

Handforth Neighbourhood Plan

Key Summary

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Handforth Neighbourhood Plan Summary Document:

The Handforth Neighbourhood Plan has successfully passed examination and is shortly to be subject to a referendum on July 12th.

This summary document has been produced by Cheshire East Council as means to succinctly view the key points which the plan raises and should only be treated as a 'snap-shot' of the plan itself.

The full version of the Handforth Neighbourhood Plan [can be accessed here](#) and includes far more detail on the issues it addresses, including a variety of important maps which underpin some of the policies summarised here. If a policy outlined below references a map, that map can be found in the full version of the neighbourhood plan.

The Vision for Handforth Neighbourhood Plan

"In 2030 Handforth will be a vibrant village. It will have extended its current strong community spirit and civic pride to new housing developments both within the North Cheshire Growth Village and within the parish of Styal. It will provide for the needs of the whole community and will capitalise on its many advantages, including its location next to greater Manchester and the Cheshire countryside.

Handforth will have an improved district centre with attractive public spaces, a vibrant and varied shopping experience, a successful independent sector and a wide range of services. Handforth will offer an excellent quality of life for its residents. The provision of new affordable housing will reduce the degree of deprivation currently found in some areas of Handforth. There will be high levels of employment and increased average incomes. There will be good access to education and important services. Handforth will have better access to sustainable transport. Handforth will have high quality open spaces and improved access to the surrounding countryside. It will be a progressive village with its own identity, reinforced by the retention of the greenbelt areas separating Handforth from Wilmslow to the south and Heald Green to the north."

Summary of Handforth Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

Housing

Objective 1 - To manage future housing growth so that it meets strategic development needs and the needs of the local community whilst at the same time providing appropriate infrastructure.

Objective 2 – To ensure that new housing is provided in an appropriate range of size, type and tenure to meet the strategic development needs and the needs of the local community.

Community and Well-Being

Objective 3 – To protect and enhance local services, community facilities, recreational areas and Local Green Spaces within the Parish

Protecting the Natural and Built Environment

Objective 4 – To protect the quality of the existing landscape of the Parish.

Objective 5 – To ensure existing trees are retained in developments and ensure additional new planting includes adequate provision for further trees.

Objective 6 – To encourage high quality design and sustainability of all new development.

Objective 7 – To protect both designated and non-designated heritage assets in the parish.

Local Economy

Objective 8 – To support appropriate local economic development, to encourage investment and to provide improved employment opportunities for local residents.

Objective 9 – To protect and enhance the district centre transforming it into a vibrant centre with a range of facilities.

Objective 10 – To improve the overall quality of the district centre including public realm improvements.

Traffic and Transport

Objective 8 – To support appropriate local economic development, to encourage investment and to provide improved employment opportunities for local residents.

Objective 9 – To protect and enhance the district centre transforming it into a vibrant centre with a range of facilities.

Objective 10 – To improve the overall quality of the district centre including public realm improvements.

Traffic and Transport

Objective 11 – To improve pedestrian (both able-bodied and disabled) and cycle access throughout the designated area including access to the station and the village centre, and to improve linkages to routes beyond the Parish.

Objective 12 - To ensure that traffic and transport improvements are carried out to improve road safety and the traffic congestion that may arise from both completion of the A555 link road to the airport (see A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road: Transport Assessment: Main Text October 2013) and from new developments within and adjacent to the parish boundaries.

Objective 13 – To support the provision of sufficient car and cycle parking facilities in the village centre, Spath Lane, Knowle Park and adjacent to Handforth Railway Station.

Objective 14 – To support the development of an integrated transport system designed to meet the current and future needs of the community whilst supporting future growth.

North Cheshire Growth Village

Objective 15 – To ensure that the North Cheshire Growth Village is developed in a way that benefits the existing community of Handforth and creates a sustainable community.

Summary of Handforth Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Policy H1 New Housing in Handforth

New housing development within the Handforth built-up area will be supported where:

- 1) It is infill development, or on previously developed land, or is the conversion, re-use or extension of an existing building; and
- 2) It is in keeping with and proportionate to the existing scale and character of the immediate surrounding area; and
- 3) It would not lead to the loss of Green Belt, Local Green Space, Incidental Open Space, recreation or other community facilities, or employment opportunities, except where that loss would be acceptable in planning terms; and
- 4) Appropriate and safe highway access can be achieved; and
- 5) It provides an appropriate mix of dwellings in accordance with Policy H2 of the Handforth Neighbourhood Plan and Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Policy SC5: and

Policy H2 Providing Appropriate House Types, Tenures and Sizes to meet Local Needs

New housing schemes will be supported where they include an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures in accordance with an up-to-date Housing Needs Assessment.

