

Cabinet

Supplementary Agenda (1)

Date: Monday, 20th September, 2010
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe
CW1 2BJ

11. **Local Development Framework Documents** (Pages 1 - 154)

The following appendices to the report are being circulated as a supplement to the agenda.

- Appendix 1 Statement of Community Involvement (revised)
- Appendix 3 Alsager Town Centre SPD (revised)
- Appendix 5 Smallwood Village Design Statement SPD (revised)

Appendices 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9 to the report have not changed since they were first considered by Cabinet in July and can be found on supplementary agenda (2).

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Local Development Framework

Statement of Community Involvement



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Equal Opportunities and Access

Equal Opportunities and Access

Cheshire East Council recognises that it can improve the quality of life of people in the area by seeking to ensure that every member of the public has equal access to its services, facilities, resources, activities and employment.

We want these to be accessible to everyone in the community regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, marital status or sexual orientation. Furthermore, we are keen to respond to the individual requirements of our customers to develop services that recognise their diversity and particular needs.

We use Language Line as a translation service, and have hearing induction loops in our reception areas.

Information can be made available in large print, in Braille or on audiotope on request.

If you would like this information in another language or format, please contact us.

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

如欲索取以另一語文印制或另一格式制作的资料，请与我们联系。

Jezeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

اگر این اطلاعات را به زبانی دیگر و یا در فرمتی دیگر میخواهید لطفاً از ما درخواست کنید

Se deseja obter informação noutra idioma ou formato, diga-nos.

1 Introduction

Role of Statement of Community Involvement

1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Cheshire East Borough Council intends to involve all sectors of the community in the planning process. Both in the preparation of planning policy through the Local Development Framework (LDF); and in the determination of planning applications.

1.2 This document is part of the Cheshire East Local Development Framework and reflects the content of the Council's wider approach to community engagement.

Status of Document

1.3 The Statement of Community Involvement has taken into account changes set out through regulations contained in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended in 2008, 2009 and 2010), Government guidance in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 – “Delivering Sustainable Development” and Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12 – “Creating Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities through Local Spatial Planning” as well as other guidance on the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) website.

Development of Statement of Community Involvement

1.4 A draft Statement of Community Involvement was subject to consultation over an eight week period between 23rd November 2009 and 18th January 2010. A total of 17 responses were received during that time. As a result of these comments the Council has made various changes to the document.

1.5 A summary of comments received and response of the Council is presented in Appendix 7.

Monitoring and Review of the Statement of Community Involvement

1.6 The Council will monitor the success of the consultation exercises it carries out. If it decides that improvements can be made, these will be highlighted in the Annual Monitoring Report. Subsequent changes to processes will be subject to consultation. The Council will also monitor emerging best practice, and the publication of any new guidance or legislation that may impact upon the requirements for public consultation.

2 Community Involvement in Planning

National Principles

2.1 Planning Policy Statement 12: “Creating Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities through Local Spatial Planning” sets out a number of principles for community engagement in planning. Local Planning Authorities should produce a Statement of Community Involvement which follows these principles, stated as follows:

- Consultation should be appropriate to the level of planning;
- Involvement and engagement should be frontloaded (i.e. from the outset) leading to a sense of ownership of local policy decisions;
- Continuous – as part of an ongoing programme of community involvement and engagement;
- Transparent and accessible – using appropriate methods for the communities or groups concerned;
- Planned – as an integral part of the process for making plans.

Local Principles and Linkages with Other Strategies and Documents

2.2 Cheshire East Borough Council recognises and appreciates the positive contribution that community involvement can have in all aspects and areas of planning. The Statement of Community Involvement is designed to reflect how the local and wider community (including stakeholders and specific, general and other consultation bodies such as statutory consultees) will be engaged and consulted on planning issues.

2.3 Cheshire East Borough Council, its Local Strategic Partnership (called Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East) and associated stakeholders have prepared a Sustainable Community Strategy called "Ambition for All". This strategy will be taken into account in the preparation of the Local Development Framework, which will help deliver the spatial objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

2.4 To avoid stakeholders suffering from “consultation fatigue”, the Council will use joint consultations on the Local Development Framework with other strategies wherever possible.

2.5 It is important to consult a broad range of groups during the preparation of each document in the Local Development Framework; and at various stages thereafter. Appendix 4 contains more information on stakeholders involved in the Local Development Framework process. In general terms, key stakeholders include:

- General public – residents and people who undertake business, leisure activities or have a general interest in the area;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Representatives of Local Strategic Partnership (Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East) / Local Area Partnership;
- Business interests and major landowners including developers and agents;
- Government departments and statutory bodies;
- Infrastructure providers;

2 Community Involvement in Planning

- Interest groups - environmental, amenity, community and voluntary groups at all levels;
- Hard to reach groups.

2.6 In the production of Planning Policy documents, Cheshire East Borough Council will aim to achieve the following:

- Ask for views at an appropriate stage;
- Provide sufficient information to enable an effective response to any consultation;
- Provide details of how to respond to any consultation and in what time period;
- All terminology used will be explained within a glossary of terms with an overall aim to reduce jargon used;
- All comments will be made publicly available and the Council will report on all consultation stages;
- Review effectiveness of consultation and engagement procedures and seek to improve them
- Publicise any consultation events on the Council's website and hold them at appropriate locations in the Borough that are accessible with appropriate disabled access.

2.7 When people or organisations submit their representations at the various consultation stages, Cheshire East Borough Council requests that the following requirements are met:

- Clear and concise comments are provided related to the issue being consulted upon;
- Comments are submitted within the time period established;
- That any comments submitted are respectful of the views of others.

3 Local Development Framework

3.1 The Local Development Framework is a portfolio of planning policy documents that set out the spatial planning strategy and help manage how development takes place in Cheshire East for the next 15 years or so. It will form the statutory Development Plan for Cheshire East and determine how the planning system helps to shape local places and communities. The Local Development Framework plays an important role in delivering the vision set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy within the context of national planning policies.

3.2 The Local Development Framework contains a number of different documents called Local Development Documents. The different types of Local Development Documents include:

3.3 Development Plan Documents – planning documents that have been subject to independent testing and form part of the statutory Development Plan. Planning applications will be assessed and determined using provisions set out within Development Plan Documents.

3.4 Development Plan Documents must be consistent with national guidance set out in Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance and the strategies of adjacent local authorities. Development Plan Documents must also be shown to have regard to the outcomes of Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. Development Plan Documents include the following documents:

- Core Strategy: - sets out the overall vision, objectives and strategy for how Cheshire East will develop over the next 15 years or so.
- Site Specific Allocations / Development Policies: - this document identifies sites allocated for future development to deliver the vision and contents of the Core Strategy. The document contains a suite of detailed policies to support the delivery of the Core Strategy and manage the delivery of future development proposals. A Proposals Map on an Ordnance Survey base will show proposals, designations and site specific policies.
- Area Action Plan: - masterplan documents that relates to areas of development or significant change.

3.5 Supplementary Planning Documents – cover a range of issues, both thematic and site specific. They provide more detailed guidance on how policies are to be applied or design guidance for the development of a site or area. Supplementary Planning Documents will be a “material consideration” in the determination of planning applications.

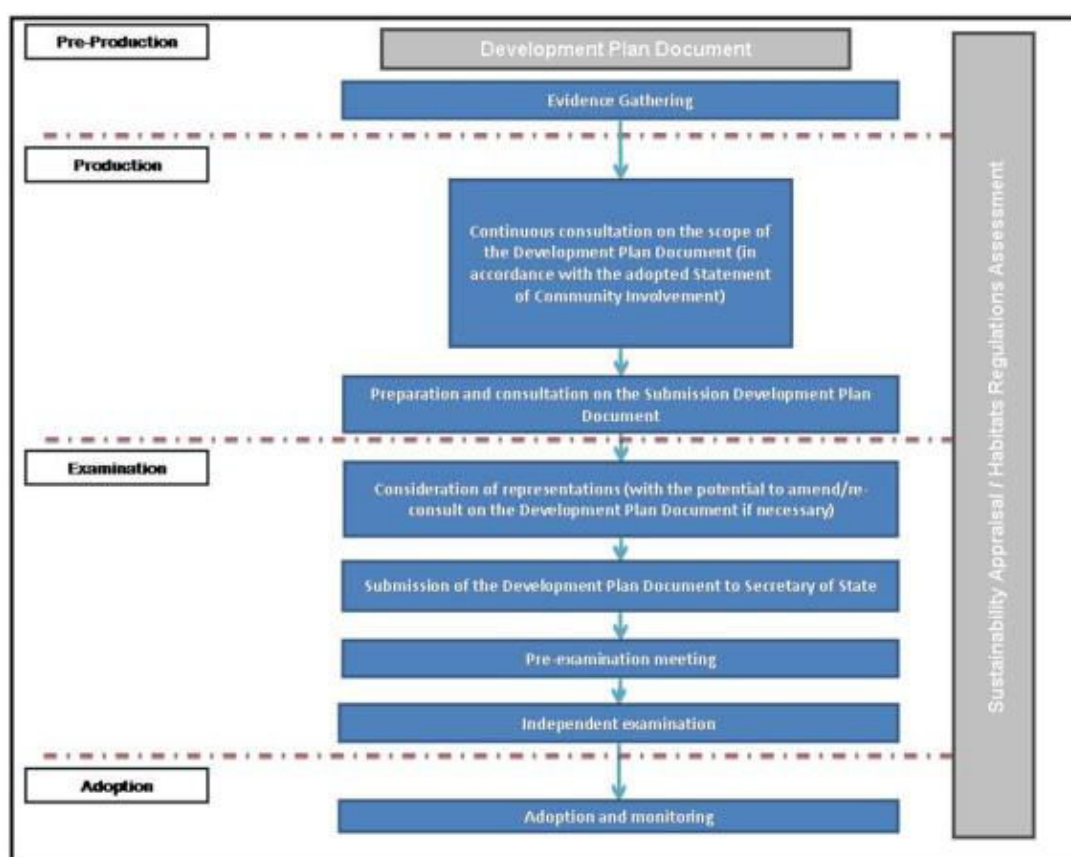
3.6 Other supporting documents in the Local Development Framework include the Local Development Scheme which sets out the Council’s programme for the production of the Local Development Framework and Annual Monitoring Report which sets out progress in terms of producing and implementing planning policies. Further information on these documents and the current planning policy context in Cheshire East can be accessed on the Council’s website.

4 Consultation and Engagement in the Preparation of the Local Development Framework

4.1 This section details the process involved in the production of documents contained within the Local Development Framework. The minimum legal requirements for consultation and engagement for the Local Development Framework are set out within the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and respective amendments made in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Development Plan Documents

4.2 There are a number of steps and consultation stages involved in the production of Development Plan Documents. This is reflected in the figure below:



Picture 4.1 DPD Flowchart

Pre Production Stage

4.3 The Council at this stage will gather background evidence and information on a number of topics that the Development Plan Document will address. Details on the evidence base are contained within the Local Development Scheme. At this stage focused consultation may be undertaken by the Council through a variety of different formats.

4.4 The Council will seek the involvement of relevant stakeholders and organisations in the development of this information with a view to ensuring a reliable and robust evidence base. An example of this is the Housing Market Partnership which includes

4 Consultation and Engagement in the Preparation of the Local Development Framework

stakeholders and representatives such as Registered Social Landlords, house builders and developers who are engaged in the production of evidence base surrounding future housing needs and land supply through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Other partnerships may be established to assist in the preparation of evidence on future employment requirements and for waste and minerals.

Production Stage

4.5 Government guidance and regulations have advised that the extent of consultation undertaken at this stage should be proportionate to the scale of issues identified and involved in the plan. Throughout this stage both informal and formal consultation exercises will be utilised as considered appropriate.

4.6 Public consultation during this period will be undertaken in accordance with Regulation 25. Methods of consultation stated in Appendix 3 will be utilised as appropriate with evidence and focused consultation exercises used to work up and develop options and appraise those options.

4.7 This will be an evolutionary and fluid consultation process with opportunities for stakeholders to get involved at various stages and the views of the wider community reflected.

4.8 This process will have an outcome of a preferred set of options. These will be consulted upon as a draft Development Plan Document and subject to a minimum six week consultation period.

Submission Stage

4.9 Prior to the Council submitting a Development Plan Document to the Secretary of State for approval, it will publish a “Publication Submission” Development Plan Document for a minimum period of six weeks including:

- “Publication Submission” Development Plan Document;
- Changes to the Proposal Map (if applicable);
- The Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment Report;
- A Consultation Statement detailing the consultation that has taken place on the Development Plan Document (including information on those consulted, methods used, summary of main issues and how these were addressed); and
- Any other supporting documents relevant to the “Publication Submission” Development Plan Document.

4.10 These documents will be published on the Council’s website. Additionally, a statutory notice will be placed in at least one local newspaper detailing the consultation stage and where respective documents can be viewed. All statutory consultees (listed in Appendix 4) and members of the Local Development Framework consultation database (see Appendix 1) who have asked to be consulted on the Development Plan Document will be informed by e-mail or letter of the details of the consultation.

4 Consultation and Engagement in the Preparation of the Local Development Framework

4.11 The six week consultation period will seek formal representations on the Development Plan Document regarding the tests of “soundness” detailed in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning. The tests of “soundness” refer to whether the Development Plan Document is justified, effective and consistent with national policy, as well as being prepared in accordance with regulations and procedures. Further information on the tests of “soundness” can be found in the Glossary of Terms and Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning.

4.12 At the end of the consultation period, the Council will consider all representations. The Council may make limited changes at this stage to the Development Plan Document and in these circumstances an addendum will be prepared setting out any proposed changes. Further consultation will be undertaken if necessary.

4.13 A summary of representations received (and a copy of the original representations), the adopted Statement of Community Involvement and all other relevant documentation will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination and made available for inspection at the Council Offices at Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach.

Examination in Public

4.14 The Council will publish the time and place of the independent examination, along with the name of the Inspector on the Council’s website at least six weeks before the examination opens and in at least one local newspaper. Anyone who has made representations (and not withdrawn them) will be notified by letter or e-mail of the examination details.

4.15 The Inspector will decide who will speak and what topics will be covered at the examination. The Government expects a majority of representations to be dealt with at examination in written format and these carry equal weight to those presented verbally at the examination.

4.16 Once the examination has been held, the Inspector will produce a report detailing the “soundness” of the Development Plan Document. This report will contain binding recommendations and the Development Plan Document will, where necessary, be amended to reflect the findings of the Inspector. The recommendations of the Inspector and response of the Council will be published on the Council’s website and made available at locations detailed in Appendix 2.

Adoption

4.17 Once the recommendations of the Inspector have been addressed the Council will adopt the Development Plan Document.

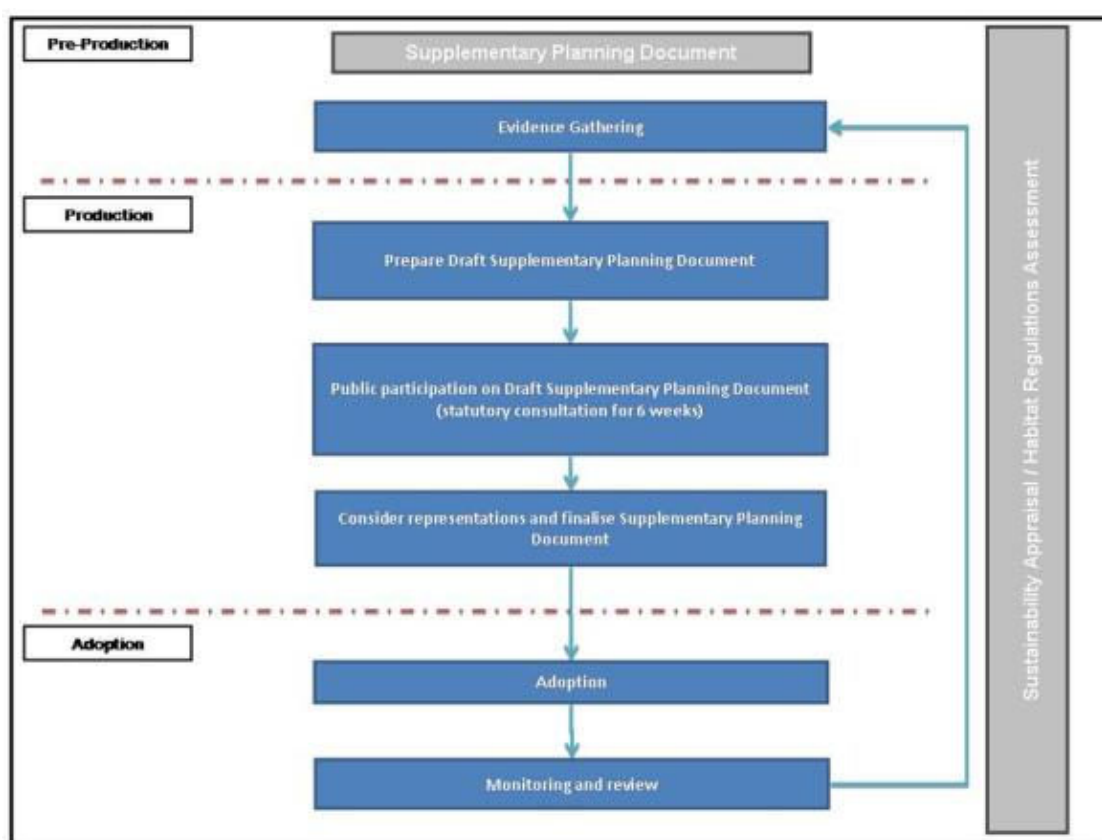
4.18 The adopted Development Plan Document, with supporting documentation including the Adoption Statement, Sustainability Appraisal report and Habitats Regulations Assessment will be made available on the Council’s website and locations detailed in Appendix 2. These arrangements will be advertised locally through a press

4 Consultation and Engagement in the Preparation of the Local Development Framework

notice in at least one local newspaper. The Adoption Statement will also be sent to anyone who requested to be notified of the adoption of the Development Plan Document. Additionally, an e-mail / letter will be sent to those individuals who have requested notification through the Local Development Framework consultation database.

Supplementary Planning Documents

4.19 The figure below shows the stages of production for Supplementary Planning Documents:



Picture 4.2 SPD Flowchart

Pre Production Stage

4.20 The Council at this stage will gather evidence and information relating to the topic of the Supplementary Planning Document. Focused consultation with appropriate stakeholders may be undertaken during this stage.

Production Stage

4.21 The Council will prepare the Supplementary Planning Document with the scale of consultation proportionate to the intended document and subject.

4 Consultation and Engagement in the Preparation of the Local Development Framework

4.22 The draft Supplementary Planning Document will be published for a four to six week period. The draft Supplementary Planning Document will be published on the Council's website. Statutory Consultees and those included on the Local Development Framework consultation database will be notified of the details of the consultation stage. Copies of the Supplementary Planning Document will be made available at locations detailed in Appendix 2.

Adoption

4.23 The Council will consider all of the comments made and prepare the final document for adoption. Once adopted, the Council will publish the Supplementary Planning Document and any supporting documentation on the Council's website and the document will be made available at locations detailed in Appendix 2. Notice of the adoption of the document will also be sent to consultees who have requested it.

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment

4.24 The Council must undertake a Sustainability Appraisal that incorporates the requirements of the EC Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive for all Development Plan Documents and certain Supplementary Planning Documents. Sustainability Appraisal is a tool for appraising the extent to which planning policies reflect sustainable development objectives with the aim of enhancing positive effects whilst minimising any potentially adverse impacts.

4.25 In undertaking Sustainability Appraisal, the Council will:

- Consult key stakeholders on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal;
- Consult key stakeholders and the public as part of public participation of the Development Plan Document and on the Sustainability Appraisal report;
- Undertake public consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal report alongside the publication and submission of the Development Plan Document.

4.26 A Habitats Regulations Assessment will be undertaken to determine whether policies and proposals cumulatively impact on the integrity of designated European sites deemed of exceptional importance in respect of natural habitats and species.

4.27 Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment will be published at the same time as the Local Development Document to which it relates.

5 Planning Applications

5.1 Development Management is a positive and proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining and delivering development proposals. It is led by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), working closely with those proposing developments and other stakeholders. It is undertaken in the spirit of partnership and inclusiveness, and supports the delivery of key priorities and outcomes.

5.2 The Council is committed to engaging both individuals and the wider community in the decision making process. The scale and scope of the consultation process will depend on the nature of the application. A list of statutory consultees the Council must consult is contained in Appendix 5.

5.3 No system for publicising planning applications can be totally effective, however extensive. A balance needs to be struck between providing a reasonable opportunity for people to comment on applications, and the cost and speed of decision-making.

5.4 The Council's procedure for consultation on Development Management is contained in the Neighbour Notification and Publicity for Planning Applications Protocol. This is available on the Council's website and updated from time to time. Information in the Neighbour Notification and Publicity for Planning Applications Protocol will take precedence over information contained in this document.

Pre-application Advice

5.5 The Council strongly encourages applicants to undertake pre-application discussions prior to the submission of planning applications, and/or related applications (e.g. Conservation Area Consent applications, Listed Building Consent applications and Tree Works applications).

5.6 Pre-application discussions are critically important and benefit developers, the Council and the wider community in ensuring a better understanding of the existing, and potential, objectives and constraints to a development. In the course of such discussions proposals can be adapted to ensure they better reflect community aspirations. The benefits of such an approach include:

- better quality, more straightforward, applications which can be quickly processed;
- a means of resolving problems at an early stage;
- an inclusive and transparent approach to determining applications;
- better design, and greater opportunity to meet the needs and aspirations of local communities;
- greater efficiency in both time and resources for both developers and the Council.

5.7 For significant or major applications, developers will be encouraged to carry out pre-application consultation with interested local parties and community bodies. This should allow any issues to be addressed early in the planning process, and hopefully prior to the submission of a planning application, to reduce the potential for delay in the decision making process, and improve the quality of applications. The content and method of any pre-application consultation exercise should be agreed with Council planning officers in advance, and a summary of both the methods

5 Planning Applications

used and results should accompany the submitted planning application. Councillors may be involved in pre-application discussions in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct Protocol in relation to planning matters.

5.8 For the purposes of this Statement of Community Involvement, significant or major applications are considered to be those, which in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority are likely to have either a significant impact on the local area or create significant public interest or controversy. These will include:

- Departures from the development plan;
- Residential proposals, on sites with areas more than 1 hectare;
- All other uses where the floorspace will be 1000 square metres or more (or the site area is 1 hectare or over)
- Major waste disposal facilities (landfill sites, composting facilities, thermal treatment or similar facilities)
- The winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral working deposits.

5.9 In the event of an application being decided at committee stage, the report to members will detail the scale and content of any pre-application discussion that took place.

5.10 5.9 Appendix 1 sets out contact details for the Development Management service and Appendix 6 include information on the methods of consultation for Planning Applications. Further information in relation to particular processes attached to Development Management is presented within the table below:

Development Management Process	Comments on Consultation Requirements
Amendments	<p>Minor amendments are generally made to overcome a particular objection or concern so there is often no need to re-consult. Re-notification of neighbours on minor amendments is left to the Case Officer's discretion.</p> <p>More significant alterations will require neighbour notification; however, a reduced timescale for a response to re-notification is set (normally between 10-14 days). Parish Councils and relevant statutory consultees will also be re-consulted on any significant alterations.</p>

5 Planning Applications

Development Management Process	Comments on Consultation Requirements
Applications going to Committee	<p>If an application is to be determined by the Planning Committee the Council will inform the applicant or agent, the Parish Council, and anyone who submitted comments. The letter informs them of the date, time, and location of the committee meeting.</p> <p>Information regarding the procedures of attending and making representations at committee meetings can be found on the Council's website in the Public Speaking at Strategic Planning Board and Planning Committee Meetings Protocol.</p> <p>Committee reports are made available on the Council's website 5 working days before the committee meeting. Minutes from committee meetings are also posted onto the Council's website.</p>
Notification of Decisions on Planning Applications	<p>Once an application has been determined, the decision will be published on the Council's website.</p>
Appeals	<p>If an application is refused planning permission, only the applicants have a right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.</p> <p>When an appeal is lodged all those who made written comments on the planning application, together with the relevant Town/Parish Council are notified in writing. Copies of any letters already received in respect of the planning application will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate.</p> <p>A list of recently lodged appeals is available on the Council's website. The website also contains details of recent appeal decisions. In addition, brief summaries of individual appeal decisions are submitted to Planning Committee.</p>

5 Planning Applications

Development Management Process	Comments on Consultation Requirements
Prior Approval Applications	<p>Prior Approval Applications (e.g. applications for agricultural buildings) are considered to be, in principle, permitted development. There are only relatively minor issues which the Council can consider in any application (e.g. the siting and appearance). There is a fixed 28 or 56-day timescale for the Council to determine these applications, and if no decision is made within this time period they are deemed to have been approved.</p> <p>The Parish Council and Ward Member are consulted, and are given 14 or 21 days (dependent on the total fixed timescale for determination) in which to submit comments. Due to the short timescales within which decisions need to be taken the usual full public consultation is not possible, but the applications are publicised on the weekly list.</p> <p>Applications for telecommunications development will however be advertised by means of both a site notice and neighbour notification letters. For applications involving a mast of 20m or higher, a press advertisement should be placed.</p>
Enforcement	<p>The majority of enforcement cases arise following a confidential referral from a member of the public. There is no public consultation on enforcement cases, although the complainant will be notified, in writing, of the outcome of any investigation or action.</p> <p>Often enforcement action results in the submission of a planning application. This would be processed as detailed above, and publicised in the normal way.</p>

5 Planning Applications

Development Management Process	Comments on Consultation Requirements
Works to Protected Trees	<p>All applications for works to protected trees will be published on the weekly list. Affected neighbours will be notified directly of applications by letter and the relevant Parish/Town Council will be notified.</p> <p>The statutory consultation period for applications for work to trees covered by a Tree Protection Order (TPO) or in a Conservation Area will be 21 days. The decision will be published on the Council's website.</p>
Hedgerow Removal Applications	<p>Consultation letters will be sent to all relevant statutory bodies as well as the relevant Town/Parish Council. All such applications will be published on the Council's weekly list of planning applications.</p>
Section 106 Agreements	<p>Section 106 agreements, or planning obligations, are a way of securing measures to overcome the negative impacts of generally acceptable development proposals on the environment, economy and community.</p> <p>Every effort will be made to promote the use of pre-application meetings between planning officers and applicants. Any issues that may arise requiring a Section 106 agreement should be incorporated into the planning application on submission, and will form part of the normal consultation process.</p> <p>Details of Section 106 agreements will be kept on file, and included in the documents made public on the Council's website.</p>

Table 5.1 Further Information about Planning Applications

6 Major Infrastructure Planning

6.1 Applications for nationally significant projects; including railways, large wind farms, power stations, reservoirs, harbours, airports and sewage treatment works are currently considered by the Infrastructure Planning Commission. Decisions made by this independent body on nationally significant projects are made within the framework of National Policy Statements, which weigh the national benefit of proposals against local impacts.

