

## 6.0 Green Open Spaces, Recreational Activities and Natural Heritage



### Introduction and Background

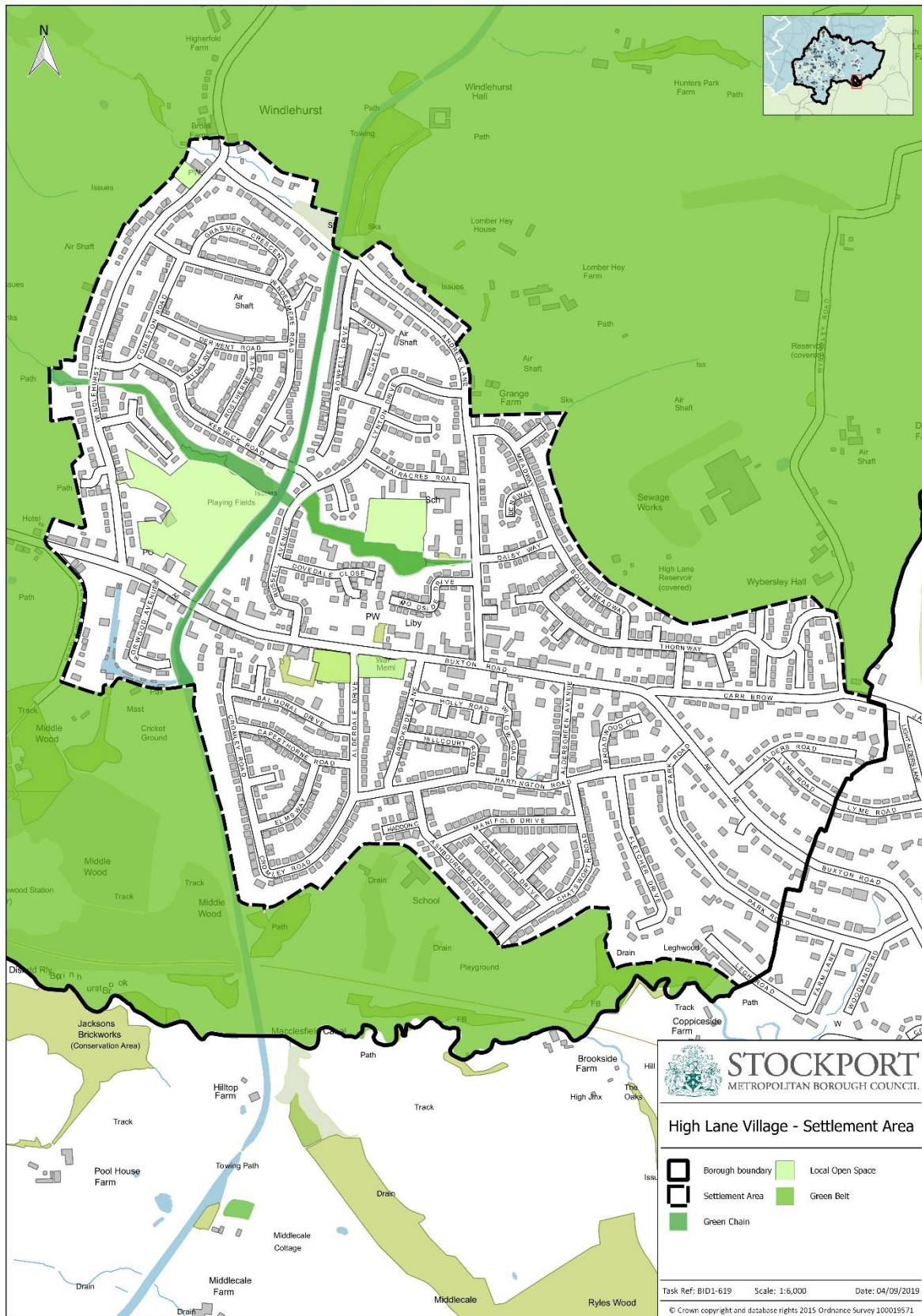
- 6.1 High Lane is surrounded by Green Belt and is surrounded by countryside linking to the National Trust property of Lyme Park. There are many opportunities for the community to participate in outdoor activity pursuits and to utilise the area's range of recreational facilities. The Forum has a commitment and passion to enhance and protect the neighbourhood of High Lane, including its village status, green open spaces and recreational facilities.
- 6.2 NPPF paragraph 91 sets out that "*planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: ... c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.*"
- 6.3 The HLVNF recognises that there is a need to promote all off-road forms of recreational activity available in the area and to support existing recreational and sports related venues. The HLVNDP has an important role in enabling health and wellbeing by supporting safe access to recreational activities and green open spaces, for all age groups and abilities. The openness of the Green Belt affords the opportunity for outdoor sport and recreational pursuits and is utilised and highly valued by the community.
- 6.4 Map 5 identifies several areas of Local Open Space which are given general protection in Core Strategy Core Policy CS8 Safeguarding and Improving the Environment. Green Chains<sup>1</sup> are also identified which are protected under UDP Policy NE3.1, a saved policy carried over into the Development Plan and supported by Core Strategy Policy CS8.

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<sup>1</sup> Green Chains are identified in the Stockport UDP. Policy NE 3 Green Chains sets out that the Council will protect and enhance a network of green chains throughout the borough, linking areas of open space and ecologically valuable routes with each other, the open countryside and similar features in adjoining districts.



# Map 5 Green Spaces





**Windlehurst Park**

6.5 Identified local open spaces and community assets in the HLVNDP area include the following:

- **Local parks** of which there are three: High Lane Park, Brookside Park and Windlehurst Park.

All three are listed as community assets and have established Friends of the Parks groups. The Neighbourhood Forum supports initiatives to improve all three local parks in High Lane and to work with the Friends of the Parks groups. Following community surveys undertaken in 2018 by HLVNF both High Lane Park and Brookside Park were listed by the Forum as community assets in March 2018.



**Brookside Park**



**High Lane Park**

- **Community assets** within open spaces and adjacent to the village and woodlands. High Lane Allotments was awarded Community Asset status in September 2018. It has 44 plots and lies within green open space adjacent to High Lane Park. A wellused, valued commodity it affords the community of High Lane the opportunity to undertake outdoor recreational activity.

- **Walking and cycling off-road routes, bridleways and trails**, and their access, including the Macclesfield Canal and towpath and Middlewood Way. Issues related to clear signage for all and indication of inclusiveness for disabled use is also being explored.

