

INTRODUCTION

The strategy of the Local Plan sets out the broad framework to be used to guide development decisions in the Borough ~~in the period 1996 to 2006~~ **up until 2011**. It provides the focus for the detailed policies and proposals in the Local Plan which themselves implement the strategy, whilst at the same time making sure that the Plan works towards a common set of aims and objectives. **The aims and objectives upon which the Plan is based are derived from a number of sources. Most significantly they include the Council's Corporate Plan and the Vale Royal Community Plan.**

VALE ROYAL BOROUGH CORPORATE PLAN 2003-06

The Council's vision is:

"Vale Royal – A great place to be"

The Council's mission is:

"To promote Vale Royal as a great place in which to live, work and visit by tackling disadvantage, aiming for total accessibility, encouraging economic growth and achieving high performance as an organisation by working in partnership."

The Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2003-2006 identifies the main focus of the Council. It sets out five key priorities for the Council and how it will achieve success in these areas, which in turn will enable us to meet our mission. The priorities are:

- ***Performance management*** - working together to meet our targets and to continuously improve service delivery to a level that is recognised and approved by our customers
- ***e Government*** - working in partnership to achieve the Government's national target to make all of our services available electronically by 2005
- ***Organisational development*** - growing the organisation both individually and together to develop skills and build capacity for future continuous improvement
- ***Regeneration*** – leading the community into a more cohesive and sustainable future
- ***Putting Vale Royal on the Map*** – raising the profile and knowledge of the Authority through the work we do, to encourage inward investment

The key priority that the Local Plan will most obviously contribute towards is Regeneration and this is a theme that runs throughout the Local Plan Alteration.

VALE ROYAL COMMUNITY PLAN 2002-2005

The Community Plan identifies local priorities and suggests actions to address them and shows how working together can improve our quality of life economically, environmentally and socially. The Plan has been prepared by the Vale Royal Community Forum which comprises a range of organisations with the shared objective of improving well-being in Vale Royal.

Its guiding principles are reflected in the Local Plan Alteration. Overall these are about creating 'sustainable communities'. A sustainable community is described as one where:

- Opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation are available
- People feel safe in their community
- Local needs are met locally
- Waste is minimised
- The community is involved in decision making
- People have opportunities for satisfying work
- People's good health is protected
- Pollution is limited
- Everyone has access to good food, shelter and fuel
- Nature is valued and protected
- Places and objects combine beauty with utility
- People can acquire new skills, improve knowledge and gain information
- We do not sacrifice for short-term gains what future generations may value

The Community Plan lists 13 priorities and a series of actions to meet them. The priorities relate to economic, social and environmental well-being. They are:

Driving the Economy:

- Reduce unemployment amongst Vale Royal residents
- Diversify and support the rural economy
- Increase the wealth of the Borough by the attraction of investment into each of its towns as centres of habitation, commerce, service and recreation

Caring for the Community:

- Improve community safety
- Improve equal opportunities and equal access
- Support local communities in finding local solutions
- Improve health and well-being
- Provide opportunities for lifelong learning and cultural activities
- Create better homes

Caring for the Environment:

- Reduce waste and use of resources
- Create better environments for people to live in, work in and visit
- Reduce noise pollution and the quality of our air, land and water
- Getting about

The Council recognises that the Local Plan has an important role to play in meeting these priorities. All the priorities need to be supported by appropriate planning policies and this is one of the principal reasons for updating the Local Plan. A number of actions identified to meet community priorities are specifically related to land-use planning. In addition, the major objectives of the Local Plan (see below) are drawn directly from the Community Plan and the policy objectives have been reorganised and amended under these three themes.

~~THE STRATEGY—AIMS AND OBJECTIVES~~

~~The Council has agreed as part of its Corporate Strategy that in the provision of all its services, its main aim should be to ensure that the people of Vale Royal enjoy a high quality of life.~~

~~The Borough Local Plan is an important policy document of the Council and should therefore reflect the Council's principal aim.~~

~~The way in which this aim will be achieved can be broken down into a number of major objectives that make up the main themes of the Local Plan. These are not in any order of importance.~~

~~These will be achieved by a number of policy objectives which are listed below each major objective.~~

~~The objectives have guided policy development and are reflected throughout the various chapters of the Local Plan.~~

~~The Council's corporate aim relating to quality of life is translated into the policies and proposals of the Plan. These reflect many economic, environmental and social themes of sustainable development.~~

~~In respect of economic considerations, the Plan makes provision for a wide range of employment opportunities.~~

~~The Local Plan also takes into account social considerations to make sure that all groups in society can benefit from its proposals. There are therefore policies on disabled access, the protection of open space and recreational facilities, the provision of affordable housing and ensuring development is accessible by choice of transport mode.~~

~~The third key theme is environmental protection and enhancement. There are a wide range of policies which seek to counter any decline in biodiversity. These include the protection of specific nature conservation sites and minimising air pollution (including greenhouse gases) from transport through minimising the need to travel and encouraging the use of more sustainable transport modes. The Plan seeks to enhance both the natural and built environment of the Borough.~~

~~The Local Plan Strategy has accepted that the Cheshire replacement Structure Plan approved in 1999 provides the strategy context for all planning decision in Vale Royal.~~

ROLES OF THE LOCAL PLAN

Before the strategy of the Local Plan is described it is important to set out the purpose of the policies and proposals.

These are as follows:

To create a vision of the future land use of the Borough.

To protect the Borough's natural and man made ~~assets~~ **environment**.

To provide a working planning document for development control.

To inform all those interested in Vale Royal what development proposals are likely in particular areas.

To promote schemes that cannot be directly implemented through development control or Council spending e.g. building new roads or controlling pollution.

~~In addition the Local Plan will need to embody the Council's own Action Plan for sustainable development – Local Agenda 21 and will therefore seek to embrace the principles of sustainable development.~~

~~MAJOR AIM FOR THE BOROUGH COUNCIL~~

~~TO ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE OF VALE ROYAL ENJOY A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE~~

~~Major Objective 1:~~

~~To generate employment opportunities by increasing economic activity within the Borough.~~

~~Policy Objectives~~

- ~~1. To allocate a range of sites for business uses, general industry, warehousing, leisure and tourism sites, to help widen the Borough's economic base and develop its economy, and to meet the requirements of industry and commerce.~~
- ~~2. To improve the attractions of existing employment areas for existing and new businesses.~~
- ~~3. To provide for opportunities for new employment – generating activities in the rural areas of the Borough to improve the rural economy.~~
- ~~4. To allocate sites in locations suitable for high quality mixed development schemes.~~
- ~~5. To improve accessibility within Vale Royal and improve transport links between the Borough and surrounding areas.~~
- ~~6. To ensure that town centres continue to operate as viable and sustainable centres for the provision of employment.~~
- ~~7. To use derelict land wherever possible to provide suitable sites for employment use.~~
- ~~8. To make sure that sites proposed for employment use are compatible with and sensitive to surrounding land use.~~
- ~~9. To ensure that opportunities are available within the Borough to enable the retention and where appropriate expansion of local companies.~~

Major Objective 2:

To conserve, enhance and facilitate the enjoyment of the Borough's built heritage and natural environment.

Policy Objectives

1. To preserve and where appropriate enhance the listed buildings and Conservation Areas in the Borough.
2. To respond to the legacy of former industrial sites and mineral workings where dereliction and contamination are particular problems.
3. To improve the condition/appearance of areas where neglect, poor design, dereliction and inappropriate land use create an unattractive environment.
4. To make sure that all new development contributes to the physical enhancement of Vale Royal by being of a high design, layout and landscaping, and being appropriate to its surroundings, particularly the major development sites.
5. To protect sites of ecological, archaeological (including industrial archaeological), geomorphological, historic and landscape value.
6. To protect all important open space within settlements from development.
7. To create an open space network in the two towns and largest villages of the Borough.
8. To promote tree planting by identifying areas for The Mersey Forest in particular in association with new development.
9. To require landscaping schemes for new development.
10. Create and restore and encourage the management of landscape areas and wildlife habitats.
11. Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land.
12. To counter any decline in biodiversity.

