Cheshire East Local Plan

SHAPING OUR FUTURE
Emerging Policy Principles

Cheshire East
Council

Foreword

The process of preparing a development plan is a complex one and can appear, at first sight, to simply be an update of existing Local Plans. Our Development Strategy is far more than that. It is a robust strategy to deliver positive, targeted and sustainable development to benefit all the people of Cheshire East.

It will deliver 27,000 new houses, 20,000 new jobs, and the infrastructure needed for this to happen, and will continue to support Cheshire East's position both as the economic powerhouse of the North West, and as a beautiful and prosperous place to live.

We have a vision of genuine growth of jobs as part of a jobs-led development strategy, supported by improved connectivity through sustainable infrastructure, such as the Poynton Relief Road, Congleton Relief Road, dualling of the A500, and junction improvements to the M6.

This is an ambitious plan which will protect the green and pleasant lands of Cheshire East through Green Belt swaps and Strategic Open Gaps, whilst delivering economic growth at one of the highest rates in UK PLC. It is underpinned by an innovative strategy for energy which focuses on sustainable alternatives to wind power, and by a real commitment to needs-based, community-led housing in order to provide lifelong housing to the people of Cheshire East.

This is a sustainable, plan-led Development Strategy which sends a strong message to the developers besieging our towns, inviting them to work with us to strengthen our towns and deliver positive outcomes to the people of Cheshire East.

Cllr Michael Jones

Cheshire East Council - Leader of the Council

This is your chance to make a difference

It is two years since the consultations began on the Local Plan. Since that time, the feedback on the Issues and Options paper and the individual Town Strategies has been considered to produce this draft Development Strategy.

This Development Strategy is based on providing jobs growth and ensuring that the character of Cheshire East is retained. This has been developed around six key points:

1. Jobs Growth - the generation of 20,000 jobs focused around the M6 corridor and town centres.
2. Infrastructure Improvements - the connection of Cheshire East by improving road infrastructure by:

    I. Dualling the A500 at Junction 16 of the M6;
    II. Improving access at Junction 16 of the M6;

III.   Providing a link road around Congleton;
IV.   Improving connections at Macclesfield via a South and West Relief Road;
V.   Poynton By-pass.

3.   Establish a 'Town Centre First' policy - to revitalise and encourage trade in all our market towns.
4.   To develop three new settlements - to minimise the impact of building in the Green Belt and to protect the individuality of towns and villages by the introduction of 'Strategic Open Gaps' across the Borough.
5.   To establish a Housing Growth Policy - based around existing towns to meet local demand and ensure we meet our five year housing supply target of 7,000 new homes.
6.   To exploit our natural resources - both minerals and energy to ensure that future generations can take full benefits that will accrue.

This plan will ensure that Cheshire East will maintain and enhance its position as the number one Borough in the North West.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who has helped shape the Local Plan so far. This includes Town and Parish Councils, Town Partnerships, community groups, members of the stakeholder panels involved in the Town Strategies and those who have taken part in the consultation stages so far.

I urge everyone to continue to get involved and give us your views to shape the future of the Borough.

Cllr David Brown

Cheshire East Council - Strategic Communities Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader of the Council

Contents

1 Introduction

What is the Local Plan?

1.1   The Local Plan will be the Development Plan for Cheshire East, and its policies will form the basis for planning decisions in the Borough. It will set out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and policies for the development of Cheshire East for the period up to 2030. This means the Local Plan will look at:

* How many new jobs are needed and where they should go;
* Protecting and improving important open areas and provide new ones;
* How many new homes will be required and where they should go;
* Providing new transport infrastructure including roads, cycle routes and footpaths; and
* How our town centres and

1.2   The Local Plan for Cheshire East will consist of three key documents. These are:

* The Core Strategy, which, identifies the overarching objectives for spatial planning in Cheshire East. It will be used by everyone who wants to see how the Borough will change and what new development will be delivered over the next 20 years. The Core Strategy will also identify strategic sites and locations and provide a key diagram that shows the position of these sites and locations.
* The Site Allocations and Policies Document, which will allocate smaller sites for future development and provide detailed policies to be used when considering planning applications for new development across the Borough.
* The Waste Development Plan Document, which will set out policies for dealing with waste and identify specific sites for waste management facilities.
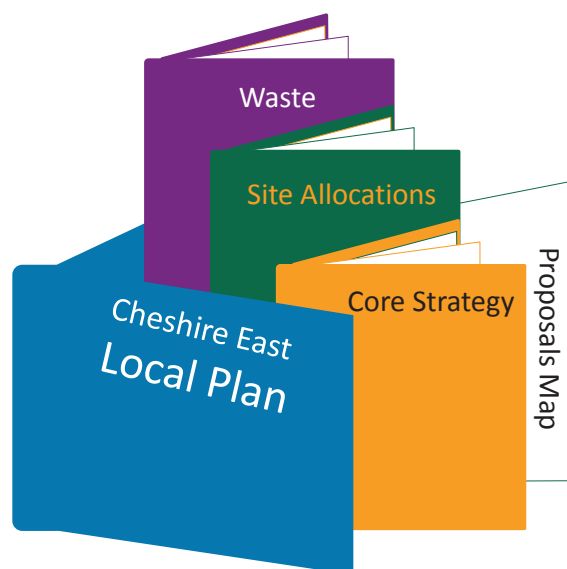
Figure 1.1 Content of the Local Plan

1.3   The Local Plan will be supported by a Proposals Map which will:

* Identify settlement boundaries;
* Show where different types of development will be permitted;
* Display environmental and heritage designations; and
* Show how policies will apply across the area.

1.4   The Local Plan will also be accompanied by an Infrastructure Plan that will identify:

* Future infrastructure needs and costs across the Borough;

- The phasing of infrastructure development;
- Available funding sources; and
- The responsibilities for delivery.

1.5   Further information on the Local Plan is available at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan.

Purpose of this Emerging Policy Principles Document

1.6   The purpose of this document is to set out and consult on 'Emerging Policy Principles' for the Borough. These principles will provide the basis for the strategic policies contained within the Local Plan. The purpose of these strategic policies will be to make sure that new development helps to deliver the objectives set out in this document for Enterprise and Growth, Stronger Communities, Sustainable Environment and Connectivity within Cheshire East.

1.7   The policy principles, as set out in this document reflect the comments received during community consultation and involvement to date and address issues identified through our current library of evidence and research.

1.8   This document has been informed by a number of information sources, including:

- National policy, particularly as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Other relevant strategies at the regional and local level.
- The evidence base gathered to inform the Local Plan.
- Various appraisals performed to support the Local Plan.
- The results of previous stages of consultation.
- The local aspirations identified within the various Town Strategies.

1.9   Consultation on this document will form an important part of the preparation of the Core Strategy of the Cheshire East Local Plan. The results of this consultation stage will be considered when drafting the Core Strategy for its submission to the Secretary of State later in 2013.

1.10   The Council is also consulting on a 'Development Strategy' document which sets out the overall number of homes and jobs that will be needed in Cheshire East over the next 20 years and suggests levels of development for each of the main towns. It also identifies proposed strategic development sites.

Your Views

1.11   Your comments will help us to develop the Local Plan. The policies and proposals in the final Local Plan will affect everyone that lives, works or visits Cheshire East; this is your opportunity to get involved and have your say on shaping the future of Cheshire East.

1.12   We want to know what you think. We want to know whether you agree with the emerging policies we have set out in this document and whether you agree with the strategic themes and sites set out in the Development Strategy document.

1.13 This document is available to view in our Libraries and on our website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan and can be inspected at our Customer Service Centres and at the Council Offices in Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach.

1.14 The consultation period runs from January 2013 to February 2013.

1.15 The contact details for the Spatial Planning team are:

- E-mail: localplan@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Website: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan
- Telephone: 01270 685893
- Twitter: search for @placeshaping
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/CESpatialPlanning
- Linked In: search for Spatial Planning - Cheshire Eat Council
- Post: Spatial Planning, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 1HZ

2 Background to Cheshire East

The Borough

2.1   The Borough of Cheshire East is bounded by Cheshire West and Chester to the west, Warrington and the Manchester conurbation to the north, Shropshire and the North Staffordshire conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme to the south and the Peak District National Park to the east.

