



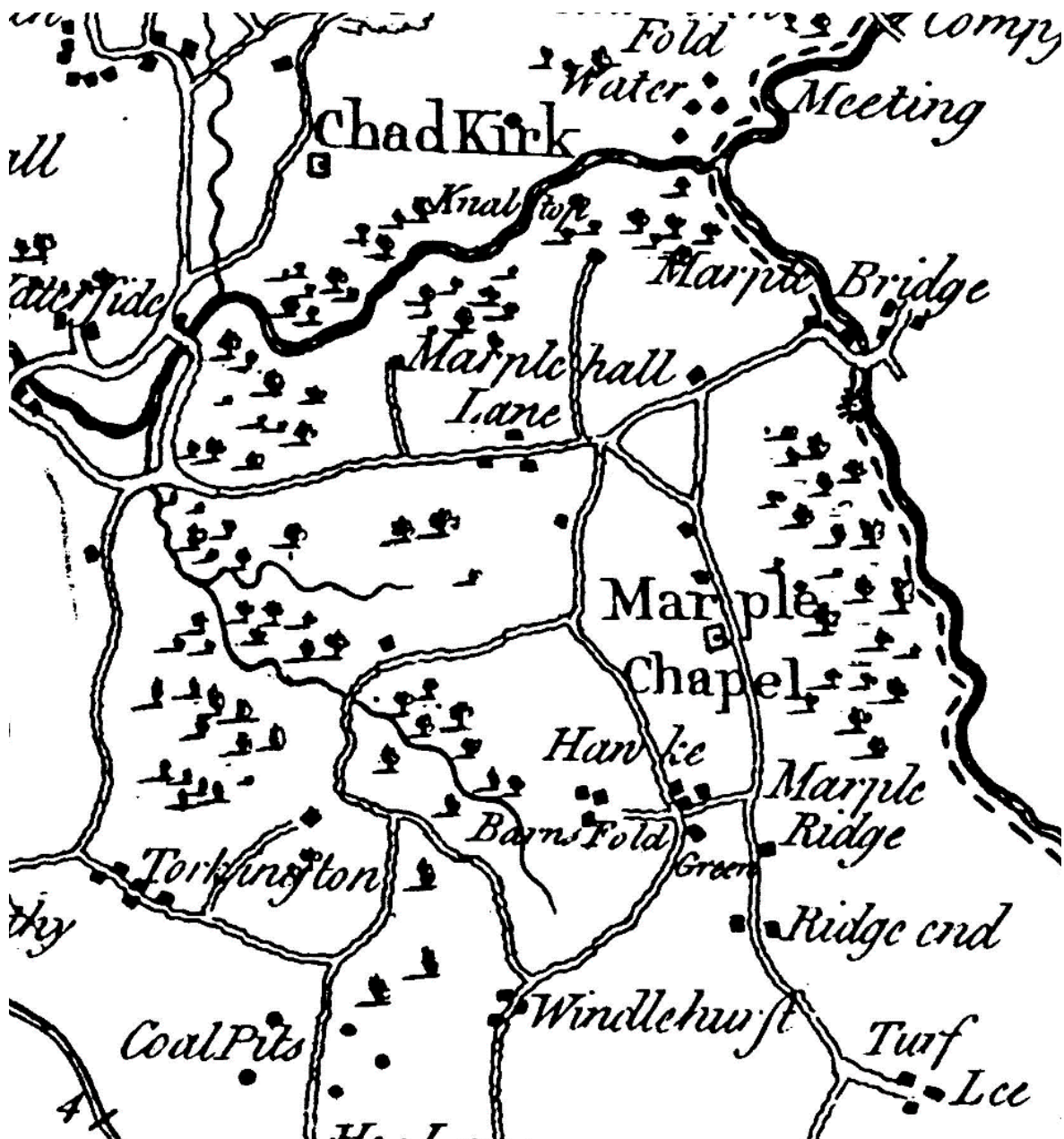
Marple Neighbourhood Plan

This is 'Our Marple Plan'. It is our vision for the future for Marple. We are proud of Marple, and love living or working here. Marple is a dynamic community, and we want to make sure that the Marple of the future provides a good quality of life for everyone. This consultation version of our plan has been written by the residents and councillors who make up the Marple Neighbourhood Forum.

We want your views to make sure that when we submit the final version for examination and a local referendum it reflects the priorities and concerns of Marple people and businesses.



Version	Issued	Purpose
1.1	Dec 2017	First draft for Management Committee
2.1	Feb 2018	Issued to SMBC for comments
3.0	July 2018	Internal draft incorporating SMBC comments
4	Aug 2018	Public consultation



Map 1: Marple in 1750.

This is what the area now occupied by Marple looked like in 1750 – 268 years ago. Some familiar names, but no railways or canal, and not many houses either. What will it look like in the future?

Influence, Impact, Inspire, Include

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1 Welcome

This is 'Our Marple Plan'. It is our vision for the future for Marple. We are proud of Marple, and love living or working here. But Marple is a dynamic community. We want to make sure that the Marple of the future provides a good quality of life for everyone.

The plan has been written by a group of residents and councillors who make up the Marple Neighbourhood Forum¹. We want your views on this consultation version to make sure that when we submit the final version for examination and a local referendum that it reflects the priorities and concerns of Marple people and businesses.

Neighbourhood Plans are an important part of the planning system and our plan will have the same legal status as the Stockport Local Plan if it is approved at a local referendum. Our plan aims to support the Stockport Local Plan and to positively support local development. It takes account of national planning policy, EU obligations (for instance on the environment) and human rights laws.

For more information or to make comments on this draft, please email info@ourmarpleplan.co.uk or visit the '[Our Marple Plan](#)' website.

2 Plan Area

Because the emerging Greater Manchester Strategic Framework and Stockport Local Plans are intended to run to 2035, our NP covers fifteen years from 2020 to 2035.

The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) area was agreed in June 2016 and is shown in the appendix. It covers the built-up area of Marple and the town centre. We have worked closely with people in Marple Bridge, Mellor, Compstall, Mill Brow and High Lane who are creating their own NPs.

Marple does not have a Parish or Town Council and there is only one established tier of local Government in Marple: Stockport, a Unitary Council. The six Councillors for Marple sit on Marple Area Committee which has some finance and decision-making powers. The ten Greater Manchester Councils (including Stockport) are grouped into a Combined Authority (GMCA) with an elected Mayor. GMCA powers and finance are limited compared to London and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales and other countries.



¹ Marple Neighbourhood Forum is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011

3 A Vision for Marple

We are proud that Marple is a thriving and historic canal-side town with wonderful people, an active community and a good quality of life. Set in the rolling hills between Manchester and the Peak district we enjoy the best of all worlds. We have an interesting history and interesting buildings. We have an attractive environment with great community spaces and parks leading to great countryside. The town supports a range of independent and national shops and we have a diverse range of employers.

But we also have challenges. Our success means that there is pressure to build houses; traffic congestion creates noise, pollution and Stockport Road splits our town. Shopping is changing, and we need to make sure that we provide a range of shops, particularly specialist ones, that Marple residents and people from outside will want to use. The growing population will need good quality community and leisure facilities. We need decent, affordable homes for everyone, particularly younger and older people. We need to move towards a more diverse, more welcoming, low emission community that is more sustainable, socially, economically and environmentally.

Our vision is for Marple to grow as an attractive community to live or work in or to visit. We will retain our character and heritage as a small town with a village feel. High levels of education and economic activity will mean a high quality of life and well-being. More compact development will reduce the need to travel, reinforce local facilities, reduce the need to develop open land and will allow us to retain the existing settlement boundaries. We will make more use of our heritage assets both for locals and visitors. We will revitalise our town centre and make it easier to walk and cycle around by reducing the dominance of Stockport Road. We will encourage small companies and start-ups to provide good jobs. We will investigate creation of a civic centre area to provide high-quality community facilities.

What are the planning problems we are trying to fix?

This table identifies our strengths and weaknesses; potential opportunities and threats.

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marple has clear boundaries and a real sense of identity • Excellent built heritage: history, buildings, urban form, Conservation Areas • Good range of civic buildings including a small swimming pool and library • Critical mass of small shops and cafes • Reasonable train service to Manchester; good road/rail links to the Peak District • Beautiful surroundings, canal network, Middlewood Way • Significant existing and potential tourism • High level of community activity, low level of deprivation
Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre is divided and dominated by traffic • Walking (and cycling) around the centre is inconvenient and sometimes unpleasant • Town centre has no town square or other focal point • Few heritage and tourism facilities or interpretation • Marple has no Town or Parish Council • Range and affordability of Housing for younger and older people
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for a second large food store to strengthen the local economy • Create greater sense of place by reducing traffic dominance, particularly on Stockport Road • Create a new, integrated Civic Centre based on Memorial Park including tourist facilities • Capitalise on our green and built heritage to encourage well-being and tourism • Goyt Mill could become a valuable mixed-use development • Provide new/Infill housing – particularly for older and younger people

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new piazza based on the junction of Hollins Lane/ Stockport Road)
Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of town store or second large in-town food store could affect local shops • Loss of shops in the centre – particularly from internet shopping • Deterioration of heritage assets • Lack of resources to maintain amenities • Creeping traffic dominance and paralysis of the town centre • Other centres make themselves more attractive and out-compete Marple • Ageing population with few younger people and little diversity

While consulting and gathering evidence for the plan, we identified six areas where we think planning could change Marple for the better. Three key areas where major change is possible:

1. Do we want a **second large food store** in the town centre? This might increase overall footfall in the town centre and encourage more residents to shop in Marple. But is it realistic? What impact would it have on other retailers and the feel of Marple? How would it affect traffic and the layout of the Marple centre?
2. Getting the right balance between **Stockport Road** as a place and its role as part of the road network. Marple centre is over-run by traffic, and traffic dominates Stockport Road which cuts our centre in two. This doesn't happen in many communities and isn't inevitable.
3. Do we want a new **Civic Centre in the Memorial Park**? This is an exciting opportunity to extend the library and town hall area to create high-quality community space that includes exhibition and performance space, Senior Citizens Hall, NHS clinic, police station and Scout hut. This could also house local council services and create a home for any future Marple Town Council.