Developments of 15 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.4 hectares or greater) will be required to provide at least 30% of all units as affordable in accordance with the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Policy SC5.

Schemes are strongly encouraged to include a suitable proportion of affordable housing, housing designed for the ageing population, starter homes for first time buyers, and properties suitable for those wishing to downsize (as identified in an up-to-date Cheshire East SHMA).

Policy H3 Protecting Local Green Spaces

The following local green space(s) as shown on Map 7 are designated in accordance with paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF:

1. Stanley Hall Park
2. Land between the three tower blocks on Spath Lane
3. Land to the west and south of Oakmere on Spath Lane including the children's play area at the Spath Lane/Henbury Road junction
4. Meriton Road Park
5. Children's play area at Kenilworth Avenue/Hope Avenue
6. The Parsonage Park
7. Land between rear of Handforth Hall and Coppice Way
8. Two parcels of land on Meriton Road
9. The playing field of Wilmslow Grange primary school
10. The playing field of St Benedict's RC primary school

New development which impacts adversely on the openness and visual amenity of these sites will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances.

Very special circumstances will only exist where the potential harm caused by any new development is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Each of the land parcels listed in this policy have been assessed for eligibility for designation as Local Green Spaces. The assessment may be found on the Handforth Neighbourhood Plan website - <http://www.handforthnplan.org/Local-Green-Space-Assessments.php>.

Policy H4 Protecting Incidental Open Spaces

Areas of incidental open space not designated as Local Green Space as shown in Map 8 will normally be protected from development. However, development will be permitted in such an area provided that the development scheme provides more or better quality space within that area. These areas include:

1. The parcel of land between Plumley Road and Spath Lane
2. The grounds of the Redesmere Centre
3. The Paddock square
4. Three small parcels of green space on Delamere Road,
5. Parcel of land at the end of Davenham Road
6. St Chad's churchyard
7. Land at The Green
8. A triangle of land at the entrance to Brereton Road
9. Two roundabouts on Woodlands Road

Policy H5 Protecting Existing Community Facilities and Supporting Investment in New Facilities

There will be a presumption in favour of the protection of existing facilities.

The permanent change of use of local community facilities, as listed below, will only be permitted for other health, education or community type uses (such as village halls, local clubhouses, health centres, schools and children's day nurseries), unless one of the following can be demonstrated:

1. The proposal includes alternative provision, on a site within the locality, of equivalent or enhanced facilities. Such sites should be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate car parking.
2. Satisfactory evidence is produced that, over a minimum period of 12 months, it has been demonstrated that the facility is redundant, and no other user is willing to acquire and manage the facility.
3. There is an assessment provided which demonstrates a lack of need for the facility within the community.

The facilities are listed as follows and shown on Map 9:

1. St Mary's Methodist Church and church hall
2. St Chad's Parish Church and church hall
3. St Benedict's RC Church and church hall
4. Wilmslow Grange Community Primary School and Nursery

Policy H5a Protection of Public Houses

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the value of Handforth's four public houses (see page 27) as public community resources / meeting places and recommends their continued use for these purposes.

The use classification of public houses is A4 (drinking establishments.) and this Plan endorses the Local Authority regulation that change of use of A4 premises is not permitted without consent.

Policy H6 Education Facilities

Proposals to extend existing education facilities in both Handforth and Wilmslow, including the development of nursery facilities, will be supported provided that:

1. they provide safe access and parking is achieved in accordance with the Local Plan Parking Standards.;
2. where feasible, pedestrian links to residential areas are improved to encourage walking to school
3. they are in accordance with all other relevant policies.

Policy H7 Health Care Facilities

The provision of new health care facilities or improvements to existing health care facilities will be supported where they are in accordance with all relevant policies. Such provision should recognise the needs of an ageing population and include facilities to meet those needs.

Such developments should therefore include adequate parking, means of access for the disabled and provision of adequate pavements (e.g. with drop kerbs) in accordance with the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. They should be accessible from existing residential areas and located close to/within walking distance of public transport facilities.

