



Grappenhall and Thelwall Neighbourhood Plan

2025 – 2038/39





With thanks to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and all the volunteers who gave up their time to help produce the Grappenhall and Thelwall Neighbourhood Plan including:

Andy Bacon, Sarah Barwell (Chair), Cllr Mark Browne, Alison Collins, Cllr Brian Davies, Nikki Currie, Abi Doward, Beverley Doward, Darryl Doward, Stephanie Fallon, Cllr Robert Hignett, Jayne Jones, Alastair King, Jenny Marsh, Michael Norman, Rob Oliver, Tim Ryan, Lindsey Smith, Cllr Helen Speed, Brian Stewart (Secretary), Martin Stuart, Isabella Tither, Julia Wrigglesworth, Eloise Wright.





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Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led document which, following public consultation, an independent examination and a referendum which gains majority support, becomes 'made' i.e. part of the statutory development plan. It allows local people to set out a shared vision for the future development and regeneration of their local area. Introduced under the Localism Act 2011, a Neighbourhood Plan gives local residents the legal authority to influence planning decisions and shape their neighbourhood. It is part of a broader move towards the decentralisation of planning, empowering local voices, and integrating community priorities into the formal development plan framework.

Neighbourhood Plans ensure that local communities are closely involved in the decisions which affect them. Once prepared, they must be examined and approved and then become part of the statutory development plan for the area. This means that local planning authorities are required to refer to the community's proposals when determining planning applications. In essence, the Neighbourhood Plan is not just a set of guidelines; it is a legally binding tool that helps communities control development and address challenges at a very local level, while also harnessing local opportunity.

This approach has tangible benefits; it brings clarity and predictability to planning processes, helps protect local assets, and ensures that any new development aligns with the community's long-term interests. By having a Neighbourhood Plan in place, local people are better equipped to negotiate and influence change, keeping their area resilient and reflective of the community's unique character.



Photo: Land at Grappenhall Heys

1.2 Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan?

The Warrington Local Plan, adopted in December 2023, allocates land for 2,700 new homes in South Warrington (Grappenhall, Thelwall, Appleton and Stretton) over the period 2024-2039, and a further 1,800 thereafter. Within Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish this comprises Thelwall Heys and part of the South East Warrington Urban Extension.

As a result, our community will undergo significant change, especially in terms of the loss of green space and the pressures arising from increased development. It is essential that we use the tools that are available to ensure that this development happens in a way that best respects and enhances our community. The Neighbourhood Plan cannot restrict the level of development set out in Warrington's Local Plan, but it can influence and shape the change positively.

The Neighbourhood Plan will also set out policies to reflect wider local priorities within the Neighbourhood Plan area. It empowers the community to shape the future of the area, ensuring that as the Parish grows, it does so in a way that protects the things that make our Parish special, while planning for a sustainable and inclusive future.

The Neighbourhood Plan, when 'made' will form part of the statutory development plan. It will be used by Warrington Borough Council alongside other national planning policy, Local Plan policies and other guidance to determine planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area.

What makes our Parish special?

It is known from the engagement[1] with local people in 2024 that residents are drawn to the Parish's strong sense of community.

This is to be expected with the Parish boasting two churches (St Wilfrid's Church in Grappenhall and All Saints Church in Thelwall) as well as the Independent Methodist Church which sits just outside the Neighbourhood Plan area, five pubs including the Bellhouse, Rams Head and Parr Arms in Grappenhall and the Pickering Arms and the Little Manor in Thelwall, along with the Ex-Servicemen's Club in Grappenhall and British Legion in Thelwall.

It has a thriving events calendar, with Grappenhall Walking Day and Thelwall Rose Queen drawing crowds from across the Parish, the two community centres hosting events such as the Grappenhall Beer Festival, the Thelwall Bonfire Night and the Walled Garden at Grappenhall Heys hosting Seasonal Fairs.



Photo: Yarn Bombing in the Parish

[1] Engagement sessions at Grappenhall Walking Day, Thelwall Rose Queen and Grappenhall Heys Walled Garden Autumn Fair on 22 June 2024, 11 June 2024 and 28 September 2024 respectively. Three questions asked at each event (1) What do you like about Grappenhall & Thelwall? – Figure 1, (2) What don't you like about Grappenhall and Thelwall? – Figure 2 and (3) As Grappenhall and Thelwall grows, what will be important to you and your family? – Figure 3.



Photo: The Bellhouse, Grappenhall



Photo: The Pickering Arms, Thelwall

The Parish has an active Sports Club (Football, Rugby and Tennis) and Cricket Club in Grappenhall, numerous playgrounds, pre-schools, five primary schools (Thelwall Community Infant School, Thelwall Community Junior School, St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School, Bradshaw Primary School and Grappenhall Heys Community Primary School which sits just outside the Neighbourhood Plan area) and a school for children with special educational needs - the Chaigeley Educational Foundation. It has a wide range of community groups and clubs for children and adults such as the uniformed clubs (Scouts/ Guides), the Women's Institute, Model Railway Club, Amateur Radio Club, History Groups, Mums and Tots Groups, U3A and Seniors Lunches. It also has a volunteer run library in Grappenhall.

It is also clear from the engagement exercises that local people chose to live in the Parish because of its semi-rural feel, the open green spaces and surrounding countryside, local walking routes including along the Bridgewater Canal and Trans Pennine Trail and because they appreciate the wildlife, trees, hedgerows that thrive in the Parish.



Photo: Victoria Road Conservation Area

Local people value the area's heritage including the three conservation areas at Grappenhall Village, Thelwall Village, and Victoria Road/York Road as well as the Walled Garden at Grappenhall Heys. All of these things epitomise the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty that make Grappenhall and Thelwall a desirable place to live.

The Parish is also an accessible location with easy access to the M56, M6 and M62, making it a perfect location for those who need to commute to nearby cities such as Manchester, Liverpool and Chester.

Figure 1 – What do you like about Grappenhall & Thelwall?



What are the Parish's existing challenges?

Local people told us that whilst the Parish is a place with many strengths, it is not without its challenges. Many of these relate to traffic, including day to day congestion around pinch points and a lack of cycle infrastructure, but also the gridlock that local people experience if there are issues on the motorways (M6, M56, M62).

There is a feeling that the area around Grappenhall Heys has already been allowed to grow without sufficient compensatory investment in local infrastructure and services. Local people are concerned about difficulty accessing health services in particular including doctors and dentists as well as the capacity of Warrington hospital.

Local people also cited the inability to access a supermarket without crossing the two canals (Bridgewater and Manchester Ship Canal), each of which have restricted crossing points, as an existing concern.

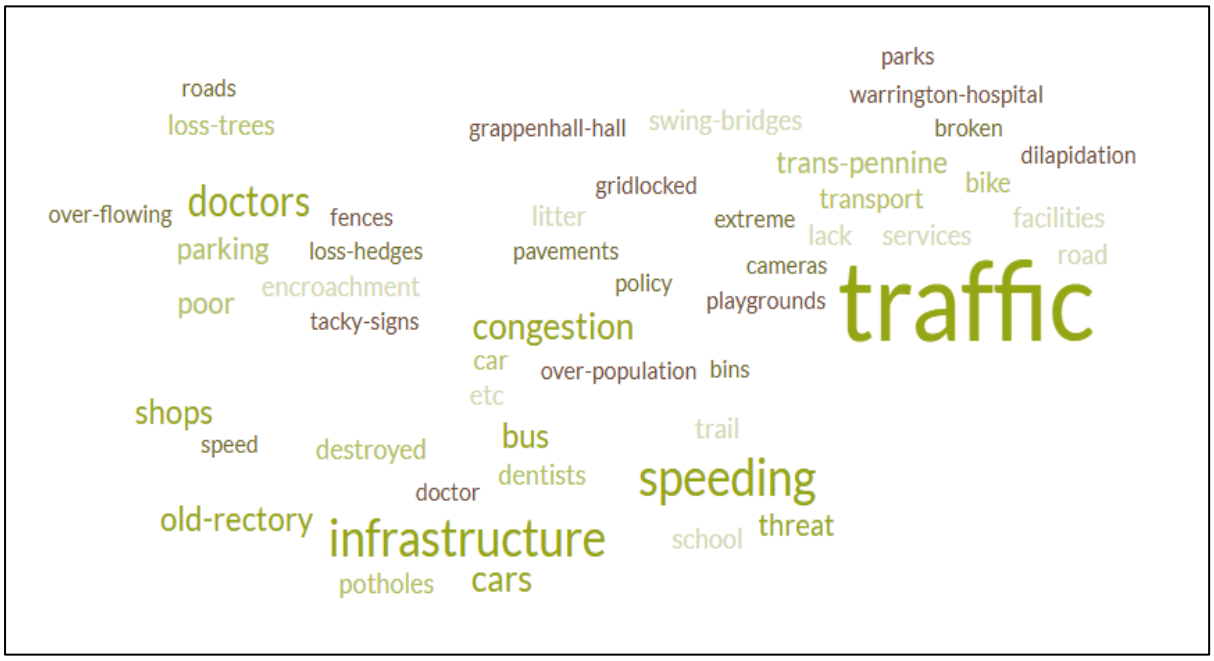
There is a need to invest in and tidy up some specific areas of the Parish's local centres as well as bringing the Former Rectory and Grappenhall Hall sites back into use in a sensitive way.

Many people are already feeling the encroachment and destruction of local green spaces that they had previously enjoyed as planned development around Grappenhall Heys progresses.



Photo: Shopping Parade, Knutsford Road

Figure 2 – What don't you like about Grappenhall & Thelwall?



What are our Parish's future challenges?

Looking to the future, local people recognised that it is important to plan for infrastructure as the Parish grows. This includes investing in health, schools, shops, sport, indoor leisure facilities, youth hubs and play areas, as well as appropriate road, public transport and active travel infrastructure. It is recognised that some of this may need to be provided outside of the Parish.



Photo: Half Acre Lane Aqueduct

There are clear worries about congestion in the local area and the impact that this will have on air quality and safety.

Local people identified a need for any new homes to be accessible to everyone – from first time buyers to up-sizers and down-sizers, with affordability being a key consideration.

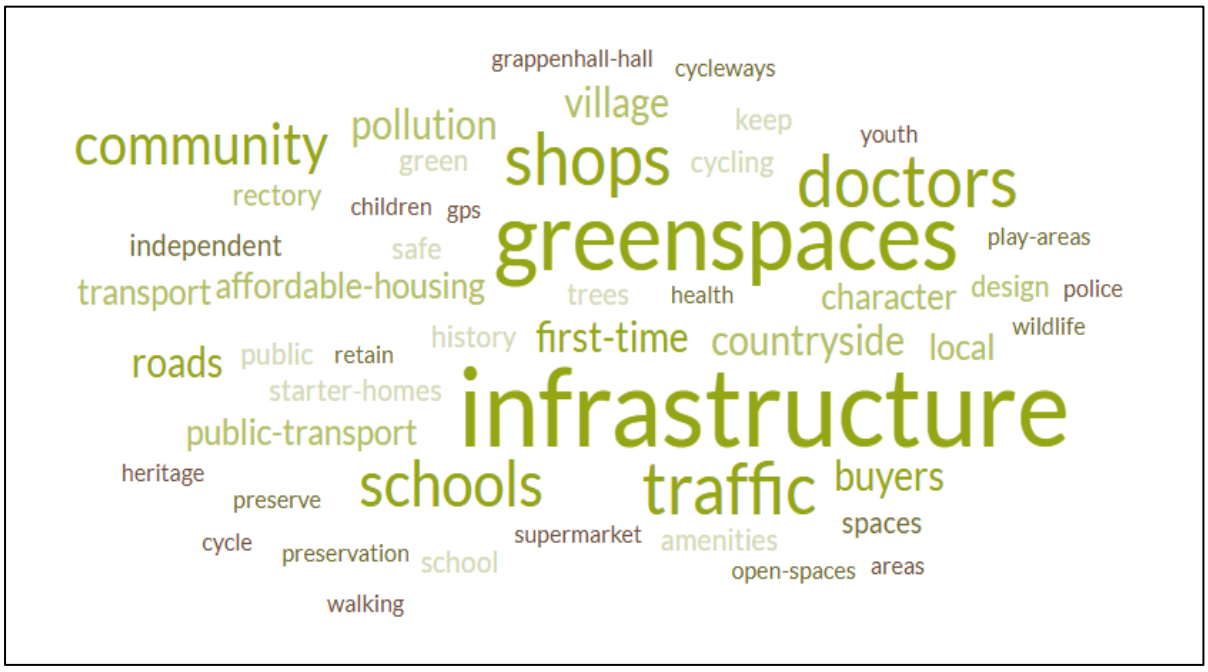
Importantly a need to protect our open green spaces, keep the sense of community, preserve our heritage assets and for designs to reflect the local character were identified.





Photos: Playground, Grappenhall Heys and Lake at the Walled Garden, Grappenhall Heys

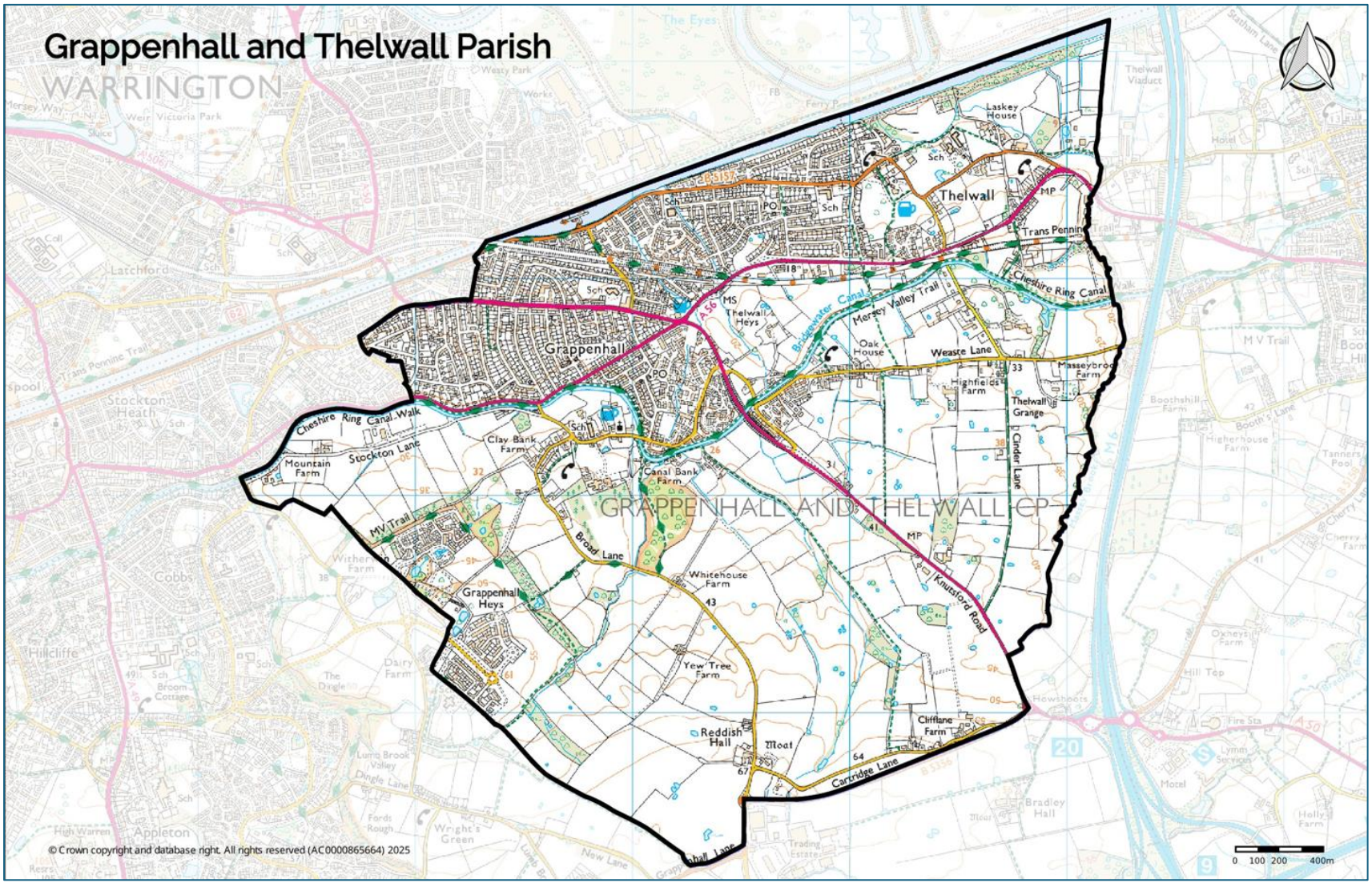
Figure 3 - As Grappenhall and Thelwall grows, what will be important to you and your family?



1.3 Neighbourhood Plan Area

The Neighbourhood Area is defined at **Figure 4**. In this case it is the same as the Parish of Grappenhall and Thelwall.

Figure 4 – Designated Neighbourhood Area



1.4 Neighbourhood Plan Vision

Having listened to local people, a Vision for our Neighbourhood Plan has been developed:



Our area will develop in such a way as to provide well-designed housing and infrastructure that meets the needs of the local community and reflects the green setting of the Parish.

Development will maintain and enhance our network of green spaces incorporating trees, hedges, water bodies and wildlife corridors. The development of an integrated system of walking, cycling and public transport will be a priority.

Development will respect and enhance the area's local identity, history and heritage including the sensitive restoration and reuse of vacant or underused buildings and sites.

New housing will comprise a mix of housing type and tenure, build on the area's current sense of community and civic pride and facilitate investment in local infrastructure in terms of transport improvements, community, play, health and educational facilities.

1.5 Neighbourhood Plan Themes

In order to deliver on the Neighbourhood Plan vision, the following five themes have been agreed:



The policies at Section 2 have been structured around these themes.

Theme 1 Green and Blue Spaces: Protecting, maintaining and enhancing our network of green and blue spaces; identifying our most important green spaces and adding an extra layer of protection by designating them as Local Green Spaces; and strengthening the green belt boundary.

Theme 2 Heritage: Ensuring that new development preserves and enhances the area's heritage, being especially mindful of the Parish's listed buildings, locally listed assets and the three designated conservation areas.

Theme 3 Design: Setting out a series of design principles for all new development, from infill proposals and conversions to large-scale housing developments, to ensure that it contributes positively to the existing character and architectural heritage of the area.

Theme 4 Housing Need: Ensuring that new homes meet the needs of local people.

Theme 5 Infrastructure: Protecting the Parish's existing community facilities and ensuring that, as our area grows, the need for additional infrastructure is addressed and ensuring that footpaths and cycling routes are protected, connected and enhanced.

1.6 Steps to Referendum

The Neighbourhood Plan must meet certain specified 'basic conditions'. These are: contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; have regard to national policy and guidance; be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area (in this case the Warrington Local Plan) and be compatible with EU obligations[2] and human rights requirements.

[2] Despite the UK no longer being a member of the EU the relevant EU obligations continue to apply.

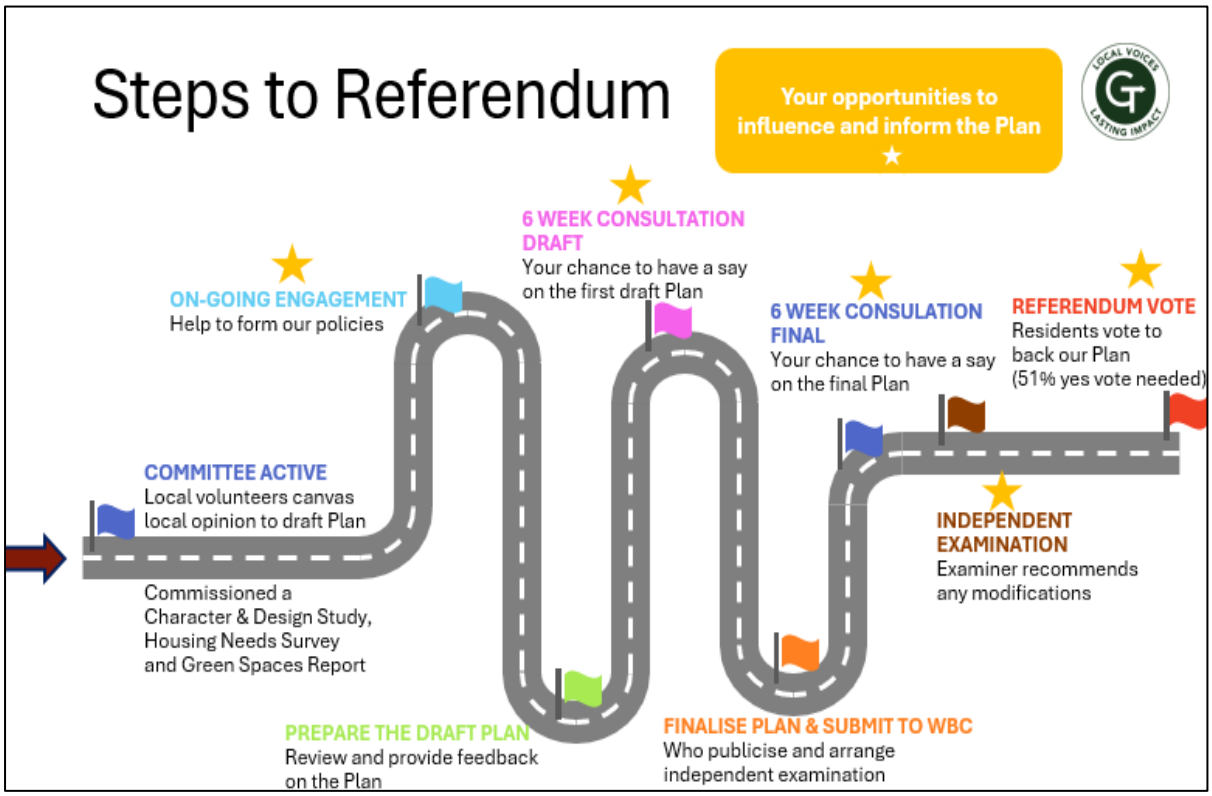
Once prepared the draft Neighbourhood Plan must undergo a 6 week public consultation where people who live, work or run businesses in the area can comment upon its content. Certain statutory bodies must also be consulted.

