

AUDLEY RURAL

Neighbourhood Plan 2024 - 42

July 2025 | Referendum Plan Version



**Audley Rural
Parish Council**



CONTENTS

1 Introduction	4	5 Design and Heritage	36
1.1 Why a Neighbourhood Plan?	5	5.1 Purpose	37
1.2 Status of the Neighbourhood Plan	5	5.2 Planning Rationale	37
1.3 Monitoring and Review	7	5.3 ANP4 Sustainable Design	48
1.4 Other Actions	7	5.4 ANP5 Audley Conservation Area	50
		5.5 ANP6 Character of Settlements	51
		5.6 ANP7 Heritage	52
		5.7 ANP8 Shopfronts	53
2 Background and Context	8	6 Green Environment	54
2.1 Audley Rural Parish	9	6.1 Purpose	55
2.2 The Population of Audley Rural Parish	11	6.2 Planning Rational	55
2.3 Household and Business Survey	13	6.3 ANP9 Natural Environment and Landscape	66
2.4 Overall Planning Strategy	14	6.4 ANP10 Green Infrastructure	68
2.5 Vision	15	6.5 ANP11 Local Green Space	70
2.6 Aims	15	6.6 Maps	73
2.7 Format of Policies	15		
3 Housing	16	7 Infrastructure	84
3.1 Purpose	17	7.1 Purpose	85
3.2 Planning Rationale	17	7.2 Planning Rationale	85
3.3 ANP1 Residential Development	20	7.3 ANP12 Transport and Active Travel	89
		7.4 ANP13 Local Energy Generation	90
4 Economy	28	8 Green Development Guidance Note	92
4.1 Purpose	29	8.1 Planning Principles	93
4.2 Planning Rationale	29	8.2 Green Building Design	93
4.3 ANP2 Business and Community Facilities	33	8.3 Biodiversity	94
4.4 ANP3 Audley Village Centre (Church Street)	34	8.4 Public Realm and Green Landscape Design	94
		9 Contacts	96



Winning entry for the logo competition drawn by a pupil of Sir Thomas Boughey Academy.

Photography by kind permission of Duncan Richardson at Shraleay Brook Media and Aecom.



INTRODUCTION

1

1.1

Why a Neighbourhood Plan?

The Audley Rural Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Audley Rural Parish Council to guide future development of the Neighbourhood Area. The Neighbourhood Area is the administrative boundary of Audley Rural Parish Council, which resolved in November 2020 to designate the Parish of Audley as the Neighbourhood Area. This was following requests from residents to make a Neighbourhood Plan in view of the emerging Local Plan of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council. The Parish of Audley Rural was granted Neighbourhood Plan status on 21 December 2020.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was formulated in April 2021, and the Parish Council agreed its Terms of Reference. Urban Vision Enterprise CIC was appointed as the Neighbourhood Planning consultant. A government grant was obtained for just under £18k over two financial years to assist with the preparation of the plan. Additional funding was provided by Audley Rural Parish Council.

The Audley Rural Neighbourhood Plan provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they receive the appropriate types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. The plan focuses on Local Green Spaces, Local Heritage Assets, Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM) and the Design Code (AECOM). There is also an independent review of the Parish Green Belt which was jointly commissioned with Staffordshire County Council. A detailed household and business survey was carried out in the spring of 2022. The results have been used to shape the themes and policies. The Neighbourhood Plan consists of the following themes:

- › Housing
- › Economy
- › Design and heritage
- › Green environment and infrastructure

1.2

Status of the Neighbourhood Plan

The Audley Rural Neighbourhood Plan contains planning policies, against which planning applications will be considered. The Neighbourhood Plan, once made, forms part of the statutory development plan, together with the adopted Newcastle-under-lyme Local Plan until 2040.

Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications must be determined in accordance with the policies of the statutory development plan (of which the Neighbourhood Plan will be part of), unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be in force for 18 years (2024 to 2042).

The Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with excluded matters including waste, mineral extraction or nationally significant infrastructure.

A plan of the Neighbourhood Area is shown on page 6.

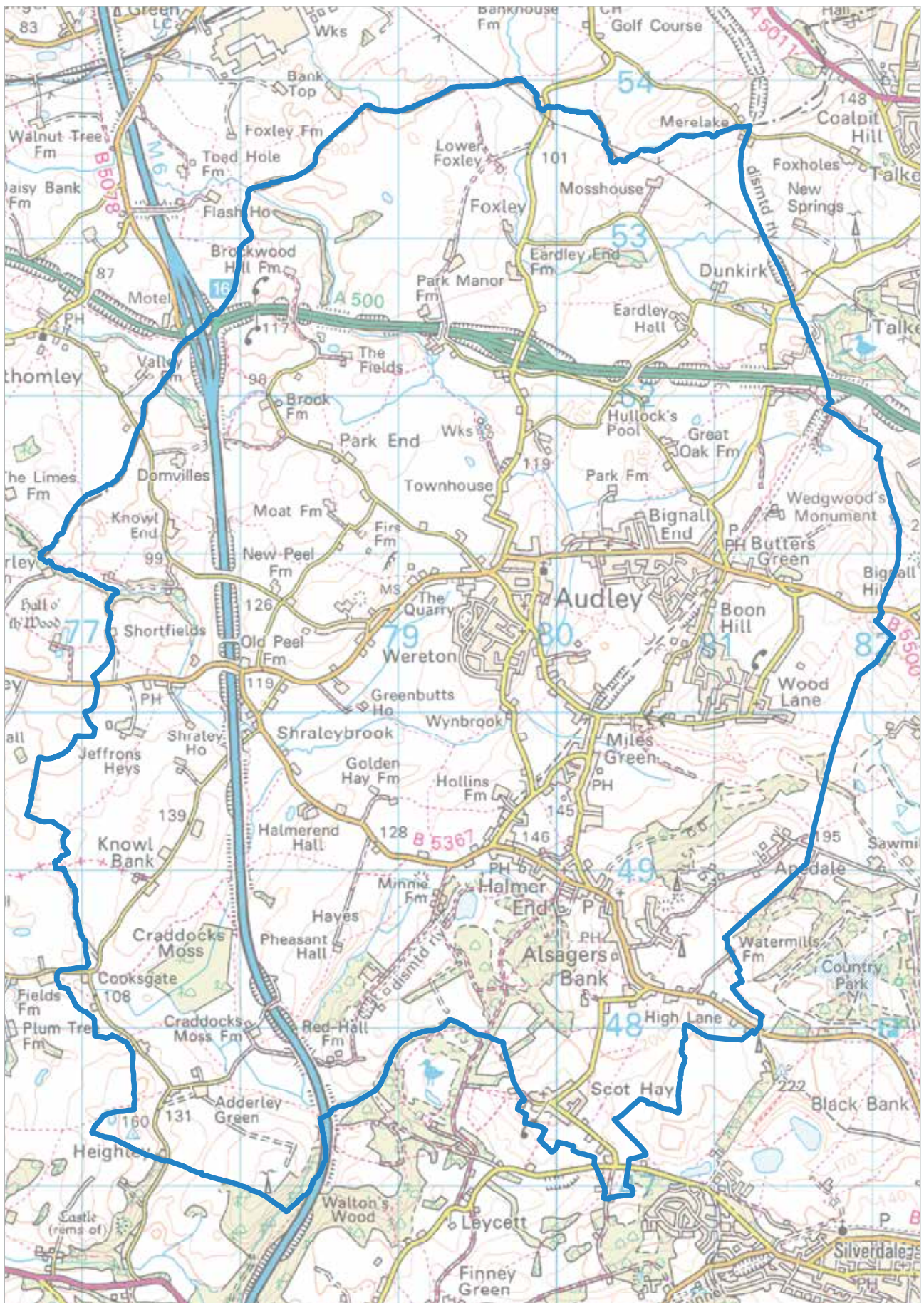


Figure 1.2, Plan of Audley Rural Neighbourhood Area

— Parish Boundary

1.3 Monitoring and Review

The Plan will be monitored by Audley Rural Parish Council throughout the Plan period to 2042. Monitoring will include:

- › planning decisions to see how the plan is being used in practice;
- › any changes in national policy, guidance or legislation;
- › any changes in or local plan policy or guidance; and
- › any other changes in the Neighbourhood Area (social, economic and environmental).

The plan will be reviewed and updated if and when necessary, a regular report will be prepared on the monitoring.

1.4 Other Actions

Throughout the community consultation process, a number of issues were raised which would not be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan.

These issues will be compiled in a separate document which will form the basis of an action plan for Audley Rural Parish Council.

The Action Plan will be the focus for future projects and budgets over the coming years.

There will be some issues which are outside of the Parish Council's ability to address and where there are such issues, the relevant agency will be asked to take action.



Figure 1.3, Bateswood Country Park, Halmer End

2



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2

2.1

Audley Rural Parish

The Parish of Audley Rural is made-up of seven main villages: Audley, Bignall End, Wood Lane, Halmer End, Alsagers Bank, Miles Green and Scot Hay. It also has a number of smaller hamlets. Whilst Audley may be seen as the heart of the Parish, each village has a distinct and proud identity. Audley Rural Parish Council created in 1932 consists of 15 elected Parish Councillors and one employee. Although farming has become less important to the local economy over the years, the Parish retains a rural character that is enforced by the significant green spaces that bisect the seven main villages and hamlets and separate the Parish from its immediate neighbours. The landscape and rural character are important elements of the Parish, with the community confirming in the survey that there is a strong desire to retain this.

There are numerous social and voluntary groups within the Parish and this helps to promote a strong sense of community. This sense of community is reflected in the responses to the householders' survey.

Location

Audley Rural Parish is the largest Parished area of Newcastle under Lyme Borough and lies to the northwest of the urban area of Stoke-on-Trent, with the M6 motorway passing through the west of the Parish in a north-south direction and the A500 crossing east-west from Stoke-on-Trent to join with the M6.

Its close proximity to the Cheshire border means that residents have a choice of travelling to Newcastle, Stoke-on-Trent or Crewe to access larger retailers and railway stations. The nearby M6 also provides easy access to major cities, such as Manchester and Birmingham.

Characteristics of the Area

Until relatively recent times, the Parish relied on farming and coal mining for employment and residents are particularly proud of their mining heritage, with notable memorials to be found in the villages.

The impact of mining is still to be seen in many parts of the surrounding countryside, along with the remnants of the supporting railway infrastructure, including part of the track-bed which is now a popular footpath, running between Bignall End and Halmer End.

Well over two-thirds of the Parish is open countryside which is considered to be one of the most important elements of the Parish for agricultural use. This reflects the rural nature of the Parish with settlements nestled within the open countryside.

The countryside that surrounds the Parish and separates the seven main villages and hamlets is rich and varied, with grassland, woods, watercourses and ponds. This provides a large variety of wildlife and habitats that support the biodiversity of the borough. There are extensive footpaths that are regularly frequented by walkers, dog-walkers, runners but very few bridlepaths for cyclists and horse riders. The land rises steeply in places, which helps to create the feeling that the Parish is self-contained - almost isolated - and very distinct from the neighbouring towns and villages.

The landscape not only provides a physical separation of the villages, but it also provides a variety of undulations and ridges and the frequent extensive views that these afford from the roads linking the villages. The breaks in development between villages not only allow distant views but also bring the open land, both agricultural and recreational, into close contact with each village. (Audley District Plan 1978)

At one time, each village had a number of small retailers to support the local community. Over time, many of these have closed-down and the centre of Audley has become the main commercial area. This is also where other community services such as the Health Centre and the nearest dentists are located.

Bignall End also retains a small number of retailers, including a post office, hairdresser and grocery store. Halmer End has a post office within a hardware shop plus a small general store. Wood Lane just has one part-time post office. Each village is also served by at least one public house.

There are three primary schools located in Alsager's

Bank, Wood Lane and Bignall End.

The Parish's high school is located in Halmer End.

A number of houses of worship of various denominations are located throughout the villages, with the grade II* 'St James the Great' church in Audley dominating the skyline.

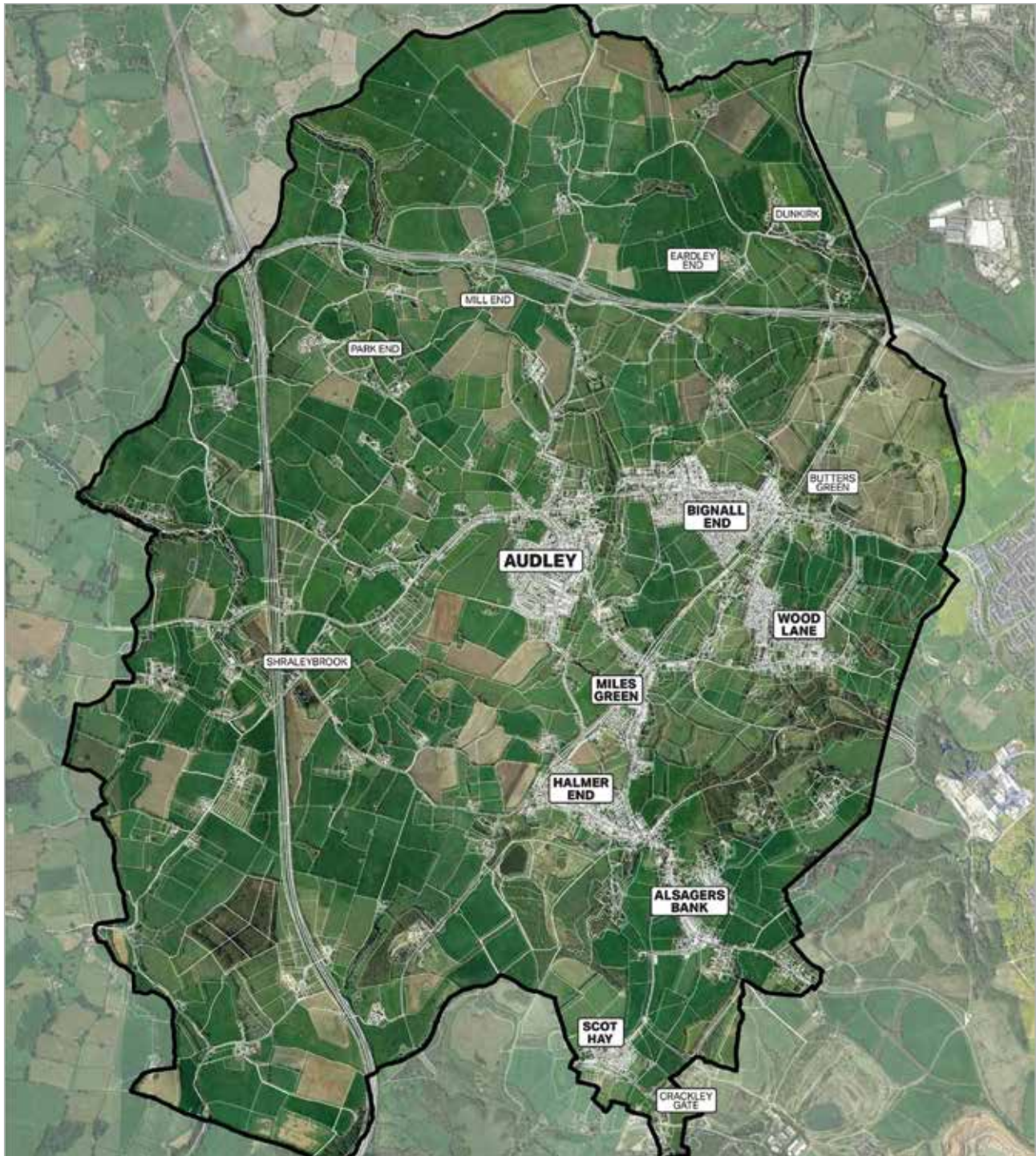


Figure 2.2, Map showing the open countryside surrounding the main villages of Audley Rural Parish

2.2

The Population of Audley Rural Parish

The 2021 census records that the Parish of Audley and Bignall End had a population of 8,323, 6.8% of the population of Newcastle Borough.

The population of the Parish has fallen slightly from the total of 8,437 recorded in the 2011 census. This is despite the construction of new homes in the intervening period.

The illustration below shows the breakdown of population by age, based on the 2021 census. Compared to Newcastle, the Audley parish has a much older age profile with 24% of residents older than 65 compared to 18.4% for Newcastle.

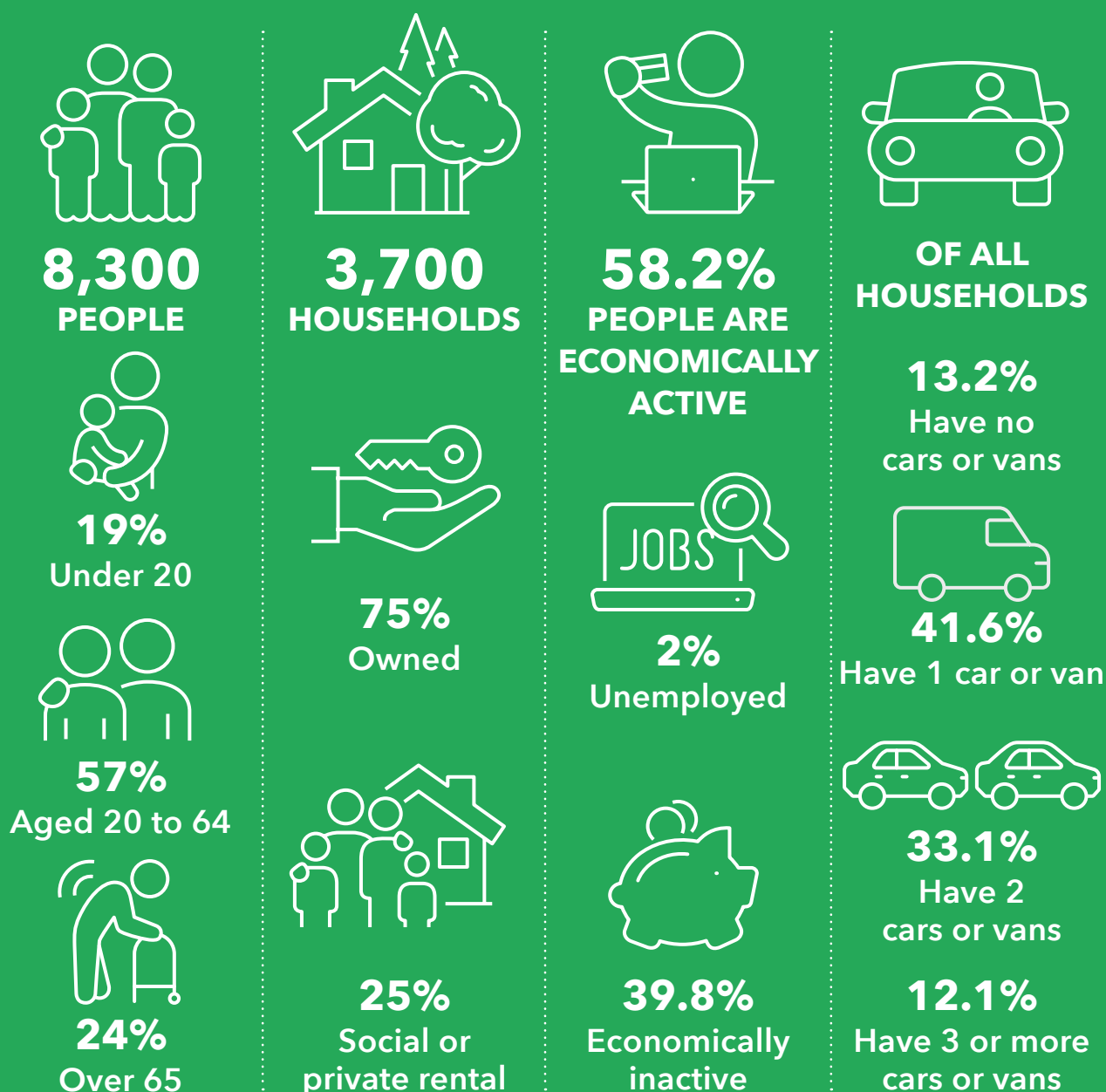


Figure 2.3, Census Data 2021

source: www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/, accessed 13th February 2023

The Census 2021 data are aggregated from small areas on a best-fit basis, and therefore may differ slightly from other sources. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 households.

Key Issues

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group first met on 22nd April 2021 and the early community engagement began shortly afterwards. Building upon the early community engagement, the themes for the Neighbourhood Plan emerged, providing insight into local issues of importance to the community.

The Neighbourhood Plan is based on analysis of data, existing evidence, previous plans and the views of the community; as informed by a householder survey carried out in early 2022 and other community consultation.

A summary of the key issues identified, including those identified by the householder survey included:

VEHICLES

- › Insufficient off-road parking, resulting in congestion and hazardous obstructions for pedestrians
- › Speeding traffic

POOR LOCAL TRANSPORT LINKS

- › No direct links to major towns and railway stations
- › Bus services are too infrequent and cease in the early evening

OPEN SPACES

- › Protecting the rural character and feel of the Neighbourhood Area.
- › Retaining the open spaces which keep the villages separate
- › Concerns regarding dog fouling

MAIN SHOPPING AREA

- › Shops look 'tired' with some frontages being poor in design
- › Shops lack diversity, with too many food outlets

SCHOOL CAPACITY

- › All primary schools are at or near full capacity
- › Only one senior school in the Parish

HOUSING

- › New houses do not follow any conformity, lack character and are unsympathetic to the rural 'feel' of the Parish
- › New houses are lacking in sustainability, with little consideration of renewable energy, sustainable drainage systems and biodiversity
- › Insufficient number of smaller dwellings for single and retired residents
- › Concerns that greenbelt land may be used for future developments

ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- › Residents feel that there has been a rise in antisocial behaviour, with little action being taken to eradicate this

2.3

Household and Business Survey

Two questionnaires were designed by the Steering Group with guidance from a professional organisation which specialises in surveying, data collection, analysis and reporting. One survey was to obtain feedback from households within the Parish and one to obtain feedback from business operating within the Parish. The questions and format were based on best practice and to build on the themes from the earlier consultation work carried out.

Survey packs were created for distribution with each one containing the following:

- › Letter introducing the survey
- › Two-page leaflet detailing the Neighbourhood Plan
- › Questionnaire
- › Pre-paid envelope for return of the completed questionnaire

A total of 3,869 households and 151 business survey packs were issued by Royal Mail between 3rd and 7th March 2022 to the all properties on the Council Tax register (as at March 2020).

If Royal Mail were unable to deliver a survey pack (i.e address inaccessible or unknown address etc.) these were returned. The following survey packs were returned undelivered by Royal Mail:

- › 27 Household survey packs
- › 8 Business survey packs

Cover letters contained a web address and QR code, allowing the survey to be completed online or via mobile phone. The invite letter also contained a telephone and email contact to assist with any survey queries or to provide the survey in an alternative format such as large print or an alternative language.

Households could complete more than one survey should members of that household wish to provide feedback on an individual basis. In addition to the postal packs, the survey was promoted on several community Facebook sites within the Parish. Residents were asked to provide their feedback by the 21st March 2022. However, this deadline was extended until 15th April 2022, with the extension publicised on community Facebook sites.

Household Survey results and findings

In total, 949 completed household questionnaires were received, with 165 of those completed online and 784 completed via post. Below is a selection of key findings from 949 respondents. The full report which contains tables, graphics and charts can be found at Audley Rural Parish Analysis of Feedback from the Household and Business Survey (May 2022).

An infographic of the survey findings has also been produced to allow easy reference. This can be found at Audley Rural Neighbourhood Plan - Household and Business Survey Outcomes 2022 Infographics.

VIEWS ON LIVING IN AUDLEY RURAL PARISH

51% felt community spirit and friendliness were one of the best things about living in Audley Rural Parish.

48% felt that parking issues were one of the things least liked about living in Audley Rural Parish.

St James Church, Audley was the heritage asset selected by most respondents.

HOUSING

92% were against the release of large areas of green belt around existing villages to create large housing developments.

84% were in favour for the reuse of brownfield sites for new housing.

ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND QUALITY DESIGN

99% felt protecting green and open spaces was an important statement for the Design Code for Audley Rural Parish.

99% felt retaining the rural character and feel of the Neighbourhood Area was an important statement for the Design Code for Audley Rural Parish.

LEISURE AND WELLBEING

84% felt Healthcare (doctor, dentist, pharmacy) was one of the most important services in the Parish.

43% felt parking was the issue that needed improving most throughout the Parish.

RURAL ENTERPRISE AND LOCAL ECONOMY

93% were against the release of green belt to create new employment sites.

80% felt the Rural Service Centre in Church Street, Audley needed to be improved.

GETTING AROUND

79% used the local footpath network on a regular basis.

86% would use a new communal car park instead of parking on narrow congested roads.

rural business enterprise and agriculture. ANP3 Audley Village Centre is a focused policy to support the thriving 'hub' of services that support the entire Neighbourhood Area.

Sustainable and innovative design including high energy performance and low carbon development is supported through policy ANP4 Sustainable Design. Policy ANP13 Local Energy Generation supports community energy production and renewable energy generation.

Policies ANP5 Audley Conservation Area, ANP6 Character of Settlements and ANP7 Heritage also seek to protect and enhance the townscape and character of the settlements. Policy ANP8 Shopfronts seeks to protect historic shopfronts and support well designed active frontages.

The Neighbourhood Area has a range of heritage assets, including the prominent grade II* 'St James the Great' church in Audley and Castle Hill motte, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. There are also a number of non-designated assets. Policy ANP7 Heritage encourages sensitive refurbishment and reuse to preserve and enhance the heritage assets across the Neighbourhood Area.

The natural and rural environment is also a key priority of the Audley Neighbourhood Plan. Key landscape characteristics, features and habitats are identified in policy ANP9 Natural Environment and Landscape, recognising the importance of the rural landscape character. Policy ANP10 Green Infrastructure identifies priorities for biodiversity net gain and encourages new development to include high quality space for amenity of new residents.

Local Green Space designations are also included, some of which contribute to biodiversity or support local wildlife and contribute to the wider green infrastructure of the area. The Local Green Spaces designated are demonstrably special to the community they serve for recreation, leisure, and the value to the natural environment. These are listed in policy ANP11 Local Green Space.

The plan promotes a balanced and sustainable range of transport in policy ANP12 Transport and Active Travel supporting the existing path network and active travel routes such as the former Mineral Line.

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are intended to augment those in the adopted Local Plan, setting requirements more specific to the Neighbourhood Area.

2.4 Overall Planning Strategy

The Audley Neighbourhood Plan seeks to achieve sustainable development and growth. This is achieved through the ranges of policies in the Plan.

The Plan does not undertake housing site allocations, leaving this to the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Local Plan (see Newcastle-under-Lyme website for latest situation in terms of adopted and emerging Local Plan) owing to the constraints of the Neighbourhood Area including green belt. However, it does cater for the small-scale level of growth identified through policy ANP1 Residential Development. This sets out sustainable locations for housing growth and includes sufficient capacity to deliver the growth strategy in the Plan period.

The rural economy is supported in policy ANP2 Business and Community Facilities which protects existing services and supports diversification and

2.5 Vision

To protect and enhance the character, features and rural setting of the Parish of Audley, to ensure a sustainable and pleasant place to live that meets the needs of local people.

2.6 Aims

The Audley Rural Neighbourhood Plan has the following aims:

- › To help ensure that future development is sustainable and meets local needs whilst protecting the rural character and Green Belt of the Parish.
- › To help ensure that development is well designed.
- › To protect important Local Green Spaces.
- › To prevent coalescence and merging of the seven key villages and hamlets within the Parish.
- › To protect important historic landmarks and heritage within the Parish.
- › To enhance and support community and recreational facilities that are well maintained, sustainable and meet local needs.
- › To support existing and new local businesses in the Parish so that they are sustainable and meet local needs.
- › To protect footpaths, greenways and bridleways/cycle paths promoting active travel.
- › To promote the Parish as an attractive and sustainable place to live, work and play
- › To help in achieving Net Carbon Zero status by 2050

2.7 Format of Policies

The following policies are supported by analysis of key issues, national and local policies and relevant evidence documents. This includes the following key evidence documents:

Audley Rural Parish Design Code and Guidance (May 2023)

Audley Rural Parish Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) (October 2023)

Audley Rural Parish Local Green Space Audit Report (August 2023)

The policies are grouped under themed chapters. These are:

Housing

Economy

Design and Heritage

Green Environment

Infrastructure.

