'Wythall Audit of Community Facilities and Infrastructure'. It sets out the work undertaken to assess the number and use of community facilities in the Parish and to assess future requirements. This has been informed by a survey of organisations which operate infrastructure and delivery services in the Parish. This includes core sites in local community use and also schools, libraries, churches and health facilities.
87. The audit has also included the full range of commercial facilities and local shopping parades which are important in providing a range of shops and services for daily use. Some commercial facilities provide important community benefits and these include childcare provision and care homes.
88. The audit also identifies important social provision including public houses, local parks and play areas, allotments, cemeteries and leisure facilities. It indicates the role each plays in meeting local community needs and highlights where further provision is necessary.
89. The audit also highlights which facilities are vulnerable to permitted changes of use without planning permission under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). This means important local commercial facilities can be lost to different uses, most commonly housing. Some changes require 'prior approval' which means there is a mechanism to highlight the importance of the potential change, and to ask for it to be considered in a planning application. Unless the community highlight this importance, there is every chance permitted development rights changes will go through without scrutiny. The table provides a means by which the importance of local community facilities has been documented.

Community infrastructure requirements

90. The audit describes the current provision and use of facilities within the Parish and, where possible, establishes whether and how capacity is fully utilised and requires further expansion or investment.

Policy Considerations

91. NPPF Paragraph 98 is clear in its requirement that planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of a wide range of community facilities. It says they should take into account the delivery of local strategies for health, social and community well-being and should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would impact on the ability of the community to meet its day-to-day needs. It says that there should be an integrated approach to the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.
92. Policy BDP6 of the Bromsgrove District Plan addresses infrastructure requirements to support new development that will be delivered in part through S106 Planning Obligations. This would be informed by an Infrastructure Development Plan.
93. Policy BDP25 supports proposals and activities which promote better health and wellbeing. Associated with this are important standards for the provision of parks, gardens, play, sports and allotments.

94. It is important for Wythall Parish to understand what current provision there is of local community facilities, what use is made of them and what is needed to maintain and improve them so they can continue to fulfil their important functions. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies facilities in local community use and demonstrates their current use, capacity and future development needs.
95. Planning Obligations can be secured only insofar as they are required to make development acceptable, are directly related to the development and are reasonable in scale and kind to the development. Within these constraints, Neighbourhood Plan policy identifies the role, capacity and importance of existing facilities in community uses and will expect new developments to demonstrate how they will affect local availability of community facilities and services where they are likely to give rise to increased demands on their use. Policy WYTHALL 1 asks Bromsgrove District Council to take into account the impacts of new development on the availability of local facilities and to ensure that reasonable contributions are secured to address the impacts from new development. Wythall Parish Council will continue its wider engagement with key partners to ensure local community facilities are improved over time.
96. The audit of community facilities and infrastructure identified a range of facilities as important components of community infrastructure that are not regarded as sites in local community use in the Use Classes Order. These are shown below.

GP Surgeries:

- 6 *Hollywood Medical Practice, Beaudesert Road, Hollywood B47 5DP*
- 7 *Hollyoaks Medical Centre, Station Road, Wythall B47 6ET*
- 8 *Dentist: Omnia Dental Spa, Station Road, Wythall B47 6ET*
74. *Dentist: Hollywood Dental Practice, 279 Alcester Road, Hollywood B47 5HJ*

Pharmacies:

- 9 *Hollywood Pharmacy, May Lane, Hollywood B47 5PA*
- 10 *Wythall Pharmacy, Station Road, Wythall B47 6ET*

Public Houses:

- 44 *The Packhorse, Alcester Road, Hollywood B47 5HA*
- 45 *The White Swan, Alcester Road, Wythall B47 6JG*
- 46 *The Drawbridge Inn, 5 Drawbridge Road, Majors Green B90 1DD*

Social Clubs

- 47 *Wythall Community Club, 52 Silver Street, Wythall, B47 6LZ*
- 48 *Royal British Legion, Houndsfield Lane, Wythall B47 6LS*

Local Shopping Precincts/Facilities:

- 52 *Drakes Cross Shopping Parade, Drakes Cross, B47 5HD*
- 53 *Shops and services, Hollywood Lane, Hollywood, B47 5PY*
- 54 *Shops and services, Station Road, Wythall, B47 6ET*
- 55 *Shops and services, May Lane, Hollywood, B47 5PA*
- 56 *Tesco Express, 71 Alcester Road, Hollywood B47 5PN*
- 57 *Rose Bank Stores & Saddlery, 1 Middle Lane, Birmingham B38 0DX*
- 58 *Select & Save, 262 Station Rd, Wythall, Birmingham B47 6EY*
- 59 *Shops and services, Alcester Road, Hollywood B47 5HJ*

WYTHALL 1 – Local Community Facilities

Proposals which avoid the loss of community facilities in use class F1, F2, or Sui Generis which are essential local services will be supported. Where it is proposed to remove existing community facilities, planning applications should demonstrate that:

- a. Equivalent alternative provision exists within the relevant village, or will be provided; or,
- b. It can be clearly demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed. To demonstrate lack of need, developers should submit evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made

to market the site/facility for its current use without success over the preceding 12 months.

This policy applies to the facilities listed below (which are detailed in the Audit of Community Facilities and Infrastructure in Wythall Parish Supporting Document and shown on the policies Map:

Ref	Use Class	Community Facility
1	F2(b)	Village Hall, Alcester Road, Wythall B47 6JL
2	F2(c)	Wythall Park, Silver Street, Wythall B47 6LZ
3	F2(c)	Walkers Heath Park, Walkers Heath Road, Walker's Heath, B38 9HP
4	E(d)	Woodrush Community Hub & Leisure Centre, Shawhurst Lane, Hollywood B47
5	F1(d)	Wythall Library
12	F2(c)	Hollywood Play Area, Hollywood Lane (aka Spider Park)
13	F2(c)	Hollywood Drive Play Area, Hollywood
14	F2(c)	May Farm Close Play Area, Hollywood
15	F2(c)	Franklin Close Play Area, Wythall
16	F2(c)	Burnham Road Play Area, Wythall
17	F2(c)	Wythall Park Play Areas, Silver Street, Wythall
18	F2(c)	Walkers Heath Park Play Area, Walkers Heath Road, Walkers Heath
76	Sui Generis	Kingswood Chapel Graveyard, Packhorse Lane, Wythall B47 5DQ
75	Sui Generis	St Mary's Churchyard, Chapel Lane, Wythall
19	Sui Generis	Wythall Cemetery, Middle Lane, Wythall B47 6JX
20	Sui Generis	Wythall Allotments, Baccabox Lane, Wythall B47
21	Sui Generis	Walkers Heath Allotments, Druids Lane, Walkers Heath B14 5QF
22	F1(a)	Woodrush High School, Shawhurst Lane, Hollywood B47 5JW
23	F1(a)	Coppice Primary School, Shawhurst Lane, Hollywood B47 5JN
24	F1(a)	Meadow Green Primary School, Meadow Road, Wythall B47 6EQ
26	F2(c)	Woodrush Rugby FC, Icknield Street, B38 0EL
27	F2(c)	Wake Green Amateur FC, Drawbridge Road, Majors Green B90 1DD
29	F1(f)	St Mary's Church, Shawhurst Lane, Hollywood B47 5JW
30	F1(f)	Hollywood Christian Life Centre, Simms Lane, Hollywood B47 5HN
31	F1(f)	Kingswood Meeting House, Packhorse Lane, Hollywood B47 5DQ
32	F1(f)	New Life Church Centre, Middle Lane, Headley Heath, B38 0DG
33	F1(f)	Kings Norton Christadelphian Hall, Harbinger Road, Kings Norton B38 0AD
44	Sui Generis	The Packhorse, Alcester Road, Hollywood B47 5HA
45	Sui Generis	The White Swan, Alcester Road, Wythall B47 6JG
46	Sui Generis	The Drawbridge Inn, 5 Drawbridge Road, Majors Green B90 1DD
49	F2(c)	Hollywood Golf Club, Hollywood Lane, Hollywood B47 5PP
50	F2(c)	Kings Norton Golf Club, Brockhill Lane, Alvechurch, B48 7ED
51	F2(c)	Fulford Heath Golf Club, Tanners Green Ln, Wythall, B47 6BH
61	F2(c)	Wythall Driving Range, Becketts Farm, Alcester Road, Wythall B47 6AJ
72	F1(c)	Transport Museum Wythall, Chapel Lane, Wythall B47 6JA
73	Sui Generis	Chapel Lane Club Campsite, Chapel Lane, Wythall B47 6JX

Where appropriate, proposals for new development should identify and propose contributions to meet investment priorities outlined in the Audit of Community Facilities and Infrastructure in Wythall Parish Supporting Document for important community infrastructure within Wythall Parish. This includes:

- A - Parking provision at Wythall Station
- B - Additional parking for Wythall Village Hall or an alternative community centre site
- C - Improvements to, and sustained maintenance of, community buildings in Wythall Park
- D - Provision of primary health care services
- E - Car park provisions for primary healthcare services
- F – Replacement larger site for Meadow Green Primary School
- G - Sports facility improvements at Woodrush Hub (Leisure Centre)
- H - Sign for Wythall Library
- I - Additional adult education facilities at Wythall Library
- J - Second site for allotments
- K - Second site for cemetery
- L - Energy efficiency improvements at Coppice Primary School
- M – In the long term a new high school
- N – Cycle Parking at key shops and facilities

5. Housing Requirements

97. A key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan is to make sure new housing development delivers housing of a size and type and level of affordability which meets the needs of people living in the area. This has several dimensions including providing homes that new households and families can afford to maintain community cohesion and balance, to facilitate life stage changes in accommodation such as downsizing, thereby releasing larger houses, and to ensure housing is affordable for all sections of the community.
98. Wythall's population grew by 591 people between 2011 and 2021 to a total of 12,269, according to 2021 Census. A total of 324 new dwellings were completed between 2011 and 2022. Since 2016, 204 dwellings have been completed and of these 31.4% were classed as affordable homes.
99. The development plan for Bromsgrove is out of date with regard to its housing land supply. The updated National Planning Policy Framework and increased Local Housing Requirements applying to Bromsgrove District will increase the likelihood of Green Belt land releases within the district to facilitate development, or development on Green Belt land through speculative development proposals, including in Wythall Parish.
100. The Neighbourhood Plan can only address matters within the Neighbourhood Area as defined, which is the Wythall Parish boundary. Clearly, Wythall Parish shares boundaries with two other areas where development is taking place and which have potential to meet local housing needs.

Wythall Housing Needs Assessment

101. A valuable role of the Neighbourhood Plan is to provide specific local information on housing affordability and on population which gives rise to different housing requirements. A robust Housing Needs Assessments has been prepared in support of the Neighbourhood Plan to complement district-wide assessments of housing need and allow for the application of Local Plan policies to take account of needs within Wythall based on robust information.
102. Technical support has been obtained through Locality from AECOM to provide a Housing Needs Assessment for Wythall (published October 2022). The period covered by the assessment is from 2023 to 2040. This has examined the tenure profile, prices and affordability of housing in Wythall Parish. It has examined the quantity of affordable housing needed and how this should be provided in terms of tenure. It has also considered the need for different types and sizes of homes reflecting age profiles and household composition, to suggest a future mix of dwelling sizes. In the context of the age profile within the Parish, it has also considered the need for specialist housing for the elderly. The Housing Needs Assessment results and policy considerations for the Neighbourhood Plan are addressed in turn below.
103. Adopted Bromsgrove District Plan Policies relevant to the matters addressed in the Housing Needs Assessment are set out in , BDP7 (Housing Mix and Density), BDP8 (Affordable Housing), BDP9 (Rural Exception Sites) and BDP10 (Homes for the elderly). In all cases the Housing Needs Assessment provides information which supports policies in the Neighbourhood Plan which aids the effective implementation of these strategic policies in the Wythall context.

Housing Requirement for Wythall

104. The Adopted Local Plan does not provide a sufficient basis for setting a forward housing requirement for Wythall Parish. The Emerging Local Plan has not so far produced proposals which would help to set future housing requirements in the Parish. A working housing

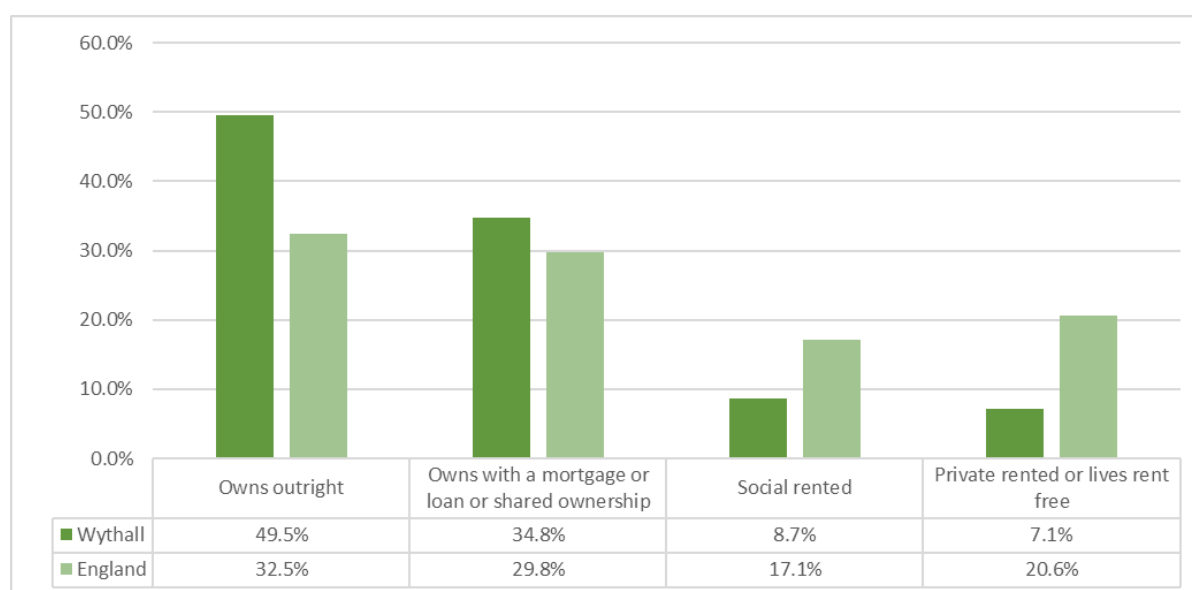
requirement is not available from Bromsgrove District Council and therefore an understanding of a total housing requirement was not available for the Housing Needs Assessment. The Housing Needs Assessments has identified a proxy total housing requirement across Bromsgrove District over the Neighbourhood Plan Period, drawing on the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment published by Bromsgrove District Council in 2022. It pro-rates the total by population to Wythall as a potential guide to likely totals required in the Parish.

105. This is not considered further in the Neighbourhood Plan because no assumption can be made that this total will need to be met in Wythall as the only means to do that would be to release land from the Green Belt. To date, there is no indication when this will occur. Consideration of the amounts of housing likely to be provided in the Parish and therefore of the amount of affordable housing delivered through that is therefore currently not known. The Neighbourhood Plan concentrates on matters that should guide affordable housing provision based on assessed housing needs, whatever total the Parish is eventually asked to accommodate.

Housing Tenure in Wythall

106. 2021 Census information for Parishes was not published at the time of the Housing Needs Assessment but has been used in Figure 4, which shows that in 2021 Wythall had a significantly higher proportion of households living in owner occupied homes than the average for England and was also higher than the Bromsgrove district average. Correspondingly smaller proportions of households were living in shared ownership or rented homes.

Figure 4 – Housing Tenure of Household in Wythall Parish in 2021.



Source: ONS, Census 2021

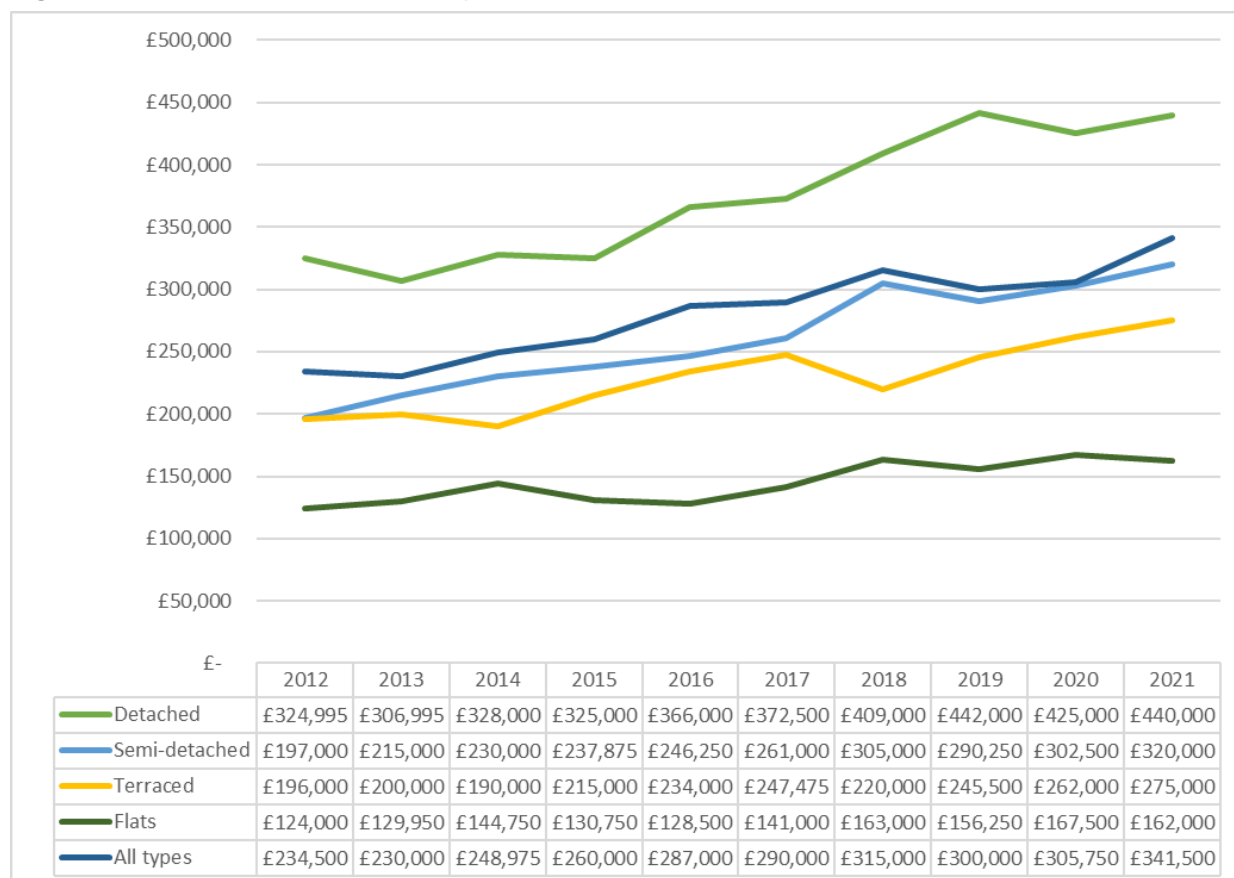
Incomes and House Price Affordability in Wythall

107. The Housing Needs Assessment has provided Land Registry data for the period 2012-2021 on different house types within the Parish. Figure 5 presents the median house price in each year of the period for detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, and for flats. The overall average for all types of home is also included. Over the period 2012-2021, the median price of all homes grew by an average 45.6%. The price of flats grew by 30.6%, terraced house prices grew by 40.3% and detached house prices grew by 35.4%. The largest growth in price was of semi-detached

houses, the median average price of which grew by 62.4%. The data does not indicate the volume of sales.¹

108. An important consideration is the price of cheaper housing. Lower Quartile (cheapest 25%) house prices grew by 57.7% between 2012-2021 (from £186,625 to £294,375).

