

List of policies saved and deleted on adoption of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 27 July 2017:

Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review (Adopted January 2005)

Please note that Congleton Local Plan policies not listed here were previously deleted following the Secretary of State's direction in January 2008.

Existing Congleton Local Plan Policy	Delete?	New Local Plan Strategy Policy	Reason
Policy PS3: Settlement Hierarchy	Yes	Policy PG 2	Policy PG 2 presents an updated settlement hierarchy.
Policy PS4: Towns	No		
Policy PS5: Villages in the Open Countryside and Inset in the Green Belt	No		
Policy PS6: Settlements in the Open Countryside and the Green Belt	No		
Policy PS7: Green Belt	No		
Policy PS8: Open Countryside	No		
Policy PS9: Areas of Special County Value	No	Policy SE 4	Areas of Special County Value are now known as Local Landscape Designations which are addressed by Policy SE 4. Until reviewed and updated through the production of a Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD, the spatial extent of Local Landscape Designation Areas in the former Congleton Borough is shown as Areas of Special County Value in the proposals maps of the existing Congleton Local Plan.
Policy PS10: Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope Consultation Zone	No	Policy SE 14	Policy SE 14 addresses the Jodrell Bank Zone. Until defined on the Policies Map through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, the spatial extent of the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope Consultation Zone in the former Congleton Borough is shown in the proposals maps of the existing Congleton Borough Local Plan.
Policy PS12: Strategic Transport Corridors	No		
Policy GR1: New Development	Yes	Policies SD 1, SD 2, SE 1, SE 2, SE 4, SE 6, SC 2, SC 4, CO 4	Various policies address new development including the principles of sustainable development, design, open space and infrastructure provision etc.
Policy GR2: Design	Yes	Policies SE 1, SE 2, SE 3, SE 4, SE 6, SE 7, SE 8, SE 9	Policy SE 1 sets out a comprehensive approach to design. Additional policies deal with energy efficiency, the historic environment and environmental protection.
Policy GR3: Design	Yes	Policies SE 1, SE 2, SC 4, SE 6, CO 1	Relevant principles are set out with regard to design; appropriate use of land; dwelling mix; housing needs; open space; and accessibility.
Policy GR4: Landscaping	Yes	Policy SE 4	Superseded by Policy SE 4 which sets out the approach to landscape protection.

Existing Congleton Local Plan Policy	Delete?	New Local Plan Strategy Policy	Reason
Policy GR5: Landscaping	Yes	Policy SE 4	Superseded by Policy SE 4 which sets out the approach to landscape protection.
Policy GR6: Amenity and Health	No		
Policy GR7: Amenity and Health	No		
Policy GR8: Amenity and Health	No		
Policy GR9: Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision (New Development)	No		
Policy GR10: Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision	No		
Policy GR11 Development Involving New Roads and other Transportation Projects	No		
Policy GR13: Public Transport Measures	No		
Policy GR14: Cycling Measures	No		
Policy GR15: Pedestrian Measures	No		
Policy GR16: Footpath, Bridleway and Cycleway Networks	No		
Policy GR17: Car Parking	No		
Policy GR18: Traffic Generation	No		
Policy GR19: Infrastructure	Yes	Policies IN 1 and IN 2	Policies IN 1 and IN 2 cover infrastructure requirements.
Policy GR20: Public Utilities	No		
Policy GR21: Flood Prevention	Yes	Policy SE 13	Superseded by Policy SE 13 which sets out flood prevention measure.
Policy GR22: Open Space Provision	No		
Policy GR23: Provision of Services and Facilities	No		
Policy NR1: Trees and Woodlands	Yes	Policy SE 5	Superseded by Policy SE 5 which sets out protection for trees, hedgerows and woodland.
Policy NR2: Statutory Sites	No	Policy SE 3	These assets are protected by Policy SE 3. Until reviewed and updated through the production of a Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD, the spatial extent of statutory sites in the former Congleton Borough is shown in the proposals maps of the existing Congleton Local Plan.
Policy NR3: Habitats	No		

Existing Congleton Local Plan Policy	Delete?	New Local Plan Strategy Policy	Reason
Policy NR4: Non-Statutory Sites	No	Policy SE 3	These assets are protected by Policy SE 3. Until reviewed and updated through the production of a Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD, the spatial extent of non-statutory sites in the former Congleton Borough is shown in the proposals maps of the existing Congleton Local Plan.
Policy NR5: Non-Statutory Sites	No		
Policy NR6: Reclamation of Land	No		
Policy NR9: Renewable Energy	Yes	Policy SE 8	Superseded by Policy SE 8 which sets out an updated policy.
Policy BH1: Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest	No		
Policy BH2: Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (Demolition)	No		
Policy BH3: Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (Change of Use/Conversion)	No		
Policy BH4: Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (Effect of Proposals)	No		
Policy BH5: Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest	No		
Policy BH6: Non-statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest	Yes	Policy SE 7	Policy SE 7 sets out the approach to heritage assets, including designated and non-designated assets.
Policy BH7: Enabling Development	No		
Policy BH8: Conservation Areas	No		
Policy BH9: Conservation Areas	No		
Policy BH10: Conservation Areas	No		
Policy BH13: New Agricultural Buildings	No		
Policy BH15: Conversion of Rural Buildings	No		
Policy BH16: The Residential Re-Use of Rural Buildings	No		
Policy E3: Employment Development in Towns	Yes	Policies SD 1, SD 2, EG 1, EG 5, SE 2	Policies set out the approach to sustainable development; the location of town centres uses; and making efficient use of land.

Existing Congleton Local Plan Policy	Delete?	New Local Plan Strategy Policy	Reason
Policy E4: Employment Development in Villages	Yes	Policies SD 1, SD 2, PG 2, EG 1, EG 2, EG 5, SE 2.	Policies set out the approach to sustainable development; the location of town centre uses; the rural economy; and making efficient use of land.
Policy E5: Employment Development in the Open Countryside	Yes	Policies SD 1, SD 2, PG 2, PG 6, EG 1, EG 2, EG 5, SE 2.	Policies set out the approach to sustainable development; the location of town centre uses; the rural economy; open countryside; and making efficient use of land.
Policy E6: Employment Development in the Green Belt	Yes	Policies SD 1, SD 2, PG 2, PG 3, EG 1, EG 2, EG 5, SE 2.	Policies set out the approach to sustainable development; the location of town centre uses; the rural economy; Green Belt; and making efficient use of land.
Policy E8: Home-Based Businesses	No		
Policy E9: Royal Ordnance Factory, Radway Green	Yes	Policies LPS 23 and LPS 24	Superseded by Policies LPS 23 and LPS 24 Radway Green Brownfield and Extension.
Policy E10: Re-use or Redevelopment of Existing Employment Sites	Yes	Policy EG 3	Policy EG 3 updates the approach to be taken to existing employment sites.
Policy E11: Owner-specific Employment Sites	No		
Policy E12: Distribution and Storage Facilities	No		
Policy E13: Roadside Facilities	No		
Policy E14: Motorway Service Areas	No		
Policy E15: Heavy Goods Vehicle Parking	No		
Policy E16: Tourism and Visitor Development (Facilities and Attractions)	Yes	Policies SD 1, SD 2, PG 3, PG 6, EG 2, EG 4	Relevant principles are contained in policies addressing sustainable development; open countryside; Green Belt; the rural economy; and tourism.
Policy E17: Tourism and Visitor Development (Serviced Accommodation)	No		
Policy E18: Tourism and Visitor Development (Camping and Caravanning Sites)	No		
Policy E19: Telecommunications	No		
Policy H1: Provision of New Housing Development	Yes	Policy PG 1	Policy PG 1 sets out the amount of land provided to accommodate the necessary number of homes throughout the plan period.
Policy H2: Provision of New Housing Development	Yes	Policy PG 2, PG 7	Policy PG 2 sets out the settlement hierarchy and Policy PG 7 addresses the spatial distribution of development across the borough.
Policy H3: Committed Housing Sites	No		

Existing Congleton Local Plan Policy	Delete?	New Local Plan Strategy Policy	Reason
Policy H4: Residential Development in Towns	Yes	Policies SD 1, SD 2, SE 1, SE 2, SE 4, SC 4, CO 4.	Policies address windfall sites and the approach to be taken in evaluating applications for housing development including infrastructure; accessibility; and physical and environmental constraints.
Policy H5: Residential Development in Villages	Yes	Policies SD 1, SD 2, SE 1, SE 2, SE 4, SC 4, SC 6	Policies address windfall sites and the approach to be taken in evaluating applications for housing development including infrastructure; accessibility; rural exceptions for housing for local needs; and physical and environmental constraints.
Policy H6: Residential Development in the Open Countryside and the Green Belt	Yes	Policies PG 3, PG 6, SD 1, SD 2, SE 1, SE 2, SE 4, SC 4, SC 6	Policies address windfall sites and the approach to be taken in evaluating applications for housing development including infrastructure; accessibility; rural exceptions for housing for local needs; open countryside; Green Belt; and physical and environmental constraints.
Policy H7: Residential Caravans and Mobile Homes	No		
Policy H8: Gypsy Caravan Sites	Yes	Policy SC 7	Policy SC 7 sets out the approach to locating sites for gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople, and addresses the level of need in the borough.
Policy H9: Additional Dwellings and Sub-divisions	No		
Policy H10: Additional Dwellings and Sub-divisions	No		
Policy H13: Affordable and Low-cost Housing	Yes	Policy SC 5	This policy addresses the provision of affordable housing.
Policy H14: Affordable and Low-cost Housing	Yes	Policy SC 6	This policy deals with rural exceptions housing to meet local needs.
Policy H16: Extensions to Dwellings in the Open Countryside and Green Belt	No		
Policy H17: Extension of Residential Curtilages into the Open Countryside or Green Belt	No		
Policy H18: Dwellings Associated with Rural Enterprises	No		
Policy H19: Agricultural Occupancy Conditions	No		
Policy S1: Shopping Hierarchy	Yes	Policy EG 5	Policy EG 5 creates a new hierarchy of retail centres.
Policy S2: Shopping and Commercial Development Outside Town Centres	Yes	Policy EG 5	Policy EG 5 sets out the approach to town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to centres.
Policy S4: Principal Shopping Areas	No		
Policy S5: Other Town Centre Areas	No		

Existing Congleton Local Plan Policy	Delete?	New Local Plan Strategy Policy	Reason
Policy S6: The Use of Upper Floors within Town Centres	No		
Policy S7: Shopping and Commercial Development in Villages	Yes	Policy EG 5	Policy EG 5 creates a new hierarchy of retail centres which replaces that in Policy S7.
Policy S8: Holmes Chapel	Yes	Policy EG 5	Policy EG 5 creates a new hierarchy of retail centres which replaces that in Policy S8.
Policy S9: Shopping and Commercial Development in the Open Countryside and Green Belt	Yes	Policies PG 3, PG 6, SD 1, SD 2, EG 2, EG 5	Relevant principles are covered in policies which address the hierarchy of retail centres; the rural economy; sustainable development; open countryside; and the Green Belt.
Policy S11: Shop Fronts and Security Shutters	No		
Policy S12: Security Shutters-Solid Lath	No		
Policy S13: Security Shutters-Lattice/Mesh Grilles	No		
Policy S14: Advertisements	No		
Policy S15: Advertisements in Conservation Areas	No		
Policy S16: Environmental Improvements and Traffic Management Measures	No		
Policy RC1: Recreation and Community Facilities Policies (General)	Yes	Policies SC 1, SC 3, SD 2 and SE 3	Covered by Local Plan Strategy policies on leisure and recreation; sustainable development; protection of countryside, landscape and geology.
Policy RC2: Protected Areas of Open Space	No		
Policy RC3: Nuisance Sports	No		
Policy RC4: Countryside Recreation Facilities	No		
Policy RC5: Equestrian Facilities	No		
Policy RC6: Golf Courses and Driving Ranges	No		
Policy RC7: Water Based Activities	No		
Policy RC8: Canal/Riverside Recreational Developments	No		
Policy RC9: Canal/Riverside Recreational Developments (Mooring)	No		
Policy RC10: Outdoor Formal Recreational and Amenity Open Space Facilities	No		
Policy RC11: Indoor Recreational and Community Uses (General)	No		

Existing Congleton Local Plan Policy	Delete?	New Local Plan Strategy Policy	Reason
Policy RC12: Retention of Existing Community Facilities	No		
Policy RC13: Day Nurseries	No		
Policy DP1: Employment Sites	No		
Policy DP2: Housing Sites	No		
Policy DP3: Mixed Use Sites	No		
Policy DP3A: Alsager Campus	Yes	Site LPS 22	The site allocation for the Former Manchester Metropolitan University Campus has been updated.
Policy DP4: Retail Sites	No		
Policy DP5: Recreation, Leisure and Community Use Sites	No		
Policy DP6: Treatment Facility	No		
Policy DP7: Development Requirements	No		
Policy DP8: Supplementary Planning Guidance	No		
Policy DP9: Transport Assessment	No		
Policy DP10: New Road Schemes	No		
Policy DP11: Transport Facilities	No		

1. INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A LOCAL PLAN?

1.1 The planning system, as established in the Town and Country Planning Acts, is intended to:

- regulate the development and use of land in the interest of the general public:
- balance the needs of development and conservation: and
- secure the most efficient and appropriate use and development of land.

1.2 Development Plans play a key role in achieving the above mentioned objectives and provide an essential framework for planning decisions. In this area the development plan system is divided into two tiers:

STRUCTURE PLAN : which is prepared by the County Council and sets out key strategic policies for the whole of the County on matters such as housing, employment and transport and provides a framework for Local Plans.

LOCAL PLANS : which are in the main prepared by District Councils and set out more detailed policies to guide development within the whole of a local authority area including proposals for specific sites.

1.3 The main functions of a Local Plan are:

- **to interpret strategic policies contained in the Structure Plan at a detailed local level;**
- **to provide policy guidelines for the consideration of all planning applications;**
- **to provide a framework for coordinating development by public authorities;**
- **to give the public the opportunity to comment upon and become involved in the resolution of local planning issues;**
- **to ensure future development of the Borough is in accordance with, and to facilitate the broader objectives of, the Council as set out in its Corporate Strategy and 6 supporting Strategies.**

1.4 Policy guidance from the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in respect of Local Plans stresses the importance of Local Plans as the basis for sound and effective development control. However, it is emphasised that Local Plans must be up to date and give due recognition to national planning policies, regional guidance and the provisions of approved structure plans.

THE CONGLETON BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

1.5 The Congleton Borough Local Plan was first produced for the plan period 1986 - 2001 and adopted in 1998. This current document is a review of the Local Plan

prepared within the framework of the approved Replacement Structure Plan 'Cheshire 2011'. It puts forward the policies and proposals of the Borough Council in respect of all aspects of land use planning within the Borough up to and including the year 2011 (for the purposes of land availability monitoring the end date of the Local Plan is taken as the end of June 2011). This document is therefore a replacement Local Plan and is effectively a detailed extension of the Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

1.6 It has been prepared in accordance with government guidance and advice on the preparation of Development Plans as set out in PPG12: *Development Plans* and in '*Development Plans. A Good Practice Guide*' (December 1999) to reflect current best practice and value and follow the procedures for the preparation of local plans which came into effect in January 2000.

FIRST MONITORING REPORT

1.7 Monitoring the performance of a Local Plan is a key requirement of government guidance on Development Plans and is considered an essential part of the review process to ensure that it remains up to date and relevant. The first monitoring report of the Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review was produced by the Council in July 2003. Subsequent monitoring reports will be published on an annual basis.

1.8 The Monitoring Report measures the Council's performance against objectives and targets included within the Local Plan and assesses the take-up and supply of housing and employment land. The report considers not just the whole of the Borough, but also looks at differences between areas within the Borough and, where appropriate, compares the Borough with other areas. It aims to show that what the Borough Council is delivering through the Local Plan is effective and meeting the Plan's objectives. The conclusions and actions identified in the report are used to inform future policy decisions and reviews of the Local Plan.

THE PLAN AREA

1.9 The Plan covers the whole of the Congleton Borough, which comprises the four towns of:

Congleton Sandbach Middlewich Alsager

and the rural area which comprises the nineteen rural parishes of:

Arclid	Betchton	Bradwall	Brereton
Church Lawton	Cranage	Goostrey	Hassall
Holmes Chapel	Hulme Walfield	Moreton	Moston
Newbold Astbury	Odd Rode	Smallwood	Somerford
Somerford Booths	Swettenham	Twemlow	

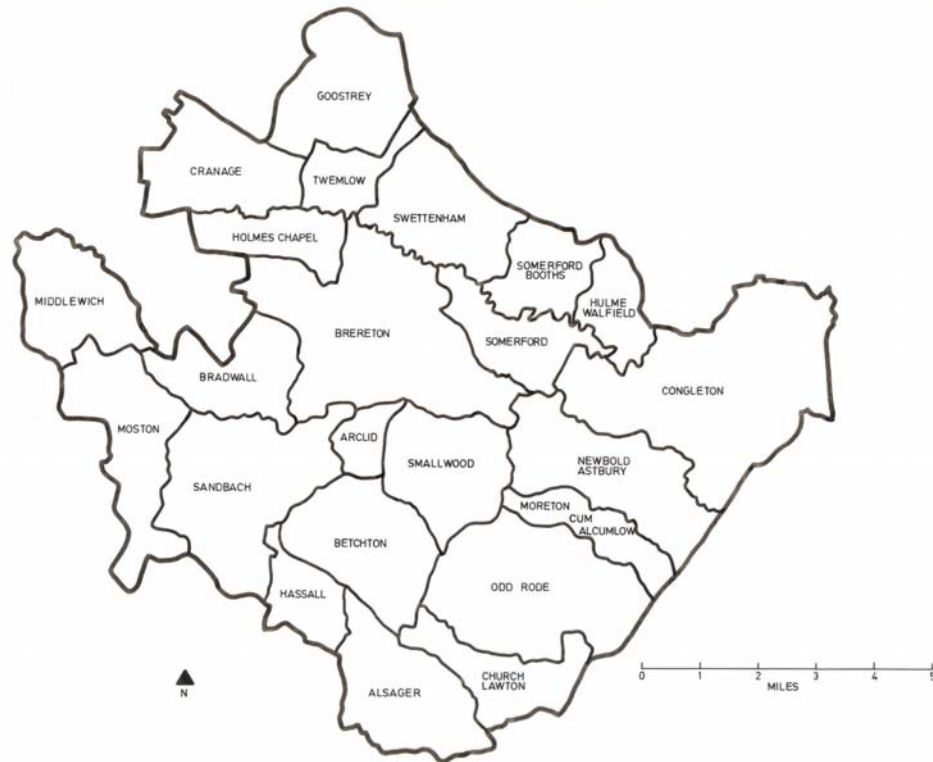


Fig.1 The Plan Area and its Towns and Parishes

THE FORM AND CONTENT OF THE PLAN

1.10 The Local Plan has been structured so as to provide a clear framework for controlling development comprising of the following elements (see dig. 2) :

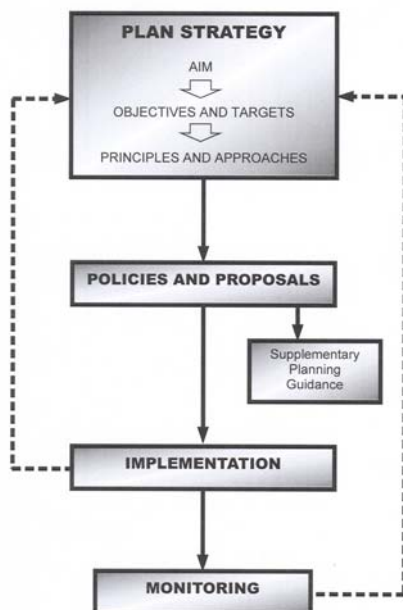


Fig.2 The Form of the Local Plan

- a **Plan Strategy** statement comprising of aims, objectives and targets; a set of guiding principles to indicate the main directions of the plan; and, a set of development approaches for each geographic area to indicate broadly how new growth is to be accommodated.
- **Policies and Proposals** for the development and use of land, in particular those which will form the basis for deciding planning applications and determining the conditions to be attached to planning permissions.
- an **Implementation** statement setting out the measures which the Borough Council will use to help implement the policies and proposals and the objectives which will be achieved.

- a **Monitoring** statement setting out how the Borough Council proposes to monitor the Local Plan against the targets which have been set.

1.11 The Borough Council also uses **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)** in the form of subject guidance notes and development briefs to supplement certain policies and proposals of the Local Plan. However, these are prepared separately to the Local Plan and do not form part of it.

1.12 The format of the Local Plan is divided into two distinct parts - the Written Statement (this document) and several maps (in the inside pocket of front cover). Although both parts are intended to be complementary to each other, in the event of a contradiction the provisions of the Written Statement will prevail.

THE WRITTEN STATEMENT

1.13 The Written Statement is arranged to enable it to be used as a policy document to control development and is designed to be read as a whole. The Plan Strategy (Chapter 2) sets out the framework within which the Plan has been prepared and its general aims, objectives and targets as well as the broad policies which govern development in the Borough. This is followed by a section dealing with General Requirements (Chapter 3) which sets out detailed considerations which all development is required to comply with. The subsequent topic chapters each relate to a specific policy area, namely:

4. Natural Environment and Resources
5. Built Environment and Heritage
6. Economy
7. Housing
8. Town Centres and Shopping
9. Recreation and Community Facilities

1.14 Each of these chapters contains a brief introduction to the topic and a summary of the relevant national, strategic and local context within which the policies have been prepared, followed by the actual policies.

1.15 Chapter 10 of the Local Plan deals with the proposals for the Local Plan and sets out all proposed allocations and schemes and includes a brief description of each allocated site and the development requirements.

1.16 The policies and proposals are typed in bold, upper case lettering and shaded for easy identification and are each given a reference letter and number e.g.:

E1

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ENSURE THAT SUFFICIENT LAND OF THE RIGHT TYPE IS MADE AVAILABLE ...

1.17 Beneath each policy is a brief explanation about why that particular policy has been included within the Local Plan. This justification is typed in lower case italic lettering to distinguish it from both the policy and the main text of the section e.g.:

The figure of 180 hectares of land is the Congleton district allocation for new industrial and business development as contained in the approved Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan ...

1.18 The policies in the Local Plan are concerned with the future use of land in the Plan Area and with measures for the improvement of the physical environment and the management of traffic. The Plan does not, therefore, give a land use zoning for every plot of land in the plan area; rather it is concerned with areas where change is likely to occur and areas within which certain policies will operate.

1.19 The Written Statement also contains a section on Implementation (Chapter 11) and Monitoring (Chapter 12), a glossary to explain technical terms and abbreviations, an index, and an appendix containing supporting technical information and approved Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes.

THE MAPS

1.20 The Local Plan contains a **Proposal Map** for the whole of the Borough at approximately 1:35,000 scale, together with **Inset Maps** for the following areas:

- 1 Congleton
- 2 Sandbach (incl. Hays Chemicals)
- 3 Middlewich
- 4 Alsager (including Lawton Gate and Lawton Heath End)
- 5 Holmes Chapel & Cranage
- 6 Goostrey
- 7 Scholar Green
- 8 Mow Cop, Mount Pleasant & The Bank
- 9 Arclid
- 10 Brereton Green
- 11 Brereton Heath
- 12 Astbury
- 13 Rode Heath
- 14 Hassall Green
- 15 Winterley
- 16 Twemlow
- 17 Malkins Bank
- 18 Rudheath Woods

1.21 The Inset Maps, which have been produced on an Ordnance Survey base at a scale of 1:10,000, show those sites which are allocated for development and areas within which specific policies will apply.

1.22 Proposals for the town centres of Congleton, Sandbach, Middlewich and Alsager are shown on **Town Centre Inset Maps** and for Holmes Chapel village centre on a **Village Centre Inset Map** which are all produced at a scale of 1:2500.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

1.23 The Congleton Borough Local Plan has been prepared taking account of a number of other relevant statutory Local Plans.

THE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

1.24 All Local Plans are obliged to conform to the provisions of the Approved Structure Plan as it stands at the time, and to be certified as so conforming by the

County Council. The Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan has been prepared by the Cheshire County Council and became operative on 1 July 1999. The Plan aims to shape the pattern of development and conservation of the environment in Cheshire to the year 2011.

1.25 The Local Plan will refer to the policies of the Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan where they are relevant to the Local Plan area.

CESHIRE MINERALS LOCAL PLAN

1.26 Cheshire County Council is the Planning Authority for all mineral matters within the County and has produced a Replacement Minerals Local Plan which was adopted by the County Council in June 1999. The Plan provides detailed policies and guidance on mineral development within the County and identifies 'preferred areas' for silica sand quarrying and 'areas of search' for sand and gravel working within the Borough.

CESHIRE WASTE DISPOSAL LOCAL PLAN

1.27 The County Council is responsible for deciding all planning applications for waste disposal activities within the County and has produced a Waste Disposal Local Plan which was adopted by the County Council in 1987. The Plan incorporates comprehensive policies for the location of waste disposal facilities. This Plan is currently being reviewed by the County Council - a first deposit draft of the Replacement Waste Local Plan was placed on deposit in May 2004.

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

1.28 Local Transport Plans (LTP) were introduced by the Government to replace Transport Policies and Programmes (TPPs) as the key to the delivery of integrated transport locally. The LTP provides the basis for an integrated approach which will implement the transport aspect of development plan strategies.

1.29 The County Council, in conjunction with the District Councils, is responsible for the Local Transport Plan for Cheshire which covers all forms of transport including highways, public transport, cycling and walking. Cheshire's first full LTP – published in October 2000 - was developed by the County Council in conjunction with the 6 Cheshire District Councils for the period 2001/2 to 2005/6. The full LTP aims to maintain existing transport infrastructure and manage its use; to improve road safety; and to widen travel choice by supporting more sustainable modes. The LTP sets out a 5 year integrated transport strategy for Cheshire and is subject to annual progress reports.

JODRELL BANK RADIO TELESCOPE CONSULTATION ZONE

1.30 Since 1973, the Borough Council has been required, under a direction of the Secretary of State for the Environment, to consult the University of Manchester on any application for development, subject to certain specified exceptions, within a six-mile radius of the Lovell Radio Telescope at Jodrell Bank. This Direction has been taken into account in deciding allocations and developing appropriate policies for controlling development within the Consultation Zone in as far as it affects the Plan Area.

NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES

1.31 This Local Plan has also taken into account the plans of neighbouring authorities, where relevant, to ensure that there is no conflict between the policies of the relevant documents.

BOROUGH STRATEGIES

1.32 Local strategies are important to the Local Plan in that they set out the aims, targets and actions of the Borough Council in respect of specific subject areas which may have an influence on the future direction of land use planning and which the Local Plan should complement and support through its own policies and proposals. The following Borough strategies have been taken into account in reviewing the Local Plan reference to which is made in the relevant chapters:

- Corporate Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy
- Cultural Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Environmental Quality Strategy
- Health Alliances Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Leisure Strategy
- Nature Conservation Strategy
- Parks and Public Open Spaces Strategy
- Sustainable Transport Strategy
- Town Centre Management Strategy

STUDIES AND SURVEYS

1.33 The baseline information needed to make appropriate judgements and decisions on future planning direction has been provided by the following studies and surveys which have been undertaken for the review:

- Urban Potential Study
- Site Assessments
- Retail Capacity Study
- Accessibility Profile
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Employment Land Study
- Housing Study
- Local Area Profiles

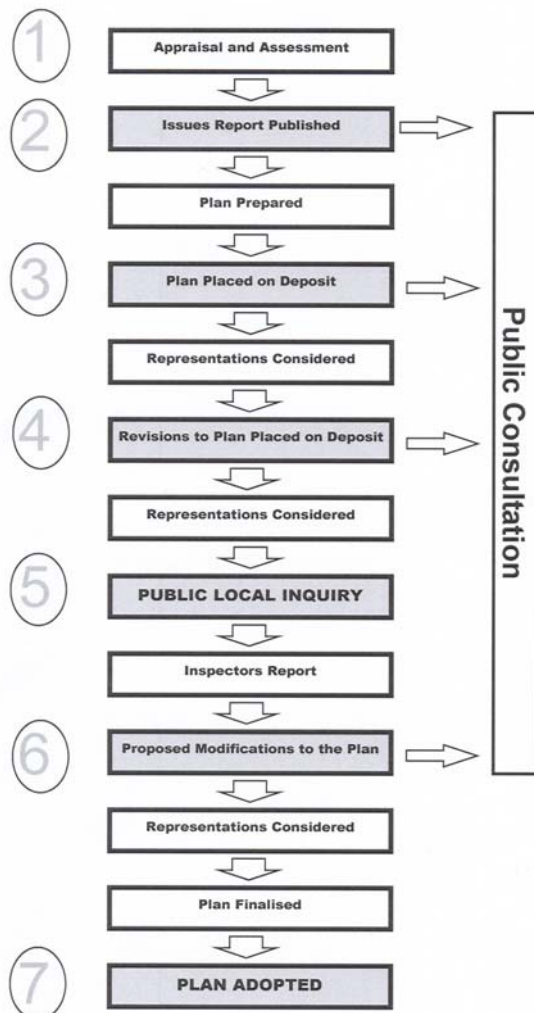
1.34 The findings of each study are set out in separate reports accompanying the Local Plan and are referred to in the relevant proceeding chapters of the Written Statement.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

1.35 A full appraisal has been undertaken of all the policies and proposals in this Local Plan to assess their likely impact on a broad range of environmental and sustainability factors. The results of the appraisal are set out in a separate document. It is proposed that the appraisal will be updated at each stage of the review process in order to check that the Local Plan remains consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

1.36 In accordance with current procedures, the Local Plan has undergone several stages of change and consultation, including two separate periods of deposit, before being formally adopted.



1 APPRAISAL AND ASSESSMENT

1.37 Much of the initial work on the Review concentrated on undertaking a number of surveys and studies to appraise and assess the existing environment in order to provide up-to-date base information and identify long-term needs and opportunities, and to monitor the implementation of the previous adopted Local Plan to establish whether its policies and proposals were achieving what they were intended to do.

2 ISSUES AND OPTIONS

1.38 The Borough Council placed considerable emphasis on identifying broad issues and options for development in the pre-deposit stage of the plan preparation process. A period of consultation was held during 1999 with key bodies, including Town and Parish Councils, on the issues and options for the plan strategy, examining alternative scenarios and general policy concerns which will help shape the revised Plan.

Dig.3 The Local Plan Process

Contributions to the debate was also invited from the public, developers, local businesses and other organisations through publicity, exhibitions and meetings. The results of the consultations are summarised in a separate document (see Appendix A1).

3 DEPOSIT OF THE PLAN

1.39 An initial draft Local Plan was prepared and placed 'on deposit' for a period of 6 weeks between 3rd November 2000 and 15th December 2000 to give an opportunity for anyone to make representations objecting to, or in support of, a policy or proposal in the Plan. A total of 2,341 representations were duly made of which 2,022 were objections and 319 were in support. In June 2001 the Council considered all the representations and agreed to make a number of changes to the Local Plan.

4 REVISED DEPOSIT STAGE

1.40 A revised draft Local Plan was subsequently prepared incorporating the agreed changes to the Local Plan as initially deposited. A Certificate of General Conformity with the County Structure Plan was issued by the County Council on 28th September 2001. The revised draft Local Plan was placed on deposit again for 6 weeks from 8th October 2001 to 19th November 2001 following which the Council received a further 648 representations of which 318 were in support and 330 were objections. These were considered by the Council but no further material changes were made as a result.

5 PUBLIC LOCAL INQUIRY

1.41 A Public Local Inquiry into objections to the Local Plan was held between 11th June 2002 and 21st February 2003. The Inspector's Report on the Inquiry setting out his recommendations as to the action which the authority should take in respect of all the objections made to the plan at both the first and revised deposit draft stages was received by the Borough Council on 15th September 2003.

1.42 The Council considered the Inspector's Report and his recommendations at its meeting on 11th December 2003. At this meeting the Council agreed its response to each of his recommendations and the modifications to the Local Plan which the Council proposed to make. Whilst the Council accepted the majority of the Inspector's recommended modifications to the Local Plan, it also resolved not to accept some of his recommendations.

6 MODIFICATIONS STAGE

1.43 The Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan were placed on deposit for 6 weeks between 16th January 2004 and 27th February 2004 following which the Council received 546 representations of which 113 were in support of the modifications, 397 were objections to the modifications and 36 were objections to the absence of a modification recommended by the Inspector. These were considered by the Council which resolved to make one further material change to the Local Plan. This was placed on deposit for 6 weeks between 16th April 2004 and 28th May 2004. In response to a Direction to Modify from the First Secretary of State dated 16th August 2004, the Council also agreed to propose

a second further modification to the Local Plan. This proposed further modification was on deposit for a period of six weeks from Friday 29th October to Friday 10th December 2004.

7 ADOPTION

1.44 The Local Plan was formally adopted on 27th January 2005. Although this represents the final stage of the actual plan preparation process, the Local Plan process is an on-going one which requires continual monitoring to identify changes and enable the Local Plan to be kept as up-to-date as possible. Annual monitoring reports will evaluate the plan's effectiveness.

FUTURE CHANGES

1.45 The Council is committed to an early review of its Local Plan to provide planning guidance for the period up to 2016. The Review will take on board the revised Regional Planning Guidance for the North West, which was issued by the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003 and will also take into account the review of the County Structure Plan, which is currently being carried out by Cheshire County Council.

1.46 The review will be carried out under the new Local Development Framework procedures in the form of Development Plan Documents.

2. PLAN STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Plan Strategy provides the framework for all new development within the plan area. It indicates the main directions of the plan and provides the context within which the various policies will operate.

2.2 The review provides an opportunity to reappraise the plan strategy to ensure that it remains consistent with national, regional and strategic planning guidance for the plan period to 2011, as well as reflects current local strategies and priorities. In this way the Local Plan can continue to provide a sensible and realistic framework within which future decisions regarding new development can be properly, fairly and consistently made.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

2.3 The Government is committed to the principles of sustainable development based on four broad objectives:

- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources.

2.4 To reflect these objectives there has been a significant number of new or revised Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Notes which cover different aspects of planning policy and which planning authorities must take into account in preparing or reviewing their development plans.

2.5 The Government's White Paper on the future of transport 'A new Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' published in 1998 also recognises that a vital element of sustainable development is one where land use policies are fully integrated with transport policies and proposals at all levels.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

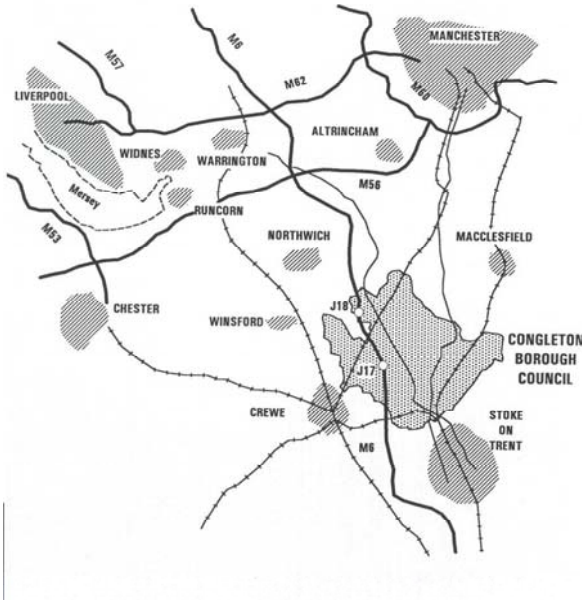
2.6 Congleton Borough occupies a strategically important location within the North West region on the main north-south communication routes between the major conurbations of Liverpool, Manchester, The Potteries and The West Midlands.

2.7 Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13) provides a regional spatial strategy within which development plans can be prepared. Replacement RPG13 was issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment in March 2003. This puts forward a broad framework for development in the region over the next 20 years by setting out the core development principles which Structure and Unitary Development Plans should accord with. It gives guidance on the amount of housing development to be accommodated in each county area, defines key investment sites and promotes urban regeneration in the conurbations.

2.8 The RPG continues the established regional development strategy of concentrating development in the Mersey Belt between Liverpool and Manchester in order to support urban regeneration and limits greenfield development through strong Green Belt policies.

2.9 A **Regional Economic Strategy** for the North West was produced in June 1993 by the North West Regional Association and North West Business Leadership Team which aims to increase average income levels and employment for the whole of the

North West and to improve the spread of prosperity and opportunity in all areas. A new Regional Strategy, 'England's North West: A Strategy Towards 2020', was published by the North West Development Agency in November 1999 which identifies the steps needed to encourage sustainable economic growth in the region for the next 20 years.



2.10 One of the principle objectives of the Strategy is investing in infrastructure by securing a strategic and physical planning framework which encourages high levels of private investment in industry, commerce and provides for inward and locally generated investment.

Dig.4 The Regional Setting

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

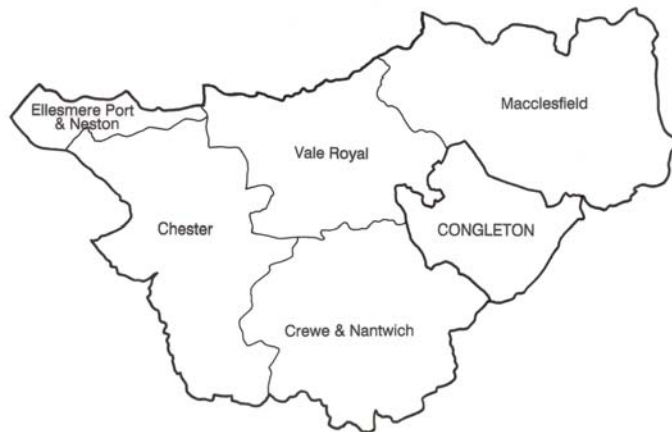
2.11 Congleton Borough Council is one of six district authorities in the County of Cheshire and the administrative area of Cheshire County Council. It also directly adjoins the County of Staffordshire to the south-east.

2.12 The **Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan** was adopted in 1999 and sets out the strategic planning context for the six districts of New Cheshire, including Congleton Borough, for the period up to mid-2011. Sustainability is the underpinning philosophy of the new plan by providing for the new homes, jobs, shopping and leisure facilities which are needed by this generation whilst conserving the County's environment and natural resources for the benefit of future generations.

2.13 The scale of development allowed by the Plan is essentially that needed for local needs between 1996 and 2011. The Structure Plan generally requires that new development is guided principally to sites within towns or on the edges of selected suitable towns, or exceptionally to other sustainable locations that are well related to nearby towns, on good lines of communications and well served by existing or proposed public transport. Within the Green Belt, open countryside, Areas of Special County Value for Landscape, Jodrell Bank Consultation Zone and on good quality agricultural land, the Structure Plan allows only limited forms of development.

2.14 In respect of the Borough, the Structure Plan expects the District to make provision for the development of about 3,800 new dwellings and about 180 ha. of land

for business, general industrial, storage and distribution development within its area between 1996 and 2011. Within this provision, the Structure Plan requires Regional Employment Sites to be identified in or on the edge of Sandbach and Middlewich. The continued maintenance of the South Cheshire Green Belt is also a major requirement of the Structure Plan in order to support the urban regeneration policies of the Potteries conurbation.



Dig.5 Cheshire County and its Neighbours

2.15 The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan (1996 - 2011) sets out the strategic planning context for those areas of Staffordshire adjoining the Borough. It reinforces the regional strategy for the regeneration of The Potteries sub-region by concentrating development in Stoke-on-Trent to maintain the urban regeneration impetus of the area and by maintaining a strong Green Belt in North Staffordshire.

LOCAL CONTEXT

THE BOROUGH – ITS CHARACTERISTICS & FEATURES

2.16 The Borough covers an area of just over 81 square miles with a population of around 91,102 (2002 mid-year estimate). The main centres of population are Congleton, Sandbach, Alsager and Middlewich although over three-quarters of the district is rural with many attractive villages, the largest being Holmes Chapel. For planning purposes the Borough is divided into 5 subdivisions - Congleton, Sandbach, Alsager, Middlewich and the Rural Areas.

2.17 The district has quite diverse features and characteristics reflecting its location within the Cheshire Plain but close to the Potteries conurbation and the uplands of the Peak District, and its wide spectrum of history from the Stone Age Bridestones burial tomb to the futuristic radio telescope at Jodrell Bank.

2.18 The largest settlement in the district is the old textile town of **Congleton** (25,960 pop.) situated on the River Dane which still contains much evidence of its medieval history, particularly in the town centre. It has grown to become an important centre providing a wide range of services and facilities as well as containing several major industrial concerns, such as Airbags International, Siemens and Berisfords. There are several Conservation Areas and a large number of Listed Buildings within the town whilst much of the surrounding rural area is subject to Green Belt and various landscape and nature conservation designations.

2.19 To the west of the Borough next to Junction 17 of the M6 lies the ancient market town of **Sandbach** (17,530 pop.). It is widely famed for its weekly Thursday market and the ancient Saxon Crosses. It contains a number of areas and features of historical and

architectural value as well as encompassing several significant areas of local environmental importance. Although important for its former truck manufacturing industries, there have been significant changes in its employment base recently.

2.20 Alsager (12,690 pop.), situated near to the Staffordshire border, is a town of more recent origins which still retains its rural charm and has a good range of local facilities. The sanitaryware manufacturer of Caradon Twyfords is the major employer in the area together with the nearby Royal Ordnance factory. Being the closest settlement to the Potteries it is largely surrounded by Green Belt to maintain its separation from the conurbation.

2.21 Situated to the north-west of the Borough, **Middlewich** (13,170 pop.) has been a salt producing settlement since Roman times with much evidence of its industrial history still in evidence. The canals are an important feature of the town which plays host to an annual folk and boat festival. As well as providing local services and facilities, it is a major employment area containing both the traditional salt-based firms of British Salt, Centura Foods and Ideal Standard as well as the newer technology companies and distributive firms such as Tesco. Because of its industrial history it has a legacy of derelict land which presents a major planning and development challenge.

2.22 The **Rural Areas** of the district (21,750 pop.) are the least densely populated but contain a wealth of features of historic, landscape and nature conservation value. Much of the area is subject to development constraints but the demands of agriculture, tourism and meeting local needs are major issues.



Holmes Chapel (5,669 pop.) is the largest village which has grown recently as a commuter centre and is the home of a small industrial estate and also a major pharmaceutical firm.

Dig.6 The Local Setting

CORPORATE STRATEGY

2.23 In October 1999 the Council adopted its new Corporate Strategy which seeks, as its statement of purpose, to ***‘protect the character, heritage, culture and environment of the Borough and to enhance the quality of life for its inhabitants, through democratic, representative and accountable governance and delivery of best value services’***. In order to achieve this statement of purpose, the Council has identified 9 corporate objectives, many of which have land use and transportation implications which will need to be reflected in the Local Plan:

- *to work with the Borough’s different communities, to identify their needs and priorities and to lead the work which is needed to enhance the social, economic and*
- *environmental wellbeing of the area • to support the creation of a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable local economy which, in turn, will enable the quality of life of residents to be enhanced, whilst preserving the character and environment of the Borough*

- *to work in partnership with others to develop an inclusive society within the Borough and to seek out and tackle inequalities and deprivation*
- *to work in partnership to make the Borough a safe place to live and work in*
- *to protect and enhance the Borough's environment by promoting sustainability as a cornerstone for improving the quality of life for all people and communities of the Borough*
- *to ensure the housing stock in the Borough provides for the needs and desires of its residents*
- *to work to improve the health of the people of Congleton Borough, through the Council's statutory functions and in partnership with others*
- *to facilitate a greater choice of transport for the Borough's communities, which is as sustainable as possible*
- *to maximise the resources which are available to the Borough and to excel in managing the Council's assets, resources and services to ensure they bring the highest level of benefit*

THE PLAN STRATEGY

2.24 The plan strategy consists of the following elements :

Aim, Objectives and Targets - these set out the purpose of the Local Plan, establishing intentions and priorities. They identify those issues which are considered important for the future planning of the Borough. They also establish targets against which the performance of the Local Plan can be monitored over time.

Guiding Principles - this sets out the principles for all development in the Borough, describing how the aims and objectives are to be achieved in terms of the key areas of concern.

Development Approaches - this sets out broadly the preferred development approaches for the plan area, identifying the relative priorities and accepted scale of development within each of the sub-divisions of the Borough.

AIM, OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

2.25 A single aim and 12 objectives have been drawn up based on current planning guidance, the results of the various studies and the outcome of consultations on issues and key priorities. They also reflect the objectives of the Council's Corporate Strategy and other Council strategies.

2.26 The aim represents the overall 'vision' for the Borough whilst the objectives are more specific, establishing intentions in respect of different issues. For each objective there is a set of targets. The objectives are not prioritised, but represent those expectations of the Local Plan which are considered particularly important.

2.27 The targets represent quantifiable goals to be achieved which will be a gauge of how successful the plan is in terms of achieving the objectives. These need to be relevant to the objective, capable of being influenced by planning policy and decisions and capable of being monitored.

AIM

To improve the quality of life in the Borough and to protect and enhance the Borough's environment through sustainable development which supports a prosperous economy and ensures adequate provision of housing, facilities and services.

OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

1 .

To support the regional policies for the North West and The Potteries to assist in the prosperity of the region and the regeneration of the conurbations

Targets

- regional employment sites established at Sandbach and Middlewich
- inward migration into the Borough not to exceed 1991 levels by 2011
- no net loss of Green Belt land to new built development other than in exceptional circumstances

2 .

To support the strategic policies of the approved County Structure Plan and fulfill its land use requirements

Targets

- net addition of 3,800 new dwellings completed within the Borough between 1996 and 2011
- 180 hectares of land made available for business, general industrial, storage and distribution development between 1996 and 2011

3 .

To minimise the loss of countryside to new development and maximise the use of urban land, particularly brownfield sites

Targets

- minimum 50% of new dwellings completed on previously used land between 2001 and 2011
- minimum 75% of all new built development completed on existing urban land and minimum of 40% on previously used land between 2001 and 2011

4 .

To minimise the need to travel, to reduce reliance on the car and facilitate greater choice of other alternatives such as public transport, cycling and walking, and to make efficient use of the existing transport network

Targets

- minimum 75% of all new housing development to be within 1/2 mile of public transport node and 1 mile of existing or proposed local convenience shop and primary school between 2001 and 2011

5 .

To create a sustainable balance between housing, employment, services and facilities within the towns

Targets

- rate of growth in number of jobs to at least equal rate of growth in workforce between 2001 and 2011 within each sub-division

6 .***To protect and enhance areas and features of nature conservation and landscape value and to increase public enjoyment of them***

Targets

- no net loss or damage to designated sites and features of nature conservation value or, areas and features of landscape value as identified in the Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment, through development
- no net loss of surface water through development

7 .***To preserve and enhance the quality of the built environment and the heritage of the Borough and to promote local distinctiveness***

Targets

- no loss of buildings listed (statutory and local) as being of architectural or historic interest through development
- no loss of Scheduled Ancient Monuments through development
- to undertake Conservation Area Appraisals and Building at Risk surveys across the Borough by 2011

8 .***To ensure the provision of sufficient land and premises for employment purposes of a range and in locations which meets the needs of the local workforce, diversifies the local economy and helps reduce the need to travel***

Targets

- to increase number of jobs within the Borough to 75% of the workforce by 2011
- level of unemployment within the Borough not to exceed national rate

9 .***To ensure the provision of an adequate number and range of housing units which meets the needs of local communities and the environmental capacity of the settlement***

Targets

- overall provision of 328 subsidised affordable housing units by 2011
- minimum 25% of all new housing stock built between 2001 and 2011 to be low-cost affordable housing units
- an annualised provision of around 200 dwellings in the Borough as a whole with the distribution between each sub division not materially exceeding the following percentage of the overall provision in a 5 year period:

Congleton	30%
Sandbach	25%
Alsager	15%
Middlewich	25%
Rural areas	15%

10.

To safeguard and strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centres as focal points for shopping, commercial, leisure and cultural activities and to support local shopping provision

Targets

- net increase of 25% in shopping floorspace in town centres between 2001 and 2011
- no net loss of convenience floorspace in the rural areas

11.

To protect and support the provision of appropriate and adequate facilities and leisure opportunities to meet the needs of individual communities

Targets

- no net loss in overall amount of open space within each sub-division by 2011 through development
- no net loss in amount of outdoor playing space provision within each sub-division by 2011 through development

12.

To protect and improve the quality of air, water and land resources in the Borough and to minimize the consumption of non-renewable resources

Targets

- net loss of undeveloped land outside settlements between 2001 and 2011 to be no greater than 0.75% of total land coverage
- no significant loss of grades 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land to new irreversible development
- 50% of recorded derelict land within urban areas as at 2001 to be brought back into beneficial use by 2011

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.28 The aim and objectives of the Local Plan are to be achieved through five guiding interrelated principles for development underlying the Plan Strategy which will not normally be compromised. These are:

- promoting sustainable development
- respecting the need for restraint
- raising environmental quality and design standards
- enhancing quality of life
- supporting a prosperous local economy

2.29 These principles have guided the Borough Council in formulating its policies and proposals for the Local Plan.

Promoting Sustainable Development

2.30 Sustainable development means accommodating necessary change in ways which safeguard and improve the environment and the resources it provides. It acknowledges that whilst we must develop economically, socially and physically, this must be in a way which accords with the whole range of environmental concerns

including nature conservation, energy efficiency, conserving future resources, purity of air, earth and water, archaeology, agricultural land, landscape and countryside protection.

2.31 The Local Plan seeks to promote sustainable development in the Borough through the following measures:

- *emphasis on urban areas and in particular realising the development potential of areas within the urban boundaries - greenfield sites only where development is essential to local needs and cannot otherwise be accommodated within urban boundaries .*
- *accommodating new development within a hierarchy of settlements according to local needs and their ability to sustain development in a balanced manner supported by adequate local services and facilities.*
- *controlling the density of development and associated parking and open space needs in a manner which makes best use of resources and respects local identity.*
- *increasing transport choice through new development being appropriately located near to transport corridors and in areas with good public transport.*
- *ensuring adequate access by modes of travel other than just the car to all new development and promoting investment in pedestrian, cycle and public transport facilities.*
- *strengthening the roles of the Borough's town, village and local shopping hierarchy through sequential control of further development and improvement of town centres including the conservation and enhancement of their heritage.*
- *encouraging reuse of underused and derelict buildings and considering alternative uses of land already committed for development which has not yet been brought forward.*
- *promoting mixed use and mixed tenure development where sustainable.*
- *encouraging more energy efficient development.*

Respecting the Need for Restraint

2.32 The majority of the Borough is comprised of countryside, the protection and enhancement of which are considered to be of crucial importance. This countryside not only provides a valuable resource for agriculture, recreation, employment and nature conservation, but is also important in providing the setting for the distinctive character of each of the Borough's towns and villages. Restraint is also necessary to help meet strategic needs for the regeneration of The Potteries and the protection of acknowledged interests, such as Jodrell Bank Radio Telescopes.

2.33 The Local Plan respects the need for restraint through the following measures:

- *reaffirming the Borough Council's commitment to maintaining the strategic aims of the South Cheshire Green Belt.*
- *limiting opportunity for growth in Alsager so as not to adversely affect the urban regeneration of the Potteries.*
- *protecting areas of best and most versatile agricultural land.*
- *restricting development in and around the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope by means of the Jodrell Bank Consultation Zone.*
- *protection of the distinctive character of the landscape (identified through the Landscape Character Assessment), nature conservation, heritage and archaeology through appropriate designations, where necessary.*

- *restraining development in many villages to conserve their character and avoid development encroaching into the surrounding countryside.*
- *incorporating policies which protect existing areas of local value such as “green wedges” and amenity open space from development.*

Raising Environmental Quality and Design Standards

2.34 To a large extent, the Borough will be judged – by residents and visitors alike – on the quality of the physical environment which incorporates new development, the conservation of the old, the quantity and quality of its open spaces and countryside and the quality of its urban design; consequently, environmental quality is a high priority of the Local Plan. The protection and enhancement of the Borough’s environment are, likewise, priorities of the Borough Council’s Corporate Strategy – the environment is one of the main ways in which the Council can improve the health of its inhabitants, make the Borough more attractive to live in, provide a good base for businesses to thrive and – by promoting civic pride – reduce crime and vandalism.

2.35 The Local Plan seeks to raise environmental quality and design standards through the following measures:

- *recognising and reflecting the distinctive character of individual towns and villages through control of new development and appropriate designations.*
- *maintaining and enhancing the distinctive character of the Borough’s landscape as identified through the Landscape Character Assessment and through the application of appropriate policies.*
- *the intention to have Settlement Character Assessments, Village Appraisals and Village Design Statements prepared to identify key characteristics of the local environment, to ensure that dedicated policy guidance is available for particular areas.*
- *promoting the layout of developments to secure high standards of amenity, accessibility, safety and energy efficiency.*
- *promoting high standards of design by the control of new development and the fostering of a greater awareness of design, and its value through the contribution which it makes to the quality of urban life.*
- *tackling contaminated and degraded land and improving air and water quality through positive proposals to reclaim areas and policies to mitigate negative affects of development*
- *promoting opportunities for environmental enhancement initiatives, traffic management measures and conservation measures.*

Enhancing the Quality of Life

2.36 The Local Plan has a significant role to play in enhancing the quality of life of the Borough’s citizens through the consideration of social and community issues which are relevant to land use planning. It seeks to achieve this by ensuring that development takes place in a corporate and co-ordinated manner which promotes community safety, meets local needs, ensures better health and improves the provision of leisure and amenity facilities through the following measures:

- *encouraging the design of new developments to encompass the principles of “Designing out Crime”.*
- *facilitating the provision of housing to cater for those in greatest need, and which will help ensure the achievement of other complimentary objectives*

relating to health, the environment, transportation, community safety and employment.

- *considering in particular the relationship of the proposed housing to existing (or proposed) local facilities and work opportunities*
- *controlling the adverse effects of development on the environment*
- *facilitating the provision of new/enhanced leisure and recreational facilities, securing greater public access to land and monitoring and reviewing policies and standards for the adoption/maintenance of land for public open space purposes as a means of helping promote better health.*
- *facilitating the provision of new/enhanced cultural facilities and the incorporation of arts projects within developments.*

Supporting a Prosperous Local Economy

2.37 The Borough Council, through the South East Cheshire Enterprise, is seeking to encourage the sustainable development of a dynamic, high skill, high value added economy which embraces new technologies, enhances and safeguards the quality of life of the communities of the Borough and enables them to fulfil their potential. The Council is determined therefore to ensure not just economic growth within the Borough, but is equally committed that this shall not be at the expense of the environment and that this should be achieved within an increased emphasis on sustainability.

2.38 The Local Plan seeks to support a prosperous local economy through the following measures:

- *creating an environment which will attract and retain business in the Borough by ensuring sufficient high quality locations and improved infrastructure*
- *revitalising town centres from a business and community perspective through further development opportunities*
- *addressing the problem of out-commuting, particularly in Congleton, through further employment allocations*
- *assisting with strategic requirements for the provision of Regional Employment Sites through new allocations*
- *maintaining existing employment areas in employment use wherever feasible through the implementation of appropriate policies*
- *providing a variety of employment sites to suit the needs of differing uses and users*
- *supporting the improvement of strategic transport corridors to assist access and reduce local congestion*
- *promoting reuse of existing underused/derelict buildings for employment use where sustainable*
- *diversifying the rural economy through policies to facilitate appropriate employment and tourism uses*

DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

2.39 The development approaches described below represent the Borough Council's relative priorities and accepted scale of development for the Borough and its sub-divisions. Diagram 7 illustrates diagrammatically the development strategy for the Borough.