The structure of the policies is as follows:

Purpose

What the set of policies seek to achieve.

Planning Rationale

Concise summary of the thinking behind the policies.

Then for individual policies in the chapter:

The policy

Requirements for development proposals to meet.

Interpretation

Notes on how the policy should be applied in decision making.



3.1 Purpose

To ensure that the Parish provides people with a range of affordable, high quality housing opportunities which help ensure the vibrancy and diversity of the area.

3.2 Planning Rationale

National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development whereby strategic policies should, "as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed housing needs", unless certain conditions are met. The method for objectively assessing housing need is nationally prescribed, although exceptional circumstances may permit the use of a different method, which would still require approval through the national planning system.

The NPPF further states that neighbourhood plans, "should support the delivery of strategic plans contained in local plans". In effect, our neighbourhood plan must contain policies and allocations to meet identified housing needs.

Chapter 5 deals with 'Supply of homes, mix and affordability'. This includes addressing the needs of groups with specific housing requirements. Chapter 5 also makes clear that neighbourhood plans should consider where small and medium sites for housing could go. The Neighbourhood Plan positively addresses this through making clear where suitable locations for housing would be across the Neighbourhood Area. Site allocations will be dealt with through the Local Plan owing to the constraints of the Neighbourhood Area including Green Belt.

Emerging Local Plan, Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council

The emerging Local Plan undertook Regulation 18 consultation in the summer of 2023. The Local Planning Authority are considering the responses to this consultation. The Local Plan timetable indicates that a Regulation 19 Draft Plan will be available for consultation later in 2024. The Parish Council have worked closely with Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to ensure there are no disparities between the two Plans.

Core Strategy, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent, Adopted October 2009

The Local Development Framework, Core Spatial Strategy 2009 contains policies on residential development, housing mix, affordable housing and other related matters. These are now somewhat out-of-date due to the age of the plan and in particular changes to national policy and guidance and the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council are in the process of updating their Local Plan. In this new draft the spatial strategy for housing and economic growth to 2040 will be set. The timetable indicates the emerging Local Plan will be prepared by the Summer 2023 and submitted later in the year. Within the Draft Local Plan, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council have indicated a proposed level of growth for the Neighbourhood Area of 250 houses. They have also supported the Audley Rural Housing Needs Assessment, produced by AECOM in December 2021, further updated in October 2023 in line with the Census 2021 statistics.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to modify Local Plan requirements for mix and affordable housing, but to shape how housing development, including affordable provision, is provided.

There are only defined settlement boundaries in the Local Plan for Audley, Alsagers Bank, Bignall End, Halmer End, Miles Green and Wood Lane. Scot Hay however does not have a defined settlement boundary as it is overwashed by Green Belt.

Audley Parish Green Belt Review V2.4, August 2022, Staffordshire County Council

Whilst the HNA considers housing need for the Neighbourhood Area, it does not consider constraints to delivery including that a majority of the Neighbourhood Area and some settlements are over washed by green belt.

The study identifies that currently delivery of capacity could be through opportunities for small-scale infill, brownfield sites, and conversion of agricultural buildings. The study goes on to recognise that:

“Infill opportunities and unimplemented planning permissions account for approximately 121 houses.”

This would result in a shortfall, which would need to be delivered through the release of green belt which can only be achieved in the Local Plan.

Audley Rural Housing Needs Assessment, AECOM November 2021 (updated October 2023)

The earlier AECOM independent Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) completed in November 2021 calculated an objectively assessed housing need figure. However, following the finalisation of that report, new Census 2021 was gradually released, allowing key analysis to be updated. Furthermore, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council made substantial progress with their emerging Local Plan which includes proposed housing allocations in the Neighbourhood Area (NA). The HNA was revised in October 2023 to take account of these changes.

The 2011 Census showed the NA had a total of 8,435 residents, formed into 3,678 households and occupying 3,801 dwellings. The 2021 Census indicates population of around 8,354 individuals, suggesting a fall in population since 2011, but a small growth in the number of households to 3,692 (+14 households). The average household size fell over the 10-year period. The number of dwellings recorded in the Census 2021 increased by only 74 since 2011.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not make any site allocations for new housing, it acknowledges that the emerging Local Plan proposes sites within the Neighbourhood Area with capacity for 270

new homes for the Local Plan period (2020-2040). In addition, the emerging Local Plan proposes growth within the settlement boundaries, which is consistent with the approach of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan period is to 2042. The HNA calculated that the Local Plan figure:

“equates to 12.5 homes on average per annum so if this rate of development was extended to the proposed Neighbourhood Plan period the delivery of new homes in Audley Rural might equate to 275 homes 2020-2042.”

The proposed allocated sites of the emerging Local Plan meets 270 of this figure. There is capacity for approximately 121 new dwellings within the settlement boundaries through existing in-fill sites and unimplemented planning permissions. The lack of suitable sites implies a shortfall of around 149 dwellings over the Neighbourhood Plan period.

Exceptional circumstances to release any green belt must be demonstrated through the emerging Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan does not propose green belt release.

Through Neighbourhood Plan policy, the Parish Council are committed to working closely with NULBC to explore options around conversions, new housing configurations and rural exception sites to address any potential shortfall. In addition, the Parish Council concurs with the strong views of the community around the limitations of the existing method for calculating housing need and the evidence shows that despite, the construction of additional dwellings, the population of the parish fell slightly between 2011 and 2021.

In summary, the HNA calculates:

There is a need for specialist housing which is affordable and can be adapted to the needs of older people. This could include homes for downsizing, co-housing developments, retirement villages and also specialist schemes.

The affordable housing tenure mix should include 35% routes to ownership (e.g., First Homes, Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy) and 65% affordable housing for rent (social rent and affordable rent).

The majority of housing in the Audley Rural Parish are 2 and 3-bedroom homes. There is a need to provide new smaller homes (1-bedroom), more family homes (3-bedroom) and also larger (4+ bedroom) family homes to provide greater choice.

Current Situation in Audley Rural Parish (Census 2021)

In terms of occupancy, 15% of households were one-person of pensionable age, with 30.1% of households containing only one person. 38.8% of households contained only two people. These figures were broadly in line with the averages for the borough. In terms of occupancy, 79% of households had one or more spare bedrooms, compared to 75.4% for the borough.

The 2021 census recorded that there were 3,700 households in Audley, giving an average household size of 2.3. Over 87% of households had access to one or more cars, compared to the national figure of 76%.

Tenure in Audley was overwhelming owner-occupied, with 43.3% owning outright (compared to 32.5% nationally), 31.8% mortgaged and 25% renting (38% nationally). The housing stock itself was predominantly comprised of houses and bungalows (95% compared to 77% for England), with only 5% flats (22% for England).

Audley has experienced very limited inward migration, with only 2.8% of the population being born outside the UK (compared to 6.8% for the borough and 17.4% for England).

The Census 2021 data is aggregated from small areas on a best-fit basis, and therefore may differ slightly from other sources. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 households.

3.3 | ANP1

Residential Development

- 1 Residential development will be supported in the following locations:
 - a. Within the settlement boundaries of Audley and Bignall End or within the built settlements of Alsager Bank, Halmer End, Miles Green and Wood Lane;
 - b. Infill development within Scot Hay or other gaps in built frontages, flanked on both sides by existing housing, providing it does not comprise inappropriate development in the green belt;
 - c. Conversions of existing buildings, providing it does not comprise inappropriate development in the green belt.
- 2 The mix of accommodation in residential development should be based on evidence of local need and include:
 - a. Small (one bedroom) and family (3-4 bedroom) housing as part of the mix;
 - b. Accommodation suitable for older people and those with limited mobility.
- 3 Where there is an affordable housing requirement, it should be tenure blind and the tenure mix should be:
 - a. Affordable rent (60%);
 - b. Affordable ownership (40%) including First Homes, shared ownership and rent-to-buy.
- 4 New dwellings should have:
 - a. Screened storage space for bins and recycling, positioned away from street frontages;
 - b. Secure, screened storage space for cycles and scooters, with electric charging points;
- 5 Residential development should be served by external amenity space in the form of at least one of the following:
 - a. Private gardens or shared garden space;
 - b. Public green space in very close proximity;
 - c. Balconies of sufficient size to allow seating and planting containers.

- 6 Where there is a requirement to provide additional play facilities, existing facilities should be improved where possible, rather than adding to the existing fragmented provision of small facilities.
- 7 Support will be given to community-led housing and self-build housing that meets the requirements of this and other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

INTERPRETATION

The settlement boundaries for most settlements were defined in the Local Plan – see plans at Figure 3.3 to 3.8. * Scot Hay however does not have a defined settlement boundary as it is overwashed by Green Belt.

Tenure blind means that affordable housing should be of similar design and specification to market housing.

In determining dwelling layouts, the following guidance and standards may be useful:

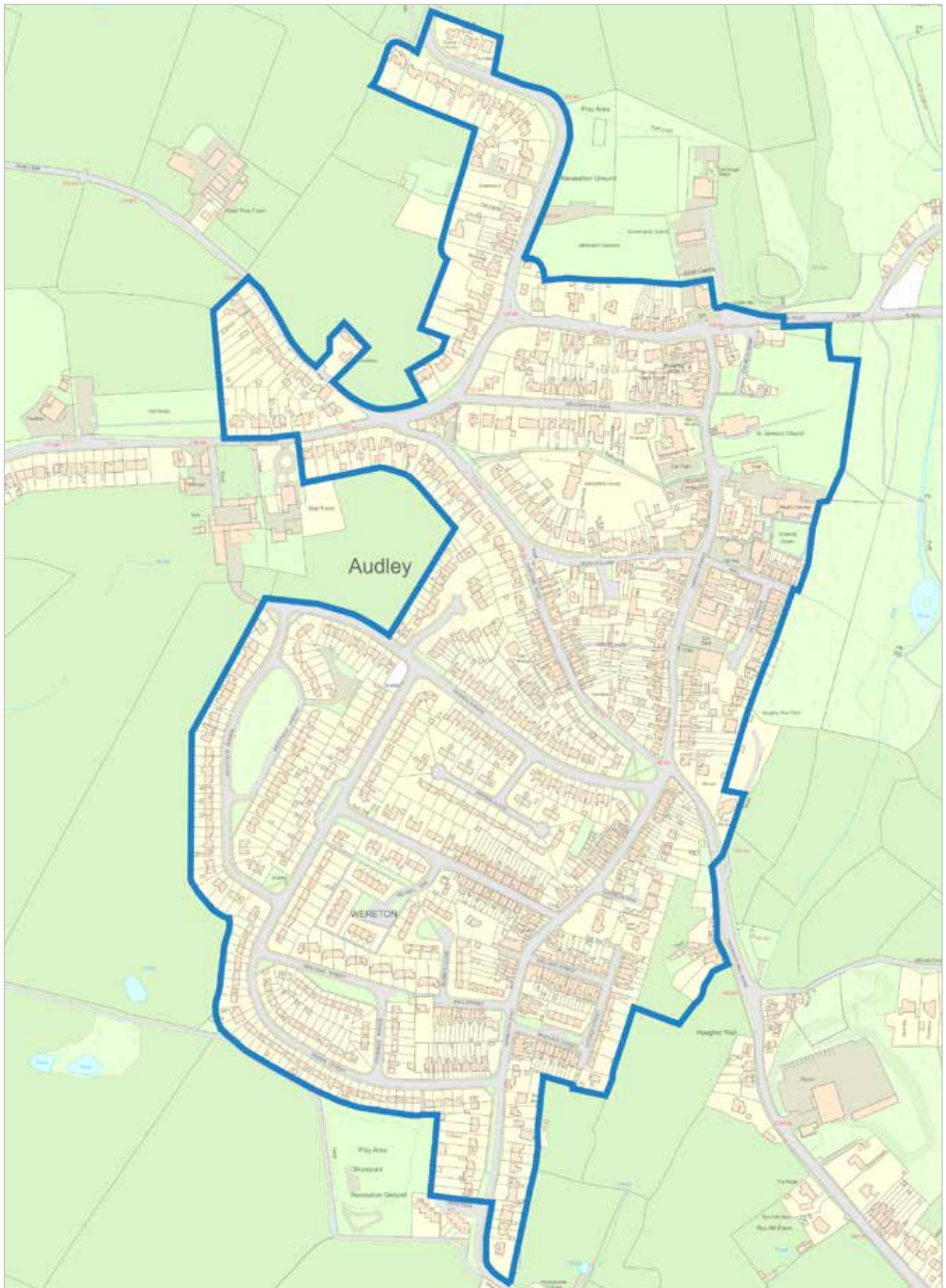
- › Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard 2015.
- › Lifetime Homes.
- › National Design Guide 2021.
- › Secured by Design.



Figure 3.2, The Arches, Church Street, in Audley conservation area



— Settlement Boundary



Audley

Figure 3.4, Audley Settlement Boundary

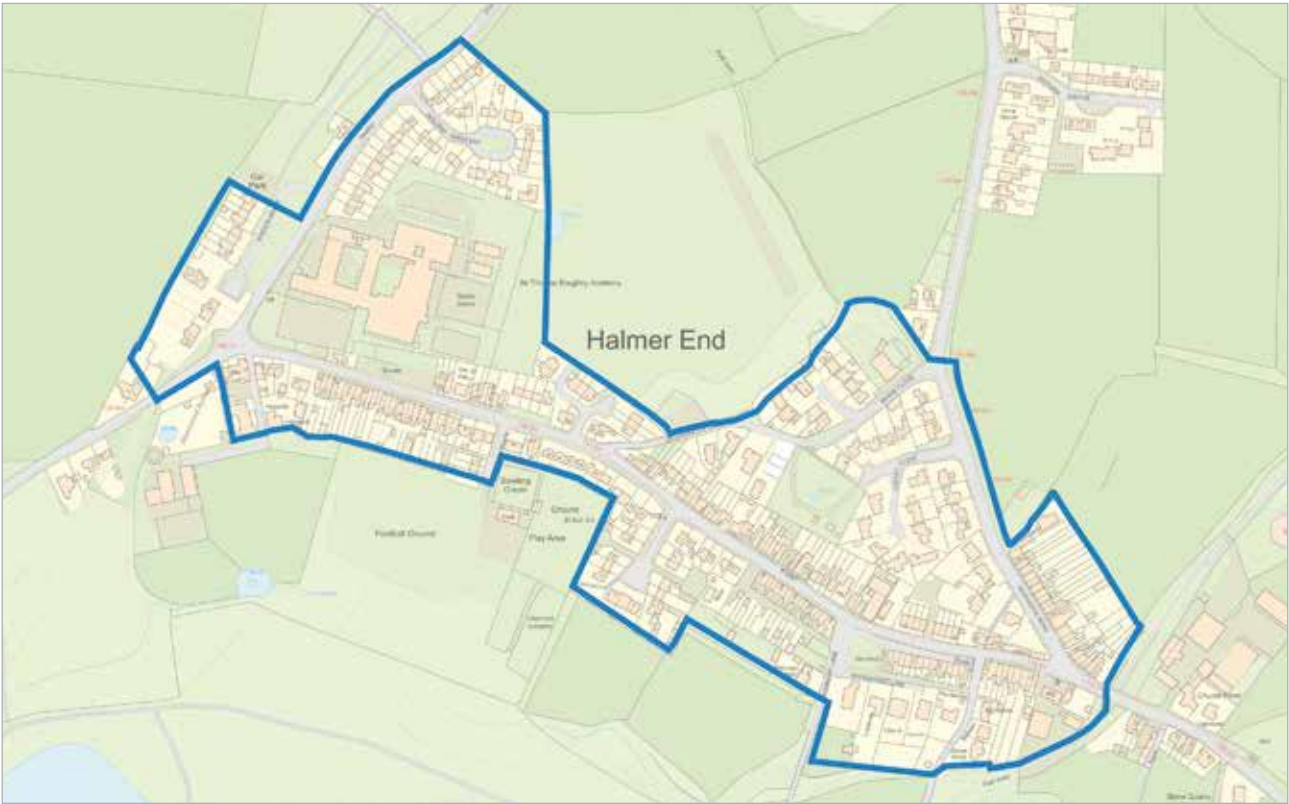
— Settlement Boundary



Bignall End

Figure 3.5, Bignall End Settlement Boundary

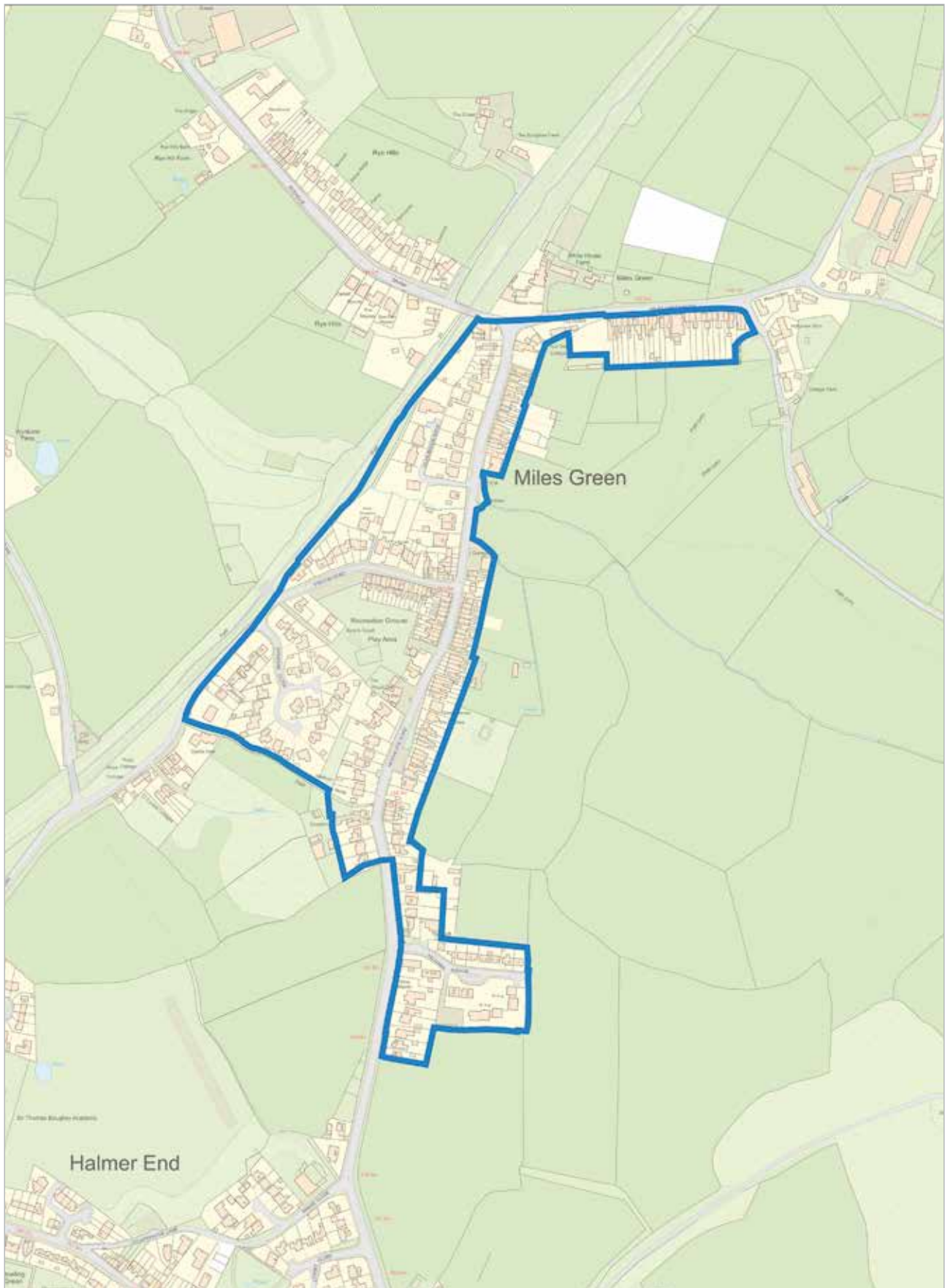
— Settlement Boundary



Halmer End

Figure 3.6, Halmer End Settlement Boundary

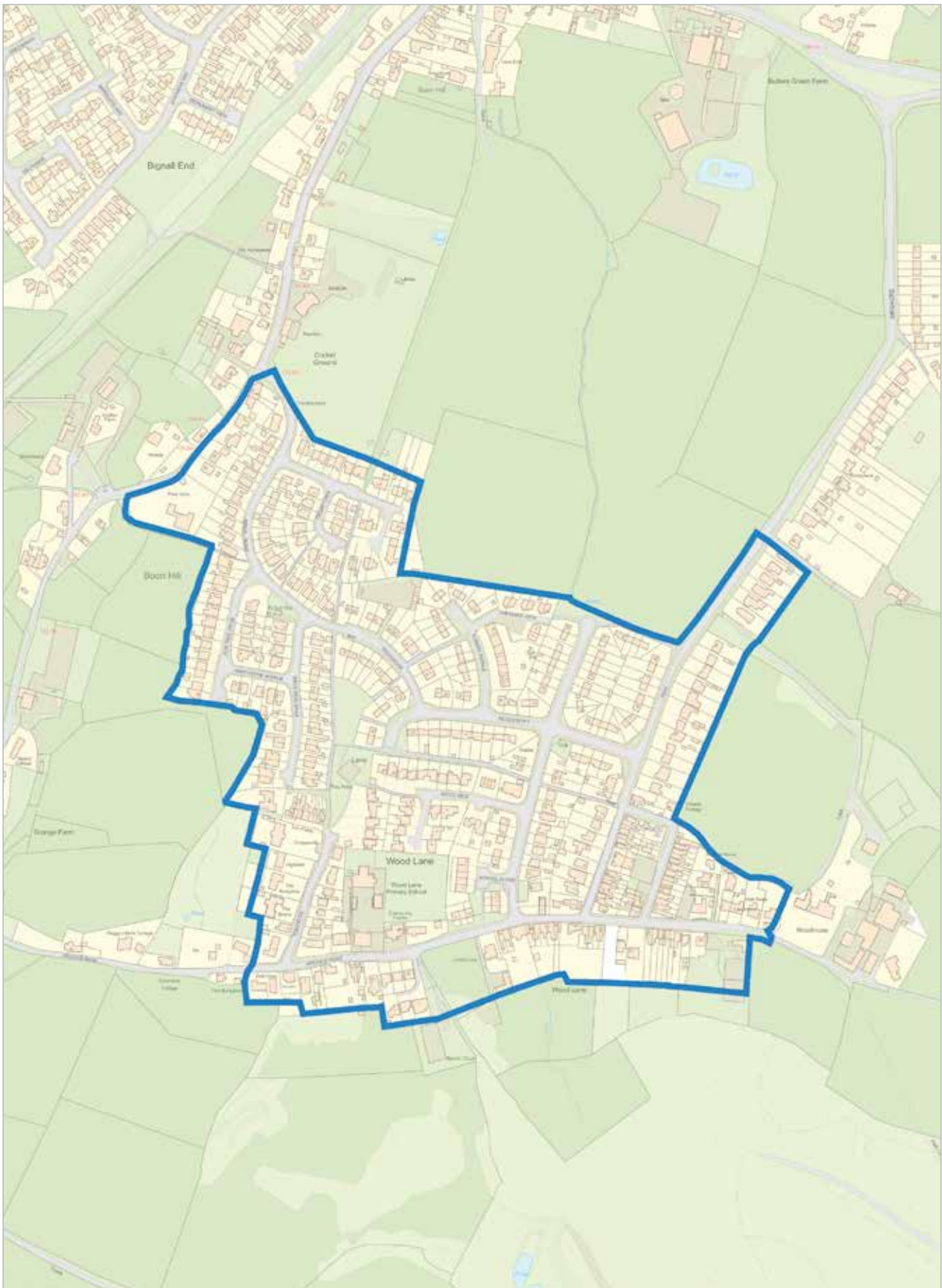
— Settlement Boundary



Miles Green

Figure 3.7, Miles Green Settlement Boundary

— Settlement Boundary



Wood Lane

Figure 3.8, Wood Lane Settlement Boundary

— Settlement Boundary

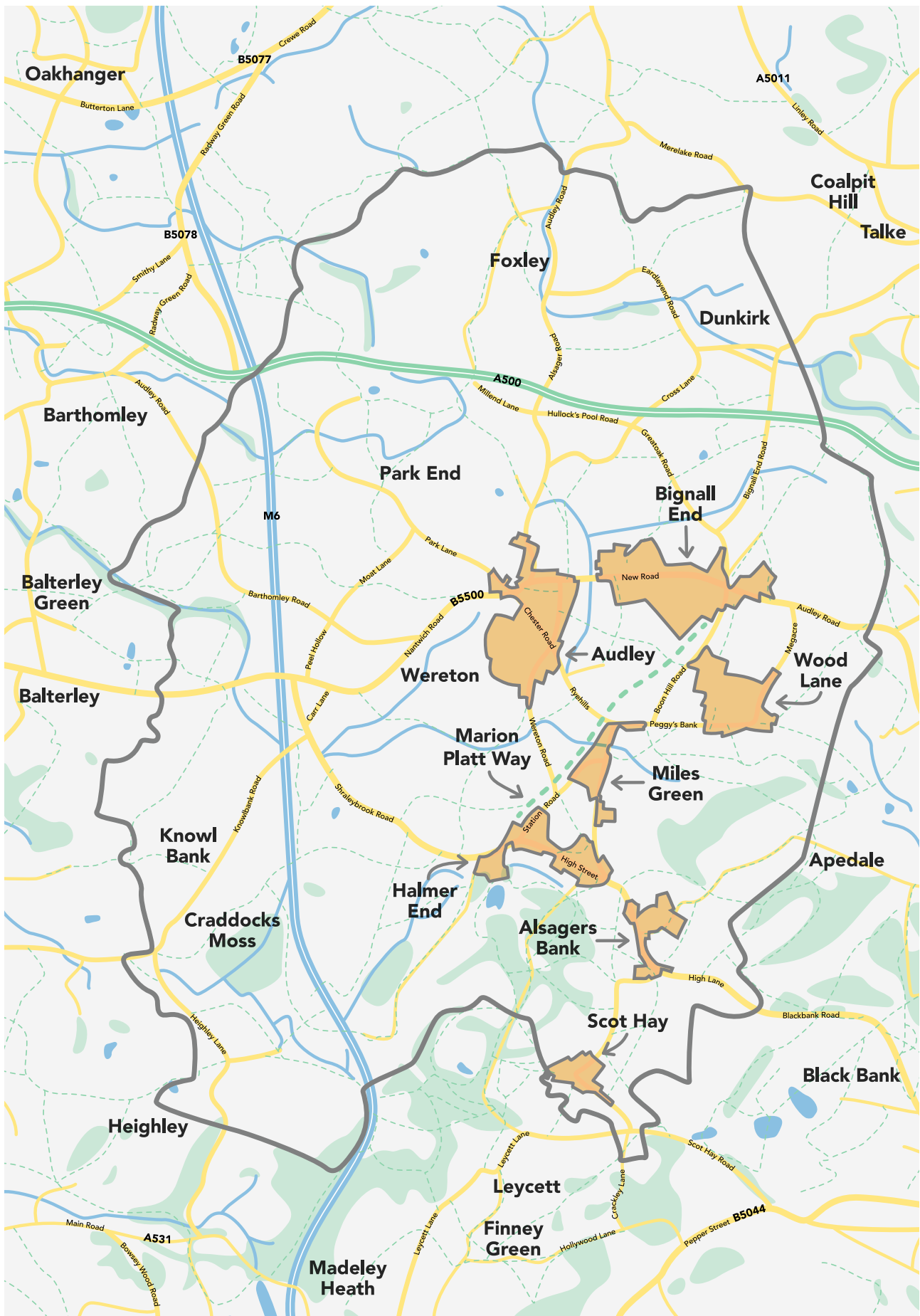


Figure 3.9, Neighbourhood area



Figure 3.10, Local example of wind turbine

4



4.1 Purpose

To support a vibrant village centre in Audley and encourage diversification to support agriculture and sustainable settlements with a range of community facilities and services.

