

Cheshire East Council

Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Report of: Director of Planning and Sustainable Development

Subject/Title: Marton Neighbourhood Plan

Date of Meeting: 16 August 2016

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Arnold, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The Marton Neighbourhood Development Plan (MNDP) was submitted to the Council in February 2016 and, following a statutory publicity period, proceeded to Independent Examination. The Examiner's report has now been received and recommends that, subject to some minor modifications, the Plan should proceed to referendum.
- 1.2 The Council must now consider the recommendations of the Examiner and decide how to proceed.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Portfolio Holder accepts the Examiner's recommendations to make modifications to the Marton Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the Examiner's report (at Appendix 1) and confirms that the Marton Neighbourhood Plan will now proceed to referendum in the Marton Neighbourhood Plan area.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council is committed to supporting neighbourhood planning in Cheshire East. It has a legal duty to provide advice and assistance on neighbourhood plans, to hold an independent examination on neighbourhood plans submitted to the Council and to make arrangements for a referendum following a favourable Examiner's Report.
- 3.2 Subject to the modifications set out in the Examiner's Report, the Marton Neighbourhood Plan is considered to meet the statutory basic conditions and procedural requirements set out in Schedule 10, paragraph 8, of the Localism Act and as such it can now proceed to referendum.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Gawsworth

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Councillor Lesley Smetham

5.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 Neighbourhood planning allows communities to establish land-use planning policy to shape new development. This is achieved through the formation of a vision and the development of objectives and policies to achieve this vision. If a neighbourhood plan is supported through a referendum and is 'made' it then forms part of the statutory development plan and becomes, with the adopted Local Plan, the starting point for determining relevant planning applications in that area.
- 6.2 A neighbourhood plan must meet a number of legal and procedural requirements and meet the 'Basic Conditions' (as prescribed in Schedule 10, paragraph 8 of the Localism Act). These Basic Conditions require neighbourhood plans to:
- Have appropriate regard to national policy.
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area
 - Be compatible with EU obligations
 - Be compatible with human rights requirements
 - Not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site.

7.0 Implications for Rural Communities

- 7.1 Marton is a rural Parish and the Marton Neighbourhood Plan addresses a number of rural issues including a vision for Marton to be a rural agricultural community with a thriving rural economy. Policies include those supporting diversification of farms and rural businesses and the rural economy. The policies in the plan have been developed by the community, with opportunities for the rural community to participate in the plan making process.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The referendum is estimated to cost £3,300. This will be paid for through government grant (£20,000) and the service's revenue budget.

9.0 Legal Implications

The Neighbourhood Plan is considered to meet the basic conditions and all relevant legal and procedural requirements and this is supported in the Examiner's Report.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 The decision to proceed to referendum and subsequently to 'make' the Neighbourhood Plan is, like all decisions of a public authority, open to challenge by Judicial Review. The risk of any legal challenge to the Plan being successful has been minimised by the thorough and robust way in which it has been prepared and tested.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan began in late 2014 with the submission of the Neighbourhood Area Designation which was approved in February 2015.
- 11.2 The location and extent of the Marton Neighbourhood area is shown on the map in Appendix 2.
- 11.3 The final Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting documents were submitted to Cheshire East Council in February 2016.
- 11.4 The supporting documents included:
- Plan of the neighbourhood area
 - Consultation Statement
 - Basic Conditions Statement
 - Evidence Base Summary
 - Screening Opinion the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - Housing Needs Survey
 - Transport Statement
 - Key Documents
- 11.5 Cheshire East undertook the required publicity between 26.02.16 – 11.04.16. Relevant consultees, residents and other interested parties were provided with information about the submitted Plan and were given the opportunity to submit comments to the Examiner.
- 11.6 The Borough Council appointed Jill Kingaby BSc (Econ) MSc MRTPI as the independent Examiner of the Plan. The Examiner is a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector, with more than 15 years experience inspecting and examining development plans. On reviewing the content of the Plan and the representations received as part of the publication process, she decided not to hold a public hearing.
- 11.7 A copy of the Examiner's Report is provided at Appendix 1. A copy of the Neighbourhood Plan (as submitted to the Council prior to examination) is included at Appendix 3.
- 11.8 The Examiner's Report contains Jill Kingaby's findings on legal and procedural matters and her assessment of the Plan against the Basic Conditions. It recommends that a number of modifications be made to the Plan. These are contained within the body of the Report and summarised in a table at the end. The modifications are principally deletion of policies that are repeated and amendments to policy wording to clarify acceptable locations for housing development and status of landscape features such as hedgerows and valued trees as well as clarification of when and where policies will be applied.
- 11.9 One such modification is proposed changes to policy PE4 (PM10). The text was modified to remove the line referring to the retention of views to the mature sycamore within any potential development. This was to recognise the finite nature of the mature sycamore, which is no longer protected by a TPO, and that

the green space is a visually attractive feature whether or not the mature tree remains.

- 11.10 In addition there is a list of minor modifications for the purpose of correcting errors or for clarification which are set out at the end of the Report.
- 11.11 Overall it is concluded that the Marton Neighbourhood Plan does comply with the Basic Conditions and other statutory requirements and that, subject to recommended modifications, it can proceed to a referendum.
- 11.12 The Examiner comments that *“Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan is commendably clear in its structure and style of presentation... The neighbourhood plan should provide a very useful tool for future planning and change in Marton.”*

12.0 Next steps

- 12.1 The Councils agreement to the Neighbourhood Plan proceeding to a referendum would be followed by the publication of a decision statement to that effect along with the reasons for that decision. This would appear on the Council's website and a copy of it would be sent to Marton Parish Council and those who have asked to be notified of the decision. The Plan would also be modified and published in its final form on the Council's website with a schedule of the modifications made.
- 12.2 An information statement about the referendum and other specified documents required by the regulations must also be published. This signals the start of the referendum process. The referendum date has to be at least 28 clear working days after the information statement and other documents are published. Assuming the Council endorses the recommendation in this report, and then all necessary procedures which follow can be undertaken promptly, it is anticipated that a referendum could take place on or around 27th October.
- 12.3 The referendum would follow a similar format to an election. All those registered to vote within the neighbourhood area would be eligible to participate. The regulations require that the ballot paper contains only the following question: “Do you want Cheshire East Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Marton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”. There would be two voting options, ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
- 12.4 If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum voted ‘yes’, then Cheshire East Council would be required to ‘make’ the plan as soon as reasonably practical. The Marton Neighbourhood Plan would then form part of the statutory development plan for the area. If there is a majority ‘no’ vote or a tied vote, then the neighbourhood plan would not come into legal force.

13.0 Appendices:

- 1. Examiners Report
- 2. Neighbourhood Area
- 3. Neighbourhood Plan

14.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name:	Tom Evans
Designation:	Neighbourhood Planning Manager
Tel No:	01625 383709
Email:	Tom.Evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk



Report on Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030

An Examination undertaken for Cheshire East Borough Council with the support of Marton Parish Council on the February 2016 submission version of the Plan.

Independent Examiner: Jill Kingaby BSc(Econ) MSc MRTPI

Date of Report: 20 July 2016

Contents

	Page
n Findings - Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction and Background	3
• Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2030	3
• The Independent Examiner	3
• The Scope of the Examination	4
• The Basic Conditions	5
2. Approach to the Examination	5
• Planning Policy Context	5
• Submitted Documents	5
• Site Visit	6
• Written Representations or Public Hearing	6
• Modifications	6
3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights	6
• Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area	6
• Plan Period	6
• Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation	6
• Development and Use of Land	7
• Excluded Development	7
• Human Rights	8
4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions	8
• EU Obligations	8
• Main Issues	8
• Housing and Commercial Development	8
• Natural and Historic Environment	13
• Transport	16
• Other matters	18
5. Conclusions	20
• Summary	20
• The Referendum and its Area	20
Appendix: Modifications	21

Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – Marton Parish Council;
- The plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Parish of Marton as shown on Map 1 in the plan;
- The plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – 2015 to 2030; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the plan, once modified, proceeds to Referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030

1.1 The approach to preparing this Neighbourhood Plan is summarised on Page 4 of the document submitted for examination. This indicates that the process began in 2014 when the Parish Council created a Steering Group with four councillors. The process of plan preparation is summarised on Page 5, which demonstrates how the Steering Group has liaised with Cheshire East Council, consulted residents and other interested parties, and has commissioned technical assessments of relevant planning topics. Page 5 sets out the anticipated future steps towards a referendum and publication of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Independent Examiner

1.2 As the plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan by Cheshire East Borough Council, with the agreement of the Marton Parish Council.

1.3 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector, with more than 15 years experience inspecting and examining development plans. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the draft plan.

The Scope of the Examination

1.4 As the independent examiner I am required to produce this report and recommend either:

- (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
- (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
- (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

1.5 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The examiner must consider:

- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions;
- Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the Local Planning Authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
- it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area;
- whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum; and
 - Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ('the 2012 Regulations').

1.6 I have considered only matters that fall within paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

1.7 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:

- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;

- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
- Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations; and
- Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.8 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further basic condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the neighbourhood plan should not be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European Offshore Marine Site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2007), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

2.1 The Development Plan for this part of East Cheshire Borough, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, is the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan 2004 (the saved policies from it).

2.2 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented.

Submitted Documents

2.3 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:

- the draft Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030, February 2016;
- Map 1 of the plan which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates;
- the Consultation Statement, February 2016;
- the Basic Conditions Statement, February 2016;
- all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation; and
- the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion prepared by Cheshire East Council.

Site Visit

2.4 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 20th June 2016 to familiarise myself with it, and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the plan and evidential documents.

Written Representations or Public Hearing

2.5 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the plan, and presented arguments for and against the plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum.

Modifications

2.6 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the plan (PMs) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have also listed these modifications separately in the Appendix.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.1 The Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by the Parish Council which is a qualifying body, for an area that was designated by Cheshire East Borough Council on 23rd February 2015.

3.2 It is the only neighbourhood plan for Marton village and parish, and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.

Plan Period

3.3 The plan specifies clearly the period to which it is to take effect, which is from 2015 to 2030.

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

3.4 The submitted consultation statement (February 2016) provides the detail around the extensive public engagement that has taken place in the evolution of the submitted Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan. Following the application from the Parish Council in October 2014 for a Neighbourhood Planning Area to be designated, public consultation on the area was carried out in November and December 2014. Cheshire East Council consulted statutory consultees, the Housing Market Partnership and other interested parties to inform them of the proposed designation. The Council also provided information on its dedicated Neighbourhood Planning website. Five comments were received from the general public, a utility company, a developer and the Parish Church. There were no objections to the proposed area designation and the Neighbourhood Planning Area was designated by Cheshire East Council in February 2015.

3.5 A questionnaire sent to local residents and businesses in March 2015, with a brief summary statement as to the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan, sought to determine what people thought of the village and what, if anything, needed to change. The Annual Village Meeting also held in March 2015 was attended by the Parish Council and 21 residents, and addressed by the Neighbourhood Plan Manager from Cheshire East Council with a question and answer session. There were 30 questionnaire responses raising a range of issues and concerns about the village, and these have shaped the vision for the Neighbourhood Plan as explained in its section 5. The Consultation Statement correctly observes that a large number of issues and concerns raised in the responses were not land use based, so not appropriately included in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council, however, drew up an action plan for some of the issues by other relevant means as set out in Appendix 2 of the plan.

3.6 Further public meetings, appropriately advertised, took place in April and December 2015 to update residents and other interested parties on the plan's progress. Both were attended by some 30 people. The Housing Needs Survey undertaken in September 2015 also elicited a response of 30 questionnaires from local people. On 18th and 19th December 2015, the steering group overseeing preparation of the

plan held consultation days at Marton School, after informing local residents and businesses by e-mail, community Facebook, and hand-delivered flyers. The draft plan, maps and diagrams were available and 27 people attended. The comments received were taken forward as part of the Regulation 14 consultation stage.

3.7 Consultation for Regulation 14 on the draft Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken between 18th December 2015 and 1st February 2016 based on the update meeting and drop-in events, as well as information sent by e-mail, Facebook, post and hand delivery. Residents, other local stakeholders, local businesses and statutory consultees as listed in the Consultation Statement were contacted. Responses were received from 25 residents, 8 public bodies, and 2 landowners and developers. Appendix 2 of the Consultation Statement indicates that all responses were considered by the neighbourhood planning team and amendments made in selected cases. Consultation in accordance with Regulation 16 when the plan was submitted to Cheshire East Council was carried out between 26th February 2016 and 11th April 2016, and 11 responses were received. I am satisfied that a transparent, fair and inclusive consultation process has been followed for this neighbourhood plan, in accordance with the legal requirements.

Development and Use of Land

3.8 The plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Excluded Development

3.9 Providing the modification recommended in paragraph 4.34 below is made, the plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.

Human Rights

3.10 Cheshire East Borough Council is satisfied that the plan does not breach Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998), and I see no reason to disagree.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

4.1 The neighbourhood plan was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by the Borough Council, which found that it was unnecessary to undertake SEA. Having read the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion, I support this conclusion.

4.2 Marton's neighbourhood plan was further screened for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), which also was not triggered. The site is not in close proximity to a European designated nature site. Natural England agreed with this conclusion in its e-mail of 12th February 2016 to Cheshire East Council, and I have no reason to disagree with this assessment.

Main Issues

4.3 Having regard for the Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan, the consultation responses and other evidence, and the site visit, I consider that there are three main issues relating to the Basic Conditions for this examination. These are:

- Whether the policies for housing and commercial development in the neighbourhood plan contribute to the achievement of sustainable development having regard for national policy and guidance, and are in general conformity with strategic policies in the Local Plan for Cheshire East Borough Council;
- Whether the neighbourhood plan will protect and conserve the natural environment and historic environment of Marton appropriately in line with national policy and in general conformity with the Local Plan, bearing in mind the parish's rural setting, landscape character and significant number of listed buildings; and
- Whether the neighbourhood plan promotes sustainable transport policies, bearing in mind the lack of public transport services and need for safety, access and parking, particularly in relation to the village school.

Housing and Commercial Development

4.4 The NPPF is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraph 6); there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14). There are three dimensions to sustainable development ie. an economic role, a social role and an environmental one (paragraph 7). Importantly, neighbourhoods should develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, plan positively to support local development and identify opportunities to use Neighbourhood Development Orders to help deliver development consistent with a neighbourhood plan (paragraph 14).