6.2 The Infrastructure Planning Commission is to be replaced by a Major Infrastructure Unit. The Major Infrastructure Unit will form part of the Planning Inspectorate and will fulfil the responsibilities currently met by the Infrastructure Planning Commission. Government Ministers will take decisions on nationally significant applications which have been fast tracked through the system.

6.3 Furthermore, National Policy Statements which have been consulted upon will be subject to ratification by Parliament.

6.4 Further information regarding the Major Infrastructure Unit is available on the Communities and Local Government Website.

7 Further Information

7.1 Further information on the planning policy process can be obtained by contacting the Spatial Planning Team, as detailed in Appendix 1. Alternatively, the following organisations offer advice and information on all aspects of the planning system and process:

- **Planning Portal** - This is a Government sponsored website setting out the current process and systems of town and country planning. The site can be used to learn about the planning system, the LDF process, and the latest government policy. The site also details how to apply for planning permission, how to find out about development near to where you live or work, and how to appeal against a planning decision (www.planningportal.gov.uk).
- **Department for Communities and Local Government** - The Planning Directorate of the DCLG is the Government Department that legislates, regulates, and prepares guidance on planning in England and Wales. The PPS and PPG documents can be found here, as well as many government studies (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/>).
- **Planning Aid** - Planning Aid is a voluntary service linked to the Royal Town Planning Institute, offering free, independent and professional advice on town planning matters to community groups and individuals who cannot afford to employ a planning consultant. Planning aid is a vital part of the planning system. It enables local communities, particularly those with limited resources, to participate effectively in planning matters. Every effort will be made to seek to ensure that members of the community are aware of the advice and support that may be available from this source (www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk).

Contact Details	
Telephone	Helpline Tel: 0870 850 9804 -Available between 9.00am and 5.00pm. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.
E-mail	nwcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk .
Address	North West Planning Aid, 2nd Floor Friars Court, Sibson Road, Sale, M337SF

Table 7.1 Planning Aid Contact Details

Appendices

Contact Details / How to Register Interest

Information on the LDF and the LDF consultation portal can be accessed using the following website link: <http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ldf>.

Contact Details:

For all matters relating to the Local Development Framework and Planning Policy please contact the Spatial Planning Team:

Contact Details	
Telephone:	01270 685893
E-mail:	ldf@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Address:	Spatial Planning Team, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 1HZ

Spatial Planning Team Contact Details

For all matters relating to planning and other applications please contact the Development Management Section:

Contact Details	
Telephone:	(01270) 53 7502/03
E-mail:	planning@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Address:	Development Management, Town Hall, Market Place, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 1DP

Development Management Contact Details

Local Development Framework Database:

If you wish to be consulted on the Local Development Framework please send your full contact details to the address detailed in table 9.1 above so that you can be added to the Local Development Framework consultation database.

Local Development Framework Consultee Involvement

Stage of DPD Production	What the Council is required to do	Consultation activities the Council will do (see Appendix 3)	Consultation activities the Council may do (see Appendix 3)
Regulation 25 (2008): Community Involvement and participation during preparation of a new, or revision of an existing DPD	<p>When preparing a new DPD or making any revisions to an existing DPD we are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Notify the specific and general consultation bodies that the Local Planning Authority considers may have an interest in the subject of the proposed DPD and invite them to make comments on what the DPD ought to contain. -Invite comments from residents and local businesses on the DPD. -Consider all representations made in response to the consultation on the DPD. -A list of specific and general consultation bodies can be found in Appendix 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Publish the document on the Council's website and consultation portal. -Make available to view copies of consultation documents at main Council Offices (Westfields, Sandbach; Town Hall, Macclesfield; Delamere House, Crewe) and libraries. -Invite representations and notification to LDF database consultees. -Press release. 	<p>Will depend upon the type of research being undertaken. Potential methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meetings -Leaflets and brochures -Newsletters -Local Radio -Exhibitions and displays -Presentations -Questionnaires / surveys -Focus groups / work shops -Theme-based fora

Local Development Framework Consultee Involvement

Stage of DPD Production	What the Council is required to do	Consultation activities the Council will do (see Appendix 3)	Consultation activities the Council may do (see Appendix 3)
Regulation 27 (2008): Community involvement and participation following the publication of a new or revision to an existing DPD before submission.	<p>After publication of the new or revised DPD and before submitting to the Secretary of State we are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make the proposed or revised DPD, and details on how to submit comments on it, available: -At the Council's offices at Westfields, Sandbach -On the Council's website -Send a copy of the proposed or revised DPD and details on how to make comments to the specific consultation bodies. -Send details to the general consultation bodies on where, when and how the proposed, or revised DPD, can be inspected and how to make comments. -Advertise locally with information on where documents can be inspected and how to make comments on the DPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Documents available for inspection at Council Offices at Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach. -Documents available to view at Council Offices (Town Hall, Macclesfield, Delamere House, Crewe) and libraries. - Documents available to view on the Council's website and consultation portal. -Email or letter (including a copy of the statutory notice) to the LDF consultee database to include consultation bodies identified in Appendix 4. -Statutory notice in at least one local newspaper and on Council's website. -Press release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meetings -Leaflets and brochures -Newsletters -Local radio -Exhibitions and displays -Presentations

Local Development Framework Consultee Involvement

Stage of DPD Production	What the Council is required to do	Consultation activities the Council will do (see Appendix 3)	Consultation activities the Council may do (see Appendix 3)
	<p>-Invite any person or body to make representations on the DPD within the specified period of time, which will be at least 6 weeks from the time the DPD is made available for viewing.</p>		
Regulation 30 (2008): Submission of proposed or revised DPD and related information to Secretary of State	<p>Following submission of the proposed or revised DPD to the Secretary of State, as soon as reasonably practicable we are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make the DPD and supporting documents submitted to Secretary of State available for inspection at Westfields, Sandbach. -Publish the DPD and supporting documents submitted to Secretary of State on the Council's website, including details on how, where and when individuals can inspect the documents. If practicable, copies of representations received or a summary of representations made, will be published on the website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make available for inspection the DPD and associated documents submitted to Secretary of State at Council Offices at Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach. -Make available to view copies of DPD and associated documents submitted to Secretary of State at Council Offices (Town Hall, Macclesfield and Delamere House, Crewe) and libraries. -Publish the submission document and associated details and a summary of the representations on the Council's website and consultation portal. 	

Local Development Framework Consultee Involvement

Stage of DPD Production	What the Council is required to do	Consultation activities the Council will do (see Appendix 3)	Consultation activities the Council may do (see Appendix 3)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Send to each of the specific consultation bodies, the DPD and other documents submitted to the Secretary of State, as well as a statement detailing where the DPD and other documents can be inspected. -Notify the general consultation bodies with details of when and how the DPD and other documents can be inspected. -Place an advertisement in a local newspaper to publicise the submission of the DPD and how, where and when the document can be inspected. -Notify anyone who requested to be notified of the submission of the DPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Send copies of DPD and other documents copies submitted to Secretary of State to specific consultation bodies by email or letter. -Letter / email (including a copy of the statutory notice) to all those on LDF database consultees. -Statutory notice in local newspaper and on the Council's website. -Press release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Notice available to view at main Council offices and libraries
Regulation 34 (2004): Public examination of proposed or revised DPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least six weeks before the examination starts we need to: -Publish the time and place of the independent examination and name of person carrying out examination on the Council's website. The Council will also advertise the matter in a local newspaper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Statutory notice available to inspect at Council Offices, Westfields, Sandbach. -Statutory notice available on the Council's website. 	

Local Development Framework Consultee Involvement

Stage of DPD Production	What the Council is required to do	Consultation activities the Council will do (see Appendix 3)	Consultation activities the Council may do (see Appendix 3)
	<p>-Inform anyone who has made representations (and not withdrawn them) of the details of the examination.</p>	<p>-Letter / email (including a copy of the statutory notice) to all those on LDF consultees database.</p> <p>-Statutory notice in local newspaper.</p> <p>-Press release</p>	
Regulation 36 (2004): Adoption of proposed or revised DPD	<p>Once the DPD has been adopted, as soon as practicable we are required to:</p> <p>-Make available to inspect the adopted DPD along with an Adoption Statement and the Sustainability Appraisal</p> <p>-Publish the Adoption Statement on the Council's website.</p> <p>-Advertise locally where the DPD, associated documentation and the Adoption Statement is available to inspect.</p> <p>-Send copies of the Adoption Statement to those who have requested to be notified of the adoption of the document</p>	<p>-Make available for inspection the adopted DPD, Adoption Statement, the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment at Council Offices at Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach.</p> <p>-Adopted DPD and Adoption Statement made available to view at Council Offices (Town Hall, Macclesfield and Delamere House, Crewe) and libraries.</p> <p>-Publish the DPD and Adoption Statement on the Council's website and consultation portal.</p>	

Local Development Framework Consultee Involvement

Stage of DPD Production	What the Council is required to do	Consultation activities the Council will do (see Appendix 3)	Consultation activities the Council may do (see Appendix 3)
	-Send the DPD and Adoption Statement to the Secretary of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Letter / email (including a copy of the statutory notice) to LDF consultees database. -Statutory notice in local newspaper and on Council's website -Press release 	
Regulation 17 (2004): Community involvement and participation before adopting an SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prepare a statement of SPD matters to include title of SPD, subject matter covered, time period for representations, details of where representations should be sent and how individuals can request to be notified on SPD Adoption. -Make available copies of SPD and associated documentation at Council offices and libraries. -Prepare a Consultation Statement stating who was consulted, main issues raised and how they have been addressed in the SPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make SPD and associated documents available for inspection at Council Offices at Westfields, Sandbach. -Make SPD and associated documents available to view at Council Offices (Town Hall, Macclesfield, Delamere House, Crewe) and libraries. -Publish the SPD and associated documents on the Council's website and consultation portal. 	<p>Will depend upon the type of research being undertaken. Possible additional methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meetings -Leaflets and brochures -Newsletters -Local radio -Exhibitions and displays -Presentations

Local Development Framework Consultee Involvement

Stage of DPD Production	What the Council is required to do	Consultation activities the Council will do (see Appendix 3)	Consultation activities the Council may do (see Appendix 3)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Publish on the Council's website, the SPD documents and SPD matters and details of where and when the documents can be viewed. -Send a copy of the SPD and associated documentation (including Consultation Statement and SPD matters) to the specific consultation bodies we consider will be affected by the SPD as well as any general consultation bodies we consider appropriate. -Advertise locally the consultation on the SPD and provide details of the documents' availability for inspection -Consult for a minimum 4 week period and no longer than 6 weeks from the period the SPD is made available for inspection. -The SPD will not be adopted until all comments made to the consultation stage are considered and a statement prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Letter / email (including a copy of statutory notice) LDF consultees database. -Statutory notice in local newspaper and on the Council's website -Press release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Questionnaires / surveys -Focus groups / work shops -Theme-based fora

Local Development Framework Consultee Involvement

Stage of DPD Production	What the Council is required to do	Consultation activities the Council will do (see Appendix 3)	Consultation activities the Council may do (see Appendix 3)
Regulation 19 (2004): Adoption of the proposed SPD	<p>detailing the main issues raised in the comments received and any impacts upon the final version of the SPD.</p> <p>As soon as practicable following adoption of an SPD we are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make the SPD, associated documentation, Consultation Statement and Adoption Statement available to view and published on the website. -Send a copy of the Adoption Statement to those requested to be notified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make SPD and associated documents available for inspection at Council Offices at Westfields, Sandbach. -Make SPD available to view copies at Council Offices (Town Hall, Macclesfield, Delamere House, Crewe) and libraries. -Publish SPD and associated documents on the Council's website and consultation portal. -Letter / email (including a copy of the adoption statement) to LDF consultees database. -Press release 	

: Development Plan Document (DPD) / Supplementary Plan Document (SPD) Production – Preparation / Revision of a DPD / SPD

Local Development Framework Methods of Consultation

During the production of the Local Development Framework a number of consultation methods will be utilised by the Council. The lists presented in both tables 11.1 and 11.2 (below) are both the standard and optional methods that will be used by the Council at different stages of Local Development Framework production.

In respect to the optional consultation methods, these methods go beyond the legal minimum and not all of the methods listed will be appropriate for each stage of document production. Therefore different methods may be employed dependent upon the issue and document consulted upon. Similarly alternative, new and / or innovative methods of consultation may be used when appropriate.

Consultation Method	Description of Method
Council's website	The Council's website is used to display all the latest Council publications and consultation documents including all background documents. The website should be the first point of reference regarding information on planning policy and the LDF process.
Documents available to inspect	All consultation documents and background documents will be made available to inspect at Council Offices at Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach.
Documents available to view	Consultation documents will be made available to view at the Council Offices at the Town Hall in Macclesfield, Delamere House in Crewe and libraries during the consultation period.
Publication of press notices / releases	The Council will issue press releases at key stages in the LDF process. The Council will also publish formal notices regarding consultation periods and the availability of consultation documents, in accordance with our statutory duty.
Invited representations	<p>Contact will be made with local interest groups, including groups covering business, environmental, cultural and social issues in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and with the national, regional and local statutory consultees. Contact will be made by letter or e-mail and will inform consultees of the consultation and invite responses.</p> <p>In an effort to reduce resources, e-mail consultation, with electronic links to the appropriate document on the Council webpage, will be the Council's preferred means of consultation.</p>

Local Development Framework Methods of Consultation

Consultation Method	Description of Method
Notification to LDF consultee database	<p>E-mails and / or letters will be sent to consultees who have notified the Council of their wish to be consulted on the LDF.</p> <p>In an effort to reduce resources, e-mail consultation, with electronic links to the appropriate document on the Council webpage, will be the Council's preferred means of consultation.</p>
Notification to Town and Parish Councils	<p>Notification and consultation will take place at various stages in the production of documents of the Local Development Framework.</p> <p>In an effort to reduce resources, e-mail consultation, with electronic links to the appropriate document on the Council webpage, will be the Council's preferred means of consultation.</p>
Consultation portal	<p>The Council will host all consultation documents and advertise consultations through the consultation portal hosted on the following website link:</p> <p>http://www.cheshireeast.gov/ldf</p> <p>Responses to consultations can be made directly through the consultation portal. A summary of representations received will be placed on the consultation portal.</p>

Standard Consultation Methods

Consultation Method	Description of Method
Meetings	<p>The opportunity for meetings with relevant stakeholders, including community groups, Local Strategic and Area Partnerships, landowners, developers, and town and parish councils is seen by the Council as an appropriate way to gather information or seek views at early stages of document preparation, and also to refine documents and update community members at later stages in the process. The opportunity for individual meetings may</p>

Local Development Framework Methods of Consultation

Consultation Method	Description of Method
	be appropriate and carried out in certain circumstances on request.
Leaflets and brochures	These can both be used to publicise the consultation and to offer a brief summary of the proposals. These forms of promotional publication are likely to be used at earlier stages of the consultation process.
Newsletters	These can be used to raise awareness and update on progress with the preparation of the various documents.
Local radio	Use of local radio can help to highlight the issues involved, and to inform the public about consultation opportunities. There is scope for these media to reach a wider and different audience to other consultation methods, helping to engage with hard to reach groups.
Presentations	These will be utilised at key stages of the LDF process in circumstances deemed appropriate by the Council and dependent on the scale and importance of issue / document being consulted upon. This will enable planning officers to inform a group of progress and proposals, to enable discussion of issues, and to encourage feedback from the group.
Focus groups / work shops	When there is a recognised need or desire to discuss a particular issue in more detail, the Council will set up a focus group. These generally consist of a group of people who have an interest in a particular issue, with a facilitator being used to aid the discussion.
Exhibitions and displays	Exhibitions will be held in appropriate locations dependent on the document or issue concerned. A prominent local venue will be used and any exhibition advertised effectively on the website.
Questionnaires / surveys	These provide an opportunity to reach a targeted audience and help with ongoing feedback. Questionnaires may be used for local development documents, particularly at key consultation stages.
Theme-based forum's	These offer an opportunity for regular meetings of a formal, professional group based around a particular theme, e.g. the Housing Market Partnership. These offer the possibility to garner continuous consultation and feedback with formal bodies.

Local Development Framework List of Stakeholders

Specific LDF Stakeholders

The following organisations will be consulted in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, as amended in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and will relate to successor bodies where re-organisations occur:

- Responsible Local Enterprise Partnership
- North West Development Agency
- Cheshire West & Chester Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- High Peak Borough Council
- Manchester City Council
- Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Shropshire Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Staffordshire Moorlands Borough Council
- Stockport MBC
- Stoke on Trent City Council
- Trafford MBC
- Warrington MBC
- West Midlands Local Enterprise Partnerships
- East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Town and Parish Councils in the Borough
- Town and Parish Councils adjacent to the Borough
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Natural England
- The Secretary of State for Transport
- Primary Care Trust (PCT)
- The Coal Authority
- Relevant Telecommunications Companies
- Relevant Electricity and Gas Companies
- Relevant Sewerage and Water Undertakers

Government Departments

The Council will consult with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on each Development Plan Document. Other Government departments will be consulted where necessary.

Local Development Framework List of Stakeholders

General LDF Stakeholders

The following are defined as general consultation bodies and will be consulted, as appropriate, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, as amended in 2008, 2009 and 2010:

- Voluntary Bodies, some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the Local Authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the Local Authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the Local Authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the Local Authority's area; and
- Bodies which represent the interests of business people in the Local Authority's area.

Other LDF Stakeholders

Where necessary, the Council will consult with a wide range of additional agencies and groups. The Council has a Local Development Framework database, which includes a range of stakeholders, individuals, groups and organisations who have requested to be consulted on the preparation of Local Development Documents. A comprehensive list of stakeholders held on the Local Development Framework database is available to view on request.

Examples of types of stakeholders include:

- Airport Operators
- Highways Agency
- Landowners
- Fire Authority
- House Builders and Developers
- Local Strategic Partnership (Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East)
- Minerals and Waste Operators and Trade Associations
- Environmental and Amenity Groups at Local, Regional and National Level
- Strategic Transport Authorities
- National controllers of waterways and navigation authorities

Development Management Consultees

STATUTORY CONSULTTEES

These bodies must be consulted if the Council considers that the body would be affected by what is proposed in a planning application. This list is not exhaustive.

- Brine Compensation Board
- British Waterways
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Individual Airports (in their role as Aerodrome Safeguarding Authority)
- Coal Authority
- Department for Culture, Media & Sport
- Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Garden History Society
- Health & Safety Executive
- Highways Agency
- Local Planning Authorities adjoining Cheshire East
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Manchester Airport
- Manchester University (Jodrell Bank)
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Sport England
- Theatres Trust
- Town & Parish Councils
- United Utilities (or other relevant sewerage undertaker)

NON-STATUTORY CONSULTTEES

These bodies may be consulted if the Council considers that the body would be affected by what is proposed in a planning application. This list is not exhaustive.

- Adlington Civic Society
- Ancient Monuments Society
- Bollin Valley Partnership
- Bollington Civic Society
- Bridgewater Canal
- British Gas Plc
- British Pipeline Agency
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Cheshire & Wirral Ornithological Society
- Cheshire Brine Subsidence Compensation Board
- Cheshire Constabulary
- Cheshire Family Practitioner Committee
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service

Development Management Consultees

- Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- Civic Trust
- Coal Authority
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- Council for British Archaeology
- DBERR
- DEFRA
- East Cheshire Ramblers
- Edge Association
- Footpaths Preservation Societies
- Forestry Commission
- Friends of the Earth
- Georgian Group
- Health Protection Agencies/Health Authorities
- Highways Agency (Northern Region)
- H M Alkali Inspectorate
- Inland Waterways
- Knutsford Civic Society
- Macclesfield Access Group
- Macclesfield Canal Society
- Macclesfield Civic Society
- Manchester Airport - in accordance with agreed criteria
- MANWEB Plc
- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Defence (Defence Estates)
- Mersey Basin Campaign
- National Farmers Union
- National Grid
- National Trust
- Network Rail London North Western
- North West Tourist Board
- Parish & Town Councils
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Planning Inspectorate
- Powergen Plc
- Prestbury Amenity Society
- Ramblers Association
- Royal Commission on Historic Monuments
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Scottish Power
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
- Sports Council (North West Region)
- Styal Village Association
- Transco

Development Management Consultees

- Twentieth Century Society
- Unipen
- United Utilities
- Victorian Society
- Wilmslow Fire Safety Office
- Wilmslow Trust
- Woodford Aerodrome
- Woodland Trust

Development Management Methods of Consultation for Planning Applications

Consultation Method	Description of Method
Council website	Copies of a submitted application, and all responses and representations made, will be accessible from the Council's website
Council Offices and libraries	Copies of a submitted application will be made available for public viewing at the Council Offices, and at the nearest public library
Invited representations	A copy of all planning applications will be forwarded to the relevant Town and Parish Councils for comment. The Council has a statutory duty to consult certain groups and bodies on the receipt of an application. The specific consultees for an application will vary from case to case. In addition, the Council is committed to consulting a range of local community and interest groups where applicable. A full list of consultees is set out in Appendix 5.
Local Liaison Groups	A liaison group is often set up following the grant of planning permission. These groups generally contain representatives of the County, District & Parish Councils, operators, other relevant bodies such as the Environment Agency, applicants and resident's group. They meet regularly to discuss site issues, future proposals as well as acting as a means of local liaison. It is a statutory requirement to consult these groups if subject to a Section 106 agreement on a previous permission
Site Notices	<p>These are a statutory requirement of the application process. Site notices, where required, are normally posted as near as possible to the site, but not necessarily on the site itself, in a highly visible location (often lampposts, street furniture, road signs and fences).</p> <p>At sites for minor development, site notices will only be used where land owners cannot be identified e.g. where the site is next to open land or in rural locations. Site notices will always be posted for development affecting the setting of a listed building, and development affecting the character or appearance of a conservation area.</p>

Development Management Methods of Consultation for Planning Applications

Consultation Method	Description of Method
Public meetings	These are often formal, open invitation meetings, and are likely to be used only for larger, or more contentious, applications
Neighbour notification	<p>Occupiers of premises most likely to be directly affected by a proposal, including neighbours opposite the site if within 20m, are notified individually by letter that an application has been received. This letter contains details of where to view the plans, the name of the relevant case officer, where to forward any comments they may wish to make, and a deadline for receipt of any comments.</p> <p>In the majority of cases there is a minimum statutory 21-day period allowed for public consultation. As a minimum, all properties whose boundaries border the application site will be notified about any proposed development. In other instances, neighbour notification is at the discretion of the case officer. Where a significant number of properties are likely to be affected then the case officer might consider a press notice to be in the public interest.</p> <p>For all new major waste disposal facilities and mineral workings, and ancillary development on these sites, all properties within a 400m radius will be notified as a minimum.</p>
Press notices	<p>The Council will publicise applications by formal press notice where it meets one of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It requires an Environmental Impact Assessment • It is a departure from the Development Plan • It affects a Public Right of Way • It affects the setting of a Listed Building • It affects the character or appearance of a Conservation Area • It is considered of a greater than local significance • It is a telecommunication mast with a height of 20m or over

Development Management Methods of Consultation on Planning Applications

Consultation Responses to Draft Statement of Community Involvement

The Statement of Community Involvement was subject to consultation over an eight week period between 23rd November 2009 and 18th January 2010. A total of 17 responses were received during that time from the following individuals / stakeholder groups:

- North West Development Agency
- Network Rail
- National Grid
- Middlewich Town Council
- Andrew Holland, Planning Consultant (representing seven congregations of Jehovah's witnesses residing within the area served by Cheshire East Borough Council)
- Bollington Town Council
- Manchester Airport
- National Trust
- How Planning
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Highways Agency
- Friends, Families and Traveller and Traveller Law Reform Project (FFT)
- East Cheshire Ramblers
- Sandy Lane Action Group
- Prestbury Parish Council
- Government Office for the North West

Consultation responses received on the Statement of Community Involvement has resulted in modifications to the final version of the document; a summary is presented below:

- Consultees added to Local Development Framework Database;
- Reference to specific consultation methods and hard to reach groups has been expanded within the document;
- The format and presentation of the document has been amended to detail the process of consultation on Local Development Framework documents, to include additional tables in the Appendices of the document and to explain clearly opportunities for stakeholder involvement;
- Explanatory text has been added to the Development Management section of the Statement of Community Involvement;
- A reduction in the usage of abbreviations in the document.

