

# **Notes of Tattenhall Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group Held virtually via ZOOM 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023.**

## **PRESENT**

Chairman: Iain Keeping

Pat Black

Adele Evans

Lucy Hughes (CCA)

Ian Waddington

Ann Wright (Clerk).

Public – 1

## Apologies

Caryl Roberts

Peter Weston (unable to access meeting)

## Declaration of Interests

None declared.

## Notes of Previous Meetings

The group agreed the notes of the meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023.

## Public Participation

It was noted that members of the public could comment at any point during the meeting.

## Parish Councillors Briefing

It was noted the Parish Councilors had been briefed on the proposed changes to the Neighbourhood Plan and had not raised any concerns. They will consider updating the designated area and housing needs survey at their meeting on Monday the 6<sup>th</sup> March.

If the Council agrees to changing the designated area it will likely be subject to no objections from dwellings impacted who will be written to and Huxley and Hargrave Parish Council.

## Neighbourhood Plan Policy Changes

The meeting reviewed the following Justification & evidence sections for the Plan:

### **Housing**

From page 235 of the notes, it was agreed this was a powerful statement. It was agreed that the wording for SOC1 needs to be amended to match the CW&C wording of a target of 30%. It was noted the figures will need updating if the Housing Needs Survey is refreshed.

### **Local Character**

From page 237 of the notes, it was noted the reference to the Design Code needs to be updated to the agreed title, possibly Tattenhall & District Design Code 2023.

It was agreed that references to the made Neighbourhood Plan would be referred to as the original Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Local Facilities**

From page 238 of the notes.

It was discussed that Tattenhall is in danger of becoming a dormitory town with many of the retail businesses listed previously no longer in the village, 6 restaurants has been reduced to 3.

A discussion took place regarding the contradiction between the character and facilities summaries it was agreed to amend the wording in the character section from “The successful and thriving village centre is a very positive...” to “The successful and busy village centre is a very positive...”

It was agreed to remove the following wording “...such as distributing mains gas to parts of the village that are currently off-grid” from the Facilities summary.

## **Local Economy**

From page 239 of the notes.

It was agreed to change wording stated that the area had a vibrant economy which the Plan will seek to revitalise and remove the word 'thriving' from the start of the final paragraph.

## **Transport & Communications**

From page 239 of the notes.

It was noted the candle factory had been removed from the section and electric charging points and new footway to Newton-by-Tattenhall included, also it had been noted superfast fibre broadband is available in the village of Tattenhall but not the more rural locations.

## **Landscape & Environment**

From page 240 of the notes.

It was noted the title of the Design Code needs to be agreed. It was agreed to amend the below sentence by removing wording after Design Code.

"The Design Statement has now been superseded by the Tattenhall and District Neighbourhood Plan Design Code, ~~but the open spaces have been retained, re-identified and expanded.~~"

## **Park Field Justification**

From page 241 of the notes.

It was suggested that this might be updated to state the Field was the location for the Coronation celebrations in 2023. It was noted that the Field's inclusion in the Plan is not new as it was in the original Plan.

## Local Green Spaces

### **Millfield & Keys Brook Corridors**

It was agreed to include both corridors marking the brooks on a map and stating the corridors extend 3m each side and remove the wording 'few miles'.

## **Jubilee Wood**

It was agreed this section and map be updated to include the Memorial Wood which is in memorial of Queen Elizabeth II.

## Design Code

It was reported that Aecom are updating the Design Code following the groups last comments and had provided response to queries regarding solar panels and orientation of buildings. It was hoped the Code can be approved by the working group at its next meeting and then approved by the Parish Council in May.

## Next Meeting Agenda

To include:

- Design Code review/agreement
- Reviewed of Introduction (to be circulated)
- Noting of draft explanation of review process undertaken (IK)

## **NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 7.30pm via Zoom

Ann Wright  
02/02/2023

## Tattenhall & District Neighbourhood Plan Review

**Draft Revised Policies 20 Dec 2022 – LH amendments to Justification and Evidence sections NB will need to be further amended after the update to the Housing Needs Survey**

### Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The following suite of policies has been developed to manage the future development of Tattenhall in order to achieve the vision, objectives and strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan. Decision makers and applicants must accept the policies as a **whole** when judging if a proposal would be acceptable.

