

## Northwich Neighbourhood Plan

# Consultation Statement



December 2016



# Consultation Statement

**December 2016**

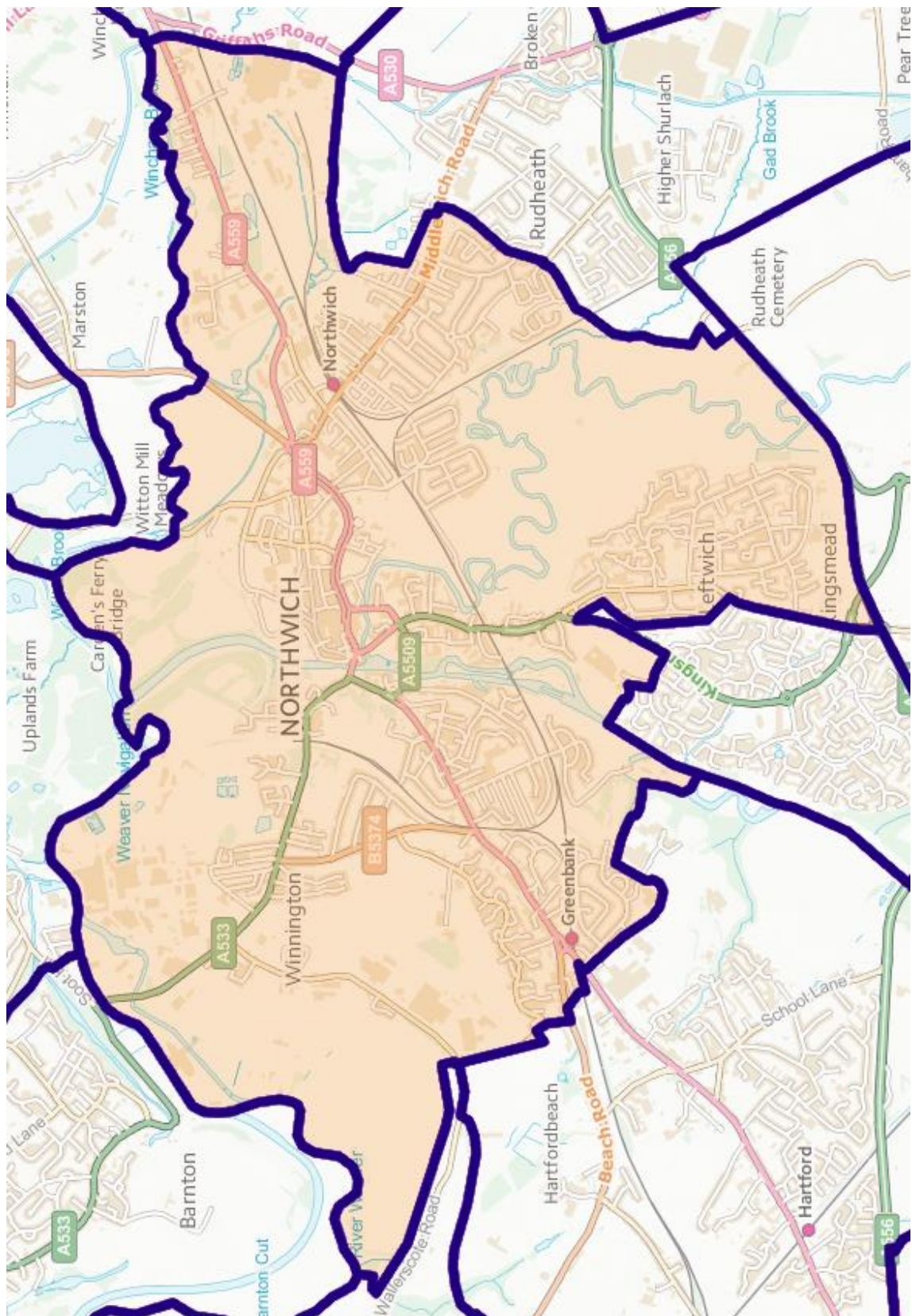
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Front cover: Consultation at Northwich Memorial Court, October 2014

