

CHELFORD PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



**Referendum Version
Plan Period 2019 – 2030**

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 The Localism Act of 2011 gave communities a powerful toolkit, for local people to have a real say in shaping the future development of their neighbourhood. The Chelford Neighbourhood Plan offers a measure of control and influence, to ensure that growth and development in the designated area are appropriate and acceptable in meeting the requirements of the community. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan therefore reflect the needs and aspirations of the Chelford community and mirror the wishes of its people in determining future planning.

1.1.2 The Local Planning Authority (*Cheshire East*) must use the Neighbourhood Plan, alongside its local plan, to determine planning decisions for future development in a community.

1.1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan must conform to the principles and strategies of the Cheshire East Local Plan and must also meet statutory requirements laid down in Government Policy. A Neighbourhood Plan is an important planning document, which when completed and accepted, has legal status for planning purposes.

‘Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. For the first-time communities can produce plans that have real statutory weight in the planning system’ (DCLG Policy Factsheet: Neighbourhood Planning October 2016)

1.1.4 For the Neighbourhood Plan to acquire legal status it must be subject to independent examination for compliance and it must be approved by a majority of the responses from the local community in a referendum.

1.2 Meeting the Conditions Laid Down in National Policy and Legislation

1.2.1 Central to the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) is the key theme of ‘sustainable development’ in the planning system. (*National Planning Policy Framework MHCLG 2018*) The Framework states that Neighbourhood Planning is about giving communities power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood Plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.

1.2.2 Sustainable development is aimed at ensuring:

- Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone.
- Effective protection for the environment.
- Prudent use of our natural resources.
- High and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

1.2.3 In accordance with legislation, all Neighbourhood Plans must:

- Have regard to national policies and guidance issued by the Government;
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area;
- Be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements (*ECHR*).

1.3 The Cheshire East Local Plan

1.3.1 The Cheshire East Council Local Plan Strategy was formally adopted by the Council in July 2017 and covers a range of matters including the number and location of new homes; the area and location of new employment land; the protection and improvement of important open areas and provision of new ones; the provision of new infrastructure and improvement of town and village centres and community facilities (*Local Plan Strategy Part 1 2017 Cheshire East Council*). Part 2 of the Local Plan, the Site Allocations and

Development Policies Document and its associated reports, were published in draft form for consultation, in September 2018 (*First Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document Aug. 2018 Cheshire East Council*). The Document lays down proposals for site allocations needed for future development and sets out further detailed planning policies to be used in determining planning decisions.

1.3.2 For planning purposes, Chelford is designated in the Local Plan as one of the 13 Local Service Centres (*LSCs*) in the settlement hierarchy of Cheshire East. *LSCs* are defined as smaller settlements with a range of services and opportunities for employment, retail and education. They serve a limited local catchment and contain a lower level of access to public transport than the larger key service settlements and principal towns. The Local Plan sets out a vision for the *LSCs*, which includes modest growth in housing and employment to meet locally arising needs, a reduction in the level of out-commuting and their continued vitality. Detailed proposals for the development of *LSCs* are contained in the draft Local Plan Part 2.

1.3.3 Whilst policies in the Chelford Neighbourhood Plan are consistent with the aims and strategies of the Local Plan Part 1, they also seek to ensure that future development is consistent with the character of the Parish, appropriate in design and scale, and will meet the needs of its residents. The draft proposals for safeguarded land in Chelford post 2030, in the Local Plan Part 2, have also been considered as part of the process of creating this Neighbourhood Plan. Given that these proposals are currently under consultation and therefore subject to change and still some way off adoption, it was determined, after discussion with Cheshire East Neighbourhood Planning Manager, that a future review of parts of this Plan may be a sensible longer-term strategy once proposals are confirmed and adopted.

1.4 How has the Neighbourhood Plan been Created?

1.4.1 Initial soundings were made at the Chelford Annual Village Meeting in May 2015, via a presentation to residents on neighbourhood planning, by a Cheshire Community Action consultant. Based on the positive reaction from residents, Chelford Parish Council determined to apply to designate the Neighbourhood Area. The designation process was completed in December 2015. Feedback from further meetings with Cheshire Community Action Consultants, Cheshire East Planning Officers, Chelford Parish Councillors, residents and regular information via the Parish website across a number of months in 2016 and early 2017, provided strong impetus for the Parish Council to move forward with a Neighbourhood Plan.

1.4.2 A Neighbourhood Plan link was established on the Village website and detailed information about neighbourhood planning was made available for residents to access. Following the positive response from residents received over an extensive period, a formal resolution was taken by the Parish Council in July 2017 to proceed with the Chelford Neighbourhood Plan and a Steering Group was formed with appropriate terms of reference. The 12 members drew up a project plan and put in place strategies and actions to acquire funding, seek consultancy support and engage fully with residents. Consequently, the Steering Group acquired central funding in September 2017 and appointed a consultant from Cheshire Community Action (*CCA*).

1.4.3 An initial questionnaire was prepared and distributed in November 2017 to each household and business, as a first step in identifying a draft vision and objectives for the Plan and in determining potential key policy areas. In addition, focus group meetings were held with local youth organisations and all pupils at the local primary school completed an adapted questionnaire. All responses were collated and report, with analysis, produced by Cheshire Community Action consultants (*for the main questionnaire*) and the Steering Group. The reports were made available to residents at two very well attended public consultations with displays and discussions, held at community centres in November 2017. Regular information and updates were also provided on the Parish website.

1.4.4 Arising from the questionnaire feedback and public consultations, overriding concerns were identified and are summarised below:

- The location of any further development, which would result in loss of green belt in exceptional circumstances, must not impact negatively on the local landscape and the bio diversity.
- The scale and design of any future development must be appropriate to the local character of the Parish; must provide a housing mix appropriate to the needs of the local population and must not result in overdevelopment.
- The local infrastructure is insufficient to meet the needs of many residents and would be inadequate to support any large-scale further development without improvements.
- New housing developments in the Parish and those in surrounding areas are placing a growing burden on the local road network.
- Open and recreational spaces are limited in meeting the needs of an expanding population and are well valued and well used.
- The needs of the growing elderly population need to be considered, whilst recognising the importance of ensuring a more mixed, vibrant community.

1.4.5 Focusing on the feedback and issues derived from the initial questionnaires and the public consultations and discussions, a more detailed questionnaire was prepared, which sought resident views on a draft vision, key objectives and potential outline policies. This was distributed to every household (550) in the Parish in February 2018 and an online questionnaire was also made available and widely publicised. A 43.6% response rate was achieved, which is a significant response reflecting the importance residents attach to the proposed Plan. The response rate also reflects how well the survey was promoted. CCA consultants carried out a detailed analysis of responses and a full report was made available to residents at two subsequent public meetings and discussions. From the questionnaire feedback and subsequent consultations, the vision for the Plan, the main objectives and key policies were clearly identified and firmly established.

1.4.6 Through extensive consultation with residents, businesses and community groups, a vision for the future, supported by objectives and key policies, provides a framework for the development of the Parish until 2030 and which reflects the views of a large majority of its residents. Cheshire Community Action Consultants and Cheshire East Officers have provided important guidance, advice and information on the planning process. Professional studies on housing (*CEC*), landscape and settlement character (*CEC/Steering Group*) and the natural environment (*Cheshire Wildlife Trust*), have also been used to inform the creation of the Plan.

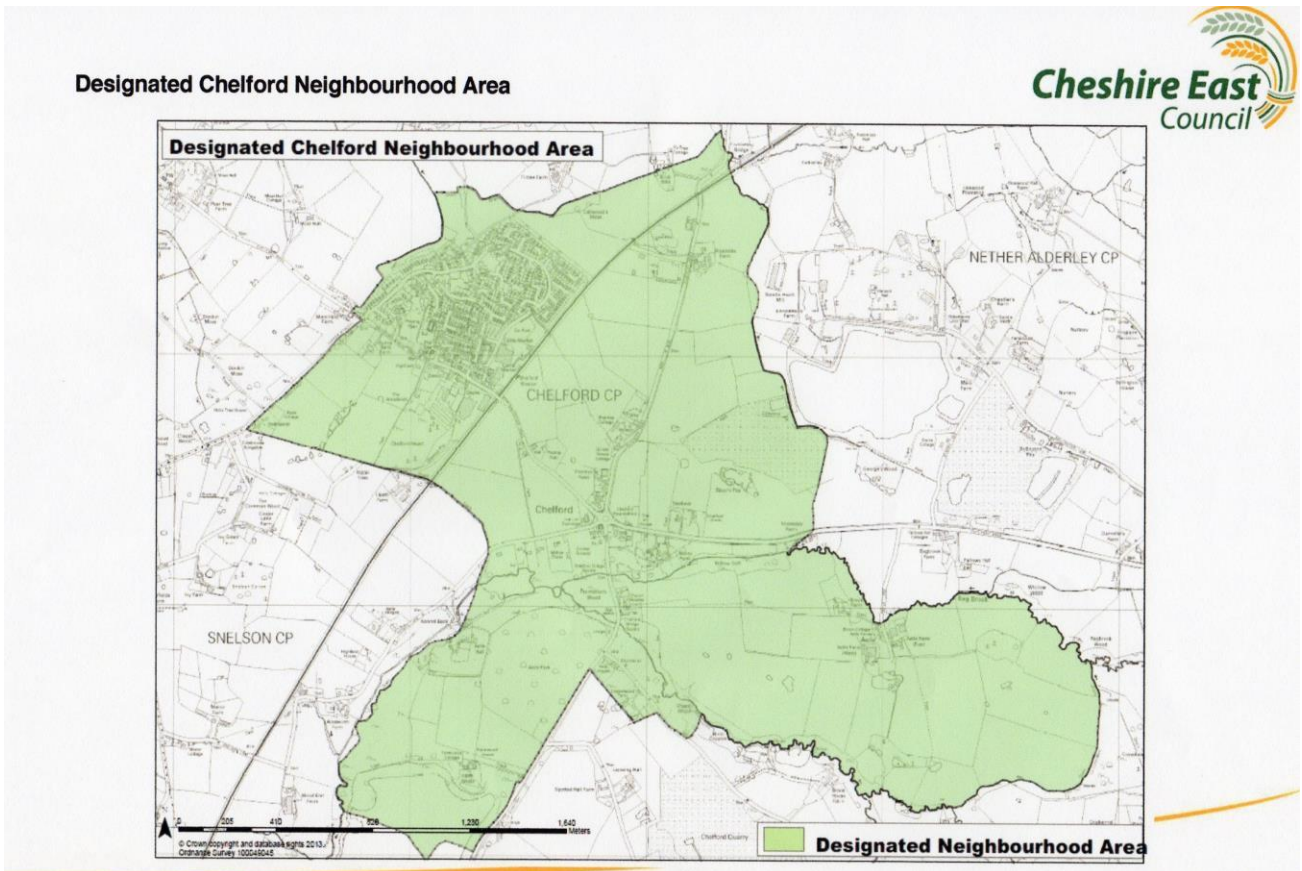
1.5 What is Our Neighbourhood Area?

1.5.1 The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is within the formal boundaries of Chelford Parish as shown in 1.5.2 (*Map A*) and as approved by Cheshire East Council Decision Notice dated 1st December 2015. It should be noted that there is a difference in geography between Chelford as a parish and Chelford as a Local Service Centre (*LSC*). The designated area is smaller than the area defined as the LSC by Cheshire East, although difference in population and housing number are minimal. It is also important to note that Chelford Ward is significantly larger than both Chelford Parish and Chelford LSC. The Ward additionally includes the parishes of Nether Alderley, Ollerton with Marthall, Peover Superior, Lower Peover, Snelson, and Plumley.



Aerial View of Chelford looking West North West

1.5.2 Map A - The Designated Area



Section 2: The Parish Past and Present

2.1. The History of Chelford

2.1.1 Walking around Chelford village, places such as Astle Farm; Cricketers Green; Dixon Drive; Drumblefield; the Manor House; Station Road and Toll Bar Cottage are strong reminders of the history of the Parish. Astle and Dixon reflect past residents, whilst other names indicate phases of important development. The present settlement has been determined by significant transport developments, most notably, the Crewe to Manchester railway line, which was established in the nineteenth century.