4.5 Pages 31 onwards of Marton's Neighbourhood Plan set out a Vision followed by an Objective for Residential and Commercial Development in Marton. The Vision aims for Marton in 2030 to *"be a quiet, small rural agricultural community with a thriving rural economy"*. The Objective is for *"a slightly larger population ... proportionate increases in housing preferably created through brownfield development, conversions of existing buildings or through infill development of an appropriate density, scale and size"*. The introduction to Policies RCD1 to RCD12 confirms this approach to housing provision, with the additional category for housing *"at the edge of the existing settlement in locations that will not cause harm to the wider landscape and setting of Marton"*.

4.6 The approach has been criticised as too restrictive and unlikely to provide the most sustainable level of residential development for Marton consistent with the NPPF. The Neighbourhood Plan does not state how many new dwellings should be provided over the plan period, nor identify specific sites for new dwellings. Some critics favour including in the plan the site on School Lane which was the subject of planning application 15/2274M. This outline application for up to 27 dwellings was refused by Cheshire East Council in October 2015, and is currently at appeal for determination by the Secretary of State. I have read the arguments for and against that proposal, noting that it was recommended for approval by the planning officer, but make no comment on the likely outcome of the appeal nor seek to pre-empt the Secretary of State's decision.

4.7 The Macclesfield Borough Local Plan was adopted in January 2004, and it covers the time period from 1996 to 2011. It stated that about 4,500 houses (net) should be provided in that time period, of which 80% should be on previously developed land, and

90% in locations well served by public transport. There should be no loss of open space. The Housing chapter of the Local Plan states that, in 2003, completions, commitments and outstanding allocations could provide 4,549 new houses, with no allowance for windfall development. The Local Plan was adopted more than 10 years ago, but many of its policies have been saved. The Local Plan did not allocate sites for housing or other major development in Marton. Saved Policy H5 gives criteria for windfall sites, and the first criterion states that location and accessibility to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car will be considered to determine potential suitability. The lack of rail or bus services and limited range of jobs, shops and other basic facilities in Marton would count against its selection as suitable for development.

4.8 Saved Policies GC5 and GC14 of the adopted Local Plan also take a restrictive approach to new development in the Parish of Marton. Policy GC5 states that development in the countryside beyond the Green Belt will not normally be permitted. Policy GC14 refers to the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescopes Consultation Zone, which includes Marton, where there should be no development that would impair the efficiency of the radio telescopes. Overall, the current development plan for Cheshire East Borough, which includes saved policies from Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, supports a moderate approach towards new housing and commercial development in the village and parish of Marton, with no set requirement for new housing in the village.

4.9 I have had regard for the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan for the plan period 2015-2030, which was submitted for examination in 2014, although I note that the Basic Conditions for neighbourhood plans only expect general conformity with strategic policies in adopted development plans. The examination for the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan has been protracted. The Inspector requested additional work on objectively assessed housing need, economic strategy, the distribution of development and the Green Belt and these led to proposed modifications to the plan. The Inspector published his Further Interim Views in December 2015, which included his assessment of the overall housing requirement and site selection process, among other things. I note that he found the overall housing requirement figure of 36,000 additional dwellings as a balanced level of housing provision. He was satisfied with the site selection process but could not sign off the revised spatial distribution for new development because a revised round of public consultation of potential changes to the plan was required.

4.10 Fresh hearing sessions for the emerging Local Plan are expected to take place in September 2016. Regarding the neighbourhood plan for Marton, the PPG, ID:41-009-20140306 indicates that neighbourhood plan preparation should not be held back when a Local Plan is also being prepared¹. The PPG supports collaborative working between the local planning authority and qualifying body in such circumstances. In its consultation response, Cheshire East Borough Council reports on close working aimed at minimising any conflict between the neighbourhood plan and emerging Local Plan.

4.11 Emerging Local Plan Policies PG1 and PG2 envisage most new development taking place in the Key Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield and the nine key service centres. The most recent figures show that Cheshire East's other settlements and rural areas should provide not less than 2,950 dwellings by 2030. After allowance has been

¹ See further the judgement in Gladman Developments Ltd v Aylesbury Vale District Council [2014] EWHC 4323 (Admin)

made for recent housing completions and commitments, an outstanding requirement for 1,250 dwellings in the rural areas exists. Suitable sites should be identified and settlement boundaries designated in a forthcoming Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document. The emerging Local Plan's strategic policies do not commit to significant development or any site allocations in Marton.

4.12 Those proposing the housing scheme off School Lane contend that site allocations should be made in Marton, having regard for the Council's limited grounds for refusal. However, in its Regulation 16 response to Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan, Cheshire East Council is supportive of the plan's approach, pointing out that it does not introduce a maximum level of housing development and instead introduces policies to manage the need arising locally.

4.13 In short, no strategic need has been identified to deliver housing in Marton beyond local needs in either the existing Macclesfield Borough Local Plan nor the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan. This neighbourhood plan proposes to meet local needs arising from the existing population and refers to the Housing Needs Assessment undertaken by the qualifying body. I share concerns about the robustness of the Housing Needs Survey in Appendix 4 to the plan. I accept that an objective study of need is very difficult for a village; a local survey cannot take account of unexpected demographic change resulting from births, deaths and people or household movements. However, in addition to uncertainty of the demographic factors, the Housing Needs Survey for Marton only looks forward 5 years, whereas the neighbourhood plan takes a longer term view to 2030. The estimate of a need for four new dwellings should only therefore be viewed as a snapshot of future housing need for this village.

4.14 The Cheshire East Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update 2013 confirms a backlog of affordable housing provision in the Macclesfield Rural Area, and a future need of 59 units 2013/14 to 2017/8 (Table 6C). My attention was drawn to the waiting list of Cheshire Homechoice (with responsibility for letting social and affordable housing across Cheshire East) which shows 19 applicants selecting Gawsorth and Marton as their first choice location. This evidence supports a plan for Marton which will not be tied to the village-based local housing need survey, and will look favourably on new housing development in principle, providing proposals are consistent with other policies as emphasised in the NPPF.

4.15 Marton has a population of fewer than 250, living in 105 dwellings. Major housing development could change the rural character of the community where 20% of the population work in agriculture. Marton has no public transport services and a limited range of community facilities. My attention was drawn to the draft neighbourhood plan and things that people did not like about living in Marton – the absence of a post office, no village hall, community centre, sports facility or traditional village shop. Whilst significant growth could provide better support for existing facilities and services, notably Marton Primary School, and give a more mixed community to balance the high proportion of older residents, there can be no guarantee that new community facilities and services or a more integrated community would result from new housing development. Marton is set in a green landscape with working farms, some attractive woodlands, diverse wildlife and a network of rural roads off the A34. The parish contains a large number (10) of listed buildings especially in the village core. The case for safeguarding this environment, as discussed below, is strong.

4.16 Whilst a plan to boost housing supply and identify potential housing sites is sought by some parties in the interests of sustainable development, I consider that the small size of the existing community and the character of the rural settlement within the countryside justify the more moderate approach in the Vision and the Objective for residential and commercial development put forward in the neighbourhood plan. The NPPF, paragraph 10, states that plans and decisions must take account of local circumstances to respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development. The social and environmental roles of sustainable development mean that planning for major housing development would not be appropriate in Marton. Having regard for the saved Local Plan policies and emerging Local Plan, I see no reason for the Marton neighbourhood plan to allocate specific sites for housing and/or commercial development.

4.17 I am broadly supportive of Policies in RCD1 to RCD12 concerning residential and commercial development, but recommend that some modifications are needed to meet the Basic Conditions. I support the proposed modification put forward by Cheshire East Borough Council to identify the approach favouring brownfield sites, infill, conversions and sites at the settlement edge in a policy rather than simply including it in supporting text. The introductory text should be modified and a new policy added as follows:

Policy RCD0 Local housing needs will be met through:

- ***The redevelopment of brownfield sites***
- ***Infill (see definition above)***
- ***Conversions***
- ***And at the edge of the existing settlement in locations that will not cause harm to the wider landscape and setting of Marton.***

As a consequence of adding a new Policy RCD0 (PM1), and having regard for the objection to RCD2 that its wording is unclear, I propose that ***Policy RCD2 be deleted (PM2).***

Policy RCD12 should also be deleted, because it is repetitive of proposed Policy RCD0 and Policy RCD7 (PM5).

In order to overcome my concern over reliance on the local housing need assessment, the second sentence under the heading POLICIES on Page 32 should be modified to read:

“This neighbourhood plan will contribute to meeting local housing needs arising in Marton and the Macclesfield Rural Area.” (PM1)

Policy RCD4 should read: ***“Development should meet local needs in terms of tenure, type and size of dwellings, to suit the needs of different groups of the population as detailed in the Housing Need Assessment and the Cheshire East SHMA Update 2013, or future updates to these documents.” (PM3)***

The text headed “Assessment of Local Housing Need” should be modified as follows:

“The Housing Need Assessment, shown in Appendix 4, highlighted four households currently living in Marton who identified a need for housing over the next 5 years. These findings align with our own assessment of the natural

minimal ebb and flow of housing requirement in a small settlement such as Marton. However, the Housing Need Assessment only estimated need over the next five years rather than need over the full plan period to 2030. It is also recognised that Marton is not an isolated settlement. Housing need should also be considered within the wider context of Rural Macclesfield, as reported in the Cheshire East SHMA Update 2013.” (PM6)

4.18 I consider that there is overlap and some inconsistency between Policies RCD3 and RCD8. Policy RCD3 correctly in my view indicates that the scale, density and landscaping of proposed development should be appropriate to its location. It has been calculated that some existing housing in Marton was built at 26 dwellings per hectare, rather than 5-15 dwellings per hectare as referenced in Policy RCD8. I have seen insufficient justification for all new housing to be sited in well wooded grounds, and conclude that ***Policy RCD8 should be deleted (PM4).***

4.19 Providing these modifications are made, I conclude that the policies for housing and commercial development in the neighbourhood plan meet the Basic Conditions, by contributing to the achievement of sustainable development having regard for national policy and guidance, and be in general conformity with strategic policy in the currently saved local plan policies for Cheshire East Borough Council.

Natural and Historic Environment

4.20 The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA) undertaken in 2015 and contained in Appendix 3 to the plan presents a very thorough assessment of the Marton neighbourhood planning area and its assets, in the context of the National Character Assessment and Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment. The LSCA identifies key viewpoints within the village and across the Cheshire Plains. It has considered the history of the village, features of biological interest, woodlands and hedges, heritage assets and features of interest on buildings (such as half-timbered elevations and thatched roofs), water features and footpaths and bridleways. The professional assessment is complemented by commentary on residents' views as to what they like or dislike about the parish.

4.21 The content of the LSCA is rightly embedded in the body of the neighbourhood plan, as it provides a robust and thorough evidential document. Policies RCD3, RCD5, RCD9 and RCD10 of the neighbourhood plan expect new development to be in keeping with existing buildings in the village and fit in with the prevailing scale, density and rural character. Those policies, and policies to protect the environment, PE8, PE9 and PE13, refer to the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA). The Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance, Appendix 1, is referenced in Policy RCD3 and Policy RCD7.

4.22 The NPPF explains that sustainable development has an environmental role contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. The core principles of the NPPF (paragraph 17) refer to securing high quality design, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving communities within it, and conserving heritage assets. Section 12 addresses conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, and paragraph 132 sets out the significance of listed buildings and their settings. Section 11 gives detailed policy for conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

4.23 Saved policies from the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan include policies for landscape protection and enhancement to conserve and enhance the diversity of landscape character (NE2), to conserve and enhance rural landscapes through the creation and restoration of hedgerows, woodland etc. (NE3), and to seek to retain and enhance existing woodlands. Overall, I consider that the Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan places appropriate emphasis on conserving and enhancing its natural, built and historic assets, having regard to the NPPF and in general conformity with the Local Plan.

4.24 Policy PE4 of the plan states it is essential that views to the mature sycamore within the paddock off School Lane are retained, and Policy PE7 seeks to preserve ancient hedgerows and valued trees. However, the sycamore tree is suffering from decay, and is no longer protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). At the time of my site visit, this tree in the centre of a field where sheep were grazing looked green and healthy, and provided an attractive feature in the centre of the village. Nevertheless, I consider that the plan should be modified to clarify the current situation regarding the TPO and recognise that this landmark tree has a limited life.

4.25 My attention was also drawn to the appeal statement from Cheshire East Council's Landscape Officer for the proposed development on School Lane, ref. 15/2274M. This stated that development of the site, being the green space to which Policy PE4 relates, would not have any significant landscape or visual impacts. It was noted that the site had no formal designation for landscape protection. I accept that the green space at the centre of the village is enclosed by roads and housing, so that its development would not affect the wider landscape or have a significant visual impact on the countryside outside the village. However, saved Policy RT2 of Macclesfield Borough Local plan states that open spaces in residential areas should be protected from development and enhanced as appropriate. Policies SD1, SD2 and SE6 of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan continue this protective theme.

4.26 The last sentence of Marton's Visual Amenity, Page 24 of the neighbourhood plan, highlights *"shorter range views over the paddock in the heart of the village ... enjoyed by the residents who live in the surrounding houses."* I consider that the green space is a visually attractive feature for pedestrians and road users on School Lane and Oak Lane as well as for residents, whether or not the mature sycamore tree remains there. I note that the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the planning application refers to provision of on-site open space, and the proposed layout shows a "village green/community open space" area around the existing mature sycamore tree. There appears to be recognition that some open space in this prominent location should be retained, even if housing development is permitted.

4.27 With reference to all the above, Policy PE4 should be modified to read:

"Proposals which enhance the green space between School Lane and Oak Lane/Oak View at the centre of the village and at the spinney will be supported.

The paddock and spinney in the heart of the village should be retained as open green space" (PM10).

In addition, the map on Page 22 of the neighbourhood plan should be amended to make clear that the sycamore tree is not protected by a TPO. The map should contain a key, and could usefully show a larger part of the village so that the

location for the ancient Marton Oak, referenced in Policy PE5 and illustrated in the photograph on Page 21, is also shown (PM18).

Map 8: Village Spatial Policies Map should also be modified to delete the focal tree and brown triangle adjacent to it (PM19).

Providing that is changed, Policy PE8 need not be modified.

However, Policy PE7 should be modified so that it takes account of the condition and likely longevity of affected trees and hedgerows. Policy PE7 should read: **“Ancient hedgerows and valued trees, which are in good condition and expected to thrive in the future, should be preserved” (PM11).**

4.28 A number of objections have been made to policies for Protecting Our Environment, regarding when and where they will be applied. I consider that a number of modifications are required to meet the Basic Conditions, specifically to ensure that the policies will achieve a positive outcome in the context of sustainable development when used for development management.

