

# Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan

## Policy Summary

**Contents**

Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Summary Document: ..... 1

The Vision for Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan: ..... 1

Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: ..... 2

Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Policies: ..... 4

## **Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Summary Document:**

The Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan has successfully passed examination and is shortly to be subject to a referendum on 14 March 2019.

This summary document has been produced by Cheshire East Council as means to succinctly view the key points which the plan raises and should only be treated as a 'snap-shot' of the plan itself.

The full version of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan can be [accessed here](#) and includes far more detail on the issues it addresses, including a variety of important maps which underpin some of the policies summarised here. If a policy outlined below references a map, that map can found in the full version of the neighbourhood plan.

## **The Vision for Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan:**

The Vision for Knutsford aims to reflect the residents' hopes and aspirations for the future of the Town and seeks to identify the role that the Neighbourhood Plan should play in achieving this.

Visions can sometimes be criticised as being overly simplistic and idealistic. However, they play an important role in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and its policies. The Vision has been adapted from the one presented in the 2010 Knutsford Town Plan, taking on board the land-use planning components and responding to the growth proposed by the Cheshire East Local Plan.

This Vision is set out as below:

“The Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan should:

- ensure that the Town thrives economically and socially as a historic market town
- protect and enhance the Town's character, variety of buildings and natural environment
- support the delivery of the facilities and infrastructure the Town needs
- maintain Knutsford's strong sense of community as it grows allowing it to remain an attractive, healthy and safe place to live, work and visit”

## **Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Objectives:**

### Community and Education Infrastructure

To ensure that people of all ages and abilities within Knutsford and its wider catchment have excellent access to, and timely provision of, quality services and facilities, including schools and public meeting places.

### Healthy Living and Wellbeing

To achieve infrastructure supportive of the health needs of local residents and Knutsford's wider catchment, by securing an expansion of medical and social services and by promoting healthy living and general wellbeing through careful design.

### Sport and Leisure

To ensure provision of accessible sports and leisure facilities for all ages and abilities for Knutsford residents and those in the wider catchment area, so that various activities for improvements in individual health and wellbeing can be encouraged.

### Environment and Green Infrastructure

To ensure Knutsford's green and open spaces and landscape setting are protected, retained, and enhanced by, but are not limited to, preserving views and vistas, safeguarding against pollution, and flooding, and protecting the Town's wildlife and biodiversity.

### Heritage

To retain Knutsford's distinctive historic character as an attractive rural market town by conserving the Town's many heritage assets and ensuring that any new development serves to make a positive contribution to the existing historic environment, including contemporary, energy efficient designs.

### Housing

To provide a mix of housing which meets identified local housing needs, including affordable housing, is delivered in a location where it is needed reflecting the strategy outlined in the Local Plan, and to ensure that it is sustainable and well-designed, and that it complements the character of Knutsford.

### Future Prosperity and Employment

To ensure the long-term viability and prosperity of the Town by extending the diversity of services and occupations, through supporting existing employment areas throughout the Town and identifying new and varied opportunities, including mixed-use, as well as encouraging home working and local knowledge-based industries.

### Traffic, Transport and Movement

To promote safe, healthy, and sustainable travel for all, in and around Knutsford, linking residential, employment and community facilities, by reducing congestion and traffic pollution, and making the Town more pedestrian- and cycling-friendly, so encouraging sustainable transport modes.

### Town Centre

To promote a range of retail opportunities and a variety of trades and services in the town centre to ensure its long-term viability and prosperity and improve pedestrian movement to effectively meet the needs of residents, visitors, and local workers.

## **Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Policies:**

### **C1 Cultural and Community Places**

When proposing new community buildings or contributing to provision elsewhere, the criteria stated below should be considered in addition to maintaining residential amenity:

- **Variety:** by promoting a diversity of community facilities located in different neighbourhoods across the Town. Development proposals which lead to duplicated facilities within the Town will not be acceptable unless they meet an identified need
- **Accessibility:** by ensuring all facilities are accessible by all ages and abilities by walking, cycling and public transport. Accessibility to facilities must be in line with policy T1 Walking in Knutsford, T2 Cycling in Knutsford, and T3 Public Transport
- **Suitability:** by avoiding duplication of facilities and ensuring appropriate locations which refer to the needs of the local community.

Planning applications which deliver new community facilities will be looked upon favourably, particularly schemes which deliver the following:

- Community Halls / Meeting Places
- Youth Community Facilities
- Music Venues and Theatres
- Education
- Places of Worship

Any development or redevelopment of a community site should take into consideration the criteria set out in the Knutsford Design Guide. Where appropriate all proposed developments must supply sufficient parking provision in accordance with policy T4 Parking Standards.

### **C2 Education Provision**

Proposals which facilitate the provision of additional school places to meet local need and accommodate the anticipated growth from Knutsford's allocated strategic sites should be approved subject to meeting the criteria below and complying with other development plan policies.

Proposals should prioritise the utilisation of existing sites and expansion of current facilities before considering new sites where this is practicable. If necessary, and a latent need is identified (including specialist educational needs), further sites can be developed for educational use to meet local needs.

The criteria below should all be satisfied when proposing new educational development:

- The site should be accessible for all ages and abilities via walking, cycling and public transport
- Meet the variety, accessibility, and suitability tests set out in policy C1 Cultural and Community Places
- Explore how educational facilities could be closely linked to local sports and leisure services, where relevant using community use agreements.