All comments received by the end of the consultation period must be considered and a decision taken as to whether or not to modify the Plan in response to each representation. The resulting modified draft Plan must then be submitted to the local planning authority (Warrington Borough Council) who will then put it out for a second round of public consultation. At this stage comments should only be submitted as to whether the Plan meets the 'basic conditions' listed above.

Any comments made at this stage will be passed directly to an Independent Examiner appointed by Warrington Borough Council in conjunction with Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council (the neighbourhood planning body). The Examiner will provide an assessment as to whether it meets the 'basic conditions' and whether it needs any modifications to enable it to do so. The Examiner will also provide a recommendation on whether the Plan should proceed to a public referendum.

Warrington Borough Council will arrange for the referendum to take place. All people on the electoral register for the Parish will be entitled to vote in the referendum.

It is necessary to gain more than a 50% 'Yes' vote of those voting in the referendum for the Plan to be 'made' and brought into force.




THELWALL
POST OFFICE
NO PARKING

Section 2 - Neighbourhood Plan Policies

2.1 Summary of Policies

A Neighbourhood Plan is a detailed technical document. The purpose of this summary page is to help you find your way around the policies of the Plan.



Green and Blue Spaces

Policy GBS1 Green and Blue Infrastructure Network Protecting and improving woodlands, hedgerows, open spaces, sports facilities and water bodies and safeguarding them from built development.

Policy GBS2 Green Belt Boundary Strengthening Ensuring that the new boundaries created by taking sites out of the Green Belt (by the Local Plan) are strengthened to make them recognisable and defensible.

Policy GBS3 Local Green Space Identifying and giving the highest level of protection to a series of green spaces which are seen as special by the local community.



Heritage

Policy HG1 Grappenhall Hall Ensuring the protection, reuse and, where necessary, renovation of Grappenhall Hall.

Policy HG2 Former Grappenhall Rectory Ensuring the protection, reuse and, where necessary, renovation of Grappenhall's former Rectory.

Policy HG3 Sites and Buildings of Local Historic Value Identifying and designating sites and buildings of local heritage importance; Grappenhall Hall and the gardens of Massey Hall, Thelwall.

Policy HG4 Protecting Heritage Transport Routes in Grappenhall Protecting the historic village of Grappenhall and its features such as canal bridges and cobbled street from excessive vehicle traffic arising from new development.



Design

Policy D1 General Residential Design Principles
Setting out design principles for new housing development to ensure that it contributes positively to existing character and heritage and is mindful of sustainability objectives.

Policy D2 SEWUE Broad Lane Area: Design Strategy
Setting out design parameters for the new large housing site off Broad Lane, Grappenhall, as allocated in the Warrington Local Plan.

Policy D3 SEWUE Stockton Lane Area: Design Strategy Setting out design parameters for the new large housing site off Stockton Lane, Grappenhall, as allocated in the Warrington Local Plan.

Policy D4 Thelwall Heys: Design Strategy
Setting out design parameters for the new large housing site at Thelwall Heys, Thelwall, as allocated in the Warrington Local Plan.

Policy D5 Sustainable Residential Development and Carbon Reduction Setting out criteria for encouraging sustainable development and carbon reduction in residential developments.

Policy D6 Re-use of agricultural buildings
Managing the conversion of agricultural buildings such as barns into houses or for other uses.

Policy D7 Commercial Areas
Seeking to improve the attractiveness and accessibility, and therefore commercial success, of the main shopping areas in the Parish.



Housing Need

Policy H1 New development to meet local housing need Making sure that new housing meets the needs of residents in terms of size, tenure and affordability and are adaptable to meet people's changing needs throughout their life.



Infrastructure

Policy INF1 Footpaths and Cycle Paths
Creating and protecting a network of walking and cycling routes to connect housing areas to schools, shops, pubs and other local amenities.

Policy INF2 Protecting, improving and providing facilities for health, education, sports and recreation and other community uses
Protecting the Parish's existing community facilities and ensuring that, as our area grows, the need for additional infrastructure is addressed.



Green and Blue Spaces

Introduction

The policies within the Green and Blue Spaces chapter of our Neighbourhood Plan should be read alongside key policies of the adopted Warrington Local Plan including: Policy DC3 (Green Infrastructure), DC4 (Ecological Network), Policy INF1 (Sustainable Travel and Transport), Policy DC5 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision), Policy MD2 (South East Warrington Urban Extension) and Policy MD4 (Thelwall Heys). Regard should also be had to Warrington Borough Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document which was adopted in July 2024 and sets out guidance on developer contributions for a range of matters including green infrastructure and open space, as well as relevant national planning policy. The Green Space Report produced in May 2025 forms part of the evidence base used to inform this chapter.

The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to protect, maintain and enhance our network of green and blue spaces, identify our most important green spaces and add an extra layer of protection by designating them as Local Green Spaces, and strengthen the green belt boundary.

Policies

Policy GBS1 Green and Blue Infrastructure Network

Development proposals must protect, maintain and enhance the existing green and blue infrastructure network shown at figure 5 and provide new infrastructure where required.

Such proposals must:

- Strengthen connectivity and increase the resilience of ecological networks.
- Maximise opportunities to mitigate, adapt and improve resilience to climate change; and
- Increase connectivity and opportunities for walking and cycling throughout the Neighbourhood Area and ensuring linkages to nearby facilities and services both within and outside the Neighbourhood Area.

In particular, proposals must protect and enhance existing woodlands, hedgerows, open spaces, sports facilities and water bodies shown on the map.

Built development on the areas identified as green and blue infrastructure will not be allowed except where it is appropriate to the particular type of infrastructure such as a pavilion in a park.

The existing and proposed green and blue infrastructure network provides a resource for the location of biodiversity mitigation or compensation measures which should be provided either adjacent to or close to development sites and within the

Neighbourhood Area, where it does not prove possible to secure a demonstrable biodiversity net gain within the site, as required by national and local policy.

In addition, parts of this network provide opportunities to provide compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of land remaining in the Green Belt, in line with local policy.

Reasoned Justification

The policy establishes a clear and robust framework for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Area. Its justification is grounded in a combination of environmental sustainability, climate resilience, public health, and alignment with national and local planning priorities.

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Enhancement

The policy prioritises the conservation and strengthening of ecological networks, particularly existing features such as woodlands, hedgerows, water bodies and open spaces. These habitats are essential for supporting local biodiversity and ecological resilience. By maintaining ecological corridors and natural habitats, the policy enables species migration, genetic exchange, and long-term viability of ecosystems.

This approach directly supports the aims of the Environment Act 2021 and the National Planning Policy Framework, which advocate for achieving a measurable biodiversity net gain in development. By identifying the green and blue infrastructure network as a resource for biodiversity mitigation and compensation, the policy ensures that development contributes positively to the natural environment.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Green and blue infrastructure plays a key role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Trees, vegetation, and water bodies help regulate temperature, reduce urban heat island effects, and manage surface water through sustainable drainage. The policy requirement to “maximise opportunities to mitigate, adapt and improve resilience to climate change” is aligned with national carbon reduction targets and adaptation strategies.

Incorporating nature-based solutions, such as expanded tree planting and pond restoration, helps reduce the impact of extreme weather events, particularly flooding and overheating, and contributes to meeting statutory obligations under the Climate Change Act 2008.

Health, Wellbeing, and Sustainable Transport

The policy supports active travel by improving walking and cycling links within and beyond the Neighbourhood Area. This encourages healthier lifestyles, reduces reliance on cars, and contributes to better air quality and lower emissions. Access to green spaces is also well-documented to support mental health and physical well-being, making the protection and enhancement of this infrastructure a vital community asset.



Photo: TPT, Bradshaw Lane

By enhancing connections between residential areas and local facilities, the policy promotes inclusive accessibility, aligning with the National Planning Policy Framework's emphasis on creating well-connected, high-quality places.

Spatial Planning and Green Belt Protection

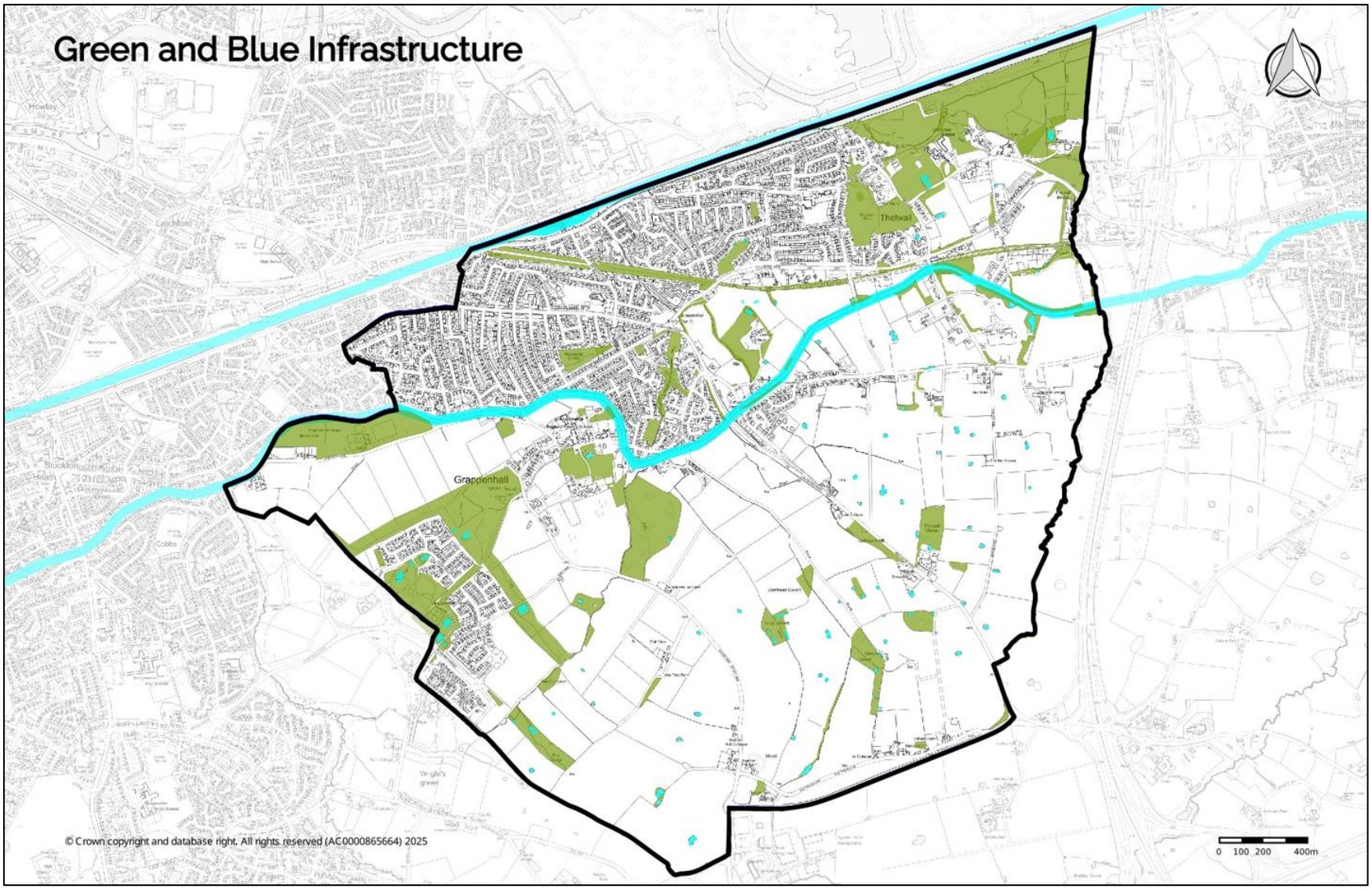
Built development is restricted on identified green and blue infrastructure unless it is clearly ancillary and appropriate (e.g. a pavilion in a park). This ensures the functional integrity of the network is preserved. Furthermore, the policy enables environmental and access improvements to land remaining in the Green Belt, offering compensatory benefits in line with Policy GB1 of the Warrington Local Plan.

Deliverability and Flexibility

The policy is both firm in its protective stance and flexible in implementation. While it restricts inappropriate development, it allows for necessary infrastructure that supports the recreational or ecological value of the land. The provision to locate biodiversity mitigation measures close to development sites, when on-site delivery is unfeasible, ensures a practical route to compliance and ensures compliance with Policy DC4 of the Warrington Local Plan.


Photo: Bridgewater canal

Figure 5 – Map showing Existing Green and Blue Infrastructure, Policy GBS1



Policy GBS2 Green Belt Boundary Strengthening

Figure 6 shows those field boundaries which need to be strengthened or where a new defensible boundary needs to be established to create a new and recognisable Green Belt boundary when considering development proposals on the allocated sites. Many of these fall within the green infrastructure network.

Reasoned Justification

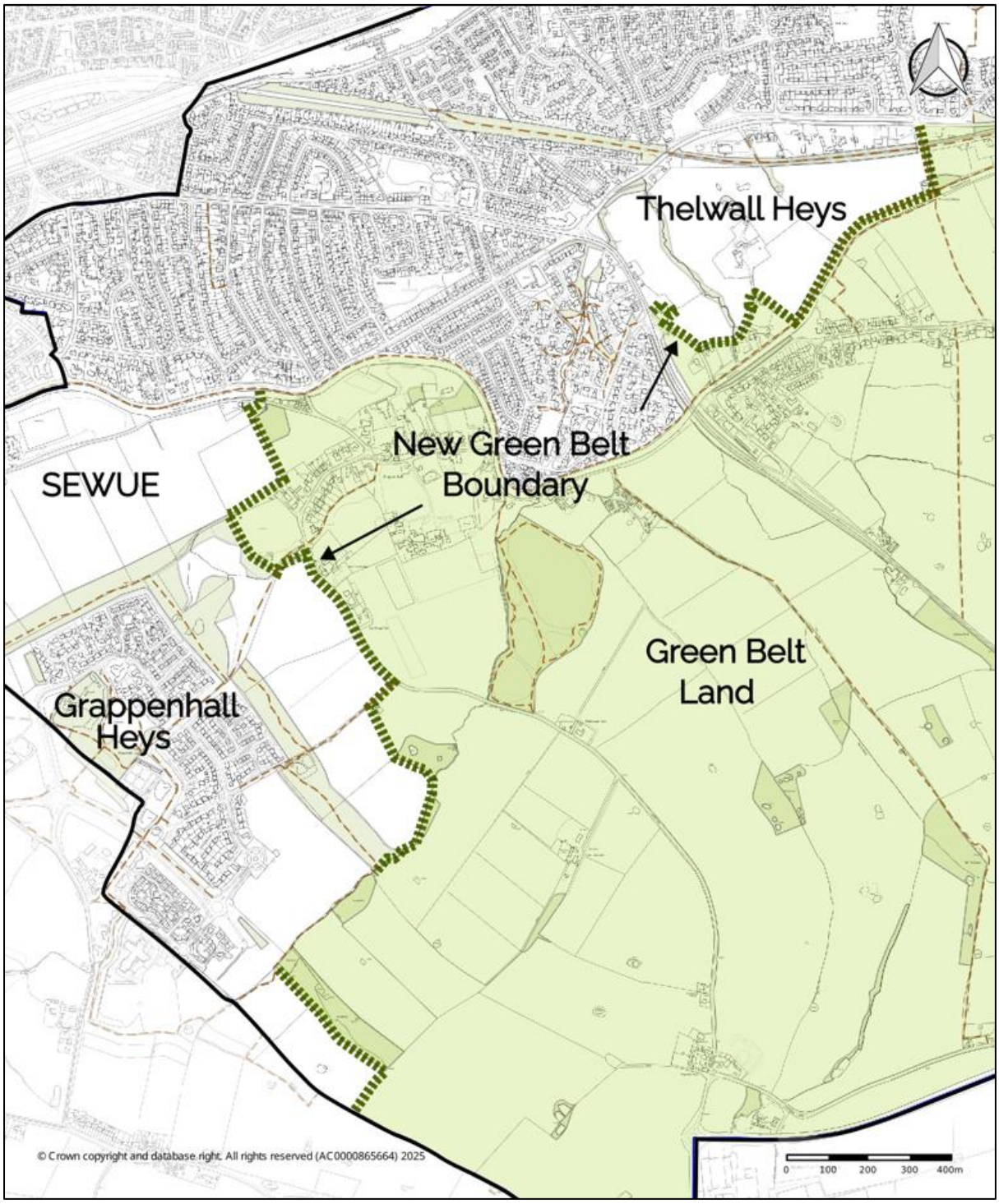
The Warrington Local Plan removed two sites from the Green Belt within the Neighbourhood Area to allocate them for development, namely Thelwall Heys and the South East Warrington Urban Extension, although only a part of the latter lies within the Neighbourhood Area.

The Local Plan policies for both these sites therefore include provisions for the strengthening of the newly created Green Belt boundaries where they abut the Green Belt to create new recognisable and permanent edges. This is to be done by such methods as providing landscape schemes to retain and enhance trees and hedgerows where there are existing field or other physical features.

This approach follows on from the policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework which specifies that, in drawing up Green Belt boundaries, plans should, “define boundaries clearly using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.”

Figure 6 shows the new Green Belt boundaries which have been created and which will be the subject of this policy in considering development proposals on the allocated sites.

Figure 6 - Map showing proposed new Green Belt boundary, Policy GBS2



Policy GBS3 Local Green Space

The following areas are designated as Local Green Space, where development will need to be consistent with national policy relating to Green Belt.

Parrs Wood, Grappenhall Heys Woodland and Village Green, the Dungeon, Grappenhall Heys plantation, Grappenhall Hall parkland, Village Green land opposite Gigg Lane, Water Woods, Elizabeth Park, Central Parkland at Thelwall Heys, Grappenhall Wood and Thelwall Meadow (see Figure 7). These areas will benefit from the additional protection such designation provides.

Reasoned Justification

The designation of specific sites at Parrs Wood, Grappenhall Heys Woodland and Village Green, the Dungeon, Grappenhall Heys Plantation, Grappenhall Hall Parkland, Village Green land opposite Gigg Lane, Water Woods, Elizabeth Park, Central Parkland at Thelwall Heys, Grappenhall Wood, and Thelwall Meadow as Local Green Space is intended to provide enduring protection to these areas due to their demonstrable local importance.

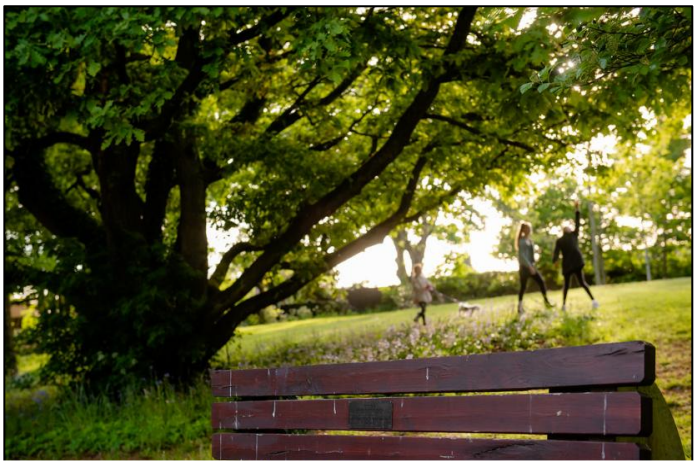


Photo: Village Green land opposite Gigg Lane, Thelwall

This designation ensures that development will be managed in line with national policy for Green Belt, preserving the spaces for current and future generations. In this regard, development in a Local Green Space will be considered inappropriate and should not be approved except in very special circumstances or where the proposal complies with one of the exceptions in paragraphs 154-155 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The justification for each site's designation aligns with the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework[3] and further interpreted in the Locality guidance[4], which states that Local Green Space must be:

1. Reasonably close to the community it serves

   All designated sites are located within or immediately adjacent to the settlements of Grappenhall and Thelwall, ensuring they are easily accessible to local residents by foot or bicycle. These spaces are used regularly for walking, informal recreation, and community events.

[3] Paragraph 107 of National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

[4] Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan, Neighbourhood Planning, Locality 06.10.2021

2. Demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance
   Each area holds unique local significance:

   - Parrs Wood and Grappenhall Heys Plantation provide vital natural habitats and opportunities for nature observation and education as well as established footpath routes.
   - Grappenhall Heys Woodland and Village Green is a central social and cultural space with historic landscape features and communal value.
   - Grappenhall Wood is cherished for its biodiversity, tranquillity, and opportunities for peaceful recreation.
   - The Dungeon, although not publicly accessible, has high wildlife value.
   - Grappenhall Hall Parkland and Elizabeth Park are important for visual amenity, community activities, and contain mature trees and heritage assets.
   - Water Woods is a well-loved amenity open space which has existing and potential wildlife value.
   - Thelwall Heys Central Parkland provides a multi-purpose amenity open space whilst also providing an open setting to the Grade II listed Thelwall Heys Hall.
   - Village Green land opposite Gigg Lane provides informal open space used by residents for dog walking, children's play, and community gathering.
   - Thelwall Meadow is an area of local open space which has high wildlife value.