Figure 5 – House Price Trends in Wythall Parish, 2012-2021



Source: data from Land Registry PPD, taken from AECOM Housing Needs Assessment, October 2022

109. How affordable the price of housing is to local people depends on whether their income levels are sufficient to access it. Affordability will be in relation to owner occupation through purchase of homes, through renting, and through shared ownership.
110. The Housing Needs Assessment gathered available data to determine that (in 2018) average total household incomes within Wythall were £43,800. It also provides district-wide data on lower quartile individual earnings, which were £15,030 in 2020². Two lower quartile earners in a household would therefore have a total household income of £30,060.
111. An Affordability matrix is presented in Figure 6. This lists the different types of market and affordable housing products that are available, and the income required to access them in terms of affordability. The colour coding indicates Unaffordable housing products (in red), housing products which are marginally affordable (in yellow) and affordable housing products (in green).

¹ Wythall Housing Needs Assessment, Table 4-3

² Wythall Housing Needs Assessment, para 87-90

112. The Housing Needs Assessment makes assumptions that mortgages will be limited to 3.5 times single salary and 2.75 times joint salaries, and that housing costs would not exceed 30% of household income. On this basis, households on average incomes and lower quartile earning households with two incomes are not able to access local market housing for sale, including entry-level housing unless there is very large deposit. Private renting is not affordable for households with two lower quartile incomes, unless a higher proportion of income is devoted to paying rent.

Figure 6 – Affordability Thresholds for different types of home in Wythall

Tenure	Mortgage value (90% of price)	Annual rent	Income required	Affordable on average incomes? £43,800	Affordable on LQ earnings (single earner)? £15,030	Affordable on LQ earnings (2 earners)? £30,060
Market Housing						
Median House Price	£307,350	-	£87,814	No	No	No
Estimated NA New Build Entry-Level House Price	£279,323		£79,807	No	No	No
LQ/Entry-level House Price	£264,938	-	£75,696	No	No	No
LA New Build Median House Price	£296,996	-	£84,856	No	No	No
Average Market Rent	-	£14,875	£49,584	No	No	No
Entry-level Market Rent	-	£11,919	£39,731	Yes	No	No
Affordable Home Ownership						
First Homes (-30%)	£195,526	-	£55,865	No	No	No
First Homes (-40%)	£167,594	-	£47,884	No	No	No
First Homes (-50%)	£139,661	-	£39,903	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (50%)	£139,661	£3,879	£52,835	No	No	No
Shared Ownership (25%)	£69,831	£5,819	£39,349	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (10%)	£27,932	£6,983	£31,258	Yes	No	Marginal
Affordable Rented Housing						
Affordable Rent	-	£5,936	£19,766	Yes	No	Yes
Social Rent	-	£4,883	£16,260	Yes	Marginal	Yes

Source: AECOM Housing Needs Assessment, October 2022, Table 4-4

First Homes

113. Turning to affordable housing products, the 'First Homes' product works by discounting and capping the price of market housing for first time buyers with the ability to prioritise their availability for local people and for key workers. First Homes provision was formerly a required element of affordable housing, but this is no longer the case although it is still available as a way for eligible first-time buyers to purchase new-build or developer-allocated homes at a discount. Legal restrictions ensure discounts are retained for future purchasers. Neighbourhood Plans can apply additional criteria such as a lower income cap and a local connection test. The level of discount is a minimum 30% and the maximum price after the discount is £250,000 outside London. Increased discounts can be justified and applied, also through Neighbourhood Plans.
114. The Housing Needs Assessment has assessed whether households on average incomes could afford First Homes and has determined that with a maximum 50% discount on local newbuild median house prices, these households would be able to access this type of housing. Lower

Quartile Earners in two-earner households would need a discount larger than the scheme allows for entry level new homes and so would not be affordable.³

Shared Ownership

115. Shared ownership housing products combine payments to acquire equity in a property (traditional 25% stake which is being reduced to a minimum 10% stake) with rent. The combined costs can be expensive to levels approaching those of private rent. Based on 10-25% equity stake, shared ownership homes would be affordable to households on average incomes in Wythall, but not to lower quartile income households with one earner. A lower quartile income household with two earners would marginally afford shared ownership housing with the minimum 10% equity stake.

Affordable and Social Rent

116. Social Rent tenure is housing owned by local authorities and housing associations and is usually available based on income and other eligibility criteria. Affordable Rent is available at no more than 80% of the local market rent with similar eligibility criteria. Figure 7 shows that lower quartile single income households in Wythall cannot afford to access affordable rent accommodation and have only marginal affordability of social rent accommodation. Two-earner lower quartile income households can afford both affordable rent and social rent.
117. The Housing Needs Assessment reviewed August 2022 Bromsgrove District Council Housing Register data for Wythall Parish to show that, at that time, 55 households were unable to access affordable rented homes suitable for their needs in the Parish (such households may be currently housed in other accommodation).

Affordable Housing Policy Implications

118. Adopted Bromsgrove District Plan policy BDP8.1 requires developments proposing a net increase of 11 or more dwellings to provide up to 40% affordable housing on greenfield sites or any sites accommodating 200 or more dwellings; or up to 30% affordable housing on brownfield sites accommodating less than 200 dwellings. In practice, within Wythall, just over 31% of new homes were affordable in developments since 2016, which would include schemes of 10 or fewer dwellings where no affordable housing requirement applies. Wythall is broadly in agreement with the Issues and Options document from the emerging Bromsgrove District Plan Review which suggested that a 70% affordable rented to 30% affordable ownership is appropriate. However, we would go further and state that within the 30% affordable ownership portion, 5% should be shared ownership housing with equity stakes from 10. In addition, discounts for first time buyers such as the 'First Homes' product should also be available, with affordable housing prioritised for people with a local connection in the first instance. This would ensure that average and lower quartile income households can access the housing made available.

³ Wythall Housing Needs Assessment, Table 4-5

WYTHALL 2 - Affordable Housing Tenure

Affordable Housing provided in Wythall Parish should ensure that as many households as possible based in Wythall can afford to access it. Whilst the precise mix of affordable housing will be decided on a site-by-site basis, applications should demonstrate how proposals have considered the following housing affordability factors in Wythall Parish:

1. Social Rent and Affordable Rent should form around 70% of affordable housing provision through new development in Wythall. Social Rented homes should be provided in larger schemes to ensure that provision is made for lower quartile income households.
2. Affordable home ownership should form around 30% of affordable housing provision in Wythall Parish, including a maximum 5% provision of Shared Ownership dwellings.
 - i. First Homes are affordable to local people on average incomes, but only with a 50% discount and where viable they should be provided on this basis.
 - ii. Shared Ownership housing is of marginal affordability in Wythall Parish. Equity stakes should be set at a 10% minimum.

Local Connection Requirement - First Homes, shared equity homes, social rented and affordable rented homes should be prioritised for people with a local connection in the first instance. Criteria for demonstrating a local connection are set out below:

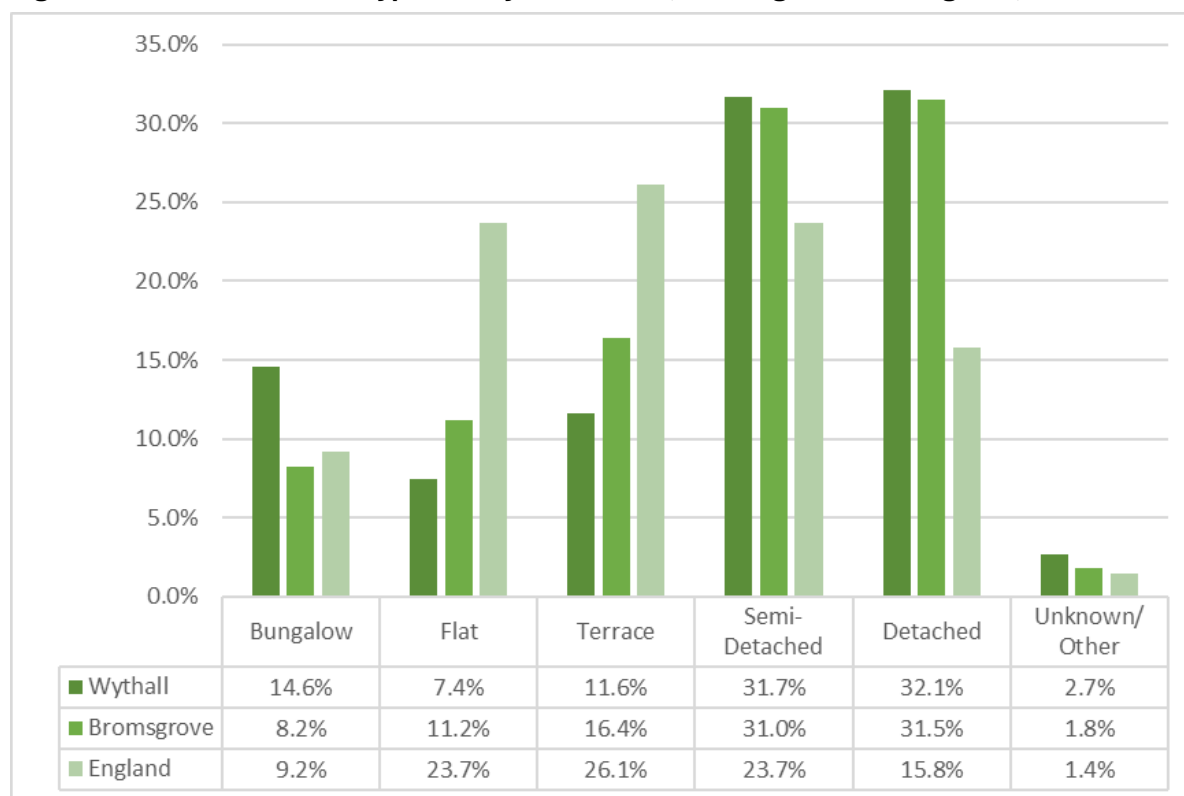
- a) Residency in Wythall Parish for the last 2 years consecutively or 3 years out of the last 5 years from the time the planning application was submitted to the Council.
- b) Close family continuous residency in Wythall Parish (parents, siblings, non-dependent children) evidenced for at least 5 years from the time the planning application was submitted to the Council.
- c) Paid employment in Wythall Parish of 16 hours per week average for minimum period of 1 year from the time the planning application was submitted to the Council. (including zero hours contracts).
- d) Offer of permanent employment to social tenant in Wythall Parish of 16 hours per week average for period no less than 1 year (including zero hours contracts) from the time the planning application was submitted to the Council and where it is unreasonable to travel from current social housing property.

Housing Type and Size in Wythall

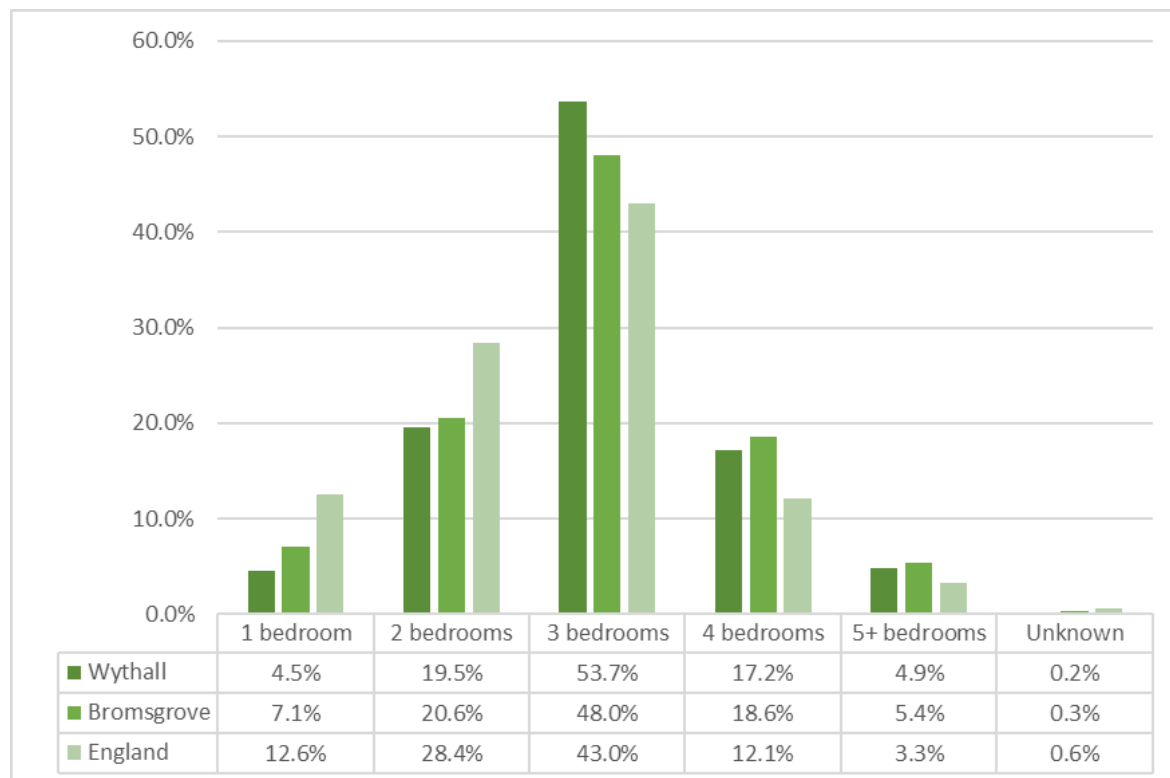
119. Understanding the composition of existing local housing in Wythall is important to identifying what priorities should be adopted for future provision in the Parish. The Housing Needs Assessment for Wythall prepared by AECOM provides a baseline default scenario onto which the considerations of the strategy can be applied. The following charts provide current and trend information on housing stock and changes to it in the period 2011-2021.
120. Figure 7 shows the proportion of different types of property in Wythall Parish compared to Bromsgrove and England, revealing that Bungalow provision is a particular feature of the housing stock in Wythall over the other areas and flats and terrace houses are less evident compared to Bromsgrove more generally and the England average.

121. Figure 8 shows that, compared to the rest of Bromsgrove and England as a whole, 1-bedroom properties are a significantly smaller proportion of the housing stock in Wythall Parish. In addition, there is a greater proportion of 3-bedroom properties in Wythall compared to the whole of Bromsgrove and England. The graph also shows a slightly lower proportion of large 4 and 5 bedroom properties in Wythall, compared to the whole of Bromsgrove, although these figures are both higher than for England as a whole. 2-bedroom properties within Wythall and Bromsgrove generally make a significantly lower contribution to house types than for England as a whole. This may relate to the low proportion of flats in the area.

Figure 7 –Accommodation Types in Wythall Parish, Bromsgrove and England, 2021



Source: AECOM Housing Needs Assessment, Table 5-2

Figure 8 – Accommodation size in Wythall Parish, Bromsgrove and England, 2021

Source: AECOM Housing Needs Assessment, Table 5-4

Policy Considerations

122. In considering what types of houses are required in the Parish for the Neighbourhood Plan period to 2040 and what size of accommodation is needed, a consideration is needed of the current housing stock, the population composition and household size – this points to an ageing population and a predominance of three bedroom semi-detached and detached properties.
123. The Neighbourhood Plan strategy for meeting future community objectives must also be considered. These are focused on restoring a well-balanced community in terms of a population comprised of a spread of households across all life stages, who are able to access local housing in accordance with their income and needs. That balance argues in favour of ensuring that all types of houses are provided for smaller and larger households, but recognising that in terms of the current population structure and in terms of the housing likely to be accessible to younger households necessary to attain a balanced community in Wythall, a particular focus on smaller properties is needed.
124. The Bromsgrove District Plan sets out a local housing requirement for housing provision to meet the wider needs of the community as a whole in the district, including family housing for the period to 2030. The emerging Bromsgrove District Local Plan will set out new local housing requirement for Wythall Parish going forward to 2043. In meeting these requirements, proposals for new development should reflect local needs. A larger proportion of housing in Wythall Parish is under-occupied by smaller, more elderly households. A particular requirement for the Parish is accommodation for downsizers who are releasing houses and using equity to acquire smaller properties, ideally apartments. Their requirement is for good quality accommodation in accordance with their buying power and life stage. The release of larger homes will improve availability for larger households, including families.

WYTHALL 3 - Housing Types and Sizes in Wythall

New housing provision in Wythall should meet a range of housing needs which assists in maintaining a balanced community within Wythall Parish. This requires housing of all sizes and different sites might meet specific local housing needs or a broad range of local and strategic housing needs with each considered on their merits. Proposals which would provide 2-bedroom open market properties, including accessible low-rise apartments or houses to meet the specific housing needs of the local population, will be welcome in principle.

6. Design and Development Form

125. The neighbourhood plan has an important focus on ensuring that new development and infrastructure design maintains and enhances the quality of existing settlements in the Parish. The local community have expressed clear objectives to ensure that new development complements existing development and that design approaches reflect the realities of modern living in relation to car parking, bin storage and space requirements. There is clear desire to create new developments which are high quality expressed through appropriate densities, distinctive design which takes inspiration from local design and through quality construction, materials and public realm infrastructure.
126. A further consideration is how local design priorities will shape housing growth, should this occur. At the time of writing, the preferred spatial strategy for the location of additional housing within Bromsgrove District is not published or known. It has been a widely held assumption that land will need to be identified for green belt release and allocation within an updated local plan. Wythall Parish, among others, is a potential location for this to occur.
127. Whether it is planned or is speculative, strategic housing development on greenfield green belt sites in Wythall Parish would have a transformational effect on its existing settlements. As well as considering how development within existing settlements should be designed, it is therefore important to also consider how future development outside settlements should relate to existing settlements in design terms and in terms of housing densities, development form and scale.
128. AECOM were appointed to prepare design codes to provide clear guidance for new development within and adjacent to current built development in the Parish. Whilst Bromsgrove District Council's spatial strategy options were not known at the time of this work, AECOM were briefed to consider how development on land adjacent to existing settlement should be planned to protect existing character features and existing amenities. The Design Guidelines and Design Codes Report (October 2023) (DGDC), prepared as a supporting document to the Neighbourhood Plan, has identified area-wide design codes and individual design codes for seven Character Areas identified in the Parish, shown in Figure 9.

Character Areas

129. AECOM undertook analysis of settlements and countryside within the Parish to identify similarities and distinctions between different areas as expressed through building styles, era of development, settlement characteristics and sense of place. From this, seven separate character areas were established, described below.

