



# **Buerton Village Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Version 2017 - 2030**

**July 2017**



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## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

### 1. FOREWORD

1.1 The Localism Act of 2011 gave new rights and powers to communities. It introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level. It is a powerful tool in that it has statutory weight and must be taken as a material consideration in planning decision-making.

1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework states 'Neighbourhood Planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need.....Neighbourhood Planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right type of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned to the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.'

1.3 All Neighbourhood Plans must:

- have appropriate regard to national planning policy;
- contribute to sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area;
- be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

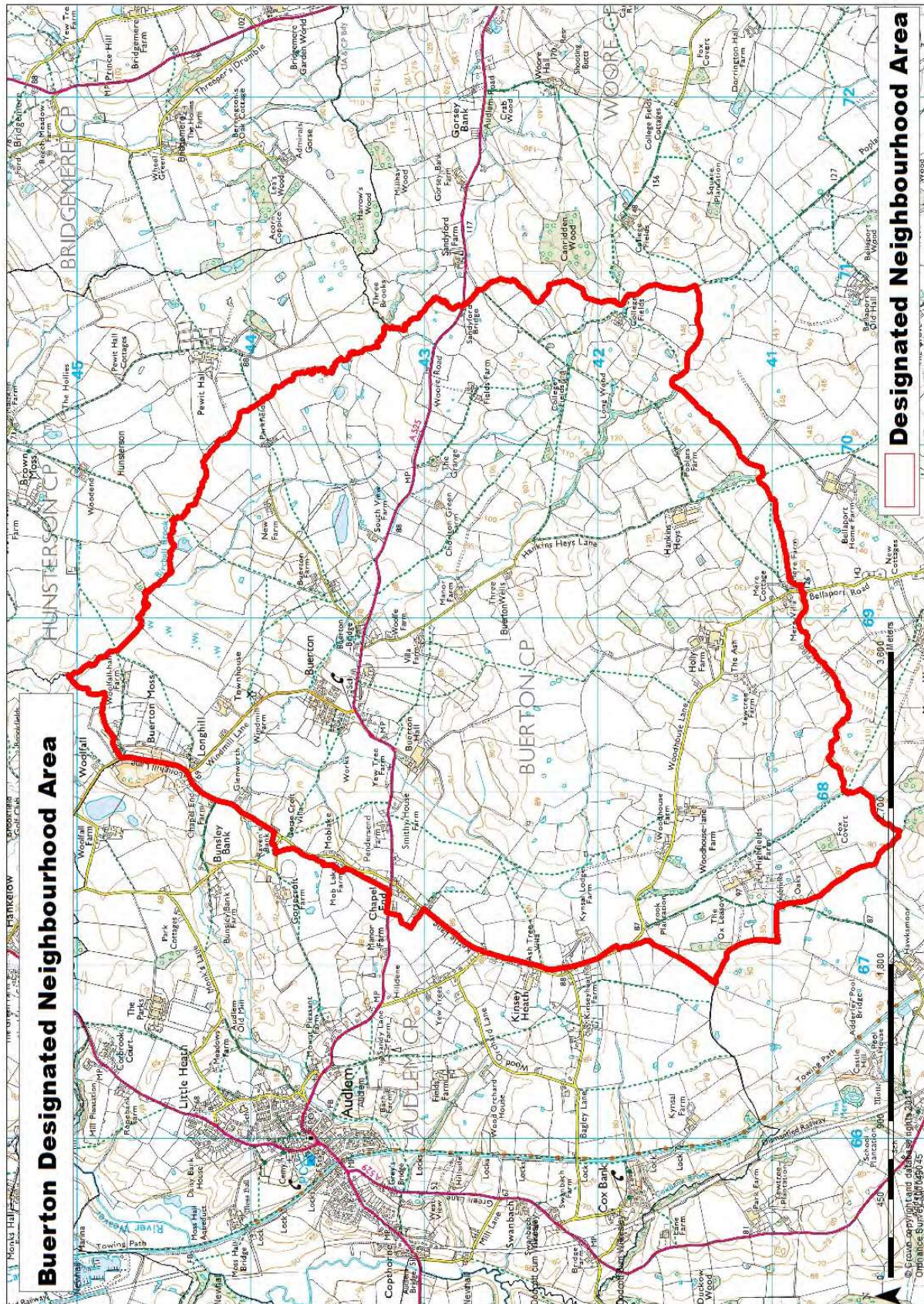
1.4 Buerton is in the rural area, where the adopted local plan indicates that in the interests of sustainable development and the maintenance of local services, growth and investment should be confined to proportionate development at a scale commensurate with the function and character of the settlement and confined to locations well related to the existing built-up extent of the settlement, although it may be appropriate for local needs to be met within larger settlements, dependent on location.

1.5 The Buerton Neighbourhood Plan was produced by the Parish Council and members of the community following a Parish Council Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014. A steering group was formed who consulted and listened to the community on a range of issues that influence the well-being, sustainability and long term preservation of Buerton's rural community. Every effort has been made to ensure that the vision, aims, objectives and policies of the Buerton Neighbourhood Plan reflect the views of the majority of Buerton residents, whilst having regard to local and national policies.

1.6 Following the pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation on the adopted Neighbourhood Plan, adjustments have been made to reflect representations received.



FIGURE A – MAP OF DESIGNATED AREA





### 2. INTRODUCTION

#### 2.1 HISTORY

2.2 Buerton is a small village in the unitary authority of Cheshire East, surrounded by open countryside, about 7 miles south of the town of Nantwich and 1½ miles east of the village of Audlem, on the border with Shropshire. The civil parish has a total area of 2,981 acres (1,206 ha). The parish also includes the small settlements of Hankins Heys, Moblake, Pender's End and Three Wells, as well as parts of Chapel End, College Fields, Kinsey Heath, Longhill, Raven's Bank, Sandyford and Woolfall. Buerton has a population of approximately 500, in 200 households, a figure which has not changed massively from the first census figures from 1801 when the population was recorded as 405. Figure B highlights the slow level of growth in Buerton over the years.

2.3 Buerton appears in the Domesday survey as Burtune; and was once held by a family of that name before being subsequently divided between two manors, one house of which is still standing (Buerton Hall). At one point, Buerton was held by William Malbank, who held much of the land in the Nantwich hundred, and had a hawk's eyrie. In 1804, it formed part of the estate of the Earl of Grosvenor. The village had a windmill in 1653; the surviving building just outside Buerton village dates from 1779 and was in use until 1880. Following the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Education Acts a school was founded in Buerton village in 1871 by the British and Foreign School Society, and a Band of Hope lecture hall was built in 1885. The village school closed in 2006.

2.4 Buerton contains 12 listed buildings – a rather sizeable amount for such a small village. The most notable is the timber-framed country house of Highfields which dates from 1615 and is listed at grade I. The Highfields estate was first mentioned in 1553, and was then in the possession of Hugh Chester of Shropshire. Woodhouse Farmhouse is a grade-II\*-listed, red-brick farmhouse on Woodhouse Lane, dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century; a barn, the garden wall and gatepiers of the farmhouse are also listed at grade II. Smithy House Farmhouse, Dairy House (now called Buerton Old House) and Yew Tree Farmhouse are timber-framed former farmhouses with brick infill, dating originally from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and are listed at grade II, as is a barn at Buerton Old House. Kynsal Lodge, off Kettle Lane, is a red-brick country house dating from around 1850. Its stables block is of the same date, both are listed at grade II.

An early 19<sup>th</sup> century farm building at Malt Kiln Farm is grade II listed, as is Buerton Old Windmill, a four storey brick windmill from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the body of which remains.



## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

2.5 Buerton has, throughout time, been little affected by national or international events. At the battle of Bloor Heath in 1459, it is rumoured that combatants used Woodhouse Lane and that some of the dead are buried along there. Later, in 1643, during the civil war, the area was plundered by Prince Rupert's army on their way to Nantwich. From the Norman times until late in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Buerton has lived on and by the land, and been involved in local affairs only.

2.6 Buerton started to change slowly in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1767 the Whitchurch to Madeley turnpike was established passing through Buerton along the line of what is now the A525. Public houses such as the Coach and Horses ( 1778 ) on the turnpike, the Leather Bottle in Woodhouse Lane, The Whynot at Kinsey and The Wolf in Hankins Heys Lane and sundry beer houses began to trade, before fading out in the first half of the twentieth century.

2.7 Buerton is in the ecclesiastical parish of Audlem St James. This was the only place of worship until a Wesleyan Chapel was built in 1813 and a Free Gospel Chapel in 1885 reflecting the Methodist surge here as in the surrounding districts, particularly Stoke on Trent from where preachers came on a regular basis.

2.8 Despite the industrial revolution no industries apart from those associated with agriculture, such as a smithy, have ever been established, probably because there is no substantial watercourse through the parish or minerals to be exploited beneath the fields. The only corn mill in the parish was a windmill, the body of which is now a residence.

2.9 Buerton has never developed a market, and although there were two shops and a filling station during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, these have all now closed. Over the years residents have always looked, and still do, to Audlem as the nearest centre for trade and supply of local services, together with the local towns of Whitchurch, Market Drayton and Nantwich.

## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

2.10 Since the Second World War, both small scale social and private housing schemes have been built in Buerton off Windmill Lane, creating more households but not substantially increasing the population.



The community now relies less on the land for employment, becoming more of a commuter and retirement village.

2.11 This change of demographic character is indicated by the loss of the school due to falling numbers, the closure of the chapels and the ability of the population, now with access to private transport, to shop and service their lives elsewhere, and farmers to use outside contractors to manage the land. Currently, Buerton has no meeting room, no practical bus service or any facilities apart from a modest children's playground and small playing field.