6.6 The SMBC Open Space Standards Paper 2017<sup>2</sup>, Implications and recommendations for the Marple Analysis Area (p19) the following issues for open spaces in High Lane are identified:

- **Parks and Gardens:** *there was a Low quality score for High Lane Park and the identified action is that site quality should look to be enhanced where possible in line with other sites of a similar type.*

- **Natural and semi-natural greenspace:** *three sites received low quality rating including Middle Wood/Norbury Hollow. The identified action is that site quality should look to be enhanced where possible (e.g. review site appearance, access and maintenance).*

- **Amenity greenspace:** *six sites scored low for quality including Brookside Lane Recreation Ground. The identified actions are that the quality of sites, in particular those with possible extensive recreational use should be enhanced where possible. Priority for review may be larger sites such as Brookside Lane Recreation Ground. Enhance quality of sites only if also possible to enhance value (e.g. review site access).*

- **Allotments:** *three allotment sites received low quality scores including High Lane Allotments. The recommended action was that quality of sites should be enhanced where possible; exploring ways to improve sites overall appearance (e.g. working with allotment associations to put plot inspections in place or hold maintenance days at sites) should be encouraged.*

- **Civic space:** *no provision of this type identified.*

- **Green corridors:** *all assessed sites rated high for quality and value.*

6.7 The Village does not have a recreation centre, but recreational and sporting activities use various venues and facilities in the area such as sports clubs, primary schools, local churches, the Village Hall and High Lane Scouts. The Junior Football Club trains in the summer on High Lane Park and then at Disley Amalgamated when it gets darker due to there being no floodlights in High Lane.

6.8 The Village Hall is located within High Lane Park and is utilised by many independent clubs for various forms of non-sporting recreational activities. It is used predominantly by mother and

baby group and for activities for those over fifty. It has the capacity to accept more groups. Car parking there however is an issue when several groups are in attendance.

### **Informal Consultations and Sports and Recreational Activity**

- 6.9 Comments received at the open meeting in May 2017 indicated concerns about the lack of recreational activities for young people in High Lane.
- 6.10 Responses from an online survey of adults conducted over a 7 day period in February 2018 showed that people value the local Green Belt and open spaces as assets but would like further improvements relating to maintenance and signage in particular.
- 6.11 The Working Group has led on several consultations to which there have been good responses. Both primary schools have responded to questionnaires in February 2018 about their usage of local parks and their use of local green spaces. These responses showed that the parks are highly valued but young people would like to see improvements in them particularly relating to drainage, additional playground equipment and facilities. The opinions of those aged 11 to 18 years were sought utilising questionnaires involving High School peer mentors and the local scout group in March 2018.
- 6.12 In February 2018 the Working Group collated data from sporting clubs in the area and the local venues that support recreational activities. The findings from this data showed that there are limited local opportunities for young people aged 11 to 18 years of age. From the data collected from the younger population of High Lane a high percentage expressed a wish for an improved provision of playing pitches on both Brookside and High Lane Parks. Further detailed information about the consultation process and results can be found in Appendix 7.
- 6.13 The responses from the younger generation demonstrated support for both local parks as highly used community assets as well as retention of the countryside surrounding High Lane for family activities such as cycling and walking. Issues were raised concerning the need to improve facilities and football pitches at both parks and the children were also concerned about the environment in the parks, particularly the issues of dog fouling and need for improved lighting at High Lane Park.
- 6.14 As High Lane has no secondary school, in order to gauge the opinions of those aged 11-18 years a small-scale study was undertaken using questionnaires completed by High Lane Scouts, together with a scheme using peer mentors to facilitate reaching a wider audience.
- 6.15 This age group, alongside their younger counterparts, enjoy activities in green open spaces and value the countryside around High Lane; 15 however advised that they consider there are not enough sporting venues for activities in High Lane for their age group. The number of journeys taken to pursue recreational sporting activity in other areas totalled 24 and supports this view. Although this age group accesses High Lane Park they consider that there are few facilities for them. They expressed a wish for more sporting venues in High Lane particularly football, an increase in the size of the skate park, provision of an area to undertake Free run activities and improvements to park lighting and signage. A place for young people to socialise together was also requested.
- 6.16 In the Issues and Options consultation 81% of responses (187) supported the provision of more sporting and outdoor recreational activities for its younger residents. The top 3 responses were:

1. Sport-multi Use Games Area (MUGA\*)- basketball/netball/football etc.
2. All weather (recycled rubber) surface to kids play area
3. Target rebound walls\* (football/cricket)

\*The target rebound walls would be part of the MUGA making 2 priority areas.

- 6.17 It is understood that the Friends of the Park Group are working towards these improvements. The Neighbourhood Forum supports improvements in local provision in the area and recognises that new and improved facilities may be required to meet the needs of an increase in population if large scale development takes place in the area over the plan period. Developer contributions may provide opportunities for supporting investment in such facilities. The Forum will seek to engage with SMBC and Sport England to investigate provision of a 3G Astro turf pitch and for multi-purpose sports and changing facilities within High Lane Park. The HLVNDP will provide a supportive and positive planning policy framework for investment in improved local facilities.
- 6.18 Policy R1 has been prepared to provide a supportive planning policy framework to protect existing recreation and sports facilities in High Lane and to promote investment in new and improved facilities as identified through the informal public consultation for the HLVNDP. SMBC will only support public facilities not private clubs through the use of developer contributions. However the Neighbourhood Forum would seek to gain an appropriate portion of funding for the High Lane community.

### **Policy R1 Protecting and Enhancing Parks and Recreational Areas**

**Open spaces, recreational and sports facilities identified on Map 5 are protected from development.**

**Proposals for new and improved outdoor sport provision and recreation facilities, including proposals for a 3G Astro turf pitch and for multi-purpose sports and changing facilities within Brookside Park or other suitable site will be supported provided that:**

- 1. Any structures or buildings are sited and designed sensitively to blend into the surrounding park and landscape, in terms of scale, colour and materials; and**
- 2. Appropriate screening and landscaping are provided minimise visual impacts; and**
- 3. Lighting schemes are designed and sited appropriately to minimise visual disturbance and impacts on local residential amenity, and any adverse impacts on wildlife; and**
- 4. Safe places with natural surveillance are created for social interaction.**

**Developer contributions will be sought in line with Stockport MBC's most up to date open space contributions policies to support investment in the existing three local parks in High Lane, or where appropriate, to provide new open space and recreation facilities in the High Lane area.**

## Informal Recreational Activity



**Middlewood Way**

- 6.19 Walking and cycling are supported as sustainable transport alternatives in Core Strategy Core Policy CS10 An Effective and Sustainable Transport Network. This sets out that "*the Council will continue to provide a network of safe, good quality walking and cycling routes and other Rights of Way.*" The Policy goes on to explain that "*the walking network will consist of key walking routes, providing direct links to health, education, employment, retail and other important amenities, and aesthetic walking routes, away from main roads, typically with greenery, and providing access to informal recreation opportunities. The Borough's walking network will also include long distance routes (e.g. Midshires Way). The cycling network will cater for direct cycling routes (which in some cases may be on busier roads) and also for routes on quieter residential roads and off-road links (e.g. the Halls Route), which are required not only for recreational cycling, but also utility cycling trips for less confident cyclists.*"
- 6.20 Stockport MBC adopted a Cycling and Walking Plan on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019<sup>3</sup>. This includes a long term vision for cycling and walking in Stockport, and provides an overarching framework and evidence base to set out:
- The value of cycling and walking in delivering wider policies and strategies.
  - The current context of cycling and walking in Stockport, including opportunities and challenges.
  - Future opportunities to encourage more cycling and walking.
  - A targeted action plan to direct delivery of the above.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/our-plan-for-walking-and-cycling-in-stockport-2019-2029>