Major Objective 3

To establish, promote and implement policies and practices which protect and raise the standard of health and quality of life of people within the Borough.

Policy Objectives

1. To ensure that new industrial development does not create unacceptable pollution and reduces the level of pollution where possible.
2. To resist development that may cause land, air, water, noise or light pollution.
3. To ensure that unsuitable development does not take place on contaminated land.
4. To resist development which increases risks to life and health to an unacceptable level.
5. To ensure that new development is located so as not to increase the risks from existing sources of pollution.
6. To promote the concept of 'secured by design' in all developments.

- ~~7. To encourage cycling as a transport mode and to provide safe routes for all cyclists.~~
- ~~8. To encourage walking as a transport mode and provide safe and convenient routes for pedestrians.~~
- ~~9. To promote traffic calming and pedestrianisation of streets.~~
- ~~10. To provide and protect open space for amenity and recreation.~~
- ~~11. To ensure that centres of employment, town centres, recreational, tourism and cultural facilities are accessible to all sections of the community.~~
- ~~12. To improve access for people with disabilities, the elderly and the less mobile sections of the community.~~

Major Objective 4

~~To protect and re-vitalise town centres~~

Policy Objectives

- ~~1. To allocate sites for new shopping developments in Northwich and Winsford town centres.~~
- ~~2. To resist out of town centre shopping developments which will adversely affect the vitality and viability of existing town centres.~~
- ~~3. To maintain a variety of shopping in town and village centres.~~
- ~~4. To improve the attractiveness of existing centres by environmental improvements, pedestrianisation, provision for cyclists, traffic calming, adequate servicing and ensuring that all hard and soft landscaping is of a good design and well maintained.~~
- ~~5. To improve access to town centres to all modes of transport for all people and put forward appropriate new road schemes and traffic calming measures.~~
- ~~6. To consider a variety of ways of limiting the expected increase in vehicles coming into town centres.~~
- ~~7. To exploit the development opportunities presented by sites next to waterways in or adjacent to town centres.~~
- ~~8. To promote leisure and tourism use on and adjacent to the waterways.~~
- ~~9. To take full account of the stability problems in Northwich town centre in considering where new development should be located.~~

Major Objective 5

~~To ensure the provision of suitable recreational, leisure and cultural facilities and services.~~

Policy Objectives

- ~~1. To protect important existing and potential open spaces and amenity land from development.~~
- ~~2. To allocate land for new recreation facilities in areas of recognised deficiency.~~
- ~~3. To encourage the full use of existing recreational facilities.~~
- ~~4. To promote the Northwich Community Woodlands as part of the Mersey Forest and as an important recreational, leisure and cultural resource in Vale Royal, Cheshire and the North West.~~

- ~~5. To promote the Lion Salt Works as a major salt heritage centre.~~
- ~~6. To promote the increased use of the Borough's waterway's recreation and tourism.~~
- ~~7. To create an open space network within the two large towns and larger villages.~~
- ~~8. To promote Vale Royal as a tourist destination.~~
- ~~9. To ensure the provision of eighteen hole municipal golf course in Winsford.~~
- ~~10. To ensure that adequate open space and children's play space is provided in new housing development.~~
- ~~11. To promote the restoration of the Anderton Boat Lift.~~

~~Major Objective 6~~

~~To ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs arising in Vale Royal.~~

~~Policy Objectives~~

- ~~1. To ensure that there are a range of sites available for housing development.~~
- ~~2. To concentrate new housing provision in or on the edge of the two principal towns and the largest villages in the Borough.~~
- ~~3. To ensure there is an adequate supply of affordable housing for local people of the Borough.~~
- ~~4. To ensure that housing density is compatible in terms of appearance, design, layout and with the nature of the site and character of the surrounding area.~~
- ~~5. To protect open space and amenity areas within residential areas.~~

~~Major Objective 7:~~

~~Planning for sustainable development and helping to reduce global warming.~~

~~Policy Objectives~~

- ~~1. Conserving land resources:~~
 - ~~(i) To sustain a long term Green Belt boundary.~~
 - ~~(ii) To protect important open space in all settlements from development.~~
 - ~~(iii) To encourage the development of brownfield land rather than greenfield land, particularly where that land is currently derelict or has been reclaimed.~~
 - ~~(iv) To protect sites of ecological, archaeological, geological, historical and landscape values.~~
 - ~~(v) To encourage the location of new development which makes best use of all transport modes, and is adjacent to other uses.~~
- ~~2. Conserving energy resources:~~
 - ~~(i) To encourage energy efficient building design and site layouts through planning and design briefs for all major new developments.~~
 - ~~(ii) To encourage the recycling of waste products and materials.~~
 - ~~(iii) To encourage the provision of renewable energy schemes.~~

Reducing the need to travel

- ~~(i) To encourage the location of new development which is accessible to a variety of transport modes.~~
- ~~(ii) To encourage a mix of uses on large development sites, particularly in or near town centres.~~
- ~~(iii) To provide opportunities for travel by different transport modes in large development schemes.~~

LOCAL PLAN OBJECTIVES

Consistent with the Community Plan, the objectives of the Local Plan are listed under the three themes of sustainable development- economic, social and environmental well-being. The Major Objectives are the same as those of the Community Plan and the Policy Objectives have been written to support community priorities.

Running through the three major objectives is the concept of acting in a way that does not sacrifice the quality of life of future generations for our short-term gains.

Major Objective 1.

To create a diverse economy in Vale Royal which attracts investment and enjoys the talents of all the community.

Policy Objectives

1. To allocate a range of sites for business uses, general industry, warehousing, leisure and tourism sites, to help widen the Borough's economic base and develop its economy, and to meet the requirements of industry and commerce.
2. To improve the image of the Borough and existing employment areas for existing businesses and to attract new businesses.
3. To provide opportunities for new employment – generating activities in the rural areas of the Borough to support rural regeneration including appropriate farm diversification.
4. To allocate sites in locations suitable for high quality mixed development schemes.
5. To improve accessibility within Vale Royal and improve transport links between the Borough and surrounding areas.
6. To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres.
7. To prevent the loss of existing and proposed employment sites in the Borough.
8. To ensure that opportunities are available within the Borough to enable the retention and where appropriate expansion of local companies.
9. To facilitate the delivery of the Northwich Regeneration Framework.
10. To facilitate regeneration in Winsford.
11. To support leisure and tourism and promote Vale Royal as a tourist destination.
12. To promote the establishment of a Weaver Valley Regional Park.

Major Objective 2.

To create a vibrant community in Vale Royal which takes collective responsibility for including, empowering, engaging and valuing everyone.

Policy Objectives

1. To promote development that reduces risks to life and improves health.
2. To ensure that new development is located so as not to be subject to unacceptable pollution.
3. To promote the principles of 'secured by design' in all developments.
4. To ensure that centres of employment, town centres, recreational, tourism and cultural facilities are accessible to all sections of the community.
5. To improve access to town centres by all modes of transport.
6. To provide a range of accessible recreation facilities including open space.
7. To protect important existing and potential open spaces and amenity land from development.
8. To encourage the full use of existing recreational facilities.
9. To promote the Northwich Community Woodlands as part of the Mersey Forest and as an important recreational, leisure and cultural resource in Vale Royal, Cheshire and the North West.
10. To promote mixed residential communities by providing a range of housing types and sizes within developments.
11. To ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing land to meet the Borough's housing requirements.
12. To ensure that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing for local people of the Borough.
13. To engage communities in planning policy decisions that affect them.
14. To maintain and improve the capacity and quality of community facilities and transportation infrastructure through seeking appropriate developer contributions as part of new development.

