

## **1. Introduction.**

- 1.1. The designation of Mickle Trafford and District as a Neighbourhood Plan was approved by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC), the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on 17th December 2015. Progress was slow for a number of years and for a number of reasons. Nevertheless a Neighbourhood Plan is still required.
- 1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan will set planning policy in the area covered by the Plan alongside those in the Local Plan. The aim of this document is to set out and explain those neighbourhood policies for the benefit of residents, land owners and developers.
- 1.3. The Neighbourhood Plan will replace the guidance in the adopted Village Design Statement (November 2003).
- 1.4. In the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan note has also been taken of the Parish Plan (February 2005)

## **2. Our Vision.**

- 2.1. The Neighbourhood Plan should assist in achieving the goal of:

Making Mickle Trafford a desirable place to live.

Making Mickle Trafford good place to work.

Making Mickle Trafford a good place to enjoy leisure time.

## **3. Informing the Vision.**

- 3.1. Consultation has taken place with residents over a number of years as to what they want from the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.2. On 18th and 19th September 2021 a community event took place at Hoole Lawn Tennis Club and members of the Steering Group, along with Parish Councillors, set up an information stall on the Neighbourhood Plan and the work of the Parish Council. This resulted in 16 policy areas being identified by residents which have been assessed and, where appropriate, included in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.3. Drafts of the Plan and supporting documents have also been posted on the Mickle Trafford Parish Council website, <http://www.mickletrafford.org.uk>, with a specific page created for the Neighbourhood Plan

## **4. What are planning policies and why are they needed?**

- 4.1. If a person wishes to carry out development in planning terms then permission is needed.
- 4.2. Development is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended. The Act is a successor Act to a similar one in 1947 which is the accepted start date for modern town planning although there were earlier Acts.

