

CHELFORD PARISH COUNCIL

FUTURE HOUSING IN CHELFORD

THE WAY FORWARD

May 2010

ADOPTED VERSION 1

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1. Introduction

Parish Plan

1.01 In 2009 Chelford Parish Council produced its Parish Plan, 'Building a Vibrant Future', which was the culmination of discussions and consultations with the resident population of the parish extending over a period of some four years. The Plan reached conclusions on actions to be pursued to resolve identified problems and enhance the prospects of the community across a wide range of environmental and socio-economic issues. One of the areas identified for action was that of future housing development, and the following document is part of the response to the Parish Plan's recommendations in this respect.

1.02 The consultations in the Parish Plan process identified a strong desire amongst participating residents to control the scale of Chelford's population, but at the same time to secure the ability of the community to retain young families. The availability of affordable housing was identified as a key element in sustaining a diverse population mix. Consequently, **the Parish Plan recommended that efforts be made to:**

“Influence any plans to redevelop areas within the village to ensure the provision of additional housing, including affordable housing to meet the needs of local, young people.”

1.03 **Three actions flowed from this key recommendation:**

“27. Establish some principles to inform the planning of any housing schemes (affordable or otherwise) within the village by drawing on the best practice of surrounding villages. Eg Cranage.

28. Work closely with interested parties and understand the impact of development on the community

29. Understand and implement the findings of the recent (2008) rural housing survey.”

Need for Progress

- 1.04 There is a need to progress these actions in the light of developing circumstances. The Parish Council has been in discussion with several interests which seek to bring forward significant housing proposals within the Chelford village context, and as such has responded positively to Action 28. However, some proposals may shortly be translated into planning applications on which the Parish Council will have to take a carefully considered position, and work needs to be done in this respect and in accordance with Action 27. Similarly, the new unitary authority, Cheshire East Council is in the process of reviewing the housing requirements of the wider area and of developing the Core Strategy, within its Local Development Framework (LDF), which will replace the current adopted Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (2004). As part of this exercise, the Council will be consulting early in 2010 on an authority wide Strategic Housing Land Availability study and on the Issues to be addressed by the Core Strategy. The Parish Council needs to be able to participate effectively in these consultations.

2. The Chelford Context

- 2.01 Residential development in the parish is concentrated in the village of Chelford itself which straddles the A537 Macclesfield-Knutsford Road immediately to the west of the Manchester-Crewe railway line. Approximately 750 m to the east of the village at the intersection of the A537 and the A535 Alderley Edge-Holmes Chapel road is a secondary node of residential, and associated service, development.
- 2.02 Both elements of the settlement pattern are of long standing, but the principal area of development owes much to the arrival of the railway in 1846 and to a major modern expansion based on Dixon Drive in the 1980s. The latter development accounts for some 60% of the homes in the parish. Within the core of the village (Oak Road) is a small element of designated affordable housing.
- 2.03 The physical structure of the main village and much of the economic base of the settlement is defined by two major sites adjacent to the A537 and railway. To the north of the A537 is Chelford Market operated by Frank R. Marshall, which is an active market site serving the national and local farming community and also providing non-agricultural retail opportunities. To the south of the A537, is a major logistics and distribution facility operated by Stobarts (formerly James Irlam). In the centre of the village and to the south of the A537 is a secondary commercial node in the form of Chelford Farm Supplies.
- 2.04 The community is well served by public transport (bus and rail) and supports a range of shops and services, including a bank and post office. It has its own primary school, pre-school and medical centre, and a church and village hall.
- 2.05 The adopted Macclesfield Borough Local Plan placed the main village within a tightly drawn Green Belt boundary, with all development to the east of the railway actually within Green Belt. Housing provision within the Green Belt would be contrary to national policy guidance (Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 ‘Green Belts’) and to local development plan policy other than in exceptional circumstances. One such

circumstance could be the exclusive provision of affordable housing. No provision was, however, made in the Plan for housing development within Chelford by way of any land allocations. The Chelford Market and Stobart's depot sites were identified as sites to be retained for employment purposes, and an area to the north of the market as a protected car parking area.

