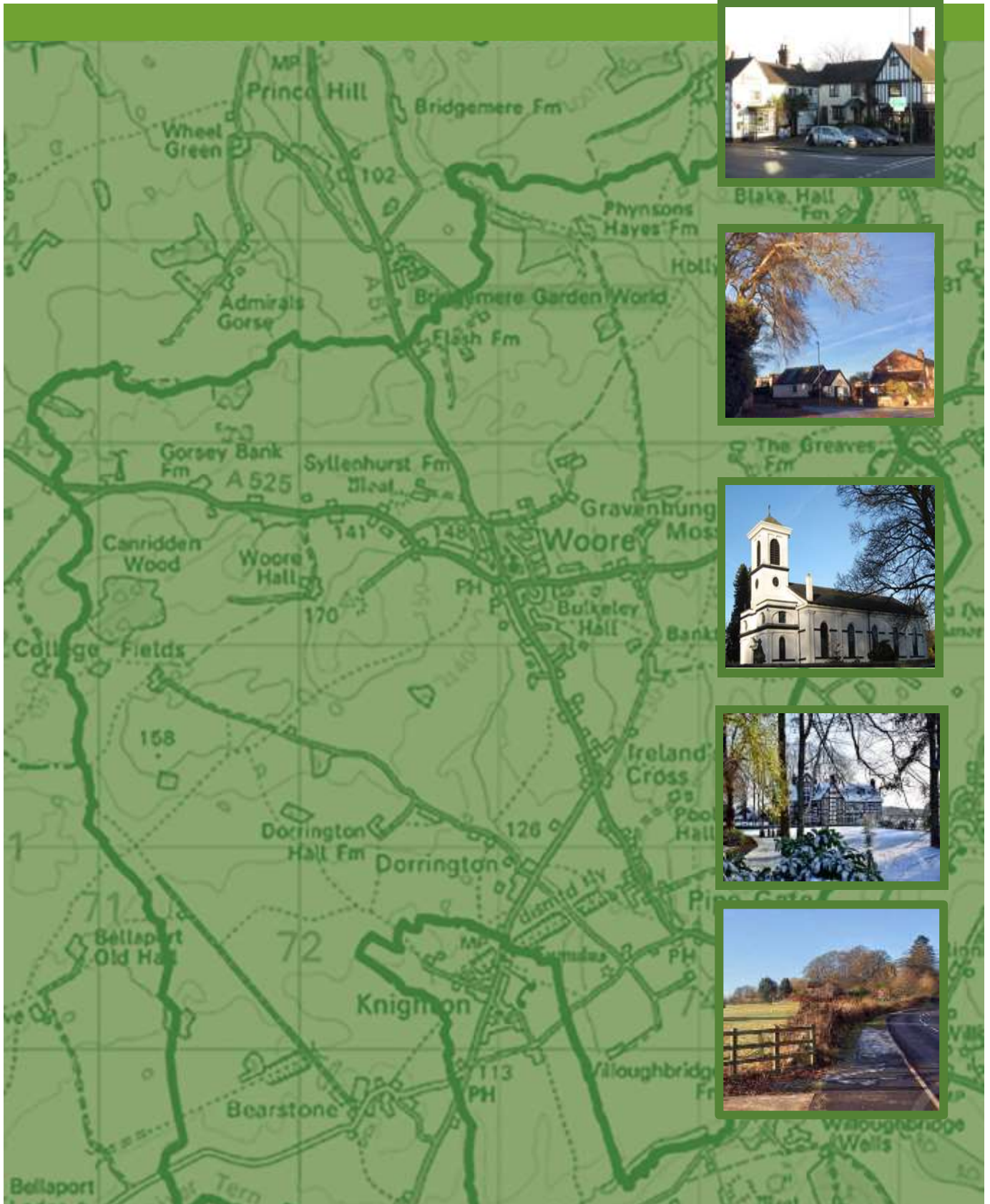


# WOORE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2016-2036

Covering the Parish of Woore which includes Woore, Pipe Gate, Gravenhunger, Dorrington, Ireland's Cross, Bearstone and part of Onneley

REGULATION 15 SUBMISSION VERSION – MAY 2018



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# 1 FOREWORD

1.1 The Localism Act of 2011 gave new rights and powers to communities. It introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level. It is a powerful tool in that it has statutory weight and must be taken as a material consideration in planning decision-making.

1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework highlights that Neighbourhood Planning gives communities power to develop a shared vision for their area and that Neighbourhood Plans can help to deliver sustainable development. Neighbourhood Plans can influence local planning decisions as part of the statutory development framework.

1.3 All Neighbourhood Plans must:

- have appropriate regard to national planning policy;
- contribute to sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area;
- be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

1.4 The Woore Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole Parish of Woore, which includes Woore, Pipe Gate, Gravenhunger, Dorrington, Ireland's Cross, Bearstone and part of Onneley. At the time of the preparation of the Woore Neighbourhood Plan, the adopted Local Plan for the area was the Shropshire Core Strategy and the Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document (SAMDEV). The Core Strategy sets out Shropshire Council's vision, strategic objectives and the broad spatial strategy to guide future development and growth in Shropshire during the period to 2026. The Core Strategy was adopted in February 2011.

1.5 The Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document (SAMDEV) was adopted in December 2015 and sets out proposals for the use of land and policies to guide future development in order to help to deliver the Vision and Objectives of the Core Strategy for the period up to 2026.

1.6 A partial review of the Local Plan 2016-2036 is currently underway. The purpose of this review is to update elements of the plan and to ensure that Shropshire can respond flexibly to changing circumstances in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The review will include the consideration of housing requirements (including objectively assessed need), employment land requirements, the distribution of development and a review of green belt boundaries, as part of the consideration of strategic options to deliver new development.

1.7 When the Woore Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' it will become part of the Local Development Framework alongside the Core Strategy and SAMDEV, and alongside the Partial Review (when adopted). The Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help determine planning applications within the Woore designated neighbourhood area.

1.8 The Core Strategy highlights that development will be directed largely to Shrewsbury, the market towns and other key centres. In the rural areas there will be a "rural rebalance" approach, accommodating around 35% of Shropshire's residential development over the plan period. Development and investment will be located predominantly in community hubs and community clusters, and will contribute to social and economic vitality. Outside these settlements, development will primarily be for economic diversification and to meet the needs of the local communities for affordable housing. In SAMDEV Woore, Irelands Cross and Pipe Gate are defined as a Community Hub reflecting the links between the three areas within the parish.

1.9 Both the Core Strategy and SAMDEV are extremely supportive of Neighbourhood Plans, as is the emerging Local Plan review. The Core Strategy highlights that Neighbourhood Plans will become part of the Local Development Framework, whilst policies in SAMDEV acknowledge the key role played by Neighbourhood Plans by cross referring to, and where appropriate requiring proposals to take account of the local requirements set out in Neighbourhood Plans. For example, policy MD2: Sustainable Design states that for a development proposal to be considered acceptable it is required to respond positively to local design aspirations, wherever possible, as set out in Neighbourhood Plans. Additionally, SAMDEV states that Community Hub and Community Cluster settlements should have regard to the policies of any Neighbourhood Plans adopted by Shropshire Council.

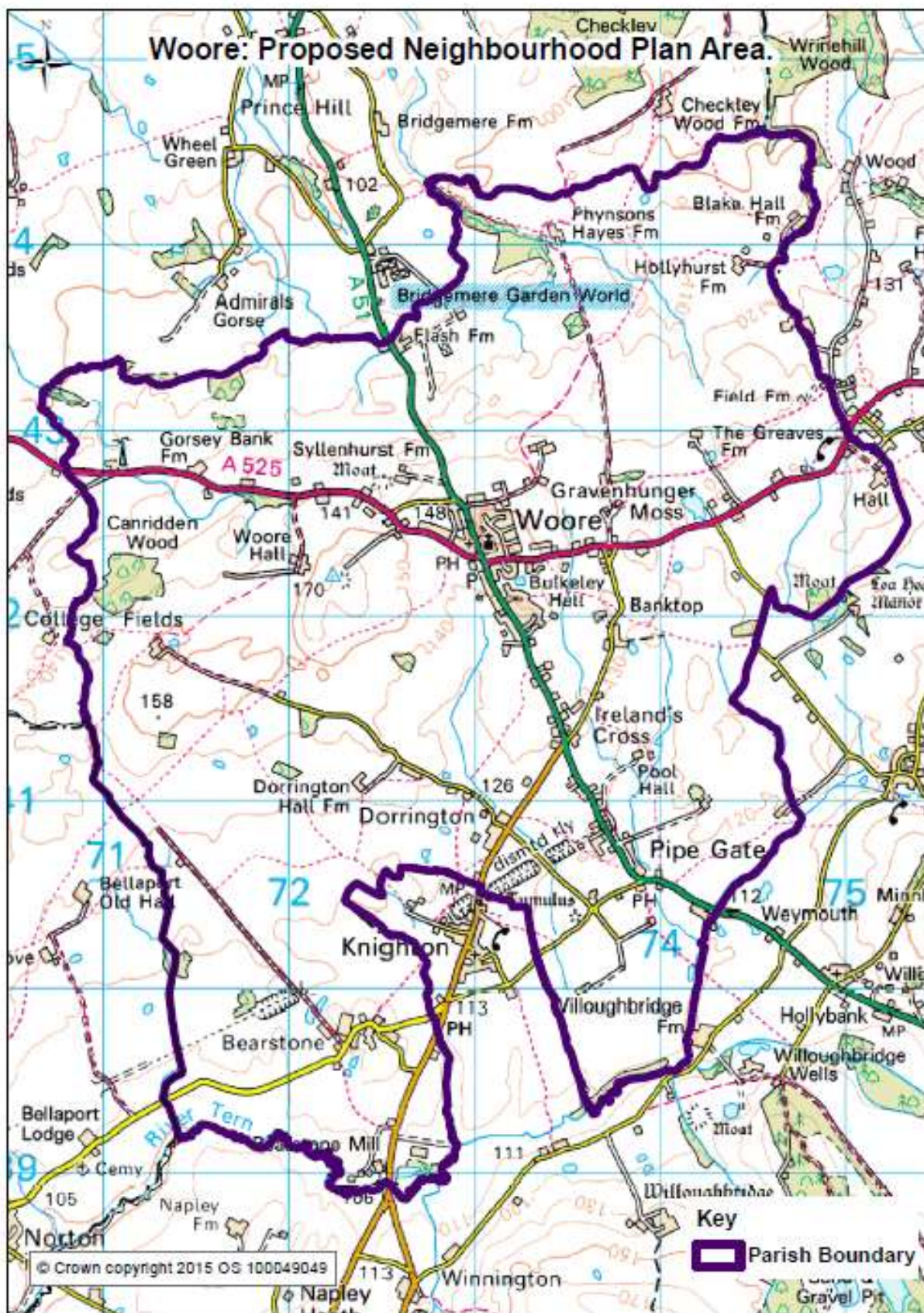
1.10 The Woore Neighbourhood Plan was produced following a resolution to undertake a Plan at the Parish Council meeting of March 2014 although work did not fully start on developing the plan until March 2016, when a public meeting was held and a steering group was formed. The steering group included Woore Parish Councillors and local volunteers, who consulted and listened to the community on a range of issues that influence the well-being, sustainability and long term preservation of the parish community. Every effort has been made to ensure that the vision, aims, objectives and policies of the Woore Neighbourhood Plan reflect the views of the majority of the local residents, whilst having regard to local and national policies.

1.11 The production of the Plan has enabled local people to contribute towards determining how land in the parish should be used in the future in a way which benefits the whole community. The Plan will ensure that new development is coordinated and appropriate to Woore Parish. The Woore Neighbourhood Plan provides a vision for the future of the village and a set of objectives and policies to support this vision from now until 2036. The types of land use covered by the Plan include housing, employment, community facilities, and the environment.

1.12 The Neighbourhood Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the residents of Woore Parish, and interested parties and landowners. Shropshire Planning department has also been consulted throughout the process and have provided information and advice.

1.13 Figure A shows the Woore Parish boundary and this has been formally designated as a Neighbourhood Plan Area through an application made by Woore Parish Council (a relevant body for the purpose of Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 Part 2 S6 and approved by Shropshire Council. The designated area was approved by Shropshire Council on 10th February 2016.