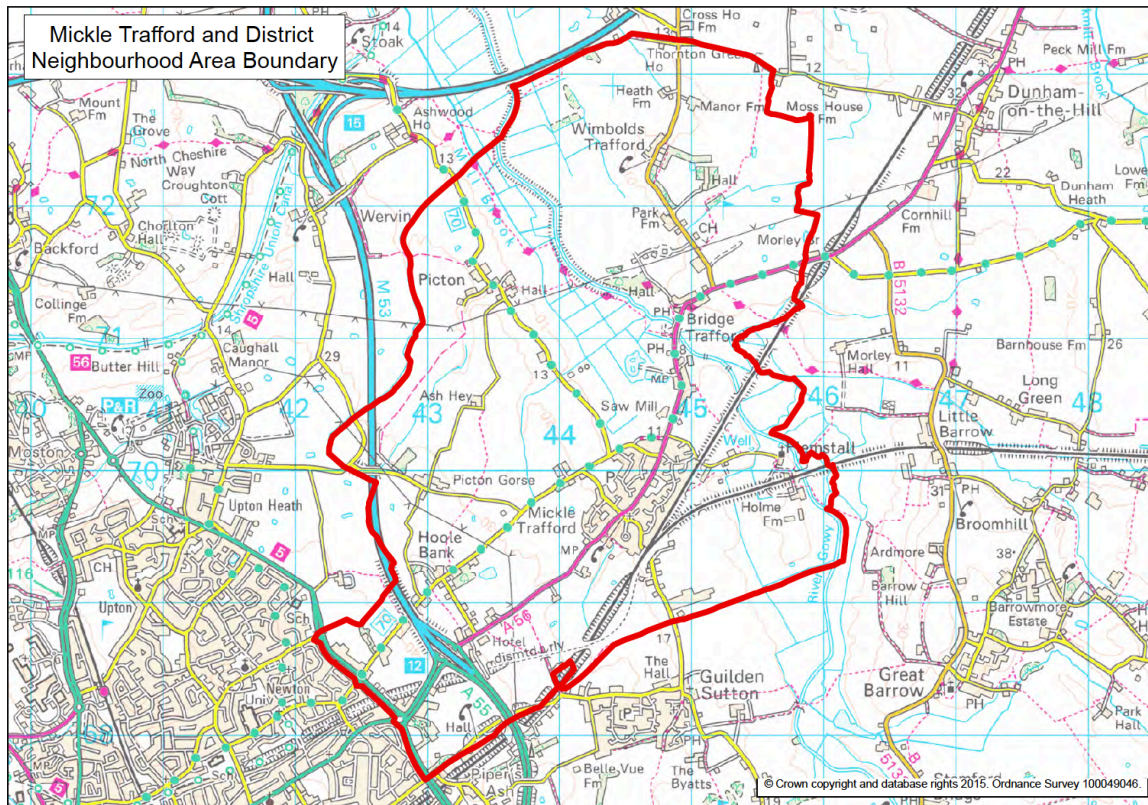
- 4.3. Section 55 of the Act sets out what is and is not development. If it is not development as mentioned in the Act then it does not require planning permission.
- 4.4. Permission is given by the Secretary of State or central government by way of Order. The main Order is The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended. The Order has been amended a number of times but there is no current intention for a new Order to consolidate all the amendments.
- 4.5. The Order gives planning permission in a number of cases without needing to inform the LPA whilst in others the prior approval of the LPA must be sought. This approval can only be withheld on restricted grounds as set out in the Order and not on being in conflict with planning policy. Development is also subject to certain conditions as set out in the Order.
- 4.6. Of particular use to householders is “Permitted development rights for householders: technical guidance” available on the internet.
- 4.7. If the work does not fall into one of the above two categories then section 57 of the Town and Country Planning Act says planning permission is required from the local planning authority, in this case CWaC.
- 4.8. The Planning and Compensation Act 2004 sets out, in section 38, that the local planning authority must decide planning applications in accordance with a Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.9. The Development Plan consists of the Local Plan with Neighbourhood Plans sitting alongside that so long as they relate to applications in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 4.10. The Local Plan for the CWaC area is the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan. This is split into two parts namely Strategic Policies and Land Allocations and Detailed Policies.
- 4.11. The central government have published a National Planning Policy Framework (“the Framework”). It was first published in 2011 but has been updated, most recently in February 2019. They also publish Planning Practice Guidance which again is regularly updated.
- 4.12. This then explains where the Neighbourhood Plan is within the greater scheme of development.
- 4.13. As well as planning policies there are various covenants in place on properties that relate to land use and an attempt to keep the residential areas open. A covenant is a legal agreement between two parties and enforcement of those covenants is a matter for the parties and not a part of the development control regime.

## **5. Mickle Trafford Parish.**

5.1. The Neighbourhood Plan area is shown below:

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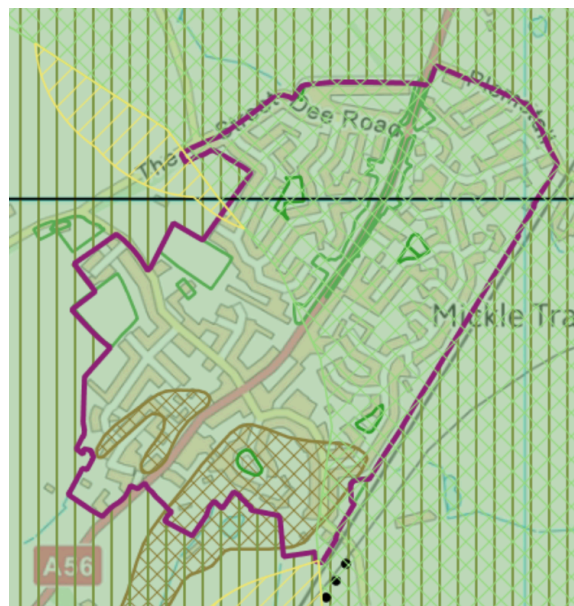
# Plan A



5.2. It will be seen that it includes the main village of Mickle Trafford but also but also Plemstall, Bridge Trafford, Wimbolds Trafford, Picton and Hoole Bank including land between the M53 and the A41 Chester Outer Ring Road.

