

Our Marple Plan



Marple Neighbourhood Plan

REFERENDUM VERSION

DECEMBER 2023

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Note: All photographs in this document were taken by Arthur Proctor unless stated otherwise.



Section 1: Introduction & Overview



1. Introduction & Overview

WHAT IS THE MARPLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

- 1.1 Those of us that live or work in Marple take great pride in our town. We have a real sense of community and a dynamic spirit. Our aim is to preserve and build on this to ensure the future quality of life for all who live, work or play here. This plan has been developed by the Marple Neighbourhood Forum, a group of volunteer residents, based on extensive input and feedback from a significant cross-section of Marple residents and organisations.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood Planning powers were introduced by the 2011 Localism Act and allow communities to prepare a land use planning document for their local area. A Neighbourhood Plan, once made, has a legal planning status sitting alongside the Stockport Local Plan as part of the statutory land use plan. As such, the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan must be considered, where relevant, by all planning applications in the area it covers. This means that the Local Authority has to take it in to account when making decisions on planning applications related to Marple.
- 1.3 The Marple Neighbourhood Plan is based heavily on consultation with the local community, local groups and other community stakeholders and has been developed by a team of more than 25 volunteers, led by the Marple Neighbourhood Forum. The Forum was supported by a series of themed working groups made up of a wide membership of local residents and representatives of community organisations.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

- 1.4 When we started developing the plan towards the end of 2016, we realised quickly that the process is designed to cover policies related specifically to the use of land. However, our working groups and feedback from Marple residents had a broader set of aspirations for Marple's future. Many other communities have taken a similar view and, in fact, neighbourhood plans are encouraged to be appropriately ambitious. Accordingly, we have included these aspirations in this document although we highlight that these do not have the legal standing of the planning policies.

- 1.5 For clarity and ease of navigation the policies that make up the Neighbourhood Plan are shown in green boxes and it is these that will form part of the formal planning policy framework for Marple. Explanatory notes set out how the policy has been developed, together with relevant supporting documents and a justification for the policy.
- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan captures the community's development aspirations and will be used by landowners, homeowners and developers to shape their proposals before applying for planning permission.
- 1.7 Local residents, businesses and community groups are often consulted on nearby planning applications. Local people can comment on planning proposals, either directly to the developer prior to submission, or to Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (hereinafter referred to as 'Stockport MBC') following the submission of a planning application. When making representations they can make specific reference to the Neighbourhood Plan setting out why they consider a proposal either does or does not meet the tests in the policies. Local people and community groups can use the Neighbourhood Plan proactively to engage with the planning system, to give weight to their comments and to ensure that they highlight the critical issues with any development proposal.
- 1.8 Stockport MBC is the decision-making authority in respect of planning applications. Proposals in accordance with the development plan, of which the Neighbourhood Plan forms part, should be approved; whilst those that do not should be refused unless there are over-riding material planning considerations. Decisions on simple planning applications can be made by Stockport MBC's planning officers under delegated powers; whilst larger, more complex planning applications tend to be considered by a planning committee, made up of elected borough councillors.

TAKING ACCOUNT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 1.9 The world is changing fast. During the time it has taken to prepare this plan, the implications of both climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic have grown to become issues that affect us all. In respect of climate change, both the UK Government and local authorities including Stockport have declared Climate Change Emergencies. It is indicative of the unprecedented nature of the pandemic that it has temporarily eclipsed the priority of addressing climate change.

- 1.10 The challenges presented by Covid-19 are a threat to both the immediate and long term health of our communities. Many other highly valued aspects of our local lives are also at considerable risk. The way we work, travel, exercise and access healthcare, learn and shop has had to change dramatically. In some cases, this has accelerated existing trends. Overall, it has emphasised the importance of our people, our community, and our environment.
- 1.11 The local community was strongly represented at the 2019 Marple Climate Emergency weekend where more than 200 residents attended presentations and discussion groups. Accordingly, we have included a [section](#) specific to Climate Change while recognising that this will sit within a framework of Climate Change programmes at the Stockport, Greater Manchester and national level.





Section 2: A Vision for Marple



2. A Vision for Marple

- 2.1 Marple is a thriving and historic canal-side town with, an active community and a good quality of life. It is a great place to live and we want it to stay that way, with an eye on how we can improve things for the future. It has many historically significant buildings and structures. We have an attractive environment with great community spaces and parks. The town supports a range of independent and national shops and we have a diverse range of employers. There is a very strong sense of community and a realisation that Marple has a lot to offer.
- 2.2 Our consultation exercises show that our residents have made very clear that they want Marple to retain the character and heritage of a small town with a village feel. The key themes of our community feedback are to protect and preserve what we have, to look after our important historical and natural heritage, the surrounding green belt and to improve some key aspects such as the town centre environment, the reduction of the dominance of car traffic on its streets, and the provision of high quality community and leisure facilities.
- 2.3 We also have challenges. Marple's popularity means there is pressure to build houses; traffic congestion creates noise and pollution and the busy Stockport Road runs through the centre of our town. Shopping is changing and we need to ensure that we have a range of shops, particularly specialist ones, that Marple residents and people from outside want to use. Marple residents need good quality community and leisure facilities. We also need decent, affordable homes, particularly for younger people and better downsizing options for our older residents. In part 5 of the Plan we identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats which we face. This highlights such things as the division of the town by a main road, the attractiveness of the area but lacking a focal point and the major opportunities to improve amenities.
- 2.4 From the Profile of Marple, compiled from data (in [Section 5](#)) other characteristics of the town emerge. In particular there is a higher proportion of over 65s than the Greater Manchester and Stockport averages; there is a high reliance on the car for journeys to work, and that both railway stations in Marple are greatly valued. From listening to the hopes and aspirations of residents and analysis of its

demography and its patterns of living and moving about, the Neighbourhood Plan takes as its starting point a vision for its future shown in the panel below.

- 2.5 The Consultation Statement (Appendix 7) which supports the Plan shows in detail the exercises carried out and responses received and the ways in which these helped formulate the Vision, Aims and Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. These, with suggestions for its future Monitoring, are set out in Table 1 below.
- 2.6 Throughout the preparation of our Policies we have been careful to adhere to the guidance and aims of national and local planning policy, in particular for the achievement of sustainable development, and to have regard to the economic, social and environmental objectives to safeguard the future development of Marple.

VISION FOR MARPLE

- The town will continue to protect and enhance its varied character both in the built environment and in its green spaces
- The town centre will retain and attract varied shops and restaurants and provide a pleasant environment where people will want to spend time
- As a town proud of its many interest groups it will seek opportunities for permanent facilities in which to meet and share community life both indoor and outdoor
- Opportunities will be sought for the provision of housing for all types of age-groups, households and tenures, for working from home, in sustainable locations
- Car traffic will be controlled, safe access for business traffic will be provided, as well as controlled and safe spaces and surfaces for pedestrians and cyclists and improved public transport facilities
- Marple will seek a sustainable path to its future social economic and environmental development with full regard to its distinctive locality and community and the potential for employment via tourism opportunities

TABLE 1 - VISION - AIMS - POLICIES - MONITORING

| Vision | Aims / Objectives | Policies | Monitoring |
|---|---|---------------------------------|--|
| 1.The town will continue to protect and enhance its varied character both in the built environment and in its green spaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will preserve our important green infrastructure and designated wildlife areas and the corridors connecting them. We will minimise the impact of development on the natural environment and encourage initiatives that result in a net gain of Natural Capital and make walking and cycling pleasant, safe experiences. | NC1, NC4 CS1, CS3 and HT1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous or at least annual review of net biodiversity gain or loss through development data from local planning authority SMBC Tracking losses or gains to Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and ACVs through SMBC development management processes |
| 2. The town centre will retain and attract varied shops and restaurants and provide a pleasant environment where people will want to spend time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will encourage and support the improvement of the town centre to deliver a more viable, attractive shopping destination and a vibrant and successful evening economy We will strive to support and retain our valued independent retailers and encourage residents to shop locally We will seek to achieve a safe, welcoming and enjoyable town centre environment | TC1 and TC2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular liaison with Marple Business Community |

| Vision | Aims / Objectives | Policies | Monitoring |
|---|---|------------------|--|
| 3. As a town proud of its many interest groups it will seek opportunities for permanent facilities in which to meet and share community life, both indoor and outdoor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marple is a town with many highly valued community facilities; the library, the independent cinema and the Carver Theatre are just a few examples. There is also room for improvement; for example, the swimming baths closure, the absence of a modern public fitness and leisure facility and the lack of a focal Community Centre. We will support and retain what we have and seek ways of making the improvements highlighted above a reality. • We have a wealth of community spaces, both in terms of green areas and parkland and indoor community activities. However, the current facilities are in great demand and we need more modern, better quality locations that are fit for purpose. | CS1, CS2 and CS3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow progress of projects through the Marple Area Committee • Review SMBC Annual Monitoring Report as it affects the Neighbourhood Plan area • Tracking losses or gains to Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and ACVs through SMBC development management processes |
| 4. Opportunities will be sought for the provision of housing for all types of age-groups, households and tenures, for working from home, in sustainable locations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will aim to meet new housing demand in a way that is sympathetic to the area; that ensures the right type of housing is built in the right locations, and that a mix of housing types is delivered to include family homes that are affordable by a wide section of the population. • We will support the development of smaller dwellings to provide for the increase in older residents and to encourage occupation by young people and young families. • We will support the wider development aims of the Borough by encouraging development on brownfield sites, including around our rail stations and in the town centre. | H1 and H2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check SMBC annual Housing Completions summary • Contribute to and monitor policies of Stockport Local Plan • Check SMBC annual Housing Completions summary. Contribute to and monitor policies of Stockport Local Plan |

| Vision | Aims / Objectives | Policies | Monitoring |
|---|---|-------------|---|
| 5. Car traffic will be controlled, safe access for business traffic will be provided, as well as controlled and safe spaces and surfaces for pedestrians and cyclists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will press for the problems of traffic congestion on our roads to be addressed. We will ensure our roads and streets are safe and accessible, better balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. We will aim to ensure that all residents have easy access to community facilities and community green spaces for leisure and recreation. Rail is a major transport mode for Marple and needs better facilities and services more in line with the high volume of users. We will encourage the development of our two stations. | GA1 and GA2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain stakeholder role in progress of Marple Transport Study |

| Vision | Aims / Objectives | Policies | Monitoring |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Marple will seek a sustainable path to its future social economic and environmental development with full regard to its locality and community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will retain our character and heritage as a small town with a village feel. We will protect our natural boundaries, avoiding the creep of urban sprawl. We will build further on our strong sense of community Our town is surrounded by wonderful countryside and has a great heritage, some important aspects of which (Mellor Mill, the Viaduct and the Lime Kilns) have been lovingly restored by the 'Oldknow's Legacy' project. Marple has much potential as a niche tourist destination that we want to encourage. We will support the creation of an environment that is attractive for micro, small and medium-sized businesses and shops to locate and flourish. We will aim to retain the sites in our area which currently provide jobs in their present use and provide sustainable employment opportunities | Elements of all Policies – but mainly HT1, HT2, and BE1 and BE2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek feedback from public prior to AGM of MNF liaise with Marple Civic Society on conservation losses and gains annually regular update and review with Marple Business Community |

- 2.7 Consequently, we have set out the following aims:

TOWN CHARACTER

- 2.8 We will retain our character and heritage as a small town with a village feel. We will protect our natural boundaries, avoiding the creep of urban sprawl. We will build further on our strong sense of community.

TOWN CENTRE

- 2.9 We will encourage and support the improvement of the town centre to deliver a more viable, attractive shopping destination and a vibrant and successful evening economy.
- 2.10 We will strive to support and retain our valued independent retailers and encourage residents to shop locally.
- 2.11 We will seek to achieve a safe, welcoming and enjoyable town centre environment.

GETTING AROUND

- 2.12 We will press for the problems of traffic congestion on our roads to be addressed.
- 2.13 We will ensure our roads and streets are safe and accessible, better balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.
- 2.14 We will aim to ensure that all residents have easy access to community facilities and community green spaces for leisure and recreation.
- 2.15 Rail is a major transport mode for Marple and needs better facilities and services more in line with the high volume of users. We will encourage the development of our two stations.