2.1.2 The earliest settlement in Chelford was around the church. This was not the current Georgian Church but probably a chapel that dates to the thirteenth century. Just below the church to the south west, in what is now part of Astle Park, is the confluence of the two streams Bag Brook and Snape Brook. It is here that a ford enabled the packhorse trail from Mow Cop to cross southwards on its journey. This ford was most probably on the outskirts of the Macclesfield Forest. At the ford it is likely that there were ponds providing fish for travellers.

2.1.3 There is little evidence of Chelford before 1086. In the Domesday Survey the place "Celeford" was mentioned as a small village of 80 acres. In 1245 Chelford appears again as a gift of land by the Abbey of St Werburgh at Chester. "Chelleford" is identified in this gift as having a mill with the landowner receiving rents from Asthill and Wythington. During the sixteenth century Chelford was a farming community of about 250 people. The Parish Registers of the eighteenth century suggest that Chelford was a self-supporting village with its own artisans to support a farming community. In 1754 the school was endowed, although it did not move to its site on what is now the Alderley Road, until 1800.

2.1.4 The map of 1789 shows two roads crossing the area. Both are now footpaths. The map shows a Chelford Green where villagers would have met. This is no longer evident though it was sited near to the Church on the current Holmes Chapel Road. In 1860/61 the Cheshire County Cricket Club ground was constructed on the land that is now the Cricketers Green housing development. The cricket ground was dug up at the commencement of the Second World War and replaced by railway siding and cold storage facilities. Electrification of the railway in 1960 and the Beeching review saw the beginning of the end of Chelford as a railway goods yard.

2.1.5 In the nineteenth century two major events influenced the village. These were the purchase of the Astle Estate by the Dixon Family and the construction of the railway through the village from 1840. The Dixon Family, who did not want the line passing through their land, determined the route, which the railway now follows. This meant that the railway construction was some 400m north of what was then the centre of the village. The construction involved a station offering eleven passenger trains a day. The importance of the railway linking Chelford to the industrial towns of Stockport and Manchester led to the building of large homes in the Chelford area by rich entrepreneurs. Some of these are evident today along Peover Lane. Others have since been demolished and replaced by modern housing development such as Mere Court.

2.1.6 During the early twentieth century the Chelford Market site was established. Having celebrated 100 years in existence, the market site was deemed no longer suitable for business and is now to be replaced by a housing development of over 80 homes. In 1908 the Village Hall was built. The main roundabout was built after the Second World War. This meant the demolition of the smithy and a garage complete with filling station. The garage has since been replaced with the current Shell Garage. Remaining alongside the roundabout is the small general store and until recently a village post office.

2.1.7 The population census returns from 1810 show that Chelford remained a small village up until the building of the Seddon estate in the 1980s. In 1810 the population of Chelford was 188. By 1911 it had grown to 384 due to the impact of the railway. In 1971 the population was only 431 and by 1991 it had risen to 1246, virtually tripling the population in 20 years.

2.1.8 The Seddon estate not only influenced the population growth of Chelford, but its location moved the population axis to the north of the railway line. This meant the Village Hall and its land granted by the Dixon family became detached from the main centre of population. Similarly, the village post office was no longer central to the village.

2.1.9 The railway and late twentieth century housing developments have left the village with two distinct areas; the original village around the Church and the newer post railway developments to the north of the railway line (see Map B).

2.2 Chelford Today

2.2.1 Data used in this analysis is drawn from the 2011 census and Action with Communities in Rural England (*Rural Community Profile Chelford: Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) Cheshire Community Action Dec. 2013*). The 2011 census indicates that Chelford was a parish of around 1175 people, living in 550 households. The population has remained concentrated on the Seddon estate, which was constructed in the 1980s and given that no other major housing development has taken place since that time, the social character of the village has remained stable. This has resulted in two distinct character areas as shown on Map B.

2.2.2 However, Chelford will undergo considerable change resulting from two substantial housing developments on former brownfield sites. Planning has been agreed on the two sites, for the building of 183 homes. A further allocation of about 43 homes is likely to be brought forward, through the sale of an area of land on the market site, owned by Cheshire East and a proposed development of 25 homes in an area of green belt identified in the Cheshire East SADPD. (*First Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document Sept 2018, Cheshire East*). In total, this will result in a potential 40% increase in the housing stock of 226 homes and a similar percentage influx of new residents of over 400. Such changes will place increasing strain on the local road network with a significant increase in car use and place even more pressure on limited services and facilities.



Map B - Chelford Character Areas **Yellow Character Area - 1** **Red Character Area - 2**

2.3 Social and Cultural Background

2.3.1 The 2011 census population statistics do not reflect the England averages. Those under 16 and of working age were less than the England average. Those over 65 and in single pensioner households were

much higher than the England average. Single parent families and those born outside the UK were also much lower than the England average. Also, the population has far less people who were born outside the UK or from black or minority ethnic groups than the England average. This data set is also true when reviewed against the Cheshire East averages.

2.3.2 Many local rural communities highlight that younger groups – particularly families – are moving out. This is often due to lack of housing which they can afford, or not having suitable employment and training opportunities. More affluent older families, for example moving in from urban areas, often replace these groups. The data for Chelford shows greater inward migration in all age groups except for the 15-24 age group between the 2001 and 2011 census returns. The older age groups have the greater difference in favour of inward migration. This reflects the general view that the area attracts more affluent older families.

2.4 Equality and Prosperity

2.4.1 Nationally, children and older people are more likely to be living in low income and these groups are indicators of vulnerability within an area. Reducing child poverty is therefore a major element of building sustainable communities. In terms of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation, Chelford is in the 20th percentile of the least deprived areas in England. Few children are in poverty when compared to the England average and similarly there are fewer residents claiming benefits, council tax or pension credits. Households are less overcrowded than average for England, and there are less than 1% of households without central heating and only 8% considered to be in fuel poverty compared to 11%. These indicators reflect the affluent nature of the village. Chelford is also deemed to be a safe community with fewer recorded crimes than the England average.

2.4.2 Health is a fundamental factor in wellbeing and quality of life, having a direct impact on an individual's ability to live a fulfilling and enjoyable life and indirectly impacting on their ability to sustain standards of living through income. Poor health may also have a severe effect on other people, either directly through changing relationships (for example forcing family members into informal unpaid care), or through indirect effects such as change in household income.

2.4.3 The age profile of residents in Chelford reflects the three categories of determining poor health. In each of the categories, People with a Limiting Long-Term Illness, Attendance Allowance claimants, and Disability Living Allowance claimants, Chelford reflects the England averages. When compared to other prosperity indices this is unexpected. In terms of planning requirements, it highlights the need for services and appropriate housing. It further highlights the need for ease of access to the health centre and community venues.

2.5 Economy

2.5.1 Many rural communities have been affected by the economic downturn of the last decade, with unemployment levels rising even in areas that have had few people out of work in the past. Being out of work can have a severe impact on an individual's quality of life, and not just economically. People out of work may also feel excluded from the local community, and the impacts can also affect partners and children, not just the person out of work.

2.5.2 Chelford has a small number of people of working age who are not in regular employment. This may be because nearly 40% of the population above 16+ have a degree compared to 16% with no qualification. Retail, professional and manufacturing are the three largest employment sectors. Nearly 60% of those in employment are in managerial or professional occupations with a further 11% in skilled trades. This employment breakdown suggests the population is more affluent than the surrounding areas within Cheshire East. A larger than average number of residents are self-employed, who work 49 + hours per week and who work from home.

2.6 Housing and the built environment

2.6.1 Housing is an important issue in rural communities. Increases in house-prices, which recently have far outstripped average increases in earnings, mean that local people may be priced out of the housing market in the area in which they grew up. For a community to sustain a fair and balanced housing market, it must provide affordable housing accessible to the local community. However, local housing development can also strain local services, as well as affect the character of the area. With the limited supply of affordably priced homes, evidencing the type and availability of housing in Chelford will be essential to community planning.

2.6.2 64% of the Chelford housing stock currently consists of detached dwellings, compared to the national average of 22.5%. A further 13% are semi-detached; 14% terraced and 8% flats, also well below national averages. This reflects the affluent nature of the area. 80% of the housing stock is owner occupied with 20% either social housing or private rented dwellings. Taking such factors into account, perhaps it is not surprising that house prices of all house types are high, with an affordability ratio of 30.2 (*median house price as a ratio of median income*) compared to the England average of 15.4.

2.6.3 Less than 22% of the housing stock is in the lowest three Council Tax bands. 26% of housing is in the top three Council Tax bands.

2.6.4 However, the Parish is currently undergoing new development. Since April 2014 planning permission has been granted for 94 dwellings on a large brownfield site, formerly the Stobart Depot. Of the 94 dwellings, at least 28 will be classed as affordable (*housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market*). Construction is now well advanced on this site with occupancy running at 21 homes in May 2018. It is a distinct possibility that a further 25 dwellings will be added to this development on land adjacent to the site. In addition, Cheshire East approved a planning application for 89 dwellings, including a small element of affordable dwellings, in April 2018, on a second brownfield site formerly used by Chelford Market. A further 18 dwellings, with some affordable, is likely on this site making a possible total of 105 dwellings.

2.7 Transport

2.7.1 People in rural areas rely more on private transport and, in general, spend more on transport than their urban counterparts (*nationally, higher transport expenditure accounts for almost half the higher expenditure by rural households than urban ones*). Overall, the residents of rural hamlets and villages travel nearly twice as far by car each year compared to urban residents.

2.7.2 This is certainly true of residents in Chelford. The car is relied upon heavily as a mode of transport, with more cars per household and far fewer households with no car, when compared with national averages. The Parish is further away from key services such as a secondary school, or job centre, and far less people travel to work by public transport than the England average. The railway station is on the main Crewe Manchester line but used by relatively few commuters. Bus services are relatively infrequent between Knutsford and Macclesfield.

2.7.3 10% of households in Chelford have no car compared to nearly 50% who have at least two cars. Travel time information suggests that Chelford is not well connected, when compared to county averages. The loss of local shops places additional pressures on any future developments to ensure that adequate car parking and garage spaces are provided in all planning applications and that the local road network is suitable to meet extra traffic demands.

2.8 Conclusion

2.8.1 Chelford is an affluent area in terms of incomes and quality of housing stock. The ability of the Parish to sustain further large development is highly questionable given that the current infrastructure has little to offer the existing population. Consequently, there is a real threat that the Parish will simply become home to a dormitory village with no real soul. Access to shops, services and employment is mainly by private car. Young people are leaving the village because of the lack of affordable housing. The

average age profile is increasing towards the over 65s. As a community the growth of the 44-60 age group poses challenges because these people are often time poor.

Section 3: Vision and Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Vision and Objectives provide the foundation for the Neighbourhood Plan. Together they state a direction and provide guidance for the future development of the Parish in accordance with the wishes of its residents. A clear majority of respondents supported the draft vision and the draft objectives, which have therefore been used to form the basis for the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

3.1.2 The planning process has identified key issues which have been in evidence consistently during consultations and which can be summarised as follows:

- The scale and scope of any future housing developments in relation to population growth and changing demographics. Already, current new developments are predicted to increase the housing stock and population by over 40% which is a significant growth
- The lack of sufficient facilities and a robust infrastructure to meet the needs of an already growing population
- The need to preserve Green Belt, provide sufficient open recreational spaces and suitable footpaths and to protect the local environment and wild life
- The impact of any future developments on the road network through the Parish which will have negative consequences for the safety, health and well being of residents

3.1.3 Consequently, these key issues have been enshrined in the vision for Chelford and have provided the basis for specific objectives. The vision and objectives have been refined during the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, taking into consideration the comments and suggestions which have arisen during the consultations.

3.2 The Vision

3.2.1

Chelford will continue as a thriving community, retaining its strong links with, and easy access to the surrounding countryside. Development in the Parish will be sustainable and demonstrate genuine progress in meeting the needs of all residents, whilst conserving and enhancing the local natural environment. Changes will have brought long-term benefits to the community; being of a scale and design which reflect the character of a semi-rural parish; protecting open and green spaces; and supported by an appropriate infrastructure and housing mix, reflecting local needs.

