

Annex 1

Report of Consultation: Local Plan Consultation – Development Strategy and Policy Principles Documents

The Local Plan consultation on the Development Strategy and Policy Principles documents took place between 15 January and 26 February 2013. It represents further preparatory work under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Consultation Documents

The consultation documents comprised the Development Strategy and Policy Principles documents, which together comprised the preferred options version of the Core Strategy, along with a Summary document of the Development Strategy. Comments forms were produced, that could be completed for any of the consultation documents and were provided as stand alone documents. Hundreds of the comments forms were distributed, with some community groups requesting multiple copies to hand out to their members and local residents.

A Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitats Regulations Assessment were produced and they were also subject to public consultation, for the same period of time and could be accessed in the same way as the other consultation documents.

All of the consultation documents were accessible via Cheshire East Council's Consultation Portal and can still be viewed on Cheshire East's web site www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan

Copies of the consultation documents were made available for inspection at all of the libraries in the Borough. They were also made available at the Council's Customer Service Centres, in Crewe and Macclesfield and Cheshire East Council's offices in Sandbach. Copies of the Summary document were also available for people to take away. All of the libraries were also given an explanatory letter. The comments forms could be completed at the libraries and Customer Service Centres and put in the boxes provided.

An e-mail was sent out to all Cheshire East Council Members and all of the Parish and Town Councils, within the Borough, to inform them that the consultation was taking place and that they could collect copies of documents from the locations listed in the paragraph above. (Those Parish Councils situated in adjoining Local Authority areas were also sent an e-mail, along with other Consultees, as set out in the next section.)

Copies of the documents and a covering letter were sent out to the 3 Statutory Consultees, for the Sustainability Appraisal, of Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency. Copies of the letter are included at **Appendix 1**.

Copies of the documents and a covering letter were sent out to the MPs that cover the Cheshire East area concerned. Copies of the letters are included at **Appendix 2**.

Notification Via Cheshire East's Consultation Portal or Letter

On 20 December 2012 (copied to all Councillors) and 3 January 2013, e-mails were sent to all Town and Parish Councils, announcing that the consultation on the Development Strategy and Policy Principles documents would take place between 15 January and 26 February 2013. The first e-mail also stated that the documents were available on the web site, ahead of the formal start of the consultation period.

On 3 January 2013 e-mails were sent to all Councillors, announcing that the consultation on the Development Strategy and Policy Principles documents would take place from 15 January until 26 February 2013.

On 11 January 2013, a letter was sent, to all consultees who had registered on Cheshire East's Consultation Portal but did not have an e-mail address, to inform them that the Local Plan consultation on the Development Strategy and Policy Principles documents had commenced. A total of 3,747 letters were sent out.

On 14 January 2013, an e-mail was sent to all consultees, who had registered on Cheshire East's Consultation Portal, with an e-mail address. This was sent to a total of 6,134 e-mail addresses.

The consultees included local residents, landowners and developers, along with the 'specific consultation bodies'; 'general consultation bodies' and 'residents and other persons carrying out a business in the Local Planning Authority's area', as required by Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Copies of the e-mails and letter are included at **Appendix 3**.

Following the end of the consultation period, all of the consultation responses were logged. At this stage, a total of 14,558 consultees had registered on the consultation database, of which 5,109 did not have an e-mail address.

Events/Meetings

Numerous meetings were held with Town and Parish Councils and local residents groups, involving Cheshire East Council's Leader and/or Deputy Leader and Officers, regarding the Local Plan consultation.

Officers also attended other events/meetings, including the following – Make it Macclesfield Forum; Macclesfield Business Breakfast; Alsager Town Council; Poynton Local Area Partnership; Wilmslow Trust; Cheshire Association of Local Councils (CHALC); Protect Congleton – Civic Society; Barthomley Action Group; Alsager Partnership; Alsager Residents Action Group.

Web Site and Cheshire East's Consultation Portal

The Cheshire East Council's web site home page featured the consultation in the 'In focus', 'Have Your Say' and the 'Consultations' sections. An advert was also placed on the web pages for the consultation. All of the consultation documents could be accessed via the Local Plan pages and the Cheshire East Consultation Portal, all of which are linked. Screen shots are included at **Appendix 4**.

Although the consultation started on 15 January 2013, the consultation documents were made available on the web site before Christmas 2012, to give people as much time as possible to read them.