Major Objective 3

To create a cleaner and more attractive living environment in Vale Royal where resources are used wisely and pollution is minimised.

Policy objectives

1. To prioritise the use of previously-developed land and the conversion of existing buildings within the towns and larger villages in the Borough in meeting development needs rather than greenfield land, particularly where that land is currently derelict or underused.
2. To respond to the legacy of former industrial sites and mineral workings where dereliction and contamination are particular problems.
3. To protect the best and most versatile agricultural land.
4. To encourage energy efficient building design and site layouts through planning and design briefs for all major new developments.

5. To encourage the recycling of waste products and materials.
6. To encourage the provision of renewable energy schemes.
7. To protect the countryside for its own sake.
8. To protect and enhance the character of the countryside.
9. To sustain a long-term Green Belt boundary.
10. To protect the openness of the Green Belt.
11. To guide new development to locations which make the best use of all transport modes.
12. To protect and improve our historic built environment including Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
13. To preserve and, where possible, enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas in the Borough.
14. To improve the condition/appearance of areas where neglect, poor design, dereliction and inappropriate land use create an unattractive environment.
15. To make sure that all new development contributes to the physical enhancement of Vale Royal by being of a high quality design, layout and landscaping, and being appropriate to its surroundings, particularly the major development sites.
16. To enhance biodiversity.
17. To ensure development is well designed and respects its context.
18. To establish a network of accessible greenspace throughout the Borough including within built-up areas.
19. To ensure that new industrial development does not create unacceptable pollution and reduces the level of pollution where possible.
20. To resist development that may cause land, air, water, noise or light pollution.
21. To encourage cycling as a transport mode and to provide safe routes for all cyclists.
22. To reduce reliance on the car by promoting walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
23. To protect sites/areas of significant ecological, archaeological, geological, historical and landscape value.
24. To avoid development in flood risk areas and promote the use of sustainable urban drainage systems.
25. To secure the designation of the Weaver Valley as a regional park project and implement initiatives and projects that support its aims.

The Local Plan Strategy

Essentially the Local Plan Strategy gives broad guidance on the location of development and the general requirements for development, and outlines those strategic constraints to development.

The Council's main aim as interpreted by the strategy of the Local Plan is to ensure a continued balance between a development which will bring investment and new jobs into the area, improved facilities, a range of good quality housing, and the protection and enhancement of the area's natural and built environment.

Future Development

The requirement for Vale Royal set out in the approved Structure Plan for new housing implies a rate of development similar to that in the past. For employment the current Structure Plan proposes an increase in the development significantly above previous rates to ensure that a range of sizes and types of site can be provided, to increase the quality of new sites and to take advantage of the Borough's central location and excellent communication links to Manchester Airport and the rest of the region.

In view of the District's **Borough's** central location within the County, the Local Plan recognises that Vale Royal has a significant role to play in attracting new development into Cheshire. At the same time it is important that the amount of new development is appropriate to the size and character of individual settlements and does not harm the existing assets of the Borough. The Plan aims to ensure that development is directed to appropriate areas where both new housing and employment opportunities can be provided.

The strategy proposes that the majority of future development should continue to be concentrated in or on the edge of the towns of Winsford and Northwich **or in Winsford**. In these towns where existing levels of investment in facilities are high, there is some scope to use derelict and underused land and premises and there are opportunities to travel other than by using the private motor car. It is inevitable, that some open land will be needed to provide sites for new housing and employment opportunities. Where such sites are identified they will need to meet specific criteria. This applies in particular to Regional Employment Sites.

Where new development takes place, the Local Plan aims to ensure that such development also brings local benefits such as improved infrastructure and facilities and the creation of new landscapes. New housing will be expected to contribute to meeting local needs.

Within the two towns, new development will be required to be in scale and character with the existing settlement pattern and take account of locally important environmental constraints.

Town centres will continue to play a central role in the provision of services and new shopping development and be a focus for public transport. Winsford Town Centre has recently seen major improvements. A Regeneration Framework for Northwich has also been approved to guide comprehensive proposals for the regeneration of the town centre following mine stabilisation. Out of town centre shopping development will be strictly controlled. New employment opportunities will be provided through the development and redevelopment of existing industrial areas, by using reclaimed and derelict land and by the establishment of new 'business parks' and regional employment sites in the Borough. **New employment development will also principally be focused in Northwich and Winsford.**

Outside these towns, the Local Plan will allow for some growth in the largest villages to satisfy local needs and provide a variety of housing sites and to maintain essential services of a scale appropriate to the settlement. **for new employment development including development that supports the rural economy. Because the Borough's housing requirement can be met to 2011 very predominantly through four major land allocations within or on the edge of Northwich and within Winsford, new housing development within Frodsham, Helsby and Tarporley will be strictly controlled.**

In some ways, the settlement of Frodsham may be regarded as a town, indeed it has a Town Council. However, for the purposes of the Local Plan Strategy, it is not regarded as a town in policy terms in the same way as Northwich and Winsford where the bulk of new development is to be concentrated.

~~The level and scale of developments considered appropriate for Frodsham, an inset settlement in the Green Belt, is similar to the other large villages except that Frodsham, like Weaverham, is constrained by the North Cheshire Green Belt.~~

~~Therefore in the context of the Local Plan, Frodsham appears among the list of larger villages, rather than as a town in the relevant policy chapters together with the appropriate policy for settlement.~~

The development of a balanced and efficient transport system is also a crucial element to the strategy with an emphasis on measures to improve road safety, alleviate congestion, and promote the use of alternative transport modes to the motor car, particularly for journeys to work and into town centres.

It will also be the aim of the Plan to ensure that where appropriate new development provides opportunities to encourage journeys to be made other than by the motor car.

Where improvements to the road network are necessary and no feasible alternative to accommodating private car traffic is available, use will be made of joint public/private sector funding to carry out such improvements.

Development Constraints in Rural Areas

A significant part of the Borough is ~~comprised of countryside~~ **rural**. The retention, protection and enhancement of ~~which the countryside~~ **is** an important issue for the Local Plan in the future planning of the Borough.

The countryside is a valuable resource for agriculture, recreation, nature conservation and as a source of rural employment. In addition, it is also an important element in maintaining the character and separate identities of the Borough's towns and villages.

The Local Plan also re-affirms the Borough Council's commitment to maintaining the strategic aims of the North Cheshire Green Belt to restrict urban sprawl, safeguard the countryside, prevent the coalescence of towns and assist in urban regeneration both in Cheshire towns and in the conurbations.

The Plan area also contains a number of other designated areas which impose constraints to development including Areas of Special County Value for Landscape, high grade agricultural land and the Jodrell Bank Consultation Zone.

Development is also restrained in a number of villages because of environmental considerations, particularly where it is necessary to conserve their character, to avoid development encroaching into the countryside and to restrict the number of people living in such settlements when their employment is elsewhere.

Similarly within and between settlements there are Areas of Significant Local Environmental Value, which the Local Plan aims to protect from development to retain their open character, and retain the separate identities of individual settlements.

Improving the Quality of the Environment

The Local Plan provides a framework for the protection and enhancement of both the built and natural environment throughout the Borough. Where new development is proposed the quality of the environment in particular should not be allowed to deteriorate; the development should benefit the area as a whole.

The policies of the Local Plan are designed to encourage and assist the enhancement of the environment through the conversion, improvement and re-development of land and buildings particularly the land within settlements, especially where it will result in the reuse of neglected, vacant or derelict land and buildings. This development will directly assist

the regeneration of those areas and bring wider benefits from investment and improved infrastructure and in addition can reduce development pressure in the countryside.