3.3 Objectives

- To promote a sustainable housing strategy, which will provide a housing mix sensitive to the needs of our community, protect our landscape and be of a scale, density and design, which retain the distinctive character of the Parish
- To ensure the protection of existing landscape, retains the green and open countryside and conserves and enhances our natural environment and biodiversity
- To protect and enhance existing green and open recreational spaces

- To encourage and promote the provision of local facilities, amenities and services and the delivery of a well-planned physical and connectivity infrastructure to support the community and local economy
- To protect and enhance existing community buildings, assets of value and amenities and services
- To encourage and promote sustainable forms of transport which benefit the environment and the local community.

Section 4: Planning Policies

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The policies in the Chelford Neighbourhood Plan are based on a range of evidence drawn from the planning process. Such evidence includes official documents and publications, including the Local Plan and the NPPF 2018; housing, environment and landscape surveys carried out by Cheshire East Officers and Consultants; views, comments and suggestions of residents and businesses expressed through local surveys and public consultations. Policies focus on the key issues and preferences identified by residents and they demonstrate a strong aspiration to fulfil the vision and deliver the objectives for Chelford. Policies have been constructed to ensure that the character and environment of the designated area are clearly considered.

4.1.2 It is considered that the Plan policies remain consistent with revised national planning policies and the Cheshire East Local Plan Part 1 2017.

4.2 Key Policy Areas

- Housing
- The Natural Environment
- Green Infrastructure
- Community Infrastructure and the Local Economy
- Transport

4.3 Housing

4.3.1 Policy Objective

To promote a sustainable housing strategy, which will provide a housing mix sensitive to the needs of our community, protect our landscape and be of a scale, density and design that retain the distinctive character of the Parish.

4.3.2 Background

4.3.3 The drafting of housing policies has been undertaken considering the following factors:

- Currently, the housing stock in Chelford, has a considerably greater proportion of detached properties, mainly consisting of larger family size dwellings, than both Cheshire East and national averages. There are relatively fewer semi –detached, terraced and apartment dwellings. Most households are in owner occupation. However, the number of residents living in social rented accommodation is comparable to Cheshire East and slightly above the national average. The

current population profile suggests a predominantly ageing population with pensioners making up a significant proportion of the population (*Cheshire East Housing Advice Note 2018*).

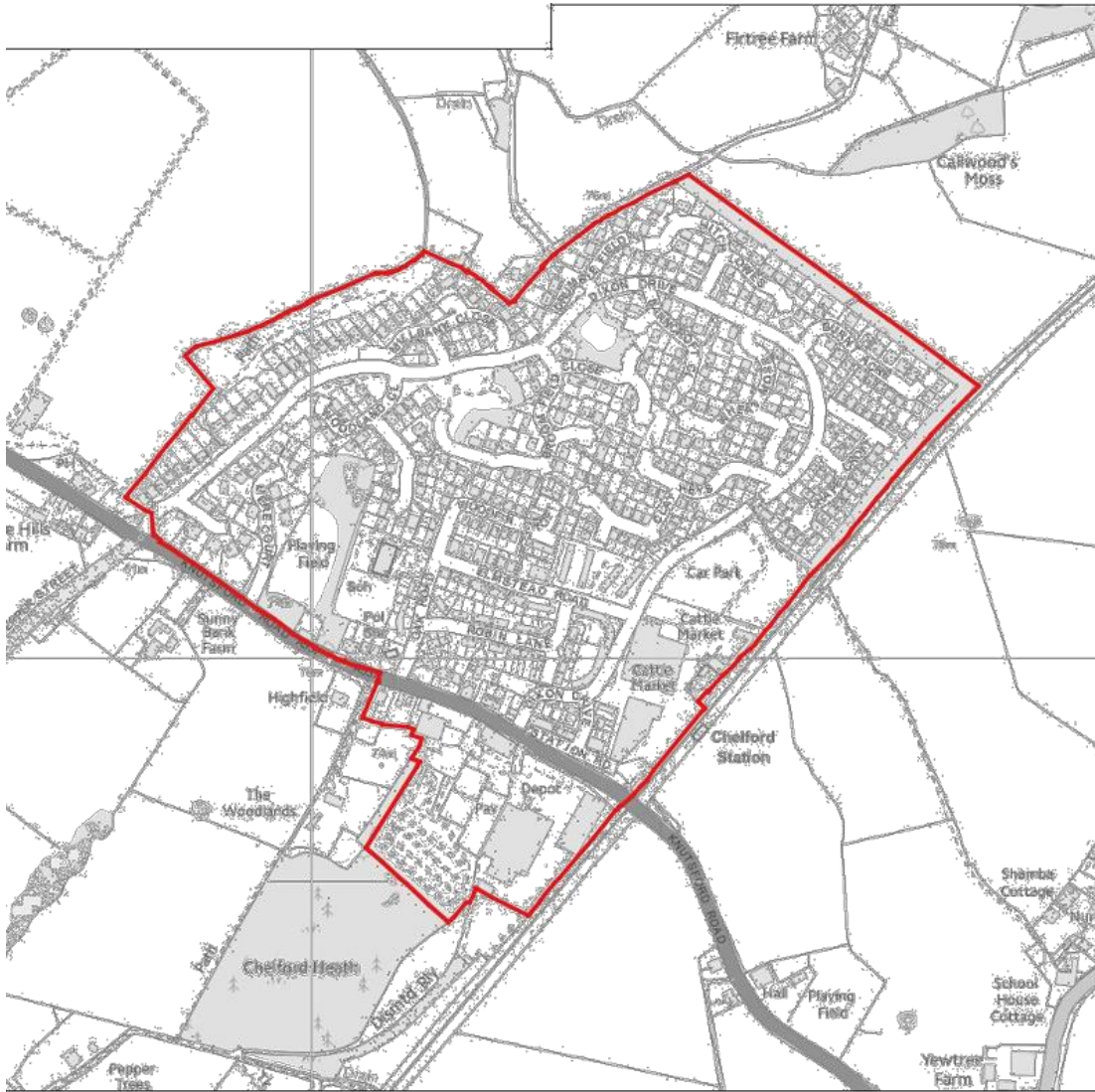
- Two new major developments are now in progress on former brownfield sites in the Parish and these will undoubtedly have an impact on the future age profile of the population, the size of the population and the mix and size of the housing stock. These developments currently, will bring forth a total of 183 homes on completion. However, a planning proposal for an additional 18 homes on the DWH market site and a proposal for another 25 homes on the Jones Homes Stobart site (draft SADPD 2018), will create a potential 226 homes in total. This could represent a significant 40% increase in both housing stock and population in Chelford by 2021. Successive parish councils have recognised and supported the need to develop these sites, in anticipation that some re-balancing in the age structure and housing mix will result, along with suitable provision of affordable accommodation for the local population.
- Cheshire East has an up to date Local Plan, underpinned by a settlement hierarchy and in September 2018 distributed an allocation of new development to Local Service Centres, of which Chelford is one (*First Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document Sept 2018*). It is recognised that the housing targets identified in the Housing Advice Note (*Housing Needs Advice Report Chelford March 2018 – Cheshire East*) differ from the targets established by Cheshire East in the site allocations exercise, due to a wider range of criteria being employed. Cheshire East consultation commenced in September 2018, with a view to establishing a final Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, which will form Part 2 of its Local Plan. The definitive policy document is unlikely to be available until 2019. Consequently, the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been drafted, based on Cheshire East proposals for development within the settlement boundary which have yet to be finally confirmed and published as definitive.

4.3.4 **Policy HP1: Housing Development and Scale**

Policy statement:

The following new housing development will be supported in principle: -

- a) Small scale developments dispersed within the settlement outside of the Green Belt.**
- b) The redevelopment of suitable brownfield sites. (previously developed sites) In the case of sites currently or previously used for employment, there must be strong evidence, including appropriate marketing for 2 years, to demonstrate that they are no longer suitable or capable of employment development (*see Local Economy Policy LE1*).**
- c) Replacement dwellings, or the conversion and adaptation of redundant rural buildings, where they would not require extensive alteration or expansion beyond the existing footprint and would enhance the character of the location.**
- d) The use of infill sites limited to one or two individual small dwellings, in an otherwise built up frontage, providing the character and appearance of the immediate neighbourhood is maintained.**
- e) A rural exception site where this specifically meets the housing needs of the Parish.**



Map C - Chelford proposed settlement boundary as defined in the draft SADPD September 2018

4.3.5 Justification

4.3.6 It is clear from the resident consultation feedback that the Parish Council now wishes to see the sustainable growth of small-scale additions to the housing stock, given that further large developments have the potential to alter the character of the village. Map C shows the proposed settlement boundary (the built limits of the settlement) as laid down in the draft Cheshire East SADPD September 2018. There is little difference between this proposal and the existing boundary, apart from the land currently under development and an adjoining area of Green Belt. Policy HP1 a) provides both for small scale housing development within the existing settlement and, on adoption of the SADPD, within the future enlarged settlement boundary.

4.3.7 Future housing growth strategy must be tailored to meet local housing needs, but also consider the local environment of the plan area. Should further development be planned, it must be proportionate and environmentally sustainable. The Chelford Character Assessment 2018 clearly recommends that new development should avoid suburban forms and depth to the existing development pattern and should not harm features, which make an important contribution to the landscape and character of the area. A principle established in the Cheshire East Local Plan is that open countryside should be protected from urbanising development. Consequently, small-scale growth may be acceptable if it meets the specific needs of the Chelford community, namely the older age groups and those younger families who require lower cost housing. The Cheshire East Housing Advice Note 2018 supports this view.

4.3.8 Any small-scale development should be sympathetic to the existing settlements and protect the character and landscape of the Parish. 92% of resident responses were in favour of any future development being no greater than 20 dwellings.

4.3.9 The Housing Advice Report establishes a methodology for determining a housing target for Chelford (*Housing Needs Advice Report Chelford March 2018 – Cheshire East*). The Advice Note looked at evidence such as household projections, census data, dwelling completion rates and the local plan strategy to give an appropriate quantum of housing for the Parish, along with characteristics of the housing need. With an estimated housing requirement of 3500 for 13 Local Service Centres and considering existing commitments of 2219 (*as at 31st March 2018*), the housing analysis suggests that it is reasonable to conclude that, with current commitments of 183 homes and potential for a further 43 additional dwellings, the Parish has more than met its requirement for the Local Plan. Even accounting for the geographical distinction between the areas defined as the LSC and the Designated Area; there is little evidence to support the view that further large-scale development is necessary to meet the needs of the Chelford population and its neighbouring parishes. Therefore, the conclusion is that any proposals which seek to make further significant additions to the housing stock, are likely to have tenuous links to the needs of the Parish. Therefore, the strong feedback from residents that any further requirement to add to the housing stock should at best be small scale to meet the needs of Chelford, is not unreasonable and is consistent with the housing analysis put forward by Cheshire East.

4.3.10 An important concern is that a further large-scale increase in housing in this location, with limited local employment provision, may have some impact on sustainable commuting patterns. Consequently, there is a real fear that Chelford is already some way to becoming a dormitory village and further large-scale development will accelerate this process.

4.3.11 There was also a strong view evident in consultations, that loss of green belt for the purposes of housing would not be welcomed. 97% of resident responses agreed that brownfield sites should be prioritised, and strong preferences were expressed for conversions/replacements of existing buildings and use of infill sites for development, before any greenfield sites were considered. The Chelford Character Assessment 2018 stresses that conversions and new dwellings should ensure a positive transition between the rural and village landscapes, by ensuring the scale and orientation of buildings are sensitive to the landscape within which the site is located. 87% of respondents agreed that Infill sites which emerge in existing developed areas, should prioritise low cost housing and individual small- scale housing for local people.

4.3.12 Affordable housing (*housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market*) is addressed through policies in the Local Plan. The current demand for affordable housing from Chelford residents has been assessed at 2 applicants (*Homechoice data June 2018*) and the conclusions of the Advice Note are consistent with the view that that the existing development sites in Chelford will be more than enough in meeting affordable housing need in the Parish. Even including Chelford in the Mobberley and Alderley sub group (*20 applicants for Chelford housing*), the affordable housing need can be met from existing commitments. Therefore, any rural exception sites that come forward would need to evidence local need and so should provide for houses needed by Chelford residents. However, there needs to be a clear match between type of housing built and need.