4.2 Planning Rationale

National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

Chapter 6 of the NPPF makes clear that significant weight should be given to supporting economic growth and activity. This includes taking into account local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

To support a prosperous rural economy the NPPF states that planning policies should enable sustainable growth and expansion of business in rural areas through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new developments. It also sets out the type of uses that are focused around community services and facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues and public houses, all of which Audley Parish currently supports as a rural community.

Chapter 8 of the NPPF deals with 'Promoting healthy and safe communities' and states that planning policies should make provision for shared spaces and community facilities and guard against loss of valued facilities and services. It also supports improvement of existing community services and facilities. There are identified opportunities for this in the Neighbourhood Area, for example with improved community centres such as Audley and Wood Lane, and the provision of new 4G football pitches, all weather multi sports courts, designated running tracks, cycle routes and bridleways.

Emerging Local Plan, Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council

The emerging Local Plan undertook Regulation 18 consultation in the summer of 2023. The Local Planning Authority are considering the responses to this consultation. The Local Plan timetable indicates that a Regulation 19 Draft Plan will be available for consultation later in 2024.

The Parish Council have worked closely with Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to ensure there are no disparities between the two Plans.

Core Spatial Strategy, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent, Adopted October 2009

The Local Development Framework, Core Spatial Strategy 2009 contains policies on economic growth and development. These are now somewhat out-of-date due to the age of the plan and in particular changes to national policy and guidance and the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council are in the process of updating their Local Plan. In this new draft the spatial strategy for economic growth and development to 2040 will be set.

The Strategic Aims of the Core Strategy make clear that development should be focused with the Audley Parish to support the function of rural services which meet the needs of local people. The Neighbourhood Plan policies identify opportunities or locations where these or new services could be delivered to support the diversity of the Neighbourhood Area. These include within settlement boundaries and existing business sites for the provision of a variety of community facilities including E Use Class. For information on use class include use class E visit: www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes or visit the Planning Portal Website and search change of use classes.

Rural Topic Paper, Rural Hierarchy of Centres, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, June 2021

The topic paper identifies that jointly Audley and Bignall End are one of six 'rural centres' across the borough.

These are defined as settlements that provide a significant role in service provision to the local community. This is echoed in the community engagement which reflected how important the rural centre is to the Neighbourhood Area.

In addition to the rural centre, agriculture also forms a part of the economy. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support and encourage starter farms and rural diversification, recognising the importance of local food growing and production.



Figure 4.2, Farming in Shralebrook

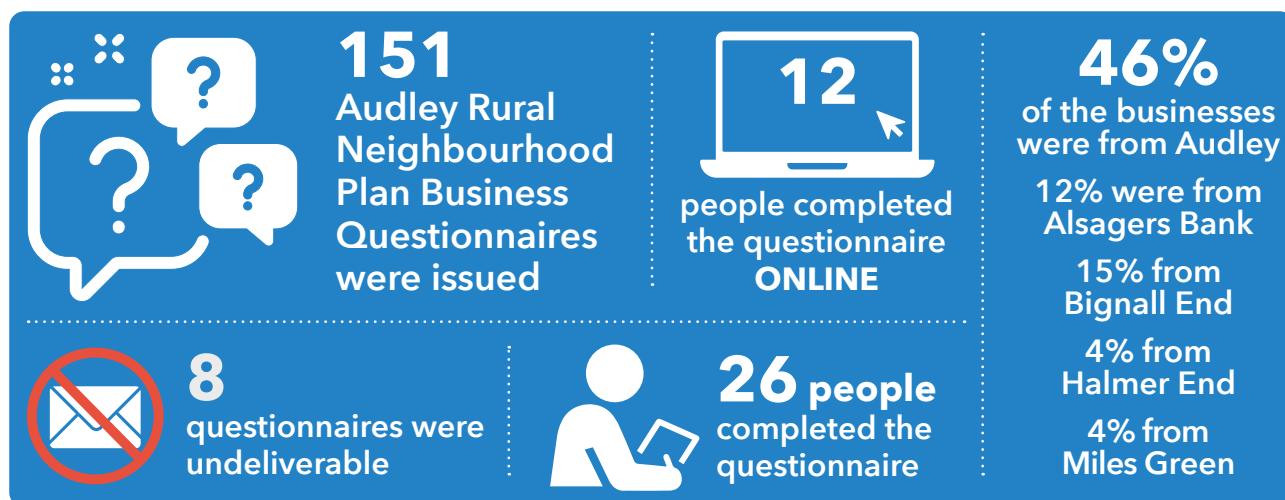


Figure 4.3, Farming in Shralebrook

Business Survey

Figure 4.2, Extracts from Community Engagement Spring 2022.

The infographics reflect the findings from community engagement with local business and the wider community on the local economy.



Where the business was stated:

A FIFTH were restaurants, cafes, or pubs



15% were health and wellbeing businesses



Almost **THREE QUARTERS** had been in business for over 11 years
 8% 6-10 years
 20% 1-5 years
 4% were new businesses (less than a year old)



Over half of businesses had no issues affecting their growth

Things affecting business growth
not enough PUBLIC TRANSPORT in the evening



NOT ENOUGH/LACK OF PARKING



NOT ENOUGH AFFORDABLE HOMES for first time buyers

Over a third had been **VICTIMS OF CRIME and/or anti-social behaviour** in the last 12 months

31% of businesses stated they would like the opportunity to **NETWORK WITH OTHER BUSINESS** in the Parish

Over three quarters of businesses said **MORE PARKING** was important



Over three quarters of businesses said **PUBLIC TRANSPORT** was important in supporting business



12% OF BUSINESSES said that advice and support to develop their business was important

OVER HALF of businesses said **development of green belt** was not important to business growth

Suggestions put forward as important to support business were

Better POLICE PRESENCE



BUS SERVICE AFTER 6PM



TRAFFIC CALMING at the top of Black Bank when entering Alsagers Bank



Rural Enterprise and Local Economy

46%
felt that
STARTER FARMS
were needed

32%
felt that
SMALLHOLDINGS
were needed

12%
felt that
A FARM SHOP
was needed



81%
felt that
NEW EMPLOYMENT
was **NOT** needed
in the Parish

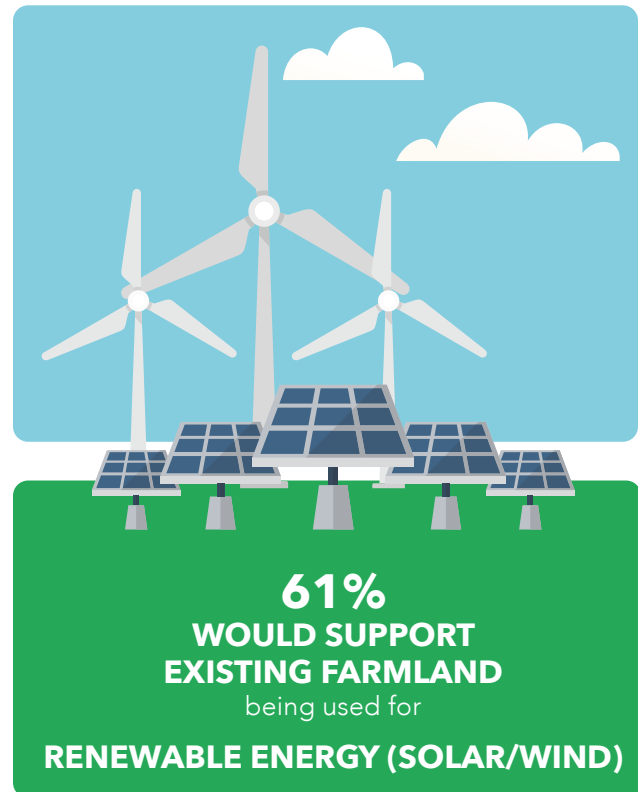
and only
3%
felt that the
GREEN BELT
SHOULD
BE RELEASED

87%
felt that
EXISTING BUILDINGS
and
72%
BROWNFIELD SITES
should be
primarily used

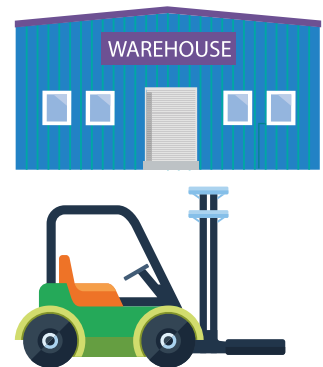
93%
are against
the release of
green belt
FOR NEW EMPLOYMENT

90%
are against
the release of
green belt
AROUND EXISTING VILLAGES
and

83%
are against
EXPANDING VILLAGES
to create new
employment sites



90%
would
NOT support
EXISTING FARMLAND
being used for
new employment
sites (warehouses/
offices)



4.3 | ANP2

Business and Community Facilities

- 1 Office space and other E Use Class and suitable F1 or F2 Use Class development and live-work units will be supported in the following locations:
 - a. Within the settlement boundaries of Audley and Bignall End or within the built settlements of Alsager Bank, Halmer End, Miles Green and Wood Lane;
 - b. Infill development within Scot Hay or other gaps in built frontages, flanked on both sides by existing housing, providing it does not comprise inappropriate development in the green belt;
 - c. Conversions of existing buildings, providing it does not comprise inappropriate development in the green belt;
 - d. The diversification of agricultural holdings;
 - e. Within existing business sites.
- 2 Support for development described in clause 1 is subject to there being no significant adverse impacts on:
 - a. The amenities of nearby residential properties;
 - b. The rural landscape or historic character of the area.

- 3 Development that creates new employment floorspace and all new dwellings should include the necessary infrastructure including ducting, to allow for the installation of super-fast broadband within the site and curtilage.

INTERPRETATION

The settlement boundaries for most settlements were defined in the last Local Plan - see plans at Figure 3.3 to 3.8. *Scot Hay however does not have a defined settlement boundary as it is overwashed by Green Belt. The emerging Local Plan retains settlement boundaries only for Audley and Bignall End. Therefore, the policy refers to 'settlement boundaries' and 'built settlements'.

The policy supports new employment space, and this could include flexible floorspace for start-ups, enterprise, and creative industries. It also supports community uses. Descriptions of Use Classes E, F1 and F2 are available on the Planning Portal.

Impacts on amenities of residential properties could include noise, dust, vibration, disturbance, including from additional vehicle movements, or any other impacts.



Figure 4.4, Converted farm buildings into small business units at Townhouse Farm, Alsager Road, Audley

4.4 | ANP3

Audley Village Centre (Church Street)

- 1 Development will be supported within Audley Village Centre where it complements or enhances and causes no harm to its vitality and viability as a centre for retail, food and drink, community facilities, recreation, entertainment and culture.
- 2 The loss of business or community facilities within Audley Village Centre will only be supported where the use or facility is no longer viable.
- 3 Ground floor road frontage units should remain in uses that complement the vitality and viability of the village centre, with shopfronts retained.
- 4 Hot food takeaways will only be supported where there would be no significant adverse impacts on residential amenity or the vitality

and viability of of the centre and where the scheme includes measures to manage impacts, including, noise, disturbance, smell, vehicle movements and litter.

INTERPRETATION

The policy would support development that complements the village centre, including Use Class E activities (shops, food and drink, business), community facilities (including health facilities), recreation, entertainment and culture.

Takeaways and other evening uses would require careful consideration in terms of impacts. Some impacts may be controlled through conditions, for example relating to hours of operation or provision of litter bins.



Figure 4.5, Church Street in Audley at night

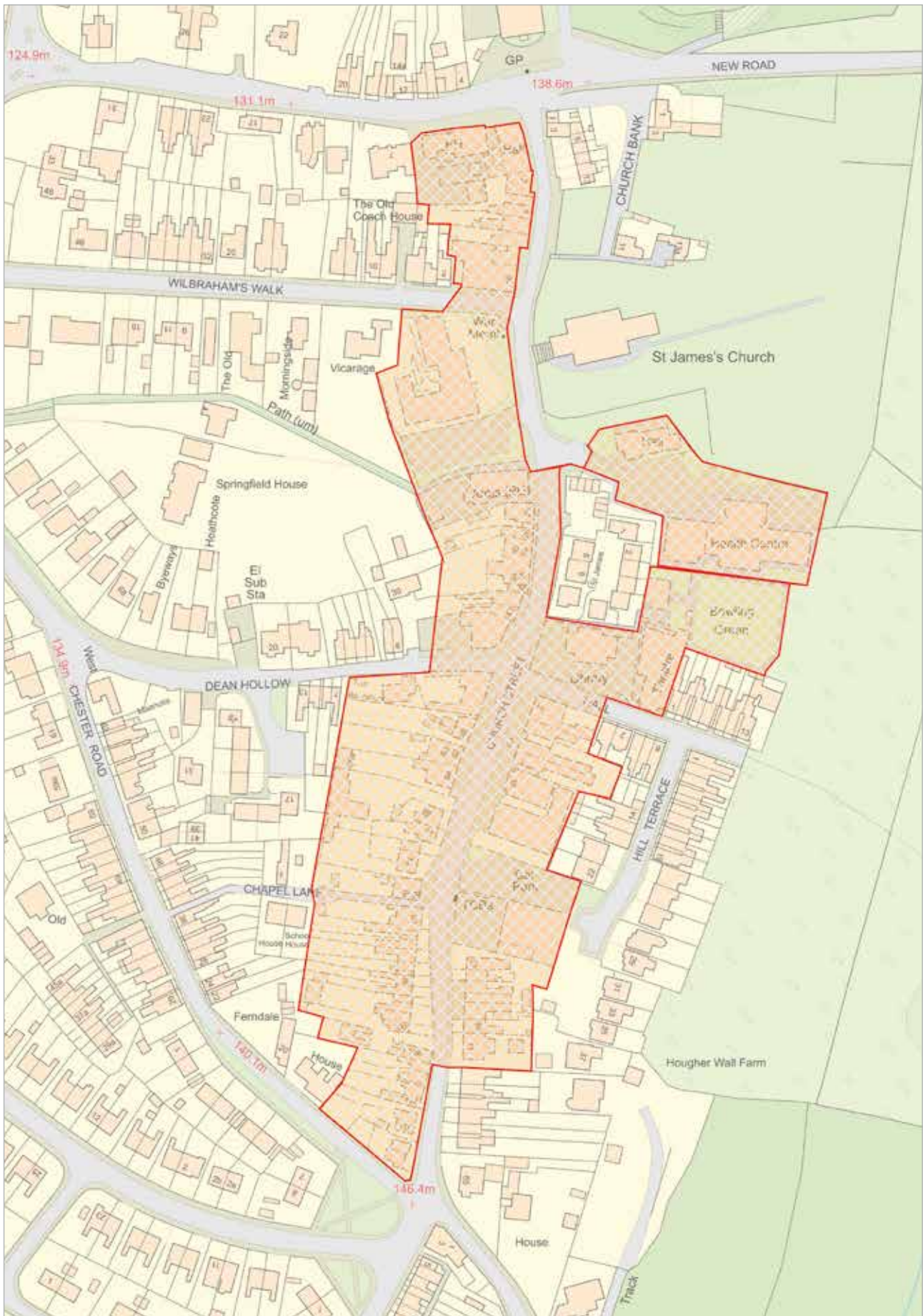


Figure 4.6, Audley village centre boundary

— Boundary of Village Centre

5



DESIGN AND HERITAGE

5

5.1 Purpose

To ensure that development is well designed and to protect or enhance historic and rural environments.

Planning Authority are considering the responses to this consultation. The Local Plan timetable indicates that a Regulation 19 Draft Plan will be available for consultation later in 2024. The Parish Council have worked closely with Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council to ensure there are no disparities between the two Plans.

5.2 Planning Rationale

National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

Chapter 12 of the NPPF deals with 'Achieving well-designed and beautiful places'. Design considerations include function, adding to the quality of the area, visual attractiveness, effective landscaping, being sympathetic to local character and history, not discouraging innovation and change, maintain strong and distinctive sense of place, optimize site potential, and making safe, inclusive and accessible places. This is augmented by the National Design Guide (2021) establishes that well-designed places have ten characteristics. These are context, nature, identity, use, resources, movement, built form, public space, homes and buildings and lifespan.

Chapter 16 of the NPPF deals with 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. This includes consideration of sustaining or enhancing heritage assets, wider social, economic and cultural benefits, contribution of new development, and character of place.

Emerging Local Plan, Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council

The emerging Local Plan undertook Regulation 18 consultation in the summer of 2023. The Local

Core Spatial Strategy, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent, Adopted October 2009

The Core Strategy, 2009 contains various policies relating to design and the historic environment. These are now somewhat out-of-date due to the age of the plan, changes to national policy and guidance, the introduction of the National Model Design Code 2021, and the increasing priority given to climate change.

The Strategic Aims of the Core Strategy make clear the priority to protect and enhance the heritage and character of the area. They also seek to eliminate poor quality development and encourage zero carbon design and technology. The Neighbourhood Plan sets more specific design requirements and takes account of more recent guidance.

Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures SPD, Adopted March 2012

This Supplementary Planning Document identifies local heritage assets. Updated periodically it includes those within the Neighbourhood Area. The Local List can be viewed at: www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/conservation-heritage/register-locally-important-buildings-structures or visit Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's website and search for the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures SPD.

Staffordshire Farmsteads Assessment Framework, February 2015, English Heritage and Staffordshire County Council

The Staffordshire Farmsteads Assessment Framework, makes clear the importance of locally distinctive historic landscape character features.

It provides a clear framework for assessing the impact of change and new development within the setting of non-designated heritage assets and the harm that can be caused.

The Framework identifies that traditional farmsteads in Staffordshire are an integral part of their surrounding landscapes and settlements. They make a significant contribution to local distinctiveness.



Figure 5.2, Staffordshire farmstead example at Wall Farm, Nantwich Road, Audley

Shop Front Design Guidance, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

The Shop Front Design Guidance highlights the evolution of shopfronts in the Borough and sets general design principles. It also identifies the

different elements of shopfronts and provides guidance on materials, detailing and colour.

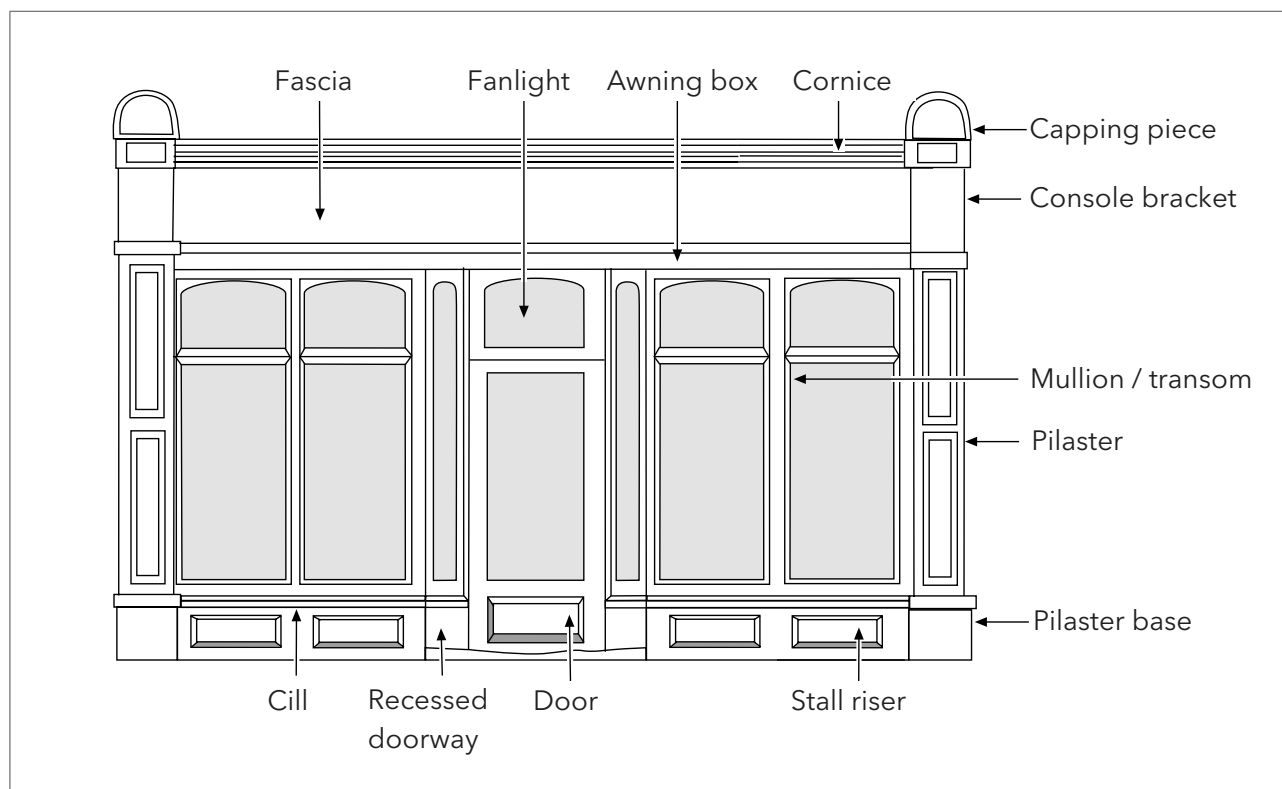


Figure 5.3, Elements of a Shop Front.
(Page 6, Shop Front Design Guidance, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council).

Audley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, September 2013

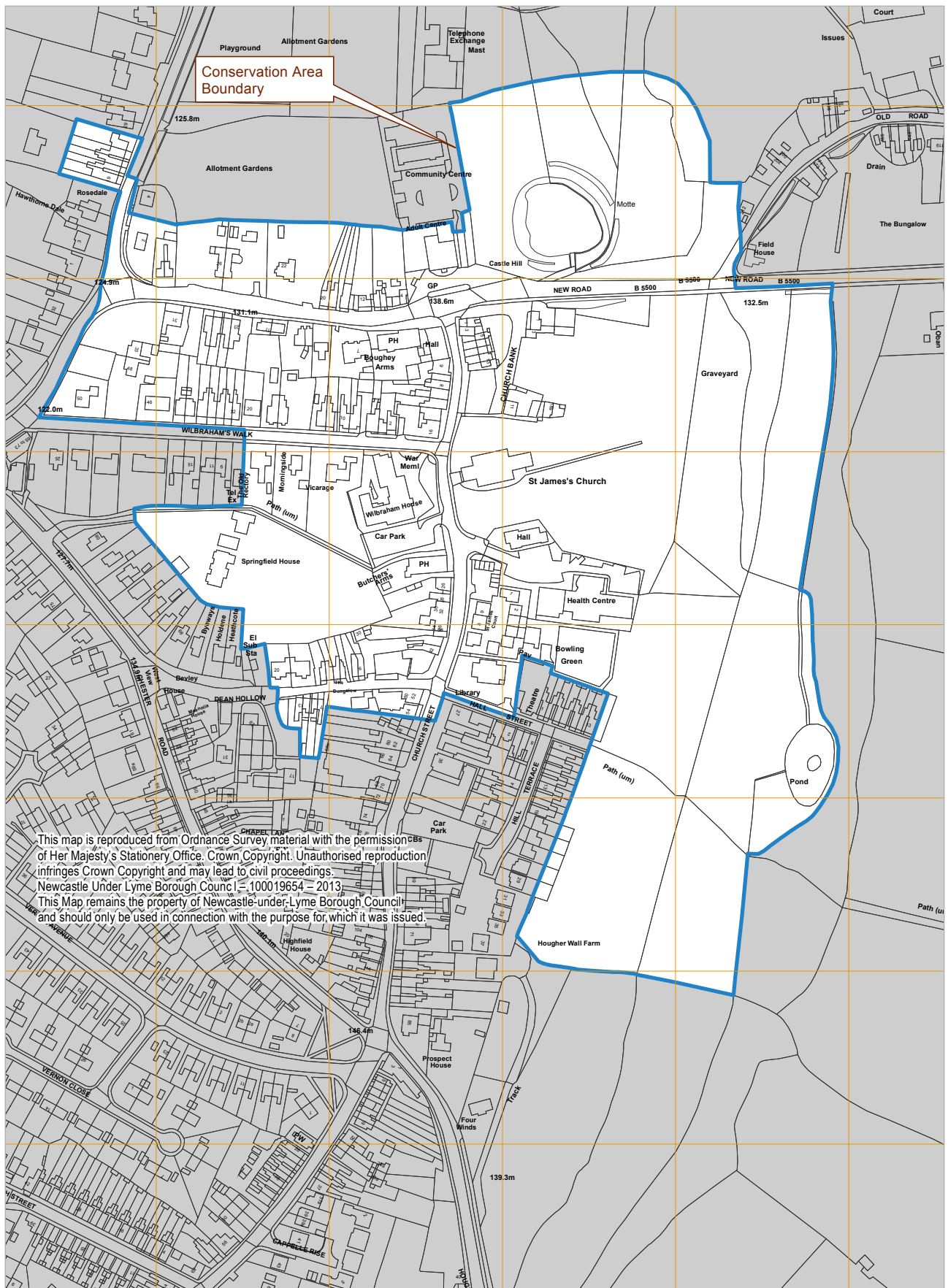
The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan includes a spatial and character analysis of the area. It also identifies that Audley has retained a centre with a distinct historic character and notes that harm has been caused by inappropriate shopfronts.

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to positively address this issue, through design policy, augmenting the shopfront design guidance.

The document also includes a townscape appraisal map which identifies the key features and characteristics of the Conservation Area.



Figure 5.4, St James the Great Church in Audley Conservation Area



Conservation Area boundary as Boundary as designated 18th September 2013

Figure 5.5, Audley Townscape Appraisal Map

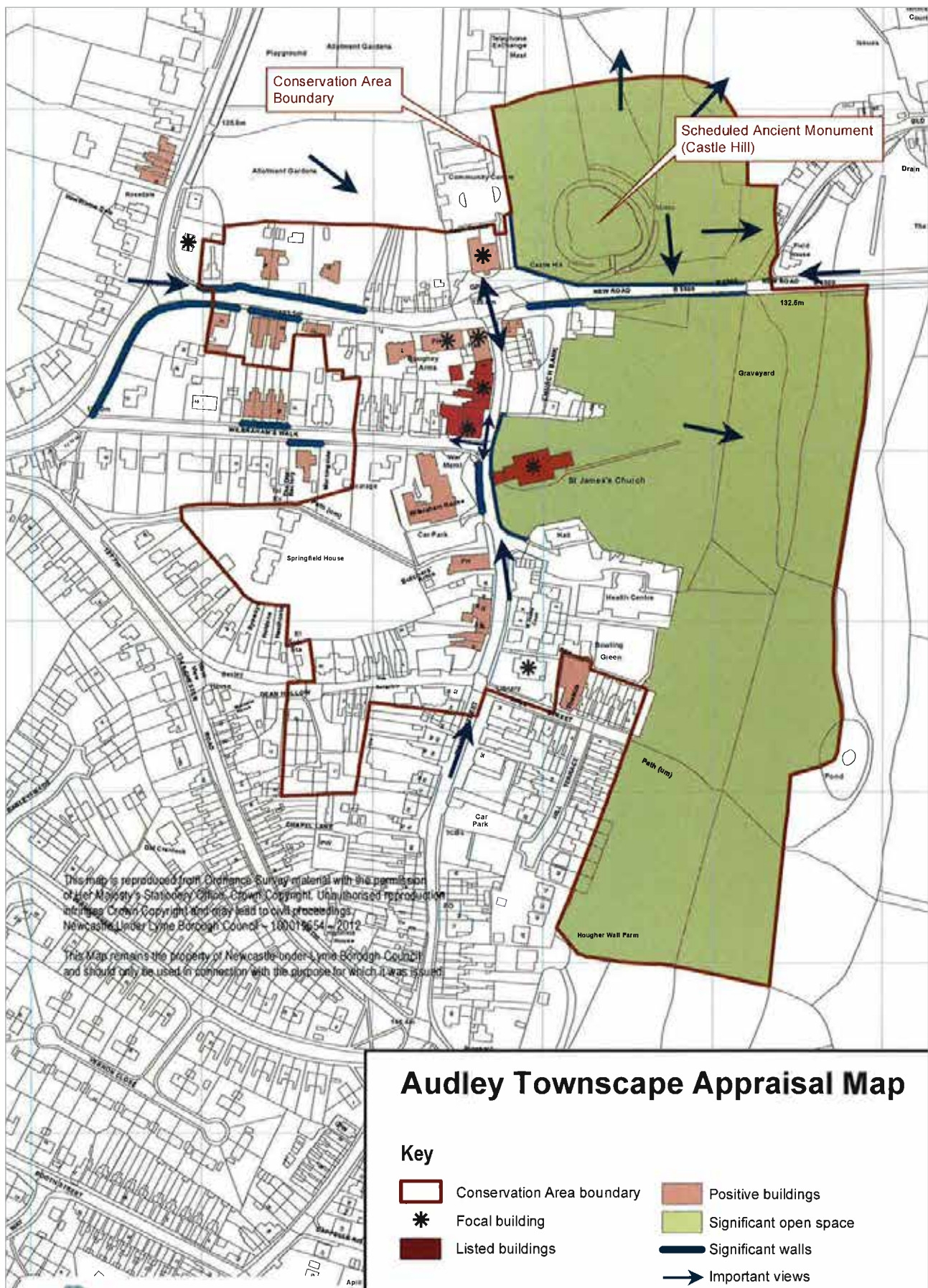


Figure 5.6, Audley Conservation Area Map (Pg 17, Audley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, September 2013)

Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment Study, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, 2022

The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment Study identifies the Wedgwood Monument as one of the most significant features in the landscape in the Neighbourhood Area. It states:

“The Wedgwood Monument, unveiled in 1845 at Bignall Hill, as a memorial to John Wedgwood, is still a prominent landscape feature today. Wedgwood, a local coal mine owner, died in 1839 and declared in his will that a monument would be erected in his memory. The Wedgwood-owned colliery, in which there were notable coal mine disasters, was located just below the hill. The monument now acts as a reminder within the landscape of this colliery and its history.”