Proposals seeking to enhance the provision of adult education facilities in Knutsford by expanding existing facilities, as new developments, or diversification of other sites, will be supported subject to meeting the criteria above.

All developments should be designed to deliver appropriate 'drop off zones' for visitors and users, but priority should be given to accessibility by sustainable modes.

### C3 Re-use of Redundant Community Land and Buildings

Land and buildings which have previously been used for community functions and facilities (excepting healthcare) will remain within that use. Planning applications for other uses will usually be refused. The unnecessary loss of valued facilities by the redevelopment of these sites for non-community use will not be supported unless sufficient alternative provision has been made elsewhere in the town.

The reuse of redundant healthcare land or buildings is subject to different reuse and redevelopment tests, set out in policy HW2 Community Health.

### C4 Utilities

All development proposals must demonstrate at the planning application stage, where relevant, a strategy for how they will connect to public utilities infrastructure prior to occupation. These include:

- Water, sewage and surface water drainage
- Gas and electricity
- Telecommunications - including high speed broadband

## D1 The Knutsford Design Guide

New development of all types and scales should be of a high design quality and complement its surroundings. Design solutions must positively respond to localised conditions, landscape and built vernacular. All planning applications must demonstrate how schemes comply with the Design Guide or justify why they do not.

The Design Guide suggests the specific design requirements for development within Knutsford. It is not intended to stifle innovative design. It aims to encourage innovative design where it is undertaken in a manner sensitive to the character of the Town.

## D2 Local Distinctiveness

All new development should, where appropriate, protect and enhance the elements which make up Knutsford's unique character including the local townscape and historic setting.

Planning applications should demonstrate how they have responded to local townscape and landscape character as set out in the Knutsford Character Assessment.

All new development should seek to deliver high design quality through meeting the following principles, where relevant:

- Reinforce character and identity through locally distinctive design and architecture
- Establish a gateway to the site and where appropriate, to the Town itself
- Establish a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces including pedestrian priority routes integrating with existing footpaths
- Deliver a scale, mass, and density commensurate with the surrounding townscape
- Establish a sensitive transition with the wider landscape where a new settlement edge is created
- Use sustainable drainage systems and water management, through water catchments and green spaces to avoid increasing surface water run-off
- Where relevant, planning applications should demonstrate how they have addressed these criteria using masterplans, design coding and design briefs for specific sites, conditioned appropriately.

## D3 Landscape in New Development

Planning applications will be supported where it is demonstrated that sensitive landscaping solutions are integrated into the design proposals. All landscape schemes should, where appropriate, demonstrate the following five criteria:

- Deliver an appropriate mix and use of native species

- Preserve the visual amenities of key gateways (as identified in Policy HE1 Landmarks, Views, Vistas and Gateways)
- Respect the character of the townscape and landscape of Knutsford, as set out in the Knutsford Character Assessment
- Maintain, enhance, and create wildlife movement routes and habitats
- Create effective passive surveillance and well overlooked open spaces.

Planning applications should retain all mature landscape features within their site, including but not limited to trees, hedgerows, wide verges, avenues of trees and areas of woodland. Where a loss of these features is proposed, appropriate mitigation measures or replacement must be demonstrated. Mitigation should seek to improve on the existing quality of provision.

#### D4 Sustainable Residential Design

All residential development should be of the highest design quality, seeking to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the building throughout its life. The Knutsford Design Guide provides detailed guidance on this matter but as a minimum, new development must demonstrate that, where relevant:

- The siting of the building has been carefully considered to maximise solar gain and to provide shelter from wind and weather
- Materials used during construction reduce the demand for energy in their production or supply chain and will enhance the overall thermal efficiency of the building
- Measures are built in to limit energy and water use, including but not limited to, on-site energy generation and grey water management systems
- Appropriate sustainable urban drainage solutions in accordance with the surface water hierarchy, including permeable parking areas and driveways, to maximise the opportunity for all surface water drainage to be managed within the site boundary
- The establishment of a green infrastructure network is in accordance with policy E2 Green and Blue Corridors

#### ER1 Employment Development

Planning applications for employment uses for knowledge-based industries, offices, and high tech and small-scale manufacturing will be supported as part of the strategic sites or on previously developed sites. Heavy industrial, storage and distribution will be resisted outside existing permissions and allocations for this employment type (for example Parkgate).

Planning applications for offices, 'above shop living' and mixed-use buildings will be supported within the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Central Zone (as defined on the Proposals Map) where they maintain an active ground floor non-residential use within the frontage.

New development which provides opportunities for a range of training and apprenticeship backgrounds will be strongly supported.

Planning applications which promote and encourage home working through well designed residential units or extensions will be supported, subject to compliance with policies H2 Previously Developed and Infill Development and H3 Residential Extensions and Conversions.

All employment development should demonstrate compliance with the Knutsford Design Guide, where relevant.

### ER2 Retail Development

New small-scale retail development outside the defined Town Centre (as defined by the SADPD, see the Proposals Map) will not be permitted unless it is within one of the identified Neighbourhood Centres (see the Proposals Map), or for a temporary use within the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Central Zone (see Proposals Map)

New small-scale convenience retail development may be permitted as part of large residential schemes to meet an identified localised need, specifically in the north and the west of the Town where significant growth is proposed but no local shopping currently exists.