Former Buerton School is now a Craft Centre

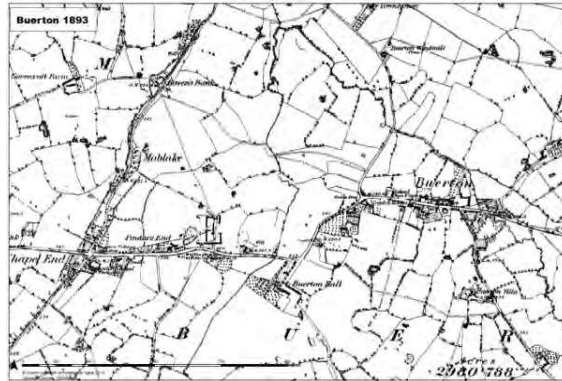


## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

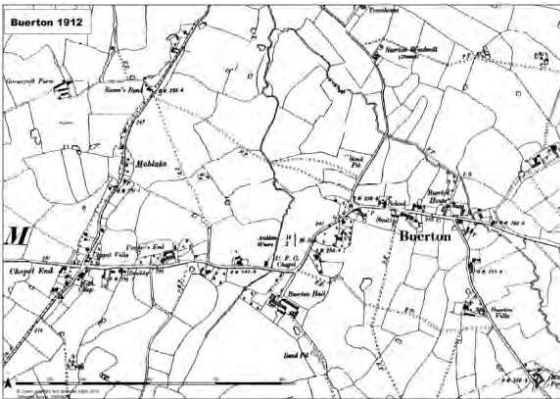
### FIGURE B – BUERTON HISTORIC MAPS



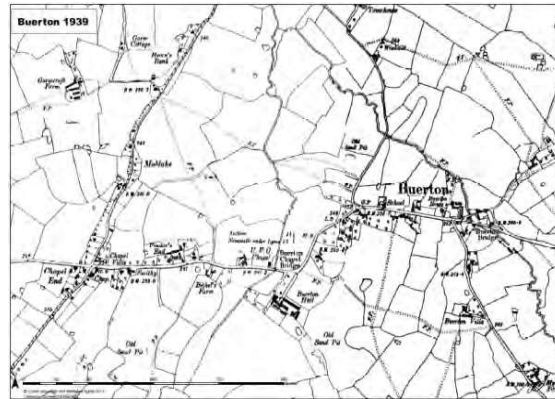
Buerton 1851



Buerton 1893



Buerton 1912



Buerton 1939



Buerton 2010

## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

### 2.12 LANDSCAPE

2.13 The terrain of Buerton is gently undulating, with a high point of 145 metres near the Shropshire border, south of College Fields. The area is predominantly rural, with the major land use being agricultural. Several small areas of woodland are located within the civil parish, including Brick-kiln Wood, Brook Plantation, Fox Covert, Long Wood and The Ox Leasow. Birchall Brook forms part of the north-eastern parish boundary; several unnamed brooks run through the parish and there are scattered small meres and ponds.



2.14 As part of the evidence base for the Buerton Neighbourhood Plan, in November 2015 Cheshire Wildlife Trust undertook a study of Buerton entitled 'Protecting and Enhancing Buerton's Natural Environment' (see web link) [www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk](http://www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk) which identified the natural assets that exist in the Neighbourhood.

2.15 Buerton lies within National Character Area 61 – Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain, a pastoral area of rolling plain which is particularly important for dairy farming. The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment 2008 classifies Buerton as lying within the Lower Farms and Woods Landscape Character Type. Buerton lies within subtype LFW4 (Audlem Character Area). The key characteristics of the Lower Farms and Woods Character Type include –

- Extensive, gently undulating plain
- Prominent, discontinuous sandstone ridges
- Few woodlands but locally extensive tracts of coniferous woodlands and locally distinct orchards scattered throughout
- Strong field patterns with generally well maintained boundaries
- Dominance of dairy farming
- Diversity of wetland habitats, internationally important wetlands, meres and mosses
- Extensive peat floodplains supporting regionally important breeding waders
- Multiple rivers and field ponds
- Archaeological evidence of iron-age hill forts, ridge and furrow and moated houses on the plain
- Regularly spaced large farmsteads, dispersed hamlets, market towns and larger settlements
- Estate parklands and gardens
- Nationally important reserves of silica sand and salt
- Canals, national cycling routes, 500km + of public rights of way and 6 national nature reserves





## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

2.16 The Subtype LFW4 (Audlem Character Area) is described as follows – ‘Lying in the far south of Cheshire and bordering Staffordshire, this character area is very rural. The dispersed settlements are connected by quiet country lanes giving the impression of isolation. The countryside is gently undulating but cut through by numerous steep sided streams often fringed with ancient woodland, particularly towards the south of the area. Towards the north arable farming is more frequent and many of the hedgerows and hedgerow trees have been removed resulting in a more open character with expansive views. The area which is part of the Meres and Mosses Natural Area has a number of overgrown mosslands (peat bogs) including one at Blakenhall. Many former mosslands have been drained in the past and evidence for these remain only in place names. There are a small number of post-glacial meres in this character area including the sizable Doddington Pool. The area also has a high number of small and medium sized ponds, particularly close to Bridgemere.’



### 2.17 BUILT CHARACTER AND DESIGN

2.18 Cheshire East Council has recently prepared a design guide that has been out for consultation (<http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/borough-design-guide-consultation.aspx>) The guide is geared principally toward larger scale housing proposals, but is also relevant to smaller scale development. The intention is to both guide and improve the quality of new development but to also provide a basis for Cheshire East to reject design that does not contribute in a positive way to Cheshire East as a place. The guide highlights that Cheshire East is a fantastic part of the country, where picturesque market towns nestle within unspoilt countryside. It is a very special and unique place that should be protected. Its character and attractiveness underpins the quality of life enjoyed by the Borough and its residents.

2.19 Five settlement character areas have been identified, and Buerton falls within ‘Market Towns and Estate Villages’, which predominantly comprises of dispersed, nucleated villages and hamlets (with one large settlement, Nantwich).

## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

2.20 The design guide highlights that the interaction of the settlement edges with the wider open countryside is very different to the north of the borough, due to the nature of the wider rolling landscape in which the settlements sit. The boundaries range from native hedgerows, post and wire stock fences to timber and concrete posts and panel fences.

2.21 In the settlement character area of Market Towns and Estate Villages, brick is the predominant building material for external walls, with both Flemish and English Garden Wall bonds being common. Red or dark brown is the most common colour, and often there is variation in colour within and between bricks producing a textured and patterned effect. Roofing material is predominantly slate or clay tile, and tall chimney stacks are a prominent feature of many buildings. Variety is provided by the mix and juxtaposition of housing typologies including terraces, semi-detached and detached properties, often along the same street.

2.22 A Spatial Character Assessment for Buerton was undertaken by Cheshire East Council, with input from the Neighbourhood Plan steering group. See link:

[www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk](http://www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk) The report assessed the spatial character of the village, including the local design vernacular, elements of the landscape, and significant local features. The Parish can be defined as having a core residential area and a rural, agricultural hinterland.

## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

### 2.23 BUERTON TODAY

2.24 Buerton is a village of around 500 people, living in 267 households. Based on the 2011 census, we know that:

- The community is fortunate to be safer than average, with less recorded crimes than the England average
- There are less people on average living with a limiting long term illness

• Average weekly income is higher in Buerton than in England as a whole, with fewer than average benefits, council tax or pension credit claimants living in the parish

• There are a similar number of economically active residents as nationally, but a far larger than average number of residents who are self-employed, work 49+ hours per week, and who work from home

• Buerton also has a higher proportion of owner occupied homes than average, and homes tend to be in the higher Council Tax bands

• Buerton households are less overcrowded than average, but there are a higher number of houses without central heating and slightly more people than average in fuel poverty

• Buerton is further away than average from key services such as a job centre, secondary school, GP, Pub or Post Office, leading to difficulties for those without a car

• The population density is low, with only 0.42 people per hectare, compared to the national average of 4.1 persons per hectare

• The population is older than the average in England, with slightly less children under the age of 16 than the national average

• Buerton has a very large proportion of detached homes (71%) with remarkably few terraced properties (2.4%) which is significantly different from the national averages of 22% and 24% respectively

• House prices are higher than average, with an affordability ratio of 18 (median house price v median income). This is higher than the national average

• In Buerton, the car is relied upon heavily as a mode of transport, with more cars per household than the average. Only 1% of people use public transport to get to work, compared to the national average of 11%

### 3. CONSULTATION

3.1 The Buerton Neighbourhood Plan is a community plan and must derive its vision, objectives and policies from the community. From the outset the Parish Council were determined that the residents should be kept informed and given every opportunity to inform the Steering Group of their views. Communication and consultation, in various forms, has played a major role in formulating the Buerton Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2 It was considered essential to:

- Promote a high degree of awareness of the project
- Invite residents to join the Steering Group
- Encourage everyone to contribute to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Promote consultation events and provide regular updates on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan and its development

3.3 Key to this programme was publicity to gain residents engagement. This was gained via public meetings, postal information and electronic media via the Audlem online website to which Buerton Parish Council has a section for parish information to provide easily accessible information.

3.4 Further information on consultation methods and the results from the consultations can be found in more detail in the Consultation Statement that accompanies this Neighbourhood Plan. Consultation Statement can be found on: [www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk](http://www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk)

3.5 The suggestion to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan was first raised at a Parish Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2014. Shortly after, a Notice was placed on the Buerton Parish Noticeboard to invite the public to attend a meeting regarding the Neighbourhood Plan and raise the possibility of joining a steering committee. Tom Evans, Neighbourhood Plan Manager at Cheshire East Council attended a public meeting in Buerton on 16<sup>th</sup> October, to explain the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. A decision was taken at this meeting to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for Buerton.

3.6 The proposed Neighbourhood Area for the Buerton Neighbourhood Plan was subject to consultation from 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014 to 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and was formally designated on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015.

