

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD

Date of Meeting:	26 th September, 2013
Report of:	Head of Strategic & Economic Planning
Subject/Title:	Cheshire East Local Plan- Report of Consultation and Core Strategy Provisional Sites
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Brown

PREFACE

Context for the Local Plan

- I The emerging *Core Strategy* will set out how the Council will deliver **sustainable, jobs-led growth** by making the **most effective use of land** and development across the Borough.
- II The emerging *Core Strategy* will also provide a **platform for continued growth in our economy** by supporting investment in infrastructure, housing, employment sites and the environment. It will focus on the **use of brownfield sites** and **protecting town centres** which we know is a key priority for our residents.
- III Our economy is already the most successful in the North of England. Our emerging *Core Strategy* will ensure the right foundations are in place to sustain this success over the next twenty years. The scale of R&D activity across the whole of Cheshire East area is particularly high by UK standards. In 2011, Cheshire East Borough as a whole accounted for **36.9% of the region's R&D jobs** and **3.3% of the country's R&D jobs**.
- IV Northeast Cheshire is a location of national **and international renown for advanced scientific analysis and research**, particularly pharmaceuticals R&D, pharmaceuticals manufacturing, astrophysics and astronomy. The emerging *Core Strategy* will support the future growth of this science base by investment in infrastructure, maintaining the right quantity and quality of employment sites, and providing new housing and investment in schools and communities to maintain the quality of life required to sustain economic growth.
- V The emerging *Core Strategy* will also reflect the Council's vision for **Crewe: High Growth City**. As the largest town in South Cheshire, Crewe is already the area's primary population centre and its major economic hub. Its 5000 businesses include concentrations of professional services, distribution, logistics and advanced engineering built on its rich rail and automotive heritage. It is located in not only one of the most prosperous parts of the region but the best connected creating the perfect location for job creation, growth and development.
- VI Crewe is the only place within the North West that will truly create the opportunity for decentralisation of the economy outside of London and the South East,

creating a 'hub' of investment in automotive and rail engineering. The recent £1bn investment announced by Bentley secures Crewe's place as a **premier location for excellence in manufacturing and engineering**.

- VII Linked by the M6 Corridor, expansion of employment land in Congleton will lead to future investment in the bedrock of manufacturing and engineering which is key to the town's heritage and future prosperity. **Major investment in infrastructure in Congleton** via a new link road is also proposed alongside the expansion of employment space and new housing development.
- VIII It is three years since the consultation began on developing a blue print for Cheshire East to 2030, covering jobs, new homes, schools, roads, leisure facilities etc. Since then, **27,000 responses have been received, and over 100 strategic sites evaluated**. There are presently **29 proposed strategic sites and 10 strategic locations with potential to go forward** in the emerging *Core Strategy*. This is set within the demographic context that Cheshire East will have a 26% increase in over 65's and a 35% increase in over 85's by 2021.
- IX Focus remains on protecting Green Belt, open spaces and our best agricultural land to ensure that growth is sustainable. Over 700 sites have been investigated in a Brownfield study to ensure that we are making the most effective use of suitable brownfield land. As a consequence, there is potential for **200 hectares of brownfield land to be earmarked for development in the Core Strategy, equivalent to about 6000 homes**.
- X Subject to the outcome of a soon-to-be-finalised Green Belt Study, we are planning to **review the extent and effectiveness of protection in and around Crewe and Nantwich, and we are proposing new settlements to mitigate some of the impact on existing Green Belt**.
- XI The emerging *Core Strategy* will also be underpinned by a need to improve transport connections across the Borough. New projects are planned in all towns as part of the Local Plan, to address congestion issues. These include the Congleton Link Road, South Macclesfield Link Road, and improvements on the A51, A530 and A500 Barthomley Link.

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Following the Board's approval of a Draft Development Strategy at its meeting of the 6th December, 2012 and the subsequent second phase of consultations on possible additional site allocations agreed at its meeting on 1st May, 2013, this report considers the next stage in the production of a Local Plan Core Strategy for Cheshire East.
- 1.2 The Report involves giving full consideration to the consultation responses to the "Preferred Option" Draft Development Strategy publications and the following Additional Sites Consultation. It also seeks comments on the currently proposed 'Core Strategy Sites', 'Strategic Locations' and 'Safeguarded Land' for potential inclusion in the emerging *Core Strategy*.

- 1.3 The Strategic Planning Board is not requested to make any decision on the Local Plan or the provisional sites at this stage. Comment and debate at this meeting (both individual and collective) will be noted and taken into account in the finalisation of the Local Plan Core Strategy, which will then be submitted to a further approval process, culminating in a full meeting of the Council.
- 1.4 This report further requests consideration of the adequacy of consultation carried out so far. Officers' view, with external legal advice, is that there has been full and thorough consultation carried out and it is not necessary in the circumstances to initiate a further round. Members will be aware that the submission draft will be published for representations to be made before the draft is submitted to the Secretary of State.

2.0 Recommendations

- To consider a Report of Consultation on *Shaping our Future: Policy Principles*
- To consider a Report of Consultation on *Shaping our Future: A Development Strategy for Jobs and Sustainable Communities*;
- To consider a Report of Consultation on *Shaping our Future: A Development Strategy for Jobs and Sustainable Communities - Possible Additional Sites Proposed by Developer and Land Interests Consultation*;
- To consider the consultation responses to the *Development Strategy and Policy Principles Sustainability Appraisal Report (2013)*.
- To consider the consultation responses to the *Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Development Strategy and Emerging Policy Principles*;
- To consider and comment on the adequacy of consultation undertaken to date.
- To receive and comment on the currently proposed 'Core Strategy Sites', 'Strategic Locations' and 'Safeguarded Land' for possible inclusion in the emerging *Core Strategy* .

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that progress is made with the preparation of the Cheshire East Local Plan, it is important to progress the plan-making process to submission of a *Core Strategy*, which should be examined by an independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State in the Spring of 2014.
- 3.2 The Council has made considerable progress in the production of a Local Plan, having prepared a significant amount of background evidence and research, but in the absence of a plan-led approach, the planning authority is becoming increasingly vulnerable to speculative planning applications for major housing and employment sites. The finalisation of an adopted *Core Strategy* is therefore of the utmost priority in determining a sustainable development strategy framework for the Borough, following which more detailed work can commence

on the *Site Allocations and Development Policies* and *Waste Development Plan Documents*.

- 3.3 Members have indicated that they would wish to be updated as to Officers' current thinking on proposed sites. All sites included in this report have already been subject to public consultation. It is therefore not considered essential to initiate a further round of consultation before finalising the *Core Strategy*, as this will in any event be subject to a formal consultation period once approved by Council. Officers have given full consideration to the responses received to the two phases of consultations and, subject to the completion and finalisation of some outstanding evidence-based work and finalisation of Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment reports, the sites represent those which Officers are currently minded to recommend for inclusion in the emerging *Core Strategy*. Full Council will of course consider all of the evidence base and representations prior to finalisation of the submission draft of the Local Plan.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Ward Members

6.0 Policy Implications including - Carbon reduction & Health

- 6.1 **Health:** The Local Plan can make an important contribution to the health and well being of the Borough. The spatial planning framework will consider the new infrastructure requirements of the area, both existing and arising from new developments. This will ultimately enable health provision to be made in the right places to serve future generations.
- 6.2 In addition, the plan can help build healthier communities through the design of new villages and neighbourhoods. Provision of green infrastructure in particular can assist in promoting more active lifestyles – as well as contributing towards better mental health.
- 6.3 **Carbon reduction:** The Local Plan is a means of promoting more sustainable patterns of development, which in turn can reduce the Borough's carbon footprint. Moreover, the emerging *Core Strategy* will contain policies dealing with renewable energy, of which Cheshire East has a variety of opportunities (eg, geothermal heating).

