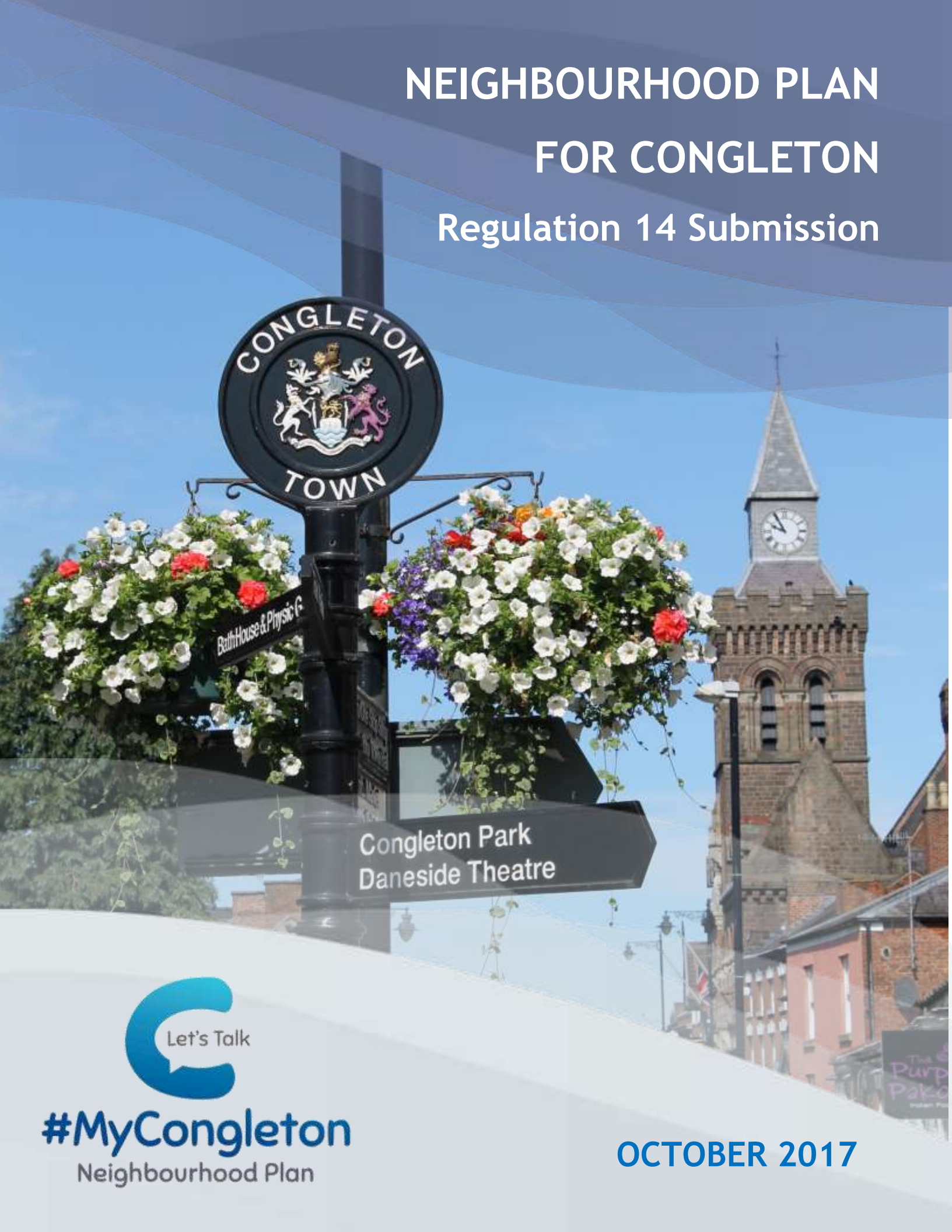


# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR CONGLETON

## Regulation 14 Submission



Let's Talk

**#MyCongleton**  
Neighbourhood Plan

**OCTOBER 2017**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### FOREWORD BY DAVID MCGIFFORD

This plan has been produced by the Congleton Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of Congleton Town Council following several months of study, research and consultation with the local community. We have also worked closely with Cheshire East Council.

We have consulted with the community through open days, interest group meetings and questionnaires and we believe that this Plan reflects the views of our community. A strong message emerging from the consultation process was that the local people are proud of their town and have a very strong desire to retain its unique character. This was key to developing the vision for the plan.

The aims and policies of the community have all been derived from the vision and are detailed in the Plan. We strongly believe that this plan is robust and will shape the future of the Town going forward to 2030



Signed by the Chair of the NPSG

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The Parish of Congleton was granted Neighbourhood Plan status on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

The Congleton Neighbourhood Plan sets out a series of policies which, once made, will be used to guide development and the preparation of planning applications. The policies will be used by Cheshire East Council in determining planning applications for all development proposals in the Town.

The Congleton Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in general conformity with the strategic policies of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan as well as the saved policies of the Congleton Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan is to run for the same period as the Cheshire East Local Plan, expiring in 2030.

The starting point for any development proposals in Congleton will be the Cheshire East Local Plan.

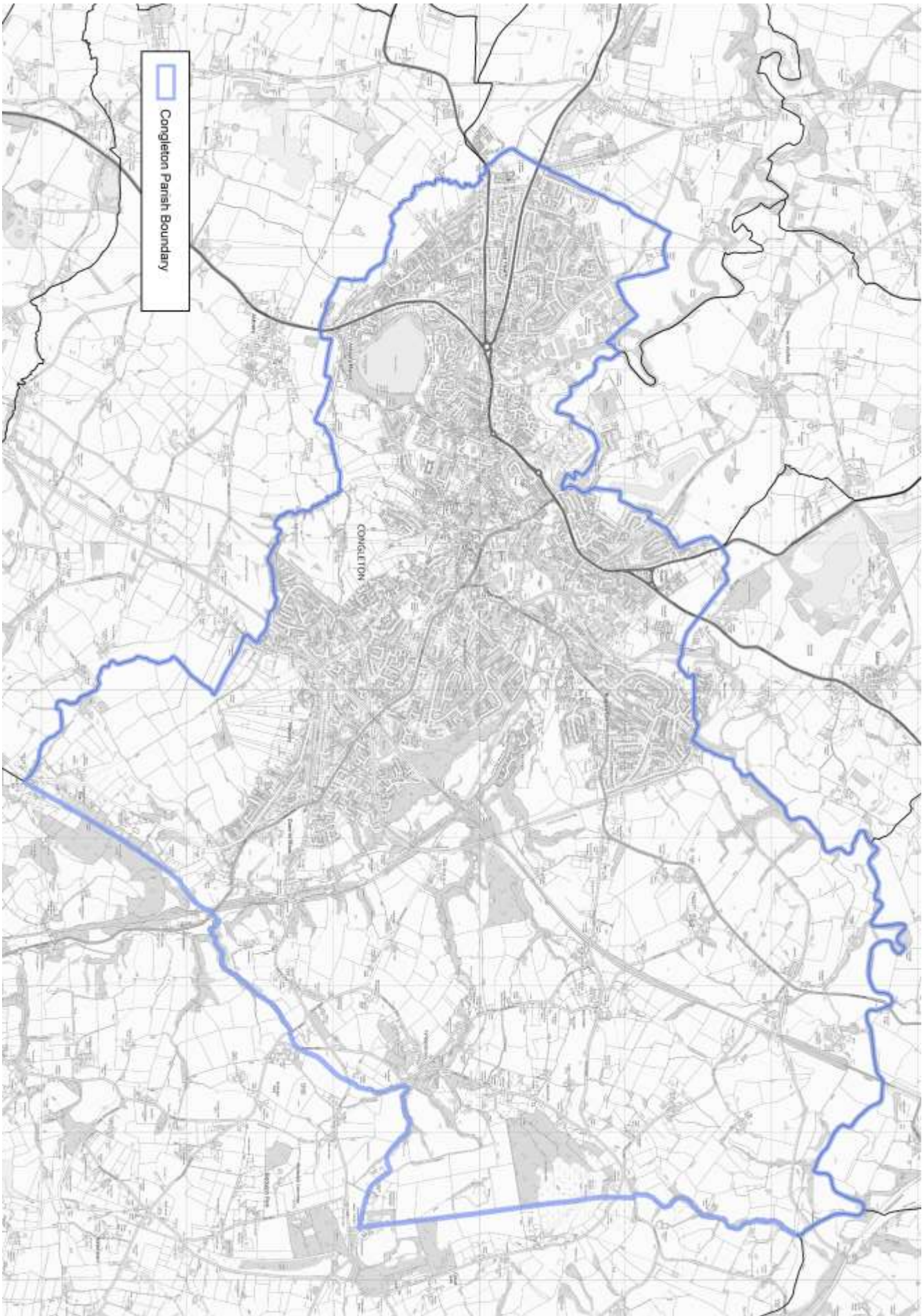
Where development is compliant with this Local Plan, the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan will provide more detailed policy applicable to proposals within plan area. Once adopted the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan will have the status of a Development Plan Document.

A number of projects have been identified during the Congleton Neighbourhood Planning process and these have been detailed in a separate Delivery Plan Document for the Town Council.

The area covered by the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan, is shown on the plan below.

This Neighbourhood Plan aims to deliver the Vision for Congleton to 2030, to reflect the issues set out above and many others raised by the local community. The consultation process leading up to the preparation of this Plan has been considerable and is detailed in a separate document entitled 'Statement of Consultation'.







## ABOUT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

### Why Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood Planning gives us as loud a voice as the Council and developers.

- It is all about improving the town we live and work in by producing a vision for its future'
- It gives us a chance to think about what we care about in our local area and what kind of place we all want to create,
- We know what is best for the town as we live here. Why let other people decide what happens to where we live and work?

A Neighbourhood Plan is drawn up by the community. It sets out a shared vision and policies to shape future growth and development of the town. It will be used by Cheshire East Council in deciding planning applications alongside the Local Plan. It also helps to identify projects that are most important to the community.

The Plan has been produced by the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of the Town Council following several months of study, research and consultation with the local community. We have also worked closely with Cheshire East Council.



We have consulted with the community through open days, interest group meetings and surveys and we believe that this Plan reflects the views of our community. A strong message emerging from the consultation was that local people are proud of their town and have a very strong desire to build upon this for the future. This was key in developing the Plan Vision.

The aims and policies of the community have all been derived from the Vision and are detailed in this Plan. We strongly believe that this Plan is robust and when formally adopted will provide the necessary guidance for Congleton until 2030.

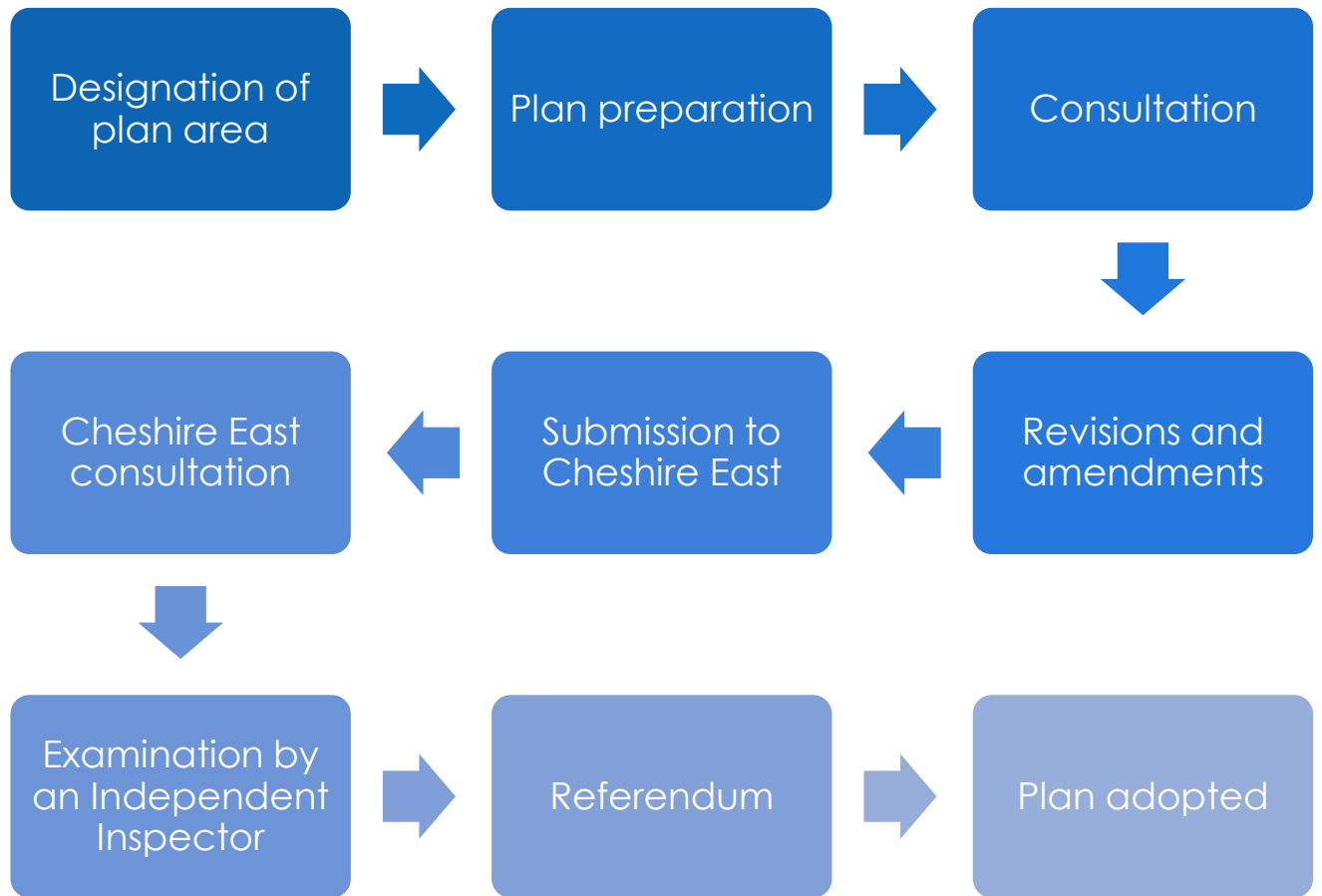
## THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROCESS

The planning system in England is based on legislation, planning policy and guidance. National planning policies are set by Government and Local Planning

Authorities, such as Cheshire East, set policies for their local area. Neighbourhood Plans give the opportunity for communities to set out planning policies for their own area.

