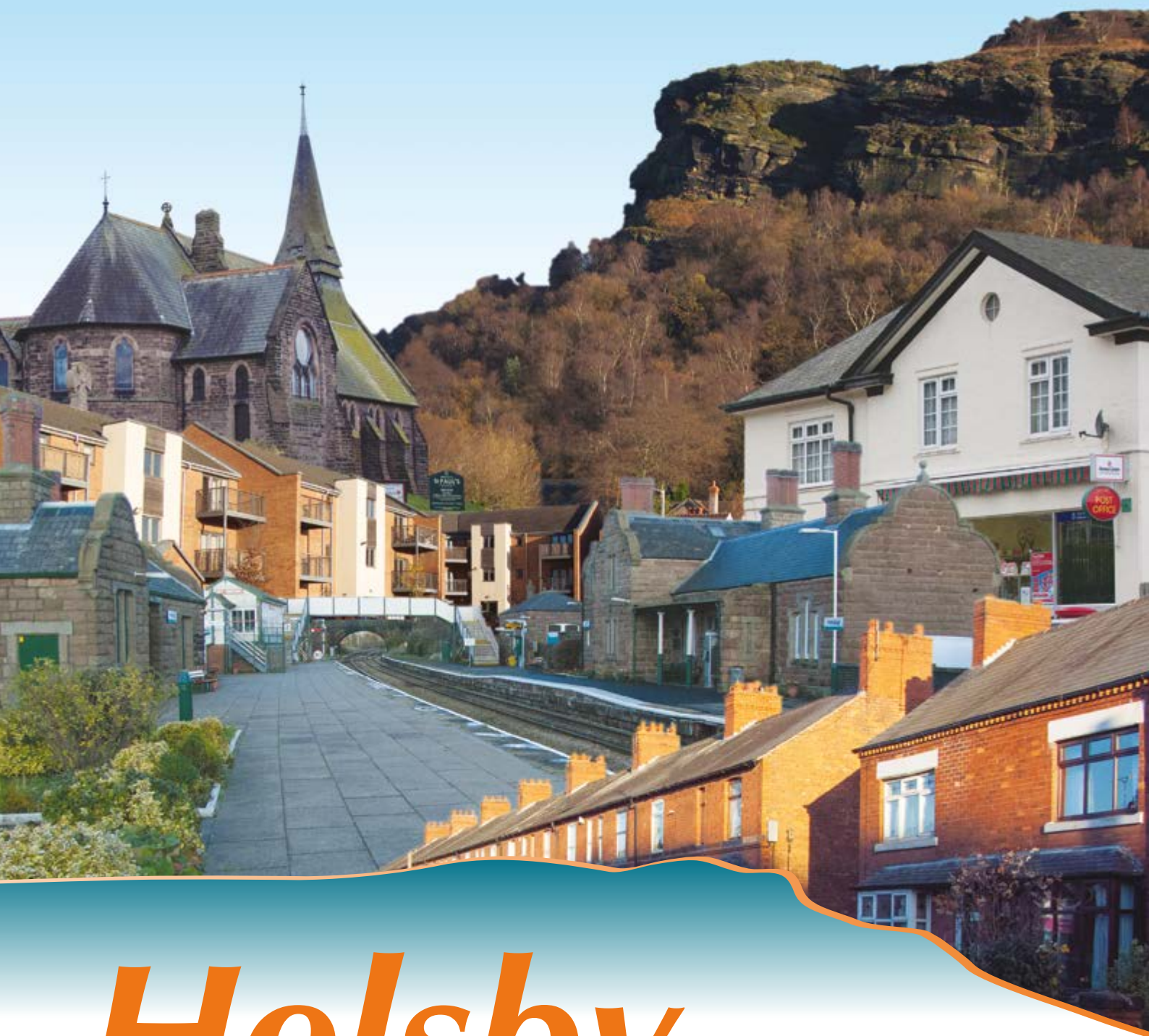


H E L S B Y      P A R I S H      C O U N C I L



# *Helsby*

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
Submission Version

***2015 - 2030***



# Preface

This is the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for Helsby which has been produced by the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, led by the Parish Council. It incorporates comments and minor policy changes resulting from the six week formal consultation exercise on the draft version of the Plan conducted in April/ May 2015. In addition to national and local statutory consultation bodies, feedback on the draft Plan was also sought from all residents, adjoining town and parish councils and local organisations including landowners, farmers, developers, businesses and shops, as well as stakeholders such as local schools, faith groups and the health centre. Pre-submission recommendations from Cheshire West and Chester Council officers have also been considered.



The Plan is founded in community engagement and has developed from views expressed by local residents during public open meetings held February/March 2014 and an associated questionnaire, and from feedback on a Vision and Objectives document circulated in July 2014. Comments and responses to all consultation stages are available to view at [www.helsbyparish.org.uk/hnp/index.html](http://www.helsbyparish.org.uk/hnp/index.html)

This proposed Neighbourhood Plan for Helsby and supporting documents are being submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council for the required six week “publicity” period, appointment of an examiner and progression to independent examination.

Following successful examination, the Plan will proceed to a local referendum in which Helsby residents will be asked whether they want Cheshire West and Chester Council to use the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide future planning applications for the area. The Neighbourhood Plan will be “made” (come into force) if the majority of those who vote in the referendum support the plan.

## ***Helsby Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group***

# ***How This Plan is Organised***

The Plan is divided into four sections:

## ***Section 1: Introduction***

This section sets out:

- How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the Planning system, what it is, and the area and time period it covers
- A summary of the public consultation stages and how these have driven development of the Plan
- A brief overview of Helsby, past and present
- The principles of sustainable development behind the Plan and the strategy for Helsby.

## ***Section 2: A Vision for Helsby - Key Issues And Core Objectives***

This section sets out the vision for development of Helsby over the period to 2030. It provides background and evidence behind the four objectives as below which were developed to support that vision:

- The Environment
- Employment, Transport and Shopping
- Housing and Infrastructure
- Sport and Leisure

For each objective, there is a summary of community views on draft proposals from the previous public consultation and how they link to the Policies in this Plan.

## ***Section 3: Neighbourhood Plan Policies***

This section sets out the individual policies of the Neighbourhood Plan listed under each of the four objectives behind the vision for Helsby, with an explanation accompanying each one. The section ends by describing how the Plan will be monitored and reviewed going forward.

## ***Section 4: Supporting Information***

This section includes:

- A glossary
- Acknowledgements
- Strategic Policy Context i.e. how the Plan aligns with national and local planning policies
- Appendix containing a schedule of available housing sites
- Appendix containing a list of heritage assets for Helsby

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# Section 1: Introduction

This document has been prepared by the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and has been led by Helsby Parish Council. The Parish Council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the village of Helsby at the Parish Council meeting held 8th October 2012.

The Helsby Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) is a new type of planning document that sets out the direction of growth in Helsby until 2030. It is part of the Government's new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. This is set out in the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Plan provides a vision for the future of the community, and sets out clear policies to realise this Vision. These policies must accord with higher level Planning policy as required by the Localism Act. The Neighbourhood Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the people of Helsby and others with an interest in the community.



The Neighbourhood Plan provides local people with the opportunity to have control over where development should go and how it can benefit the community. It will protect Helsby from uncoordinated and speculative development.

The Neighbourhood Plan for Helsby reflects the desires of the community to preserve the character and community spirit of the village whilst enabling its continued growth and vitality by ensuring that facilities and services are provided as part of any additional housing development.

In order to provide a structure which meets the needs of a growing population, safeguards the environment and builds the local economy, the Plan must be flexible, adaptable and above all sustainable in order to ensure the future wellbeing of our community.

## ***1.1 How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the Planning system***

Although the Government's intention is for local people to decide what goes on in their communities, the Localism Act 2011 sets out some important principles.

One of these is that all Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with higher level planning policy such as the National Planning Policy Framework (otherwise known as the NPPF) and local policy, which in Helsby's case is the retained policies of the Vale Royal Local Plan First Review Alteration 2006 (referred to as the Vale Royal Local Plan), Supplementary Planning Documents, and Cheshire West and Chester Council's (CWAC) Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies as adopted on 29th January 2015.

Whilst planning applications will still be decided by CWAC, the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for Helsby will give local people the power to decide where new housing required by the CWAC Local Plan should go, how employment, retail and leisure facilities should develop and how the village should change. The Localism Act allows the Neighbourhood Plan to provide more than the number of houses defined in local policy but it does not allow the Plan to provide for less. When finally adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will be taken into account when planning decisions for Helsby are made by CWAC.

## ***1.2 What is in the Neighbourhood Plan?***

Although deciding where new housing should go and how employment, retail and leisure facilities should develop are important aspects of the Plan, it is about much more than this. The Plan is a plan for the village as a whole. It looks at a wide range of issues, including:

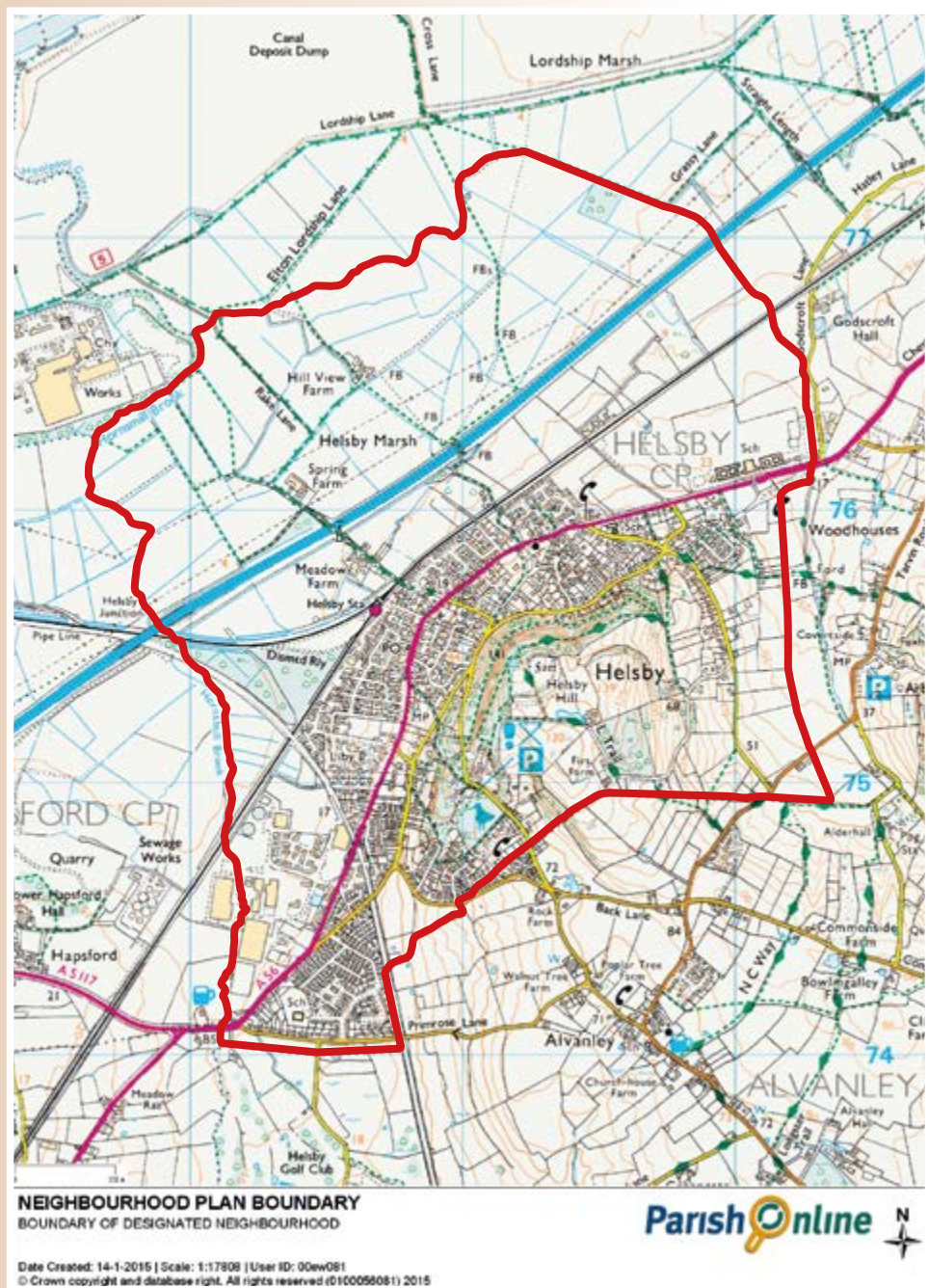
- Achieving high quality, well designed development which fits into the village environment
- The type and tenure of new housing, including an element of affordable homes, required to meet local needs
- Consideration of how new housing development will impact on local facilities such as healthcare and education, and also on infrastructure such as public utilities and the highways network
- Promoting local employment and opportunities for businesses to set up or expand their premises
- Transport and access issues such as parking, cycling and walking provision
- The provision of sports and leisure facilities including community buildings and social meeting places
- Preserving the environment of the village including its landscape and views
- Protecting its important historic buildings and heritage assets
- Protecting and enhancing natural assets, habitats and green open spaces such as parks, play areas and allotments
- Development of wind turbine renewable energy sources



### 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Boundary and Plan Period

The whole parish of Helsby has been formally designated as a Neighbourhood Area through an application made on 20th May 2013 under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (Part 2) which was approved by Cheshire West and Chester Council on 31st July 2013. The Neighbourhood Plan boundary thus follows the Parish Council boundary and is shown below.

The Plan covers a 15 year period from 2015 to 2030, which is in line with the timescale of CWAC's Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies 2010-2030.



Boundary of Helsby Neighbourhood Plan

## ***1.4 Community Engagement and Development of the Plan***

The Helsby Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by residents and members of Helsby Parish Council working together as a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The Steering Group has been supported by professional guidance from a qualified Town Planner (Robert Mackenzie Associates Ltd), funded by grants from the Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning programme 2013 - 2015 and the Community Rights Programme, led by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Plan has been developed from the views of local residents, stakeholders and statutory consultees gathered using a variety of consultation approaches to ensure widespread awareness and community involvement.



Full details are described in the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement with additional information available at <http://www.helsbyparish.org.uk/hnp/index.html>

### **Raising Awareness and Gathering Initial Community Feedback**

Helsby News, a community-run quarterly newsletter supported by Helsby Parish Council and delivered by volunteers to every household in Helsby, ran articles throughout 2013 describing the formation of the Steering Group and inviting participants, followed by updates on progress and upcoming community events.

During February and March 2014 the Steering Group organised a total of four “roadshows” at different venues throughout Helsby (Sports and Social Club, the Community Centre and St Paul’s Church Hall to facilitate attendance from residents living in the south, centre or north areas of the village, respectively). The events were also held at different times (weekdays and weekends, daytime and evening) to maximise attendance. The events were advertised by a flyer published in the February 2014 edition of Helsby to Hand (an independent monthly publication delivered by volunteers to all 2,143 Helsby households) and by posters on community noticeboards, in shops and businesses throughout Helsby. Copies of the flyer were provided to both primary schools in Helsby (Hornsmill and Hillside) and staff ensured each child took one home. The flyer was also made available to all pupils at Helsby High School. Email communication was used to inform all clubs and societies within the village (over 60 organisations) of the schedule and interest encouraged through postings on the Helsby Facebook page.

At each roadshow, there were posters describing the Neighbourhood Plan process, maps of the Neighbourhood Plan area and a rolling slideshow entitled “Helsby in Numbers” which provided key statistics regarding the village. Attendees were provided with sticky-notepads and invited to leave their comments and thoughts on 16 general topics of potential local interest and an “anything else?” section. Volunteers from the Steering Group were on hand to explain everything and also issue a brief information sheet/questionnaire for attendees to take away. The



questionnaire was very broad-based and asked residents what they liked and disliked about the Parish, how they would like to see it evolve and the benefits new development should bring to the community. Drop boxes, and additional copies of the questionnaire, were provided at the Post Office, Community Centre and local shops/businesses for return by 31st March 2014. The questionnaire was also available online through SurveyMonkey.

Over 50 people attended the roadshow events and left comments on post-it notes. In addition a total of 35 questionnaires were returned (15 from the drop boxes and 20 online).

### **Development and Consultation on Vision and Objectives**

During April and May 2014, the Steering Group collated all the comments and feedback from the roadshow events, reviewed all responses and pulled out the most frequently mentioned items from the questionnaire to assist developing a Vision for Helsby. From the roadshow and questionnaire data, four key themes emerged as shown below and were used to prepare Objectives to support that vision:

- The Environment
- Employment, Transport and Shopping
- Housing and Infrastructure
- Sport and Leisure



For each Objective, the Steering Group developed a series of proposals based on the initial community feedback for how the goal of that objective could be achieved.

A copy of the Vision and Objectives document/questionnaire was included in the Summer edition of Helsby News for distribution to every household in Helsby during the week of 23rd June 2014. The document provided background to the Vision and Objectives and asked each participant whether they agreed or disagreed with the Vision and individual proposals. As for the initial questionnaire, drop boxes were available throughout the village for return of the questionnaire by end July. Email communication to all local clubs/societies and Facebook postings were again used to encourage residents to respond.

