

# AUDLEM

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### 2015 – 2030



**Final Version**

**February 2016**

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## 1 FOREWORD

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

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

All Neighbourhood Plans must:

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

In addition to its value as a material consideration in planning-decision making, a Neighbourhood Plan can also help the Parish Council decide priorities for the village and give guidance when making decisions on behalf of the village.

In producing a Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council would have to:

- demonstrate extensive consultation and community engagement to ensure that residents' views about how they want the village to develop are fully reflected in the submitted Neighbourhood Plan;
- identify and take account of the settlement's history, features, environment and demographics;
- take into account the impact of recent planning decisions.

At the time of submission of this Neighbourhood Plan, Cheshire East Council's Cabinet has approved their revised Local Plan<sup>1</sup>. Areas that have been adjusted do not appear to immediately impact the general strategy of the draft Local Plan as it affects the Local Service Centres (LSC) of which Audlem is one, except in that it increases the overall 2010 – 2030 housing requirement from 27000 to 36000, with a consequent knock-on effect for the LSCs. Further detail is provided in Section 4.3.1.

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<sup>1</sup> Cheshire East Council Cabinet Agenda 21st July 2015, page 63

## 2 BACKGROUND/SETTING THE SCENE

### 2.1 History<sup>2</sup>

Audlem, a Civil Parish of 2,348 acres with a current population of 1990, is located at the southernmost edge of Cheshire East unitary authority. The village stands at the intersection of the roads from Nantwich (Cheshire) to Market Drayton (Shropshire) and Newcastle-under-Lyme (Staffordshire) to Whitchurch (Shropshire). The Shropshire border lies close by, just over a mile to the south of the village centre on the Market Drayton road (A529) and about 3 miles to the east on the road to Woore and Newcastle (A525). The parish includes the compact and attractive hamlet of Coxbank situated about one mile to the south between the canal and A529.



Audlem and its Environs

The oldest part of the village is the core at the “T” intersection of the two main roads and is dominated attractively by the ancient sandstone Church of St James built on top of a walled mound. The village is bounded on the west by the River Weaver, which flows north through fine open countryside to Nantwich.

The Domesday Book (1086) entry for Audlem (“Aldelyme”) refers only to fields, woodland, agriculture and hunting. However, by the late 13th century the church had been founded and Audlem’s market charter was granted by Edward I in 1296. It seems certain that Audlem has been a significant centre of population since at least that time. The only visible medieval building is that part of the church dated from the 14th to the 16th centuries. Buildings of the 17th century are prominently represented by Moss Hall (1616), on the north side of the village close to the canal, and the Old Grammar School (1647-55), off Vicarage Lane near the brook.

A pleasing and characterful range of buildings, with facades of the 18th to 20th centuries, line the streets radiating from the centre. They include shops, public houses and dwellings, some converted from former shops and pubs. The Buttermarket alongside the church was built (or refurbished) in

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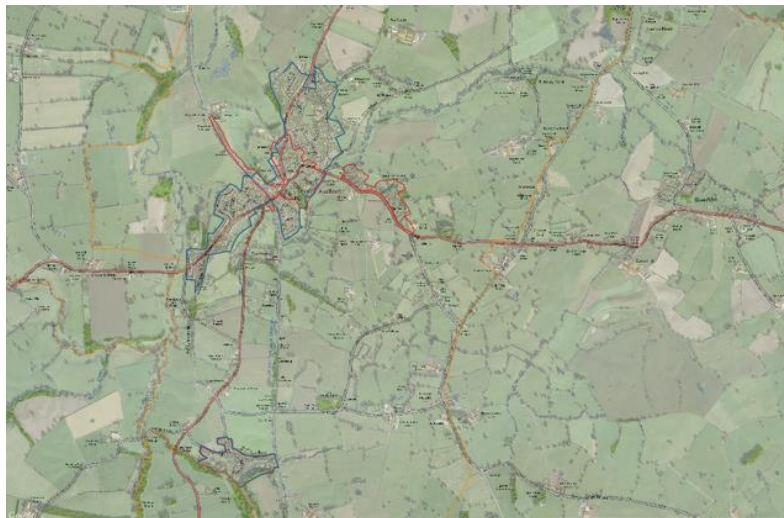
<sup>2</sup> Audlem Parish Plan 2005: Appendix 8.3

1733. The village extends about half a mile to the north, east and west along the main access roads. Some new housing estates, built mainly in the 1970s, have added considerably to the population and have markedly changed the appearance of many parts of the village.

The Birmingham and Liverpool Canal was constructed between 1827 and 1835, and the Nantwich and Market Drayton Railway in 1863. The railway was never an economic success and Audlem Station was finally closed in 1964. Only slight traces of the line now remain on the west side of the village. However the canal, now known as the Shropshire Union, has given the village a very beneficial legacy in terms of the leisure boating industry, which in recent years has brought tens of thousands of visitors through the village each year. The flight of 15 locks in a mile and a half raises the canal 93ft in the Shropshire direction. With its attractive wharf and well-kept towpath, it is also a magnet for walkers and casual visitors.

## 2.2 Settlement Features And Environment

Audlem has developed very gradually over the centuries and residents are keen to ensure that a measured pace of growth continues so that village services and infrastructure can keep up with demand. St James' Church dominates the historic village centre and further information on the history of the village can be found below. Audlem clearly developed along the main roads to adjacent settlements – Stafford Street, Cheshire Street and Shropshire Street, their adjoining lanes and the canal wharf are mainly protected as a Conservation Area. There are a number of listed buildings including the Buttermarket (located below the Church) the Old Grammar School (now Audlem Country Nursing Home) and the Lock Keeper's Cottage.<sup>3</sup>



Conservation Areas

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<sup>3</sup> Village Design Statement 2009 rev 2011: Appendix 8.3

In the eastern part of Audlem just north of the Woore road, the small and distinctive group of older houses known as Salford that includes the attractive Baptist Chapel (1840,) is designated a Conservation area, with a third Conservation area to the south in the small hamlet of Coxbank<sup>4</sup>.

Since the 1970s a number of modern estates have been built. Most of these are of relatively low density, characterised by broad streets and good size gardens. Whilst the architecture is bland, with few design options, these areas have now matured and provide pleasant, uncrowded living accommodation for many residents. More recently the sites of the Crown Hotel and the Lamb Hotel have been developed into higher density housing, Crown Mews being a particularly attractive feature hidden behind a gate in the village centre. Additional higher density housing has been built in Cotton Mews and it is clear that there are significant parking issues for residents due to lack of parking provision by the developers.



Grammar School Care Home (left) and Crown Mews

### 3 THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OF THE PARISH

#### 3.1 Overview<sup>5</sup>

All land outside the settlement boundaries of the main village, Salford and Coxbank is classified by the planning authority as “Open Countryside”, and was afforded some protection from non-agricultural development under Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council Policy (CNBC) NE.2. In the cases of Salford and Coxbank the Conservation area boundaries serve as settlement boundaries. About 90 per cent of the parish’s 2,348 acres is in this category (Open Countryside) but only about 10 per cent of the dwellings are outside settlement boundaries.

In terms of landscape, the enlarged Audlem area (all land south of Wybunbury) is classified as “Lower Farms and Woods – LFW4”. The key characteristics of LFW are gently rolling topography, prominent hedgerow boundaries with standard trees, a mix of cattle and arable fields and horse paddocks, some woodland, a medium settlement density and large numbers of (small) bodies of water.

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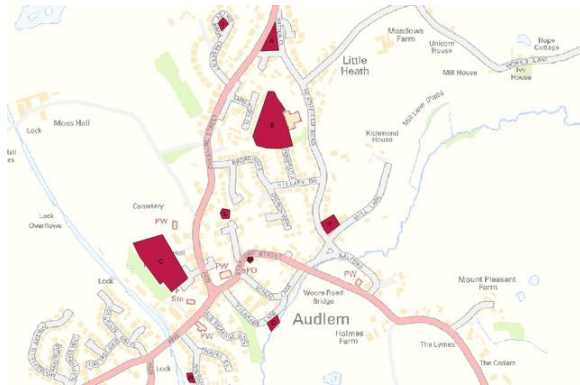
<sup>4</sup> Conservation area documentation: Appendix 8.3

<sup>5</sup> Village Design Statement 2009 rev 2011: Appendix 8.3



Little Heath open space

The policy notes: “around Audlem the topography is more undulating, with tree-lined streams and field drains, small woodlands and copses. This area appears more verdant and enclosed, with a smaller scale.” We would add that the variety of landscapes, changing from north to south, and east to west, is also an appealing feature.



Green Spaces in and around Audlem

The Village Design statement subdivided the Parish landscape into three types:

- Type A: Gently undulating farmland with fields in a wide range of sizes, usually enclosed by hedges including mature trees.
- Type B: Stream and river valleys with steeper gradients and a greater density of trees. The rivers and streams concerned are principally the Weaver, Duckow, Audlem Brook and Coxbank Brook.
- Type C: The canal corridor artificially embanked above or cut through the adjoining land.



Substantial remains of medieval town fields are to be found south of the A525 and extend up to half a mile from the village centre (County Historic Environment Record). The Tithe Map of 1840 is also a valuable record of the parish's field system, some of which has changed little in over 170 years.

Hedgerows removed since that time can sometimes be discerned by the presence of a line of mature trees in an otherwise open field. Many old hedgerows, however, are species-rich and important for wildlife. Maps and aerial photographs show that the mature trees are confined very largely to hedgerows, along stream and river valleys, and the canal. Plantations and field copses are scarce. However, Tree Preservation Orders are in place to protect older or more 'valuable' specimens.

### **3.2 Geology**

Our land consists mainly of glacial deposits of clay, sand and gravel, and the glacial sequence is well exposed in the Duckow and Weaver valleys. Along the southwest parish boundary (Coxbank Brook and River Duckow) there is some exposure of Triassic rocks and Jurassic mudstones containing fossils.

Around Kinsey Heath and to the east of Audlem the glacial deposits are flat lying and produce a gently rolling surface. The Upper and Lower boulder clays are dark grey in colour, weathering to brown, and separated by the Middle Sand. The sandy nature of the deposits is indicated by the name Sandy Lane, and well displayed in the nearby Holmes Bank, just south of the village centre.

### **3.3 Land Quality**

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) provides a method for assessing the quality (productiveness) of farmland to enable informed choices to be made about its future use within the planning system. It helps to underpin the principles of sustainable development. The ALC classifies land into 5 grades, with Grade 3 subdivided into 3a and 3b.

The data for Audlem parish lacks detail and the only available map indicates a mix of Grade 2 (very good) and Grade 3 (good to moderate). The work to subdivide Grade 3 in this area has apparently not been done. CNBC NE.12 contains a presumption that Grades 1, 2 and 3a will not be permitted to be developed for non-agricultural uses unless there are specified overriding considerations.

### **3.4 The Importance of Open Countryside for the Parish<sup>6</sup>**

The relatively unspoiled open countryside of the parish is important for the following reasons:

- The good network of public footpaths and quiet lanes (extending some 16 miles within the parish boundaries and with links much further afield) provide a much appreciated amenity for residents and our many visitors. There are also fine viewpoints from higher ground. Cyclists, walkers and boaters make an important contribution to the local economy by using the shops, cafes and pubs. Audlem has established an attractive reputation in this respect;

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<sup>6</sup> VDS Village Design Statement 2009 rev 2011: Appendix 8.3

- Though the contribution of farming to the local economy and employment has decreased in recent decades, the continuation of farming is essential if the attractive and historic character of the landscape is to be preserved. Food security issues may also, before long, dictate the retention of farmland rather than its use for building;
- The identity of Audlem and its individuality would be diminished if green land separating it from the adjoining settlements were to be built over. The gaps are now quite small between Audlem and Buerton to the east. Note - the gap between Hankelow to the north and Audlem will be significantly eroded following the granting of planning permission for 120 houses at Little Heath.



Audlem and its neighbouring Parishes

### 3.5 Demographics

For a hundred years from the middle of the nineteenth century the population was more or less static at around 1300 to 1500 residents. Unless otherwise stated, all of the data referred to in this section is taken from Community profile for Audlem (Parish), ACRE, OCSI 2013 and relates to the 2011 census<sup>7</sup>.

