



# Astbury + Moreton Neighbourhood Plan



# Contents

1	Foreword.....	5
2	Scope.....	6
3	Vision.....	7
	Aims - .....	8
4	Housing .....	9
	Justification and Evidence .....	9
	Community Feedback .....	9
	P1 Scale of Housing Development.....	10
	P2 Housing to meet local needs.....	11
	P3 Housing Mix.....	11
	P4 Design .....	11
	P5 Parking.....	12
5	Local Economy.....	13
	Justification and Evidence .....	13
	Community Feedback .....	13
	P6 New Business .....	13
	P7 Loss of Employment Sites and Community Facilities .....	13
	P8 Use of Rural Buildings.....	14
	P9 Scale, Design and Amenity.....	14
6	Landscape and Environment .....	15
	Justification and Evidence .....	15
	Community Feedback .....	15
	P10 Open Space within the Settlements .....	16
	P11 Countryside and Open Views .....	16
	P12 Woodland, Trees, and Hedgerows .....	16
	P13 New development in the open countryside or Green Belt .....	16
	P14 Extensions and Alterations to existing buildings in the open countryside .....	17
	P15 Environmental Sustainability of buildings .....	17
	P16 Agricultural Buildings .....	17
	P17 Buffer Zones and Wildlife Corridors.....	18

	P18	Historic Environment.....	18
	P19	Footpaths .....	18
7		Transport and Communications .....	19
		Justification and Evidence.....	19
		Community Feedback.....	19
	P20	Fibre to Premises .....	20
	P21	Traffic.....	20
	P22	Parking.....	20
	P23	Public Rights of Way.....	20
	P24	Traffic in the Conservation Area and Rural Lanes .....	21
8		Local Character .....	22
		Justification and Evidence.....	22
		Community Feedback.....	22
	P25	Built Environment.....	23
	P26	Landscape Quality.....	23
	P27	Extensions and Alterations to Existing Buildings.....	23
	P28	Replacement Development .....	24
	P29	Backland Development.....	24
	P30	Neighbourhood Plan Boundary Signs .....	24
9		Community Infrastructure .....	25
		Justification and Evidence.....	25
		Community Feedback.....	25
	P31	Existing Facilities .....	25
	P32	Contributions to Community Infrastructure .....	26
	Appendix A	Mitigating the impact of development.....	28
		Section 106 Agreements .....	28
		Community Infrastructure Levy.....	29
	Appendix B	Local Views .....	30
	Glossary.....		31

# 1 Foreword

This Plan has been produced by the Astbury and Moreton Neighbourhood Plan Group on behalf of Astbury and Moreton Parish Council after months of study, research and consultation with the local community. We have also worked closely with Cheshire East Council.

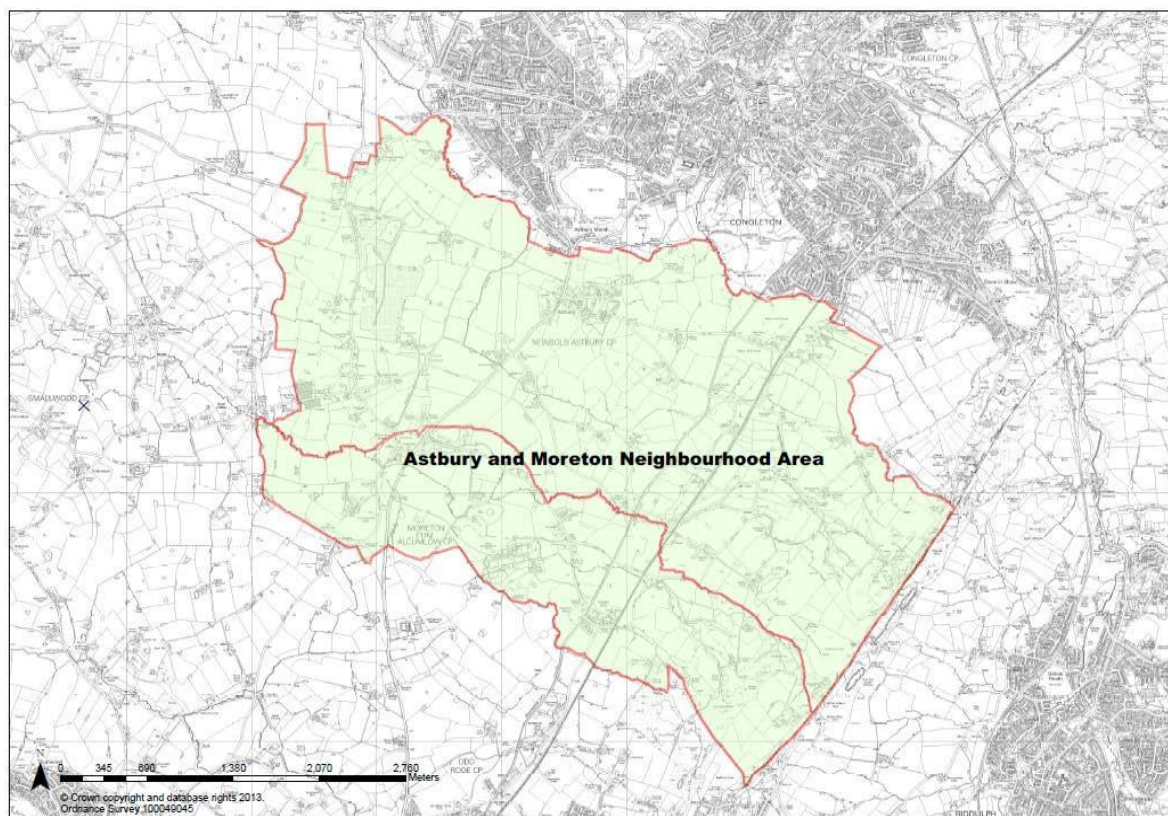
We have consulted with the community through open days, interest group meetings and a survey and we believe that this Plan reflects the views of our community. A strong message emerging from the consultation process was that the local people are proud of the parish character and have a very strong desire to retain it. This was key to developing the Plan Vision.