A total of 244 completed questionnaires were received, representing a response of approximately 12% of Helsby households.

### **Creation of the Draft Plan and Pre-Submission Consultation**

The Steering Group reviewed all 244 returned questionnaires which overwhelmingly supported the vision and objectives of the Plan proposals. Only two proposals, around seeking potential sites for a swimming pool and skateboard/roller-skating/biking facility proved controversial and showed divided opinion. Very few of the additional comments could be addressed directly through the Neighbourhood Plan but the Steering Group considered other ways to respond, if possible.

The results of the consultation were used to confirm the Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan and to prepare policies for the draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan. Preliminary advice from Cheshire West and Chester Council Planning Officers was also used to refine the document.

The pre-submission consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan started week of 23rd March 2015 and ran until 15th May 2015 (5th June for Cheshire West and Chester Council and Town and Parish Councils neighbouring Helsby). The consultation was designed to obtain input from a wide range of residents and stakeholders. A summary of the policies, with a detachable feedback form, was circulated to all households in Helsby with the Spring 2015 edition of the Helsby News. The document asked residents to view the Draft Plan online at the website or as a hard copy available at several locations within the village. Comments could be returned using the feedback form (hard copy to a choice of dropboxes or website download/email) and/or by visiting one of the Parish Council surgeries held 11th April or 2nd May. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group sent a letter to local organisations including landowners, farmers, businesses, shops, schools, faith groups and local clubs/societies requesting feedback on the draft Plan and offering to visit for a discussion if wished. Letters were also sent to the required statutory consultees and bodies asking for their comments.

Posters advertising the availability of the Draft Plan and ways of providing feedback were displayed throughout Helsby and Facebook postings used to encourage community involvement.

### **Creation of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan**

A total of 72 individuals/organisations responded to the pre-submission consultation on the draft Plan and over 160 comments were recorded by the Steering Group using a spreadsheet to assist review of the feedback. The overwhelming majority of responses supported the policies in the draft Plan.

The popular issues and concerns were similar to themes identified in previous consultations and were associated with:

- Parking, especially at the railway station
- Speeding traffic
- Greenbelt and housing development
- Wind turbines



The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group considered all comments and responses to each were documented in the spreadsheet (Appendix 5 of the Consultation Statement and available at <http://www.helsbyparish.org.uk/hnp/index.html>). The Summer edition of Helsby News was used to inform residents about the Plan progress and availability of the spreadsheet with responses to all comments received.

In some instances, the relevant policy(s) were amended to reflect the comments received, as summarised in the table below. In addition, a further request was made to the Health Centre to confirm that the position of the Practice had not changed since they were consulted at an earlier stage in preparing the Plan, and had responded that they felt their premises had sufficient space to accommodate the expected increase in population.

Policy	Change
ENV2 Helsby Hill	Clarified Policy wording around views from Helsby Hill to take account of comments about wind farm.
ENV7 Natural Assets	Amended Policy wording to cover natural assets and biodiversity sites in areas adjoining Helsby.
ENV8 Wind Turbines	In the light of changes to the national policy for onshore windfarms, Policy revised to say that planning permission will not be granted for new wind turbines.
ETS2 Retention of Employment Sites	Clarified Policy wording that redevelopment to non-employment uses will only be permitted if defined criteria are met.
ETS3 Helsby Station	Replaced requirement in Explanation to consider impact on parking of station expansion (e.g. non-rail use of existing buildings) through a "travel statement" by an assessment of impact appropriate to the scale of development. Amended Explanation wording to highlight likelihood of expanded rail services, and possibly developments in Helsby, to add pressure on car parking provision.
ETS4 Walking, Cycling & Parking	Clarified Policy wording to include leisure and sport facilities in developments covered by Policy.
H1 New Housing Development	Amended Policy and Explanation to cross-reference Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies.
H3 Affordable Housing	Amended Policy to include requirement that affordable housing is dispersed throughout site and indistinguishable from market housing in design quality.
H4 Affordable Housing Green Belt	Clarified Policy that it refers only to limited provision of affordable housing in the Green Belt and added cross-references to Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies and other Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.
H7 Backland Development	Clarified Policy and Explanation so that the criterion around additional traffic is a severe impact on the transport network.
H8 Residential Parking	Explanation amended in light of policy statement from Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government made on 25 March 2015.
H10 Infrastructure Capacity	Explanation amended to include need to assess impact on need for traffic calming.

## 1.5 About Helsby - Past and Present

Helsby is located on the A56 approximately 7 miles east of Chester, nestling along the slopes of the sandstone outcrop of Helsby Hill above the marshes to the Mersey estuary. Helsby currently has a population of 4970 (from 2011 census) and covers an area of some 548 hectares.

Helsby's history goes back two thousand years when Iron Age tribesmen constructed a hill fort on top of Helsby Hill. The Roman road from the tidal limit of the Mersey at Wilderspool (Warrington) to Chester passed along the higher ground that is now Helsby.

Around 900 A.D. Norsemen settled in the area and established a frontier settlement at Helsby which they called "Hjallr-by" (the Village on the edge). In the Domesday Book (1086) the Village was recorded by its Norman name "Hellesbe". In the 13th Century the Manor of Helsby was held by the "de Hellesbe" family who established a water mill in the 14th Century, indicating the extent of clearance of land for cultivation in the area. A Rent Roll in 1354 shows 30 tenants occupying some 165 acres in Helsby.

By the 15th Century, ownership was divided between the Venebles, de Trafford and de Beeston families. The Trafford family were still landowners some 200 years later, but in 1612, the powerful Savage family, who already owned Frodsham, moved in and bought the Manor. Through marriage, the land passed to the Marquis of Cholmondeley who was still the principal landowner and Lord of the Manor at the time of the Tythe Apportionment of 1844.

The 1801 census gave the Village population as 692. A National School (later the Church of England Primary School) was erected in 1846. During the 19th Century no less than three Methodist Chapels were built – only one remains in use for religious purposes. The Anglican Parish Church was erected in 1870.

In 1850, the Birkenhead, Lancashire and Cheshire Junction Railway Company constructed the railway line from Chester to Warrington. In 1863, the Hooton and Helsby Branch Line connected the Village with the Birkenhead – Chester Line and "Helsby Junction" became a reality. Finally, the West Cheshire Railway reached Helsby from Mouldsworth in 1869 and was connected to the Hooton Branch Line. These convenient railway communications were undoubtedly an important factor in convincing the Telegraph Manufacturing Company to move from Neston in the mid 1880's and build its Britannia Telegraph Works on land to the north of the Chester Road adjoining the West Cheshire Line. From that date, the factory, most recently owned by BICC Electronic Cables, became a vital part of the life of the Village.



By 1901 the population had grown to 1572. It would seem that Helsby was dragged into the 20th Century against the wishes of many of its inhabitants. The Telegraph Manufacturing Company's borehole ensured a plentiful supply of clean water, but at a Public Meeting held in the school to consider the installation of a water supply scheme for the Village there was a majority against it. In

the event, the Company themselves set up a private company in 1895 known as the “Helsby Water Company”, laid mains, built a reservoir and those who wanted paid the Helsby Water Company for the connection and supply. Street lighting was also provided by the firm from their generating station and donations towards cost were solicited from prominent residents. Even in 1912, when the Mersey Power Company laid their line to Helsby, and householders were canvassed, only 12 householders were prepared to take a supply.



By 1951 the population was 2739. As the population continued to rise, so did the scale of traffic on the main Chester road, especially in the summer months when massive traffic jams developed. In the early 1960s a “Road Action Committee” was established, which, by propaganda and demonstrations, brought the problem to the notice of the Government and the Highway Authorities. Direct intervention by the Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home in 1964 resulted in Helsby/Frodsham By-pass section of the M56 being included in the Government’s Trunk Road Programme. Work started in 1968 and ‘our part’ of the M56 opened on 31st January 1971. This one development has had a major impact on the current quality of life in Helsby by reducing the volume of traffic that passes through the Village.

Helsby is now well served with transport links. Its close proximity to Junction 14 on the M56 offers convenient access to the motorway network. There is also a rail link offering a regular service to Chester, Frodsham, Warrington and Manchester and an occasional service to Liverpool. There is also a bus service to Chester, Frodsham, Runcorn, Liverpool and Warrington.

From the 2nd World War through to the 1960s, the BICC site in Helsby employed some 5000 people from the local area. From 1970 on there was a series of redundancy initiatives which reduced the number of employees to less than half that number. BICC stopped its operations in Helsby in 2000 and the site finally closed altogether during the summer of 2002. A plan to redevelop the site was presented in 2002 and in the spring of 2004 it was announced that there would be a new Tesco Supermarket built on the site in addition to housing and light industrial units. The Tesco store was opened at the end of 2005.



Since then, residential development of the former BICC site - now termed Mere's Edge - has continued with approximately 100 houses of 2, 2½ or 3 storeys being built by Persimmon Homes near the Tesco store (the Callender Gardens estate), together with a play area, and approximately 35 apartments in 2 or 3 storey blocks being built, also by Persimmon, at the entrance to the site (Arbour Walk). Further applications have recently been approved for additional residential development, including a 77 unit retirement facility. A part of the site has been earmarked for a new Community Sports Club, which will relocate from its current position on the A56.

Helsby has two good primary schools and a High School which is frequently the top comprehensive in Cheshire in the national league tables. There is a community Health Centre, a Library and Community Centre. At the time of the 2011 Census the usually resident population was 4972, with 89% of households owning one or more cars. 77% of those employed travelled to work by car, 17% by other means and 6% worked from home. In 2014, 5.7% of working age residents claimed out of work benefits.

The majority of residents work outside the Village. Although net employment opportunities in the Village have fallen with the phased closure of the BICC works, new employment and businesses have been created over recent years in the Village but all are relatively small scale and have moved into converted existing buildings e.g. RSK Group at Spring Lodge, 172 Chester Road and Compass Computer Consultants at Rockcliffe, Old Chester Road. This has established the Village as being primarily residential which is supported by the good transport links.

Most of Helsby Hill is owned by the National Trust and Helsby Quarry Woodland Park is designated as a Local Nature Reserve. Harmers Wood on Helsby Hill is another woodland area valued by the community and cared for by the Friends of Harmers Wood Trust.

The rural aspect with accessible adjacent countryside; the convenience for Chester, Liverpool, Manchester and the motorway network; together with its modest size and the “village atmosphere” are the three most common reasons why residents like living in Helsby.

## ***1.6 Principles of Sustainable Development***

Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. These three dimensions constitute what is sustainable in planning terms.

- Economic** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy
- Social** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities
- Environmental** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

To achieve this, a thoughtful and innovative approach is required, which works more positively with residents, landowners and developers taking a continuing interest in the future of the village.

This is the approach adopted in the Plan and on the basis of this the Parish will look to engage positively with the statutory planning process to guide future development.

People living in Helsby appreciate the special qualities the village possesses. It is a great place to live and when accommodating housing growth it will be vital that the qualities which make Helsby so successful are protected.

This plan is not anti-development and the community understands the need to accommodate housing growth. But there is great concern that new development in Helsby could erode the very qualities that make the village special if it is not carefully managed in terms of its scale and design.

Planning permission already exists for substantial new housing development at the Mere's Edge site, which will meet the housing requirements of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies for the remainder of the plan period. Any further proposals for development in the village must create developments of quality which contribute to the character of the village.



The Neighbourhood Plan will encourage the provision and retention of employment in Helsby to avoid unnecessary commuting. It will also encourage the provision of social infrastructure to meet the needs of the community, ranging from schools and medical facilities to amenity and greenspace; and it will encourage sustainable means of travel.

## ***1.7 Strategy for Helsby***

The key priority of the Plan for Helsby is to allow sustainable growth whilst maintaining the character, facilities and atmosphere of the village.

Housing growth is to be accommodated in a sensitive way with the majority of new homes being built on the brownfield Mere's Edge site. The new extra care development of 77 1- and 2-bedroom apartments with associated care facilities within Mere's Edge will help to diversify the housing offer in Helsby and the local area.



Other new housing development is expected to take the form of small scale developments across the Parish. Future growth based on large scale, inappropriate development outside existing village boundaries will not be supported by the community.

A number of small scale dispersed developments can be accommodated throughout the parish and could provide affordable housing opportunities for local residents.

Sustaining local businesses and improving local facilities is also a priority for the Plan. Local shops, services, and community facilities will be supported. Local employment and a range of local shops and services are essential to the sustainability of the village. An assessment will be required for any development associated with the railway station to ensure parking considerations are addressed.



Important green spaces are to be protected as are strategic views within the Parish and into and out of the village of Helsby.

The natural and historic assets will be afforded levels of protection commensurate with their importance. Improved walking and cycling connections will be promoted, both within the village and to surrounding Towns and Villages, to make sustainable travel to work and study easier, as well as providing leisure opportunities. The leisure use of the disused Helsby to Mouldsworth railway line for walking and cycling is a longer term aspiration. The re-opening of the Halton Curve offers an opportunity to provide a sustainable link to Liverpool.



Developers will be expected to ensure that the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure needed to support their proposals can be provided in a timely manner. This may be through on-site or off-site provision within Helsby.



# *Section 2: A Vision for Helsby - Key Issues and Core Objectives*

## *2.1 Vision for Helsby 2015 - 2030*

- The community values the village character and rural feel of Helsby, especially its green spaces and Hill, which it would like to preserve and enhance by protecting the best of what we have, and ensuring that any new development is sensitive to the local character and adds to the assets of the village.
- The community supports the retention of existing employment, and the creation of new jobs appropriate to Helsby's size and character, but recognises that many residents will continue to travel to work outside the village. It values the good existing road and rail links, and would like to see opportunities for sustainable travel improved through enhancements to the bus and rail network.
- Existing shopping provision is valued, and should be retained, and there is an aspiration to see as wide a range of choice as is realistically possible.
- The community would like to see additional housing to meet local needs, with a suitable range of house types and tenure, including affordable housing, and housing to meet the needs of an ageing population. This can be achieved on existing brownfield sites and through infilling, without the need for development on the Green Belt, which residents wish to protect.
- Residents would like to see enhanced opportunities for sport, leisure and recreation through the development of new sport and play facilities and extension of the footpath and cycleway networks.
- There are some major existing and planned industrial and energy related developments which are largely outside the parish boundary but have visual and environmental impact on the village. The community will oppose further proposals which might add to the cumulative burden of atmospheric, audible or visual pollution and would welcome measures to reduce traffic noise from the M56.



## 2.2 Key Issues and Objectives of The Plan

### 2.2.1 The Environment

#### Objective for the Environment

**To protect and enhance Helsby's environment, including its natural and heritage assets, so as to retain the character of the village, and hand it on to future generations in a better state than it is now.**

#### Background and Key Issues

Helsby sits within the North Cheshire Green Belt area. Helsby's Hill and Marshes are defining features of its environment and these important natural assets add distinctiveness to the village. Within the village there are a small number of protected wildlife sites, including Helsby Quarry (a Local Nature Reserve) and Harmers Wood, Helsby Hill and Frodsham Helsby and Lordship Marshes (Local Wildlife Sites). (See Plan Env 1).

Helsby Quarry Local Nature Reserve is a 3.5 hectare former sandstone quarry situated off Alvanley Road, on the slopes of Helsby Hill. When the Quarry ceased production in the 1920s it was used as a landfill site. It was compulsory purchased by Vale Royal Borough Council in 1988. The land was reclaimed, landscaped and officially opened as a Woodland Park in 1990. The site gained Local Nature Reserve status in 2001. The woodland, meadow, paths and picnic areas are now managed by Cheshire West and Chester Council and there is an active "Friends" group. The Park also has facilities for visitors with disabilities and has received The Civic Trust Green Flag Award each year since 2007. The exposed rock faces and tunnel of Helsby Sandstone are designated a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS).

The woods and disused quarries on Helsby Hill were purchased from the Marquis of Cholmondeley by The Friends of Harmer's Wood Trust in 2007. The area has been transformed and is now accessible to the public, providing woodland walks, an open area for meetings/ education and rock faces suitable for climbing.

There is a second Regionally Important Geological Site designated on Helsby Hill. (See Plan Env 2)

Helsby Frodsham and Lordship Marshes north of the M56 motorway is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (formerly known as a Site of Biological Interest or SBI); an Area of Significant Local Environmental Value (ASLEV) (Vale Royal Local Plan Policy NE12), and are part of the Mersey Estuary Zone (Vale Royal Local Plan Policy NE18). They are a significant open area between the heavy industry of Ellesmere Port and Halton. They provide a setting for Helsby Hill, are an important landscape feature in themselves, and are of international importance to migrating and wintering birds. The policies of the Vale Royal Local Plan protect these areas from development that would adversely affect the features which gave rise to their designation.