Within the town centre and Neighbourhood Centres development proposals in use classes A1-A4 are encouraged, particularly those which achieve a strong active frontage during the day. Planning applications, including changes of use, that will result in a significant portion of the frontage being unused in the daytime will be resisted.

Proposals for non-retail uses will be resisted within the identified Primary Shopping Frontages (as defined by the SADPD, see the Proposals Map) unless it can be demonstrated that it will enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. Proposed changes of use of the ground floor from retail to residential will be resisted where the retail premises form part of a Primary Shopping Frontage.

The Town Council supports schemes which seek to improve the offer of shops which sell everyday comparison goods, to reduce the need for residents to shop outside Knutsford for such essential items. Within the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Central Zone applications for leisure and community uses (use class D1 and D2) will be supported to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre.

### ER3 Shop Frontages

Where planning permission is required for the refurbishment or replacement of existing shop frontages and installation of new shop fronts, applicants must demonstrate how they have considered and addressed the following design criteria:

- Consideration of the architectural styles of adjoining buildings and shop fronts and the wider street scene, including where appropriate, contemporary design
- Fascias should be of a scale proportionate to the rest of the building; they should not obscure windows and other architectural detailing; they should align with other fascias in the parade. Box fascias and box lighting will not normally be permitted

- The subdivision and proportions of windows should relate to the character of the building and its neighbours
- Signage should respect the character of the individual building and adjoining properties. Only one hanging sign should normally be permitted per shop front.

Within conservation areas the following additional criteria apply:

- Solid shutters will normally be considered unacceptable. Only security measures which maintain a level of transparency to and from the street will be permitted, such as laminated glazing, lattice grilles and perforated shutters
- Projecting boxes and external shutters are also considered to be inappropriate and will be resisted.

#### ER4 Tourism and Day Visitors

Planning applications proposing development linked to tourism activities will be supported. Schemes which seek to enhance the experience of those visiting the Town, such as enhancements to the Heritage Centre and other visitor attractions, will be supported subject to demonstrating consideration of the surrounding historic character and local amenity. Schemes which encourage or create space for temporary events and activities will be strongly supported.

Where required, planning applications for signage, interpretation, and information within the town centre to assist with way-finding and interpretation of the Town's history will also be supported, subject to compliance with the Knutsford Design Guide.

#### ER5 Overnight Accommodation

Planning applications which propose new overnight accommodation (use class C1) within the town centre (as defined on the Proposals Map) will be supported, subject to compliance with the Knutsford Design Guide and appropriate parking and servicing in line with design criteria in policy H2 Infill Development.

Schemes located outside the town centre, on bus routes, footpath links or within proximity to the railway or bus station, will also be supported.

#### E1 Connections to the Countryside

Development proposals, excluding householder planning applications, where possible and appropriate, must ensure that visual and physical links to the countryside identified in the key views in policy HE1 Landmarks, Views, Vistas and Gateways are maintained and improved through sensitively designed open spaces and landscape features, where relevant.

Planning applications which improve the accessibility to the countryside for Knutsford residents will be looked on favourably. Where possible, planning applications must seek to incorporate and establish green links to the countryside through their landscape design. New green links should be provided on site and should contribute to an established or proposed green link. Development proposals will be resisted where they would result in isolation from the wider countryside or from existing green and open areas and wildlife sites in the Town.

### E2 Green and Blue Corridors

All planning applications, regardless of scale and size, where possible and appropriate, must seek to maintain or improve the network of green and blue corridors throughout the Town as part of the development within their site. This should be achieved through the incorporation and integration of landscape and design features, including but not limited to:

- Provision of new open spaces within the site in line with policy SL1 Open Space in New Developments
- New paths and bridleways which reflect the local character in line with policy T1 Walking in Knutsford and T2 Cycling in Knutsford
- Native planting within boundary treatments, verges, avenues of trees and front gardens, which safeguard and improve wildlife permeability
- Integration with walking and cycling routes in line with policy T1 Walking in Knutsford and T2 Cycling in Knutsford
- The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in line with policy D4 Sustainable Residential Design to create new blue corridors and to benefit existing blue corridors through facilitation of surface water drainage.

### E3 Habitat Protection and Biodiversity

Planning applications will be supported where they can demonstrate that they will not adversely affect designated wildlife habitats in Knutsford (as identified in Appendix 2) and any non-designated sites where this is relevant. Planning applications which create new habitats will be looked upon favourably.

Development proposals which would create barriers to the movement of wildlife along the wildlife corridors within the Town will be resisted. The major corridors are identified on Appendix 1. Planning applications that enhance the connections between corridors and wildlife sites will be looked upon favourably.

#### Protecting Areas of High Habitat Distinctiveness

Development is unlikely to be considered acceptable in areas identified as being of High Habitat Distinctiveness (see Appendix 3).

Development proposals adjacent to these sites should demonstrate that an appropriate 'buffer zone' is applied to protect these ecological assets.

In areas identified as being of Medium Habitat Distinctiveness (Appendix 3), development will only be considered acceptable where, following a thorough ecological assessment, any harm is avoided, mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for.