Population	Number of households	Children under 16	Working age adults <sup>8</sup>	People over 65
1,990	865	295	1095	600
48.2% male 51.8% female		14.8% (England average = 18.9%)	55.1% (England average = 64.7%)	30.1% (England average = 16.3%)

<sup>7</sup> Appendix 8.3

<sup>8</sup> ACRE definition covers age range 16 - 64

Lone parent families with children	Single pensioner households	People from Black or Minority ethnic groups	People born outside the UK	Dependency Ratio <sup>9</sup>
130	145	55	65	0.81
16.3% of all families with dependent children (England average = 24.5%)	16.5% of households (England average = 12.4%)	2.8% (England average = 20.2%)	3.5% (England average = 13.8%)	(England average = 0.55)

Audlem's residents are 'as well as can be expected' in that 12.3% of 16-65 year olds have a limiting long-term illness against the 12.8% English average. However, that changes when the older residents are taken into consideration. Then 22.8% of the total Audlem population suffer from a limiting long-term illness against a Cheshire East and England average of 17.5%. Clearly this has an impact on demand at the Audlem Medical Practice, which already has on its list over 2000 patients to each (FTE) GP. It should be borne in mind that there are two Nursing Homes in the village – Corbrook Court, which incorporates a separate dementia unit (Cedar Court) and Audlem Country Nursing Home – which may influence the post-65 data.

### 3.5.1 Housing

As the table below demonstrates, there is a high proportion of detached, larger properties in Audlem. The Housing Questionnaire has confirmed that residents believe there is sufficient detached, 4-5 bedroom housing supply and that future requirements are for 1-2 bedroom bungalows and terraced houses, 2-3 bedroom semi-detached houses and 3 bedroom detached houses.

Detached	Semi-detached	Terrace	Flats (purpose built)	Flats (other)	Caravan or other temporary accommodation
536	233	83	38	35	7
58.1% of dwellings (England average = 22.3%)	25.3% of dwellings (England average = 30.7%)	9% of dwellings (England average = 24.5%)	4.1% of dwellings (England average = 16.7%)	2.7% of dwellings (England average = 5.4%)	0.8% of dwellings (England average = 0.4%)

<sup>9</sup> Dependency ratio is the ratio of non-working age to working age population.

### 3.5.2 Housing Tenure

Housing that is owner-occupied	Housing that is social rented	Housing that is private rented	Other rented accommodation
702	55	75	35
81.0% of households (England average = 64.1%)	6.3% of households (England average = 17.7%)	8.7% of households (England average = 15.4%)	4.0% of households (England average = 2.8%)

### 3.5.3 Housing Affordability

Affordability ratio (median house prices as ratio of median incomes)	Dwellings in Council Tax Band A	Dwellings in Council Tax Band B	Dwellings in Council Tax Band C
18.0	28	58	116
(England average = 15.4)	3.3% of dwellings (England average = 24.8%)	6.8% of dwellings (England average = 19.6%)	13.7% of dwellings (England average = 21.8%)
Median house price: Detached houses	Median house price: Semi-detached houses	Median house price: Terraced houses	Median house price: Flats
£340,000	£237,500	£270,000	£120,000
England average = £320,268	England average = £211,043	England average = £174,653	England average = £131,110

The January 2015 Audlem Housing Questionnaire asked the following question: “In your opinion, what percentage of full-market value does 'affordable' mean?”

Information gathered<sup>10</sup> suggests that the average price of a property in Audlem is about £270,000. The Government’s guideline is 80% of market value in the local area. Assessing housing need is a complex issue and takes into consideration many factors. Based simply on the responses collated from the 2015 Housing Questionnaire, Audlem residents believe that the average affordable cost should be 63.1% (£170,370).

% of average price	No of responses
80% (£216,000)	18.5%
70% (£189,000)	23.9%
60% (£162,000)	28.5%
50% (£135,000)	29.3%

<sup>10</sup> Zoopla 2015: Appendix 8.3

### 3.5.4 Disadvantaged Households

Only 6% of housing in the village is vacant, although this is higher than the England average of 4.3%. Only 24 households (2.8%) are deemed to be living in overcrowded conditions against an England average of 8.7% of households. A relatively low number of 18 households are still without central heating yet 11.9% of Audlem households are considered to be in 'fuel poverty' compared with an England average of 10.9%. The fact that there is no mains gas supply to the village may have an impact on these statistics, as oil has traditionally been a higher price fuel.

### 3.5.5 Environment

Residents of Audlem are fortunate to live in a comparatively unpolluted area of the UK, with a low population density per hectare and no residents living in Living Environment 'deprivation hotspots'<sup>11</sup>.

### 3.5.6 Employment

Audlem is a relatively prosperous and well-educated village with 37.7% of those aged 16-65 having degree level education or equivalent against the 27.4% England average. Of those in employment 29% work in the public sector and 16% are self-employed. The main employment sectors are retail, education and health & social work.

In August 2012 only 43 residents were receiving 'out of work' benefits. Only 16 children were living in 'out of work' households at the time of the 2011 census (4.8% of the population against 19.2% English average). However, for those struggling to find employment, the nearest Job Centre is 19km away, whereas the national average distance is only 4.6km. There is no direct bus service to Crewe, the nearest large centre of employment, nor to any of the major employment centres such as Manchester, Stoke-on-Trent, Chester or Shrewsbury<sup>12</sup>.

### 3.5.7 Transport

As stated in 3.5.6, the poor public transport system from the village is highlighted in the 2015 Housing questionnaire and also by our younger residents (Brine Leas Survey 16 Sept 2014). The figures below show that the majority of homes have two or more cars available, which possibly reflects the poor public transport infrastructure and the most common types of employment engaged in by Audlem residents.

No cars	One car	Two cars	Three cars	Four+ cars
80	345	335	80	30
9.1% of 870 households (England average = 25.8%)	39.9% of 870 households (England average = 42.2%)	38.5% of 870 households (England average = 24.7%)	9.2% of 870 households (England average = 5.5%)	3.2% of 870 households (England average = 1.9%)

<sup>11</sup> Community profile for Audlem (Parish), ACRE, OCSI 2013: Appendix 8.3

<sup>12</sup> Other than a single, non-peak-period service to Hanley of one bus in each direction on Fridays only

Statistics from the 2011 Census report show a high percentage of people working from home, with relatively few working within 2km of their home and almost 10% of the population travelling more than 40km to reach their place of employment. The average distance to travel to work is 18.37 km.

The rural location of the village with its lack of local employment and inadequate public transport is reflected in the data below:

<b>Average travel time to nearest town centre by public transport/walking</b>	<b>People travelling to work by public transport</b>
43 minutes	20
County average 19 minutes	1.5% (England average =11%)

Audlem’s population is primarily served by hospitals at Leighton (Crewe) and North Staffordshire (Stoke), neither of which can be easily reached by public transport and this is a source of concern to our more elderly residents who may no longer be fit enough to drive. This is one of the many infrastructure issues raised by residents in the January 2015 questionnaire and are addressed in Section 6.6.2, Community Infrastructure Levy.

## 4 AUDLEM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### 4.1 Purpose

The purpose of the ANP is to set out clearly:

- what residents see as their 'Vision' for Audlem in the future;
- policies that will be used to help determine future planning applications in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 17. It is intended that the policies will provide a guide to the type and design of development that is in keeping with our Parish and reflect the way residents wish their village to evolve in a sustainable, well-managed manner;
- proposals for how the Community Infrastructure Levy, Audlem Medical Trust, and the existing S106 regime should be incorporated to help mitigate against the impact of future development on village services.

#### 4.1.1 Sustainable Growth

It should be noted that the Plan covers the period 2010 - 2030. Sustainable development is seen as a positive requirement for Audlem to grow and prosper. To this extent, planning approvals in the early part of 2015 will meet this need. Proposed developments at Little Heath (120 dwellings) and Heathfield Road (26 dwellings) mean that any further allocation of potential sites is unnecessary at this time (see Section 0). Should neither of these proposed developments come to fruition, the Plan will be reviewed.

For this reason, no site allocation process was carried out. Audlem Parish Council will work with CEC during the next stage of their Local Plan that will include LSCs.

This strategy is consistent with CEC's revision of its Local Plan. As recently stated by Michael Jones, Leader of the Council, "new plan policies will be reviewed to increase development on brownfield and infill". This also conforms to proposed changes to planning legislation currently proposed by the Government.

### 4.2 The Process

The Audlem Neighbourhood Plan was produced by the Parish Council and members of the community following an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting in July 2014. Residents were given information on Neighbourhood Planning and asked if they wished to take this opportunity to plan proactively for the challenges of the future. There was unanimous agreement to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan so the community could ensure gradual, sustainable development to allow the local infrastructure to keep pace with the additional demands more housing will create.

Over the next few months the Parish Council set about investigating what was required to produce a robust, evidence-based Neighbourhood Plan. Newsletters and the local website (AudlemOnline) were used to publicise the process and a request was made for volunteers from the community to participate in the exercise. In September the Parish Council delegated responsibility to a group of 30 volunteers from whom a Steering Committee of 11 (8 residents and 3 Parish Councillors) was formed to oversee the development of the ANP. Its contents reflect the views of our community following surveys and extensive consultation over the period.

Following the pre-submission consultation on the draft ANP, adjustments have been made to reflect representations received.

The submission ANP builds on earlier work undertaken by the Parish Council in partnership with other village organisations to provide a planning framework and design context for the Parish.

A comprehensive Parish Plan was produced in 2005, revised in 2010, and is to be updated in 2015. A Village Design Statement was produced in 2009 and describes the distinctive character of the area through the landscape setting, settlement shape and individual buildings. This was revised in 2011 and sets out various design principles. These substantial documents were also produced following consultation with residents and have been used to inform and underpin this Neighbourhood Plan.

### **4.3 The Planning Environment**

It was impossible to draft this Neighbourhood Plan without reference to the NPPF, the draft CEC Local Plan or without taking into account the impact of recent planning decisions in Audlem.

#### **4.3.1 The Draft Cheshire East Council Local Plan**

When the CEC Local Plan was submitted for Inspection in May 2014, the examining Inspector expressed concerns about the economic and housing strategies put forward by the Council. The inspector found that the Council's economic strategy was "unduly pessimistic" and that there was a "serious mismatch between the economic strategy and the housing strategy"<sup>13</sup>. That revision of the Local Plan was subsequently withdrawn for review of these specific areas.

In the submitted Local Plan Audlem was identified as one of 13 Local Service Centres (LSCs) where 'small scale development to meet localised, objectively assessed needs and priorities will be supported where they contribute to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities'<sup>14</sup>. However, in the Local Plan, Audlem as an LSC is defined as Audlem Ward.

Audlem Ward consists of a significantly larger area than the designated Audlem Neighbourhood Plan Area defined by the Audlem Parish Boundary. The Ward additionally includes the neighbouring Parishes of Hankelow, Buerton, Dodcott cum Wilkesley and Newhall, where additional planning permissions are also being sought and granted.

Initially, the 13 LSCs were together expected to provide 2500 houses in the period 2010 to 2030<sup>15</sup>. After taking into account allocation and approvals since 2010, CEC informed Audlem Parish Council that this would translate into an additional requirement for 80-100 homes in the Audlem through the period to 2030<sup>16</sup>. The questionnaire issued in January 2015 was based on that figure and further information on its outcome is detailed below.

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<sup>13</sup> The Inspector's Interim Report: Appendix 8.4

<sup>14</sup> P77 Cheshire East Council Local Plan (submission version), Cheshire East Council evidence document BE046 - Determining the Settlement Hierarchy: Appendix 8.4

<sup>15</sup> P91 Cheshire East Council Local Plan submission version: Appendix 8.4

<sup>16</sup> Adrian Fisher email and subsequent conversations with Michael E Jones & CEC Spatial planners: Appendix 8.3



In July 2015 Cabinet approved CEC's revised Local Plan<sup>17</sup>. This has resulted in a higher requirement for housing throughout the authority for 3500 homes to be located in LSCs, proportionally increasing the number of homes to be built within each LSC. Assuming 3500 new homes in the LSCs, the revised requirement for Audlem Ward would appear to be around 160 dwellings based upon population.