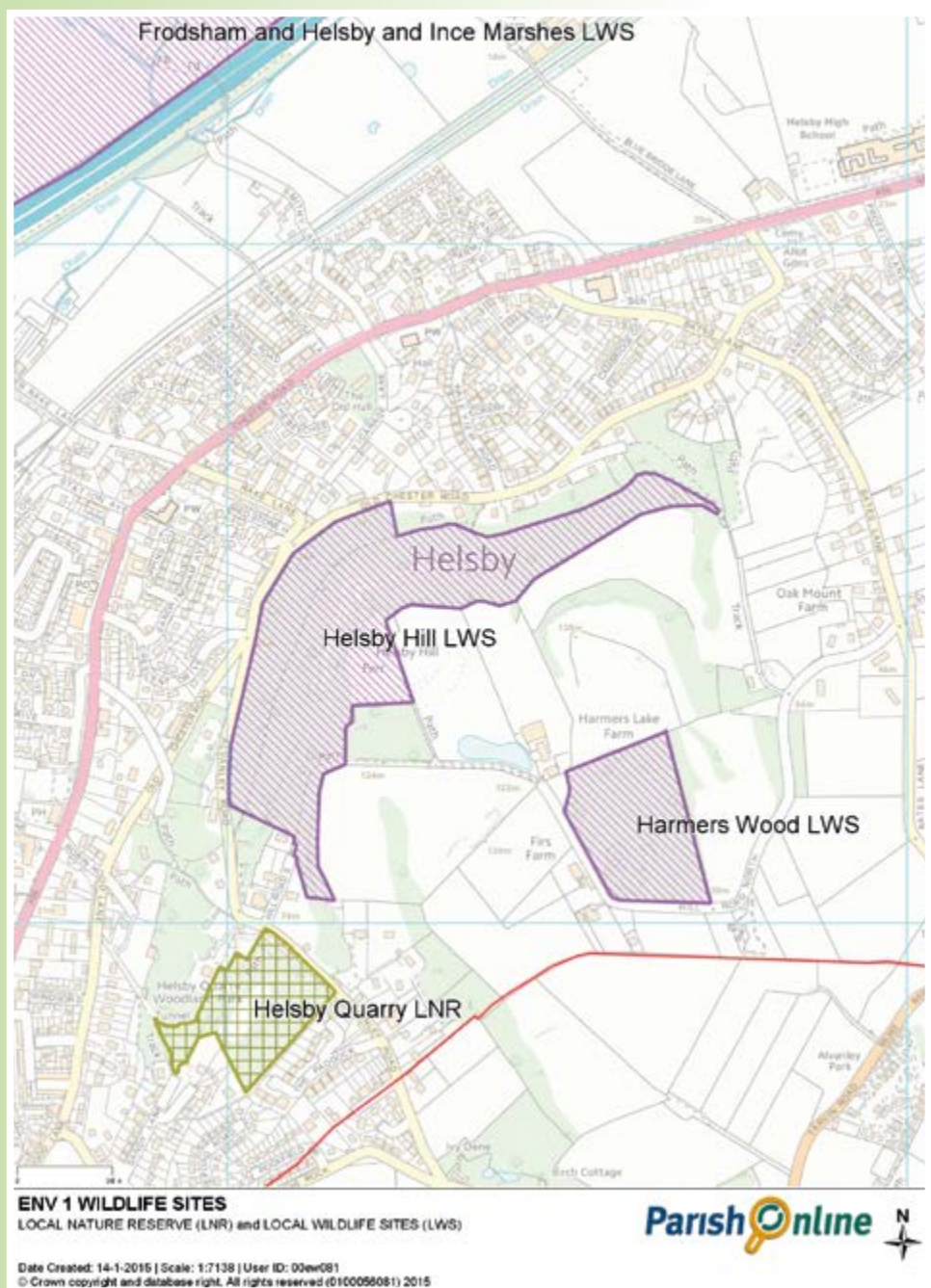
The Vale Royal Local Plan designated three other ASLEVs in or adjacent to Helsby (See Plan Env 3):

- The gap between Helsby and Frodsham South east of the A56
- Chester Road/Vicarage Lane
- Alvanley Road/Old Chester Road

Within these areas Policy NE12 of the Vale Royal Local Plan states that development will only be permitted if there is no unacceptable harm to the value of the area.

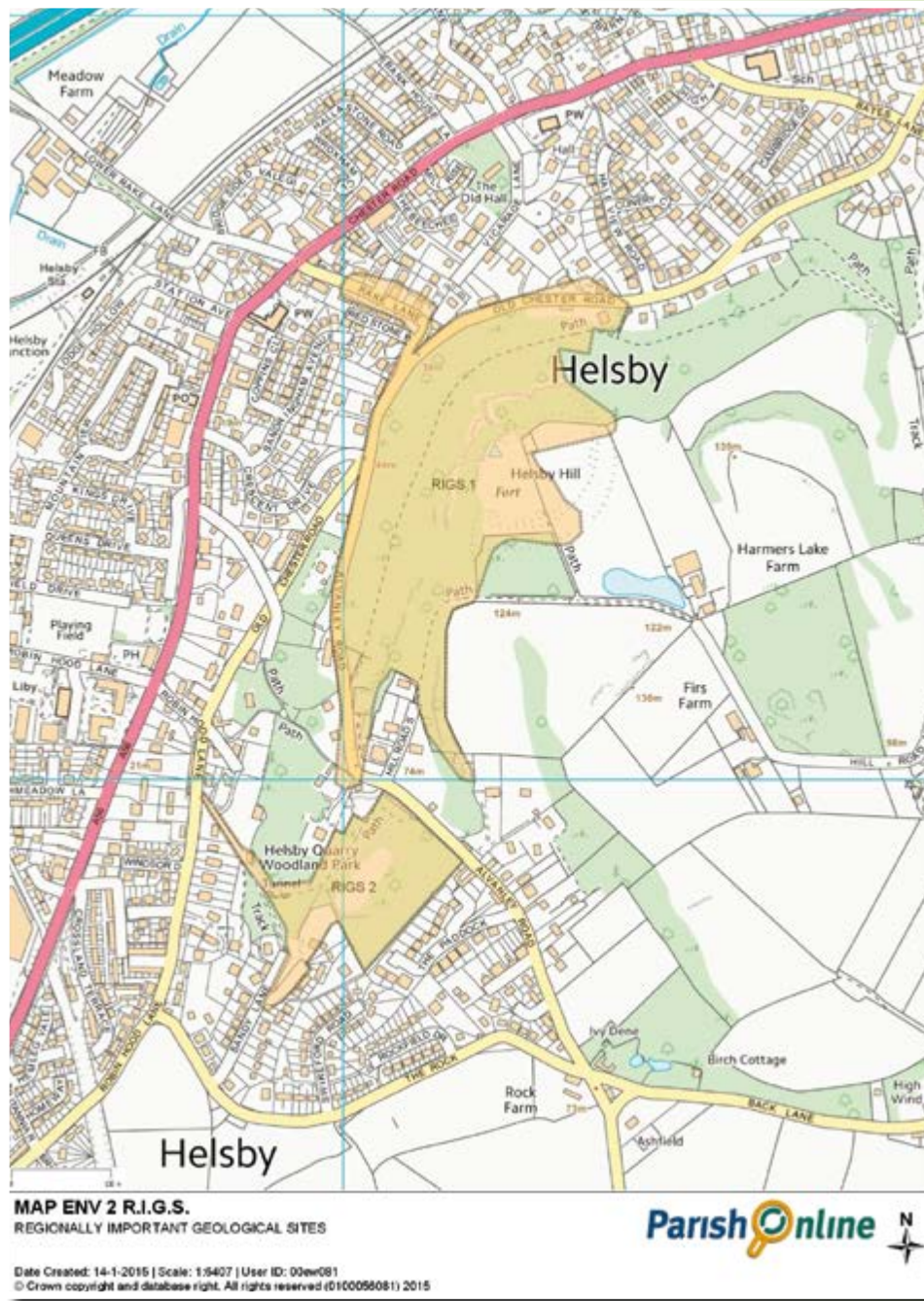
Helsby Hill was also designated as an Area of Special County Value in the now revoked Replacement Cheshire County Structure Plan.

There is no Conservation Area in Helsby, but there are several Heritage Assets, including a Scheduled Monument, “listed” buildings and features of local historical interest.

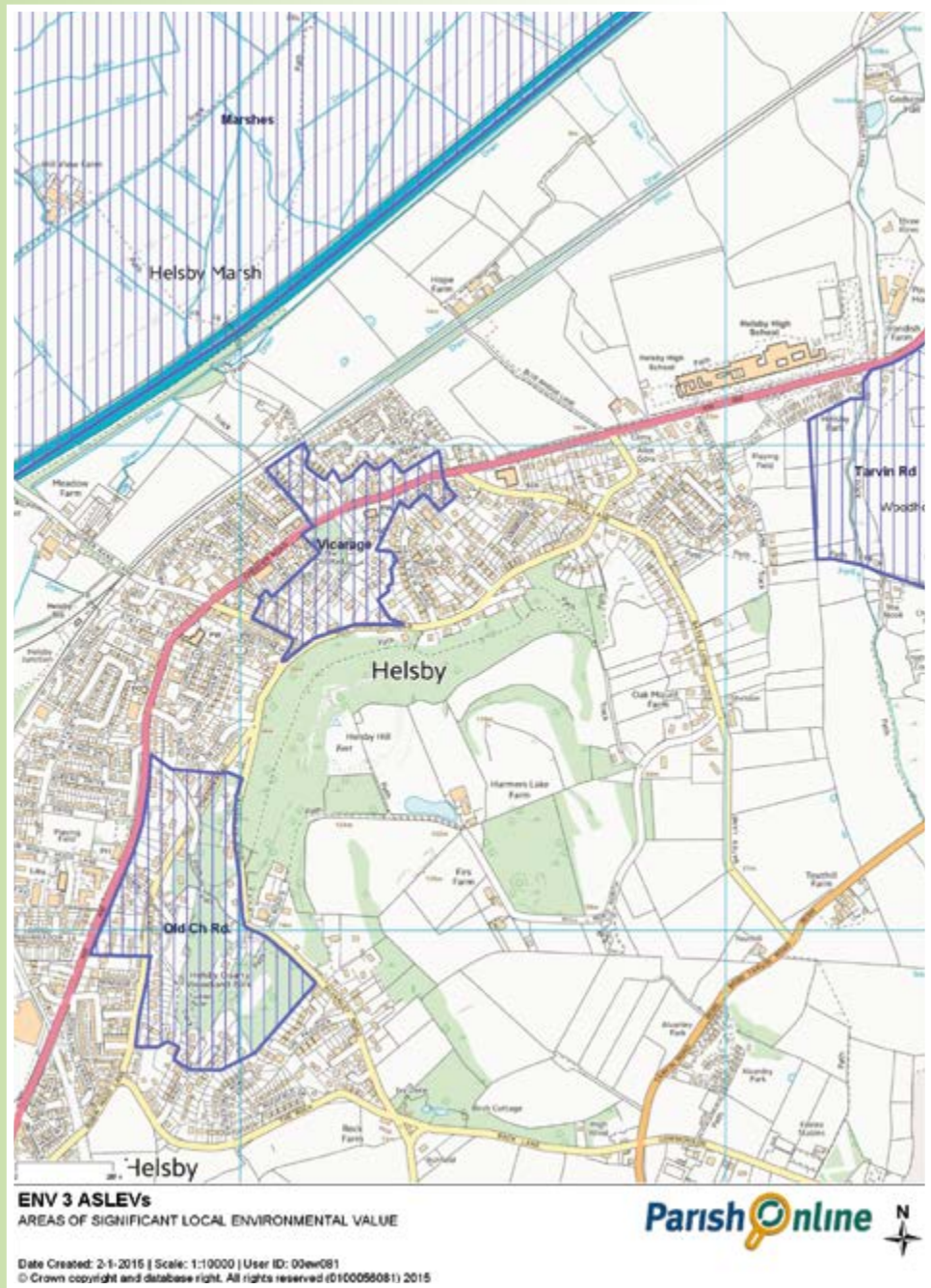


**Plan Env 1 Local Wildlife Sites and Nature Reserves**

There is concern about the cumulative impact of existing and planned new developments within or beyond the village boundary such as the M56, major industrial sites, windfarm and incinerator, which may impact on its environment through noise, dust, odour, and air pollution. Although likely to be outside the area covered by this neighbourhood plan, the community would object to any proposal adding significantly to this impact.



### PLAN Env 2 Regionally Important Geological Sites



**PLAN Env 3 Areas of Significant Local Environmental Value.**

## Community Views

The community was asked for its views on a series of proposals relating to the Environment. The responses we received were used to help with the drawing up of the policies in this neighbourhood plan. The proposals, the survey responses, and the relevant policies in the plan can be summarised as follows:

Proposal	Agreed %	Did not agree %	No view %	Policy ref
There will be no change to the current Green Belt boundaries.	94	2	3	HNP ENV1
We will protect and retain landscape features which contribute to the character and distinctiveness of Helsby, including views of, and from, the Hill. The design of new developments should reflect and enhance the environment by use of local materials e.g. sandstone, and soft landscaping/planting.	97	1	2	HNP ENV2 HNP ENV3
All green public open/amenity space (e.g. parks, play areas, landscaped areas within housing developments etc.) within Helsby are to be retained.	100	0	0	HNP ENV4
All identified/listed historic buildings and heritage assets of significant interest to Helsby are to be retained. Development should not have a negative effect on the historic environment.	94	1	5	HNP ENV5
There will be a presumption against felling trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders and we will seek a review to ensure that trees which are important to the amenity or character of Helsby are protected.	93	2	5	HNP ENV6
All nationally and locally designated nature reserves, and sites of scientific, biological or wildlife value will be protected and where possible enhanced.	98	0	2	HNP ENV7
Wind turbines will not be permitted within a specified distance of any residential property. The distance required will depend upon the height of the turbine.	94	3	2	HNP ENV8

## 2.2.2 Employment, Transport and Shopping

### Objective for Employment Transport and Shopping

To provide employment opportunities for residents by retaining existing employment and encouraging new employment of an appropriate scale. Sustainable methods of commuting will be supported. The range of shopping provision will be retained or enhanced where economically viable.

#### Background and Key Issues - Employment and Transport

Helsby used to be a major employment centre, with 5,000 people working at the BICC plant in its heyday, but with the redevelopment of much of the cableworks site for housing and a supermarket, 84% of working residents now commute elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the village still has significant employers including RSK, Compass Computers and Tesco. There is limited scope for additional employment development, but home-working and IT based businesses could be a way of reversing this trend. Many residents will continue to work outside the village and sustainable commuting will be supported, including cycleways and enhancements to the station and rail services.



Helsby has an above average proportion of economically active residents, and a low rate of unemployment. Nevertheless, in February 2014 there were 170 residents claiming out of work benefits (Office for National Statistics, Nomis).

Economic Activity	Helsby Numbers	% of people aged 16-75 (Helsby)	England average
Economically Active residents	2698	72.6	69.9
Economically Inactive residents	1024	27.6	30.1
Full-time employees	1631	43.8	38.6
Part-time employees	516	13.9	13.7
Self-employed	359	9.6	9.8

Source: 2011 Census

<sup>1</sup> Cheshire West and Chester Strategic Housing Market Assessment Table 4.9a

DWP benefit claimants (Feb 2014)	Helsby Numbers	Helsby %	Cheshire West and Chester %	Great Britain %
Total claimants	210	7.0	12.3	13.3
Job seekers	45	1.5	2.3	2.9
ESA and incapacity benefits	105	3.5	5.8	6.2
Lone parents	10	0.3	1.0	1.2
Carers	25	0.8	1.5	1.4
Others on income related benefits	10	0.3	0.3	0.3
Disabled	15	0.5	1.2	1.2
Bereaved	0	0.0	0.2	0.2
Key out-of-work benefits*	170	5.7	9.4	10.6

Source: NOMIS benefit claimants - working age clients for small areas

\* Key out-of-work benefits includes the groups: job seekers, ESA and incapacity benefits, lone parents and others on income related benefits.

Note: The percentage figures show the number of benefit claimants as a proportion of resident population aged 16-64.

Only 16.1% of working residents have jobs in Helsby. The remainder commute, mainly to Warrington/Halton ( 20.2%); and Chester (15.1%).

Place of work of Helsby residents	% of working Helsby residents travelling to this destination
Chester Urban Area	15.1
Ellesmere Port Urban Area	3.5
Frodsham	5.7
Helsby	<b>16.1</b>
Northwich Urban Area	2.2
Rural North	3.9
Winsford Urban Area	3.8
North Wales	4.5
Wirral	3.3
Liverpool	6.4
Halton/Warrington	<b>20.2</b>
Greater Manchester	5.7
Elsewhere	9.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: SHMA Household Survey, CWAC 2013

Helsby has good rail and bus services to Chester, Runcorn and Warrington, which are all major centres of employment. Close by are the major industrial areas of Stanlow and Ince, home to an oil refinery, petrochemicals, fertiliser and glass production. The Ince and Stanlow sites are within easy cycling distance, but there is no safe route. There is a rail connection, but services are infrequent. There is a half hourly bus service between 7.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. The proposed intermodal resource recovery development at Ince Park is another source of potential future jobs, and it is important that sustainable transport routes to the Park from Helsby are provided as part of the development. The re-opening of the Halton Curve rail link may provide further opportunities for sustainable commuting from Helsby to employment in south and central Liverpool.



