

CHAPTER 18

Witheridge Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

18.1 Witheridge is identified as a Local Centre that provides localised services and facilities for the village and surrounding rural community. The village is situated along the B3137 between South Molton and Tiverton and is approximately 15 kilometres from each of these towns.

18.2 Witheridge is located on the edge of the Local Plan area with the Mid Devon District boundary abutting the south eastern corner of the village. Consequently, part of the catchment area for Witheridge falls within Mid Devon and the village looks towards Tiverton as well as South Molton for its nearest Area Centre providing higher level services. The village is situated in the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration.

ENVIRONMENT

Landscape

18.3 The landscape setting of Witheridge is characterised by sloping culm grassland with higher land to the south of the village sloping towards the valley of the Little Dart River to the north. Witheridge does not have any landscape designations, although the surrounding landscape is still considered attractive.

Nature Conservation

18.4 There are no sites of national nature conservation importance around the village, although there are several County Wildlife Sites around Witheridge to which Policy ENV12 applies. These include the semi-ancient woodland at Yeo Copse adjacent to Little Dart River.

Historic Environment

18.5 Witheridge is centred around The Square, an open area between Church Street and West Street. The Parish Church of St John the Baptist is situated to the north of the Square and is Grade I listed. The historic character of the village centre has been retained and forms the basis of the Conservation Area shown on Inset Map 7. Proposals within the Conservation Area will be considered against Policy ENV16.

Sewage Disposal

18.6 The foul sewerage system in Witheridge is overloaded and has no spare capacity to cater for further development. Any significant new developments will require major improvements to the sewerage system. Developers will be required to contribute towards the costs of these improvements. Surface water disposal should be controlled and managed through the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) in accordance with Policy DVS7.

HOUSING

18.7 A development boundary for Witheridge is defined on Inset Map 7 outside of which the principle of residential development will not be acceptable unless it complies with Policies HSG8 or HSG10. Within the development boundary residential development will be permitted in accordance with Policy HSG2.

18.8 As a result of extensive growth for the village during the 1970's and 1980's there are large estates of bungalows to the south of the village centre. No large previously developed sites have been identified for residential redevelopment. However, a relatively large greenfield site is proposed west of Brooke Road for residential development to reflect its local centre status in the PARR and in order to help sustain the viability of the village and to promote its greater self sufficiency.

Broomhouse Park (WIT1a)

18.9 Land west of Broomhouse Park is relatively flat. Due to its size, only part of the site should be developed for housing for about 40 dwellings. A range of house types and sizes should be provided in accordance with Policy HSG6 including at least 15 affordable homes or 35% of the total number of units provided, to meet the requirements of Policy HSG7. The development should be built at a minimum net density of 35 units to the hectare in accordance with Policy HSG5. The remainder of the site identified for development should include a new medical centre to replace the existing facility. The present site is restricted in size and provides no opportunity for the medical centre to expand in order to improve its range and quality of health services. To meet current health standards and provide sufficient parking and space for future expansion if needed, a site measuring approximately 1000 sq. metres gross is required and should be located on the edge of the overall development. To help facilitate its development, the developer of the residential element of the site will be expected to provide access and essential services into the plot identified for the medical centre. An area of public open space and a landscaped buffer along the eastern site boundary should also be provided as part of the overall development.

18.10 Access to the site should be from Brooke Road and not from Drayford Road in order to prevent the formation of a rat run off the narrow lane. Traffic management measures will be required along roads leading to the site, including Brooke Road. Revenue contributions will be sought towards improving the frequency and quality of bus services within the village in accordance with Policy TRA1A. The development will be required to upgrade the foul and surface water sewers in order to provide additional capacity and incorporate the use of SUDS.

18.11 The Two Moors Way crosses to the south of the site. Its route should be enhanced to reflect Policy TRA1A. The existing hedgerow along the southern boundary of the site should be enhanced to minimise any visual impact on the surrounding countryside in accordance with Policy DVS2. To ensure the site is comprehensively and sensitively developed, a development brief will be required.

Apple Tree Close (WIT1b)

18.12 Land west of Apple Tree Close is currently a paddock measuring approximately 0.5 hectares surrounded by existing residential development. 50% of the total number of dwellings proposed should be affordable in accordance with Policy HSG7. Access to the site should be off Apple Tree Close. A high quality of design will be important to reflect the character and appearance of the adjoining Conservation Area in accordance with Policies DVS1 and ENV16. There is no spare capacity in either the foul or surface water sewers and major improvements will be required to the public foul sewerage system if foul sewage is discharged to it. Surface water must be controlled and managed using SUDS.

PROPOSAL WIT1 (RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT)

1. THE FOLLOWING SITES, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 7, ARE ALLOCATED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED THE ELEMENTS IDENTIFIED FOR EACH SITE ARE PROPOSED:-

LAND OFF BROOMHOUSE PARK (WIT1a)

- A) ABOUT 40 DWELLINGS AT A MINIMUM NET DENSITY OF 35 UNITS PER HECTARE AND INCORPORATING A MIX OF ACCOMMODATION TYPES AND SIZES INCLUDING AT LEAST 15 AFFORDABLE HOMES;
- B) THE PROVISION OF A NEW MEDICAL CENTRE AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE;
- C) ACCESS FROM BROOKE ROAD INCLUDING TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES ON ROADS LEADING TO THE SITE;
- D) PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE LINKS INCLUDING ENHANCEMENT TO THE TWO MOORS WAY;
- E) THE PREPARATION OF A DEVELOPMENT BRIEF; AND
- F) IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE ELEMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE SOUGHT TOWARDS:-
 - ◆ UPGRADING THE SEWERS;
 - ◆ PROVIDING ADDITIONAL PLACES AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE DESIGNATED AREA; AND
 - ◆ IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO THE SITE.