And then there are three other important areas where we can steer development

4. We have a **great green and built heritage**. There are opportunities to make more particularly of our canals and our industrial heritage to promote tourism and increase visitors to the benefit of residents, businesses and the visitors themselves.
5. What is the future of **Goyt Mill**? Should it continue as an employment site or be developed for mixed use as leisure, residential, retail or entertainment use? There is lots of potential.
6. We have two great opportunities at our stations:
 - The Friends of Marple Station are promoting a **new hub at Marple Station** that would provide a high-quality waiting room including toilets and a café as well as community facilities. How do we make this happen and what does it mean for the surrounding area?
 - Rose Hill Station is at the start of the Middlewood Way and the base of a network of cycling and walking opportunities. Could we promote **Leisure facilities at Rose Hill** to encourage tourism and provide facilities for passengers?

Change in these six areas would transform Marple.

4 National and local planning guidance

For our Neighbourhood Plan to be brought into force by the local planning authority it must meet the [basic conditions](#) set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). These can be summarised as follows:

- Generally conforming with strategic local policy.
- Having regard to national planning policy and guidance (including the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance).
- Compatible with EU obligations.
- Contributing to achieving sustainable development.

We have produced a Basic Conditions Statement (Marple Neighbourhood Forum, 2018) which shows how our plan meets these conditions. The final version of the plan will be subject to a sustainability assessment, and Strategic Environmental Assessment if required.

The Marple area is covered by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), and Stockport MBC. These have produced a range of statutory and advisory policies that affect land use and transport and our plan has taken account of all of these.

5 Community Involvement and Consultation

Consultations with Marple people, elected representatives and businesses over the production of this Neighbourhood Plan have been overwhelmingly positive and reflect a genuine desire to improve our community and to take more control over decisions that affect us.

The following is a summary of the key consultations that have been carried out in Marple since 2010 on issues that are included in the plan. The final plan will be accompanied by a more detailed account of the recent consultation process (MNF, 2018).

2010-12 The Marple Vision Partnership (MVP): This was set up to take forward The Vision for Marple, a community project developed by Marple Civic Society to create a partnership between our community, Stockport Council and British Waterways (now Canal & River Trust). The process involved extensive consultation with individuals and community groups.

2010 - Street Clutter Workshop: The Civic Society ran a professional workshop to identify excessive street clutter that could be removed from the town centre. 98 items were identified and the report presented to, and accepted by the leader of the council, executive members, local councillors and senior officers. Five years later, only 3 minor items had been dealt with.

2012 - The Glass-House Community Led Design: The Civic Society ran two professional workshops to look at movement around Marple, accessibility to Marple Wharf and alternative schemes. It included a visit to Hollingworth Hub. Forty delegates attended. The group highlighted the barrier effect of Stockport Road which cuts Marple in two, and numerous other issues now addressed in the MNP.

2012 – PlaceCheck: This assessed the quality of Marple as a place and developed strategies for change. A Government report concluded that this methodology could be used by local authorities throughout the planning process. The workshop, identified that to make the most of any new retail development in the town centre, there needed to be careful consideration of town centre design, public space and movement to avoid problems created by pedestrian barriers and traffic congestion.

2012 - Kirkland Developments: The company carried out a comprehensive public consultation into a new food store at Chadwick Street including stakeholder meetings, website with a feedback form, a

two-day public exhibition, 6,000 leaflets distributed to the Marple community, engagement with community websites and the local press. 1,784 contacts were made with the public and 908 written comment responses received, resulting in 91% in favour (online) and 85% in favour (exhibition).

2013 Marple Civic Society Public consultation: The society launched a public consultation and spoke to 257 members of the public about a traffic scheme proposed by the Council and the need for an independent study to address the issues identified by previous community workshops and consultations. There was almost unanimous support for an independent urban design study to look at a new approach to a long standing traffic problem in Marple town centre.

2015 - Urban Design Study (UDS) Phil Jones Associates: Major study to look at how Marple town centre functioned both from traffic circulation and as a place. Consultation at the Locks Heritage Festival in 2015 was overwhelmingly supportive of this positive new approach. Key findings were that the Neighbourhood Planning process should focus on the spaces and approaches surrounding Stockport Road and its junctions with Market Street, Hollins Lane and Trinity Street. Strengthening the links and overcoming the physical and psychological barriers are essential to increase the visibility of Market Street extend its presence and to enhance pedestrian and cycle access. It suggested that '*Bold changes are required and are increasingly possible*'. In 2017 the study was presented to the Neighbourhood Plan AGM.

2016 - NP consultation and exhibition: A week of consultation including 5,000 leaflets delivered within the NP area, a presentation to area committee, a public meeting. An exhibition included displays on major issues in the town.

2018 – Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council: Consultation over an early draft of this plan.

2018 (August/September) – public consultation with local people and businesses about the key issues that should be included in this plan.



Neighbourhood Plan Policies

6 Town Centre (TC)

Introduction

Marple town centre developed from the start of the Industrial Revolution into an attractive mix of mainly late Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian and some modern buildings centred on Market Street and Stockport Road. The buildings record a century of development of the centre of a small town.

A partially completed 1960s scheme extended Hibbert Lane which allowed Market Street to become a quiet pedestrianised precinct, and several cleared areas became parking. At Chadwick Street the car park also has a Mail Sorting Office which has an uncertain long-term future. Recently an unpopular proposed out-of-town supermarket proposal on Hibbert Lane was withdrawn, and permission granted (and now expired) for a supermarket on the Chadwick Street site. Unrestrained traffic growth has left many areas in the centre dominated by traffic.

The Stockport Retail Study Update (Hollis Vincent, 2014) ranks Marple as best out of Stockport's District Centres on 16 customer satisfaction ratings. This strong relative ranking does not accord with our local understanding and may reflect the fragile state of local retailing overall in the Stockport area. Currently the town centre lets Marple down: the pedestrianised area is tired and shabby, and traffic on Stockport Road creates danger and severance, deters linked trips, impedes movement for pedestrians, cyclists and less mobile people and holds the economy of Marple back. While there are relatively few vacant units, retail trends are changing quickly, footfall particularly during weekdays is low, there is a lot of street clutter, the shopping environment is poor, and our discussions with retailers suggests that the economy of the town centre is fragile.

Our vision is for Marple town centre to become a more vibrant, people-friendly place. Where activity is low we want to encourage more people. Where the environment is dominated by traffic, we want it to become a place that is safe, pleasant and easy to negotiate for everyone and attracts more investment. We expect new development to adhere to the principles in 'Street Design for All - An update of national advice and good practice (CIHT, 2018):

- Design and manage the street for a sense of place as well as for movement.
- Design the street to enhance its sense of place
- Encourage wellbeing through healthy, active lifestyles
- Design and manage the highway to make unsafe actions less likely
- Aim for total street design-not just individual uncoordinated components

Currently, Stockport Road, Hollins Lane and Hibbert Lane are perceived as significant barriers to moving around the town centre on foot. Poor quality and narrow footways on parts of Stockport Road and Hollins Lane (with no footway at one point) make walking unpleasant. These create difficulties in moving between The Hollins, Market Street and Stockport Road west of Hibbert Lane. In turn this discourages investment and makes people more likely to shop elsewhere, including on-line.

Marple hosts occasional markets both in the centre and at Rose Hill. These are very popular but onerous to organise as one-offs. We think that there is a demand for a more regular market – monthly or even weekly – that could showcase food, drink and crafts from the local area.

Context

Two recent retail studies have included an assessment of Marple. A Retail Statement was submitted on behalf of ASDA to support an application for a supermarket on the Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College Hibbert Lane site (Drivers Jonas Deloitte, 2012). A 2011 household survey showed 57% of residents chose to do their main food shopping outside Marple.

A study carried for Stockport MBC (Hollis Vincent, 2014) covered the nine main town centres. In Marple it found: *'... the highest number of retail operators in the convenience goods sector of any of the District Centres. Thus, whilst multiple supermarket representation is limited to the Co-op² and Iceland, there are many independent traders, including seven bakers, two butchers, two greengrocers, two off-licences, and a range of confectioners and newsagents. Moreover, the redevelopment of the Chadwick Street Car park would rectify the deficiency of a medium-sized supermarket, provided the necessary land assembly can be achieved and an operator secured.'*

After these two studies, the store at The Hollins was taken over by ASDA and appears to be trading better than the former Co-op although we have no definitive evidence. This may have reduced the trade of the shops on Market Street and Derby Way. While we can extrapolate certain retail trends such as internet shopping, there is always uncertainty about the future, and plans must remain flexible. We all want to see our shopping areas remain at the centre of Marple life.