## Informal Consultation Responses

- 6.21 The Working Group undertook a ten question Facebook survey aimed at adults, to explore how the community participate locally in terms of the type and frequency of recreational activity, and in other areas (incorporating travel mode and time to activity).
- 6.22 Of the 42 responses received, the results indicated many enjoy walking and cycling and value all open countryside and the greenbelt as assets, recognising their importance in terms of health and well-being as well as their contribution to the character of High Lane Village. The openness of the Green Belt and the views it afforded to residents are significant to the rural identity of the village.



**Woods at Middlewood**

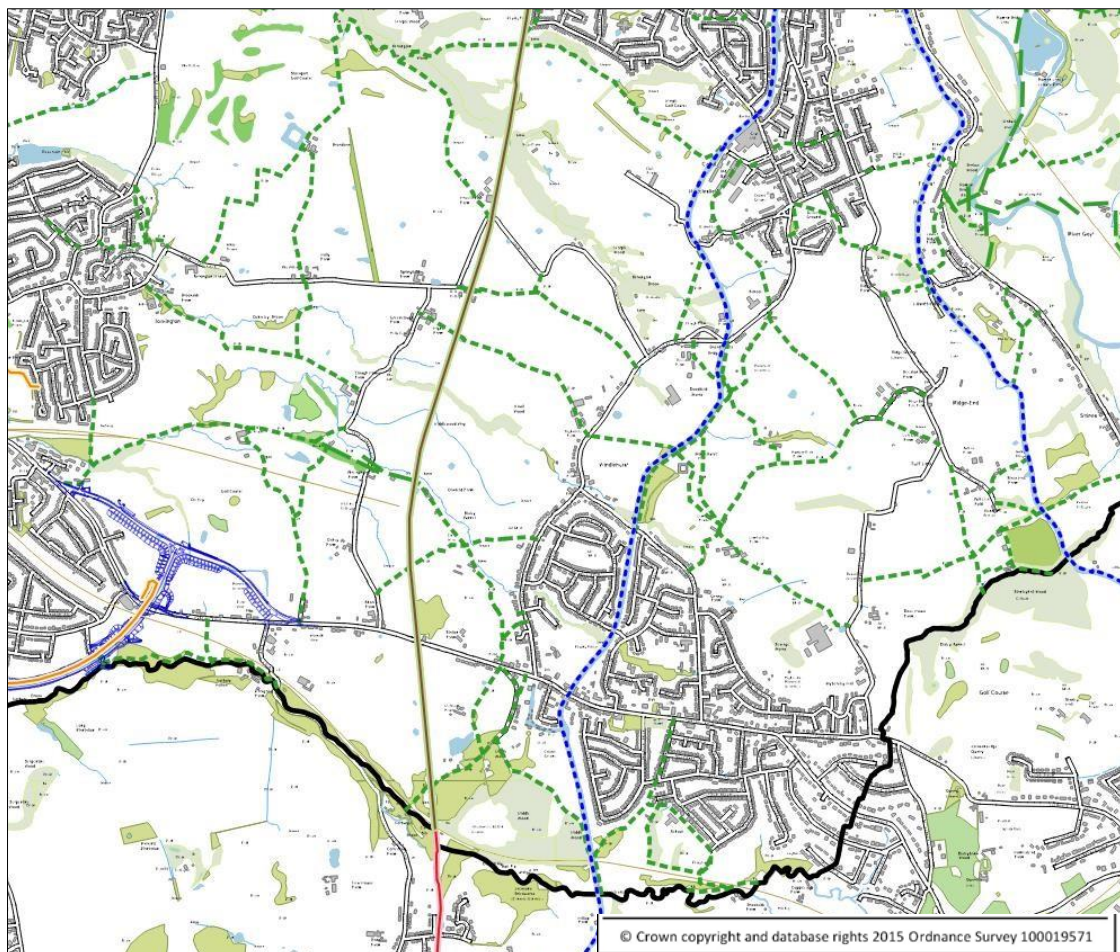
- 6.23 There were suggestions that more could be undertaken to promote the network of footpaths, trails and green corridors as links for alternative traffic free routes to areas. Issues were raised re dog fouling and accessing local green spaces. Of concern were boggy and poorly maintained walking routes, access to/signage of off-road paths, particularly Middlewood Way and the Macclesfield Canal as well as maintaining habitats for wildlife and the environment.
- 6.24 In November 2017 the SMBC 2007 Rights of Way Improvement Plan was reviewed by Marple Area Committee and their decision was to support the continuation of the plan adopted in the initial document. This plan sought to improve off-road access for all, improved signage to pathways and the provision of bridleways. In the ten years since this plan was adopted High Lane has seen very little evidence of any of these initiatives in the area despite it having an extensive network of off-road footpaths, long distance walking and cycling routes and a high proportion of equestrian pursuits. Data collected in our surveys from all age groups supports the community concerns regarding these routes and access to them.
- 6.25 Long distance walking and cycling routes within the area include the Middlewood Way, Cheshire Ring Canal Walk and Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail and are enjoyed by all ages of the local population and attracting tourists. Walking and cycling in High Lane are predominantly undertaken as off-road recreational activities and accessed through multipurpose routes. They are therefore addressed in this section of the HLVNDP as well as Policy T2 in the Transport section (4.0).