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The preparation of the Local Plan is a time consuming and costly process; accordingly additional resources have been identified in the 2013/14 budget to support its preparation. Should a further round of consultation be necessary, the costs can be met within existing budget funds (depending on its precise scope and format). Otherwise this report does not raise any additional direct finance issues.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* requires local planning authorities to prepare Local Development Frameworks, now known as Local Plans. The *Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012* set out the procedures to be followed in the preparation of such plans.
- 8.2 The extensive work undertaken on preparing a Draft Development Strategy was to meet the statutory requirements of Regulation 18 which in effect requires Local Planning Authorities to engage with the community and businesses regarding the preparation of the Local Plan. It is therefore an important part of the Local Plan process and the results of the various consultation exercises have informed and added value to the preparation of the emerging *Core Strategy*. The submission draft will be published to allow representations to be made (Regulation 19) prior to it being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.
- 8.3 The Council should be able to demonstrate to the Inspector who conducts the public examination into the *Core Strategy* that extensive consultation has been undertaken and that all reasonable alternative strategies have been considered; these considerations will form part of the 'tests of soundness' that the Inspector will apply.
- 8.4 The preparation of the plan is guided by the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* and other related advice. The implications of this have been fully assessed both in responding to consultations and preparing the draft strategy.
- 8.5 Section 110 of the *Localism Act 2011* imposes a duty on local planning authorities to co-operate with neighbouring authorities and other parties on strategic issues of common interest in preparing local plans. This is becoming an increasingly important issue in the examination process and a separate report is being prepared setting out how this requirement has been met. If the Inspector is not satisfied that the duty to co-operate has been fulfilled, the plan will fail, irrespective of its 'soundness' (see paragraph 9.1).

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 **Local Plan Examination-** Following its publication, the emerging *Core Strategy* will be submitted for formal examination. The key test at examination is one of 'soundness'. For a plan to be considered sound, it must be:
- Positively prepared
 - Justified
 - Effective
 - Consistent with National Policy
- 9.2 Failure at examination has serious negative consequences for any Local Planning Authority and the proper planning of its area. However, by preparing and consulting on a Draft Development Strategy and by undertaking a significant degree of evidence-based studies and background research, including sustainability appraisals at each key stage, it is considered that the Council has significantly reduced the risk of this outcome.

9.3 **Planning Applications and Appeals-** Whilst Cheshire East is currently able to demonstrate the availability of a five-year supply of housing land, which is a key requirement of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, the Council is experiencing a large number of planning applications for housing on sites that are not allocated in the development plan; some of these are currently subject to appeal and/or legal challenge.

9.4 Members will be aware that some strategic sites, which meet clearly defined parameters, are being granted planning permission and are making important contributions to 5-year housing land supply. An up-to-date local plan will not only provide new policies that are fully compliant with the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, but will also identify, through a housing trajectory, a continuing five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Consequently, completion of the local plan will greatly assist the processing and determination of planning applications in the Borough.

10.0 National Guidance

10.1 In the absence of a *Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West*, which together with the 'saved' policies of the *Cheshire Structure Plan*, was revoked on 20th May, 2013, the statutory framework for preparing a local plan for Cheshire East is contained in the *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)*, the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)*, the *Planning Act 2008*, the *Localism Act 2011* and associated Regulations.

10.2 At the present time, there is no adopted planning policy framework in Cheshire East with the only point of reference being 'saved' policies from previously adopted local plans for the former Boroughs of Crewe and Nantwich, Congleton and Macclesfield and the Minerals and Waste Local Plans adopted by the former Cheshire County Council.

11.0 Plan Making in Cheshire East

11.1 During the initial consultative stage of the plan-making process in the autumn of 2010, the Council published a *Core Strategy: Issues and Options* paper which considered different potential approaches to growth and development at a Borough-wide level. One of the consequences of this work was the realisation that an understanding of Cheshire East as a unified 'place' was still evolving. As a large County Borough, created via local government re-organisation in 2009, the area neither represented the historic County of Cheshire nor the individual Boroughs which had been in existence since the last major re-organisation in 1974.

11.2 Accordingly, the Council invested considerable effort into a *Place Shaping* consultation exercise in the summer of 2011 at a level which was more meaningful to the Borough's residents. This provided a valuable platform for the subsequent production of *Town Strategies* for each of the larger settlements in Cheshire East in 2012. These were prepared according to neighbourhood planning principles and followed the award of government funding as a neighbourhood planning 'front runner'. The *Shaping our Future: Development Strategy and Policy Principles* documents prepared for consultation in early 2013 brought together the findings of these strategies, as well as the findings of the

earlier *Issues and Options* paper and research and evidence base and consultation responses, to create a coherent plan for the future of the Borough.

11.3 The emerging *Core Strategy* will therefore set out the Council's approach to shaping the sustainable growth of Cheshire East and seek to encapsulate the findings of all of this background work to provide a clear steer to guide future development in the Borough up to 2030. The strategy will focus on growth to create prosperous communities with the provision of new housing, employment areas and transport infrastructure being fundamental to its approach.

12.0 Delivering Wider Economic Growth

12.1 It is recognised that there are three strands of sustainability, namely economic, environmental and social and these are all equally important and mutually dependent and delivering economic growth in Cheshire East remains a central tenet to the future prosperity of the Borough and is increasingly important to the future sustainability of the Council. The Local Plan is an essential building block necessary to deliver an overall vision for economic growth.

12.2 The economy is at the heart of the Council's Corporate Plan, its principal objectives being to:

- Build stronger relationships with existing businesses and investors to stimulate growth, build new enterprises and deliver jobs;
- Build stronger relationships with local communities to support the local economy and create entrepreneurial towns and villages;
- Directly promote employment and housing growth through development of Council assets and land to deliver jobs and new homes;
- Focus education and skills investment to deliver a skilled workforce for the future and create opportunities for young people to build links with local businesses to encourage them to stay in Cheshire East;
- Build new partnerships with developers and funding bodies to create new models of investment to stimulate growth;
- Build a strong partnership with Government and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to bring investment in sites, infrastructure and influence a national economic growth strategy to recognise the significance of Cheshire East and the wider sub-region; and
- Maximise the impact that the Council can have on the local economy through directing our spending power locally, developing a local supply chain; generating employment opportunities for local people and ensuring the economic impact of major policy decisions is understood.

12.3 The Local Plan should set out the land uses required to deliver growth, as the spatial interpretation of the vision. The key principles set out in the emerging *Core Strategy* will reflect this wider vision for economic growth, whilst achieving the key objective of building sustainable communities.

13.0 Sustainable Community Strategy

13.1 The Local Plan should also deliver the place-shaping aspects and objectives of *Ambition for All - A Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)* approved by the Council in July, 2010.