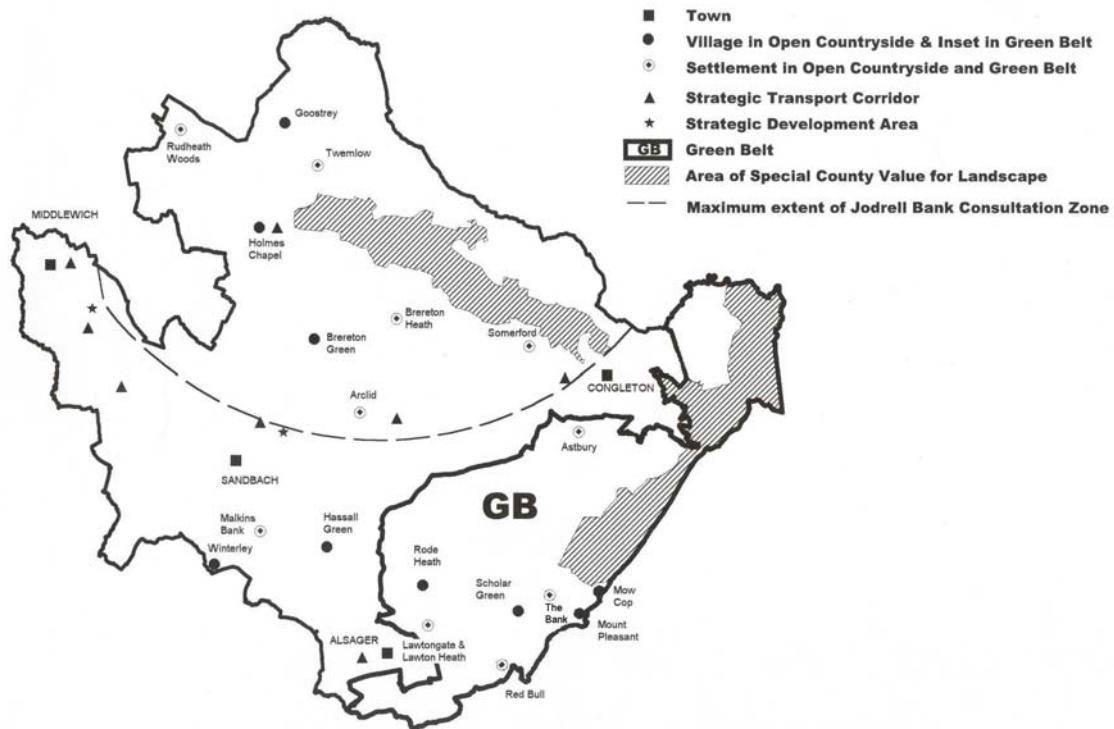


Fig.7 The Development Strategy

Borough-wide

2.40 The reduced scale of housing required to be provided in the Borough to meet Structure Plan requirements compared to previous requirements means a 40% reduction in overall housing growth from past levels. This will have significant implications for the location and nature of housing development in the Borough with priority directed towards meeting local needs rather than demand. The Structure Plan policy figure for industrial and business development, on the other hand, represents a doubling of past rates of development in order to help reduce out-commuting and to build on the regional locational advantages of the west of the Borough.

2.41 In accordance with the principles of sustainable development and strategic planning guidance, the overall development approach for the Borough therefore seeks to maintain and strengthen the role of the 4 towns of Congleton, Sandbach, Middlewich and Alsager as the principle focus of employment, housing and services in the Borough. This will be achieved by realising the potential that exists within urban areas and ensuring a balance between housing and employment to primarily meet local needs. The bulk of new development will therefore be directed towards the 4 towns in line with their potential for accommodating development and local needs. Expansion of urban areas shall only occur where necessary to meet essential needs which cannot be accommodated within the existing built-up area.

2.42 New development will generally continue to be discouraged in the rural areas because of strategic development restraints and the need to protect the countryside and agricultural land and because remoter locations are less likely to be sustainable. The emphasis shall be on sustaining existing communities through selective growth in established rural centres.

Congleton

2.43 Congleton is the largest town in the Borough with the greatest local need for housing and employment land and the most potential for development on brownfield and vacant urban sites. However it remains subject to strategic development restraints to support the urban regeneration of the Potteries and to protect adjoining areas of high landscape value and is locally constrained by an inadequate transport network. Further housing growth shall therefore need to be limited to that which can be accommodated within the limits of these constraints, maximising the opportunities for utilising existing urban sites and meeting local needs only.

2.44 The creation of a more sustainable community through the establishment of a major new, high-quality employment area and improvements to the range of shopping facilities to reduce existing high levels of outcommuting and shopping leakage to adjacent towns are seen as priorities. Transportation measures to facilitate greater choice of travel modes and continued improvement to the A34 corridor are also a high priority. Whilst the bulk of new development can be accommodated on sites which are within the urban area, there is a need to identify a suitable edge of town site to meet the employment needs of the town.

Sandbach

2.45 Although lying within the 'West Coast Spine' growth corridor in Regional Planning Guidance for the North West, the character and limited size of Sandbach do not make it suitable for significant growth. The town also has only limited urban development opportunities and is subject to local environmental constraints which it is proposed to maintain. There is not considered to be any overriding need to expand the town significantly beyond its current boundaries other than where it is necessary to accommodate growth to meet local needs. Priority will continue to be given to protecting areas of local environmental importance in order to maintain the open character of the town and to further improving the attractiveness and viability of the town centre and the provision of facilities in the town. Allocations will, therefore, be dispersed around the town on sites which are least environmentally sensitive and which will maintain the existing settlement form. Due to the recent loss of manufacturing jobs within the town there is also an overriding need to bring forward good quality employment land in the town to meet both strategic and local employment needs.

Alsager

2.46 The town is subject to development restraints to support the urban regeneration of the Potteries and has very limited urban development potential. Therefore a low rate of housing growth to meet local needs only is proposed and only limited employment development will be allowed. The maintenance of the towns rural character, enhancing the range of shopping and leisure facilities and addressing local traffic problems are the key priorities for the town. In allocating land priority will continue to be given to improving the range of facilities serving the town, minimising environmental impact and maximising development opportunities on the principal public transport corridor through the town.

Middlewich

2.47 Middlewich also lies within the 'West Coast Spine' growth corridor in Regional Planning Guidance for the North West. It has experienced significant growth in recent years which it is unlikely to be able to sustain without considerable investment in infrastructure and facilities. The opportunities for further housing growth are also limited due to land constraints. Although there are significant areas of derelict land, much of this is unsuitable or likely to be unavailable for housing use during the plan period. It is therefore considered undesirable to maintain past levels of housing growth, but the town will have a continuing role to play in meeting strategic and local employment land requirements because of its location and to facilitate the implementation of the remainder of the Middlewich Eastern bypass. Priority will continue to be given to bringing forward for development existing areas of derelict land, environmental improvements, further community and leisure facilities to serve the town and the improvement of the town's highway network. Allocations will principally be within the existing settlement and on land to the east where it will facilitate the completion of the eastern by-pass to the town.

Rural Area

2.48 The bulk of development in the rural areas will be focused within established rural centres where growth in housing will continue slightly below past rates of development providing essentially for local housing and employment needs and supporting existing facilities and services. Limited development will also be facilitated in smaller settlements where it may aid the provision of rural services or provide effective housing to meet local need.

2.49 With the ever changing structure of many agricultural activities further diversification of the rural economy will be encouraged where this would not have unacceptable consequences having regard to environmental and other considerations.

SETTLEMENT CATEGORIES

2.50 The Local Plan groups the settlements of the Borough into a hierarchy of 3 categories:-

- **Towns**
- **Villages in the Open Countryside and Inset in the Green Belt**
- **Settlements in the Open Countryside and Green Belt**

2.51 Each category of settlement has a general policy for the control of development. In some cases specific land allocations are also proposed and these are shown on the relevant Inset Map.

Settlement Zone Line

2.52 For the towns, principal villages and major development areas in the open countryside a "Settlement Zone Line" (SZL) is shown on the relevant Inset Map to define those areas within which the relevant policies apply. Its purpose is to define the boundary between the built-up area where the settlement policies in the plan apply, and the rural area where more restrictive open countryside or Green Belt policies apply. It therefore excludes land which requires protection from development, either

because it contributes to the overall character of the settlement and/or where it is important to retain views of the surrounding countryside.

2.53 Within the SZL, areas without notation are those within which the predominant character is intended to largely remain unchanged. Any proposals for new development within such areas will be examined on their merits with that context in mind. The SZL is not intended as a long term boundary and has, therefore, been reviewed and modified to reflect current circumstances and new allocations for the plan period to 2011.

Boundary of Villages Inset In The Green Belt

2.54 Where development is to be allowed for infilling or rounding off the existing built-up area of settlements situated within the Green Belt, the Local Plan identifies such settlements as "Villages Inset in the Green Belt". The boundary of such settlements is defined on the relevant Inset Map by a Settlement Zone Line. Within the boundary the Green Belt policies do not apply and appropriate limited development may be allowed where it will not conflict with the overall objectives of the Green Belt or harm the local environment. Outside the boundaries the normal Green Belt policies will apply.

Infill Boundary Line

2.55 For those small settlements in the open countryside and the Green Belt where limited infill development may be appropriate, an Infill Boundary Line (IBL) is defined. Within this boundary development is still subject to the open countryside or Green Belt policies, but in addition some controlled housing infill may be permitted.

2.56 Some smaller settlements in the open countryside do not have an IBL because the predominantly open and loose-knit character of the existing development makes the definition of such a line inappropriate. In those settlements infill development would not be permissible in order to maintain their essentially open character.

PLAN STRATEGY POLICIES

GENERAL SCALE AND LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

PS1

SUFFICIENT LAND WILL BE PROVIDED TO CATER FOR THE FORECAST REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW HOUSING AND INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOROUGH BETWEEN MID-1996 AND MID-2011.

ALLOCATIONS WILL BE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY SET OUT IN PS3, THE RESTRAINT POLICIES OF THE PLAN AND THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

2.57 Strategic and national guidance requires the Local Plan to ensure an adequate supply of land for housing and employment purposes to meet forecast requirements for the plan period. However, the scale of such provision will need to have regard to other strategic policies, in particular those relating to areas of development restraint, in order

to safeguard the area's assets and to avoid undermining the urban regeneration strategies of neighbouring authorities.

2.58 *The forecast requirements for the Borough are as set out in policies HOU1 and IND1 of the adopted Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan. In order to meet the objectives of the Local Plan, the scale and location of development to meet the forecast requirements shall be governed by the settlement and area strategy policies set out below which reflect government guidance regarding the need for Local Planning Authorities to incorporate the principles of sustainable development within their development plans. Chapters 6, 7 and 10 contain detailed policies and proposals to meet the requirements of this policy.*

PS2

THE PROVISION OF NEW SHOPPING, TRANSPORT, RECREATIONAL, COMMUNITY AND TOURISM FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE BOROUGH'S RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND VISITORS DURING THE PLAN PERIOD WILL BE ENCOURAGED AND PROVIDED FOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN AND THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

2.59 *A growing range of facilities and services will be needed to serve the Borough's residents, businesses and visitors during the plan period. Whilst the Local Plan cannot accurately forecast the likely scale and nature of future needs, it will, through appropriate policies and proposals, ensure that adequate opportunities are provided for appropriate development and change. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 contain detailed policies and proposals to meet the requirements of this policy.*

SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

PS3

WITHIN THE FOLLOWING HIERARCHY OF SETTLEMENTS, DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHICH IS APPROPRIATE TO THEIR STATUS AND ROLE AS SPECIFIED IN THE SUBSEQUENT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN:

- **TOWNS (PS4)**
- **VILLAGES IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND INSET IN THE GREEN BELT (PS5)**
- **SETTLEMENTS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND GREEN BELT (PS6)**

THE BULK OF NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL GENERALLY BE CONCENTRATED WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE OF THE TOWNS OF THE BOROUGH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY APPROACHES FOR THOSE TOWNS AND SUBJECT TO THE STRATEGIC POLICIES SET OUT IN THE STRUCTURE PLAN. NO NEW SETTLEMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WITHIN THE PLAN AREA.

PRIORITY WILL GENERALLY BE GIVEN TO THE USE OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITES.

2.60 *The above hierarchy and policies PS4 to PS6 identify which settlements are suited to greater or lesser levels of development in accordance with their character and role in order to ensure that the bulk of development takes place in sustainable locations*

which will minimise the need to travel and support existing services and facilities. The status and role of each type of settlement within the hierarchy is identified below:

Towns - urban areas which have a wide range of facilities and services and are centres serving their surrounding rural areas where continued growth realising the potential within the urban area and expansion only where necessary to meet identified needs would be appropriate. Within these settlements a balanced provision of housing and employment development will be sought.

Villages In The Open Countryside and Inset In The Green Belt - villages which have a basic range of facilities and services where limited growth of a scale sufficient to meet locally generated needs and support local services only would be appropriate.

Settlements In The Open Countryside and In the Green Belt - settlements which have a very limited range or no facilities and services where only very strictly controlled infill would be appropriate. In some cases no development other than in exceptional cases would be appropriate.

2.61 *The concentration of development within the towns of the Borough is in accordance with Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan policy GEN1. It is also considered that the requirements of policies PS1 and PS2 of the Local Plan can be met more sustainably through development within or on the edge of existing settlements rather than in any new settlement.*

TOWNS

PS4

THE FOLLOWING SETTLEMENTS ARE IDENTIFIED AS TOWNS AND DEFINED BY A SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE (SZL) ON THE INSET MAPS:

- **CONGLETON**
- **SANDBACH (INCLUDING HAYS CHEMICALS COMPLEX)**
- **MIDDLEWICH**
- **ALSAGER**

WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT ZONE LINES OF THESE TOWNS, THERE IS A GENERAL PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED IT IS IN KEEPING WITH THE TOWN'S SCALE AND CHARACTER AND DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

ANY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SETTLEMENT ZONE LINES ON LAND WHICH IS NOT OTHERWISE ALLOCATED FOR A PARTICULAR USE MUST ALSO BE APPROPRIATE TO THE CHARACTER OF ITS LOCALITY IN TERMS OF USE, INTENSITY, SCALE AND APPEARANCE.

2.62 *This policy aims to ensure that development is concentrated within or adjoining the existing built-up area of the major settlements of the Borough in accordance with policy PS3, by defining a Settlement Zone Line (SZL). The boundaries of the SZL will allow for sufficient growth to meet future land use needs for the plan period. Development outside the SZL will be subject to the Local Plan's policies in respect of the open countryside or Green Belt as appropriate. More detailed policy guidance in*

respect of individual land uses within these settlements is set out in the subsequent topic chapters of the Local Plan.

VILLAGES IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND INSET IN THE GREEN BELT

PS5

THE FOLLOWING ARE IDENTIFIED AS VILLAGES IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR INSET IN THE GREEN BELT AND ARE DEFINED BY A SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE (SZL) ON THE INSET MAPS:

- **BRERETON GREEN**
- **GOOSTREY**
- **HASSALL GREEN**
- **HOLMES CHAPEL (INCLUDING FORMER CRANAGE HALL HOSPITAL)**
- **RODE HEATH**
- **SCHOLAR GREEN/KENT GREEN/HALL GREEN**
- **MOUNT PLEASANT**
- **MOW COP**
- **WINTERLEY**

WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE OF THESE VILLAGES, DEVELOPMENT ON LAND WHICH IS NOT OTHERWISE ALLOCATED FOR A PARTICULAR USE WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT IS APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCAL CHARACTER IN TERMS OF USE, INTENSITY, SCALE AND APPEARANCE AND DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

2.63 These settlements provide a basic level of community services which are used by the local population, including those parishes surrounding them, and are expected to absorb the bulk of the housing and employment requirements for the rural areas. Development in these settlements is considered important to maintaining the viability of existing local services and facilities although the scale of development will be limited to that which is necessary to meet local needs. The boundaries of the Settlement Zone Lines around these villages have been drawn to accommodate future growth and also to protect the surrounding countryside from further encroachment. More detailed policy guidance in respect of individual land uses within these settlements is set out in the subsequent topic chapters of the Local Plan.

SETTLEMENTS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND THE GREEN BELT

PS6

THE FOLLOWING ARE IDENTIFIED AS SETTLEMENTS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR THE GREEN BELT AND ARE DEFINED BY AN INFILL BOUNDARY LINE (IBL) ON THE INSET MAPS:

- **ARCLID**
- **ASTBURY**
- **BRERETON HEATH**

- **LAWTONGATE & LAWTON HEATH**
- **MALKINS BANK**
- **RED BULL**
- **RUDHEATH WOODS**
- **SOMERFORD (CHELFORD ROAD/HOLMES CHAPEL ROAD/BLACK FIRS LANE)**
- **THE BANK**
- **TWEMLOW**

WITHIN THE INFILL BOUNDARY LINE OF THESE SETTLEMENTS, LIMITED DEVELOPMENT ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H6 WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT IS APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCAL CHARACTER IN TERMS OF USE, INTENSITY, SCALE AND APPEARANCE AND DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

IN ALL OTHER SETTLEMENTS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND GREEN BELT NOT DEFINED BY AN INFILL BOUNDARY LINE, NO DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED OTHER THAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICIES PS7 AND PS8.

2.64 The settlements listed are those which contain established groups of dwellings and may provide limited community services or other facilities for the population living within them or within the surrounding parishes. The policy aims to reflect guidance on the provision of housing in the open countryside or Green Belts as contained in PPGs 2 and 7 (revised) by recognising the settlements listed as being those where there may be limited situations, which are defined in this plan, in which development might be accommodated. This would have to be fully consistent with the predominant pattern of land use and the extent, intensity, scale and appearance of existing development. Those settlements or parts of settlements in the open countryside and Green Belt not listed or lying outside Infill Boundary Lines are considered to be unsuitable for accommodating any infill development because of their loose-knit settlement pattern. More detailed policy guidance in respect of individual land uses within these settlements is set out in the subsequent topic chapters of the Local Plan. Limited development is defined as the building of a single or small group of dwellings.

GREEN BELT

PS7

WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT IS FOR ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

- I) **AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY;**
- II) **ESSENTIAL FACILITIES FOR OUTDOOR SPORT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION, FOR CEMETERIES AND FOR OTHER USES OF LAND WHICH PRESERVE THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT AND WHICH DO NOT CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND WITHIN IT;**
- III) **NEW DWELLINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H6 AND EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING DWELLINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H16;**

- IV) CONTROLLED INFILLING WITHIN THOSE SETTLEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN POLICY PS7 IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H6;**
- V) LIMITED AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOCAL NEEDS WHICH COMPLY WITH POLICY H14;**
- VI) DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY E6;**
- VII) THE RE-USE OF EXISTING RURAL BUILDINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICIES BH15 AND BH16;**

SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES IN THE LOCAL PLAN.

2.65 This policy is consistent with policy GEN2 of the Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan. The purpose of the Green Belt is to check the unrestrained growth of the built-up area and to safeguard the countryside against further encroachment. The Green Belt boundaries have been reviewed and it is intended that they shall remain unchanged during the plan period. The Green Belt excludes those settlements defined in policy PS5 which are inset in the Green Belt. Where development permitted by this policy is allowed, it should be located in close proximity to existing buildings or use existing buildings wherever possible to minimise its visual impact and make use of existing services. Specific guidance on the approach to proposals for housing and employment in the Green Belt is set out in Chapters 6 and 7.

OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

PS8

IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF IT IS FOR ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

- I) AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY;**
- II) FACILITIES FOR OUTDOOR SPORT, RECREATION AND TOURISM, CEMETERIES AND FOR OTHER USES OF LAND WHICH PRESERVE THE OPENNESS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE AND MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE ITS LOCAL CHARACTER;**
- III) NEW DWELLINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H6 AND EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING DWELLINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H16;**
- IV) CONTROLLED INFILLING WITHIN THOSE SETTLEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN POLICY PS7 IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H6;**
- V) AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOCAL NEEDS WHICH COMPLY WITH POLICY H14;**
- VI) DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY E5;**

VII) THE RE-USE OF EXISTING RURAL BUILDINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICIES BH15 AND BH16;

VIII) THE RE-USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY E10;

SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH ALL OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES IN THE LOCAL PLAN.

2.66 This policy accords with those relevant policies contained in the Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan, notably policies HOU5 and IND6. and government guidance on development in the open countryside as set out in PPG7 (revised). The protection of the open countryside from inappropriate development is a principal objective of the Plan. The open countryside comprises that part of the Plan Area outside the Green Belt and outside those settlements defined in policies PS4 and PS5. Development in the open countryside will normally be unacceptable unless it can be shown to be essential to local needs and the rural economy and cannot be accommodated within existing settlements. The boundaries of the open countryside have been reviewed and amended to take account of changes in the boundaries of the Settlement Zone Lines of the towns and villages. Specific guidance on the approach to proposals for housing and employment in the Green Belt is set out in Chapters 6 and 7.

AREAS OF SPECIAL COUNTY VALUE

PS9

THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF SPECIAL COUNTY VALUE ARE DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND INSET MAPS:

- **DANE VALLEY (BETWEEN CONGLETON AND HOLMES CHAPEL).**
- **CONGLETON CLOUD/ TIMBERSBROOK/ ROE PARK/ MOW COP.**

WITHIN THESE DESIGNATED AREAS, DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD DAMAGE THE CHARACTER OR FEATURES FOR WHICH THE AREA OF SPECIAL COUNTY VALUE HAS BEEN DESIGNATED WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. OTHERWISE ACCEPTABLE OR APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT MAY BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT IT SATISFIES ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WHICH ARE RELEVANT:

- I) NEW BUILDINGS ARE NEEDED FOR THE PURPOSES OF AGRICULTURE OR FORESTRY AND ARE SENSITIVELY DESIGNED AND SITED IN RELATION TO LAND FORM AND MEANS OF ACCESS;**
- II) NEW, CONVERTED OR EXTENDED BUILDINGS RESPECT TRADITIONAL FORMS AND EXTERNAL MATERIALS AND ARE RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF RURAL ENTERPRISE OR TOURISM;**
- III) DEVELOPMENT RESTORES, PROTECTS OR ENHANCES THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE BY SUITABLE PLANTING, LANDSCAPING OR AFFORESTATION;**
- IV) PROPOSALS FOR THE EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND MAKE SUITABLE PROVISION FOR BETTER PUBLIC ACCESS TO AND ENJOYMENT OF THE DESIGNATED AREAS;**

- V) **PROVISION OF LOCALLY REQUIRED UTILITIES ARE RELATED IN SIZE, POSITION AND DESIGN TO THE EXTENT AND NEEDS OF SETTLEMENTS AND THEIR RESIDENT POPULATION;**
- VI) **PROVISION OF AMENITIES FOR THE LOCALLY RESIDENT POPULATION OR VISITORS IS SITED WITH DUE REGARD TO AVAILABLE MEANS OF ACCESS.**

2.67 This Policy accords with Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan Policy R2. The areas of Special County Value are of strategic value to the County because of the quality of their landscape which should be protected from development. These areas also contain features of archaeological, historic or nature conservation importance which in combination with their landscape quality, need to be conserved and managed. The specific exceptions as set out in the Policy criteria I to VI to the general presumption against development in this policy are to allow for essential economic and social needs and opportunities for environmental enhancement.

2.68 The Structure Plan identifies two Areas of Special County Value (ASCV) in the Borough. The Congleton Cloud/ Timbersbrook/Roe Park/Mow Cop area is designated as an upland area characterised by small to medium-scale farmland with large blocks of woodland. It contains a variety of features unusual to Cheshire including moorland heather, dry stone walls, old rocky outcrops and long views out. The Dane Valley area is characterised by wide river meanders and meadows contained by steeply wooded buff slopes along with older river banks and slopes of cleared woodland. Within the context of Cheshire, this part of the River Dane has made more of an impact on the Cheshire Plain than other rivers.

JODRELL BANK RADIO TELESCOPE CONSULTATION ZONE

PS10

WITHIN THE JODRELL BANK RADIO TELESCOPE CONSULTATION ZONE, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND INSET MAPS, DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH CAN BE SHOWN TO IMPAIR THE EFFICIENCY OF THE JODRELL BANK RADIO TELESCOPE.

2.69 The purpose of this policy is to take account of the Town and Country (Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope) Direction 1973 and to accords with Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan policy GEN5. Detailed consultations with the University of Manchester have taken place in order that the Local Plan's major land use allocations, in particular those for housing, take account of the University's requirements in respect of maintaining the efficiency of the Radio Telescope in terms of its ability to receive radio emissions from space with a minimum of interference from electrical equipment.

MAJOR EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

PS11

PROVISION WILL BE MADE ON THE EDGE OF THE FOLLOWING SETTLEMENTS FOR MAJOR NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT AREAS TO MEET IDENTIFIED ECONOMIC NEEDS:

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT SITES:

SANDBACH MIDDLEWICH

SITE TO MEET A LOCAL NEED: CONGLETON

2.70 *A major objective of the Local Plan is the development of a strong local economy in order to maintain high levels of employment and reduce out-commuting. The adopted Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan requires the provision of regional employment sites in the Borough at Sandbach and Middlewich to help sustain the economy of the County. These are sites of sub-regional importance and are not Regional Investment Sites as defined in Regional Planning Guidance, nor Strategic Regional Sites as identified within the Regional Economic Strategy. In addition a more local need has been identified for a major employment site in Congleton.*

2.71 *The Borough Council's Urban Potential Study has revealed that there is no suitable land currently available within existing urban areas for major new employment development. Achieving these needs will therefore require identifying land on the edges of these settlements of a scale appropriate to the character of the area and sufficient to meet identified needs. In selecting suitable sites for development the objectives set out in paragraph 10.21 will be used.*

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

PS12

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT AND PROMOTE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE FOLLOWING MAJOR TRANSPORT CORRIDORS. DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH IS LIKELY TO PREJUDICE THE IMPROVEMENT OF THESE CORRIDORS:

- **A34 THROUGH CONGLETON TOWN (INCLUDING WAGGON & HORSES JUNCTION)**
- **MIDDLEWICH EASTERN BYPASS (SOUTHERN SECTION)**
- **A54 THROUGH MIDDLEWICH TO JUNCTION 18 OF M6**
- **A534 BETWEEN CONGLETON AND JUNCTION 17 OF M6**
- **JUNCTION OF A50, A54 AND A535 AT HOLMES CHAPEL**
- **B5077 THROUGH ALSAGER**
- **UPGRADING OF SANDBACH-MIDDLEWICH-NORTHWICH RAIL LINE FOR USE BY PASSENGERS**
- **M6 MOTORWAY (INCLUDING JUNCTION 17)**

2.72 *The Borough Council will support improvements to the following transport corridors which are reconcilable with government policy, with the environmental and sustainable principles listed in paragraph 2.33 of this Plan and with the Plan's objectives and targets. These schemes are considered by the Council to be of strategic importance for the reasons detailed below and it will, therefore, seek to support and promote them with the aim of bringing forward in part or in whole suitable schemes for implementation.*

A34 through Congleton Town - *the Congleton Transportation Study identified the need for improvements to the A34 corridor, in particular the junction of the A34, A534 and A54 (Waggon & Horses Junction) to facilitate improved traffic flows. A scheme for the provision of a new roundabout at this junction has been approved by the County*

Council and is identified on the Proposals Map for Congleton. It is anticipated that this scheme will be partly funded by the private sector. Other improvements to the corridor will be investigated and implemented as opportunities arise. The programmed improvements to the Waggon & Horses junction and any other as yet unidentified improvements to the A34 corridor through the town will provide only a partial solution to the problem of traffic congestion and the potential for a more radical solution in the form of a by-pass will need to be explored in conjunction with the County Highway Authority in the event that Central Government funding for such schemes becomes more favourable. The Borough Council will press therefore for regular monitoring of traffic flows on the A34 and the associated road network with a view to the subsequent inclusion of a by-pass proposal in the County's Local Transport Plan.

Middlewich Eastern Bypass (southern section) - this replaces the former proposed diversion of Lewin Street to Brooks Lane, to remove through traffic from Lewin Street, and provides a much more effective and long term solution to problems of traffic congestion within Middlewich. This road will provide improved access to existing industrial areas and to a number of proposed development areas in Middlewich. This route will link to the existing new highway from Holmes Chapel Road to King Street to form part of a wider eastern bypass for Middlewich. Funding towards this scheme will also come from the private sector. It is identified in the Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan as a major scheme to be implemented. An indicative line for the remaining section of the route is identified on the Proposals Map for Middlewich.

A54 through Middlewich to Junction 18 of M6 - this route is the principal strategic route between Winsford, Middlewich and the M6 and serves significant areas of employment and housing development. Improvements to this road would help ease traffic congestion, improve road safety and environmental conditions and improve access to development areas. It is identified in the Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan as a major scheme to be investigated.

A534 between Congleton and Junction 17 of M6 - this road provides access to the motorway from Congleton town and from surrounding districts. It is expected to take increasing traffic volumes during the plan period to serve housing and employment growth in the town, but is of a poor standard in parts and requires upgrading to ease traffic flows and improve road safety.

Junction of A50, A54 and A535 at Holmes Chapel - there is concern regarding volumes of traffic, in particular heavy goods vehicles, gaining access to and from the motorway through the centre of Holmes Chapel. Whilst a series of traffic management measures have been agreed for the centre, these do not address the fundamental transportation issue and there is long term consideration for a bypass within the County Council's programme.

B5077 through Alsager - the town suffers from local congestion at peak times due to the volumes of through traffic along the B5077. There is a need to address this issue through appropriate traffic management measures and highway improvements.

Upgrading of Sandbach-Middlewich-Northwich rail line for passenger use - the upgrading of this line for use as a passenger service would allow the re-introduction of services to Middlewich and the revision of passenger services in the mid-Cheshire line as a whole and also to take greater advantage of rail freight opportunities. It is identified in the Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan as a major scheme to be investigated.

M6 Junction 16 to 19 - Consultants for the Midman (multi modal study) reported in March 2002, their proposals included a series of integrated transport measures and

new infrastructure proposals, namely, the widening of the M6 between junctions 11a and 19. The Secretary of State for Transport approved the report and has instructed the Highways Agency to carry out further work to enable this scheme to be entered into the Government's Targeted Programme of Improvements.

3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION

3.1 The purpose of this Section is to set out the detailed guidelines upon which planning applications will be decided and conditions imposed, where the principle of the proposal is in accordance with the policies and proposals of the Local Plan. It deals with the aspects of environmental quality which need to be taken into consideration for all development.

3.2 The Borough Council attaches great importance to the consideration of environmental matters in determining planning applications and ensuring that they are taken into account on a comprehensive and consistent basis. Such environmental concerns, in their widest sense, include not just issues relating to the local physical environment, but also global environmental issues and the management of traffic. The latter, in particular, is now seen as a major consideration in land use planning as growth in road transport and the consequent environmental impact present a significant challenge to the objectives of sustainable development.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

3.3 Sustainable development is at the heart of government planning policy and is reflected strongly in the advice set out in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 1 'General Policy and Principles' and PPG13 'Transport' as well as other PPGs relating to more specific areas of planning. PPGs1 and 13 and the government's sustainable development strategy 'A Better Quality of Life' emphasise the contribution of the planning system to achieving sustainable development. In particular they stress the importance of facilitating development which makes best use of existing resources and reduces the need to travel. PPG1 also requires that development plans set out design policies against which development proposals are to be considered. Revised PPG3 'Housing' also emphasises the need for more sustainable patterns of housing development and the promotion of good design in new housing developments.

3.4 The 1998 Government Transport White Paper also sees planning as having a key role to play in extending choice in transport by influencing the scale, density and design of land uses.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.5 Environmental quality and the conservation of resources is reflected in many of the policies of the Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan. In particular policy GEN3 requires that all development minimise adverse impacts and where possible improve the quality of the environment whilst policy GEN7 sets out controls on the location of potentially polluting developments and the location of sensitive developments in the vicinity of existing polluting installations. The Structure Plan also sets out measures to meet transport and access needs (policies T1 and T2) and manage car parking (policy T7).

LOCAL CONTEXT

Environmental Sustainability Strategy

3.6 The Borough Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy seeks to promote the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment in the Borough through the Council's own actions and its influence over others. It is based on the Council's Environmental Charter which was adopted in 1992 and incorporates the Council's Local Agenda 21 Programme.

Congleton Borough Sustainable Transport Strategy

3.7 The Congleton Borough Sustainable Transport Strategy was adopted by the Borough Council in February 1999 and now forms part of its Economic Planning Strategy. It provides a framework for identifying future schemes and initiatives and for changing the direction of transport policy in the Borough by establishing objectives to aim for, setting targets and proposing measures to facilitate change. It seeks to minimise the impact of travel on the environment by giving more choice in the way we travel and move goods thereby reducing our dependence on the car and lorry, making better use of our existing resources, and reducing air pollution and economic loss through less congestion.

The Environment Act 1995 and Air Quality

3.8 The Environment Act 1995 introduced the need for all local authorities to assess the quality of air within their area. The quality is measured against the effects of nine different pollutants. Levels of pollution are monitored regularly by the Borough Council to ensure they are not exceeded. The Act recognises the close link between local air quality, traffic management and land use planning, bringing in new responsibilities for local authorities to review and assess air quality and to declare local Air Quality Management Areas.

Design and Landscaping

3.9 New buildings and their curtilages have a significant effect on the character and quality of an area. This is perhaps most obvious in urban areas and their fringes. Whilst the plan does not oppose development that is necessary for economic or social purposes, it is important to ensure that the environment of the Borough is not allowed to deteriorate. Most developers now accept that design and landscape must be a considered part of development proposals; this can often present the opportunity for further enhancement of neighbouring areas. Good design and landscaping and respect for the amenities and health of others can also help promote sustainable development, reduce crime, attract business and investment and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place.

3.10 To provide guidance and advice to developers on matters relating to design and landscaping, the Borough Council produces Supplementary Planning Guidance in the form of Development Briefs for certain development sites and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGN's) for particular forms of development. Current SPGN's are listed in the Appendix.

Community Safety Strategy

3.11 The Community Safety Strategy is a three year partnership programme for reducing crime and disorder and their social and economic costs in Congleton Borough in a cost effective and equitable way through various initiatives and measures involving the local community, police and health authorities, the Borough Council and other agencies. At a local level, the Local Plan has a role to play in helping to achieve the objectives of the Strategy by promoting designs and layouts of new development which are safe and take account of crime prevention and community safety considerations.

Landscape Character Assessment

3.12 The landscape is an important and highly valued part of the environmental resource of the district. It contributes to the identity of the area, to the economy because of its role in attracting tourism and business and is often a source of enjoyment and inspiration. Whilst it is necessary to have policies to protect certain landscapes which are considered to be of importance such as Areas of Special County Value for landscape, national planning guidance is increasingly requiring that emphasis should be placed on “landscape character” i.e. what makes a landscape different from another, rather than what makes it better or worse. This approach enables policies to be directed towards maintaining diversity and distinctiveness of landscape character.

3.13 In 1999 the Borough Council commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment of the Borough which has identified eleven areas of the Borough which are broadly of homogeneous character (see diagram 8) and identified guidelines for the future management, conservation and enhancement of these areas (see Appendix). The findings of the Study are reflected in the policies of the Local Plan Review.

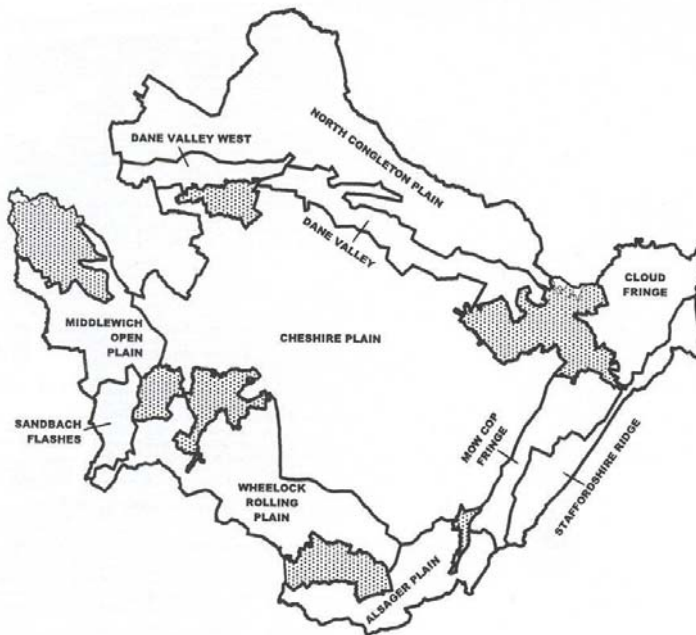


Fig. 8. Landscape Character Areas

Transport

3.14 The impact of the car on our towns, villages and the open countryside is a major concern of the Borough Council and local residents. The planning system can have a significant long term impact on travel patterns within the Borough through measures to control new development. As Planning Authority the Borough Council can have a direct influence on how new development impacts on local transport needs and travel

patterns through its planning policies and through the determination of planning applications.

3.15 PPG13 (Transport) requires that planning authorities incorporate policies within Local Plans to help minimise the impact of the car and facilitate greater choice. Changing how people travel is difficult, however and costly, but the long term environmental and health costs of not changing these habits may be greater. Car ownership is continually rising in the Borough, there is limited public transport provision and services and facilities are becoming more remote from people's homes. The settlement pattern of the Borough is characterised by small and medium-sized settlements which cannot support intensive public transport provision. On the other hand the Borough has the advantage of having small compact towns which favour promoting access on foot and by cycle or other types of service, such as flexible mini-bus, taxi-bus services and community transport. There is therefore a need to ensure that all new development, where appropriate, addresses these concerns through measures to reduce the impact of generated vehicular traffic and encourage access by means other than the car. There is also a necessity to ensure that Congleton Borough residents and businesses are able to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by rail corridors in the Borough and the potential for freight movement on the canals.

3.16 The Local Transport Plan for the period 2001/2 - 2005/6 identifies the main problems of the Congleton District as being:

- increasing environmental and safety problems
- accommodating economic development
- addressing strategic traffic movements; and
- inadequate, non-car linkages both within and between communities

3.17 It seeks to address these problems through a variety of measures aimed at improving transport choice and mode interchange, reducing the impact of traffic, increasing travel safety, and accommodating local employment needs. The Local Plan will need to reflect and reinforce these measures through land use policies relating to all development.

3.18 The management of car parking is a vital component of the Local Plans objectives of making more efficient use of the transport network and revitalising the town centres. However any such measures need to be considered in the context of an overall package of transport measures designed to make better use of and improve existing facilities, reduce the impact of car parks on the environment and discourage inappropriate use of parking facilities.

Pollution and Hazard Control

3.19 Increasing awareness of the environmental effects of development on local air and water quality and the effects of noise and light pollution has led local authorities to take a greater interest in controlling potentially polluting activities. At the same time the effectiveness and scope of environmental protection legislation has expanded rapidly.

3.20 Although the Borough is not heavily urbanised, pollution in the Borough is nonetheless still a significant issue which can arise from a number of sources: industrial activities, traffic generation, quarrying, commercial operations, construction itself and even from agricultural activities. It can also arise from waste storage, treatment and disposal facilities and is present in contaminated land itself. Whilst pollution controls are administered through a number of organisations, the planning

system has an important role to play in ensuring that any potentially polluting and hazardous effects of development are minimised.

Infrastructure and Facilities

3.21 The need to accommodate more development within the Borough will place considerable pressure on the infrastructure and facilities currently available within the Borough. There is much concern that further development will worsen existing problems or create shortfalls which cannot be met. On the other hand new development can present an opportunity to improve or provide new infrastructure and facilities and can help sustain services and facilities in areas of static or declining population. This is particularly the case in the Borough where the small size of many settlements are unable to support a wide range of facilities. There is therefore a need to ensure that all new development should make a positive contribution towards the overall quality of life by incorporating open space provision, creating new areas of value and enhancing existing areas and providing or funding facilities and improvements as appropriate.

Global Concerns

3.22 There is increasing awareness of the global impact of development as a result of greenhouse gas emissions and high energy consumption threatening climate change. The layout of a development, the materials used in buildings and their method of construction and the use of landscaping can all have an effect. Whilst much lies beyond the scope of current planning controls, there is still action which the Borough Council can take through advice and the determination of planning applications to achieve more energy efficient forms of development.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS POLICIES

NEW DEVELOPMENT

GR1

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

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

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

IX) WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

3.23 This policy sets out the various aspects of the built and natural environment which the Borough Council will consider in respect of all applications seeking permission or consent as appropriate to the nature of the proposal. The detailed requirements which will need to be met in respect of each of these aspects are set out in the subsequent policies. Currently approved Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes and standards are contained in the Technical Appendix. The circumstances under which statements and assessments will be required to accompany the application are also set out in the subsequent policies

DESIGN

GR2

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

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARACTER, APPEARANCE AND FORM OF THE SITE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA IN TERMS OF:**
 - A) THE HEIGHT, SCALE, FORM AND GROUPING OF THE BUILDING(S);**
 - B) THE CHOICE OF MATERIALS;**
 - C) EXTERNAL DESIGN FEATURES, INCLUDING SIGNAGE AND STREET FURNITURE;**
 - D) THE VISUAL, PHYSICAL AND FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSAL TO NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES, THE STREET SCENE AND TO THE LOCALITY GENERALLY;**

- II) WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE PROPOSAL PROVIDES FOR HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SCHEME WHICH IS SATISFACTORY IN TERMS OF:-**
 - A) THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE OPEN SPACE AND BUILT FORM OF THE DEVELOPMENT;**
 - B) THE RELATIONSHIP OF PROPOSED AREAS OF LANDSCAPING TO THE LAYOUT, SETTING AND DESIGN OF THE DEVELOPMENT;**
 - C) THE SCREENING OF ADJOINING USES;**
 - D) MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATING NEW WILDLIFE/ NATURE CONSERVATION HABITATS WHERE SUCH FEATURES CAN REASONABLY BE INCLUDED AS PART OF SITE LAYOUTS AND LANDSCAPING WORKS;**

- III) WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE PROPOSAL RESPECTS EXISTING FEATURES AND AREAS OF NATURE**

CONSERVATION, HISTORIC, ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL VALUE AND IMPORTANCE WITHIN THE SITE;

- IV) WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE PROPOSAL INCORPORATES MEASURES TO IMPROVE NATURAL SURVEILLANCE AND REDUCE THE RISK OF CRIME;**
- V) WHERE APPROPRIATE, CONSIDERATION IS GIVEN TO THE USE OF PUBLIC ART AND THE CREATION OF PUBLIC SPACES TO BENEFIT AND ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE SURROUNDING AREA;**
- VI) THE PROPOSAL TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE NEED FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENCY BY MEANS OF BUILDING TYPE, ORIENTATION AND LAYOUT, SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS AND THE USE OF LANDSCAPING.**

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

3.24 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a high standard of design is achieved and that new development contributes positively to the character of the locality of the site. It is concerned with the relationship between all the elements of the built and unbuilt environment which give buildings and areas their unique character and distinctiveness. The criteria do not seek to stifle creative expression, but rather to develop awareness of context and to encourage sensitivity to the townscape. This policy will apply to all proposals for new development requiring planning permission regardless of its land use, both in the urban and rural areas. Appropriate supplementary planning guidance and adopted standards will be applied with regard to current government guidance.

3.25 The provision of landscaping and public art helps enhance the quality of the built environment, provides identity to an area, adds to the quality and variety of our natural landscapes and improves the attractiveness of an area to encourage investment. The provision of any public art will be through negotiation with developers for those schemes which, by virtue of their scale, nature or location, would be visually prominent to the public. Any such works will be considered as part of the amenity features of the development.

3.26 The reduction of crime and improving community safety is a high priority of the Borough Council's Corporate Strategy. Circular 5/94 advises that crime prevention is capable of being a material consideration when planning applications are considered. In this respect the design of new development can play a part in reducing the risk of criminal activity both to individuals and to property.

3.27 Planning decisions also need to reconcile the interests of development with the importance of conserving the environment. Energy conservation and efficiency measures are important in helping to achieve global sustainability aims and reducing the consumption of non-renewable energy resources. Appropriate measures need result in little or no additional cost to the developer. Guidance on suitable measures is contained in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes on Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development and in its Green Guide to Development.

3.28 *A statement of design principles is considered necessary for certain proposals to enable the Borough Council to properly understand the design concept and facilitate consideration of design issues. This is in accordance with the advice in Annex A of PPG1. Such statements should show the wider context as well as the development site and its immediately adjacent buildings.*

3.29 *A sensitive site is one which includes or adjoins areas designated as of value or interest in the Local Plan which are likely to be significantly affected by the proposal. The Borough Council's requirements in respect of design and layout and the provision of private and public open space in respect of all new housing development are set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes.*

GR3

IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF POLICY GR2, PLANNING PERMISSION FOR ANY NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON SITES PROVIDING 10 OR MORE DWELLINGS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE :

- I) **THE DENSITY OF THE PROPOSAL REPRESENTS THE MOST EFFICIENT USE OF LAND HAVING REGARD TO:**
 - A) **THE LOCATION OF THE SITE WITH REGARD TO ACCESS TO SERVICES AND FACILITIES AND CHOICE OF MEANS OF TRAVEL;**
 - B) **THE INTRINSIC QUALITIES OF THE SITE AND THE CHARACTER OF ITS SURROUNDINGS;**
 - C) **THE ESTIMATED DWELLING CAPACITY OF THOSE SITES ALLOCATED UNDER POLICY DP2;**

WHILST HIGHER DENSITIES WILL BE SOUGHT, PARTICULARLY WHERE THERE IS GOOD PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESS, NET RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES WILL NOT BE LOWER THAN 30 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE.
- II) **AN APPROPRIATE RANGE OF DWELLING TYPES AND SIZES IS PROVIDED HAVING REGARD TO:**
 - A) **THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THE SETTLEMENT, INCLUDING, WHERE REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H13, SOME PROVISION FOR LOCAL NEEDS;**
 - B) **THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE AND IT'S SURROUNDINGS;**
 - C) **THE EXISTING SOCIAL MIX IN THE LOCALITY;**
- III) **ADEQUATE MEASURES ARE UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL PROVISION IS MADE WHERE APPROPRIATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF POLICY GR22;**
- IV) **ADEQUATE MEASURES ARE INCORPORATED TO ENSURE A SAFE, ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR RESIDENTS;**
- V) **THE LAYOUT MAKES ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR SAFE AND CONVENIENT PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE MOVEMENT AND MINIMISES THE IMPACT OF THE CAR.**

3.30 *This policy reflects government guidance as set out in PPG3 'Housing' by seeking to ensure that larger housing schemes understand the design concept and facilitate consideration of design issues. This is in accordance with the advice in Annex A of PPG1. Such statements should show the wider context as well as the development site and its immediately adjacent buildings make efficient use of land, by generally avoiding*

low density development, create balanced, socially mixed communities which reflect the housing needs of the area and help widen housing opportunities, contribute towards the provision of public open space and recreational facilities in the area to meet the needs of local residents and promote access by means other than the car. The nature of those requirements will be dependent on the scale of the development, with larger schemes being required to provide a greater range of house types and an appropriate level of open space within the development itself. Information such as the Council's Housing Needs Study and the Census will be used to help determine the needs and social mix of an area.

3.31 *The Borough Council will expect all schemes to be of a high design standard and adopt the principles of sustainable development. The Borough Council's requirements in respect of design and layout and the provision of private and public open space in respect of all new housing development are set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes.*

LANDSCAPING

GR4

WHERE A LANDSCAPING SCHEME IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED, EITHER AT PLANNING APPLICATION STAGE OR AS A CONDITION OF PERMISSION, THIS WILL ONLY BE APPROVED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS SHOW SPECIES, SITING, NUMBER, PLANTING SIZE AND PLANTING DENSITY OF ALL NEW TREES AND SHRUBS AND DETAILS OF EXISTING VEGETATION TO BE RETAINED OR REMOVED;**
- II) PLANT SPECIES ARE USED WHICH ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE NATURE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND IN SYMPATHY WITH THE CHARACTER OF EXISTING VEGETATION WITHIN THE SITE AND IN THE AREA GENERALLY;**
- III) LANDSCAPED AREAS ARE ADEQUATE AND APPROPRIATE FOR THE INTENDED USE;**
- IV) SATISFACTORY PROVISION IS MADE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND AFTERCARE OF THE SCHEME.**

3.32 *This policy seeks to secure high quality, well designed landscaping through landscaping schemes where appropriate to the development. A detailed landscaping scheme will allow the Local Planning Authority to assess the impact of the proposal on a given site and ensure that the existing features are retained and enhanced. In most cases the Council will impose planning conditions requiring the submission of a detailed landscape scheme to be approved prior to commencement of development. For sensitive sites, however, a detailed scheme may be required at the time of submission of the application. In the case of major development proposals, the Borough Council may require the submission of a landscape master plan at the time of submission of the application. The Council may also require that certain landscaping works are carried out before the development is started in order to minimise the impact of the development.*

GR5

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

3.33 The landscape of the Borough is extremely rich and varied and is important to the character and quality of the whole Borough both intrinsically and as a setting for individual settlements. A Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken of the countryside within the Borough which divides the landscape character of the Borough into broadly homogenous units of similar character. This policy seeks to ensure that any development within the countryside respects or enhances the individual characteristics of these areas and the features or views which form part of them. PPG7 supports the adoption of this 'character approach' to accommodating necessary change. The boundaries of the individual landscape character areas are identified in Diagram 8 and guidelines outlining the most appropriate management and conservation strategies, to ensure that the areas character is conserved, restored or enhanced are set out in the Appendix. The landscape character assessment guidelines will be subject to consultation and subsequent adoption as supplementary planning guidance by the Borough Council.

AMENITY AND HEALTH

GR6

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR ANY DEVELOPMENT ADJOINING OR NEAR TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY OR SENSITIVE USES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNDULY DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THEIR AMENITY DUE TO:

- I) **LOSS OF PRIVACY;**
- II) **LOSS OF SUNLIGHT AND DAYLIGHT;**
- III) **VISUAL INTRUSION;**
- IV) **ENVIRONMENTAL DISTURBANCE OR POLLUTION;**
- V) **TRAFFIC GENERATION, ACCESS AND PARKING.**

3.34 This policy seeks to ensure the protection of the amenities of occupiers of residential properties or sensitive uses in the vicinity of any new development. In considering planning applications near to residential properties the Borough Council will have regard to the standards set out in relevant SPGNs in respect of space about dwellings (SPGN No. 1) and the advice in SPGN No. 5 regarding

environmental protection (or as subsequently replaced). The Borough Council will have particular regard to the effects of commercial and industrial uses on residential property. Environmental disturbance includes the effects of noise, vibration, smells, fumes, smoke, dust or grit. Sensitive uses are those uses whose activities are particularly vulnerable to disturbance from noise, pollution, loss of privacy or daylight and visual intrusion, such as housing, schools, hospitals and nursing homes.

GR7

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH, IN THE VIEW OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL, WOULD BE LIKELY TO:

- I) LEAD OR CONTRIBUTE TO SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED AIR, LAND, WATER, LIGHT OR NOISE POLLUTION TO ENVIRONMENTALLY UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS;**
- II) INVOLVE SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER RISK TO THE LIVES AND HEALTH OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, INCLUDING OCCUPANTS OF ADJOINING LAND;**
- III) EXPOSE MORE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO UNACCEPTABLE RISK EITHER IN AREAS SUBJECT TO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS OR WHERE IT IS PROBABLE THAT SUCH HAZARDS MAY INCREASE;**
- IV) BE A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF STATUTORY NUISANCE, APPREHENSION OF DANGER OR LOSS OF AMENITY TO PEOPLE LIVING OR WORKING IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA. ALL PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MUST INCLUDE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO ALLOW THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT TO BE ACCURATELY JUDGED. WHERE, IN THE OPINION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL, THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL IS LIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANT IN AIR QUALITY TERMS, AN AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT WILL BE REQUIRED.**

3.35 *There are some forms of development, particularly industrial, which may be potentially hazardous to the public at large (or within adjoining land and buildings) or which may cause various types of pollution by reason of the processes used, the by-products created or the effluent which are discharged. Such forms of development will be strongly resisted. The Borough Council will undertake Air Quality Initiatives to monitor and assess changes in air quality due to emissions from potentially hazardous installations and will require all applications for major proposals which are likely to have a significant impact on air quality to be accompanied by an air quality assessment .*

GR8

IN AREAS ON OR AROUND POTENTIAL OR EXISTING SOURCES OF AIR, LAND, WATER OR NOISE POLLUTION, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE SENSITIVE TO SUCH POLLUTION IF UNACCEPTABLE DAMAGE OR NUISANCE TO THE NEW USE IS LIKELY TO RESULT.

3.36 *In order to minimise the consequences of polluting activities, new development proposals will be resisted where the surroundings are likely to have a detrimental impact on the proposal unless adequate measures can be implemented to mitigate the*

impact of pollution from its source. This may be enforced through appropriate conditions or a planning obligation. The Borough Council will consider exposure to pollution at the time of the application and any increase that may be reasonably expected in the foreseeable future. Sensitive proposals are those whose activities are particularly vulnerable to disturbance from noise, pollution, loss of privacy or daylight and visual intrusion, such as housing, schools, hospitals and nursing homes.

ACCESSIBILITY, SERVICING AND PARKING PROVISION

New Development

GR9

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING ACCESS, SERVICING OR PARKING FACILITIES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) PROPER CONSIDERATION IS GIVEN TO THE NEEDS OF PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS AS WELL AS THOSE OF CAR USERS;**
- II) ADEQUATE AND SAFE PROVISION FOR SUITABLE ACCESS AND EGRESS BY VEHICLES, PEDESTRIANS AND OTHER ROAD USERS TO A PUBLIC HIGHWAY, INCLUDING ATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF THE DISABLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY GR12;**
- III) COMPLIANCE WITH PARKING AND HIGHWAY STANDARDS WITH DUE REGARD TO THE PROVISIONS OF POLICY GR17;**
- IV) WHERE APPROPRIATE, ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR THE LOADING AND UNLOADING OF COMMERCIAL VEHICLES;**
- V) WHERE REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY DP7, MAKE PROVISION FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EXISTING TRANSPORT NETWORK OF FOR NEW ROADS.**

3.37 The aim of this policy is to ensure that new development is adequately designed and laid out so as to promote transport choice, highway safety and convenience without aggravating existing traffic problems in the area. The County Council's documents "Design Aid: Parking" and "Design Aid: Housing : Roads", which are currently being revised to ensure compatibility with Government guidance, will be the main instruments used to assess the standard and level of parking and highway provisions. An interim parking standard policy based on current national and regional parking standards has been adopted by the County Council details of which are contained in the Appendix. Proposals for development affecting a trunk road will be expected to comply with the relevant Department of Transport development control policies.