Policy PE1 expecting any development proposal to mitigate the impact on Marton’s surroundings could be unduly onerous. It should be modified to read: **“Development proposals which would have a significant and harmful visual impact on the countryside surrounding the settlement of Marton will not be permitted, unless appropriate mitigation measures are put in place” (PM7).**

On Policy PE2, it may be reasonable for a sizeable housing development to contribute towards better access to the countryside, but unrealistic and unviable for conversions or infill schemes of one or two dwellings to do so. The policy should be modified by adding the following text:

“Any appropriate proposals new developments to improve access to the countryside, where this would be reasonable and viable” (PM8).

Policies PE3 and PE10 cover the same ground. **Policy PE3 should be deleted (PM9).**

I consider that Policy PE11 is rather vague and unclear as to where or when it should be applied. Alterations to village lanes would usually be a matter for the highway authority rather than the local planning authority. If new vehicular accesses were required for permitted development along village lanes, however, they should aim to minimise any harm to the rural character of the area. Road safety would also need to be considered if access arrangements were to be changed. The policy should be modified and combined with Policy PE12 to make this clear, as follows:

Where new vehicular accesses to the roads and lanes in the Parish of Marton are made, the character and appearance of rural lanes should be retained. Existing verges, trees and hedgerows along rural lanes should be retained wherever possible, having regard for road safety (PM12).

4.29 Providing all the above mentioned modifications are made, I conclude that the neighbourhood plan should protect and conserve the natural environment and historic environment of Marton appropriately having regard for national policy and be in general conformity with strategic policies in the Local Plan, bearing in mind the parish’s rural setting, landscape character and significant number of listed buildings.

Transport

4.30 Policy TSP1 of the neighbourhood plan is designed to address the plan objective, to “*Reduce the problems of congestion outside school and improve safety*”. I am aware that Cheshire East Council did not object to the planning application for new housing off School Lane on highways grounds, and that the applicants carried out surveys of traffic and parking at the Marton and District School, which indicated that there were negligible problems relating to congestion or road safety. In its comments on the neighbourhood plan, Cheshire East Council, however, stated that the policies on Transport, School and Parking meet the Basic Conditions. I note that school traffic and parking are features which local residents do not like about living in Marton (Page 28 of the plan). Even if conditions are not seriously problematic now, this is a long term plan looking to 2030. Given the perception of local people, the location of the school within a rural area away from the main road, the fact that the school serves a number of villages which are not within reasonable walking distance, and the importance of securing safety for young children, I accept the need for the policy.

4.31 Saved policies from the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan include a number of transport policies relevant to this neighbourhood plan. Saved Policy T1 sets out criteria for an “integrated transport policy” including (3) improved safety for pedestrians, cyclists and road users; (5) protection and enhancement of the environment; and (6) the extent to which new transport schemes integrate with land use. Saved Policy T3 aims for improved pedestrian conditions including safer routes to school, Policy T5 addresses provision for cyclists, and Policy T9 gives support for traffic management and calming measures in, among other places, village centres.

4.32 The emerging Cheshire East Local Plan also includes policies for safe access and sufficient car parking (Policy SD1), for sustainable travel and transport encouraging cycling and walking (Policy CO1) and design around the comfort of people rather than vehicles (Policy SE1). The thrust of Policies TSP1 and TS1 to TS4 is in general conformity with the Local Plan, the emerging plan and with achieving sustainable development, although I consider that some modifications to wording are required to meet the Basic Conditions.

4.33 Section 4 of the neighbourhood plan addresses Traffic and Safety. I agree that the last sentence below the OBJECTIVE should be re-worded to have regard for the NPPF’s paragraph 32.

It should read: ***New development should be designed so that its impact on the transport network is minimised as far as possible. Development which exacerbates existing transport problems and results in a severely harmful impact will not be permitted (PM13).***

Also, having regard for national policy, notably paragraph 35 of the NPPF, Policy TS2 should refer to the impact of all motor vehicles not just the private car, and promote safety for all road users not just pedestrians and cyclists, as does saved Local Plan policy T1.

Policy TS2 should state: ***The impact of vehicular traffic on the street scene, and do not reduce safety for all road users including pedestrians and cyclists (PM14).***

Policy TS4 is in general conformity with saved Policy IMP2 of the Local Plan which seeks planning obligations to secure improvements to walking or cycling where such measures could influence travel patterns. However, Policy TS4 should be extended to explain that transport improvements should be secured with new development where they would be viable and deliverable having regard for paragraph 173 of the NPPF, as follows:

Development should be refusedWhere appropriate in terms of viability and deliverability, new development should contribute towards traffic improvement (PM16).

4.34 Neighbourhood plans must not include policies for 'excluded development' (s.38B(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). It is the responsibility of the highway authority, Cheshire East Borough Council, to determine the number and size of traffic signs rather than Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan. However, I have sympathy with the aim of Policy TS3 to reduce the impact of signage on the character and appearance of this rural landscape and village, which is broadly in general conformity with saved Local Plan Policies T1(5) and T9. I propose a modification to the plan so that Policy TS3 is moved from policy to supporting text, and so that it encourages dialogue with Cheshire East Borough Council and other bodies (such as local businesses and the school) to achieve safe but sensitive use of road signs in the village and across the parish. Policy TS3 should cease to be a policy, and be modified to read:

The Parish Council will liaise with the highway authority, Cheshire East Borough Council, and other interested parties, to ensure that the numbers of traffic signs do not exceed what is necessary, and are the minimum size necessary to meet the requirements of safety. The Parish Council will aim to secure the design of signage which is sensitive to the character and appearance of the village and parish (PM15).

4.35 Providing these modifications are made, I conclude that the neighbourhood plan meets the Basic Conditions in so far as it promotes sustainable transport policies, both having regard for national policy and being in general conformity with Local Plan policy, bearing in mind the lack of public transport services in Marton and need for safety, access and parking, particularly in relation to the village school.

Other matters

4.36 Section 5 of the neighbourhood plan seeks to protect community assets, with an objective to retain and enhance those components of the village that residents value, and which contribute to village life. Protection of Marton's historical assets including the ancient oak tree and listed buildings and their settings is consistent with one of the core principles in the NPPF, paragraph 17, to conserve heritage assets. Saved Policies BE2 and BE16 of Macclesfield Borough Local plan, and Policies SE1 and SE7 of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan also support the inclusion of Policy PCA1 in the neighbourhood plan. In order to clarify the location of listed buildings as shown on Map 3 for readers of the neighbourhood plan who may not be residents, it would be helpful if numbers were inserted against each building mentioned on Page 15. This is put forward as an optional modification to the neighbourhood plan to achieve clarity, but is not essential to meet the Basic Conditions. If the Parish Council decides to pursue the

change, the plan would read ***“Grade 1: 1. Church of St James and St Paul; Grade II: 2. Cross in churchyard; 3. Cherry Tree Cottage 10. Pump Cottage”***.

4.37 Notwithstanding the criticism of Policy PCA2 and PCA3, I consider that the aim to retain a thriving village centre is sufficiently clear, and is consistent with maintaining sustainable communities and a prosperous rural economy. The requirement for a marketing exercise prior to granting a change of use from commercial uses to residential is not unusual and is justified for a small rural settlement like Marton. However, I consider that Policy PCA2 should be expressed more clearly to achieve the desired outcome as follows:

Commercial proposals to maintain the thriving village centre will be supported provided that they are in keeping with the character of the village. Any proposals for change of use from commercial to residential use will require a marketing exercise for an appropriate amount of time to demonstrate that the commercial use is no longer viable (PM17).

4.38 Policies SBS1 to SBS3 supportive of small businesses are consistent with the NPPF's paragraph 28 on supporting economic growth in rural areas and taking a positive approach to sustainable new development there. There is no conflict in general conformity with the Local Plan or emerging Cheshire East Local Plan, and the Basic Conditions are met.

4.39 In examining the neighbourhood plan, I have considered whether it is clear in its presentation of policies and proposals, and sufficiently focussed on the development and use of land, having regard for s.38A(2) and s.38B(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004, as amended. In my view, Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan is commendably clear in its structure and style of presentation. The early sections set out the process of preparing the plan, describe Marton, and report on the findings of the village consultation exercise, before the Vision, Objectives and Policies are addressed. Cheshire East Council commented on “the depth of support in the local community” for this plan. The appendices include useful evidential documents as well as Appendix 2, which gives an Action Plan for the Parish Council; this has emerged from consultation work for the neighbourhood plan. The proposed works involve ongoing collaboration with Cheshire East Council, the school and other bodies, and demonstrate an intent to secure the neighbourhood plan's vision and objectives. The neighbourhood plan should provide a very useful tool for future planning and change in Marton.

5. Conclusions

Summary

5.1 The Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. It has focused on three main issues relating to policies for housing and commercial development, for protecting the environment, and for transport. I have had regard for all the responses made following consultation on the neighbourhood plan, and the evidence documents submitted with it.

5.2 I have made recommendations to modify a number of policies and text to ensure the plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the plan relates. The Marton Village Neighbourhood Plan as modified has no policy or proposals which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated neighbourhood plan boundary (ie. the parish boundary), requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the plan should be the boundary of the designated neighbourhood plan area ie. the parish boundary.

Jill Kingaby

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 32	<p>POLICIES</p> <p>Marton is a rural settlement. No strategic need has been identified to deliver housing beyond local needs in either the existing Macclesfield Borough Local Plan or the emerging Cheshire East Local plan. This neighbourhood plan will contribute to meeting local housing needs arising in Marton and the Macclesfield Rural Area.</p> <p>Policies to meet the objective are:</p> <p>Policy RCD0 Local housing needs will be met through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The redevelopment of brownfield sites • Infill (see definition above) • Conversions • And at the edge of the existing settlement in locations that will not cause harm to the wider landscape and setting of Marton. <p>Policy RCD1 unchanged.</p>
PM2	Page 33	Policy RCD2 should be deleted.
PM3	Page 33	Policy RCD4: Development should meet local needs in terms of tenure, type and size of dwellings, to suit the needs of different groups of the population as detailed in the Housing Need Assessment and the Cheshire East SHMA Update 2013, or future updates to these documents.
PM4	Page 33	Policy RCD8 should be deleted.
PM5	Page 33	Policy RCD12 should be deleted.
PM6	Page 34	<p><u>Assessment of Local Housing Need</u></p> <p>The Housing Need Assessment, shown in Appendix 4, highlighted four households currently living in Marton who identified a need for housing over the next 5 years. These findings align with our own assessment of the natural minimal ebb and flow of housing requirement in a small settlement such as Marton. However, the Housing Need Assessment only estimated need over the next five years rather than need over the full plan period to 2030. It is</p>

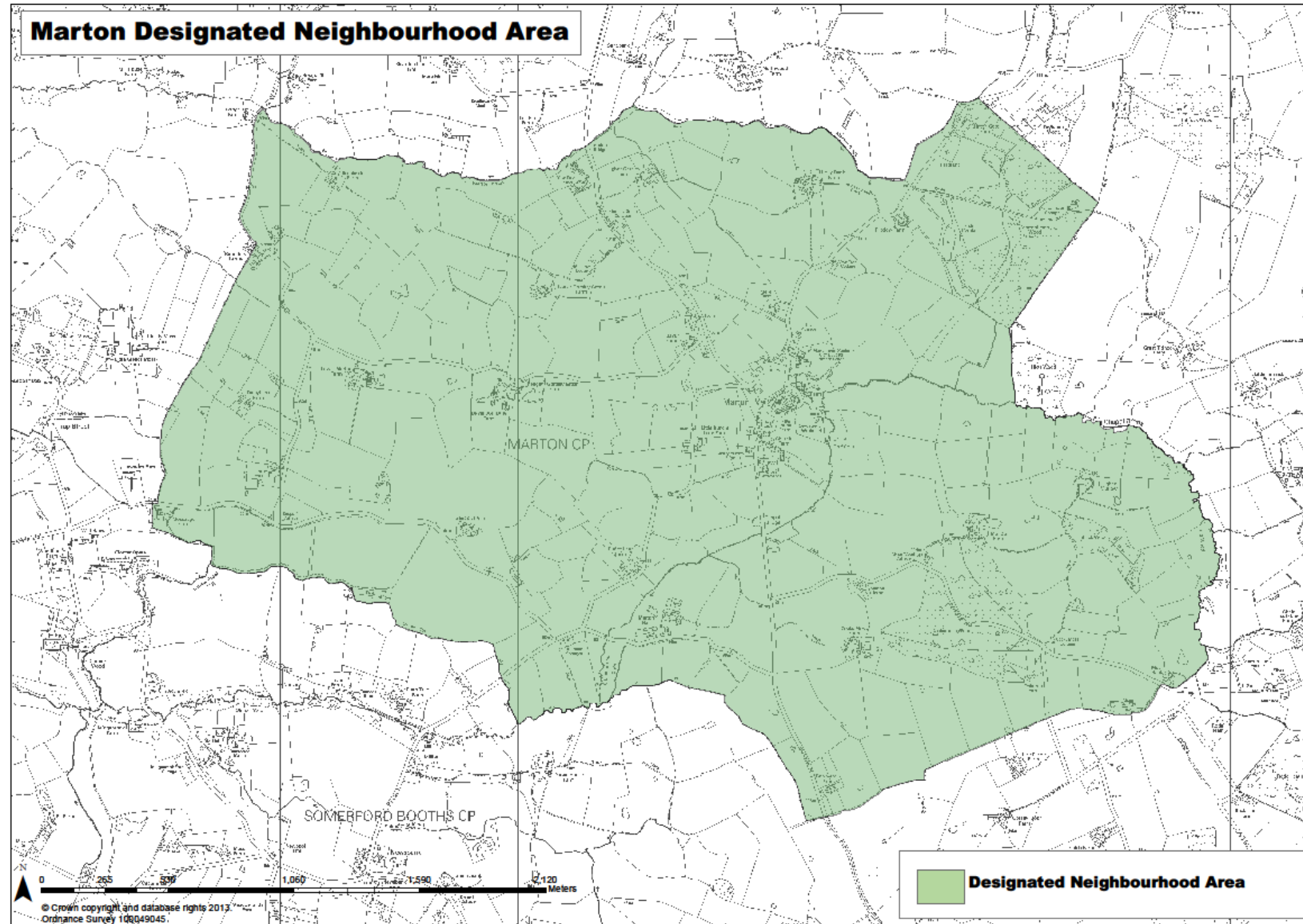
		also recognised that Marton is not an isolated settlement. Housing need should also be considered within the wider context of Rural Macclesfield, as reported in the Cheshire East SHMA Update 2013.
PM7	Page 35	Policy PE1: Development proposals which would have a significant and harmful visual impact on the countryside surrounding the settlement of Marton will not be permitted, unless appropriate mitigation measures are put in place.
PM8	Page 35	Policy PE 2: Any appropriate proposals will be sought in connection with new developments to improve access to the countryside, where this would be reasonable and viable.
PM9	Page 35	Delete Policy PE3
PM10	Page 35	<p>Policy PE4: Proposals which enhance the green space between School Lane and Oak Lane/Oak View at the centre of the village and at the spinney will be supported.</p> <p>The paddock and spinney in the heart of the village should be retained as open green space.</p>
PM11	Page 35	Policy PE7: Ancient hedgerows and valued trees, which are in good condition and expected to thrive in the future, should be preserved, and development which would adversely impact
PM12	Page 36	<p>Replacement Policy PE11 and PE12: Where new vehicular accesses to the roads and lanes in the Parish of Marton are made, the character and appearance of rural lanes should be retained. Existing verges, trees and hedgerows along rural lanes should be retained wherever possible, having regard for road safety.</p>
PM13	Page 36	<p>OBJECTIVE Delete last sentence in second paragraph beginning “Any additional development must not ...” and insert:</p> <p>New development should be designed so that its impact on the transport network is minimised as far as possible. Development which exacerbates existing transport problems and results in a severely harmful impact will not be permitted.</p>
PM14	Page 36	Policy TS2: The impact of vehicular traffic on the street scene, and do not reduce safety for all