13.2 The community strategy sets out how, over the next 15 years, the *Partnership for Action for Cheshire East (PACE)* will ensure that Cheshire East continues to prosper. The activities outlined in the strategy are intended to improve the quality of life of all the people of Cheshire East and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through action to improve economic, social and environmental well-being across the area. The strategy provides a high-level vision for Cheshire East centred around seven priorities for action, which are:

- Nurturing strong communities, including the delivery of services as locally as possible and ensuring that communities feel safe;
- Creating conditions for business growth, including making the most of our tourism, heritage and natural assets and ensuring there is a range of available high quality employment sites and premises in all parts of Cheshire East with good transport links, to attract new and expanding businesses;
- Unlocking the potential of our towns; this focuses firstly on the regeneration of Crewe including the redevelopment of the town centre and the provision of new homes and jobs. Secondly, on the revitalisation of Macclesfield, including improving the quality and choice of shops and services in the town centre and progressing the development of South Macclesfield; and thirdly, on retaining the vitality and viability of our market towns to ensure that they continue to deliver essential services, retail, leisure and employment opportunities;
- Supporting our children and young people;
- Ensuring a sustainable future by providing affordable and appropriate housing to meet future needs, by promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, by ensuring that all major developments are located with good access to local amenities, cycle and walking routes, by developing a green infrastructure plan to safeguard, manage and enhance our green assets, giving priority to the redevelopment of our vacant brownfield sites and by recognising the importance of mineral extraction to the local economy;
- Preparing for an increasingly older population including the provision of an adequate supply of suitable extra care housing; and
- Driving out the causes of poor health including investment in green infrastructure to encourage active and healthy lifestyle choices.

14.0 The Evidence Base

14.1 The emerging *Core Strategy* is required to be supported by a strong, yet proportionate, evidence base. The key studies and areas of work that inform the strategy include:

POPULATION AND HOUSING

- **South Cheshire Sub-Regional Study (July, 2010)**
- **Determining the Settlement Hierarchy (November 2010)**
- **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2012 Update) - Published March, 2013**
- **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2010/2013)**
- **Population Projections and Forecasts (2013)**
- **Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2007)**

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCE

- **Crewe Vision – All Change for Crewe (December, 2010)**
- **Macclesfield Economic Masterplan (December, 2010)**
- **Cheshire Retail Study Update (April, 2011)**
- **Employment Land Review (November, 2012)**
- **High Growth City (2013)**

GREEN BELT & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Green Infrastructure Framework for North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral (2010)**
- **Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Crewe (2012)**
- **Open Spaces Assessment (March, 2012)**
- **Green Space Strategy (January, 2013)**
- **Local Landscape Designations Study (May, 2013)**
- **Green Belt Assessment (2013)**
- **New Green Belt and Strategic Open Gap Review (2013)**

ENERGY

- **Renewable Energy Policy Study (2010)**
- **Climate Change and Sustainability Energy Study (September 2011)**
- **Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Developments (2013)**

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (June, 2013)**
- **Local Transport Plan (2011-2026)**
- **Viability Study (2013)**
- **Infrastructure Study and Delivery Plan (2013)**

14.2 In addition, the *Core Strategy* will also be accompanied by an updated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment together with the results of highway modelling work for Crewe, Macclesfield and Congleton.

15.0 Consultation Responses

15.1 **Annex 1** contains a 'Report of Consultation' on the *Policy Principles and Development Strategy*, upon which comments were invited during the 6 week period between the 15th January and the 26th February, 2013. This demonstrates the considerable level of public and stakeholder engagement in the plan-making process and includes details on the following:

- Consultation Documents
- Notification Via Cheshire East's Consultation Portal or Letter
- Events/Meetings
- Web Site and Cheshire East's Consultation Portal
- Publicity and Media Coverage
- Young People
- Consultation Responses
- Petitions and Standard Letters Received

15.2 In respect of the *Shaping our Future: Policy Principles* document, almost 1500 responses were received to the consultation with about 50% registering support for the 'Policy Principles' and 20% raising objections; the remainder submitted general comments for consideration by the Council (see **Annex 1B**).

15.3 The following provides a brief summary of the responses received:-

- Concerns over definition of 'local service centre';
- Strong concern over definition of 'sustainable village' and identified settlements;
- General support for encouraging economic prosperity, including the rural economy;
- Overwhelming support for promoting a 'town centre first' approach;

- General support for ‘sustainable communities’ policies;
- Concerns over policies on housing to meet local needs;
- General support for policies on ‘protecting and enhancing environmental quality’;
- General support for ‘sustainable environment’ policies, particularly the historic environment and promoting high quality design; and
- General support for reducing the need to travel and promoting more sustainable travel modes.

15.4 In respect of the *Shaping our Future: A Development Strategy for Jobs and Sustainable Communities* document, almost 10,000 responses were received to the consultation with just over 50% of the representations involving objections to the Development Strategy (see **Annex 1A**). A further 25% of responses highlight broad support with the remainder submitting comments for consideration by the Council.

15.5 The following provides a brief summary of the responses received:-

- Overall support for Vision for Cheshire East in 2030;
- A majority of respondents objected to the levels of proposed new housebuilding;
- Concern over status and findings of *Town Strategies*;
- Concern at Growth Strategy, but general acceptance of growth to promote regeneration and jobs;
- Concern at findings of settlement hierarchy and spatial distribution of development;
- General support for Crewe and Macclesfield vision;
- Concern over visions for Key Service Centres, Local Service Centres and other Villages;
- Concern over adjustments to the Green Belt;
- Support for new Green Belt, Strategic Open Gap and Open Countryside policies;
- Concern over ‘safeguarded land’;
- Support for sustainable development;
- Concern over supporting infrastructure, particularly roads;
- Concern over focus on greenfield rather than brownfield land;
- Strong objections to Leighton West, The Triangle and East Shavington sites in Crewe;
- Support for Crewe Railway Exchange;
- Strong objections to land between Chelford Road/Congleton Road in Macclesfield;
- Broad support for strategic sites around Congleton;
- Objection to site in North West Knutsford;
- Broad support for sites in Alsager and Middlewich;
- Broad support for sites in Nantwich;
- Strong objections to Capricorn site in Sandbach, as well as alternative sites;
- Strong objections to sites in Wilmslow;
- Strong objections to new settlement at Handforth East;
- Objections to new settlement at South East Crewe;

- Concern over evidence base; and
- Some support for alternative sites.

15.6 In addition to the responses received on the Development Strategy and Policy Principles, 9 petitions were also received, details of which are set out in the 'Report of Consultation' document. Several standard letters were also received with an estimated 500 copies of a questionnaire submitted by the pressure group 'Hands Off Handforth Green Belt'.

15.7 It should be noted that some of the representations received relate to support for alternative sites put forward in the Development Strategy. However, as these were not in the Council's list of preferred sites, it is not possible to gauge the level of objection they may have elicited at the consultation stage.

15.8 **Annex 2** contains a 'Report of Consultation' in respect of the *Shaping our Future: A Development Strategy for Jobs and Sustainable Communities - Possible Additional Sites Proposed by Developer and Land Interests Consultation* document. This consultation, run during the period between the 3rd and 30th May, 2013, focused on 27 possible additional sites and elicited nearly 5,000 responses (see **Annex 2A**). Of these, over 80% were objections with less than 10% expressing support for the possible alternative sites; the remainder submitted general comments for consideration by the Council.