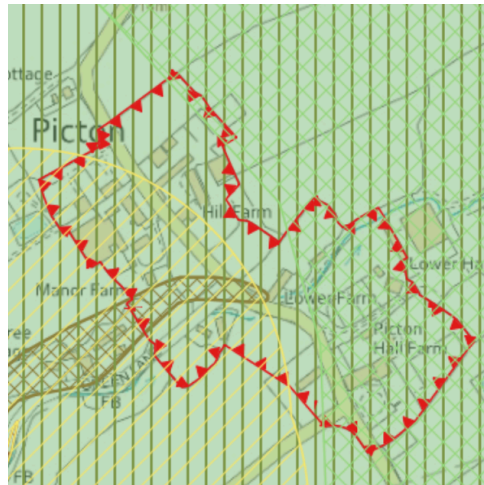
5.3. Of these areas only Mickle Trafford has a defined settlement boundary:

## Plan B



- 5.4. This boundary also sets Mickle Trafford as a Local Service Centre within the Local Plan. A Local Service Centre is not defined within the Local Plan but in the context of the Local Plan mean smaller rural settlements which have adequate services and facilities and access to public transport.
- 5.5. The only other designation in planning terms around a settlement is the conservation area around Picton, although there is no further public information as to the particular merits of that area in conservations terms.

## Plan C



## 6. History.

### 6.1. Mickle Trafford

- 6.1.1. Mickle Trafford is bisected by the A56 Warrington Road and lies approximately 3 miles from Chester City centre within 1 mile of junction 10 of the M53. It is an old settlement and is mentioned in the Domesday Book.
- 6.1.2. The older part of the Village is centred around the Crossroads and two modern housing developments are located on either side of the A56. Following the closure of the railway station in the 1950's, the Village went through a period of tremendous growth and the majority of the housing development dates from the 1970's and 1980's.
- 6.1.3. Land Between Station Lane And Plemstall Lane was developed in three initial phases between 1975 and 1977 with subsequent in-fill developments. Land on the other side of Warrington Road was developed around 1976 and again there are subsequent in-fill developments.
- 6.1.4. The Springfield houses to the south of School Lane were a little later, in 1978, whilst the most recent significant housing is the affordable homes on School Lane which date from 2004 with the number of houses increased in 2014.
- 6.1.5. Boundaries to the Village are well defined and the surrounding land is in agricultural use with sporadic dwellings located within the Green Belt.

6.1.6. A high volume of traffic travels along the A56, due in part to the presence of the Gowy Landfill Site and partially as an alternative route from the Chester Ring Roads to the M56 motorway at Hapsford.

6.1.7. Covenants exist to prevent boundary walls, fences or hedges being erected in the front gardens and conditions attached to many of the original planning permissions mean that planning permission should be sought for such development. The original vision was that views along the residential roads should not be restricted by high structures in front gardens.

## 6.2. Plemstall

6.2.1. Plemstall is the site of the parish church, mentioned later, some railway cottages and a large riding stables.

## 6.3. Bridge Trafford

6.3.1. The hamlet is dominated by the former Nag's Head, which was rebuilt between the wars and is now a retail store, and the Chester Fields Country Pub and Wedding Venue.

## 6.4. Picton

6.4.1. Picton is notable for Picton Hall, which has been refurbished, and later development in the area

## 6.5. Wimbolds Trafford.

6.5.1. Wimbolds Trafford is notable for Trafford Hall, built in 1756 and mentioned later under historic buildings. It also has a modern golf driving range. There is a large landfill site nearby which has been planted with appropriate trees to create a park to which there is public access.

## 6.6. Hoole Village.

6.6.1. Among a scattering of houses there is a nationally recognised school for performing arts housed in a fine eighteenth century mansion with additions made over recent years.

