

## Appendix 2: Marple Town Centre Study

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## NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### TOWN CENTRE RETAIL POLICIES

#### 1 Introduction

1.1 The Town Centre Study has been carried out by the three members of the Town Centre Study Group of the Neighbourhood Forum over summer and autumn of 2017. The survey work consisted of:

- an attitude survey of existing shopkeepers and businesses in the town centre;
- reviews of existing retail studies that include Marple in their scope.

1.2 An Ordnance Survey based plan of the centre was prepared showing the distribution of the shopping streets, car parks and of sites and areas considered to represent opportunities for development or redevelopment. The plan shows the extent of the town centre, the distribution of the existing shopping frontages, the main functional linkages between parts of the town centre such as the car parks, and basic policy proposals. See Appendix 1.

1.3 The study was not prepared in isolation but in conjunction with other working groups of the Neighbourhood Forum. In particular another part of the Town Centre group has pursued the traffic and pedestrian movement issues in the town centre; and the Pride in Marple Group has examined the condition of the public areas of the town centre and its links with Memorial Park and the canal system.

1.4 The town centre group was also able to avail itself of two recent retail studies carried out by consultants; as well as national and local planning policy documents as follows:

- ASDA Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College Hibbert Lane - Retail Statement
- the Holliss Vincent study carried out for Stockport MBC in 2014
- the National Planning Policy Framework
- the Core Strategy for Stockport MBC.

1.5 The comparatively recent studies of the town centre of Marple indicate the advantages of the present centre and provide comparison with the other seven district centres of the Borough of Stockport. Marple is well placed in relation to these. In the light of this position what is the starting point for new policies and proposals which might improve it even further ?

1.6 The anecdotal evidence arising from the public meetings and exhibitions held to inaugurate the Neighbourhood Development Plan and in subsequent meetings of the topic groups and members of the Forum suggest the following areas where change for the better might be sought:

- traffic congestion is a constant complaint; and with it the difficulty for pedestrians in gaining comfortable access to the shops;
- a sense that 'nothing has changed' in Marple since the pedestrianisation of Market Street in 1975;
- there is a clear preference for another food supermarket in the town to complement ASDA;
- the environment of public spaces and streets is in need of refreshment

## **2 The Hollis Vincent Study**

2.1 Hollis Vincent are Planning and Development Consultants who carried out an update of an earlier Retail Study of Stockport, for the Metropolitan Borough Council as local planning authority, in August 2014. Beside the main town centre of Stockport it covered the eight district centres of Stockport: Bramhall, Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme, Edgeley, Hazel Grove, Marple, Reddish and Romiley. The study examined the number of shops, the turnover of comparison goods and convenience goods, and the diversity of the types of shops. In relation to Marple it found:

'Marple has the highest number of retail operators in the convenience goods sector of any of the District Centres. Thus, whilst multiple supermarket representation is limited to the Co-op and Iceland, there are many independent traders, including seven bakers, two butchers, two greengrocers, two off-licences, and a range of confectioners and newsagents. Moreover, the redevelopment of the Chadwick Street Car park would rectify the deficiency of a medium-sized supermarket, provided the necessary land assembly can be achieved and an operator secured.'

'Marple also has the highest number of comparison goods retailers of all the District Centres, with multiples including M & Co, Co-op Pharmacy, Superdrug and Boots. However Marple also has a range of quality independent traders, particularly in the womens' and girls' clothing and general clothing sectors, and in the furniture/carpets/ textiles sector. There is also a good range of DIY/hardware stores, chemists, and jewellers. Thus although Marple lacks a large supermarket operator, it probably has a better retail representation overall than all of the District Centres.'

'Marple also has an excellent range of restaurants, cafes and takeaways, and many hairdressers and beauty parlour operators. Marple also benefits from better leisure facilities than most of the District Centres, and has a cinema and a swimming pool/gym facility. Marple is also distinct in having a number of dentists and other operators in the healthcare sector, including an osteopath, a chiropractor, a physiotherapy clinic and a doctor's surgery.'

2.2 To put this upbeat assessment into perspective, the study indicates that Hazel Grove, Cheadle, and Cheadle Hulme have the largest (survey-derived) comparison goods turnovers; and Hazel Grove, Cheadle Hulme and Houldsworth Square have largest convenience goods turnovers. The convenience goods turnover figures reflect the presence of Sainsbury's, ASDA and Aldi supermarkets, and M & S Food; and Cheadle Hulme has both ASDA and Waitrose supermarkets. With regard to numbers of shops, Marple has 174, Cheadle has 175, and Hazel Grove has 160. The distribution of the shops in Marple is shown on the attached map of the town centre.