HOUSING

- 2.16 We will aim to meet new housing demand in a way that is sympathetic to the area; that ensures the right type of housing is built in the right locations, and that a mix of housing types is delivered to include family homes that are affordable by a wide section of the population.
- 2.17 We will support the development of smaller dwellings to provide for the increase in older residents and to encourage occupation by young people and young families.

- 2.18 We will support the wider development aims of the Borough by encouraging development on brownfield sites, including around our rail stations and in the town centre.

NATURAL CAPITAL

- 2.19 We will preserve our important green infrastructure and designated wildlife areas and the corridors connecting them.
- 2.20 We will minimise the impact of development on the natural environment and encourage initiatives that result in a net gain of Natural Capital and make walking and cycling pleasant, safe experiences.

COMMUNITY SPACE

- 2.21 Marple is a town with many highly valued community facilities; the library, the independent cinema and the Carver Theatre are just a few examples. There is also room for improvement; for example, the swimming baths closure, the absence of a modern public fitness and leisure facility and the lack of a focal Community Centre. We will support and retain what we have and seek ways of making the improvements highlighted above a reality.
- 2.22 We have a wealth of community spaces, both in terms of green areas and parkland and indoor community activities. However, the current facilities are in great demand and we need more modern, better quality locations that are fit for purpose.

HERITAGE AND TOURISM

- 2.23 Our town is surrounded by wonderful countryside and has a great heritage, some important aspects of which (Mellor Mill, the Viaduct and the Lime Kilns) have been lovingly restored by the 'Oldknow's Legacy' project. Marple has much potential as a niche tourist destination that we want to encourage.

BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

- 2.24 We will support the creation of an environment that is attractive for micro, small and medium-sized businesses and shops to locate and flourish.
- 2.25 We will aim to retain the sites in our area which currently provide jobs in their present use and provide sustainable employment opportunities.

Our Marple Plan



Section 3: Plan Area & Context

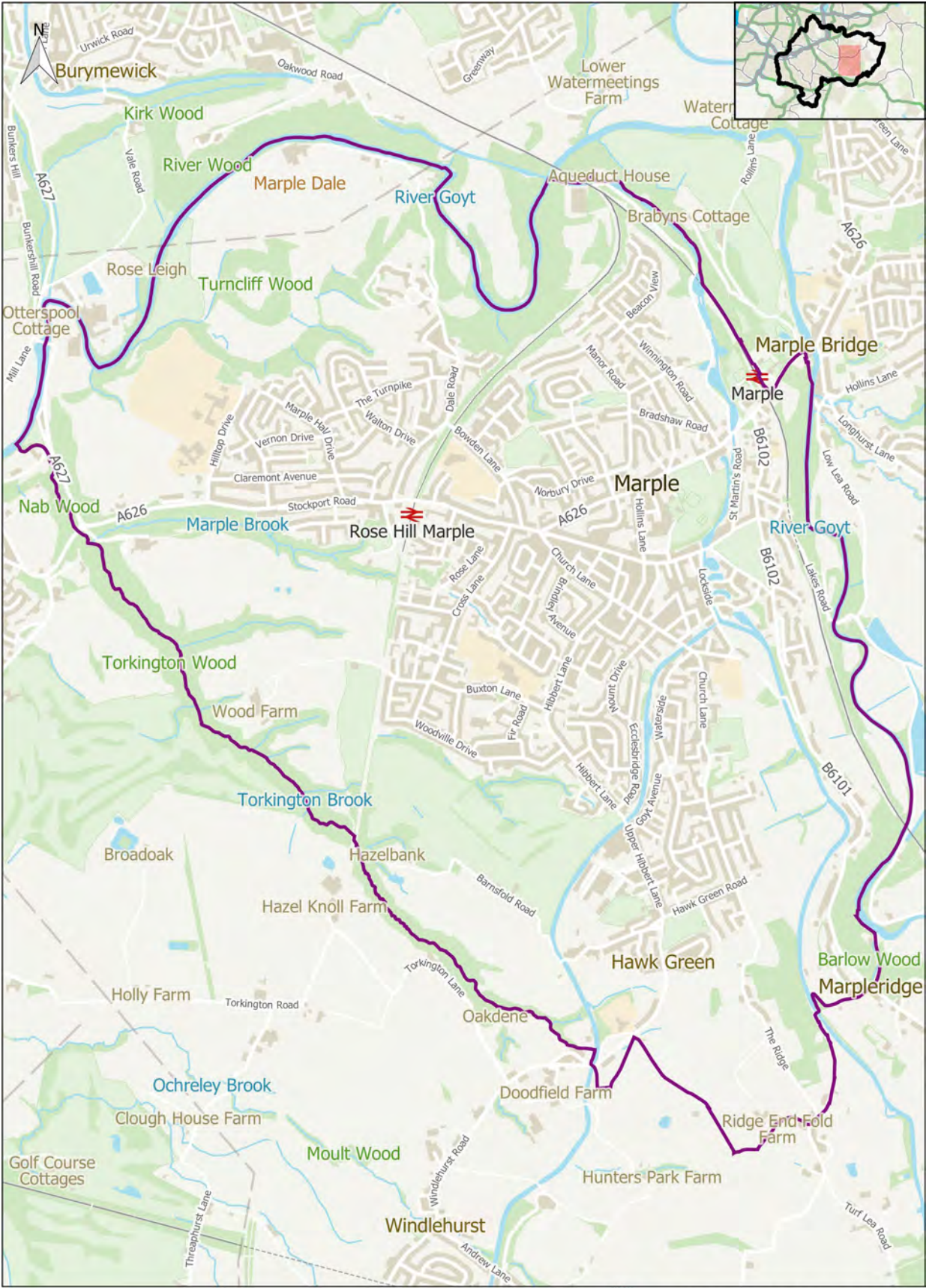


3. Plan Area & Context

- 3.1 Marple is part of the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport, which in turn is one of the ten local authorities which make up the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).
- 3.2 Marple elects six Councillors for Stockport Council who also sit on the Marple Area Committee. This has some executive decision-making powers and limited funds. We do not have a Parish or Town Council, so the Marple Neighbourhood Forum was set up as the qualifying body for the Neighbourhood Plan which will run for fifteen years from 2023 to 2038. This will align it with the revised Stockport Local Plan, now that Stockport is no longer part of the group of councils developing the Places for Everyone Development Plan Document, formerly known as the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.
- 3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) area was designated in June 2016 and is shown on the following page. It covers the built-up area of Marple and the town centre. We have worked closely with people in Marple Bridge, Mellor, Compstall and Mill Brow who are creating their own Neighbourhood Plans, and High Lane who now have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

- 3.4 The approach to Neighbourhood Planning, as set out in the Localism Act (2011), is further detailed by national guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).
- 3.5 In addition to Neighbourhood Planning, the national guidance sets out how plans should respond to essential topics, including housing, employment, protection of the environment, heritage and design. There is a requirement for both this Neighbourhood Plan and the Stockport Local Plan to reflect the approach set out within these documents.



Marple Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

Task Ref: BID1-4019 Scale: 1:21000 Date: 07/11/2023

- 3.6 It is a requirement of the Planning Acts of 1990 and 2004 that Neighbourhood Plans must comply with certain 'Basic Conditions'. These requirements are set out in full in the Basic Conditions Statement (Appendix 6) which supports Our Neighbourhood Plan and can be summarised as:
- Generally conforming with strategic local policy;
 - Having regard to national planning policy and guidance (including the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance);
 - Contributing to achieving sustainable development.
- 3.7 The seven policy topics of the Neighbourhood Plan have been systematically appraised against those of the Stockport Core Strategy, the Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan and the emerging Stockport Local Plan. The priorities of the Stockport Local Plan were, at the time of our appraisal, neighbourhoods, brownfield first for development, high quality design for development, provision of local infrastructure, response to climate change and concern for the health and well-being of communities. The schedule in the Basic Conditions Statement concludes that there are no conflicts of policy or purpose between the two sets of plans, and indicates rather that there is a remarkable degree of convergence between them.
- 3.8 National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and in national Planning Practice Guidance. The aims of the NPPF to achieve the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes, to build a strong competitive economy, to ensure the vitality of town centres, the promotion of healthy and safe communities, and sustainable transport have guided and framed the policies of the Marple Neighbourhood Plan. They are co-ordinated to ensure mutual support between them.
- 3.9 The NPPF lays emphasis on the importance of sustainable development as one of its first priorities. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives:
- economic - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support

growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- social - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities 'health, social and cultural well-being; and
- environmental - to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- These objectives are important in view of the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' in the NPPF which must in turn be followed in any application of the policies of the Marple Neighbourhood Plan.

3.10 This aim of sustainable development has been developed in all the Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan: by reducing the need to travel by car; by retaining shoppers in the town centre; by promoting walking and cycling, development around and connections to our two railway station; conserving our countryside, our heritage and employment space, and our walking based tourism.

3.11 Through the gathering of evidence, the analysis of data, listening to the Marple community, to the formulation of policies, the Plan has been careful to retain the perspective of local and national planning policy. The summary of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats at Section 5 of the Plan indicates where effort is needed, both to fulfil the Vision for Marple (Section 2) and to adhere to the framework of national planning policy. Each policy has been devised in a way that contributes to the purpose of sustainability.

3.12 To meet requirements our plan is accompanied by these documents:

- Basic Conditions Statement (Appendix 6)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment screening statement.



EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS

- 3.13 In preparing this Neighbourhood Plan, a wide range of evidence documents have been considered and prepared. Much of this has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Committee, some with the help of external organisations such as AECOM and the Cheshire Wildlife Trust. Additionally, we have referred at length to work undertaken by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.
- 3.14 In addition to this evidence there has been a significant degree of consultation and engagement over an extended period with residents and other stakeholders in Marple. The findings of this work are included in the evidence base and have shaped the vision and aims across all the topics covered by the policies.
- 3.15 A full list of the evidence used to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan is included in Appendix 7.



Section 4: Community Involvement & Consultation Process



4. Community Involvement & Consultation Process

- 4.1 Consultations with Marple residents, elected representatives and businesses over the production of this Neighbourhood Plan have been overwhelmingly positive and reflect a genuine desire to improve our community and to take more control over decisions that affect us.
- 4.2 The following is a summary of the key consultations that have been carried out in Marple, some as early as 2010, while the majority have been since the inception of the Neighbourhood Forum in 2016.
- 4.3 Prior to the establishment of the Neighbourhood Forum, the Marple Civic Society invested much time and effort on behalf of the community. In 2010, the Marple Vision Partnership was set up as a project working with Stockport Council and British Waterways (now the Canal and River Trust). In 2015, the Society engaged Phil Jones Associates for an Urban Design Study that looked at how Marple town centre functioned both in terms of traffic circulation and as a place where residents could spend enjoyable time.
- 4.4 In 2016, the Neighbourhood Forum was launched with a week-long exhibition and drop-in at the library culminating in a well-attended open meeting. This led to the establishment of a substantial initial membership and the initiation of the Neighbourhood Planning process.



- 4.5 From the outset, a major component of developing the plan has been continuous communication and feedback between the forum committee, the key topic working groups and the residents of Marple.
- 4.6 The Forum has grown to its present number of 80 members, with more than 200 residents on our monthly mailing list and more than 20 affiliated Marple businesses and organisations.
- 4.7 Online communication is via the 'Our Marple Plan' website and a Facebook page. The Forum Committee also produces a monthly newsletter that is mailed to more than 200 recipients. From time to time, we have a stall in Market Street to provide information and receive feedback from as wide a cross-section of Marple residents as possible. In addition, residents, businesses and organisations have been consulted directly by the topic groups throughout the evidence gathering process.
- 4.8 2017 saw a series of Focus Group workshops that gave feedback on key elements of the plan. An awareness campaign distributed information to every Marple household and regular features appeared in the Marple Review as well as the popular Marple website. There was a full letterbox drop survey on key questions for the Plan and we have used Survey Monkey to elicit further views. Topic groups have brought additional members into discussions and some focus groups were held with randomly selected invitees.