Nevertheless, currently a high proportion of working residents travel to work by car and fewer travel by public transport, bicycle or on foot than the national average.

In the interests of sustainability, it is therefore important to encourage the provision and retention of employment within Helsby.

Method of travel to work	% of working Helsby residents	% of working England residents
Car or Van	82	62
Train	2.4	5.3
Bus	2.5	7.5
Bicycle	0.7	3.0
On Foot	5.6	10.7

Source: SHMA Household Survey, CWAC 2013

## Background and Key Issues – Shopping

Shopping provision comprises the Tesco supermarket and small groups of local shops (on Latham Avenue, Britannia Road, and Chester Road). Helsby also has a Post Office. In common with many similar areas, there has been a decline in the number and variety of local shops in recent years.

The Cheshire West and Chester Retail Study Update 2013 included Helsby within its “Frodsham Study Zone”. It looked at convenience goods (weekly shopping such as food), and concluded that “existing convenience goods facilities in and around Frodsham were under-trading when compared to expected levels. Since 2010, the out-of-centre Tesco at Helsby has implemented its extension which will further diminish any quantitative capacity in the future. Therefore, there may be a qualitative benefit with promoting improvements to the existing in centre facilities, if possible, in response to improvements made to out of-centre facilities to ensure Frodsham’s future role and vitality and viability is maintained.”

With regard to comparison goods (less regular purchases such as clothing, furniture or electrical goods) the study found “Frodsham has a very limited comparison goods function and therefore any qualitative improvements to its offer would need to be incremental and sympathetic in scale to the village and its catchment.”

In summary then, there is no need for additional land to be allocated for shopping in Helsby. Of greater concern is the retention of existing facilities to reduce the need for residents to travel.

## Community Views

The community was asked for its views on a series of proposals relating to Employment, Transport and Shopping. The responses we received were used to help with the drawing up of the policies in this neighbourhood plan. The proposals, the survey responses, and the relevant policies in the plan can be summarised as follows:

Proposal	Agreed %	Did not agree %	No view %	Policy ref
New small businesses will be encouraged provided they are of a scale and nature appropriate to their setting so that they do not adversely affect the amenity of the village.	96	1	3	HNP ETS1 HNP ETS2
Proposals to enhance facilities at Helsby Station will be supported, subject to the provision of additional car parking.	93	1	5	HNP ETS3
New retail and employment development will be required to provide adequate car parking and also cycle racks or storage facilities.	88	3	9	HNP ETS4
Enhance and extend the network of cycleways for recreational purposes and to encourage sustainable transport by students and workers to/from adjoining areas such as Frodsham and Elton.	91	2	8	HNP ETS5

## 2.2.3 Housing and Infrastructure

### Objective for Housing and Infrastructure

To meet the housing needs of Helsby residents in an environmentally sustainable way, and ensure that there are adequate health facilities, schools, roads and drainage to serve new developments. Before large scale development is approved, consideration must be given to the existing infrastructure's capacity to cope with additional residents.

### Background and Key Issues

At the time of the 2011 Census, 2143 households lived in Helsby. The proportion which owned the house they occupied was significantly above the national and Cheshire West and Chester averages. The proportion in social rented housing was less than half the average for Cheshire West and Chester and just over a third of the national proportion. More of these houses were detached or semi-detached than the average for Cheshire West and Chester or England, and fewer were terraced or flats.



### Tenure and House Types

Tenure	Helsby Number / %	Cheshire West & Chester %	England %
Owner occupied	1753 81.8	70.8	63.3
Social rented	142 6.6	14.7	17.7
Private rented	231 10.8	12.5	16.8
Rent free	17 0.8	1.2	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2143</b>		

House type	Helsby Number / %	Cheshire West & Chester %	England %
Detached	787 36.7	30.0	22.4
Semi-detached	794 37.1	36.4	31.2
Terraced	380 17.7	21.5	24.5
Flats	150 7.0	11.3	21.2
Mobile homes	32 1.5	0.6	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2143</b>		

(Source: 2011 Census)

The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies makes provision for the majority of development to be within or on the edge of the city and towns within the Borough. To maintain the vitality of rural areas, appropriate levels of development will be brought forward focused on the key service centres which provide the best opportunity for sustainable development. Helsby has been identified as one of those key services centres as it is a sustainable location, having social, economic and transport facilities such as shops, schools, bus, and train services (Local

Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies Policy STRAT 1). The plan indicates that Helsby should accommodate an additional 300 dwellings between 2010 and 2030. On 1st April 2014 there was capacity for a net increase of 346 dwellings on sites with planning permission in Helsby. This is in addition to the 27 net additional dwellings already built between 2010 and April 2014, giving a total capacity between 2010 and 2030 of 373 dwellings. (See Appendix at section 4.4 for schedule of sites). Accordingly there is no requirement for this Neighbourhood Plan to allocate additional sites for housing to meet the requirements of the Local Plan. However, in recognition of the contribution that additional housing can make to the vitality of the community, further development will be welcomed, provided it maintains and supports the character of the village, and makes the greatest possible contribution to local housing needs, especially for affordable housing and housing to meet the needs of an increasingly elderly population.



Helsby is inset within, and surrounded by the Green Belt. During consultation, there was strong support for maintaining existing Green Belt boundaries, and in view of the capacity of the village to support new development, including affordable housing, within the inset, it was not felt by residents that there was any justification for allowing “exception” sites within the Green Belt to meet Helsby’s affordable housing needs. However, an absolute prohibition on affordable housing provision in the Green Belt would be contrary to national planning policy and would therefore lead to the rejection of the Neighbourhood Plan. A policy setting out criteria for Green Belt exceptions has therefore been included instead.

At the time of the 2011 census, 142 households were recorded as living in social rented housing and 18 in shared ownership. The proportion of the stock which is socially rented (6.6%) is very low by comparison with Cheshire West and Chester (14.7%) or England (17.7%). This suggests there may be under-provision of social rented housing in Helsby. In March 2014, Weaver Vale Housing Trust, the largest registered provider in the area had a stock of 124 properties. There were 86 applicants on the housing waiting list for Helsby (Weaver Vale Housing Trust, 15 May 2014).

Cheshire West and Chester's Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 identified a net requirement for Helsby of 10 affordable dwellings a year between 2013 and 2018 to meet the needs of households who cannot afford market prices or rents. The breakdown of this predicted annual need is:

### Recommended affordable housing delivery by property size and designation 2013/14 to 2017/18<sup>2</sup>

	Age and Number of Beds						Total
	Under 65			65 Years and Over			
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3+ Bed	1 Bed	2 Bed	3+ Bed	
Helsby	5	4	0	1	0	0	10

It is hard to project need forward for the whole plan period to 2030 because needs will vary according to changes in incomes, house prices, supply of affordable housing and population. However, if the needs to 2030 remain at a constant level, it would indicate that 170 extra affordable homes would be needed by 2030. This is over half of the overall housing allocation for Helsby.



On 1st April 2014 there was capacity for a net increase of 346 dwellings on sites with planning permission in Helsby, of which 77 will be affordable. Of these 77 affordable houses, 63 are extra care apartments, the majority of which are likely to be completed within the next 5 years. (See Appendix at section 4.4 for schedule of sites).

It can be seen that over the next 5 years the quantity of affordable provision exceeds the total estimated requirement, but does not meet the needs of the under 65 population. It is therefore important that affordable housing provision is maximised in future developments, in particular provision of 1 and 2 bed dwellings for the under 65s, or as otherwise indicated by updated Strategic Housing Market Analyses.

New housing development will increase the demands on local facilities such as healthcare, education and leisure; and also on infrastructure such as public utilities, libraries, policing, waste services and the highways network. It is essential that developers provide the relevant infrastructure necessary for their development so as to ensure the sustainability of Helsby.

<sup>2</sup> Cheshire West and Chester Strategic Housing Market Analysis 2013 Table D10 net shortfall reconciled with gross requirements.

## Community Views

The community was asked for its views on a series of proposals for housing in Helsby. The responses we received were used to help with the drawing up of the policies in this neighbourhood plan. The proposals, the survey responses, and the relevant policies in the plan can be summarised as follows:

Proposal	Agreed %	Did not agree %	No view %	Policy ref
New housing development should meet the needs of the local area which will require a sustainable mix of owner occupied and rented properties; and a proportion of houses suitable for older residents. Affordable housing should be promoted (e.g. discount for sale, shared ownership / shared equity, affordable rent or social rent).	91	4	6	HNP H1 H2 H3 H4 H5
Existing permissions are sufficient to meet the requirements of the draft CWAC local plan. Other proposals will be judged on their merits, but with a priority to redeveloping brown field sites. Exceptions to provide affordable housing in the greenbelt will not be allowed.	93	2	4	HNP H1 NHP H4
All new homes shall be built to the highest possible architectural and environmental standards.	95	1	4	HNP H6 HNP H7
All new housing developments shall be required to provide sufficient car park space according to size (minimum of 1 space for a 1 bed house, 2 spaces for a 2 or 3 bed house, 3 spaces for anything larger).	94	2	4	HNP H8
All new housing developments shall ensure that any grass verges are reinforced to withstand car parking	81	8	11	HNP H9
Before large scale development is approved, consideration must be given to the existing infrastructure's ability to cope with additional residents.	95	1	4	HNP H10

## **2.2.4 Sport and Leisure**

### **Objective for Sport and Leisure**

**To provide a single modern facility at Mere's Edge for a range of sporting and social activities, and to identify further opportunities and sites to enhance local sports provision for all ages and abilities. To retain and extend buildings and outside areas so that residents have a wide range of leisure and recreation options.**

### **Background and Key Issues**

Helsby has a range of formal and informal leisure and sports provision;

- The Parish Field provides a large recreation space for various purposes, and includes a football pitch.
- The Helsby Community Sports Club is a community club which leases its premises from Chester West and Chester Council and provides a range of facilities including tennis, football, rugby, fishing, bowls, darts and snooker. Its changing facilities are also used by Helsby Running Club, and it runs a programme of social activities.
- Equipped children's play areas on the Parish Field, and in the Mere's Edge housing development.
- Allotment sites at Queen's Drive and Old Chester Road.
- A library, Community Centre, and other community buildings such as the Guide Hut.
- A network of footpaths and bridleways giving access to surrounding countryside, and in particular to Helsby Hill.
- A pub, two private members' clubs, two cafés, and a restaurant.

The Open Space Assessment conducted in 2011 for Cheshire West and Chester shows that there is a substantial shortfall in amenity greenspace in Helsby. ("Amenity greenspace" is defined as "informal recreational and green spaces which have the primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work. Amenity greenspace is also often used for landscaping".) On the other hand there is generous provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace (Helsby Hill). There is a small shortfall in allotment provision. Play provision for children aged 12 or less is above average for Cheshire West and Chester, but for older children is slightly below average. See table A at the end of this section.

Feedback from consultation indicates that there is a shortage of informal social facilities, with a desire to see the provision of tea/coffee shops, an internet café, restaurant and additional pub.

### **Community Views**

The community was asked for its views on a series of proposals relating to Sport and Leisure. The responses we received were used to help with the drawing up of the policies in this neighbourhood plan. The proposals, the survey responses, and the relevant policies in the plan can be summarised as follows:

Proposal	Agreed %	Did not agree %	No view %	Policy ref
Identify potential sites for a swimming pool, possibly in partnership with others.	73	13	14	None, see below
Identify sites for a skateboard/rollerskating/biking facility.	50	21	29	None, see below
Encourage development of local play or recreation facilities on small areas originally intended for housing but not capable of development.	85	4	11	HNP SL1
Protect the route of the Helsby to Mouldsworth railway line from development so that if not required for rail use it, may be used as a cycleway and/or footpath.	94	1	5	HNP SL2
Retain public rights of way so any new developments do not unduly spoil rural-feeling walks in/round Helsby.	98	0	2	HNP SL3 HNP SL4
Retain the allotment sites at Old Chester Road and Queen's Drive.	90	2	8	HNP SL5
Retain the Community Centre and Library as facilities for the local community.	98	0	1	HNP SL6
Encourage the provision of places for people to socialise such as cafes, teashops and restaurants, provided that they do not adversely affect local residents.	90	2	0	HNP SL7

### Helsby Community Sports Club

The Community Sports Club is a valuable and well used asset. However, the current clubhouse building is reaching the end of its life. It has therefore been agreed as part of the overall development proposals for Mere's Edge that it will be relocated to a new site within Mere's Edge providing replacement tennis courts, bowling greens, sports centre and 3G synthetic football pitch. (See the Section 106 legal agreement associated with Planning Permission 08/02901/OUM granted in October 2013). The proposed new facilities are regarded by the users and the Parish Council as an improvement, and as suitable replacement facilities to allow the redevelopment of the old site. For this reason, no specific policy is included in the plan regarding the sports club, but should the relocation not proceed for any reason, the loss of the existing facilities would be strongly opposed unless a suitable replacement is provided.



### Swimming Pool

There is a long standing aspiration to secure a public swimming pool to serve the residents of Helsby and Frodsham. The nearest public facilities are in Chester (8.6 miles), Ellesmere Port (8.9 miles), Northwich (13.9 miles), Runcorn (9.3 miles) and there is a joint use pool at the Brookvale Recreation Centre, Runcorn (5.9

miles, limited hours). The principal obstacles

have been the capital cost, and perhaps more significantly the annual revenue running costs. The provision of a pool remains a community aspiration. The responses to the community survey found 75% supporting the proposal that the Neighbourhood Plan should identify sites for a swimming pool, possibly in partnership with others.

Given the uncertainty over funding, and the possibility of co-operation with neighbouring communities, no specific site allocations are made in this Neighbourhood Plan. Subject to investigation and consultation, the grounds of Helsby High School may provide the opportunity to serve both Frodsham and Helsby. The school is on public transport routes and has parking provision.

### Skatepark

During initial consultations, it was suggested that Helsby needs a facility for Skateboarding, roller-skating and BMX bikes (referred to here as a “skatepark”). This would fill a particular gap in facilities for older children. However, in the subsequent survey of opinion, identifying potential sites for a skateboard/rollerskating/biking facility was the least popular proposal for inclusion in the plan, with 50% in favour, 21% opposed, and 29% having no view. It is possible that this response is a result of concerns about siting, and fears of adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.

In the light of these responses, it is clear that the siting of such a facility, if it were to proceed, would need great care. No site allocation has been made in the plan for a skatepark, because a great deal more work is clearly required to determine whether it would be possible to find a site that would be acceptable to the whole community. Nevertheless, it would be a valuable addition to the range of leisure facilities available in Helsby, and is worthy of further consideration, and consultation as part of a separate exercise.

## Provision of Amenity and Green Space in Helsby for Current Population of 4940 and Projected Population of 5236 in 2017

Open Space Type	No. of Sites	Total Hectarage	Local Standard	Ha per 1000 Population	Ha per 1000 Future	Shortfall / Surplus Current (Ha)	Shortfall / Surplus Future (Ha)	Average Quality Score (Ha)
Allotments & Community Gardens	2	0.53	0.15	0.11	0.10	-0.21	-0.25	58
Amenity Green Space	0	-	0.81	0.00	0.00	-4.00	-4.24	0
Cemeteries and Churchyards	2	0.48		0.10	0.09	0.48	0.48	57
Natural and Semi Natural Green Spaces	3	19.01	1.50	3.85	3.63	11.60	11.16	54
Outdoor Sport & Recreation	10	15.00		3.04	2.87			61
Parks and Gardens	0	-	0.37	0.00	0.00	-1.83	-1.94	0
Provision for Children	2	0.44	*	0.09	0.08	0.14*	0.12*	63
Provision for Young People	2	0.04	*	0.01	0.01	-0.06*	-0.07*	59

Source: CWAC Open Space Assessment October 2011 (revised ward boundaries) Neil Allen Associates

\* Note that there is no standard for play provision, so the shortfall/surplus figures are based on the difference between provision in Helsby, and the average across Cheshire West and Chester.



# Section 3: The Policies of The Neighbourhood Plan

## 3.1 Policies for The Environment

### Policy HNP ENV1 - Green Belt

**The Green Belt boundary around Helsby is shown on Plan Env4**

**Development in the Green Belt will be subject to national planning policy, and the policies of the Chester West and Chester Local Plan.**

#### **Explanation:**

The Green Belt boundary around Helsby safeguards the countryside surrounding the village, which is important to its setting and character. It also maintains the gap between Helsby and the nearby towns and villages of Frodsham, Alvanley, Dunham Hill, and Hapsford. The gap between Helsby and Frodsham is particularly narrow.

The Green Belt boundary around Helsby has been established for many years through Structure and Local Plans. NPPF states that “Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan”. (NPPF Paragraph 83). It is therefore beyond the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan to change the Green Belt boundary. Accordingly, the Green Belt boundary shown on Plan Env 4 is unchanged.