## **3 ASDA Hibbert Lane Retail Statement**

3.1 A report was prepared by Drivers Jonas Deloitte in 2012 to support the application for planning permission by ASDA on the Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College site on Hibbert Lane. A household survey was undertaken in May 2011 to try to understand where residents of Marple shopped; and whether the shops in Marple drew custom from a wider area than the town. For this purpose a number of zones were drawn geographically:

- Zone 1 Marple
- Zone 2 Marple Bridge and Compstall
- Zone 3 New Mills and Disley
- Zone 4 Hazel Grove and Offerton
- Zone 5 Bredbury and Romiley

3.2 The survey showed that only 43% of the residents of Marple chose to do their main food shopping there. This means that over half of the residents of Marple (Zone 1) currently travel

outside of the town to conduct their main food shop. This leakage of expenditure is a result of the limited convenience provision within Marple, which is not of a size sufficient to provide a full range of goods and offer a comparable choice to the large foodstores outside of Marple. The main alternative food shopping destinations are Sainsbury's in Hazel Grove and Tesco Extra in Stockport.

3.3 The household survey also showed that 79% of people in Zone 1 used their car for the main shopping trip; and that they linked these trips to other services. This means that Marple town centre is losing trade for its own services and comparison goods shop types. This is contrary to the principles of sustainability, by generating traffic and loss of local spending power. By constructing a new medium-sized food store, much of this lost trade would be returned to Marple.

3.4 Planning permission for the ASDA store at Hibbert Lane was refused in March 2013, in favour of an alternative scheme at Chadwick Street in Marple. The Council supported this scheme in order to maintain national and local planning policy to protect shops in existing town centres. The report to the meeting of the Council's Executive on 28th May 2012 states:

'It is the Council's view that the ability of the site to accommodate a larger format development in the District Centre, would help to contribute to the range and quantity of Marple's retail offer. In addition bringing an additional retail operator would help promote Marple as competitive District Centre, and enhance consumer choice. This would also help generate linked trip opportunities within the District Centre which would help safeguard its vitality and viability.'

#### **4 Questionnaire Survey carried out by the NP Town Centre Group**

##### The Survey

4.1 The questionnaire survey was carried out in the town centre of Marple during May 2017. All the 174 shops received a questionnaire and these were collected a few days later. A little under half the shops and businesses replied. Their answers are shown on the analysis sheet at Appendix 2.

4.2 In terms of 'likes' and 'dislikes' of the responses it is clear that Marple town centre has recognised advantages of easy accessibility, cheap parking, its community or village 'feel' and its good range of shops. Nonetheless, the 'dislikes' showed some dissatisfaction with the centre because of traffic congestion, the lack of 'appeal' of the town centre which was felt to be stagnant or dying, and its failure to connect with its main tourist attraction, the canal system.

##### Another Supermarket

4.3 With regard to attitudes towards the development of another supermarket, the question was framed around the proposal by Kirkland Developments in 2013, to build a 21,000 sq.ft. supermarket on the site of the Post Office sorting office adjoining Chadwick Street car park. Opinion amongst the shopkeepers was decisive; 41 were in favour with 17 against. Not all the shops supported the idea of another supermarket; not all those independent traders in food welcomed it. Those shops in comparison goods however generally did. Their hope was that a new supermarket of the right size would increase the attractiveness of Marple as a town centre shopping destination, with advantage for traders and shoppers alike. A further question about which supermarket chain would be most welcomed, there was a clear preference for a 'high end' store such as Waitrose, Booths or M & S.

##### Cafes and Restaurants

4.4 There were many suggestions for other types of cafe / restaurant to be added to those already represented in the town. A wide range of national food chains, as well as middle Eastern, American and Italian national food outlets was put forward.

## Sunday Market

4.5 The idea of an occasional Sunday open air market was received very favourably. This could take place on the pedestrianised streets of Market Street and Derby Way. There was overwhelming opposition to the idea of re-opening these streets to traffic.

## Car Parks

4.6 There was moderate dissatisfaction with the main charged car park at Chadwick Street, the closest car park to the Market Street shops. Various suggestions were put forward on the charging regime such as free parking, or free for the first half or one hour periods. Payment on exist would enable shoppers to be more relaxed about the length of time they spent in the shops. The access to Chadwick Street, along Trinity Street, could be made clearer; and it was thought that the location of this car park was distant from the shops on Stockport Road.

## The Shopping Environment

4.7 It was thought that some of the shop frontages could be kept in a better state of repair and measures should be taken to compel owners to maintain them in better condition. The preservation of traditional shop fronts was thought desirable. Some thought that too many cafes and restaurants interrupted the shopping frontage. However a 'shopping and eating' guide for visitors would be welcome.

4.8 There were many suggestions for improving the appearance of the town centre. These included more planting with trees, flowers beds and hanging baskets, and more seating areas. The flower beds at the western end of the town centre on Stockport Road opposite the Texaco Garage were thought to be neglected.

4.9 There was some objection to untidy displays of A-boards outside shops for advertising; and that petrol filling station forecourts were cluttered with signs.