- 4.9 Four Annual General Meetings have been well attended with round table discussions and workshops, Q&A sessions, a friendly debate and, in 2017, a presentation from Phil Jones on the substance and conclusions of the Urban Design Study.

- 4.10 In 2018, an early draft of the Plan was published on our website along with a short survey enabling residents to respond with feedback and suggestions. More than 100 responses submitted over a two month period further informed the formulation of the plan.
- 4.11 Throughout the process, the Forum has been in regular contact with representatives of Stockport Council who, from the outset, have provided both encouragement and support.

RECENT CONSULTATION ON THE PLAN

- 4.12 A Regulation 14 consultation was carried out by the Forum between November 2021 and January 2022 and the results are reported in our Consultation Statement. A further public consultation was carried out by Stockport Council under Regulation 16 between February and March 2023.





Section 5: A Profile of Marple



5. A Profile of Marple

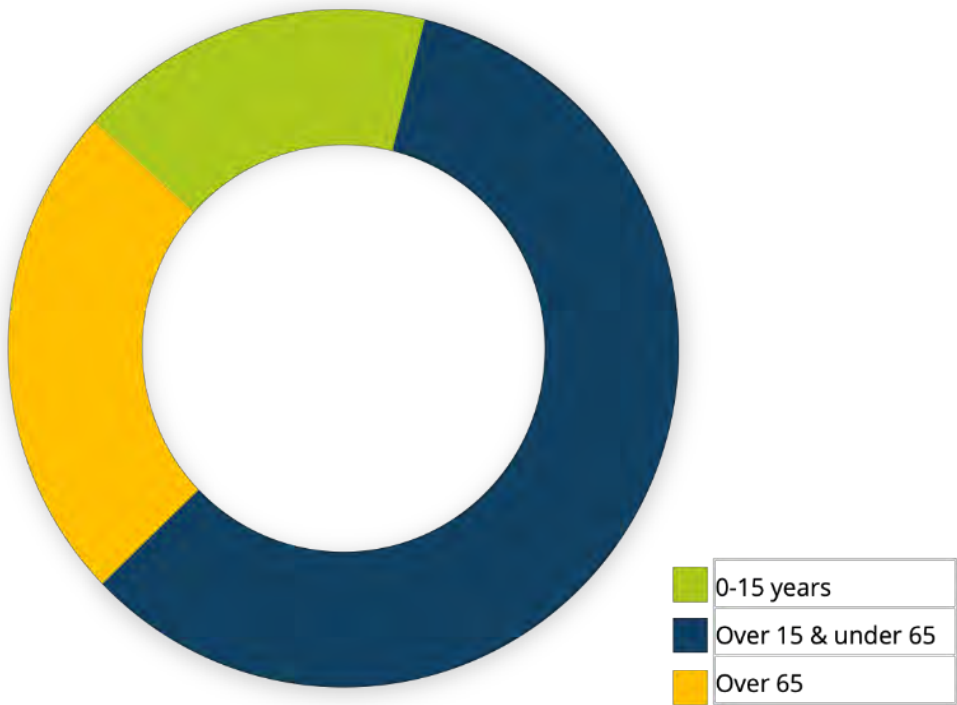
- 5.1 This section provides some key facts and statistics that outline the basic characteristics of our town.

POPULATION

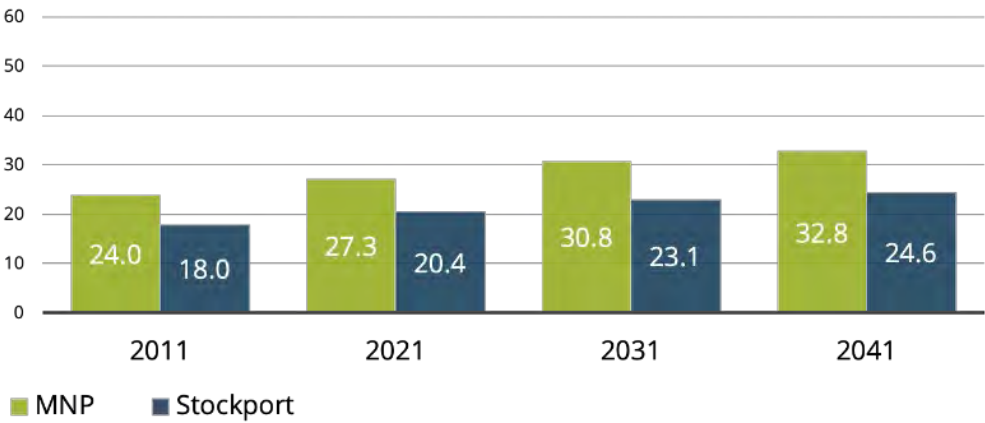
- 5.2 The population living within the boundary of the Marple Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) recorded in the 2011 census was **12,979**.
- 5.3 The protected green belt areas surrounding the town and the general lack of suitable land for large-scale development leads to a relatively stable population in terms of absolute numbers. However, along with the broader national trend, Marple was forecast to experience a significant change in the age profile of residents over the next twenty years. These forecasts may be adjusted after the 2021 census and the effects of the Covid Pandemic and Brexit.
- 5.4 We have a **higher proportion of over 65s** than the Greater Manchester & Stockport averages and the number of over 65s is **forecast to increase dramatically further** over the lifetime of the plan.



MNP POPULATION: 12,979



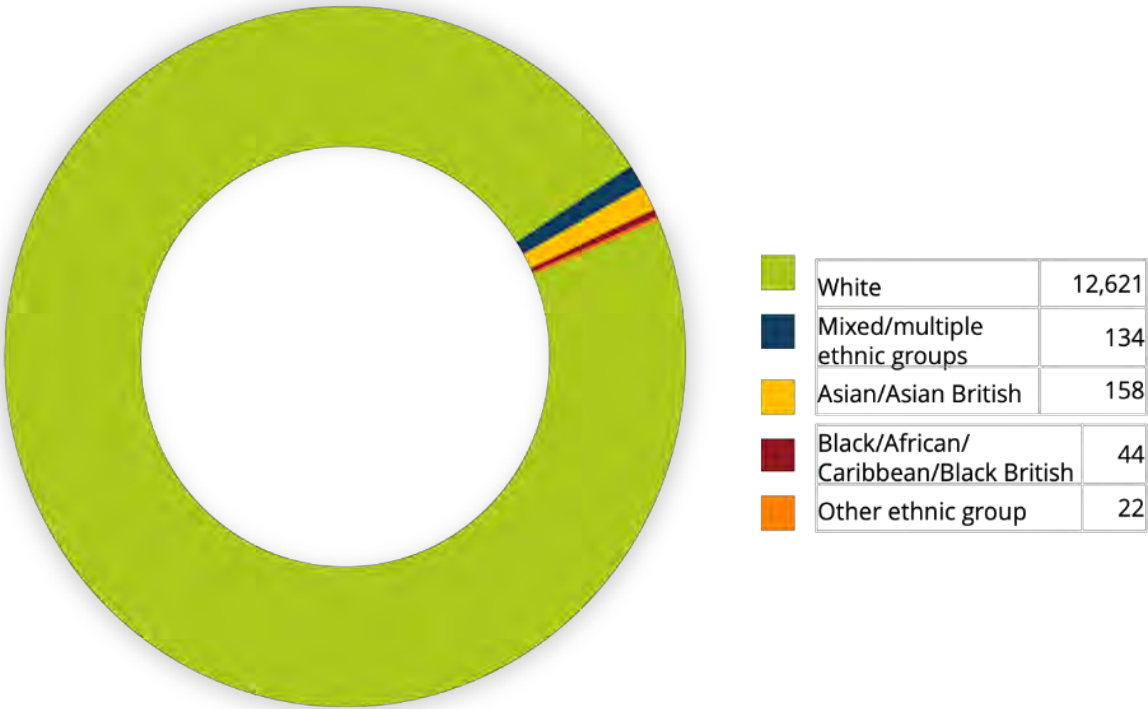
OVER 65 POPULATION (%)



- 5.5 The changing demographic will result in increasing demand for elderly care centred around the home and for smaller well-equipped dwellings for independent elderly residents. We will need to balance this by encouraging and enabling younger people and young families to make their homes in Marple.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY

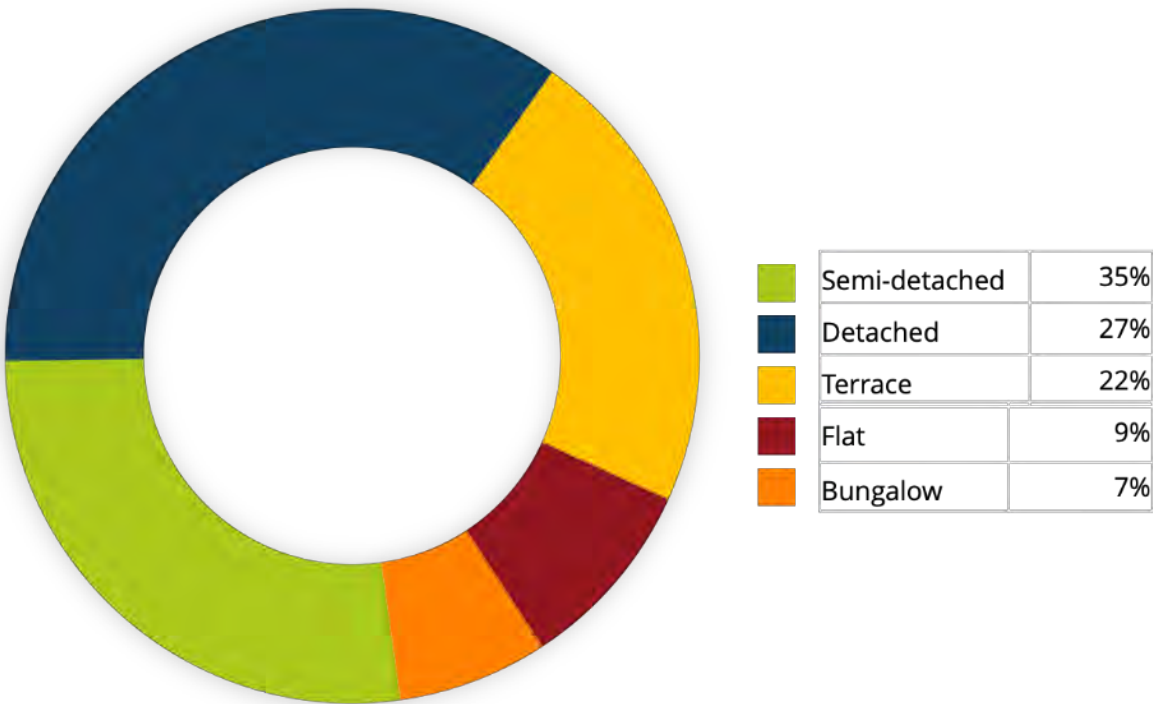
5.6 In terms of ethnic diversity Marple is less diverse than many Greater Manchester areas.