Planning permission (Cheshire West and Chester Council reference 08/02901/OUM) was granted on 11 October 2013 for the construction of 96 dwellings on the site of the Helsby Community Sports Club. The site includes the football field which lies in the Green Belt. There were exceptional circumstances in this case, namely the provision of improved sports facilities elsewhere on the Mere’s Edge site. At any future review of the North Cheshire Green Belt, it would be appropriate to consider redrawing the Green Belt boundary along Hornsmill Brook to exclude this development from the Green Belt. Apart from that, there is no reason to consider changing the Green Belt boundary elsewhere around Helsby, given that there is sufficient previously developed (“brownfield”) land within the village to meet its development needs to 2030 and beyond.

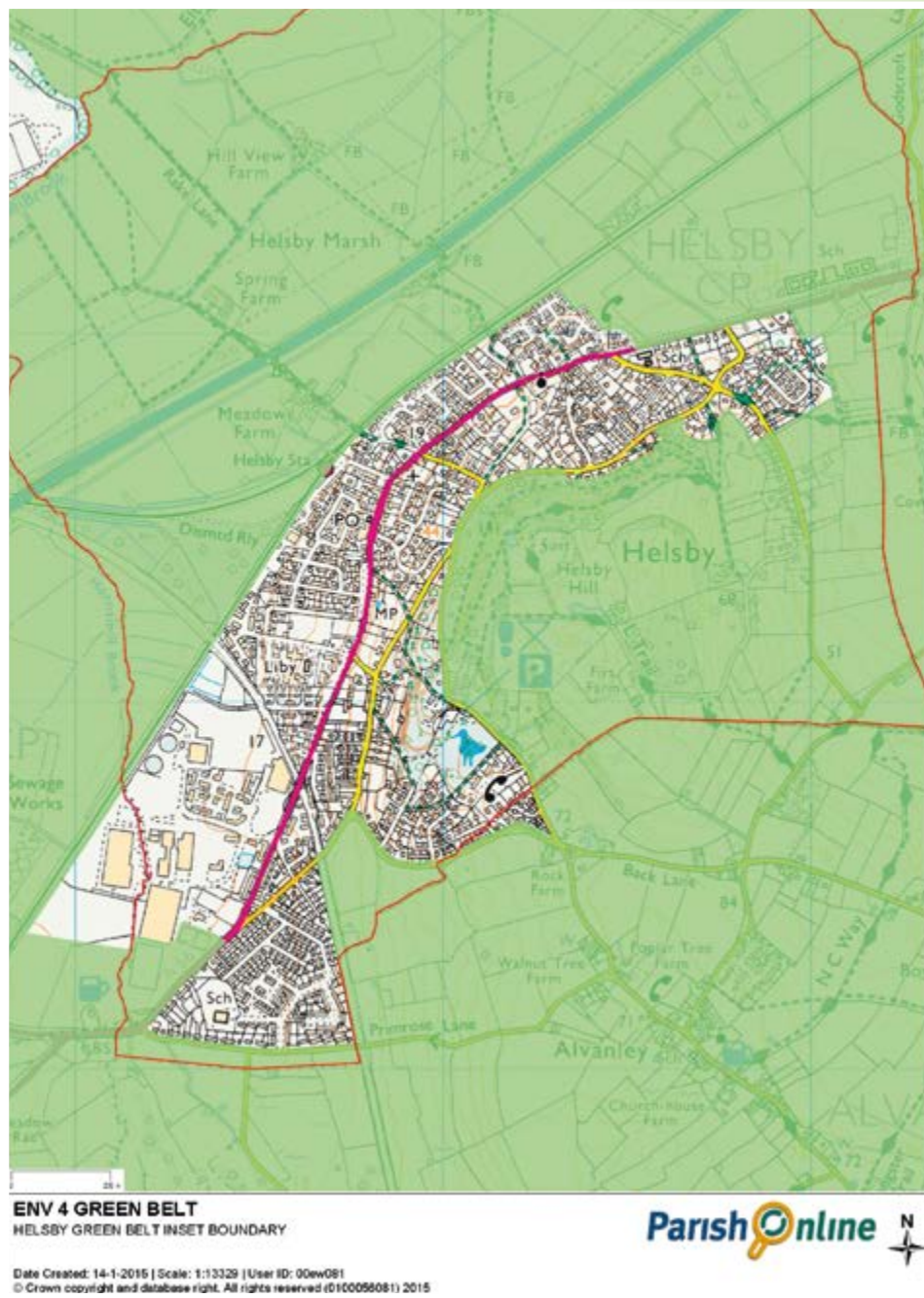
### Policy HNP ENV2 - Helsby Hill

**Development which adversely affects public views of Helsby Hill, blocks views from the hill, or adversely affects the ridgeline, will not be allowed.**

#### **Explanation:**

The Hill is the most significant defining feature of Helsby. Not only does it provide an important informal recreation resource, it is the most distinctive visual feature. The “old man’s face”, visible as a profile in the rock face, is well known over a very wide area. The Hill can be seen from within the village and from





many miles around. The top of the cliff face is also a popular viewpoint from which Liverpool, the Pennines and North Wales can be seen. It includes a scheduled monument, is an area of special local environmental value, a local wildlife site and is a regionally important geological site. It also incorporates a local nature reserve.

Helsby Hill is described in the Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment and the Green Infrastructure framework.

It is therefore important to maintaining the character of the village that new developments respect this feature by:

- Not blocking views of the hill from within the village;
- Not blocking views from the Hill to the surrounding countryside
- Not disrupting an undeveloped ridgeline with intrusive built developments.

## **Policy HNP ENV3 - Local Materials and Characteristics**

**The design of developments should reflect and enhance the local environment where appropriate by using materials such as sandstone, incorporating and retaining characteristic detailing, and by tree planting and soft landscaping.**

### **Explanation:**

Helsby is a well-wooded area with exposed sandstone escarpments. This is reflected in the use of sandstone in many of the older buildings and boundary treatments. Where possible this tradition should be maintained. Where it is not, developments should reflect the local palette of red brick and slate.

Helsby's character and local distinctiveness is due as much to the numerous small repetitive details as it is to individual historic assets. Original architectural details such as cornices, fenestration, architraves, etc. are important to the character of the village and preservation or restoration of these features will be encouraged.

## **Policy HNP ENV4 - Green Spaces**

**Built development will not be permitted on the Local Green Spaces identified on Plans ENV 5 and 6, and in the schedule to this policy unless an equivalent replacement is provided within the immediate vicinity. New developments should include, or contribute to the provision of recreational open space in accordance with the standards set out by Cheshire West and Chester Council.**

### **Explanation:**

According to the Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Assessment the amount of amenity green space, parks and gardens in Helsby falls below the standard set (see page 35). It is therefore important to protect those areas that do exist from development. Open spaces include informal landscaped and grassed areas in residential developments, playing fields and playgrounds. They contribute to the health and well-being of residents, and provide opportunities for social interaction. The sites are delineated on Plans ENV 5 and 6.

The Greenspaces identified in this policy are within Helsby, are well-used and valued, and meet one or more of the following selection criteria:

1. A valued sports or recreational resource
2. Important for informal recreation
3. Important for wildlife
4. Important for tranquillity and reflection

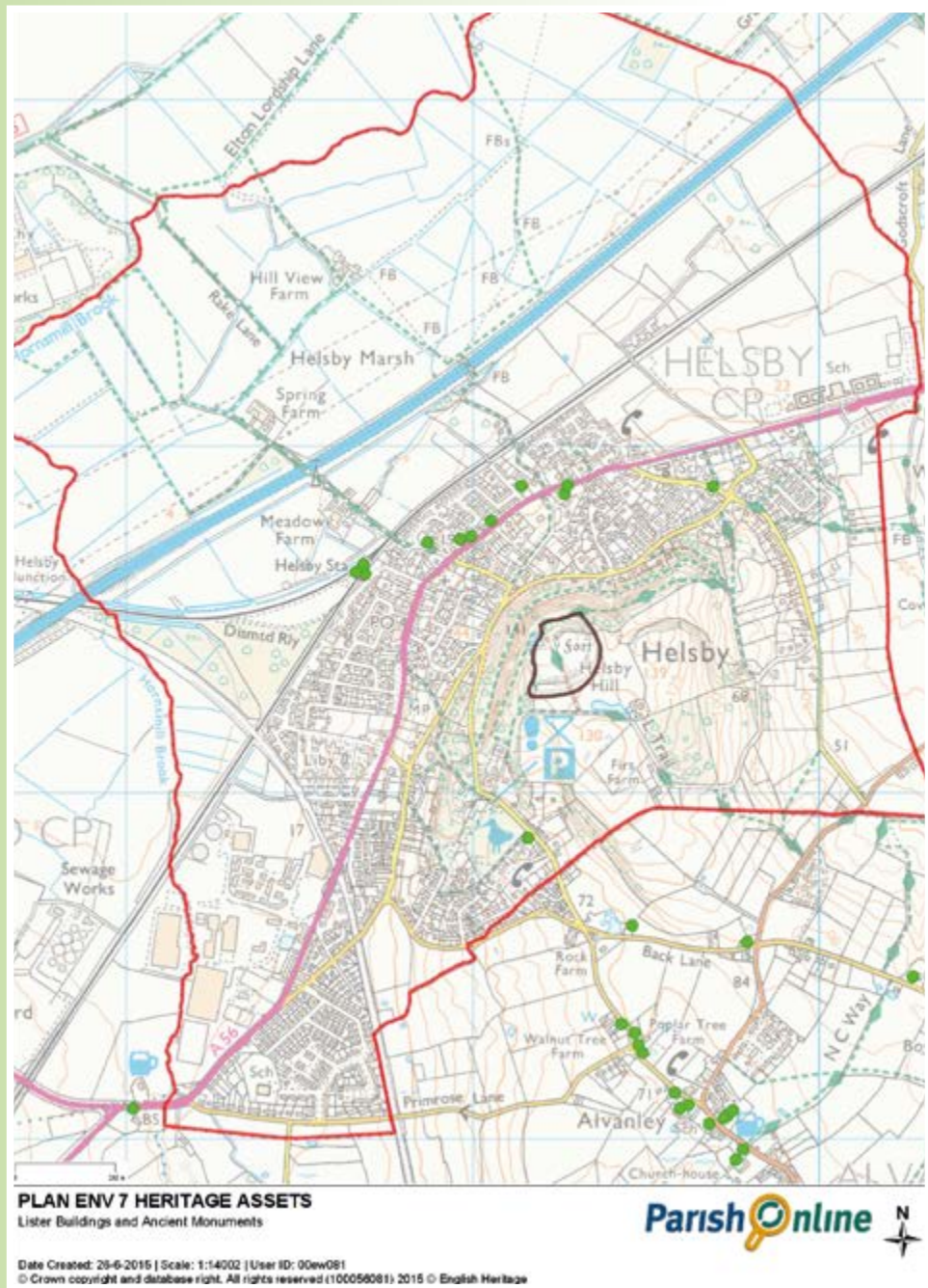
## Schedule of Greenspaces

Ref.	Site	Location	Approx. Size	Comments
GS1	Freshmeadow Lane Wetland Area 1	Bottom end of Freshmeadow Lane	1.5 ha	Wildlife area bounded by disused railway
GS2	Freshmeadow Lane Wetland Area 2	Bottom end of Freshmeadow Lane	6.0 ha	Wildlife area bounded by live railway and Hornsmill Brook
GS3	Harmers Wood	Hill Rd	3.6 ha	Woodland –informal recreation
GS4	Helsby Hill		15.9 ha	Owned and managed by National Trust – informal recreation
GS5	Helsby Quarry	Alvanley Rd	2.8 ha	Disused quarry green flag park, owned by CWAC – informal recreation
GS6	Maltby Triangle	Robin Hood Lane/Chester Rd	0.03 ha	Prominent green space
GS7	Parish Field and Play Area	Lower Robin Hood Lane	1.3 ha	Helsby Parish Council. Queen Elizabeth II Field in Trust Reg. No. 1594. Parish Field is between Lower Robin Hood lane and Parkfield Drive, used for various outdoor pursuits. Play Area is adjacent to Chester Road surrounded by railings. Play equipment for 1 – 16 year olds.
GS8	Play area	Mere's Edge	0.3 ha	Equipped Play area
GS9	Cemetery	Chester Rd/Old Chester Rd	0.3 ha	Burial Ground – tranquillity
GS10	Sherwood Court	Lower Robin Hood Lane	0.1 ha	
GS11	Queen's Drive Allotments	Queen's Drive	0.3 ha	Allotments – recreation
GS12	Old Chester Road Allotments	Old Chester Rd	0.2 ha	Allotments – recreation
GS13	Hornsmill School Playing Field	Denbigh Close	0.7 ha	School Playing Fields – sport and recreation
GS14	Hillside Primary School Playing Field	Proffits Lane	0.8 ha	School Playing Fields (Green belt) - sport and recreation
GS15	Helsby High School Playing Fields	Chester Rd	8.6 ha	School Playing Fields (Green Belt) sport and recreation -
GS16	Queens Drive Play Area	Between Queens Drive and Queens Drive Allotments	0.05 ha	Play area
GS17	Plovers Lane Open Space	Rear of Horse and Jockey	0.3 ha	Open space – informal recreation



**Plan ENV 5 Green Spaces (West)**





## Plan ENV7 Heritage Assets

## **Policy HNP ENV5 - Heritage Assets**

**Development should safeguard or enhance heritage assets and their settings. Heritage assets include designated assets such as listed buildings and scheduled monuments, and non-designated assets including buildings identified as locally listed on the Cheshire Historic Environment Record and in the Vale Royal Local Plan (Policy BE 22). Development which is likely to have an adverse impact on designated heritage assets and their settings which cannot be avoided or where the heritage asset cannot be preserved in situ will not be permitted.**

### **Explanation:**

Helsby does not have a Conservation Area but there are 12 Grade II listed buildings and 23 local heritage assets on the Cheshire Historic Environment Record. There is also one scheduled monument. (See Appendix at Section 4.5 for list of Heritage Assets). These assets have a social, cultural and economic significance. They remind us of our past, and contribute to the character and essence of Helsby. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect these assets and promote an overall high quality of setting for them, to sustain and enhance their significance for the enjoyment of the local community and visitors alike. In considering applications for development affecting heritage assets or their settings, due weight will be given to the significance of the heritage asset concerned, but in view of the relative scarcity of nationally significant assets in Helsby, it will be all the more important to look after our locally important assets. Cheshire West and Chester Council will be encouraged to review the local list as a matter of urgency.



## **Policy HNP ENV6 - Trees and Woodland**

**Development proposals should seek to retain mature or important trees, groups of trees or woodland. Where removal of a tree of recognised importance is proposed, a replacement of similar amenity value should be provided on site. Wherever appropriate, the planting of trees should be included in the development, particularly native species that are in keeping with the area.**

**Explanation:**

Trees are an important feature of Helsby, with the wooded slopes of the hill merging down into the residential areas, and contrasting strongly with the open Marshes to the north. They are vital to the green infrastructure of the area, and make a key contribution to the green and leafy character of parts of Helsby. They contribute to the amenity of the area, absorb CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere, and contribute to biodiversity. Once a mature tree is lost, by natural or unnatural causes, it is difficult to replace. The main species that define Helsby such as oak, ash and beech, take several decades to reach maturity. There has been a steady piecemeal loss of trees from the pressures of development, especially where large plots of single dwellings have been split up. Such developments result not only in the removal of trees to enable development, but more trees may be lost after development has been completed due to the long term impact of root disturbance and work undertaken by future occupants. There is strong support from the community for the presumption against felling of trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The Parish Council will encourage Cheshire West and Chester Council to review the coverage of Tree Preservation Orders in Helsby to ensure that important trees or groups of trees which might be affected by development are protected.

**Policy HNP ENV7 -  
Natural Assets**

**Development should safeguard or enhance natural assets in Helsby and adjoining areas, including Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, and Regionally Important Geological Sites. Development should not result in the net loss of natural assets or adverse impact on priority habitats or protected/priority species, and should seek to provide gains. Where there is unavoidable loss or damage to habitats, sites or features because of exceptional overriding circumstances, mitigation and compensation will be required to ensure there is no net loss of environmental value.**

**Explanation:**

The National Planning Policy Framework requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment (Chapter 11). "If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused."



Within the Neighbourhood Plan area there are a number of designated natural assets, as shown on Plan Env 1:

- Helsby Hill Local Wildlife Site
- Harmer's Wood Local Wildlife Site
- Frodsham and Helsby and Ince Marshes Local Wildlife Site
- Helsby Quarry Local Nature Reserve

When consulted on the draft aims and objectives of the plan, 98% of respondents supported the proposal that "all nationally and locally designated nature reserves and sites of scientific, biological, or wildlife value will be protected and where possible enhanced".

These sites contribute to the biodiversity of Helsby. Development will not be permitted that would put these sites, and their habitats, at risk. Development in their vicinity should look to enhance them whenever possible. The same considerations will apply to developments within Helsby which may adversely affect designated sites beyond the Neighbourhood Plan boundary.