The aims and policies of the community have all been derived from the Vision and are detailed in this Plan. We strongly believe that this Plan is robust and when formally adopted will provide the necessary guidance for Astbury and Moreton until 2030.

(Signed by the Chair of the Astbury and Moreton Neighbourhood Plan Group.)

## 2 Scope

Cheshire East designated the Neighbourhood Plan Area on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014, as the administrative parish of Newbold-Astbury cum Moreton, except for a small exclusion zone in the North-West corner which is reserved for a roundabout at the end of the proposed Congleton Link Road (a strategic policy of the emerging Local Plan).



The Astbury and Moreton Neighbourhood Plan sets out a series of policies which, once adopted, will be used to guide development and preparation of planning applications in the plan area. These policies will also be used in determining planning applications for all development proposals in the area.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in general conformity with the strategic policies of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan and it will run for the same period up to 2030.

The starting point for any development proposals in the plan area will be the Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan. Once adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will have the status of a Development Plan Document.

A number of projects may be identified through the neighbourhood plan consultation process and these will be set out in an appendix to the plan and detailed in a separate Delivery Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed every 5 years or when the Local Plan is amended by Cheshire East and those changes have a material impact on the Neighbourhood Plan.

### 3 Vision

The distinctive historic and rural character of Astbury and Moreton will be maintained and enhanced whilst evolving and expanding in a way that respects and reflects the views of the community.

The Parish of Astbury and Moreton is primarily rural. The historic settlement of Astbury is bounded by open fields and views into the countryside situated within and surrounded by Green Belt with some of the land also classified as Open Countryside.

The Neighbourhood Plan will aim to sustain and promote local businesses and a range of community activities and facilities. It will build upon the strong sense of community, quality of life and flourishing natural environment of the area.

Astbury and Moreton is a special place and local residents are determined to keep it that way. This is a very strong message emerging through the consultation process which has led to the publication of this, the first Astbury and Moreton Neighbourhood Plan. People not only appreciate the social and environmental qualities of the plan area but consider they have a duty to protect them for future generations who choose to live and work in the area. They want to keep and, if possible, improve the range of community facilities that currently exist. Local businesses are also important and people want to support these as well as attracting new enterprises into the district, providing they are in keeping with the area.

Importantly, people recognise the need for small groups of housing over the period of the plan, providing it is carefully controlled, the design of any housing is in keeping with the historic character of the area and the environmental sustainability of Astbury and Moreton is enhanced. The acceptance of any small scale development must maintain and enhance the form of the existing settlement, retaining the important green spaces and open vistas as well as preserving existing trees and hedgerows and not encroaching into open countryside.

Any additional new housing should meet the needs of people who already live or wish to move into the area. Affordability will be important, primarily low cost market housing especially for young people. It is also important to meet the needs of the older residents in Astbury and Moreton who wish to downsize without leaving the area and are looking for housing which will meet their needs.

This Neighbourhood Plan aims to deliver the Vision for Astbury and Moreton to 2030, to reflect the issues set out above and others raised by the local community. The consultation process leading up to the preparation of this Plan has been considerable and is detailed in a separate document entitled 'Statement of Consultation'. The Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the principles and policies contained in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan. Importantly, it seeks to ensure that the views of the people of Astbury and Moreton have a legal status in the planning process as intended by the Localism Act 2011.

## **Aims** -

- To deliver small scale housing growth, phased over the neighbourhood plan period, to meet the needs of local people with respect to size and price
- To encourage limited small scale sensitive development which protects and enhances the existing historic character, built form and landscape setting of the plan area
- To sustain and improve local services and community facilities to meet the changing needs of Astbury and Moreton over the period of the plan
- To strengthen and support economic activity in Astbury and Moreton that looks to employ and support local people
- To secure continuing improvements to local infrastructure and digital connectivity for the area
- To prioritise local distinctiveness in every element of change and growth
- To protect and enhance the quality and character of both the natural and built environment of the plan area
- To involve local people in the process of plan making, monitoring and delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan



## 4 Housing

### Justification and Evidence

The greater part of the land in the Parish is in the Green Belt and the remainder is open countryside. Within the Green Belt, toward Mow Cop Ridge, are specifically classified areas of Special County Value, Significant Local Environment Value, Special Scientific Interest and Biological Importance. Both Astbury Village and the Macclesfield Canal Corridor are Conservation Areas.

Most land in the Parish is high grade farm land which supports many dairy herds, mixed horticulture and equestrian uses. Historically dairy farming has been the main industry with mineral extraction taking place in the north of the parish where thick deposits of silica sand occur and further areas of search have been identified in the area.

Astbury village is a small rural settlement surrounded over by Green Belt. The Cheshire East Local Plan will set the agenda for housing growth in rural areas, allowing communities such as Astbury to plan for the future through Neighbourhood Plans and other mechanisms that will facilitate appropriate levels of development to meet local needs, subject to any additional restrictions in the Green Belt.