3.7 An initial short questionnaire was delivered to every household in the parish on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2015 and displayed on the Parish Notice Board, to be completed by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015. (The questionnaire can be seen on the web link)

[www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk](http://www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk)



- 53 responses were received, a response rate of 26.5%. The questionnaire asked the following questions –

1. Do you wish Buerton to have a Neighbourhood Plan?
2. Do you wish Buerton to protect the open countryside/ agricultural land?
3. Do you agree that in the future, when satisfying Buerton housing needs, development should be restricted to existing brown field sites and infill land of areas with built up frontages?

3.8 Of the 53 households that returned their questionnaire, only one resident disagreed when answering question three. The resident commented ***“that there is a need for some development in the village on a small scale as we should encourage more people to come to live here with a view to improve the facilities that could be provided.”***





### 4. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The vision and objectives are based on the key issues raised by local people during the initial stages of the consultation process. They have been summarised and refined by the Steering Group to form the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2 Buerton is a small rural village in the heart of the open Cheshire countryside. The vision for Buerton is:

#### VISION

Buerton will retain a close relationship with the open countryside and wildlife. Development will be at a slow and steady pace, maintaining the serenity and character of Buerton and being in keeping with the environment. Buerton will be a balanced community of mixed ages, with improved access to services and a thriving rural economy.

4.3 The following objectives have been identified, and the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan seek to deliver these objectives -

#### OBJECTIVES

- To protect and enhance the open countryside setting of Buerton
- To protect and enhance the valued wildlife habitats of Buerton
- To ensure that important views and local green spaces are protected
- To encourage development on brownfield land, infill sites and through conversions
- To ensure that new development meets local needs
- To protect and enhance heritage assets
- To ensure that new development is in keeping with the local character of Buerton
- To ensure that new development does not have a negative impact on existing infrastructure
- To improve access to services
- To encourage a thriving local rural economy



### 5. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

5.1 The overwhelming response from the public consultations was that the community value and cherish the rural nature of Buerton, and wish to protect the open countryside and local wildlife. As a result, the Buerton Neighbourhood Plan has the following relevant objectives –

- To protect and enhance the open countryside setting of Buerton
- To protect and enhance the valued wildlife habitats of Buerton

### 5.2 Wildlife Corridor and Areas of Habitat Distinctiveness

#### POLICY ENV1 – BIODIVERSITY

Development should not adversely affect the local wildlife site at Long Wood (Figure C), the areas of high or medium distinctiveness identified in Figure D, or the wildlife corridors identified in Figure E. The enhancement of these areas will be supported.

Where development proposals are likely to have a significant impact on these sites, development will only be permitted where suitable mitigation and/or compensation is provided to address the adverse impacts, or where any residual harm, along with any other harm, is clearly outweighed by the benefits of the development.

### 5.3 Evidence and Justification

5.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were fortunate to be able to commission Cheshire Wildlife Trust to undertake a study of Buerton's natural environment, in order to inform and produce appropriate policies for the Neighbourhood Plan. The report 'Protecting and Enhancing Buerton's Natural Environment' was published in November 2015 (see web link) [www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk](http://www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk)

5.5 The report identified the core, high ecological value sites (high distinctiveness) for nature conservation in Buerton, which are recommended for protection, and medium value sites (semi-natural habitat) which should be considered as biodiversity opportunity areas subject to further evaluation, and which should be subject to a full evaluation should they be proposed for future development. Additionally, the report identified key local and regional ecological networks within the Neighbourhood Plan area that should be protected through Neighbourhood Plan policies.

5.6 Cheshire Wildlife Trust used data sets, aerial photography, Land Character Assessments and Econet categories (ecological network) to produce habitat distinctiveness maps for Buerton.

5.7 The study identified several major areas of high value (distinctiveness) habitat in the Buerton Neighbourhood Plan area, including one area of woodland designated as a Local Wildlife Site (Long Wood). These are shown on Figure D. Further areas of undesignated woodland habitat are located along Birchall Brook and other parcels are at Brook Plantation, The Ox Leasow, Hankins Heys and Buerton Gorse. There are also three traditional orchards mapped as 'high habitat distinctiveness' including two at Buerton Hall and one at Woodhouse Farm. Undesignated areas of 'medium habitat distinctiveness' were also identified as they provide important wildlife habitats in their own right as well as acting as ecological stepping stones. The majority are semi natural or species rich grassland. The largest parcels are by Birchall Brook, Buerton Moss and at College Fields.

5.8 The report also identified areas that act as a wildlife corridor network (figure E) with high ecological connectivity within and beyond the Buerton Neighbourhood Plan. The network largely follows the courses of five brooks which run from the higher land in the south northwards, eventually draining into the river Weaver at Audlem. The wildlife corridor also incorporates areas of semi natural habitat – by College Fields there are a number of fields which support marshy or neutral grassland, and many fields have intact native hedgerows which provide additional connectivity within the landscape. South of Parkfields, close to Birchall brook has the highest density of extant ponds, and is included in the wildlife corridor due to its importance in a local context.

5.9 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and creating ecological networks are central to the National Planning Policy Framework. Indeed, biodiversity is mentioned fifteen times in the NPPF with protection and improvement of the natural environment as core objectives of the planning system. The community in Buerton is keen to protect wildlife and one of the key ways to achieve this is to ensure that new developments are appropriately located and do not cause a net loss of biodiversity. The NPPF states that planning policies should identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation.

5.10 Policy SE4 of the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy seeks to ensure that all development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should, where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of rural and urban landscapes. Development should preserve local distinctiveness and avoid the loss of habitats of significant landscape importance.