- 2.06 All the relevant policies, except that relating to the market site, have been saved by the Secretary of State as continuing to apply pending the completion of the replacement LDF. Subsequent to the adoption of the Local Plan, the then Irlams depot site was identified in the adopted Cheshire Replacement Waste Local Plan (July 2007) as an appropriate location for a bulking and materials recycling facility.
- 2.07 In November 2008 the former Macclesfield Borough Council produced, as part of its work towards the development of a Core Strategy, a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Assessment Report (SHLAA). The objective of the report was to find sites and land to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet identified needs. Three sites were considered within the main settlement framework of Chelford:

Chelford Farm Supplies
Irlams depot
Chelford Cattle Market and Car Park

The report assessed that the cumulative capacity of these three sites was 235 dwellings. A greenfield site to the east of the railway and a site at Pear Tree Farm, Marthall, were also promoted in the assessment but not progressed due to their Green Belt status. The conclusions of the Macclesfield SHLAA will be reviewed and incorporated into the developing authority wide assessment for Cheshire East.

- 2.08 Action Point 29 of the Parish Plan refers to "*the findings of the recent (2008) rural housing survey.*" This is the Cheshire East 'Plumley and nearby Parishes Rural Housing Needs Survey Assessment' (February/March 2008). The results of this study are based on a questionnaire survey of local residents. The largest number of respondents (267) was from Chelford parish, representing 50% of the village households.
- 2.09 35 Chelford respondents identified themselves with a household in which there was at least one adult wishing to form a separate household and 11 indicated that this could only be achieved through a move out of the parish due to the lack of affordable housing. In 16 cases the need was immediate (ie 0-1 year). Amongst the Chelford respondents the so-called 'hidden household' was a child and in the total sample over 75% of the demand came from individuals aged 20-25 years. In terms of a solution, the Chelford respondents overwhelmingly preferred a subsidised ownership or open market housing option. In response to an option of a small number of affordable houses, 64% of Chelford respondents were in favour.
- 2.10 In summary, **the context in which the Parish Council seeks to take forward its consideration of options to meet the future housing needs of the community is therefore:**

- (i) **the baseline of an existing sustainable community with a sound mix of housing and employment opportunities, and a good range of educational, medical, retail services and public amenities;**
- (ii) **a constrained settlement structure determined by the main transport infrastructure, significant employment sites and the restraint of a tightly drawn Green Belt;**
- (iii) **a clearly expressed need and support for some additional housing, inclusive of a small number of affordable dwellings.**

3 The Community Objectives

Objectives

- 3.01 The primary objectives of the Parish Plan are to develop and sustain a viable and vibrant community, and to take advantage of opportunities to strengthen the mix of residential and employment functions, to enhance the quality of the village environment, and to develop the sense of community.

Issues

- 3.02 In translating these objectives into principles which can be applied to prospective housing proposals, the Parish Council recognises that it has to have regard not only to the aspirations of the community, but also to the particular circumstances of the settlement pattern and to the framework of planning policy within which any proposals will be considered by the local planning authority.
- 3.03 It considering this framework, the Parish Council has had to address two fundamental questions:
- (i) whether, in taking forward a position on future housing, it is contemplating only affordable housing provision or a wider mix of residential development;
 - (ii) whether it is contemplating any development option which seeks to breach the extent of the existing Green Belt in the parish.
- 3.04 The first question raises the issue of **whether the longer term interests of the community would be best served by taking a very narrow approach to future housing, reflecting the needs of current residents, or whether these needs and those of the community as a whole should be met within development aimed at a wider concept of a sustainability, variety and inclusivity.** In addressing this choice, it is recognised that local housing policies require that general residential development schemes deliver a proportion (25%) of the total number of dwellings as affordable units (H8 Macclesfield Borough Local Plan).