To reflect the results of the consultation events undertaken during the Plan's preparation and evidence of local issues and characteristics the policies are separated into six themes – Housing, Local Character, Local Economy, Local Facilities, Transport and Communications and Landscape and Wildlife.

To aid interpretation, for decision makers and applicants each policy is accompanied by supporting text setting out the context for the theme, the local community's views on that subject and the evidence, plans and strategies that offer support and evidence for its approach. All policies have been framed in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Local Plan for Cheshire West and Chester.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is first and foremost a land-use document a number of issues falling outside of the planning system's remit were identified by the local community during consultation events. Alongside its core policies the Plan therefore includes a number of aspirations to encourage interventions by wider stakeholders. These are included within each topic where relevant.

### Housing Growth Justification and Evidence

There are currently **[1,090]** dwellings in the parish of Tattenhall. Of these, **[847]** are located in the village whilst the remainder are spread around the Parish including the smaller settlements of Gatesheath and Newton-by- Tattenhall.

The adopted Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part One set the agenda for housing numbers and growth within Tattenhall as a strategic service centre. Tattenhall is looking to plan positively to meet its identified local housing requirement and will respond to the supply of these new homes.

The best villages have developed through incremental growth that harmonises with the existing character of their setting and buildings. It is essential that this continues to be the case in Tattenhall. The supply of new homes in the village and wider parish must be realised in accordance with the distinctive features, scale and grain of the local area. Housing sites must be carefully considered and will only be acceptable where they reflect these principles and are consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan taken as a **whole**.

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes is essential to support sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities. In Tattenhall this will underpin a well-balanced population that is vital to the on-going viability of local services and prosperity of the Parish, particularly in light of the community's increasingly ageing population. Evidence from the Cheshire West and Chester Strategic Housing Market Assessment indicates demand for a range of property

sizes and types in the Tattenhall area. Housing developments must therefore provide a mixture of housing to meet the needs of the community.

The original Tattenhall Neighbourhood Plan stipulated a requirement to provide 35% affordable units on site, with a provision of both intermediate and affordable rent. This requirement preceded the adoption of the Local Plan, in which policy SOC1 states that up to 30% of units should be affordable.

Affordability, however, remains a key housing issue for Tattenhall and there is a compelling case to meet local targets for affordable housing provision, with average house prices too high for those on average incomes. In order to fully understand the housing issues in Tattenhall, a Housing Needs Report for Tattenhall and District (Parish) was undertaken in 2018, funded by Cheshire West and Chester Council and prepared by Cheshire Community Action.

This report indicated that whilst Tattenhall had performed well in terms of dwelling completions during the plan period, the area had fallen short of achieving 30% affordable housing. In 2022, of the 269 units in Tattenhall that have received planning permission that requires an element of affordable housing, only 69 are affordable – a figure of 22%. In the rural parts of the Parish this figure falls to 16% of units, with 11 out of 67 applicable dwellings being affordable. (See Appendix)

This is despite the Housing Needs Report detailing that in 2018 the affordability ratio in Tattenhall was 9:1 i.e. house prices are 9 times the annual average Tattenhall salary. This is higher than the CWaC average of 6:1:1. Although median and lower quartile incomes are higher than those in Tattenhall than the borough as a whole (£32500 and £22500 as compared to £27972 and £17383) median and lower quartile dwelling prices in Tattenhall from 2011 averaged £117650 above the borough average. To put this into perspective, to afford a one bedroomed flat in Tattenhall, you would need to be earning £29714, which is over £7000 more than the lower quartile income of £22500. These figures clearly demonstrate how unaffordable local house prices are in relation to income.

