Chelford Landscape Character Assessment

March 19

2018

A report into the local features and special qualities that characterise Chelford Parish

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Introduction:

This report seeks to set out and summarise the key landscape and design characteristics of Chelford Parish, placing them in a wider context of the local authority area (Cheshire East), to make meaningful recommendations for policy themes that could be pursued in the Chelford Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Character is the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that make each place different. Landscape character is an important element of this which makes a place unique and gives a locality it's 'sense of place' and is influenced by particular combinations of visual, natural and historic elements together with settlement patterns and built components. Intangible aspects such as tranquillity and sense of place also have a strong influence upon the way the landscape and place is perceived.

The information in this report draws from a number of different studies and other reports including the Cheshire East Design Guide and the Cheshire Landscape Assessment 2007, and seeks to assist the formulation of policies and guidance to ensure the planning and management of sustainable future landscapes. The report has three main purposes:

- To encourage a greater awareness of local landscape character
- To help to recognise contemporary pressures
- To stimulate debate about the future

The report is structured to set out the wider character context within which Chelford is located and further assess the detailed elements which contribute to the sense of place in Chelford itself. The body of the report undertakes this assessment and Appendix 1 sets out the existing planning policy framework in regards landscape and design, relevant to the parish.

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1. Cheshire East - A Unique Borough

1.1 The county of Cheshire is well known for its rolling pastoral landscapes, plains and historic market towns. No landscape in Cheshire is truly natural; all have been influenced by humans over millennia.

1.2 In Cheshire East these influences can be seen from the Upland Peak District fringe in the east to the plains, rolling landscapes and sandstone escarpments in the west.

1.3 Farming, geography, natural resources, geology, and the industrial revolution have all impacted upon the landscape, location, growth of and form of the settlements within it.

1.4 The way settlements have evolved, responding to their location, to growth and changing human needs over centuries have made each of them unique today. The layers of history are physically displayed in the buildings, streets and spaces, all of which add depth to their sense of place and providing us with an emotional response to inanimate bricks and mortar.

1.5 It is this emotional response which is lacking from many modern developments. Whilst the evolutionary depth of a place takes many years and cannot be recreated, many modern developments have lost any intimate human sense of scale and are more governed by rigorously applied standards, amplified by industry standardisation which, in turn creates bland anywhere places and spaces which bare no relationship to each other.

1.6 This chapter 'Cheshire East - A Unique Borough' looks to identify what is unique about Cheshire East, how the character varies and to identify 'Settlement character Areas', distilling out what makes each unique and special, sets out in brief where that uniqueness has been derived from in terms of historical and physical influences and provides a series of 'design cues' to aid designers in reinterpreting these features in a modern context and fit for purpose in the 21st century.

1.7 The two key phrases out of the previous paragraph are '**reinterpretation'** and **'fit for purpose'**. Cheshire East does not want to create pastiche 'chocolate box' developments. Such an approach will water down and weaken the historic town and village-scapes within the district.

1.8 Developers and their design teams are encouraged however to draw upon the information distilled from Cheshire East's character, as set-out below, and creatively use it to produce unique, forward looking, grounded developments which positively contribute to the established settlements and landscape into which they are placed.

Geographic & Historic Influences

1.9 As touched on above, geography and history have been key in the evolution of the landscape and settlements within it.

1.10 Sheltered locations, supplies of building materials fire wood, food and fresh, plentiful water were the first priorities in establishing places to live.

1.11 As human endeavour evolved, settlements grew, based on communication routes (paths, navigable rivers, fords and valleys), farming, trade, defensible locations, raw materials (coal, stone, peat etc.) and the most reproductive land.

1.12 The Industrial Revolution of the 1760's saw the start of an explosion in population and settlement growth.

1.13 Settlements grew and new ones sprung up when they were well located to exploit the needs of the new industries in terms of power (water in the first instance), raw materials and the transport systems to

move those raw materials and then the finished products to their markets.

1.14 For example the Silk Industry in Macclesfield and Congleton grew up around the unique microclimate required in the silk production process, as much as around the power supplied by the local river systems. Whereas, Bollington's main focus was cotton.

1.15 The influences on the form and layout of those settlements of the silk industry can be seen today in the classic three storey weavers cottages (pictured below), mill buildings, workers terraces, foreman's homes and mill owners villas and mansion houses, as well as in the developed infrastructure in terms of canals and railways.

1.16 Whilst these create interesting and much loved townscapes, replicating these forms and layouts in the 21st Century with the impact of motor vehicles and modern standards is not practical or desirable. But, as stated previously, distilling out what makes these town and villagescapes special and creatively reinterpreting it would lead to adding yet another layer of history and evolution to the settlements into which they are placed.

1.17 Some settlements didn't exist until well into the industrial revolution. For example Crewe didn't take on a recognisable settlement form until the 1840's.

1.18 It was only when the railways arrived in Crewe that the town as we know it today began to grow as illustrated in The Growth of Crewe (Figure ii:02 above).

1.19 Similar historical and geographical influences have affected all the settlements in Cheshire East in one form or another.

1.20 Another geographical based aspect of character is derived from the underlying geology in the form of the local building materials.

1.21 The architectural form of buildings has been heavily influenced by the local materials quarried in the area. Gritstones are the obvious example in the east of the District from Disley in the north east down to Bollington, Sutton, Langley and Wincle in the south east where solid no-nonsense built forms dominate.

1.22 Due to the availability of clay, the use of brick dominates as the main building material from Poynton across the Cheshire Plain to Crewe and Nantwich and beyond with their extensive use in settlements and farmsteads in between. Probably the Georgian period is the best represented illustration of the use of locally produced brick, with tall light and well proportioned double fronted high status town houses and farm houses which can be seen across the market towns and farmsteads of most of lowland Cheshire East.

1.23 The local material palette specific to each settlement character area is explored in more detail under Settlement Character Areas and the sample settlements drawn from those areas which follow.

Figure ii:01 - Silk Weavers Cottages, Paradise Street, Macclesfield

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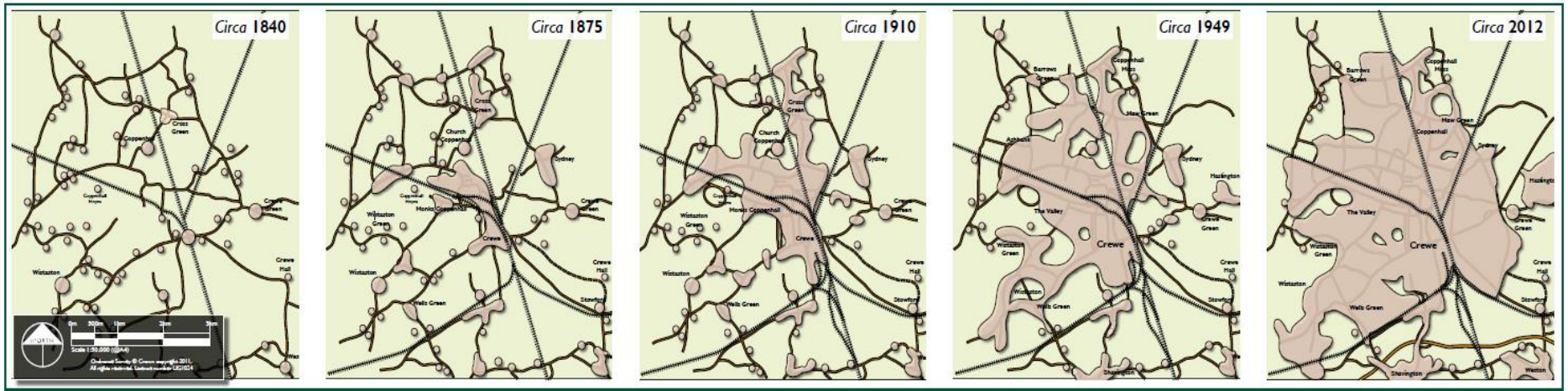

Figure ii:02 - The Growth of Crewe

How Landscape Informs Settlement Structure

1.24 It is not only the location of settlements which is informed by geographic features but also settlement form and layout can be influenced by the landscape features in and around them.

1.25 Cheshire East contains a variety of settlement forms which we have termed as:

- Dispersed Linear
- Compact Linear
- Dispersed Radial
- Compact Radial

1.26 Dispersed settlement forms are normally found in rural locations such as Bosley (Dispersed Linear) or Wincle (Dispersed Radial).

1.27 Settlements along river valleys, hill tops or ridge lines are usually found to be linear in form following the course of the river or particular contours. Settlements within the Cheshire Plain can also be linear influenced by a main road, watercourse or railway (existing or former).

1.28 Radial settlements are usually found on the plains or within gently rolling landscapes, most examples are market towns or villages which sit on a crossroads of two or more main roads with the Market Square or a Coaching Inn lying at the heart of the settlement.

Some Basic Rules...

1.29 Development proposed within or on the edge of settlements should be informed by an understanding of its current form, street pattern and density.

