

# Churnet Valley Masterplan

## Supplementary Planning Document

March 2014

# Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document



## Foreword

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**CHURNET VALLEY MASTERPLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

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## Introduction



## 1 Introduction

**1.0.1** The Churnet Valley is a treasured part of the Staffordshire Moorlands which is rich in history and natural beauty. It is also a living landscape which provides jobs, services and homes for local communities and offers much for visitors to enjoy. This brings many pressures and demands on the area, as well as providing tremendous opportunities to enhance the overall contribution which the area makes to the District and region.

**1.0.2** To make sure we realise the potential of the Churnet Valley, whilst at the same time safeguarding what makes it special, the Council has led in the preparation of this Masterplan for the Churnet Valley. This Masterplan provides a comprehensive framework for future development in the area. It identifies opportunities and measures to help regenerate and manage this important rural area based around sustainable tourism in a manner which is sensitive to and enhances its important heritage, landscape and ecology.

**1.0.3** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 28 states that "Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;...
- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres;" <sup>(1)</sup>

**1.0.4** The Churnet Valley has the potential to act as a sub-regional asset and to complement and ease pressure on the neighbouring Peak District National Park.

**1.0.5** The Core Strategy, policy, SS7, identifies the Churnet Valley as a sustainable tourism area. This Masterplan, which is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), will have a major influence on future planning decisions and on other initiatives and strategies affecting the area. The Masterplan identifies key opportunities but it is the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) that will allocate land for development.

**1.0.6** This Masterplan provides clarity that the most vulnerable areas and features in the Churnet Valley will be conserved and enhanced whilst at the same time managing and controlling new activity in order to provide opportunities for jobs and wealth generation.

**1.0.7** A Churnet Valley Masterplan Baseline Report has been produced which draws together background evidence that has been used to inform the Masterplan. A number of supporting studies have been undertaken to inform the Masterplan. These are a Churnet Valley Accessibility and Connectivity Study, Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment and Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Study. These are all available from the Council's website at [www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/churnetvalleymasterplan](http://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/churnetvalleymasterplan).

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1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012 paragraph 28

**1.0.8** A number of additional studies were undertaken to test the Draft Masterplan. These included an Economic Assessment, Transport Study and Habitats Regulations Assessment. These are available from the Council's website at [www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/churnetvalleymasterplan](http://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/churnetvalleymasterplan)

The Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy is the key development plan document for the District excluding the Peak Park. It establishes the overarching approach to development in the area. The main policies that are relevant to the Masterplan are SS5a, SS5c, SS6, SS6a, SS6b, SS6c, SS7, SD1, SD2, SD3, E3, DC1, DC2, DC3, C1, C3, R1, NE1, T1 and T2.

## The Churnet Valley

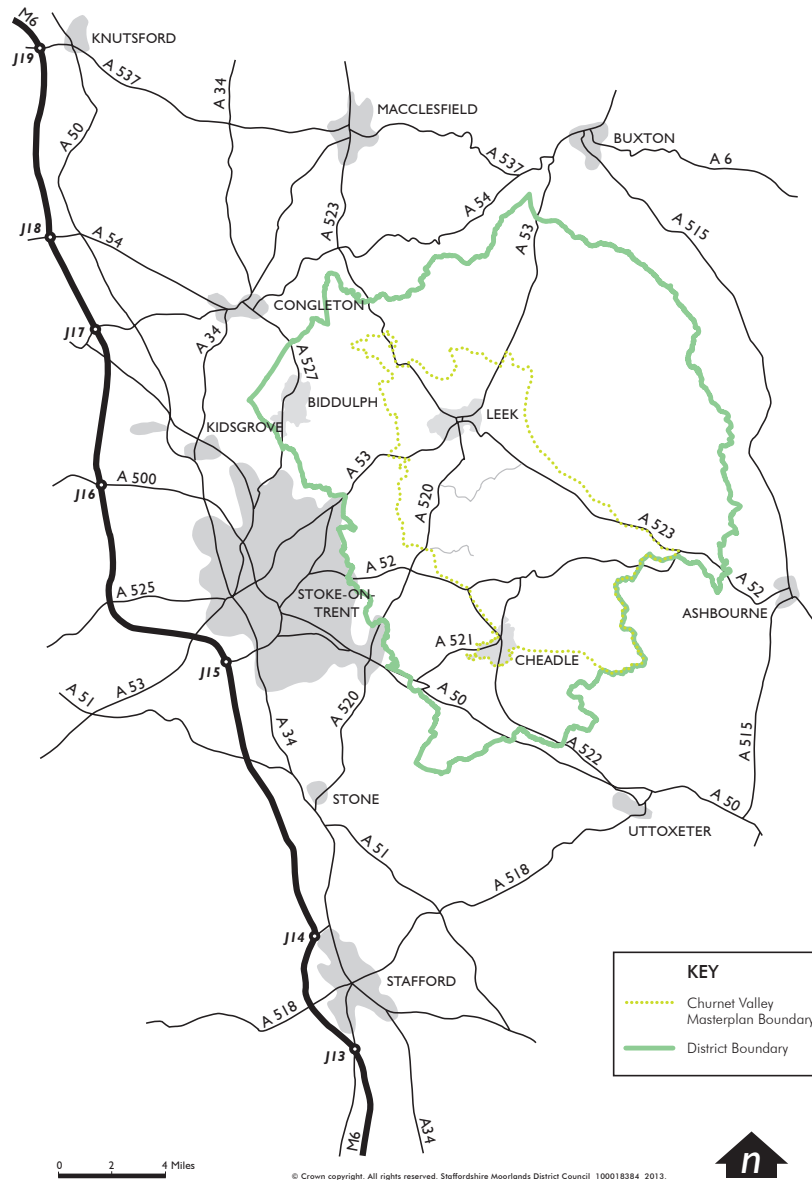


## 2 The Churnet Valley

### Context

**2.0.1** The Churnet Valley lies in the heart of the Staffordshire Moorlands with links to the Potteries and Peak District National Park. The area is crossed by major roads including the A523 (Leek - Macclesfield), A53 (Leek - Stoke), A520 (Leek - Stone) and A52 (Stoke - Derby). Froghall is located in the central part of the area and is crossed by the A52 (Stoke-Derby). Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies in the south of the County. The Peak District National Park lies to the east of the Churnet Valley area.

Map 2.1 Location of the Staffordshire Moorlands and the Churnet Valley



## Description

**2.0.2** The Churnet Valley has many features and qualities which give it its unique sense of place. From wooded valleys at its heart, to the River Churnet which flows through the valley from higher land north of Tittesworth Reservoir, through Leek, Cheddleton Froghall, Oakamoor and Alton and joins the River Dove beyond Rocester. It is an area of high landscape value, with many sites of nature conservation and geological interest and a vast array of heritage features such as ancient monuments, former plateways, a castle and a registered park and garden. It has a large number of well-established tourist, leisure and visitor attractions, including the Churnet Valley Railway and the Caldon Canal which run through the valley and the Alton Towers Resort.

**2.0.3** The amount of activity varies considerably within the valley, from the busy southern area around Alton Towers Resort and the well used greenway, to the more tranquil areas of Rudyard Lake and Tittesworth Reservoir and the country parks of Deep Hayes and Ladderedge in the north. The central area is less accessible by vehicles and this further adds to a sense of tranquillity and quiet enjoyment, whilst around the Froghall area the landscape is scarred by past industrial activity.

**2.0.4** The towns and villages each have their own sense of place and distinctive character with a strong local sense of community. Leek is an ancient market town with a proud silk and Arts and Crafts heritage, and a vibrant independent retail offer. Cheadle is a smaller historic market town with nationally significant buildings by celebrated architect Pugin. The villages of Alton and Farley are home to high quality historic buildings. Oakamoor village has reminders of the valley's industrial heritage, whilst nearby Whiston is a small nucleated settlement with a large village hall and golf course. Kingsley, which originated as a linear settlement along the A52, has seen recent housing development on the site of the former Plough Inn and Kingsley Holt is characterised by ribbon development along the A521. Ipstones is noted for its narrow streets and Conservation Area. There are also small settlements at Cotton, Consall and Froghall and the large village of Cheddleton, which is home to the Flint Mill and Churnet Valley Railway Station.

**2.0.5** There are numerous Listed Buildings within the Churnet Valley and Conservation Areas at Horton, Leek, Cheddleton, Ipstones, Cheadle and Alton, as well as several designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Biological Importance.

### **Landscape Character**

**2.0.6** The Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment describes the landscape character of the valley stating, "Churnet Valley is characterised by deeply incised, generally wooded valleys associated with the River Churnet and its tributaries. Outside of the valleys the land becomes a more gentle rolling landscape, with smaller valley features, and a more open, pastoral nature. Fields are mostly bounded by hedges, with dry stone walls associated with dwellings. The proximity to upland and gritstone landscapes changes the nature of the land to less intimate, with more ridgelines, and field boundaries are interspersed with dry stone walls. Views are generally experienced from higher ground. More enclosed views are experienced from within the Cloughs and valleys. Remnant Historic Parkland is located throughout the study area creating a strong character to the area. The Caldron Canal, Churnet Valley Railway with disused railway lines, Rudyard and Tittesworth Reservoirs are distinct man made interventions of high value within the landscape."<sup>(2)</sup>

### **Historic Character**

**2.0.7** Officers from Staffordshire County Council have provided a description of the historic context of the Churnet Valley:

"The Churnet Valley has a rich and varied cultural heritage, the development of which has been greatly influenced by the diverse landscape and geology of the area. This unique rural historic character has been mapped as part of the Staffordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation project (2006).

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2 Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment (2011) paragraph 4.01



During the later prehistoric period the upland areas which flank the Churnet Valley appear to have been largely deforested and given over to large fields used for pastoral and some arable agriculture, while the steeper valley sides of the Churnet probably retained their thickly wooded character. The climate was several degrees warmer at this time and these upland areas are likely to have been occupied by small farming and mining communities although little evidence beyond their burial monuments has been found to date. The largest prehistoric monument to survive within the Churnet Valley is the Iron Age hillfort at Bunbury (close to Alton); this site may also contain evidence of earlier activity although to date none has been found. The hillfort during the Iron Age represented a considerable investment of time and labour and required a suitably advanced agricultural system with sufficient agricultural surpluses and a centralised authority to support its construction. Hillforts appear to have dominated territories but are not likely to have been permanently occupied; instead they operated as a central place to meet and feast, a place to kraal animals and store produce and a place to go to when conflict threatened; the community would have lived within its hinterland in loosely knit communities centred on farmsteads. There is some evidence to suggest that the rich mineral resources in the Staffordshire Moorlands were being exploited from the Bronze Age (as at Ecton copper mine); however, to date no similar evidence has been recovered from within the Churnet Valley and much may have been lost through later mining activity. The open pastoral character which dominates much of the area and which developed in the late prehistoric appears to have continued largely through into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

During the Roman period the Churnet Valley appears to have been only loosely exploited and there is little evidence for activity within the valley during this time. Only at Alton Castle is there a 'significant' collection of Roman coins which some have suggested may indicate the presence of a settlement nearby. The same pattern of sparse occupation appears to be repeated during the early medieval period with few sites or recorded finds identified to date. Some have suggested the re-occupation of Bunbury hillfort at this point (as occurs elsewhere) although at present this is pure conjecture. Recent research on tree ring data has indicated a global collapse in temperatures during the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century AD possibly resulting from a large volcanic event and some suggest that this worsening of the climate may in part explain a reduction in upland activity and particularly occupation in the Churnet Valley. Small groups are likely to have continued to exploit the upland landscape; however, much of it had become marginal land by that time and cropping and livestock requirements had drastically reduced the profitability of farming in this area.

It was not until the later 10<sup>th</sup> century, with average temperatures improving, that farming became increasingly viable, and small settlements are likely to have developed once again in the upland areas of the region. However, at Domesday (1086), comparatively few settlements are recorded for the area of the Churnet Valley and it may be that the majority of the population were dispersed throughout the landscape in small farmsteads. Several central places had developed by this time: Leek and Alton being the principal marketing and administrative settlements for the area. It is during the medieval period that industrial activities in the Churnet Valley appear to have developed, facilitated by the ready supply of water power and the proximity of nearby mineral wealth. Extraction sites can be hard to identify, often located on the wooded valley slopes and having been subsequently extracted at later times; however, several sites are known from woods surrounding Kingsley. Mill sites are attested on the River Churnet itself principally at Alton, however further bloomery sites are recorded the length of the valley at Cherry Eye Bridge (Ipstones), Jacksons Wood and Mathers Wood (Oakamoor). An ironworks is also attested in documentary records at Consall Wood. It appears that the great monastic houses had a significant part to play in the development of an industrial focus in the valley. The upland environment had traditionally

been dominated by Cistercian monastic houses who valued pasture for their large flocks of sheep up until the Dissolution. However, the monastic houses were also a focus for the development of industries and increasingly religious houses were exploiting natural mineral resources as they previously had water power and the natural environment. Along the valley top several grange sites are recorded at Leek, Oakamoor and Cauldon and while these are likely to have focused on farming activities they did represent important complexes in the monastic land management regime and point to a level of wide scale ecclesiastical interest in this area. It would appear that many labouring in the valley floor industries also carried out subsistence farming; a recent survey coupled with the Staffordshire Historic Farmsteads Survey has identified numerous small scale farmsteads surrounded by the remnants of small field systems on the upland fringe.

Several of these industrial centres appear to have developed into formal settlements towards the end of the medieval period and into the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the post-medieval and industrial period within the valley many of the mines expanded while the water mills were altered to grind colour and flint for the developing pottery industry to the west in the six towns which would later form Stoke on Trent. Metalworking continued throughout this period along the valley floor and indeed continues to this day to a lesser extent. Across the upland areas which flank the valley much of the historic agricultural character of the early post-medieval period and earlier survives. Formal enclosure was not carried out to the extent it was elsewhere in the county; presumably owing to the marginal nature of the landscape. In a similar vein, many of the areas farmsteads developed in a piecemeal fashion with older building reused rather than demolished; possibly the result of less financial capital to invest into marginal farming capacity. This situation, coupled with the steep valley sides and relatively narrow valley bottom have resulted in the rich and diverse historic character visible today throughout the Churnet Valley and the wealth of important heritage assets which can still be experienced the length of the river corridor."

## 2.1 Challenges and Opportunities

**2.1.1** The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been identified which have informed the development of the Draft Masterplan.

### Strengths

- High quality attractive landscape
- Environmental quality of the area including a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Regionally Important Geological sites (RIGs), Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) and ancient woodland.
- Good road links to and from the area particularly north-south links. These include the A53 (Leek-Stoke), A52 (Stoke-Derby), A523 (Leek-Macclesfield), A520 (Leek-Stone), and links to the A50.
- Number of existing visitor attractions of varying scales which appeal to a variety of visitor segments. Two main markets:
  - 'countrysiders' who are visiting the area for a combination of experiences - activities, discovery/ sightseeing, and rest and relaxation. Outdoor activities will be the main activity but the natural environment and scenery will be a key underpinning appeal.
  - 'family fun' -fun day out with the family. Typically visiting an attraction. Alton Towers is the primary attraction (accounting for the vast majority of visits)

although this market group may visit some other attractions in the District (albeit in considerably lower volumes).

- Industrial heritage including the Churnet Valley Railway, Caldon Canal, former Uttoxeter Canal, and tramways.
- Strong communities who seek to maintain, enhance and protect the special qualities of the area.
- Two tourism brands within the District of genuine national significance, Alton Towers and the Peak District, supported by a range of more modest, but nevertheless important attractors including the market towns of Leek and Cheadle and the natural and industrial history of the Churnet Valley including the Churnet Valley heritage railway and the Caldon Canal.
- The Churnet Valley's historic landscape character is important in the understanding of how the Churnet Valley has developed and plays an important role in defining the high quality landscape of the Churnet Valley.
- The River Churnet is a strength and more could be made of it particular in terms of Green Infrastructure. Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 2009 every opportunity should be sought to improve the River corridor and work towards the Churnet Achieving 'Good Ecological Status or Potential' by 2015 along the entire length. Under the WFD no deterioration in water quality is allowed.
- The significance of the heritage associations of Leek to William Morris and Cheadle to AWN Pugin, plus the industrial heritage of the valley linked to the industry in the Potteries.
- Diverse range of existing businesses, although they would benefit from additional support

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of physical and promotional linkages between visitor attractions.
- Reliance on the private car due to rural nature of the area, limited capacity of the highway network which is of a poor standard in places. Congestion at peak times of the year can be experienced due to visitor traffic. The rural nature of the area limits the opportunities for physical transport improvements and reduces the viability of new services.
- Limited access within the Churnet Valley by public transport – bus routes generally limited to main roads.
- Topography and physical barriers including the railway and canal can be restrictive to movement within the corridor.
- No towns with a national profile to act as a focus and provide national profile (e.g. an equivalent to Buxton and Bakewell).
- Area is relatively unknown.
- Limited range of accommodation in particular the Staffordshire Moorlands lacks any significant sized hotels other than those at Alton Towers Resort.
- Limited provision for cycling and horse riding.
- Relative under appreciation of the area's industrial heritage, especially to the wider public.

- Lack of maintenance of the area's heritage assets and threat of deteriorating condition and possible loss. A number of these assets are on the Heritage at Risk Register.
- Walkers, cyclists and horse riders are vulnerable users and there is a lack of access to cyclists and riders.
- Narrowness of lanes (e.g Consall area).
- Local roads are unsuited for high volume and type of traffic - limited capacity and poor standard.
- Lack of provision for 'all-year-round' tourism.
- Churnet Valley is not an existing coherent visitor destination and does not have a broad identity consistent with the proposed Masterplan boundaries.

### Opportunities

- Scope to promote Leek and Cheadle as gateways to the area, both in a physical sense including potential hotel developments and by acting as a source of visitor information.
- A number of attractions are in relatively close proximity to each other where linked visits could be encouraged through new and improved promotion, signage and physical connections.
- Potential redevelopment opportunities including large sites such as Bolton Copperworks, Froghall; Churnet Works, Leek; Cornhill, Leek; Moneystone Quarry, giving further consideration to their future roles through the preparation of the Masterplan. These are sites where there is pressure for change.
- Scope to enhance opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding through creating and enhancing linkages between existing routes and through upgrading routes and creating new routes. This ties in with the work of the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership (CVLLP). It also links in with the Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Study findings that the Churnet Valley should market and position itself to the 'Countrysiders' segment – people coming for experiences which include activities, discovery/sightseeing and rest and relaxation.
- Significant visitor potential linked to the combination of fascinating industrial heritage, attractive natural environment, walking, cycling and horse riding opportunities, the canal and the further development of the Churnet Valley Railway as both an attraction but also a transport link. The potential of the Churnet Valley is in its development as a coherent 'attraction' – conceived as providing full days of activity, with a mixture of experiences from tranquillity and quiet enjoyment to active participation and education.
- Opportunities to enhance and create further biodiversity.
- Active interest of Moorland and City Railway in re-opening the railway line to Leek and Stoke, and the line from Oakamoor to Alton which provides potential to reduce car journeys, connect villages and, existing and potential attractions, and to act as a visitor attraction in its own right with enhanced visitor appeal due to ability to visit a number of attractions on the route. There is also the potential to continue the recently re-opened route to Cauldon Lowe further to Waterhouses where a former station is already in existence. This could provide an opportunity to access the visitor attractions of Blackbrook Zoological Park and the Manifold Trail by rail.

- A feasibility study has been completed which demonstrates that the restoration of the Uttoxeter Canal between Caldon Canal at Froghall and the Uttoxeter Gravel pits is a technically feasible project and identifies that the restored canal would bring economic and social benefits to the area. There are substantial costs associated with the restoration and obtaining the required funding would be a significant challenge. In the shorter term there is a potential opportunity to extend footpath links along its route including at the Bolton Copperworks site.
- Opportunities for job creation through new and extended visitor attractions and holiday accommodation.
- Investment in the area through development has the potential to deliver community benefits which could include enhanced community facilities and services and/ or the safeguarding of existing services and/or facilities such as the village public house, local shop, and improved public transport and recreation opportunities.
- Conurbations with large populations in close proximity.
- Potential for a number of projects to transform the visitor economy of the area either in terms of direct impact or catalysing wider development, particularly on some large brownfield sites.
- Identified potential for a number of supporting actions which could add depth and critical mass to either the existing markets, or new markets and products and which would enhance the overall attractiveness and appeal of the District. These include:
  - Making more of Leek (as a visitor destination)
  - Enhancing access to the area and connectivity within it
  - Developing new and improving the existing major attractions/ attractors
  - Encouraging and promoting more events
  - Enhancing the accommodation stock
  - Going Green
  - Retail
- Potential opportunity to make more of Ladderedge Country Park including investigating the potential for visitor facilities and links to future development at Cornhill.
- Potential opportunity to make more of Coombes Valley RSPB Nature Reserve by enhancing the current visitor facilities.
- Potential for improving access to the countryside for walking could include the improvement of existing rights of way which occupy historic routeways such as the Churnet Valley plateways.
- Green economic initiatives.
- Develop and support existing businesses - small businesses as well as larger operators.
- Achieving better quality tourism, that is distinctive, potentially develop new markets around walking, cycling and quality rural breaks alongside the established Alton Towers Resort brand.
- Underused sites represent an opportunity to realise new high quality leisure and tourism opportunities.
- Potential economic, social and environmental benefits from new development.
- Existing business parks have potential for environmental enhancement, extension and appropriate in-fill to provide industrial and business space.
- Opportunity for interpretation of heritage assets which along with an understanding of the natural heritage could be used to promote walking routes.

## Threats

- Lack of a planning framework leading to uncoordinated, piecemeal development. Without a co-ordinated planned approach to future development there is the potential for strategic opportunities to be missed including developer contributions. There would be no planning framework to support and co-ordinate other initiatives and projects and a high risk that future developments and changes may not properly address the needs of the area.
- Potential impact of future development on landscape, heritage, environment and traffic levels in the area.
- There are a number of potential threats on the landscape including replacement of hedgerows and dry stone walls by stock proof fencing, overgrazing and horsiculture, erosion and loss of parkland landscapes, loss of tree cover and lack of woodland management, erosion of canal infrastructure, 'urbanisation' of rural villages and isolated dwellings, urban fringe impacts associated with Leek, development which does not reflect local vernacular and urban style highway improvements.
- Potential future development at Moneystone Quarry could cause loss of small scale landscape features further affecting the character of the local landscape. There are biodiversity sites in close proximity which could potentially be vulnerable to future change.
- Expansion of Alton Towers Resort may have adverse impacts on parkland landscape and be visually intrusive. There are biodiversity sites in the area which could potentially be vulnerable to future change.
- Further development along the shoreline and banks of Rudyard Reservoir could threaten the landscape of the area.
- Lack of appropriate facilities, investment and repairs associated with tourist attractions and destination sites in the Froghall and Consall Forge area is identified as resulting in pressures on the landscape.
- The need to improve the financial viability of Consall Hall Gardens to secure retention of parkland.
- Expansion of Leek into sensitive landscapes.
- Abandonment of the disused army base at Blackshaw Moor.
- Impact of potential future development on local residents and existing visitors. Additional visitors may result in increased noise and increased number of vehicles on the roads. This could threaten quiet enjoyment of the countryside.
- High levels of car ownership and car use in Staffordshire, which is likely to increase and the associated environmental impacts of this and implications for the road network in the Churnet Valley.
- Potential cuts to rural bus services and potential issues for securing funding for necessary transport maintenance/ improvements.
- Impact of the re-opening of the railway on the existing greenways which are used for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- The railway was developed in parts over the line of the former Uttoxeter Canal therefore there are issues over how to accommodate a restored canal alongside any extension of the Churnet Valley Railway.
- Current economic climate - however this is a 10 -15 year plan and therefore this should not stifle planning for future resurgence. The Masterplan must be flexible to economic changes.

- Environmental sensitivity of some sites. There are a number of biodiversity sites within or in close proximity of the opportunity sites. Whiston Eaves SSSI, Heathy Gore SBI and Ashbourne SBI are in the vicinity of Moneystone Quarry. In the Consall Hall Gardens area is Dale Sprink Pastures SBI, Churnet Valley SSSI and Consall Forge SBI. Close to the Bolton Copperworks, Froghall site is Churnet Valley SSSI, Froghall Meadow Pastures, Harston Hill SBI and Froghall Bridge SBI. At Alton Towers there is Alton Park SBI and Abbey Wood SBI. The former railway line, and therefore in parts the route of the former Uttoxeter Canal, which now acts as a greenway from Oakamoor to beyond the District boundary, is an SBI (Churnet Valley Railway SBI). Soils Wood SBI is adjacent to the railway line at Leekbrook. There is a Biodiversity Alert Site in the Cornhill area.
- Access for walking could increase impacts on the historic routeways and steps should be taken to develop appropriate management regimes in order to protect and enhance such historic routes as well as providing information for walkers on their historic nature.
- Potential impacts to the rights of way network from increased walking, horse riding and cycling.
- Issue of lack of maintenance for the area's heritage assets and the threat of deteriorating condition and possible loss.
- Impact of removal of traditional boundary materials and boundary removal on the sensitive historic landscape.
- Impact on local economy of lack of investment from businesses.
- Effects of railway on local amenity and noise.
- Potential for increasing pressure on natural resources from development.
- Sensitivity of heritage assets in relation to new development.
- Invasive Non-Native Species which are having a detrimental impact on the ecology and landscape character of the Churnet Valley.
- Water supply and management will be a significant issue for the canal.

## Consultation





### 3 Consultation

**3.0.1** The Churnet Valley Masterplan has been the subject of extensive consultation and community engagement which has informed its vision, principles and final option. In autumn 2010, a leaflet was produced to raise awareness that the Masterplan was to be produced which was made available at the Leek and Cheadle One-Stop Shops and the Leek Tourist Information Centre. A letter and leaflet were sent to each parish council clerk in October 2010 to inform them of work being undertaken to produce a masterplan for the Churnet Valley.

**3.0.2** In October/ November 2010, a planning officer was in attendance at each of the four **Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership roadshow events** to raise awareness about the Masterplan and the key stages in production of the document. These events provided an early opportunity to inform the public of forthcoming masterplan work, and to add the contact details of those who expressed an interest in being informed of future consultation on the Masterplan to the Council's consultation database. There were 20 requests to be added to the consultation database. An officer attended a further CVLLP event at Caudon Lowe Village Hall on the 8 June 2011 in order to answer any questions on the Churnet Valley Masterplan.

**3.0.3** The Council was successful, through the Rural Masterplanning Fund, in receiving support through a CABE appointed enabler to undertake visioning work. A major **visioning event** took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at Consall Hall Gardens which all local Parish Councils, specific organisations and businesses were invited to attend. The purpose of the event was to explore issues and challenges relating to the Churnet Valley and to establish a vision and key principles for the Masterplan. A **feedback event** followed on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at the Nicholson Museum and Art Gallery.

**3.0.4** The Council received Rural Masterplanning Fund support to develop a draft Masterplan for Bolton Copperworks.

**3.0.5** During summer 2011, a number of '**Community Conversation**' events were held in villages across the Churnet Valley. These were widely publicised and open to local residents to attend. Whilst these were held principally to inform the LDF on future site allocations, the opportunity was also taken at each of these events to request comments from those present on issues relating to the Churnet Valley relevant to their area and the presentation which was given covered the purpose and timetable for producing the Masterplan and how local residents could get involved.

**3.0.6** The Council consulted on the **Churnet Valley Masterplan Options** for a six week period from the 16th January to the 24th February 2012. Letters and emails notifying Parish Councils, organisations and those on the LDF database of contacts were sent. There was a Council press release on the 5th January 2012 and a reminder press release prior to the consultation ending. Posters were put up in the Churnet Valley area detailing the consultation events and how to find out more information about the Churnet Valley Masterplan Options consultation. The event venues were also asked to display the posters in advance of the events. Flyers were produced which were made available in public libraries and One-stop shops and Leek Tourist Information. Requests were made to visitor attractions to display the flyers at their venue. The Council's twitter account was used to raise awareness of the options consultation and to provide reminders about the events.

**3.0.7** At the options consultation events exhibition boards were displayed summarising the options consultation, summary booklets were distributed, officers attended the events and copies of the relevant consultation documentation was available. In response to their request, the Churnet Valley Conservation Society was provided with space to display their material at the events.

**3.0.8** There were 226 responses to the consultation plus one received much later. There were some 3695 individual comments. The summary of comments can be viewed on the Council's website - **Summary of Main Issues from Options Consultation** - the full comments are on the Council's LDF consultation portal. These responses have informed the production of the Draft Churnet Valley Masterplan. Further details of the consultation can be found in the **Churnet Valley Masterplan Consultation Statement**.

**3.0.9** The responses to the consultation raised a number of important issues, concerns and opportunities which officers have given careful consideration to. Officers have had **further meetings** with English Heritage, Staffordshire County Council, Moorlands and City Railway, North Staffs Railway, Caldon and Uttoxeter Canals Trust, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Churnet Valley Conservation Society, the Landmark Trust and Foxt Action Group to discuss further issues relating to transport, biodiversity and heritage and additional work needed which have also informed the Draft Masterplan.

**3.0.10** In winter/ spring 2013, officers met with various organisations, voluntary groups and developers to discuss the Draft Churnet Valley Masterplan. Meetings also took place around specific topic areas such as biodiversity, heritage and transport. This targeted consultation has been used to inform the refined Draft Churnet Valley Masterplan.

**3.0.11** There were over 270 individual representations to the **Draft Masterplan statutory public consultation**. A number of modifications have been made to the Masterplan in response to these representations. These are detailed in the Consultation Statement (March 2014).

## A Vision for the Churnet Valley



## 4 A Vision for the Churnet Valley

### 4.1 Vision

The vision for the Churnet Valley is that it will be a celebrated, high quality landscape which is treasured by both the communities who live and work in the area and visitors to it. It will sustain its unique qualities of a diverse and varied environment which is rich in wildlife, heritage, landscape and tourist attractions. It will be a landscape maintained by sensitive land management, restrained from overuse and where damage in the past is reversed by remedial action. It will be an area where community based projects, economic regeneration and environmental enhancement thrive together in this inspiring natural setting.

The Churnet Valley will be widely recognised, locally, regionally and nationally for its high quality landscape and its heritage and wildlife interest and for its varied tourism offer. The designation of the Churnet Valley as an AONB will be supported. Visitors will take their time to explore the area, many choosing to stay for several days and they will be eager to return due to the variety of activities and opportunities for recreation on offer. There will be something to appeal to visitors whatever the season and weather.