However taking into consideration planning permissions granted as at 31st March 2015, of the 3500 new homes required, 3267 have been committed, completed, allocated or on strategic sites. As a result, the additional number of new homes now required in the LSCs is 233<sup>18</sup> up to 2030. The distribution of development at these settlements will be determined by further site-specific testing through the site allocations process. With the indicative number of new homes required already granted planning permission, it seems probable that Audlem Parish will have met and exceeded these expectations.



Audlem Parish (green) versus Audlem Ward

#### 4.3.2 Recent planning outcomes

Gradual growth throughout the period of the ANP, especially to expand the number of affordable homes and those for young families, is welcomed. The word 'gradual' is carefully chosen; if the village is to remain sustainable the infrastructure has to expand concurrently to support the additional number of residents using its services. Residents fear the village infrastructure, especially the Medical Practice, could not cope with any potentially overwhelming and rapid change in population (see below). It is vital to allow services and infrastructure providers to plan meaningfully for the needs of new residents over a manageable timeframe.

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<sup>17</sup> Cheshire East Council Cabinet Agenda 21st July 2015, page 63

<sup>18</sup> Cheshire East Council Cabinet Agenda 21st July 2015, page 63



**Recent large planning applications**

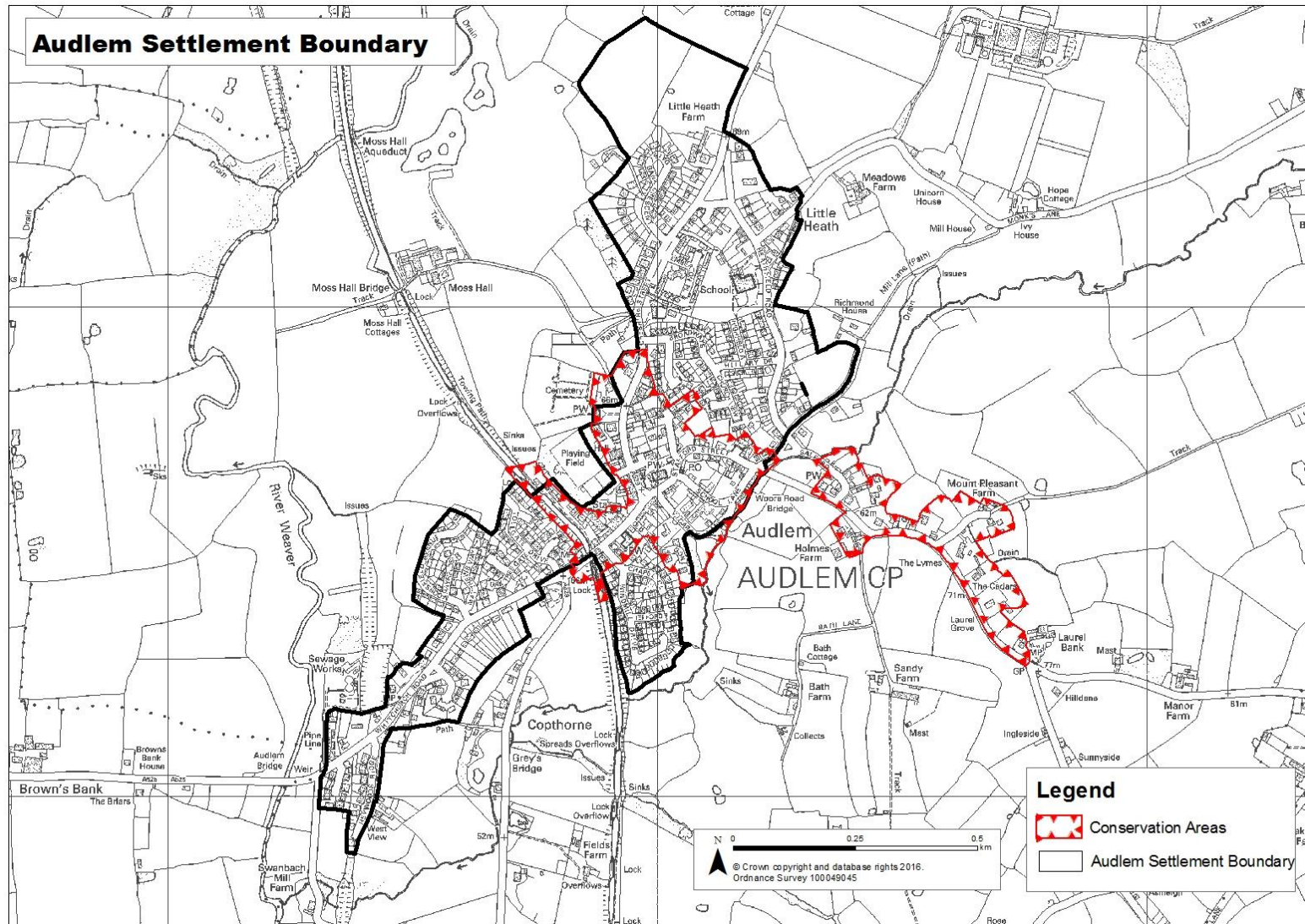
During 2013/2014 Audlem was the subject of two planning applications on good quality agricultural land outside the existing settlement boundary. The first was for 120 homes at Little Heath, to the north of the settlement boundary. The second, off Heathfield Road to the east of the village and adjacent to the Salford Conservation Area was initially for 34 homes, subsequently reduced to 26 homes. Audlem Parish Council and CEC initially rejected these applications on many grounds.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. In the absence of an approved Local Plan, in December 2014 CEC concluded it had no choice but to approve the re-submitted 26-house Heathfield Road application, despite the local concern at the impact on services. In January 2015 the Planning Inspectorate found in favour of an Appeal by Gladman Developments to build up to 120 houses at Little Heath. These two large-scale (in local terms) developments, will alone result in an additional 146 homes in Audlem Parish within the next 3 – 5 years.

In addition to the 146 houses on the above two sites and 35 other houses already approved for Audlem Parish, a further 124 houses have been granted permission in the neighbouring Parishes of Hankelow, Buerton, Dodcott cum Wilkesley and Newhall. This means that the total housing stock in Audlem Parish will now increase by at least 181 (20.9%) and in Audlem Ward by at least 305 before 2020 — whilst still leaving another 10 years in the lifetime of the Plan.

The policies drawn up for the ANP continue to reflect and support the desire for ongoing growth in a phased manner – but not to the detriment of the village, its services and its unique rural character.

### 4.3.3 Settlement Boundary



CEC's Settlement Boundary Methodology Section a) Extant Planning Consents states:

'A site currently outside, but adjoining the existing settlement boundary, has extant planning consent for housing, with no exceptional circumstances attached (e.g. previous allocation), should be included within settlement boundary.'

Accordingly, Audlem Parish Council accepts that in view of the land for the two approved major developments (Little Heath and Heathfield Road) being outside, but adjoining, the current settlement boundary, the boundary should be changed to incorporate them. Once these sites are completed they will inevitably form a functional part of the existing settlement. Audlem Parish Council will work with CEC to facilitate this change.

#### **4.4 Consultation Process**

The ANP belongs to the people of Audlem. It has been developed from the views of local people gathered using a variety of different consultation approaches including: meetings; presentations; interactive workshops; website and village-wide on-line/paper surveys. In addition to the residents' consultation a wide range of stakeholders were invited to participate in an event aimed specifically at gathering their views and concerns. Local businesses were also asked to complete either a paper-based survey or respond on-line.



Village consultation meeting

The following are some of the reference documents to the ANP:

- Pre-existing Audlem village documents including the Parish Plan and Village Design Statement;
- Consultation Statement;
- Basic Condition Statement.

Please refer to Appendices, Section 8

### **Sustainability and Equality Impact Assessments**

The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal is to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are considered throughout the plan making process and that the Audlem Neighbourhood Plan has considered all aspects of economic, social and environmental sustainability in its production.

The Audlem Neighbourhood Plan and all of its Policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisals using assessment forms provided by Cheshire East Council<sup>19</sup>.

All of the assessments were carried out by volunteers to ensure impartiality.

#### **4.4.1 Pre-submission Consultation**

The ANP has been submitted to the list of statutory and other bodies provided by CEC as required under Regulation 14, Town and Country Planning, England Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (General) 2012.

This is fully documented in the Consultation Statement, Appendix 8.1.

#### **4.4.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The Environment Agency confirmed to CEC on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015 that an SEA was not required.<sup>20</sup>

#### **4.4.3 Habitat Assessment**

A Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) screening opinion was sought from Cheshire East Council in order to confirm whether an HRA was required to support the Audlem Neighbourhood Plan. The screening exercise concluded that there were no European sites that would be affected by the proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **4.5 Designating the Neighbourhood Area**

The first formal stage in producing a Neighbourhood Plan is to define the Neighbourhood Area. There were a number of decisions that the Parish Council had to make. Should we work with adjacent Parishes? Should we include the whole of Audlem Ward or just the Parish? Should we review just the area inside the settlement boundary? As the Parish Plan and Village Design Statement already gave a strong body of evidence to support a Neighbourhood Plan and were restricted to the area within the parish boundary the Parish Council decided that CEC should be asked to agree that the area within the parish boundary should be the designated area for the ANP. See Appendix 8.2 for official notification.

The formal consultation process commenced on 11 August 2014 and the notification that the designated Area had been agreed was received on 21 October 2014<sup>21</sup>

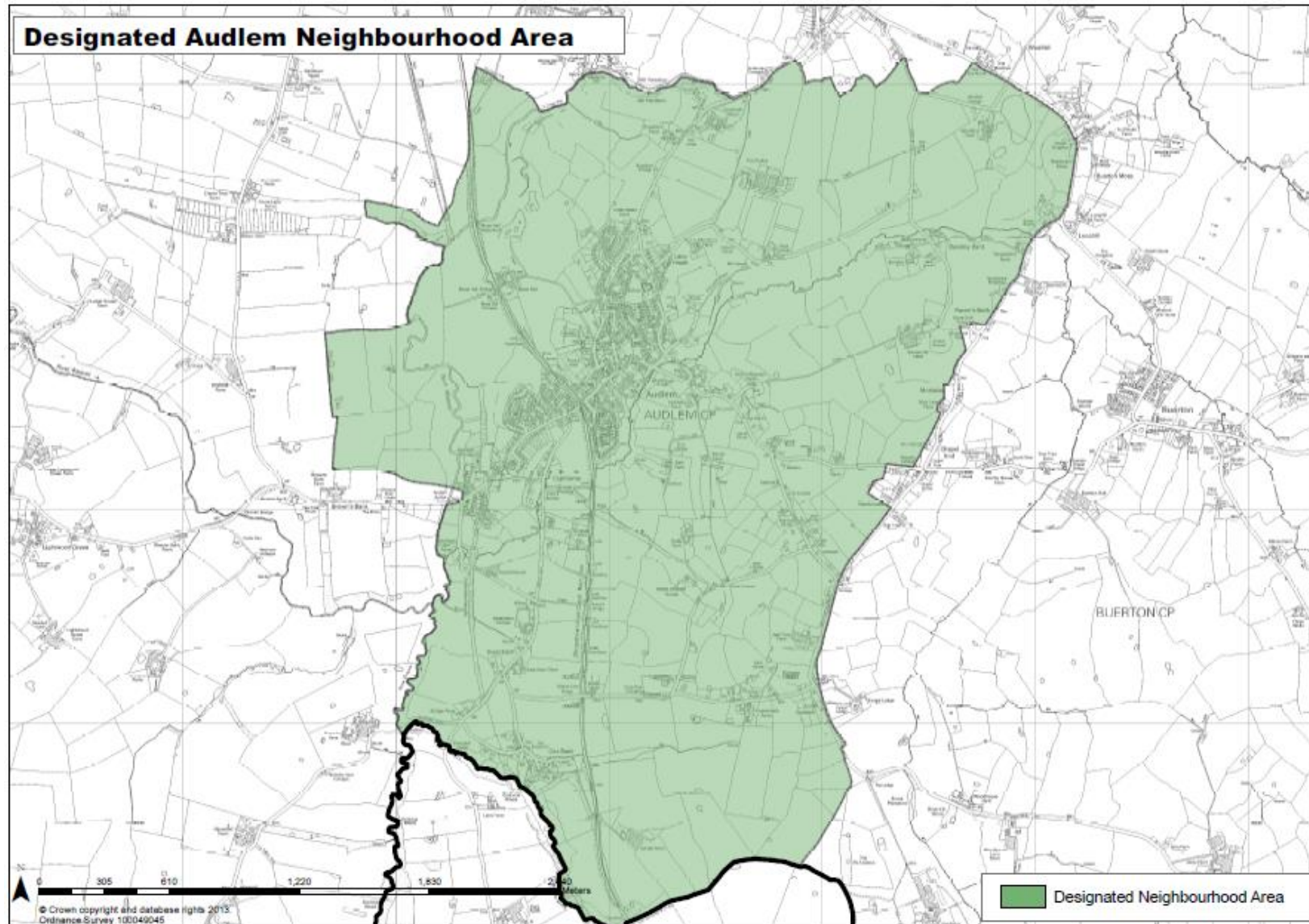
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<sup>19</sup> Basic Conditions Statement: Appendix 8.5