GR10

IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF POLICY GR9, PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT LIKELY TO GENERATE SIGNIFICANT TRAVEL NEEDS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHICH SATISFY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- I) **THE LOCATION IS ACCESSIBLE BY A CHOICE OF MEANS OF TRAVEL;**
- II) **APPROPRIATE MEASURES ARE PROVIDED TO ASSIST PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICIES GR13, GR14 AND GR15 AND TO MANAGE PARKING PROVISION IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY GR17;**
- III) **A TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT IS SUBMITTED WITH THE APPLICATION WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC GENERATION ON AIR QUALITY;**
- IV) **IN THE CASE OF A MAJOR EMPLOYMENT GENERATOR, A COMPANY COMMUTER PLAN IS ADOPTED.**

3.38 *In accordance with the guidance in PPG13 (Transport) this policy seeks to ensure that major new developments should facilitate choice of travel through their location and through measures to assist non-car users. The Borough Council has produced an Accessibility Profile to identify areas of good and poor access by public transport.*

3.39 *The Borough Council will expect any major new employment development to include a Company Commuter Plan setting out measures to reduce the impact of traffic congestion for journeys to and from work. Cheshire County Council's guide "Commuter Plans in Cheshire: Steps to Success" gives practical advice to assist companies in drawing up Commuter Plans.*

3.40 *The Borough Council will also require the submission of a transport assessment, including the implications for local air quality, in order to enable the impact of the proposal on the wider transport network to be properly considered*

3.41 *As a general rule, this Policy will apply to all developments in accordance with the advice in paragraph 23 of PPG13 or any subsequent advice as may be published by the ODPM.*

Development Involving New Roads and Other Transportation Projects

GR11

PROPOSALS FOR THE PROVISION OF A NEW HIGHWAY OR IMPROVEMENT TO AN EXISTING HIGHWAY AND FOR OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHICH WOULD IMPROVE THE TRANSPORT NETWORK OF THE PLAN AREA AND SATISFY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA AS APPROPRIATE TO THE PROPOSAL:

- I) **DISCOURAGE THE PENETRATION OF NON-ESSENTIAL VEHICLE TRAFFIC AND ON-STREET PARKING WITHIN THE BOROUGH'S TOWNS AND VILLAGES;**
- II) **IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND MOVEMENT OF TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY USERS.**
- III) **IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT OF PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS;**

- IV) PROVIDE FOR IMPROVED ACCESS TO INDUSTRIAL, BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL AREAS;**
- V) ENHANCE OR SUPPORT THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM;**
- VI) REDUCE NOISE, CONGESTION AND ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND AREAS OF HIGH PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY;**
- VII) NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANTLY DETRIMENTAL EFFECT UPON IMPORTANT AREAS OF LANDSCAPE AND NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE;**
- VIII) INCORPORATE ADEQUATE LANDSCAPING TREATMENT AND NOISE ATTENUATION MEASURES, AS APPROPRIATE, EITHER ALONGSIDE OR IN THE VICINITY OF THE NEW ROAD WORKS.**

3.42 *The maintenance and improvement of the Borough's highway and public transport networks are essential to the District's continued prosperity and its economic well-being. They can also help to meet this Council's social, environmental and sustainable development objectives. This policy aims to ensure that highway improvements and other transport projects continue to come forward in support of these objectives as well as meeting the needs of access and mobility. Suitable schemes may come about as a result of either public or private sector initiatives. This policy accords with policies T1 and T2 of the Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan and reflects the priority it gives to economic development, road safety and environmental improvement, and is consistent with the major strands of the approach to transport in Congleton District set out in the Local Transport Plan.*

3.43 *As new highways or improvement to existing highways can often be extremely visually intrusive to the environment and lead to additional noise disturbance for nearby properties the Council is anxious to ensure that these are minimised by suitable landscaping alongside the roads or in the vicinity of the road. In such cases, the Council will require the submission of a detailed landscaping scheme at the time of submission of any application for planning permission.*

GR12

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OR USE OF BUILDINGS TO WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ADMITTED WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY PROVIDE FOR:

- I) A SUITABLE MEANS OF ACCESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE BUILDING FROM AN ADJOINING STREET OR CAR PARK, AND THAT THIS ROUTE BE SIGNPOSTED WHERE NECESSARY;**
- II) INTEGRAL OR OTHER OFF-STREET CAR PARKING SPACES APPROPRIATE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE WHICH ARE SUITABLY LOCATED AND FULLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

3.44 *The Policy seeks to improve accessibility for disabled persons in accordance with "Access for Disabled Development Control Policy Note" (DOE 1985) and PPG6 "Town Centres and Retail Development." The Borough Council's adopted parking standards are set out in the Appendix of the Local Plan. These indicate the maximum parking*

provision which will be sought where access to other modes of transport is not feasible.

Public Transport Measures

GR13

WHERE APPROPRIATE, CONDITIONS WILL BE IMPOSED OR AGREEMENTS SOUGHT TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

WHERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES MERIT IT, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE SOUGHT FROM DEVELOPERS TOWARDS THE FOLLOWING MEASURES TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS:

- **SUITABLE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES;**
- **SEGREGATED BUS LANES WITHIN THE CARRIAGEWAY;**
- **PRIORITY FACILITIES FOR BUSES AT NEW OR EXISTING ROAD JUNCTIONS;**
- **ON-STREET AND OFF-STREET BUS LAYBY FACILITIES;**
- **NEW OR IMPROVED PASSENGER AND OPERATOR FACILITIES;**
- **ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT SERVICES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES**

WHERE RAILWAY LINES HAVE BECOME REDUNDANT, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL RESIST ANY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH MIGHT PREJUDICE THEIR FUTURE REINSTATEMENT OR THEIR ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT OR LEISURE USE.

3.45 For trips over 3 miles, public transport is the main alternative mode of transport to the private car. This policy aims to ensure that new developments and transport schemes assist and help promote public transport usage by highlighting those measures which the Borough Council will look for in appropriate cases. The Policy relates to rail as well as bus transport measures. In some cases the Borough Council may seek contributions from developers to help fund such measures. Financial contributions towards such provision will only be sought where it is directly related to the requirements and scale of the proposed development. The Borough Council has produced an Accessibility Profile to identify areas of good and poor access by public transport. This policy is consistent with the Borough Council's adopted Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Cycling Measures

GR14

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE REFUSED FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH FAILS TO ADEQUATELY TAKE ACCOUNT OF ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CYCLE MOVEMENT. WHERE APPROPRIATE, CONDITIONS WILL BE IMPOSED OR AGREEMENTS SOUGHT TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR CYCLE MOVEMENT.

WHERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES MERIT IT, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE SOUGHT FROM DEVELOPERS TOWARDS THE FOLLOWING MEASURES TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR CYCLISTS:

- **SEGREGATED TRAFFIC LANES WITHIN THE CARRIAGEWAY OR FOOTWAY;**
- **SEGREGATED CYCLEWAYS;**
- **IDENTIFICATION OF SAFE CYCLE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS, TOWN CENTRES, EMPLOYMENT AREAS, RECREATIONAL AND LEISURE FACILITIES AND OTHER MAJOR ATTRACTORS;**
- **SHARED USE OF EXISTING OR FUTURE PEDESTRIAN PATHS AND CYCLE ROUTES;**
- **PRIORITY FACILITIES AT NEW OR EXISTING ROAD JUNCTIONS;**
- **ON-STREET AREA PARKING RESTRICTIONS AND SPEED CONTROL MEASURES;**
- **SECURE CYCLE PARKING**

3.46 Cycling is economical and efficient for local journeys, environmentally friendly and healthy. Cycle routes may be developed along redundant railway lines or space alongside canal towpaths and where appropriate and feasible such routes should be shared with pedestrians and horseriders. In new development, the provision of cycle routes and cycle priority measures will be encouraged and as with pedestrian routes care will need to be taken to ensure that the routes are not isolated from other activities. Financial contributions towards provision will only be sought where it is directly related to the requirements and scale of the proposed development. This policy is consistent with the Borough Council's adopted Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Pedestrian Measures

GR15

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE REFUSED FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH FAILS TO ADEQUATELY TAKE ACCOUNT OF ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT. WHERE APPROPRIATE, CONDITIONS WILL BE IMPOSED OR AGREEMENTS SOUGHT TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT.

WHERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES MERIT IT, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE SOUGHT FROM DEVELOPERS TOWARDS THE FOLLOWING MEASURES TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR PEDESTRIANS:

- **TRAFFIC CALMING**
- **PEDESTRIANISATION**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES INCLUDING SURFACING**
- **SUITABLE LIGHTING**
- **SAFE AND CONVENIENT PEDESTRIAN ROUTES.**

3.47 Walking is the easiest and most convenient mode of travel for journeys of less than 1 mile and is the most sustainable of all the modes. Many local journeys currently made by car could be considered suitable for walking if other factors are favourable. This policy seeks to ensure that opportunities are taken wherever possible to make walking safer and more convenient by managing and even removing road traffic in locations which generate pedestrian movement. Financial contributions towards provision will only be sought where it is directly related to the requirements and scale of

the proposed development. This policy is consistent with the Borough Council's adopted Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Footpath, Bridleway and Cycleway Networks

GR16

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE REFUSED FOR DEVELOPMENTS WHICH FAIL TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE EXISTING FOOTPATH, BRIDLEWAY AND CYCLEWAY NETWORK. WHERE A REQUIREMENT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED, A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION MAY BE SOUGHT FROM DEVELOPERS TOWARDS THE IMPROVEMENT AND EXTENSION OF THE NETWORK.

3.48 The existence of public rights of way such as footpaths and bridleways is evidenced by signposts and waymarks erected and maintained by the County Council as local highway authority. The County Council also have the responsibility for the recording of all such rights of way on definitive maps and statements. The existence of permissive footpaths and other access arrangements, together with relevant planning obligations, will normally be recorded as a local land charge for which the Borough Council is the responsible authority. Financial contributions towards provision will only be sought where it is directly related to the requirements and scale of the proposed development.

Car Parking

GR17

PROPOSALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE CAR PARKING PROVISION DOES NOT EXCEED THE LEVELS CONTAINED IN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE.

IN APPROPRIATE CASES WHERE PLANNING PERMISSION IS GRANTED FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT THE COUNCIL MAY SEEK A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS NECESSARY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT MEASURES.

3.49 The Borough Council's parking standards have been based on the Cheshire Design Aid – Parking (Second Edition) however this document no longer accords with national and regional guidance and is in the process of revision. An interim parking standard policy for non-residential development based on current national and regional parking standards has been adopted by the County Council details of which are contained in the Appendix. When the revision is complete it is intended that the document shall again form the basis for the Borough Council's parking standards.

3.50 Whilst it is inappropriate for a local authority to seek commuted payments based purely around the lack of parking on the site, in appropriate cases contributions towards the provision of sustainable transport measures, such as the introducing on-street parking controls in the vicinity of the site, will be sought where this is required to mitigate the impact of a development.

TRAFFIC GENERATION

GR18

PROPOSALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE, IN THE OPINION OF THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY, THE SCALE OF TRAFFIC GENERATED BY DEVELOPMENT IS NOT LIKELY TO WORSEN EXISTING TRAFFIC PROBLEMS TO AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OR INCLUDES MEASURES, OR A DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS MEASURES, TO OVERCOME ANY DEFICIENCIES IN THE TRANSPORT NETWORK AS A RESULT OF THE DEVELOPMENT.

3.51 The aim of this policy is to ensure that the existing capacity of the highway network is not overloaded leading to traffic congestion. There may be cases where the establishment of land uses, which are likely to be major traffic generators, may be permitted provided they accord with the other policies of this Local Plan and adequate highway improvements are undertaken or funded by the developer. Such developments should also be capable of being served by public transport and accessible by bicycle and foot. The Local Planning Authority will need to be reassured, through legal agreements and/or planning conditions, that the associated investment in highway improvements is undertaken at the time the development takes place. The Borough Council will only seek measures or developer contributions where these are necessary, relevant and directly related in scale and kind to the proposed development in accordance with the guidance in Circular 1/97 (Planning Obligations).

INFRASTRUCTURE

GR19

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT TO MAKE ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR ANY INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS WHICH ARISE DIRECTLY AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED;

SUCH PROVISION MAY INCLUDE:-

- I) ON-SITE FACILITIES DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT;**
- II) OFF-SITE FACILITIES REQUIRED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, IN ORDER TO AVOID PLACING AN UNDUE BURDEN ON EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE;**
- III) A COMMUTED SUM PAYMENT OF MONEY, EITHER OF A SPECIFIC AMOUNT OR BY REFERENCE TO AN AGREED FORMULA, TO ENABLE IDENTIFIED INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS TO BE PROVIDED AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO BE MAINTAINED.**

THE INFRASTRUCTURE CONSEQUENCES OF EACH DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL WILL BE ASSESSED ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL MERITS, PARTICULARLY IN ASSESSING ON-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS BUT, DEPENDING UPON LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN SOME CASES TO VIEW INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS COLLECTIVELY IN ASSESSING OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS.

WHERE NECESSARY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO SECURE SUCH INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH PLANNING CONDITIONS AND/OR A LEGAL AGREEMENT.

3.52 *This policy aims to ensure that all new development is properly assimilated into the environment and that adequate and reasonable provision is made to meet the needs and requirements of future users and occupants. This policy therefore, also applies to any new development which may take place on land other than that allocated for such purposes in the Local Plan. It is consistent with Government advice regarding planning obligations and will be enforced through planning conditions and/or legal agreements as appropriate.*

3.53 *Infrastructure requirements may include:*

- *new or improved highways and junctions;*
- *provision of public open space;*
- *recreation/community facilities;*
- *nature conservation/landscaping measures;*
- *water supply, sewerage or sewage disposal;*
- *car parking/servicing facilities;*
- *provision of access, pedestrian/cycle ways, public rights of way.*

3.54 *The Borough Council will assess the infrastructure requirements of each scheme when submitted and advise developers accordingly. Development Briefs will identify in more detail the infrastructure requirements for allocated sites in the Local Plan. Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes may also elaborate on particular infrastructure requirements for different forms of development such as housing. Off-site infrastructure requirements for specific housing and employment allocations are also outlined in policy DP7. The Borough Council will only seek measures or developer contributions where these are necessary, relevant and directly related in scale and kind to the proposed development in accordance with the guidance in Circular 1/97 (Planning Obligations).*

Public Utilities

GR20

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE SITE CAN BE ADEQUATELY DRAINED OF FOUL AND SURFACE WATER WITHOUT CAUSING ANY ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM AS A RESULT OF THE ULTIMATE DISCHARGE. THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT THAT THIS BE TO PUBLIC SEWERS WHERE PRACTICABLE;**
- II) AN ADEQUATE MEANS OF WATER SUPPLY CAN BE PROVIDED;**
- III) ADEQUATE ESSENTIAL ACCESS CAN BE PROVIDED FOR MAINTENANCE PURPOSES TO WATERCOURSES AND UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE;**

- IV) THE SITE CAN BE ADEQUATELY PROVIDED WITH OTHER PUBLIC UTILITIES ESSENTIAL TO THE OPERATION AND ENJOYMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- V) THE PROPOSAL CONSIDERS THE NEED TO ASSIST THE PERMEABILITY OF LAND FOR STORM DRAINAGE AND PROTECTING AMENITY AND WATER QUALITY BY MEANS OF SELECTING AND USING SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (SUDS), AS APPROPRIATE.**

3.55 *This policy aims to ensure that all new development is capable of being served by essential public utilities without detriment to the environment or the needs of the operators.*

Flood Prevention

GR21

PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT OR THE INTENSIFICATION OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN FLOOD PLAINS, AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) APPROPRIATE FLOOD PREVENTION AND MITIGATION MEASURES ARE PROVIDED AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT TO AVOID UNACCEPTABLE RISK OF FLOODING;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT CREATE OR EXACERBATE FLOODING ELSEWHERE;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, NATURE CONSERVATION, GEOLOGICAL, HISTORIC OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERESTS;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT RESULT IN EXTENSIVE AND UNACCEPTABLE CULVERTING;**
- V) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE INTEGRITY OR CONTINUITY OF EXISTING FLOOD DEFENCES OR HINDER ACCESS TO WATERCOURSES FOR MAINTENANCE PURPOSES;**
- VI) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

3.56 *New development and redevelopment can have significant implications for flood risk. The Environment Agency has identified those areas within the Borough, as shown on the Proposals Map, within which new developments may be liable to flooding and may increase the risk of flooding in other areas by reducing the storage capacity of the floodplain and increasing surface water run-off. The boundaries of those areas shown on the Proposals Map are based on information which is not definitive and may be subject to change in light of more detailed surveys. They identify only those areas which have a high risk of flooding (annual probability of 1% or greater). In determining applications for development, the Borough Council will apply the risk-based approach through a sequential test of the potential risk of flooding as set out in paragraph 30 of*

PPG25. In the application of the sequential test, the Borough Council will consult and take advice of the Environment Agency.

OPEN SPACE PROVISION

GR22

WHERE RESIDENTIAL PLANNING PERMISSION IS GRANTED IT WILL BE A REQUIREMENT THAT PROVISION BE MADE FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE OF AN EXTENT, QUALITY, DESIGN AND LOCATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CURRENTLY ADOPTED STANDARDS AND HAVING REGARD TO EXISTING LEVELS OF PROVISION.

IN APPROPRIATE CASES THE BOROUGH COUNCIL MAY ACCEPT A COMMUTED PAYMENT TO PROVIDE OR IMPROVE FACILITIES ELSEWHERE IN THE LOCALITY IN LIEU OF ON-SITE PROVISION, PROVIDING THE ALTERNATIVE IS NEAR TO AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE FROM THE HOUSING SITE. SUCH PAYMENT IS TO BE CALCULATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CURRENTLY ADOPTED STANDARDS.

3.57 The aim of this policy is to ensure that all developers of residential land are aware of the need to design and to implement their schemes in accordance with the appropriate standards of public open space provision, currently outlined in the Borough Council's Supplementary Guidance Note 1 (as adopted in October 2003 or as subsequently amended) entitled 'Provision of Public Open Space in New Residential Development'.

3.58 It is also recognised by the Council that, there may be certain circumstances where it is preferable for a developer to contribute towards the provision of new open space or to the improvement of an existing area of open space elsewhere in the locality, rather than to provide on-site provision. Where the Borough Council considers this to be an appropriate alternative to the provision of public open space within the site it will require a contribution from the developer towards capital and maintenance costs to equate to that which would have been incurred had open space been provided within the development site itself. The basis for determining this calculation is also set out in the Borough Council's Supplementary Guidance Note 1 entitled 'Provision of Public Open Space in New Residential Development'.

PROVISION OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES

GR23

PROPOSALS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO INTENSIFY OR CREATE SHORTFALLS IN THE PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES OR FACILITIES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS THESE ARE PROVIDED AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OR A DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION IS MADE TOWARDS MEETING ANY IDENTIFIED SHORTFALL.

3.59 The aim of this policy is to ensure that new development does not exacerbate a situation regarding the provision of essential services or facilities which is already unsatisfactory or cannot be met as direct consequence of the development. Such services and facilities may include the provision of public utilities, education and health services and the fulfilment of other statutory duties. The level of any contribution from a

developer would need to be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and the level of demand created by the development. The Policy will be applied through consultation with relevant service providers and statutory undertakers as appropriate.

WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

GR24

ALL PROPOSALS WILL BE EXPECTED TO HAVE REGARD TO THE WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES ARISING FROM THEIR DEVELOPMENT. AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ANY PROPOSAL WHICH FALLS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS. IN THE CASE OF OTHER PROPOSALS OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE REGULATIONS BUT WHICH ARE LIKELY TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT.

WHERE THE DEVELOPMENT STATUTORILY REQUIRES AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT TO BE SUBMITTED, OR WHERE AN ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT IS VOLUNTARILY SUBMITTED, THIS SHALL BE A THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED DOCUMENT PROVIDING SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO ENABLE THE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO ASSESS THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT.

3.60 *The wider environmental consequences of development are important considerations in achieving sustainable development. These include issues such as energy conservation, global warming, the reduction in greenhouse gases, waste disposal and the prudent use of natural resources. These all have land use implications for development in that they arise directly as a result of changes in land use patterns and the transport and infrastructure needed to serve them.*

3.61 *In order to evaluate the impact which certain types of developments may have on the wider environment as well as the immediate surroundings, the Borough Council may require the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment as laid down in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999. Guidance on the regulations and requirements governing an Environmental Impact Assessment are set out in Circular 02/99. It is the developers responsibility to prepare the Assessment in accordance with the regulations. Advice on the format and content of an EIA is set out in Circular 2/99 and in the DETR good practice guide – “Preparation of Environmental Statements for Planning Projects that Require Environmental Assessment”.*

4. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

4.1 The planning process is able to contribute to the management of the natural environment by the integration and accommodation of differing interests and demands (which can potentially often be in conflict). The importance of a rich, diverse and healthy environment is widely recognised and is becoming increasingly important and its maintenance and enhancement means taking an integrated view of characteristic landscapes, wildlife habitats, geology, archaeological and historic features, and the historic relationship between building and settlements in the landscape. Overall, it is the combination of all these that contribute so much to the variety and sense of place in our surroundings and especially within the rural landscapes.

4.2 In general terms, the policies of the Local Plan concerning the natural environment of the Borough are aimed at conserving and enhancing the diversity and distinctiveness of landscape character in the plan area; recognising the importance of the full range of wildlife habitats with appropriate policies to protect them; protecting important features in the countryside and towns, including trees, hedges, walls, and archaeological, geological or geomorphological features; ensuring that the important contribution of historic and characteristic buildings, settlements, and historic parks and gardens is maintained and enhanced; and, supporting the enhancement of landscapes and habitats and, where appropriate, the creation of new ones.

EUROPEAN CONTEXT

4.3 The Local Plan has to have regard to European environmental protection legislation, the most significant of which is the Council Directive of May 21 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the Habitats Directive).

4.4 The objective of the Directive is to maintain biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna throughout the Community. It requires Member States to:

- Designate Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas;
- Protect designated sites from deterioration and disturbance;
- Protect species listed as being of Community Interest.

4.5 There are currently no designated Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas in the Borough. However, if such sites are subsequently designated, the provisions of the Directive will apply as well as relevant policies of the Local Plan.

4.6 Where proposed development requiring planning permission is likely to impact upon a Special Area for Conservation or Special Protection Area or a protected species, in order to comply with the Habitats Directive, the Planning Authority is obliged to consult with English Nature and to take account of its views before making a decision on the application. The extent of any impact may lead to planning permission

being refused or being granted with conditions which may include for appropriate mitigation measures.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

4.7 Government policies for environmental stewardship require effective protection for both the natural and built environment. Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 1 and Regional Planning Guidance for the North West highlight that heritage resources are important to peoples' quality of life and in sustaining local distinctiveness; both documents require Development Plans to contain policies for the conservation and enhancement of such resources whilst PPG12 advises that impacts on the environment which may be irreversible or very difficult to undo should be treated with particular care in the preparation of plans, as future generations may value the lost resource more than the development which replaced it.

4.8 The importance of a hierarchy of designations is set out in PPG9 – it states that Local Planning Authorities should have regard to the relative significance of international, national and local and informal designations in considering the weight to be attached to nature conservation interests.

4.9 Government guidance emphasises the need to conserve not only designated areas but also important sites and features lying outside designations – PPG9 highlights that wildlife heritage is not confined to the various statutorily designated sites but is found throughout the countryside; PPG7 advocates that the countryside should be safeguarded for its own sake and non-renewable and natural resources should be afforded protection.

4.10 The UK Strategy for Sustainable Development also recognises that there needs to be more prudent use and management of natural resources to help address global problems and reverse the trends of damage to our landscape and wildlife.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

4.11 The aim of sustainable development is to ensure that the overall quality of the natural and man-made environment is maintained and, where possible, enhanced. The underlying principle is that, as a minimum, there should be 'no net loss' of environmental assets arising from any development and this is one of the stated objectives of the Structure Plan. A second objective is to protect and enhance characteristic habitats, landscape, wildlife, open spaces and the man-made environment in town and country. The Structure Plan also recognises that in addition to their intrinsic interest, the value of individual heritage features is, in some cases, enhanced by the contribution they make to a network of heritage resources and that consequently such networks need to be conserved as well as individual sites and features.

4.12 Accordingly, Policy R1 of Cheshire 2011 requires that Cheshire's natural (and man-made) heritage be conserved, and in appropriate cases enhanced, by taking into account the hierarchy of designations of international, national, regional, county, and local importance; the site or feature's irreplaceability in terms of its rarity, vulnerability, antiquity, or complexity; the site or feature's contribution to the countryside network of sites and features, and to the character of its locality.

4.13 In addition, Policy GEN3 requires that all development should minimise any detrimental impact upon the heritage value of its site and surroundings and, where possible, improve the quality of the environment.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Nature Conservation Strategy

4.14 The Borough Council has prepared and adopted a Nature Conservation Strategy as part of its Environmental Sustainability Strategy to safeguard the richness and diversity of species and habitats in the Borough by seeking:

- to protect and enhance the network of wildlife sites, green corridors and open space, to encourage plants and animals to disperse throughout the Borough and through Cheshire;
- to enhance Congleton Borough's biodiversity through the creation of new wildlife sites and through positive habitat management;
- to identify and maintain records of species and habitats in the Borough;
- to promote greater understanding and appreciation of nature throughout the community;
- to ensure that everyone in Congleton Borough has easy access to natural open space and wildlife information to assist their appreciation of wildlife and natural habitats.

4.15 The Strategy contains the following aims in so far as the relationship between nature conservation and development is concerned which are reflected in the policies of the Local Plan:

- to protect irreplaceable features of nature conservation value from damaging development;
- to ensure that there is no net loss of valuable nature conservation features that can be re-created or compensated for elsewhere;
- to ensure that nature conservation is given due consideration, at the earliest opportunity in the planning and building control processes.

Trees and Woodlands

4.16 Trees and woodlands are one of the most widely valued parts of our environment because of their cultural and historical associations, importance for nature conservation and contribution to the landscape. Consequently, the Plan contains a strong commitment to their protection from development or other damaging change – if necessary by the use of Tree Preservation Orders – especially where they are within the following categories:-

- “ancient woodland”, i.e. those woodlands which have existed from at least medieval times without ever having been cleared for uses other than wood or timber production.
- important tree and woodland features contributing to the character of open spaces in or near settlements, or in the wider landscape, including those associated with major roads, rivers, lakes, canals or in highly visible positions.

Wildlife and Nature Conservation

4.17 The Local Plan policies seek to conserve the abundance and diversity of the Borough's wildlife and its habitats, and to minimise the adverse effects on wildlife where development is essential.

4.18 The Borough contains a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest which are identified by English Nature as representative examples of semi-natural habitats forming a nationally importance set of site and which have statutory protection. SSSIs need to be strictly protected from development that would have an adverse effect on their special interest. These effects may be direct or indirect and the Local Plan recognises that development outside the boundary of an SSSI can have serious repercussions within the area (for example, alterations to water tables, or the effects of water pollution some distance away).

4.19 In addition, there are sites of international importance listed under the Ramsar Convention on wetlands of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitats, known as “Ramsar Sites” of which there is one within this Borough.

4.20 English Nature has also endorsed the importance of other sites of wildlife, geological or geomorphological value which are not notified as SSSI's but are still considered to be important. These include Local Nature Reserves, such as Cranberry Moss, Alsager. The Borough Council seeks to safeguard such locally important sites wherever possible, and to minimise the effects on them of potentially damaging development. In those instances where development is approved, the Borough Council will require the implementation of appropriate measures to protect the interest of the site and/or to provide for compensatory benefits by way of enhancement and the creation of new habitats either elsewhere or on the site, using planning agreements where appropriate.

4.21 There is a need also for the Local Plan to provide protection for “earth science sites” that are important for their geological exposures – such sites are also often of great archaeological importance because of the early evidence that they contain; the most important of these are normally identified as SSSI's but more locally important ones are usually identified as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and the Plan accordingly incorporates appropriate policy protection for these sites also.

4.22 In addition to those areas which have been formally recognised for their nature conservation value, many areas contain a rich mosaic of wildlife habitats including all types of unimproved grassland, wetlands, lowland heath, upland habitats such as heather or grass moorland as well as features such as reservoirs, canals, road verges and even areas of wasteland; these habitats have nature conservation value both in their own right and as corridors, and often contribute to the character of the landscape. Consequently the Local Plan incorporates policies to encourage the management of features which are of importance for wild flora and fauna.

4.23 The relative significance of these various designations in diagram 9 below.

Fig. 9 Hierarchy of Site Status.

INTERNATIONAL / NATIONAL IMPORTANCE - STATUTORY

Ramsar Sites

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's)

Habitats of nationally rare species

REGIONAL / COUNTY / LOCAL IMPORTANCE – NON-STATUTORY

Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGG's)

Sites of Biological Importance (SBI's)

Local Nature Reserves (LNR's)

Designations of local value, including Wildlife corridors

After-Use of Minerals, Waste Disposal and Derelict Sites

4.24 Planning applications relating to the extraction of minerals and waste disposal are determined by the County Council and policies contained in the County Council's Minerals and Waste Disposal Local Plans. Nevertheless the after-use of such sites once mineral extraction or disposal has finished is a matter for the Borough Council. There is therefore an opportunity for after-uses to contribute to wider plan objectives in a coordinated way. Mineral sites offer opportunities for habitat creation, landscape rehabilitation, and informal recreation. They also offer opportunities for taking pressure off more sensitive areas, for example making special provision for noisy sports or horse riding.

4.25 Coordinating after-uses with wider plan objectives depends to a large extent on widening the brief of those responsible for mineral planning to include a more detailed consideration of after-use earlier in the process. Planning for a combination of after-uses may meet strategic objectives whereas considered individually there may be conflict between different after-uses and irrevocable erosion of the attractiveness of the area.

4.26 With advanced reclamation techniques, it is now possible to minimise the impact of active mineral workings, to recreate many types of landscape and landscape features; and to create certain types of habitat. Accordingly the Borough Council is keen to ensure that these opportunities are maximised and that attention is focused on:

- promoting habitat creating, informal access, and the addition of landscape features characteristic of the area, as part of all reclamation schemes even when the primary emphasis may be on other afteruse
- designing restoration proposals to make a positive contribution and to fit well within their surroundings.

4.27 Similarly opportunities exist for creative afteruse of waste disposal sites for the benefit of wildlife, landscape, and recreation.

Reclamation of Contaminated, Derelict or Previously Developed Land

4.28 The Borough contains a number of contaminated, derelict or previously developed areas of land. Such sites have the potential to be restored to beneficial use, attracting new development and lessening demand for greenfield sites. The Borough Council will give particular priority to the reclamation of those sites which: • present hazard to life, health or the environment; • are considered to be important to the improvement of local amenity; • have the potential for housing or employment use or to conserve or create facilities for recreation, tourism, education, amenity, heritage and nature conservation.

Agricultural Land

4.29 The Borough is a major provider of good quality agricultural land. Almost 95% of the total land area of the Borough is agricultural of which 17.8% is Grade 2 and 74.2% is Grade 3. The bulk of the highest quality land lies around Sandbach, Hassall, Somerford and Somerford Booths, and between Congleton and Alsager.

4.30 In the past, with strong emphasis on agricultural production, development plans laid stress on protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3A) from irreversible loss to development. Although the imperative of agricultural

production has now lessened it nonetheless remains important for the Local Plan to protect the best of our soil resource, recognising that a global view of sustainability may, in the future, once again require greater emphasis on food production. Where the use of agricultural land is unavoidable the Council will seek to ensure that areas of poorer quality are used in preference to land of a higher quality.

Renewable Energy

4.31 In the longer term more energy will have to come from energy sources which emit little or no carbon dioxide, in particular from new and renewable sources. The Government intends to work towards a target of 10% of UK electricity being supplied by renewable energy by 2010, the achievement of which is subject to the costs on consumers being acceptable. The Local Plan includes policy guidance concerning the exploitation of renewable energy sources which acknowledges that whilst renewable energy sources offer great benefits in addressing global concerns, and thereby complying with sustainable development objectives, it is also necessary to give the fullest attention to their environmental effects.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES POLICIES

TREES AND WOODLANDS

NR1

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH AFFECT A SITE CONTAINING EXISTING TREES OR WOODLANDS MUST INCLUDE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO ENABLE ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON SUCH TREES. PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE IT IS APPARENT THAT THERE WOULD BE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON EXISTING HEALTHY TREES OF AMENITY VALUE. ANY PERMISSION GIVEN WILL INCLUDE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR PROTECTION DURING DEVELOPMENT WHERE APPROPRIATE BY REQUIRING SUBMISSION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DETAILED METHOD STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION AND ARBORICULTURAL WORKS.

4.32 *This policy is intended to protect trees and woodland areas in the Borough on land where development is proposed, regardless of scale. The Council will normally require submission of a detailed tree survey, drawn up in conjunction with a land survey, in accordance with British Standard 583 (1991) Guide for Trees in Relation to Construction.*

4.33 *Woodland and trees within the Borough make a valuable contribution to its landscape and amenity. Where their removal, reduction, planting or replacement would have a significant impact on the local environment, the Borough Council will consider the making of a tree preservation order or the imposition of suitable conditions on planning permissions for development or redevelopment in order to protect the trees during the course of the carrying out of the development concerned.*

4.34 *The Borough Council will seek to maximise opportunities for the establishment and management of woodlands, and community planting schemes on land from which the public will derive benefit.*

WILDLIFE AND NATURE CONSERVATION

Statutory Sites

NR2

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OR DAMAGE OF THE FOLLOWING SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION OR GEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED:

- **RAMSAR SITES (WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE)**
- **SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI's)**
- **ANY SITE OR HABITAT SUPPORTING SPECIES THAT ARE PROTECTED BY LAW**

DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF A PROPOSALS IMPACT ON NATURE CONSERVATION AS PART OF AN APPLICATION TO DEVELOP A SITE WHICH MAY AFFECT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

4.35 *The Borough Council is determined to afford appropriate protection to the above irreplaceable features of nature conservation value and, where possible, to secure their enhancement. To these ends developers will be required to submit a comprehensive assessment of a proposals impact on nature conservation to standards set by English Nature as part of any application to develop a site which may affect any of the above and consultation with English Nature, Cheshire County Council, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and other interested bodies will be undertaken. Any development proposal which is accordingly advised or considered as having harmful consequences for any such sites will be refused. All currently notified sites are identified on the Proposals Map or Inset Maps and listed in the Technical Appendix. During the life of the Local Plan, changes or additions may be made to this list.*

Habitats

NR3

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OR DAMAGE OF THE FOLLOWING HABITATS WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IF THERE ARE OVERRIDING REASONS FOR ALLOWING THE DEVELOPMENT, AND WHERE THE LIKELY EFFECTS CAN BE MITIGATED OR THE HABITAT SUCCESSFULLY RECREATED ON OR ADJACENT TO THE SITE AND THERE ARE NO SUITABLE ALTERNATIVES:

- **ANCIENT SEMI-NATURAL WOODLANDS**
- **UNIMPROVED GRASSLAND**
- **HEATHLAND**
- **IMPORTANT HEDGEROWS**
- **MERES AND MOSSES**

- **MATURE BROADLEAVED OR MIXED WOODLAND**
- **SPECIES-RICH GRASSLAND**
- **PONDS**
- **FLOOD PLAINS AND WATER COURSES**

DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF A PROPOSALS IMPACT ON NATURE CONSERVATION AS PART OF AN APPLICATION TO DEVELOP A SITE WHICH MAY AFFECT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

4.36 The Borough Council is determined to afford appropriate protection to the above features of nature conservation and, where possible, to secure their enhancement. To these ends developers will be required to submit a comprehensive assessment of a proposals impact on nature conservation, to standards set by English Nature as part of any application to develop a site which may affect any of the above and consultation with English Nature, Cheshire County Council, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and other interested bodies will be undertaken. Any development proposal which is accordingly advised or considered as having harmful consequences for any such sites will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where there are overriding reasons for allowing the development and where the developer can satisfactorily demonstrate that any adverse effects can be mitigated or the habitat successfully recreated on or adjacent to the site.

Non-statutory sites

NR4

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF OR DAMAGE TO THE FOLLOWING SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION OR GEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IF THERE ARE OVERRIDING REASONS FOR ALLOWING THE DEVELOPMENT AND THERE ARE NO SUITABLE ALTERNATIVES:

- **SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE (SBI'S) GRADES A, B OR C.**
- **LOCAL NATURE RESERVES (LNR'S)**
- **REGIONALLY IMPORTANT GEOLOGICAL AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL SITES (RIGGS)**
- **WILDLIFE CORRIDORS**
- **ANY SITES SUPPORTING SPECIES THAT ARE RARE OR DECLINING IN THE NORTH WEST OR CHESHIRE, OR LOCAL TO CONGLETON BOROUGH**
- **SITES OR HABITATS SUPPORTING SPECIES THAT ARE SUBJECT OF BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS OR RECORDED AS RARE OR DECLINING IN BRITAIN BUT ARE NOT PROTECTED BY LAW**

WHERE UNAVOIDABLE LOSS OR DAMAGE TO A SITE IS LIKELY AS A RESULT OF A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, MEASURES OF MITIGATION AND COMPENSATION WILL BE REQUIRED ON OR ADJOINING THE SITE TO ENSURE THERE IS NO NET LOSS OF ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE.

DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF A PROPOSALS IMPACT ON NATURE CONSERVATION AS PART OF AN APPLICATION TO DEVELOP A SITE WHICH MAY AFFECT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

4.37 *The Borough Council is determined to ensure that there is no net loss of valuable nature conservation features, and therefore wishes to afford appropriate protection to all sites of nature conservation importance and, where possible, to secure their enhancement. To these ends, developers will be required to submit a comprehensive assessment of a proposals impact on nature conservation, to standards set by English Nature as part of any application to develop a site which may affect any of the above, and consultation with English Nature, Cheshire County Council, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and other interested bodies will be undertaken. Any development proposal which is accordingly advised or considered as having avoidable harmful consequences for any such sites will be made subject to planning conditions or obligations to fund a comprehensive mitigation, enhancement and compensation package, otherwise they will be refused.*

4.38 *This policy covers non-statutory designations. All currently designated SBIs are shown on the Local Plan Proposals Maps and listed in the Appendix. During the life of the Local Plan, changes or additions may be made to this list. Any additional sites which may be identified during the plan period will also be protected by this policy as soon as they are proposed for designation. There are two Wildlife Corridors in the Borough, at Sandbach and at Congleton, which are defined on the Proposals Maps. The Borough Council is to produce Supplementary Planning Guidance in respect of Nature Conservation which will include reference to, amongst other things, those species that are rare or declining.*

NR5

DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAXIMISE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATING NEW WILDLIFE/NATURE CONSERVATION HABITATS WHERE SUCH FEATURES CAN REASONABLY BE INCLUDED AS PART OF SITE LAYOUTS AND LANDSCAPING WORKS, AND TO PRESERVING EXISTING FEATURES OF VALUE ON SITE.

4.39 *Opportunities to improve and enhance nature conservation are an important benefit of the development process. Therefore, the Council will give high priority to the creation of new wildlife/nature conservation habitats in appropriate development schemes.*

RECLAMATION OF LAND

NR6

PROPOSALS FOR THE RECLAMATION OF CONTAMINATED, DERELICT OR PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND INCLUDING THE RESTORATION OF MINERAL EXTRACTION AND WASTE DISPOSAL SITES, WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE;

- I) THE PROPOSAL INVOLVES A SITE THAT PRESENTS HAZARD TO LIFE, HEALTH OR THE ENVIRONMENT;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL WOULD BRING ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS TO LOCAL AMENITY;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL INVOLVES A SITE WITH POTENTIAL FOR HOUSING OR EMPLOYMENT USE, OR TO CONSERVE OR CREATE FACILITIES FOR**

**RECREATION, TOURISM, EDUCATION, AMENITY, HERITAGE,
AGRICULTURE AND NATURE CONSERVATION;**

**IV) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT POLICES OF
THE LOCAL PLAN.**

4.40 The Borough Council wishes to see derelict, previously developed, and contaminated sites returned to beneficial use. This can be useful in attracting new development and lessening demand for greenfield sites and is a practical example of sustainable development.

NR7

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL MAY REQUIRE SUBMISSION OF A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT, AND DETAILS FOR THE TREATMENT AND RESTORATION OF KNOWN OR SUSPECTED DERELICT, UNSTABLE OR CONTAMINATED SITES FOR WHICH PLANNING PERMISSION IS SOUGHT. THE POSSIBLE RETENTION OF EXISTING FEATURES OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST SHOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF STUDY BEFORE THE SUBMISSION OF ANY DETAILED SURVEY AND THE PREPARATION OF ANY PROGRAMME OF RESTORATION WORKS.

4.41 The Borough Council will need to be assured with any planning application for the development of known or suspected derelict or contaminated land that proper measures are proposed to assess the degree and nature of any suspected contamination, and to implement a programme of works to treat and restore such land in order to ensure that there is no risk to future users of the site. This may call for preliminary consultation with the Council, adjoining owners and other interested bodies. A survey of the site and a programme of restoration works may be required either at the stage of making an outline application or when submitting further details of development. The implementation of such a restoration programme may be the subject of planning conditions or agreements.

4.42 In some cases, nature conservation aspects may have priority as a result of the site's colonisation by flora and fauna. It is considered that such features should not be needlessly destroyed and, for this reason, aspects of nature conservation should be included in preliminary consultations and should feature, where appropriate, in site appraisals and the submission of restorative work programmes.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

NR8

PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVE THE USE OF THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND (GRADES 1, 2 AND 3A BASED ON THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FISHERIES AND FOOD LAND CLASSIFICATION) FOR ANY FORM OF IRREVERSIBLE DEVELOPMENT NOT ASSOCIATED WITH AGRICULTURE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT ARE SUPPORTED IN THE LOCAL PLAN; AND**

- II) THE DEVELOPMENT CANNOT OTHERWISE BE ACCOMMODATED USING**
–
A) ANOTHER SITE WHICH IS SUITABLE AND AVAILABLE FOR THE PROPOSED USE
B) DERELICT OR NON-AGRICULTURAL LAND
C) LAND OF A LOWER AGRICULTURAL QUALITY (GRADES 3B, 4 OR 5 BASED ON THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD LAND CLASSIFICATION); AND
- III) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT BREAK UP A VIABLE AGRICULTURAL HOLDING OR HOLDINGS.**

4.43 *In accordance with national and strategic planning guidance, it is essential that the highest quality agricultural land is a national resource for the longer term and should, in general, be protected from development.*

4.44 *Where, in exceptional circumstances, new development is allowed on high quality agricultural land, the Local Planning Authority will need to be convinced that no other suitable land is available which is derelict, non-agricultural or of a lower quality. Whilst acknowledging the potential for diversification in the rural economy, it is important that new development proposals do not affect the viability of well run agricultural enterprises to the detriment of the local economy and the appearance of the countryside. Proposals for development must have regard to any nature conservation interests or value present on the site.*

RENEWABLE ENERGY

NR9

PROPOSALS FOR THE GENERATION OF ENERGY FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES, INCLUDING ANY ENERGY TRANSMISSION FACILITIES NEEDED, WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY ARE SATISFIED THAT:

- I) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT ON LANDSCAPE OR TOWNSCAPE;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT ON FEATURES AND AREAS OF RECOGNISED NATURE CONSERVATION, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, GEOLOGICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORIC, CULTURAL OR LANDSCAPE INTEREST OR VALUE;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE UNACCEPTABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OR OTHER LOCAL LAND USES;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE UNACCEPTABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS OR OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

IN THE EVENT THAT A PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE DETRIMENTAL CONSEQUENCES, THE COUNCIL WOULD REQUIRE TO BE SATISFIED THAT THESE ARE OUTWEIGHED BY THE LOCAL AND WIDER BENEFITS THAT THE PROPOSAL WOULD ENGENDER AND THAT CARE HAS BEEN TAKEN WITH THE

SITING AND DESIGN OF THE PROPOSAL AND ITS LANDSCAPING IN ORDER TO MINIMISE ANY DETRIMENTAL IMPACT, INCLUDING THAT DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE.

4.45 The Council's support in principle for the development of renewable energy sources needs to be carefully weighed against its continued commitment to policies for the protection of the local environment although it is recognised that such proposals can involve a number of considerations peculiar to the technology involved, including the fact that certain renewable energy resources can only be harnessed where the resource occurs.

5. BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

INTRODUCTION

5.1 This chapter looks at the following aspects of the built environment and heritage of the Plan Area:

- buildings of special architectural or historic interest
- conservation areas
- ancient monuments and archaeological sites
- parks and gardens of historic interest
- agricultural and rural buildings

5.2 Through the Local Plan, the Borough Council is committed to the protection of the built heritage of the Borough which ranges from nationally recognised Grade 1 Listed Buildings such as Little Moreton Hall and Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope to the humbler traditional farm buildings which are typical of the Borough's countryside. They are important also as a means of achieving sustainable development. The policies of the Local Plan in respect of the built environment and heritage seek to ensure that these assets are preserved, enhanced and utilised.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

5.3 Government policies for effective stewardship require effective protection for the built environment. Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 15 outlines the Government's commitment to effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment – this states that the physical survivals of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake as part of the cultural heritage and national identity.

5.4 The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport compiles the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest for the guidance of local planning authorities and also designates Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Government policy establishes two particularly important principles relating to the conservation of Listed Buildings: firstly, a general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings, and secondly, an emphasis on active use, usually an economically viable use, as the best way of securing their upkeep.

5.5 Government policy on archaeology and planning matters is clearly set out in PPG 16, "*Archaeology and Planning*" for nationally and internationally important sites, both scheduled and unscheduled, PPG 16 establishes a presumption against damaging development and in favour of preservation. The key requirement is to prevent development which would adversely affect either the archaeological deposits or remains on or under the site or its character or setting, and should normally seek to ensure preservation of remains *in situ*. This approach applies except in the most exceptional circumstances and reasons for departing from it must be extremely strong to counterbalance the national importance of the archaeology.

5.6 Local authorities are also advised to give special consideration in Development Plans to historic gardens, parks and designed ornamental landscapes as places of special historic interest and value for recreation. Inclusion on English Heritage's *Register of historic parks and gardens of special historic interest*, though bringing no additional statutory protection, is confirmed by PPG15 as a material consideration for development control purposes

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

5.7 The Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan sets out a hierarchy of designations for sites or features of heritage value with the greatest protection assigned, in descending order, to sites or features of international, national, regional, county and local importance (policy R1). Local Plans are expected to identify the sites and areas of land to which the Structure Plan policy applies.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

5.8 Listed buildings are nationally important because they represent the best of our historic and architectural built heritage. There are currently 485 listed buildings in the Borough of which 7 are Grade I, 35 are Grade II* and 443 are Grade II. They are a significant element of the Borough's heritage from an architectural and historic point of view as well as being important to the culture and image of the Borough. The Local Plan demonstrates the commitment of the Local Authority to the protection of the buildings themselves, their historic and archaeological value, and their settings, as well as to their sympathetic maintenance and repair.

5.9 Generally the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings and areas is to keep them in active use. For the great majority this must mean economically viable uses if they are to survive, and new, and even continuing, uses will often necessitate some degree of adaptation. The range and acceptability of possible uses is therefore usually a major consideration when the future of listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas is in question, with the economic viability of possible uses needing to be balanced against the effect of any changes that they entail in the special architectural and historic interest of the building/area concerned. Sensitive alterations and extensions may be appropriate to retain a listed building in a viable use.

Other Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest

5.10 Whilst particular buildings/building groups may not have sufficient merit in themselves to warrant inclusion within the statutory list of buildings they do nonetheless perform a very valuable function in terms of contributing to the appearance and heritage of the Borough. Consequently the Plan seeks to encourage the retention and appropriate repair and renovation of such buildings/structures in order that they can continue to contribute positively to the local environment.

Conservation Areas

5.11 There are 10 Conservation Areas in the Borough (see Dig.10); these vary in character from the historic cores of Sandbach, Congleton and Middlewich, to the length of the Trent & Mersey and Macclesfield canals within the Borough. It is important that these areas are protected from development which would spoil their character. However this should not preclude new development completely.

5.12 Conservation Areas are best protected by ensuring that new development accords with the special character of the area. This is achieved by a positive contribution to



preservation or by development which leaves its character or appearance unharmed. In this respect, good design is crucial. The design of new buildings, alterations and extensions in a Conservation Area and their landscape setting, whether hard or soft, will need to be considered comprehensively and as integral parts of the whole area.

Dig. 10 Conservation Areas

Ancient Monuments/ Archaeological Sites

5.13 There are a substantial number of designated ancient monuments and archaeological sites in the Borough. As well as the monuments which are already scheduled, or which are known to be of national importance, there are many other sites or areas which are of more local importance. The County Archaeologist also defines Areas of Archaeological Potential.

Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest

5.14 The Borough contains a number of parks and gardens which are of historic interest of which only 1 is on English Heritage's *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest*. However, whilst inclusion on the register indicates sites of national importance, the Borough Council has identified other more locally important parks and gardens (on a "Local List" of such sites) within the Plan - this List is afforded policy protection which indicates that development which would adversely affect their special historic character, or their setting, will not be permitted, and makes provision for the promotion of schemes for the repair, restoration or enhancement of parks and gardens by cross-referencing of this policy with that relating to "enabling development".

5.15 Whilst inappropriate development within registered sites should be guarded against, there may be circumstances where appropriate and carefully planned development may assist in their conservation. The Borough Council will seek to ensure that opportunities will be secured, through conditions or planning agreements, to achieve repair, restoration, and management of the landscape. In view of the sensitivity of registered sites, however, it is unlikely that “outline” permission will be given and that detailed proposals will be required before applications can be determined.

Agricultural Buildings

5.16 New farm development requires planning permission if it comprises large buildings, livestock units close to residential areas, and new development on units of less than 5 hectares. The Local Plan sets out criteria to assess such proposals to ensure there should be no unacceptable adverse impacts on landscape, wildlife, archaeological or historic interests.

5.17 Buildings for intensive livestock rearing, which are usually semi-industrial in design and operation, can be particularly intrusive, and need particularly careful planning and consideration to avoid having a significant local impact.

Conversions of Rural Buildings

5.18 The changing Common Agricultural Policy is bringing land out of agricultural production and is leading farms to seek to diversify their enterprises. Farm diversification can take many forms. Not all of them are subject to planning control, but new nonagricultural uses of land and the alternative use of farm buildings will require planning permission. Appropriate diversification will, in the longer term, enhance the ability of the countryside to sustain itself. Ideally farm diversification proposals should contribute to the longterm maintenance of appropriate farming activity on the remainder of the unit, supporting environmentally sensitive farming practices wherever possible.

5.19 As a major part of rural diversification the Local Plan supports the continued beneficial use of the stock of rural buildings. Buildings suitable for conversion range from agricultural buildings to old mills and pump houses. Reuse provides a way of encouraging new economic activity without the requirement for new buildings in the countryside provided the buildings have good access and can be easily serviced, and so long as the use is of a scale and character appropriate to a rural location.

5.20 Where original uses no longer remain or are obviously no longer practicable, emphasis then should be on finding alternative uses which call for only minimal changes to the structure and external appearance of the building (for example, by maintaining existing door and window openings). Light – or high – technology industry, craft workshops, certain tourism and recreational uses and community uses are usually suitable uses.

5.21 The Local Plan policies generally do not favour of conversion of buildings, and especially those of historic importance, to residential use, because this usually requires the greatest change to the fabric of the building (such as creation of new window and door openings) as well as sometimes difficult subdivision of internal spaces and the addition of external works, such as gardens and parking areas, which can have a suburbanising influence on the landscape. The only circumstances in which residential conversion may

be acceptable are where it offers the only means of retaining a valued building, other means of ensuring the retention of that building having been full evaluated (and proven to be inappropriate for whatever reason) or the proposed alterations to the building and surrounding curtilage do not damage the fabric of the building or significantly change its character.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE POLICIES

PARKS AND GARDENS OF HISTORIC INTEREST

BH1

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AFFECTING THOSE AREAS, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, IN THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S LIST OF PARKS AND GARDENS OF HISTORIC INTEREST SHALL:

- I) RESPECT THEIR CHARACTER, SETTING AND APPEARANCE AND THOSE FEATURES WHICH FORM PART OF/ CONTRIBUTE TO THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE PARK OR GARDEN;**
- II) BE COMPATIBLE WITH THEIR CONSERVATION;**
- III) IN THOSE INSTANCES WHERE ENABLING DEVELOPMENT IS PROPOSED, COMPLY WITH POLICY BH7;**
- IV) ACCORD WITH OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

5.22 *It is very easy for modern development, by virtue of its scale and nature, to destroy the character of parks and gardens of historic interest. This policy seeks to ensure that due regard is paid to the character, wider setting and appearance of such areas and to the conservation opportunities which may arise from their seemly future development. A local list of parks and gardens of historic interest has been compiled by the Borough Council. This is contained in the Appendix to the Local Plan. The areas covered by the policy are identified by symbol on the Proposals Map and Inset Maps and are also illustrated in the Appendix. The grounds of Rode Hall (Appendix A7, site no. 5) and Congleton Park (Appendix A7, site no. 10) are also included in English Heritage's National Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and development affecting them or their setting may also be the subject of notification to English Heritage (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission).*

STATUTORY LIST OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

Demolition

BH2

PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVE THE COMPLETE DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS OR STRUCTURES INCLUDED IN THE STATUTORY LIST OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST WILL BE GRANTED LISTED BUILDING CONSENT ONLY IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING APPLY:

- I) THE BUILDING IS STRUCTURALLY UNSOUND;**
- II) ITS REPAIR IS NOT AN ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE AND PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO DEMOLITION;**
- III) ALTERNATIVE USES FOR AND THE DISPOSAL OF THE BUILDING HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATED;**
- IV) DETAILED PLANS FOR REDEVELOPMENT HAVE BEEN APPROVED.**

IN THOSE CASES WHERE, EXCEPTIONALLY, DEMOLITION IS PERMITTED THEN PROVISION WILL BE REQUIRED TO BE MADE FOR THE RECORDING OF THE LISTED BUILDING AND FOR THE STORAGE OF MATERIALS/FEATURES FOR RE-USE.

5.23 Historic buildings make a vital contribution to the environmental and historical context of the Borough and their loss would not therefore be acceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances and only then when there is no reasonable prospect of finding an alternative use of the land and buildings which would satisfy Policy BH3. Where an application is made for consent to demolish a listed building, the applicant may be required to provide an independent structural engineer's assessment of the building's condition and also a report on the economic feasibility of repair and possible conversion, as opposed to the outright demolition of the structure.

5.24 Where permission is granted for the demolition of a listed building the Council will impose a condition requiring that the demolition shall not take place before a contract for carrying out the redevelopment of the site has been made and planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment for which the contract provides.

5.25 The criteria in Policy BH2 should be read in conjunction with Appendix E of Circular 14/97 where unlisted buildings in conservation areas are concerned.

Change of Use/Conversion

BH3

THE CHANGE OF USE/ CONVERSION OF LISTED BUILDINGS WILL ONLY BE AUTHORISED IF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL IS SATISFIED THAT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE SATISFIED:

- I) THE CHANGE OF USE AND ASSOCIATED CONVERSION OR ALTERATION WORKS WOULD PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING;**
- II) THE INTENDED USE OF THE BUILDING DOES NOT DETRACT FROM ITS SETTING;**
- III) THE BUILDING'S ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES AND HISTORIC INTEREST ARE PRESERVED;**
- IV) THE OVERALL PROPOSAL IS GENERALLY CONSISTENT WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

5.26 The Borough Council will give consideration to permitting a range of alternative uses for unused listed buildings in order to ensure their continued conservation. It will need to be satisfied that the building is no longer suitable for its current use and that the change of use proposed will not significantly affect the character of the Listed Building.

5.27 The Borough Council may require the submission of comprehensive information by way of the provision of additional details to enable a fully informed consideration of the proposal.