15.9 With the exception of White Moss Quarry, none of the possible additional sites received any majority support in favour of allocation in the emerging *Core Strategy*. Indeed, several sites, notably Site H (Wistaston Green Road, Wistaston) and Site J (Gorsty Hill Golf Course, Weston) received considerable objection. It should also be noted that Stoke & Newcastle Councils do not consider White Moss Quarry offers a reasonable alternative to their original objection to sites in the South East Crewe growth corridor.

15.10 In addition to the consultation responses, 7 petitions were also received in respect of the possible additional sites, details of which are included in the 'Report of Consultation' document.

15.11 **Annex 1C** sets out the responses to the *Development Strategy and Policy Principles Sustainability Appraisal Report (2013)*. A total of 221 representations were submitted and the following provides a brief summary of the responses received:-

- Objection to the length of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and how the sections have been split up;
- Concern that the proposals are unsustainable;
- Suggestions that the SA is superficial and repetitive;
- Doubts about the worth of the SA;
- Support for the principles of the SA;
- Suggestions that it is unclear as to how the SA has been used for inform the Development Strategy and Policy Principles documents;
- Concern that development can negatively affect an area's character;
- Suggestion that the SA has not been objective for Handforth East;
- Suggestion that the SA is not compliant with legislation;

- Suggestion that there is a lack of detail on community infrastructure and health;
- Suggestions on additional sustainability considerations for canals;
- Queries on the scoring of some proposals and request for further clarity on how/why options have been selected or rejected;
- Suggestion that there is a lack of evidence to support statements in the SA;
- Queries as to the significance of some of the option's effects;
- Objection to some of the terminology used;
- Concern regarding how the SA has been carried out; and
- Amendments suggested to some of the site commentaries.

15.12 It should be noted that there was a considerable amount of objection to Goostrey being a Local Service Centre, however this is primarily a matter for the plan-making process and not for the Sustainability Appraisal. Similarly, there were many other responses on different themes that are also primarily matters for the plan-making process.

15.13 **Annex 1D** sets out the responses received to the *Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Development Strategy and Policy Principles* consultation. 26 representations were received with an even split between support/comment and objections. The principal areas of concern relate to the potential impact of development proposals on sensitive ecological areas, particularly the 'Shavington Triangle', Wybunbury, Goostrey and North West Knutsford.

15.14 Officers have given due consideration to all of the responses received and these have informed the currently proposed site selection, as set out later in this report. Further full Habitats Regulation Assessment will accompany the final Core Strategy.

16.0 Emerging Strategy and Policy

Overall Spatial Strategy

16.1 Cheshire East is a high quality place to live and work, but it will only remain that way if changes evolve to meet the needs of future generations. That change needs to be managed so that it reinforces the advantages the area already possesses, rather than work against them.

16.2 The development strategy contained in the emerging *Core Strategy* should clearly establish the employment land, housing land, infrastructure and community facilities that the area will need in the future. It should demonstrate that the Council is committed to a jobs-led growth strategy that places the prosperity of its citizens at the heart of everything it is seeking to achieve.

16.3 The emerging *Core Strategy* must also recognise the distinctive character of different parts of the Borough, acknowledging that there is no single county town that dominates the area. The key principles should be as follows:

- Concentrating development in the two Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield by encouraging development that is necessary to support their regeneration and revitalisation;
- Development of the Key Service Centres linked to their distinctive needs and characteristics. Those in the central belt of the Borough should accommodate a greater proportion of development whilst those in the north of the Borough should accommodate correspondingly less development, recognising Green Belt constraints;
- New settlement(s) which can provide jobs and homes in a planned environment with good infrastructure, rather than loading onto the periphery of existing constrained settlements; and
- Significant new employment areas to underpin the growth strategy whilst allowing existing key employers to grow and develop.

16.4 The strategy should acknowledge that connectivity is the key to achieving growth, maximising the benefits of Crewe as a national rail hub and exploiting the potential of Wilmslow and Macclesfield Stations. Substantial new road infrastructure will therefore be required to open up the east of Cheshire and connect the M6 with main settlements and surrounding major roads.

16.5 The emerging *Core Strategy* should adopt a 'Town Centre First' approach to retailing and commercial development, supporting but changing the way existing Town Centres perform and function. In particular, and this is also supported by consultation responses on the development strategy document, there is support for the revitalisation of the principal Town Centres of Crewe and Macclesfield, which are identified as major growth points and the vision for them. In Crewe, this should be complemented by urban regeneration based on the railway station as a further potential growth 'hub'.

16.6 Apart from areas allocated for necessary development, the unique character and distinctiveness of the Cheshire countryside should be protected and enhanced within the overall spatial strategy. This approach is generally consistent with some of the changes made to the original 'preferred strategy' published for consultation in early 2013.

Jobs and Employment

16.7 Jobs and prosperity are at the heart of the *Core Strategy*. Accordingly, the emerging *Core Strategy* must seek to promote the right conditions for job growth by boosting the delivery of existing major employment sites, improving connectivity and identifying new areas for future investment and expansion. The starting point for this has been an assessment of current employment land and assets.

16.8 The *Employment Land Review 2012* considered the demand for and supply of employment land in Cheshire East between 2009 and 2030. The review considered all employment land uses that fall within Use Classes B1 (offices, research and development and light industrial), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution). It showed that Cheshire East is a key economic driver

for the North West region with the local economy providing 6.4% of the North West's economic output and containing 7.5% of its businesses.

16.9 The *Employment Land Review 2012* therefore provides a key part of the evidence base upon which to plan for future economic growth. In order to ensure the future prosperity of the area and to assist in the national growth agenda, new employment land will be identified in key locations to provide further economic opportunities. Some of these will be phased to later in the plan period to allow existing sites to fully develop.

16.10 There are a number of key employment/technological locations in Cheshire East, of which seven have been identified as being of particular significance to the economy in Cheshire East (see **Annex 5**). These are:

- Alderley Park, Nether Alderley
- Hurdsfield Industrial Estate, Macclesfield
- Bentley Motors, Crewe
- Radbroke Hall, Knutsford
- Jodrell Bank, Holmes Chapel
- Booths Hall , Knutsford
- Midpoint 18, Middlewich

16.11 As these are existing developments, 'saved' planning policies apply to any planned development. However, it is recognised that the sites are significant for the Cheshire East economy. This is demonstrated by the fact that these key employment locations represent the major sectors of the Cheshire East economy, notably chemicals and pharmaceuticals, advanced automotive engineering, logistics, and finance.

Transport, Accessibility and Connectivity

16.12 Improved connectivity forms a vital part of the development strategy and provides the necessary links between land use and transport. Better transport is also a driver for economic growth with new development providing opportunities to secure new infrastructure. The emerging *Core Strategy* will highlight the role that Crewe Station can play in leading the regeneration of the whole town; this position could also be greatly enhanced by the advent of HS2, which is fully supported by Cheshire East, subject to environmental considerations. Fast rail links to Manchester, Birmingham and London are also key advantages of Macclesfield and Wilmslow Town Centres.