(Pg 23, Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment Study, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, 2022)

It also identifies the impact of the topography and how development is visible in the landscape noting that:

“Residential development on the edge of the urban areas is often visible in the landscape,

particularly in the north of the Study Area where it is located on the rising slopes of the undulating landform. Here, it is viewed as layers of predominantly residential properties, climbing the hillsides.”

(Pg 24, Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment Study, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, 2022)

Audley Rural Design Codes, AECOM, May 2023

The Audley Design Codes provides detailed analysis and site context for each of the settlements and the wider rural area. It identifies townscape character and settlement characteristics that inform the policies of this Plan. To view the detailed design code visit: www.audleyplan.org/designcode.php or the Audley Neighbourhood Plan website at www.audleyplan.org to view the Aecom Design Guidance and Codes May 2023

The following extract shows how the Neighbourhood Area has been subdivided into character areas in the design code. The corresponding plan shows ‘area 3’ as the strategic gaps between settlements that are key to preventing coalescence and the identity of each settlement.



Figure 5.7, LGS Site 38 – Church Bank, Audley

Audley Rural Parish

Design Guidance and Codes

May 2023

Delivering a better world

Figure 5.8, Audley Rural Parish Design Codes and Guidance, May 2023, Aecom

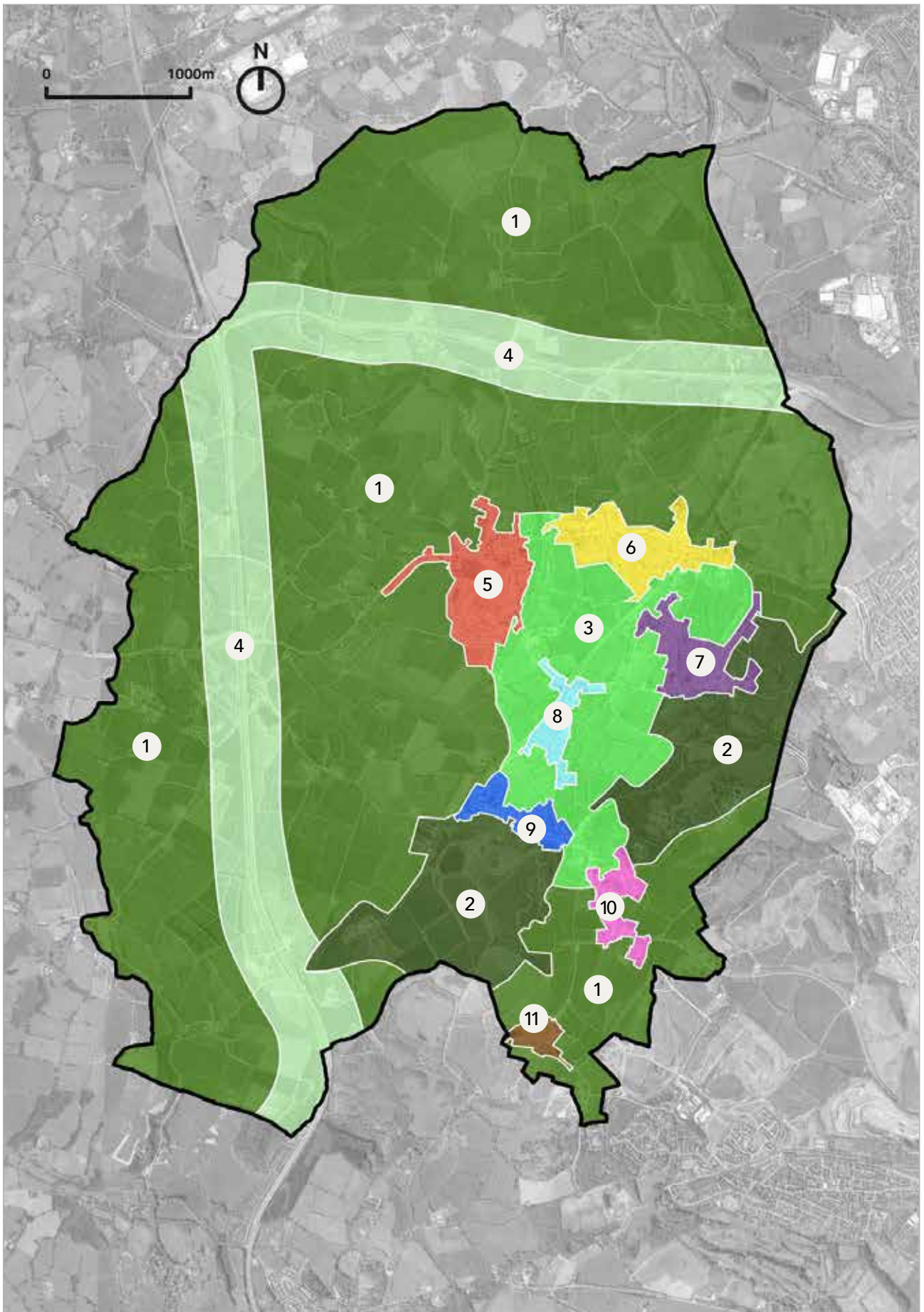


Figure 5.9, Map of AECOM Design Code Character Areas

AECOM Design Code - Countryside and Settlement Focus Areas

The Parish lends itself to being divided between two broad categories (countryside or settlement) into which there are a number of focus areas. As the adjacent map (Figure 5.8) illustrates, the settlement focus areas are in close proximity and centrally located. Overall, eleven focus areas have been identified and include:

COUNTRYSIDE		1. Open green fields	Open spaces with field boundary hedgerows and trees; contribute to the openness of the Parish
		2. Woodland areas	Mature woodlands and dense scrubs dominate these areas; and act as visual screens around the villages
		3. Strategic gaps	Open green spaces act as strategic maps separating villages
		4. Major infrastructure gaps	Linear areas along M6 and the A500; potential negative visual and noise impacts
SETTLEMENT		5. Audley Village	The main settlement of the Parish, providing key social and community amenities
		6. Bignall End	A typical small residential village at the intersection of the disused railway and the B5500
		7. Wood Lane	A predominantly residential village adjacent to mature woodlands
		8. Miles Green	A small, triangular-shaped village situated amongst green spaces
		9. Halmer End	Predominantly residential village with a linear settlement pattern and north of the Bateswood Nature Reserve
		10. Alsagers Bank	A small village located in the south-east part of the Parish, situated between two wooded areas
		11. Scot Hay	The smallest of all the villages and located on the south-east border of the Neighbourhood Area

Figure 5.10, Legend of AECOM Design Code Character Areas - Countryside and Settlement Focus Areas

The following extract shows the distribution of heritage assets across the Neighbourhood Area and the Conservation Area.

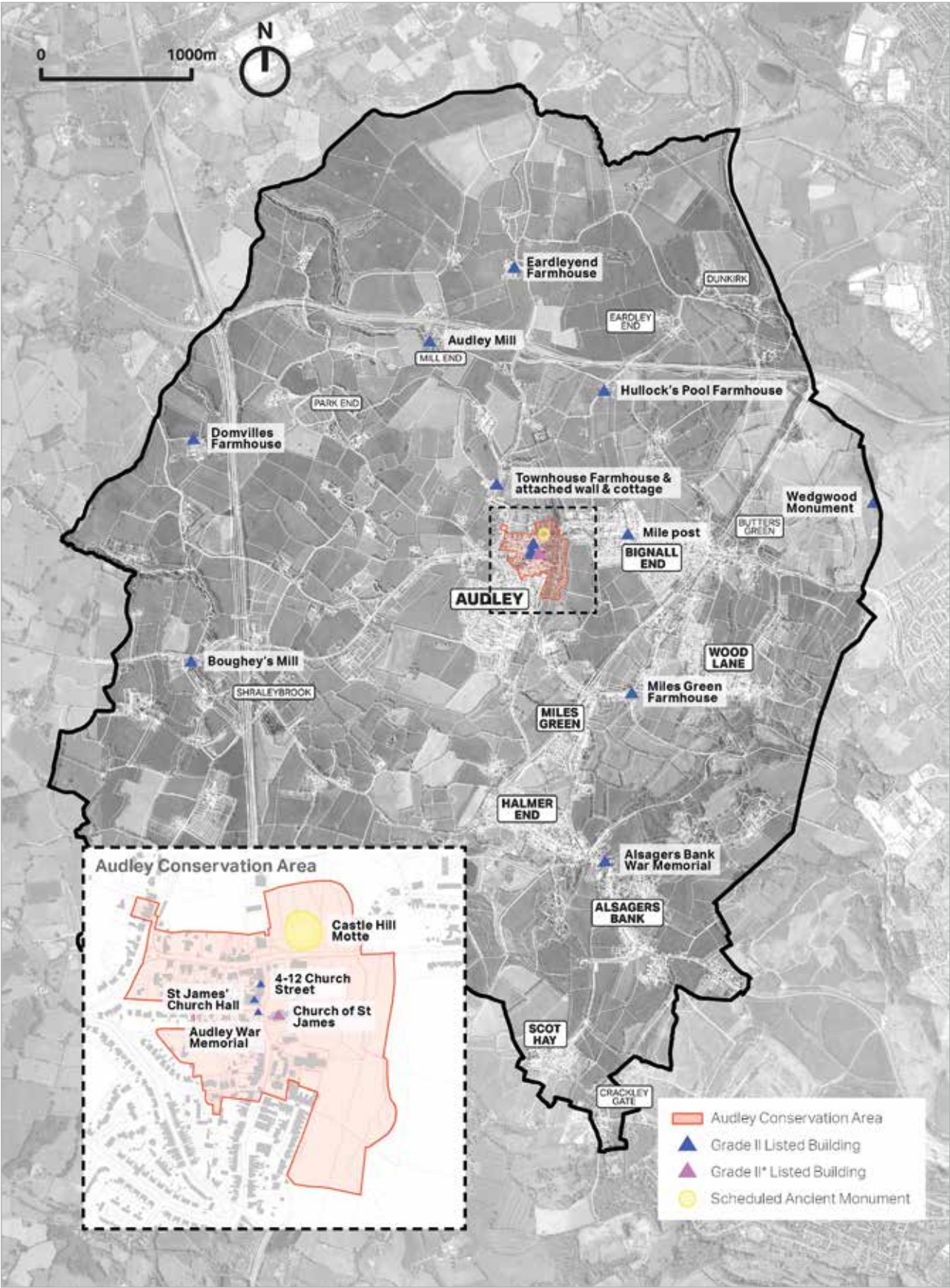
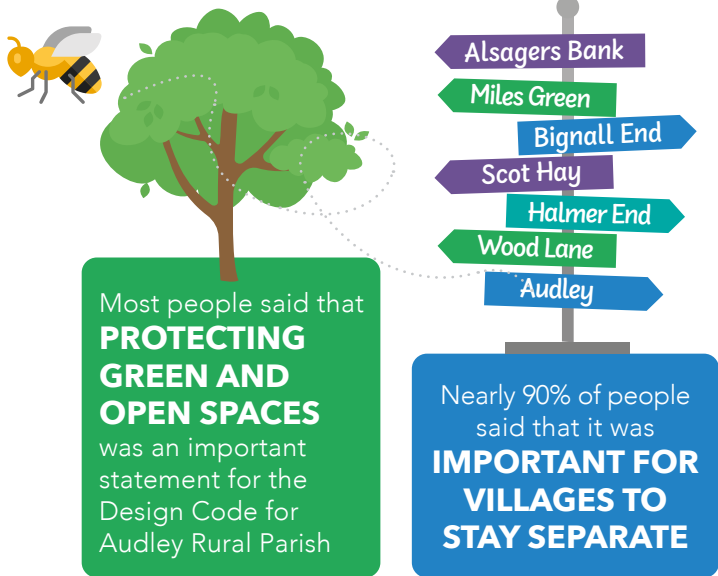


Figure 5.11, Heritage Assets Across the Neighbourhood Area

The feedback from community engagement also supported how people want to protect the rural area with the results shown in the following infographics from the Householder survey in Spring 2022.

Environment, Sustainability and Quality Design (Design Code)

Most people said it was important to **KEEP THE RURAL CHARACTER AND FEEL** of the Neighbourhood Area



What is Important to People About Audley Rural Parish

A heritage asset is an item that is important because of its contribution to Audley's community and culture.

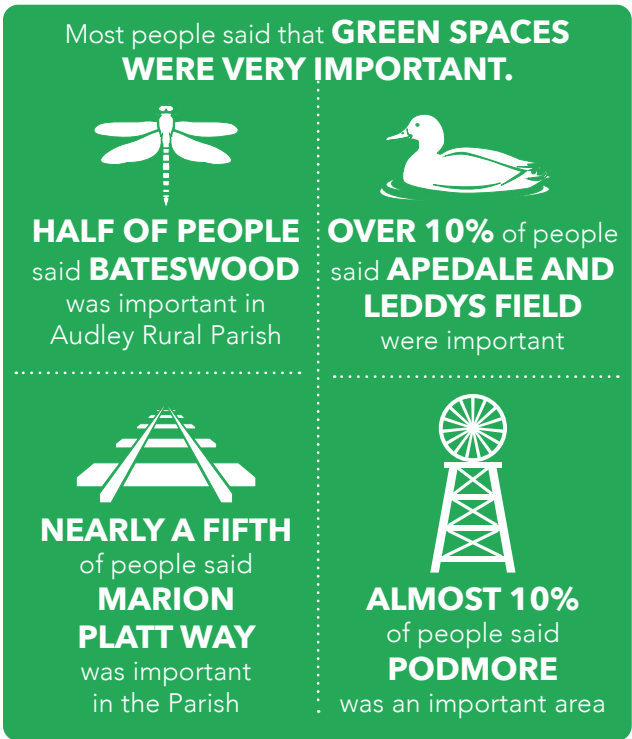


Figure 5.12, Extracts from Community Engagement Spring 2022

5.3 | ANP4

Sustainable Design

- 1 Development should be well-designed and locally distinctive where it is appropriate.
 - a. Development should complement the existing character of the area in terms of:
 - i. height, scale, massing;
 - ii. setback from the road and pavement;
 - iii. spacing of properties;
 - iv. patterns of yards or gardens;
 - v. any other predominant townscape characteristics.
 - b. Development should create a safe and convenient environment for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders, including:
 - i. Designing the public realm, including green infrastructure, to support good physical and mental health, including opportunities for recreation, social interaction, play and exercise, meeting the requirements of Policy ANP10.
 - ii. Designing layouts to support ease of movement within the site, with links to surrounding footpaths, streets and facilities;
 - iii. Ensuring that street and spaces are overlooked by active building frontages, to create natural surveillance.
 - c. Development that includes positive features to reduce carbon impacts and support biodiversity in its design, specification and landscaping will be supported, taking account of the Green Guidance Note later in this plan.
 - d. Development should have strong legibility, including distinctive buildings, spaces and features and well-defined streets and spaces.
 - e. Development that uses durable materials with a high standard of finish will be supported, including:
 - i. local vernacular materials;
 - ii. reclaimed or recycled materials;

- iii. green materials, including those from sustainable sources or with low embodied energy.
- f. Boundary treatments should reinforce local character, including use of low walls or hedges.
- g. Development should avoid having any adverse impact on the community value, open and green character, amenity, accessibility or safety of green and other public spaces.
- h. Parking should be integrated in the design and layout of development, including curtilage spaces, so that streets and spaces are not dominated by parked cars.
- i. Creative or innovative design solutions for the specific site and context will be supported, especially where they incorporate green design features.

INTERPRETATION

The application of the policy, proportionate to the scale and nature of the development recognises that not all clauses relate to all development. For example, some clauses apply only where new layout is being created.

An integrated approach should be taken to the design of buildings, spaces and landscape. The design process should be based on analysis of the site and local context, including surrounding landscape and townscape characteristics, also taking account of this Plan's Green Infrastructure policy.

Active frontages would include elevations with windows, doors and balconies and low boundary treatments.

The 'National Design Guide' and 'Building for a Healthy Life' standard may be useful in securing compliance with the policy.

Legibility refers to the ease with which a place can be 'understood' by users. The creation of distinctive buildings and strong street frontages can be helpful in creating places that are easy to find your way around.

Local traditional materials include red brick, stone dressings, render, and plain clay tiles. More detail on materials is contained in the Audley Conservation Area and Settlement Character policies of this Plan.

Integration of parking could be achieved by using a range of parking provision including garages and curtilage spaces, bearing in mind that some people use garages for other purposes.

Design and Access statements to accompany planning applications provide an opportunity to demonstrate how the requirements of this and other policies have been met.

Strong encouragement is given to engagement

with the Parish Council and the local community from early stages of the design process.

Use of independent design review is encouraged for larger or more complex schemes, or in locations with design sensitivity.

Compliance with the policy will be easier to achieve if care is taken over the selection of skilled and experienced design professionals.



Figure 5.13, Mix of Shopfronts and Housing within the Conservation area in Church Street, Audley

5.4 | ANP5

Audley Conservation Area

1 Development in or affecting Audley Conservation Area should preserve or enhance its character and appearance and special architectural or historic interest, complementing the following key characteristics as appropriate:

- a. Architectural and building diversity, including several landmark buildings, with St James's Church and churchyard as a focal point;
- b. The Castle Motte, St James's Churchyard and Leddys Field as key green spaces;
- c. Tight grain of ribbon development to main streets, providing definition and enclosure to streets and spaces;
- d. The topography, creating stepped streetscape and allowing distinctive views to surrounding countryside;

e. Trees and woodland;

f. Predominant use of plain clay roof tiles and brick, with some polychromatic detailing in Church Street;

g. Boundary walls, including dry stone walls and brick with coping stones;

h. Historic surfaces, including cobbles and blue brick pavements and steps.

INTERPRETATION

The policy highlights key aspects of Audley Conservation Area's character, to help to ensure that development responds to its historic context. One of the key aspects of character is architectural diversity, so the policy should not be interpreted as requiring or encouraging stylistic imitation or as a barrier to innovative, creative or green design.



Figure 5.14, Audley Conservation Area, Church Street

5.5 | ANP6

Character of Settlements

- 1 Development in Audley's built settlements should complement the locally distinctive character, including the following key characteristics as appropriate:
 - a. A mix of properties set back from the road, with front gardens or shallow courts, and rear-of-the-pavement frontages;
 - b. The domestic scale and predominant two storey height of properties;
 - c. Use of low brick walls, hedges and trees as boundary treatments, to create a green character to streets;
 - d. The mix of red, brown and buff bricks, render, red and blue clay roof tiles, stone dressings, and chimneys;
 - e. The topography, resulting in stepped building forms.

INTERPRETATION

The policy highlights key aspects of the area's character, to help to ensure that development responds to its historic context. One of the key aspects of character is architectural diversity, so the policy should not be interpreted as requiring or encouraging stylistic imitation or as a barrier to innovative, creative or green design.



Figure 5.15, Example of heritage stone wall and farm buildings at Alsagers Bank

5.6 | ANP7 Heritage

- 1 Support will be given to the sensitive refurbishment and adaptation of designated and non-designated heritage buildings, providing the works preserve or enhance the building, its architectural and other features, and its setting.
- 2 Development should have no significant adverse impact on the John Wedgwood Memorial monument, its landscape setting, or views towards the monument from the surrounding area.

INTERPRETATION

The policy provides locally-specific protection for designated and non-designated heritage assets. A local list is in the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures SPD, Adopted March 2012.

In considering applications involving non-designated farmsteads, it may be helpful to refer to Staffordshire Farmsteads Assessment Framework, February 2015, English Heritage and Staffordshire County Council.

The reference to 'the surrounding area' would include all parts of the Neighbourhood Area from which the monument is visible.



Figure 5.16, Wedgwood Monument, Wood Lane

5.7 | ANP8 Shopfronts

- 1 Historic shopfronts and shopfront features should be retained and support will be given for the reinstatement of historic shopfronts.
- 2 Shopfronts should be designed to complement the character of the street, having regard to the Newcastle under Lyme Shopfront Design Guide, Audley Conservation Area Appraisal and other relevant guidance.

INTERPRETATION

Common elements of traditional shopfronts are the fascia, door, windows, stall risers, pilasters and capitals. The fascia provides space for signage.

The stall risers should be of timber, metal and masonry construction. Window frames, doors, pilasters and fascias should be of timber construction. To create a good standard of detail, timber panelling should be constructional, rather than adding timber beading to a flat surface. Paint finishes are more historically authentic than stained finishes.

Projecting external lighting of the shop sign area provides a higher quality effect than internal lighting behind a transparent shop sign.

Any shutters or shutter boxes should be placed internally behind the shop window. Shutters must not block the shop window when in an open position. Shutters should be perforated or of such construction so as to allow vision to the interior beyond. Canopies should be retractable and of fabric and metal design.

The Audley Rural Design Code, AECOM, May 2023 may be useful in securing compliance with the policy.

See also diagram on page 38.

Local guidance relevant to shopfronts includes:

- › Audley Rural Design Code, AECOM, May 2023;
- › Newcastle under Lyme Shopfront Design Guide;
- › Audley Conservation Area Appraisal



Figure 5.17, Shopfronts in Church Street, Audley

6



GREEN ENVIRONMENT

6

6.1 Purpose

To protect and enhance the natural environment, landscape character and green infrastructure.

6.2 Planning Rationale

National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

Chapter 8 of the NPPF deals with 'Promoting healthy and safe communities', including the designation of Local Green Spaces that are demonstrably special to the community. The Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space audit considered 103 proposed spaces and designates 48 Local Green Spaces including allotments, woodland, open space and play areas that are important to the local community contributing to the health and well-being of the wider community.

Chapter 12 deals with 'Achieving well-designed and beautiful places'. Design considerations include function, adding to the quality of the area, visual attractiveness, effective landscaping, being sympathetic to local character and history, maintain strong and distinctive sense of place, and making safe, inclusive and accessible places.

This is augmented by the National Design Guide (2021) establishes that well-designed places have ten characteristics. These are context, nature, identity, use, resources, movement, built form, public space, homes and buildings and lifespan.

The NPPF makes clear in chapter 14 'meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change', paragraph 157 that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.

Chapter 15 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment makes clear that planning policies should protect and enhance valued landscapes, intrinsic character and beauty of the landscape, habitats, and provide net gains in biodiversity. This includes consideration of protection of valued landscapes, intrinsic character, biodiversity net-gain, pollution, mitigation.

Emerging Local Plan, Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council

The emerging Local Plan undertook Regulation 18 consultation in the summer of 2023. The Local Planning Authority are considering the responses to this consultation. The Local Plan timetable indicates that a Regulation 19 Draft Plan will be available for consultation later in 2024.

The Parish Council have worked closely with Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council to ensure there are no disparities between the two Plans.

Core Spatial Strategy, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent, Adopted October 2009

The Core Strategy, 2009 contains various policies relating to the natural environment and green infrastructure. These are now somewhat out-of-date due to the age of the plan, changes to national policy and guidance, including the requirement for 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in the Environment Act 2021.

The Strategic Aims of the Core Strategy make clear the priority to protect and enhance the diversity of wildlife and habitats. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to enhance protection through identifying locally distinctive and important features, and protect the landscape setting and character of the rural Neighbourhood Area.

Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment Study, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, 2022

The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment Study identifies the landscape character type as 'Ancient Clay Farmlands' that are in good condition and have a strong sense of character. It also identifies part of the Neighbourhood Area within the 'Apedale Coalfields Farmlands' that have a high landscape sensitivity at Halmer End Fringe. It highlights the importance of protecting and enhancing the character and diversity of the identified landscape types.

Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, RSK, April 2022

The strategy sets a nature-based vision for green and blue infrastructure across the Borough. It identifies a number of relevant opportunities including:

FUNCTION 2 LANDSCAPE SETTING, EXPERIENCE AND LAND QUALITY

Ancient woodland connectivity and enhanced connective planting to link ancient and semi natural woodland sites and create a more 'wilded' farmland landscape mosaic and network of habitats for nature recovery, which could be delivered through Environmental Land Management (ELM).

FUNCTION 3 HISTORIC CHARACTER, SETTING AND LEGACY

A rich, often intact historic landscape resource and sense of time depth is apparent in much of the rural Green Infrastructure (GI) of the borough in particular, which should be conserved as key parts of the rural GI network, through ELM and other mechanisms.

FUNCTION 4 BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE CONSERVATION/ NATURE RECOVERY NETWORKS

Use of landscape management to enhance connectivity and assist in reversing fragmentation between priority habitat assets and sites, as part of a landscape scale, landscape character informed and multi-functional approach.

Use of ELM and other mechanisms such as regenerative agriculture to contribute to creation of rural nature recovery networks.