### Biodiversity in large schemes

Schemes with an excess of 50 dwellings or 1,000 square metres should demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity through the use of appropriate evaluation methodologies and strategies. Compensation will be sought through biodiversity offsetting if a net loss of biodiversity is likely from the scheme as described in the reference document “Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development”.

### E4 Local Green Space

The Neighbourhood Plan designates sites within Knutsford as Local Green Space (LGS). These areas are identified in the list below and mapped in Appendix 4.

#### List of Local Green Spaces (LGS):

LGS ID	Name	Category of Green Space
LGS-01	Mereheath Lane Allotments	Allotments
LGS-02	Egerton Youth Club	Sports Facility
LGS-03	Mereheath Lane Bowling Green	Sports Facility
LGS-04	Knutsford Sports Club	Sports Facility
LGS-05	Knutsford Football Club	Sports Facility
LGS-06	Queensway Green	Neighbourhood Green
LGS-07	Wallwood	Woodland
LGS-08	Drury Lane/Hillside Road Green	Neighbourhood Green
LGS-09	Warren Avenue Allotments	Allotments
LGS-10	Knutsford Heath	Park
LGS-11	Manchester Road Bowling Green	Sports Facility
LGS-12	The Moor	Park
LGS-13	Court Gardens	Community Garden
LGS-14	Booths Garden	Community Garden
LGS-15	Library Grounds	Community Garden
LGS-16	Council Office Grounds	Community Garden
LGS-17	Westfield Drive Triangle	Neighbourhood Green
LGS-18	Ashworth Park West Green	Neighbourhood Green
LGS-19	Ashworth Park East Green	Neighbourhood Green
LGS-20	Malvern Road Green	Neighbourhood Green
LGS-21	Ashworth Park South Green	Neighbourhood Green

LGS-22 Beggarmans Lane Green Neighbourhood Green  
LGS-23 Longridge Community Space Park  
LGS-24 Bird Estate Green Neighbourhood Green  
LGS-25 Southfields Playground Play Area  
LGS-26 St John's Wood Woodland  
LGS-27 Mobberley Road Crescent Walled Green Neighbourhood Green  
LGS-28 Manor Crescent Playground Play Area  
LGS-29 Site of St Helena and Grounds Neighbourhood Green  
LGS-30 Manor Crescent Triangle Neighbourhood Green  
LGS-31 Woodlands Drive Shops Green Neighbourhood Green  
LGS-32 Downs/Longridge Playing Fields Neighbourhood Green  
LGS-33 The Barncroft Neighbourhood Green  
LGS-34 Thorneyholme Drive Wood Woodland  
LGS-35 Triangle on Hollow Lane Amenity Open Space  
LGS-36 Downs End/Delmar Road Green Neighbourhood Green  
LGS-37 Booths Mere Woodland Woodland  
LGS-38 Sparrow Lane Allotments Allotments  
LGS-39 Cross Town Bowling Green Sports Facility  
LGS-40 Toft Cricket Club Sports Facility  
LGS-41 Booths Hall Playing Field Sports Facility

### E5 Pollution

All new developments which deliver outdoor amenity spaces where the occupants would be sensitive to pollution (such as residential, education and outdoor sport and leisure uses) should site the spaces to minimise the impact of air, noise, and other pollutants both now and in the future.

In assessing the acceptability of schemes, planning applications should consider a range of types of pollution including, but not limited to, noise, aircraft and traffic, vibration, and smell, from the following possible contributors:

- The railway corridor
- The major arterial routes (A50, A537, A5033, B5085) and key town centre junctions
- Aircraft routes (departures and arrivals to Manchester Airport)
- Existing and proposed employment sites

Planning applications on the strategic sites greater than 50 units or 1000 square metres of commercial space, will be expected to demonstrate as part of their application packages (including EIA where applicable);

- How the development will not cause a significant impact on air quality or other pollutants
- How it has considered impacts on air quality, more specifically the inclusion of an air quality management plan in accordance with guidance in section 32 of the National Planning Policy Guidance, or any subsequent national guidance
- How they have introduced appropriate mitigation to ensure that the amenity is not injured in terms of appropriate planting and landscaping or modern materials and technologies

All developments should, where relevant, consider carefully the impact on nearby streams and other watercourses, ensuring that effective landscape design and Sustainable Drainage Schemes are in place to minimise pollutants from surface runoff.

### HW1 Health and Wellbeing

Development proposals (excluding householder planning applications) should demonstrate how they have considered health and wellbeing and encouraged healthier lifestyles as part of their planning application.

In preparing proposals planning applications, where appropriate, will be expected to demonstrate as a minimum how they have addressed the following design drivers:

- Use by those with mental health issues or dementia
- Construction of the buildings to allow for them to adapt to changing needs of different ages and abilities over time
- Provide sufficient access to outdoor space and recreation spaces, including gardens, parks and sports and leisure facilities (in line with the Sports and Leisure Policies)
- Appropriate access to a wide range of health facilities and services by sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling and public transport).