Opposite: Map of Northwich Neighbourhood Plan Area;  
contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2015





# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (SI No. 637) Part 5 Paragraph 15 (2)<sup>1</sup> which defines a “consultation statement” as a document which
- *contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;*
  - *explains how they were consulted;*
  - *summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and*
  - *describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.*
- 1.2 The Northwich Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in response to the Localism Act 2011, which gives Town Councils and other relevant bodies new powers to prepare statutory Neighbourhood Plans to help guide development in their local areas. These powers give local people the opportunity to shape new development, as planning applications are determined in accordance with national planning policy and the local development plan. Neighbourhood Plans form part of this Framework. Other new powers include Community Right to Build Orders whereby local communities have the ability to grant planning permission for new buildings.
- 1.3 This Consultation Statement summarises the community consultation process that was undertaken in producing the Draft Northwich Neighbourhood Plan November 2015 (referred to in this document as the Neighbourhood Plan) and shows how the

requirements of Regulations 14 and 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 have been satisfied in producing the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 1.4 Northwich Town Council has been explicit in its aim that the Neighbourhood Plan should be a plan for the town, developed by the people of the town. Consequently, efforts have been made to involve the local community in a meaningful way at every stage of the plan-making process. Particular emphasis was placed on “front-loaded” community consultation to engage as wide a range of local people and interested parties as possible, right from the start, before any proposals were formulated.
- 1.5 In addition, the consultation process was designed to ensure that consultation events took place at critical points in the process where decisions needed to be taken; that as wide a range of people as possible could be engaged in the planning process by using a



variety of events and communication techniques; and that the results of consultation were fed back to local people and available to read (in both hard copy and via electronic media) as soon as possible after consultation events.



1.6 On 13 March 2013, the Steering Group met at the offices of Northwich Town Council. It agreed the provisional themes (later to be called Topic Areas) around which the Neighbourhood Plan could be constructed. These were:

- Housing Development;
- Community Infrastructure;
- Transport & Waterways;
- Economic Development;
- Retail & Commercial;
- Recreation & Tourism and Environment.

1.7 As work of the Topic Area Groups (TAGs) progressed, the area titles were modified to better reflect points arising from discussions within the groups and with the community.



Northwich Library  
November 2014

1.8 On 31 July 2013, an Executive Group was appointed to oversee continuing work on the Plan including co-ordinating and supporting the work of the TAGs. → **Appendix A.**

1.9 On 8 October 2013 an application was sent to Locality, seeking an initial grant of £7000 to assist in the production of the plan. The application was successful.

1.10 The process to produce the Plan was:

- **Stage 1** – Creation of Working Structure and Initial Public Involvement. February 2012 – December 2013.
- **Stage 2** – Initial consultation to inform the Plan Vision. Topic Area Groups develop Topic Area Objectives and Public Surveys carried out. December 2013 – February 2015.
- **Stage 3** – From analysis of survey results, the Vision and Topic Area Objectives were refined and initial policies developed. Initial Draft Plan produced (by Urban Roots). February 2015 – May 2015
- **Stage 4** – Further consultation to test Objectives and Policies in developing preferred options for the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. This stage was the Regulation 14 – Pre-submission consultation and publicity stage which was undertaken by the qualifying body (the Town Council). May 2015 – October 2015.
- **Stage 5** – Statutory Public Consultation took place from 13 October 2015 to 30 November 2015. Analysis of the Results from the Statutory Public Consultation and consequent modification of the Draft Plan.

## 2 Stage 1

**February 2012 – December 2013**

**Creation of Working Structure and Initial Public Involvement.**

Stage 1 begins with an interest expressed by Northwich Town Council and results in the creation of the working structure, ie. identification of provisional Topic Areas; identification of members of the community wishing to be part of a particular Topic Area Working Group (TAG); initial creation of a Steering Group (consisting of members of Northwich Town Council and volunteers from the community) to carry the process forward; and creation of an Executive Working Group to co-ordinate the work of the TAGs and manage liaison with Northwich Town Council, Cheshire West and Chester (Locality), voluntary groups and the business community.