3. Local in character and not an extensive tract of land

   None of the designated sites constitute extensive tracts of land. Each has clearly defined boundaries and is integrated within or adjacent to built-up areas. The designations have been carefully assessed to ensure they are proportionate and justified in terms of scale and use.

4. Consistent with the planning of sustainable development

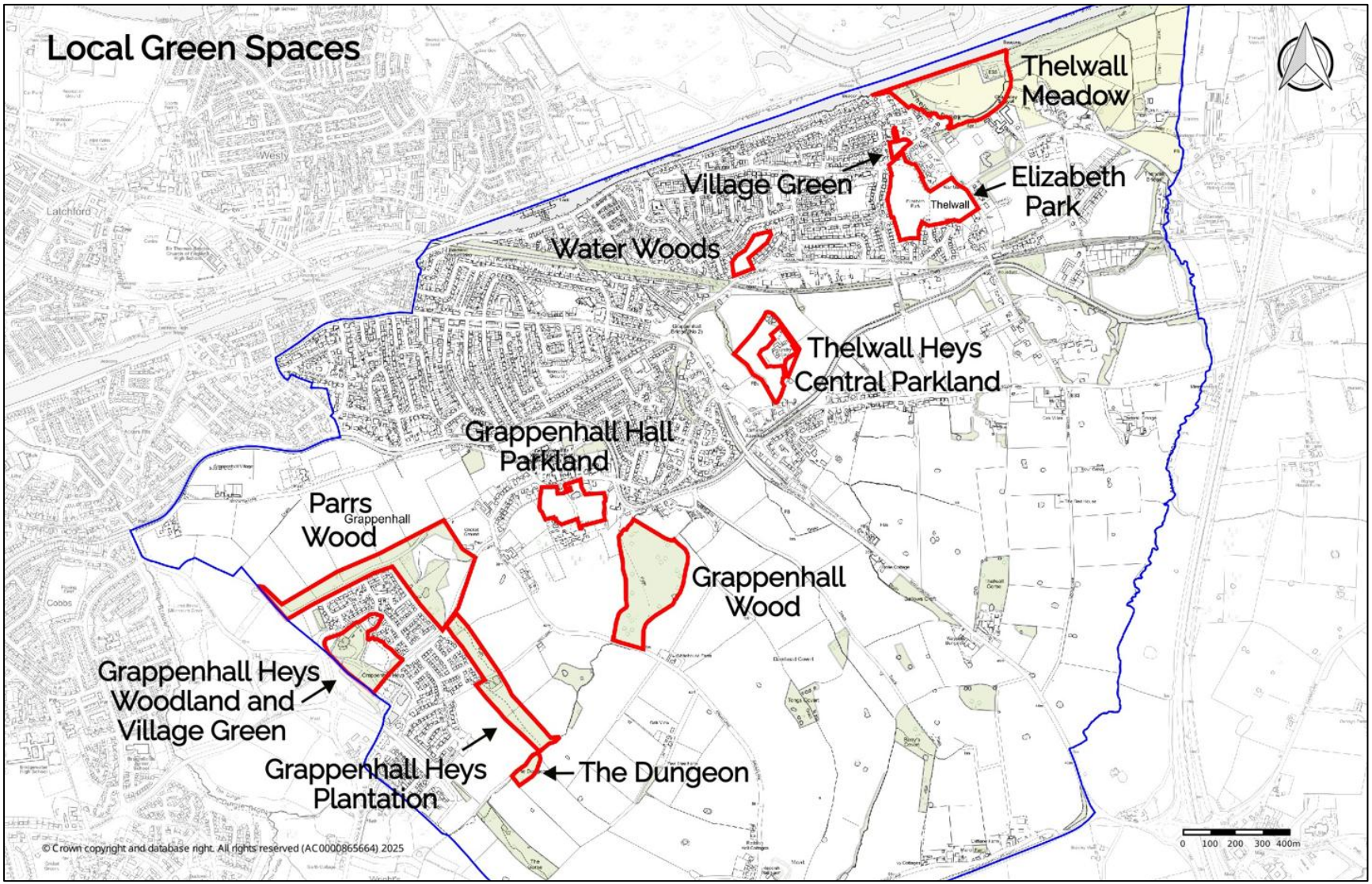
   The designation of these sites as Local Green Space supports sustainable development by ensuring that valued green infrastructure is retained, enhancing quality of life, supporting biodiversity, and promoting healthy lifestyles. They also contribute to climate resilience by maintaining natural areas within the urban fabric.

5. Capable of enduring beyond the plan period

   These spaces are not only valued today but are likely to continue serving the community in perpetuity. Their designation will help ensure they remain protected from inappropriate development and continue to provide environmental, recreational, and cultural benefits.

The proposed Local Green Space designations meet all the criteria outlined in national policy and guidance. They reflect community support and are based on clear evidence of local value and significance. Their designation is a proportionate response to the need to protect important green areas from development, while supporting the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and the broader principles of sustainable development.

Figure 7 – Map showing Designated Local Green Spaces, Policy GBS3





Heritage

Introduction

The policies within the Heritage chapter of our Neighbourhood Plan should be read alongside key policies of the adopted Warrington Local Plan including Policy DC2 (Historic Environment), as well as relevant national planning policy. Regard should also be had to guidance prepared by Warrington Borough Council around the three Conservation Areas that sit within the designated Neighbourhood Area; namely Grappenhall Village Conservation Area (Designated in 1974 and extended in 1980), Thelwall Village Conservation Area (Designated in 1977 and extended in 1991 and 1993) and Victoria Road/ York Drive Conservation Area (Designated in 1996), as well as the many historic assets listed within Appendix 5 of the Warrington Local Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to ensure that new development preserves and enhances the area's heritage, being especially mindful of the Neighbourhood Area's listed buildings, locally listed assets and the three designated conservation areas.

Policies

Policy HG1 Grappenhall Hall

Proposals for the redevelopment of Grappenhall Hall, which is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset, should aim to restore and re-use the Hall building and deliver the sensitive redevelopment of its surrounding buildings and restoration and public use of its open grounds and its landscape setting.

This restoration must meet the following criteria:

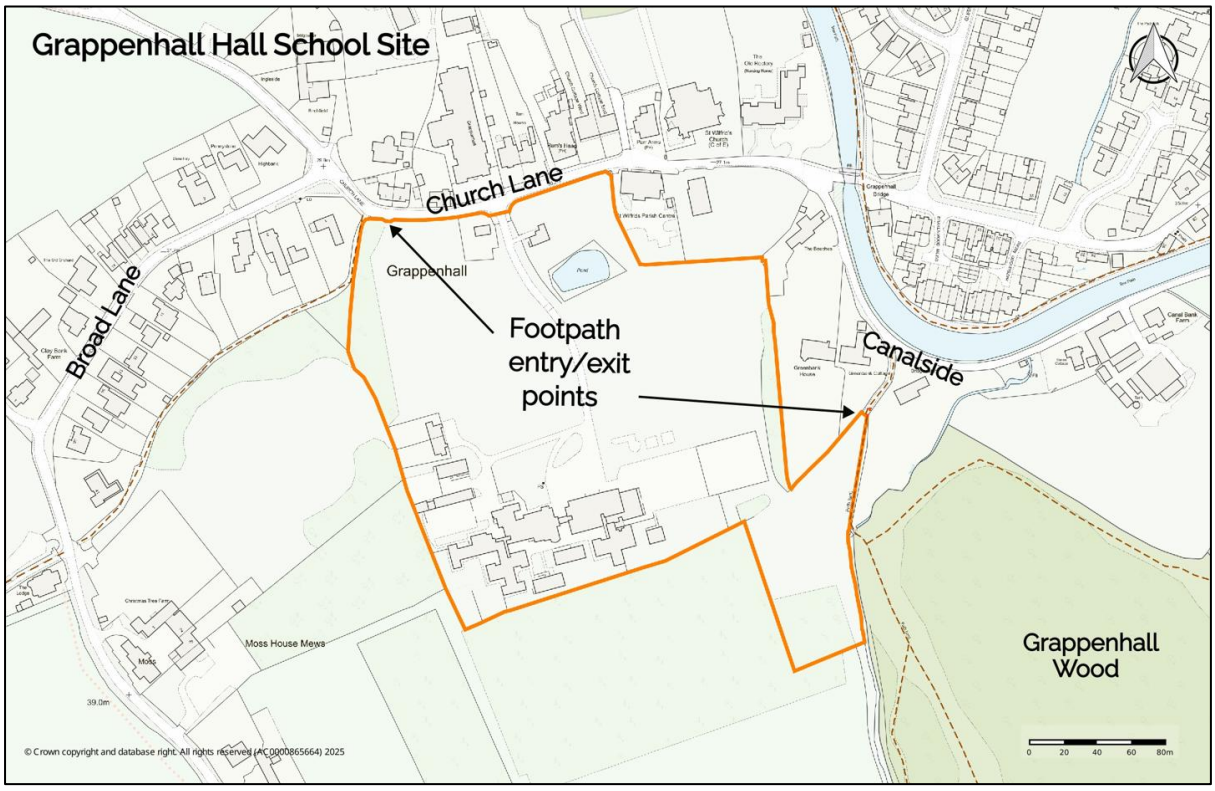
1. All buildings and structures, other than the Hall, may be demolished and replaced with new buildings in residential (C3), residential institution (C2), hotel (C1), and/or learning and non-residential institution (F1) uses. The hall itself should be re-used for any of these uses.
2. These buildings must be subordinate in form and height to the Hall building and separated from it to allow its setting to be appreciated.
3. The layout of the scheme should comprise primarily terraced houses and ranges of buildings that may be around courtyards and not detached forms.
4. No new building should be sited in such a way as to block the main view of the hall from Church Lane.
5. The houses either side of the driveway access may be redeveloped in a form and style that are recognised as estate lodges using a palette of materials of the nearby Parish Centre i.e. brown brick and gabled grey slate roof.
6. Should it be necessary to widen the front access to the Hall, the stone pillars and curving walls must be retained and relocated.
7. In any scheme, the parkland forward of the building line must be retained as publicly accessible open space,
8. The original footpath from the gate opposite No. 1 Church Lane must be reinstated and a new footpath link created on the eastern boundary of the

site to connect with the Public Right of Way between Canalside and Grappenhall Wood.

The redevelopment of the Hall instead of its restoration will only be considered where it can clearly be demonstrated, through a robust site-specific Financial Viability Assessment, that restoration would not be financially viable. In this case, applicants will be required to provide viability evidence through an 'open book' approach to allow for the proper review of evidence submitted and for reasons of transparency.

Should redevelopment of the Hall be justified, any proposals must comply with clause 1. above (other than the demolition of the Hall). It must also comply with clauses 3. to 8., in addition to meeting national Green Belt policy and Local Plan policy for development in Conservation Areas (Policy DC2).

Figure 8 – Location of Grappenhall Hall, Policy HG1



Reasoned Justification

The National Planning Policy Framework identifies conservation and the enhancement of the historic environment as a strategic matter[5]. It goes on to state that Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

[5] Paragraph 20 of National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

Grappenhall Hall lies at the heart of the Conservation Area and its appearance, along with the open parkland in front of it, contributes strongly to the special character of the Conservation Area and of the village of Grappenhall itself.

The Hall is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset which is of value, and which should be restored and re-used, as a first preference.

Although the site falls within the Green Belt, national policy does allow for the limited infilling and partial or complete redevelopment of such sites where this would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The Hall has been allowed to deteriorate and is currently in a very poor condition. The cost of repair, restoration and re-use is undoubtedly high. However, sufficient funding for the hall's restoration could be provided by allowing enabling development to the extent of the footprint of the previously developed land on the site (other than the hall).

Should that not be the case, as demonstrated by the financial viability assessment process outlined in the policy, the redevelopment of the hall itself will be allowed provided its replacement accords with national Green Belt policy and preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

An important element of the character that the Hall and its grounds bring to the village is the open parkland between the Hall and Church Lane. As such this land has been designated as Local Green Space and will be maintained as publicly accessible open space for use by the community (see Policy GBS3). This community use will be enhanced by the provision of footpath connections into the site from the south-east and from the existing gateway at the north-west corner of the site which was formerly the access track to the stables of the Hall.



Photo: Grappenhall Hall

Policy HG2 Former Grappenhall Rectory

Proposals to repair, refurbish and reuse this building, shown at Figure 10, must conserve its significance as defined by the statutory listing description whilst preserving or enhancing the structure and its curtilage.

In particular, any scheme must:

1. Faithfully reinstate the original porch that has been removed, using the drawings and photographic record made at the time of its removal in 2009;
2. Include the retention and repair of both pairs of gate piers in situ as well as the low sandstone boundary wall with new iron railings above;
3. Retain as open land the garden land across the site from the eastern elevation to the site boundary to preserve the Rectory's setting in glimpsed views from Church Lane.
4. Retain the brick boundary wall to Church Lane and the trees behind it as well as those trees south of the building, all of which contribute strongly to its setting.

Any extension to the building should be sited on its western and southern elevations, comply with Green Belt policy and have regard to the value of the heritage asset.

Where fully justified and assessed, a minimal level of enabling development consistent with securing the building's future in an appropriate viable use may be allowed.

Should the need for enabling development to secure reuse of the building be demonstrated, any new building on the site may only be located on the southern edge of the site nearest 'The Beeches' and be no more than 50% of the floorspace of the Rectory building. It must be of a subordinate form in scale and height and must respect the setting of the Rectory in views from Church Lane.

The need for enabling development to support the restoration of the former Rectory will need to be clearly demonstrated, through a robust site-specific Financial Viability Assessment. In this case, applicants will be required to provide viability evidence through an 'open book' approach to allow for the proper review of evidence submitted and for reasons of transparency.

Reasoned Justification

The policy for the Former Grappenhall Rectory is underpinned by a commitment to the conservation and enhancement of a designated heritage asset of both architectural and historic significance. The Former Rectory is a listed building situated within the Grappenhall Conservation Area—a historically rich and visually coherent environment marked by its rural street pattern, historic buildings, and distinctive landscape features. The policy reflects both statutory duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and national planning principles requiring that heritage assets be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conservation of Significance and Architectural Integrity

The Former Rectory's heritage value is embedded in its special architectural features, including its original crenelated Gothic porch, Tudor arch, corner pinnacles, and the associated historic gate piers and boundary treatments. These elements are referenced explicitly in its statutory listing description. Their faithful reinstatement and repair are essential to preserving the building's integrity and authenticity. The policy's requirement to reinstate the original porch using archival documentation from 2009 ensures restoration accuracy, aligning with Historic England guidance on heritage-led repair[6].

Protection of Setting and Visual Relationships

The Former Rectory's contribution to the Grappenhall Conservation Area is not limited to its physical structure but extends to its curtilage and visual prominence within the landscape. The policy mandates the preservation and restoration of key boundary features such as the brick and sandstone walls, iron railings, and mature trees, which frame the building and maintain historic views from Church Lane. The retention of open garden land to the east is critical in sustaining the building's semi-rural character and its relationship to the conservation area's spatial pattern. This approach reflects an understanding of the Former Rectory's role in forming part of a significant group of heritage assets, including St. Wilfrid's Church, the Parish Centre, and the Parr Arms, around the narrowest and most visually distinctive part of Church Lane.

Sensitive and Subordinate Extension

The allowance for potential extensions to the Former Rectory, restricted to its western and southern elevations, reflects both a historical precedent (given the building's original western structure) and the need for adaptability to ensure sustainable reuse. However, any such additions must be subordinate in scale and sensitive in design, ensuring the original building remains the visual and historical focus. This condition is consistent with the principles of proportionality and reversibility encouraged in heritage conservation policies.

Controlled Enabling Development

The policy permits enabling development only where it is clearly demonstrated to be essential to the Former Rectory's long-term conservation. Such development is strictly limited in location, scale, and form being confined to the southern edge of the site, capped at 50% of the Former Rectory's floorspace, and required to be visually subordinate. These constraints ensure that any additional development does not undermine the heritage significance or dominate the setting of the Former Rectory in key views from Church Lane. The requirement for a robust, transparent financial viability assessment further ensures that enabling development remains a last resort, tightly controlled and justified under national planning policy guidance, particularly Historic England's enabling development criteria.

[6] Principles of Repair for Historic Buildings, Historic England

Figure 10 – Location of Former Grappenhall Rectory, Policy HG2

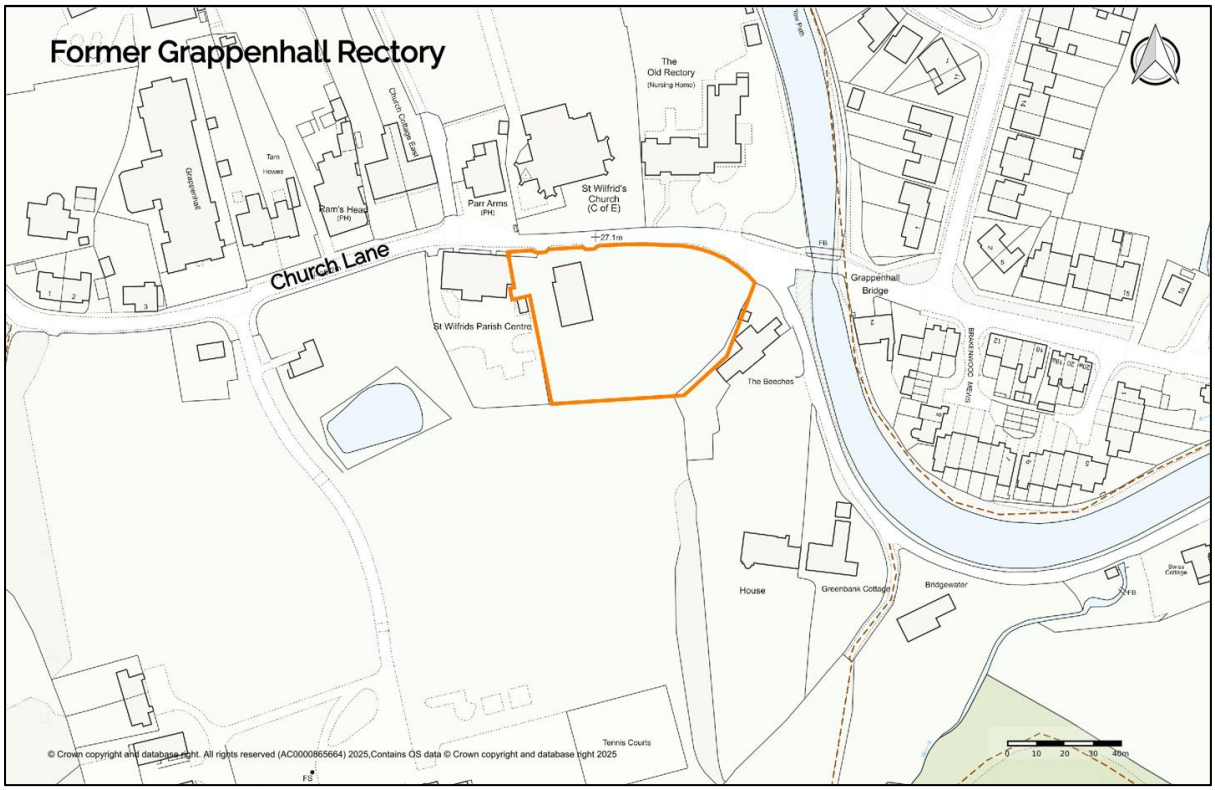




Photo: Former Rectory, Grappenhall

Policy HG3 Sites and Buildings of Local Historic Value

The following two sites and buildings are identified as non-designated heritage assets:

1. Grappenhall Hall, Grappenhall. (Figure 11)
2. The Gardens of Massey Hall, Thelwall. (Figure 11)

As non-designated heritage assets they are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Reasoned Justification

Grappenhall Hall



Grappenhall Hall merits recognition as a building of local historic interest due to its significant architectural and social value within the Grappenhall area. Constructed in the 19th century, the Hall exemplifies the domestic architecture of its period, featuring characteristic materials, proportions, and detailing that contribute to the local historic townscape. Historically, it served as a prominent residence of the Greenall family and later fulfilled community roles, including use as an educational institution, reflecting evolving patterns of land use and public service. Its association with notable local families and institutions further enhances its cultural importance. Preserving Grappenhall Hall supports the continuity of local heritage and reinforces community identity.

Massey Hall Park

Whilst Massey Hall Park does not meet the criteria for national designation, it clearly merits recognition as a site of local historic interest due to its strong historical associations, local architectural character, and designed landscape heritage. Laid out circa 1874 for the prominent industrialist and politician Peter Rylands, the park reflects the social and economic history of the area and includes work by Edward Kemp, a nationally renowned landscape designer. Although the original design has undergone alterations and loss of key features, the park retains important historic elements such as specimen trees, boundary woodland, remnants of the original drive, and outbuildings including the stable block and cottage. Additionally, its role as a former educational establishment for Lancashire County Council following its bequest by Sir William Rylands adds further cultural significance. These layers of local historical and architectural interest, coupled with its setting within the Green Belt, justify its protection and recognition at the local level.

Figure 11 – Massey Hall Gardens and Grappenhall Hall, Policy HG3





Policy HG4 Protecting Heritage Transport Routes in Grappenhall

In preparing the required Transport Assessment and Travel Plans for the two South East Warrington Urban Extension development sites at Broad Lane (Policy D2) and Stockton Lane (Policy D3), particular regard must be given to the potential traffic impact of those developments on the surrounding heritage-sensitive areas.

They must demonstrate how traffic exit strategies will avoid increasing vehicle movements over the heritage assets of the two historic humpback bridges (Stanney Lunt Bridge and Grappenhall Bridge) over the canal in Grappenhall village and the cobbled road adjacent to St Wilfrid's Church, a Grade I listed building.