1.14 Figure A – Woore Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.



## 2 SETTING THE SCENE

### 2.1 History

2.2 Woore is a Civil Parish of about 3,950 acres (1,600 hectares) with a current population of 1,069 (2011 census), and is located at the north east corner (or 'pan handle') of Shropshire unitary authority. The village stands at the intersection of the roads from Stone (Staffordshire) to Nantwich (Cheshire) and Newcastle-under-Lyme (Staffordshire) to Audlem (Cheshire). The Staffordshire and Cheshire borders lie close by, just over a mile to the south and east of the village centre on the Stone and Newcastle roads (A51 and A525) with Staffordshire, and another mile to the west and north on the roads to Audlem and Nantwich (A525 and A51) with Cheshire. Indeed the name Woore means "on the border" or "boundary" (either Ancient Celtic, or Anglo-Saxon: "Oure").

2.3 While its position in Shropshire seems odd when viewed on the map, it is easy to see on the ground why the land, situated on a commanding ridge overlooking lower ground beyond, owed allegiance to the Earl of Shrewsbury rather than belonging to neighbouring counties – it would be easily defensible. The parish is the most northerly in Shropshire and the only road links between Woore Parish and the rest of Shropshire pass through adjoining counties. The village is also the farthest place in Shropshire from the centre of the county near Cantlop. From the highest point in the village the Wrekin is easily visible to the south, while to the north one overlooks the whole Cheshire Plain, with the Clwyd Hills beyond, and Beeston Castle visible on a clear day.

2.4 The civil parish includes several other hamlets and villages including Pipe Gate, Gravenhunger, Dorrington, Ireland's Cross, Bearstone and part of Onneley (the remainder being in the neighbouring Staffordshire Parish of Madeley). It can be described as two medium-sized villages and a number of hamlets. The nearest significant towns to the Parish of Woore are Market Drayton, Whitchurch, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Nantwich and Crewe.

2.5 The Domesday Book (1086) entry for Woore ("Waure") shows that the manor was held not from Earl Roger of Shrewsbury, but as a tenant-in-chief from the King, by William Malbedeng (William Malbank), and contained a large hall within the moated site at what is now Syllenhurst Farm– this contrasts with neighbouring Audlem, described as referring only to fields, with woodland, agriculture and hunting. Lying in the Hundred of Hodnet, there were 5 households in Woore itself, the value of which to the Lord was assessed for tax at 5 shillings, with woodland for 60 pigs. William Malbank also held land at Dorrington (2 households with land for 3 ploughlands, woodland for 100 pigs, valued at 4 shillings), Gravenhunger (2 households with land for 4 ploughlands, valued at 6 shillings) and Onneley (no households, valued at less than 2 shillings). He had succeeded a pre-Conquest Saxon Lord, Edric. In later medieval times the most notable family of Woore was the de Bulkeleyes.

2.6 Syllenhurst Moat is a protected site, scheduled in 1999, comprising a medieval fishpond, moated site and moat. The fishpond is so large that it is believed it may have been used commercially as well as to supply the house with food. The site is oblong in form, widens into a small lake on the north side, and on the south it apparently extended around an adjacent square area. Old foundations of a building were found c1899. The moat has been drained and there is no indication that the former pond on the north side was not an original feature. There is no evidence of the moat having extended further to the south. Water to supply the moat and the fishpond came from the higher ground to the south through a channel, or leat, which joined the moat at its SW corner. This channel has been re-cut and forms part of the modern drainage system, and is not therefore included in the scheduling. The modern drainage channel cuts through the base of the west arm of the moat and connects with drains in the east part of the fishpond.

2.7 Number 15 (The Tudor House) The Square is a Grade II Listed house, now shop, of the early 17th century, remodelled in 1905. It is described as "Planted timbers with plastered infill over timber frame on painted sandstone plinth. Plain tile roof. Baffle entry plan of 2 framed bays. Two storeys. Barge boards with incised ornament, pierced feet and finials. Central 19th century brick ridge stack. South West front: pair of first floor 3-light C19 wooden casements and ground floor canted bay to right. Central early 20th century boarded door with diamond-ledged overlight and gabled porch with octagonal wooden posts, Tudor archway with date in spandrels, planted timbers in gable and incised barge boards. Shop front extending around the corner to left with lean-to roof, plate glass windows and boarded door set at an angle at the corner".

2.8 Also Grade II Listed are Woore Manor, at the centre of Woore on the Crossroads (early and late 19th century with 20th century additions); Dorrington Farmhouse of the late 16th/early 17th century; the mid-17th century Oak Farmhouse at Dorrington, remodelled in the second half of the 19th century; the 17th and 18th century Gravenhunger Hall and adjoining outbuilding; the mid-16th century Bearstone Grange (Farmhouse); and of course St. Leonard's, Church of England, Parish Church whose unusual white plastered walls make it probably the iconic image of the village. The other large house in the parish, Bulkeley Hall on Newcastle Road, is not Listed.

2.9 St. Leonard's church was constructed in about 1830-31, to serve what were then five townships of the Shropshire portion of the ancient parish of Mucklestone in Staffordshire, and is of an unconventional white plaster Italianate design. It is a Grade II listed building. Designed by George Hamilton of Stone, the bell tower is an Edwardian addition by Chapman and Snape of Newcastle under Lyme. The tower has not been safe to ring in regularly since the late 1980s, with the bells now replaced by a timed recording.

### 2.10 Full Schedule of Listed Buildings and Structures in Woore Parish

- i. Woore Manor, Audlem Road, Woore - Grade: II
- ii. Former Font, approximately 15 Metres South of Church of St Leonard, Nantwich Road, Woore - Grade: II
- iii. Milestone on Bearstone Bridge, B5026, Woore, Mucklestone - Grade: II
- iv. Bearstone Bridge, B5026, Woore - Grade: II
- v. Oak Farmhouse, Dorrington, Woore - Grade: II
- vi. The Tudor House, The Square, Woore - Grade: II
- vii. Church of St Leonard, Nantwich Road, Woore – Grade: II
- viii. Dorrington Hall Farmhouse, Woore, Dorrington – Grade: II
- ix. Bearstone Grange, Woore, Bearstone – Grade: II
- x. Gravenhunger Hall and Adjoining Outbuilding, Woore, Gravenhunger – Grade: II
- xi. Lea Head Moated Site, Lea Head, Woore – Scheduled
- xii. Bowl Barrow 120 metres south west of Dorrington Cottage, Pipe Gate, Woore – Scheduled
- xiii. Syllenhurst Moated Site and fishpond, Syllenhurst Farm, Woore - Scheduled

2.11 The A51 is the old London to Chester post and stage coach road and the former Swan Inn, recently converted into flats, had stables for changes of horses in the centre of Woore itself, on the site now occupied by the parish church opposite the Swan.

2.12 In 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* described Woore like this: “**WOORE**, or Wore, a township and a chapelry in Mucclstone Parish, Salop. The township lies 2¾ miles WSW of Madeley r. station, and 6¾ NE of Market-Drayton; and has a post-office under Market-Drayton. Acres, 5,291. Pop., 783. Houses, 169. The chapelry was constituted in 1841. Pop., 839. Houses, 184. The living is a vicarage in the diocese of Lichfield. Value, £96. Patron, G. Kenrick, Esq. The church was built in 1830. There is a national school.”

2.13 The village was served by the North Staffordshire Railway's Stoke to Market Drayton Line, with a railway station at Pipe Gate for Woore. Services opened in 1870, but reduced to two trains per day from the mid-1920s. Express Dairies had a creamery with private siding access to Pipe Gate, allowing its transport partner the Great Western Railway to provide mile trains to the facility, for onward scheduling to London via Market Drayton. Passenger services ceased from 1956, and the line was lifted in 1966 after the closure of the creamery, following review under the Beeching Axe. A large section of it, from the border with the hamlet of Knighton in Staffordshire, is now a footpath, in the ownership of Loggerheads Parish Council, of which Knighton is a part.

2.14 Woore Racecourse (closed 1963) was an English National Hunt horse racing venue, situated in the parish, 2 miles south of Woore village in Pipe Gate, on farmland leased to the racecourse company. The track was a mile round, with very sharp left hand bends. Horses had to gallop over a bridge between the last two jumps. As the course was constantly turning, it paid to be close to the rails, according to former jockeys. Since the course was also used for grazing, it was regularly covered with cow pats. Races are first recorded at Woore in 1883, with the site moving to Pipe Gate in 1885. Woore had its most successful period between the World Wars, when, despite the existence of just a single, wooden grandstand, the meeting became popular with National Hunt fans, sometimes

drawing crowds in excess of 1500. In 1937, King George VI, attended to watch his horse, Slam, take part in the Betton Hurdle, in which it finished fourth.

2.15 The nearby railway station provided access to the course, but when passenger services to this station stopped, attendance became more difficult. Despite this, expansion of the course continued, with a restaurant added in 1957. The final meeting was held on 1 June 1963, although it was not known it would be the last at the time. The Levy Board had announced a couple of months previously that it would be withdrawing funding from Woore, along with several other courses. Today very little remains that suggests the existence of a racecourse and the land is now used by Bearstone Stud's breeding operation, maintaining the racing link to the area.

## **2.16 Woore Today**

2.17 Bridgemere Garden World, now owned by Wyevale Garden Centres, is situated to the north of Woore itself, just over the border in Cheshire, and is a major local employer, as is TT Pumps on the road to Onneley. Another leading business in the parish is Bearstone Stud (above).

2.18 The village today is mostly residential with a number of small shops, centred on the Post Office and general store on the village square. Two public houses service the village in Woore itself, with another in Pipe Gate, along with one modern red brick primary school and two churches, the smaller of which is a Methodist church, popularly known as "the Chapel on the corner", and the larger of which is the white plastered parish church.

2.19 Woore Cricket Club, of the North Staffordshire and South Cheshire League, play at the Falcon Field in the village, which has a dramatic slope downwards from the Pavilion and Falcon Inn sides. The Tennis Club has recently acquired its own premises off London Road, while the Bowls Club has for many years been the tenant of the green behind the car park of the former Swan Inn, both recently registered as Community Assets.

2.20 The 2011 Census revealed that there were 462 households in Woore Parish at the time of the Census; the parish had 1069 usual residents and covers an area of 1,600 hectares; 206 households were owner occupiers (owned outright) equating to 44.6% of all households. There were 148 households (32.0%) who owned their home with a mortgage or loan.

2.21 There were 51 households (11.0% of all households) that privately rented their home from a landlord. There were also 5 households (1.1% of all households) who privately rented from a landlord classified as 'Other'. 4 households were renting social housing from the Council totalling 0.9% of all households. There were also 34 households (7.4%) renting social housing from 'Other' sources.

2.22 In Woore Parish there were 291 detached dwellings representing 61.5% of all dwellings. There were also 120 semi-detached and 48 terraced dwellings equating to 25.4% and 10.1% respectively. 11.5% of all households were one person pensioner households. 21.8% of households in the area had dependent children, 85 being couple households and 8 lone parent households (with dependent children), which equates to 1.7% of all households.

2.23 17.6% of the population in Woore Parish are self-employed, and 11.1% work from home compared with 5.6% for Shropshire. The car is used as the main means of travel to work for 48.9%, while 1.7% uses public transport.

2.24 This low public transport figure is not surprising, given that from April 2018 no public transport either runs from or to Woore. Residents' responses to the questionnaires circulated in preparation of this Plan show that the absence of a decent public transport provision is a major concern in the Parish of Woore, as are the reported frequent breaches of the traffic speed limit on the main roads through the village, which are monitored by the Parish Council using a Moveable Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS), which is rotated between a number of key positions.

2.25 They also noted that in the last 20 years the regular presence of a doctor's surgery visiting the Victory Hall had ceased, and there was no pharmacy in the parish, both these despite rising population figures. The village Primary School currently has 57 children on the roll (May 2017), which although not full to capacity overall, masks



admissions in the Early Years to the PAN (Planned Admission Number) in recent school years. These larger numbers will work through the school leading to it being potentially fully subscribed in future years, even without additional development.