- 3.05 The choice taken in respect of the first question bears on the second question; **whether future housing requirements should be met in a way which compromises the Green Belt context of the village.** Only the adoption of the narrow approach would be consistent with maintenance of the Green Belt. A breach of the Green Belt boundary to meet a general housing requirement would be likely to raise significant policy issues. Existing national and local planning policy does, however, allow for the release of small scale exception sites in rural areas, including Green Belts, exclusively to meet the current affordable housing needs of a community.
- 3.06 In terms of meeting a more widely defined housing requirement, the key policy objective is to make effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed. For rural settlements, national planning policy seeks to direct development to locations where it can support existing social networks, place people close to sources of employment and key services, minimise environmental impact and where possible deliver environmental benefits.

Principles

- 3.07 Having considered these issues, **the Parish Council has concluded that it should take a broad view of housing provision in Chelford and seek to maintain and enhance the environmental context of the settlements. Consequently it has adopted the following principles that future housing proposals should:**
- (i) **provide a mix of tenure types, including affordable housing appropriate to proven demand;**
 - (ii) **utilise, as far as possible, existing developed land and/or not prejudice the countryside context of the settlement;**
 - (iii) **contribute to improvements to the management of traffic on the A537, to the safer interaction between vehicles and pedestrians, and the resolution of village parking issues;**
 - (iv) **contribute to the development of a more coherent village structure;**
 - (v) **provide for new employment opportunities where the use previous employment land is envisaged;**
 - (vi) **provide additional, or contribute to the enhancement of existing, community facilities.**

4 Current and Potential Housing Sites

- 4.01 The Parish Council has been engaged in consultation with interests seeking to promote residential development in Chelford. One is a developer seeking an exclusively affordable housing development on a green field, Green Belt site (south of A537 opposite Mere Court) on the southwestern edge of the main village, and the second is a commercial interest seeking a re-development of the Stobart's depot site. Two other sites have already been considered in the context of the Macclesfield Borough Council Strategic Housing Land Assessment (SHLAA), namely the Chelford Market site and the Chelford Farm Supplies site. Within the built-up fabric of the parish, only one other site has been considered by the Parish Council, namely a small backland plot off Dixon Drive and to the rear of property fronting onto the A537. All other open land within the main village is in active amenity use and/or performs an important environmental function. Other speculative sites on the periphery of the village or associated with the eastern satellite to Chelford are all within the Green Belt.
- 4.02 For the purposes of developing a view on future housing development, the current planning exercise has concentrated on the following sites:
- (i) A537 Green Belt site
 - (ii) Stobart's depot site
 - (iii) Chelford Farm Supplies site
 - (iv) Chelford Market site, including its adjoining car parking area
 - (v) Dixon Drive backland plot.

For completeness, more general consideration has been given to peripheral sites, notably land to the rear of the Egerton Arms PH and in the vicinity of Carter Lane, and to land to the east of the railway.

5 Site Assessment

Introduction

- 5.01 In considering, the housing sites identified, the Parish Council has had regard to the Government's guidance to local planning authorities on the provision of adequate housing land set out in Planning Policy Statement 3 'Housing' (2006). This guidance introduces the concepts of 'deliverable' and 'developable' sites. Deliverable sites are those which can meet needs in the short term (ie 0-5 years), while developable sites can meet needs over a longer period of up to 15 years.
- 5.02 To be deliverable a site must be currently available and housing on it achievable within five years. It must also be suitable for immediate development and contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities. Developable sites must be in suitable locations and have a reasonable prospect of being brought forward.
- 5.03 These are the criteria which were applied by the former Macclesfield Borough Council to the three sites examined in its SHLAA report (November 2008). The conclusions of that assessment were as follows:

Site	Size ha	Position	Suitability	Available	Achievable	Developable	Capacity	5 years supply	6-10 years	11-15 years
Farm supplies	0.5	In use	√	x	√	√	15			15
Irlams depot	1.7	In use, any scheme to be part housing and employment	√	√	√	√	50	50		
Market	3.7	In use, but owners wish to relocate	√	√	√	√	170		170	

The Parish Council understands that in the recent collection of information for the Cheshire East SHLAA 2010 report, the availability of the market site will be updated to 0-5 years. The rest of the assessment conclusions are believed to still be relevant.