1.30 Development in linear settlements should be accessed from the primary road and/or work with the contours, river or communications routes to which the existing settlement has responded. Development in such locations should respect any maximum or minimum contour lines; above or below which issues of visibility (built form breaking above the ridge line if this precedent is not already set) or potential flooding (adjacent to a watercourse in a valley bottom location) are likely to preclude development.

1.31 Radial settlements are probably easier locations in which to develop proposals

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as, by their very nature, they are less constrained by the surrounding topography, watercourses or communication routes. However if a radial settlement is tucked under a hill or set into a rolling landscape then existing vistas and panoramas of that settlement from the surrounding countryside or special views out from the settlement should be respected and maintained. The green spaces penetrating into these settlements may also be particularly important.

1.32 Development on the edge of such settlements should look to infill parcels of land to reinforce the radial nature of those settlements, buildings should nestle into the landscape and exploit any changes in topography or existing landscape features (woodlands, hedgerows or individual trees) on the site to soften and integrate the development into the landscape, townscape or villagescape in which it is part.

1.33 In dispersed settlements the layout and location of development should respond to the settlement form (linear or radial) and not be seen to change the nature of the settlement from 'dispersed' to 'compact'. Therefore lower density development (individual properties or short runs of townhouse rows), set into a strong landscape framework responding to existing field/lane/woodland patterns would be necessary to successfully integrate them.

Figure ii:03 - A settlement nestled into the landscape, Bollington

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2. Settlement Character Areas

2.1 As set-out generally above, Cheshire East is unique due to its diversity of settlements and landscapes which have been influenced by geography, farming, industry and movement.

2.2 This uniqueness of landscape and settlement characters should be used to inform future developments within the borough to ensure Cheshire East retains an individual identity and does not give the impression of a series of bland 'anywhere' settlements.

2.3 Settlement Character Areas have been defined as illustrated in Figure ii:04 below.

2.4 These settlement character areas have been informed in part by a desktop assessment of the Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment, the Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Study and a comprehensive field survey of settlements and the rural hinterland which has refined and defined the final character areas and their boundaries as illustrated opposite.

2.5 Five Settlement Character Areas have been created as illustrated and include from north to south:

- North Cheshire Fringe
- Gritstone Edge
- Silk, Cotton & Market Towns
- Salt & Engineering Towns
- Market Towns & Estate Villages

2.6 The following pages describe the Settlement Character Area relevant to Chelford Parish, the general Landscape Character traits which make up this area, the typical design cues and the materials and detailing which can be found within this area. A Character Area summary has been included to illustrate the typical layouts, evolution, form, archetypes, materials and detailing which will help inform the design process for any developments proposed within the Chelford Character Area.

2.7 This document should therefore be read in conjunction with any relevant existing neighbourhood plans or village design statements.

2.8 Specific design cues have been identified for Chelford Character Area are included below. Generic settlement character area cues have emerged, as highlighted in the green boxes in the character area descriptions. These design cues should be used to aid the designers in the development of their proposals.

2.9 Designers and developers are asked to take cognisance of the pages that follow and use the information creatively to inform their proposals. This process and the design approach chosen should be set-out and incorporated in the supporting Design & Access Statement. This document is the starting point. It should be overlaid by further site/area specific assessment by the design team.

2.10 Cheshire East expect Design and Access Statements to be comprehensive in illustrating and explaining the design process adopted in developing the proposals.

2.11 Some settlements fall within two character areas, drawing influence in character from both. This needs to be reflected and responded to in the character studies within Design and Access Statements and in developing masterplans and design codes.

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3. Character Areas Map

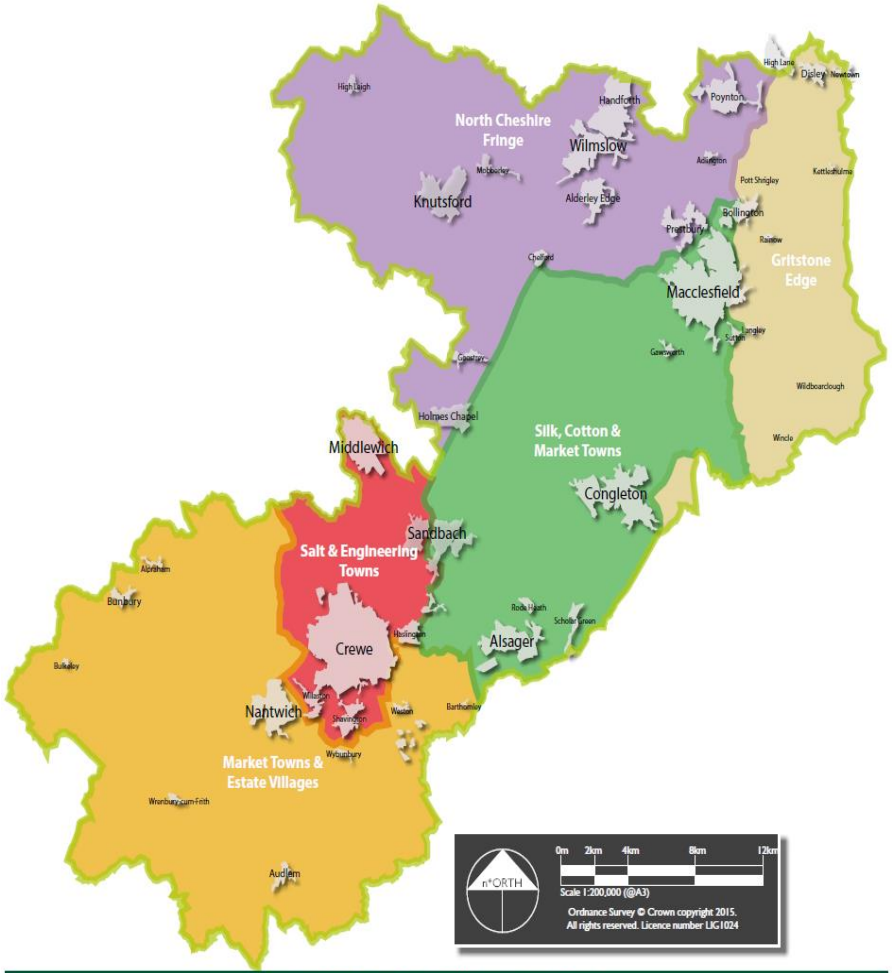
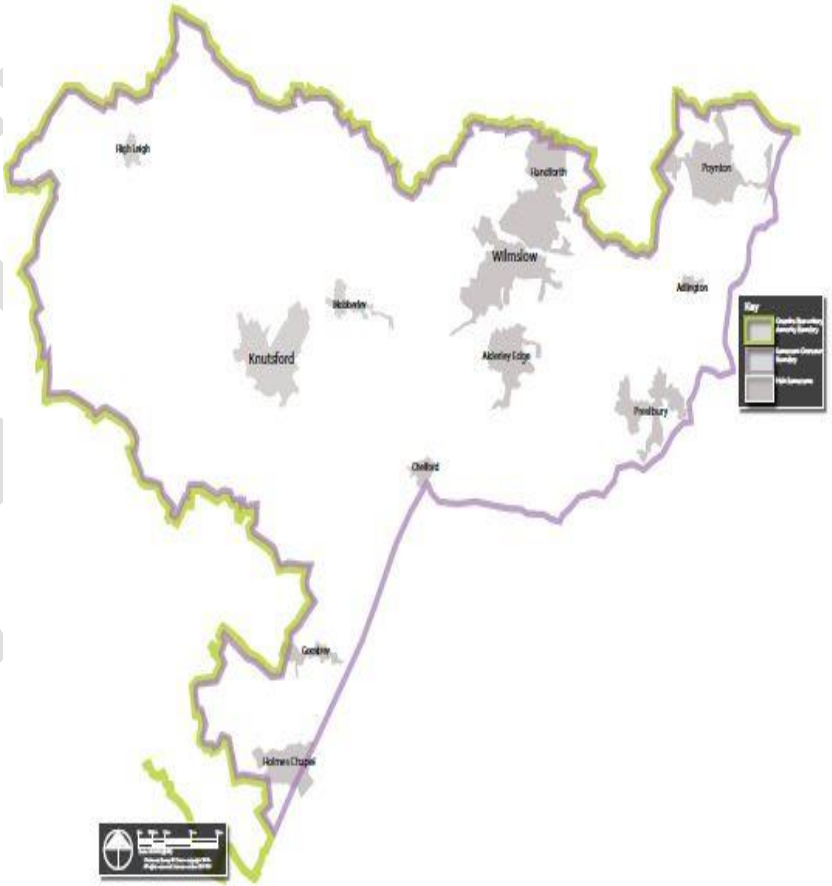


Figure II:04 - Cheshire East Settlement Character Areas



North Cheshire Fringe

4. North Cheshire Fringe

4.1 The North Cheshire Fringe Settlement Character Area forms the north western area of the district. The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment contains five Landscape Types within the North Cheshire Fringe boundary:

- Estate Wood and Mere
- River Valley
- Higher Farms and Woods
- Lower Farms and Woods
- Mosslands

4.2 The Lower Farms and Woods makes up the majority of this Settlement Character Area and is described as low undulating medium scale landscape of mixed arable and pastoral farmland. A large portion of this area is influenced by the towns of Knutsford, Wilmslow, Poynton, Prestbury and Alderley Edge.