<sup>20</sup> Basic Conditions Statement: Appendix 8.5

<sup>21</sup> Appendix 8.2

## Audlem Neighbourhood Plan Area



## 5 AUDLEM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN VISION

Based on feedback from village meetings and conversations held with residents at two Saturday morning Q&A sessions held under the Buttermarket the Steering Committee drew up a draft Vision which they hoped encapsulated the prime concerns expressed by the community. It was important that residents felt this statement truly reflected their overall wishes for the village over the lifetime of this Plan. Residents were asked to comment on and endorse the Vision by means of a questionnaire<sup>22</sup> that was delivered to every household within the village boundary in January 2015 and also at a public forum on March 12, 2015.

**Audlem is an ancient village full of history and character set in a rural, predominantly agricultural environment - 'the jewel in the crown' of South Cheshire. We intend to proactively enhance its position as the Local Service Centre for the area through gradual, managed, well planned development to ensure Audlem will continue to be:**

- a vibrant, thriving and caring community for people of all ages, incomes and abilities;
- a self-sufficient, dynamic, balanced and socially cohesive place to live and work;
- a sustainable community – providing whatever our residents need to maintain an outstanding quality of life for present and future generations.

During consultation with village residents it was also stated that Audlem should continue to be an attractive place to visit. It was felt that this was inherent in the existing Vision so no changes were made.



Audlem from Holmes Bank

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<sup>22</sup> Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

## 6 POLICIES

Our policies have been separated into different themes, but it should be noted that all new development is expected to meet the requirements of **all** relevant policies.

### 6.1 HOUSING POLICIES

#### 6.1.1 Objective

Residents recognise that to continue to thrive as a vibrant and distinctive village, Audlem needs to evolve and grow in a sustainable way<sup>23</sup>. Residents also want the village to continue to provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future residents<sup>24</sup>. These aspirations combined to produce a housing objective:

**To provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home by:**

- **facilitating the building of sufficient houses to meet the locally identified housing need in the period 2010-2030;**
- **requiring that individual developments be relatively small<sup>25</sup> and absorbed in the Audlem 'scene' as unobtrusively as possible;**
- **requiring that all new developments of 3 or more dwellings include a substantial proportion of smaller and affordable properties.**

#### 6.1.2 Policies

##### 6.1.2.1 Introduction<sup>26</sup>

Answers to the January Housing Questionnaire 2015 indicated a strong desire for:

- more balanced housing stock with an increased number of smaller houses in particular
- more housing suitable for older people;
- housing of a scale which is appropriate to the character of the village and will enable new residents to integrate easily into village life;
- more affordable housing;
- those with a strong local connection to have preferential access to affordable housing.

Audlem is a popular village in which to live. Once having moved to Audlem, many residents remain for the rest of their lives. As a result Audlem has a disproportionate number of older residents; 30% over 65, compared with the national average (note – throughout this section national means England) average of 16%. This disparity is likely to become more marked in coming years, with 18% of Audlem residents in the 55-64 age bracket, compared with 12% nationally. This threatens the

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<sup>23</sup> Q20a of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>24</sup> Q20b of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>25</sup> Q11 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>26</sup> Community profile for Audlem (Parish), ACRE, OCSI 2013: Appendix 8.3



vitality of the community and places extra, and different, demands on local health, transport and housing.

Audlem's housing stock is dominated by detached owner-occupied properties. 58% of Audlem's houses are detached (22% nationally) and 81% owner-occupied (64% nationally).

House prices in themselves are not particularly out of line with the national average, as evidenced by the following data:

- Average detached house price: Audlem £340k; National £320k;
- Affordability ratio (mean house price as ratio of median income): Audlem 18.0: National 15.4.

What is different about Audlem's housing stock is the mix; only 24% is placed in Council Tax bands A to C, as against 66% nationally.

All the above points to a relative shortage of small homes that can be afforded by people on relatively low incomes. This is confirmed by the following:

- Proportion of terraced housing & flats: Audlem 16%; National 47%;
- Social rented housing: Audlem 6%; National 18%.

Audlem needs more young people and families for the community to retain its age balance but the current shortage of affordable housing denies young people and families the opportunity to live in the village where they grew up. The village needs smaller homes for elderly villagers wishing to downsize and remain in Audlem and also for young singles or couples. This is evidenced by an extract from *Cheshire East Council: Rural Housing Needs Survey 2013 –Audlem Parish*:

“The survey highlighted several types of resident that had an affordable housing need within Audlem, including:

- 29 respondents requiring alternative housing within the parish, most commonly because they needed smaller accommodation;
- 40 current Audlem residents who might wish to form a new household inside Cheshire East within the next 5 years;
- 29 ex-Audlem residents who might move back into the parish within 5 years if affordable housing were available.

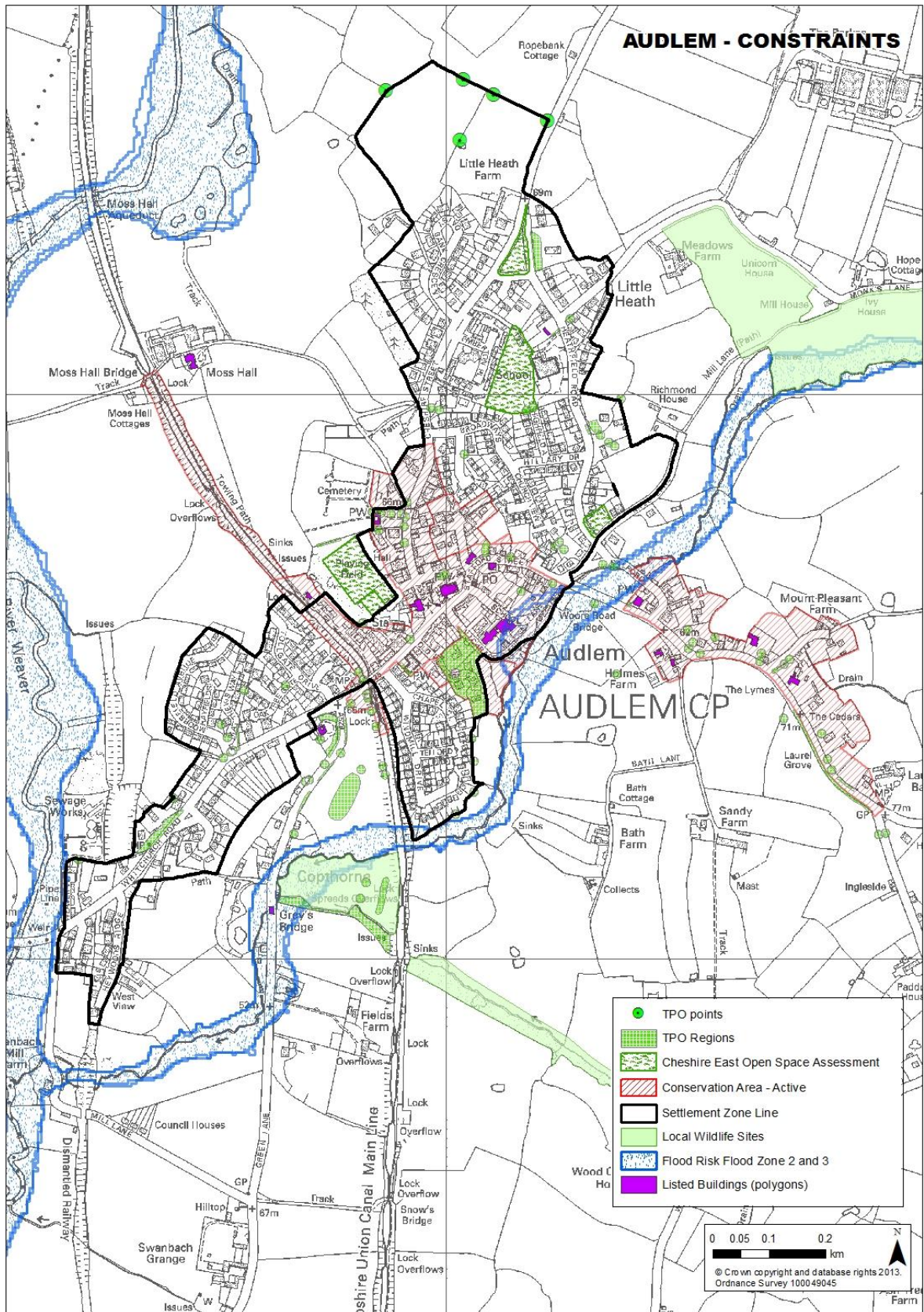
Therefore, there was a potential total 98 new households that might be required within Audlem within the next 5 years. Of these 98 potential new households at least 37 would need to be subsidised ownership or rentable properties, with the majority of these being for a son or daughter of a current resident.”

As to the location of housing development, most residents want priority to be given first to using redundant brownfield sites and, second to infill. Building on greenfield sites is strongly opposed, particularly if the recently approved Little Heath and Heathfield Road sites go ahead<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Q5 & Q7 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

Audlem Constraints Map



### 6.1.2.2 Housing number

The objectives of the ANP are realised by a set of policies that:

- conform to and develop the relevant policies in the Cheshire East Draft Local Plan;
- address the preferences of the Audlem community as indicated by the responses to the Housing Questionnaire and the Housing Needs Survey.

A large majority of respondents (82%)<sup>28</sup> do not wish to see major new housing developments in Audlem, as they would lead to a significant change in the character of the village. Of those who hold different views 90% favoured a number less than 80 (average 29); only 10% favoured a number greater than 100<sup>29</sup>.

As stated in Section 4.3.1 the Cheshire East Local Plan submission version (2014) and information from Council officials indicated that 80-100 homes should be built in Audlem from 2010 to 2030<sup>30</sup>. Residents are aware that the Local Plan is under review. Whilst it is understood from the latest version of the Cheshire East Local Plan (July 2015) that this number will be higher there is no indication that Audlem should expect a disproportionate amount of any increase that might result.

With 305 existing permissions in Audlem Ward, of which 181 are in Audlem Parish, Audlem has in all likelihood met and exceeded the probable housing target with the majority of the housing located outside the current settlement boundary. These permissions, although outline, are unlikely to be refused at reserved matters stage and it is anticipated that development will go ahead.

The existing settlement boundary for Audlem is that identified in the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan (2011) (C&NLP). Audlem Parish Council acknowledge that this is likely to change as a result of recently approved planning applications at Little Heath and Heathfield Road. Therefore the ANP assumes that the settlement boundary now incorporates these two developments – see Section 1.1.1.