4.3.13 There was clear support in resident feedback, for enough affordable market dwellings (*housing for sale on the open market priced at an affordable level*) to be available in the planning period, particularly for young families who wish to remain in the Parish. This view has remained consistent for several years dating back to the Parish Plan 2009.

4.3.14 Policy HP2: Housing Mix

Policy Statement:

New residential development should seek to deliver a range of property type, tenures and size. Where possible, sites should deliver accommodation suitable for older residents, and lower priced small and family sized dwellings. A positive balance should be struck between site layout and urban design delivering a variety of dwellings on site in keeping with the local character of the area (refer to the Chelford Character Assessment 2018).

4.3.15 Justification

4.3.16 The Housing Advice Note highlights that the proportion of the very elderly population in Chelford is significantly greater than the Cheshire East average and that there is a large proportion of households who will become very elderly over the plan period.

4.3.17 Given that those over 65 represent a considerable proportion of the population, it is not surprising to find that considerable resident feedback focused on preferences for the provision of small bungalows in the future. A growing number of older residents live in larger properties and it is recognised that smaller properties might afford opportunities for downsizing. Preferences for smaller dwellings such as semi-detached homes with at least 3 bedrooms were also strong, reflecting the support from residents for young families who wish to remain in the Parish. The need for flats/apartments attracted the fewest respondents from the main questionnaire, a reflection that such dwellings often failed to meet the needs of young families and in current developments taking place, are concentrated in unimaginative blocks lacking in design and character.

4.3.18 The provision of specialist housing (*sheltered accommodation*) for the elderly rated highly in feedback, again a reflection of the population profile. Crucially, the village infrastructure will be critical in determining the viability and sustainability of this type of accommodation. Based on the current and likely future assessment of the infrastructure, the viability of such provision is doubtful given the need to ensure that sheltered/ retirement provision is close to services and facilities and such accommodation may therefore be better placed in larger, nearby settlements.

4.3.19 The current housing stock in Chelford is skewed towards larger detached properties. The 2011 census highlighted that over 64% of properties were detached, compared to the average in England of 22.5%. There were a smaller number of semi-detached and terraces in Chelford than England as a whole. This dwelling stock, coupled with a larger than average elderly population, is likely to have led to a lack of opportunities for people to downsize or get on the housing ladder. This policy will provide smaller and therefore more affordable family homes, while helping to provide homes for those elderly residents wishing to downsize – which in turn will free up family homes.

4.3.20 Additionally, evidence from the public consultations points to a recognition that the lack of smaller market homes limits the ability for first time buyers to either locate or remain in the parish and may be further compounding the ageing population and lower proportions of younger age groups. This view is supported in the housing analysis produced by Cheshire East Neighbourhood Planning Team (*Housing Needs Advice Report Chelford March 2018 – Cheshire East*). Local younger families require housing types, which are marketed at affordable prices and meet their specific accommodation needs.

4.3.21 The policy complies with Cheshire East Council's policy requirement for a mix of dwelling types and sizes, and with the NPPF, which seeks to ensure that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed, and that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be addressed and reflected in planning policies.



Examples of the types of detached properties in the two Chelford Character Areas (see Map B)

4.3.22 Policy HP3: Housing Design

Policy Statement:

To ensure that buildings, characteristic features and materials are representative of the settlement character and traditions of Chelford. The design and layout of new developments and any alterations to existing buildings and structures, should demonstrate consideration of the Cheshire East Design Guide (2017) and the Chelford Character Assessment (2018) or any updated versions.

New development should:

- a) Complement the established Chelford character in terms of scale, density, green spaces and architectural style.
- b) Avoid introducing suburban forms and depth where this would adversely affect the rural character of the Parish.
- c) Not harm features which make an important contribution to the landscape and character of the area, including hedgerows and trees.
- d) Provide adequate allocated parking (*minimum standards as described in the Cheshire East Local Plan*), so that it does not dominate the street. Consideration should be given to garage design, which reflects the style of house and which accommodates modern vehicles; garages set back from the street frontage and parking which is located on the footprint of the plot.
- e) Minimise the visual impact of refuse and recycling space; adopt well designed sewage and drainage systems.
- f) Maintain a positive transition between the rural and urban landscapes within the Parish, by ensuring the scale, materials and orientation of buildings are sensitive to the landscape, as well as heritage assets.
- g) Use a limited palette of materials, seeking opportunities to integrate and reproduce existing strong character elements already evident in the Parish.
- h) Reflect design characteristics from traditional properties to reflect local distinctiveness.
- i) Have proportions which reflect the characteristics of existing properties, including garden space and be of a height no more than 3 storeys.
- j) Have low rise boundary treatments facing the street, consistent with the immediate character of the area and which seek to create a sense of enclosure within the street scene. Boundary hedges should normally be retained and incorporated in any new development.

k) Have pavements and fixed boundary treatments to complement existing features of properties and use texture and pattern to make permanent boundaries distinct where possible.

l) Ensure a consistency of form with immediate neighbours who are in close proximity to one another.

m) Protect visual amenity from significant harm.

n) Incorporate SUDS which avoids all non-permeable surfaces or delivers a water management system which minimises surface water run-off and ensure that all surface water is addressed within the site boundary. Every option should be investigated before discharging surface water into a public sewerage network, in line with the surface water hierarchy.

4.3.23 Justification

4.3.24 The policy and its constituent parts are entirely consistent with NPPF policy 2018, the Cheshire East Local Plan objectives and accompanying Design Guide 2017 and the recommendations from the Chelford Character Assessment 2018. In particular, the Cheshire East Design Guide emphasises the need for more creative and imaginative thinking when considering housing design. There is an increasing tendency for many new housing developments to be governed by rigid standards, which produce bland settlements with little sense of place or coherence. The move towards high density settlements has often been at the expense of adequate external space, something now apparent in current housing developments in Chelford. In turn this weakens the long-standing character of the area.

4.3.25 United Utilities has advised that surface water should be discharged in the following order of priority:

1. An adequate soakaway or some other form of infiltration system.
2. An attenuated discharge to surface water body.
3. An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer, highway drain or another drainage system.
4. An attenuated discharge to public combined sewer.

Applicants wishing to discharge to public sewer will need to submit clear evidence demonstrating why alternative options are not available as part of the determination of their application.

4.3.26 NPPF highlights that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. It states that design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each areas defining characteristics. Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. The point is also made that good design should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Consequently, this design policy seeks to incorporate these principles.

4.3.27 Feedback from residents (*over 90% respondents*) gave strong support to many of the features contained within the general policy. Residents stressed the need to use good quality building materials to complement existing properties; to design dwellings which had appropriate parking spaces; to ensure that drainage and sewage systems were well designed and effective and that dwellings were given adequate garden and open space.



Examples of design characteristics evident within the Parish

4.4 The Natural Environment

4.4.1 Policy Objective

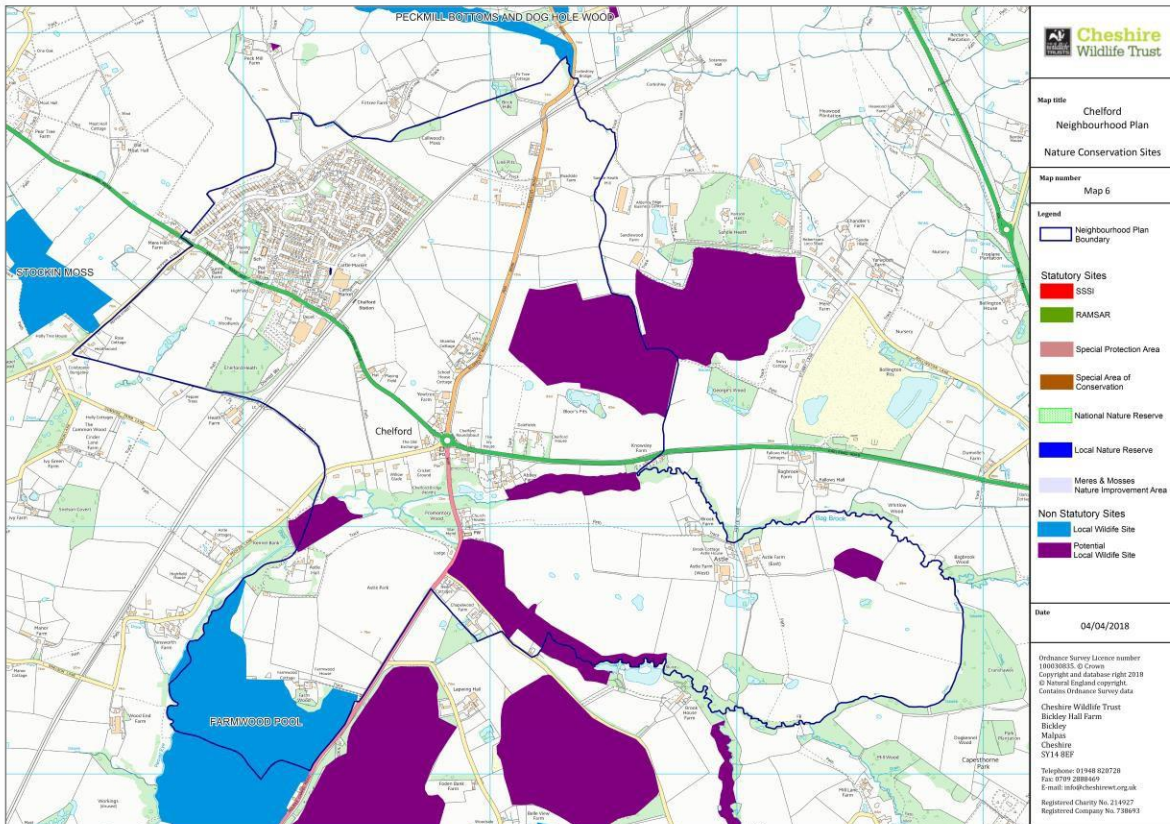
To ensure the protection of existing landscape, the green and open countryside and conserve and enhance our natural environment and biodiversity (*variety of plant and animal life considered to be important and desirable*).

4.4.2 Background

4.4.3 The drafting of policies relating to the natural environment has been undertaken considering a range of factors, in particular those identified in the Wildlife Survey (*Protecting and Enhancing Chelford's Natural Environment: Cheshire Wildlife Trust 2018*); The Chelford Character Assessment 2018; NPPF 2018 and the Cheshire East Local Plan 2017.

4.4.4 The planning system has a vital role to play in protecting and enhancing the natural environment and consequently, the Chelford Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to support this key aim at local level by identifying priorities for nature conservation and by ensuring these are seriously considered in any development proposals.

4.4.5 The natural environment of the Parish, contributes to its distinctive character and the existing landscape is highly valued by residents as indicated in the responses from the main questionnaire.