Policy H8 Landscape and Biodiversity

All development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes in accordance with Policy SE4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

New development will be expected to protect and/or conserve the historical and ecological qualities of the area. These areas are identified on Map 10 and include:

1. Woodland on Spath Lane

Handforth's green corridor identified by Cheshire East Council that includes:

2. The broad grass verge and hedgerow on west side of Wilmslow Road,
3. Woodland on Epsom Avenue,
4. Woodland between Lower Meadow Road and Hall Road
5. Woodland in valley of Spath Brook leading down to the River Dean

And also:

6. Woodland atop the environmental barrier alongside Coppice Way
7. Ancient hedgerows at the eastern extension of Hall Road
8. Woodland atop the A34 environmental barrier
9. Woodland to the rear of The Race and Vale Head
10. Woodland in Dobbin Brook Clough
11. Woodland in the Dean Valley below Knowle Park
12. Hall Wood

Policy H9 Trees and Hedgerows

1. Hedgerows and trees which are identified as making a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity and landscape character of the surrounding area must be preserved, and development, which would adversely impact upon them, will not normally be supported unless substantial public benefits can be demonstrated, and their loss adequately mitigated.
2. Where the benefits of development are considered to outweigh the benefit of preserving trees and hedgerows which fall below the standard defined in (1) above, development will be permitted subject to adequate compensatory provision of new planting being made.
3. All new developments should be designed to protect existing healthy mature trees either through the provision of TPOs or a permanent arboriculture management programme for the site.
4. Where no mature trees exist, developers of sites of greater than 10 dwellings will be expected to introduce landscaping which incorporates a number of trees of locally suitable species on public open space.

Policy H10 Protection of Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Proposals would be expected to conserve and enhance the local historic character throughout the Parish. A balanced judgement will be required, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The following buildings, as shown on the Map 11, are identified as buildings of local architectural and historical interest.

- 21 Woodlands Road,
- The Freemasons Arms,
- Handforth Library,
- Chadsworth House,
- St Chad's Church,
- 28-36 Church Road

Where a non-designated heritage asset is affected by development proposals, there will be a presumption in favour of its retention wherever possible. Any loss of the whole or part of such an asset will require clear and convincing justification. No loss will be permitted without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

Any special features which contribute to an asset's significance should be retained and reinstated, where possible, in accordance with paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Proposals within the setting of a non-designated heritage asset will be required to give due consideration to the asset's significance and ensure that this is protected or enhanced where possible.

New buildings and any associated landscaping within the curtilage of a non-designated heritage asset, or in close proximity to one, should ensure that the setting is not compromised. Positive settings should be protected, preserved, and where possible enhanced by new development which should assist in better revealing the significance of the asset.

Policy H11 Encouraging High Quality Design

All new development will be expected to demonstrate how account has been taken of the following Design Principles:

1. High quality design, layout and appearance of the proposed development that respects the scale, density and character, layout, access, street furniture and signage of existing surrounding buildings and landscape and protects and enhances the unique identity of the area where it is located, will be encouraged.
2. Proposals should not feature designs specific to a generic scheme and must display how they take account of the locally distinctive character of the area in which they are to be sited within design and access statements.
3. New buildings should follow a consistent design approach in the use of materials, fenestration and the roofline to the building. Materials should be chosen to complement the design of a development and adjoining buildings. They should add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment.

4. Sustainable, energy efficient designs are strongly encouraged. Reclaimed materials from sustainable sources should be used where possible.
5. High quality contemporary design, which will be encouraged, as well as more traditional designs which accurately reflect the local vernacular and proportions and use or re-use of materials indigenous to the area or which are indistinguishable from them.
6. Respecting established building lines and details of front garden enclosures, and relating well to the street, providing an active street frontage using materials that complement the existing palette of materials used within the village.
7. Ensuring the scale of infill development does not adversely affect the character of the immediate locality or the residential amenities of nearby occupiers.
8. Providing amenity and garden space appropriate to the property size and type rather than tenure, and car, cycle, and refuse storage to allow a well-managed streetscape.
9. Providing on-site parking in accordance with the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Standards.
10. Extensions should be small in scale and subordinate in scale to the original building.
11. Proposals should minimise the impact on general amenity and give careful consideration to noise, odour and light. Light pollution should be minimised wherever possible and security lighting must be appropriate, unobtrusive and energy efficient.

Policy H12 Surface water management

New development should be designed to maximise the retention of surface water on the development site and to minimise runoff. The approach to surface water drainage should be considered in liaison with the LLFA, the public sewerage undertaker and where appropriate the Environment Agency.

Surface water should be discharged in the following order of priority:

- An adequate soakaway or some other form of infiltration system.
- An attenuated discharge to watercourse or other water body.

- An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer.
- An attenuated discharge to public combined sewer.

The design of new development should take account of existing topography to manage the flow of water along specific flow routes away from property. The preference will be for new development to include genuine sustainable drainage systems as opposed to underground tanked storage systems for surface water.

Approved development proposals will be expected to be supplemented by appropriate maintenance and management regimes for surface water drainage schemes.