(Summary findings, Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, RSK, April 2022)

The Strategy goes on to identify the types of green infrastructure. The Neighbourhood Area includes a diverse mix including:

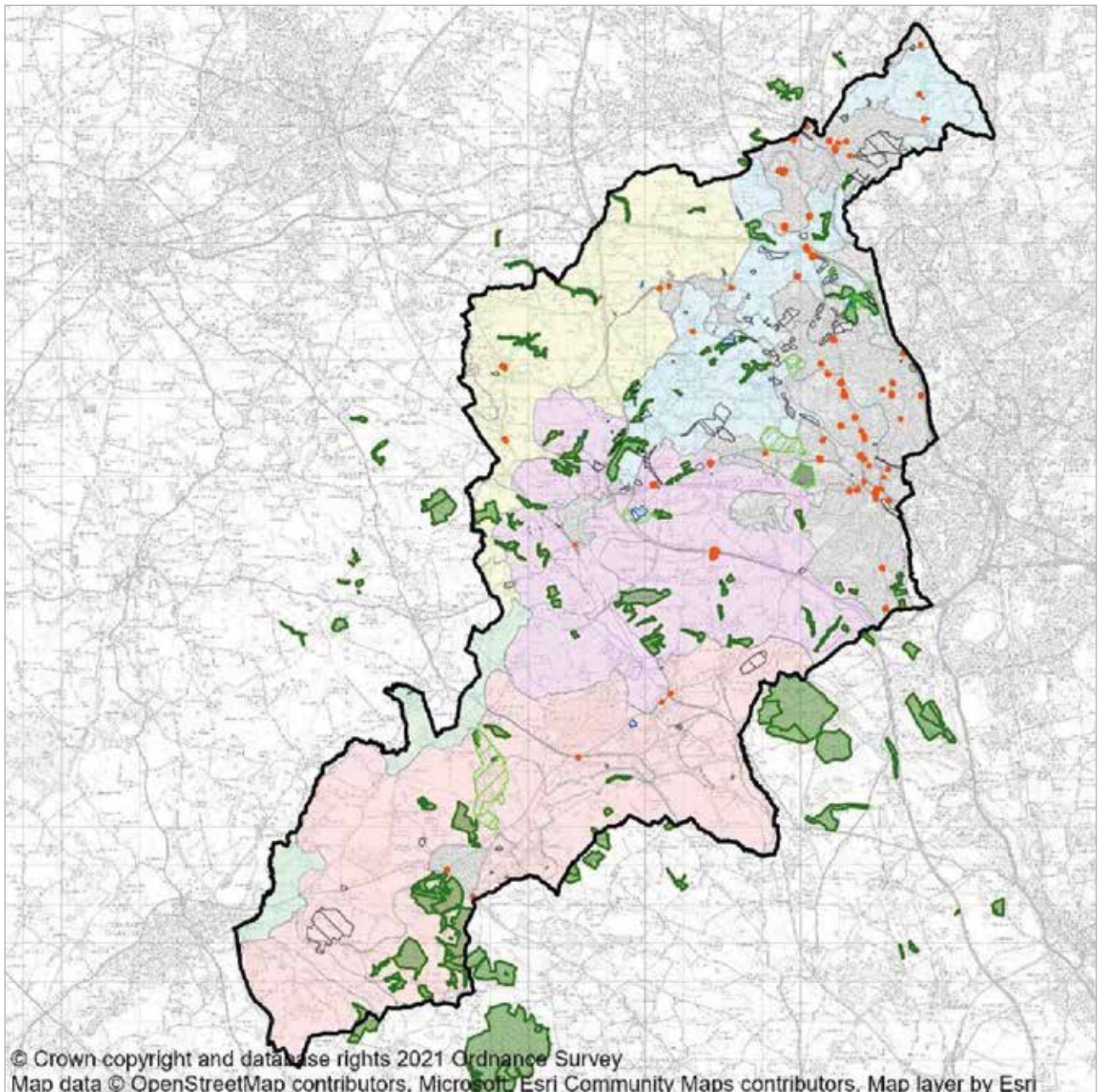
- › Allotments (one site at Audley with 68 plots and another at Halmer End with 22 plots);
- › Amenity greenspace;
- › Cemeteries and churchyards;
- › Green corridors such as the former Mineral Line;
- › Natural and semi-natural greenspace;
- › Pockets parks and gardens, including Margaret's Garden and Halmer End Memorial Garden; and
- › Provision for children and teenagers.

Many of these are identified as Local Green Space, designated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Strategy also includes mapping data to illustrate the landscape setting and character. Further maps demonstrate the biodiversity and nature conservation/nature recovery networks. This mapping data identifies the following features within the Neighbourhood Area:

- › Local Nature Reserve;
- › Sites of Biological Importance;
- › Biodiversity Alert Sites;
- › Protected Habitats Inventory; and
- › Countryside Stewardship Scheme Management Areas.

Maps showing the Audley Rural Parish's Green Infrastructure (GI); Biodiversity Nature Conservation and Nature Recovery Networks; Habitat Connectivity Opportunity; and also Landscape Setting, Experience and Land Quality are shown at Figures 6.4 - 6.7.



Landscape Setting, Character and Land Quality

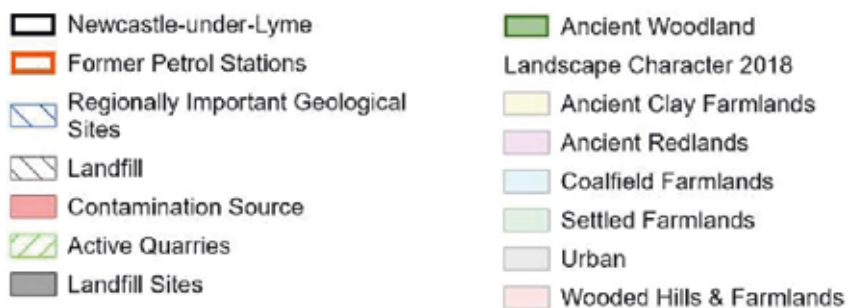
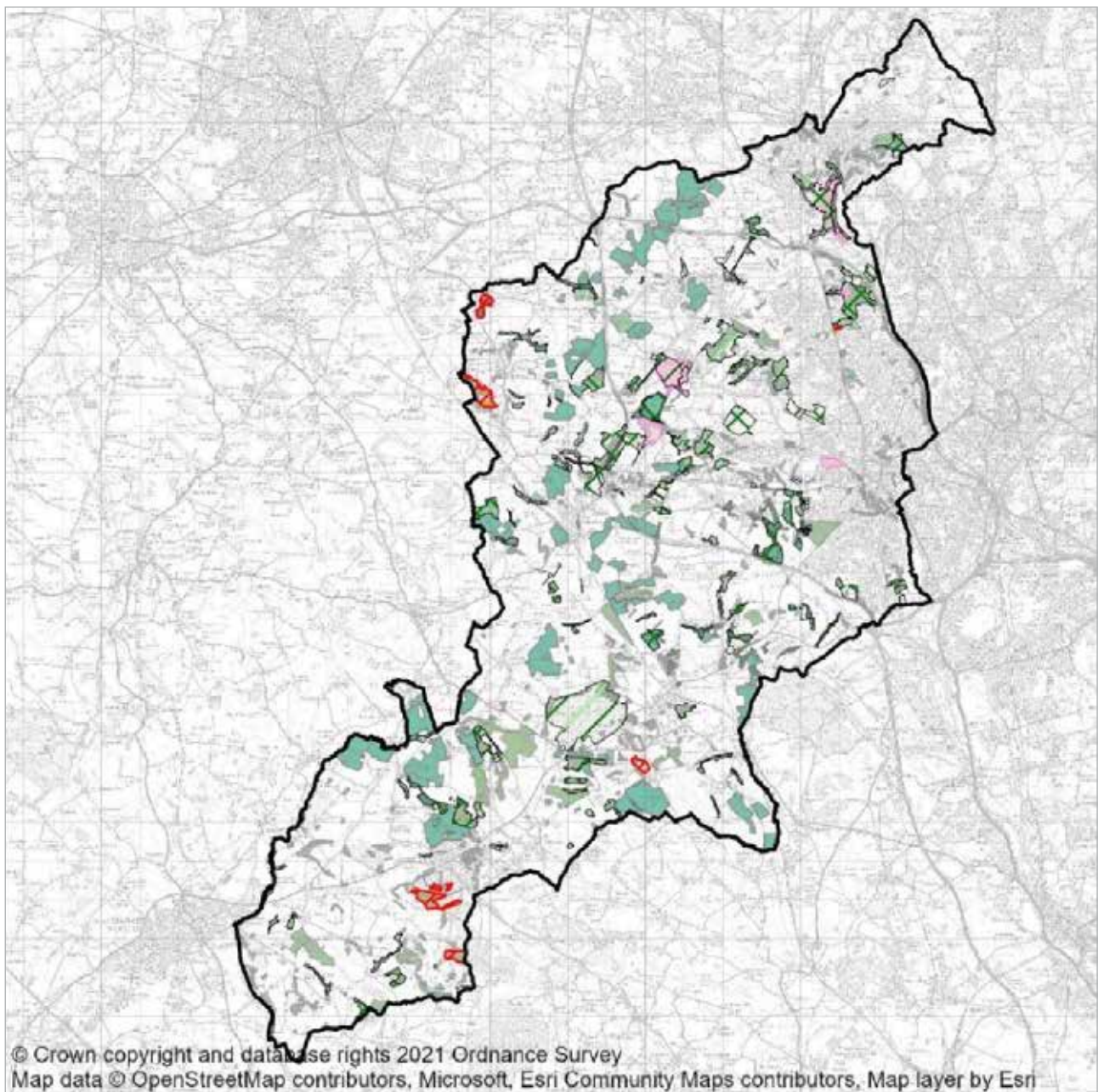


Figure 6.2, Map showing Newcastle Borough Landscape Setting, Experience, Character and Land Quality



- Newcastle-under-Lyme
- SSSI
- RAMSAR
- LNR
- Sites of Biological Importance
- Biodiversity Alert Site
- Protected Habitats Inventory
- Countryside Stewardship Scheme Management Areas

Figure 6.3, Map showing Newcastle Borough Biodiversity and Nature Conservation/Nature Recovery Networks

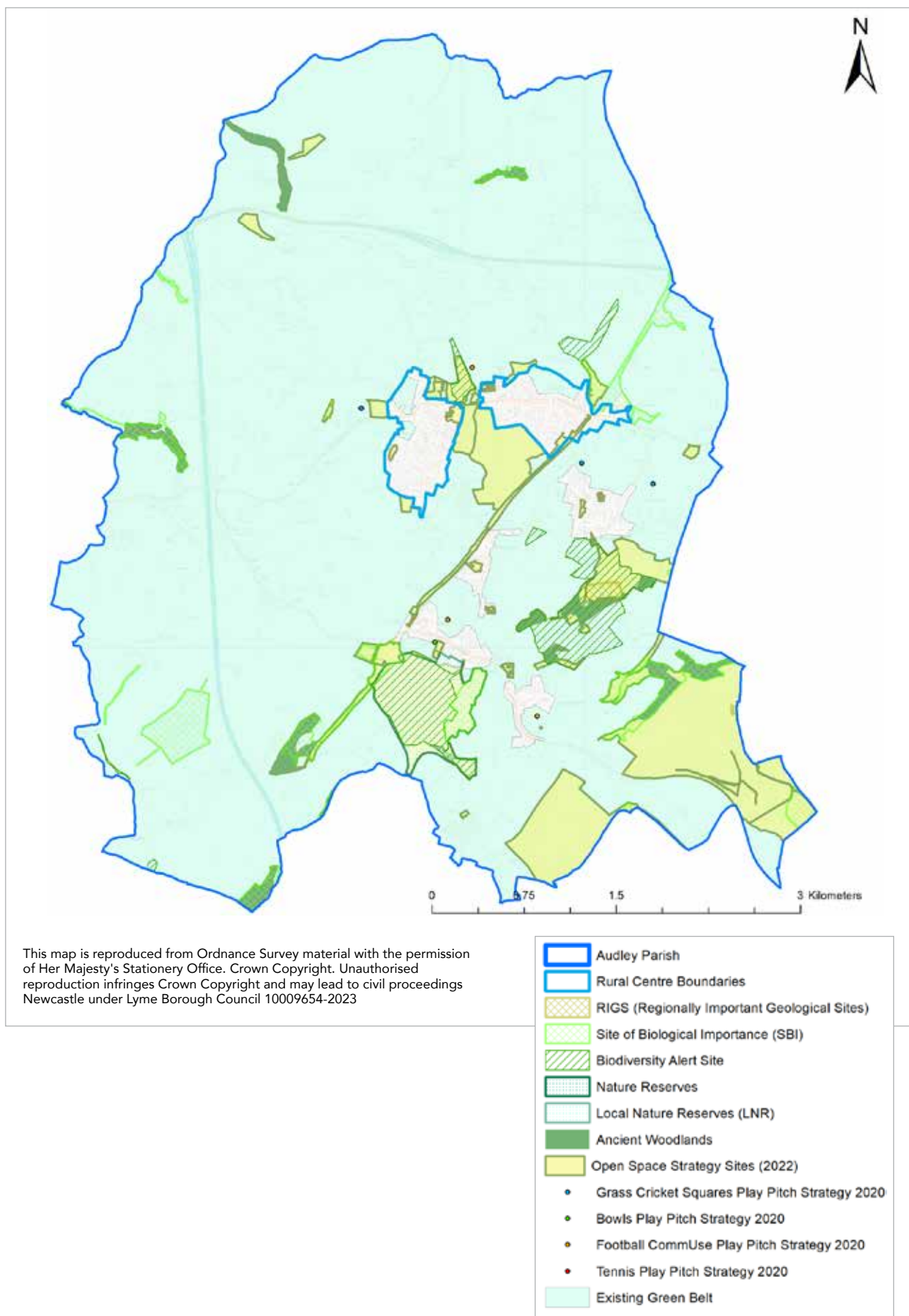


Figure 6.4, Map showing Audley Rural Parish Green Infrastructure (NBC 2024)

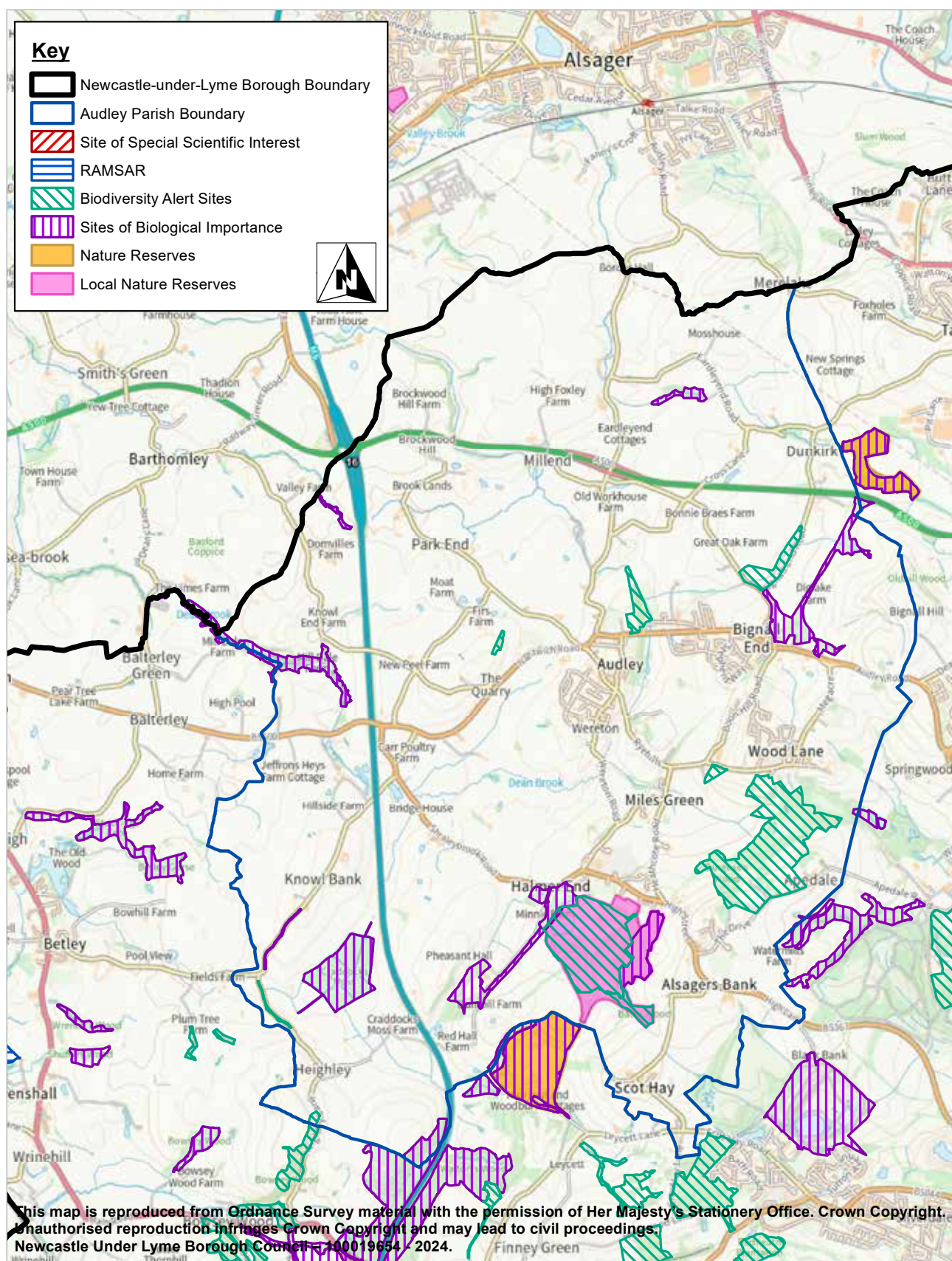


Figure 6.5, Map showing Audley Rural Parish Biodiversity and Nature Conservation/Nature Recovery Networks (NBC 2024)

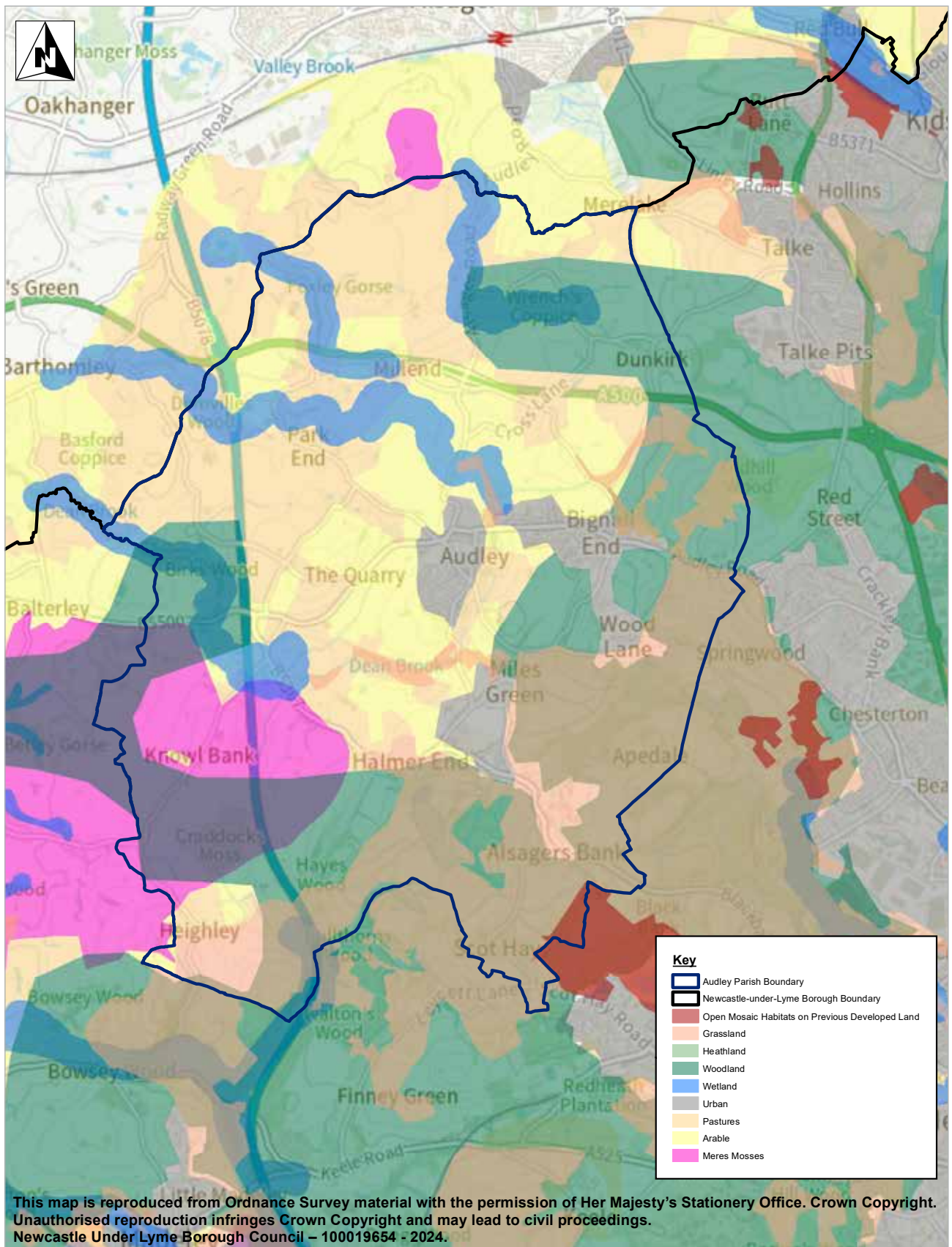


Figure 6.6, Map showing Audley Rural Parish Habitat Connectivity Opportunity (NBC 2024)

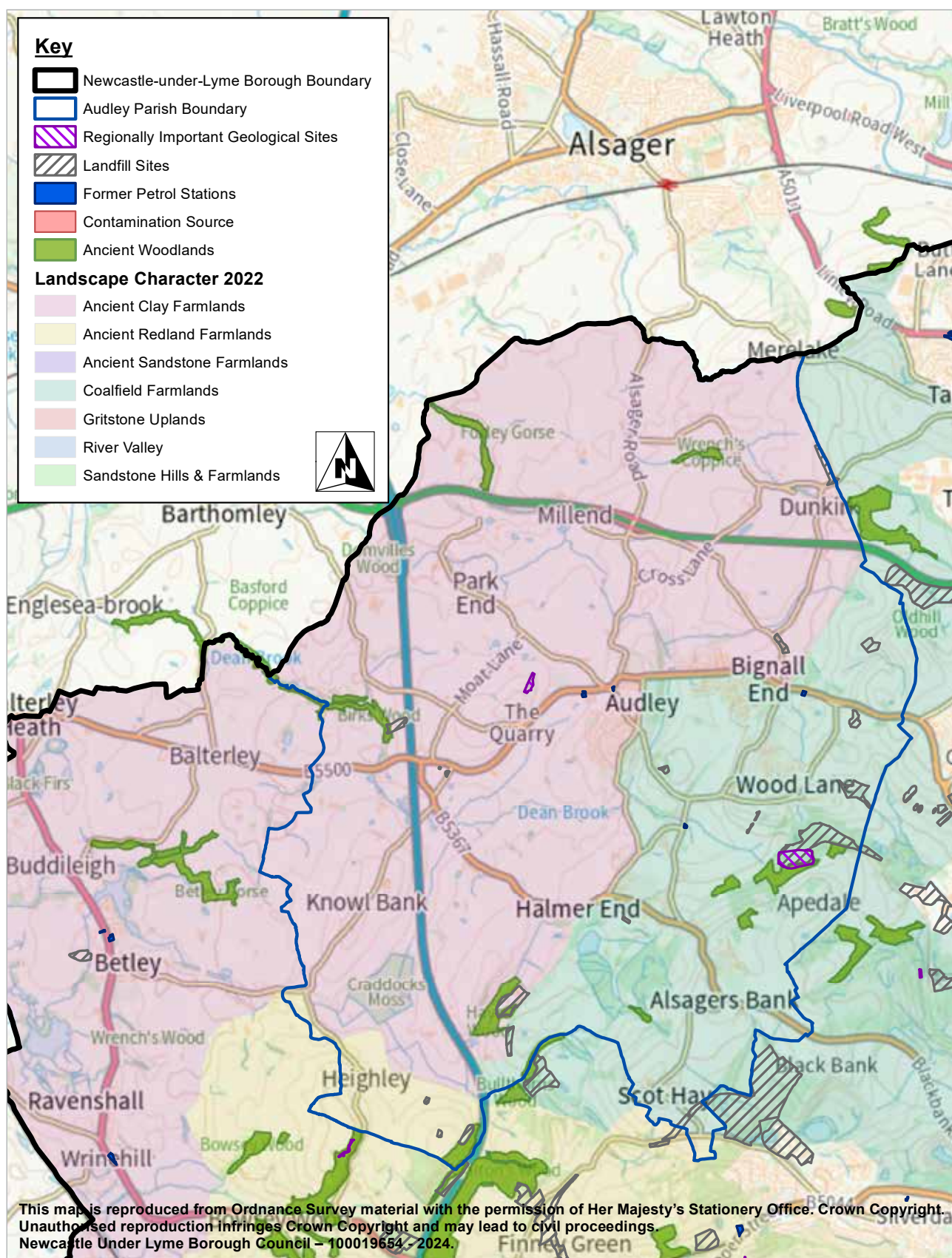


Figure 6.7, Map showing Audley Rural Parish Landscape Setting, Experience and Land Quality (NBC 2024)

Audley Rural Design Codes, AECOM. May 2023

The Audley Design Code makes clear the importance of the natural and rural landscape as a significant characteristic of the Neighbourhood Area. It describes the how the:

“The Neighbourhood area is host to an array of both statutory and non-statutory environmental designations. This comprises the network of green spaces, water bodies, biodiversity habitats and other natural elements. All of these spaces need to be well maintained to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the local people, as well as the animal and plant species within its ecosystem. The Neighbourhood area’s open countryside is a defining feature of its landscape character, making it all the more important to preserve such areas where possible. A majority of these spaces fall within the Green Belt, adding an extra layer of protection to these locally and naturally important spaces.”

To view the detailed design code visit: www.audleyplan.org/designcode.php or visit the Audley Neighbourhood Plan website to view the Aecom Audley Rural Parish Design Guidance and codes May 2023.

The design code also identifies how trees and hedgerows provide definitive boundaries to settlements and how the topography provides extensive views across the rural landscape. It states:

“Audley has a strong well connected Green Infrastructure network, including many allocated open spaces, playing fields, Green Belt, and some informal strategic green gaps. These various types of green infrastructure often play an essential role

in the character of that particular settlement and in separating villages regarding setting and local amenity. With these strategic green gaps, development is resisted to conserve the character and boundaries of each settlement.”

The following plan at Figure 6.6 shows the strategic green gaps in relation to the settlements of the Neighbourhood Area.

DEFRA Interactive Mapping Data

This dataset clearly shows the rural nature of the Parish and its variety of natural and green assets. Using the mapping tool, the following designations and features are within the Neighbourhood Area:

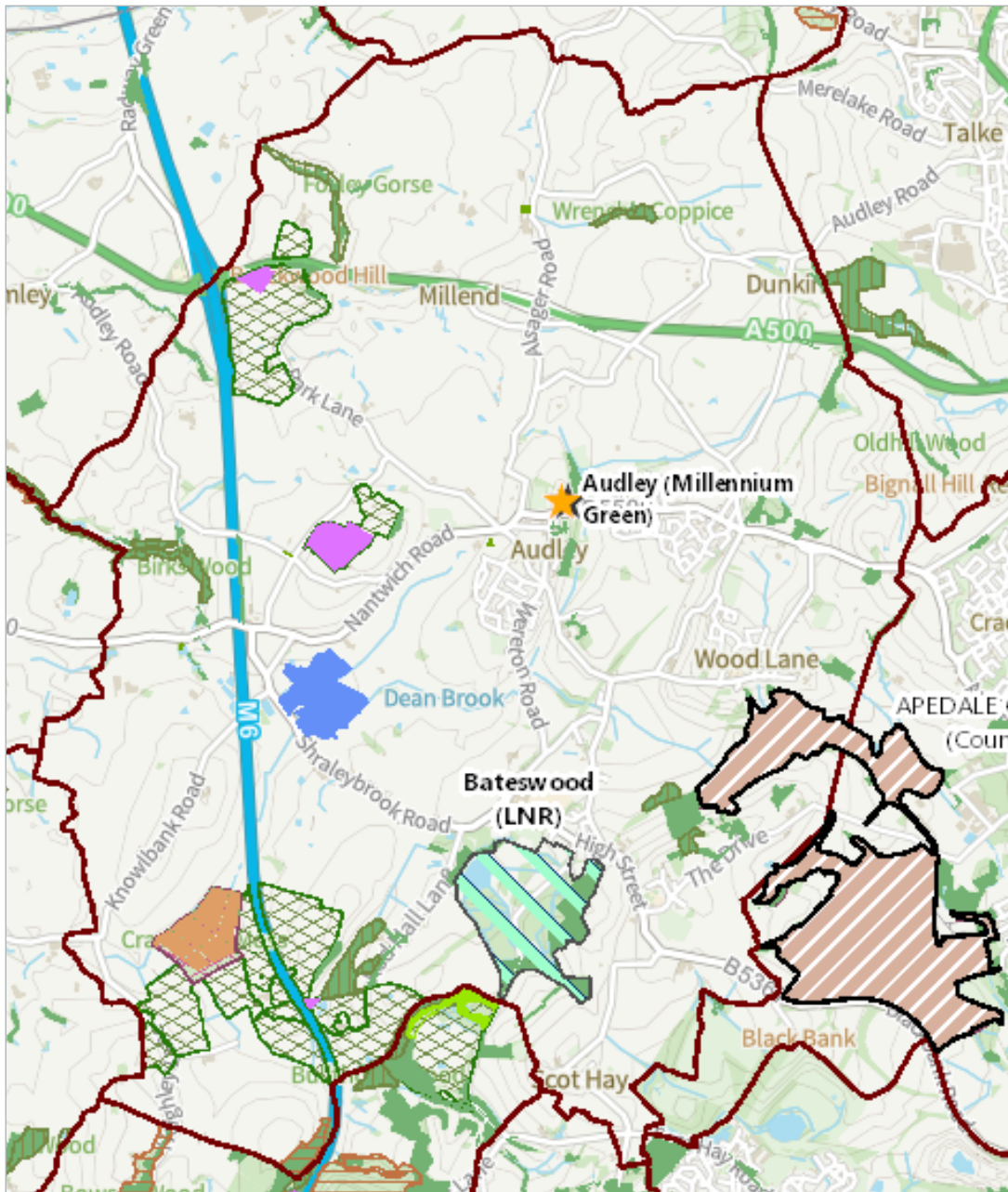
- › Ancient Woodland;
- › Apedale Community Country Park;
- › Audley Millennium Green;
- › Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland;
- › Priority Habitat Grazing Marsh;
- › Priority Habitat Lowland Fens;
- › Priority Habitat Lowland Meadow;
- › Priority Habitat Lowland Raised Bog; and
- › Priority Habitat Reedbeds.