### 2.1 Consultation during Stage 1

#### Objectives

- 2.1.1 To engage the community and Town Council in joint activity identifying Topic Areas and a working structure to facilitate work on developing a Neighbourhood Plan.

#### 2.1 Who was involved and how

- 2.2.1 On 3 September 2012, at the Northwich Town Council meeting, Terms of Reference → **Appendix B** were agreed.

- 2.2.2 On 12 December 2012, Northwich Town Council held an open meeting at the RAOB Club, Northwich, to explain the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. The meeting was publicised in the local press and by notices in public places. Councillors also used existing networks to inform interested groups and individuals.

- 2.2.3 Twenty representatives from fifteen

community groups, along with councillors from Northwich Town Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council, attended. It was agreed that a Steering Group consisting of Councillors and members of the community should be set up to move the process forward as a joint enterprise → **Appendix C**

- 2.2.4 A further open meeting advertised in the same way as that above was held at the Northwich Town Council offices on 28 October 2013. The meeting was attended by the Executive Group and the Topic Area Group (TAG) leaders plus 20 members of the public (most of these represented interest groups and organisations). The Planning Consultant, Murray Graham, from Urban Roots, explained the purpose and process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan.



- 2.2.5 A further open meeting, held at Winnington Recreation Club on 3 December 2013, launched the Plan. It was advertised using the methods outlined above. This meeting was attended by approximately 100 members of the public. The meeting room was set out so that each Topic Area had a table and display. Post-It pads were available and people invited to make comments about issues in Northwich related



to each Topic Area. Discussion was supported by the town Council's consultant (Murray Graham of Urban Roots) and Duncan McCorquodale, Planning Manager at Cheshire West and Chester Council.

2.2.6 This latter meeting resulted in the expansion of the organisations and individuals listed in the consultation database. Those people not already part of a TAG were encouraged to join a group(s) of particular interest to them.

## 2.3 What did they say?

2.3.1 The issues, possibilities and priorities raised during these meetings, particularly at the public meeting on 3 December 2013, were collated and used as the starting agenda for work on the development of the Plan. It should be noted that not all comments received could be incorporated in the Plan which would become a planning policy document. → **Appendix D.**

2.3.2 Key themes that emerged included;

- local historic architecture (black and white character should be retained),
- river, canal and boats are the best assets and are undervalued – encourage

- development which faces onto the river;
- development of an evening economy;
- improve provision for cyclists;
- improve Winnington Bridge to allow two way traffic;
- encourage development which would bring employment to the town and area,
- protect and improve sports facilities and green spaces, new buildings should be sympathetic to the architecture of Northwich;
- interlink public transport provision.

2.3.3 On analysis over 100 comments could be listed as 96 statements placed under the following 7 Topic Area Groups (TAGs).

- Retail and Commercial;
- Employment and Education;
- Housing;
- Environment – Natural and Built;
- Transport and Infrastructure;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Recreation, Tourism and Waterways.

## 2.4 How the comments were used

2.4.1 The comments, under TAG headings, formed the starting agenda for the TAGs in Stage 2.



Hayhurst Bridge  
September 2014

## 3 Stage 2

**December 2013 – February 2015**

Initial consultation to inform the Plan Vision. Topic Area Groups develop Topic Area Objectives and Public Surveys carried out.

### 3.1 Consultation during Stage 2

#### Objectives

- 3.1.1 For Topic Area Groups to modify the list of issues from Stage 1 and develop them in a form which could be tested in a public survey.

### 3.2 Who was consulted and how?

- 3.2.1 A further public meeting was held on 25 February 2014 at the Winnington Recreation Club, as a workshop session. The room was set up with the TAG tables and wall displays with the leaders and the group members present. Attendees moved from table to table and were encouraged to contribute from their range of interests and views in the different topic areas.

- 3.2.2 The meeting was supported by Murray Graham (Urban Roots), Duncan McCorquodale (Cheshire West and Chester Planning Manager) and Mark Simmons (Cheshire West and Chester Northwich Area Locality Manager).