The Cheshire East Consultation Portal can be accessed via the web site; it enabled stakeholders to inspect and download the consultation documents. It also enabled them to respond to the consultation electronically and to register their details, so that they can be informed of future Local Plan consultations. The comments forms could also be put in boxes left at the libraries, the Customer Service Centres and Cheshire East Council's offices in Sandbach and submitted by e-mail or post.

The Local Plan consultation pages, on the web site, had around 5,000 unique page views and 7,200 page views during the consultation period. This indicates that, on average, there were up to 2,200 users who viewed the page twice.

Links were also provided to Spatial Planning pages on Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn. The Facebook and twitter pages were regularly updated.

The number of Facebook 'likes' increased from 86 in November 2012 to 108 in April 2013.

The number of twitter 'followers' has increased from 375 in November 2012 to 443 in April 2013.

Screen shots of the twitter and Facebook pages are included at **Appendix 5**.

Publicity and Media Coverage

The consultation included press releases on 21 December 2012; 13 February 2013; 18 February 2013 and 19 February 2013. Letters were sent out to the Press, from Councillor Brown, urging people to comment on the forthcoming consultation, regarding the town of Crewe, dated 11 December 2012 and the towns of Alsager, Congleton, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich and Poynton, dated 12 December 2012. These letters resulted in a number of articles being published in the press.

There was also local radio coverage of the consultation and the Local Plan process, along with interviews on BBC television. Details of the consultation were also included in the Radio Stoke 'What's On' listing that is read out on air each day.

An article was published in the January/February 2013 edition of the Cheshire East 'Partnerships' newsletter which is circulated to a wide range of Partners, including the LAPs, Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) and Town Partnerships; it is also available on Cheshire East Council's web site.

An article was included on the 'Good Migration' web site which is aimed at migrant workers in Cheshire East.

Articles were placed on various web sites including Haslington Online, Nantwich News and Knutsford.com.

Three articles were included in the internal Cheshire East Council weekly staff newsletter 'Team Talk'.

Two articles were included in the internal Cheshire East Council Schools Bulletin.

An article on the consultation was included on the Mid Cheshire Hospitals Foundation Trust staff intranet.

A list of the media coverage, press releases and the letters, from Councillor Brown, are included at **Appendix 6**.

Details of the consultation were also included on the customer information screens, at Cheshire East Council's Customer Service Centres, throughout the whole of the consultation period. A copy of the information displayed is included at **Appendix 7**.

Local Plan posts were visible on 308 people's Facebook newsfeed, during week commencing 4 February 2013.

LinkedIn – an e-mail was received to say that Spatial Planning is one of the top 5% most viewed LinkedIn profiles for 2012. This e-mail is included at **Appendix 8**.

Young People

‘Schools Bulletin’ - articles about the consultation were included in the Cheshire East Council ‘Schools Bulletin’ which is sent to schools electronically once a week. The articles aimed to encourage schools, pupils, teachers, governors and parents to respond to the consultation. It also included the availability of a lesson plan for schools that could be used either during or after the consultation.

You Tube film – A You Tube film was made to encourage people to respond to the consultation. A link to the film was put on the Cheshire East Council Local Plan web page; the Town and Parish Council SharePoint site and their discussion forum. A link was included in the Cheshire East Council internal newsletter Team Talk on 8 February 2013; the Schools Bulletin on 11 February 2013 and on Facebook and Twitter. The film has had 346 viewings.

Consultation Responses

A total of 11,489 comments were made by 4,127 different parties to the consultation on the Development Strategy; Policy Principles; Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment documents. A breakdown of those comments is as follows –

- Development Strategy: 9,771 comments from 4,051 different parties
- Policy Principles: 1,426 comments from 500 different parties
- Sustainability Appraisal: 266 comments from 78 different parties
- Habitats Regulations Assessment: 26 comments from 22 different parties

The methods by which comments were submitted are as follows –

- 4,302 (37%) were submitted online via the consultation portal
- 4,325 (38%) were submitted in paper form (either via the official consultation form or a letter)
- 2,862 (25%) were submitted by email.