It will be easily accessible by a range of transport choices, with innovative opportunities to reduce carbon footprint sought and embraced. Exploring the Churnet Valley will be easy, and something not to be missed, with varied and abundant opportunities for leisure, recreation and to appreciate the natural environment and heritage of the area on route, for locals and visitors alike, who have a shared sense of the value of this special area. The interpretation and signage available throughout the area means no one will be in any doubt of the activities and attractions available within the area and how to reach them. There will be recognition and interpretation of the broad historic environment of the valley, in particular its industrial legacy and the quality of the natural environment.

The area will be a fine example of sustainable, low carbon development that is of a high quality design and in-keeping with the landscape character of the area. The range of employment opportunities on offer, housing choices, services and facilities available to people living in the area will be coveted. Improvements to accessibility and connectivity within and to the area will benefit local communities making it easier for them to go about their day to day activities.

There will be opportunities for new businesses to set up in the area in locations that are easily accessible by a range of transport choices. There will be new opportunities for employment available that are well connected to the villages in the area. Existing businesses will benefit from more customers, improved accessibility and connectivity.

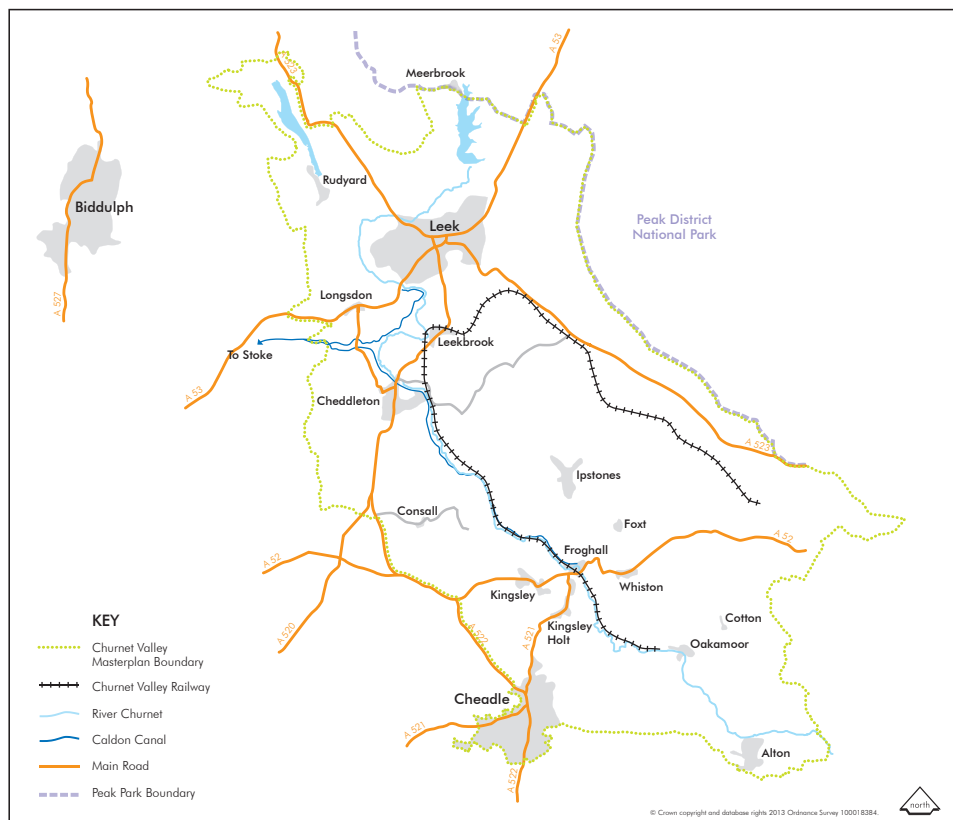
Our vision expects all who are privileged to live or work in this special place to share some responsibility for its guardianship, accepting the benefits and limitations this requires.

## 4.2 Boundary

**4.2.1** The definition of a boundary for the Churnet Valley Masterplan is important in order to clarify the extent of the area which would be subject to proposals and policy guidance in the document.

**4.2.2** At the options stage a draft proposed boundary was put forward which used the Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment findings as a starting point for defining the boundary. This was then refined to include the towns of Leek and Cheddleton to reflect the feedback from the visioning event that both towns act as gateways and hubs. The boundary was further refined to reflect the findings of the Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Study which identified an outer zone and inner core to the Churnet Valley. Although part of the western boundary was not included within the Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Study outer zone boundary it appears appropriate to include this area within the Churnet Valley Masterplan boundary due to its landscape character. In response to comments made at the options stage consultation the eastern boundary has been taken further out to the east to the Peak District National Park boundary.

**Map 4.1 Churnet Valley Masterplan Boundary**



## Sustainable Tourism and the Masterplan Principles



## 5 Sustainable Tourism and the Masterplan Principles

### 5.1 Sustainable Tourism

**5.1.1** Sustainable tourism, rather than being a type of product, is an ethos that underpins all tourism activities. As such, it is integral to all aspects of tourism development and management rather than being an add-on component as confirmed in national planning guidance. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies that "There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **an economic role** - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role** - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental role** - contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving a low carbon economy."<sup>(3)</sup>

**5.1.2** The objective of sustainable tourism is to retain the economic and social advantages of tourism development while reducing or mitigating any undesirable impacts on the natural, historic, cultural or social environment. This is achieved by balancing the needs of tourists with those of the destination.

#### VisitEngland - Wise Growth

**5.1.3** The overview and definitions of sustainable tourism provide an ethos to underpin the visitor economy, but recently VisitEngland have developed an Action Plan entitled Wise Growth which sets out how to grow tourism responsibly in a finite world, creating resilience and prosperity for all, balancing the growth aspirations of the Strategic Framework with the principles of sustainability. The Strategic Framework is the Masterplan Principles.

**5.1.4** This Action Plan uses the term Wise Growth rather than sustainable tourism in order to link and balance the growth aspirations of the Strategic Framework with the principles of sustainability in tourism. These principles are drawn from a range of globally recognised definitions and characterise Wise Growth in tourism as:

- **Inclusive:** visitor experiences are fun, inspirational, safe, open and accessible to all with no discrimination based on gender, race or disability.
- **Engaging:** involving local residents in tourism development through working relationships, consultation and co-operation.

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3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 7 page 2

- **Well-being:** tourism activities strengthen and sustain the quality of life of communities in which they take place by improving access to local resources and amenities for residents.
- **Caring:** the cultural heritage of places, the authenticity and distinctiveness is protected or enhanced through preserving traditions and local cultures for both residents and visitors.
- **Distinctive:** the quality of the urban, coastal and rural environment is maintained or enhanced without physical or visual degradation.
- **Fun and appealing:** capitalise on the enjoyment of England's natural and built environments, habitats and wildlife but ensure these are not damaged in the process.
- **Viable:** champion local businesses that operate successfully and responsibly over the long-term. Create and strengthen the number and quality of local jobs supported by tourism activities, including salary, conditions and availability. Ensure local residents benefit from the tourism activity they host, especially by maximising visitor spending retained in the local economy.
- **Efficient:** visitors and businesses use scarce and non-renewable resources wisely; visitors and businesses seek to minimise pollution, especially from transport, and reduce waste from all tourism activity.

**5.1.5** Achieving Wise Growth in practice will require more than the Strategic Framework process alone. Its success will depend on the quality of dialogue and relationships between those who are responsible for achieving the aims. These stakeholders include visitors, residents and tourism businesses.

*Visitors will enjoy enhanced experiences at authentic destinations. Residents will feel the benefits of tourism in a way that doesn't undermine their local sense of place. Tourism businesses will reduce costs through greater efficiency, improving quality, creating new jobs and strengthening local economies in the process. And all this will be delivered in such a way that protects and improves the broader environment, natural and manmade.*

**5.1.6** In developing their Wise Growth Action Plan, VisitEngland have identified a number of challenges and opportunities:

- Sustainability in tourism is not new, but little evidence of it being fully adopted by the industry.
- Selling sustainability to business and consumers purely on environmental grounds has not worked.
- Lack of understanding of the business case for Wise Growth, partly due to inconsistent message and lack of focus on core message.
- Language used does not inspire action but rather dictate limiting behaviour, such as what business and consumers can't or shouldn't do.



- There is evidence to suggest businesses do not have the confidence to promote themselves as being green.
- Government's medium term recovery strategy gives tourism a major opportunity to capitalise on the principles of Wise Growth.
- When destinations are developed and managed, as part of a wider economy and with the Wise Growth principles embedded, they can thrive.
- VisitEngland research in 2010 found consumers are willing to play their part in local stewardship, if it is easy and simple to do.
- Local produce is a significant opportunity to create a win-win situation when promoted.
- An alternative to car based tourism is a challenge, but there are examples of schemes that have worked, such as the New Forest Tour Bus or Electric Bike Network.
- Wide and different forms of business support are confusing for business, a simple and coordinated plan of support is essential.

**5.1.7** Sustainable tourism in the Churnet Valley must be both a top-down Strategic Framework for major developments and substantial investments, and a bottom-up framework to support business growth for SMEs focused on saving them money, improving the visitor experience and widening the benefit of tourism, say through local purchasing (food, services and supplies).

**5.1.8** In Staffordshire there are two key products that can help businesses engage with the principles of Wise Growth, these are the Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark (SEQM) and Taste of Staffordshire campaign.

#### **Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark**

The scheme is operational in Staffordshire and recognised by Destination Staffordshire as a mark of quality for businesses in the county and is promoted via the destination marketing.

Destination Staffordshire supports this vision wholeheartedly as the way forward for tourism and the new Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark (SEQM) seeks to help the wise growth of businesses by posing the question:

"How do you help people fall in love with Staffordshire?"

- An SEQM business is passionate about Staffordshire and passionate about customer service.
- An SEQM business makes sure their customers are more satisfied, have more fun, come back and spread the word about Staffordshire.

- SEQM businesses are the businesses that Destination Staffordshire trusts, celebrates, refers to and is proud of.
- SEQM businesses have proved they are responsible, trusted and celebrated custodians of Staffordshire.

SEQM actions are sustainable actions: reducing negative local and global environmental impact, purchasing responsibly, supporting people and communities.

The SEQM sets out a series of benefits to business, from reducing costs, to setting themselves out as distinctive, and creating a network of like-minded businesses to learn from.

### **Taste of Staffordshire**

The Taste of Staffordshire campaign centres on a partnership that is dedicated to raising and promoting the quality of Staffordshire's food and drink. The goal is to drive more business through restaurants, eating places, food and drink producers and retailers.

There is great potential to increase participation in the District and develop a cluster that is highly visible to visitors as they explore the destination.

## **Business Improvement**

**5.1.9** To support sustainable tourism the Masterplan proposes a business improvement programme focused on advocating the use of Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark and Taste of Staffordshire programmes. This provides for the development of a strong cluster of like-minded businesses committed to quality and distinctiveness, dovetailing with the approach being taken by the CVLLP and building on Destination Staffordshire's regional and national marketing, plus their Tourism Business Development Programme.

**5.1.10** Key considerations:

- We need to inspire businesses and show the business case for adoption;
- We need grassroots commitment, such as through Totally Locally Leek, to get businesses involved;
- The Council and its partners need to improve the direct support available to tourism businesses;
- Major developments and investments must be shown to be examples of best practice and showcase this ethos if the existing business community is to commit to change.

## Achieving Distinctiveness

**5.1.11** If the Churnet Valley is to commit to Wise Growth , and use SEQM/ Taste of Staffordshire as a framework for business improvement, great play will need to be put on distinctiveness. However, there is great potential for conflict between Staffordshire as a destination, the association with the Peak District, Staffordshire Moorlands as an administrative district and the area defined by the Churnet Valley Masterplan / CVLLP.

**5.1.12** Often tourism development gets fixated on branding, sub-branding and identity, whereas many discerning visitors will be attracted by product, a quality offer and ultimately the visitor experience that reflects their taste. The Churnet Valley is not a major destination in its own right; this was clearly set out in the Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Study (2011), which identified two key destination brands; Alton Towers Resort and the Peak District. The District Council, working in partnership with Destination Staffordshire has referred to the Staffordshire Moorlands and parts of East Staffordshire as the 'Staffordshire Peak District', in part tapping into the recognised brand of the Peak District, but making the connection that a good percentage of the Peak District as a visitor destination is in Staffordshire. Some businesses will see great affinity with this approach; others may question the relevance for them. In the same way those in Froghall may have greater association with the Churnet Valley than a business in north Rudyard. We should remain mindful that any reference to the area as the Staffordshire Peak District is for dispersal of those attracted by the nationally recognised brands such as the Peak District, it is not an 'attract' brand in itself.

**5.1.13** In developing the Masterplan, there is a need to focus on the Strategic Framework for business improvement, Wise Growth and success, rather than dictating who a business should market with. By doing so it can encourage high quality, distinctive businesses that will form the critical mass to encourage both Visit Peak District and Destination Staffordshire to maximise the potential and improve their marketing to reflect this growing trend. Furthermore, it can be seen from existing quality businesses that they achieve wider national market presence through distinctive marketing. These demonstrate that well developed businesses do understand the potential to promote themselves through relevant channels to attract customers. Indeed, if the business community can achieve national presence through media coverage online and in print (newspapers and lifestyle magazines) then this is often as valuable as affiliation with the local Destination Marketing Organisation.

**5.1.14** The blueprint for the development and delivery of the Churnet Valley Masterplan has to be focused on the customer experience, and it is proposed that the District Council and its partners focus on a defined group of visitors, rather than trying to be all things to all people. The 2011 Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Study gives guidance on what these cross-cutting themes should be:

- Making more of Leek
- Enhancing access to the (Churnet Valley) area and connectivity within it
- Developing new and improving the existing major attractions / attractors
- Encouraging and promoting more events
- Enhancing the accommodation stock
- Going Green

**5.1.15** The Tourism Study<sup>(4)</sup> clearly states that these cross-cutting themes should enhance the overall quality of the visitor experience and provide a context for the more transformational projects. The Churnet Valley has significant potential to be further developed as an attraction through the development of its heritage, nature based and active outdoor recreation products. These represent its core proposition to the market place. The District has the benefit of association with the umbrella of the (Staffordshire) Peak District brand.

### **Defining Future Potential Visitors**

**5.1.16** The Tourism Study<sup>(5)</sup> provided an overview of the range of visitors that already come, or could be attracted to holiday in the Churnet Valley and wider Staffordshire Peak District. The Masterplan needs to focus on those committed to staying overnight, as this is both the most sustainable for the environment and community, and offers the most valuable economic contribution to the industry. The Tourism Study set out the market segments, characteristics and potential for growth as follows:

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4 Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Study (2011) TEAM

5 Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Study (2011) TEAM

**Countrysiders:**

- Primarily coming for a combination of experiences - activities, discovery/ sightseeing, and rest & relaxation. Outdoor activities will be the predominate activity but the natural environment/scenery will be a key underpinning appeal. They will have an interest in heritage and natural history and will have the propensity to travel around/ explore.
- Typically they will be short break through to week-long staying visitors. Demographically they will be middle-aged ABC1 couples travelling from a wide area.
- They are categorised as one of the most important markets for the area.

**Family Fun:**

- This segment may overlap with elements of the 'Countrysiders' group (above) to an extent - the differentiator will be the influence and motivation of Alton Towers in the trip. Countrysiders' families will be likely to stay longer and undertake a wider range of activities, including heritage and natural history, rather than just come for Alton Towers (staying either on the resort or in the immediate area).
- As with day visitors motivated by Alton Towers the group will be predominantly C1 with children of all ages (from pre to secondary school) and travelling from a wide catchment. This group will generally stay at Alton Towers with limited activity elsewhere in the district.

**5.1.17** In addition to these two segments, the area will no doubt attract special interest groups focused around industrial heritage and natural history, for example attracted by events at the CVR Railway or RSPB Reserves.

**5.1.18** In summary, the focus of the Masterplan should be around attracting 'Countrysiders', with or without children, who best fit the offer and are most likely to be attracted by a rural destination, with a distinctive and quality offer; and to a lesser extent 'family fun'.

**5.1.19** In focusing on this approach, the Churnet Valley will connect well with adjacent Peak District National Park to the east and north of the area. Furthermore, the element of industrial heritage that helps the Churnet Valley define itself also links well with the Potteries, with its quality attractions such as Wedgwood, Emma Bridgewater, and Portmeirion/ Spode - revived lifestyle products/brands. This will further strengthen the area's position within the Enjoy Staffordshire Marketing Campaign.

## Achieving Sustainable Tourism in the Churnet Valley

**5.1.20** Whilst the Churnet Valley contains the vibrant market towns of Leek and Cheadle and is connected to the urban conurbation of Stoke on Trent, the area exhibits many qualities of remote landscape, highly valued by its residents and many who visit it to walk, cycle, ride and relax. The CVLLP and the Council's research have defined varied landscapes with considerable opportunity for informal recreation throughout most of the area. In addition to natural heritage, the area's industrial legacy is of great interest to those that like to explore and discover. The area also has an array of formal visitor attractions, many well suited to the family market (wildlife reserves, animal sanctuaries, steam railways etc.). Compared to many areas, the Churnet Valley has a rich heritage (natural, cultural and industrial), but much more can be done to coordinate this, 'tell the story' and manage how visitors might experience it. Whilst the masterplan will identify key opportunity sites for transformational projects, the future economic success of the valley's micro and small businesses will depend on organic change over the lifetime of this plan.

**5.1.21** Some of the key challenges are:

- Improving the accommodation offer in terms of range and quality throughout the valley;
- Tackling poor signage, dated or non-existent interpretation/ visitor welcome boards, and encouraging visitors to explore beyond the immediate site;
- Developing visitor hubs, where people can access, explore and discover in a way that enriches the visitor experience but does so with the least impact on the environment and community;
- Develop the food offer in the valley, with improvements to rural pubs (many of which need to diversify to remain viable) and making more of locally produced food;
- Providing micro/small businesses with confidence to invest/ improve backed by DMO-led marketing opportunities that fit the responsible tourism approach, this will need greater engagement and support over the first years of the plan;
- Encourage, develop and improve the promotion of events that will enrich visitor experiences (e.g. Country shows, specialist markets, traditional events) through discovery;
- Extending the season that visitors want to experience the area, working to support businesses develop offers for the period October- Easter.

**5.1.22** The main opportunities are:

- Promoting a series of gateways into the Churnet Valley from which visitors can then travel, by more sustainable modes where possible, into the valley.
- Promoting a number of gateway visitor hubs based on existing centres of interest from which visitors can explore the local area.
- Improving connectivity and accessibility between hubs and attractions in the area

- Developing the visitor offer aimed primarily at the countrysider market including families under the framework of Wise Growth.
- Increasing overnight stays
- 'Going green' through the promotion of Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark

## 5.2 Masterplan Principles

**5.2.1** The Masterplan principles are the foundation for the Masterplan and establish the 'rules' by which the Churnet Valley shall be managed.

The overarching principle is one of sustaining and enhancing the natural, built and historic environmental quality of the area, its settlements and its hinterland through managed change which provides for rural regeneration largely based on sustainable tourism.

The other principles are as follows:

**1. Ensure that communities are at the heart of the future Churnet Valley:**

- by delivering the vision and strategy for the Churnet Valley in partnership with local community groups
- by ensuring that future development brings benefits and a sustainable future for local communities through provision of employment, new or improved services and facilities, improved accessibility and connectivity, and housing to meet local needs.

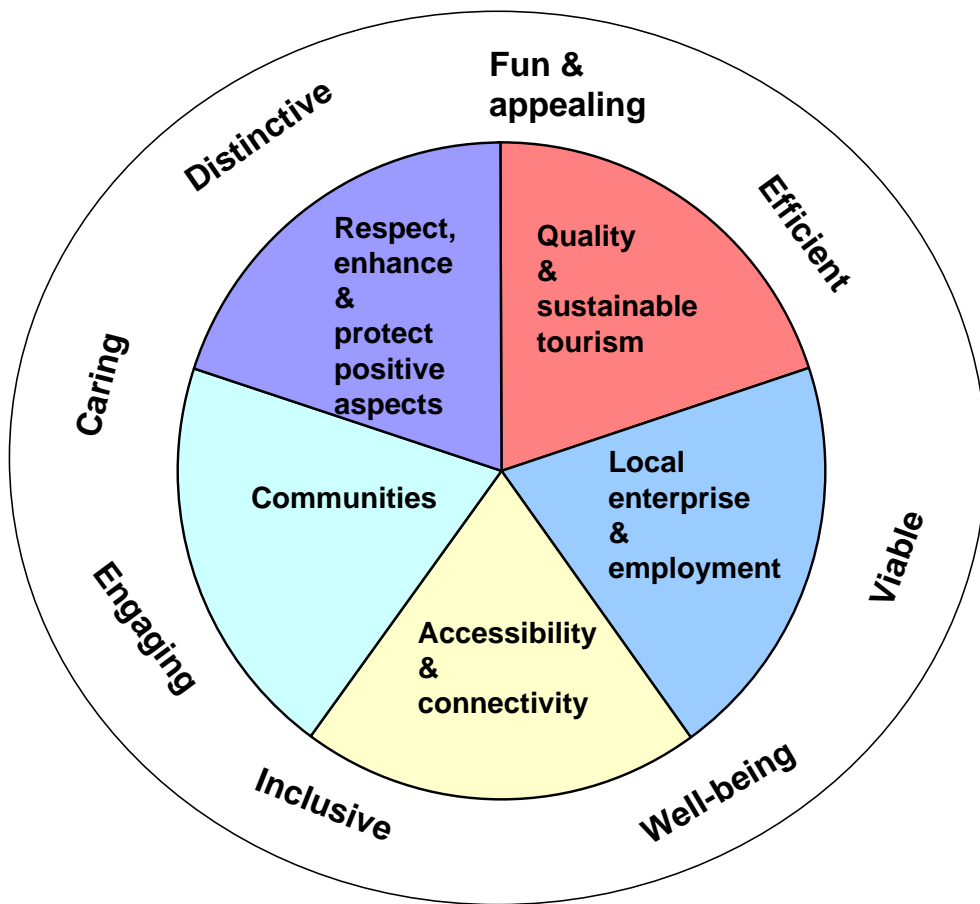
**2. Respect, enhance and protect the positive aspects of the Churnet Valley:**

- by sustaining and enhancing the existing qualities and assets of the Churnet Valley which make the area unique
- by ensuring that future development responds to and is sympathetic with the environmental, ecological and landscape limits and makes appropriate provision for the management of land and features for nature conservation and heritage and the enjoyment of areas of wildlife and geological interest
- by recognising the contribution of industrial historic buildings and structures and areas of special archaeological interest
- by seeking the highest levels of environmental and sustainable technologies and the highest standard of design for future developments
- by seeking to ensure an integrated approach to environmental management so that wherever possible benefits are identified and delivered for the natural, historic and built environment.
- by integration with the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Project and recognising the positive impact this project can have for the future of the Churnet Valley
- through viable land management that connects to habitats and creates a living landscape
- by supporting opportunities to create, manage and promote further biodiversity
- by celebrating and encouraging increased awareness and understanding of the area's heritage assets

- by securing the complementary redevelopment of major brownfield sites and reuse of existing buildings
  - by strengthening the Churnet Valley as a brand and identity for both visitors and locals
  - by ensuring the nature and scale of development is appropriate to its locality - this may mean limited or no development is appropriate for parts of the Valley.
3. **Support local enterprise and create local employment opportunities:**
- by securing sustainable economic growth which responds to local needs and circumstances, helps to tackle regeneration priorities, supports local businesses, and creates local jobs
  - by recognising and promoting the need for small modern business units and facilities for business start-up including live/ work units
  - enabling employment opportunities beyond tourism and offering help and support for all local businesses in the Churnet Valley
  - by encouraging sustainable trading i.e. local markets for local producers to reduce carbon footprint
  - by retaining and building on traditional skills present in the Churnet Valley which the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership is seeking to achieve.
4. **Improve accessibility and connectivity:**
- by recognising and promoting gateways to the Churnet Valley including the towns of Cheadle and Leek
  - through promoting sustainable modes of transport (bus/ rail/ canal/ foot/ cycling/ horse riding) and ensuring that there are transport hubs
  - by establishing green networks for movement throughout the Churnet Valley
  - by maintaining and improving roads and signposting
  - by addressing the need for strategically located car parking particularly to act as hubs to then use sustainable modes (foot/ cycling/ bus/ rail/ canal/ horse riding) to explore the Valley
  - by addressing traffic hotspots
  - through measures which benefit local communities as well as visitors.
5. **Deliver quality and sustainable tourism:**
- by facilitating the development of the Churnet Valley as a visitor destination whilst respecting the environment
  - by promoting increased tourism and economic prosperity without causing harm to essential qualities of landscape, ecology, heritage and remoteness that the Churnet Valley is recognised for
  - by enhancing visitor facilities and unlocking the potential of underutilised assets
  - by attracting and retaining visitors and their expenditure overnight and longer, by promoting a year round visitor offer and dispersing visitors to increase benefit to the local economy
  - by focusing on quality rather than quantity
  - by giving preference to incremental improvements which support existing businesses
  - by marketing and branding the Churnet Valley



Figure 5.1 Diagram showing the relationship between Wise Growth and the Masterplan Principles



## Spatial Strategy



## 6 Spatial Strategy

**6.0.1** The Spatial Strategy for the Churnet Valley shall be one which is based on '**Balanced Development**' across the whole of the area.

### 6.1 Aims of the Strategy

**6.1.1** The overall aim of the strategy is to increase the economic contribution from sustainable tourism and regenerate key brownfield sites in the area in a manner which is sensitive to and enhances the heritage, landscape and ecology of the Churnet Valley. Emphasis will be on increasing overnight stays with visitors staying for longer and throughout the year. A range of high quality accommodation will be provided at key sites in the Churnet Valley such as Bolton Copperworks, Alton Towers Resort, Leek and Cheadle, Moneystone Quarry and on a much smaller scale at Consall Hall Gardens. There will be support for development that provides opportunities for visitors to access, understand and engage with the Churnet Valley's landscape, heritage and nature conservation assets and these opportunities will be well promoted. Access to these activities will be improved through the use of gateways and hubs and there will be promotion of sustainable modes of travel. There will also be support and encouragement for existing businesses and they will be encouraged to 'go green' through the promotion of Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark. Regeneration schemes will be promoted for key brownfield sites to enhance their role and value in the Churnet Valley. Communities in the area will benefit from improved accessibility and enhancement of the natural environment as well as new employment opportunities. The strategy could include some housing at Bolton Copperworks.

### 6.2 Key requirements of the Strategy

**6.2.1** Development is to be focused in key locations which can best accommodate change and bring maximum social, economic and environmental benefits. Only minimal change is to be allowed in other parts to protect sensitive areas. Areas are to be identified for different visitor destinations supported by measures and routes to improve connectivity and promote greater use of public transport and non-motorised travel. The approach is to be based on green, low/no carbon development creating a green tourism destination with careful control to prevent impacts on landscape, ecology and heritage. Development must be of a high quality but also viable with a particular focus on development which can deliver improvements. There will be strong measures to enhance landscape and enhance the area's biodiversity and a strong emphasis on supporting heritage. Green infrastructure measures must also be incorporated linking open countryside, country parks and wildlife areas.

**6.2.2** This approach allows for different scales of development in specific areas which will bring economic benefits across the wider area. Major projects are targeted to key areas in the north, south and central parts with small scale projects in between to improve legibility and access. This approach facilitates a broader destination appeal to a variety of potential visitors and avoids concentration of too much development in specific areas. There is potential for economic development without compromising overall environmental quality. It maintains investment across the area to bring social, economic and environmental benefits and allows for improved connectivity with the Peak District National Park and Potteries. It also allows for existing businesses to be supported. There are opportunities for a range of 'gateways' into the area including Leek, Cheadle, Cornhill, Coombes Valley, Froghall and Alton Towers Resort. Anzio Camp has the potential to act as a gateway from the Peak District

National Park in the future. This approach enables best use to be made of available development opportunities and also addresses key locations which are presently harmful to the landscape and character of the Churnet Valley.

### 6.3 Justification for Strategy

**6.3.1** The public consultation on the Draft Masterplan has informed this final Masterplan. The Consultation Statement (March 2014) details the representations received and the modifications made in response to these. A Final Sustainability Appraisal (March 2014) has also been produced which explains how options were considered and how the Masterplan was developed and assessed for its sustainability impacts.

**6.3.2** The consultation responses at options stage, the Sustainability Appraisal of the Churnet Valley Masterplan Options and the Economic Impact Assessment of Options have all played an important role in informing the Draft Churnet Valley Masterplan.

**6.3.3** A range of 5 options (Minimal Change, Dispersed Development, Northern Focus, Froghall Focus and Southern Focus) were explored and tested to develop a strategy for the Churnet Valley. The Sustainability Appraisal of Options scored the Dispersed Development well, in the long term, in terms of social and economic impacts however its significant shortfall was in terms of the environmental impact and in particular impact on the need to travel and potential to increase the use of the private car as travel would be dispersed throughout the area. The Southern approach scored well in terms of economic impact for the south but not for the north and was assessed as having the potential to have negative environmental impacts in the south. The Northern Focus scored well in terms of economic impact in the north but not for the other parts of the Churnet Valley. It scored quite well in environmental terms as it protects the most sensitive southern parts of the valley. The Minimal Change approach scored well in terms of environmental impact but more mixed in terms of economic impacts due to the limited nature of development.

**6.3.4** The Churnet Valley Masterplan Economic Activity Monitor found that the economic impact of the 5 options varies considerably, with the modest contribution of £9,471,000 based on the minimal development option, through to £51,202,000 for the southern focus option. The lowest contribution would add 4.27% to the economic value of tourism activity to the Staffordshire Moorlands, the Minimal Change option. The Dispersed Development would add 12.59%, the Northern Focus would add 5.38%, the Froghall Focus would add 7.38% and the Southern Focus would add 23.11%. However the economic impact per visitor does not vary considerably between the options, reflecting a broad range of accommodation stock in each development option, the difference being less than £5 per visitor. In terms of employment impact the Southern Focus had by far the greatest impact followed by Dispersed Development, then the Froghall Focus, then Northern Focus with the Minimal Change approach contributing the least employment potential.

**6.3.5** It is felt that the balanced approach being put forward in the Masterplan of focusing development on key locations and seeing minimal development elsewhere which recognises the sensitivity and unique qualities of each of the character areas is the most appropriate approach for the Churnet Valley in terms of a balance between sustainability and economic impact. It also best reflects comments made to the consultation on options about the unique character of areas of the Churnet Valley and the need for a sensitive approach that sees the protection and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Churnet Valley as a key overriding requirement.

**6.3.6** A number of studies were undertaken to test the Draft Masterplan. These included a Sustainability Appraisal, Transport Study, Habitat Regulations Assessment and Economic Assessment.