1 - Walkers Heath

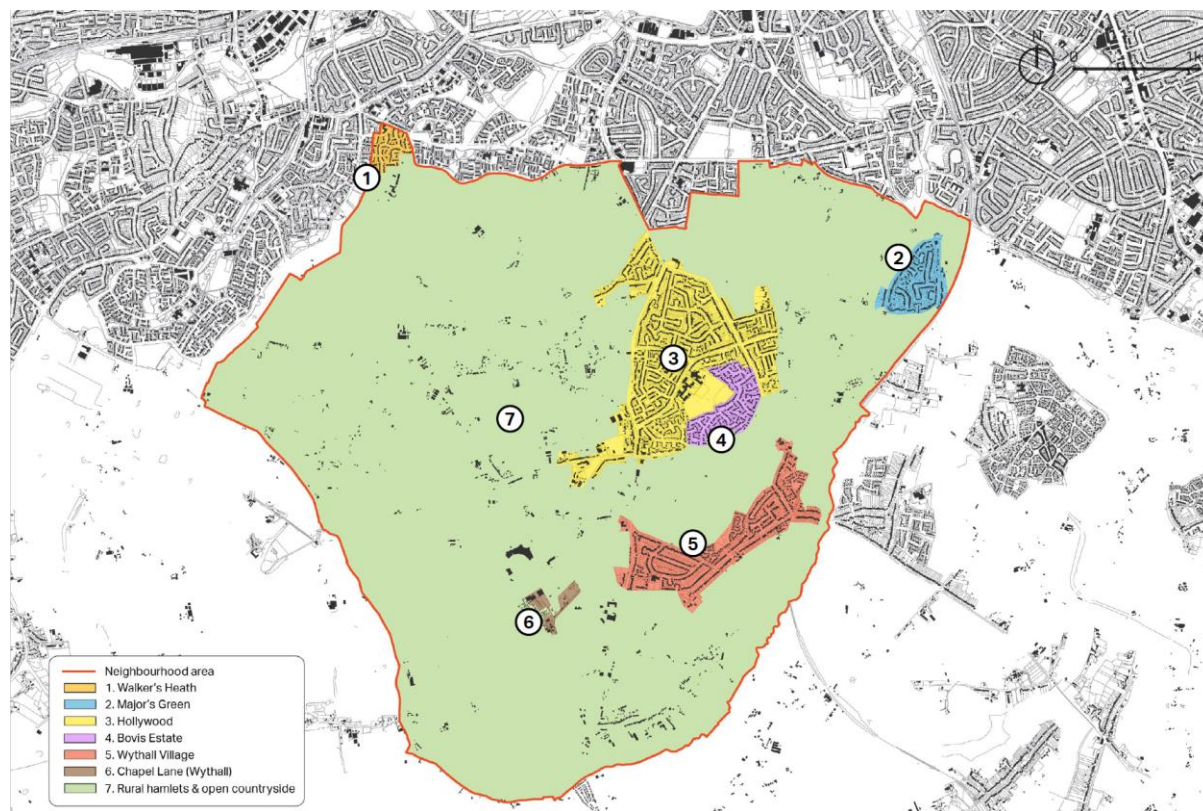
130. Whilst part of Wythall Parish, Walkers Heath is part of the Kings Norton suburb of Birmingham and clearly interacts with and relies on services within Birmingham. Typical development within Walkers Heath is mid to late 20th Century housing including maisonettes, semi-detached and detached houses. Walker Heath Park and Moundsley Hall Care Village are notable features of this area.

2 - Major's Green

131. Located in the northeast corner of Wythall Parish, Major's Green is primarily a residential settlement which lacks community facilities apart from the Drawbridge Inn public house and the Wake Green FC ground. The distinct village envelope encloses mostly mid to late 20th century

detached and semi-detached houses. Nearby, Berry Mound Hill Fort and the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal provide historic points interest.

Figure 9 – Character Areas within Wythall Parish



Source: AECOM 2023

3 - Hollywood

132. Hollywood is the largest settlement in Wythall Parish. It contains several housing estates which differ in style, including significant bungalow development in addition to areas of 20th Century and 21st Century semi-detached and detached houses. Most of the community facilities serving the Parish are located in the settlement.

4 - Bovis Estate

133. Located within Hollywood, the Bovis Estate is a single development with a distinctive style and character setting it apart from the rest of Hollywood. The area is well-regarded locally for the larger plot sizes, extensive greenery in public and private areas, and on-plot parking provision.

5 - Wythall Village

134. Separated from Hollywood and located to its south, Wythall Village hosts Wythall Train Station which serves the Parish with rail services to Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon. Wythall is a historic village, linear in form and which possesses some heritage buildings, but which also contains significant mid to late 20th Century housing developments of primarily semi-detached, detached and bungalow houses. More recent 21st Century developments at Burnham Road and Selsdon Close (excluded from the area) are regarded locally as introducing unwelcome character changes to be avoided in future developments, as they concentrate buildings within the development at high density and this is not mitigated by adjacent open areas, and overall does not complement the existing Character Area.

6 - Chapel Lane (Wythall)

135. The age and heritage of buildings and streets within the Chapel Lane area sets it apart from the rest of Wythall and worthy of its own Character Area. St Mary's Church and the Transport Museum are located in this area, whilst a range of mixed uses are also present including the Wythall Cemetery and commercial uses. The Character Area is quite open and has a rural character emphasised through the presence of agricultural fields and hedgerows in the area.

7 - Rural Hamlets and Open Countryside Character Area

136. Outside the main settlement of the Parish, the countryside forms a natural open landscape of arable land interspersed with small hamlets and isolated development. All is washed over by the green belt. Tanners Green is a small hamlet of mostly detached houses and Inford has a mix of semi-detached and detached houses. Owing to the isolated and sporadic nature of development throughout a large area of open countryside, the styles are varied and range from historic farmhouses to modern 21st Century infill houses. The area contains a wildlife corridor for the River Cole, two Sites of Special Scientific Interest and has a strong rural character.
137. Design Guidelines and Codes were prepared by AECOM to guide development within the Character Areas identified which are set out in Table 4. Further Design Guidance and Codes were prepared to guide new development in the Parish as a whole, set out in Table 5

Table 4 – Design Principles for Wythall Parish Character Areas

Design Principles for Walkers Heath Character Area	
	Encourage fewer hard boundaries (i.e. closed-board fencing) within the area, and replacing with natural boundaries such as hedgerow and planting
	Maintain the area's community planting and green spaces such as the area's green verges, street planting, parks and allotment space
	Improve the area's permeability by providing pedestrian routes through / extending cul-de-sacs where possible
	Protected pedestrian links to the south of the area to maintain connectivity with the rest of the Neighbourhood Area
	Provide a sensitive landscape treatment where development borders the open landscape/green spaces to the south of the area
Design Principles for Major's Green Character Area.	
	Utilise Peterbrook Road at the aqueduct (from Solihull), Haslucks Green Road at Bill Lane Junction (from Solihull) and at Tilehouse Lane (from Solihull) to create a sense of arrival in Major's Green (see Code F: Village Gateways).
	To maintain the village's distinct settlement boundary and separation from adjacent settlements
	Coalescing with nearby developments should be avoided by maintaining green gaps
	Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape
	To preserve the amenity and identity of the village's historic assets including the drawbridge and Berry Mound hill fort
	To enhance the boundary treatments of existing and new development via red brick wall and hedgerow boundaries
Design Principles for Hollywood Character Area	
	Utilise Houndsfield Lane railway bridge (from Solihull) and at Alcester Road at Maypole Island (from Birmingham) to create a sense of arrival in Hollywood (see Code F: Village Gateways).
	To encourage fewer hard boundaries (i.e. closed-board fencing) within the area, and replacing with natural boundaries such as hedgerow and planting
	To maintain the village's distinct settlement boundary and separation from adjacent settlements
	Coalescing with nearby developments should be avoided by maintaining green gaps
	Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape
	To preserve and enhance Hollywood's green infrastructure such as its grass verges, street trees and parks

Design Principles for the Bovis Estate Character Area
To replicate the open character of the estate in future development in the areas adjacent to the Bovis Estate, as well as across the whole Neighbourhood Area
To maintain the green character of the area by preserving and enhancing its green infrastructure (i.e. grass verges, street trees, front gardens)
To maintain the area's openness by ensuring on-plot parking remains a key feature of residential plots within the Bovis Estate, as well as within plots across the Neighbourhood Area.
To utilise junctions at either end of Hollywood Lane as gateway locations for creating a sense of arrival to Hollywood (see Code F: Village Gateways)
Design Principles for Wythall Village Character Area
To utilise either end of Station Road as gateway locations for creating a sense of arrival to Wythall as well as the whole Neighbourhood Area (see Code F: Village Gateways)
Promote the area's local vernacular by referencing the style and features of its historic development, in new proposals
Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape
Uphold the village's settlement boundary by ensuring new development avoids coalescing with surrounding settlements (i.e. Tidbury Green to the east)
Utilise Norton Lane at the River Cole to create a sense of arrival in Wythall Village (see Code F: Village Gateways).
Design Principles for Chapel Lane (Wythall) Character Area
Promote the area's local vernacular by referencing the style and features of its historic development (i.e. Chapel Lane cottages), in new proposals
Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape (where this is located in what is currently countryside).
Uphold the area's rural character by ensuring new development incorporates hedgerow / landscape features within proposals
Design Principles for the Rural Hamlets and Open Countryside Character Area
Utilise entry points into the Parish from adjacent areas at A435 at Watery Lane entrance (from Beoley Parish), Weatheroak Hill/Hill Lane (from Alvechurch Parish), Redhill Road at Redhill Farm (from Alvechurch Parish), Gayhill Lane/Walkers Heath Road (from Birmingham) and Crabmill Lane/Druids Lane (from Birmingham), to create a sense of arrival in Wythall Parish rural areas (see Code F: Village Gateways).
Promote the area's local vernacular by referencing the style and features of its historic development (i.e. farmhouse-style heritage), in new proposals
Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape (where this is located in what is currently countryside).
Uphold the area's rural character by ensuring new development incorporates hedgerow / landscape features within proposals
To protect and enhance the area's natural/wildlife assets (i.e. River Cole)

Source: AECOM, 2023 and Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, 2024

Table 5 – Design Guidance Codes for New Development in Wythall Parish

Built Character Features
A1 - Architectural detailing: Decorative brick, stone and wood detailing is encouraged to provide reference to the area's historic character. Such detailing should reference the Neighbourhood Area's local vernacular, which is outlined in Section 3 of the DGDC. Please note, these features will vary slightly depending on the character area in which a site lies and/ or relates to. Some areas have a modern style or a mock-tudor style and this can work also provided that design and materials are high quality and that they do not negatively impact on existing character.
A2 - Contextual colourways: The choice of colour and finish is an important design consideration in mitigating adverse visual impacts on village-scapes and character. Subtle or muted colours should be used to ensure cohesion with existing high quality development.
A3 - Boundary treatments: Residential plots should include either red brick wall, hedgerow, wrought iron fences, or include a hybrid mix of these as boundary treatments.

A4 - Avoiding overly complicated design: Proposals should adopt a simple and focused palette that responds to the streetscape and space in which it relates. Overly complicated and random mixes of materials / palettes should be avoided. For example, some of Wythall's Victorian terraces and cottages have a distinct but simple character, with uncomplicated red brick facades.

A5 - Avoiding low quality precedent: Existing and/or nearby examples of low quality design should not be referenced or replicated. Instead, proposals should refer to high-quality contextual features such as those illustrated in the built form features graphic in Section 3 of the DGDC.

A6 - Character area response: Proposals must respond to the character area with one of the following three approaches, considered in the following order; **1. Harmonise** – clearly respond to existing characteristics within the character area, street and site, including scale, form and appearance; **2. Complement** - doing something slightly different that adds to the overall character and quality in a way that is nonetheless fitting, for example, additional high quality materials but harmonising in scale, form and positioning; or **3. Innovate** – doing something of high design quality that is different but adds positively to the built-form and character and is considered an exemplar approach for others to follow. For example, develop innovative building form and use low embodied energy, high quality materials that add to the overall design quality, sustainability and richness of the area. **NOTE:** When adhering to 'harmonise' or 'complement', low quality precedent should be avoided in the design stages

Infill Development

B1 - Scale and massing: Building scale and massing should be in keeping with the prevailing development pattern and not be overbearing on existing properties or deprive them of light, including over-looking or over-shading of windows and amenity space.

B2 - Fenestration: Building fenestration and pattern should be in keeping with the predominant positive buildings character on the street or harmonise with adjacent buildings of good character.

B3 - Access: Building entrances will address the street with a main access and main fenestration. Corner buildings should address both streets with fenestration but the main entrance could be on either subject to access requirements.

B4 - Setbacks: The building line should reflect the street and be set back no more than a maximum of 1.5m from adjacent buildings unless additional landscaping or tree planting is being introduced to the street scene; where buildings are set back from the pavement a boundary feature should define the plot and link up to adjacent buildings.

B5 - Enclosure: Building scale and position on plot should help to define and enclose the space within the street corridor or square to an appropriate degree based on the existing street section (building to building) and level of enclosure (ratio of street width to building height).

B6 - Facade design: Building façade design should respect the horizontal rhythm of plots and building subdivisions on the street in order to integrate and maintain visual continuity or add to the visual interest where required.

B7 - Building height: Buildings heights should vary from 1.0 – 2.5 storeys depending on adjacent plots. A variable eaves line and ridgeline is allowed to create interest but variation between adjacent buildings should be a maximum of 0.5 storey in general.

B8 - Refuse storage: Bin storage amenity should be provided with stores big enough for 3 bins per dwelling being integrated within plot boundaries. Ginnels / alleyways should be considered for terraced buildings with 4 or more units in order to accommodate bin storage and access.

B9 - Parking provision: Parking should be integrated on plot where possible with parking spaces set behind the building line. Off-street parking should be provided within all residential developments to alleviate the area's chronic on-street parking and congestion issues, particularly in new developments including Selsdon Close, Burnham Road and Coppice Gardens.

Conversions, Extensions and Outbuildings

C1 – Quality and durable construction: Conversions, extensions and outbuildings should be made from high-quality and durable materials so to maintain their integrity and aesthetics over time. They should use both the high-quality construction methods of nearby development as well as the latest sustainable construction techniques on the market at the time. The lifespan of any new construction should be maximised wherever possible.

C2 - Matching the existing dwelling: Conversions, extensions, and outbuildings should emulate or reference the architectural detailing and character of the primary dwelling. The architectural details (i.e. finials, coping, string courses, and window and door surrounds) of the existing dwelling should be carefully considered in any new construction within the plot.

C3 - Dormers: Dormer windows should be modest in size and either match, complement, or reference the existing building.

C4 - Doors and windows: New windows and doors should reflect the character of each village, as well as that of the original dwelling. Both the material and colour of doors and windows are an important design consideration and should complement both plot and setting.

C5 - Chimneys: Chimneys contribute to the local roofscape and overall character of the area. They should therefore be retained, referenced, or emulated.

C6 - Screening outbuildings: They should ideally be positioned behind screening so to be out of public view (e.g. trees, planting, existing buildings). Outbuildings (not including garden structures such as sheds, greenhouses etc.) should be positioned close to the primary dwelling. This will help to minimise the visual impact of any outbuilding due to screening provided by the dwelling.

C8 - Outbuilding aesthetic: Where screening is not possible, the aesthetic quality of the structure should be of a higher quality, so to positively contribute to the character and context of the surrounding area.

C9 - Outbuildings as secondary tier buildings: There should be a clear building hierarchy with outbuildings being secondary to the primary dwelling within a plot.

Green Infrastructure and Habitat Creation

D1 - Retaining landscape habitats: Existing landscape features such as trees, ponds, streams, hedgerows, verges and ditches should be retained where possible. The creation, maintenance and extension of wildlife corridors will be encouraged. All proposed planting should be native species in order to promote biodiversity.

D2 - Replacing landscape features: Where trees and other landscape features cannot be retained, they should be replaced with a proportional or higher quality landscaping scheme. Replacing a mature tree for example on a 1-for-1 basis is not proportional due to the reduction in the canopy cover, habitat, and public amenity. The size and amenity of the original landscaping should be accounted for in any landscape replacement. For now native UK plant species trees should be preferred or non-native where a specific reason exists.

D3 - Wildlife habitats: New developments must provide habitat creation by installing wildlife-friendly spaces and movement corridors such as solitary bee bricks, bumble bee boxes, swift bricks and hedgehog highways. Opportunities to improve water-based habitats should be considered. All homes within a development should include some form of wildlife-friendly installation to ensure a cohesive network of spaces for wildlife is created.

D4 - Interconnectivity: Landscaping and public realm should be interconnected to create a network of green and blue infrastructure both within any site, whilst connecting to the wider routes and places across the Neighbourhood Area.

D5 - Recreational green spaces: Open spaces should be located within walking distance of residential areas and linked through a series of green networks or corridors. Such linkages support a green infrastructure approach to development, allowing wildlife to move along corridors to access foraging opportunities and habitats and people to access a range of different recreational facilities.

D6 - Natural offsets: Include suitable offsets to boundary vegetation such as hedgerows and provide additional planting on sensitive landscape edges. Screen planting may be required on some sites and should be designed in conjunction with results of any landscape and visual impact surveys.

D7 - Street trees and grass verges: New street proposals should include street trees and/or grass verges and should be provided in accordance with Worcestershire County Council's Streetscape Design Guide. Grass verges in particular are commonplace throughout the Neighbourhood Area, making the continuation of such features important in retaining local character. Grass verges should vary in shape and size dependent on location, but should be no narrower than 1.5m.

Sustainable Design and Climate Resilience

E1 - Resilience to Climate Change: All new development should work to moderate extremes of temperature, wind, humidity, local flooding and pollution within the Parish: • Avoid siting homes in high risk flood areas and mitigate increased risk of storms/flooding with sustainable drainage systems. These reduce the amount and rate at which surface water reaches sewers/watercourses. Often, the most sustainable option is collecting this water for reuse, for example in a water butt or rainwater harvesting system. • Plant trees as part of major development for habitat, fuel and sustainable building materials. • Ecosystems cannot adapt as fast as the climate is changing leading to loss of biodiversity. Protecting and enhancing the Neighbourhood Area's watercourses and green infrastructure can combat this. Aim to increase ecology through biodiversity net-gain (BNG) on major development sites.

E2 – Assessing Alternative Energy Sources: Key considerations in the assessment of alternative energy sources may include: • Optimise solar orientation of streets and buildings. Aim to orient buildings within 30° of south (both main fenestration and roof plane) for solar gain, solar energy (solar panels) and natural daylighting; • Ground

conditions to accommodate loops for ground source heat and space for air source heat pump units; • Links to local estates for sustainable coppicing, harvesting or recycling of biomass fuels; and • Local wind speed and direction for micro-grid wind turbines. • Applicants must be mindful noise and visual pollution by providing appropriate screening measures.

E3 - Energy efficiency measures towards Net-Zero carbon: By default, new development should adopt a fabric first approach in line with the governments emerging Future Homes Standard, to attain higher standards of insulation and energy conservation. • Reducing energy demand further by employing passive design principles for homes is desirable and can make some forms of development more acceptable to the community (window orientation, solar gain, solar shading, increased insulation, ventilation with heat-recovery); • Maximise on-site renewable energy generation (solar, ground source, air source and wind driven); Consider building form and thermal efficiency: point-block/ terraced / semi-detached / detached all have different energy efficiency profiles. This must be balanced with local design preference and character considerations to ease acceptance for development.

E4 – Electric Vehicle charging: Current transition to electric vehicle technology and ownership comes with related issues that must be addressed by new development. Design issues to address for EV charging at the home include: • Convenient on plot parking and charging points close to homes • Potential to incorporate charging points under cover within car ports and garages • Still need to integrate car parking sensitively within the street scene. For example, parking set behind the building line or front of plot spaces lined with native hedgerow planting • Need to consider visitor parking / charging needs • Potential for providing secure, serviced communal parking areas for higher density homes • Existing unallocated / on-street parking areas and feasibility to provide electric charging infrastructure not linked to the home.

Village Gateways

F1 - Placemaking: Designers must set out a clear response to the character of the individual settlements in which development is sited or adjacent to. This should be achieved by respecting and/or referencing both the built and natural character features within the village. Suggested locations for village gateways are listed in the Design Guidelines and Design Codes document.

F2 - Entry Treatments: Entry treatments are often used at the sides of roads to notify drivers of their arrival into an area with a different character. They can be employed to indicate the beginning of traffic calming measures or that the driver is entering a different speed zone.

F3 - Location: A gateway should be positioned so that motorists do not encounter it unexpectedly as this could be dangerous. Consideration should be given when putting gateways on lengthy curves where they might not initially be visible to the vehicle. Gateway placement ought to avoid obstructing access to frontage properties, and there should be a sufficient clear verge to accommodate any vertical elements. A gateway placed close to the first structures in a neighbourhood can accentuate a shift in the nature of the journey in rural settings.