Policy Approaches

The Policy approaches outline the scale and type of development the Local Plan envisages for the towns, villages and rural areas.

Northwich

~~Northwich and~~ **Northwich is identified as a 'key town' within the region in Regional Planning Guidance for the North West. As such it is a strategic focus for new development and for regeneration resources. With** its satellite villages it represents the largest centre of population and employment within the Borough. **Northwich also serves a large rural catchment. The Council in partnership with the North West Development Agency, English Partnerships, Cheshire County Council and British Waterways has prepared a Regeneration Framework for the town. It follows the award of £32 million by English Partnerships on behalf of the Government under the Land Stabilisation Programme for the stabilisation of abandoned salt mines beneath the town centre. The Regeneration Framework provides a comprehensive land-use plan to reshape the town centre. It will strengthen its retail offer, transform it into an attractive tourist destination and introduce a new residential community into the heart of the town. An important focus of the Framework is to ensure that the design of new buildings and public spaces, including routes, are of a high quality. These will also need to integrate the rivers, a major environmental asset, into the townscape. A further, essential element of the Framework is the establishment of an integrated transport strategy to ensure new development is supported by an efficient transportation network.**

The town will continue to be a focal point for **other** large scale development. ~~, although some developments may have to wait until the subsidence problems are resolved.~~ There will be an emphasis on the redevelopment of particular existing industrial areas and the ~~use of vacant land~~ **re-use of previously developed land particularly where it is derelict or underused.** The town is generally constrained by the North Cheshire Green Belt on its northern side and to the south the flood plain of the River Dane an Area of Special Local Value, prohibits development. Within the urban areas important open spaces will be protected from development.

~~Whilst much of the new residential developments will continue to be accommodated at Kingsmead, the Local Plan does provide some scope for new housing in some of the larger villages where there is access to public transport.~~

~~Improvements to traffic circulation in the town will be a high priority with the provision of facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. The vitality and viability of the town centre will be protected through the concentration of retailing and other uses on sites accessible to public transport.~~

~~Outside the town, at the edge of the urban area there will be a need for new employment sites accessible to the road network and to public transport.~~

~~Outside the town, at the edge of the urban area there will be a need for new employment sites accessible to the road network and to public transport. New railway stations will be required.~~

Given its key town status, the significant regeneration agenda for the town and that it has the largest concentration of housing, employment and other services/facilities in the Borough, Northwich will accommodate the majority of additional housing development requirements to 2011.

Winsford

Whilst not constrained by Green Belt the town of Winsford is surrounded by attractive countryside which includes in particular the River Weaver and the Flash.

New housing development will be located to permit access to existing and proposed employment sites and to take advantage of public transport facilities. Some expansion of the town centre is anticipated to take in surrounding areas which both have a town centre function and can provide new sites for town centre development to enhance the vitality and viability of the centre. **focused on a single major site known as the Winford Gateway. This allocation will transform in a comprehensive way, a number of vacant , under-used and derelict sites. It will create an attractive 'gateway' development leading to the town centre and considerably improving the town's image.**

Some new employment sites for a range of activities will be located to take advantage of the Davenham bypass and the Crewe-Liverpool railway line.

A priority at Winsford in the Local Plan is the provision of an 18 hole golf course.

Larger Villages

Outside the Northwich area, the expansion of Frodsham and the villages of Helsby and Weaverham is constrained by Green Belt policies and in the case of Tarporley by other rural restraint policies.

Whilst it is likely that some development will take place within the settlements on for example former industrial sites, it is important that local employment opportunities remain and are strengthened. Development pressure within such settlements should not be at the expense of open space.

The Rural Area

Any housing development will generally be restricted to limited infilling in appropriate villages. There will be provision for some small scale new development and some small scale expansion of existing businesses, in scale with the settlement and opportunities for existing businesses to adapt to changing circumstances.

The aim will be to encourage development which can help to meet **demonstrated** local housing **needs** and **employment needs support the rural economy in a way which also protects the environment.** and help to support existing facilities and services, and to restrict further out commuting for employment, but providing local jobs.

SELECTION OF SITES

All sites which are allocated for development in the Local Plan have been identified following a systematic analysis and assessment of a larger number of potential development areas within and around the edge of existing settlements.

In selecting sites for development the Borough Council has taken account of the following considerations:—

Ensuring that development avoids the Green Belt, areas of landscape, nature conservation or archaeological value, substantial areas of high quality agricultural land and areas of local amenity value.

Ensuring that new development makes the best possible use of available infrastructure in terms of roads, public utilities, drainage, schools, public transport services and other facilities or makes a contribution to the improvement of the area's infrastructure.

Utilising derelict or underused land for housing and employment wherever

~~practicable and appropriate.~~

~~Ensuring that the character and separate identity of existing settlements is safeguarded.~~

~~Ensuring that a variety of sites are provided in locations which are attractive to developers provided this does not compromise their other objectives of the Local Plan.~~

~~Ensuring that sites are relatively free from external constraints.~~

~~Ensuring that development is generally related in scale and location to existing development and takes account of existing patterns of settlement and surrounding land uses.~~

~~Taking advantage of opportunities for mixed development schemes and locating development sites to encourage a reduction in the number of separate trips made, especially by private car, and the use of other transport modes.~~

Candidate sites have been assessed against a range of sustainability and deliverability criteria. Separate reports setting out the housing and employment site selection methodology have been prepared as background papers which will accompany the Local Plan Alteration.

GS1

SUFFICIENT LAND WILL BE PROVIDED TO SATISFY DEMAND FOR NEW HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT AND SERVICES ARISING IN THE BOROUGH UP TO ~~2006~~ **2011** SUBJECT TO THE STRATEGIC POLICIES SET OUT IN THE CHESHIRE REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE PLAN.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) Provisions for housing, employment and services in the period up to ~~2006~~ **2011** allows for the needs likely to arise within the Borough and also allows for modest growth through in-migration.
- (ii) Within the Borough, development should continue to be concentrated where: levels of investment are high; there is scope for journeys to be made other than by private car; there is scope for environmental improvement; where there is the potential to use derelict and vacant land and re-use existing buildings and developed land that have become redundant and where the loss of natural resources is minimised. Such scope continues to be provided largely within or on the edge of ~~towns of~~ Northwich and ~~in~~ Winsford.
- (iii) For the purpose of calculating the policy requirements of the Structure Plan for the Local Plan, a base date of ~~September 1999~~ **March 2003** has been used. In addition the housing and employment land requirements in the Local Plan now reflect the contents of the Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan – Cheshire 2011.

GS2

NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT AND SERVICES IN THE BOROUGH WILL GENERALLY BE CONCENTRATED IN OR ON THE EDGE OF ~~THE TOWNS OF~~ NORTHWICH AND ~~IN~~ WINSFORD, INCLUDING THE LARGER VILLAGES OF ANDERTON, BARNTON, CUDDINGTON, DAVENHAM, HARTFORD, LOSTOCK GRALAM, LOWER MARSTON, LOWER WINCHAM, MOULTON, RUDHEATH, HIGHER WINCHAM, AND WEAVERHAM. THE OTHER LARGER VILLAGES, TARPORLEY, FRODSHAM AND HELSBY ARE ALSO SUITABLE FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) To conform with the strategic aims of the Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan to concentrate development in or on the edge of the towns of the County.
- (ii) To maximise the use of existing infrastructure and services.
- (iii) To safeguard the rural areas and villages from a scale of development inappropriate to that location.
- (iv) To protect areas of high landscape quality.
- (v) To minimise the loss of valuable ecological resources.
- (vi) To provide access to services without the need to use the private car.