### 6.4 Sustainability Appraisal

**6.4.1** A Final Churnet Valley Masterplan sustainability Appraisal (SA) (March 2014) has been produced which explains how options were considered and how the Masterplan was developed and assessed for its sustainability impacts. An SA was undertaken of the Draft Masterplan by the SA Team which predicted the likely significant effects of the Draft Churnet Valley Masterplan on social, environmental and economic factors. This assessed the overall Spatial Strategy, emerging principles, character areas and the cumulative impacts of the Draft Masterplan. Positive, negative and neutral effects have been identified in the assessment. Where adverse effects of implementing the Draft Masterplan are envisaged, measures to prevent, reduce or offset as fully as possible are identified.

**6.4.2** The overall approach of 'Balanced Development' scores well in terms of supporting the heritage of the Churnet Valley, enhancing the landscape, providing local employment opportunities, regenerating brownfield sites and strengthening links between the rural areas and the towns.

**6.4.3** The SA makes recommendations for mitigation / improvement of aspects of the Draft Masterplan that could have negative impacts. These include: resisting development which would harm the character of the local landscape; encouraging overnight stays; better promotion of public transport services; maximising use of gateways and hubs; and seeking renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies in new schemes.

### 6.5 Habitat Regulations Assessment

**6.5.1** The purpose of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is to assess whether the Masterplan could have a likely significant effect on any European sites of nature conservation. The Screening Report undertaken, by Natural Capital, considered that none of the development opportunities within the Churnet Valley Masterplan would be considered likely to generate impacts that would have a likely effect on sites. Natural England raised initial concerns regarding the HRA during the public consultation on the Draft Masterplan. In order to address Natural England's initial representation to the public consultation on the Draft Masterplan, an HRA Update (November 2013) was produced. Natural England have confirmed that they are satisfied that the conclusions in the HRA Update (November 2013) is appropriate and confirmed that in their view the Masterplan is legally compliant and sound.

### 6.6 Transport Study

**6.6.1** The Transport Study (2013), undertaken by Atkins, looks at the potential impact on the highway network of development at Cornhill, Bolton Copperworks, Moneystone Quarry, Alton Towers Resort, Leek and Cheadle. The Transport Study (2013) also considers the potential role that hubs (existing centres of interest/ visitor attractions), gateways and other travel modes may be able to play in the future, including railway and bus services. It identified a number of measures to be undertaken for the key opportunity sites (see section 13).

## **6.7 Economic Impact Assessment**

**6.7.1** The Economic Assessment (2013) considered the economic impact of the Draft Masterplan. It demonstrates that the total increase in total economic impact of all visitor types in the Staffordshire Moorlands would make an additional contribution of 12.3%.

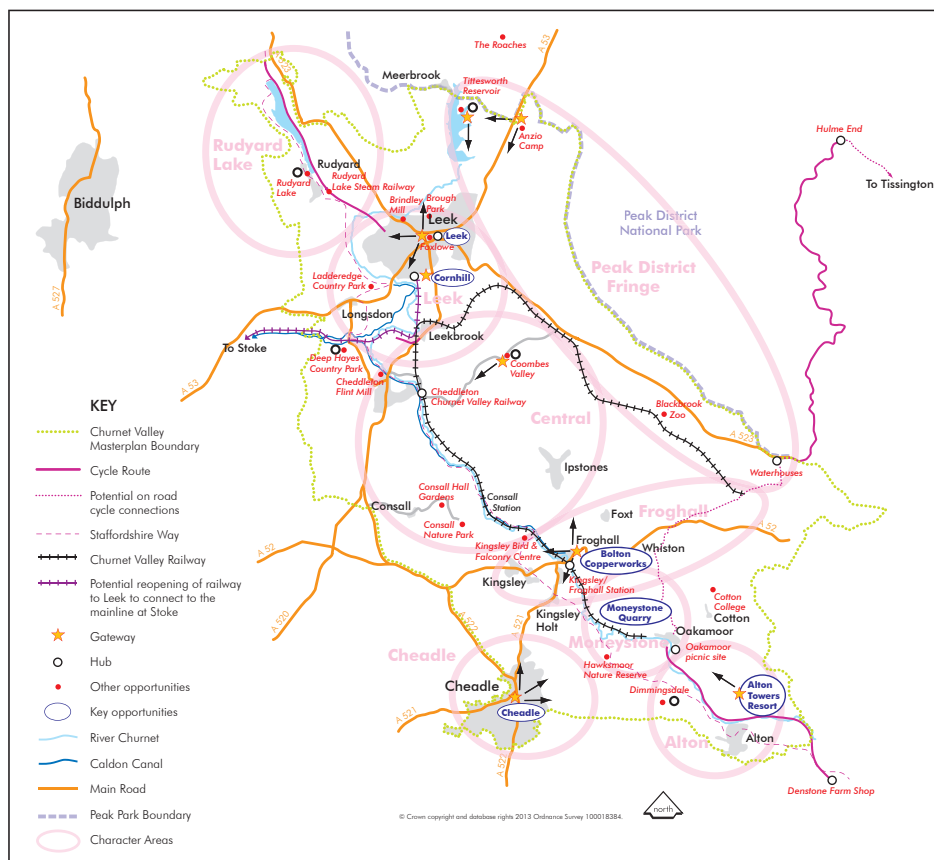
## 6.8 Key Elements of the Strategy

### 6.8.1 Character Areas

**6.8.1.1** Eight local character areas have been identified that reflect the distinctiveness of areas of the Churnet Valley and the role these individual character areas will play in achieving the vision. These are areas where existing characteristics and opportunities lend themselves to particular purposes and change:

1. Rudyard Lake (Rudyard)
2. Peak District Fringe (Meerbrook, Tittesworth with visitor centre, Anzio Camp, Blackbrook, Waterhouses)
3. Leek
4. Central (Cheddleton, Consall, Ipstones)
5. Froghall (Kingsley, Froghall, Whiston)
6. Moneystone (Kingsley Holt, Oakamoor)
7. Alton (Alton, Alton Towers Resort)
8. Cheadle

Map 6.1 Character Areas



**6.8.1.2** For each of the character areas the following is identified:

- **Role** - sets out ideas and rationale of the proposals for the area

- **Key Activities** - identifies uses and activities which are appropriate to this area
- **Key Actions** - identifies main measures and proposals necessary to deliver the role

### 6.8.2 Gateways

**6.8.2.1** Gateways will provide places of entry, from which to then travel through the valley by more sustainable modes where possible. There are a number of gateways to reflect the different places the Churnet Valley can be entered. Leek is to act as the main gateway in the north and Cheadle is to act as the main gateway in the south. Cornhill is to act as a more minor gateway in the north particularly for those arriving by train or canal. In the central area Froghall is to act as a minor gateway. Coombes Valley is to act as a gateway for those arriving from the Peak District National Park. Tittesworth Reservoir is to act as a gateway. Anzio Camp similarly has the potential to act as a gateway from the Peak District National Park in the future. Alton Towers Resort acts as a gateway into the Churnet Valley in the south.

### 6.8.3 Hubs

**6.8.3.1** A number of gateway visitor hubs have been identified in or beyond the character areas. These are existing centres of interest, with visitor facilities, from which visitors can explore the local area. These are as follows:

- Tittesworth Reservoir (Severn Trent Visitor Centre)
- Rudyard Lake (Rudyard Visitor Centre)
- Hulme End (in the Peak District National Park, but a gateway via Manifold trail)
- Denstone Farm Shop (outside Churnet Valley area but gateway via old railway track)
- Oakamoor Picnic Site (SCC)
- Dimmingsdale
- Kingsley/ Froghall Churnet Valley Railway Station
- Deep Hayes Country Park (SCC)
- Cheddleton Churnet Valley Railway Station
- Coombes Valley RSPB Nature Reserve (RSPB)
- Waterhouses Cycle Hire (Peak District National Park Authority, bottom of Manifold track)

**6.8.3.2** For each hub a summary is provided of what is already on offer, how it connects with other parts of the Churnet Valley and areas for improvement based on enhancement of existing provision or development of new elements within the Character Areas section.

**6.8.3.3** All visitor hubs should offer adequate parking, clear brown signage, facilitate walking, cycling, and where possible riding, to places of interest, attractions etc. They have a cluster of activity and businesses that can benefit.

### 6.8.4 Transport Corridors and Links

**6.8.4.1** A comprehensive network of road and off-road routes for all users is to be promoted with links to existing routes and trails e.g. Manifold trail, Staffordshire Way, canal towpath, Churnet Valley Railway. There is also the potential to link the Tissington and Manifold trails by road and then the Manifold at Waterhouses with Oakamoor to link down to Uttoxeter for cycling. Whilst the re-opening of the former railway lines to Stoke, Leek and east of Froghall is supported, further work is needed to confirm deliverability and viability and how any conflicts with existing users, local amenity and ecological interests can be addressed. Regarding the

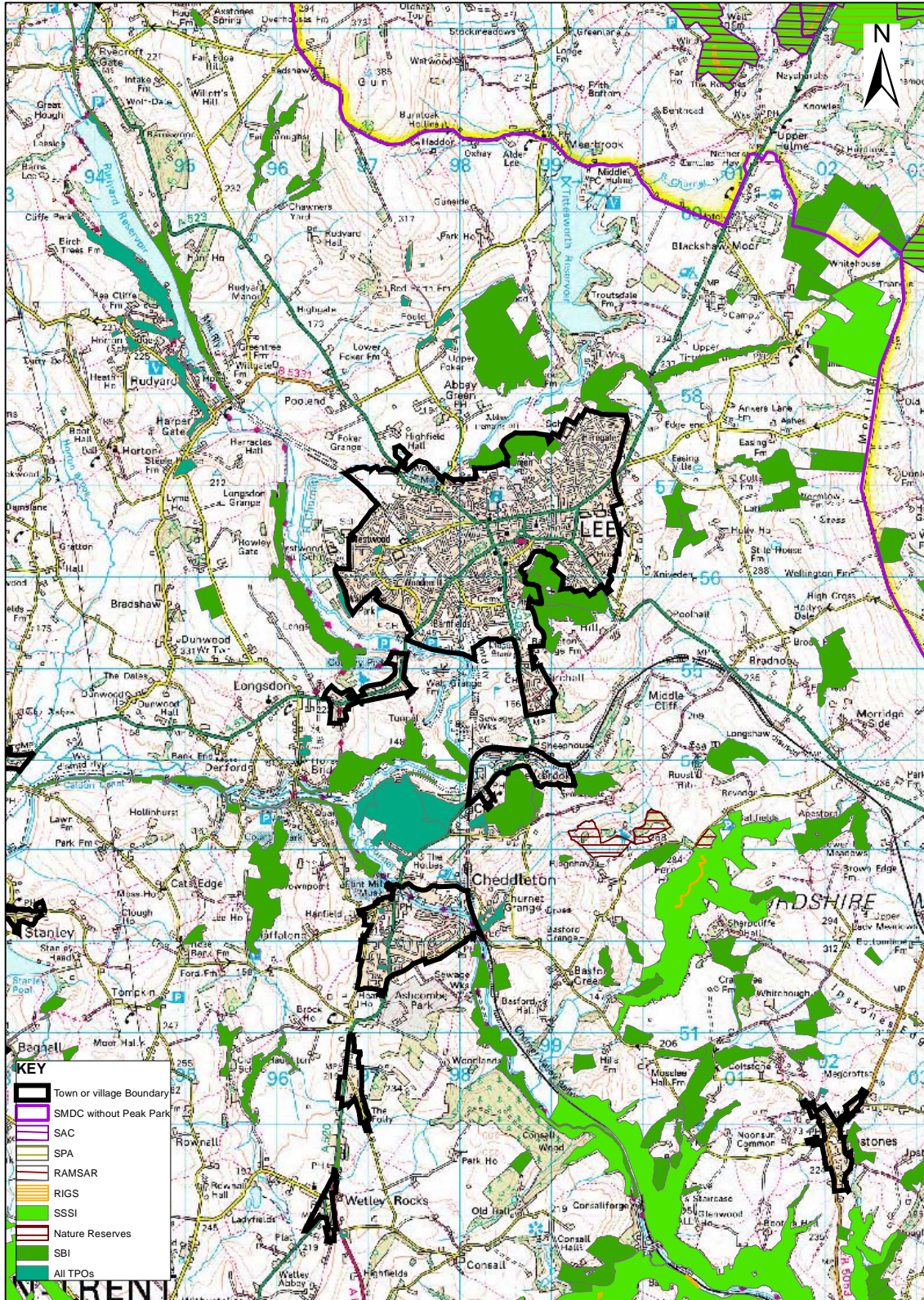


Uttoxeter Canal restoration the focus is on key actions to reinstate its route in key areas e.g. Froghall. There is to be identification of key transport nodes from which to travel by more sustainable modes with improvements where necessary to car parking through the identification of key parking points at visitor hubs throughout the valley, with enhanced signage from main routes to these hubs.

### **6.8.5 Green Infrastructure**

**6.8.5.1** Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect the Churnet Valley. It comprises of the country parks, nature reserves, woodlands, rivers, canals, wildlife habitats and green routes. Figures 6.2 and 6.3 show biodiversity sites in the Churnet Valley. These maps are for information only and as stated in the Core Strategy the Site Allocations DPD proposals map will identify the location of designated sites of international, national, regional and local biological and geological importance and ancient woodland.

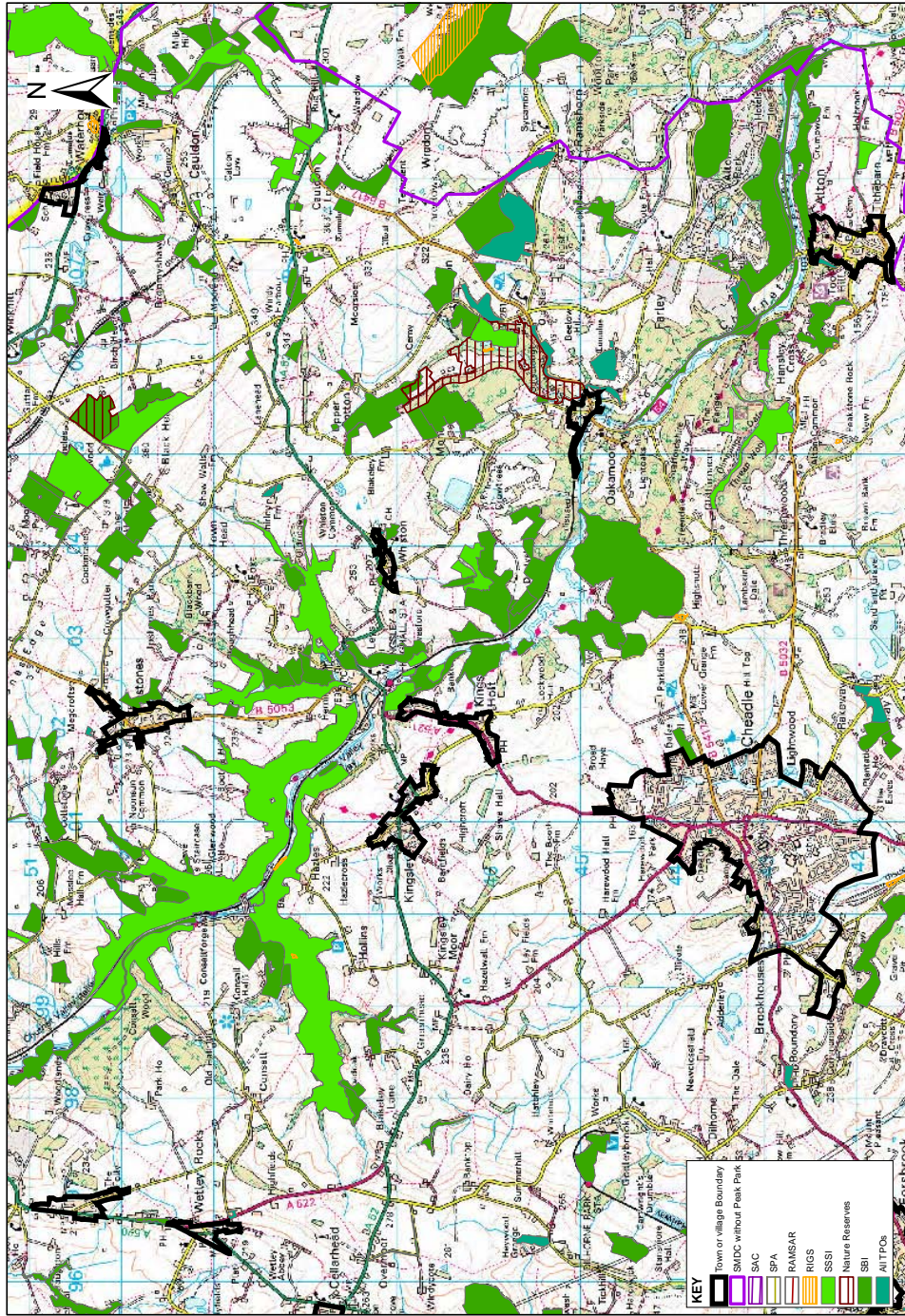
Map 6.2 Biodiversity Sites in the Churnet Valley (North)



Scale 1:50,000

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Map 6.3 Biodiversity Sites in the Churnet Valley (South)

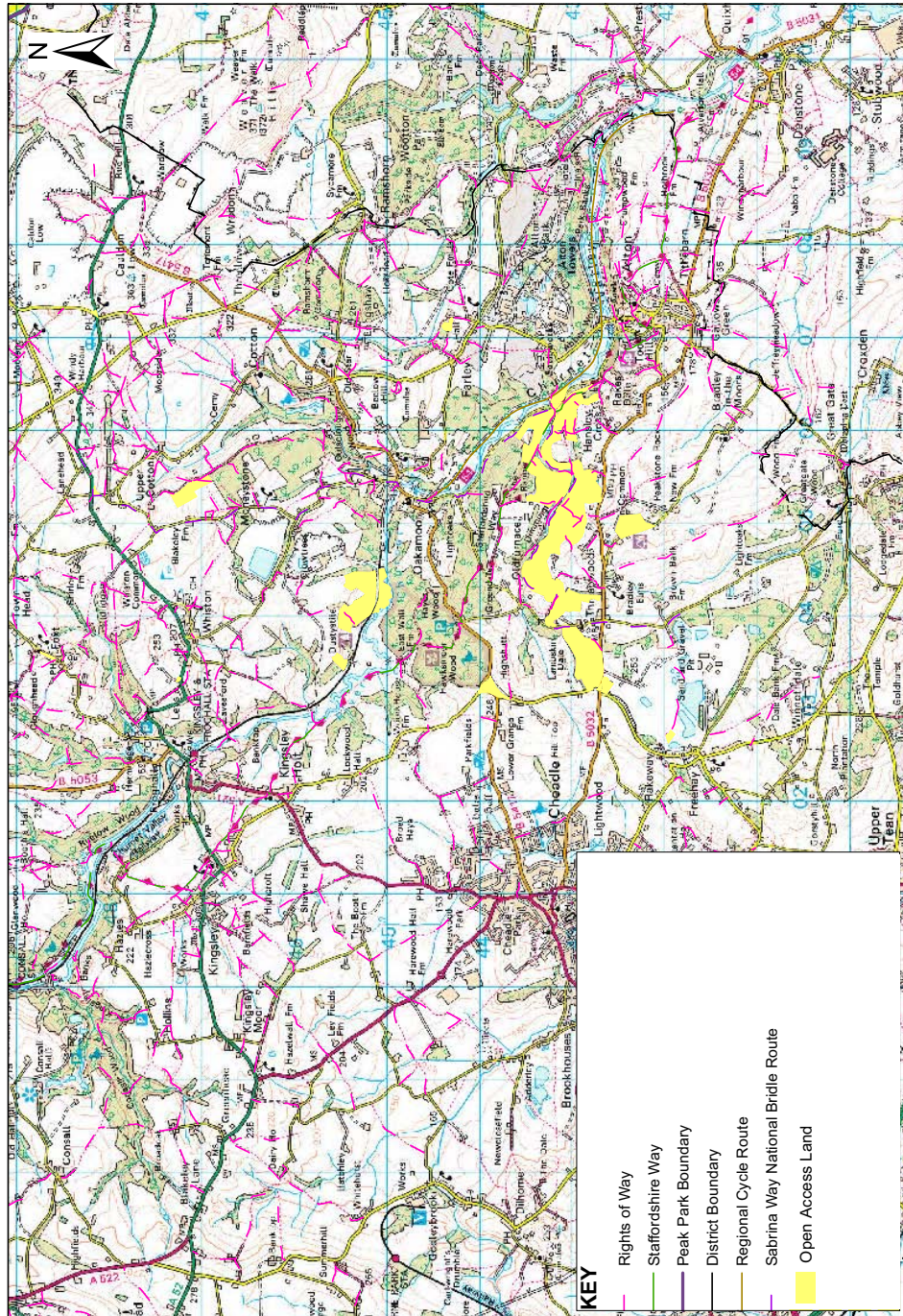


Map 6.4 Map showing Recreation Routes in the Churnet Valley Masterplan



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Map 6.5 Recreation Routes in the Churnet Valley (South)



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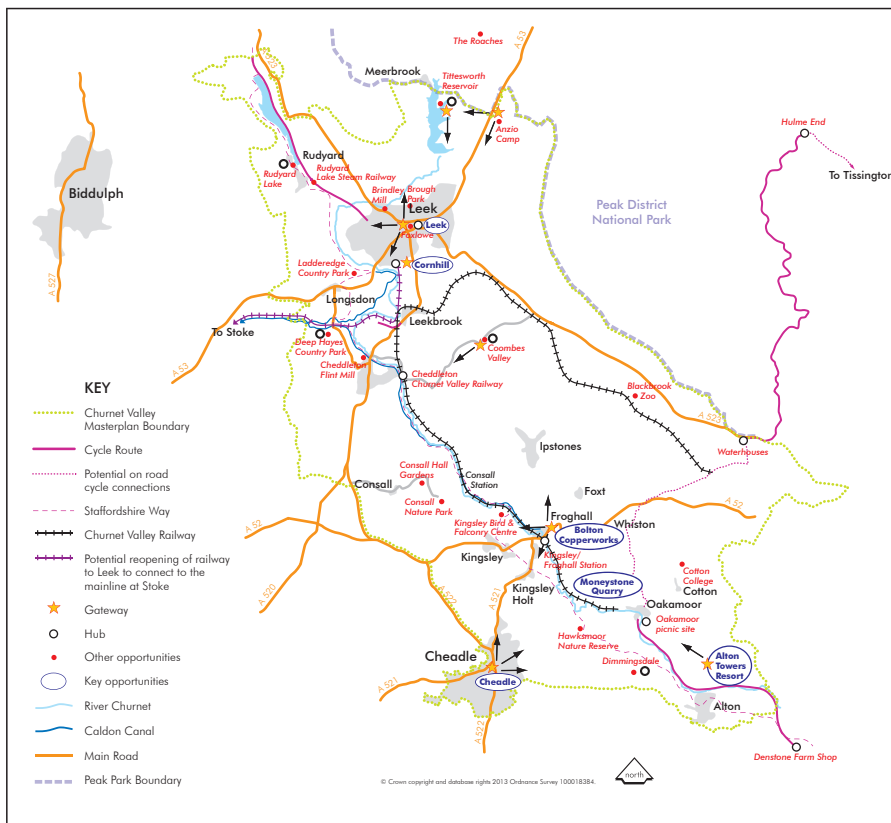
## 6.8.6 Opportunity Sites

**6.8.6.1** The **key opportunity sites** are attractions or sites which have or could play a key role in delivering the strategy. These are Cornhill, Froghall (Bolton Copperworks), Moneystone Quarry and Alton Towers Resort and are each subject to a detailed **concept statement**. Each concept statement is essentially a mini development brief for the site and provides guidance for the future use of the site. There has already been a significant amount of baseline work and masterplanning around the long term use of these areas.

**6.8.6.2** The towns of Leek and Cheadle are also key opportunities which are subject of their own Masterplans with opportunities for a number of opportunity sites within each of the towns having been identified in the town centre masterplans. See [Leek Town Centre Masterplan](#) and [Cheadle Town Centre Masterplan](#). The Masterplan for the Bolton Copperworks site can be viewed on the [Council's Churnet Valley Masterplan webpage](#).

**6.8.6.3** **Other opportunity sites** have also been identified which include The Roaches/Tittesworth Reservoir, Brindley Mill, Rudyard Lake and Railway, Anzio Camp, Ladderedge Country Park, Brough Park, Foxlowe, Cheddleton Flint Mill, Deep Hayes Country Park, Coombes Valley, Consall Hall Gardens, Consall Nature Park, Blackbrook Zoo, Kinglsey Bird & Falconry Centre, Cotton College, Hawksmoor Nature Reserve and Dimmingsdale. These are not subject to concept statements but are identified as having scope for change or acting as a focus for activities. Although Consall Hall Gardens is identified as an "other" opportunity it is subject to a concept statement due to the sensitivity of the site.

Map 6.6 Strategy Map



### 6.8.7 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Designation

**6.8.7.1** The Council will support AONB designation recognising the positive contribution this can make to the area. The Council will work with Natural England and local partners to identify the most appropriate way forward to recognise the importance and value of the area at a national level.

### 6.8.8 Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership (CVLLP)

**6.8.8.1** The Churnet Valley Living Landscape is 190km<sup>2</sup> of England; bordered to the north by the Peak District National Park, to the south and west by the Churnet watershed and to the east by the River Dove floodplain.

**6.8.8.2** The Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership consists of a wide range of organisations; including District and County Councils, National Statutory Bodies, Environmental and Historical NGOs and community initiated Association. Over the previous ten years these organisations have worked alone and in changing partners to protect and enhance the Churnet Valley. In 2009 the initial fifteen came together to undertake a Living Landscape Partnership Project.

**6.8.8.3** During the development phase the Partners, supported by four Steering Groups; one for each of the Heritage Lottery Partnership Programmes, researched projects and undertook community consultations. Projects were discussed and interested parties consulted, as a result, the CVLLP Landscape Conservation Action plan lays out a set of works and activities which the partnership believes will deliver the most valuable protective and celebratory activities practicable. In all there are twenty five projects, with a total value in excess of £3m, to be undertaken by 2016. All of these projects are linked and, although clearly related to one Heritage Lottery Programme, offer benefits and added value to each other. Where Access is the core of a project, it is access to or at a place of heritage importance, there are opportunities for the community to participate in the work being undertaken and training (either short course or part of an accredited training programme) in heritage skills can be gained.

**6.8.8.4** The Partnership and the community have become galvanised around the Heritage Lottery funded element of this LCAP but it is hoped by all participants, that this work is just the beginning. <sup>(6)</sup>

#### ***Vision Statement***

**6.8.8.5** *The Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership (CVLLP) aims to conserve, enhance and celebrate the heritage of an area of high landscape value and rare, often overlooked, industrial significance on the edge of the Staffordshire Peak District. Our vision, shared by nineteen partners representing a breadth of local interests and local people, is that through co-operative action across the community we will:*

- ***Maximise the opportunities to work with and improve the strong built and natural heritage characteristics of the landscape;***
- ***Take community involvement with and pride in our heritage to new levels of engagement***

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6 CVLLP (2013)

- ***Increase the recognition of the landscape's contribution to England's history, particularly its currently under-appreciated role in the Industrial Revolution;***
- ***Make access to and understanding of our human heritage, the varied natural assets and the interactions between them more readily available to a wider audience.<sup>(7)</sup>***



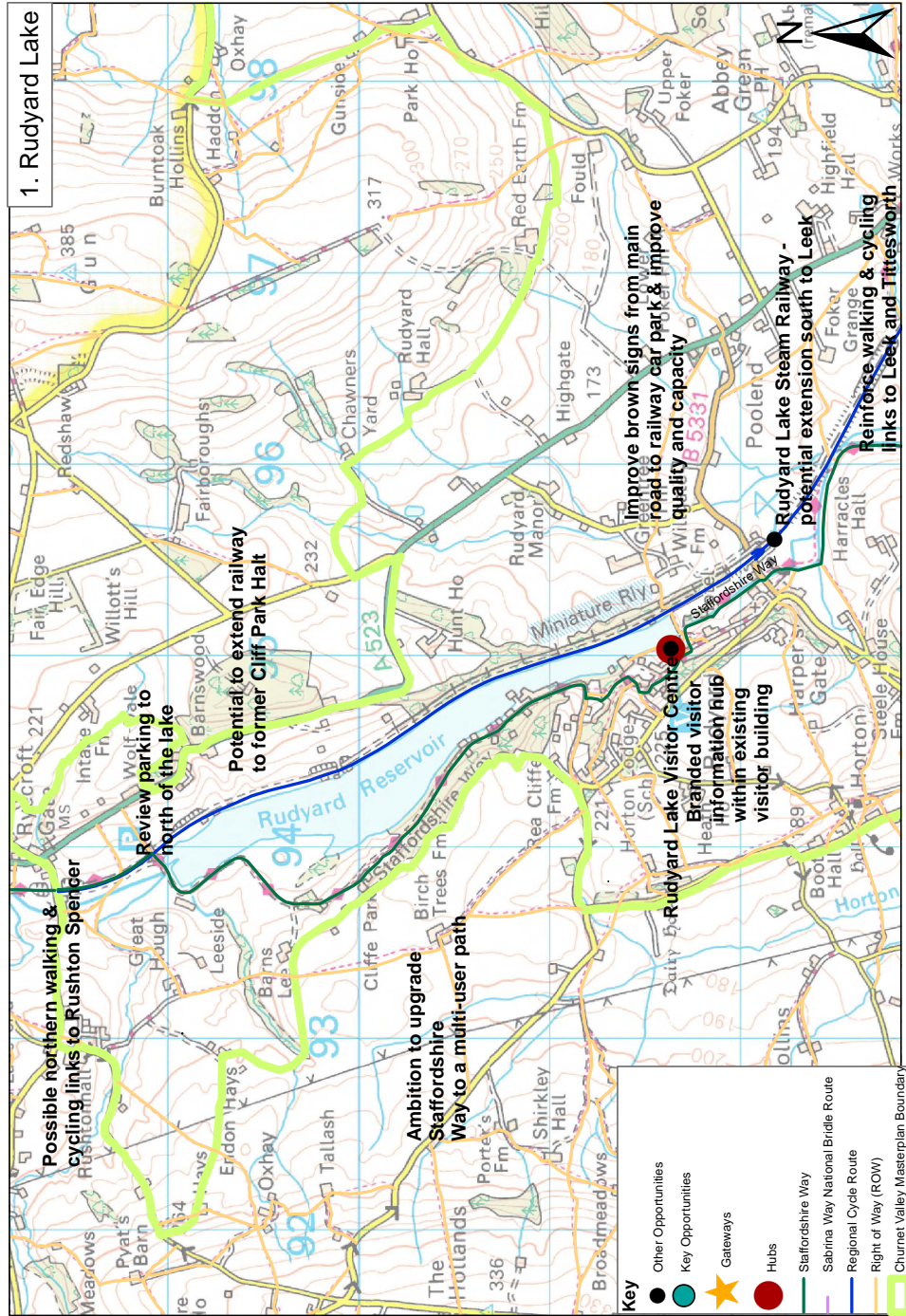
## Character Areas



## 7 Character Areas

7.1 Rudyard Lake Character Area

Map 7.1 Rudyard Lake Character Area



## 7.1.1 Role

**7.1.1.1** This area acts as a key recreational hub in the north of the Churnet Valley which is dominated by the lake which lends itself to a range of leisure and recreational activities for countrysiders and families. This serves a wide area to the north of the County and into Cheshire with potential for stronger links to Leek via the greenway and cycling. Rudyard Lake is identified as a hub and the Rudyard Lake Steam Railway is identified as a minor opportunity site.