		road users including pedestrians and cyclists.
PM15	Page 37	Policy TS3: The Parish Council will liaise with the highway authority, Cheshire East Borough Council, and other interested parties, to ensure that the numbers of traffic signs do not exceed what is necessary, and are the minimum size necessary to meet the requirements of safety. The Parish Council will aim to secure the design of signage which is sensitive to the character and appearance of the village and parish.
PM16	Page 38	Policy TS4: Development should be refusedWhere appropriate in terms of viability and deliverability, new development should contribute towards traffic improvement.
PM17	Page 37	Policy PCA2: Commercial proposals to maintain the thriving village centre will be supported provided that they are in keeping with the character of the village. Any proposals for change of use from commercial to residential use will require a marketing exercise for an appropriate amount of time to demonstrate that the commercial use is no longer viable.
PM18	Page 22	Clarify that the mature sycamore is not subject to TPO; add a key to the map; enlarge the map to show the location of Marton's ancient oak.
PM19	Page 26	Map 8: Village Spatial Policies Map should be modified to delete the focal tree and brown triangle adjacent to it.

Examiner's suggested optional modification for clarity:

Insert numbers against each of the listed buildings on Page 15 to reflect the numbers shown on Map 3.

Appendix 2: Neighbourhood Area



Appendix 3: Neighbourhood Plan



Marton Village
Neighbourhood Plan
2015-2030



CONTENTS

Maps

1. Introduction
 - a. Background
 - b. Planning powers
 - c. Our approach
2. Process
3. The proposed neighbourhood area
4. Description of Marton
 - a. History
 - b. Marton today
 - c. Marton's architectural heritage
 - d. Marton's natural environment
 - e. Marton's visual amenity
5. Findings of the Village Consultation
 - a. Positive views of Marton
 - b. Issues faced by residents
 - c. Fears for the future of Marton
6. Vision
7. Objectives and policies
 1. Residential and commercial development
 2. Transport, school and parking
 3. Protecting our environment: landscape character, green spaces and wildlife
 4. Traffic and safety
 5. Protecting community assets
 6. Small business support

Appendices:

1. Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance
2. Action Plan for the Parish Council

Further Appendices:

- 3: Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment
- 4: Housing Needs Survey
- 5: Transport Statement
- 6: Key Documents: Village Plan, Statistics and Census, Meetings

This plan can be found online at www.marton-pc.gov.uk

MAPS

Map 1. Neighbourhood Plan Area	p.6
Map 2. Settlement Limits and Rural Farmstead/Dwelling Dispersal	p. 7
Map 3. Listed Buildings	p.16
Map 4. Footpaths, Cycleways and Bridleways	p.19
Map 5. Water Bodies and Courses	p.20
Map 6. Primary Tree Cover and Important Hedgerows	p.23
Map 7. Viewpoint Locations	p.25
Map 8. Village Spatial Policies Map	p.26

1. INTRODUCTION

*A neighbourhood plan gives communities power to shape the future development and growth of their local area. It allows communities to choose where new homes, shops, offices and community facilities should be built, and what they should look like. Once 'made' it forms part of the statutory development plan, and is used by the local planning authority in making decisions on planning applications. – **Cheshire Community Action 'Introduction to Neighbourhood Plans'***

"Decisions should be made by people who live in Marton, not outsiders" - a resident

1A. BACKGROUND

The Localism Bill was presented to Parliament in 2010.

In March 2012 the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with immediate effect. This legislation replaced the former planning regulations with a new planning rulebook which puts localism at the heart of future planning.

In April 2012 regulations governing Neighbourhood Planning came into force.

Neighbourhood Plans allow a community to set out a vision for an area and planning policies for the use and development of land.

1B. PLANNING POWERS

A Neighbourhood Plan must be compatible with national policies and with the policies in the authority's local plan. The Cheshire East Local Plan which will be the new Development Plan for Cheshire East is currently being prepared and will guide development up to 2030.

Before the adoption of the new Local Plan, the Saved Policies from the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, Cheshire Waste Plan and Cheshire Minerals Plan will continue to be used for the Marton area.

Cheshire East Council submitted its Local Plan Strategy to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 20th May 2014 and it is currently undergoing independent examination. The examination was suspended as the Borough Council undertook further work following the first round of examination hearings held in Autumn 2014 and the Planning Inspector's written comments arising from those hearings. The examination was resumed in October 2015.

Given the requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and not to promote less development than the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies, it is prudent to have regard to the emerging Local Plan. The suggested modifications to the Plan which

were sent to the Inspector were agreed at Cabinet in July 2015 and proposed that 2950 new homes should be provided in the rural area up to 2030. Due to commitments and completions, this left a requirement of 1452 throughout the rural area of Cheshire East. The most up to date information (Feb 2016) in Appendix A of the updated draft Local Plan, indicates that with completions (642), commitments (1051), Strategic Sites and Site Allocations (275 and 1250) a total figure of 3218 is achieved.

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot stop development, but it can be used to guide it.

Before a Neighbourhood Plan can be adopted, it is subject to an independent examination and to a referendum held within the community (where it must receive over 50% of the votes).

If adopted, it becomes part of the statutory development plan, with legal weight, and will be used in making decisions on planning applications.

1C. OUR APPROACH

The Parish Council of the village of Marton, in Cheshire East, decided in autumn 2014 to be one of the first small villages to develop a neighbourhood plan, in order to protect the interests of the village. The Council created a Steering Group, consisting of four Parish Councillors: David McGowan, Lucy Nixon, Dick Schwendener and Sue Webborn.

We have consulted the people who live and work in Marton, in order to find out what they hope Marton will be in 2030. We have worked with Cheshire East to help develop the plan. And we have consulted the major landowner in the area (Capesthorpe Estate), businesses and organisations within the village, and groups such as the Cheshire East Rambling Society, the Church of England and Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

We invited the Deputy Leader of Cheshire East Council, Cllr David Brown, to talk to the village about the Cheshire East Local Plan in March 2014, when he advised us that the wishes of the village would be taken into account when allocating the development of new homes to rural areas. He also said that brownfield development was to be preferred.

The Leader of Cheshire East Council, Cllr Michael Jones, came to talk to the Parish Council in February 2015, when he advised that an application to have the area between Marton and Congleton designated as a green gap would be well received by Cheshire East Planning.

We engaged expert consultants to conduct surveys and assessments, and to provide planning advice. These were:

- Nigel Curtis, Director, Progress10 Design
- Lucy Hughes, Community Led Planning Officer, Cheshire Community Action
- Roger Lomas, Managing Director of eSCAPE Urbanists
- Richard Turkington, Director, Housing Vision Ltd

2. PROCESS

The development of the plan has drawn heavily on the Village Plan, which was developed in May 2014 (see Appendix 6) following consultation with local residents.

We expect that the development of the Plan will take a year. The steps of the process we are following are:

- Setting up a steering group
 - This group consists primarily of Parish Councillors and has met regularly to discuss progress (see appendix 6)
 - Cheshire East Council Neighbourhood Planning Manager, Tom Evans, has frequently attended these meetings
- Applying for a neighbourhood area designation
 - This was agreed by Cheshire East in February 2015
- Creating a project plan
- Issuing a questionnaire to the village
 - This was issued in March 2015
- Holding a village meeting
 - This was held in March 2015
- Drafting the plan
 - This was done in Summer 2015
- Undertaking a transport assessment
 - This was done in Summer 2015
- Applying for funding
 - This was done in Autumn 2015
- Issuing a housing needs survey
 - This was done in Autumn 2015
- Undertaking a landscape and settlement character assessment
 - This was done in Autumn 2015
- Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance
 - This was done in Autumn 2015
- Updating the plan with information from assessments and surveys
 - This was done in Autumn 2015
- Consulting the community on the draft plan
- Submitting the plan to Cheshire East for examination
- Considering the examiner's recommendations
- Publication of the referendum information statement
- Referendum
- Publication and Making of the Neighbourhood Plan

3. THE PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

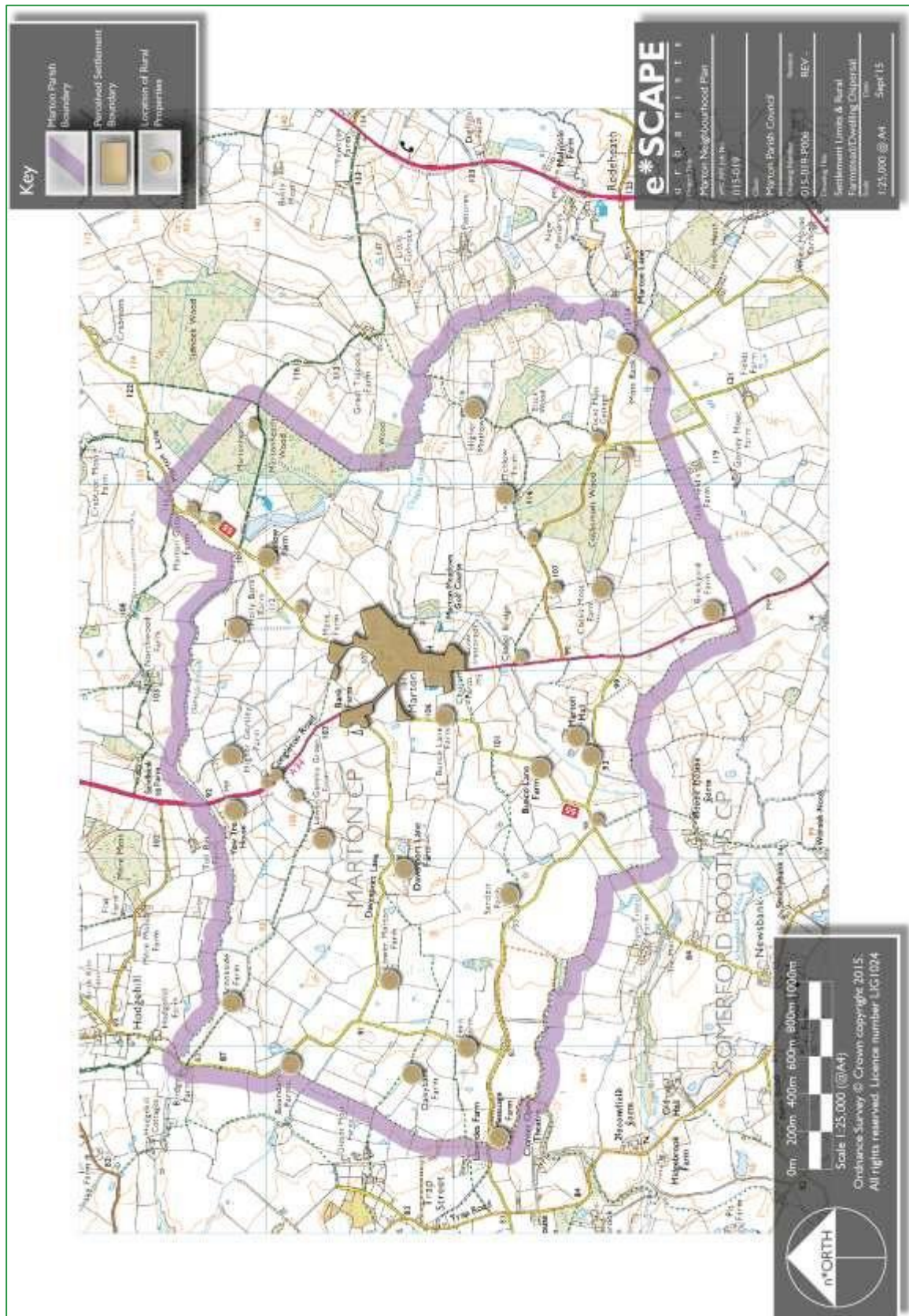
The area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is aligned with the parish boundary (marked in *purple below*).



Map 1: Neighbourhood Plan Area

The Neighbourhood Plan Area of Marton is primarily farmland, with a central core of 54 dwellings.

The remaining 51 houses are scattered farms and cottages along the country lanes. See settlement map overleaf.



4. DESCRIPTION OF MARTON

Marton is a small rural village situated on the A34 between Congleton and Monks Heath surrounded on all sides by open countryside.

The population of fewer than 250 people mostly reside within the village core with the remainder living in the outlying areas.

Historically, Marton was a rural community comprising of farmlands whose produce supplied the markets of Macclesfield and Congleton. In more recent times the population has decreased with the majority now commuting to work elsewhere or retired from work.

Marton contains a number of ancient listed buildings, the most important being the 14th century timber framed church of St James and St Paul. Founded in 1343 by local landowner Sir John de Davenport, it was originally a chapel, and was raised to the status of parish church in 1370. It has a wood shingled bell-tower, and black and white half-timbering; it is one of the ancient timber-framed churches of Cheshire, and considered one of the oldest longitudinal timber churches of Europe. It has medieval wall paintings on the west wall.

Another notable feature is the Marton Oak which is listed among the 50 most important trees in the country. It is estimated to be at least 1200 years old.

In the centre of the village we have a restaurant, café, pub, beauty therapist and gift shop, plus a 9-hole par 3 golf course; and, nearby, a series of trout pools that serve the fishing community. A set of cycle routes pass through the village, as do a network of footpaths and bridleways.

The village also contains a single-entry Church of England aided primary school and nursery, serving six surrounding villages and north Congleton. This school was established about 40 years ago, when the village schools in seven villages were closed and amalgamated on the site in Marton.

There are no rail or bus services within the village or from the village travelling to local towns.