Wider considerations also include the Neighbourhood Area is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for Betley Mere and Black Firs & Cranberry Bog SSSI's.

The data can be accessed via: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> or by searching Magic maps through the DEFRA website



Figure 6.8, Craddocks Moss, a unique lowland raised bog



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Figure 6.9, DEFRA Map showing designations and features within the Neighbourhood Area (Source: DEFRA Magic Map, 2023)

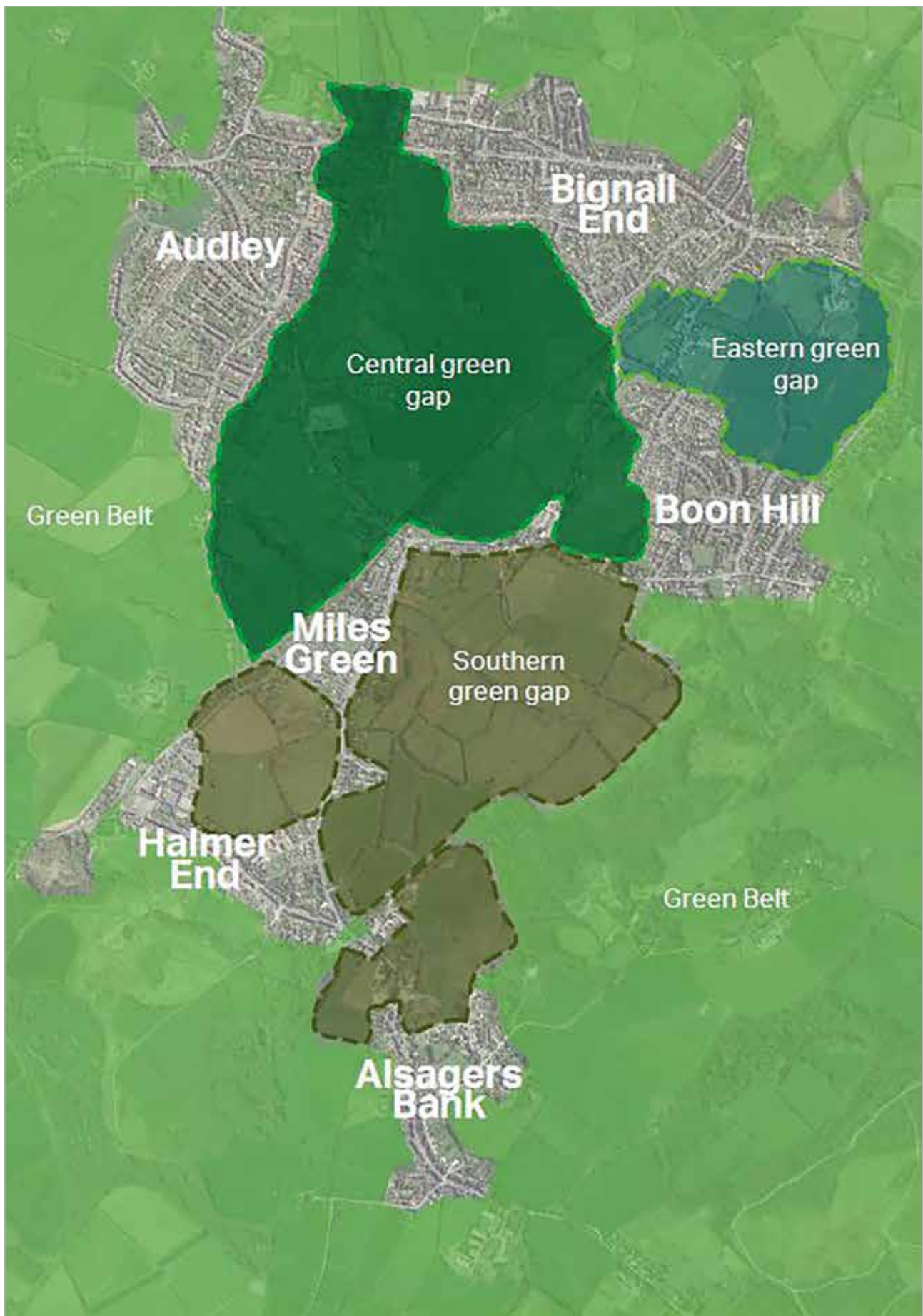


Figure 6.10, Plan of the Strategic Green Gaps

6.3 | ANP9

Natural Environment and Landscape

- 1 Development should take opportunities to enhance Audley's green landscapes, wildlife corridors, habitats & biodiversity and:
 - a. avoid causing harm: or
 - b. if avoidance to harm is not possible, mitigate such harm; or
 - c. as a last resort, compensate for such harm.
- 2 Development should maintain the green landscape settings and separation of the following distinctive settlements: Alsagers Bank, Audley, Bignall End, Halmer End, Miles Green, Scot Hay, Wood Lane.
- 3 Wherever feasible, existing mature trees should be:
 - a. Retained and incorporated into the design and layout of development; or
 - b. Where there are robust planning reasons why retention is not possible, new tree planting should be provided in and around the site, to provide a similar level of amenity and environmental value.
- 4 Except in exceptional circumstances where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat, development must not harm and should take opportunities to enhance Audley's Ancient Woodland, Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Biological Importance and other sensitive and/or designated landscapes. See Plan at Figure 6.3 and 6.8* Audley Biodiversity Assets Plan and Figure 6.5 DEFRA Map showing designations and features within the Neighbourhood Area.
- 5 Opportunities should be taken to enhance the nature conservation values of Biodiversity Alert Sites, as shown in Figure 6.12.
- 6 Development should not involve the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

INTERPRETATION

The policy protects Audley's natural environment and landscape.

The following hierarchy should be used to minimise impacts on habitats.

- › Avoid habitat damage;
- › Minimise habitat damage;
- › Restore damaged or lost habitat;
- › Compensate for habitat loss or damage (as a last resort).

Incorporating existing landscape features, landform and green infrastructure into redevelopment is an important part of avoiding habitat damage.

Best and most versatile land is grades 1, 2 and 3a.

Harm to natural environment would include air, water or land pollution.



Figure 6.11, Halmer End Village and surrounding green spaces

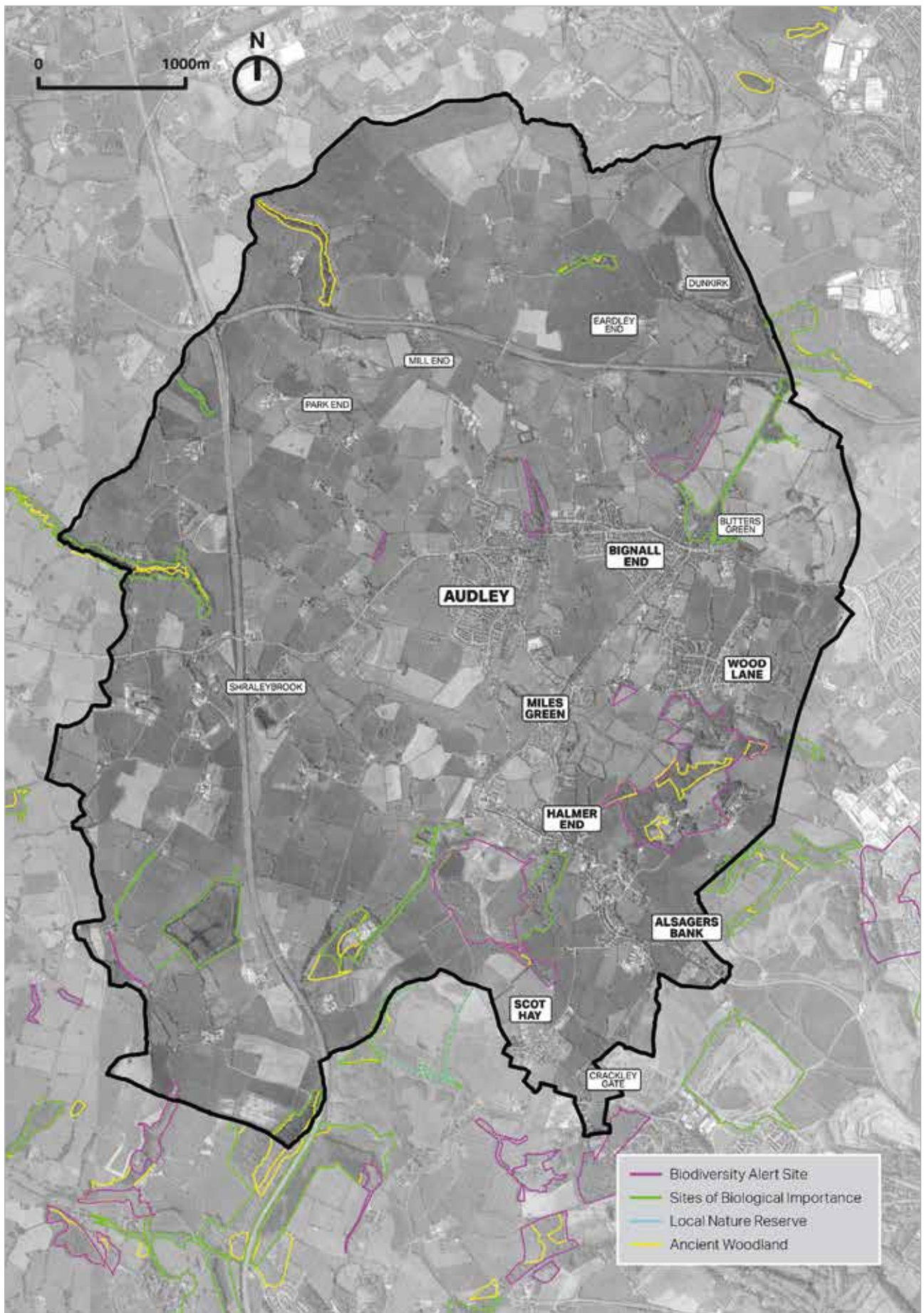


Figure 6.12, Audley Biodiversity Assets Plan

6.4 | ANP10

Green Infrastructure

- 1 Development should include planting, landscaping and other green infrastructure, proportionate to the scale and nature of the development to help achieve:
 - a. A high level of amenity;
 - b. Biodiversity net gain.
- 2 Support will be given to:
 - a. nature and wildlife friendly gardens and landscaping;
 - b. allotments, food growing gardens and other facilities for local food growing;
 - c. green infrastructure that promotes and enables physical activity.

INTERPRETATION

The policy should be applied together with the Sustainable Design and Transport and Active Travel policies (and other relevant policies).

An integrated approach should be taken to the design of buildings, spaces and landscape. The design process should be based on analysis of the site and local context, including surrounding landscape and townscape characteristics.

The 'National Design Guide' and 'Building for a Healthy Life' standard may be useful in securing compliance with the policy.



Figure 6.13, LGS 66 Halmer End Memorial Site, Podmore Lane

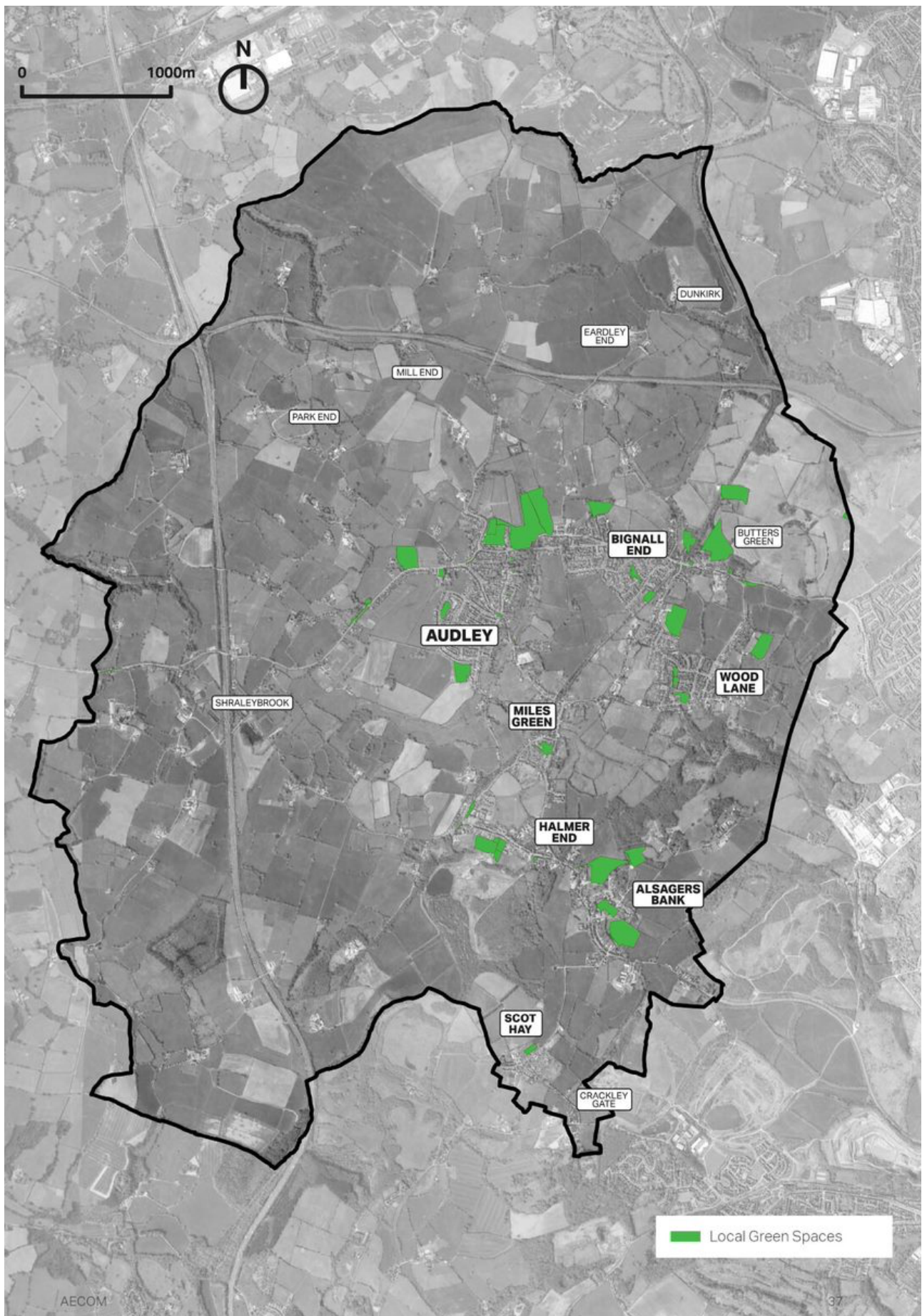


Figure 6.14, Map showing Local Green Spaces across the Neighbourhood Area

6.5 | ANP11

Local Green Space

1. The following spaces are designated as Local Green Space:

REF	SITE NAME	ROAD	VILLAGE	FUNCTION
LGS 1	Queen Street Fields of Trust Play Area (1)	Wereton Road	Audley	Playing Field, Play Area and BMX track
LGS 4	Wood Lane Cricket Club (4)	Megacre	Wood Lane	Playing Field
LGS 5	Bignall End Cricket Club (5)	Boon Hill	Bignall End	Playing Field
LGS 8	Audley Cricket Club (8)	Nantwich Road	Audley	Playing Field
LGS 10	Bignall End Road Play Area (10)	Bignall End Road	Bignall End	Playing Field and Play Area
LGS 12	Alsager Road (12)	Alsager Road	Audley	Allotments Or Community Growing Spaces
LGS 14	Audley Football Club (14)	Old Road	Audley	Playing Field
LGS 15	Alsager Road Play Area (15)	Alsager Road	Audley	Playing Field and Play Area
LGS 18	Albert Street Play Area (18)	Albert Street	Bignall End	Playing Field and Play Area
LGS 20	Scot Hay Play Area / Playing Field (20)	Leycett Road	Scot Hay	Playing Field and Play Area
LGS 23	Alsagers Bank Cricket Club (23)	High Street	Alsagers Bank	Playing Field and Play Area
LGS 26	Miles Green Play Area (26)	Station Road	Miles Green	Playing Field and Play Area inc MUGA
LGS 29	Wood Lane Play Area (Aspire) (29)	Wood Croft	Wood Lane	Play Space
LGS 30	Halmer End Institute (30)	Wesley Place	Halmer End	Playing Field
LGS 31	Halmer End Allotments (31)	Harrison Close	Halmer End	Allotments or Community Growing Spaces
LGS 32	Halmer End Bowling Club (32)	Wesley Place (32)	Halmer End	Bowling Green
LGS 33	Halmer End Play Area (33)	Harrison Close	Halmer End	Playing Field and Play Area
LGS 36	Margaret Garden (green space, bench, planted, maintained) (36)	Church Street	Audley	Pocket Park
LGS 37	Greenspace (landscaped, benches, planted and Cherry trees) Top of Vernon Avenue/ Wereton Road junction (37)	Vernon Avenue/ Wereton Road	Audley	Pocket Park
LGS 38	Church Bank (planted area with mining monument) (38)	Church Street	Audley	Planted Area
LGS 41	Wedgwood Monument and immediate surrounding space (41)	Land off Audley Road	Bignall End	Monument and Surrounding Land
LGS 42	Westfield Ave (42)	Westfield Avenue	Audley	Greenspace Area

REF		SITE NAME	ROAD	VILLAGE	FUNCTION
LGS	45	Pit tub areas in Parish - Boon Hill/Ravens Lane entrance to Marians Way (45)	Ravens Lane	Bignall End	Landscaped Greenspace
LGS	46	Pit tub and planted area - Bignall End Road/Ravens Lane (46)	Audley Road roundabout	Bignall End	Landscaped Greenspace
LGS	47	Bignall Hill/Land off Megacre Highway Verge, planted (47)	Bignall Hill/ Megacre junction	Bignall End	Landscaped Greenspace
LGS	48	Bignall Hill - CAGOO Pit Wheel and Planted areas (48)	Bignall Hill/ Audley Road	Wood Lane	Landscaped Greenspace
LGS	49	Bignall Hill - planted area trees on the left on the hill next to 3 Butters Green (49)	Bignall Hill/ Audley Road	Wood Lane	Greenspace Trees
LGS	50	Station Walks - green space by houses/planters avenue of trees opposite school STBH, pit tub and memorial (50)	Station Road	Halmer End	Greenspace Corridor
LGS	51	Highway Verge/Gateway to Parish Nantwich Road - avenue of Cherry trees (51)	Nantwich Road	Audley	Tree Gateway Feature
LGS	52	Verge on corners of Barthomley Road/Nantwich Road junction - trees and seating (52)	Nantwich Road	Audley	Greenspace/Landscaped
LGS	53	Grass area by Barthomley Road/Nantwich Road post box - trees and seating (53)	Nantwich Road	Audley	Greenspace/Landscaped
LGS	54	Highway Verge on Nantwich Road Golden Jubilee trees plantation (54)	Nantwich Road	Balterley	Tree Memorial
LGS	55	Audley Millenium Green (55)	Land off New Road/Alsager Road	Audley	Greenspace Millenium Green
LGS	56	Barthomley Road pond (56)	Nantwich Road/ Barthomley Road junction	Audley	Pond
LGS	59 and 59a	St James Church and Audley Pensioners Hall memorial garden (59/59a)	Church Street	Audley	Memorial Garden

REF		SITE NAME	ROAD	VILLAGE	FUNCTION
LGS	60	Green space by old police house, Nantwich Road opp Wilbrahams Walk / Chester Road (60)	Nantwich Road	Audley	Greenspace/Seating
LGS	64	Burgess Woods (64)	Off The Drive	Alsagers Bank	Woodland
LGS	66	Entrance to Podmore Lane/ Bateswood (66)	High Street	Halmer End	Halmer End Memorial Site
LGS	69	Alsagers Bank Primary Academy School Playing Fields (69)	The Drive	Alsagers Bank	Alsagers Bank Primary Academy Playing Fields
LGS	72	Wood Lane Primary School playing fields (72)	Apedale Road	Wood Lane	Wood Lane Primary School Playing Fields
LGS	81	Wood Street green space (81)	Wood Street	Wood Lane	Informal Football Area by Wood Lane Play Area
LGS	82	Diglake (82)	Off Bignall End Road	Bignall End	Diglake Mine Shaft Entrance
LGS	87	Church Fields (up from Church Farm) (87)	High Street	Alsagers Bank	Church Fields (Informal) Sledging Area
LGS	89	Green space Aarons Drive (89)	Aarons Drive	Bignall End	Land Between Aarons Drive/Stephens Way/ Greenways
LGS	90	Green Space Stephens Way (90)	Stephens Way	Bignall End	Land off Stephens Way/ Brindleys Way
LGS	91	Land in front of Wall Farm (91)	Nantwich Road	Audley	Land by Wall Farm Model Farm
LGS	94	Hougher Wall Road (94)	Hougher Wall Road	Audley	Land Along by Grassy Green Lane (Four Winds Field Verge) Hougherwall Road
LGS	97	Bignall Hill Colliery Site part A and part B (97)	Audley Road	Bignall End	Former Bignall Hill Colliery Site Part A and Part B

INTERPRETATION

The policy designates Local Green Space.

The NPPF makes clear that Local Green Space has similar protection to Green Belts.

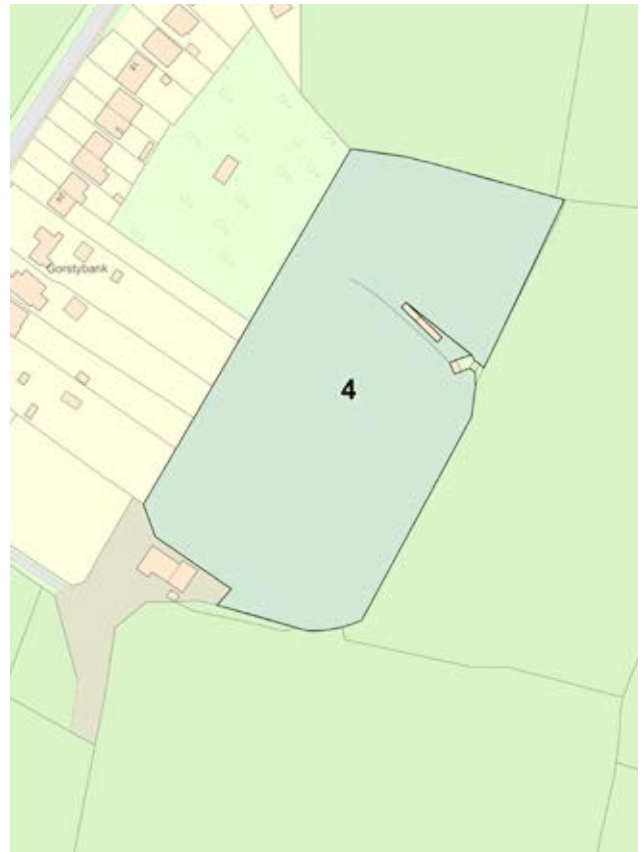
The NPPF makes clear that managing development within these local green spaces should be consistent with policies for the control of development within the Green Belt.

In following this advice, it should be noted that the purpose of Local Green Space designation is related to community value, so is different to the five purposes for Green Belts.

The second clause takes account of the National Design Guide.