## 7.1.2 Key Activities

- Water based activities – sailing/boating, angling
- Family activities - boating, Rudyard Lake Steam Railway, activity centre
- Heritage - Rudyard Lake, visitor centre, boathouse
- Community/educational facilities – activity centre/café, visitor centre, boathouse,
- Countryside activities – walking (Lakeside walks), cycling (greenway), wildlife, horse riding (horses are not allowed on the section of the path between Rudyard Station and Cliffe Park)
- Green initiatives - boathouse

## 7.1.3 Key Actions

- Minimal further development - retaining and enhancing unique character of Rudyard Lake; development within Rudyard in line with the Core Strategy, support for existing facilities and attractions.
- Reinforce walking and cycling links to Leek and Tittesworth (existing Pedal Peak route), cycle hire... possible links to Rushton Spencer
- Potential to enhance opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- Ambition that the Staffordshire Way is upgraded to a multi-user path including potential to enhance the canal feeder in parts.
- Further green initiatives
- Improve brown signs from main road, and from Leek to railway car park and improve quality of car park and capacity.
- Tie in local public houses/ hotels etc with Environmental Quality Mark
- Work with Rudyard Lake Trust and Rudyard Lake Steam Railway to provide/ enhance visitor information points.
- Potential to enhance existing tourist attractions - extension of Rudyard Lake Steam Railway to north and south
- Review parking and vehicular access to the north of the lake.
- Introduce branded visitor information within existing lakeside Visitor Centre and at the Railway Car Park (arrival point).
- Preserve, enhance and better reveal the areas built heritage and social history. In recognition of the significance of the built heritage a Conservation Area will be designated.

### 7.1.4 Rudyard Lake Hub and Opportunity Site

Managed by Trust on a long lease from the Canals and Rivers Trust, with an operating company alongside. Leek to Rushton greenway owned and managed by Staffordshire County Council, who lease land to Rudyard Lake Steam Railway which operate as a limited company. First major cluster of visitor activity/ experience travelling south from the Cheshire Peaks:

- Visitor and Activity Centre with toilets
- Main car park, with existing signage
- Lakeside Steam Railway with Station Café
- Boat hire and boat launch facilities
- Lakeside/ woodland walks (5 miles), covered by current SMDC leaflet
- Picnic facilities
- Café on site
- Planning permission for cycle hire, with established marked cycle route to Leek
- Fishing
- Bird and Wildlife Watching
- Adventure Play Area
- Seasonal boat trips.
- Sailability Boathouse

#### Connections

- By A523 to Macclesfield and Leek
- To Tittesworth by bicycle using Pedal Peak District (2 routes via Tittesworth and Leek) not signed but mapped with GPS download
- Greenway and (SCC) maintained cycle route into Leek on former railway line.

#### Possible Improvements

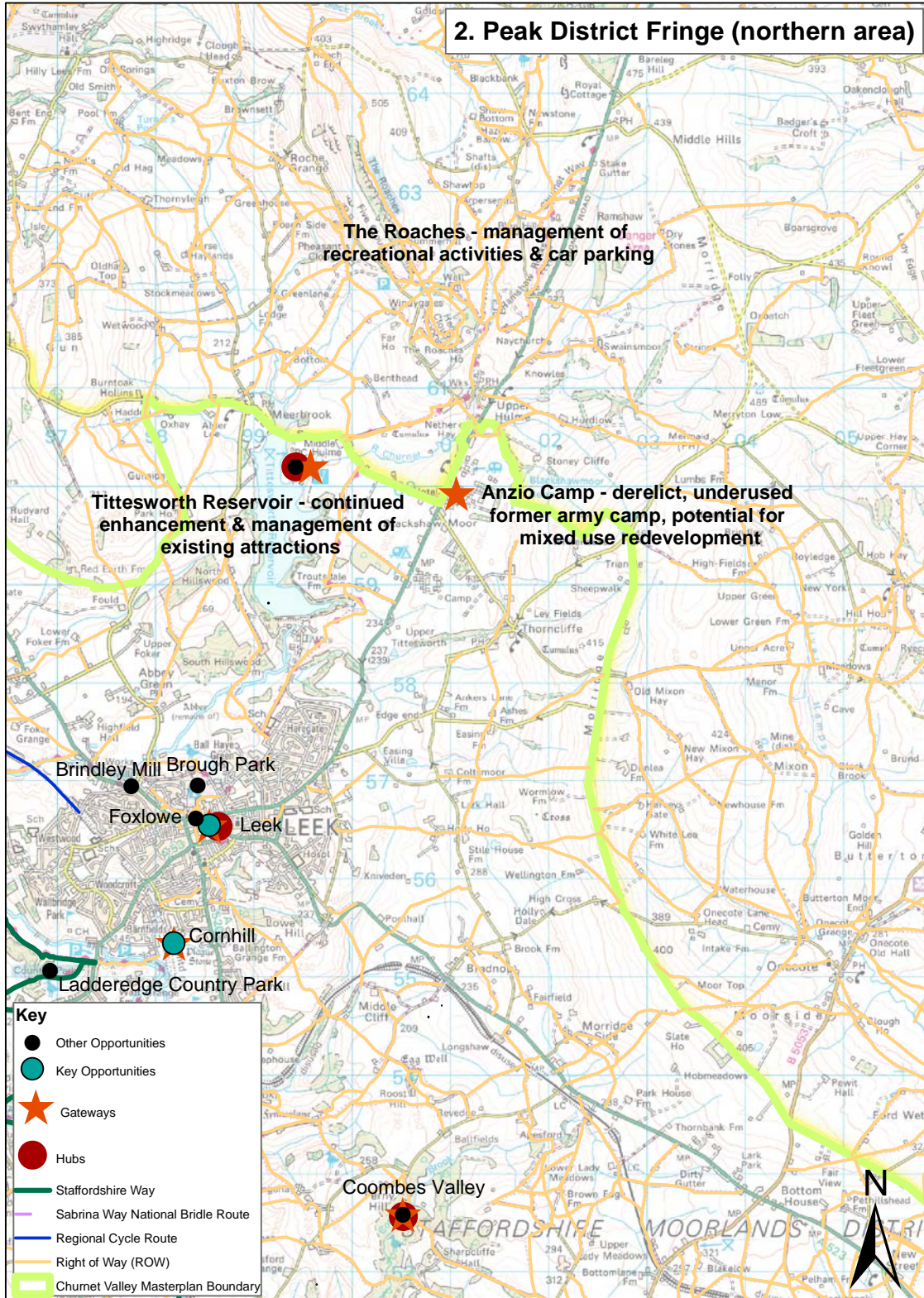
- Enhance brown signs from A523
- Formalise car park, with better surface and marked bays, introduce parking charges to fund ongoing investment and management of the area, and develop overflow parking adjacent to the current car park for peak pressures.
- Refresh walk leaflet with wider visitor information (digitise) and installation of waymarker posts (CVLLP Footpath Audit)
- Better promotion of Greenway to Leek (distance and walk/cycle times)
- Opportunities for Rudyard Lake Hotel - possibly Taste of Staffordshire
- Extend railway to north by approximately a mile and south to Leek.
- Make stronger links with Staffordshire Way and connections north via Rushton Spencer and into Cheshire Peak District (SCC Official Guide and Rushton to Timbersbrook Loop north of CVMP area)

### 7.1.5 Rudyard Lake Steam Railway Opportunity Site

The Rudyard Lake Steam Railway is a minimum gauge railway which runs for 1.5 miles along track bed of the former North Staffordshire Railway line from car park north. Potential to enhance existing facilities at the railway and to extend north to the former Cliff Park Halt and south to Leek.

## 7.2 Peak District Fringe Character Area

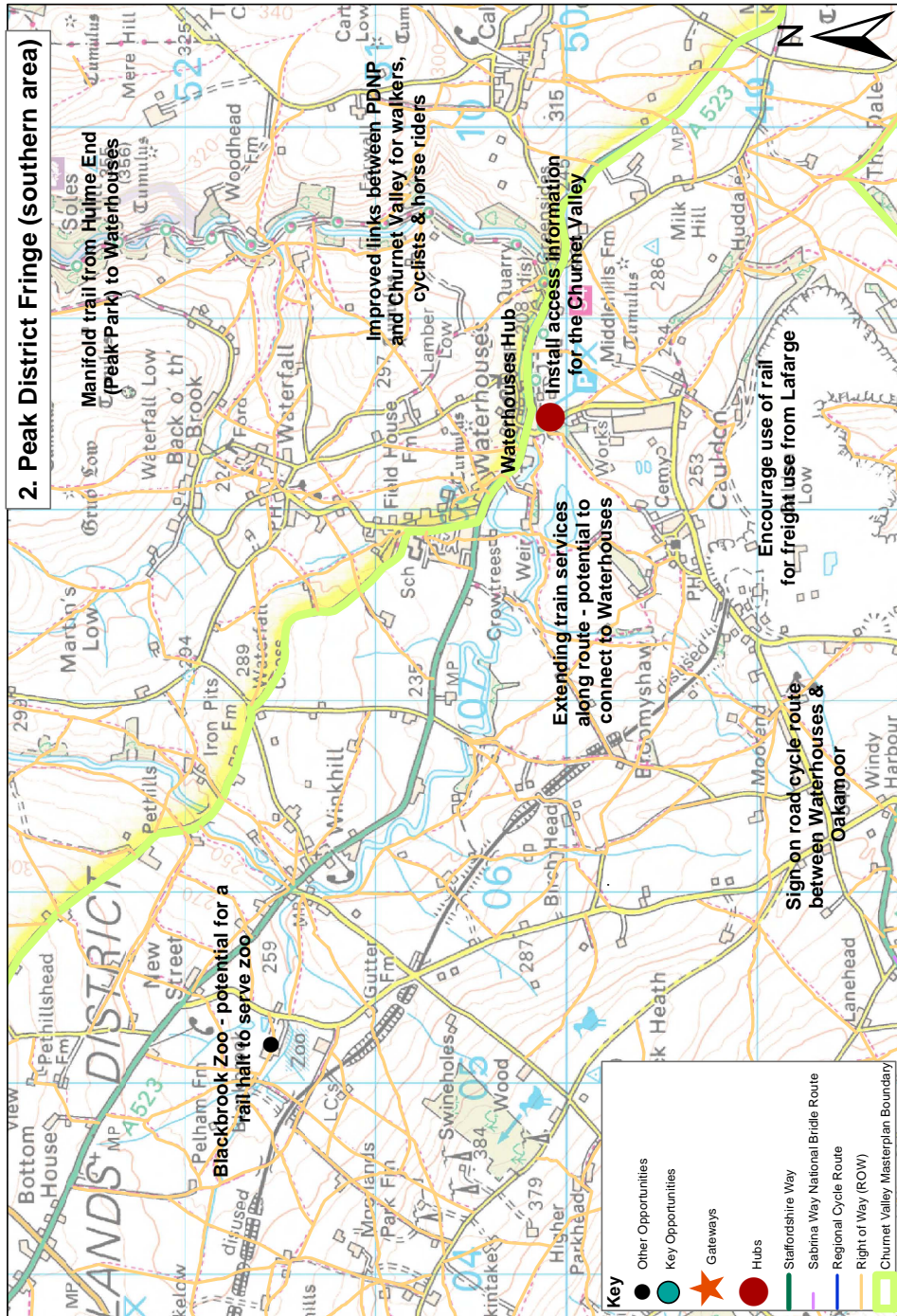
Map 7.2 Peak District Fringe (northern area)



Scale 1:24,000

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Map 7.3 Peak District Fringe (southern area)



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Scale 1:24,000



## 7.2.1 Role

**7.2.1.1** This area provides a gateway between the Peak District National Park and Churnet Valley and there is a significant opportunity to provide improved connectivity between the two areas. Anzio Camp also provides an opportunity to act as a gateway from the Peak District National Park due to its proximity to the National Park. Hubs within and beyond this area include Tittesworth Reservoir, Waterhouses Cycle Hire and Hulme End. This distinctive limestone landscape includes several large quarries and highly significant species rich grassland SSSIs and SBIs. Quarrying is a major activity around Caldon Lowe.

## 7.2.2 Key Activities

- Outdoor sports - climbing (Roaches)
- Countryside activities – walking, cycling, horse riding, wildlife (established route with Manifold Trail as National Cycle Route 54 extending down to Alton)
- Family activities – Tittesworth Reservoir (Peak Pursuits -including water sports)

## 7.2.3 Key Actions

- Mixed use development at Anzio Camp in line with the Core Strategy
- Minimal development elsewhere which must respond to the landscape character of the area. The Peak District National Park has a landscape strategy and action plan which should be consulted. Development within settlements in line with the Core Strategy.
- There may be future potential to set up a park and ride scheme to link Tittesworth, Anzio Camp and the Roaches which could reduce private car use into the Peak Park.
- Extending passenger train services and CVSR long route to Waterhouses – potential for halt to serve Blackbrook Zoo
- Encourage use of rail for freight use from Lafarge
- Improved links between Peak District National Park and Churnet Valley for walkers, cyclists and horse riders
- Within this area there is a commitment to improving connectivity however this must not harm the valued characteristics people have come to enjoy. Issues of connectivity need to consider transport loads and the appropriateness of directing people on to specific routes.
- Continued enhancement and management of existing attractions – The Roaches/Tittesworth, Blackbrook Zoo
- Install access information for the Churnet Valley
- Sign cycle route (on road) between Waterhouses and Oakamoor linking Tissington, via Manifold to Denstone route.
- Involve local pubs in Taste of Staffordshire scheme
- Work with County Council to implement a long term strategy for mitigation, conservation and enhancement of the grassland resource and for mitigation of landscape impacts of quarrying.

## 7.2.4 Tittesworth Reservoir Hub and Opportunity Site

Owned and managed by Severn Trent Water, key for access to The Roaches and Peak District landscape. A potential first stop for visitors travelling from Buxton just off the A53 within the Peak District fringe, but within the masterplan area:

- Visitor Centre with toilets (good opening hours)
- Walking (5 mile and 1.5 mile accessible route with mobility buggy hire)
- Leek to Peak (SMDC) walk published
- Restaurant and Lakeside Kiosk
- Children's Play Area
- Water sports (via Peak Pursuits)
- Picnic Area
- Bird and wildlife watching
- Seasonal events
- Three Horse Shoes Public House (Taste of Staffordshire) and Tea Rooms close by
- Camping/ caravan sites and youth hostel in close proximity, plus clusters of self catering cottages

#### **Connections**

- By A53 Buxton and Leek
- To Rudyard by bicycle using Pedal Peak District (2 routes via Rudyard and Leek) not signed but mapped with GPS download
- To Leek by quiet lanes (Leek to Peak walk - SMDC links you to Haregate)
- To camping and caravan sites and youth hostel by foot and cycle.

#### **Possible Improvements**

- Enhance brown signs
- On site dispersal information boards
- Pedal Peak District Routes not picked up by SCC Cycle Map linking Rudyard with Tittesworth and Leek
- Better promotion of quiet route to Leek (existing SMDC Walk Leaflet published 2006) with signage from Haregate to Town Centre (and vice versa)
- Leek to Peak footpath improvements identified by CVLLP Footpath Audit
- Merit for cycle hire (e bikes) at the Visitor Centre

### **7.2.5 Waterhouses Hub**

Site managed by Peak District National Park Authority, at bottom of Manifold Track:

- Good parking, space for 90 cars
- Toilets and space for picnic
- Private Cycle Hire (opening times limited)
- Well signed off main road
- On national cycle route 54 (but north of Churnet Valley off-road, route south via roads)

#### **Possible Improvements**

- Install access information for CV

- Sign cycle route (on-road) between Waterhouses and Oakamoor linking Tissington, via Manifold to Denton route.
- Possible M&CR Station/ Halt on the Cauldon Lowe loop
- Involve local pubs in Taste of Staffordshire scheme

### 7.2.6 Hulme End Hub

Hulme End Visitor Centre is located at the end of the Manifold track in the Peak District National Park. There are public toilets, refreshments and a picnic site. There is car parking available at both ends of the track.

### 7.2.7 Anzio Camp Opportunity Site

Anzio Camp is a derelict, underused former army camp, potential for mixed use redevelopment. Potential to act as a gateway from the Peak Park due to its proximity to the Park, providing for mixed use development including tourism and leisure uses. Any scheme in this location needs to pay close regard to the setting of the National Park in terms of design and landscaping.

### 7.2.8 The Roaches Opportunity Site

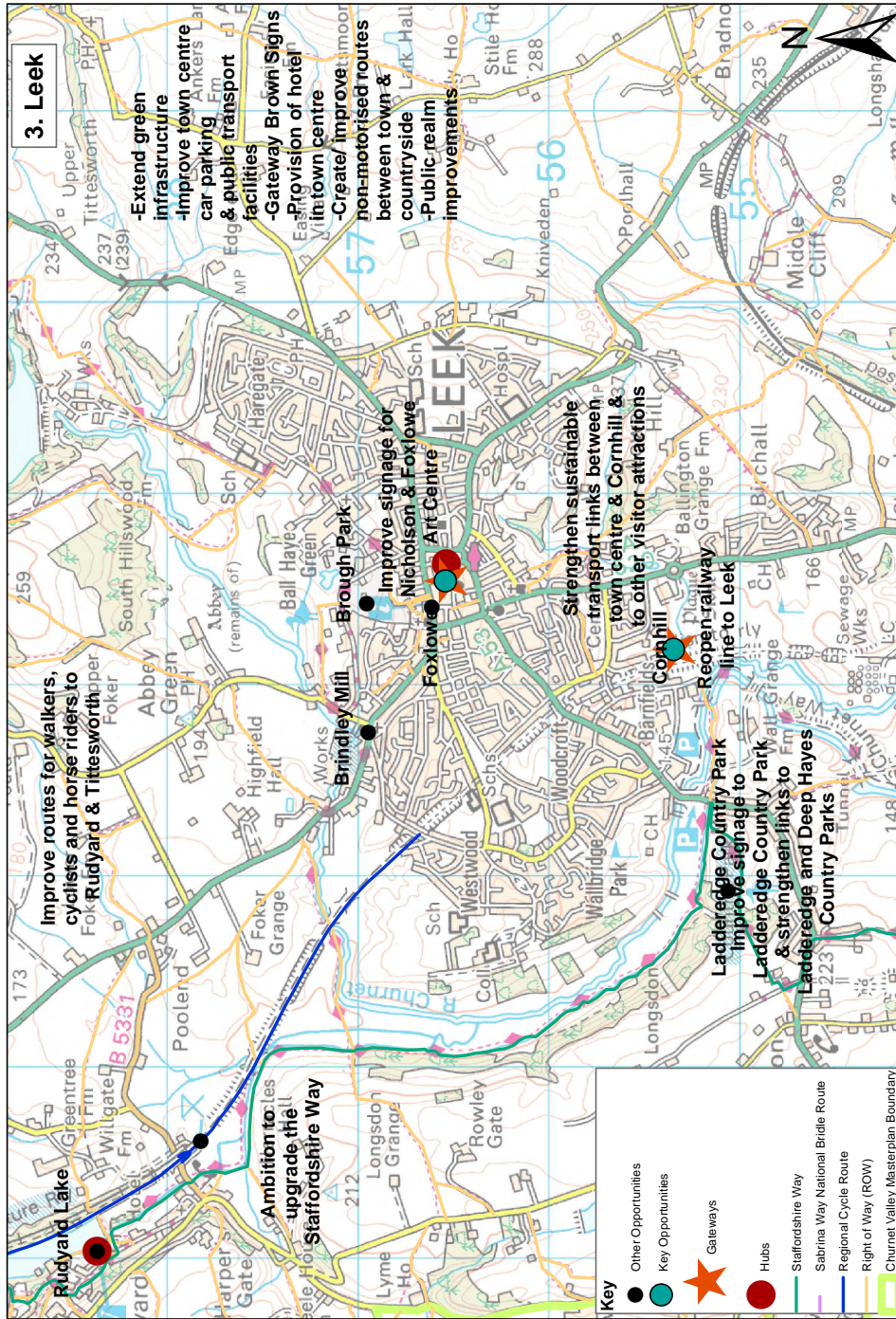
The Roaches is an existing area of high landscape value, popular for walking and climbing, management of recreational activities and car parking. The area has minimal parking facilities therefore any opportunities to increase visitor numbers need to be aimed at sustainable transport access which could include improved cycling facilities and, park and ride.

### 7.2.9 Blackbrook Zoo Opportunity Site

Blackbrook Zoo is an existing zoological park where there are opportunities to enhance the attraction. There is also the possibility to extend passenger service along route to Waterhouses with potential for a halt to serve Blackbrook Zoo.

7.3 Leek Character Area

Map 7.4 Leek Character Area



### 7.3.1 Role

**7.3.1.1** Leek has a key role as market town for a wide catchment area, particularly to the north of the District. It is a significant gateway into the Churnet Valley and the Peak District National Park from the north and west. Leek offers a unique tourist offer based on heritage, independent shops and market and as a base for exploring the Churnet Valley and Peak District National Park. Cornhill is a major development opportunity to provide a significant tourist hub to complement the town centre with links to the railway and canal and broadening the tourist appeal of the town - potential to accommodate facilities and attractions not suited to other parts of Churnet Valley. There is scope for improvement of Leek as a visitor destination providing an important opportunity for job creation and support for the local economy. Leek town centre is the subject of a separate Masterplan ([www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/sm/council-services/area-action-plans/leek-town-centre-masterplan](http://www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/sm/council-services/area-action-plans/leek-town-centre-masterplan)) and therefore the development principles are general principles for Leek in its role as a principal gateway to the Churnet Valley. Leek is to also act as a hub.

### 7.3.2 Key Activities

- Shopping including specialist shopping such as antiques and crafts. Markets (specialist markets - fine foods, antiques)
- Museums and art galleries including Brindley Mill and Nicholson Museum and Art Gallery
- Heritage - Arts and Crafts movement
- Entertainment Events - Arts Festival etc, Foxlowe Centre (craft, gallery, cinema), Leek Show, Food and Drink Festivals
- Recreation - Leisure Centre, Brough Park, Birchall Playing Fields

### 7.3.3 Key Actions

- Development in line with the Leek Area Strategy in the Core Strategy
- Strengthen and reinforce role of town centre as principal service and retailing centre for the District in line with the Leek Town Centre Masterplan which identifies key development opportunity sites
- Improve town centre parking and public transport facilities
- Development focused on Cornhill in line with Concept Statement
- Re-opening of rail line to Leek and development of canal gateway
- Provision of hotel accommodation in the town centre
- Provision of entertainment/cultural venue in the town centre – Foxlowe Arts Centre and other potential sites
- Extend network of off-road paths for walkers, cyclists and horse riders with links to Rudyard and Tittesworth to the north.
- Public realm improvements and visitor facilities/attractions in Leek town centre.
- Supporting and promoting distinctive, independent shopping facilities such as antiques, home and crafts
- Strengthen sustainable transport links between town centre and Cornhill and to other visitor attractions in the Churnet Valley
- Conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets
- Improve the catering offer including ensuring that they are more orientated to visitors, get more establishments accredited with Taste of Staffordshire and/ or Environmental Quality Mark.
- Extend green infrastructure with access to green space within town and to surrounding countryside - enhance role of Brough Park

- Strengthen links to country parks – Ladderedge and Deep Hayes
- Create / improve non-motorised routes between town and countryside
- Ambition that the Staffordshire Way is upgraded to a multi-user path
- Footpath improvements identified by CVLLP Footpath Audit for three published routes.
- New signature events such as Leek Food and Drink Festival.
- Improved accommodation stock.

### 7.3.4 Leek Hub and Gateway

Leek has a major role to play as a hub and gateway. It is the main visitor town in the Masterplan area, acting as a key gateway for visitors from the northwest and northeast.

- Very strong independent shopping offer supported by Totally Locally Leek
- Established markets, including specialist markets and Sunday Supplement
- Foxlowe Arts Centre as a visitor hub within town, café, gallery and event space
- Nicholson Museum and Art Gallery with strong exhibition and event programme
- Established seasonable events, Arts Festival, Christmas etc
- Historic Walking Tour of Leek, Ale Trail and further self-guided trails planned
- Main Moorlands TIC
- Bus station and principal exchange for services through the District
- Existing walking leaflets (Leek Landscapes, Longsdon via Ladderedge and Leek to Peak) produced by SMDC
- Ladderedge Country Park on the SW edge of town with existing parking (the Longsdon Walks published by SMDC)
- Deep Hayes Country Park to south of Leek near to Cheddleton with existing parking and toilets.

#### Connections

- By A523 Rudyard (north) and Ashbourne (south), A53 Tittesworth (and Peak District), A520 to Cheddleton, Cheadle and A53 to Stoke.
- Greenway cycle track to Rudyard
- Quiet Lane route to Tittesworth via Haregate

#### Possible Improvements

- Gateway Brown Signs
- Improved signing for Nicholson Museum (parking on foot) and Foxlowe Art Centre
- Improved connection to Cornhill and proposed railway station, canal basin, etc
- Better signage to Ladderedge Country Park on SW edge of town (road and walking route)
- Secure cycle storage to encourage links with Rudyard via green route, could be linked to new cycle hire venue (e.g. Foxlowe Arts Centre)

### 7.3.5 Cornhill Opportunity Site

#### Cornhill Concept Statement

##### Overview

- Cornhill is located in the northern part of the Churnet Valley. It occupies an important site on the edge of Leek at the head of the Caldon Canal and Leek - Stoke railway line.
- Potential to act as a significant gateway into the Churnet Valley.
- The emerging Core Strategy identifies that employment, tourism and leisure uses may be suitable for this site and that any development shall make provision for a link between the A520 and A53 to the south of the town and links to the canal and Churnet Valley Railway.
- The Cornhill Regeneration Area has been a focus for the Council for a number of years. Part of the area is in Council ownership and is allocated in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan for employment use. The Council is working with landowners in the area in order to further progress the project.

##### Constraints

- Limited available access
- Ecology
- Multiple ownerships
- Landscape
- Distance/ weak linkages to town centre
- Part in Flood Zone

##### Opportunities

- Existing employment
- Edge of settlement
- Heritage of town
- Potential for extension of canal and railway, plus restoration of Leekbrook Signal Box (CVLLP Scheme)
- Potential for link between A53 and A520

##### Development Strategy

- Creation of employment and leisure development linking Leek with the canal and railway.
- Zones are identified for different uses on the Concept Plan. Zones 1 and 4 are identified as potentially suitable for commercial/ residential uses, Zone 2 identified as a tourist hub and Zone 3 is identified as a marina. An indicative railway station location is also shown on the Concept Plan. Consideration should be given to the Biodiversity Alert Site in Zone 1 in accordance with the development principles.
- Appropriate uses:
  - Employment – offices, light industrial
  - Tourism – accommodation, tourist-related retail

- Leisure
- Residential

### **General Development Principles**

- Should not undermine the role, attractiveness and viability of town centre or its visitor appeal – strengthen linkages into the town
- Make the most of the areas assets including the Caldon Canal, Leek to Stoke railway line and significant tree coverage to the south of the site which could help to screen future development.
- Development proposals should achieve a scheme which is commercially viable and deliverable taking account of site constraints, local markets and other available funding sources.
- Take a holistic and comprehensive approach to development of the site ensuring that any future development complements the overall strategic approach to development in the Churnet Valley.

### **Environmental Enhancement**

- Enhance the environment of the area and make better use of underutilised land.

### **Accessibility and Connectivity**

- Provide an opportunity to improve access for the wider area whilst opening up the site for development through provision of a link road if appropriate
- Utilise potential of canal to full advantage
- Improve transport links into the town
- Reopen rail line for passenger services
- Make provision for a railway station and canal basin and associated car parking and create physical links between these.
- Any development should create physical linkages and sightlines between the on-site development, canal, railway and through sustainable transport links to the town centre.
- Seek opportunities to create walking and cycling routes between the site and Ladderedge Country Park and Birchall Playing Fields.

### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- Secure high quality design which responds to the landscape character of the area and the physical constraints of the site.
- Ensure that significant views are safeguarded through the appropriate siting of development.
- Ensure that development does not detract from the existing attractive southern gateway to Leek.

### **Economic Considerations**

- Generate and support job creation.