The pub, the Davenport Arms, dates back to the 18th century, when local justice used to be dispensed there. In addition, tenants of the estate went to the 'sweating room' there to pay their rent to the bailiffs.

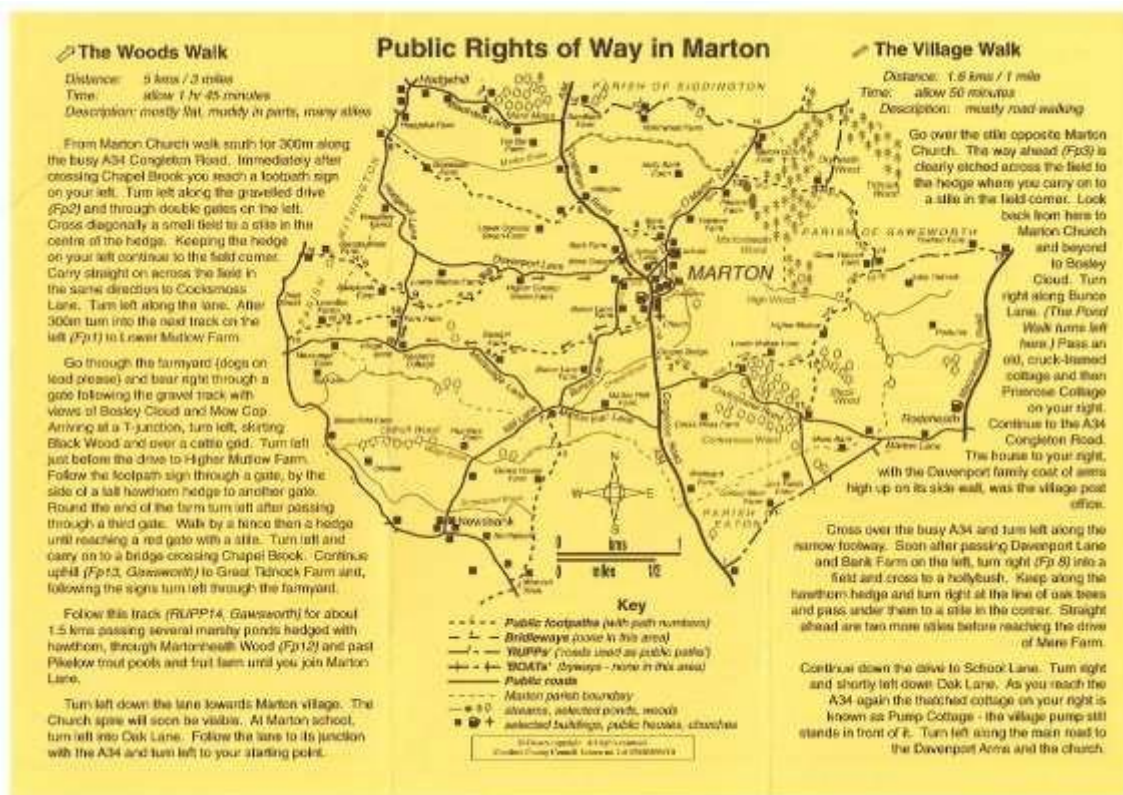
The Davenport family were Master Sergeants of Macclesfield Forest, with the power of life and death over wrongdoers, and their crest—a felon's head with a rope around his neck—is visible on the gable end of some of the properties.

The village retains some village traditions, notably the annual village Wakes, at which the village Rose Queen is crowned, and the annual Gooseberry Show. Marton trout pools also host a biennial event for the RSPB.



Pump Cottage, Marton

Image credit: www.cheshirenow.co.uk



Copyright: Cheshire County Council

4A. BRIEF HISTORY

The old village of Marton, with its distinctive black and white church, is situated close to the A34. In the Domesday Book, Marton is listed as 'Meretune', which became 'Merton' in 1248. The meaning is 'the tun (homestead) by a lake'. The settlement was named after Marton Mere, which has now been drained. The Domesday Book records that it was held by Gordic, and the lands owned by Earl Hugh.

Marton was a township in the ancient parishes of Prestbury and Gawsorth, Macclesfield hundred, and became a civil parish in 1866. It includes the hamlets of Cockmoss, Gorsley Green, Mutlow and Pikelow.¹

The population has declined over the years (with a recent upsurge), though the number of dwellings has grown slowly over time, notably in about 1954, when 14 council houses were built on Oak Lane (and later mostly sold into private ownership) and then again in 1968 when 6 bungalows were built in Oak View and in the 1980s when 9 social housing dwellings were added in Oak View.

	1801	1851	1871	1901	1951	2011
Pop.	310	313	296	289	227	245

In 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* described Marton like this:

MARTON, a village and a township-chapelry in Prestbury parish, Cheshire. The village stands 3½ miles W by N of North Rode Junction r. station, and 3½ N by W of Congleton; and has a post office under Congleton. The chapelry comprises 1,947 acres. Real property, £3,947. Pop., 296. Houses, 49. The property belongs to A. H. Davenport, Esq. Marton Hall was formerly the seat of the Davenport family; and is a half-timbered building, now used as a farm-house. The living is a p. curacy in the diocese of Chester. Value, £66. Patron, A. H. Davenport, Esq. The church was built about 1343; consists of nave and chancel, with short wooden spire; and is a curious half-timbered structure. There is a national school.

Sadly, the railway station at North Rode no longer exists; nor does the Marton post office.

¹ Information on this page is from:

<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/place/1451>
<http://www.ukbmd.org.uk/genuki/chs/marton1.html>

4B. MARTON TODAY

We are a village of around 245 people, living in 105 households.

Based on the 2011 census, we know that:

- Our population is older than the average in Cheshire East, which is, in turn, older than that of England as a whole.
- Average weekly income is higher in Marton than in Cheshire East or in England as a whole, with fewer than average benefits, council tax or pension credit claimants living here.
- But housing costs are higher, which means that the average net income, while slightly higher than elsewhere, is not significantly greater.
 - However, this is an average, and individual incomes vary greatly. Over 18% of our households are estimated to be in fuel poverty compared to a national average of just under 11%. Note: fuel poverty means a household needs to spend over 10% of its income on fuel, and in 2011, when this census was taken, the oil price was high.
- Marton has an unusually high proportion of detached houses
- Marton has a higher than average proportion of rented houses
- Houses in Marton tend to be in higher council tax bands.
- Individual Marton households are not overcrowded, and we do have empty houses (though not as many as the average in England).

Population

Our population is older than the average and – perhaps as a consequence, we have, on average, more people living with a limiting illness

Housing types and density

We are not overcrowded. We have a high proportion of:

- Detached houses
- Rented houses

- Nearly 5% of households do not have central heating (vs. the average in England of 2.7%), and this may also contribute to the high proportion of households estimated to be in fuel poverty.
- Marton has more people living with a limiting long-term illness than the average in Cheshire East or in the UK. This may be because we have an older than average population.
- While we have a more-or-less typical proportion of economically active residents, we have an unusually high number of people who:
 - Are self-employed
 - Work from home
 - Work over 49 hours per week.

This is probably due to the rural nature of the village, and the high proportion of farms, though we do have a significant number of other people working in business consultant roles.

- The average proportion of people employed in agriculture in rural areas is 3%; Marton has 20% of its population working in agriculture.

Housing costs and fuel costs

Housing costs are higher than average.

Over 18% of our households are estimated to live in fuel poverty. 5% of households do not have central heating

Work

We have a high proportion of people who are self-employed – and a high proportion who work from home

- In Marton, we rely heavily on the car as a mode of transport, as there is no public transport available.

Households in Marton tend to have more cars available to them than the average; probably because each adult in a working household would need to travel to a different work location.

- However, we have a high number of people who work from home (around 17.5% vs. the average in England of 3.5%).
- The lack of public transport from here is a significant problem for those without a car. It would take 80-84 minutes to get to a hospital, supermarket or town centre from here without a car, compared to 10-33 minutes average travel time across Cheshire East.

Travel

There is no public transport. It would take nearly 1.5 hours to walk to a hospital or supermarket.

Work

20% of our working population work in agriculture; the average in rural areas nationwide is 3%. A high proportion of our working population work over 49 hours / week

4C. MARTON'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Listed buildings are of special architectural or historic interest. There are just under 500,000 such buildings in the UK. For our size, we have a surprisingly high number of listed buildings.



Interior of Church of St James and St Paul, Marton

Image credit: www.cheshirenow.co.uk

Listed buildings in Marton include:

Grade I:	Church of St James and St Paul
- Buildings of exceptional interest, sometimes considered to be internationally important. Only 2.5% of listed buildings are Grade 1	
Grade II*	<none>
Grade II :	Cross in churchyard of St James and St Paul
- Buildings that are nationally important, and of special interest.	Cherry Tree Cottage
	Lower Gorsley Green Farmhouse
	Greenacre
	Holly Bank Farm
	Lower Marton Farmhouse
	Oak Cottage
	Oak Farm
	Pump Cottage

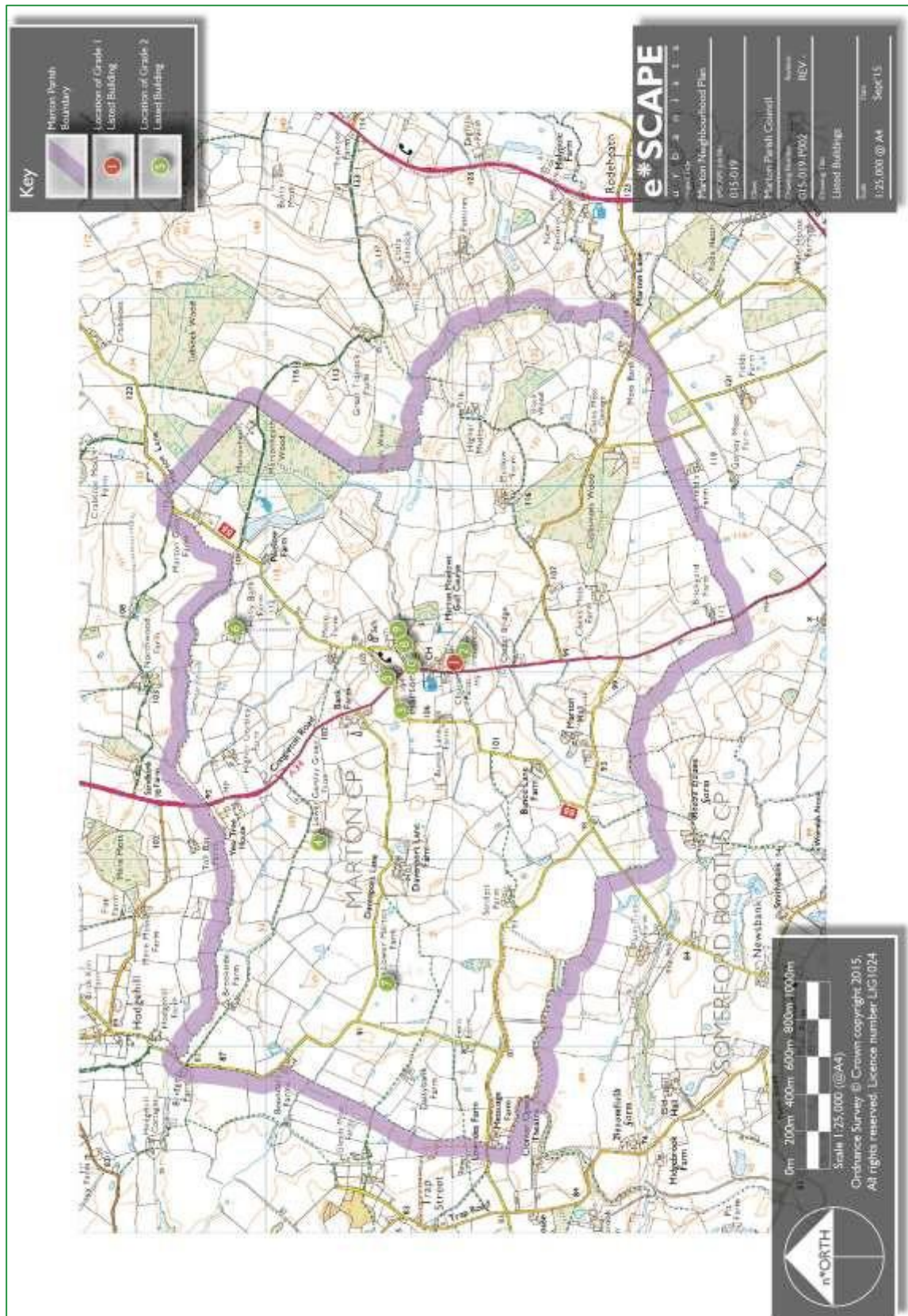
Not counting the church, or the cross in the churchyard, this is 7.6% of the houses in our village—a significant proportion. These are primarily houses built before 1840, with a few being built before 1700.

Most of the listed buildings in our parish are within the central core of the village. See the map of listed buildings overleaf.

How important are our historic buildings?

Average score from residents:

8.7 out of 10



Map 3: Listed Buildings

4D. MARTON'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

We have a network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes through our village, which are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. (See map of pathways overleaf).

We have a variety of birds and wildlife living in and around the village: from bats, buzzards and badgers, to hares and herons, foxes, red-legged partridge and woodpeckers. At Marton Heath trout pools, some 30 different species of farm and woodland birds use the feeders each day.



Image credits: David Taylor

We also have streams running through the village, and a small natural pond which is left untended as a wildlife habitat. (See map of water features).