Priority habitats and protected/priority species, as identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (or its successor), whether within or outside these designated sites, will also be protected from harm by development. For further advice, contact the Biodiversity specialists at Cheshire West and Chester Council [biodiversity@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:biodiversity@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

## Policy HNP ENV8 - Wind Turbines

**No area of Helsby has been identified as suitable for wind energy development within this Neighbourhood Plan, and planning permission will not be granted for new wind turbines.**

### Explanation:

Planning permission was granted to Peel Holdings by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change on 19 October 2012 (ref 10/00597/DECC) for a 19 turbine wind farm on the Frodsham and Helsby Marshes. The wind farm is to be located just outside the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan boundary. This proposal was controversial and gave rise to significant local objections (and some support). Consultation responses to the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan reveal continuing opposition to the development, and to any further wind turbines in the area.

National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup> was amended on 28 June 2015 and states that "*when considering applications for wind energy development, local planning authorities (subject to transitional arrangements) should only grant planning permission if:*

- *The development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and*
- *following consultation it can be demonstrated the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.*

*Whether the proposal has the backing of the affected local community is a planning judgement for the local planning authority".*

<sup>1</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy>

No area has been allocated for wind energy development in this Neighbourhood Plan. Further wind turbines are not considered appropriate in the area given:

- the strength of objections received to the more permissive policy in the consultation draft Neighbourhood Plan which pre-dated the amended National Planning Practice Guidance published in June 2015;
- the extent of local opposition to the Frodsham and Helsby Marshes development;
- the built up nature of most of the Neighbourhood Plan Area which would place any wind turbine near to residential development;
- the sensitive nature of the local landscape, including the designation of Areas of Significant Local Environmental Value; and
- the impact of the already approved 19 turbine wind farm on Frodsham and Helsby Marshes, and its potential cumulative impact with any further proposed wind turbines.

**Note: Developments over 50 megawatts capacity will be considered by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change under the Planning Act 2008 rather than Cheshire West and Chester Council.**



## 3.2 Policies for Employment, Transport and Shopping

**NOTE:** The Policies in this section should be read in conjunction with Policy HNP H10 – Infrastructure Capacity.

### Policy HNP ETS1 - Business Development

The conversion of existing buildings for employment use; the expansion of existing employment premises; and the erection of new buildings for employment use will be supported provided the development is of a scale appropriate to its surroundings.

Proposals for such development must demonstrate that

- a) Any parking, additional traffic, noise, lighting, vibration, dust or odour will not adversely impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties, and more generally the surrounding area;
- b) It will not severely affect the safety of road users or traffic congestion, particularly if it is accessed through a residential area; and
- c) It respects the character of the surrounding area by way of its scale, and design, and does not harm the enjoyment of the local landscape.

Employment development in the Green Belt will also be subject to national Green Belt policies, and policy STRAT 9 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies.

#### Explanation:

Helsby has changed from being a major centre of employment for the surrounding area to being largely a commuter settlement. The retention and expansion of local businesses is encouraged to provide local employment opportunities so as to create a more sustainable community. However, most existing sites are within residential areas, and any development must respect its surroundings and neighbours. Several major employers remain within the Mere's Edge site. The retention of these employers is important, but as the residential redevelopment of the area takes place any future employment developments will have to take account of their changing surroundings.



## **Policy HNP ETS2 - Retention of Existing Employment Sites**

**The refurbishment and enhancement of existing employment sites and premises for continued employment use will be supported. Redevelopment to non-employment uses will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated:**

- **That there is a sufficient range, choice and quality of employment sites available to meet the future employment needs of Helsby, and**
- **That the existing use of the land or buildings for employment purposes is no longer economically viable and the site has been actively marketed on reasonable terms for at least a year for that and any other suitable employment uses.**

**Development for the provision of affordable housing will be the priority where these criteria are met.**

### **Explanation:**

Helsby has lost much of its employment in recent years, resulting in 84% of working residents having to travel elsewhere for work. In the interests of the sustainability of the community it is important to make every effort to maximise opportunities for the retention and/or creation of employment in the village. There is sufficient land with planning permission for residential development for over 300 new dwellings, and so there is no need for the further loss of employment land for house building. Indeed, the construction of over 300 new homes will add to the population of working age, and so increase the need for local employment opportunities. Accordingly, existing employment land should remain in employment use.

Exceptionally, redevelopment of employment sites for affordable housing will be supported, where it can be demonstrated that sufficient land remains to meet local employment needs, there is no market demand for employment uses on the site, and the development contributes to meeting local affordable housing needs in accordance with the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment. In these circumstances any viability appraisal of affordable housing provision should use a land value not exceeding the site's value for employment purposes.

## **Policy HNP ETS3 - Helsby Station**

**The development and enhancement of rail services and station facilities at Helsby Station will be supported provided that they are accompanied by a Station Travel Plan promoting more sustainable access to the station as well as increased parking provision for additional users and employees. Changes of use of existing station buildings, or new buildings on the station should be accompanied by an assessment of the impact of the proposals on transport and parking, together with suitable measures encouraging sustainable travel for employees and customers who are not rail users, and demonstrating how their parking needs will be met.**

### **Explanation:**

Helsby Station is on the North Wales to Manchester line, currently offering hourly services which are well used particularly by commuters. There is also a line linking Helsby to Ellesmere Port which has stops at Elton & Ince, and Stanlow & Thornton. Passengers can change at Ellesmere Port onto the electrified Merseyrail services to Hooton, Birkenhead and Liverpool. The service to Ellesmere Port is very limited and as a result is poorly used despite having stations near to major centres of employment. The Department for Transport has confirmed investment in the Halton Curve, which will connect Helsby to the West Coast Mainline station at Runcorn, and to Liverpool

via Liverpool South Parkway for Liverpool Airport.

There is limited parking at Helsby Station, which is situated on a residential street. Inconsiderate on street parking by rail users has affected the amenity of residents, and prior to the introduction of management policies, resulted in a lack of car parking for visitors to nearby shops.



The planned improvements to services via the Halton Curve are welcome. Such improvements are highly likely to result in additional passengers using the station, and a modal shift from road to the more sustainable rail transport. However this will bring further pressure on car parking as not all parts of the catchment are in walking distance or on a bus route to the station. The provision of a station travel plan and additional parking is therefore a priority. There is also potential to improve services to Ellesmere Port by use of different rolling stock or electrification of the route from Ellesmere Port to Helsby and possibly onwards to Liverpool via Runcorn further increasing station usage.

The under-used station buildings are attractive examples of Cheshire Lines architecture, and their recent restoration is welcomed. However, the introduction of non-rail uses could add further to the car parking deficiency, and so no further changes of use or additional building will be allowed unless an assessment appropriate to the scale of the development is provided of its impact on transport and parking, together where appropriate with proposals to minimise additional car trips arising from the development and provide adequate parking for employees and customers.

Where applicable, developments in Helsby which are expected to generate additional rail passenger traffic likely to travel to the station by car may be required to provide additional parking for the station (see Policy HNP H10).

## **Policy HNP ETS4 - Walking, Cycling and Parking Provision**

**Applicants for permission for residential, leisure, sport, retail or employment development must demonstrate that they have considered options for the delivery of safe and attractive pedestrian, bus and cycle connections as part of a comprehensive approach to movement that aims to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport and so reduce reliance on vehicles. New retail, leisure, sport and employment development must provide adequate car parking and cycle racks or storage facilities in accordance with the parking standards of Cheshire West and Chester Council.**

### **Explanation:**

It is important to enable increased use of public transport so as to reduce car use and CO2 emissions. Walking and cycling are better for the health of individuals as well as being more sustainable. New developments should be designed so as to facilitate and encourage pedestrians, cyclists and the use of public transport.

Additional employment, leisure, sport and retail development would help to maintain and improve the vitality of the village. However, with the exception of the Tesco supermarket, parking provision for the three main shopping frontages (Chester Road, Britannia Road, and Latham Avenue) is limited, and at times insufficient. Local employers have also added to pressures on on-street parking. It is therefore important that new development makes adequate provision for parking and for facilities which would encourage more sustainable forms of transport such as cycle storage or cycle racks.

Where developments are of sufficient size and scale, consideration should be given to whether bus passenger waiting facilities require improvement.

## Policy HNP ETS5 - Cycleways

**Proposals that help to create a network of cycleways for recreational purposes and encourage sustainable transport by students and workers to and from adjoining areas such as Frodsham and Elton will be supported.**

### Explanation:

Increased use of cycles will reduce car usage and congestion, and so CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, it is beneficial for health, and will reduce the demand for car parking. Part of the National Cycle Network runs across Frodsham and Helsby Marshes to the north of the village (outside the plan area), and there are links to it via Lower Rake Lane and Godscroft Lane. Currently the only cycle route within the plan area is a cycle lane along the busy A56 past Helsby High School to the outskirts of Frodsham. Further provision of safe cycle routes and cycle lanes will be encouraged. Sustrans have previously investigated the feasibility of a cycle way alongside the Helsby to Elton railway line, but the landowner was unwilling to give a licence for access over the land required. Should this position change, the proposal would be supported. Policy HNP SLP2 safeguards the line of the Helsby Mouldsworth railway from development so that if it is not required for rail use, it could be used as a leisure route for pedestrians and/or cyclists.

Developers may be required to provide sustainable travel routes (see Policy HNP H10) related to their development.



## 3.3 Policies for Housing and Infrastructure

### Policy HNP H1 - New Housing Development

New sustainable housing development will be encouraged subject to:

- the other policies in this plan, including Policies HNP Env1 to 7 and the criteria in Policy HNP H6
- Conformity with Policy ENV4 Biodiversity and Geodiversity in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies
- Minimising the loss of high grade agricultural land in accordance with Policy STRAT 1 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies

#### Explanation:

Whilst sites which already have planning permission will meet the housing requirements up to 2030 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies, they are likely to be developed within the first half of the plan period. If other sustainable sites come forward during the plan period, they will be supported provided that they are not in the Green Belt, or on Green Space, and proposals respect the character of the surrounding area as required by HNP H6. Developments must also conform to other policies in this plan and the Part One Local Plan as specified in the policy wording. Redevelopment of brownfield land for housing will be supported, provided it is consistent with the other policies in this plan (see HNP ETS2).

### Policy HNP H2 - Provide a Mix of Housing Types

Applications for residential development of more than six dwellings will be supported subject to a mix of dwelling types and sizes being provided to meet the needs of current and future households in Helsby. Developments consisting of uniform types and sizes of dwelling must be avoided.

#### Explanation:

Helsby has developed organically over the centuries, resulting in a variety of size, type, and architectural style in our houses. This contributes to the character and feel of the village. The development of large, uniform estates would create a suburban character which would be alien to the village. Therefore new developments will be expected to provide some variety in size and type of dwelling, which will also contribute to a range of provision to meet the needs of different sections of the local population.



## **Policy HNP H3 - Affordable Housing**

All housing developments should provide a mix of homes taking into account objectively assessed housing needs and an element of affordable housing will be sought in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies. When determining the affordable housing component of new residential developments in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the appropriate figures for Helsby from the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be specifically applied to ensure that the house types and tenure meet the needs of local people. Affordable housing must be dispersed throughout the site unless there are specific circumstances that warrant otherwise, and it should be indistinguishable from market housing in design quality.

If, in exceptional circumstances, the local planning authority agrees to the affordable housing component of a development being delivered outside the application site, this must be delivered within Helsby to meet the village's affordable housing needs within the village.

The priorities for the allocation of affordable housing will be for people who:

- live in Helsby,
- work in Helsby, or
- have connections with Helsby as agreed with Helsby Parish Council.

The affordable housing will be subject to a S106 Legal Agreement, or planning condition, ensuring that it remains an affordable dwelling for local people in perpetuity.

### **Explanation.**

The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies requires the provision of affordable homes within new housing to be determined by the assessment of need in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), as well as site specific conditions and scheme viability. The aim of Policy HNP H3 is to ensure that this provision is determined using the SHMA figures that most closely relate to specific local needs in Helsby. For the period 2013-2018, the delivery of 10 affordable dwellings a year is necessary to meet the local need, including nine 1 or 2 bedroom units a year for under 65 year old households. (Cheshire West and Chester Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013).

The affordable housing provision will include a mix of types and tenures of housing to be agreed with the Local Authority. This will include consideration of the number of bedrooms and type of units.

The provision of affordable and older persons' housing provision should ensure that residents that wish to remain in Helsby as their housing needs change are able to do so. It will also help to maintain a balanced and sustainable community.

Affordable housing provision should be 'pepper-potted' through the development – i.e. scattered in viable blocks across the site rather than located in a single cluster, in order to aid social cohesion and create mixed communities.

Legally binding agreements (s106 agreements) will ensure that housing provided under these arrangements remains affordable and available to local people. Priority will be given to those who live in, work in, or have local connection with Helsby and are on the housing waiting list (Trust Homechoice maintained by Cheshire West and Chester Council's Housing Solutions team or its equivalent).

## **Policy HNP H4 - Limited Green Belt Exceptions for 100% Affordable Housing**

Exceptions to the presumption against the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt for the limited provision of 100% affordable housing will be permitted in accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance provided that it can be demonstrated that:

- The housing meets an identified local need for affordable housing that cannot be met from any sites within the village that are not designated as Green Belt or Green Space; and
- It is adjacent to the Green Belt boundary around the existing built up area; and
- The proposal is appropriate in terms of its scale, character and location, and it would not have a significant impact on the surrounding rural landscape or the landscape setting of Helsby; and
- It does not prejudice features or policy considerations of special local importance, for example the gaps between Helsby and Frodsham, Hapsford and Alvanley, or Areas of Significant Local Environment Value;
- It conforms with Policy ENV4 Biodiversity and Geodiversity in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies;
- It conforms with the other policies in this plan, including HNP ENV1 to 7 and HNP H6; and
- It minimises the loss of high grade agricultural land in accordance with Policy STRAT 1 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies

Where it is essential to enable the delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs, a small, subsidiary element of market housing may be permitted on such sites.

The first priority in the allocation of affordable housing will be for people who live in, work in, or have with connections with, Helsby. Developers will be required to enter into a legal agreement to ensure that affordable provision will remain affordable and available to local people in perpetuity

### **Explanation:**

The extent of the Green Belt is shown on Plan ENV1. The Neighbourhood Plan is legally required to be in general conformity with national planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out policies restricting new development in the Green Belt. The Green Belt around Helsby safeguards the countryside which is important to its setting and character. It also maintains the gap between Helsby and nearby villages and industrial development. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF specifies that “limited affordable housing for local community needs” is an exception to the presumption against new buildings in the Green Belt. Policy HNP H4 sets out how this national policy will be applied locally. There is sufficient capacity within the village to meet the housing needs of the community, up to 2030 and beyond without need to review the Green Belt boundary. The capacity to meet affordable housing need within the village means that there will need to be strong justification for allowing exceptions in the surrounding Green Belt for affordable housing. If such justification exists, it is important that sites adjoin the existing village boundary, and do not prejudice particularly sensitive policy areas. Any such affordable provision will be expected to be provided in perpetuity, with priority for local people (as Policy HNP H3).

## **Policy HNP H5 - Lifetime Homes**

**On developments of 4 or more homes in Helsby at least 25% of new houses must be fully Lifetime Homes compliant (or compliant to a relevant equivalent standard to the satisfaction of the local planning authority).**

### **Explanation:**

Helsby has a high number of older people: 21.7% of Helsby residents were recorded as being 65 or over in the 2011 Census [ONS, 2011] compared to 16.3% nationally. Housing proposals should therefore respond by providing sufficient specialist homes suitable for older people; hence the requirement for 25% of homes to be Lifetime Homes compliant. A Lifetime Home will meet the requirements of a wide range of households, including families with push chairs as well as some wheelchair users without the necessity for substantial alterations. The additional functionality and accessibility it provides is also helpful to everyone in ordinary daily life, for example when carrying large and bulky items. Lifetime Homes are not, however, a substitute for purpose-designed wheelchair standard housing. Many wheelchair users will require purpose-designed wheelchair housing. The standard is based on 16 criteria. More information can be found at <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk>

## **Policy HNP H6 - Design Criteria**

**New housing development, including extensions, change of use and conversions, will be supported providing all of the following criteria are satisfied:**

- a) The scale, height and form fit unobtrusively with character of the street scene;
- b) Spacing between buildings should respect the character of the street scene;
- c) Gaps which provide public views out of the village to surrounding countryside, and views of Helsby Hill from public places within and beyond the village are maintained;
- d) Existing traditional boundary treatments such as sandstone walls and “Cheshire” black and white railings are retained and, where feasible, reinforced or introduced;
- e) The privacy, amenity and daylight of adjoining residents are safeguarded; and
- f) Where practicable and viable, the development incorporates features that improve its environmental performance thereby reducing carbon emissions. These can include both energy efficiency measures and green energy generation. New homes should meet the level 4 standard of the Code for Sustainable Homes or its equivalent.

**In order to gauge whether good design is at the heart of proposed new developments, applicants should include with their planning applications an assessment of how their scheme performs against the twelve criteria outlined in the Building for Life 12 framework.**

### **Explanation:**

During consultation on the vision for the plan, the commonest reason why people liked living in Helsby was the sense of living in a small village within a rural setting. It is important to retain this village feel by ensuring that new development respects the character and feel of the area. Helsby Hill was another recurrent theme and the views from and of the Hill are particular features that must be retained. Parts of Helsby are characterised by sandstone boundary walls, and on the outskirts by “Cheshire railings”, and these should be retained and where possible reinforced.