The following policy aims have been derived from surveys:

- Within Astbury sympathetic, well designed and environmentally sustainable development should be permitted, such as the conversion of buildings or infilling of a small gap with up to 2 dwellings
- Development should not exceed the capacity of existing services and infrastructure unless the required improvements can be made
- The local community is best placed to understand its needs for local services and specific housing requirements. Neighbourhood Plans and other mechanisms including Community Right to Build Orders and Rural Exception Sites aim to satisfy these needs. Any developments in Astbury should be of a scale and design that respects the character of the Conservation Area and the rural setting
- Delivering a choice of homes to meet local needs, including low cost market housing where appropriate, will be important and the community recognises that a small amount of sustainable housing development in scale and character with the settlement to reflect Policy PG2 in the emerging Local Plan, will need to be accommodated over the Plan period and it is against this background and the views of the community that the housing policies have been formulated. In the context of this plan “local need” is defined as accommodating households who are either current residents in Cheshire East or have an existing family or employment connection in the parishes

### Community Feedback

Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following key housing issues that policies P1 to P5 seek to address:

- Support development that preserves the Green Belt and the open countryside
- Maintain the character of the village and settlements
- Avoidance of large scale infill within the existing settlements, but consider small rural exception sites of up to 4 houses adjoining the settlement boundaries not exceeding 50 houses in aggregate across the parish
- Encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites within the Parishes, prioritising development which provides employment opportunities, while also allowing housing where this would meet all the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan
- Provide housing choice and meet local needs

The following plans, documents and strategic policies support policies P1 to P5:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version March 2014
- Congleton Borough Council Local Plan First Review 2005
- Cheshire East Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013
- Astbury Conservation Area designation and policy of 1972, updated 2008
- Building for Life 12
- Code for Sustainable Homes

## P1 Scale of Housing Development

New development will be supported in principle provided that it is small scale, in character with the settlement and environmentally sustainable. Development shall incorporate the latest Fabric Energy Efficiency Standards or the equivalent standard in force at the time, follow the guidance in Building for Life 12, and adopt a minimum building standard of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. It should be phased over the period of the Plan and fall within the following categories:

### a) Brownfield within the Parishes

The redevelopment of environmentally sustainable brownfield sites within the Parish, where they are neither suitable nor capable of employment development, to meet the local needs of Astbury and satisfy in all other respects the policies contained in the neighbourhood plan

### b) Greenfield within the Settlements

Infill housing development of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage of up to two dwellings in character with adjoining developments

Rural exception sites of up to 4 houses to meet local needs and in character with adjoining developments

**c) Development within the Green Belt**

Development within the Green Belt will be restricted to the categories of development permitted by the Cheshire East Local Plan or NPPF Green Belt policy as applicable.

**d) Re-use of Buildings**

The re-use of redundant or disused but structurally sound buildings to meet local needs, which would lead to an enhancement of the character of the immediate area, where they are unsuitable for employment use

**P2 Housing to meet local needs**

Development that meets a local need identified in the latest parish housing needs survey or, if out of date, the most appropriate objectively assessed review of housing need in the future will be subject to the affordable housing allocations policy as determined by Cheshire East Council. The local community would like to see planning conditions and/or planning obligations requiring the first occupants to be residents of Astbury or with an Astbury connection, then adjoining parishes and finally Cheshire East. In the case of essential agricultural dwellings the same criteria shall apply, and occupants will be employed or last employed in agriculture.

Any housing provided to meet a Local Housing Need when it is completed and subsequently becomes vacant shall be made available from that time for a period of 12 months for occupation by people who meet the Local Housing Need criteria.

**P3 Housing Mix**

All new development should provide a mix of housing to meet local needs as identified in the most up to date Local Housing Needs Survey Report and should include an element of low cost market housing. The Neighbourhood Plan will support the provision of smaller dwellings and development that provides for the changing needs and life-styles of an ageing population including Lifetime Homes standard in accordance with current national guidance, Building for Life 12.

**P4 Design**

All new housing proposals should be in small groups, no more than 4, to reflect the historic character of Astbury and will be expected to respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Development that fails to take the opportunities available for enhancing the local character and quality of the area and the way it functions shall not be permitted.

A central part of achieving good design is responding to and integrating with local surroundings and landscape context as well as the built environment through:

- Using good quality materials that complement the existing palette of materials used within the area

- Using green hedging and/or trees for highway boundaries wherever possible and in keeping with the existing streetscape
- Ensuring safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and road users
- Providing adequate refuse and recycling storage incorporated into the scheme to minimise visual impact
- Innovative design that is sustainable and energy efficient in its design, construction and operation
- Promoting high quality interior spaces and light
- Adopting the principles of sustainable urban drainage, where appropriate
- All dwellings capable of being inhabited by families should provide sufficient private garden amenity space to meet household recreational needs. These should be in scale with the dwelling, reflect the character of the area and be appropriate in relation to topography and privacy

## P5 Parking

Parking should be designed so that it fits in with the character of the proposed development. Considerations should include:

- Garages designed to reflect the architectural style of the house they serve
- Garages set back from the street frontage
- Parking located in between houses (rather than in front) so that it does not dominate the street scene

## 5 Local Economy

### Justification and Evidence

The majority of established businesses in the plan area are livestock and arable farming, horticultural and equestrian with a number of 'hidden' businesses and sole traders primarily working from home. The largest employers in the area are Bent Farm Quarry, the public houses and restaurants, garden centres, and shops.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out to maintain and encourage the local economy and to support the local community. It will support the expansion of small businesses and enterprises in the parish and brownfield sites within the plan area as well as rural tourism and local facilities that will benefit the local economy and the wider community whilst respecting the rural character of the area.

### Community Feedback

Consultation on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following issues in relation to the Local Economy that policies 5-8 seek to address:

- To promote and support existing businesses and the continued prosperity of the Parish
- To retain the existing shops and other facilities within the parish

The following plans, documents and strategic policies support policies P6 to P9:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Cheshire East Local Plan 2015
- Congleton Borough Council Local Plan First Review 2005

#### **P6 New Business**

Proposals which extend existing or promote new small scale employment opportunities within the plan area will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the development will positively benefit the local economy and provide the opportunity for local employment and training and, the proposal will not adversely impact upon the character and appearance of the locality or the amenity of adjoining properties.

#### **P7 Loss of Employment Sites and Community Facilities**

Loss of existing local employment sites and community facilities will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable or required and the premises/site/business has been actively marketed for at least 12 months at an appropriate market price

## P8 Use of Rural Buildings

The re-use, conversion and adaptation of permanent, structurally sound, rural buildings of substantial construction for small business, recreation or tourism will be supported subject to:

- The proposed use being appropriate to a rural location
- The conversion and/or adaptation works proposed respecting the local character of the surrounding buildings and local area
- The local highway network being capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and adequate car parking being provided within the site
- All applications for the change of use of agricultural buildings, including stables, within 4 years of the completion of the building must be accompanied by evidence that the building was used during that period for the intended agricultural use and that the proposed change of use will not generate the need for a replacement structure.