A separate document detailing the specific consultation responses made to the draft Statement of Community Involvement and responses of the Borough Council has been prepared and is available on request.

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Term	Description
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report	A report submitted to the Government by Local Planning Authorities assessing progress with and the effectiveness of a Local Development Framework.
AAP	Area Action Plan	A type of Development Plan Document focused upon a specific location or an area subject to conservation or significant change (for example major regeneration).
-	Core Strategy	A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision and strategic objectives of the planning framework for an area, having regard to the Community Strategy.
-	Development Plan	<p>A document setting out the Local Planning Authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area. It includes Unitary, Structure, and Local Plans prepared under transitional arrangements.</p> <p>It also includes Development Plan Documents prepared under the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004.</p>
DPD	Development Plan Document	<p>Development Plan Documents are prepared by Local Planning Authorities and outline the key development goals of the Local Development Framework.</p> <p>Development Plan Documents include the Core Strategy and, where needed, Area Action Plans. There will also be an adopted Proposals Map which illustrates the spatial extent of policies that must be prepared and maintained to accompany all DPDs.</p> <p>All DPDs must be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination, and adopted after receipt of the inspector's binding report. Once adopted, development control decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>DPDs form an essential part of the Local Development Framework.</p>

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Term	Description
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment	An assessment, required by the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations, to any plan or project not directly connected with the management of a site but likely to have a significant effect on it.
-	Independent Examination	The process by which a planning inspector may publicly examine a Development Plan Document (DPD), in respect, before issuing a binding report. The findings set out in the report of binding upon the local authority that produced the DPD.
LAA	Local Area Agreement	A three year agreement, based on local Sustainable Community Strategies, that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government, represented by the Government Office (GO), and a local area, represented by the Local Authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).
LDD	Local Development Document	These include Development Plan Documents (which form part of the Statutory Development Plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents (which do not form part of the Statutory Development Plan). LDDs collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the Local Planning Authority's area.
LDF	Local Development Framework	<p>The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a non-statutory term used to describe a folder of documents, which includes all the Local Planning Authority's Local Development Documents. An LDF is comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan) -Supplementary Planning Documents <p>The Local Development Framework will also comprise of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Statement of Community Involvement - the Local Development Scheme - the Annual Monitoring Report

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Term	Description
		- any Local Development Orders or Simplified Planning Zones that may have been added.
LDS	Local Development Scheme	The Local Planning Authority's time-scaled programme for the preparation of Local Development Documents that must be agreed with government and reviewed every year.
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership	An overall partnership of people that brings together organisations from the public, private, community and voluntary sector within a Local Authority area, with the objective of improving people's quality of life.
-	Material Consideration	A matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.
PPS	Planning Policy Statements	Issued by central government to replace the existing Planning Policy Guidance notes in order to provide greater clarity and to remove from national policy advice on practical implementation, which is better expressed as guidance rather than policy.
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy	A strategy for how a region should look in 15 to 20 years time and possibly longer. Regional Spatial Strategies were revoked in July 2010.
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	The Statement of Community Involvement sets out the processes to be used by the local authority in involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all local development documents and development control decisions. The Statement of Community Involvement is an essential part of Local Development Frameworks.
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy	A programme issued by the government to set the framework for delivering sustainable communities over the next 15-20 years. The main areas of focus are housing supply, new growth areas, decent homes and the countryside and local environment.

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Term	Description
		A Plan or Strategy for enhancing the quality of life of the local community which each local authority has a duty to prepare under the Local Government Act 2000. The plan is developed and implemented by the Local Strategic Partnership.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	A Supplementary Planning Document is a Local Development Document that may cover a range of issues, thematic or site specific, and provides further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' Development Plan Document.
-	Tests of Soundness	<p>To be “sound” a DPD should be JUSTIFIED, EFFECTIVE and consistent with NATIONAL POLICY.</p> <p>“Justified” means that the document must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -founded on a robust and credible evidence base -the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives <p>“Effective” means that the document must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -deliverable -flexible -able to be monitored <p>The concepts of justification and effectiveness are expanded at paragraphs 4.36 – 4.38 and 4.44 – 4.47 of Planning Policy Statement 12, which can be found on the Communities and Local Government website at www.communities.gov.uk.</p> <p>In addition, the Planning Inspectorate have issued guidance on soundness including key questions to be answered in its publication “Local Development Frameworks – Examining Development Plan Documents: Soundness Guidance (August 2009), which is available on its website at http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/index.htm.</p>

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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



Alsager Town Centre

Supplementary Planning Document

ALSAGER TOWN CENTRE

Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted **date month year**

Foreword

This Supplementary Planning Document sets the scene for town centre regeneration in Alsager. It contains a Vision and planning policies to guide new development that look to conserve the best and change the rest with a determination to accept only the highest quality. The key to this success will be for public, private and community organisation to work together over the long term with the combined aim to create an improved town centre.

Councillor Dave Brown
Cabinet Portfolio Holder

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- 9 Leisure, Cultural and Community Facilities
- 10 Accessibility
- 11 Public Spaces
- 12 A Well Managed Town Centre
- 13 Development Opportunities
- 14 Next Steps, Monitoring and Implementation

Appendices

- A Contacts and Useful Information
- B Glossary of Terms
- C Plans, Policies and Strategies
- D Materials Palette

1 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 This document has been prepared to provide a Strategy for Alsager Town Centre, providing additional guidance to that contained in the saved policies adopted in the Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review¹ (referred to throughout this document as Congleton Local Plan). This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) covers all those aspects of policy guidance with a spatial dimension relevant to town centres, including economic, environmental and social well being and matters such as community safety, community facilities, traffic management, marketing and delivery.
- 1.2 Alsager is one situated approximately 5 miles to the east of Crewe. The extent of the Town Centre is as defined in the Congleton Local Plan and is shown in Diagram 1. The Town Centre is focused around the crossroads of the B5077 (Crewe Road / Lawton Road) and the B5078 (Sandbach Road North / Sandbach Road South). Within this area two Principal Shopping Areas are defined; one to the east along Lawton Road and one to the west on Crewe Road. In addition, the town centre includes a large area of open space; namely Milton Park.

Local Development Framework

- 1.3 This document is being prepared under the provisions of the 2004 Planning and Compensation Act and will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which will form part of the Cheshire East Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 1.4 The 2004 Planning and Compensation Act introduced major changes to the planning system replacing 'old style' development plans, which could take 5 or more years to prepare, with a system of smaller more focused documents that together will guide development at the local level. Collectively, these documents will be known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). Policies and proposals within these documents will eventually replace those in the Congleton Local Plan. The documents that will contain the statutory policies and proposals, which form the development plan, will be known as Development Plan Documents (DPDs), with further, more detailed planning advice, such as technical guidance relating to how to design shop fronts or advice relating to the development of a particular part of the Authority contained in Supplementary Planning Document's (SPDs). These SPDs also form part of the LDF, but are not part of the statutory development plan.

¹ This document is available to download from the Council's website (Currently, www.cheshireeast.gov.uk), or to view at the Council's offices at Westfields, Sandbach.

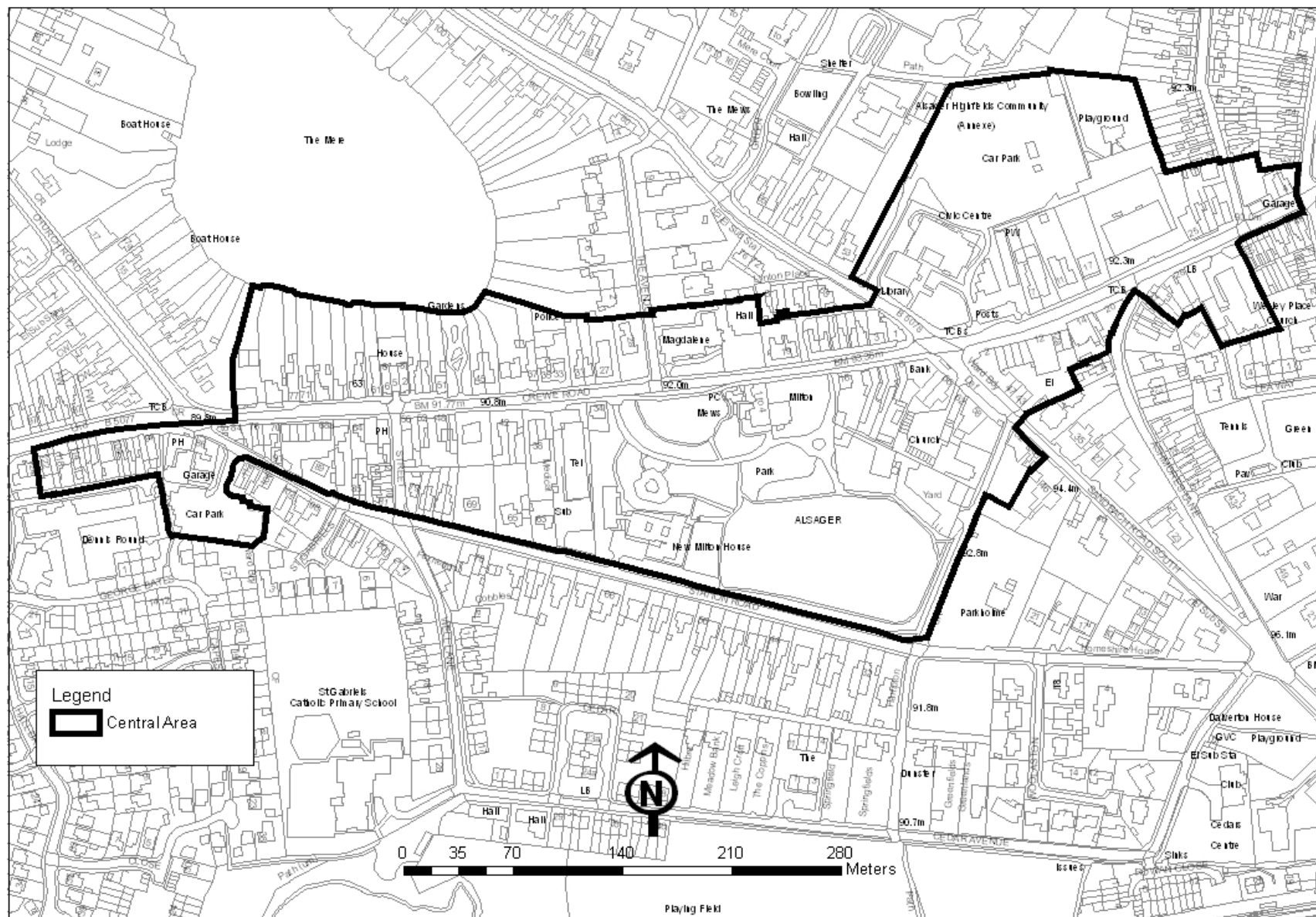


Diagram 1: Alsager Town Centre

- 1.5 This SPD has been prepared in line with saved policies, however, it should be noted that it may be necessary to revise this document in future to bring it in line with new policies in the Core Strategy or other DPDs.

2 Alsager Town Centre SPD

Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this SPD is to provide guidance on the implementation of adopted policies within the Congleton Local Plan and saved as part of the Cheshire East Local Development Framework (LDF), particularly policies S1, S4, S5 and S6, (Appendix C) to support the planning of new development within Alsager Town Centre. This guidance note should be read in conjunction with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.
- 2.2 The Council will seek to improve through its function as a Local Planning Authority any development proposal that does not provide for, or meet the principles encouraged and required within this SPD and the Congleton Local Plan or as replaced by the LDF. This SPD is also intended to encourage all of those who have or will have an interest in the vitality and viability of the town centre to follow the practical guidance it contains wherever opportunities arise whether or not planning permission or other consents are required.

Structure of the document

- 2.3 This document comprises: a vision for the town centre, a series of objectives, whereby progress can be monitored, and planning principles and proposals for the centre, including opportunity sites. The document sets down, in terms of broad principles and examples, how the objectives may be met, the approach towards new retail provision and urban design in the centre, as well as broad proposals for improving the public realm, managing and improving transport and town centre management.

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations

- 2.4 The Council has prepared a Sustainability Appraisal² (SA) to test and refine the policies and proposals in this SPD.
- 2.5 Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process, which is carried out during the production of planning documents to ensure that policies and proposals contribute towards relevant environmental, social and economic objectives.
- 2.6 In addition amendments made to the UK Conservation (Habitats and etc) Regulations 2006 require a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC for all land use plans likely to have a significant effect on a European site. European sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Offshore Marine Sites (OMS). A HRA Screening Report³ has been prepared to accompany this SPD to determine if this document is likely to have a significant

² This document is available to download from the Council's website (www.cheshireeast.gov.uk) or to view at the Council's offices at Westfields, Sandbach.

³ This document is available to download from the Council's website www.cheshireeast.gov.uk or to view at the Council's offices at Westfields, Sandbach.

effect on any European sites. It has determined that this SPD will not have a significant effect on any European sites and therefore no further assessment has been undertaken.

3 Policy Background

- 3.1 This Alsager Town Centre SPD has been produced to ensure that through its function as a Local Planning Authority, the Council is in accordance with national guidance and advice and contributes, wherever possible, to meeting the priorities of the community it serves. This document has been informed by and will inform other strategies and approaches including those by other agencies.

National Policy

- 3.2 **Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development**, states that planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. It also highlights the need to focus developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development, in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion and more sustainable patterns of development.
- 3.3 **Planning and Climate Change** the supplement to PPS1 states that planning authorities should expect new development 'to take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption, including maximising cooling and avoiding solar gain in the summer; and, overall, be planned so as to minimise carbon dioxide emissions through giving careful consideration to how all aspects of development form, together with the proposed density and mix of development, support opportunities for decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy supply'. They should also expect new development to 'provide public and private open space as appropriate so that it offers accessible choice of shade and shelter, recognising the opportunities for flood storage, wildlife and people provided by multifunctional greenspaces' and to 'give priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems, paying attention to the potential contribution to be gained to water harvesting from impermeable surfaces and encourage layouts that accommodate waste water recycling'.
- 3.4 **Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4): Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth**, states that Government's objectives for planning are to promote the vitality and viability of town and other centres as important places for communities. One of the ways Government wants to do this is for new economic growth and development of main town centre uses to be focused in existing centres, with the aim of offering a wide range of services to communities in an attractive and safe environment and remedying deficiencies in provision in areas with poor access to facilities.
- 3.5 Section 17 of the **Crime and Disorder Act (1998)** imposes a duty of the Local Authority to exercise its functions with due regards to the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. The SPD deals with the matter in relation to land use planning considerations only.

3.6 **Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools** provides further detailed design guidance, stating that the issues which should be considered for inclusion in Local Development Documents, include:

- identifying the capacity of each centre to accommodate growth, and making provision for this;
- providing a comprehensive plan for any area of renewal or development;
- addressing the location and layout of new development;
- developing an urban design strategy, which establishes a comprehensive urban design vision and is supported by specific urban design policies, guidelines or proposals for specific sites;
- addressing the spatial implications of strategies for parking, traffic management and improvement of the pedestrian environment; and
- setting out a detailed implementation programme for bringing forward development on key sites, including, where appropriate, proposals for addressing issues such as land assembly through compulsory purchase orders.

3.7 **Going to Town – Improving Town Centre Access** is a good practice guide and was published in 2002 by ODPM. It highlights what can be done to improve the key routes from the arrival points to the main attractions and provides the principles of route quality. These are:

- **Connected:** good pedestrian routes which link the places where people want to go, and form a network;
- **Convenient:** direct routes following desire lines, with easy-to-use crossings;
- **Comfortable:** good quality footways, with adequate widths and without obstructions;
- **Convivial:** attractive, well lit and safe, and with variety along the route; and
- **Conspicuous:** legible routes easy to find and follow, with surface treatments and signs to guide pedestrians.

3.8 CABE's **Design Reviewed – Town Centre Retail**, states that when translated to town centre retail development, we can judge proposed designs against a number of key principles:

- Good urban design – the principles of which are set out in 'By Design', and include the importance of character, legibility, ease of movement, adaptability and a mix of uses.
- Good architecture – buildings with civic quality that enhance their internal and external environments through their scale, massing, proportions and detailing.
- Good for retail – the development must work for retail and leisure providers in their core business, selling products to customers.
- Good for everyone – the development must minimise any negative impacts on the environment and promote a safe and inclusive environment for all who want to use the town centre, including those with special access needs.

Regional Policy

- 3.9 The **North West Best Practice Design Guide**⁴ (May 2006) provides an introduction to the many aspects of design that need to be considered in the planning process, and is illustrated by case studies, whilst the **North West Green Infrastructure Guide**⁵ (2008) provides more detailed information on the concept of Green Infrastructure.

Local Policy

- 3.10 The **Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review** (adopted January 2005 and referred to throughout this document as the Local Plan) provides the Development Plan for the area formerly covered by Congleton Borough. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the requirement for Local Authorities to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF). As part of the transitional arrangements a number of policies from the Congleton Local Plan have been 'saved' and will continue to provide the Development Plan for the former Congleton Borough area as part of the Cheshire East LDF. This allows SPDs to be linked to existing 'saved' Local Plan policies.

- 3.11 This SPD supplements Policies S1, S4, S5 and S6 of the Congleton Local Plan, which provide policy for the development of the town centres within the Borough.

- **Policy S1 – Shopping Hierarchy**, provides the hierarchy of retail centres within the Borough and requires development to be of a scale, nature and location in relation to its position in the hierarchy
- **Policy S4 – Principal Shopping Areas**, provides a policy to ensure that these areas retain a concentration of retail uses.
- **Policy S5 – Other Town Centre Areas**, allows for the development of non retail town centres uses providing they do not detract from the overall town centre function.
- **Policy S6 – The Use of Upper Floors within the Town Centres**, allows for the development of non retail uses within the upper floors provided they meet a number of criteria.

- 3.12 The full text of the above policies can be found in Appendix C. There are also a number of other policies which are relevant to the SPD including:

- **Policy GR1 – New Development**, which requires all new development to be of a high standard, to conserve or enhance the character of the surrounding area and to have regard to the principles of sustainable development.
- **Policy GR2 – Design**, which requires development to meet a number of design criteria.
- **Policy GR9 – Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision**, provides the criteria that must be met for all developments requiring access, servicing or parking facilities.
- **Policy S11 – Shop Fronts and Security Shutters**, provides the criteria for new shop fronts, alterations to shop fronts and replacement shop fronts.

⁴ http://www.nwra.gov.uk/documents/?page_id=4&category_id=105

⁵ <http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk/resources/Glguide.pdf>

- **Policy RC1 – Recreation and Community Facilities Policies**, provides the policy to ensure that recreational and community facilities accurately reflect the needs of the Borough and that the development does not adversely affect the surrounding area.
- **Policy RC11 – Indoor recreation and community uses**, provides the criteria that must be met for the development of indoor recreation and community facilities.

3.13 This SPD is intended to contribute to the implementation of the Cheshire East Interim Sustainable Community Strategy. This strategy co-ordinates the resources of the local public, private and voluntary organisations towards common purposes. The priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy are provided below:

- Reducing inequalities / narrowing the gap between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of Cheshire East and sectors of the community
- Addressing the key issues surrounding our ageing population
- Addressing the priority services for children and young people
- Improving access to and availability of affordable and appropriate housing
- Reducing anti-social behaviour, arson and criminal damage
- Reducing re-offending
- Tackling the adverse impact of alcohol
- Achieving sustainable management of waste resources
- Responding to the challenge of climate change
- Reducing worklessness and improving skills
- Improving road safety, maintenance
- Improving environmental cleanliness
- Maintaining an efficient transport network
- Reducing the risk of industrial and commercial emergencies

3.14 The SPD has potential to address a number of these priorities through the provision of a vibrant, vital and safe town centre at Alsager.

3.15 The **Cheshire Local Transport Plan** covers the period 2006 to 2011 and contains a number of objectives intended to ensure that a safe, integrated, sustainable and well maintained transport network is provided. These include promoting accessibility to everyday services for all, especially those without access to a car; improve safety for all travellers; promoting the integration of all forms of transport and land-use planning, leading to a better, more efficient transport system; and, managing a well maintained and efficient transport network. It is expected that the SPD will also consider these objectives during its production.

3.16 There are other **Supplementary Planning Documents** (SPD) and **Supplementary Planning Guidance** (SPG) notes that will be of relevance to developments within Alsager Town Centre. Key amongst these is the Congleton Borough Shop Front Security SPG and the Congleton Borough Sustainable Development SPD.

4 Spatial Portrait and Town Centre Issues

- 4.1 The Town Centre is focused around the crossroads of the B5077 (Crewe Road / Lawton Road) and the B5078 (Sandbach Road North / Sandbach Road South). Within this area two Principal Shopping Areas are defined; one to the east along Lawton Road and one to the west on Crewe Road. In addition, the town centre includes a large area of open space; namely Milton Park.

Retail

- 4.2 In recent years the health and vitality of the town centre has suffered from a decline due to a lack of private sector investment. The retail offer is currently limited. The main shopping area of the town at the junction of B5077 and the B5078 comprises approximately 102 retail units⁶, the majority of which are based within the main retail area. This area contains a mix of units dated from the Victorian era but with considerable modern (1970s) infilling. The retail frontages are separated by Sandbach Road which although provided with traffic-light controlled pedestrian crossing facilities is an impediment to free movement between the two areas.
- 4.3 The comparison goods sector of the retail market is generally represented by franchised or family run local businesses catering for day-to-day requirements. The range of foods on offer is limited and relates to everyday consumables as opposed to larger comparison purchases. Whilst, in relation to food retailing, this currently is anchored by a Co-Op store and smaller Sainsbury Local and Nisa stores.

Accessibility

- 4.4 Alsager is located approximately 3 miles to the north-east of Junction 16 of the M6 Motorway on the B5077. There are several bus services providing access to Crewe, Hanley City Centre, Sandbach and Nantwich. Whilst the railway station, located a short walk from the Town Centre, provides links to Stafford, Lichfield, Crewe and Derby and on to Northampton, Milton Keynes and London Euston.

History

- 4.5 The 1909 Plan below (Diagram 2) shows that the area around the Station Road Conservation Area was largely built up including the villas which still remain today as an important aspect of the area to the south of the town centre.
- 4.6 Further information in relation to Alsager's history can be found within the Alsager Archaeological Assessment undertaken as part of the Cheshire Historic town Survey.

⁶ Congleton Borough Council Retail Schedule 2008

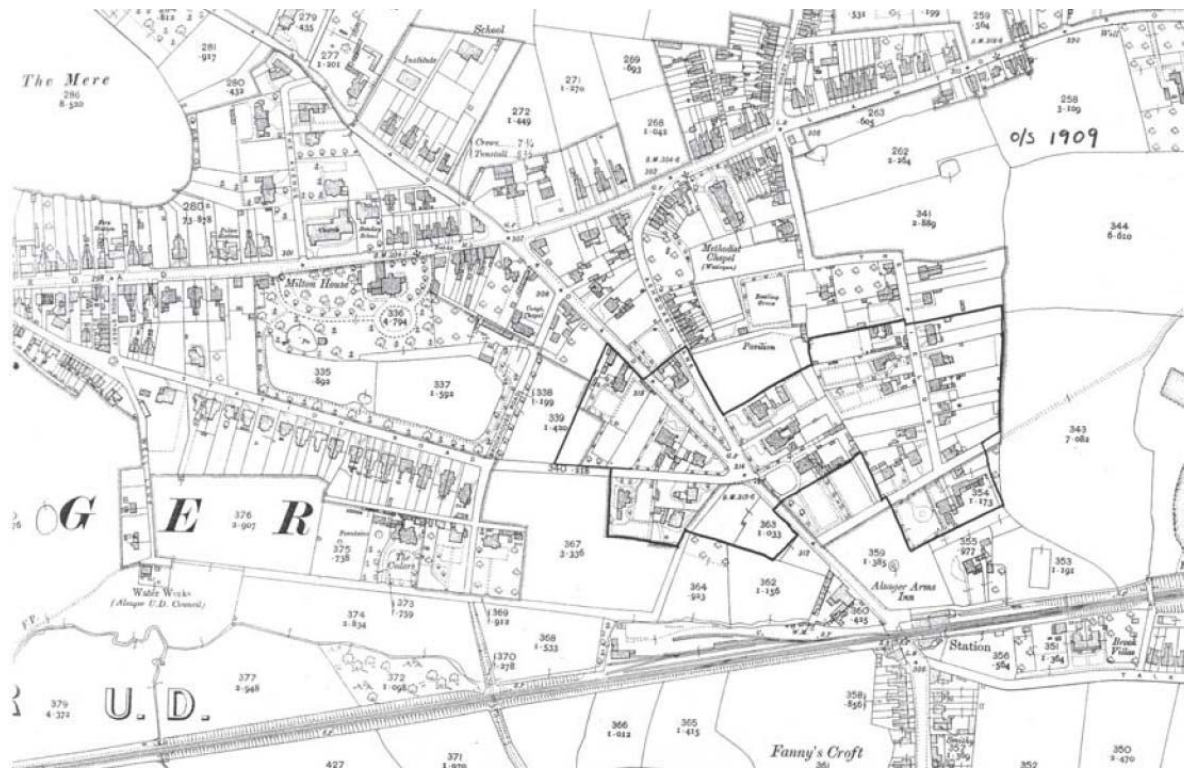


Diagram 2: 1909 Plan of Alsager highlighting the villas to the south of the town centre

Town Centre Management

- 4.7 In more recent times, Alsager was involved in the Market Towns Initiative, with a project manager appointed in January 2007. The project raised match funding of £98,000 to fund project management, marketing of Alsager, establishing a chamber of trade, and purchasing new street furniture.
- 4.8 Diagram 3 provides an orientation plan of Alsager the town centre it highlights a number of key areas and buildings throughout the town centre to help with orientation.