4.3 To the south of the North Cheshire Fringe there are localised areas of undulating topography with concentrated areas of woodland although the landscape is generally flat. The field pattern remains intact but in northern areas hedgerows are increasingly being replaced by post and wire fences creating a larger scale open landscape that allows extensive views to the surrounding countryside.

4.4 The western part of the North Cheshire Fringe consists of low rolling landform with a medium to large scale, semi regular landscape pattern that creates rural character. Boundaries consist of gappy hawthorn hedges, single trees and fences. Solid woodland blocks interrupt the otherwise open landscape. A number of major roads and transport networks cross through the area and influence the surrounding landscape although many areas remain rural between these routes.

4.5 To the west of Wilmslow the topography becomes flat with varying scales of landscape. There are many blocks of woodland where the urban edge of Wilmslow is completely hidden from view by dense vegetation.

4.6 In the east the topography is undulating, broad and open, becoming steeper further north, particularly around Alderley Edge. This area of the North Cheshire Fringe contains a number of historic estates and houses with associated gardens and parkland, some consisting of large areas of woodland that help to convey a well wooded landscape. Water bodies are a common feature in this small to medium scale landscape.

4.7 In the central parts of this character area around Knutsford the landscape is slightly undulating and of medium scale. The parkland within the historic estates has a strong influence on the landscape. Settlement comprises a low density scatter of dispersed farmsteads. Fields in this area are predominantly small to medium in size and regular in shape.

4.8 Overall this Settlement Character Area is affected by a number of incongruous elements within the landscape such as the M6 motorway, located to the west of Knutsford and Holmes Chapel, that crosses the landscape on a north to south axis. Particularly within the flat and more open landscape this becomes a visually intrusive element.

4.9 The North Cheshire Fringe contains five major settlements: Knutsford, Wilmslow, Poynton, Prestbury and Alderley Edge. Away from the main towns settlement mainly consists of dispersed farmsteads and dwellings with a number of nucleated villages and small hamlets. Several of the dispersed settlements are linear in form having developed along roadways and larger nucleated villages that have undergone modern expansion, such as Chelford and Goostrey.

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5. Settlement Fringes - The Rural Transition

5.1 The boundaries in the **North Cheshire Fringe** range from coursed stone/brick walling, native and ornamental hedgerows, parkland style railings, timber/concrete post/panel fences to close boarded timber fences.

5.2 Positive solutions look to arrange built form fronting onto a street or other form of movement corridor, bordered by boundary treatments which are in keeping with their location and of a suitable height to ensure properties address their frontage. Solutions in all settlement character areas should not look to screen development from the countryside, but to soften and ground development in its setting, in keeping with the local character.

5.3 The key is to ensure that the boundary solution draws on best practice in terms of creating the desired finished edge, which is well surveilled, with good quality detailing to the boundaries, movement corridors and elevations of the built form.

5.4The photographs illustrated here show existing positive and negative solutions within the North Cheshire Fringe Settlement Character Area.

Positive Rural Transitions ✓

Built form fronts narrow private access way. Formal picket fence forms garden boundary with cleft oak post and rail fence fronting fields.

Terrace set back behind front gardens and bordered by hedgerow fronting countryside. Parking and servicing to rear.

Properties front informal lane with a mixture of privet hedges and railings. Native hedgerow and trees forms boundary between fields and lane.

Long terrace set behind long front gardens with strong landscaping softening built form when viewed from surrounding area.

Negative Rural Transitions ✗

Rear gardens back onto paddock with varied boundary treatments, sheds, greenhouses and conservatories visible from wider countryside.

Blank elevation doesn't make most of elevated views or offer surveillance to public footpath. High timber fence and conservatory incongruous with rural interface.

Blank gable and high walls over little surveillance of adjoining green space, although the strong landscaping softens the built form.

Cottage row has strong interface with countryside, however much of front gardens lost to parking. Whilst off road parking required, treatment of frontage could have been more sympathetic.

6. Typical Traditional Materials

6.1 Brick is the predominant building material throughout the character area but subtle variations in colour exist between settlements. Lighter brown brick is more common in smaller settlements in contrast to larger towns where a brighter red brick is often found. Contrasting brick is used for decorative effect on many buildings. Materials often vary between elevations, for instance render or painted brick on main façades and exposed brick on side elevations. Stone is most commonly found on boundary walls rather than building exteriors where it is used for trim detail or quoins.

6.2 Boundary treatments are a broad mix of brick and stone walls, hedges, railings and timber fencing. Some variation exists with a predominance of low stone walls and hedging in Alderley Edge for example. Paved setts can be found on some streets in Alderley Edge.

Typical Traditional Detailing

6.3 Buildings in the Tudor revival style are found throughout the character area. Common details typical of this period include first floor oriel windows, steep pitched roofs, mullioned windows, tall narrow windows and mock timber framing to gables. Turrets, towers and full height bays are a distinctive feature of late Victorian houses. This is very evident in parts of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow.

6.4 Several properties in Alderley Edge have distinctive shaped gables. Decorative brick banding is common on terraced properties and takes various forms including: three bands of red engineered brick; alternating stretchers of red and blue brick in two bands; and multiple bands of red stretchers (e.g. River Street in Wilmslow). Occasionally a stone band is used below first floor windows with dentilled brickwork below. A few examples of Neo-Georgian architecture can be found in Wilmslow, identifiable by the characteristic of hipped roofs with dormer windows and a white cornice under the eaves.

Figure II:27 - Architectural Materials Palette

Figure II:28 - Streetscape Materials Palette

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Figure iv:15 - North Cheshire Fringe Materials Palette

Figure II:29 - Traditional Detailing

Figure II:30 - Character Area Colour Palette

Settlement Character Area Design Cues

6.5 Out of our assessment of the North Cheshire Fringe we have distilled out the typical design cues of the area. These have been highlighted in the panel to the right

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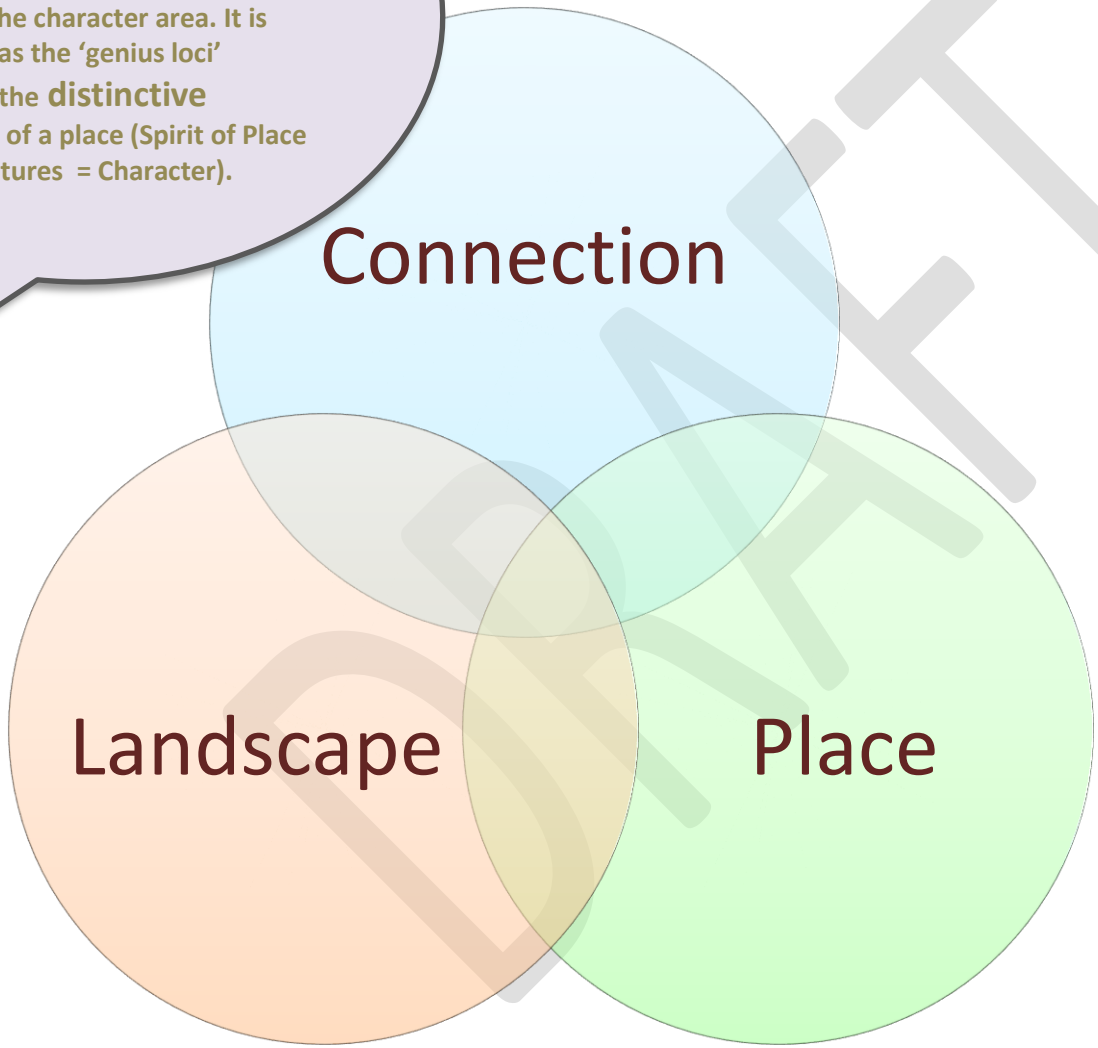
What is the 'spirit of place?'