The Housing Needs Report indicated that approximately 18.8% of housing stock in Tattenhall is social/ affordable housing, but that the housing register data indicated that there is very little stock/ tenures becoming available on a regular basis, with on average only 1 social/ affordable unit becoming available for re-let each year. The shortage of availability of affordable housing, coupled with the growing discrepancy between average earnings and house prices, make it considered to be imperative that new housing provides at least 30% affordable units in the Neighbourhood area, and that any off-site contributions contribute to the provision of affordable housing within the parish. This will help to address these issues and ensure that Tattenhall parish remains a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive community where people can afford to live and work.

Tattenhall has a significantly higher proportion of detached housing than Cheshire West and Chester (40.8% as compared to 29.6%) and a significantly lower proportion of terraces (15.4% compared to 21.7%) and flats (7.4% compared to 12.2%). It also currently has a significantly lower proportion of 1-2 bed bungalows, 1-2 bed flats and 1-2 bed terraces. Going forward, the Housing Needs Report highlights the requirements of new developments to provide more for an ageing population, including a range of good quality market downsizing options, along with the provision of Lifetime Homes, bungalows and Extra Care housing. Additionally, in order to help keep the age structure more balanced, a range of social/ affordable rented 1, 2 and 3 bed starter/ family homes are needed to help the local population to sustain services and the local economy. The housing register shows a need for 1 bed units, and a very broad and balanced need for social housing to include 25% flats, 21% bungalow and 54% general housing.

The community recognises that housing development can sometimes bring wider benefits, such as the redevelopment of brownfield sites, securing the on-going use of a building and

providing much needed affordable homes. Such proposals will be supported in accordance with this policy and the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **Community Feedback**

Consultation on the original Neighbourhood Plan revealed that the community regarded the most important key issues in relation to housing were the need to respect the current village character (92% agreed); add value and vitality to the community (91% agreed); add housing choice and meet local needs (86% agreed); and comply with the Village Design Statement (88% agreed). The policy in the Neighbourhood Plan review continues to seek to address these issues.

## Local Character

### Justification and Evidence

The landscape surrounding Tattenhall retains a significant historic character. Areas bordering the north, north-west and north-east of the village are classified as 'Ancient Field Systems' or 'Medieval Townfields' by the Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation. These areas contribute to local distinctiveness and the retention of their character is a key element in achieving sustainable development.

Whilst agriculture may remain the principal land use in Tattenhall, the character of the local landscape is also defined by its buildings, several of which have been listed for their special architectural or historic interest. Today, the village of Tattenhall is one of the most attractive and least spoilt of the larger villages in southwest Cheshire. Much of the village is now designated as a well defined Conservation Area, radiating out from the centre. It is essential that these qualities are protected. The historic assets in the area are shown on the built historic environment designations map.

A significant amount of work took place to identify the features that make Tattenhall unique. After comprehensive consultation, the community published the Tattenhall Village Design Statement with recommendations based on a detailed understanding of the village's landscape setting, its shape and grain and the style and nature of its buildings. The Village Design Code 2022 describes the distinctive surroundings and character of the district, based on clear guidance from the community that all new developments must follow to be successfully accommodated into the Parish. Standard designs will not be acceptable.

The successful and thriving village centre is a very positive attribute of Tattenhall which inevitably and understandably results in the need for commercial signage. Whilst ensuring that businesses are clearly visible, it is important that this demand is managed to avoid an unacceptable proliferation of signage that could undermine its distinctiveness.

There has been concern locally about the loss of trees with amenity value within the village. Such trees contribute significantly to the attractiveness of the village and every effort should be made to retain them. All new development, as well as incorporating new tree planting and landscaping schemes, should be planned and delivered in a way that safeguards any existing significant trees and allows sufficient distance between them and new buildings to avoid later pressure for their removal.

Tattenhall should only receive the very best, attractive and sustainable development. Building for a Healthy Life, a government backed industry standard for well designed homes and neighbourhoods can help ensure that this is the case. Building for a Healthy Life sets out the criteria to assess the quality of a development scheme.

