

Marbury and District* Neighbourhood Plan

(*The combined Parishes of Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall)



Marbury and District - Neighbourhood Plan

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1. Introduction

The Marbury and District Neighbourhood Plan Working Group on behalf of the Marbury and District Parish Council have produced this Plan after consultation with the local community. Cheshire East Borough Council (Neighbourhood Planning) has supported the production of this plan.

Cheshire Community Action and Aecom Ltd have both contributed their advice, with Aecom Ltd developing a detailed Design Guide. This plan should be utilised in conjunction with the detailed Design Guide.

The purpose of this plan is to set out clearly the views and expectations of the community through its detailed planning policies when Cheshire East Planning consider any proposals for development within the Parish.

We have consulted with the community through surveys, meetings, flyers, electronic messaging, the Parish Magazine and through the Parish Council Website. This Plan reflects the views and expectations of our community.

The initial questionnaire/survey was delivered by hand to all households in Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall during January 2021 and was made available online via a link on the Parish Council Website. A total of 68 surveys were returned out of the 267 distributed. This gave a good overall response rate of 25.5%, particularly as the survey was undertaken during the covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Many respondents gave lengthy, well considered, thoughtful and detailed responses.

An overwhelming message emerging from the initial consultation process was that local people are proud of the character of their locality, its community spirit and have a very strong desire to retain these attributes. This was key to developing the Plan Vision.

The aims and policies of the community have been derived from the Vision and Objectives and are detailed in this Plan. This Plan is robust and when formally adopted will provide the necessary planning guidance for Marbury and District until 2030.

A full copy of the plan and other supporting documents are available on the Marbury and District Parish Council website.

All Neighbourhood Plans must:

- *have appropriate regard to national planning policy;*
- *contribute to sustainable development;*
- *be in general conformity and enhance the strategic policies in the Cheshire East Development Plan for the local area;*

This plan is a statutory document to be used in planning decision-making. A Neighbourhood Plan can also assist the Parish Council when deciding priorities for the Parish, support with funding bids, and provide guidance when making decisions on behalf of the Parish.

Overall Planning Context: Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, 2010 - 2030

The three parishes of Marbury, Norbury & Wirswall sit within the unitary authority area of Cheshire East. The policies listed in Appendix A are relevant and important to highlight the sensitive nature of the combined Parish and the need to 'Preserve and Enhance' the character and feel of the area in the Vision and Objectives of this plan.

This plan is seeking to enhance Cheshire East planning policies to provide focus, detail and a voice for the local community when proposals are being considered by the LPA.

2. The Location, History and Character of Marbury and District

The three distinct areas of the combined parishes of Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall have a rich history and it is vital for this Neighbourhood Plan to recognise its distinctiveness. The Civil Parishes were combined in 2011 under the Unitary Authority of Cheshire East. They represent a large geographical area with undulating countryside connected via minor roads, many of which are single track. The green, open feel of the area with its hedgerows and distinctive black and white fingerposts speak to its highly rural feel and distinctive character.

The images below represent the types of building and landscape found in the Neighbourhood Plan Area that characterise the open green feeling of the area.



Grange Farmhouse Wirswall



Marbury Lock and Keepers Cottage



View towards Marbury from Wirswall



View of Welsh Mountains from Terrick Road

Location of Marbury and District within South West Cheshire

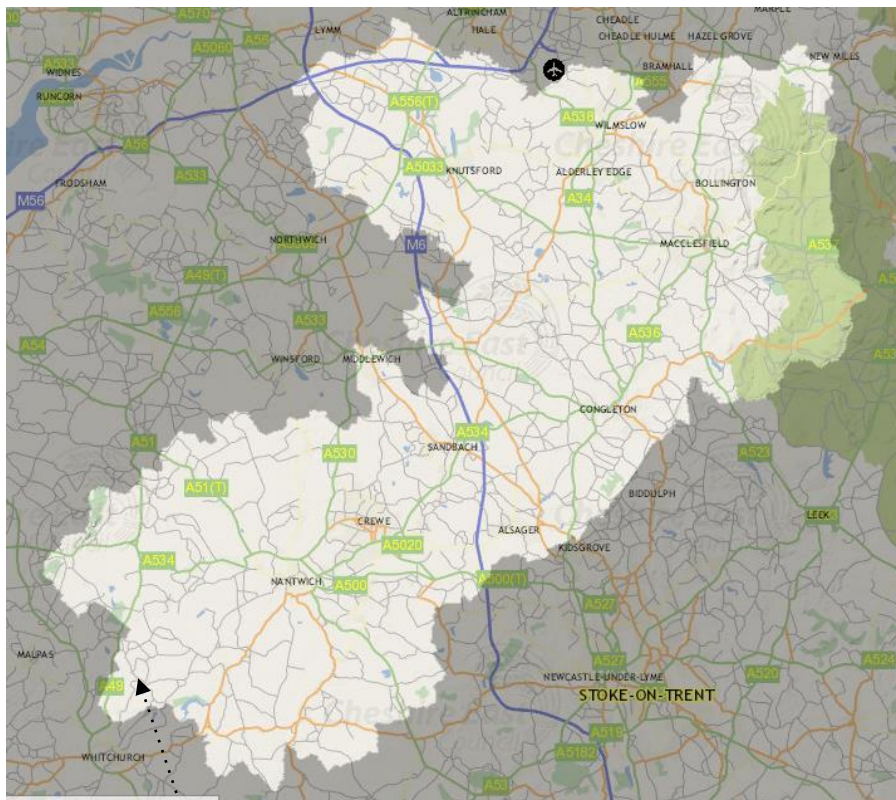


Fig 1 – Location of Neighbourhood Plan Area

Neighbourhood Plan Area

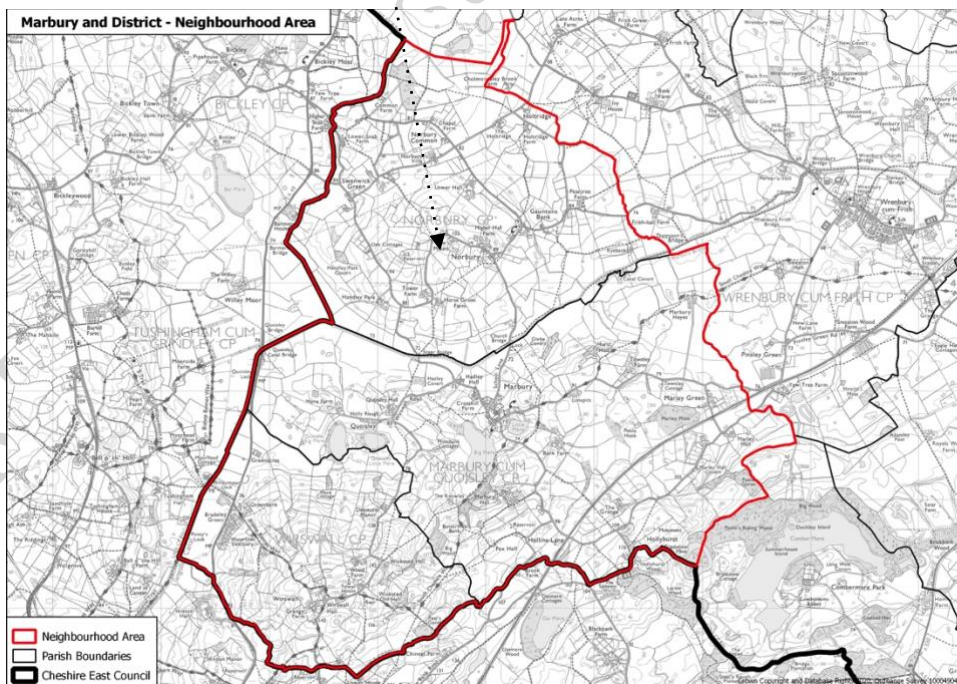


Fig 2 – Neighbourhood Plan Area

The combined Parish is located in the extreme Southwest of Cheshire and borders Shropshire to the South and West.

Marbury

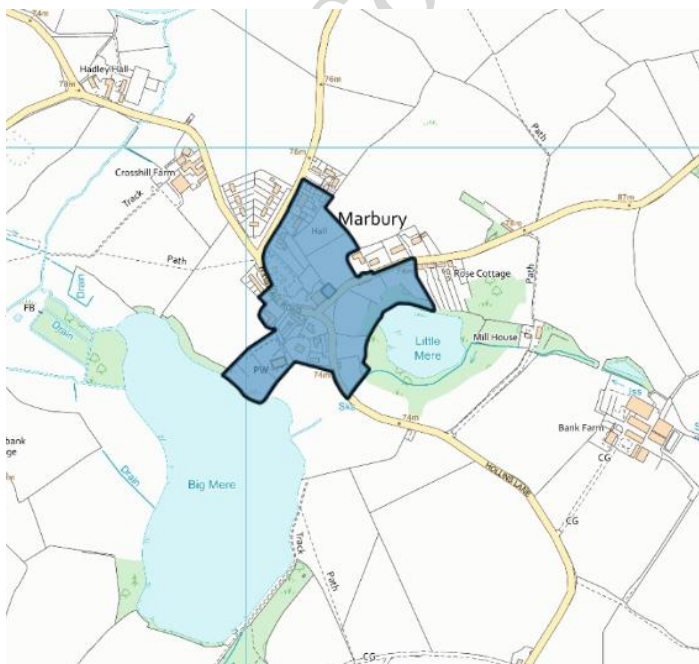
Marbury is a small village located in the Civil Parish of **Marbury cum Quoisley**, within the unitary authority of Cheshire East. It is administered jointly with the adjacent civil parishes of Norbury and Wirswall. The village lies around 3 miles (5 km) north east of Whitchurch in Shropshire and 7 miles (11 km) south west of Nantwich in Cheshire. Nearby villages include Malpas, No Man's Heath, Norbury, Wirswall and Wrenbury. The civil parish borders Shropshire and covers 2,168 acres (877 ha); it also contains the small settlements of Hollins Lane, Marley Green and Quoisley, as well as parts of Hollyhurst and Willey Moor. The total population was just under 250 in 2001, and – combined with Wirswall – 352 in 2011.