16.13 New road infrastructure will also be promoted and protected via the emerging *Core Strategy*. For example, the dualling of the A500 will support future growth in Crewe as will improvements to junctions 16 and 17 of the M6. A new northern link road is proposed around Congleton to both relieve existing congestion and also open up new land, especially for employment development. This in turn will facilitate links into Macclesfield, where a new link road is also planned, again

connected to new development. Similarly, a new Eastern By-Pass is planned for Middlewich; this will be instrumental in opening up additional employment land at Midpoint 18.

- 16.14 To maintain linkages with Greater Manchester, the *South East Manchester Multi Modal Study (SEMMMS)* route proposes a new highway link between the A6 and Manchester Airport; a Woodford-Poynton Relief Road is also planned.
- 16.15 Accessibility is another key feature of the development strategy and this was a fundamental principle in determining the settlement hierarchy, where proximity to local services by all modes of transport is important, particularly in a predominantly rural Borough. Promoting more sustainable travel modes was supported in the consultation responses to the *Policy Principles* document.

Housing Growth

- 16.16 In Cheshire East, there are a number of factors that influence the scale and location of future housing. The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* advises that Local Plans need to meet the full, objectively assessed housing needs for their area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the *NPPF*. In addition there is the ongoing requirement to identify a five year supply of 'deliverable' housing sites and to identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for housing growth.
- 16.17 In terms of evidence, the starting point is demographic information. The Council commissioned a range of forecasts to be produced using POPGROUP software based on *Office for National Statistics (ONS)* data. This led to ten demographic scenarios being considered in total. It produced a wide range of outputs for growth from the narrow view of providing for the likely needs of the existing population only (i.e. natural change) to a wider view based on providing for continued economic prosperity.
- 16.18 Whilst a natural change option could be desirable in terms of minimising impacts on local services, evidence from the *Census 2011* suggests a highly mobile population with a considerable movement of people in and out of the Borough.
- 16.19 Demographic information is however only part of the equation. The updated *Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)* will indicate the imbalance that exists between the need for affordable housing relative to supply in Cheshire East. On the supply side of the equation, the *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)* considers all potential housing sites and the results of this assessment suggest that over 30,000 dwellings could be delivered over the next 15 years, of which about 7,000 homes would be on brownfield sites with a further 3,700 on sites that are a mix of brownfield and greenfield.
- 16.20 Therefore, the demographic and housing market evidence currently available suggests that there is an ongoing need to provide additional housing in Cheshire East. This reflects population growth, changes in household size and composition, family breakdown and other societal changes in addition to patterns of UK migration. Set against these 'elevating' factors are matters which

serve to constrain supply; these include Green Belt, infrastructure limitations, highway capacity and environmental designations.

- 16.21 Advice in the *NPPF* is to ‘*boost significantly*’ the supply of housing land by meeting the full objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing. It requires a realistic assessment of future housebuilding and the likely timescales involved in delivering new housing land allocations. Local planning authorities must use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the *NPPF*, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period.
- 16.22 The *NPPF* also requires that Councils identify a five-year supply of ‘deliverable’ housing land in their development plans, plus at least a 5% ‘buffer’ to allow for choice and competition. The supply targets necessarily include existing commitments, which are those sites already having the benefit of residential planning consent and those currently under construction.
- 16.23 The currently proposed sites identified in this report have been selected on the basis that they could make a significant contribution to meeting the housing needs of the area over the whole plan period and, subject to the outcome of detailed viability testing, in some cases, deliverable. Moreover, they have the potential to significantly improve the supply of affordable, intermediate and market housing once the *Core Strategy* has been formally adopted following examination. There will also be a greater range of housing sites available with further sites to be identified in the *Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD)* in due course.
- 16.24 Based on the range of sites selected, the Council will need to be able to demonstrate, in line with advice in the *NPPF* that a five year supply of ‘deliverable’ housing land is available. This will be evidenced through a ‘housing trajectory’ outlining the timing of housing completions over the plan period.

17.0 Development Sites

- 17.1 The emerging *Core Strategy* will be supported by the identification of land for development, which falls into the following categories:
- **Core Strategy Sites** – where the boundaries of the site are clearly defined;
 - **Strategic Locations** – where the broad locality is known, but where further work may be necessary to specifically identify the appropriate site boundaries;
 - **Areas of Search** - where there is a need to identify proposals that will take effect well into the future. Detailed policies will be brought forward through the *Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD)* or possibly an *Area Action Plan*; and

- **Corridors of Interest** - where new road proposals are under consideration, but a protected line has not yet been agreed, the strategy will identify 'Corridors of Interest' to describe the swathe of land where the road is likely to be located.

17.2 The proposed 'Core Strategy Sites' and 'Strategic Locations' will be located for the most part within the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres. These towns have the infrastructure and facilities best able to support new jobs, homes and other development. The Towns and Centres have also been the subject of *Town Strategies*, each prepared according to neighbourhood planning principles, with the majority of Core Strategy Sites being the subject of preliminary consultation.

17.3 Where a *Town Strategy* has already been approved by the relevant Town Council, the emerging *Core Strategy* will (wherever possible) reflect the preferred sites or options set out in those strategies. However, it should be noted that a number of sites have been proposed following more recent consultations which post-date the work undertaken on the *Town Strategies*.

Currently Proposed 'Core Strategy Sites'

17.4 The currently proposed 'Core Strategy Sites' reflect the overall spatial distribution of both jobs and homes and would be supported in many cases by community benefits such as affordable housing, schools, open space and improvements to pedestrian and cycle networks. These sites have the capacity to accommodate about 11,000 new homes and about 185 hectares of new employment land. The delivery of these sites, many of which are mixed use, would be phased over the plan period to accord with programmed infrastructure improvements. This should ensure that sustainable development is delivered in a timely manner with necessary improvements to local and strategic services. The emerging *Core Strategy* will clearly highlight the necessary delivery mechanisms, often involving developer contributions to essential infrastructure, without which many of the proposals would be deemed unsustainable.

Currently Proposed Core Strategy Sites in Crewe

Site		Proposed Uses	Commentary
	Basford East	24ha of employment land, about 1000 homes, local centre (including a doctor's surgery, primary school, new retail and community venue).	A longstanding allocation for employment now proposed for business, mixed use and housing development; this is a high priority in the draft <i>Crewe Town Strategy</i> and the <i>All Change for Crewe</i> prospectus. A mix of uses is necessary to produce a viable development, but the fundamental objective remains the creation of a high quality employment area.
	Basford West	22 ha of employment land, about 350 new homes, a new local centre, hotel and significant	A longstanding allocation for employment now proposed for business, mixed use and housing