The diagram below outlines the Neighbourhood Plan process.

## Congleton Neighbourhood Plan







## SECTION 2 ABOUT CONGLETON

### HISTORY OF CONGLETON

Congleton is a long-established town on the banks of the River Dane. Situated at a point where the foothills of the Pennines meet the Cheshire Plain, the town and its surrounding parishes has a rich history. The earliest settlements appear to have been in Neolithic times with archaeological finds from the Stone and Bronze ages. There is evidence of activity from the Romans and the Vikings in the vicinity and the Saxon Earl Godwin of Wessex held the town until it passed to the Norman Earl of Chester, as recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086.

The first Town Charter was granted by Henry de Lacy in 1272 when the town acquired the rights of a free borough. The flourishing mediaeval town suffered from the occasional disaster such as flooding of the river Dane and much of the historical town centre is sited on higher ground as a result of this. The manufacture of leather work was important at this time, as was



agriculture. Some of the older properties in the town date to Tudor times. The plague reached Congleton and environs during the seventeenth century as did the divisions of the Civil War. This caused a downturn in the town's fortunes but these revived significantly as the industrial revolution ushered in an era of industrial entrepreneurship. The first silk mill was established in 1752 and for the best part of a hundred years the silk industry and its associated trades was the dominant manufacture of the town. After legislation in 1860 the silk industry suffered a decline, but new industrial processes such as fustian and velvet cutting were introduced and the town continued to thrive on this industrial base until the later part of the twentieth century.

The railway reached Congleton in 1848, Turnpike Trusts were established and in 1831 the Macclesfield Canal was opened. The topography, referred to in the first paragraph, has played a decisive role in some of this development over the ages. The railway and the canal are situated alongside the escarpment and sit to one side of the town rather than centrally. Development in the town during the pre-motor-vehicle age has led to narrow roads along the old mediaeval road patterns and most of these narrow to single carriageway as they approach the town centre. The river Dane also poses a significant challenge as it is currently only bridged in two places and one of these bridges, Victorian in origin, also struggles to accommodate any significant size and volume of traffic.



During the latter part of the twentieth century the town struggled to retain its traditional industrial base in textiles, although there has been some success in introducing new manufacturing, notably air bags. Silica sand extraction has also provided a major industry during this time. One of the town's older manufactures, in ribbons and labels, still carries on, but many of the mills that characterised the town have been demolished or renovated and put to new use. Whilst many of the older buildings remain, creating a historic core, much modern

development, both commercial and housing, since the 1960s has taken place on the western periphery of the town and has spilled over into neighbouring parishes.

Since the 1950s, attempts were made to tackle some of the problems that beset the town, with only partial success. The Clayton by-pass, a 1950s extension along the A34 provided a second bridge over the Dane, but this has limited utility because of the restrictions in other areas of

the A34 through the town. A dual carriageway built in the 1970s has bisected the central town, to unhappy effect, whilst a hollowing-out of parts of the town centre and the erection of monolithic commercial and service buildings, has failed to deliver significant or lasting benefits. The new plans for the town seek to address that challenge and improve accessibility to the town centre.

Congleton has historically been a "green" town, where tongues of the bocage-type landscape, hedges, fields and clumps of trees, extended into the heart of the town. Much of this has been lost to development in the recent past and there is little undeveloped space in the modern town.

The Victorian park and the redeveloped sand quarry known as Astbury Mere, together with some small community gardens, help to preserve some of the traditional green environment of the town. The town has always enjoyed a strong community spirit and has valued its whole history, recorded, built, manufactured and green, greatly and hopes to be able to continue to do so through the next phase of development.

## OVERVIEW OF PRESENT DAY CONGLETON

### SUMMARY

Congleton is a town with a vibrant past and a determination to create a successful and a well-planned future. The town is constrained by land shortage which is putting pressure on green land.

The local plan recognizes this problem and therefore, aspirations to build for the future mean that much new development will take place in adjoining parishes. The Neighbourhood Plan



seeks to redress the problems arising from the current position of the town.

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## PERCEIVED ISSUES

Residents have taken part in the process via questionnaires, exhibitions and much public debate in various town forums. The residents have been clear that they would like the Neighbourhood Plan to address the needs of the town and of future generations in a sustainable way that does not compromise the distinctive landscape and historical character of the town.



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## ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

- Changes in traditional manufacturing activities
- Lack of availability of viable employment sites within the town boundary
- Identified need for expansion room for existing businesses
- Road constraints affecting movement of goods and people
- Contribution of town centre to economic activity
- Land shortage inside town boundary resulting in a requirement for land adjacent to the current town boundary
- Lack of accommodation to support tourism
- Insufficient skill base



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## AGEING POPULATION

- Congleton is identified as the town with the highest ageing population in Cheshire East and this trend looks likely to continue
- Need to redress the population imbalance
- Older people are tending to remain in larger family homes
- Current medical services are oversubscribed and likely to be inadequate to meet the needs of an ageing population





- Recognised need to provide for the above situation in housing accommodation and healthcare

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## TRAFFIC AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- Arterial routes go through the town causing serious traffic congestion
- Arterial routes frequently affected by issues on the M6
- High private car ownership and use
- Serious air pollution in some parts of the town
- Inadequate public transport
- Inadequate footpaths on some routes
- Location of station is not easily accessible for large areas of the town
- Road safety and speed limits is a public concern
- Road improvement constrained by topography and heritage
- Under use of sustainable means of travelling such as cycling and walking
- Large rural catchment areas for some schools leads to congestion to both arterial and local roads




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## TOWN CENTRE

- Uncertainties and delays surrounding retail development schemes
- Land ownership issues in some areas of the town
- Difficulties of accessing town centre facilities by road or other means
- Competition from out of town and on-line shopping
- Protecting heritage without restricting development
- Difficulty in attracting national brands
- Hidden nature of town centre to through traffic
- Parking
- Inadequately resourced public realm




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## HOUSING SUPPLY

- The availability of land within the town boundary for development is limited, recent planning decisions have reduced the availability
- It is recognised that much of the required housing need will be delivered within adjoining parishes
- Research has shown that there is a shortage of starter homes, small family homes and retirement provision such as bungalows and extra-care and this is not being



met by



new



developments

- Pressure on green space for housing development

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## GREEN ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

- Congleton is a town where green spaces and existing landscape features are highly valued and under threat
- Potential threats to areas such as the Dane Valley, Astbury Mere, The Park, Priesty Fields, Macclesfield Canal and the Town Wood and other green spaces which enhance the local landscape
- The incremental erosion of the green areas which are a part of the traditional layout of the town and which sit side by side with the older developed part of the town
- Shortage of allotments
- Threats to the built heritage of the town



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## HEALTH EDUCATION AND WELLBEING

- Shortage of medical and dental practices for current and future requirements
- Potential closure of War Memorial hospital
- Lack of provision of community and school sporting facilities
- Loss of community facilities
- Shortage of nursery, primary and secondary school places
- Shortage of specialist care facilities







## SECTION 3 VISION AND KEY THEMES

### OUR VISION FOR CONGLETON

*My Congleton* will thrive as a distinctive town that offers a comprehensive range of homes, shops, jobs, services and facilities supported by the required infrastructure to cater for the needs of all our residents until 2030. The special and unique character of Congleton, including its heritage assets and the surrounding countryside, will be protected, enhanced and promoted to make the town an attractive place in which to live, work and visit.

### OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To meet the objectively assessed local housing needs of Congleton especially the needs of the existing and future residents of the town, particularly the aging population, to create a vibrant and inclusive local community.
- ❖ To improve the attractiveness and vibrancy of the Town Centre
- ❖ To secure the future prosperity of Congleton it is important to retain and attract a variety of new employment opportunities within the town to meet local needs and to support the local economy.
- ❖ To develop an integrated sustainable transport framework within the town improving walking and cycling routes between everyday facilities such as shops, services, open spaces and the surrounding countryside.
- ❖ The long-term objective for Congleton is to have a range of good quality community, leisure, health and social facilities available and accessible to everyone who lives in the town.
- ❖ The object of the Environmental and Sustainability policies is to preserve our green spaces, enhance our environment and implement where practical renewable energy.
- ❖ To deliver high quality, distinct and safe places which respect the Town's heritage and character.

### KEY THEMES (SOLUTIONS, JUSTIFICATION AND EVIDENCE)

Having outlined the issues and concerns which exist in present day Congleton, the key themes below form the backbone of the Neighbourhood Plan.

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#### STIMULATING EMPLOYMENT

- Supporting existing businesses and provide opportunities for new employment to securing a sustainable future for Congleton
- Working with local schools and businesses to improve an appropriate skill base in the town

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#### PROVIDING FOR AN AGEING POPULATION

- Encourage the provision of specialized accommodation, health care and leisure facilities for the ageing population of Congleton.

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## IMPROVING TRAFFIC FLOW

- Improving movement around and through the town, including walking and cycling
- Improving the air quality of specific areas of the town

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## REGENERATING THE TOWN CENTRE

- To develop an attractive, welcoming, prosperous and dynamic town centre with a broad retail offer of quality shops and businesses.
- To create a place where people will wish to visit, work, live and shop and experience our heritage and be entertained during daytime and evening
- Develop and expand the Key Service Centre role of the town.

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## ENSURING THE RIGHT HOUSING SUPPLY

- To make sure that housing development satisfies the need of both existing and future generations
- Ensure that development provides high quality buildings, streets and spaces that reflects the established character of the town and its surrounding countryside.

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## PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT

- Residents recognize Congleton as a special place regarding its green spaces and green infrastructure. All new developments should add or enhance significantly to the current stock
- Provide linked paths and cycleways to enable easy and safe access to the key facilities within the town
- Encourage the use of Renewable energy technology and innovations

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## HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELLBEING

- Ensure that Congleton has health and leisure facilities that are suitable, appropriate, affordable and accessible for everyone in the community
- To ensure the educational facilities are state of the art and able to support the growing population of the town and the surrounding area

## SECTION 4 WHERE SHOULD NEW DEVELOPMENT GO?

This section sets out where new development should go in Congleton and which key areas of the town may change in the future. It provides the basis for location specific policies and illustrates what the overall Vision and Key Themes mean in terms of the locations for new development and improvements within the town. It is not possible to show all of the matters included in the Vision and Key themes in terms of locations for new developments, for example the support for local businesses and high-quality design. Section 5 includes policies for issues such as these as well as locational policies.

There are three issues that need to be explored to identify how and where Congleton may grow in the future. These are;

- Technical and environmental constraints and opportunities;
- The availability of land
- Which locations may best support the Vision and Key Themes?

The Neighbourhood Plan is informed by an in-depth analysis of the whole of Congleton drawing on a wide range of background information. In thinking about where new development should go and how best to support the Vision and Key Themes of the plan, the following questions arose;

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### THEME 1 - STIMULATING EMPLOYMENT

- Are there any sites within the town that can accommodate new employment opportunities?
- Which sites offer an opportunity to increase the variety of employment uses?

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### THEME 2 - PROVIDING FOR AN AGEING POPULATION

- Are there any sites within the town that can accommodate elderly person/extra care facilities?
- Can the housing policies encourage a mix of housing to meet the needs of the aging population?

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### THEME 3 - IMPROVING TRAFFIC FLOW

- Do new development proposals have the potential to contribute to and/or provide new and improved public transport and walking links in the town?
- Will the proposed Link Road reduce traffic within the town and consequently improve air quality?
- Which sites have the best potential to achieve and/or improve good public transport and walking/cycling links?

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### THEME 4 - REGENERATING THE TOWN CENTRE

- Are there visually prominent sites that could create a positive image/improve the attractiveness of the town?
- Are there sites that can positively integrate with the town adding to Congleton's character and identity?



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## THEME 5 - ENSURING THE RIGHT HOUSING SUPPLY

- Are there sufficient sites to accommodate the future housing needs of the town?
- Can the plan deliver the mix of houses to accommodate the changing needs of the community?

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## THEME 6 - PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT

- Are there sites that can bring appropriate new uses such as leisure and open space in the built-up area of the town?
- How can the plan encourage renewable energy in new developments?
- Where are the opportunities to link open spaces within the town by walking and cycling?

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## THEME 7 - HEALTH AND WELL BEING

- Do sites within the town have potential to improve and/or enhance existing facilities?
- Are there any sites or opportunities to improve, expand and/or enhance education facilities within the town?

### HOUSING

#### OBJECTIVE

To meet the objectively assessed local housing needs of Congleton especially the needs of the existing and future residents of the town, particularly the aging population, to create a vibrant and inclusive local community.

#### H1 Housing Provision

New housing will be provided on strategic sites already allocated in the Cheshire East Plan and on a range of unallocated windfall, brownfield and infill developments that meet other policies set out in this plan on sites within the settlement boundary for Congleton Town and Timbersbrook Village core.