- 6.26 Macclesfield Canal is a canal corridor used by walkers and cyclists with rich wildlife interest. Issues with the footpaths and their lack of maintenance are a long-standing problem for High Lane residents. Volunteers through The Residents Association are currently involved working with the Canal and Rivers Trust in restoring small lengths of the footpath. However more needs to be done to maintain user safety. The residents that volunteered to improve the tow path with slate dust have now adopted this stretch of the tow path and plan to maintain it monthly.
- 6.27 Respondents to our survey advised that the canal wall is subsiding at various points through High Lane. There is an entry point off a path in High Lane park which provides disabled access onto the canal tow path, although there is no signposting anywhere to indicate this access. The entry point is suitable for wheelchair users and mobility scooters as there are no steps but since there is no handrail it is not suitable for pedestrians who cannot manage steps and have mobility issues. Routes onto the canal via the A6 or within High Lane Park are unsuitable for the disabled as steps are present. All are poorly sign posted.
- 6.28 The Middlewood Way is a green corridor forming part of Route 55 of the National Cycle Network. A multi-user route it is shared by walkers, pedestrians, horses and their riders. Issues regarding the surface of this route have recently been addressed following a long campaign by The Save Middlewood Way support group. Access to the Middlewood Way however remains restrictive for those with disabilities. At present High Lane has no signage for the disabled advising of accessibility for this group to any of its off-road walking routes including the Middlewood Way. While there are two potential routes which lead to the Middlewood Way both have unsuitable terrains. The first is the route which lies off Middlewood Road. This is an off-road path which, whilst it is wide enough to accommodate wheel chair users, is long and uneven and in wet conditions muddy and impassable. The second potential route is a recognised walkway which lies off Windlehurst Road on Mag Lane and this is narrow, uneven and impassable when wet. The HLVNDP supports upgrades to both these routes and the establishment of a multi user route off Windlehurst Road.
- 6.29 Issues raised in our surveys by those respondents who use this route are provided in Appendices 6 and 7 and include concerns about conflict between walkers and cyclists, poor accessibility and signage.
- 6.30 The Ladybrook Valley Trail is an off-road route for walkers which extends from Coppice Lane in Disley passing through Middlewood and on towards the A6 MARR cycle network and Happy Valley in Bramhall before going on to Cheadle, Stockport. At its junction with the Middlewood Way the route is signposted for both cyclists and horse riders. The terrain on this route however requires considerable attention and investment in order to make it safe for users. With council planning and investment this cycle route could provide an alternative to on road cyclists travelling towards Cheadle.
- 6.31 South East Area Bridleways Association advised that there are safety issues for both horses and their riders who have to ride on busy public roads as a result of the loss of bridleways in the area. A lack of access onto the Middlewood Way (a permissive path) from Windlehurst Road is causing significant problems as cars speed on this route. There are 194 members who access the Middlewood Way. The society advised that many farmers in the area are turning to equestrian and livery for income, generating millions in revenue for the area. They are

asking for the support of the forum for inclusion into our HLVNDP for the re-instatement and establishment of more bridleways in the area to accommodate this growing equestrian activity.

- 6.32 The responses to the Issues and Options consultation showed that there was a high level of support for the HLVNF to work with SMBC to improve accessibility/signage for all, inclusive of those with disabilities to off-road footpaths (222 (93% of respondents) said Yes to this). 201 (84% of respondents) also supported the creation of a multi-user access route from Windlehurst Road onto the Middlewood Way. There was also support for the possible creation of new bridleways (85% of respondents or 200 people supported this suggestion).
- 6.33 Map 6 shows the extent of existing walking and cycling routes in High Lane Neighbourhood Area. Development proposals should include linkages to these routes to encourage walking and cycling as part of more sustainable transport choices and to promote health and wellbeing. The HLVNDP supports improvements to existing networks and provision of new networks to enhance and extend facilities in the area. Developer contributions and other funding may be sought towards investment in such infrastructure.

**Map 6 Walking, Cycling and Bridleway Networks**



## Key

----- Footpaths

\_\_\_\_\_ Middlewood Way (permissive path for walking, cycling and horse riding; not a public right of way)

\_\_\_\_\_ A555 junction with shared path

----- Canal and towpath PROW

----- Bridleways

\_\_\_\_\_ HLVNDP Area Boundary

### Policy R2 Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding

The network of walking, cycling and horse riding routes in High Lane Village NDP area is identified shown on Map 6.

Where appropriate, developer contributions will be sought for accessibility improvements to benefit all user groups, and particularly those reliant on scooters, wheelchairs and pushchairs, including the following:

1. Replacement of stiles with accessible gates or other entrances at access points;
2. Improved signage and lighting including from main access points and at appropriate points along the routes such as at interchanges with other routes;
3. Informal segregation of different user groups such as walkers, riders and cyclists to reduce conflict, through for example changes in surface texture or colour; and
4. Provision of new bridleways and the establishment of a multi user footpath from Windlehurst Road to the Middlewood Way.

Major development proposals for new housing, community and commercial uses should, wherever possible, include physical linkages or signage to nearby footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways and Beelines on Mill Lane in order to improve connectivity between existing networks and enhance the attractiveness of walking, cycling and riding in and around the High Lane.

Development proposals should ensure that existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) including footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways, which cross or adjoin their sites, are retained and improved for walkers, cyclists, horses and their riders. ~~New and existing routes within development schemes should not be enclosed on both sides by high fences, walls or hedging which can lead to narrow, unattractive corridors with limited overlooking.~~ (Move to design codes)

## Protecting Local Landscape Character



**View from footpath on Middlewood looking through woods towards landmark bridge and Poynton**

- 6.34 High Lane is in Natural England's National Character Area 54: Manchester Pennine Fringe<sup>4</sup> which occupies the transitional zone between the open moorlands of the Dark Peak and Southern Pennines, and the densely populated urban conurbation of Manchester.
- 6.35 Stockport Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study<sup>5</sup> provides a critical review of the landscape character evidence included in the UDP Review (2006) to produce a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the landscape character and sensitivity of the Borough of Stockport.
- 6.36 The Stockport Landscape Character Assessment was prepared in parallel with the Greater Manchester-wide Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment<sup>6</sup>. This GM-wide study sits as a tier above the local-scale work, with larger 'Landscape Character Types' (LCTs) representing the main types of landscape found across Greater Manchester. A range of local landscape character types are identified. The area to the north west of High Lane Village is in Urban Fringe Farmland, the area to the north east is in Pennine Foothills (Dark peak) and the area to the south and west is in Incised Urban Fringe Valleys. These areas are identified on Figure 8.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4631438>

<sup>5</sup> Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council Final Report prepared by LUC August 2018  
<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/live-iag-static-assets/pdf/LDF/Evidence/Stockport+Landscape+Character+Assessment+2018.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment  
Produced for Greater Manchester Combined Authority Final Report Prepared by LUC August 2018  
<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1727/greater-manchester-landscape-character-and-sensitivity-report.pdf>

**Figure 8 Landscape Character Types in the High Lane Area**



**Figure 2.3: Greater Manchester Landscape Character Types**



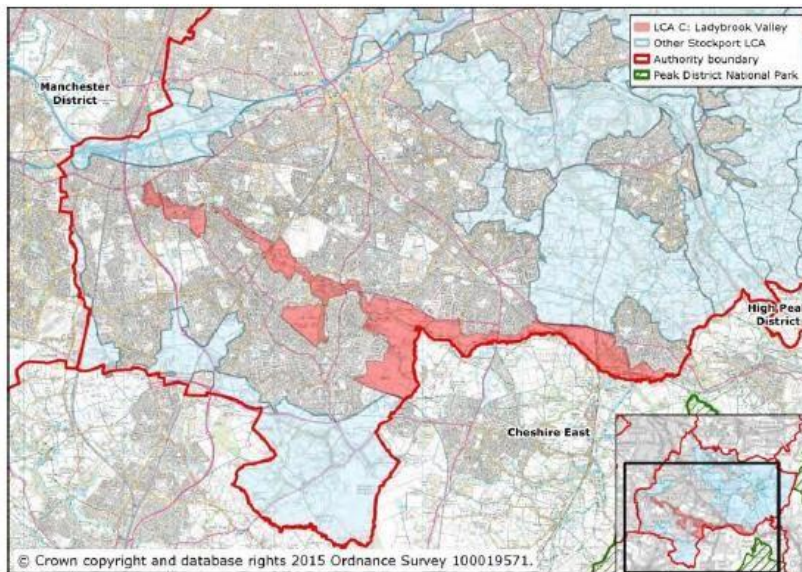
6.37 The study also considers landscape sensitivity: "Landscape sensitivity is the relative extent to which the character and quality of an area (including its visual attributes) is likely to change."