- 5.04 In relation to any housing proposals brought forward in the short-term on these sites or any others in Chelford, the local planning authority has set out guidance on how developers should interpret the policy framework of PPS3 and saved development plan policies in an advice note. This identifies a number of criteria which housing proposals should meet. These criteria generally accord with the aspirations of the Parish Council and have been used, as far as practicable, in its consideration of the various potential sites and proposals.

Objective 1	Ensuring the proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing in the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives
Requirements	Does the proposal accord with local housing and wider policy objectives?
Objective 2	Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people
Requirements	Does the proposal meet the housing needs of the area and/or provide affordable housing
Objective 3	The suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental suitability
Requirements	Is the site in a suitable and sustainable location, eg in or near a town, district or village centre
	Is the site previously developed land
	Is the site subject to constraints on deliverability or development
Objective 4	Using land effectively and efficiently
Requirements	Is the density at least 30 dwellings per hectare, and if not does the character of the area dictate a lower density
Objective 5	Achieving high quality housing
Requirements	Is the site accessible to public transport
	Is the development well laid out – safe, accessible and user friendly
	Is there adequate open space provided and/or access to recreational open space
	Does the design complement/improve the local character of the area
	Does the development make efficient use of resources, incorporate energy saving measures and adaptations to reduce climate change
	Is the car parking well designed and integrated with streets that are pedestrian, cycle or vehicle friendly
	Does the development provide for the retention or re-establishment of biodiversity

A537 Green Belt site

- 5.05 The Green Belt site is located on the southern side of the A537 between Sunny Bank Farm and the existing built up edge of the main village in the vicinity of Mere Court. It is an entirely green field site currently in agricultural use. During consultation, the developer has indicated the intention to bring forward a proposal for 36 affordable housing units.
- 5.06 It is understood that the site is available and the developer has a proven track record in bringing forward affordable housing schemes. The size of the proposed scheme exceeds the national indicative minimum site size threshold of 15 dwellings. It would accord with the general housing imperative to provide affordable housing where there is a demonstrated need. The expressed intention is to provide only rental opportunities in the development, which does not accord with the preferred mix of affordable options expressed by Chelford residents in the Housing Needs Survey.
- 5.07 The site does not appear to have any physical constraints to its development, and has ready access to the main services and facilities of the village, and to public transport. It is, however, a green field site within the Green Belt and as such its development would conflict with the policy objectives of seeking to direct new development to previously developed land and to restrain development in Green Belt areas.
- 5.08 In design terms any development in this location, would require significant landscaping works in order to integrate it into the existing village context and the wider countryside to the south. There is no existing southern boundary to the site and in the absence of landscaping development would be obtrusive and visible from public rights of way providing access for the community to the countryside south of the village. Existing development on the north side of the A537 at this location is associated with mature trees giving a settled context to the village boundary. The A537 clearly distinguishes the village from the countryside; a distinction which the proposed development would erode. The indicative site layout provided to the Parish Council by the developer includes no features which address these issues.
- 5.09 The site would require an additional new access onto the A537 and residents would have to cross this heavily trafficked road to reach any village services or facilities. For pedestrians this would require some formal crossing provision to be made for this to be achieved safely.
- 5.10 The limited nature of the development would deliver no additional services or benefits which would integrate it into the structure and life of the community. The indicative site layout includes a central green space which would serve the immediate residents, but make no wider contribution to the benefit of the community.