Diagram 3: Orientation Plan



National Issues

4.9 There are several national trends regarding shopping and town centres that may be of significance to Alsager Town Centre. These include:

- Competition from **retail parks** which have a competitive advantage in terms of ease of access and abundant free surface level car parking which can result in loss of trade or relocation of traders;
- **Superstores** selling an **increased range of non-food goods** (including clothing) as they seek new profit and growth opportunities;
- **Growth in unit sizes** to meet occupier requirements for fewer, larger units;
- **Growing disparity between large destination centres and medium and smaller centres** as key operators focus their attention on a limited number of locations.
- **The current economic situation**, which has led to an increase in retail closure and may lead to a general decrease in footfall as shoppers become more cautious.

Local Issues

4.10 This section provides a summary of the key issues that have been drawn out from a number of evidence sources, such as the Cheshire Town Centre Study 2006 to 2021, carried out by White Young Green in 2006, the August 2006 Shopper Survey carried out by NEMS Market Research on behalf of White Young Green, the Annual Retail Schedule produced by the former Congleton Borough Council and consultation with the Alsager Town Council, Alsager Partnership and the local Councillors. Further detailed analysis of this information can be found in Appendix D. This summary has also considered the SWOT analysis of the town centre carried out by the Alsager Partnership which is included within Appendix E.

4.11 The Key local issues that the Town Centre Strategy should look to address include:

- Image and character of Alsager town centre;
- Unfulfilled shopping potential and loss of trade to other Towns;
- Deficiencies in recreation, leisure and culture;
- The appearance and quality of the Civic Centre and other public buildings;
- Infrastructure – quality of roads and paving, pedestrian facilities, signage in and around town;
- Ageing population;
- Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- The lack of youth facilities.

4.12 However, there are also a number of areas of local pride or areas which are considered to be strengths. These are areas which the Town Centre Strategy should look to maintain and enhance, including:

- Character of Alsager ‘the Village’;
- Natural environment – the Mere, Milton Park and town centre trees and planting;
- Bank Corner Pub;
- Civic Centre – good location and well used;

- “Destination businesses”;
- Market;
- Pro-active community with a strong community spirit;
- The ‘personable’ environment within the town centre and the friendly nature of the people;
- The Christmas light display within the town centre;
- The skateboard and children's adventure playground in Milton Garden;
- The Train Station and the good transport links it provides; and
- The Victorian Heritage of the town and historic buildings of interest, including St Mary Magdalene Church.

5 Vision and Objectives

- 5.1 As town centres throughout the UK compete increasingly with one another for shoppers, businesses and jobs, Alsager must ensure that it remains vibrant.
- 5.2 However, the ongoing process of development and change within Alsager town centre can either add to or detract from the existing character and ultimately determine the social, environmental and economic sustainability of the town. It is this process that we seek to understand and influence in order to ensure a better quality town centre for all.

Vision

- 5.3 The Vision for the future development of Alsager is:

“Alsager Town Centre will be developed as a strong and viable town centre.....”

- Development in the town centre will allow the town to reach its full potential whilst recognising its role within the wider context.

“..... attracting and meeting the needs of a wide range of residents, visitors and workers providing a self-sustaining mix of uses.....”

- Ensuring that the scale and mix of development provided for within the town centre is compatible with the town's catchment and role reflecting local and national policy which seeks to deliver “sustainable development”.

“..... in a well designed, focused and integrated centre.....”

- The existing town centre extends from the primary shopping area in the east to the secondary area in the west. The objective should be to link these areas with a consistent high quality of public realm.

“..... in a safe, accessible and well maintained environment.”

- The quality of the town's public realm and environment should be of the highest quality to inspire a strong sense of pride amongst workers, residents and visitors.
- The quality of the environment, and the safety of the town centre are already key assets of Alsager and these elements should be built upon.
- Issues of licensing management and policing should be considered holistically to ensure that the town is welcoming to all.

Objectives

- 5.4 Turning the vision into reality requires that more detailed objectives be identified to shape the creation of policies. The suggested objectives will require action and agreement from a range of partners, such as Cheshire East Council, the Town Council and Alsager Partnership. However, it should be noted in some cases objectives will take a number of years to come to fruition.
- 5.5 It is suggested that the objectives for Alsager Town Centre are:

- 1. To create a distinctive character for the Town Centre that will inspire a sense of pride amongst local residents, workers and visitors.***
- 2. To ensure that Alsager Town Centre is a vital and viable town centre area, with a variety of shops to meet the needs of the local residents, as well as a number of specialist shops and stalls that draw in visitors from further afield.***
- 3. To support a good range of high quality, accessible leisure, cultural and community facilities, to meet the needs of all local residents, workers and visitors, particularly looking to address the need for youth facilities and facilities for the ageing population.***
- 4. To improve accessibility within the Town Centre for all pedestrians and cyclists and to the Town Centre by pedestrians, cyclists and other means of transport.***
- 5. To provide an accessible, high quality, safe and attractive public realm and new public spaces that will form the heart of civic life.***
- 6. To provide a well managed and safe Town Centre.***

5.6 It should be noted that Section 3 of the Evidence Base Document that accompanies this document highlights the relationship between the issues raised in Section 4 and the Vision and the Objectives.

6 Introduction to the Policies and Proposals

6.1 The following set of policies and proposals will be applied to Alsager Town Centre. They are not presented in any particular order either in terms of importance, timetable or deliverability. There are a number of general principles that will apply across the centre as a whole and a number of proposals which may only apply to specific areas - where this is to be the case the areas involved will be identified. For ease of reading the policies have been split into sections relating to:

- The establishment of a distinctive character for the town centre;
- The creation of a Vital and Viable Shopping Area;
- The provision of Leisure, Cultural and Community Facilities;
- Accessibility of the town centre;
- The creation of quality Public Spaces; and
- The management of the town centre.

6.2 The policies and proposals within this Strategy are intended to guide development in order to achieve the Vision and Objectives (set out in Section 5), whilst allowing enough flexibility for future proposals to show innovation, creativity and imagination, and to appreciate the changes that may occur in the physical and economic condition of Alsager Town Centre.

6.3 The policies and proposals are based on the assumption that the Strategy will be delivered through partnerships between the Alsager Partnership, Alsager Town Council, Cheshire East Council, development partners and other key stakeholders including public sector agencies and landowners. The Council, as a landowner in the study area and local planning authority, will play the lead role utilising its property assets, planning and potentially Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers and providing leadership to facilitate the overall delivery process. In addition development partners will bring the necessary private sector investment and property development expertise to take development proposals forward.

6.4 It is also of note that there are several principles and proposals that promote the use of planning obligations to assist in the improvement of the town centre. However, this document cannot prescribe the exact nature of obligations being sought, as this must be done on a case-by-case basis in compliance with Circular 05/05.

6.5 As a SPD, this document does not designate sites for development. It provides guidance for new developments in the town centre, shown on Diagram 1, that accord with national planning policy (PPS) and Local Plan policies.

7 Distinctive Character

- 7.1 A clear and positive town centre image improves attractiveness for visitors, shoppers and investors as well as helping the local community to understand and make the best use of their town centre.
- 7.2 It is important to recognise and reinforce the structural elements that form the 'backbone' of the town centre. These 'assets' may be used as a foundation for the development and marketing of a strong town centre image and identity and to reinforce general local pride.
- 7.3 The image presented to visitors as they approach and arrive in the town centre is fundamental to developing a positive first impression and sense of place. The quality and appearance of approach routes and the outer edge that the town centre presents to the 'outside world' are crucial to the formation of a positive town centre image and identity. Attention should be paid to two areas:
 - Entry or arrival points (often referred to as 'gateways'); and
 - The outer edge of the town centre, that is, the 'face' that the town centre presents to the 'outside' world'.

Orientation points

- 7.4 The development of memorable locations heighten the sense of arrival and welcome and help regular users of the town centre navigate through and around the town. Therefore **buildings with civic, community and/or cultural functions (such as the library and civic centre) will be expected to have a strong presence on a principal shopping street and be of outstanding architectural merit and quality of design.**

Gateways and Landmark Buildings

- 7.5 Gateways are formal or informal designated features that signal a sense of arrival to a place, in this case Alsager town centre. They can be features such as landmark buildings/structures, or landscape features such as planting, water features and public art. Again, gateways have been considered for both vehicular, pedestrian and public transport approach routes.
- 7.6 **The Council will promote the use of memorable architecture at key locations, sited to respond to major vistas,** such as the views down Sandbach Road North and South, Crewe Road and Lawton Road to the central cross roads and the key areas such as Bank Corner, the Civic Centre and Library and the views into Milton Park from points on both Crewe Road and Sandbach Road South. These features should help people find their way around the Town Centre and help to enrich its character. The development of gateways and landmarks should make a clear statement to reinforce the identity and character of their location.
- 7.7 This could be done for example: through the quality of their design; the way a building may be set apart by its design or scale from others in its frontage; or by the way it turns a corner.

- 7.8 The Council will expect all development and initiatives within Alsager Town Centre to reinforce visual connections along key routes, between spaces and at landmark locations with appropriate landscaping, lighting and signage.

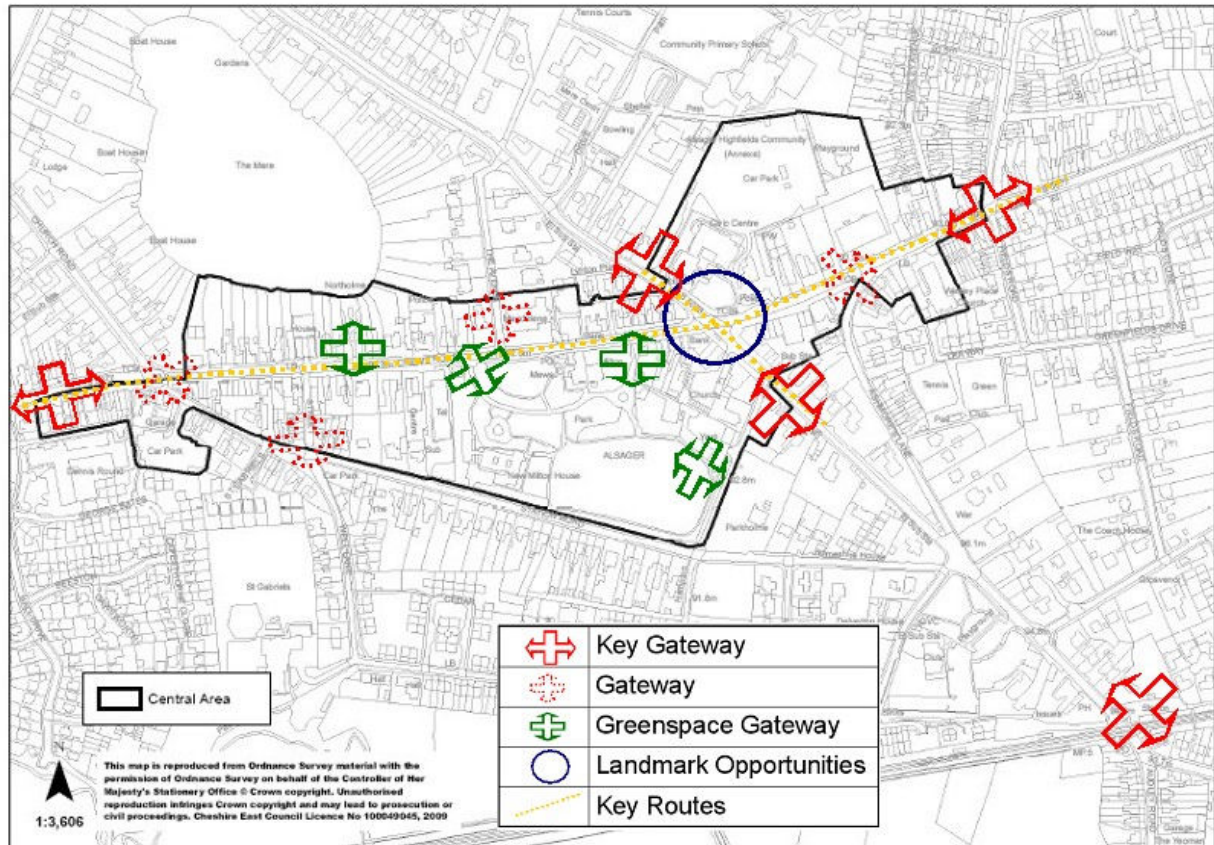


Diagram 4: Map of key routes and potential sites for gateways and landmark buildings

Public Art

- 7.9 The inclusion of Public Art within the Town Centre is expected to lead to the creation of a visually stimulating and animated place that is unique and encourages the interaction of all ages. The Council will look to increase public art within Alsager Town Centre to add to its attraction and interest. A Public Art Strategy will be produced to ensure a coordinated approach is undertaken within the town centre.



Good quality Public Art in Birmingham

- 7.10 Any development within the town centre will be expected to contribute to the Public Arts Fund, which will look to realize the work promoted by the Public Art Strategy.

- 7.11 The Public Art Strategy is likely to encourage commissions by artists to be incorporated within the development of

the town to accompany streetscape proposals for key spaces. Temporary artworks may also be used enliven the town centre's streets and spaces. It is hoped that the Public Art Strategy will also encourage artists to work with local residents, young people, schools and colleges to encourage people's understanding and appreciation of their environment and foster a greater awareness of the role and importance of contemporary art, architecture and urban design to the quality of life.

7.12 The Arts Council of Great Britain initiated the 'Percent for Art Campaign' to enhance the built environment by encouraging developers to devote a proportion of capital expenditure of the construction of a new building to the provision of new works of art, craft or decoration in the building or its environs.

7.13 The Council will therefore look to developers to provide 1% of the total construction costs for public art commissions. This figure is used as a starting point and ensures that there is always a minimum expenditure on public art within a scheme and its value and scale is directly related to the size of the project. Contributions will also be expected towards the long term maintenance of any commissions.

Design of new development

7.14 Design is a subjective issue and we all have our preferences, but most would agree that well-designed developments are those that add something to the environment. Design can be key to the success of a building or development not just because our lives are connected through our common built environment, but also because good design can bring economic benefits to both developers and occupiers.

7.15 **The Council will expect that all new development will positively improve the appearance and character of the site in its setting, will improve the functionality of the area and will create a new quality benchmark for further development in the immediate locality.** This is particularly important where the existing site and context are of poor visual or environmental quality or are weak and lacking in character.

7.16 Policy GR1 of the Local Plan states that *'proposals will only be permitted if considered to be acceptable in terms of . . . design'*. **Within Alsager Town Centre proposals will only be considered acceptable, in terms of design, where they:**

- **maximise the amount of 'active' building frontage;**
- **minimise blank walls, service areas and other 'dead' frontages onto the public realm;**
- **locate building entrances so that they are convenient for pedestrians and cyclists, rather than the drivers of private cars;**
- **ensure that entrances to major facilities are welcoming, appropriately scaled and detailed and visible along or at the end of one or more major view corridors;**
- **are designed to relate to the scale, form and massing of the local area;**

- incorporate high quality landscaped boundary treatments to provide enclosure and continuity to the street or space;
- designed to reduce crime and fear of crime; and
- incorporate inclusive design.

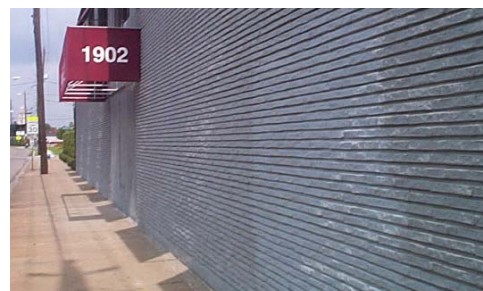
Active Frontages

7.17 Development should face on to and reinforce streets and public spaces.

Buildings that face onto streets and other open spaces help give life to the public realm. Well-designed buildings will have a clear definition between public and private space and relate positively to the public realm. In town centres, buildings that front directly onto the pavement contribute to viability and vitality, whilst providing good enclosure to a street.

7.18 Development should have active frontages including entrances and exits, windows, arcades, balconies and seating areas that overlook and provide activity onto the street or open space.

Making frontages 'active' adds vitality and interest to the public realm. Lively interior activities oriented towards outdoor places can enliven spaces for instance. The use of active frontages can also help to maximize informal surveillance, as buildings with live edges and doors directly to the street, enable people to keep an eye on public space, making it feel safer.



Non-active frontages should be avoided

7.19 'Active' building frontages can be created by:

- incorporating smaller uses such as individual shops, restaurants and small business units at ground floor level; or
- wrapping smaller uses around the perimeter of the larger uses, so creating an active frontage to the street; and
- locating uses such as cafes within supermarkets or leisure complexes on the frontage, with views in from outside.

Entrance Points

7.20 Main entrances will be expected to be located on the street. If this is not possible then they should be directly visible, easily accessible and as close to the street as practically possible to allow for convenient access for both pedestrians and cyclists. The function(s) of the building should also be readily apparent to passers by.

Scale and massing

7.21 The scale of the development or building will be largely dependent upon the location and size of the site but also its position within the hierarchy of the built form. It should also relate to the width and importance of the space which they enclose. For example, a gateway position may demand a greater mass, along with a higher quality of design and materials, than its neighbours, whilst an infill development may require a 'quieter' building, which is more responsive to the prevailing storey heights and articulations.

- 7.22 The height of new building will be managed across the town centre to ensure that they fit appropriately into their setting, this may be by ensuring that development incorporates upper floor uses such as residential flats, business or leisure or by ensuring that development does not become overpowering.

Boundary treatments

- 7.23 The choice of boundary treatment can either add to, or detract, from the quality of the frontage. The choice of material and scale should be appropriate to achieve both security and a good appearance, and it should provide enclosure and continuity to the street or public space.

Crime Prevention

- 7.24 Secured-by-design principles are to be considered in the design of all development in order to create spaces that minimise crime and make people feel safe.

Inclusive Design

- 7.25 The goal is to create environments that everyone can use equally. Footways, access routes from car parks and entrances to buildings should be easy to use by the disabled, elderly and those people with pushchairs and wheelchairs to all principal public entrances / exits.

Refuse and Recycling

- 7.26 **Provision for refuse storage and recycling facilities must be made within the curtilage of the property, unless otherwise agreed.**
- 7.27 Screened storage for waste storage bins and recycling storage should be made within the curtilage of the premises. This is particularly important close to residential properties, as not only does it look unattractive but it may cause problems with health and safety.
- 7.28 This will also encourage and facilitate the ability of both residential and commercial properties to temporarily store and make recyclable materials/refuse available for collection.
- 7.29 Targets for the reduction of municipal wastes /proportions going to landfill are in place for all local authorities and facilities being planned to enable the processing of various waste types to further reduce waste to landfill.

Fumes and Odours

- 7.30 **Appropriate measures to control fumes / smells from the premises shall be put in place in order to protect the amenities of nearby properties/ residents.**
- 7.31 Adequate ventilation and extraction systems allow premises to operate without being detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring properties. When installing the appropriate measures careful consideration should also be given to the appearance of the systems, where they are sited and hours of operation, in

order to ensure that visual amenity is not compromised and noise problems are not introduced.

Noise

- 7.32 Where new restaurants, cafes, pubs, bars and take-aways are permitted they will be carefully conditioned to ensure no adverse impact on the residential and other noise sensitive uses being encouraged to locate within the town centre.
- 7.33 The Council will expect all applicants to submit information with planning applications on the noise attenuation levels proposed in order to ensure the amenities of nearby residential properties and the character of the area are protected.

Existing Developments

- 7.34 Many existing commercial buildings have opportunities for radical remodelling and upgrading for the benefit of the townscape as well as improving the value and use of the accommodation. **Where planning permission is required the redevelopment of existing buildings will be expected to meet the design requirements set out for new developments as set out above.** Where planning permission is not required the Council would encourage developers to apply these principles in order to enhance the character of Alsager Town Centre.
- 7.35 Within Alsager Town Centre the Council will allow for the removal of unattractive or inappropriate buildings, elements or features that detract from the quality and/or character of the site and its surroundings.
- 7.36 Where the existing buildings are felt to have a level of local historic interest it is important that any key features are retained. Particularly those buildings and areas which have links to the Victorian heritage of the area or to the adjacent Conservation Areas.

Shop Frontages

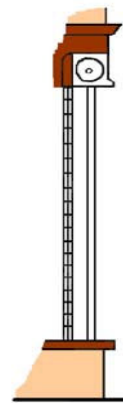
- 7.37 Shop fronts are an important part of the street scene, as they create both the initial impression of the quality of the shop, and allow the customer to see at first glance what goods the shop have to offer, acting as an advertisement. It is in the best interest of the shop owner, therefore, to project an appropriate and effective image to the public through the shop frontage.
- 7.38 **Wherever possible traditional shop fronts and features should be retained** (this includes frontages on pubs, banks, solicitors, estate agents etc). In some cases, original features may have been hidden behind more modern fascias and panelling. Good modern designs will be acceptable, providing that they relate well to the building on which they are to be installed, that they are imaginative and creative and that they respect the character of the building and the street scene in terms of scale, proportions and materials.



7.39 **The Council will expect the design of the shop front to take into account the rhythm and characteristics of the street in which it is located.** Many buildings will have a strong vertical emphasis and this combined with an average plot width of 5-7m will create an agreeable

rhythm and proportion, producing visual harmony within the street. This can be destroyed by fascias which are over-long and/or too deep. This destroys the relationship between the ground and upper facade and creates a jarring horizontal emphasis. This can be overcome by using mullions or recessed entrances to break up long displays and ensuring that fascia box width is in proportion to the building and usually not extending above the cornice.

7.40 **The Council will expect that any commercial security measure does not create an inappropriate or intimidating frontage which may reduce the overall vitality of the area.** Security measures should always form an integral part of the design of a shop front and should not simply be "added on" as an after thought. **There is a general presumption against the use of solid lath roller shutters** as their horizontal emphasis is invariably at odds with the scale and detailing of many buildings. Solid external roller shutters will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as they create a hostile frontage and can attract vandalism and graffiti. Well-lit interiors, visible internal CCTV systems, and adequate locks and alarms, including alarmed glass, can all reduce the risk to vulnerable premises without significant detriment to the street-scene.



Best practice:
Shutter mechanism behind fascia and invisible from outside. Shutters are located internally and are of a roller grille style.

8 Vital and Viable Shopping Area

- 8.1 Shopping is often considered to be the lifeblood of a successful centre. It is usually the primary incentive for regular trips into centres from surrounding residential areas, moreover, shopping is an essential service. Convenient access to a comprehensive range of competitively priced goods can be considered as a key component of a good quality of life and social inclusion.
- 8.2 Vitality is determined by actual and perceived activity at different times of day. This includes pedestrian activity in the street and activity 'visible' within buildings, including the presence of displays in shop windows and lighting at night; the maintenance of buildings and spaces; the perception of safety and occurrence of crime; and the ease of access to/from and within the centre.
- 8.3 Viability is concerned with economic issues including retailer representation, rental levels, the returns on investment in property and vacancy rates. Diversity of use is also an indicator but more appropriate to the centre overall rather than the retail core.

Principal Shopping Areas

- 8.4 It is important to protect the shopping core of the Town Centre. Policy S4 of the Local Plan, defines the Principal Shopping Areas and protects them from non-retail uses at ground floor level. The loss of retail (A1) uses in these areas to non-retail uses such as housing or offices is precluded. The loss of A1 uses to other retail uses such as financial and professional services (A2), restaurants and cafes (A3), drinking establishments (A4), and takeaways (A5) is strictly controlled.
- 8.5 Policy S4 states that a change of use from A1 to A2, A3, A4 or A5 would not be permitted where it would lead to a concentration of non-A1 uses. The Council considers a 'concentration' to be a row of more than two non-A1 uses. In addition, where a unit is vacant, the most recently authorised use class will be considered. **Where a non-A1 use is permitted it must retain a display frontage appropriate to a shopping area.** The Principal Shopping Areas as set out in the Local Plan are shown in Diagram 5.



The Evening Economy

- 8.6 Restaurants and cafes are essential to the vitality of the Town Centre and encourage a safer feeling in the evening by attracting visitors of all ages. However, it is recognized that too many drinking establishments or take-aways in one place can have an adverse impact on residential amenity and the town centre environment by creating noise and disturbance and potentially anti-social behaviour.
- 8.7 **The Council will support a greater mix of uses including restaurants, cafes, bars and other evening economy uses to support the vitality of the retail offer, in line with Policies S5 and S6 of the Local Plan.**
- 8.8 However, in assessing each application the Council will need to be satisfied that the proposed development will not cause detrimental impacts on the character and/or amenity of the area. Where there is evidence of potential harmful impacts the development will be carefully conditioned to ensure no adverse impact on any residential and other noise sensitive uses in the area, restrictions on opening hours/ closing times may be imposed or if mitigation is not possible the application may be refused.
- 8.9 **Proposals that would result in a concentration of evening economy uses will be carefully assessed to ensure that the character of the area does not become detrimental to the wider appeal of the town centre.**
- 8.10 In order to ensure that cafes, bars and other evening economy uses do not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town centre by creating 'non active frontages' during the day the Council will seek to enter into a Section 106 agreement with the applicant/s to ensure that premises are open throughout the day as well as in the evening (where appropriate consideration may be given to lunch time opening hours rather than daytime).
- 8.11 Outdoor seating areas on the public highway should be discussed with the Highways Engineer but may be permitted within appropriate locations in the town centre. Outdoor seating areas can add to the activity within streets, both throughout the day and in the evening. This type of facility adds vibrancy to the street scene and encourages more people to take advantage of the facilities on offer. Outdoor seating areas can also help to create a more relaxed feel to the environment and act as a form of natural surveillance.