A study (Phil Jones Associates, 2015) prepared on behalf of Marple Vision Partnership (MVP) included an analysis of how design and placemaking could improve the operation and attractiveness of the retail area both to shoppers and investors. It defined a design framework and vision for Marple that would help to reduce traffic dominance in the town and to improve facilities available to pedestrian and cyclists. The aspirations of MVP to rejuvenate the town centre, to support the vibrancy and growth of the shopping area on Market Street and Stockport Road, to improve accessibility, safety and sustainability and manage the interaction of people and traffic have been taken on by the NF.

Our extensive consultation is clear that residents and businesses want to see a total, integrated town centre design as suggested by the PJA report (Phil Jones Associates, 2015) - rather than a piecemeal, uncoordinated approach dominated by traffic flow. Modern design and placemaking stresses the importance of streets not only as conduits for movement but as places to visit and spend time. A recent report (Atkins, 2017) has added baseline information on current movements.

Policy TC1: Additional Town Centre Food Store

Policy TC1: The development of a food store of up to 1,000 sq. m on sites shown on the proposals map) is supported subject to the following conditions:

- The development meets the 'placemaking' criteria set out in policy TC2
- A significant financial contribution is made to an agreed placemaking plan to ensure the effect on the overall town centre environment and function is acceptable.

Supporting explanation and evidence

The evidence suggests that Marple can support an additional food store and that this will reduce the amount of money spent by Marple residents outside Marple. Consultation has shown consistent support from both local businesses and residents for an additional food store. It has also shown strong

² Now owned and operated by ASDA.

support for the principles that the store should reinforce the character of Marple, should not add to traffic volume or severance, and any planning gain should be invested in improving the town centre.

However, potentially available sites, may not be attractive to retailers, or existing owners may prefer to remain, or to promote an alternative use such as residential. The local authority will have a key role in assembling and making a potential site available and developable. For instance, unrealistic expectation of site value could prevent development of the Chadwick Street sorting office site.

Policy TC2: Town Centre Placemaking

Policy TC2: All development in Marple Town Centre will be expected to contribute both physically and financially to implementation of the following principles to make the centre a more attractive place to shop, work and for other activities. Development that contravenes these principles will be refused:

- Increase in footfall and vibrancy, including outside normal shopping hours such as restaurants and other leisure uses;
- Genuinely active frontages – this includes restaurants
- Reduction in car dominance, including the barrier effect of Stockport Road;
- Creating a more attractive street environment, with a clear town centre identity;
- Prevention of additional, and removal of existing street clutter
- Pedestrian movement will be prioritized in streets with main retail frontages as identified in the proposals map
- Safe and attractive cycling routes and enhanced provision for public transport will be

Supporting explanation and evidence

Over many years local people and successive consultations have identified the barrier effect of Stockport Road and traffic congestion as major problems for both drivers and pedestrians. The road is essentially designed for motorised traffic. Traffic volumes and speeds are relatively low suggesting that the barrier effect and congestion are due to the way the traffic is managed rather than large volumes. We need a scheme that designs for a people-friendly town and recognises place for social interaction - an integrated scheme that is designed for the needs of all users, not just car drivers - a scheme that starts with simple design promoting free flow of movement and only the addition of controlling factors where they can be justified.

Stockport Road, Hollins Lane and Hibbert Lane are significant barriers to moving around the town centre on foot, and poor quality and narrow footways and inconvenient formal crossings on parts of Stockport Road and Hollins Lane make walking unpleasant. Our consultations suggest these create real and perceived difficulties in moving between the ASDA store area, the Market Street precinct and Stockport Road west of Hibbert Lane. In turn this discourages investment in the retail area.

Current street design means that drivers are unaware that they are entering a town centre and an area with many pedestrians including many that are less mobile. In addition, some walking routes from Stockport Road to the other areas of the centre are indirect. While traffic speeds are often low due to queuing at traffic signals, this is not always the case and traffic speeds cause problems for vulnerable pedestrians. It would be logical to aim to limit traffic speeds to 20mph although this does not need to be a formal speed limit but could be achieved through gateway features, placemaking and urban design. (CIHT, 2018) shows how a design for lower speeds has worked in other places by improving road safety and the perception of a better environment. This would balance the need to keep traffic moving and the aim to create a pleasant place where town centre activities can take place.

Consultation also suggests that residents see Market Street as very quiet after 17.00 and that there is little for young adults to do. Retail is evolving rapidly and as part of placemaking, we would specifically like to see additional restaurant and other leisure activities on the pedestrianised parts of the town centre. Enhancement of the night time economy with appropriate eating and drinking facilities will be encouraged subject to Stockport local planning policies to restrict concentrations of hot food takeaways.

This policy conforms to the spirit of Core Strategy and saved UDP Review Policy PSD2.2 seeking to safeguard a high proportion of retail in Primary Frontages, although these policies are being quickly overtaken by the reality of internet shopping and other changes on high streets.

Marple has a Victorian and Edwardian feel, but also many modern buildings, and it is the character and scale of existing shopfronts give Marple centre much of its character. Opportunities will arise through the development process to bring about environmental improvement to the shop frontages and forecourts of the shops in the town centre.

Street clutter constantly accumulates and has an eroding effect on the appearance of streets and place. Cluttered road signs can cause confusion and distract drivers. Decluttering has a positive effect on streets, making them tidier and less confusing for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists (Urban Design London, 2017).

Policy TC3: Town Centre Car Parking

Policy TC3: A parking strategy will be developed to balance the supply and demand for parking across the town centre, including access arrangements to car parks, charging policy, length of stay limits, use by Residents' Permit holders and signage. Development in the town centre will be expected to contribute financially to implementation of this strategy.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Car parking can be an emotive issue and this has been a feature of our consultations (MNF, 2018). The Town Centre Capacity Study (Atkins, 2017) and a count carried out by MNF in 2017 suggests that demand and supply for town centre parking is well-balanced. Although shopping in Marple is relatively self-contained, the strategy will consider the context of car parking across the borough. Evidence from outer London (beyond the Congestion Charging Zone) suggests:

- Shopkeepers consistently overestimate the share of their customers coming by car. In some cases, this is by a factor of as much as 400%.
- While car drivers spend more on a single trip; walkers and bus users spend more over a month.
- A well-managed parking scheme, where spaces 'turn over' increases the number of visitors and helps business. This is more important than the number of spaces.
- There is no such thing as 'free' parking. The costs of developing and maintaining parking spaces and enforcing proper use must be borne by somebody.
- A good mix of shops and services and a quality environment are the most important factors in attracting visitors. If these are poor, then changes to parking or accessibility will not make a town centre more attractive.

We have not sought to define a policy for on-street or residential parking and feel that this is best left to consideration in individual areas.

Policy TC4: Uses of space above retail premises

Policy TC4: The use of space above shops for housing, offices and other employment will be strongly encouraged. The redevelopment of retail units to provide flats, offices and other employment uses at first floor level and above is encouraged if a genuinely active frontage is retained.

Supporting explanation and evidence

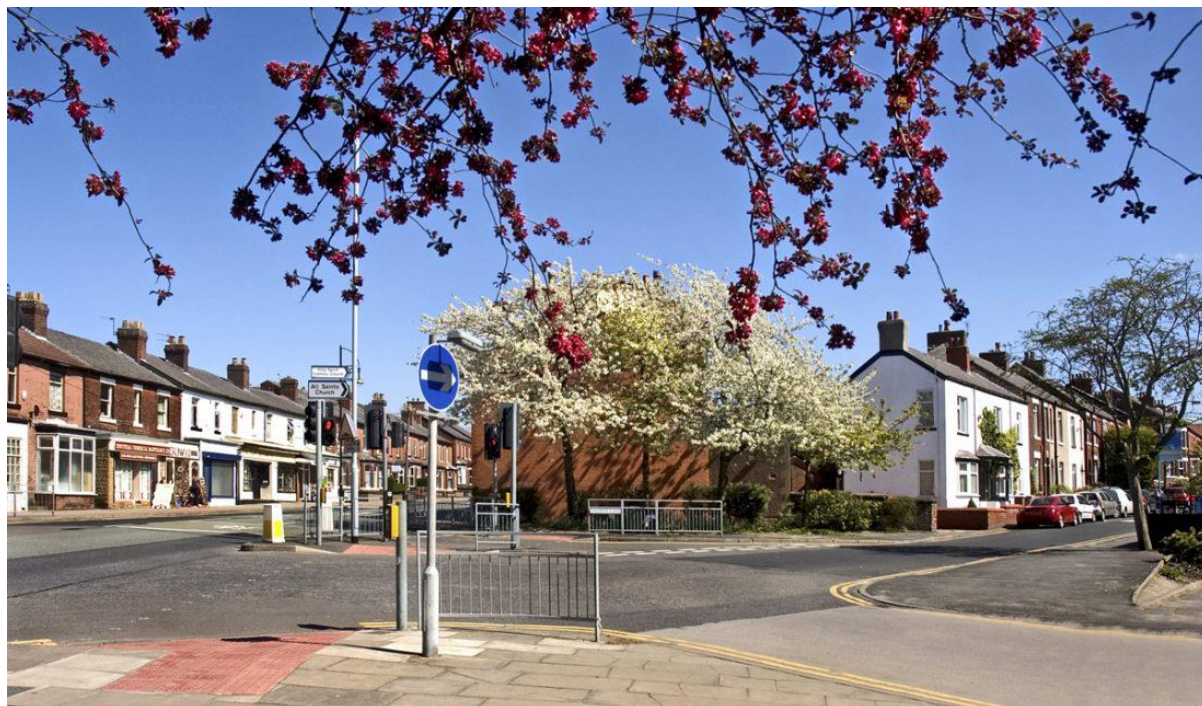
Some floors above shops in Marple are either underused or vacant, and this space could be used better. We understand the issues involved in conversion, particularly in older buildings and sometimes a better solution could be rebuilding with purpose-built flats and offices above. This would help to increase the prosperity and liveliness of the town centre, help to promote the evening economy and improve frontages above street level. This policy is intended to go further than existing national and local (PSD 2.3) policies, to encourage selective redevelopment with purpose-built flats.