The Code for Sustainable Homes is the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. It aims to reduce carbon emissions and promote higher standards of sustainable design above the current minimum standards set out by the building regulations. It uses a 1 to 6 star system to rate the overall sustainability performance of a new home against 9 categories including energy/CO<sub>2</sub>, water and waste. The level 3 standard is now incorporated into the Building regulations. It is the intention of this plan to require developments to achieve a higher standard of sustainability reflecting local opinion that new buildings should meet the highest possible environmental standards.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-for-sustainable-homes-technical-guidance>

The Building for Life 12 standard enables developments to be assessed against 12 criteria covering: integrating into the neighbourhood; creating a place; and street and home.

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/knowledge-resources/guide/building-life-12>



## **Policy HNP H7 - Backland Housing Development**

**Backland and tandem development in gardens of existing properties will not be supported where it will create severe impacts on the transport network or result in the loss of amenity of neighbouring properties through:**

- **loss of privacy; or**
- **loss of daylight; or**
- **visual intrusion by a building or structure; or**
- **reduction of car parking below the minimum levels set out in HNP H8; or**
- **loss of mature vegetation or landscape screening.**

**Explanation:**

There are many houses and other buildings in Helsby within large plots, and several have been the subject of applications for backland or tandem development. Such proposals can be a way of adding to the housing stock in a sustainable manner, but it is important that they take account of existing development, and the overall character of the area.

Sensitive developments will be permitted, but development proposals which adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties will be refused.

**Policy HNP H8 -  
Residential Parking**

New housing developments, including conversions of existing buildings, must provide sufficient off-road parking. As a minimum:

- 1 space for each 1 bedroom dwelling
- 2 spaces for dwellings with 2 or 3 bedrooms
- 3 parking spaces for dwellings with more than 3 bedrooms

Extensions to existing dwellings will not be permitted where they would result in a reduction of parking or an increase in bedrooms such that they would fail to meet these standards.

**Explanation:**

Levels of car ownership in Helsby are high. Only 11.3% of households have no car which is less than half of the national average (23.8%, 2011 Census). Recent developments have experienced problems of excessive on-street parking due to insufficient off street provision.

Current government Planning Practice Guidance states that “maximum parking standards can lead to poor quality development and congested streets, local planning authorities should seek to ensure parking provision is appropriate to the needs of the development and not reduced below a level that could be considered reasonable”. In March 2015 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issued a policy statement that “*local planning authorities should only impose local parking standards for residential and non-residential development where there is clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage their local road network*”.

There have been persistent and widespread problems of inappropriate on-street parking in Helsby. It has given rise to many comments and suggestions during public consultation on the preparation of the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan. In response to the 6 week consultation on the

draft plan over a quarter of all respondents referred to parking issues, including many references to specific concerns about the adequacy of parking in residential areas. There is therefore a clear and compelling justification for including this policy in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The standards in the policy are based on research and policy proposals by Mott McDonald for the submitted draft North West Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) Partial Review July 2009<sup>2</sup>. Although never formally adopted, due to the abolition of the RSS process, they form a sound, evidence based framework for future planning approvals in Helsby which takes into account car ownership levels, the availability of public transport and the type of development.

Where off-street parking is provided partly or wholly in the form of a garage, it should be large enough to accommodate an average family saloon car.

## **Policy HNP H9 - Protection of Verges**

**In the design of new housing layouts, consideration should be given to the protection of grassed areas including verges from damage by the parking of vehicles.**

### **Explanation:**

Grass verges in residential areas are a feature of parts of Helsby, and can add to the open green character of residential estates. However, they have increasingly been subject to damage by parked vehicles. In the layout of new housing areas which incorporate grass verges, consideration should be given to the protection of grass verges to prevent their use for parking, or provision of suitable reinforcement with mesh or similar to limit the resultant damage. Reinforced verges will not be accepted as an alternative to the off street parking provision required by Policy HNP H8 and the parking standards of Cheshire West and Chester Council.



## **Policy HNP H10 - Infrastructure Capacity**

**Applicants for planning permission must provide an assessment of how the proposed development is likely impact on local physical and social infrastructure, services and facilities; and demonstrate how any such impacts will be addressed. The cumulative impacts arising from the proposed development combined with other schemes that have planning permission must be taken into account.**

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.northwestplanpartialreview.org.uk/downloads/SustainabilityAppraisal/4NW%20Partial%20Review.pdf>

**Developers will be expected to ensure that the social, physical and green infrastructure needed to support the proposed development is provided in a timely manner. This may be through on-site or off-site provision by the developer.**

**Explanation:**

**N.B. this policy applies to all development, not just housing development.**

An overwhelming majority (95%) of survey respondents agreed with the proposal that before large scale development is approved, consideration must be given to the existing infrastructure's capacity to cope with additional residents. It is acknowledged that new development can have a positive impact on the viability of local services through sustaining or increasing demand. However, as further development proposals come forward, it will be important to assess their impact on local infrastructure such as public utilities, open space, play and recreation facilities, libraries, policing, waste services, the highways network, public transport, the need for traffic calming, schools and medical services. Having assessed the impact, it will be necessary to make provision for any investment required to mitigate the impact of the development. In the interests of maintaining a sustainable community, where off-site services, facilities, social or physical infrastructure are required, it is expected that they will be provided within Helsby.



The Neighbourhood Plan has identified infrastructure requirements needed to support new development informed by residents' survey responses. These are:

- A community leisure facility providing a minimum 4-court multi-use sports hall, gym and dance facilities, full size floodlit 3G all weather-pitch, running loop, 4 senior tennis courts with pavilion, 2 bowling greens with pavilion, changing rooms, storage, Parish office, meeting rooms and associated administration and parking facilities;
- The provision of additional parking for Helsby Station
- The provision of cycle routes from Helsby to Elton and Frodsham to facilitate sustainable travel to work and study
- The provision of additional formal and informal play and recreation facilities
- The construction of an informal skateboard/roller skating/biking facility

The construction of a swimming pool for joint community and schools use will be investigated and provided if financially viable.

Contributions to community infrastructure will be secured through Helsby Parish Council's allocation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (at least 25% of the CIL charged in the Neighbourhood Plan area) subject to the adoption of a CIL charging schedule by Cheshire West and Chester Council (Policy STRAT 11 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan). Cheshire West and Chester Council may also choose to invest the remaining 75% of CIL in strategic infrastructure projects in the area. In the meantime, contributions may come through s106 agreements from developers who are unable directly to provide infrastructure or facilities required by their specific scheme. Such s106 contributions from up to 5 different developments may be pooled to fund a single item of infrastructure.

## 3.4 Policies for Sport and Leisure

### Policy HNP SL1 - Creation of Play Areas and Open Spaces

The creation of play areas and green open spaces will be encouraged, particularly in new and existing residential areas subject to an assessment of their impact on the amenity of local residents.

#### Explanation:

There is a shortage of green space within the built up area of Helsby.

Play provision for younger children meets local standards in terms of quantity, but is not accessible by many residents without having to cross a busy road. There is an under provision of facilities for teenagers. Therefore new provision will be encouraged. However, for equipped sites, due consideration needs to be given to the impact that activities may have on neighbouring residents if play equipment is not carefully positioned.



### Policy HNP SL2 - Helsby to Mouldsworth Rail Corridor

The route of the Helsby/Mouldsworth railway line will be safeguarded, and development on or adjacent to the route will only be permitted if it would not prejudice:

- a) the future reopening of the line for rail services; or
- b) the use of the route of the line as a cycleway, footpath and/or bridleway; or
- c) the use of route as a linear park; or
- d) the line's role as a wildlife corridor

#### Explanation:

The Helsby to Mouldsworth rail line has not been in use for many years. It may offer an alternative freight route to Ince Park and other major employers in the Elton/Ince/Stanlow complex. This use would be a sustainable alternative to road transport, and so would be supported. However, if not required for these purposes, the line could provide a recreational route of considerable potential, linking Helsby to Mouldsworth and Delamere Forest. As well as benefiting local residents, this could encourage visitors to travel by train from Manchester, Chester and North Wales to Helsby to walk along the route and then return via Manchester or Chester from Mouldsworth Station.

## Policy HNP SL3 - Public Rights of Way

Developments affecting a public right of way must maintain and where possible improve its character so as not to diminish the rural feel of Helsby. Paths must not be reduced in width, fenced or walled in so as to restrict views, or diverted in such a way that they become a less attractive route to the surrounding countryside.

## Policy HNP SL4 - Linking Development to Footpaths

New housing and employment developments will be expected to establish publicly accessible links from development sites to the wider footpath network and green spaces wherever possible.

### Explanation:

Helsby benefits from a network of public footpaths which link the village to the surrounding countryside, particularly Helsby Hill, and Helsby Marshes. These links are valued by local residents and were mentioned during consultation as one of the features of Helsby that residents wish to maintain. Confining paths within urban surroundings detracts from their open rural aspects, and makes them a less inviting prospect. It is important to encourage walking as a form of recreation, for travel to work, school and shops, and for the benefit of the health of residents. New developments will be expected wherever possible to link to the footpath network.

## Policy HNP SL5 - Allotments

Allotment sites at Queen's Drive and Old Chester Road will be safeguarded and their redevelopment will not be allowed.

### Explanation:

Allotments should be protected from redevelopment, wherever possible, due to their very important local value, fulfilling a unique amenity and recreation role. They make an important contribution to the character of the natural and built environment of the area. If allotments become disused, they could continue to fulfil an amenity role by reverting to open space, where their visual and wildlife value would increase. The provision of allotments in Helsby is slightly below the standards set out in the Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Survey 2011, and any further reduction below this level of provision will not be allowed. The provision of additional allotments will be encouraged.



## Policy HNP SL6 - Community Buildings

**The loss of existing community buildings (Use Class D1) including the Community Centre and Library will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for the facility no longer exists or that suitable alternative provision is made elsewhere in Helsby.**

### **Explanation:**

Helsby has a number of excellent facilities within the village for groups needing places to meet. Community buildings in the village include the Community Centre, Library, 1st Helsby Scout Group HQ, Guide Hut, St Paul's Church Hall and the Methodist Hall. To maintain the social fabric of the village, the range of existing well used facilities needs to be maintained and enhanced. The need is accentuated as the amount of additional development in Helsby increases. There may be pressure to convert existing community buildings to other uses such as residential development during the plan period but the Neighbourhood Plan will resist the loss of such facilities which contribute significantly to the social fabric of the parish.



## Policy HNP SL7 - Cafes and Restaurants

**The conversion or change of use of buildings to provide cafes and restaurants (use class A3) will be encouraged subject to there being no unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties by reason of noise, odour, parking or other amenity impacts.**

### **Explanation:**

Helsby is not well provided with cafes. In 2015 there is a café in Tesco, a café on Chester Road, an Indian restaurant and 3 licensed premises. As a result there is a shortage of places for informal social activity which is not alcohol based. This gap was highlighted in consultation and there was strong support for this policy objective at the consultation stage. Care will be needed to ensure that the siting and design of any such facility does not affect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.



### *3.5 Plan Monitoring and Review*

The Steering Group is concerned to ensure that this Neighbourhood Plan is actively managed over the next 15 years.

The Plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it takes into account possible changes in national planning policy or to the Cheshire West and Chester Council strategic planning policy framework. Responsibility for reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan will rest with Helsby Parish Council and will be reported on the Parish Council website [www.helsbyparish.org.uk](http://www.helsbyparish.org.uk)

The purpose of the reviews will be to guide the Parish Council in its stewardship of the Helsby Neighbourhood Plan, and to consider the need for proposing a review of, or amendment to the Plan to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

In 2018 and 2023 there will be thorough five year reviews of progress by a Steering Group which has a wide community base.

In 2027 the Parish Council will again recruit a new Steering Group from within the community to undertake a review and decide on the need for a subsequent Neighbourhood Plan and if so decided, to overview the development of the subsequent 15 year plan which would commence in 2028.



# Section 4: *Supporting Information*

## 4.1 *Glossary of Terms*

### **Affordable Housing**

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

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

### **Consultation Bodies**

Consultation Bodies are bodies the local planning authority must consult if a planning application could affect their interests. For example, the Highways Agency must be consulted on applications that could affect a major road.

### **Consultation Statement**

Consultation Statements set out how the local planning authority will engage local communities in plan making: who they will engage and how. In particular, they list the community groups and other organisations which will be contacted about Local Plan stages, and the methods of consultation which will be used. Hard-to-reach groups are identified and methods of helping them get involved set out.

**Development Plan**

This includes adopted Local Plans, and neighbourhood plans, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Local Plan for Helsby is the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies together with the retained policies of the Vale Royal Local Plan.

**Flood Risk Assessment**

An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and flood mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

**Heritage Asset**

A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). These are included in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record.

**Highway Authority**

Highway authorities are responsible for producing the local transport plan and for managing existing or proposed new local roads in the area. Cheshire West and Chester Council is the local Highway Authority for Helsby.

**Infrastructure**

Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

**Listed Building**

A building of special architectural or historic interest designated by the government on the recommendation of English Heritage. Listed buildings are graded I, II\* or II with grade I being the most significant. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and may also include any buildings or permanent structures attached to or within its curtilage.

**Local Authority**

An umbrella term for the administrative body that governs local services such as education, housing and social services.

## **Local Plan**

The Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies is the name given to the planning policy document for Cheshire West and Chester Council. It sets out a vision, objectives and detailed delivery policies for the borough to 2030. The Helsby Neighbourhood Plan must be in conformity with the Local Plan. The CWAC Local Plan will be in two parts. The Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies deals with strategic matters and allocations, and The Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies will contain site allocations and more detailed policies. The CWAC Local Plan identifies where future development should take place to meet local needs for homes, businesses, shops and other services, as well as the infrastructure to support them. It also decides which areas should be protected from development because they are important to local people or have environmental or heritage qualities and should be conserved. Until such time as both parts of the CWAC Local Plan are adopted, certain policies from the Vale Royal Local Plan still apply in Helsby (known as “retained policies”). These are listed in Appendix A of the adopted Local Plan (Part One).

## **Localism Act 2011**

A major piece of new legislation which includes wide ranging changes to local government, housing and planning. Included in this new Act is the introduction of Neighbourhood Development Plans.

## **Material Consideration**

A factor which will be taken into account when reaching a decision on a planning application or appeal. Under section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, decisions on planning applications ‘must be made in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise’. The courts ultimately decide on what constitutes a material consideration. However, a case law gives local planning authorities a great deal of leeway to decide what considerations are relevant, and how much weight they should be given, each time they decide on a planning application. In practice, government planning policy is often the most important material consideration, other than the development plan. Government policy may override the development plan if it has been consulted on and published more recently.

## **National Planning Policy**

National planning policies that local planning authorities should take into account when drawing up Development Plans and other documents, and making decisions on planning applications. In the past these policies have been included in Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The Government has recently replaced existing guidance with a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

## **Neighbourhood Development Order**

Neighbourhood Plans, or Neighbourhood Development Plans, were introduced by the Localism Act 2011. The term may also be used by some to refer to the Neighbourhood Development Orders, which were also introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and are a second tool to enable neighbourhood planning. Communities may prepare neighbourhood planning documents, outlining how they would like to see their area developing in the future.

**Neighbourhood Plan**

A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

**Open Space**

All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport.

**Parish Council**

Parish Councils are the tier of governance closest to the community. Around 30% of England's population is governed by a parish council, predominantly in rural areas. Parish councils are elected bodies and have powers to raise taxes. Their responsibilities vary, but can include provision of parks and allotments, maintenance of village halls, litter control and maintenance of local landmarks.

**Planning Permission**

Formal approval which needs to be obtained from a local planning authority to allow a proposed development to proceed. Permission may be applied for in principle through outline planning applications, or in detail through full planning applications.

**Public Open Space**

Urban space, designated by a council, where public access may or may not be formally established, but which fulfils or can fulfil a recreational or non-recreational role (for example, amenity, ecological, educational, social or cultural usages).

**Section 106 Agreement**

A legal agreement under section 106 of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.

**Sustainability Appraisal**

Sustainability Appraisal assesses the economic, environmental and social impacts of a proposed policy or plan, to ensure that it would contribute to achieving sustainable development. Neighbourhood Plans are not required to undergo a sustainability appraisal, but Local Plans must.

## **4.2 Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgements and thanks are due to the following; who all played a part in delivering this Neighbourhood Plan:

Members of Helsby Parish Council who took the lead in forming the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and producing the Plan.

Volunteers from the local community who contributed to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with their ideas, actions and time.

The Parish Clerk for her support to the Steering Group. Also all Parish Councillors who helped with the various community engagement and consultation activities.

Rob Mackenzie from Robert Mackenzie Associates Ltd) for his professional advice and personal diligence in helping produce the Plan.

Officers of Cheshire West and Chester Council for the support and advice they gave as the Neighbourhood Plan was developed.

We are also grateful for a grant from the Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning programme 2013 - 2015 led by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

## **4.3 Strategic Policy Context**

The Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies was formally adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council on 29th January 2015. Certain policies of the Vale Royal Local Plan remain operative after being retained through the Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies, and particularly relevant ones are listed below, as are the policies of the CWAC Local Plan (Part One).