- 3.2.3 Discussions took place which enabled the TAG leaders to take notes and refine earlier work on key issues and expectations within their topic areas. TAGs developed their list of issues and opportunities and tested these in further consultation with the community through various means including ad-hoc and regular interaction with visitors to the monthly Artisan Market held in Northwich. Each group was asked to identify priorities reflecting the frequency of public comment and suitability for inclusion in a Neighbourhood Plan.

- 3.2.4 Each TAG then prepared a report (later to be supported by “issues” maps) which was sent to, and discussed with, Murray Graham at Urban Roots. Urban Roots used these reports to produce a draft set of key objective and aspirations → **Appendix E** and a draft survey that would be used to formulate audience specific surveys to be conducted with Northwich communities.

- 3.2.5 The surveys were conducted through 2000 printed copies and online versions as set out in detail in → **Appendix F**. Specific





Clock Tower,  
Navigation Road  
September 2014



strategies were employed to contact 'hard reach' residents and people from a range of interests and ages and businesses.

### 3.3 What did they say?

#### 3.3.1 Responses returned were as follows,

- Residents 670;
- Businesses 21;
- Colleges 64;
- Schools 119.

(A detailed analysis is provided as

→ **Appendix G**).

#### 3.3.2 Responses endorsed and expanded upon the issues identified during the Stage one public consultation.

#### 3.3.3 The main things people liked about Northwich were:

- Riverside setting with easy access into the countryside for walking;
- History of the town together with the "black and white" architecture;
- Mix of independent shops in the Town Centre, along with the free parking;
- Good facilities for sport activities;
- Verdin and Vickersway Parks, and Grozone Community Garden;
- Good network of local voluntary groups.

#### 3.3.4 The main things people did not like about Northwich were:

- 50's and 60's concrete buildings;
- Surface pipelines in and around the Town;
- Lack of evening activities - restaurants, cinemas, etc;
- Consideration for cyclists in road layout;
- The Town Centre turning its back on the river;
- The desolate nature of Weaver Square and the markets.

#### 3.3.5 The main things people thought should be changed or improved were:

- The river frontage in the Town Centre should be improved, with new developments encouraged to face on to the river;
- Winnington Bridge should be improved to allow two-way traffic;
- Bus and rail services should be improved;
- Healthcare services, including the Victoria Infirmary, should be retained and increased to support the growing population;
- More social and affordable housing;
- Concentration of development of brownfield sites, rather than on greenfield sites or on the flood plain.

#### 3.3.6 The main issues and needs people thought that the Neighbourhood Plan should address were:

- Make better use of the River Weaver and River Dane, and improve access to them;
- Ensure new development reflects the historic character of Northwich, particularly in the Town Centre;
- Ensure that new housing development provides sufficient school places and healthcare facilities;
- Improve public transport and road safety for all road users and, in particular, improve road access to Winnington;
- Provide more and better arts, leisure, social and entertainment facilities;
- Support and improve sports facilities;
- Protect existing and provide additional green space.

#### 3.3.7 The responses and comments in general did not contain any surprises. They confirmed that the preparatory work in public meetings subsequently developed by the TAGs had identified the main issues and opportunities facing the town. Examples of responses on major issues are

- The lack of use of the river and water front was identified by 88%;
- The need for retail regeneration – 74%;
- Guidelines on sympathetic character (matching black and white) of new buildings – 88%;
- Use of brownfield sites – 87%;
- Retaining and enhancing green spaces and recreation areas – 72%;
- Would prefer to cycle to work if safe routes – 51%;
- The need for a two lane crossing at Winnington Bridge – 53%;



### 3.4 How were the findings used?

3.4.1 The Topic Area Groups met regularly throughout this period. The starting point of discussion was the list of issues identified from the initial public meetings, informed through an analysis of the data from the surveys. Each TAG developed its own summary report, that would be used to develop the Plan.

3.4.2 At a briefing meeting for TAGs on 18 September 2014, Murray Graham (Urban Roots) distributed maps of Northwich and of each district area. He explained how objectives which related to specific areas of land should be indicated within the TAG reports, to ensure that there were no conflicts between the proposals of different TAGs.