Policy TC5: A market for Marple

Policy TC5: The establishment of a regular weekly or monthly street market in the town centre is supported.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Marple holds a street market with mainly local traders several days a year, and some markets are held at Rose Hill. A regular traditional market is unlikely to be viable, but regular specialist food and drink or craft markets could attract additional people to visit the town centre, as well as providing an outlet for the creativity of Marple people. The Neighbourhood Forum will work actively with the Council, Marple Business Group and potential market operators to identify a specific location within the town centre and establish a market as soon as practical.



7 Getting Around (GA)

Introduction

Transport and land use development are closely linked. Good transport accessibility encourages development, while poor accessibility may be a major barrier; it reduces the quality of life and restricts work opportunities. Good transport also ensures that existing residential, business, retail, cultural, heritage and leisure assets can function to their full potential. Adequate transport links are essential to meet the travel demands created by development. Highways are a vital part of the public realm and contribute to a prosperous economy and a healthy and inclusive society. But motor vehicles have become dominant to the detriment of a wide group of users, both in terms of their ability to move around and in the quality of Marple itself including impacts on health and well-being.

Context

Private cars vehicles help to meet the travel needs of those who live or work in or visit Marple. However, a strategy based on unlimited private car use is unsustainable:

- It is an inefficient use of road space compared to cycling or public transport;
- Land used for parking could otherwise be used for alternative, more valuable purposes;
- It creates noise, air pollution and visual intrusion;
- Traffic congestion causes delay both to car users themselves and other road users; and
- Road traffic creates barriers to pedestrian movement, discourages people from walking to, from and around Marple and thereby encourages a dispersed pattern of development.

Transport is not a benefit in itself: it is about the movement of people, goods and ideas. Our vision for transport is that it should support other aims such as to revitalise our town centre and make it easier to walk and cycle around by reducing the dominance of traffic on Stockport Road and throughout Marple and reduce the need to travel which will encourage use of local facilities. This will reduce the need to develop open land which and allow us to retain the existing settlement boundaries. Mobility must be inclusive. Our community must be accessible to everyone including older people (some with mobility scooters), the very young and people with disabilities.

Promotion and development of walking, cycling and public transport at the heart of our proposals, but we recognise the important role of private vehicles and the needs of people with mobility issues. TfL routinely calculate the annual health benefits of sustainable travel interventions, and the NHS have carried out some work on planning for health (NHS England, 2017). [Better Streets Delivered 2](#) calculates health benefits that have come from the placemaking approach to street improvements.

Our evidence is based on the Marple District Centre Capacity Study (Draft Baseline Assessment Report) produced for Stockport Council (Atkins, 2017)

Policy GA1: Walking and Cycling within Marple

Policy GA1: Walking and cycling routes to the town centre; Marple Hall School; Marple Sixth Form College; Rose Hill and other primary schools; rail stations, and other attractions will be provided as shown on the Neighbourhood Plan proposals map. Walking and cycling routes:

- Must be provided as an integral part of new developments.
- Significant developments must contribute to the implementing the network.
- Development that makes walking and cycling less safe or convenient must be refused
- Provision will be made for mobility scooters on walking routes where possible;
- New cycle routes should as a minimum follow the TfGM cycle design guidelines
- New or upgraded routes will be designed to give priority to pedestrians and where possible to provide a separate route for cyclist.
- Routes should respect the environment and biodiversity.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Barriers to walking and cycling include the lack of direct, safe and well-maintained routes and the lack of facilities where it is necessary to cross busy roads. This policy seeks to encourage developers to improve routes as part of their developments and contribute to the cost of upgrading existing routes. It also seeks to prevent existing routes being removed or made less convenient or safe. Use of the same space by walkers and cyclists can lead to conflicts and should be designed out as far as is reasonably practicable.

The design of the public realm should enable, encourage and empower people to choose walking for a portion of their journey. This can be achieved by providing: the most direct routes possible and making them clear and free from physical clutter, appropriately dimensioned routes that create a comfortable walking experience even at the busiest times, clear sightlines along routes that promote intuitive wayfinding, clear wayfinding signage at appropriate locations, crossing points that match desire lines, a well-lit and pleasant environment that feels safe and secure at all times

A survey undertaken by Friends of Marple Station in June 2017 indicated that 50% of users walk to the station with 45% travelling by car. A significant number walk more than 800 metres. This indicates the importance of walking as an access mode and suggests that some current car users could be encouraged to switch to walking or cycling.

We used evidence from Beelines (TfGM, 2018), part of the 'Made to Move' initiative (Boardman, 2017), local cyclists and Marple cycling groups, and the BikeLife report (Sustrans, 2018). Made to Move is backed by the GM Mayor and aims to transform the way we get around. It emphasises the need for a culture change both from people who live in GM and those who provide infrastructure. Cycling and walking offer an outstanding return on investment: at least £5.50 for every £1 invested. How we developed the Neighbourhood Plan cycling proposals is explained in our background note.

Policy GA2: Traffic Speeds

Policy GA2: The introduction of 20 miles/hour speed limits will be supported on residential streets; on Station Road and Brabyns Brow.

Reducing vehicle speeds on residential streets improves road safety and lowers noise and air pollution. It also discourages rat running through residential areas. These benefits make streets more pleasant places and encourage walking and cycling and more activity on street, for example making it safe for

children to play. This is relevant to land-use planning as it encourages activity other than vehicles and makes the other land-use changes we want to see more likely to happen.

This policy is consistent with Transport for Greater Manchester’s ‘Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040’ which supports ‘the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in residential and other built up areas where there is local support’. Within the town centre 20mph will be the norm, but here it does not have to be a formal speed limit. Reducing speed reduces both the frequency and severity of accidents with the proportion of people killed in an incident falling from 8% to 1.5% if speeds drop from 30 mph to 20mph (E Rosén, 2011).

Policy GA3: Links to Stockport

Supporting explanation and evidence

Policy GA3: The reinstatement of a fixed track public transport link between Marple and Stockport town centre, wholly or largely segregated from general road traffic is supported.

Stockport is a major centre of employment for Marple residents and the main shopping centre for the Borough. The 2011 Census showed that 1,800 Neighbourhood Plan area residents worked elsewhere in Stockport Borough and 1,400 people working in Marple lived elsewhere in Stockport. This is more than in any other Greater Manchester local authority area. Not all these people will work or live in the town centre, but it is a major centre of employment. Stockport also provides a gateway to the wider public transport network, including intercity rail and the bus network across South Manchester and this provides an additional flow of commuters via Stockport to and from other locations. Equivalent data is not available on shopping or leisure trips.

There are significant congestion problems on the two existing road links from Marple to Stockport via Offerton and via Bredbury. Trafficmaster data shows large sections of these routes have journey speeds of less than 10 mph in both morning and evening peaks. This causes delay and unreliability for buses as well as cars. It creates barriers for both work and non-work-related journeys. Poor accessibility to and from Stockport is a constraint on attracting development to Marple.

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

The former rail link from Marple via Romiley to Stockport Tiviot Dale station has been built over including by the M60. There are several options to restore rail connections with differing costs, technical challenges, potential journey times and levels of town centre penetration. These include:

- Hyde Loop to Guide Bridge, and via Reddish South to Stockport;
- New chord between the Romiley – Manchester via Bredbury line and the route via Reddish South where they cross on the edge of Reddish Vale;
- Re-open the Rose Hill to Macclesfield line to High Lane and construct a chord to link either to the Buxton line at Middlewood or to the Sheffield – Stockport line west of Disley tunnel, providing a link to Stockport via Hazel Grove;
- Linking the existing railway to a disused alignment in the Brinnington area and following this to Portwood before continuing on-street into the centre of Stockport, as suggested in the 2001 SEMMMS Strategy;
- Running on street through Brinnington before continuing via Portwood into Stockport; or

- Using the former Romiley – Stockport rail alignment as far as Bredbury before continuing to Portwood on the south side of the M60.

This aligns with ambitions of GM 2040 Transport Strategy. The last three options would probably use tram-train technology. The costs, benefits and feasibility of these, and any other, potential options would need to be examined in detail. One option would use the Middlewood Way. This must be retained to promote walking and cycling and is also a safe route to Rose Hill school.

Policy GA4: Development in areas with good public transport access

Policy GA4: Higher density residential development and re-development (40 to 100 dwellings per hectare) is encouraged within 400 metres of these locations with good public transport access:

- Marple railway station
- Rose Hill railway station
- The Hollins (interchange for high frequency bus services)

In these areas reduced car parking provision and car-free development will be encouraged. Development will be subject to:

- Retention of genuinely active retail frontages in existing retail areas
- High quality public realm
- No net loss of biodiversity or other environmental capital
- High quality internal and external cycle parking

Supporting explanation and evidence

It is logical that denser development, which generates more travel demand, should be located where it is easier to accommodate demand by sustainable modes. Short access journeys are more likely to be made on foot than longer ones. The 2017 FOMS survey showed that 67% of respondents living within an 800m radius of the station accessed it by walking, compared with 48% of Marple residents from further away.