1. New developments must prioritise alternative access and exit points that divert traffic away from the heritage-sensitive route of Church Lane, Grappenhall.
2. Direct vehicular access onto Broad Lane and Stockton Lane should be minimised, with primary access routes directed towards roads with greater capacity and infrastructure suitability.
3. Where necessary, developments must provide traffic mitigation measures such as designated access routes, road improvements, or traffic calming features that reduce reliance on heritage-sensitive routes.
4. Developments must respect the historic integrity of the cobbled road adjacent to St Wilfrid's Church by ensuring that traffic volumes and vehicle types do not contribute to wear, degradation, or safety concerns.
5. Where increased traffic impact is unavoidable, developers must contribute to necessary road improvements, traffic management solutions, and conservation efforts to protect the character of the heritage-sensitive areas referred to above.

Reasoned Justification

The aim of this policy is to ensure that new developments adjacent to Broad Lane and Stockton Lane do not contribute to increased traffic pressures on the historic humpback bridges and cobbled road near St Wilfrid's Church, thereby preserving the area's heritage, character, and safety.

It aims to balance the need for new development with the preservation of Grappenhall's historic and rural character. The two humpback bridges and cobbled road outside St Wilfrid's Church are integral to the village's heritage and must be safeguarded from excessive traffic pressures that could lead to structural deterioration, congestion, or safety hazards. By implementing strict access strategies, sustainable travel solutions, and infrastructure contributions, this policy ensures that new developments support both growth and heritage conservation in Grappenhall.

These requirements must be taken into account in preparing the Transport Assessments and Travel Plans for major development proposals which are required under section 7 of Local Plan policy INF1 which deals with Sustainable Travel and Transport.


BRETLAND

Design

Introduction

The policies within the Design chapter of our Neighbourhood Plan should be read alongside key policies of the adopted Warrington Local Plan including: Policy DC6 (Quality of Place), Policy DC1 (Warrington's Places), Policy DEV 1 (Housing Delivery), Policy DEV2 (Meeting Housing Needs), Policy INF1 (Sustainable Travel and Transport), Policy MD2 (South East Warrington Urban Extension) and Policy MD4 (Thelwall Heys). Regard should also be had to the Warrington Design Guide which was adopted by Warrington Borough Council in July 2024 as a Supplementary Planning Document, the House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document adopted by Warrington Borough Council in June 2021, and relevant national planning policy.

The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to set out a series of design principles for all new development, from infill proposals and conversions to large-scale housing developments, to ensure that it contributes positively to the existing character and architectural heritage of the area.

Policies

Policy D1 General Residential Design Principles

Residential development proposals should comply with the following design principles.

Within the Character Areas identified (see Figure 13) which have a strong architectural style, designs should incorporate:

Common Features and Motifs

1. Hood moulds of moulded plaster or brickwork or other appropriate material above windows.
2. Canted bay windows in a variety of styles.
3. Porches to front doors with gabled and pitched roofs.
4. Plat bands of decorative brickwork and dentillated eaves on front elevations.

Their use should not lead to the use of pastiche, faux Domestic Revival or other architectural period styles where the use of a feature or motif would jar or sit uncomfortably with a modern building form.

Materials and Colours

1. Proposals should use a black and white colour palette for render, painted brick and timber work (other than doors and windows.)
2. Red sandstone should be used either as a facing material or at least as a feature in the design palette.

3. Grey roofing materials should be used or red/orange clay tiles (or similar) where they predominate in the immediate area.
4. Cheshire railings painted black and/or white should be used in appropriate locations.

Building Forms

1. Dwelling proposals should be a detached or semi-detached house form laid out in regular streets and plot patterns except where terraced housing or bungalows adjoin the site boundary, in which case they will also be appropriate building forms.
2. On larger new build schemes, predominantly within the South East Warrington Urban Extension and Thelwall Heys, the use of occasional terraces and bungalows will be encouraged.

Reasoned Justification

The General Residential Design Principles outlined here aim to ensure that new residential development contributes positively to the existing character and architectural heritage of the area. By integrating distinctive features, materials, and building forms that reflect the local vernacular, the policy supports a coherent and aesthetically appropriate built environment while allowing for modern design innovations.

The inclusion of specific architectural features and motifs is intended to maintain the identity and visual harmony of Character Areas that exhibit a strong architectural style. Features such as hood moulds, canted bay windows, porches, and decorative brickwork have historical significance and contribute to the unique streetscape of the neighbourhood. By requiring new developments to incorporate one or more of these elements, the policy ensures that contemporary architecture respects and complements the local character.

However, the policy also recognises the importance of avoiding pastiche or excessive historic replication that may result in inauthentic or discordant design. Instead, it promotes the thoughtful incorporation of traditional elements in a way that harmonises with modern building forms. This balance between heritage conservation and contemporary architecture fosters an evolving yet cohesive built environment.

The specified colour palette and materials reinforce the area's historical and visual identity. The black and white scheme for render, painted brick, and timber work is characteristic of traditional local buildings, ensuring continuity in the streetscape. The use of red sandstone as a primary or accent material aligns with the region's geological and architectural heritage, providing texture and warmth to new developments.

Roofing materials are also crucial in maintaining visual consistency. Grey roofing or red/orange clay tiles (or suitable alternatives) ensure that new buildings integrate seamlessly with their surroundings. By setting these material guidelines, the policy enhances the sense of place and minimises discordant or inappropriate materials that may undermine the neighbourhood area's aesthetic cohesion.

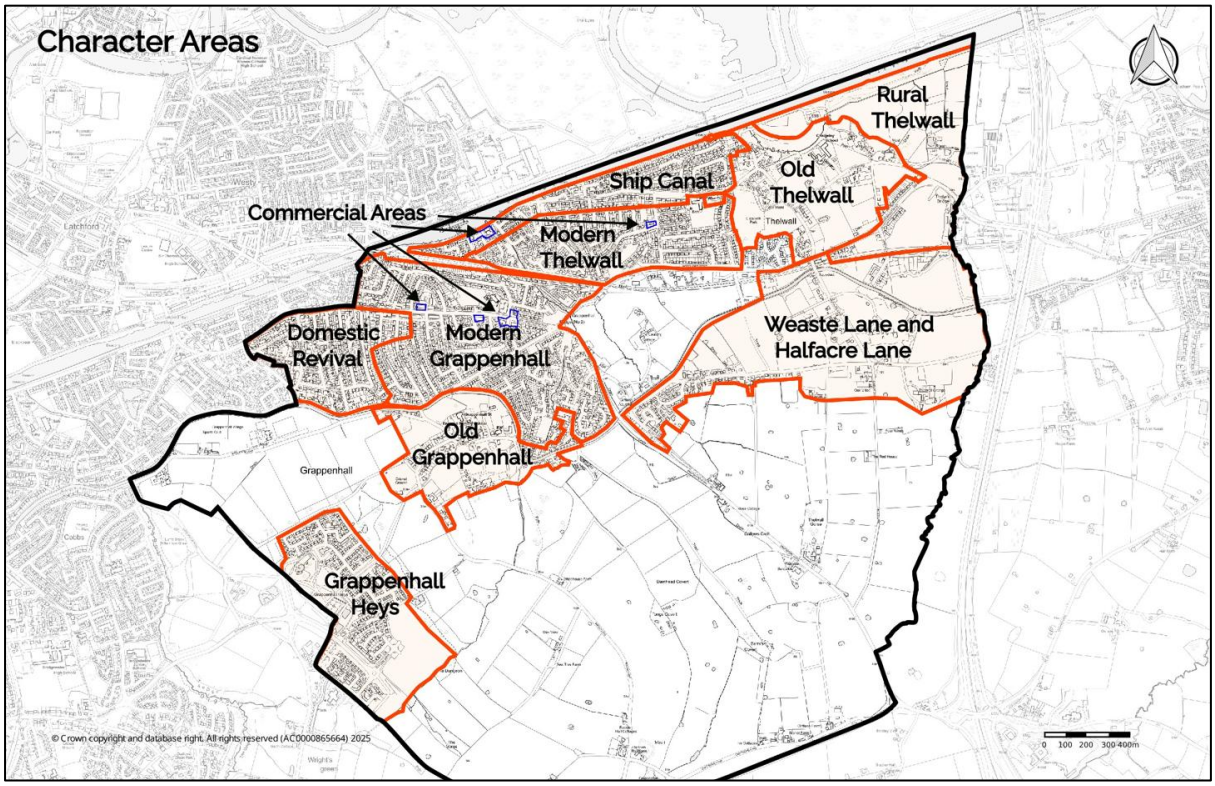
The prescribed building forms reflect the predominant residential typologies within the Neighbourhood Area, supporting a structured and recognisable layout that enhances the streetscape. Detached and semi-detached houses in regular street patterns are characteristic of the area, ensuring that new developments align with existing urban morphology.

The policy also acknowledges site-specific considerations by allowing for terraced housing and bungalows where they adjoin existing developments of the same type. This flexible approach ensures that new developments transition smoothly into their surroundings, preventing abrupt changes in scale or density that could disrupt the neighbourhood fabric.

For larger development schemes, such as those in SEWUE and Thelwall Heys, the encouragement of occasional terraces and bungalows promotes housing diversity while maintaining the overarching character principles. This approach supports a balanced and inclusive residential environment that caters to different household needs and preferences.

The General Residential Design Principles set out here serve to protect and enhance the local character while accommodating appropriate new development. By defining clear yet flexible design parameters, the policy ensures that new residential proposals contribute positively to the visual, historical, and functional aspects of the area. This approach fosters a sense of continuity and place-making, ultimately creating a high-quality, well-integrated built environment that respects both tradition and modernity.

Figure 13 – Map Showing Character Areas, Policy D1



More detailed maps of the identified Character Areas are provided at **Appendix 1**.

Policy D2 South East Warrington Urban Extension Broad Lane Area: Design Strategy

New housing development on the Broad Lane area of the South East Warrington Urban Extension (shown on the map at Figure 14) should comply with the following design principles:

1. To enhance the visual connection between the Broad Lane area and Grappenhall Village, the development must have a layout that comprises linear development facing Broad Lane with plots located behind the existing hedgerow, which should be retained and bolstered.
2. The layout should allow for glimpse views of the Grappenhall Heys woodland to the southwest of the site. A buffer zone should be provided to the woodland onto which the dwellings should face.
3. A new footpath should be provided within the site running parallel to Broad Lane connecting Hall Lane with the established footpath alongside the cricket field.
4. As part of the compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of land remaining in the Green Belt, a footpath will be provided from Grappenhall Wood south westwards to join up with the footpath within Grappenhall Heys Plantation (also shown on Plan at Figure 19). This will be delivered by the developer/developers of this site. Similarly, a footpath connection will be provided from the junction of Hall Lane with Broad Lane to that emerging from Grappenhall Wood, behind the roadside hedge.

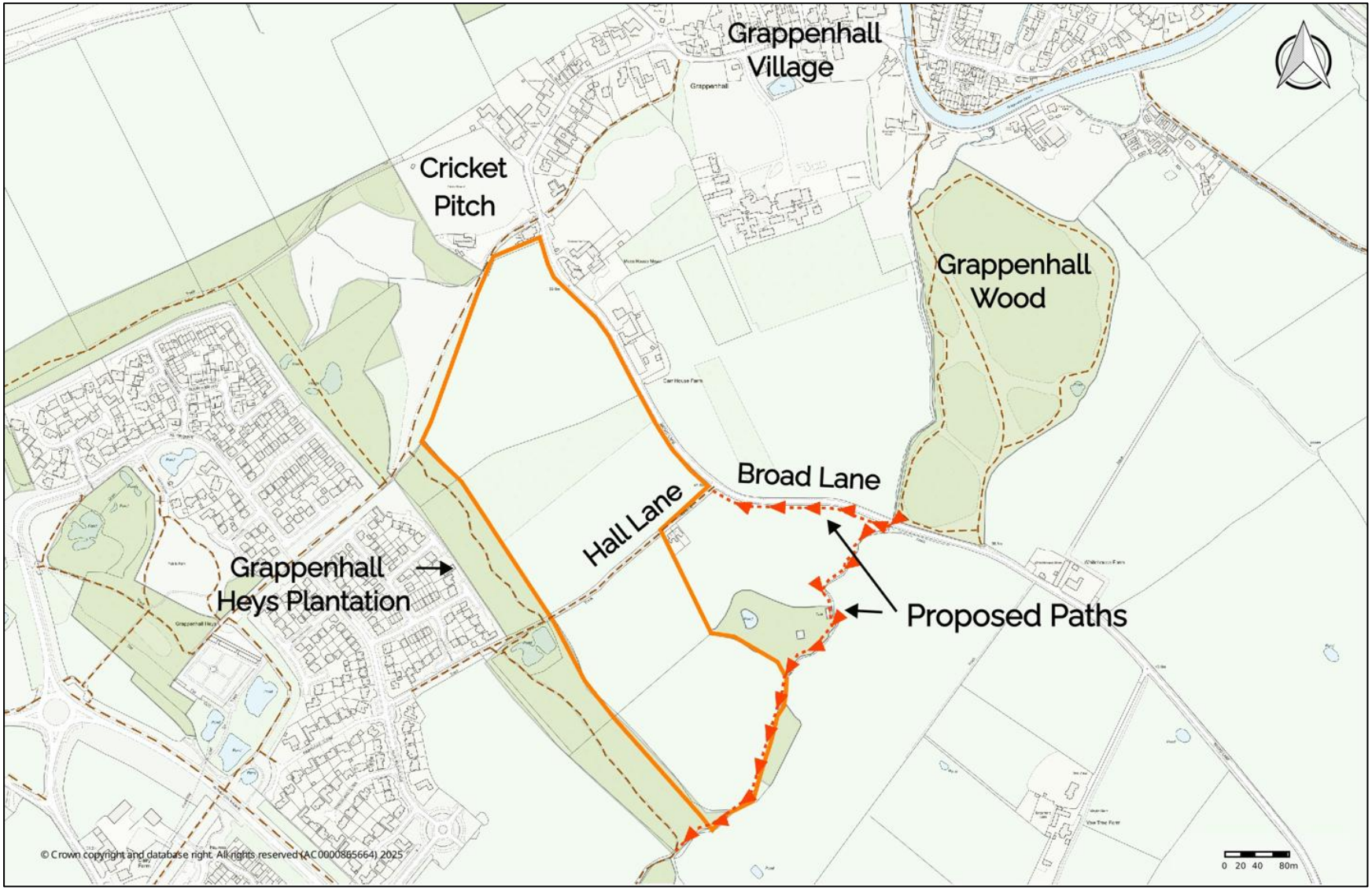
Reasoned Justification

This important element of the South East Warrington Urban Extension housing allocation forms a key visual backdrop to Grappenhall village although the built-up area is mostly hidden in views from the area by the tight curve in the road by the cricket field. Maintenance of this existing character will be preserved by allowing glimpse views of the woodland belt to the southwest of the site and by preserving the existing roadside hedge along Broad Lane.

The site also enables the provision of some key footpath/cycleway linkages which tie the site into the wider area. In particular, a route will be provided alongside Broad Lane (which currently has no footway) from the cricket field to the path emerging from Grappenhall Wood, inside the hedge line. Another key connection is from Grappenhall Wood to the existing footpath within Grappenhall Heys plantation. The route of this path, shown at figures 14 and 19, is indicative, the precise routeing to be determined at implementation.

Although parts of these routes fall within the development allocation and will be provided as part of the housing scheme, other parts fall outside the allocation and will need to be provided by the developer, in negotiation with landowners, as compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of land remaining in the Green Belt, in line with clause 26 of Local Plan policy MD2 which allocates the site for development.

Figure 14 – Map showing extent of SEWUE Broad Lane Area, Policy D2



Policy D3 South East Warrington Urban Extension Stockton Lane Area: Design Strategy

New Housing development on the Stockton Lane area of the South East Warrington Urban Extension (shown on the map at Figure 16) should comply with the following design principles:

1. To ensure a visual connection between Grappenhall and the Stockton Lane area, the layout of development should allow for views of Parrs Wood to the south of the site both above the rooftops and along strategic long views through the development. A buffer zone should be provided to the woodland onto which the dwellings should face.
2. Development should use and orientate mainly straight streets along the contours to create a built form and roofscape that blends into the countryside setting.
3. The layout must allow for buildings to face Stockton Lane and the canal but must be sited behind the hedgerow along the lane, which should be retained and bolstered. New footpaths may penetrate the hedge to connect to the lane which may be closed in part to vehicles in the future. It must also allow for buildings to face the cricket field and the Church Lane field to the north-east.
4. As far as possible, the existing hedges should be retained within the layout. They should form part of the multi-functional green infrastructure network referred to in Policy INF1 that encourages walking through the area to Stockton Lane, Lumb Brook Road, Broad Lane and Grappenhall Heys.
5. The development may benefit from the location of a landmark building or structure at its centre that would be visible from the canal, Church Lane and Lumb Brook Road as a means of orientating visitors within and outside the development.
6. Given its proximity to the Domestic Revival Character Area, buildings should seek to reflect the black and white colour palette and other stylistic devices including half-timbered gables, white render, grey slate or red tile roofing materials, and have more generous and well-planted front gardens. Hood moulds should also be used on the front elevations of a proportion of the buildings, particularly those in the more prominent locations.

Reasoned Justification

The Stockton Lane area lies at a visually and strategically important position within the South East Warrington Urban Extension forming a key interface between new development and the surrounding countryside, including the historic settlement of Grappenhall. The design principles outlined in the policy aim to ensure that new housing in this sensitive location integrates harmoniously with the landscape, responds to local character, and contributes positively to the identity, legibility, and quality of the wider South East Warrington Urban Extension.

Visual Connectivity and Landscape Integration

The requirement to maintain strategic views of Parrs Wood and orient buildings toward the surrounding woodland ensures visual continuity between Grappenhall and the

Stockton Lane area. This strengthens the sense of place by anchoring the development within its wider landscape context and fostering a sense of openness. The buffer zone around the woodland, with dwellings facing into it, reinforces passive surveillance, enhances biodiversity, and safeguards the setting of mature landscape features.

Contour-Responsive Street Layout

Orienting development along existing contours with straight streets supports efficient site drainage, reduces cut-and-fill, and results in a more naturalistic roofline that blends into the gently rolling landscape. This approach promotes visual cohesion and reduces the prominence of built form when viewed from surrounding countryside areas, supporting a softer transition between urban and rural environments.

Frontage to Key Features and Hedgerow Retention

Encouraging buildings to face Stockton Lane, the canal, cricket field, and Church Lane field helps maintain active frontages and visual interest along key public routes and open spaces. Preserving and enhancing the hedgerow along Stockton Lane is vital for maintaining rural character and ecological value. Allowing for pedestrian permeability through new footpaths strikes an appropriate balance between accessibility and heritage conservation.

Green Infrastructure and Walkability

Integrating existing hedgerows into a green infrastructure network supports ecological connectivity, sustainable drainage, and access to nature. Retaining these landscape features as structuring elements of the site layout contributes to a distinctive and locally rooted design. Enhanced walkability, as enabled by this network, encourages low-carbon travel options and improves physical and mental wellbeing for residents.

Landmark Building for Orientation and Identity

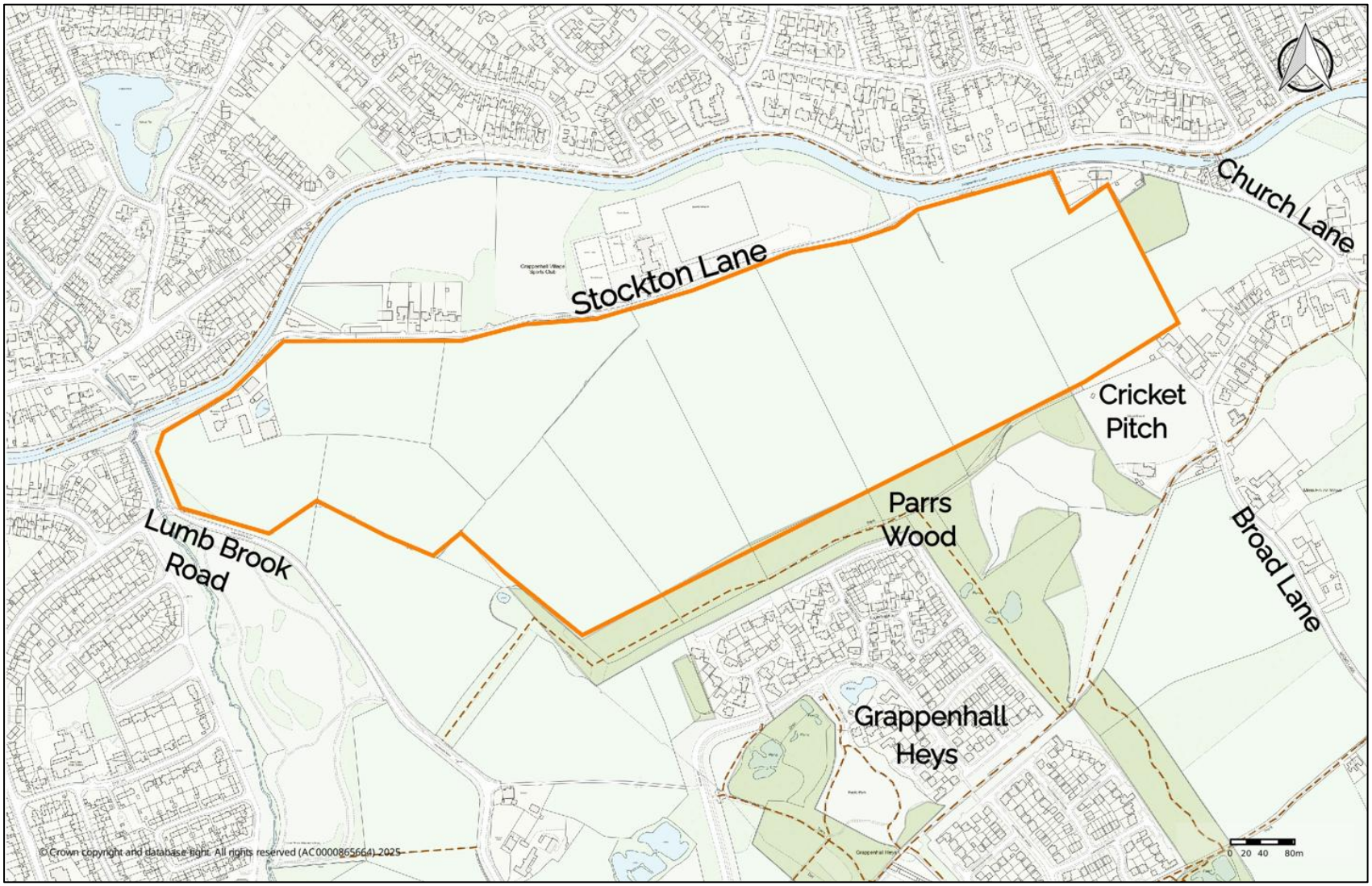
The suggestion for a centrally located landmark feature enhances navigability and provides a focal point for community identity. Being visible from major routes such as the canal and Chester Road, the landmark can serve both as a visual anchor and a place-making device that reinforces the area's distinctiveness and coherence within the wider area.