LGS 1 Queen Street



LGS 4 Wood Lane Cricket Club



LGS 5 Bignall End Cricket Club

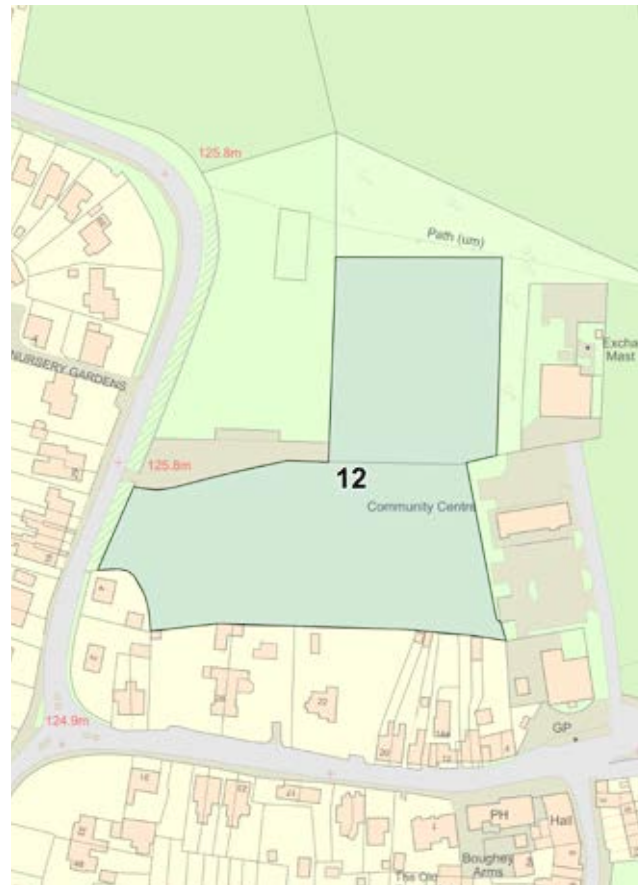


LGS 8 Audley Cricket Club

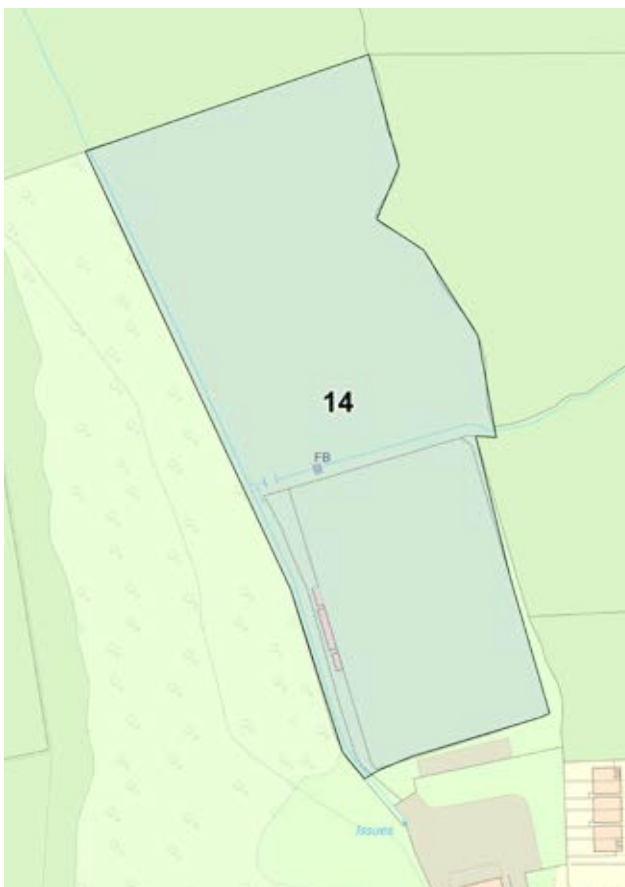
Figure 6.15: Local Green Space Designations maps



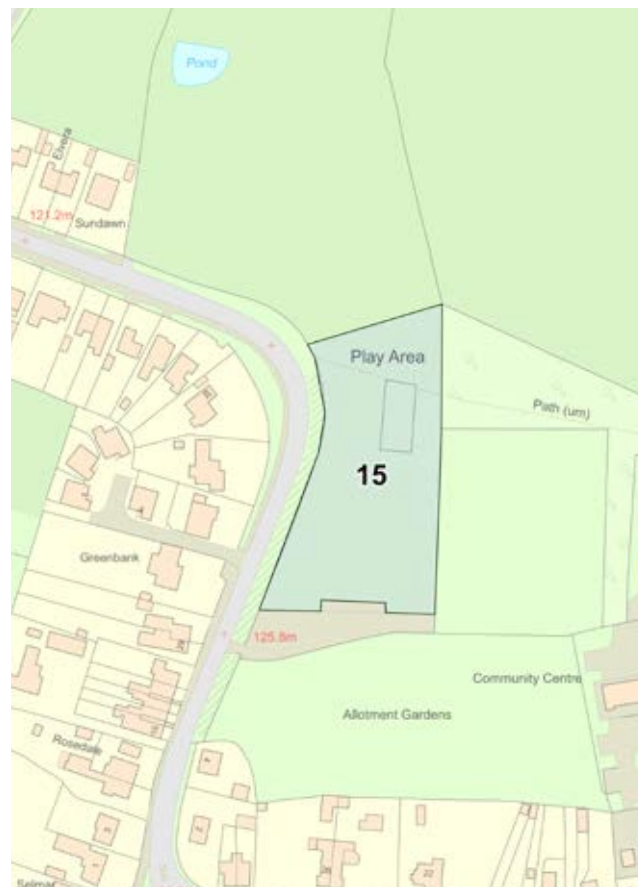
LGS 10 Bignall End Road Play Area and Rec