HOUSING

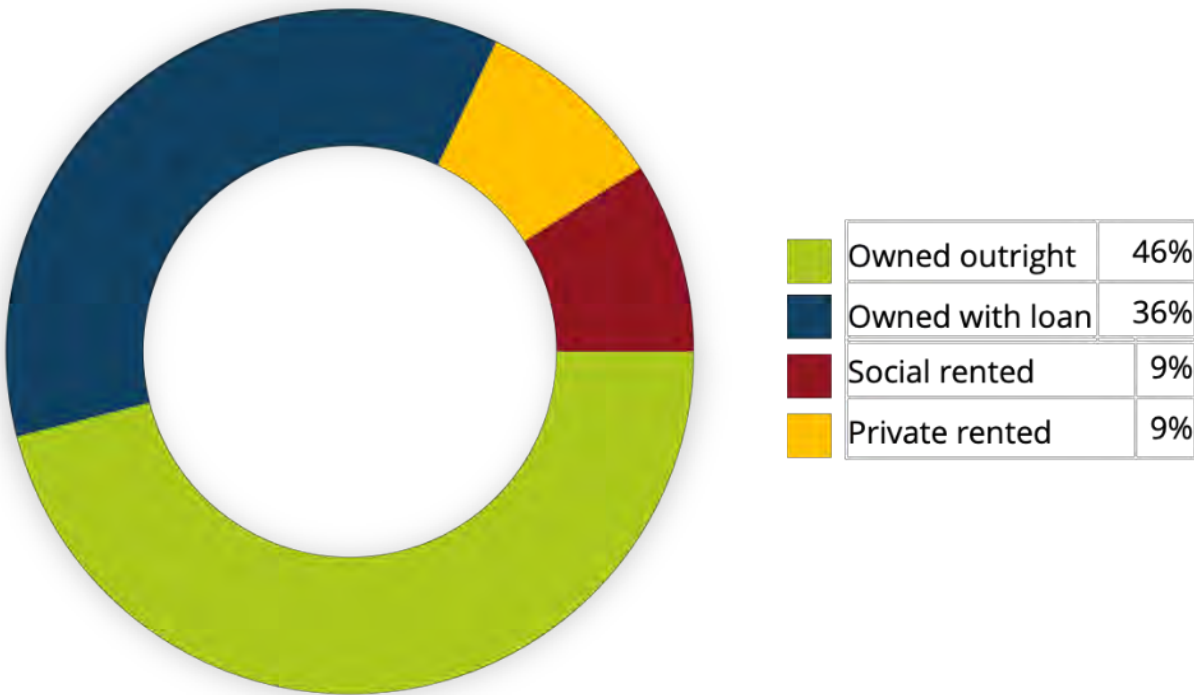
5.7 Marple is home to approximately 5,600 households with a mix of size and type. It is an increasingly sought after place to live – a distinct community, immediate access to wonderful countryside, good schools – and with this come issues of affordability, especially for younger residents, and availability, for older residents looking to downsize.

5.8 The following chart shows the relative mix of housing types.



TENURE TYPE

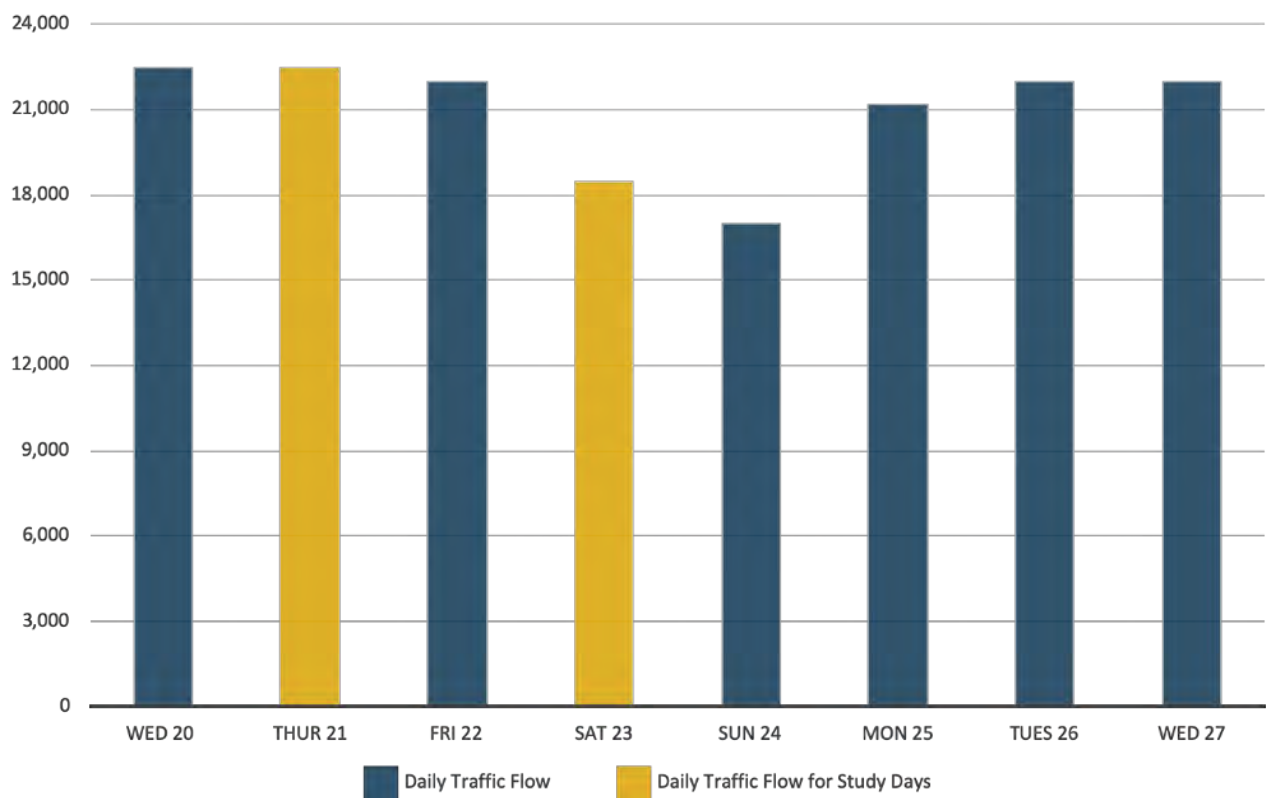
5.9 More than 80% of Marple’s housing is privately owned with a significant portion owned outright. Private and Social rented housing are important sectors of roughly equivalent size.



TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

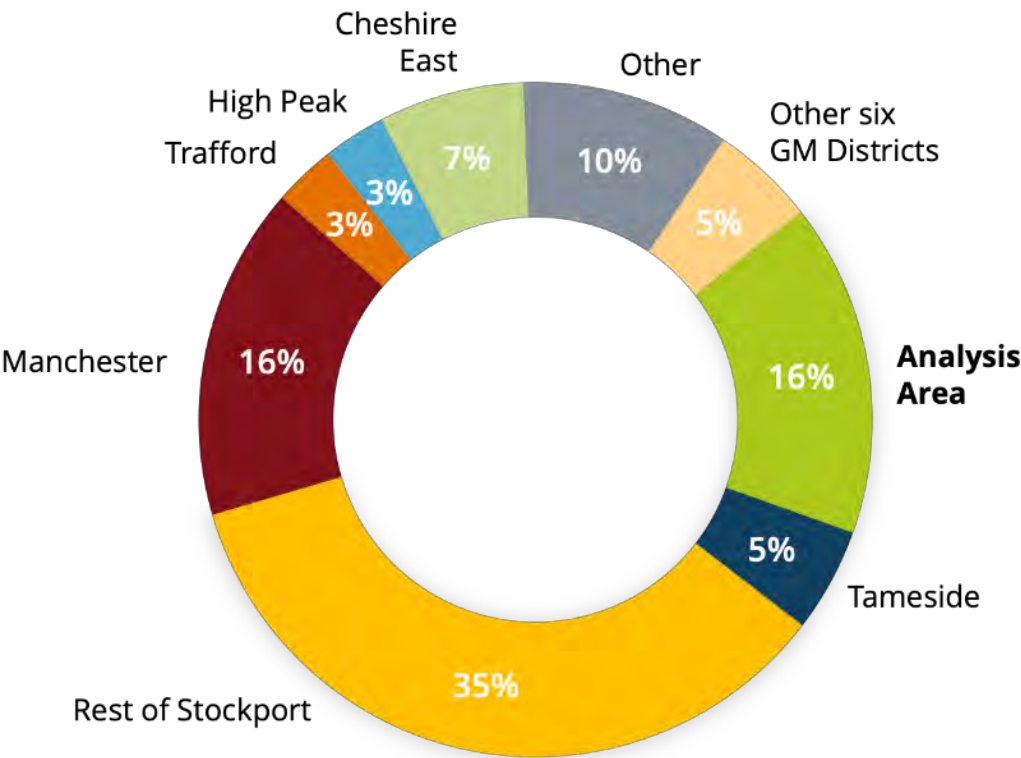
- 5.10 Travel and transport feature high on our agenda, from issues of congestion and safety, to air quality and making the town centre both accessible and an enjoyable place to spend time.
- 5.11 The table below gives an indication of the significant traffic volumes using Stockport Road from a sample taken in 2018.

DAILY TRAFFIC FLOW RECORDINGS ON A626 STOCKPORT ROAD

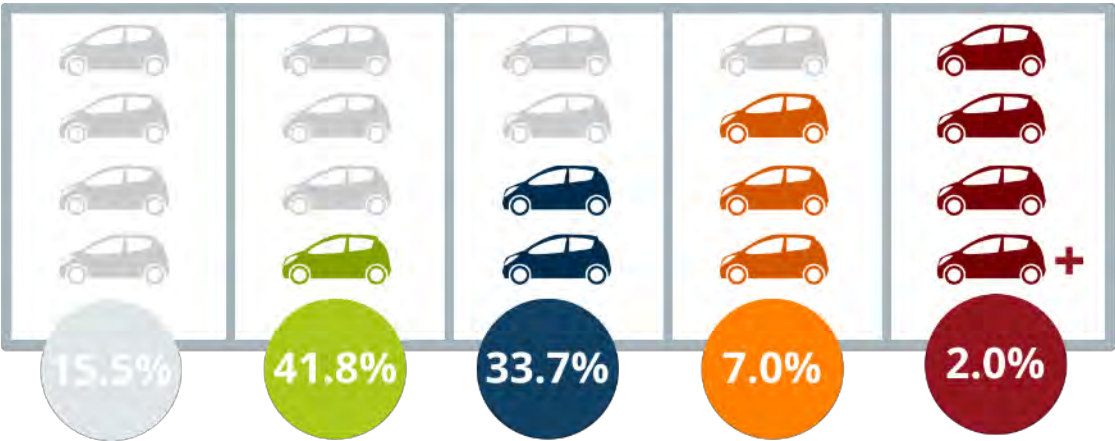


JOURNEY TO WORK

5.12 An analysis of almost 4,900 residents shows how and where we travel to work. Roughly half of all journeys are within the Marple or Stockport area with the rest further afield. Local journeys are split between walking and cars with only 1% by bike. Journeys to Stockport are 75% by car and to Manchester 56% by car, 38% by train and only 3% by bus.



5.13 Almost 85% of Marple households have at least one vehicle with over 40% having two or more:

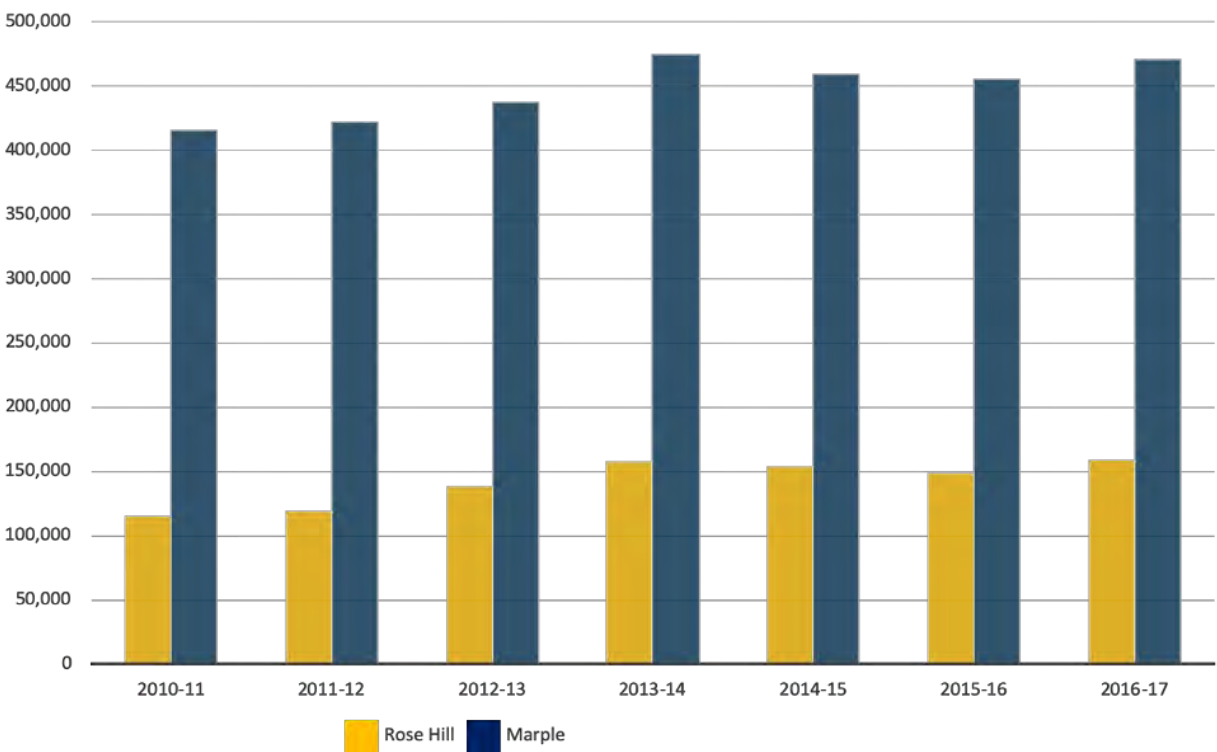


5.14 Many Marple residents do not have access to a car. In households that do have a car, some residents may not be able to drive or have use of the household car.