FIGURE C – LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE AT LONG WOOD

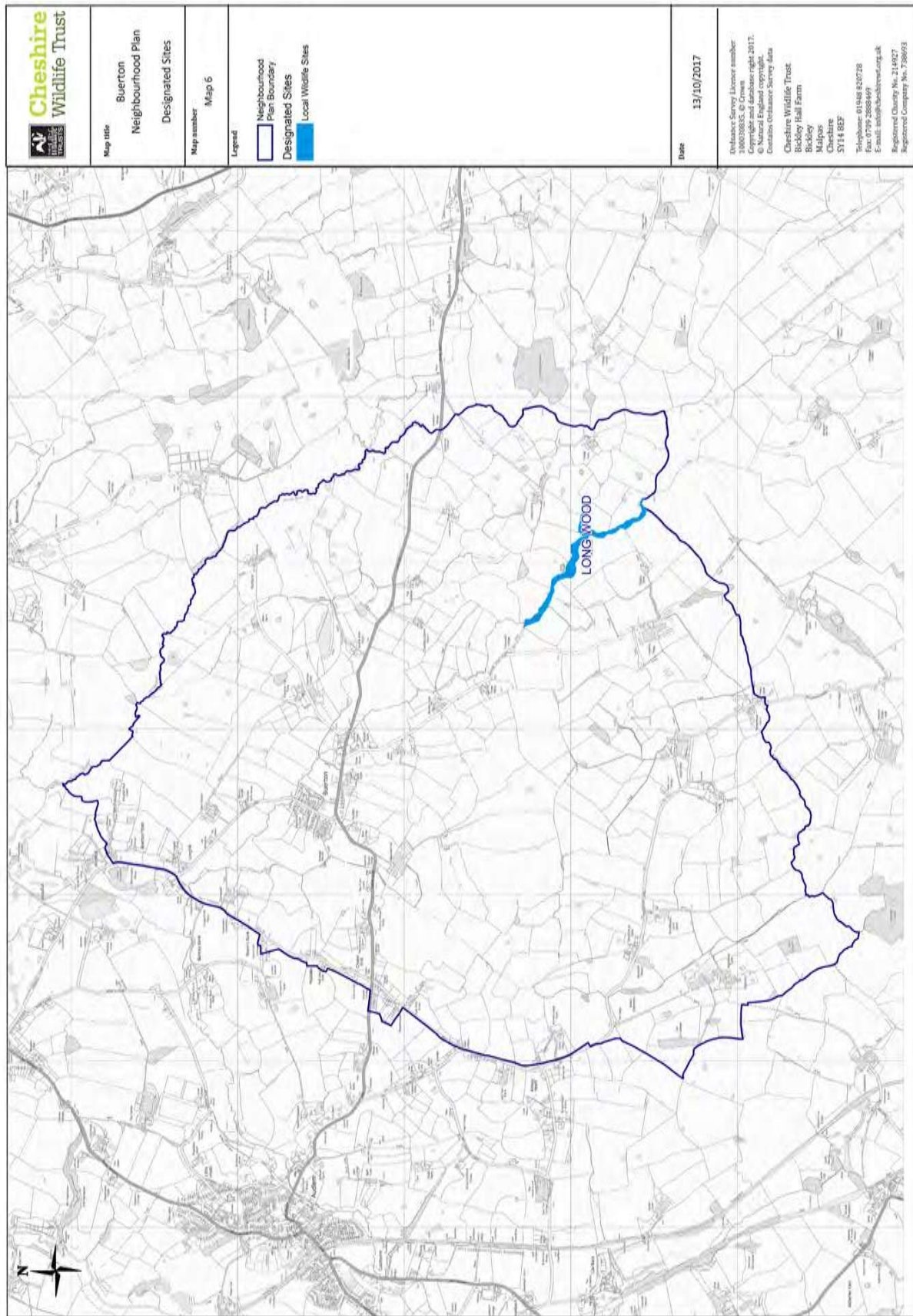




FIGURE D – HABITAT DISTINCTIVENESS MAP

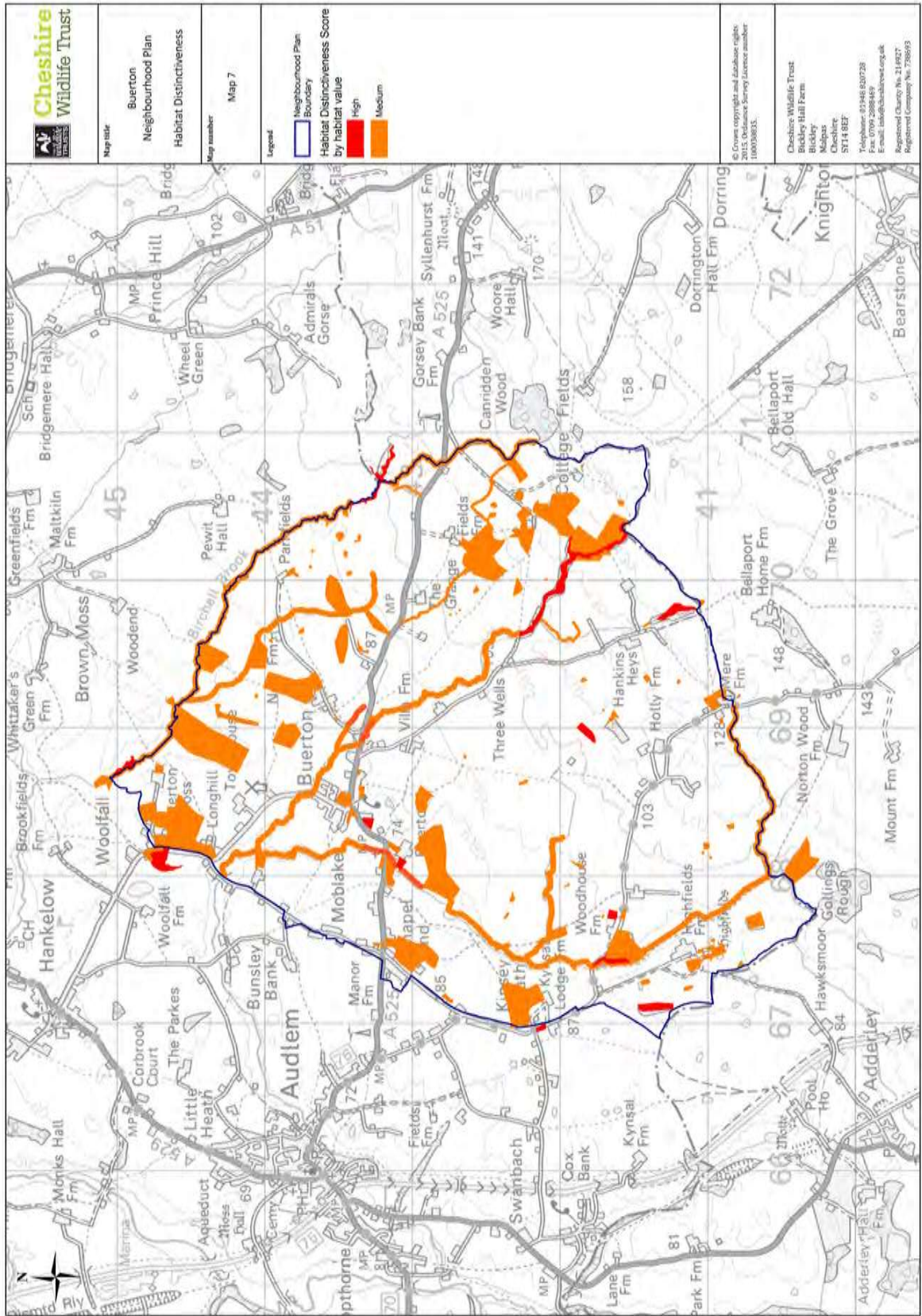
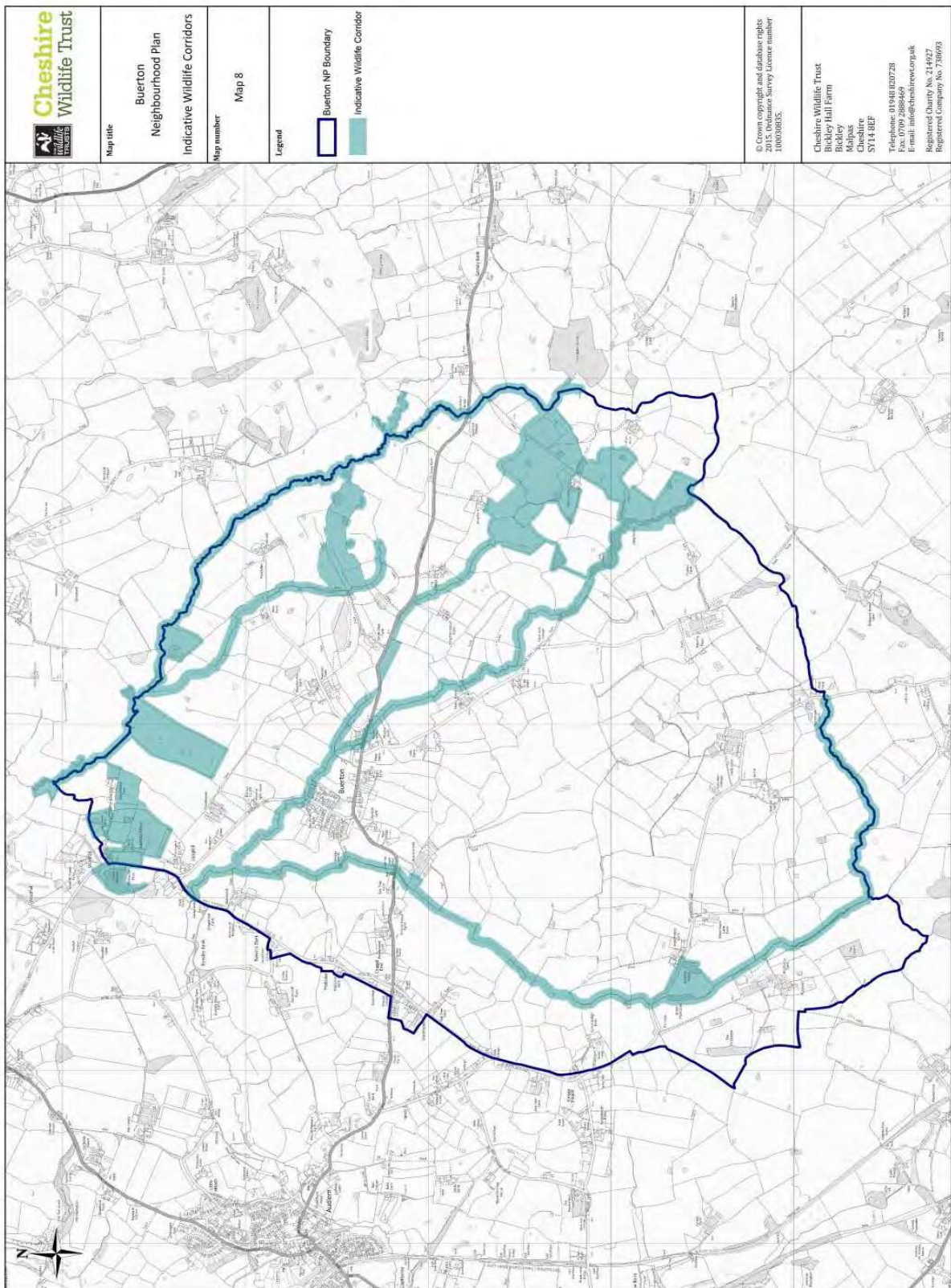


FIGURE E – INDICATIVE WILDLIFE CORRIDORS





### 5.11 Trees, Hedgerows and Watercourses

#### **POLICY ENV2 – TREES, HEDGEROWS AND WATERCOURSES**

Hedgerows, trees and watercourses which make a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity and landscape character of the surrounding area should, if at all possible, be preserved, and development which would adversely impact upon them will not normally be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of development are considered to outweigh the benefit of preserving trees, hedgerows and watercourses, development will be permitted subject to appropriate mitigation. The retention of trees, hedgerows and watercourses in situ will always be preferable.

Where a development may threaten protected trees an arboricultural assessment will be submitted with development proposals.

New developments will, where appropriate, be required to include suitable plantings of trees and hedgerows. Where available, this must be in compliance with the most up-to-date local planning authority guidelines.

### 5.12 Evidence and justification

5.13 Cheshire East Council have kindly prepared a Spatial Character Assessment of Buerton to help inform the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, assisted in the survey work by the Neighbourhood Plan group. (see web link) [www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk](http://www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk)

The survey work was undertaken in the summer of 2016, and the final Assessment produced in December 2016. The Assessment gave an overview of the Parish, noting that the landscape is primarily undulating plain, rising gently to the south and containing large field systems marked by hedgerows and trees. Whilst woodland is limited, individual trees feature regularly across the landscape, and within the village itself trees are a notable feature in residential landscaping.

5.14 The Assessment highlights that the more extensive rural hinterland incorporates a variety of landscape features including woodlands, farmsteads, hedgerow field boundaries and hillocks and river valleys each offering their own unique and localised landscape conditions.

5.15 The Assessment shows that a stream bisects the core village area creating a shallow brook valley to the west of Windmill Lane and forming a natural boundary marking the entrance to the village at the north. Footpaths along the northern extent of the stream are lined with trees and open to the wider countryside and arable cropping. In the existing residential developments, trees, hedges and shrubbery are prominent in frontage gardens and offer a transition between the open countryside and built development. Lanes to the west of the village are naturally enclosed by hedgerows. There are good examples of mature trees in the recreation area and at prominent locations along field edges.

5.16 The Spatial Character Assessment recommended that Neighbourhood Plan policies should include protection for key features of the landscape including hedgerows, trees and watercourses that contribute to the landscape character of Buerton. This policy seeks to ensure that valued trees, hedgerows and watercourses are protected, and further appropriate coverage forthcoming.