2.26 Woore Parish had developed very gradually over the centuries, but very rapidly in the last few years, and residents are keen to ensure that a measured pace of growth now resumes in order that village services and infrastructure can keep up with demand. The Census figures for 1981 (335 households), 1991 (392), 2001 (408) and 2011 (462), with a growth of population only from 991 to 1,069, illustrate this slow rate of growth, as does the figure of 783 a century before. Since 2011, however, the Shropshire Council household number for Council Tax shows a rise to 572 households. The population figure for 2011 of 1,069 included 166 under-18 year-olds. As the Electoral Register for 2017 stood at 1,043 adults, it is clear that, even making no allowance for under registration, the number of households in the parish has grown by over 20% in just over 5 years.

2.27 These additional houses are largely, but not exclusively, concentrated on the north edge of Woore itself, facing the Syllenhurst Moat site across Candle Lane (55 houses), and on a former industrial site in Pipe Gate (38 houses). A further 50 additional dwellings have been approved but not yet built including 20 near The Grove, on the edge of the gap between Woore and Ireland's Cross, 10 at Ireland's Cross itself, and 10 on the former Pipe Gate Station site.

2.28 There is no mains gas provision in the parish.

## **3 THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OF THE PARISH**

### **3.1 Overview**

3.2 All land outside the settlement boundaries of the main villages and hamlets is essentially Open Countryside, although within the existing Community Hub, and this accounts for about 90% of the area of the parish. The key characteristics of the landscape are a gently rolling topography, prominent hedgerow boundaries with standard trees, a mix of pasture, arable fields, horse paddocks and small bodies of water, including the Severn Trent Reservoir to the West of Woore itself.

### **3.3 Landscape**

3.4 Largely consisting of timbered pastures, the key characteristics of the parish are:

- Rolling lowland
- A dense network of hedgerow trees
- Ancient woodland character
- Pastoral land use
- Small-medium scale landscape with filtered views

3.5 Occurring only in the extreme north-eastern corner of Shropshire, in this area around the Parish of Woore, this is a lowland landscape of rolling glacial tills, where the heavy overlying soils support medium intensity dairy farming.

3.6 Dense lines of trees along hedgerows and water courses represent one of the defining features of this landscape type. Oak forms the dominant hedgerow tree species, although Ash is also common in some areas, and Willow predominates along the watercourses. A number of blocks of ancient woodland, widespread wet flushes and numerous small field ponds, many of which probably occupy former marl pits, add further ecological value. The nature of the tree cover also plays an important role in structuring the landscape, creating filtered views and a small-medium scale.

3.7 This landscape is also characterised by varied field systems and a complex settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads and wayside cottages with occasional villages.

3.8 These landscapes have complex histories. Field systems derived from localised medieval open fields exist around the villages. Beyond them, extensive areas appear to have been cleared and enclosed ('assarted') from woodland/ wood pasture and 'waste' (common rough pasture), creating a pattern of dispersed farmsteads set within a matrix of winding lanes and irregular fields.

3.9 A number of deer parks were also established during the medieval period, such as the one that once existed to the south of Bellaport Old Hall, north-west of Norton in Hales.

3.10 Dairy farming became increasingly important in north Shropshire during the 16th and 17th centuries, and was dependent upon careful stock breeding and grassland management. Enclosed pastures provided the best means of meeting these requirements and, partially for this reason, enclosure of the open fields had been largely completed by 1600.

3.11 The clusters of cottages and associated smallholdings, which exist in some locations, suggest that encroachment onto the remaining commons also occurred during this period. Enclosure of the last pieces of common land was completed between the 18th and early 19th centuries, creating regular geometric fields subdivided by straight thorn hedges.

3.12 During the later part of the 20th century, intensification of the traditional dairying regimes has resulted in the amalgamation of some fields.

## 4 CONSULTATION

4.1 The Woore Neighbourhood Plan is a community plan and must derive its vision, objectives and policies from the community. From the outset the Parish Council were determined that the residents should be kept informed and given every opportunity to inform the Steering Group of their views. Communication and consultation, in various forms, have played a major role in formulating the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2 It was considered important to -

- Promote a high degree of awareness of the project
- Encourage everyone to contribute to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Promote consultation events and provide regular updates on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan and its development

4.3 Key to this programme was publicity to gain residents engagement. This was gained via public meetings, press releases in local newspapers, drop in events, displays at village events, postal information, and electronic media via the Parish Council website and a separate Neighbourhood Plan website. Use was also made of the Woore and Pipe Gate Community Facebook pages to engage the community.

4.4 The proposed Neighbourhood Area for the Woore Neighbourhood Plan was subject to consultation from 25<sup>th</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and was formally designated on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

4.5 An initial questionnaire was delivered to every household in the parish in December 2016. The questionnaire was used as a basis on which to develop the vision and objectives and policy themes. The questionnaire can be seen on the following web link :-

<http://www.wooreparishcouncil.org/shared/attachments.asp?f=5f38d80e%2Dad61%2D47b2%2D9094%2Dea1bd2ac9b5b%2Edocx1> or [http://www.woorenpt.org.uk/questionnaire/Woore First Questionnaire - Final.pdf](http://www.woorenpt.org.uk/questionnaire/Woore%20First%20Questionnaire%20-%20Final.pdf).

4.6 168 responses were received, a response rate of 30%. The questionnaire asked a number of questions, such as what the respondents liked and disliked about where they live, what threats they foresaw to the parish, what issues were important to them, and what development they would or wouldn't support.

4.7 When asked what residents like about living in Woore Parish, overwhelmingly the answer was the rural environment followed by the village amenities. When asked what they didn't like about living in the parish, the largest responses were the dislike of traffic, over development of housing, and the lack of amenities and facilities. The main threats to the future of Woore Parish were seen to be the over development of housing, lack of infrastructure and increase in traffic, a lack of amenities and a lack of affordable housing.

4.8 When asked what development they would support, the main response was small scale business expansion, followed by small scale housing development, improved infrastructure, low cost housing, and better recreational facilities and amenities. Respondents were asked what development they wouldn't support. The main response to this was large housing estates, industrial development and green field developments.

4.9 Respondents were asked for their vision for the Parish of Woore, and the main responses were to retain the present rural character, have better amenities and a thriving community.

4.10 Once an initial vision and objectives had been drafted, a further and longer questionnaire was sent out to residents in June 2017. The questionnaire can be seen on the following weblink:-

[http://www.woorenpt.org.uk/questionnaire/Woore Big Questionnaire.pdf](http://www.woorenpt.org.uk/questionnaire/Woore%20Big%20Questionnaire.pdf).

4.11 304 responses to the questionnaire were received, a response rate of 54%, indicating a great deal of interest and support for the Neighbourhood Plan. 92% of respondents completely or mainly agreed with the proposed vision, and an average of 98% of respondents agreed with the proposed objectives. Following the questionnaires, drop in events were held to feedback the results to the community, provide more information on the Neighbourhood Plan, and highlight the policies that were being drafted.

4.12 The Woore Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to statutory consultees, and other consultees, landowners and developers and interested bodies as required under Regulation 14, Town and Country Planning, England Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (General) 2012. The draft plan was consulted upon from 22<sup>nd</sup> January – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018, and a number of amendments were made in light of the comments received.

4.13 Further information on consultation undertaken throughout the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan can be seen in the Consultation Statement, at <http://www.woorenpt.org.uk>

## 5 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 The vision and objectives are based on the key issues raised by local people during the initial stages of the consultation process. They have been summarised and refined by the Steering Group to form the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.2 An initial questionnaire asked residents for their vision of how they would like to see the parish in 2036. The largest response was that the rural character would be retained, and that there would be better amenities and a thriving community, with small developments and appropriate infrastructure.

5.3 The vision for Woore Parish is:-

### VISION

The Parish of Woore will continue to be a vibrant, thriving community with improved facilities and amenities for all its residents and visitors. New developments of an appropriate scale will have provided a mix of housing to reflect local needs, along with necessary improvements to local infrastructure. Developments will be sensitively located and designed to ensure that the cherished natural environment and rural character of the parish is maintained.

5.4 Following on from the vision, the following objectives have been identified, and the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan seek to deliver these objectives:

### OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that any new housing developments be relatively small, unobtrusive and reflect local needs
- To maintain the rural character of the Parish of Woore respecting the sensitive gaps between settlements
- To support a thriving village centre and enhance the rural economy
- To improve the local infrastructure
- To protect and enhance community services and amenities
- To protect and enhance the natural environment

## 6 HOUSING AND DESIGN POLICIES

The Woore Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To ensure that any new housing developments be relatively small, unobtrusive and reflect local needs.

### **POLICY HOU1 – SCALE OF NEW HOUSING**

Development boundaries around the individual parts of the community hub of Woore, Irelands Cross and Pipe Gate are defined and shown on Figure B. Within the development boundaries, new housing development consistent with housing numbers set by Shropshire Council for Woore as a Community Hub within the Local Plan Review will be supported. In order to meet local housing needs, and to remain on a scale appropriate to the existing character of Woore Parish, it is envisaged that this figure will be for around 30 dwellings from 2016-2036, incorporating small scale residential developments of up to ten dwellings per development.

### **POLICY HOU2 – NEW HOUSING LOCATION**

Within the development boundaries, development will be supported on suitable sites which:-

- a) does not adversely affect local landscape character and visual amenity; and/ or
- b) maintains the sensitive green gaps as defined in policy GAP1; and/ or
- c) are located on brownfield land; and/or
- d) fill a small, restricted gap in the continuity of existing frontage buildings; and/or
- e) are a conversion of existing buildings; and/or
- f) replace an existing building; and/or
- g) provides for evidenced local affordable housing through rural exception sites either within or on the edge of the development boundaries; and/or
- h) does not adversely affect heritage assets or their settings.

Outside the development boundaries the parish is designated as open countryside, where new development will be strictly controlled in line with local and national policies.

#### **6.1 Evidence and Justification**

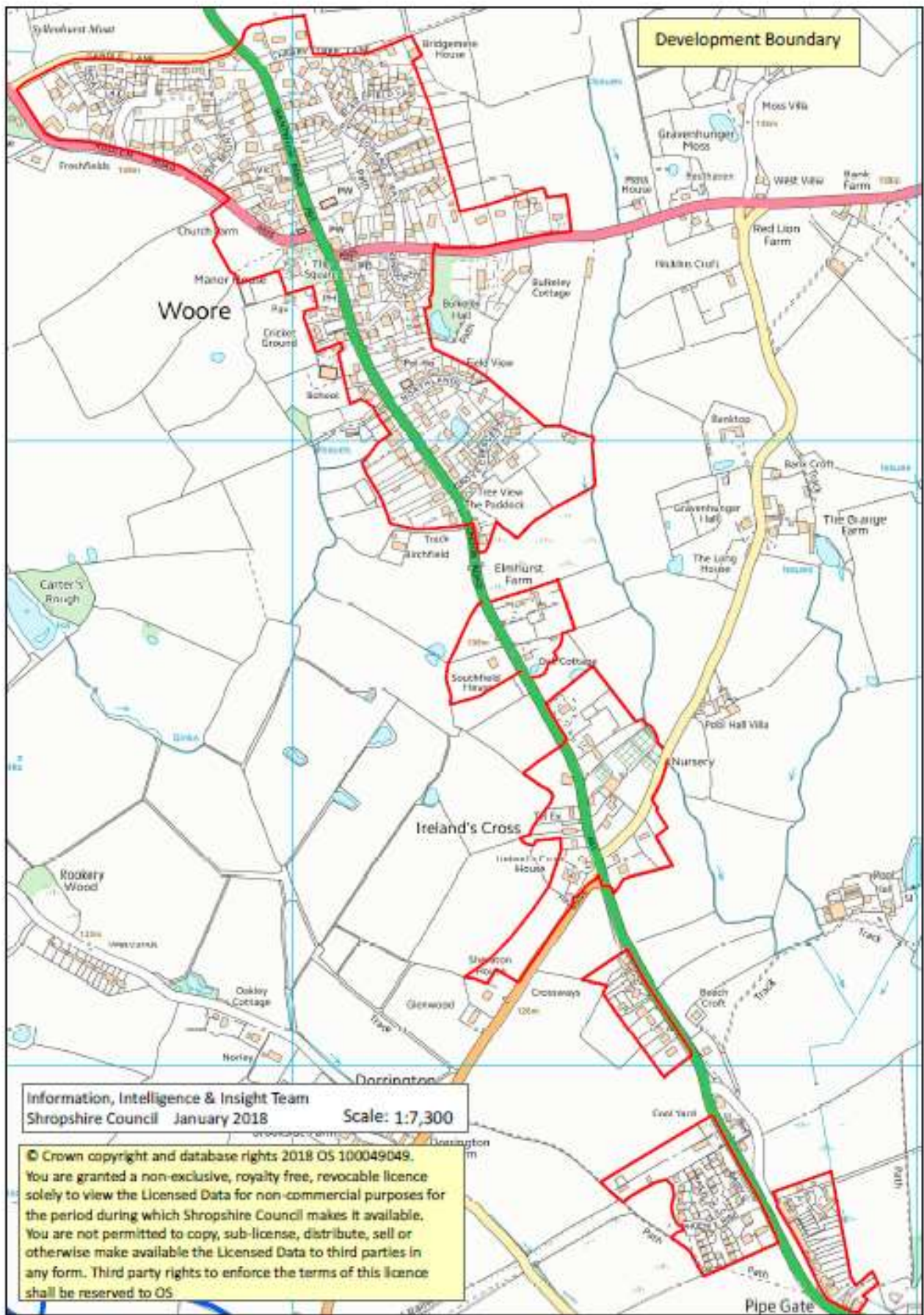
6.2 Woore Parish is a rural settlement. This Neighbourhood Plan recognises that in order to maintain a sustainable and flourishing community, some housing development will be appropriate to meet local housing needs. However, one of the main responses from the consultations was that people value the open countryside setting of Woore Parish, and the rural character, and it is the aim of the Neighbourhood Plan that new housing development will remain of a scale and in locations appropriate to the rural location.