The area is primarily agricultural with undulating terrain, 75–120 metres in elevation. Farming (arable, livestock with some dairy) is the main industry. A small area in the east of the civil parish is part of the Combermere estate. The Llangollen Canal runs along the northern boundary.

There are five Meres that are important wildlife habitats. Marbury Big Mere is a fishing lake and the Quoisley Meres are Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a Wetland of International Importance; they originated in glacial kettle holes. Additionally, numerous smaller ponds are scattered across the farmland. There are many small areas of woodland including Big Wood, Glebe Covert, Hadley Covert, Holly Rough, Limepits, Marley Hall Covert, Marley Moss, Poole Gorse, Poole Hook and Square Covert, and parts of Brankelow Moss, Hollyhurst Wood and Poole's Riding Wood. The civil parish is believed inhabited since the Anglo-Saxon period. It contains many historic buildings, the earliest being the 15th-century St Michael's Church.

Marbury has a total area of 2,168 acres (877 ha). The terrain is undulating in character, rising from around 75 metres by the Llangollen Canal in the north and west of the parish to around 120 metres near Hollyhurst in the south east.

Marbury Conservation Area



The village of Marbury has a Conservation Area that is subject to saved Cheshire East Policies BE7, BE8, NE3, NE6 and a formal recreation area RT1. These are saved policies included in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010 to 2030.

These planning policies protect the centre of Marbury to ensure it retains its distinct value and character.

Fig 2 – Marbury Conservation Area

Local people and visitors alike appreciate the historic feel and openness of the centre of the village, its Public House, Grade II listed buildings and the 15th Century St Michael's Church.

The conservation area contains key views that residents wish to preserve from surveys and feedback and also evidenced from the area analysis undertaken as part of the Design Guide produced independently by Aecom on behalf of the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. The Marbury and District Design Guide and Design Code 5A shows areas that require strong planning policy protection.

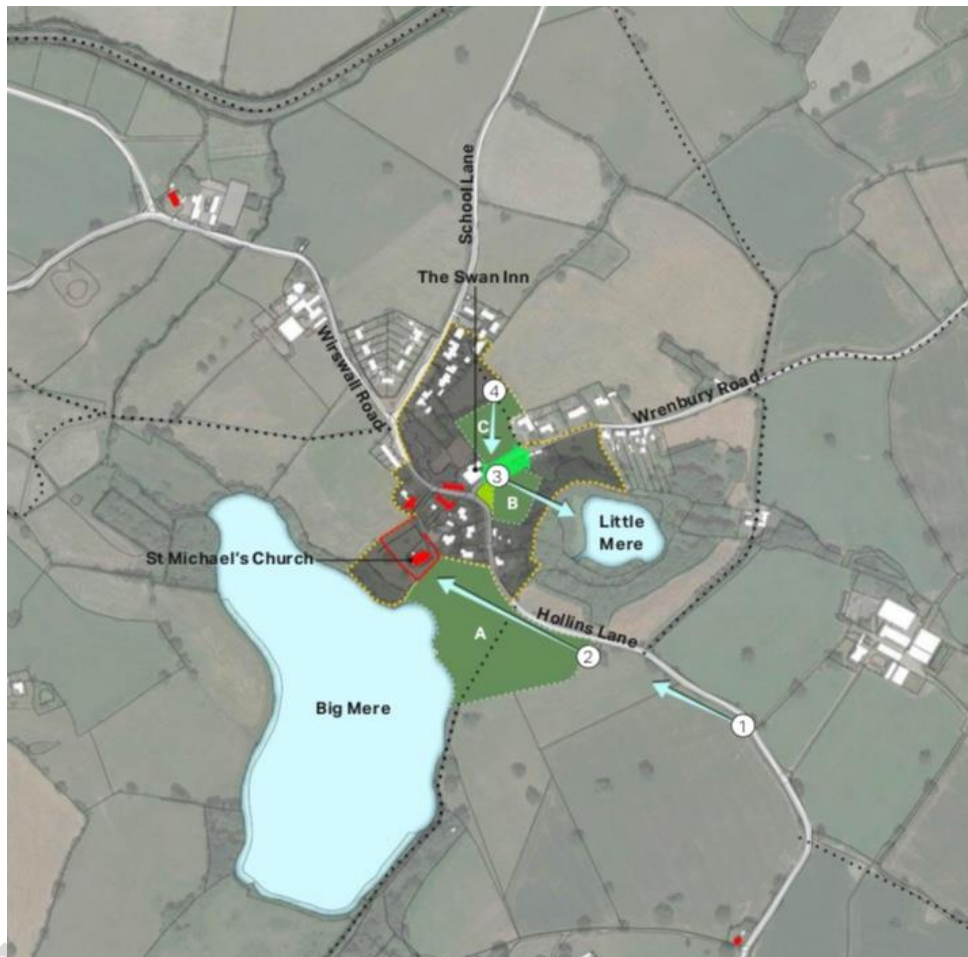


Fig 2A – Conservation Area Views and Green Spaces



The green spaces identified on the above in Fig 2A plan (A, B and C) are particularly sensitive as they provide a sense of openness and incorporate important viewpoints into the village. In addition, their locations have the potential to impact upon the setting of the conservation area and listed buildings.

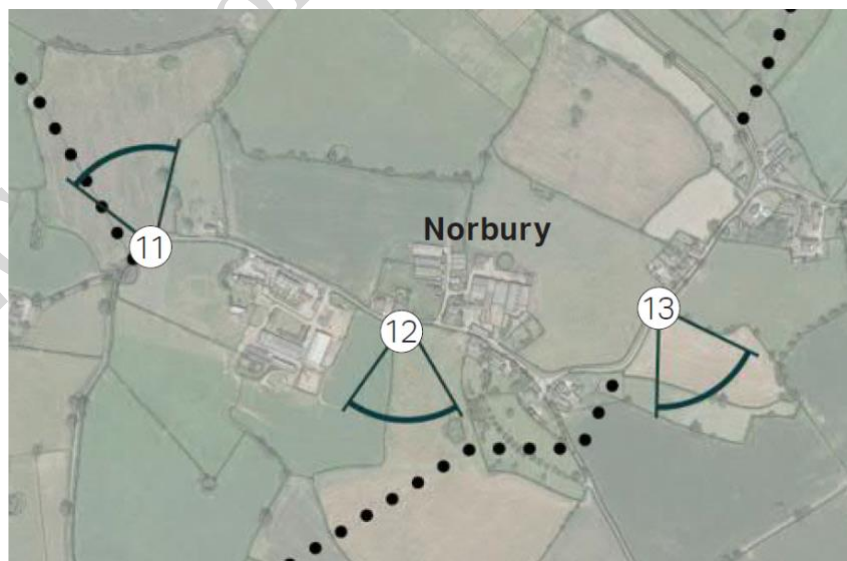
Norbury

The civil parish of Norbury lies on the boundary with Cheshire West and Chester, and is constituted by a number of smaller settlements, including Norbury Town, Gauntons Bank, Hurst Green, Swanwick Green, Norbury Common, and Holtridge. The civil parish had a population of 194 in 2011: the low population density reflective of its rural character. The hamlet of Norbury lies around 5 miles (8 km) north of Whitchurch in Shropshire, and 7 miles south west of Nantwich. Nearby villages include No Man's Heath, Marbury, and Wrenbury.

The civil parish has an area of 628 hectares (1,550 acres). The terrain is undulating with low hills. The hamlet of Norbury stands on a low hill, and the high point of the parish is at an elevation of 112 metres (367ft.) immediately to its west, with a trig point and a covered reservoir. The Llangollen Canal runs along or just inside the southern boundary, before cutting into the south-east corner of the parish. The parish also features Handley Park Covert woodland, while part of the Norbury Meres site of special scientific interest falls into the northern tip of the parish.

Farming and agriculture are the main industries within the parish, reflected in the use of land, which is largely undeveloped and used for the farming of animals and crops. Housing density within the parish is very low, with analysis undertaken by Aecom identifying a maximum density of 8 dwellings per hectare. The parish features a number of historic buildings, including Grade II listed Brook Farmhouse and The Holtridge, which add history and value to the low density built environment.

The parish includes a number of key viewpoints that residents have indicated they wish to preserve through surveys and feedback. This has also been evidenced from the area analysis undertaken as part of the Design Guide produced independently by Aecom on behalf of the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.





Holtridge Lane Norbury



Gauntons Bank Norbury

Note the fingerpost in the Gauntons Bank image above typifies the road signage in the area that reflects its history and heritage.

Wirswall

Wirswall is near the Shropshire border, around 1½ miles north of Whitchurch. This historical township had an area of 973 acres (3.94 km²). The civil parish also includes the settlement of Bradeley Green and part of Willey Moor. Until the end of the 19th century the hamlet formed part of Whitchurch and remains within the Lichfield Diocese. Wirswall also has an entry in the Domesday Book.

The hamlet sits atop and around low hills, which form the highest land in the immediate area. A trig point at 156 m is located to the south east of the hamlet. Nearby villages include Marbury and Wrenbury. The elevated position of Wirswall provides very long distance views of the Cheshire Plain and the hills of Wales and the Peak District.