### **Ecology**

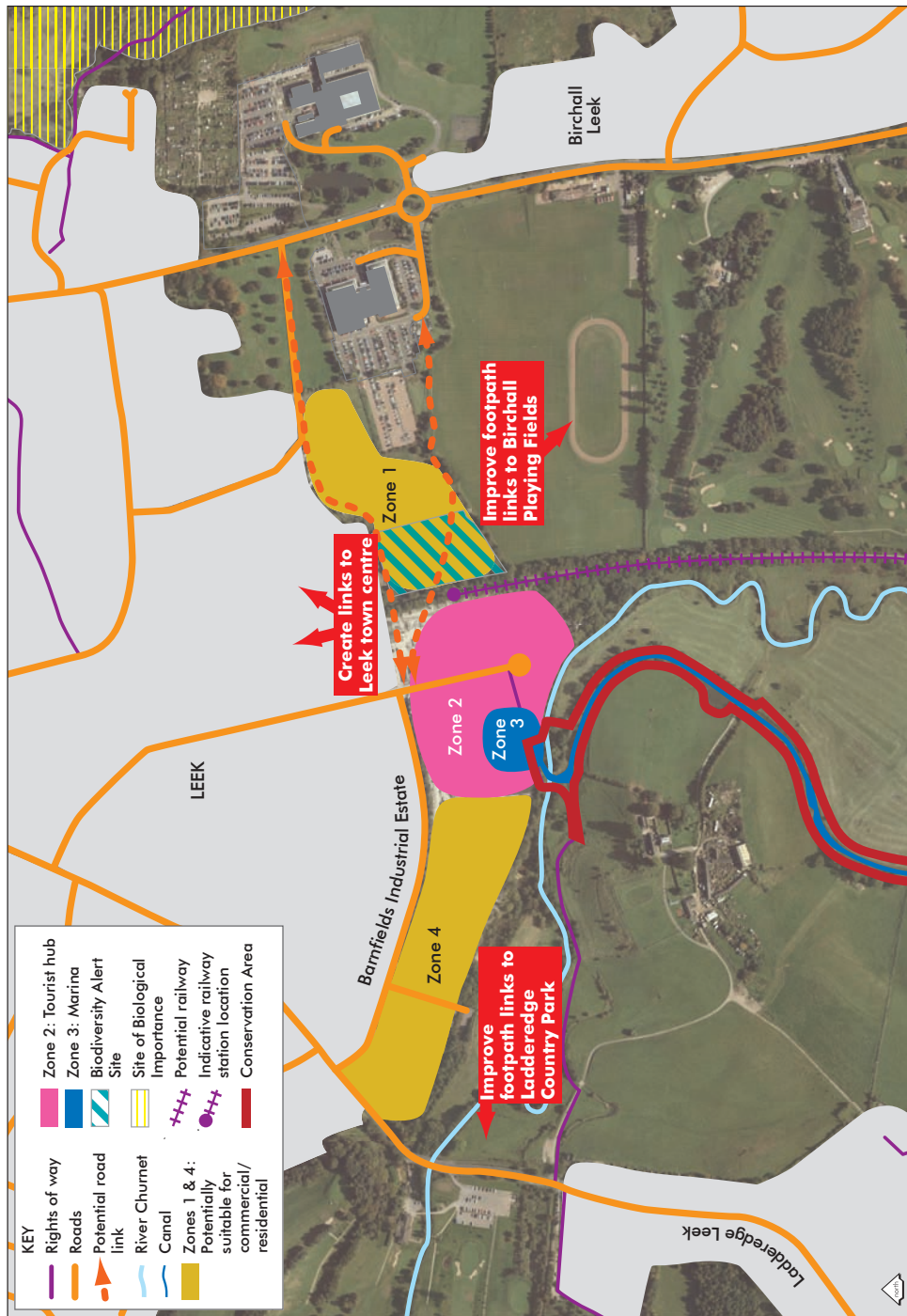


- Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the management of land for nature conservation and the enjoyment of areas of wildlife and geological interest while ensuring that any potential impacts of development on biodiversity and geodiversity are appropriately mitigated including, if necessary, off-site compensation

**Sustainable Development**

- Ensure that where feasible renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are included within projects for new development.
- Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the sustainable management and use of surface water.

Figure 7.1 Cornhill Concept Plan



Picture 7.1 Artist Impression of Cornhill



**7.3.5.1** Picture 7.1 is an artist impression showing what Cornhill marina area could potentially look like. This is only intended to provide ideas for the potential development of the area and any scheme would need to be subject to detailed planning.

### 7.3.6 Brindley Mill Opportunity Site

Brindley Mill is an existing tourist attraction which is located on the River Churnet in Leek. It includes a museum. There are opportunities for enhancement.

### 7.3.7 Ladderedge Country Park Opportunity Site

Ladderedge Country Park is a Staffordshire Moorlands District Council managed country park. There are a number of signed walks of varying lengths and interpretation boards. There are no toilet and refreshment facilities. There are potential opportunities to improve linkages between the country park and Leek and to create linkages to Cornhill for walking and cycling.

### 7.3.8 Foxlowe Arts Centre

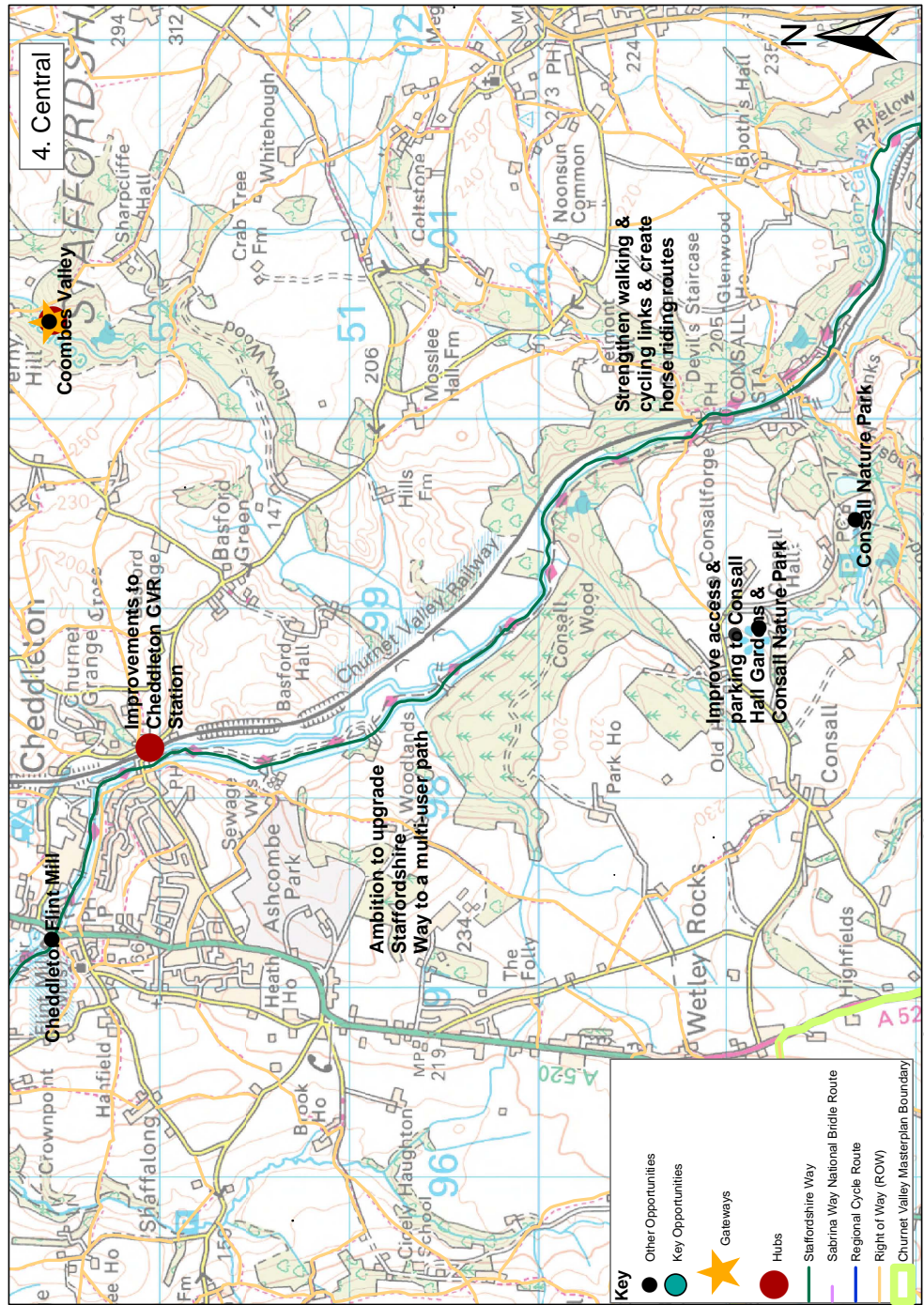
The Foxlowe Arts Centre includes a café bar, cinema, gallery and performance area. There are opportunities for cycling racks to be provided at this venue and for it to act as a place to find out information about the Churnet Valley.

### 7.3.9 Brough Park

Brough Park provides a usable green space with a band stand.

7.4 Central Character Area

Map 7.5 Central Character Area



## 7.4.1 Role

**7.4.1.1** This is an area of high landscape value with more limited access and less intensive recreational use. It is more suited to countryside activities and minimal change. It has a low-key role of linking other activities and destinations. Within this area Cheddleton CVR Station and Deep Hayes Country Park are identified as hubs. A Concept Statement has been prepared for Consall Hall Gardens which will include a set of development principles.

## 7.4.2 Key Activities

- Countryside recreation – walking, cycling, horse riding, wildlife (Coombes Valley RSPB Reserve, Consall Nature Park)
- Family activities – CV Railway (main base at Cheddleton), Caldon Canal (boating, walking, cycling), Consall Hall Gardens
- Heritage – Cheddleton Flint Mill, railway centre, Consall Hall Gardens, Consall Forge
- Canalside walks and links to local reserves (although not signed)
- 2.5 mile walk from Consall via Kingsley (SMDC Churnet Country leaflet)
- Black Lion pub (real ale champion)
- Nature park, woodland walks and events

## 7.4.3 Key Actions

- Only minimal development – conversion of existing buildings, development within settlements in line with Core Strategy, sensitive development to support/maintain existing facilities
- Limited enabling development at Consall Hall Gardens in line with Concept Statement
- Strengthen walking and cycling links and create horse riding routes
- Ambition that the Staffordshire Way is upgraded to a multi-user path
- Improve access and parking to Consall Hall Gardens and Consall Nature Park
- Black Lion pub - potentially Taste of Staffordshire
- Improvements to Cheddleton CVR Station

## 7.4.4 Coombes Valley RSPB Hub and Opportunity Site

Coombes Valley is located a short distance from Bradnop. The site has a small information centre, toilets and picnic area. The information centre is staffed daily during the period April to September and is the starting point for a programme of events/ guided walks. There are short and long trails that explore the valley. The site has two Public Rights of Way which will be connected through the heart of the reserve in 2013. A number of view points give views across the valley to the Peak District. There is an opportunity to make more of the site as a visitor hub and an opportunity for it to act as a gateway to the Churnet Valley from the Peak Park. The site is owned and managed by the RSPB.

- Limited brown signs from the A523 near the Apesford Lane turning
- Parking (charge for non RSPB members)

### Connections

- Very close to the A523 and approximately 10 minutes drive from Leek

#### **Possible Improvements**

- Improved Brown Signage from Leek and Cheddleton
- Improved visitor infrastructure
- Improved interpretation through the site
- Better promotion of existing SMDC walk route

### **7.4.5 Consall Nature Park Opportunity Site**

The site is located a short distance from Consall and provides a visitor centre, picnic area and public toilets. There are walks of varying lengths around the site. The site is owned and managed by Staffordshire County Council.

### **7.4.6 Cheddleton CVR Station Hub**

Owned and operated by the Churnet Valley Railway. It includes a Victorian railway station building, picnic area and toilet facilities.

- Loco Shed and Goods Yard
- NSRC Museum (recently refurbished)
- Picnic Site
- Ample Parking (with overflow)
- Walk via Canal to Flint Mill, Cheddleton Village (Village Walk), Tea Rooms, Black Lion and Red Lion public houses (existing village leaflet current and up to date).
- Boat Inn Public House on canal side, with towpath walk to Cheddleton Flint Mill

#### **Possible Improvements**

- CVR investing in new Tea Room at the station
- CVLLP is investing in towpath improvements between Cheddleton Station and Flint Mill
- Work with three pubs and tea room to embrace Taste of Staffordshire
- Visitor Information and dispersal at the Railway Station
- Reinforce Canal-side route to Deep Hayes Country Park
- Canal towpath to Cheddleton Flint Mill down to be upgraded by CVLLP

### **7.4.7 Deep Hayes Country Park Hub and Opportunity Site**

Staffordshire County Council owned and run visitor centre, country park, car park and public toilets. There are a number of walks starting from the visitor centre and close by are the canal and disused railway. There is the potential to enhance its role and make more of the site as a visitor hub.

## 7.4.8 Consall Hall Gardens Opportunity Site

### Concept Statement

#### Overview

- Consall Hall Gardens is an existing visitor attraction. The gardens are open to the public on certain days in the spring and summer months. There is a tea room and tours of the garden are available. A wedding and conference venue runs from the site.
- Expressed interest in providing high quality self catering lodges in part of the garden and possibly a caravan and campsite nearby to help support management and upkeep of gardens.
- Any development would only be undertaken when required in future to enable the maintenance of the gardens.

#### Constraints

- Green Belt
- Access and local road network/ signage
- Landscape/ecology – partly SBI and adjacent to SSSI and Local Nature Reserve

#### Opportunities

- Gardens safeguarded as a visitor attraction
- Existing visitor facilities could act as a hub for the area alongside neighbouring Consall Nature Park
- Proximity to Consall Nature Park, Staffordshire Way, canal and River Churnet (visitor cluster with links to linear greenway)
- Links to CV Railway

#### Development Strategy

- Enabling development to support and maintain future of Consall Hall Gardens
- Appropriate development:
  - Limited development of low impact holiday lodges (maximum of 15) within gardens
  - Enhanced visitor offer – improved facilities, access, parking arrangements
  - Other suitable commercial uses of a modest scale only where necessary to secure long term viability of gardens without damaging unacceptably the essence of the Churnet Valley e.g. wedding venue and conference facilities

#### General Development Principles



- Deliver high quality and environmentally sensitive viable development that contributes to increasing overnight stays within the area.
- Improve the financial viability of Consall Hall Gardens in order to secure the retention, maintenance and enhancement of the parkland landscape.

#### **Accessibility and Transport**

- Explore opportunities to create links between the site, the adjacent Consall Nature Park, the Staffordshire Way and Consall Forge (Consall Railway Station and the Caldon Canal).
- Improved access into site - ensure that any associated road improvements are in-keeping with the character of the area and these should not create intrusive urban feature.

#### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- Ensure that visual impact of any future development is minimised and that it is assimilated into the landscape through appropriate siting of development and by reinforcing associated vegetation or establishing new planting blocks.
- Ensure that development is in-keeping with the woodland/ natural landscape in which it is to be located.
- Ensure that any new planting takes account of the form and character of the historic parkland and the form of its setting as part of a comprehensive landscape Masterplan for the gardens
- Ensure that where development within the existing woodland is proposed that careful consideration is had for the future management of the woodland and the potential wind blow as a result of tree removal.
- Ensure that any future development proposals give consideration to visibility from the surrounding area, and the character of the park and any development will be required to be low key and should be of a nature, character and style that is sympathetic to the character of the area.
- Development proposals to be subject to a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and potential impacts on landscape need to be mitigated through sensitive design and a landscape strategy.

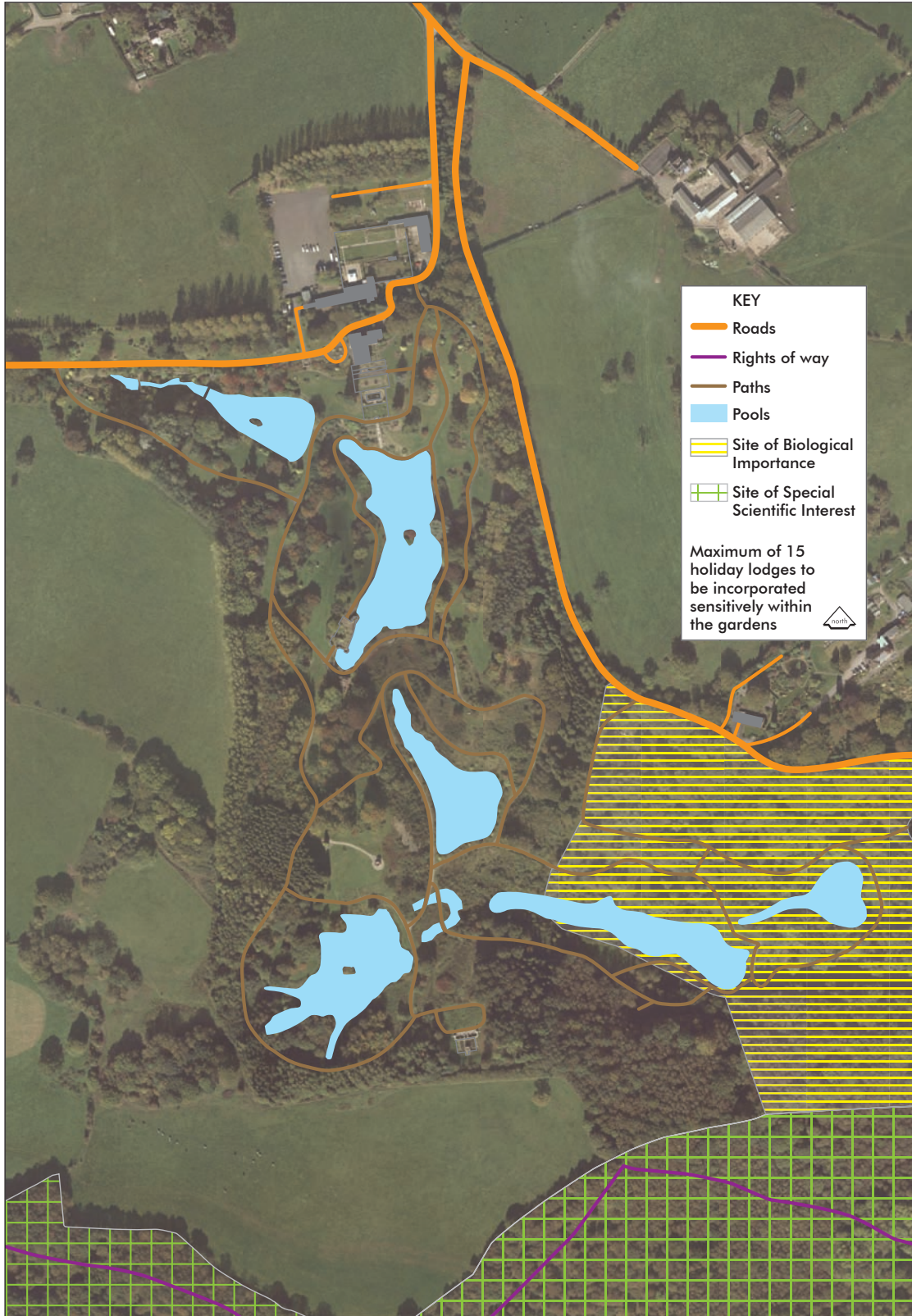
#### **Ecology**

- Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the management and enhancement of land for nature conservation and the enjoyment of wildlife and geological interest whilst ensuring that any potential impacts of development on biodiversity or geodiversity are appropriately mitigated.

#### **Sustainable Development**

- Ensure that where feasible renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are included within projects for new development
- Encourage the attraction to go for Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark, and look at green energy option to power the lodges i.e. Central wood fuel boiler.
- Encourage tea room to become Taste of Staffordshire accredited and promote local produce.
- Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the sustainable management and use of surface water.

Figure 7.2 Concept Plan of Consall Hall Gardens



**Picture 7.2 Artist Impression of Consall Hall Gardens**



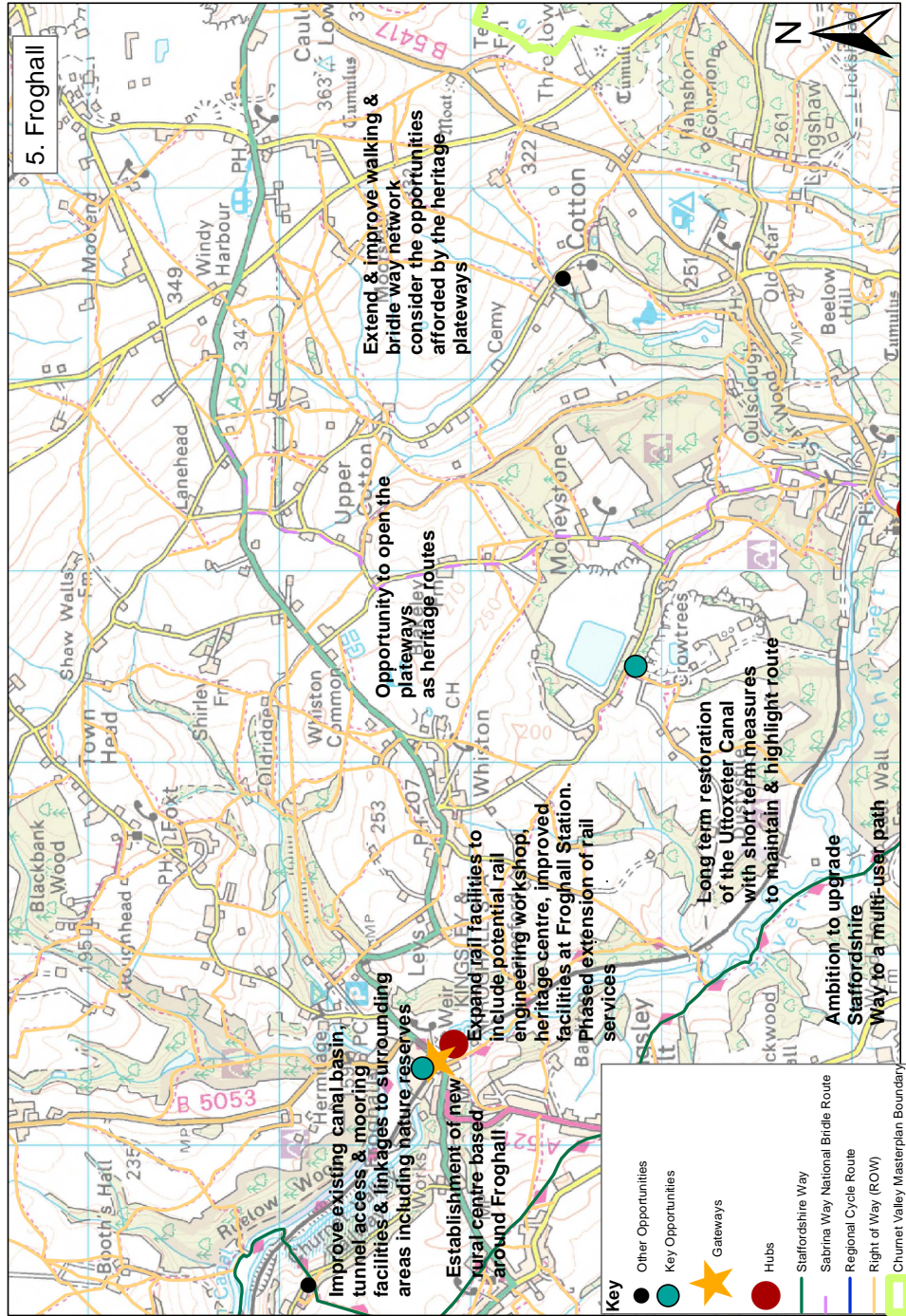
**7.4.8.1** Picture 7.2 is an artist impression showing what Consall Hall Gardens holiday lodge development could look like. This is only intended to provide ideas and any scheme would need to be subject to detailed planning.

#### **7.4.9 Cheddleton Flint Mill Opportunity Site**

Cheddleton Flint Mill is a Grade II\* Listed mill building with a museum. There is an opportunity to better promote this visitor attraction.

7.5 Frogghall Character Area

Map 7.6 Frogghall Character Area



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Scale 1:24,000

### 7.5.1 Role

**7.5.1.1** This is a key strategic area in the Churnet Valley with the A52, rail and canal running through the area. It acts as a hub and gateway to the Churnet Valley. Bolton Copperworks is a major underused site which detracts from the quality of the Churnet Valley. There is an opportunity for sensitive redevelopment to create a new rural centre and landmark site providing a mix of uses to support the rural economy and local communities. It is recognised that on viability grounds it will be necessary to incorporate value generating uses. There are likely to be impacts on landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets which must be managed and there are highway constraints. Due to the nature of the Bolton Copperworks site and the significant constraints identified there cannot be over reliance on this site being delivered. There is also an opportunity to create a destination for Churnet Valley Railway users and an opportunity for job creation and diversification. This area and Bolton Copperworks site in particular is a key element in delivering the vision for the Churnet Valley. A Concept Statement has been prepared for Bolton Copperworks which includes a set of development principles. Kingsley/ Froghall CVR Station is also identified as a hub.

### 7.5.2 Key Activities

- Industrial archaeology/heritage – Froghall Wharf, Bolton Copperworks site, canal, railway, plateways
- Employment – Bolton Copperworks site
- Limited enabling residential
- Tourist facilities and heritage features including canals, Churnet Valley Railway, plateways
- Outdoor recreation - boating, canoing, walking, cycling and horse riding

### 7.5.3 Key Actions

- Establish new rural centre based around Froghall – sustainable mixed use regeneration in line with Concept Statement
- Minimal development elsewhere – conversion of existing buildings, development within settlements in line with Core Strategy, sensitive development to support/maintain existing facilities
- Long term restoration of Uttoxeter Canal with short term measures to maintain and highlight route
- Extend and improve walking and bridle way network - consider the opportunities afforded by the heritage plateways
- Ambition that the Staffordshire Way is upgraded to a multi-user path
- Improve existing canal basin, tunnel access and mooring facilities and linkages to surrounding areas including nature reserves
- Expand rail facilities to include potential rail engineering workshop, heritage centre, improved facilities at Froghall Station and increased car parking. Phased extension of rail services to east of Froghall.
- Secure future of SCC Visitor Centre at Froghall Wharf
- Proposed Conservation Area for Foxt in recognition of its special historic character which needs to be preserved and enhanced.

### 7.5.4 Kingsley/ Froghall CVR Station Hub

Owned and operated by Churnet Valley Railway. It forms the current southern terminus of the railway. Facilities in the area include:

- Railway Tea Room
- Ample parking
- Short walk to Froghall Wharf and Caldon Canal (SCC Picnic Area leaflet and SMDC Caldon Canal, former Uttoxeter Canal, Mineral Line and 1802 Plateway ... Visitor Centre (limited opening)
- Railway Inn public house a short walk
- Kingsley Bird & Falconry close (but not in walking distance)
- Bolton Copperworks opportunity site - see Concept Statement

#### Connections

- Off the A52 Stoke to Ashbourne

#### Possible Improvements

- Visitor information and dispersal at the station
- Clarity on parking capacity, charges and CVR approach being a hub
- Walking/cycling route between station and Froghall basin
- Opening times and options for SCC Visitor Centre at Froghall Basin
- Refresh walking maps and interpretation, include Plateway Trail
- Churnet Riverside (land to east of A52) Visitor Centre, Craft/ Retail units/ Cafe/gallery, workshop, heritage centre etc as advocated in the concept statement for Bolton Copperworks
- Improving connectivity for walkers, cyclists, horse riders to wider network.

### 7.5.5 Bolton Copperworks Opportunity Site

#### Concept Statement

##### Overview

- The Core Strategy identifies a number of potentially suitable uses for the site including employment, residential, tourist-related retail and accommodation and leisure. It also requires that any development shall make provision for appropriate off-site highway improvements.
- Bolton Copperworks has been the subject of masterplanning work which is available on the Council's website [www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/churnetvalleymasterplan](http://www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/churnetvalleymasterplan). The outcome of this work included a set of principles for future development as well as a suggested final option for development of the site.

##### Constraints

- Poor ground conditions - significant unknown on-site contamination, flood zones

- Highway and access constraints
- Existing uses – scrap yard, engineering works
- Remote from services and facilities
- Sensitive landscape, areas of wildlife value
- Listed buildings
- Conservation Area

### **Opportunities**

- Strategic location within Churnet Valley
- Existing transport hub – road, rail and canal, rights of way, towpath
- Established businesses – Bolton Copperworks, other works, public house
- Attractive setting
- Existing heritage features – wharf, lime kilns, railway, canal, Bolton Copperworks, tramways
- Opportunity to incorporate features of the industrial heritage at the site into future redevelopment such as the chimney.

### **Development Strategy**

- Creation of a Rural Centre comprising of mixed use development.
- Appropriate uses:
  - employment – emphasis on small industrial/starter units, retention of existing businesses within site, green industry
  - residential – around 50 high quality units (may include extra care) but a need for flexibility due to the requirement for this to be sufficient to cross-subsidise other uses
  - provision of railway/canal heritage centre and workshops
  - provision of visitor/heritage/educational centre
  - small hotel (50 bed spaces)/pub/restaurant
  - craft/tourist-related retail uses
  - provision of outdoor activity centre
  - extended parking to serve railway and other uses
- Appropriate uses are indicative only – any development proposals should achieve a scheme which is commercially viable and deliverable taking account of site constraints, local markets and other available funding sources.
- The Concept Plan for Bolton Copperworks shows zones for different uses including:

#### **Zone 1 - Heritage railway**

Potentially suitable for heritage railway and canal heritage uses. Retention of the Bolton Copperworks chimney.

#### **Zone 2 - Employment**

Potentially suitable for 'green' employment use.

#### **Zone 3 - Potential residential**

Potentially suitable for residential use consideration needs to be given to impact on trees within this zone. Development must be sensitive to its setting. Relocation of employment uses into Zone 2.

#### **Zone 4 - Hotel**

Potentially suitable for a 50 bed space hotel. Development must be sensitive to its setting. There is an opportunity to make a feature of the potential canal route and to improve links to Froghall Wharf. Relocation of employment uses into Zone 2.

#### **Zone 5 - Listed farm complex in need of urgent and sensitive repair and re-use**

This is a zone of high sensitivity due to the Listed building within the zone, the derelict Cottage Farm/ Beech Tree House. Ideally suited to re-use as a farmhouse. May be some limited potential for re-use for craft/tourist related retail. Visitor parking should not be located in this area. There is an opportunity to improve links to Froghall Wharf.

#### **Zone 6 - Potential residential**

This is an area that is potentially suitable for residential. The eastern part of the zone is an area of sensitivity due to the adjacent SBI and ancient woodland. Consideration must be had for the biodiversity value of this area of the zone in line with the requirements of the development principles. There are rising contours and the presents of emergent vegetation between the hard-core surfaced area of car parking and the SBI edge on the eastern boundary. This has the appearance of semi-natural wild recolonisation. This area should be maintained and enhanced within any scheme and the opportunity to re-locate the overhead transmission lines should be considered as part of any development proposal.

#### **Zone 7 - Visitor/ heritage/ education centre and car parking**

This is an area for redevelopment with relocation of existing uses to Zone 2 including visitor, heritage, education centre and car parking. There also be potential for craft/ tourist related retail in this area. There is an opportunity to improve links between Zone 7 and Zones 5 and 6. Within this area there is a fine former industrial building, the significance and retention of this building should be explored.

#### **Zone 8 - Potential residential**

This is an area for redevelopment which is potentially suitable for residential use. Relocation of existing uses to Zone 2. Retention of the public house for community use.

#### **Zone 9 - Green space and Bolton Copperworks parking**

There is an opportunity to enhance the area around the retained employment including providing green space and car parking.

#### **General Development Principles**

- Take a comprehensive approach to development with the focus being on place-making at the village scale and any development must complement the overall approach to development taken in the Masterplan.



- Development must not detract from role, attractiveness and viability of other town centres
- Development proposals should be soundly based on a clear understanding of site constraints including issues of contamination.