6.3 The Shropshire Local Plan currently comprises the Core Strategy (2011) and the Site Allocations and Management Development (SAMDEV) Plan (adopted in 2015). The Local Plan is currently under review. The overall strategic approach of focussing growth in Shropshire's county town, market towns and key centres whilst enabling some controlled development in rural areas to maintain local sustainability will remain as the preferred development strategy. In smaller rural areas (including community hubs and clusters) development is proposed to be managed in future through criteria based policies, with the delivery of local housing appropriate to the role, size and function of each settlement.

6.4 The adopted SAMDEV plan highlighted that Woore, Irelands Cross and Pipe Gate are a Community Hub, which are the focus for new housing in the rural area. SAMDEV also noted, however, that the parish has provided for significant housing growth through the North Shropshire Local Plan, with housing development on two significant sites providing 75 homes. The SAMDEV plan states that there is limited potential for future development of approximately 15 dwellings over the plan period to 2026 which will be delivered through limited infilling, conversions and small groups of houses which may be acceptable on suitable sites within the villages, avoiding

ribbon development along the A51. Any development must respect the sensitive gap between Woore, Irelands Cross and Pipe Gate.

6.5 Figure B – Map of Development Boundary



6.6 To inform the Local Plan Review, Shropshire Council published a Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need in July 2016. National Planning Guidance stresses that the reasoning and evidence informing an emerging Local Plan process can be relevant for Neighbourhood Plans, for example up-to-date housing needs evidence is relevant to the question of whether a housing supply policy in a neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. The Shropshire Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need report concluded that the housing need for Shropshire over 2016-2036 is 25,178 dwellings. Consultation has been undertaken on three different approaches to fulfil the housing requirement – Moderate Growth, Significant Growth or High Growth. In the Consultation on Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development (October 2017) Shropshire Council have proposed that they plan for the ‘High Growth’ option. This gives a figure of 28,750 dwellings, equivalent to an average delivery rate of 1,430 dwellings per year for the whole of Shropshire. Existing housing completions, commitments and allocations amount to 18,583 dwellings, so the remaining net additional housing required is 10,347 dwellings, with figures for the rural area being 7875 additional dwellings, with the net additional housing required being 2,560 by 2036. The distribution of development is planned to be ‘Urban Focused’, with the Rural Areas to provide around 27.5% of the overall figure.

6.7 Although the Local Plan Review is some way off adoption, and Neighbourhood Plans need to be in general conformity with adopted Local Plans, it makes sense to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is ‘future proofed’, uses the most up to date housing need evidence, and as such reflects the preferred policy direction of Shropshire Council.

6.8 Taking into consideration household projections, census data, and the local plan, the following figures give an appropriate quantum of housing for Woore Parish:-

- Shropshire Local Plan Review proportionate figure: **66** (Using the 2011 census data, it can be calculated that there are 54,905 households in the rural area of Shropshire, and 462 households in Woore Parish – 0.84% of total households in the rural area. If Woore Parish was to take a 0.84% proportion of the proposed 7875 dwellings to be delivered in the rural area over the plan period of 2016-2036 this would equate to 66 dwellings).
- DCLG Household Projections: (It is projected that by 2036 Shropshire households will increase to 154,000 from 136,000 in 2016– an average increase of 900 households per annum. Woore Parish has 0.35 % share of all households in Shropshire, which equates to a rise to 539 dwellings from 476 - a figure of 63 households over the plan period. With a ratio of 1.02 households per dwelling, this equates to **62** dwellings over the plan period).

6.9 Over 80 households were built or started on the Audlem Road and Phoenix Rise Estates between 2010 and 2012. Between 2012- 2017 there was an increase of 59 dwellings in Woore Parish (to 563), or 11.8 dwellings per annum. Projecting forward to 2036, a figure of 224 dwellings would be arrived at if this rate continued over the plan period. However, in the context of the historical growth of the parish, this recent level of growth represents a significant increase to the population of Woore – a fact reflected in the adopted SAMDEV plan that highlighted that Woore Parish has provided for significant housing growth in recent years, and that there is limited potential for future development of approximately 15 dwellings over the period to 2026. In the light of Woore, Ireland’s Cross and Pipe Gate’s designation as a Community Hub, and the Local Plan’s urban focus for new development, it is not the Local Plan’s strategy for development to carry on at this scale.

6.10 From April 2016 to April 2107 there have been 9 residential completions. There are 50 dwellings committed, taking the completions and commitments up to April 2017 to 59. This figure can be deducted from the potential range of 62-66 units, making a requirement for between 3-7 dwellings for the remainder of the plan period (up to 2036). The SAMDEV plan indicated that there was limited potential up to 2026 for approximately 15 dwellings. With the figures now required up to 2036, and taking into account Shropshire Council’s ‘high growth’ ambitions, it would seem appropriate for a further figure of approximately 15 in the period 2026-2036, being 30 houses in total for the plan period, which is over and above the likely range of 3-7 dwellings for Woore Parish quoted above, reflecting its designation as a community hub.

6.11 As part of the Local Plan Review Shropshire Council have agreed that in rural areas they fully support the principle of local housing requirements being derived in discussion with the local community through the Parish Council, and that are supported by evidence. Woore Parish Council consider the figure of around 30 new houses



up to 2036 is an appropriate figure for the Parish, reflecting Woore as a Community Hub; population figures and household projections; the approach in the adopted SAMDEV; and the policy direction of the emerging Local Plan partial review which has a high growth, but urban focussed principle for the delivery of development. Whilst a figure of around 30 dwellings is considered to be appropriate, the policy recognises, however, that should further evidence of need come forward through the Local Plan Review, Shropshire Council, through the emerging Local Plan, may seek to propose an additional housing requirement on to the Community Hub in discussion with the Parish Council.

6.12 In the rural area, community hubs and community clusters are settlements that provide a range of services, and which are the focus for new housing within the rural area. The Local Plan Review has listed draft criteria for development within the hubs and clusters and indicates that in order to provide greater certainty on the scale and location of development in each Community Hub, they will have development boundaries and a residential guideline. The former North Shropshire Local Plan had defined settlement boundaries which have been adapted to reflect the recent growth which has taken place in the parish. These Neighbourhood Plan policies reflects the approach of both the adopted SAMDEV and the draft partial review. The draft criteria highlights that development will be encouraged within development boundaries that is of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the character of the settlement and its environs, having regard to local landscape character and visual amenity. Any strategically important gaps between settlements will be maintained. Additionally, the cumulative impact of residential development proposals is a significant policy consideration. Cumulatively, residential proposals, in combination with any existing commitments; allocations or completions since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 must complement the nature, size and character of a settlement.

6.13 The Core Strategy highlights that development in community hubs will be within the village, or on land that has been specifically allocated for development. To prevent fragmented development, windfall development adjoining the village is not acceptable, unless it is an exception site for affordable housing, or other development that is normally allowed in the countryside.

6.14 Local residents and landowners were asked if they had any suggestions for new housing through the Big Questionnaire consultation in June 2017. No specific sites were put forward for consideration at this stage. At the Regulation 14 consultation stage, residents, statutory consultees and landowners and developers were consulted. Their responses can be viewed in the Consultation Statement at <http://www.woorenpt.org.uk> . Two developers replied, and one developer proposed a site for consideration to be included as a housing site in the Neighbourhood Plan. This site, however, was on land that has been registered as a community asset and it was not deemed appropriate or necessary to allocate the site for residential development, which would have been in opposition to the expressed views of the Parish Council in registering the sites, of residents in the Big Questionnaire, and Sport England in its response on the Bowling Green's inclusion in the Plan.

6.15 The Woore Big Questionnaire asked residents that if the housing target for Woore after 2026 is increased, what size they would prefer future housing developments to be. 86% of respondents in total answered either very small developments of 1 or 2 houses at a time (46%) or small developments of fewer than 10 houses (40%). 84% of respondents answered that the priority for development should be the reuse of brownfield land, 74% supported conversions, and 53% supported infill development. Only 6.85% supported the development of greenfield sites.

6.16 It is not therefore considered necessary to allocate further sites for residential development, and no appropriate sites were suggested through the consultation stages. The housing policies will allow for appropriate small scale windfall developments within the village, or rural exception sites to meet the identified need, in line with the Core Strategy, SAMDEV and the Local Plan Review. Any new housing development should be limited in scale, with a maximum of up to ten units, in order to remain in keeping with the scale and character of Woore Parish.

6.17 There was a large positive response to affordable housing in the Woore Big Questionnaire, to the question as to what type of dwellings should be developed. Rural exception sites would therefore be supported in appropriate locations, to help address local housing needs, subject to suitable scale, design, tenure and prioritisation for local needs, as highlighted in Core Strategy policy CS11, which seeks to ensure that development which takes place in the rural area is of community benefit, with local affordable housing a priority.

### **POLICY HOU3 - DESIGN**

New development should take the following into account:

- A. Development adjoining open countryside should provide a sympathetic transition.
- B. All new building shall take account of the topography and natural features of the site to maximise the views from the site to the surrounding areas of countryside and to minimise impact on the skyline.
- C. The orientation of new buildings should be arranged to maintain as far as is possible the views from existing buildings.
- D. New housing should be positioned such that it does not prejudice the amenity of future occupiers or the occupiers of adjacent property by reason of overshadowing, overlooking, visual intrusion, noise and disturbance, odour, or in any other way.
- E. New dwellings will be normally be no more than 2 storeys high, unless such development is appropriate to its setting, topography, and is well designed in its own right.
- F. Dwellings should be of varying designs, house types and sizes, and have individual outside space.
- G. Design should respect the character of the locality and the local vernacular and contribute positively to local distinctiveness.
- H. New developments should take account of eco and environmentally sustainable technology and materials.
- I. Development should support features beneficial to wildlife.
- J. Developments should incorporate a native British mix of plants within their landscaping.

#### **6.18 Evidence and Justification**

6.19 It is important that any new development is of high quality design, enhancing the local character. Woore Parish is set within a rural landscape, with many views of the open countryside. Every effort needs to be adopted to ensure new developments respect this. The National Planning Policy Framework states that developments should respond to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation, highlighting the role that Neighbourhood Plans play in developing design policies reflective of the local area.