### HW2 Community Health

Development proposals which provide additional health infrastructure and facilities, including but not limited to the following, will be supported, where they are part of a strategic site or on a brownfield site:

- Improvements and diversification of existing NHS premises
- Improved provision/capacity for GPs
- Dentists

Development proposals leading to any net loss of existing healthcare facilities or service provision in the Town, even during a temporary period, will be resisted unless they result in new and improved facilities in the same location or elsewhere within Knutsford.

The hospital site (Bexton Road), as identified on the Proposals Map, will be protected for the expansion of existing health care facilities, or for the enhancement of healthcare provision for the wider catchment area. The reuse of this site for non-healthcare uses will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it will form part of a wider strategy for improving the quality and quantity of healthcare facilities within Knutsford.

All new healthcare facilities should be accessible by all ages and abilities by walking, cycling and public transport in line with criteria regarding variety, accessibility, affordability, and suitability as outlined in policy C1 Cultural and Community Places.

### HE1 Landmarks, Views, Vistas and Gateways

All new development should, where relevant, demonstrate how it protects and enhances key landmarks, views, vistas, and gateways as indicated within the Knutsford Character Assessment through meeting the following criteria:

- Views and vistas, as identified, should be protected from inappropriate development and landscape planting.
- The closing of views, excessive scale, or mass at the edges of these views and planting of inappropriate species is to be avoided.
- Development which uses planting and buildings to frame key views will be looked on favourably.
- The loss or inappropriate alteration of landmark structures, as identified within the Character Assessment, will be strongly resisted. Applicants must demonstrate how they have considered the local significance of such structures and seek to protect and enhance them in line with guidance contained within the Knutsford Design Guide
- Planning applications which erode the presence of a gateway into the Town will not be supported. In some instances, it may be appropriate to extend or create a new gateway into the Town. In such cases the design of approaches into the Town should be carefully considered and take account of the contents of the Knutsford Design Guide and relevant conservation area guidance.

Where these features affect a designated heritage asset they must also consider other relevant policies within the development plan, specifically policy SE7 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

### HE2 Heritage Assets

The Neighbourhood Plan attaches great weight to the conservation of heritage assets. Planning applications which result in the loss of, cause unacceptable harm to, or negatively impact on, the significance of heritage assets (designated or non-designated) will be resisted. The impact on significance will be considered against policy SE 7 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.

In addition, where this is not already a designed asset, the historic landscape patterns and boundaries, parks and below ground archaeology should also be considered as a heritage asset.

The Town Council will work with partners to provide a continued review of the heritage assets in Knutsford.

### HE3 Conservation Areas

Planning applications within the Town's Conservation Areas must demonstrate that they aim to protect and enhance the defining characteristics of that area, subject to other policies of the development plan.

All new development within the Town's Conservation Areas should comply with the following design principles where relevant:

- New development should respect its context in terms of scale, height, and massing
- Facades should normally conform to the original building line
- Materials should blend with or complement the materials used commonly in the Town in the 18th and 19th centuries: local brick and stone, Welsh slate, or clay tiles
- Roofs will normally be pitched
- Doors and windows should be made from timber and painted.

Extensions and major alterations to existing buildings within the Town's Conservation Areas should:

- Achieve a high standard of design
- Should respect the height, bulk, and general form of the original building
- Should be secondary in character to the original building
- Roofs will normally be pitched and covered using Welsh slate or clay tiles
- Chimneys should be provided where appropriate
- Details of matching materials must be specified
- External joinery details should match existing.

In addition, development within each of the Town's Conservation Areas is also subject to additional design criteria due to the unique character of each;

Town Centre:

- All new development should positively contribute to the skyline in the historic core of Knutsford and in particular when viewed from The Moor

and railway line

St. John's Avenue:

- The loss of front boundaries and/or front gardens for parking will be resisted

Heathfield Square:

- New boundaries should consist of hedging and trees

Cross Town:

- The addition of architectural details such as external shutters and gallows-arm porches will be resisted where they are considered not to fit in with the 'modest' architectural character of the area
- Development which results in the loss of mature trees will be resisted because of their importance within the street scene

Legh Road:

- Buildings should be set back from the public highway, reflecting the local building line
- Generally, new buildings should be no more than two storeys high
- Development which results in the loss of mature trees will be resisted because of their importance within the street scene

All schemes must demonstrate how they have considered the relevant conservation area appraisal and management plans for each conservation area, in addition to guidance set out within the Knutsford Design Guide and Character Assessment.

#### HE4 Re-use of Historic Buildings

Planning applications which propose the re-use of historic buildings (designated and non-designated) will be supported where they contribute to their long-term use and safeguard the significance of the heritage asset for the public benefit, and meet the following criteria:

- That external alterations are minimal and do not significantly alter the appearance of the building
- The internal fabric of the building should be preserved where possible
- That high-quality materials, fixtures and fittings have been used
- The setting around the historic building is respected and preserved where possible through use of a carefully considered hard and soft landscape scheme.