#### **Accessibility and Transport**

- Highway improvements to junction of A52/B5053 and traffic calming measures along A52
- Investigation and remediation of contamination in any redevelopment areas by owner/developer prior to development
- Ensure that any road improvements within and to the surrounding area as a result of further developments are in-keeping with the character of the area and should not create intrusive urban features.
- Give careful consideration to the design of car parking. The surfacing and associated planting to screen such facilities should be of a suitable type that enables such facilities to be readily absorbed within the landscape character sub area.
- Utilise the opportunities the site affords for recreational activities such as cycling, walking and horse riding.
- Improve linkages between railway and canal

#### **Contamination and Environmental Enhancement**

- Secure appropriate remediation of previously developed land and improve the environmental quality of the area including environmental improvements to existing industrial buildings.
- Prior to development any contamination issues must be appropriately addressed through remediation.
- Rediscover the riverside through changes in use and environmental works.
- Maximise the existing and potential value of the canal as an environmental asset. This should include the removal of incongruous fencing to improve the visual appearance and the quality of the canal side environment.
- Secure environmental improvements to existing industrial buildings.

#### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- Ensure screening of the remaining industrial development. Any planting should reflect the natural species and mixes within the character sub area.
- Ensure that planting is of a nature that complements the informal wooded setting and formal planting should be discouraged.
- Take a flexible approach to green space and trees within the area and to ensure trees and green areas of value are retained, but accepting that there will be need to be some loss of green space and trees to deliver development. This would need to be compensated for through development proposals which should include high quality landscape treatment to help integrate them. Woodland character of the area must not be lost.

#### **Tourism and Leisure Activities**

- Act as a gateway and hub to the Churnet Valley including provision of car parking facilities for visitors and telling the story of the site and valley through interpretation and signage as well as a potential visitor hub providing facilities for visitors.
- Connect and strengthen the tourism assets of Froghall Wharf and the Caldon Canal and the heritage railway and the railway station at Froghall.
- Any development should not prejudice potential reinstatement of the route of the Uttoxeter Canal and provide short term measures such as interpretative boards and route clearance

### **Ecology**

- Any development will ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced and any unavoidable impacts will be minimized through mitigation – consider scope for setting aside heavily contaminated land to develop Open Mosaic Habitats.

### **Heritage**

- Reuse, conserve and enhance the heritage townscape across the site including seeking to retain significant features on site as part of any future development.
- Ensure development is in-keeping with the traditional building style of the local area and reflects the historic patterns of local, traditional settlement with reference to the sites historic character.
- Enhance railway related facilities on the core Bolton Copperworks site.

### **Sustainable Development**

- Focus on high quality sustainable design – green environmental theme
- Ensure that where feasible renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are included within projects for new development.
- Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the sustainable management and use of surface water.

### **Economic Considerations**

- Safeguard the existing Thomas Bolton operation on site.
- Promote more diverse jobs in Froghall through tourism and leisure.
- Support starter and small businesses

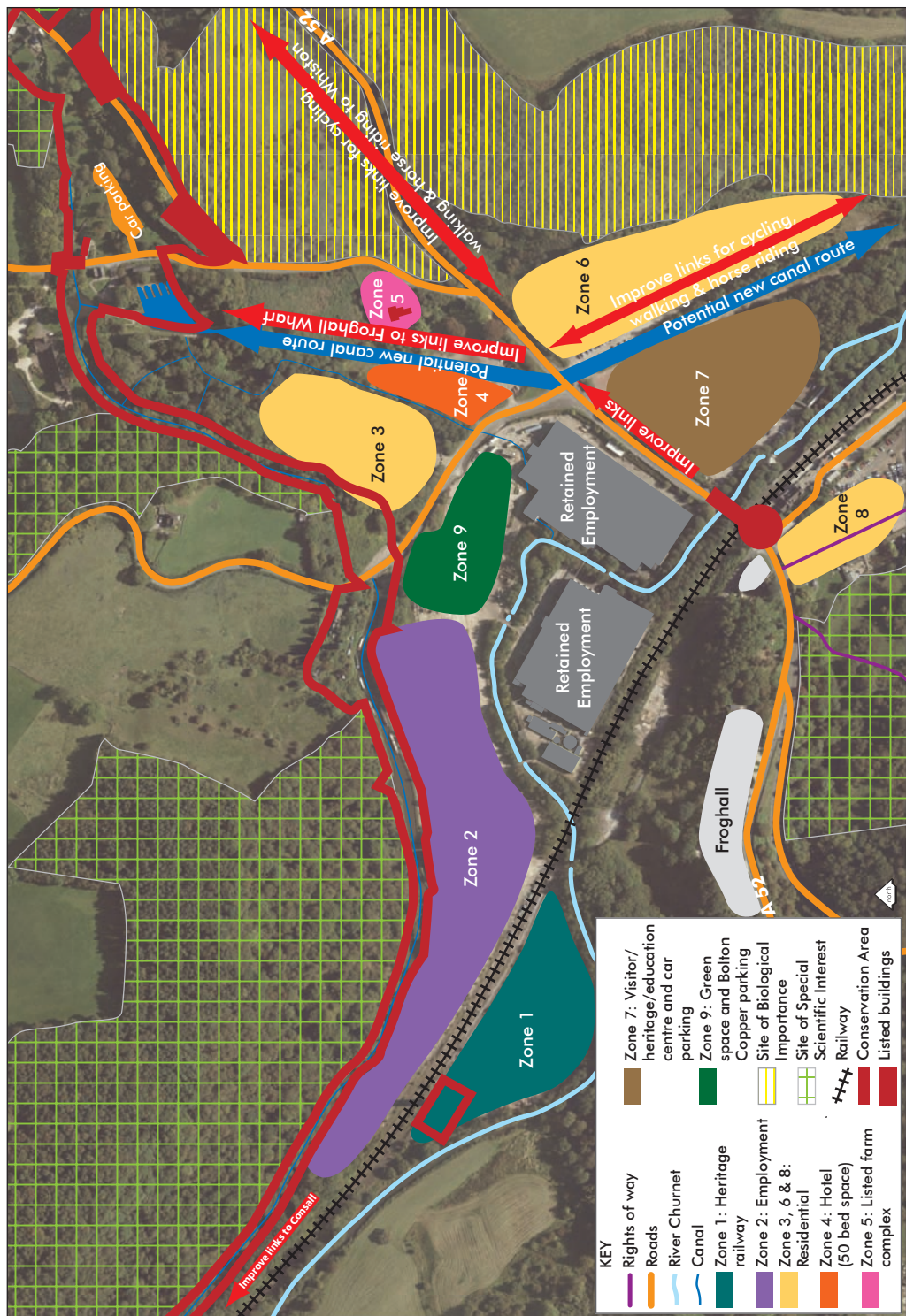
### **Flood Risk**

- Take a creative approach to flood risk and locating uses such as car parking, employment and visitor attractions within the flood zones to make most effective use of available land.

### **Green Infrastructure**

- Maximise green infrastructure opportunities.

Figure 7.3 Bolton Copperworks Concept Plan



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Picture 7.3 Bolton Copperworks Artist Impression



Picture 7.4 Bolton Copperworks Visitor Centre Artist Impression



**7.5.5.1** Pictures 7.3 and 7.4 are artist impressions showing what the visitor centre area of the Bolton Copperworks site (Zone 7) could potentially look like. This is only intended to provide ideas for the potential development of the area and any scheme would need to be subject to detailed planning.

### **7.5.6 Froghall Wharf Opportunity Site**

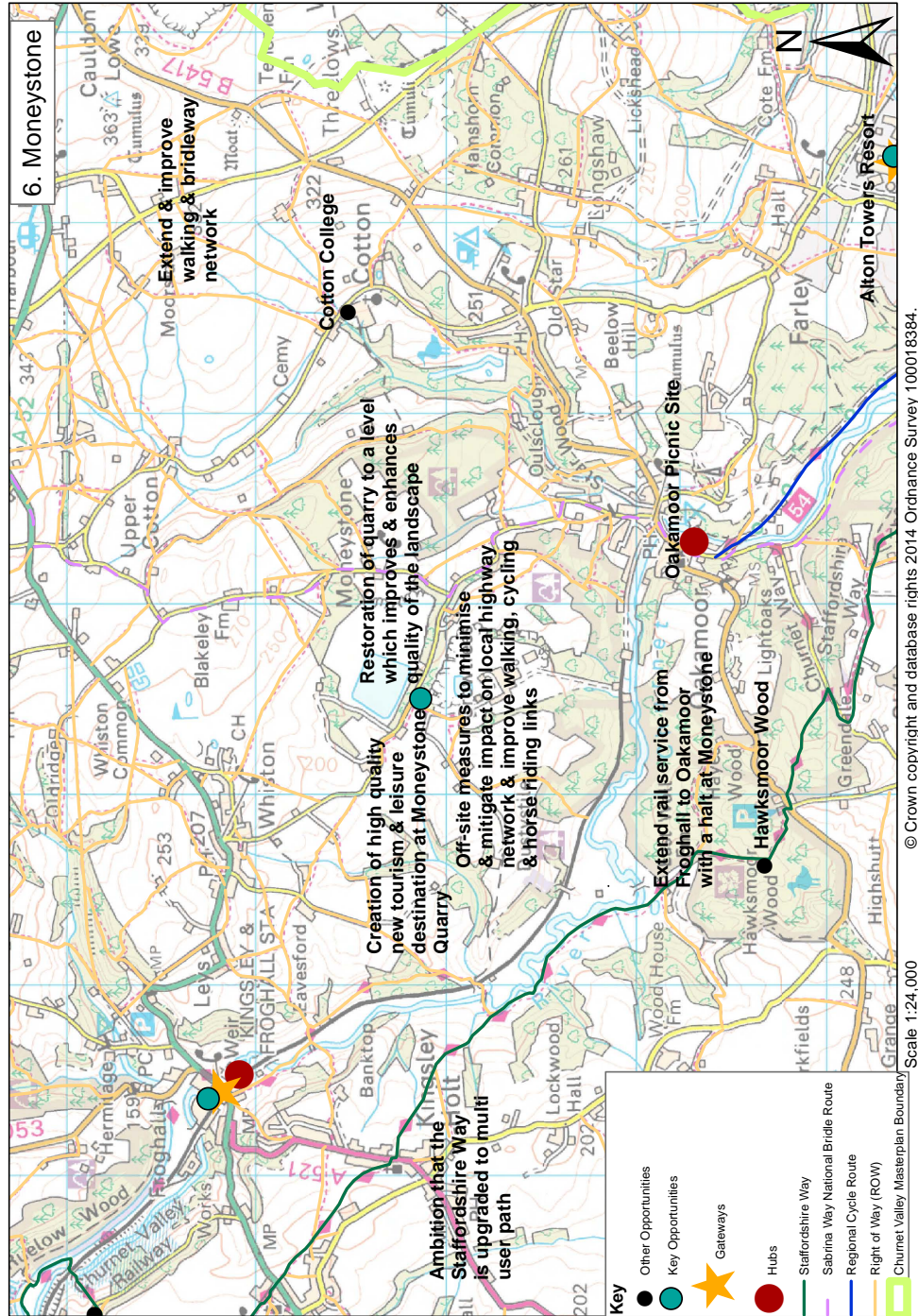
Lies at the head of the Caldon Canal comprising of canal wharf, visitor centre and picnic area with with restored lime kilns. Opportunities to enhance this area.

### **7.5.7 Kingsley Bird & Falconry Centre**

Kingsley Bird and Falconry Centre lies in the heart of the Churnet Valley. The centre is open to visitors as well as offering courses.

7.6 Moneystone Character Area

Map 7.7 Moneystone Character Area



## 7.6.1 Role

**7.6.1.1** This area is dominated by Moneystone Quarry, a major closed quarry site, which is subject to a restoration plan. The site has been identified for further consideration in the Masterplan due to it being a site where there is significant pressure for change. A private sector developer and operator proposes to develop a visitor resort at the site. The draft masterplan recognises there is the potential to enhance countryside, recreational and leisure opportunities and management of the area's biodiversity and to increase the visitor offer and accommodation in the valley through a new scheme of restoration and introduction of new activities. The sensitivity of the landscape, biodiversity, heritage and access issues are major factors and the key focus should be on conserving and enhancing the landscape and biodiversity of the area through sensitive leisure development of an appropriate scale. There is an emphasis on links to local communities, business and other attractions and activities. A Concept Statement has been prepared for Moneystone Quarry which includes a set of development principles. Oakamoor Picnic site is identified as a hub.

## 7.6.2 Key Activities

- Outdoor family recreation and leisure activities based around Moneystone Quarry
- Tourist accommodation and facilities at Moneystone Quarry and Oakamoor
- Community/educational facilities – activity centre/café, visitor centre at Moneystone Quarry
- Countryside activities – walking, cycling, wildlife, horse riding
- Improvement of visitor welcome at Oakamoor Village and create a basis for woodland walks in the area, including improving public houses in the village.

## 7.6.3 Key Actions

- Creation of high quality new tourism and leisure destination at Moneystone Quarry in line with Concept Statement. Minimal development elsewhere, conversion of existing buildings, development within settlements in line with the Core Strategy, sensitive development to support/ maintain existing facilities.
- Extend rail service from Froghall to Oakamoor with halt at Moneystone
- Extend and improve walking and bridle way network
- Restoration of quarry to a level which improves and enhances quality of the landscape and biodiversity of the area
- Off-site measures to minimise and mitigate impact on local highway network and improve walking, cycling and horse riding links
- Ambition that the Staffordshire Way is upgraded to a multi-user path
- Proposed Conservation Area for Oakamoor in recognition of its special historic character which needs to be preserved and enhanced.

## 7.6.4 Oakamoor Picnic Site Hub

Owned and managed by Staffordshire County Council

- Free car park, with good capacity and option for overflow parking
- Good toilet block, modern and clean, but footpath needs improvement
- Existing interpretation of local heritage in place with walk across the field into the village centre



- Three existing public houses in the village
- Poor signage to site and car park
- Existing Oakamoor and Whiston Circular Walk (SCC) starting from Oakamoor Picnic Site taking in Sutton's Wood, Hawksmoor Nature Reserve (NT), around back of Moneystone and through Cotton Dell Nature Reserve, plus (SCC) Picnic Site leaflet
- Existing Woods and Ways (SMDC) published walks with no major improvements identified by CVLLP Footpath Audit.

#### **Possible Improvements**

- Refresh heritage interpretation panels (some now deteriorating).
- Include Picnic Site/ Toilets etc on new Brown Sign, plus Woodland Walk against Cotton Dell Nature Reserve (SWT instruction is to park here and walk) plus directions to Dimmingsdale Woods and Ramblers Retreat (only Ramblers Retreat on current sign)
- Footpath improvements from car park to toilet block and across field to the village
- Explore the potential for horse riders to use part of the Oakamoor Picnic Site (north eastern side to reach the greenway from Oakamoor)
- Car Park sign enhancement
- Churnet Valley dispersal information in Car Park
- Review walking routes, existing leaflets and access to information (existing circular walk can be split down to promote walking routes to Cotton Dell NR and Hawksmoor NR)
- Towpath Trail of former Uttoxeter Canal - CVLLP Project.

### **7.6.5 Moneystone Quarry Opportunity Site**

#### **Concept Statement**

##### **Overview**

- Quarrying activity recently ceased at Moneystone Quarry.
- Condition 35 of the quarry permission (planning permission ref: SM.96/935) requires the restoration of the site within 2 years from the completion of working and for the management and aftercare of the restored site for a period of five years from the completion of its restoration. The new owners, Laver Leisure, submitted amendments to the approved Restoration Plan. Laver Leisure withdrew their submission in January 2014 and replaced it with a Revised Restoration Plan. This was approved by Staffordshire County Council on the 13 March 2014.
- Laver Leisure have also put forward draft proposals for an 'eco-resort' with outdoor recreational activities and quality holiday accommodation. They have undertaken masterplanning work for the site. Staffordshire County Council have confirmed that any afteruse(s) at the former quarry are matters for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to determine.
- The site represents an opportunity to create a high quality leisure venue to complement other recreational and leisure attractions and enhance the area but

needs to be of a scale which does not undermine the tranquility and character of this sensitive part of the Churnet Valley and other businesses.

### Constraints

- Remediation from past quarrying activities required
- Redundant on-site quarrying structures
- Areas of high wildlife value – SSSIs, SBI
- Local highway network
- Restoration plan approved by Staffordshire County Council
- Mineral consultation area between Oakamoor and Whiston:
  - Proposal 7 of the Minerals Local Plan is a saved allocation identifies it as an area of search for the winning and working of silica sand for use as a raw material at Moneystone processing plant only. Consideration needs to be had for the impact of any proposal to remove the Moneystone processing plant on any opportunity to implement this allocation.
  - Saved policy 5 of the Minerals Local Plan is relevant in the consideration of any future proposal this states: development within the Minerals Consultation Areas should not sterilise or seriously hinder the extraction of mineral deposits of economic value which are capable of being worked. Where the proposed development falls within the Mineral Consultation Areas and may have a significant impact upon mineral resources then the responsibility rests with the prospective developer to prove that the existence or otherwise, quantity and quality of the mineral prior to the determination of the planning application. It should be noted that the mineral safeguarding policy and the remaining mapping will be subject to review as part of the preparation of a new Minerals Local Plan but until such time as a new plan is adopted the Saved Policies version remains the Development Plan.
  - The Minerals Local Plan (saved policies 2007) Proposal 7 (inset Map 20) is a potential constraint.
- Potential issues of water resource availability

### Opportunities

- Reuse of existing quarry features
- Dramatic setting
- Proximity to Alton Towers and other tourist attractions
- Network of existing off-road paths
- Churnet Valley Railway
- Provision of significant local employment

### Development Strategy

- New leisure development based around restoration of the quarry
- May be the potential for a complementary renewable energy scheme on the site.
- Appropriate uses:
  - Holiday accommodation – low impact holiday lodges in Zones 1 and 2. Limited development in Zones 4 and 5. Maximum of 250 holiday lodges in total.

- Outdoor recreation facilities – including walking, cycling, horse riding and climbing
- Hub within Zone 1.
- Recreational lake to include non-motorised water based activities in Zone 3

The Concept Plan identifies a number of Zones for potential development. These are indicative and are as follows:

#### **Zone 1 - Quarry 1**

Low impact holiday lodge development, incorporating landscaping and biodiversity areas.

#### **Zone 2 - Quarry 2**

Low impact holiday lodge development, incorporating landscaping and biodiversity areas.

#### **Zone 3 - part of Quarry 3**

Recreational lake.

#### **Zone 4 - part of Quarry 3**

Limited sensitive development of holiday lodges to be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Consideration should be given to the impact on the SSSI of development. Any development should conserve and enhance the SSSI.

#### **Zone 5 - part of Quarry 2**

Limited sensitive development of holiday lodges to be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

#### **General Development Principles**

- Ensure that any future development accords with the overall strategic approach to development within the Churnet Valley.
- Ensure appropriate restoration of the quarry.
- Take a comprehensive approach to development.
- Must deliver economic, social and environmental benefits for area
- Restoration of the quarry unless a more beneficial alternative can be justified.

#### **Accessibility and Connectivity**

- Utilise the opportunities the site affords for outdoor recreational activities such as cycling, walking and horse riding and water based activities.
- Ensure development does not generate unacceptable volumes of traffic on existing road network and that major highway works are avoided
- Incorporate measures to create off road links to be used by cyclists, walkers and horse riders to reach other attractions.
- Appropriately address any significant demand for travel generated by development through complementary highway improvements of access routes.

- Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport to reach the site and once at the site to explore the surrounding area.
- Ensure that necessary road improvements associated with the expansion of the facility should be in-keeping with the character of the area and avoid creating intrusive features. Roads within the site should be of a scale and nature that are not intrusive to the landscape character and should minimise hedgerow and tree removal.
- Incorporate measures to dissuade visitors from driving to other attractions
- Ensure highway/junction improvements to support development subject to minimising environmental impact

### **Economic Considerations**

- Complement the role of other key facilities and attractions in the area.
- Lodge development should complement and not impact negatively on existing accommodation stock in the area.
- Encourage the creation of local jobs.

### **Sustainable Development**

- Creation of a high quality, sustainable environment which will promote environmental awareness – use of sustainable building techniques, low carbon, low impact development with on-site energy generation, green technology, eco-lodges
- Ensure new development is water efficient.
- Ensure that where feasible renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are included within projects for new development.

### **Community**

- Provide new community facilities which will help sustain local villages and businesses through promotion of local services, goods and attractions, according to local need

### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- Ensure that any development is in-keeping with the scale and nature of the landscape character of the three sub areas within which it is located.
- Ensure that any additional planting is of a nature that complements the informal wooded setting of the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys and relates to the existing woodland planting associated with the quarry. Woodland planting should aim to take on the form and character of the ancient and semi natural woodland which is typical of the landscape character type. This should avoid the introduction of incongruous woodland blocks within the landscape.
- Ensure that any future development is located in a way that does not impinge on the small scale landscape or the open, visible landscape and where they can be screened by existing vegetation or can be screened by appropriately located new planting.
- Ensure that any future development proposals give consideration to the openness and high visibility of areas outside of the core quarry and any development within

these locations, where it can be justified, will be required to be low key and should be of a nature, character and style that is intrinsic to the character of the area.

- Development proposals to be subject to a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and potential impacts on landscape need to be mitigated through sensitive design and a landscape strategy.

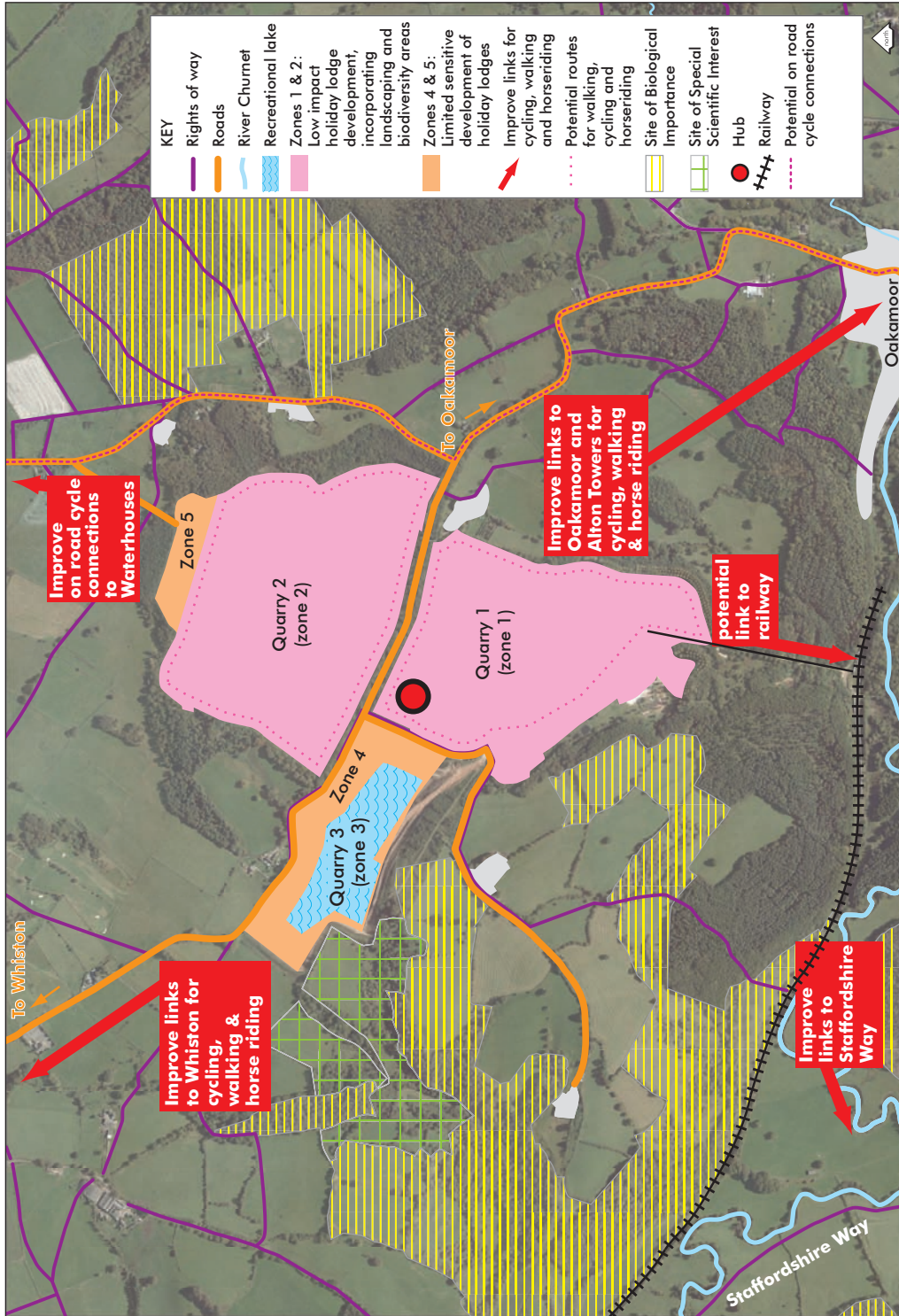
### **Ecology**

- Active conservation of the site – re-establishing habitats, measures to protect SSSI, woodland planting
- Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the management of land for nature conservation and the enjoyment of areas of wildlife and geological interest while ensuring that any potential impacts of development on biodiversity and geodiversity are appropriately mitigated including, if necessary, off-site compensation and enhancements are delivered where possible.
- Maintain the agreed management regime for the Whiston Eaves SSSI
- Ensure enhancement to biodiversity
- Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the sustainable management and use of surface water.

### **Tourism and Leisure Activities**

- Ensure a high quality, sustainable tourist offer
- Ensure provision of outdoor activity facilities – walking, cycling, horse riding, water sports, climbing etc.
- Expand off-road paths with existing networks for walkers, cyclists and horse riders
- Promote industrial heritage of site and educational opportunities

Figure 7.4 Moneystone Quarry Concept Plan



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Picture 7.5 Moneystone Quarry Artist Impression of part of Zone 2



**7.6.5.1** Picture 7.6 is an artist impression of what zone 2 of Moneystone Quarry could potentially look like. This is only intended to provide ideas for the potential development of the area and any scheme would need to be subject to detailed planning.



### **7.6.6 Cotton College Opportunity Site**

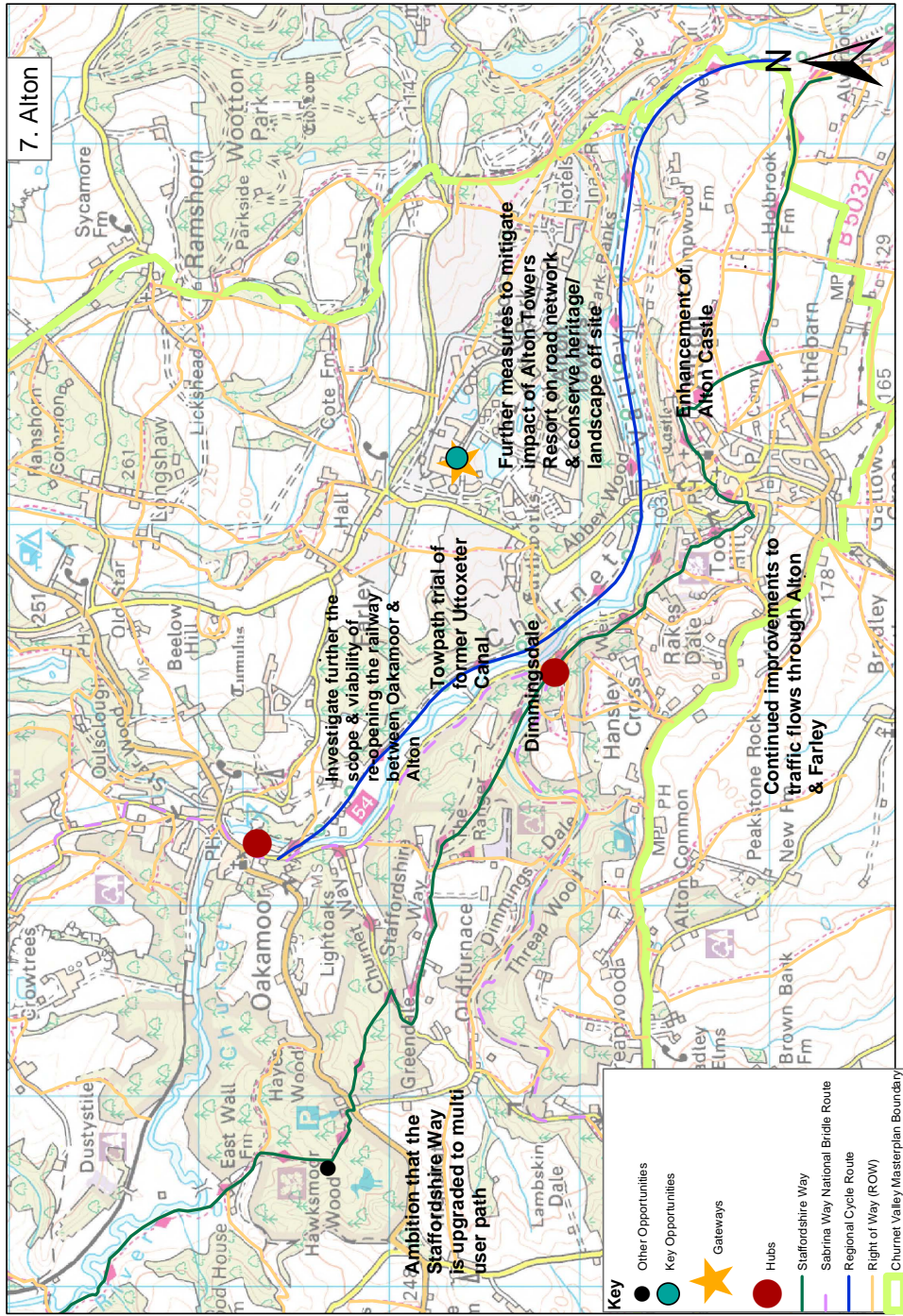
Cotton College is an eighteenth century country house, with alterations attributed to A.W. Pugin. It has been unused since 1987. There are a number of uses potentially suitable for the site including residential, leisure and employment uses in line with the existing Cotton College Development Brief.

### **7.6.7 Hawksmoor Nature Reserve Opportunity Site**

Hawksmoor Nature Reserve is a National Trust woodland just outside of Oakamoor. There is an opportunity to enhance its role as a visitor attraction.