6.20 The Woore Big Questionnaire highlighted the support from respondents for houses to be non-uniform in design, to be in keeping with nearby properties, and to have their own garden. Many suggestions of how new developments could be well designed and built were given, with many respondents mentioning the use of environmentally friendly materials and technology, with houses being eco-friendly and energy efficient. Additionally, in order to support local wildlife, new development should support features within their design that are beneficial to wildlife such as bird and bat boxes, appropriate planting, and small gaps in boundary treatments to allow for hedgehogs.

6.21 The questionnaire asked respondents what they considered the maximum number of storeys that should be permitted in new developments. The vast majority, almost 85%, replied that they felt two storey was an appropriate maximum, reflecting the existing character of the parish.

6.22 The Local Plan Review has suggested criteria for community clusters and community hubs, one of which stresses that development should reflect design criteria and policies identified within Neighbourhood Plans, and another that development should respect the qualities of the local landscape and be sympathetic to its character and visual quality.

6.23 Adopted local planning policies recognise the importance of good design, and highlight that it is appropriate for Neighbourhood Plans to have locally distinct design policies. The Core Strategy highlights in policy CS4 (Community Hubs and Community Clusters) that all development should be of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the character of the settlement and its environs. Policy CS6 (Sustainable Design and Development Principles) states that development will be designed to a high quality using sustainable design principles which respect and enhance local distinctiveness and which mitigates and adapts to climate change. Policy MD2: Sustainable Design, in SAMDEV, states that for a development proposal to be considered acceptable it is required to respond positively to local design aspirations, wherever possible, both in terms of visual appearance and how a place functions, as set out in Neighbourhood Plans.

## 7 SENSITIVE GAP POLICY

The Woore Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To maintain the rural character of the Parish of Woore respecting the sensitive gaps between settlements

### **POLICY GAP1 – SENSITIVE GAPS**

In order to maintain the established pattern of development and the distinctive identities of Woore, Irelands Cross and Pipe Gate, new development must minimise the impact on the open character of the sensitive gaps as defined in Figure C. The sensitive gaps should be respected, and unacceptable coalescence levels of the built form avoided.

The sensitive gaps are designated as open countryside, where new development will be strictly controlled in line with local and national policies.

#### **7.1 Evidence and Justification**

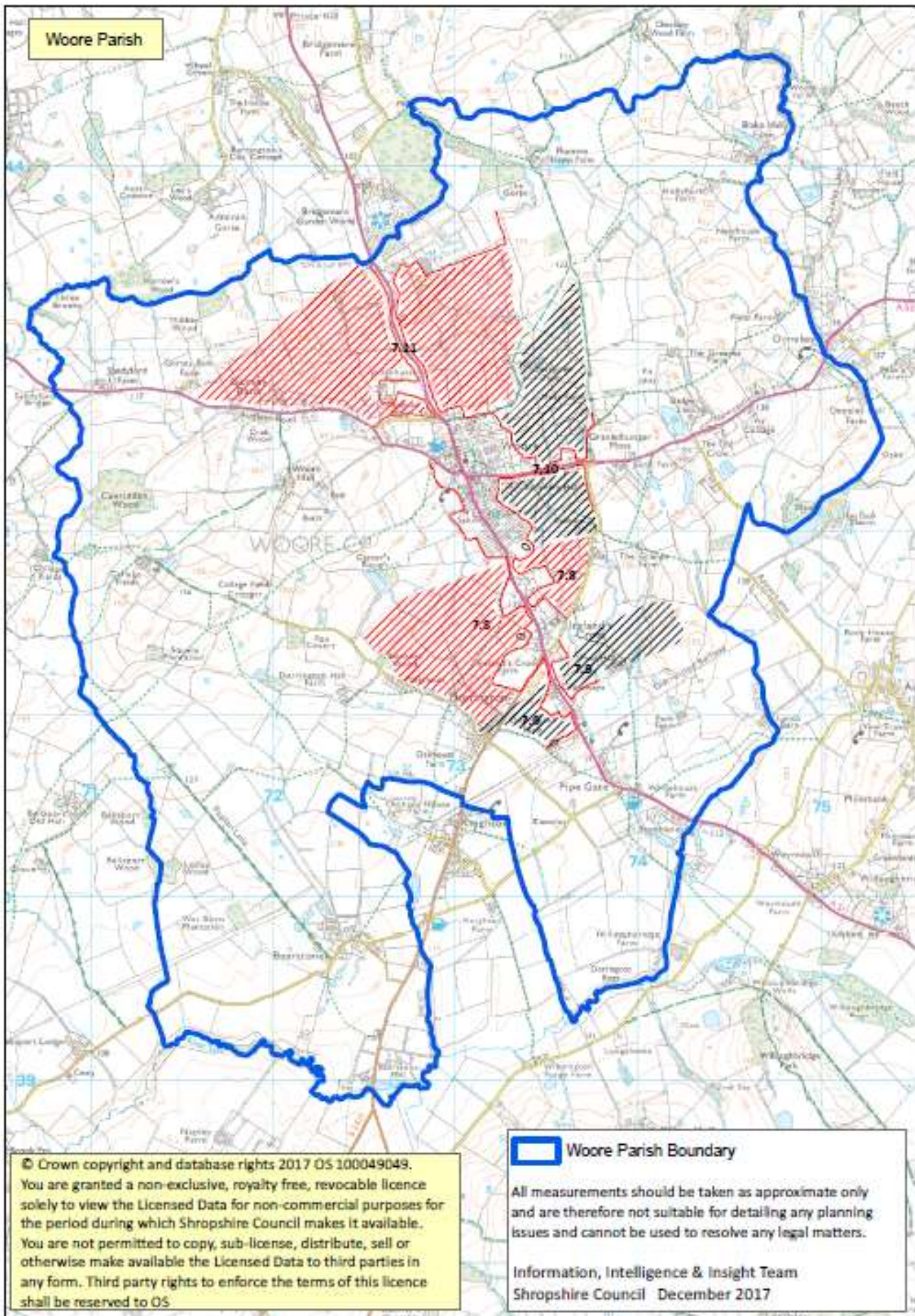
7.2 The maintenance and enhancement of land between individual settlements (Separation Gaps) has been established as a priority for Woore Parish. The Shropshire Local Plan states that any development must respect the sensitive gaps between Woore, Irelands Cross and Pipe Gate to prevent the coalescence of the settlements, and that ribbon development along the A51 must be avoided. The adopted Core Strategy and the Shropshire Local Plan Review has highlighted that the policy approach is that the rural area between community clusters is considered as countryside, and that the integrity of any strategically important gaps between settlements will be protected.

7.3 The Local Plan Review indicates that Neighbourhood Plans will allow communities to provide further local context to the criteria based policies within Community Hubs and Community Clusters. Indeed, members of the Neighbourhood Planning Team were advised by planning officers that such a designation could usefully be included in a Neighbourhood Plan. With this in mind, the Woore Big Questionnaire asked respondents which local areas they considered to be sensitive gaps which should be protected under the Neighbourhood Plan. The results of the questionnaire showed that the majority of respondents were in favour of having a policy designating sensitive gaps. The most popular were between Woore and Bridgemere Nurseries, and between Woore and Irelands Cross.

7.4 The Sensitive Gaps identified in the Plan should be preserved as open countryside. Those between Woore and Ireland's Cross and between Ireland's Cross and Pipe Gate separate the main areas of settlement identified in the Local Plan, while the area North of Woore towards the county boundary South of Bridgemere Nurseries has been called for as a Green gap by residents, as has that East of Woore towards Gravenhunger, where a recent Inspector's report on a housing appeal also lends support to its inclusion.

7.5 The purpose of this policy is to maintain the rural/settlement relationships and views out to the surrounding countryside from public places. Woore is a parish situated in the Open Countryside, with large areas of Open Countryside within its borders, with an agricultural heritage which is still important today. Developments over the years have retained the agricultural fields which come right into the heart of the parish. This is a strong visual and historic characteristic of the village which the residents wish to retain for future generations. For these reasons, it is believed that recognition and protection of specific areas is warranted in the Neighbourhood Plan. It is not intended to create a Green Belt effect and the areas identified are not extensive and do not result in a blanket coverage. There were six other areas which were originally considered, but were judged after the *Big Questionnaire* of June 2017 not to have sufficient support.

7.6 Figure C - Map of Sensitive Gaps



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**Woore Parish Boundary**

All measurements should be taken as approximate only and are therefore not suitable for detailing any planning issues and cannot be used to resolve any legal matters.

Information, Intelligence & Insight Team  
 Shropshire Council December 2017

7.7 There are two types of area identified:

i) **Settlement Separations (2 areas).** Woore Parish has three distinct and separate settlement boundaries (as shown in Figure B). These delineate Northern, central and Southern parts (Woore, Ireland's Cross and Pipe Gate) in addition to the other smaller but still distinct areas described in the history of the Parish. The two proposed Settlement Separation Green Gaps maintain the historic gaps between these three distinct areas. At the same time they provide agricultural reference points and rural landscape features which are intrinsic to the characteristic of the parish's farming heritage. Both areas are outside the former development boundaries and lie in defined Open Countryside, and are highlighted on the Map of Sensitive Gaps (Figure C, above) as 7.8 and 7.9.

ii) **Green Borders (2 areas).** The purpose of these is to maintain 'windows' out into the Open Countryside from areas inside the settlement boundaries which are otherwise already built-up or have the potential to be built-up in the future. This will avoid a loss of the connection to the surrounding fields in these spots. There is one Green Border on the Eastern side of Woore itself on Newcastle Road and one to the North, up to Flash Farm on the A51 into Cheshire. These gaps are shown on the Map of Sensitive gaps (Figure C, above) as 7.10 and 7.11.

The following paragraph numbers relate to the sensitive gaps numbered and delineated on the Map of Sensitive Gaps (Figure C, above), and highlight the reasons for their inclusion.

7.8 The gap between the village area of Woore and Ireland's Cross to its South represents the remains of centuries of separation between these areas. Like the other Green Gaps identified in this Plan, it was open countryside outside the development boundary of the old North Shropshire Plan for this parish. There has been some encroachment on this area before the adoption of Shropshire's Local Plan, but sufficient remains to form an identifiable block of agricultural land with only a few houses in its central part, adjacent to the main road.



Land between Woore and Ireland's Cross, with open fields beyond the road to the left (West).

7.9 The gap between Pipe Gate and Ireland's Cross to its North again reflects historical separation, maintained to this day, but interrupted on the West side of the A51 by the houses around Crossways – this Green Gap is longer on the East side of the road, but should be seen as passing behind Crossways on the West. This defined the North Shropshire Development Boundary.



The A51 South of Ireland's Cross, with open fields to the right (East), and Pipe Gate to the South.

7.10 The open fields between Woore and Gravenhunger, to the East of the village of Woore proper, bordering the A525 Newcastle Road, have been well defined by the findings of the Inspector (Nigel Harrison) in his Report dated 9 December 2016 dismissing the appeal of developers (Berrys) against Shropshire Council's refusal of permission to build 50 houses on farm land North of Newcastle Road, partly in order to maintain this Green Gap. He wrote "Even though the site adjoins built-up development on its western edge, it is a large open field with a very different character to the urban area, and to my mind clearly forms part of the open countryside on the eastern side of the village. I am therefore satisfied that the site should be regarded as countryside to which Policies CS5 and MD7a apply. When read together as part of the overall strategy, they clearly do not support the continued development of the village with predominantly open market housing." He added "I conclude on this issue that the proposal would not be a suitable location for the development proposed having regard to its conflict with the development strategy for the area." And that "I conclude that the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside. In this respect it would conflict with CS Policies CS5 and CS6 which together seek to maintain and enhance the character of the countryside and to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment." The same comments hold good for the open farm land on the South side of the road between Woore and Gravenhunger. This Plan seeks to reflect these findings by the inclusion of this area as a sensitive gap.



Land to the North (left) and South of the A525, East of Woore.



Land South of the A525 East of Woore.

7.11 Land North of the Cherry Tree Lane/Candle Lane staggered crossroads, on the North edge of Woore, between Woore and Flash Farm on the Cheshire boundary, has been the Northern boundary of settlement, apart from Syllenhurst and Flash Farms, and the barn development at Syllenhurst Moat, since the medieval period. It is delineated by fields beyond hedgerows enclosing the A51 North from the village, apart from a stretch which runs through trees bordering a cutting in the hillside through which the road drops to the Cheshire plain below. This land, apart from the Farm buildings themselves, was beyond the Development Boundary.