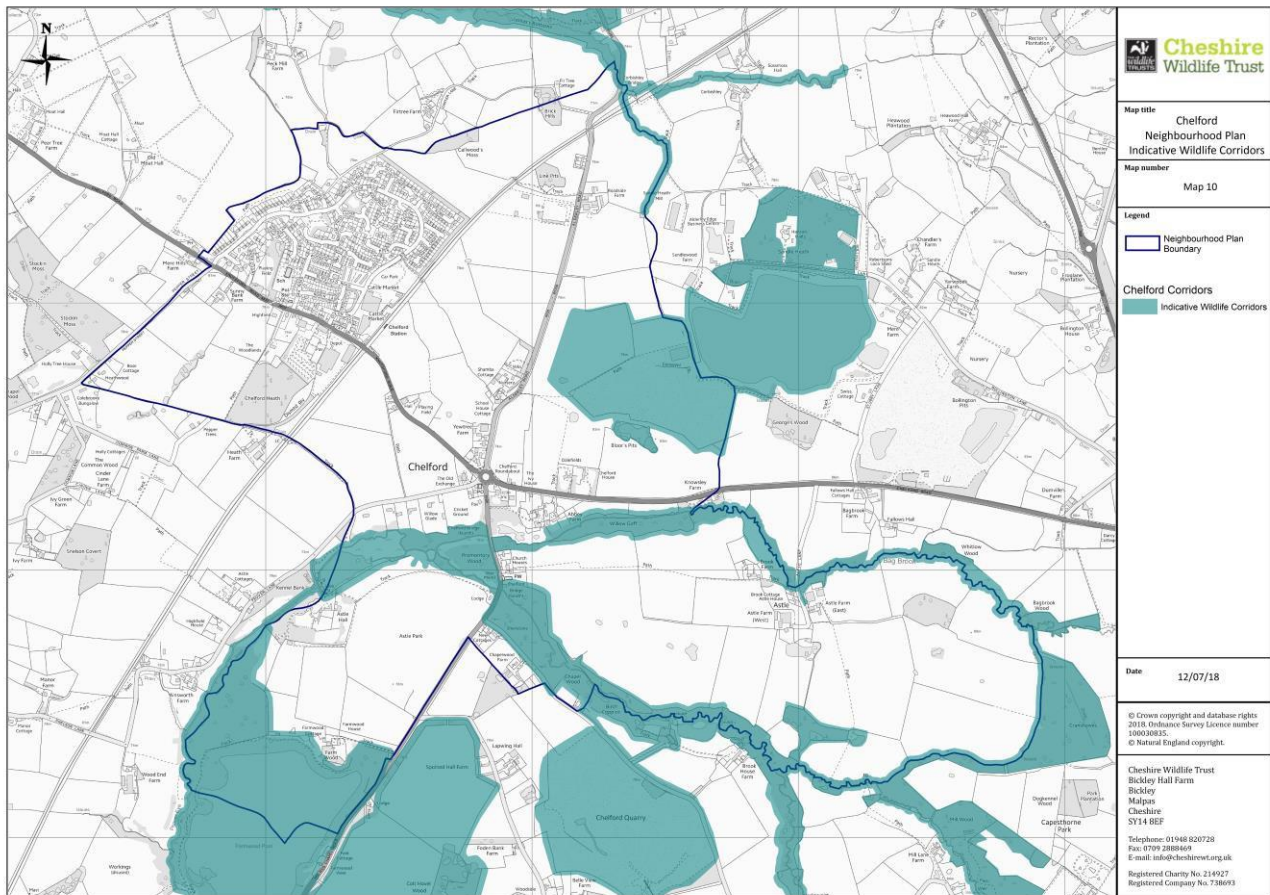


Map D - Cheshire Wildlife Trust - Nature Conservation Sites, Local Wildlife Sites and non-designated potential Local Wildlife Sites.

4.4.6 Policy NE1: Biodiversity

Policy Statement:

- a) Development proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on local wildlife corridors or wildlife habitat will not be permitted, except where it can be clearly demonstrated that the reasons for or the benefits of the proposed development outweigh the impact of the development.
- b) Where appropriate, development will only be supported where there has been a detailed, independent survey to ascertain the impact on identified wildlife corridors and wildlife habitats as shown in the Cheshire Wildlife Trust Report 2018 and any adverse effects effectively ameliorated (*see Maps D and E*).
- c) Enhancement of wildlife corridors and wildlife habitats will be supported.



Map E - Cheshire Wildlife trust – Indicative Wildlife Corridors

4.4.7 Justification

4.4.8 The policies are consistent with central government strategy to conserve and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment. The NPPF highlights that plans should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. This approach is consistent with the analysis presented in the Chelford Wildlife Survey and the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan (*see Cheshire Wildlife Trust Survey of Chelford 2018*).

4.4.9 The Chelford Wildlife Trust Survey 2018 emphasises that any future development of Chelford should respect the natural environment. The most intact landscapes, in terms of biodiversity, landform and historical/cultural associations should be valued highly when planning decisions are made. The Wildlife Trust Survey highlighted a ‘wildlife corridor network’, which provides ecological connectivity between woodland, grassland, wetland and riparian habitats within and beyond the Neighbourhood Planning area (*see Map E*). The wildlife corridor network is likely to support a wide range of species some of which that are in decline both locally and nationally. It is also noted in the Survey, that any development proposals for sites adjacent to high distinctiveness habitat or a wildlife corridor, should demonstrate substantial mitigation and avoidance measures to lessen any potential impacts on wildlife.

4.4.10 Although the Cheshire East Local Plan does not specifically refer to this approach, Cheshire East is one of a number of contributing members to a sub-regional partnership which was set up with "A 2020 Vision - towards a land and sea richer in wildlife by the year 2020". It is led by a steering group of over 10 partner organisations, including Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the Environment Agency. Cheshire East is also a signatory to the Cheshire Region Local Nature Partnership ‘Net Gains for Nature’ policy (*January 2016*), which sets out the guidance and principles of biodiversity accounting and compensation. The policy approach in this Plan is also consistent with the Cheshire East Local Plan, which

lays down key policy principles for protecting biodiversity and landscape character (*Policies SE3 and SE4 Cheshire East Local Plan Part 1 2017*).

4.4.11 Over 95% of respondents to the main questionnaire, strongly supported the need to protect and enhance the biodiversity in the Parish

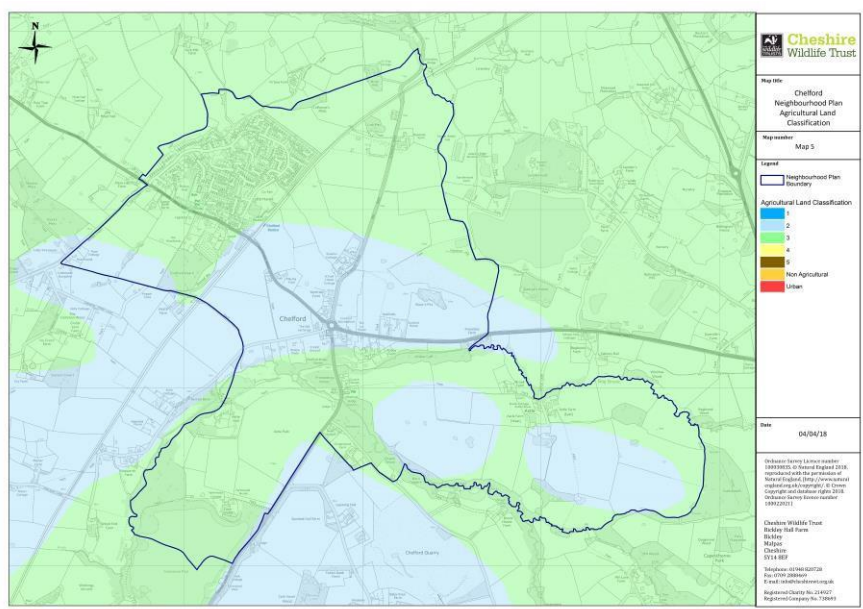
4.4.12 Policy NE2: Landscape

Policy Statement:

To protect and preserve the identity of Chelford as a village within its open countryside and farmland setting, new development should respect the landscape character areas of Chelford (*defined in the Chelford Character Assessment 2018*) and respond positively to the landscape character with appropriate density, scale, massing, features and design of the development.

4.4.13 Justification

4.4.14 Over 95% of the residents who responded to the main questionnaire, agreed that the extent of the Green Belt must be retained unless genuine exceptional circumstances can be clearly demonstrated which necessitate small scale adjustments. Chelford is effectively surrounded by Green Belt with significant areas within the Parish too. These areas are characterised by agricultural land, some of which is grade 2 quality (*classed as high-quality versatile land*) and indicated in blue on Map F (*Protecting and Enhancing Chelford's Natural Environment p.15 Cheshire Wildlife Trust July 2018*). The Chelford Character Assessment 2018 highlighted two distinct character areas of Chelford (*see Map B*) with differing characteristics and any new development should demonstrate consideration of the Character Assessment to ensure that it responds positively to the distinct landscape characteristics of its location.



Map F Chelford Agricultural land Classification – Cheshire wildlife Trust.

4.4.15 98% of respondents gave strong support in favour of protecting existing green and open countryside and conserving and enhancing the local natural environment. The Wildlife Trust Survey emphasises that the protection and enhancement of Chelford's natural assets is of crucial importance for nature conservation and ecosystem services, but it is also important for the enjoyment of future generations. The Cheshire East Local Plan recognises that the natural environment is a significant characteristic of an area, which should be conserved (*Policy SE4*). Furthermore, it is stated that protecting the landscape is a means of preserving and promoting local distinctiveness and diversity. Equally, the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Part of Chelford Parish is defined by its views across open countryside, which also embrace some of its historic buildings and areas of the Peak District. (*see photographs below*). These views connect Chelford to its surroundings and the rural environment and as such, should be retained and protected, to preserve the Parish character and for the enjoyment of its residents. The Cheshire East Council Design Guide states:

***'...views to landmarks (i.e. a church spire) or retention and framing of panoramic views into, through or out of a site not only enhances identity but informs character and grounds the development in its setting.'* (Cheshire East Council Design Guide Vol. 2 i05 2017)**

Views of the open countryside surrounding Chelford



4.4.16 Policy NE3: Trees and Hedgerows

Policy Statement:

- a) **Trees and hedgerows, which make a significant contribution to wildlife habitats and amenity, biodiversity and landscape character of the surrounding area should be preserved and any development which adversely impacts upon them will not normally be permitted.**
- b) **Where the benefits of a development are considered to outweigh the benefit of preserving existing trees and hedgerows, the development must demonstrate appropriate mitigation to support amenity, landscape character and appearance of the area. This may include suitable planting of trees and hedgerows where appropriate.**
- c) **The retention and preservation of trees and hedgerows in situ will always be preferable.**

4.4.17 Justification

4.4.18 The Wildlife Trust Survey 2018 also points to the significant contribution of trees and hedgerows to the biodiversity and landscape character and surrounding area of Chelford. Similarly, the Chelford Character Assessment 2018 identifies strong field patterns with well-maintained boundaries, predominant hedgerows, with dense, mature hedgerow trees. The area is also characterised by more open, larger scale landscape with more extensive views, which add to the richness of the area. The Character Assessment 2018 recommends that any proposed development should not significantly harm features, which make an important contribution to the landscape character of the area, including visual amenity, hedgerows and trees.

4.5 The Green Infrastructure

4.5.1 Policy Objective

To protect and enhance existing green and open recreational spaces.

4.5.2 Background

4.5.3 The aim of this policy is to ensure that residents have access to good quality local green space, by protecting them from inappropriate development.

4.5.4 Green spaces deliver a wide range of environmental benefits for Chelford, including supporting local biodiversity. However, the green infrastructure also provides important social, recreational and health benefits for residents. It is therefore important for this Plan to safeguard green infrastructure assets, so that any development does not compromise their integrity or value. Local green spaces are mainly under the ownership of Cheshire East and the Parish Council, but much of the open countryside is under private ownership, which can still be accessed by footpaths and Public Rights of Way (*PROWS*).



Mere Court green space in Character Area 2 to be enhanced by s106 monies from the Stobart Development site.

4.5.5 Chelford Parish is not well endowed with open and recreational spaces to support its growing population and there is limited opportunity to add to the green network of spaces. The areas currently under development have made little physical contribution to open spaces and therefore developer contributions have been secured to improve the quality and use of existing open spaces and to provide greater multi-functionality.

4.5.6 In terms of sport and recreational facilities, the Parish has seen some small, but key improvements in the last five years. The Parish Council, with a major contribution from volunteers, raised enough funds to install a multi use games area on an existing open space and a play area with equipment close to the Village Hall.



The Multi-Use Games Area in Character Area 1

4.5.7 In addition, the open space and play area at Mere Court is currently undergoing a major refurbishment, using s106 monies from the development on the former Stobart site. The Bowls Club is an important recreational and sport facility with a membership over 100 residents. This facility is classed as an Asset of Community Value. Cricket in Chelford has along history dating back 150 years and the current

club is based on land, which it rents from a private owner. Membership in recent years has relied heavily on non-residents, also a reflection of the age profile in the community.