Located on one of the small hills is a large telecommunications tower, alongside which is a water tower supplying the hamlet, both of which are thought to be on the site of a medieval watch tower.

The South Cheshire Way (long distance footpath) runs through the hamlet, and Bishop Bennet Way (bridleway) terminates there. The Llangollen branch of the Shropshire Union Canal runs ¾ mile to its east.

Wirswall is largely a linear development, stretching for over a mile along Wirswall/Terrick Road, running from Marbury to Whitchurch. Farms and housing are located on or scattered around this single track road. One farm is thought to be located on a former Roman site.

Much of the land is pasture supporting several livestock farms and a dairy farm. There are a number of small wooded areas and coverts, notably Peel's Gorse.

3. Scope of the Plan

The Parish of Marbury and District (combined Parishes of Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall) was designated as a Neighbourhood Plan Area on 6th February 2020. The Neighbourhood Plan period runs from 2010 to 2030.

The Marbury and District Neighbourhood Plan sets out a series of policies which, once made, will be used to guide development and the determination of planning applications and development proposals by Cheshire East Borough Council.

Neighbourhood plans should, in general, conform to the strategic policies of the relevant adopted Local Plan. The Marbury and District Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in general conformity with the saved policies of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan and the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. These are set out in Appendix A “Planning Context”.

In the Local Plan Strategy Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall is classified as open countryside in Cheshire East; there being no defined settlement boundaries.

The production of this Plan has enabled local people to contribute towards determining how land in the parish should be used in the future and in a way that benefits the whole community. The Plan will seek to ensure that any new development is appropriate to Marbury and District through its detailed Design Code.

The Marbury and District Neighbourhood Plan provides a vision for the future of the villages of Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall, plus objectives and policies to support this vision from now until 2030. The types of land use covered by the Plan include, heritage, community facilities, the countryside, the environment, building design including housing, business premises and the preservation of local character.

4. Consultation

Marbury and District Parish Council have long held an ambition to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. The work to create this plan has been completed by a working group with clear terms of reference with the full support of Marbury and District Parish Council. The work to develop this plan was led by a Parish Councillor with the support of the Parish Council and members of the community.

This Plan reflects the needs, concerns and aspirations of the people of Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall and takes into account the future of the villages that impact on the community.

Throughout the process, the neighbourhood planning working group has engaged in extensive consultations with the community, using a variety of methods in order to gain as many views as possible. The majority of the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan took place during the Covid19 Pandemic requiring the use of electronic communications and online meetings. The steps followed are listed below:

- Survey of all 267 households in the parish, using both a paper and online survey with 25.5% response rate
- Progress update reports distributed via the Parish Council Website and Parish Magazine
- Separate section created on the Parish Website for the Neighbourhood Plan www.marburyanddistrict.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan
- Full draft plan published on Parish Council website and promoted via local Whats App, Parish Magazine and email reminders
- Online survey during March and April 2022 to collect feedback on draft plan
- Drop in Session held in Marbury Village Hall on 21st May 2022 where local people were able to view the plan in detail supported by a rolling presentation, the working group and Parish Councillors
- Since May 2022 work on the plan has been sporadic and has been picked up to complete in 2025
- Final public consultation draft is now published on The Marbury and District Parish Council Website

The Marbury and District Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to the list of statutory and other bodies provided by Cheshire East Council as required under Regulation 14, Town and Country Planning, England Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (General) 2012, and comments received considered carefully with appropriate amendments made to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

A full report on consultation will be available as a separate 'Consultation Statement' when this plan is formally submitted for review and inspection.

5. Vision and Objectives

VISION

'Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall will continue to be a peaceful rural parish set within open countryside. The Parish will be welcoming and inclusive, with a strong community spirit and vibrant community facilities. The valued landscape and natural environment, alongside the treasured heritage assets that positively contribute to the character of the Parish, will be preserved, protected and enhanced. Improved infrastructure will enhance the life of residents and visitors, and any new development will be sustainable and of a high environmental and design standard. Farming and agriculture will continue to be supported, and the local rural economy will be thriving. Collectively, this should ensure that the parish retains its unique and valued rural character.

OBJECTIVES

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, green open spaces and heritage assets of the Parish
- Support and encourage the local economy and agriculture
- Promote and support sustainable transport
- Ensure that any development is appropriate, sustainable, well designed, and in a suitable location which meets the needs of the local community
- Ensure the Parish retains its peaceful, distinctive rural character
- Promote improvements to infrastructure that improve the experience of living, visiting and working in the Parish
- Improve access to, and enjoyment of, the countryside for residents and visitors alike
- Support community facilities and cohesion, ensuring a welcoming, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community

The Vision and Objectives were derived from a comprehensive community survey via a leaflet posted through every dwelling and business in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The survey was made available online and was promoted in the Parish Magazine and on the Parish Council Website. The Vision and Objectives were further refined during the development of the plan.

The consultation statement (separate document) details how this was achieved and summarises the results.

Key Enablers

This plan simply cannot be realised or succeed without major investment by Cheshire East Council in the local road network. The community recognises that this plan cannot 'fix' the road network per se, but without significant improvement in the local infrastructure the effort to create this plan and engage the community will be lost.

6. Heritage and Landscape Character Policies

HLC1 Landscape Character

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:

- Ensure the Parish retains its peaceful, distinctive rural character:

The following policies support the achievement of the objective above:

1. Development proposals must not significantly harm, individually or cumulatively, the characteristic features of the local landscape. The landscape character of Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall must be protected and enhanced.
2. Proposals must demonstrate consideration of the relevant character areas detailed in the Design Guide – Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall 2021 (or any updated version).
3. New Development should:
 - Be avoided on steep slopes or in visually prominent locations
 - Protect the character of the area, avoiding the removal of mature trees and hedgerows
 - Retain historic field and plot patterns, avoiding the encroachment of the built environment into the landscape
 - Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding increasing their width or removal of hedgerows except where passing places improve road safety
 - Ensure that the traditional rural character of the area is not degraded
 - Retain the sense of enclosure and high levels of tranquility within the landscape, screening visual and audible intrusive features within the landscape
 - Respect the sparsely settled character of the landscape and the existing local built form
 - Reflect the local rural character in both materials and scale
 - Conserve the distinctive views and viewpoints within the Neighbourhood Plan Area
 - Ensure that any conversion of agricultural buildings retains a rural character, including their surroundings

Justification

The initial survey undertaken identified some key themes that people expressed. These themes pointed to the valued landscape, green rural environment that positively contribute to a model of conservation and preservation that provides a peaceful and tranquil place to live and work.

HLC2 Heritage Assets and Conservation Area

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following Objectives:

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, green open spaces and heritage assets of the Parish
- Ensure that any development is appropriate, sustainable, well designed, and in a suitable location which meets the needs of the local community

The following policies support the delivery of the above objectives

1. Planning applications will be required to demonstrate how development proposals impact on heritage assets and their setting, including how they respond positively to them including promoting opportunities for enhancement. New buildings ancillary to heritage assets should not harm the significance of the asset itself, its setting, or the wider character of the area
2. Proposals that conserve and enhance historic assets and their setting will be supported, particularly if the proposals assist retaining the assets in active use.
3. Proposals for development must take into account the scale of any possible harm or loss and to the significance of any heritage assets. Measures should be put in place to avoid or minimise impact or mitigate damage.
4. Enabling development will only be permitted where:
 - It would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, the benefits of which would outweigh the disbenefits arising from any conflict between the enabling development and local and national planning policy;
 - The enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future conservation of the heritage asset and it is designed in a way that minimises its disbenefits;
 - The integrity and sustainability of the heritage asset is not materially compromised; and it represents the only possible solution, following a full evaluation of all potential options including those that could result in fewer disbenefits

The historic integrity of the landscape and component heritage features and assets should be preserved, and the interpretation of these features will be promoted and supported where this would not compromise the conservation of these assets.

Listed Heritage Assets



Grade II Listed Black and White Cottages



Grade II Listed Wood Farmhouse



Grade II listed Churchyard wall at Church of St Michael



Grade II* Church of St Michael



Grade II listed The Grange Farmhouse



Grade II listed Marbury Cottage



Grade II listed Outhouse to Swan I

In addition, there are a further 16 grade II listed entries within the three parishes.

These are listed below:

- Monumental Obelisk
- Llangollen Canal - Willey Moor Lock
- Barn at Wirswall Hall
- Olive Cottage
- Marbury Hall
- Hadley Hall
- Llangollen Canal - Povey's Lock and Spillway
- Church Bridge
- Brook Farmhouse
- Old Farmhouse at Marbury Hall
- Stokes Cottage Gate
- Lodge to Marbury Hall
- Llangollen Canal Stables at Willey Moor Lock
- The Holtridge
- Lychgate in Churchyard of St Michael
- Combermere Abbey Park and Garden

Justification

A Key theme emerging from residents during the initial survey and subsequent meetings indicates a strong desire to see their heritage protected with no development in the green fields or the countryside. The Design Guide work highlighted historic listed buildings that contribute to the character of the parish. The Grade II* Listed St Michael's Church is a local landmark which can be seen from many locations across the Parish. There are several brick and timber framed buildings in the area where the timber framework is visible from the exterior. These construction methods greatly contribute to the overall historic character of the parishes.

The influence of the surrounding landscape contributes to the rural character of the villages. The elevated position of Wirswall provides very long distance views to both Cheshire and the Welsh Mountains.