#### **Policy H1: Number of New Homes**

##### **Policy H1: Settlement Boundary and Number of New Homes**

**A settlement boundary is defined and shown on the map on page 19 of the ANP.**

**Any additional new housing in excess of those permissions granted at 27 April 2015 will be supported within this settlement boundary where it accords with other policies outlined in this Plan. Outside the settlement boundary residential permission will not be permitted except in circumstances specified in this Plan.**

**Development of isolated dwelling houses in rural areas will be resisted, except where these accord with national policy. Development of dwelling houses in Flood Zones 2 and 3 will be resisted.**

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<sup>28</sup> Q3 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>29</sup> Q4 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>30</sup> Adrian Fisher email and subsequent conversations with Michael E Jones & Spatial Planners: Appendix 8.3

Audlem Parish Council will work with CEC on the next stage of the Cheshire East Local Plan to ensure that local housing needs are met and reflect the outcome of the 2013 and 2015 Housing questionnaire. Unless CEC's site allocation policy has a significant effect upon the number of dwellings required, progress towards meeting the confirmed Local Plan target housing number will be reviewed in 2020 and to the extent the target appears unlikely to be met, policies will be reviewed and amended accordingly.

### 6.1.2.3 Housing location

- Such developments as there are should accord with community preferences as to location and interface with existing buildings. Specifically:
- development should be restricted to brownfield and infill land;<sup>31</sup>
- development should protect and enhance the setting of existing buildings;<sup>32</sup>
- development should have consideration for any impact on utilities' underground infrastructure and the service provided.

Developments should not significantly reduce the Open Countryside between Audlem and its surrounding parishes so as to maintain its distinctive character - (Section 3.4).

#### **Policy H2: Redevelopment of Infill Land and Brownfield Land**

**Permission will be granted for residential developments of 10 or fewer dwellings that are well designed and meet all other relevant policies within this Plan and:**

- are within the settlement boundary as defined in Policy H1 (including any extended settlement boundary established by a Local Plan) and do not harm residential amenity of neighbours as defined in Policy D3 of this Plan; or
- are outside the settlement boundary and:
  - a) fill a small, restricted gap in the continuity of existing frontage buildings, where the site is closely surrounded by buildings normally within an existing dwelling's curtilage; or
  - b) are located on brownfield land.

**For the purpose of this policy:**

**"brownfield land" has the same meaning as "previously developed land" in the NPPF: and "infill land" refers to land normally within the curtilage of existing properties that adjoins the existing settlement boundary (ignoring for this purpose its expansion to include the land on which planning permission was granted for a further 146 dwellings).**

### 6.1.2.4 Scale of New Development

Audlem residents have expressed their strong opposition to large developments. Most (46%) would prefer sites of no more than 10 houses with a further 35% favouring developments of between 10 and 20 homes<sup>33</sup>.

Further discussions at the meetings listed below resulted in the view by residents that a limit of 10 dwellings was preferable, unless a development greater than 10 houses was deemed to be of

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<sup>31</sup> Q7 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>32</sup> Q9 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>33</sup> Q11 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

significant community benefit. In both cases<sup>34</sup>, it is recognised that such developments for new homes must be commercially viable.

- Public forum review of policies - 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015;
- Annual Village Meeting, Public Hall – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015;
- Drop-in Consultation Workshop for Pre-submission Consultation of the ANP – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The Community also favours the inclusion of communal green spaces in any design.

#### **Policy H3: Scale of New Development**

**Any development within the settlement boundary will normally be limited to 10 properties in order that it is on a scale commensurate with the character of the village. Development of more than 6 houses shall include a provision for communal green space that is grassland, landscaped in keeping with the immediate surroundings. Exceptions to this Policy will include developments offering significant benefit to the community such as a specific development of social housing or village centre car parking.**

#### **6.1.2.5 Size and Type of New Homes**

Audlem has 2.6 times the number of detached homes compared to the national average and less than 0.4 times the number of terraced homes<sup>35</sup>. This reduces the supply of less expensive homes in a village where, in local terms, housing is relatively expensive.

#### **Policy H4: Size of Homes**

**New development should favour smaller dwellings, so meeting the needs of Audlem, unless an independent viability study, or other material considerations, show a robust justification for a different mix.**

This requirement:

- reflects the response to Question 15 of the Housing Questionnaire, which showed 1, 2 & 3 bedroom properties as being of the highest priority, with properties of 4 bedrooms or more being of far less importance. Respondents were required to ascribe ranking points to their preferred housing type; 93% of those ranking points were allocated to 1, 2 & 3 bedroom properties and only 7% to 4+ bedroom properties. Breaking down the above groups, by far the highest category housing types, by ranking points, were 2&3 bed semi-detached (29%), 1&2 bedroom bungalows (21%), 1&2 bed terraced (16%) and 3 bed detached (14%);
- reflects the need of those actually requiring a house, as indicated by the response to the Housing Needs Survey (see Section 0);
- produces smaller and therefore more affordable family homes;
- provides home for elderly residents wishing to downsize;
- is in line with NPPF para 50.

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<sup>34</sup> Q13 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire January 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>35</sup> Community profile for Audlem (Parish), ACRE, OCSI 2013: Appendix 8.3

### **Policy H5: Type of Homes**

**To redress the imbalance of the current housing stock and ensure a full mix of housing in Audlem, a majority of new homes on developments of 3 or more should be limited to one-third detached properties, the rest being bungalows, terraced or semi-detached, unless viability or other material considerations show a robust justification for a different mix.**

This requirement:

- provides more relatively affordable open market homes;
- reflects the priority given by residents for bungalow, terraced and semi-detached housing; these groups aggregating 73% of the ranking points allocated in Q15 of the Housing Questionnaire and
- complies with CEC's requirement for a mix of dwelling types and sizes (Policy SC4).

#### **6.1.2.6 Affordable Housing**

In 2013, the Housing Needs Survey produced the results that 68% of respondents were in favour of a small development of affordable housing being built within the parish, with 17% against and 15% unsure either way.

The ANP supports the development of affordable housing in Audlem for rent, shared-ownership (intermediate) and for sale to local people. In the 2015 Housing Questionnaire 80% of respondents indicated that Audlem should have more affordable housing built. Those residents supporting the building of affordable homes think that 36% of any development should be affordable homes<sup>36</sup>. However, when the effect of those voters who did not support the building of any affordable homes is taken into account, the figure reduces to 30%. The sustainability and balance of the community is threatened as young people brought up in Audlem are forced to move away because the village is unable to meet their housing needs in the open market. Starter homes and shared green space are priorities for a community that needs to retain its young families.



Witton Close - affordable housing

90% of the respondents favour the following groups being given priority for any intermediate affordable housing, subject to their being unable to afford market priced housing:

- young and elderly people with family living in Audlem;

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<sup>36</sup> Q16 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

- individuals with jobs in, or adjacent to Audlem, who would ideally live in Audlem to do their job effectively<sup>37</sup>.

The above wishes should be set in context of a community desire that the principle of affordable housing should be to give a leg-up to those unable to afford market priced housing and not a windfall gain as a result of their being able to subsequently sell on any 'affordably' acquired property at market price. Ideally a proportion of any affordable housing should be retained as affordable stock in perpetuity.

Where affordable properties are either rented or intermediate, then pre-determined policies apply for assessing eligibility. For intermediate properties the Registered Provider will follow the Homes and Communities Agency guidelines. Allocations for rented units are determined by CEC as set out in the adopted Common Allocations Policy. Within the Allocations Policy the Local Connection and Community Connection criteria are stipulated<sup>38</sup>.

The community would welcome any constructive proposals by Housing Associations and the like, to provide innovative solutions to the above wishes; in particular in relation to the anticipated detailed planning proposals on the approved Little Heath and Heathfield Road sites.

CEC's current guidelines cannot fully guarantee that affordable housing will give preference to local people. The Parish Council will look into the possibility of setting up a Community Land Trust (CLT) to help facilitate the provision of affordable housing for local people in perpetuity.

Notwithstanding the above, there is concern that affordable housing for outright purchase remains out of reach for many aspirants, particularly because of the high deposits required. Whilst the government guideline of affordability is 80% of the market value in the local area, the average opinion of respondents to the Housing Questionnaire was 63%. To help overcome the difficulties described above, affordable housing proposals should include a proportion of shared-ownership houses.

#### **Policy H6: Affordable Housing**

**Proposals for developments that result in a net gain of three or more dwellings will be expected to provide a minimum of 30% of affordable housing on the site which will be fully integrated into the development unless a Financial Viability Assessment or other material considerations demonstrates a robust justification for a different percentage.**

**In cases where the '30%' calculation provides a part unit then either the number of affordable units must be rounded up to the next whole unit, or a financial contribution will be sought, equivalent to that part unit.**

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<sup>37</sup> Q18 of Audlem Housing Questionnaire 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>38</sup> Cheshire Homechoice Common Allocation Policy V2: Appendix 8.4

### **Policy H7: Tenancy Mix**

**Proposals for development will need to consider local housing need and should normally provide a tenure mix of 35% of the affordable homes being for shared-ownership (intermediate) housing unless viability or a specific housing needs survey, carried out by the developer, shows a robust justification for a different mix.**

This policy reflects the findings of the 2013 Housing Needs Survey, mentioned in Appendix 8.3. The ANP delivers the requirement for affordable housing while maintaining the flexibility necessary to meet the specific local requirements needed within our proposed housing developments.

The full integration of affordable and open market housing is a requirement of CEC policy SC5.4

## **6.2 DESIGN POLICIES**

### **6.2.1 Objective**

**To incorporate design and sustainability principles into any new development in Audlem to ensure that the external appearance and form of the development blend into and enhance the village environment and to reflect community feedback on the development design requirements needed for Audlem.**

### **6.2.2 Policies**

#### **6.2.2.1 Introduction**

The design policies are informed by the guidelines laid out in the December 2011 update to the Audlem Village Design Statement. The original version (2009) of this document was adopted by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009 as “a material consideration” in relation to planning applications affecting the parish. The subsequent revision in 2011 was similarly adopted by CEC in February 2012. The policies laid out here have been endorsed by the community at the public forum event in March 2015.

The NPPF indicates clearly the importance of good design in any new development in particular this is noted in clause 56 of the framework document - *The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.* The NPPF continues with significant support to the importance of good design in the determination of planning approval.

The initial discussions of the design working group determined that the design policies were best separated into four sections:

- the importance of maintaining the character of the village of Audlem is recognised; this does not imply that any new building should replicate existing buildings but that all new buildings should be designed to complement the existing appearance of the village;
- sustainability and efficiency are recognised as essential within all new buildings and will ensure that the environmental footprint of the building is minimised;
- green spaces within the village environment and the views both to and from the surrounding landscape not only enhance the appearance of the area but also positively improve the experience of living in the community: the importance of green spaces is recognised within the NPPF documentation;
- elements of the built environment that if designed correctly will enhance the experience of living within the community.



### **6.2.2.2 Character**

The character of Audlem comes from the mix of building types and the layout of the village settlement that has evolved slowly as the settlement has expanded over the past centuries. Buildings of differing styles and ages come together to provide a pleasing feel to the village; the policies within this section are designed to maintain these pleasing characteristics within the village building environment allowing buildings of quality and good design that enhance and complement the established character of Audlem.

The policies that follow have been drafted bearing in mind the following (each of which is mentioned in Appendix 8.3) the Village Design Statement, the 2015 Housing Questionnaire, the Case for Space (RIBA), the adopted Local Plan, Conservation documentation and Design Quality Standards (Housing Corporation).