The next step will be for Cheshire West and Chester to prepare the Local Plan (Part Two) covering detailed policies and site allocations. It is likely that this will replace the remainder of the retained Vale Royal Local Plan once it is adopted.

Policies relevant at the time of writing are:

## **Environment**

### **National Planning Policy Framework Chapters**

8 Promoting healthy communities

9 Protecting Green Belt land

10 Meeting the challenge of climate change

11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

## **Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies**

STRAT 9 Green Belt and countryside

SOC 5 Health and well-being

SOC 6 Open space, sport and recreation

ENV 2 Landscape

ENV 3 Green infrastructure

ENV 4 Biodiversity and geodiversity

ENV 5 Historic environment

ENV 7 Alternative energy supplies

## **Retained Vale Royal Local Plan Policies**

NE1 Protection of the Nature Conservation Resource

NE7 Protection and enhancement of landscape features

NE9 Trees and woodland

BE5 to BE9 Historic environment – listed buildings

BE13 Ancient monuments

BE14 Other sites of archaeological importance

BE21 Renewable energy (part retained)

BE22 Locally important buildings

RT2 Sports facilities and open spaces

# **Employment, Transport and Shopping**

## **National Planning Policy Framework Chapters**

1 Building a strong competitive economy

3 Supporting a prosperous rural economy

4 Promoting sustainable transport

## **Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies**

STRAT 10 Transport and accessibility

ECON 1 Economic growth, employment and enterprise

ECON 2 Town centres

### **Retained Vale Royal Local Plan Policies**

- E1 General requirements for employment use (part retained)
- E3 Redevelopment of employment land for employment purposes
- E4 Redevelopment of existing and proposed employment land for non-employment purposes
- E5 Employment land allocations (part retained)
- T4 Railways
- T5 Railway stations
- T13 &14 Car parking
- T20 Travel Plans

## **Housing and Infrastructure**

### **National Planning Policy Framework Chapters**

- 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- 9 Protecting the Green Belt

### **Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies**

- STRAT 1 Sustainable Development
- STRAT 8 Rural area – levels of development to be accommodated
- STRAT 9 Green Belt
- STRAT 10 Transport and accessibility – parking standards
- STRAT 11 Infrastructure
- SOC 1 Delivering affordable housing
- SOC 3 Housing mix and type
- ENV6 High quality design and sustainable construction

### **Retained Vale Royal Local Plan Policies**

- BE1 Safeguarding and Improving the Environment
- BE4 Planning Obligations
- H8 Extensions/Alterations to dwellings
- H9 Extensions to rural conversions
- H10 Replacement dwellings
- H11 Extensions to residential curtilages in the open Countryside and the Green Belt

# Sport and Leisure

## National Planning Policy Framework Chapter

8 Promoting healthy communities

## Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies

STRAT 8 Rural area

SOC 5 Health and well-being

SOC 6 Open space sport and recreation

## Retained Vale Royal Local Plan Policies

RT2.12 Sports facilities and open spaces

RT3 Recreation and open space in new developments

RT6 Village facilities

T7 Safeguarded railway lines

## 4.4 Appendix: Schedule of Housing Land Availability 1st April 2014

### Completions 2010-2014

CWAC SHLAAREF	Location	Planning Ref	Units
HEL/0002/H	The Old Hall, Vicarage Lane, Helsby	05-0609-FUL	2
HEL/0005/H	111 Chester Rd, Helsby	08/0128/COU	7
HEL/0006/H	Adj Methodist Church, 200 Chester Rd	09/00471/FUL	2
HEL/0010/H	Former Old School, 274 Chester Rd	09/02165/OUT 12/00313/REM	8
HEL/0015/H	249 Chester Rd	00/00506/FUL	6
HEL/0022/H	Windcliffe, Alvanley Rd, Helsby	10/00880/FUL	1
HEL/0031/H	Adj Windcliffe, Alvanley Rd, Helsby	12/05043/FUL	1
	<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>

### Available Sites April 2014

CWAC SHLAAREF	Location	Planning Ref	Status	Size (ha)	Units	1-5 Yrs	6-10 Yrs	11-15 Years	16-20+ Yrs	Affordable
HEL/0001/S	Mere's Edge Ph4, Chester Rd	08/02901/OUM	App Oct 13	2.48	96	50	46	0	0	14
HEL/0004/H	Oakliffe, 134 Chester Rd	08/24247/OUT	Outline	0.09	1	1				
HEL/0007/H	Land odd Cable Drive (site of Delamere House)	12/05370/FUL	Full	0.79	77	77				47 Affordable
HEL/0008/H	Chester Rd		Outline	1.71	70	70				16 Intermediate
HEL/0013/H	Horse & Jockey, Chester Rd	09/02434/FUL	Lapsed	0.32	13	13				0
HEL/0014/H	Roar of Osterley, Robin Hood Lane	10/00102/FUL	Full	0.11	1	1				
HEL/0016/S	INEOS Compounds, north of Cable Drive, off Chester Rd	13/02503/OUT	Outline	2.03	69	69				0
HEL/0018/H	Robin Hood Hotel, 163 Chester Rd	10/02694/FUL	Full	0.23	13	13				0
HEL/0019/H	Adj Pine Crop, Proffits Lane	11/03176/FUL 13/01623/FUL	Full	0.08	1	1				
HEL/0020/H	Land at 12 Crescent Drive	11/04771/FUL	Full	0.06	1	1				
HEL/0023/H	Land at 138 Chester Rd	12/03344/FUL	Full	0.09	1	1				
HEL/0025/H	Land at 8 Old Chester Rd	12/03879/FUL	Full	0.04	1	1				
HEL/0031/H	Adj Windcliffe, Alvanley Rd	12/05043/FUL	Full	0	1	1				
HEL/0032/H	209-211 Chester Rd CoU 1st Floor to 1 Flat	13/03477	Full		1	1				
HEL/0033/H	Land at Llomond, Crescent Drive	13/02347/OUT	Outline		1	1				
	<b>Total</b>				<b>346</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>77</b>

1 Sports Club s106 14/04044 (120 dwellings may supersede).

2 Full permission 77 Extra care appts under construction. Outline permission for additional 70 houses of which 20 have reserved matters approved (13/05005/REM).

## 4.5 Appendix to Policy HNP ENV5 - Heritage Assets

Listed and locally listed buildings.

Cheshire Historic Environment Record: Designation List 12/05/2014

DesigUID	Name	Type	Ref	NGR	Additional Local Historical Notes (See the Cheshire Historic Environment Record for the official designation descriptions of listed buildings Revealing Cheshire's Past)
DCH422	Promontory fort on Helsby Hill 250m north west of Harmers Lake Farm	Scheduled Ancient Monument	1013292	SJ 4927 7539	National Monument Number 25689.
DCH13208	Helsby Junction Signal Box	Listed Building Grade II	1412057	SJ 4868 7565	Type 4 Signal Box, erected in 1900 to replace an earlier 1870's signal box.
DCH2407	Alvanley House	Listed Building Grade II	1253365	SJ 4916 7487	Built in 1773, the home of Thomas Brandreth and later served as a shop and Post Office. The Victorian Post Box is included in the curtilage.
DCH2411	Wrights Cottage	Listed Building Grade II	1253454	SJ 4969 7588	18th century cottage and former barn belonging to Stocks Brow Farm. Possible connection with School Farm, farmed by "Wrights" from 1880-1930s or named because a Wheelwright lived there.
DCH2412	Shippon and Barn 10 Metres North West of Rose Farmhouse	Listed Building Grade II	1253455	SJ 4896 7573	Farm buildings for Rose Farm.
DCH2413	Bank House	Listed Building Grade II	1253456	SJ 4914 7588	Situated at the corner of Chester Road and Bank House Lane. Early 19th century farm, home of John & Margaret Lewis, son of Thomas Lewis of Rake House; later Abraham White and in the 20th century, Willis Hallas, a breeder of Hallastone Pigs.
DCH2414	Church of St Paul	Listed Building Grade II	1253457	SJ 4927 7585	Built between 1868 & 1870 of local sandstone donated by the Marquis of Cholmondeley.
DCH2415	Lychgate to St Paul's Churchyard	Listed Building Grade II	1253458	SJ 4927 7588	On the Chester Road side of the church and built in 1911. It was donated by James Taylor JP, cofounder of the Britannia Telegraph Works, Helsby (BICC). It bears the inscription "I am the Resurrection and the Life"
DCH2416	Rake House	Listed Building Grade II	1253459	SJ 4887 7572	Built in 1807 for Elizabeth Haspell, widow of Richard, a local landowner. Their daughter married Thomas Lewis of Godscroft Hall, a prominent Methodist. James Slater Lewis, first Managing Director of the Britannia Telegraph Works was born there.
DCH2417	Former Stationmaster's House and Main Railway Station Building Helsby Station	Listed Building Grade II	1253460	SJ 4866 7563	Listed as being built in 1849, but thought to be built to coincide with the opening of the branch line to Hooton in July 1863.
DCH2469	Rose Farmhouse	Listed Building Grade II	1261759	SJ 4899 7573	Late 17th century farmhouse. Home in the 19th century of Richard Peers who ran a shop and Post Office. Later his daughter and her husband, William & Sarah Davies, farmed there.

DesigUID	Name	Type	Ref	NGR	Additional Local Historical Notes
DCH2470	256 Chester Rd	Listed Building Grade II	1261760	SJ 4905 7577	Late 17th century thatched cottage on Marquis of Cholmondeley land. In the 20th century, owned by Davies, formerly of Rose Farm.
DCH9760	Former Stables, Rake House, Lower Rake Lane	Locally Listed Building	-	SJ 4889 7571	Built in 1826 by Elizabeth Haspell, owner of Rake House – built in 1807. Keystone of arch inscribed EH 1826. Stables now converted into dwellings.
DCH10290	Old Station, Off Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	-	SJ 4864 7472	Former Helsby & Alvanley Station on the Cheshire Lines, Moldsworth to Helsby Junction Railway. Opened on 1st September 1869 and closed in 1875. The Station reopened over the years to be finally closed in 1964. The track was used for freight and that eventually closed in 1991 and has been dismantled. The Station is now a private house.
DCH10291	115 -119 Robin Hood Lane	Locally Listed Building	-	SJ 4880 7501	Tall sandstone terrace built in the 1880's by Guests, the owners of Helsby Quarry. Following an argument with Mark Smith they built the terrace to spoil the view from the property Smith owned. Hence the name "Spite Houses".
DCH10292	Hill Cliff Cottage, The Rock	Locally Listed Building	-	SJ 4877 7469	Built in 1860 - Date Stone - for local farmers, Joseph and Mary Garner, on land formally owned by the Earl of Shrewsbury. The land was farmed by the same family until the 1930s. The original distinctive windows have been replaced and the property extended.
DCH10293	Ravenscar, Alvanley Road	Locally Listed Building	-	SJ 4898 7515	Large sandstone house built in 1889 for George Crosland Taylor, founder of the Britannia Telegraph Works (later BICC).
DCH10294	1, 2, 3 & 4 Lower Rake Lane	Locally Listed Building	-	SJ 4869 7582	Known as the "Magazine Cottages". A row of cottages on the Marshes with pretty brickwork decoration, built around 1880 to house families of men who worked at the Powder Magazine Company based at Ince.
DCH10295	Undermount, 216 Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	-	SJ 4899 7569	Tablet inscribed S.E.B. 1765. Samuel and Ellen Burgess. Their granddaughter, Elizabeth, married landowner Richard Haspell and grandson Samuel established a Methodist Sunday School in Undermount in 1800. Samuel's son, Samuel, also a prominent Methodist, gave money for the Zion Chapel and was jointly responsible, with the Marquis of Cholmondeley, for the building of Carriage Drive on the Hill. Part of the original house was demolished to accommodate road widening.
DCH10296	Undermount Mews, off Rake Lane	Locally Listed Building	-	SJ 4901 7569	These were the out buildings built in 1778 and belonging to Undermount which was originally a farm and later Parkers butchers.
DCH10297	Middle House, 263 Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	-	SJ 4903 7576	Built in 1805 – date stone – for John and Martha Lewis of "Hatley" Netherton. Their grandson, John Lewis, inherited the farm and worked it until his death in 1869. It was later owned by the Davies family of Rose Farm. In the 1950s & 1960s the farm became Rondeg Nurseries specialising in flowers and shrubs.

DesigUID	Name	Type	NGR	Additional Local Historical Notes
DCH10298	Helsby House, 248 Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4910 7577	Possibly built in the 1870s on the site of an older house. Home of James White, Colour Oil and Tallow Merchant in the 1880s and 1890s. In the 20th century, it was the home of James Brandreth, Coal and Timber Merchant, and family. The original house is now split into two dwellings.
DCH10299	Beech House, 289 Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4917 7589	Built in 1879 for Joshua Midwood, a retired builder who previously lived at Bank House. He diverted what is now Smithy Lane and built Beech House near the site of an old farmhouse.
DCH10300	The Old Hall, Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4919 7579	The timber parts of the original 15th century hall were destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt in brick at the end of the 18th century and used as a farmhouse. The building has been much altered over the years. It was used as a Convalescent Home during WWI by Mrs Davies, the widow of Gabriel Looker Davies JP, Colliery Proprietor who lived there from the mid-1880s.
DCH10301	The Vicarage, Vicarage Lane	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4927 7580	Built of Helsby Sandstone donated by James Reynolds of Foxhill.
DCH10302	Holly Villa, 293 Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4925 7590	Although listed as Victorian, the house could date back to the mid-18th century. It was the home of the wealthy farming family, Brownent, who hailed from Woodhouses. There is a memorial in St Lawrence's Church to Samuel Brownent of Helsby, who died in 1782, and other family members. Later it became the home of John Dixon, a retired builder from Liverpool.
DCH10303	Horse and Jockey, Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4932 7592	Originally a farm and alehouse owned by the Janion family. First recorded as an alehouse in 1822. The landlord between 1822 and 1828 was William Rathbone. It was called "Horse & Groom", "Horse & Jockey", "Groom", and "Jockey" at various times over that period. It was bought by a brewery in 1890. When the Public House closed, it was bought by a developer who was prevented from demolishing the building, partly due to this listing. It is now in a poor condition waiting redevelopment.
DCH10304	Cottage Row, 268 - 274 Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4936 7589	Now called Elm Mount, at the junction of Chester Road and Grove Bank. A late Victorian bay fronted terrace of 4 dwellings built in 1896 by William Musgrove who also built Grove Terrace, Grove Mount, and Mount Villa.
DCH10305	School House, Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4940 7595	18th century farmhouse owned by Richard Janion. In the early 1800s, John Mountfield and family farmed there and in the 1880s Ann Wright and later Albert Wright farmed until at least 1928.
DCH10306	Station Cottages, Station Avenue	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4875 7562	A Victorian terrace of cottages, built in the 1850s to house railway workers. Used to be called Poplar Grove.
DCH10307	Undercliffe, Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4881 7528	A farmhouse, listed as 1770 but probably older, built on Marquis of Cholmondeley land. Farmed by William Cobbe in the early 19th century. In 1869, the land was leased by William Garnett, a cabinet maker from Chester. He upgraded Undercliffe (1879), converted the barn for a home for his foreman Thomas Gandy and built Heathercliffe for himself. By 1891 he had left the village. Undercliffe became the home of Thomas Fletcher, a ship-owner from Liverpool and Heathercliffe the home of James Taylor, joint founder of the Britannia Telegraph Works Helsby (BICC).

DesigUID	Name	Type	NGR	Additional Local Historical Notes
DCH10308	138 Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4881 7530	The barn to Undercliffe (see above), converted to a home in the 1870s for Thomas Gandy.
DCH10309	Hunter House, 31 Old Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4967 7577	Now called "Underhill" it was built for John and Martha Ellams, son of William and Mary Ellams who owned the adjoining Hillside Farm. It has recently been completely renovated and extended.
DCH10310	Fir Bank, 91 Old Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4929 7562	The listing gives a date of 1841 but it could be considerably older, possibly originating as a one roomed, dirt floored hunting lodge for Delamere Forest. More recently it was used as a school and the bell and coat pegs in the hall and bathroom still remain. The building has distinctive honeycomb iron windows.
DCH10311	Teuthill Farm, Tarvin Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 5023 7507	Built in 1848 by Richard and Mary Harrison – date stone-, a farmer and landowner from Alvanley. He later moved to New Pale Farm, Manley. A date stone "RMH 1818" in the house could have been taken from their original home in Alvanley.
DCH10314	Firs Farm, Hill Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4953 7506	Bear the date stone "WHJ 1794" and was built for landowners and farmers, William and Hannah Jones. On their death, it passed to their son in law, Samuel Okell of Frodsham. The farm was bought by George Lea in 1922 and in the 1930s and 1940s his widow Alice ran a tea shop and guest house there.
DCH10804	Telephone Kiosk, Chester Road	Locally Listed Building	SJ 4879 7542	Recorded under Criterion F, this red telephone box, situated near the Indian Restaurant, is still in working order, although there are windows missing and it needs maintenance.





H E L S B Y      P A R I S H      C O U N C I L

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