## Suggestions for Change

4.10 Participants were asked in the survey for the one thing they would most like to change in the town centre. Better traffic circulation and car parking charges were very important. Greater use of the shops by local people was desirable. (This reflects the view that in the interests of reducing car travel and the 'leakage' of spending away from the centre, the shops here should be made more attractive by their range and type). Others wanted more local events, more police on the beat, more street cleaning, a pedestrian crossing near the swimming pool, a focal point or shelter for teenagers to gather, and the relocation of the Post office on Stockport Road to a more central location in the town centre.

## **5 A New Supermarket**

### Planning Policy

5.1 The development of retail outlets is strictly controlled under current national (the National Planning Policy Framework) and local policy (the Core Strategy for Stockport). The NPPF requires local planning authorities to recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality; and define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes. They should also allocate a range of suitable sites for all commercial uses, including retail, and it is important that these are met in full and not be compromised by limited site availability. If necessary the local authority should undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient

supply of suitable sites. Where sites for proposed retail development are located with defined town centres there is no requirement for a 'sequential test' (paragraph 24 NPPF).

5.2 When assessing applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500 sq m). This should include assessment of the impact on the proposal on the planned and committed public and private investment in the town centre and on its vitality and viability.

5.3 The Core Strategy for Stockport (2011) establishes a hierarchy of service centres in the Borough:

- Stockport Town Centre
- District Centres (including Marple)
- Local Centres

5.4 Development Management Policy AS-1 (The Viability and Viability of Stockport's Service Centres) outlines that the following guidelines will apply to the scale of individual A1 use units generally considered to be appropriate within the service centre hierarchy:

- Up to a sub-regional scale at Stockport Town Centre
- Up to 2,500 sq. m net at District Centres
- Up to 1,500 sq. m net at Large Local Centres
- Up to 280 sq. m net at Other Local Centres

5.5 Marple is categorised as a District Centre, along with seven others, in the Borough of Stockport. (Some indication of its ranking amongst these is given above at section 2 above). The policy in the Core Strategy therefore permits the development of Class A1 (shops) units of up to 2,500 square metres net in size, within the district centre. The district centre is defined for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, as the same as that defined in the Proposals Map of the Unitary Development Plan for Stockport of 2006. The boundary is shown on the plan at Appendix 1. Close to most parts of the boundary there are areas of medium to high density housing. There is little scope or necessity therefore to extend the boundary as part of the Neighbourhood Plan proposals. Nothing of significance in terms of planned or committed public or private investment has changed in relation to Marple Town Centre since the adoption of the UDP review in 2006.

### The Challenge

5.6 With the background of the two reports indicated above, the support of Stockport MBC, and the positive attitude of businesses in the town centre towards a new supermarket to complement the ASDA offer, there is clear justification for including a policy in the Neighbourhood Development Plan to encourage the necessary private investment to establish a new and additional supermarket.

5.7 It is acknowledged that there are no sites in the town centre that would accommodate the equivalent of the ASDA application at Hibbert Lane which proposed 3,786 square metres. This it was thought would take the role of the 'main food supermarket' in Marple, being twice the size of the then Co-op with its 1,590 square metres. The Deloitte Report criticised the Kirkland (Chadwick Street) proposals at 2,323 square metres as unrealistic because of the car parking requirement which that floorspace would demand. It was also of the view that there are no vacant sites or retail units in or on the edge of the town centre that are of a size suitable for development of a foodstore of the size required to prevent the continued leakage of convenience goods expenditure from the town.

5.8 The challenge therefore is to find a site within the defined town centre for a new supermarket. A number of 'Development Opportunity Sites' have been identified by the Town Centre Group. These are listed below in Table 1. The limited space available in the defined town centre as a whole mean that none of them are easy options; all have multiple ownerships likely to give rise to difficulties in assembling each one; and some have difficult levels which would require greater design and development effort than a flat site. Notes are appended below on the suitability of each site.

5.9 The size of a new supermarket (in square metres net) would have to be flexible in order to fit the Development Opportunity Sites identified. In Table 1 a notional site coverage of 50% building floorspace and 50% car parking is adopted as a rough indication of the size of supermarket, perhaps better termed a convenience food store, which might be accommodated on each one. There is some justification for adopting this approach as the size of 'supermarkets' nationally has diminished with the lessening of the large weekly food shop by customers who now show a growing preference for smaller 'top-up' shopping trips. An example of this type of store is the new M & S Food store on Church Road Cheadle Hulme which has a net retail area of 275 square metres (plus ancillary offices toilets and staff accommodation in the same building). The Co-op store at the Texaco garage in Marple has a net floorspace of only 256 square metres.

5.10 Such a store would perhaps not provide the range of comparison goods alongside the food range that the larger supermarkets now provide. However if the food range was different from the present offer at ASDA and the Co-op convenience store at the Texaco Garage by being complementary rather than competitive with those stores it would go some way towards preventing the leakage of food shopping trips out of Marple, thus boosting the independent comparison goods shops in the town centre.