6.6.2. There are and two substantial hotels, one including a fitness centre. Abundant tree growth, other vegetation and wildlife, make a stark contrast to the urban environment south of the A41.

## **7. Green Belt**

7.1. All the Parish is within the North Cheshire Green Belt. Mickle Trafford is classed as a "washed-over" village in the Green Belt with a specific settlement boundary. All the rest is classed as open countryside.

- 7.2. Due to the location of Mickle Trafford, less than 3 miles from Chester City, there is an apprehension that over time urban sprawl could consume the parish and that character could be lost along with the green spaces. The community would like planning to protect the area of green belt between Chester and Mickle Trafford to ensure the independent survival of this semi-rural community and the character of the settlements within it.
- 7.3. There is ample scope for encouraging wildlife by, for example planting trees and encouraging continuous field hedging to provide wildlife corridors.
- 7.4. There is also a need to conserve open areas along roads and seek to limit incremental linear growth. Undeveloped gaps and open spaces should be protected.
- 7.5. The boundaries of the Green Belt were changed in the Local Plan in 2015 and there are no proposals to further alter these boundaries.
- 7.6. In support of paragraphs 143- 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework of Policy STRAT9 of the Local Plan there will be a Neighbourhood Plan policy:

Policy GB1  
The Green Belt must be preserved in its present form and area. Development that seeks to intrude on land between the village of Mickle Trafford and any of the surrounding settlements will not be supported.

## 8. Housing Need

- 8.1. There is no need nor opportunity for major housing development within the Neighbourhood Plan area in view of the restrictions on the local service centre boundary and the Green Belt considerations.
- 8.2. Any new infill housing on specific plots must complement the existing housing provision in terms of scale and style.

Policy H1  
The scale and design of all new houses should enhance and not detract from the overall design, legibility and styles in the village. New development in rural areas should have due regard to the form and materials of buildings in those areas.

- 8.3. Notwithstanding the above many householders may feel that the open-plan estates created in the 1970s are no longer appropriate. Where a householder wishes to enclose a front garden support should be given for this commensurate with the effect on the surrounding dwellings. Many have already taken this step.

8.4. Particular care needs to be taken in regard of dwellings that are prominent within the estate or form 'gateways into the estate.

Policy H3

Enclosure of front garden areas will be supported providing the manner and materials do not detract from the overall attractiveness of the estate.

Particular care must be taken on dwellings that form an entrance to or are prominent on the estates.

8.5. There is an ageing population in the area but limited facilities for assisted living for such persons. Should existing buildings become available for conversion then the provision of a care home would be supported.

Policy H3.

Due to the absence of current provision, the conversion of existing buildings to provide a care home in the Plan area would be supported.

## 9. Leisure and Hospitality Facilities

9.1. Within the plan boundaries we have the benefit of the following:

- The Village Hall
- Meadow Lea Cafe
- Chester Fields Restaurant
- Hoole Hall Hotel
- Toby Carvery
- Hoole Lawn Tennis Club
- Popular Cycleway which link the parish to North Wales and the Wirral
- Equestrian facilities
- Park with facilities for all age groups including landscaped park and woodland
- Touring caravan site
- A Youth Hostel
- Kitchen Garden

9.2. This plan supports the sustainable development of our leisure facilities to allow visitors to enjoy the facilities within the plan area. Planning should also ensure any development is within the capacity of the infrastructure and does not negatively impact on the home environment of the plan area residents.

9.3. In particular, the tennis club site on School Lane is ideally situated in the centre of the village to offer an enhanced sport facility outside of tennis and to be an alternative to the village hall for community events.

Policy L1

The Parish has a number of hospitality venues and recreational facilities and their growth will be supported commensurate with the effect on residential amenity.

## 10. Businesses

10.1. The community would like to encourage the growth of commercial business and community businesses. A survey of business addresses found that over 80 are registered in Mickle Trafford.