They conform to the guidance within the Knutsford Design Guide and reflect the characteristics set out within Character Assessment. Where these features affect a designated heritage asset, they must also consider other relevant policies within the development plan, specifically policy SE7 of the Local Plan Strategy

#### HE5 Historic Open Spaces, Woodlands, and Meres

The following historic open spaces, woodlands, and meres are identified as being of particular significance to the history of the settlement and the community of Knutsford;

- The Heath
- The Moor
- Tatton Mere, including Moor Pool
- The St. Helena's Burial Ground and Scheduled Ancient Monument
- The Barncroft
- Booths Mere
- St. John's Wood
- Sanctuary Moor
- Dog Wood
- Windmill Wood

These historic features are considered important to Knutsford's character and sense of place, and planning applications on land adjacent to these spaces will be supported where it can demonstrate that;

- the scheme will not have a negative impact on the setting of the area through inappropriate scale, form and materials
- the development does not undermine public accessibility to the space, in line with policies T1 Walking in Knutsford and T2 Cycling in Knutsford
- guidance in the Knutsford Design Guide has been considered to ensure a positive interaction with these spaces

Planning applications which seek to enhance these areas and support their functionality in the long term will be supported. Planning applications for temporary community events and activities in these areas may be supported where it can be demonstrated that they will not cause long term harm to their functionality.

Where these features effect a designated heritage asset, they must also consider other relevant policies within the development plan, specifically policy SE7 of the Local Plan Strategy

## H1 Housing Mix

Planning applications for new residential development on the strategic sites or within the settlement boundary on previously developed sites (in accordance with policy H2 Previously Developed and Infill Development and H3 Residential Extensions and Conversions of the Neighbourhood Plan), should primarily seek to deliver the following types of market housing (including those for private rental):

- 2/3 bedroomed family housing and that suitable for downsizing with gardens and associated parking
- Housing for older people or those with reduced mobility, either as one or two storey properties or as higher density apartments, which are designed with the specific needs of those users
- Nursing and care homes and sheltered accommodation for the elderly.

Apartment developments providing 1 and 2 bedroomed units within the town centre (as defined on the Proposals Map), as part of the strategic sites or adjacent to sustainable transport routes / interchanges will also be considered acceptable. Care or nursing homes (use class C2) are also supported in these locations, subject to meeting an identified need or deficiency.

In all cases Affordable Housing should be delivered in line with policies within the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy delivering both shared ownership and social rented homes, with physical provision preferred over contributions. The Neighbourhood Plan supports rented accommodation provided by a Registered Provider.

Larger housing types, including family and executive homes, will be acceptable where they form part of a wider mix as part of the development of the strategic sites, or where they are justified to meet a localised and up-to-date specific housing need and demand.

Planning applications should demonstrate how they have delivered a mix which responds to the sites' specific location, context, and character through delivering appropriate densities and landscape treatment, especially where creating a new urban edge or, in the conservation areas, in accordance with policy D2 Local Distinctiveness.

## H2 Previously Developed and Infill Development

Planning applications for new residential development on previously developed land within the urban area (including redevelopment of large plots) which deliver the types set out in policy H1 Housing Mix, should be approved where they are able to meet the following criteria, where relevant:

- Ensuring that the proposed scheme has a plot ratio, density, scale, and height which is commensurate with the surrounding townscape
- Preserving all mature vegetation, including trees, hedgerows, and where appropriate woody shrubs, especially where these are part of the street scene or a visually prominent boundary

- Providing appropriate on-site parking (in accordance with policy T4 Parking) and servicing, including bin storage and refuse collection, which does not dominate the street scene.

The construction of infill properties as part of side gardens will be supported where the new property is of a similar scale, mass, and design to the existing dwelling. It should avoid the appearance of 'terracing' to adjacent properties (unless this is part of the local character) and have a dedicated separate vehicle access point which provides appropriate parking in accordance with policy T4 Parking.

All planning application packages should ensure that they have considered the relevant sections of the Knutsford Design Guide and the Knutsford Character Assessment, or justified why there are circumstances that demonstrate that a different design approach is appropriate.

### H3 Residential Extensions and Conversions

#### Extensions and Sub-Divisions

- Planning applications, including householder planning applications, which propose the extension or subdivision of an existing residential property will be supported where they can demonstrate that they meet the following criteria:
  - Any extension or alteration to the building remains subservient to the original dwelling when visible from roads and public rights of way
  - Any extension or alteration reflects the local vernacular in terms of the materials used in both the built form and the landscape
  - Appropriate parking and servicing, including bin storage, is provided (or retained), and maintains clear and appropriate boundaries which do not dominate the street scene
  - That the development does not reduce the availability of single storey accommodation (bungalows) through the adding of an additional storey(s)
  - Where relevant, the scheme meets the design aspirations set out within the Knutsford Design Guide and reflects the characteristics set out within Knutsford Character Assessment.

#### Conversions

Where planning permission is required for the conversion of a non-residential building to residential use, this will be supported where it meets the following criteria:

- The development does not undermine the surrounding townscape or landscape through careful use of the materials and consideration of the character of the proposed buildings and landscape design
- Any extension or alteration to the building is in proportion to the original building and respects local townscape and landscape patterns, including but not limited to boundary features and building lines
- Appropriate parking and servicing is delivered, in accordance with other development plan policies, which do not dominate the street scene

- Where relevant, schemes meet the design aspirations set out within the Knutsford Design Guide and reflect the characteristics set out within Knutsford Character Assessment.

#### H4 Living in the Town Centre

Within the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Central Zone (as defined on the Proposals Map) planning applications for new residential development will be supported where they reuse redundant upper storeys of retail and commercial premises or as part of new, small scale apartment buildings in accordance with policy H1 Housing Mix. Schemes which provide smaller units will be supported.