4.5.8 However, with a predicted increase of 40% in the housing stock and population, protecting and enhancing the limited existing open and recreational spaces are a key priority. Key green spaces are identified and mapped in the Chelford Character Assessment 2018 (pp.43-44).

4.5.9 Footpaths and bridleways, like many other parishes, can be found linking the open spaces and these provide valuable access for residents to enjoy the local environment and open countryside (see *Chelford Character Assessment 2018 pp.45-46*). Most dwellings are within sight of and / or near green spaces, often within a few minutes' walk. The retention of the existing footpaths and bridleways is essential to maintain this proximity and it is therefore important that no future development degrades this access network, but rather adds to it and enhances the provision.

4.5.10 Although cycleways in Chelford are somewhat limited currently, it is important that these are retained and where possible new routes be established to support access to green spaces.

4.5.11 Policy GI 1: Green Space

Policy Statement:

The following areas are designated as Local Green Spaces which are protected from new development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated, or where development supports the role and function of the Local Green Space.

- 1. Mere Court (*play area, football pitch, picnic area, pond area*).**
- 2. Play areas off Dixon Drive.**
- 3. Bowling Green (*behind Chelford Farm Supplies*)—an Asset of Community Value.**
- 4. Parish Council land adjacent to the Village Hall site (*play area, MUGA, BMX track and playing field*).**
- 5. Chelford Cricket Club.**

4.5.12 Policy GI 2: Open and Recreational Space

Policy Statement:

All sports fields and areas currently used for play and recreation will be protected and where possible, enhanced. Development will not be permitted unless:

- i) an assessment has been undertaken which shows them to be surplus to requirements; or**
- ii) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity in a suitable location; or**
- iii) in the case of the loss of sports and recreation facilities, the development is for alternative sports and recreation facilities, the needs of which clearly outweigh the loss.**

4.5.13 Justification

4.5.14 In response to the main questionnaire almost 100% of the respondents felt that it was important to protect open spaces in the Plan area, which have a recreation, amenity, sport, wildlife or conservation value (*see policies on biodiversity and Cheshire Wildlife Survey*). Specific support was given to the Bowling Green, which has community value status and is an important sport and recreational venue enjoyed by over a hundred men and women members. The policies are supported by the Chelford Character Assessment 2018 recommendations and are in line with the Cheshire East Local Plan policy on green infrastructure (*policy SE6*).

4.5.15 The NPPF 2018 highlights that local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

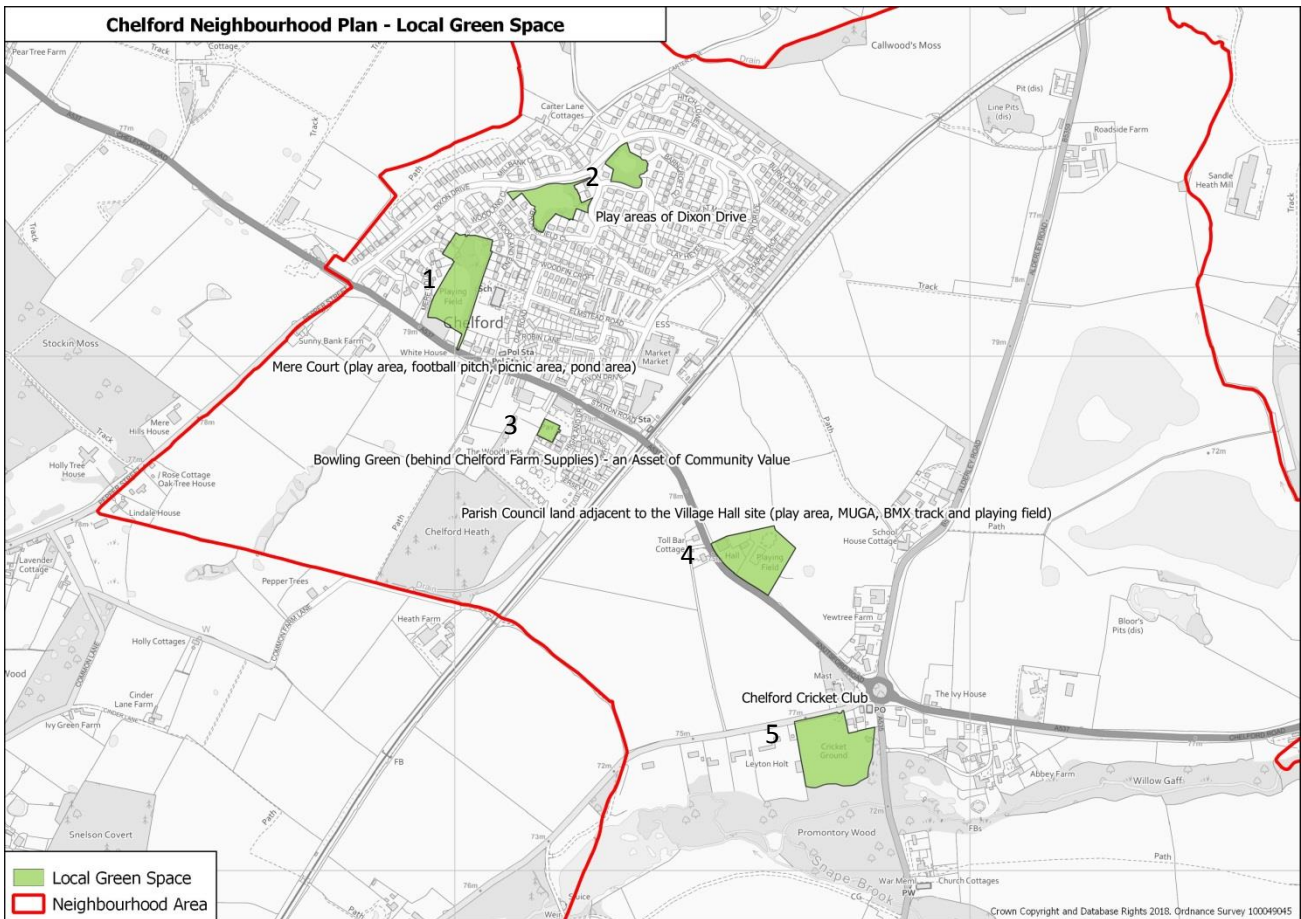
4.5.16 Local Green Space designation should only be used:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;
- and where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

4.5.17 The following areas (*see map 4.5.18*) are designated as Local Green Spaces. Starting top right and moving anti-clockwise these are:

1. Mere Court (*play area, football pitch, picnic area, pond area*).
2. Play areas off Dixon Drive.
3. Bowling Green (*behind Chelford Farm Supplies*) - designated an Asset of Community Value.
4. Parish Council land adjacent to the Village Hall site (*play area, MUGA, BMX track and playing field*).
5. Chelford Cricket Club.

4.5.18 Chelford Local Green Spaces



4.5.19 Given that Chelford is constrained by the limited number of local green spaces, some small in area, it is considered appropriate that existing green spaces, which are valued locally, should be protected as Local Green Space. Given the likely increase in population during the planning period, it is essential that no valued green space is lost unnecessarily, and that further development should seek to improve the local stock of green space.

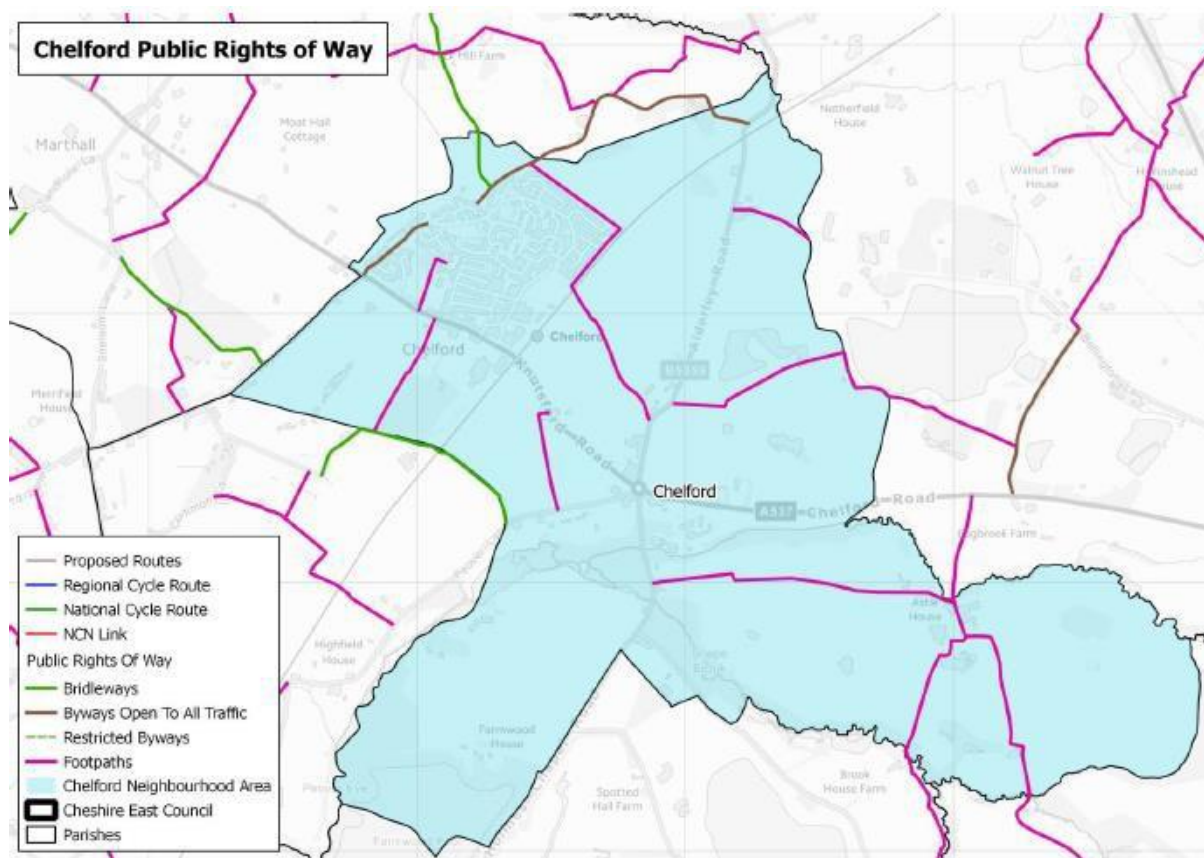
4.5.20 Whilst developer contributions can make an important difference to the quality of existing provision, they are less preferable to genuine additions to green spaces in the Parish.

4.5.21 Policy GI 3: Public Rights of Way and Footpaths

Policy Statement:

- a) Access to the countryside, village services and amenities, will be promoted through protection, maintenance and enhancement of the existing Public Rights of Way - *PROWs* - (see Figure 4.5.22 Map G), network and cycleways, and as a consequence will support the safety of users of rural roads and lanes. The construction and appearance of any new tracks, paths or links between existing footpaths must be appropriate and sensitive to the character of the locality and the surrounding area.
- b) Any new development must provide easy, accessible traffic free routes for non-motorised users (*pedestrians, disabled people, people with prams/buggies, cyclists and where appropriate equestrians*) to the nearby countryside. The provision of such additional routes will be supported.

4.5.22



Map G – Chelford Public Rights of Way (produced by Cheshire East)

4.5.23 Justification

4.5.23 Resident feedback in the main questionnaire placed great stress on the importance of access to green spaces and open countryside. 97% of respondents agreed that walking routes should be encouraged and protected in and around the village to link up with open countryside. Respondents were also keen to ensure that access to local facilities and amenities was made easy by any new development incorporating footpaths and pathways into its planning. There are few genuine cycleways in Chelford and residents are keen to enhance provision, both as a means of supporting access to green spaces and countryside and as a way of improving road safety. The Cheshire East Local Plan seeks to promote and support linkages between new development and surrounding recreational networks and facilities (*policy SE6*).