10.2. The area contains a number of farms and these are also businesses.

10.3. In addition to those businesses within the Leisure and Hospitality sector as mentioned above there are also other business sites such as:

Beesley and Fildes Building Supplies.

The former MAFF depot on Station Lane which houses small businesses such as car repair shops.

The former engineering works on The Street.

10.4. As well as serving a wider area these businesses provide local access to facilities for residents.

10.5. The Neighbourhood Plan wishes to maintain and encourage the local economy and to support the local community. It will support the sustainable growth of businesses and enterprises within the parish as well as tourism and local facilities that will benefit the local economy and the wider community while respecting and protecting the rural areas of the village.

10.6. The local community would like to support the local businesses and develop the success of the parish and see the further success of local businesses while maintaining the rural nature of the village.

10.7. Redundant brown field sites in the plan area should be utilised for future developments.

10.8. The Mickle Trafford Village Shop and Post Office is an asset to the area. Further shops serving the needs of the residents of Mickle Trafford were anticipated when the village was first expanded and would be supported now.

10.9. Other services could be introduced and would be supported. For example, there was a doctor's surgery in a house near the mill prior to the NHS and there is more

than sufficient people to support one now. Guilden Sutton has a dentists but no doctor so the two could operate in tandem.

- 10.10. Alternatively peripatetic surgeries could be held in existing buildings and, if that was felt to be a material change of use of those buildings, then that change would be supported.

Policy B1

Local businesses will be supported to enhance the local economy commensurate with the effect on residential amenity.

Policy B2

The provisions of further facilities such as enhanced medical facilities, either as a stand alone site or in conjunction with other uses is to be encouraged.

## 11. Nature and Wildlife

- 11.1. Mickle Trafford has matured since its greater development and now provides well-appointed plots and a green village which sits attractively in its countryside with generous green spaces among its houses and great commuter links.
- 11.2. The parish of Mickle Trafford contains areas of significant wildlife value including trees, hedgerows, rivers and flood plains which offer unique habitats for endangered species.
- 11.3. The present islands of wildlife activity need to be connected by woodlands, hedges and ditches to enable wildlife to move from threatened sites to safe site and create a network for wildlife activity, wildlife corridors.
- 11.4. Ditches need to be maintained to prevent flooding and to provide corridors for amphibious species. Even ditches with no eventual outflow provide a storage capacity for standing water.
- 11.5. The community values the green spaces around the village. Any new development should maintain open vistas outside the curtilage of dwellings and preserve the look and feel of the parish and encourage continuity of hedging to extend wildlife corridors.
- 11.6. Any new development should consider and where possible enhance existing green spaces or create new open green spaces for the growing population of the parish and have regard for wildlife sites culminating in a net biological and ecological gain

Policy NW 1

The wildlife habitat in the Parish will be preserved and where possible enhanced. All new development will be expected to show a net ecological and biodiversity gain

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## 12. Green spaces and Play Provision.

- 12.1. There is a football pitch and play areas in the Jubilee Park in Mickle Trafford which is owned and maintained by the Parish Council. Other sports pitches are within the grounds of Mickle Trafford Primary School.
- 12.2. Tennis courts are provided at Hoole Lawn Tennis Club on Station Lane.
- 12.3. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to make better use of the informal green spaces around the village.
- 12.4. Presently those green pockets are reserved for young children to play but are unused as the change in culture, increased traffic and awareness of danger has resulted in parents being more apprehensive of their children playing beyond their own boundaries therefore the green spaces which were popular some years are no longer fulfilling their original purpose.
- 12.5. The community would like to see these green spaces better used, popular ideas include growing vegetables, creating wildlife areas including habitats for hedgehogs and insects or planting of small wooded areas, bird boxes, wild flower meadows and seating within these areas for all the community to utilise.

### Policy GS 1

The current green spaces within the Parish will be preserved and maintained and new and innovative uses for such spaces for the benefit of the community and the enhancement of the area will be supported.