2.2   Cheshire East is a new Borough, created as part of Local Government Reorganisation in 2009 and it covers the eastern part of the historic county of Cheshire. It is a large Borough, with many towns, villages and rural areas. The towns and villages vary greatly in character and face differing issues with different needs for the future. As such, Cheshire East currently has an emerging sense of place and identity. This Local Plan aims to contribute towards the creation of a coherent identity for the Borough.
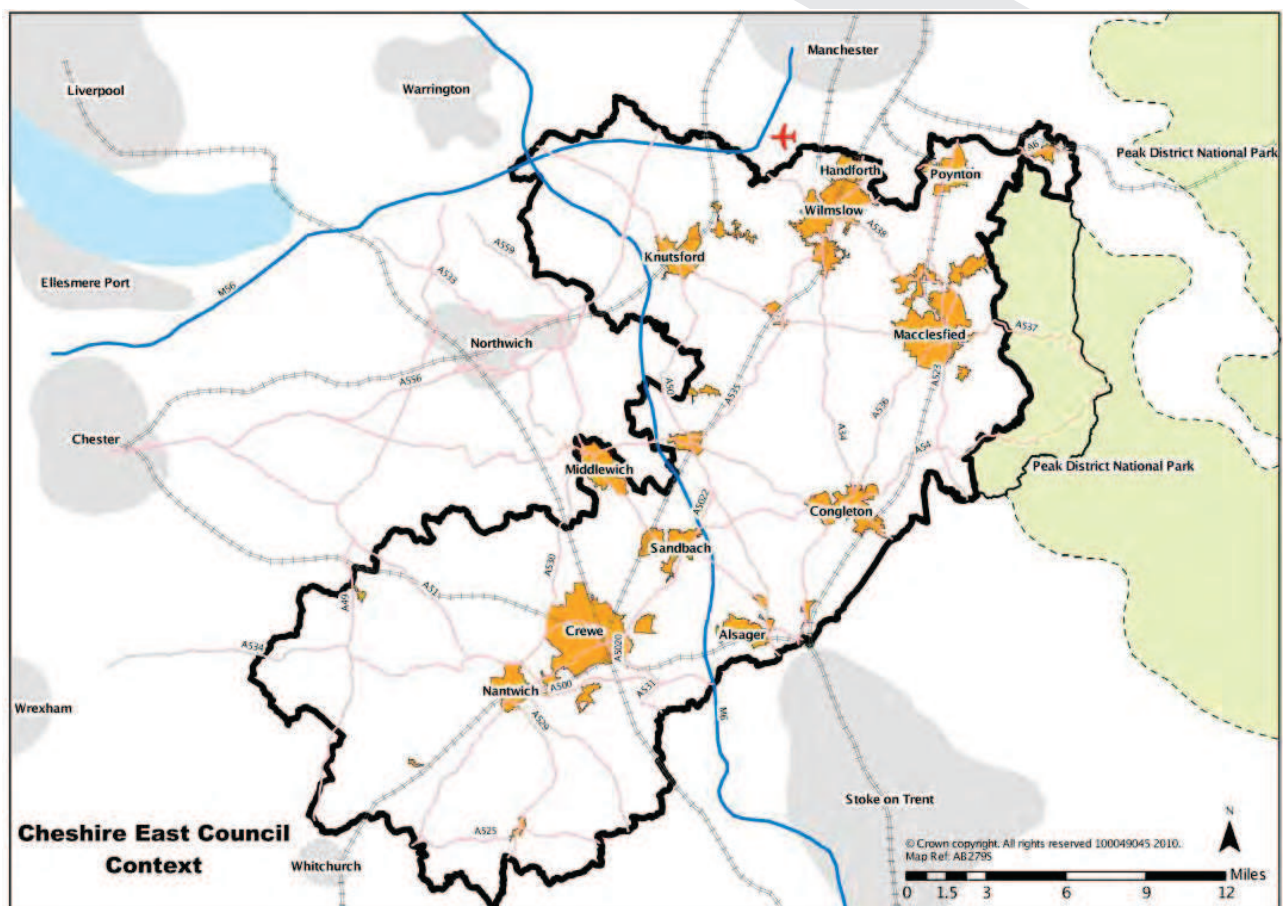
Figure 2.1 Cheshire East Location Map

2.3   Cheshire East has 40,630 ha of land designated as Green Belt, located in the northern and eastern parts of the Borough, which is part of the Green Belts surrounding the Potteries and Greater Manchester conurbations.

2.4   The two Principal Towns in Cheshire East are Crewe and Macclesfield. There are also a number of smaller towns including Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.

2.5   The extensive road network in the Borough includes the M6, which runs north to south through the centre of the Borough and the M56 running east to west at the northern end of Cheshire East. The M56 links to the M6 in the north of the Borough.

2.6   The rail network is accessible from 22 Railway Stations across the Borough, located on one or more of the rail lines radiating from Crewe. Crewe and Macclesfield are on separate branches of the West Coast Main Line giving access to Greater Manchester and London Euston.

2.7   In addition, Manchester International Airport lies immediately to the north of the Borough, offering services to various parts of the globe.

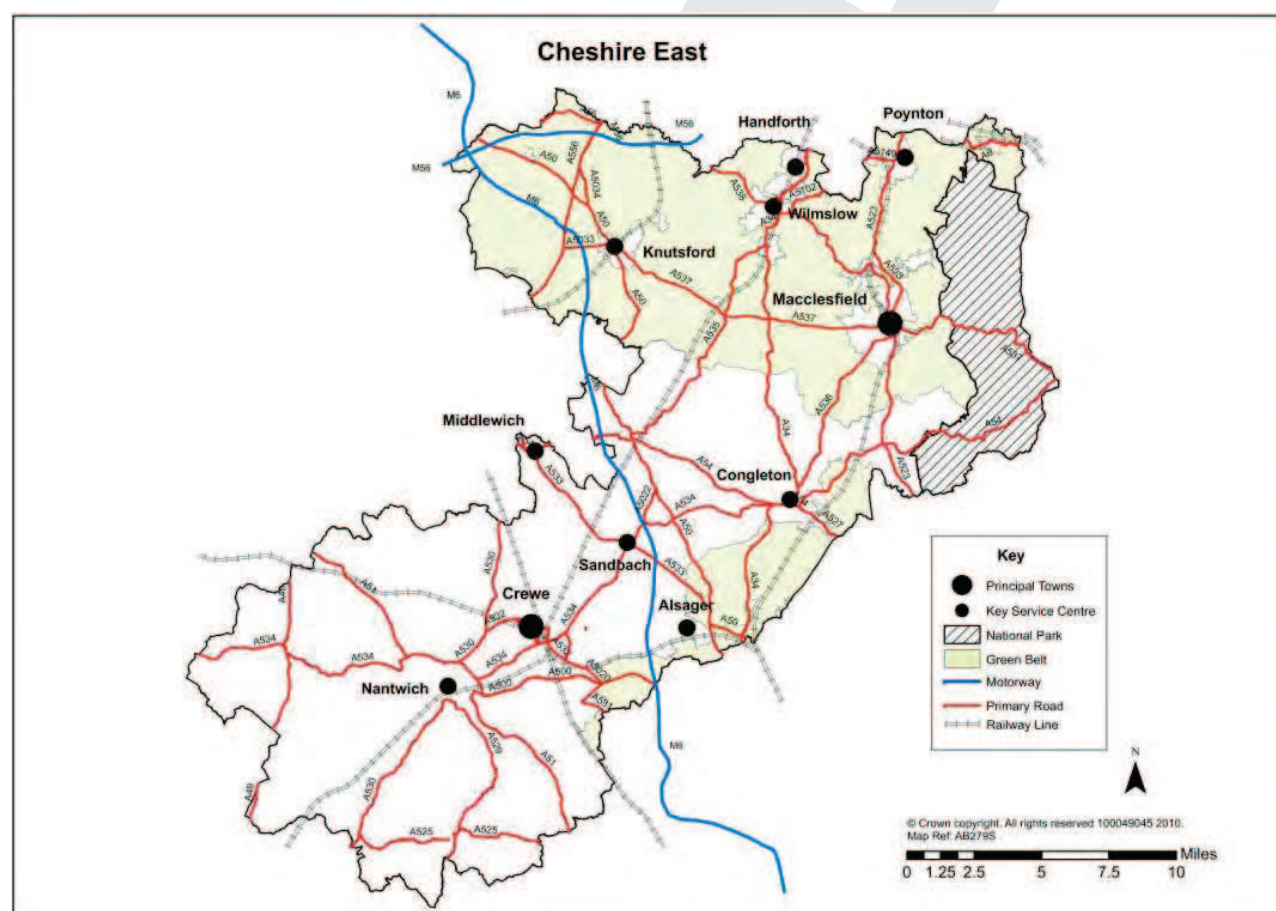**2.8**   Figure 2.2 shows some of the key features within Cheshire East.

Figure 2.2 Map of Cheshire East

Background to Cheshire East

2.9 Cheshire East has a population of 370,127. 51 per cent (188,718) are female and 49 per cent (181,409) are male.[1] This represents 0.66 per cent of the population of England and Wales. The population pyramid in Figure 2.3 shows the age distribution of Cheshire East residents.

2.10 As shown by the population pyramid, Cheshire East has a lower than average proportion of both male and females in all age groups from 15 to 34. It has a higher than average proportion of residents over the age of 40. The relatively low proportion of people of working age and relatively high proportion of older people has implications for the housing needs of the population and for the future economic prosperity of the Borough.

Figure 2.3 Cheshire East Population Pyramid (2011)

2.11 Over the ten year period from July 2000 until June 2010, 126,830 people moved into Cheshire East and 112,590 people have moved out of the Borough, with both movements having particular links to Cheshire West and Chester, Stockport and Manchester. The result is a net in-flow of 14,240 people (an average of 1,424 each year).[2]

2.12 Using 2009 population data as a base it is forecasted that Cheshire East's population will increase by 21,300 (or 6 per cent) up to 2029, leading to an overall figure of 384,000. The forecasts also predict that the population aged 65 and over will increase sharply (by 59 per cent) during the period 2009 to 2029[3].