Town Centre Market

- 8.12 Markets can help to make the Town Centre more lively and can add to the overall town centre experience. The Alsager Market will remain a foundation of the town centre. However, the possible relocation of a part-enclosed, part open-air market connected to a public building or public space, would create a new market focus for the town centre should the Fairview Car Park area be redeveloped or altered. **The Council will expect a Market to be maintained within the town centre of Alsager.**

New Retail Provision

- 8.13 The main focus for new retail provision will be within the Principal Shopping Area and the development opportunity site at Fairview Car Park. Further information about the development opportunity site at Fairview Car Park can be found in Section 13. The Cheshire Town Centre Study 2006 to 2021, produced by White Young Green in 2006 on behalf of the Cheshire Authorities, identified that there is additional capacity in Alsager town centre for between 860sqm and 1,720sqm (net) of convenience floorspace and between 1,380sqm and 1,971sqm (net) of comparison floorspace over the period to 2021.
- 8.14 An increase in new retail provision is also supported by local residents, when asked if they thought *'an improved range and choice of food shopping would encourage more people to shop in Alsager'*; 81% of those questioned by Erinaceous Planning agreed.
- 8.15 A successful town centre provides accommodation for a range of retailers extending from small units for independent operators to larger units for the high street multiples. There is currently a lack of larger units to meet modern retail needs. However, it will also be important to retain a number of smaller specialist units for destination shopping. **Development of new retailing should compliment the existing provision within the centre, and not undermine its vitality and viability.**
- 8.16 It is difficult for planning policies to change the type and quality of retail stores, because the A1 Use Class covers all types of shops and the Council cannot restrict who owns or occupies these stores. However, by providing a better quality shopping environment and new units of an appropriate size and design, it is expected that an improved retail offer can be attracted to the town.

9 Leisure, Cultural and Community Facilities

- 9.1 Leisure, culture and community facilities are an essential part to a rounded quality of life in a town centre. They can help to attract prospective investors and enhance the quality of the town centre for existing local residents, workers and visitors. When Erinaceous Planning asked local residents if they *'used the existing community and leisure facilities in the Town Centre'* 85% agreed.
- 9.2 **The loss of buildings used for community uses/purposes will not be considered acceptable unless it can be shown that it no longer makes a positive contribution to the social or cultural life of the community, or that suitable alternative provision will be made in line with Policy RC12.**
- 9.3 **Within Alsager Town Centre the Council will expect that all options to increase the buildings contribution to the social or cultural life of the community have been explored and found to be unviable. Whilst any alternative provision will be expected to be at least equivalent to the current facilities and preferably of a higher quality in terms of design, access and usage.**
- 9.4 Meeting the social needs of everyone in the context of a balanced community is recognised as a key aspect of sustainable development, whilst the ageing population and the lack of youth facilities have both been highlighted as issues within Alsager. Therefore any proposals that will provide community facilities for these sections of the community will be encouraged, however, they will still be expected to meet with the appropriate planning policies including Local Plan policies RC1 and RC11. It should be noted that community facilities can include a wide range of facilities including, but not limited to, public houses, church and village halls, churches, schools, libraries, village/local shops.
- 9.5 The Council will work in partnership with appropriate community service providers to ensure that health, education and community service needs arising from a development are provided for. The use of planning obligations and conditions on planning permissions may be used in pursuit of this policy. The Council recognises the need for the provision of flexible community spaces in the town centre, and is supportive of the inclusion of such space within any redevelopment proposal.
- 9.6 Community facilities are seen and used by many people, and should therefore aspire to be models of good practice in terms of sustainable design. These buildings can help to raise awareness of sustainability issues and their solutions, and thereby contribute to achieving sustainable communities. It should be noted that renewable energies are often accompanied by energy efficiency gains, and therefore cost savings can also be made. It is suggested that all Community facilities strive to meet with the requirements of BREEAM Level 3.

10 Accessibility

10.1 This section examines the quality of existing and potential physical connections with a view to optimising and balancing user movement around the town centre. Traffic management (all modes), street furniture design and surfacing within and around the town centre core will be fundamental to this.

10.2 When assessing the strengths and weaknesses of existing town centre access and movement routes we have considered the following two factors:

- **Permeability**

This describes the ease with which people can walk, cycle or drive through an area by a variety of routes. Directness of route is also an important consideration. The smaller the number of viewpoint changes required to reach a destination the better. Successful areas usually have a high level of permeability which in turn generates lively streets that can support a range of uses.

- **Legibility**

This describes the ability to understand an area. Before people can make use of a route or shortcut they need to understand that it exists and have an idea of where it may lead. For example, approach routes should not only be attractive, but should provide physical affirmation of entry into the town centre, through an appropriate gateway feature or visible known landmark within the centre.

10.3 Distances between all parts of the town centre are all possible to walk, but the ease and attractiveness of walking has to be enhanced. New and improved linkages for safe, legible and unobstructed routes into the town centre from neighbouring residential areas and the train station are essential. Whilst improving the choice and attractiveness of pedestrian routes within the town centre will help to spread footfall across the Town Centre. **The Council will expect pedestrian routes to be along clearly defined routes that are direct, safe and as short as possible and fully accessible to all people.**

10.4 The Council will seek to provide a comprehensive system of safe and well signposted walking and cycling routes, both through and to the town centre. This will include into and through Milton Park which is a key area within the town centre, improving the accessibility within this area should help to improve the legibility of the town centre. This could be done through improved signage and lighting at key entrance points and by ensuring that the paths and desire lines within the park itself are uncluttered and well maintained.

10.5 The Council will also seek to ensure there are clear, direct and well-lit routes and paths between key destinations, with clear forward visibility and gentle changes of direction, avoiding places hidden from view or in darkness.

10.6 **Development will only be permitted where the most active uses are concentrated on main routes and around focal points.** This will contribute to the vitality of a place, as enabling both real and perceived access and mobility

to your business is key to providing a vital and viable town centre and to creating a prosperous business.

- 10.7 The Council will look to ensure that pedestrian routes remain free from obstructions and unintended hazards that would restrict accessibility (e.g. uneven pavements, temporary barriers, and inappropriate resurfacing prior to, during or after construction and maintenance works). Alongside this, **the Council will look to remove all inappropriate signage located on the highway** and will encourage town centre occupiers to give careful consideration to where they locate goods and signage outside of their premises, and within their curtilage, to ensure that pedestrian routes are free from obstruction.
- 10.8 **Planning permission will only be granted for developments which provide for the access needs of everyone**, including people with disabilities and those with pushchairs. This includes dealing with approach and access to buildings, adequate and convenient parking for disabled people and use of colour and tactile materials to assist blind and partially sighted people. Designing for people with disabilities makes access easier for everyone and encourages more people to use public buildings and spaces.
- 10.9 The Council will also look into the development of 'shared space' concepts that overcome the barrier effect of busy roads and integrate the town centre with its surroundings.

Signage

- 10.10 Currently, much of the signage throughout the town centre is of a low quality. This is partly because many additions and changes to signage have occurred incrementally over time and in the absence of a strategy that provides guidelines, signs will inevitably lack coherence and appear haphazard. **All signage in Alsager Town Centre should be clear, unambiguous and avoid being unnecessarily intrusive.**
- 10.11 It is likely that an audit of signage will need to be undertaken to identify signs that could be rationalised, removed, repositioned, or otherwise changed to help improve the appearance of the urban environment. Clearly, highway safety cannot be compromised, therefore, the audit will need to be undertaken in partnership with, and agreed by the Council's Highways division.

Reducing clutter

- 10.12 Unnecessary clutter of streets signs, bollards, benches, railings, litter bins, and light columns in a street can significantly detract from its appearance. In addition, street clutter can obstruct pedestrian movement, especially for the partially sighted. This clutter arises because there is a lack of coordination between the different organisations responsible for the signs and street furniture. Reducing clutter requires a coordinated effort, especially along major corridor. Streetscape elements can be organised more efficiently by:
- removing obsolete signs and street furniture;
 - maximising the clear pavement area for pedestrians by locating street furniture in a single strip;

- avoiding excessive 'fencing in' of pedestrians with guard rails;
- where possible, combining signs and street furniture (e.g. fixing signs to lighting columns);
- coordinating types, styles and colours of street furniture for the length of the street; and
- using a limited palette of paving and other materials to keep the street visually simple.

Car Parking Strategy

10.13 The regeneration in the town centre will create both increased levels of development, generating a demand for car parking, as well as potentially creating opportunities for the development of existing surface car parks. It is therefore suggested that a car parking strategy be developed to help manage this change in demand and guiding significant developments to provide appropriate on-site provision. The strategy will need to balance accessibility with attractiveness and this is likely to involve a level of partnership working with the Highways Section and the developer to deliver attractive and appropriate on-site parking.

10.14 The Council will expect all town centre public car parks and secure cycle parking areas to be accessible and well-lit, with secure and visible entrances and exits.

10.15 The Council will expect all developments involving car parking to consider the needs of the pedestrian when designing their car parks not just those of the car user. The Council will expect the car park to provide:

- desire lines across the car park to the various buildings it serves, and design safe and attractive routes for people on foot using high quality materials;
- include a pedestrian only zone adjacent to the building frontages, so that there is some 'breathing space' from parked cars;
- break up the mass of car parking through a well considered structure of vertical elements such as trees, attractive light columns, public art and high quality structures such as trolley shelters;
- ensure that security measures such as CCTV are carefully designed into the layout from the outset; and
- opportunities for the car park to be used for alternative purposes such as local markets and civic events.

11 Public Spaces

- 11.1 Public space, including the street, squares and green places within the urban environment, provide free of charge physical and visual access for the public to enjoy. These are the areas that can benefit the town centre by encouraging greater interaction between different groups in the community and provide a space where the vivacity of the town centre can take place, providing a setting for many public events and activities. All public spaces should offer an environmental and visual quality that allows for and encourages high levels of sustainability, safety, interest, diversity and ultimately vitality.
- 11.2 Open spaces (green/soft spaces) are an essential component of any town centre, providing a valuable contrast to the built urban environment. These spaces, often described as 'green lungs', are enjoyed by residents, workers and visitors and are home to a variety of flora and species.
- 11.3 **The Council will expect development to clearly distinguish between private and public space, and to concentrate activity at ground level in streets and public spaces.** Where possible the Council will look to encourage enclosed public spaces, which create squares and piazzas. This will help to create a vital and viable mixed used town centre.
- 11.4 **Streets and spaces should facilitate a broad range of creative and economic activities and multiple uses such as markets, public art, and open-air performances.** The design of public open spaces should allow for a variety of pedestrian uses at a range of times of the day, for example street trading during the day, and eating out at the weekend.
- 11.5 Tables and chairs in public space promotes a café culture and adds to the vitality of a space. The co-ordination of tables and chairs licensing and the identification of spaces for street trading, performance and events can help towards creating a diverse economy.
- 11.6 **Streets and spaces should be guided by a clear signage strategy to enhance and coordinate access to services, way finding and interpretation.** The minimum level of information necessary to effectively direct people should be used to ensure a maximum degree of simplicity and clarity. Traffic signs can be incorporated into street furniture elements or affixed to buildings to help reduce visual clutter.

- 11.7 **Streets and spaces should use materials and furniture that are of a high quality.** Appendix G provides a 'Materials Palette' that aims to achieve a consistent approach and high quality public realm that has contemporary relevance. Furniture designs should be simple, elegant and robust.



High quality public space –
Exchange Square, Manchester

11.8 The Council will expect all areas of public space to be well designed, this will include:

- providing coordinated elements of street furniture including seating, litter bins, railings, bollards, lighting, cycle stands, bus shelters and kiosks;
- avoiding visual clutter and confusion in the siting, amount, nature and design of signage, railings, recycle bins, lighting and other elements of street furniture;
- using paving and surfacing materials that are visually attractive, durable, easy to maintain and replace, and reflect the character of the street or space. Where possible, use paving materials that are reclaimed and recycled, preferably locally;
- ensuring that the space is accessible for all, and where appropriate compliant with the necessary DDA or Equality guidance.
- integrate trees and other soft landscape elements with other elements of street furniture and paving in a coordinated way;
- incorporate works of public art and provide opportunities for local artists to be involved in the design of the public realm and the elements with it; and
- contribute where appropriate to the on-going costs of management and maintenance of the public realm.

11.9 The Council will expect all developments to follow the principles of development highlighted within 'Manual for Streets' (DfT, 2007).

11.10 To reveal and exploit the presence in the town centre of Milton Park, the Mere and associated green spaces, the Council will seek to provide a coherent network of open spaces and landscape features. This may include the creation of a network of tree lined streets and 'pocket parks' that provide green corridors for people and wildlife, and link to strategic open space.

11.11 In line with Policy NR5 the Council will encourage new development to maximise the opportunities to create new wildlife areas and to promote and enhance biodiversity within the town centre.

12 A Well Managed Town Centre

Partnership Working

- 12.1 An important factor in the success of the Town Centre is the creation of partnerships between the various stakeholders in the town. There are a number of key stakeholders within the Town Centre including Cheshire East Council, businesses, landowners, the Town Council and the Alsager Partnership. The future prosperity of the Town Centre will, in part, rely on the ability of different groups to communicate with each other and take forward the vision set out in this SPD. Regular communication between the key stakeholders involved should be established, maintained and improved, as appropriate, to ensure that progress to deliver the SPD is monitored and delivered. It is the role of all stakeholders to ensure that the vision for a transformed Alsager Town Centre is a success and this communication will assist in realising this.
- 12.2 **Partnership working must be maintained and where appropriate improved in Alsager Town Centre to build on existing synergies and further enhance the dialogue between the different stakeholders in order to implement policies and proposals and support the long term successful development of the Town Centre.**

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

- 12.3 The overall scale of development envisaged in the Town Centre up to 2026 will generate demand for new infrastructure, in the form of both works and services. This will include improvements to the road network, public transport services, utilities, public realm improvements, and other social and community facilities and services. The Council will work with infrastructure providers to identify what new provision needs to be made to meet the growing needs of the local community and visitors to the Town Centre. The Council will seek the provision of facilities or contributions to the cost of infrastructure from developers through planning obligations where this is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. Due to the scale of some of the expected improvements and the levels of contributions it is possible that the contributions will be pooled until a time when larger projects can be implemented.
- 12.4 It should be noted that the Government is currently reviewing the system of obtaining planning obligations, therefore the method of seeking developer contributions in the Town Centre may be reviewed in the future.
- 12.5 **Contributions will be sought from all developments, which have a direct or indirect impact on the Town Centre, towards the cost of delivering infrastructure including improvements to the environment, transportation, social and community facilities and resources, and the public realm.** This is in line with Policy GR23 which states that 'proposals which are likely to intensify or create shortfalls in the provision of essential services or facilities will not be permitted unless these are provided as part of the development or a developer contribution is made towards meeting any identified shortfall'.

13 Development Opportunities

13.1 Development potential has been assessed through a visual examination of buildings and structures. This considered the condition, conservation or listed status, business or economic use, surrounding context and contribution to townscape quality (character, continuity and enclosure, ease of movement, legibility, quality of the public realm, adaptability, and diversity). There are a number of areas and / or buildings, which do not contribute positively to the town's character, identity or urban structure and these are identified for redevelopment either now or in the future to enable the restructuring of the town and to allow a more efficient use to be made of land.

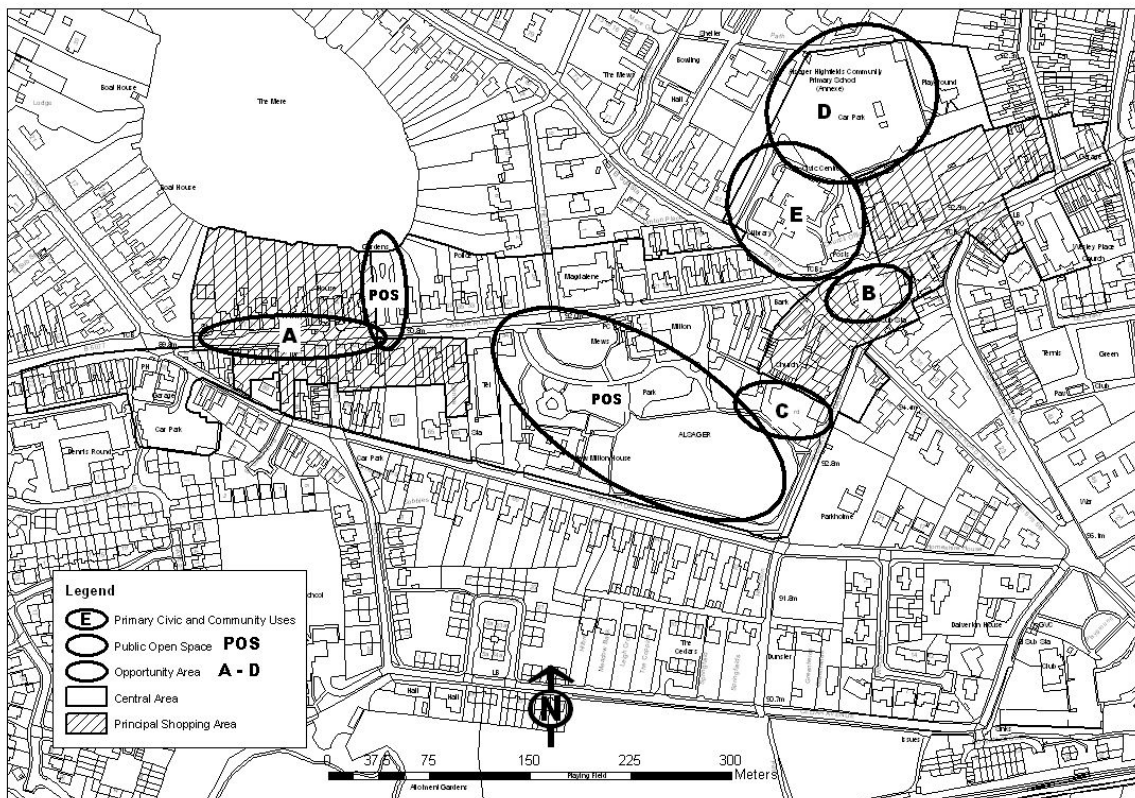


Diagram 6: Development Opportunities

A: Crewe Road Frontage

13.2 There is particular scope to encourage the development of restaurants and cafes within key areas of the Town Centre area. This would provide a focus to the town and would help stimulate the daytime and evening economy. Such an initiative would also act as a draw to capture the wealth identified within Alsager and its hinterland. The image of Alsager would be changed positively, and would have a beneficial effect on the retail provision.

13.3 The **Crewe Road Frontage** is considered to have potential to provide an improved evening economy offer. The success of the recently opened Bank Corner Public House on Lawton Road is a testament to this potential. Care should however be taken in relation to the potential provision of such facilities.

The residents' consultation exercise, undertaken by Erinaceous Planning, suggests that residents of Alsager have definite concerns over the provision of such facilities.

Within the Crewe Road Frontages proposals for A3 uses (Restaurants and Cafes) will be encouraged. A4 (Drinking Establishments) and A5 uses will be permitted where they do not lead to a concentration of these uses, they retain a display frontage appropriate to a shopping area, the opening hours are controlled appropriately and they accord with other policies of this SPD and the Local Plan.

B: No. 2-12 Lawton Road and 43-45 Sandbach Road South

13.4 **No. 2-12 Lawton Road and 43-45 Sandbach Road South** are considered to provide a significant opportunity for future development in the town centre.

The Council will support a suitable comprehensive redevelopment scheme of No. 2-12 Lawton Road and 43-45 Sandbach Road South provided that the resultant development provides:

- a. an improved sense of place;**
- b. an appropriate building to mark its landmark location in the town centre;**
- c. improved elevational and corner treatments, particularly to the key Lawton Road / Sandbach Road intersection;**
- d. for uses in conformity to the prevailing development plan policy; and**
- e. active frontages onto both Lawton Road and Sandbach Road South.**

C: Council Yard off Brookhouse Road

13.5 It is understood that the **Council Yard off Brookhouse Road** is now considered surplus to requirements and may be likely to come forward for redevelopment. The site adjoins Milton Park, a key strategic asset for the town centre and the way in which it is now developed is of importance to the area, and the park's environment.

13.6 Milton Park is an under-utilised asset within the Town Centre and there is a very clear desire to maximise its benefits for leisure in the town's renaissance. This area has the potential to be an important leisure / community hub for Alsager, maximising its frontage and relationship to the Park.

13.7 **The Council will support an appropriate redevelopment scheme where it enhances the links between the town centre and Milton Park and where the development provides an appropriate frontage on the Park.** Any development will also be expected to contribute to the character of this area, enhance the biodiversity of Milton Park and to give consideration to the other surrounding land uses.

D: Town Centre Car Park

13.8 The **Town Centre Car Park and the surrounding area** have been identified by two developers as being suitable for redevelopment to provide a modern foodstore. The Council owns much of the land in this area and therefore an

element of control of the future development of this site lies with the Council. Currently, there is a valid planning permission to allow this site to be developed for retail development and another application has also been approved subject to a legal agreement. However, it is not expected that either permission will be built and instead further negotiations have been undertaken between potential developers and the Council.

- 13.9 The Council believes that this site is suitable for a retail development, in particular a convenience retail store.

The Council will support a suitable retail convenience development provided that the resultant development:

- a. provides an improved sense of place;**
- b. creates a well designed development which will help to make the town more attractive to potential shoppers;**
- c. is easily accessed from both Sandbach Road North and from Lawton Road;**
- d. provides a high quality frontage on to either / both Sandbach Road North and from Lawton Road;**
- e. retains an appropriate level of parking for the town centre and for the development itself;**
- f. provides a suitable alternative to replace the existing playground area;**
- g. creates an appropriate layout to manage the safe and efficient flow of traffic and people associated with the local schools;**
- h. provides an appropriate layout to limit the impacts of servicing the development; and**
- i. makes provision for the retention of the local market, preferably in the form of a public space which can be used for a variety of occasional events and activities.**

E: Civic Quarter

- 13.10 The **Civic Quarter** comprises a number of buildings in the ownership of the Council and others primarily used for civic functions including the Civic Hall and Library. Both the Civic Hall and Library are now somewhat dated and there may be opportunity to consider the future of these facilities and the possibility of their replacement to provide modern high quality provision. Library Services have indicated a willingness to work with any development on this site to ensure that Library Services are provided in the best possible environment. It is also noted that the Council's Offices in Alsager are not fully occupied although they do contain One-Stop Shop facilities for Council services and as such represent an under-utilised asset.

- 13.11 **The Council will expect that any redevelopment of these buildings addresses the junction of Crewe Road, Lawton Road and Sandbach Road North and South. A landmark building or corner feature will be encouraged here. Any proposals should include replacement facilities for the Library, Civic Centre and Council Offices.** The Council will expect the buildings on this site to remain within the town centre and within a central and accessible location. If these buildings were to be redeveloped it will be

important to ensure that the replacement buildings are fit for purpose and accessible for all.

13.12 A new and improved public space will also be expected to be provided if the current area is developed. This should create a vibrant and welcoming landmark open space. The scheme should include soft landscaping, improved surfacing and new street furniture. Any design should respond to the surrounding buildings and should help to create links to other areas of public space.

Development Briefs

13.13 It is likely that the Council will now consider preparing Planning / Development Briefs for a number of these development opportunity areas before they are brought forward for development. The briefs will provide the necessary level of site specific detail to give prospective developers clarity on development and design requirements. They will also provide the opportunity for further consultation work with land owners and other key stakeholders. The briefs should build on the recommendations of this Strategy, and set out:

- Uses/mix of uses sought;
- Infrastructure and facility requirements;
- Planning standards to be applied and the degree of flexibility;
- Layout of the development including access, parking and circulation;
- Scale, massing and height of buildings;
- Landscaping;
- Buildings to be retained;
- Design criteria; and
- Off-site requirements (i.e. section 106 contributions).

14 Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation

14.1 There are 5 main ways of implementing the strategy:

1. Determination of Planning Applications

2. Developer Contributions

The Council will seek contributions from developers to provide the infrastructure or measures required of the development, in line with Local Plan Policy GR23.

3. Commercial Delivery of Development

Many of the aims of this strategy require the delivery of development, much of which will be provided by the private sector. Their skills will be harnessed, and an open dialogue pursued where issues occur.

4. Provision of Public Services

The needs of public service providers (e.g. education, health, etc) have been taken into account in preparing this SPD. These providers are asked to consider the spatial objectives of this SPD in the delivery of these services.

5. Regeneration Programmes

There are several complementary regeneration programmes that can deliver funding to carry out various works to the Town Centre area, mainly environmental improvements. Close working with the relevant organizations can realize both their visions and that of the SPD.

14.2 The Council owns a number of key sites within Alsager Town Centre including the Civic Centre, the One Stop Shop, Fair View Car Park and the Depot site. As part of the process of stimulating investor interest and encouraging the development of other identified sites the Council will endeavour to bring forward Council owned land for redevelopment as an early phase of the implementation process. In bringing forward these sites particular emphasis will be given to the realisation of the Council's objectives as a showcase for best practice.