Effect of Proposals

BH4

PLANNING PERMISSION AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR THE EXTENSION OR ALTERATION OF A LISTED BUILDING OR FOR PROPOSALS AFFECTING THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING WILL ONLY BE GRANTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE LISTED BUILDING AS REGARDS SCALE, STYLE, APPEARANCE, MATERIALS AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT RESULT IN A LOSS OF IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL LISTED BUILDING;**
- III) THE LISTED BUILDING'S ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES AND HISTORIC INTEREST ARE PRESERVED;**

IV) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE SETTING OF THE LISTED BUILDING;

V) THE OVERALL PROPOSAL IS GENERALLY CONSISTENT WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

PROPOSALS WHICH AFFECT THE STRUCTURE, CHARACTER, APPEARANCE OR SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING WILL GENERALLY REQUIRE THE SUBMISSION OF A DETAILED PLANNING APPLICATION, AND IN APPROPRIATE CASES THE SUBMISSION ALSO OF AN APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT.

5.28 To safeguard the appearance and integrity of Listed Buildings which are the subject of development proposals or whose setting may be affected by proposals.

5.29 Often it is the setting of a Listed Building which is as important as the building itself. Detailed consideration will, therefore, be required where development would affect such a building or its setting.

BH5

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT, ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT, CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT OR PLANNING PERMISSION, AS RELEVANT, WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR PROPOSALS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL, WOULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT UPON THE EXISTING SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A LISTED BUILDING / STRUCTURE AS A RESULT OF :-

- I) ADVERTISEMENTS, SHOP FASCIAS OR SIGNS WHICH ARE UNSYMPATHETIC BY VIRTUE OF THEIR DESIGN, SITING, COLOUR, SIZE OR MATERIALS**
- II) CHANGES TO ELEVATIONAL DETAIL, PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF SHOP FRONTS, OF AN UNSYMPATHETIC DESIGN WHICH DO NOT RESPECT THE LOCAL CHARACTER**
- III) DEVELOPMENT WHERE THE DESIGN, SITING, SCALE OR USE OF FACING, ROOFING OR PAVING MATERIALS ARE INAPPROPRIATE IN RELATION TO THE INTEGRITY OF THE BUILDING / STRUCTURE ITSELF, NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS OR TO THE AREA GENERALLY.**

5.30 To safeguard the appearance and integrity of Listed Buildings in commercial or employment uses which are the subject of development proposals.

NON-STATUTORY LIST OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC INTEREST

BH6

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS INVOLVING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES LOCALLY LISTED AS BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL AND/OR HISTORIC INTEREST WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL IS SATISFIED THAT THE ARCHITECTURAL AND / OR HISTORIC CHARACTER IS CONSERVED AND THAT IN THOSE INSTANCES WHERE DEMOLITION IS INVOLVED THIS IS UNAVOIDABLE.

5.31 Many buildings and structures which do not meet the criteria in order to qualify for inclusion on the list of statutorily Listed Buildings as a reflection of being of national importance are nonetheless of local importance and worthy of protection because of the particular contribution that they make to the local environment or because of their architectural or local historical interest. These buildings/ structures or groups thereof will be included on a "Local List" to be produced by the Borough Council and will be put forward for approval for use as Supplementary Planning Guidance - it will consequently constitute a "material consideration" in the determination of those relevant planning applications and priority will be given in those instances to the conservation and enhancement of locally important buildings and structures. The "Local List" will, for the avoidance of doubt, include individual as well as groups of buildings and structures and will be up-dated, as and when appropriate, by the Borough Council.

ENABLING DEVELOPMENT

BH7

PROPOSALS INVOLVING ENABLING DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE SATISFIED:

- I) THE ENABLING DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT MATERIALLY DETRACT FROM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORIC OR LANDSCAPE INTEREST OF THE ASSET, OR MATERIALLY HARM ITS SETTING;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL AVOIDS DETRIMENTAL FRAGMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT OF THE HERITAGE ASSET;**
- III) THE ENABLING DEVELOPMENT WILL SECURE THE LONG TERM FUTURE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET, AND WHERE APPLICABLE, ITS CONTINUED USE FOR A SYMPATHETIC PURPOSE;**
- IV) THE JUSTIFICATION FOR ENABLING DEVELOPMENT ARISES FROM THE INHERENT NEEDS OF THE HERITAGE ASSET, RATHER THAN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PRESENT OWNER OR THE PURCHASE PRICE PAID;**

- V) **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS NOT AVAILABLE FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE;**
- VI) **IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE AMOUNT OF ENABLING DEVELOPMENT IS THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO SECURE THE FUTURE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET, AND THAT ITS FORM MINIMISES DISBENEFITS;**
- VII) **THE VALUE OR BENEFIT OF THE SURVIVAL OR ENHANCEMENT OF THE HERITAGE ASSET OUTWEIGHS THE LONG-TERM COST TO THE COMMUNITY (I.E. THE DISBENEFITS) OF PROVIDING THE ENABLING DEVELOPMENT.**

IF A SCHEME OF ENABLING DEVELOPMENT FULLY SATISFIES ALL THE CRITERIA SPECIFIED ABOVE, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE GRANTED IF THE SCHEME IS SUBMITTED IN THE FORM OF A FULL PLANNING APPLICATION AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE HERITAGE OBJECTIVE CAN BE SECURELY AND ENFORCEABLY LINKED TO THE GRANTING OF PLANNING PERMISSION, IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE GUIDANCE OUTLINED IN CIRCULAR 1/97.

5.32 The essence of “enabling development” is that significant benefit to a heritage asset would be accrued from the value added to the land as a result of planning permission being granted for development which would not otherwise gain consent since it would be contrary to other objectives of national, regional or local planning policy – for example, a policy of restraint on housing development in the countryside might be relaxed to fund the repair of an historic landscape.

5.33 These proposals are put forward on the basis that the benefit to the community of conserving the heritage asset outweighs the harm to other material interests; the success of these schemes depends on the integrity and sustainability of the heritage asset not being materially compromised by the development and it is crucial that the Local Planning Authority can be satisfied that the balance of public advantage lies with approving the enabling development as the means of ensuring the secure future of the heritage asset – in this respect, the Local Planning Authority will expect that the proposed enabling development will have followed, and been the only resulting possible solution, from a full evaluation of all potential options as part of the overall assessment process.

5.34 Where the appearance of the enabling development is crucial to its acceptability – as it inevitably will be – then a submission in outline form will not be appropriate, since a permission in outline would not enable the requisite full and continuing control over the scheme by the Local Planning Authority. In the light of guidance and advice contained in Circular 1/97, serious consideration will be given to the use and form of planning obligations, where appropriate, or other forms of legally-binding agreement (e.g. with third parties such as building preservation trusts) to ensure that the objective of enabling development can be achieved; the most appropriate means of achieving that objective will be likely to be a matter of judgement in each case.

5.35 Ideally, the heritage asset should be repaired before the enabling development commences (or the funds necessary to do so deposited with a Trust, or a performance bond or guarantee obtained); alternatively, an agreement requiring the phased repair of the heritage asset linked to stages in the realisation of the enabling development should ensure that the phases of work to the heritage asset are undertaken in a logical sequence. The Local Planning Authority will be looking to ensure that in each case the objective of

the enabling development i.e. the repair of the heritage asset, is secured as early as possible in the development process and in no cases shall that be later than the use/occupation of the new (enabling) development.

5.36 *This policy should be read in conjunction with the advice contained in PPG15 and PPG16.*

CONSERVATION AREAS

BH8

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL DESIGNATE NEW CONSERVATION AREAS OR EXTEND OR ALTER THE BOUNDARIES OF EXISTING AREAS ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING GENERAL CRITERIA:-

- I) AREAS WHOSE SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST HAS BEEN REVEALED AS A RESULT OF RECENT RESEARCH, SURVEY, INVESTIGATION OR DISCOVERY;**
- II) ANY CONSERVATION AREAS WHOSE EXTENT OR CHARACTER HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT SINCE THEIR ORIGINAL DESIGNATION;**

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL UNDERTAKE AND PUBLISH ASSESSMENTS OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREAS AS A MEANS OF AIDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES BH9 AND BH10.

5.37 The Borough Council has a continuing duty to determine, by ongoing research and survey, whether to designate new or extend conservation areas or initiate marginal changes in the boundaries of existing areas which are due to the impact of development which has taken place since their original designation. Such new boundaries will more accurately reflect the aims and overall intention of conservation policy which is also reflected in the wording and criteria of Policy BH8.

BH9

PLANNING PERMISSION, CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT OR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT, WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR PROPOSALS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL, WOULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT UPON THE EXISTING SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA AS A RESULT OF:-

- I) ADVERTISEMENTS, SHOP FASCIAS OR SIGNS WHICH ARE UNSYMPATHETIC BY VIRTUE OF THEIR DESIGN, SITING, COLOUR, SIZE OR MATERIALS;**
- II) CHANGES TO ELEVATIONAL DETAIL, PARTICULARLY SHOP FRONTS, OF AN UNSYMPATHETIC DESIGN WHICH DO NOT RESPECT THE LOCAL CHARACTER;**

- III) **DEVELOPMENT WHERE THE DESIGN, SITING, SCALE OR USE OF FACING, ROOFING OR PAVING MATERIALS ARE INAPPROPRIATE IN RELATION TO EITHER NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS OR TO THE AREA GENERALLY;**
- IV) **THE SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF IMPORTANT TREES, TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OR AREAS OF OPEN LAND;**
- V) **INTRUSIVENESS WITHIN THE SETTING OF A CONSERVATION AREA OR IN RELATION TO EXISTING VIEWS INTO, OUT OF, WITHIN OR ACROSS THE AREA.**

PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE EXISTING SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF CONSERVATION AREAS MAY REQUIRE THE SUBMISSION OF FURTHER DETAILS OR A FULL PLANNING APPLICATION.

5.38 The aim of designating conservation areas in the borough is to preserve their existing special architectural and historic character or to enhance their future appearance (or to achieve both effects) by retaining existing buildings and features of interest and merit and by promoting the areas' appropriate physical improvement. The baseline character of existing and proposed conservation areas will be the subject of detailed Assessments and public consultation. Any planning or development proposals within or near them may need to be capable of detailed examination in order to assess their impact according to the criteria set out in this policy and to policy guidance contained in PPG15 (Planning and Historic Environment). The boundaries of the existing Conservation Areas in the Borough are identified on the Proposals Maps.

BH10

CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT AND/ OR PLANNING PERMISSION, AS RELEVANT, FOR THE DEMOLITION OF A BUILDING OR GROUP OF BUILDINGS WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRESENT CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA WILL NOT BE GRANTED UNLESS THE HARM FROM THE LOSS WAS OUTWEIGHED BY THE PUBLIC BENEFITS OF AN APPROVED AND FULLY COMMITTED REPLACEMENT SCHEME. IN THIS RESPECT, THE DEMOLITION OF SUCH UNLISTED BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS WILL BE CONSIDERED AGAINST THE SAME CRITERIA AS THOSE RELATING TO LISTED BUILDINGS.

5.39 Development within Conservation Areas must protect or enhance the character or appearance of the area. It is important to ensure that development proposals that involve the loss of existing buildings or other features are appropriate and will enhance the Conservation Area. There must also be confidence that proposals are well-founded to avoid diminution of character caused by the prolonged appearance of unsightly gaps in established street scenes.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Sites of National Importance

BH11

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECT SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND OTHER SITES OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE OR THEIR SETTINGS WILL NOT BE GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSION.

5.40 Schedule Ancient Monuments are designated by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, on the advice of English Heritage, as being of national importance and meriting statutory protection under ancient monuments legislation. They are identified by symbol on the Proposals and Inset Maps. The Secretary of State is solely responsible for the grant of scheduled monument consent for works of demolition, repair and alteration.

5.41 Not all monuments of national importance are scheduled and a review of scheduled sites is being undertaken. As a result, further monuments may be scheduled or the extent of existing ones amended, during the lifetime of the local plan. The up-to-date list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments is held by Cheshire County Council and by English Heritage.

Other Sites of Archaeological Importance

BH12

WHERE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AFFECT OTHER SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OR ARE WITHIN AN AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL MAY REQUIRE THE SUBMISSION OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION PRIOR TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED TO ASSESS THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS.

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS TO BE PRESERVED IN SITU AS THE PREFERRED SOLUTION. WHERE PRESERVATION IN SITU IS NOT JUSTIFIED, DEVELOPMENT MAY BE PERMITTED, PROVIDED THAT THE APPLICANT MAKES ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR AN AGREED PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION TO TAKE PLACE.

5.42 Other sites of archaeological importance are recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). These are not identified on the Proposals or Inset Maps, as the SMR is continuously being revised. Further sites and objects may be discovered during the lifetime of the local plan, and will be added to the SMR as they arise. The County SMR contains all known archaeological sites and finds throughout the County, providing the basis for recognition of the potential archaeological impact of development proposals.

5.43 *Areas of Archaeological Potential have been defined by Cheshire County Council in and around the town centres of Congleton, Middlewich and Sandbach, and their extent is shown on the relevant Inset Maps.*

5.44 *This policy is in accordance with policy guidance contained in PPG16 (Archaeology and Planning). Its prime archaeological objective is the preservation in situ of important remains. This can often be achieved by such methods as design modification and by landscaping in sensitive areas. It is therefore important to obtain, as early as possible, a detailed archaeological assessment of the affected area, so that constraints to development may be identified and appropriate measures taken. This is the reason why evaluation is required before an application is determined.*

5.45 *Where sites have been subject to evaluation, and in situ preservation is not justified, an agreed programme of archaeological investigation may be appropriate. This may vary from full archaeological excavation to a watching brief during development, and will be secured through a legal agreement or planning condition.*

NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS

BH13

PROPOSALS FOR THE ERECTION, ALTERATION OR EXTENSION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE COMPLIED WITH:

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS REQUIRED FOR, AND IS ANCILLARY TO THE USE OF LAND FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES;**
- II) THE BUILDING IS ESSENTIAL EITHER TO THE AGRICULTURAL OPERATION OR TO COMPLY WITH CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL AND WELFARE LEGISLATION, AND MAINTAINS THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE HOLDING.**
- III) HAVING REGARD TO THE FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE AGRICULTURAL OPERATION, THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS SATISFACTORILY SITED IN RELATION TO EXISTING BUILDINGS TO MINIMISE ITS INTRUSIVENESS IN THE LANDSCAPE, AND IS OF SYMPATHETIC DESIGN AND MATERIALS AND APPROPRIATELY LANDSCAPED TO ENSURE HARMONY WITH ITS ENVIRONMENT;**
- IV) ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR THE DISPOSAL OF FOUL, SURFACE AND GROUND WATER DRAINAGE AND ANIMAL WASTES WITHOUT RISK TO WATERCOURSES;**
- V) ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR ACCESS AND MOVEMENT OF MACHINERY AND LIVESTOCK TO AVERT THE INTENSIFICATION OR CREATION OF A TRAFFIC HAZARD.**

5.46 *The erection of new farming buildings which require planning permission, can have a major impact in the countryside but that impact will be particularly pronounced in*

prominent or open locations. Where there is proven need for new farm buildings every effort will be made to ensure that their impact on the environment is minimised.

5.47 *In considering applications for planning permission for the erection of new farm buildings, the Council will have regard to the viability of the holding and the need for the buildings, (advice will be sought when considering farm viability); their siting, size, form and design; the materials to be used in their construction and the proposed method/means of screening. In particular, special care must be exercised in those parts of the Plan Area which are subject to special landscape protection policies.*

BH14

WHERE THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY REQUIRE THE SUBMISSION OF DETAILS OF THE SITING, DESIGN AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS PERMITTED BY PART 6 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING GENERAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER 1988 (AS AMENDED), THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT:

- I) THE BUILDING SHOULD BE SITED SATISFACTORILY IN RELATION TO EXISTING BUILDINGS, TO MINIMIZE ITS INTRUSIVENESS IN THE LANDSCAPE, AND SHOULD BE OF SYMPATHETIC DESIGN AND MATERIALS;**
- II) THE BUILDING SHOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND THEIR SETTINGS, KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES, LISTED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SETTINGS, SITES OF RECOGNISED NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE AND PROTECTED TREES.**

5.48 *Farm buildings permitted by the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988 (as amended) are the subject of a notification procedure whereby the Local Planning Authority has up to 28 days to decide whether they consider it necessary for them to give prior approval to the siting, design and external appearance of a building or structure. (This determination procedure does not concern the principle of development, which is established by the General Development Order itself). In the event that the Local Planning Authority does not grant approval to the details submitted, then any re-submission of details would need to be in the form of a planning application seeking approval for 'reserved matters'.*

CONVERSIONS OF RURAL BUILDINGS

BH15

THE CONVERSION, REUSE OR ADAPTATION OF EXISTING RURAL BUILDINGS TO AN ALTERNATIVE USE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:-

- I) THE BUILDING IS PERMANENT AND SUBSTANTIAL AND WOULD NOT REQUIRE EXTENSIVE ALTERATION, REBUILDING OR EXTENSION;**

- II) THE PROPOSED USE IS APPROPRIATE TO THE AREA IN WHICH THE BUILDING IS SITUATED AND ACCORDS WITH POLICY BH16 IN RESPECT OF RESIDENTIAL USE;
- III) THE PROPOSAL IS SYMPATHETIC TO THE BUILDING'S ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND / OR HISTORIC INTEREST AND TO ITS RURAL CHARACTER;
- IV) NEITHER THE USE OF THE BUILDING ITSELF OR OF LAND WITHIN ITS CURTILAGE, NOR THE EXTENT OF THAT CURTILAGE HAS A HARMFUL EFFECT ON THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE;
- V) THE FORM, BULK AND DESIGN OF THE BUILDING IS IN KEEPING WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS AND SETTING;
- VI) SATISFACTORY ACCESS AND CAR PARKING (TO APPROPRIATE COUNTY HIGHWAYS STANDARDS) CAN BE ACHIEVED AND LIKELY TRAFFIC GENERATION IS ACCEPTABLE;
- VII) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT DETRIMENTALLY AFFECT THE AMENITY OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES;
- VIII) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT DETRIMENTALLY AFFECT ANY EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES;
- IX) THE SITE IS ABLE TO BE SERVICED SATISFACTORILY;
- X) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

5.49 Changes that have occurred in rural areas, particularly relating to agricultural production, have resulted in many buildings no longer having a current use or being surplus to requirements. Planning Policy Guidance indicates that Local Planning Authorities should consider only whether the nature and proposed use for a building are acceptable in planning terms.

The Residential Re-use of Rural Buildings

BH16

THE RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS FOR RESIDENTIAL USE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:-

- I) EVERY REASONABLE ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE TO SECURE SUITABLE BUSINESS RE-USE, AND THE PROPOSAL IS SUPPORTED BY A STATEMENT OUTLINING THOSE EFFORTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE, OR -
- II) RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION IS A SUBORDINATE PART OF A SCHEME FOR BUSINESS RE-USE, OR -

III) THE LOCATION AND CHARACTER OF THE SITE IS SUCH THAT RESIDENTIAL USE IS THE ONLY APPROPRIATE USE;

AND

IV) THE PROPOSAL IS CAPABLE OF SATISFYING ALL THE CRITERIA IN POLICY BH15 AND ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE PLAN AS RELEVANT.

5.50 The conversion of buildings which are currently in agricultural, industrial or commercial use to dwellings may have an adverse impact on local economic activity. Residential conversion of buildings which have ceased to be used for industrial or commercial purposes will have a minimal economic impact, whilst business conversion may have a more positive impact on local employment. Residential conversions can also often be detrimental to the fabric and character of historic buildings, although in some cases it may not be possible to find a suitable re-use for a listed or other rural building. Residential conversions may have a part to play in meeting identified needs for new market or affordable housing; moreover, in instances where buildings are in close proximity to existing residential uses, conversion to residential may be the most suitable and appropriate use.

6. ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION

6.1 This chapter looks at the following aspects of the economy of the Plan Area:

- business and general industrial development
- distribution and storage facilities • roadside facilities
- tourism and visitor facilities
- telecommunications

6.2 Other aspects closely linked to the economy such as retailing, commercial and leisure activities are dealt with in other chapters of the Local Plan. **Specific allocations for employment uses are not included within this chapter but are contained within chapter 10.**

6.3 The policies of the Local Plan in respect of the economy seek to ensure that land is allocated and measures are in place which will facilitate an increase in jobs sufficient to meet local needs. Whilst a Local Plan cannot ensure that jobs are created or conversely will not be lost, it can provide the framework for future economic growth. Congleton Borough occupies a location of strategic importance for employment development by straddling the M6 Motorway, being close to the Potteries conurbation and being on the north-south communication routes between the major industrial areas of the North West of England and the West Midlands. The District therefore, has the opportunity to capitalise on the advantages arising from its location so as to promote the development of new jobs and investment and, in particular, to endeavour to diversify the local economy which traditionally has been dominated by manufacturing and a few large employers concentrating on a relatively narrow range of activities. Moreover, continued economic development is needed in the Borough to seek to address the imbalance between housing and employment provision which is apparent from the level of commuting that takes place to locations outside the District, particularly to Greater Manchester and Staffordshire.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

6.4 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 4 'Industrial; and Commercial Development and Small Firms' provides guidance on a range of issues relating to industrial and commercial development and small firms. It places particular emphasis on the need for development plans to take account of both the locational demands of business and the wider environmental objectives. It stresses that it is important that sufficient land is available which is capable of development, well served by infrastructure and with an adequate range of sites to meet differing needs.

6.5 Providing a sustainable economy which provides for growth in productivity and employment in ways which make better use of resources is also one of the main thrusts of the Government's strategy for sustainable development.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

6.6 Policy IND1 of the approved Structure Plan requires that 180 hectares of land is made available for business, general industrial, storage and distribution development in the Borough between 1996 and 2011. This policy figure implies a doubling of the past rate of industrial and business development to reduce net out-commuting and to build on the locational advantages of the west of the Borough. It includes provision for two Regional Employment Sites to be allocated in or on the edge of Sandbach and Middlewich (policy IND10), each of between 8 and 50 hectares.

6.7 In allocating land to meet these requirements, policy IND2 of the Structure Plan requires that Local Plans should locate sites in areas easily accessible by a variety of means of transport, facilitate the improvement of existing employment areas, utilise former industrial and business sites, and allocate sites which can be realistically developed.

6.8 It should be noted that the Structure Plan requirement relates to business, industrial, storage and distribution uses only as defined by Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order (see Appendix for details) and does not include land for retail, tourism or leisure uses. It also excludes “owner specific” sites as these are retained by landowners for their own use and are not available for speculative employment uses.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Economic Development Strategy

6.9 The Borough Council's Economic Development Strategy was adopted in February 2001 and sets a framework of the role the Council will play in developing the Borough's economy. It sets out a vision based on 6 strategic objectives and an overall goal “to support the creation of a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable local economy, which in turn will enable the quality of life of residents to be enhanced whilst preserving the character and environment of the Borough.

6.10 Much of the Borough Council's Strategy is to be delivered through the South East Cheshire Enterprise of which the Borough is a major partner. Their own ‘Borough of Congleton Economic Development Strategy – 2000 and Beyond’, is closely aligned to that of the Borough and has, as a key element, the promotion of the Borough and its towns as a place for business and tourism and ensuring a match between the supply and demand for employment land.

Employment Land Study

6.11 A study of employment land addressing both the quantitative and qualitative issues was undertaken to assist in identifying the most appropriate sites for new employment development. The study took into account other studies and surveys relating to the Borough's economic and employment needs which had already been undertaken by the Borough of Congleton Economic Partnership, the Borough's Economic Development and

Tourism Manager and the Economic Development Committee's Employment Sites Working Group.

6.12 The study found that:

- There is evidence of a lack of range of sites and uneven distribution geographically with a particular scarcity of employment land in Congleton
- Many existing employment sites are not genuinely available because of site and ownership constraints
- The need to identify major strategic employment sites to meet Structure Plan requirements must be balanced against the need to meet local needs and reduce out commuting
- Opportunities for identifying additional employment land on brownfield sites is very limited. It is likely that the bulk of new employment land will need to be on greenfield sites
- There is a particular need in the Borough to increase provision of jobs in the service sector to meet future local employment needs and reduce outcommuting
- The Borough needs to be in a position to compete on a sub-regional level with adjacent Districts by providing attractive larger sites suitable for inward investment.

Availability of Land and Premises

6.13 Whilst the Borough has been successful in providing a continual supply of employment land to meet its land supply requirements for the plan period to 2001, the current amount of land available for employment development is unlikely to meet the long term needs of the Borough because of its location, nature and limited availability. The preparation of a revised Local Plan gives an opportunity to review existing employment allocations which have not been taken up and identify new sites which will attract inward investment as well as address any imbalances in provision. There is a need also to provide greater variety of employment sites which will meet the needs of both large established companies and smaller businesses.

Demand for Land and Premises

6.14 The pleasant environment of the Borough means that it is an attractive place in which to work, providing employment for a large number of people - both for residents and in-commuters. With an increasing population and a greater number of women seeking work, the local labour supply is expected to increase significantly by the end of the plan period. The nature of employment opportunities available is also likely to continue to alter over the next decade as the workforce grows and new forms of economic development arise.

6.15 Whilst there is a healthy demand for land and premises, particularly in the Congleton area and from existing firms, there is evidence of a mismatch between the type of employment provided within the Borough and the occupations of its residents; there is a need for the Borough to increase the provision of service jobs to meet the qualifications and occupational needs of its own workforce. The changing pattern of job requirements from manufacturing to service will also mean ensuring that land has a good quality environment with good access for its workforce and market; there may also be increasing opportunities for town centre sites and for the conversion of existing buildings.

6.16 Despite recent loss of jobs in some of the Borough's traditional manufacturing firms, manufacturing remains a major provider of jobs in the Borough. There is therefore also a need to ensure that adequate measures are taken to safeguard these through appropriate planning policies and proposals which facilitate the expansion, modernisation and retention of existing firms, and to provide sites capable of meeting a variety of needs to attract inward investment and facilitate new startup businesses.

Rural Diversification

6.17 The rural areas continue to make an important contribution to the Borough's economy. However, whilst the countryside has traditionally been dominated by agricultural activities and food production, the recent changes in the agricultural industry has created a need to foster the diversification of the rural economy. Diversification of the rural economy is also necessary to provide wider and more varied employment opportunities for local people and to help sustain rural communities. On the other hand the high agricultural land quality, nature conservation value and good landscape character of much of the countryside in the Borough means that new uses need to be sensitive in their nature and design. The guiding principle for employment development in the rural areas is therefore that it should be necessary, benefit local rural communities and maintain or enhance the environment.

Tourism

6.18 Although tourism does not, as yet, play a major role in the economy of the Borough, it is a growth industry and, in view of the many natural and man-made features of interest which exist in the area and its good regional location, could become a significant source of employment in the future. The potential impact of tourism upon areas of value, both directly through development and indirectly through increased numbers of visitors, requires that adequate controls are in place to ensure that it is managed to minimise its impact on sensitive areas.

Commuting

6.19 The car has brought many economic benefits, but the increasing use of the car for commuting in the Borough has become a significant problem causing increasing levels of pollution, delays to commuters and costs to businesses. Much of the problem lies in the imbalance between where people live and where they have to work. In the Borough there is a significant imbalance between the employment needs of residents and the provision of local jobs, particularly in Congleton, leading to significant out-commuting of those in the service sector to areas such as South Manchester and The Potteries.

6.20 Addressing this problem means ensuring that there is sufficient suitable employment land provided to attract more businesses into the Borough, especially service industries in areas such as Congleton.

Reuse of Existing Employment Sites

6.21 There has been a significant increase recently in the number of industrial premises becoming vacant due to closures and relocation, both in the urban and rural areas. These

are valuable brownfield development sites which should, whenever possible, be retained for employment use in order to reduce the need to develop greenfield sites. However, it is sometimes the case that due to their location or the nature of the premises they are not suitable for continued employment use. In such cases consideration needs to be given to suitable alternative uses for the site or premises which would make best use of an existing resource, providing it does not compromise the objectives and strategy of the plan.

New Technology

6.22 The rapid pace of technological change facing the local economy is such that it is difficult to predict with any accuracy long term employment needs. Telecommunications and information technology will inevitably place different demands on land use than the traditional manufacturing industries. It may also provide opportunities for more localised business activities which reduce the need to travel. The Local Plan needs to be able to embrace these changes through flexible policies and regular monitoring of changes.

EMPLOYMENT LAND REQUIREMENTS

Note: The employment land figures and requirements referred to in this Plan are based on the situation as at 31st March 2004.

6.23 The Borough's employment land provision for the period mid-1996 to mid 2011 will comprise of:

- Completions – land developed for B1, B2 and B8 uses between 1st July 1996 and 31st March 2004.
- Commitments – land under construction and sites with current or past planning permission for B1, B2 and B8 uses (not owner-specific) as at 31st March 2004.
- Allocations – new sites to be allocated in this Local Plan.

6.24 Between 1st June 1996 and 31st March 2004 a total of 31.33 hectares of land had been developed for B1, B2 and B8 employment purposes within the Borough. A further 62.65 hectares of land was identified as being available towards the requirement for the Borough of 180 hectares (excluding 'owner-specific' sites) giving a total land supply of 93.98 hectares. This leaves a requirement of 86 hectares which will need to be identified in the Local Plan. Table 1 below sets out the current provision of employment land in the Borough for each of the sub-divisions (Note there are no sub-divisional policy figures for employment land).

Table 1 Summary of Current Employment Land Supply (all figures in hectares)

Sub-Division	Policy Requirement	Completions (1996-March 2004)	Current Commitments	Total Supply	Net Residual Requirement
Congleton		4.83	5.	9.83	
Sandbach		3.8	15.28	19.08	
Alsager		1.45	0	1.45	
Middlewich		20.16	39.75	59.91	
Rural		1.09	2.62	3.71	
Borough	180	31.33	62.65	93.98	86.02

6.25 The sites allocated in Policy DP1 amount to 65.2 hectares giving a total provision for the plan period of **159.2 hectares**.

ECONOMY POLICIES

GENERAL SCALE OF NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

E1

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ENSURE THAT SUFFICIENT LAND OF THE RIGHT TYPE AND OF SUITABLE QUALITY IS MADE AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE FOR 180 HECTARES GROSS OF LAND FOR BUSINESS, GENERAL INDUSTRIAL, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH BETWEEN MID-1996 AND MID-2011.

6.26 The figure of 180 hectares of land is the Congleton district allocation for new industrial and business development as contained in the approved Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan. This level of allocation allows a doubling of the past rate of development to build on the locational advantages of the west of the Borough and to reduce net out-commuting, particularly in Congleton. It includes provision for two Regional Employment Sites at Middlewich and Sandbach in accordance with the requirements of Structure Plan Policy IND10. In Sandbach this requirement is met by the committed site at Junction 17/Old Mill Road, Sandbach, and in Middlewich by a combination of the committed employment site to the north of Cledford Lane, and further land allocated to the south (DP1(M1)).

6.27 Some of the required level of provision has already been met through completions since mid-1996 and existing commitments. The remainder will be met from new allocations which are identified in the Local Plan. Details of proposed allocations are set out in the Development Proposals chapter of the Local Plan (Chapter 10).

COMMITTED EMPLOYMENT SITES

E2

ON SITES WHICH ARE CURRENTLY COMMITTED TO EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT, APPLICATIONS FOR THE RENEWAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT USES WILL BE REVIEWED CRITICALLY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE EXISTING PLANNING PERMISSION SHOULD BE RENEWED BY ASSESSING THE PROPOSAL AGAINST THE RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN, HAVING FULL REGARD TO ANY MATERIAL CHANGES IN PLANNING CIRCUMSTANCES.

6.28 This policy is intended to maintain the supply of land for employment development, and to bring into beneficial use land which has been deemed to be appropriate for employment development where the proposed use remains appropriate to the area.

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN TOWNS

E3

PROPOSALS FOR EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT ON LAND NOT ALLOCATED FOR SUCH PURPOSES WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE OF THOSE SETTLEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN POLICY PS4 WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UTILISE A SITE WHICH IS ALLOCATED OR COMMITTED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE IN THE LOCAL PLAN;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL IS APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCAL CHARACTER IN TERMS OF ITS USE, INTENSITY, SCALE AND APPEARANCE;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY GR1;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES.**

6.29 In addition to providing opportunities for the creation of new jobs on sites allocated for employment use, the Local Plan also seeks to maintain and increase existing employment opportunities and to encourage the growth of existing firms. This Policy consequently allows for proposals which involve the conversion, extension or redevelopment of existing buildings - which will primarily be existing industrial, warehousing or commercial undertakings - within the settlements identified in Policy PS4, as well as the introduction of new businesses, providing that the requirements of Policy GR1 are satisfied. Generally it is expected that such development will be within existing established employment areas - development within primarily residential areas will only be acceptable where it meets the requirements of policy E7.

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN VILLAGES

E4

PROPOSALS FOR EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT ON LAND NOT ALLOCATED FOR SUCH PURPOSES WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE OF THOSE SETTLEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN POLICY PS5 WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS FOR A SMALLSCALE ENTERPRISE APPROPRIATE TO A RURAL SETTLEMENT OR RELATES TO AN EXISTING BUSINESS;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UTILISE A SITE WHICH IS ALLOCATED OR COMMITTED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE IN THE LOCAL PLAN;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY GR1;**

IV) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES.

6.30 *Opportunities for new industrial or commercial enterprises within existing settlements are limited, but when such opportunities do arise then their development by businesses which can be carried on without unacceptable disturbance to their surroundings may be appropriate. In some settlements, vacant or under-utilised land and buildings may be suitable for employment purposes and such use will be encouraged, provided that environmental and development control standards can be met. The provision of employment development may also help to make villages more sustainable by aiding the opportunity and choice for residents to be able to work locally. Generally, acceptable uses will be those which fall within Class B1 of the Use Classes Order (see appendix) and are of a scale which would not conflict with the rural character of a village.*

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

E5

PROPOSALS FOR EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- I) THE EXPANSION OR REDEVELOPMENT OF AN EXISTING BUSINESS**
- II) NEW SMALL-SCALE DEVELOPMENT**
- III) THE REUSE OF AN EXISTING RURAL BUILDING**
- IV) THE DIVERSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING FARM ENTERPRISE**

PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- A) THE PROPOSAL IS FOR A BUSINESS ENTERPRISE APPROPRIATE TO A RURAL AREA OR IS ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTINUATION OF OPERATIONS WHICH ARE ALREADY ON SITE AND THERE ARE NO SUITABLE EXISTING BUILDINGS WHICH COULD BE REUSED;**
- B) IN THE CASE OF THE CONVERSION OF A RURAL BUILDING, THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY BH15;**
- C) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UTILISE A SITE WHICH IS ALLOCATED OR COMMITTED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE IN THE LOCAL PLAN;**
- D) THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY GR1;**
- E) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES.**

6.31 *A prime objective of the Local Plan is to concentrate development within the urban areas and to avoid encroachment into land in the open countryside beyond that which has already been identified. It is, however, recognised that existing firms in rural locations*

should be allowed to expand, where such expansion can be accommodated satisfactorily and is environmentally acceptable. In such cases the proposed use should be one which relates to the existing operations of the business.

6.32 *New development in the countryside is generally discouraged because of the need to protect the countryside and because remoter locations are less likely to be sustainable in terms of travel to work and servicing. However, it is recognised that limited new development may be beneficial in terms of providing local employment opportunities and assisting in diversifying the rural economy. Only where the proposal is of a small scale (generally below 5,000 sq. ft. net), relates to a rural employment business which requires a rural location and there are no suitable existing buildings which could be reused, may new development be acceptable. Wherever possible such uses should utilise sites on the edge of existing settlements or adjoining an existing building complex to minimise their impact on the open character of the countryside. Normally such uses should fall within Class B1 of the Use Classes Order (see appendix).*

6.33 *This policy also aims to diversify rural employment opportunities and promote sustainable development by bringing back into beneficial use wasted resources in the form of unused/underused buildings and ensuring the retention of buildings of merit, providing the proposed use can be accommodated without detrimental environmental effects.*

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

E6

PROPOSALS FOR EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT IS FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- I) THE LIMITED EXPANSION OR REDEVELOPMENT OF AN EXISTING BUSINESS**
- II) THE REUSE OF AN EXISTING RURAL BUILDING**
- III) THE DIVERSIFICATION OF AN EXISTING FARM ENTERPRISE**

PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- A) THE PROPOSAL IS FOR A BUSINESS ENTERPRISE APPROPRIATE TO A RURAL AREA OR IS ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTINUATION OF OPERATIONS WHICH ARE ALREADY ON THE SITE;**
- B) THE PROPOSAL AND ANY ASSOCIATED USE OF SURROUNDING LAND DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT;**
- C) IN THE CASE OF THE CONVERSION OF A RURAL BUILDING, THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY BH15;**
- D) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UTILISE A SITE WHICH IS ALLOCATED OR COMMITTED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE IN THE LOCAL PLAN;**

- E) THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY GR1;**
- F) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES.**

6.34 *Whilst this Policy contains a general presumption against new industrial or commercial uses in the Green Belt - in order to safeguard its character and appearance - it does, however, allow for the expansion of existing undertakings, subject to such expansion being able to be accommodated satisfactorily and also being environmentally acceptable.*

6.35 *Section (II) of the Policy provides for the use of existing buildings within the Green Belt for industrial or commercial purposes (subject to compliance with stated criteria) - and by so doing, seeks to fulfill the utilisation of an existing un-used/ under-used resource, meet local employment needs without the necessity to provide new buildings, and ensure the preservation of buildings which contribute to the appearance of the locality. Normally such uses should fall within Class B1 of the Use Classes Order (see Appendix).*

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

E7

PROPOSALS FOR EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING BUSINESS PREMISES, THE ERECTION OF NEW BUILDINGS ON EXISTING OR NEW SITES, AND THE CONVERSION OR CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES WITHIN PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL AREAS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED, ITS SCALE AND ITS TRAFFIC GENERATION WOULD NOT BE LIKELY TO UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA OR ITS AMENITIES.

6.36 *Small scale industrial and commercial/business uses - particularly where they occupy existing buildings - can be acceptable in residential areas, providing that the type of activity concerned is appropriate to its location and carefully controlled to ensure that it does not cause harm or nuisance. In some cases, a use which appears to be potentially unacceptable can be made to be acceptable through the imposition of appropriate conditions concerning matters such as use of power tools, hours of operation, outside storage. Inevitably, locations within residential areas may ultimately impose severe constraints on the ability of businesses to expand - in those circumstances, the Borough Council would aim to direct those businesses experiencing such difficulties onto sites specifically allocated for industrial use, or to other suitable vacant sites/premises.*

6.37 *Those proposals involving minor extensions or alterations which consequently would have minimal impact on the surrounding area will normally be acceptable. It is also possible that development proposals of a larger scale could also be considered favourably where associated environmental improvements are such that there would be no reduction of residential amenities, and particularly in those instances where the development proposed would actually result in beneficial improvements to the amenity of the locality.*

6.38 *Advice and guidance is given in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on Sustainable Development.*

HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

E8

PROPOSALS FOR THE USE OF ANY PART OF A DWELLING OR DOMESTIC CURTILAGE FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) **THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT ON THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE AREA, THE AMENITIES OF ANY NEARBY EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES AND HIGHWAY SAFETY;**
- II) **THE PROPOSAL WOULD RETAIN A SATISFACTORY STANDARD OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION AND ANCILLARY PARKING PROVISION;**
- III) **THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT RESULT IN THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE ORIGINAL DWELLING BEING SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED.**

6.39 *Businesses operating from home are becoming an increasingly important part of the Borough's economy and can help reduce the need for travel. Where planning permission is required for such businesses, the Borough Council wishes to facilitate their provision in a manner which minimise their impact on their surroundings and prevents inappropriate development taking place.*

ROYAL ORDNANCE FACTORY, RADWAY GREEN

E9

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THOSE APPLICATIONS SEEKING APPROVAL FOR THE RE-USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF BUILDINGS AND LAND WITHIN THE EXISTING CONFINES OF THE ROYAL ORDNANCE FACTORY AT RADWAY GREEN, AS DEFINED ON THE INSET MAP, FOR THOSE USES FALLING WITHIN USE CLASSES B1, B2 AND B8 OF THE USE CLASSES ORDER 1988, SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THOSE CRITERIA SET OUT IN POLICY GR1.

6.40 *Although a policy of restraint is applicable to major employment applications in Alsager, it is acknowledged that the Royal Ordnance factory presents a complex of existing buildings and land in a good location near to Junction 16 of the M6. Some of the land and buildings within the existing boundaries of the site are now redundant and surplus to requirements and as such, represent an under-used facility for which an appropriate use should be found. This policy seeks to enable the re-use of such unused land and buildings within the boundaries of the existing site, and by doing so minimises the need for new employment development on greenfield sites.*

6.41 *Although the Radway Green site does not comprise part of the identified supply of employment land, once new developments are completed on the site they will be included within the on-going totals of completions for employment related uses.*

RE-USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES

E10

PROPOSALS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF AN EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITE OR PREMISES TO NON-EMPLOYMENT USES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT THE SITE IS NO LONGER SUITABLE FOR EMPLOYMENT USES OR THERE WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL PLANNING BENEFIT IN PERMITTING ALTERNATIVE USES THAT WOULD OUTWEIGH THE LOSS OF THE SITE FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES.

IN CONSIDERING WHETHER THE SITE IS NO LONGER SUITABLE FOR EMPLOYMENT USES ACCOUNT WILL BE TAKEN OF:

- A) THE LOCATION OF THE SITE OR PREMISES AND THE PHYSICAL NATURE OF ANY BUILDING**
- B) THE ADEQUACY OF SUPPLY OF SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT SITES AND PREMISES IN THE AREA**
- C) WHETHER REASONABLE ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO LET OR SELL THE PREMISES FOR EMPLOYMENT USES**

IN CONSIDERING WHETHER THERE WOULD BE A SUBSTANTIAL PLANNING BENEFIT FROM AN ALTERNATIVE USE ACCOUNT WILL BE TAKEN OF:

- A) ANY BENEFITS IN TERMS OF TRAFFIC GENERATION, NOISE OR DISTURBANCE TO AMENITY**
- B) THE IMPACT THE PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE ON THE ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OF THE LOCAL AREA**
- C) THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSAL AND ITS POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCAL AREA**
- D) THE REQUIREMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN**

6.42 *The retention of existing employment sites is considered important in order to maintain an adequate range of land and buildings suitable for employment purposes across the Borough. However, it is recognised that in some instances the continued retention of an employment use may not be appropriate. Therefore, only where it can be demonstrated that the site would no longer be suitable for continued employment use or there would be substantial planning benefit from the removal of employment uses in the area and from any successor development, would the Borough Council consider other forms of use or development.*

6.43 *For the purposes of the policy existing employment sites include unused sites or premises last used for employment purpose, committed or allocated sites, as well as those*

currently in use. In cases where it is argued that a substantial planning benefit arises from the avoidance of dereliction or ensuring that the site remains in beneficial use, and the loss of the site or premises from employment use would adversely affect the availability of employment land in the locality, applicants will be required to demonstrate that reasonable attempts have been made to let or sell the site or premises and should therefore provide details of any marketing undertaken, over what period of time the site has been actively marketed and any interest arising in the site etc.

OWNER-SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT SITES

E11

PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT OR THE REUSE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF BUILDINGS AND LAND ON OWNER-SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT SITES AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS WILL BE PERMITTED FOR EMPLOYMENT USES APPROPRIATE TO THE BUSINESS OR OPERATIONS OF THE OWNER. OTHER USES WILL BE CONSIDERED AGAINST THE RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

6.44 There are a number of sites which are either committed or available for employment use within the Settlement Zone Line which are 'owner-specific', i.e. they are retained by the owner for their own use and are not therefore currently available for use by other businesses. These sites do not count towards the employment land requirements of the Structure Plan and are therefore not identified as employment land commitments or allocations in the Local Plan. This policy seeks to ensure that such sites remain available for employment use by the owners during the plan period. Where such sites become developed, they will then count towards the employment land provision for the Borough. Should the owners no longer require these sites for their own operations, then other uses will be considered against the relevant Local Plan policies. The term 'Other Uses' also includes other non-owner specific employment uses.

DISTRIBUTION AND STORAGE FACILITIES

E12

IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF POLICIES E3 - 7, PROPOSALS FOR DISTRIBUTION AND STORAGE FACILITIES WHICH ARE LIKELY TO GENERATE SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF FREIGHT WHICH COULD BE REALISTICALLY MOVED BY MEANS OTHER THAN ROAD, WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED ON SITES WHICH HAVE, OR CAN ECONOMICALLY BE PROVIDED WITH, ACCESS TO A RAILWAY LINE OR PIPELINE AS WELL AS TO THE PRINCIPAL ROAD NETWORK.

6.45 This policy reflects the guidance in Structure Plan policy IND4 which seeks to steer new development which will generate significant amounts of freight to locate near to a railway or pipeline to reduce traffic generation on roads. Where such firms intend to use only road transport for the foreseeable future, the site layout should nevertheless safeguard the space necessary for the future installation of cargo handling facilities.

ROADSIDE FACILITIES

E13

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR ROADSIDE FACILITIES (EXCEPT ON MOTORWAYS) SUCH AS PETROL FILLING STATIONS, CAFES AND RESTAURANTS WILL ONLY BE GRANTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE SATISFIED:-

- I) **THE PROPOSAL IS WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY OF THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICIES PS4 AND PS5;**
- II) **SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE SITE CAN BE ACHIEVED FROM A PUBLIC HIGHWAY;**
- III) **SUFFICIENT CAR PARKING IS AVAILABLE WITHIN THE SITE;**
- IV) **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS LOCATED ON OR ADJOINING A CLASSIFIED (CLASS I OR II) ROAD;**
- V) **THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITIES OF ADJACENT PROPERTIES OR THE SURROUNDING AREAS;**
- VI) **ANY NEW BUILDINGS SHOULD BLEND INTO THE SURROUNDINGS, IN TERMS OF SITING, DESIGN AND MATERIALS USED;**
- VII) **ADVERTISEMENT SIGNS AT ALL ROADSIDE FACILITIES SHOULD GENERALLY COMPLEMENT THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS AND NOT BE UNDULY INTRUSIVE BY REASON OF EITHER; NUMBER, SIZE, TYPE, CHOICE OF MATERIALS, OR INTENSITY AND TYPE OF ILLUMINATION;**
- VIII) **IN THE CASE OF PETROL FILLING STATIONS, PROPOSALS FOR THE SALE OF GOODS OR SERVICES, SHOULD BE ANCILLARY TO THE FILLING STATION ITSELF OR OF A MINOR NATURE WHERE ADDITIONAL AND ADEQUATE CAR PARKING PROVISION CAN BE DEMONSTRATED.**

6.46 *The Borough Council considers it preferable to locate roadside facilities (other than farm shops (see policy S9)) within or very close to existing settlement boundaries in order to support policies which restrict development in the open countryside. In most cases where roads approach or are within a settlement, speed limits are in force and therefore motor traffic is generally slowing down. Accordingly, subject to appropriate access arrangements, interference by vehicles slowing to use roadside facilities will prove least open to objection.*

6.47 *The location, siting, signing and advertising of such roadside facilities should fully consider the amenities of their surroundings and, where possible, the promotion of key individual sites will be encouraged where a range of facilities might be provided for road users' convenience and thereby reduce the overall number of individual accesses from the classified road. However, the individual uses on these sites would have to be*

assessed according to the relevant policies in force and to the nature and characteristics of the site and its surrounding area.

Motorway Service Areas

E14

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR A NEW MOTORWAY SERVICE AREA (MSA) OR FOR EXTENSION TO EXISTING MSA'S WILL ONLY BE GRANTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSED MSA MEETS THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT'S REQUIREMENTS CURRENT AT THE TIME OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION;**
- II) THE PROPOSED MSA WOULD NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT THE AMENITIES OF NEARBY LOCAL RESIDENTS OR THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE SURROUNDING AREA;**
- III) ANY NEW BUILDINGS SHOULD BLEND INTO THE SURROUNDINGS, IN TERMS OF SITING, DESIGN AND MATERIALS USED;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL SHOULD BE DESIGNED SO AS TO MINIMISE VISUAL OR NOISE INTRUSION OR VEHICLE EMISSIONS.**

6.48 The Department of Environment, Regions and Transport continues to have interests in MSAs in relation to motorway safety and traffic management and therefore issues such as the spacing of MSAs, parking requirements, minimum facilities requirements, access etc are best dealt with by them. This policy therefore seeks to ensure that any proposal for such development not only meets the Department's current or future requirements but also would not be unduly detrimental to the amenity of any local residents or on the overall character and appearance of the area surrounding the proposed MSA location.

Heavy Goods Vehicle Parking

E15

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE PROPOSED PARKING OF A HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE OR VEHICLES WILL ONLY BE GRANTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE SATISFIED:

- I) THE SITE IS LOCATED WITHIN OR CONTIGUOUS TO THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICIES PS4 AND PS5;**
- II) THE SITE IS NOT SITUATED WITHIN A PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL AREA;**
- III) IT WOULD NOT BE VISUALLY INTRUSIVE OR OUT OF KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA;**

- IV) ACCESS AND EGRESS CAN BE ADEQUATELY AND SAFELY OBTAINED;
- V) EXCESS TRAFFIC WOULD NOT BE GENERATED ONTO THE HIGHWAY NETWORK;
- VI) IT WOULD NOT DETRIMENTALLY AFFECT NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTS;
- VII) IT WOULD NOT REDUCE PARKING PROVISION FOR OTHER USERS.

6.49 *This policy aims to ensure that sites for the parking of lorries are provided only in locations where they will not cause a nuisance to residents and other road users or where they would be environmentally or visually intrusive. Ideally such sites should be located adjoining or within existing industrial areas and be well screened.*

TOURISM AND VISITOR DEVELOPMENT

Facilities and Attractions

E16

PROPOSALS FOR THE PROVISION OF TOURIST AND VISITOR FACILITIES AND ATTRACTIONS WILL BE PERMITTED FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- I) DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICIES PS4 AND PS5
- II) THE REUSE OF AN EXISTING RURAL BUILDING IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR GREEN BELT
- III) SMALL SCALE DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE
- IV) THE EXPANSION OF AN EXISTING FACILITY IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR GREEN BELT

PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:-

- A) THE PROPOSAL IS FOR A TOURIST OR VISITOR FACILITY APPROPRIATE TO THE AREA;
- B) THE PROPOSAL AND ANY ASSOCIATED USE OF SURROUNDING LAND DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT
- C) IN THE CASE OF THE CONVERSION OF A RURAL BUILDING, THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY BH15;
- D) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UTILISE A SITE WHICH IS ALLOCATED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE IN THE LOCAL PLAN;
- E) THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY GR1;

F) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES.

6.50 This policy seeks to improve the facilities available for tourists and visitors in the Borough, whilst maintaining and improving upon the quality of the environment. It recognises the potential of tourism uses to generate benefits for the local economy and employment and to help diversify the rural economy. Whilst it is expected that the bulk of tourist facilities should be located within existing towns and villages where there is greater choice of access and the provision of other related services and facilities, it is recognised that some proposals will necessarily have to locate in the countryside. In such cases particular care is needed to ensure they do not adversely affect the character or appearance of the area. It is important that the quality of such development proposals reflect environmental concerns and respond positively to the local environment.

Serviced Accommodation

E17

PROPOSALS FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICED TOURIST AND VISITOR ACCOMMODATION WILL BE PERMITTED FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- I) DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICIES PS4 AND PS5**
- II) THE REUSE OF AN EXISTING RURAL BUILDING IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR GREEN BELT**
- III) THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING ACCOMMODATION IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR GREEN BELT**

PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:-

- A) IN THE CASE OF THE CONVERSION OF A RURAL BUILDING, THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY BH15;**
- B) THE PROPOSAL AND ANY ASSOCIATED USE OF SURROUNDING LAND DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT**
- C) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UTILISE A SITE WHICH IS ALLOCATED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE IN THE LOCAL PLAN;**
- D) THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICY GR1;**
- E) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES.**

6.51 This policy is aimed at assisting in the provision of tourist and visitor accommodation in the Borough to enable visitors to stay in the area longer and increase the opportunity for "business" tourism which forms an important part of the market in the North West

Region. The types of uses to which this policy applies would include hotels, motels, guesthouses, bed & breakfast or other serviced accommodation. New hotels and other tourist accommodation should be concentrated within existing settlements where there is choice of access and the provision of other complementary services and facilities. It is, however, essential that any new development is of a high standard and design, protects the amenity of nearby residential properties and is of an adequate standard in respect of highway safety and car parking.

6.52 *This policy maintains the Council's approach to restricting inappropriate new development in the open countryside and in areas defined as Green Belt. The development of new buildings often detracts from the appearance of the countryside and can be expensive to service. However, this policy recognises that in appropriate circumstances serviced tourist accommodation enables old buildings, which make a significant contribution to the rural scene, to be restored to a beneficial use and can assist in diversifying the local economy. It is also recognised that there are a number of existing established tourist and visitor accommodation facilities already in the open countryside and green belt which should be allowed to expand on a limited scale.*

Camping And Caravanning Sites

E18

PROPOSALS FOR THE PROVISION OF CAMPING AND HOLIDAY / TOURING CARAVAN SITES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THEY SATISFY THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:-

- I) THE SITE IS PHYSICALLY CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING THE USE SATISFACTORILY;**
- II) THE SITE IS SITUATED ADJACENT, OR CLOSE TO THE MAJOR ROUTES THROUGH THE BOROUGH;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE WHICH WOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE VALUE OF THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE AND IS WELL SCREENED;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITIES OF THE SURROUNDING AREA;**
- V) ANY PERMANENT BUILDINGS REQUIRED BLEND INTO THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE IN RESPECT OF SITING, DESIGN AND MATERIALS USED;**
- VI) THE SITE IS CAPABLE OF BEING CONNECTED TO EXISTING SERVICES;**
- VII) THE PROPOSAL HAS NO MATERIALLY DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE, WILDLIFE OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND DOES NOT INVOLVE THE PERMANENT LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND OF GRADE 1,2, AND 3A;**
- VIII) THE PERMANENT STATIONING OF CARAVANS IS PROHIBITED;**

IX) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES IN THE LOCAL PLAN.

6.53 *This policy aims to ensure that there is a well planned approach towards the provision of touring or transit caravans and camping sites within the Borough, the main intention being to minimise the environmental impact of such sites when approved. Also, to limit the number of cars with caravans which travel on rural roads through the Borough, and to ensure the highest standards in respect of layout, design and landscaping so as to minimise the impact of such sites.*

6.54 *The Local Planning Authority does not wish to encourage the creation of additional permanent holiday caravan sites or chalets, or the extension of existing sites, primarily because they would have a disruptive environmental impact which would prejudice the conservation objectives of this Local Plan, and can affect the amenity of nearby residential properties. In addition, such sites can be difficult to monitor and control leading to the prospect of permanent occupation outside the main holiday season.*

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

E19

PROPOSALS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS INSTALLATIONS, INCLUDING SATELLITE DISHES, REQUIRING PLANNING PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITIES OF LOCAL RESIDENTS;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT UPON IMPORTANT AREAS OR FEATURES OF LANDSCAPE, NATURE CONSERVATION, ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC VALUE;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE OR TOWNSCAPE OR ADVERSELY AFFECT VIEWS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE OR VISUAL AMENITY IN GENERAL;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL INCORPORATES SUITABLE LANDSCAPING WHERE APPROPRIATE;**
- V) ADEQUATE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND UNOBTRUSIVE ON-SITE PARKING IS PROVIDED WHERE THIS IS NECESSARY FOR OPERATIONAL REASONS;**
- VI) THE PROPOSAL IS SITED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MINIMISE IMPACT ON THE APPEARANCE OF ANY BUILDINGS OR STRUCTURES USED FOR INSTALLATION IN SO FAR AS IS PRACTICABLE AND WHERE THIS IS OPERATIONALLY AND TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE;**

PREFERENCE SHOULD BE GIVEN WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO PROPOSALS WHICH AVOID THE NEED TO ERECT LARGE NEW MASTS BY USING EXISTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OR SHARING EXISTING FACILITIES.