5.11 In terms of the Parish Council’s development principles, the south of A537 site performs as follows:

Comprise a mix of tenure types, including affordable housing	x
Utilise, as far as possible, existing developed land and/or not prejudice the countryside context of the settlement	x
Contribute to improvements to the management of traffic on the A537 and to the safer interaction between vehicles and pedestrians;	x
Contribute to the development of a more coherent village structure	x
Provide for new employment opportunities where the use previous employment land is envisaged	x
Provide additional, or contribute to the enhancement of existing, community facilities.	x

5.12 The main advantage of the site is its potential ability to deliver affordable housing at an early date.

Stobart’s depot site

5.13 The Stobart’s depot site is located to the south of the A537 and adjacent to the railway. The site considered in the Macclesfield SHLAA was restricted solely to the operational area of the depot which includes several substantial buildings. The current owners, Stobarts, are however promoting a larger area of land extending to the west of the depot and to the south of a bowling green. This area comprises mainly land used as a car parking area in conjunction with the operation of the Market. It is considered by the promoter that this larger site has a capacity for some 100 dwellings. The extension area falls outside the village boundary and within the Green Belt.

5.14 Discussions between the site promoter and the Parish Council have identified an intention to deliver some 30% of the dwellings as an affordable component, to include a retained element of employment uses and to deliver an element of community facilities. The proportion of affordable housing would be consistent with development plan policy requirements. The Parish Council anticipates that, in accordance with adopted development plan policy (T6 Macclesfield Borough Local Plan), development of the site would also include improvements to the A537 at the access or make a contribution to highway improvements.

5.15 The issue of the conditions on the A537 in the vicinity of the Stobart’s site is important to the Parish Council. This is essentially at an important nodal point in the structure of the main village. There is a wide area of highway land comprising the A537, the depot entrance and the junctions of Dixon Drive and Station Road. This is an area of high vehicular and pedestrian activity, with a poor and confusing highway layout. The need for a holistic road safety improvement plan is an identified action in the Parish Plan. Development of the Irlams site would provide a stimulus for such an improvement plan, as the developer will be required to provide a safe means for vehicles and pedestrians to interact with the A537.

- 5.16 At the present time, the Stobart's depot site is a somewhat incongruous feature within the structure of the village, reflecting its unplanned origins. The removal of the substantial industrial style buildings and re-use of the site subject to modern standards of design and landscaping would represent an enhancement of a site which is prominent in the village structure. The loss of the employment aspect of current depot use is balanced by the fact that it makes a very limited contribution to the wider employment needs and aspirations of the community, with most workers being drawn from a wider labour market. Furthermore, neither the community nor the Parish Council would support the alternative waste management use of the site promoted in the County Waste Local Plan. The site has the potential to deliver a varied mix of housing and employment opportunities which would have benefits for the future of the community.
- 5.17 That part of the site which is located in the Green Belt raises policy issues. While being open land, it is, however, functionally part of the urban fabric of the village and wholly contained by the woodland area of Chelford Heath to its south and an area of mature trees to its west. As such its re-development would not prejudice any countryside uses, nor produce an urban extension in conflict with the broad objectives of Green Belt designation. Nevertheless, development in this part of the site will require special justification in the context of this national restraint designation.
- 5.18 Three further policy constraints relevant to the site relate to the conservation interest in the adjoining Chelford Heath (a development plan Site of Nature Conservation Importance) and to the loss of a parking facility and of employment land. Development of the Stobart's depot site and its extension would not physically impinge upon the Heath, but protective measures would be necessary in the design of any development. This must necessarily be subject to an appropriate assessment of ecological issues. In terms of the use of part of the land for parking purposes, development plan policy T13 would normally require the provision of alternative facilities where development removes existing parking space. The ongoing role of this parking in the future of the Market needs to be considered. While there is no policy embargo on the use of employment land for other purposes, there is a general objective to retain a flexible resource in this respect. The retention of an employment element in the development of the depot site will, therefore, be a relevant consideration.
- 5.19 The operational part of the Stobart's depot site was considered a suitable housing location in the Macclesfield SHLAA report. The proposed extension westwards would, however, introduce some potential policy and site suitability conflicts in terms of the Cheshire East PPS3 guidance. Both the smaller and larger sites would, however, meet the tests of availability and developability. The scale of potential development is likely to be significant in the light of the site preparation costs and contributions to affordable housing, highway improvement and community facility elements. The viability of a development scheme is likely to depend upon a sufficient scale of development being achieved.