This policy increases the overall sustainability of Marple by promoting a higher density of development close to the main public transport nodes. 400m is the generally accepted distance that people will walk to good quality public transport. New development within this radius will be particularly attractive to people who wish to use public transport, walk or cycle. Good accessibility will encourage a high public transport mode share. Denser development could lead to better outdoor residential space if high-quality shared gardens were provided.

Transport for London has found property prices are about 10% higher within 500 metres of a station and Transport for Greater Manchester found comparable increases for houses near the Metrolink network. TfGM intend to provide services at both Rose Hill and Marple stations that are comparable to Metrolink. The Hollins is included as this has a high level of provision of bus services.

The [London Plan](#) identifies ‘intensification areas’, all near rail or tube stations, and in many of these areas densification of development has occurred. Opportunity for increasing densities near Marple station are limited, but at The Hollins and Rose Hill Station, there are significant opportunities. We would expect these to be identified through creation of a planning brief for these areas.

We are aware of the issues of car parking at stations. While they theoretically encourage more rail trips, car parks are expensive to build and maintain, are space-intensive, lock up valuable land near

stations and can also encourage people who previously walked to the station to drive. On balance we feel that scarce land near stations is better used for higher density residential development rather than parking.

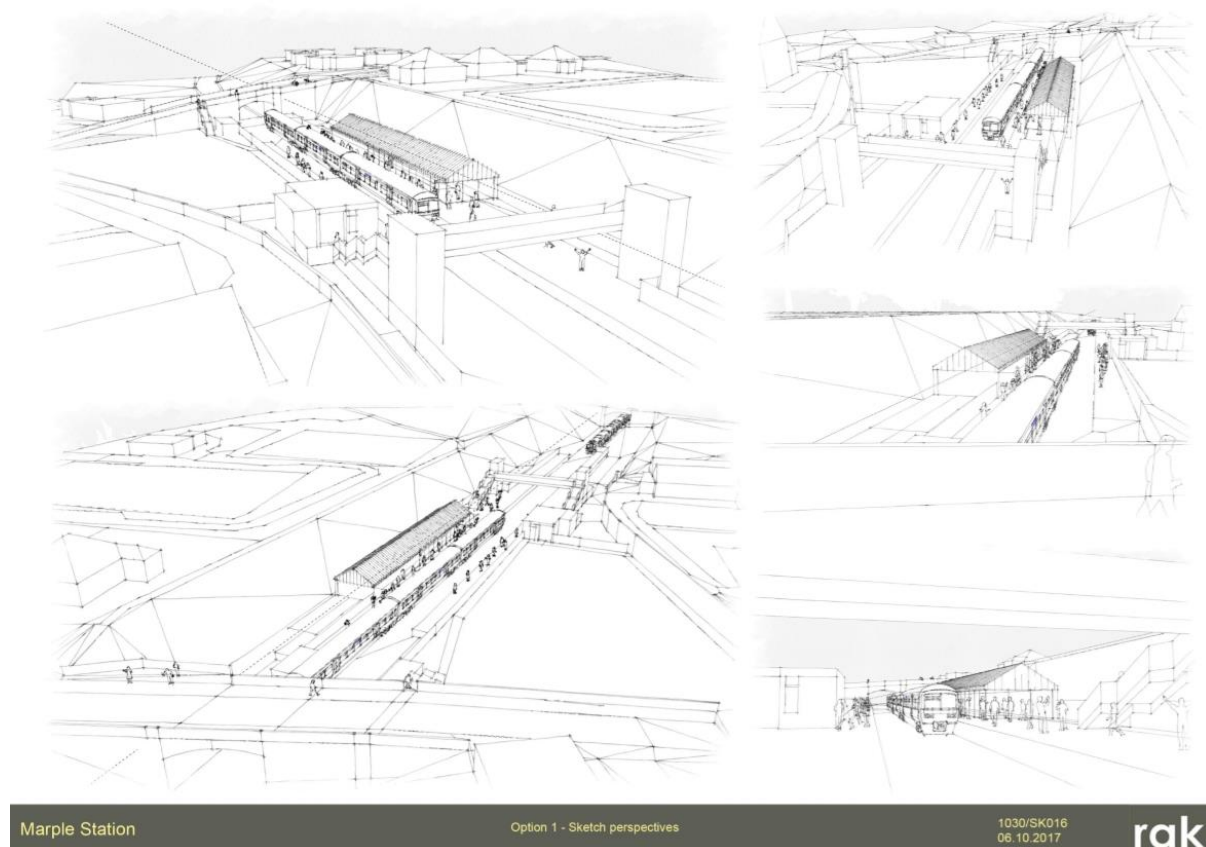
Policy GA5: Marple and Rose Hill railway Stations

Policy GA5: The following developments will be encouraged:

- **Marple Station.** Improved waiting and community facilities plus associated ancillary retail floorspace and other business uses, and an additional passenger entrance directly from Brabyns Brow to the Manchester platform.
- **Rose Hill Station.** An integrated building for tourists (such as cycle hire and servicing, information, toilet and café) with additional facilities for rail passengers.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Facilities at both Marple and Rose Hill stations were reduced in the 1960s, and despite the efforts of active 'Friends' groups³ do not provide the facilities that current travellers expect or require. There is demand for convenience retail, cafes and community facilities such as cycle hire at the stations. They would make rail a more attractive travel option. Some facilities, such as cycle hire, will attract leisure trips, support tourism development and local businesses.



³ Friends of Rose Hill Station and Friends of Marple Station

8 Housing (H)

Introduction

Marple is a wonderful place and it is not surprising that many people want to live here, but housing is expensive, and there is little land suitable for expansion or development.

Marple has a greater proportion of older people⁴ than the national average and this is set to increase over the lifetime of our NP. Currently Marple has almost 500 residents over 85 and with current life expectancy approaching 90 we will see this number more than double over the next 10 years. We need to plan for an increase in those aged over 65 of nearly 50%. Our research and consultation show the town is short of good options for older residents to downsize; this stops family homes coming onto the market. We also know from consultation with the public and estate agents that higher than average house prices and the lack of smaller dwellings makes it difficult for our younger people to find suitable housing. We need to find a solution to keep Marple as a balanced community. Statistics in this plan are based on the 2011 Census (ONS, 2011) and future predictions.

Our vision is that housing will contribute to the economic prosperity and well-being of Marple, but within the current settlement boundaries and without expansion onto our valued Green Belt which provides a distinctive character and a village feel that is highly prized by residents. Our priority is to:

- Provide additional housing through a brownfield first approach. We will seek to revitalise the town centre and reduce road traffic through denser development near rail and bus links
- Increased provision of a diverse mix of high quality housing for older people that will result in a significant increase in the options for downsizing.
- Encourage younger people to stay in and relocate to Marple by providing one and two-bedroom dwellings in areas with good public transport and walking and cycling links.
- Encourage the provision of live-work accommodation to boost local employment and to support the transformation of the town centre.
- To preserve the character of Marple and its surrounding Green Belt through a brownfield first approach to development.

Context

The current Development Plan for Marple area is the Local Plan Core Strategy (Stockport MBC, 2010). This does not allocate individual development sites in Marple. Development of an allocations DPD was abandoned, and although it included consultation on the allocation of some sites in Marple for housing, the document is out of date. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority consulted on a Strategic Framework (GMCA, 2016) in 2016, but the high level of opposition to unsustainable Green Belt development meant that it was withdrawn for substantial revision. GMSF housing figures were based on a very high assumed level of growth. More realistic figures were published by Government in an objective assessment of (housing) need (OAN) in September 2017. The OAN covers Stockport borough and Marple is within the wider housing market area that is defined within GMSF. Based on head of population these suggest the **Marple Neighbourhood Plan area may need to provide for about 50 new dwellings per year**, although the OAN emphasises that this is before constraints such as Green Belt (which covers most open land in Marple) are considered. SMBC are in the early stages of developing a new Local Plan which could be adopted in 2021.

⁴ The term 'older people' usually refers to those who are aged 65 or over, the age at which men can claim the state pension, although this is not a strict definition. Many sheltered housing providers accept residents aged 55 or over, sometimes still in work.

We assessed housing need in Marple by:

- Considering population trends, household size and age;
- Listening to the views of the residents who attended various consultations – these are specified in the section on consultation.
- Considering the relatively limited Marple data held by SMBC Housing Department
- Consulting local estate agents
- Hearing the views of owners and owners of housing potential sites; and
- Noting the housing numbers proposed for GMSF and Stockport Local Plans.

Potential Sites were identified by considering available sites in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), suggestions by local people and landowners, discussions with SMBC officers and our own knowledge and observation. At the time of developing this plan significant housing building was in progress in Marple.

Policy H1 Housing location

Policy H1: The re-development of previously developed land is supported. Permission will not be granted for development of Green Belt and green field unless there is an exceptional argument to meet a proven local need.

Proposed residential allocations are provided in the table below.

Site	Estimated dwellings
Goyt Mill (as part of a mixed-use development)	100
Marple Centre opportunity area	100
Rose Hill opportunity area	100
TOTAL	300

Table 2: Indicative housing allocations.

Supporting explanation and evidence

A large majority of residents do not wish to see major new housing developments either on greenfield or Green Belt land, or of a size which would inevitably lead to a significant change in the character of Marple. We accept that Marple needs to provide more houses so that we can play our part in ensuring that enough, decent homes are available. We think this can be done through re-use of brownfield sites, and by redeveloping in some areas at higher densities where this can respect the character of our community and increase the vitality of Marple.

Goyt Mill is currently an employment allocation, however a long-term viable use that generates enough income to allow the mill to be repaired will include at least an element of residential.