Architectural Response to Local Character

Drawing upon the Domestic Revival Character Area’s palette and stylistic language ensures that the new development respects and complements the architectural heritage of the area. Features such as half-timbered gables, white render, grey slate roofs, and generous gardens will promote a high-quality streetscape that reflects traditional Cheshire design cues. The use of hood moulds and careful material selection for prominent buildings supports visual interest and reinforces hierarchy within the built form.

Overall, the policy supports a development approach that is landscape-led, heritage-sensitive, and contextually appropriate. It ensures that the Stockton Lane area contributes to the overall success of the SEWUE as a distinctive, sustainable, and characterful extension of Warrington.

Figure 16 - Map showing extent of SEWUE Stockton Lane Area, Policy D3



Policy D4 Thelwall Heys: Design Strategy

New housing development at Thelwall Heys (shown on the map at Figure 17) should comply with the following design principles:

1. The layout should ensure that the open setting to the listed building at the centre of the site is retained to enable it to be viewed from across the area. Housing should face onto this space to provide the necessary surveillance of this public area.
2. The hedge along the Bridgewater Canal should be retained, strengthened and protected with a landscaped buffer between it and the development. Dwellings should front onto this buffer.
3. The retention of existing mature trees, hedges and ponds within the site and around its edges should be maximised.
4. The walking and cycling network should connect the whole scheme with the central space, with the canal and with the Trans-Pennine Trail, including between the Trail and Pickering's Bridge. A footpath/cycleway connection is also required to link the site to the junction of Knutsford Road/ Stockport Road.
5. Provision should be made for improved surfacing of the canal towpath from the site into Grappenhall village in view of the increased use likely to be made of it as a pedestrian linkage.

Reasoned Justification

The policy sets out a clear and locally distinctive design strategy for the proposed housing development at Thelwall Heys. It ensures that the site is developed in a manner that is sensitive to its heritage, landscape character, ecological assets, and connectivity within the wider area and complies with Warrington Local Plan policy MD4 which allocates the site. It has been informed by the Local Residents Group's response document to the current planning application on the site.

1. Open Setting for the Listed Building

The listed building at the centre of the site is a designated heritage asset, and preserving its setting is critical under the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraphs 202-221). Leaving an open setting around it maintains its prominence, ensures visual appreciation from all sides, and enhances the character and legibility of the new development. Orienting housing to face this central space also promotes natural surveillance, supporting community safety and cohesion in line with Secured by Design principles.[7]

2. Retention and Enhancement of the Canal-Side Hedge

The Bridgewater Canal is both a valuable ecological corridor and a key landscape feature. Retaining and reinforcing the existing hedge with a landscaped buffer not only

[7] Secured by Design (SBD) is the official police security initiative that is owned by the UK Police Service with the specific aim to reduce crime and help people live more safely.

protects this important green edge from urban encroachment but also preserves the visual amenity and biodiversity associated with the canal. Requiring homes to front this edge creates an attractive, high-quality frontage and promotes stewardship of the landscape, preventing unsightly rear boundary treatments facing the canal and encroaching onto the landscape buffer.

3. Retention of Trees, Hedges, and Ponds

Mature trees, hedgerows, and water features contribute significantly to the site's biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and local character. Maximising their retention supports both national and local biodiversity net gain requirements and enhances climate resilience. Their preservation also helps the new development integrate more sensitively into the landscape, supporting local distinctiveness as encouraged by the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 136).

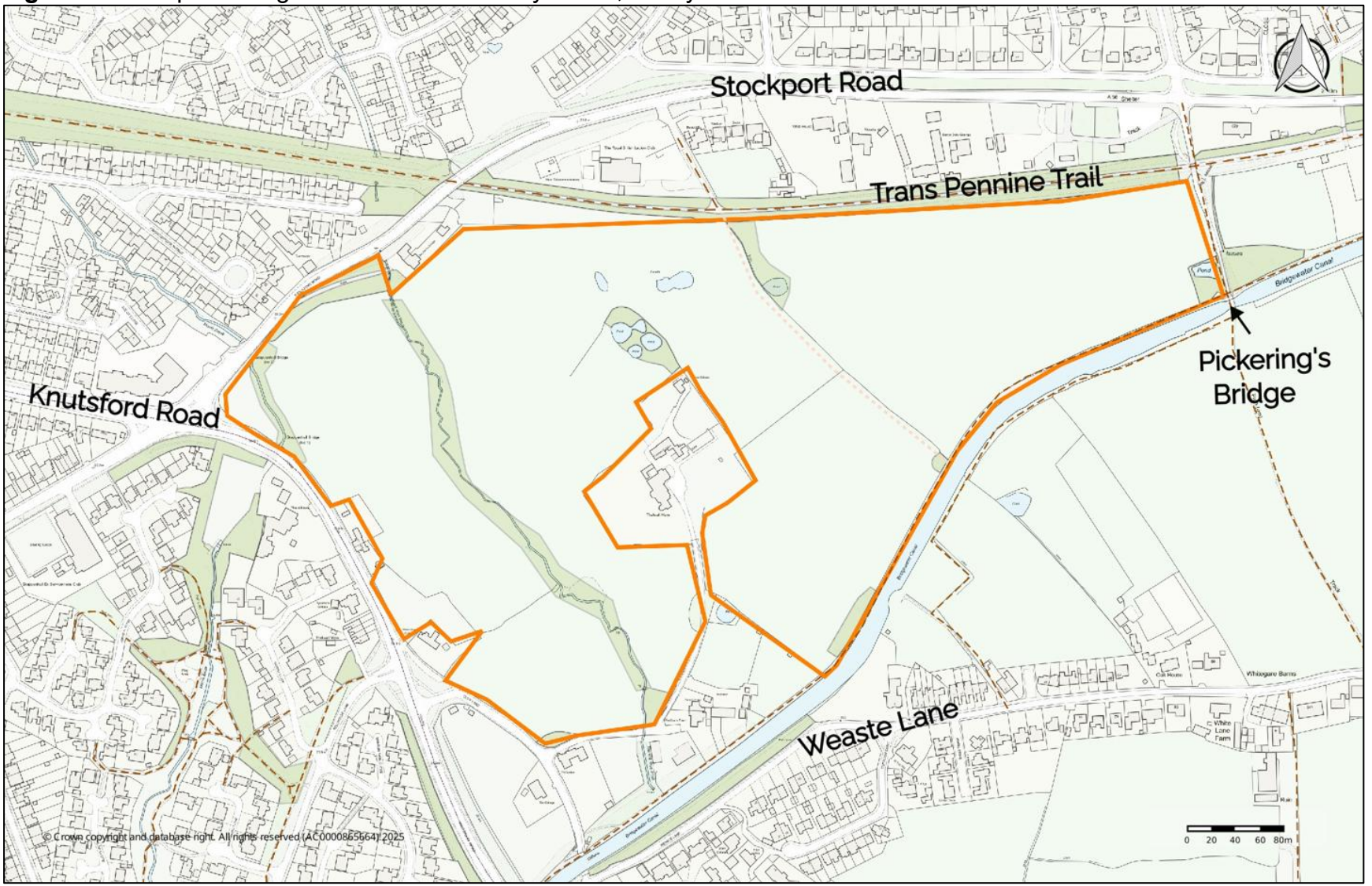
4. Walking and Cycling Connectivity

Promoting active travel is central to sustainable development. By requiring strong walking and cycling links across the site and to key destinations—such as the central space, the Bridgewater Canal, the Trans-Pennine Trail, and the Knutsford/Stockport Road junction—the policy ensures that the development supports healthy lifestyles, reduces car dependence, and enhances accessibility for all. This connectivity helps integrate the site with its surroundings and encourages inclusive movement patterns.

5. Improvements to the Canal Towpath

With increased pedestrian use anticipated as a result of the development, improvements to the surfacing of the canal towpath into Grappenhall are essential to maintain safety, accessibility, and amenity. This enhancement also supports tourism and recreational opportunities while preserving the historic character of the canal corridor. Making this provision pre-emptively addresses potential impacts of development and aligns with best practice in place-making and infrastructure planning.

Figure 17 – Map showing extent of Thelwall Heys Area, Policy D4



Policy D5 Sustainable Residential Development and Carbon Reduction

1. Construction and Design Principles

   All new residential developments within the Neighbourhood Area should incorporate modern methods of construction while adhering to the general design principles outlined in Policy DC6 of the Warrington Local Plan and Policy D1 of this plan. This includes utilising innovative, sustainable building techniques that promote energy efficiency, durability, and a reduced carbon footprint throughout the lifecycle of the development.

   The design and construction of residential developments must include measures to reduce carbon emissions across the entire lifespan of each dwelling. These measures should aim to exceed the minimum requirements outlined in Part L of the Building Regulations 2023 and SAP10 regarding energy performance and carbon emissions reduction unless proven to be not feasible or unviable.

2. Sustainability Measures Impact on the Environment

   New residential developments should consider the potential environmental impacts of their sustainability measures, and these should be designed to:

   - Ensure air source heat pumps (ASHPs) are adequately screened and soundproofed to minimise noise and disturbance for surrounding properties;
   - Minimise noise transmission between linked properties, specifically from heating systems;
   - Restrict external light pollution, ensuring that illumination remains contained within the curtilage of the dwelling and does not negatively impact the surrounding environment.

3. Energy Efficiency and Climate Adaptation

   The design of residential developments should incorporate strategies that contribute to energy efficiency and climate adaptation. Key design considerations should include:

   - Building Orientation: Careful siting of buildings to minimise solar heat gain while optimising roof placement for solar energy systems (e.g.photovoltaic panels);
   - Design for Longevity: Buildings should be designed for a minimum useful life of 120 years, with attention to cyclical maintenance to ensure longevity and maximise whole-life carbon efficiency;
   - Avoiding Costly or Risky Features: Design features that are difficult, costly, or risky to repair should be avoided to reduce long-term environmental and economic costs;

- Landscape Design: Landscaping measures such as the incorporation of street trees, green roofs and walls and rain gardens to assist in climate adaptation.

4. Internal Spatial Planning

   New residential developments should be spatially planned to ensure:

   - Sufficient internal storage capacity to support sustainable living.
   - Adequate space within the dwelling to discourage future extensions that may not meet environmental standards and to encourage compact, efficient living.

5. Sustainable and Low-Carbon Features

   Residential developments should incorporate the following low-carbon technologies and sustainable features, where appropriate:

   - Low-energy lighting (both internally and externally).
   - Good internet connectivity to support the installation of 'smart' features for controlling heating, lighting, and energy use.
   - High-efficiency heat pumps (air or ground source) providing heat comparable to gas boilers.
   - Underfloor heating to enhance energy efficiency.
   - Energy-efficient kitchen appliances and water-saving devices.
   - Solar photovoltaic panels with battery storage and additionally solar water heating where possible.
   - Electric vehicle (EV) chargers to support sustainable transportation.
   - The exclusion of gas mains distribution pipework from new developments, in line with national energy transition goals.

In implementing all of the above requirements developers should demonstrate how the sustainable practices and low-carbon technologies will be incorporated into their designs and provide evidence of compliance through planning applications and energy performance assessments. Ongoing monitoring of energy performance and carbon emissions reduction will be required to ensure that developments meet both initial and long-term sustainability goals.

Reasoned Justification

This policy aims to ensure that housing developments contribute positively to the character, sustainability, and long-term viability of the Neighbourhood Area. It is aligned with the broader objectives of reducing carbon emissions, fostering resilient

communities, and meeting national and local climate targets. It is in line with the Parish Council's declaration of a climate emergency. The policy is in general conformity with the strategic planning policies set out in policies DC6 and ENV7 of the Warrington Local Plan. It is not considered necessary to repeat the requirements of policy ENV7 of the Warrington Local Plan in relation to the requirements for residential developments to include renewable and low carbon technologies.

Policy D6 Re-use of agricultural buildings

In the Green Belt or in open countryside the re-use of agricultural buildings will be permitted, where planning permission is required, if the fully detailed submissions satisfy the following criteria:

1. The building must be structurally sound[8] capable of re-use without major reconstruction[9] and large enough to be converted without the need for major or prominent additions.
2. The building must be of permanent and substantial construction and its form, bulk and general design must be in keeping with its surroundings.
3. The proposals must be architecturally consistent with the existing building or group of buildings and consideration must be given to the retention of the existing height, shape, mass, windows and openings, internal spaces, plan form and internal and external functional and architectural details. Proposals must respect local building styles and materials and re-use existing materials wherever possible.
4. In order to be considered, proposed extensions, additions or buildings in the curtilage of re-used buildings (whether carried out as part of the original conversion, or subsequently) must meet all the requirements of the policy and will be limited to single storey construction up to a maximum of 50 cubic metres volume.
5. A comprehensive scheme of external works and landscaping must be included and any encroachment onto agricultural land to form a curtilage should be minimised.
6. After conversion, any proposals for further extensions or for outbuildings will be considered against the provisions of this policy rather than as a house extension.

Reasoned Justification

The policy provides a structured framework for managing the re-use of agricultural buildings in the Green Belt and open countryside, ensuring such developments respect both the rural environment and the broader goals of sustainable development. The policy is justified on several interrelated grounds:

[8] In order to demonstrate that a building is structurally sound, the application must be accompanied by a structural survey carried out by an appropriately qualified structural surveyor/engineer to establish that the building is capable of conversion.

[9] A building will be considered to be needing major reconstruction, and therefore not capable of re-use under this policy, if more than 30% of its fabric needs to be rebuilt, although the replacement of the roof covering in an appropriate material will usually be acceptable and will not count towards the 30% limit.

Protection of the Green Belt and Open Countryside

The primary purpose of Green Belt policy, as defined in national planning policy (National Planning Policy Framework), is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Allowing the re-use of existing agricultural buildings—rather than permitting new builds—supports this objective by limiting further development in protected areas while enabling beneficial use of existing assets. By setting strict criteria, the policy ensures that such re-use does not undermine the openness or character of the countryside.

Sustainability and Efficient Use of Resources

Encouraging the re-use of structurally sound buildings aligns with sustainability principles by reducing the need for new construction and associated resource consumption. It promotes a cyclical approach to development—reusing materials, preserving embodied carbon in existing structures, and avoiding waste. The requirement for buildings to be of substantial and permanent construction (criterion 2) ensures only buildings suitable for efficient and lasting re-use are considered.

Safeguarding Rural Character and Architectural Integrity

Rural areas have distinct visual and cultural identities, often defined by historic farmsteads and vernacular buildings. The policy requires that any conversion respects the form, style, and materials of the original building (criterion 3), which helps to maintain the character of the countryside and avoids incongruous or urban-style development. Emphasis on re-using existing materials also reduces visual impact and reinforces local distinctiveness.

Preventing Overdevelopment and Suburbanisation

By strictly limiting the scale and volume of any additions (criterion 4), the policy guards against cumulative overdevelopment and prevents re-used buildings from becoming suburbanised. The cap of 50 cubic metres for extensions ensures that additions remain subordinate and do not alter the rural scale or appearance of the site. This protects the visual openness of the countryside and reduces the risk of farm buildings losing their essential character.

Landscape and Environmental Considerations

The requirement for comprehensive landscaping and minimal encroachment onto agricultural land (criterion 5) ensures developments are visually integrated and avoid unnecessary loss of productive land. This supports both visual amenity and environmental stewardship objectives, preserving the countryside’s aesthetic and functional value.

Structural Integrity and Practical Viability

The policy’s stipulation for a structural survey (clarified in the footnotes) ensures that only buildings capable of safe and practical conversion are eligible. The 30% reconstruction limit sets a clear, objective threshold that prevents speculative proposals seeking to rebuild rather than truly re-use a structure. This ensures policy

intent is upheld and reduces pressure for inappropriate development disguised as re-use.





Photos: Barn conversion/ barns within the Parish

Policy D7 Commercial Areas

Any proposals for the redevelopment of Nos. 194 – 196 Knutsford Road will be supported where they:

1. Comprise an active ground floor frontage to Knutsford Road.
2. Do not exceed three storeys in height.
3. Are articulated with variety in roofscape with pitched and gabled roofs.
4. Present a distinct corner at the junction with East View in views east along Knutsford Road, views south from Bradshaw Lane and views north from East View.

Proposals will also be supported to improve the public realm of Nos.177-181, 184-192, 91-99 and 156-158 Knutsford Road, Barley Road shops and 239 Thelwall New Road through the re-organisation of the car parking arrangements, landscaping and the provision of new seating areas using the most sustainable, durable and high-quality materials.

Improvements to the public realm should include management and maintenance arrangements.

Opportunities to improve the appearance of the shop frontages by removing unsightly shutters and excessive advertisement signs will be encouraged.

Reasoned Justification

This policy supports the regeneration of a prominent stretch of Knutsford Road by guiding any future development at Nos. 194–196 and enhancing the wider public realm. This part of Grappenhall, while located within the broader Modern Grappenhall area, has a distinct identity due to its commercial character and linear form along a key route. The policy ensures that development reinforces this identity while addressing specific urban design opportunities.

The requirement for an active ground floor frontage reflects the commercial function of this section of Knutsford Road. Such frontages enhance pedestrian engagement, promote natural surveillance, and help maintain the economic vitality of the area by encouraging footfall and supporting local businesses.

The three-storey height limit respects the existing scale and massing of the area, ensuring new development remains proportionate and does not dominate the streetscape or nearby residential buildings. This height restriction helps retain the human scale of the street, which is essential for maintaining a walkable and inviting environment.

The call for articulation and variety in roofscape through pitched and gabled forms supports the visual interest and architectural rhythm of the area. These roof forms also reference traditional vernacular architecture, helping new buildings integrate with existing character while offering contemporary interpretations.

The requirement for a distinct corner treatment at the junction of East View is a targeted urban design response to a key visual node. Enhancing this corner will help define the entry to the eastern end of the Character Area, providing a visual anchor when viewed from three different directions (east along Knutsford Road, south from Bradshaw Lane, and north from East View). This supports wayfinding and strengthens the townscape quality of the junction.

In addition to redevelopment, the policy supports public realm improvements at Nos. 177–181, 184–192, 156-158 and 91–99 Knutsford Road, as well as Barley Road shops and at 239 Thelwall New Road, in Thelwall. These enhancements, including re-organised car parking, landscaping, and new seating, aim to make the area more attractive, accessible, and comfortable for users. The requirement for sustainable, durable, and high-quality materials ensures long-term value and environmental performance. The policy does not include the former derelict shop on Thelwall New Road as planning permission has now been granted for the redevelopment of that site for a shop with apartments above. This is welcomed development.

It is also hoped to encourage improvements to shop frontages by the removal of shutters and excessive advertisement signs.

Finally, the emphasis on management and maintenance arrangements for these public spaces recognises that long-term success depends not only on design quality but also on upkeep. This ensures that improvements remain functional and attractive, securing their role in enhancing the overall character and usability of the Commercial Areas.



Photo: Barley Road shops, Thelwall



Photo: 91-99 Knutsford Road, Grappenhall

Figure 18 – Map identifying Commercial Area, Policy D7





Housing Need

Introduction

The policies within the Housing Need chapter of our Neighbourhood Plan should be read alongside key policies of the adopted Warrington Local Plan including Policy DEV1 (Housing Delivery), DEV2 (Meeting Housing Needs), Policy MD2 (South East Warrington Urban Extension) and Policy MD4 (Thelwall Heys) , as well as relevant national planning policy. Regard must also be had to the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document which was adopted by Warrington Borough Council in July 2024 and provides guidance on developer contributions for a number of key infrastructure areas including affordable housing. An evidence base has been gathered to inform this chapter including a Housing Needs Survey completed by the Parish Council in December 2024 and a Housing Needs Assessment completed by Aecom in January 2025.

The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to ensure that new homes meet the needs of local people.

Policies

Policy H1 New development to meet local housing need

Residential development in the Neighbourhood Area must provide a mix of different housing sizes, types and tenure to meet identified local housing need and provide a more diversified and affordable housing stock.