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1   Office for National Statistics 2011 Census, Crown Copyright
2   Office for National Statistics, Internal Migration by Local Authorities in England and Wales, Mid-year (National Health Service Central Register)
3   Sources: [1] ONS population estimates 2009. [2] 2010-29 Cheshire West and Chester Council Population Forecasts on behalf of Cheshire East
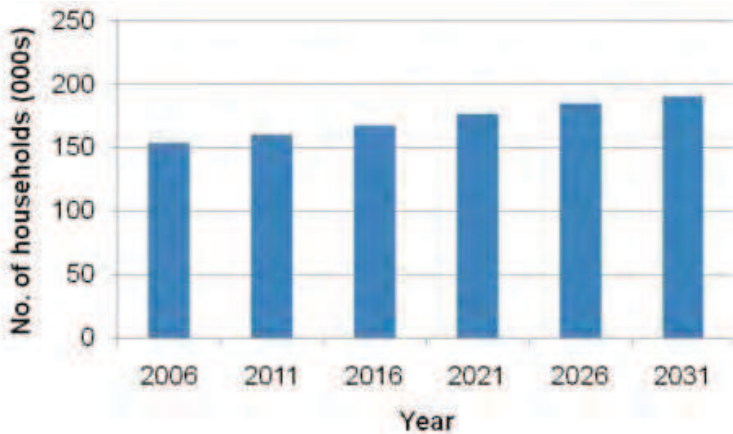
Background to Cheshire East

Figure 2.4 Household Change 2006 to 2031

2.13 Information from the 2011 census shows that within Cheshire East there were 159,400 households with an average household size of about 2.29 people. Housing need is expected to increase as a result of national trends, including predicted increases in the population and changes to household sizes resulting from an increased number of divorces and separations, and an ageing population. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment indicates that the number of households in Cheshire East is expected to increase from 154,000 in 2006 to 191,000 by 2031; an increase of 24.2 per cent, indicated in Figure 2.4. This equates to an average yearly increase of 1,480 households.

2.14 The economy of Cheshire East is diverse and generally vibrant. The Borough provides 6.6 per cent of the economic output in the North West [4] and 7.5 per cent of the region's businesses - the highest share of any North West unitary or district authority.[5] Its residents make up a significant proportion of the 'knowledge economy' workforce that drives the Manchester city region.[6] Cheshire East performs better than the regional and national averages in skill levels,[7] business start ups [8] and knowledge-based employment.[9]

2.15 The number of people employed in the pharmaceutical industry is significantly above the national average with particular concentrations in the former Macclesfield district, for example AstraZeneca. Advanced engineering is a significant employer in the Crewe area, for example Bentley Motors. Both Macclesfield and Crewe are net importers of labour, whereas in the Congleton area there is a relative shortage of jobs and a large outflow of workers. The rural nature of the Borough is reflected in the relatively high number of people employed in agriculture; twice the national average.

2.16 Based on data taken from the 2009 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Household Survey, 66 per cent of Cheshire East's 189,771 economically active residents lived and worked in the Borough and 34 per cent lived in Cheshire East but worked outside the Borough.

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4   Figure relates to economic output (GVA) in 2009. Source: Baseline projections from the Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Econometric Model (CHWEM). Projections were obtained using Cambridge Econometrics /IER LEFM software and are consistent with Cambridge Econometrics' UK Regional Forecast, as published on Cambridge Econometrics' Knowledge Base website in June 2012. Additional data preparation and aggregation by the Economic Development and Regeneration Team, Cheshire East Council.

5   Figure relates to business population in 2010. Source: Business Demography – 2010: Enterprise Births, Deaths and Survivals, ONS, December 2011

6   2001 Census. Crown Copyright. Based on Cheshire East residents' share of the number of managerial and professional people (NS-SeC groups 1 and 2) working in each Greater Manchester (and other North West) Local Authority

7   Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2011, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copright. Based on the percentage of working-age (16 to 64 year-old) residents with a qualification at or above NVQ Level 4

8   [1] Business Demography – 2010: Enterprise Births, Deaths and Survivals, ONS, December 2011. [2] ONS population estimates 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012

9   Annual Population Survey Workplace Analysis, Apr 2011 – Mar 2012, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copright. Based on the proportion of employment at Cheshire East sites which consists of people working as Managers and Senior Officials or in Professional Occupations (SOC2000 Major Groups 1 and 2)

Background to Cheshire East

2.17 An estimated 172,300 people were working in Cheshire East in 2011, as either employees or working proprietors. Of those working as employees (166,300), 70 per cent were full-time and 30 per cent part-time. 13 per cent of employees worked in the health and social work sector, with manufacturing (12 per cent), professional, scientific and technical activities (11 per cent) and retail (11 per cent) also accounting for a large proportion of the employee total. [10]

2.18 The Borough has major educational assets, in terms of skills development and knowledge transfer, in the form of Manchester Metropolitan University at Crewe and three Further Education colleges - South Cheshire, Reaseheath and Macclesfield.

Figure 2.5 Tourist Destinations: The Canal Network, Jodrell Bank and Tatton Park

2.19 The closeness of Manchester International Airport provides economic benefits to the Borough by providing access to national and international markets as well as supporting a substantial number of jobs, both directly and indirectly. In 2004, the Airport was estimated to contribute £1.7 billion of economic impact nationally, supporting over 35,000 jobs in the North West[11].

2.20 Cheshire East has a diverse retail offer, however many of the Borough's town centres are under-performing and declining, in need of revitalisation and suffering from competition from major centres outside of the Borough.

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10   Business Register and Employment Survey 2011, ONS, Nomis. Crown Copyright.
11   Manchester Airport Masterplan to 2030
       (http://www.manchesterairport.co.uk/manweb.nsf/alldocs/10F56C819A51454E8025739300388C1D)

2.21 The visitor economy is an important contributor to the Cheshire East economy with about 10,000 jobs associated with the tourism industry and a turnover of £653 million.[12] Major attractions include Tatton Park, Jodrell Bank, Lyme Park, Styal Mill, the canal network and the Peak District National Park.

Figure 2.6 Housing on the former Henbury High School Site, Macclesfield

2.22 According to the Cheshire East Strategic Housing Market Assessment, house prices across Cheshire East and its former districts have increased dramatically over the period 1996 to 2009, from around £55,500 as a median figure to a peak of £186,000 in 2007. This represents an increase of 234 per cent in median house prices over a 13 year period. Average house prices in the former Macclesfield district were highest, Crewe and Nantwich the lowest and prices in Congleton have tended to mirror the Cheshire East average (median) house price.

2.23 Cheshire East has a ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings of 6.96 according to the Department for Communities and Local Government (2010). This means that the price of a house at the top end of the cheapest quarter of all houses costs 6.96 times the earnings of a person who earns the most out of the lowest quarter of all earnings. In terms of relative affordability the Borough is ranked the sixth least affordable District in the North West.[13]

2.24 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment suggests that, on the basis of migration and travel to work data, Cheshire East comprises three housing market areas; one focused on the former Macclesfield district, which exhibits strong interactions with the South Manchester market; a second focused on the former Crewe and Nantwich district, which is largely self-contained; the third is centred around Congleton, which has noticeable market interactions with North Staffordshire and South Manchester.

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12   Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy 2011
13   Communities and Local Government, Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by District 2010

2.25 The mean average household income in Cheshire East is £39,000 per year, however there are significant differences in income levels across the Borough.[14] Lower income areas are predominantly found within the towns of Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield and Nantwich, whilst the majority of the higher income areas are the smaller towns and rural areas of the Borough, with the highest average earners located in the north of the Borough. This is shown in Figure 2.7.
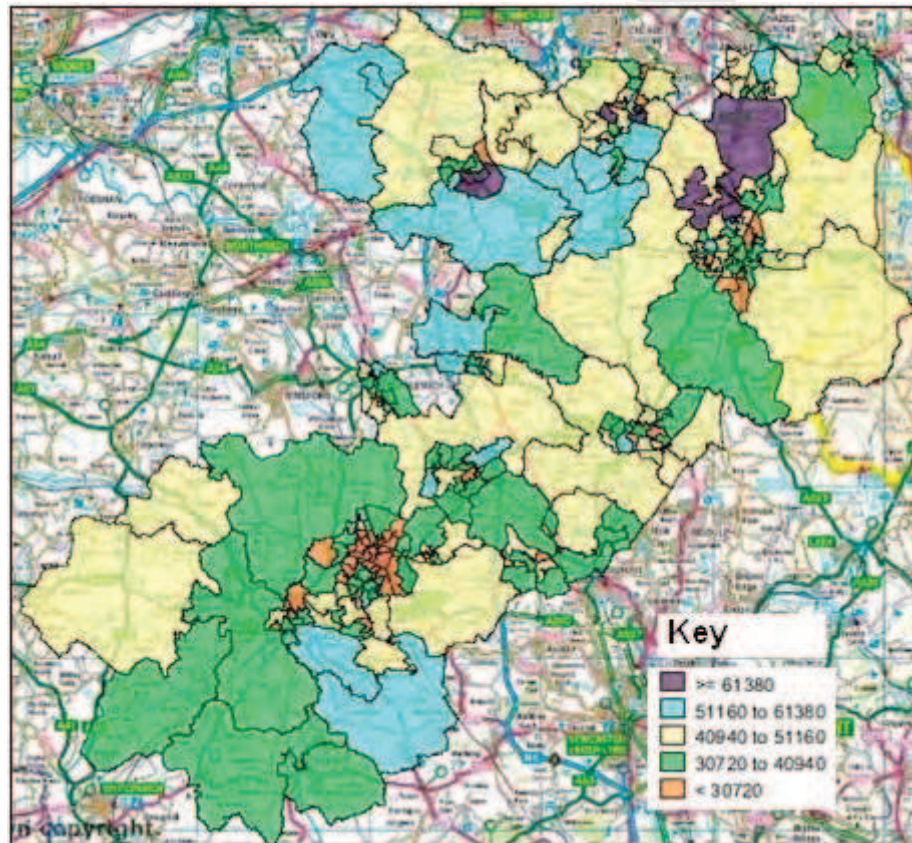
Figure 2.7 Mean Average Yearly Household Income in Cheshire East

2.26 The Index of Multiple Deprivation data (IMD 2010) combines a number of economic, social and environmental indicators to assess and identify levels of deprivation in a particular area. These indicators are then combined to provide an overall score identifying the level of deprivation at a Lower Super Output Area.