Planning permission is unlikely to be granted for developments which would result in the loss of active retail and commercial frontage within the Primary Shopping Frontages (as defined by the SADPD). Outside these frontages the replacement of ground floor uses by residential accommodation may be acceptable.

All development must ensure that it provides appropriate parking, servicing, and bin storage in accordance with policy T4 Parking of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Where development will erode or impinge on green spaces or public realm without appropriate mitigation or replacement, it will be refused.

#### SL1 Open Space in New Developments

Open space is required in all types of development in line with the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

Design for new open spaces (in all development types):

All proposals for new open space should be of high quality design and provide improvements in the connection between people and nature in accordance with policy E1 Connections to the Countryside. The design of new developments, regardless of scale and type, should remain within the character of the area and should follow the criteria stated in the Cheshire East and Knutsford Design Guides as well as meeting the ten principles of Active Design set out by Sport England or any relevant subsequent guidance.

Open space in new residential developments: All new residential development proposals should, where appropriate, deliver new onsite green and open spaces and demonstrate how they will complement existing spaces and facilities within the Town in line with policy SL3 New Sport and Leisure Facilities. All proposals should demonstrate how these spaces will be maintained and managed in the long term and retained in public use in perpetuity.

Where sites are of insufficient size to deliver facilities or space, developments should contribute to existing sites and facilities in accordance with Policy SL2, or other facilities in Knutsford under development.

### SL2 Enhancing Existing Sport and Leisure Facilities

All development, where it does not deliver the required open space for sports and leisure facilities (as outlined in the relevant policies of the Cheshire East Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan) should indicate how it will provide a contribution to existing sports and leisure places and facilities in Knutsford. Appendix 8 provides a list of facilities within the Town that should form the focus of these improvements.

In these cases, planning applications should demonstrate how community engagement has shaped the nature of these enhancements.

In all cases, wider community use agreements or similar should be in place and either conditioned or set out in planning obligations to ensure that all enhanced facilities are open to the wider community.

Contributions may include, but are not limited to, leasing or purchase of new land, monies for capital works, longer term management and maintenance or design and development works. These may be to facilitate meeting the principles of Active Design for off-site improvements to access for walking, cycling and public transport in accordance with policies T1, T2 and T3 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### SL3 New Sport and Leisure Facilities

Planning applications which deliver the following sports and leisure facilities will be welcomed subject to compliance with other development plan policies:

- The relocation of the Leisure Centre including, but not limited to, swimming pool, indoor and outdoor sports provision (including all weather pitches), and access to changing rooms for outdoor sports
- A new skate park
- Facilities for rugby including a clubhouse and playing pitches
- Additional football pitches throughout the Town offering a mix of club and public recreational facilities
- Improvement to playing facilities at the Knutsford Academy School.

Planning applications which facilitate the delivery of new community halls suitable for a variety of uses, but especially for youth related activities, will also be welcomed.

Where new sports facilities are to be delivered, they should demonstrate how they have considered the Sport England design and cost guidance.

### TC1 Town Centre Streets, Spaces and Forecourts

Where planning permission is required, proposals which seek to improve the pedestrian environment in the town centre will be supported. Pedestrian priority environments may be appropriate in some town centre locations in line with the proposals set out within the Town Centre Masterplan Aspiration.

Applicants must demonstrate how public realm proposals positively contribute towards the historical character of the town centre and its streets and buildings in line with guidance within the Knutsford Design Guide and reflect the characteristics set out within Character Assessment. Careful consideration should be taken regarding the use of materials, surfacing and street furniture, including consideration of how it can be easily used by all ages and abilities. Durability and long-term maintenance and management should be considered from the beginning of the design process.

Proposals for new public spaces will be supported where they are well located and related to the town centre and offer opportunities for temporary community events and recreational activities. Planning applications which do not maximise such opportunities will be resisted.

Schemes which demonstrate careful consideration of bin and servicing areas will be strongly supported. Developments which propose new bin and servicing areas should ensure delivery times do not have a negative impact on the amenity of neighbouring and other town centre uses. Schemes which propose environmental improvements to existing bin stores and servicing yards through screening or similar, whilst ensuring thoroughfares are kept clear, will be supported.

### TC2 Alleyways and Yards

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the areas known as the 'Alleyways' and 'Yards' (see the Proposals Map) for targeted improvement and increased activity appropriate to their scale and location.

Planning applications which promote use of these spaces for small scale, retail, food and drink and creative industries will be supported where their important role as thoroughfares is retained and, where possible, improved.

All development proposals should, where relevant, demonstrate use of attractive and appropriate (public realm) materials and street furniture, including public seating and picnic areas and the use of café forecourts for outdoor seating.

Schemes which showcase innovative design appropriate to the historical context will be supported. Proposals should consider how spaces will be used throughout the seasons and how temporary uses, performances and community activities can be accommodated.

New development in the town centre which contributes towards improvement of these areas financially will be supported, subject to compliance

with policies in the development plan.