## P9 Scale, Design and Amenity

All new employment development must be of a high quality of design which:

- Complements and enhances where appropriate the size, height, scale, mass, materials, layout, access and density of existing adjoining development
- Demonstrates that the amenities of neighbouring dwellings will not be adversely affected through overlooking, loss of light or outlook, over dominance or general disturbance
- Provides an appropriate level of landscaping which complements and enhances the rural character of the local area
- Provides on-site car parking that meets the needs of the prospective occupiers
- Avoids or minimizes light pollution

## 6 Landscape and Environment

### Justification and Evidence

Astbury is a rural village predominantly surrounded by green belt which contains a number of small groups of houses and scattered farmsteads. The plan area is primarily open countryside and is characterised by trees, hedgerows, and verges which are integral to the landscape quality of the area. A large proportion of the dwelling stock dates from the 19th and 20th century and the principal use of the countryside was and still is for agricultural and equine activity.

The area is rich in sites of nature conservation value with several designated sites of biological or scientific interest<sup>1</sup>. The majority of these sites are of broad-leaved woodland habitat with some heathland along the ridge of Congleton Edge, and the S.S.S.I. is noted for its exposures of Namurian shales, sandstones and ganisters.

The area is rich in sites of nature conservation value with 5 designated sites of Biological Interest at Roe Park, Clough Wood, Limekiln Wood, Quarry Wood and Edge Hill. The majority of these sites are of broad-leaved woodland habitat with some heathland along the ridge of Congleton Edge. There is also a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest at Pot Bank Quarry off Mow Lane in Newbold Astbury noted for its exposures of Namurian Shales, sandstones and ganisters.

### Community Feedback

Consultations on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan highlighted the following key issues in relation to Landscape and Environment:

- To treasure what we have
- To keep old hedgerows and open up overgrown ditches
- To protect major assets including the sites of Biological Interest and the SSSI
- To continue to protect wildlife, especially those endangered species such as great crested newts, birds of prey and owls
- To preserve listed buildings

To protect views into and out of the plan area and rural skylines

The following plans, documents and strategic policies support policies P10 to P19:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version March 2014
- Congleton Borough Council Local Plan First Review 2005

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<sup>1</sup> *Biological sites include Roe Park, Clough Wood, Limekiln Wood, Quarry Wood and Edge Hill, and the S.S.S.I. is at Pot Bank Quarry off Mow Lane in Newbold Astbury.*

- Astbury Conservation Area Statement
- Astbury and Moreton Parish Plan 2005

## **P10 Open Space within the Settlements**

Areas of open space that have sport, recreation, amenity or conservation value, or provide open vistas and rural skylines into, out of and across the settlements, will be protected.

## **P11 Countryside and Open Views**

All new development will be expected to respect and enhance the countryside surrounding Astbury and existing open views will be protected as a matter of priority from unnecessary or inappropriate development. Any development in these areas will only be acceptable in accordance with other Neighbourhood Plan and development plan policies or in exceptional circumstances and where the development clearly enhances these areas, for example landscaping and planting schemes. Development will also be required to meet the requirements of relevant Cheshire East Local Plan and other development plan policies

## **P12 Woodland, Trees, and Hedgerows**

Any new development that involves the loss or damage to local woodland, trees, hedgerows and wide verges that contribute to the character and amenity of the plan area must demonstrate the need for the development proposed and provide for appropriate replacement planting of native species on the site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting.

Where a new access is created, or, an existing access is widened through an existing hedgerow to protect the visual amenity of the locality a new hedgerow to match the existing in height and plant species shall be planted on the splay returns into the site to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows within the Parish.

All new development close to existing mature trees will be expected to have in place an arboricultural method statement to BS5837 standard or equivalent before any development commences. This will detail tree protection policies to be employed during construction.

## **P13 New development in the open countryside or Green Belt**

New development in open countryside will be restricted to that which requires a countryside location and cannot be accommodated within the settlements. In all cases the applicant must demonstrate how the development proposed will protect and enhance the open countryside.



Inappropriate development in the Green Belt will, by definition, be harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

### **P14 Extensions and Alterations to existing buildings in the open countryside**

Proposed extensions and/or alterations to existing buildings in the open countryside should reflect the rural character of the area and will be required to be constructed of traditional materials. The design should enhance the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area.

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt will, by definition, be harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

### **P15 Environmental Sustainability of buildings**

Favourable consideration will be given on both existing and new development to the installation of ground source heat pumps and solar panels provided that the installation will not detract from the character of the area and in particular the conservation area.

Where appropriate, in all new developments sustainable drainage schemes should be used to provide new wildlife areas. These may include features such as ponds, swales and permeable paving designed as part of the development and to reflect the rural character of the area.

### **P16 Agricultural Buildings**

The re-use, conversion and adaptation of permanent, structurally sound, rural buildings of substantial construction for small business, recreation or tourism will be supported subject to the criteria set out in P8 and P18.

All new agricultural buildings, stables and animal field shelters must be sited in the least obtrusive location and be of a size, scale, design and appearance appropriate to their intended use and the character of the rural area.

The extension of riding schools, stables and equestrian developments in the open countryside should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the site and its setting including any proposed fencing, trackways, jumps and other ancillary development. The introduction of external floodlighting including menage areas will not be supported because of the impact of the lighting upon the character of the area and the amenity of adjacent uses.

## **P17 Buffer Zones and Wildlife Corridors**

The existing protected sites, woodlands, wildlife sites, drainage ditches, brooks and culverts will be maintained and enhanced and, where appropriate, new buffer zones and wildlife corridors will be created to increase the biodiversity of the plan area.