Approved development proposals will be expected to be supplemented by appropriate maintenance and management regimes for surface water drainage schemes.

On greenfield sites, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the current natural discharge solution from a site is at least mimicked.

On previously developed land, applicants should target a reduction of surface water discharge in accordance with the non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage produced by DEFRA. In demonstrating a reduction, applicants should include clear evidence of existing positive connections from the site with associated calculations on rates of discharge. Where there are no existing positive connections, applicants will be expected to target greenfield run off rates.

Landscaping proposals should consider what contribution the landscaping of a site can make to reducing surface water discharge. This can include hard and soft landscaping such as permeable surfaces.

On large sites it may be necessary to ensure the foul and surface water drainage proposals are part of a wider, holistic strategy which coordinates the approach to drainage between phases, between developers, and over a number of years of construction. The applicant will be expected to include details of how the approach to foul and surface water drainage on a phase of development has regard to interconnecting phases within a larger site. Infrastructure should be sized to accommodate flows from interconnecting phases and drainage strategies should ensure a proliferation of pumping stations is avoided on a phased development.

Policy H13 Supporting the Local Economy

Development on existing employment areas and allocated sites will be assessed against Cheshire East adopted policies.

New small-scale business development, and conversion of existing buildings to provide premises for new businesses, will be encouraged. The development of new small scale local employment opportunities will be supported providing that they:

1. do not have a detrimental impact on surrounding residential amenity;
2. do not lead to the loss of open space or green infrastructure;
3. are located close to existing highways and do not have an unacceptable impact on traffic;
4. include adequate car parking facilities

The integration of live-work units within new housing developments will be encouraged.

Policy H14 Handforth District Centre

Within the defined town centre boundary development for main town centre uses (including retail, leisure, office, commercial, cultural and tourism) will be supported subject to the following criteria:

1. Where new shop frontages are proposed they are of good design and enhance local distinctiveness by ensuring that corporate branding is subordinate to the site and local surroundings;
2. The re-use of upper floors for residential use will be supported and encouraged;
3. Distinctive and detailed features of buildings should be retained and enhanced;
4. Proposals must include secure screened areas for waste (wheelie bins) and bicycles;
5. Provision of trees and planting to improve the town centre environment and appearance and to help create a strong sense of place, so that drivers understand that they are in, and respect, a pedestrian dominated environment; and
6. Business premises include appropriate signage.

Within the town centre boundary, as defined on Map 4, proposals which lead to the permanent loss of commercial units should be supported by evidence to demonstrate that their continued commercial use is no longer viable, or that an alternative use would positively enhance the viability and vitality of the town centre.

Within the Parish, proposals for hot food takeaways will only be permitted within the town centre, subject to the following criteria:

1. They do not create an unacceptable concentration of similar uses or where existing non-retail uses amount to over 50% of the frontage;
2. They do not have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of surrounding residential properties;
3. The proposals will not cause detriment to the free flow of traffic;
4. They provide or are served by adequate parking spaces.

Policy H15 New shop fronts and roller shutters

The design of new or alterations to existing shopfronts and advertisements should satisfy the following criteria:

1. The design is appropriate to the character of the existing building and street scene in terms of its size, detailing and use of materials;
2. Traditional materials such as timber or cast metal will be favoured.
3. Blinds and canopies, where acceptable in principle, must be appropriate to the character of the shopfront and its setting.
4. Wherever practicable, shopfronts must be designed to ensure equal access for all users;
5. Inset entrances should be glazed and well-lit to contribute to the attractiveness, safety and vitality of the area and avoid blank frontages to the street;
6. Security matters should be considered from the earliest design stages. Security shutters and grilles should be internal where possible and external solid security shutters will not normally be permitted;
7. The size, design, positioning, materials and degree of illumination of advertisements does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of the areas in which they are displayed and there is no adverse effect on public safety; in particular:
 - i) Fascias should not cut across or obscure first floor windows and advertisements and on shop fronts should normally be positioned within the fascia. Additional or alternative wall-mounted or hanging signs at or above fascia level are only acceptable if they are of high quality, are not overbearing and can be satisfactorily accommodated without obscuring key architectural features. Imaginative and craft sign work will be supported and encouraged; and

- ii) Any illumination of shopfront or advertisements where agreed to be acceptable must be sited and designed so as not to cause excessive light pollution or visual intrusion into adjoining or nearby residential properties. Flashing internal or external signs will not be permitted.

Policy H16 Congestion and Highway Safety

This plan recommends that detailed traffic management studies are carried out before access routes to any new development sites are finalised. These sites are to include, not only those within Handforth parish, but also those adjacent to the parish boundary where access would be gained from Handforth parish.