- 12.6. The objective should be to bring wildlife closer to the community and planning should encourage the enhancement of these green spaces.
- 12.7. Local landowners should be encouraged to continue the good works of those who have worked with Cheshire Wildlife Trust to create wildlife corridors along the Gowy Belt increasing the habitats available.
- 12.8. With the focus on wildlife corridors the community would like to see the retention and re-establishment of hedgerows.

### Policy GS 2

Wildlife corridors consisting of hedges, land drains and other suitable habitats should be maintained commensurate with the economic use of the land.

- 12.9. The water quality of the Gowy will be protected with consideration taken to ensure the unique habitat surrounding the Gowy is enhanced where possible.

12.10. Any development adjacent to the School and preschool should enhance the wildlife areas on its boundaries. Ease of access from the school will enable teachers to teach about wildlife in the local area.

**Policy GS3**

Any development adjacent or near to the Mickle Trafford Primary school should preserve and enhance natural habitat to enable children to learn about nature.

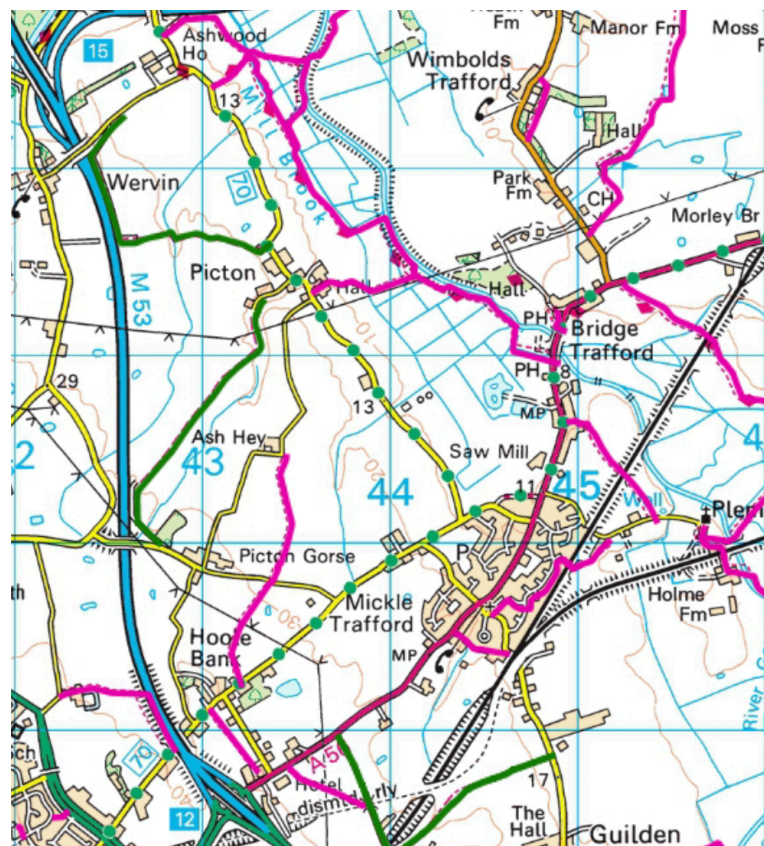
### 13. Footpath Network

13.1. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure the footpath network is protected, promoted and well signposted so that for the community are able to enjoy the countryside whilst staying on the footpaths therefore reducing disturbance of adjacent wildlife.