Policy Derivation

Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan (2011) Policies GEN, IND2, HOU2

GS3

THE NORTH CHESHIRE GREEN BELT EXTENDS ACROSS THE NORTHERN PART OF THE BOROUGH, ITS BOUNDARIES BEING DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

WITHIN THE GREEN BELT PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GIVEN EXCEPT IN VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW BUILDINGS UNLESS IT IS FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

- (i) AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY (REF POLICES ~~H8, H9, H18, H19~~ **H5, H9, RE3, RE4, RE7**)
- (ii) ESSENTIAL FACILITIES FOR OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION (REF POLICIES RT1, RT15, RT18-RT19, RE9, MW4) FOR CEMETERIES AND FOR OTHER USES OF THE LAND WHICH PRESERVE THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT (REF POLICY PS1) AND WHICH DO NOT CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND WITHIN THE GREEN BELT;
- (iii) LIMITED EXTENSION, ALTERATION OR REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING DWELLINGS (REF POLICIES ~~H8, H9, H18, H19~~ **H5, H14, H16, H18**)
- ~~(iv) LIMITED INFILLING IN EXISTING VILLAGES (REF POLICY H11) AND LIMITED AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR COMMUNITY NEEDS (REF POLICY H23)~~
- (v) LIMITED INFILLING OR REDEVELOPMENT OF MAJOR EXISTING DEVELOPED SITES (REF POLICY E10 FOR EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES AND POLICY PS5 FOR REDUNDANT INSTITUTIONAL SITES)

PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVE A MATERIAL CHANGE IN THE USE OF LAND OR ENGINEERING AND OTHER OPERATIONS AS SET OUT IN THE STATUTORY DEFINITION OF DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ALLOWED PROVIDED THEY MAINTAIN THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT AND DO NOT CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN THE GREEN BELT.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) To conform with the Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan (2011).
- (ii) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas as part of the North Cheshire Green Belt, the Green Belt boundaries shown on the Proposals Map perform the strategic roles of helping:
 - To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- (iii) Openness in terms of this policy generally means freedom from built development. Any development which reduces the openness of the Green Belt as a whole will not be acceptable under the terms of the policy.
- (iv) The boundaries have been drawn to enable a long term Green Belt boundary to be established so as to avoid short term amendments.
- (v) The Borough Council is not identifying any areas of safeguarded land between the urban areas and the Green Belt since it is confident that there is sufficient land outside the Green Belt to accommodate foreseeable future development needs.
- (vi) To conform with PPG2 “Green Belts”

Policy Derivation

PPG2 – “Green Belts”

Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan (2011) Policy GEN2

~~Existing Villages in the Green Belt~~~~GS4~~

~~THE VILLAGES OF ACTON BRIDGE, ALVANLEY, ANTROBUS, COMBERBACH, CROWTON, DELAMERE, GREAT BUDWORTH, HIGHER WHITLEY, KINGLSEY, LITTLE LEIGH, NORLEY, SUTTON WEAVER WILL BE WASHED OVER BY THE GREEN BELT. CERTAIN VERY LIMITED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ALLOWED AS FOLLOWS; HOUSING (REF POLICIES H8 AND H9), EMPLOYMENT (REF POLICIES E10), SHOPPING (REF POLICIES STC13 AND STC14), RECREATION AND TOURISM (REF POLICIES GS7 AND RT10-RT13).~~

~~THE FOLLOWING VILLAGES WILL BE INSET IN THE GREEN BELT: FRODSHAM, HELSBY, HIGHER WINCHAM, WEAVERHAM. LIMITED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ALLOWED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING POLICIES: HOUSING (REF POLICY H6), EMPLOYMENT (REF POLICY E8), SHOPPING (REF POLICIES STC1, STC3, STC7-STC10), RECREATION AND TOURISM (REF POLICY RT7)~~

~~Reasons and Explanations~~

- ~~(i) To conform with the advice of PPG2 “Green Belts”.~~
- ~~(ii) The washed over villages are those where some very limited development in scale with the character of the village, and the level of existing facilities and services is appropriate.~~

- (iii) ~~The inset villages are those settlements where limited new development or the expansion of development within the village, in scale with the character of the settlement and level of existing services and facilities is appropriate.~~

~~Policy Derivation~~

~~PPG2 "Green Belts"~~

~~Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan (2001) policy ENV3~~

Changes to the North Cheshire Green Belt

GS5 [note changes to proposals map]

THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO THE NORTH CHESHIRE GREEN BELT BOUNDARY ARE PROPOSED AND SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

- (i) LAND AT ANDERTON CONCRETE WORKS, NEW ROAD, HOUGH LANE, ANDERTON IS EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) The Borough Council considers that in view of the developed nature of the site, this land should be excluded from the Green Belt. It is therefore necessary to keep this land permanently open.
- (ii) The realigned Green Belt boundary is well defined, follows an existing hedge line which essentially defines the edge of the built up area.
- (ii) This amendment to the Green Belt boundary will not lead to the encroachment of development into the surrounding countryside.
- (iv) The site received planning consent for housing development in April 1996 as a Departure to the development plan justified on the basis of exceptional circumstances, i.e. the removal of a non-conforming noisy industrial use. The site has now been developed fully.

- (ii) LAND COMPRISING THE FRODSHAM, HELSBY AND LORDSHIP MARSHES AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP IS INCLUDED WITHIN THE NORTH CHESHIRE GREEN BELT.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) This land has been safeguarded as a possible future site for large scale industry of national importance since 1979 when the Secretary of State confirmed the area's potential in approving the Cheshire County Structure Plan. His view was that development should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. The Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan (1992) retained a presumption against development except for agricultural purposes (EMP4). In addition all planning applications on the marshes were to be referred to the Secretary of State instead of being dealt with by the Borough Council.
- (ii) There is now increasing international recognition of the value of estuaries in nature conservation terms and the Mersey Estuary in particular which now has the status of a Ramsar site and special protection area. The Marshes lying within the Estuary zone and the Ramsar designation should not now be considered for large scale industry.

- (iii) In addition the Marshes represents a major open area between the heavy industrial sites at Ellesmere Port and Runcorn and therefore perform the function of separating large built up areas. Their openness is essential to this function.
- (iv) The Manchester Ship Canal is an important strategic waterway that needs to be maintained by regular dredging to ensure that it remains navigable and for drainage purposes. The Borough Council recognises the importance of the canal deposit grounds located in the Frodsham, Helsby and Lordship marshes to the continued maintenance works required to the canal.
- (iii) **LAND AT DALGETY, WINCHAM LANE, LOWER WINCHAM BE EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT.**

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) A very substantial part of this site is occupied by a large and prominent industrial building. Physically, visually and functionally it now forms part of the large industrial complex to the south.
- (ii) The site no longer contributes to the openness of the Green belt and no longer performs a Green Belt function.
- (iii) The form and bulk of the existing development on this site creates the exceptional circumstances necessary to change the Green belt boundary.
- (iv) **LAND AT AND ADJACENT TO WEAVER PARK INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, FRODSHAM BE EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT**

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) **The site constitutes previously developed land. Part of it is currently an industrial estate of poor environmental quality. There is a major opportunity to improve this key gateway area at the entrance to Frodsham through a comprehensive remodelling of the industrial estate and its extension over further previously developed land. Any comprehensive scheme will also need to encompass the former East Clifton tip bringing forward its remediation and reclamation as an area of community greenspace with appropriate long-term and resourced management arrangements. Taken together, these are considered to constitute exceptional circumstances that warrant the removal of the land from the Green Belt.**
- (ii) **A comprehensive scheme would support several of the prioritised activities identified through the Frodsham Forward initiative (Market Town Health Check). These include improving the gateways into Frodsham, regenerating waterside sites and redeveloping brownfield sites to provide a greater variety of units for small businesses.**
- (v) **LAND AT FOREST ROAD, CUDDINGTON BE INCLUDED IN THE GREEN BELT**