The spirit of place describes the essence of the character area. It is also known as the 'genius loci' referring to the distinctive atmosphere of a place (Spirit of Place + Design features = Character).



The term 'quality of place' initially arose in relation to the question about how people made decisions about where to live and work. Richard Florida suggests that generally one can think about quality of place as cutting across three key dimensions:

- What's there: the combination of the built environment and the natural environment; a stimulating, appealing setting for the pursuit of creative lives
- Who's there: diverse people of all ethnicities, nationalities, religions, and sexual orientations, interacting and providing clear cues that this is a community where anyone can fit in and make a life
- What's going on: the vibrancy of the street life, café culture, arts and music; the visible presence of people engaging in outdoor activities- altogether a lot of exciting, creative goings-ons.

The National Trust and Cheshire East Council recognise the importance of quality of place in contributing to quality of life and economic prosperity of an area. The ability to define the contributory factors, including natural, cultural and historic environment elements that make up quality of place, may offer scope for strategic planning and decision making, and a way of aligning the work of different organisations and council departments to greater effect.

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Sample text 'Spirit of Place'

Chelford is a tranquil, safe and peaceful rural place with a wonderful energy of community spirit, whose residents are committed to the continued flourish and preservation of the village's cultural heritage. Its quintessential rural characteristics are highly valued and appreciated by all local residents and those travelling from farther afield. A calming agricultural landscape with views of cattle on the horizon, juxtaposed with local wildlife, serene streets and exquisite gardens in a striking tree lined setting, all add to an attractive countryside backdrop. Some urbanisation in places detracts from the overall village feel, but its presence is limited in the context of the wider green surroundings.

The village is buoyed by the local farm shop as this acts as a cultural and central hub for the local and wider community providing a distinctive agricultural focus for the area. The local butchers shop is well known and popular within the area and is a community highlight. The village estate provides important housing for the village, and is well occupied and sought after in the wider Cheshire area due its accessible location next to a commuter train line and local road network. All in all Chelford provides the best of both worlds, an idyllic crisp rural setting where village life can be enjoyed and appreciated, alongside access to other vibrant communities with everything Cheshire East has to offer

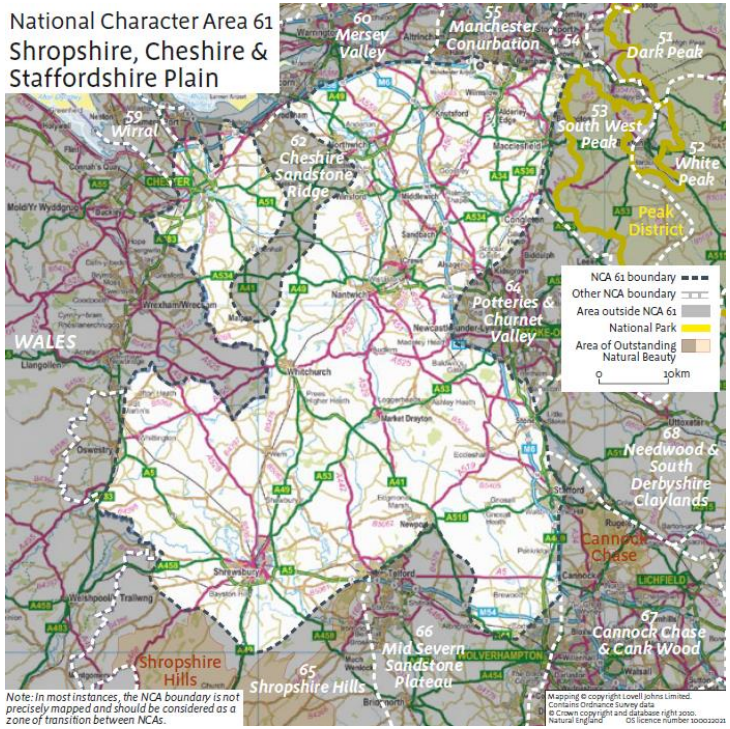
Home, family, friendship, relationships, bonds

Rural, scenic, countryside, quaint

Peaceful, welcoming, vibrant, multifunctional, historic

Try and capture the 'mood' and atmosphere. If this is challenging, try and think of a favourite holiday destination and capture the 'essence' of this - why did you go there, what were the sights and sounds like, the smells - what words would you use to describe this place?

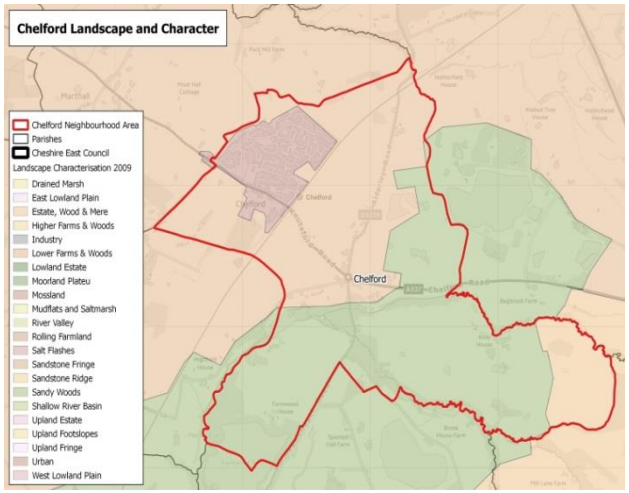
8. National and Local Landscape Context



3.1 The Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain National Character Area (NCA) comprises most of the county of Cheshire, the northern half of Shropshire and a large part of north-west Staffordshire. This is an expanse of flat or gently undulating, lush, pastoral farmland, which is bounded by the Mersey Valley NCA in the north, with its urban and industrial development, and extending to the rural Shropshire Hills NCA in the south. To the west, it is bounded by the hills of the Welsh borders and to the east and south-east by the urban areas within the Potteries and Churnet Valley, Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands, and Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCAs.

3.2 A series of small sandstone ridges cut across the plain and are very prominent features within this open landscape. The Mid-Cheshire Ridge, the Maer and the Hanchurch Hills are the most significant. They are characterised by steep sides and woodland is often ancient semi-natural woodland which is notably absent from the plain, except around Northwich.

3.3 The Cheshire Landscape Character assessment, published by the former Cheshire County Council in 2008, provides a classification of the Cheshire Landscape. The assessment identifies 20 Landscape Character Types which share a common identity based on natural and cultural characteristics and further refines the landscape into geographically specific and unique Landscape Character Areas.



3.4 Chelford Parish is in the landscape character area Lower Farms and Woods, and is adjacent to the urban landscapes of Knutsford and Macclesfield.