## **P18 Historic Environment**

Any designated historic heritage assets in the Parish and their settings, both above and below ground and including listed buildings, and any monuments that may be scheduled or conservation areas that exist or may be extended will be protected and enhanced for their historic significance and their importance to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage assets.

## **P19 Footpaths**

Improvements to the existing public footpath network in the Parish will be supported. The construction and appearance of new paths, tracks or links between existing footpaths must be appropriate and sensitive to the character of the locality and the surrounding area.

## 7 Transport and Communications

### Justification and Evidence

The Neighbourhood Plan area is criss-crossed by many lanes. The A34 Manchester to Newcastle under Lyme runs north-south across the area while the A534 Congleton to Wrexham road skirts the western edge. The Macclesfield Canal runs north-south and is paralleled by the West Coast Rail Line. The 2011 census confirmed that the plan area is an area of high car dependency.

All properties in the Parish have access to mains electricity although not all properties have access to gas or mains drainage. Mobile reception is poor and broadband is slow and patchy in parts of the parish. It is anticipated that the majority of the properties in the plan area will be able to access high speed broadband from 2015.

### Community Feedback

Consultations on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following key issues in relation to Transport and Communications:

- Traffic speeds on the A34, A534 and local roads
- Poor road marking at A34 junction with Childs Lane
- Improvements for pedestrian safety on country roads
- Concerns about the capacity of existing country lanes to accommodate additional traffic and their use as 'rat runs' at peak hours.
- Provision of bus services providing destinations and route timings that reflect local need
- Provision of high speed broadband and improved mobile phone reception to all within the community

The following plans, documents and strategic policies support policies P20 to P24:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version March 2014
- Congleton Borough Council Local Plan First Review 2005

## P20 Fibre to Premises

New employment proposals, and developments of more than 2 houses, should demonstrate how they will contribute to and be compatible with local fibre or internet connectivity. This should be through a 'Connectivity Statement' provided with all planning applications for new residential and business developments. Such statements could consider such aspects as: the intended land use and the anticipated connectivity requirements of the development; known nearby data networks and their anticipated speed; realistic assessments of connection potential and contribution to any such networks.

Where possible and desirable, additional ducting should be provided that also contributes to a local network for the wider community.

Major infrastructure development must provide ducting that is available for community owned access or strategic fibre deployment. Such developers are encouraged to have early discussions with local broadband groups.

## P21 Traffic

Proposals for 2 or more houses and new employment development should be accompanied by a mitigation statement that provides an objective assessment of the impact of the additional traffic that will be generated by the proposed development. This statement should include an assessment of the effect this may have on pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, road safety, parking and congestion within or adjacent to the plan area including measures to mitigate any impact. All new development will be encouraged to contribute towards the enhancement of the existing networks of cycling and pedestrian facilities across the plan area and traffic calming within the development to control vehicle speeds.

## P22 Parking

All new developments shall provide sufficient on site car parking to accommodate the type and size of vehicles associated with the proposed use including visitor car parking and shall comply with the Cheshire East adopted car parking standards as a minimum. The off road parking provision shall be completed and made available before the first occupation of the proposed development.

## P23 Public Rights of Way

Development proposals that are linked to and contribute towards improvements to the existing public rights of way network within the Parish including the South Cheshire Cycle Route will be supported as will the creation of circular public rights of way to encourage walking and cycling within the Parish.

## P24 Traffic in the Conservation Area and Rural Lanes

The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for traffic calming in the village of Astbury. Where existing or proposed development adds to congestion and vehicle speeds in the village, or brings inappropriate or heavier traffic on rural lanes in the plan area, proposals should be brought forward to mitigate any traffic impact and/or contribute funding towards local transport schemes.

Local transport schemes to be delivered together with Cheshire East Council as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Plan may include:

- Traffic management measures to minimise the impact of traffic on the conservation area and listed buildings;
- Signage to direct through traffic away from and around Astbury village;
- Signage on rural lanes including width and weight restrictions to direct HGVs and other inappropriate vehicles onto designated roads;
- Any other traffic mitigation measures that may be appropriate to mitigate the impact of the volume, scale and speed of traffic on the rural area.

## 8 Local Character

### Justification and Evidence

It is essential that the qualities of Astbury and Moreton and the surrounding area are protected and that the layout and design of all new development should reflect the rural setting and be complementary in scale and design with adjoining properties.

Existing trees, hedgerows and Cheshire railings in the area contribute to the amenity and rural setting of the Parish and every effort should be made to retain them. All new development should therefore incorporate new tree planting and landscaping schemes designed to safeguard existing trees, hedgerows and fences.

Astbury and Moreton will only allow high quality, environmentally sustainable development and will resist mediocre suburban designs, which do not reflect the rural character of the area. Building for Life 12, a Government backed industry standard for well-designed homes ensures this will be delivered. Building for Life 12 sets out twelve criteria to assess the quality of a development and proposals coming forward in Astbury and Moreton should ideally meet all of these criteria.

### Community Feedback

Consultation on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following key issues in relation to Local Character that policies P25 – P30 seek to address:

- All proposals must complement the existing characteristics of low density dispersed development
- Significant open views into and out of the settlements should be maintained and where possible enhanced
- The impact of development upon existing woodlands, hedges, and Cheshire fencing should be minimised
- All new development should reflect the rural setting of the settlement and be complementary in scale and design to adjoining properties
- All new development should have gardens that are of an appropriate size to serve the dwelling they relate to

The following plans, documents and strategic policies support policies P25 to P30:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version March 2014
- Congleton Borough Council Local Plan First Review 2005
- Building for Life 12
- Astbury and Moreton Parish Plan 2005

- Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment
- Astbury and Moreton Conservation Area Assessments
- Astbury and Moreton Parish Profile 1987

## **P25 Built Environment**

New development will be expected to respond positively to the local character of its immediate environment particularly the conservation area in the village by showing an understanding of the qualities which make up this character. All new development should be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement and demonstrate a high quality of design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers of the proposed development, at the same time ensuring that the amenities of neighbouring properties will not be adversely affected.