## **6 Notes to Table 1**

6.1 Site 1 - S Duddy Limited: this was discounted in the Deloitte Report for the ASDA application on Hibbert Lane as being too small to support a medium sized supermarket. For the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, which include increasing the attractiveness of the town centre, and improving its links with the canals, Memorial Park and the Civic Quarter next to the Park, this site is also somewhat off-centre for promoting these purposes.

6.2 Site 2 - Travis Perkins: this site too was discounted in the Deloitte Report as being too small to be able to perform a main food shopping role in Marple. If used in conjunction with the adjoining Site 3, 42-44 Stockport Road, however a larger site could be assembled. There could also be planning gain from the redevelopment of this site, namely a contribution to the improvement of the junction of Hibbert Lane and Stockport Road.

6.3 Site 3 - a shop with first floor office accommodation which adjoins the Travis Perkins site. Together two comprise Site 4. This could accommodate a larger convenience store and be expected to contribute to any improvements at the junction of Hibbert Lane and Stockport Road. If not used for retail purposes it could also have a role in a service use such as a medical centre, or a relocated post office sorting office.

**TABLE 1 Potential Sites for Medium Sized Supermarket Development in the Town Centre**

No	site	size		potential square footage assuming 50% building coverage (sq.m.)	notes
		acres	square metres		
1	S Duddy Ltd	0.36	1,438	719	development opportunity site dismissed in the Deloitte Report as too small
2	Travis Perkins	0.53	2,140	1,070	development opportunity site - dismissed in the Deloitte Report as too small
3	42-44 Stockport Road - Stationery Supplies and Kay Bdrs Office	0.13	543		
4	total of two above	0.66	2,683	1,341	
5	55-63 Stockport Road (Edel Carpets, Perfect Pets, Motorhouse)	0.53	2,140	1,070	development opportunity site - multiple land ownerships and difficult levels
6	Nat West Bank	0.17	710	355	could be considered as part of DOS - recently sold to unknown buyer at auction
7	69 Stockport Road	0.04	188		
8	Total of 5 & 6 above	0.7	2,850	1425	using the combined site, the net area could be higher if linked with Derby Way car park
9	Chadwick Street (Post Office sorting office)	0.31	1,275	637	needs Chadwick St car park to create site of any useful size
10	92-94 Church St (former Albert School site)	0.25	1,027	513	current application for 20 flats and 361 sq.m. retail
11	garage 96 Church St	0.14	599		
12	Church Lane Store 90 Church St	0.10	416		
13	total of three above	0.49	2,042	1,021	



6.4 Site 5 - 55-63 Stockport Road (Edel Carpets, Purrfect Pets, Motorhouse): this site combines a number of ownerships which together would provide a site for a food store of perhaps 1,070 square metres (11,500 square feet). As a site it would have great visual prominence in the town centre. If combined with the Nat West bank, which was recently sold at auction, it would comprise a bigger site for a store of perhaps 1,425 square metres (15,337 square feet). If combined with the Derby Way car park the net area achievable would be much higher. The Proposals Map going with this report indicates also that the assembled site might also include number 69 Stockport Road (hairdresser's) and a remodelling of the Hibbert Lane Stockport Road junction and a landscaped corner to the swimming pool.

6.5 Site 9 - Post Office Sorting Office and Chadwick Street car park: the sorting office building and its car park comprise a site of only 1,275 square metres which by itself would yield a site for a convenience store of about 630 square metres. It would have to be combined with the Chadwick Street car park, either in whole or in part, a convince store of a very useful size could be built. although not approaching the 2,323 of the Kirkland proposals.

6.6 The disadvantage of this site is its very limited visibility in the town although, with time to develop local awareness of its existence, and clear signing, it could become the destination store which the town needs.

6.7 Site 10 - 92-94 Church Street (the former Albert School site): a planning application (reference DC/065826) comprising 20 apartments and an integral retail store of 361 square metres (gross internal) was submitted on 16th May 2017. The application remains undetermined. A further part of the site was allocated for 14 car parking spaces to serve the retail unit, with a separate allocation for the apartments. The retail part of the proposal is limited to the front part of the site which is allocated for retail purposes on the Proposals Map of the Unitary Development Plan for Stockport.

6.8 To use the rear part of the site for retail would bring the shop element into some proximity to the existing houses surrounding this part of the site on three sides. This same situation has arisen with the M & S Food development in Cheadle Hulme mentioned above. Here the shop has been developed alongside the surrounding housing without any apparent harm to amenity. There is some justification therefore for considering Site 10 as a whole as a site for a convenience store.