		green open space/woodland and ecological mitigation areas.	development; this is a high priority in the Draft <i>Crewe Town Strategy</i> and the <i>All Change for Crewe</i> prospectus. A mix of uses is necessary to produce a viable development, but the mix is subordinate to creating a business environment suitable for manufacturing and distribution. The site is now subject to a resolution to grant planning permission, subject to the signing of a S106 agreement.
	Leighton West	5 ha of employment land, space for extension of Leighton Hospital, about 1000 new homes and key worker housing for employees at Leighton Hospital, new local centre (including a community centre), green corridor and other open space, new bus interchange and road improvements. Potential for geothermal district heating scheme and the creation of a science/energy park.	A greenfield site which provides an opportunity for a mix of uses and provides land for the expansion of Leighton Hospital. A sustainable location on the edge of town close to the Bentley works, one of Crewe's largest employers. Development will need to support key improvements at Leighton Hospital, key highway improvements and the opportunity to create an automotive hub linked to Bentley.
	The Triangle, Shavington	About 350 new homes, small scale retail, community facility, open space and new pedestrian and cycle links.	A greenfield site, outside the green gap and close to the villages of Shavington and Wybunbury. It is largely surrounded by existing residential properties. The site now has a resolution to grant planning permission, subject to the signing of a S106 agreement.
	East Shavington	About 300 new homes, small scale retail, community facility, open space, village green, green infrastructure and new pedestrian and cycle links.	A greenfield site on the eastern edge of Shavington village comprising approximately 11 hectares of agricultural land. Recent highway issues in the transport corridors serving the site suggest that development will need to be phased until after 2020.
	Sydney Road	The delivery of about 250 new homes and contributions towards highway improvements at Crewe Green Roundabout, Maw Green junction and Sydney Road	An opportunity for a high quality, sustainable residential development on a site which is located about 1.5 km from Crewe Town Centre. Surrounding uses

		bridge. Incorporation of Green Infrastructure including: allotments, equipped children's play area, community woodland. Improvement of existing and provision of new pedestrian and cycle links to link new and existing residential areas, employment areas, shops, schools and health facilities.	include residential, the railway line and open countryside. The site is designated as "green gap" in the 2005 Crewe & Nantwich Local Plan. The site was originally put forward as an 'Alternative Site' in the Development Strategy.
	Crewe Green	About 150 new homes, highway improvements at Crewe Green Roundabout; incorporation of Green Infrastructure; improvement of existing and provision of new pedestrian and cycle links to link new and existing residential areas, employment areas, shops, schools and health facilities; inclusion of appropriate planting and buffering along the northern boundary.	An opportunity to deliver improvements to the transport network, in particular the Crewe Green roundabout and to provide a high quality residential development at a key gateway into Crewe. Surrounding uses include residential uses situated to the west, mixed uses including employment and Crewe Green roundabout to the south. This site is currently located in the Green Gap and has been added following the 'Possible Additional Sites' consultation.

Currently Proposed Core Strategy Sites in Macclesfield

Site		Proposed Uses	Commentary
	South Macclesfield Development Area	5ha of employment land, about 5,000 sq m retail development (convenience goods), new link road, about 1100 new homes, green infrastructure and open space, improved pedestrian and cycle links.	A longstanding allocation for employment that has not come forward. The area is the only significant parcel of undeveloped land in Macclesfield outside of the green belt. The introduction of higher value uses will produce a viable scheme that will deliver the necessary infrastructure.
	Land between Congleton Road and Chelford Road	Mixed use proposal includes 5ha of employment land and about 150 new dwellings located adjacent to Congleton Road. Additional land in the Green Belt adjoining the site is safeguarded for potential development beyond 2030.	A greenfield allocation which involves an alteration to the Green Belt boundary. The site benefits from direct access onto the main Congleton Road and therefore considered suitable for both new business and housing. The site could be extended after 2030 onto adjoining land, should a need for more growth be

			identified.
	Fence Avenue	About 250 new homes, open space, local facilities, new pedestrian and cycle links.	A sustainable site close to Macclesfield Town Centre and Rail Station, which involves an alteration to the Green Belt boundary. The full site extends to around 14ha; however all of the land would only become available if there was a future consolidation or relocation of the King's School facilities. Encouragement should be given to the re-use of key buildings where possible.
	Gaw End Lane	About 100 new homes, 5 hectares of employment land, open space and new pedestrian and cycle links.	This area lies to the south of Macclesfield beyond the Lyme Green Business Park. The site is mainly agricultural land with the Council Depot at the northern end. Surrounding uses include industry, business, residential uses and agricultural land. This site was originally identified as an 'Alternative Site' in the Development Strategy.

Currently Proposed Core Strategy Sites in Alsager

Site		Proposed Uses	Commentary
	Twyfords and Cardway	About 550 new homes, retention of existing offices, new open spaces and improved pedestrian and cycle links to the Town Centre, railway station, Excalibur Industrial Estate and Talke Road. Potential for specialist older person's accommodation, additional employment development, local retail facilities and community facilities.	A substantial brownfield site to the east of Alsager with opportunities to provide a wide range of uses, including residential and employment. Much of the site is subject to a resolution to grant planning permission for housing.
	Former Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) Campus	About 350 new homes, together with sports and leisure hub, open space and improved pedestrian and cycle links. Potential for older person's accommodation, local retail facilities and community facilities.	A partly brownfield site on the west of the town which is available for redevelopment following the consolidation of the MMU South Cheshire Campus at Crewe. The site was allocated in the 2005 Congleton Local Plan with a recognition that

			some development would take place after 2011.
	Radway Green	10 ha of employment land, open space and improvements to pedestrian and cycle links.	An extension and redevelopment of an established employment site to the west of Alsager.
	Radway Green Extension	A 25 ha site for new employment and business. In single ownership it is suitable for large scale end-users.	The allocation allows the southwards extension of Radway Green and is intended to support the role of the site as a significant strategic employment location. The land is currently designated as Green Belt.

Currently Proposed Core Strategy Sites in Congleton

Site		Proposed Uses	Commentary
	Giantswood Lane	About 150 new homes, open space, new pedestrian/cycle links.	New residential development associated with the proposed Congleton Northern Link Road.
	Manchester Road	About 550 new homes, new primary school, local retail facilities, new pedestrian and cycle links and open space.	New residential community associated with the proposed Congleton Northern Link Road.

Currently Proposed Core Strategy Sites in Knutsford

Site		Proposed Uses	Commentary
	Parkgate Extension	6 ha of employment land and about 250 new dwellings, subject to site access improvements. Improved pedestrian and cycle links.	This predominantly greenfield site is located to the north and east of Parkgate Trading Estate. The land is outside of the greenbelt, but has been allocated for employment in the previous Local Plan.
	North West Knutsford	5 ha of employment land, about 300 new homes, new primary school, open space, local retail facility and community facilities. Additional land to be safeguarded for housing and employment development beyond 2030.	A sustainable urban extension to the town which requires an alteration to the Green Belt boundary. There is an area of Protected Open Space to the south of this site and reserved for open space and sports uses.

Currently Proposed Core Strategy Sites in Middlewich

Site		Proposed Uses	Commentary
	Glebe Farm	About 450 new homes, together with open space and improved pedestrian and cycle links. The development will be expected to provide funding towards the completion of the Middlewich Eastern Link Road.	A greenfield site to the south of the town where development is associated with the completion of the Middlewich Eastern Link Road.