5.20 In terms of the Parish Council’s development principles, the Stobart’s depot site performs as follows:

Comprise a mix of tenure types, including affordable housing	√
Utilise, as far as possible, existing developed land and/or not prejudice the countryside context of the settlement	√
Contribute to improvements to the management of traffic on the A537 and to the safer interaction between vehicles and pedestrians;	√
Contribute to the development of a more coherent village structure	√
Provide for new employment opportunities where the use previous employment land is envisaged	√
Provide additional, or contribute to the enhancement of existing, community facilities.	√

Chelford Farm Supplies site

5.21 Chelford Farm Supplies is a small commercial complex fronting onto the south side of the A537. It is a congested site comprising a number of substantial buildings and is wholly within the boundary of the main village. Residential development adjoins it. The Macclesfield SHLAA report assessed its capacity at 15 dwellings. While the re-development of the site could have environmental benefits, it would entail the loss of a valuable commercial and employment facility. The current owners have indicated that there is no foreseeable intention to diminish this facility and the site is, therefore, regarded as unavailable.

5.22 Should the site become available at a future date, **the Chelford Farm Supplies site performs as follows in terms of the Parish Council’s development principles:**

Comprise a mix of tenure types, including affordable housing	√
Utilise, as far as possible, existing developed land and/or not prejudice the countryside context of the settlement	√
Contribute to improvements to the management of traffic on the A537 and to the safer interaction between vehicles and pedestrians;	√
Contribute to the development of a more coherent village structure	√
Provide for new employment opportunities where the use previous employment land is envisaged	x
Provide additional, or contribute to the enhancement of existing, community facilities.	x

Chelford Market site

5.23 The Chelford Market site is located to the north of the A537 and adjacent to the railway, and is accessed from Dixon Drive and Station Road. The southern two thirds of the site comprises an extensive area of buildings and surrounding operational land associated with a functioning livestock market and associated market and administrative activity. To its north is a separate area of parking. It is a wholly developed land site.

- 5.24 The Market is an important economic element in the structure of Chelford, but it is also a source of tensions associated with its operation in close proximity to a mainly residential environment. The Market operator has a clear aspiration to re-locate to a less constrained site with a view to removing the potential for conflict and to developing a modern purpose built facility. The Parish Council has supported recent unsuccessful efforts to effect relocation, but does not wish to see a move in the Market's location which severs its functional links with Chelford.
- 5.25 The Market site and associated parking area is wholly within the boundary of the main village and is identified as employment land in the adopted development plan. However the relevant development plan policy (E17) referred to retention of the site in its present use only; a very specific policy not saved for current development control purposes by the Secretary of State. The supporting text makes it quite clear that the planning authority is aware that the Market is a source of some problems and an alternative site is being sought.
- 5.26 The site is, therefore, available for housing and other development in so far as the Market Operator wishes to relocate. It is not, however, truly available until such time as an alternative site has been identified and any necessary planning permission secured. The Market site was considered a suitable housing location in the Macclesfield SHLAA report.
- 5.27 At the present time, the Market site, as with the Irlams depot site, is a somewhat incongruous feature within the structure of the village. The removal of the substantial complex of buildings and re-use of the site subject to modern standards of design and landscaping would represent an enhancement of a site which is prominent in the village structure. The site has the potential to deliver a varied mix of housing and employment opportunities which would have benefit for the community.
- 5.28 Any proposal for the redevelopment of the site involving a residential element would be required to deliver a proportion of dwellings which were affordable.
- 5.29 There are no obvious physical or environmental constraints to the development of the site. It is in a highly sustainable location within the main village with the major services and facilities within a short walking distance (less than 400m) of the site. Since the development of the site would entail the cessation of Market activities, there would be no policy issue in respect of the retention/replacement of the car parking facility. Given the potential capacity of the site, however, there are likely to be highway issues, which again would revolve around the design inadequacies of the A537/Dixon Drive/Station Road junction.