6.9 There are two sites adjoining the former Albert School: a corner shop set in a site with an appreciable area of car parking next to it; and a former service and repair garage now used for MoTs and car wash on the other side. Added to the site these elements would provide useful additional site space and frontage. However without the corner shop site, the visibility of a new store here would be little better than the Post Office sorting office site; but with it there would be a very visible presence at the mini roundabout junction of Hibbert Lane and Church Lane.

#### Other Sites

6.10 The sites identified above are by no means intended to be exclusive. It is important that all sites are examined for possible development a medium-sized supermarket. If it is possible that other land or other groups of land owners may come together. In terms of the NPPF such sites would have to be 'suitable, available and viable'. A location within the town centre boundary would be almost certain to meet these tests. Any policies devised for the Neighbourhood Plan for the encouragement of a new supermarket are intended to be applied to the town centre as a whole, and not just to the Development Opportunity sites.

## **7 Other Town Centre Issues**

### **First Floor Uses**

7.1 The Town Centre Group has also been concerned about the under-use of first floor accommodation in the town centre, and what opportunities there might be for these spaces to be occupied. Many of the town centre shops are basically small units, perhaps converted from houses in the first place with perhaps two or three rooms and bathroom at first floor.

7.2 Such spaces could be brought into use for residential accommodation thus bringing life to the town centre. They would also be useful for small offices, studios, therapy and consulting rooms, financial services, tutorial space etc. These could all increase the range of services offered in the town centre. The Neighbourhood Plan could include a Policy to encourage their use and occupation

7.3 Two of the larger first floor spaces are:

- the floor above the former Co-op / Hanbury's supermarket at the east end of the Hollins parade of shops (above Byles kitchen showroom). This has a large glazed tympanum facing Stockport road which might suggest use as a public display space of some kind, and;
- the first floor above M & Co occupied as offices from time to time but capable of being used by other organisations for the same purpose who might wish to relocate. Some Council functions might be accommodated here for example.

### **Service Areas**

7.4 Some of the service areas to the rear of the shops on Stockport Road and Market Street which are easily accessible to non-service traffic have become somewhat neglected. They are important to the functioning of the relevant shops as follows:

- 18-109 Stockport Road
- 1-8 The Hollins (Stockport Road)
- behind Iceland, 9-13 Market Street and RBS Bank
- 25-41 Market Street

7.5 Those on the west side of Market Street, numbers 36-62, and 12-34, on the other hand work well with tarmac surfaces and access limited to service vehicles only. If opportunities arise from other development, or traffic measures introduced by the Council, and subject to the owners wish, to repair and resurface such areas then encouragement should be given through the policies of the Neighbours Development Plan.

## **8 Conclusion**

8.1 The development opportunity sites are identified here for the purposes of consultation. No detailed studies of their capacity have been undertaken. The main variables in a retail development are floorspace and car parking. There is therefore a wide spectrum of possibility in the sites identified. In fact, the NPPF demands that local planning authorities should be flexible in their approach to format and scale (paragraph 24). It is emphasised again that the Development Opportunity Sites examined above are not necessarily the only ones which may be suitable for the development of a medium-sized supermarket; others might come forward and would be equally supported by the general policies of the NDP.

8.2 It is considered by the Town Centre working group that the development of a new complementary supermarket of the largest practicable size given the sites described, is the catalyst to other improvements to the town centre, from a stimulus to its present range of comparison goods shops to its environmental improvement. Much of course depends on the

willingness of the many owners of these sites to come to terms for sale; this would be the task of a competent development agent to achieve. The Neighbourhood Development Plan town centre proposals and policies would provide the framework by which to direct that investment.

## **9 Draft Environmental Management Policies for the Town Centre**

9.1 For draft planning proposals and policies relating to the land use aspects of the development of the town centre, see Appendix 3.

### The Shopping Environment

9.2 A number of other issues arose from the questions put to the businessmen and women during the survey of May 2017. Many of these fell into the 'environmental management' category, rather than the 'land use planning' category. Some related to the way in which private property was maintained or otherwise in the town centre; and others to the public realm where the Council as planning, highway, or environmental health authority has responsibility.

9.3 In the private sector the condition and appearance of shop frontages, at ground and first floor level can sometimes fall below standard. Opportunities can be taken if applications for planning permission are made to individual properties, to require improvements to design and condition as a normal part of the planning gain process. Otherwise it is recommended that a campaign of simple advice notes and design codes or guides on the best ways to treat traditional shop fronts be introduced. Property owners could be encouraged to take a common approach to frontage alterations or maintenance in the interests of the appearance of the town centre streets. Events or workshops could be held to acquaint local businesses with ideas of design, maintenance and enhancement of their properties. Sponsors for public art should be sought.

9.4 Whilst perhaps not susceptible to conventional land use policies, these recognisable environmental management matters should be recorded in the Neighbourhood Plan and perhaps treated as a Schedule of Commitments appended to the Plan in support of its planning policies.