**Policy F1**

The network of footpaths in the Parish should be clearly delineated and remain accessible to all

Plan D



## 14. Transport

- 14.1. It is interesting to note that had the two railway stations within the parish not been closed prior to the expansion of housing then the whole of the village of Mickle Trafford could have been set either side of the railway rather than either side of the A56.
- 14.2. There were two stations and they were demolished in 1951 but the lines remain from Chester to Warrington and also from Chester to Altrincham. Interestingly the Greater Manchester Tram network ends at Altrincham but the continuation of this all the way to Chester would be possible on the Cheshire Lines route. This would see Chester linked in to both the Merseyside and Greater Manchester urban railways network.
- 14.3. The bus network consists of an hourly bus running along the A56. This is used by residents and some guests visiting the hotels and will no doubt be used by those staying at the Youth Hostel. The present service is inadequate and should be restored to at least a twice hourly service. Ideally a more local rural service similar to that serving villages to the south of Chester should be initiated.
- 14.4. There may be potential for bus companies to engage with major developers in this regard. For example many out of town centre new supermarkets are built subject to a condition that a subsidised bus service should run for a number of years and a similar principle could apply to any major development in this parish, adjoining settlements or those on a potential bus route.
- 14.5. At the present time there is a situation where few buses are provided because few people use them and people do not use them because they are infrequent.

### Policy T1

Support would be given to a rail station or halt for Mickle Trafford to enable transport other than by car.

### Policy T2

All development with the potential to increase the need to travel must address how travel can be carried out other than by car.

## 15. Heritage and Buildings of Note

- 15.1. A number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments are located within the Parish. These include:

### 15.1.1. Mickle Trafford Mill

15.1.1.1. This is a Grade II listed building currently run by a charitable trust. It forms an interesting gateway to Mickle Trafford on the banks of the River Gowy.

Image of Mickle Trafford Mill

#### 15.1.2. Trafford Hall

15.1.2.1. Trafford Hall is an 18th-century country house standing to the east of the village of Wimbolds Trafford. From 1989 until February 2019, Trafford Hall was owned and operated by the National Communities Resource Centre (NCRC) as a training and outreach centre and conferencing venue. Earlier this year NCRC joined The Regenda Group.

15.1.2.2. As part of the partnership between Regenda and YHA, Trafford Hall will continue to be the home of the National Communities Resource Centre as it continues to grow as a charity, helping social landlords across the country, residents and frontline staff to develop the skills needed to tackle serious social problems at a local level.

Image of Trafford Hall

#### 15.1.3. St Peter's Church

15.1.3.1. St Peter's Church was built in the 12th century with later additions and replaced an earlier church on the same site. The site was originally known as 'The Isle of Chester' and the original church was thought to have been built by a shipwrecked sailor, grateful to be on land again.

Image of St. Peter's Church

#### 15.1.4. St Plegmund's Well

15.1.4.1. St. Plegmund's well lies about 220 yards (201 m) to the west of St Peter's Church. It is named after Plegmund, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, and who is believed to have lived as a hermit nearby. The well is situated on the edge of a low cliff to the east of which is one of the channels of the River Gowy. It is one of two holy wells in west Cheshire.

Image of St Plegmund's Well preferably after Well Dressing.

### 15.1.5. Pinfolds

15.1.5.1. There is an old Pinfold opposite the Royal Oak which is a Grade II listed building. A Pinfold is where stray cattle were kept and its siting is opposite the original Royal Oak Hotel which was a coaching house on the Warrington Road.

Image of Pinfolds

15.2. Other buildings of note are:

### 15.2.1. The Village Hall

15.2.1.1. Mickle Trafford Village Hall was initially a church built in the grounds of the old village school after its closure in 1909. With the growth of the village by the early 1980s the church leased the hall to a group of trustees who let out the hall for various community activities.

Image of Village Hall

### 15.2.2. The Methodist Chapel.

15.2.2.1. Adjacent to the Village Hall but with an entrance on Station Lane is the Methodist Chapel. It was built by local Primitive Methodist families in 1885 and is still in use.

Image of Methodist Chapel

### 15.2.3. The Street (part of a Roman road).

15.2.3.1. There is a long tradition that there was a Roman Road running from Chester to Wilderspool at Warrington. According to The Roman Roads in Briton website:

The Roman Road from Chester to Wilderspool  
Margary Number: 701  
Distance: 19 miles

There can be little doubt a road from Chester to Wilderspool would have been a necessity for the Romans. It would have been the best way to the north. However, evidence is very limited. This is no doubt due to it being mostly overlaid by modern roads mainly the A56 and

several Chester/old Chester roads. Probably the strongest evidence is that the alignment of Mannings Lane/The Street is the optimum to reach the best crossing point of the Gowy. A road in that direction can realistically have only had Wilderspool as its objective.