Policy H2 Housing type

Policy H2: To ensure a diverse mix of housing types and tenures, all housing developments will have to conform to the following criteria:

- On developments of 9 or more new homes at least half of new homes should be flats or terraced and no more than one-third detached properties unless other material considerations show a robust justification for a different mix.
- On developments of 9 or more new homes at least 10% should be suitable for older people
- On all sites larger than 1 ha or that can accommodate more than 40 dwellings, at least 10% should be delivered as genuine self or joint-build
- The provision of live-work accommodation is encouraged

Supporting explanation and evidence

An appropriate mix of dwellings is needed to meet anticipated local needs, particularly those arising from people who live locally or have a strong connection with Marple.

The home size policy directs that new development should favour smaller dwellings. Marple has more, larger and detached homes compared to the national average. This reduces the supply of affordable homes, and those suitable for younger, older and lower-paid people. It also reflects the results of our consultation and complies with NPPF requirement for a mix of dwelling types and sizes.

With the significant increase in over 65s forecast over the plan period we will need a marked increase in options for older people, particularly those looking to downsize whilst remaining independent. We need enough homes for those who will need varying levels of care – age specific retirement complexes (warden controlled or care scheme options) or bungalows and accessible apartments.

Self-build is defined for this policy as where someone, or a group of people directly organise the design and construction of their new home(s). This covers a wide range of projects from traditional 'DIY self-build', through to where a group of future residents organise an architect and contractor to design and build a small block of flats. This option (sometimes also known as joint build) is common and successful in Germany and we think it would work here too.

We recognise that many dynamic and creative businesses either start at or are run from home. We wish to encourage this trend.

We have chosen the threshold of ten homes because it is not realistic for sites below this size to provide the full range of housing types required.

Policy H3 Housing quality

Policy H3: All housing on sites of 9 dwellings or more must meet current Lifetime Home standards. [Building for Life 12](#) should be used as a design tool throughout the planning process with schemes performing positively against it.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Building for Life 12 is a standard which promotes quality in urban design for new residential developments that aims to:

- integrate new homes into existing neighbourhoods and support a more pedestrian and cycle friendly neighbourhood;

- provide access to local facilities and public transport using convenient, direct paths suitable for those with pushchairs, in a wheelchair, walking with a stick or walking frame or using a mobility scooter;
- design streets to encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces;
- design streets to accommodate on-street parking, to prevent anti-social parking and to allow for plenty of trees and planting to balance the visual impact of parked cars;
- integrate parking without the need for large rear parking courts; and
- provided adequate storage space for bins and recycling, as well as vehicles and cycles.

Other housing considerations

Consultation has consistently shown a desire for local people and their families to be able to choose to live in Marple. Open market housing builders have been unable or unwilling to provide suitable or affordable dwellings. The absence of a local connection requirement for existing affordable housing reinforces opposition to new affordable housing. As the social housing stock has been sold off, often to end up as private rented, the options for decent, affordable homes has narrowed.

One approach to ensure new affordable housing of the right type is provided would be a Community Land Trust (CLT). A CLT is a non-profit entity that develops and manages affordable housing on behalf of the community. Partnerships between CLTs and housing associations can attract funding to improve the viability of affordable housing projects and while this is not a land-use policy, we will investigate if a Community Land Trust in Marple is feasible.



9 Community Space (CS)

Introduction

Marple is the centre of a vibrant and active community of over 20,000 people⁵, and over 100 formal and informal community groups⁶ which need and use our indoor and outdoor space. Many people visit Marple to use the canals, walk, cycle or just to enjoy the countryside. Indoor and outdoor space is an essential part of Marple as a place and as a community and is central to the character of the town.

As the average age of people in Marple rises, we must ensure that there are opportunities for well-being, to keep active and fit, and for intellectually stimulating sedentary activities.

Context

Marple has many formal and informal public green spaces which are highly valued. These include:

- Memorial Park (including a Bowling Green and Skateboard Park)
- Three canals and their towpath
- Middlewood Way (which starts almost unannounced at Rose Hill)
- Brabyns Park (Note that this is outside our plan area)

These provide a wide range of activities that encourage health and wellbeing. We have identified significant potential to develop their value for residents and visitors including the need for better waymarking. These are explored further in the Heritage and Tourism section. There are many informal spaces. All contribute to the character of the area and must be valued and protected. The cricket, football, tennis, golf and rugby clubs play an important role in the town both for recreation and providing open spaces.

Inside, many groups need indoor space either for meetings or activities. The varied buildings currently available are listed in a background paper (Community Space group, 2017). These groups range from church organisations, Scouts and Guides, interest groups through to mother and baby groups, fitness and well-being activities and family gatherings. The cohesion these groups give to the community is important and is also part of the character of the community and the town. Indoor spaces are scattered across Marple and are of variable quality. We do not have enough indoor community facilities of the right size and quality and demand for space often exceeds supply (Francis, 2017). There is a concentration of community space buildings in the Memorial Park area, but this is provided in a range of separate buildings of varying quality, and some of which are underused. We also have the Carver amateur theatre, a much-loved independent cinema, cricket, football and golf clubs.

Marple has a small but valued indoor swimming pool with a cramped gym. There is also an indoor climbing wall and squash club, but otherwise indoor sport and gym activities are poorly provided for. Sporting facilities exist at Marple Hall and at Cheadle and Marple College: these may be underused outside school hours and should be made more available for residents. Stockport MBC has carried out a study into Indoor Sports Facilities (FMG Consulting, 2017). This section will be modified once we have been able to assess the study further.

Marple has about 80 allotments on two sites which are both registered as Assets of Community Value. The waiting list is normally around 20 plots. The Stockport Open Space Study suggests some additional allotments are needed, but we do not feel that a policy on allotments is needed in this plan.

⁵ 23,000 at the 2011 Census.

⁶ Source: Marple website

Policy CS1 Outside Community space

Policy CS1: Outside community space will be protected and enhanced by:

- Development which results in the loss of outside community space will not be granted consent unless there is an exceptional argument to meet a proven local need.
- Development will be expected to contribute financially to the enhancement of outdoor community space.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Marple currently has enough green space, including significant areas just beyond the plan boundaries, including Etherow Country Park, Mellor Park, Mill Brow Park, Ludworth and Cote Green Play areas. Any proposals should generally focus on improvements to what exists (such as play areas, paths, signage, interpretation and facilities) rather than additions, though any major new development might require additional open space. Where resources become available through the development process for maintenance and enhancement, this should be used for the purpose intended rather than as a general Council resource. This policy is intended to extend protection to sports clubs that have pitches or other substantial outside areas.

Where housing, retail or other development create additional pressures on open space, then they must contribute to the improvement of existing space.

Policy CS2 Indoor Community Space

Policy CS2: Indoor community space will be protected and enhanced by:

Development that would result in the loss of social and community floorspace will not be permitted except where existing provision is being reconfigured, upgraded or relocated to improve services and meet identified needs. In all such cases it will have to be demonstrated that the overall level of social and community provision is improved and there is no demand for an alternative social and community use for that floorspace.

Provision of additional or upgraded public or private space for indoor recreation including gym facilities is strongly encouraged.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Our research (Francis, 2017) shows that Marple needs more indoor community space that is fit for purpose. It suggests that the quality and location of existing space is not always ideal – for instance the need to keep the population active and healthy through exercise classes and gyms requires high-quality spaces.

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

Policy CS3 Memorial Park Civic Area

Policy CS3: The development of an integrated civic area in Memorial Park centred on the Library/Old Town Hall area will be encouraged. This would bring public uses (such as Library, Marple Clinic and Police) together with other community uses in a high-quality environment.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Memorial Park contains a wide range of public and community uses in disparate and uncoordinated buildings: Library, Old Town Hall, Police, Health Clinic, Senior Citizens Hall, and Scout Hut. Space is poorly used, and some facilities are poor quality. The public realm is disjointed and dominated by car parking in an otherwise green location. The issues must be addressed by 'joined-up thinking'.

There is an opportunity to bring together many of these uses, and potentially other community needs (such as new sporting facilities) in a new building potentially based on the library and Old Town Hall that would provide a high-quality, efficient, more cost-effective solution that would provide public services and community groups with the space and independence that they need. These proposals should save public money through providing modern accommodation of the right size, shared where appropriate, that is fit for purpose and energy efficient.

This issue is a priority for action and could be taken forward as part of the 'One Public Estate programme'⁷, or any successor initiative.

Policy CS4 Marple Swimming Pool

Policy CS4: Any development that will result in the loss of a swimming pool within the immediate Marple town centre area will be refused.

The upgrading or replacement of Marple Swimming Pool is strongly supported. However, any replacement should be in a location that is easy to walk to from Marple town centre and should not encourage additional car use.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Marple Swimming Pool is a difficult issue. While it is ageing and does not provide either modern swimming or gym provision, is a valued facility and it is essential to retain a pool in Marple. Rebuilding outside Marple would not be acceptable. Any relocation must be in the immediate town centre area. Current public and private gym provision in Marple is low, and any rebuilding should consider the need for up to date gym facilities.

⁷ Partnerships made up of councils and public-sector bodies to work collaboratively on land and property initiatives leading to new jobs, new homes, joined up public services and savings for the taxpayer.

10 ‘Silicon Canal’ - Business, Employment and Education (BE)

Introduction

We have a wide range of public and private sector employers concentrated in retail, services, tourism, education and creative industries. These provide local employment, the businesses and employees spend money directly in Marple, and they improve the quality of life for residents and attract visitors. There are no large employers, but there is a cluster of companies around Goyt Mill. Homeworking, creative industries, leisure and tourism and small service companies are significant employers and are set to grow. We want to maintain and encourage the diverse range of existing employment and create more jobs where this does not affect the character of our town.