6.55 The Borough Council recognises the particular needs, problems and impact of telecommunication installations as outlined in PPG8, and encourages prior discussion with the Planning and Estates Division to ensure that there is understanding where possible on the optimum siting of such facilities. Proposals will be expected to create the minimum possible impact on visual and residential amenity, especially in sensitive areas with consideration given to the possibility of sharing other existing facilities or using existing structures or buildings. Where new masts are proposed they should whenever possible include additional structural capacity to take account of the growing demands for network development from the telecommunications industry. Such later extensions requiring planning permission will however be considered separately on their own planning merits. In appropriate cases where planning permission is granted, the Borough Council may withdraw permitted development rights.

6.56 Applications for new mobile phone base stations should be accompanied by a statement that self certifies to the effect that when operational the base stations will meet the ICNIRP guidelines. Performance data including information on the frequency and modulation characteristics and details of power output will be required.

7. HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

7.1 This chapter deals with the provision of all forms of housing in the Borough and includes a range of measures to enable greater choice of housing, make better use of existing land and buildings and provide more sustainable communities. It also sets out policies to achieve the Structure Plan requirements for housing in the Borough. **Specific allocations for housing are not included within this chapter but are contained within section 10.**

NATIONAL CONTEXT

7.2 The Government's latest estimates are that 3.8 million new households could form in England and 300,000 in the North West during the twenty-five years 1996-2021. This expected increase is due not only to a rise in population as a result of inward migration and increased life expectancies, but also to changes in population structure including more younger people wanting their own homes earlier in life and more people separating or becoming divorced. Consequently, the average size of households is becoming smaller and the number of households increasing. As well as generating a demand for more dwellings, the socio-economic factors underpinning the forecast also imply a requirement for a different range of dwelling types including smaller and more affordable units whilst recognising that smaller households do not solely and necessarily acquire the smallest properties available.

7.3 Government advice on the provision of housing is set out primarily in

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 3 'Housing', a revised version of which was issued in March 2000 in order to provide up-to-date guidance on a range of issues relating to the provision of housing. The guidance expects local planning authorities to:

- provide wider housing opportunity and choice for the whole community, including those in need of affordable housing;
- give priority to re-using previously-developed land within urban areas;
- create more sustainable patterns of development;
- make more efficient use of land by reviewing policies and standards;
- promote good design in new housing developments.

7.4 One of the main thrusts of the guidance is that Local Planning Authorities should adopt a "plan, monitor and manage" approach to releasing land for housing. Local Plans should identify sites for housing and buildings for conversion and re-use sufficient to meet housing requirements after making an allowance for windfall sites and manage the release of land over the plan period.

7.5 Advice on housing in the rural areas is set out in PPG7 "The Countryside and Rural Economy" which urges local authorities to strictly control the development of rural housing

away from existing settlements and to encourage modest housing development in villages where it will help to sustain a range of services.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

7.6 The replacement Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 13) for the North-West issued in March 2003 has an emphasis on reducing the number of new build houses, increasing the reuse of vacant stock, maximising the use of underused land and buildings, making use of up to date urban potential studies and promoting sustainable patterns of development. It stresses the importance of the 'plan monitor and manage' approach and requires development plans to introduce annual house build rates that are to be applied from the present time until a different rate is adopted following review of the RPG.

7.7 The provision in the Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan for new housing allows primarily for meeting the County's own needs with minimal contribution towards meeting wider regional needs. Accordingly, policy HOU1 of the Structure Plan sets the Borough Council's housing requirement for the period 1996-2011 at 3,800 new dwellings. This level of provision is a 40% reduction on previous requirements reflecting the fact that the Borough is not expected to play a major role in meeting the County's overall housing needs as well as the constraints around the town of Congleton, the Jodrell Bank Zone, and the longstanding policy of restraining development at Alsager in order to support the regeneration of the Potteries conurbation.

7.8 Whilst avoiding fundamental conflict with the Structure Plan, the Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review should, if possible, have the flexibility to take on board the changed approach of PPG3 and RPG13 which will certainly be reflected in the forthcoming structure plan review. Consequently, whilst continuing to allocate sites to enable the current structure plan requirement to be met, the plan should also set annualised development rates which have the flexibility to be reviewed in the light of emerging strategic policy.

7.9 The replacement RPG indicates that the rate of housing development in Cheshire will be around 1630 per annum (p.a.). This would represent a significant reduction from the current structure plan figure which reflects a countywide annual development rate of 2067 p.a. If the ratio of the split between the various districts of the County used in the current structure plan was maintained this would represent an annual development rate for Congleton of around 200 p.a. This compares with a notional rate of 253 p.a for the overall plan period on the basis of the current target figure of 3800.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Housing Strategy

7.10 Following the transfer of its housing stock to Dane Housing in 1998, the Borough Council's role has changed to become one of enabler rather than provider in housing matters and the Council intends to increase multi-agency working and community involvement in the Borough.

7.11 The Borough Council's current Housing Strategy covers the period 2002-2005 and establishes the Council's role in meeting housing need and ensuring satisfactory housing standards. The Housing Strategy combines information on the analysis of housing need and how the need will be met, incorporating the principles of Best Value and linking to the wider Council plans/strategies, such as environmental sustainability. The strategy outlines the Council's commitment to ensuring a healthy living environment for all its residents, which will be achieved by the provision of coordinated cost-effective services and places emphasis on a multi-agency and multi-tenure approach to meeting housing need as well as addressing the issues of improving housing and service standards.

7.12 The strategy points to a concentration of economic deprivation within the affordable rented housing stock and this is clearly an important factor to take into consideration in the development of policies which seek to counter social exclusion. It acknowledges that the housing needs of the Borough will not be met solely by the development of social housing for rent. The Council is therefore committed to pursuing a Development Programme which provides affordable housing, for rent, shared ownership and discounted 'low-cost' home ownership and which also makes effective use of Section 106 agreements and rural exceptions sites. In particular, the strategy identifies the need for more flexible affordable housing allocations, social rented properties in rural areas and shared ownership properties, and to target specific housing need and mix to specific sites.

Housing Needs and Affordable Housing

7.13 Recent government guidance on housing and planning has emphasized the requirement for local authorities to assess housing need, create complementary strategies to address it and to coordinate effort in a corporate approach to their strategic and enabling role. The Borough Council first commissioned a Housing Needs Survey in 1995; however, in order to base housing, care and planning strategies for the future on up-to-date information, a second study was commissioned and undertaken in the Autumn of 1999 to enable the Council to assess and monitor housing need; increase the provision of affordable housing through the use of planning legislation and in partnerships with other housing providers; prevent homelessness and identify solutions to the problem of homelessness; and, support and promote initiatives involving care in the community and supporting people. A new Housing Needs Assessment is to be undertaken during 2004.

7.14 The 1999 Housing Needs Study found that:

- home ownership is beyond the reach of around half of the concealed households identified in the survey without significant personal savings or assistance from parents;
- 176 households were planning to leave Congleton Borough because of the lack of affordable housing indicating that there is an 'affordability' problem in the Borough for low-income households at a time (Autumn 1999) when access to the housing market is at its most accessible level in real terms for many years;
- further house price increases above the rate of inflation would make access to market housing more difficult to achieve and would impact on households with marginal incomes most significantly.
- there is a need to provide 328 affordable housing units and around 400 unsubsidised small market housing units by 2006

‘Windfall’ Housing

7.15 Although the majority of the remaining housing requirement in the Borough will be met on sites allocated for housing in this Local Plan (see section 10), some houses will be built on sites which are not allocated, because they are too small to be identified in the Local Plan or their availability was uncertain at the time of considering potential allocations. Housing built on these sites is known as ‘windfall’. This type of development provides a useful addition to the housing stock and helps reduce pressures for greenfield sites, but they do need to be carefully controlled to ensure that the existing environment and amenities are protected and that they do not place an excessive burden on existing infrastructure.

Conversions and Sub-Divisions

7.16 There is significant potential within the towns and villages of the Borough for increasing the range of housing provision, particularly small dwelling units, through conversions and sub-division of existing buildings. This type of development enables underused and vacant property to be brought into more beneficial use, bring about their improvement and reduce the need for new dwellings on greenfield sites. However, there needs to be particularly careful control exercised over such forms of housing in order to ensure that the character of the building concerned is maintained and that the amenity of existing residents is not harmed.

HOUSING LAND REQUIREMENTS

Note: The housing land figures and requirements referred to in this Plan are based on the situation as at 30th September 2004.

7.17 The Borough’s housing provision for the period mid-1996 to mid 2011 will comprise of:

- Completions – dwellings already completed between 1st July 1996 and 30th September 2004.
- Commitments – dwellings under construction and sites with current or past planning permission with new dwellings as at 30th September 2004.
- Windfalls – new dwellings which may be built on unidentified sites.
- Allocations – new dwellings built on sites to be allocated in this Local Plan.

7.18 All of the Borough’s Structure Plan requirement for housing land has already now been met through past completions and current planning commitments. Since mid-1996, 3588 new dwellings have already been built in the Borough. In addition there are a further 1081 dwellings which are either under construction or have planning permission and are expected to be built during the plan period. Deducting 103 dwellings which have been or are anticipated to be demolished gives a total net provision of 4566 dwellings, which exceeds the Structure Plan requirement for the Borough by 766 dwellings. This figure excludes permissions which are awaiting Section 106 Agreement signing.

7.19 Table 2 sets out the dwelling supply for the Borough.

Structure Plan Requirement	Completions 1996-2004	Current Commitments	Demolitions	TOTAL SUPPLY
3800	3588	1081	-103	4566

7.20 Policy H1 also allows for the continued provision of housing at a rate not materially exceeding 200 dwellings per annum. This is effectively equivalent to 1350 dwellings over the remainder of the plan period (6.75 years at 200 per annum). It is anticipated that this could largely be met by the proposed allocations set out in section 10, which will provide an estimated 290 additional new dwellings, and the current commitments of 1081 dwellings, depending on the rate of construction of these dwellings. Any additional requirement to achieve the 200 dwellings per annum would be met through further windfall development or additional allocations identified through subsequent reviews. Table 3 sets out how the provision for the Borough will be achieved.

Completions	Current Commitments	Proposed Allocations	Demolitions	Additional Windfall	TOTAL PROVISION
3588	1081	290	-103	-----	4856

Managing The Release of Housing Land

7.21 In accordance with the guidance in PPG3 and RPG13 the Borough Council will seek to manage the release of sites for housing development in order to control the pattern and speed of housing growth, ensure that new infrastructure is co-ordinated with new housing development, and deliver the Council's targets for urban and brownfield development. This will be achieved through the setting of an annualised housing target for the Borough, which will be periodically reviewed in the light of current strategic requirements. In addition, in order to ensure a distribution of new housing development between the various sub-divisions of the Borough, in accordance with the plan strategy, a figure for the proportion of the overall provision that should not be exceeded in each sub-division in a five year period is included in policy H2.

HOUSING POLICIES

PROVISION OF NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

H1

THE CURRENT STRUCTURE PLAN REQUIREMENT OF ABOUT 3800 DWELLINGS IN THE PERIOD MID-1996 TO MID-2011 WILL BE MET THROUGH COMPLETIONS, COMMITMENTS, WINDFALL SITES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALLOCATED SITES LISTED IN DP2.

IN APPROPRIATE CASES PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE REFUSED, OR CONDITIONS WILL BE IMPOSED TO PHASE DEVELOPMENT OR PREVENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SITES BEFORE A GIVEN DATE, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE ANNUAL RATE OF CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DWELLINGS IN THE BOROUGH DOES NOT MATERIALLY EXCEED 200. THIS FIGURE SHALL BE REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF ANY SUBSEQUENT ALTERATION OF THE STRUCTURE PLAN OR REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY AND SHALL IN ANY EVENT BE REVIEWED IN MID-2006.

7.22 This policy is consistent with the Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan policy HOU1 by ensuring that sufficient provision is made in order to meet the forecasted requirement for housing for the plan period. It is anticipated that the overall residential requirement will be met by a combination of types of site including unidentified windfall sites. Table 2 indicates the level of housing requirement calculated as at 30th September 2004 whilst table 3 indicates the total housing provision in the local plan.

7.23 The policy accords with the guidance in PPG3 'Housing' which requires local authorities to manage the release of land over the plan period in order to control the pattern and speed of growth, ensure that new infrastructure is co-ordinated with new housing development and deliver the local authority recycling target. Furthermore it incorporates flexibility to respond to the strategic framework in RPG13, which requires development plans in Cheshire to make housing provision on the basis of annualised requirements.

7.24 Advice and guidance on how the annualised development rate operates is set out in the accompanying 'Housing Land Supply' Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Borough Council will also continually monitor all housing commitments and completions and publish quarterly monitoring schedules to assist in the implementation of this policy..

H2

IN MANAGING THE FUTURE SUPPLY OF DWELLINGS THE COUNCIL WILL ENSURE THAT THEY ARE DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN THE FIVE SUB-DIVISIONS OF THE BOROUGH. AVERAGED OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD THE PROPORTION IN ANY ONE SUB-DIVISION SHALL NOT MATERIALLY EXCEED THE FOLLOWING PERCENTAGES OF THE TOTAL PROVISION BOROUGHWIDE:

CONGLETON	30%
SANDBACH	25%
ALSAGER	15%
MIDDLEWICH	25%
RURAL AREAS	15%

(Note: In order to provide a degree of flexibility the figures have been rounded and do not total 100%)

7.25 *In accordance with the plan strategy it is important that new housing is distributed between the various sub-divisions of the Borough. Policy H2 seeks to ensure that over a five year period, development is not concentrated in particular areas and planning permission may be refused or conditioned to ensure that undue concentration does not occur. The percentage figures, which will be periodically reviewed, are derived having regard to natural growth requirements of the sub-divisions, location in relation to constraints and opportunities and the potential of sub-divisions to accommodate sustainable forms of development. The figures are rounded to provide a degree of flexibility.*

7.26 *Advice and guidance on how the apportionment between sub-divisions operates is set out in the accompanying 'Housing Land Supply' Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Borough Council will also continually monitor all housing commitments and completions and publish quarterly monitoring schedules to assist in the implementation of this policy.*

COMMITTED HOUSING SITES

H3

ON SITES WHICH ARE CURRENTLY COMMITTED TO RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, APPLICATIONS FOR THE RENEWAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION FOR RESIDENTIAL USE WILL BE REVIEWED CRITICALLY THOROUGHLY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE EXISTING PLANNING PERMISSION SHOULD BE RENEWED BY ASSESSING THE PROPOSAL AGAINST THE RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN, HAVING FULL REGARD TO ANY MATERIAL CHANGES IN PLANNING CIRCUMSTANCES AND AGAINST EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- I) THE AVAILABILITY OF PREVIOUSLY-DEVELOPED SITES AND EMPTY OR UNDER-USED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SUITABILITY FOR HOUSING USE;**
- II) THE LOCATION AND ACCESSABILITY OF THE SITE TO JOBS, SHOPS AND SERVICES BY MODES OTHER THAN THE CAR, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVING SUCH ACCESSIBILITY;**
- III) THE CAPACITY OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WATER AND SEWERAGE, OTHER UTILITIES AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE (SUCH AS SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS) TO ABSORB FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND THE COST OF ADDING FURTHER INFRASTRUCTURE;**

- IV) **THE ABILITY TO BUILD COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT NEW PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT DEMAND TO SUSTAIN APPROPRIATE LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES;**
- V) **THE PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND SUCH AS THE LEVEL OF CONTAMINATION, STABILITY AND FLOOD RISK TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT THIS RISK MAY INCREASE AS A RESULT OF CLIMATIC CHANGE.**

7.27 This policy is intended to maintain the supply of land for housing development, and to bring into beneficial use land which has been deemed to be appropriate for housing development where the proposed use remains appropriate to the area.

7.28 The Proposals and Inset Maps of the Local Plan identify all housing commitments of 5 or more dwellings as at September 2004.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN TOWNS

H4

PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON LAND NOT ALLOCATED FOR SUCH PURPOSES WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE OF THOSE SETTLEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN POLICY PS4 WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) **THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UTILISE A SITE WHICH IS ALLOCATED OR COMMITTED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE IN THE LOCAL PLAN;**
- II) **THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH POLICES GR2 AND GR3;**
- III) **THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES;**
- IV) **THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT GIVE RISE, INDIVIDUALLY OR CUMULATIVELY, TO HOUSING SUPPLY TOTALS SIGNIFICANTLY AT VARIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF POLICIES H1 AND H2.**

IN CONSIDERING PLANNING APPLICATIONS THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ALSO HAVE REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- A) **THE AVAILABILITY OF PREVIOUSLY-DEVELOPED SITES AND EMPTY OR UNDERUSED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SUITABILITY FOR HOUSING USE;**
- B) **THE LOCATION AND ACCESSABILITY OF THE SITE TO JOBS, SHOPS AND SERVICES BY MODES OTHER THAN THE CAR, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVING SUCH ACCESSIBILITY;**
- C) **THE CAPACITY OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WATER AND SEWERAGE, OTHER**

UTILITIES AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE (SUCH AS SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS) TO ABSORB FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND THE COST OF ADDING FURTHER INFRASTRUCTURE;

- D) THE ABILITY TO BUILD COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT NEW PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT DEMAND TO SUSTAIN APPROPRIATE LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES;**
- E) THE PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE SUCH AS THE LEVEL OF CONTAMINATION, STABILITY AND FLOOD RISK TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT THIS RISK MAY INCREASE AS A RESULT OF CLIMATIC CHANGE.**

7.29 Whilst it is expected that the bulk of new housing development will be on those sites allocated in policy DP2, additional residential development on unidentified sites also has to be allowed for. This policy accords with policies PS3 and PS4 and is aimed at ensuring that new housing is located within the Settlement Zone Line and is of a scale appropriate to the size and character of the settlement. Control over the housing supply totals is necessary in order to maintain an appropriate distribution of housing supply across the Borough.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN VILLAGES

H5

PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON LAND NOT ALLOCATED FOR SUCH PURPOSE WILL BE PERMITTED WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE OF THOSE SETTLEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN POLICY PS5 PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL IS FOR DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCAL CHARACTER IN TERMS OF ITS USE, INTENSITY, SCALE AND APPEARANCE AND THAT IT ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES, IN PARTICULAR POLICIES GR2 AND GR3.

IN CONSIDERING PLANNING APPLICATIONS THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ALSO HAVE REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- A) THE AVAILABILITY OF PREVIOUSLY-DEVELOPED SITES AND EMPTY OR UNDER-USED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SUITABILITY FOR HOUSING USE;**
- B) THE LOCATION AND ACCESSABILITY OF THE SITE TO JOBS, SHOPS AND SERVICES BY MODES OTHER THAN THE CAR, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVING SUCH ACCESSIBILITY;**
- C) THE CAPACITY OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WATER AND SEWERAGE, OTHER UTILITIES AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE (SUCH AS SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS) TO ABSORB FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND THE COST OF ADDING FURTHER INFRASTRUCTURE;**

- D) THE ABILITY TO BUILD COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT NEW PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT DEMAND TO SUSTAIN APPROPRIATE LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES;**
- E) THE PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE SUCH AS THE LEVEL OF CONTAMINATION, STABILITY AND FLOOD RISK TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT THIS RISK MAY INCREASE AS A RESULT OF CLIMATIC CHANGE.**

7.30 New residential development within existing villages is required to provide for the growth in the existing population and contribute to the maintenance of local services and community life. It is important that such development is related to the existing pattern of settlement and has proper regard to Government policies which aim to protect the countryside for its own sake. The sites allocated in Policy DP2, in addition to those sites already having planning permission, are expected to provide for the bulk of new residential development in the rural areas sub-division up to 2011. However, suitable sites may come forward which for various reasons cannot be identified at the present time. Other exceptions may also be allowed in the context of Policy H14 - Affordable Housing: Rural Exceptions Policy.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND THE GREEN BELT

H6

NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR WITHIN THE GREEN BELT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT FALLS WITHIN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- I) A DWELLING REQUIRED FOR A PERSON ENGAGED FULL-TIME IN AGRICULTURE OR FORESTRY OR, IN AREAS OUTSIDE THE GREEN BELT, OTHER RURAL ENTERPRISE APPROPRIATELY LOCATED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE THAT IS SITED WITHIN AND DESIGNED IN RELATION TO A NEARBY GROUP OF DWELLINGS OR A FARM COMPLEX;**
- II) THE REPLACEMENT OF AN EXISTING DWELLING BY A NEW DWELLING WHICH IS NOT MATERIALLY LARGER THAN THE DWELLING IT REPLACES;**
- III) THE CONVERSION OF AN EXISTING RURAL BUILDING INTO A DWELLING PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH POLICIES BH15 AND BH16;**
- IV) THE CHANGE OF USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF AN EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITE OR PREMISES IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY E10;**
- V) LIMITED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE INFILL BOUNDARY LINE OF THOSE SETTLEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN POLICY PS6 WHICH MUST BE APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCAL CHARACTER IN TERMS OF ITS USE, INTENSITY, SCALE AND APPEARANCE;**

VI) AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN ACCORDANCE WITH RURAL EXCEPTIONS POLICY H14;

AND PROVIDED THAT IT ACCORDS WITH OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES, IN PARTICULAR POLICIES GR2 AND GR3.

7.31 Whilst there is a general presumption against development in the open countryside or Green Belt, it is recognised that certain forms of residential development are appropriate in order to assist with the maintenance of the rural economy and to help to serve the continuing stewardship of land, providing they do not prejudice the architectural character of converted buildings, the existing appearance of the countryside or the openness of the Green Belt. This policy aims to ensure that only appropriate development is allowed and is in accordance with PPG2 (Green Belts) and PPG7 (The Countryside and the Rural Economy). Limited development is defined as the building of a single or small group of dwellings. In those cases where a replacement dwelling is proposed, if the existing dwelling that is to be replaced is of either architectural or historic interest then an assessment of the architectural or historic interest of the building will be required and any special features/ materials identified by that assessment retained for re-use.

RESIDENTIAL CARAVANS AND MOBILE HOMES

H7

PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN AND MOBILE HOME DEVELOPMENT WILL NEED TO SATISFY THE SAME POLICIES IN THIS LOCAL PLAN AS WOULD APPLICATIONS FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

7.32 Residential caravan and mobile home sites require all the services needed by permanent housing development. It is appropriate, therefore, that these two forms of residential development be treated on the same basis (see policies H4, H5 and H6). They will count towards the number of dwellings completed, in the context of Policies H1 and H2.

GYPSY CARAVAN SITES

H8

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR PROPOSALS FOR TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT GYPSY CARAVAN SITES WILL BE GRANTED PROVIDED THEY COMPLY WITH ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- I) AVOIDS UNACCEPTABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE AMENITY OF NEARBY RESIDENTS;**
- II) COMPRISES A SITE WHICH IS NOT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, AREA OF SPECIAL COUNTY VALUE FOR LANDSCAPE OR AFFECTS SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST;**

- III) **IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE WHICH WOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE VALUE OF THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE;**
- IV) **IS ADEQUATELY SCREENED AND LANDSCAPED;**
- V) **PROVIDES SATISFACTORY ONSITE PARKING AND ACCESS FROM A PUBLIC HIGHWAY;**
- VI) **PROVIDES ADEQUATE ON-SITE FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO SERVE ALL CARAVANS;**
- VII) **DOES NOT PREJUDICE OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES.**
- VIII) **DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH UTILITY COMPANY OR AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS;**
- IX) **AVOIDS WHEREVER POSSIBLE ENCROACHMENT ON THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE;**
- X) **IS, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, WITHIN 1.6 KM (1 MILE) OF EXISTING LOCAL SHOPS, COMMUNITY FACILITIES, PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES.**

7.33 Central Government advice in Circular 1/94 requires that Local Plans provide guidance to show how Local Authorities have taken account of their duty, under the Caravan Sites Act 1968, to make adequate provision for gypsies residing in or resorting to their areas. There are at present several such sites already within the Borough and, therefore, it will need to be demonstrated that there is a justifiable need for further provision. Because of the potential impact of such sites on the amenities of residents and the appearance of the countryside, such sites will need to be especially well located and screened.

7.34 With the repeal of Part II of the Caravan Sites Act 1968, the duty of Local Authorities to provide gypsy caravan sites ceased to exist, although Councils who no longer provide sites directly must ensure that adequate provision exists through the planning system.

ADDITIONAL DWELLINGS AND SUB-DIVISIONS

H9

AN APPLICATION FOR THE EXTENSION OF AN EXISTING DWELLING TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL HABITABLE UNIT OR FOR THE ERECTION OF A NEW DWELLING OR DWELLINGS ON THE SITE OF A FORMER DWELLING WILL BE TREATED IN THE SAME MANNER AS WOULD AN APPLICATION FOR A NEW DWELLING.

7.35 Changes to the existing housing stock may, from time to time, result from the replacement of former dwellings which have been demolished or the creation of additional housing units onto existing dwellings. Such forms of development need to be considered in the same manner as a new dwelling because they can have a similar impact on

the environment and require similar services and infrastructure (see policies H4, H5 and H6). They will count towards the number of dwellings completed, in the context of Policies H1 and H2.

H10

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE SUB-DIVISION OF EXISTING DWELLINGS INTO SELF-CONTAINED RESIDENTIAL UNITS PROVIDED THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- I) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT RESULT IN THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE ORIGINAL DWELLING BEING SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED;**
- II) THE DWELLING IS LARGE ENOUGH TO BE SUB-DIVIDED WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL EXTENSIONS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THE IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL DWELLING;**
- III) COMPLIANCE WITH POLICIES GR2 AND GR3.**

7.36 The creation of additional self-contained housing units by the sub-division of existing dwellings is often an effective way of providing low-cost housing accommodation, particularly for single persons and couples, and may also help secure the improvement of older houses. This policy seeks to ensure, however, that such forms of development are provided in a manner which will help protect the environment. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note provides detailed advice on matters such as access, parking arrangements, open space requirements. Normally the Borough Council would wish to ensure that more modest sized houses, especially terraced houses, which are capable of providing single family occupation, are generally retained as such.

NON-RESIDENTIAL USES WITHIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

H11

PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OR CONVERSION OF EXISTING DWELLINGS TO OTHER USES, OR FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF USES OTHER THAN HOUSING INTO PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL AREAS, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED EXCEPT WHERE THE PROPOSAL:-

- I) WOULD NOT DETRACT MATERIALLY FROM THE AMENITIES ENJOYED BY THE OCCUPIERS OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES IN THE AREA;**
- II) WOULD NOT IMPAIR THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF THE AREA;**
- III) WOULD NOT GIVE RISE TO A TRAFFIC HAZARD OR NUISANCE.**

7.37 This policy seeks to ensure that predominantly residential areas are retained as such and that other types of uses are not introduced which could create problems for existing residents. However, it is recognised that some nonresidential uses may be

appropriate, particularly where they provide a service to residents (e.g. shops, nurseries) or to tourists (e.g. serviced accommodation), providing they are suitably located.

TANDEM/BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

H12

PROPOSALS FOR TANDEM OR BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REFUSED WHERE:

- I) A SATISFACTORY MEANS OF ACCESS CANNOT BE OBTAINED TO AN EXISTING PUBLIC HIGHWAY.**
- II) THE PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE UNACCEPTABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE AMENITY OF THE RESIDENTS OF EXISTING OR PROPOSED PROPERTIES.**
- III) THE PROPOSAL WOULD RESULT IN OVER INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA.**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL CONFLICTS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE PLAN, PARTICULARLY GR2 AND GR3**

7.38 This policy is necessary to avoid the undesirable cramming of new dwellings onto sites already occupied by existing buildings. Only where the site is large enough to accommodate additional dwellings without adversely affecting the amenities enjoyed by existing properties, and where a separate means of access can be provided, would such a form of development be appropriate.

AFFORDABLE AND LOW-COST HOUSING

H13

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL NEGOTIATE THE PROVISION OF AN APPROPRIATE ELEMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON ALLOCATED HOUSING SITES, AND ON UNIDENTIFIED HOUSING SITES OF 1 HECTARE OR MORE OR COMPRISING OF 25 OR MORE DWELLING UNITS. THE THRESHOLD FIGURE FOR SITES IN SETTLEMENTS OF LESS THAN 3000 POPULATION IN THE RURAL SUB-DIVISION WILL BE REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF ANY REVIEW OF THE HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS DEFINED AS COMPRISING OF BOTH LOW-COST MARKET HOUSING AND SUBSIDISED HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE UNABLE TO RESOLVE THEIR HOUSING NEEDS IN THE LOCAL PRIVATE SECTOR MARKET BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSING COSTS AND INCOMES.

THE SCALE AND NATURE OF PROVISION WILL BE DETERMINED BY LOCAL NEED, SITE CHARACTERISTICS, GENERAL LOCATION, SITE SUITABILITY, ECONOMICS

OF PROVISION, PROXIMITY TO LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES AND OTHER PLANNING OBJECTIVES.**WHERE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS PROVIDED BY WAY OF SUBSIDISED HOUSING THIS MUST BE SUBJECT TO A SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT TO ENSURE THAT THE BENEFIT OF BELOW MARKET PRICE HOUSING IS AVAILABLE IN PERPETUITY TO FUTURE OCCUPANTS.**

7.39 PPG3 states that affordable housing is a material consideration when granting permission for housing sites. It also says that where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs – as assessed by up-to-date surveys and other information – local plans should include a policy for seeking affordable housing in suitable housing developments. The PPG and subsequent case law have confirmed that Local Planning Authorities are entitled, where housing need has been demonstrated, to seek affordable housing. If developers refuse to negotiate on this subject, that is a material consideration in assessing their planning application.

7.40 Circular 6/98 emphasises the need for local authorities to provide a local definition of 'affordable housing' and to identify the level of that need and measures through the planning process to achieve it. In 1999 the Borough Council commissioned consultants to undertake a Housing Needs Survey of the Borough to define affordable housing and determine the level of need. The definition of Affordable Housing as set out in the Policy is taken from the Housing Needs Survey. The formula used to derive the upper ceiling for what should be regarded as affordable housing is 3 x current average household income for first-time buyers + available capital (derived from Congleton Housing Needs Survey – 1999).

7.41 The Housing Needs Survey established that there is a need for new dwellings for those who cannot afford market solutions to their housing problems. In the light of these findings, the provision of affordable units for all sites allocated for housing development in the Local Plan and for all unidentified housing sites above the threshold of 25 units or 1 hectare, as set out in Circular 6/98, will be sought. Each site will be assessed individually as to the level and type of affordable housing considered appropriate taking into account existing supply, survey demand and other planning sustainability and economic factors.

7.42 The Housing Needs Survey estimates that 328 subsidised housing units and 400 unsubsidised low-cost housing units will be required between 1999 and 2006. These will be provided in the main from the allocations in section 10, the remainder being met through development on unidentified sites. Indicative targets for the proportion of subsidised and low-cost market affordable housing to be provided on allocated sites are given in the site details schedule in section 10. The targets, which will provide the basis for negotiation with developers, will be reviewed in the light of annual monitoring of the need for affordable housing. The Borough Council will monitor the level of affordable housing provision through the Housing Land Availability Schedules.

7.43 The Borough Council has adopted a Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (SPGN) on affordable housing which is a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications. This provides guidance on the definition of subsidised and low-cost market housing, threshold levels, development considerations and means of securing their provision. The SPGN will be reviewed as necessary in the light of any review of housing needs assessment

H14

THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL ENCOURAGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING BY GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL PARISHES OF THE BOROUGH WHICH CAN BE DEMONSTRATED TO MEET AN IDENTIFIED LOCAL HOUSING NEED THAT CANNOT BE ACCOMMODATED IN ANY OTHER WAY.

SUCH A DEVELOPMENT MUST SATISFY ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- I) COMPRISE A SITE CLOSE TO EXISTING OR PROPOSED SERVICES AND FACILITIES;**
- II) WHERE IT IS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT IT SHOULD NOT COMPROMISE THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT OR ITS STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS;**
- III) COMPRISE OF A SMALL SCHEME, THE SCALE, LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF WHICH IS APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCALITY;**
- IV) CONSIST IN ITS ENTIRETY OF HOUSING THAT WILL BE RETAINED AS LOW COST HOUSING IN PERPETUITY AND WHICH IS FOR RENT, SHARED EQUITY OR, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITY OR A HOUSING ASSOCIATION. THOSE PROPOSALS WHICH OFFER ONLY A DISCOUNTED INITIAL PURCHASE PRICE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE;**
- V) BE SUPPORTED BY A SURVEY WHICH IDENTIFIES A LEVEL OF HOUSING NEED WITHIN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE COMMENSURATE WITH THE PROPOSED SCHEME. SUCH A SURVEY WOULD BE CARRIED OUT EITHER BY, OR IN ASSOCIATION WITH, THE PARISH COUNCIL;**
- VI) BE SUBJECT TO A PRIOR LEGAL AGREEMENT WHICH ENSURES THAT:
 - A) INITIAL AND SUBSEQUENT OCCUPANCY IS LIMITED TO MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WHO ARE IN HOUSING NEED;**
 - B) OCCUPANTS ARE PREVENTED FROM SUBSEQUENTLY DISPOSING OF THE PROPERTY ON THE OPEN MARKET;**
 - C) A SATISFACTORY MECHANISM IS ESTABLISHED FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHEME;****
- VII) BE IN ALL OTHER RESPECTS IN CONFORMITY WITH NORMAL PLANNING STANDARDS AND OTHER TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS;**
- VIII) BE IN CONFORMITY WITH ALL THE POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN THAT RELATE TO THE SITE SUBJECT OF THE PROPOSAL.**

7.44 Low cost housing for local needs may be defined as that which meets the needs of those people who cannot afford to buy property at the "open market rate". It therefore includes low cost home ownership, shared ownership (i.e. a combination of

renting and owning) and housing for rent. Local market conditions and wage rates will need to be taken into account in assessing the extent to which local people can afford accommodation in their area, and what level of payment for housing would be within their means - there can clearly be no single measure of what constitutes low cost housing.

7.45 *Whilst the 1999 Housing Needs Survey provides a basis for assessing Borough-wide housing needs, it is important to assess local feelings and opinion and that is best done through the agency of the Parish Council concerned.*

7.46 *In assessing the need for low cost housing the following are certain categories of need which may be identified:*

- i) existing residents needing separate accommodation (newly married couples, people leaving tied accommodation on retirement etc.);*
- ii) people whose work provides important services and also need or wish to live closer to the local community;*
- iii) people who are not necessarily resident locally but have long-standing links with the local community (e.g. elderly people wishing to move back to a village to be near relatives);*
- iv) people with the offer of a job in the locality, who cannot take up the offer because of a lack of affordable housing.*

7.47 *The release of such sites will be an exception to normal planning policy and therefore the location, scale and design of any proposed scheme will be critical in determining whether it is acceptable.*

7.48 *Arrangements for securing the necessary control over lowcost housing schemes will usually be through legal agreements under the Town and Country Planning Acts. Such agreements must however be voluntary agreements between the Local Planning Authority, the landowner, developer, and the management organisation involved, such as a Registered Social Landlord.*

7.49 *Any new dwellings allowed by virtue of this policy will be excluded from the housing land supply calculations in relation to Policies H1 and H2, but will count towards the affordable housing target for the Borough.*

EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS AND THEIR CURTILAGES

Extensions to Dwellings in Towns and Villages

H15

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING DWELLINGS IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES WILL BE GRANTED WHERE THE PROPOSAL IS IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE PROPERTY AND THE AREA GENERALLY IN TERMS OF SITING, SIZE, DESIGN AND MATERIALS USED.

7.50 *A substantial proportion of planning applications submitted to the Borough Council relate to proposed extensions to houses in towns and villages. Such developments, whilst small in scale, can have major impact on the street scene and affect the privacy and*

amenities of adjoining householders. This policy allows for such forms of development providing they are appropriately designed and have regard to neighbouring properties. The Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes provide detailed guidance on the standards which are required to be met.

7.51 *In the case of two storey extensions a pitched roof is desirable in order to improve the appearance of the extension and will normally be required where it is clearly visible from the public highway or other public areas.*

Extensions to Dwellings in The Open Countryside and Green Belt

H16

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING DWELLINGS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR THE GREEN BELT WILL BE GRANTED PROVIDING:

- I) THE PROPOSED EXTENSION IS WELL DESIGNED HAVING DUE REGARD TO THE SCALE, STYLE, APPEARANCE AND MATERIALS OF THE EXISTING DWELLING; AND**
- II) THE PROPOSED EXTENSION IS NOT DISPROPORTIONATE TO THE ORIGINAL DWELLING AND WOULD NOT RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT DETRIMENTAL EFFECT UPON THE CHARACTER OR THE IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL DWELLING; OR**
- III) THE EXTENSION IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY STANDARD OF FACILITIES IN A VERY SMALL EXISTING DWELLING AND THE RESULTANT DWELLING WOULD STILL BE IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF ADJOINING PROPERTIES AND THE WIDER AREA.**

7.52 *Large or unsympathetic extensions to existing dwellings can be obtrusive in the countryside and can undermine policies for the protection of the countryside and the Green Belt by adding to the scale and bulk of built development. A large extension may, if approved, lead to a loss of identity of the original dwelling and could be tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling in the countryside which would not normally be permitted. In the context of this policy a "modest" extension would normally comprise in the region of a 30% increase in the volume of the original dwelling. This, however, is not a rigid standard and in the consideration of such proposals the relationship between the proposed extension and the existing dwelling will also be of importance.*

Extension of Residential Curtilages into the Open Countryside or Green Belt

H17

PROPOSALS FOR THE EXTENSION OF RESIDENTIAL CURTILAGES INTO THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR GREEN BELT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS THE LAND IS REQUIRED TO ENABLE A MINIMUM STANDARD OF RESIDENTIAL AMENITY TO BE ACHIEVED AND IT WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT AREAS OF

NATURE CONSERVATION OR LANDSCAPE INTEREST AND AREAS OF HISTORIC INTEREST.

IN THOSE CASES WHERE THE LAND REQUIRED IS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, THOSE PROPOSALS SHOULD NOT COMPROMISE THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT, THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING THE LAND WITHIN THE GREEN BELT OR ITS STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS.

7.53 This policy seeks to avoid incremental encroachment of residential areas into the open countryside and green belt arising from the change of use of agricultural or other undeveloped land to domestic gardens which may threaten the openness and rural character of such areas. Only in exceptional circumstances where additional land is needed to secure an acceptable standard of residential garden space in accordance with the Council's adopted standards may permission be granted subject to there being no harm to nature conservation and landscape interests as a result.

DWELLINGS ASSOCIATED WITH RURAL ENTERPRISES

H18

PROPOSALS FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW DWELLINGS FOR AGRICULTURAL, FORESTRY, OTHER RURAL ENTERPRISE WORKERS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE:

- I) THE DWELLING IS REQUIRED TO SATISFY A PROVEN NEED IN TERMS OF THE EFFICIENT RUNNING OF THE ENTERPRISE, SECURITY AND LONG TERM VIABILITY;**
- II) NO OTHER DWELLINGS, OR BUILDINGS CAPABLE OF CONVERSION, ARE AVAILABLE WHICH COULD SATISFACTORILY ACCOMMODATE THE NEED;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL IS SATISFACTORILY SITED ON, OR IN RELATION TO, THE ENTERPRISE AND WHEREVER POSSIBLE AND PRACTICAL SHOULD BE SITED WITHIN A SETTLEMENT OR EXISTING GROUP OF BUILDINGS.**

WHERE THE CASE FOR A PERMANENT DWELLING IS NOT CONCLUSIVELY PROVEN, THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY MAY BE PREPARED TO GRANT PLANNING CONSENT FOR A TEMPORARY DWELLING FOR A FIXED PERIOD WHILST THE CASE FOR A PERMANENT DWELLING AND THE OPERATION OF THE ENTERPRISE IS ASSESSED.

WITHIN THE GREEN BELT THE POLICY IS ONLY APPLICABLE IN SO FAR AS IT RELATES TO THE ERECTION OF NEW DWELLINGS FOR AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY WORKERS

7.54 This policy reflects Policy HOU5 of Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan and is intended to prevent isolated development in the countryside while catering for the genuine needs of rural enterprise. In all cases, the Local Authority will need to be satisfied that there is a long term need for the dwellings in the interests of agriculture, forestry, or other rural enterprise. All permission granted will be subject to a condition limiting occupancy to

a bona-fide agricultural or forestry worker. The applicant may also be required to enter into a legal agreement with the Borough Council to ensure that the dwelling is not disposed of separately from the enterprise concerned.

AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS

H19

THE REMOVAL OF AN AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY CONDITION WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IN EXCEPTIONAL CASES WHERE THERE IS NO LONG TERM NEED FOR THE DWELLING TO ACCOMMODATE AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ON THAT FARM OR IN THE LOCALITY AND APPROPRIATE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO DISPOSE OF THE PROPERTY WITHIN THE AGRICULTURAL HOUSING MARKET AT A PRICE OR RENTAL WHICH REFLECTS THE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY THE CONDITION.

7.55 The reasoning behind this policy is to outline those criteria which will influence the determination of any application submitted seeking consent for the removal of an agricultural occupancy condition. Whilst it is clear that such conditions will only be removed in exceptional circumstances, it is however recognised that instances may arise when the restriction imposed by such a condition is no longer appropriate and that its removal may therefore be justified. The Council would consider all other options for retaining the dwelling for an agricultural worker or for a worker employed in another rural enterprise before agreeing to the complete removal of a condition.

8. TOWN CENTRES AND SHOPPING

INTRODUCTION

8.1 The town centres of Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich and Sandbach, plus Holmes Chapel Village Centre, form the focal points for shopping and commercial activities within the Borough. Whilst this role has continued to be maintained, surveys have revealed that, in recent years, these town centres have come under considerable pressure because of changes in economic and retail trends, including the growth and popularity of out-of-centre retail parks and factory outlets.

8.2 An important aim of this Local Plan, therefore, is to continue to protect and improve the viability and attractiveness of the Borough's town centres to ensure that they can maintain their role in the future.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

8.3 National Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 'Town Centres and Retail Development' (PPG 6) defines the Government's objectives in respect of this particular subject, and puts forward a means of achieving those objectives.

8.4 The Government's objectives are:

- to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres;
- to focus retail development in locations where the proximity of businesses facilitates competition, to the benefit of all consumers, and maximises the opportunity to use means of transport other than the car;
- to maintain an efficient, competitive and innovative retail sector, and;
- to ensure the availability of a wide range of shops, services and facilities to which people have easy access by a choice of means of transport.

8.5 PPG 6 advises, firstly, that these objectives should be met through 'the plan-led approach'. Local Plans should consider existing retail provision and identify sites for new development. It further advises that Local Planning Authorities should, after considering the need for new retail development, adopt a sequential approach to the selection of appropriate sites. This means that first preference should be given to town centre sites, followed by edge-of-centre sites, district and local centres, and only if these are not available should consideration be given to out-of-centre sites which are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

8.6 The Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan identifies a hierarchy of centres within the County, and states that the scale, nature and location of new retail developments should reflect this hierarchy (Policy TCR1).

8.7 The hierarchy identifies Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich and Sandbach (plus seven other towns in the County) as Secondary Town Centres where retail development should be to serve the needs of the town and its catchment, and be of a size and scale appropriate to the character and function of the centre (Policy TCR6). The Replacement Structure Plan, stresses the need to protect and enhance the viability and attractiveness of existing town centres, and to reduce the reliance on the car as a means of transport.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Congleton Borough Retail Study

8.8 A Retail Study of the Borough was commissioned by the Council and was completed in June 1999. It assesses the current performance of the five main shopping centres of the Borough, and provides base data which has assisted in the formulation of the policies concerning Town Centres and Shopping comprised within this First Review of the Congleton Borough Local Plan (details of retail floorspace data are set out in the Appendix).

8.9 The study concluded that the five main shopping areas of the Borough are unable to retain high levels of expenditure as a consequence of many local residents choosing to shop in larger centres such as Stoke, Crewe and Macclesfield. In respect of food shopping it is estimated that some 47% of expenditure generated by residents of the Borough is leaked to surrounding areas, with only Congleton and Sandbach attracting a majority of local main food shopping trips owing to the presence of the large Safeway stores. The leakage in general non-food retailing is estimated to be some 90% of locally generated expenditure; and the survey also concluded that the lack of specialist retail warehousing in the Borough indicates that up to 91% of 'bulky goods' expenditure leaks outside the Borough at present.

Table 4 Retail Capacity Estimates

	Convenience Non-Food SQ.M.(Net)	Retailing Retailing SQ.M.(Net)
Congleton	1,800-2,600	2,550-4,450*
Sandbach	760-1,330	1,500-2,300
Middlewich	130-820	990
Alsager	1,100-1,180	1040
Holmes Chapel	None	500

*There is in addition considered to be capacity in Congleton for a new retail park of around 6,200 sq.m net, for bulky goods retailing, to serve the Borough as a whole

8.10 The study examined future capacity for retail development within the five main shopping centres of the Borough up to the year 2011, assuming that each centre would either retain their existing market share of expenditure (ie not lose trade) or be able to

“clawback” an element of expenditure currently lost to the centre. Table 4 summarises estimates of future capacity within each of the centres.

Economic Development Strategy

8.11 The promotion and regeneration of town centres is a key element of the Borough of Congleton Economic Development Strategy – 2000 and Beyond. This was developed by South East Cheshire Enterprise, which was jointly formed by the Borough Council, Congleton Borough Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise and Cheshire County Council.

8.12 The Strategy contains positive objectives aimed at revitalising the Borough’s towns as centres of business and social activity through the following measures:

- Targeting inward investment
- raising the profile of the Borough and its assets as a business environment
- supporting the revitalisation of the 5 town centres through town centre projects
- supporting the Heritage Economic Regeneration schemes in Middlewich and Sandbach
- Enhancing the marketing and promotion of the town centres

Community Safety Strategy

8.13 The Local Plan Review also takes into account the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which introduced a statutory duty on a number of statutory authorities to work together to implement a three year Community Safety Strategy for reducing crime and disorder. The Council's current strategy for this Borough covers the years 1999-2002. Local Plan policies should therefore seek to ensure that the design of new development and environmental works is carried out in such a way as to discourage crime in town centres.

Improving the Attractiveness of the Town Centres

8.14 One of the central objectives of the Local Plan is to improve the attractiveness of the Borough’s Town Centres. In order to achieve this objective it is necessary, in addition to the allocation of limited amounts of land for further development, to introduce measures which will help make town centres more attractive to their users.

8.15 Traffic congestion and a shortage of parking spaces may deter many people from visiting a town centre and measures are therefore needed to alleviate such problems and to make the environment more attractive to pedestrians by minimising conflict with vehicles. Environmental improvement may also be brought about within the town centres by the implementation of schemes to preserve and enhance the historic and visual quality of the town centre and by ensuring that new development is carried out in a sympathetic manner, particularly in the architecturally and historically important parts of the towns.

8.16 Shop fronts and advertisements also contribute greatly to the overall character and appearance of any town centre and poor design and unsympathetic alterations on even a small number of units can easily debase the overall visual quality of the town centre. To preserve and improve the quality of the street scene, particularly within the Borough’s conservation areas, it is necessary to ensure that any proposals affecting shop fronts take into account the character and appearance of the building and general street scene, and

that the use of unsympathetic and garish advertising material does not detract from the appearance of the area.

8.17 The influx of non-retail uses into the town centres is also an important issue although it is recognised that certain types of non-retail uses such as banks, building societies and food and drink businesses are now part of the established shopping scene. The Local Plan seeks to ensure that they should not be totally excluded from the principal shopping streets but that there should be sufficient flexibility to enable a reasonable and attractive balance of uses to be maintained. As part of the review of the Local Plan all Central Area and Principal Shopping Area boundaries have consequently been reviewed and, where appropriate, amended to consolidate them and reflect current circumstances.

8.18 The vitality of town centres can also be achieved by maintaining residential uses. The upper floors of commercial premises within the town centres are often vacant or under-utilised contributing little to the overall appearance or vitality of the town centres. Given the current demand for smaller, cheaper units of accommodation the Local Plan encourages the conversion of upper floors to self-contained flats in appropriate circumstances. Such a use could not only improve the appearance of the street scene, but also generate activity within the town centres outside of normal shopping hours which in turn creates a safer environment with more frequent surveillance by passers-by, and offering less opportunity for violence and crime.

8.19 The use of upper floors for office development is also considered to be acceptable particularly within the principal shopping areas where such uses are not acceptable at ground floor level.

Local Facilities

8.20 Elsewhere in the Borough, the Local Plan seeks to provide for a range of local shopping facilities to serve the day to day needs of residents, and to ensure that existing levels of services and facilities are maintained and where possible improved to meet the requirements of the plan area, particularly in those areas where there is currently considered to be a shortage of such facilities.

TOWN CENTRES AND SHOPPING POLICIES

SHOPPING HIERARCHY

S1

PROPOSALS FOR SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE SCALE, NATURE AND LOCATION REFLECTS THE FOLLOWING HIERARCHY OF SETTLEMENTS AND AREAS AS SPECIFIED IN THE SUBSEQUENT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN:

- **TOWNS (POLICIES S2 TO S6)**

- **VILLAGES (POLICIES S7 & S8)**
- **OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND GREEN BELT (POLICY S9)**

8.21 *The above hierarchy and policies S2 to S9 identify the scale, nature and location of shopping considered appropriate to each area and is in accordance with the Structure Plan Policy TCR1 and the plan strategy of the Local Plan as established in Policy PS3 which seek to maintain the function of the Borough's towns as the main shopping and commercial centres of the Borough, but also recognising that facilities intended to serve the needs of local communities and specialist needs may also be appropriate elsewhere.*

SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE TOWN CENTRES

S2

ANY NEW SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTRES OF CONGLETON, SANDBACH, ALSAGER AND MIDDLEWICH, OTHER THAN SITES ALLOCATED FOR RETAIL USE AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT IS FOR;

- I) NEW SHOPPING OR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE OF A TOWN, OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE INTENDED TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF A LOCALLY RESIDENT COMMUNITY OR;**
- II) NEW SHOPPING OR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS PERMITTED UNDER POLICIES S7, S8 & S9 OR;**
- III) THE REDEVELOPMENT OR MODEST EXTENSION OF AN EXISTING SHOPPING OR COMMERCIAL FACILITY.**

IN ADDITION, ANY SIGNIFICANT SHOPPING OR COMMERCIAL PROPOSAL WILL NEED TO MEET ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA;

- A) THERE IS A PROVEN NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- B) NO TOWN CENTRE SITE OR OTHER SITE ALLOCATED FOR RETAIL USE IN POLICY DP4 IS AVAILABLE AND SUITABLE. IN SUCH INSTANCES PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO EDGE OF CENTRE SITES, FOLLOWED BY EXISTING DISTRICT CENTRES, AND FINALLY OUT OF CENTRE SITES IN LOCATIONS THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE BY A CHOICE OF MEANS OF TRANSPORT;**
- C) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT UNDERMINE, EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR CUMULATIVELY THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF ANY EXISTING CENTRE;**
- D) IT WOULD NOT BE SIGNIFICANTLY DETRIMENTAL TO THE AMENITY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS OR TO THE OVERALL CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE SETTLEMENT;**

- E) IT SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE BY A CHOICE OF MEANS OF TRANSPORT INCLUDING FOOT, CYCLE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT FROM ITS CATCHMENT AREA OR INCLUDE MEASURES TO MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE IN THIS WAY;**
- F) IT WOULD NOT GIVE RISE TO UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC EITHER IN RELATION TO LOCAL FLOWS OR TO OVERALL DISTANCE TRAVELLED;**
- G) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

8.22 The Borough Council will strongly resist any proposals to provide new or extended shopping and commercial facilities outside the Town Centres which would, in the opinion of the Borough Council, either individually or collectively, be of sufficient magnitude to attract shoppers and trade away from the Town Centres and therefore prejudice their separate or combined long term viability. Such proposals will only be considered where there is a demonstrable quantitative and qualitative need for such a development and will be determined in accordance with the sequential approach advocated in PPG6 and the detailed criteria listed in the above policy. Individual shops and neighbourhood centres which serve the needs of the local community are, however, considered to be valuable to supporting communities and help promote sustainability. Proposals for such facilities will be supported where they are not of detriment to the amenity of nearby residents or to the viability of the Borough's Town Centres. 'Significant' shopping and commercial proposals are considered to be those in excess of 500 square metres net floorspace.

SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN TOWN CENTRES

S3

WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRES OF CONGLETON, SANDBACH, MIDDLEWICH AND ALSAGER AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, PROPOSALS FOR NEW SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING RETAIL ACTIVITIES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY ACCORD WITH THE OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN AND IN PARTICULAR POLICIES S4 AND S5.

8.23 The Borough Council wishes to maintain the viability of the Borough's town centres as the main shopping centres of the Borough, and to increase and strengthen the range of shopping facilities to an appropriate level within the town centres. Proposals for new shopping and commercial development and extensions to existing retail activities within town centres will therefore be permitted where in accordance with the appropriate policies of the local plan.

Principal Shopping Areas

S4

WITHIN THE PRINCIPAL SHOPPING AREAS AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER NON-RETAIL USES AT GROUND FLOOR WILL NOT BE PERMITTED (OTHER THAN PROPOSALS INVOLVING THE CHANGE OF USE OF A1 PREMISES TO A2 OR A3 USES).