Currently Proposed Core Strategy Sites in Nantwich

Site		Proposed Uses	Commentary
	Kingsley Fields	2 ha of employment land, about 1100 new homes, local centre including local retail and community facilities. A new primary school or a financial contribution for education provision will be required. Substantial open space to be provided including an extension of the Riverside Park between Reaseheath College and the Town Centre. Improved pedestrian and cycleways including links to the Connect 2 Greenway route. The development will include a new road link to Waterlode, the realignment of the A51 through the site and assist in funding improvements at the Burford Cross Roads.	A greenfield site which provides the opportunity for a sustainable extension to the town delivering community infrastructure, including open space, road improvements and pedestrian and cycle links.
	Snow Hill	Regeneration for a mix of uses including offices, leisure/hotel, housing, retail, community facilities and parking. Existing swimming pool to be retained. The design of the scheme will provide for strong pedestrian and cycle linkages between the site and the Town Centre. Open space to be provided including an extension of the Riverside Park.	A brownfield site close to the Town Centre which offers the potential for regeneration.
	Stapeley Water Gardens	About 150 new homes, open space and improved pedestrian/ cycle links.	A mix of greenfield and brownfield land. Land adjacent already has planning permission for a mix of housing

			development.
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Currently Proposed Core Strategy Sites in Sandbach

Site	Proposed Uses	Commentary
Land adjacent to Junction 17 of M6, south east of Congleton Road (Capricorn)	20ha of employment land, hotel, at least 200 new homes, retention and strengthening of wildlife corridor, allotments, new local centre (including primary school), open space, improved pedestrian and cycle links. Initial phases will necessitate improved access whilst development of the entire site will be dependent on the prior delivery of improvements to Junction 17 of the M6.	A greenfield site adjacent to J17 of the M6 motorway which provides the opportunity for a high quality business park together with residential development. Final housing figures are dependent on further viability work and may consequently increase.

Currently Proposed Core Strategy Sites in Wilmslow

Site	Proposed Uses	Commentary
Adlington Road	About 200 new homes, open space, community facilities, new pedestrian and cycle links.	A largely greenfield site outside the Green Belt and previously safeguarded for future development in the Macclesfield Local Plan. Provides a sustainable location for new residential development.
Land at Royal London	2 ha of employment land, hotel, about 75 new homes, open space, new pedestrian/ cycle links. Land to the west of Alderley Road will be protected for future open space.	A greenfield site, with a current developable area of around 12.5ha to the east of Royal London's office campus. It represents an extension of the existing Royal London office complex for employment and housing and involves an alteration to the Green Belt boundary.
Wilmslow Business Park	The delivery of a business use development of about 25,000sq m in line with the principles of sustainable development, across a site of about 6ha.	The site is located to the south east of Wilmslow town centre, bordered on the west side by the West Coast Main Line, and to the east by the A34 Wilmslow bypass. The site is relatively flat and lies adjacent to the west coast main line.

Currently Proposed Core Strategy Site at Wardle

Site		Proposed Uses	Commentary
	Wardle Employment Improvement Area	An existing employment site in the countryside focused around the Wardle Industrial Estate, where there is scope for intensification of employment and ancillary uses within the area. Two phases of development have the potential to deliver about 31ha of new employment land adjacent to the A51.	An existing employment area in open countryside which will benefit from intensification and environmental improvements.

Currently Proposed New Settlement in Cheshire East

Site		Proposed Uses	Commentary
	North Cheshire Growth Village – Handforth East	A sustainable new settlement comprising 12ha of new employment land, about 1800 homes, local centre with retail, community facilities, new secondary and primary schools, leisure facilities, country park, open space and sports pitches, new pedestrian and cycle links, particularly to Handforth Railway Station, and protection and enhancement of the setting of Handforth Hall. Additional land will be safeguarded for further development (about 600 homes) beyond 2030.	An area of largely unused land in the Green Belt to the east of the A34 Handforth By-Pass which is proposed for a new sustainable settlement with self contained facilities and properly planned infrastructure. It will accommodate a significant proportion of development needs in the north of the Borough without any adverse impact upon the existing settlement of Handforth.

Currently Proposed ‘Strategic Locations’

17.5 In several cases, where either only the broad locality of the proposed development is known or additional technical assessment is considered necessary, the emerging *Core Strategy* will identify ‘Strategic Locations’. Further work will be required to determine precise site boundaries, as some are affected by proposed highway improvement lines, which are yet to be finalised through public consultation and any necessary Compulsory Purchase Order procedures. Other locations, such as Central Crewe and Macclesfield could accommodate development on a range of sites, which it would not be appropriate to separately identify in a strategic policy document. It is envisaged that the currently proposed ‘Strategic Locations’ could be capable of delivering over 5,000 new dwellings and a further 90 hectares of employment land.

Currently Proposed Strategic Locations in Cheshire East

Strategic Location	Proposed Uses	Commentary
Central Crewe	About 250 new homes (including student accommodation) with retail, leisure and commercial uses including offices, restaurants, cafés and bars. Improvements to Crewe Railway Station and its surroundings and 5,000 sq m retail development in Mill Street, expansion of existing sports and leisure hub at Crewe Alexandra Football Club and new office/commercial development in Macon Way.	The Town Centre is an important focus for regeneration in line with the 'All Change for Crewe' initiative to improve the range of retail units and to introduce leisure, cultural and residential development to improve its vitality, in accordance with the 'Town Centre First' objective. The railway station area, formerly identified as the 'Crewe Rail Exchange Zone' has been added as part of the 'strategic location' providing the opportunity to create a high quality gateway into Crewe, including a new entrance to the station, new bus interchange and redevelopment of surrounding areas. Improvements in the linkages between the station and the town centre are a key objective.
Leighton, Crewe	About 400 new homes, local centre including retail, community facilities, open space, new pedestrian and cycle links and highway improvements.	The opportunity to deliver a new sustainable urban extension that will support and complement the nearby mixed use allocation, the adjacent Leighton Hospital and other major employers including Bentley. The site lies to the north west of Crewe and borders existing residential development to the east and Leighton Hospital to the north. Development will provide the opportunity for further highway improvements, notably the A530.
South Cheshire Growth Village , South West Crewe	A sustainable new settlement providing an opportunity for the phased delivery of about 900 new homes, education provision, retail centre, community facilities, sports/leisure facilities, open space and green infrastructure.	An area of land adjacent to Crewe Hall to the south east of Crewe. It will accommodate a new sustainable settlement with self contained facilities and properly planned infrastructure within a high quality environment. The settlement will complement the nearby

			allocation at Basford East. The proposed strategic location will accommodate a significant proportion of housing development needs and will be expected to contribute towards related road infrastructure improvements.
	Central Macclesfield	Primarily retail, commercial and leisure development, about 850 new homes within the wider urban area and improved pedestrian and cycle links with the rest of the town.	There are redevelopment opportunities within the Town Centre and the wider urban area for a variety of uses including retail and residential development in accordance with the 'Town Centre First' objective.
	White Moss Quarry (Alsager)	A sustainable new settlement comprising about 900 new dwellings, local centre with retail, community facilities, education provision, open space and new pedestrian and cycle links.	The site is centred on the peat and sand workings at White Moss. Although classed as greenfield (and subject to restoration conditions) the land has been extensively disturbed by mineral extraction. Remainder of the site is in agricultural use and contains a variety of wooded landscape, existing hedgerows and field systems, much of which will be retained and incorporated into the proposed scheme. This site has been added following the 'Additional Sites' consultation.
	Back Lane and Radnor Park, Congleton	10 ha of employment land and about 500 new homes, new primary school, open space and recreation facilities dependent on and to be served by a new Congleton Northern Link Road. New pedestrian and cycle links.	An extension of the existing Radnor Park Industrial Estate to allow for the expansion and relocation of existing businesses together with residential development and recreation facilities associated with a new Northern Link Road.
	Congleton Business Park Extension	10 ha of employment land and about 450 new homes, new school, local centre, open space and recreation facilities to be served by a new Congleton Northern Link Road. New pedestrian and cycle links.	Location to the north of the town presents a significant strategic location in scale. It presents an opportunity to establish a high quality extension to Congleton Business Park alongside other uses. Residential development will support the creation of this new community set in ample greenspace which supports existing wildlife areas and the