#### Justification

*Housing needs and shortfalls have been identified through a wide range of demographic and housing evidence provided in relation to the Cheshire East Local Plan and in the Congleton Estate Agents Survey Report (survey carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Team in 2016-17). This information has informed judgments regarding this Plan's policies and proposals in relation to housing numbers and house type mix.*

#### H2 Congleton Settlement Boundary including the Timbersbrook Village Core

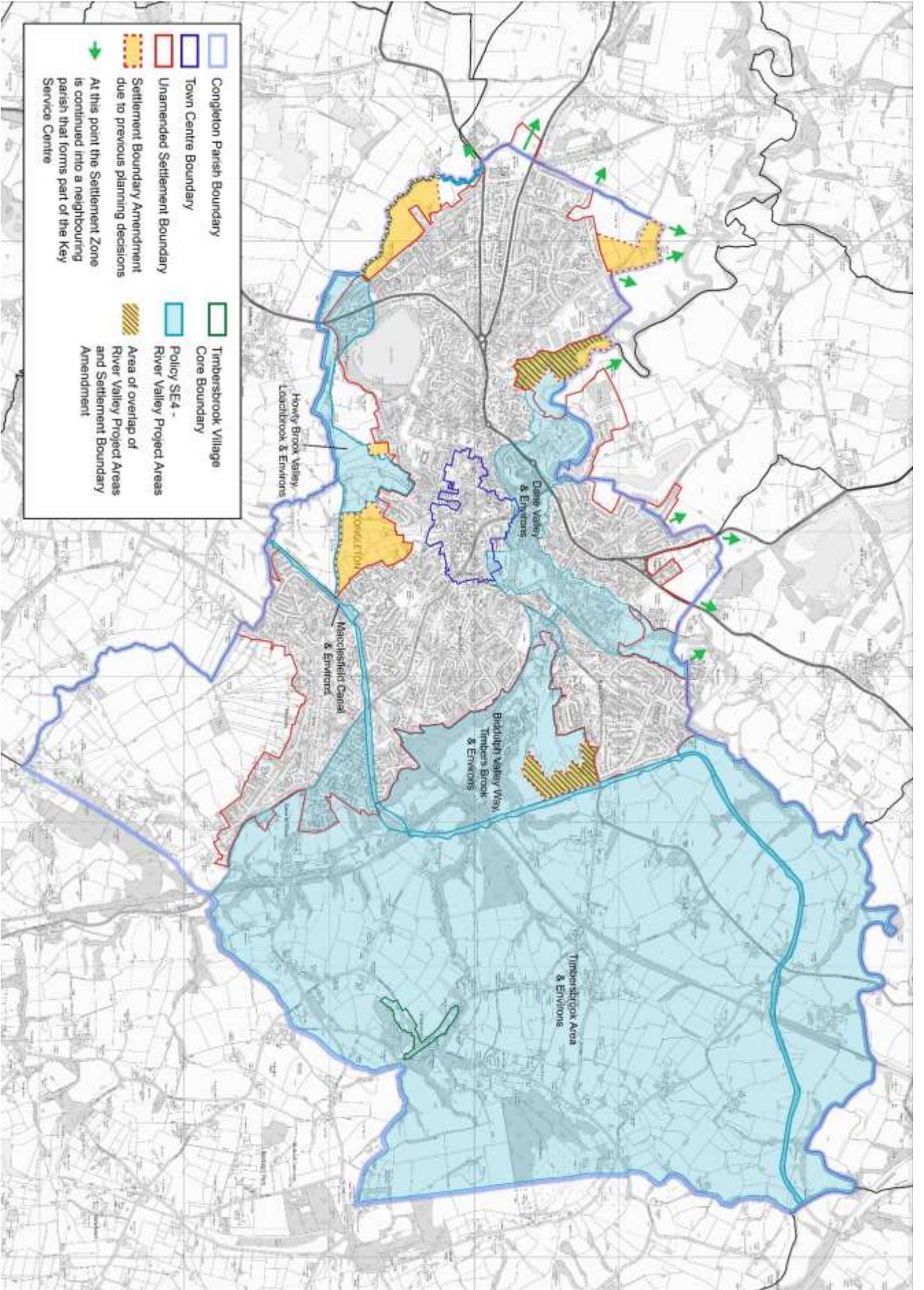
Development in the Plan Area will be focused on sites within the existing built up area of the existing settlements with the aim of enhancing their roles as sustainable settlements whilst protecting the surrounding countryside. Development will normally be permitted subject to the following;

- Provision of good quality design and layout, highway access, parking and wheelie bin storage;
- Provision of good quality hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties;
- Respect for the character, appearance and setting of any listed buildings and conservation area policies;

#### Justification

*The settlement boundary defined for the urban area of Congleton in the 2005 Congleton Local Plan is indicated in the Proposals Map.*

*The Neighbourhood Plan also adopts this boundary with appropriate modification to acknowledge the planning permissions that have been granted outside the 2005 boundary. The settlement boundary shown in the Proposals Map also acknowledges the strategic site allocations included in the Cheshire East Strategic Development Framework.*





The Village Core Boundary shown in the Proposals Map Inset for Timbersbrook is intended to restrict any small-scale infill development in this 'washed over' Green Belt in accordance with Local Plan and National Planning Policy

### **H3 Housing proposals in the open countryside**

New dwellings in the open countryside within the Plan Area will only be supported where required for the purposes of agriculture, forestry or other small rural enterprise to retain and protect the rural setting of the town.

#### *Justification*

*Proposals for housing development within the parish of Congleton but outside the defined Settlement Boundary for Congleton Town and the Village Core Boundary for Timbersbrook will be considered against the Open Countryside policies of the Plan (and under the Green Belt policy for locations within Green Belt as defined in the Proposals Map) to safeguard the wider rural setting of the parish and where relevant to fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt.*

### **H4 Housing for the Elderly, Disabled and other vulnerable groups**

Proposals to provide housing for and/or improved specialist care for the elderly, the physically and learning disabled and mental health services in the town will be supported and encouraged.

All housing proposals over 10 houses in the Plan Area will be required to provide;

- A minimum of 20% of the total units to be built in the form of bungalows suitable for occupation by the elderly or disabled and of the bungalows to be provided at least 75% shall be 2 bedroomed bungalows;
- Where any bungalows are built as part of a development the PD rights will be removed on those properties to retain the stock of bungalows in the plan area.
- A minimum of 25% of houses which adopt the 16 criteria for accessibility and adaptability of the dwelling as set out in the most up to date Building Regulations.

#### *Justification*

*In the light of the plan area's existing and forecast demographics, and paying due regard to the Cheshire East Council Strategy for Vulnerable and Older People's Housing, the most recent census results, and the demographic evidence of a rapidly ageing population in CEC's Local Plan population forecasts, it is appropriate, necessary and important for the Neighbourhood Plan to provide for at least 25% of new homes to be built to Part M 4 (2) standards (or any equivalent succeeding/updated statutory standards) in order to contribute towards meeting the future needs of the community's rapidly ageing population. Including a proportion of homes suitable to meet the needs of older and vulnerable people will also contribute to the development of 'lifetime neighbourhoods', which has been encouraged by Government.*

*Encouragement and support will also be given to provision within the plan period of at least one 'Extra Care' scheme providing a minimum of 30 units, together with at least 360 sheltered or 'enhanced sheltered' units, mostly in the form of 1 and 2-bedroom bungalows to rent. In addition, provision of at least 50 places of C2 accommodation for people with dementia is proposed.*

## **H5 Redevelopment of bungalows**

The redevelopment or demolition of existing bungalows within the plan area will not be supported except where it can be demonstrated that any redevelopment of the site does not detract from the character of the surrounding area nor has a detrimental effect upon the privacy and amenity of adjoining properties.

### *Justification*

*There has been a trend in recent years for larger bungalows or bungalows occupying larger plots to have been redeveloped with schemes for one or more two-storey houses. Work on this Plan has demonstrated clear evidence of a shortage of bungalow accommodation suitable for occupation by older people and by members of the community with mobility problems. Policy H4 provides for a proportion of new bungalows to be provided on allocated sites. However, it is anticipated that many of these new bungalows are likely to be smaller properties providing 2 bedrooms. Accordingly, this policy seeks to contribute towards ensuring no net loss of larger bungalows from the overall housing stock across the Plan area to ensure an adequate choice of single-storey housing for older people and people with mobility problems.*

## **H6-Affordable Housing, Starter Homes and Low-Cost Market Housing to meet Local Housing Needs**

Development that meets an objectively assessed Local Housing Need identified in the latest housing needs survey or, if out of date, the most appropriate objectively assessed review of housing need in the future, will be subject to planning conditions and/or planning obligations requiring the first occupants to be residents of Congleton or with a local connection or employment in the Plan Area, then adjoining parishes and finally Cheshire East. Within any new development the affordable housing provided shall be 'pepperpotted' within that development and not grouped together.

In the case of essential agricultural dwellings, the same criteria shall apply, and occupants will be employed or last employed in agriculture. Any housing provided to meet a Local Housing Need when it is completed and subsequently becomes vacant shall be made available from that time for a period of 12 months for occupation by people who meet the Local Housing Need criteria.

All new housing developments of 10 houses should include 15% of 2 bedroomed Starter Homes in addition to any affordable housing to contribute to a mixed and balanced community.

### *Justification*

*Market assessment research undertaken in preparation for the Neighbourhood Plan has revealed strong demand for new build 2-bedroom starter homes in a range of different tenures. This policy seeks to ensure that the larger sites - both allocated and windfall sites providing or likely to provide for construction of over 10 dwellings in total (whether within a single application or sequential applications) - are required to accommodate an appropriate proportion of starter homes to meet the unmet demand together with additional demand likely to arise during the plan period.*

## **H7 Tenure Mix**

Proposals for Affordable Homes in the plan area must be of a tenure, size and type to help meet the locally identified housing needs and contribute to a mixed, balanced and inclusive community where people can live independently longer.

### *Justification*

*Market assessment research undertaken in preparation for the Neighbourhood Plan has revealed strong demand for Affordable Homes in a range of different tenures.*

## **H8 Hostels and Houses in Multiple Occupation**

Any application for the construction of a new hostel or for the conversion of or change of use of an existing building to a hostel will not be supported where it would exacerbate or contribute to the concentration of hostels and HMO accommodation in one area of the town to the detriment of that area.

### *Justification*

*In recent years a range of HMOs and hostels have been developed in the town some located close to the town centre.*

*It is important to the economy of the town centre and to local communities that care should be taken to avoid over-concentration of this type of accommodation. At the date of publication of this Plan planning control applies only to hostels rather than to HMOs, although licensing rule changes are bringing more HMOs under the control of the housing authority than was previously the case. Therefore, this policy aims to control the development of hostels (together with any other types of multi-occupied housing brought under planning control over the lifetime of the Plan).*

## **H9 Housing Design**

All proposals for new housing development in the Plan Area should take account of the immediately surrounding area and reinforce its character by;

- The provision of off street car and cycle parking;
- The provision of sustainable infrastructure including waste storage and disposal and surface water drainage;
- The provision of hard and soft landscaping;
- The retention of existing trees, hedgerows and boundary walls;
- Garaging where appropriate of a size to accommodate the average family car

### *Justification*

*This policy seeks to clarify the development management criteria that will be applied to the design of proposals for residential development to ensure good quality, well designed new housing development.*

## **H10 Strategic Housing Sites**

The layout and design of all housing on the planned strategic sites within or adjoining the Plan Area to the north of the town should take account of ‘garden village’ and ‘walkable neighbourhood’ principles including;



- A high standard of public open space, green space and amenity provision, including important public open space along the Dane Valley towards the town centre, and retail and other facilities at Barn Road, West Heath and Lower Heath;
- Excellent connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists to the town centre including through riverside green spaces along the Dane Valley;
- Housing designs appropriate to Congleton's market town character;
- High quality landscape design of key distributor roads similar to the existing landscape treatment of the Holmes Chapel and Sandbach Roads.

#### *Justification*

*The quality of development of the main urban extension sites to Congleton will have a major influence on perception of its attractiveness as a place to live and work for many years to come and will also influence the perception of the adjoining rural parishes. It is therefore regarded as very important that a clear overall design approach is taken, adopting 'garden village' and 'walkable neighbourhood' principles to ensure a sustainable and attractive strategic development that is connected to appropriate public and commercial services, social and community facilities and public amenities such as parks and public open spaces. The main centres providing such services, facilities and amenities are located in and adjoining Congleton Town Centre, off Barn Road and at West Heath and Lower Heath. Agreement will be sought with adjoining neighbourhood planning bodies to ensure a coordinated approach to securing well-coordinated high quality sustainable development across the administrative boundaries, including attractive pedestrian and cycle links, public open spaces corridors and parks and play areas.*

#### **H11 Self Build and Custom Build Homes**

Applications for self-build or custom-built schemes within the Plan Area will be supported where:

- the location and proposed nature of the scheme are both sympathetic to the character of the area and would have minimal visual and environmental impact
- the site is within the settlement boundary;
- Dwellings can only be built by those acting on behalf of individuals or a community group of individuals. No single individual or group will be granted planning permission for more than one dwelling in any one scheme;
- New houses will need to conform to the quality standards set out in this plan and wider planning guidance;
- Dwellings shall be accompanied by evidence of the local housing connection(s) of the applicant(s) and sites will be granted only where such a connection has been demonstrated. In addition, planning permission will be granted provided that an obligation is concluded under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in which the applicant(s) undertake(s) to commence construction of the dwelling in accordance with the submitted and approved plans. The applicant(s) shall also undertake to occupy the dwelling upon completion.

#### *Justification*

*Government is seeking to encourage self-build and custom-build housing. A significant proportion of smaller infill development sites are developed by self-builders or custom builders. Nationally, a growing number of groups of individuals have also joined together to share skills and workload in bringing forward groups of self-build or custom-build properties for their own occupation. This policy confirms support for the principle of*

*appropriately located and designed housing development of this type, subject to the provisions of the other housing policies in this plan.*

## **H12 Vacant and Derelict Properties**

Proposals for the renovation, conversion and re-use of underused properties in the Plan Area will be encouraged and supported subject to the following;

- Provision of good quality design and layout, highway access, parking and wheelie bin storage;
- Provision of good quality hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties;
- Respect for the character, appearance and setting of the area and any listed buildings and conservation area policies;
- Other policies within the Plan

### *Justification*

*Vacant and derelict properties can present hazards and nuisance to neighbours and to the wider community. This policy provides a clear statement of intent in support of the renovation, conversion and re-use of vacant and derelict properties in the plan area.*

## TOWN CENTRE

### OBJECTIVE

To improve the attractiveness and vibrancy of the town centre

#### TC1 Location of Retail, Leisure and Service Development.

Proposals for regeneration and development projects in the east and west growth zones in the town centre will be supported and encouraged subject to;

- Provision of good quality design and layout, highway access, parking and wheelie bin storage;
- Provision of good quality hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties;
- Respect for the character, appearance and setting of any listed buildings and conservation area policies.