2.27 There are 23 Lower Super Output Areas amongst the 25 per cent most deprived in the country, which includes five that are amongst the 10 per cent most deprived. Conversely, there are 121 Lower Super Output Areas amongst the 25 per cent least deprived, which includes 71 that are amongst the 10 per cent least deprived.[15] There are areas of deprivation within Alsager, Crewe, Congleton, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich and Wilmslow.

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14   2010 Paycheck data, CACI Limited
15   Department of Communities and Local Government, Indices of Deprivation 2010

Figure 2.8 Mineral operations and waste collection in Cheshire East

2.28   Mineral extraction plays an important role in both the local and wider economy. The mineral resources worked in Cheshire East are silica or industrial sand, construction sand, sandstone, salt (in brine) and peat. Permitted mineral sites are situated across the Borough as illustrated in Figure 2.9.

2.29   The principle types of waste arising in Cheshire East are municipal, commercial and industrial (C&I), construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) and hazardous. Evidence shows that about 870,000 tonnes of waste were generated in Cheshire East in 2009. This is predicted to fall to about 797,000 tonnes by 2030.[16]

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16   Source: Urban Mines 'Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils - Waste Needs Assessment Report' (2011)

Cheshire East Mineral Sites

Legend
- Cheshire East
- Peak District National Park
- Construction Sand
- Sandstone
- Peat
- Construction Sand and Peat
- Brine
- Silica Sand

1 Mere Farm
2 Bridestones Quarry
3 Lee Hills
4 Bridge Quarry
5 Endon Quarry
6 Gawsworth/ Rough Hey Quarry
7 Marksend Quarry
8 Sycamore Quarry
9 White Moss
10 Lindow Moss
11 Warmingham Brinefields
12 Bent Farm
13 Eaton Hall
14 Arclid Quarry
15 Dingle Bank Quarry

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Map Ref: AB279S

Figure 2.9 Operational Minerals Sites in Cheshire East

2.30   Within Cheshire East, statistics indicate that residents, commerce and industry and other non-residential uses create an annual average carbon dioxide emissions level of 9.3 tonnes per person, which is more than the average regional level of 7.8 tonnes per person.[17] This has implications for local, regional and national air quality.

2.31   Cheshire East's landscape is dominated by the flat topography of the Cheshire Plain; however the closeness of the Peak District to the east and the Mid-Cheshire Ridge to the west provides significant variety in the landscape. There is also a diverse and valued range of flora and fauna in the Borough.

2.32   Key nature conservation sites are shown in Figure 2.10.

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17   Department of Energy and Climate Change, Local Authority emissions statistics (2010)

Environmentally Designated Sites

Legend
- LDF Boundary
- Peak District National Park
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Sites of Biological Importance
- Special Protection Areas
- Ramsar Site
- National Nature Reserve
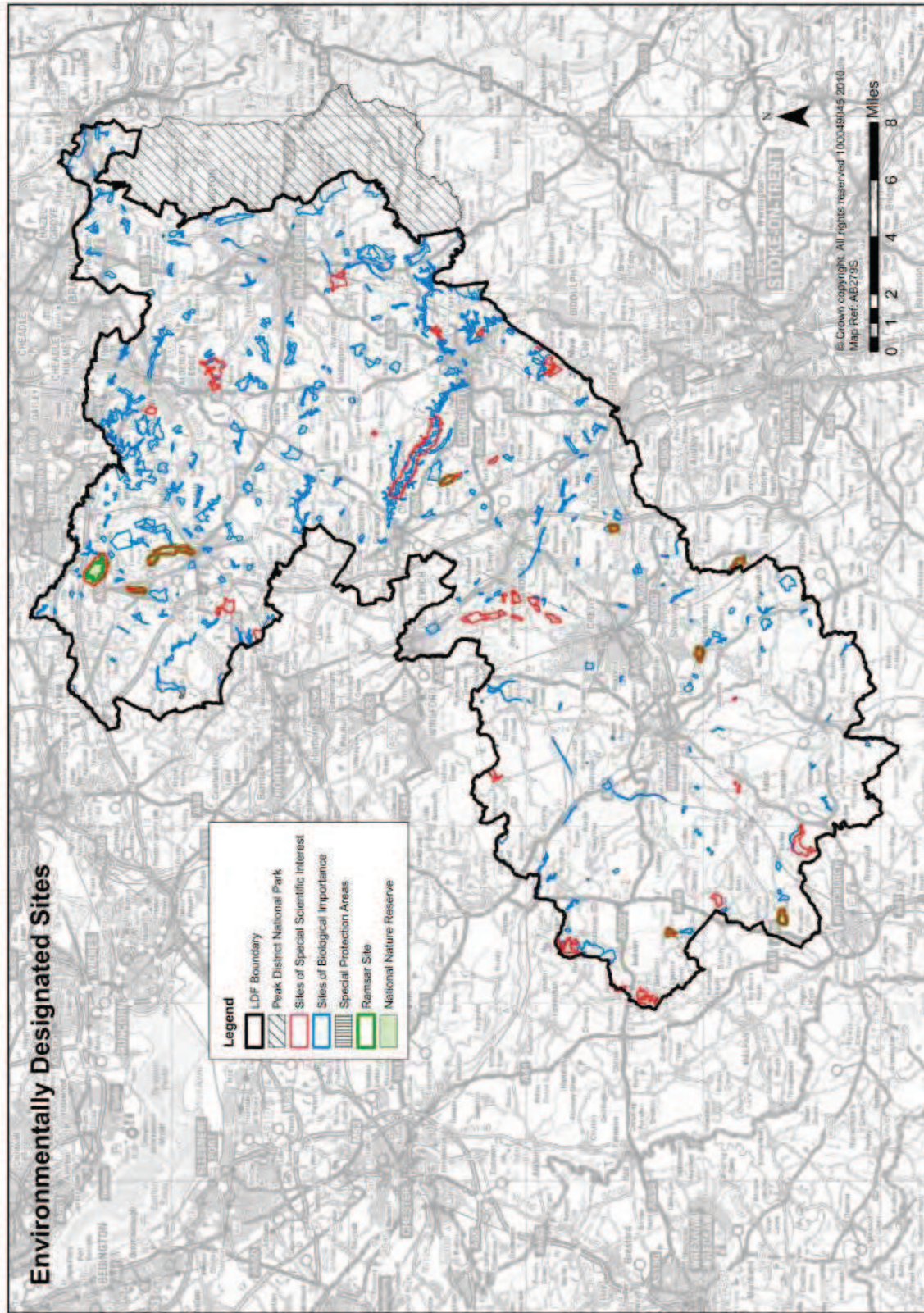
Figure 2.10 Key Nature Conservation Sites in Cheshire East

Background to Cheshire East

2.33 The most prominent environmental designations within Cheshire East are:

- The Peak District National Park;
- 1 Special Protection Area;
- 2 Special Areas of Conservation;
- 3 Ramsar designations (spread across nine component sites);
- 33 Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- 2 National Nature Reserves;
- 416 Sites of Biological Importance;
- 21 Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites;
- 8 Local Nature Reserves; and
- 1,210 Tree Preservation Orders.

2.34 Cheshire East contains a valued, varied and unique heritage, which includes a number of cultural and environmental assets. These assets include Macclesfield's industrial heritage, Little Moreton Hall, Crewe's railway heritage, Tatton Park, Lyme Park, Styal Mill, Tegg's Nose, the canal network, historic towns and parts of the Peak District National Park, amongst others. Other unique attractions include a wealth of Historic Parks and Gardens and Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope. The Borough also has a rich archaeological resource from the prehistoric period to the Second World War, including sites such as the Bridestones Neolithic chambered tomb, the Roman and medieval saltworking remains of Middlewich and Nantwich, the Saxon Sandbach Crosses and the defences of the former airfield at RAF Cranage.

Figure 2.11 The Built Environment: Little Moreton Hall, Peckforton Castle and Nantwich Town Centre

2.35 Formal cultural designations present within Cheshire East include:

- 76 Conservation Areas of varying size and scale;
- 2,644 Listed Buildings covering different gradings;
- 108 Scheduled Monuments;
- 17 Registered Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest;
- 1 Registered Battlefield;
- 10 Areas of Archaeological Potential and 6,708 Sites of Archaeological Importance; and
- 387 Locally Listed Buildings.

Principal Towns

2.36   The Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield are the largest towns in the Borough. They provide a wide range of services and opportunities for employment, retail, education and leisure. They serve large catchment areas with high levels of accessibility and public transport provision. However, the two towns are very different in their history, character and urban form.