7. Natural Environment and Green Open Space Policies

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, green open spaces and heritage assets of the Parish

Policy NE1 – Wildlife Habitat Corridors

The following policies support the delivery of the above objective

1. Development within the Wildlife Corridor (identified in Appendix B) or within areas identified as being of High Habitat Distinctiveness (identified in Appendix C) is unacceptable unless exceptional circumstances and an absence of appropriate alternatives can be demonstrated. Development proposals adjacent to these sites should demonstrate that an appropriate buffer zone has been applied to ensure the coherence and resilience of the network is maintained.
2. In areas identified as being of Medium Habitat Distinctiveness (identified in Appendix C), development will only be considered acceptable where, following a thorough ecological impact assessment, any harm is avoided, mitigated, or (as a last resort) compensated for.

Justification

The area identified as the Marbury Wildlife Corridor incorporates one Ramsar site¹, two Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSI)², four Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)³ and five potential Local Wildlife Sites (pLWS) alongside areas of connecting priority⁴ and semi-natural habitat. This network of core areas, corridors and stepping stones offer substantial value to biodiversity: particularly along the Shropshire Union Canal and throughout the south-west of the Neighbourhood Planning Area. Wildlife corridors are an essential component of ecological networks as they provide connectivity for species to move throughout core areas of high wildlife value and the wider landscape.

In line with national and local planning policy, policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. The Marbury Wildlife Corridor should therefore incorporate the identified semi-natural habitat and include a non-developable buffer zone (in the region of 15 metres - Appendix B). This buffer will contribute to maintaining the resilience of the corridor and protect it from detrimental influences such as light and noise pollution, predation by domestic pets, changes in hydrology or water quality and the spread of invasive non-native plant species.

This policy accords with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁵ paragraphs 174a, 174d, 179a, 179b, 180a, Local Policy⁶ SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity and forthcoming Local Policy⁷ ENV1 Ecological Network and ENV2 Ecological implementation.

¹ Quoisley Meres.

² Quoisley Meres and Norbury Meres.

³ Norbury Common, Shropshire Union Canal, Marbury Big Mere and Marley Moss.

⁴ Habitats of Principal Importance (S41 of NERC Act 2006) or those listed on UK/Local BAP.

⁵ Last updated 20 July 2021

⁶ Cheshire East Local Plan (Adopted 27 July 2017)

⁷ Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (Draft submitted for examination 29 April 2021)

NE2 Biodiversity Net Gain

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, green open spaces and heritage assets of the Parish

Policy NE2 – Biodiversity Net Gain

The following policy supports the delivery of the above objective

All development proposals must secure a measurable biodiversity net gain (BNG) of at least 10%. The provision of BNG must be measured using the latest version of the DEFRA metric and be delivered in line with the British Standard for BNG (BS 8683) and the BNG Good Practice Principles of Development (CIEEM, CIRIA and IEMA).

Justification

The natural environment is fundamental to well-being, health and the economy, and provides us with a range of ecosystem services such as food, water, raw materials, flood defences, air quality and carbon sequestration. Biodiversity underpins most, if not all, of these ecosystem services. Anthropogenic pressures on the environment are likely to continue to increase and therefore we need to learn how to manage these important natural resources in ways that deliver multiple benefits, for example; delivering sustainable development that delivers substantial net gains for biodiversity while improving the permeability and function of the site for wildlife.

Investigations have revealed that the Marbury Neighbourhood Planning Area is particularly rich in wildlife and the community is keen for this to be protected and enhanced for future generations. Bringing nature into recovery is a national and local priority and the Marbury and District Neighbourhood Plan policies reiterate this by setting out clearly the community's commitment to protect and enhance its natural environment.

The Cheshire East Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)⁸ provides guidance on achieving Biodiversity Net-Gain (BNG) from new development. BNG is achieved when a development site creates an increase in biodiversity, compared to what was on the site before development took place. The Draft BNG SPD provides information about the provision of and/or contributions towards the delivery of biodiversity net gain in new development and sets out the circumstances where such provision, including financial contributions, will be sought through planning obligations.

⁸ Cheshire East Local Plan Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document (Consultation Draft May 2021)⁸
<https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development/>

⁸ <https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development-a-practical-guide/>

⁸ Last updated 20 July 2021

⁸ Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (Draft submitted for examination 29 April 2021)

Biodiversity Net Gain Justification continued:

The British Standard for BNG (BS 8683: Process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain – Specification), the BNG Good Practice Principles for Development⁹ and the Good Practice Principles for Development Practical Guide¹⁰ produced by CIEEM, CIRIA and IEMA provide structured and best practice processes for designing and implementing BNG. All BNG delivered as a result of Policy NE2 must accord with the good practice principles set out in these guides (including any future iterations) or any superseding industry standard good practice guidance.

This policy accords with Schedule 7A of the Environment Act (2021), National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹¹ paragraphs 174d, 179b and forthcoming Local Policy¹² ENV2 Ecological implementation.

⁹ Cheshire East Local Plan Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document (Consultation Draft May 2021)⁹
<https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development/>

¹⁰ <https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development-a-practical-guide/>

¹¹ Last updated 20 July 2021

¹² Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (Draft submitted for examination 29 April 2021)

NE3 Trees, Hedgerows and Green Rural Lanes*

***For the purposes of this plan Green Rural Lanes refers to the local single track road network that links the settlements and approaches from other routes.**

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following Objectives:

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, green open spaces and heritage assets of the Parish
- Ensure that any development is appropriate, sustainable, well designed, and in a suitable location which meets the needs of the local community
- Ensure the Parish retains its peaceful, distinctive rural character

Policy NE3 – Trees, Hedgerows and Green Rural Lanes

a) Trees and hedgerows along the rural lanes play an important part of the parish's character and their openness should be maintained.

b) Planting of trees and improvement in the quality and diversity of hedgerows will be supported along all the routes within the plan area.

c) Continuous ribbon development along these routes could impact upon the openness of local character and should be avoided.



Viewpoint 1 above shows the open views of the rural landscape on the road from Marbury to Norbury.

These green lanes are typical of those within the Parish and their openness and freedom from Ribbon development should be protected.



Viewpoint 3 Holtridge Lane, Norbury.

Note the wide-ranging view over open countryside.



Viewpoint 2 Wirswall Road towards Marbury

Note the wide-open aspect as the road drops down towards Quoisley

Justification

The green rural lanes between the three settlements are surrounded by long range views of open countryside that strengthens the rural character of the area. When arriving at the settlements this sense of open green space changes with buildings providing a sense of enclosure. Norbury has a more scattered layout than Marbury and Wirswall and is therefore separated by green rural lanes between the small groups of dwellings. These routes are an important part of the parish's character and their openness should be maintained. Continuous ribbon development along these routes should be avoided to ensure the openness of this character is retained.

NE4 Green Open Spaces

Policy NE4 – Local Green Spaces

The three sites A, B and C shown in Figure NE4 below are designated as Local Green Space. Development will not be permitted on designated Local Green Space other than:

(a) In exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Local Green Space, and any other harm, is demonstrably outweighed by a specific community supported local need, or UK Government mandated requirement or other considerations; or

(b) Where the development does not conflict with the purposes of designating the area of Local Green Space and is consistent with its role and function as an area of particular importance to the community which is demonstrably special; which holds a particular local significance and possesses local character



Figure NE4

Open Space	Size (Approx.)	Proximity to the Community	Demonstration of Special Value to the Local Community
Field adjacent to Hollins Lane in front of St Michaels Church known as the 'Church Field'	3.6Ha	This field is adjacent to Hollins Lane and borders the edge of the settlement of Marbury and fronts St Michaels Church.	This field has been used for Marbury Merry Days for over 40 years and is held in high regard by the local community. It frames the view of St Michaels Church as you approach the Village of Marbury along Hollins Lane. The view of Marbury Big Mere from the Churchyard is one treasured by local people as you sit and look over the Mere, view animals in the field and the birdlife and wildfowl using the Big Mere as their habitat.
Field Opposite Swan PH adjacent to the Village Green	0.3Ha	In the centre of the Village of Marbury	This field contributes to the Openness of the Centre of Marbury and is an important green space adjacent to Little Mere. It serves to create a sense of openness and is a significant factor in bringing visitors to the area to experience the Heritage assets in the village of Marbury.
Marbury Village Green	0.1Ha	In the centre of Marbury Village.	The village green has an Ancient Wellington Oak tree and a bench where local people and visitors can meet, sit and enjoy the local views and a drink from the Swan PH. The Village Green provides a sense of green open space and contributes to the setting of the Swan PH.
The Old Smithy Field between the Old Smithy and the Swan PH.	0.48Ha	In the centre of Marbury Village	The Old Smithy Field forms an important green gap between the ribbon development along the north side of Wrenbury Road and the Marbury Conservation area. Footpath 3 runs adjacent to the Old Smithy and has important views over the Village Green and beyond to St Michaels Church, Marbury Hall and Wirswall on the horizon. This field also sits within the Marbury Conservation Area.

Justification

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

Local Green Space designations should only be used:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Where the green space 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.

Green spaces within the villages are important parts of their character and enhance the experience of living within the community. The consultation results highlighted the importance of green spaces to the local community. A third of residents responded that they wanted to see particular protection of green open spaces, specifically stating sites A, B and C in Figure NE4. Other sites around the area were also highlighted as being important green spaces.

Cheshire East Planning Policies *PG6 Open Countryside* and *SE4 The Landscape* also provide protection from inappropriate or harmful development.