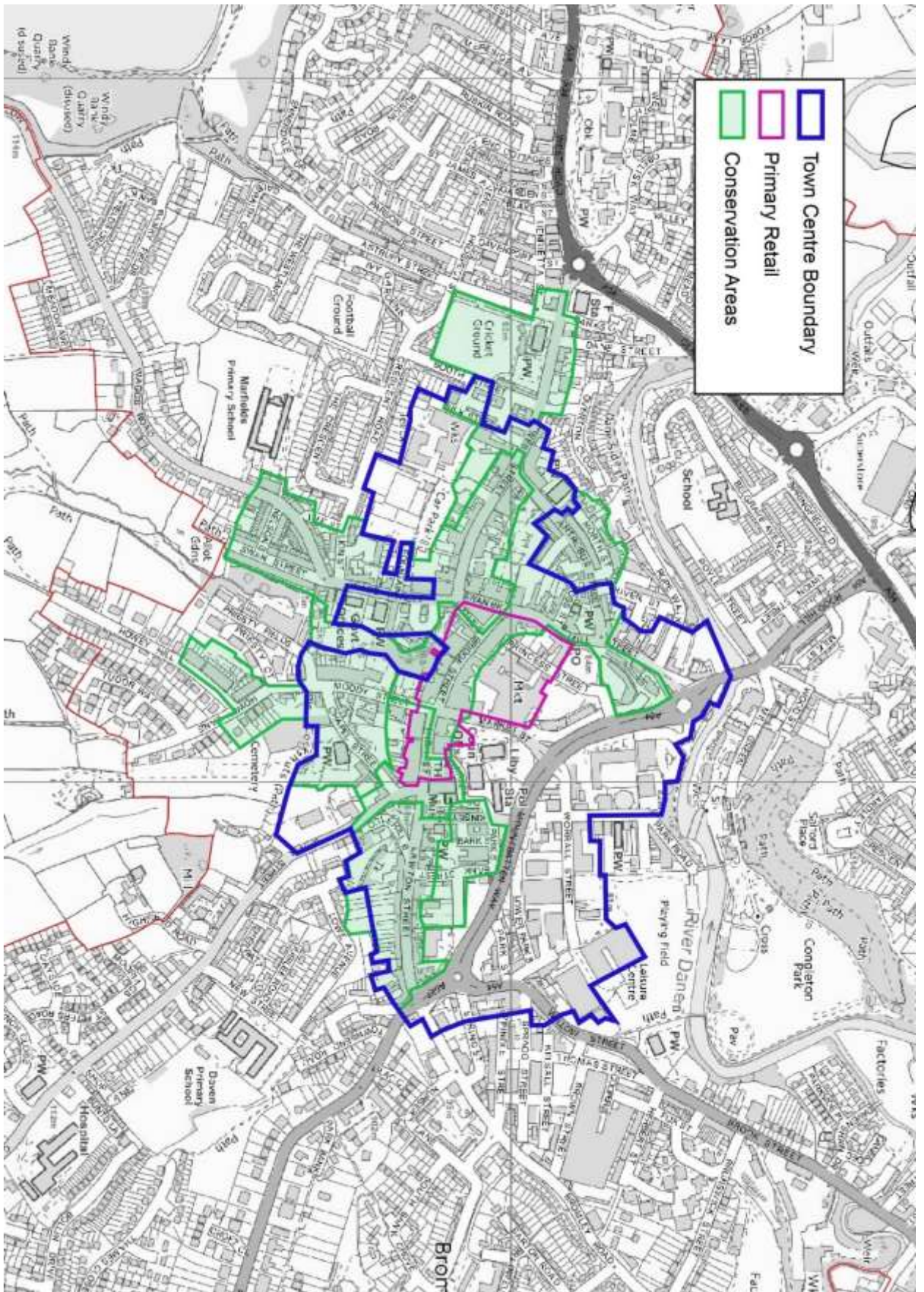
#### *Justification*

*Applying the principle of 'Town Centre First', to ensure the primacy of Congleton town centre and to re-enforce its key service centre functions, all new retail and services developments except for small scale local service centre developments will be located within the boundary of the town centre as shown in the Town Centre Plan. Retail developments will be located primarily in the Town Centre Growth Zone West site but with supporting independent specialised retail located in Growth Zone East to maintain and enhance the retail offer of the town and the varied retail frontages.*

*Commercial leisure developments including bars, clubs, restaurants, and public houses will be focused primarily in the Swan Bank area West Street and Lawton Street. Commercial leisure development proposals should pay careful attention to implications for nearby residential uses, including the impacts of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, operational noise, smells, air pollution and/or waste disposal arrangements and should seek to minimise any conflicts identified. Any such developments likely to give rise to significant adverse impacts upon established residential areas will be refused permission.*

*Subject to the normal environmental, servicing and traffic considerations, commercial, financial and public service developments may be located in any appropriate location within the town centre including the primary retail frontages, where priority is given to maintaining and to re-establishing where necessary the continuity of retail frontages and footfall.*





## TC2 Town Centre Growth Zones.

The Growth Zone East sites are allocated to provide for re-development of the bus station, police station, council offices, Fair Ground, Market Square, North Rode Timber Yard and Back Park Street surface car park.

Proposals for developments in the Town Centre Growth Zones will be supported and encouraged subject to;

- A multifunction community hub providing a focus for integrated local public services including a new public library;
- Development focused on commercial leisure, entertainment and independent and specialized retailing, including a high quality focal public space;
- A Care/Extra-care housing scheme catering for the needs of elderly and other people needing high levels of social and medical care but with easy access to good social care services, retail and leisure facilities and incorporating a peaceful, secure green space;
- Coordinated area improvements and upgrade to the existing area of 19<sup>th</sup> century town centre housing north of Lawton Street to integrate this area where appropriate with the adjoining new development schemes.
- Where any new development fronts onto Mountbatten Way it should present an attractive frontage to that road to encourage people into the town centre;
- Within any new town centre development provision should include new public toilets and, car parking.

### *Justification*

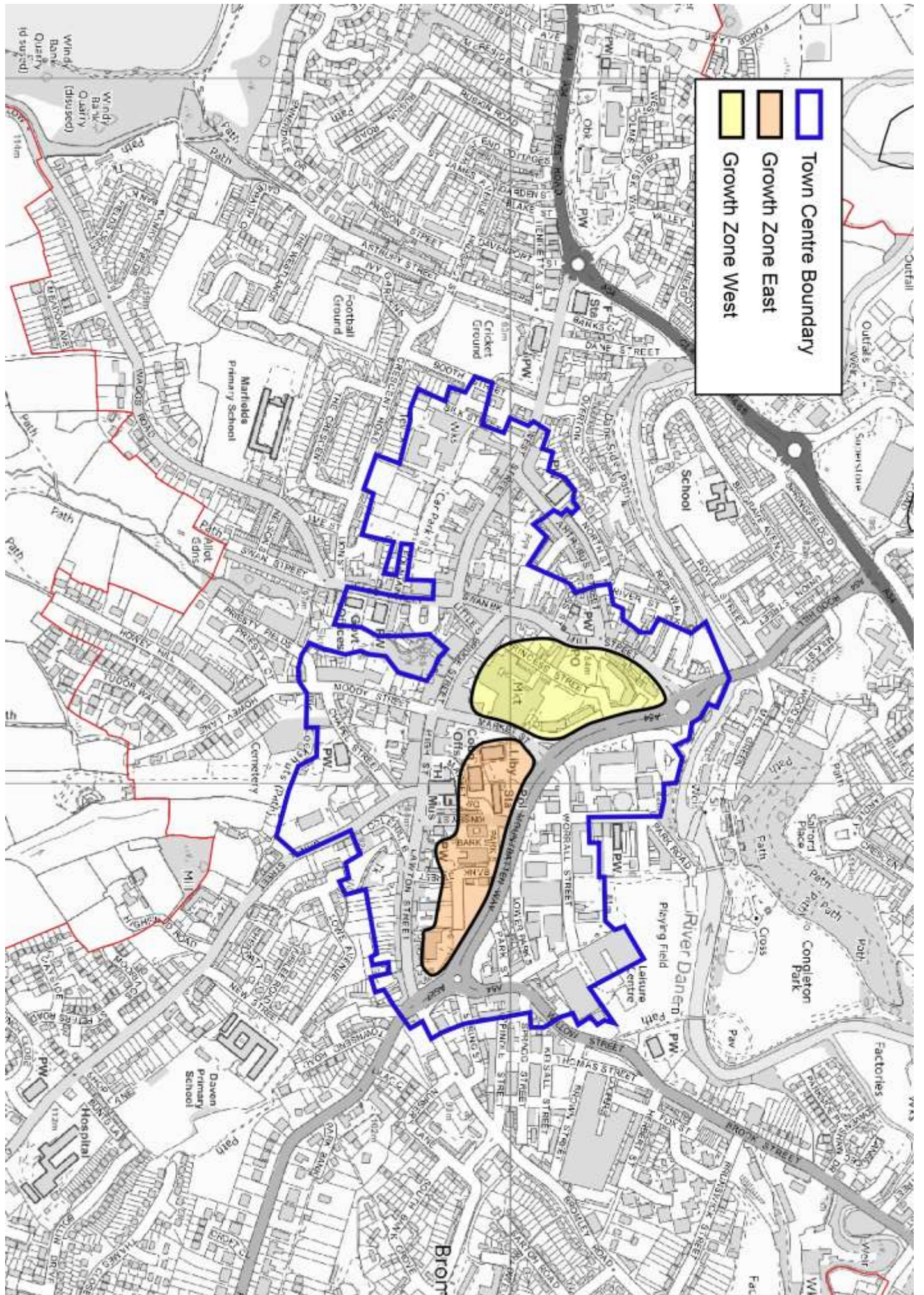
*The Growth Zone West site is allocated to enable extension, remodeling and enhancements to the Mills Development, or redevelopment with any alternative scheme that incorporates similar attractive and efficient retail floor space, a substantial area of open market stalls, retail area car parking, public toilets and other relevant elements that would extend and support the primary retail functions of the town centre's main shopping area.*

*The mix of uses allocated for each site in the Town Centre Growth Zone should have regard to relevant site characteristics and constraints and should achieve the diversity of town centre uses and activities considered necessary and/or desirable to ensure a coherent and vital central area.*

*Proposals that adopt the mix of uses allocated subject to high quality design, environmental and access and parking standards will be supported. Proposals that conflict with the mix of uses allocated or that fail to meet the standards set out in the development plan design policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Cheshire East Design Guide will be refused.*

*Design guidance will be prepared for the Growth Zones in conjunction with Cheshire East and proposals for any new development within the Growth Zone will be expected to comply with this design guidance and the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan.*





- Town Centre Boundary
- Growth Zone East
- Growth Zone West

Windy Bank Quarry (disused)

Brom

Factories

Completion Park

River Danen

Laisure Centre

Playing field

Liby Stn

INGERS STREET

BARK ST

MOODY STREET

MOODY STREET

MOODY STREET

MOODY STREET

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### **TC3 Local Needs Shopping outside the Town Centre.**

Outside the Town Centre boundaries new and extended small-scale retail development to meet daily convenience shopping needs will be permitted in the West Heath Local Centre, Lower Heath,

High Town and Buglawton shopping areas subject to;

- The provision of adequate car parking;
- The provision of servicing and waste management facilities;
- The provision of good quality hard and soft landscaping;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties

#### *Justification*

*These existing local shopping centres serve the needs of the communities of West Heath, High Town, Buglawton and Lower Heath who live within reasonable walking and cycling distance and are already established retail locations outside the Town Centre. Any new retail development proposed should make adequate provision for car parking, servicing and waste management and disposal and, should not give rise to adverse traffic, road safety and/or environmental impacts on adjacent residential areas.*

### **TC4 Other Retail and Leisure Developments outside the Town Centre.**

Where it can be demonstrated that a proposed retail or leisure development cannot be accommodated with the Town Centre then support will be given to such development on sites immediately adjoining the Town Centre subject to;

- The provision of adequate car parking;
- The provision of servicing and waste management facilities;
- The provision of good quality hard and soft landscaping;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties;
- Respect for the character, appearance and setting of any listed buildings and conservation area policies.

#### *Justification*

*It is important that all 'town centre' uses are concentrated within or as close as possible to the town centre to reinforce and strengthen the role of Congleton in the wider area.*

### **TC5 Residential and Business Development in the Town Centre.**

Support will be given to the conversion of space over shops and the redevelopment of existing buildings and vacant sites within the Town Centre subject to;

- Provision of good quality design and layout, highway access, parking and wheelie bin storage;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties;
- The provision of good quality hard and soft landscaping;
- Respect for the character, appearance and setting of any listed buildings and conservation area policies.



### *Justification*

*Factors to be assessed in relation to the environment around the development and the implications of the proposal itself will include consideration of noise, smells, parking, traffic, servicing, waste management and disposal etc.*

*Proposals for redevelopment of the upper floors of town centre properties, in properties historically used as houses and on identified brownfield sites where housing can be an important component of the mix of uses will be encouraged.*

### **TC6 Market Area within the Town.**

Proposals for the redevelopment of the existing market area in the town centre will be supported if provision is made to accommodate a range of uses including the retention of an outdoor market within the town centre west zone subject to;

- Provision of good quality design and layout, highway access, parking and wheelie bin storage;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties;
- The provision of good quality hard and soft landscaping;
- The storage of market stalls;
- Respect for the character, appearance and setting of any listed buildings and conservation area policies

### *Justification*

*Congleton is an historic market town and the twice weekly market is a popular local retail attraction supported by the community which adds to the variety of retail offer in the town centre. It is recognized that the outdoor market needs improvement and there may be the opportunity to relocate it within or as part of any proposed new development in the town centre.*

### **TC7 Employment in the Town Centre.**

New employment development in the Town Centre will be supported subject to;

- Provision of good quality design and layout, highway access, parking and wheelie bin storage;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties;
- The provision of good quality hard and soft landscaping;
- Respect for the character, appearance and setting of any listed buildings and conservation area policies.

### *Justification*

*To create a variety of employment opportunities within the town centre which are accessible to local people.*

### **TC8 Parking in the Town Centre.**

New development in the Town Centre will be supported where additional car parking is provided to serve that development within or immediately adjacent to the Town Centre subject to;

- No loss of existing on street free parking;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties;
- Respect for the character, appearance and setting of any listed buildings and conservation area policies.

#### *Justification*

*Developments proposed in the town centre that would contribute to additional parking demand will be required to make physical or financial provision by Section 106 agreement to meet that demand in an attractive form and in an appropriate location on or off-site.*

*Several of the potential development sites in the town centre include existing car parks and it will be important to create new attractive public car parks close to the centre to support its future development and vitality.*

*The standards of car parking to be required will be determined in relation to the relevant Cheshire East car parking standards together with any additional evidence regarding the parking demand and traffic generation of the development in question.*

### **TC9 Design in the Town Centre.**

Support will be given to all new developments in the Town Centre subject to;

- Ensuring a high standard of design in any building refurbishments and new shop fronts;
- Improvements to the existing public realm ;
- The introduction of public artworks reflecting the character of the town;
- Improvements to existing listed building and conservation areas;
- The provision of good quality hard and soft landscaping including the provision of additional open green spaces, quiet areas, trees and gardens
- The protection and refurbishment of historic and listed buildings;
- The retention of views across the town importantly views of the Town Hall Clock and St Peters tower.