F4 - Road Surfaces: A rumble device provides a visual, audible and vibratory effect for motorists. These can take the form of a surface with contrasting colours, and/or a textured surface. In order for the surface to be clearly seen from a distance, it should typically be at least 5 meters long, with longer lengths increasing the conspicuity, but lessening the impact of the entryway. Edgeline hatching markings can provide the impression that the roadway is smaller than it actually is whilst allowing larger vehicles to pass through these spaces if necessary. To provide a narrowing impression, one can also use build-outs, chicanes, and pinch-points.

F5 - Signage: Signs create the opportunity to enhance the sense of place in the neighbourhood by establishing initial impressions. Settlements should utilise this by reflecting the local environment, culture and history. Utilising natural materials, muted colors, and placing gateway signs in open spaces can help to achieve simplicity and visual appeal.

F6 - Landscaping: Transitioning from naturalistic planting to more formal schemes helps to delineate the change from a rural to urban setting. Tree planting enhances the feeling of enclosure and creates a threshold to the village, separating the it from the rural environment and other settlements.

Shop Frontages

G1 - Placemaking: Designers must set out a clear response to the character of the individual settlements in which development is sited or adjacent to. This should be achieved by respecting and/or referencing both the built and natural character features within the village.

G2 - Design: The unique character of the host building should be considered while designing a shop front. • The design of the shop front should reflect the overall character and proportions of the building. • When the host building lacks architectural significance and it would be improper to replicate its style within a proposed shop front, crucial aspects such as design, materials, and height should be pulled from neighbouring structures. • Materials should complement the building's and the surrounding character. Traditional storefronts should be made of natural materials as well as being designed, coloured, and polished in traditional fashion. Modern designs offer more freedom, but the finish and colour should compliment rather than conflict with the

surroundings. • Signage can be made to enhance both old and modern storefronts, and it can significantly improve the quality of the street scene.

G3 - Retail boundary treatments: There is currently no uniformity in boundary treatments across existing shopping parades. New treatments should be in keeping with the immediate surrounding area such as low brick walls or hedging, not necessarily with the other parades.

G4 - Parking: There should be parking provisions made for new shops or parades, including disabled spaces and EV charging points. To prevent damage caused by parking on grass verges, the implementation of class II kerbs will prevent the encroachment of parking vehicles whilst allowing emergency vehicles to climb them.

Street Furniture

H1 - Location: Consider the location of street furniture and routes of utilities from the early stages of the design process. Analyse how all the elements will be seen and perceived when placed and viewed at once.

H2 - Usage: All public space should be clearly defined and designed to fulfill specific roles and functions for different range of users.

H3 - Rest Stops: Provide seating places in convenient locations and gathering spaces such as public green spaces. Recycled composite benches in a natural wood finish is preferred over timber or metal due to its sustainability and longevity credentials.

H4 - Design: Create a palette of street furniture and signage that is complementary and is likely to stand the test of time.

H5 - Paving Styles: Existing local pavements, shop fronts, and parking have tarmac surfacing, providing a practical and uniform finish across the Neighbourhood Area. Block paving could be used in pedestrian only areas as it can easily accommodate tactile paving at crossings.

H6 - Lighting: Proposed lampposts are to be of similar style to the existing 6m steel columns with TRT mini LED lamps.

H7 - Bollards: Both plastic and concrete bollards are found throughout the Neighbourhood Area. Plastic mounted bollards are preferred from both an aesthetic and practical standpoint.

H8 - Bins: Bromsgrove District Council have agreed black and gold wastebins, either square or circular, for use around the Neighbourhood Area's as well as any future developments.

H9 - Cycle Racks: Creating opportunities for active travel throughout the area is encouraged, with cycle racks being implemented in key locations, such as nearby shopping parades. These should be simple in nature, both covered and uncovered designs are encouraged.

H10 - Noticeboards: Existing shopping parades and other urban areas have timber mounted community noticeboards which should be incorporated into larger future developments.

Car Parking

I1 - On-street parking: On-street parking is the only parking option for several dwellings within the Neighbourhood Area. In order to reduce the visual impact of parked cars, on-street parking should be avoided in future development. Where on street parking is unavoidable it should be broken up by landscaping and tree planting.

I2 - Front of dwelling driveway parking: Parking provided on driveways directly in front of dwellings should be restricted due to the visual impact that cars have on the street. Therefore, a maximum of 2 dwellings in a row will be permitted to provide parking in this way. Front gardens should be a minimum depth of 6m to allow movement around parked vehicles and also be well screened with hedgerows when providing parking space to the front of a dwelling. Where appropriate, porous surfaces should be used.

I3 - Side of dwelling driveway parking: Parking being provided on a driveway to the side of a dwelling should be of sufficient length (5m minimum) so that a car can park behind the frontage line of the dwelling. This will reduce the visual impact that cars will have on the street scene. When parking is provided to the side of a dwelling a minimum front garden depth of 3m should be provided. Where appropriate, porous surfaces should be used.

I4 - Garage parking: Parking being provided in a garage to the side of a dwelling should be set back from the frontage line of the dwelling to reduce the visual impact of cars on the street. Garages should also provide sufficient room for cars to park inside them as well as provide some room for storage. The minimum internal dimensions of a garage should therefore be 6m x 3m.

I5 - Car parks: Generally runs of car parking spaces should not exceed 6 spaces in width before being interspersed by planting. All landscaping and car park surfaces should be chosen to respect the rural setting of the Neighbourhood Area and should be of a good quality and appropriate appearance for their immediate context. Where appropriate, porous surfaces should be used.

I6 - Planting buffer: All car parks and parking spaces should incorporate appropriate planting as a landscape buffer. Parked cars have a negative visual impact on streetscape character and should therefore be softened by planting such as street trees, planters, and planted grass verges.

Settlement Edges

J1 - Avoiding ribbon development: New development should be sensitive to the surrounding landscape. Inappropriate ribbon development away from the principal settlement should be avoided where it has an adverse impact on landscape character.

J2 - Avoiding settlement coalescence: Landscape gaps between settlements should be retained to ensure the distinctiveness of each settlement and avoid coalescence.

J3 - Maintaining distinctive settlement edges: Development should not be proposed which breaches a distinctive settlement edge.

J4 - Planting buffers at the settlement edge: Development at the settlement edge should be buffered with dense vegetation belts that help mitigate the visual impact from any new developments.

J5 - Integrating green corridors: Green corridors are recommended so as to integrate the new development with the surrounding landscape, as well as providing additional pedestrian and habitat links.

J6 - Lower density at the settlement edge: Consider using lower density development at the settlement edge in fostering a gentle transition between built form and the character of the low-lying landscape. This could include bungalows or 1.5 storey development. Anything above 1.5 storeys should be appropriately screened with planting to mitigate its scale against the backdrop of the surrounding landscape.

Protecting Cherished Views

K1 - Obstructing cherished views: The position of new development should be carefully considered in relation to cherished views of St Mary's Church Spire identified in Section 2 of the design codes document. Any attempt to disrupt or inhibit existing views should be resisted.

K2 - Minimising detractors and light spill in new development: The use of skylights, large glass panes, reflective materials or expansive flat roofs for new developments should be carefully considered if the building will be prominent in important views. This is to minimise detractors in views and light spill. New developments should seek to reduce light spill by minimising glass panes/windows/doors/ skylights and using downward directional lights/ bollards where lighting is necessary for safety.

K3 - Locally appropriate planting schemes: Appropriate planting to integrate buildings into the landscape is encouraged however this should be used to enhance and retain character rather than to alter it. Planting should reflect native species mix and be used chiefly to soften building lines or unavoidable visual detractors.

K4 - Avoiding camouflage of poor design: The use of planting as 'screening' to avoid following the design principles set out in this document is unacceptable. Likewise, camouflaging roofs through material/ colour/green roof, but failing to consider the height of elevations is unacceptable. Good design is about integration, not camouflage.

K5 - Prominent landmark views: Views to the key landmark of St Mary's Church Spire should be retained through careful siting of new development. The setting of this key landmark should be a consideration in all new development. Where new development is sited within the setting of sites with cherished views referred to on pages 19-21 of the DGDC, provision must be made for the enhancement of its setting (such as increasing the amount of open space around it or increasing its distance from buildings) and provision of information panels/ signs.

K6 - Protecting and creating views for wayfinding: Buildings should be oriented to maintain existing key views or to create new views/vistas which can contribute to local way-finding. Views of both landmark buildings (i.e. church spires) and landscape features (i.e. hills) should be utilised to promote legibility within the area

Protecting and Enhancing Green Verges

L1 - Avoiding the loss of green verges - Incorporating existing grass verges within plots (i.e. for front gardens or extensions), particularly at corners/junctions, must be avoided. Grass verges are important assets that should be maintained as character features of the Neighbourhood Area's streetscapes.

L2 - Creating open streetscapes - all proposals including new streets should incorporate green verges within the streetscape design. This is to enhance the openness and green character of streets which has successfully been achieved in areas such as the Bovis Estate (See Character Area 4: Bovis Estate in Section 3 of the DGDC).

L3 - Avoiding verge parking - To mitigate the likelihood of illegal or improper street parking, the use of bollards, planters and trees should be utilised to prevent car users from being able to mount and park on grass verges. This is particularly important at corners/junctions where visibility must be maintained.

L4 - Enhancing visibility at corners/ junctions - New proposals must include grass verges at corners/ junctions to increase splays and the subsequent visibility for both pedestrians and car users.

L5 - Planting within corner/junction verges - Planting within corner/ junctions verges should be low-medium in height to maintain visibility. High-level planting such as trees should therefore be avoided.

L6 - Planting within linear verges - Linear verges along streets should include planting such as street trees to enhance the green character of streetscapes, as well as providing natural barriers to on-street parking.

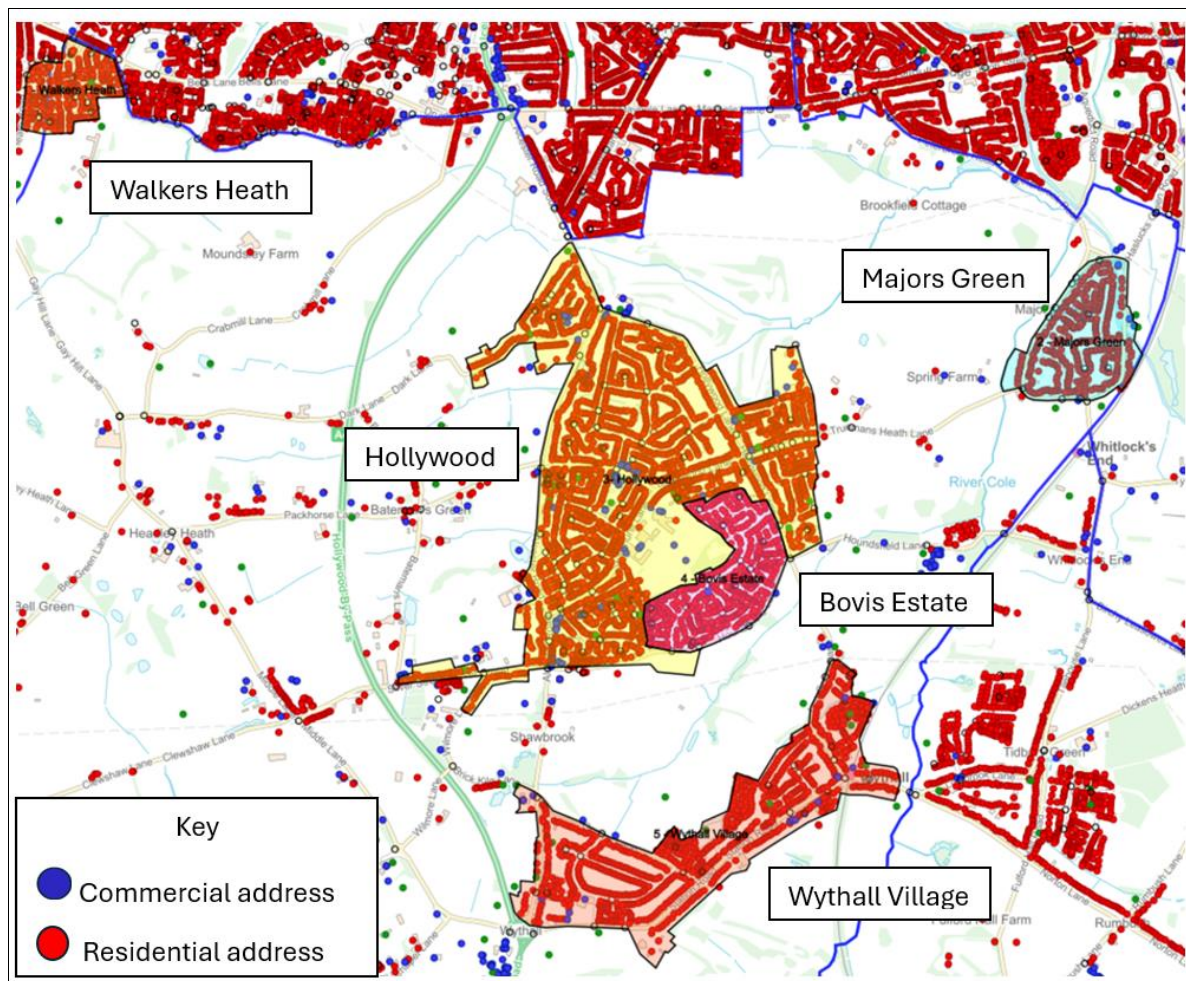
L7 - Placement of planting within verges - planting such as street trees should be positioned near enough to the road so to mitigate the likelihood of car users mounting the verges for parking.

L8 - Placement of verges - Green verges should be incorporated within all Neighbourhood roads and Residential roads (See Vehicular Networks plan on pages 32-33 of the DGDC) to foster open, green and attractive streetscapes.

L9 - Width of green verges - The width and/or the splay of verges should generally be larger on Neighbourhood roads than on Residential roads, due to the contrast in car speeds and street widths. Buildings should be setback further along busier roads (i.e. Neighbourhood roads) as is currently practiced along a majority of the Neighbourhood Area's existing neighbourhood road network.

Development Form and Density

138. As noted in the Design Codes report, development within the Parish gives rise to different densities and how this relates to the look and feel of each area. It has further importance in relation to how new development adjacent to existing development should be designed and at what density.
139. To help understand current densities, for each character area (excluding 6 – Chapel Lane and 7 Rural Hamlets) identified in the Design Guidance and Codes Report, housing densities have been calculated based on the following approach:
 - Where appropriate, areas were adjusted to remove the largest open areas from Character Areas. This would have the effect of increasing densities within what remains, and so can be regarded as conservative in approach (i.e. it indicates higher densities).
 - Address base information is used to identify separate dwellings (separate residential postal addresses are shown as red dots and commercial postal addresses are shown as blue dots). This is recent information.
 - Separate residential addresses have been counted within each character area. Each residential address base is regarded as a separate dwelling. In reality, this might not be the case e.g. some might not be C3 housing but may be C2 care home uses, but is likely to be the correct assumption for the most part. This should lead to a small over-counting of dwellings and so would also indicate a higher residential density than might exist.
 - The area covered by commercial addresses within character areas have been ignored and so are included. There are not many properties, but this will reduce over-counting in some areas (i.e. it will reduce housing density).
140. Figure 10 indicates the character area boundaries as amended in two areas and shows postal address basepoints. Table 6 shows the number of homes and the area for each character area, and the resultant density of dwellings per hectare.
141. The highest density character area is Walkers Heath with approximately 28 dwellings per hectare in an area of 11 ha comprising 309 dwellings. The lowest density character area is Wythall Village with 16 dwellings per hectare. Walkers Heath is in a different position to the rest of the Parish as it is effectively part of the Birmingham conurbation. The rest of the Parish does not muster housing densities across large areas more than 20 dwellings per hectare. The average across the five character areas assessed in Table 6 is 19 dwellings per hectare.

Figure 10 – Local Character Areas within Wythall**Table 6 – Approximate Housing Densities within Wythall Parish Character Areas**

Character Area	Area (ha)	Number of homes	Density per hectare
1. Walkers Heath	11	309	28
2. Major's Green	22	379	17
3. Hollywood	135	2532	19
4. Bovis Estate	22	447	20
5. Wythall Village	61	995	16
6. Chapel Lane (Wythall)	N/A	N/A	N/A
7. Rural hamlets & open countryside	N/A	N/A	N/A
Overall average	251	4662	19

142. Locally, residents have views about the types of housing development design they prefer. Selected housing developments in the area, from different periods, were examined to establish the positive features supported by residents and to calculate the approximate densities of these

schemes. These are shown in Table 7 with fuller details provided in a supporting document on ‘Housing Densities of existing developments in Wythall Parish’. The main findings from this work is that developments which support reasonable densities can be achieved using design and development forms which are recognisable from existing developments and so can be secured with public greenery, private front gardens, off-street parking and room for storing bins out of sight.

Table 7 – Densities achieved within selected housing developments in Wythall Parish

Development	Number of Homes	Area	Density including public green space provision where applicable	Density excluding public green space provision
Fieldways Close	15	0.53 ha	28	no green space
Paddocks Road Area	265	9.87 ha	27	28
Richmond Close	26	1.16 ha	23	no green space
Lint Meadow	16	0.40 ha	40	no green space
Mayhurst/Wythwood	94	3.47 ha	27	29
Bovis	419	20.22 ha	21	no green space
Holly Drive	11	0.56 ha	20	no green space
Bleakhouse Farm	178	6.30 ha	28	32
Selsdon Close	76	3.10 ha	25	30
Coppice Gardens	14	0.43 ha	33	no green space

Source: Wythall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

143. It is appreciated that the planning system requires the efficient use of land. The work shows that housing developments can be designed so that local people respond positively to them from an aesthetic point of view, and yet achieve appropriate densities.

Policy Considerations

144. NPPF paragraph 29 provides clear support for neighbourhood plans to establish design principles for their areas and, through paragraph 129, to set out policies with aim of maintaining an area’s character and setting and securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places. NPPF paragraphs 130-135 provides a clear role for area-based character assessments and design codes to inform local planning policies.
145. There are two key considerations for the Neighbourhood Plan arising from its work to address design and development form. The first is that new development within the existing settlements in the Parish should be complementary to existing development and should ensure that key positive features and attributes are maintained or enhanced where appropriate. Care is needed to respect neighbouring development and to adopt sensitive approaches in terms of design details, materials, plot layout and external space.
146. The second key concern is to ensure that, if new development is planned in future on areas which are at present Green Belt countryside, then development in areas adjacent to existing settlement edges should respect the density and form of existing development, should seek to not overwhelm existing development and should safeguard, as far as may be possible, existing local characteristics. A response to this will include moderating density and scale of development close to existing character areas and incorporating development design and landscaping approaches which provide appropriate buffers between existing and new development.

WYTHALL 4 – Good Design and Development Form in Wythall Parish

Planning applications in Wythall Parish should, where relevant, demonstrate how development will be undertaken in accordance with the Design Principles set out in Table 4 and Design Codes set out in Table 5, and with reference to the supporting Design Guidelines and Design Codes Report (October 2023). It is important to maintain and enhance positive design characteristics within the Parish and applications should demonstrate clearly how they will do this.

Applications for new residential development should have regard to the density of surrounding development in the character area. They should set out specific design measures to avoid overbearing development on neighbouring development and plans which demonstrate a graduated approach to density, appropriate development buffers from existing development and landscape screening, also having regard to Design Principles set out in Table 4 and Design Codes set out in Table 5.

All proposals for new development should include measures to create and/or enhance habitats in accordance with Design Codes D1 to D7. Measures to meet Biodiversity Net Gain requirements should be provided on site wherever possible.