**Policy EM1:** property owners should be encouraged to have regard for the proper maintenance of their property; to undertake alterations, particularly to front elevations in accordance with guidance to be provided in advice notes; and free standing advertisement boards should only be displayed with the consent of the planning and highway authority.

9.5 Again in the private sector opportunities should be taken through the planning process to secure 'gain' in terms of better access to sites, landscaping, and most of all to secure improvements to the roads and footways of Marple as part of an integrated approach to traffic and pedestrian management across the whole town centre.

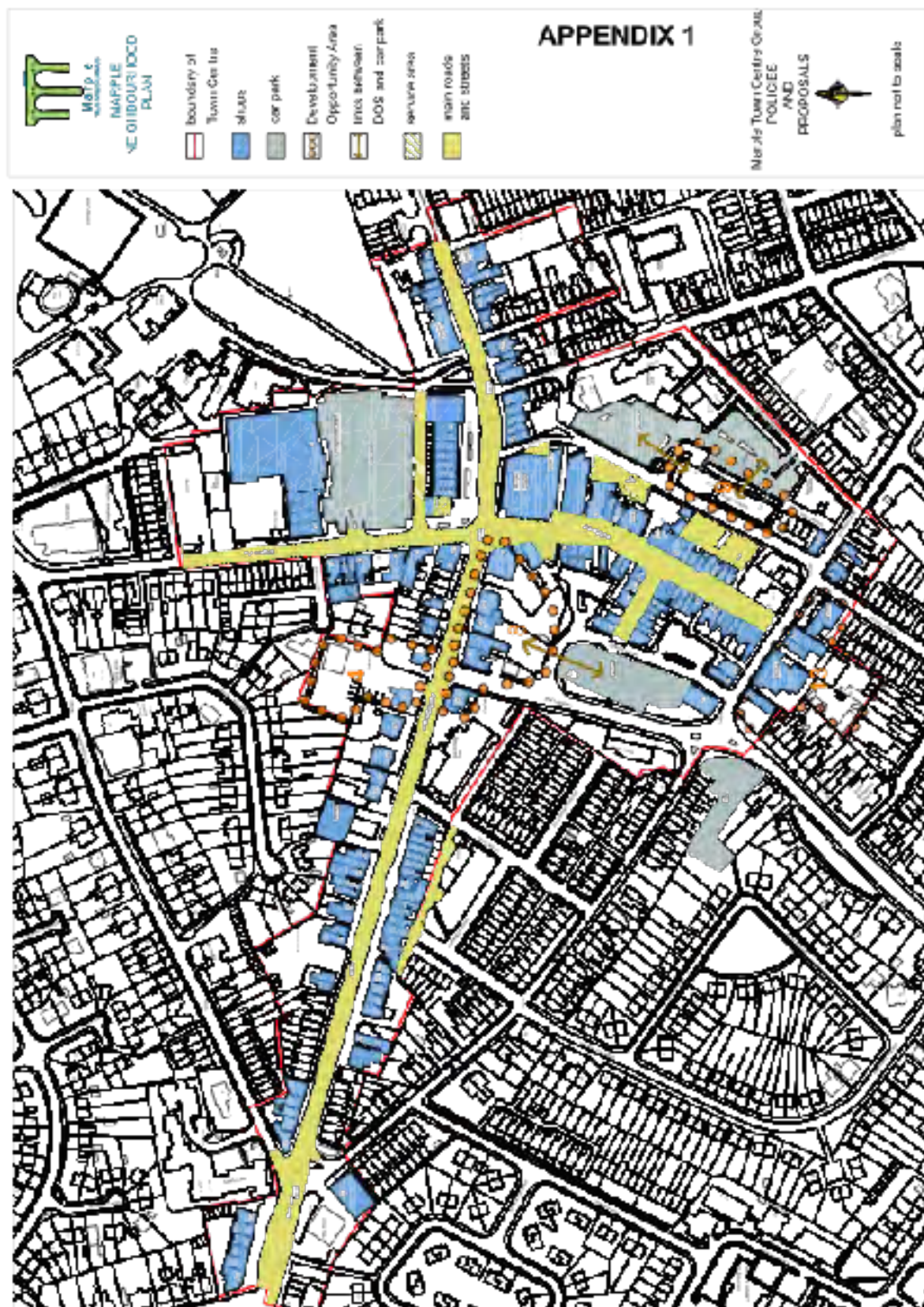
**Policy EM2:** improvements to the traffic and pedestrian systems of the town, access to sites, and the provisions of amenity features should be sought during the development management process

9.6 In the public realm much depends on the resources available from Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council as planning, highway, environmental health authority. The frequency of street cleaning, litter picking, lighting, maintenance of planting beds and the creation of new ones, and the provision of signs, are all budget-dependent. There may be opportunities however to involve local businesses in joint efforts to sponsor and maintain public realm features.

**Policy EM3:** a joint approach between the Council, local businesses and volunteers to the provision of amenity features and their maintenance should be explored and regular contact established to secure initial and on-going schemes with the aim of enhancing the condition and identity of Marple Town Centre.