The policy helps to deliver one of the key aims of the NPPF of conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Para 118 states that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

### 5.17 Access to the Countryside

#### **POLICY ENV3 – ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Proposals to maintain and enhance the network of public footpaths and bridleways will be supported. Additions, connectivity, links and improvements to the existing network of public footpaths and bridleways will be sought in connection with new developments, where viable and practical, to improve access to the countryside.

Proposals which lead to the loss or degradation of any public right of way will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances. Proposals to divert public rights of way must provide clear and demonstrable benefits for the wider community.

Proposals to improve access to the Countryside Recreational Area (identified on Figure H) will be supported.

### 5.18 Evidence and Justification

5.19 The importance of the natural environment and continued access to the open countryside are seen as very important to the community of Buerton.

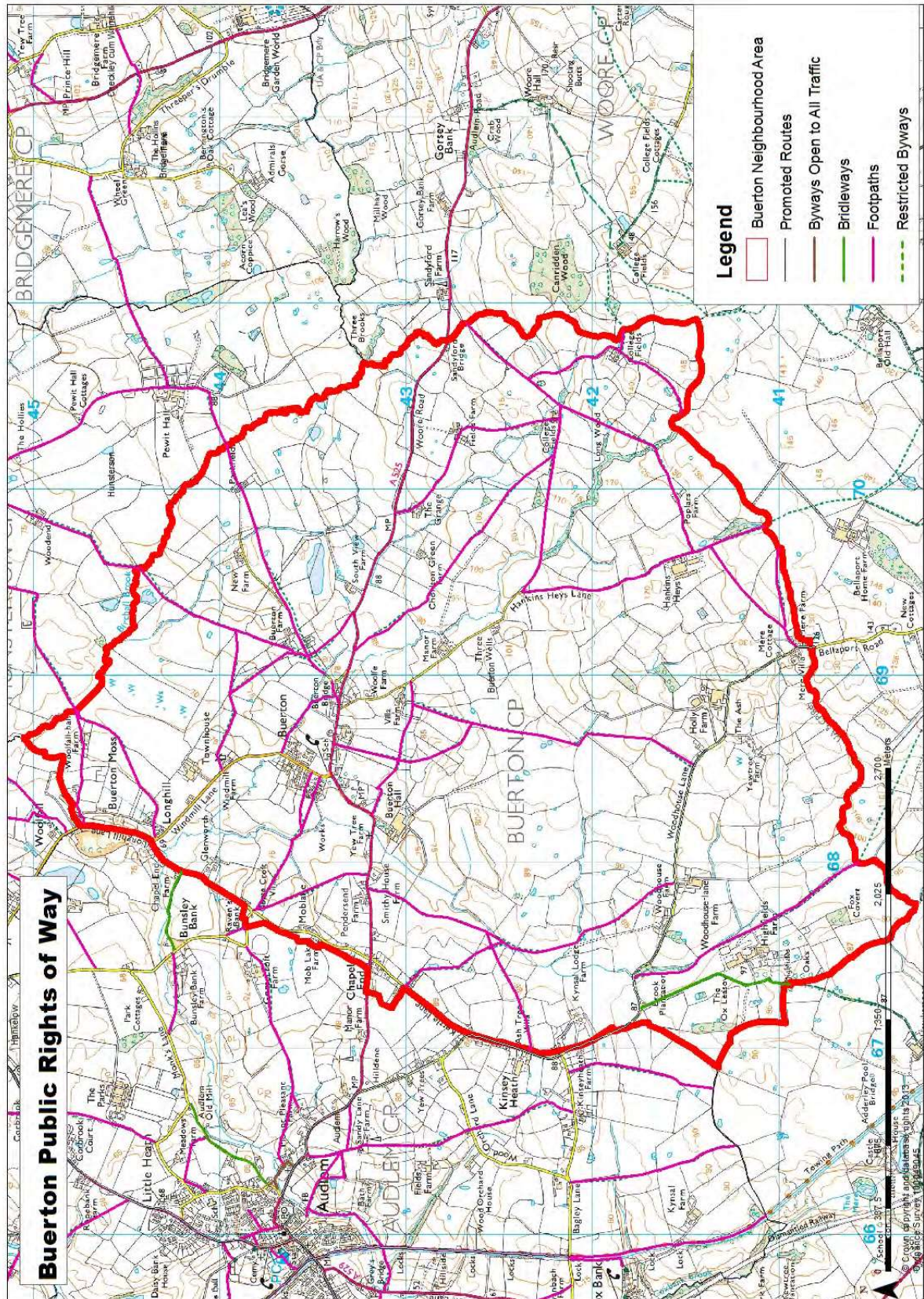
5.20 Buerton has a number of public footpaths that allow direct access to the countryside (see Figure F). The Neighbourhood Plan aims to protect the existing network, and take opportunities to enhance existing provision by creating new links where possible and viable.

5.21 There is only one bridleway in the Parish, and any improvements or provision of safe places to ride would be welcomed.

5.22 The Spatial Character Assessment for Buerton highlighted the need to protect, and where possible increase opportunities to access the Countryside Recreational Area identified on the Key Map (Figure H). Any future development which is detrimental to the role, function and character of this area will not be supported. This policy will help to achieve this aim, whilst also maintaining and enhancing access to the countryside throughout the Parish. This policy seeks to help deliver one of the NPPF's key planning aims of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, and also of promoting healthy communities. Para 75 indicates that policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and that opportunities should be sought to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing public rights of way networks.



FIGURE F – BUERTON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY





### 6. HOUSING POLICIES

6.1 The Buerton Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives -

- To encourage development on brownfield land, infill sites and through conversions
- To ensure that new development meets local needs

### 6.2 New Housing Developments

#### **POLICY HOU01 - NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS**

In order to meet local housing needs, and to remain on a scale appropriate to the existing character of Buerton, permission will be granted for small scale residential developments of up to six dwellings on any one site that are well designed and meet all other relevant policies within this Plan and:

- a) fill a small, restricted gap in the continuity of existing frontage buildings, and/or
- b) are located on brownfield land, and/or
- c) are conversions of existing buildings, and/or
- d) are replacing an existing building, and/or
- e) provide for evidenced local affordable housing through rural exception sites and/or
- f) for new developments, which are within or adjacent to the heart of the village (as defined in figure G) and/or
- g) are essential for the conversion or enhancement of a heritage asset

Six dwellings on any one site has been chosen to fit in with the local rural character of Buerton. In the case of conversions, or on brownfield sites, where the existing building is of an appropriate size and scale, the number of dwellings created may be greater as long as the character of the original buildings and the surrounding area is respected.

### 6.3 Evidence and Justification

6.4 Buerton is a rural settlement. No strategic need has been identified to deliver housing beyond local needs in either the existing Crewe and Nantwich Borough Local Plan or the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan. This Neighbourhood Plan recognises that in order to maintain a sustainable and flourishing community, some housing development will be appropriate to meet local housing needs. However, one of the main responses from the consultations was that people value the open countryside setting of Buerton, and it is the aim of the Neighbourhood Plan that new housing development will remain of a scale and in locations appropriate to the rural location.

6.5 Development in Buerton has historically been at a slow and steady rate. According to the 2011 census, the population of the village was 503. In the 1801 census, taken more than 200 years previously, the population was 405. The rural feel and open countryside are greatly valued by the local community, and large scale development would be out of character with the village.

6.6 In both the adopted Crewe and Nantwich replacement Local Plan and the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan, the village is defined as being outside settlement limits and in open countryside, where new housing is normally only permitted through conversions or replacement dwellings; limited infilling; limited affordable housing through rural exception sites; or where the dwelling is exceptional in design and sustainable development terms. The protection of the open countryside from urbanising development is a principal objective of the Local Plan Strategy. Indeed, one of the policy principles underpinning the adopted Local Plan vision is to develop brownfield sites, where possible, to minimise the use of greenfield and the open countryside.

6.7 Cheshire East Council have produced a Housing Advice Note for Buerton (see web link) [www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk](http://www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk) which has indicated the likely housing need for the parishes and helped inform the Neighbourhood Plan policies. The Housing Advice Note was prepared in August 2016, using methodology endorsed by Planning Practice Guidance and best practice. The Advice Note looked at evidence such as

household projections, census data, dwelling completion rates and the adopted local plan strategy to give an appropriate quantum of housing for Buerton, along with characteristics of the housing need.

6.8 The Housing Advice Note indicates that the range of potential housing range for Buerton could be 24-30 dwellings (2010-2030). This is comprised of the following:-

- Cheshire East Local Plan Submission Version proportionate figure: 28 (There are 20656 households in the rural area of Cheshire East, and 200 households in Buerton – 0.96% of total households in the rural area. If the parishes were to take a proportion of the proposed 2950 dwellings to be delivered in the rural area over the plan period, this would equate to 28 dwellings).
- DCLG Household Projections: 24 (It is projected that by 2030 Cheshire East households will increase to 180 000 from 159 000 in 2010 – an average increase of 1050 households per annum. Buerton has a 0.1166 % share of all households in Cheshire East, projected forward this gives a figure of 209 households by 2030. With a ratio of 1.055 households per dwelling, this equates to 24 dwellings over the plan period).
- Dwelling completion rate: 30 (Between 2001-2011 there was an increase of 16 dwellings in Buerton, or 1.1 dwellings per annum. Projecting forward to 2030, a figure of 30.4 dwellings would be arrived at if this rate continued over the plan period).

6.9 From April 2010 to September 2015 there have been 12 residential completions. There are 9 dwellings committed, taking the completions and commitments up to September 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 to 21. This figure can be deducted from the potential range of 24-30 units, making a requirement for between 3-9 dwellings for the remainder of the plan period (up to 2030).