The use of sympathetic materials will be encouraged to maintain the local vernacular and enhanced sense of place.

## **P26 Landscape Quality**

All new development will be expected to respect and enhance the local landscape quality ensuring that important local views and vistas into, out of and across the settlements and the rural skylines are maintained and, where possible, enhanced and protected from development. (See Appendix X for a list and map respectively of important local views and vistas).

## **P27 Extensions and Alterations to Existing Buildings**

Proposed extensions and/or alterations to buildings should reflect the size and scale of the existing and adjacent dwellings and will be required to be constructed of complementary materials. The design should reflect and enhance the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the proposal should also provide garden space commensurate with the size of the extended or altered dwelling in accordance with the prevailing pattern of development in the locality (see policy P4 Design on page 11).

Extensions and alterations to non-residential buildings will be designed to reflect the character and appearance of the existing building and to be in keeping with the surrounding development.

Conversion of farm buildings must be sensitive to the local vernacular. Particular attention must be paid to the features which accompany the conversion such as driveways and gardens, ensuring that these features do not 'suburbanise' the landscape.

All new extensions and alterations to existing buildings shall identify and protect, during both demolition and construction works, all underground utility infrastructure assets within or adjacent to the development site.

## **P28 Replacement Development**

Replacement dwellings will be proportionate to the size of the site and the scale of surrounding existing development and be in keeping with neighbouring properties.

## **P29 Backland Development**

Backland development will be resisted if it would impact upon existing residential amenity through overlooking, loss of amenity or intrusion of privacy.

## **P30 Neighbourhood Plan Boundary Signs**

Astbury and Moreton Neighbourhood Plan boundaries will be marked by signs approved by the Parish Council.



## 9 Community Infrastructure

### Justification and Evidence

The Parish of Astbury and Moreton has a range of buildings and facilities that serve the community as a whole. Within the Parish are a Church, public houses and restaurants, four garden centres, farm shops, two garages, a printer and an automation company. To promote the ongoing prosperity of the Parish it is essential that Astbury and Moreton retains and provides local services and businesses that sustain the vitality of the community. Receipts from New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy will be used to deliver new and improved community infrastructure. There is also a demand for outdoor recreational areas.

### Community Feedback

Consultations on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following key issues in relation to Community Infrastructure that policies P31 and P32 need to address:

- To retain and provide local services that will sustain the community
- To assess the impact that all new development may have on community infrastructure

The following plans, documents and strategic policies support policies P31 and P32:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Emerging Cheshire East Local Plan [Strategy Submission Version March 2014]
- Congleton Borough Council Local Plan First Review 2005

### P31 Existing Facilities

The retention, continued use, refurbishment and improvement of all the community buildings and their associated uses together with the shop and public houses will be supported. The relocation of services or facilities within the Parish will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there will be no loss to the Parish but there will be an equal or greater level of service and accessibility for the community.

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

## **P32 Contributions to Community Infrastructure**

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

Financial contributions paid direct to the local community as a result of New Homes Bonus or CIL will be pooled to deliver priorities identified in the Neighbourhood Delivery Plan Plan such as traffic management and signage in P24. Direct delivery by developers of any off-site works will be supported where these works are identified in the Neighbourhood Delivery Plan.



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# Appendix A

## Mitigating the impact of development

### Section 106 Agreements

Section 106 Agreements are made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). They are legally binding agreements that are negotiated between the Planning Authority and the applicant/developer and any others that may have an interest in the land (landowners). Alternatively applicants can propose them independently, this is known as a ‘unilateral undertaking’.

They are attached to a piece of land and are registered as local land charges against that piece of land. Section 106 Agreements, also sometimes referred to as planning obligations, enable a council to secure contributions to services, infrastructure and amenities in order to support and facilitate a proposed development and are intended to make unacceptable development, acceptable.

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

- prescribing the nature of development (e.g. by requiring a proportion of affordable housing); securing a contribution from a developer to compensate or provide loss created by development (e.g. open space);
- mitigating a development’s impact on the locality (e.g. contribution towards infrastructure and facilities). Developers can either pay a contribution to the council or deliver the benefit themselves.

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

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- b) directly related to the development;
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

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

If a developer offers any unrelated contribution, that does not meet the three legal tests, as an inducement, planning officers will disregard this when determining the application.

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

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

Section 106 agreements are expected to continue as a planning tool for ensuring more general infrastructure deficiencies are dealt with. A new tool, the Community Infrastructure Levy, can be used by the Unitary Authority and Parish Councils to mitigate specifically identified infrastructure issues. It is anticipated that S106 and the CIL will run side by side.

## Community Infrastructure Levy

CIL regulations have changed the developer payment landscape by introducing the levy and also by changing when Councils can seek S106 obligations. CIL provides a mechanism for developer contribution to contribute towards infrastructure needed to support the development of the area. It is not to remedy existing deficiencies unless the new development will make it worse. CIL is not mandatory Councils must develop a policy to support the imposition of CIL and must spend the income on infrastructure.

Cheshire East Council does not yet have a CIL in place as this has to be based on an approved Local Plan, evidence of the infrastructure gap and the potential impact on viability. However, once this is in place a Parish Council with a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan can claim 25% of the Levy, uncapped, paid to directly to the Parish. CIL can be paid 'in kind', as land or infrastructure, as well as by cash, if the charging authority (i.e. Cheshire East Council) chooses to accept these alternatives. However, the relevant percentage of cash value of levy receipts must be passed on to Parish Council in cash.

What can CIL be spent on?

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

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

# Appendix B

## Local Views

A selection of local views, vistas and maps ...