7.7 Alton Character Area

Map 7.8 Alton Character Area



### 7.7.1 Role

**7.7.1.1** This is an area of high landscape value dominated by Alton Towers Resort. There are significant impacts arising from Alton Towers Resort on the area but it is also a significant generator of visitors to the area and employment. It is important to ensure continued support for Alton Towers Resort and investment in tourism, economy, transport infrastructure, heritage and landscape, maintaining Alton Towers Resort as a leading resort attraction. The area is under significant pressure from visitors and further development and there are conflicting interests in this area, which need to be carefully addressed through sensitive management. There will be continued investment by Alton Towers Resort in transport, woodland and heritage and the potential for improved connectivity to the wider area and longer stays at the resort. A concept Statement provides further guidance on development at Alton Towers Resort. Within and in close proximity of this area are the hubs of Dimmingsdale and Denstone Farm Shop.

### 7.7.2 Key Activities

- family activities – Alton Towers Resort
- countryside activities – walking, cycling, wildlife, Dimmingsdale
- heritage – Alton Towers and gardens, Alton Castle and village
- accommodation – Alton Towers, self-catering
- Denstone Farm Shop

### 7.7.3 Key Actions

- Continued sensitive expansion of Alton Towers Resort in line with Concept Statement. Minimal development elsewhere - conversion of existing buildings, development within settlements in line with Core Strategy, sensitive development to support/ maintain existing facilities.
- Further measures to mitigate impact of Alton Towers Resort on road network and conserve heritage/landscape of site in line with Alton Towers Resort Long Term Plan.
- Increase access to Alton Towers gardens
- Investigate further the scope and viability of re-opening railway line between Oakamoor and Alton including impact on wildlife and local amenity and potential conflicts with walkers, cyclists and horse riders and proposals to re-instate the canal
- Continued improvements to traffic flows through Alton and Farley
- Enhancement of Alton Castle
- Possible improvements linked to Denstone Farm shop include Churnet Valley access information point and map; support the Farm Shop to promote access to the Churnet Valley on their website and allow parking (need to review capacity)
- Sign Staffordshire Way and Cycle route to Alton (not already signed) and brown sign for Denstone Farm hop (parking, cycle route).
- Ambition that the Staffordshire Way is upgraded to a multi-user path
- Towpath trail of former Uttoxeter Canal CVLLP Project.

### 7.7.4 Dimmingsdale Hub and Opportunity Site

Forestry Commission owned car park. There may be opportunities to enhance this area and its role as a hub.

### 7.7.5 Denstone Farm Shop Hub

Outside Churnet Valley Masterplan area in East Staffordshire, good business in Taste of Staffordshire and offers gateway via old railway track to Alton and Oakamoor along SCC Cycle Route

- Across the road from the Staffordshire Way, with cycle route up into Alton/Dimmingsdale Wood
- Established Taste of Staffordshire member, good parking with café, and toilet facilities

#### Possible Improvements

- Churnet Valley Access information point and map
- Support for Denstone Farm Shop to promote access to the Churnet Valley on their website and allow parking (need to review capacity)
- Sign Staffordshire Way and Cycle Route to Alton (not already signed) and Brown Sign for Denstone Farm Shop (Parking, Cycle Route)
- Possible Cycle Hire Business development or Mobile Service delivering to this point for those wanting to hire
- Towpath trail of former Uttoxeter Canal CVLLP Project

### 7.7.6 Alton Towers Resort Opportunity Site

#### Concept Statement

##### Overview

- The Core Strategy supports the sensitive expansion of existing attractions including Alton Towers Resort. It requires that further development at Alton Towers is considered against guidance set out in this Masterplan.
- A Long Term Plan with supporting technical studies has been prepared by Alton Towers Resort. This sets out Alton Towers Resort's plans for the next 10 years. Alton Towers Resort undertook community consultation in connection with its Long Term Plan in summer 2009.
- The aims and objectives of the Long Term Plan are to:
  - increase/maximise overnight stays at the Resort
  - introduce some new major rides;
  - “refresh” the existing themed areas;
  - develop a year round destination, incorporating ‘all weather’ products;
  - Increase choice and extend the appeal of the resort beyond the core ‘theme park’ including developing evening entertainment options;
  - improving visitor circulation within the site;
  - provide entertainment for different groups of people and age profiles, for example family, teenagers and young children;
  - provide heritage investment and woodland management;

- implement car park improvements; and
- undertake transport investment in order to encourage non car modes, public transport and improved traffic management of the surrounding road network.

### **Constraints**

- Volume of traffic and impact on surrounding villages
- Noise and visual intrusion from rides
- Potential impact on heritage assets
- Includes 2 SBIs – Abbey Wood and Alton Park
- Alton Towers and many structures associated with the estate are Listed Buildings. The gardens are a Grade 1 Registered Historic Park and Garden.
- Iron Age Fort which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument - Bunbury Hill Fort

### **Opportunities**

- Major tourist attraction; that brings visitors to the District and County
- Safeguarding employment
- Improved range of accommodation in line with Staffordshire County Council's Tourism Strategy 2012-2014 which encourages overnight stays
- Management and enhancement of biodiversity
- Investment in traffic management measures
- Continued restoration, protection and enhancement of the site's heritage assets

### **Development Strategy**

The development strategy at Alton Towers resort includes the following:

- new (replacement) parking areas with enhanced landscaping, new entertainment areas, several new rides and continued investment in refreshing existing themed areas.
- There is potential to increase in overnight accommodation at the site by promoting increased use of the existing hotels, implementing the extant planning permission for the extension to the Alton Towers Hotel, and subject to demand, developing new accommodation. The latter is likely to be in the form of lodge/ campsite developments and new hotel developments. Based on modelling by Alton Towers Resort, the level of investment would increase admissions to approximately 3.3 million (from an average of 2.6 million over the last 10 years) by 2019, increase economic impact and allow for significant investment in heritage assets. Overnight stays on site would increase over the period off-setting increased admissions due to reduction in individual journeys which will have benefits to local traffic movements. As a result of increased visitor numbers, the resort could make investments in local traffic management and other transportation initiatives including continued investigation of multi-modal access.
- Any new development at the Alton Towers Resort should comply with the Transport Strategy, Woodland Management Plan, Conservation Plan and Legal Agreement once agreed.
- The Concept Plan identifies a number of zones within the Resort and within these zones measures which are considered appropriate subject to further detail.

- All major development proposals will need to consider impact on views, transport, trees and heritage assets. In some proposals the potential noise effects of proposals will also be an important consideration.
- Any proposals beyond the scope of the Concept Plan will be assessed on their individual merits and in accordance with policy guidance.

#### **Zone 1 - Redevelopment Area - Towers Street**

Area of redevelopment/ retheming for leisure uses which must be sensitive to the heritage of the site. Need to consider impact on trees within the area.

#### **Zone 2 - Redevelopment/ New Rides - South western area**

Potential for redevelopment in this area which is sensitive to distant views, tree canopy, Bunbury Hill Fort and the Flag Tower. Leisure uses including new rides are potentially suitable within this area. Height restrictions should be considered due to this being the high point within the Resort. Any future development should be screened from long distant views and enhance the setting of the Flag Tower.

#### **Zone 3 - Redevelopment Area**

Potential redevelopment area for leisure use. Consideration should be had for the impact on trees within the area.

#### **Zone 4 - Potential New Entrance**

Potential new entrance to the park. Consideration needs to be had for the impact of any new entrance on visitor circulation and in particular impact on the historic gardens and trees.

#### **Zone 5 - Relocation of Spinball Whizzer**

Removal of Spinball Whizzer from this area will be encouraged. Consideration needs to be given to the impact on trees.

#### **Zone 6 - Improved car parking**

Area for improved car parking and new planting. Consideration should be given to how surface run-off is managed. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated in any improved parking area.

#### **Zone 7 - Entertainment Area**

Potential new entertainment area and enhanced link from the hotel to the theme park.

#### **Zone 8 - Area for holiday lodge development and/ or new ride**

Area for holiday lodge development and/ or new ride. Consideration should be had for ensuring development does not go above the tree canopy. It must be ensured that development has no adverse impact on the woodland and the screening it provides. Development should sit clear of the woodland edge.

#### **Zone 9 - The Gardens**

Protection and enhancement of existing gardens. When considering visitor circulation within this area consideration should be had for the impact on the historic gardens. Encourage better use of the gardens by visitors.

#### **Zone 10 - New Development Area**

Maximise use within this zone before development within Zone 11 is considered. There is potential in this area for the following:

- Improved parking and advanced structural planting; and
- Hotel and lodge developments

In addition, within this zone is a derelict farm (Nicklin Farm) which may be suitable for re-use as an entertainment area however development must be sensitive to the heritage of the site. Consideration should be had for tree coverage and particularly the screening that trees offer along the southern and eastern edge of this zone. Trees on the northern edge provide an important break in views from the north. Consideration should be had for the heritage asset of the boundary ditch, bank and wall.

#### **Zone 11 - Area of Sensitivity/ Limited Development Potential**

Significant areas currently used for overflow car parking. Limited potential for development. Any potential future development must be sensitive to the historic parkland and biodiversity of the area including where necessary provision of off-site mitigation of the SBI as well as on site enhancement and management. This is a visually open area to the north whereas the southern boundary offers a natural break in development.

#### **Outside of these Zones:**

**Towers** - continued restoration of the Towers and to actively look for new appropriate uses including visitor interpretation and display of the Alton Towers archive. Other uses might include tourist accommodation, administrative offices and retail use.

**Station Lodge** - refurbishment of the Station Lodge (the Pugin built gatehouse across the road from Alton Station) for active use (offices or residential use if no suitable alternative employment use can be found) will be encouraged.

**Mill House** - Currently in use but may be suitable for future re-use for tourist accommodation, craft workshops, cycle hire or other tourist uses.

#### **Development Principles**

##### **Accessibility and Transport**

- Encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport, including, where feasible, rail access.
- Ensure compliance with the Transport Strategy (see Appendix).
- Continue to undertake traffic management on the local highway network for special events such as concerts, with the objective of encouraging the free flow of traffic, while at the same time enhancing public safety.

- Consider the creation of off road cycle routes to the attraction and provision of electric bikes for off-site recreation for staying visitors.
- Make provision for on site cycle storage.
- Ensure that any necessary road improvements associated with future development are in-keeping with the character of the area and avoid creating intrusive urban features.
- Consider the appropriateness of enabling visitors to access the park and gardens only rather than requiring entry to the whole resort.

### **Amenity and Noise**

- Consider the amenity of residents living near to the resort and on the main access routes to the resort
- Ensure that any new major development proposals for the site are accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment where necessary.

### **Economic Considerations**

- Continue to support local employment at the site
- Generate and support job creation by meeting the Council's Employment and Skills Charter
- Encourage additional long stay visitors and family groups.
- Encourage opportunities to promote links between the Alton Towers Resort and other tourism facilities in the area.

### **Woodland Management and Ecology**

- Ensure that development at the Alton Towers Resort complies/ does not conflict with the long term objectives of the Woodland Management Plan (see Appendix) and contributes to the site's ecology by adopting the principles in the Ecological Appraisal.
- Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the management of land for nature conservation and the enjoyment of areas of wildlife and geological interest while ensuring that any potential impacts of development on biodiversity and geodiversity are appropriately mitigated including, if necessary, off-site compensation and enhancements are delivered where possible.

### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- Ensure that any major new development at the Alton Towers Resort is accompanied by a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to identify and assess the effects on the site's landscape, heritage character and quality and the effects on the wider landscape character and setting.
- Ensure that the development of the site is not harmful to the landscape within the site and the wider area. Any new development will also be required to respect the site's landscape, heritage character and quality and to minimise the impact on the local landscape character outside the resort's boundary.

### **Heritage and Conservation**



- Ensure that any new development at the Alton Towers Resort, including new uses, accords/ does not conflict with policies contained in the Conservation Plan (see Appendix) to ensure that the existing heritage assets of the site are conserved.
- Ensure that no proposed development will impact directly upon any known archaeological assets. There is the potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains and desk-based assessments may represent the first stage of archaeological evaluation and mitigation associated with a given development proposal. Where an application is known to include, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, then applications for development will be required to be accompanied by a desk-based assessment.
- Ensure that any new development takes account of the sensitive nature of the Registered Historic Parkland and its setting. Development that substantially alters the remaining historic landscape within the site should seek to maintain the character of the parkland landscape, retaining and reinforcing parkland trees.
- Ensure that any new development proposals that extend into the wider parkland take account of the parkland setting, and where possible reinforce vegetation structure to enable new development to be absorbed within this important landscape.

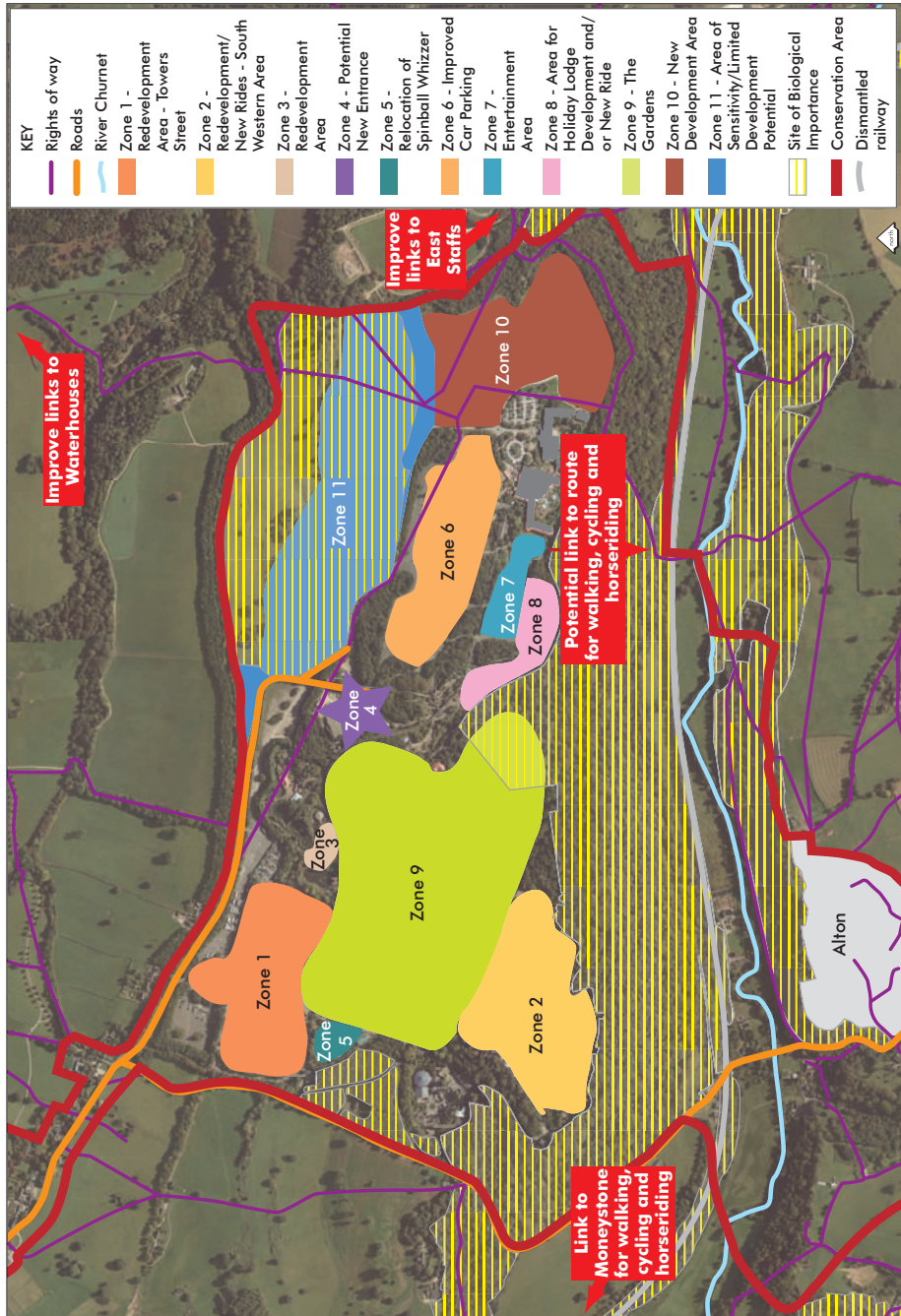
#### **Sustainable Development**

- Ensure that where feasible renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are included within proposals for new development.
- New development should be water efficient.
- Ensure development makes appropriate provision for the sustainable management and use of surface water.

#### Other Considerations:

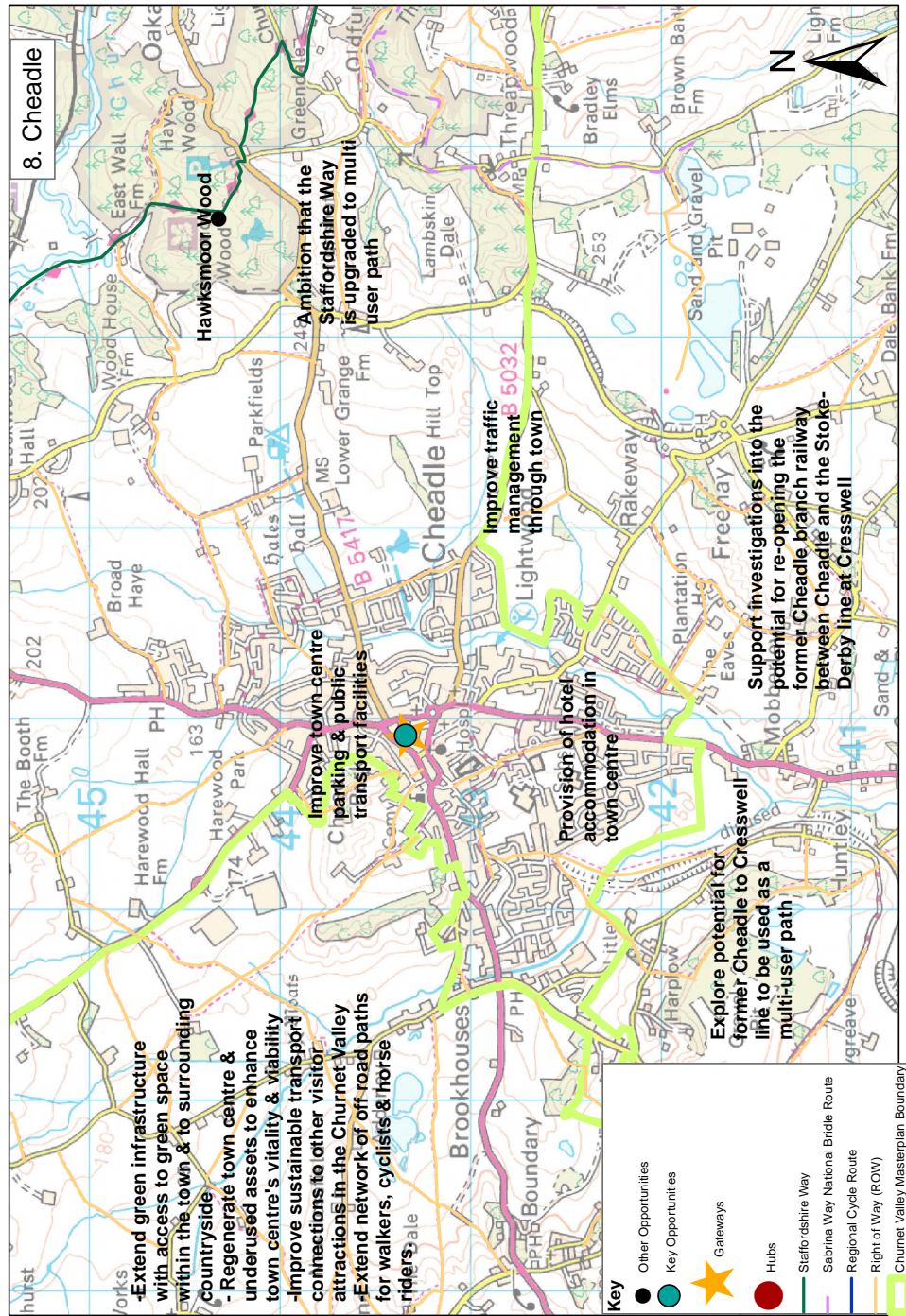
- potential impacts on landscape and biodiversity need to be:
  - a. avoided so far as possible
  - b. mitigated
  - c. compensated for

Figure 7.5 Alton Towers Resort Concept Plan



7.8 Cheadle Character Area

Map 7.9 Cheadle Character Area



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Scale 1:24,000

## 7.8.1 Role

**7.8.1.1** Cheadle has a key role as market town for a wide catchment area, particularly to the south of District. It acts as a significant gateway into the Churnet Valley and Peak District National Park from the south and west. Cheadle has the potential to offer a unique tourist offer based on heritage and independent shops and as a base for exploring the Churnet Valley and The Potteries. There is scope for improvement of Cheadle as a visitor destination and an important opportunity for job creation and support for the local economy. Cheadle town centre is subject of a separate Masterplan (available on the Council's website at [www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/sm/council-services/area-action-plans/Cheadle-town-centre-masterplan](http://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/sm/council-services/area-action-plans/Cheadle-town-centre-masterplan)) and therefore the development principles detailed are general principles for Cheadle in its role as a main gateway to the Churnet Valley.

## 7.8.2 Key Activities

- Tourism –
  - Heritage - Pugin Centre, St Giles RC Church
  - Visitor information Points
- Shopping & Services – town centre, market
- Leisure – leisure centre, green spaces and outdoor recreational facilities
- Visitor accommodation

## 7.8.3 Key Actions

- Development in line with Cheadle Area Strategy in the Core Strategy.
- Strengthen role of town centre as service and retailing centre in line with the Cheadle Town Centre Masterplan which identifies key development opportunity sites.
- Improve town centre parking and public transport facilities
- Improve traffic management through town - town centre junction improvements
- Provision of hotel accommodation in town centre
- Regenerate town centre and underused assets to enhance town centre's vitality and viability
- Extend network of off-road paths for walkers, cyclists and horse riders
- Enhance the urban environment and support measures to make the town more tourism orientated.
- Encourage the promotion of markets and events.
- Improve sustainable transport connections to other visitor attractions in the Churnet Valley.
- Conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets. Reinforce heritage and visitor attractions.
- Extend green infrastructure with access to green space within town and to surrounding countryside
- Support investigations into the potential for re-opening of the former Cheadle branch railway between Cheadle and the Stoke-Derby line at Cresswell.
- Explore the potential for the former Cheadle to Cresswell line to be used as a multi-user path.

## Development and Management Principles



## 8 Development and Management Principles

**8.0.1** This section sets out the key principles and guidance for the development and management of the whole of the Churnet Valley Masterplan area to ensure that future development proposals reflect the aims of the Masterplan and delivers the Strategy. It supplements the policies in the Local Plan (Core Strategy) to ensure that applicants seeking permission for development can make successful planning applications by outlining the Council's expectations and will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### 8.1 Natural Environment

The protection and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Churnet Valley is the overriding requirement for any development. Land uses and the siting and scale of development should respect and enhance the valued characteristics of the Churnet Valley and the local landscape character informed by the Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment. The valued characteristics of the Churnet Valley are set out in section 2 of the Masterplan.

Proposals and associated infrastructure measures should not be detrimental to the sensitive ecology and geology of the area. Opportunities should be sought to ensure the management of land for nature conservation and the enjoyment of areas of wildlife and geological interest and to create links between sites of nature conservation. Where appropriate, development should create a net gain in biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity informed by a natural landscape conservation strategy. This should be informed by the Staffordshire Moorlands Biodiversity Opportunity Map and Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan. There should be recognition of the wider benefits of ecosystem services. There are links between biodiversity and heritage features such as dry stone walls and these links should be given consideration. With regard to areas under SSSI designation the landowners and planners have a legal duty to comply with a sites legal protection.

Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) every opportunity should be sought to improve the River corridor and work towards the Churnet achieving 'Good Ecological Status or Potential' by 2015 along the entire length. Under the WFD no deterioration in water quality is allowed. Therefore, wherever possible, water should be placed at the heart of a community or development whether it is as a focal point/ community area (in public open spaces etc), or a method of flood alleviation/ retention/ storage or treatment.

Any proposals should not increase risk of flooding - where development falls within areas at risk of flooding a flood risk assessment will be required. Development should seek to reduce flood risk and improve the water environment. Where development is proposed within 8 metres of the top of a bank of any main river Flood Defence Consent will be required from the Environment Agency.

## 8.2 Heritage

The Churnet Valley has a rich and diverse history and its past management has, in part, resulted in the landscape we are familiar with today. Iron Age hillforts sit side by side with 18th century parkland and threaded throughout the valley is a rich archaeological heritage relating to medieval and late industrial development in its flint and colour mills, its canals and railway and its nineteenth century industrial developments much of which supplied the burgeoning ceramics industry in nearby Stoke-on-Trent. Beyond the valley slopes a rich agricultural landscape survives and its character speaks of mixed pastoral and arable form of farming which may go back a thousand years. Certainly there are many small farmsteads with 17<sup>th</sup> century and possible earlier origins.

The area's designated heritage assets (listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and conservation areas) and its non-designated heritage assets shall be protected and maintained in a state of good repair and enhanced wherever possible. The Caldon Canal is a Conservation Area and this should be given appropriate consideration. Development proposals shall not cause avoidable harm to any heritage assets and consideration given to promoting public accessibility, understanding and appreciation of the Churnet Valley's history and its corresponding built heritage. These measures will, in turn, encourage visitors to experience the cultural heritage of the area. Development should seek to conserve and enhance the historic landscape character of the Churnet Valley. Extensive Urban Surveys have been completed for Cheadle, Alton and Leek and include characterisations of historic character through these urban centres and provide advice regarding development in these centres.

All development proposals affecting any heritage assets will be the subject of an impact statement and measures taken to minimise any adverse impact on their special significance. Key industrial heritage sites, such as the Bolton Copper Works, shall ensure any future development respects the past development and retains any surviving heritage assets where possible. Where impacts of a heritage assets (designated or undesignated) are justified, an appropriate degree of evaluation and/ or mitigation will be agreed commensurate to the level of impact and the significance of heritage asset/s to be affected.

The area is rich in its links to the Arts and Craft Movement (particularly in Leek) and the works of Augustus Pugin (particularly in Cheadle and Alton). A wider appreciation of these links, both within the area and outside, shall be promoted. Where appropriate, links shall also be encouraged to the industrial heritage of Stoke and the Potteries to create a fuller visitor experience.

## 8.3 Sustainable Tourism

The provision of high quality all year round tourism opportunities is a key requirement of any proposal for new or extended tourist facilities and services. Businesses and communities are encouraged to work together to benefit their local area by improving the tourism offer. The aim is to help develop healthy, sustainable communities, who will benefit from the positive knock on effects of increased tourism to their area throughout the year.

The scale and nature of new and extended tourist attractions should reflect the role and key activities of the individual character areas in which they are located. They should have particular regard for the natural environment and heritage of the Churnet Valley and demonstrate strong sustainable development principles. Development should make appropriate provision for the management of land for nature conservation and the enjoyment of areas of wildlife and geological interest while ensuring that any potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity are appropriately mitigated including, if necessary, off-site compensation.

New tourist accommodation shall minimise their impact on existing businesses (especially small businesses) and large schemes should be supported by an assessment of need with consideration given to the mix, quality and future market that the accommodation will appeal to.

Car parking requirements should be considered including issues of capacity of existing car parks. Wherever possible visitor hubs should act as the main points for car parking where opportunities for travelling by alternative means will be encouraged and promoted.

There should be better promotion of existing public transport services and a review of linkages to attractions. Private bus services (for example Alton Towers) should be maintained and enhanced and opportunities sought to create linkages with other attractions. Opportunities to promote these services should be sought.

## 8.4 Sustainable Transport

All proposals should aim to support more sustainable means of transport within and into the Churnet Valley and seek to change visitor perceptions of how they can travel around the Churnet Valley by increasing transport choices for those wishing to visit attractions and facilities and, where appropriate, providing facilities to enable visitors to park up and travel from key points by more sustainable travel means, and through measures to manage access and movement and encourage off-site exploration by non-motorised means.

### Rail

The railway presents a significant opportunity to reduce travel by car and promote more sustainable means of exploring the Churnet Valley. There shall be continued support for the use of the Churnet Valley rail line as a heritage and tourist attraction and support for the re-opening of the rail line into Stoke-on-Trent and into Leek and the line to Caldon Lowe for both light passenger and freight use. There is also support for the phased extension of the Churnet Valley rail line east of Froghall, initially to Moneystone Quarry and Oakamoor. However, further information is required regarding a rail link to Alton Towers with regard to viability and feasibility as there are potential conflicts and impacts which need further investigation.

The existing rail line and any future extensions of the rail line should be integrated with development proposals for major sites where feasible, in particular at Cornhill and the Bolton Copperworks site and be closely aligned to improvements to walking, cycling, parking and public transport with appropriate connections created. Any affected



recreation uses should be either safeguarded alongside a re-opened railway or re-provided in another way. Any associated development such as station buildings and car parking should be sensitive to its surroundings, in-keeping with the landscape character of the area, and be of a high quality design which reflects the heritage of the area. Where appropriate, provision should be made for enhanced railway related facilities – parking and a new station at Cornhill/Leek and heritage centre/workshops and extended parking at Froghall and Cheddleton.

### Canals

The canals are recognised as having significant recreational, biodiversity and heritage value in the Churnet Valley. There shall be support for canal-related proposals which have the potential to bring in more tourists and support local businesses, subject to potential conflicts with other users and impact on the natural environment and water supply being addressed. The canal towpath shall be managed to safeguard recreation use to encourage greater use of the towpath by walkers and cyclists where it is capable of accommodating additional usage, and to prevent further erosion of the canal infrastructure and protect the canal heritage.

There is support for the restoration of the Uttoxeter Canal from Froghall to Uttoxeter as a long term proposal subject to further investigation and consideration, particular in respect of compatibility with existing recreational routes and any possible rail extension. Any proposals along or near to the route should not prejudice the future restoration of the canal and should provide for short term measures such as interpretation boards and route clearance. Where possible opportunities should be sought to provide connections to the wider footpath network and improve access points to the canal and towpath improvements. It should be ensured that any future development is in keeping with the landscape character of the area and should complement the role of other projects within the Churnet Valley.

There will be support and encouragement for additional moorings on the Caldon Canal in suitable places including Cornhill and Endon. Existing moorings at Consall Forge, Cheddleton and Froghall should be reviewed and, where necessary, improved. Any future moorings should be on new marinas rather than additional canal-side moorings. There will be support for enhancement of canal related facilities in appropriate locations including parking, access, moorings, visitor facilities and interpretation.

### Bus

There will be support for existing public bus services and for making better use of existing services. There will be encouragement for retaining and extending existing private bus services from Alton Towers Resort to other attractions and destinations and for new services such as a shuttle bus between key attractions and destinations and demand-responsive services such as Moorlands Connect. Measures to improve and expand bus facilities and information will be supported, such as bus stops, timetables, electronic messaging, promotional material.