6.10 It is not therefore considered necessary to allocate further sites for residential development. The housing policies will allow for appropriate small scale windfall developments or rural exception sites to meet the identified need as has historically been the case in Buerton. Any new housing development should be limited in scale, with a maximum of up to six units, in order to remain in keeping with the character of Buerton. The Buerton Spatial Character Assessment 2016 (see link) prepared by Cheshire East Council in order to help inform the Neighbourhood Plan policies, highlights that there are multiple farmsteads in the rural area of Buerton which offer an opportunity for new residential development should they choose to diversify. The Assessment highlights that Buerton has a rich agricultural hinterland, with most development taking place in the core residential heart of the village. Outside of this core, development consists of linear, ribbon type development and individual farmsteads. In order to reflect the local character of Buerton, the Spatial Character Assessment recommends that new development should be focussed within and adjacent to the heart of the village.

### 6.11 New Housing Size and Type

#### **POLICY HOU2 – NEW HOUSING SIZE AND TYPE**

In order to meet the housing needs of Buerton and to redress the imbalance of the current housing stock, new developments should favour smaller dwellings. A majority of new homes on developments of 3 or more should be limited to one-third detached properties, the rest being bungalows, terraced or semi-detached properties, unless viability or other material considerations show a robust justification for a different mix of house size and type.

### 6.12 Evidence and Justification

6.13 In order to help ascertain the affordable housing needs of Buerton, a Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in July/August 2016.

(see web link) [www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk](http://www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk) was sent by post to all households in the Neighbourhood Area of Buerton. The survey only required a response from those people who are or will be in need of affordable housing, including details of anyone known to have moved away from Buerton due to a lack of affordable housing in the previous three years since the last housing needs survey was carried out.

6.14 A total of 12 surveys were returned, with three of these responses demonstrating a housing need. One of the three respondents wished to move within Buerton, whilst the other two respondents were happy to move within 5-10 miles and 11-20 miles of Buerton. The reasons cited for needing to move were to live independently; and to have cheaper accommodation. However, all three respondents' preferred tenure was private purchase. All wished to purchase a house, ranging from 2 to 4 bedrooms, and none had any special needs or requirements.

6.15 The Housing Advice Note prepared by Cheshire East for Buerton in August 2016 highlights that the recent delivery of 11 affordable homes in the Parish may have improved affordability in the area. This may have contributed to why there is currently little evidence of affordable housing need. Moreover, rural exception policies in the Local Plan will allow for the further delivery of small scale rural exception sites for locally identified housing need, should evidence highlight the need for this at a later stage in the Plan period. Affordable housing policies and requirements for market developments will be provided through the Cheshire East Local Plan, and so along with the limited evidence forthcoming from the local survey, it is not thought necessary to introduce a policy specifically for Buerton.

6.16 Housing Advice Note does, however, indicate that the parish has a lower proportion of concealed families than the Cheshire East and national average, with an under occupancy of properties, and that this may indicate that there are not enough suitably sized smaller market properties to meet local demand. Furthermore, the Housing Advice Note details that Buerton's housing stock is dominated by detached housing, accounting for 71% of household accommodation, more than double Cheshire East and national averages. There is also considerably fewer smaller terraced and semi-detached properties. This lack of smaller market homes limits the opportunities for first time buyers to either locate or remain in the parish, compounding the demographic profile of an ageing population and lower proportions of younger age groups. It also does not give much opportunity for people to downsize, freeing up family homes. The Housing Advice Note recommends that developments should provide for a range of housing types, tenures and sizes, with a particular emphasis on smaller market housing to balance the housing stock profile and provide

more opportunities for younger residents including first time buyers as well as some downsizing opportunities.

6.17 The Housing Advice Note highlights that the proportion of the very elderly population is significantly greater than the Cheshire East average and that there are a large proportion of households who will become very elderly over the plan period. However, it is recognised that whilst there is a need to consider carefully the provision of specialist housing for the elderly, the viability of such provision and the need to ensure that sheltered/ retirement provision is close to services and facilities, may lead to such accommodation being better provided for in larger settlements. Again, smaller properties available for downsizing and for residents to maintain their independence for longer would be a way of helping to address this issue.

6.18 This policy reflects the outcome of the Housing Advice Note, and is also in line with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 50 which strives to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, identifying the size, type, tenure and range of housing required in particular locations to reflect local demand.



### 7. LOCAL CHARACTER AND DESIGN POLICIES

7.1 The Buerton Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective

- To ensure that new development is in keeping with the local character of Buerton
- To ensure that important views and local green spaces are protected

### 7.2 Local Character and Design

#### **POLICY LCD1 – LOCAL CHARACTER AND DESIGN**

To ensure that buildings, characteristic features and materials are representative of the settlement character of Buerton, the design and layout of new developments should demonstrate consideration of the Cheshire East Design Guide (2016) and the Buerton Spatial Character Assessment (2016).

New development should take the following into account, where appropriate:

- a) Development adjoining open countryside should provide a sympathetic transition between the rural and village landscape, through appropriate landscaping, design and boundary treatments.
- b) Development should be bordered by boundary treatments appropriate to its location.
- c) Development should be set back from the main highway.
- d) Development should create gaps in frontages to enable views to the countryside.
- e) Development should include traditional materials and detailing in new designs, reflective of the high quality traditional features present in the village.
- f) Development should provide appropriate landscaping for the localised context.
- g) Development of, and within close proximity of the defined Character Buildings (Figure H) should be sensitively designed with special regard to design, setting, materials and street scene.
- h) Development at the gateways to the core village (Figure H) should be treated sensitively incorporating a traditional style and vernacular.
- i) Development should support features beneficial to wildlife.

### 7.3 Evidence and Justification.

7.4 The rural setting of Buerton within the landscape is important to the local community. Cheshire East Council have prepared a Spatial Character Assessment of Buerton to help inform the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, assisted in the survey work by the Neighbourhood Plan group (see web link) [www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk](http://www.buertonparishcouncilnp.co.uk) The survey work was undertaken in the summer of 2016, and the final Assessment produced in December 2016. The report assesses the spatial character of the village, including the local design vernacular, elements of the landscape, and significant local features. The Parish can be defined as having a core residential area and a rural, agricultural hinterland.

7.5 It is important that any new development is of high quality design, enhancing the local character of the parish. Buerton has a distinctive character with attractive buildings set within a rural landscape, which is valued by the community. Every effort needs to be adopted to ensure new developments respect this. The National Planning Policy Framework states that developments should respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

7.6 The 2016 Spatial Character Assessment of Buerton gave an overview of the Parish, noting that the landscape is primarily undulating plain, rising gently to the south and containing large field systems marked by hedgerows and trees. Whilst woodland is limited, individual trees feature regularly across the landscape, and within the village itself trees are a notable feature in residential landscaping. The main village has limited low density, linear residential development along some of its lanes, with small blocks of residential development extending beyond these highways, primarily in the north east of the village. Individual large farmsteads feature prominently in the landscape, often in traditional Cheshire Brick.