### TC3 Town Centre Sites

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following key town centre sites, as marked on the Proposals Map, for redevelopment and improvement;

- King Street Car Park
- Tatton Street Car Park
- Princess Street Car Park
- Canute Place

Planning applications to redevelop and / or improve the identified key town centre sites will be supported in principle subject to the following criteria;

- The overall provision of car parking in the town centre is maintained or exceeded through mixed use multi-storey car parks
- The scheme is part of a mixed-use development providing retail, office and smallscale workshops and residential use
- The scheme promotes high standards of design, including contemporary solutions, which complement the existing character of the town centre, in terms of scale, mass and respect of key townscape views, as identified within the Knutsford Character Assessment

Where car parks are to be redeveloped, temporary replacement parking must be provided for the duration of the works in accordance the following criteria:

- Associated works to the site should be kept to a minimum confined only to the laying of scalpings or similar at the site's entrance and exit
- There is no impact on the ecological integrity of the site and that no existing boundary hedgerows or fences to be removed in whole or in part
- Planning applications should demonstrate that they do not negatively impact the existing historic character of Knutsford
- That a management agreement is in place conditioning the returning of the site to its previous use

Planning applications will be required to submit details of how this would be facilitated as part of their planning application packages.

All planning applications must demonstrate compliance with the Knutsford Design Guide and the analysis within the Character Assessment.

### TC4 Active Frontages within the Town Centre

Within Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages (as defined by the SADPD), nonretail uses will not be supported on ground level units. The design of these shop frontages should follow the guidance within the Knutsford Design Guide and within Neighbourhood Plan policy ER3 Shop

## Frontages.

Outside these Primary Shopping Frontages, residential uses at ground level will be supported where they can demonstrate enhancement of the vitality of the town centre, and if they will not threaten the overall retail identity and viability of the area.

New and existing frontages will help define key routes into and within the town centre through the execution of design and public realm treatments as outlined in the Knutsford Design Guide

### T1 Walking in Knutsford

All new development (excluding householder planning applications) should contribute to the creation of a network of safe and well-surfaced footpaths. Developments which would reduce or undermine the network coverage through the stopping up or diversion of footpaths, public rights of way or permissive routes are unlikely to be acceptable.

Developments which include new footpaths, streets or spaces or improved or new links to the wider public footpath network should ensure that these are designed to cater for a wide range of ages and abilities, including but not limited to wheelchair users, parents with small children and pushchairs, and those with visual or hearing impairments. All new routes should be designed to be well overlooked to ensure they feel safe. Developments which enhance a footpath, public right of way or permissive route to ensure access for a wider range of ages and abilities will be looked upon favourably.

Developments on the strategic sites, or larger than 50 units, or 1000 square metres of commercial space, must ensure continuous pedestrian routes are provided between the development site and local shops, services, and facilities.

### T2 Cycling in Knutsford

All new development (excluding householder planning applications) will be required to demonstrate how it will seek to support cycling within the Town for all ages and abilities. New developments should provide appropriate cycle infrastructure and cycle parking and, where relevant, showering and changing facilities for staff. The design of all streets and spaces within developments should be cycle friendly and provide connections to the main shops, services and facilities.

The Knutsford Cycle Plan has been prepared to guide the implementation of this policy and identifies key cycle routes for creation and improvement as part of a wider network which should include segregated, continuous cycle routes (see Appendix 5.) Appendix 5 identifies proposed long and short circular routes, junctions which need to be improved for cyclists and existing routes for improvement, some of which are identified as a priority. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how they have contributed to these elements, where relevant.

Developments on the strategic sites, or larger than 50 units, or 1000 square metres of commercial space which do not take opportunities to contribute to this cycle network, are unlikely to be acceptable.

### T3 Public Transport

All new developments (excluding householder planning applications) will be required to demonstrate how they can be accessed easily and safely by public transport, including bus routes (both with proximity and service regularity) and the railway station, through walking and cycling. Planning applications with poor links to public transport are unlikely to be acceptable.

Any development on the strategic sites, or in excess of 50 homes or 1000 square metres of commercial space, will be required to demonstrate how they can connect with existing public transport routes throughout the Town, ensuring the delivery of a regular service from their sites through either extending existing routes or subsidy of services.

Development which seeks to improve facilities at Knutsford Railway Station, including those that improve the quality of services, will be supported subject to compliance with other development plan policies. The Neighbourhood Plan will support any wider proposals for increasing the frequency of services.

The use of car parks away from the town centre may be supported subject to delivery of park and ride schemes.

### T4 Parking

Where appropriate, all new developments (including householder extensions where additional bedrooms are created) will be required to provide parking (including cycle parking) to meet development needs in line with guidance set out within the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, the Cheshire East Design Guide, and the Knutsford Design Guide.

The design of new parking spaces and garages should comply with the standards set out in Appendix C of Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

The provision of electric vehicle charging points will be required for all new development (excluding householder planning applications) with delivery secured by condition as appropriate.

The number of required parking spaces may be reduced in the town centre, given the access to sustainable transport modes. However, development which would increase the demand for parking in the main town centre car parks between 8am and 6pm is unlikely to be acceptable unless additional capacity is delivered.

Off-site parking on the roads adjacent to any development, including visitor parking, should be avoided where possible. Along major arterial routes (A50, A537, A5033 and B5085) any offsite parking will be resisted in order to maintain traffic flow and highway safety.