Proposals coming forward in Tattenhall should be exemplary, ideally scoring twelve out of twelve greens when assessed against these criteria.

Tattenhall and the surrounding rural area experiences some of the highest rates of fuel poverty and energy consumption in the wider Cheshire West and Chester area, whilst a number of properties are still supplied by fuel oil as a result of being off the main energy supply network. It is essential that all communities take action in their local area wherever possible to tackle the national and global issue of climate change. In this context it is therefore essential that steps are taken to encourage developments that are more energy efficient and make use of opportunities to use green sources of energy wherever possible.

## Community Feedback

Consultation for the existing Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following key issues in relation to this topic that the policy seeks to address:

- Match the grain and quality of the Village Design Statement Character Zones. 93% agreed
- Not spoil the views into and out of the village and parish. 94% agreed
- Enhance the Character Zones as detailed in the Tattenhall Village Design Statement. 90% agreed
- Be at a measured pace to enable infrastructure expansion. 91% agreed
- Minimises impact on woodland, hedges, ponds, streams, verges and geological features. 96% agreed



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| • Ensure boundaries respect/reflect local tradition/ materials. | 93% agreed |
| • Include native Cheshire species in landscaping.               | 92% agreed |
| • Minimises unnecessary tree felling.                           | 94% agreed |

## Local Facilities Justification and Evidence

With increasing mobility the viability of many rural services has declined significantly over the past fifty years. Many villages closer to Chester have a poor range of retail services, as local residents increasingly use the larger retail outlets located on the periphery of the city. In Tattenhall, retail services have also declined. Premises have changed ownership and it seems that the propensity is towards services rather than retail with several former retail outlets no longer providing goods to the public. With the building of many new houses comes the issue that Tattenhall could become a dormitory village as many of these residents may not use the local facilities but those closer to where they work.

At present Tattenhall's retail facilities include a Post Office and gift shop, a dispensing chemist, a newsagents, one hairdresser, a cafe, a general store and a fish and chip shop. Other services are also provided within these outlets, such as dry cleaning, cash machine, and banking services. One retail outlet on the High Street has been converted to an office for a Care Provider and the butcher shop is currently empty as is another retail outlet. A farm shop is located on Newton Lane and the local facilities are complemented by two restaurants, Indian and Chinese, and two public houses located within the village. At the last count there were over forty clubs and societies in the Parish, whilst a wide range of sporting facilities is offered at Sport Tattenhall Recreation Club. Cheshire West and Chester Council operates the Village Library, which is situated beside the Tattenhall Park Primary School, whilst a bowling green, located in the heart of the village behind the Sportsman's Arms public house, is regularly used during the summer months. The Barbour Institute and the Parish Church are regularly used as venues for events, meetings, concerts, musical gatherings and arts festivals. The Church of St. Alban has extended to include a community room which is rented to small groups. The site of the former Roman Catholic Church has been vacant for a number of years but there is no clear vision for this area. Open spaces include the Park (albeit a much reduced area with fencing around the school playing field denying access to the public) with its children's play area, Sport Tattenhall and its indoor and outdoor sporting facilities, the Millennium Mile and other footpaths that lead into the wider countryside. The Spinney (an area of woodland owned by the Parish Council) has been developed into a pleasant area for walking and outdoor activities. A rollerblade and skateboard centre, The Boneyard, is situated in Newton-by-Tattenhall.

To promote the on-going prosperity of the Parish it is essential that Tattenhall retains and provides local services that will sustain the vitality of the community and encourage local spending. The receipts received from New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy will be used to enhance community infrastructure, and, where necessary, planning obligations will be used to address the impacts of development proposals. Occasionally, development may offer substantial opportunities to enhance existing infrastructure, *such as distributing mains gas to parts of the village that are currently off-grid*. (Is this still an aspiration?) Where such improvements are made as part of new development proposals, this will be seen as a positive benefit.