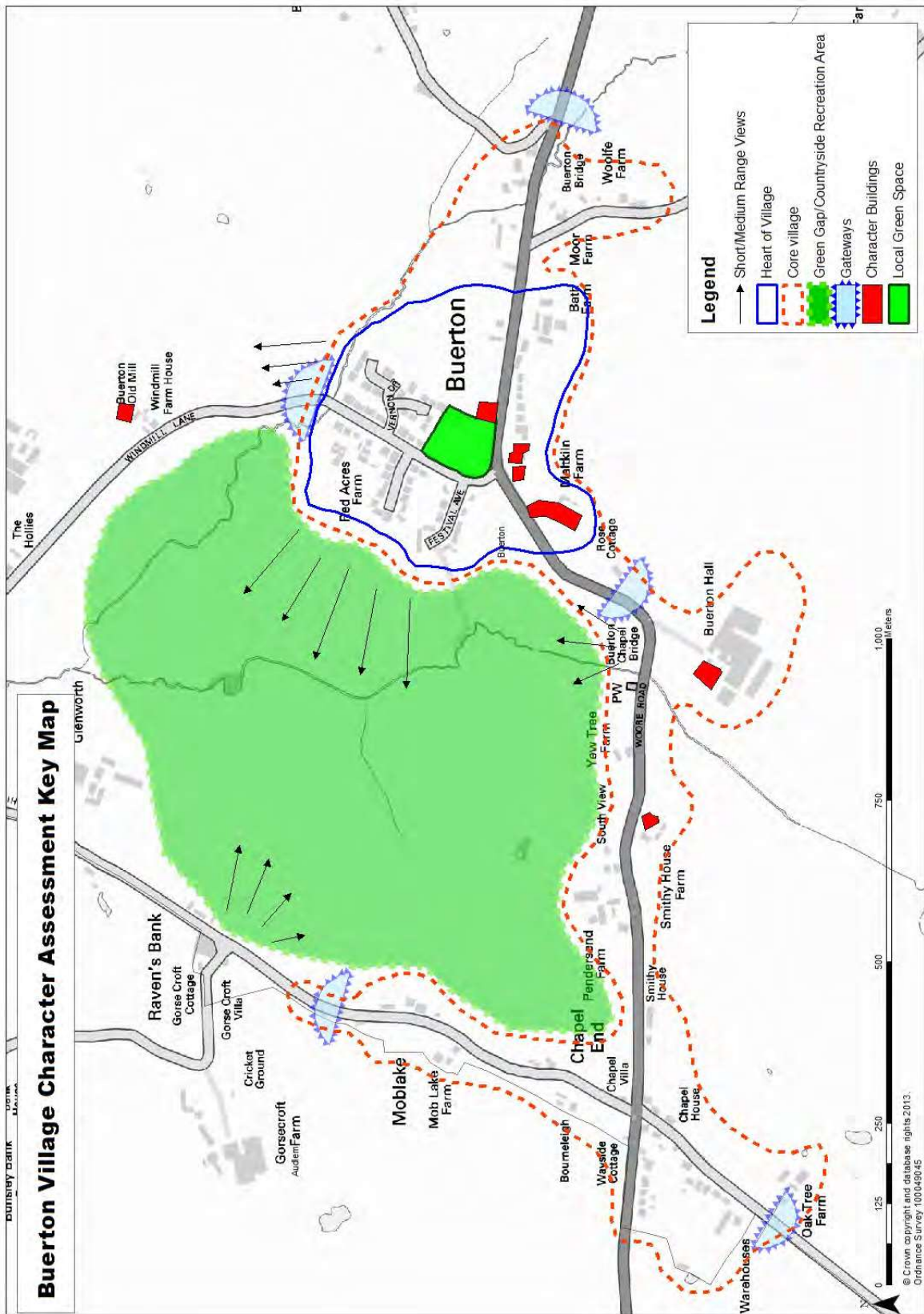


7.7 The Village Sub Areas are indicated on Figure G, and Figure H shows the Buerton Village Key Map.









7.8 The Spatial Character Assessment split the village into three defined character areas – as shown on Figure G - the northern edge, the southern edge and the western edge. Each area has a distinct feel. The northern edge is the most concentrated area of modern, post war development with a tighter, denser development pattern. The Southern edge includes lower density dwellings in ribbon form, being more dispersed towards the west, and containing most of the older buildings in the village. The western section of the village is located at some distance from the main centre. Again, ribbon development dominates at low density with a higher concentration of residences located around the cross roads between Kettle Lane and Woore Road.

7.9 The Spatial Character Assessment gives detailed information on the layout and structure of the village. In particular:

- Properties are set back from the carriageway with soft boundary treatments enabling a sense of distinct and separate space but enabling sightlines across the across the private and public realm
- Gaps in built development providing access and views to the countryside, with long range views from elevated positions to the outlying rural area and medium range views across the core recreation area to the north west of the village
- Front gardens provide a wide range of planting and landscaping contributing to biodiversity and soft palette of materials associated with the rural setting
- Close proximity of footpaths in to the countryside
- Distinct sense of entrance to the northern area of the village
- Prominent natural environment
- Footpaths incorporating trees and verges along main routes
- Local consistency of style, mass and materials in dwellings
- Most residences are of single and two storey height, and proportionate to their plots incorporating front and rear gardens
- Where post war, estate style development has taken place, layout is inward facing with access connections to the main carriageway. Layout elsewhere is formed through the relation of individual dwellings at low density to their immediate surroundings and tends to be linear ribbon development
- Some older properties display examples of timber framed and thatch and incorporate hay holes into their elevations. In late 20th century residences, hay-holes have been included as a design feature. Chimneys are evident in many properties although omitted from the newest residences at Red Acres
- A wide range of materials are employed throughout including timber cladding, rendering, a variety of brick styles and concrete pan tiled rooves in modern residences. Traditional materials are notable in the listed heritage assets
- Boundary treatments range from completely open to soft low level landscaping and hedgerows to timber board and low rise walls. Boundary treatments facing the countryside, although not exclusively true, display a trend toward timber panel fencing in most locations
- Planting and landscaping is incorporated into the public realm throughout the village with hedgerows often establishing boundaries along lanes. Trees and shrubbery are prominent in frontage gardens with good examples of mature trees in the recreation area and at prominent locations along field edges in the countryside
- A stream bisects the core village area creating a shallow brook valley to the west of Windmill Lane and forming a natural boundary marking the entrance to the village at the north. Footpaths along the northern extent of the stream are lined with trees and open to the wider countryside and arable cropping.

7.10 The Spatial Character Assessment defines a number of Character Buildings, some of which are listed (see Figure H). These include the restored windmill north of the village; the old school house and the thatched Buerton Old House which establish a sense of heritage and rural style; the timber framed Smithy House Farm; Buerton Hall Farm and Malt Kiln Farm. These character buildings are significant landmarks within the village, and in order to ensure their continued value to the setting and character of the Parish, the Assessment recommends that development of and within close proximity to these buildings should be undertaken sensitively with special regard to design, setting, materials and street scene.

7.11 Key gateways into the village are defined on the Key Map (Figure H). These are at the north of the village on Windmill Lane; by Buerton Bridge on Woore Road; by Buerton Chapel Bridge on Woore Road; by Oak Tree Farm on Kettle Lane; and north of Mob Lake Farm on Long Hill Lane. These key gateways are important in defining the approach and setting the style of the village. The Spatial Character Assessment recommends that any development at these gateways must be treated sensitively and incorporate traditional style and vernacular, in order to reflect their importance to the setting and character of Buerton.

7.12 Additionally, Cheshire East Council has recently prepared a design guide that has been out for consultation. [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/borough-design-guide-consultation.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/borough-design-guide-consultation.aspx) The guide highlights that the character and attractiveness of Cheshire East underpins the quality of life enjoyed by the Borough and its residents.

7.13 Buerton falls within 'Market Towns and Estate Villages', which predominantly comprises of dispersed, nucleated villages and hamlets. In the south, where Buerton is located, the landform is undulating and of a small, enclosed scale, where the intermittent watercourses are wooded with steeper slopes. Narrow, sunken lanes with high hedges contribute to the perception of a remote, small scale landscape.

7.14 The design guide highlights that the interaction of the settlement edges with the wider open countryside is very different to the north of the borough, due to the nature of the wider rolling landscape in which the settlements sit. Built form which fronts on to a street or lane should be bordered by boundary treatments in keeping with their location.

7.15 In order to reflect and enhance the character of Buerton, the Cheshire East Design Guide and the Buerton Spatial Character Assessment should be consulted on all new development proposals.

7.16 One of the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework is to always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Para 58 states that neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area, that developments should establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. Developments should respond to local character and history, reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. Para 61 states planning policies and decisions should address the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.



## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

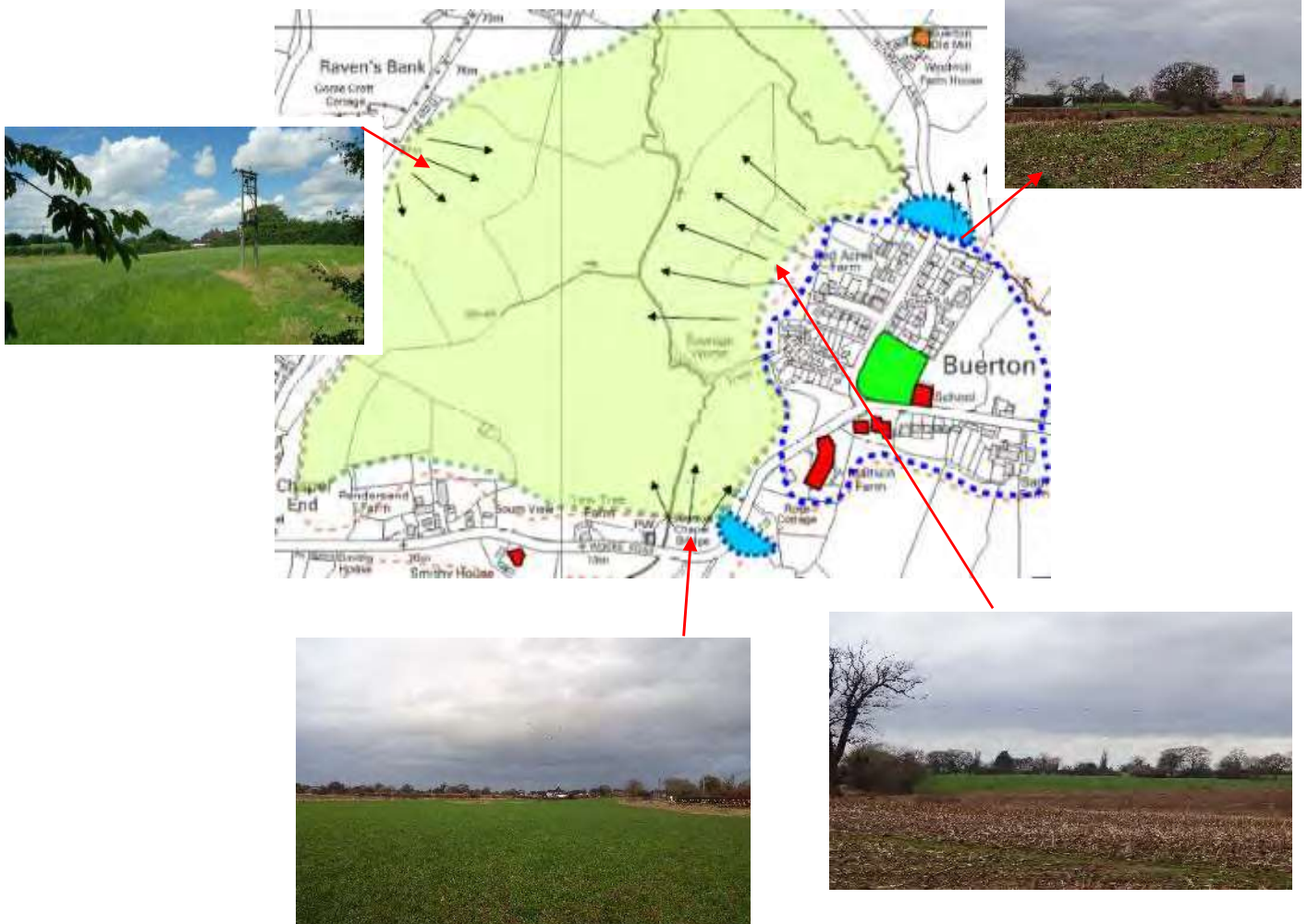
### 7.17 Important Views and Vistas

#### Policy LCD2 – Important Views and Vistas

Development will not be permitted if it materially interrupts or significantly interferes with the views and vista shown on Figure H.