STATION USAGE

5.15 We have great pride in our two railway stations and the graph below illustrates that we make good use of them.

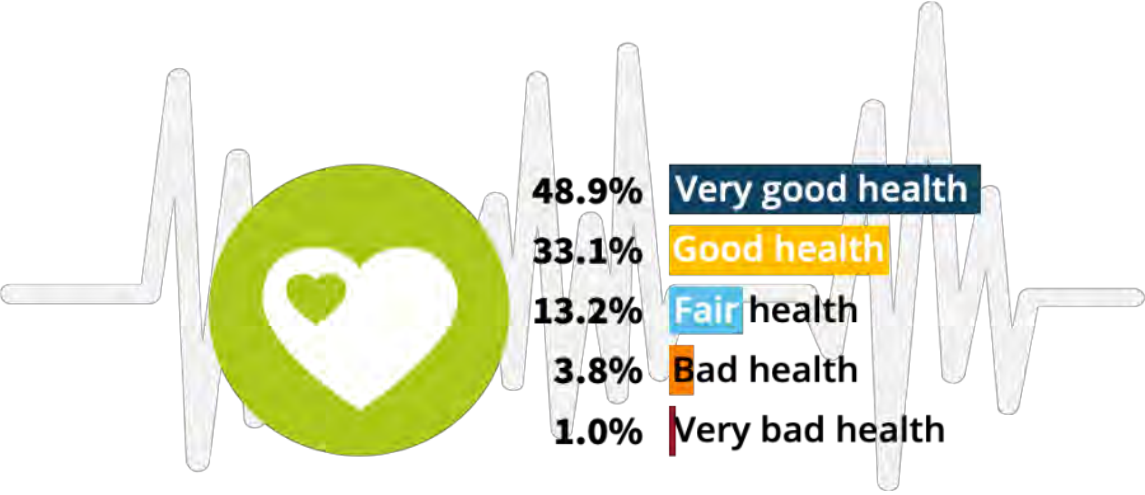
NUMBERS OF PASSENGER TRIPS BY YEAR APRIL-MARCH



SOURCE: Office of Rail Regulation, Employment and Health

HEALTH

5.16 Marple residents generally enjoy good health – here’s how we assessed ourselves in the 2011 Census data:



5.17 Life expectancy is slightly better than that of the Borough and similar to that of the UK.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

5.18 The chart below is a summary of the focus group sessions and feedback from our other community engagement activities.

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|--|
| <p>Marple has clear boundaries & a real sense of identity</p> <p>Excellent built heritage: history, buildings, Conservation Areas</p> <p>Good range of civic buildings</p> <p>Critical mass of small shops & cafes, restaurants & bars</p> <p>Reasonable train services to Manchester; good road/rail links to the Peak District</p> <p>Beautiful surroundings, canal network, Middlewood Way</p> <p>High level of community activity, low level of deprivation</p> | <p>Marple Town centre is divided & dominated by traffic</p> <p>Walking (and cycling) around the centre is inconvenient & sometimes unpleasant</p> <p>Marple Town centre has no town square or other focal point</p> <p>Few heritage & tourism facilities or interpretation</p> <p>Poor range & affordability of Housing for younger & older people</p> |
| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| <p>Upgrade Marple Town Centre to a place that brings the people of Marple together</p> <p>Create greater sense of place by reducing traffic dominance, particularly on Stockport Road</p> <p>Develop a modern leisure facility including a new swimming pool</p> <p>Create a new, integrated Civic Centre based on Memorial Park including tourist facilities</p> <p>Capitalise on our green & built heritage to encourage well-being & tourism</p> <p>Develop Goyt Mill estate potential</p> <p>Provide new/infill housing – particularly for older & younger people</p> | <p>Out of town or second large in-town food stores could affect local shops</p> <p>Some infrastructure no longer fit for purpose – e.g. swimming pool and gym now closed</p> <p>Loss of shops in the centre – particularly from internet shopping</p> <p>Deterioration of heritage assets</p> <p>Housing over-development</p> <p>Creeping traffic dominance & paralysis of the town centre</p> <p>Other centres make themselves more attractive & out-compete Marple</p> <p>Ageing population with fewer younger people & little diversity</p> |

Our Marple Plan



Section 6: Town Centre (TC) Policies



6. Town Centre (TC) Policies

6.1 For descriptive reasons, we refer here consistently to “Town Centre” policies. It is recognised that the official designation of Marple centre is as a “District Centre” and Stockport MBC policies refer to it as such. For this plan we use the term that is best understood by residents, but intend the same designation as Stockport MBC.

6.2 The area referred to is on the map at Appendix 1.

POLICY TC1: TOWN CENTRE IDENTITY

Development in the Town Centre must respect local character, having regard to the height, scale and materials of existing buildings. Shop fronts and signs should respect their surroundings, including the elevations of the buildings in which they are located.

EXPLANATORY

6.3 The purpose of the Town Centre policies is to enhance the appearance and to reinforce Marple Town Centre’s identity to appeal to both residents and visitors as a destination for shopping, food and drink and leisure during the day and evening hours. Their aims are to:

- Create streets that are attractive to and meet the needs of the principal users of those streets, whether residential, retail or commercial
- Create a visually attractive streetscape through the management of new development
- Open up new routes for pedestrians and cyclists and enhance legible wayfinding.

6.4 Policies TC1 and TC2 are integrated with one another with the purpose of promoting placemaking in the town centre.

6.5 ‘Placemaking’ is the process of enhancing the identity of Marple together with bringing about environmental improvements to its streets and spaces. It would be implemented by making the most of any private or public investment which might take place. For example, it is normal to expect ‘planning gain’ to be obtainable for the benefit of the community, with large developments such as

town centre food stores. These could include traffic and access measures, new paving, planting and amenity features around the site.

- 6.6 The shops in Marple typically consist of assorted properties originally used for other purposes such as dwellings and now collectively form lively facades with displays and advertising. Some are in need of refreshment and Policy TC1 will exercise control over signs, shop front displays and entrances to help ensure they pay respect to the elevations of the buildings in which they are located.
- 6.7 Policy TC1 consists of guidance for the control of changes to built form in the Town Centre. Typically, most new development to the shops consists of changes of use, or new shop fronts or fascias. The opportunity should be taken to retain the character and appearance of those buildings which make a distinctive contribution to the shopping streets; and where change is proposed, planning applications should demonstrate how they have responded to local townscape and landscape character.

One of the Town Centre's most important frontages.

The former Co-op has been sympathetically treated by the present occupants. The ground floor has retained the pilasters, capitals, stallriser and recessed doorways of the original, and a consistent theme of paintwork has been adopted throughout.



POLICY TC2: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

Development in the Town Centre must respect the public realm. External spaces, boundaries, access points, services bays, refuse storage, security measures and seating should be designed to integrate with their surroundings.

EXPLANATORY

- 6.8 Whereas Policy TC1 is concerned primarily with buildings, Policy TC2 seeks to ensure that the treatment of the spaces between them also contributes to the character and appearance of the town centre. The way in which sites are developed can provide many opportunities for the creation of new public and private spaces which, with appropriate landscaping, can contribute to the bio-diversity of the town centre. They can also create new openings, recesses and enclosures for public art or seating, incidental play for children, or information points. The right planting can introduce green features into an otherwise harsh environment of stone and brick facades and paving. Street clutter can be addressed or avoided, for a calmer environment and clarity of deliberate signposting.
- 6.9 The Neighbourhood Forum is keen to see the introduction of a Public Realm Scheme, and other Community Projects following the making of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Public Realm Scheme would provide design advice and guidance. All new proposed development, including that by individual shops and businesses would be expected, under these policies, to contribute in proportion to the scale of their proposals, to further environmental improvements, which would, incrementally achieve the aims set out in paragraph 6.3 above.
- 6.10 Alongside the need for environmental improvement the important issues of traffic and pedestrian movement, identified in the 'Weaknesses' of the Marple Profile section, need to be tackled. The town centre is divided and dominated by traffic, and there is difficulty and inconvenience of movement for both pedestrians and cyclists. The town centre policies would be complemented by the Marple Transport Study, now being prepared by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 6.11 The aims of the Marple Transport Study are to retain, support and enhance Marple Town Centre by:
- Improving linkages, taking into account the perceived barrier effect of Stockport Road and Hibbert Lane
 - Exploring opportunities to reduce car dominance and promoting safe and attractive cycling and walking
 - Supporting the potential for enhanced provision for public transport and the better integration of public transport with other modes
 - Ensuring that shopping areas, community and amenity areas are easily accessible and connected, and
 - Improving transport safety within the study area, with particular focus on Stockport Road between the junctions with Cross Lane and Station Road.
- 6.12 It is expected that the Transport Study recommendations will identify opportunities for placemaking, strengthening the identity of Marple and proposals for environmental improvement. It will draw on the findings of the 2015 Phil Jones Associates report, which combined proposals for the easing of traffic flow through the town, with making movement for pedestrians and cyclists safer and more convenient; and a street by street and space by space examination of localities in the town centre and its immediate approaches which have potential for enhancement.
- 6.13 Public investment will most probably be required to implement any proposals for highway work. It is the aim of the town centre policies to co-ordinate public and private investment with a scheme for the revival and refreshment of the public realm in the town centre. The Neighbourhood Plan will be ready to support bids for such investment when a future opportunity arises.

ASPIRATION: A PLACEMAKING SCHEME FOR MARPLE

Marple's Town Centre has the potential to be a vibrant and attractive location. Together with key Marple stakeholders, we will develop a Placemaking Scheme for Town Centre improvement to make Marple a place where people want to visit, meet, shop and relax. The scheme will include:

- Creation of a clear Town Centre Identity
- Reduction in car traffic and congestion
- Prioritisation of pedestrian movement in streets with the main retail frontage
- Safe and attractive cycling routes together with enhanced provision for public transport
- Removal of existing and prevention of additional, street clutter.



Section 7: Getting Around (GA) Policies



7. Getting Around (GA) Policies

POLICY GA1: WALKING & CYCLING WITHIN MARPLE

The creation of new and the protection and improvement of existing, pedestrian and cycle routes will be supported. Development must protect existing rights of way. The provision of safe and secure cycle parking at the interface of cycle routes with amenities will be supported.

EXPLANATORY

- 7.1 Transport is not a benefit in itself: it is about the movement of people, goods and ideas. Our vision for transport is that it should support other aims such as to revitalise our town centre and make it easier to walk and cycle around.