We have not allocated new employment sites but do want to protect existing employment ones. We have used the term ‘Silicon Canal’ to describe the development of a cluster microbusinesses in a range of industries that are attracted by the physical, social and business environment of Marple.

We understand that there is pressure on primary school places, but there is no immediate need to find a site for a new primary school within the plan period.

Context

The Stockport Economic Development Strategy 2012-7 highlights that:

- Good-quality housing stock ... helps to draw talented wealth creators into the area, creating opportunities for business creation and stimulating the local economy
- the visitor appeal of Marple, Bramhall and Cheadle as attractive, safe, places, with independent shops and eateries
- the success of these centres is central to Stockport’s appeal as a place to live and work
- high value occupations like managers, senior officials, associate professional and technical occupations will see a high level of growth.

The use of the term ‘wealth creator’ is perhaps a little misleading. Economic development (and social and environmental development which are equally important) relies on dynamic individuals and networks that add overall to the wealth of society. These people may not be conventionally wealthy, but they do seek a good quality of life with appropriate housing (such as good quality flats for young professionals), a high-quality public realm and facilities such as places to meet, socialise and recreate that meet their aspirations

Marple is well-placed to take advantage, although the quality of the urban realm, housing balance and communications will need to be improved before a critical mass can be achieved.

Goyt Mill is in a Conservation Area on a prominent location next to the Macclesfield Canal. It is the last mill in a town that was once dominated by mills and is both beautiful and historic. It has a concentration of small businesses, attracted by relatively low rents and the varied and large spaces available. These offer a wide range of employment and services ranging from cycle restoration through a climbing wall to a printing firm. The Mill needs renovation; without investment in the fabric, the long-term future is uncertain.

Policy BE1 Retention of existing development land

Policy BE1: Development that would result in the reduction in existing employment land or employment within the plan area will be refused unless:

- The strategic need for the proposed development clearly exceeds the benefits of retaining the site for employment use, and
- The site has been marketed for at least 18 months and there is no realistic prospect of viable employment use.

Supporting explanation and evidence

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

Policy BE2 New employment – ‘Silicon Canal’

Policy BE2: Development that would result in new microbusinesses and additional high quality and value jobs is strongly encouraged throughout the plan area subject to an acceptable effect on residential areas. The following developments and proposals will be supported:

- B1 flexible serviced office accommodation suitable for microbusinesses
- Multi-let floor space development
- Live work units and shared desk space
- The enhancement of the commercial viability of the Town centre
- Proposals that encourage businesses to form a “hub” or “cluster” to benefit from proximity to each other.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Marple is attractive to wealth and job creators, with strong potential for additional jobs in creative and high technology areas. We could become ‘Silicon Canal’ – a hot spot of future industries that will drive economic growth across Stockport. These microbusinesses (fewer than ten employees and a turnover less than €2 million⁸) often start at home and grow into managed office space and it is hard to anticipate requirements. However, it is important that the planning system is flexible and encourages rather than stifling growth. These are new jobs, so would not impact on viability of Marple or other centres.

⁸ Recommendation 2003/361/EC

Policy BE3 Goyt Mill development opportunity

Policy BE3: The mixed-use development of Goyt Mill and associated land as shown on the proposals map including for residential use is strongly supported subject to:

- Preparation of a joint development brief that involves the owner, Council, Marple Area Committee and local community.
- Maintenance of a significant level of accommodation suitable for small businesses
- Protection of the heritage features and setting of the mill.
- Strong tourism and leisure element that focusses on the Macclesfield Canal.

Supporting explanation and evidence

It is essential to retain Goyt Mill both as an important heritage asset and home to small businesses. But it must have a viable use, and one that can generate resources to maintain the building. We see the mill as a unique opportunity for a leisure, tourism retail and housing development. It may be necessary to create a proposal that can attract grant-aid and it is important that all stakeholders including the local community are involved.



11 Heritage and Tourism (HT)

Introduction

We are privileged to live in an historic town with a great and interconnected natural and built heritage. Our landscape of hills, woods, rivers and canals is home to diverse habitats, plants and animals. Our history as a mill and canal town has also left a rich built heritage. Many people moved to or stay in Marple because of its history, rural character and easy access to the countryside. Our heritage and countryside make a major contribution to community health and welfare.

This natural and built heritage attracts locals, visitors and tourists who come to walk, boat, cycle, ride horses, canoe/kayak and enjoy other activities. They explore our landscape, canal network and buildings such as those connected with the Oldknow legacy. They use local facilities such as shops and cafes and put money into the local economy.

But natural and built heritage is always threatened. The ravages of time and weather, bland national volume housebuilder styles, the increasing dominance of traffic and insensitive development erode the built environment. Urbanisation of the countryside, agricultural operations and changes, and insensitive management and development can threaten the natural environment.

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

Our vision is that our unique mix of natural and built heritage should be conserved, managed, enhanced and interpreted so that people who live or work in, or visit Marple can enjoy and use it. We want to leave our heritage in a better condition for future generations. We feel that there is considerable potential to attract more tourists to bring employment and income to Marple.

Context

Natural Heritage context

The CWT report (CWT, 2017) recognises the importance of SBIs but also notes the importance for movement of wildlife of the network of communications – the canals, the river Goyt and its tributary stream valleys, the live rail lines, and the Middlewood Way, a former railway. All are Green Infrastructure and together with our countryside and open space within the urban area are part of a network that supports a biodiverse wildlife. We must be careful to place and design future development so that it enhances and retains biodiversity and wildlife corridors as part of the green infrastructure network.

Marple is within National Character Area 54: The Manchester Pennine Fringe. This occupies the transitional zone between the open moorlands of the Dark Peak and Southern Pennines, and the densely populated urban conurbation of Manchester. Marple is underlain by Carboniferous Millstone Grit and Pennine Coal Measures. It owes much of its character to the steep valleys that characterise the transition from Derbyshire moorland to Cheshire Plain. Much of the countryside is influenced by recreational use from adjacent urban areas and by the diversification of farmland.

The natural distribution of habitats throughout the area has been heavily modified by human activity over centuries, especially since the Industrial Revolution. Much of the countryside is influenced by recreational use from adjacent urban areas and by the diversification of farmland. Woodland is concentrated in narrow, steep-sided valleys that cut into smooth shoulders of pastoral land, but also extends along the Goyt River valley. Rivers and canals are an important feature, providing transport routes and links to industrial heritage, as well as movement corridors for biodiversity.

There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the NP area (Magic Map <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) – the nearest is Compstall Nature Reserve SSSI. Several Sites of Biological Importance have been designated by Stockport MBC and these are identified in the CWT report.

Woodland

The NP area has several areas of ancient⁹ or semi-natural woodland. Much exists in steep-sided valleys which penetrate the built-up area. These are an important feature which enhances Marple's rural character and makes an important contribution to its green infrastructure. With more recently planted woodland (for instance at Ridge Quarry) they add variety and diversity to the NP area

Water

The canals and rivers of Marple form natural boundaries to much of the NP area and they form important movement corridors and account for a large part of our biodiversity. Water quality in the Sett to Etherow section of the River Goyt is much improved in recent years from 'Poor' in 2009 to 'Moderate' in 2016¹⁰. It supports a diverse population of fish and invertebrate life. It now provides a habitat for birds such as dipper, kingfisher (amber listed), grey wagtail (red listed) and goosander. There are several notable species of fish in the Marple section of the river Goyt including European bullhead, grayling, brown trout and salmon (Environment Agency 2009). Brown trout and Atlantic salmon are species of Principal Importance (under Section 41).

Management

As public bodies continue to cut back, the work done by volunteers is valuable, but we recognise the need to ensure that it is carried out in full knowledge of the area in which they are working and that they have appropriate training and leadership. There is a need to update the appraisal of areas important for biodiversity.

Built Heritage context

Before the present system of roads, railways and canals, Marple was scattered dwellings at the edge of the Pennine fringe with Norbury Smithy the focus of east-west travel with at one time three smithies and of more importance than the present town centre. Samuel Oldknow as entrepreneur, farmer and industrialist was one of the principal drivers of development. His inheritance has had lasting importance for Marple including the Aqueduct and the Lime Kilns. Mellor Mill is an important and recently investigated archaeological site that is just outside the plan area. Together with subsequent development following the railways and improved roads over some two centuries this has given Marple both a coherence of character and the potential for a successful (but perhaps a niche) centre for tourism with the Oldknow legacy and especially the canals and their infrastructure. The importance and character of our built infrastructure is recognised in the four designated Conservation areas: two associated with the canals, one with All Saints Church and Church Lane and much of Station Road, which makes manifest the building associated with the coming of the railway age. Together these structures and their environment give Marple its unique and special character. We think an additional Conservation Area should be designated in the town centre.

Recent initiatives to conserve and interpret include 'Revealing Oldknow's Legacy'. This is a joint project supported by Heritage Lottery Fund and being delivered in partnership by Canal & River Trust and Mellor Archaeological Trust focussed on Mellor Mill and the Peak Forest Canal.

⁹ Defined as woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before.

¹⁰ EA data (<http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/>) for River Goyt (Sett to Etherow section).

The future of Goyt Mill (part of a Conservation Area and locally listed but not a listed building¹¹) is uncertain. Any development will need careful consideration if the building itself and its context are to be preserved. Given the high rate of loss of mill buildings in Greater Manchester, a higher level of protection such as Grade 2 status should be considered.