- The view northwards from the north of the village at Windmill Lane towards Buerton Old Mill and Windmill Farm House
- The view from the west of the village westwards towards Ravens Bank
- The view from Ravens Bank at Longhill Lane towards the village of Buerton
- The view northwards from Buerton Chapel Bridge at Woore Road

#### Buerton Important Views & Vistas



### 7.18 Evidence and Justification

7.19 The rural setting of Buerton within the landscape is important to the local community, and in particular there are specific views and vistas which should, where possible, be preserved. The Neighbourhood Plan group worked with Cheshire East Council when undertaking the survey work for the Spatial Character Assessment of Buerton, providing local knowledge on the views and vistas considered important and special to the community. One of the recommendations of the report was to include a policy within the Neighbourhood Plan to protect the key mid and short range views identified, as defined in Figure H.

7.20 Views in Buerton are primarily short range, although at key elevated points in the south of the parish extensive long range views can be found northward across the plain to the iconic Grade 1 Listed Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank Observatory, and westward towards Peckforton Hills. A number of mid-range views are available at gaps in the frontage of buildings on the main highway and at gateway points in the village, and there are a number of important medium range views across the core recreation area to the north west of the village.

### 7.21 Local Green Space

#### **POLICY LCD3 – LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

The area listed below is designated as a 'Local Green Space' which is protected from new development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

#### **Buerton School Playing Field Recreation Area**

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

7.24 Local Green Space designation should only be used:

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

## Buerton Neighbourhood Plan

7.25 The table below provides information about how the Local Green Space meets the criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Green Space is also recognised as an important feature in the Buerton Spatial Character Assessment, and is identified on Figure I

Open Space	Size	Proximity to the Community	Demonstration of Special Value to the Local Community	Ownership
Buerton School Playing Field Recreation Area	0.85 ha	Located centrally within the heart of the village	Situating in the heart of the village, the recreation ground is central to the recreational needs of the village. The recreation area provides a community facility for all and is surrounded by mature trees. It includes includes playground equipment, and has an open, well managed playing field. Large trees at the boundary edge of this space bring a sense of greenery and nature into the main carriageway and the formal open space.	Buerton Parish Council



FIGURE I - MAP OF LOCAL GREEN SPACE (BUERTON SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD RECREATION AREA)



### 8. HERITAGE POLICY

8.1 The Buerton Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective

- To protect and enhance heritage assets

### 8.2 Heritage

#### **POLICY HER1 – HERITAGE**

Proposals which conserve and enhance Buerton's historic assets and their setting will be supported, particularly if the proposals would help retain the assets in active use. Proposals for development must take into account the scale of any possible harm or loss and the significance of any heritage assets and will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that substantial benefits will be achieved when weighed against the harm or loss. Measures should be put in place to avoid or minimise impact or mitigate damage.

### 8.3 Evidence and Justification

8.4 Buerton is fortunate to have a long and rich heritage, even appearing in the Domesday survey as Burtune. Buerton contains 12 listed buildings – a sizeable amount for such a small village. The most notable is the timber-framed country house of Highfields which dates from 1615 and is listed at Grade I.

8.5 The other listed buildings are Woodhouse Farmhouse which is a grade-II\*-listed, red-brick farmhouse on Woodhouse Lane, dating from the late 17th or early 18th century; a barn, the garden wall and gatepiers of the farmhouse are also listed at grade II. Smithy House Farmhouse, Dairy House (now known as Buerton Old House) and Yew Tree Farmhouse are timber-framed former farmhouses with brick infill, dating originally from the 17th century, and are listed at grade II, as is a barn at Dairy House. Kynsal Lodge, off Kettle Lane, is a red-brick country house dating from around 1850. Its stables block is of the same date, both are listed at grade II. An early 19th century farm building at Malt Kiln Farm is grade II listed, as is Buerton Old Windmill, a four storey brick windmill from the late 18th to the early 19th century, the body of which remains.

8.6 Also of note in the village is a second world war damaged concrete pillbox, and two cast iron mileposts, one on the verge, west of the entrance to the Grange, and another between Buerton Hall and Buerton village on the verge in front of a metal fence.

8.7 These heritage assets are part of Buerton's character and are valued by the community. It is important that they are protected from inappropriate development and, where possible, enhanced. The Buerton Spatial Character Assessment highlighted the prominent location and feature in the street scene of heritage assets and listed buildings, and recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan should include a policy to help enable the retention of listed buildings and heritage assets in active use.

8.8 One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, detailed in Para 17, is to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.



FIGURE J MAP OF LISTED BUILDINGS





### 9. INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

9.1 The Buerton Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives

- To ensure that new development does not have a negative impact on existing infrastructure
- To improve access to services

### 9.2 Infrastructure

#### **POLICY INF1 - INFRASTRUCTURE**

Proposals for new residential properties will be expected to address the impacts and benefits it will have on community infrastructure and how any negative aspects can be mitigated. To the extent that this evaluation indicates improvements to the existing infrastructure will be necessary to maintain existing quality of services, the proposal shall either incorporate the necessary improvements or include a contribution towards such improvement, subject to viability, by whatever charging system Cheshire East Council has in place.

### 9.3 Drainage

#### **POLICY INF2 – DRAINAGE**

To ensure that development will not increase surface water flooding or overload the foul drainage system all proposals for new residential properties should, if at all possible, incorporate sustainable drainage systems including permeable surfaces for drives and paths.

### 9.4 Evidence and Justification

9.5 The main infrastructure issues that have been identified during the production of the Neighbourhood Plan are traffic, sewers and public transport. 88% of respondents to the questionnaire felt that life in Buerton would be impossible without a car, and that public transport is inadequate. Perhaps unsurprisingly, only 1% of people commute to work by public transport (2011 census). Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan cannot influence bus routes and timetables, should any development come forward leading to developer contributions being sought, the Parish Council will work with Cheshire East Council and the developer to see if any improvements can be made to improve public transport facilities and services. Contributions may also be sought, where appropriate, for sustainable transport links such as cycleways and facilities, and for any necessary highway safety improvements.

9.6 One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy framework (Para 17) is that planning should deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Policy SD2 –Sustainable Development Principles - of the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan (2016) stresses that all development will be expected to provide or contribute towards identified infrastructure, services or facilities.

9.7 There is real concern from the community that Buerton's water, drainage and sewerage system is inadequate (over 60% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan felt that this was a problem) and that any new development should be designed to prevent an increased discharge of surface water (98% of respondents). Additionally, a number of comments were received highlighting that drainage and the sewers are inadequate.

9.8 One of the key aims of the National Planning Policy Framework is to meet the challenge of climate change and flooding. Para 99 states that new development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change.

### 9.9 Broadband

#### **POLICY INF3– COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE**

The development of advanced high quality communications infrastructure, including high speed broadband, will be supported, subject to:

- a) Development being kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network.
- b) Any development being sympathetic to its surroundings and camouflaged where appropriate.

### 9.10 Evidence and Justification

9.11 Buerton is fairly isolated, and further away than average from key services such as a job centre, secondary school, GP, or Post Office. As highlighted above, accessing public transport at a necessary or convenient time is not always achievable, and this can be a real problem for people without the use of a car. Data from the Department for Transport indicates that Buerton is 11.2k from a job centre, with the average distance in England being 4.6k. The nearest secondary school is 10k from Buerton, with the average in England being 2.1k. The nearest GP surgery is 2.6k, compared to the England average of 1.2k, and it is 2.5k to the nearest post office from Buerton, which compares unfavourably to the England average of 1k.

9.12 It is therefore considered important that Buerton has high quality communications infrastructure. Superfast broadband is encouraged so that everyone, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities, can have greater access to opportunities and services which are available on the world wide web.

9.13 Additionally, a larger than average percentage of Buerton residents work from home. The 2011 census information indicates that 9.1% of 16-74 year olds work from home, which is higher than the average in England of 3.5%. Having a high quality communications infrastructure is therefore important to help sustain and develop the businesses of these residents.

9.14 One of the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework is to support high quality communications infrastructure. Paragraph 42 highlights that supporting high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth, and that the development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

### 10. RURAL ECONOMY POLICY

10.1 The Buerton Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective

- To encourage a thriving local rural economy

### 10.2 The Rural Economy

#### **POLICY ECON1: RURAL ECONOMY**

Subject to respecting Buerton's built and landscape character, and environmental and residential amenity impacts being acceptable, the following will be supported -

- a) The development of new small businesses and the expansion of existing businesses, particularly on brownfield sites
- b) Development proposals in the open countryside which support the rural economy and agriculture where they contribute positively to the environment and do not cause unacceptable visual or landscape harm
- c) Proposals that promote or provide facilities for home working, and businesses operating from home
- d) The sympathetic conversion of existing buildings for business and enterprise
- e) The diversification of farms and rural businesses

### 10.3 Evidence and justification

10.4 Buerton has a significantly higher than average proportion of people aged 16-74 who work from home (9.1% compared to the average in England of 3.5%); who work more than 49 hours a week (26% compared to the England average of 13.3%) and/or who are self-employed (18.9% compared to the England average of 9.8%) (2011 Census). As detailed earlier in the Neighbourhood Plan, only 1% of working residents use public transport to get to work, and only 1.6% of people travel less than 2km to work, compared to the average in England of 20%. The rural economy and existing small businesses are a vital part of village life, and any opportunities to develop either existing businesses, or that would enable the start-up of new small businesses appropriate to the rural area would be supported.

10.5 The Buerton Spatial Character Assessment highlights that there are multiple farmsteads in the rural area of Buerton which offer an opportunity for rural economic development, should they choose to diversify.

10.6 The above policy will help to ensure that Buerton's rural economy can grow sustainability over the Plan period and beyond, and that support can be given for both existing businesses and for new businesses and enterprises within the parish.

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