			River Dane which is a key asset to the town. Key to this development will be the provision of the Congleton
	Giantswood Lane to Manchester Road, Congleton	About 550 new homes, new primary school, local retail facilities, open space, new pedestrian/cycle links. Site release dependent upon and to be served by proposed Congleton Northern Link Road.	New residential community associated with the proposed Congleton Northern Link Road.
	Midpoint 18 Extension	Up to 70 ha of employment land. The release of this site will be expected to occur only after the completion of Midpoint 18 Phase 3 for which outline planning consent has already been granted. The development of Midpoint 18 Phase 3 is itself dependent upon the completion of the Middlewich Eastern Link Road. The allocation of this site should also provide an additional financial contribution towards the Link Road.	An extension to the Midpoint 18 employment area, to be developed towards and beyond the end of the plan period.
	Brooks Lane, Middlewich	About 400 new homes, local retail facility; improvements to canal-side environment and improved accessibility to Town Centre for pedestrians and cyclists.	An existing industrial area close to the Town Centre which is proposed for comprehensive redevelopment.

17.6 All sites proposed in the emerging *Core Strategy* will be expected to be developed in accordance with the relevant policy principles, unless otherwise specified. One of the key challenges will be to connect sites into the existing urban and rural fabric. It is acknowledged that many communities are already established and new development, where appropriate, should take advantage of existing facilities and services. However, where new services are provided to support proposed developments, they will need to be accessible and integrated into existing communities.

17.7 In 2014, the Council will prepare a *Site Allocations and Development Policies* Development Plan Document (DPD) in accordance with its revised *Local Development Scheme 2014 - 2017*. This document will identify further smaller sites for different types of development, including housing and employment, which are not considered to be strategic in nature; these will be illustrated on a *Policies Map* to accompany the DPD.

18.0 Currently Proposed 'Safeguarded Land'

18.1 In order to avoid the need for future reviews of the Green Belt, it is necessary, in accordance with advice in the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, to identify 'safeguarded land' between urban areas and the Green Belt boundaries as proposed in the emerging *Core Strategy*. *Such land is intended to meet* longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period - in other words during the 2030's at the earliest. It should be stressed that safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time and should not be viewed as being potentially available for building in the near future. It is also not appropriate to propose any eventual use of the land at this time. Planning permission for the permanent development of 'safeguarded land' should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development. Any such review will need to take account of the development needs arising at that time and the availability of other sources of land available at that point.

18.2 Accordingly, the currently proposed 'Safeguarded Land', which has been identified in Macclesfield, Knutsford, Poynton, Wilmslow and Handforth may be required to meet longer term development needs beyond the end of the plan period and equates to some 276 hectares. Some parcels of safeguarded land adjoin existing proposals in the plan; whilst others are discrete and stand alone in nature. In all cases, any development of this type of land will be subject to a further Local Plan review dealing with needs after 2030. In the meantime, the land will be subject to protective policies similar to those applying to the countryside. This will ensure that for the duration of the plan period that existing uses of the land will continue and that the area will be fully protected for the duration of the plan period.

18.3 In the case of Poynton, more detailed investigations to determine the boundaries of safeguarded land will be carried out during the preparation of the *Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document (DPD)*.

Currently Proposed Safeguarded Land in Cheshire East

Site		Approximate Site Area
	Lyme Green, Macclesfield	18 hectares
	South West Macclesfield, Congleton Road	137 hectares
	North West Knutsford	23 hectares
	Northwich Road, Knutsford	20 hectares
	Poynton	10 hectares
	Prestbury Road, Wilmslow	26 hectares
	Upcast Lane, Wilmslow	14 hectares
	North Cheshire Growth Village	28 hectares
	TOTAL	276 hectares

19.0 Next Steps

- 19.1 It is anticipated that a Draft *Core Strategy* document will be prepared and presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet before being submitted to Council for formal approval. The range of sites outlined in this report (see **Annex 6**) reflect further plan-making undertaken since the two consultations were carried out in the first half of 2013. The *Core Strategy* itself will bring all the strands of evidence, technical assessment, co-operation and public engagement together in a single document. It will represent the Council's best and final plan before the formal steps of the Local Plan process commence.
- 19.2 Once approved by Council, the *Core Strategy* will be published for a six week period to invite representations on the 'soundness' of the plan. All comments received will be fully considered to assess whether any further modifications are required to the plan before formal submission; this is anticipated by the end of the year/beginning of 2014.
- 19.3 The *Core Strategy* will then be formally submitted to the Secretary of State who will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to hold a public examination to test the legal compliance and soundness of the plan document. Prior to formal submission, a Programme Officer will be appointed to assist the Inspector in the efficient running of the Examination. This has already been budgeted for in terms of the management of resources together with the Inspector's costs, which will be principally determined by the number of sitting days and the hiring or use of a suitable venue.
- 19.4 Those persons or organisations that submit comments requesting changes to the *Core Strategy* within the prescribed six week period will have the right to appear before and be heard by an Inspector. As soon as is practically possible, the Inspector will arrange a Pre-Examination Hearing to outline the procedure for those intending to appear and establish the deadlines for the submission of evidence. It is anticipated that the Examination will commence in Spring/Summer, 2014 with the Inspector's Report not expected until the Autumn of next year.
- 19.5 The responsibility for adopting the *Core Strategy* will ultimately rest with the Council and it is hoped that this can be achieved before the end of 2014. The document will then provide the necessary strategic planning framework for determining planning applications and provide a sound basis for preparing other Development Plan Documents, such as the *Site Allocations and Development Policies* DPD, *Waste* DPD and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's).

20.0 Access to Information

- 20.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:-

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Annexes:

Annex 1	Report of Consultation- <i>Shaping our Future: Policy Principles and A Development Strategy for Jobs and Sustainable Communities (2013)</i>
Annex 1A	Summary of Consultation Responses- <i>Shaping our Future: A Development Strategy for Jobs and Sustainable Communities (2013)</i>
Annex 1B	Summary of Consultation Responses - <i>Shaping our Future: Policy Principles</i>
Annex 1C	Summary of Consultation Responses - <i>Development Strategy and Policy Principles Sustainability Appraisal Report (2013)</i>
Annex 1D	Summary of Consultation Responses - <i>Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Development Strategy and Emerging Policy Principles (2013)</i>
Annex 2	Report of Consultation- <i>Shaping our Future: A Development Strategy for Jobs and Sustainable Communities- Possible Additional Sites proposed by Developer and Land Interests (2013)</i>
Annex 2A	Consultation Responses - <i>Shaping our Future: A Development Strategy for Jobs and Sustainable Communities - Possible Additional Sites proposed by Developer and Land Interests (2013)</i>
Annex 3	Key Employment Sites in Cheshire East
Annex 4	Currently Proposed Sites - Location Plans