Crewe

2.37   Crewe is the largest town in Cheshire East, with a population of 70,240.[18] It developed as a railway town in the 19th century, and is now a major employment centre with a diversified base in education, manufacturing, services and distribution. The major employers are Bentley Motors, Mornflake, Leighton Hospital and Manchester Metropolitan University. Crewe is the primary shopping centre in the south of the Borough, but the town centre is in need of major investment. The town is also noted for the award winning Crewe Business Park, regarded as the country's first 'green business park'.

2.38   Crewe is often referred to as the 'Gateway to the North West'. It was established as a major railway hub in the late 1830s and it remains a significant railway interchange on the West Coast Main Line. As a consequence of the existing railway infrastructure there are problems with railway lines forming significant barriers to connectivity within the town.

2.39   Two large areas of land to the south of the town at Basford have been identified in the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan as strategically important employment sites to provide jobs for the people of south Cheshire. This will help to address Crewe's problems with economic inactivity, which is higher than the Borough average. In addition, Crewe residents have the lowest average mean income within Cheshire East.[19] Parts of the west end of Crewe are particularly disadvantaged and it is an area where life expectancy is 20 years less than some of the more affluent areas of Cheshire East.

Macclesfield

2.40   Macclesfield is the second largest town in Cheshire East, with a population of 51,090.[20] It is situated in the north eastern part of the Borough on the River Bollin. It is close to the borders of Greater Manchester to the north, and the Peak District to the east.

18   Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012
19   2010 Paycheck data, CACI Ltd
20   Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012

2.41   Macclesfield was established as a settlement in the 13th century and later developed around the silk and textiles industries. Present day industries include pharmaceuticals, textiles, light engineering, paper and plastics. One of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, AstraZeneca, is located at Hurdsfield Industrial Estate in Macclesfield and also at nearby Alderley Park. In addition many residents work in Greater Manchester.

2.42   Macclesfield has an important retail centre with just under 500 shops. There is a need however for new investment into the town centre to improve its retail offer, to improve the public realm and to boost the night-time economy. There are plans for major new retail development in the town, which will further improve its attractiveness. Although the northern part of Cheshire East is very prosperous, Macclesfield does have its problems and there are areas within the town showing evidence of multiple deprivation.

2.43   The town is well served by bus routes and the Railway Station is on the West Coast Main Line with direct regular services to Stoke-on-Trent, Birmingham, Manchester and London Euston.

Key Service Centres

2.44   Cheshire East is characterised by its many smaller towns, each with its own distinctive history, character and form. These towns lie at the heart of the Borough, and their vitality and growth is essential for the prosperity of the Borough as a whole. Such towns serve as Key Service Centres for a wider locality and usually have a good range of facilities including shops, schools and cultural and leisure facilities.

2.45   The Key Service Centres of Cheshire East are: Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.

Alsager

2.46   Alsager is a small town in the south east of the Borough with a population of 12,190. [21] It lies east of Crewe and is close to the Potteries conurbation to the south. It was a small farming village until the 19th century when, due to its rail connections and rural character, it became popular with managers from the nearby Potteries. During the Second World War, a large armaments factory was built outside the town at Radway Green, and the town grew to house the influx of factory workers. This site remains the town's largest employer.

2.47   Alsager town centre stretches along the main street and comprises of about 100 retail units. In addition, the town centre includes Milton Park, a large area of public open space that has recently been remodelled.

2.48   The number of jobs available within the area is low, although the unemployment rate is lower than the Cheshire East average. Income levels are also generally below the Cheshire East average. One of the major employers in the town, Twyfords, is in the process of closing its site.

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21   Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012

2.49 The town is served by several bus routes that provide access to Crewe, Hanley, Kidsgrove, Nantwich and Sandbach. The Railway Station, which is a short walk from the town centre, provides links to Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Lichfield and on to Northampton, Milton Keynes and London Euston. Junction 16 of the M6 is a short distance away.

Congleton

2.50 Congleton is a large market town with a population of 26,530.[22] It lies on the River Dane in the east of the Borough. In its early days it was an important centre of textile production, especially lace and leather gloves. Currently, the principal industries in Congleton include the manufacture of airbags. There are a number of light engineering factories and sand extraction occurs on the Cheshire Plain, although much of the area is now a dormitory town for Manchester, Macclesfield and Stoke-on-Trent.

2.51 Congleton has a reasonably vibrant town centre with 259 retail units, however vacancy rates are currently high with over 20% of units vacant. Planning permission has recently been granted for a retail development in the town centre that will increase the town's attractiveness. The development will take the form of an extension to the Bridestones Centre through to Mill Street, providing a new home for the town's market.

2.52 The town is served by several bus routes and has its own Railway Station with direct services between Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester. The M6 is a short distance away.

Handforth

2.53 Handforth is a suburban area on the northern edge of Cheshire East with a population of 6,180.[23] In the 1950s, two Manchester overspill housing estates were built in the area to rehouse people from Victorian slums of inner city Manchester.

2.54 The town has a small shopping centre containing 67 retail units. The Handforth Dean Retail Park contains a number of large format retailers.

2.55 Average mean household income levels are the second lowest in Cheshire East[24]. A large proportion of jobs in Handforth are located at the Stanley Green industrial estate and the Handforth Dean Retail Park. There is a high level of in-commuting, particularly from Stockport. There is also a high level of out-commuting with the majority of residents working outside of Handforth.

2.56 There is no direct road access between the settlement of Handforth and Handforth Dean. Access to the Retail Park is only available from the A34 bypass. Once constructed, the A555 Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road will provide quick road access to the airport and M56, about 4 km to the north-west.

2.57 Handforth has its own Railway Station with two trains per hour serving Crewe and Manchester. Regular buses serve Macclesfield, Manchester, Stockport and Wilmslow.

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22   Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012
23   Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012
24   2010Paycheck data, CACI Ltd

Background to Cheshire East

Knutsford

2.58　Knutsford is said to be named after King Canute, who by tradition forded the nearby River Lily. The town later prospered in the 18th and 19th centuries and has many historic buildings. Today Knutsford is largely a dormitory town with a population of 12,650 people.[25] It lies in the north east of the Borough some 19km to the south west of Manchester and 18km north west of Macclesfield.　After the Second World War, overspill housing estates were created in the town to accommodate families from Manchester.　This area has localised pockets of deprivation. Tatton Park borders the town to the north.

2.59　Within the town centre there are 205 retail units, making it an important shopping centre in the Borough.　It contains many buildings of architectural and historic importance.

2.60　There are reasonable daytime bus services linking Knutsford with Altrincham, Macclesfield, Northwich and Wilmslow.　The Railway Station is centrally located and has one train per hour to Chester, Manchester, Northwich and Stockport.　There are significant levels of out-commuting to Manchester and Stockport.

Middlewich

2.61　Middlewich is a market town with a population of 13,780.[26]　It dates back to Roman times when it was important for the production of salt, which is still manufactured at British Salt, employing around 125 people. The closeness to the M6 motorway has led to the creation of a large distribution and business park at Midpoint 18.

2.62　The town centre has 84 retail units and is centred on Wheelock Street, where planning permission has been granted for a new supermarket, however vacancy rates are currently high with over 20% of units vacant. In recent years tourism has become increasingly important, with the annual Folk and Boat Festival being a notable attraction. The Trent and Mersey Canal runs through the town and is an important tourism and recreational resource.

2.63　Although there is a railway line that runs through the town, it is currently used solely for freight movements.　There is no railway station or passenger rail service within the town, but there are bus services providing access to Crewe, Holmes Chapel, Congleton, Northwich, Sandbach and Winsford.　The M6 is a short distance away linked to the town by the A54. An Eastern Bypass for Middlewich has been partially constructed in recent years.　The construction of the final section linking to the A533 Booth Lane to the south of the town will open up further land for employment development as well as improving environmental conditions in the town centre.　The timing of this project, being largely dependent upon private sector funding, is currently uncertain.

25　Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012
26　Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012

Background to Cheshire East

Nantwich

2.64 Nantwich is a historic market town, with a population of 17,840.[27] It dates back to Roman times, when it was a centre for the production of salt. Nantwich has a thriving town centre with 255, mainly independent, units. The town itself contains more than 100 Listed Buildings, and has the largest collection of historic buildings in the Borough. It is also a popular destination for tourists and visitors from its large rural hinterland.

2.65 Nantwich currently has a relatively low jobs density (proportion of jobs to working age people) and a high level of out-commuting.

2.66 Nantwich Railway Station lies on the Crewe to Cardiff line by way of Shrewsbury. Bus services are relatively good with regular services to residential areas of the town and to Crewe.

Poynton

2.67 Poynton is a dormitory town (population 13,080)[28] in the north eastern corner of the Borough, 11km north of Macclesfield and 8km south of Stockport. It was once an important coal mining area.

2.68 The shopping centre has 117 retail units. A programme of environmental improvements has recently been completed in the town centre.

2.69 Two buses per hour serve the town, providing links to Bollington, Stockport and Macclesfield. The Railway Station is on the western side of the town and has one train per hour serving stations between Manchester and Stoke-on-Trent.

Sandbach

2.70 Sandbach is a market town with a population of 17,700.[29] Its origins date back to Saxon times and it is widely famed for its weekly Thursday market and the ancient Saxon Crosses. It contains a number of areas and features of historical and architectural value as well as encompassing several significant areas of local environmental importance. The town grew around truck manufacturing industries, but since these closed in 2002 there have been significant changes in its employment base with considerable losses of manufacturing jobs.

2.71 The town centre has 191 retail units. The town is now the headquarters of Cheshire East Council, which is the largest employer.