PROPOSALS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING A1 GROUND FLOOR RETAIL USES TO A2 OR A3 USES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSED USE IS COMPLIMENTARY TO ADJACENT SHOPPING USES IN TERMS OF ITS OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS;**
- II) THE PROPOSED USE RETAINS A DISPLAY FRONTAGE APPROPRIATE TO A SHOPPING AREA;**
- III) THE PROPOSED USE DOES NOT LEAD TO A CONCENTRATION OF NON A1 USES;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

8.24 *The Principal Shopping Area as defined on the Town Centre Inset Maps, represent those areas which contain the town's main convenience and durable shopping outlets. The Borough Council wishes to improve shopping facilities generally within Town Centres, but especially within the Principal Shopping Areas which contain the greatest concentration of A1 retail uses. Priority is, therefore, given to maintaining and protecting these areas from inappropriate non-retail development.*

8.25 *Whilst some non A1 uses may be appropriate within such areas, it is important that these central shopping areas do not become dominated by groups of non retail uses which may lead to a loss of pedestrian flow and reduce the dominant shopping characteristics and vitality of the town centres. In this regard, the Borough Council considers that a row of more than two non A1 retail uses would represent an inappropriate concentration of such uses within the Principal Shopping Areas.*

Other Town Centre Areas

S5

WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE NOT OTHERWISE DEFINED AS A PRINCIPAL SHOPPING AREA, PROPOSALS FOR NON-RETAIL USES AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE PROPOSED USE IS A COMMERCIAL, LEISURE, ENTERTAINMENT, COMMUNITY OR CIVIC USE APPROPRIATE TO THE TOWN CENTRE, OR FOR RESIDENTIAL USE ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE TOWN CENTRE, WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) **THE PROPOSED USE DOES NOT ON ITS OWN OR IN COMBINATION WITH OTHER EXISTING NON-RETAIL USES DETRACT FROM THE OVERALL TOWN CENTRE FUNCTION OF THE AREA;**
- II) **THERE IS NO DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE AMENITIES OF ANY FUTURE OCCUPIER FROM EXISTING ADJACENT USES;**
- III) **THE PROPOSAL HAS NO DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE AMENITIES OF ADJACENT PROPERTIES;**
- IV) **THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

8.26 *These areas provide a suitable location for a number of appropriate town centre activities, but which may be unacceptable in the Principal Shopping Areas. In the case of residential uses, these may also be appropriate within the town centre providing they are situated on the fringes rather than near to the Principal Shopping Areas. In addition policy S5 allows for non-retail and residential uses above the ground floor level in all parts of the town centres.*

The Use of Upper Floors Within Town Centres

S6

PROPOSALS FOR THE USE OF UPPER FLOORS WITHIN TOWN CENTRES FOR NON-RETAIL USE, INCLUDING B1 OFFICE USE OR CONVERSION INTO SELF-CONTAINED FLATS, WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE PROPOSAL MEETS THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

- I) **A REASONABLE STANDARD OF ACCOMMODATION IS CAPABLE OF BEING PROVIDED;**
- II) **NO DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE AMENITIES OF ANY FUTURE OCCUPIER, FROM EXISTING ADJACENT USES;**
- III) **NO DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE AMENITIES OF OTHER OCCUPIERS OF THE PROPERTY OR ADJACENT PROPERTIES;**
- IV) **SEPARATE ACCESS TO THE ACCOMMODATION IS PROVIDED;**
- V) **NO DETRIMENTAL ALTERATIONS ARE REQUIRED ON PRINCIPAL FACADES;**
- VI) **AVAILABILITY OF CAR PARKING IN THE VICINITY;**
- VII) **ACCORDANCE WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

8.27 *The upper floors of premises within town centres are often vacant or under-utilised and it is considered that their re-use would improve the appearance and vitality of the Town Centre. The Borough Council will therefore support, where appropriate, the conversion of such premises into self-contained flats or appropriate commercial uses where*

the proposal would be able to provide a reasonable standard of accommodation with satisfactory access, and adequate parking provision. It is also important to ensure that no significant alterations are required to the front of the premises which would be of detriment to the appearance and character of the building, particularly where the proposed development is within a conservation area or affects a building of special architectural or historic interest.

SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN VILLAGES

S7

WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT ZONE LINE OF THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICY PS5, PROPOSALS FOR SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE PROPOSAL IS CLEARLY INTENDED TO SERVE PRINCIPALLY THE NEEDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS, SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSAL ACCORDING WITH POLICY S2 AND OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

8.28 *This policy supports the development of small scale, local shopping facilities within existing villages to meet the needs of local residents where they will not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of local residents or the character and appearance of the area.*

Holmes Chapel

S8

WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE HOLMES CHAPEL VILLAGE CENTRE, AS DEFINED ON THE VILLAGE CENTRE INSET MAP, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN USE CLASSES A1, A2 AND A3, PROVIDED THAT THE LAND AND BUILDINGS IN QUESTION ARE SUITABLE IN ALL RESPECTS FOR THE INTENDED USE OR USES. PLANNING PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE GRANTED FOR USE CLASS B1 OFFICE DEVELOPMENT ABOVE GROUND FLOOR LEVEL.

8.29 *The village of Holmes Chapel is distinct in that it is not only the largest rural settlement within the Borough, but also contains a clearly defined village centre which provides a range of shops and services, serving both the residents of the village and of the surrounding settlements.*

8.30 *In recognition of the Holmes Chapel Village Centre's importance in providing retail and associated services to the village and surrounding settlements, the policy seeks to define those uses which will generally be allowed. Priority is given to maintaining shopping frontages within the village centre, with the exception of Use Class A2 and A3 uses which usually require ground floor locations. Within the Village Centre general office uses are considered better suited to upper floors which might otherwise remain vacant. A definition of the various use classes is contained in the Appendix.*

SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND GREEN BELT

S9

WITHIN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND GREEN BELT, PROPOSALS FOR SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE PROPOSAL IS FOR:

- A) FARM SHOPS WHICH ASSIST WITH THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE RURAL ECONOMY PROVIDED THAT THE GOODS SOLD ARE PREDOMINANTLY PRODUCED LOCALLY AND THE RETAILING USE IS ANCILLARY TO THE MAIN AGRICULTURAL USE OF THE FARM; OR**
- B) NEW SHOPPING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE INFILL BOUNDARY LINE OF THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICY PS6, INTENDED TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS**

SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSAL ACCORDING WITH POLICY S2 AND OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

8.31 *This policy supports the development of small scale local shopping facilities within existing settlements where intended to meet the needs of the local community, where they will not have a detrimental impact upon the amenity of local residents or the character and appearance of the area, and of those farm shops requiring planning permission, which are assisting with the diversification of the rural economy. However, it is recognised that farm shops may be an exception where they form part of an existing farm unit selling farm produce as they can assist with the diversification of the rural economy. Proposals for farm shops in the Green Belt will be restricted to the re-use of existing buildings.*

8.32 *The Borough Council will strongly resist any proposals to provide significant, inappropriate new shopping facilities within the open countryside or Green Belt. Such developments are generally not considered to be acceptable in the open countryside because of their detrimental effect upon the amenity and character of the area, and their potential effect on the viability of existing town centres in the Borough. Proposals for such development will only be acceptable where the developer is able to demonstrate a proven need for the development, and that a sequential approach to site selection has been undertaken which clearly demonstrates that the proposal cannot be accommodated within or on the edge of an existing settlement. It is considered that the existing and proposed shopping facilities within the Congleton Borough and in those larger centres adjoining the Plan area should be sufficient to meet demand. Developments such as garden centres and nurseries may, in principle be more appropriate within the open countryside competing less directly with existing retail provision within town centres, however such proposals will still be required to comply with those criteria set out in Policy S2.*

COMMITTED SHOPPING SITES

S10

ON SITES WHICH ARE CURRENTLY COMMITTED TO SHOPPING USES, APPLICATIONS FOR THE RENEWAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION FOR SUCH USES WILL BE REVIEWED TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE EXISTING PLANNING PERMISSION SHOULD BE RENEWED BY ASSESSING THE PROPOSAL AGAINST THE RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN, HAVING FULL REGARD TO ANY MATERIAL CHANGES IN PLANNING CIRCUMSTANCES AND NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE.

8.33 The aim of this policy is to maintain the supply of land for retail development, and to bring into beneficial use land which has been deemed to be appropriate for retail development.

SHOP FRONTS AND SECURITY SHUTTERS

Shop Fronts

S11

PROPOSALS FOR NEW SHOP FRONTS OR ALTERATIONS OR REPLACEMENTS TO EXISTING ONES REQUIRING CONSENT SHOULD SATISFY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- I) SHOP FRONTS SHOULD RESPECT THE SCALE, PROPORTIONS, CHARACTER AND MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE UPPER PART OF THE STRUCTURE AND WHERE RELEVANT THE SETTING OF THE BUILDING IN RELATION TO ADJOINING BUILDINGS AND THE STREET SCENE IN GENERAL;**
- II) SHOP FRONTS OF ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST SHOULD ONLY BE REMOVED IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES;**
- III) FASCIA SIGNS:**
 - A) SHOULD NOT BE SO DEEP AS TO BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE PROPORTIONS OR SCALE OF THE BUILDING;**
 - B) SHOULD NOT LINK TWO BUILDINGS WITH SEPARATE ARCHITECTURAL IDENTITIES;**
 - C) SHOULD, WHERE APPROPRIATE BE OF A COMMON DEPTH ON SINGLE BUILDINGS CONSISTING OF TWO OR MORE SHOP UNITS;**
- IV) WINDOWS TO UPPER FLOORS SHOULD NOT BE ENLARGED FOR DISPLAY PURPOSES.**

8.34 The Borough Council wishes to ensure that any proposals for new shop fronts or alterations to existing shop fronts take into account the character and appearance of the

building and general street scene particularly where the development is within a Conservation Area or affects a building of special architectural or historic interest.

Security Shutters - Solid Lath

S12

THE INSTALLATION OF SOLID LATH OR SIMILAR SECURITY SHUTTERS ON SHOP FRONTS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS ALTERNATIVE PHYSICAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES, INCLUDING THE USE OF CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SURVEILLANCE, ARE DEMONSTRABLY INAPPROPRIATE OR INADEQUATE.

8.35 To maintain the vitality of the Borough's towns, the Borough Council wishes to extend the time during which the town centres are in active use and therefore consider it to be important that the attractiveness of the town centres are maintained in the evenings and on Sundays. Shop fronts are an important feature of any street scene and have many roles. They permit after hours window shopping, allow supervision by Police and passers-by and allow additional illumination of the street which is itself a disincentive to crime - against both the property and users of the town centre. It is considered, therefore, that the use of solid lath shutters within town centres would be inappropriate. The Borough Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on shop front security in the Appendix of the Local Plan gives advice on the design of alternative security measures.

8.36 The use of such shutters in neighbourhood shops are also considered to be inappropriate given their often prominent position within primarily residential areas.

Security Shutters - Lattice/Mesh Grilles

S13

PROPOSALS FOR THE ERECTION OF EXTERNAL LATTICE GRILLE (ROLLER GRILLE OR DEMOUNTABLE MESH SCREENS) WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS, OR ON LISTED BUILDINGS WILL BE RESISTED UNLESS THEIR USE IS SHOWN TO BE IMPERATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE PHYSICAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES, INCLUDING THE USE OF CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SURVEILLANCE, ARE DEMONSTRABLY INAPPROPRIATE OR INADEQUATE.

ELSEWHERE SUCH PROPOSALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF THEY SATISFY ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- I) THE GRILLE, WHEN IN THE CLOSED POSITION, SHOULD NOT COVER THE FASCIA, PILASTERS OR STALL-RISERS;**
- II) THE GRILLE SHOULD BE INTEGRATED INTO THE OVERALL COLOUR SCHEME OF THE PREMISES AND NOT BE GALVANISED OR UNPAINTED;**
- III) THE GRILLE SPINDLE BOX IS, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, LOCATED BEHIND THE FASCIA OR INTEGRATED INTO THE OVERALL DESIGN OF THE SHOP FRONT.**

8.37 *The Borough Council considers the use of external lattice grilles to be inappropriate within the Borough's Conservation Areas and on listed buildings where they would detract from the architectural and historical character and appearance of the areas. The Borough Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on shop front security in the Appendix of the Local Plan gives advice on the design of alternative security measures.*

8.38 *Elsewhere the erection of lattice grilles or demountable mesh screens will only be permitted where the proposed grille is not of significant detriment to the overall character and appearance of the shop front. The Borough Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on shop front security in the Appendix of the Local Plan gives advice on the design of alternative security measures.*

ADVERTISEMENTS

S14

PROPOSALS FOR THE DISPLAY OF NEW, OR THE RETENTION OF EXISTING, ADVERTISEMENTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHICH SATISFY ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS NOT OUT OF KEEPING WITH THE STYLE OR CHARACTER OF A BUILDING OR ITS SURROUNDING;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO AMENITY OR SAFETY, BY REASON OF GENERAL DESIGN, SIZE, COLOUR, POSITION OF SIGN, TYPE OR DEGREE OF ILLUMINATION;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT AFFECT VIEWS INTO OR OUT OF A CONSERVATION AREA;**
- IV) IN THE CASE OF PROPOSALS WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA, IT COMPLIES WITH POLICY S15.**

8.39 *The aim of this policy is to prevent the display of advertisements in areas where the design and location of the advertisement is considered to be inappropriate. Such advertisements can be visually obtrusive and in some circumstances constitute a hazard to road users and pedestrians.*

Advertisements in Conservation Areas

S15

IN ITS CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR EXPRESS CONSENT MADE UNDER THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (CONTROL OF ADVERTISEMENT) REGULATIONS WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ONLY ALLOW SIGNS WHICH SATISFY ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- I) **SIGNS SHALL BE EITHER PAINTED OR INDIVIDUALLY LETTERED IN A SUITABLE MATERIAL AND SHALL BE OF AN APPROPRIATE SIZE AND DESIGN IN RELATION TO THE BUILDING UPON WHICH THEY ARE TO BE DISPLAYED AND THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA IN WHICH THE BUILDING IS SITUATED;**
- II) **SIGNS SHALL PREFERABLY BE NON-ILLUMINATED BUT WHERE ILLUMINATION IS JUSTIFIED, IT SHOULD BE DISCREET AND IN THE FORM OF UNCOLOURED ILLUMINATION INTEGRATED INTO THE DESIGN OF THE SHOP FRONT;**
- III) **THE FORM OF SIGNS SHALL BE OF A TRADITIONAL FASCIA OR HANGING TYPE DEPICTING, BY MEANS OF PAINTING OR THREE DIMENSIONAL TECHNIQUES, THE TRADE OR SERVICE OFFERED;**
- IV) **SIGNS SHALL, OTHER THAN IN THE MOST EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, BE OF A MINIMUM SIZE NECESSARY TO CONVEY THEIR MESSAGE.**

8.40 While it is recognised that many of the Borough's Conservation Areas include parts of commercial town centres, it is important to ensure that the use of garish and unsympathetic advertising material does not detract from the appearance of areas of architectural and historic interest.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

S16

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO IMPLEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRES OF THE BOROUGH AND HOLMES CHAPEL VILLAGE CENTRE AND TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR PEDESTRIANS BY INTRODUCING TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES WHERE APPROPRIATE. WHERE REQUIRED, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR SUCH APPROPRIATELY DESIGNED SCHEMES.

CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE NEEDS OF THE LESS MOBILE SECTIONS OF THE POPULATION IN ANY SUCH WORKS. OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PROVISION OF SUCH IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE CONSIDERATION OF ANY APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WITHIN THESE AREAS.

8.41 The Borough Council wishes to bring about environmental improvements within each of the Borough's towns and the village centre of Holmes Chapel, to further enhance each of the Borough's Town Centres. The introduction of traffic management measures to reduce unnecessary through traffic flows, parking and servicing conflicts within the town centres are also considered to be important to improving the environment of the Borough's Town Centres and would form part of wider environmental improvement schemes within the Town Centres. Large parts of the town centres are designated as Conservation Areas

and their special interest will be considered in all proposals for environmental improvement and enhancement. Such measures would be implemented within each of the towns as and when resources are available and opportunities arise.

Access and Facilities For The Disabled

S17

WHEN CONSIDERING ANY PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT OR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WITHIN TOWN CENTRES, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL GIVE CONSIDERATION TO THE NEEDS OF DISABLED PEOPLE WITH REGARD TO EXTERNAL FEATURES SUCH AS PARKING, PATHS, KERBS, STREET FURNITURE, ENTRANCES TO BUILDINGS, AND OPEN SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS. WHERE PLANNING PERMISSION IS REQUIRED THIS WILL ONLY BE GRANTED IF APPROPRIATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR THE DISABLED AS PART OF THE SCHEME OR IT CAN BE REQUIRED BY CONDITION.

8.41 *The Borough Council wishes to increase the attractiveness of the Borough's towns to people with disabilities by improving where possible accessibility and facilities for disabled persons within town centres.*

9. RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

9.1 The term “recreation” embraces a wide variety of sport and leisure pursuits which have come to play an increasingly important role in peoples lives. Such pursuits may involve the use of formal sports areas or play facilities (outdoor and indoor), or they may concern more informal aspects of leisure, and be associated with the surrounding environment and landscapes in the Borough such as the canal system, footpaths or the open countryside where activities such as leisure walking are popular.

9.2 In its widest sense, recreation also includes tourism, which is both a leisure activity and an important source of employment in the Borough. However, in view of its wider employment and economic implications, tourism is dealt with in the “Economy” chapter of this Local Plan.

9.3 Allied to the provision of recreation facilities is the provision of community facilities – these may include day nurseries, residential homes, health facilities, educational establishments, community centres and village halls which all serve the needs of the community.

9.4 The Local Plan aims to ensure that sufficient land and facilities can be made available to meet the needs of the local population and those visiting the area, but at the same time to minimise any potentially detrimental effects on the environment.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

9.5 The Government recognises sport and recreation as important components of civilised life and as playing a valuable social and economic role. Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 17 outlines the Government policy of promoting the development of sport and recreation in the widest sense.

9.6 The guidance advises that Local Plans are the appropriate context in which to:

- assess local needs for recreational facilities;
- Identify deficiencies in the provision of public open space;
- encourage the development of suitable sites and types of site for additional sport and recreation and open space provision;
- ensure that provision is properly coordinated with other forms of development and land-use policies; and
- protect open space and other land with recreational or amenity value.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

9.7 The policy approach in the Structure Plan is to encourage the provision of recreation facilities which will adequately meet the needs and demands of both the residents and

visitors which they intend to serve, whilst respecting the environmental capacity of the locality. It seeks to allow recreation developments which will attract a significant number of visitors in locations which are accessible by a choice of means of

LOCAL CONTEXT

Local Area Profiles

9.8 To assist in understanding the individual characteristics and issues affecting the Borough's towns and in particular the rural area of the Borough, Local Area Profiles have been compiled for each of the towns and the rural area. These highlight key local trends, features and issues. The profiles are intended to give background information and provide an understanding of local areas in terms of their characteristics, dynamics and planning needs. In this respect they have also drawn upon the needs and issues highlighted by respondents to the Issues Paper consultation.

Community Strategy

9.9 The Borough Council's Community Strategy seeks to satisfy the community's demand for operational, cultural, social inclusion and recreational activities through the Council's own actions and its influence over others. It brings together the development of new strategies in respect of Community Planning, Community Development, Democratic Engagement and Rural Areas with the existing strategies with respect to Amenities and Leisure, Highways and Transportation.

Cultural Strategy

9.10 A cultural strategy for the Borough was commissioned by the Council and was completed in December 1998. Entitled "Pride of Place" this covers the period 1999-2001. The strategy defines 'culture' in its widest sense, as being "the sum total of the individual and collective experiences around us, and the ways in which we both see our world and respond imaginatively to it", as opposed to just relating to the recognised forms of art/culture such as drama, dance, literature etc. The strategy recognises that cultural measures are most effective when they form part of a strategic concept for sustainable development; and that economic development, environmental protection and cultural action are interrelated and not necessarily opposed to each other. Within these wide parameters, the strategy outlines objectives in respect of planning related matters such as town centre regeneration, culture and the natural environment, and regeneration of the waterways.

9.11 The findings and recommendations of the Cultural Strategy have been taken into account, not just in relation to the policies concerning recreation and community facilities, but throughout all sections of the Local Plan.

Leisure Strategy

9.12 A new leisure strategy for the Borough was commissioned by the Council and was completed in June 1999. This involved a comprehensive review of the existing leisure

provision in the Borough, and a consultation exercise with all the relevant agencies, statutory bodies, and organisations involved in, or having an influence on, the delivery of leisure provision in the Borough. The results of this review and consultation exercise were then used as the basis for a number of recommendations.

9.13 Of the numerous findings of the study, those considered to be relevant to the Local Plan are as follows:-

- There is some unmet demand for health and fitness facilities in the Borough.
- There is an under provision of synthetic turf pitches in the Borough.
- There is a deficit of indoor swimming pool provision against recommended standards.

9.14 The strategy includes a number of recommendations, of which those concerning facility development are relevant to the Local Plan. These are as follows:-

- To identify the Council's priority for further swimming provision in the Borough; and to determine the nature of this provision, if facility development is to take place.
- To improve the quality of existing pitches.
- To increase the number of pitches in the Borough.

Recreational Demand

9.15 In addition to the requirements identified in the Leisure Strategy, there are a number of general issues concerning recreational matters which are of relevance to the Local Plan. The principle issue is the fact that in recent years there has been an increase in the number of people with spare time available, whilst, for those in employment, rising real incomes have meant increasing opportunities and demand for leisure pursuits.

Formal/Sports Recreation

9.16 Whilst acknowledging the shortfalls identified in the Leisure Strategy, in general terms there is a reasonable provision of formal/sports-related indoor and outdoor recreational facilities throughout the Borough. Outdoor facilities include sports pitches, playing fields, bowling greens, golf courses, parks and play areas.

9.17 A survey carried out by the Borough Council, which identified all existing open areas and recreational facilities in the Borough based on the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) definition of outdoor playing space shows that there is over 105 hectares of outdoor playing space provision (Table 5). However, according to the standards for outdoor playing space provision advocated by the NPFA, a further 109.26 109.34 hectares of sports pitches, play spaces and equipped play areas are still required to rectify the existing deficiency in provision throughout the settlements of the Borough.

9.18 It should be noted, however, that there are in addition some 667.24 hectares of open space not included in the NPFA standards. These include facilities within the education sector not usually available to the public, (approximately 142.75 hectares areas of school/college playing fields), informal recreational open space of which there are some 264.84 hectares and public parks, allotments or golf courses.

9.18 Indoor facilities are mainly provided by the public leisure centres based in Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich, Sandbach and Holmes Chapel. Facilities available include a mix of

swimming pools, squash courts, sports halls and gyms, as well as outdoor allweather pitches and tennis courts.

9.20 The expected increase in population for the whole of the Borough up to the end of the plan period will exert increasing pressure upon these areas both in terms of their value as a recreational resource, and in the case of the outdoor facilities particularly, their potential for built development. Where these open areas are considered a valuable resource and worthy of retention as recreational space, the Local Plan aims to secure their future as such.

9.21 Besides the retention of existing facilities, the Council recognises that there will be a demand for further formal recreational provision during the Plan period, notably in terms of sports pitch provision as a result of the expected increase in the population, and a need to improve existing provision.

Table 5 : Outdoor Playing Space Provision (Hectares)

	NPFA Target ₁	Current Provision ₂	Surplus(+)/ Deficiency (-)
Congleton	61.62	33.82	-27.80
Sandbach	41.80	27.58	-14.22
Middlewich	29.11	14.50	-14.61
Alsager	29.23	12.65	-16.58
Rural Areas	53.02	16.92	-36.10
<i>Borough</i>	<i>214.81</i>	<i>105.47</i>	<i>-109.34</i>

Notes

1. 2.43 hectares/1,000 pop. Based on 1999 population estimates.
2. Current provision from 1999 Survey

Informal/Countryside Recreation

9.21 National surveys have revealed that much of the demand for recreational facilities is for unmanaged, or hardly managed, freely accessible countryside rather than for formal facilities. The surveys also indicate that people would like to visit the countryside more often, and particularly countryside which is easily accessible.

9.22 Congleton Borough is fortunate in having a number of large expanses of attractive countryside areas surrounding the built-up areas of the towns and villages. However, accessibility into these areas by the general public is limited mainly to the public footpath and bridleway system, although there are areas, for example The Cloud, Congleton Edge and Brereton Heath, where significant portions of countryside have been dedicated for public use. There are also linear multi-user routes which have been established along some of the lengths of the disused railway lines which run through the Borough, such as “Merelake Way”, “The Salt Line” and Biddulph Valley Way”.

9.23 The most popular leisure activity is walking, which is particularly popular amongst the older participating age groups who are well represented in the Borough’s population at

present, and are expected to increase as an age group during the Plan period. This creates increasing demands for tracts of walking land i.e. freely accessible countryside. A major problem with making the countryside increasingly accessible, however, is the conflicts thus produced between people and working agricultural land, and areas of nature or other conservation interest. It is not always practicable to encourage people into all areas of the countryside since there are areas which might suffer as a result. However, by allocating a number of open areas in the countryside where recreation is the dominant land use, linked to other areas of leisure interest, by footpaths, cycleways and bridleways, not only will the countryside be accessible directly from the built-up areas, but also visitors can be dispersed throughout the countryside without causing unnecessary disturbance or damage.

9.24 The Local Plan also recognises that an alternative to the countryside for informal recreational pursuits is the great opportunity offered by the Borough's extensive canal system. Both Middlewich and Congleton could benefit from further promotion of the canal system as a recreational resource, following environmental improvements and recreation/tourist related developments along the canal course.

Future Recreation Requirements

9.25 Recreation is recognised in the Local Plan as providing a positive contribution both to the quality of the environment and quality of life of its residents, and to the creation of jobs. As such, it is considered important, within the resources available, to strive to meet the recreational demands of those residents living in the Borough.

9.26 From the findings of the Leisure Strategy it is evident that the current provision of facilities within the Borough is unlikely to cater adequately for the perceived increase in demand over the Plan period. Therefore in order to maintain and wherever possible increase provision, the policies contained within this Local Plan seek to protect existing facilities and to allow for further new facilities to be provided in appropriate areas.

9.27 Additionally, there will be a need for further open space provision in certain parts of the Borough associated with new housing developments, as well as an improvement of existing facilities. In this respect, the Local Plan makes specific allocations for new or replacement recreational facilities and, in appropriate cases requires developers to make provision for public open space and recreation facilities to meet such needs as part of their development.

9.28 With regard to indoor sports facilities, it is considered that the existing leisure centres in the main settlements will be able to satisfy some of the additional demand for recreation, but there will be scope for the private sector to provide further facilities within the Plan period. This would apply in particular to specialist formal sports provision.

9.29 In general, the Borough Council seeks to fulfil the demand for recreational facilities where finances permit. However as resources are limited, the Borough Council will increasingly seek the involvement of private developers in the provision of much of the recreational requirements.

Community Facilities

9.30 Community facilities provide essential support services for the local population and help to sustain communities. They also help give communities a sense of place and civic pride as well as providing opportunities for recreation and leisure activities. It is important therefore to seek to ensure the retention of existing community facilities, and allow the provision of new facilities, including day nurseries and residential institutions, in appropriate locations, in order to satisfy the needs of the Borough's residents.

Public Facilities

9.31 In addition to providing for the recreational and cultural needs of the local population, the Borough Council also provides a range of other public facilities and works in close partnership with local communities to address specific needs. The Borough Council is seeking to identify a site for a cemetery at Alsager although there are currently no specific proposals requiring the identification of sites within the Local Plan.

9.32 Cheshire County Council is responsible for schools, libraries and social services provision in the Borough. Generally these are provided in response to changes in the population structure, local circumstances and available resources. The only major proposal affecting the Borough currently is the reorganisation of secondary school provision at Congleton which will lead to the closure of Westlands High School in 2001 and the expansion of Heathfield (Congleton High) and Dane Valley (Eaton Bank) schools. There are currently no proposals for new schools, libraries or other major County Council facilities in the Borough.

9.33 Fire services in the Borough are also the responsibility of Cheshire County Council, whilst police services are the responsibility of Cheshire Constabulary. There are no significant changes envisaged in respect of the land use planning needs of either service in the foreseeable future.

9.34 The provision of health services, including ambulance stations, is the responsibility of the South Cheshire Health Authority which currently has no proposals for significant change to the provision of services with land use planning implications affecting the plan area.

9.35 Other public utility services are generally provided by statutory undertakers in response to demand as a result of new development.

Other Facilities

9.36 There are a large range of other educational, residential, health, cultural, social and leisure facilities provided by the private, voluntary and community sectors within the Borough. Generally these are provided to meet local needs according to available resources and individual initiatives and their future land use requirements are therefore not definitive.

9.37 The policies in the Local Plan seek to allow for the provision and expansion of these other facilities to meet needs in a manner which also protects the amenity of local residents and does not harm the character of the area.

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES POLICIES

GENERAL

RC1

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW FACILITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY USE, OR THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING FACILITIES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE BOROUGH COUNCIL IS SATISFIED THAT:

- I) THE SCALE AND NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT AND ITS PROPOSED LOCATION ARE ALL WELL RELATED TO ITS POTENTIAL CATCHMENT AREA OR WILL HELP TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL POPULATION;**
- II) IN THE CASE OF BUILDING CONVERSION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS IN KEEPING WITH AND ENHANCES THOSE FEATURES OF BUILDINGS WHICH WARRANT PRESERVATION, AS REGARDS FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN;**
- III) ANY PERMANENT BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES AND CAR PARKING REQUIRED WILL NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OR AMENITY OF THE LOCALITY;**
- IV) DEVELOPMENT IS, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, LOCATED WHERE IT IS ACCESSIBLE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT ON FOOT AND CYCLE, AND WHERE VEHICULAR TRAFFIC LIKELY TO RESULT FROM DEVELOPMENT CAN OR WILL SAFELY BE ACCOMMODATED WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC EXPENDITURE;**
- V) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION, GEOLOGICAL OR LANDSCAPE INTEREST;**
- VI) THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT RESULT IN A PERMANENT LOSS OF A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF GRADE 1,2 OR 3A AGRICULTURAL LAND, OR DISRUPT THE VIABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS;**
- VII) IT CONFORMS TO POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC RECREATIONAL OR COMMUNITY USES.**
- VIII) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN**

9.38 *The aim of this policy is to ensure that recreational or community-related developments accurately reflect the needs of the Borough and that the use of land/buildings for such purposes does not adversely affect the surrounding area, nor use land which is of agricultural, nature conservation, geological or landscape value.*

9.39 *New developments should, wherever possible, be accessible by public transport, public footpaths and cycleways. It is also important that any facilities would not create traffic problems which would necessitate the use of substantial public expenditure. Proposals should satisfy the appropriate requirements in terms of layout, building form, highway safety, car parking, and impact upon adjoining development where it occurs.*

9.40 *Where development is in open countryside particular consideration will be given to the impact of permanent buildings and structures on the openness of the area. Near to residential properties careful consideration will also be given to the impact of the use and ancillary structures, especially lighting and spectator facilities, on the local amenity.*

PROTECTED AREAS OF OPEN SPACE

RC2

PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVE THE DEVELOPMENT FOR AN ALTERNATIVE USE OF ANY OF THOSE AREAS OF OPEN SPACE OR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP OR THOSE AREAS OR FACILITIES WHICH MAY SUBSEQUENTLY BE CREATED, WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT RESULT IN A LOCAL DEFICIENCY IN THE QUANTITY, RANGE AND ACCESSIBILITY OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES OR AMENITY OPEN SPACE OR, ALTERNATIVELY, THE PROVISION OF AN EQUIVALENT OR IMPROVED AND SUITABLY LOCATED REPLACEMENT FACILITY IS PROPOSED WITHIN A TIME PERIOD ACCEPTABLE TO THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY;**
- II) THE OPEN SPACE OR RECREATIONAL FACILITY HAS NO SIGNIFICANT LOCAL VALUE EITHER AS PART OF AN EXISTING NETWORK OF OPEN AREAS, AS A BUFFER ZONE BETWEEN INCOMPATIBLE USES (INCLUDING NOISE ALLEVIATION ZONES), AS AN IMPORTANT VISUAL AMENITY OR SIGNIFICANT VISUAL BREAK IN AN OTHERWISE DEVELOPED AREA, OR IN RELATION TO AN EXISTING OR PROPOSED LINEAR AMENITY AREA SUCH AS A CANAL CORRIDOR, DISUSED RAILWAY LINE OR WILDLIFE CORRIDOR;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN, PARTICULARLY THOSE RELATING TO NATURE CONSERVATION, LANDSCAPE AND AGRICULTURAL LAND**

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE CURRENT USE OF THE SITE, OR EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS WITHIN DESIGNATED AREAS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT WILL ALLOW FOR IMPROVED FACILITIES ON THE SITE AND WILL NOT RESULT IN ANY SHORTFALL IN OPEN SPACE PROVISION AND WHERE THE PROPOSED USE CONFORMS TO OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

9.41 *Existing recreational facilities, particularly open spaces, are at a premium in settlements throughout the Borough, and would in certain circumstances, create a*

significant loss were they to be developed. Although many recreational facilities play an important role in Borough-wide provision, it is usually at the local level where deficiencies in particular types of provision and the insufficient quality of what does exist is most marked. Therefore it is important to consider provision in the locality and the significance of a particular use before allowing areas to be developed. The Borough Council considers that importance should be placed on the role of recreational facilities, particularly open space, and that only where all the criteria set out above are achieved will the development of an identified area of open space for an alternative use be allowed.

9.42 *This does not however preclude the redevelopment of built up areas of redundant sites such as school buildings, or development or extension of existing buildings associated with the use of the site where there would be no significant loss of a recreational facility involved or where it would allow for improved facilities on the site which would offset any loss. The term open space in the policy refers to all areas of open land which are of public benefit and includes formal, informal and natural areas of open space.*

NUISANCE SPORTS

RC3

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RECREATIONAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITIES WHICH BY THEIR NATURE MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITY OF NEARBY RESIDENTS, OTHER USERS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE, OR BUILT-UP AREAS, OR FEATURES OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:-

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS COMPATIBLE WITH NATURE CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE INTERESTS;**
- II) ADEQUATE ON-SITE CAR PARKING AND ACCESS FROM A PUBLIC HIGHWAY CAN BE ACHIEVED AND THERE WILL BE NO EXCESSIVE TRAFFIC GENERATION ONTO THE EXISTING HIGHWAY NETWORK;**
- III) ANY PERMANENT STRUCTURES, CAR PARKS OR FEATURES DO NOT INTRUDE INTO THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE IN TERMS OF SITING, DESIGN AND MATERIALS USED;**
- IV) THERE WOULD BE NO DETRIMENT TO THE NATURE OF LAND FEATURES OF INTEREST AS A RESULT OF POSSIBLE EROSION OR LOSS OF VEGETATION;**
- V) THE PROPOSAL INCLUDES APPROPRIATE NOISE ATTENUATION MEASURES SUCH AS SCREENING BANKS AND TREES;**
- VI) THE PROPOSAL PROVIDES FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF LAND IN A DEGRADED OR DERELICT STATE;**
- VII) THE PROPOSAL WILL CAUSE MINIMUM DETRIMENT TO NEARBY RESIDENTS AND OTHER USERS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE;**

VIII) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

9.43 *Several recreational activities such as motorcycle scrambling, war games or shooting clubs, can be detrimental to the amenity of nearby residents, nature conservation and other users of the countryside by virtue of noise, erosion, visual impact or traffic generation if they are inappropriately sited. The provision of suitable sites for such uses can divert unauthorised and damaging use of playing fields, footpaths, open land and woodlands. Wherever possible such sites should be readily accessible by public transport, footpaths and cycleways.*

9.44 *The governing body (or bodies) of the relevant sport will be consulted where a code of conduct has been produced.*

COUNTRYSIDE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

RC4

PROPOSALS FOR COUNTRYSIDE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT THE AMENITIES AND CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA;**
- II) ANY PERMANENT BUILDINGS AND CAR PARKING REQUIRED SHOULD BLEND INTO THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE IN RESPECT OF SITING, DESIGN AND MATERIALS USED;**
- III) SUFFICIENT CAR PARKING IS AVAILABLE WITHIN THE SITE;**
- IV) SATISFACTORY ACCESS TO THE SITE CAN BE ACHIEVED FROM A PUBLIC HIGHWAY;**
- V) PROPOSALS CAN BE INTEGRATED WHEREVER POSSIBLE WITH EXISTING AREAS OF OPEN SPACE AND THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK;**
- VI) THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION, GEOLOGICAL OR LANDSCAPE VALUE;**
- VII) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

9.45 *Informal recreational facilities in the countryside, preferably linked to the footpath, cycleway and bridleway networks are necessary if countryside activities are to be managed effectively. Such sites can provide for interpretation of the local area and the direction of visitors along suitable parts of the rights of way network. Recreational activities can, however, conflict with other rural activities or interests, thus by allocating particular sites and controlling provision elsewhere the aim is to reduce the potential conflicts. The opportunity to acquire such land is limited, therefore it may be appropriate to seek land management agreement with landowners in partnership with Parish Councils, the County Council and others, in order to increase public access.*

EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES

RC5

PROPOSALS INVOLVING THE DEVELOPMENT OF EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES OR FOR THE ENLARGEMENT OF EXISTING FACILITIES OUTSIDE SETTLEMENTS, WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION, GEOLOGICAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL OR LANDSCAPE VALUE;**
- II) THE SITE IS WELL SCREENED AND THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT OBSTRUCT VIEWS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE NOR BE VISUALLY DETRIMENTAL TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA;**
- III) NO PERMANENT LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND GRADED 1, 2 OR 3A IS INVOLVED;**
- IV) THERE WOULD BE NO DETRIMENT TO THE AMENITY OF NEARBY RESIDENTIAL AREAS;**
- V) THERE WOULD BE NO DETRIMENT TO THE NATURE OF THE LAND AS A RESULT OF POSSIBLE EROSION OR LOSS OF VEGETATION;**
- VI) ADEQUATE ON-SITE CAR PARKING AND ACCESS FROM A PUBLIC HIGHWAY CAN BE ACHIEVED AND THERE IS NO EXCESSIVE TRAFFIC GENERATION ONTO THE EXISTING HIGHWAY NETWORK;**
- VII) ANY PERMANENT STRUCTURES, CAR PARKS OR FEATURES DO NOT INTRUDE INTO THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE IN TERMS OF SITING, DESIGN AND MATERIALS USED;**
- VIII) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS REASONABLY WELL RELATED TO THE EXISTING PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY NETWORK WHOSE CAPACITY IS LOCALLY ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT INCREASED USE BY HORSES AND RIDERS WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO OTHER AUTHORISED TRAFFIC.**

9.46 By their nature, equestrian facilities which may include stables, grazing and paddocks, jumping/and training areas and associated facilities such as parking, may often take on an appearance which is at variance with the agricultural use of the countryside. However, the Borough Council is aware of the need for the provision of such facilities in countryside areas where they can be linked to bridleways and therefore seeks to ensure that the visual and amenity impact of such proposals is minimised. Wherever possible, new buildings should be sited within or near to an existing farm complex and existing buildings should be utilised in preference to new buildings. Linkages with the existing bridleway network should also be sought.

GOLF COURSES AND DRIVING RANGES

RC6

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW GOLF COURSES, THE ENLARGEMENT OF EXISTING GOLF COURSES OR GOLF DRIVING RANGES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL CONFORMS TO POLICY RC1 EXCEPT THAT USE MAY BE MADE OF LAND OF GRADES 1, 2 AND 3A WHERE NO IRREVERSIBLE LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL VALUE OCCURS AND WHERE NO SIGNIFICANT EARTHMOVING OR BUILDING WORKS ARE INVOLVED;**
- II) ANY BUILDINGS, PERMANENT STRUCTURES OR CAR PARKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT DO NOT INTRUDE INTO THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE IN TERMS OF SITING, SCALE, DESIGN AND MATERIALS USED;**
- III) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT AREAS OF LANDSCAPE VALUE, NATURE CONSERVATION OR GEOLOGICAL INTEREST, OR OF HISTORIC OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL VALUE;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE EXISTING RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK;**
- V) IN CASES WHERE A GOLF COURSE OR GOLF DRIVING RANGE FORMS ONLY PART OF A WIDER DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL, THE OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL (FOR EXAMPLE, HOTELS, CONFERENCE CENTRES, LEISURE CENTRES OR HOUSING) WILL BE CONSIDERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOSE LOCAL PLAN POLICIES RELATING TO THE PARTICULAR USE PROPOSED;**
- VI) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

9.47 Golf Course developments use considerable amounts of land normally only available in the open countryside. The use of non-agricultural land, such as derelict land or that available following mineral working, is preferable to the loss of land in high quality agricultural use, (Grade 1, 2 and 3a) however, so long as no significant earthworks are proposed on high grade agricultural land then golf course development is considered acceptable.

9.48 The demand for golf facilities in the Borough presently outweighs the supply, particularly for "pay-as-you-play" facilities. However it is important that proposals are appropriate to the surrounding environment in terms of location, siting and layout, and that any areas of special interest are retained and incorporated into the layout design, and where possible opportunities for such areas to be established are exploited. Any proposal for golf course development should be accompanied by agricultural and ecological surveys and analyses, together with a commitment to prepare and implement a conservation management plan.

9.49 *Golf Driving Ranges require less amounts of land than golf courses, and may therefore be more readily accommodated in urban fringes. Their visual impact can however be more significant than that of a golf course, given the concentration of buildings, car parking, netting and lighting that is usually required in association with such a facility. It is therefore particularly important that any proposed golf driving range is appropriately sited to minimise any detrimental visual or functional impact upon the locality, with due regard given to the scale, design and use of materials proposed.*

9.50 *Any proposals should naturally take full account of the environmental policies contained within the plan, and in the case where other development is proposed in association with such a facility, then those relevant policies should also be considered.*

WATER BASED ACTIVITIES

RC7

PROPOSALS FOR NEW WATER BASED ACTIVITIES OR THE INTENSIFICATION OR DIVERSIFICATION OF EXISTING ONES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT ANY AREA OF LANDSCAPE, NATURE CONSERVATION OR GEOLOGICAL INTEREST, OR OF HISTORIC OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL VALUE;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT EXISTING WATER BASED ACTIVITIES.**
- III) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

9.51 *There are a number of open water sites around the Borough which could benefit from some form of recreational use being placed upon them to provide opportunities for waterbased activities such as sailing, fishing and sub-aqua diving. Potential also exists to incorporate more land based activities such as nature trails, into the overall development so as to use the site to the full, though paying heed to environmental and conservation policies. It may be possible on some such sites, to allow ancillary facilities to develop as demand indicates the need, though again this is subject to the prevailing environmental policies contained in this plan.*

9.52 *In considering proposals, the Authority will consult the Environment Agency in appropriate cases, as advised by PPG17 (paragraph 56).*

CANAL/RIVERSIDE RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

RC8

PROPOSALS FOR RECREATION AND LEISURE USES RELATED TO THE CANALS AND RIVERSIDES OF THE BOROUGH, WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) **THE PROPOSAL IS WITHIN OR CLOSE TO THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY OF THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICIES PS4 AND PS5;**
- II) **SUFFICIENT PARKING IS AVAILABLE WITHIN THE SITE;**
- III) **SATISFACTORY ACCESS CAN BE ACHIEVED FROM A PUBLIC HIGHWAY;**
- IV) **THE PROPOSAL IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND TYPE WHICH WOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE AMENITY OR VALUE OF THE SURROUNDINGS;**
- V) **THE PROPOSAL UTILISES, AS FAR AS IS POSSIBLE, EXISTING BUILDINGS, AND WHERE NEW BUILDINGS ARE REQUIRED, THEY SHOULD BLEND INTO THE SURROUNDINGS IN TERMS OF SITING, DESIGN AND MATERIALS USED, AND SHOULD FRONT THE CANAL OR RIVER;**
- VI) **THE PROPOSAL INTEGRATES, WHERE POSSIBLE, WITH AREAS OF RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE AND LINK WITH A DEVELOPING NETWORK OF FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS, CYCLEWAYS, TOWPATHS AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS;**
- VII) **THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT SITES AND FEATURES OF WILDLIFE AND NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST OR OF HERITAGE VALUE;**
- VIII) **THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

9.53 *The aim of this policy is to encourage the development of canalside/riverside areas for appropriate uses in order to upgrade the area generally, encourage use of the canals and rivers by residents and visitors alike and to integrate the varied water features in the Borough with other recreational areas by means of the footpath and cycleway network.*

RC9

PROPOSALS FOR CANAL MOORING FACILITIES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) **THE PROPOSAL IS WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO AN EXISTING SETTLEMENT WHERE AMENITIES SUCH AS SHOPS AND PUBLIC HOUSES ALREADY EXIST;**
- II) **SUFFICIENT CAR PARKING IS AVAILABLE WITHIN THE SITE;**
- III) **SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE SITE CAN BE ACHIEVED FROM A PUBLIC HIGHWAY;**
- IV) **THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UNACCEPTABLY AFFECT SITES AND FEATURES OF WILDLIFE AND NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST;**
- V) **THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE AMENITY OR VALUE OF THE SURROUNDINGS;**

VI) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

9.54 *Canalside mooring facilities are most effective when they are sensibly spaced out in relation to each other. This avoids boat traffic congestion and uneconomic duplication of facilities. Linear moorings can restrict the use of the canal for other activities. Mooring basins and transit moorings provide limited facilities for mooring while reducing obstruction on the canal. Boating centres provide a wide range of facilities and services. These should be located sensibly in relation to each other and the needs of the travelling public on the canals.*

OUTDOOR FORMAL RECREATIONAL AND AMENITY OPEN SPACE FACILITIES.**RC10**

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR OUTDOOR PLAYING FACILITIES PROVIDED THAT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICY PS4 AND PS5;**
- II) ADEQUATE CHANGING FACILITIES AND CAR PARKING ARE PROVIDED WITHIN THE SITE IF APPROPRIATE TO THE PROPOSED USE;**
- III) SATISFACTORY ACCESS TO THE SITE CAN BE ACHIEVED;**
- IV) THE AMENITIES OF ADJACENT PROPERTIES OR NEARBY RESIDENTIAL AREAS WOULD NOT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED;**
- V) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**
- VI) DEVELOPMENT IS WHEREVER POSSIBLE ACCESSIBLE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, ON FOOT AND CYCLE.**

9.55 *This policy aims to promote the development of outdoor playing facilities such as football pitches, skate parks, etc to improve current provision for formal sports activities within the Borough, provided car parking can be provided within the site so as to reduce traffic hazards on adjacent roads and where access meets Council adopted standards. The Council considers it important to safeguard the amenity of nearby residents and properties, particularly in terms of noise attenuation, traffic flows, and building form bulk and general design.*

INDOOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY USES

General RC11

PROPOSALS FOR INDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, ENTERTAINMENT, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY USES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS WITHIN THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICIES PS4, PS5 AND PS6 OR RELATES TO THE RE-USE OF BUILDINGS WITHIN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR SOUTH CHESHIRE GREEN BELT IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY BH15;**
- II) THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE ON-SITE CAR PARKING AND SERVICING OR, WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL MAY ACCEPT A COMMUTED PAYMENT IN LIEU OF THE PROVISION OF CAR PARKING FACILITIES WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT SITE;**
- III) SATISFACTORY ACCESS TO THE SITE CAN BE ACHIEVED;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT GIVE RISE TO UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC, EITHER IN RELATION TO LOCAL FLOWS OR TO OVERALL DISTANCE TRAVELLED;**
- V) THE AMENITIES OF ADJACENT PROPERTIES OR NEARBY RESIDENTIAL AREAS WOULD NOT BE UNACCEPTABLY AFFECTED;**
- VI) A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE DEVELOPMENT WITH THE SURROUNDING AREAS AND PROPERTIES;**
- VII) A SUITABLE MEANS OF ACCESS AND APPROPRIATE PARKING FACILITIES ARE PROVIDED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF DISABLED PEOPLE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY GR12;**
- VIII) APPROPRIATE NOISE CONTROL MEASURES ARE CARRIED OUT;**
- IX) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH THE OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

9.56 *This policy aims to promote the development of indoor recreational facilities, entertainment, social, cultural and community uses which serve the needs of the general community and which may therefore be considered appropriate in a variety of locations. Such uses may include schools, churches, health facilities, public houses, cinemas, leisure centres, community centres, libraries, swimming pools etc. The Council considers it important to safeguard the amenity of nearby residents and properties, particularly in terms of noise attenuation, traffic flows and building form, bulk and general design.*

Retention of Existing Community Facilities

RC12

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR ANY PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF ANY COMMUNITY FACILITY WHICH MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIAL OR CULTURAL LIFE OF A COMMUNITY, UNLESS SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION IS MADE.

9.57 The Borough Council will resist any proposals which would result in the loss of an existing community facility. There are a wide range of facilities serving community needs, including public houses, church and village halls, churches, schools, libraries, village/local shops etc. Any proposal involving the loss of such a facility would need to demonstrate that the continued or future use of the facility is unviable and that its loss would not be detrimental to the locality, or make provision for a suitable alternative facility elsewhere within the community.

Day Nurseries

RC13

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW, OR FOR THE EXTENSION OR INTENSIFICATION OF USE OF EXISTING, DAY NURSERIES AND PLAYGROUPS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) **THE DEVELOPMENT WILL PROVIDE AN ADEQUATELY SIZED AND WELL SCREENED GARDEN FOR OUTDOOR PLAY;**
- II) **THE PROPOSALS ARE CONSIDERED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO BE OF A SCALE APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCALITY AND WILL NOT BE OF SIGNIFICANT DETRIMENT TO THE AMENITIES OF LOCAL RESIDENTS BY VIRTUE OF NOISE, GENERAL DISTURBANCE, LOSS OF PRIVACY AND TRAFFIC GENERATION;**
- III) **APPROPRIATE MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO MINIMISE NOISE NUISANCE ARISING FROM THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT;**
- IV) **ADEQUATE CAR PARKING FOR RESIDENTS AND STAFF CAN BE PROVIDED IN AN UNOBTRUSIVE MANNER WHICH PRESERVES THE AMENITY AND CHARACTER OF THE LOCALITY;**
- V) **THERE ARE SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ARRANGEMENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE DROPPINGOFF AND COLLECTING OF CHILDREN WITHOUT CAUSING A DANGER TO OTHER ROAD USERS, EITHER;**
 - A) **WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF THE SITE, OR;**
 - B) **WHERE THERE ARE NO PARKING RESTRICTIONS, ON THE HIGHWAY FRONTING THE PREMISES PROVIDING THE HIGHWAY IS CONSIDERED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO BE WIDE ENOUGH TO**

**ALLOW VEHICLES TO STOP WITHOUT ENDANGERING OR
INCONVENIENCING OTHER ROAD USERS.**

**VI) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICES OF THE LOCAL PLAN, IN
PARTICULAR POLICY RC11**

9.58 *The Borough Council recognises the growing need for day nurseries and play groups within the Borough and the increasingly important role of the private sector in providing such facilities.*

9.59 *This policy supports the provision of day nurseries and play groups within the Borough where they will not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of local residents or the character and appearance of the area.*

9.60 *The Borough Council's adopted parking standards are set out in the Appendix of the Local Plan. These indicate the maximum parking provision which will be sought.*

Residential Institutions

RC14

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW, OR FOR THE EXTENSION OR INTENSIFICATION OF USE OF EXISTING, RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS (WITHIN USE CLASS C2 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING USE CLASSES ORDER 1987) WILL BE PERMITTED WITHIN THOSE SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICIES PS4 AND PS5, WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE DEVELOPMENT WILL PROVIDE AN ADEQUATELY SIZED GARDEN FOR USE BY THE RESIDENTS;**
- II) THE SITE IS CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING THE NECESSARY PARKING AND MANOEUVRING AREAS FOR STAFF, RESIDENTS AND VISITORS;**
- III) THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE AMENITY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS BY VIRTUE OF NOISE, GENERAL DISTURBANCE AND LOSS OF PRIVACY DUE TO THE ACTIVITY UNDER CONSIDERATION OR THE VEHICULAR OR PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENTS IT GENERATES;**
- IV) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN, IN PARTICULAR POLICY RC11.**

9.61 *The Borough Council recognises the growing demand for residential institutions within the Borough and the increasingly important role of the private sector in providing such facilities.*

9.62 *The Borough Council considers the development of such institutions to be acceptable within existing settlements where they will not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of local residents or the character and appearance of the area.*

9.63 *The Cheshire County Council Parking Standards will be used to assess the adequacy of the parking and servicing arrangements.*

PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

RC15

DEVELOPMENT BY A PUBLIC UTILITY OR STATUTORY UNDERTAKER WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE SATISFIED:

- I) THE PROPOSAL IS ESSENTIAL TO THE MAINTENANCE OF AN EXISTING SERVICE, OR THE PROVISION OF A NEW SERVICE OR UNDERTAKING;**
- II) THE PROPOSAL ACCORDS WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

9.64 *The aim of this policy is to enable the necessary provision of public services and facilities within the Borough with due regard to their detailed environmental impact where operational necessity calls for their siting in sensitive locations.*

10. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

10.1 This chapter sets out all the development proposals identified for the Borough during the plan period. It includes new sites allocated for development and those sites previously proposed in the 1986 –2001 Local Plan which have not been so far been developed, but which it is considered should be retained as allocations. It also includes transport proposals which it is expected will be implemented during the plan period.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

10.2 Government advice on the identification of sites for development in Local Plans is set out in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Notes and in the government's sustainable development strategy.

10.3 The main thrusts of the guidance is that Local Planning Authorities should:

- give preference to using previously developed sites in urban areas which have ready access by non-car modes to jobs, shops and other services;
- exploit fully the potential for better use and conversion of existing buildings;
- consider raising the density of housing development in areas with good public transport accessibility;
- release land held for alternative uses where the amount of land held exceeds likely realistic requirements e.g. employment land;
- identify areas where, through land assembly, areawide redevelopment can be promoted.
- promote mixed use development areas, particularly in town centres or other areas highly accessible by means other than the car and in areas of major new development.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

10.4 Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13) sets out core development principles which development plans should consider in order to achieve sustainable development. These include:

- Economy on the use of land and buildings
- An enhancement in the overall quality of life
- Good design quality and respect for its setting
- Promoting sustainable economic growth, competitiveness and social inclusion

10.5 The Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan (policy GEN1) requires that Local Plans ensure that new development is guided primarily to sites within towns, or to sites on the edges of selected suitable towns. The scale and form of such development should be

compatible with its setting and seek to create, wherever practicable, compact mixed use neighbourhoods. District Councils should ensure that Local Plan allocations and planning permissions:

- do not use the best and most versatile agricultural land unless it can be demonstrated that no other suitable site is available;
- do not have a significant adverse effect on the development of identified mineral resources;
- are not located where there is a significant unavoidable risk from flooding, tidal inundation, coastal erosion or instability; and
- do not prejudice the long term planning of the area.

10.6 In allocating land to meet the Structure Plan requirements, policy IND2 requires, inter alia, that Local Plans should locate employment sites in areas accessible by a variety of means of transport whilst policy HOU2 of the Structure Plan requires that sites for new housing development should, wherever possible, be sited within 1.6km (1 mile) of existing or proposed local shops, community facilities and a primary school and be well related to public transport.

10.7 In terms of the provision of Regional Employment Sites at Sandbach and Middlewich, the Structure Plan requires that these should be between 8 and 50 hectares, on previously used land where possible, capable of being served by pedestrian and cycle routes and by public transport, well related to housing and associated facilities, accessible to the rail network and principal road network and be capable of providing a good environmental setting.

10.8 Policy TCR6 of the Structure Plan requires that retail sites should serve the needs of the town and its catchment and be of a size and scale appropriate to the character and function of the centre. Similarly sites for leisure, entertainment, food and drink, cultural and arts facilities are required to be within town centres and of a scale and nature appropriate to the centre's role (policy TCR7).

LOCAL CONTEXT

10.9 The process of identifying and selecting sites for development in the Local Plan is a complex and involved one which requires evaluating and assessing many different factors. Inevitably judgements have to be made and the opportunities for public consultation and inquiry in the plan preparation process will help in testing those judgements.

10.10 Using the plan's sustainable development objectives, the initial base for identifying sites for development was a comprehensive Urban Potential Study. This enabled the potential of the Borough's main urban areas to be assessed and suitable development sites to be identified. A detailed assessment was also undertaken of all potential development sites, both within the urban areas and on greenfield sites on the edges of settlements and in the open countryside, against a number of environmental and sustainability criteria.

Urban Potential Study

10.11 A key element of the local plan review has been the undertaking of an Urban Potential Study for the Borough; this concentrated on looking at the potential for development within the existing urban areas of the Borough to reduce the amount of new greenfield land needed to meet the future development requirements of the Borough. It reflects growing Government concern with the protection of greenfield sites from development though the redevelopment of urban, brownfield sites particularly for housing as evidenced in the recent statement from the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions that 60% of new dwellings nationally should be built on brownfield sites.