14.3 The key to the regeneration of Alsager, lies in the forming of robust and sustainable public – private partnerships. This brings together the leadership, planning powers, local knowledge and property assets of the public sector partners together with the development experience and investment potential of the private sector. There are several ways, in which development can be taken forward; the most appropriate approach is dependent on the nature of ownerships and other complexities facing the site in question. These three approaches are:

- *Private Led*

Sites where private land owners can, under the guidance of a detailed planning brief, take forward land assembly and the development process themselves.

- *Public Asset Based*
Sites that are in public ownership and can be taken forward quickly to the private sector and delivered through a development agreement.
- *Public-Private Partnership*
Sites where the complexities of land ownership are likely to necessitate a combined public/private approach to acquiring and if necessary acquiring land through compulsory purchase powers before development can take place.

Monitoring

14.4 Progress with the implementation of this SPD and development proposals in Alsager Town Centre will be monitored through the LDF Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

Appendix A: Contacts and Useful Information

General information

Further information relating to the purpose of the intended SPD and as discussed in Section 3 of this SPD can be found at the details below:

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

To access a downloadable copy of the Planning Policy Guidance notes or Planning Policy Statements detailed in Section 3.

Website: www.communities.gov.uk/

Tel: 0870 1226 236.

Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools

Can be downloaded free of charge from the Communities and Local Government

Website: www.communities.gov.uk/

Tel: 0870 1226 236.

Going to Town: Improving Town Centre Access

Can be downloaded free of charge from the National Retail Planning Forum (NRPF) or a hard copy can also be purchased online at the same website address.

Website: www.nrpf.org

Tel: 0207 633 0903

Design Reviewed – Town Centre Retail

Can be downloaded free of charge from CABE

Website: www.cabe.org.uk

Tel: 020 7070 6700

You can find out about the planning system and how it works at www.planningportal.gov.uk or at www.communities.gov.uk or at www.pas.gov.uk

Local Information

For further information on the local framework including: the Sustainable Community Strategy; Corporate Plan; the Local Transport Plan; and the Housing Strategy visit the Council website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 5500.

15 Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

Accessibility	The ease with which facilities of any kind can be reached by people wishing to use them.
Adoption	The point at which this SPD is approved by the Council.
Allocated site	Land which is acceptable in principle for development for a particular purpose and which is not already in use for that purpose and is therefore 'allocated' within the Development Plan. The development of such sites is still dependent on planning permission being obtained.
Annual Monitoring Report	A report on the implementation of the policies of the Local Development Framework.
Conservation Area	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance. Within a Conservation Area there are special controls over development and demolition of buildings and work to trees.
Cultural heritage	Places or things that are valued because they give us a sense of the past and of our cultural identity.
Development Plan	Comprises the Development Plan Documents contained within the Local Development Framework.
Development Plan Document (DPDs)	DPDs are documents having development plan status. Once adopted, development control decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise. DPDs can include the Core Strategy, Site Specific Land Allocations and Area Action Plans.
Economic Development	The development of the economy of the Council area by the creation of employment opportunities.
Greenfield Sites	Land that has never been built on, usually grassland, farmland or heath.
Heritage	Things of value inherited or passed on from generation to generation, qualities which are worthwhile to preserve for prosperity.
Infrastructure	Roads, sewers, drainage and the availability of energy supplies at the most basic level, through to social infrastructure such as schools and community centres.

Listed Building	A building contained in a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest prepared by the Secretary of State.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	The overarching term given to the collection of spatial planning documents prepared by a local planning authority.
Local Development Scheme	A programme setting out the proposed documents within the Local Development Framework and the timetable for their production.
Local Plan	A Local Plan provides detailed policies to guide development and includes detailed proposals for specific sites. The Local Development Framework will replace the Local Plan as it is produced.
Local Transport Plan	Plan prepared by Cheshire East Council detailing transport priorities and actions to be taken.
Local Strategic Partnership	Local strategic partnerships are bodies with representatives of the community, public, private sector and other agencies that work to encourage greater public participation in local governance and prepare the Sustainable Community Strategy for each local authority area. LDFs must have regard to, and should be the spatial expression of, the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Objective	A statement of what is intended, specifying the desired direction of change in trends.
Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)	A series of notes issued by the Government, setting out policy guidance on different aspects of planning. Local Planning Authorities must take their content into account in preparing their LDF.
Planning Policy Statement (PPS)	A series of statements issued by the Government, setting out policy on different aspects of planning. Local Planning Authorities must take their content into account in preparing their LDF.
Previously Developed Land (PDL) / Brownfield	<p>Previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.'</p> <p>The definition includes defence buildings, but excludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings. – Land in built-up areas such as parks, recreation grounds and allotments, which, although it may feature

	<p>paths, pavilions and other buildings, has not been previously developed.</p> <p>A precise definition is included in Planning Policy Statement 3 'Housing'.</p>
Public Realm	<p>Public Realm relates to all those parts of the built environment where the public has free access. It encompasses: all streets, squares, and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; and the 'public/private' spaces where public access is unrestricted (at least during daylight hours). It includes the interfaces with key internal and private spaces to which the public normally has free access.</p> <p>(ODPM, Living Places: Caring for Quality (January 2004))</p>
Renewable Energy	<p>Energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment (e.g. from sun, wind or wave or fall of water). Plant and some waste materials are also potential sources.</p>
Stakeholders	<p>Groups, individuals or organisations which may be affected by or have a key interest in a development proposal or planning policy. They may often be experts in their field or represent the views of many people.</p>
Statement of Community Involvement	<p>A Local Development Document setting out how the Council intends to engage the community and stakeholders in the Local Development Framework and the determination of planning applications.</p>
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	<p>Is part of the Local Development Framework and provides additional guidance on the implementation of development plan policies. It is subject to community and stakeholder consultation.</p>
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	<p>Appraisals of plans, strategies and proposals to test them against social, environmental and economic objectives.</p>
Sustainable Community Strategy	<p>A Plan or Strategy for enhancing the quality of life of the local community which each local authority has a duty to prepare under the Local Government Act 2000. The plan is developed and implemented by the Local Strategic Partnership.</p>
Town centres	<p>Town centres will usually be the second level of centres after city centres and, in many cases, they will be the principal centre or centres in a local authority's</p>

area. In rural areas they are likely to be market towns and other centres of similar size and role which function as important service centres, providing a range of facilities and services for extensive rural catchment areas. In planning the future of town centres, local planning authorities should consider the function of different parts of the centre and how these contribute to its overall vitality and viability.

(Definition taken from PPS4)

Appendix C: Plans, Policies and Strategies

Local Plan Policies

This SPD supplements Policy S1, S4, S5 and S6 of the Congleton Local Plan, which provide policy for the development of the town centres within the former Congleton Borough. The full text of these policies is provided below:

S1 - Shopping Hierarchy

Proposals for shopping and commercial development will only be permitted where the scale, nature and location reflects the following hierarchy of settlements and areas as specified in the subsequent policies of the local plan:

- Towns (policies S2 to S6)
- Villages (policies S7 & S8)
- Open countryside and green belt (policy S9)

S4 - Principal Shopping Areas

Within the principal shopping areas as defined on the proposals map⁷ proposals for further non-retail uses at ground floor will not be permitted (other than proposals involving the change of use of A1 premises to A2 or A3⁸ uses).

Proposals for the change of use of existing A1 ground floor retail uses to A2 or A3 uses will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- i) The proposed use is complimentary to adjacent shopping uses in terms of its operational characteristics;
- ii) The proposed use retains a display frontage appropriate to a shopping area;
- iii) The proposed use does not lead to a concentration of non A1 uses;
- iv) The proposal accords with other policies of the local plan.

S5 - Other Town Centre Areas

Within the town centre not otherwise defined as a principal shopping area, proposals for non-retail uses at ground floor level will be permitted where the proposed use is a commercial, leisure, entertainment, community or civic use appropriate to the town centre, or for residential use on the periphery of the town centre, where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- i) The proposed use does not on its own or in combination with other existing non-retail uses detract from the overall town centre function of the area;
- ii) There is no detrimental impact on the amenities of any future occupier from existing adjacent uses;
- iii) The proposal has no detrimental impact on the amenities of adjacent properties;
- iv) The proposal accords with other policies of the local plan.

⁷ (The Proposals maps are too large to be included within this document, however they are available on the Council's website at www.congleton.gov.uk)

⁸ A3 uses have now been subdivided into A3, A4 and A5 uses.

S6 - The Use Of Upper Floors Within Town Centres

Proposals for the use of upper floors within town centres for non-retail use, including B1 office use or conversion into self-contained flats, will be permitted where the proposal meets the following requirements:

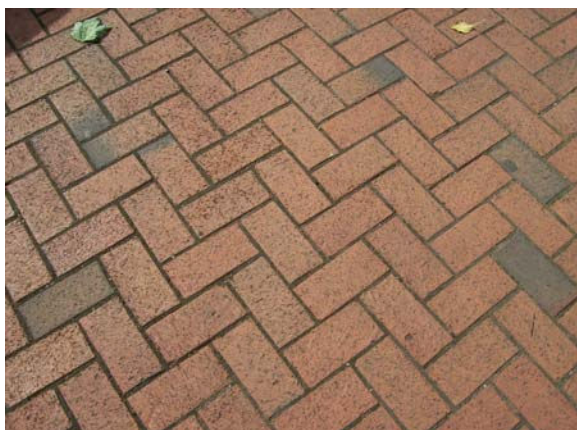
- i) A reasonable standard of accommodation is capable of being provided;
- ii) No detrimental impact on the amenities of any future occupier, from existing adjacent uses;
- lii) No detrimental impact on the amenities of other occupiers of the property or adjacent properties;
- iv) Separate access to the accommodation is provided;
- v) No detrimental alterations are required on principal facades;
- vi) Availability of car parking in the vicinity;
- vii) Accordance with other policies of the local plan.

Appendix D: Materials Palette

A robust selection of simple, sustainable finishes is suggested to emphasise the quality of the town centre. It is proposed that this palette be rigorously applied to the town centre.

Paving

- Street design shall comply with the Highways Authority standards
- Paving materials should be of a high quality, durable and suitable for the anticipated loading, and where possible they should be sourced sustainably.
- Kerb lines should be retained and defined by both material and a low change in level (25 mm drop) to improve accessibility for disabled people and shopmobility vehicles.
- Pedestrian crossing points shall be defined by tactile paving where necessary at crossing points and contrasting paving materials/ colour at uncontrolled crossings.
- Inspection chamber covers shall be carefully integrated within the paving.
- Paving should be designed to ensure that it is not subject to flooding or collections of surface water, this could be through the use of permeable materials or through careful design to route surface water appropriately.



Examples of Paving within Alsager Town Centre

Street Furniture

- High quality street furniture should reflect and enhance the character of the town centre and should be appropriately placed to reduce clutter while enhancing pedestrian spaces.
- The design of the street furniture should be coordinated using a limited pattern of traditional materials such as stone, wood and metal. The design should have a timeless quality that is capable of accommodating future additions or changes.
- It should be sustainable, durable, easy to maintain and resistant to vandalism.
- Where appropriate the design and layout of seats and benches should define and enclose spaces as well as provide seating.



Examples of Street Furniture within Alsager Town Centre

Signage

- An integrated hierarchy of pedestrian and traffic signage should be developed to minimise the overall size and number of signs.
- Finger posts will need to be carefully sited to avoid creating unnecessary clutter and/or hazards for the visually impaired.
- Traditional wall-mounted signs or signs set in paving should be included at features of interest and at main pedestrian orientation points.



Existing Fingerpost signage within Alsager

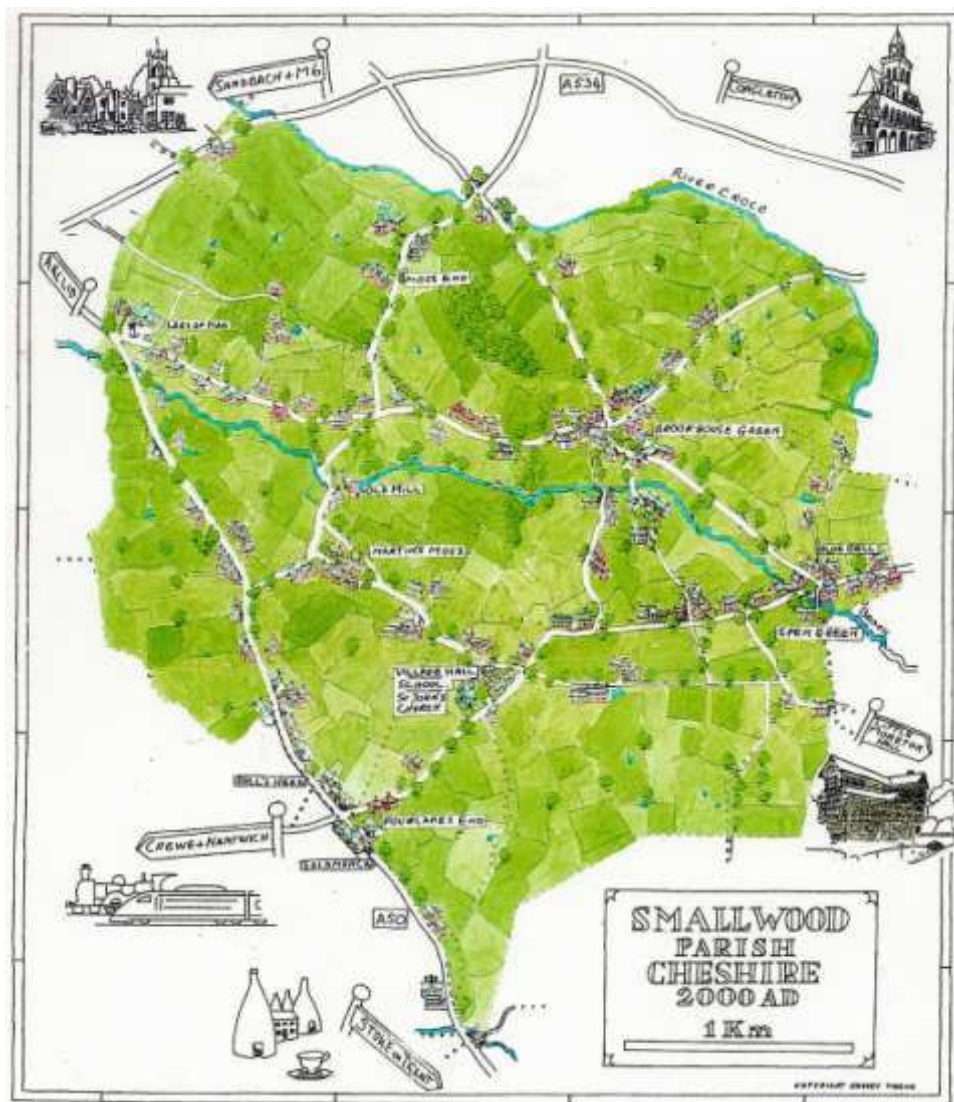
Lighting

- Primarily, lighting will be designed to provide the required levels for safety, security, traffic management and pedestrian flow.
- Feature lighting should be used to enhance landmarks.
- Pedestrian links should be clearly and attractively lit for safety, security and to encourage night time activity within the town centre.

Local Development Framework

Smallwood Village Design Statement

Supplementary Planning Document



Smallwood Village Design Statement

Supplementary Planning Document

July 2010

Spatial Planning
Cheshire East Council
Westfields
Middlewich Road
Sandbach
Cheshire
CW11 1HZ

**Initiated by Smallwood Parish Council
Celebrating the Past and Guiding Future Changes**

Equal Opportunities and Access

Cheshire East Council recognises that it can improve the quality of life of people in the area by seeking to ensure that every member of the public has equal access to its services, facilities, resources, activities and employment.

We want these to be accessible to everyone in the community regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, marital status or sexual orientation. Furthermore, we are keen to respond to the individual requirements of our customers to develop services that recognise their diversity and particular needs.

We use the Big Word as a translation service, and have hearing induction loops in our reception areas.

Information can be made available in large print, in Braille or on audiotape on request.

If you would like this information in another language or format, please contact us.

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

如欲索取以另一語文印制或另一格式制作的资料，请与我们联系。

Jezeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

اگر این اطلاعات را به زبانی دیگر و یا در فرمتی دیگر میخواهید لطفاً از ما درخواست کنید

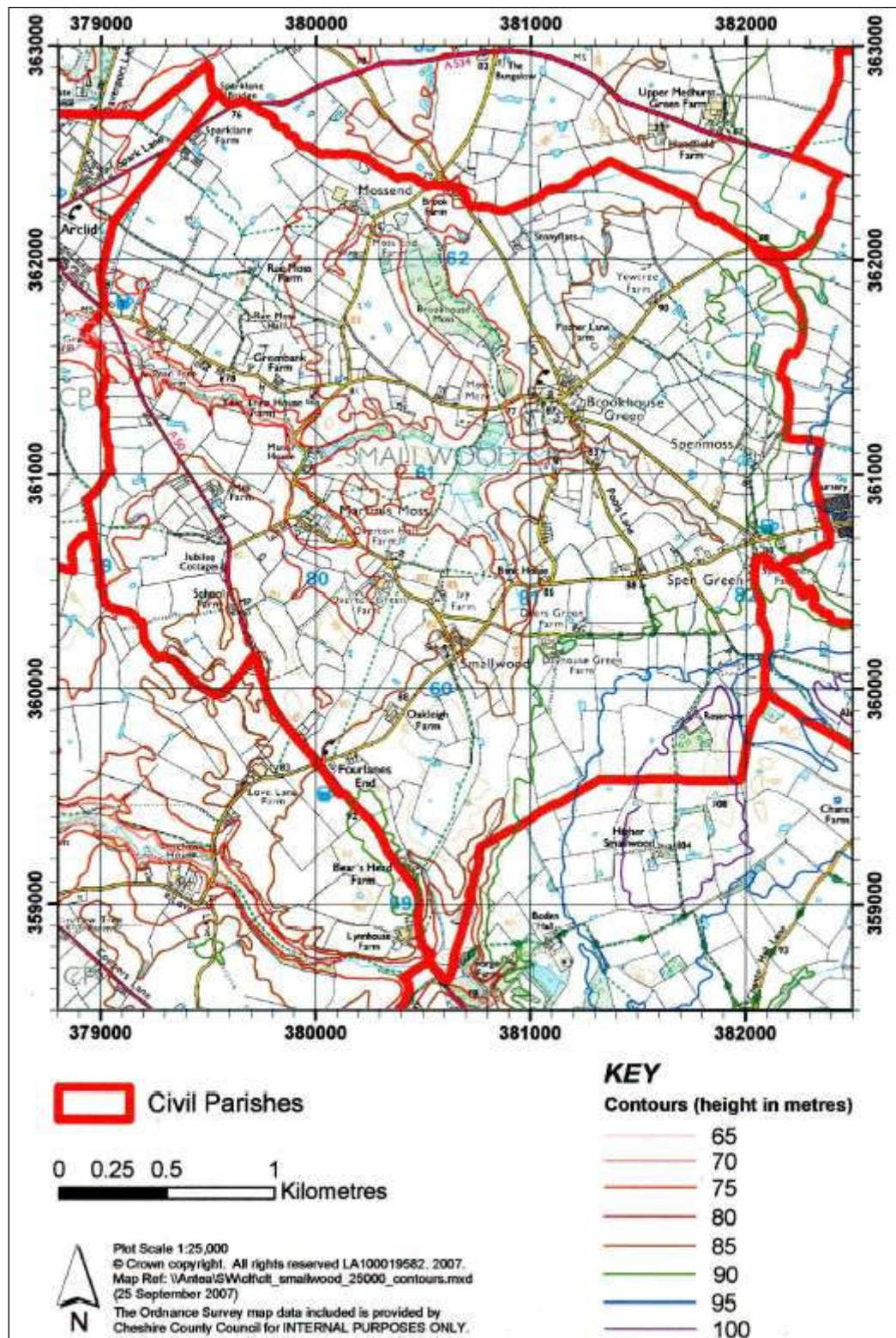
Se deseja obter informação noutro idioma ou formato, diga-nos.

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1. Introduction and Policy Context

Figure 1: Smallwood Parish Boundary 2007¹



¹ Cheshire County Council

Figure 2: Burdett's Historical Map of Smallwood 1777



1.1 Figure 2 is the earliest map to show Cheshire in any detail and illustrates recognisable places in Smallwood, the Parish's relationship to Astbury and the general road layout. The original is to a scale of 1 inch to a mile.

What is a Village Design Statement?

1.2 This Statement has been produced to manage change in buildings and landscape, whether large or small or simply additions and alterations, in a way that reflects the local character of its buildings, spaces and landscape setting. It will provide further locationally specific practical guidance to developers and other interested parties in line with Congleton Local Plan policies GR1, GR2 and GR5 (see Appendix 2).

1.3 The Village Design Statement (VDS) is not about whether or not changes should take place, which is the job of the Local Development Framework. It is not meant to stop change from happening, but it will help to influence how changes fit into the village by setting out the qualities and

characteristics that people value in their village and surroundings, and by providing clear and simple guidance for the design of all development.

1.4 The Local Plan is the Congleton Borough Local Plan, First Review (Local Plan) adopted in January 2005. This establishes broad policies and guidelines for the location and design of development in the interests of good planning. The Smallwood VDS sets out localised guidance within this broader framework and is a Supplementary Planning Document, adopted by Cheshire East Council in XX2010.

How has the Statement Evolved?

1.5 There has always been a strong sense of community in Smallwood and the Smallwood VDS originated with Parish Councillors seeking to preserve the village's unique character and essential features without precluding change. At a Village Assembly the Parish Council was encouraged to pass Resolutions stating:-

- The Parish Council considers that a VDS is desirable and should be produced; and
- A special village committee, composed of Smallwood residents and some Parish Councillors, should do the actual work.

1.6 Through public meetings, an open afternoon, public consultation events and a questionnaire the residents of Smallwood and other interested parties have had an opportunity to express their views on the proposed content of the document; further details of which can be found in the Consultation Statement, which is available on the Council's website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk.

Who Should Use the Village Design Statement?

1.7 The Village Design Statement has been written for:-

- Councillors and Development Management Officers at Cheshire East Council to guide their consideration of relevant planning applications;
- Architects and Designers in order to explain what the village community would reasonably expect to see in new development, so that they can incorporate this within their planning applications;
- Residents, giving guidance to enable alterations and extensions to harmonise with and respect the character of the village area;
- Anybody else who wishes to promote some form of alteration in the Smallwood area, including local authorities and statutory bodies.

National and Local Policy Context

1.8 In order to produce this guidance national and local policy documents were used, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

1.9 Central **Government guidance** relating to the design of development in villages is set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development', a key principle of which is to promote high quality inclusive design, which should take the opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area. PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' asks that "all development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness" and provides guidance on the design and the character of rural settlements. Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' provides guidance on the design of new buildings in relation to historic buildings. The Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism emphasises the value of tourism and how it can be used as a tool for regeneration in rural areas. All of these documents can be found on the Communities and Local Government (CLG) website at www.communities.gov.uk and their contact details can be found in Appendix 6.

1.10 The main policies within the **Local Plan** that this VDS provides further guidance on are GR1 'New Development', GR2 'Design' and GR5 'Landscaping'. The full text of which can be found in Appendix 2. The effectiveness of the Smallwood VDS SPD in implementing the Local Plan Policies will be monitored through the Cheshire East **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**. Should the AMR highlight a need to modify the Smallwood VDS SPD then the SPD will need to be reviewed. Similarly the AMR will identify changes needed to the VDS SPD as a consequence of Local Plan Policies being replaced by the production of **Local Development Documents**.

Pre-Application Discussions & Planning Decisions

1.11 Government promotes the use of pre-application discussions to assist in a more effective service. It can save cost and delays for applicants and the Local Planning Authority encourages applicants to arrange pre-application meetings with the Planning Service at as early a stage as possible in a scheme prior to progressing it to application. Once submitted each individual proposal will be assessed on its own merits, having regard to the relevant policies in the Local Plan and Development Plan Documents, national guidance (PPG's, PPS's and Government Circulars) and any other material planning considerations. Compliance with the guidance of the VDS does not remove the obligation where necessary to seek planning permission for development from the Local Planning Authority.

2. The Village Context

The Geographical Background

2.1 Smallwood is situated in the south of Cheshire East, midway between Congleton and Sandbach each some 6km away. The Parish is roughly bound to the west by the A50 and to the north by the River Croco. To the east is the parish of Astbury and Morton. Beyond that is the distinctive skyline of Mow Cop and Congleton Edge; the start of the Pennines. The village is affected by the South Cheshire Green Belt, the northern edge of which runs from Four Lanes End along Church Lane / Congleton Road to the eastern boundary. Figure 3 illustrates the Green Belt and Open Countryside division within the Parish.

2.2 The Parish occupies fairly level, good agricultural land and Smallwood was known as the market garden of the Potteries because of its rich agricultural land. The average height above sea level is 80m, and there is an area called Higher Smallwood rising to over 100m, where a reservoir has been located.