In addition to the standing buildings, Marple contains known and potential buried archaeological sites. Excavations such as on Oldknow's Lime Kiln tramway as part of the Revealing Oldknow's Legacy project has demonstrated the potential for surviving buried remains associated with the industrialisation of Marple, and which expand the story told by the standing building resource. With activity in Marple represented by standing buildings dating from the 17th century, there is high potential for archaeological material associated with past human activity from at least this period.

The canals are a significant local heritage asset and are protected either as Listed Buildings and overall are included as a Conservation Area. The canals form a focus for the historic and industrial character of Marple, but also as an attraction for tourists, and a community space for locals. They also form significant wildlife corridors and an important traffic-free route within the footpath and bridleway network around Marple.

Tourism context

The wealth of natural and built heritage makes Marple an attractive place to be a 'tourist' whether you live here or are visiting for the day or longer. We have little visitor accommodation and Roman Lakes is one of very few formal tourist facilities. There is no visitor centre (although a small information point is at Top Locks and the Library has a few leaflets). Signs to guide visitors are poor. More tourists and casual visitors encouraged by better facilities, promotion and marketing could make a significant contribution to the viability of local shops and might offer other business opportunities such as provision of accommodation and a greater range of restaurants. While we welcome everyone, if we can encourage people to use public transport or come under their own steam, then this will reduce pressure on our roads and parking. Tourism is currently low-key, attractions are spread out and Marple could absorb a significant increase before it became an issue

Our built tourist heritage includes the town centre, listed buildings and Conservation Areas (including beautiful churches, the famous aqueduct, ancient monuments (such as the Lime Kilns), and buildings associated with Oldknow), Roman Lakes, which illustrate the development of Marple. An abundance of smaller historical artefacts is held locally, but almost none are on display or accessible due to a lack of suitable facilities. Marple badly needs a heritage centre or museum and the development of community facilities in Brabyns Park provides an obvious opportunity.

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

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

¹¹ Not on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) but listed on [Stockport Historic Environment Database](#).

Policy HT1 Green Infrastructure

Policy HT1: The Green Infrastructure Network will be protected in the following ways.

- Development that adversely affects the integrity of Sites of Biological Importance, ancient woodland, wildlife corridors identified on the proposals map or reduces biodiversity overall will be refused unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Development that increases biodiversity, strengthens access and recreational use, and increases understanding of natural heritage will be encouraged

Supporting explanation and evidence

NPPF suggests protection should be commensurate with the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites. Marple does not have designated international or national sites, so this policy refers to SBIs. This policy builds on the hierarchy approach to mitigation as set out in NPPF and is based on the evidence in the Cheshire Wildlife Trust report (CWT, 2017). The corridor network shown in map 9 of this report is should be protected from development so that the NPPF ecological networks guidance can be implemented at a local level. The wildlife corridor network includes a buffer zone of up to 15 metres in places to protect the notable habitats shown in map 8 of the CWT report. If new areas of high distinctiveness habitat are subsequently identified these should also be protected by a 15 metre non-developable buffer zone.

Policy HT2 Green Infrastructure – additions to the network and management

Policy HT2: Development will be expected to result in no net loss of biodiversity and to contribute to the extension of green infrastructure and the protection and management of existing green infrastructure.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Any development proposals near a wildlife corridor should include mitigation to ensure impacts on wildlife are acceptable. This should include measures such as installing bat and otter sensitive lighting schemes, installing durable bat and bird boxes, hedgehog-friendly fencing and ensuring surface water is used sensitively and creatively to enhance biodiversity.

Extensions to SBIs and management plans are not traditionally part of a land-use plan. However, in an area as urbanised as Marple, extension of green infrastructure, review of sites and their management is closely linked with other land-use changes. As part of this process, existing Sites of Biological Importance will be reviewed, and management plans prepared and updated. for the following sites:

- Middlewood Way
- Hartley Wood
- Dan Bank
- Ridge Quarry
- Area East of Grosvenor Road extension and west of Lock 14, back of Winnington Road.
- Memorial Park and Recreation Park

Policy HT3 Built Heritage

Policy HT3: Built Heritage will be protected in the following ways.

- Development that enhances the historic, architectural character, appearance or setting of heritage assets will be supported
- Development that affects buildings and other structures associated with Samuel Oldknow must ensure that they respect their historic, architectural character, appearance and setting and allow appropriate interpretation.
- Idiosyncratic local vernacular buildings such as terraced housing for workers must be preserved, conserved and incorporated into new development

Supporting explanation and evidence

Existing national and local planning guidance provides significant protection to our listed buildings, and Conservation Areas. Local listings also give protection to a lesser degree. However, Conservation Area appraisals become out of date, appreciation of and the value placed on buildings from different eras changes, and new discoveries are made. We feel that the Victorian and Edwardian heritage of Marple, together with buildings associated with Samuel Oldknow are currently undervalued.

We think that the attractive and well-preserved ensemble of Victorian and Edwardian buildings in the lower part of Church Lane of Church Lane, and the town centre around the pedestrianised Market Street should have better protection. Conservation Areas will be reviewed with the intention to protect additional areas around Church Lane and Marple town centre.

Policy HT4 Archaeological Heritage

Policy HT4: Archaeological Heritage

Development that adversely affects a significant archaeological site will not be permitted unless the strategic need for the development outweighs the harm caused. Development that affects a known or reasonably suspected archaeological site must include provision for:

- An archaeological field evaluation including recording and conservation in-situ or off-site as appropriate, and
- Conservation, display and interpretation of archaeological material within community or other buildings in Marple open to the public.

Supporting explanation and evidence

In line with Stockport Local Heritage Policies, we recognise the importance of designated and non-designated archaeological sites to understanding the story of Marple. We support the protection, enhancement, promotion of archaeological sites and their settings. Marple contains many known archaeological sites and recent excavations have expanded our knowledge, but it is likely that some significant sites are under-recorded or currently unknown.

Policy HT5 Tourism

Policy HT5: Facilities that encourage local people and tourists visit and stay to enjoy our built and natural environment including accommodation will be granted consent subject to:

- Acceptable transport impact (including congestion, parking and road safety)
- Encouragement of sustainable non-motorised transport (e.g. walk, cycle, horse ride)

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

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

Supporting explanation and evidence

Marple currently has a significant amount of mainly informal tourism, but there is potential for better interpretation and better services. We have identified the biggest gaps. For instance, there is no dedicated centre to interpret our built or natural heritage, or to display local artefacts. Both our stations attract significant numbers of people but have poor facilities. There is an opportunity that would provide both information and services to tourists and improve the journey for rail passengers.

The nature of much of our tourism means that we need to gather further evidence, particularly for informal and outdoor activities such as walking, horse riding and mountain biking.

Policy HT6 Promotion and Marketing

Policy HT6: Natural and built heritage will be interpreted and marketed through a Marple brand and a plan that will be agreed with stakeholders. New tourist and leisure developments will normally be expected to contribute to this brand.

Supporting explanation and evidence

Promotion and Marketing are not traditionally part of a land-use plan. However, if tourism is to play a significant part in the life and economic development of Marple then it is necessary to devote adequate resources to the attraction of visitors to the area and to provide adequate information to enable them to plan their visit.

High quality signage is needed as part of a Wayfinding Strategy within the town and at the main access points such as the stations, Top Lock, the Middlewood Way and The Hollins both for local facilities (such as parking, shops and refreshments) and sites of interest. Signage and wayfinding are large projects in themselves: they must be comprehensive and coordinated.

12 What next? Management and Monitoring

This is an ambitious plan. So, who will make it happen, and how will we know that we have achieved our aims? Marple does not have a Town or Parish Council, but it does have a Neighbourhood Forum which prepared this plan, and there is also Marple Area Committee which brings together the six Stockport Borough Councillors who represent the Greater Marple area that also includes High Lane,

Marple Bridge, Mellor and Compstall. These communities are also preparing Neighbourhood Plans, so it makes sense for MAC to be the main body that monitors progress.

Approved NP policies are part of the statutory land-use planning system and will be used by Stockport Council Development Managers to help to determine planning applications, but we also see it as a plan to stimulate action and activity. It should guide Council and other investment plans, particularly for highways where we have set out a clear vision of what the community needs.

Some initiatives (for instance at Marple Station) already have champions, but we will need to find champions for others.

It is the intention that **the plan should be reviewed after five years** to ensure that it is still relevant and meets the needs of our community.

Glossary and abbreviations

- EA Environment Agency
- NE Natural England
- NP Neighbourhood Plan
- GMCA Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- GMSF Greater Manchester Strategic Framework
- SMBC Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- TfGM Transport for Greater Manchester
- MVP Marple Vision Partnership

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

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Designated heritage asset: Scheduled (Ancient) Monument, Listed Building, Registered Park and Garden, or Conservation Area.

Declutter: Remove unnecessary signs, railings, advertising and other items to make streets tidier and less confusing for motorists and pedestrians.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Silicon Canal: Development of a cluster microbusinesses in a range of industries that are attracted by the business and physical environment of Marple.

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

Wildlife corridor: Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

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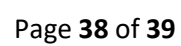
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Map 3: Marple Neighbourhood Plan boundary



Other maps that will be included in the final plan (available on request now) are:

- Historic environment (listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological monuments)
- Green Belt/Green Infrastructure/wildlife corridors (from CWT study)/landscape designations
- Sites of Biological Importance
- Development sites/development
- Transport proposals including proposed cycle network
- Rights of Way

End of document