- 7.2 This can be achieved by reducing the dominance of traffic on Stockport Road and throughout Marple and reducing the need to travel, which will encourage use of local facilities. In turn, this will reduce the need to develop open land which will allow us to retain the existing settlement boundaries.
- 7.3 Mobility must be inclusive. Our community must be accessible to everyone including older people (some with mobility scooters), the very young and people with disabilities.
- 7.4 Promotion and development of walking, cycling and public transport is at the heart of our proposals, but we recognise the important role of private vehicles and the needs of people with mobility issues.

- 7.5 Highways are a vital part of the public realm and contribute to a prosperous economy and a healthy and inclusive society. Our consultations with Marple residents focused frequently on the fact that motor vehicles have become dominant to the detriment of a wide group of users, both in terms of their ability to move around and in the quality of Marple itself including impacts on health and well-being.
- 7.6 Private cars help to meet the travel needs of those who live or work in or visit Marple. However, a strategy based on unlimited private car use is unsustainable:
- It is an inefficient use of road space compared to cycling or public transport
 - Land used for parking could otherwise be used for alternative, more valuable purposes
 - It creates noise, air pollution and visual intrusion
 - Traffic congestion causes delay both to car users themselves and other road users
 - Road traffic creates barriers to pedestrian movement, discourages people from walking to, from and around Marple and thereby encourages a dispersed pattern of development.
- 7.7 Our evidence is based on the Marple District Centre Capacity Study (Draft Baseline Assessment Report) produced for Stockport Council (Atkins, 2017).
- 7.8 Barriers to walking and cycling include the lack of direct, safe and well-maintained routes and the lack of facilities where it is necessary to cross busy roads.
- 7.9 The design of the public realm should enable, encourage and empower people to choose walking for a portion of their journey. A survey undertaken by Friends of Marple Station (FOMS) in June 2017 indicated that 50% of users walk to the station with 45% travelling by car.
- 7.10 A significant number walk more than 800 metres. This indicates the importance of walking as an access mode and suggests that some current car users could be encouraged to switch to walking or cycling.
- 7.11 Additionally, we considered evidence from Beelines (TfGM, 2018), part of the 'Made to Move' initiative (Boardman, 2017), local cyclists

and Marple cycling groups, the BikeLife report (Sustrans, 2018) and the Stockport Borough Cycling and Walking Plan 2019-2020. Made to Move is backed by the GM Mayor and aims to transform the way we get around. It emphasises the need for a culture change both from people who live in Greater Manchester and those who provide our infrastructure.



POLICY GA2: MARPLE & ROSE HILL RAILWAY STATIONS

The following development will be supported:

- **Marple Station.** Improved waiting and community facilities plus associated ancillary retail floorspace and other business uses, and an additional passenger entrance directly from Brabyn's Brow to the Manchester platform, along with a pedestrian friendly crossing on Brabyn's Brow.
- **Rose Hill Station.** An integrated building for tourists (such as cycle hire and servicing, information, toilet and café) with additional facilities for rail passengers. Any development should ensure there is a safe, convenient and attractive entrance to the major tourist and leisure attraction of the Middlewood Way.

EXPLANATORY

- 7.12 Good accessibility will encourage a high public transport mode share.

- 7.13 Facilities at both Marple and Rose Hill stations were reduced in the 1960s, and despite the efforts of active 'Friends' groups¹ do not provide the facilities that current travellers expect or require. Better, more attractive facilities will grow rail use, whereas run down facilities and lack of shelter actively deter use and lead to increased road traffic.
- 7.14 Our consultations have shown there is demand for convenience retail, cafes and community facilities such as cycle hire at the stations. This would make rail a more attractive travel option. Some facilities, such as cycle hire, will attract leisure trips, support tourism development and local businesses.



¹ Friends of Rose Hill Station and Friends of Marple Station

ASPIRATION: REDUCING TRAFFIC SPEEDS

Reducing vehicle speeds on residential streets improves road safety and lowers noise and air pollution. It also discourages rat running through residential areas. These benefits make streets more pleasant places and encourage walking and cycling and more activity. Simply put, reducing traffic speeds through the town will make it a much nicer place to be.

This plan is consistent with Transport for Greater Manchester's 'Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040' which supports 'the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in residential and other built up areas where there is local support'. Within the town centre we want 20 mph to be the norm, but this could be achieved through changes in the physical environment rather than a formal speed limit.

ASPIRATION: PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS TO STOCKPORT

Our aspiration is to reduce road congestion at peak times in and out of Marple through a fixed public transport link to Stockport.

There is little potential to alleviate congestion through road widening or the introduction of bus lanes, given the dense development along the most congested route sections. Accordingly, it makes sense to consider fixed track solutions.

This is also supported by the SEMMMS refresh



Section 8: Housing (H) Policies



8. Housing (H) Policies

POLICY H1: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing sites of one hectare or more should provide a minimum of 35% affordable homes. To avoid over-concentration in one location, affordable homes should be distributed across the site in a way that reflects the scale of the scheme.

EXPLANATORY

- 8.1 Demand for social housing in the Neighbourhood area far exceeds supply (Appendix 3). Open-market housing builders have not provided enough affordable dwellings. Many people who grew up locally and have strong connections with Marple find it difficult to get on the housing ladder or return to the area for reasons of affordability. An appropriate mix of dwellings is needed to meet anticipated local needs.
- 8.2 With The Stockport MBC Local Development Framework Core Strategy DPD (March 2011) specifies the requirement for affordable housing and states that “affordable housing is an issue”. The Framework has a target of increasing the levels of affordable housing under Objective 2. In the Core policy CS3 in the mixed target, it states that the desirable level of affordable housing should be 50% of the overall target. For Stockport Homes, the “arms length” body that deals with social housing on behalf of the Local Authority has a target of 100% affordable homes. Stockport Homes already has property in the Neighbourhood Plan Area and continues to seek to build wherever possible under sole or joint partnerships with developers or builders.

POLICY H2: DOWNSIZING & ACCOMMODATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The developments of housing for older people, taking account of Lifetime Homes or equivalent standards, will be supported.

EXPLANATORY

- 8.3 With the significant increase in over 65s forecast over the plan period we need more options for older people, particularly those looking to downsize while remaining independent. Many people are reluctant to leave their family homes, although the space is under-used and the money realised from down-sizing might be useful to them (Appendix 3).
- 8.4 Conversations with local people, developers and estate agents indicate that there is a demand for larger flats than those currently available and for more bungalows, which could help free up larger family homes.
- 8.5 Marple already has many large and detached homes and there is no lack of supply to support house building of such properties, although profit margins dictate otherwise. Increasing the supply of affordable homes, and those suitable for younger, older and lower-paid people would help to redress Marple's demographic imbalance. It would also reflect the preferences expressed by contributors to our consultations and would comply with NPPF requirements for a mix of dwelling types and sizes.



Section 9: Natural Capital and Climate Change (NC) Policies



9. Natural Capital and Climate Change (NC) Policies

POLICY NC1: NATURAL CAPITAL AND BIODIVERSITY

Development must minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. Development must respect the indicative wildlife corridors shown in blue on the map on page 56.

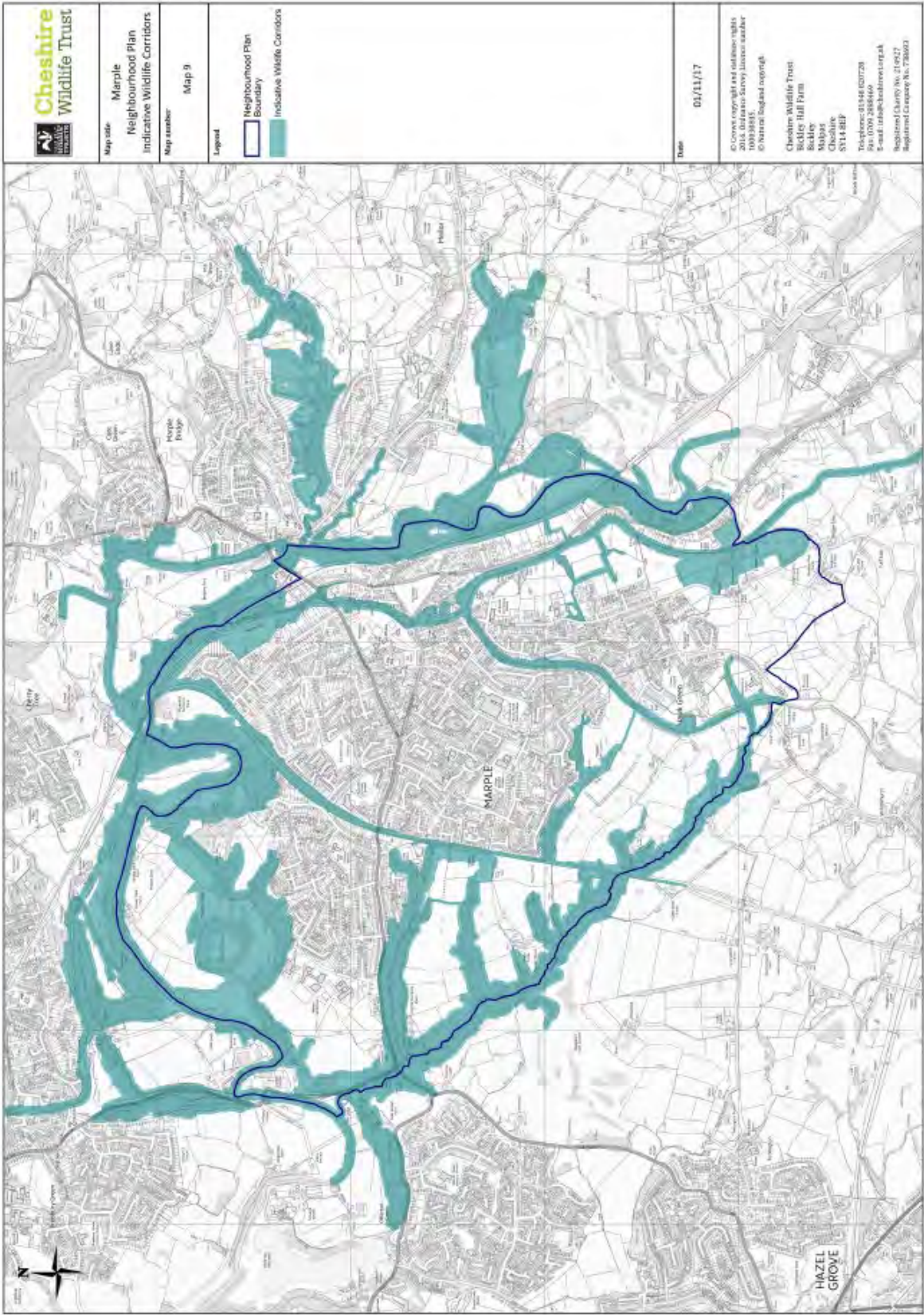
EXPLANATORY

- 9.1 Marple has a rich biodiversity that is critical to the character of the town. We have good access to a varied landscape and greenspace including ancient woodlands and wildlife corridors. Marple is an important canal junction and these historic and vibrant waterways penetrate the heart of the town. We commissioned the Cheshire Wildlife Trust (CWT, 2017) to report on the state of our natural capital.
- 9.2 Marple is within National character Area 54: The Manchester Pennine Fringe. We occupy the transitional zone between the open moorlands of the Dark Peak and Southern Pennines, and the densely populated urban conurbation of Manchester.
- 9.3 Marple is underlain by Carboniferous Millstone Grit and Pennine Coal Measures. It owes much of its character to the steep valleys that characterise the transition from Derbyshire moorland to Cheshire Plain.
- 9.4 The natural distribution of habitats throughout the area has been heavily modified by human activity over centuries, especially since the Industrial Revolution. Much of the countryside is influenced by recreational use from adjacent urban areas and by intensive agriculture and farm diversification.
- 9.5 The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) area includes several ancient or semi-natural woodlands, which often cloak the deeply cut steep-sided valleys of the Pennine Fringe and are along the River Goyt, which penetrates the built-up area. These are an important part of the green infrastructure which enhances Marple's rural character. More recent planted woodland or natural regeneration (for instance at Ridge Quarry) add variety and diversity.