8. Local Building Design Policies

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives:

- Ensure that any development is appropriate, sustainable, well designed, and in a suitable location which meets the needs of the local community
- Support and encourage the local economy and agriculture

LHD1 Design Guide Application Policy

- In order to reflect the pattern of development within the parish, and reinforce local character, development proposals should demonstrate full consideration of the Design Guide – Marbury, Norbury & Wirswall Design 2021 (or any updated version).
- Development proposals should consider the character area to which the proposal relates along with the local archetypes, with character, form and scale following the pattern of original and nearby buildings.
- Proposals should conform to the detailed design code provisions of the Design Guide – Marbury, Norbury & Wirswall Design 2021

Justification

Marbury and District Parish Council commissioned Aecom via Locality to develop a detailed Design Guide to help inform Neighbourhood Plan policies, and ensure that any development was well designed, sympathetic to the existing built form and able to enhance the existing character of the parish. The comprehensive report considered the role of the landscape, the setting of the settlement, and the design features and materials of local buildings. The report adds local detail, and sits alongside the guidance contained within the Cheshire East Design Guide (2017) which was prepared to guide and improve the quality of new development but to also provide a basis for Cheshire East to reject design that does not contribute in a positive way to Cheshire East as a place. The guide highlights that Cheshire East is a special part of the country, where picturesque market towns nestle within un-spoilt countryside. It is a very special and unique place that should be protected. Its character and attractiveness underpin the quality of life enjoyed by the Borough and its residents. Supplementary planning documents from Cheshire East can be found here:

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/cheshire-east-local-plan/supplementary-plan-documents/supplementary-plan-documents.aspx>

Local Housing

Within the combined Parishes the housing stock is primarily Detached (54.6%), Semi-Detached (34.2%) with a small amount of terraced property (7.8%). There is no discernable demand for new housing within the Plan Area nor is there any requirement for additional housing by Cheshire East Borough Council in their local plan up to 2030. Recent housing development has been of small scale, primarily limited to conversion of agricultural buildings to homes and small extensions to existing dwellings. Thus a Design Guide was commissioned to ensure that any development reflected the local housing types and is in keeping with existing property types and their appearance. Sympathetic conversion of suitably located agricultural buildings will be supported.

Housing Density

Current housing density ranges from 14 dwellings per hectare in School Lane Marbury to 3 dwellings per hectare in Terrick Road Marbury. The average is 8 dwellings per hectare taking into account Hollins Lane, Norbury Town Lane and Gauntons Bank. Future development should adopt a similar low density to ensure cohesion with the local context.

Business Premises

There is a range of local businesses, many related to equestrian activities and small businesses located throughout the Parish. Small light industrial units exist at Bradeley Green accessed via the A49 and Bradeley Lane at the Southern Boundary of the Parish. Agricultural buildings are dotted throughout the combined Parish and their conversion utilising appropriate materials should conform to the Marbury and District Design Guide.

The Design Code – Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall identified the following characteristics of the area:

- The settlements typically comprise low density development with little impact on the surrounding landscape. Lower densities and one sided streets support a soft transition from the settlements to the surrounding landscape.
- The majority of dwellings have gable roof forms with a few having hipped forms. Dormer windows and skylights are also seen across the parishes.
- Typical building heights across the parish are two storeys. There are also examples of additional storeys being provided within the roof space of a dwelling.
- Single storey and 1.5 storey dwellings are typical and can be used to preserve views to local landmarks or the surrounding landscape.
- Parking is typically provided on plot and out of sight avoiding cluttering the frontage of a dwelling.
- Views to the surrounding landscape have a positive influence on local character.
- A material palette of red brick elevations and slate or clay roofing is typical for development in the three parishes.
- Many dwellings within the parishes have front porches or sheltered front door thresholds.
- Boundaries are typically hedgerows, low stone walls with hedgerows or red brick walls with stone coping.
- Within the parishes there are several historic agricultural buildings that have been converted into residential use. This is a sympathetic form of development that has had a low impact on the rural character of the area.
- Windows are typically painted white. Heritage colour palettes that complement the building materials are also typical.
- The historic way-finding finger-post signage that is found at many junctions across the parishes has a positive impact on the historic character of the area.

9. Detailed Design Code Application (to be read in conjunction with the Marbury and District Design Guide)

Code	Prefix	When to use the code
Sustainability and Climate Change	1A	Code to be applied to all future developments in the Neighborhood Plan Area to reduce water wastage and flood risk and tackle climate change.
Landscape, Views and the Settlement Edge	2A	Code to be applied where a development could impact upon views to the surrounding landscape.
	2B	Code to be applied where a development could impact upon views towards the villages from the surrounding landscape.
	2C	Code to be applied when the arrangement of a development's layout could restrict views to the surrounding landscape.
	2D	Code to be applied when a proposed development has the potential to restrict views to local landmarks.
	2E	Code to be applied when a proposed development has the potential to impact on the transition space between the developed settlement area and the surrounding landscape.
	2F	Code to be applied when a proposed development has the potential to reduce the sense of openness along green rural lanes within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Building Design	3A	Code to be applied when determining the height and scale of future developments.
	3B	Code to be applied when proposed development will have an impact on historic buildings or other historic assets.
	3C	Code to be applied when determining the material and detailing palette to be used in a development.

Parking, Gardens and Boundary Treatments	4A	Code to be applied when designing how parking will be provided within future housing developments.
	4B	
	4C	
	4D	
	4E	Code to be applied when designing the back gardens of future housing developments.
	4F	Code to be applied when selecting the boundary treatments to be used within future housing developments.
Marbury Conservation Area	5A	Code to be applied to protect the rural character of Marbury Conservation area and its setting.

10. Access to the Countryside Policies

Policy AC1 Public Rights of Way, Bridleways and Cycle Routes and Towpath

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives:

- Promote improvements to infrastructure that improve the experience of living, visiting and working in the Parish
- Improve access to, and enjoyment of, the countryside for residents and visitors alike

- Proposals to maintain enhance and improve safety on the network of public footpaths; the canal towpath and cycle ways will be supported.
- Where any new development is proposed, additions, connectivity, links and improvements to the existing network of public footpaths, the Llangollen canal towpath, and cycle ways will be sought, where viable and practical, to improve safe access to the countryside and facilitate walking and cycling to amenities and services.
- Proposals to divert public rights of way and cycle ways must provide a route which is no less convenient than the previous route, and which offers a similar level of amenity to users.

Justification

Marbury and District is well served by a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) one of the most significant is the Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal towpath and the South Cheshire Way and another significant route being Marbury Cum Quoisley FP8 that runs from Marbury to Wirswall, commanding far reaching views over the Welsh mountains and the Cheshire Plain.

The Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal towpath starts at Hurleston Junction on the Shropshire Union Canal, from where it heads south-west, through Wrenbury village, before heading towards Whitchurch, passing between Marbury and Norbury under the A49 at Quoisley Bridge. The section between Marbury Lock and Steer Bridge and into Wrenbury is popular with residents and tourists for short walks; however, its surface is variable in width and state of maintenance.

The South Cheshire Way starts on the Shropshire Union Canal at Grindley Brook, near Whitchurch and winds its way to Mow Cop near Congleton, passing west to east to the south of Wrenbury village on the stretch between Marbury and Coole Pilate, near Nantwich.

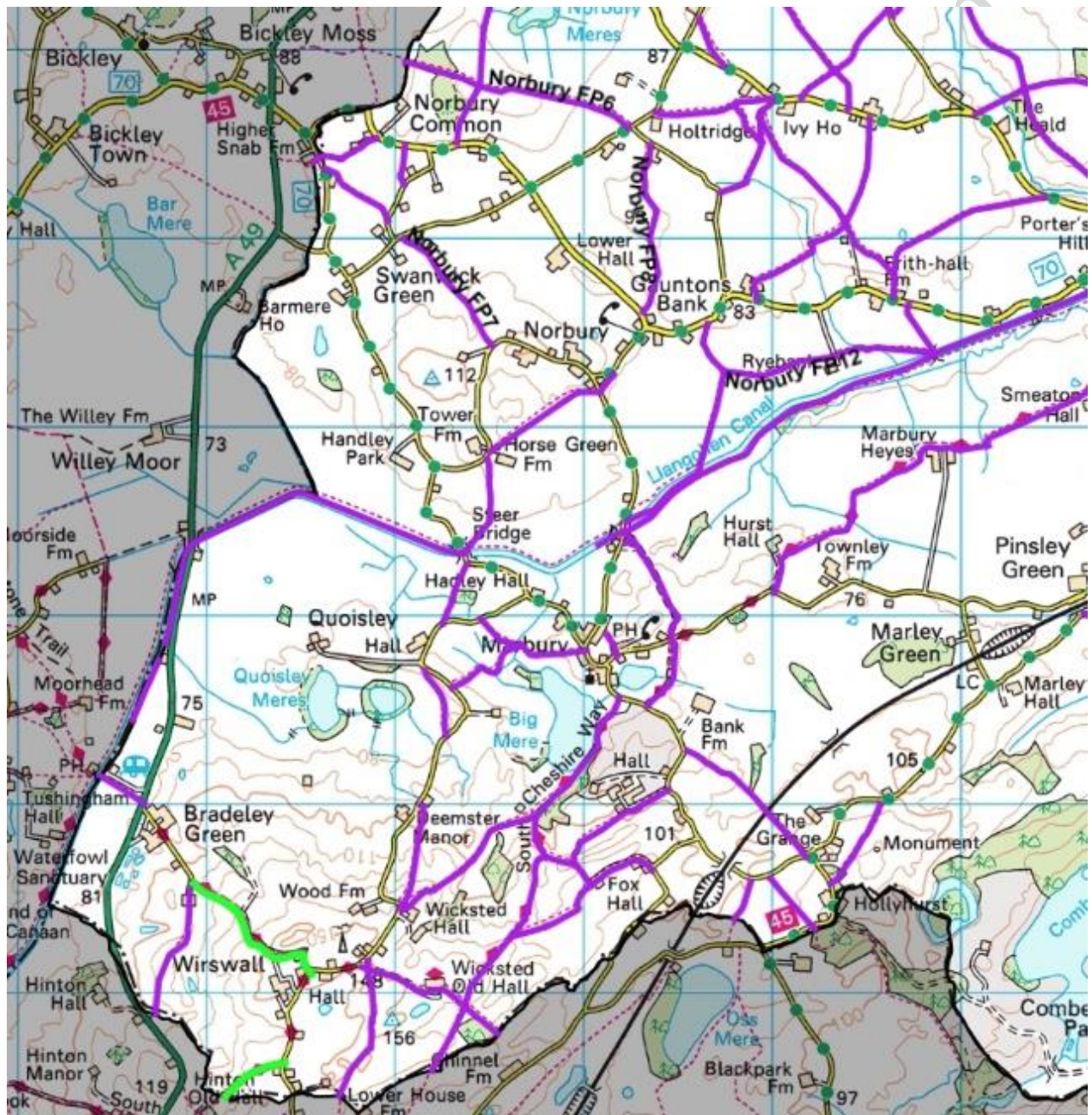
National Cycle Route 45 runs through the Parish from Wrenbury in the East along Hollyhurst Road via Marley Green, Hollyhurst and onwards to Whitchurch via Black Park Road. This route is well used throughout the year, particularly the Summer months.