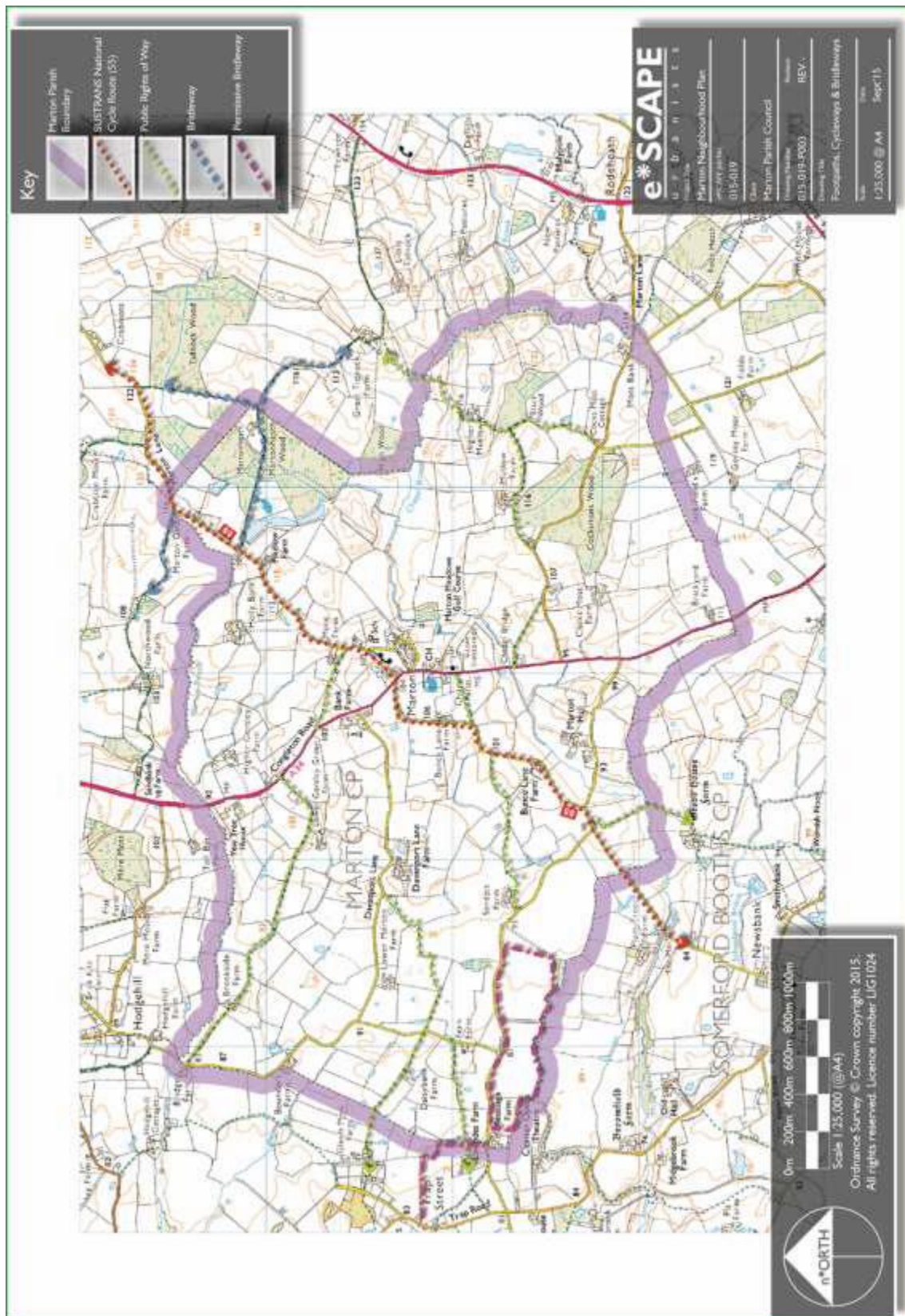




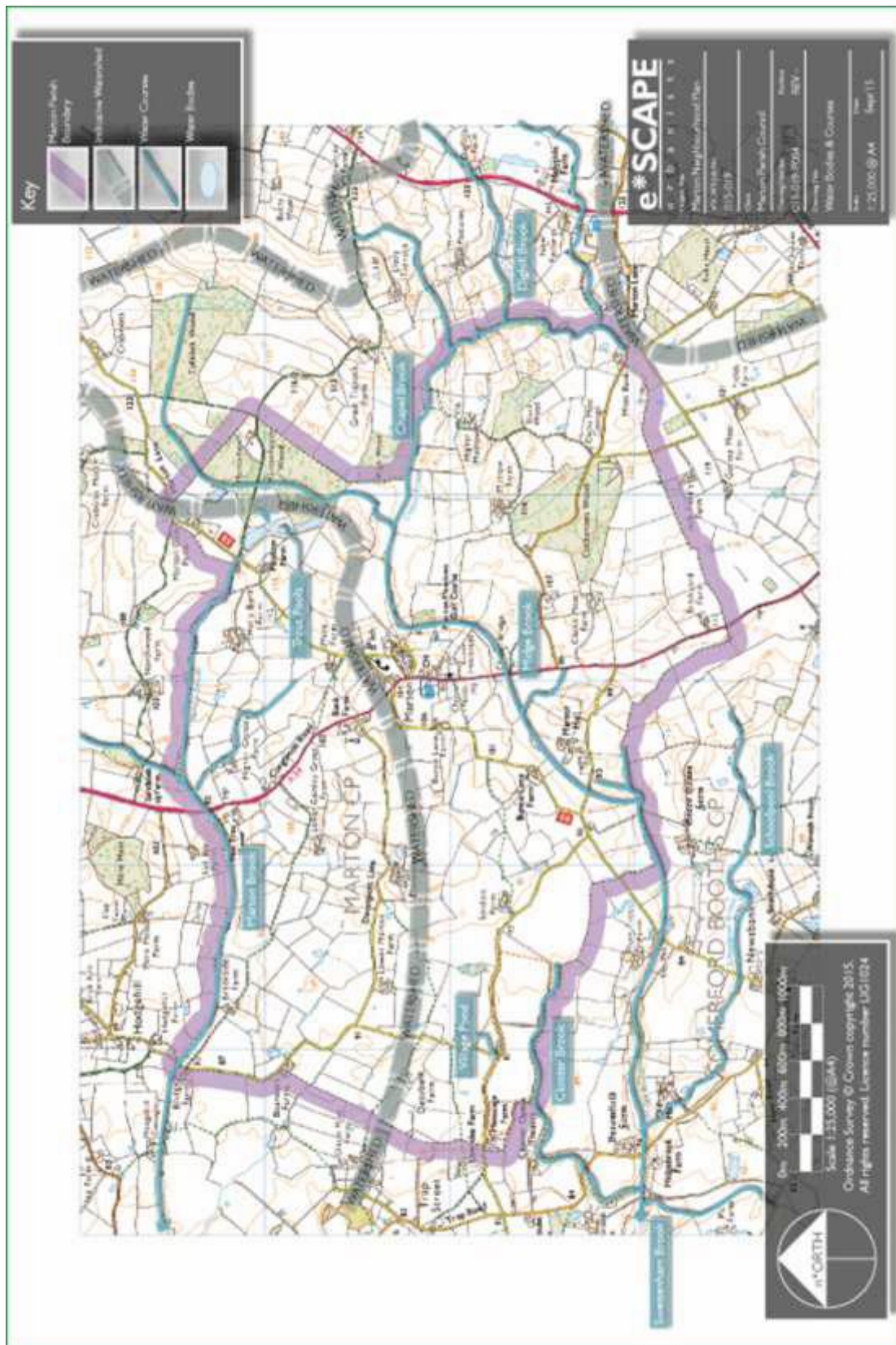
How important is the natural environment?

Average score from residents:

9.3 out of 10



Map 4: Footpaths, Cycleways and Bridleways



Map 5: Water Bodies and Courses

Trees and hedges

The Marton Oak is a sessile oak tree which is said to be 1200 years old. It is one of the biggest oak trees in Britain, and was named as one of the 50 Great British Trees by the Tree Council in 2002.



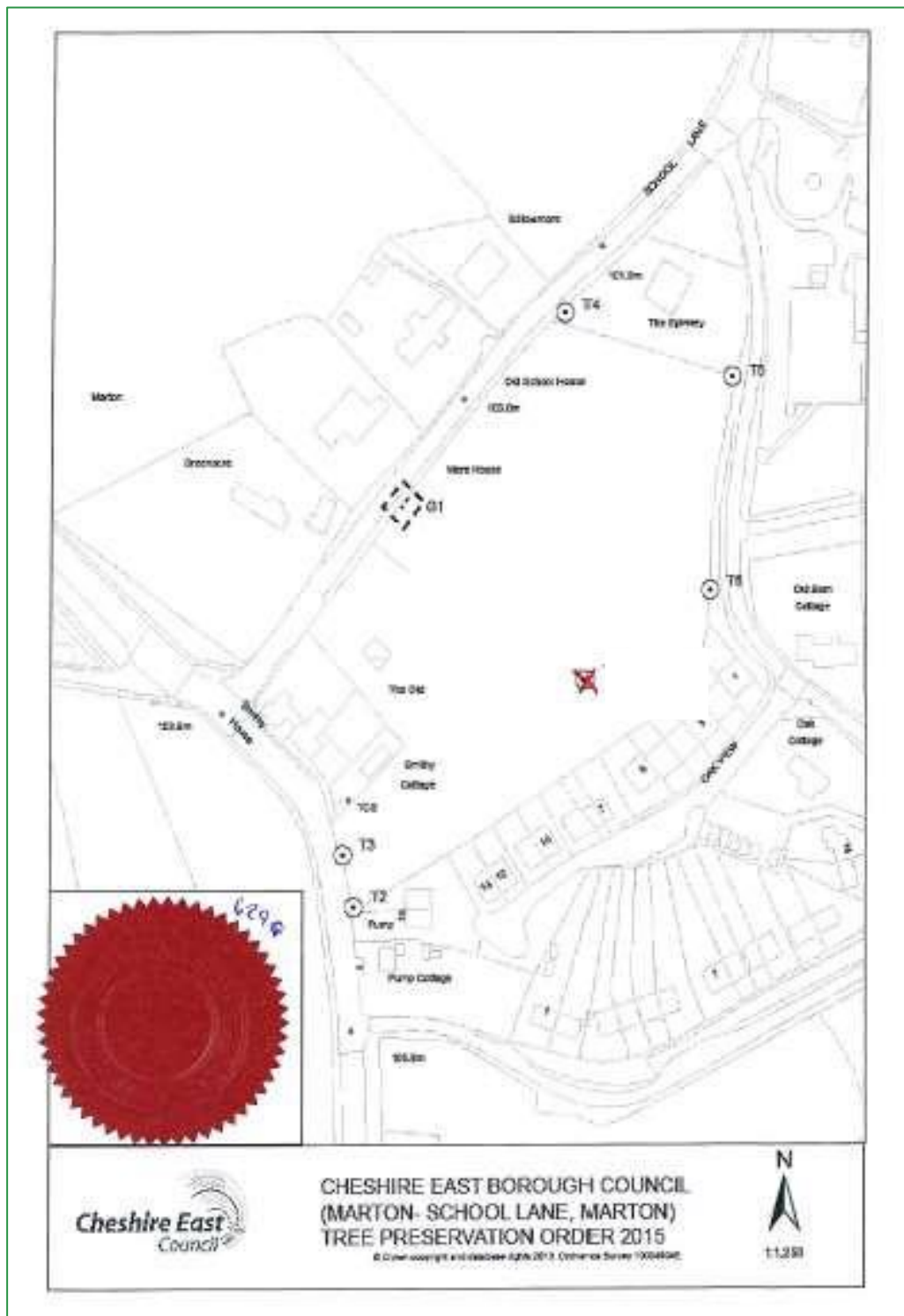
Image credit: John Beresford

Trees play an important role in the village: the Parish Council has an on-going tree planting scheme; the village has a Tree Warden, and a young orchard has recently been planted on the public verges of the green space known locally as the Folly.

There are tree preservation orders on six trees in the centre of the village (see diagram overleaf) and on the Marton Oak.

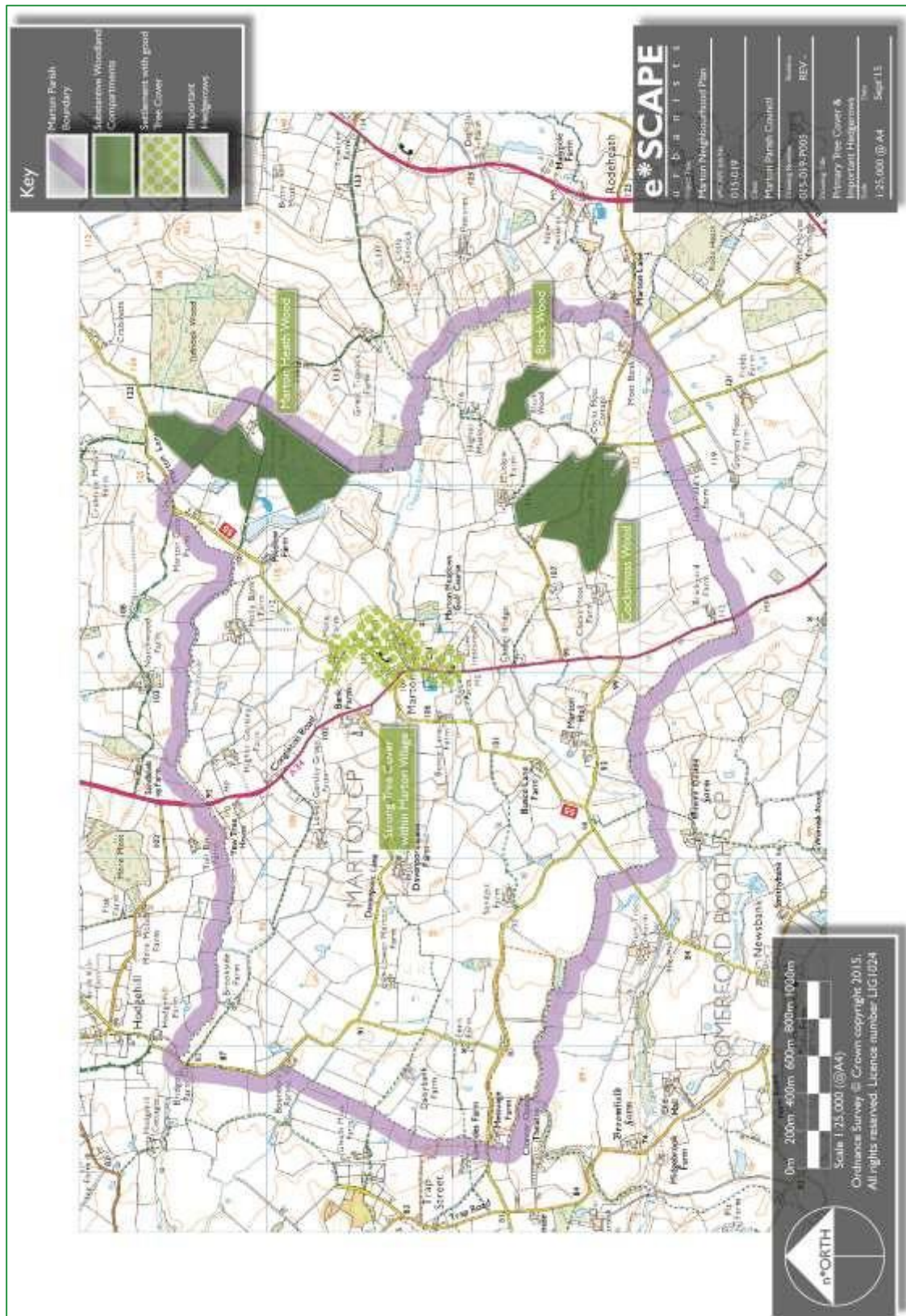
The village orchard

Planted in 2013 - and extended in 2014 - by the tree warden and family (as part of the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, supported by the Parish Council), this plantation includes traditional Cheshire varieties. Some of the trees are sponsored by local businesses and individuals.