Local Byway in Character Area 2



Footpath in Character Area 1

4.6 Community Infrastructure and the Local Economy

4.6.1 Policy Objectives

- a) **To encourage and promote the provision of local facilities, amenities and services and the delivery of a well-planned physical and connectivity infrastructure to support the community and local economy.**
- b) **To protect and enhance existing community buildings, assets of value and amenities and services.**

4.6.2 Background

4.6.3 Chelford has few community buildings, which serve the expanding community. Of these, the Village Hall is a focal point for sections of the community to meet, to enjoy various recreational activities and to participate in a range of clubs and organisations e.g. indoor bowls. The facilities of the Hall are also hired by a variety of non-residents and organisations outside Chelford. However, the Hall is an old building, which requires continual expenditure to keep it well maintained as an acceptable venue.

4.6.4 On the Village Hall site is a building, which serves as a base for the Scouts, Guides, Brownies and Beavers who meet on different nights of the week. Membership of all groups is small, reflecting to some extent the relatively smaller proportions of young people in the Parish. However, young people from

neighbouring parishes do participate with Chelford residents.

4.6.5 A smaller but equally effective community hub is based at Astle Court, which is used predominantly by older age groups for wide ranging social and community events. The venue is managed by an active group of volunteers, who make a significant and positive contribution to the community.

4.6.6 The local surgery, which draws patients from a wide area beyond Chelford, has undergone extensive refurbishment and some physical expansion in the last four years. However, there is increasing pressure to deal with growing patient numbers from developments within the Parish and in neighbouring parishes.

4.6.7 The Chelford Primary School has benefited from developer contributions, which have allowed an additional classroom to be built to meet potential demand from new developments.

4.6.8 Like many parishes, Chelford has several listed buildings with important historical links. The national heritage list includes:

Former Tithe Barn at the Manor House, Holmes Chapel Road – Grade II

Church of St John, Holmes Chapel Road – Grade II

The Manor House, Holmes Chapel Road – Grade II

Church Cottages, 3-5 Holmes Chapel Road – Grade II

Chelford Bridge South, Holmes Chapel Road – Grade II

The Lodge, Holmes Chapel Road – Grade II

Astle Farm East Farmhouse, Astle Lane – Grade II

The Old Vicarage, Macclesfield Road – Grade II

The Ivy House, Macclesfield Road – Grade II



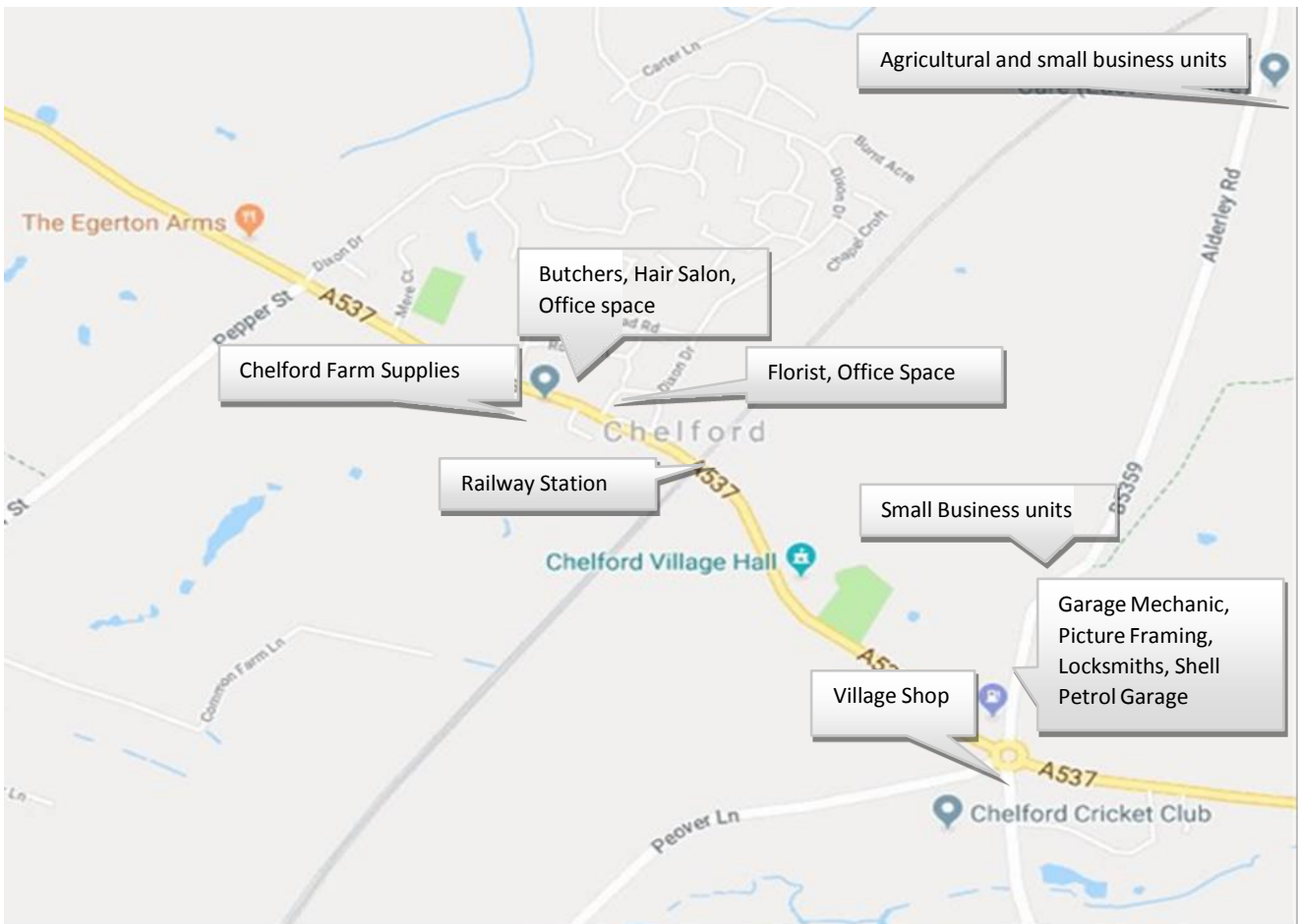
St John's Church and Church Cottages

4.6.9 In recent years, the local bank has closed, the newsagent has gone out of business, the small greengrocer/general store has closed recently, and the local general store has lost the Post Office section. The remaining businesses which serve the community, include a well-established butcher, a hairdresser, a specialist farm supplies/equestrian outlet, a small maintenance garage, a petrol station and an art services specialist. A Florist has now replaced the Newsagent (*see Map H*).

4.6.10 Apart from these commercial activities, which directly serve the community, a limited number of diverse, small businesses are in the Parish serving clients and customers well beyond the Parish boundaries. There are a small number of farms in the Parish and farms located in neighbouring parishes cultivate some land in the Parish.

4.6.11 There have been improvements in broadband connectivity over the last two years for some households and businesses, although some areas in the Parish remain poorly served by the existing infrastructure.

4.6.12 The following policies are thus set against the background as outlined above.



Map H - showing the commercial and retail establishments in Chelford - 2018

4.6.13 Policy CI 1: Community Facilities and Amenities

Policy Statement:

a) Proposals for the refurbishment and improvement of all community buildings, car parks and recreational facilities will be supported. New community facilities in locations appropriate to the character and surrounding area will be supported.

b) Any proposed development which would lead to a loss of recreational facilities and valued community assets (*see para. 4.5.17*) will not be supported unless the proposed use will provide equal or greater benefits to the community; the facility is replaced elsewhere; the facility is no longer required.

c) Where appropriate, developer contributions or CIL (*Community Infrastructure Levy-a charge on landowners and/or developers*) will be sought to enhance existing community and recreational facilities and services and provide new ones in appropriate locations.

4.6.14 Justification

4.6.16 The Cheshire East Local Plan 2017 sees improvements in the infrastructure as a key component in sustaining growing communities. The NPPF stresses the need to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services. The NPPF points out that shops, facilities and services should be able to develop and modernise and be retained for the benefit of that community. The Cheshire East Local Plan emphasises too, that infrastructure improvements 'will be fundamental to achieving the vision for the development of Cheshire East up to 2030 and are necessary to deal with existing deficiencies and to cater for a growing and ageing population' (*Cheshire East Local Plan Part 1 2017 para.10.4 p.89*).

4.6.17 Over 95% of Chelford respondents to the questions regarding community facilities and services, expressed a view that this Neighbourhood Plan should seek to encourage the development of new provision and protect existing provision. These questions produced the highest number of comments compared to all other questions. The greatest number of comments focused on improved retail provision and the need to support plans, which contributed to such improvement. Where any new development was proposed, over 97% residents were keen to that it should clearly demonstrate a positive contribution

to village facilities and services, including those for recreation. In addition, many residents commented on the need for improved access to facilities and services (see *Green Infrastructure Policy GI 2*).

4.6.18 There was also strong expression to develop the Village Hall. Given the growing Chelford population, there is an increasing need to provide a more modern facility at the Village Hall site; fit for future purpose and one which will serve the needs of all age groups. The Hall building is increasingly requiring maintenance because of its ageing structure. Also, Astle Court community hub is limited by its size in terms what it can offer and consequently requires some physical expansion.

4.6.19 Whilst some community facilities funds have been made available from s106 monies on the former Stobart site, no similar s106 monies have been forthcoming from the market site development. Consequently, long-term opportunities to expand /improve community facilities may be somewhat limited and their ability to sustain the potential population is questionable, unless there is some physical expansion of the infrastructure and increase in quality. Clearly it is vital that no community facilities are lost.

4.6.20 Undoubtedly, s106 monies for open spaces and sport and recreation, particularly those arising from the two current developments, will provide valuable support for improving existing facilities. However, the actual area given over to such activities is only likely to show marginal expansion during the planning period (see *Policy GI 1*). The provision of recreational and open space is not extensive and areas for sport and play are likely to remain constrained in the future.

4.6.21 The main heritage sites are linked to Character Area 1 (see *Chelford Character Assessment 2018*) and buildings associated with the station built in the mid-19th century. A recommendation drawn from the Character Assessment emphasises that heritage assets are a key aspect of Chelford Village and offer historical visual cues to future building styles that might be approved in the future. For the village to retain its historical links with the past these buildings and the vistas surrounding them need to be retained.

4.6.22 **Policy LE 1: Local Economy**

Policy Statement:

The following will be supported provided they demonstrate good quality design (see policy HP 3), they integrate positively with local surroundings, the environment and landscape character and they do not have an adverse impact on residential amenity and the highway network:

- a) The conversion of existing non-residential buildings for commercial, retail or employment use. (Classes A1, B1 and B2)**
- b) The development of new retail, enterprise and employment opportunities and the expansion of existing employment premises within the locations identified on map J of the designated area for enhanced retail, enterprise and employment opportunities.**
- c) Proposals that promote or provide facilities for home-based working.**
- d) Enterprises which promote agricultural and horticultural commercial activity.**
- e) Change of use from Classes A1, B1 and B2 uses will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that no alternative business user can be found through an appropriate and realistic marketing exercise for at least twenty-four months.**



Map J - designated area for enhanced retail, enterprise and employment opportunities as identified in Policy LE1.

4.6.23 Policy DI 1: Digital Infrastructure

Policy Statement:

- a) The development of advanced high-quality communications infrastructure, including high speed broadband and improved mobile network coverage will be supported, subject to:**
 - i. Development being kept to a minimum, consistent with the efficient operation of the network.**
 - ii. Any development being sympathetic to its surroundings and camouflaged where appropriate.**
- b) Where appropriate, proposals should ensure that new development provides high speed broadband connectivity capability.**

4.6.24 Justification

4.6.25 Chelford has a small number of people of working age who are not in regular employment. This may be because nearly 40% of the population above 16+ has a degree compared to 16% with no qualification. Retail, professional and manufacturing are the three largest employment sectors. Nearly 60% of those in employment are in managerial or professional occupations with a further 11% in skilled trades. In addition, there is an increasing number of people who work from home, which assists in reducing some traffic movement and helps to lessen the overall negative impact of out commuting. However, the majority of those in employment work outside the Parish and some local businesses find it difficult to recruit labour from within the Parish. The policies seek to support local employment.

4.6.26 There are relatively few shops and services available in Chelford for the current population. Access to shops and services is mainly by private car. Consequently, there is increasing pressure on local businesses and services to survive commercially, when faced with significant competition from major

retail centres within a 10-mile radius and within easy reach by car. In addition, the growth of online shopping has created further commercial pressures.