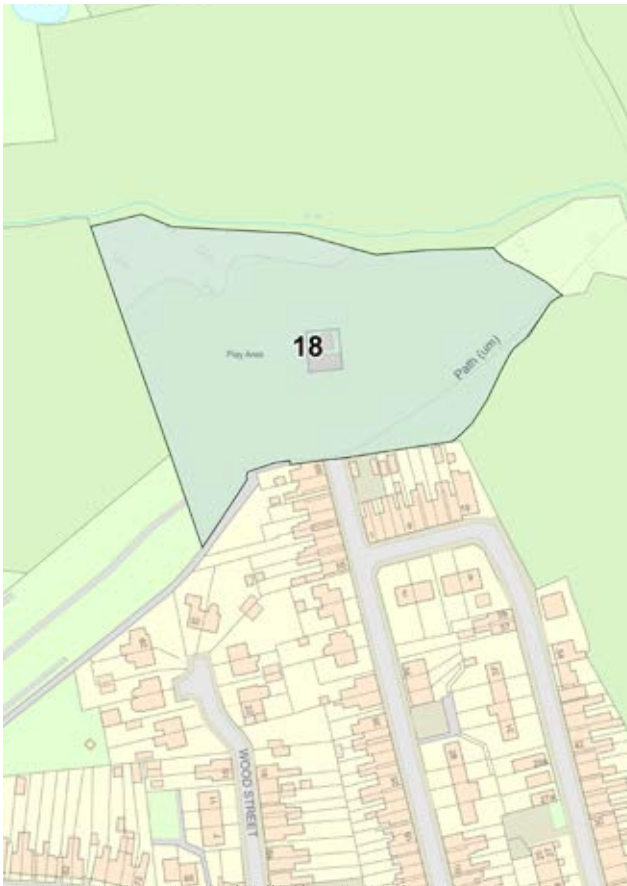
LGS 12 Alsager Road Allotments



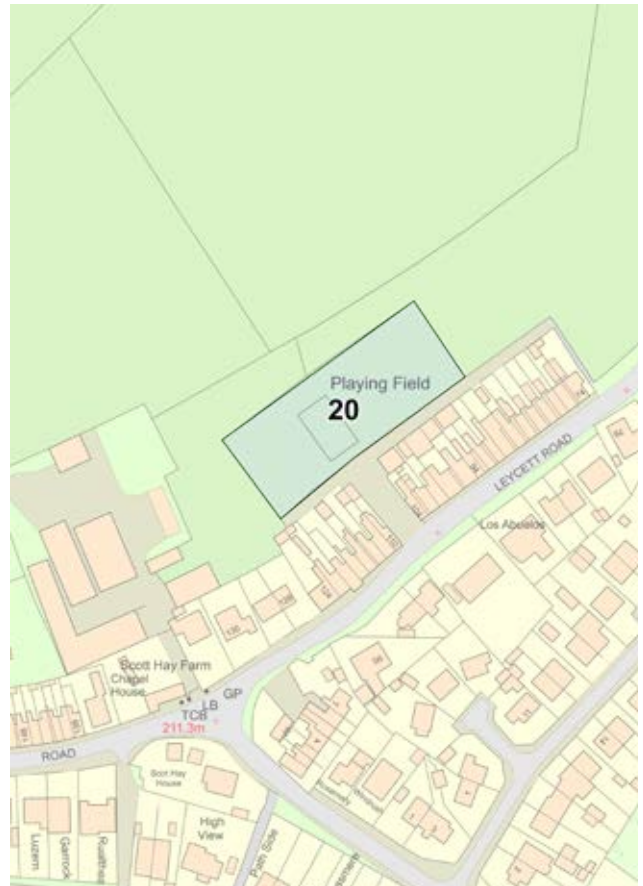
LGS 14 Audley Football Ground



LGS 15 Alsager Road Play Area



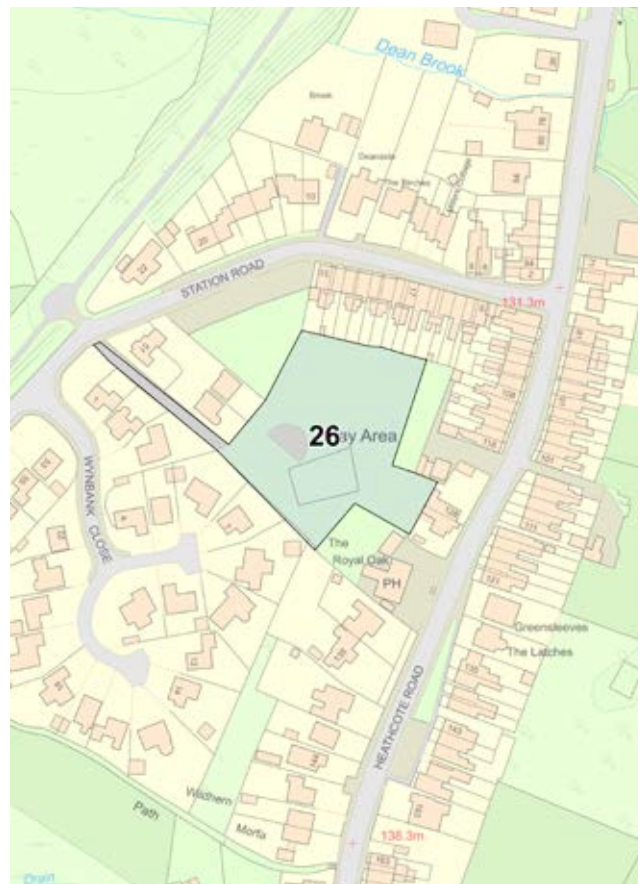
LGS 18 Albert Street Play Area



LGS 20 Scot Hay Play Area



LGS 23 Alsagers Bank Cricket Club



LGS 26 Miles Green Play Area



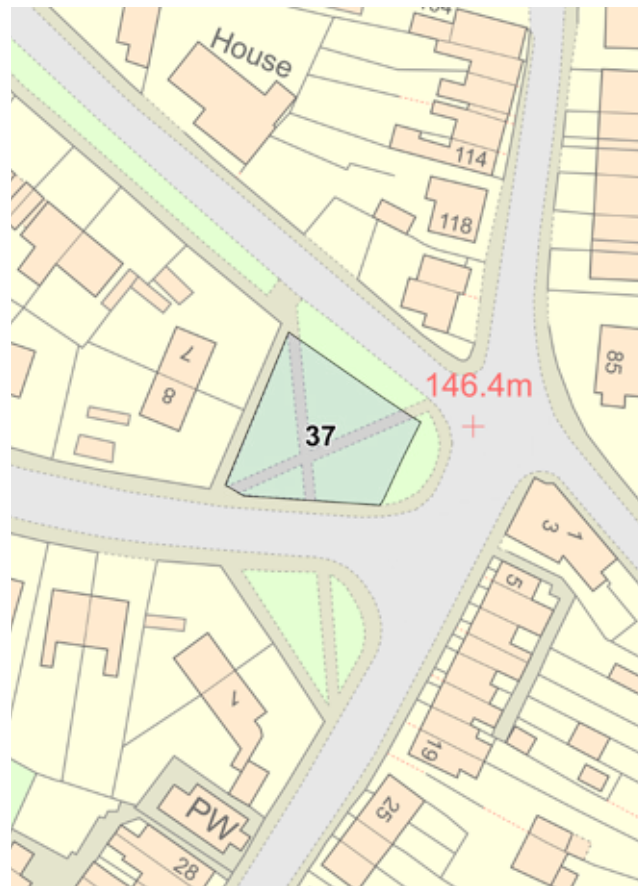
LGS 29 Wood Lane Play Area



LGS 30 31 32 33 Halmer End



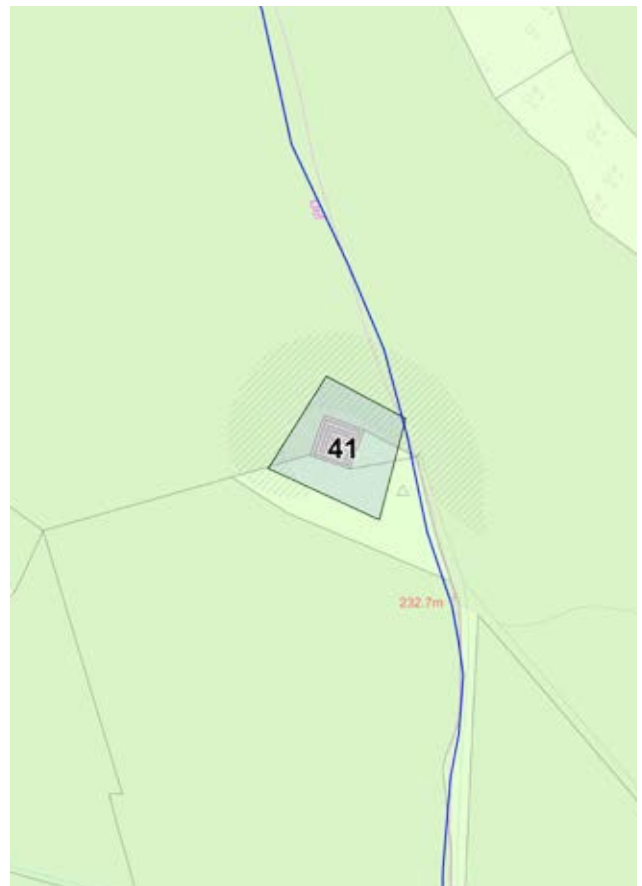
LGS 36 Margarets Garden



LGS 37 Vernon Avenue Chester Road



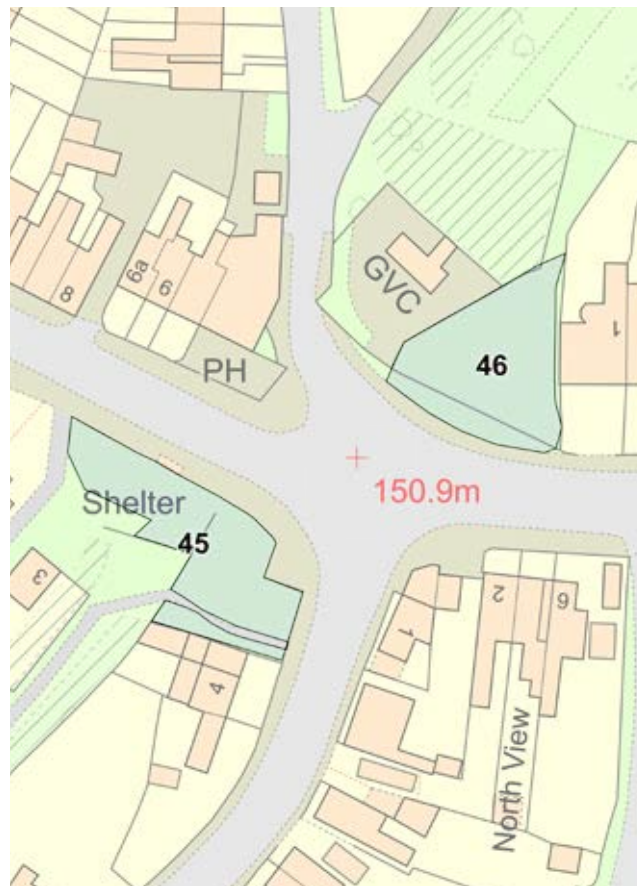
LGS 38 Church Bank



LGS 41 Monument



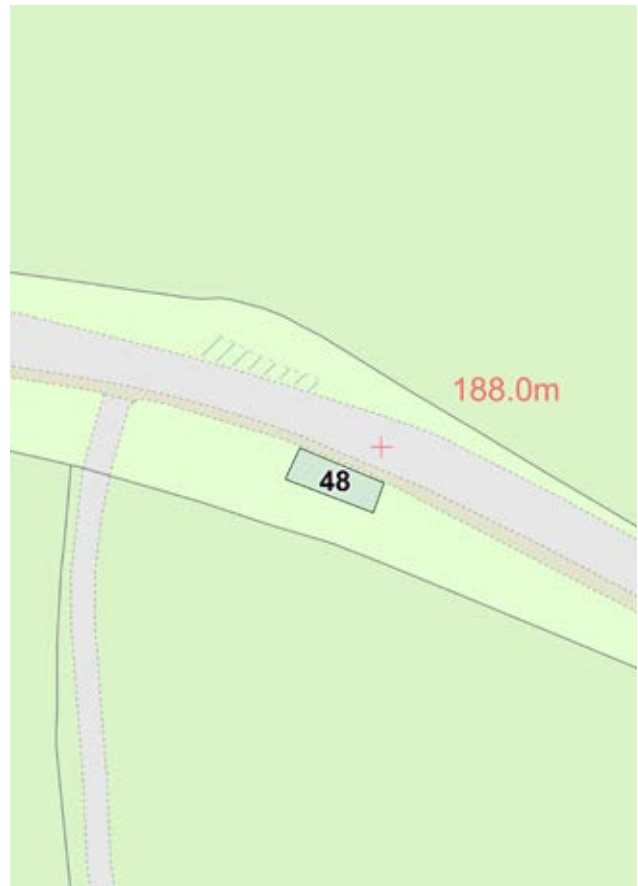
LGS 42 Westfield Ave Green Space



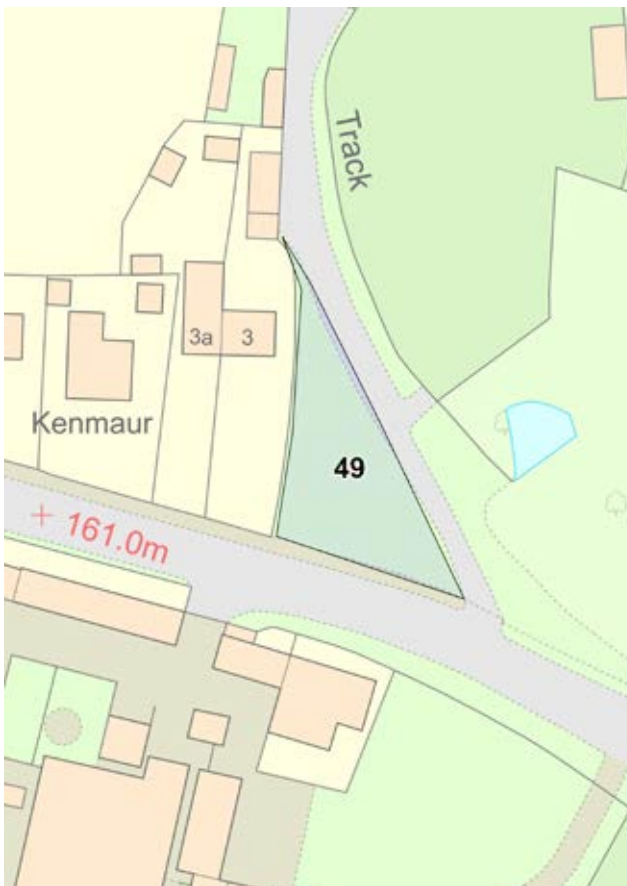
LGS 45 46 Plough Roundabout



LGS 47 Megacre Junction with Bignall Hill



LGS 48 Bignall Hill Mine Cart



LGS 49 Bignall Hill



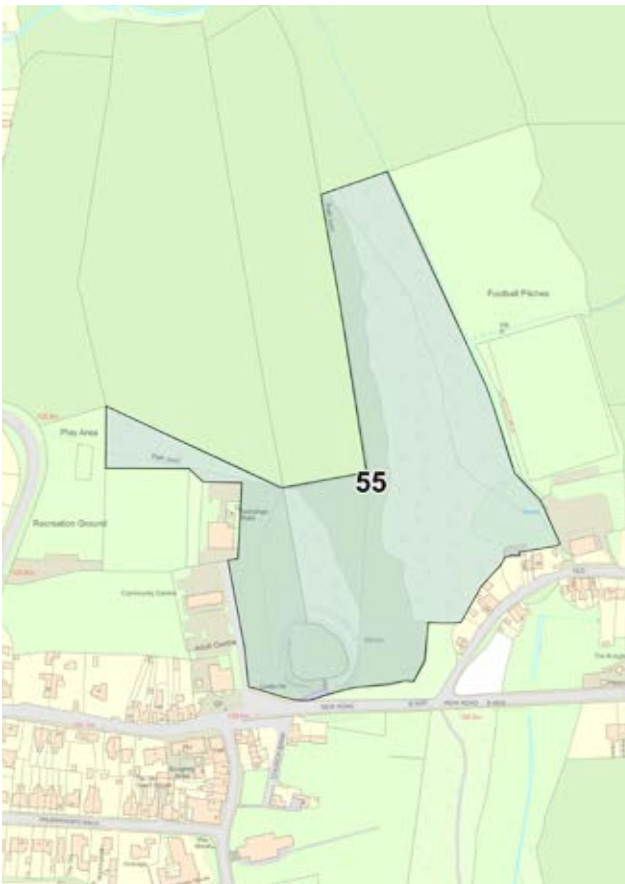
LGS 50 Station Walks



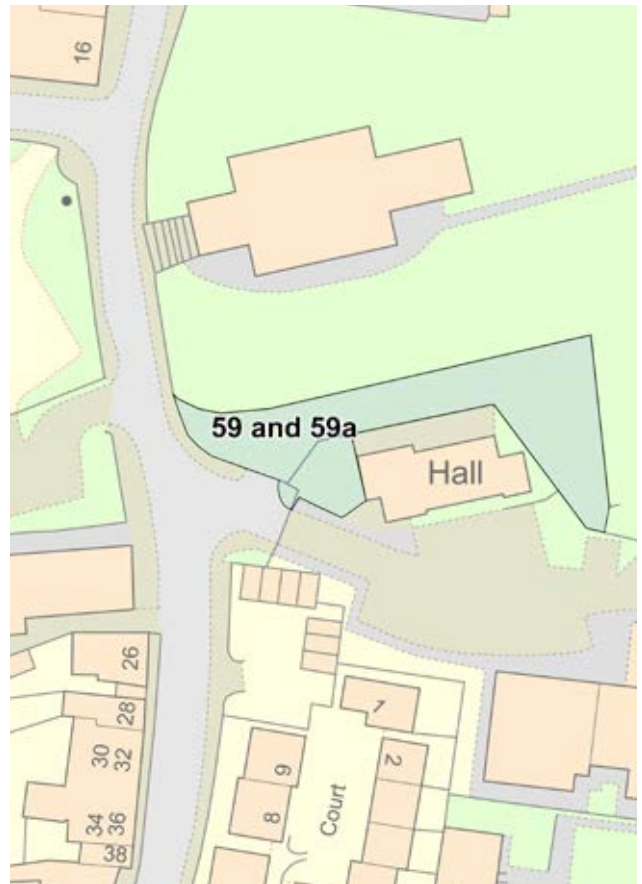
LGS 51, 52, 53, 56 Nantwich Road



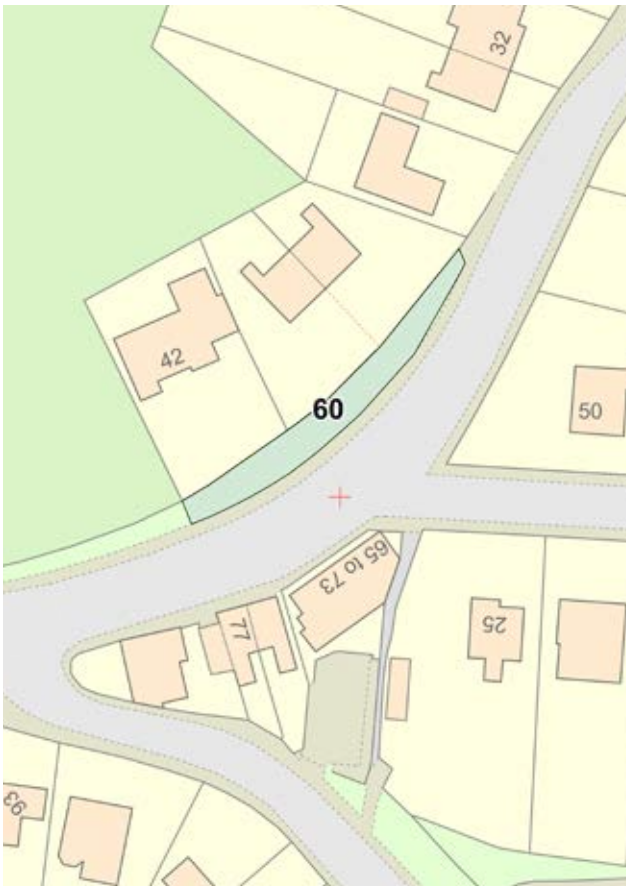
LGS 54 Nantwich Road Jubilee Trees



LGS 55 Audley Millenium Green



LGS 59 and 59a St James Memorial Garden



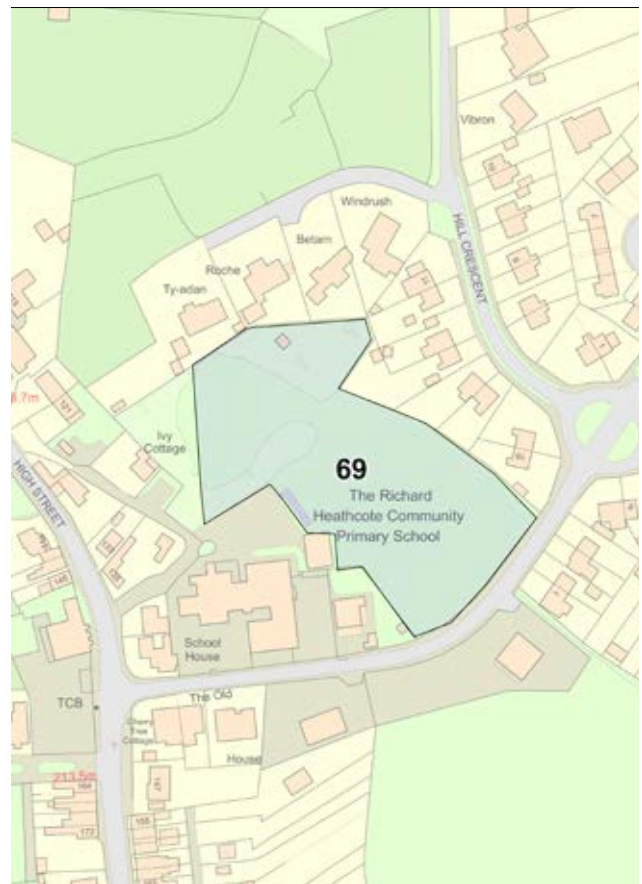
LGS 60 Nantwich Road Park Lane Junction



LGS 64 Burgess Woods



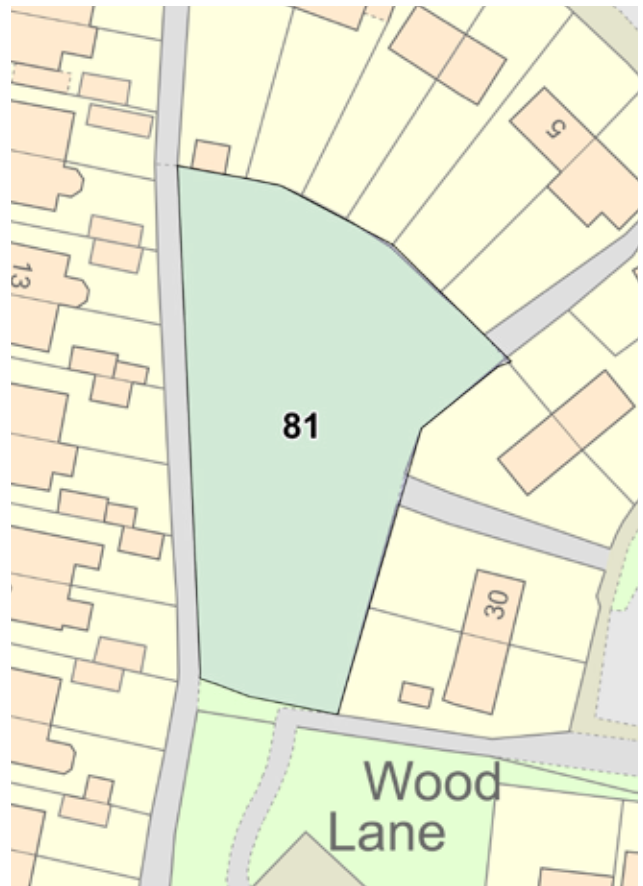
LGS 66 Halmer End Memorial Site



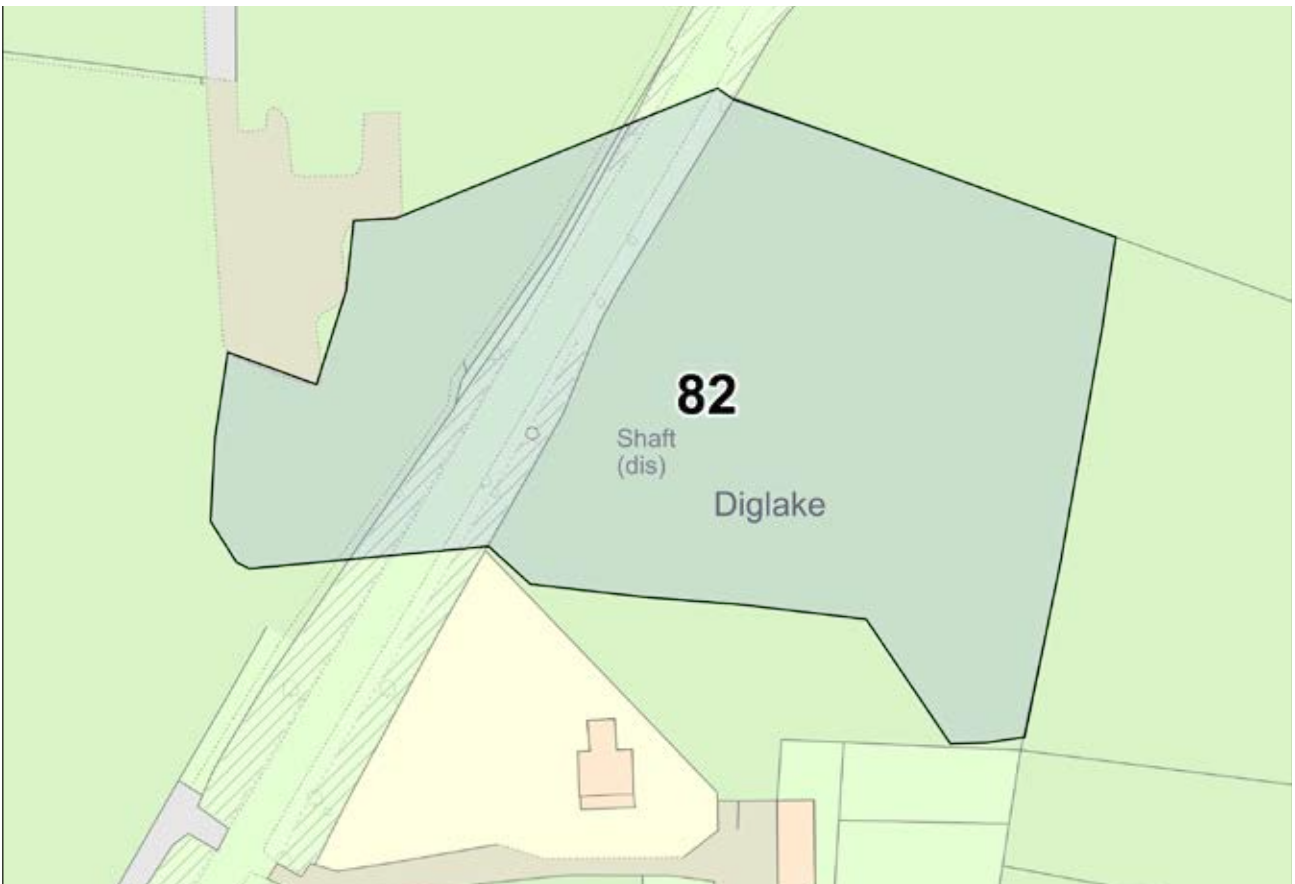
LGS 69 Alsagers Bank Academy



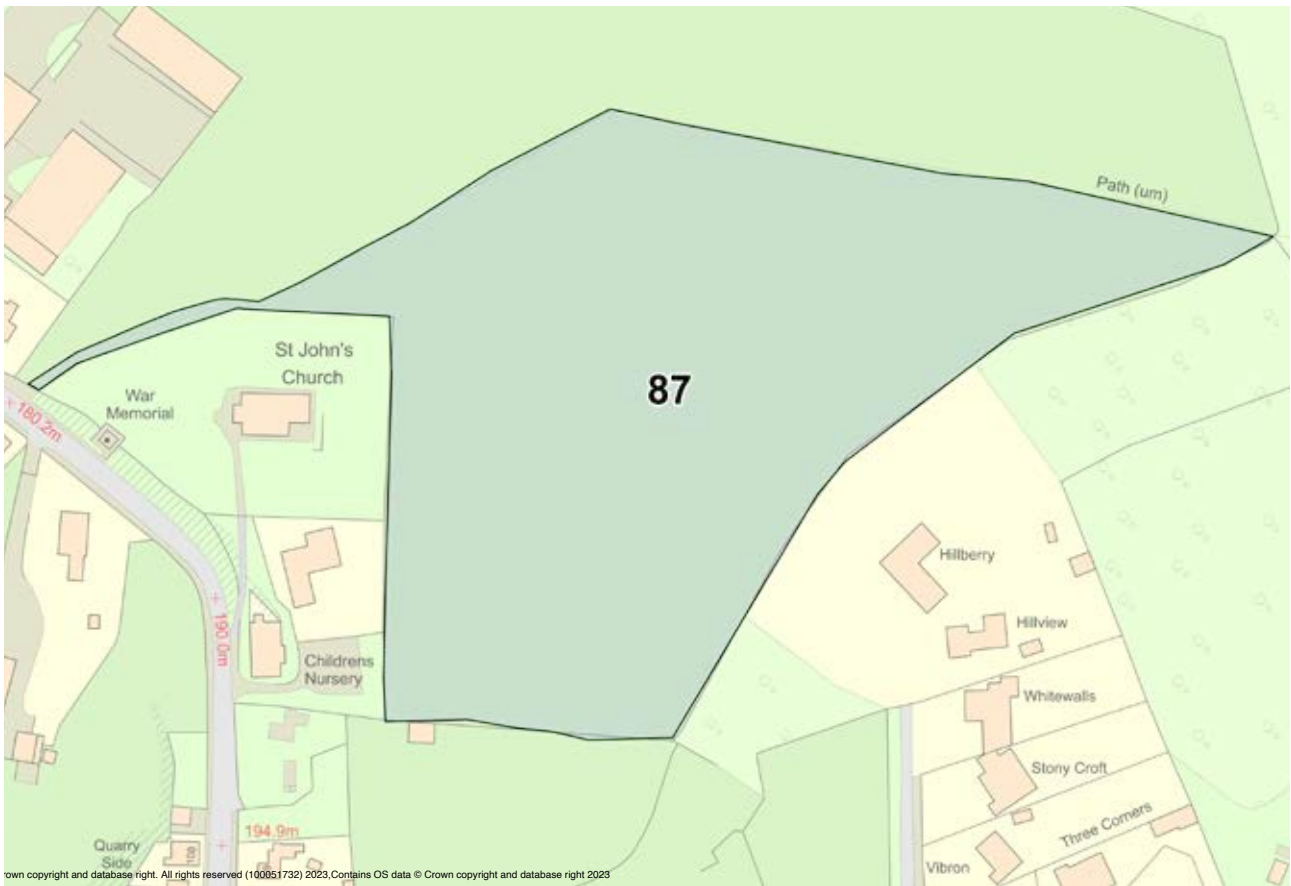
LGS 72 Wood Lane Primary School playing fields



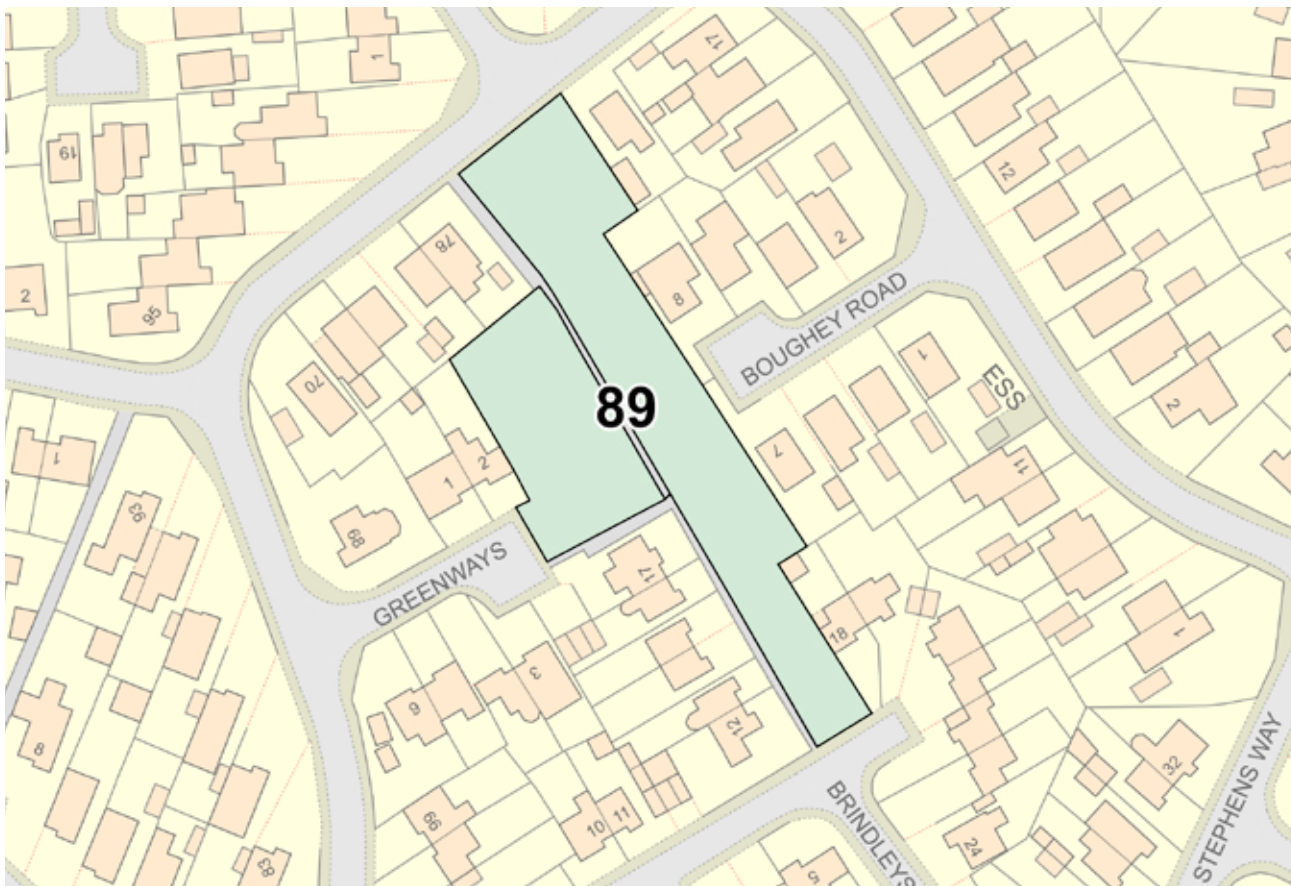
LGS 81 Wood Street Play Area



LGS 82 Diglake



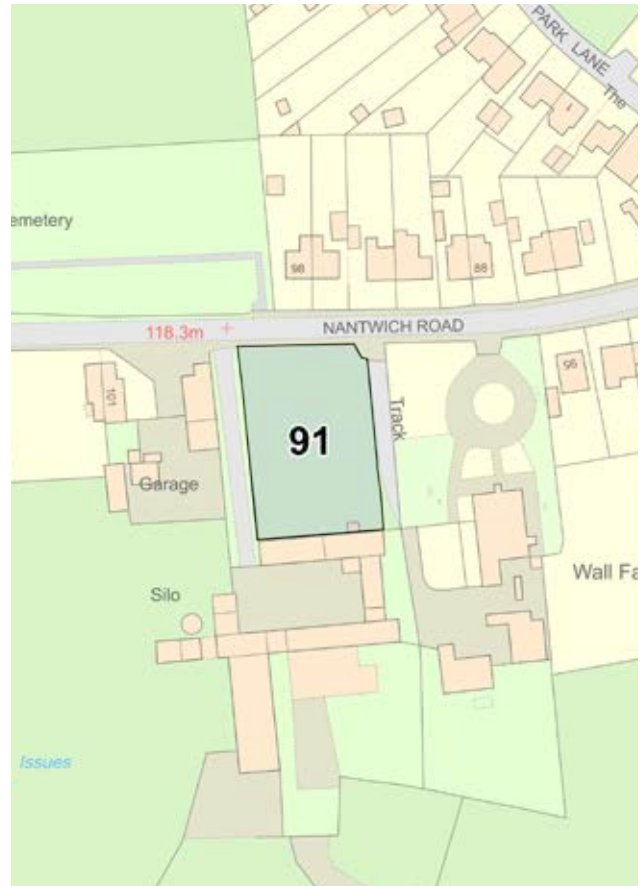
LGS 87 Church Fields Alsagers Bank



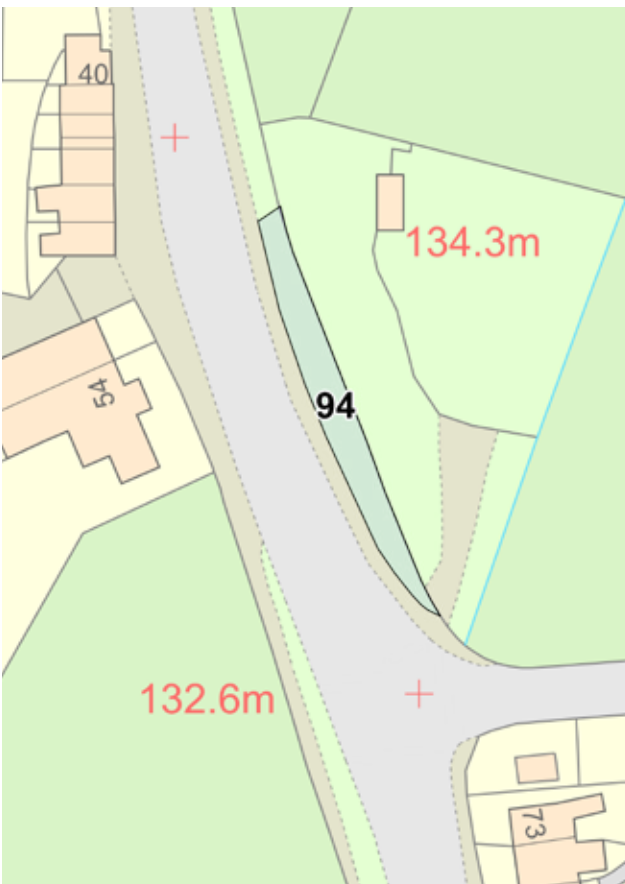
LGS 89 Land off Aarons Drive Bignall End



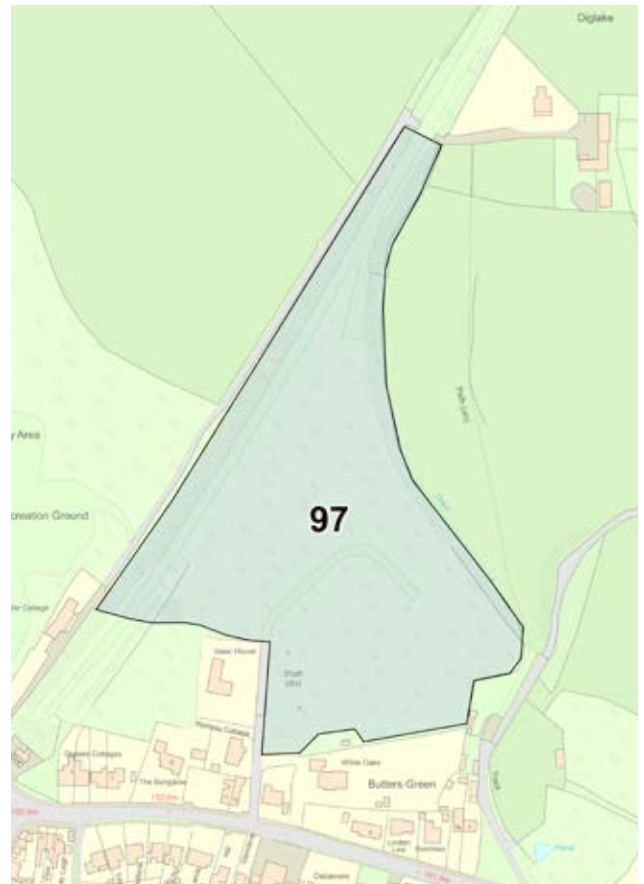
LGS 90 Land off Stephens Way Bignall End



LGS 91 Wall Farm land Nantwich Road



LGS 94 Hougherwall Road



LGS 97 Bignall Hill Colliery Site Entrance

7



7.1

Purpose

To promote more sustainable travel methods, including active travel. To support local energy generation through renewable sources.

7.2

Planning Rationale

National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

Chapter 2 deals with sustainable development.

Sustainable development has economic, social and environmental objectives, set out in Paragraph 8.

Paragraph 11a) states:

“all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;”

Chapter 9 of the NPPF deals with promoting sustainable travel. Whilst this is challenging in a rural environment without good public transport links, the Neighbourhood Plan promotes active travel through walking and cycling.

The NPPF defines sustainable transport modes as:

“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.”

This is important for rural communities to encourage ultra-low and zero emission vehicles, where the reliance is heavily on private vehicle journeys due to a lack of public transport alternatives.

The NPPF makes clear in chapter 14 ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’, paragraph 152, that policies should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.

Emerging Local Plan, Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council

The emerging Local Plan undertook Regulation 18 consultation in the summer of 2023. The Local Planning Authority are considering the responses to this consultation. The Local Plan timetable indicates that a Regulation 19 Draft Plan will be available for consultation later in 2024.

The Parish Council have worked closely with Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council to ensure there are no disparities between the two Plans.

Core Spatial Strategy, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent, Adopted October 2009

The Core Strategy, 2009 contains various policies relating to the natural environment and green infrastructure. These are now somewhat out-of-date due to the age of the plan, changes to national policy and guidance, including the requirement for 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in the Environment Act 2021.

The Strategic Aims of the Core Strategy make clear the priority to protect and enhance the diversity of wildlife and habitats. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to enhance protection through identifying locally distinctive and important features, and protect the landscape setting and character of the rural Neighbourhood Area.

Benefits of cycling and walking³⁰

Health

Physical inactivity costs the NHS up to **£1 billion** per annum, with further indirect costs calculated at

£8.2bn



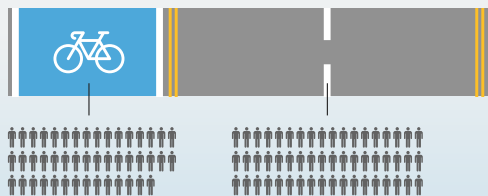
Wellbeing

20 minutes of exercise per day **cuts risk** of developing depression **by 31%** and increases productivity of workers



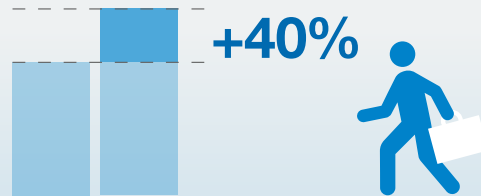
Congestion

The new east-west and north-south cycle routes in London are moving **46% of the people** in only **30% of the road space**



Local businesses

Up to **40% increase** in shopping footfall by well-planned improvements in the walking environment



Environmental and air quality

By 2050, future active travel spending is expected to deliver **£20–100m** savings from air quality improvements alone and provide opportunities to improve green space and biodiversity.

Climate change

Mode shift to active transport is one of the **most cost-effective ways of reducing transport emissions**



Economy

Bike manufacture, distribution, retail and sales **contributes £0.8 billion** per year to the economy and **supports around 22,000 jobs**.



Figure 7.2, Decarbonising Transport Plan 2021

Decarbonising Transport Plan, 2021

The Government's Decarbonising Transport Plan (2021) sets out a vision for future transport which aims to address the climate agenda, improve health and wellbeing, create better places to live whilst providing ways of travelling which are affordable and reliable. The Neighbourhood Plan positively addresses this through policy, which addresses sustainable transport, including active travel and electric charging points for vehicles.

See Figure 7.2 for an infographics which shows the benefits of cycling and walking.

Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment Study (Part 1), Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, 2022

The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment Study identifies that:

"As a response to climate change, there is a strong emphasis on moving towards generating energy from renewable as opposed to finite sources. Renewable energy can include a number of forms, from wind technology (single turbines and wind farms) to biomass, solar and hydro-electric technologies, all of which are likely to have impacts on the landscape if not sensitively designed and sited."

(Page 26, Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment Study, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, 2022)

The Neighbourhood Plan responds positively by setting design criteria and supporting energy generation from renewable and zero-carbon sources.

Audley Rural Design Codes, AECOM, May 2023

The Audley Design Code puts great emphasis on carbon zero, climate resilient and energy efficient new development. It makes suggestions for how energy could be produced in new developments suggesting that:

"Design Codes - Low Carbon Energy Generation (LCEG) The National Grid is de-carbonising as cleaner, greener energy is used to generate

electricity, supporting a move away from fossil-fuel heating to electricitybased systems. Additional sources of low carbon energy should be included in the design where suitable.

- › Where possible, buildings with complementary energy profiles should be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source (e.g. an ambient loop network) can be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night. This can be used to reduce peak loads. Further, waste heat generated from one building could then be used to heat another
- › Depending on local water bodies in close proximity to the development, water source heat pumps may be a suitable source of heating and cooling. In a large development these may contribute to a District Heating Network (DHN) or for a large commercial building they may be used directly. They can be designed to use either static or flowing bodies of water but require detailed environmental assessments to be carried out as part of the design process
- › Biomass boilers might be suitable in buildings with a predictable heat load, as the heat output cannot be easily modulated to match load changes instantly. Biomass should only be specified on sites where there is a local sustainable source of wood chips or pellets that can be readily stored nearby and there is space for storage and easy transport access for deliveries."

The Neighbourhood Area has a significant past in the mining industry. The scope of geo-thermal energy could be explored as part of developing climate resilient communities with a local energy source production.

The design code also identifies a hierarchy of roads and streets across the Neighbourhood Area and network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW). What this demonstrates is that, owing to the rural location, topography and scale of the area, there are limited alternatives to private cars for movement and access. The policies of this Plan seek to promote active travel and reduce dependency on private cars.

However, there are a number of factors that make this the predominate form of movement. Poor public transport infrastructure in rural communities increases the need for private vehicles. This point is echoed through the results of the community engagement in the householder questionnaire in Spring 2022 shown in the following extract which makes clear that in the top five priorities more footpaths and bridleways were needed and bus services.

Leisure and Wellbeing

Most people said that the things that need to be made better were

Policing



Parking



Buses



Footpaths



Over two thirds of people thought that some things in the Parish were missing. The top five were

Car
Parking



Sports
Facilities



Cycle
Paths and
Bridleways



Bus
Services



Activities
for Young
People



OVER A QUARTER
of people wanted
OFF ROAD
CYCLING/BRIDLEWAYS

A QUARTER
of people want
TENNIS COURTS

OVER 10%
of people wanted
4G
FOOTBALL PITCHES

Some people said that
facilities in Audley Rural
Parish like those at



**SIR THOMAS
BOUGHEY
ACADEMY**

**SIR THOMAS
BOUGHEY ACADEMY**
should be made
available for the public



OVER 84%
of people said that
HEALTHCARE
**(DOCTOR, DENTIST,
PHARMACY)**
was one of the most
important services
in the Parish

Figure 7.3, Extracts from Community Engagement Spring 2022

7.3 | ANP12

Transport and Active Travel

- 1 Development likely to generate a significant amount of additional travel should include balanced and sustainable transport provision, including support for active travel, proportionate to the scale and nature of the scheme, including:
 - a. Secure, screened storage space for cycles and scooters, with electric charging points;
 - b. Electric charging points for motor vehicles.
 - c. Varied parking provision including sufficient on-plot to avoid excessive on-street parking.
- 2 Development, and the cumulative impacts of development, must have no severe impact on road capacity and safety and additional vehicle movements should cause no significant harm to residential amenity.
- 3 Development should avoid adverse impacts and take opportunities to enhance the amenity, safety, accessibility and setting of footpaths, cycle routes, public rights of way, the greenway, Marion Platt Way, and the Former Mineral Line.
- 4 Development should create a safe and convenient environment for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders, including in rural parts of the area, meeting the requirements of this Neighbourhood Plan's Sustainable Design policy.

INTERPRETATION

The policy applies to all kinds of development. For housing, it should be applied with ANP1, which sets some similar provisions specific to housing.

Space for cycles may be provided separately or be incorporated into garages large enough to accommodate one vehicle in addition to two cycles.

For apartments, a shared cycle facility may be provided.

Development should link to existing footpaths and cycle routes where possible.

Transport Assessment and Travel Plans provide an opportunity to explain how the requirements of the policy have been met.



Figure 7.4, Marion Platt Way

7.4 | ANP13

Local Energy Generation

- 1 Development to provide local energy schemes will be supported, providing there is no significant adverse impact on:
 - a. The amenities of residential properties;
 - b. The best and most versatile agricultural land;
 - c. The rural character of the area, including sensitive and designated landscapes, having regard to Policy ANP9;
 - d. Audley Conservation Area and listed buildings and their settings, having regard to heritage Policies in this plan;
 - e. The separation of settlements.
- 2 Local energy schemes should be located and designed to compensate for environmental impacts and minimise their visual impacts including boundary treatments and landscaping.
- 3 Conditions or an agreement should be considered so that, if and when the facility becomes redundant:
 - a. the facility and associated infrastructure will be removed;
 - b. the site will be restored to its previous natural state.

INTERPRETATION

Local energy generation could include wind turbines, solar panels, geothermal from mine shafts, carbon capture and storage, district heating schemes and anaerobic.

Sensitive and designated landscapes are shown on Plans at Figure 6.3 and 6.8 - Audley Biodiversity Assets Plan and Figure 6.5 DEFRA Map showing designations and features within the Neighbourhood Area.

Design and landscape features to compensate for environmental impacts and reduce visual impacts could include:

- › Installation or retention of boundary features such as hedgerows, ditches, and stone walls;
- › Creating pollen and nectar strips;
- › Where security fencing is installed, growing climbers such as honeysuckle and ensuring there is a 20-30cm gap between the base of the fence and the ground to allow small wildlife to pass through;
- › Installation of bat/bird boxes or other features to support wildlife.



Figure 7.5, Example of local solar panels used for local energy generation

Infrastructure Priorities

The following is a list of priorities for the use of planning infrastructure monies.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Improved public transport services, including connections and frequencies. | 6 Create signage to give the parish an identity. |
| 2 CCTV. | 7 Traffic calming measures. |
| 3 Improved sports facilities, for example tennis and basketball courts, rugby and 4G football pitches. | 8 New off road cycle routes and bridleways. |
| 4 Gym and swimming pool. | 9 Improvement of local community facilities. |
| 5 Allotments/community gardens. | |



Figure 7.6, Cycling in Audley Rural Parish

8



GREEN DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE NOTE

8

This is a guidance note for developers on green design. It is an informal note, so includes non-planning matters. However, use of the guidance may help in achieving compliance with the policies of the neighbourhood plan, in particular those relating to design and landscape.

patterns. Many meetings can be held through digital media.

Design of development should take account of microclimate, including sun, shading and wind.

Development should be designed to minimise pollution, including air, water and noise pollution.

8.1 Planning Principles

Mixed use neighbourhoods (which include residential properties, employment and community facilities in easy walking distance) can help to reduce the need for journeys. Such neighbourhoods are sometimes referred to as 15 minute neighbourhoods.

Layouts should prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement, convenience and safety. This includes convenient links to public transport.

Historic and older areas were designed for a low carbon economy and tend to have intrinsic sustainable characteristics including a finer grain of mixed use, pedestrian-orientated layouts, and dense urban forms such as terraces.

Retention and reuse of buildings preserves the energy embodied in their materials and construction and avoids landfill.

Town and village centres tend to have concentrations of facilities and are usually served by sustainable forms of transport. Populating such centres can be an effective way of improving their viability.

Flexible work practices, including home working, can help to create more sustainable life/work.

8.2 Green Building Design

Carbon neutral development is a key goal.

Ways of building green can include:

- › use of efficient heating and cooling systems, or design to reduce dependency on heating and cooling systems.
- › superior insulation properties and airtightness, in excess of Building Regulations;
- › natural ventilation and air flow (for warmer months) to help avoid over-heating;
- › use of local, low-embodied energy, recycled and recyclable materials;
- › living (green) walls or roofs;
- › orientation to maximise passive solar gain;
- › rainwater capture, storage and reuse (grey water);
- › use of LED or other low wattage lighting;
- › space for natural drying clothes;
- › bins for recycling;
- › flexible spaces and layouts to accommodate changing demands.

8.3 Biodiversity

Development should achieve a biodiversity net gain.

In terms of impacts on habitats, the following hierarchy should be used:

- › Avoid habitat damage;
- › Minimise habitat damage;
- › Restore damaged or lost habitat;
- › Compensate for habitat loss or damage (as a last resort).

Existing landscape features, landform and green infrastructure should be retained and be incorporated into redevelopment and enhanced as far as possible.

Design features to support wildlife include:

- › Bat boxes and bird boxes (owl, raptors, house sparrow, house-martin, swift, woodpecker);
- › Hedgehog gaps in fences;
- › Badger routes;
- › Wildlife connectivity via grass verges and footpath edges;
- › Meadow edge grasses and wildflowers, bee-friendly desirable.

8.4 Public Realm and Green Landscape Design

The public realm and green infrastructure should be designed to support movement, recreation, social interaction, play and exercise.

Sustainable surface water management and the efficient use of water are critical elements of the design process and sustainable surface water management should be linked to green/blue infrastructure and landscape design. Green infrastructure can help to mitigate the impacts of high temperatures, combat emissions, maintain or enhance biodiversity and reduce flood risk.

Sustainable Drainage Systems should be incorporated into the landscape design. This includes green spaces for residential developments.

Hard surfacing should be kept to a minimum area and be water permeable.

Use of traditional hedges for boundary treatments creates a greener environment and enhances the historic and rural character of the area.

Native species or other species with high environmental value should be used in planting.

More natural or wild landscape treatments can have greater biodiversity value and be easier to maintain.



Figure 8.2, Example of green roof on a community building



Figure 8.3, Leddys Field



Figure 8.4, Halmer End CIC Football pitch

9



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