Glossary

term or initials	initial	explanation
<b>Affordable Housing</b>		<p><b>Social rented housing</b> is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.</p> <p><b>Affordable rented housing</b> is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).</p> <p><b>Intermediate housing</b> is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rent housing.</p> <p>Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning. The sequence of allocating affordable housing will be first to those with a connection to Astbury cum Moreton, then to those in adjoining parishes, and finally to the remaining Cheshire East area.</p>
<b>Amenity</b>		An element that contributes positively to the overall character or enjoyment of an area
<b>Backland development</b>		Development of 'landlocked' sites behind existing buildings, such as rear gardens and private open space, usually within predominantly residential areas. Such sites often have no street frontages
<b>Biodiversity</b>		A measure of the number and range of plants and animals and their relative abundance in a community
<b>Brownfield Land</b>		Previously developed land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure
<b>Building for Life 12</b>		The industry standard endorsed by government for designing new homes in England, based on 12 key criteria
<b>Cheshire East Borough Council</b>	CEC	The Local Authority for Newbold Astbury cum Moreton Parish Council, often referred to as Cheshire East Council

term or initials	initial	explanation
<b>Community Facilities</b>		Facilities providing for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, leisure and cultural needs of the community
<b>Community Infrastructure</b>		The basic facilities, services and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society. It includes community buildings and halls, leisure facilities, cultural facilities, education services, and healthcare facilities
<b>Community Infrastructure Levy</b>	CIL	A charge allowing Local Authorities to raise funds from owners and developers of land who undertake new building projects in their area
<b>Community Right to Build</b>		The Community Right to Build gives groups of local people the power to deliver the development that their local community wants, with minimal red tape. Communities may wish to build new homes or new community amenities, and providing they can demonstrate overwhelming local support, the Community Right to Build will give Communities the powers to deliver this directly.
<b>Consultation Statement</b>		A Consultation Statement accompanying the Neighbourhood Plan is required by the Localism Act. The Consultation Statement must explain how the community were consulted and how this informed the Neighbourhood Plan
<b>Curtilage</b>		The area of land, usually enclosed, immediately surrounding a dwelling house
<b>Delivery Strategy</b>		A document accompanying the Bunbury Neighbourhood Plan that sets out a strategy for delivering and monitoring the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. It includes the infrastructure and initiatives associated with the Plan area. This is a 'live' document that will be updated throughout the Plan period
<b>Deregulation Act 2015</b>		The Deregulation Act provides for the removal or reduction of burdens on businesses, civil society, individuals, public sector bodies and the taxpayer. These include measures relating to general and specific areas of business, companies and insolvency, the use of land, housing and development, transport, communications, the environment, the regulation of child trust funds, education and training, alcohol, sport and entertainment, the administration of justice, public authorities and legislative reform. The Act also provides for a duty on those exercising specified regulatory functions to have regard to the desirability of promoting economic growth. In addition, the Act repeals legislation that is no longer of practical use



term or initials	initial	explanation
<b>Design and Access Statement</b>		A report accompanying and supporting a planning application. The Local Planning Authority requires it for most development proposals apart from householder applications. These reports explain the design thinking behind a planning application
<b>Development</b>		Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land. Most forms of development require planning permission
<b>Development Plan</b>		A plan comprising the Development Plan Documents contained within the Local Development Framework This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans, and is defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
<b>Dwelling mix</b>		The mix of different types of homes provided on a site. A mix may typically include a range of house types from 2 bedroom to 5 bedroom houses
<b>Employment Land</b>		Development of land for employment uses, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).
<b>Evidence Base</b>		The researched, documented, analysed and verified evidence for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. It consists of many documents produced over a period of years by the Local Authority as part of the process of developing its Core Strategy
<b>Evidence Base Summary</b>		A document produced as part of the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. It supports the Plan by summing up the relevant Evidence Base and explaining how decisions were made as to where new development should be located
<b>Examination</b>		An independent review of the Neighbourhood Plan carried out in public by an independent examiner
<b>Exception Site</b>		see Rural Exception Site

term or initials	initial	explanation
<b>Fabric First</b>		<p>A building's fabric is intended to be the longest standing part of the construction, so the adoption of a fabric first approach is designed to ensure long-term performance that will help reduce energy demand to the lowest possible level, and provide the energy in the most cost-effective way. SAP 2012 software calculates the TFEE for a dwelling by taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building fabric U-values</li> <li>• Thermal bridging</li> <li>• Air permeability</li> <li>• Solar gains</li> <li>• Internal heat gains.</li> </ul> <p>Previously, a dwelling could achieve compliance by paying little attention to the fabric but taking advantage of costly renewable technologies such as heat pumps and photovoltaic arrays. Now, the aim is to reduce energy use and cost, reduce CO2 emissions, increase comfort, and rely less on those renewable technologies.</p> <p>To achieve this, the calculation method rewards improved insulation standards and well-designed construction details that limit thermal bridging and air leakage. The overall intention is for L1A 2013 to result in a 6% reduction in CO2 emissions across the new homes build mix compared to L1A 2010 (although changes in the calculation methodology make it difficult to quantify the exact percentage).</p> <p>For L1A 2013, the 'limiting fabric parameters' (essentially, the highest permissible U-values for individual building elements) from L1A 2010 remain. Designing to these values will not result in compliance and the building specification will need to be considerably better.</p>
<b>Fabric First Approach</b>	TER, TFEE	<p>Like the 2010 building regulations, L1A 2013 requires new dwellings to meet a defined target for carbon emissions (the 'Target Emission Rate', or TER). Unlike the 2010 regulations, there is an added emphasis on the basic fabric of the building, and in order to comply with L1A 2013, a new dwelling will also have to meet a 'Target Fabric Energy Efficiency' (TFEE).</p>
<b>Green Corridor</b>		<p>Green spaces that provide avenues for wildlife movement, often along streams, rivers, hedgerows or other natural features. Green corridors connect green spaces together</p>
<b>Green Spaces</b>		<p>see Open Space</p>
<b>Greenfield</b>		<p>Land on which no development has previously taken place</p>