- 9.6 Our three canals, the River Goyt and its tributaries are of great value for both biodiversity and people. They provide important corridors for movement of plants and animals and account for a large part of our biodiversity. Water quality in the River Goyt is getting better. The Sett to Etherow section improved from 'Poor' in 2009 to 'Moderate' in 2016. It supports a diverse population of fish and invertebrate life and now provides a habitat for birds such as dipper, kingfisher (amber listed), grey wagtail (red listed) and goosander. There are several notable species of fish in the Marple section of the river Goyt including European bullhead, grayling, brown trout and salmon (Environment Agency 2009).
- 9.7 There are no Sites of Special Interest (SSSI) in the NP area – the nearest is Compstall Nature Reserve SSSI. The NP area does have Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) designated locally by Stockport MBC and identified in the CWT report (CWT, 2017).
- 9.8 The Cheshire Wildlife Trust recognises the importance of SBIs but also notes the importance for movement of wildlife of the network of communications – the canals, the river Goyt and its tributary stream valleys, the live railway corridors, and the Middlewood Way. All are Green Infrastructure and together with our countryside and open space within the urban area are part of a network that supports a biodiverse wildlife.
- 9.9 Marple is rich in green infrastructure. Much of this green space is the network of wildlife corridors identified by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust (see map below) in their study of Marple's wildlife. In 2018, the UK Government published a 25 year Environment Plan, which recognises the need for both "connecting people with the environment" and "recovering nature". The Environment Act 2021 sets out that the Government intends to put the environment at the centre of policy making and make sure that we have a cleaner, greener and more resilient country for the next generation. It establishes a legal presumption that development should result in no net loss of biodiversity.
- 9.10 Much of our green infrastructure is coincident with the network of wildlife corridors identified by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust Study².

² CWT 2017: Protecting and Enhancing Marple's Natural Environment.





POLICY NC2: RENEWABLE ENERGY

Development should seek to minimise energy use and maximise energy efficiency. Where practical and possible, development should maximise the proportion of energy used from renewable sources.

- 9.11 Climate Change is the greatest long-term challenge facing the world. Both the UK Government and Stockport Council have declared a Climate Change Emergency³. Marple both contributes to climate change gas emissions and will suffer from climate change. While national and international action is essential, we want to play our part. Marple has many climate change challenges. We are dependent on nearby towns and cities for services and employment, there is a lack of choice and affordability of energy-efficient housing, we have high car dependence and rising energy costs.
- 9.12 Other policies in this plan address many aspects of climate change including the need to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, reduce the impact of traffic, protect the environment, and improve town centre sustainability.
- 9.13 To mitigate emissions that worsen climate change it is essential that buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan Area minimise energy use and maximise energy efficiency and the production and use of renewable energy to meet their needs. This policy will ensure that energy conservation and generation is taken into account in the design of new development.

³ 'An emergency is a situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or environment. Most emergencies require urgent intervention to prevent a worsening of the situation...' (wiki, accessed July 20)

POLICY NC3: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION

Proposals for individual and community scale energy from hydro-electricity, solar photovoltaic panels, local biomass, anaerobic digestions and wood fuel products will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- The siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting; and
- The proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on residential amenity; and
- The proposed development respects features of natural and/or biodiversity importance.

EXPLANATORY

9.14 This policy encourages the development of local energy production.

POLICY NC4: RETROFITTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro-renewables in historic buildings will be supported, including the retrofitting of listed buildings, buildings of solid wall or traditional construction and buildings within conservation areas, subject to development proposals demonstrating that they will conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

EXPLANATORY

9.15 Marple has many historic buildings and these are a particular challenge to make energy-efficient.





Section 10: Community Space (CS) Policies



10. Community Space (CS) Policies

POLICY CS1: OUTSIDE COMMUNITY SPACE

Existing open space, sports and recreational land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the open space or land to be surplus to requirements; or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in an equally or more sustainable location; or the development is for an alternative recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

EXPLANATORY

- 10.1 Many people visit Marple to use the canals, walk, cycle or just to enjoy the countryside. Indoor and outdoor space is an essential part of Marple as a place and as a community and is central to the character of the town. As the average age of people in Marple rises, we must ensure that there are opportunities for well-being, to keep active and fit, and for intellectually stimulating sedentary activities.
- 10.2 Part of the character of Marple is vested in the high proportion of residential properties that have mature gardens with trees and shrubs. There are also a number of informal public green spaces within the built-up part of our area.
- 10.3 This green infrastructure is important to maintain the rural feel to Marple and to provide a connection with both the formal park areas and the views and ambience of the surrounding countryside. These also make a contribution to the health and well-being of residents, including the very young, families and the older residents.
- 10.4 Marple has several formal public or green spaces that are highly valued, including:
- Memorial Park (including Bowling Green and Skateboard Park)
 - Two canals and their towpaths
 - Middlewood Way (which starts almost unannounced at Rose Hill) has a vital historical link to a now disused railway line, and therefore needs the access ways and entrance protected to allow enhancement

- Public Rights of Way
 - Brabyn's Park (Just outside our area but within easy access)
 - Allotments
 - Sports fields: cricket, football, golf, tennis and rugby clubs.
- 10.5 These provide a wide range of activities that encourage health and well-being. We have identified significant potential to develop their value for residents and visitors including the need for better waymarking. These are explored further in the Heritage and Tourism section.
- 10.6 There are two allotment sites in the Plan area which are both registered as Assets of Community Value. They comprise 91 separate plots and there are about 77 members of the Allotment Society. The waiting list is normally around 20 plots. The Allotment Society also maintains a plot in the public Marple Memorial Park.
- 10.7 The Allotments provide a valuable source of recreation and healthy living which is vitally important in the Plan area, particularly given the demographic. It also is a productive activity which goes beyond a benefit for those active. It provides a cheap alternative to those with a small or no garden; it should not be seen an enclave for ageing retired people. It is important that the allotment sites are protected from development.
- 10.8 Allotments are also protected to some degree by national planning policies and it was determined that the current regulations afford adequate protection (The Allotments Act 1925).
- 10.9 The Stockport Open Space Study suggests some additional allotments are needed. If there was any valid reason, justifiable under exceptional circumstances, to allocate the existing Allotment sites for other uses, it would be essential that a site of equivalent size and accessibility was provided. Such a site would need to have a water supply also, and be on land suitable for cultivation.



POLICY CS2: INDOOR COMMUNITY SPACE

Development resulting in the loss of indoor community space will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer any need for the space; or, further to at least 12 months active and open marketing, the community space is shown not to be economically viable; or the proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation or replacement of an equivalent or improved community space in an equally accessible location elsewhere.

The development of new indoor community space will be supported.

EXPLANATORY

- 10.10 Many groups need indoor space either for meetings or activities. The varied buildings currently available are listed in a background paper (Community Space group, 2017). These groups range from church organisations, Scouts and Guides, interest groups through to mother and baby groups, fitness and well-being activities and family gatherings. The cohesion these groups give to the community is important and is also part of the character of the community and the town.
- 10.11 Indoor spaces are scattered across Marple and are of variable quality. We have insufficient indoor community facilities of the right size and quality and demand for space often exceeds supply (Francis, 2017). There is a concentration of community space buildings in the Memorial Park area, but this is provided in a range of separate buildings of varying quality, some of which are underused. We also have the Carver amateur theatre, a much-loved independent cinema, cricket, football and golf clubs.
- 10.12 There is also an indoor climbing wall and squash club, but otherwise indoor sport and gym activities are poorly provided for.
- 10.13 Sporting facilities exist at Marple Hall and at Cheadle and Marple College. These may be underused outside school hours and should be made more available for residents. Stockport MBC has carried out a study into Indoor Sports Facilities (FMG Consulting, 2017).

- 10.14 This plan also recognises that a number of Public Houses provide meeting rooms which groups can use either for meetings or for activities such as music, education and so on.



- 10.15 While there are some limitations on these facilities they help to encourage community engagement. Some are protected under the Localities Act, so planning decisions need to be mindful where this applies. We encourage the valid use of Assets of Community Value (ACVs) from the Localities Act to protect facilities.
- 10.16 Where housing, retail or other developments create additional pressures on open space, then they must contribute to the improvement of existing space.
- 10.17 Marple indoor swimming pool has now been closed due to structural problems. This 80-year old pool was inevitably going to come to the end of its serviceable life. It was highly valued and was a vital facility for health and well-being as well as the opportunity for children to learn to swim either via lessons or their school, many of which visited the pool.
- 10.18 The plans for building a new pool are under consultation at the time of this Plan and should be reviewed within the plan context and policies, once a decision has been made. The Plan would want to see a new/replacement facility in the Town.
- 10.19 Our research (Francis, 2017) shows that Marple needs more indoor community space that is fit for purpose. It suggests that the quality and location of existing space is not always ideal – for instance the need to keep the population active and healthy through exercise classes and gyms requires high-quality spaces.

- 10.20 As well as protecting current overall provision, social and community facilities need to be in appropriate buildings that meet the needs of the people who use them, and which allow modern models of service provision.
- 10.21 This may include several different social and community facilities in a single place or flexible community floorspace available to a range of organisations. There is currently a low level of both public and private gym provision in Marple.

POLICY CS3: CANAL TOWPATHS

Development must respect the character and appearance of canals and their towpaths.

EXPLANATORY

- 10.22 Canals are a vital part of the history, heritage, tourism and recreational space for Marple's community.



© Canal & River Trust Charity no. 1146792

- 10.23 The towpaths are a valued and significant part of the outdoor community space, used not only for recreation and exercise by walkers, cyclists and other users, but also as access across parts of Marple, reducing use of vehicular transport.

ASPIRATION: MEMORIAL PARK CIVIC AREA

The aspiration is to develop a modern, high quality community and leisure facility (including a new swimming pool) based on the re-development of the existing buildings in the Memorial Park. There is an opportunity to bring together existing activities in a new building based on the library and Old Town Hall that would provide a high quality, efficient, more cost-effective solution.





Section 11:
Heritage & Tourism (HT) Policies



11. Heritage & Tourism (HT) Policies

POLICY HT1: BUILT HERITAGE

Marple's heritage assets must be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

EXPLANATORY

- 11.1 Our history as a mill and canal town has left a rich built heritage. The links with 18th century entrepreneurs places Marple in the centre of the industrial revolution in the area. In its day, the Mellor Mill, just outside the Plan area, was the largest water powered mill in Europe. The canals, with their confluence here, the associated industrial activity around the lime kilns and the unique flight of 16 locks and historic viaduct, link Marple with key elements of industrial development as well as the population it brought. The canals were followed by railway development and Marple retains two train stations and features of what the railways brought to the area, including a more affluent population escaping from Central Manchester. This had a striking influence on housing development and design.
- 11.2 Many people moved to or stay in Marple because of its history, rural character and easy access to the countryside. Our heritage and countryside make a major contribution to community health and welfare.
- 11.3 Our natural and built heritage attracts locals, visitors and tourists who come to walk, boat, cycle, ride horses, canoe/kayak and enjoy other activities. They explore our landscape, canal network and buildings such as those connected with the Oldknow legacy. They use local facilities such as shops and cafes and put money into the local economy.
- 11.4 Natural and built heritage needs to be conserved. The ravages of time and weather, the effect of traffic and insensitive development can erode the built environment. Urbanisation

of the countryside, agricultural operations and changes, and insensitive management and development can threaten the natural environment.

- 11.5 We have used the Stockport Historic Environment Database (SHED), and Magic Map to identify designated heritage and natural assets. We commissioned a report from the Cheshire Wildlife Trust (CWT, 2017) to review biodiversity and wildlife designations in Marple.



- 11.6 Our vision is that our unique mix of natural and built heritage should be conserved, managed, enhanced and interpreted so that those people who live, work or visit Marple can enjoy and use it. We want to leave our heritage in a better condition for future generations and feel that there is considerable potential to attract more tourists to bring employment and income to Marple.
- 11.7 Before the present system of roads, railways and canals, Marple was a scattering of dwellings at the edge of the Pennine fringe with Norbury Smithy the focal point of east-west travel.
- 11.8 The importance and character of our built infrastructure is recognised in the four designated Conservation areas: two associated with the canals, one with All Saints Church and Church Lane and much of Station Road, which embody the building associated with the coming of the railway age.