Woodlands and green space

There are three woodland areas in Marton: Marton Heath Wood, Cocks Moss Wood and Black Wood. In addition, there is a field in the core of the village, grazed by cows or sheep, and a stretch of green space along the A34 containing the village orchard and the Millennium circle. See map overleaf.



Map 6: Primary Tree Cover and Important Hedgerows

4E. MARTON'S VISUAL AMENITY

The Key Views Map (overleaf) identifies the location of key views that can be found within the village and in the surrounding landscape.

Marton has a number of locations which capture long range views to important landscape features such as Gawsworth Common, Bosley Cloud and the folly of Mow Cop Castle. At close quarters the Church of St James and St Paul is visible from the lanes and public footpaths in the vicinity of the village core. The views illustrate how the rural countryside provide an appropriate and historic setting to the heritage asset that the church provides and ranges from views of the full façade or limited to just the spire.

Important views can be categorised into those within the village core and those that are experienced in the surrounding countryside. The following is a general overview of the visual amenity—please see the Key Views Map to identify viewpoints, and the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment to see images from these viewpoints.

Viewpoints 1-3 illustrate the views out to the east and south from the vicinity of the Church of St James and St Paul. These views include a panorama that captures Gawsworth Common, the Bosley Cloud and even Mow Cop when viewed from the A34.

Viewpoints 4 and 5 are in the vicinity of Bunce Lane and illustrate that the steeple of the Church is experienced on the adjacent public footpath. This is important in terms of the setting of the listed building.

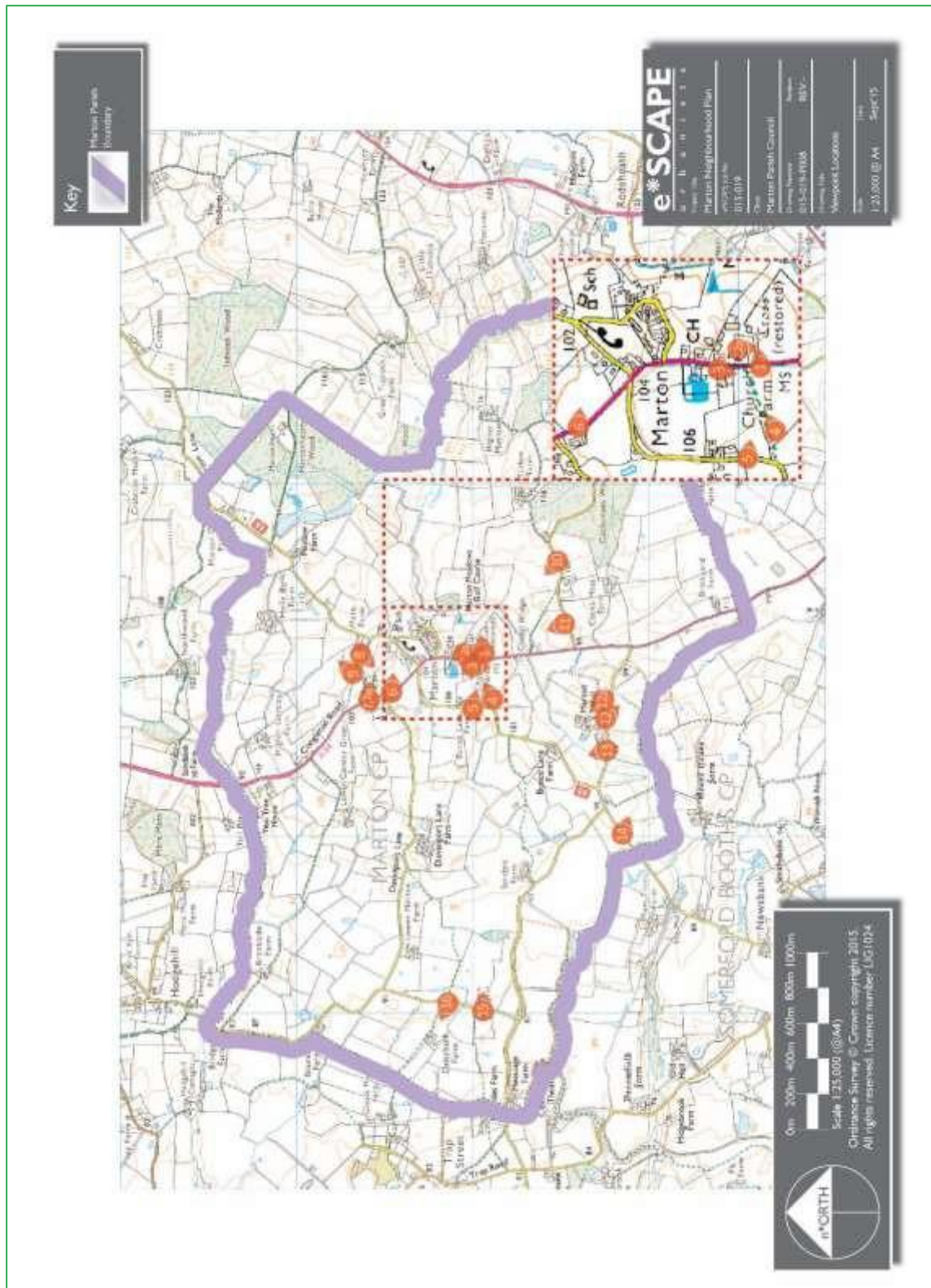
Viewpoints 6-9 illustrate the quality and character of the surrounding landscape to the north of the village and here views of Gawsworth Common to the east are experienced in localised places such as openings to the hedgerows for access into fields.

Viewpoints 10 and 11 are located on Cocks Moss Lane and are particularly significant in terms of the setting of the Church of St James and St Paul.

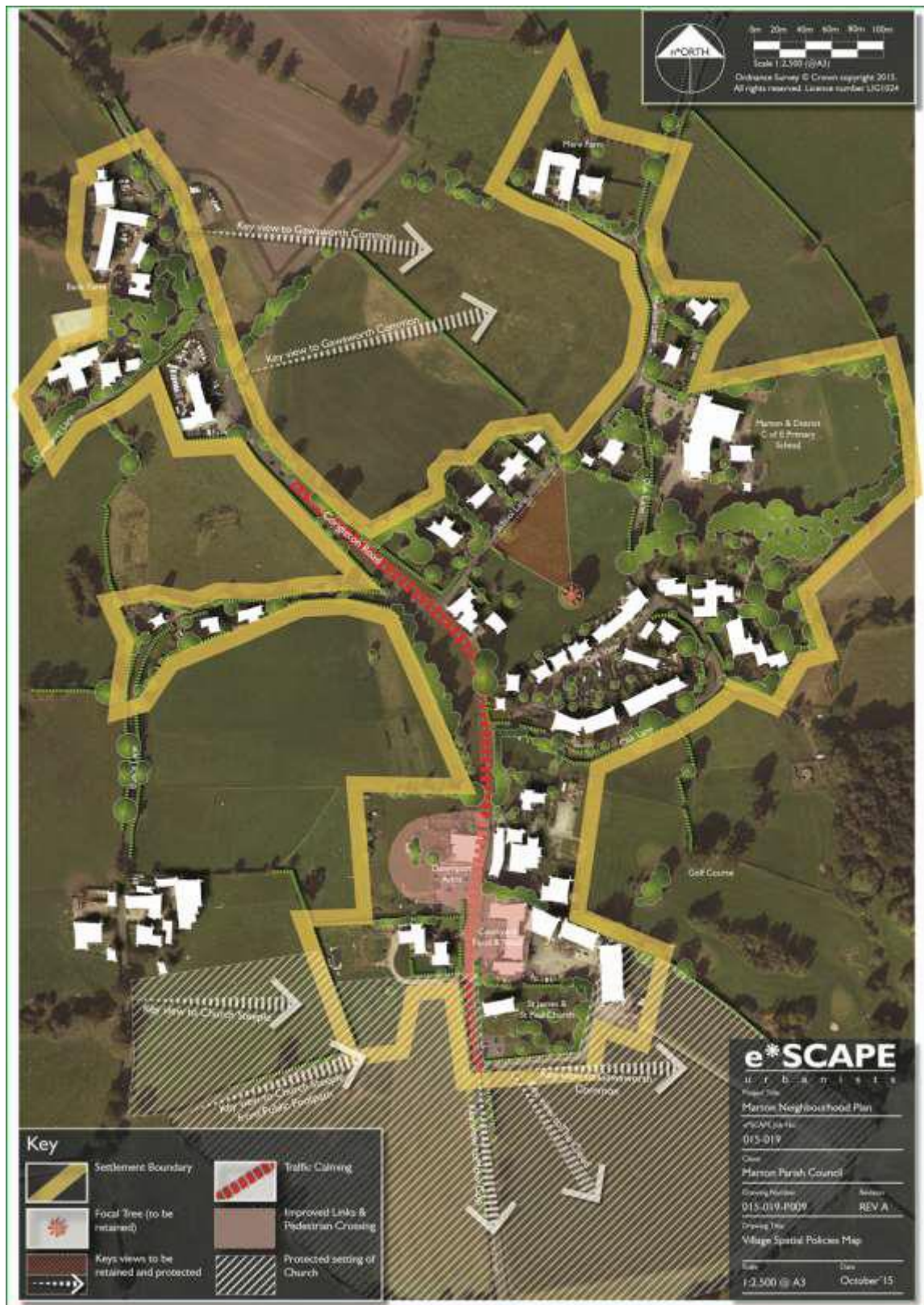
Viewpoints 12-14 are located south of the village on Marton Hall Lane and capture the character of the landscape in and around Marton Hall. Jodrell Bank can be seen when looking north as well as glimpses of Gawsworth Common to the east. Marton Hall is set within a parkland landscape as illustrated in Viewpoint 12a.

Viewpoints 15 and 16 are located to the west of the parish boundary on Hodgehill Lane and capture long range views to the east and south. The typical parkland tree lined avenue leading to Daisy Bank Farm is illustrated in Viewpoint 16 and captures the character of the surrounding parkland landscape.

In addition to the long range views, shorter range views over the paddock in the heart of the village are enjoyed by the residents who live in the surrounding houses. (See the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment).



Map 7: Viewpoint Locations



Map 8: Village Spatial Policies Map

5A. POSITIVE VIEWS OF MARTON

In general, people who live in Marton are happy to live here. They like:

- the rural setting of the village (fields, wildlife, cattle, views...)
- the close-knit, friendly community
- the peace and quiet
- the village pub, restaurant and café
- the ancient buildings
- the fact that it is a farming community
- the small size of the village
- that it is unspoilt, with open space
- countryside activities
- the village traditions
- the primary school
- the low density of housing
- the low population
- our historic tree
- the diversity of the people and of the dwellings in the village
- the fact that it is safe
- the lack of street lighting, so that the night skies are visible

This word cloud indicates the frequency with which people mentioned each item in their questionnaires; the bigger the word, the more frequent the mention.



5B. ISSUES FACED BY RESIDENTS

During the consultation process in March 2015, people were invited to list the things that they don't like about living in Marton. These are:

- parking issues around school pickup/drop off times
- traffic on the A34 (speed, volume, noise, pollution)
- volume of school traffic on Oak Lane and School Lane
- lack of public transport
- slow internet / poor mobile signal
- no village hall, community centre or sports facilities
- no traditional village shop or post office
- litter
- no mains gas
- poor quality roads with potholes
- lack of pavements and cycle paths on the narrow lanes
- power cuts and water shut-offs
- incivility of cyclists
- lack of footpaths across fields
- no longer a farming community
- would like to see stronger involvement with the village from Church and school

This word cloud indicates the frequency with which people mentioned each item in their questionnaires; the bigger the word, the more frequent the mention.



How important is the (lack of) infrastructure?

Average score from residents:

7.6 out of 10

How important is the issue of transport and roads?

Average score from residents:

6.7 out of 10

5C. FEARS FOR THE FUTURE

We invited local people to comment on their fears for the future of the village as part of the consultation process. These are listed below

- Housing developments:
 - that alter the character of the village
 - that are intrusive, badly designed and unsympathetic
 - that are too large, and disproportionate to the size of the village
 - which the village infrastructure cannot support
 - in the centre of the village
 - that damage the diversity of property types
 - that worsen the traffic issues
- Changes to the setting of the village in its natural environment
 - Loss of green spaces surrounding the village
 - Sand quarrying
- Changes to the nature of the village
 - Loss of the sense of community
 - Loss of farms and dairy herds
 - The village becoming a dormitory village because of lack of local jobs and public transport
 - Farms being developed as barn conversions
 - Large houses being built for people who don't want to be part of the village
 - Overpopulation
 - Loss of the village pub
- Major housing and road developments to the north and south leading to:
 - Increased traffic through the village
 - Increased size of lorries travelling through the village
 - Increased noise and pollution
 - Encroachment of housing from north and south
- Damage to our rural lanes that cannot support the volume of school/commuter traffic
- Business risks
 - High business rates
- Infrastructure issues
 - Slow internet speeds
- Lack of any development
- Demographic issues
 - Ageing population
- Environmental issues
 - Effects on the water table of mass development

- Pollution
 - Developments that affect wildlife
- A bypass cutting through the village

Note that because these are comments made by individuals, some contradict the ideas for the future put forward by other individuals. We have tried to bring together these ideas into a cohesive whole that represents the views of the majority of the village.

6. VISION

The Parish Council invited comment on a draft vision for Marton:

IN 2030 MARTON WILL BE A SMALL BUT THRIVING RURAL COMMUNITY FOR RESIDENTS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES, PRESERVING ITS ANCIENT BUILDINGS AND RURAL CHARACTER WHILE BENEFITING FROM MODERN TECHNOLOGIES.

Most respondents were broadly in agreement with this statement. 30% of respondents wished to see no change in the village.

Based on the additional comments received, we have revised this statement to read:

IN 2030 MARTON WILL BE A QUIET, SMALL, RURAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY WITH A THRIVING RURAL ECONOMY. MARTON WILL MAINTAIN ITS VARIED, MIXED-AGE POPULATION AND A STRONG SENSE OF VILLAGE COMMUNITY. IT WILL PRESERVE ITS TRADITIONS, ANCIENT BUILDINGS AND RURAL CHARACTER WHILE BENEFITING FROM MODERN TECHNOLOGIES.