Sustainable Buildings

147. The climate emergency creates an imperative for local communities to take action to combat climate change and to mitigate its effects through design of new development. Wythall Parish is no different and wants to support the development of new sustainable buildings and to support existing development to become more sustainable through measures to increase energy efficiency and incorporate low carbon and renewable energy technologies. It is important that new buildings in the Parish are built ready for renewable or low carbon heat technologies, and should incorporate renewable energy generation to reduce fossil fuel energy demands and improve energy efficiency.
148. The government is regulating on home insulation and heating and is also providing incentives for homeowners to improve energy efficiency and reduce domestic emissions of greenhouse gases. Higher levels of energy efficiency and lower carbon emissions will be required in new buildings when Parts F and L Building Regulations requirements are applied from 2026 to meet the Future Homes Standard. There is no reason why new development design cannot incorporate these features now or at least ensure that new development is ready to meet new requirements.
149. The occupants of new housing are often left with significant costs and difficulties in adapting newly-built homes to meet future requirements or take advantage of government initiatives to support change. New homes could be routinely built with roof top solar panels on them now. New homes will need space to be provided for heat pumps and this needs to be designed in – many new homes have little space to the front and at the back and it is not currently clear they could incorporate heat pumps.
150. Many smaller homes are designed with final entry doors to the front and rear which open directly into living spaces, which undermines the way heat pumps work to gradually heat spaces. New homes are often provided with plumbing and wiring which is not capable of accommodating new heating technologies which require greater water flow to heated water storage tanks. They don't have the space for the large water tanks. Radiators are too small and underfloor heating is not provided. Electrical wiring does not support renewable technology installation.
151. The energy efficiency of UK homes is poor overall. Significant reliance is placed on building regulations to secure improved energy efficient and lower embodied carbon emissions in new

building construction in accordance with regulatory requirements emerging through the Future Homes Standard.

152. All this can render sustainable technologies unworkable or can be disruptive and costly to address. This could be avoided if required features and infrastructure are designed into new developments now, and they are built to good standards. Efforts to reflect these needs in planning policies are often objected to by developers who think that requirements should be laid out clearly in Building Regulations, and this might work if Building Regulations practices were better.
153. What can the Neighbourhood Plan do to encourage better development design, built with good quality materials to good standards of construction? Wythall Parish supports local efforts to reduce the area's carbon footprint. Neighbourhood plan policies can support homeowners and developers to install renewable and other low carbon technologies within existing and on new developments. It can do this by encouraging high environmental performance in the development of new buildings and alterations/extensions to existing buildings.

WYTHALL 5 – Environmental Performance of Buildings

New Buildings and alterations/extensions to existing buildings are expected to achieve high standards of environmental performance. This includes where possible in relation to listed buildings where positive support will be given to proposals within the existing framework of protection of heritage assets.

New development design in Wythall Parish should be future-proofed to support the achievement of the Future Homes Standard, including lower carbon emissions, improved energy efficiency, better heat management and lower operating costs with new heating and energy generation technologies.

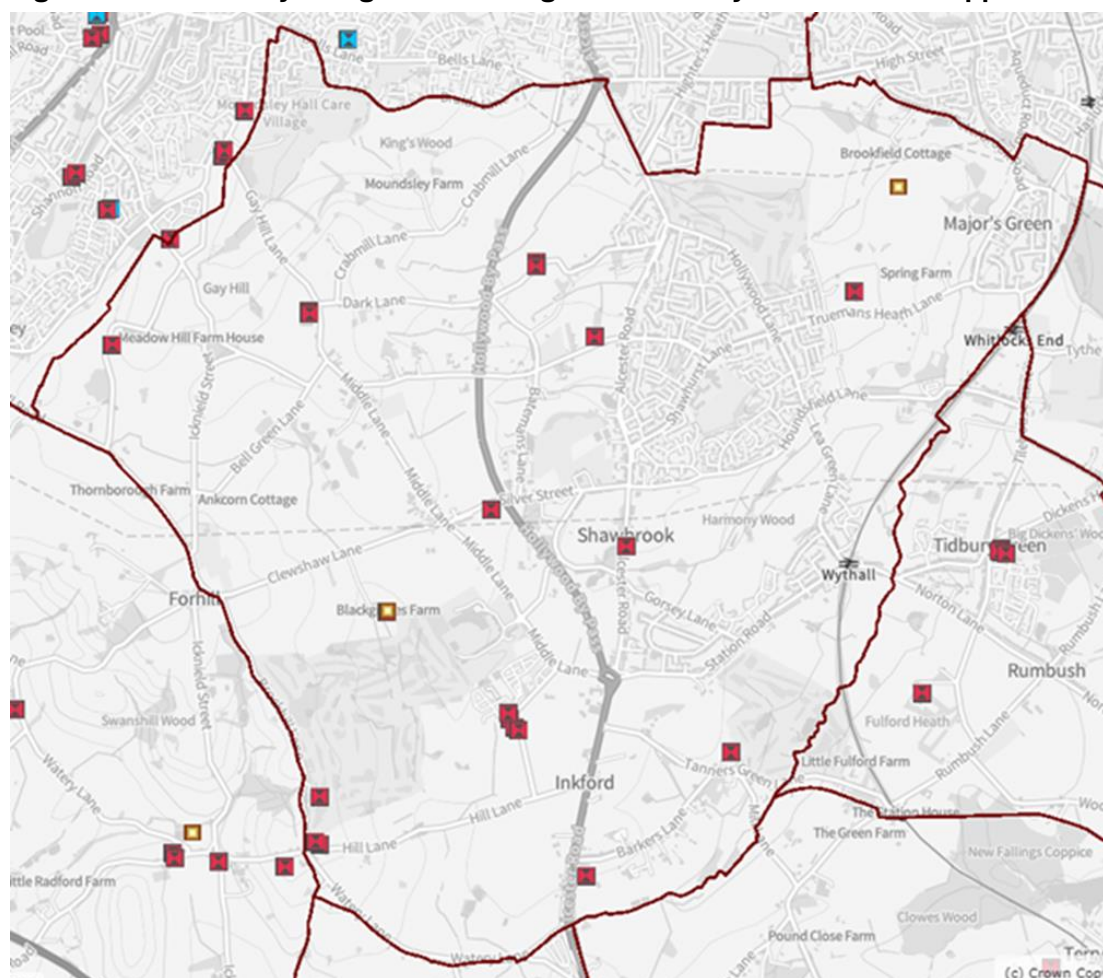
Proposals for development which include measures to reduce carbon emissions from building operations, such as those listed below, will be supported:



- a) Provide space within plots for heat pumps which should be positioned to ensure the amenity of occupants and neighbours is maintained.
- b) Incorporate design features to maintain heat balance within buildings, avoiding external doors opening directly into living spaces. Ensure good insulation.
- c) Provide internal electrical and plumbing to specifications required for use with sustainable heating and energy generation technologies.
- d) Incorporate roof top solar on new buildings.
- e) Community energy schemes to provide heat and power to new developments.
- f) Provide Electric Vehicle Chargepoints to serve the occupants of every new home and to serve the users of all non-domestic buildings in accordance with the Worcestershire County Council Streetscapes Design Guide.
- g) Water-saving measures such as grey-water systems and water butts.

7. Local Heritage

154. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has used local knowledge and historic environment records to identify assets in the Parish that are of sufficient local heritage interest to merit consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated heritage assets.
155. The Neighbourhood Area also possesses rich archaeological heritage, being host to two Scheduled Monuments (SM). These include the first recorded settlement in Wythall, Berry Mound Camp, to the northwest of Major's Green. This was an Iron Age hill fort dating to the 1st or 2nd century BC (see Figure 11 and Table 8).
156. The second is the Moated Site at Blackgreves Farm which encompasses the moat and land surrounding the Grade II Listed Blackgreves Farmhouse to the south of Clewshaw Lane. The monument includes the buried and earthwork remains of a moated site with records referring to Richard I (1157-1199) granting the tenement to Reginald De Barres, and in 1252 Henry III granting the same lands to William de Belne.
157. No Registered Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens or World Heritage Sites are recorded in the Parish.

Figure 11 – Nationally Designated Heritage Assets in Wythall Parish – Mapped Locations



Key:  Scheduled Monuments  Grade 2 listed buildings

Source: Defra MAGIC maps

Table 8 – Nationally Designated Heritage Assets in Wythall Parish – Grading and Locations

Description	Heritage Category	Grid Reference
Berrymound Camp, Majors Green	Scheduling	SP0952 7789
Hollytree Farmhouse, Dark Lane, Hollywood	Grade 2 listing	SP0744 7747
Barn and cart shed approx. 15 metres south of Hollytree Farmhouse, Dark Lane, Hollywood	Grade 2 listing	SP0744 7745
Truemans Heath Farmhouse, Truemans Heath Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0927 7730
Gay Hill Farmhouse, Gay Hill Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0613 7719
Barn approx. 10 metres south of Gay Hill Farmhouse, Gay Hill Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0613 7718
Kingswood Meeting House and Sunday School, Packhorse Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0777 7705
Goodrest Farmhouse, Goodrest Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0500 7700
Holly Farmhouse, Silver Street	Grade 2 listing	SP0718 7605
349,351 Alcester Road	Grade 2 listing	SP0796 7584
Moated site at Blackgreaves Farm	Scheduling	SP0658 7547
Blackgreaves Farmhouse, Clewshaw Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0658 7546
Church of St Mary, Chapel Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0728 7488
Parish Hall, Chapel Lane (The Old School House)	Grade 2 listing	SP0729 7485
Chapelgreen Farmhouse, Chapel Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0731 7480
Cart shed approx. 15 metres south east of Chapelgreen Farmhouse, Chapel Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0734 7478
Lonnin End, Tanners Green	Grade 2 listing	SP0856 7466
Weatheroak Hall, Kings Norton Golf Club, Brock Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0619 7413
Hall Farmhouse, Hill Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0619 7413
Barn, cow house and stables approx. 10 metres west of Hall Farmhouse, Hill Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0617 7414
Inkford Farm, Barkers Lane	Grade 2 listing	SP0773 7395

Source: Historic England

National Planning Policy

158. A heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as “a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest”.
159. National Planning Practice Guidance defines non-designated heritage assets as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.
160. Paragraph 216 of the Framework states that non-designated heritage assets can merit consideration in planning matters, stating that ‘In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
161. Section 16 of the NPPF covers all aspects of the historic environment. Paragraph 203 states that “Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment”.

Adopted Local Plan Policies

162. The Adopted Local Plan addresses the role of heritage assets which are recognised for their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest (BDP20.1). It supports development proposals that will sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets including their

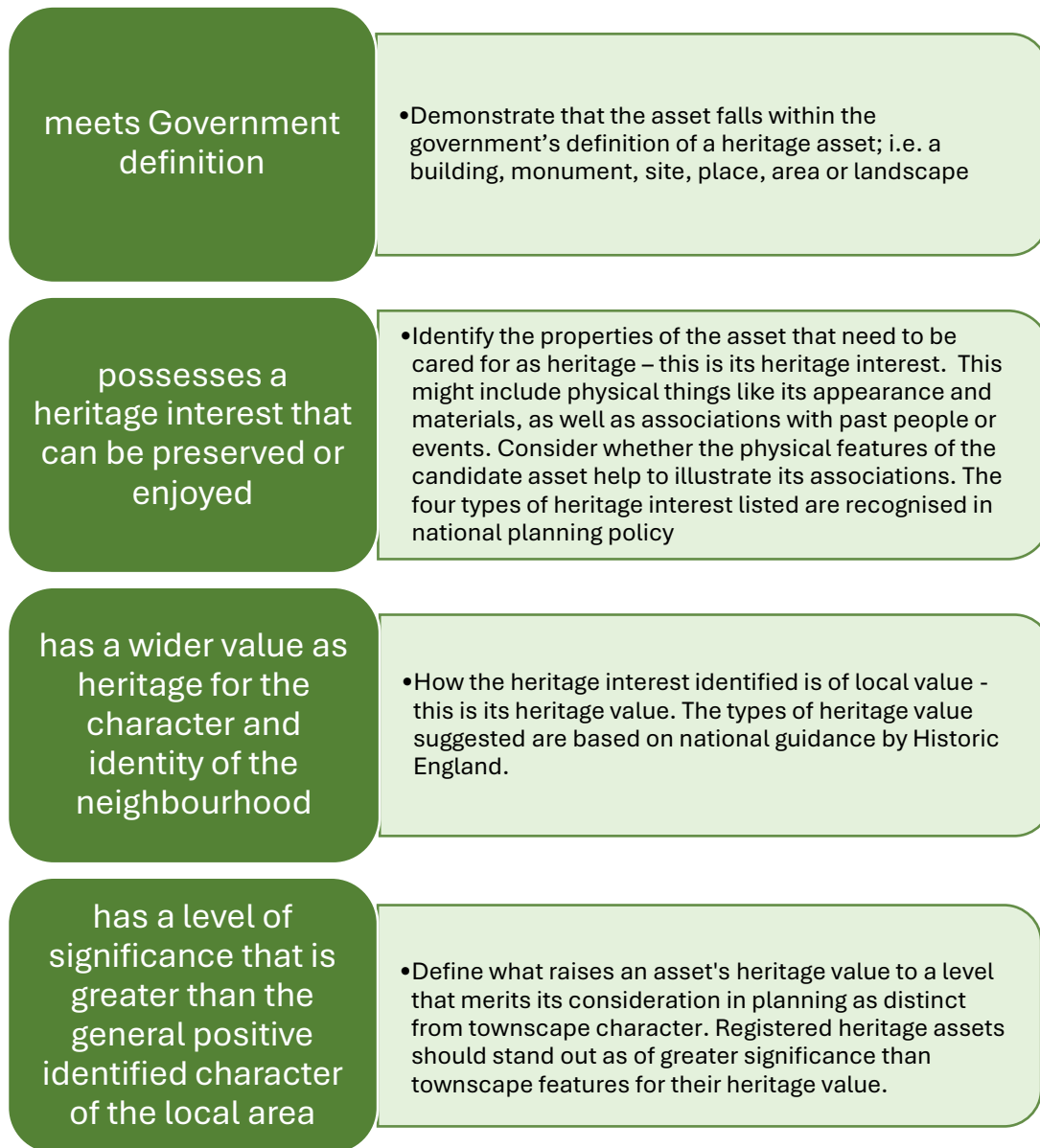
setting, including Non-designated Heritage Assets including (but not limited to) those identified on the Local List and assets recorded in the Historic Environment Record (BDP20.2 (b)).

163. BDP20.12 refers to a commitment by Bromsgrove District Council to update the draft local heritage list and formally adopt it, to include all Heritage Assets recognised as being of local importance, including those which are locally distinctive. At the time of writing, this has not been done for Wythall Parish and there are no published timescales for this work.
164. BDP20.13 says that the District Council will support development that retains Heritage Assets on the Local List; involves sympathetic alterations and extensions to Heritage Assets on the Local List; and, does not have a detrimental impact on the setting or context of Heritage Assets on the Local List.

Local Heritage Assets

165. The Neighbourhood Plan used published good practice guidance from Historic England and information from the Historic Environment Record for the area to identify a schedule of assets that are considered to have local heritage interest. The criteria set out in Figure 12 were used to test the strength of the asset for inclusion in the neighbourhood plan. The Plan designates sites as 'Wythall Parish Local Heritage Assets'.
166. Additionally, an advantage of the work completed is that two local trees have been identified, a walnut tree and a pear tree (claimed to be the oldest pear tree in Worcestershire) for which Tree Preservation Orders are being pursued due to rarity or age and status.
167. **Appendix A** sets out information on each site considered. Each Site identified has been set out on a separate sheet with map showing boundary, location and photographs. The asset features have been described and then the value of the asset has been assessed using a site assessment checklist based on the criteria.

Figure 12 – Criteria for Non-Designated Heritage Assets



168. A key objective for identified non-designated heritage assets is to safeguard them against loss or harm, where development benefits would not clearly outweigh identified impacts. A complementary objective would be to support improvement to such assets where this is appropriate and to provide interpretive information about them where this would improve understanding of local cultural heritage.

WYTHALL 6 - Wythall Parish Local Heritage Assets

The following sites, which are described in Appendix A and shown on the Policies Map, are identified as Non-Designated Heritage Assets. Special consideration should be given to the local

heritage value of these sites in the formulation of development proposals and in decisions on planning applications.

- 1 – The Packhorse
- 2 – Wythall House (façade, staircase and stained-glass window)
- 3 – Well located at Wythall House
- 4 – Wythall Train Station Former Ticket Office
- 5 – St Mary’s Churchyard
- 6 – Kingswood Meeting House Graveyard
- 7 – War Memorial, Paddocks Road
- 8 – Memorial at Crash Site of Vickers Wellington
- 9 – Shirley Drawbridge
- 10 – Milestone, Alcester Road, Hollywood
- 11 – Milestone, A435, South of Wythall Island
- 12 – Telephone Kiosk, Barkers Lane
- 13 – Telephone Kiosk, Lea Green Lane
- 14 – Blue Plaque at Wythall Cemetery
- 15 – GR Pillar Box, Alcester Road
- 16 – GR Pillar Box, Lea Green Lane
- 17 – GR Pillar Box, Hollywood Lane
- 18 – ERII Type K Pillar Box, Shawhurst Lane
- 19 – ERII Pillar Box, Peterbrook Road
- 20 – Victorian Post Box, Houndsfield Lane

8. Green Infrastructure

169. Green infrastructure within Wythall Parish carries out an important function in defining the character of the area. The area's green infrastructure in aggregate also fulfils an important existing strategic function in presenting greener local neighbourhoods in relation to surrounding countryside.
170. It is important that new development maintains and enhances this relationship and function. It can do this by incorporating sufficient green infrastructure of the right type within developments to maintain local character within settlements and setting in relation to the countryside.
171. In relation to the Vision and Objectives set for the Neighbourhood Plan, creating new and better green infrastructure also provides a significant opportunity to improve the look and feel of the neighbourhood, to align this with improvements to walking and cycling routes, to create connected networks for habitats and to promote opportunities for healthier lifestyles.
172. Green infrastructure is made up of a number of components which together have the potential to make up an important network of open spaces, green corridors and habitats. Much of what follows is covered by general policy protections in the adopted Bromsgrove District Plan.
- Formal Open Spaces are an important aspect of green infrastructure, providing important spaces for sports, recreation, walking, running, and open-air enjoyment away from the built environment.
 - Incidental green spaces provide important local functions in relation to housing developments for informal play and local recreation and greenery.
 - Garden space to housing, businesses and in other more institutional settings, like health facilities and schools.
 - Formal play areas are not strictly green, but provide an important function for the local community
 - Green corridors often are formed by natural or constructed linear features, such as rivers and streams, footpaths, railway lines, property boundaries etc.
 - Local Wildlife Sites
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other statutorily protected wildlife sites.
 - Allotments provide a means for the community grow healthy food, to enjoy healthy activities and to socially interact.
 - Undesignated open land within the urban area is often incidental and forgotten. Over time it can become valuable for biodiversity and as a green resource for local people.
 - Agricultural land is an important setting for nearby settlement and has features of value such as footpaths and hedgerows.
173. Given the strategic contribution that green infrastructure makes as a whole and in view of the objective to connect green infrastructure, the Neighbourhood Plan is focused on ensuring that green infrastructure connections and functions of value to local people, and its strategic role, are maintained.

174. The Neighbourhood Plan brings together how all these open space elements work together to form the Neighbourhood Plan Area's network of green infrastructure and sets objectives for protecting, maintaining, improving and creating new green infrastructure to strengthen the network.
175. Local volunteers have prepared a review of green infrastructure sites which contribute to the above objectives and functions within the Neighbourhood Area.
176. New development can contribute to improvements to green and blue infrastructure and should also ensure that the resilience of the Parish to flood risk from rivers and surface water is maintained and where possible, improved. In developing their proposals, developers are encouraged to consult with North Worcestershire Water Management to ensure that they take account of local records of flooding incidents and identified improvement measures where appropriate.

Local Green Space Sites

177. The National Planning Policy Framework includes provisions for the designation of Local Green Space, as set out in Figure 13.