## Community Feedback

Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan made in 2011 revealed the following key issues in relation to this topic that the policy seeks to address:

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| • Support or enhance existing services and facilities (including GP surgery, school, sports, community buildings) | 97% agreed |
| • Show how it will contribute to increasing service capacity and services   | 94% agreed |
| • Engage with voluntary and community services  | 93% agreed |
| • Provide facilities for young people   | 91% agreed |
| • Encourage community involvement   | 91% agreed |
| • Provide easy, safe access to facilities   | 90% agreed |

## **The Local Economy**

### **Justification and Evidence**

Tattenhall Parish has a vibrant economy. Historically farming has been the key driver behind the prosperity of the parish, but in line with experiences seen across the British Countryside the Parish has seen significant socio-economic changes as a result of increasing affluence, the rise in car ownership and the movement of population from town to country. Although the land is still farmed, the number of farmers and agricultural employees has reduced dramatically, with many farm buildings now converted to other uses.

Over the past fifty years, rural settlements have become attractive to an increasing number of mobile individuals and their families who choose to live in the country but work in the town or city. This has led to a significant population growth in rural locations, such as Tattenhall, which are in close proximity to major urban areas.

The limited availability of workspace and jobs in rural communities can further encourage local people of working age to leave the area and prevent people of working age from moving in. This loss of the working age population has social as well as economic consequences. Communities where there is a daily exodus of people of working age can also struggle to provide the viable conditions for many community services and facilities.

Tattenhall, however, is recognised as an excellent example of a community that has successfully developed a high level of local workspace. Its diverse and sustainable local business community continues to grow and support the local economy. Many different types of businesses have located within the Parish, from offices within converted rural buildings and new build developments, to small scale manufacturing and workshop space.

Accompanying the Parish's employment opportunities is a significant leisure and tourism offer, including a 300 berth canal marina and the Cheshire Farm Ice Cream, which is one of the most popular visitor attractions in Cheshire with over 300,000 visitors a year. In 2012 Tattenhall was the winner of the Community Pride award and runner up in the Community Spirit competition.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out to maintain and encourage the Parish's thriving local economy to support the on-going sustainability of the community. It will support the sustainable growth of all types of businesses and enterprise in the Parish, rural tourism and leisure facilities that benefit local businesses, residents and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.

### **Community Feedback**

Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following key issues in relation to this topic that the policy seeks to address:

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| • Work alongside existing, thriving businesses          | 94% agreed |
| • Be considered on merit                                | 91% agreed |
| • Support business out in the countryside               | 88% agreed |
| • Extend rural land use                                 | 86% agreed |
| • Encourage employment/apprenticeships for local people | 93% agreed |
| • Encourage the installation of a high street bank      | 90% agreed |

### **Transport and Communications Justification and Evidence**

Tattenhall is a rural Parish and does not have any major roads within its boundaries. The busy A41 Chester to Whitchurch road borders the Community with three access roads to the village centre running off it. Traffic flow increases during the summer months and at most weekends through the year as visitors access the Cheshire Ice Cream Farm and walkers the Sandstone Ridge at Burwardsley. The village can become particularly congested during periods of peak travel and school/nursery pick up and drop off times. HGV's and the lack of dedicated car parking provision can contribute to this issue.

Public transport provision in the Parish is barely adequate, with the only regular bus service travelling to Chester, Malpas and Whitchurch. There is little service for evening and late night use. During school terms, buses are also used to convey students to the local High School and Colleges. For the most part however, people's principle mode of transport in the Parish is the car, even for some of the shortest journeys. A new footpath has been laid from the village on Tattenhall

Road to the new housing estate in Newton-by-Tattenhall. This gives walkers partial access to the Ice Cream Farm but does not continue along Newton Lane to the site. We still need better footpaths and public rights of way connecting the main village with all hamlets within the Parish. The Tattenhall Road Railway Station closed in 1966 and it is a community goal to see it reopened to provide access to the wider national rail network and a better alternative to car travel. Provision could also be made for electric car charging points and cycle racks in Barbour Square. Superfast Fibre Broadband is now available in the village but connectivity is still poor in the surrounding areas. This affects the ability of residents to access information and the performance of businesses that rely on Broadband as a key means of communication in a rural area.