## 4 Stage 3

### February 2015 – May 2015

From analysis of survey results, the Vision and Topic Area Objectives were refined and initial policies developed. Initial Draft Plan produced by Urban Roots.

#### 4.1 Summary of Consultation during Stage 3

##### Objective

- 4.1.1 To use the findings from Stage 2 to generate a set of objectives and policies in the form of a first draft Neighbourhood Plan.

#### 4.2 Who was consulted and how?

- 4.2.1 The members of the Topic Area Groups engaged in meetings within their groups and discussions with interested members of the public. The task was to consider the survey results and incorporate them, where appropriate, into their Reports. On-going feedback was regularly being obtained via the Council stand at the Artisan Market and through unstructured opportunity contacts. A personal account of the work of one of the TAG leaders is given as → **Appendix H**.

- 4.3.2 Topic Area Groups (TAGs) met to consider the survey results and incorporate them, where appropriate, in an updated Topic Area Report.

- 4.3.3 The working Draft Plan (key objectives and aspirations) set out under the Topic Areas was presented to a meeting of TAG Leaders and the NNP Executive Group at the offices of Northwich Town Council, on 12 May 2015 (minutes of this meeting given as → **Appendix I**). This document provided guidance on the required content and structure of a Neighbourhood Plan and, in particular, the way information and views gathered from various form and process of consultation with the community should be presented.

#### 4.3 How were the results used?

- 4.3.1 Initially by the Consultants, Urban Roots, then by the TAGs to write a framework of content for the Draft Plan as set out below.





View from Town Bridge  
September 2014

## 5 Stage 4

**May 2015 – October 2015**

Further consultation to test Objectives and Policies in developing preferred options for the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. This stage was the Regulation 14 – Pre-submission consultation and publicity stage which was undertaken by the qualifying body (the Town Council).

### 5.1 Summary of Consultation during Stage 4

#### **Objective**

- 5.1.1 To develop the initial Draft Plan from Stage 3 into a Draft Plan ready for Statutory Public Consultation. Preferred options and proposed policies were further tested through consultations listed in the bullet points below.

### 5.2 Who was consulted and how?

- 5.2.1 Members of the Northwich community were asked for their views on the proposed policies at the monthly Council stand at the Northwich Artisan Market and the Neighbourhood Plan website.
- 5.2.2 Northwich Town Councillors were consulted at their monthly council meetings during this period. The Neighbourhood Plan was an agenda item at each meeting.
- 5.2.3 Cheshire West and Chester Borough Councillors for Northwich Wards and other Wards in the villages bordering on the town (most of the residents of these villages regard Northwich as their local town). Online versions of the Draft Plan were sent to each neighbouring council.
- 5.2.4 Relevant Cheshire West and Chester Council officers. An online version was sent to the responsible case officer in September 2015.