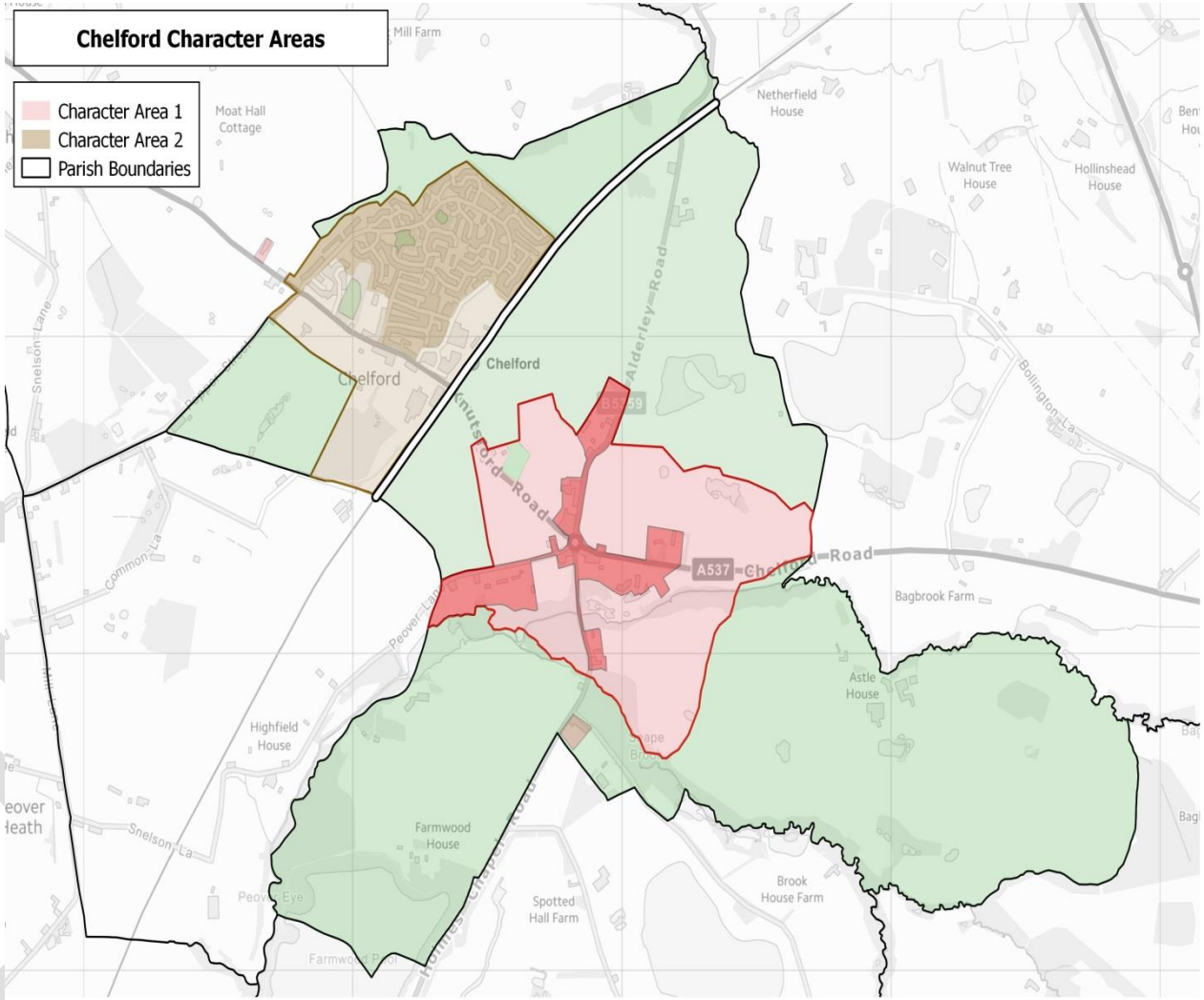
9. Local Character Context

9.1 Chelford is identified as a Local Service Centre in the CELPS. The primary landscape character of Chelford Parish is medium scale landscape of mixed arable and pastoral farmland with a medium density, comprising of clusters of dispersed settlements. There are localised areas of more undulating ground but the land is generally flat. In the north, many fields have been enlarged and there is evidence of hedgerow removal with increased reliance upon post and wire fences. This has produced a more open, larger scale landscape with more extensive views, although even there, many views are curtailed in the middle distance by solid blocks of woodland.

9.2 On the basis of internally consistent typologies and broad similarities, the character area can loosely be further refined into three sub areas: the roundabout area, the suburban edge and the open countryside.

9.3 The primary landscape is predominantly agricultural with green flat terrain with gently rolling fields and largely open. Chelford has some open views across the fields adding to the visual richness of the area, but on the whole short views are visible from the roadside and from the station. Jodrell bank can be seen in the distance but there are few landmarks defining the view.

9.4 The overall wider parish area is sparsely occupied by dispersed farmsteads with properties spread across a much larger area. There are footways situated along the main road but these are narrow in width.



9.5 Chelford is broadly functionally split into two distinct character areas, distinguished primarily by the break between the railway line. The location of Chelford asserts proximity to Manchester Airport and the commuter trainline and proximity to the A34. The railway line forms a literal and symbolic divide between the two character parts of the village - a core residential area, and a rural hinterland. The south easterly side by on Knutsford Road (Character Area 1) is defined by a roundabout, which is a more typical rural landscape with largely dispersed houses, some amenities and limited residential dwellings. Character Area 2, is identifiable by the farm shop and a nucleated housing estate by the train station.

9.6 Chelford has no clear village centre per se. There are some local amenities scattered amongst Chelford village, such as the post office, petrol station and farm shop. Most additional day to day needs are served from the nearby larger settlements in Knutsford and Macclesfield.

9.7 It is not clear from entering the village where the beginning or the end starts. Most of the main modern estate in Character Area 2 is 'hidden' from the roadside as it aligns along the path of the railway line.

Character Area 1

9.8 The roundabout in Character Area 1 contributes as a focal point and node in the village as many roads connect from this point into other local areas.

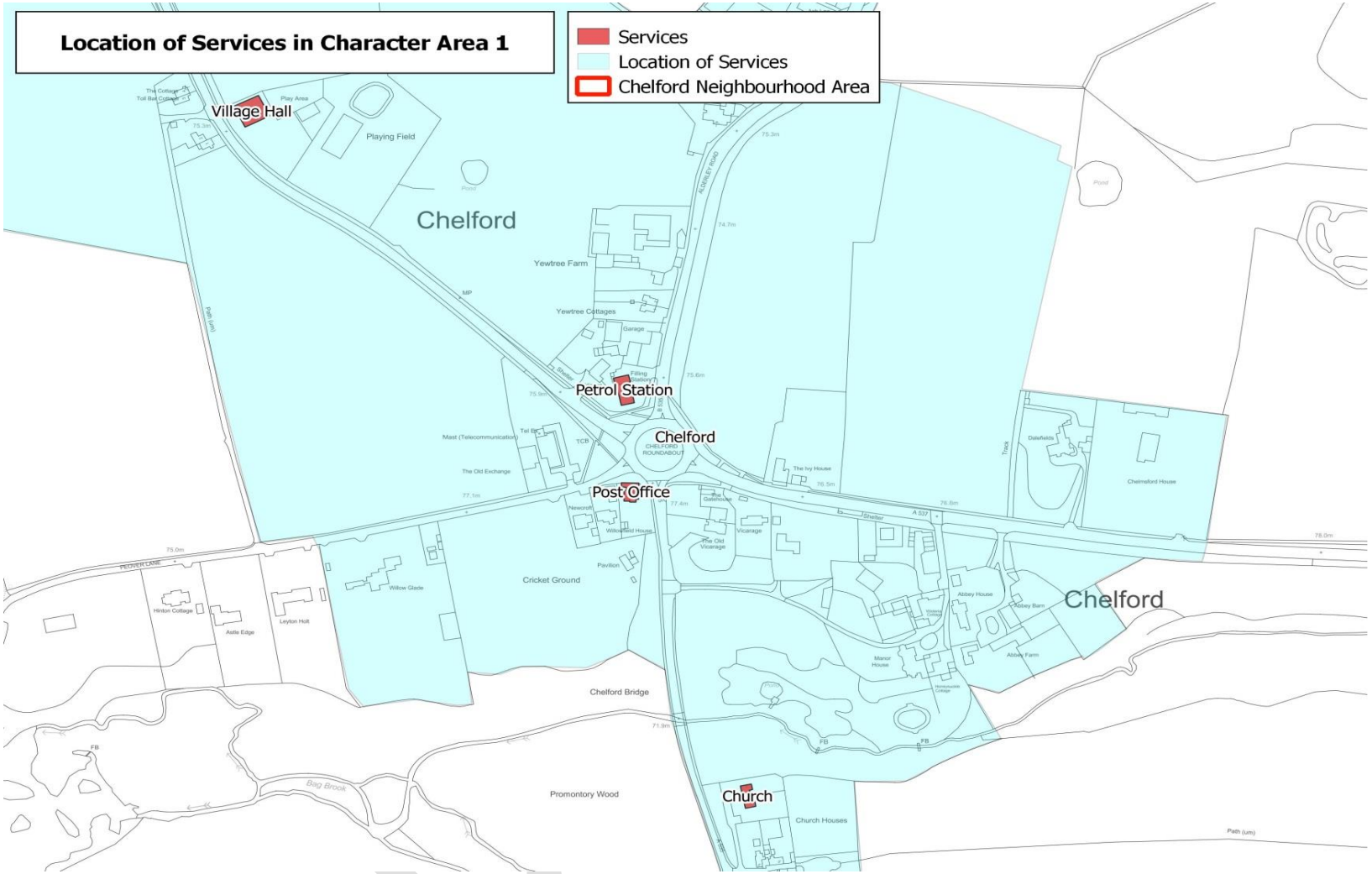
9.9 The busy road and roundabout also interjects the village into additional segments.

9.10 The roundabout is further defined by mature trees and greenery. Coming off the roundabout interchange is a Shell garage, cricket club and Saint Johns Church.

9.11 Some large houses are present with mature trees and some low stone boundary treatments, soft landscaping and perennial hedges surround the houses which are set back from the road. These have more front space available eg. larger front gardens and space for parking.

9.12 Similar period style 'square' sash cottage windows are present. The housing in the southerly eastern edge is rural typical with open landscape and dispersed housing and mature trees. As well as retail establishments around the roundabout the predominant properties are two stories in height.