term or initials	initial	explanation
<b>Gross density</b>		The number of dwellings per hectare where the calculation of the site area includes the whole site
<b>Habitat Regulations</b>		The European Union Habitat Directive aims to protect the wild plants, animals and habitats that make up our diverse natural environment. The directive created a network of protected areas around the European Union of national and international importance. The protected areas are called Natura 2000 sites. If a development is likely to affect a Natura 2000 site, an assessment under the Habitat Regulations is required.
<b>Independent Examiner</b>		Anyone with appropriate qualifications and skills and who meets certain requirements set out in the Localism Act. This could be a planning consultant or other planning professional, an employee of another local authority or a planning inspector.
<b>Infill Development</b>		Infilling is defined as the filling of a small gap (with up to 2 dwellings) in an otherwise built-up frontage in a recognised settlement.
<b>Infrastructure</b>		All the ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals etc.
<b>Intermediate housing</b>		See Affordable Housing
<b>Lifetime Homes</b>		The Lifetime Homes standard is a set of 16 design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of their lives.
<b>Local Development Document</b>		An individual part, usually a plan, of the Local Development Framework.
<b>Local Development Framework</b>	LDF	The portfolio of Local Development Documents.
<b>Local Plan</b>		The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

term or initials	initial	explanation
<b>Local Wildlife Sites</b>		Sites with ‘substantive nature conservation value’, they are defined areas identified and selected locally for their nature conservation value based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species with a national, regional and local context.
<b>Localism Act</b>		An Act of Parliament that became law in April 2012. The Act introduces a new right for local people to draw up ‘Neighbourhood Development Plans’ for their local area.
<b>Low Cost Market Housing</b>		Private sector housing that will be available to local residents who cannot afford to buy houses generally available in the open market.
<b>Market Housing</b>		Properties for sale or rent where prices are set in the open market.
<b>Mixed use</b>		Development where more than one use is proposed. A site could have houses, shops and community facilities for example. One building could be used for different purposes such as offices over shops.
<b>National Planning Policy Framework</b>	NPPF	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government in March 2012. It sets out the Government’s Planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b>		The full title in the Localism Act is ‘Neighbourhood Development Plan’. It is a plan document for a defined area subject to examination and approval by local referendum. It will be used in the determination of planning applications.
<b>Neighbourhood Plan Group</b>		A group of local people representing the Parish Council, community groups and businesses that informed and guided work on the Astbury and Moreton Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>Net Density</b>		The number of dwellings per hectare when the calculation of the site area excludes features such as open space, landscape buffers and access roads.
<b>New Homes Bonus</b>		The New Homes Bonus is a grant paid by central government to local councils for increasing the number of homes and their use. The New Homes Bonus is paid each year for 6 years. It’s based on the amount of extra Council Tax revenue raised for new-build homes, conversions and long-term empty homes brought back into use. There is also an extra payment for providing <a href="#">affordable homes</a> .
<b>Open Countryside</b>		The area outside the settlement boundary.

term or initials	initial	explanation
<b>Open Space</b>		All spaces of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas and areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which may offer opportunities for sport and recreation or act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife.
<b>Open Vista</b>		A view into, out of or across the parishes, over open countryside and the surrounding area.
<b>Plan Period</b>		The period for which the Astbury and Moreton Neighbourhood Plan will have effect. This will be from the adoption of the Plan until 2030 by agreement between Astbury and Moreton Parish Council and Cheshire East Council.
<b>Public Open Space</b>		see Open Space above
<b>Referendum</b>		A general vote by the electorate on a single policy question that has been referred to them for a direct decision. In the case of the Astbury and Moreton Neighbourhood Plan, the referendum will decide whether or not to adopt the Plan.
<b>Registered Social Landlord</b>		Independent housing organisation registered with the Tenant Services Authority under the Housing Act 1996. Independent not-for-profit housing providers, regulated by the government and also known as Housing Associations. They offer homes for rent or shared ownership for people in housing need.
<b>Residential Amenity</b>		The quality of the living environment for occupants of a dwelling house including its associated external spaces
<b>Rural Exception Site</b>		Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.
<b>Section 106 Agreements</b>	S106	Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), commonly known as 106 agreements, are a mechanism which make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, that would not otherwise be acceptable. They are focused on site specific mitigation of the impact of development. S106 agreements are often referred to as 'developer contributions' along with highway contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

term or initials	initial	explanation
<b>Settlement</b>		Settlements may be defined as cities, towns, villages and small settlements. The precise definition of which category each settlement falls into, will be part of the development plan process for each locality.
<b>Settlement Boundary</b>		This defines the limits of development and makes clear where development will and will not be allowed, regardless of other constraints.
<b>Social rented housing</b>		See Affordable Housing
<b>SSSI</b>	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest.
<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment</b>	SEA	Assessments made compulsory by a European Directive (the SEA Directive). They are to be implemented in planning through Sustainability Appraisals of Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.
<b>Sustainability Appraisal</b>		A process of appraising policies for their social, economic and environmental effects, which must be applied to all Development Plan Documents.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>		Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy <i>Securing the Future</i> set out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.
<b>Swales</b>		Shallow broad and vegetated channels designed to store and/or convey runoff and remove pollutants. They can be designed to promote infiltration where soil and groundwater conditions allow.
<b>Transport Assessment</b>		An assessment of the availability of, and levels of access to, all forms of transportation. In relation to a proposed development it identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated impacts of the development.
<b>Use Classes</b>		The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'.
<b>Wildlife Corridor</b>		Strips of land, for example along a hedgerow, conserved and managed for wildlife, usually linking more extensive wildlife habitats.

term or initials	initial	explanation
<b>Windfall sites</b>		Sites not allocated for development in the Neighbourhood Plan that unexpectedly come forward for development.