**Landscape Character Areas**

6.38 12 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are identified and HLVNDP Area includes areas in LCA C: Ladybrook Valley and LCA I: Hazel Grove - High Lane.

**Landscape Character Area Profiles**

**C: Ladybrook Valley**

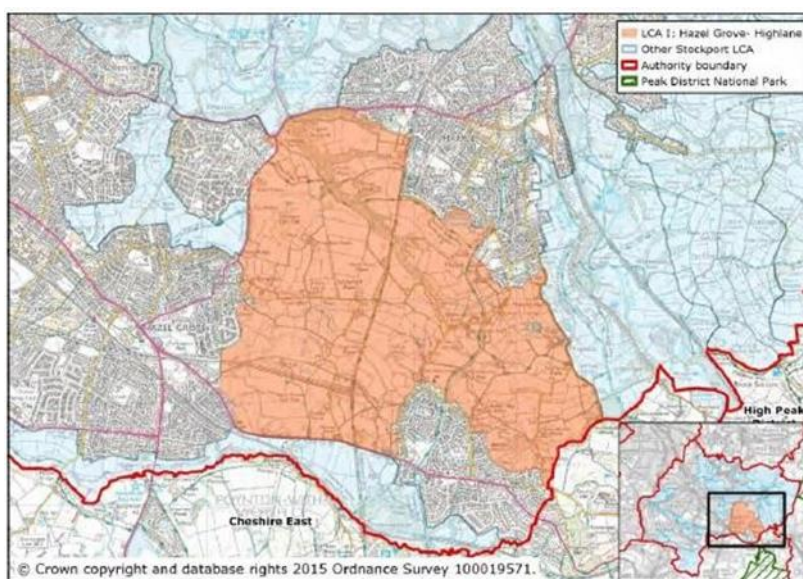


### **Location and summary of overall character**

*This Landscape Character Area falls within GM Landscape Character Types: Urban Fringe Farmland and Urban Fringe Valleys .*

*This linear LCA covers the extent of the Ladybrook Valley within Stockport, from High Lane in the east to the junction with the Mersey Valley at Cheadle in the west. It is not a contiguous LCA and is broken by the presence of residential development in the vicinity of Cheadle Golf Course. The central part of the valley contains the parkland grounds of the Grade I listed Bramhall Hall. The predominant land use is for amenity and recreation, with the Ladybrook Nature Interest Trail meandering through most of the LCA.*

### **I: Hazel Grove - High Lane**



### **Location and summary of overall character**

*This Landscape Character Area falls within GM Landscape Character Types: Urban Fringe Farmland and Pennine Foothills (Dark Peak)*

*This LCA is situated between Marple, High Lane, Hazel Grove and Offerton Green. Brooks and streams are a consistent feature with Torkington Brook being the more prominent with an extensive band of ancient woodland following its course. The Middlewood Way and Macclesfield Canal (Conservation Area) form two major access routes running north-south through the LCA. A network of other access routes and tracks provide good connectivity and views are generally dominated by a well wooded horizon revealing the occasional farmhouse.*

- 6.39 The guidance and opportunities in relation to future development within these Landscape Character Areas have been used to inform HLVNDP Policy NH1.

### **Policy NH1 Protecting Local Landscape Character in the High Lane Area**

**Development proposals should be designed to protect and enhance local landscape character in High Lane. Schemes should refer to the guidance set out in the Stockport Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study and the Greater Manchester-wide Landscape Character Assessment.**

Site layouts, designs and landscaping proposals address the following design principles:

1. Avoiding intrusive and dominant built form in visually prominent locations such as on the sides of the Ladybrook Valley or in open areas;
2. Protecting and where possible restoring and re-creating important seminatural habitats to reduce their fragmentation, including woodlands linking to an intact hedgerow network, individual oak specimens and characteristic field ponds.
3. Ensuring the role of the valley as an important wildlife corridor is retained;
4. Utilising existing or planting new woodland to screen development;
5. Ensuring that the setting and integrity of the historic landscapes and heritage features within the valley is respected and retained;
6. Maintaining important historical, industrial elements of the landscape such as former railway routes, bridges and the Macclesfield Canal, as these features play a major role in local identity and sense of place;
7. Encouraging the recreational use of industrial transportation routes where they respect landscape character;
8. Protecting and promoting the important views out of the valley into Cheshire East (including the Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation Area and the Grade II\* Registered Lyme Park) and glimpses of the Peak District National Park; and
9. Ensuring any new development does not adversely affect the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, including its beautiful views, sense of tranquillity and dark night skies, and the vital benefits that flow beyond its boundary.



Aerial view from Windlehurst Hall looking west extending over the High Lane Village Neighbourhood boundary towards Hazel Grove and Stockport. The view overlooks farmland in High Lane, used for cattle and equestrian facilities and reaches out far into the distance of Manchester skyline. The history of High Lane shows that Farming and equestrian pursuits have been and are important parts of the agricultural heritage and help to define the village character.

## Important Views and Vistas

6.40 The HLVF have identified the following views and vistas as important:

**View 1: (marked as the red circle on Map 7) is taken from the path off Windlehurst Road, looking north.**



The view is from the footpath joining Windlehurst Road and Middlewood Way, Mag Lane, close to 75 Windlehurst Road, looking north east toward Stockport and Manchester. This is unspoilt Green Belt and a view that many villagers enjoy. The path is one of a small number that join the village to Middlewood Way.

**View 2: (marked as the blue circle on Map 7) is taken from Fletcher Drive looking south.**



High Lane sits within the Pennine Fringe and backs onto the National Trust property of Lyme Park. This photo shows the view from Fletcher Drive, High Lane looking South towards Lyme Park with The Cage nestling on the hill stretching to Kettlethulme and Pott Shrigley beyond.

The many footpaths in this area are frequently used by residents and visitors for several recreational purposes including walking, running, cycling and dog walking.