### 5.3 What did they say?

- 5.3.1 A sample of the nature of responses include

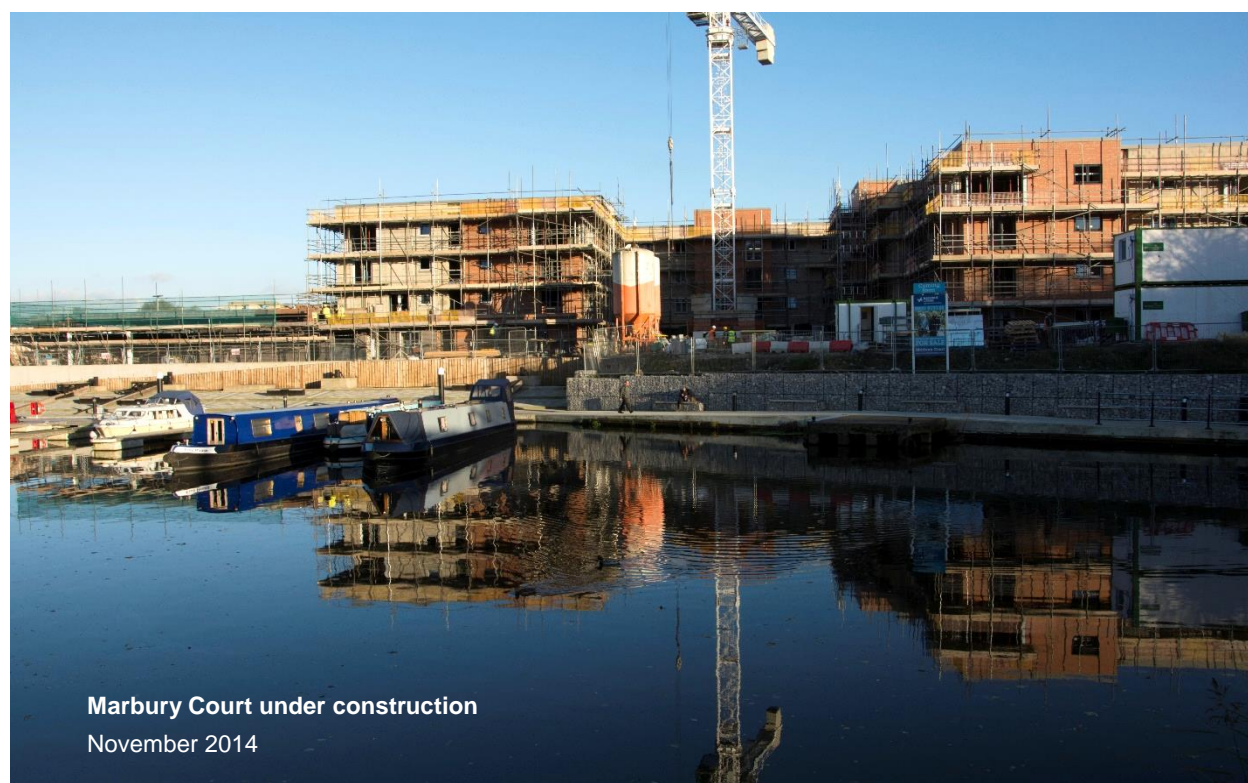
- *"I agree Weaver Square should be demolished along with the indoor market. Altrincham has successfully turned its indoor market into a popular food and bar hall. That used an existing charming structure which Northwich doesn't have so would need to be a new construction. The Hill section of Witton Street is a mess especially the paving near Weaver Square. This can't be left as is and needs to compliment Barons Quay."*
- *"Market needs relocating to Barons Quay area. Weaver Square needs complete overhaul and redevelopment. With building of Barons Quay focal centre of Northwich has moved. Riverfront must be developed"*
- *"Housing needs have to be met but should be supported by a better infrastructure and improved roads. For example Winnington swing bridge"*
- *"Better transport links to Gadbrook Park and Cheshire Business Park would help to attract local employees and employers to the area."*
- *"The potential of the waterways, rivers and canals is vastly underestimated in Northwich and the surrounding areas."*

### 5.4 How were the comments used?

- 5.4.1 Details of the process used to develop the draft Neighbourhood Plan for Statutory Consultation are outlined below.



- 5.4.2 Throughout the process, the latest updated version of the Plan was available on the Northwich Neighbourhood Plan website.
- 5.4.3 Weekly reports on issues and progress were presented to the Executive Group during this period. The Executive focused its attention on areas of the Plan where potential changes and modifications might be required.
- 5.4.4 Consultations included meeting of TAG Groups and Leaders during September 2015 involving specific aspects of the Plan as it affected their Topic Areas.
- 5.4.5 The constant review of the Plan following the consultations resulted in 17 drafts, each progressing from the previous version, being produced (draft 17, the Regulation 14, version can be found at → **Appendix J**).
- 5.4.6 In the latter stages, prior to release on 14 October 2015, copies of the Plan were sent online to CWaC Councillors for Northwich and neighbouring wards, along with invitations to comment. Also, at this time, consultation took place with relevant CWaC officers to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.
- 5.4.7 The Town Council strived to take on as many comments and proposed amendments as possible. Given the number of responses, comments from Cheshire West and Chester Council were taken as the starting point for amending the plan and then responses from other individuals, bodies, developers, landowners etc. were considered in detail.
- 5.4.8 As comments came in, the Draft Plan was amended until the Plan for submission to Cheshire West and Chester Council (draft 17) was considered ready.
- 5.4.9 The Regulation 14 - Pre-submission of the Draft Northwich Neighbourhood Plan to Cheshire West and Chester Council was made on 13 October 2015.
- 5.4.10 The Draft Northwich Neighbourhood Plan for Statutory Public Consultation (the Regulation 14 Version of the Plan) was published on 14 October 2015.