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) **Land at Forest Road, Cuddington was taken out of the Green Belt in 1992 through the Vale Royal Borough Local Plan. It was subsequently allocated for housing In the First Review of the Plan (2001) to contribute towards the housing development requirements of the Borough to 2011. There is no longer a need for this large greenfield site and it has been de-allocated**

through a change to policy H2. The Vale Royal Urban Capacity Study has identified that there is a significant amount of sustainable brownfield land within the main built up areas of the Borough through to 2016. Because of the scale of further housing allocations in the Local Plan there is a very restrictive policy towards further new-build windfall development. This will mean that not all of the capacity identified in the Study to 2011 will be realised. Added to this is a strategy in Regional Planning Guidance for the North West which seeks to reduce the annualised rate of new build development across the Region which the Local Plan at its next stage will need to take account of following changes to the Structure Plan. These factors taken together mean that it is highly unlikely that the Forest Road site will be needed to meet the Borough's housing requirement in the long-term. A revised long-term Green Belt boundary can therefore be established. This change directly fulfils a number of the purposes of including land in the Green Belt set out in PPG2: Green Belts, in particular:

- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and
- to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Policy Derivation
PPG12 "Green Belts"

The Open Countryside

GS6

THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE PROTECTED. OPEN COUNTRYSIDE IS DEFINED AS ALL PARTS OF THE BOROUGH WHICH LIE OUTSIDE OF SETTLEMENT POLICY BOUNDARIES BUT EXCLUDING THE LAND IN THE NORTH CHESHIRE GREEN BELT SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP NOTWITHSTANDING THAT THERE EXIST BUILDINGS SINGLY AND IN GROUPS WITHIN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE. **NEW BUILDINGS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE UNLESS PROVIDED FOR THROUGH OTHER POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.**

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) It is the Strategic Policy of the Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan to limit development in the rural parts of the County and to direct most new development for housing, employment and commercial purposes to the towns of the County.
- (ii) The Borough Local Plan provides for most forms of development to be accommodated within existing settlements. This does not mean that development of all land within towns and villages will be acceptable. Policies in this Local Plan for the protection of the character, environmental qualities and amenities of the towns and villages will be used to assess the suitability of development proposals for individual sites.
- (iii) The variety of form and character of towns and villages of Vale Royal means that some settlements will be capable of accommodating a wider range of development than others. The Policies of this Local Plan indicate the range of development which are appropriate to each of the towns and villages for which settlement Policy Boundaries are identified. These policies apply within the areas as shown on the

Proposals Map.

- (iv) The Settlement Policy Boundaries show the extent of the area in which the range of developments appropriate in a particular locality may be permitted within the aims of the Plan.

Policy Derivation

Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan (2011) Policy GEN1

Change of Use/Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Green Belt and Open Countryside

GS7

~~THE PREFERRED REUSE OF RURAL BUILDINGS WILL BE USES WHICH ACCOMMODATE OR BENEFIT LOCAL RURAL COMMERCE AND BUSINESS OR GENERATE WEALTH FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. THE NEED TO ACCOMMODATE LOCAL BUSINESS AND COMMERCE WILL BE A MATERIAL CONSIDERATION IN DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR THE CONVERSION OF RURAL BUILDINGS. APPLICATIONS FOR CONVERSIONS OF RURAL BUILDINGS WILL BE REQUIRED TO MEET CRITERIA (i) TO (ix) OF THE POLICY WHILST APPLICATIONS FOR CONVERSIONS TO RESIDENTIAL USE WILL NEED TO MEET CRITERIA (i) TO (xiii)~~

THE RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT, RECREATION, TOURISM OR COMMUNITY PURPOSES WILL BE ALLOWED WHEN THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE MET:

- (i) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT LEAD TO UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF TRAFFIC, A REDUCTION IN RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OR A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE BUILT OR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.
- (ii) THE APPLICANT MUST SHOW THAT THE BUILDING TO BE CONVERTED IS STRUCTURALLY SOUND AND OF PERMANENT AND SUBSTANTIAL CONSTRUCTION. AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS BUILT WITHIN 4 YEARS OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE ARE DEALT WITH IN RE5 WITH AN ADDITIONAL POLICY, BUT SHOULD ALSO MEET THE CRITERIA IN THIS POLICY.
- (iii) THE APPLICANT MUST SHOW THAT THE BUILDING CAN BE BROUGHT BACK INTO USE WITHOUT COMPLETE OR MAJOR RECONSTRUCTION.
- (iv) WHERE RELEVANT THE APPLICANT SHOULD PROVIDE DETAILS OF ANY PROTECTED SPECIES, E.G. BATS WHICH PRESENTLY INHABIT THE BUILDING.
- (v) THE DESIGN OF THE CONVERSION SHOULD NOT INVOLVE SIGNIFICANT EXTERNAL CHANGE NOR EXTENSION NOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL BUILDINGS AND SHOULD RESPECT THE ORIGINAL STYLE, BULK, DESIGN AND FORM OF THE BUILDING AND WHERE POSSIBLE SHOULD USE LOCAL STYLES AND MATERIALS OR THEIR EQUIVALENTS TO ENSURE THE BUILDING IS IN KEEPING WITH THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA.
- (vi) ALTERATIONS TO THE CURTILAGE OF THE BUILDING TO PROVIDE CAR PARKING SHOULD USE ORIGINAL STYLES AND FINISHES SUCH AS, FOR

EXAMPLE, COBBLES.

- (vii) THE OVERALL APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING AND ITS CURTILAGE SHOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO EITHER THE VIEWS INTO THE SITE OR THE CHARACTER AND OPENNESS OF THE AREA.
- (viii) IN THE CASE OF BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL MERIT OR HISTORIC INTEREST, THE CONVERSION SHOULD PRESERVE BOTH THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FEATURES OF THE BUILDING AND ITS SETTING. PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS MAY BE REMOVED WHERE IT IS CONSIDERED THAT FURTHER ALTERATIONS TO A BUILDING OF ARCHITECTURAL MERIT OR HISTORIC INTEREST WOULD BE LIKELY TO HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT ON IT OR ITS WIDER SETTING.
- (ix) THE CONVERSION DOES NOT LEAD TO DISPERSAL OF ACTIVITY ON SUCH A SCALE TO PREJUDICE TOWN AND VILLAGE VITALITY.

THE RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS TO RESIDENTIAL LIVING ACCOMMODATION WILL NOT BE ALLOWED UNLESS:

- (i) IT FORMS A SUBORDINATE ELEMENT TO THE CONVERSION OF A BUILDING FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES AS PART OF A LIVE-WORK UNIT;
- (ii) IT IS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITHIN OR ON THE EDGE OF A VILLAGE WHERE THERE IS A DEMONSTRATED LOCAL NEED (REF POLICY H23).
- (iii) IT IS FOR AN AGRICULTURAL WORKER, SUBJECT TO POLICY RE7; OR
- (iv) IT IS IN ASSOCIATION WITH A LARGER SCALE EQUINE DEVELOPMENT, SUBJECT TO POLICY RE9.