### Road

Excessive traffic can harm the valued characteristics of the Churnet Valley, therefore all development should seek to minimise the impact of traffic, particularly within environmentally sensitive locations. Where new road infrastructure is required, it must

be carefully designed to take full account of the valued characteristics of the Churnet Valley with mitigation measures, where appropriate, to protect the landscape and wildlife corridors.

Encouragement will be given to measures which give priority to sustainable modes of travel on the roads and increase safety for non-motorised road users - this could include the provision of bus priority measures, access and speed restrictions or warnings, cycle lanes and quiet lanes.

#### Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding

In accordance with the emphasis on supporting more sustainable means of travel and improving connectivity through the Churnet Valley, developments should have footpath and cycle connections to existing rights of way and to gateways, hubs and settlements. Improvements to existing routes for walking, cycling and horse riding and the creation of new routes will be supported and the Rights of Way network protected and, wherever appropriate, enhanced. Where possible there will be support for the creation and improvement of routes to multi-user paths.

Cycling provision and infrastructure should be incorporated in new development including the provision of bike storage. The potential for additional cycle hire venues should be considered and the use of other innovative sustainable transport measures, such as electric bikes, shall be encouraged.

Long distance routes will be enhanced and extended to connect with gateways and hubs. There is support for upgrading the Staffordshire Way which runs through the Churnet Valley to a multi-user path. Where a railway use is reinstated on a former disused rail route used for walking, cycling or horse riding, this facility shall be replaced or realigned.

Provision for horse riding, including facilities for stabling, will be supported where it can be accommodated without conflict with other users and impact on the landscape and ecological sites.

Off-road mountain biking will only be supported where it can be managed and controlled along specific tracks which do not cause conflict with other users and adverse impact on ecological sites.

## 8.5 Economic Development

Rural communities need a diverse range of successful local businesses and work opportunities in order to flourish in the Churnet Valley. Small and local businesses which promote local goods and services and employ the local workforce shall therefore be encouraged and supported through funding programmes and through work with Staffordshire Peak District Tourism Association and Destination Staffordshire to support business development, with workshops and business development events.

New employment uses should preferably use existing rural buildings in locations which are well served from the main road network or be located in specific employment areas which are capable of serving businesses. Alternative uses for existing employment areas will only be supported where the premises or site is unsuitable or unviable for continued employment use.

All major employment developments will be expected to sign an employment charter to maximise local labour and supplies.

There will be support for traditional small scale farming which respects the biodiversity, heritage and landscape character of the area.

## 8.6 Green Initiatives

The Council will support measures designed to improve sustainability of new development within the Churnet Valley (where consistent with Policies in the Core Strategy) for example through orientating and positioning buildings to minimise residual energy demand through passive solar gain; constructing buildings to thermal efficiency and water conservation standards above those required under Building Regulations to reduce residual energy and water demand; use of recycled building materials both on-site or from the locality; integration of on-site Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDs) to mitigate on-site flood risk; integration of micro-scale (or larger-scale communal) renewable energy installations within/ around buildings to reduce residual energy demand.

The use of sustainable construction methods and materials shall be encouraged that will blend into the landscape in order that development has a minimal impact on its surroundings.

The use of woodfuel is promoted as a renewable energy resource capitalising on the initiative to develop a local woodfuel economy using local suitably managed woodlands. Support will be given to the CVLLP Woodland Management Project.

Renewable energy schemes having significant adverse impact on the landscape, heritage or biodiversity of the Churnet Valley will be assessed against Core Strategy Policy SD2 (and other Policy), which requires that assessment weigh up the positive impacts of renewable/ low carbon proposals against all negative impacts (as minimised), including consideration of impacts upon landscape character.

New and existing businesses will be encouraged and supported to achieve Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark.

## 8.7 Design Principles

High quality design of all new development in the Churnet Valley will be promoted having been assessed by reference to how it respects the valued characteristics of the Churnet Valley in terms of its site context, including the wider setting, density, massing and scale, impact on close and distant views, impact on streetscape and materials.

Assessments will start initially with looking at the value of retaining and re-using what is there. Depending on the outcome of the initial assessment, the design quality of proposals will then be assessed using the following criteria:

- Relationship to the site
- Relationship to its wider setting
- Density of the proposed development
- Impact on close view and wider vistas
- Materials
- Fitness of purpose of the proposed architecture
- Composition
- Contribution to the public realm
- Landscape and planting
- Massing
- Height
- Local distinctiveness
- Site constraints

Any major proposal will be assessed for design quality using accepted best practice issued by national agencies including the Design Council and English Heritage. Where appropriate and subject to resources, design briefs and other design guidance will be prepared and adopted on key sites including the Bolton Copper Works.

Opportunities should be taken to enhance the Churnet Valley by the treatment or removal of features or buildings which detract from the high quality of the area. This could also include remediation of contaminated and/or potentially unstable land resulting from past mining activities within the area. Positive improvements will be supported.

Opportunities should be sought to incorporate high quality locally distinctive design features and layouts that will reduce crime and fear of crime.

## Implementation and Delivery



## 9 Implementation and Delivery

### Implementation and Delivery

**9.0.1** In order to successfully implement the Masterplan there is a need for a coordinated implementation and delivery plan. The initial priorities are over a ten year time frame. Table 1 identifies delivery issues for the opportunity sites with Concept Statements. It details potential risks, phasing/ timescales, delivery agencies, funding and implementation. It may be subject to change over time. In order to ensure that risks are fully addressed there is a need for a risk assessment and set of timescales for the key opportunities prior to adoption of the Masterplan and may be subject to change over time. Short term delivery plans will be prepared to cover 12 to 24 month periods and incorporated within the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

Table 1 Delivery of Opportunity Sites with Concept Statements

<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Cornhill</b>	<b>Consall Hall Gardens</b>	<b>Bolton Copperworks</b>	<b>Moneystone Quarry</b>	<b>Alton Towers Resort</b>
<b>Risk</b>	High risk that not all elements will be deliverable in short-medium term due to very significant development costs and limited commercial returns arising from the proposed uses	Moderate	High risk may not be delivered due to site constraints, viability issues, particularly within the earlier years of the masterplan	Medium risk may not be delivered	Low risk may not be delivered
<b>Phasing</b>	TBC, currently subject to feasibility work. Outline planning application pending consideration SMD/2014/0048 Land at Barnfields Road and Sunnyhills Road, Cornhill.	TBC	TBC	TBC - potentially three phases	TBC. Planning application pending consideration SMD/2014/0107.
<b>Delivery Agencies</b>	Private sector led. Public sector TBC	Private sector led	Private sector-led. Public sector TBC	Private sector led	Private sector led
<b>Funding</b>	Private sector, SMDC, SCC, M&CR and others TBC	Private sector led	Private sector led but may require some public sector intervention	Private sector led	Private sector led
<b>Legal Agreement</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	Required to secure contributions
<b>Implementation</b>	Allocation in Site Allocations DPD, planning application	Planning application	Allocation in Site Allocation DPD, planning application	Allocation in Site Allocations DPD, planning application	Allocation in Site Allocations DPD, planning application

## Funding

**9.0.2** As outlined earlier in the document, the projects in the Masterplan other than Cornhill should be deliverable by the private sector.

**9.0.3** There will be some costs associated with establishing a project team to facilitate the programme and in addressing planning issues.

## Developer Contributions

**9.0.4** There is a presumption that all new developments should contribute to enhanced connectivity within the Churnet Valley in line with the Transport Strategy contained at Appendix 12 where this is necessary to make development acceptable in planning terms. The National Planning Policy Framework states that "Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition."<sup>(8)</sup> The NPPF sets out the tests for planning obligations to be sought, "Planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development."<sup>(9)</sup>

**9.0.5** Other necessary developer contributions will be identified in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

## Hubs and Gateways

**9.0.6** There are a number of gateways and hubs identified within the Masterplan and for each of these there are a number of potential improvements identified. The types of enhancements and potential funding sources for the hubs are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Potential Enhancements	Timescale	Potential Funding Source
Enhance brown signs	Short term	SMDC/ SCC/ CVLLP
Access information for Churnet Valley. On site dispersal information boards.	Short to medium term	SMDC/ SCC/ CVLLP
Better promotion of routes, new maps etc	Short term	SMDC/ SCC/ CVLLP

8 National Planning Policy Framework (2012) paragraph 203

9 National Planning Policy Framework (2012) paragraph 204



Potential Enhancements	Timescale	Potential Funding Source
Sign cycle routes	Short term	SMDC/ SCC/ CVLLP
Cycle hire provision at various hubs	Medium term	Private sector

**9.0.7** \*Short term = 1-5 years, Medium term = 6-10 years, Long term = 11-15 years

### Transport Corridors and Links

**9.0.8** The Peak District National Park has been successful in its bid for funding to enhance and extend the cycle trial network. One of the projects includes areas of the Churnet Valley, the Staffordshire Moorlands Link. The Staffordshire Moorlands link consists of 23km connection from Stoke-on-Trent to the Manifold Trail and the Roaches via a segregated cycle route between Stockton Brook and Cheddleton (utilising the Caldon Canal towpath) combined with an on-road route from Cheddleton to the Manifold Trail. Other transport measures are contained in Section 13.

### Project Direction

**9.0.9** The Staffordshire Tourism Study (2011) stated that the "Tourism potential and the attractive character of the Churnet Valley suggest that the best way forward is to take a coordinated planning and sustainable development approach that combines the encouragement of tourism and the visitor economy with the management of the environment and visitors. The preparation of the Churnet Valley Masterplan gives the opportunity to make recommendations for ongoing planning and management structures." It states that "The models being developed in a number of AONBs would be an ideal way to view matters. The Forest of Bowland AONB Lancashire is one such model and the various plans and policies developed recently there indicate the type of approach that would be suitable in the Churnet Valley corridor." It states that "Some coordination will be required that brings together the public, private and voluntary sectors. The partnership approach being developed through the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership... Should be built upon and at the end of that scheme there could be a series of legacy projects that would continue to encourage the sustainable development of recreation and tourism in the area"

**9.0.10** It is intended that the coordination of the delivery of the Churnet Valley Masterplan will be via the Regeneration section of the District Council and will involve partnership working with Staffordshire County Council, Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership, voluntary sector and the private sector.

**9.0.11** The Council is supportive of AONB designation and will work with relevant parties to seek designation. However the Council can only go so far, and cannot determine applications within the potential AONB area as if they were subject to a formal AONB designation. AONB designation can only be considered as a material consideration after the designation order has been made and confirmed under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

**9.0.12** The implementation of a natural landscape conservation strategy is an important element of ensuring that conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is achieved in the area covered by the Masterplan.

## Monitoring



## **10 Monitoring**

**10.0.1** As part of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) a narrative report on the Churnet Valley Masterplan will be included annually from when it is adopted which will include relevant statistics reported in the AMR.

## Glossary



## 11 Glossary

**11.0.1** Listed below is an explanation of some of the technical terms and phrases used in this document.

- **'Actives'** – visitors coming for outdoor activities, walking, hiking and cycling, but will include riding, water sports and climbing. May visit regularly for the activity, level of engagement will vary from those trying it for the first time to seasoned activity seekers.
- **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)** – is an area outside a National Park that is considered by Natural England to be of such outstanding natural beauty that it should be designated for the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.
- **Brownfield** – see 'Previously Developed Land'
- **Character Area** - within the Churnet Valley Masterplan 'Character Areas' are used to describe areas that have distinctive characteristics within the Churnet Valley and the role these individual character areas will play in achieving the vision. These are areas where existing characteristics and opportunities lend themselves to particular purpose and change. This differs from landscape character as identified in the Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment.
- **Community Conversations** – events aimed at engaging with members of the community and understanding what they value in their village and how the villages could change in the future.
- **Core Strategy Development Plan Document** – a strategic District wide plan which influences how and where the Staffordshire Moorlands will develop in the future. It sets out what the District would like to achieve in each of the main towns and the rural areas outside the Peak District National Park.
- **'Countrysiders'** – visitors primarily coming for a combination of experiences – activities, discovery / sightseeing, and rest and relaxation. Outdoor activities will be the predominate activity but the natural environment / scenery will be a key underpinning appeal, will however undertake a range of activities while staying in the area including heritage and natural history and will have a propensity to travel around / explore. They will be staying for an additional holiday / short break – typically in independent accommodation (B&B, self catering) – typical length of stay will be 2 to 3 nights or 6 to 7 nights. Demographically they will primarily be middle-aged couples – travelling from a wide area. The Countrysiders are the main backbone of staying visitors to the Moorlands and most closely aligned with the visitor profile of the wider Peak District.
- **'Discoverers'** – visitors are coming for attractions and day sightseeing across the District outside Alton Towers. Predominantly couples, but some families, typically from Staffordshire, broadly similar to leisure visitors found elsewhere in the wider Peak District and key contributor to spend.
- **Gateway** - means of accessing the area
- **Hub** - point of activity from which to explore the area

- **‘Family Fun’** – mainly Alton Towers visitors, predominantly with children, traveling from a wide catchment, generally stay within Alton Towers with limited linked trips at present. Provide core business for Alton Towers.
- **Green Tourism** - Historically the definition of this term has been travel which is environmentally friendly or benign that in general does not concern itself with cultural or economic elements of the destination. Current uses of the term are becoming broader to incorporate full sustainable tourism principles.
- **Local Development Framework (LDF)** – a portfolio of Local Development Documents. It consists of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, a Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Reports. Together these documents will provide for delivering the spatial planning strategy for a local authority area.
- **Previously Developed Land (PDL)** – as defined in the NPPF this comprises of land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition excludes land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments, which, although it may feature paths, pavilions and other buildings, has not been previously developed; land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time (to the extent that it can reasonably be considered as part of the natural surroundings).
- **Site Allocations Development Plan Document** – a Development Plan Document which will contain all future allocations of land for housing, employment, retail etc.
- **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** – part of the Local Development Framework these documents provide supplementary information in respect of the policies in the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents.
- **Sustainable tourism** - The United Nations World Tourism Organisation defines sustainable tourism as tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. Rather than being a type of product, it is an ethos that underpins all tourism activities. As such, it is integral to all aspects of tourism development and management rather than being an add-on component

The objective of sustainable tourism is to retain the economic and social advantages of tourism development while reducing or mitigating any undesirable impacts on the natural, historic, cultural or social environment. This is achieved by balancing the needs of tourists with those of the destination as outline above.

VisitEngland recognises sustainable tourism as a term used mainly by industry (policy makers, internal to organisations) and it is used by VisitEngland because it is felt that it is the most encompassing term.

- **Traffic hotspots** - are areas where there are particular issues experienced with traffic. This may be at particular times of the day or year. Alton is an example of a traffic hotspot.

Alton Towers Resort Appendix





## 12 Alton Towers Resort Appendix

### Transport Strategy/ Role of Transport Liaison Group

**12.0.1** A Transport Strategy has been prepared by Atkins which assess the traffic implications of the Long Term Plan and sets out a package of measures aimed at improving traffic flows in the local villages and enhancing transport sustainability. The report concludes that the Long Term Plan will result in some increases in admission numbers, but that the highway network has capacity and can accommodate the increase without material environmental effects being likely to arise. It also concludes there is no need for a new "eastern access" as a result of the Long Term Plan proposals.

**12.0.2** Traffic and admissions levels at the Resort will continue to be monitored by the County Council and reported to the Local Planning Authority on a regular basis as part of the Transport Liaison Group Meetings.

**12.0.3** Alton Towers Resort will make regular transport contributions throughout the Long Term Plan period in the form of annual payments that will vary depending on levels of admissions (using the 2008 admission levels as a baseline). This will provide more certainty regarding the delivery of transport initiatives.

**12.0.4** The package of transportation initiatives recommended in the study, includes

- A full routing, signage and traffic management strategy, to include links to monitoring stations within the resort and the village of Alton;
- Improved use of the website to promote all modes of transport, particularly public transport;
- Increased usage of ticket options to reduce arrival and departure peaks;
- Highway and junction improvements if considered feasible.

**12.0.5** The priorities for spending on transport improvements will be made by the Transport Liaison Group which includes representatives from Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and East Staffordshire Borough Council. The Highways Authority will make the ultimate decision when allocating spending and implementing the transportation initiatives.

### Woodland Management Plan

**12.0.6** A Woodland Management Plan (WMP) has been developed by Nichols Brown Webber in order to set out the long term vision for the site in order to maintain and restore the woodlands and woodland walks with regard to their historic character as laid out in the early 19th century. In addition the WMP contains objectives to:

- Diversify tree and shrub species;
- Increase biodiversity and ensure the long term survival of the woodlands;
- Provide a visual and noise barrier; and
- Improve access and enjoyment for the public and guests.

## Ecology

**12.0.7** An Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Staffordshire Ecological Services (October 2009, revised March 2010) sets out proposals to enhance the biodiversity value of the Alton Towers Resort both through an extension of the existing commitment to the Woodland Management Plan, but also through the wider management and enhancement of the site's ecology.

## Conservation Plan

**12.0.8** A Conservation Plan has been developed for the site setting out policies which will provide a framework to enable the impact and revenue of development proposals to be considered and guide future proposals for the conservation, restoration and management of the historic structures and gardens at Alton Towers Resort. It is the intention to monitor and amend the Plan as necessary to ensure its effectiveness, with a comprehensive review every five years. The boundary to the area covered by the Conservation Plan includes Alton Towers, all the listed structures, the boundary of the Registered Park and the main surrounding woodland areas within the ownership of Alton Towers Resort. The major elements of historic significance within the boundary of the Plan are:

- i. Alton Towers and its immediate surroundings (Grade II\* listed)
- ii. The gardens to the east of the Towers (Grade 1 listed on the Register)
- iii. The wider historic park (also taken in by the Garden's listing)
- iv. There are further listed structures, some of which have value in their own right, but as a collection of placed objects in the landscape, assume considerable cumulative value
- v. The Scheduled Ancient Monument (an Iron Age Fort, Bunbury Hill) to the west and south of the main Towers building
- vi. The Alton and Farley Conservation Area. This designation affects the whole of the Alton Towers Resort site.

**12.0.9** The vision for the future of the heritage assets at the Park is:

- i. To ensure that the existing heritage assets are conserved for the enjoyment of current and future generations of visitors to the park
- ii. To identify projects to actively restore elements of the park's heritage assets. This will involve the site's listed buildings, the registered garden and historic woodlands
- iii. To identify new uses for existing buildings and spaces of heritage significance which are sensitive to the heritage designations but allow for commercially sustainable activities
- iv. To promote the heritage assets of the site by appropriate marketing and other forms of communication including a dedicated heritage web site in order to better inform the general public of the significant heritage assets located at Alton Towers Resort
- v. To maintain the Alton Towers Resort physical and digital heritage archive and provide free access to this material for education and research purposes
- vi. To regularly review this Conservation Plan and the Action Plan in order to meet the objectives set out above.

**12.0.10** A number of key issues are identified for the Conservation Plan that must be addressed. These are:

- i. To establish a programme of works with priorities for conservation and consolidation (i.e. The prevention of further deterioration) and active restoration and to balance the needs of three elements (buildings, gardens and woodlands)
- ii. To establish an appropriate balance between conservation and the need to promote public access, both to the areas of historic significance and to the main areas of the theme park to assist in economic activity and revenue generation. Without (significant) public funding, further development or redevelopment of the commercial elements of the park are likely to be the only ways of generating significant funding for restoration works.
- iii. To secure appropriate funding for conservation and restoration work to the structures, gardens and woodlands having regard to the available sources of funding (commercial funding through the Long Term Plan and Landscape Heritage Contribution and where appropriate through s106 funding by the Resort and/or grant funding if available now or in the future))
- iv. To promote greater public understanding and interest in the built, landscape and archaeological heritage of Alton Towers

#### **12.0.11 Consolidation of the fabric of the buildings**

**12.0.12** The conservation and consolidation of the fabric of the Towers and the other listed structures on the estate is an immediate priority of the Conservation Plan. The second priority is to achieve reinstatement of features to assist in creating new and viable uses for the historic fabric and to assist in developing public understanding and interest in Alton Towers.

**12.0.13** Issues which identified in the Conservation Plan that a conservation programme will have to address include:

- i. Stonework decay due to weathering and chemical action
- ii. Stone/ render spalling due to decay in internal iron reinforcement
- iii. Vegetation growth in masonry jointing and consequent structural damage
- iv. Deterioration of decorative elements remaining in situ due to weathering and physical damage and/ or water penetration
- v. Rot and infestation of timber elements
- vi. Structural movement where walls are inadequately tied (for example where roof timbers and floor joists have been removed or have rotted)
- vii. Structural failure leading to building collapse
- viii. Vandalism (primarily graffiti)

#### **12.0.14 Restoration objectives for buildings**

**12.0.15** Subject to the availability of further funding, a range of projects could be undertaken which would serve to enhance the understanding and public appreciation of the Towers and other structures.

**12.0.16** The Conservation Plan identified that active uses are the best way of avoiding decline. The Towers has recently been successfully used as a visitor attraction (based on a scare maze theme). Alton Towers Resort will consider similar seasonal or permanent uses of parts of the Towers and other listed buildings will continue to be explored both for public and employee use.

#### **12.0.17 Restoration objectives for other listed and unlisted buildings**

**12.0.18** The Conservation Plan identifies that where possible, active use for other listed and unlisted buildings at the site should be sought.

#### **12.0.19 Restoration objectives for the gardens**

**12.0.20** Possible restoration objectives for the gardens include:

- i. Removal of inappropriate modern planting
- ii. New planting beds which are historically accurate in terms of location and planting species (derived from planting schemes/ schedules)
- iii. Replacement of lost or re-located structures/ statues/ water features
- iv. Replacement footpath surfaces using materials appropriate to mid-nineteenth century (where appropriate)
- v. Generally, restoration of nineteenth century planting schemes
- vi. Restoration of Nestfield Parterre subject to other priorities
- vii. Garden infrastructure, de-silting of lakes and waterways, walks and structure.

#### **12.0.21 Preservation and repair programme**

**12.0.22** An Action Plan, setting out a programme for the conservation and restoration of elements of the buildings and landscape, has been prepared as part of the Conservation Plan.

### **Legal Agreement**

**12.0.23** A legal agreement is to be agreed.

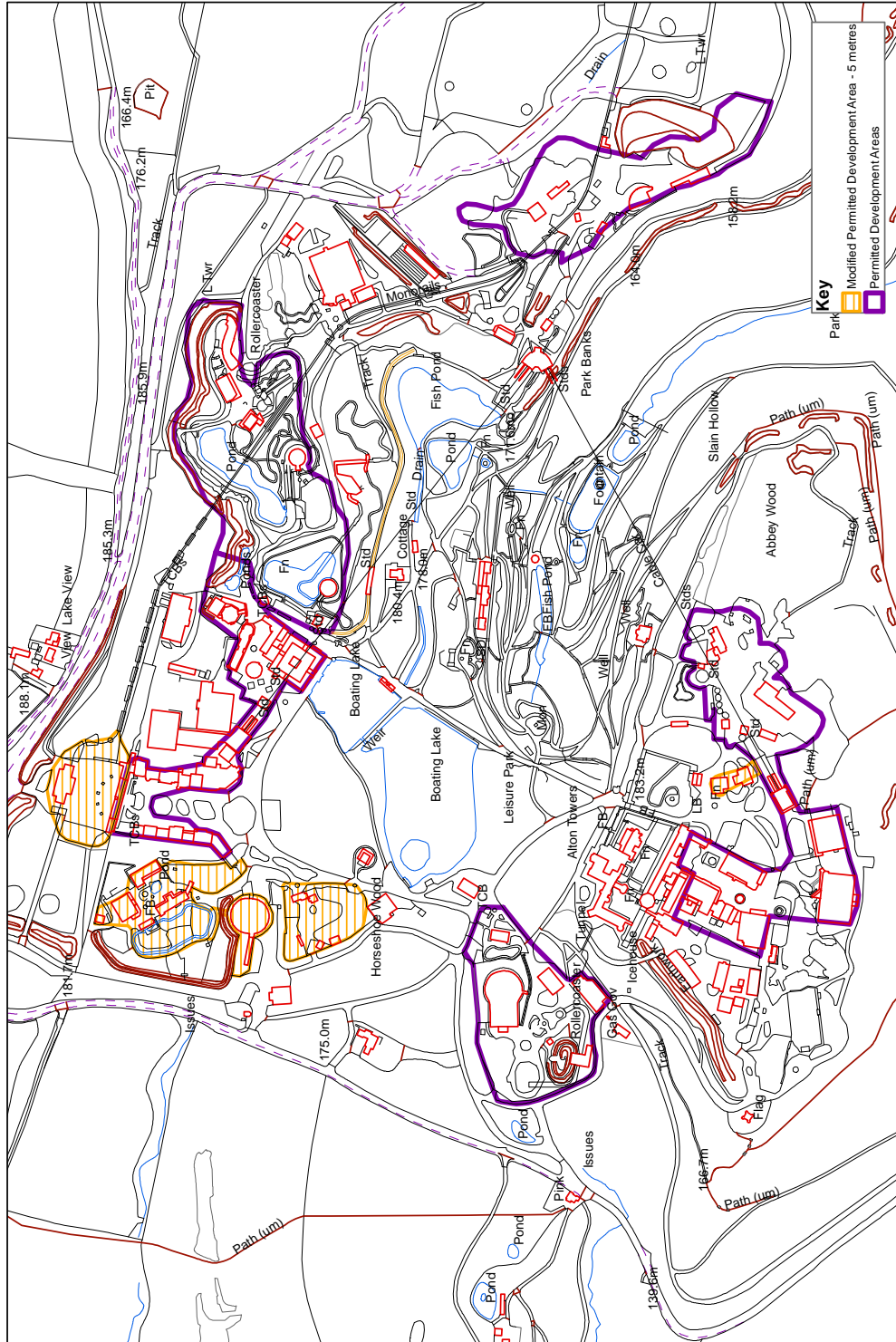
### **Permitted Development Areas**

**12.0.24** The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 part 28 sets out the definition of permitted development. Part 28 makes it clear that, subject to certain restrictions, for development to be permitted it must be carried out on land used as an amusement park and relate to:-

- a. the erection of booths or stalls or the installation of plant or machinery to be used for or in connection with the entertainment of the public within the amusement park; or
  - b. the extension, alteration or replacement of any existing booths or stalls, plant or machinery so used
- "amusement park" means an enclosed area of open land which is principally used (other than by way of a temporary use) as a funfair or otherwise for the purpose of providing public entertainment by means of mechanical amusements and side-shows. Where part only of an enclosed area is commonly used as a funfair or for such public entertainment, only the part so used shall be regarded as an amusement park
  - "booths or stalls" includes buildings or structures similar to booths or stalls.

**12.0.25** The areas shown on Map 12.1 are considered to benefit from permitted development rights. The modified permitted development areas of 5 metres would need to be secured through a Legal Agreement.

Picture 12.1 Alton Towers Permitted Development Areas



1:5000

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## Transport Strategy



## 13 Transport Strategy

**13.1** The Churnet Valley Transport Study identified a number of measures which are either essential or desirable to be undertaken for each of the key opportunity sites. These are set out below:

**Table 13.1 Cornhill**

Mode	Essential	Desirable
Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access arrangements onto A53/A520 need to be confirmed.</li> <li>- Capacity assessments of nearby junctions on the A53 and A520 should be carried out and mitigation measures should be funded by the development. This could include additional highway capacity and improvements to non-car modes of travel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A New Link Road between A53 and A520 (with access junctions into the site) should continue to be investigated, to allow some traffic to avoid travelling into Leek Town Centre.</li> <li>- Possibility of securing funding towards an improvement of the A52/A520 Cellarhead Junction to be investigated.</li> </ul>
Other modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consultation with bus operators should be undertaken, along with possible contributions to an improved bus services funded by the development.</li> <li>- Pedestrian/ cycle links to Leek Town Centre and nearby origins/ destinations to be provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extended Churnet Valley Railway to continue to be investigated (with long term opportunities to link to the national rail network at Stoke-on-Trent).</li> </ul>

**Table 13.2 Bolton Copperworks**

Mode	Essential	Desirable
Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure that access onto the B5053 and A52 is safe and has adequate capacity for the proposed level of traffic.</li> </ul>	-
Other modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase of Monday to Saturday bus frequency to be investigated, plus introduction of a Sunday service</li> </ul>	Further investigate the potential to extend the railway south from Kinglsey and Froghall to Alton Towers.



**Table 13.3 Moneystone Quarry**

Mode	Essential	Desirable
Highway	- Local highway impacts need to be assessed in detail and the improvements considered at the A52/Whiston Eaves Lane Junction, with funding or part-funding provided by the developer.	-
Other modes	- Options for bus links to the site should be investigated, including a potential diversion of the route which already passes through Whiston on the A52.  - Connections with existing pedestrian and cycle routes should be reviewed.	- Consider the potential for a new station for the Churnet Valley Railway close to Moneystone Quarry. Further investigate the potential to open the line to Alton Towers.

**13.2** Alton Towers - various measures established through the Alton Towers Traffic Liaison Group. The Transport Study states that "no change in trip rates has been assumed for Alton Towers Resort.

**Table 13.4 Leek**

Mode	Essential	Desirable
Highway	- Please refer to the Leek Town Centre Package of the Integrated Transport Strategy for the specific measures outlined for Leek. This includes traffic management improvements in the town centre and capacity improvements to the south, on the A53, A520 and A523.	-
Other modes	- Diversion and expansion of bus routes to serve the new residential developments should be considered along with pedestrian and cycle links between the proposed areas of housing and the town centre (plus local amenities).	- As noted for Cornhill, potential to extend the Churnet Valley Railway.

**Table 13.5 Cheadle**

Mode	Essential	Desirable
Highway	- Please refer to the Cheadle Town Centre Package of the Integrated Transport Strategy for the specific measures outlined for Cheadle.  - An assessment of Cheadle Road/ Uttoxeter Road Junction (in Blythe Bridge) is required to determine how capacity can be provided, given the expected increase in traffic as a result of the residential developments in Cheadle.	-

Mode	Essential	Desirable
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modification of some town centre junctions may be required in Cheadle, plus some traffic management and public realm improvements.</li> </ul>	
Other modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved bus services should be investigated to Blythe Bridge and Stoke-on-Trent, linking with railway stations.</li> <li>- Pedestrian and cycle links between the proposed housing, the town centre and local amenities should be improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further investigate the potential of re-opening of the disused railway line between Cheadle and the Derby-Dtoke railway.</li> </ul>

**13.3** Developers will be expected to undertake appropriate Transport Assessment and Travel Planning in consultation with the highway authority as an integral part of any planning application.

## Further Information



## **14 Further Information**

The artist impressions of Cornhill, Consall Hall Gardens, Bolton Copperworks and Moneystone Quarry have been produced by CTD Architects.