#### *Justification*

*New developments in the town centre will be expected to add and enhance the existing town centre experience building upon what is already there and creating new spaces and experiences for those people using the town centre making it an attractive space to visit and use daily.*



**Figure 1 Concept consultation image of proposed pedestrianisation**

#### **TC10 Town Centre Infrastructure.**

All proposals for new development in the Town Centre will be expected to ensure effective provision for the following;

- Pedestrian and cycle movement;
- Public car parking;
- The retention of existing free on-street car parking;
- Delivery and servicing traffic;
- Waste storage and collection.

#### *Justification*

*The promotion of safe and convenient access into and around the town centre and its facilities for both able bodied and disabled residents and visitors is a priority. The Town Council, the Town Centre Partnership and the Local Access Forum will identify and support projects for cycling and pedestrian access improvements. Town Centre developments will be expected to consider pedestrian, cycle and disabled access as key elements of their design. Where relevant and appropriate, significant town centre and major housing developments will be expected to contribute towards the programme of town centre access improvements on-site and off-site.*

*Opportunities to improve orbital traffic circulation around the southern side of the town centre between West Road/Clayton Bypass (the A34) and the Park Lane (A527) will be subject to detailed technical and feasibility study within the first 5-year period of the Neighbourhood*

*Plan. It is proposed that orbital access and traffic movement around the south of the central area will be considered further at the first review of the Neighbourhood Plan.*

#### **TC 11 Town Centre Visitor Attractions.**

Proposals for the retention, promotion and enhancement of the existing Town Centre Visitor attractions will be supported subject to;

- The protection and refurbishment of historic and listed buildings;
- Provision for delivery and servicing traffic;
- Provision for waste storage and collection



#### *Justification*

*To maintain and enhance the historic market town role of Congleton in the wider area the provision of heritage and leisure facilities in the town centre, together with the re-use of historic buildings will be supported and encouraged.*

#### **TC12 Other Leisure Developments.**

Support will be given for proposals which enhance existing leisure facilities in the town, particularly in Swan Bank, West Street and Lawton Street subject to;

- No loss of existing on street free parking;
- Respect for the amenity and privacy of nearby residential properties;
- Respect for the character, appearance and setting of any listed buildings and conservation area policies;
- Provision of good quality design and layout, highway access, and parking;



- Provision for delivery and servicing traffic;
- Provision for waste storage and collection.



### *Justification*

*To maintain and enhance the historic market town role of Congleton in the wider area the provision of facilities that enhance the evening economy of the town centre, together will be supported and encouraged. The redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre to provide a 'Lifestyle Centre' as the basis for a 'Leisure Hub', either on the existing leisure centre site or on an appropriate site within or on the edge of the town centre will be promoted and supported. As part of this leisure and sport-related development it will be essential to ensure safe, clear and attractive pedestrian links from the new facility to the principal town centre facilities and services, including public transport facilities.*

## ECONOMY

### Objective

To secure the future prosperity of Congleton it is important to retain and attract a variety of new employment opportunities within the town to meet local needs and to support the local economy.

### Policy E1 New Business

Proposals which extend existing, or promote new employment opportunities within the plan area will be supported where it can be demonstrated that;

- The development will positively benefit the local economy and provides the opportunity for local employment and training.
- All business development will be encouraged to manage down their need for employee and visitor parking over the plan period by the introduction of travel plans and encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes.
- They must not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality or the amenity of adjoining properties.
- They link into safe, attractive and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes; and
- Any new employment development takes advantage of existing public transport routes within the town.

#### *Justification*

*To ensure the continued success of the town and to continue its role as a service centre it is important to provide new employment opportunities within the town. New employment will attract additional people into the town and provide job opportunities for existing and new residents. Businesses will take an active role in improving local skill levels and reducing local employment.*

### Policy E2 Loss of Employment Sites

Loss of existing local employment sites will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable or required and the premises/site/business has been actively marketed for employment uses for at least 12 months at an appropriate market price.

The plan encourages the re-use of local employment sites for a mix of market, affordable, low cost market and elderly persons housing in accordance with the housing policies in the plan. (Policy H4)

#### *Justification*

*To retain employment within the town. If the site is not used for employment then consideration should be given to providing a mix of housing to meet the housing policies in the Plan.*

### Policy E3 Use of Existing Buildings

The re-use, conversion and adaptation of permanent, structurally sound buildings of substantial construction for small business, recreation or tourism will be supported subject to:

- The proposed use being appropriate to its location
- The conversion and/or adaptation works proposed respecting the local character of the surrounding buildings and local area
- The local highway network being capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and adequate car parking being provided within the site

*Justification*

*To create a variety of employment opportunities that are accessible to local people.*

**Policy E4 Tourism**

New tourism related development will be supported within the plan area, including the re-use and conversion of suitable buildings in the countryside for tourist accommodation provided;

- The proposed use being appropriate to its location
- The conversion and/or adaptation works proposed respecting the local character of the surrounding buildings and immediate area
- The local highway network being capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and adequate car parking being provided within the site.

*Justification*

*To promote Congleton as a tourist destination and to encourage the growth of the tourism industry within the town.*

**Policy E5 Extensions to existing industrial sites**

The extension to existing industrial sites or premises within the built-up area will be supported subject to:

- The proposed use being appropriate to its location
- The extensions proposed respecting the local character of the surrounding buildings and local area
- The local highway network being capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed use and adequate car parking being provided within the site
- The development proposed does affect the amenity of adjoining uses especially existing or proposed housing.

*Justification*

*To retain employment within the town.*

## TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

### Objective

To develop an integrated sustainable transport framework within the town improving walking and cycling routes between everyday facilities such as shops, services, open spaces and the surrounding countryside.

### Policy T1 Promoting Sustainable Transport

Development proposals must demonstrate how they enhance and support the delivery of improvements to the transport infrastructure proportionate to the scale of the scheme proposed and, improve accessibility and support development through a process of managed traffic growth: - in particular

- Provide safe walking and cycling routes from the proposed site, with consideration of access to key services and facilities in the town including the town centre, railway station, schools and key employment sites;
- Demonstrate how the proposals will provide safe walking and cycling links to public transport including traffic calming measures where practical.
- All business development will be encouraged to manage down their need for employee and visitor parking over the plan period by encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes.
- To avoid inappropriate parking in residential areas close to the town centre businesses should have adequate spaces to provide for the needs of the business and of their visitors to the minimum standards set out in Cheshire Easts parking standards in force at the time.
- Proposals to provide short and long stay commuting parking near to the Rail Station will be supported as long as these are consistent with all other policies in the plan.
- The provision of travel plans for development of 10 or more houses and new or extended employment development.
- Deliver priority improvements to the wider transport system in the plan area by S106 contributions or the payment of Community Infrastructure Levy.

### *Justification*

*To address traffic congestion issues and to encourage sustainable transport encouragement will be given to proposals that promote safe walking and cycling routes into and out of the town linking north, east, south and west and throughout the town centre.*

### Policy T2 Congestion and Highway Safety

Proposals will only be permitted where the scale of traffic generated by the development will not worsen existing traffic problems in the plan area 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 proposed development.

### *Justification*

*To address congestion issues caused by through traffic developments that will increase the volume of HGV traffic through the town will be opposed unless there are mitigating circumstances and contributions to the construction of the proposed Link Road.*



### **Policy T3 Parking**

All development proposals must provide a minimum level of on-site parking in accordance with Cheshire East's car parking standards. Developments which lead to a net loss of car parking spaces within the town centre will be opposed.

The retention of free on-street parking within the town centre will be supported and encouraged.

#### *Justification*

*It is important for the vitality of the town centre that convenient and safe car parking facilities are provided and maintained.*

### **Policy T4 Accessibility**

Proposals for new development or the re-use of buildings to which the public are admitted will only be permitted where they provide for:

- A suitable means of access for disabled and visually impaired people to the entrance of the building from an adjoining street or car park, and that route be signposted where necessary;
- Integral or other off-street car parking spaces appropriate for disabled people which are in close proximity to and fully accessible to the proposed development.

#### *Justification*

*All new and existing buildings should be accessible to all members of the community.*

### **Policy T5 Public Transport**

Financial contributions will be sought from developers towards the following measures to improve conditions for public transport users in the plan area:

- Suitable and convenient pedestrian access to new and existing public transport facilities;
- Suitable and convenient access to new and existing public transport facilities for disabled and visually impaired people
- Priority facilities for buses at new or existing road junctions
- On-street and off-street bus layby facilities;
- New or improved passenger and operational facilities;
- Alternative transport services for the rural areas;
- Cross town bus services and links to the rail station

#### *Justification*

*The retention and enhancement of public transport provision in the town is key to securing its sustainable future.*

## **Policy T6 Cycling**

All new proposals for residential and employment development will be required to make adequate provision for cycling in the town, financial contributions may be sought from developers towards the following measures to improve conditions for cyclists:

- Segregated cycle ways;
- Identification of safe cycle routes to schools, the town centre, employment areas, recreational and leisure facilities, and other major attractions;
- Shared use of existing or future pedestrian paths and cycle routes;
- Priority facilities at new and existing road junctions;
- Secure cycle parking at key locations such as the town centre, supermarkets, out of town shopping centres, railway station, employment areas, schools, recreational and leisure facilities;
- Links to the surrounding countryside.

### *Justification*

*Cycling in and around the town is one of the ways of improving sustainability and accessibility whilst reducing the need to rely on the car.*

## **Policy T7 Pedestrians**

All proposals for residential and employment development will be required to make adequate provision for pedestrians within the plan area and, where the circumstances merit it, financial contributions may be sought from developers towards the following measures to improve conditions for pedestrians including the disabled and visually impaired:

- Traffic calming;
- Environmental measures including surfacing, lighting and signage;
- Safe and convenient pedestrian routes.

### *Justification*

*Walking in and around the town is one of the ways of improving sustainability and accessibility whilst reducing the need to rely on the car. The Health and Well Being policies in the plan also address this issue.*

## **Policy T8 Footpath, Bridleway and Cycle Networks ('Public Right of Way Network')**

All proposals for residential and employment development will be required to take account of the existing footpath, bridleway and cycleway network. Where this network is adjacent or close by the development it must provide suitable links to the network. Where a requirement can be demonstrated, a financial contribution may be sought from developers towards the improvement and extension of the network.

As part of any new development to the north of the town contributions may be sought for a new cycle river crossing to be provided at a suitable location to link this development area by both a footpath and cycle route into the Town Centre.



#### *Justification*

*It will be important to improve and enhance the existing network as well as creating new links from the development area to the north of the town into the town centre.*

#### **Policy T9 Infrastructure**

All new development will be required to make adequate provision for any infrastructure requirements which arise directly as a consequence of the development proposed;

Such provision may include some or all of the following: -

- On site facilities directly related to the proposed development;
- Off-site facilities required as a consequence of the proposed development, in order to avoid placing an undue burden on existing infrastructure;
- A commuted sum payment to be agreed with Cheshire East Council to enable identified infrastructure requirements to be provided and, where appropriate to be maintained.

#### *Justification*

*Infrastructure investment is key to the future success of the town and it will be important, going forward that infrastructure provision keeps pace with development demands.*

#### **Policy T10 Fibre optic cabling to premises**

The development of high speed broadband and/or any subsequent future technology across the plan area will be encouraged and supported.

### *Justification*

*The provision of high speed broadband is essential to maintain economic competitiveness of existing businesses and to attract new businesses into the town.*

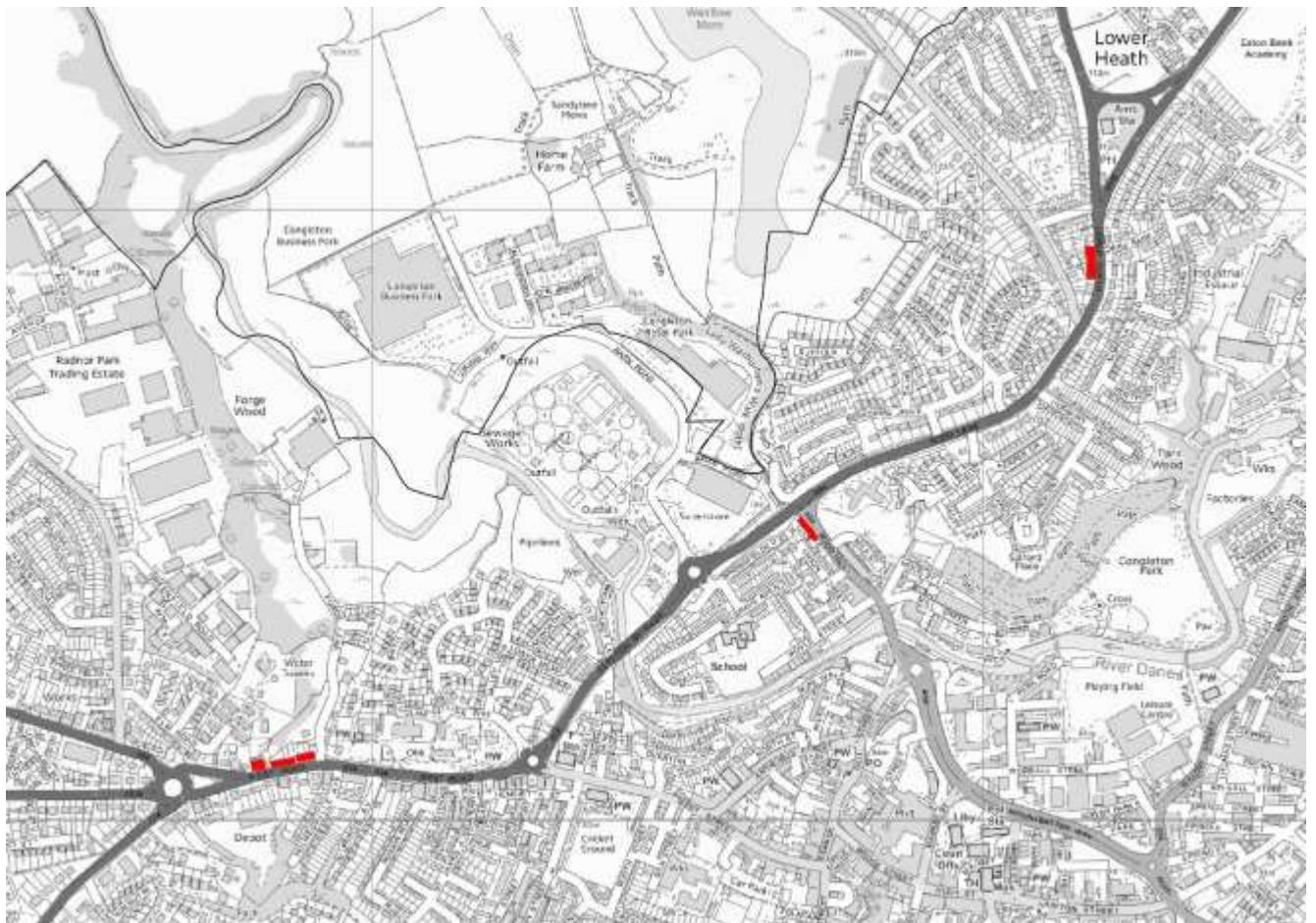
### **Policy T11 Improving Air Quality**

To protect air quality where it is of a high standard and improve it elsewhere, particularly in Congleton's Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) Development proposals will only be supported provided they:

- Demonstrate that their traffic impacts will not decrease air quality in the Congleton AQMAs at Rood Hill, West Road and Lower Heath;
- Implement and support actions that make a positive contribution to improving air quality, such as the increased take-up of sustainable transport;
- Integrate with existing policies for spatial and transport planning to reduce travel demand and increase the opportunities for walking and cycling in the plan area.