**Marbury Court under construction**  
November 2014



## 6 Stage 5

**October 2015 – August 2016**

Statutory Public Consultation took place from 14 October to 30 November 2015. Analysis of the Results from the Statutory Public Consultation and consequent modification of the Draft Plan.

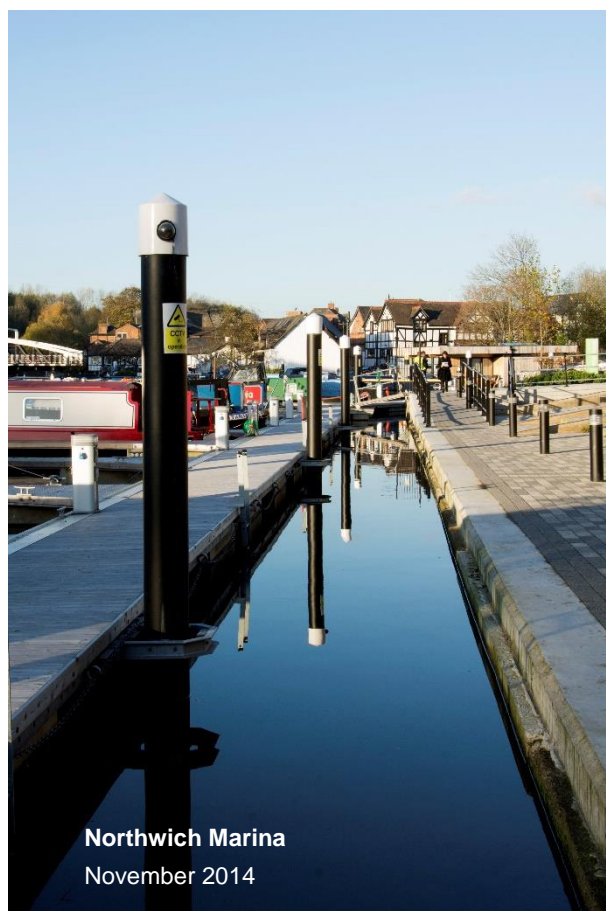
### 6.1 Summary of Consultation during Stage 5

#### **Objective**

- 6.1.1 The public consultation on the Northwich Draft Neighbourhood Plan was carried out in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (SI No. 637) Part 5 Pre-submission consultation and publicity, paragraph 14. This states that: *Before submitting a plan proposal to the local planning authority, a qualifying body must*
- (a) *publicise, in a manner that is likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area*
- *details of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan;*
  - *details of where and when the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan may be inspected;*
  - *details of how to make representations; and*
  - *the date by which those representations must be received, being not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the draft proposal is first publicised;*
- (b) *consult any consultation body referred to in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan; and*
- (c) *send a copy of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan to the local planning authority.*

### 6.2 Who was consulted and how?

- 6.2.1 Residents of Northwich and surrounding areas using copies of the Plan and an online version (examples of press releases given as → **Appendix K**).
- 6.2.2 Direct consultation with a number of bodies, including statutory consultees as advised by Cheshire West and Chester Council.



**Northwich Marina**  
November 2014

6.2.3 A range of methods and strategies was used in order to engage as wide a spectrum of residents as possible. This involved using a variety of locations for display/discussions and again, sessions in the colleges to meet with younger people.

6.2.4 A copy of the consultation document, methods used and a list of consultees are given as → **Appendix L**.

### 6.3 What did they say?

6.3.1 The website version received 1218 visits.

6.3.2 189 response forms were completed either on paper or on line.