This view is enjoyed by many people including the children playing at Brookside Park, local walkers who pass here to enjoy the park or enter Lyme Park by the access point further on and the children, staff and parents at Brookside Primary school which is 100 yards away . The view enables local people to feel a connection with the wilder countryside some distance away. The view is an inclusive one because the car park is easily accessible for people in wheelchairs or with limited mobility and for parents/carers with children in buggies.

**View 3: (marked as the yellow circle on Map 7) is taken from Bridge 9 on the Macclesfield Canal looking east towards Mellor Ridge.**



The canal sits within the Macclesfield Canal Conservation area and runs between Macclesfield and Marple. The canal is used by residents and visitors to the area, for walking, cycling and boating providing health and wellbeing. The photograph is taken from Bridge 9 and looks east toward Mellor Ridge and beyond.

**View 4: (marked as the orange circle on Map 7) is of Coopers Meadow (opposite the Royal Oak) looking west towards Marsden House and the woods of Middlewood.**



This view shows Coopers Meadow (opposite the Royal Oak) with sheep grazing.

This peaceful view alongside Middlewood Road is visible to pedestrians, cyclists, and walkers from the A6 and sets the scene for High Lane's rural character. Residents and visitors can quickly and easily access the view and escape the noise and pollution of the A6 thereby enhancing their physical and mental well being. Many local people choose to regularly walk, jog or cycle alongside it to enjoy its serenity.

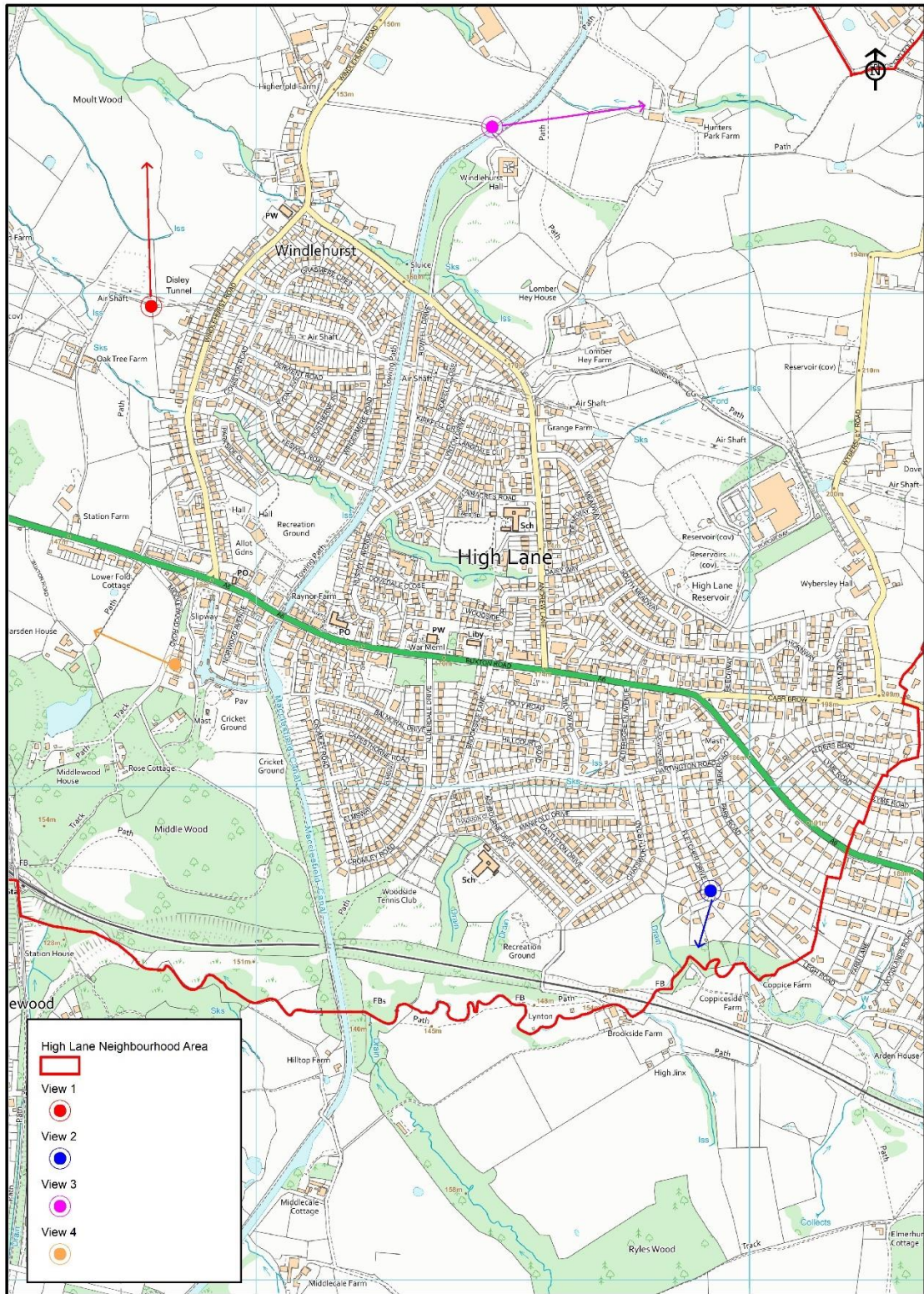
- 6.41 These and any others identified through the consultation process will be protected through Policy NH2.
- 6.42 These Important Views and Vistas are identified on Map 7 and all make an important contribution towards local visual amenity and the neighbourhood area's landscape character. Policy NH2 seeks to ensure new development is designed and sited sensitively to ensure they are respected.

### **Policy NH2 Protecting Important Views and Vistas**

**Development proposals should respect identified Important Views and Vistas which are locally valued and identified on Map 7.**

**Where a development proposal impacts on an identified Important View, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or similar study should be carried out to ensure that the scheme is designed and sited sensitively and appropriately to mitigate any adverse impacts.**

# Map 7 Important Views and Vistas



## Wildlife

- 6.43 High Lane Neighbourhood Area includes a number of areas of wildlife value. Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland can be found around Torkington Brook, Middlewood, Hartley Woods and Marple Woods (see Appendix 8). Other areas of woodland are also to be found across the neighbourhood. These areas along with the many brooks which run through High Lane (Bollin Brook, Ladybrook, Daisy Brook and Ochreley Brook) provide important natural wildlife habitats.
- 6.44 Appendix 8 also includes maps showing the presence of key species kindly provided by Greater Manchester Ecological Unit. The Unit have advised that the presence of great crested newts in the west is of some significance and there are records of polecats which are very unusual in Greater Manchester. There are also records of badgers. The land proposed for development south of the A6 (Coopers Meadow), Allocation GM 38, is thought to have evidence of bats and is a highway for badgers, foxes and hedgehogs.
- 6.45 Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs) are shown on Map 10. Other maps showing known local wildlife are provided in Appendix 8. Policy NH3 seeks to protect local wildlife and encourages new development to incorporate features which will enhance biodiversity in High Lane.
- 6.46 In 2019 the HLVNF commissioned Cheshire Wildlife Trust to identify natural heritage assets in the High Lane Village NDP area and to recommend how the HLVNDP can support biodiversity net gain. The final report, Protecting and Enhancing High lane's Natural Environment, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, November 2019, is published as a background document on the HLVNDP website and forms part of the HLVNDP evidence base. The Objectives to the study are set out on page 3 of the report:

*"Objectives of the study*

*The first stage to protecting and enhancing the natural environment is to identify the natural assets that exist within the neighbourhood. This report aims to identify the core, high ecological value sites for nature conservation in the High Lane Neighbourhood Planning Area, as well as sites deemed to be of medium ecological value. The high value sites are recommended for protection through the neighbourhood planning process and the medium value sites could be considered as biodiversity opportunity areas subject to further evaluation. Medium and high value sites should also act as an alert in the planning system triggering full evaluation should they be proposed for future development.*

*The report also aims to identify key local and regional ecological networks within the neighbourhood planning area and recommends that these are protected through the neighbourhood plan. Additionally, it identifies key features associated with the landscape character of the High Lane area so these can be referenced in planning policies."*

- 6.47 In addition the CWT provided advice about amended wording for Policy NH3 and this has been partially incorporated into the amended policy in the submission plan, with references to two maps showing habitat distinctiveness (Map 8) and Indicative Wildlife Corridors (Map 9).

## **Policy NH3 Protecting and Enhancing Local Wildlife**

The priority for new development should be to create a net gain in natural capital and biodiversity. Direct and indirect impacts upon biodiversity and/or geodiversity should be avoided. Where impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation and then as a last resort compensatory measures (for example biodiversity offsetting) should be provided.

All development proposals should demonstrate how biodiversity will be protected and enhanced including the local wildlife, ecological networks, non-statutory locally designated wildlife sites and habitats.

Landscaping schemes should include wildlife enhancements, for example incorporating ponds, and retaining existing, and planting new areas of trees, woodlands and hedgerows using locally appropriate native species. Areas identified on Map 8 supporting high distinctiveness habitat (as listed in Local Plan Policy SE3 points 2 and 4) should be protected by at least a 15 m buffer zone. Those supporting medium distinctiveness habitat will require a comprehensive ecological evaluation if they are put forward for development. The Wildlife Corridor identified on Map 9 (local ecological network) should be preserved.

Rivers and the lines of water courses should be protected and water courses managed sustainably to protect water quality and flow rates. The use of permeable surfaces to reduce run off is required.

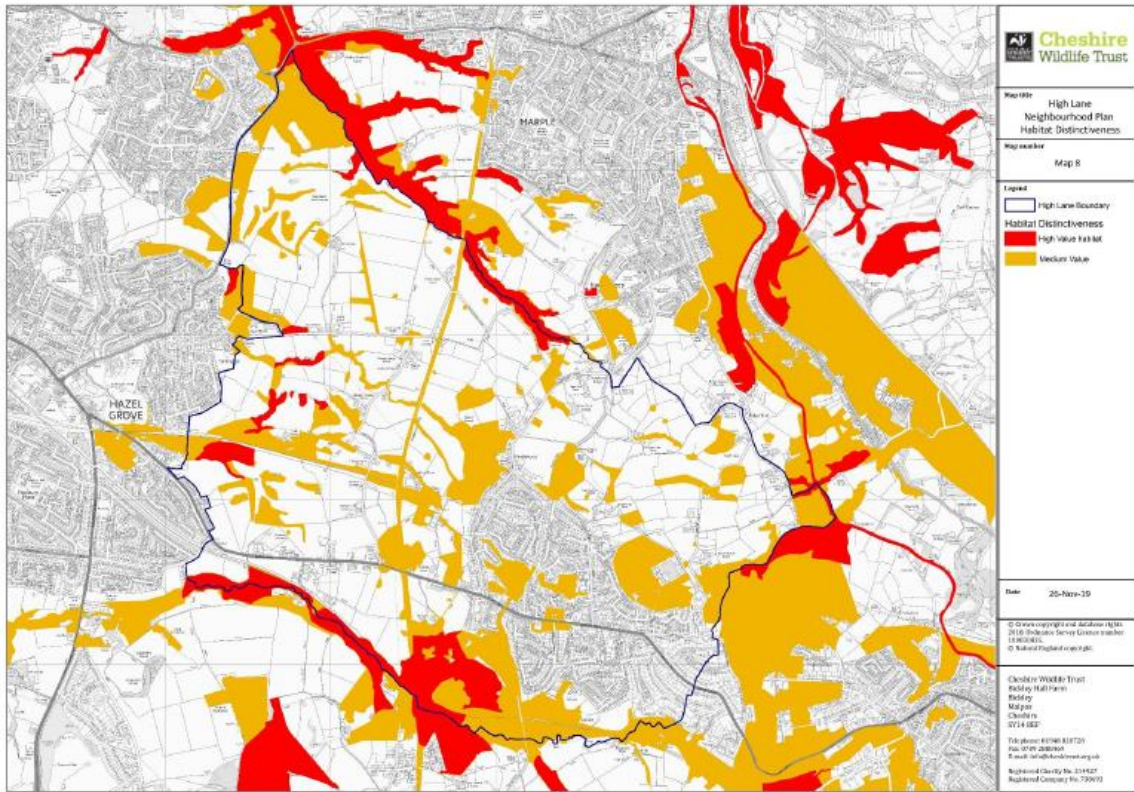
In line with Natural England's standing advice<sup>7</sup> building demolitions or conversions should be supported by bat surveys and barn owl surveys where required. Development should take into consideration the need to protect existing wildlife which may be using the building(s) as habitats. Buildings should incorporate bird nest boxes (including for swifts) and roosting opportunities for bats (such as bat roosting boxes) wherever possible.

Lighting schemes should be designed sensitively to reduce any adverse impacts on wildlife and mitigation measures should be included to minimise other disturbance such as noise.