### *Justification*

*Air pollution, particularly from traffic, is becoming an increasing problem and there is a need to reduce air pollution particularly in and around the town centre, and, adjacent to schools, nurseries and health facilities. Three areas of poor air quality can be seen on the map below.*





## HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELL BEING

### Objective

The long-term objective for Congleton is to have a range of good quality community, leisure, health and social facilities available and accessible to everyone who lives in the town.

### Policy HEW 1 Accessible GP and Dental Practices

Proposals to provide facilities for and or improved specialist care for the elderly, people with physical and learning disabilities and mental health services in the town will be supported and encouraged.

All proposals for residential and employment development will be required on a case by case basis to support the provision of local health facilities so that all residents have access to a local GP and/ or dental practice within the service centre of Congleton, where a requirement can be demonstrated, a financial contribution may be sought from developers subject to agreement with the existing healthcare providers.

#### *Justification*

*New housing will give rise to additional demands on existing health facilities. The development of new housing must therefore contribute to community and social facilities, including for example community space, GPs and dentists within the town.*

### Policy HEW 2 Provide for the sports needs of the local community

All new developments will be encouraged to make contributions towards existing outdoor sports facilities within the town will be encouraged in accordance with Congleton's Sports Trust and Cheshire East Council's sporting strategy to include;

- A mix of facilities will be determined in consultation with Sports Trust;
- All new or enhanced sports facilities must be inclusive (i.e. suitable for the elderly, residents with disabilities and those with mental health issues) be accompanied by car parking and be located on sites which are easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
- The increased use of existing School facilities for multi-use by the local community will be encouraged including the provision of additional facilities at Eaton Bank Academy and Congleton High School;
- The development of additional new playing fields
- Existing playing field lands will be safeguarded and preserved from development proposals unless alternative enhanced facilities of equivalent or greater scale and quality are provided in an appropriate location nearby as part of the scheme proposed;
- Contributions will be sought under section 106 to secure contributions from developments towards the enhancement and provision of playing fields in the plan area and these will be delivered as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Plan.

### *Justification*

*There is an aging population in the town and it will be important that provision is made for this growing sector of the local community if the town is to continue to cater successfully for all elements of the local community.*

*There is a need to support and provide for the sporting needs of the local community by for example shared use of school pitches but also to make these sporting facilities accessible to all members of the community.*

### **Policy HEW 3 Existing and New Community Facilities**

Proposals that retain or enhance the provision community facilities in the plan area will be supported where they do not conflict with other policies in the plan and subject to;

- should be of an appropriate scale and design to enable multiple use throughout the day;
- Facilities should be accessible to all and take account of existing and future needs of the local community;
- They do not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

### *Justification*

*It is important that a town like Congleton builds upon the community facilities that already exist and which are well used by the local population. Any increase in population will create additional demand for improved, expanded and new facilities within the town and every effort should be made to encourage improvements to and additional community facilities. There is a need to retain wherever possible existing community facilities within the town and it is important that the viability of these uses is tested within the market place before they are lost to an alternative use such as housing.*

### **Policy HEW 4 Contributions to Community Infrastructure**

All new development will be expected to address the impacts and benefits it will have on the community infrastructure and how any impacts can be mitigated.

The provision of community infrastructure by developers in lieu of financial contributions will be supported where such community infrastructure projects are identified in the Neighbourhood Delivery Plan.

### *Justification*

*To support the delivery of new and or extended community facilities the Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Plan will set out priorities for the town.*

### **Policy HEW 5 Day Nurseries, Primary and Secondary Schools**

Proposals for the development of new, or for the extension or intensification of use of existing, day nurseries, playgroups, primary and secondary schools will be encouraged where all of the following criteria are satisfied;

- There is a separate and secure area for outdoor play;
- The scale of the proposal will not affect the amenity of residents by virtue of noise, general disturbance, loss of privacy and traffic generation;
- Adequate off-street car parking is provided for staff and visitors;

- The location is accessible by public transport, walking and bicycle;
- There are satisfactory arrangements for the dropping off and collecting of children without causing a danger or obstruction to other road users.

*Justification*

*There are already many nurseries, playgroups and schools within the town and it is important that the impact of these uses is fully assessed, particularly where they impact upon adjoining residential properties.*

**Policy HEW 6 Improvement to the Community’s General Health and Well-Being**

Proposals for new development will be encouraged to add to and improve the existing cycling and walking infrastructure within and throughout the town. Linking into the existing infrastructure to create a town wide safe cycling and walking routes for all members of the community. (policy T8)

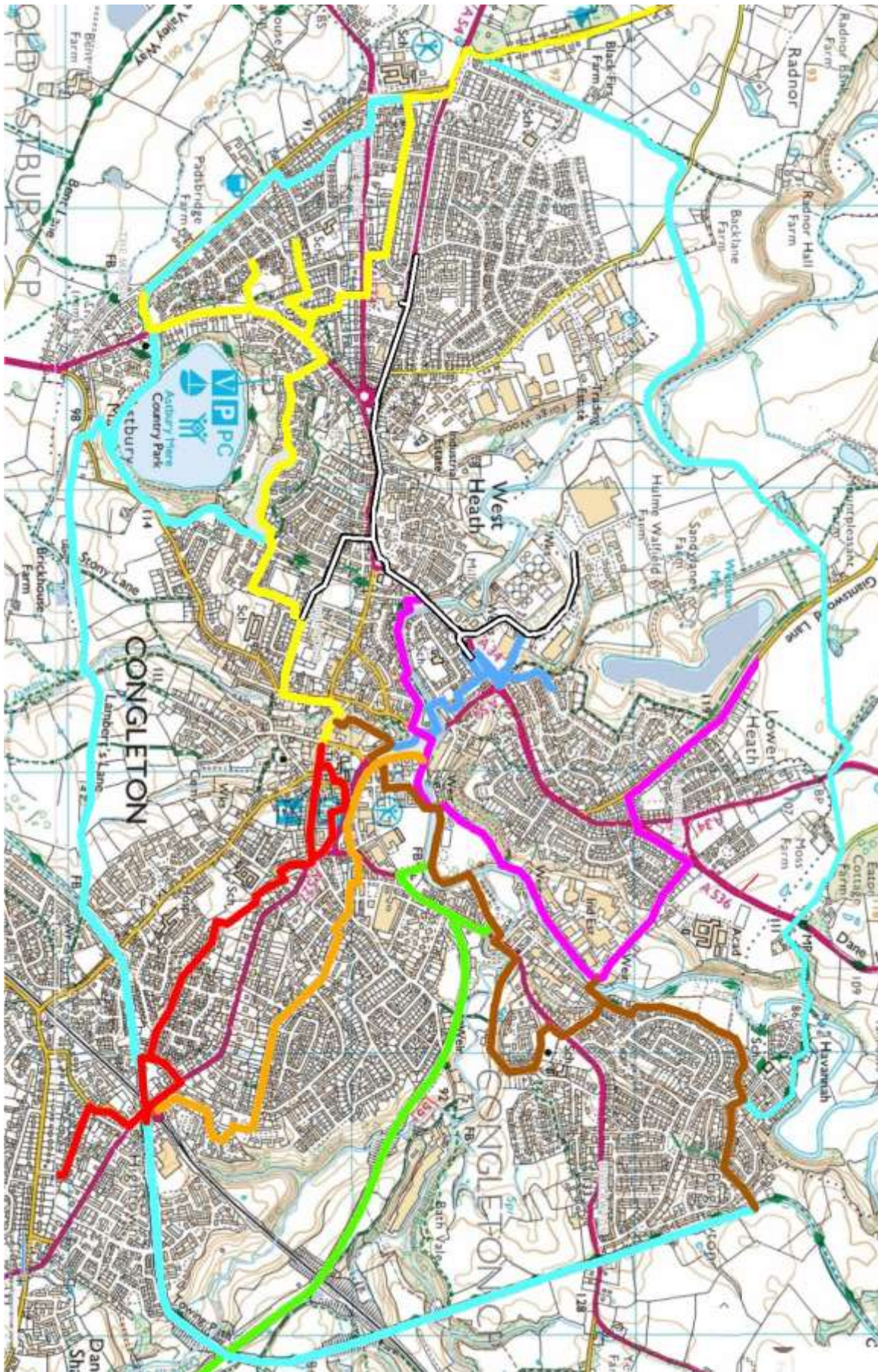
- All new cycle paths will provide safe and effective routes across and through the plan area linking with other areas adjacent to and accessible from the Town;
- New and existing cycle tracks should where possible link with the National Cycle Network;
- Routes should aim to keep crossings and changes in level to a minimum and cycle routes should avoid unnecessary gradients.
- Routes should normally be accessible for those with wheelchairs, frames, buggies or other mobility aids.

*Justification*

*The plan aims to encourage safe walking and cycling routes across and throughout the town to not only encourage healthier living but also to create links from the town into the surrounding countryside.*









## ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Objective

The object of the Environmental and Sustainability policies is to preserving our green spaces, enhance our environment and implement where practical renewable energy.

### Policy SE1 Development within Conservation Areas or the setting of a Heritage Asset

New development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of existing heritage assets identified on the Local List for the plan area will normally be supported where they enhance the conservation area and/or enhance the significance of the heritage asset concerned.

The loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area will not be supported.

Any development proposals that would lead to substantial harm or loss of a designated heritage asset will be refused planning consent unless it can be demonstrated that the significant harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss such as: -

- No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation.
- The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

### *Justification*

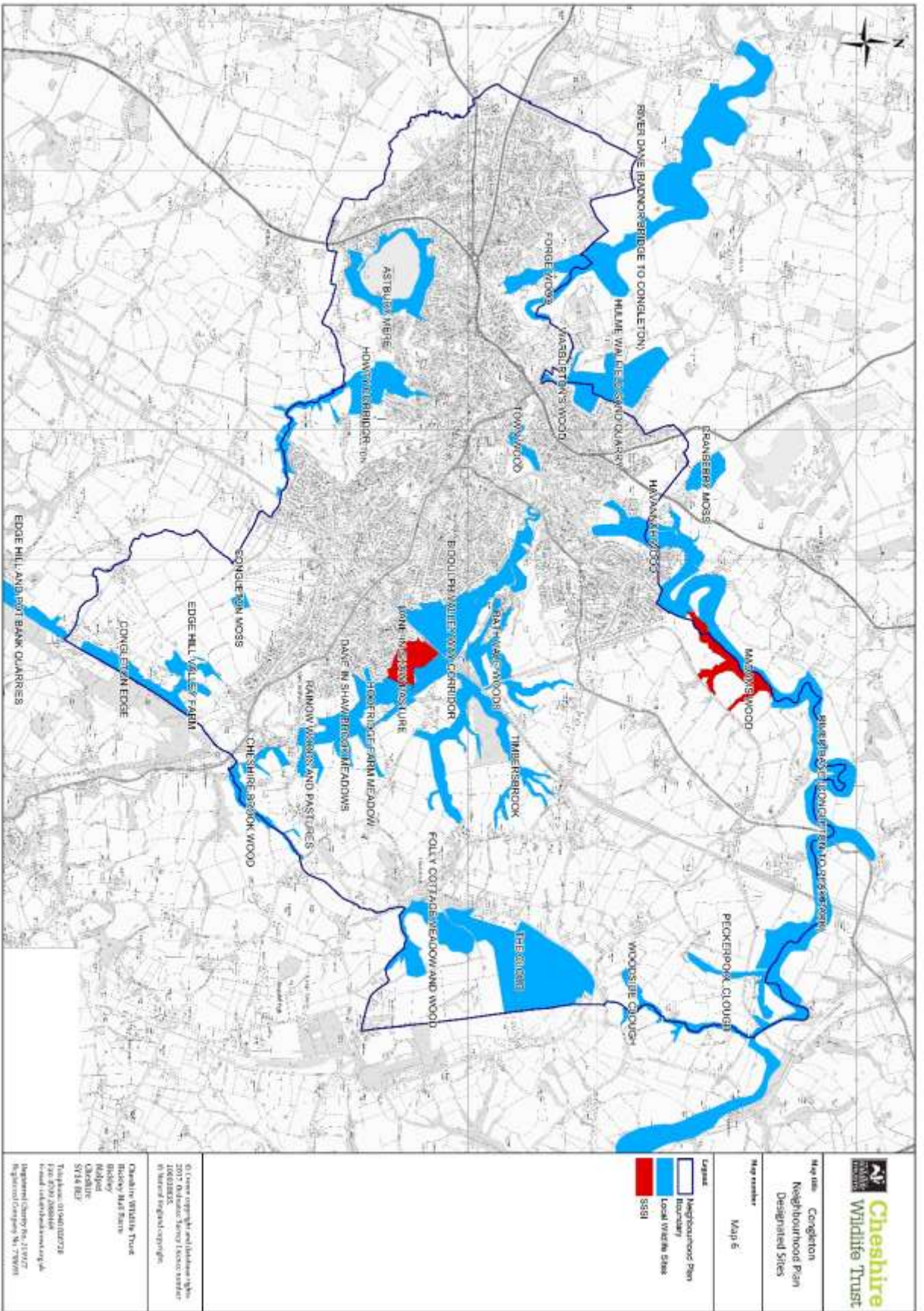
*The Conservation Areas and Heritage assets reflect the Town's heritage and character and it is important that they are protected and enhanced for future generations.*

### Policy SE2 The Landscape Setting of the Town

All new development should respect and enhance the local landscape character and its quality, ensuring that important views and vistas into, out of and across the town relating to the landscape areas and features referenced below are maintained and enhanced.