The policy seeks to deliver the NPPF's planning aims of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, and also of promoting healthy communities. The NPPF highlights that policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and that opportunities should be sought to provide better facilities for users.

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy policy 'SE6 Green Infrastructure' highlights that Cheshire East aims to deliver a good quality, and accessible network of green spaces for people to enjoy, and development should contribute to the creation of a good quality, integrated and accessible multi-functional network of green spaces.

Improvements to existing public rights of way and the making of new provision will be sought by means of the mechanisms set out in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Policies IN 1 and IN 2.

The following map shows the Footpath Network, Bridleways Wirswall BR10 and Wirswall BR11 in the Neighbourhood Plan area and Cycle Route 45.



© Ordnance Survey OS PSGA 100063411

AC2 Tourism

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives:

- Promote improvements to infrastructure that improve the experience of living, visiting and working in the Parish
- Improve access to, and enjoyment of, the countryside for residents and visitors alike

Policy AC2 – Tourism

Tourism initiatives, visitor accommodation and improvements to existing services and facilities associated with attracting tourists will be supported. Development proposals should:

- a) Be appropriate in scale, character and location for the development.
- b) Create no significant harm to the existing character of the local area.
- c) Have no significant adverse impact on any residential amenities.
- d) Have no significant conflict with matters of highway capacity, capability and safety.

Developments that would negatively impact on the attraction of visitors to the area will not be permitted.

Justification

Key attractions include the [Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal](#), the 15th Century St Michael's Church, the Village of Marbury with its ancient Wellington Oak Tree, Black and White Cottages, the Old Dower House and the Swan Public House with its Grade II listed outbuilding. The village of a Marbury is a designated conservation area. Other attractions include the local walks, the Meres, SSIs, peaceful open countryside and important views such as The Holtridge, The Welsh Hills and The Cheshire Plain from Wirswall.

The [Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal](#) is a very popular attraction. The towpath is a well-used walk both for tourists and local residents for general enjoyment of the views from the canal.

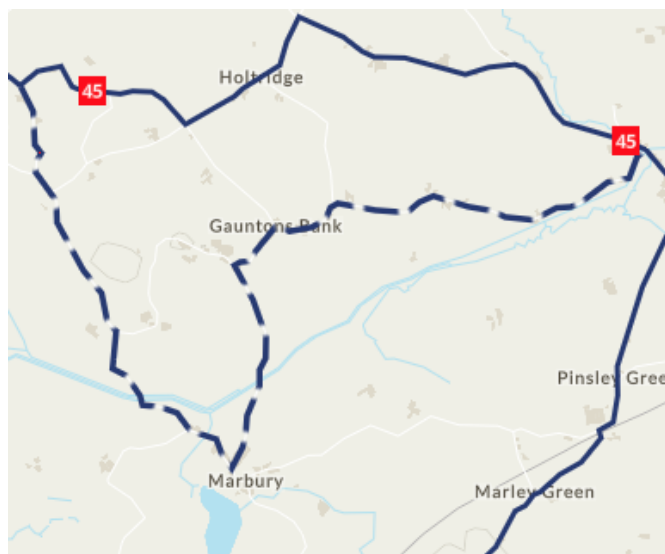


Marbury Lock Cottage



View over Marbury Village

Cycling is popular within the Parish and cycling groups regularly stop at the Swan PH on the village green as they pass through the area.



National Cycle Route 45 passes through the Parish from the A49 via Holtridge to Wrenbury. The route can be followed to Pinsley Green, Marley Green and onwards to Whitchurch.

A well used on road detour route is via Gauntons Bank and Marbury from Wrenbury to the A49 and vice versa.



The Swan PH and Marbury Village Green

11. Local Community Facilities Policies

LC1 Village Hall and Play/Recreation Area

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:

- Support community facilities and cohesion, ensuring a welcoming, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community

Policy LC1 – Local Community Facilities

- Proposals for the improvement of Marbury Village Hall, it's parking and recreational facilities will be supported subject to other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. Change of use of these buildings to non-community use that requires planning permission will not normally be permitted, unless replacement use provides equal or greater benefits to the community, the facility is replaced elsewhere, or it is clearly demonstrated that the facility is no longer required.
- Proposals for new community facilities will be supported, subject to other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan

Justification

Marbury Village Hall is a community hall run on a charitable basis. It is home to local groups such as the Wine Club, Marbury Women's Institute and is used for fund raising events and social nights. The Village Hall is also used for wedding receptions and funeral gatherings.

There is a play area behind the Village Hall that has been replaced with modern equipment by the Parish Council. This remains a valuable community asset.

In order to ensure the continued vibrancy and vitality of the plan area, and that the Parish remains an attractive place to live, work and to visit, it is essential that the loss of facilities is resisted where possible, and that the improvement and enhancement of facilities is supported.

The NPPF highlights that planning policies and decisions should promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, recreational venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.



Marbury Village Hall

12. Rural Economy Policies

RE1 Local Economy

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives:

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, green open spaces and heritage assets of the Parish
- Support and encourage the local economy and agriculture
- Ensure that any development is appropriate, sustainable, well designed, and in a suitable location which meets the needs of the local community
- Promote improvements to infrastructure that improve the experience of living, visiting and working in the Parish

Policy RE1 – Local Economy

Subject to the other policies of this plan, proposals for small-scale employment development (Use Classes B1, B2, or B8) will be supported in principle where this is demonstrably required to meet local needs and help to retain services and facilities and reduce the need to travel elsewhere.

Small-scale employment development that:

- (a) Supports the vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan Area or
- (b) Creates or extends rural-based tourist attractions, visitor facilities and recreational uses, consistent with the provisions of Policy AC1 and AC2; or
- (c) Encourages the retention and expansion of existing businesses, including the sympathetic conversion of existing buildings; or
- (d) Encourages the creation and expansion of sustainable farming and food production businesses, farm diversification and those that allow for the adoption of modern agricultural practices; or
- (e) Promotes or provides facilities for home working and businesses operating from home; or
- (f) Is considered essential to the wider strategic interests of the economic development of Cheshire East; or
- (g) Supports the retention and delivery of community services such as public houses and village halls, consistent with the provisions of Policy LC1 will be supported provided that it:
- (h) Meets the sustainable development objectives of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy:
- (i) Supports the rural economy, and could not reasonably be expected to locate within a designated centre by the nature of the business activity;
- (iii) Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations;
- (iv) Is supported by adequate infrastructure.

(v) Is consistent in scale with its location and designed to conserve and where possible enhance the character and quality of the landscape and built environment, consistent with the provisions of Policies LHD1;

(vi) Does not significantly affect the amenity of the occupiers of nearby buildings or of the surrounding area; and

(vii) Does not give rise to unacceptable flows of traffic, consistent with the provisions of Policies LI2.

Proposals which would result in the loss of land or buildings for employment uses will be supported only where:

- 1) the premises are causing significant nuisance or environmental problems that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated; or
- 2) the site is no longer suitable or viable for employment use; and
- 3) there is no potential for modernisation or alternative employment uses; and
- 4) no other occupiers can be found.

In the case of criteria (2), (3) & (4) above, proposals must be accompanied by a demonstration that the premises, the site or the business has been actively marketed at a realistic price reflecting its employment status prior to any consent being given.

Justification

Historically the villages of Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall and the surrounding areas have evolved into a rural community with farming, equestrian related businesses, a wedding venue and destination for tourists enjoying its character, charm and the Swan PH.

There is a small, light industrial estate at Bradeley Green adjacent to the A49, Sunny Oak Caravan Park and other small enterprises and service businesses.

There is a long history of farming in the community, and the surrounding land use is predominately agricultural. Arable farming has overtaken dairy farming in the since 2010 with few dairy farms remaining. Livestock can be seen in many of the pastures all year round with sheep, beef and pig farming. The change in the balance of agricultural activity towards arable from dairy has lead to a large increase in HGV movements along the narrow rural lanes. Agricultural machinery has increased in size and power causing churned up verges along the local road network.

The recently refurbished Swan PH attracts visitors including cycling groups, the local hunt and visitors using the Llangollen Canal.