9.13 There are examples or recent singular housebuilding and modernisation of properties. Some of the modernised and renovated properties include white render detailing


Location of Services in Character Area 1
Services
Location of Services
Chelford Neighbourhood Area
Village Hall
Playing Field
Chelford
Yewtree Farm
Yewtree Cottages
Petrol Station
Chelford
Post Office
Cricket Ground
Chelford
Chelford Bridge
Bag Brook
Promontory Wood
Church
Church Houses

Character Area 2

9.14 The northern suburban side (Character Area 2) is urbanised with predominantly modern standard detached housing around the station. The physical environment is heavily influenced by the transport infrastructure of the road and rail network which passes through the settlement and to the local countryside. In the main residential areas mostly low boundary treatments are prominent. Domestic garden landscaping and occasional views into the wider landscape define the local character. It is a nucleated suburban estate which forms part of the wider parish and is a core part of the village identity. This condensed population and dwelling disparity makes the area appear slightly off balance, 'lopsided', and lacking overall cohesion without a centre to connect the two parts together.

9.15 There are some Victorian properties in a ribbon pattern following the edge of the Knutsford Road. The area is distinguished between character styles - typically modern single storey and two storey standard housing, terraced properties with mock Tudor characteristics, Victorian and post war municipal properties.

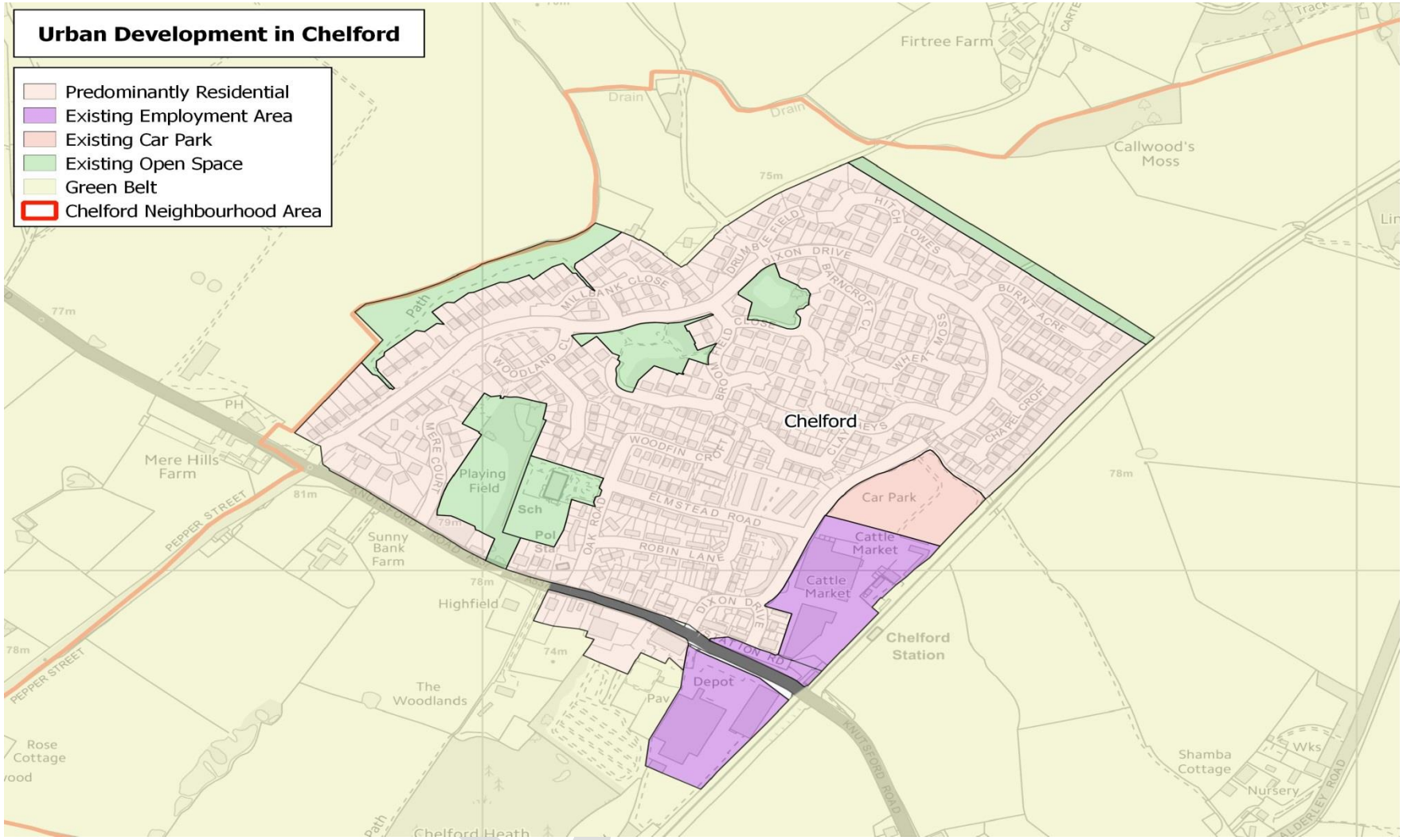
9.16 Closer to the station there is a cluster of a few older terraced properties but these are limited in number. The terraces near the station approach have a traditional 'two up two down' appearance.

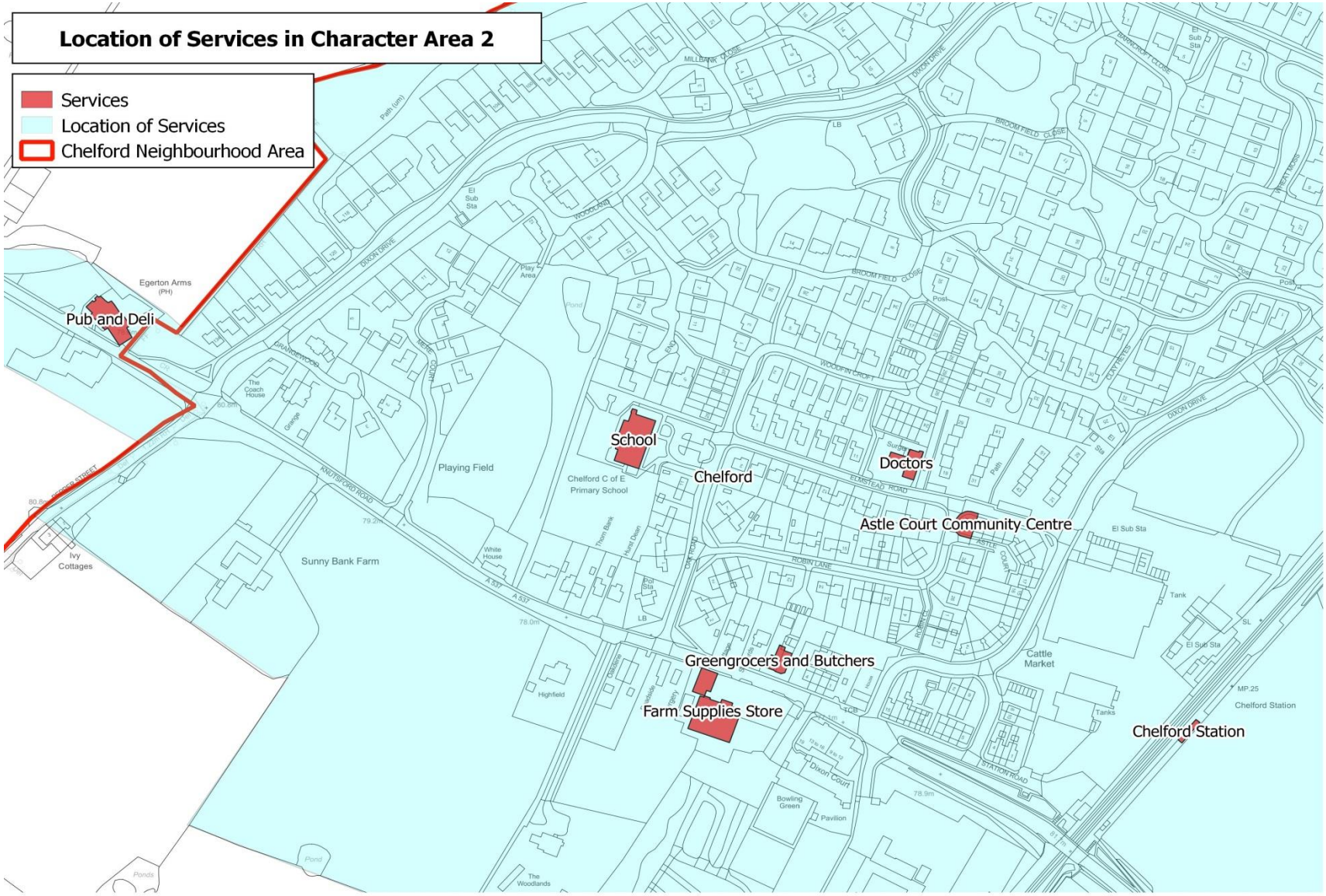
9.17 Although the properties are dense in the suburban part of the village. The use of standard housing provides a consistency of style, design and layout which creates sense of flow but is also repetitive as the style of house is consistently repeated on many of the streets.

9.18 Integrated into the development on many of the properties are large deep set gardens interspersed with green space, which is both public and private.

9.19 In the suburban area there is little visual connectivity between streets and to the wider countryside. This makes it seem slightly disorienting navigating through the space. Dixon Drive is an important semi circular road which links the estate together however the estate lacks distinct permeability. Some heavy planting and trees around the footpaths create an insular environment enclosed by trees. Some small side ginnels and footpaths provide access points for walking into the estate but not across or through the estate which affects the rhythm of the streets, nevertheless the streets appear uniformed and orderly.