In particular, the following landscape areas and features should be given special weight and safeguarded from development and its impacts:

- the open sections of the River Dane valley, including the fingers of the green valley space extending into the heart of the urban area of Congleton as well as those extending through the strategic site allocations west of the existing built-up area of the town and those located in open countryside outside the Settlement Boundary shown in the Proposals Map;
- wooded escarpments within and outside the town, including those related to the Town Wood, Dane Valley and The Cloud/Timbersbrook/Congleton Edge;
- The Meres to the northwest and south of the town.



### *Justification*

*The landscape setting of the town is particularly important and unique, reflecting the history and growth of Congleton.*

### **Policy SE 3 Green Spaces within the Plan Area**

All existing areas of recreational land and open space within the plan area will be preserved and protected from development. As development proposals come forward opportunities will be sought to:

- a) create a network of green space, pedestrian, cycle and equestrian routes and wildlife corridors across the town from the adjoining rural networks and outlying residential areas.
- b) link any new areas of green space that may be created with existing green space and footpath/cycleway links
- c) address gaps in the existing networks by the creation of new rights of way and wildlife corridors/areas.

All development proposals for new development will be expected to contribute to the maintenance of existing open space and/or the provision of new recreational open space to be made available for use by all residents of the town.

Any new publicly accessible green space to be provided should as a minimum meet or exceed Cheshire East Council's standards for green, sports and play spaces and allotments.

### *Justification*

*Open space, including gardens, small areas of open space within existing developments, allotments, recreational space, open fields, woodlands and pathways are important to us all. Natural and semi natural open space is highly valued by local residents not just for its recreational value but also for its landscape character, quiet enjoyment and biodiversity*

*Notwithstanding the rural setting of Congleton, the town is not well served by play provision and this policy seeks to address this. Where developers are not able to make provision for play provision on site, financial contributions to off-site play space may be used to meet local needs, and to enhance existing provision elsewhere in the town.*

*The Neighbourhood Plan wishes to ensure that all members of the wider community have access to high quality outdoor play. Footpaths crisscross the town and are enjoyed by local residents and visitors alike however more could be provided and circular footpaths created for dog walkers and joggers. The Plan aims to take opportunities to integrate any new developments within or adjacent to the town with the existing rights of way network and enhance existing provision by creating new links wherever possible, particularly where there is potential to improve links to the existing network.*

*This policy will contribute to the sustainable development of the Town by promoting safer communities, creating active and healthier lifestyles, promoting participation in a diverse range of sporting, recreational and cultural activities, and protecting and enhancing the range and populations of species and the quality and extent of wildlife habitats.*

## Policy SE4 River valley safeguarding and green space projects

In pursuit of the Green Space objectives set out at Policy SE3 above, five new Key Green Space Policy Areas are proposed. These are as follows:

- River Dane Valley and environs (including Town Wood)
- Macclesfield Canal and environs
- Biddulph Valley Way and Environs
- Congleton East rural area (including Timbersbrook Village and Environs)
- Priesty Fields/Howty Brook valley/Loachbrook valley



### *Justification*

*Corridors of green space extend along the river valleys (the River Dane valley in the north and west, the Howty Brook valley in the south and the Timbers Brook valley in the east) from the outer edges of the Congleton Key Service Centre into the centre or inner areas of the town. They provide attractive semi-public green spaces that present opportunities for linkage and enhancement together with more effective provision and integrated management for the purposes of public amenity, public access, public recreation and wildlife conservation. These linear green corridor spaces are valuable landscape features which add greatly to the environmental quality of the town and can provide important safe pedestrian, cycle and equestrian routes from not only the new residential areas proposed on the edges of the built-up area but also from the existing residential areas of Congleton into the town centre and other retail and commercial areas that provide the services and facilities of the Key Service Centre.*





**Policy SE5 Wildlife Corridors.**

Proposals that conserve or enhance biodiversity will be supported. Developments will be encouraged to provide for and incorporate biodiversity particularly where it forms part of a wider network or wildlife corridor.

These corridors are identified in the Cheshire Wildlife Trust Study which highlighted that the important wildlife habitat in Congleton is mainly associated with the woodlands and semi-natural grasslands/heathlands of River Dane and its tributaries and the steep gritstone edge to the east.

*Justification*

*Areas of the town are particularly rich in wildlife and the community is keen to see this protected for future generations.*

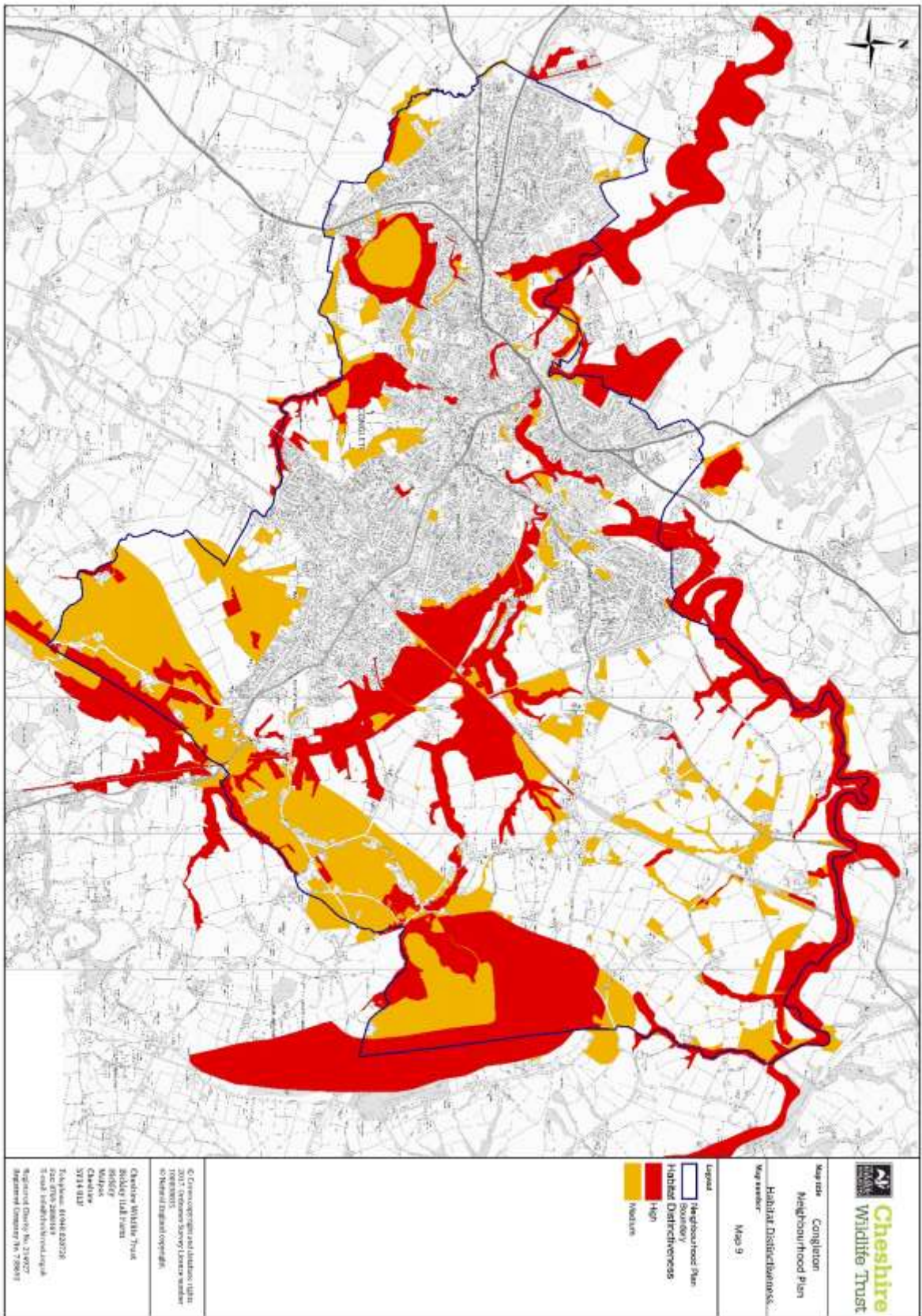


Figure 2 - Habitat Distinctiveness



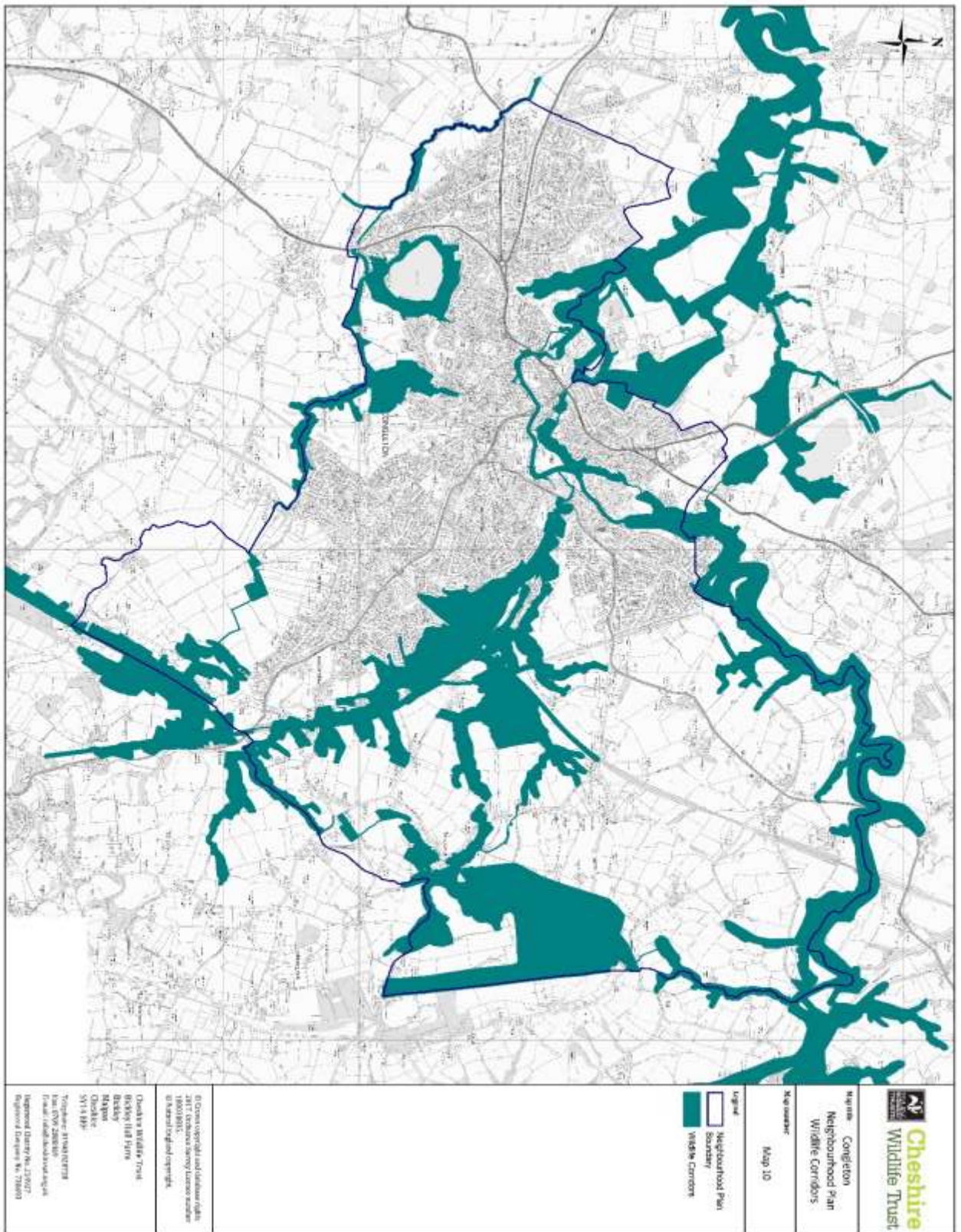


Figure 3 - Wildlife Corridors

## Policy SE6 Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows

Any new development that involves the loss or damage to local woodland, trees, hedgerows and wide verges that contribute to the character and amenity of the plan area must demonstrate the need for the development proposed and provide for appropriate replacement planting of native species on the site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting.

Where a new access is created, or, an existing access is widened through an existing hedgerow to protect the visual amenity of the locality a new hedgerow to match the existing in height and plant species shall be planted on the splay returns into the site to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows within the plan area.

All new development close to existing mature trees will be expected to have in place an arboricultural method statement to BS5837 standard or equivalent before any development commences. This will detail tree protection policies to be employed during construction.



### *Justification*

*Existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows contribute to local amenity, the character of the plan area and provide wildlife habitats.*

## Policy SE7 Climate Change

Renewable and low carbon energy proposals will be supported and encouraged in the plan area.

This will be supported through detailed design and a combination of measures including;

- Reducing the use of fossil fuels
- Promoting the efficient use of natural resources, the re-use and recycling of resources, and the production and consumption of renewable energy



- Encouraging and facilitating the development of low and zero carbon energy flexibly through a range of technologies
- Linking the provision of low and zero carbon energy infrastructure in new developments to existing buildings

*Justification*

*New developments should be designed to maximise the use of renewable and low carbon energy to contribute to the mitigation of and adaption to climate change.*

## DESIGN

### Objective

To deliver high quality, distinct and safe places which respect the Town's heritage and character.

### Policy D1 Design for Congleton

All new development proposals within the plan area must demonstrate good quality design. This means responding to and integrating with local surroundings and landscape context as well as the built environment.