1. All major housing developments[10] should provide the following as a proportion of the total homes proposed:
   - at least 30% of provision should have 1-2 bedrooms;
   - at least 30% of provision should have 3 bedrooms; and
   - no more than 20% of provision should have 4+ bedrooms

   Where applicants propose to provide a different mix to the above, they must provide the evidence to support this from an up to-date local Housing Needs Assessment to show how their proposals meet local housing needs.

2. The proportion of affordable housing to be provided in the Neighbourhood Area and the split between affordable home ownership and affordable housing for rent should be in accordance with the strategic planning policy as set out in policy DEV 2 of the Warrington Local Plan.

   The mix of affordable home ownership properties should comprise Discounted Market Sales, First Homes and Shared Ownership products. Where Rent to Buy is intended as a Shared Ownership product within the

[10] Major housing development: development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

tenure mix, evidence must be provided of its affordability. Similarly, where general Discounted Market Housing for Sale is proposed, evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the homes are genuinely affordable in the location they are being proposed.

Affordable housing (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership for Key Workers) within the Neighbourhood Area should, in the first instance, be allocated to households and individuals that have both a strong local connection and are eligible for the specific tenure of affordable housing in accordance with Warrington Borough Council's nomination policy. Where there are no such households or individuals, an affordable house may then be allocated to households and individuals that are eligible for the specific tenure of affordable housing in accordance with Warrington Borough Council's nomination policy as set out in policy DEV 2 of the Warrington Local Plan.

Affordable housing should be secured in perpetuity as set out in policy DEV 2 of the Warrington Local Plan.

Affordable homes should be fully integrated (i.e. "pepper potted") with market housing in new development and should only be provided off-site or located away from other housing types within a development scheme in exceptional circumstances and where it can be robustly justified. The layout and design of new housing developments should be such that the tenure cannot be identified.

3. Proposals for specialist housing for older people will be supported in sustainable, accessible locations that offer services and facilities and public transport options.

4. Providing for the changing needs and life-styles of the population of the Neighbourhood Area all homes should be delivered to Building Regulation Standard M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards and 10% of new homes on major housing development should be delivered to M4(3) wheelchair user standards in accordance with the strategic planning policy as set out in policy DEV 2 of the Warrington Local Plan.

Reasoned Justification

The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) from January 2025 and the Local Housing Needs Survey (HNS) from December 2024 provide insights into the future housing needs in Grappenhall and Thelwall.

The area's population is ageing, with a significant increase in the number of people aged 65 and over. Younger age groups, especially families with children, are shrinking, suggesting that Grappenhall and Thelwall has struggled to attract younger families. The older population is expected to grow by 69% by 2039, while younger age groups will grow less or shrink. Compared to Warrington, Grappenhall and Thelwall has more family households, with many having dependent children.

Home ownership is high at 88%, much more than in Warrington or the UK. However, the lack of affordable housing options makes it tough for low-income households to stay in the area. House prices have risen by 50% over the past decade, and many potential buyers are priced out of the market, with the median house price at £330,000 and the current lower quartile (the middle value of the cheapest 50% of properties sold.) being £250,000.

The lower quartile, which is typically taken as a good representation of 'entry-level' housing, is around 75% of the median price, meaning there is limited variety at the lower end of the market and that truly entry-level properties infrequently come up for sale. Average house prices in Grappenhall and Thelwall are around 38% more expensive than those of Warrington as a whole.

The average household income in the Neighbourhood Area was £51,600 in 2020.

The Housing Needs Assessment indicates that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a large deposit. The median house price would require an annual income nearly two-thirds higher than the current average.

Renting is more affordable but still out of reach for many people, with average rents for smaller homes higher than most can afford.

Private renting is generally only accessible to average and dual earning households – and even then, only for dwellings with 2 bedrooms or fewer. The current average rent for a 1-2 bedroom property at £923/month is higher than the £850/month which the majority of respondents in the Housing Needs Survey indicated they could afford to spend on rent – meaning that the vast majority of potential renters are clearly priced out of the market.

Although home ownership was by far the most common tenure preference among households planning to move within the Parish, according to the Housing Needs Survey, not insignificant numbers require a low-cost ownership product or affordable rented property.

The Warrington Local Plan requires 30% of all new housing on qualifying sites to be affordable and that the target mix should comprise 66% affordable rented and 33% affordable home ownership options. The affordability evidence gathered in the Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Needs Survey supports this default policy requirement.

Subsidised routes to home ownership like Discounted Market Housing, First Homes and Shared Ownership are intended to target people who can afford to rent but not to buy. In Grappenhall and Thelwall there is a relatively large gap between the income needed to afford to rent (£37,000) and to buy (£63,000), meaning that many households could potentially benefit from these products.

Within the mix of affordable home ownership properties, relatively balanced attention is given to Discounted Market Sale, First Homes and Shared Ownership products, since these appear similarly affordable and offer a variety of options, allowing the needs of households with different savings and other circumstances to be well-served.

Whilst the inclusion of Rent to Buy in the mix amplifies the latter benefit, the affordability evidence suggests this product may be less affordable within the Neighbourhood Area, warranting a lesser focus within the tenure mix.

The discount on First Homes can be set at 30%, 40% or 50% in Neighbourhood Plans. The Warrington Local Plan indicates that 'First Homes' should be discounted by 40% south of the Manchester Ship Canal (which includes the Neighbourhood Area). Such a discount would appear sufficiently affordable to average earning households in the Neighbourhood Area.

The affordable rented sector performs a vital function in the Neighbourhood Area as the only option for those in the most acute need. The HNA indicates that there is a long-term need for around 15 units of affordable rented housing per year and an annual potential demand for around 10 affordable home ownership dwellings.

The current dwelling mix is much more strongly weighted towards semi-detached homes than the comparator geographies of Warrington and England. The area also has more bungalows than Warrington and England, likely due to its older population.

Smaller homes like flats and terraced houses are in short supply, making it hard for single people, younger families, and older residents who wish to downsize to find affordable housing.

There is a strong desire for more diverse housing options, with many residents looking for smaller, more affordable homes. There is a high level of under-occupancy in the Neighbourhood Area, with many large homes occupied by people who don't need all the space. This suggests that there is potential for households to downsize or upsize to better match their needs without relying solely on new builds.

Specialist accommodation for older people is also needed. The number of people aged 75+ is expected to grow by 54% by 2039, and there will be an increasing need for homes with additional care. The Housing Needs Study found only a small current demand for specialist accommodation, but future needs are harder to predict. Borough-wide projections[11] suggest a need for 4,376 specialist units by 2038, which would translate to 201 units in the Neighbourhood Area. The estimated need for care home beds in the area is around 73, which can be met by existing care facilities which offer nearly 200 bed spaces.

In 2011, 82% of households in Warrington aged 55-75 owned their homes, with the rest mostly renting from social landlords. Those who own their homes may need specialist accommodation for purchase, while renters will need subsidized housing due to financial limitations. Rates of disability are higher among social tenants than homeowners.

Around 60-65% of people aged 65+ in Grappenhall & Thelwall have disabilities that limit their activities. While older people are the focus for housing needs, younger people with disabilities also require accessible housing or care. The number of people aged 75+ in the area is expected to rise from 1,234 in 2021 to 1,895 by 2039, an increase of 54%. This will increase the demand for specialist housing, with an

[11] Local Housing Needs Assessment Update for Warrington 2021

estimated need for 166 to 228 specialist housing units during the plan period. Most of this demand (60-75%) is for market-purchased housing, and 55-70% of it is for sheltered housing, with a significant gap for extra-care accommodation.

In the light of the Neighbourhood Area's ageing population, it will be important to ensure that new homes are accessible for older and disabled people. The Warrington Local Plan requires new homes to be adaptable, and this should be enforced within the neighbourhood area to meet the needs of a diverse community.

In summary, the Neighbourhood Area will need a mix of affordable housing, accessible homes, and specialist accommodation for older people in the coming years. The Neighbourhood Area's housing stock should be diversified to meet the needs of younger families, older residents, and low-income households.



Photo: Thelwall New Road


URBAN

Infrastructure

Introduction

The policies within the Infrastructure chapter of our Neighbourhood Plan should be read alongside key policies of the adopted Warrington Local Plan including Policy MD2 (South East Warrington Urban Extension) and Policy MD4 (Thelwall Heys) which provide specific advice on the infrastructure that must be provided on the two key allocated sites within the Neighbourhood Area, Policies INF1 (Sustainable Travel and Transport), INF2 (Transport Safeguarding), INF3 (Utilities, Telecommunications and Broadband), INF4 (Community Facilities) and INF5 (Delivering Infrastructure), as well as relevant national planning policy. Regard must also be given to the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document which was adopted by Warrington Borough Council in July 2024 and provides guidance on developer contributions for a number of key infrastructure areas including affordable housing, education, health, playing pitches, sport and recreation, transport and open space.

The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to protect the Parish's existing community facilities and ensure that, as our area grows, the need for additional infrastructure is addressed and ensuring that footpaths and cycling routes are protected and enhanced.

Policies

Policy INF1 Footpaths and Cycle Paths

New development should be integrated into the Neighbourhood Area via a matrix of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes connecting residential areas to core amenities such as schools, shops, parks, pubs/cafes, pharmacies, GPs, bus stops, sports facilities and community centres.

In particular, new footpaths/cycleways are proposed at the following locations:

- From Grappenhall Wood south westwards to join up with the footpath within Grappenhall Heys Plantation.
- From the footpath from Canal Side to the grounds of Grappenhall Hall
- Along Broad Lane from Hall Lane to the entrance to Grappenhall Wood

And shown on the map at Figure 19.

It is also proposed that footpath/cycleways routes be incorporated into development to provide connections in the following locations:

- Along Broad Lane from the cricket club to Hall Lane
- Along Stockton Lane,
- From Grappenhall Heys to Stockton Lane,
- Across Thelwall Heys from the Bridgewater canal to Stockport Road along the existing field boundary,

- Through Thelwall Heys parallel to Knutsford Road,
- Within the grounds of Grappenhall Hall accessed from the existing gateway to Church Lane at the northwest corner.
- Proposals to provide a footpath/cycleway route closely following the Parish boundary will be supported.

Where such proposals fall outside development sites but within the Green Belt, they will be delivered by developers as part of a scheme of compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of land remaining in the Green Belt.

Reasoned Justification

The policy seeks the integration of new development into the Neighbourhood Area through a matrix of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes that will enhance both the quality of life for residents and the long-term sustainability of the community. The justification for this policy rests on several key principles: improving accessibility, promoting health and well-being, mitigating environmental impacts, and enhancing community cohesion.

One of the primary objectives of the policy is to ensure that new development is seamlessly integrated with existing residential areas and key amenities. This includes linking homes to schools, parks, shops, cafes, and healthcare facilities. As the local population increases with new development, it becomes essential to ensure that residents can easily and safely access these amenities without relying on cars. The creation of footpaths and cycleways, particularly in strategic locations like Grappenhall Wood, Grappenhall Hall, and along Broad Lane and Stockton Lane, ensures that residents can connect to the heart of their community and access green spaces. By linking these key locations, the policy helps create a well-connected neighbourhood that is both pedestrian and cyclist friendly.

Only the route of two proposed footpaths/cycleways are shown on the map. Other proposed routes fall within development sites where to define a specific route would unnecessarily constrain the form of future development. Instead, the line of the path is either described in words or just the end points shown. It should be noted that the route of the footpath from Grappenhall Woods southwards to join up with the footpath within Grappenhall Heys Plantation, shown at figures 14 and 19, is indicative, the precise routeing to be determined at implementation.

Encouraging walking and cycling provides numerous health benefits, from reducing obesity to promoting mental well-being. By ensuring that key areas are connected through safe, attractive routes, this policy encourages a more active lifestyle among residents. The presence of designated walking and cycling routes also reduces the need for short car journeys, which are often associated with poor air quality and sedentary lifestyles. Moreover, the proposed footpaths and cycleways provide a safe alternative to roads that may otherwise be hazardous, such as Broad Lane, which has a 50mph speed limit, and limited visibility. By addressing these safety concerns and encouraging active travel, the policy fosters a healthier, more resilient community.

The policy aligns with the broader goals of environmental sustainability, which include reducing carbon emissions, preserving natural habitats, and enhancing quality of life for residents. By integrating walking and cycling routes into new developments it reduces the reliance on cars and the associated traffic emissions. Furthermore, it provides opportunities for compensatory environmental improvements. For example, developers can contribute to enhancing the accessibility and environmental quality of land in the Green Belt, which is an important asset in maintaining openness. This policy helps protect the integrity of the Green Belt while ensuring that it remains accessible to the wider community.

New development often leads to increased traffic, which can exacerbate existing problems, such as road congestion, air pollution, and pedestrian safety risks. The proposed footpaths and cycleways serve as a key strategy to mitigate these impacts by providing safer and more sustainable transport alternatives. For instance, the plan to create a footpath along Broad Lane addresses both safety concerns and traffic congestion, offering residents a safer way to access Grappenhall Wood and then on to Grappenhall village while reducing pressure on the existing road infrastructure. Additionally, improving the lane from Chichester Close to the woodland ensures that the Green Belt remains accessible, but without adding to the traffic burden.

By providing safe and attractive routes for walking and cycling, the policy fosters greater community interaction. Green spaces, parks, and local amenities become more accessible, encouraging social engagement and a stronger sense of belonging within the neighbourhood. The routes proposed in the policy – especially those that pass through areas like Grappenhall Hall and Grappenhall Heys – not only serve as connectors between different parts of the Neighbourhood Area but also create opportunities for people to interact and share experiences in communal spaces. The development of these pathways promotes inclusivity and strengthens social ties within the community.



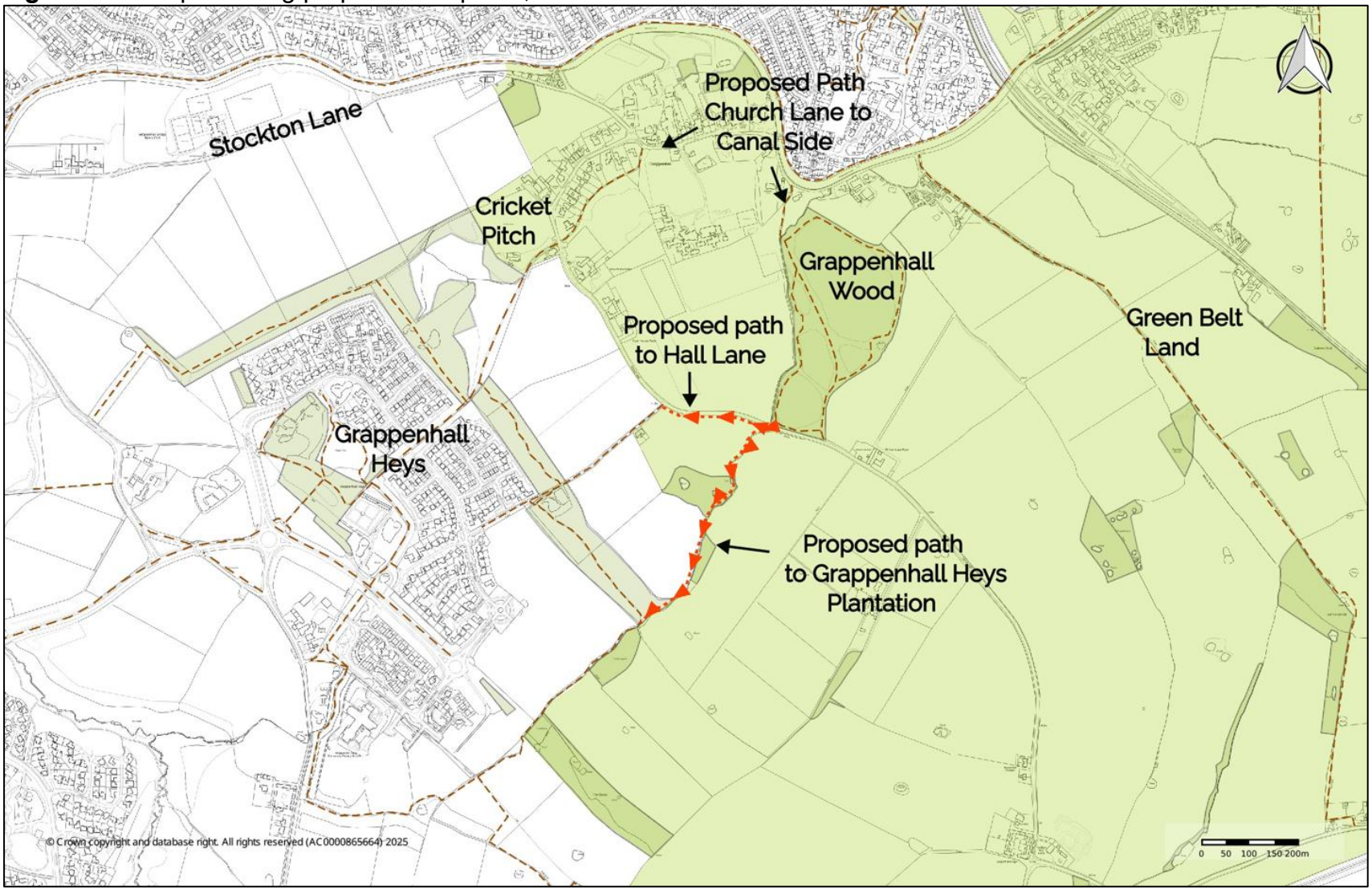
Photo: Active travel, Grappenhall Heys

The policy also acknowledges the importance of maintaining the character and openness of the Green Belt and strengthening its boundaries. By focusing on improving footpath and cycleway access to the Green Belt, it ensures that residents can enjoy the beauty and tranquillity of these spaces without compromising their preservation. Proposals such as the potential new footpath behind the hedge along Broad Lane not only increase accessibility but also ensure that the existing hedge remains intact increasing the safety of pedestrians.

The policy promotes a well-connected, sustainable, and healthy community. It addresses the pressing needs for better pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, whilst also ensuring that the impacts of new development are carefully managed to protect the environment, promote social cohesion, and encourage a more active lifestyle. By linking key areas of the neighbourhood with safe and attractive walking and cycling

routes, the policy enhances both the accessibility and quality of life for residents, making it a critical component of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 19 – Map showing proposed footpaths, INF 1



Policy INF 2 Protecting, improving and providing facilities for health, education, sports and recreation and other community uses

1. Protecting community and social facilities

   The re-use or redevelopment of existing community facilities for health, education or community type uses will be supported.

   The change of use of existing facilities to other uses will be resisted unless the following can be demonstrated:

   a) The proposal includes alternative provision, on a site within the locality, of equivalent or enhanced facilities. Such sites should be accessible by various means of transport including walking and cycling and have adequate car parking, or
   b) There is no longer a need for the facility, and this can be robustly demonstrated by the developer.

2. Protecting indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities

   The change of use or redevelopment of existing indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities will be resisted unless:

   a) It is clearly demonstrated through a robust assessment that the provision is surplus to requirements; or
   b) They would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
   c) The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision of equivalent or better quality and quantity.

3. Provision of new facilities for health, education, sports and recreation and other community uses and improvement of existing such facilities

   Developer contributions from new housing development will be sought towards the provision of new sports facilities, or improvements to existing sports facilities, in line with the latest assessment of need, or as identified in the most up to date playing pitch or other indoor and/or outdoor sports facility strategy.

   Proposals which contribute towards the improvement of existing or provision of new health, education or community facilities, including the provision of additional allotments, and sports and recreation facilities, will be supported where:

   a) It can be demonstrated that they meet the needs of the present and future population;
   b) They are of a high-quality design and have regard to the surrounding location in terms of scale, siting and massing;

c) They minimise any adverse impacts on local residential amenity such as from disturbance, noise, lighting;
d) They ensure accessibility for all through the provision of adequate car and cycle parking and safe pedestrian and cycle access; and
e) They are designed in accordance with Sport England's design guidance notes[12], where appropriate.

Reasoned Justification

This policy seeks to protect, enhance, and ensure the future provision of essential community, health, education, sports, and recreational facilities. These facilities play a critical role in maintaining the social fabric of the neighbourhood and promoting sustainable, inclusive, and healthy communities. The policy is consistent with the objectives of national planning policy and aligns with strategic local plan aims.

1. Protecting community and social facilities

Community facilities such as health centres, schools, village halls, libraries, and meeting spaces are integral to maintaining social cohesion, reducing inequality, and supporting the well-being of residents. Examples of these facilities include Thelwall Parish Hall, Grappenhall Library and Grappenhall Clinic.

This part of the policy ensures that these vital community assets are retained unless it can be clearly demonstrated that they are no longer required, or suitable, accessible alternatives are provided. This reflects the National Planning Policy Framework which states that planning policies should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces and community facilities and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services[13].

By requiring robust evidence of redundancy or alternative provision, the policy ensures that changes of use are carefully considered and only permitted where they do not undermine local needs.

2. Protecting indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities

This section of the policy aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework, which resists the loss of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land unless specific criteria are met—namely, that the facility is demonstrably surplus to requirements or is replaced by equivalent or better provision[14].

Sport and recreation spaces not only contribute to healthier lifestyles but also foster community interaction and provide opportunities for all age groups to engage in physical and social activity. The protection of both formal and informal spaces—such

[12] https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance
[13] Paragraph 98 National Planning Policy Framework December 2024
[14] Paragraph 104 National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

as playing fields and indoor sports halls—is therefore fundamental to the quality of life within the neighbourhood.

The policy requires a robust assessment to justify any loss, ensuring decisions are grounded in the latest available evidence, such as local playing pitch strategies or sport and leisure assessments. It also supports flexibility by allowing redevelopment where alternative, improved provision is proposed.