#### **Policy D1: Character and Quality**

**Design of all new buildings shall be in character with existing buildings within the village; and will respect and enhance the natural, built, and historic environment of the village. All new buildings shall use materials chosen to complement the design of the development and add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment. Imaginative and creative design and the use of high quality materials will be encouraged.**

#### **Policy D2: Size and Space**

**New buildings will provide space standards as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard to promote the best living environment.**

#### **Policy D3: Position and Topography**

**New buildings will be positioned such that they do not prejudice the amenity of future occupiers or the occupiers of adjacent property by reason of overshadowing, overlooking, visual intrusion, noise and disturbance, odour, or in any other way.**

**New buildings will be no more than 2 storeys high except where the topography of the proposed site allows a 3-storey building to fit unobtrusively with existing neighbouring properties.**

**All new building shall take account of the topography and natural features of the site to maximise the views from the site to the surrounding areas of countryside and to minimise impact on the skyline. The development shall be required to be a considerate neighbour by arranging the orientation of new buildings such as to maintain as far as is possible the views from existing buildings. Important views identified in the Village Design Statement 2011 shall be protected by ensuring that the visual impact of any development on these views is carefully controlled.**

#### **Policy D4: Conservation Areas**

**Any proposal for a new building or external modification to any existing building within a Conservation Area shall be designed to ensure a truly contextual and harmonising change that will enhance the character of the conservation area. Such proposals will be considered taking account of any potential detriment to the existing appearance and unique identity of the adjacent area as described in Conservation Area documentation.**

#### **Policy D5: Demolition**

**Within a Conservation Area any proposal to demolish existing sound buildings that contribute to the character of the village environment will be rejected.**

#### **Policy D6: Street Furniture and Lighting**

**All street furniture, lighting columns etc. within the Conservation Area shall be in character with existing such items. Within all other areas lighting systems will complement the design of the development. In all cases outdoor lighting sources should have a minimum impact on the environment, should minimise light pollution and should minimise adverse effects on wildlife. As and when existing lighting systems are maintained and replaced they should be updated to meet modern low environmental impact standards.**

#### **6.2.2.3 Sustainability**

A key requirement within national standards for new construction is that all new homes should be designed and constructed in a sustainable manner using products and methods that reduce environmental impact, adapt to climate change, have lower running costs, and incorporate features that enhance the health and well-being of the constructors, occupiers, and the wider community<sup>39</sup>.

Energy efficiency will be enhanced by the use of light and thermal energy from the environment. The ability to make use of available energy from the sun for use within a living space will be influenced by the positioning of the building within a site; parts of any new building that will not normally be occupied e.g. garages or outbuildings can be positioned to allow the occupied spaces to take best advantage of the available energy.

#### **Policy D7: Efficiency and Sustainability**

**All new buildings will be designed to high standards of efficiency and sustainability so as to minimise energy use. Wherever possible, new buildings shall have a roof area orientated to ensure optimal energy input for solar-powered energy systems.**

#### **6.2.3 Open/Green/Amenity Spaces<sup>40</sup>**

Green spaces within the layout of the village are an important part of the characteristic of the settlement and enhance the experience of living within the community. Where local green spaces have been specifically designated they are afforded additional protection under planning rules. The 2012 CEC Open Space Study indicates that Audlem has a shortage of amenity open space. We believe that it is important for all existing green spaces within the village of Audlem as identified by the community to remain as such. Further for any new development of any significant size a communal green space will enhance the design and improve the experience of living within the development. Nature conservation will be encouraged to ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced on any new development<sup>41</sup> and within all of the village green spaces<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Design Quality Standards – Housing Corporation: Appendix 8.3

<sup>40</sup> See List of Open Spaces: Appendix 8.3

<sup>41</sup> In accordance with paras 109 to 125 of the NPPF: Appendix 8.3

<sup>42</sup> Policy BE.1 of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan Appendix 8.4



Salford

#### **Policy D8: Retaining Green Space and Encouraging Nature Conservation**

**New buildings shall have no detrimental impact on any existing open green space or recreational facilities as identified on plans in Section 3.1 and listed below:**

- **Publicly owned**
  - St James' School playing field
  - The recreation ground, tennis courts, play area and car park in the village centre
  - Little Heath
  - The Lower Green (Vicarage Lane)
  - The Green, Bunsley Bank
  - The green space in Windmill Drive
  - The green 'roundabout' in Daisy Bank Crescent
  - Longhill Moss
  - The well at Cox Bank
  - The conservation area at the top of Churchfields
  - Plot 776, Paddock Lane (Cheshire Archives Tithes Map reference)
  - The green areas alongside either side of the canal bank throughout the Parish
- **Privately owned**
  - The Bowling Green, Heathfield Road
  - The Cricket Club, Bunsley Bank
  - The green space between nos 28 and 32 Stafford Street
- **Roadside verges and grassed areas at road junctions**
  - Tollgate Drive with the A525 (Shropshire Street/Whitchurch Road)
  - Windmill Drive with the A525 (Shropshire Street)
  - Broadways with the A529 (Cheshire Street) and the green verge opposite, bordering Cheshire Street
  - Hillary Drive with Heathfield Road
- **Areas of historic amenity value**
  - The field at Holmes Bank
  - Audlem Vale
  - The Cemetery and Cemetery Chapels

**These spaces shall be maintained as green spaces.**

**Nature conservation will be encouraged to ensure that biodiversity is protected.**

**Policy D9: Planting**

Historic hedgerows and trees will be protected, and tree preservation orders shall be respected. Where a development may threaten protected trees an arboricultural assessment will be submitted with development proposals.

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

New developments of 6 houses or more shall include communal green space within the development in addition to any individual garden areas. Proper arrangements (e.g. management company) for the ongoing maintenance of any new communal green or open spaces shall be provided.

**Policy D10: Drainage**

Parking areas shall be built with a base of permeable material allowing water drainage.

**6.2.3.1 Built environment**

The appearance and the functionality of the village as a whole will be influenced by the design of each new development. There is a high level of car ownership within this rural community and issues of road safety and road congestion and parking availability are key concerns of the community. Access for emergency vehicles and delivery vehicles should not be compromised by vehicles parked on the roadway of any new development. It is recognised that by encouraging cycling and walking for all shorter distance journeys traffic volumes could be reduced; however safety considerations will often inhibit this.

The appearance of the village will be enhanced by the use of good design within all new developments including affordable home schemes, individual houses, and redeveloped buildings.

**Policy D11: Residential Parking**

All new buildings with 2 or more bedrooms shall be provided with space to park at least 2 cars. In the case of a new 1-bed property a single parking space shall be provided. A garage shall only be considered as a parking space where this is large enough to fit an average family car and allow a driver to get in and out of the car within the garage. Where appropriate to the layout of the development of 2 or more properties parking may be provided by allocated spaces that are not immediately adjacent to the house. Parking areas shall not encroach on the garden/green space of the development.

**Exception to Policy D11**

Where it can be demonstrated that a development is specifically targeted at members of the community unlikely to have multiple vehicles (e.g. sheltered housing) then the parking requirements of D11 may be relaxed.

**Policy D12: Road Widths**

Road widths on new developments of 6 dwellings or more shall be sufficient to allow safe parking on the roadway without encroaching on the pavements whilst leaving sufficient space for other vehicles such as delivery vehicles or refuse trucks to continue to use the roadway.

**Policy D13: Safe Access**

Safe access for pedestrians and cyclists routes from any new development to the village centre, the village school and the recreational areas must be ensured. Where these routes necessarily cross main roads a safe crossing arrangement shall be provided in line with policy T4.

**Policy D14: Storage Space**

All new buildings will be designed to include adequate hidden storage space for refuse and recycling bins and cycles<sup>43</sup>.

**Policy D15: Reuse of Redundant Buildings**

Development of substantially built but redundant agricultural buildings for business or residential use will be supported. This policy is linked to the employment and business section policy B2.

**Policy D16: Affordable Housing Standards**

Small developments of affordable housing in line with Policy H6 will be supported.

**Policy D17: Self-Build**

Proposals for individually designed single self-build or custom-built houses will be supported. Such developments should show imaginative and creative design and use high quality materials whilst complying with all other policies of this document.

## 6.3 BUSINESS, TOURISM AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

### 6.3.1 Introduction

Historically, Audlem developed as a rural village servicing the surrounding agricultural area and acting as a market place for buying and selling produce. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the canal and railway system opened up a wider market, resulting in increased employment and economic prosperity. The commercial demise of the canals and the closure of Audlem Railway Station by the 1960s heralded in the new era of motor transport. The latter part of the twentieth century saw the demise of established businesses, such as Bonnells and Moseleys, which occupied large employment sites. Instead of new businesses replacing them, these sites have been redeveloped for housing, reflecting its higher value use. Public houses have reduced from 5 to 3 and again, these sites have been redeveloped for housing.

Whilst traditional businesses and employment have been in decline, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought some surprises. Against national trends, the new retail developments in the centre of the village have expanded the retail sector, with an improved supermarket and new shops, offering a more sustainable choice for local people. Tourism and visitor spend has helped to sustain some local village shops and businesses. These are mainly centred around the activities generated by the Shropshire Union Canal with its flight of 15 locks, overnight and permanent moorings. The canal corridor is also popular with walkers and Audlem is a popular stopping-off point for cyclists. There are also some holiday accommodation providers for bed and breakfast and self-catering. Audlem is tourism friendly and has tourist interpretation signs and tourism leaflets to encourage longer stays in the village. The visitor economy has expanded with the development of the Overwater Marina and the introduction of the Audlem Lass, and more recently, the new Wheelyboat. There is a wide range of volunteer-led events and activities within the village, which attract thousands of visitors throughout the year.

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<sup>43</sup> Building for Life – 2012 and Dept for Transport Manual for Streets: Appendix 8.3

With an ageing population there has also been an expansion of the care home sector, with two nursing homes (one a specialist dementia unit) providing a range of employment opportunities.

Following national trends we have experienced a growth in self-employment and home businesses. Audlem has a surprising range of enterprises, as evidenced by listings on the Audlem Online website and data provided by CEC. The introduction of Superfast Broadband in 2015 is helping some of these businesses and will hopefully give an opportunity for new enterprises to develop and grow. Audlem Parish Council is continuing its efforts through Connecting Cheshire to ensure that Superfast Broadband is extended to the more outlying areas of the Parish

Whilst a high proportion of residents have to commute to work outside Audlem, it is clear from the Housing, Business and Youth Questionnaires that residents would like their village to develop and grow in a sustainable way. This includes supporting the development of employment opportunities to ensure that the village continues to thrive.

Whilst the business community was given the opportunity to comment in the Housing Questionnaire and at the workshop, it was considered appropriate to send a separate questionnaire to the 47 businesses in Audlem with valid email addresses listed on the AudlemOnline website and an additional 12 were mailed. These businesses ranged from home tuition to shops. In addition the survey was open to any other local business to complete the survey online and this was well publicised on the Audlem Online website. This allowed identification of any additional issues and provided written feedback on the policy options proposed. 22 responses were received.

### **6.3.2 Objective**

**To sustain and enhance a range of employment opportunities within Audlem, reflecting its growth and role as a service centre by supporting existing businesses and encouraging the development of new enterprises. Through business support our aim is to maintain a vibrant and varied retail, service, tourism and leisure offering within the village.**

Over 90% of the businesses that responded to the Businesses Questionnaire supported this objective.

The Housing Questionnaire demonstrated that 98.2 % of respondents wanted to strengthen and support employment in the village and 99.5 % of respondents wanted to sustain and improve the excellent local facilities. It also showed that the community strongly values tourism as a means to improve the local economy.

In the Youth Questionnaire a high number of respondents requested more shops and restaurants in Audlem.

### **6.3.3 Review of options and planning policies**

A wide range of options to protect existing employment and business uses have been considered as well as opportunities which might arise over the next 15 years to increase and enhance employment within the village. From this longer list a number of options had to be dropped on the basis that they could not be enforced under existing planning policy.

There was a view that it would be beneficial to protect existing retail, office, cafés, etc. (planning uses A1, A2, A3, A5) within the village centre by preventing a change of use to residential. Similarly, existing industrial, storage and office uses (B1, B2, B8) would support employment by retaining those uses. However, permitted development under existing planning legislation now allows changes of use between most use classes without the need for planning permission. On these

grounds these options were not pursued further, apart from general policy support for maintaining and improving the main retail and service areas in the village centre. This issue also came out strongly from the volunteer group consultation.

It is also recognised that the Post Office and cash machine at the Co-operative store provide essential services to some businesses although these cannot be protected through a Neighbourhood Plan.

Given the inability to protect existing businesses and employment uses, options for bringing forward new business space were considered. Nationally, redundant farm buildings have, in the past, been widely converted to employment uses and in some cases to live-work units, i.e. residential use with some workspace designed into the scheme to allow people to live and work at the same location. This approach has great merit but permitted development rights allow change of use from agricultural to residential, although prior approval needs to be sought from the local planning authority. Given that the authority might have some influence over the outcome, it is considered worthwhile to put this policy forward, although there is uncertainty over its outcome.