~~IN ADDITION, FOR RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:~~

- ~~(x) THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THE APPLICANT TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE THAT THE BUILDING IS NOT REQUIRED FOR THE NEEDS OF LOCAL COMMERCE, TOURISM OR INDUSTRY FOLLOWING THE MARKETING OF THE PROPERTY FOR SUCH USES FOR 12 MONTHS AT AN APPROPRIATE PRICE. THE BOROUGH COUNCIL MAY EXCEPTIONALLY RELAX THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE MARKETING EXERCISE IF THE PROPOSAL FOR RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION IS A SUBORDINATE PART OF A SCHEME FOR BUSINESS REUSE.~~
- ~~(xi) PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS MAY BE REMOVED WHERE IT IS CONSIDERED THAT FURTHER ALTERATIONS WOULD BE LIKELY TO HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT ON THE BUILDING OR ITS WIDER SETTING.~~
- ~~(xii) THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL NEED TO BE ASSURED THAT ANY SUCH PROPOSALS WILL NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON: THE BUILDING, IN TERMS OF THE CHANGES CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO ACCOMMODATE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ASSOCIATED SERVICES AND FACILITIES;-
ITS SETTING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, IN TERMS OF NOISE, TRAFFIC AND THE IMPACT OF PARKED CARS, GARDENS AND ASSOCIATED RESIDENTIAL CLUTTER.~~
- ~~(xiii) THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ONLY ALLOW PROPOSALS INVOLVING MORE THAN 10 UNITS WHERE:
THIS IS REQUIRED TO SECURE THE ECONOMIC REUSE OF A LISTED BUILDING OR LOCALLY IMPORTANT BUILDINGS.~~

~~WHERE THERE ARE OVERRIDING BENEFITS IN TERMS OF IMPROVEMENTS TO THE APPEARANCE OF BUILDINGS.~~

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) ~~In order to ensure new development is sustainable and does not promote large numbers of private car trips it is the Policy of both the Structure Plan and this Plan to concentrate development in urban areas and generally discourage development in isolated locations. However, residential conversions of rural buildings, have to a degree, undermined this policy and some of these developments have been a substantial scale.~~
- (ii) ~~This policy seeks to ensure that conversions bring economic benefit to the rural area in which they are situated. PPG7 “The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development” clearly states that many rural areas lack suitable workspace and the reuse of existing buildings has an important role to play in meeting this demand. The PPG makes it clear that such uses can encourage new enterprise and provide jobs needed whilst “residential conversions have a minimal impact on the rural economy”. Accordingly in order to ensure the future of the rural economy reuse of rural buildings for tourist accommodation and employment uses should be given precedence over residential use, although there will continue to be pressure for residential use.~~
- (iii) ~~The conversion of rural buildings to residential use will often have a detrimental effect on both the building being converted and its setting. If a more comprehensive range of uses are considered it will be possible to match the needs of the rural community and the scope of the building itself.~~
- (i) The Government expresses a clear preference for the economic re-use of rural buildings (PPG7, PPG2, RPG13, Rural White Paper (2000)). This policy is applicable to all types of rural buildings that lie within the Open Countryside or Green Belt (including washed over villages). This includes, for example: agricultural buildings, schools, churches and village halls.**
- (ii) The re-use of rural buildings is one of the ways local planning authorities can assist rural diversification. Additionally, providing employment opportunities in rural areas can allow people to work locally and therefore reduce the need to travel.**
- (iii) Residential conversions have a minimal beneficial economic impact for rural communities, while business conversion can offer local employment opportunities and help support the rural economy**
- (iv) The focus of additional housing development should be directed to the principal built-up areas in the Borough. Government guidance states that buildings in the countryside, away from settlements should be strictly controlled. Agricultural buildings are also excluded from the definition of previously developed land. PPG3 states that priority should be given to using previously developed land.**
- (v) Buildings of architectural merit (v) or historic interest are those which are listed by the Secretary of State for National Heritage under Section 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990).**

Policy Derivation

PPG2 “Greenbelts”

PPG3 “Housing”

PPG7 “The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development”

PPG13 “Transport”**RPG 13 “Regional Planning Guidance for the North West”****DETR (2000) “Our Countryside: The Future - A Fair Deal for Rural England” (Rural White Paper)**

Areas Affected by Former Underground Rock Salt Mining in Northwich

GS 8

NEW BUILDING DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY FORMER UNDERGROUND ROCK SALT MINING AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL NOT BE ALLOWED UNLESS EVIDENCE CAN BE PRODUCED TO SHOW THAT THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS WILL NOT BE DETRIMENTALLY AFFECTED TO A MATERIAL DEGREE BY UNDERGROUND CONDITIONS.

EXCEPTIONS TO THIS MAY BE ALLOWED IN RESPECT OF BOTH MINOR EXTENSIONS TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY, MINOR EXTENSION TO RETAIL AND OTHER COMMERCIAL PROPERTY AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT WHERE THE DEVELOPER IS PREPARED TO DELAY THE DEVELOPMENT UNTIL AFTER INVESTIGATIONS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT AND IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL THAT PEOPLE AND PROPERTY WOULD NOT BE AT RISK.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) To ensure that new developments are not put at risk of subsidence because of underground conditions within the area to the north of Northwich.
- ~~(ii) The Borough Council is undertaking investigatory work on Baron's Quay; Witten Bank; Penny's Lane and Neumann's Witten Street mines which extend under a number of ownerships and for which it would be impractical and potentially unsafe to ask individual applicants to undertake investigations of the mines. It is anticipated that the investigations will be completed by Spring 1996.~~
- ~~(iii) Until such time as the mines have been demonstrated to be stable; or that they have been stabilised by being filled or that the ground has been stabilised following the collapse of the mines, it is considered that new building development would put people and property at greater risk.~~
- ~~(iv) The Council's policy is, with the landowners affected, to actively seek ways of in which the necessary financial resources including assistance from Government agencies can be provided to stabilise the abandoned rock salt mines. In this regard, an application has been made for grant assistance to English Partnerships under the Land Stabilisation Programme. The objective is to secure the long term future for both existing uses and for any redevelopment of the land within Northwich town policy boundary. In view of the complexity of the issues to be resolved the Council recognise that this is unlikely to be achieved in the short term, but is confident that the problems will be resolved within the Plan period.~~
- (ii) The Council has secured funding through the Land Stabilisation Programme managed by English Partnership for the stabilisation of abandoned salt mines beneath the town centre. It is anticipated that stabilisation works will be completed by 2007. Development will be permitted to be carried out in phases as individual mines are stabilised throughout this period.**

Policy Derivation

PPG14- "Development on Unstable Land"

MPG12 – "Treatment of Disused Mine Openings and Availability of Information on Mined Ground"

GS9

NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL USES AND BUILDINGS ON SITES OUTSIDE THE NORTHWICH TOWN CENTRE POLICY BOUNDARY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IF THE USES AND BUILDINGS ARE THOSE WHICH WOULD OR COULD BE EXPECTED TO LOCATE WITHIN THE NORTHWICH TOWN CENTRE.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) ~~Until such times as the future stability of the town centre can be assured and consequently new developments permitted within the town centre, the authority wish to ensure that the future vitality and viability of the town centre is not threatened by developments occurring elsewhere.~~
The Council has secured funding through the Land Stabilisation Programme managed by English Partnership for the stabilisation of abandoned salt mines beneath the town centre. It is anticipated that stabilisation works will be completed by 2007. The Northwich Vision identifies significant opportunities to accommodate the full range of key town centre uses within Northwich Town Centre. If the Regeneration Framework is to succeed then it is imperative that these uses are not lost to sites outside the town centre.
- (ii) ~~The dispersal of town centre uses outside the town centre is contrary to Central Government advice.~~
- (iii) ~~The policy will be reviewed once the further investigations of the mines in Northwich Town Centre have been completed.~~

Policy Derivation

PPG6 "Town Centres and Retail Developments"

~~Areas of special development opportunity~~

~~There are particular areas within the Borough where there is potential for significant change and development over the next ten years and beyond but where there is some uncertainty about the form and nature of the development that may take place. Simple land use allocations would therefore not be a suitable way of dealing with these area's circumstances in the local Plan.~~

