

MARTON VILLAGE NEIGHBOUR PLAN 2015-2030

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

ON BEHALF OF

THE CAPESTHORNE ESTATE

JANUARY 2016

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Consultation Response is submitted on behalf of the Capesthorne Estate.
- 1.2 The Estate comprises approximately half of the Designated Marton Neighbourhood Area including 9 farms, a number of Estate cottages and land within and immediately adjoining the village of Marton.
- 1.3 A plan is attached at Appendix 1 showing the Designated Marton Neighbourhood Area and that part which within the Capesthorne Estate.
- 1.4 The Draft Plan states that consultations have taken place with the Capesthorne Estate. Other than discussions with the Parish Council some 2 years ago with regards to a specific site in Marton village, we are not aware of any other direct consultation having taken place.
- 1.5 There are many aspects and policies in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan which we are very happy to support. However, we do not believe that the Neighbourhood Plan confirms with the Strategic Policies contained within the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan or that the Neighbourhood Plan positively contributes to achieving sustainable development.

2. Housing

- 2.1 The emerging Cheshire East Local Plan states that the Rural Area will provide not less than 2,950 dwellings over the plan period (2015-2030). Having regard to the completions and existing commitments, there is a requirement for 1,452 dwellings in the Rural Area.
- 2.2 In accordance with the NPPF these dwellings will have to be provided in sustainable locations.
- 2.3 It is our contention that Marton is a sustainable settlement benefitting from a primary school, pub, restaurant/café and a small farm shop. In response to Planning Application 15/2274M which relates to proposed development of up to 27 dwellings on School Lane, Marton, the Cheshire East Council Highways Department confirmed that it would *"have difficulty resisting the application on the grounds of sustainability"*.
- 2.4 The Jodrell Bank Observatory (JBO) has objected to development in other rural settlements but did not object the development proposed in application 15/2274M. The implication of this is that the required housing numbers in the Rural Area will only be permitted in sustainable settlements that are outside of the JBO exclusion zone. Such settlements, including Marton, must take their share of the required housing numbers.
- 2.5 The Draft Neighbourhood Plan states *"no strategic need has been identified to deliver housing beyond local needs...This neighbourhood plan proposes to meet needs arising from the existing population. Local housing needs will be met through:*
 - *The redevelopment of brownfield sites*
 - *Infill*
 - *Conversions*

- *And at the edge of the existing settlements in locations that will not cause harm to the wider landscape and setting of Marton."*

2.6 The Draft Neighbourhood Plan does not identify any specific site for new dwellings but states that brownfield development is always to be preferred over greenfield development. In practice we think it is highly unlikely that sufficient brownfield sites, infill sites or conversions will come forward to enable this objective/policy to be achieved.

2.7 The Draft Neighbourhood Plan states that the Housing Need Assessment highlighted 4 households who identified a need for housing which aligned with the Parish's own assessment of the natural minimum ebb and flow of housing requirements in a small settlement such as Marton. As a result of Application 15/2274M, we are aware that Cheshire East Council Housing Officers responded to the application and stated that *"there are currently 19 active applicants on the waiting list with Cheshire Home Choice who have selected Gorsworth and Marton as their first choice"*. The application provided for 9 affordable units and Peaks and Plains (Social Landlord) have indicated a desire to take up the affordable element of the proposed development. Peaks and Plains clearly do not have any concerns regarding demand for these affordable dwellings.

2.8 It is our contention that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan should state the minimum number of dwellings that should be provided within the plan period and that it should also identify specific sites where this housing could be provided. We propose that the site on School Lane in the centre of Marton which is the subject of Application 15/2274M should be shown as a housing site.

3. Sustainability

3.1 The Draft Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing facilities in Marton and in particular states that *"the loss of the village pub, for example, would adversely affect village life"*. The plan also identifies that the population of Marton is older than average and in 2011 stood at only 245 people.

3.2 A Community Consultation exercise undertaken by Hollins Strategic Land in advance of the submission of Application 15/2274M elicited a response from the Head teacher of Marton School stating that the Governing Body *"would welcome the proposal to build extra houses at Marton as we look forward to welcoming more children to the School"*.

3.3 The Post Office no longer exists and things which are listed in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan that people don't like about living in Marton include:-

- No Village Hall, Community Centre or sports facility
- No traditional village shop or Post Office

The things that people do like about living in Marton include:-

- The Village pub, restaurant and café
- The Primary School

3.4 In order to maintain the existing facilities which people value in Marton and in order to try and achieve some of the aspirations it seems logical that more dwellings and therefore more people are required to use and support these facilities.

4. Comment and Response to Specific Policies within the Draft Neighbourhood Plan

4.1 Policy 1 – Residential and Commercial Development

- 4.1.1 The Draft Neighbourhood Plan should state the minimum number of dwellings that should be provided within the plan period to contribute to the housing numbers required in the Rural Area and to contribute to maintaining Marton as a sustainable location.
- 4.1.2 Providing the required number of dwellings on brownfield sites, infill sites and conversions is unlikely to be achievable.

4.2 Policy 2 – Transport, School and Parking

- 4.2.1 We would be happy to work with the Parish Council to investigate ways of improving the parking provision at the School. However, Application 15/2274M proposed a parking area adjacent to Oak Lane and this was not supported by the Parish Council or local residents. It was indicated that it would serve no benefit.

4.3 Policy 3 – Protecting our Environment: Landscape Character, Green Spaces and Wildlife

- 4.3.1 We are happy to support policies 3 (a), (b), (c), (e), (f), (i) and (j).
- 4.3.2 Policy 3(d) makes reference to the mature sycamore within the paddock off School Lane. This tree is not protected by a TPO and Cheshire East Council confirmed that it should not be protected because of the amount of decay which is present both above and below ground and the absence of adequate sound residual timber. The tree is dying and is not worthy of protection. The emphasis on the importance of the views of the tree are therefore not justified.

4.4 Policy 4 – Traffic Safety

- 4.4.1 Policy 4(d) applies an incorrect policy test. The NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. Policy 4a should apply this policy test.
- 4.4.2 We are happy to support policies 4(a), (b) and (c).

4.5 Policy 5 – Protecting Community Assets

- 4.5.1 We are happy to support policies 5(a) subject to our comments regarding the sycamore tree in para 4.3.2 above and 5(b) and (c).

4.6 Policy 6 – Small Business Support

- 4.6.1 We are happy to support policies 6(a) – (e).

5. Summary

- 5.1 The Plan should state a minimum number of houses to be provided over the plan period which will contribute positively to the 1452 that are stated to be required in the Rural Area.
- 5.2 We do not consider that it will be possible to provide the required housing on Brownfield sites, in-fill sites and through conversions of existing buildings. There is requirement to identify a significant new housing site on which a properly planned development, respecting many of the other positive policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, can be undertaken.
- 5.3 We support the desire to maintain existing community facilities and the aspiration to develop new facilities. We consider that this will only be feasible if more dwellings are permitted and therefore the population grows.
- 5.4 We support the policies to support small rural businesses.