4.6.27 However, provision of high-quality broadband service supports the operating efficiency of local businesses and home working and enhances the provision of local services (*NPPF*). It also provides convenience for residents to undertake shopping, banking and entertainment. Access to these services contributes to sustainability and provides opportunities for some residents to overcome transport issues.

4.6.28 The survey of local businesses indicated that for some, the weak local infrastructure was a factor in their decisions not to expand. Broadband connectivity and parking were also cited as issues. Most respondents to the main questionnaire supported the Neighbourhood Plan in seeking to secure developments in mobile reception and broadband linkages to meet the needs of Chelford's changing population, local organisations and all forms of business. The Parish Council will continue to lobby relevant partners to ensure that broadband connectivity is improved for all residents.

4.6.29 The limited retail and service infrastructure in the Parish is an issue for several residents, particularly those in the older age groups. Concern was expressed in the questionnaire feedback that the local shopping facilities were failing to keep pace with the growing population. The current provision is insufficient to meet the needs of the population and there are sections of the older population who must rely on limited public transport or who have restricted mobility. Whilst there are retailers who survive because of historical reasons and well-established specific markets beyond Chelford, these are few and far between. However, enhancing and utilising station buildings for commercial use and which would benefit the community, could present new opportunities. This Plan thus recognises the importance and need to retain and develop the existing commercial area; to support improved pedestrian access and to support any additional development, which utilises the station building. These areas are clearly defined on the map. The main commercial area is consistent with the proposals in the draft site allocations proposals, to identify a local centre retail boundary as shown on Map J (*Draft Allocations and Development Policies Document: Chelford Settlement Report FD26 Sept. 18 Cheshire East Council*).

4.6.30 Clearly, commercial factors will largely influence location retail and service provision. However, this Plan seeks to support opportunities for retaining and where possible, improving that provision. This approach is consistent with the Cheshire East Local Plan (*policy EG 2*), which looks to encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses, particularly through the conversion of existing buildings and farm diversification. There was strong feedback from residents stressing that the Neighbourhood Plan should support the retention, development and sustainable growth of new and existing businesses [including retail], which are important to the local economy and community, including those working from home.

4.6.31 In terms of agriculture, Chelford landscape is characterised by mixed arable and pastoral farmland with dispersed farmsteads. Changes in farming have resulted from pressure to diversify and changing patterns of land ownership. Consequently, this Plan seeks to support any agricultural or horticultural activity, which promotes commercial diversification. The purchase of agricultural holdings by non-farmers is also becoming a significant force for change, resulting in conversion of farmhouses and farm buildings and changes in farm use. Changes in farm crops can be seen, with a trend towards silage production and a growing move towards bio-energy crops (*Chelford Character Assessment 2018*).

4.7 Transport

4.7.1 Policy Objective

To encourage and promote sustainable forms of transport which benefit the environment and the local community.

4.7.2 Background

4.7.3 A significant number of Chelford residents rely on the car to access retail and service facilities, entertainment and recreation and places of employment. Partly this is due to the limited public transport links to key centres with wide ranging facilities, the weak infrastructure in Chelford and the location of places of employment. The relative affluence of the area is also an important influence on car ownership and use.

4.7.4 The Parish is bisected by an increasingly busy major road, the A537, which links Knutsford to Macclesfield. A roundabout at the eastern end of the Parish allows another busy road, the A535, to join the A537. Additionally, a busy B5359 links Alderley Edge to Chelford at this roundabout. Both A roads act as conduits for traffic making its way to the M6 motorway. Heavy goods traffic as well as commuter traffic and agricultural vehicles regularly use the roads. Bottlenecks at the roundabout have become increasingly common at rush hour times. The A537 has seen several serious and fatal accidents relatively close to the Chelford boundaries and recently there have been two serious accidents within the Parish boundaries.

4.7.5 There are no formal cycleways in the Parish. Chelford is on a well-known cycling route, which is used regularly by cycling clubs and for competitions. The route through the village is used for time trials in the Tour of Britain.

4.7.6 A speed indicator has been installed at either end of the village where the speed limit changes, but these have had limited impact. As part of the planning agreement on the former Stobart site, a zebra crossing has been installed centrally, to assist pedestrians, but also as a traffic calming measure. Recently, school signs have been erected to impose speed limits through the village at school opening and closing times.

4.7.7 There are few recognised parking areas in the village and it is therefore essential that any further development ensures that existing parking is retained and enhanced where possible.

4.7.8 Public transport links are via train or bus. Hourly train services run to stations along the line to Crewe or stations along the line to Manchester. Buses operate hourly to Macclesfield or Knutsford. The train service is used by some residents for commuting and visits for entertainment and recreation.

4.7.9 Policy T1: Transport

Policy Statement:

- a) Development should demonstrate where appropriate:
- Necessary enhancements and improvements in order to negate adverse impacts on parking and congestion within the Parish. It should also consider its cumulative impact on traffic with other approved developments in the locality and seek ways in which to mitigate these impacts.
 - How its plans link to public transport through the production of a detailed Travel Plan.
 - Provision for the enhancement and improvement of road safety in the Parish, to negate any adverse impacts on pedestrians and cyclists. Measures might include traffic calming, creating convenient pedestrian access to facilities.
- b) The needs of non-motorised users must be taken into account in all traffic planning, but especially in relation to rural lanes and roads. Harmful impacts arising from an increase in vehicle numbers where agricultural buildings are converted to residential or commercial use must be taken into consideration. Measures to be considered to ensure this may include, separation of pedestrians/ cyclists from vehicular traffic where possible, improvements to signage, or means of speed reduction (*see also policy GI 2*).
- c) The needs of those with disabilities and the elderly must be positively considered and appropriate facilities within the transport infrastructure considered.
- d) Development proposals should seek, where possible, to create cycle paths so as to provide safe and effective routes across and through the Plan area (*see also policy GI 3*). Proposed developments should include adequate cycle storage.
- e) Proposals for any commercial development, must demonstrate adequate parking for employees' visitors and customers to avoid on street parking.
- f) Ancillary improvements to Chelford Railway Station which help sustain or improve its operation and facilities (for example, parking improvements and cycle storage) will be supported
- g) Proposals which promote better integration between different modes of transport, including links to the local railway station and which serve to improve bus routes, services and passenger facilities will be supported, subject to other policies within this Neighbourhood Plan.

4.7.10 Justification

4.7.11 The NPPF highlights the need to promote sustainable transport, and states that opportunities to promote walking cycling and public transport use should be identified and pursued. In doing so, it seeks to reduce car use and encourages people to adopt more sustainable modes of travel. Although the Cheshire East Local Plan (*section 14*) supports these ideals, it also recognises that significant improvements are needed in infrastructure and connectivity. Influencing the scale of this change is

outside the scope of this Plan, but the various policies seek to support and are consistent with several key principles laid down in the Cheshire East Local Plan policy on sustainable transport and connectivity (*policies CO1 and CO2*).

4.7.12 Developments in the Parish and in neighbouring parishes, including the large development at Alderley Park and potential developments in Knutsford, will see increased traffic flows along the main routes running through Chelford and these are likely to have a growing and negative impact in terms of congestion, noise, air quality and safety. Residents expressed serious concerns in their feedback, about the speed at which traffic enters the Parish from the western and eastern end of the A537 and the implications for non-motorised users. It is therefore important that measures to improve road safety, walking and cycling routes, should be sought. Improved digital infrastructure (*Digital Infrastructure policy: DI 1*) can also make a positive contribution by encouraging residents to work from home and to access facilities and services without the need to travel.

4.7.13 However, the location of Chelford within an increasingly busy road network, its limited facilities and the relative infrequency of public transport are factors which work against reduction in car travel and it must be recognised that car usage will continue to be the main mode of travel through and in and out of the Parish. It is also recognised that Chelford is located within driving distance of several key retail areas, a factor that will produce even greater traffic flows with the new developments. The Chelford Housing Advice Note 2018 prepared by Cheshire East, highlights the potential negative impact on sustainable commuting patterns of increased development in the Parish. Therefore, it is important that proposed developments make detailed assessments of the likely impacts on traffic and transport and demonstrate mitigation where such impacts are adverse.

4.7.14 There was very strong support from residents (*100% of respondents*), for developments to make necessary enhancements and improvements to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists; to improve parking and to consider how best to reduce potential congestion. Parking space is restricted in the village and larger spaces are likely to be lost as part of current developments. It is therefore important that policy seeks to ensure that any proposed residential or commercial development demonstrates adequate parking provision.

4.7.15 The railway station allows access to rail services along the Crewe –Manchester line. Currently parking provision and cycle storage is limited and may act as a disincentive for potential travellers. Any improvements would therefore be welcomed and supported, subject to the policies stated in this Plan.

Background documentation utilised in preparation of the Chelford Neighbourhood Plan

- National Planning Policy Framework - DCLG 2018.
- Localism Act 2011 - MHCLG 2012.
- Neighbourhood Planning: Policy Factsheet - DCLG 2106.
- Cheshire East Local Plan Part 1 - Cheshire East Council 2017.
- Cheshire East Local Plan Part 2 First Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document Cheshire East Council Sept. 2018.
- Cheshire East Local Plan Part 2 First Draft Interim Sustainability Appraisal FD03 - Cheshire East Council Aug.2018.
- Draft Chelford Settlement Report FD26 SADPD - Cheshire East Council Aug. 2018.
- Draft Habitats and Regulations Assessment SADPD - Cheshire East Council Aug. 2018.
- Draft Local Service Centres Spatial Distribution Disaggregation Report SADPD FD05 - Cheshire East Council Aug.2018.
- Draft Adopted Policies Map FD02 SADPD - Cheshire East Council Aug. 2018.
- Report into Local Features and Special Qualities of Chelford - Cheshire East Council March 2018.
- Cheshire East Borough Design Guide: Vols. 1 & 2 - Cheshire East Council 2017.
- Cheshire East Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Cheshire East Council 2010 & 2013
- Cheshire East Local Historic Buildings On-Line - Cheshire East Council.
- Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2018---2023 Cheshire East Council 2017.
- Neighbourhood Plan Landscape and Settlement Character Toolkit - Cheshire East Council March 2016.
- Green Belt Assessment Update Final Report ARUP - Cheshire East Council 2015.
- English Heritage Assets. www.historicengland.org.uk
- Neighbourhood Statistics ONS. www.ons.gov.uk
- Neighbourhood Planning Briefing Paper 05838 - House of Commons Library June 2015.

The documents below can be found at: <http://www.chelfordparishcouncil.org.uk> using the Neighbourhood Planning link:

- Rural Community Profile Chelford: Action with Communities in Rural England - ACRE/OCSI/CCA Dec. 2016.
- Neighbourhood Planning Guidance - Cheshire Community Action.
- How to Resource Your Neighbourhood Plan - Planning Aid England RTPI.
- How to Prepare a Character Assessment - Planning Aid England RTPI.
- Character Assessment Pro Forma Notes - Planning Aid England RTPI.
- Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit - Cheshire East Council website.
- Chelford Initial Survey Results and Analysis- Cheshire Community Action Nov. 2017.
- Chelford Main Survey Results and Analysis - Cheshire Community Action March 2018.
- Chelford Business Survey Results and Analysis - Cheshire Community Action Nov. 2017.
- Chelford Focus Groups Analysis - Chelford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Nov. 2017.
- Chelford Young Person's Survey Results and Analysis – Chelford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Key reports commissioned to support the Chelford Neighbourhood Plan

(These are separate documents that can also be found at www.chelfordparishcouncil.org.uk using the Neighbourhood Planning link)

- **Chelford Character Assessment 2018** - Chelford Neighbourhood Planning Team.
- **Chelford Main Questionnaire** - Chelford Neighbourhood Planning Team.
- **Chelford Housing Needs Advice Report** - Cheshire East Council March 2018.
- **Protecting and Enhancing Chelford's Natural Environment** - Cheshire Wildlife Trust July 2018.
- **SEA Screening Report Chelford** - Cheshire East Council October 2018.

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