## Community Feedback

Consultation on the first Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following key issues in relation to this topic that the policy seeks to address:

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| • Include local traffic repercussions and mitigations           | 95% agreed |
| • Show how pedestrian and cycle facilities will be improved     | 94% agreed |
| • Improve footpaths and bridleways to the surrounding hamlets   | 91% agreed |
| • Improve public transport, look to re-open the railway station | 83% agreed |
| • Work to improve high-speed broadband provision                | 87% agreed |

## Landscape and Environment

### Justification and Evidence

Tattenhall is a rural parish. Whilst the main village has seen development during the second half of the 20th century it retains a number of green spaces that contribute to this character and provide opportunities for informal and formal recreation. In accordance with national planning guidance the community wishes to see the most important of these spaces protected for future generations. Accordingly, they will be afforded protection from new development unless exceptional circumstances demonstrate that proposals should go ahead.

The development process of Tattenhall Village Design Statement in 2009 involved undertaking a detailed assessment of Tattenhall's landscape character. This detailed work was developed into a set of local policies to manage new development in order to harmonise and reflect the setting of the Parish. The Design Statement formed an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan Policy 2 where full accord was a requirement. The Design Statement has now been superseded by the Tattenhall and District Neighbourhood Plan Design Code, but the open spaces have been retained, re-identified and expanded.

The settlements and wider countryside of the parish contain features of significant local wildlife value. Flooded marl pits dug during the late eighteenth century are found throughout the Parish and these wetland 'nature reserves' contain a great diversity of plant and animal species including the endangered great crested newt in over 50 parish ponds. The Keys Brook and Mill Brook areas are also important wetland features and have significant wildlife value, draining from the Sandstone Ridge. With peak flow normally occurring between January and March, they often breach their banks and flood the surrounding fields. The River Gowy is also an important watercourse in the north of the parish.

The Parish's open fields support brown hare and in the damper patches, birds such as snipe and mallard. Hedgerows in the parish form important corridors for wildlife including badgers and foxes; small birds such as finches, great tits and blue tits; dragonflies and butterflies. Small woodland areas also provide important habitats for many species including the tawny owl and great spotted woodpecker. Watercourses also provide an important wildlife habitat for otters and water voles. Although modern agricultural practices have been responsible for the loss of many landscape features over the past sixty years, there are signs that future agri-environment funding regimes may lead to the restoration of traditional features such as woodland, hedgerows, wildflower meadows and wetlands. To enable a greater appreciation of the Parish's landscape features and interaction with the wildlife, access to the countryside is achieved via a network of public and



permissive footpaths that cross the Parish, however, a lack of circular routes often necessitates a return via local roads.

### **Community Feedback**

Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following key issues in relation to this topic that the policy seeks to address:

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| • Not harm or impact habitats and wildlife corridors      | 92% agreed |
| • Minimise visual and landscape impact                    | 93% agreed |
| • Conform with landscape and nature conservation policies | 92% agreed |
| • Enhance, maintain and create new wildlife corridors     | 89% agreed |
| • Protect, restore and create existing/new wildlife sites | 90% agreed |

### **Park Field Justification**

The Park Field was divided between the Park School and a public area by a security fence in 2018, but the open green space as a whole has been a valued focal centre of the village since the land was acquired for the community in the 1960s. The school field is not now open for public use, but it is used extensively for usual school outdoor activities including its own play equipment. The remaining grassed area is the site of the expanded children's play area, open to the public. It is in the centre of the village beside the Primary School and includes wildflower area. The play equipment is used on a daily basis throughout the year by local children and families gather there to picnic and to play football on the adjacent grassed space. This is one of the few areas open to the public where there is room for ball games and is also used regularly by dog walkers and by residents accessing the village centre.

The dimension, layout and public accessibility contribute strongly to the distinctiveness of the Village and remains a single green space in the hearts of the community.

The land is within Tattenhall Conservation area.

## **TATTENHALL & DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW**

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