In 2011 the census information detailed that Marbury had a higher than average proportion of people aged 16-74 who work more than 49 hours a week (28% compared to the England average of 13.3%) and/or who are self-employed (23% compared to the England average of 9.8%, 2011 Census). The 2018 Housing Needs Report indicates that 17% of the working population now work from home. The rural economy and existing small businesses are a vital part of village life, and any opportunities to develop existing businesses, or enable the start-up of new small businesses appropriate to the rural area would be supported.

Policy RE1 is designed to support Marbury and District Parish's rural economy to grow sustainability over the Plan period and beyond, and that support can be given to existing businesses, new businesses and enterprises within the parish. In all cases the activities and premises of the businesses must be sensitive to the environment, residents and infrastructure and not increase the damage to the rural environment or be detrimental to the residents and tourist's safe enjoyment of the area, which may in turn damage the economy.

One of the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework is to support a prosperous rural economy. Planning policies should support sustainable growth in rural areas. The Designated Neighbourhood Area includes a number of farms and the National Planning Policy Framework supports the reuse of existing rural buildings, particularly for economic purposes, and promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses.

13. Local Infrastructure: Telecommunications, Transport, Safety and Energy Policies

LI1 Telecommunications

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives:

- Support and encourage the local economy and agriculture
- Promote improvements to infrastructure that improve the experience of living, visiting and working in the Parish

- **Policy LI1 – Telecommunications and Broadband**
- The development of advanced, reliable high quality communications infrastructure, including high speed broadband, will be supported, subject to:
- a) Development being minimal whilst enabling the efficient and effective operation of the network.
- b) Any development is required to be sympathetic to its location and hidden or camouflaged where appropriate.

Justification

Marbury is now served by high speed broadband over copper cables and via Fibre to the Cabinet situated in the centre of Marbury. The parish is also served by full fibre to the home (FTTH) with download speeds in excess 900Mbps by overhead drop wire.

Mobile phone coverage across the Parish is reasonable for both voice and text services depending on the network operator. However, in some parts of the Parish with poor signal quality (not spots) having a negative effect on local small businesses, residents who work from home, as well as visitors.

It is therefore important that the combined parish as a whole has high quality communications infrastructure. Superfast broadband has been rolled out in 2024. However, it is evident that the majority of the installation is over-head wiring, leading to an excess of clutter. The rollout of full fibre Broadband has provided access to opportunities and services (regardless of income) e.g. banking, video and audio streaming services that are available via applications over the Internet.

Having a high quality communications infrastructure is important to help sustain and develop the economic activity of residents and businesses as well as reducing fuel consumption and vehicle emissions.

One of the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework is to support high quality communications infrastructure. The NPPF highlights that supporting high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth, and social wellbeing.

The community would support efforts by network providers to remove unnecessary cabling and wiring in such a rural environment.

LI2 Transport, Safety

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives:

- Support and encourage the local economy and agriculture
- Promote and support sustainable transport
- Promote improvements to infrastructure that improve the experience of living, visiting and working in the Parish
- Improve access to, and enjoyment of, the countryside for residents and visitors alike

Policy LI2 – Transport and Safety

- To improve the sustainability of travel, transport and road safety, any developments that may generate significant movements shall be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and, if appropriate, a Travel Plan consistent with the provisions of Policy CO 4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.
- Positive consideration shall be given to the needs of those with disabilities or of elderly persons. Appropriate facilities within the transport infrastructure shall be provided to assist them where practicable.
- Proposals that promote provision of different modes of transport including links to local services at Wrenbury and Whitchurch and to provide bus routes, and passenger facilities will be supported.

Justification

In our rural community private car ownership and usage constitute the predominant method of transport; with approximately 73% of all homes owning at least 1 or more cars or vans (ONS Census 2011). Whilst cars are essential for many people, the provision of public transport and the encouragement of walking and cycling routes are vital in order to help to address the issues of climate change and provide equality of opportunity. Public transport is currently wholly inadequate for people who work and do not have access to a car or van in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The nearest rail services are located to the East at Wrenbury or South at Whitchurch both being 3 miles from the centre of Marbury. Wrenbury is a request only service and is not sustainable as a commuter route with minimal parking of four spaces. Whitchurch provides a timetabled service to stations North and South, with good parking provision.

Bus services to Whitchurch were cut completely in April 2018 and services to Nantwich and Wrenbury were also withdrawn. A replacement 'Go Too' Rural Bus Service has now been made available 'on demand', though on a limited basis. There is no bus service to Whitchurch available at all when many residents go there via private car to use its larger, more varied retail outlets and local services.

Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan cannot require bus routes and timetables to be provided any significant proposed development should be encouraged to contribute towards improving public transport facilities and services. Contributions may also be sought, where appropriate, for sustainable transport links such as cycleways and facilities, and for any necessary highway safety improvements e.g. Passing Places.

The roads are widely regarded by the community and tourists as completely inadequate to service the existing residents, services and businesses. By far the majority of the road network in the Neighbourhood Plan area is narrow, winding, has dangerous blind bends with poor visibility and junctions with limited room to pass is forcing vehicles into the verges causing damage. Agricultural Machinery that utilises the narrow lanes, many without passing places are damaging soft verges. As traditional agriculture has intensified, the number of HGV deliveries and collections has increased with progressively larger farm machinery using the narrow lanes.

Given the lack of passing places, many verges are regularly churned up, causing mud and debris that in turn results in drains becoming blocked and/or connecting pipework crushed. This creates areas that flood regularly, leading to highway degradation, potholes, icing, and ultimately significant safety issues. The poor condition of the highways leads to increased damage and excessive wear and tear to residents' vehicles. The frequency of large vehicles on the lane network also results in frequent damage to highway signage, bridges, culverts and private property, particularly during planting and harvest periods.

The promotion of sustainable transport is one of the aims of the NPPF, which highlights the importance of walking, cycling and public transport. Currently there is no prospect of our Neighbourhood being served sustainably by the existing road network.

This policy will be applied in the context of Policy CO 4 in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. Consistent with the provisions of the NPPF, developments that are likely to have a significant transport impact are required to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment.

The Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives:

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, green open spaces and heritage assets of the Parish
- Support and encourage the local economy and agriculture
- Ensure that any development is appropriate, sustainable, well designed, and in a suitable location which meets the needs of the local community

Policy LI3 – Renewable Energy

Proposals for renewable energy in appropriate locations could be supported, having due regard to its scale, impact, both immediate and over time:

- (a) So as not to harm the natural environment or the character of the landscape;
- (c) To avoid the most productive and versatile agricultural land;
- (d) To affect the amenities and safety of local people, tourism, users of the countryside; and
- (e) The functioning of the rural road network;

Consideration must also be given to:

- (f) The measures proposed to mitigate any harmful effects identified; and
- (g) The overall benefits of the development for the local and wider community

Justification

The Neighbourhood Plan supports renewable energy technologies in principle, and that the parish is open minded about small-scale renewable energy schemes that lead to tangible benefits to the community. Benefits such as community owned schemes, community investment or developer investment in other low carbon initiatives to benefit and fund local facilities within the Parish (for example green infrastructure, footpath and cycleway improvements).

Dependant on the scale and benefit to the community, potential ideas for renewable energy include wind power, solar energy, anaerobic digestion (waste only), energy storage and heat pumps. Micro (house scale) renewable energies will be supported.

The Parish is not served by mains gas and is 'off grid'. There is reliance by local people on mains electricity, deliveries of oil, gas, coal and wood. The volatile, unregulated oil and gas prices are a very significant concern for many residents. 94% of households have central heating (2011 Census) 10.1% are estimated to be in fuel poverty. 6% of households are without central heating (2011 Census). Many residents are members of buying groups to try and reduce their fuel bills. Any improvements in renewable energy would therefore be of great benefit to the Parish.

One of the aims of the NPPF is to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, and encourage renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy schemes e.g. on Agricultural Buildings).

APPENDICES

14. Appendix A Overall Planning Context

Overall Planning Context: Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, 2010 - 2030

The three parishes of Marbury, Norbury & Wirswall sit within the unitary authority area of Cheshire East. The following policies are relevant and important to highlight the sensitive nature of the combined Parish and the need to 'Preserve and Enhance' the character and feel of the area in the Vision and Objectives of this plan.

Policy PG 2 Settlement Hierarchy

Within the Cheshire East Settlement Hierarchy Marbury, Norbury & Wirswall are defined as 'Other Settlements and Rural Areas'. The policy states that 'growth and investment in the Other Settlements should be confined to proportionate development at a scale commensurate with the function and character of the settlement and confined to locations well related to the existing built-up extent of the settlement.'

Policy PG 6 Open Countryside

The three parishes are within Cheshire East's Open Countryside, defined as the area outside of any settlement with a defined settlement boundary. Within the Open Countryside only development that is essential for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, public infrastructure, essential works will be permitted. Exceptions may be made where there is the opportunity for infilling in villages or where a proposed dwelling is exceptional in design and sustainable terms.

Policy SE 1 Design

This policy indicates that proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of sense of place, managing design quality, sustainable urban, architectural and landscape design, livability/workability and designing in safety. Further guidance on design from Manual for Streets and Building Better, Building Beautiful is signposted within the policy. Marbury, Norbury & Wirswall Design Code 8 sets out further detailed guidance.

Policy SE 2 Efficient Use of Land

This policy encourages the redevelopment/re-use of previously developed land and buildings. The policy also states that all windfall development should consider the landscape and townscape character of the surrounding area when determining the character and density of development.

Policy SE 4 The Landscape

A large area within Marbury and Wirswall is defined as a Local Landscape Designation Area (see Landscape plan on page 12 of the Marbury and District Design Guide). In these areas the council will seek to enhance the landscape and protect it from development that is likely to have an adverse impact. Measures will be sought to integrate development into the landscape character of these areas by:

- Protecting the character through suitable planting, landscape and / or woodland; and
- Making suitable provision for better public access to, and enjoyment of Local Landscape Designation Areas.