2.72 There is a Railway Station on the edge of the town providing services to Crewe, Manchester and Manchester Airport. There is also a reasonable bus service, with routes providing access to Congleton, Crewe, Northwich and Macclesfield. The town lies adjacent to junction 17 of the M6.

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27   Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012
28   Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012
29   Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012

Wilmslow

2.73   Wilmslow, population 22,950,[30] lies in the north of the Borough. The town is noted for its high quality housing and shopping, making it a sought after location.

2.74   The town centre has 234 retail units and is also served by the out-of-town Handforth Dean Retail Park. The town has a strong office sector both within the town centre and also on a number of large out-of-town office parks. A large number of residents work in Manchester, with other significant commuter flows to Stockport and Macclesfield. The nearby Manchester International Airport is also a major employer.

2.75   The town has easy road access to the M60 and M56. Manchester Airport is 5km to the north. Access will be improved when the western section of the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road is completed.

2.76   Wilmslow has a reasonable local bus network serving destinations including Knutsford, Macclesfield, Manchester Airport, Manchester and Stockport. The Railway Station is on the West Coast Main Line served by local and long-distance services. Direct destinations served include London Euston and Manchester Piccadilly.

Local Service Centres and Sustainable Villages

2.77   Local Service Centres are small towns or large villages which provide a range of services and facilities to meet the needs of local people, including those living in nearby settlements. They may also have a range of shops, health and leisure facilities, and employment opportunities.

2.78   The Local Service Centres for Cheshire East are Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury.

2.79   Sustainable Villages are those villages that sustain a number local facilities which reduce the need to travel elsewhere for services. Currently identified Sustainable Villages include Acton, Alprahram, Arclid, Aston, Barbridge, Brereton Green, Brereton Heath, Calveley, Cranage, Hankelow, Hassall Green, Hough, Mount Pleasant, Mow Cop, Rode Heath, Scholar Green, Spurstow, Weston, Winterley, Worleston and Wybunbury.

2.80   The remaining settlements have fewer facilities and are therefore considered rural villages and / or rural areas. People living in these communities generally have to travel to larger centres for jobs, healthcare and other services.

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30   Cheshire West & Chester Council Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2012

Background to Cheshire East

3 Enterprise and Growth

3.1   Cheshire East will be an engine for growth and promote a dynamic, prosperous economy. We have a wide variety of successful industries in the area, but we need to stay ahead of the game by ensuring that we exploit new opportunities, build on our current successes and create a climate that is attractive for business investment and growth, not just in our larger towns but also in our smaller towns and rural communities.

3.2   We also want to create thriving town and village centres that are sustainable and can continue to deliver essential services, retail, leisure and employment opportunities.

3.3   If these ambitions are to be achieved then there is a need to create the conditions required for 'jobs led growth'. We aim to create 20, 000 new jobs over the plan period and need to create the right business environment to achieve this.

Objective 1: Promoting economic prosperity by creating conditions for business growth.

This will be delivered by:

1. Providing a viable and flexible supply of quality employment land and premises, including business parks and strategic sites, to attract new and innovative businesses, to enable existing businesses to grow and to create new and retain existing jobs.
2. Promoting the vitality, viability and accessibility of our town centres to create thriving destinations for retail, culture and leisure to satisfy a growing population and visitors from further afield.
3. Supporting major regeneration schemes in the town centres of Crewe and Macclesfield in order to provide an enhanced retail and leisure offer and improved environmental quality.
4. Improving the economy in rural areas by supporting the development of rural enterprise, diversification of the rural economy, sustainable tourism, broadband connectivity, and the continued importance of farming and agriculture.
5. Capitalising on the accessibility of the Borough, including improved transport links to the Manchester City Region and Manchester Airport, improved transport infrastructure such as Crewe Railway Station and maximising the opportunities that may be offered by High Speed 2 Rail Links (HS2).
6. Securing excellent educational facilities to meet the needs of the current and future population of all ages, to improve educational attainment and provide a wide skills base.
7. Supporting flexible working and investment in new communication technologies, to allow home working and to support businesses reliant on e-technology.

3.4   The Core Strategy will promote the delivery of strategic employment sites that will provide a step change in economic opportunity in the Borough. These include sites at Basford East and Basford West in Crewe, Midpoint 18 in Middlewich, Congleton North in Congleton and the South Macclesfield Development Area in Macclesfield.

Performance Indicators: Enterprise and Growth
Employment land allocated
Employment land developed
Employment floorspace developed
Jobs created
VAT registered businesses
Unemployment rates
Vacant town centre units
Town centres
Qualifications of residents

Table 3.1 Performance Indicators

Economic prosperity

3.5 Cheshire East's economy is characterised by a broad range of industries and services, with particular strengths in pharmaceuticals, financial businesses and advanced engineering, whilst the rural nature of the Borough is reflected in the relatively high number of people employed in agriculture.

Policy EG 1

Economic prosperity

1. Proposals for employment development (use classes B1, B2 or B8) will be supported in principle within the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres as well as on employment land allocated in the Development Plan.

2. Proposals for employment development on non-allocated employment sites will need to be in the right location and support the strategy, role and function of the town, as identified in Policy CS2 (Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution)[31] and in any future plans, including Neighbourhood Plans, where applicable.

Explanation

3.6 The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'to help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century'*.

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31   Policy CS2 in the Draft Development Strategy for Cheshire East

3.7 Cheshire East's employment policy seeks to encourage growth in the Borough and secure a greater number of jobs for its resident workforce. The Cheshire East Local Plan will be focused on delivering growth including ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between jobs, services and facilities and homes, creating a more sustainable pattern of development in the Borough.

3.8 Policy EG1 supports the delivery of opportunities for the provision of employment land that may come forward in the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres, in addition to the employment land that is allocated in the Core Strategy. This policy will contribute to the achievement of the strategic objective to promote economic prosperity by creating conditions for business growth.

Key Evidence

1. Employment Land Review (October 2012). [32]
2. Employment Monitoring (updated yearly). [33]

Consultation Responses

3.9 The Town and Parish Council seminar undertaken as part of the work on the Core Strategy identified that the economy is important in driving growth.

3.10 'Job prospects and employment opportunities' were identified as one of the elements that most needs improvement in a number of towns as part of the Place Shaping consultation, including Alsager (2nd out of 30 issues identified in the survey), Congleton (1st), Crewe (2nd), Middlewich (4th), Nantwich (3rd) and Sandbach (2nd).

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: Restrict employment development
Description: This option would restrict employment development to sites allocated in the Local Plan.
Justification: This would not be in line with the objectives of this document, which is to plan for growth. It would also be contrary to Governments objectives of supporting growth and employment opportunities.

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32   Available to view at
     http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/spatial_planning/research_and_evidence/employment_land_review.aspx
33   Available to view at
     http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/annual_monitoring_report.aspx

Enterprise and Growth

Policy EG 2

Rural Economy

1. Outside the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres, developments that:

i. Provide opportunities for local rural employment development that supports the vitality of rural settlements.
ii. Create or extend rural based tourist attractions, visitor facilities and recreational uses.
iii. Develop farm shops, garden centres and other similar outlets selling goods manufactured on site.
iv. Seek to retain or expand businesses.
v. Support sustainable farming and food production through allowing development required to adapt to modern agricultural practices and diversification.
vi. Are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Cheshire East, as determined by the Council.

Will be supported where the development:

a. Meets sustainable development objectives as set out in Policies CS7, CS 8 and CS9 of the Development Strategy;
b. Supports the rural economy, and could not reasonably be expected to locate within a designated centre by reason of their products sold. A high proportion of goods sold should be produced on site;
c. Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations;
d. Are supported by adequate infrastructure;
e. Are consistent in scale with their location, do not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity; and
f. Is well sited and designed in order to conserve and where possible enhance the character and quality of the landscape and buildings.

Explanation

3.11   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development'*.

3.12   The rural economy provides a wide range of important goods and services, including clean water, biodiversity, recreational space and opportunities, food energy and carbon management. Rural land is a vital resource for mitigating and adapting to the various challenges of climate change, such as drought and flooding. The countryside is also home to settlements and communities, where economic activities include agriculture and other farm based industries, as well as businesses associated with countryside pursuits, including

rural tourism and leisure. Beyond farming, the rural economy in Cheshire East supports many businesses, including wholesale and retail trade, repairs, manufacturing, health and social work and real estate, renting and business activities.

3.13   Planning has a key role to play in ensuring that the rural economy is viable, meets the needs of existing residents of rural areas and that growth and development is appropriate to the scale of each area.

Key Evidence

1.   Employment Land Review 2012

Consultation Responses

3.14   The Council Members workshop undertaken as part of the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation highlighted the importance of supporting rural areas, as did the Housing Market Partnership workshop.

3.15   Key comments from the Rural Issues Summary Document consultation included:encouraging and supporting the development of countryside enterprise and rural employment; allowing farm diversification and the setting up of micro businesses; supporting the reuse of appropriate empty buildings; and creating a working landscape.

3.16   A recurring theme from the Town Strategy consultations was the importance of food security and support for sustainable farming and food production.

Alternatives considered

Option 1: No Rural Economy Policy
Description: This option would not include a policy on the rural economy.
Justification: This option would not give the Council the opportunity to respond to local strengths and issues around the rural economy. There would be reliance on national policy guidance.