The road's course was dictated by that crossing of the River Gowy marshes and also having to get around Helsby Hill. Modern roads have had little option but to follow the same course and these have ended up on top of the most of the Roman line masking a lot of the evidence.

15.2.3.2. The Margery number refers to the numbering scheme developed by the historian Ivan Margary to catalogue known and suspected Roman roads in Britain in his 1955 work *The Roman Roads of Britain*. They remain the standard system used by archaeologists and historians to identify individual Roman roads within Britain.

15.2.3.3. A lidar image (used to identify sub-strata) shows the possible line through Mickle Trafford.

15.2.3.4. The line runs down from the inner ring road but does not go sharp right into that part of The Street that goes towards Warrington Road but follows the hedge line to the west of Beesley and Fildes Yard, the old Deeside Sawmills, to join the A56 before the bridge near to Meadow Fisheries. The opportunity exists to further explore the line where it goes across previously undeveloped land.

Plan E



15.2.4. Ince Lane.

15.2.4.1. There is the possibility of a second Roman Road in the parish running from Warrington Road along Ince Lane. According to *The Roman Roads in Briton* website:

This is The Roman Road from Bridge Trafford to Ince Fortlet  
Margary Number: 701aa  
Distance: 3.6 miles

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The small fortlet at Ince was not identified until 1994, however in his 1886 publication Roman Cheshire, the antiquarian WT Watkin suspected the possibility of a Roman Road branching off to the north west from the Chester to Warrington road (RR701) at Bridge Trafford. When Margary published The Roman Roads of Britain in 1985 the fort was still undiscovered and no new evidence supporting Watkins' speculation had emerged so consequently it was not identified or numbered.

The fortlet is thought to have been constructed in the early years of the occupation to monitor marine traffic along the coast to and from Wilderspool (Warrington) and possibly to guard against incursions from the north.

It must be noted that there is very little positive evidence for the course of this road.

15.2.4.2. However the line is across undeveloped land and the opportunity exists to further explore this to confirm or refute the presence of the road.

Plan F



#### 15.2.5. The Village School.

15.2.5.1. Mickle Trafford Village School is a pivotal building within the built and also social environment of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Insert image of Village School frontage

15.2.5.2. The original school building dates from 1909 and later additions to enlarge and modernise the school do not architecturally detract from the original building.

15.2.5.3. Further extensions or provision of facilities are possible whilst still retaining the historic heritage.

15.3. All historic buildings and features that relate to the history of the area are worthy of conservation and must be considered in accepting any form of development.

**Policy HIST1**

Any development proposal must take into account the need to protect, conserve and seek further evidence and explanation by way of archeological, listed building or heritage appraisal of any listed building, monument or part of the historic fabric of the parish.

**16. Conclusion.**

16.1. This Neighbourhood Plan is valid for 10 years or such period when it is replaced by another Neighbourhood Plan.

16.2. The policies in this Neighbourhood Plan are in conformity with the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. Both these documents may change over the lifetime of this Neighbourhood Plan.

16.3. In addition the local planning authority may issue supplementary planning documents that also have to be taken into account.

16.4. This Neighbourhood Plan reflects the wishes of this community and should be given substantial weight during its lifetime notwithstanding additions, variations or replacement of other planning policies and guidance.

**Plans.**

A - Neighbourhood Plan Area.

B - Settlement Boundary Mickle Trafford.

C - Picton Conservation Area.

D - Public Footpaths.

E - Lidar image of line of The Street as a Roman Road.

F - Possible line of Roman Road to Ince Marshes.

**Appendices.**

Consultation document on preservation of open plan development in Mickle Trafford.