9.20 The main road creates some background noise, but the area mostly overall is undisturbed by traffic disturbance. Larger vehicle sounds are noticeable when within the residential area although generally there is limited noise pollution from air traffic, trains, residents or businesses. The general village has a quiet and relaxed atmosphere with the sounds of birds and the local agriculture, creating a largely tranquil ambience. The high hedges and trees create a sense of enclosure in places.


Urban Development in Chelford
Predominantly Residential
Existing Employment Area
Existing Car Park
Existing Open Space
Green Belt
Chelford Neighbourhood Area
Firtree Farm
Callwood's Moss
Drain
Chelford
Car Park
Cattle Market
Cattle Market
Depot
Chelford Station
Playing Field
Sch
Pol
Mere Hills Farm
Sunny Bank Farm
Highfield
The Woodlands
Rose Cottage
Shamba Cottage
Nursery
Wks
Chelford Heath
PEPPER STREET
KNUTSFORD ROAD
ELDERLEY ROAD
ELMSTEAD ROAD
ROBIN LANE
DIXON DRIVE
OAK ROAD
WOODFIN CROFT
MILLBANK CLOSE
WOODLAND CL
MERE COURT
BROOMFIELD CLOSE
DRUMBLE FIELD
HITCH LOWES
BARNCROFT CL
WHEET MOSS
BURNT ACRE
CHAPEL CROFT
CLAYLEYS
Path
PH
77m
75m
78m
81m
74m


Location of Services in Character Area 2
Services
Location of Services
Chelford Neighbourhood Area
Pub and Deli
Egerton Arms (PH)
School
Chelford
Doctors
Astle Court Community Centre
Greengrocers and Butchers
Farm Supplies Store
Chelford Station
Playing Field
Chelford C of E Primary School
Sunny Bank Farm
Ivy Cottages
Cattle Market
Bowling Green
Pavilion
Dixon Court
Highfield
The Coach House
White House
The Woodlands
Ponds
Pond
Play Area
El Sub Sta
Tank
Tanks
Chelford Station
MILLBANK CLOSE
DIXON DRIVE
BROOM FIELD CLOSE
WOODLAND
WOODFIN CROFT
CONTINENTAL
GRANGEWOOD
KNUTSFORD ROAD
EDISTEAD ROAD
ROBIN LANE
ASTLE COURT
OAK ROAD
STATION ROAD
A 537
A 537
Path (um)
Path
Post
Surgery
Grange
Garage
Vehicle
Garden
Hedge
Hum Dean
Thorn Bank
LB
78.0m
78.9m
79.2m
80.8m
80.3m
MP.25

10. Chelford Character Area Design Cues:

10.1 Key Positive Impacts

- Traditional Victorian rural character cottage houses with distinct features.
- Decorative timber features on windows with a set back design.
- Windows are in proportion to the rest of the property.
- Variety of brick shade and pattern adds to character detailing on Victorian properties.
- The characteristics of Victorian properties vary but many have distinct rounded and angled bay fronted windows some with small square sash windows with surrounds.
- The characteristics of Victorian properties vary, but many have distinct rounded and angled bay fronted windows some with small square sash windows with surrounds.
- Consideration to bay window frames, size of window pane, eave height, chimneys, pattern form roof tiling, shape or stone brick intels, bands and patterns in different coloured brick, materials such as slate and timber should be enhanced with prominent chimneys.
- Boundary treatments principally have low garden walls and hedges with mature trees on grass verges and large hedges.
- Some of the suburban streets are tree lined adding to an attractive village environment with a mixture of hedging and shrubbery.

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10.2 Key Negative Impacts:

- A mixture of property types throughout (Victorian, municipal, mock Tudor, standard developer housing). A mix of styles together create a lack of cohesion without a definitive style.
- Little to anchor the two distinct sections of Chelford together.
- Accentuated proportions and features on new properties undermine the village setting e.g scale of the patio doors on the main highway detract from feelings of privacy.
- Use of stone and gravel and metal boundary treatments without greenery on private properties detracts from the rural component.
- Appearance of concreted tarmac front paths with no trees and limited greenery detract from the rural setting and creates challenge with defining ownership of shared space.
- Overgrown large hedges detract from openness of the village scene.
- There are limited landmarks or character buildings to help with orientation around the suburban streets.
- Some paths are very narrow on the main road making pedestrians more vulnerable.
- The petrol station on the roundabout with little other context gives the impression the village is a stop gap for motorists.

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11 Typical Local Materials and Details Research

(To be completed by group with close up and detailed images of brickwork, windows, roofs etc, to form a visual key for their area. In conjunction with the 'Spirit of Place', this exercise should aim to identify the positive design features of Chelford . The below text taken from the design guide, can be used as a starting point to generate ideas.)

*****Example text for group to adapt for their own character area*****

Brick *is the predominant building material throughout the character area but subtle variations in colour exist between settlements. Lighter brown brick is more common in smaller settlements in contrast to larger towns where a brighter red brick is often found. Contrasting brick is used for decorative effect on many buildings etc..*

Materials *often vary between elevations, for instance render or painted brick on main façades and exposed brick on side elevations. Stone is most commonly found on boundary walls rather than building exteriors where it is used for trim detail or quoins.*

Boundary treatments *are a broad mix of brick and stone walls, hedges, railings and timber fencing. Some variation exists with a predominance of low stone walls and hedging in ….. for example. Paved setts can be found on some streets in the character area..*

Typical Traditional Detailing

Buildings *from the …….revival style are found throughout the character area.*

Common details *typical of this period include first floor oriel windows, steep pitched roofs, mullioned windows, tall narrow windows and mock timber framing to gables.*

Turrets, towers and full height bays are a ***distinctive feature*** *of late Victorian houses. This is very evident in parts of ……..*

Several properties in the character area have distinctive shaped gables…..

Decorative brick banding is common on terraced properties and takes various forms including: three bands of red engineered brick; alternating stretchers of red and blue brick in two bands; and multiple bands of red stretchers.

Occasionally a stone band is used below first floor windows with dentilled brickwork below. A few examples of Victorian architecture can be found, identifiable by the characteristic of ……windows and a white cornice under the eaves.

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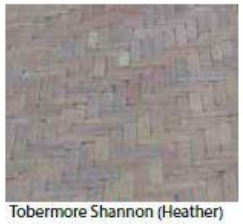
North Cheshire Fringe

	Carriageway			Shared Surface		Conservation Area	
Avenue	Bitmac	Bitmac with gutter detail in Conservation Setts (Silver grey)	Conservation Setts (Silver grey)	Gritstone/Yorkstone/Granite Flags (buffs/greys/blue)	Gritstone/Yorkstone/Granite Setts (buffs/greys/blues)		Bitmac carriageway with silver grey granite aggregate chippings rolled into wearing course with Granite split faced setts (silver grey) as gutter detail (five courses)/parking bays and Yorkstone diamond sawn flags (buffs/greys) to pavements
Street	Bitmac	Bitmac with gutter detail in Conservation Setts (Silver grey)	Conservation Setts (Silver grey)	Gritstone/Yorkstone/Granite Setts (buffs/greys/blues)	Conservation Setts (Silver grey)		Bitmac carriageway with silver grey granite aggregate chippings rolled into wearing course with Granite split faced setts (silver grey) as gutter detail (five courses)/parking bays and Yorkstone diamond sawn flags (buffs/greys) to pavements
Lane	Tegula Setts (Pennant grey)			Tegula Setts (Pennant grey)		Carriageway - Conservation Setts (Silver grey)	Gritstone/Yorkstone/Granite Flags (buffs/greys/blue)
Shared Drive	Resin Bound Gravel (Pink Aggregates)	Mistral Priora Permeable Paving (Silver grey)	 Tobermore Shannon (Heather)	Tobermore Country Kerb (Silver grey)			

12. Recommendations:

11.1 To protect and improve the character of the village and ensure the neighbourhood plan incorporates locally specific policies, the following policy areas are recommended to be included in the neighbourhood plan:

1. **New development should avoid introducing suburban forms and depth to the development pattern.**
2. **New development should attempt to balance together both parts of the character areas.**
3. **New development should not significantly harm features which make an important contribution to the landscape and character of the area (hedge rows and trees)**
4. **Conversions and new dwellings should ensure a positive transition between the rural and village landscapes, by ensuring the scale, materials and orientation of buildings is sensitive to the landscape within which the site is located.**
5. **New buildings should use a limited pallet of materials, seeking opportunities to integrate and reproduce existing strong character elements. Newly rendered properties to reflect the design cues of the North Cheshire Village.**
6. **Details from traditional properties should be reflected in new developments.**
7. **Seek to improve or maintain the permeability of new residential settings and the legibility of the village, either through the character of the buildings by using a contrast of features, or landscape features such as benches and distinct nodes and edges on new developments.**
8. **The proportions of new properties to reflect the characteristics of existing properties. Contextual cues to be taken from the existing village layout.**
9. **Green spaces - within existing or new suburban areas to be maintained or allocated within new development to ensure a complementary vision to the existing rural environment.**
10. **Maintain green spaces within the suburban areas and use soft landscaping/hedges around properties. Use appropriate landscaping for local context. Enclosure of plots and formation of boundary edges should be delivered in new development**
11. **Boundaries: Boundary treatments facing the street should be low rise, consistent with the immediate character of the area and seek to create a sense of enclosure within the street scene. Boundary hedges should normally be retained and incorporated in new development.**
12. **Pavements and fixed boundary treatments to complement existing features of properties. Use texture and pattern to make permanent boundaries distinct where possible.**
13. **In infill plots, new development should ensure a consistency of form with immediate neighbours that are in close proximity to one another.**
14. **Increase PROW and cycleways through the village.**
15. **Identify any local heritage assets for inclusion in the neighbourhood plan.**

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16. Key mid and short range views identified should be protected from significant harm.
17. New buildings should be oriented to ensure roof ridges run parallel to the highway.
18. Installation of gate posts and gates facing the highway should be limited in size and not dominate a residential frontage or street scene
19. Dormers should be proportional to the existing building and be subservient to the roof space.
20. The character assessment should seek to uniform the two aspects of positive urban design features and 'Spirit of Place' together to form a cohesive set of features that identify Chelford as a unique place.