3. Provision of new facilities for health, education, sports and recreation and other community uses and improvement of existing such facilities

This section of the policy supports the proactive enhancement of community infrastructure in step with planned growth. As housing development increases local population levels, there is a clear need to ensure supporting infrastructure keeps pace. There is also a need to address existing acknowledged shortfalls of sport and recreation provision in South Warrington. The policy aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework which stresses the need to ensure that new development is supported by the necessary social and physical infrastructure, including opportunities for active travel[15] In the case of health provision it aligns with the recently published 10 Year Health Plan for England [16] which in particular emphasises the move from hospital to community and the development of a neighbourhood health centre in every community.

Developer contributions are a legitimate and essential means to fund infrastructure improvements. By linking investment to up-to-date assessments of local need, this policy ensures that contributions are fair, targeted, and effective.

In supporting well-designed new facilities, the policy also promotes inclusive access, minimises adverse amenity impacts, and encourages adherence to recognised design standards (e.g. Sport England's Design Guidance Notes). This ensures developments are high quality, sustainable, and fit for purpose in the long term.

[15] Paragraphs 98 and 109 National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

[16] 10 Year Health Plan for England: Fit for the Future. Dept of Health and Social Care , Prime Minister's Office. 3 July 2025.


TRANS PENNINE TRAIL
East
62

Section 3 - Monitoring and Review

3.1 Monitoring

The Neighbourhood Plan, forms part of the Development Plan for Warrington Borough Council and will be subject to the Borough Council's Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) regime. The AMR provides many of the monitoring and review mechanisms relevant to Neighbourhood Plan policies, as they sit within the wider strategic policies of the Local Plan, including matters of housing and employment delivery.

Consequently, it is considered that the existing monitoring arrangements for the strategic policies of the Local Plan will be sufficient for most of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

It may be necessary to monitor separately a number of other specific indicators which should be conducted in partnership with Warrington Borough Council and Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council on a biannual basis. These indicators will establish whether the policies are having the desired outcomes and will highlight policies requiring immediate or timely review to align them with their original purpose.

3.2 Review

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to guide development up to 2039.

This is in line with the Warrington Local Plan, the document that provides the strategic context for the Neighbourhood Plan. It is unlikely that the Neighbourhood Plan will remain current and completely relevant for the entire Plan period and may, in whole or in part, require some amendments before 2039.

There are a number of circumstances in which a partial review of the plan may be necessary. These may include revision of the following existing local planning documents or if the monitoring of the policies listed below does not adequately address the objectives set for the Plan.

- Revision to the Local Plan or its evidence base
- Revision to National Policy

The Parish Council and its partners should consider undertaking a partial review of the Neighbourhood Plan around 2031 and then a full review should be no later than 2034.



Glossary

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) **Social Rent**: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

b) **Other affordable housing for rent**: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

c) **Discounted market sales housing**: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership**: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Annual Monitoring Report: Reviews progress of Local Plans and includes monitoring information on employment, housing and natural environment. An Annual Monitoring Report is the tool that can be used to lead to policy change if the policies in the Local Plan are not achieving the desired results.

Basic conditions: The Basic Conditions are set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The Neighbourhood Plan must comply with the Basic Conditions in order to proceed to referendum.

Biodiversity Net Gain: Biodiversity net gain is a way of creating and improving natural habitats. Biodiversity net gain makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development.

Build to Rent: Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

Canted bay windows: A canted bay window is a version of the conventional bay window where two sloped sides offset the flat front**.**

Character Area: There are ten character areas identified in the Grappenhall and Thelwall Character and Design Study March 2025, the existing development in each of which has been assessed as exhibiting distinctive characteristics due to their common features and motifs, materials and colours and/or building forms.

Climate change adaptation: Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation: Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

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

Designated heritage asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Developer contributions: Developer contributions is a collective term mainly used to refer to the Planning Obligations (commonly referred to as ‘Section 106’ or ‘S106’ obligations after Section 106 of the Planning Act). They are planning tools that can be used to secure financial and non-financial contributions, or other works, to provide infrastructure to support development and mitigate the impact of development.

Development plan: Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force.

Financial viability assessment: A process of assessing whether a site is financially viable, by looking at whether the value generated by a development is more than the cost of developing it. This includes looking at the key elements of gross development value, costs, land value, landowner premium, and developer return.

Green and blue infrastructure: The National Planning Policy Framework defines green infrastructure as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing and quality of life benefits for native climate, local and wider communities and prosperity. Blue infrastructure refers to water bodies including streams, rivers, canals and ponds.

Green Belt compensatory improvements: Improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of land remaining in the Green Belt to offset the impact of removing land from the Green Belt.

Heritage asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Hood moulds: An external moulded projection from a wall over an opening to throw off rainwater, historically often in form of a pediment.

Housing Needs Assessment: A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is a study that examines the current and projected housing requirements for a specific area. It provides data to assist with planning for various types of housing, including affordable, family, and specialist housing suitable for older people.

Housing Needs Survey: A Housing Needs Survey is a questionnaire used to gather information directly from residents about their current housing situation and future housing needs. It helps us to understand what types of homes are needed in a community.

Local planning authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area, in this specific case Warrington Borough Council.

Local Connection: A local connection is defined as households and individuals that live in the neighbourhood area, work in the neighbourhood area or have immediate family in the neighbourhood area and will occupy the property as their sole residence.

Local Green Space: Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

Local Plan: A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community, under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Modern methods of construction: Modern Methods of Construction is a wide term, covering a range of offsite and onsite techniques. Modern Methods of Construction provide alternatives to traditional methods and have the potential to deliver faster, greener and more cost-effective construction.

National Planning Policy Framework: The National Planning Policy Framework sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Neighbourhood Area: A Neighbourhood Area is the area to be covered by a Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Area is required to be designated under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). In the case of this Neighbourhood Plan the designated Neighbourhood Area is the Parish of Grappenhall and Thelwall.

Neighbourhood Plan: A plan prepared by a Parish Council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Non-designated heritage asset: Non-designated heritage assets are locally-identified buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

Non-strategic policies: Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.

Older people: People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Open space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

People with disabilities: People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

Previously developed land: Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Public realm: The space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible including streets, forecourts, parks and open spaces.

Renewable and low carbon energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the

significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

Specialist accommodation for older people: Housing types specifically aimed at older people, which may often be restricted to those in certain older age groups (often over 55). This could include residential institutions, sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement housing and a range of other potential types of housing which has been designed and built to serve the needs of older people, including often providing care or other additional services.

Statutory listing description: A statutory listing description is provided by Historic England. It is used for identification purposes and includes details about the building's history and special interest.

Strategic planning policies: Policies and site allocations which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Strategic policy-making authorities: Those authorities responsible for producing strategic policies (local planning authorities, and elected Mayors or combined authorities, where this power has been conferred). This definition applies whether the authority is in the process of producing strategic policies or not.

Supplementary Planning Documents: Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Sustainable Drainage System: A sustainable drainage system controls surface water run off close to where it falls, combining a mixture of built and nature-based techniques to mimic natural drainage as closely as possible, and accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change. The type of system that would be appropriate will vary from small scale interventions such as permeable paving and soakaways that can be used in very small developments to larger integrated schemes in major developments.

Sustainable transport: Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, ultra low and zero emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

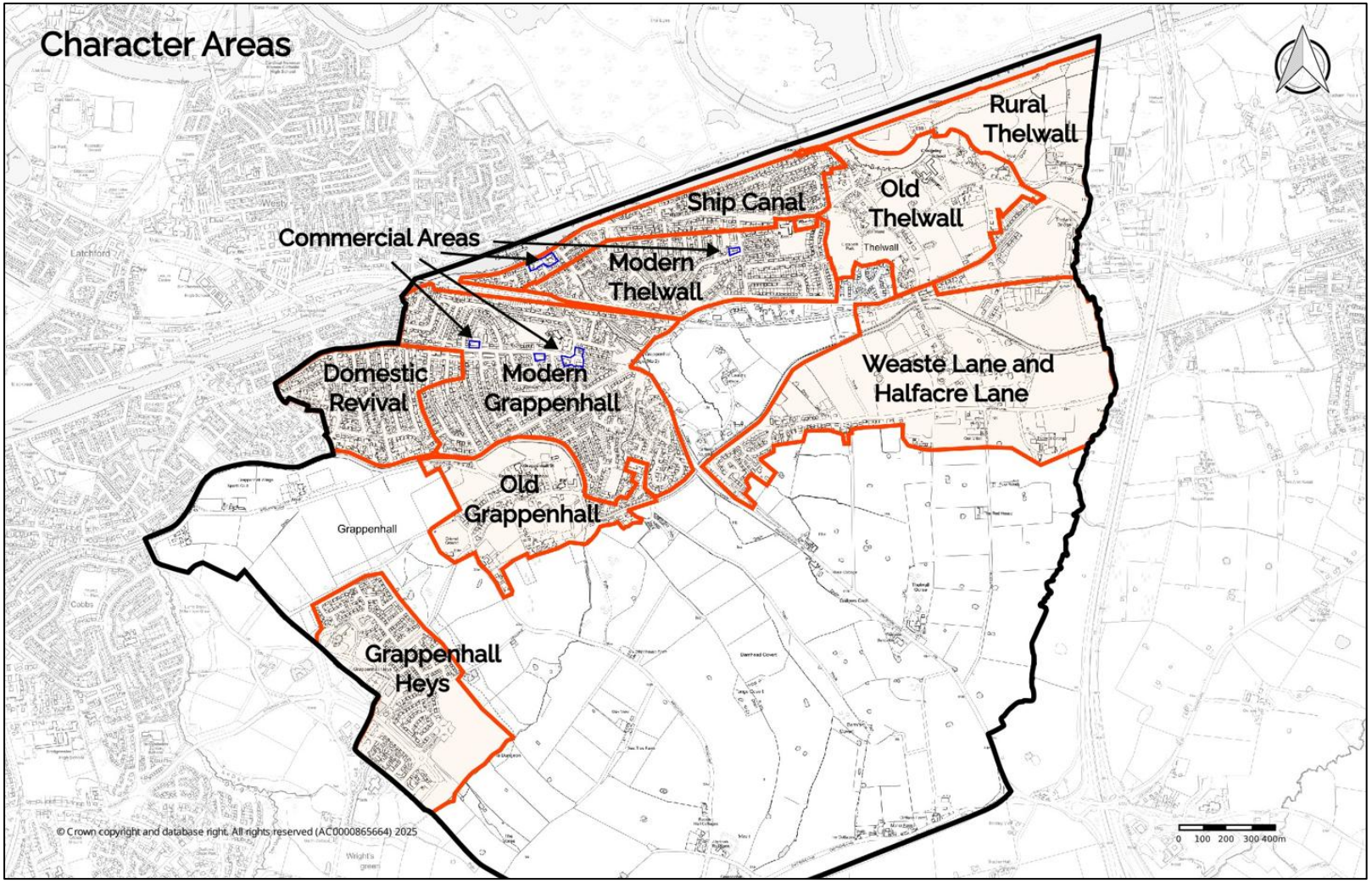
Transport assessment: A comprehensive and systematic process that considers and sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development, in the context of the vision for the scheme. It identifies measures required to support alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport, and to promote accessibility and safety, together with measures that will be needed to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

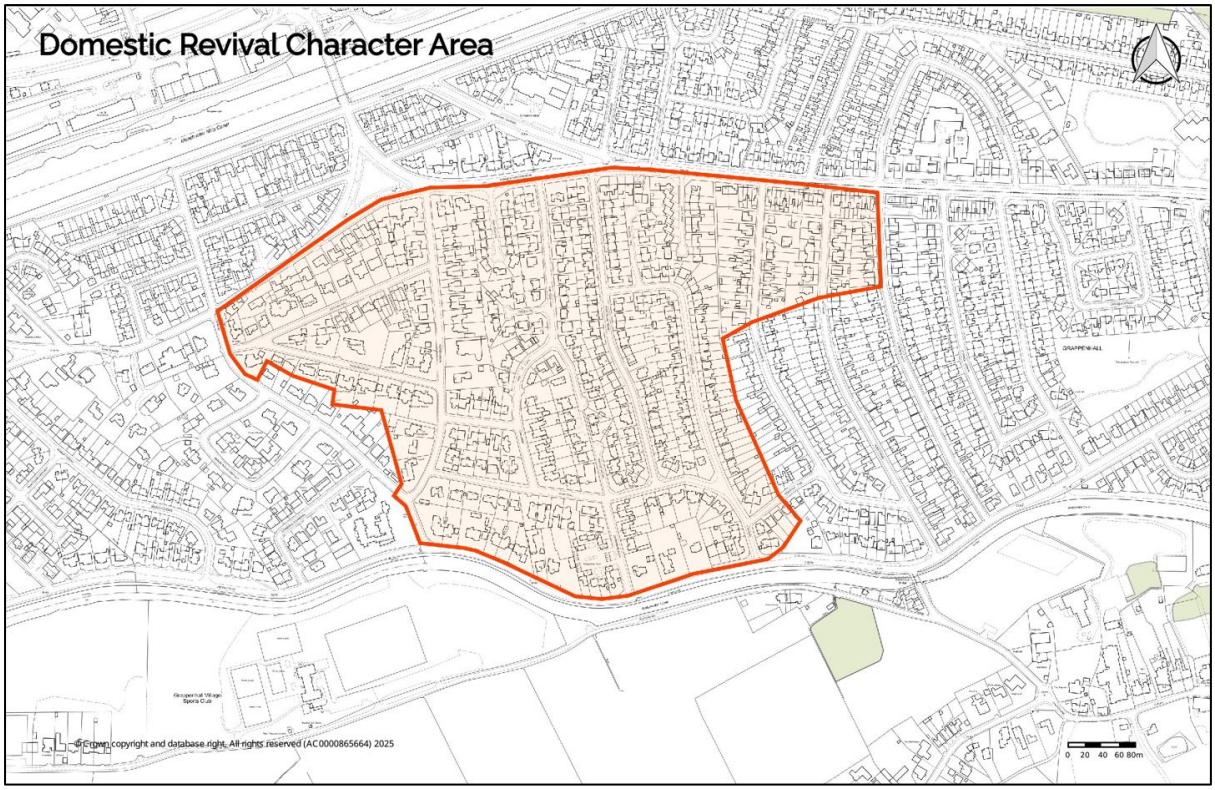
Travel plan: A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that details how agreed sustainable transport objectives are to be delivered, and which is monitored and regularly reviewed.

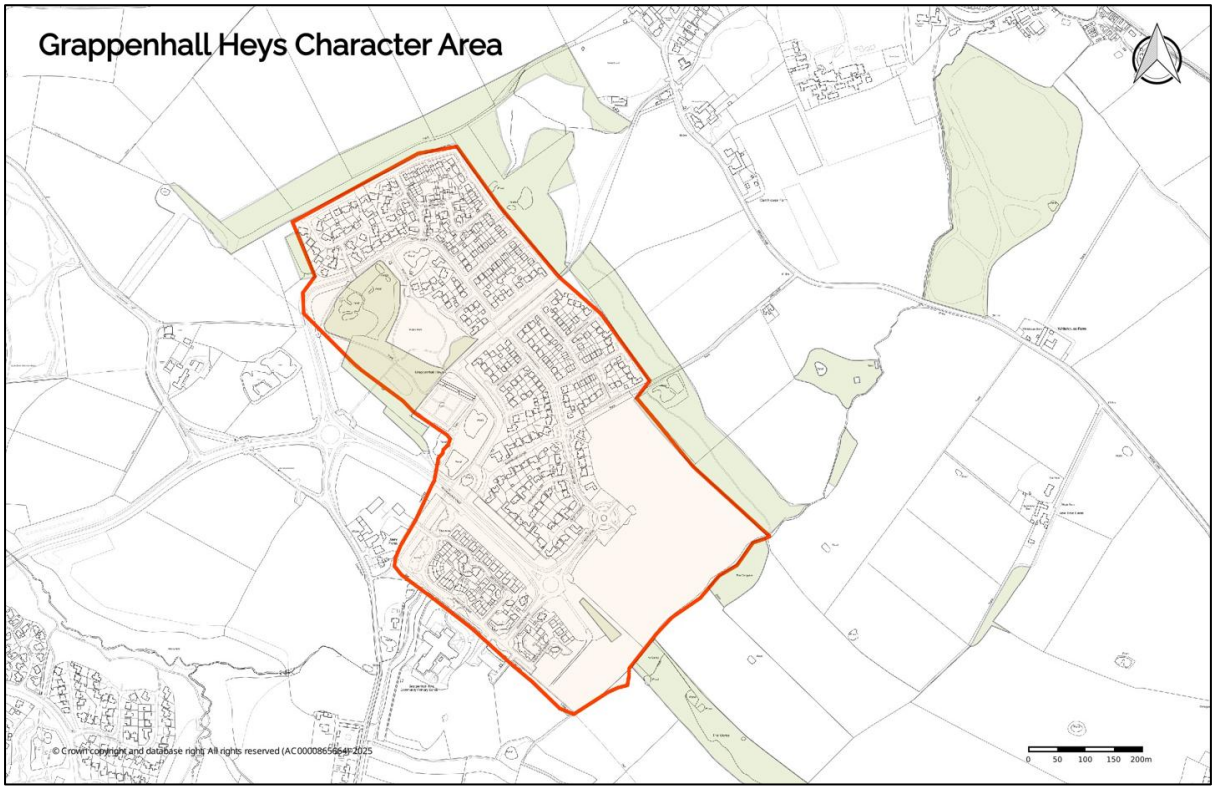

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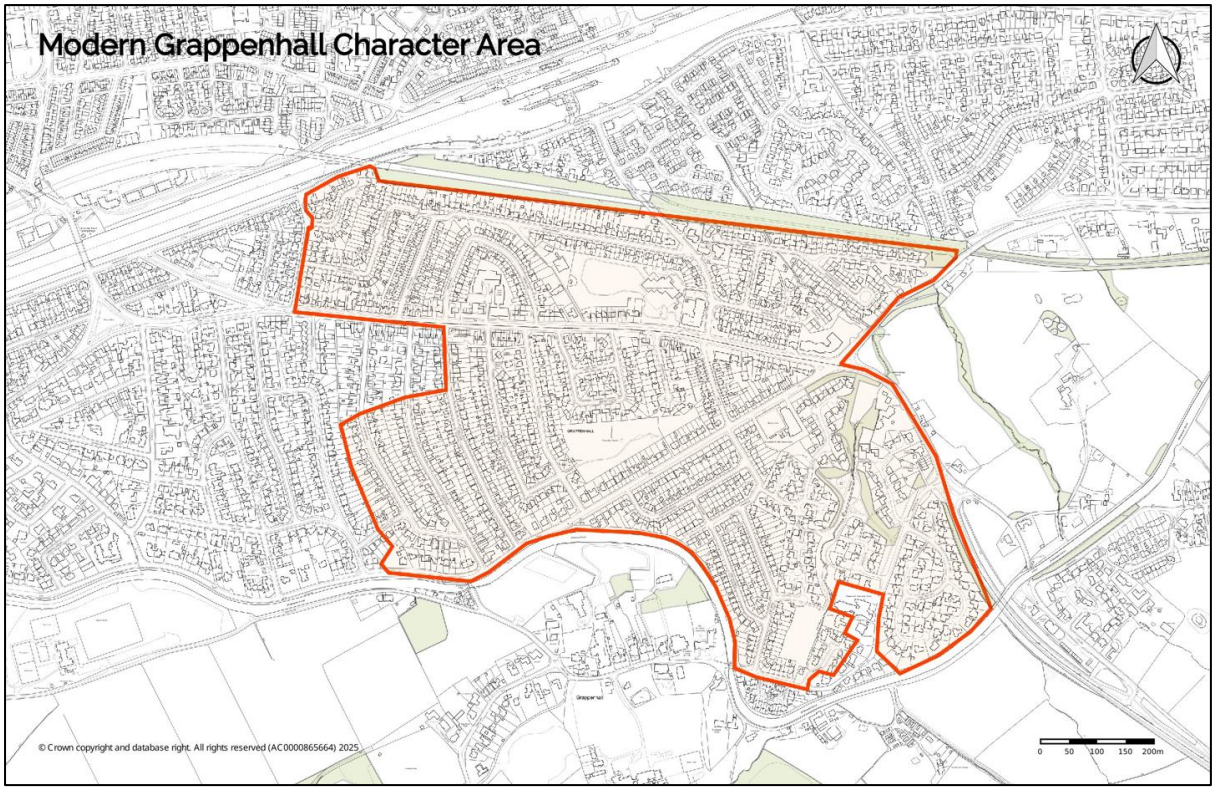
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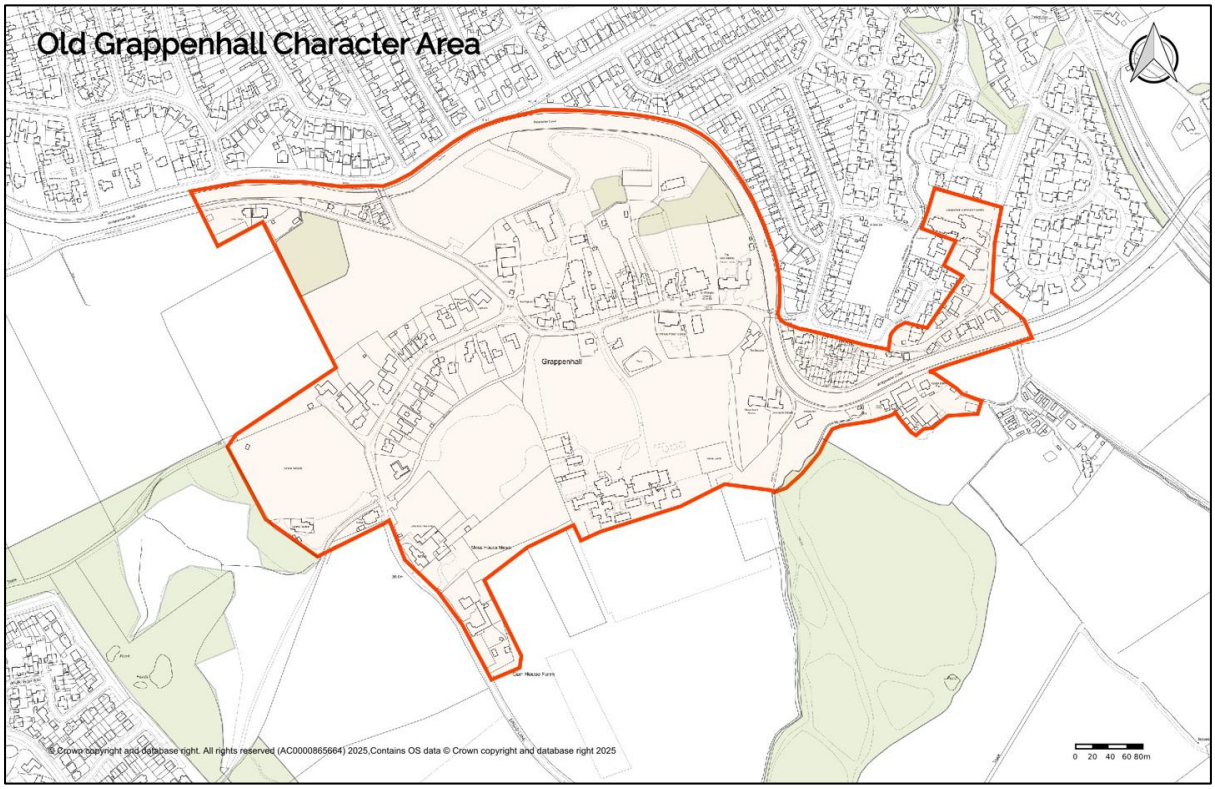
Appendix 1 – Character Areas