10.12 An Urban Potential Study represents an attempt to estimate the potential of a settlement to absorb development based on various assumptions and is one of the major tasks needed to help identify suitable sites for development. The work was undertaken by the Borough Council in early 1999 based on a methodology recommended to Local Authorities by the North West Regional Assembly and was combined with work required by the DETR for the National Land Use Database. It included all the urban areas of the towns of Congleton, Sandbach, Alsager and Middlewich plus the built-up areas of the main villages, namely Holmes Chapel, Goostrey, Scholar Green, Church Lawton, Rode Heath, Mow Cop and Mount Pleasant. This Study was subsequently updated in 2004 using the NWRA's latest methodology.

10.13 The Urban Potential Study includes sites with potential for housing, employment, retail and other uses. The results are set out in a separate report in the form of an analysis of all identified sites.

10.14 Whilst the study indicates that there is a good supply of potential development land within the urban areas of the Borough, it reveals significant variations in the nature, distribution, potential use and availability of this land which has important implications for future land use planning.

10.15 It is clearly evident that housing presents the major opportunity for development of urban sites across the Borough, whereas employment, retail and other uses tend to be confined to a few sites only. The most significant potential for housing lie within the urban area of Congleton and to a lesser extent Sandbach and Middlewich. The closure of the MMU Campus in Alsager will also provide an opportunity for redevelopment for mixed uses in the urban area. Much of this potential is shown to be on a few larger sites which are considered likely to come forward for development. On the other hand there are still a significant number of urban sites which could make a substantial contribution to the supply of housing land, but are unlikely to do so at present because of development constraints and planning policy restrictions.

10.16 The number of urban and brownfield sites available for employment development is very limited with the most potential being within Middlewich. However, even here the nature of most of the sites is such that they are unlikely to be available for speculative development within the plan period.

10.17 The study also clearly demonstrates that changing planning standards and policies can have a significant effect upon the number of dwellings which could be generated by

these sites. However, such a move would require a major change in overall planning policy.

Public Transport Accessibility Study

10.18 The purpose of this study was to assess existing levels of accessibility to public transport services in the towns and rural settlements of the Borough through the use of accessibility profiles.

10.19 Accessibility profiles are a series of contours or isobars around locations of good public transport which indicate the degree of accessibility on foot to public transport nodes. The concept of accessibility profiles was introduced in PPG13 which advises that Local Planning Authorities establish accessibility profiles for public transport in order to determine those sites which could meet the policy goals set out in the guidance. The undertaking of these profiles also fulfilled the requirements of the Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy which supports the use of accessibility profiles as a measure to help identify and tackle local transport issues. The results of the study have been used to assist in the identification of all new allocations.

Site Assessment

10.20 All the sites which are proposed for development in the Local Plan have been identified following a systematic analysis and assessment of a large number of potential development areas within and around the edge of existing settlements. These included sites identified from the Urban Potential Study, sites put forward by landowners, developers and consultants for consideration, and sites previously identified which were not included in the adopted Local Plan. As part of the review process, the selection of sites has also included sites allocated in the adopted Local Plan which have not come forward for development and committed sites with expired planning permissions in order to ensure their future use continues to be appropriate for the plan period.

10.21 In selecting sites for development the Borough Council has taken account of the following objectives:

- to give priority to utilising derelict, underused or previously developed land wherever practicable and appropriate;
- to give preference to sites within existing urban areas over sites in the open countryside;
- to ensure that development is kept within well-defined and recognisable boundaries and in particular to avoid Green Belts, areas of landscape, nature conservation or archaeological value, high quality agricultural land and areas of local amenity value;
- to ensure sites are well served, or capable of being well served, by a variety of means of transport, and by appropriate services and facilities;
- to ensure that new development makes the best possible use of the available infrastructure and its capacity to absorb development or makes a contribution to the improvement of the area's infrastructure;
- to ensure that the character of existing settlements is safeguarded;
- to ensure that a variety of sites are provided in locations which are viable to develop and meet local needs;

- to ensure that sites are relatively free from external constraints to their development.

10.22 A summary of all the sites considered and the results of their assessment is set out in a separate report.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS

10.23 In accordance with Government advice and the objectives of the Local Plan, much of the Borough's development requirements over the remainder of the plan period have been met on sites within existing urban areas, including the use of brownfield sites wherever possible. However, due to the lack of suitable brownfield sites in some areas, it has been necessary to utilise greenfield sites in order to fully meet Structure Plan requirements.

10.24 Table 6 indicates the proportion of land to be developed on brownfield and urban areas. Of the 212 hectares of land committed or allocated for built development in this plan, 33% is brownfield, and 63% located within existing urban areas. This figure could further increase rise as any windfall sites brought forward during this period are likely to be on brownfield, urban sites. Further details of the proportions of development on urban, rural, brownfield and greenfield land are set out in the Appendix.

10.25 All of the sites selected are those which the Borough Council considers are capable of being implemented within the plan period. Some sites will require land or infrastructure constraints to be overcome before development can commence. In these cases the Borough Council will work proactively with landowners, developers and the relevant agencies to enable development to proceed as planned. It is not expected that this will constrain the supply of land for development as there are other sites which have few constraints to their development or are already committed which will meet immediate needs. In some cases there is a requirement for the provision of certain off-site works or the dedication of land where it is needed to enable the development to proceed, or where it is related to the proposed development, or is intended to off-set the loss of or impact on any amenity present on site prior to development. For each site details of developer requirements, estimated dwelling numbers, net developable areas and affordable housing targets are set out in the 'Site Details' section at the end of the chapter.

Table 6 All Built Development by Land Type (September 2004)

	Brownfield	Greenfield	Urban	Non-Urban
Committed Sites	29% (37.82ha)	71% (91.99ha)	76% (98.52ha)	24% (31.29ha)
Allocated Sites	40% (33.2ha)	60% (49.8ha)	43% (36ha)	57% (47ha)
Total	33% (71.02ha)	67% (141.79ha)	63% (134.52ha)	37% (78.29ha)

Housing Allocations

10.26 One of the major functions of the Local Plan is to identify sites to accommodate the identified requirement for new housing. The Local Plan only allocates sites which are likely to provide 10 dwellings or more since these will provide the bulk of the provision and involve more significant land use change than smaller sites.

10.27 Table 7 indicates the proportion of new dwellings to be built on brownfield and greenfield sites over the remainder of the plan period. This indicates that some 81% of new dwellings committed or allocated will be on brownfield sites.

Table 7 Dwellings by Land Type (September 2004)

	Brownfield	Greenfield
Committed	79% (851 dwgs)	21% (230 dwgs)
Allocated Sites	90% (260 dwgs)	10% (30 dwgs)
Total	81% (1111 dwgs)	19% (260 dwgs)

10.28 The sites allocated in the Local Plan are intended to be wide ranging in their distribution and scale to cater for differing housing markets and to allow for development which is appropriate to the role and character of each settlement. They are also intended, wherever possible, to meet local needs and assist in maintaining local services. Some relatively large scale allocations are proposed where they would enable improvements in infrastructure and community facilities to be achieved.

10.29 In order that new housing meets community needs, the Local Plan sets out the Borough Council's requirements for the provision of infrastructure, open space and replacement facilities associated with such sites. Some sites will need to be subject to development briefs and legal agreements between the Borough Council and the developer(s).

10.30 In identifying sites for housing development density ranges of between 20 and 60 dwellings per hectare have been used to determine estimated dwelling provision to ensure that new development makes the best use of land and buildings. The proportion of housing which is required to be 'affordable' within each site has also been defined at a range between 15% and 25% for subsidised housing and 25% and 50% for low-cost market housing. The precise nature of the affordable housing, dwelling numbers and the range of house types within each site will be considered at the planning application stage subject to any requirements which may be set out in any development briefs.

Industrial and Business Allocations

10.31 The shortage of available suitable sites within the urban areas is such that it would not be possible to meet all of the Borough's needs on urban sites alone. Problems of likely adverse impact on residential amenity and increased traffic generation within built up areas, has further limited the potential for absorbing additional industry within existing urban areas. The need to provide significant good quality sites to attract new business into the Borough, which will meet the strategic requirements of the Structure Plan to provide regional employment sites and to reduce help outcommuting, has also been a major consideration in selecting sites.

10.32 As a result much of the Borough's remaining requirement for employment land has had to be met on greenfield land. The Borough Council is aware that in doing so there are major environmental issues which need to be addressed to ensure that development of such sites has minimal impact on areas and features of landscape and nature conservation value. Particular consideration has consequently been given to matters of design, landscaping and access to ensure the development of such sites is as sustainable as possible.

10.33 In order that issues relating to transport and environmental impact are properly dealt with, the Local Plan sets out the Borough Council's requirements for the provision of infrastructure, open space and landscaping associated with such sites. Some sites will need to be subject to development briefs and legal agreements between the Borough Council and the developer(s).

Mixed Use Allocations

10.34 In line with national and strategic planning guidance, emphasis has been placed on identifying mixed use sites in areas of high accessibility or regeneration which would provide a balance of uses to complement existing uses in the locality. Four mixed use development areas are proposed, all of which involve brownfield sites within which a range of appropriate uses will be sought. Most of these involve sites with existing uses or buildings which will require a comprehensive and sensitive approach to refurbishment and/or redevelopment.

Retail Allocations

10.35 The Local Plan identifies 3 retail allocations for the towns of Congleton, Sandbach and Middlewich, all of which are town centre sites. It is considered that these allocations, together with recent commitments and developments and existing retail provision, will be

sufficient to meet the retail needs of the Borough to 2011 as identified in the Borough Retail Study.

Recreation and Community Use Allocations

10.36 There are 7 sites allocated for a range of formal and informal recreation, leisure and community uses in the Local Plan. Of these, 4 are identified for formal recreational or community uses in order to make provision for replacement facilities for those existing sites allocated for housing and to provide improved local facilities in line with the recommendations of the Borough Leisure Strategy. The remainder are for informal recreational use to offset the loss of open land for housing use or to enhance local facilities.

TRANSPORT PROPOSALS

10.37 The Borough's extensive transport network and its link with the M6 motorway have been a major factor in the district's growth and will remain an important influence on its future development. Pressure on this network is likely to continue to increase during the plan period as the number of residents, businesses and visitors in the area grows. Maintaining an effective transportation network with a balanced provision of good roads and public transport services is, therefore, essential to the social and economic well-being of the district. Conversely there is growing concern over the environmental impact and safety of the transport network, particularly roads, both in urban and rural areas.

10.38 The primary responsibility for the highway system lies with the Department of Transport and Cheshire County Council. Since April 1998 a joint County and Borough Council arrangement has been established in respect of the Borough's roads.

Local Transport Plan

10.39 The Local Transport Plan for Cheshire, as well as setting out a strategy for transportation for the whole County, sets out specific proposals for the Borough. It proposes enhanced facilities, a review of local parking arrangements and management, further traffic calming measures, continuation of developer funded schemes for the Waggon & Horses Junction in Congleton and the Middlewich Eastern Bypass, improved cycle facilities, improvements to bus links and railway stations and the longer term re-opening of the Sandbach-Middlewich-Northwich railway line for passenger use.

10.40 The Local Plan seeks to support and encourage these proposals through the plan strategy (policy PS12), more general policy requirements (policies GR9 to GR18) and through specific transport proposals set out below.

Transportation Studies

10.41 Transportation Studies have been carried out by the County Council for Congleton and Sandbach and one is proposed for Middlewich. The studies aim to develop a more balanced and sustainable approach to transport problems and have an important role to play in identifying and furthering local transport solutions.

Summary of Proposed Transport Schemes

10.42 The schemes put forward in the Local Plan are consistent with the proposals identified for the Borough in the Local Transport Plan and the Transportation Studies. They seek to maintain and improve the existing transport infrastructure and facilitate greater choice of travel. In line with the objectives of the Local Plan and national and strategic planning guidance, priority has been given to schemes which will make better use of the existing road network and enhance facilities for town centres and public transport users.

10.43 The only significant new road scheme proposed is the completion of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass which will be provided in conjunction with new employment allocations. Wherever appropriate the Borough Council will seek funding towards the provision of these schemes from developers or will seek to achieve their provision through related development proposals.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

EMPLOYMENT SITES

DP1

THE FOLLOWING SITES ARE ALLOCATED FOR INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AS INDICATED BELOW AND DEFINED ON THE INSET MAPS:

CONGLETON

C1 EATON BANK 2.2 HECTARES - B1 USES

SANDBACH

S1 FODENS TEST TRACK, MOSS LANE 3.5 HECTARES – B1/B2 USES

ALSAGER

A1 MMU CAMPUS 0.5 HECTARES - B1 USES (MIXED USE ALLOCATION DP3(A1))

MIDDLEWICH

M1 SOUTH OF CLEDFORD LANE 35 HECTARES - B1/B2/B8 USES

M2 NEW FARM/CENTURA FOODS, BOOTH LANE 18 HECTARES - B1/B2/B8 USES (MIXED USE ALLOCATION DP3(M2))

M3 BROOKS LANE/ROAD BETA 6 HECTARES - B1/B2 USES (MIXED USE ALLOCATION DP3(M1))

10.44 *It is a principal aim of the Local Plan to ensure that a range of sites is available within the Plan Area which will be appropriate to the varying requirements of employers.*

The Local Plan allocates sites in the Plan Area which are intended to provide sufficient land for new employment development throughout the Plan Period. These proposals will together provide approximately 65.2 hectares of additional land for employment purposes of varying quality, size and type. Together with past completions and existing commitments, these will provide a total land supply of almost 159.2 hectares over the period mid-1996 to mid-2011.

10.45 *The schedule of sites listed in this Policy specifies the particular business or industrial uses which would be acceptable on each site to ensure that all business and industrial sectors are appropriately provided for, and that the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring developments. (The definitions used are those as given in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 - see Appendix).*

10.46 *Particular developer requirements relating to specific sites are set out in policies DP7, DP8 and DP9. Site descriptions and general development principles for each site are given at the end of this chapter.*

HOUSING SITES

DP2

THE FOLLOWING SITES ARE ALLOCATED FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AS INDICATED BELOW AND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS:

SANDBACH

S1	UNION STREET/NEWHALL AVENUE	70 DWELLINGS
S2	WHELOCK MILL	40 DWELLINGS
S3	NORTH OF CHAPEL STREET	30 DWELLINGS

ALSAGER

A1	MMU CAMPUS	150 DWELLINGS (MIXED USE ALLOCATION DP3(A1))
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10.47 *Most of the allocations first proposed in the Local Plan have now been implemented or have planning permission. There are 4 remaining allocations in the Local Plan which, together with current commitments of 1095 dwellings, are intended to provide sufficient additional land for new housing development for the remainder of the plan period. These allocations could provide in total approximately 290 additional new dwellings. Together with past completions and existing commitments and estimated losses due to demolitions, these will provide a total housing supply of 4856 dwellings (as at 31st July 2004) over the period mid-1996 to mid-2011.*

10.48 *Particular developer requirements relating to specific sites are set out in policies DP7, DP8 and DP9. Site descriptions and general development principles for each site are given at the end of this chapter.*

MIXED USE SITES

DP3

THE FOLLOWING AREAS ARE IDENTIFIED FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AS INDICATED BELOW AND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP:

CONGLETON

C1 BANK STREET

HOUSING / OFFICES / LEISURE /
RETAIL / COMMUNITY USES / CAR
PARK

ALSAGER

A1 MMU CAMPUS

VARIOUS USES (SEE POLICY
DP3A)

MIDDLEWICH

M1 BROOKS LANE/ROAD BETA

EMPLOYMENT / LEISURE / NON-
FOOD BULKY GOODS RETAIL/
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

M2 NEW FARM/CENTURA FOODS,
LANE

EMPLOYMENT / LEISURE / BOOTH
TOURISM

10.49 *Mixed-use development can contribute towards sustainable development by making urban areas more attractive to live, enriching the vitality and viability of settlements, reducing the need to travel and preserving and enhancing the historic heritage. These areas are considered suitable for mixed-use development by virtue of their location and the nature of the site. They offer potential for reuse, conversion or redevelopment for a range of appropriate uses which may contribute to improving, restructuring existing urban areas or regenerating an area.*

10.50 *The uses identified for each site are those which the Borough Council considers appropriate, but it would not necessarily preclude other suitable uses being considered. Good, innovative design and refurbishment is essential to ensure that mixed uses relate well to each other. Where appropriate the Borough Council may wish to produce a development/design brief to guide future development.*

10.51 *Particular developer requirements relating to specific sites are set out in policies DP7, DP8 and DP9. Site descriptions and general development principles for each site are given at the end of this chapter.*

ALSAGER CAMPUS

DP3A

- 1. PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF ALL OR PART OF MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY'S ALSAGER CAMPUS, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, WILL BE GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSION PROVIDING THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD:**

- A) BE CONSISTENT WITH THE INTENTION TO PROVIDE A SUSTAINABLE MIX OF LAND USES ON THE SITE;
 - B) BE SATISFACTORILY INTEGRATED WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE URBAN AREA;
 - C) NOT ADVERSELY IMPACT UPON THE LOCAL ROAD AND TRANSPORT NETWORK;
 - D) PROVIDE FOR SAFE AND SATISFACTORY ACCESS BY FOOT, CYCLE, PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND PRIVATE VEHICLES;
 - E) PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY DESIGN AND LAYOUT, TO REFLECT THE CONTEXT OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS; AND
 - F) NOT ADVERSELY IMPACT ON THE AMENITY OF FUTURE RESIDENTS, OTHER USERS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND THOSE LIVING AND WORKING IN THE VICINITY;
 - G) PROVIDE NEW BUILT DEVELOPMENT THAT REFLECTS AND IS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE LIMITED TO THE EXISTING BUILT DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINT;
 - H) PROVIDE FOR THE RETENTION FOR COMMUNITY USE, WHERE APPROPRIATE, OF THE EXISTING OUTDOOR AND INDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES ON THE SITE.
2. IN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE MIX OF LAND USES, REGARD SHALL BE HAD TO THE SCALE AND LOCATION OF EACH USE AND THE OBJECTIVE TO DELIVER THE COMPREHENSIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND MIXED-USE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE. THE FOLLOWING USES ARE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE:
- I) RESIDENTIAL USE (NOT EXCEEDING 150 DWELLINGS IN THE PLAN PERIOD);
 - II) SPORT AND RECREATIONAL USES;
 - III) SMALL SCALE NEIGHBOURHOOD RETAIL AND LEISURE USES (CLASSES A1, A2, A3 AND D2);
 - IV) EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL USES;
 - V) COMMUNITY USES;
 - VI) OFFICE/BUSINESS USES (CLASS B1);
 - VII) FORMAL AND INFORMAL PUBLIC OPEN SPACE;

- VIII) **PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES SUCH AS BUS STOPS, SHELTERS AND LAY-BYES; AND**
- IX) **CAR PARKING ASSOCIATED WITH ANY DEVELOPMENT.**
3. **PROPOSALS SHALL BE FORMULATED ON THE BASIS OF A COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT BRIEF TO COVER THE ENTIRE CAMPUS SITE, TO BE PREPARED EITHER BY, OR IN CONSULTATION WITH, THE COUNCIL AND WHICH SHALL BE SUBJECT TO FULL PUBLIC CONSULTATION BEFORE FINALISATION.**
4. **PRIOR TO THE WITHDRAWAL BY MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY OF ITS OPERATIONS FROM THE CAMPUS, PROPOSALS FOR NEW FACILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY WILL BE PERMITTED, SUBJECT TO CONSIDERATION OF THE AMENITIES OF ADJACENT OCCUPIERS AND USERS OF THE CAMPUS; PEDESTRIAN, CYCLE AND HIGHWAY SAFETY; AND COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE PLAN.**

10.52 The Alsager Campus extends to approximately 22.5 hectares and is located to the north west of Alsager, on the edge of and within the built up area and the Settlement Zone Line. Manchester Metropolitan University is the current owner of the Campus and has made a formal decision to withdraw its facilities and operations from Alsager and relocate them at Crewe.

10.53 A substantial part of the Campus will become redundant and available on a phased basis during the plan period. The first phase of withdrawal is expected to occur in 2004/2005, the second approximately three years later and the third is expected to take place towards the end of the plan period with the strong possibility that it will spill over into the next plan period.

10.54 The Council is anxious to ensure that the University's withdrawal does not result in a redundant and deteriorating site in this sensitive location abutting the open countryside. It is important therefore to establish a positive planning framework to guide appropriate and phased redevelopment of the Campus. Much of the site is already substantially developed and as such falls to be classified as 'brownfield' land. The Campus comprises numerous buildings and associated infrastructure, including a significant number of residential blocks and sport and recreation facilities. Given its location and characteristics, the site is appropriate for reuse or redevelopment for a range of uses including an element of housing. To prevent an over provision of housing in the area no more than 150 dwellings shall be provided on the site in the plan period. The site also has the potential to accommodate small businesses of a technological nature.

10.55 It is also important to consider the Campus site in the context of the Borough as a whole, which is characterised by attractive countryside some of which is within the green belt. Development land is at a premium and pressure to release greenfield sites is often intense. Indeed in some instances the Council has no option but to release greenfield land for development, given the shortage of brownfield land. The Alsager Campus site therefore represents an opportunity to accommodate some of the Borough's development needs in the plan period and beyond.

10.56 *The site needs to be redeveloped in a manner that ensures its efficient and effective use whilst recognising the various constraints. This policy establishes a clear and structured framework to guide potential developers, and to ensure a quality of development which reflects the sensitivity of the site and its surroundings.*

10.57 *Part 1 of the policy sets out the criteria against which any future development will be assessed and Part 2 promotes a balanced mix of uses (in terms of scale and location), and sets out what are considered to be appropriate land uses, although the list is not necessarily exhaustive.*

10.58 *Part 3 of the policy requires the preparation of a Development Brief to guide and assist in the comprehensive development of the site. The Council is committed to the preparation of such guidance, which will take the form of a Development Brief, in accordance with policy DP8. In turn it is likely that the Development Brief will require the preparation of a comprehensive Masterplan to ensure that an appropriate, balanced and integrated pattern of development comes forward on a logical and phased basis. Whilst the Brief and any Masterplan should be prepared in consultation or conjunction with the Council, these may be formulated by the landowner, developer or other interested parties. Any housing development will include a significant proportion of affordable housing and as a guide the Council will seek to negotiate an element of around 50%.*

10.59 *Finally, part 4 of the policy allows for the creation of new educational facilities which may be required by the University in advance of its full withdrawal from the Campus.*

10.60 *It is important that any redevelopment of the Campus site does not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding highway and transportation network. In that regard it is likely that any substantial future application(s) will need to be accompanied by a comprehensive Transportation Assessment. This shall have regard to, among other things, the accessibility of the site by non-car travel modes, necessary measures to avoid 'rat-running' in surrounding streets and the likely impact on the surrounding highway network, including the key junctions in the vicinity.*

10.61 *Where existing or new facilities are to be provided for community use, there will be a requirement for appropriate financial arrangements to be put in place which will ensure the management and maintenance of these facilities for the benefit of the public. The mechanism to achieve this will be the subject of negotiation and will amongst other things take account of the type and extent of the facilities proposed; the nature, extent and phasing of development on the site as a whole and the end user of the facilities.*

RETAIL SITES

DP4

THE FOLLOWING AREAS ARE PROPOSED AS BEING SUITABLE FOR IMPROVEMENT OR DEVELOPMENT FOR RETAIL USES AS INDICATED BELOW AND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS:

CONGLETON

C1 PRINCESS STREET/MILL STREET

GENERAL RETAIL

SANDBACH

S1 BROOKHOUSE ROAD GENERAL RETAIL

MIDDLEWICH

**M1 WHEELOCK STREET/
DARLINGTON STREET GENERAL RETAIL**

10.62 *It is the aim of the Borough Council to ensure that there is adequate provision for a range of retail uses to cater for the needs of the Borough to the end of the Plan Period, and it is considered that the above sites, together with existing commitments and opportunities for redevelopment within the defined town centres of the Borough, are adequate to meet the Boroughs retail requirements up to and including the year 2011.*

Particular developer requirements relating to specific sites are set out in policies DP7, DP8 and DP9. Site descriptions and general development principles for each site are given at the end of this chapter.

RECREATION, LEISURE AND COMMUNITY USE SITES**DP5**

THE FOLLOWING SITES ARE ALLOCATED FOR RECREATION, LEISURE AND/OR COMMUNITY USE AS INDICATED BELOW AND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS:

CONGLETON

C1 BACK LANE FORMAL OPEN SPACE

ALSAGER

**A1 MMU CAMPUS RECREATION, LEISURE &
COMMUNITY USES (MIXED USE
ALLOCATION DP3(A1))**

A2 SOUTH OF HOME FARM PHASE 2 FORMAL OPEN SPACE

MIDDLEWICH

M1 CIVIC WAY COMMUNITY USES

M2 CROXTON LANE INFORMAL OPEN SPACE

M3 SOUTH OF CLEDFORD LANE INFORMAL OPEN SPACE

10.63 *The allocation of these sites is intended to help ensure that there is an adequate provision of recreational and community uses to meet the Borough's future needs within the plan period. Additional areas of public open space, play areas, and amenity open space will also be required to be provided in association with any new housing developments (see Policy GR22 and the Council's Supplementary Guidance Note on Recreation and Public Open Space in New Residential Developments). Some of these sites are required to be provided by developers of associated housing allocations as proposed in policies DP7.*

10.64 Particular developer requirements relating to specific sites are set out in policies DP7, DP8 and DP9. Site descriptions and general development principles for each site are given at the end of this chapter.

DP6

A SITE ADJACENT TO THE EXISTING HOLMES CHAPEL SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT IN CRANAGE PARISH AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, IS RESERVED FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE TREATMENT PLANT

10.65 This site is considered to be necessary for the future expansion of such facilities to meet increasing demand the works to meet tighter environmental standards.

DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

DP7

PROPOSALS FOR THE FOLLOWING SITES ALLOCATED UNDER POLICIES DP1-6 MUST MAKE PROVISION FOR THE ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS LISTED BELOW:

CONGLETON

DP3(C1)	BANK STREET	PUBLIC CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS
DP4(C1)	PRINCESS STREET/MILL STREET	PUBLIC CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS
SANDBACH		
DP2(S1)	UNION STREET/NEWHALL AVENUE	REPLACEMENT FOOTBALL GROUND
DP2(S2)	WHELOCK MILL	INFORMAL OPEN SPACE
ALSAGER		
DP3(A1)	MMU CAMPUS	HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS, LANDSCAPING, LEISURE / COMMUNITY AND RECREATION FACILITIES

MIDDLEWICH

DP1(M1)	SOUTH OF CLEDFORD LANE	NEW HIGHWAY AND LANDSCAPE CORRIDOR
DP1(M2)	NEW FARM/CENTURA FOODS, BOOTH LANE	NEW HIGHWAY
DP3(M1)	BROOKS LANE/ROAD BETA	TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS
DP4(M1)	WHELOCK STREET/DARLINGTON ST.	HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

10.66 *In accordance with the advice contained in Government Circulars and Planning Policy Guidance Notes, the Local Planning Authority may require of developers the provision of certain works or the dedication of land where it is needed to enable the development to proceed, or where it is related to the proposed development, or is intended to off-set the loss of or impact on any amenity present on site prior to development. The allocated sites identified in this policy are those where the Borough Council considers it reasonable to seek such requirement from any applicant for planning permission. The requirement for individual allocations is set out in more detail in Section 10, the scale and nature of which will be considered in accordance with the tests in Circulars 11/95 and 1/97. In such cases the Borough Council may either impose an appropriate condition on the grant of any planning permission or may seek to enter into a “planning obligation” by a legal agreement with the applicant.*

10.67 *These requirements are additional to any normal on-site requirements needed to conform to other policies of the Local Plan (e.g. affordable housing and internal open space provision) and to adopted standards as set out in the supplementary planning guidance notes contained within the Appendix of the Local Plan.*

DP8

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE IN THE FORM OF A DEVELOPMENT BRIEF IS REQUIRED TO BE PREPARED AND APPROVED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR THE FOLLOWING SITES ALLOCATED UNDER POLICIES DP1-6 BEFORE PLANNING PERMISSION IS GRANTED:

CONGLETON

DP3(C1) BANK STREET
DP4(C1) PRINCESS STREET/MILL STREET

SANDBACH

DP2(S1) UNION STREET/NEWHALL AVENUE

ALSAGER

DP3(A1) MMU CAMPUS

MIDDLEWICH

DP1(M1) SOUTH OF CLEDFORD LANE
DP1(M2) NEW FARM/CENTURA FOODS, BOOTH LANE
DP3(M1) BROOKS LANE/ROAD BETA

THE CONTENTS OF THE APPROVED BRIEF WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL IN DETERMINING ANY APPLICATION FOR THESE SITES.

10.68 *Because of their local significance, scale and particular requirements it is proposed that Development Briefs should be prepared for these sites taking account of the aims and policies of the Local Plan. These Briefs will provide guidance on matters such as the type of housing, access arrangements, road layout, drainage, provision of open space, landscaping and those matters which may be subject to legal agreements. Whilst it is*

envisaged that the Borough Council would normally prepare the Development Brief, in appropriate cases it may be prepared by a developer or other party in liaison with the Borough Council. The Borough Council will undertake full public consultation on any development briefs which are proposed prior to their being adopted and referred to for determining planning applications.

DP9

A TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT IS REQUIRED TO BE PREPARED FOR THE FOLLOWING SITES ALLOCATED UNDER POLICIES DP1- 6 BEFORE PLANNING PERMISSION IS GRANTED:

CONGLETON

**DP1(C1) EATON BANK
DP3(C1) BANK STREET
DP4(C1) PRINCESS STREET/MILL STREET**

SANDBACH

**DP2(S1) UNION STREET/NEWHALL AVENUE
DP2(S2) WHEELOCK MILL**

ALSAGER

DP3(A1) MMU CAMPUS

MIDDLEWICH

**DP1(M1) SOUTH OF CLEDFORD LANE
DP1(M2) NEW FARM/CENTURA FOODS, BOOTH LANE
DP3(M1) BROOKS LANE/ROAD BETA
DP4(M1) WHEELOCK STREET/DARLINGTON STREET**

10.69 *Transport Assessments are required to be submitted alongside applications for these developments because they are likely to have a significant impact on local traffic levels. These assessments should illustrate the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site, together with details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling and reduce the number and impacts of motorised journeys associated with the proposal. These assessments will help the Borough Council to assess the application and provide a basis for negotiation on details of the scheme, such as the level of parking, and measures to improve the access to the site.*

TRANSPORT SCHEMES AND FACILITIES

New Road Schemes

DP10

THE FOLLOWING MAJOR ROAD SCHEMES, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, ARE PROGRAMMED TO BE UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PLAN PERIOD AND WILL BE SAFEGUARDED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL FROM ANY OTHER DEVELOPMENT:

MIDDLEWICH

M1 MIDDLEWICH EASTERN BYPASS (CLEDFORD LANE - TETTON BRIDGE)

10.70 *This proposal is an approved County Council scheme identified in the County Council's LTP and is programmed to be implemented during the Plan period. The Local Plan will therefore need to ensure that its implementation is not prejudiced by other development. Details of the scheme is given below:*

M1 - Middlewich Eastern Bypass (Cledford Lane - Tetton Bridge) - *this scheme replaces the former proposed diversion of Lewin Street to Brooks Lane, to remove through traffic from Lewin Street, and provides a much more effective and long term solution to problems of traffic congestion within Middlewich. This road will provide improved access to existing industrial areas and to a number of proposed development areas in Middlewich. This route will link to the existing new highway from Holmes Chapel Road to King Street to form part of a wider eastern bypass for Middlewich. Funding towards this scheme will also come from the private sector.*

Transport Facilities

DP11

THE FOLLOWING AREAS ARE PROPOSED IN PART OR ENTIRELY FOR NEW OR IMPROVED TRANSPORT FACILITIES AS INDICATED BELOW AND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS:

CONGLETON

- C1 PRINCESS STREET/MILL STREET/ STONEHOUSE GREEN - IMPROVED PUBLIC CAR PARKING FACILITIES**
- C2 MARKET STREET - BUS STATION IMPROVEMENTS**
- C3 CONGLETON RAILWAY STATION - IMPROVED PASSENGER FACILITIES**
- C4 BANK STREET - IMPROVED PUBLIC CAR PARKING FACILITIES**

SANDBACH

- S1 SANDBACH RAILWAY STATION - IMPROVED PASSENGER FACILITIES**
- S2 LAND NORTH OF CHAPEL STREET - IMPROVED PUBLIC CAR PARKING FACILITIES**

MIDDLEWICH

M1 KING STREET - NEW PASSENGER RAIL HALT

M2 LAND REAR OF WHEELOCK STREET - IMPROVED PUBLIC CAR PARKING FACILITIES

ALSAGER

A1 ALSAGER RAILWAY STATION - IMPROVED PASSENGER FACILITIES

10.71 The above schemes are considered to be of priority, in making better use of the existing road network and enhancing facilities for town centres and public transport users in accordance with the objectives of the local plan and national and strategic planning guidance as a whole.

SITE DETAILS

This section provides information and guidance to assist in the development of all allocated sites, identifying features and policy considerations which need to be taken into account and setting out development requirements which the Borough Council will expect to be met. The information provided does not comprise a formal development brief.

Employment Sites

DP1(C1) Eaton Bank, Congleton

Proposed Use: Employment (B1 Uses)
Gross Site Area: 2.2 ha.

Site Description: The site is located on the north-east side of Eaton Bank on the opposite side of the road to the existing Siemens premises. The area is greenfield comprising in the main of rough pasture with steep banks along the northern and western edges of the site. A small part of the north eastern part of the site is within the Congleton Wildlife Corridor and River Dane Site of Biological Importance.

Development Requirements: The location of the site makes it suitable for employment purposes and it is currently identified as an owner specific employment site. In view of its location near to residential areas and a school, the site is appropriate for B1 employment uses only. Existing landscape and ecological features along the boundary of the site should be retained and supplemented by further landscaping. An ecological and a flood risk assessment are required.

Implementation: Private sector

DP1(S1) Fodens Test Track, Moss Lane, Sandbach

Proposed Use: Employment (B1/ B2 Uses)
Gross Site Area: 3.5 ha.

Site Description: Brownfield site which was the former test track for Fodens Trucks but is no longer in use. Open site bounded by the Trent & Mersey canal to the west, which is a designated Conservation Area, and the railway line to the east. Moss Lane adjoins the northern boundary of the site accessed over a railway bridge of limited width.

Development Requirements: The site is appropriate for B1 and B2 industrial uses. The layout and design of any scheme shall have particular regard to the canal Conservation Area along the western boundary with retention and enhancement of any existing natural features along the canalside. Access to the site shall be from Mill Lane which will require off-site improvements to the bridge.

Implementation: Private sector

DP1(A1) MMU Campus, Alsager

See Mixed Use allocation DP3(A1) for site details

DP1(M1) South of Cledford Lane, Middlewich

Proposed Use: B1/B2/B8 Uses
Gross Site Area: Employment: 35 ha.
 Informal Open Space: 15 ha

Site Description: A roughly triangular open countryside greenfield site bounded by the brook to the north and east, open countryside to the south and the railway line and the line of the Middlewich Eastern By-Pass to the

west. The site is open but traversed by an overhead line running north-south and contains several significant landscape and ecological features including the valley and watercourse of Sandersons brook, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and ponds. The site is essentially flat but slopes gently upwards in an easterly direction away from the brook.

Development Requirements: Provision, prior to occupation of any of the development, of remaining length of Middlewich Eastern By-Pass to Booth Lane, with the precise alignment and point of access to the site from the by-pass to be the subject of determination in due course. Any alignment of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass through the site should not place a restriction on any part of the site coming forward. There is to be no access into this area off Cledford Lane, other than for pedestrian or cycle purposes. Substantial structural landscape treatment required to all boundaries of the site with a corridor of informal open land maintained to the north and east. The exact boundaries of the employment allocation where it adjoins the informal open space allocation need to be precisely identified in conjunction with the Environment Agency in order to ensure full valley features of Sandersons Brook are safeguarded and retained. Significant landscape and ecological features will as far as possible be retained. Development of this site needs to facilitate the potential for units to be serviced by rail, if so required. A Green Commuter Plan will be required to address means of reducing car usage and facilitating access by other means. A Development Brief, Environmental Impact Assessment (including protected species survey) and Transport Assessment will also be required.

Implementation: Private sector

DP1(M2) New Farm/Centura Foods, Booth Lane, Middlewich

See Mixed Use allocation DP3(M2) for site details

DP1(M3) Brooks Lane/ Road Beta, Middlewich

See Mixed Use allocation DP3(M1) for site details

Housing Sites

DP2(S1) Land off Union Street/Newhall Avenue, Sandbach

Proposed Use:	Housing
Gross Site Area:	2.25 ha.
Estimated Dwelling Provision:	70
Affordable Housing Element:	25% subsidised; 50% low-cost market

Site Description: An urban brownfield site comprising of an area of unused ground, a football ground and a Council depot. Part of site previously used as gas works is potentially contaminated. It is adjoined to the north and west by residential development in Union Street and Newhall Avenue; to the south by an area of public open space and part of the Sandbach Wildlife Corridor; and to the east by land which has the benefit of planning permission for a small supermarket.

Development Requirements: High density housing including a high element of low-cost and affordable housing. Vehicular access shall be from Old Mill Road combined with access to the proposed adjoining retail site. Development shall not take place until such time as an alternative football ground a replacement facility which is of at least an equivalent or better quality and quantity has been provided in or on the edge of Sandbach. A contribution to enhancement of local recreational facilities required in lieu of on-site provision. The layout and design of any development should respect the sites prominence and topography. The south-eastern corner of the site should be kept free of development and suitably landscaped to enhance the wildlife corridor. Appropriate measures to deal with any on-site contamination from previous uses will be required. Consideration may be given to the phased development of the site with separate access arrangements subject to compliance with highway requirements. A revised Development Brief, Transport Assessment and ecological survey are required in respect of any development on this site.

Implementation: Private sector

DP2(S2) Wheelock Mill, Sandbach

Proposed Use:	Housing / Informal Open Space
Site Area:	Housing: 0.85 ha. Informal Open Space: 0.78 ha.
Estimated Dwelling Provision:	40
Affordable Housing Element:	15% subsidised; 25% low-cost market

Site Description: An urban brownfield site currently in employment and retail use. The site is bordered by the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area to the north and by residential properties and open countryside to the south and west. The river Wheelock runs to the south of the site forming the southern boundary to part of the site. Access to the site is from Crewe Road.

Development Requirements: Medium/high density housing development incorporating a significant element of affordable housing. Although none of the buildings are listed, the Mill itself is considered of local value and consideration should be given to its retention and conversion where viable and appropriate. The layout and design of the development should respect the adjacent Canal Conservation Area. Provision of pedestrian access to the adjoining towpath and investigations to identify possible contamination from previous use will be necessary. Provision and laying out of informal open space to the west of the site is also required which should include measures to facilitate public access with appropriate landscaping and the protection/enhancement of any canal or riverside habitats. Removal of the existing business will be a pre-requisite for development and the provision of improved access and visibility splays will be required together with a transport assessment. Any development proposals will have to be supported by a flood risk assessment with details of the way risk can be minimised.

Implementation: Private sector

DP2(S3) North of Chapel Street, Sandbach

Proposed Use:	Housing and Car Park
Site Area:	1 ha.
Estimated Dwelling Provision:	30
Affordable Housing Element:	25% subsidised; 50% low-cost market

Site Description: The site is bordered by residential development to the north and to the east of the site, and by Chapel Street to the south, with residential development and Council Offices to the west. The northern part of the site is currently in the ownership of the Borough Council and used for parking purposes. The remainder of the site is in a number of private ownership's with the southernmost strip being owned by the Borough Council and used as an informal offstreet parking area. The site is currently underused and unattractive in appearance and it is considered that the development of this site would improve the overall appearance of Chapel Street. The site adjoins a Conservation area and lies within the Town Centre Inset for Sandbach.

Development Requirements: A medium to high density housing development incorporating a significant element of affordable housing. The proximity of the site to the town centre also makes it suitable for a sheltered housing scheme. On site public open space/play space provision or a contribution to enhancement of local recreational facilities in lieu of on site provision required. Access to the site is inadequate at present and will require highway improvements and/or traffic management measures to Chapel Street and its junction with Middlewich Road or Bradwall Road, as appropriate, being provided by the developer. The layout and design of the development should respect its town centre location and the adjacent Conservation Area. There is a requirement for the retention of an off-street public car park within the site.

Implementation: Borough Council / Private sector

DP2(A1) MMU Campus, Alsager

See Mixed Use allocation DP3(A1) for site details

Mixed Use Sites

DP3(C1) Bank Street, Congleton

Proposed Use: Housing / Offices / Leisure / Retail / Community Uses / Car Parking

Gross Site Area: 1 ha

Site Description: Urban brownfield site comprising of public car park, timber yard, breakers yard, garage and various outbuildings situated within the town centre and on the edge of a Conservation Area. Although none of the buildings within the site are required to be retained, there are several Listed buildings adjoining the site.

Development Requirements: Whole of site is suitable for redevelopment for mixed uses to complement the town centre. The retention of public car parking facilities within the site is essential and should provide approximately 100 spaces. It is envisaged that the Timber Yard would lend itself to redevelopment for a high-density housing scheme with a high element of low-cost and affordable housing. The remainder of the site would be more suited to retail or commercial uses. Strong pedestrian linkages to the rest of the town centre are required and the scheme should respect existing buildings along Lawton Street and Bank Street. New development should maintain and enhance the character of the area through sympathetic and high quality design. Access to the site should be predominantly from Mountbatten Way via the existing junction with Park Street. A contribution to enhancement of local recreational facilities required in lieu of on-site provision. A Development Brief and Transport Assessment including air quality and noise impact assessments are required to be prepared to facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of the site. It will also be necessary for an Archaeological Evaluation of the site to be carried out to an agreed brief prior to the determination of any application.

Implementation: Private sector

DP3(A1) MMU Campus, Alsager

Proposed Use: Various Uses

Gross Site Area: 22.5 ha.

Net Development Area: 7 ha

Site Description: The Alsager Campus is located to the north west of Alsager, on the edge of and within the built up area and the Settlement Zone Line. Manchester Metropolitan University is the current owner of the Campus and has made a formal decision to withdraw its facilities and operations from Alsager and relocate them at Crewe. Much of the site is already substantially developed and as such falls to be classified as 'brownfield' land. The Campus comprises numerous buildings and associated infrastructure, including a significant number of residential blocks and sport and recreation facilities.

Development Requirements: Given its location and characteristics, the site is appropriate for reuse or redevelopment for a range of uses including an element of housing. To prevent an over provision of housing in the area no more than 150 dwellings shall be provided on the site in the plan period. Any housing development will include a significant proportion of affordable housing and as a guide the Council will seek to negotiate an element of around 50% (comprising of both subsidised and low-cost market housing). The site needs to be redeveloped in a manner that ensures its efficient and effective use whilst recognising the various constraints. Policy DP3A of the Local Plan establishes a clear and structured framework to guide potential developers, and to ensure a quality of development which reflects the sensitivity of the site and its surroundings. It sets out the criteria against which any future development will be assessed and promotes a balanced mix of uses (in terms of scale and location), and sets out what are considered to be appropriate land uses, although the list is not necessarily exhaustive.

A Development Brief is required to be prepared to guide and assist in the comprehensive development of the site including a comprehensive Masterplan to ensure that an appropriate, balanced and integrated pattern of development comes forward on a logical and phased basis. Any substantial future application(s) will also need to be accompanied by a comprehensive Transportation Assessment. This shall have regard to, among other things, the accessibility of the site by non-car travel modes, necessary measures to avoid 'rat-running' in surrounding streets and the likely impact on the surrounding highway network, including the key junctions in the vicinity.

Where existing or new facilities are to be provided for community use, there will be a requirement for appropriate financial arrangements to be put in place which will ensure the management and maintenance of these facilities for the benefit of the public. The mechanism to achieve this will be the subject of negotiation and will amongst other things take account of the type and extent of the facilities proposed; the nature, extent and phasing of development on the site as a whole and the end user of the facilities.

Implementation: Private sector

DP3(M1) Brooks Lane/Road Beta, Middlewich

Proposed Use: Employment (B1/B2 Uses) / Leisure / Non-Food Bulky Goods Retail / Community Facilities

Gross Site Area: 6 ha.

Site Description: A flat, irregular shaped site bounded by established industrial, residential and community uses to the north, the Trent and Mersey Canal to the west, the Lagoons (lime beds) to the south and the railway line to the east. The site represents a brownfield site which is suitable for redevelopment. There a number of existing industrial and office buildings within the site.

Development Requirements: A significantly sized and located site which is suitable for a wide variety of uses. The overall requirement is for a mixed development to take place on the site which recognises the site's potential to accommodate a range of new forms of development which cannot be accommodated elsewhere. In this respect, the Local Authority would look to the provision of employment land (maximum of 40.6 hectares to incorporate B1 and B2 uses); leisure (including the potential for the incorporation within the development of a marina to serve the adjacent canal); non-food bulky goods retail (providing that the type and scale of development does not undermine the vitality and viability of existing centres nearby); specialist retail facilities associated with leisure development of the canalside area and, community facilities. A small amount of residential development to a maximum of 20 dwellings is also potentially acceptable as part of any canal related leisure development. Transportation improvements may be required, depending on the scale and nature of the uses being proposed. Such improvements may include the provision of a dedicated vehicular access off the Middlewich Eastern By-pass, off-site improvements to the local highway network and the reservation of a site for a passenger rail halt in the event that it is not possible to provide this on the King Street site (in anticipation of the line being re-opened for passenger usage). In addition, measures for improved convenient pedestrian links to the town centre from the site, improvements to the canalside environment, and the need to respect and accommodate any features of nature conservation importance will be required. A Development Brief, Transport Assessment, Environmental Impact and Contaminated Land Assessments will be required for the whole of the site.

Implementation: Private sector

DP3(M2) New Farm/Centura Foods, Booth Lane, Middlewich

Proposed Use: Employment (B1/B2/B8Uses) / Leisure / Tourism

Gross Site Area: 18 ha.

Site Description: A mixed brownfield and greenfield site bounded by the Trent & Mersey Canal and Booth Lane to the south, open countryside and the line of the southern-most portion of the Middlewich Eastern By-Pass to the south, the railway line to the east and the British Salt premises to the north. The site adjoins and lies partly within the Trent & Mersey Canal Conservation Area and encompasses Centura Foods premises which are currently in employment use and land occupied by New Farm, most of which is used for the grazing of horses.

Development Requirements: Although allocated predominantly for B1, B2 and B8 employment uses, its location adjoining the canal lends itself also to leisure and tourism uses. Whilst the existing buildings on the site are not in themselves worthy of retention, the adjoining Conservation Area designation surrounding the Trent & Mersey Canal will set the context for the scale and design and properties within the southern boundary of the site. Development of this site needs to facilitate the potential for units to be serviced by rail, if so required. Existing hedgerows and watercourses within the site should be retained wherever possible. The development of this site will be expected to contribute towards the provision, prior to occupation of any of the development, of the Middlewich Eastern By-Pass through the site to its junction with Booth Lane. Any

alignment of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass through the site should not place a restriction on any part of the site coming forward. A Development Brief, Transport Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment are required in respect of this site.

Implementation: Private sector

Retail Sites

DP4(C1) Princess Street, Congleton

Proposed Use: General Retail
Gross Site Area: 0.8 ha.
Net Retail Floorspace: approx. 4,000 sq. m.

Site Description: Urban brownfield site located within the town centre. The site is bordered by Mill Street to the west, Princess Street and the Bridestones Centre to the east. It includes the existing covered and open market and a public car park to the north. The site contains a mixture of uses, including a number of retail units and small industrial workshops in several private ownerships, and a yard and vacant area of rough scrubland. There is a considerable drop in level from Mill Street down to Princess Street. The site is generally of poor environmental quality and would benefit from comprehensive redevelopment. The site adjoins a Conservation Area and several Listed Buildings.

Development Requirements: Considered suitable for redevelopment for predominantly retail uses. The retention and enlargement of public car parking facilities within the site is essential. Also the existing market is required to be either retained and enhanced within the site with improved access to the town centre, or may be relocated to a more appropriate location. Any scheme should be of a high design quality, respecting existing buildings around the site and providing for improved pedestrian linkages into the Bridestones Centre, Duke Street and Mill Street. A Development Brief and Transport Assessment are required. It will also be necessary for an Archaeological Evaluation of the site to be carried out to an agreed brief prior to the determination of any application.

Implementation: Private sector

DP4(S1) Land between High Street and Brookhouse Road, Sandbach.

Proposed Use: General Retail
Gross Site Area: 0.6 ha
Net Retail Floorspace: approx. 1,000 sq. m.

Site Description: A predominantly urban brownfield site located to the rear of properties fronting High Street, Sandbach. It comprises a mixture of uses, including rough grassland, gardens, and one property with an adjoining yard, and is currently in several different ownerships. The southernmost 0.2 ha has the benefit of outline planning permission for a veterinary hospital granted in November 1998.

Development Requirements: The site is considered to be appropriate primarily for retail development, but other commercial uses such as offices or hotel development may also be acceptable. Whilst priority will be given to employment generating uses, an element of housing may be acceptable within the overall development, preferably above ground floor level. As the site is in a prominent position, being highly visible from Old Mill Road, and in view of its proximity to a Conservation Area and Listed Buildings (the Old Hall Hotel and its outbuildings) any development should be of high design quality. Vehicular access shall be taken from Brookhouse Road and not from the High Street with additional pedestrian access obtained direct from High Street and George's Walk. It will also be necessary for an Archaeological Evaluation of the site to be carried out to an agreed brief prior to the determination of any application. An ecological assessment of the site will also be required.

Implementation: Private sector

DP2(M1) Wheelock Street / Darlington Street, Middlewich

Proposed Use: General Retail
Gross Site Area: 1.2 ha
Net Retail Floorspace: approx. 3,000 sq. m.

Site Description: An urban brownfield site located off Wheelock Street (the town's main shopping street) and Darlington Street – it comprises of a grassed parcel of land, a roughly surfaced parking area accessed off Wheelock Street through a gap in the frontage between Nos. 57 and 63 Wheelock Street, a commercial use off Darlington Street, outbuildings at the rear of properties fronting Wheelock Street and a large detached property and the substantial grounds surrounding it which comprises the southern half of the site. The site is consequently currently in a number of ownerships.

Development Requirements: Site is suitable for general retail uses, but other commercial or employment uses may be considered. Off-site highway improvements and traffic management measures are required. In view of its relationship with the Conservation Area a sensitive scheme is required which links with Wheelock Street. The layout should seek to retain existing trees within the site. In view of the sensitive location of the site and likely traffic implications for the town centre, a Development Brief and Transport Assessment are required for the site.

Implementation: Private sector

Recreation, Leisure and Community Use Sites

DP5(C1) Back Lane, Congleton

Proposed Use: Formal Open Space
Gross Site Area: 3.6 ha

Site Description: An area of open farmland alongside existing recreation provision at Back Lane. Consists of single grassed field used currently as a paddock for grazing.

Development Requirements: This allocation is intended as an additional area of land for use as sports pitches, using the existing changing and car parking facilities on the existing site. This allocation will help to alleviate some of the deficiency in outdoor sports pitch provision identified in Congleton and would provide approximately four additional pitches. Wherever feasible, existing hedges worthy of retention should be kept. Where hedge loss is unavoidable, new hedges should be planted nearby. Particular consideration should be given to the impact of permanent buildings and structures on the openness of the area. Near to residential properties careful consideration should also be given to the impact of the use and ancillary structures, especially lighting, on the local amenity. Wherever practical, features of nature conservation value including any on-site ponds should be protected.

Implementation: Private sector

DP5(A1) MMU Campus, Alsager

See Mixed Use allocation DP3(A1) for site details

DP5(A2) Land South of Home Farm (Phase 2), Alsager

Proposed Use: Formal Open Space
Gross Site Area: 6 ha.

Site Description: An irregular shaped piece of land to the south of the Home Farm estate, being bounded by allotments to the east, the railway to the south and open countryside to the west. The northern part of the site is within an area which is possibly liable to flooding.

Development Requirements: This site is intended to accommodate the need which has been identified for the provision of formal football pitches – recreational provision for the town. The site will require the associated provision of changing facilities and a dedicated vehicular access in order that traffic associated with this use does not have to pass through residential areas. An ecological assessment is required, including measures for retention and enhancement of existing features and the wildlife corridor along the brook.

Implementation: Private sector

DP5(M1) Land off Civic Way, Middlewich

Proposed Use: Community/Leisure
Gross Site Area: 0.4 ha.

Site Description: A relatively level grassed parcel of land off Civic Way bounded by the Civic Hall car Park, residential properties and the community centre to the north; the medical centre to the west, all weather playing facility to the south and the Wych Community Centre to the east. The site is consequently situated therefore amongst a range of uses.

Development Requirements: The site is allocated for community uses and is considered to be suitable for accommodating a range of social, recreational or leisure uses to serve the town. Access and parking should utilise the existing arrangements off Civic Way.

Implementation: Town Council / Borough Council

DP5(M2) Land off Croxton Lane, Middlewich

Proposed Use: Recreation
Gross Site Area: 3.0 ha

Site Description: This is the site of a former sewage disposal plant which has since been dried and filled with household waste; the refuse tip currently in use is well screened from the rest of the site.

Development Requirements: The area could provide a valuable recreational resource because of its relationship with the River Wheelock, River Dane and the Trent and Mersey Canal and its links to other open spaces via the public footpath system which follows the course of the River Wheelock. It is considered to be most suitable for informal recreational activities. Any recreational use of the site will need to be carefully balanced with the nature conservation needs of the site.

Implementation: Town Council / Borough Council / County Council

DP5(M3) South of Cledford Lane, Middlewich

See employment allocation DP1(M1) for site details

11. IMPLEMENTATION

11.1 The Local Plan provides a land use context for all development proposals, forming the basis for decisions on planning applications and the Borough Council's own investment decisions and programmes. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with Government guidance on plan preparation so that only those developments which the Borough Council can reasonably expect to be commenced within the Plan Period are incorporated as proposals. However, appropriate measures will be necessary to ensure that policies and proposals are able to be implemented.

11.2 The role of the Plan is to guide and co-ordinate the decisions of private investors, the Local Authority and the many other agencies who will be involved in implementing the Plan by undertaking development and/or providing services and facilities. The implementation of the proposals in the Plan must therefore be practical and effective if its aims and objectives are to be achieved through the widest possible co-operation and involvement of all the individual agencies concerned.

11.3 Much of the investment needed to implement measures and schemes to achieve the Plan's objectives will come from the private sector. In this respect the Local Plan has an important role to play in providing clear guidance on where development can or cannot take place. In addition to providing additional housing, employment, retail and leisure uses on sites identified in the Local Plan, the Borough Council will also expect developers to provide, where appropriate, the necessary infrastructure, community facilities and the open spaces arising from the development proposals themselves. Some of the development is likely to be on unidentified sites and in these cases the Borough Council will

ensure that it takes place in a manner which meets the objectives of the Local Plan.

11.4 Although it is intended that all the proposals contained within the Plan will be commenced within the Plan Period, this cannot be guaranteed to happen since it will largely be dependent upon the availability of adequate finance and other circumstances which cannot always be foreseen. Most of the proposals fall to be implemented by the private sector and the timing of these are, therefore, largely out of the control of the Borough Council. Some of the policies and proposals rely solely on implementation by the Borough Council and in these instances the level of finance available to it for implementing projects is greatly influenced by Central Government policies or public sector expenditure and is thereby subject to fluctuation.