# APPENDIX 1: POLICIES AND PROPOSALS MAP FOR TOWN CENTRE



## APPENDIX 2

### SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS QUESTIONNAIRE

The comments below are given in note form as giving the most instant picture of the responses

1 What do you most like about Marple town centre as a location for your business ?

'Likes'

central to a wide area  
easy accessibility  
cheap parking  
community 'feel'  
pedestrian precinct  
'village' appeal  
good range of shops

'Dislikes'

town centre dying  
town centre not appealing  
town centre fails to make use of the  
tourist feature of the canal  
traffic is a nightmare

2 What other types of business do you think would: a) help your business by providing choice, b) hinder your business by introducing competition ?

(a) types of business that would help

'classy' supermarket  
more independent shops  
tourist information  
more coffee shops  
another GP service and health centre  
sports/leisure club  
local market

(b) types of business that would hinder

charity shops  
too many more estate agents  
stop banks from closing  
no more hairdressers, nail shops, card  
shops (from existing competitors)  
those in food retail did not want another  
supermarket whereas those who aren't do

3 If the proposal for a 21,000 sq.ft supermarket on the Chadwick St Site (PO Office) were to be revived would that be benefit to the town centre ?

No. in favour: **41**

No. against: **17**

4 Which supermarket would you prefer it to be occupied by: (tick which one)

Waitrose/Booths ..... M & S.....Sainsbury's/Tesco/Morrisons.....Aldi/Lidl.... Morrisons/Tesco.....

(These have been grouped together in these notes as many respondents ticked both)

No. for  
Waitrose /  
Booths/ M&S

**54**

No. for  
Sainsbury's  
/ Morrisons /  
Tesco

**11**

No. for  
Aldi / Lidl

**16**

5 What other retail outlets would benefit the town centre of Marple ? (e.g. outdoor clothing store, Edinburgh Woollen Mill, tourist and gift shops, shoe shop, factory outlet shop, card shop, men and women's clothing, furniture / fabrics, electrical goods, health and beauty studio, delicatessen etc)

Suggestions

gift shops, homeware, shoe shop, men's and women's clothing, tourist information centre, 'outlet' shop, modern clothing for young people, Edinburgh Woollen Mill, upmarket men's clothing, flower shops, high street banks, electrical goods, fabrics and haberdashery, bedding, towels and kitchen ware, fitness centre, delicatessen, factory outlet shop, furniture shops, indoor play area for children, good food and drink shops ('like Altrincham')

6 Would you like to see different charges on the Chadwick Street car park to make it more attractive to shoppers shoppers ?

Suggestions

pay on exit so that people can relax  
all car parks free  
free for first 1/2 hr 1hr or 2 hrs  
change penalties to be lower for short time infringements and higher for longer ones  
present low charges are welcome, and attract shoppers  
access to Chadwick St car park needs to be made clearer  
town centre car parks are distant from Stockport Road shops  
car parks should be free after 4.00 pm

**NOTE:**

These suggestions raise questions about the management of the car parks and information from the Council would be useful in understanding the income obtained from the car parks against the resources need to run them. Other functions such as street cleaning and landscape maintenance are 'management' functions rather than land use / development questions and may need to be considered separately from the main proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan.

7 What other types of restaurant would you wish to see in the town centre ? examples - Pizza Express, Gusto's, Thai, English pub, food chain restaurants / fast food outlets etc 8 8

Suggestions

classy small bistros, Gusto's, Piccolino's, Thai, nice wine bar, tea room, Nando's, gourmet food, Waggamma, Nero, McDonalds, Witherspoons, KFC, Pizza Express, carvers-style pub, good-quality restaurant (like those in Bramhall), steak house, English pub food, Turkish, Persian, burger place, vegetarian, Yard and Coup

8 Would you like to see Market Street re-opened or partially re-opened for traffic ? Do you think this would bring greater trade and footfall to the town centre ?

No. against:  
Overwhelming answer 'no'

No. for: 11  
of those few in favour some thought it would provide a better route to Hawk Green; and shops at the far (south) end of market Street suffer from lack of passing traffic

9 What planning policies would you like to see towards advertising, preservation or modernisation of shop fronts, no. of restaurants / cafes, no. and proximity of offices, banks, estate agents etc:

Suggestions  
more should be done to keep vacant shops in a better state of repair  
lower rents for retail property would be welcome  
preservation of traditional shop fronts thought desirable  
restaurants and cafes should be limited  
stop decline of banks

10 What improvements do you want to see to the 'public realm' of the town centre ? for example are there any places that need tidying or landscaping; more control over A-boards adverting on the pavement; or more public art or flower beds ?