Another opportunity for bringing forward new business space might arise if buildings that have a community use, e.g. churches (D1), hall, pubs (A4) etc., become redundant from their original use. In the absence of an alternative community use, a policy to promote business/employment use in preference to residential use could be adopted. Permitted development currently allows changes of use without planning permission for up to 2 years but planning policy could have control over more permanent uses. There is also the scope for the Plan to list buildings as Assets of Community Value<sup>44</sup>, which then gives communities the ability to raise funds and bid<sup>45</sup> for a property on the open market within 6 months.

The final option considered was to identify and allocate an employment site within or at the edge of the village. Since this gives a relatively low return, it was considered that landowners would be reluctant to support this. It is also questionable whether there would be any demand for land from end users or from a developer to fund and build an employment site speculatively. Past evidence suggests that a development scheme would only be viable through a public subsidy, which is unlikely to be available, or if a specific end-user came forward with 100% funding which is also unlikely and uncertain.

The Business Survey tried to identify any demand for land or buildings and only four businesses identified any need for additional space, only one of which wished to move from their existing premises. Interestingly, in the same survey 45.4% of businesses believe greenfield land should be used for employment purposes. However, within the Housing Questionnaire, which elicited a higher response rate, over 83% of respondents did not want any greenfield land developed for housing, which indicates there is little public support for using greenfield land for any development. Clearly businesses in the retail, service and café/pub sector would benefit financially if there were more employment/footfall within the village.

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<sup>44</sup> Appendix 8.3

<sup>45</sup> Policy CW1

Given no proven demand and for the reasons outlined above no specific policy option for allocating an employment site on greenfield land has been promoted.

#### **6.3.4 Business and Employment Policies**

Feedback from the volunteers meeting held on February 26<sup>th</sup> 2015, together with 22 responses from the Business Questionnaire<sup>46</sup>, was positive in supporting the policies shown below.

From the review and analysis of the Business Questionnaire the biggest issue and concern was the continued need for additional free off-street car parking as at peak times, the availability of parking spaces can be a problem.

All developments in this Section must also comply with those in the Traffic and Parking Policies (See Section 6.5).

##### **Policy B1: Development for small businesses**

**Development for small businesses will be supported on brownfield sites both within and outside the settlement boundary, subject to environmental impacts being acceptable.**

##### **Policy B2: Redundant Farm Buildings**

**Over and above Permitted Development, redundant farm buildings should be utilised for employment purposes wherever possible and, where residential use is favoured, an element of workspace should be provided within development proposals.**

**The conversion of farm buildings for employment purposes will be acceptable where such proposals meet the wider criteria of policies contained within this Neighbourhood Plan.**

**Where a change of use is sought and an assessment must be made by the LPA, proposals must incorporate a flexible design to accommodate future employment<sup>47</sup>.**

##### **Policy B3: Redundant Community Buildings**

**Should buildings which have an established community use including D1 (churches and halls) and A4 (pubs) planning uses become redundant from their original use, then employment or business use should be promoted as an alternative to residential<sup>48</sup>.**

##### **Policy B4: Home Working**

**Proposals that promote home working, businesses operating from home and tourism enterprises will be supported, provided there is no impact on residential amenity and that they are in line with Policy D3.**

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<sup>46</sup> Policies B2 (77.2%), B3 (100%), B4 (90.9%) and B5 (90.9%): Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1

<sup>47</sup> Should be read in conjunction with Policy H2 and D15

<sup>48</sup> Should be read in conjunction with Policy CW1



### **Policy B5: Retail and Service Areas**

**Support will be given to proposals and applications that promote the maintenance and improvement of the size and character of the main retail and service areas in the centre of the village.**

#### **6.3.5 Tourism Policy**

As previously stated, Audlem is attractive to both residents and tourists. It has a wide range of public footpaths and bridleways. The Shropshire Union Canal provides for a number of outdoor activities such as fishing, boating, walking, cycling and bird watching. The health and performance of the inland waterway network is directly linked to the quality of the neighbourhood and environment through which the waterway passes<sup>49</sup>. The Canal Wharf is ever popular with visitors, as are the pubs and cafés. There are also a number of interesting and ancient buildings and old wells within the parish.



**Audlem Wharf and Shropshire Union Canal**

Consideration has been given to planning policies that support the development and enhancement of tourism and visitor amenities including accommodation facilities and tourism/visitor attractions. National and local policies generally support this sector and the Neighbourhood Plan can reinforce this approach whilst ensuring that any development is at the appropriate scale and use in keeping with the heritage and character of the village. The policy complies with paragraphs 132 and 127 of the NPPF, Policy EG4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (Submission Version 2014).

### **Policy B6: Tourism**

**Improvements to services and facilities associated with tourist attractions will be supported.**

**Development proposals should:**

- **comply with policies for the countryside and conservation/heritage;**
- **be appropriate in scale, character and location for the development;**
- **create no harm to the existing character of the local area;**
- **have no adverse impact on any adjoining residential amenities;**
- **have no conflict with matters of highway safety.**

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<sup>49</sup> Inland Waterways Policy Advice Note: Appendix 8.3

## 6.4 COMMUNITY WELL-BEING POLICIES

### 6.4.1 Objective

**To continue to provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future residents of Audlem.**

### 6.4.2 Policies

#### 6.4.2.1 Introduction

There is strong community and national support for safeguarding and improving important village assets and facilities. Those specific to Audlem are described below<sup>50</sup>.

#### 6.4.2.2 Community and Recreational Facilities

For a community of 1990 residents Audlem is reasonably well endowed with community and recreational facilities. The village has:

- Public Hall with a kitchen, a main hall, a small recreation room and a committee room. These facilities are relatively outdated and limited, such that efforts are currently being expended to obtain funding for an annexe;
- Scout & Guide Hall, again with a kitchen, which is also used for a wide range of activities;
- Methodist Church community rooms, including a kitchen;
- recreation area, comprising football pitch, tennis court, a playground and a car park. CEC owns these assets, but Audlem Parish Council is currently negotiating with Cheshire East to take ownership;
- cricket club;
- bowling green;
- a cemetery;
- public toilets.

The Shropshire Union Canal, flowing through the village, and the rural surroundings are important leisure assets to Audlem residents, with many opportunities for walking, cycling, horse riding, boating and other outdoor pursuits.

#### **Policy CW1: Assets of Community Value**

**Proposals that will result in either a loss or significant harm to an Asset of Community Value listed on the Asset List will be rejected.**

Audlem Parish Council will review and formalise this during the development of the Neighbourhood Delivery Plan.

#### 6.4.2.3 Health and Health Care

The Audlem Medical Practice is highly valued. The ageing of the village population coupled with any significant new housing development will add to the existing strain upon the medical facilities. This concern was expressed time and again in general comments made by respondents to the Housing Questionnaire and by Audlem Medical Practice<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> Q19c of Housing Questionnaire: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1 & NPPF paras 28, 69 & 70 : Appendix 8.3

<sup>51</sup> Statement can be found at: <http://np.audlem.org/doc/D113763.pdf>

A letter from Audlem Medical Practice, dated October 2014, stated:

“This is a rural area and as such we are the only Practice where local patients can register. The closest neighbouring Practices in Nantwich, Wrenbury and Market Drayton do not accept patients from Audlem, being outside of our practice boundaries. This means that any new residents will have to register at Audlem. Any additional housing will mean an increase in population that we will not be able to accommodate. We will be left with no other option than to ‘close our list’, i.e. not take on ANY new patients at all. This will therefore adversely affect both residents of the new development and any other new-born children, residents at the local nursing homes and anyone moving into an existing property. Once ‘closed’ we have no discretion to register new patients. Due to current spending cuts there is no likelihood that our capacity will improve in the near to medium term.”

#### **6.4.2.4 Schools**

Audlem has a nursery and primary school. At present, the primary school is not fully subscribed, but villagers have concerns that significant additional development will alter that situation to one of over-subscription. The environmental and health benefit for children walking to their local school or nursery should not be overlooked<sup>52</sup>.

#### **6.4.2.5 Shopping**

Audlem currently has more than 20 shops, an exceptionally large number for a village of its size. The wide range includes a Co-operative store, Post Office, chemist, newsagent and general store, butcher, hairdresser and three cafés. In addition there are three public houses.

#### **6.4.2.6 Community Facilities**

Additional residents in Audlem will generate a need to improve facilities at, for example, the medical practice, schools, Public Hall, playing field and village greens. Communities with a Neighbourhood Plan will receive 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – see 6.6.2 below. In the absence of CIL the Parish Council will seek developer contributions for nominated projects by agreement with CEC and developers.

### **Policy CW2: Community Facilities and Services**

**Proposals for additional services and facilities will be supported subject to the following criteria:**

- **the proposal will not generate unacceptable noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance to adjoining properties;**
- **the proposal will not lead to traffic congestion or adversely affect the movement of traffic on the adjoining highway;**
- **access arrangements and off-street parking can be satisfactorily provided without negatively impinging on adjoining residential and non-residential uses.**

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<sup>52</sup> Policies T4 & D13

### **Policy CW3: Infrastructure support**

For any proposal of the type specified below, the Design and Access Statement shall include an infrastructure evaluation which will quantify the likely impact on the community infrastructure; including, but not limited to, the effect on the medical facilities, schools, sewers, traffic, parking and public transport. To the extent that this evaluation indicates improvements to the existing infrastructure will be necessary to maintain existing quality of services, the proposal shall either incorporate the necessary improvements or include a contribution towards such improvements to the extent permitted by law by means of a deed of planning obligation under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 106.

This policy applies to proposals for 6 houses or more where a Design and Access Statement is required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

## **6.5 TRAFFIC AND PARKING POLICIES**

### **6.5.1 Objective**

To reduce the hazards associated with the current flow of traffic through the village and risks to pedestrians and cyclists.

### **6.5.2 Policies**

#### **6.5.2.1 Introduction**

Audlem is crossed by two main roads which merge in the village centre; the A525 from Woore to the east and Whitchurch to the west; the A529 from Nantwich to the north and Market Drayton to the south. The village traffic problems are caused less by the volume of traffic itself than the narrowness of roads and on-street parking.

The two most significant concerns expressed by respondents to the 2015 Housing Questionnaire were traffic and parking. Similar views were also expressed in the Business Questionnaire.



Stafford Street



Shropshire Street

### 6.5.2.2 Specific issues

The specific issues causing traffic congestion in Audlem, along with the associated risks to pedestrians and cyclists are:

- the substantial amount of Heavy Goods Vehicle and agricultural through traffic<sup>53</sup>;
- the narrowness of the A525 as it passes by the church, opposite the Post Office;
- on-street parking on the A525, particularly adjacent to the Co-operative store;
- on-street parking on the A529, immediately to the north of its junction with the A525;
- the lack of parking in the village centre<sup>54</sup>. There is already a high demand on the existing parking because of its proximity to shops, the Medical Practice and the Public Hall. Additional demand is created by visitors to the village who wish to park for lengthy periods to enjoy the many local walks and recreational facilities. Any additional housing will further exacerbate the problem. In order for Audlem to remain sustainable, people need to be able to park with reasonable ease adjacent to all these services. Further parking is therefore a key requirement for the future;
- the narrowness of and lack of pavements on Heathfield Road and Salford that connect the A529 at the north end of the village with the A525 at the east end of the village. These are frequently used as a 'rat run' to avoid the village centre. As the village primary and nursery schools are in Heathfield Road, there are significant parking issues on the roadside creating further risks to pedestrians<sup>55</sup>.

#### **Policy T1: Heavy Goods Vehicle through traffic**

**Developments that will increase the volume of Heavy Goods Vehicle traffic through the village will be rejected.**

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<sup>53</sup> Audlem Traffic Survey: Appendix 8.3

<sup>54</sup> Audlem Housing Questionnaire 2015: Consultation Statement Appendix 8.1 & Audlem Parish Plan: Appendix 8.3

<sup>55</sup> Residents Association objection document and commissioned report Planning Application 14/3976: Appendix 8.3

#### **Policy T2: Traffic Congestion and Risks to Road Users**

Proposals requiring planning permission and which seek to increase the number of access points or which would involve an increase in traffic generation will need to demonstrate that they do not further inhibit the free flow of traffic, exacerbate conditions of parking stress, including conflict with larger vehicles, or increase risk to the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, in the following areas:

- the village centre and the three main road exits;
- Stafford Street as far as the Salford/School Lane crossroads;
- Shropshire Street and Whitchurch Road as far as the Mill Lane/Weaver View crossroads;
- Cheshire Street as far as the cemetery;
- Green Lane, from its junction with Shropshire Street to the river bridge;
- the entire length of Heathfield Road and Salford.