Figure 13 – NPPF policy on Local Green Space Designation

Para 106	What is Local Green Space? <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.
Para 107	When should Local Green Space designation be used? <ul style="list-style-type: none">•a)in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;•b)demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and,• c)local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
Para 108	What is the effect of Local Green Space Designation? <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.

178. Using the criteria set out in the NPPF, the Neighbourhood Plan has identified and assessed candidate sites for Local Green Space designation. Each site considered is set out on a separate sheet which provides details of site location, the boundary of the area proposed for designation and the assessment with recommendation. These are included in **Appendix B**.
179. Owners of Land proposed for Local Green Space designation were consulted informally to make them aware of the proposal and to provide an opportunity to comment.

180. The Neighbourhood Plan has considered objectives related to the future maintenance and enhancement of Local Green Space within the Parish. The Parish Council has an ongoing Grow Wild Wythall Biodiversity Project with funds to maintain work done including on specific LGS and to progress other biodiversity enhancements based on an action plan to be developed following the 2024 annual Parish council meeting and appointment of a working group.

WYTHALL 7 - Local Green Space Sites

The following sites, described in Appendix B and shown on the policies map, are designated Local Green Space sites, and other than in very special circumstances, no inappropriate development will be permitted within them that would harm their green character and reason for designation.

A - Balancing Pond, Selsdon Close - 0.37ha

B - Batemans Lane Pond – 1.22ha

C - Beaudesert Nature Park – 0.5ha

D - Burnham Road Greenspace – 0.64ha

E - Chesterwood-Falstaff Open Space – 0.31ha

F - Dark Lane Meadow – 0.64ha

G - Gorsey Lotts – 0.21ha

H - Harmony Wood – 2.3ha

I - Johnson's Pool – 2.06ha

J - Mayhurst-Wythwood Greenspace – 0.17ha

K - Mynors Crescent Greenspace – 0.16ha

L - Silvermead Conservation Area – 0.14ha

M - Woodrush Drive and The Innage – 0.07ha

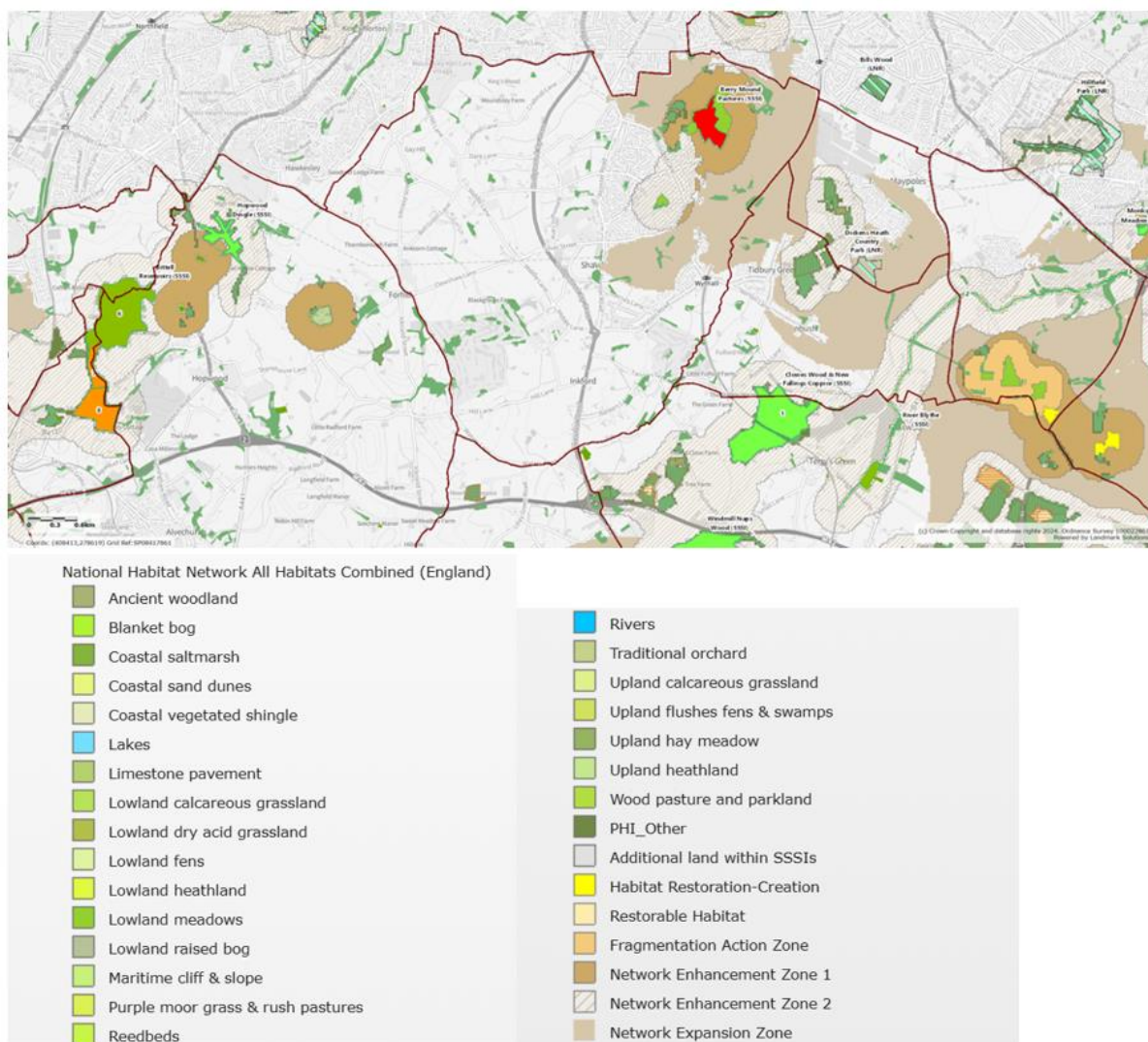
N - Wythall Meadow – 1.48ha

Biodiversity Gains from New Development

181. Under national regulations, new developments are required to demonstrate a net improvement in biodiversity of at least 10% above baseline site biodiversity. . Where biodiversity net gain is provided and how it is provided are important considerations, with potential for improvements to be targeted on areas prioritised within emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Worcestershire, or with improvements secured on other sites (which could be anywhere) which provide biodiversity net gain credits.
182. National guidance sets a hierarchy of approaches in which opportunities to secure improvements are taken on development sites first, with biodiversity improvements on adjacent or other nearby sites second. Only then should other options be considered.
183. An important principle is that if Wythall Parish experiences new development then it should benefit from improvements in biodiversity before other options are taken to improve it elsewhere.
184. A supporting document (Wythall Parish - Habitats, Nature Networks and Agricultural Land) was prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan to map environmental designations, constraints and potential using published sources including DEFRA Magic Maps, Natural England and the

Environment Agency. The maps produced informed an overall observation that Wythall Parish contains relatively few national natural environment designations of value. Agricultural Land is a mixture of Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) and Grade 4 (Poor Quality).

185. There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located within Wythall Parish, at Berry Hill Mound Pastures. The SSSI condition has been assessed as declining over the last ten years or so, requiring more grazing with appropriate species to meet objectives.
186. There are no statutory Local Nature Reserves and there is no Ancient or Semi-Ancient Woodland located within the Parish. Small patches of deciduous woodland are found throughout the Parish. There are no nature designations located on the boundaries of the Parish in adjoining areas.
187. Priority Habitats are lacking within the Parish except for two small areas of priority habitat in the form of lowland meadow, one of which is adjacent to the Berry Mound SSSI and a smaller area at the margins of Woodrush High School fields in Hollywood (Wythall Meadow).
188. Most of the Parish is not identified as having potential for habitat enhancement and expansion.
189. The main habitat resources and habitat improvement opportunities appear to be located in the east and northeast of the Parish (see Figure 14) connecting to nature networks to the north (in Birmingham) and to the east (in Dickens Heath and further afield). These are indicated as having potential for habitat restoration, habitat network enhancement (including within built up areas) and habitat network expansion. This would link and expand habitat networks to a similarly enhanced and expanded area centred on Dickens Heath Country Park in the adjacent Parish to the east. Areas immediately adjacent to this and also adjacent to Ancient Woodland within and beyond the Neighbourhood Area are viewed as potential areas for habitat network enhancement.

Figure 14 – Opportunities for habitat network enhancement, expansion and connection

Source: Defra Magic Maps

190. Also, the northern edge of Wythall Parish adjoins the Birmingham and Black Country Nature Improvement Area. This was a government-funded partnership programme until 2015. The partnership lives on and promotes programmes and projects to improve nature within the area. Ecological linking areas are shown extending south from Moseley Bog, across the Parish boundary in the northeast corner. This map, when considered with the maps above, indicates more sensitivity in the northeast of the Parish and a potential focus on habitat restoration and enhancement in this area.

WYTHALL 8 – Biodiversity Gains from new development in Wythall Parish

In the first instance, new developments which are required to secure biodiversity net gain of at least 10% should meet this requirement on the application site. Where this cannot be achieved, proposals should aim to meet biodiversity net gain requirements in accordance with local nature recovery priorities more broadly within Wythall Parish.

New developments which contribute to local habitat network enhancement, expansion and connection in the north and east of Wythall Parish will be supported.

9. Sustainable Travel

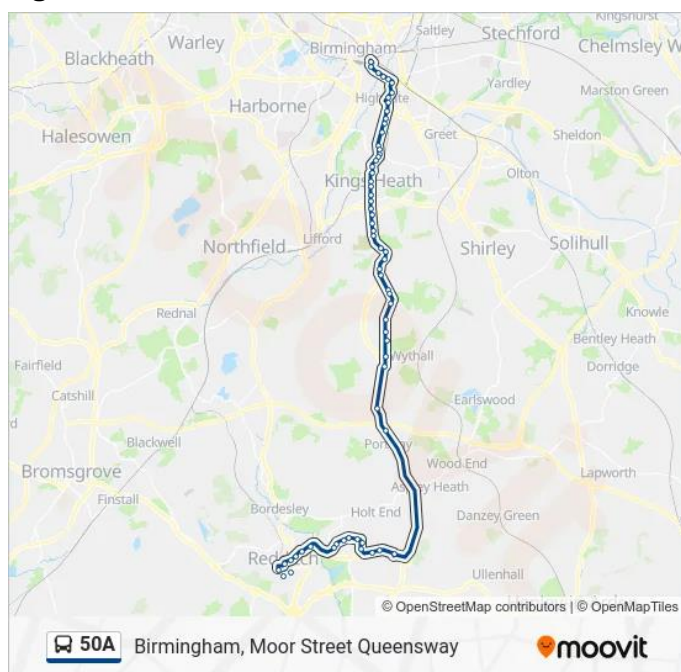
191. Travel within Wythall Parish is influenced by the location of the main settlements of Wythall, Hollywood and Majors Green in the centre and east of the Parish close to the border with Solihull and Birmingham. The settlements are separated by Green Belt countryside. The Parish is located in the northeastern corner of Worcestershire, outside the metropolitan area of the west midlands. This creates difficulties but also opportunities to address strategic and local transport requirements relating to rail and bus travel, and for active travel within the Parish.
192. Local daily services within Wythall are provided on a largely decentralised basis, with a degree of self-sufficiency for each settlement. Nevertheless, within the settlements of the Parish, walking distances to access local services, and particularly where these are in one of the other settlements of the Parish, can be too far for regular daily journeys, particularly for younger and older sections of the population.
193. Those with access to bicycles can easily reach all parts of the Parish based on the distances between settlements but no encouragement towards their use is currently offered. There are no dedicated cycle paths or cycle lanes, no cycle crossings or filter lanes at junctions and, no provision for secure cycle parking with the exceptions of Woodrush Hub and Hollywood Medical Centre. The same exclusions apply to cycling as for walking outlined above - the old and infirm and the very young, when unaccompanied..
194. Strategic public transport infrastructure is provided through Wythall railway station and there are needs and opportunities for improvements to enable greater use of the station by local residents. There is a need to connect the Parish to nearby areas outside Worcestershire through bus routes and more frequent bus services.
195. Whitlocks End railway station is situated just to the South of Major's Green, over the border in Solihull. Although its location means that it does serve Major's Green residents particularly as well as others within the Parish by virtue of its car park, the plan has not focussed on any improvements at this railway station because it is outside of the Parish.
196. Wythall Parish is also connected to the M42 motorway to the south via the A435 dual carriageway. This provides a route directly from Junction 3 of the M42 into the heart of the Parish and on into Birmingham. Strategic development is taking place in adjacent Solihull Metropolitan Borough Wards to the east of Wythall, and this is providing a potential strategic-level rat-run for traffic on the M42 during times of severe congestion on the motorway (the rat-run connects the A435 via lanes to new roads built through development to eventually rejoin the M42 east of Birmingham, so cutting out the southeast corner). Managing the impacts of traffic through the Parish is linked to providing attractive walking and cycling routes and ensuring bus services are reliable.

Public Transport Service in Wythall Parish

197. Wythall Parish is located at the furthest extent of the bus service network within North East Worcestershire and lies outside the metropolitan bus network of Birmingham. Bus service co-ordination between metropolitan areas and their adjacent counties often leaves places like Wythall with bus services that don't meet local needs. In this case, there is a local need for frequent bus services into the adjacent metropolitan area.

198. In August 2024 Worcestershire County Council introduced ‘Worcestershire on Demand’ to Wythall. This is a Demand Responsive Transport service across North East Worcestershire, which allows passengers to book a return journey on an app or by telephone to anywhere within the zone. The initiative has already expanded to further areas and, as its usage builds, it is hoped that it will expand further to provide services into Redditch and beyond
199. Frequent bus services that run late into the evening into the centre of Birmingham and other destinations operate from the Maypole shopping centre, located just outside the northern boundary of the Parish. However, four bus services operate within Wythall Parish to connect to the Maypole shopping centre.
200. For those relying on bus services to get to work in Birmingham, a new Diamond Service 50A was recently introduced as a new AM and PM peak direct service to Birmingham (see Figure 15). The route operates services on weekday mornings and in the evening in order to provide a direct service. The route is also provided on a reduced service on Saturdays and Sundays.

Figure 15 – Bus Service 50A from Redditch to Birmingham through Wythall Parish



Source: Moovit

201. The Landflight Services 664 and 665 which have recently replaced the A4, run loop services to and from Solihull, through Wythall Parish via Maypole (see Figure 16). A regular service runs to Solihull on weekdays, with the last bus leaving Solihull early evening. The route to Solihull is circuitous and takes between around 45 minutes or more to reach Solihull Town Centre. There is a slight difference in routes between the 664 and 665 where the services operate in opposite directions when approaching Wythall. This benefits local people when accessing local facilities with the convenience of using the 664 service one way and the 665 the other, allowing shorter journeys to and from home.

residential areas are beyond 800m or 15 minutes' walk to the shops. Majors Green has no shops. The distance between some residential areas and local facilities can be too far for an increasingly elderly population to travel on foot.

205. The introduction of the Worcestershire on Demand service has provided an opportunity to help local people in Wythall stay connected to local shops and services, as well as to other destinations within Northeast Worcestershire.
206. Overall, the lack of services to important destinations outside of the Worcestershire on Demand zone, other than Solihull, makes it difficult for local people to use bus services and many either drive or must rely on taxis.

WYTHALL 9 – Support for Bus Services

Major development should contribute towards measures to introduce and sustain improved public transport services in one or more of the following ways:

- a) Financial support to retain the existing frequency of service to Solihull and Maypole.
- b) Financial support to retain the services to Birmingham, Kings Heath and Redditch and to increase the frequency of these services if there is sufficient local demand.
- c) Financial support to increase the Worcestershire on Demand service particularly in terms of extending the operating zone and the number of vehicles available.

Rail Services from Wythall Station

207. Wythall station is located on the Stratford upon Avon to Birmingham double-track rail line facilitating through journeys without changing trains as far as Kidderminster. The service is currently operated by West Midlands Trains and consists of a minimal hourly stopping service in both directions. A more frequent service (in the Birmingham direction only) is provided from Whitlocks End Station, just outside the Parish.
208. The potential to increase services levels to a 30-minute service through Wythall to Stratford-Upon-Avon is currently being explored with the operators of the service – the 'Shakespeare Line Rail User Group' (SLRUG) have long campaigned for a commitment from the West Midlands Rail Executive to double the rail service frequency to two trains per hour in each direction at all stations on the line between Stratford upon Avon and Whitlocks End, including Wythall Station. Rail patronage would increase from all stations on the line (still currently depressed below pre-Covid levels).
209. Looking much further into the future, the North Warwickshire line, to give the Stratford to Tyseley Junction railway its internal name, may be electrified. This will allow the travel times to be significantly reduced.
210. There is a need to improve pedestrian access and relieve road congestion at Whitlocks End Station which is well-used by people living in Wythall Parish. The station is located just outside the Parish boundary and so is beyond the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. Wythall Parish Council will work with partners to raise issues surrounding the operation of the station.

Wythall Station Improvements Needed

211. Wythall Station was built in the early 20th Century with minimal station infrastructure – the platforms are long but each has only a concrete 'shelter' for waiting passengers. The two

platforms are accessed by ramps from the same road overbridge, allowing passengers to cross over. The original station, constructed without dedicated car parking, remains largely unchanged from its original design.

212. As a consequence, it is unlikely that the straightness and gradient of platform access ramps would meet modern ‘disabled access’ criteria. The lack of off-street parking to serve the railway station is problematic for the amenity of surrounding roads. There is lighting and remotely-monitored CCTV for passenger safety.
213. The station does benefit from its recent ‘adoption’ by a group from the local school, Woodrush Academy’ under the auspices of ‘Friends of the Shakespeare Line’ (FoSL). The long-abandoned ticket office is being developed as a ‘Community Amenity’ and the group attend to decorative planters and regularly tidy the environs and surrounding undergrowth, as the practical element of the schools’ City & Guilds in Horticulture course.
214. Wythall Station would require improvements to support more frequent rail services and a greater number of passengers that would be generated from new services and from (depending on what the emerging local plan proposes) new housing development. Coupled with the other ‘Active Travel’ measures referenced elsewhere in this Neighbourhood Plan, there will come the need for better facilities which are set out in policy WYTHALL 10.

WYTHALL 10 – Support for Rail Services and Station improvements

Major development proposals which contain measures to support a 30-minute railway service from Wythall Station or infrastructure improvements at Wythall Stations transport services in one or more of the following ways will be supported:

- a) A station car park with EV charging facilities provided in a convenient location which reduces disruption to surrounding areas, preferable to the north-east or south-east of the station. A potential location is shown on Figure 20 as ‘Potential Parking Area 1’.
- b) A dedicated transport hub and waiting area for connecting road/rail services and demand responsive transport.
- c) Redesigned access to platforms, including from car parking areas, to ensure that modern access standards are met.
- d) Improved platform shelters.
- e) Live information screens which show connecting bus services.
- f) Modern ticket machines.
- g) Secure cycle parking facilities.
- h) Bike hire facilities for use throughout the Parish.