6.3.3 The table below presents the statistical analysis of the responses to the individual questions.

6.3.4 Detailed responses were received from a number of stakeholders, including submissions from

- Cheshire West and Chester Council;
- NPL (a landholder in the Plan area);
- H2O on behalf of Jalsea Marina;
- The Canal and River Trust.

6.3.5 Analysis of the public and stakeholder responses is explained in 6.4 below.

### 6.4 How were the results of the Statutory Consultation used?

6.4.1 Consultation responses were entered online into Survey Monkey (including paper responses). The results were exported into a database for analysis. A full analysis of the responses was carried out, involving the Topic Area Groups in addressing responses pertaining to their areas.

6.4.2 A meeting was held on 6 January 2016 attended by TAG Leaders and the Executive Group. Tag Leaders were provided with comments which were relevant to their Topic Area and discussion took place about the process of dealing with them.

6.4.3 In consultation with the Executive group and Tag leaders the comments were assessed, differentiating between general statements (usually of approval) and specific comments requiring consideration and possible amendment to the Plan.

Question number	Topic Area	Number of responses	Agree or partly agree		Disagree	
				%		%
1	<b>Retail and Commercial</b>	162	154	<b>95.1</b>	8	<b>4.9</b>
2	<b>Employment and Education</b>	155	147	<b>94.8</b>	8	<b>5.2</b>
3	<b>Housing</b>	154	140	<b>90.9</b>	14	<b>9.1</b>
4	<b>Environment - Natural and Built</b>	154	146	<b>94.8</b>	8	<b>5.2</b>
5	<b>Transport and Infrastructure</b>	153	141	<b>92.2</b>	12	<b>7.8</b>
6	<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	127	125	<b>98.4</b>	2	<b>1.6</b>
7	<b>Recreation, Tourism and Waterways</b>	147	146	<b>99.3</b>	1	<b>0.7</b>

Statistical analysis of responses to individual questions





Solvay Road, Winnington  
April 2014



- 6.4.4 TAG Leaders, in consultation with their TAG teams, prepared reports suggesting amendments to the Plan where appropriate. These reports were forwarded to Councillor Andrew Cooper.
- 6.4.5 This Stage was led by Councillor Cooper, assisted by Rupert Adams. Because of the pending adoption of Local Plan Part 2, the final part of the process was delayed so that adequate consideration could be given to this key policy document. Councillor Cooper and Rupert Adams reviewed the responses and TAG reports, and produced a list of actions and alterations to the plan resulting from the statutory consultation process. These are detailed in → **Appendix M**.
- 6.4.6 Councillor Cooper and Rupert Adams met with the Executive Group on a number of occasions during this process so that possible amendments could be assessed and agreed action taken.
- 6.4.7 Agreed amendments were incorporated into the Draft Plan. This resulted in the version to be submitted to Chester West and Chester Council as required by Regulation 15

# Appendices

This is a list of the appendices to this Consultation Statement, which are available as separate documents.

<b>Appendix A</b>	List of Members of the Executive Group and TAG leaders
<b>Appendix B</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>Appendix C</b>	Notes of 12 December 2012 meeting, including attendees
<b>Appendix D</b>	Issues raised at initial meetings
<b>Appendix E</b>	Key objectives and aspirations
<b>Appendix F</b>	Survey forms and distribution methodology
<b>Appendix G</b>	Results of survey
<b>Appendix H</b>	A personal account of a TAG Leader
<b>Appendix I</b>	Review of the Initial Consultation Draft
<b>Appendix J</b>	The (Regulation 14) Consultation Draft Plan
<b>Appendix K</b>	Example of press releases, and Consultation Flyer
<b>Appendix L</b>	The Consultation Document, methods used and a list of consultees
<b>Appendix M</b>	Review of consultation responses





**Northwich Neighbourhood Plan**

# Consultation Statement

**December 2016**

This Consultation Statement and the supporting consultation reports are considered to comply with Section 15 (2) of Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

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