Option 2: Tighten Rural Economy criteria
Description: This option would see the criteria in this policy on the rural economy tightened.
Justification: Proposals could be limited to those that require a rural area, or could be limited to locations only accessible to public transport. This would be limit the opportunities for business activities that could take place in the rural area, and may not fully support the objective to improve the economy in rural areas.

Enterprise and Growth

Policy EG 3

Existing and Allocated Employment Sites

1. Existing employment sites will be protected for employment use unless:

- premises are causing significant nuisance or environmental problems that could not be mitigated;

or

- the site is no longer suitable for employment; and
- there is no potential for modernisation or alternate employment uses; and
- no other occupiers can be found;

or

- it does not result in the loss of small and start-up business premises, unless alternative provision is made.

2. Where it can be demonstrated that there is a case for alternative development on existing employment sites, all opportunities must be explored to incorporate an element of employment development as part of a mixed use scheme.

3. Allocated employment sites will be protected for employment use in order to maintain an adequate and flexible supply of employment land to attract new and innovative businesses, to enable existing businesses to grow and to create new and retain existing jobs.

Explanation

3.17   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose'*.

3.18   In order to provide a range of employment sites, particularly for inward investment and limit the need for development on greenfield land, it is vital that existing employment sites, premises and allocations that are viable for continued employment use are safeguarded. This will make sure that job opportunities are maintained and the economic health of the Borough is protected. The release of viable employment sites or premises to other uses may only be made where their loss would not cause harm to business or employment opportunities, or where there are unacceptable amenity impacts for local residents.

Key Evidence

1. Employment Land Review (October 2012)
2. Employment Monitoring (updated yearly)

Consultation Responses

3.19   The Town and Parish Council seminar undertaken as part of the work on the Core Strategy identified that the economy is important in driving growth.

3.20   'Job prospects and employment opportunities' were identified as one of the elements that most needs improvement in a number of towns as part of the Place Shaping consultation, including Alsager (2nd out of 30 issues identified in the survey), Congleton (1st), Crewe (2nd), Middlewich (4th), Nantwich (3rd) and Sandbach (2nd).

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No policy
Description: This option would not include a policy to protect existing and allocated employment sites.
Justification: This option may lead to a restriction in the availability of employment sites, and may impact on the job opportunities available. This would be contrary to the objectives of this document.

Option 2: Identify areas suitable for loss
Description: This option would identify employment areas within Cheshire East that are suitable to be lost from employment use.
Justification: This option has not been taken forward as the Employment Land Review as suggested that much of the employment land within Cheshire East is of a high standard and is appropriate to retain as employment. Therefore it would not seem appropriate to lose these sites or to restrict potential losses of employment to those areas where identified in a policy, rather than judging each proposals on its merits.

Tourism

3.21   Nationally, tourism generates £90 billion of direct spending, provides 1.36 million jobs and is the fifth or sixth biggest sector of the UK economy in most years. The visitor economy is an important contributor to businesses and communities in Cheshire East, generating over £653m each year to the local economy and employing over 10,000 people, with accommodation, food and drink and shopping employing the highest numbers. As part of the plan for growth it is important that the visitor economy is able to maximise its contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life of Cheshire East.

Enterprise and Growth

Policy EG 4

Tourism

1.   The Core Strategy will protect and enhance the unique features of Cheshire East that attract visitors to the area, whilst encouraging investment. This will be achieved through:

i.   The protection of Cheshire East's tourist assets, such as Tatton Park, Quarry Bank, Little Moreton Hall, Alderley Edge, the Gritstone Trail, Tegg's Nose, Sandstone Ridge and the waterways that support appropriate sustainable tourist related development.
ii.   By protecting visitor attraction sites unless it can be proved the use is no longer economically viable, and promoting new visitor attractions and accommodation in sustainable and appropriate locations.
iii.   By encouraging sustainable transport to tourist and cultural sites.

2.   Proposals for tourist development of an appropriate scale, including attractions and tourist accommodation, will be supported within the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres, providing they are in line with other policies in the Local Plan.

3.   Proposals for tourist development outside of the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres will be supported where:

i.   They are located within a Local Service Centre or Sustainable Villages; or
ii.   They are located within a existing or replacement building; or
iii.   There is evidence that the facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction;

And

i.   The scale, design and use of the proposal is compatible with its wider landscape or townscape and would not detract from the character or appearance of the area; and
ii.   It would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas; and
iii.   The proposals is served by adequate access and infrastructure; and
iv.   The site has access to local services and employment.

Explanation

3.22   The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Plans should *'support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside'*.

3.23   The National Planning Policy Framework supports this agenda through a range of policy directives to support:

- Sustainable rural tourism
- Competitive town centres

- Sustainable transport
- High quality design
- Inclusive communities
- Enhancement of the natural environment
- Enjoyment of the historic environment

3.24 Together these policies underpin the Cheshire East approach to sustainable tourism and our ambition to maximise its contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life in Cheshire East.

3.25 The visitor economy covers a wide range of activities across a variety of themes and locations in Cheshire East. Attractions such as Tatton Park, Jodrell Bank and Little Moreton Hall may be considered visitor destinations in their own right; leisure based visits might cross the Borough over a variety of canal, cycle or public footpath networks; and culture and recreational activities may take visitors to parks and gardens, market towns, and festivals across the Borough.

3.26 This diverse offer is important to businesses and communities across Cheshire East with 11.7million visits to the Borough contributing over £578m each year to the local economy, employing over 8,000 people (STEAM 2010) and generating a wide range of economic, social and health benefits.

3.27 Visits to and within the Borough generate economic activity, supporting jobs and industries, and by maintaining and improving infrastructure associated with the visitor economy, communities are better able to access active leisure opportunities and participate in the cultural and social life of the Borough.

3.28 Enabling residents and visitors to access, understand and engage with the heritage, landscape and cultural assets of the borough promotes a sense of place and pride in communities that alongside an attractive cultural, recreational and leisure offer, can be important in attracting high skilled individuals and businesses to locate in the area and contribute to long term prosperity, regeneration and support for services.

3.29 Whilst it is important to support our visitor economy it is also important to protect those assets that make the Borough attractive to visitors including landscape, public realm and heritage. In particular it is important to minimise the impact from tourism associated travel.

3.30 Planning has a key role to play in enabling and encouraging more of our 10.3 million day visitors to stay longer and spend more by:

- supporting the industry to increase the number of overnight stays
- promoting good design in the built environment and public space
- protecting the quality of natural and historic landscapes
- improving the provision of arts and heritage
- enhancing the visitor experience by way of improvements to the public realm.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy (January 2011) [34]

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34   http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/business_information/visitor_economy.aspx

Enterprise and Growth

2. Government Tourism Policy 2011 [35]
3. Cheshire East Sustainable Communities Strategy (2010)[36]
4. Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy (January 2011)[37]
5. Cheshire East Economic Development Strategy (2011)[38]
6. Cheshire East Local Economic Needs Assessment (2011)[39]
7. Cheshire East Local Transport Plan (2011)[40]

Consultation Responses

3.31   As part of the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation the Council Members workshop identified the importance of the visitor economy to Cheshire East.

3.32   The Middlewich and Sandbach Town Strategies both include consideration of tourism and visitor attractions, following support for this during their consultation. The Middlewich Town Strategy for example looks to promote guided tours and virtual tours of Middlewich's heritage utilising historical assets and sites and the closeness to the waterways.

3.33   The draft Town Strategies for Knutsford, Macclesfield and Poynton also considered the potential for tourism and visitor attractions, with many of the responses highlighting the importance of achieving benefits to the town from these attractions.

Option 1: No Tourism Policy
Description: This option would not include a policy on Tourism.
Justification: This could lead to a lack of protection for the tourism assets within Cheshire East and also potentially lead to a lack of support for appropriate developments required to support tourism in the Borough.

Town Centres

3.34   The Council advocates a clear 'town centre first' approach for its major towns. It is fully supportive of the Government's aims to promote the vitality and viability of town and other centres as important places for communities. They are a major focus for employment and drivers of economic growth.

3.35   Cheshire East is a Borough with a significant number of towns and villages, each with its own distinct identity and character and offering an individual experience. They are key drivers in Cheshire East's economic prosperity and the focus will be on the continued development of the centres as commercial, retail and leisure hubs.

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35   http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/Government2_Tourism_Policy_2011.Pdf
36   http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/community_and_living/pace_-_strategic_partnerships/sustainable_community_strategy.aspx
37   http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/business_information/visitor_economy.aspx
38   http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/economic_development_services/strategy_and_policy.aspx
39   http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/economic_development_services/strategy_and_policy.aspx
40   http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel/local_transport_plan.aspx

Policy EG 5

Promoting a town centre first approach to retail and commerce

1. The Council will support the following hierarchy of retail centres in Cheshire East:

- The **Principal Towns** will be the main focus for high quality comparison retail supported by a range of retail, service, leisure, tourism, office and other town centre-type uses, including residential.
- Within the **Key Service Centres** there will be a focus on the improvement of the convenience and comparison retail offer, with the potential to strengthen and enhance the retail offer where suitable, as well as diversification to other uses such as offices, services, leisure, cultural and residential, as appropriate.
- Within the **Local Service Centres** there will be a focus on convenience retailing of an appropriate scale, plus opportunities for service uses and small-scale independent retailing of a function and character that meets the needs of the local community.
- Within the **Sustainable Villages** there will be a focus on providing retail and services of appropriate scale and nature to meet the needs of the local community.