~~The following area is shown on the Local Plan proposals maps and policies state what the Council wishes to see achieved on the site taking account of the potential of the area and other relevant policies of the Local Plan. The Council may in partnership with developers produce Development Briefs for these sites.~~

~~Land North and West of Weaver Way, Northwich~~

GS10

~~THE SITE IS ALLOCATED FOR MIXED USES INCLUDING RETAIL, HOUSING, LEISURE/RECREATION, PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, ANY PROPOSAL FOR THE SITE MUST OPEN UP THE RIVER FRONTAGE (REF. POLICIES H2.05 AND STC2.2~~

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) ~~This is a major site in Northwich Town centre next to the River Weaver. The Council would wish to see the site developed for town centre uses such as housing, shopping, recreation and leisure taking full advantage of the river~~
- (ii) ~~this site has tremendous potential to attract town centre uses but presently is underused and comprises uses which would be better located elsewhere. To develop the site will require highway improvements, the retention and incorporation of a Listed building, improved access to the town centre, and the creation of a high quality built environment.~~

Policy Derivation

PPG12 "Development Plan"

Northwich Town Centre

GS11 *[note changes to proposals map]*

DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHWICH TOWN CENTRE WILL BE BROUGHT FORWARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NORTHWICH VISION. DEVELOPMENT THAT PREJUDICES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORTHWICH VISION WILL NOT BE ALLOWED.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) **The regeneration of Northwich is a key priority in the Vale Royal Community Plan. The Northwich Vision is a comprehensive, 15 year regeneration strategy for Northwich town centre. The strategy will give clear guidance regarding the implementation of development, public realm and transportation projects across the town centre. Its preparation has been steered by a partnership of Vale Royal Borough Council, Cheshire County Council, English Partnerships, the North West Development Agency and British Waterways.**
- (ii) **The Council published the draft Northwich Vision for consultation purposes in November 2003. Following the consideration of representations it will be finalised and approved by the council as supplementary planning guidance (SPG) in February 2004.**
- (iii) **The Northwich Vision SPG will contain a masterplan to guide the redevelopment of a range of sites within the town centre. These key development opportunities will also have specific design briefs. Integral to the Vision is a transportation strategy aimed at ensuring the town centre has sufficient transportation capacity to allow this development to take place. It covers all modes including rail, bus, walking, cycling, taxi and the private car. The SPG also sets out an approach towards securing, through planning obligations, contributions towards transportation infrastructure and other necessary public realm improvements. Underpinning and strategy is a focus on good urban design through quality new buildings, spaces and routes.**
- (iv) **The Northwich Vision seeks to expand and enhance the town centre's offer in terms of shopping, tourism and leisure. Significant new residential development is proposed linking to existing communities along with new employment opportunities, particularly offices. It will also seek to build upon the town's key assets including the waterfront, its historic buildings and the natural setting of the town adjacent to the Northwich Community Woodlands.**

The Weaver Valley Regional Park project will provide a wider strategic context for the town underpinning the significance of Northwich as a 'key town' within the region.

- (v) The Council will have regard to the SPG in determining planning applications and therefore applicants will be expected to demonstrate how their proposals fully address the issues that it covers. Prospective applicants are encouraged to discuss proposals informally with the Council before submitting applications.
- (vi) Reference should also be made to other policies relevant to the town centre. These include policies H2, E5 and STC2.

Policy Derivation

Northwich Vision Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance November 2003.

Lower Wincham and Winsford Gateway Sites

GS12 [NOTE CHANGES TO PROPOSALS MAP]

THE FOLLOWING SITES WILL BE BROUGHT FORWARD FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS:

- (I) LOWER WINCHAM
- (II) WINSFORD GATEWAY

THE PREPARATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS WILL BE AN INCLUSIVE PROCESS INVOLVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS. THE BRIEFS WILL CONTAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) These sites are significant new allocations in the Local Plan. They should be brought forward for development only after the preparation of development briefs and in accordance with the phasing of residential development set out in policy H2a. The Council will ensure that local communities and other stakeholders are engaged in their preparation. The policy does not include the Winnington/Wallerscote Urban village and Northwich Town Centre Sites. The first of these sites is already covered by an approved development brief. Northwich Town Centre is covered by policy GS11.
- (ii) Development briefs are necessary to ensure that the sites are planned in a comprehensive way and to ensure their contribution towards regeneration and the creation of sustainable communities is optimised.
- (iii) The Lower Wincham site is allocated for a mix of uses. It will comprise housing (see policy H2), employment (see policy E5), community uses and associated infrastructure. The matters to be addressed through a development brief will include:
 - the establishment of a new road access off New Warrington Road;
 - the current use of Chapel Street as a through route for heavy goods vehicles;
 - urban design principles to deliver high quality buildings, spaces and routes;

- the proximity of potential new housing to existing employment uses;
 - the enhancement of the Trent and Mersey Canal corridor;
 - the delivery of new housing predominantly on previously developed land;
 - the provision of a range of open space and recreation facilities;
 - contributions towards other community facilities;
 - the relocation of existing businesses which may be displaced through redevelopment;
 - appropriate investigations into ground conditions;
 - bus service provision and routes for cyclists and pedestrians;
 - necessary off-site highway improvements including the New Warrington Road/Chester Way/Station Road roundabout; and
 - the provision of affordable housing on the site.
- (iv) The Winsford Gateway is a cluster of sites around New Road and the old High Street. A residential-led regeneration scheme is envisaged. Much of the land is derelict or underused. It forms an important gateway into the town and the redevelopment of this area will compliment other regeneration initiatives including the Weaver Valley Regional Park project. The matters to be addressed through a development brief will include:
- the provision of a range of open space and recreation facilities;
 - contributions towards other community facilities;
 - appropriate investigations into ground conditions;
 - bus provision and routes for cyclists and pedestrians;
 - the relocation of existing businesses which may be displaced through redevelopment;
 - the provision of affordable housing on the site;
 - urban design principles to deliver high quality buildings, spaces and routes; and
 - flood risk issues.

Weaver Valley Regional Park Project

GS13

THE COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT THE DESIGNATION OF THE WEAVER VALLEY AS A REGIONAL PARK AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF ITS AIMS.

Reasons and Explanations

- (i) The concept of regional parks was introduced in the North West Development Agency's Regional Economic Strategy (1999) and was subsequently included within Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (2003).

- (ii) It is anticipated that an updated policy will appear in draft revised Regional Planning Guidance early in 2004. The Weaver Valley will be identified as a regional park project within the Mersey Belt Strategic Regional Parks. The Mersey Belt will be one of three Strategic Regional Parks in the north west.
- (iii) Regional parks are extensive areas connected by natural landscape and/or cultural heritage. The Borough Council is currently supporting Cheshire County Council and working alongside other local and regional partners in preparing a Vision Document for the Weaver Valley Regional Park project. It will describe its opportunities and a range of projects. The project will extend through the Borough, linking Frodsham, Northwich and Winsford, and further south into the adjoining Boroughs of Congleton and Crewe and Nantwich. It is intended to submit the Vision document to the North West Development Agency and North West Regional Assembly early in 2004. The Regional Park project will build on existing initiatives such as the Northwich Vision, Frodsham Forward, the Winsford Gateway, the Mersey Forest, the Weaver Valley Initiative, Northwich Community Woodlands and strategic land reclamation programmes.
- (iv) The aims of the Weaver Valley Regional Park project will include:
- supporting regeneration in and around Frodsham, Northwich and Winsford;
 - reclaiming derelict and contaminated land;
 - securing landscape and biodiversity enhancement including extending woodland cover;
 - promoting sustainable recreation and tourism;
 - protecting and enhancing our industrial and built heritage; and
 - improving and extending footpath, cycle and bridleway routes.

Policy Derivation
 Regional Economic Strategy
 Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (2003)