5.30 In terms of the Parish Council’s development principles, the Chelford Market site performs as follows

Comprise a mix of tenure types, including affordable housing	√
Utilise, as far as possible, existing developed land and/or not prejudice the countryside context of the settlement	√
Contribute to improvements to the management of traffic on the A537 and to the safer interaction between vehicles and pedestrians;	√
Contribute to the development of a more coherent village structure	√
Provide for new employment opportunities where the use previous employment land is envisaged	√
Provide additional, or contribute to the enhancement of existing, community facilities.	√

Dixon Drive backland plot

5.31 Off Dixon Drive close to its junction with Station Road is a small greenfield site forming a backland plot to existing residential property. It is the only open space within the fabric of the main village which has no specific functional allocation. Given its very limited capacity, it would not be capable of making any significant contribution to future housing requirements in the context of the Parish Council’s principals for such development:

Comprise a mix of tenure types, including affordable housing	x
Utilise, as far as possible, existing developed land and/or not prejudice the countryside context of the settlement	√
Contribute to improvements to the management of traffic on the A537 and to the safer interaction between vehicles and pedestrians;	x
Contribute to the development of a more coherent village structure	x
Provide for new employment opportunities where the use previous employment land is envisaged	x
Provide additional, or contribute to the enhancement of existing, community facilities.	x

5.32 Nevertheless, the site would meet the criteria set out in the adopted Local Plan (Policy H5) for ‘windfall sites’, particularly in respect of its highly sustainable location.

Other sites

5.33 The Parish Council has previously given consideration to peripheral sites at Chelford as potential sites for affordable housing, notably land in the vicinity of Carter Lane, and land to the east of the railway before and after the Village Hall and across from the Village Hall, south of the A537. A further site is that to the rear of the Egerton Arms PH. All these sites have the disadvantage of breaching the village boundary and encroaching upon the Green Belt. Access to the Carter Lane land is constrained by an inability to meet current access standards. The Egerton Arms site involves disturbed ground and possible contamination issues. The sites around the Village Hall raise sustainability issues in terms of access on to the A537 and proximity to the main village, although there is a pedestrian on the north side of the Village Hall which under the Parish Plan implementation will be improved. None performs well in

relation in terms of the development principles subsequently formulated by the Parish Council:

Comprise a mix of tenure types, including affordable housing	x
Utilise, as far as possible, existing developed land and/or not prejudice the countryside context of the settlement	x
Contribute to improvements to the management of traffic on the A537 and to the safer interaction between vehicles and pedestrians;	x
Contribute to the development of a more coherent village structure	x
Provide for new employment opportunities where the use previous employment land is envisaged	x
Provide additional, or contribute to the enhancement of existing, community facilities.	x

6. Options and Preferred Approach

Options

6.01 In terms of the principles established by the Parish Council, the potential sites which appear to have the greatest prospects of delivering both the requirements and benefits it seeks from future housing in Chelford are those already considered in the Macclesfield SHLAA; the Irlams depot, Chelford Farm Supplies and the Chelford Market. Of these only the Irlams depot site is being actively progressed. The Chelford Farm Supplies site appears to be unavailable with the owner seeking to consolidate its commercial value, and the availability of the Market site is dependent upon identification of an alternative location for its current function.

6.02 The potential for housing development in Chelford falls, therefore, into two categories:

- (i) those which are available and deliverable in the short-term, namely the south of A537 and Stobart's depot proposals, and
- (ii) those which may become available in the longer term, namely the Market and Farm Supplies sites.

6.03 The short-term options comprise:

- Option A the south of A537 proposal
- Option B the Stobart's depot proposal
- Option C a cumulative combination of both options A and B

6.04 Longer term options comprise:

- Option D the Chelford Market site
- Option E the Chelford Farm Supplies site

Option A

- 6.05 This is a limited option in terms of the benefits which would accrue to the community, including the scope of the affordable housing to be provided. The development would be poorly integrated with both the physical and social structure of the village. There would be a significant breach of the Green Belt boundary into open countryside, and potential highway issues. Being a relatively simple development, it could, in the event of planning permission being secured, and be readily delivered.