Suggestions  
more hanging baskets, flower beds, trees  
regular street cleaning  
more gardens with seating  
suggest 'Marple in Bloom' event  
tidying up and reduction of signs on petrol filling station forecourts  
use of 'A-boards' on pavements outside shops should be controlled  
service access ways behind the Hollins shops should be kept clear of parking and bin areas tidied up  
a 'shopping and eating map' of Marple Town Centre would help people find their way around  
more signs to control litter and dog waste  
somewhere for teenagers to gather  
flower beds in footway on Stockport Road (opposite Texaco) need attention - a Christmas Tree would be welcome at this end of the town



11 Would you like to see a Sunday market perhaps once a month on Market Street ?  
Would it encourage you to open your business on those Sundays ?

No in favour: **43**

No against: **8**

12 Are you aware of any plots or parcels of land, buildings or premises (including your own) that could be incorporated into a development or redevelopment scheme ?

Suggestions

shop floor above Costa is unused (and other first floor accommodation in the Town Centre)  
the land behind the Stockport Road shops (south side) is in dire condition

13 Would you be prepared to join a Focus Group of town centre businesses to put forward your views on the future of Marple Town Centre or would you prefer the Business Forum to represent you?

name and e-mail address of those willing to participate

14 If there was one thing you would wish to change about Marple Town Centre, what would it be?

Suggestions

better traffic circulation  
encourage visitors  
alter parking charges which now curtail shopping trips  
want craft / art / music / event weekend  
encourage more local people to use the town centre  
more police on the beat  
more street cleaning  
relocate Post Office to more central location  
need pedestrian crossing near swimming pool

## APPENDIX 3

### Draft Planning Policies for the Town Centre in the Neighbourhood Development Plan

#### Draft Town Centre Policies

##### **Policy TC1:**

**Encouragement will be given to the establishment of a new food retail supermarket of the right scale and type in the defined town centre of Marple**

##### Reasoned Justification:

As one of the main purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan is to encourage investment in the town it is considered appropriate to encourage the establishment of another food supermarket of the right type and scale. The town centre would benefit from a choice of food retailers preferably of complementary type. The idea of a new supermarket was supported by many of the businesses surveyed by questionnaire with 4:1 in favour. It should be located in the town centre as defined in the Proposals Map of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan.

##### **Policy TC2:**

**A site will be sought for the establishment of a pick up point for goods ordered on line subject to the provision of nearby parking**

##### Reasoned Justification:

The advent of online shopping in both food and non-food sectors should be anticipated by the Neighbourhood Plan. By retaining the collection of goods within the town centre there would be benefit to existing shopkeepers from the increased presence in the town from those collecting goods; and by limiting traffic movements to out-of-town shopping destinations. A collection point should be well related to existing public car parks. Separate points for food and non-food goods would be considered.

##### **Policy TC3:**

**Opportunities will be sought to extend the supply of off street car parking on appropriate sites**

##### Reasoned Justification:

It is generally considered that car parking provision in the town centre is insufficient. The free car park at Asda attracts undue pressure whilst Chadwick Street with its charging regime is from time to time under-used. Opportunities should be sought as development takes place to increase the amount and distribution of car parking and to increase the efficiency of the operation of the existing car parks. An integrated approach to the management of car parking across the town centre by operating hours and charges, traffic management measures, and site-specific policies to provide additional car parking should be taken during the ongoing implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Policy TC4:**

**The use of first floor accommodation in the town centre will be encouraged for the provision of housing, offices, small employment units**

**Reasoned Justification:**

Opportunities should be sought in applications for the change of use of existing properties in the town centre to introduce viable uses for first floor accommodation such as flats, studios, small workshops, tuition venues, consultancy offices, children's play and party areas etc. This would increase the prosperity and liveliness of the town centre, help to promote an evening economy and bring environmental improvement to building frontages above ground level.

**Policy TC5:**

**The establishment of restaurant and leisure uses on the pedestrianised parts of the town centre will be encouraged**

**Reasoned Justification:**

The establishment of restaurants of all types, and leisure uses, such as specialist beer outlets, and amusements, in order to promote a leisure economy based on existing pedestrianised streets would be encouraged through the development process. Derby Way has number of existing shop units which would be large enough to accommodate new and varied restaurants, and is conveniently situated for car parking. There are existing examples of cafes which take advantage of the existing pedestrianised street for outdoor food and refreshments and there is scope to extend this function, using related parts of Market Street as well.

**Policy TC6:**

**Opportunities will be taken through the development process to bring about environmental improvement to the shop frontages and forecourts of the shops in the town centre**

**Reasoned Justification:**

The ongoing improvement to the character and appearance of the town centre by incremental improvements to shop fronts, forecourt displays, planting arrangements and by features which will enhance the identity of Marple and the town centre in particular should be encouraged. The businesses of the town centre would all benefit from a mutual commitment to this process. Where such improvements can be achieved through the development process, the planning authority (Stockport MBC) is encouraged to pay special regard to this ambition.