Land West (left) of the A51 North of Woore



Wooded land to the North, fields to the East (right)

7.12 This policy is supported by the NPPF which highlights that planning should protect and enhance valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

## 8 RURAL ECONOMY POLICY

The Woore Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To support a thriving village centre and enhance the rural economy

### **POLICY ECON1 - RURAL ECONOMY**

Subject to respecting the Parish of Woore's built and landscape character, and environmental and residential amenity impacts being acceptable, the following will be supported -

- a) The development of new small businesses and the expansion of existing businesses
- b) Development proposals in the open countryside which support the rural economy and agriculture where they contribute positively to the environment and do not cause unacceptable visual or landscape harm
- c) Proposals that promote or provide facilities for home working, and businesses operating from home
- d) The sympathetic conversion of existing buildings for business and enterprise
- e) The diversification of farms and rural businesses where development is sensitive to their distinctive character, materials and form.

### **8.1 Evidence and justification**

8.2 Woore Parish has a significantly higher than average proportion of people aged 16-74 who work from home (11.1% compared to the average in England of 3.5%); who work more than 49 hours a week (22% compared to the England average of 13.3%) and/or who are self-employed (17.6% compared to the England average of 9.8%) (2011 Census). Only 1.7% of working residents use public transport to get to work, and only 9% of people travel less than 2km to work, compared to the average in England of 20%. Additionally, the average time it takes to walk or get public transport to the nearest employment centre is 44 minutes, greater than the average in Shropshire of 16 minutes. The rural economy and existing small businesses are a vital part of village life, and any opportunities to develop either existing businesses, or that would enable the start-up of new small businesses appropriate to the rural area would be supported.

8.3 The Big Questionnaire for Woore asked respondents if they ran a business or worked in the parish, and twenty percent of respondents (60 people) replied that they did. There were a wide range of roles, including farming, health care, retail, catering and a number of home based consultancies.

8.4 It is hoped that the above policy will help to ensure that Woore Parish's rural economy can grow sustainability over the Plan period and beyond, and that support can be given for both existing businesses and for new businesses and enterprises within the parish.

8.5 One of the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework is to support a prosperous rural economy. Planning policies should support sustainable growth in rural areas. The Designated Neighbourhood Area includes a number of farms and the National Planning Policy Framework supports the reuse of existing rural buildings, particularly for economic purposes, and promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses. It is considered important that the redevelopment, alteration or extension of historic farmsteads and agricultural buildings should be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials and form. Due reference should be made and full consideration given to the Shropshire Farmsteads Character Project. <https://new.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/historic-environment/historic-farmstead-characterisation/>



## 9 INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

The Woore Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To improve the local infrastructure

### **POLICY INF1 - PARKING**

Development must not exacerbate existing parking problems in the parish, or lead to the loss of existing parking provision unless the lost parking places are adequately replaced in a nearby and appropriate alternative location, or an agreed alternative transport facility be provided or a contribution made to mitigate the loss.

Any further provision for appropriate car parking in the parish will be supported.

Existing residential areas and any new residential, retail, commercial and business developments must have adequate parking facilities to avoid or minimise 'on street' parking. For residential developments, this would be a minimum of 2 car parking spaces per 1 – 3 bedroomed dwelling, and a minimum of 3 parking spaces per 4+ bedroomed dwelling.

### **9.1 Evidence and Justification**

9.2 Woore is a rural parish, and some distance from a number of facilities. Like many rural areas, there is high car ownership and usage. The 2011 census indicated that in the Parish of Woore 59.1% of households have 2 or more cars, compared to 32.1% in England. This exacerbates the problems with car parking in the village.

9.3 Woore Parish is fairly isolated, and further away than average from key services such as a job centre, secondary school and a GP. Accessing public transport at a necessary or convenient time is not always achievable. Data from the Department for Transport indicates that Woore is 10.4 kilometres from a job centre, with the average distance in England being 4.6 kilometres. The nearest secondary school is 6.2 kilometres from Woore, with the average in England being 2.1 kilometres. The nearest GP surgery is 5.3 kilometres, compared to the England average of 1.2 kilometres. To walk or get public transport to a supermarket takes 45 minutes from Woore, compared to the county average of 12 minutes. It is likely that the high car ownership in Woore Parish is therefore set to continue.

9.4 The issue of parking is of concern to the community, and has been raised at Neighbourhood Plan consultation events and in surveys. In the Big Questionnaire for Woore it was suggested that there should be 1 parking space per 1 bedroomed dwelling, 2 parking spaces per 2-3 bedroomed dwelling, and 3 parking spaces per 4+ bedroomed dwelling on all new residential developments. However, a number of respondents considered that only 1 space for 1 bedroomed dwellings was not enough, and would not cater for couples, nor for visitors. As such, the standards in the policy above are considered more appropriate.

9.5 Where it can be demonstrated that a development is specifically targeted at members of the community unlikely to have multiple vehicles (e.g. sheltered housing) then the minimum parking requirements may be relaxed.

9.6 There are no national or county standards for off street parking facilities on new builds. The National Planning Policy framework states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, the following should be taken into account:

- the accessibility of the development;
- the type, mix and use of development;
- the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- local car ownership levels; and
- an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.

9.7 The standards above are considered appropriate for the Parish of Woore, due to the high local car ownership levels and the lack of availability of public transport.

## **POLICY INF2– COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE**

The development of advanced high quality communications infrastructure, including high speed broadband and improved mobile network coverage, will be supported, subject to:

- a) Development being kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network.
- b) Any development being sympathetic to its surroundings and camouflaged where appropriate.

Where appropriate, new housing development should ensure that residential properties have high speed broadband connectivity capability.

### **9.8 Evidence and Justification**

9.9 As detailed elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish of Woore is fairly isolated, and further away than average from key services. It is therefore considered important that Woore Parish has high quality communications infrastructure. Superfast broadband is encouraged so that everyone, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities, can have greater access to opportunities and services which are available on the world wide web.

9.10 Additionally, with a larger number of residents in Woore Parish working from home (11.1% compared to the average in England of 3.5%), having a high quality communications infrastructure is vitally important to help sustain and develop the businesses of these residents.

9.11 The Woore Big Questionnaire asked respondents who ran a business or who worked in Woore Parish what would improve their experience of working in the parish, or would help support the growth of the business or service. 84% of respondents stated that improved mobile reception was key, and 70% stressed the importance of faster broadband. The question was answered by a number of respondents who didn't work in Woore Parish, but rather were residents, highlighting that these issues are important to the community in general.

9.12 The Core Strategy policy CS7 (Communications and Transport) highlights the importance of promoting the use of information and communication technologies to reduce the impacts of individual travel decisions, and facilitating enterprise and improved access to services and information by managing the development of fixed and mobile ICT infrastructure and enabling local access to ICT facilities.

9.13 One of the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework is to support high quality communications infrastructure. The NPPF highlights that supporting high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth, and social wellbeing.

## 10 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND LOCAL GREEN SPACE POLICIES

The Woore Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To protect and enhance community services and amenities

### **POLICY COM1 - COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Proposals for the refurbishment and improvement of all community buildings, car parks, and recreational facilities together with the shops and public houses will be supported. Changes of use of community facilities which require planning permission will be supported where the proposed use will provide equal or greater benefits to the community, the facility is replaced elsewhere, or it is demonstrated that the facility is no longer required. New community facilities in appropriate locations will be supported.

#### **10.1 Evidence and Justification**

10.2 Woore is fortunate to have a small number of community facilities and services. These include a community hall (Victory Hall), village green, play areas, tennis courts, a cricket club, and an adult outdoor gym. Consultation events and surveys have highlighted the value that local residents place on these facilities. However, not many people use the facilities on a regular basis, and many respondents to the Woore Big Questionnaire had suggestions for improvements for existing facilities and ideas for further facilities that would be welcome, should any funds or land become available, the most popular suggestion being for a community garden.

10.3 In order to ensure the continued vibrancy and vitality of Woore Parish, and that the parish remains an attractive place in which to live and work and to visit, it is essential that the loss of facilities is resisted where possible, and that the improvement and enhancement of facilities is supported.

10.4 The NPPF highlights that planning policies and decisions should promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

### **POLICY COM2 – RECREATION, PLAY AND OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

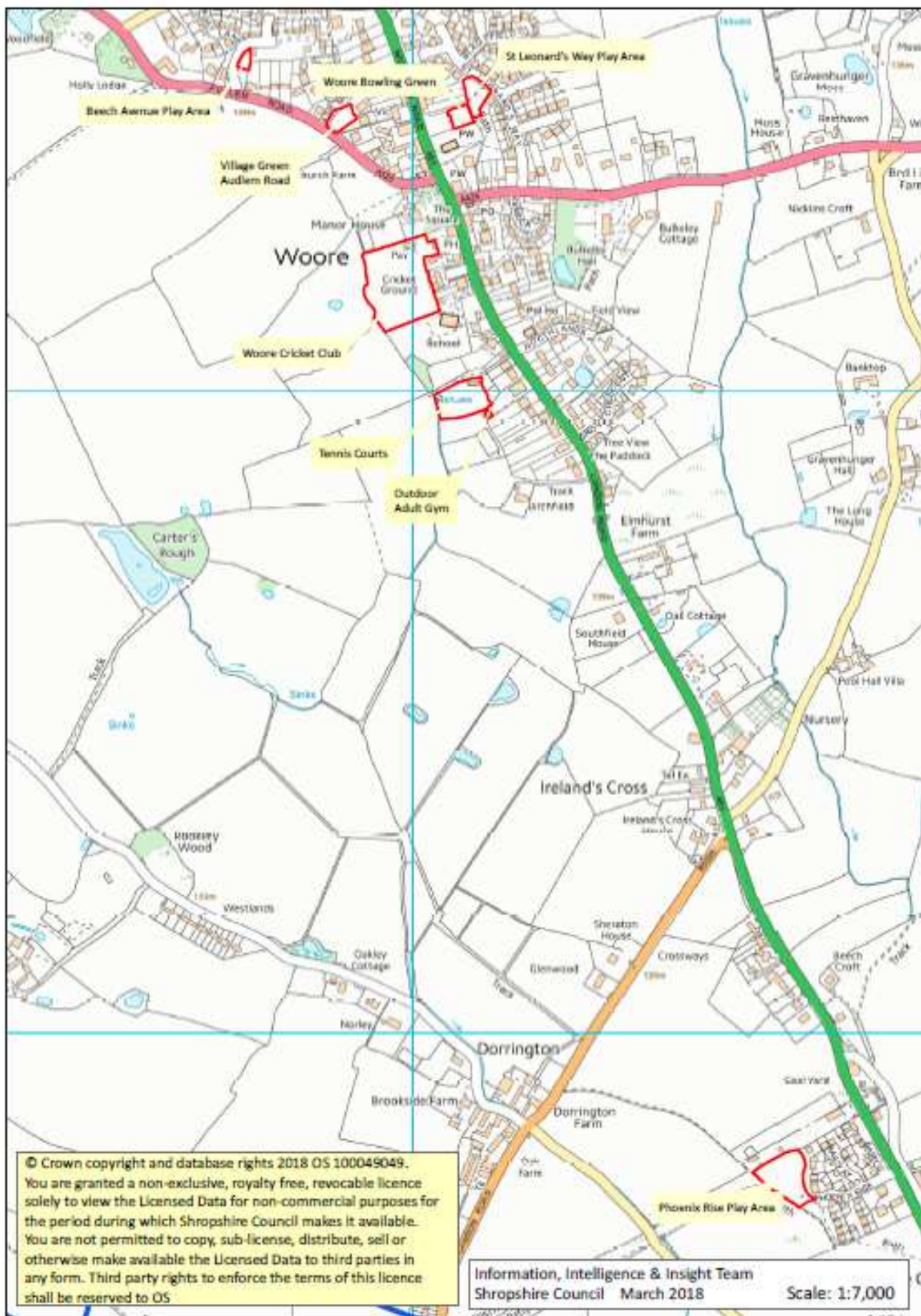
All sports fields and areas currently used for play and recreation as shown on Figure D and Appendix 1 will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. Development for alternative uses will only be supported when:

- i) an assessment has been undertaken which shows the facility to be surplus to requirements; or
- ii) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- iii) in the case of the loss of sports and recreation facilities, the development is for alternative sports and recreation facilities, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

#### **10.5 Evidence and Justification**

10.6 The provision of recreational open space facilities in Woore Parish is reasonably varied, with a cricket ground, bowling green, tennis courts, play areas and an adult outdoor gym. Additionally there is a small village green.