Option B

- 6.06 This provides an opportunity to deliver a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits sought by the community, including affordable market housing, and would provide a more coherent structure to the village to the south of the A537. The site has a number of policy issues associated with it, not least the inclusion of Green Belt land which might present an important planning obstacle. Development would be substantial and, in the event of planning permission being secured, would take a significant period of time to complete.

Option C

- 6.07 If both Options A and B were to progress, there would be a very significant increase in the supply of affordable housing in Chelford. The cumulative total number of dwellings, including the existing provision, would be significantly in excess of the scale of provision anticipated by Chelford participants in the housing needs survey. The promoters of the A537 Green Belt scheme have also indicated to the Parish Council that a combination of the two proposals would prejudice the viability of the standalone affordable housing proposal. In response to this it has been suggested by the promoters that the standalone proposal is an opportunity which the community cannot afford to miss and is a more certain route to the provision of affordable housing than the more complex and potentially problematic proposals for the Irlams depot site. It would appear that a combination of Options A and B is, therefore, unlikely.
- 6.08 If the immediate choice is between options A and B, then the Stobart's depot site has the greater potential to deliver the range of benefits sought by the Parish Council for the community.

Options D and E

- 6.09 If Option B is delivered then the development of other significant sites in Chelford would only be relevant in the longer term and/or if Chelford was identified as an appropriate location to meet more strategic housing requirements. In the event that the Stobart's depot does not come forward for the mixed development preferred by the Parish Council, then the Market site becomes the only remaining site capable of delivering the housing and other benefits which the Council seeks for the community. The site has the advantage, in comparison with the Stobart's depot site, that its re-development would not impinge upon the Green Belt. However, its capability is entirely dependent upon the release of the site from market uses, which at the present

time translates into a relocation to a suitable alternative site, which is in the Chelford locality is likely to involve Green Belt issues.

- 6.10 Option E, the Chelford Farm Supplies site, is again dependent upon availability. Although less able to deliver the range of benefits sought by the Parish Council than the Market site, it has the advantage that its re-development would make a positive contribution to the strengthening the coherence of the structure of the main settlement being located on the south side of the A537.

Preferred Approach

- 6.11 The Parish Council's perspective on the future development needs of Chelford is more broadly based than solely that of affordable housing provision. Consequently its Preferred Approach in the short-term is to pursue Option B. In the longer term, the Parish Council would wish to see a resolution to issues associated with the Chelford Market site and the development of a further Option D in respect of the release of the site as a mixed-use opportunity. This Preferred Approach is based solely on the perceived availability of these sites as both could provide the mixed development needs of Chelford.**

Additionally, the Parish Council would have no concerns were the Dixon Drive backland plot to be brought forward as a housing windfall opportunity.

- 6.12 In order to progress the Preferred Approach, the Parish Council will:
- (i) engage with the developer and local planning authority to address the policy issue of the Green Belt element of the Irlams depot site;
 - (ii) explore with the developer the extent to which a viable master plan can be developed which directs those land use elements which are least objectionable in Green Belt policy terms to that part of the site;
 - (iii) explore with the developer the securing of community facilities and employment opportunities on the site which ensure the development of a functional relationship across the divide of the A537;
 - (iv) engage with the Highway Authority to address the comprehensive and long term improvement of the of the A537 corridor through the village, and identify how the preferred approach;
 - (v) participate fully in the consultation processes associated with the East Cheshire SHLAA and the emerging Core Strategy, and any planning applications for housing proposals in Chelford, with a view to supporting the Preferred Approach;
 - (vi) engage with the operator and local planning authority in respect of the longer term future of the Market site and the search for an alternative location. Promote the inclusion of the site in the SHLAA and Core Strategy as a suitable, longer term mixed use opportunity.