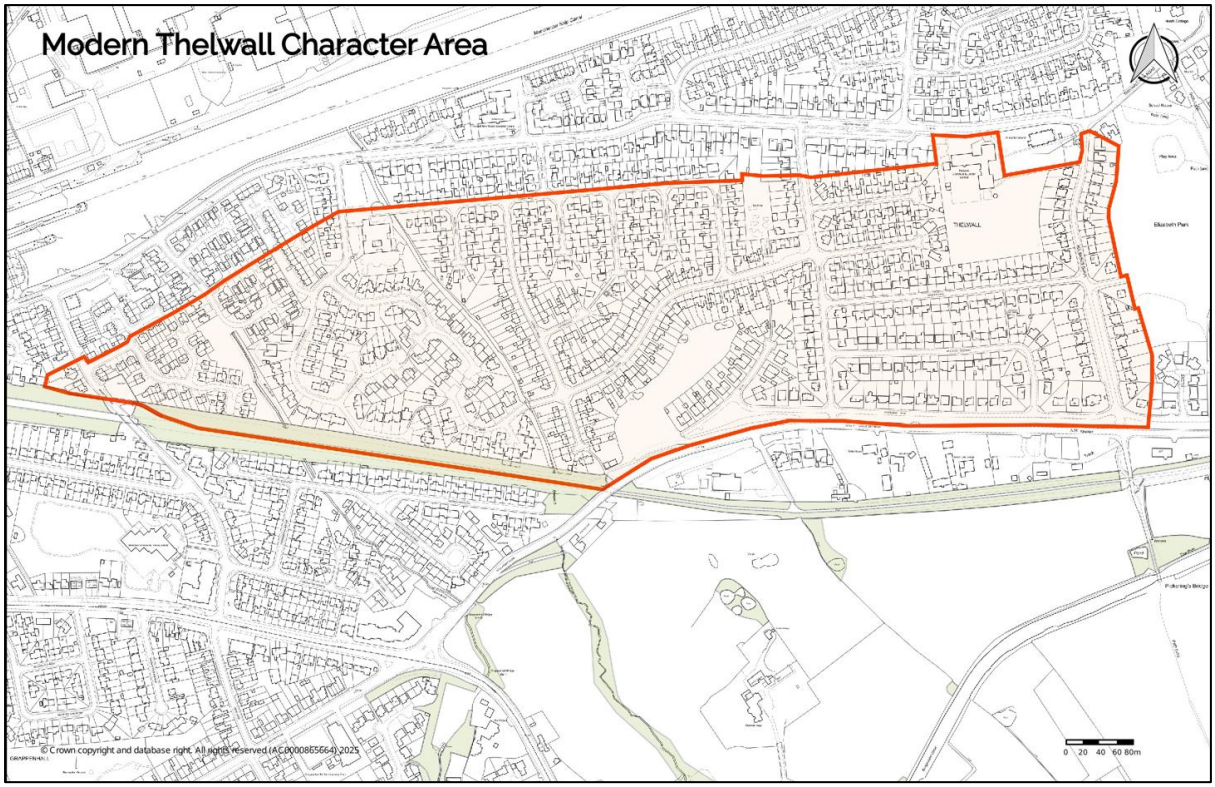


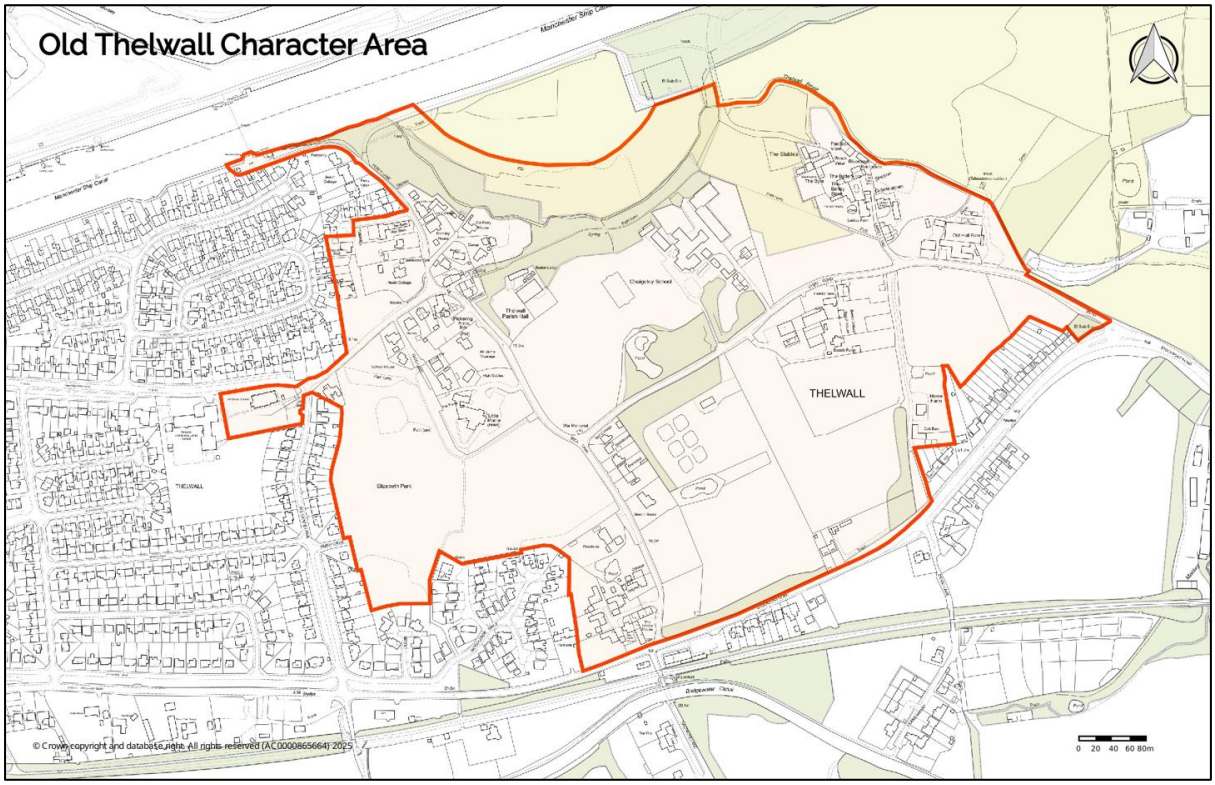

Domestic Revival Character Area
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0 20 40 60 80m

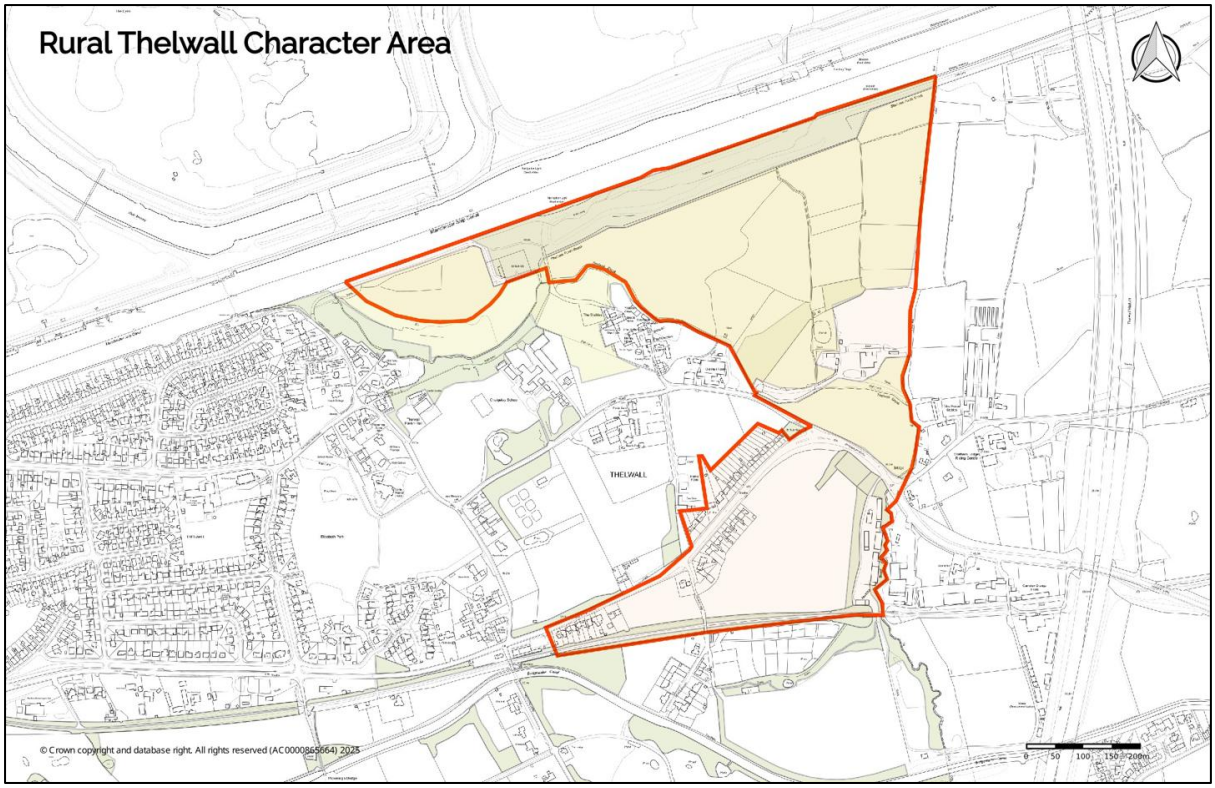

Grappenhall Heys Character Area
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0 50 100 150 200m

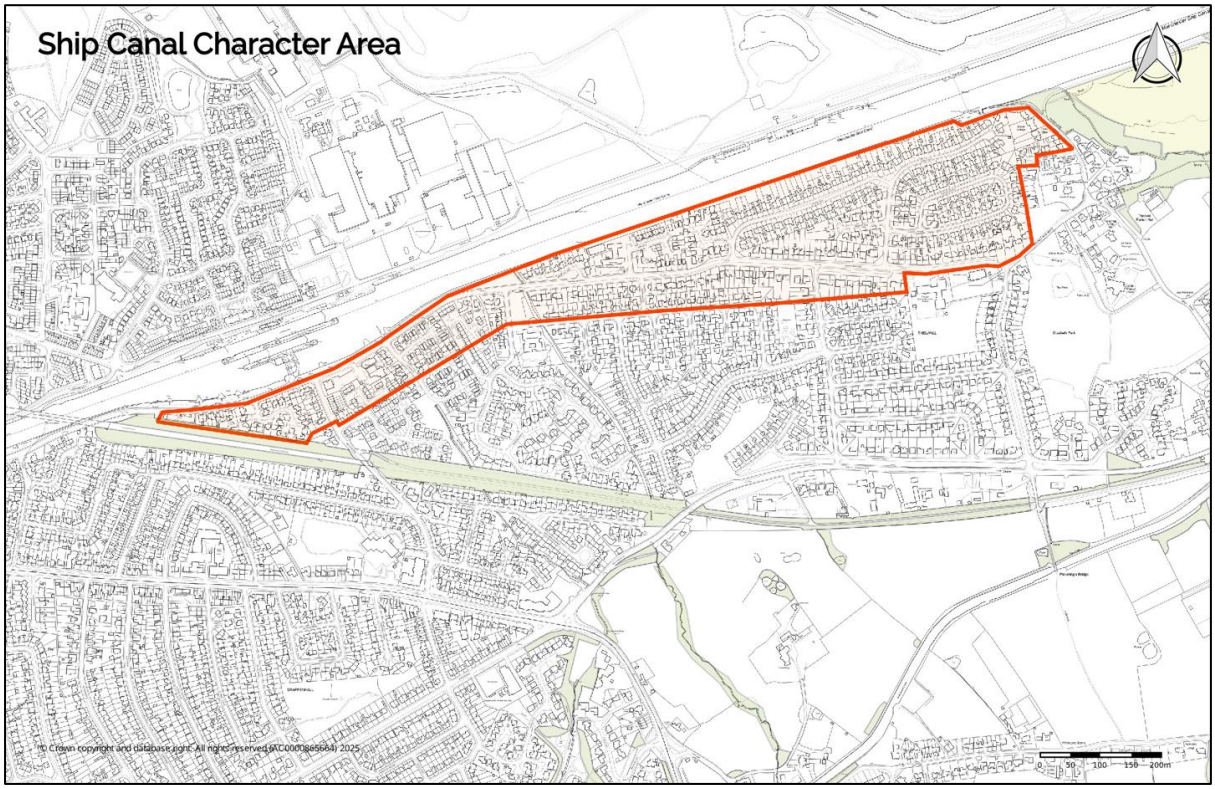

Modern Grappenhall Character Area
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0 50 100 150 200m

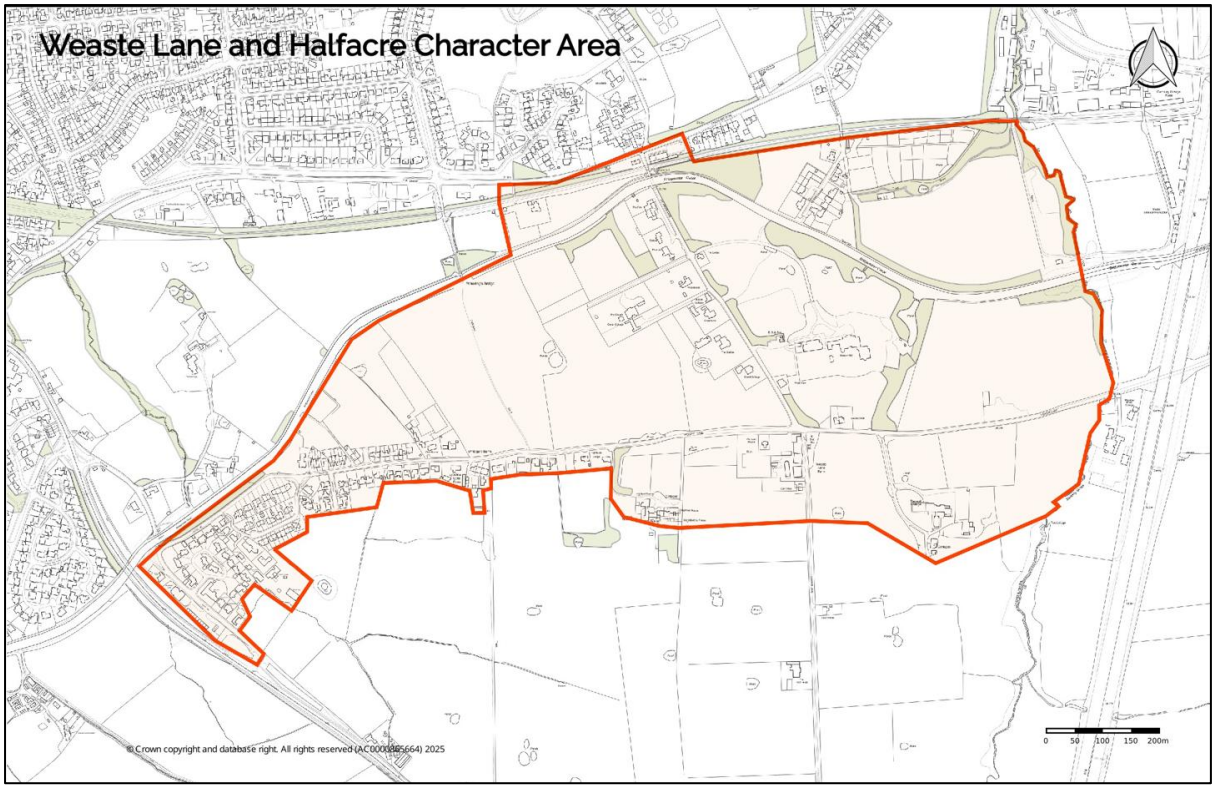

Old Grappenhall Character Area
Grappenhall
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0 20 40 60 80m

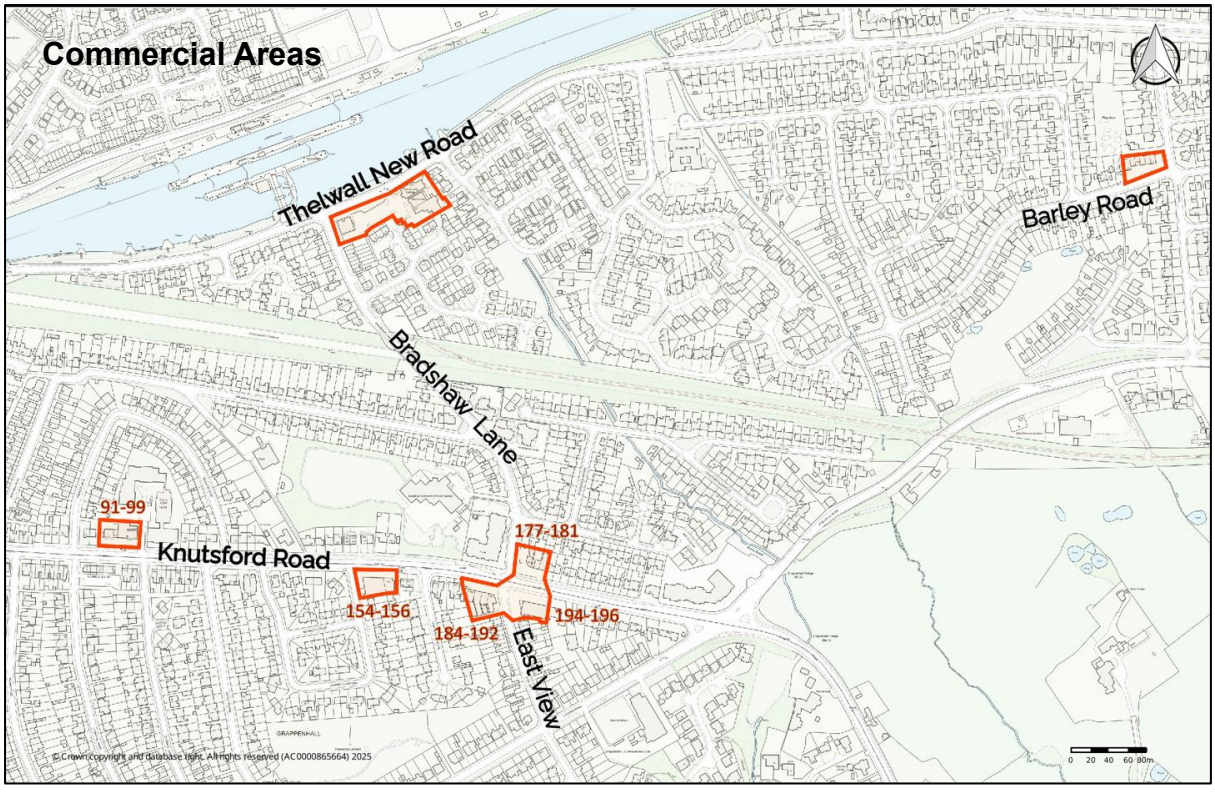

Modern Thelwall Character Area
THELWALL
Elizabeth Park
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0 20 40 60 80m


Old Thelwall Character Area
Manchester Ship Canal
THELWALL
Elizabeth Park
Thelwall Parish Hall
Chapel to School
Dutton Lane
Dutton Lane
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0 20 40 60 80m


Rural Thelwall Character Area
THELWALL
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0 50 100 150 200m


Ship Canal Character Area
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0 50 100 150 200m


Weaste Lane and Halfacre Character Area
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Commercial Areas
Thelwall New Road
Barley Road
Bradshaw Lane
91-99
Knutsford Road
177-181
154-156
184-192
194-196
East View
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0 20 40 60 80m