Specific suggestions for the village raised in response to this statement have been covered elsewhere in this document.

7. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

In order to achieve this vision, we have identified 6 objectives and a variety of associated policies.

The policies are to be read in conjunction with the Marton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance (appendix 1), the Marton Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (appendix 3) and the Key Views in the Spatial Policy Map (section 4E).

1. RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE

Marton will have a slightly larger population due to carefully planned and proportionate increases in housing preferably created through brownfield development, conversions of existing buildings or through infill development of an appropriate density, scale and size.

The size and design of any such development should be in keeping with Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance, the local vernacular and with the surrounding rural hinterland. Note: infill development is the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage. A small gap is one which could be filled by one or two houses.

POLICIES

Marton is a rural settlement. No strategic need has been identified to deliver housing beyond local needs in either the existing Macclesfield Borough Local Plan or the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan. This neighbourhood plan proposes to meet local needs arising from the existing population.

Local housing needs will be met through:

- The redevelopment of brownfield sites
- Infill (see definition above)
- Conversions
- And at the edge of the existing settlement in locations that will not cause harm to the wider landscape and setting of Marton.

Policies to meet the objective are:

RCD1 Following Cheshire East policy guidelines, development will be supported on brownfield sites, but all applications will be considered on their individual merit.

- RCD2 Residential development will be acceptable where it meets an identified local need, in line with the historic development of the village on a piecemeal basis. See the LSCA
- RCD3 Development on any given plot should be of a scale appropriate to the location, of appropriate density, and fit in with the existing rural character and surroundings of the village as detailed in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA) and Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance
- RCD4 Development should meet the needs of the village in terms of tenure, type and size of dwellings, to suit the needs of different groups of the population as detailed in the Housing Needs Assessment
- RCD5 Development should be in keeping with the existing buildings in the village as detailed in the LSCA and reflect the traditional vernacular of the village in terms of layout, density and appearance
- RCD6 Development must not have a negative impact on the natural and historic environment of Marton and to this end should conform with the spatial policy maps of this plan
- RCD7 New homes, extensions and other buildings should be of a quality and form appropriate to their local context and meet the quality and design standards outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance at Appendix 1
- RCD8 Future development should reflect the traditional density of the village (5-15 dwellings per hectare) and set in well wooded grounds
- RCD9 The height and mass of new or altered buildings should not dominate their surroundings
- RCD10 Building materials and architectural detailing should be compatible with other buildings in the vicinity
- RCD11 Extensions should relate well to the existing building reflecting its form and materials, ensuring the original integrity is retained, and should not be overly dominant
- RCD12 Any need for additional housing would best be met by small scale development with individual character, such as conversion of redundant farm buildings and infill development.

Assessment of Local Housing Need

The Housing Need Assessment highlighted four households who identified a need for housing. The findings of the Housing Need Assessment align with our own assessment of the natural minimal ebb and flow of housing requirements in a small settlement such as Marton.

2. TRANSPORT, SCHOOL AND PARKING

OBJECTIVE

Reduce the problems of congestion outside school and improve safety

The school was established to replace the village schools in Marton and the surrounding villages, and plays an important role in the village, educating a number of our primary school-age children and hosting many meetings and events throughout the year, including the annual Village Wakes. However, because an increasing number of pupils come from outside the area, and do not qualify for free bus passes, they have to travel by car. This has created a problem of congestion and safety issues outside the school, which in turn has increased the burden on our narrow lanes due to parked cars, cars attempting to park and turn, and over-large buses.

POLICY

TSP1 Proposals to improve the parking provision within the curtilage of the school will be supported as this would improve the safety of the children and of parents bringing their children to school

3. PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, GREEN SPACES AND LOCAL WILDLIFE

OBJECTIVE

To maintain and enhance the rural environment of Marton and to protect it from inappropriate development encroaching on the village from the north of Congleton and the south of Macclesfield.

The expansion of both towns could undermine our small rural village with increased traffic and inappropriate development, either of which could potentially damage the character of our village. We wish to remain an independent village rather than become a suburb of a larger town.

The surrounding landscape character with views to the countryside and distant hills is a valuable asset that needs to be taken into consideration by future and potential developers. Tidnock Wood, Cockswood Wood and Marton Heath are Sites of Biological Importance, and are

protected by policy NE12 in the Macclesfield Local Plan. The central recommendation of the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment was that the paddock in the heart of the village should be retained as a green space.

POLICIES

- PE1 The landscape surrounding the settlement of Marton is a highly valued local resource and any development proposal should mitigate the impact on its surroundings

- PE2 Any appropriate proposals to maintain and enhance the network of public footpaths, bridleways and cycleways will be supported. Additionally, links and improvements to the existing network of public footpaths, bridleways and cycleways will be sought in connection with new developments to improve access to the countryside

- PE3 New housing development should install bird and bat boxes wherever possible

- PE4 Proposals which enhance the green space at the centre of the village and at the spinney will be supported. It is essential that views to the mature sycamore within the paddock off School Lane are retained and respected as part of any potential development. The paddock and spinney in the heart of the village should be retained as open green space

- PE5 Development proposals must not harm the Marton Oak or its setting. Potential development must demonstrate how the oak and its setting remain unaffected as a result of the proposals.

- PE6 Any proposals to maintain and enhance the woodlands of Cocksmoss, Black Wood, and Marton Heath Wood and to create wildlife corridors in farmland to enable wildlife to move between these woodlands will be supported

- PE7 Ancient hedgerows and valued trees must be preserved, and development which would adversely impact upon them will not normally be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of development are considered to outweigh the benefit of preserving trees and hedgerows, development will be permitted subject to appropriate mitigation. The retention of trees and hedgerows in situ will always be preferable

- PE8 The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (appendix 3) and the Village Spatial Policies Map (section 4E) have identified key views within the village as well as views out to the surrounding countryside. Development must demonstrate that the views are retained and integrated within the proposals

- PE9 Dark skies are to be preferred over street lights. We have minimal street lighting at the moment – 4 street lights on Oak View. Any future lighting systems should complement the design of any development which in turn should be in keeping with the village character (see LSCA). In all cases, outdoor lighting sources should have a minimum impact

on the environment, should minimise light pollution, and should minimise adverse effects on wildlife. All lighting shall comply with BS5489---1:2013 (or its successor). As and when existing lighting systems are maintained and replaced they should be updated to meet modern low environmental impact standards.

PE10 Opportunities to incorporate features into new build or extensions which are beneficial to wildlife should be undertaken wherever possible, such as the installation of bird and bat boxes

PE11 Vehicular access arrangements must not be detrimental to the character of village lanes

PE12 Verges, trees and hedgerows along country lanes should be retained

PE13 The key views into and from the village, as detailed in the Neighbourhood Plan and LSCA, must be respected.

4. TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

OBJECTIVE

Marton will have calmer, slower traffic through the village on the A34.

We have made good progress in increasing the safety of our residents and visitors by instigating the introduction of speed limits through the village and on the main road on each side of the village. However, many vehicles passing through our village continue to travel too fast on roads that are not designed for high speed travel. We have an ongoing dialogue with our local PCSO and have instigated the periodic use of a speed indicator.

Any additional development must not exacerbate the existing traffic problems and if possible should contribute towards improvement.

POLICIES

TS1 New development should provide safe access to the carriageway

TS2 The impact of the private car on the street scene should be minimised wherever possible. Appropriate new development will be supported where proposals provide off-street parking, do not clutter the public realm, and do not reduce safety for pedestrians and cyclists

- TS3 The numbers of traffic signs should not exceed what is necessary and shall be the minimum size necessary to meet the requirements of safety. The design of signage shall also be suited to the sensitivity of the villagescape
- TS4 Development should be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are shown to be severe. Where appropriate, new development should contribute towards traffic improvements.

5. PROTECTING COMMUNITY ASSETS

OBJECTIVE

Retain and enhance those components of the village that residents value, and which contribute to village life

The amenities within our village are highly valued by residents, and loss of, for example, the village pub, would adversely affect village life. Our primary school is recognised as good, and is an important part of the web of connections within the community. People who live here value the community, and wish to keep and strengthen the community bonds. These community bonds are forged through the farming community, the church, the school and the pub (an important social meeting place that also offers the potential to reinforce community life in the future).

POLICIES

- PCA1 Marton's historical assets, including the ancient oak tree and the listed buildings integral to the character of Marton, should be preserved and enhanced. The Spatial Policies Map identifies locations where the setting of a heritage asset is particularly sensitive to development. In these locations development will only be permitted where proposals make a positive contribution to enhance the asset and its setting.
- PCA2 Commercial proposals to maintain the thriving village centre will be supported provided that they are in keeping with the character of the village. Any changes of use that require planning permission will require a marketing exercise for an appropriate amount of time to demonstrate that the commercial use is no longer viable prior to any proposal to convert to residential property.
- PCA3 A good mix of commercial and residential use should be retained in the village centre. Loss of commercial premises will not be supported

6. SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

OBJECTIVE

Support the growth of the rural economy by retaining and supporting small rural-based businesses within our boundaries

Marton has a significantly higher than average proportion of people who work from home, who work more than 49 hours a week, and/or who are self-employed. We have a significantly higher proportion of people who work in agriculture (even compared to other rural locations). The rural economy and small businesses are a vital part of village life.

POLICIES

- SBS1 Development for new, small, rural based businesses will be supported, particularly on brownfield sites.
- SBS2 The diversification of farms and rural businesses will be supported.
- SBS3 Proposals to provide facilities for home working either by conversion, extension or new build within the curtilage of existing homes, will be supported provided that it is not disproportionate to the existing building and there is no adverse impact on residential amenity.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

This Design Guidance is intended to give advice and guidance to anyone who is considering any form of development in the village, no matter how large or small. It is not only concerned with housing, but covers all types of development with the intention of improving the quality of design in new development, and should support plan preferences which are in line with the adopted policies of the local authority.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Marton has a high proportion of listed buildings of architectural and historical merit, and the range of architectural forms found in the village—from a half-timbered Mediaeval church, Tudor cottages and Georgian farmsteads to Victorian and 20th/21st Century buildings—contributes to an architectural richness.

The charm and character of the village, however, also lies in the relationship and spaces between the buildings, and the rural setting. The community does not favour too prescriptive an approach to future development, recognising that much of what we now value is the result of ‘happy accidents’ and small-scale organic development over a long period in which there were few planning controls. Nonetheless, some principles and guidelines should serve to avoid damage to the heritage and the amenity of residents and visitors.

The historic layout of property boundaries should be preserved with particular attention to be given to boundary treatments and landscaping. The preservation of existing trees, hedgerows and stone/brick walls should be encouraged.

A good mix of commercial and residential use should be maintained in the central village area and every effort made to prevent the loss of commercial premises.

The traditional density of the village is low at between 5 and 15 homes per hectare, with properties set into well wooded grounds. Any further development should reflect these densities.

New development should reflect the existing built form, materials and architectural detailing of the village, for example:

- i) Oak Lane forms a strong and positive relationship between the village’s built form and the countryside, with properties fronting the lane having large front gardens, boundary hedges and retained mature trees.
- ii) To the west of School Lane a handful of detached properties of varying archetypes are

located and whilst the built form is of varying eras they are individually designed,

architecturally interesting and set into mature landscaped gardens which contribute to the village lane feel of School Lane.

iii) Modern or rebuilt cottages in the village on individual plots provide new and creative architectural forms which still follow some of the traditional rules in terms of materials (timber and/or brick with blue slate roofs), massing and density within strongly landscaped plots, whilst adding a new dimension to the vibrancy of the built form in the village.

iv) Many buildings from the Georgian era onwards have been built with the typical and traditional warm brindle multi 'Cheshire brick'. Recent exceptions are very much at odds with the vernacular and rural setting. New development should therefore follow the traditional style of Cheshire brick and blue slate roofs where possible.

The height and mass of any new or altered buildings should not dominate their surroundings. Building materials and architectural detailing should be compatible with other buildings in the vicinity. Any extension should relate well to the existing building reflecting its form and materials, ensuring that its original integrity is retained, and should not be over dominant.

Any need for additional housing would best be met by small-scale developments with individual character. A large new estate, especially one uniform in its house designs and building materials could severely damage the character—and upset the balance—of the village.

There is a need to protect the street scene by ensuring that the number of traffic signs, advertisements etc. do not exceed what may be necessary to meet the requirements of safety and commercial viability.

OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

Opportunities to incorporate features into new build or extensions which are beneficial to wildlife should be undertaken wherever possible, such as the installation of bird and bat boxes.

Vehicular access arrangements must not be detrimental to the character of village lanes.

Verges, trees and hedgerows along country lanes should be maintained wherever possible to preserve nature and for conservation purposes.

The key views into and from the village, as detailed in the Neighbourhood Plan and LSCA, must be respected.

APPENDIX 2: ACTION PLAN FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL, COMING FORWARD FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATIONS

1. Continue to work with school and with Cheshire East to minimise the number of large coaches that are used to transport children to our village school and to improve the parking facilities
2. Support surrounding parishes in the establishment of a Green Gap around the village to the north and south to protect the village from encroachment from expansion of the nearby towns. (Note: first requested as part of response to Cheshire East Core Plan in December 2013)
3. Continue with the hedge and tree planting schemes such as the village orchard to ensure the renewal of our green environment
4. Continue to liaise with Cheshire East to maintain our country lanes, keeping them tidy and keeping paths clear for walkers and riders, while preserving our hedgerows and minimising the quantity and speed of traffic where possible
5. Continue to maintain and improve our shared spaces in the centre of the village, such as the spinney, the Folly and the orchard, while minimising the signage and street lighting in the village to maintain its rural character
6. Continue the installation of bird- and bat- boxes around the village
7. Retain our village Tree Warden to monitor and manage our village trees
8. Introduce permanent traffic calming measures such as flashing speed limit signs both north and south of the village
9. Continue to work with Cheshire East Highways to investigate the possibility of further reductions in speed limits at the village edges, to smooth the reduction from 50mph to 30mph
10. Continue to invite our PCSO to village meetings to discuss issues of traffic and safety that affect the villagers
11. Explore the possibility of a road crossing to connect the pub with the retail outlets
12. Investigate possible locations for a safe play area for children within the village

13. Continue to support the restoration of the church
14. Continue to investigate the possibility of a dedicated village hall. Proposals to use the school hall as a village hall to further benefit the local community will be encouraged
15. Pursue further works to the A34 to calm traffic speeds through the village.

FURTHER APPENDICES

Further appendices are to be found in separate documents. These appendices are:

- Appendix 3: Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment
- Appendix 4: Housing Needs Survey
- Appendix 5: Transport Statement
- Appendix 6: Key Documents: Village Plan, Statistics and Census, Meetings