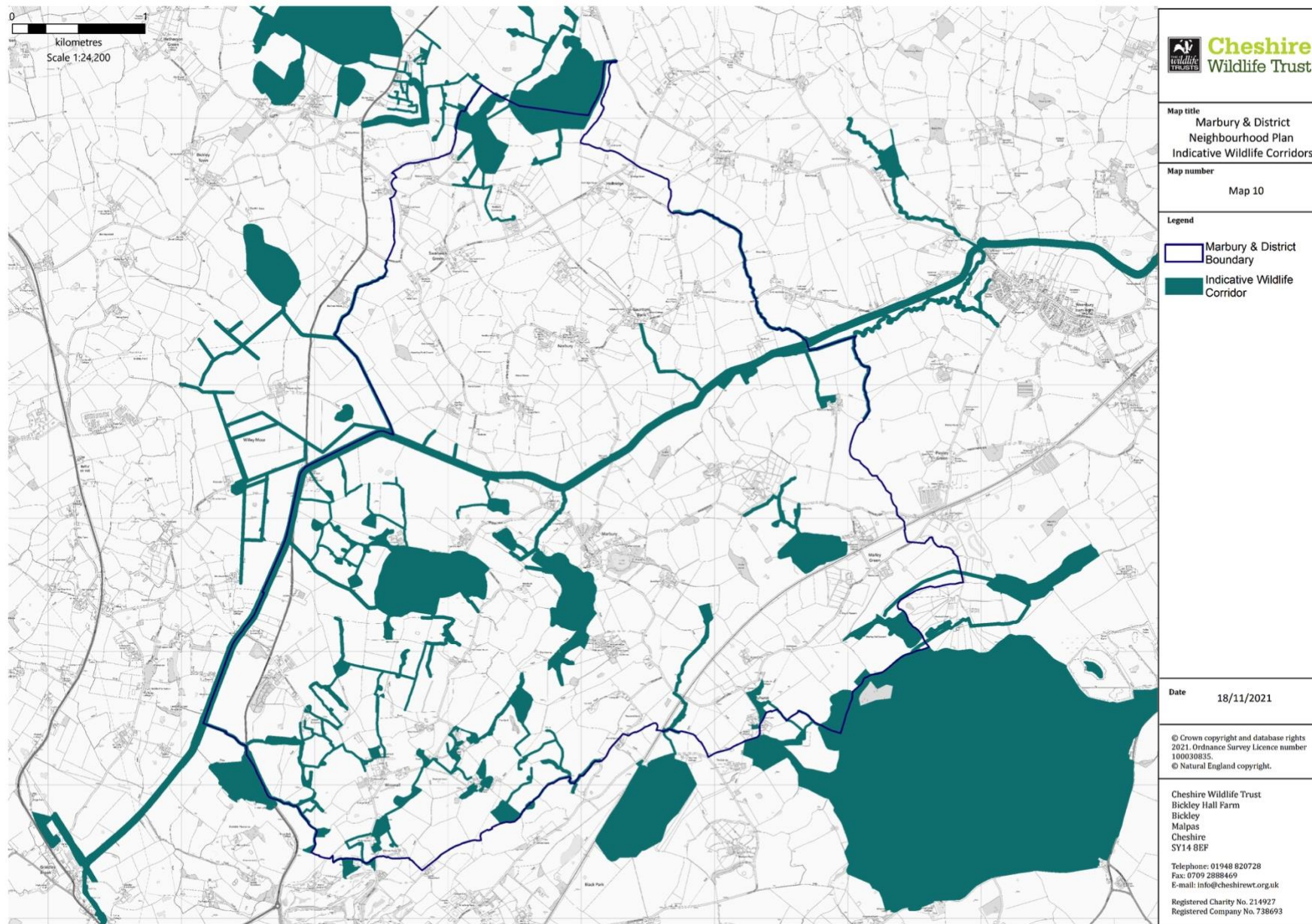
Policy SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles

Within this policy it is stated that all development should reinforce local distinctiveness in terms of height, scale, massing form and grouping, materials, external design features, green infrastructure and relationship to neighbouring properties, street scene and the wider neighbourhood.

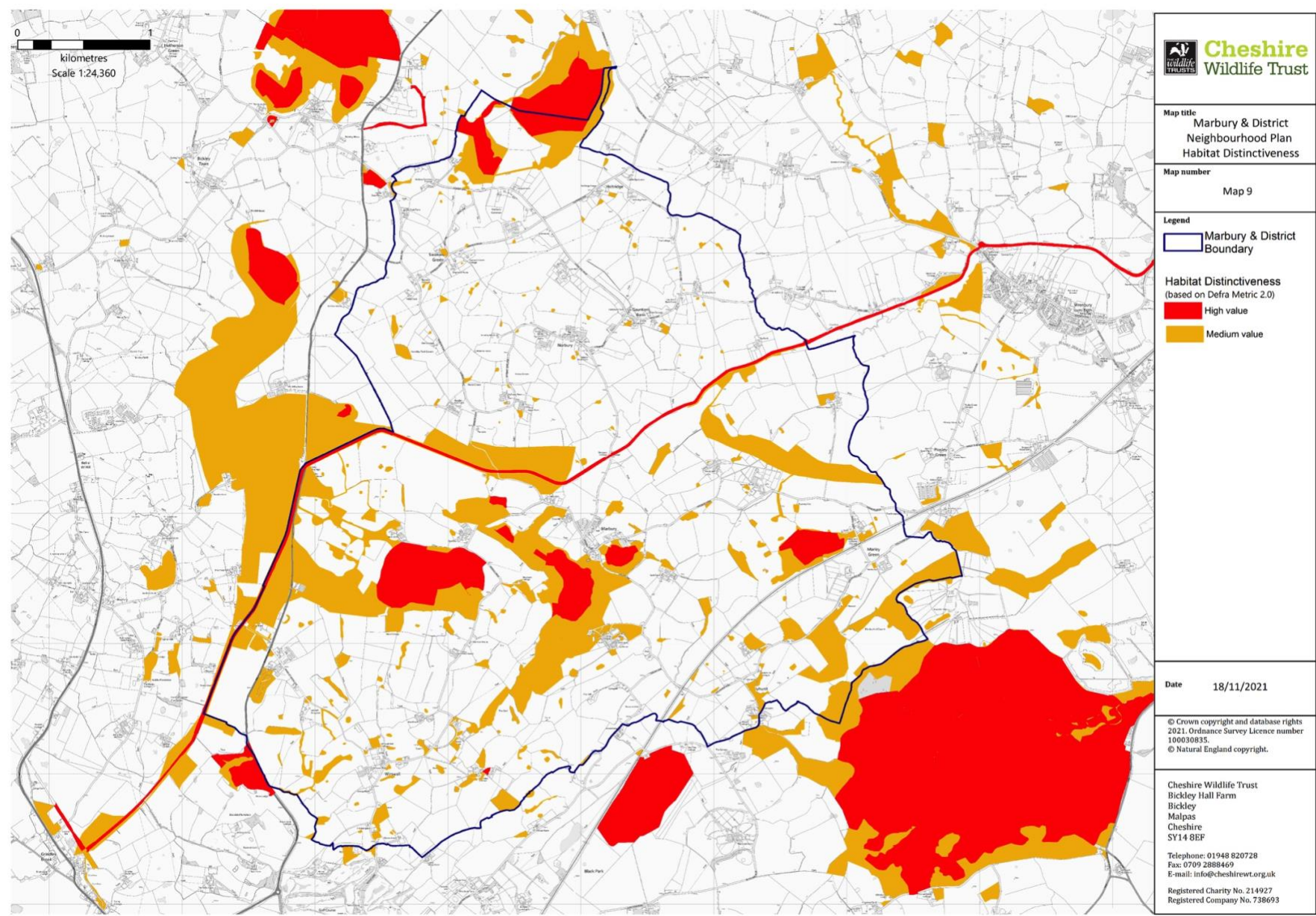
The policy also expects development to be resilient to climate change, minimise energy use, use natural resources prudently, promote the use, recovery and recycling of materials, integrate or allow future integration of renewable energy technologies, discourage crime and anti-social behaviour, minimise trip generation, minimise waste and pollution and be water efficient.

Sustainable development principles are a key element, further detailed in the Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall Design Guide that forms an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

15. Appendix B – Wildlife Corridors



16. Appendix C Habitat Distinctiveness



17. Appendix D – Glossary of Terms

Green Rural Lanes

Green Rural Lanes refers to the local single-track road network that links the settlements within the Neighbourhood Plan area and the approaches from other routes outside the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

REG14 Consultation Version

18. Document History

Draft1 22nd December 2021

Draft 2 3rd May 2022

- Additional Justification for Green Open Space designation added
- Wording updated for Policy LI3 Renewable Energy

Draft 2.1 9th May 2022

- Pagination issue corrected - Appendix B and C
- Footer corrected to update Issue to 2.1

Draft 3 23rd May 2022

- Reference to Buttermilk Bank removed on Page 6
- Consultation section (4) updated to reflect stages completed
- Minor corrections to text on HLC 1 and HLC2 policies
- Policy NE4 Green Open Spaces justification updated
- Policy LI3 updated to reflect concerns expressed by residents

Draft 4 31st January 2025

- Policy LI1 updated to reflect full fibre roll out
- Minor corrections to text throughout the document

Draft 4 31st January 2025

- Minor corrections to text throughout the document
- Watermark updated