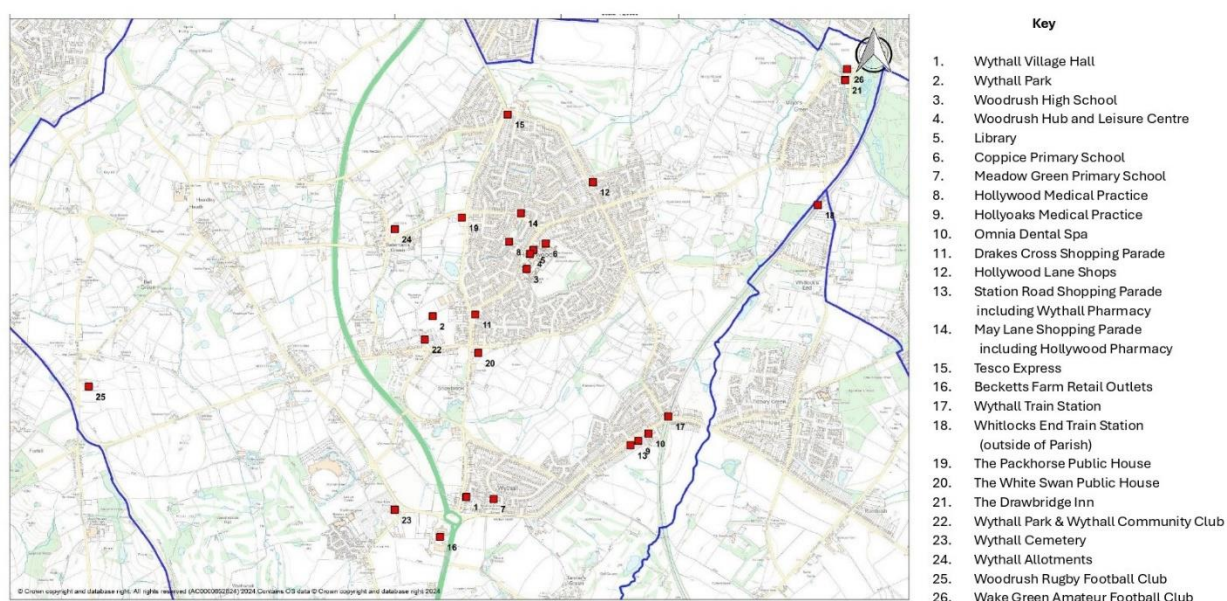
Access to local services on foot

215. The key requirement for the delivery of a walkable Wythall Parish is that key local facilities should be located and retained within an acceptable walking distance of where people live. In terms of walkable neighbourhoods, the distance normally applied is 800 metres or ten minutes’ walk. Walking routes must be legible, safe and attractive.
216. Wythall is comprised of tightly formed settlements surrounded by open countryside. The major settlements of Wythall, Hollywood and Major’s Green are separated by countryside but

connected by short road routes. Each settlement is self-contained to an extent, but some services located within one settlement serve the Parish as a whole. This necessitates travel between settlements for essential services.

217. Figure 18 indicates the location of key facilities providing local services to residents of the Parish. The map shows some community facilities located in Wythall Village with the majority of facilities located in Hollywood, and relatively few present in Major's Green.
218. Figure 19 shows walking access times to different types of local community facilities – shops, medical centres, primary schools, the secondary school and railway stations. A catchment of 800m or 10-minutes walking time has been applied to show areas of the Parish which have good walking access to local facilities (but not taking into account topography or obstacles). These maps show that access on foot to facilities within each settlement in the Parish is generally good where it is present in that settlement (for example the medical centres in Wythall Village and Hollywood). Centrally-located facilities (in one settlement only) are generally not easily accessible on foot from the other settlements (for example the secondary school in Hollywood). With the exception of walking access to Whitlock's End Railway Station (outside the Parish), Major's Green lacks easy walking access to most community facilities in the Parish.
219. Key destinations which hundreds of pupils and parents walk to each day are the local schools. Two of which are located on Shawhurst Lane in Hollywood and one on Meadow Road in Wythall. In general, many footpaths are often too narrow for buggies, or for parents to walk alongside their children, or to pass pedestrians walking in the opposite direction. They often flood, have poor lighting or lack crossing provision such as dropped kerbs, tactile paving or pedestrian refuges.
220. In some cases, there could be scope to provide more direct walking and cycling routes to connect residential areas to key facilities. These are discussed below. In other circumstances, there may be a need to provide local bus services to meet access requirements. A third possibility is that new local facilities are provided where appropriate to improve local access. This could be through new development if and when this is clarified in the emerging local plan.

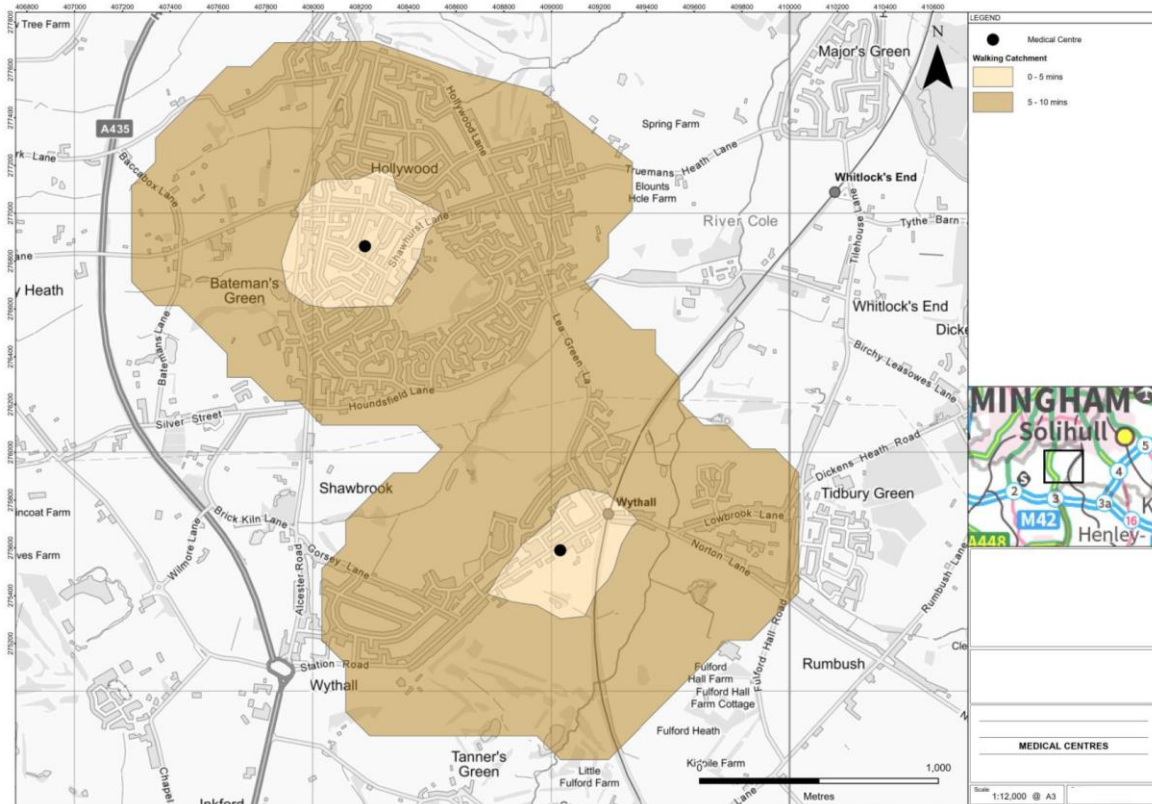
Figure 18 – Key Parish Facilities



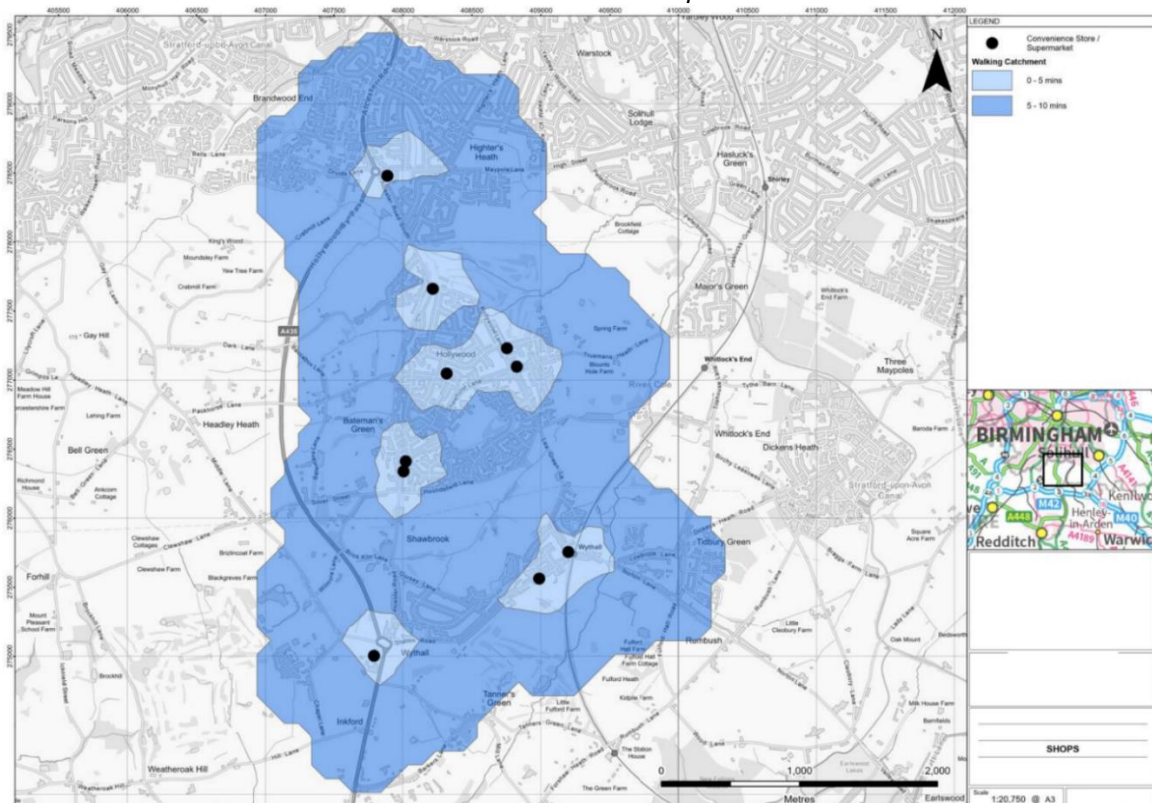
Source: Wythall Parish Council, April 2024