10.7 Figure D – Map of Recreation, Play and Outdoor Sports Facilities



10.8 Figure E below details the location of valued play, recreation and outdoor sports facilities in Woore Parish. A list of play, recreational and sports facilities is set out below :-

10.9 Figure E - Table of play, recreation and outdoor sports facilities in Woore Parish.

Reference	Facility	Address	Ownership
REC1	Bowling Green	Off Nantwich Road	Private
REC2	Tennis courts	Off London Road	Woore Tennis Club
REC3	Cricket ground	Off London Road	Woore Cricket Club
REC4	Outdoor adult gym	Off London Road	Parish Council
REC5	Beech Avenue Play Area	Beech Avenue	Management Company
REC6	Phoenix Rise Play Area	Phoenix Rise	Management Company

10.10 Detailed maps for each site can be seen in Appendix 1

10.11 This policy seeks to help deliver the NPPF aim of promoting healthy communities. Additionally, policy CS8 of the Shropshire Core Strategy (Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision) highlights the need to protect and enhance existing facilities, services and amenities that contribute to the quality of life of residents and visitors, in order to ensure safe and healthy communities where residents enjoy a high quality of life.

### **POLICY COM3 – LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

The 3 sites listed in Figure F below are designated as ‘Local Green Space’ which is protected from new development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

#### **10.12 Evidence and Justification**

10.13 The NPPF states that local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

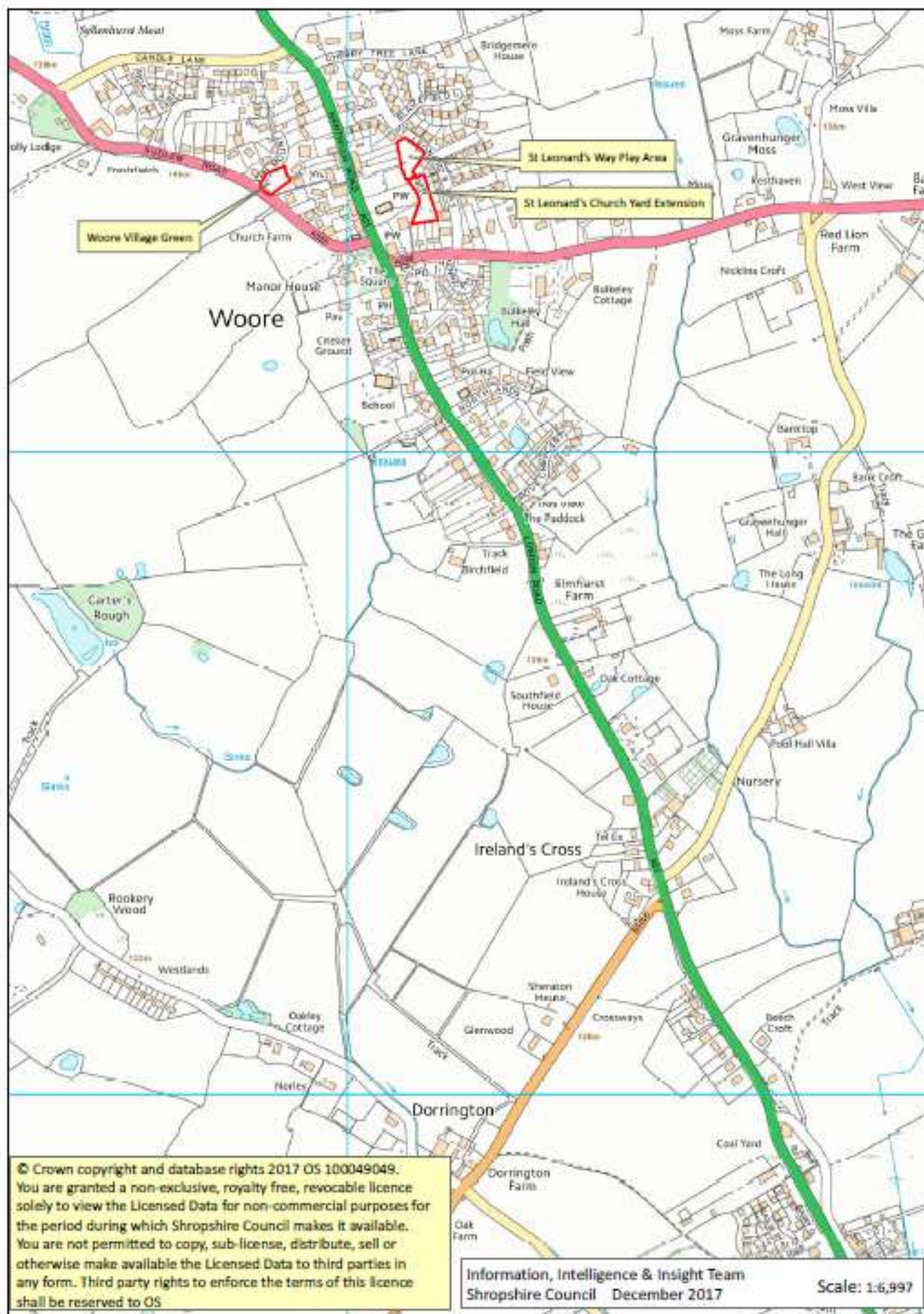
10.14 Local Green Space designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

10.15 Green spaces within the parish are an important part of its character and enhance the experience of living within the community. The Big Questionnaire for Woore asked respondents whether they had any suggestions for green spaces that they would like to see designated as Local Green Spaces.

10.16 Figure F below details the location of designated Local Green Space and the Figure G table provides information about how the local green space meets the criteria for designated Local Green Space in the National Planning Policy Framework. Detailed maps for each site are provided in appendix 2.

10.17 Figure F – Map of Local Green Spaces



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10.18 Figure G – Table of Local Green Spaces

Reference	Green Space	Size	Proximity to the Community	Demonstration of Special Value/Significance to the Local Community	Ownership
LGS1	Woore Village Green	0.143 ha	Within Woore village, directly accessible	The village green is at the heart of Woore Village and directly accessible. It is an attractive piece of open land where people can play, walk dogs, meet up and enjoy the greenery.	Parish Council
LGS2	St. Leonard's Way Play Area	0.163 ha	Centrally located within Woore village	An Important play area at the heart of Woore Village which provides good quality and much needed play space for the children of the parish.	Parish Council
LGS3	St. Leonard's Churchyard Extension	0.194 ha	Centrally located within Woore Village	A separate green space divided from the old church yard by a footpath which runs from the St. Leonard's Way play area forming a continuous and valuable peaceful and restful green space. The church yard extension is the only burial ground in the parish and serves the whole community.	St Leonard's PCC

# 11 ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

The Woore Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To protect and enhance the natural environment

## **POLICY ENV1 - FOOTPATHS/ SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**

1. Access to the countryside will be promoted through protection and maintenance of the existing Public Right of Way (PROW) network (see map of existing PROW), its enhancement where possible, and the safety of users of rural roads and lanes.
2. Any development which leads to the loss or degradation of any PROW, or any cycleway, will not be permitted in other than very special circumstances. Proposals to divert PROWs or cycleways should provide clear and demonstrable benefits for the wider community.
3. Any new development must provide easy, accessible traffic-free routes for non-motorised users (to include pedestrians, disabled people, people with prams or baby-buggies, cyclists and where appropriate equestrians) to village facilities, parks and open spaces, and nearby countryside. The provision of any such additional routes will be supported.
4. The needs of non-motorised users (as described in para 3 above) must be taken into account in all traffic planning, but especially in relation to rural lanes and roads. Hazards arising from an increase in vehicle numbers where agricultural buildings are converted to residential or commercial use will need to be taken into consideration.
5. Measures to be taken to ensure this may include, for example, separation of pedestrians/cyclists from vehicular traffic where possible, improvements to signage, or means of speed reduction.

### **11.1 Evidence and Justification**

11.2 The importance of the natural environment and continued access to the open countryside are seen as very important to the community of Woore Parish.

11.3 The parish has a number of public footpaths that allow direct access to the countryside (see Figure H). The Neighbourhood Plan aims to protect the existing network, and take opportunities to enhance existing provision by creating new links where possible and viable.

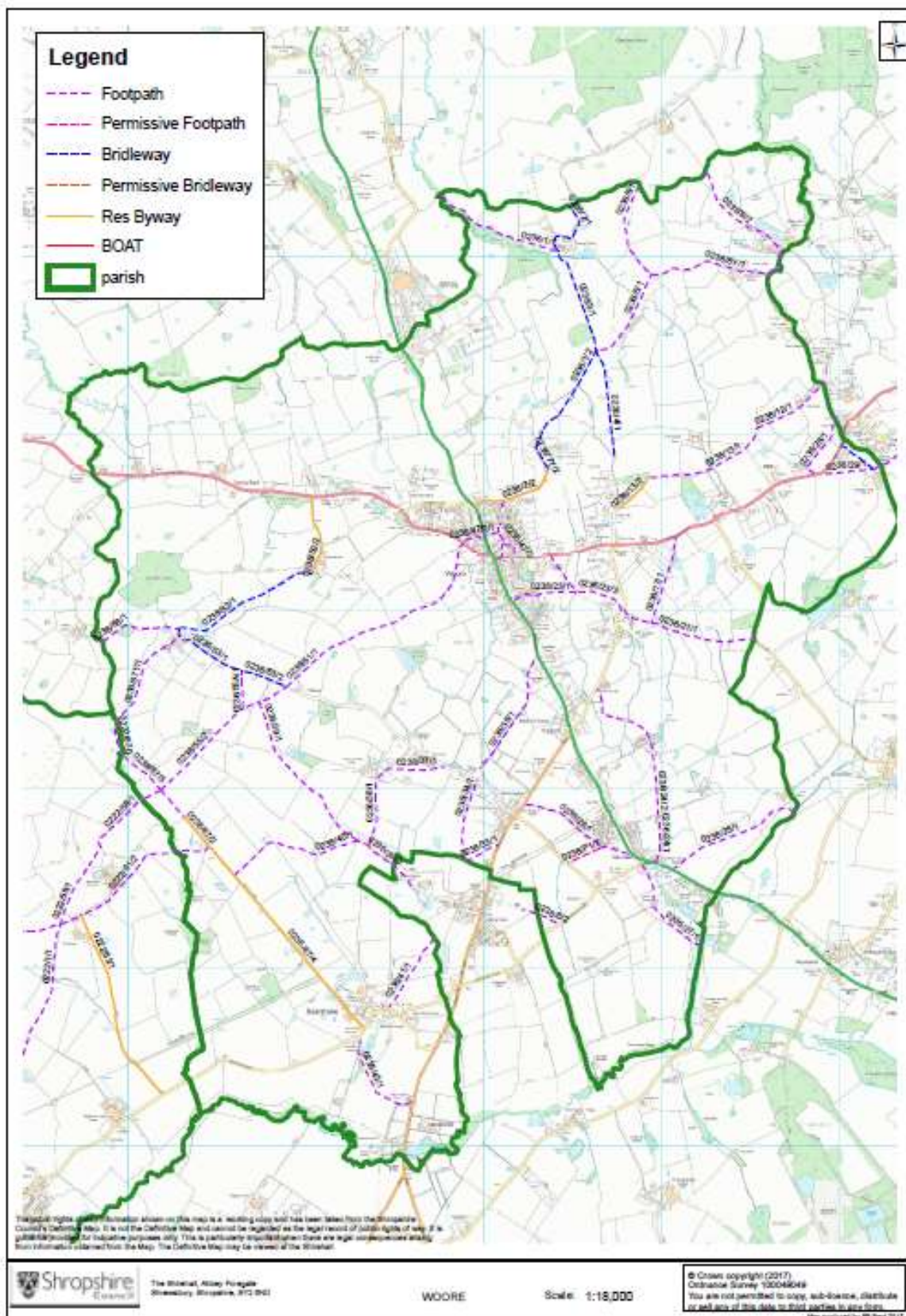
11.4 The Woore Big Questionnaire highlighted that over 85% of respondents used the public rights of way either frequently (48%) or occasionally (37%). Additionally, over 99% of respondents agreed with the objective to protect and enhance the natural environment. This policy will help to achieve this objective, whilst maintaining and enhancing access to the countryside throughout the parish. The speed and volume of traffic through the parish has long been a concern of residents, and one which was raised consistently in comments throughout the Neighbourhood Plan consultations. The policy seeks to improve safety on the parish's rural lanes and roads.