#### **Policy T3: Parking, close to the village centre**

Proposals to provide a limited increase in short-term and off-road parking spaces within 250 metres of the Bellyse monument in the village centre will be supported.

Should any brownfield land become available within 250 metres of the Bellyse monument where safe pedestrian and wheelchair access can be assured, then as part of any development proposal on this land the provision of suitably landscaped short-term off-road public parking spaces designed to blend into this historic village centre will be required, proportionate to the scale of the development and any viability constraints.

#### **Policy T4: Pedestrian Footways**

Proposals that improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists throughout the village will be supported, in line with Policy D13.

## **6.6 MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT: S106 AND THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

### **6.6.1 Section 106 Agreements**

Section 106 Agreements are made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). They are legally binding agreements that are negotiated between the Planning Authority and the applicant/developer and any others that may have an interest in the land (landowners). Alternatively applicants can propose them independently, this is known as a 'unilateral undertaking'. They are attached to a piece of land and are registered as local land charges against that piece of land. Section 106 Agreements, sometimes referred to as planning obligations, enable a council to secure contributions to services, infrastructure and amenities in order to support and facilitate a proposed development and are intended to make unacceptable development acceptable.

Section 106 Agreements are generally used to minimise or mitigate the impact of development and to implement the Councils planning policies through:

- prescribing the nature of development (e.g. by requiring a proportion of affordable housing); securing a contribution from a developer to compensate or provide loss created by development (e.g. open space);
- mitigating a development's impact on the locality (e.g. contribution towards infrastructure and facilities).

Developers can either pay a contribution to the council or deliver the benefit themselves.

It is a legal requirement that Section 106 agreements meet three tests as set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations. These tests are that the obligations in the Section 106 Agreement must be:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development;
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

If an obligation does not meet all of these tests it cannot in law be taken into account in granting planning permission: they have to be fair and reasonable. Planning officers will not ask for any contribution unless it relates fairly to the development. It would not be fair to expect a developer to contribute towards existing service deficiencies, such as a shortage of school places or library facilities, or repairs to the highway, where no additional need would arise from the development. However, it would be fair to expect them to contribute to limiting the impact of their own development on the local area.

If a developer offers any unrelated contribution, that does not meet the three legal tests, as an inducement, planning officers will disregard this when determining the application. As an example, it may not be appropriate for a Council to seek contributions towards the development of a swimming pool arising from an application for a supermarket development. However, it could be appropriate to expect a supermarket developer to contribute towards highway improvements (if appropriate) and an enhanced landscaping plan.

On receipt of an application for development the Council undertakes a consultation exercise, and whether the Parish Council supports or objects to a proposal, it has have the opportunity to put forward suggestions, which could potentially inform any negotiated S106 agreement.

It is therefore incumbent on communities to identify those areas where there are weaknesses in social and physical infrastructure to which contributions could be sought from new development, provided that the contribution relates in scale and kind to the development. For example, affordable housing, sheltered accommodation, open space and local environmental improvements.

Unfortunately, whilst the S106 agreement and unilateral undertakings involved in the two larger developments have been overturned, future Section 106 agreements are expected to continue as a planning tool for ensuring more general infrastructure deficiencies are dealt with. A new tool, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), can be used by the Local Authority and Parish Councils to mitigate specifically identified infrastructure issues. It is anticipated that S106 and the CIL will run side by side.

### **6.6.2 Community Infrastructure Levy**

CIL regulations have changed the developer payment landscape by introducing the levy and also by changing when Councils can seek S106 obligations<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> PAS website: Appendix 8.3

CIL provides a mechanism for developer contribution to contribute towards infrastructure needed to support the development of the area. It is not to remedy existing deficiencies unless the new development will make it worse. CIL is not mandatory – Councils must develop a policy to support the imposition of CIL and must spend the income on infrastructure.

CEC does not yet have a CIL in place as this has to be based on an approved Local Plan, evidence of the infrastructure gap and the potential impact on viability. However, once this is in place a Parish Council with a ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plan can claim 25% of the Levy, uncapped, paid directly to the Parish.

Cheshire East Charging authorities, i.e. Cheshire East Council, can choose to pass on more than 25% of levy, although the wider spending powers that apply to the Neighbourhood funding element of the levy will not apply to any additional funds passed to a Parish. Those additional funds can only be spent on infrastructure, as defined in the Planning Act 2008 for the purposes of the levy.

CIL can be paid ‘in kind’, as land or infrastructure, as well as by cash, if the charging authority (i.e. CEC) chooses to accept these alternatives. However, the relevant percentage of cash value of levy receipts must be passed on to Parish Council in cash.

What can CIL be spent on?

- the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure e.g. play areas, parks, green spaces, transport, schools, health and social care facilities, cultural and sports facilities;
- anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area, e.g. at Parish level, affordable housing.

As with the S106 agreements it is incumbent on communities to identify those areas where there are weaknesses in social and physical infrastructure to which contributions could be sought from new development (provided that the contribution relates in scale and kind to the development).

### **6.6.3 Preferred use of CIL and Section 106 funds**

The main infrastructure issues that have been identified during the production of the Neighbourhood Plan through the questionnaires<sup>57</sup> are shown below:

- Traffic
- Parking
- Medical
- Sewers
- Recreation
- Employment
- Public transport/Cycling/cycle paths

A Neighbourhood Delivery Plan will be produced by the Parish Council informed by the issues raised within this Plan. Further work on infrastructure issues will be undertaken as part of the Parish Plan update later in 2015 and will be incorporated into the Neighbourhood Delivery Plan.

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<sup>57</sup> Q22 - Audlem Housing Questionnaire 2015: Appendix 8.3



**POLICY CI1: Infrastructure**

All new development will be expected to address the impacts and benefits it will have on community infrastructure and how any negative aspects can be mitigated.

Provision of community infrastructure by developers in lieu of financial contributions will be supported where such community infrastructure projects are identified in the Neighbourhood Delivery Plan and the Parish Plan.

**6.6.4 Audlem Medical Trust**

Comments made by Audlem Patient Participation Group have requested that, in the absence of a NHS England policy for the local distribution of developer contributions, all developers should instead make a contribution to Audlem Medical Trust<sup>58</sup>. Such a contribution should be commensurate with the additional pressure on medical services created by the development. Both the Audlem and District Carers Association and Audlem District Amenities Society also support such a practice.

**POLICY CI2: Existing and new facilities**

The retention, continued use, refurbishment and improvement of all community buildings and recreational facilities together with the shops and public houses will be supported.

The loss of the shops, Post Office, public houses and other community infrastructure from the Parish will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the existing uses have been marketed for at least 12 months and any replacement use will provide equal or greater benefits to the community including benefits through contributions from any other sites within the Parish.

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<sup>58</sup> Based on calculations made in line with the NHS funding formula

## 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements and thanks are due to the following; all of who played an important part in delivering this Plan:

- Members of the Audlem Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee;
- All the Volunteers who gave up their time to help;
- Officers and members of Cheshire East Council for the support and advice they gave as the Plan was developed;
- Officers of Cheshire Community Action for the support and advice they gave as the Plan was developed;
- Audlem residents of all ages who participated so enthusiastically in the consultation process and throughout the creation program for the Plan.

## 8 APPENDICES

### 8.1 Consultation Statement

This document can be found here:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D114236.pdf>

### 8.2 Neighbourhood Plan Decision Notice and Area Map

Neighbourhood Area Decision notice

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D85465.pdf>

Neighbourhood Area Notification:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D85466.pdf>

### 8.3 References

Audlem Parish Plan 2005:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D111957.pdf>

Audlem Parish Plan 2010:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D111958.pdf>

Audlem Centre Conservation Area

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D117073.pdf>

Salford Conservation Area:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D117070.pdf>

Coxbank Conservation Area:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D117059.pdf>

Village Design Statement 2009 rev 2011:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D111959.pdf>

Zoopla 2015:

[http://www.zoopla.co.uk/market/audlem/?search\\_source=top\\_nav](http://www.zoopla.co.uk/market/audlem/?search_source=top_nav)

Community profile for Audlem (Parish), ACRE, OCSI 2013:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D111961.pdf>

Adrian Fisher email:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D113064.pdf>

Subsequent conversations with Michael E Jones & CEC Spatial planners:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D113912.pdf>

National Planning Policy Framework document:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

Housing Needs Survey 2013:

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D112016.pdf>

Conservation Area Documentation:

<http://audlemnpc.audlem.org/doc/D17753.pdf>

Design Quality Standards – Housing Corporation:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/313392/design\\_quality\\_standards.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313392/design_quality_standards.pdf)

Environment Agency guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens 2008:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf)

Building for Life – 2012:

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

**Dept. for Transport Manual for Streets:**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf)

**Case for Space RIBA:**

<http://www.architecture.com/Files/RIBAHoldings/PolicyAndInternationalRelations/HomeWise/CaseforSpace.pdf>

**Inland Waterways Policy Advice Note:**

<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/InlandWaterways.pdf>

**Assets of Community Value:**

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D114064.pdf>

**Audlem Traffic Survey:**

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D114085.pdf>

**List of Open Spaces:**

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D114065.pdf>

**Residents Association objection document and commissioned report Planning Application  
14/3976:**

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D112560.pdf>

**PAS website:**

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/community-infrastructure-levy>

#### **8.4 Cheshire East Council Document Library**

<http://cheshireeast-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/library>

#### **8.5 Basic Conditions Statement**

<http://np.audlem.org/doc/D114438.pdf>

## 8.6 Glossary of Terms

### Affordable Housing<sup>59</sup>

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

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

Affordable Rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing.

Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

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

Affordable housing is not available on the open market. It is available as social rented, affordable rented or as shared ownership housing, and is managed by a Registered Social Landlord, who may be the local authority.

### Brownfield

Previously developed land<sup>60</sup>: land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

### Conservation Area

Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

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<sup>59</sup> as defined in the NPPF

<sup>60</sup> as defined in the NPPF: Appendix 8.3

## **CNBC**

Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council

### **Development Plan**

A Development Plan is the legal term used to describe the set of planning policy documents that are used to determine planning applications within a particular area.

### **Flood Risk Assessment**

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

### **Greenfield**

Land (or a defined site) usually farmland that has not previously been developed.

### **Highway Authority**

Highway authorities are responsible for producing the local transport plan and for managing existing or proposed new local roads in the area. In most places, the local highway authority is part of the county council, the metropolitan council or the unitary authority.

### **Household**

One person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area.

### **Infill**

Land within the existing Audlem settlement boundary or within the curtilage of existing properties immediately adjacent to the existing Audlem settlement boundary<sup>61</sup> and not listed as an open space' site.

### **Infrastructure**

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

### **Listed Building**

A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II\* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building and any buildings or permanent structures.

### **Local Authority**

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

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<sup>61</sup> Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council LP policy Res.4: Appendix 8.3

### **Localism Act 2011**

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

### **NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework**

National planning policies that local planning authorities should take into account when drawing up Development Plans and other documents, and making decisions on planning applications. In the past these policies have been included in Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The Government has introduced the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in April 2012.

### **Open Space**

Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground. However, in applying the policies in Planning Policy Guidance 17: 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation', open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs that offer important opportunities for sport or recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.

### **Parish Council**

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

### **Planning Permission**

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

### **Public Open Space**

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

### **Renewable Energy**

Energy generated from the sun, wind, oceans, plants, the fall of water, biomass and deep geothermal heat.

### **SHLAA**

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. A study to identify sites with potential for housing, assess their housing potential and assess when they are likely to be developed.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

This assesses the economic, environmental and social impacts of a proposed policy or plan, to ensure that it would contribute to achieving sustainable development. Development Plan Documents (DPDs) have to undergo Sustainability Appraisal, but Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) do not.

## **9 REVIEW**

The ANP will adopt a similar cycle to the Cheshire East Council Local Plan i.e. every 3 to 5 years as appropriate.