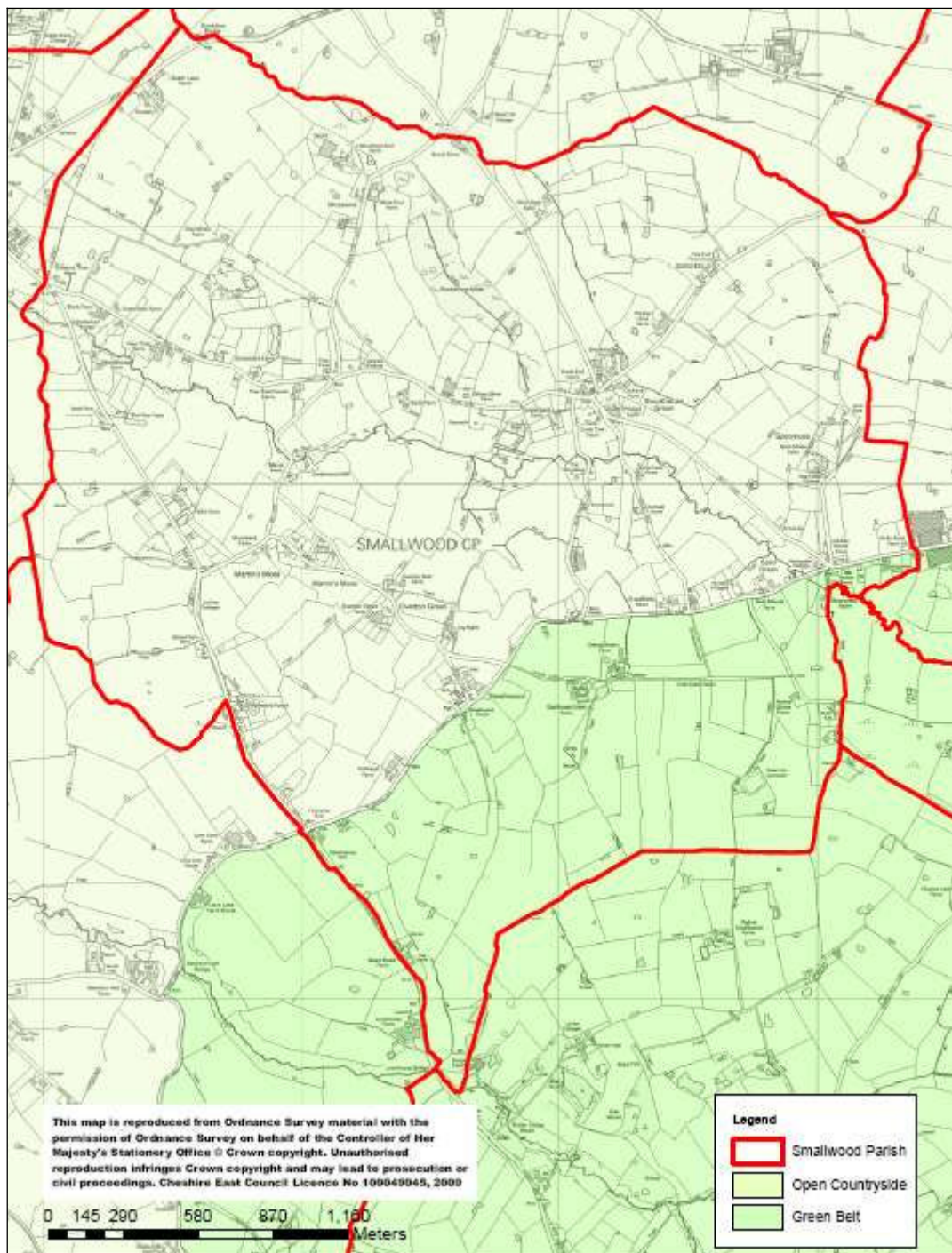
2.3 The subsoil is clay and sand. To the north, outside the parish, sand is extracted at Bent Farm. The area of interest for sand exploration extends to inside Smallwood's boundary, although there has been no pressure for sand extraction in the village up to the present time.

Typical Views Across Smallwood



2.4 There are two rivers through the parish, flowing in a NW direction to the Mersey. They are the Croco, which rises in Smallwood, and a larger one, called locally The Brook, flows into the Mill Pond and was used to power the Mill up to the 1950's.

Figure 3: Green Belt and Open Countryside in Smallwood



The Historical Background

2.5 Smallwood is not mentioned in the Domesday Book. The first mention occurred in 1276 when Sir Ralph Mainwaring gave the manor of Smallwood to Henry of Audley when Henry married Sir Ralph's daughter Bertred. By the end of the 1200s there was enough corn being grown to make a water-powered mill a necessity – the first reference to Smallwood Mill being in 1299.



The Mill



Millpond

2.6 The “Calendar of Close Rolls” in the Public Record Office shows Smallwood belonging to the Duchy of Lancaster. In 1570 the Duchy of Lancaster estates in Smallwood were wound up.

2.7 Smallwood Church and Village School were built in Victorian times, Astbury Church being the mother church of Smallwood.



St John’s Church 1845



School 1845

2.8 The Audleys, Mainwarings and Hawkstones were all related and during the next 150 years the manor passed from one to another. In 1420 Smallwood became part of the Egerton estates moving among the Egerton, Wilbraham and Willoughby families, which continued until 1570. Smallwood was sold in 1624 to a Thomas Hood for £1,000, including 24 homesteads (or messuages).

2.9 The Lowndes family, being of Norman extraction, were prominent in the village, and lived at Overton Hall for many years. One branch of the Lowndes family went to live in South America. The last owner, Thomas Lowndes (1692-1747) left the property to Cambridge University to help found a Chair of Astronomy.

2.10 The Wedgwood family has a connection with Smallwood. Young Josiah Wedgwood courted his third cousin Sarah Wedgwood, who lived at Spen Green and they married in 1764 at Astbury Church.

2.11 There are eight Listed Buildings (see Appendix 5) in Smallwood and other buildings in the village that are of local significance.



Overton Green Farmhouse



Smallwood House (Former Rectory)

2.12 Smallwood has not altered greatly over the years in terms of population. Government returns show that in 1801 the population was 492, in 1881 it was 578 and in 2006 it was 570.

Present Economic and Other Activities

2.13 Smallwood is an agricultural parish and all farms are now owned by the farmers who work them, but only a small proportion of the working population is directly engaged in farming or market gardening. Others are engaged in associated activities such as transport and storage. There has been some diversification to large-scale egg production and there has been some move to equestrian activities.

2.14 There are two small industrial firms that provide employment; one engaged in parts for commercial vehicles and the other in electronics.

2.15 There are very few other work opportunities in the village, so most people travel to local firms or further afield to Stoke and Manchester for example. There is now the possibility of working from home using computers and the Internet.

2.16 There is an excellent primary school, which even attracts parents of children outside the Parish, and in recent years it has been necessary to build extra classrooms.

2.17 People from the surrounding area come to Smallwood for leisure pursuits such as walking, horse riding and shooting, and to the pubs for meals and entertainment.



The Three Public Houses:-

The Legs of Man The Bull's Head

The Blue Bell



2.18 The Village Hall is a centre of community life for meetings, clubs and social events, which are also popular with people from outside the Parish. There are also two Churches; an Anglican church and a Methodist church. Disappointment has been expressed that there is no village shop, bus service or playground.



The Village Hall



Brookhouse Green Methodist Church

3. The Landscape Setting

3.1 Smallwood is a farming parish and the landscape is that of rich arable farming, with fields enclosed by hedges with associated trees. The farms are either on their own or found with other houses, in small groups spread throughout the parish, many known as Greens or Mosses. These include the centre of Smallwood with the Parish Church, School and Village Hall. A characteristic of the groups of settlements forming the Parish of Smallwood is that they have open country between one and the next and dwellings have generous gardens. Orchards were an important part of most farms and would have included damsons, currants and berries. Fruit production is still enjoyed but usually on a domestic scale.

3.2 Cows are less in evidence now and some farmers have diversified to free range egg production, installing unobtrusively the large low barns necessary. There are also more signs of land used for horses and for leisure use. Smallwood was also known for market gardening, and this is still practised but on a reduced scale.



3.3 There are also woods and low-lying areas with pools and rivers providing a wonderful habitat for wildlife. The pools were often the result of Marl (clay) extraction for making the bricks for the village houses and barns on site, and for improving light soils. The low-lying areas were often a source of Peat and were divided into Moss Rooms with rights of extraction. One such area is Brookhouse Moss, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and now protected (see Appendix 4).



3.4 Very often these areas were productive in their own right. In these 'mosses' or 'drains' grew rushes, willow, hazel, alder and oak, which were coppiced and harvested in rotation depending on the size of timber needed.

You can still see examples of these coppiced trees when walking along some of the footpaths.

3.5 Rushes were cut annually and often used by the Potteries for packing china. Willow was used for basket making, hazel for hurdles, alder for clog bottoms, oak for joinery and the off-cuts used to make charcoal. Alder buckthorn was harvested for 'Syrup of Buckthorn', which is high in vitamins.

Managing the Land

3.6 Despite initial impressions Smallwood can be a very wet and soggy place due to the low lying land, high water table, heavy clay and compacted sand combined with many natural springs. These areas of boggy and often scrubby land were ignored by the larger landowners and taken on by the subsistence farmers. By a process of clearing the scrub and trees, creating ditches, putting in land drains and diverting and harnessing the spring water, the land became productive.

3.7 The combination of hedges and ditches served the purpose of marking a boundary, containing livestock and providing shelter. Hedges were sometimes the remnants of the old shrubs and trees left around the cleared ground or newly planted with 'quicks' (hawthorn).

3.8 Typically, the farmer would dig a ditch along the boundary of his land, putting the excavated soil back onto his land and in this loose topsoil the hedge would be planted. These new hedges were allowed to grow to 2m and then laid to create a dense, stock proof base.

3.9 This method gave the new 'quicks' a head start in free draining soil with double the depth of topsoil. The ditch would be draining the surrounding ground of excess water and holding it for when the ground started to dry out. Sometimes the ditch would be directed to a stream or to make a 'Stock' pond for fish. Where a drain was next to a road or track it helped keep it passable in winter.



3.10 Hedges are now recognised as very important to the wildlife, which has evolved to take advantage of them for food and shelter, and are now

dependant on them. A section on Hedges and Hedgerow Maintenance is contained in Appendix 3.

3.11 The Parish is crisscrossed by hedge lined country lanes. There are also 24 footpaths, bridleways and rights of way which are well used and managed with the invaluable help of the County Council's Rights of Way Unit and the goodwill of farmers and landowners. The south eastern section of the VDS region is part of the wider setting of Little Moreton Hall. The VDS area is therefore not only attractive but also ecologically rich and much enjoyed by local people and visitors, particularly the field paths, woodland areas, and pools, some of which are used for fishing. The best way to appreciate Smallwood is in fact to walk some of the delightful lanes and footpaths, and sample a woodland walk by Brookhouse Moss or over fields from Smallwood's centre.

Landscape Guidelines

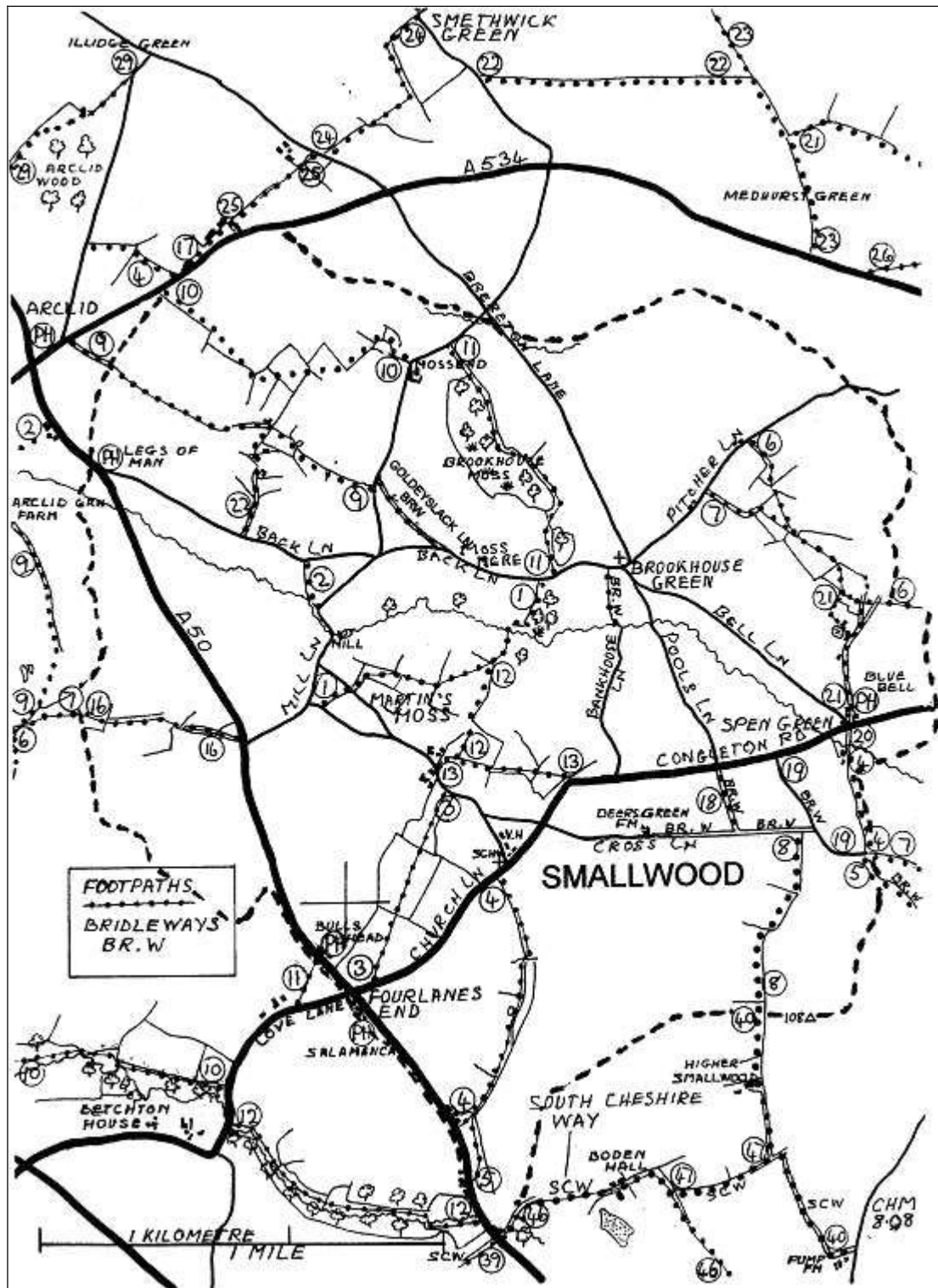
Where appropriate, development should:-

- L1 Not detract from the character of woodland, water and wildlife areas including;**
 - Brookhouse Moss
 - Moss to the South of Brookhouse Moss
 - The Brook
 - River Croco
 - River Wheelock
- L2 Not detract from the settings and views provided from Rights of Way/Footpaths and Bridleways including;**
 - Hangmans Lane (No.18) to Higher Smallwood (No.8)
 - Bankhouse Lane by the Brook
 - Goldeyslack Lane
 - Path 4 opposite Blue Bell Morton
 - From the Church by the Old Vicarage to the A50 by No.s 4 and 5
 - Rights of Way No.s 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12 & 19
- L3 Not detract from the wider setting of Little Moreton Hall, including views to and from the Hall;**
- L4 Respect the distinctive character of the traditional agricultural landscapes in Smallwood Parish, in particular its essential tree and hedge features;**
- L5 When proposing or requiring landscaping regard should be given to the good practice guidance on hedges contain in Appendix 3;**

L6 Have regard to the characterisations in the Landscape Assessment of Congleton Borough, The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation and the Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment.

Policies GR1, GR2 and GR5 are the Local Plan policies that the above guidelines supplement.

Figure 4: Footpaths, Bridleways and Rights of Way in Smallwood²



² Path numbers are from the definitive map by Cheshire County Council

4. The Settlement Pattern

4.1 Smallwood is a rural parish originally based on agriculture. The population is mainly in small settlements spread throughout the area and this pattern may well be very old. Interestingly the population has not altered greatly over the last two hundred years. In 1801 it was 492 with 90 families and 82 houses. In 1881 it was 578. In 2006 it was 570 but in 236 houses and about the same number of families.

4.2 The oldest recorded building is the Mill, 1299, and this would have been surrounded by local farms and associated workers dwellings. Some of the settlements have buildings that can be dated to the early 16th century and some with Listed Buildings (contemporary with Little Moreton Hall) (see Appendix 5).

4.3 The settlements are:-

- Smallwood (this is the 'central' settlement with the Anglican Church, Vicarage and School, built in 1845, and modern Village Hall). Until 1845 Four Lanes End was the centre of Smallwood as shown on Burdett's map of 1777 (see Figure 2 pg 2);
- Brookhouse Green;
- Spen Green;
- Sims Green;
- Overton Green;
- Martin's Moss;
- Moss End;
- Moss Mere;
- Days Green (site of Dayhouse Green Farm and Deers Green Farm); and
- Heron Green (not commonly used now, but the land west of the A50 opposite Mill Lane).



Brookhouse Green



Spen Green and the Blue Bell



Martin's Moss



Smallwood Centre (School Lane)

4.4 In addition there are farms and groups of buildings along the principal roads, such as those along the A50 Newcastle Rd, which include three very old hostleries and an old industrial site called Jackson's Forge where carts were made (part of this site now has modern houses, called Smallwood Forge).

4.5 Over the years, as the timber framed buildings have become dilapidated, the outside walls have been rebuilt in brick. Inside walls often show the original timber frame. Some buildings have been demolished and some extended.

4.6 Development appears to have taken place in the 19th century as there are many more buildings shown on the OS Map of 1909 compared to those shown on Burdett's map of Smallwood 1777.

4.7 In the 1930's and 40's there was quite a big change, when two developments of Council built homes were constructed for agricultural workers under The Housing Act of 1938 and The Agricultural Workers' Houses Act of 1945. The first resulted in sixteen houses being built at Bankhouse Lane and near Four Lanes End. The second Act resulted in fourteen houses at Moss Mere and Smallwood centre.



Council Built House



Barn Conversion

4.8 The most recent developments have been the conversions of redundant barns to dwellings. These seem to work well and if done sensitively, show minimum change to the appearance of the Village. Further information on the conversion of redundant barns can be found in Congleton Borough

Council's SPD7: Rural Development, which is available on Cheshire East's website: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk.

4.9 There has also been change of use of two industrial sites to residential use; one is at Jackson's Forge on the A50 and the other at Brookhouse Green. However where a real effort has been made to keep to local traditional styles they are maturing quite well.



Large Barn Conversions



New Developments

4.10 Street lighting is not favoured in Smallwood as it tends to give an urban feel. Light pollution from buildings can be a problem where any properties have strong garden lighting that is not pointing down. It also should be positioned and angled to avoid glare distracting drivers.

Settlement Guidelines

Where appropriate, development should:-

- S1 Be of a small scale and sited to maintain the character of the settlements in Smallwood Parish;**
- S2 Where new buildings are proposed outside the village, they should be sited close to other existing buildings or unobtrusively in the landscape, so as to respect the open character of the settings of the settlements in Smallwood Parish.**
- S3 Respect existing streetscenes within settlements in terms of typical building set backs from the highway edge.**
- S4 Ensure that any proposed exterior lights do not adversely affect the character of the settlements or their settings through light pollution, having regard to the guidance in the document: Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice (1997), especially on developments outside or on the edge of settlements.**
- S5 Ensure that any proposed exterior lights are positioned away from any potential bat roost or foraging areas.**
- S6 Consider protected species in the design and construction/alteration of any building in the Parish.**

Policies GR1, GR2 and GR5 are the Local Plan policies that the above guidelines supplement.

5. Buildings

Architectural Heritage

5.1 The existing building stock within the Parish of Smallwood dates from the fifteenth century to the twenty-first.

5.2 There is a small number of farmsteads and public house buildings, which would originally have been farms containing elements of building fabric dating from the fifteenth, sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. There are very few buildings in the parish that are Georgian in origin. The greater majority of the remaining buildings sited within the Parish of Smallwood are nineteenth century farms and cottages. There are a number of rows of inter-war and post war houses, which were originally constructed by the Local Authority as uncrowded, well built homes on secure tenancies at affordable rents.

5.3 The late twentieth century has contributed two small housing developments on land formerly in industrial use on Newcastle Road and at Brookhouse Green.

Scale and Density of Buildings

5.4 Buildings within the Parish of Smallwood are generally at low density. The village is a collection of hamlets and farmsteads and rows of nineteenth century cottages, which are separated by open countryside. Generally houses and farms are two or two and a half stories in height. The few industrial sites in the village have larger single-storey buildings.

Building Types, Styles and Forms

5.5 The Parish largely comprises farms and their associated outbuildings and nineteenth century cottages. There are few buildings that have been designed by architects; most of the building stock being classed as vernacular architecture, where the methods of construction use locally available resources to meet local needs. Vernacular architecture tends to evolve over time, reflecting the local environmental, cultural and historical context in which it exists.

5.6 There are a number of public and civic buildings within the Parish, which are probably the only ones of the pre-twentieth century building stock that have been designed by architects. These are the school, the church and the former vicarage at the centre of the village. There is a Methodist Chapel sited at Brookhouse Green. There are also two other former non-conformist chapels, one on Martins Moss and one on Newcastle Road, which have been converted into dwellings.

5.7 There are a number of sites within the parish which contain small scale industrial developments: a site at Four Lane Ends and a site further north on Newcastle Road, which dates from the late nineteenth century and Smallwood

Mill. These sites generally contain small industrial and warehouse type buildings.

Materials and Building Details

5.8 Walls to older buildings within the Parish tend to be of local red brick or exposed timber framing.

5.9 Roofs are constructed of stone flags, tiles or Welsh slate. Most of the buildings in the village have roofs that are of gabled form. The former Local Authority houses have hipped tiled roofs.

5.10 Prior to the improvement of transport links in the mid eighteenth century stone flags or thatch would have been the most easily obtainable roof coverings available in the locality, and timber and brick the most easily obtainable walling materials.

5.11 Windows to older buildings would have been either vertical sliding sash or two or three light wooden windows with side-hung casements. This pattern of windows has altered over time as windows have been replaced with ones with different glazing patterns or of different materials. Porches and canopies to doors have historically been open fronted.

5.12 The images below illustrate the use of materials and variety of building styles and forms of dwellings in Smallwood Parish. Further images can also be found throughout the document.

Images of Smallwood Dwellings





Buildings Guidelines

- B1** Buildings within the Parish's settlements generally give the appearance of being at a low density and through careful design this perception should be maintained where appropriate, to preserve settlement character;
- B2** Development either to existing buildings or new construction should normally respect the local vernacular architecture in terms of siting, design, scale and materials;
- B3** Exterior walls to older buildings tend to be of local red brick or exposed timber framing. Where brick is to be used the traditional local red brick is preferred;
- B4** Roofs are generally constructed with 'blue' tiles or Welsh slate and these are preferred on new development;
- B5** Proposed window openings in extensions and new development should where appropriate complement the more traditional styles of window openings in the Parish in terms of size, proportion, recess and materials; timber being the preferred material for frames and glazing bars with a painted finish;
- B6** Porches and canopies proposed on traditional buildings should normally be open fronted and of a traditional design and appearance;

Policies GR1, GR2 and GR5 are the Local Plan policies that the above guidelines supplement.

6. Open Spaces, Paths, Trees, Boundaries and Gateways

Open Spaces and Paths

6.1 Open Spaces are essential ingredients of Smallwood. These occur naturally in all the farmland and in the space between settlements and in the ample gardens surrounding most houses. The majority of open space in the settlements of Smallwood Parish is private, there being very little public open space.

6.2 There are however many footpaths, bridleways and rights of way criss-crossing the village, providing a wonderful leisure resource allowing walkers and riders to explore the countryside and get close to nature.

Trees

6.3 Smallwood has a variety of trees growing along its roadways. These are mainly trees 'common' to the area such as oak, sycamore, ash, silver birch and beech. However there are a number of woodland patches such as the mosses where there are trees growing randomly in groups. In the marshy places there are a lot of willow trees interspersed with oak and birch.

6.4 The trees growing in the hedgerows soften the roadsides and enhance the visual effect, while the ones in wooded areas add to the overall visual effect of the landscape. Many of the trees in the area are reaching the end of their life and care should be taken to ensure that replacement planting is carried out to compensate for this loss. More tree planting of 'native' species (oak, ash and silver birch) should be encouraged where this fits in with the landscape. Tree Preservation Orders exist to protect trees that have public amenity value. Further information on this can be found in SPD14: 'Trees and Development'.



Bell Lane



Pitcher Lane

Boundaries

6.5 There are a number of different materials used for boundaries; however the majority of the boundaries in this area are hedgerows. The hedging is mainly thorn, hazel, and holly (this is covered more fully in Appendix 3). This type of hedging provides cover for birds, particularly at nesting time and makes a good stock-proof barrier. Some gardens in the area are bounded with privet, laurel, yew and conifer and other more exotic hedging shrubs such as pyracantha. Brick walls are also used for boundaries. Here Cheshire bricks can be found, which are an orangey colour blending well with the landscape of the area. The brick walls are usually capped with blue capping stones or sandstone slabs. Other materials are post and rail fencing, post and barbed wire or the white painted metal fencing used on corners of roads such as at Four Lanes End.



6.6 There is one example of a stone wall around the churchyard that is built from stone quarried at Mow Cop. Some gardens use the conventional over lapping wooden fencing panels.

Gates and Gateways

6.7 Gates to fields are metal or wooden five barred. Gateways to fields are now being indented slightly to enable a vehicle plus a trailer to draw into the gateway off the road. Gates to houses are varied. A number have electronically operated gates, which are usually wrought iron, some rather overly ornate for the countryside. Other types of gates are simple old-fashioned Victorian wrought iron, or wooden five bared gates. There are lots of small pedestrian gates to houses usually small iron gates. Gateways on footpaths take the form of stiles, kissing gates, and occasionally three leg gates (as into the churchyard). It should be noted that some boundary treatments may require planning permission and therefore advice should be sought from the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

Examples of Traditional Gateways



Open Spaces, Paths, Trees, Boundaries and Gateways Guidelines:

OS1 Consideration should be given to domestic boundaries, particularly to ensure that they are of durable design consistent with the character of the area;

- Suitable hedge varieties are given in Appendix 3;
- If walls are to be used thought should be given to the material. If brick is used then reclaimed brick is preferred;
- Where fencing is chosen, a style should be selected to fit with the surrounding area. Fencing to be avoided includes close boarded, panelling, concrete block and high ornate railings and gates.