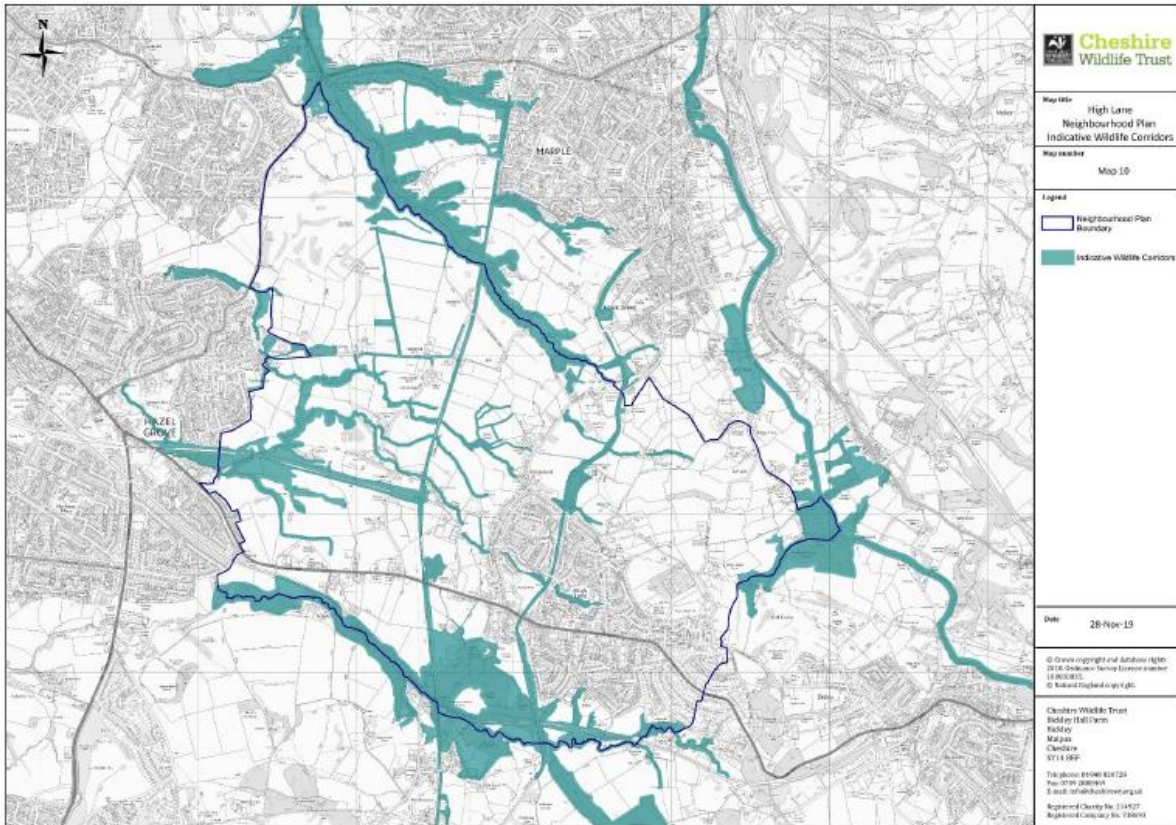
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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects>  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wild-birds-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects>

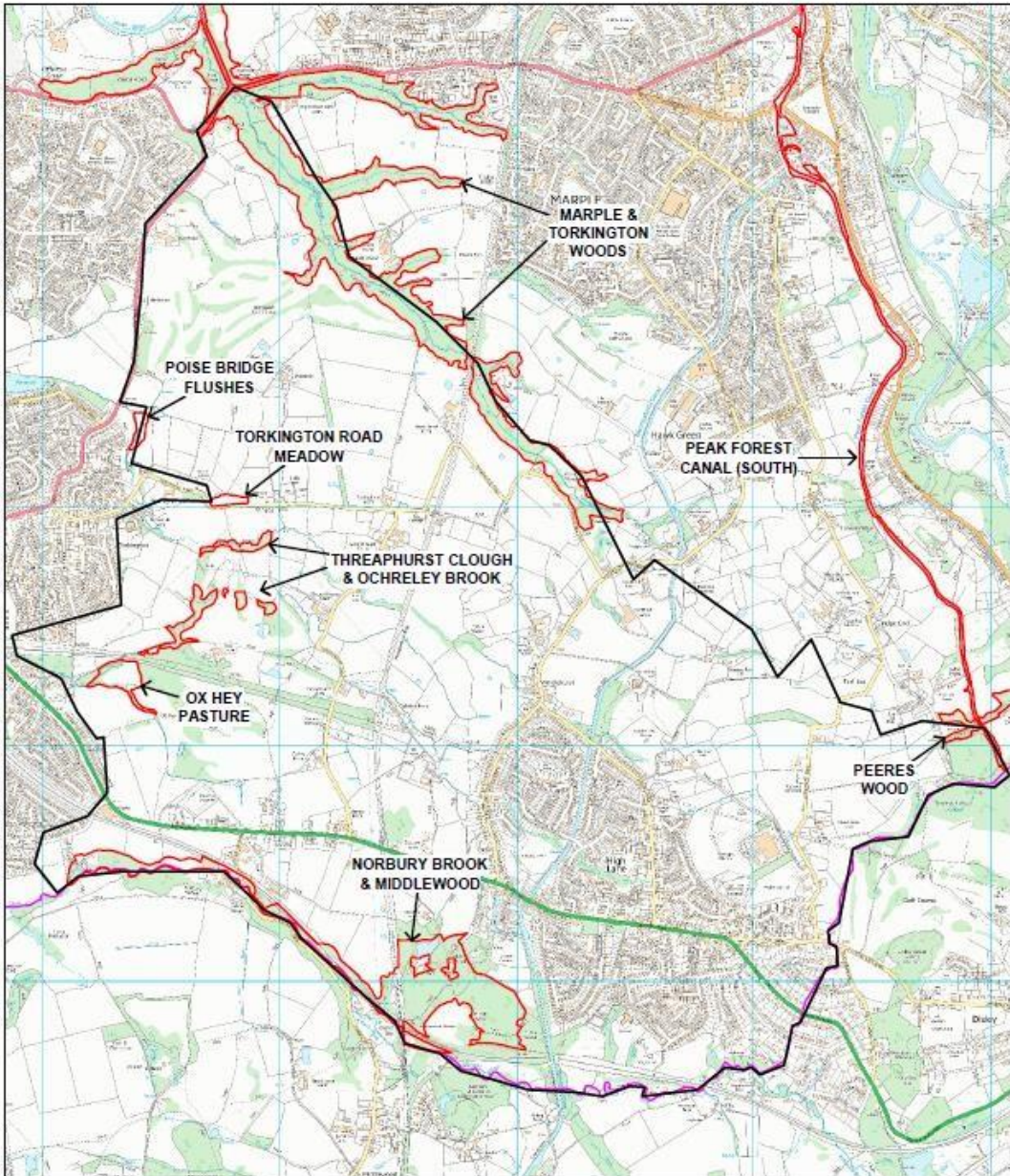
**Map 8 Habitat Distinctiveness**



**Map 9 Indicative Wildlife Corridors for Biodiversity and Nature Conservation**



## Map 10 Sites of Biological Interest in High Lane



**KEY**  
 SITE OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE  
 SBI BOUNDARY

GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT  
 ECOLOGICAL SEARCH - SJ 9487  
 HIGH LANE - MAP 1

SCALE 1:15,000

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