13. Other Considerations:

1. Consider detailed review of development opportunities within the village.
2. Consider establishing a formal settlement boundary.
3. Formalisation of existing areas of employment through an allocation of employment land
4. Protection of and increasing opportunities to access the countryside and to better connect the village to other areas within the parish.
5. Policies to manage the change of use of agricultural buildings as farms consolidate and close. The multiple farmsteads in the rural area offer an opportunity for rural economic development and where appropriate for new residential development but this should be balanced against suburbanising effects on the rural character of the area both in terms of design and use.
6. Policies to encourage and facilitate the diversification of the rural economy, including to support tourism and leisure.

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Appendix 1: Policy Context:

National Policy

The core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework address the role of design and the relevance of character and landscape in the planning process. The Core Principles state that planning should:

'*always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings'*

And:

'take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it'

These principles are further detailed through a number of polices. Section 7 of the NPPF sets out at length what good design means and how it should be addressed in the planning system. Paragraph 58 sets out that:

Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging*
- *appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate*

Whilst planning policies should not seek to impose specific styles or features, local distinctiveness is to be recognised (paragraph 60) and great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative design (paragraph 63). The NPPF also sets out that planning policies and decisions should *'identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason' (para.121)*

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NPPF also sets out a series of policies related to the countryside and landscape. Planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (para.17) and local and neighbourhood plans should support sustainable rural enterprise which respects the character of the countryside (para.28).

The NPPF also sets out a series of policies specifically relating to landscape and environment:

Paragraph 109: *The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;'

Paragraph 113: *Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites,so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.*

Paragraph 117: *To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:*

plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;

Paragraph 125: *By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*

The NPPF sets a framework within which there are opportunities for local and neighbourhood plans to plan positively for design, environment and landscape. This report makes recommendations on how the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan may successfully form a policy response to such issues.

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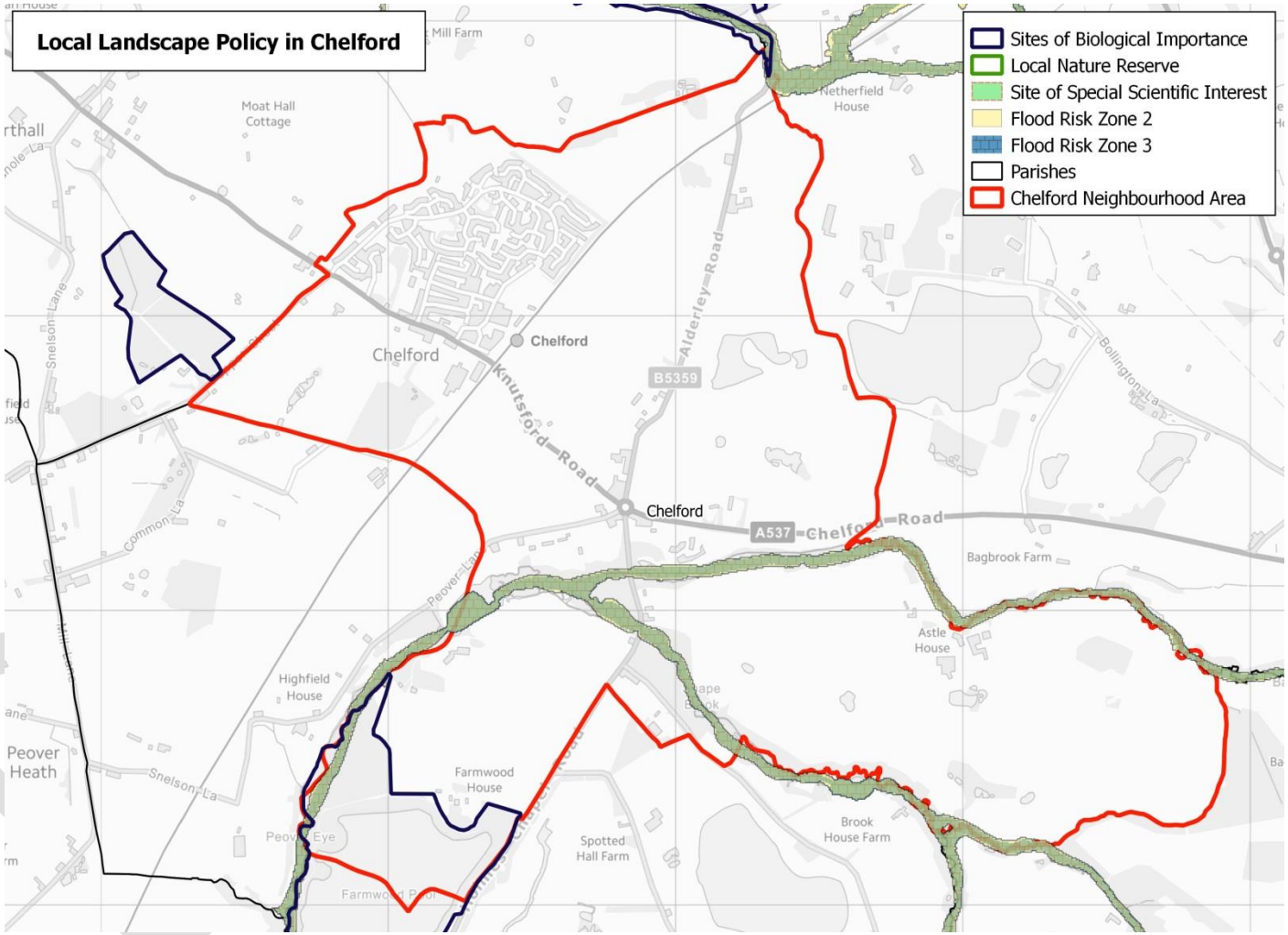
Appendix 2: Local Landscape Policy

The saved policies of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan contain no specific, overarching policy in regard the treatment of landscape however does include defined Areas of Special County Value and also references the landscape as an important factor for consideration in a number of policies.

There are no specific landscape policies or designations within Chelford parish.

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy sets out strategic policies which will form the local basis of future detailed policies in the borough. Policy SE4 sets out the approach that Cheshire east Council will take in regard to landscape issues which is to ensure that 'all development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes.' The policy is set out in full below:



The Landscape

1. The high quality of the built and natural environment is recognised as a significant characteristic of the Borough. All development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes.

2. Development will be expected to:

   i. Incorporate appropriate landscaping which reflects the character of the area through appropriate design and management;
   ii. Where appropriate, provide suitable and appropriate mitigation for the restoration of damaged landscape areas;
   iii. Preserve and promote local distinctiveness and diversity;
   iv. Avoid the loss of habitats of significant landscape importance;
   v. Protect and / or conserve the historical and ecological qualities of an area;

3. In Local Landscape Designation Areas, Cheshire East will seek to conserve and enhance the quality of the landscape and to protect it from development which is likely to have an adverse effect on its character and appearance and setting. Where development is considered to be acceptable in principle; measures will be sought to integrate it into the landscape character of the area by:

   i. Protecting, restoring and enhancing the character and appearance of the local area through suitable planting, landscape and / or woodland;
   ii. Making suitable provision for better public access to, and enjoyment of, the Local Landscape Designation Areas;

   4. Where development may affect a local or national[70] designation a full understanding of the context, characteristics and significance should be provided and informed by the Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Assessment and the Local Landscape Designation Study. In Local Landscape Designation Areas, Cheshire East will seek to conserve and enhance the quality of the landscape and to protect it from development which is likely to have an adverse effect on its character and appearance.

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14. Reference Page

Bimby – Beauty in my backyard

Cheshire East Council - Design Guide

Design Council - Building for Life: The sign of a good place to live

Locality - Good design in Neighbourhood Planning

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - NPPF

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Housing White Paper

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