OS2 Trees are essential to the Parish's landscape character and trees that are lost through development should be replaced where appropriate. Replacement and additional planting of native species is encouraged.

Policies GR1, GR2 and GR5 are the Local Plan policies that the above guidelines supplement.

7. Highways and Traffic

7.1 Smallwood has two main roads running at its west and north boundaries; the A50 and the A534 respectively.

7.2 All the other roads are Unclassified but one of these, Church Lane/Congleton Rd, sees a significant increase in through traffic at peak hours of the day. National Cycle Network 70 goes along this stretch also.

7.3 On this road at Smallwood centre by the Church is the turning to the School and this is an additional hazard at the beginning and end of the school day. There are a number of safety signs and flashing lights near the School.

7.4 People also walk with their children along this road and there is no footpath. This is particularly dangerous at Wharam's Bank, a narrow winding section of road about half a mile from the School.



7.5 With these exceptions horse riding and walking are popular and relatively safe leisure activities on the internal roads and lanes.

7.6 The roadside vegetation and verges in the Parish give the highway network surrounding Smallwood an attractive rural character and appearance, despite being vulnerable to damage by road users and fly tipping.

7.7 Parking is not a problem in the Parish. Where it was a problem in the past at the School, the Village Hall managers allowing parking in their yard solved this.

7.8 The other problem was conducting traffic along the narrow School Lane and having an unofficial one-way system, which most parents observe, has largely solved this.

8. Vision for the Future

8.1 The unique character of Smallwood with its groups of houses set in an open landscape has been enjoyed by its inhabitants for centuries and reflects its history. The gradual developments that have taken place over the years, both in scale and design, have generally been sympathetic to the whole, producing a pleasing mixture.

8.2 We are very conscious of caring for the environment, and support measures that do this, locally and in the wider sense. However the effects of these on the appearance of the Parish should be negligible if used unobtrusively. Some examples are: heat pumps to make use of the considerable amount of low grade heat in the ground and even the air; domestic scale wind turbines; solar panels; and reed beds and willow, which could have advantages for biodiversity and water quality of domestic effluent.

8.3 This Village Design Statement is meant to ensure any future developments should have regard for the history and appearance of Smallwood, and help to keep it a place to be proud of now and in the future.

Appendix: 1

Glossary of Terms

Annual Monitoring Report - A report submitted to the government by local planning authorities or regional planning bodies assessing progress with and the effectiveness of a Local Development Framework.

Development Plan - A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area. It includes Unitary, Structure, and Local Plans prepared under transitional arrangements.

It also includes Development Plan Documents prepared under the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004.

Development Plan Document - A Local Development Document with significant weight in the determination of planning applications. Independent scrutiny is required before its adoption.

Listed Building – A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures (e.g. wells within its curtilage).

English Heritage is responsible for designating buildings for listing in England.

Local Development Document - These include Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents (which do not form part of the statutory development plan). LDDs collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area.

Local Development Framework - The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a non-statutory term used to describe a folder of documents, which includes all the local planning authority's local development documents. An LDF is comprised of:

- Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan)
- Supplementary Planning Documents

The local development framework will also comprise of:

- the Statement of Community Involvement
- the Local Development Scheme
- the Annual Monitoring Report
- any Local Development Orders or Simplified Planning Zones that may have been added

Local Development Scheme - The local planning authority's time-scaled programme for the preparation of Local Development Documents that must be agreed with government and reviewed every year.

Local Plan - An old-style development plan prepared by district and other local planning authorities. These plans will continue to operate for a time after the commencement of the new development plan system, by virtue of specific transitional provisions.

Open Countryside – The rural area outside the Borough's towns and villages, as defined in the Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review, but excluding the Green Belt.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) - Issued by central government setting out its national land use policies for England on different areas of planning. These are gradually being replaced by Planning Policy Statements.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) - Issued by central government to replace the existing Planning Policy Guidance notes in order to provide greater clarity and to remove from national policy advice on practical implementation, which is better expressed as guidance rather than policy.

Rural Areas – For the purpose of the SPD this relates to areas outside of the Settlement Zone Line of the Borough's towns and villages as defined in the adopted Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review and includes both the Open Countryside and the Green Belt.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - A Supplementary Planning Document is a Local Development Document that may cover a range of issues, thematic or site specific, and provides further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' Development Plan Document.

Appendix: 2

Supplemented Policies Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review (adopted January 2005)

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Policy GR1

ALL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE EXPECTED TO BE OF A HIGH STANDARD, TO CONSERVE OR ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA AND NOT DETRACT FROM ITS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, AND TO HAVE REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

PROPOSALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF CONSIDERED TO BE ACCEPTABLE IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING, AS APPROPRIATE:

- I) DESIGN
- II) LANDSCAPE
- III) AMENITY AND HEALTH
- IV) ACCESSIBILITY, SERVICING AND PARKING PROVISION
- V) TRAFFIC GENERATION
- VI) INFRASTRUCTURE
- VII) OPEN SPACE PROVISION
- VIII) PROVISION OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES
- IX) WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD ALSO HAVE REGARD TO ANY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS RELATING TO THE PROPOSAL OR THE SITE WHICH HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL.

WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THE SUBMISSION OF STATEMENTS OR ASSESSMENTS TO ACCOMPANY THE APPLICATION IN RESPECT OF DESIGN PRINCIPLES, AIR QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL, TRAFFIC AND RETAIL IMPACT.

DESIGN

Policy GR2

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE GRANTED WHERE THE PROPOSAL SATISFIES THE FOLLOWING DESIGN CRITERIA:

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARACTER, APPEARANCE AND FORM OF THE SITE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA IN TERMS OF:
 - A) THE HEIGHT, SCALE, FORM AND GROUPING OF THE BUILDING(S);
 - B) THE CHOICE OF MATERIALS;
 - C) EXTERNAL DESIGN FEATURES, INCLUDING SIGNAGE AND STREET FURNITURE;
 - D) THE VISUAL, PHYSICAL AND FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSAL TO NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES, THE STREET SCENE AND TO THE LOCALITY GENERALLY;
- II) WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE PROPOSAL PROVIDES FOR HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SCHEME WHICH IS SATISFACTORY IN TERMS OF:-
 - A) THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE OPEN SPACE AND BUILT FORM OF THE DEVELOPMENT;
 - B) THE RELATIONSHIP OF PROPOSED AREAS OF LANDSCAPING TO THE LAYOUT, SETTING AND DESIGN OF THE DEVELOPMENT;
 - C) THE SCREENING OF ADJOINING USES;
 - D) MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATING NEW WILDLIFE/ NATURE CONSERVATION HABITATS WHERE SUCH FEATURES CAN REASONABLY BE INCLUDED AS PART OF SITE LAYOUTS AND LANDSCAPING WORKS;
- III) WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE PROPOSAL RESPECTS EXISTING FEATURES AND AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION, HISTORIC, ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL VALUE AND IMPORTANCE WITHIN THE SITE;
- IV) WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE PROPOSAL INCORPORATES MEASURES TO IMPROVE NATURAL SURVEILLANCE AND REDUCE THE RISK OF CRIME;
- V) WHERE APPROPRIATE, CONSIDERATION IS GIVEN TO THE USE OF PUBLIC ART AND THE CREATION OF PUBLIC SPACES TO BENEFIT AND ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE SURROUNDING AREA;
- VI) THE PROPOSAL TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE NEED FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENCY BY MEANS OF BUILDING TYPE, ORIENTATION AND LAYOUT, SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS AND THE USE OF LANDSCAPING.

PROPOSALS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL, ARE FOR LARGE-SCALE OR COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT OR INVOLVING SENSITIVE SITES WILL REQUIRE THE SUBMISSION OF A STATEMENT OF DESIGN PRINCIPLES TO ACCOMPANY ANY APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION.

LANDSCAPING

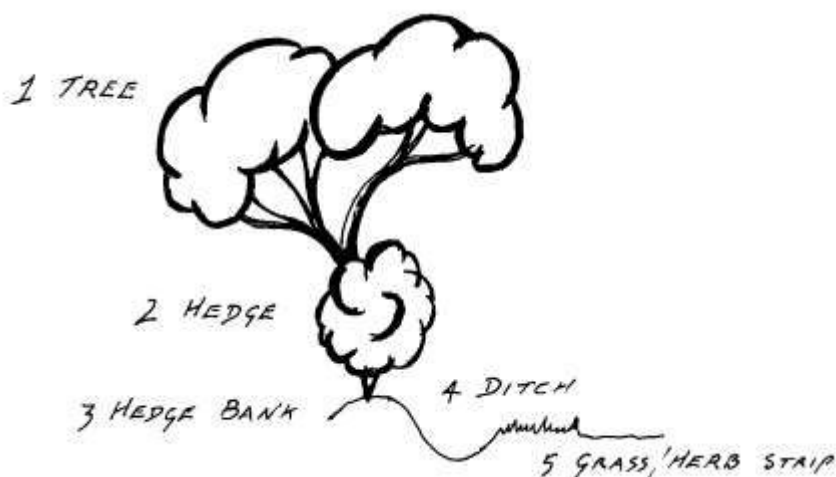
Policy GR5

DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED ONLY WHERE IT RESPECTS OR ENHANCES THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF THE AREA. DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH, IN THE VIEW OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL, WOULD BE LIKELY TO IMPACT ADVERSELY ON THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF SUCH AREAS, OR WOULD UNACCEPTABLY OBSCURE VIEWS OR UNACCEPTABLY LESSEN THE VISUAL IMPACT OF SIGNIFICANT LANDMARKS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES WHEN VIEWED FROM AREAS GENERALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC, AS A RESULT OF THE LOCATION, DESIGN OR LANDSCAPING OF THE PROPOSAL. PARTICULAR ATTENTION WILL BE PAID TOWARDS THE PROTECTION OF FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE SETTING OF URBAN AREAS.

Appendix: 3

Hedges: Features Important to Wildlife

A hedgerow will support more wildlife if it has all or most of these features:

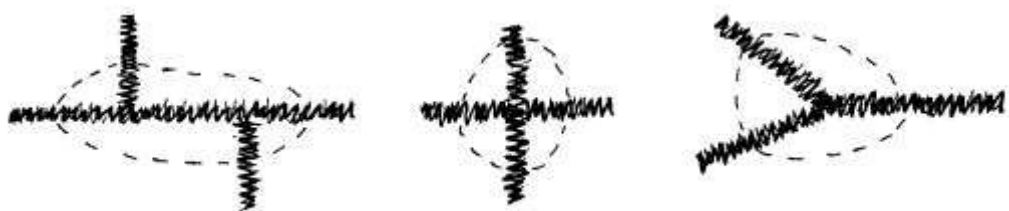


SPECIES RICH - A variety of flowering and fruiting hedge shrubs and trees provide food over different periods as well as ensuring that insects with specific 'host' shrubs are provided for. If a new hedge is planned or an old one gapped up, consider varying the range of species used in the hedge.

VARIETIES - Where possible use a combination of these species:- Holly, hawthorn, hazel, elder, blackthorn, crab apple, sycamore, Cheshire damson, dog rose, honeysuckle.

LINKING HABITATS - Hedges can create corridors along which wildlife can move and access woods, ponds etc. in safety from predators. If planting a new hedge consider what other habitats it could link up with.

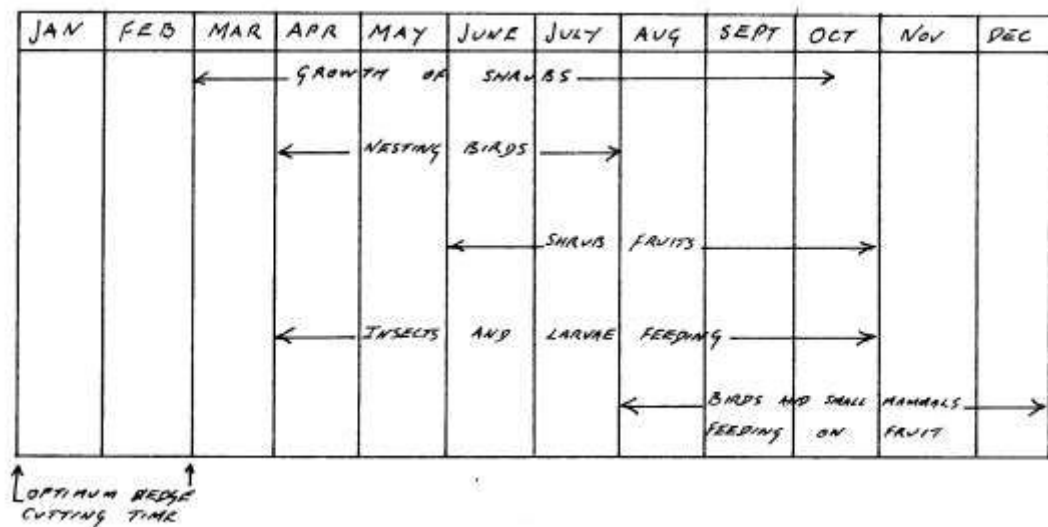
SONGPOSTS - Hedges that have trees or a ragged top with long top shoots are favoured by songbirds as they use them to project their songs during the breeding season. Hedge junctions are a favoured habitat for songbirds as they provide a choice of direction when avoiding predators without breaking cover.



Hedge Junction Patterns

'FREE' GROWTH - If possible allow a small proportion of hedge to go into free growth or cut on a 3 year rotation as this will allow some of the shrubs to flower and fruit. If hedge junctions are allowed to become 'overgrown' this can also provide shelter and shade for livestock.

HEDGEROW MAINTENANCE - Except where sight lines and pedestrian safety need to be maintained along roadsides it is not necessary to cut hedges annually. In fact many shrubs can only produce flowers and fruit on year old wood so annual cutting dramatically reduces the benefit of these hedges. Ideally cut every 2 or 3 years between January and 1st March. Not only does this benefit wildlife, it saves money. It is often thought that cutting hard along the top of a hedge will encourage it to thicken out at the base. This is not the case and only by laying a hedge will you get it stock proof at ground level. The optimum height for a hedge is 2m as this prevents foxes, badgers, cats etc reaching the nests.



FREE GROWTH

- Cut every 5-10 yrs
- Gives tall hedge with a dense base
- Ideal for hedge junctions



'A' SHAPED

- Ideal stock proof hedge
- Excellent windbreak
- Must be at least 1.5m tall.



TOPPED 'A'

- The top can be left with an irregular fringe which can flower and fruit.



PARALLEL SIDED

- Needs periodic laying or coppicing
- Should not be cut low.

Information from Cheshire FWAG

N.B. FWAG stands for Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

APPENDIX 4: Brookhouse Moss

The Meres and Mosses of the North West Midlands form some of the most important wetland areas in England. Brookhouse Moss is one of these nationally important sites and is designated as a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**. It has an area of 10.06 hectares and is 18 metres at its deepest. Water levels vary considerably between seasons.

As with most of the Mosses and Meres of the region, Brookhouse Moss developed in a natural depression in the 'glacial drift' left by the ice sheets that covered the Cheshire/Shropshire plain about 15,000 years ago. This depression was colonised by bog mosses and gradually became infilled, resulting in a 'peat bog' or 'moss'.

Efforts to drain the Moss and to improve it for agricultural purposes have occurred during the past 150 years or more. There is a central main drainage channel running from the north to the south of the Moss, with a number of smaller drains feeding into it. In the 19th century, the drained areas were divided into what were known as 'Moss Rooms' and cultivated by individual members of the community. The two World Wars of the 20th century saw renewed efforts to drain the Moss for cultivation purposes in order to supply the extra demand for food. Since the mid-20th century, the Moss has been reverting to its natural state.



As a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Brookhouse Moss is recognised as an outstanding example of a Moss at an advanced stage of development. Wetland areas such as this are not permanent and unchanging, but are part of a dynamic process known as 'succession'. This is when one vegetation type slowly develops into the next phase as plant growth modifies the environment. At Brookhouse Moss there are several areas of open bog in addition to fen woodland, the latter being dominated by Birch, Alder and Goat Willow. Alder Buckthorn, a rarity in Cheshire, is present in the southern areas of the Moss. The Mosses also support nationally important communities of mosses, liverworts and uncommon flowering plants. Notably, Brookhouse Moss supports the nationally rare Bog Rosemary.

APPENDIX 5: Listed Buildings

There are a number of listed buildings scattered throughout the village.

Smallwood 'Village Centre' (houses pictured earlier)

Amongst the buildings at the village centre is a small group of nineteenth century listed buildings which are thought to be by the same architect.

Church of St John the Baptist

The church was built in 1845 with walls of coursed sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings and a slate roof. It has simple lancet windows in groups of two or three. It was designed by C & J Trubshaw in the Gothic style. The stone was from Mow Cop.

Smallwood House

This house was formerly the parish rectory, and dates from the mid nineteenth century. It has walls of red Flemish bond brick with blue brick patterning. The roof is covered with fishscale tiles. It is thought to have been designed by C & J Trubshaw in the Gothic style.

Smallwood School and Schoolmaster's House

The school and schoolmaster's house date from the mid nineteenth century. They have Flemish bond brick walls with ashlar stone dressings. The roof is covered with fishscale tiles. The building has simple lancet windows in groups of two or three.

Overton Green

Overton Green Farmhouse (pictured earlier)

The older parts of Overton Green Farmhouse date from the late 16th or early 17th century. The walls are exposed timber framing in-filled with render or Flemish bond brick. The roof is covered with slate. Windows generally are casements set in moulded timber surrounds.

Overton Hall Farm Barn

The barn to the north of the complex of buildings at Overton Hall Farm dates from the 16th or 17th century. It is a five bay timber framed structure with later gable walls built from brick in the 19th century. The long exterior walls are clad in twentieth century vertical timber boarding with the central threshing floor flanked by doors. The frame of the barn is made up of four trusses supported on wall posts with angle bracing. The roof is covered with graded stone slates.

Brookhouse Green

Pinfold Farm

The farmhouse at Pinfold Farm dates from the 16th century and was a timber framed cruck structure (still visible inside). Much of the house was rebuilt in brick in the 18th century. The walls are now whitewashed. The roof is covered with plain tiles. Windows are generally casements with 2 or 3 lights.

Deer's Green

Deer's Green Farmhouse

The older part of Deer's Green Farmhouse dates from the 16th or 17th century. The walls are timber framed with render infill or of facing brickwork in Flemish bond with black brick headers. The roof is covered with clay tiles. The windows are generally casements.



Deer's Green Farmhouse



Pinfold Farm

Deer's Green Farm Barn

The single storey outbuilding located 10 metres to the south-east of the farmhouse dates from the 17th century. The walls are timber framed with an ashlar stone plinth with some areas replaced by facing brickwork. The interior of the building has two timber trusses with angle braces. The roof is covered with clay tiles.



Deer's Green Farm Barn



Overton Hall Farm Barn

APPENDIX 6: Useful contacts

Business Link Cheshire and Warrington
International Business Centre
Delta Crescent
Westbrook
Warrington
Cheshire
WA5 7WQ
Tel: 0845 345 4025
Email: info@blinkcw.co.uk

Cheshire Community Action
96 Lower Bridge Street
Chester
Cheshire
CH1 1RU
Tel: 01244 323602
Website: www.cheshireaction.org.uk

Cheshire Landscape Trust
Redland House
64 Hough Green
Chester
Cheshire
CH4 8JY
Tel: 01244 674 193

Cheshire Wildlife Trust
Bickley Hall Farm
Bickley
Malpas
Cheshire
SY14 8EF
Tel: 01948 820728
Email: info@cheshirewt.cix.co.uk
Website: www.cheshirewildlifetrust.co.uk

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
1 Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4 AN
Tel: 020 7070 6700
Fax: 020 7070 6777
E-mail: enquiries@cabe.org.uk
Website: www.cabe.org.uk

Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Tel: 020 7944 4400
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

Commission for Rural Communities
20th Floor
Portland House
Stag Place
London
SW1E 5RS
Tel: +44(0)20 7932 5800
Fax: +44(0)20 7932 5811
Email: info@ruralcommunities.gov.uk

Defra
Customer Contact Unit
Eastbury House
30-34 Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7TL
Tel: 08459 33 55 77
E-mail: helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Energy Saving Trust
21 Dartmouth Street
London
SW1H 9BP
Tel: 0800 512012
Fax: 020 7654 2460
Website: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Environment Agency
Appleton House
430 Birchwood Boulevard
Birchwood
Warrington
Cheshire
WA3 7WD
E-mail: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Government Office for the North West
Cunard Building
Pierhead
Water Street
Liverpool
L31 1QB
Tel: 0151 224 3000
Fax: 0151 224 6470
Website: www.go-nw.gov.uk

Natural England
North West Region
Regional Advocacy and Partnerships Team
Planning and Advocacy
3rd Floor Bridgewater House
Whitworth Street
Manchester
M1 6LT
Tel: 0161 237 1061
Fax: 0161 237 1062
E-mail: stephen.hedley@naturalengland.org.uk

North West Tourist Board
e-Media Manager
Northwest Regional Development Agency
Renaissance House
PO Box 37
Centre Park
Warrington
WA1 1XB
E-mail: venw@nwda.co.uk

Planning Consultants
The RTPI Planning Consultants Referral Service has details of practices offering the services of Chartered Town Planners:
Hawksmere/RTPI Conferences,
7th Floor,
Elizabeth House,
York Road,
London
SE1 7NQ
Tel: 020 7960 5663

Rural Enterprise Gateway
Philip Leverhulme Centre
Reaseheath College
Reaseheath
Cheshire
CW5 6DF
Tel: +44(0)1270 628621
Fax: +44(0)1270 619076
Email: reg@reaseheath.ac.uk

Rural Housing Enabler for East Cheshire
Cheshire East Council
Municipal Buildings
Earle Street
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 2BJ
Tel: 0300 123 5017
E-mail: affordablehousing@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Rural Planning Facilitation Service
Business Support and Planning Manager
Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency
Lake District Business Park
Mint Bridge Road
Kendal
Cumbria
LA9 6NH
Tel: 01539 726624
Fax: 01539 730928

Small Business Council Secretariat
Bay 106-112
1st Floor
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET
Tel: 020 7215 5484/6297
Email: sbcsecretariat@sbs.gsi.gov.uk
The Barn Owl Trust
Waterleat
Ashburton
Devon
TQ13 7HU
Tel: 01364 653026

The Bat Conservation Trust
 Unit 2, 15 Cloisters House
 8 Battersea Park Road
 London
 SW8 4BG
 Tel: +44(0)20 76272629
 Fax: +44(0)20 76272628
 Email: enquiries@bats.org.uk

APPENDIX 7: References

<i>The Re-use of Rural Buildings</i>	Congleton Borough Council
History: - <i>Old Smallwood</i>	Colin Jones and Margaret Meeke
<i>More Old Smallwood</i>	Margaret Meeke

APPENDIX 8: Smallwood Statistics

Population of Smallwood	2006	570 (estimated 94 are children up to the age of 14)
Population	1801	492 (90 families, 82 houses)
	1881	578 (no figures)
	2006	570
Electorate	2006	469
Area of Smallwood Parish		9 square kilometres (3.5 sq miles)
Length of roads		18.5 km (11.5 miles)
Number of footpaths/bridleways		22
Average height above sea level approximately 80 metres		

Acknowledgements

The Parish Council initiated Smallwood Village Design Statement and it was encouraged and supported by Congleton Borough Council and then by Cheshire East Council. Most importantly it was realised by a group of Residents and Councillors whose interest, enthusiasm and effort have made it possible.

The VDS Group Members:

Harvey Meeke Chairman/Coordinator, Parish Councillor

Jan Williams Secretary, Clerk to the Parish Council

Ondre Nowakowski

Carol Henshaw

Sally Platt

Jan Fox

Lou Blythe

John Cunniffe

Jean Cunniffe

Yvonne Amery Parish Council Chairperson

Margaret Meeke

Anthea Hughes Parish Councillor

John Hollinshead Parish councillor

John Warren

Special thanks are due to John Gittins of the Cheshire Landscape Trust for his initial help, advice and support and for arranging financial aid. Thanks also to Ben McDyre, the Co-ordinator of Whitegate and Marton VDS, for his advice and allowing us to use their VDS as a model. Thanks to the Parish Council for their financial aid for accommodation for our many meetings. Thanks to Congleton Borough Council/Cheshire East Council for their help in taking us through the various stages. Thanks to the School for help they gave. Last but not least we thank all those who took part filling up the Questionnaire and giving opinions, to make it a meaningful document.

HARVEST TIME

*Our village holds no special place
In history. Its public face
Would cause no traveller to pause,
Its landscape merits no applause.*

*We love it though. And love declares
Its memories, in patchwork squares,
And fabric images that bind
The heritage we leave behind.
Each public, private thought portrayed,
Each delicately appliquéd.*

*We stretch our memories on frames,
Without exaggerated claims,
Knowing each proud biography
Embroiders our geography.
This warning, too, our needles know,
That as we reap, so shall we sew.*

Con Connell

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The full title of the original poem was 'Harvest Time – A needlework map commemorating the Millennium'.

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This information is available in other formats on request