Together these structures and their environment give Marple its unique and special character.

- 11.9 The future of Goyt Mill (part of a Conservation Area and locally listed but not a listed building⁴) is uncertain. Any development will need careful consideration if the building itself and its context are to be preserved.
- 11.10 Existing national and local planning guidance provides significant protection to our listed buildings and Conservation Areas. Local listings also give protection to a lesser degree.
- 11.11 However, Conservation Area appraisals become out of date, appreciation of and the value placed on buildings from different eras changes, and new discoveries are made.

ASPIRATION: NEW CONSERVATION AREAS

While our industrial buildings, and particularly Samuel Oldknow's heritage and the canals are well recognised, we feel that the Victorian and Edwardian heritage of Marple is undervalued currently.

The attractive and well-preserved Victorian and Edwardian buildings in the lower part of Church Lane and the town centre around Market Street should have better protection.

⁴ Not on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) but listed on [Stockport Historic Environment Database](#).

POLICY HT2: ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Development proposals affecting a known or reasonably suspected archaeological site should be supported by a desk-based assessment and where necessary, a field evaluation.

EXPLANATORY

- 11.12 Samuel Oldknow as entrepreneur, farmer and industrialist was one of the principal drivers of development. His inheritance has had lasting importance for Marple including the Aqueduct and the Lime Kilns.



- 11.13 Mellor Mill is an important and recently investigated archaeological site that is just outside the plan area. Together with development following the building of the railways and improved roads over some two centuries this has given Marple both a coherence of character and the potential for a successful (although niche) destination for tourism with the Oldknow legacy and especially the canals and their infrastructure.
- 11.14 Recent initiatives to conserve and interpret include 'Revealing Oldknow's Legacy'. This is a joint project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and being delivered in partnership by Canal & River Trust and Mellor Archaeological Trust focused on Mellor Mill and the Peak Forest Canal.
- 11.15 In addition to the standing buildings, Marple contains known and potential buried archaeological sites. Excavations such as

on Oldknow's Lime Kiln tramway as part of the Revealing Oldknow's Legacy project has demonstrated the potential for surviving buried remains associated with the industrialisation of Marple, and which expand the story told by the standing building resource.

- 11.16 With activity in Marple represented by standing buildings dating from the 17th century, there is high potential for archaeological material associated with past human activity from at least this period.
- 11.17 In line with Stockport Local Heritage Policies, we recognise the importance of designated and non-designated archaeological sites to understanding the story of Marple. We support the protection, enhancement, promotion of archaeological sites and their settings. Marple contains many known archaeological sites and recent excavations have expanded our knowledge, but it is likely that some significant sites are under-recorded or currently unknown.



POLICY HT3: TOURISM

Facilities that encourage local people and tourists to visit and stay to enjoy our built and natural environment including accommodation will be supported subject to their location supporting active movement and not resulting in harm to highway safety.

The following types of development and locations are considered especially suitable for development of tourist facilities:

- Marple Heritage Centre/Museum – Memorial Park
- Rose Hill Station area – provision of bike hire, café and information centre
- Marple Station – café, community facilities, welcome and interpretation centre
- Goyt Mill – canal-based activities, cafes, indoor climbing and other recreation
- Top Lock Marina/Forces Club – canal and boat repair facilities.

EXPLANATORY

11.18 The wealth of natural and built heritage makes Marple an attractive place to be a 'tourist' whether you live here or are visiting.

We have little visitor accommodation and Roman Lakes is one of a few formal tourist facilities. There is no visitor centre (although a small information point exists at Top Locks and the Library has a few leaflets available).



11.19 Visitor signage could be improved. More tourists and casual visitors encouraged by better facilities, promotion and marketing could make a significant contribution to local shops and might offer other business opportunities such as

provision of accommodation and a greater range of restaurants. While we welcome everyone, if we can encourage people to use public transport or to walk or cycle, then this will reduce pressure on our roads and parking.

11.20 An abundance of smaller historical artefacts is held locally, but almost none are on display or accessible due to a lack of suitable facilities. Marple needs a heritage centre or museum and the development of community facilities.

11.21 A wide range of tourist activity already takes place in the natural environment:

- Walking – mainly day walks, but Marple is also on the Goyt Way and Midshires Way
- Boating – cruising on the Cheshire Ring, day trips, importance as a stop-over and boat servicing point.
- Cycling – on-road, Middlewood Way, Canal towpath, and network of off-road tracks
- Horse riding – on the extensive and linked bridleway network
- Canoe/kayaking – the canal, Roman lakes and River Goyt, home of Manchester Canoe Club.

ASPIRATION: THE FUTURE OF GOYT MILL

It is vital to retain Goyt Mill as a cherished heritage asset and as a protected employment area, since it is home to various small businesses. It must have a long term viable use that can generate resources for its maintenance. The mill is a unique opportunity for a mixed development of business, housing and leisure – a model that has been created successfully in various examples of mill preservation and regeneration. Any plans will be led by the Mill's owners with the involvement of other key community stakeholders.



Section 12: Business & Employment (BE) Policies



12. Business and Employment (BE) Policies

POLICY BE1: RETENTION OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT LAND

Development that would result in the reduction of existing employment land will not be supported unless the site has been openly and actively marketed for at least 18 months and there is no prospect of viable employment use.

EXPLANATORY

- 12.1 We have a wide range of public and private sector employers concentrated in retail, services, tourism, education and creative industries. These provide local employment; the businesses and employees spend money directly in Marple, and they improve the quality of life for residents.
- 12.2 Marple has no large employers. However, homeworking, creative industries, leisure and tourism and small service companies are significant employers and are set to grow.
- 12.3 Our aim is to maintain and encourage the diverse range of existing employment and create more jobs where this does not affect the character of our town. We have not allocated new employment sites but do want to protect existing locations.



POLICY BE2: NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

Development supporting the creation of new microbusinesses, for example, the development of Class E serviced office accommodation, will be supported where such development respects local character and residential amenity and does not harm highway safety.

EXPLANATORY

- 12.4 Marple is attractive to wealth and job creators, with strong potential for additional jobs in creative and high technology areas. We have the potential to become a hot spot of future industries that will drive economic growth across Stockport. These microbusinesses (fewer than ten employees and a turnover less than €2 million⁵) often start at home and grow into managed office space and it is hard to anticipate requirements. However, it is important that the planning system is flexible and encourages rather than stifles growth.
- 12.5 The Stockport Economic Development Strategy 2012-7 highlights that the:
- Good-quality housing stock helps to draw talented wealth creators into the area, creating opportunities for business creation and stimulating the local economy
 - Visitor appeal of Marple, Bramhall and Cheadle as attractive, safe places with independent shops and eateries
 - Success of these centres is central to Stockport's appeal as a place to live and work

⁵ Recommendation 2003/361/EC

- High value occupations like managers, senior officials, associate professional and technical occupations will see a high level of growth.



- 12.6 Economic development (and social and environmental development which are equally important) relies on dynamic individuals and networks that add overall to the wealth of society.
- 12.7 These people may not be conventionally wealthy, but they do seek a good quality of life with appropriate housing (such as good quality flats for young professionals), a high-quality public realm and facilities such as places to meet, socialise and recreate that meet their aspirations. Marple is well-placed to take advantage, although the quality of the urban realm, housing balance and communications could all be improved.
- 12.8 Goyt Mill is in a Conservation Area on a prominent location next to the Macclesfield Canal. It is the last mill in a town that was once dominated by mills and is both beautiful and historic. It has a concentration of small businesses, attracted by relatively low rents and the varied and large spaces available. These offer a wide range of employment and services ranging from cycle restoration through a climbing wall to a printing firm. The Mill needs renovation; without investment in the fabric, the long-term future is uncertain.

- 12.9 Marple is currently a significant net exporter of labour. According to the 2011 Census, 4,452 residents of the Neighbourhood Plan area work elsewhere and 2,532 commute into the area. A further 1,536 both live and work in Marple.
- 12.10 The current imbalance contributes to congestion on the road network and crowding on public transport and reduces the quality of life for people who are forced to commute.
- 12.11 A loss of employment in Marple would further worsen transport conditions. It would also reduce daytime activity in the town, affect shops and increase the age imbalance. An increase in employment would support the retail sector and reduce transport congestion.

ASPIRATION: SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS

The importance of local businesses has seldom been more visible than in the coronavirus pandemic of 2020/1. Although many businesses were unable to trade during lockdown periods, the value of local amenities was heightened, as communities came together to support each other and our local businesses formed a critical core in the supply and delivery of essentials.

The future presents a wonderful opportunity to build on this as we prepare to live with the ongoing consequences of the pandemic. We can develop local employment together with local shops and facilities that would be mutually supportive, reduce the need and demand for commuting into and out of Marple and lead to sustainable growth and environmental benefits.



Section 13: What Next? Monitoring & Review



13. What Next?

Monitoring & Review

- 13.1 This is an ambitious plan. So, who will make it happen, and how will we know that we are achieving our aims? Marple does not have a Town or Parish Council, but it does have a Neighbourhood Forum that prepared this plan, and there is also the Marple Area Committee which brings together the six Stockport Borough Councillors who represent the Greater Marple area.
- 13.2 Additionally, Marple has a well-represented Civic Society that regularly reviews planning applications related to the town.
- 13.3 Approved NP policies are part of the statutory development plan and will be used by the local planning authority to help to determine planning applications, but we also see it as a plan to stimulate action and activity. It should guide the Council's and other investment plans, particularly for highways where we have set out a clear vision of what the community needs.
- 13.4 The Neighbourhood Forum will monitor the plan in association with Marple Area Committee and in partnership with interested organisations in our community. We intend that every policy and aspiration should have 'Champions' from the community. Each year Marple Neighbourhood Forum will convene to consider how the policies and aspirations are progressing and we will publish the results of this deliberation.
- 13.5 Some initiatives (for instance at Marple Station) already have champions, but we will need to find champions for others.
- 13.6 It is the intention that the plan should be reviewed after five years to ensure that it is still relevant and meets the needs of our community.



Section 14: Glossary & Abbreviations



14. Glossary & Abbreviations

- EA – Environment Agency
- NE – Natural England
- NP – Neighbourhood Plan
- GMCA – Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- GMSF – Greater Manchester Spatial Framework
- SMBC – Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- TfGM – Transport for Greater Manchester
- MVP – Marple Vision Partnership
- SEMMMS – South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy
- MNP – Marple Neighbourhood Plan

ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE:

Land or buildings listed by Stockport Council under the Localism Act 2011 as furthering the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. This provides some protection for the land/building and its uses.

CONSERVATION (FOR HERITAGE POLICY):

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET:

A Scheduled (Ancient) Monument, Listed Building, Registered Park and Garden, or Conservation Area.

DECLUTTER:

To remove unnecessary signs, railings, advertising and other items to make streets tidier and less confusing for motorists and pedestrians.

ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS:

These link sites of biodiversity importance and provide corridors for animals and plants to move along.

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

The benefits people obtain from ecosystems such as, food, water, flood and disease control and recreation.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

A formal procedure to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

GREATER MARPLE:

The area that includes High Lane, Marple Bridge, Mellor and Compstall.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE:

A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which can deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

HERITAGE ASSET:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets including formal listing, Conservation Areas and local lists.

MICROBUSINESS:

Businesses with fewer than ten employees and a turnover or balance sheet of less than €2 million (EU definition).

PLACEMAKING:

A multi-faceted and multi-disciplined approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces identified and used by people for a specific purpose - it encompasses any space between buildings including people activity and movement, and traffic management.

SIGNIFICANCE (FOR HERITAGE POLICY):

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives from a heritage asset's physical presence, and from its setting.

SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SCHEME (SUDS):

Natural approach to managing drainage in and around properties and other developments. SUDS work by slowing and holding back the water that runs off from a site, allowing natural processes to break down pollutants.

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR:

Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.





Section 15: Bibliography



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