Figure 19 – Walking access times to community facilities

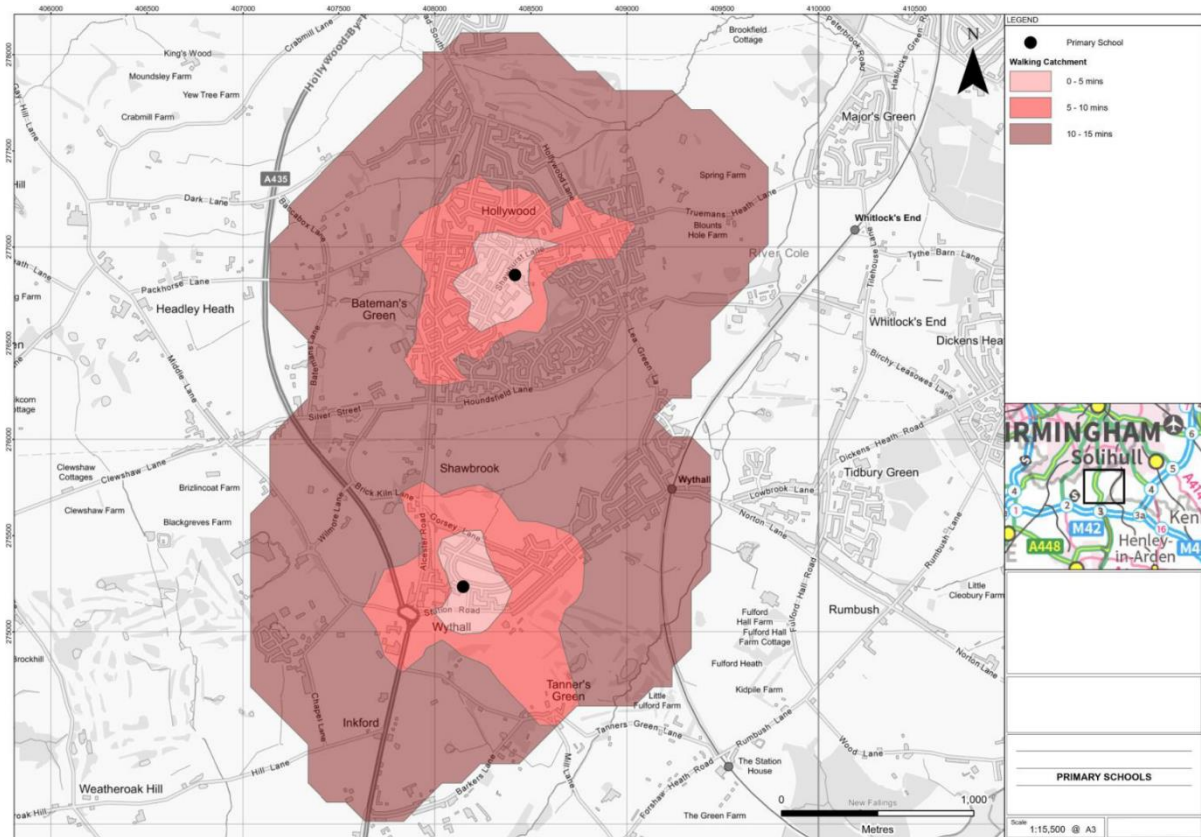
Medical Centres



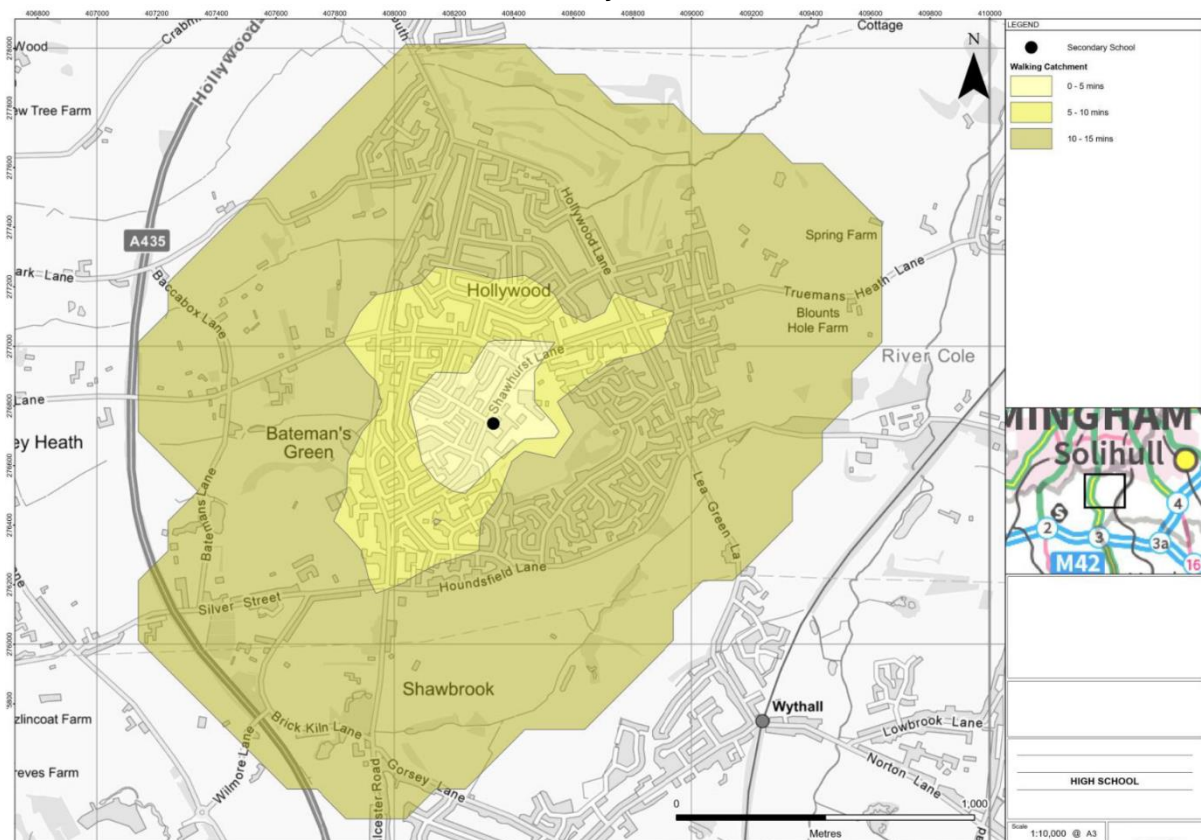
Convenience Stores/Supermarket

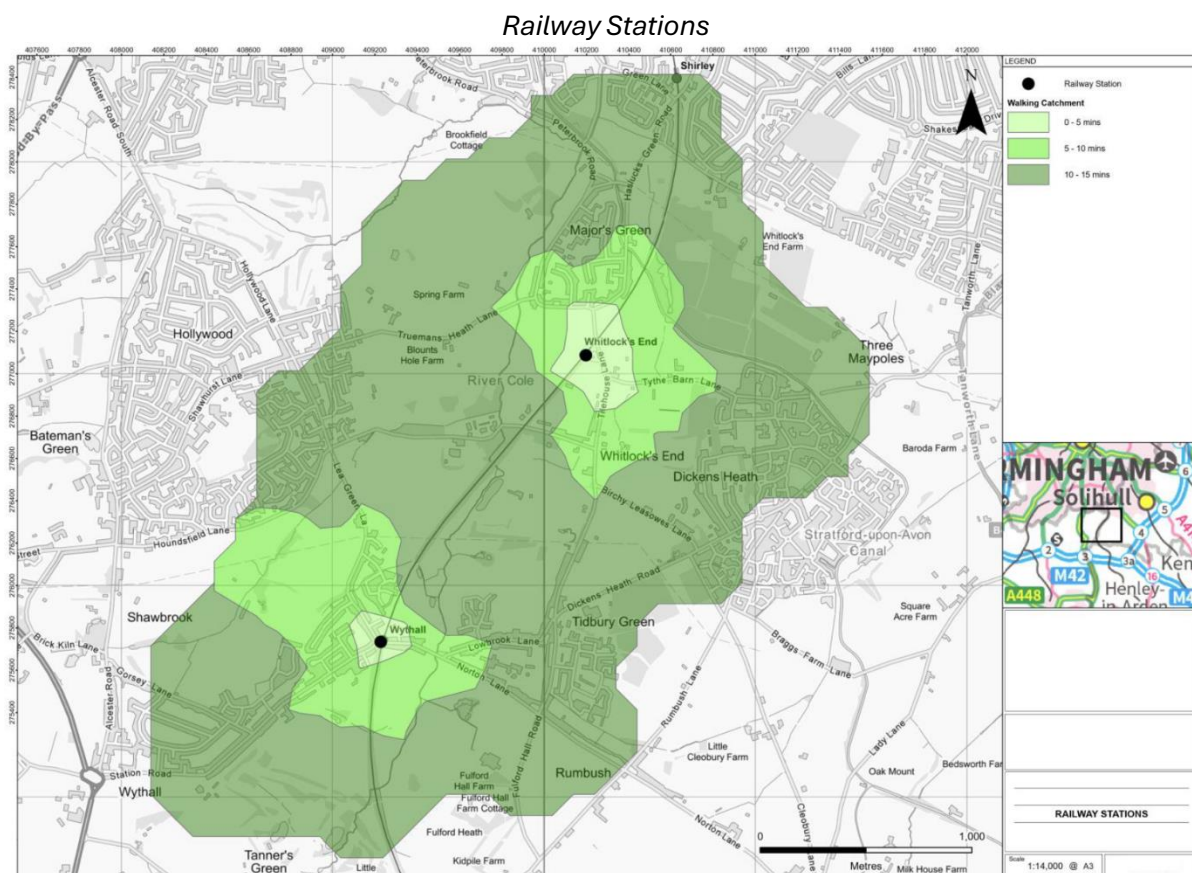


Primary Schools



Secondary Schools

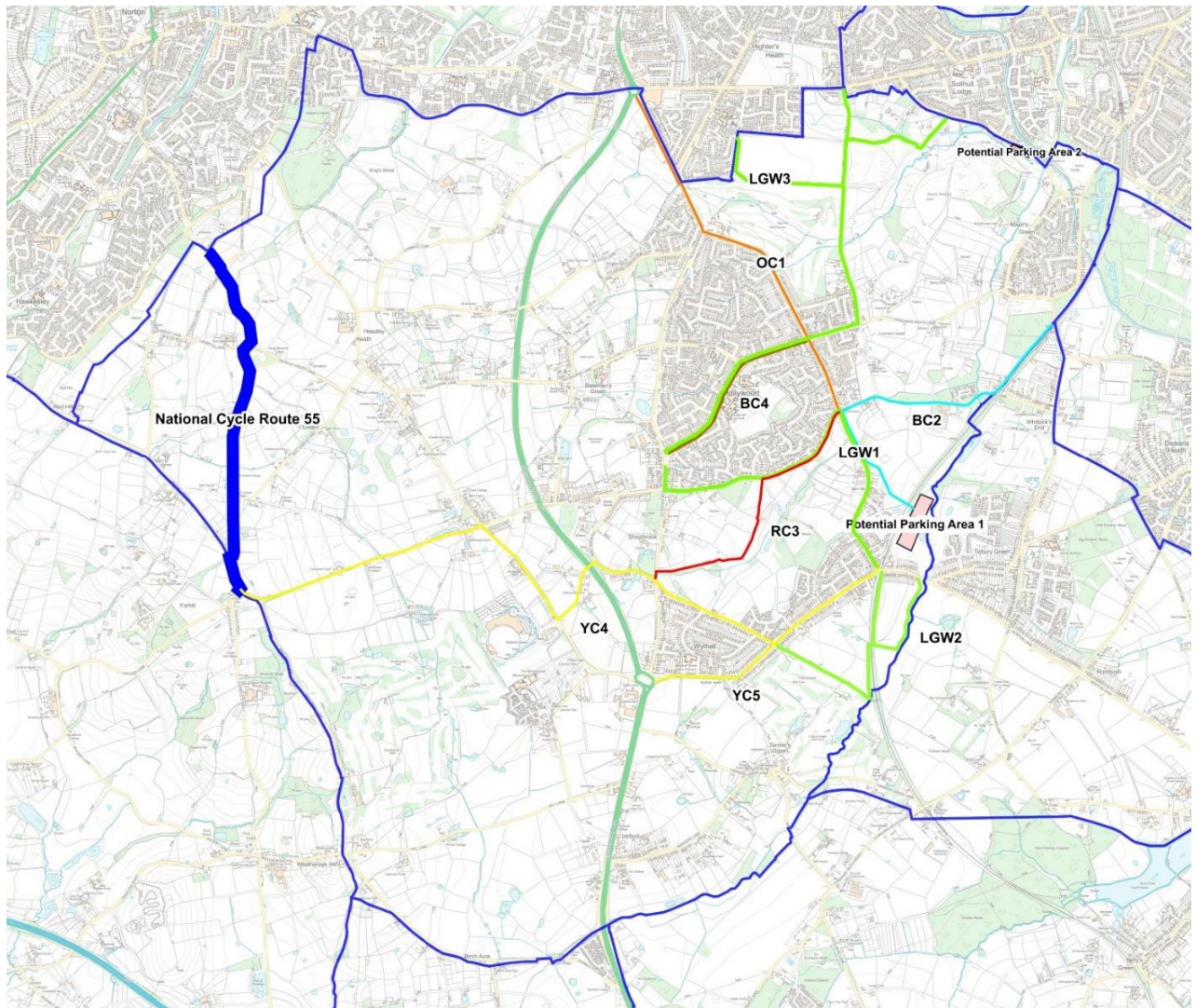




Priority walking and cycling routes

221. Active travel objectives set by Government support walking and cycling. Cycling can be particularly effective in supporting non-car or public transport access to local shops and services, or to access longer distance transport services. The neighbourhood plan supports cycling as a means of improving accessibility for local people. This means providing safe and convenient routes, and sufficient cycle parking infrastructure.
222. The working group has examined the quality of walking and cycling routes connecting to key destinations in the Parish. Key walking and cycling routes within the Parish are identified in Figure 20 in terms of their importance for accessing key services including the train station. There will be overlap with a leisure walking and cycling network but here the focus is on accessible walking and cycling routes for daily needs which are important if a reduction in the need to travel by car is to be achieved.

Figure 20 - Priority walking and cycling routes in Wythall Parish



Source: Wythall Parish Council

Figure 21 – Close up of location of Potential Parking Area 2



Source: Wythall Parish Council

223. The LGW2 route set out on Figure 20 could incorporate a “Riverside Way” route branching left prior to the railway embankment would be possible, running at a distance away from the River Cole (to allow it to be at a well- drained surface level thus avoiding any flooding issues). The path would terminate at Norton Lane a short distance downhill from the station.
224. This route would have many advantages for the health and wellbeing of residents, not only would it offer an alternative route to and from the station, cut down on road usage and help reduce traffic air pollution, it would be safer for pedestrians and cyclists.
225. There would also be an opportunity to improve green infrastructure and wildlife habitats near the river corridor with tree planting, which would improve air quality and help drain out excessive ground water.
226. Figure 20 also shows a potential location for a parking area at Wythall Rail Station (labelled as ‘Potential Parking Area 1’). Another tourist/local visitor parking area is identified at Peterbrook Road (labelled as ‘Potential Parking Area 2’ and shown more fully in figure 21). This would be located at the start of the “North Worcestershire Way” which is a long-distance walking route across Worcestershire County. A small parking area could be accommodated at the starting point of the walk, which together with an information board, would encourage people to try this walk and benefit from it.
227. Proposals made by the National Trust in its 8 Hills Regional Park Spatial Framework report include a heritage route from Shirley Station to Berry Mound Fort Camp, a visitor facility at Berry Mound Fort Camp and a potential Discovery Gateway at Shirley Station. Berry Mound Fort Camp is located extremely close to the start of the North Worcestershire Way and these proposals would link in well with our proposed car park.
228. The Government publishes guidance and standards for cycle infrastructure design, set out in LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design. This provides a framework for the local assessment of existing cycle infrastructure and the identification of priorities for future provision to address deficiencies and enhance infrastructure networks.

229. Local Authorities are required to publish a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). These are prepared with engagement and input from local communities to identify aspirations and priorities in a plan for local walking and cycling infrastructure.
230. For a council area the size of Worcestershire, separate LCWIPs are being put in place for different parts of the County. So far, Wythall has not been covered and so the neighbourhood plan can make its own assessment of infrastructure quality and requirements.
231. In making a local attempt to establish credible assessment of quality of cycling infrastructure, reference should be made to the Core Principles of design set out in LTN1/20. LTN1/20 principles guide the suitability of different types of cycle infrastructure according to road speeds and traffic volumes.
232. Table 9 demonstrates how the core design principles of LTN1/20 were applied to the routes identified in Figure 20 and priorities for further cycling infrastructure to improve the coherence, directness, safety, comfort and attractiveness of the network were considered. Where local knowledge and available data permitted, the need was recognised to protect cyclists from motor traffic on highways using the guidance set out in figure 4.1 of LTN1/20.
233. The priorities identified will be actioned through a variety of mechanisms. This will include direct contributions from new development, securing commitments from Worcestershire County Council and other means as may be identified.
234. Whilst written for cycling infrastructure, an assessment of local walking routes and infrastructure was undertaken using the same guidance and principles. This is also set out in the table.

WYTHALL 11 – Support for improvements to priority walking and cycling routes

Major development proposals are encouraged to support improvements to and well-marked signage for the following priority walking and cycling routes as set out on the Policies Map and in Table 9:

- a) Extent of National Cycle Route 55 (NCR55) within Wythall Parish boundary.
- b) Yellow Cycling Route (YC4) joins NCR55 at Forhill to Wythall rail station via Wythall Green.
- c) Yellow Cycling Route (YC5).
- d) Blue Cycling Route (BC2).
- e) Red Cycling Route (RC3).
- f) Orange Cycling Route (OC1).
- g) Brown Cycling Route (BC4).
- h) Light Green Walking Route 1 (LGW1).
- i) Light Green Walking Route 2 (LGW2).
- j) Light Green Walking Route 3 (LGW3).
- k) Bike hire facilities for use throughout the Parish.
- l) Cycle storage and cycle parking stands at key shopping and other Parish facilities.

Table 9 - Assessment of priority walking and cycling routes – quality and investment priorities

Cycle or Walking Route	Description of route and infrastructure	Assessment in accordance with LTN1/20	What are priorities for route improvement?
Extent of established NCR55 within Wythall Parish boundary	Crosses into the Parish along Primrose Hill and continues along Icknield St.	Coherent? Yes Direct? Yes Safe? Yes Comfortable? Yes Attractive? Yes Suitable protection from traffic? Yes, but ACL road markings must be applied throughout.	Advisory Cycle Lane markings where feasible. Signage where appropriate.
Yellow Cycling Route (YC4) joins NCR55 at Forhill and runs to Wythall rail station via Wythall Green (a major employment zone).	Uses Wilmore Lane, Brick Kiln Lane and Gorsey Lane to reach Station Rd, then runs parallel with Station Rd (SW to NE) to Wythall Station.	Coherent? Yes Direct? Yes Safe? Yes Comfortable? Yes Attractive? Yes Suitable protection from traffic? Yes, with ACL and 20mph measures applied to the western end of the route.	Provide route to Station Rd with Advisory Cycle Lanes (ACL's), roads to be widened where possible and subjected to blanket 20mph limit. A prerequisite is a 3m wide fully segregated (walking/cycling) bi-directional tarmac route on Station Rd running either in the west verge or east verge (or behind properties on east side of Station Road if home security fears of residents can be allayed).
Yellow Cycling Route (YC5)	Connects to YC4 along Station Rd at southern end of Gorsey Lane	Coherent? Yes Direct? Yes Safe? Yes Comfortable? Yes Attractive? Yes	This route extends from a junction with YC4 at Gorsey Lane in a south-westerly direction a short distance along Station Rd towards Beckett's Island, serving the site of Meadow Green primary school and linking up with a segregated cycle path, already in place, running south alongside the A435 Alcester Rd. A prerequisite is a 3m wide fully segregated (walking/cycling) bi-directional tarmac route on Station Rd running either in the west verge or east verge (or

Wythall Parish Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 15 – February 2025

Cycle or Walking Route	Description of route and infrastructure	Assessment in accordance with LTN1/20	What are priorities for route improvement?
		Suitable protection from traffic? Yes	behind properties on east side of Station Road if home security fears of residents can be allayed).
Blue Cycling Route (BC2)	Links Whitlocks End and Wythall stations.	<p>Coherent? Yes</p> <p>Direct? Yes, could follow rail line throughout, but 'kink' to pass Houndsfield Lane crossroads improves connectivity.</p> <p>Safe? Yes</p> <p>Comfortable? Yes, with design attention to minimise gradient up Barns Hill</p> <p>Attractive? Not really.</p> <p>Suitable protection from traffic? No</p>	<p>3m wide fully segregated (walking/cycling) bi-directional tarmac route running south from Whitlocks End station to be created from existing footpath.</p> <p>At its junction with Houndsfield Lane ACL and 20mph measures must be applied along its whole westward length towards Lea Green Lane crossroad. Houndsfield Lane is a known 'rat-run' so Tythe Barn Lane-style chicanes may be an option.</p> <p>Continuing west, near Hollybrook farm, it will turn south on to a 3m wide fully segregated (walking/cycling) bi-directional tarmac route, ascending to Barn Hill before 'ducking under' the rail alignment, via a culvert opening that will need to be enlarged by NR, to reach Wythall station environs.</p> <p>ACL and 20mph measures must be applied to Houndsfield Lane and chicanes introduced on what can be a 'rat run'.</p>
Red Cycling Route (RC3)	Links to Blue and Orange routes at the Houndsfield Lane/Lea Green Lane crossroads and to Yellow route at Brick Kiln Lane / Alcester Road.	<p>Coherent? Yes</p> <p>Direct? Yes</p> <p>Safe? Yes</p> <p>Comfortable? Yes</p> <p>Attractive? Yes</p> <p>Suitable protection from traffic? No</p>	<p>The route requires a 3m wide fully-segregated (walking/cycling) bi-directional tarmac path to be laid initially parallel with Houndsfield Lane running SSW for about 600m, then veering SW to follow the line of the existing footpath to Alcester Road.</p> <p>Although no longer a trunk road, a light-controlled crossing (Toucan or similar) on the Alcester Rd near Brick Kiln Lane would help ensure the safety of both foot and cycle traffic moving to or from the YC4.</p> <p>Safety Measures at Houndsfield Lane/Lea Green Lane cross roads</p>
Orange Cycling Route (OC1)	Links Hollywood Lane with The Maypole and provides opportunity for red and blue route users to reach this important	<p>Coherent? Yes</p> <p>Direct? Yes</p> <p>Safe? Yes</p>	<p>The route requires a 3m wide fully-segregated (walking/cycling) bi-directional tarmac path to be laid on the wide verge on the east side of Hollywood lane from Houndsfield Lane x-roads to the Alcester Road at Tesco. This could extend on the west side of Alcester Rd northwards towards the Maypole.</p>

Wythall Parish Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 15 – February 2025

Cycle or Walking Route	Description of route and infrastructure	Assessment in accordance with LTN1/20	What are priorities for route improvement?
	public transport 'node' which also hosts major retailers and a gym.	Comfortable? Yes Attractive? Yes Suitable protection from traffic? Yes, but a light-controlled crossing (Toucan or similar) is needed for crossing Alcester Rd E-W and W-E if the segregated route is on the west side of this road.	As a less-costly alternative a 3m wide fully-segregated path could be laid across the SW corner of Hollywood Golf Course, saving the cost of at least 1 'Toucan'.
Brown Cycling Route 4 (BC4)	Links Orange Cycling Route 1 past the two schools located in Hollywood and to Drakes Cross Shopping Parade (the largest local shopping area). 20MPH zone outside schools. This route is used by children cycling to and from school.	Coherent?: Yes Direct? Yes Safe? No Comfortable? No Attractive? Yes Suitable protection from traffic? No	Enforce the parking and speeding restrictions along Shawhurst Lane. Consider extending the existing 20MPH restriction along the whole length of Shawhurst Lane.
Light Green Walking Route 1 (LGW1)	From Wythall Station, Along Lea Green Lane, to Houndsfield Lane turning west along Houndsfield Lane to Alcester Road and then north along Alcester Road to Drakes Cross Shopping Parade.	Coherent?: Yes Direct? Yes Safe? No Comfortable? No Attractive? Yes Suitable protection from traffic? No	Enforce the speed limits along Lea Green Lane and Houndsfield Lane. Sections of Lea Green Lane footpath are narrow and require siding out and widening. Sections of Houndsfield Lane footpath are narrow and require siding out and widening. Safety Measures at Houndsfield Lane/Lea Green Lane crossroads are required to allow safe crossing for pedestrians.
Light Green Walking Route 2 (LGW2) (including two branching aspirational	Links to Wythall station and other neighbouring leisure walks. From Station Road the route	Coherent? Yes Direct? Yes	A small 'pocket' of land on Norton Lane opposite the end of the riverside walk option could be acquired and made into a small car park for 'leisure' walkers.

Wythall Parish Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 15 – February 2025

Cycle or Walking Route	Description of route and infrastructure	Assessment in accordance with LTN1/20	What are priorities for route improvement?
routes from 583B to Norton Lane)	follows public rights of way 582B and 583B. The remainder of the walk is on private land, controlled by the developer of site WY03 proposed in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan, where the footpath passes under the railway embankment using the arch for the River Cole. The walk then branches into two, with one heading north, following the railway line to Norton Lane and Wythall station and the other heading east to the River Cole, then north following the River Cole to Norton Lane.	<p>Safe? Yes</p> <p>Comfortable? Yes</p> <p>Attractive? Yes, especially the branch along the riverside*</p> <p>Suitable protection from traffic? Yes, with a crossing facility for pedestrians to access Wythall Station</p>	<p>Negotiation with Network Rail (NR) and the landowner would be required to allow a footpath to be built alongside the railway, fenced to prevent trespass.</p> <p>*A new walking route to be created (well-drained surface at a height above the River Cole mean water level to prevent it flooding in all but the most extreme weather conditions.</p> <p>** Three-way traffic lights with a pedestrian phase at the junction between Station Rd, Lea Green Lane and Norton Lane would create safety for all road users and pedestrians or pelican or zebra crossing as appropriate (?)</p>
Light Green Walking Route 3 (LGW3) (including an aspirational extension from PROW 506C to Pickenham Road)	Utilising existing footpaths alongside Shawhurst Lane and Truemans Heath Lane, then turning onto Public Right of Way 505B along The Fordrough, linking to 506C and 507C, but branching off these for a short section to utilise	<p>Coherent? Yes</p> <p>Direct? Yes</p> <p>Safe? No, due to the traffic speed on Truemans Heath Lane where 40MPH zone reduced to a 30MPH zone and, on Shawhurst Lane where vehicles park on footpaths and there is a high volume of traffic at school pick up and drop off times</p>	<p>Enforce the speed limits and parking restrictions along Truemans Heath Lane and Shawhurst Lane.</p> <p>Widen the northern footpath from Hollywood Lane to Shawhurst Gardens, whilst retaining some verge.</p> <p>Improve the May Lane/Shawhurst Lane junction to reduce the radii by allowing a narrower entrance to/from May Lane and less distance for pedestrians to cross, or, add a roundabout at this junction with splitter islands to help pedestrians to cross.</p>

Wythall Parish Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 15 – February 2025

Cycle or Walking Route	Description of route and infrastructure	Assessment in accordance with LTN1/20	What are priorities for route improvement?
	current permissible paths across private land to link with Pickenham Road. This route links up two local schools, Drakes Cross Shopping Parade (the largest local shopping area) and the neighbouring 'Maypole' area of Birmingham which has the best local travel links. NB. Shawhurst Lane is a busy pedestrian area for children and their carers walking to and from the schools.	as well as speeding at other times which all causes it to feel less safe. Comfortable? Yes Attractive? Yes Suitable Protection from Traffic? No, in respect of the junction at the Fordrough and Truemans Heath Lane where there is no footpath.	Note a small part of the route utilises a permissible path on private land where landowner agreement would be required. The path is currently maintained and kept clear for public use.

Source: Wythall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

10. Monitoring, Delivery and Review

235. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to achieve a number of outcomes which will require further actions, active monitoring and periodic review to determine whether objectives and policies are being achieved and observed. Key requirements are identified in Table 10.

Table 10 - Monitoring for Neighbourhood Plan delivery

Policy	Action Required to Deliver and Monitor policy implementation
WYTHALL 1 – Local Community Facilities	Monitor policy use in planning applications. Develop specific actions to secure required investments where appropriate.
WYTHALL 2 - Affordable Housing Tenure	Monitor policy use in planning applications
WYTHALL 3 - Housing Types and Sizes in Wythall	Monitor policy use in planning applications
WYTHALL 4 – Good Design and Development Form in Wythall Parish	Monitor policy use in planning applications
WYTHALL 5 – Environmental Performance of Buildings	Monitor policy use in planning applications
WYTHALL 6 - Wythall Parish Local Heritage Assets	Monitor policy use in planning applications
WYTHALL 7 - Local Green Space Sites	Monitor policy use in planning applications Develop specific management proposals for Local Green Space
WYTHALL 8 – Biodiversity Gains from new development in Wythall Parish	Monitor policy use in planning applications
WYTHALL 9 – Support for Bus Services	Monitor policy use in planning applications Develop specific actions to secure required investments where appropriate.
WYTHALL 10 – Support for Rail Services and Station improvements	Monitor policy use in planning applications Develop specific actions to secure required investments where appropriate.
WYTHALL 11 – Support for improvements to priority walking and cycling routes	Monitor policy use in planning applications Develop specific actions to secure required investments where appropriate.

APPENDIX A Wythall Parish Local Heritage Sites

See separate document

APPENDIX B Local Green Space Sites Assessment

See separate document