Petitions and Standard Letters Received

A number of petitions and standard letters/responses were received to the consultation which are included in the figures set out above; they are set out below –

Petitions

1. Site Nantwich 4 (alternative) Land to the South of Nantwich – petition with 1,529 signatures, from Edward Timpson MP, opposing development on the aforementioned site.
2. Site New Settlement 2 – South East Crewe – petition with 1,261 signatures and e-petition with 373 names, from Barthomley Action Group opposing development on the aforementioned site.
3. Save Macclesfield Green Belt – petition submitted, with 2,390 signatures opposing development on the Green Belt.
4. North Knutsford Community Group – petition with 512 signatures stating ‘We the undersigned require the proposed new development for North Knutsford to consider the needs of Knutsfordians and to be right for Knutsford.’
5. Chelford Tenants and Residents Association – petition with 34 signatures, re the opposition to development on the Green Belt, agricultural land east of the railway line.

Following the closure of the consultation period, four further petitions were also received, as follows –

6. Petition with 24 signatures, from ‘Keep it Green Cheshire Campaign’, stating – ‘We the undersigned call on Cheshire East Borough Council not to allow building in the Green Gap that surrounds the towns of Crewe and Nantwich and the villages of Shavington, Haslington, Hough, Stapeley, Willaston, Wistaston, Wybunbury, Weston and to protect the countryside surrounding the Leighton and Maw Green Wards by declaring it Green Gap’.
7. Petition with 1,914 signatures, from the ‘Hands off Wistaston Action Group’, stating ‘We the undersigned petition Cheshire East Council to protect existing Green Gap land in the Crewe and Nantwich area from development.’
8. E-petition with 365 signatures – ‘Protecting Green Space in Wistaston’ – ‘We the undersigned petition the council to refuse planning applications that would encroach on, and designate Green Belt status to, existing Green Gap/Strategic Open Gap land in the Wistaston parish area. We call on Cheshire East Council to refuse planning applications that would encroach on existing Green Gap or Strategic Open Gap land in the Wistaston area as defined in the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan and the draft Cheshire East Local Plan. Furthermore, we ask Cheshire East Council to designate full Green Belt status to the existing Green Gap/Strategic Open Gap land in the Wistaston area. The National Planning Policy Framework states that Green Belt land serves five purposes: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. Preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another. Assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Preserving the setting and special character

of historic towns. Assisting in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. We believe that affording Green Belt status to this land would fulfill these purposes, contribute to the local landscape and recreation amenities and also benefit the health and wellbeing of local residents.'

9. E-petition, with 548 signatures – 'Green Belt and Open Countryside Protection' – 'We the undersigned petition the council to Extend the Green Belt from Stapeley to Chorlton to fulfil the NPPF and CEC aim in relation to open countryside protection from urban sprawl. The NPPF clearly states the fundamental aim of Green Belt is to prevent Urban sprawl. Nantwich is being afforded 2 Green Belt areas as well as the existing Green Belt area around Wychwood Park Chorlton. By not joining these Green belt zones the open countryside parishes of Wybunbury and Hough are totally unprotected from further urban sprawl. The Green Belt from Stapeley should be extended (and is compliant with policy CS3 and 6) along the corridor South of Newcastle Road to meet the adjoining Green belt zone in Chorlton.'

Standard Letters

10. Site Macclesfield 3 - Land between Congleton Road and Chelford Road – approximately 500 copies of a standard letter have been received opposing development on the aforementioned site.
11. Site Crewe 5 – Leighton West, Crewe - approximately 160 copies of a standard comments form, with a standard comment sheet have been received opposing development on the aforementioned site.
12. Congleton Link Road - Approximately 950 copies of a standard comments form have been received, supporting the Congleton Link Road.
13. Proposed development in Nantwich - Approximately 25 copies of a standard letter, objecting to proposed development in Nantwich, have been received by e-mail.
14. Handforth East New Settlement - Approximately 50 standard letters have been received, objecting to the Handforth East New Settlement
15. Approximately 300 standard letters have been received from Goostrey residents, supporting the Cheshire East Council Vision for 2030 and the Town Centre First Policy but objecting to the designation of Goostrey as a Local Service Centre and requesting that it be classified as a Sustainable Village.

In addition, an estimated 500 copies of a questionnaire, produced by the pressure group 'Hands Off Handforth Green Belt', have been submitted.

The full consultation responses and summaries of those responses are available as separate documents.

Future Stages

The next stage of public consultation relates to those sites that the Council has been asked to consider as possible Strategic Sites that have not previously been the subject of public consultation. The consultation on 'Possible Additional Sites Proposed by Developer and Land Interests' took place between 3rd and 30th May 2013.

Following this, the next preparatory stage will be publication of the Submission version of the Core Strategy for Cheshire East, when formal representations can be made.

13/09/13