11.5 This policy will help deliver one of the NPPF's key planning aims of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, and also of promoting healthy communities. The NPPF highlights that policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and that opportunities should be sought to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing public rights of way networks. Additionally, policy CS7 of the Shropshire Core Strategy (Communications and Transport) highlights the need to protect and enhance strategic and local cycling, footpath, bridleway and canal networks as local transport routes and for recreation and leisure use, in order to maintain a sustainable pattern of development.

11.6 Figure H shows the footpaths and bridleways in Woore Parish.



11.7 Figure H – Map of Footpaths and Bridleways in Woore Parish



## **POLICY ENV2 – HS2**

Any land use alterations and highway modifications as a result of temporary works during the construction of HS2 must be returned to their original condition once work is completed.

### **11.8 Evidence and Justification**

11.9 The issue of HS2 and the effect of the resultant traffic and highway modifications during construction is one of the major concerns of Woore Parish residents, and one which has been raised at all consultations regarding the Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst the HS2 route does not pass directly through the parish, it is proposed that the routes for vehicular access during the construction of HS2 will pass directly through Woore. This will not only lead to far more traffic and HGV vehicles passing through daily, but it is also proposed that there will be temporary changes to the road network. Whilst recognising that HS2 is a national strategic matter that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot influence, the community are keen to ensure that any changes as a result of the construction works do not become permanent, but that after work has been completed are returned to their original condition in order to retain the local rural character of Woore. Concerns have been widely voiced about the restoration and avoidance of “accidental” creation of brownfield sites within the sensitive green gaps which all wish to protect.

11.10 Where practicable, site haul routes will be created adjacent to the route of the Proposed HS2 Scheme to transport construction materials and equipment in order to reduce HGV movements on public roads with access taken via the main road network. However, where it is not possible to use site haul roads, HGV will be routed along the strategic road network and/or the main A road network. This is the case in Woore Parish.

11.11 The majority of construction HGV movements will be travelling from the A51 (northbound – passing Victory Hall on left) to A525 (eastbound – towards Madeley) and the reverse from the A525 (westbound – from Madeley) to A51 (southbound – passing Victory Hall on right). There will also be a number of HGV movements along A51 northbound and southbound, which will not turn onto A525. The peak of the construction activity will generate daily construction traffic flows of 274 HGVs northbound and 274 HGVs southbound on A51 London Road from A53 Newcastle Road to A525 Bar Hill.

11.12 Temporary modifications to the junction of the A51 and A525 are proposed to allow construction vehicles to safely turn into, and out of, the junction. This will consist of temporary removal of street furniture. Along the A525, several temporary passing bays (9 in Shropshire) and some localised widening are proposed where the road is currently particularly narrow, to allow two HGVs to safely pass. The works are temporary and as such they must be reinstated on completion of construction.

11.13 Policy MD8 (Infrastructure Provision) of the Site Allocations and Management Development (SAMDEV) Plan highlights that in cases of new strategic infrastructure, particular consideration will be given to the potential for adverse impacts from traffic and transport during the construction and operation of the infrastructure development. Proposals for temporary infrastructure will be expected to include measures for satisfactory restoration, including progressive restoration, of the site at the earliest practicable opportunity to an agreed after-use or to a state capable of beneficial after-use.

**APPENDIX 1 – DETAILED OPEN SPACE MAPS**

**REC1 – BOWLING GREEN, OFF NANTWICH ROAD**



REC2 – TENNIS COURTS, OFF LONDON ROAD



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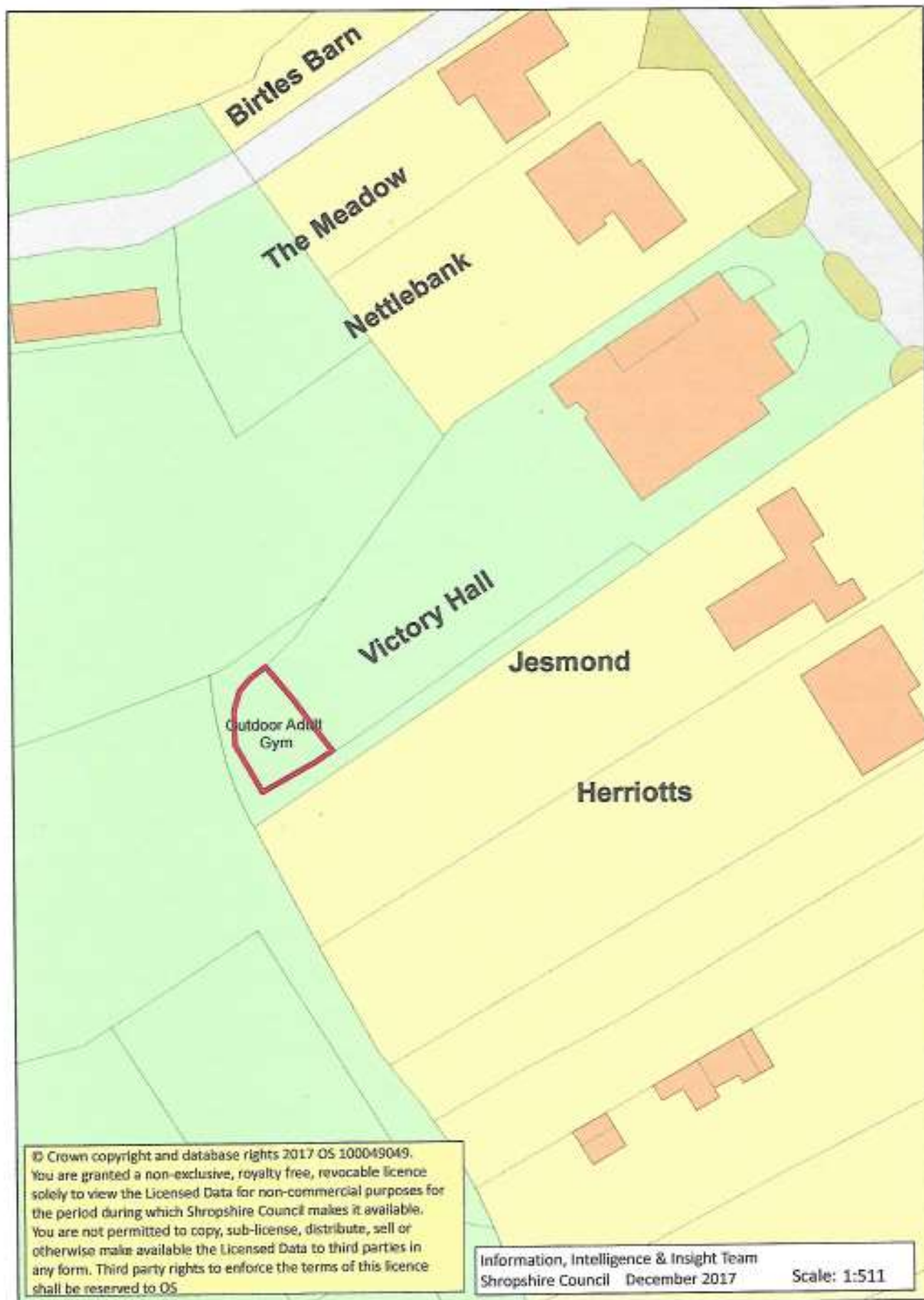
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REC3 – CRICKET GROUND, OFF LONDON ROAD



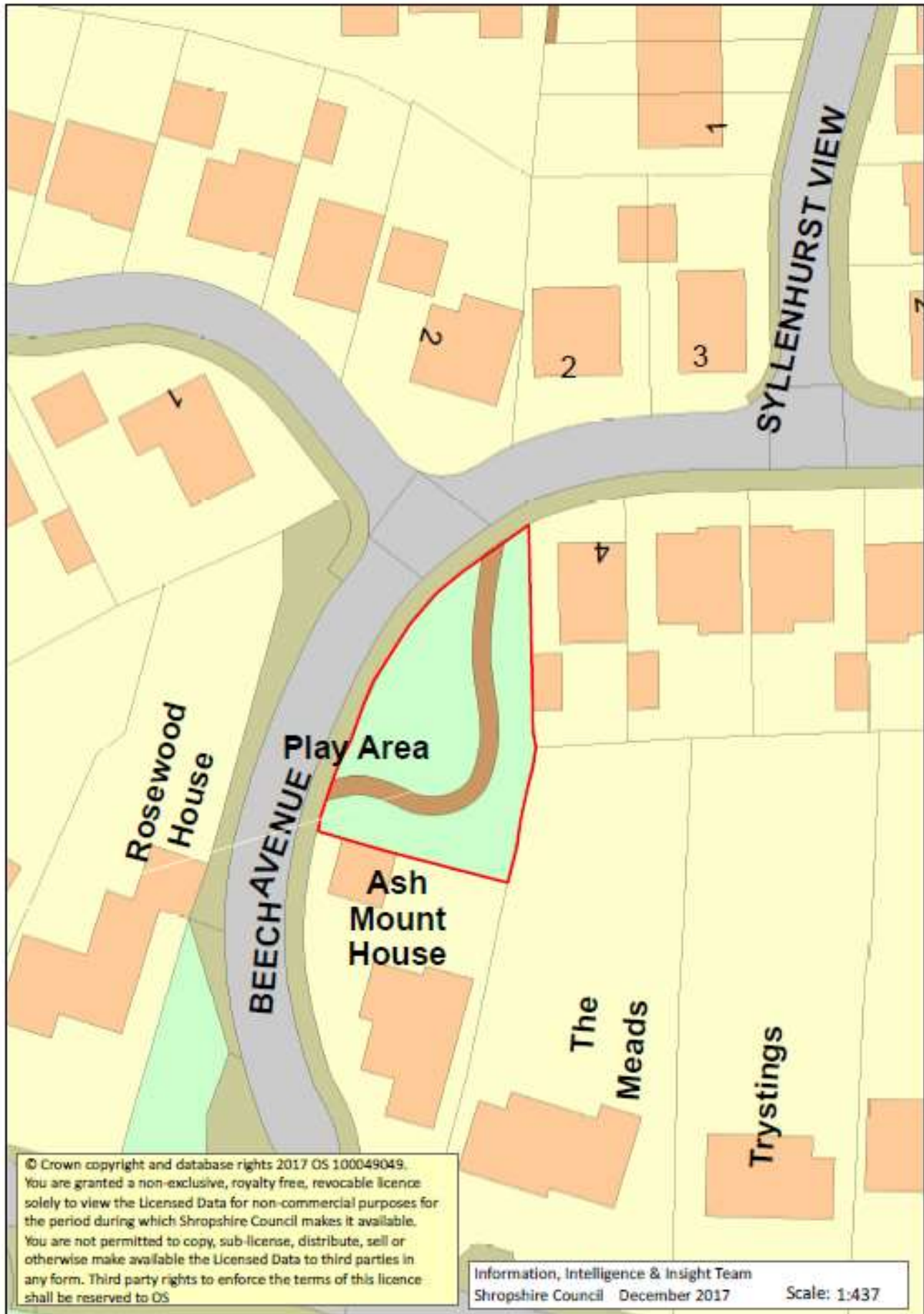
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REC6 – PHOENIX RISE PLAY AREA, PHOENIX RISE





**APPENDIX 2 – DETAILED LOCAL GREEN SPACE MAPS**

**LGS1 – WOORE VILLAGE GREEN**







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