Residential development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of traffic must be accompanied by a traffic assessment. This traffic assessment must assess the impact on the wider local area and where such impact is likely to be significant, appropriate mitigation measures must be implemented.

Policy H17 Public Car Parking

The retention of existing and provision of additional short stay parking spaces in the village centre will be encouraged to support local businesses and their customers.

Developments which provide additional public car parking facilities close to Handforth station will be supported as will proposals to provide secure parking for bicycles. The development of a car park on the field east of the Youth Centre will be supported.

Developments which reduce kerbside parking in Spath Lane and Knowle Park will be supported, provided that they do not lead to a reduction in green spaces used for children's play

Development proposals which result in the loss of any public parking spaces serving the village centre or elsewhere in the Plan area, should be replaced by equivalent parking on site, or nearby, as part of the development scheme.

All business development should have adequate spaces to provide for the needs of the business and of their visitors to the prevailing minimum standard.

Policy H18 Promoting sustainable transport

In order to improve and enhance sustainable transport modes and pedestrian safety proposals for new development that are likely to generate significant extra traffic must demonstrate:

1. safe walking and cycling routes from the proposed site, with consideration of access to village infrastructure services and facilities.
2. how the proposals link to public transport.
3. the impacts of traffic from the proposed development and indicate how any impacts will be mitigated.
4. that the most up to date parking standards required by Cheshire East Council will be met.
5. that the proposed site is situated in an acceptable location in relation to the existing highway network, especially from a safety and aggregate congestion viewpoint.
6. that the needs of those with disabilities have been positively considered and appropriate facilities within the transport infrastructure have been provided to assist them.
7. Opportunities should be taken to extend footpath and cycle networks into new residential and employment areas to facilitate sustainable travel options. Wherever possible, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways should be associated with green corridors to enhance their multifunctionality.

Any proposals to improve cycleways through the village centre (along Wilmslow Road) and to improve local bus services will be supported.

Policy H19 Improving access to the countryside in Handforth and the surrounding area.

1. Access to the countryside will be promoted through protection and maintenance of the existing Public Right of Way (PROW) network (see map 5), its enhancement where possible, and the safety of users of rural roads and lanes.
2. Any development which leads to the loss or degradation of any PROW, or any cycleway, will not be permitted in other than very special circumstances. Proposals to divert PROWs or cycleways should provide clear and demonstrable benefits for the wider community.

3. Any new development must provide easy, accessible traffic-free routes for non-motorised users (pedestrians, disabled people, people with prams or baby-buggies, cyclists and where appropriate equestrians) to town or shopping centres, parks and open spaces, and nearby countryside. The provision of any such additional routes will be supported.
4. The needs of non-motorised users (as described in para 3 above) must be taken into account in all traffic planning, but especially in relation to rural lanes and roads. Hazards arising from an increase in vehicle numbers where agricultural buildings are converted to residential or commercial use will need to be taken into consideration.
5. Measures to be taken to ensure this may include, for example, separation of pedestrians/cyclists from vehicular traffic where possible, improvements to signage, or means of speed reduction.

The provision of new public footpaths and the enhancement of the existing Public Rights of Way network within the parish and linking to areas beyond will be supported. This Plan therefore supports CEC Rights of Way Improvement Plan Aspiration Ref.W107 for footpaths and bridges linking Sagars Road to Linney's Bridge, the proposed housing development at Little Stanneylands and Handforth Bridge. However, any footpath/cycleway through the fields to the north of the River Dean should be positioned and fenced so that it does not interfere with the grazing of livestock from Bridge Farm.

Policy H20 Supporting Investment in Infrastructure

Subject to viability considerations and schemes for new development will be required to support proposals for improved community facilities and infrastructure in the Parish. Priority will be given by the Parish Council for funds that they receive through Section 106 and/or C.I.L. to the following proposals:

- Station access for disabled persons
- Station car park with secure bicycle storage facilities
- Improved parking in Spath Lane and Knowle Park
- Spath Lane community centre
- Refurbishment of the Youth Centre
- New tarmac football/games pitch at youth centre
- New homes for social rent

New facades for village centre shops
Health centre extension
Library extension with public WCs
Land drains in Meriton Road Park and Stanley Hall Park
Parking control measures in the village centre
Pavilion/changing rooms for sports pitch in Stanley Hall Park
Improvements to public footpaths and road surfaces
Improvements and extensions to the village CCTV system where deemed necessary.

Other infrastructure projects that may arise as a priority for the community.