The Council's Role

11.5 The Council will implement the policies of the Local Plan through the following measures, as appropriate:

- **Development Control**

Through the use of its planning powers under the Town & Country Planning Acts the Borough Council will determine planning applications in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan and use enforcement powers to ensure development takes place in accordance with the Local Plan.

- **Guidance and Advice**

The Borough Council will provide guidance and advice to potential developers and the public through pre-application meetings and the preparation of supplementary planning guidance in the form of development briefs and subject policy notes to ensure development is implemented in accordance with the policies in the Local Plan.

- **Consultation and Liaison**

It is recognised that there are many statutory, voluntary and private agencies and bodies operating within the Borough who have an interest in land-use planning, either through their responsibilities or their role as landowner. These will play a significant role in controlling, facilitating, encouraging and providing development to achieve the Local Plan's objectives. Wherever appropriate, the Borough Council will ensure that such agencies are involved in the implementation of development by the private sector, through consultation and liaison on planning applications and on specific schemes or initiatives.

- **Agreements and Obligations**

The Borough Council may require or liaise with developers and landowners for the use of agreements or planning obligations to secure the provision of certain facilities, rights or funding to achieve planning requirements in relation to development or initiatives in accordance with the Local Plan.

- **Studies and Surveys**

Although several studies and surveys have already been undertaken to help produce the Local Plan, further studies may be sought where appropriate to assist in the implementation of policies or the determination of applications. In such cases the Borough Council may initiate or undertake them itself or may require developers or landowners to undertake them where they are deemed necessary in order to facilitate development.

- **Funding**

Through the priorities it attaches to specific projects and programmes in its own capital and revenue budgets and through grant aid from outside sources, funding may be used to help implement specific schemes, purchase land, facilitate development by others or undertake environmental and traffic measures. The level of resources available for implementing specific projects will be dependent on the Council's own spending programme and the availability of funding from grant allocations from Central Government and other bodies. The Borough Council will also endeavour to bid for funding from specific initiatives as opportunities arise.

- **Land Assembly**

The Borough Council as landowner may, where appropriate, seek to facilitate development which accords with the Local Plan by releasing land which is surplus to requirements or which would provide wider community benefits. The Borough Council may also intervene in the development process to bring land forward for development through the use of CPO powers to assemble land where it would be in the community's interest.

- **Enabling Role**

The role of the Borough Council is increasingly one of 'enabler' facilitating development by promoting strategies, co-ordinating the actions and investment of others and encouraging appropriate development. Where appropriate, the Borough Council may also use its influence to lobby other bodies, authorities and government agencies for funding and action to help implement schemes over which the Council itself has no direct control.

11.6 Table 9 illustrates how these various measures may be used by the Borough Council to implement the policies of the Local Plan. The table also identifies other policy and strategy documents which will be used by the Borough Council to help implement the relevant policies and the particular objectives of the Local Plan which implementation will help achieve.

11.7 In respect of individual development sites, section 10 sets out in detail the Borough Council's requirements and those who will be responsible for their implementation.

KEY TO CODES IN TABLE 9

Measures

DC	Development Control	GA	Guidance and advice
CL	Consultation and liaison	AO	Agreements and obligations
SS	Studies and surveys	F	Funding
LA	Land assembly	E	Enabling role

Supporting Guidance

AP	Area Profiles
CA	Conservation Area Assessments
CLR	Contaminated Land Register
CS	Cultural Strategy
CSS	Community Safety Strategy
ELS	Employment Land Study
EQS	Environmental Quality Strategy
HNS	Housing Needs Study
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
MLP	Minerals Local Plan
NCS	Nature Conservation Strategy
RCS	Retail Capacity Study
ROS	Recreation and Open Space Survey
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
STS	Sustainable Transport Strategy
TS	Transport Studies
UPS	Urban Potential Study
WLP	Waste Local Plan

Table 8 Implementation Measures

			Objectives Achieved
PS1-2	General Scale and Location of Development	DC,SS, LA, E	1,2,5,8,9,10,11
PS3	Settlement Hierarchy	DC,SS	2,3,4,5,10
PS4-6	Towns, Villages and Settlements	DC,SS	SPG 1,2,3,4,5,8,9,10
PS7	Green Belt	DC,SS	SPG 1,2,3,4,12
PS8	Open Countryside	DC,SS	SPG 2,3,4,8,12
PS9	Areas of Special County Value	DC,SS	LCA 2,6
PS10	Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope Consultation Zone	DC,SS,CL	2
PS11	Strategic Development Areas	DC,E,GA,LA	SPG 1,2,5,8
PS12	Strategic Transport Corridors	DC,E,CL,LS LA, A0	LTP,STS,TS 1,2,4
GR1	New Development	DC,GA	2,4,6,7
GR2-3	Design	DC,GC,AG,SS	SPG,CS,NCS,CSS 6,4,7
GR4-5	Landscape	DC,GC,AG,SS	LCA,NCS,SPG 6,7
GR6-8	Amenity and Health	DC,GC,AG,SS,AO	SPG 7,12
GR9-17	Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision	DC,GC,AG,SS,AO	LTP,STS,TS,SPE 4
GR18	Traffic Generation	DC,GC,AG,SS,AO	LTP,SPG,TS 4
GR19-21	Infrastructure	DC,CL,SS,AG	SPG 11
GR22	Open Space Provision	DC,GA,AO,SS	SPG,LS,ROS 11

GR23	Provision of Services and Facilities	DC,AO,SS	AP	11
GR24	Wider Environmental Considerations	DC,GA,AO,SS	SPG	12
NR1	Trees and Woodlands	DC,GC,AO,F,SS	NCS,SPG	6,7
NR2-5	Wildlife and Nature Conservation	DC,GA,CL,AO,F,SS,E	NCS,SPG	6,7
NR6-7	Reclamation of Contaminated, Derelict and Brownfield Land	DC,CL,SS,F,E	CLR,UPS,MLP,WLP	3,12
NR8	Agricultural Land	DC,CL		3,12
NR9	Renewable Energy	DC	SPG	12
BH1	Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest	DC,GA,CL,SS,E,F	LCA	6,7
BH2-5	Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest	DC,GA,CL,SS,E,F	SPG	3,6,7
BH6	Non-Statutory List of Buildings and Structures	DC,GA,CL,SS,E,F	SPG	3,6,7
BH7	Enabling Development	DC,GA,CL,AO,E,F	SPG	3,6,7
BH8-10	Conservation Areas	DC,GA,CL,SS,E,F	SPG,CA	6,7
BH11-12	Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites	DC,GC,CL,AO,F		6,7
BH13-14	New Agricultural Buildings	DC,GA	SPG	8
BH15-16	Conversions of Rural Buildings	DC,GA	SPG	3,6,7,8
E1	General Scale of New Employment Development	DC,SS,LA,E	ELS	1,2,8
E2-7	Employment Development	DC,GA,CL,AO,LA,F	SPG,ELS,UPS	1,2,3,5,8

E9	Royal Ordnance Factory, Radway Green	DC,GA,CL		3,8
E10	Re-use of Redevelopment of Existing Employment Sites	DC,GA,AO,SS	ELS,UPS	3
E11	Owner-specific Employment Sites	DC,GA,CL		3,8
E12	Distribution and Warehousing	DC,GA,CL,AO,E	STS	2,4,8
E13-15	Roadside Facilities	DC,GA,CL,AO		8
E16-18	Tourism and Visitor Development	DC,GA,CL,AO	CS	6,8,11
E19	Telecommunications	DC,GA,CL	SPG	6,7
<hr/>				
H1-2	General Scale of New Housing Development	DC,SS,LA,E		1,2,9
H3-6	Residential Development	DC,GA,CL,AO,LA,F	SPG,UPS	1,2,3,5,9
H7	Residential Caravans and Mobile Homes	DC,GA		9
H8	Gypsy Caravan Sites	DC,GA,SS		9
H9-10	Additional Dwellings and Sub-divisions	DC,GA	SPG	2,3,9
H11	Non-residential Uses Within Residential Areas	DC,GA		3,8
H12	Tandem/Backland Development	DC,GA	SPG	2,3,9
H13-14	Affordable and Low-cost Housing	DC,GA,AO,E,LA,F	SPG,HNS	2,3,9
H15-17	Extensions to Dwellings & Curtilges	DC,GA	SPG	3
H18	Dwellings Associated With Rural Enterprises	DC,GA,AO,CL		8
H19	Agricultural Occupancy Conditions	DC,GA,AO		9
<hr/>				
S1	Shopping Hierarchy	DC,GA,SS,AO	RS	2,4,5,10

S2-10	Shopping and Commercial Development	DC,GA,CL,AO,LA	SPG,RCS,CS,AP	2,4,5,10
S11-13	Shop fronts and Security Shutters	DC,GA,F	SPG,CA,CSS	7,10
S14-15	Advertisements	DC,GA,F	SPG,CA	7,10
S16-17	Environmental Improvements and Traffic Management Measures	F,E,CL	CA,TS,STS	4,10
RC1	General	DC,GA,CL	AP	6,5,11,12
RC2	Protected Areas of Open Space	DC,GA,CL,AO	ROS	7,5,11
RC3	Nuisance Sports	DC,GA		6
RC4	Countryside Recreation Facilities	DC,GA,AO,CL,E		6,11
RC5	Equestrian Facilities	DC,GA		6,11
RC6	Golf Courses and Golf Driving Ranges	DC,GA		6,11,12
RC7	Water Based Activities	DC,GA		6,11,12
RC8/9	Canal/Riverside Recreational Developments	DC,GA,CL	SPG	6,11
RC10	Outdoor Formal Recreational and Amenity Open Space Facilities	DC,GA,LA,E,F	ROS	11,5
RC11-14	Indoor Recreation and Community Uses	DC,GA,E,F,CL	AP	11,5
RC15	Public Utility Services and Facilities	DC,GA		12
DP1	Employment Sites	DC,GA,CL,LA,E,SS	SPG,ELS	1,2,5,8
DP2	Housing Sites	DC,GA,CL,LA,E,SS	SPG,HNS	1,2,5,9
DP3	Mixed Use Sites	DC,GA,CL,LA,E,SS	SPG	1,2,5,8,9
DP3A	Alsager Campus	DC,GA,CL,LA,E,SS	SPG	1,2,5,8,9

DP4	Retail Sites	DC,GA,CL,LA,E,SS	SPG,RCS	5,10
DP5	Recreation, Leisure and Community Use Sites	DC,GA,CL,LA,E,F		5,11
DP6	Sewage Treatment Plant Proposal	DC,GA		11,12
DP7-9	Development Requirements	DC,GA		5,7
DP10	New Road Schemes	DC,GA,CL,E,F	STS.TS	1,2
DP11	Transport Facilities	DC,GA,CL,E,F	STS.TS	4

12. MONITORING AND REVIEW

12.1 In order to ensure that the policies and proposals in the Local Plan are meeting the identified objectives and targets of the Local Plan, there will be continual monitoring of development during the plan period. In addition there will be a need to check other indicators of change and progress, such as population, as the plan is partly based on predictions of future trends which contain an element of uncertainty. Regular monitoring will also need to be undertaken to assess whether policies and proposals are being properly implemented and whether they are adequately reflecting current needs and demands and planning guidance.

12.2 The process of monitoring involves the collection of data from various sources which is then used to assess and make judgements about the success and effectiveness of the Plan. Much of this data will have been collected on a regular basis already, whilst other data will require monitoring systems to be set up. In some cases the Borough Council may need to initiate surveys or studies to examine in more detail particular matters which affect development.

12.3 Table 10 identifies the means by which the targets and objectives of the Local Plan will be monitored through specific indicators. It also identifies the sources of information to be used and the policies which will directly affect the achievement of the objectives and targets. The indicators are quantifiable measures of change related to the objective which help to explain how things are changing over time. They need not necessarily be ones influenced by planning decisions. Those marked (N) are national headline indicators which the Government is proposing to

use as measures of sustainability. On-going work on updating the National Land Use Database (NLUD) will also be used as a measure of available land to monitor progress on the Local Plan against targets.

12.4 It is proposed to publish the results of the monitoring in regular monitoring reports which will be considered by the Council and made available to the public. The results of the monitoring reports will be used to highlight issues which may require amendments or a further review of the Plan to ensure that it remains up-to-date, or the issue of supplementary planning guidance to deal with changes of policy or unforeseen development needs.

Table 10 MEASURES TO MONITOR THE LOCAL PLAN

				APPLICABLE POLICIES
1. To support the regional policies for the North West and The Potteries to assist in the prosperity of the region and the regeneration of the conurbations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional employment sites established at Sandbach and Middlewich inward migration into the Borough not to exceed 1991 levels by 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new employment land completions level of migration into the Borough extent of new built development allowed 	Employment Land Availability Database (CBC) Migration Statistics (ONS, CCC) Planning	PS1-2 PS7 PS12 E1 H1 DP1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no net loss of Green Belt land to new built development other than in exceptional circumstances 	on Green Belt land	Applications Database(CBC)	
2. To support the strategic policies of the approved County Structure Plan and fulfil its land use requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> net addition of 3,800 new dwellings completed within the Borough between 1996 and 2011 180 hectares of land made available for business, general industrial, storage and distribution development between 1996 and 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number of new dwellings completed amount of employment land made available 	Housing Land Availability Database (CBC) Employment Land Availability Database (CBC)	E1-E12 H1-H6 DP1-DP4
3. To minimise the loss of countryside to new development and maximise the use of urban land, particularly brownfield sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimum 50% of new dwellings completed on previously developed land between 2001 and 2011 minimum 75% of all new built development completed on existing urban land and minimum of 40% on previously developed land between 2001 and 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extent of all new development built on previously developed land number of redundant buildings granted permission for reuse extent of new homes built on previously developed land (N) extent of available brownfield land and redundant buildings (NLUD) 	Planning Applications Database (CBC) Planning Applications Database (CBC) Housing Land Availability Database (CBC) Urban Potential Study Database (CBC)	PS1-2 PS7-8 NR8 BH15-16 E3-E12 H4-H6 DP1-DP4
4. To minimise the need to travel, to reduce reliance on the car and facilitate greater choice of other alternatives such as public transport, cycling and walking, and to make efficient use of the existing transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimum 75% of all new housing development to be within 1/2 mile of public transport node and 1 mile of existing or proposed local convenience shop and primary school between 2001 and 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessibility of new housing areas to public transport services, local shops and schools car ownership levels and mode of travel to work amount of road traffic (N) 	Planning Applications Database(CBC) Census of Population (ONS) DETR	GR9-GR18, H4-H6 DP1-DP12
5. To create a sustainable balance between housing, employment, services and facilities within the towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rate of growth in number of jobs to at least equal rate of growth in workforce between 2001 and 2011 within each sub-division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local workforce and job numbers employment land and dwelling completions and supply levels of out-commuting POS provision shopping floorspace provision 	Census of Population (ONS) Census of Employment (ONS) Employment and Housing Land Availability Databases (CBC) Census of Population (ONS) Recreation Land Database (CBC) Retail Database (CBC)	GR24 E3-E12 H4-H6 S2-S9 RC2 DP1-DP5
6. To protect and enhance areas and features of nature conservation and landscape value and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no net loss or damage to designated sites and features of nature conservation value or, areas and features of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number and extent of designated nature conservation and landscape sites and features 	Nature Conservation and Landscape Site Designations (CBC)	PS9 GR4-GR5 NR1-NR5

<p>to increase public enjoyment of them</p>	<p>landscape value as identified in the Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment, through development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no net loss of surface water through development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extent of natural habitats number of approved landscape schemes number of trees felled and replaced authorised through TPOs extent of hedgerows removed under Hedgerow Regulations extent of hedgerows planted through CBC grant schemes 	<p>Nature Conservation Audit (CBC)</p> <p>Planning Applications Database (CBC)</p> <p>TPO Applications (CBC)</p> <p>Hedgerow Regulation Applications (CBC)</p> <p>Landscape and Nature Conservation Grant Schemes Implemented (CBC)</p>	
<p>7. To preserve and enhance the quality of the built environment and the heritage of the Borough and to promote local distinctiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no loss of buildings listed (statutory and local) as being of architectural or historic interest through development no loss of Scheduled Ancient Monuments through development to undertake Conservation Area Appraisals and Building at Risk surveys across the Borough by 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number and nature of Listed Building and Conservation Area Consents number of historic buildings at risk developments affecting County Archaeological Sites or Scheduled Ancient Monuments number of Conservation Area Appraisals 	<p>Listed Building and Conservation Area Consents (CBC)</p> <p>Survey of Buildings at Risk (CBC)</p> <p>Planning Applications Database (CBC)</p>	<p>BH1-BH10</p>
<p>8. To ensure the provision of sufficient land and premises for employment purposes of a range and in locations which meets the needs of the local workforce, diversifies the local economy and helps reduce the need to travel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to increase number of jobs within the Borough to 75% of the workforce by 2011 level of unemployment within the Borough not to exceed national rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> levels of out commuting employment land completions and supply number of employees working in the Borough number of firms unemployment rates proportion of residents of working age who are in work (N) 	<p>Census of Population (ONS)</p> <p>Employment Land Availability Database (CBC)</p> <p>Census of Employment (CBC)</p> <p>Census of Population (ONS)</p> <p>Employment Statistics (Dept. of Employment)</p> <p>Employment Statistics (Dept. of Employment)</p>	<p>DP1 E1-E12</p>
<p>9. To ensure the provision of an adequate number and range of housing units which meets the needs of local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> overall provision of 328 affordable housing units between 2001 and 2011 minimum 25% of all new housing stock built 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number and type of new dwelling completions and supply number of affordable 	<p>Housing Land Availability Database (CBC)</p> <p>Housing Land Availability</p>	<p>DP2 H1-H14</p>

<p>communities and the environmental capacity of the settlement</p>	<p>between 2001 and 2011 to be low-cost units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an annualised provision of around 200 dwellings in the Borough as a whole with the distribution between each sub division not materially exceeding the following percentages of the overall provision in a 5 year period: Congleton 30% Sandbach 25% Alsager 15% Middlewich 25% Rural Areas 15% 	<p>and low-cost housing units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> homes judged unfit to live in (N) number of empty properties 	<p>Database (CBC) Stock Condition Survey (CBC) Council Tax Register (CBC)</p>	
<p>10 To safeguard and strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centres as focal points for shopping, commercial, leisure and cultural activities and to support local shopping provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> net increase of 25% in shopping floorspace in town centres between 2001 and 2011 no net loss of convenience floorspace in the rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shopping floorspace provision including balance of uses range of key local facilities rental levels permissions for retail development outside town centres 	<p>Retail Database (CBC) Local Area Profiles (CBC) Congleton Borough Retail Study (CBC) Planning Applications Database (CBC)</p>	<p>DP4 S1-S8</p>
<p>11. To protect and support the provision of appropriate and adequate facilities and leisure opportunities to meet the needs of individual communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no net loss in overall amount of open space within each sub-division by 2011 through development no net loss in amount of outdoor playing space provision within each sub-division by 2011 through development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> amount and nature of open space range of recreational and leisure facilities 	<p>Recreation Land Database (CBC) Local Area Profiles (CBC)</p>	<p>GR23 RC1-RC15</p>
<p>12. To protect and improve the quality of air, water and land resources in the Borough and to minimise the consumption of non-renewable resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> net loss of undeveloped land outside settlements between 2001 and 2011 to be no greater than 0.75% of total land coverage no significant loss of grades 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land to new irreversible development 50% of recorded derelict land within urban areas as at 2001 to be brought back into beneficial use by 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extent of new development on undeveloped land extent of new development completed on grades 1 and 2 agricultural land amount of recorded derelict or contaminated land days of air pollution (N) river water quality (N) 	<p>Planning Applications Database (CBC) Planning Applications Database (CBC) Derelict Land Database (CBC) Air Quality Plan (CBC) Environment Agency</p>	<p>GR21, GR24 NR6-NR9 E5-E6 H6 S9 DP1-DP6</p>

APPENDICES

- A1 Background Documentation**
- A2 Key Statistics**
- A3 Committed Housing Sites**
- A4 Committed Employment Sites**
- A5 Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest**
- A6 Protected Sites**
- A7 Landscape Character Guidelines**
- A8 Town & Country Planning Use Classes Order**
- A9 Car Parking Standards**
- A10 Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes**

A1 Background Documentation

The following is a list of those documents (as at January 2005) which have been used in preparing the Local Plan.

Government Publications

Planning Policy Guidance Notes

PPS1:	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPG2:	Green Belts
PPG3:	Housing
PPG4:	Industrial & Commercial Development and Small Firms
PPG6:	Town Centres and Retail Development
PPS7:	Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPG8:	Telecommunications
PPG9:	Nature Conservation
PPG12:	Development Plans
PPG13:	Transport
PPG14:	Development on Unstable Land
PPG15:	Planning and the Historic Environment
PPG16:	Archaeology and Planning
PPG17:	Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
PPG19:	Outdoor Advertisement Control
PPG21:	Tourism
PPG22:	Renewable Energy
PPS23:	Planning and Pollution Control
PPG24:	Planning and Noise
PPG25:	Development and Flood Risk

Regional Planning Policy Guidance Notes

RPG13:	Regional Planning Guidance for the North West
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Circulars

5/94	Planning Out Crime
1/97	Planning Obligations
14/97	Planning and the Historic Environment
6/98	Planning and Affordable Housing
2/99	Environmental Impact Assessment

Other Publications

Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans: A Good Practice Guide
 Development Plans: A Good Practice Guide
 Planning for Rural Diversification: A Good Practice Guide
 Planning For Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice
 A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK
 PPG13: A Guide to Better Practice
 A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone - White Paper on the Future of Transport
 The National Cycling Strategy
 Preparation of Environmental Statements for Planning Projects that Require Environmental Assessment

—Good practice Guide

Congleton Borough Council Publications

Strategy Documents

Corporate Strategy
Community Safety: A Strategy for Congleton Borough
Pride of Place: Congleton Borough Council's Cultural Strategy
Environmental Quality Strategy
Health Alliances Strategy
Housing Matters In Congleton: Housing Strategy
Leisure Strategy
Nature Conservation Strategy
Parks and Public Open Spaces Strategy
Congleton Borough Sustainable Transport Strategy
Borough of Congleton Town Centre Management Strategy: A Strategy for Action
Economic Development Strategy (Congleton Economic Partnership)

Studies and Reports

Urban Potential Study (CBC - November 2004)
Site Assessments (CBC - June 2000)
Employment Land Study (CBC – October 1999)
Local Area Profiles (CBC – October 1999)
Accessibility Profile (CBC – April 1999)
Housing Study (CBC – September 2000)
Environmental and Sustainability Appraisal (CBC – September 2000)
Borough of Congleton Retail Study (MVM Planning – June 1999))
Housing Needs Study (David Coutie Associates Ltd. - 1999)
Landscape Assessment of Congleton Borough (Chris Blandford Associates – October 1999)
The Borough of Congleton Economic Partnership: Building on Success (Highfield Centre – 1999)
Congleton Transportation Study: Main Report (CCC - 1996)

Local Plan Documents

First Review Issues Report (CBC - January 1999)
Results of Consultation on Issues and Options (CBC - November 1999)
Representations on Deposit Draft (CBC – April 2001)
Representations on Revised Deposit Draft (CBC – January 2002)
Inspector's Report on Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review (CBC – September 2003)
Statement of Council's Response to Inspector's Recommendations (CBC – January 2004)
Representations on Proposed Modifications and Council's Response (CBC – March 2004)
Representations on Proposed Further Modification and Council's Response (CBC – September 2004)
Representations on Proposed Further Modification and Council's Response (CBC – January 2005)
Annual Monitoring Report (December 2004)

Cheshire County Council Publications

Cheshire 2011 Replacement Structure Plan: Explanatory Memorandum and Written Statement
Cheshire Replacement Minerals Local Plan 1999
Cheshire Waste Disposal Local Plan
Cheshire Sustainable Transport Strategy: Moving in a New Direction
Provisional Local Transport Plan 200/01 - 2005/06
A Landscape Strategy for Cheshire
A Woodland Strategy for Cheshire
A Nature Conservation Strategy for Cheshire
An Archaeological Strategy for Cheshire
Landscape Assessment of Cheshire
Commuter Plans in Cheshire: Steps to Success

Regional Publications

England's North West: a strategy towards 2020 (North West Development Agency)
North West Regional Competitiveness Strategy (Government Office for the North West)
Exploring Urban Potential in Housing: A Manual and Tool Kit (NWRA & Llewelyn-Davies)

Publications by Other Bodies

Conservation Issues in Local Plans (Countryside Commission, English Heritage & English Nature)
Weaver/Dane Local Environment Agency Plan (Environment Agency)
Policy and Practice for the Protection of Floodplains (Environment Agency)
Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater (NRA)
Guidance Notes for Local Planning Authorities on the Methods of Protecting the Water Environment through Development Plans (NRA)
The Playing Pitch Strategy (Sports Council and NPFA)
Bikeframe: A Model Cycling Policy (Cyclists Public Affairs Group)
Planning for Quality of Life in Rural England : Interim Planning Policy (Countryside Agency)

A2 Key Statistics

Settlement Characteristics

	(hectares)					
Congleton	2255	25960	16020	11121	2.32	11.5
Sandbach	1503	17530	10870	7621	2.31	11.7
Alsager	800	12690	7910	5205	2.42	15.9
Middlewich	907	13170	8300	5359	2.44	14.5
Rural Areas	15634	21750	13460	9028	2.39	1.4
BOROUGH	21099	91100	56540	38337	2.43	4.3

Sources: ONS Crown Copyright, Registrar Generals Annual Estimates of Population, 2002
 Cheshire County Council, Research & Intelligence Unit's Estimates of Workforce and Housing, 2002
 ONS Crown Copyright, 2001 Census, Housing
 Area boundaries digitised from Ordnance Survey Maps

Parish Statistics

	(Hectares)		
Arclid	223	199	75
Betchton	1066	622	274
Bradwall	784	165	69
Brereton	2169	1017	427
Church Lawton	579	2199	959
Cranage	911	1133	425
Goostrey	1029	2213	958
Hassall	424	279	108
Holmes Chapel	515	5669	2350
Hulme Walfield	411	144	61
Moreton-c- Alcumlow	443	149	69
Moston	1052	375	149
Newbold Astbury	1168	473	197
Odd Rode	1539	5552	2360
- Rode Heath		2144	
- Scholar Green		1450	
- Mt. Pleasant & Mow Cop		1083	
Smallwood	885	494	192
Somerford	615	345	125
Somerford Booths	528	174	76
Swettenham	907	249	112
Twemlow	386	167	65

Sources: ONS Crown Copyright, 2001 Census
 Area boundaries digitised from Ordnance Survey Maps

Ward Statistics

Alasger Central	3677	1420
Alsager East	5180	2290
Alsager West	3721	1510
Astbury	1774	730
Brereton	1752	710
Buglawton	2987	1270
Congleton Central	4355	2010
Congleton North	3727	1680
Congleton North West	3565	1620
Congleton South	5867	2430
Congleton West	5249	2180
Dane Valley	3747	1560
Holmes Chapel	5669	2350
Lawton	3102	1340
Middlewich Cledford	6846	2770
Middlewich Kinderton	6255	2580
Odd Rode	5552	2360
Sandbach East	5491	2500
Sandbach North	5795	2480
Sandbach West	6344	2600

Source: ONS Crown Copyright, 2001 Census

Forecast Population Change (2001 – 2011)

0 – 15	-300	-400	-300	-500	-800	-2300
16 - 44	-900	-800	-800	-800	-1000	-4300
45 - 64	-100	+500	+1100	+500	+100	+2100
65+	+400	+1000	+400	+700	+1300	+3800
Total	-800	+300	+300	-100	-400	-700

Sources: Cheshire County Council, Research & Intelligence Unit's Population Forecasts, 2004

Retail Provision

Floorspace (m²net)

Congleton	3750	7200	3850	2765	35	17600
Sandbach	4100	3500	3000	1380	30	12010
Alsager	1650	2500	1300	970	30	6450
Middlewich	1500	2450	1200	720	30	5900
Holmes Chapel	1800	2100	1300	0	70	5270
Borough	12800	17750	10650	5835	195	47230

Source: 1999 Congleton Borough Retail Study

Units

Congleton	23	109	65	44	2	243
Sandbach	17	61	56	13	1	148
Alsager	15	35	28	14	1	93
Middlewich	10	29	32	12	1	84
Holmes Chapel	8	15	16	0	2	41
Borough	73	249	197	83	7	609

Source: 1999 Congleton Borough Retail Study

Recreation and Open Space Provision**Outdoor Playing Space**

					Total
Congleton	4.72	15.88	11.64	1.58	33.82
Sandbach	9.52	10.21	5.76	2.09	27.58
Alsager	3.91	6.46	1.46	0.82	12.65
Middlewich	6.62	5.49	1.37	1.02	14.5
Rural Areas	12.98	0.00	1.47	2.47	16.92
Borough	37.75	38.04	21.7	7.98	105.47

Source: 1999 Congleton Borough Open Space Survey

Other Open Space

						Total
Congleton	108.17	4.57	62.73	0.30	32.35	208.12
Sandbach	11.79	3.12	146.72	0.00	29.16	190.79
Alsager	40.29	2.08	37.16	1.83	41.59	122.95
Middlewich	27.69	0.72	0.00	0.42	12.85	41.68
Rural Areas	76.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	26.80	103.70
Borough	264.84	10.49	246.61	2.55	142.75	667.24

Source: 1999 Congleton Borough Open Space Survey

A3 Committed Housing Sites – Sept 2004

Sites of 5 or more dwellings which are identified on the Proposals Maps

NOTATION:

UC	Under Construction (remaining dwellings not yet completed)
PP	Planning Permission (sites of 5 or more dwellings only)
B	Brownfield site
G	Greenfield site

Congleton		No. of Dwgs
The Quinta, 55 Sandbach Road	UC B	5
Land off Astbury Lane Ends	UC G	8
Canal Wharf, Canal Road	UC B	36
Roldane Mill, Mill Green	UC B	96
"Dane-in-Shaw Mill", Reades Lane	UC B	12
"Westlands Heath", Holmes Chapel Road	UC B	137
Malhamdale Road	UC B	6
"Lawrence Motors", Canal Road	PP B	14
Former Infants School, Spragg Street	PP B	5
Bossons Mill/ Brooks Mill	PP B	53
Danebridge and Providence Mills	PP B	30
Congleton Cattle Market, Macclesfield Road	PP B	60
		462

Sandbach		No. of Dwgs
1-25 Bold Street	UC B	20
206 Crewe Road	UC B	16
Land off School Lane	UC B	69
Land to the rear of Palmer Road	PP B	14
Cricket Club, Bradwall Road	PP B	48
Land north of Chapel Street	PP B	34
		201

Alsager		No. of Dwgs
37 Sandbach Road South	UC B	9
83 Cranberry Lane	PP B	5
		14

Middlewich		No. of Dwgs
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Land at Lewin Street (Maidenhills)	UC G	12
The Tannery, Wheelock Street	UC B	28
"Chaucers Green", Centurion Way	UC G	129
British Crepe, Finneys Lane	PP B	71
Station Goods Yard, King Street	PP B	49
36-38 & 64 Wheelock Street	PP B	42
		331

Rural		No. of Dwgs
Park House Farm, Mill Lane, Brereton	UC G	5
"Lawton Hall", Liverpool Road West, Church	UC B	34
Former timber yard, Sandbach Road, Rode Heath	UC B	10
Dunkirk Farm, London Road, Holmes Chapel	UC G	5
Congleton Road, Arclid	UC B	24
Sandhole Farm, Hulme Walfield	UC G	8
Moss End Farm, Moss End Lane, Smallwood	UC G	6
Hall Farm, Knutsford Road, Cranage	UC G	10
Jeffries Factory, Malkins Bank (Phase 2)	PP B	20
Cotton Hall, Middlewich Road, Holmes Chapel	PP G	5
Somerford Garage, Homes Chapel Road, Brereton	PP B	7
1 & 3 Liverpool Road East, Church Lawton	PP B	5
Smethwick Hall Farm, Smethwick Lane, Smethwick Green	PP G	8
Moston Manor, Plant Lane, Moston	PP G	6
		153

A4 Committed Employment Sites – March 2004

Sites of 0.1 hectare or more which are identified on the Proposals Maps

NOTATION: UC Under Construction (remaining dwellings not yet completed)
 PP Planning Permission (sites of 5 or more dwellings only)
 B Brownfield
 G Greenfield

Congleton		Gross Area (Hectares)
Congleton Business Park	PP G	5
Sandbach		
Former ERF Works, Middlewich Road	UC B	0.3
Station Road	UC B	0.17
Rookery Bridge	PP B	2.81
Sandbach Business Park	PP G	12
Middlewich		
Midpoint 18, Phase 1	UC G	6.85
Midpoint 18, Phase 2	UC G	32.9
Rural		
Arclid Hospital	PP B	2.62
		62.65

A5 Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest

PARKS AND GARDENS OF HISTORIC INTEREST SUBJECT TO POLICY BH1 ARE LISTED BELOW AND IDENTIFIED BY SYMBOL ON THE PROPOSALS AND INSET MAPS. THE EXTENT OF THE AREAS COVERED BY THE POLICY ARE ALSO SHOWN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES OF THE TECHNICAL APPENDIX. THE BOUNDARIES HAVE BEEN BASED ON CURRENT KNOWLEDGE BUT MAY BE FURTHER REFINED IN THE LIGHT OF SUBSEQUENT RESEARCH AND INFORMATION.

List of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Brereton Hall | 9. Boden Hall |
| 2. Buglawton Hall | 10. Congleton Park |
| 3. Great Moreton Hall | 11. Hassall Hall |
| 4. Lawton Hall | 12. Little Moreton Hall |
| 5. Rode Hall* | 13. Somerford Booths Hall |
| 6. Swettenham Hall` | 14. Sandbach Park |
| 7. Milton Park, Alsager | 15. The Mere, Alsager |
| 8. The Quinta, Swettenham | |

* Site included in HBMC's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

A6 Protected Sites

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.I.'s)

Dane-in-Shaw Pasture, Congleton	SJ877625
Madams Wood, Congleton	SJ877650
Bagmere, Brereton Heath (also a RAMSAR site)	SJ795643
Roe Park Woods, Moreton-cum-Alcumlow	SJ858583
Gannister Quarry, Newbold Astbury	SJ869592
Brookhouse Moss, Smallwood	SJ806617
River Dane, Swettenham	SJ808661
Holly Bank, Swettenham	SJ815659
Flashes, Sandbach	SJ726607

Sites of Biological Importance (S.B.I.'s)

Grade A

42	Higher Roughwood Salt Site	SJ782579
43/1	River Dane (Holmes Chapel- Peak Park	SJ847640
43/2	River Dane (Holmes Chapel - Peak Park	SJ847640
43/3	River Dane (Holmes Chapel - Peak Park	SJ847640
43/4	River Dane (Holmes Chapel - Peak Park	SJ847640
43/5	River Dane (Holmes Chapel - Peak Park	SJ847640
44/1	Bowshot Wood & Pigeon House Clough	SJ785678
44/2	Bowshot Wood & Pigeon House Clough	SJ785678
45	Peover Eye Valley	SJ786725
49	Edge Hill Valley Farm	SJ874596
51/1	Rainow Woods and Pastures	SJ886618
51/2	Rainow Woods and Pastures	SJ886618
52	Cheshire Brook Wood	SJ888613
265/1	Stannerhouse Lane Meadows	SJ773593
265/2	Stannerhouse Lane Meadows	SJ773593
282/1	Dragons Lake & Moston House Fields	SJ732615
282/2	Dragons Lake & Moston House Fields	SJ732615
285	Taxmere	SJ780623
286	Pinfold Rough	SJ784670
307	Corda Well Wood	SJ866595
308	Edge Hill and Pot Bank Quarries	SJ874596
309	Swettenham Brook Valley	SJ803674
311	Brookhouse Swamp	SJ808610
312	Pool Wood	SJ814647
314	Bancroft Wood	SJ835655
315	Forge and Radnor Woods	SJ845643
317/1	Bath Vale Woods	SJ878633
317/2	Bath Vale Woods	SJ878633
319	Timbersbrook	SJ885634
321	The Cloud	SJ903637
510/2	Shakerley Meres	
526	Bridge Farm Pasture	SJ794707
585	Engine Wood	SJ793665
587	Lawton Woods	SJ824560
601	Town Wood	

650	Bridge Farm Wood	SJ770677
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Grade B

47	Hulme Walfield Sand Quarry	SJ856643
50	Dane In Shaw Brook Meadows	SJ883621
280	Cledford Lane Lime Bed	SJ712652
281	Stud Green Meadow	SJ730626
284	Brereton Mill Pool and Blackberry Covert	SJ775656
287	Arclid Wood	SJ788629
288	Marsh South of Bagmere	SJ798636
290	Moorhead Farm Marsh	SJ799633
300/1	Meadow off Cherry Lane	SJ809567
300/2	Meadow off Cherry Lane	SJ809567
301	Rode Pool	SJ815575
303	Hall O'Lee Clough	SJ838569
305/1	Lower Roe Park Woods	SJ857591
305/2	Lower Roe Park Woods	SJ857591
310	Chapel Woods and Grasslands	SJ805666
318	Hoofridge Farm Meadow	SJ884622
320	Havannah Wood	
322/1	Woodside Clough	SJ905644
322/2	Woodside Clough	SJ905644
465	Peckerpool Clough	SJ903650
559/2	White Moss	
560/1	Goostrey Heaths	SJ763693
560/2	Goostrey Heaths	SJ763693
577	Arclid Brook Valley West	SJ770614
578	Hassall Grassland	SJ773572
598	Galey Wood	SJ773717
599	Hollins Wood	SJ738627
600	Shannock Big Wood	SJ839652
622	Sproston Wood	SJ735675
648	Bratts Wood	SJ820565
666/1	Clay Lane Verges, Haslington	SJ727588
666/2	Clay Lane Verges, Haslington	SJ727588
676	The Bongs	SJ777705

Grade C

46	Cheshire's Close	SJ868588
48	Congleton Edge	SJ877602
53	Folly Cottage Meadow and Wood	SJ898628
256	Brookhouse Pools	SJ808610
258/1	Fields Farm Flashes	SJ729592
258/2	Fields Farm Flashes	SJ729592
258/3	Fields Farm Flashes	SJ729592
262	Wheelock Disused Railway	SJ747598
263	Trent and Mersey Canal	SJ762592
274	Disused Railway, Day Green	SJ783577
275	River Wheelock Banks (South)	SJ783575
276	Chellshill Wood	SJ790579
278	River Wheelock Banks (North)	SJ705637
283	Hollins Farm Wood	SJ760680
289	Brereton Plantation	SJ798652
302	Lawton Hall Lake	SJ824556

304	Clough Wood	SJ855598
304/2	Clough Wood	SJ855598
306	Limekiln Farm Quarry	SJ862594
313	Pinfold Farm Mire	SJ814676
316	Congleton Moss	SJ876612
563/1	Mow Cop Heaths	SJ858575
563/2	Mow Cop Heaths	SJ858575
563/3	Mow Cop Heaths	SJ858575
563/4	Mow Cop Heaths	SJ858575
563/5	Mow Cop Heaths	SJ858575
563/6	Mow Cop Heaths	SJ858575
563/7	Mow Cop Heaths	SJ858575
576	Arclid Brook Valley East	SJ773617
649	Union Gorse	SJ728638

Note: SBIs data supplied by Cheshire County Council as at December 2004

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

23654	Bowl barrow 50m south of Jodrell Bank Farm, Goostrey
23655	Bowl barrow 550m south-east of Jodrell Bank Farm, Twemlow
23656	Bowl barrow 700m south-east of Jodrell Bank Farm, Twemlow
23657	Bowl barrow 800m south-east of Jodrell Bank Farm, Swettenham
12615	King Street Roman fort, Harbutt's Field, Middlewich
23614	Bowl barrow 450m east-north-east of Swettenham Hall, Swettenham
21	Crossley Bridge or Colley Mill Bridge, Congleton
13499	Long barrow 300m south east of Somerford Bridge, Somerford
13500	The Bridestones, Neolithic chambered long cairn, Congleton
25716	Roman camp at Bent Farm, Newbold Astbury
23637	Sandbach Anglo-Saxon crosses, Sandbach
13492	Kinderton Hall moated site, two annexes, five prospect mound, fishponds, and garden, Middlewich
30383	Icehouse with associated iceyard at Great Moreton Hall, 70m E of the Hall, Moreton cum Alcumlow
30382	Dovecote and pigstys, 270m SE of Jodrell Bank Farm, Twemlow
32563	Canopied Tomb in St Mary's Churchyard, Newbold Astbury
30394	Standing Cross St Mary's Churchyard, Newbold
34588	Brine Pumps at Brooks Lane, Middlewich
30395	Standing medieval cross in St. Mary's churchyard+B52, Sandbach
30396	Early medieval sculptural fragments in St Mary's church, Sandbach
34989/05	WWII defences of the former airfield of RAFCranage, pillbox (eastern), Cranage
34989/02	WWII defences of the former airfield of RAFCranage, pillbox (northern), Cranage
34989/01	WWII defences of the former airfield of RAFCranage + machine gun post, 'battle headquarters', Cranage
34989/06	WWII defences of the former airfield of RAFCranage, sleeping shelter for airmen, Cranage
34989/04	WWII defences of the former airfield of RAFCranage, pillbox (southern), Cranage
34989/03	WWII defences of the former airfield of RAFCranage remains only, pillbox (western) buried, Byley
13472	Little Moreton Hall moated site and outlying prospect mound, Odd Rode

A7 Landscape Character Guidelines

The following guidelines are taken from the 'Landscape Assessment of Congleton Borough' undertaken for the Borough Council by Chris Blandford Associates in 1999. They outline those features of the character of each area which are considered valuable and the most appropriate management and conservation strategies to ensure that the areas character is conserved, restored or enhanced.

Middlewich Open Plain

- Respect the conservation value associated with waterbodies and wetlands. The SSSI at Sparrowgrove, areas of woodland along brooks and field ponds are important features of the landscape and are also of value for nature conservation value. Continue to manage and maintain these areas.
- Respect the conservation value of the Trent and Mersey canal. The canal is a distinguishing feature of the landscape. Continue to maintain and manage this resource avoiding new developments impacting upon its course.
- Promote further areas for nature conservation. Areas of disturbed or degraded land affected by industry provide an opportunity to develop new landscape features such as blocks of broadleaf woodlands, wetlands or grasslands particularly where they are positive benefits in screening industrial works and roads. Increase woodland cover along the River Wheelock.
- Avoid major changes to ground level. The generally flat, low lying topography should be respected in any proposals for new development resisting significant changes to ground level.
- Restore and manage hedgerows as positive conservation features within the landscape. Continue to manage hedgerows, restoring gaps and planting new trees to promote this feature within the landscape.
- Preserve remnants of ridge and furrow. Retain land in arable use along the River Wheelock to preserve historic feature.

Sandbach Flashes

- Respect the conservation value of the flashes. The open expanses of water, wetland surrounds and clumps of tree cover are an important distinguishing feature of the landscape and are of importance for nature conservation. Continue to maintain and manage the flashes, avoiding new developments in these areas.
- Plant new hedgerows, with trees and simple blocks of woodland. Improve the visual appearance and conservation value at the urban fringe and wider character area by planting new hawthorn hedges with hedgerow trees and blocks of broadleaf woodland with oak and ash.
- Promote further areas for nature conservation. Areas of disturbed or degraded land affected by industry provide an opportunity to develop new landscape features such as woodlands, wetlands or grasslands.
- Appropriate screening and integration of new and existing developments. Due to the open nature of the landscape, large buildings are potentially visible from the surrounding landscape. Use off-site tree planting to provide screening to new developments.

Wheelock Rolling Plain

- Respect the conservation value of the vegetation corridors associated with the River Wheelock and its tributaries. These drainage channels are distinguishing features of the landscape and are also of nature conservation value.
- Respect the conservation value of the Trent and Mersey canal. The canal is a distinguishing feature of the landscape. Continue to maintain and manage this resource avoiding new development along its course.

- Conserve small pockets of heath on the urban fringe of Alsager. Area of distinctive local character adds diversity to the landscape. Retain and maintain the heathland character.
- Resist planting poplar or other non-indigenous woodlands. In some areas species have been planted for their aesthetic value which can not otherwise be found in the local area. This practice dilutes local distinctiveness and should be avoided.
- Restore and manage hedgerows as positive conservation features within the landscape. Continue to manage hedgerows, restoring gaps and planting new trees to promote this feature within the landscape.
- Promote further areas for nature conservation. Areas of disturbed or degraded land affected by industry provide an opportunity to develop new landscape features such as woodlands, wetlands or grasslands.
- Maintain/improve quality of urban fringes at Sandbach and Alsager.

Alsager Plain

- Respect the conservation value of the vegetation corridors associated with the River Wheelock and its tributaries. These drainage channels are distinguishing features of the landscape and are also of nature conservation value.
- Respect the conservation value of the Trent and Mersey canal. The canal is a distinguishing feature of the landscape. Continue to maintain and manage this resource avoiding new development along its course.
- Conserve small pockets of heath on the urban fringe of Alsager. Area of distinctive local character adds diversity to the landscape. Retain and maintain the heathland character.
- Resist planting new poplar or other non-indigenous woodlands. In some areas species have been planted for their aesthetic value which can not otherwise be found in the local area. This practice dilutes the impact of local distinctiveness and should be avoided.
- Restore and manage hedgerows as positive conservation features within the landscape. Continue to manage hedgerows, restoring gaps and planting new trees to promote this feature within the landscape.
- Promote further areas for nature conservation; disturbed or degraded land affected by industry provide an opportunity to develop new landscape features such as woodlands, wetlands or grasslands
- Restoration of woodland areas of Lawton hall Estate.

Cheshire Plain

- Retain open views towards Staffordshire Peak ridgeline and Pennines. Notable views towards the ridgeline are a feature of the area. Careful consideration should be given to the location of new developments to ensure that these views are maintained.
- Continue to maintain hedge, hedgerow trees and field trees as positive conservation features within the landscape. Manage hedgerows to maintain the existing age and species diversity, ensuring hedgerows continue to be a feature of the landscape.
- Respect the conservation value of Newbold Astbury. Avoid development that would be detrimental to the settlement's character.
- Conserve Brereton Heath. This is an area of distinctive local character, which adds diversity to the landscape. Retain and maintain character.
- Respect the conservation value of the historic parks and gardens. Areas of estate parkland are a feature of the Cheshire Plain. Retain and maintain character.
- Protect important nature conservation areas. Woodland grassland, heathland and wetland habitats are of importance for nature conservation and are valuable landscape features. Both their aesthetic and ecological value should be respected in any management or maintenance work.
- Restoration of mineral workings present opportunities for recreational or nature conservation use.
- Maintain/improve urban fringe of settlements.

Dane Valley West

- Respect the conservation value associated with the river and woodland. Continue to manage and maintain these areas.
- Respect the conservation value of the Twemlow Viaduct. The viaduct is a distinguishing feature of the landscape. Avoid development impacting upon this resource.
- Promote further areas for nature conservation. Areas of disturbed or degraded land affected by industry or urban fringe neglect provide an opportunity to develop new landscape features such as blocks of broadleaf woodlands, wetlands or grasslands particularly where there are positive benefits to be gained in screening industrial works and roads. Restoring some of the qualities of the valley to the east.
- Restore and manage hedgerows as positive conservation features within the landscape. Continue to manage hedgerows, restoring gaps and planting new trees to promote this feature within the landscape.

Dane Valley

- Protect the important nature conservation of the Dane Valley. The valley corridor is of high biodiversity, sustaining important wildlife habitats and a valuable landscape feature. The valley's aesthetic and ecological value should be respected in any management or maintenance works.
- The enclosed introspective nature of the valley, is a feature of the character area. Avoid new insensitive developments which encroach upon the existing character of the Dane Valley.
- Enhance this recreational resource by promoting improved access for walkers, cyclists and equestrians. A strategy for recreation should be established, and would be required to address safety issues.
- Manage blocks of woodland. It is important to replant and manage mature woodland to ensure the continuation of these characteristic features.

North Congleton Plain

- Retain open views towards Jodrell Bank.
- Continue to maintain hedges, hedgerow trees and field trees as positive conservation features within the landscape. Manage hedgerows to maintain the existing age and species diversity, ensuring hedgerows continue to be a feature of the landscape.
- Conserve small pockets of heath. Heath areas are of distinctive local character, which adds diversity to the landscape. Retain and maintain character.
- Respect the conservation value of the estate parkland. Areas of estate parkland are a feature of the North Congleton Plain. Retain and maintain character.
- Protect important nature conservation areas. Woodland and grassland and heathland habitats are of importance for nature conservation and are valuable landscape features. Both their aesthetic and ecological value should be respected in any management or maintenance work.

Cloud Fringe

- Retain open views towards Staffordshire Ridge and Pennines. Notable views towards the ridgeline are a feature of the area. Careful consideration should be given to the location of new developments to ensure that these views are maintained.
- Continue to maintain hedge, hedgerow trees and field trees as positive conservation features within the landscape. Restore and manage hedgerows to maintain the existing age and species diversity, ensuring hedgerows maintain a feature of the landscape. It is important to replant and manage mature trees to ensure the continuation of these characteristic areas.
- Protect important conservation areas. Woodland and grassland habitats along the River Dane tributaries and grassland at Congleton urban fringe are of importance for nature conservation and are valuable landscape features. Both their aesthetic and ecological value

should be respected in any management or maintenance work.

Mow Cop Fringe

- Retain open views towards Staffordshire Ridge. Notable views are towards Mow Cop. Careful consideration should be given to the location of new developments to ensure that these views are maintained.
- Continue to maintain hedge, hedgerow trees and field trees as positive conservation features within the landscape. Restore and manage hedgerows to maintain the existing age and species diversity, ensuring hedgerows remain a feature of the landscape. It is important to replant and manage mature trees to ensure the continuation of these characteristic areas.
- Protect conservation areas. Woodland and grassland habitats along tributaries are of importance for nature conservation and are valuable landscape features. Both their aesthetic and ecological value should be respected in any management or maintenance work.
- Continue to manage existing blocks of woodland by replacing ageing trees. Manage woodlands to maintain the existing age and species diversity, ensuring that this feature continues to be a prominent characteristic of estate land.
- Respect the conservation value of the Macclesfield Canal. The canal is a distinguishing feature of the landscape. Continue to maintain and manage this resource avoiding new development along its course.
- Conserve small pocket of heath at Congleton Moss. Area of distinctive local character adds diversity to the landscape. Retain and maintain character.

Staffordshire Ridge

- Retain expansive views over the Cheshire Plain, which are distinguishing features of the character area. Careful consideration should be given to the location of new developments to ensure that these views are maintained.
- Protect the ridgeline. The ridgeline is under pressure from people straying from the footpath network. Ensure that footpaths are well signposted to encourage proper use.
- Continue to preserve and repair stone walls, to match existing, thereby ensuring that they continue to be a prominent feature of the character area.
- Planting should reflect existing species in the area retaining diversity between the lower slopes, upper slopes and ridgeline. Oak, ash and hawthorn species should be promoted for planting within farmed slopes whilst oak, birch, hawthorn, heather and gorse are appropriate for upper slopes. The coniferous planting below the Cloud should be respected.
- Continue to maintain hedgerows and hedgerow trees as positive conservation features within the landscape. Manage hedgerows to maintain the existing age and species diversity, ensuring hedgerows maintain a feature of the landscape.
- Replant and manage blocks of woodland. to ensure the continuation of these characteristic features.
- Preserve archaeological features within the area.

A8 Town & Country Planning Use Classes Order

A1 Shops

Shops, post offices, retail, warehouses, ticket and travel agencies, sandwich bars, hairdressers, funeral directors, showrooms, domestic/personal hire shops, dry cleaners/ washing service.

A2 Financial and Professional Services

Banks, building societies, estate and employment agencies, professional and financial services, betting offices, other services appropriate in a shopping area. (These must principally serve visiting members of the public. Health and medical services are not included [in Class D1]).

A3 Food and Drink

Restaurants, public houses, cafes, wine bars, snack bars, shops for the sale of food eg chip shop.

B1 Business

- ◆ offices not in Class A2
- ◆ research and development, studios, laboratories, "high-tech" uses
- ◆ light industry

(These must be uses which can be carried out in any residential area, without detriment to the amenity of that area)

B2 General Industrial

Any industrial use not falling within the Business (B1)

B8 Storage or Distribution

Wholesale warehouses, cash 'n' carry, open storage.

C1 Hotels and Hostels

Hotel, hostel, boarding or guest house (where no significant element of care is provided).

C2 Residential Institutions

Residential accommodation for the care of people in need, hospitals, nursing homes and residential schools, colleges or training centres (for seven or more residents).

C3 Dwellinghouses

Dwellings, residences for up to six people living as single households even where care is provided (includes flats).

D1 Non-residential Institutions

Institutions/facilities for use by the community.

Examples:- day nursery, creche, day centre, clinics, health centres, non-residential schools, colleges and training centres, museums, public halls, libraries, art galleries, exhibition halls, reading rooms, places of worship, church halls.

D2 Assembly and Leisure

Cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls, casinos, dance halls, swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasia or areas for other indoor or outdoor sports or recreations, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms.

Sui generis – unclassified

Any planning use not falling within a specific Use Class above, and which is therefore a use class on its own.

Examples:- theatres, amusement arcade or centre, funfair, launderettes, car showrooms, petrol filling stations, taxi businesses, vehicle hire, scrapyards, open spaces, car parks, lorry parks, storage yards for minerals. Use for a purpose which involves the manufacture, processing, keeping or use of a hazardous substance in such circumstances as will result in the presence at one time of a notifiable quantity of that substance in, on, over or under that building or land or any site of which that building or land forms part.

A9 Car Parking Standards

THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS ARE FROM CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL INTERIM PARKING POLICY STANDARDS (September 2002)

Land Use	Cheshire Interim Standard
A1 Shops	
Food Retail	1 space per 14 sq metres
Non-Food Retail	1 space per 20 sq metres
Restaurants	1 space per 5 sq metres PFA
Fast Food – Drive Thru	1 space per 7.5 sq metres GFA
B1 including offices	1 space per 30 sq metres
Stand alone offices	1 space per 30 sq metres
Business Parks	1 space per 35 sq metres
General Industry	1 space per 45 sq metres
Storage & Distribution	1 space per 45 sq metres
Hotels	1 space per bedroom including staff
Medical or Health Facilities	1 space per 2 staff + 4 per consulting room
Higher & Further Education	1 space per 2 staff + 1 space per 15 students
Cinemas & Conference Facilities etc.	1 space per 5 seats
Leisure	1 space per 22 sq metres
Stadia	1 space per 15 seats

A10 Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes

THE FOLLOWING SECTION CONTAINS THOSE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTES WHICH ARE CURRENTLY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL.

THE INFORMATION PROVIDED WITHIN THEM IS SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN AND SHOULD THEREFORE BE READ ALONGSIDE THE RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN

LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTES AS AT APRIL 2005:

- 1: Provision of Public Open Space in New Residential Developments (October 2003)
- 2: Provision of Private Open Space in New Residential Developments (November 1993)
- 3: Shop Front Security (September 1994)
- 4: Sustainable Development (April 2005)
- 6: Affordable Housing (April 2003)
- 7: The Re-use of Rural Buildings (April 1997)
- 9: Telecommunications (July 2004)
- 10: Housing Land Supply (January 2005)