In Congleton good design means;

- Complementing and enhancing where appropriate the size, height, scale, mass, rural skyline, materials, layout, access and density of existing development in the plan area including where appropriate the provision of chimneys
- Demonstrating that the amenities of neighbouring dwellings will not be adversely affected through overlooking, loss of light or outlook, over dominance or general disturbance
- Assessing any impact upon local heritage assets or areas of local interest
- Has assessed the impact of the development on the local highway network
- Providing adequate street lighting to enhance house security, pedestrian safety and the safety of road users
- Providing an appropriate level of landscaping which complements and enhances the rural character of the local area
- Providing garden space commensurate with the size of the dwelling proposed, the prevailing pattern of development in the locality and the likely needs of the prospective occupiers
- Providing for the changing needs and life-styles of an ageing population and will be encouraged to build a proportion of new homes to Lifetime Homes standard in accordance with current national guidance and Building Regulations.
- Responding positively to the local character of its immediate environment particularly the conservation areas in the plan area by showing an understanding of the qualities which make up this character.
- The use of good quality local materials such as red Cheshire brick, sandstone as well as more innovative materials will be encouraged provided they are sympathetic to the context in which they are proposed and maintain the local vernacular and enhanced sense of place.
- Innovation to achieve low carbon sustainable design that meets the BREEAM Quality Mark standard will be encouraged.
- Providing sufficient external amenity space, refuse and recycling storage, car and bicycle parking and, on all new housing developments conveniently located dog bins (faeces disposal points) to ensure a high quality and well managed street scape.
- Retaining existing sight lines within the town of the Town Hall Clock and St Peters Tower.
- Retaining and enhancing the tree lined approaches to the town from the west.

- Where any development is proposed on the edge of the town it should contribute to establishing a positive 'green' character incorporating high quality landscaping to create an urban edge as well as such features as SUDS including ponds and swales.

#### *Justification*

*The Cheshire East Design Guide clearly sets out the distinctiveness and architectural design which have evolved as the town has grown and which should be reflected within any new development.*

#### **Policy D2 Poor design**

Planning permission will not be granted for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving local character and quality of the plan area and the way it functions and does not have regard to Policy D1 and the other policies in this plan.

#### *Justification*

*The Cheshire East Design Guide clearly sets out the distinctiveness and architectural design which have evolved as the town has grown and which should be reflected within any new development.*

#### **Policy D3 Redundant Buildings**

The re-use, conversion and adaptation of permanent, structurally sound, buildings of substantial construction to meet Local Housing Needs, which would lead to an enhancement of the character of the town and the Conservation Areas will be supported subject to:

- The proposed use being appropriate to its location
- The conversion and/or adaptation works proposed respecting the local character of the surrounding buildings and local area
- The local highway network can accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed new use and adequate car parking being provided within the site

#### *Justification*

*Whilst it is important to encourage the reuse of existing buildings the new use must have regard to the immediate character of the locality and neighbouring properties.*

#### **Policy D4 Extensions and Alterations to Existing Buildings**

Proposed extensions and/or alterations to buildings should reflect the size and scale of the existing and adjacent buildings and will be required to be constructed of complementary materials.

Extensions and alterations to non-residential buildings will be designed to reflect the character and appearance of the existing building and to be in keeping with the surrounding development.

All new extensions and alterations to existing buildings shall identify and protect, during both demolition and construction works, all underground utility infrastructure assets within or adjacent to the development site.

*Justification*

*The Cheshire East Design Guide clearly sets out the distinctiveness and architectural design which have evolved as the town has grown and which should be reflected within any new development.*

**Policy D5 Backland Development**

Backland development will be resisted if it would impact upon existing residential amenity through overlooking, loss of amenity or intrusion of privacy.

*Justification*

*The Cheshire East Design Guide clearly sets out the distinctiveness and architectural design which have evolved as the town has grown and which should be reflected within any new development.*



# Congleton Neighbourhood Plan

## Evidence Library

The following documents and strategies support the proposed policies:

- National Planning Policy Framework.
- Cheshire East Local Plan July 2017.
- Congleton Local Plan First Review 2005.
- Congleton Town Centre Plan 2008.
- Congleton Town Centre Strategy 2012.
- Cheshire East Link Road Options Assessment Study January 2016.
- North Congleton Master Plan Barton Willmore 2015.
- Congleton Town Centre Plan -Taylor Young, King Sturge, J-Transport 2008.
- Congleton Public Realm Strategy -E\*scape Urbanists - 2011.
- Congleton Town Centre Strategy - Cheshire East Local Plan - 2012.
- White Young Green Cheshire Retail Study Update (2011 updated 2016).
- Action for Market Towns Benchmark Surveys 2010-2012.
- Is uncontrolled growth causing economic decline - Congleton Chamber of Commerce February 2016.
- Cheshire Open Space Report 2012.
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust - Protecting and Enhancing Congleton's Natural Environment - March 2017.
- OCSI Report 2016.
- Cheshire East Town Wood Congleton - Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland.
- Colin Hoards from Priestly Fields - Survey and Documentary Research CSMR 2327 - Robert Philpott November 1992 - National Museum and Galleries Merseyside.
- Cheshire East Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.
- Cheshire East Cycling Strategy 2017.
- RoSPA Study on Road Safety March 2014.
- Local Plan Strategy Library - Reference RE-FO14.
- Congleton Traffic Model January 2016.
- Cheshire East Strategic Site Selection Report (Congleton).
- Neighbourhood Plan Housing Completions Schedule 2017.
- Cheshire East Housing Supply and Delivery Topic Paper August 2017.
- Cheshire East Housing Land Assessment (SHLAA) Congleton.
- Cheshire East Interim Summary of Housing Completions and Losses 2009/10-2014/15.
- Neighbourhood Plan Small Sites Schedule.
- Neighbourhood Plan Completions in Congleton Service Centre.
- Urban Vision Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment.
- Cheshire East Vulnerable and Elderly Persons Housing Strategy Report May 2014.
- Neighbourhood Plan Estate Agents Survey Report 2016.
- Neighbourhood Plan Housing Group Dementia Summary paper and Appendices 2016.
- Basic Facts about Congleton - Local Government Association.
- Neighbourhood Plan Older Persons Accommodation Needs from SHOP date for Congleton 2015-2030.

- Neighbourhood Plan Schedule of new housing by house type and number of bedrooms April 2010-September 2015.
- Plus Dane Housing Association Community Insight Profile February 2015.
- Cheshire East Private Rented Sector Housing Condition Survey 2010.
- Cheshire East Private Rented Sector in Cheshire East Report 2013.
- Neighbourhood Plan list of HMO locations in Congleton 2016.
- Chartered Institute of Health - Houses in Multiple Occupation and Possible Planning Responses - CLG Consultation.
- ECOTEC Final Report on behalf of CLG - Houses in Multiple Occupation and Possible Planning Responses - September 2008.
- NPPF Housing and Design Policies.
- Cheshire East Design Guide 2016.
- House of Commons Ministerial Statement by Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP: Support for small scale developers, Custom and Self Builders - November 2014.

## SECTION 7 GLOSSARY

### GLOSSARY

**Affordable Housing** - Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined regarding local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

**Amenity** - An element that contributes positively to the overall character or enjoyment of an area.

**Biodiversity** - A measure of the number and range of plants and animals and their relative abundance in a community.

**Brownfield Land** - Previously developed land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

**Building for Life 12** - The industry standard endorsed by government for designing new homes in England, based on 12 key criteria.

**Cheshire East Council** - The Local Authority for Congleton

**Code for Sustainable Homes** - The Code for Sustainable Homes is the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. This is a voluntary national standard for new homes. It assesses rates and certifies the environmental performance of new homes on a scale of zero to six, with six being a design and construction that minimises environmental impact.

**Community Facilities** - Facilities providing for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, leisure and cultural needs of the community.

**Community Infrastructure** - The basic facilities, services and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society. It includes community buildings and halls, leisure facilities, cultural facilities, education services, and healthcare facilities.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** - A charge allowing Local Authorities to raise funds from owners and developers of land who undertake new building projects in their area.

**Consultation Statement** - A Consultation Statement accompanying the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan is required by the Localism Act. The Consultation Statement must explain how the community were consulted and how this informed the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Core Strategy** - A Development Plan Document prepared by Cheshire East Council. The Core Strategy sets out the long term spatial vision for the wider area and contains policies which will apply to all development proposals in the local authority area.

**Curtilage** - The area of land, usually enclosed, immediately surrounding a dwelling house.

**Delivery Strategy** - A document accompanying the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan that sets out a strategy for delivering and monitoring the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. It includes the infrastructure and initiatives associated with the Plan area. This is a "live" document that will be updated throughout the Plan period.

**Design and Access Statement** - A report accompanying and supporting a planning application. The Local Planning Authority requires it for most development proposals apart from householder applications. These reports explain the design thinking behind a planning application.

**Development** - Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as “the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land.” Most forms of development require planning permission.

**Development Plan** - A plan comprising the Development Plan Documents contained within the Local Development Framework. (See definition under L below) This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans, and is defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Dwelling mix** - The mix of different types of homes provided on a site. A mix may typically include a range of house types from 2 bedroom to 5-bedroom houses.

**Employment Land** - Development of land for employment uses, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).

**Evidence Base** - The researched, documented, analysed and verified evidence for preparing the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan. It consists of many documents produced over a period of years by the Local Authority as part of the process of developing its Core Strategy.

**Evidence Base Summary** - A document produced as part of the process of developing the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan. It supports the Plan by summing up the relevant Evidence Base and explaining how decisions were made as to where new development should be located in Congleton.

**Examination** - An independent review of the Neighbourhood Plan carried out in public by an independent examiner.

**Green Corridors** - Green spaces that provide avenues for wildlife movement, often along streams, rivers, hedgerows or other natural features. Green corridors connect green spaces together.

**Green Spaces** - see Open Space

**Greenfield** - Land on which no development has previously taken place.

**Gross density** - The number of dwellings per hectare when the calculation of the site area includes the whole site.

**Habitat Regulations** - The European Union Habitat Directive aims to protect the wild plants, animals and habitats that make up our diverse natural environment. The directive created a network of protected areas around the European Union of national and international importance. The protected areas are called Natura 2000 sites. If a development is likely to affect a Natura 2000 site, an assessment under the Habitat Regulations is required.

**Independent Examiner** - Anyone with appropriate qualifications and skills and who meets certain requirements set out in the Localism Act. This could be a planning consultant or other planning professional, an employee of another local authority or a planning inspector.



**Infill Development** - Infilling is defined as the filling of a small gap (with up to 2 dwellings) in an otherwise built-up frontage in a recognised settlement.

**Infrastructure** - The entire ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals etc.

**Lifetime Homes** - The Lifetime Homes standard is a set of 16 design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of their lives.

**Local Need** - local need is defined as accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection in Congleton.

**Local Wildlife Sites** - Sites with 'substantive nature conservation value', they are defined areas identified and selected locally for their nature conservation value based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species with a national, regional and local context.

**Local Development Document** - An individual part, usually a plan, of the Local Development Framework.

**Local Development Framework** - The portfolio of Local Development Documents.

**Localism Act** - An Act of Parliament that became law in April 2012. The Act introduces a new right for local people to draw up 'Neighbourhood Development Plans' for their local area.

**Local Housing Needs** - Housing that generally meets the needs of existing residents of Congleton or people with a Congleton connection or in the case of essential agricultural dwellings, residents employed or last employed in agriculture. Evidence of need should be based on the latest parish housing needs survey or, if out of date, the most appropriate objectively assessed review of housing needs in the future.

**Local Plan** - The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law, this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act."

**Low Cost Market Housing** - private sector housing that will be available to local residents who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available in the open market.

**Market Housing** - Properties for sale or rent where prices are set in the open market.

**Mixed use** - Developments where more than one use is proposed. A site could have houses, shops and community facilities for example. One building could be used for different purposes such as offices over shops.

**National Planning Policy Framework** - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government in March 2012. It sets out the Government's Planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - The full title in the Localism Act is 'Neighbourhood Development Plan'. It is a plan document for a defined area subject to examination and approval by local referendum. It will be used in the determination of planning applications.

**Net Density** - The number of dwellings per hectare when the calculation of the site area excludes features such as open space, landscape buffers and access roads.

**Open Countryside** - The area outside the settlement boundary.

**Open Space** - All spaces of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas and areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which may offer opportunities for sport and recreation or act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife.

**Plan Period** - The period for which the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan will set policy for Congleton. This will be from the adoption of the Plan until 2030 by agreement between Congleton Town Council and Cheshire East Council.

**Public Open Space** - see Open Space above

**Referendum** - A general vote by the electorate on a single policy question that has been referred to them for a direct decision. In the case of the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan, the referendum will decide whether or not to adopt the Plan.

**Registered Social Landlord** - Independent housing organisation registered with the Tenant Services Authority under the Housing Act 1996. Independent not-for-profit housing providers, regulated by the government and also known as Housing Associations. They offer homes for rent or shared ownership for people in housing need.

**Residential Amenity** - The quality of the living environment for occupants of a dwelling house including its associated external spaces

**Rural Exception Site** - small sites with permission for affordable housing in perpetuity where consent would not normally be granted for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.'

**Settlement** - Settlements may be defined as cities, towns, villages and small settlements. The precise definition of which category each settlement falls into, will be part of the development plan process for each locality

**Settlement Boundary** - This defines the limits of development and makes clear where development will and will not be allowed, regardless of other constraints.

**SSSI** - Site of Special Scientific Interest.

**Sustainable Development** - Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy *Securing the Future* set out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.

**Sustainability Appraisal** - A process of appraising policies for their social, economic and environmental effects, which must be applied to all Development Plan Documents.

**Steering Group** - A group of local people representing the Town Council, community groups and businesses that informed and guided the work on the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment** - Assessments made compulsory by a European Directive (the SEA Directive). They are to be implemented in planning through Sustainability Appraisals of Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

**Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)** - A drainage system that controls the rate and quantity of run-off of surface water from developments.

**Transport Assessment** - An assessment of the availability of, and levels of access to, all forms of transportation. In relation to a proposed development it identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated impacts of the development.

**Use Classes** - The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'.

**Wildlife Corridor** - Strips of land, for example along a hedgerow, conserved and managed for wildlife, usually linking more extensive wildlife habitats.

**Windfall sites** - Sites not allocated for development in the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan that unexpectedly come forward for development.