LAND WEST OF APPLE TREE CLOSE (WIT1b)

- A) ABOUT 10 DWELLINGS INCLUDING AT LEAST 5 AFFORDABLE HOMES; AND
- B) IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE ELEMENT CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE SOUGHT TOWARDS UPGRADING THE SEWERS.

2. A PLANNING OBLIGATION OR CONDITION WILL BE USED TO SECURE ANY CONTRIBUTIONS PROVIDED.

EMPLOYMENT

18.13 Witheridge is within the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration and is a focus for employment opportunities for the surrounding rural area. A series of workshops have been provided on the industrial estate to the north west of the village adjoining the B3137. The site has not yet been fully developed and will be safeguarded for the provision of additional employment uses within Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order. Any proposals for alternative uses will be considered against Policy ECN2. If additional land is required for employment purposes, any future extension of the industrial estate will be considered against Policy ECN3.

18.14 Immediately to the south of the existing industrial estate is a large storage yard occupied by Mole Valley Farmers. Should all or part of this site become available during the Plan period, then it should be redeveloped for employment purposes, utilising the access through the existing industrial estate. Any redevelopment of this site should include provision of a dedicated parking area for lorries and commercial vehicles to remove them from the village centre. The site should be landscaped in accordance with Policies DVS2 and DVS3 to assimilate the development into the village and to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties.

PROPOSAL WIT2 (WITHERIDGE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE)

LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE VILLAGE, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 7, IS PROPOSED FOR EMPLOYMENT WITHIN CLASSES B1, B2 AND B8 OF THE USE CLASSES ORDER, INCLUDING DEDICATED PARKING PROVISION FOR LORRIES AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Sport and Recreation

18.15 Existing public open spaces within Witheridge are identified on Inset Map 7. The village is fortunate in that it is well served by open space accessible to the public. The main sports provision are the football and cricket pitches adjacent to Witheridge Primary School, the recreation ground to the south of Merryside Villas (including BMX facilities) and tennis courts and multi use games area at the Parish Hall. There are two equipped children's play areas within the village. These areas of public open space will be protected from other uses in accordance with Policy REC6.

18.16 Land west of Brooke Road has been proposed for additional public open space within the village as part of the development of this site identified under Proposal WIT1a. Further public open space is proposed to the north of the Parish Hall to meet a local need for additional sports pitches and an all weather multi use games area, where it can share existing parking and facilities associated with the Parish Hall.

PROPOSAL WIT2A (PUBLIC OPEN SPACE PROVISION)

LAND NORTH OF THE PARISH HALL IS PROPOSED FOR SPORTS PITCHES AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 7, WHERE THE OPEN CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE IS NOT HARMED.

18.17 The Two Moors Way runs through Witheridge from north to south and crosses into Mid Devon District to the south of the village. The route of the Two Moors Way is shown on Inset Map 7 and the Proposals Map. The Two Moors Way provides opportunities for public access to the countryside on both sides of the village. It also provides tourism and recreation opportunities within the village for people walking the route in its entirety. Land north of Rackenford Road is situated next to the Two Moors Way and is proposed for a camping area with associated facilities under Proposal WIT2B. This proposal will help to develop alternative local tourism opportunities. Access improvements and upgrading the sewerage system and appropriate boundary treatments to minimise visual impact and to protect the amenities of adjoining properties will be required in accordance with Policies DVS2, DVS3, DVS6 and TRA6.

PROPOSAL WIT2B (CAMPING AREA)

LAND TO THE NORTH OF RACKENFORD ROAD, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 7, IS PROPOSED FOR A CAMPING AREA WHERE:-

- A) ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS ARE PROVIDED;**
- B) THE EXISTING SEWER IS UPGRADED; AND**
- C) ANY NEW BUILDINGS OR STRUCTURES REQUIRED ARE SITED AND DESIGNED TO MINIMISE THEIR VISUAL IMPACT.**

18.18 To improve pedestrian access within the village, a footpath link is proposed from Apple Tree Close to Fore Street as shown on Inset Map 7. This provision will improve accessibility to Witheridge Primary School and the adjoining sports field enabling the narrow and busy roads in the centre of the village to be avoided.

PROPOSAL WIT3 (FOOTPATH LINK)

A FOOTPATH LINK IS PROPOSED BETWEEN APPLE TREE CLOSE AND FORE STREET AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 7.

Education and Healthcare Provision

18.19 Witheridge has a primary school which is at capacity. Contributions will therefore be sought towards the cost of increasing its capacity where a residential scheme includes housing containing more than one bedroom. The level of contributions will be based on the Code of Practice produced as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The village also has a medical centre, although it is proposed to replace it with a more modern facility as part of the proposal for Broomhouse Park (see Proposal WIT1a).