2. The designated town centres will be promoted as the primary location for main town centre uses including retail, leisure, cultural and office development.
3. The use of upper floors in town and other centres for non-retail uses will be supported, where appropriate.
4. The retention and enhancement of the Borough's markets will be encouraged.
5. Small parades of shops will be protected where they are important to the day-to-day needs of local communities.
6. Proposals that help develop the evening and night-time economy in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres will be supported, where any negative impacts on amenity are addressed.
7. Outside the centres identified above, there will be a presumption against the development of retail, leisure and other town centre-type uses except where it can be demonstrated that they satisfy the tests outlined in current Government guidance.
8. Proposals for main town centre uses that cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to the town centre will be considered where:

   i. there is a proven need;
   ii. there is no negative impact on the surrounding town centres; and
   iii. it is demonstrated that the tests outlined in current Government guidance can be satisfied.

Explanation

3.36 The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period'.* It goes on to state that *'local planning authorities should:*

- *recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;*
- *define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes; . . .*
- *promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres; . . .*
- *set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres . . .'*

3.37 It is important to determine appropriate policies for retailing focused on town centres as they are often a central part of community identity and contain the shops, services, pubs, restaurants, leisure, entertainment and other facilities that people wish to access locally, as well as businesses, employment and homes. Town centres are generally accessible by a wide range of transport modes and provide the greatest opportunity for linked trips.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire Retail Study 2011 [41]
2. Town Centre Surveys (updated yearly)
3. Retail monitoring (updated yearly)

Consultation Responses

3.38 As part of the consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options document the Business Breakfast workshop identified the importance of the town centre including the retail offer, the variety of shops, the facilities available and the provision of suitable sites.

3.39 The need to improve the town centre was identified in the Place Shaping consultations for a number of towns including Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Handforth, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich and Sandbach.

3.40 Each of the Town Strategies also identified the importance of having a viable town centre and many of the documents considered different ways to improve the town centre. In general the consultation comments were supportive of the need to improve and support the town centres, with improvements to the public realm, the importance of bringing empty shops back into use and car parking frequently mentioned.

3.41 Responses to the Town Strategies for Macclesfield, Knutsford, Crewe and Nantwich also suggest that residents in these areas were keen to retain and enhance the role and relevance of the market in their Town.

Enterprise and Growth

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: Alternative retail hierarchy

Description: Apply a different retail hierarchy which does not necessarily follow the settlement hierarchy proposed in this document. This could potentially increase the position of Holmes Chapel in the hierarchy to reflect the level of retail already present in the centre.

Justification: Current evidence suggests that some of the Local Service Centres and Key Service Centres have similar sized centres and therefore there may be opportunities for these town centres to increase their position in the hierarchy. However, as it is the intention of the document to create town centres that are able to support the development that is proposed it is logical to link the retail and settlement hierarchies.

Option 2: Do not seek to retain local markets

Description: This option would not seek to retain or enhance local markets.

Justification: This would be contrary to the consultation responses from the Town Strategies were a number of respondents were keen to see the markets within their towns retained and enhanced.

Enterprise and Growth

4 Stronger Communities

4.1 Cheshire East is committed to meeting the needs of its local communities and providing the infrastructure, services and facilities required to create sustainable and stronger communities, whilst recognising that Cheshire East is a big place and contains a large number of towns and villages, each with its own local character and distinctiveness, which must be considered.

4.2 We also want to put local people at the heart of decision making for their community and provide them with the ability to identify and meet their own needs, embracing the spirit of localism.

Objective 2: To create sustainable communities, where all members are able to contribute and where all the infrastructure required to support the community is provided.

 This will be delivered by:

1. Providing for 27,000 new homes across the Borough to support economic growth and to meet housing needs.

    i. ensuring that the majority of new housing is provided in sustainable locations within Crewe, Macclesfield and the Key Service Centres.
    ii. ensuring that there is an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures including affordable housing to meet the Borough's needs.
    iii. enabling vulnerable and older people to live independently, longer.

2. Ensuring that development provides the opportunity for healthier lifestyles through provision of high quality green infrastructure and cultural, recreational, leisure and sports opportunities.
3. Working with infrastructure providers to make sure that infrastructure to support the community is provided; this will include local health and social care facilities, leisure facilities, recreation and greenspaces, education, transport, superfast broadband, mobile and other ICT connectivity, water, waste and energy.
4. Improving links between existing and new neighbourhoods by giving priority to walking, cycling and public transport and providing a genuine choice of modes and supporting community integration.
5. Ensuring that all new development is well designed, durable, sustainable and energy efficient.

4.3 The Local Plan will provide a significant number of new dwellings in all parts of the Borough to 2030 to support economic growth and sustainable development. It will make sure that there is an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures provided across the Borough.

4.4 The Council also faces challenges in enabling people of all ages to make provision for their own care needs wherever possible. Good housing is essential for achieving this aim. Housing needs to be readily adaptable in the face of changes in circumstances of its occupiers.

In addition, specific provision should be made to meet the diverse needs of the Borough. This can range from bespoke housing with an element of care through to whole life housing, the obligation to build more bungalows and positive encouragement for dependant relative annexes.

4.5   The Local Plan will contribute to the achievement of equality and social inclusion. It will seek to reduce poverty and to enable older people to live independently for longer in order to achieve a better quality of life for all. It will seek to improve human health and achieve a high quality of life by maximising opportunities to access facilities and open space that encourage a healthy and active lifestyle.

4.6   The Local Plan will work with infrastructure providers to make sure that the infrastructure required to support the community, including: local health and social care facilities; leisure facilities; education; transport; broadband, mobile and other ICT connectivity; water; waste water; and energy are provided.

Performance Indicators: Stronger Communities
Housing land allocated
Five year housing land supply
Number of homes built
Number of affordable homes built
Percentage of total housing completions that are affordable
Average house price
Net additional pitches (Gypsy and Traveller)
Building for Life Assessments
Housing energy efficiency (SAP) ratings
Life expectancy at birth
Number of people with a limiting long term illness

Table 4.1 Performance Indicators

Leisure

4.7   Leisure opportunities bring together members of a community who work, live and play within an area.

4.8   Leisure and sports facilities and green spaces such as parks and allotments can help to enhance everyone's life. Such provision is important for resident's social, mental and physical health and well being and to the achievement of sustainable communities.

Policy SC 1

Leisure

In order to provide appropriate sports, leisure and recreational facilities for the communities of Cheshire East, the Council will:

1.   Seek to protect existing sport and recreation facilities, unless they are proven to be surplus to requirements or unless improved alternative provision is to be made.

2.   Support and promote the provision of better sport and leisure facilities, where there is a need for such facilities and will follow the sequential approach set out below, provided they are of a type and scale appropriate to the size of the settlement, are accessible and support our objectives. We will:

i.   Require facilities that serve the Borough as a whole, and facilities that attract large numbers of people, to be located within or adjoining Crewe or Macclesfield town centres;
ii.   Require facilities serving other Key Service Centres to be located in or adjacent to town centres or highly accessible locations;
iii.   Require facilities intended to serve the everyday needs of a community or neighbourhood to be in or adjacent to the centres of Local Service Centres or Sustainable Villages; and
iv.   Encourage the development of shared service centres that combine public services, health and community functions in modern accessible buildings.

3.   Support proposals for facilities that are not appropriate to be located in or adjacent to centres, provided they are highly accessible by a choice of transport and do not harm the character or amenity of the area, and satisfy the following criteria:

i.   it is a sports facility that supports a business use, is appropriate in an employment area, or supports an outdoor sports facility, education or related community/visitor facility; or
ii.   it supports the visitor economy and is based on local cultural or existing visitor attractions.

4.   Work with agencies, services and businesses responsible for providing facilities to make sure that the needs and demands of communities are met.

5.   Make sure that appropriate developments contribute, through land assembly and financial contributions, to new or improved facilities where development will increase demand and / or there is a recognised shortage.[42]

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42   Further detail can be found in Policy SE5.

Explanation

4.9   The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Planning Authorities should *'allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of . . . leisure . . . development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for . . . leisure . . . are met in full'.*

4.10   Major facilities that attract a large number of people should be located in accessible locations such as town centres or local centres. Smaller facilities should be located close to existing centres where possible or close to the communities they are serving. Where sites are not available in centres, other accessible locations will be acceptable subject to their impact on surrounding uses. Accessibility is a critical issue for community facilities as they are used by all groups, including those without access to a car and with restricted mobility. Young people and elderly persons can be disadvantaged in terms of accessibility to community facilities and therefore accessibility by public transport and safe pedestrian routes is essential.

4.11   Focusing major facilities in town centres not only ensures good standards of accessibility but also helps to ensure vibrant and viable town centres. Major out of town centre leisure facilities are not encouraged. But it is accepted that some facilities serve a very local need or will only be viable in locations outside centres, so the policy seeks to ensure that their impact is not harmful on the surrounding area.

4.12   The Council will work with other agencies and the voluntary and private sectors, to secure more and better facilities by joint working. Shared centres where public health facilities, council offices, Libraries, police and other services are in one building can be both cost-effective and more convenient for the public and are therefore supported.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire Retail Study (2011). **(43)**
2.   Open Space Audit (2012). **(44)**
3.   Greenspace Strategy
4.   Playing Pitch Strategy

Consultation Responses

4.13   Responses to the Core Strategy Issues and Options document identified the need for infrastructure, including leisure facilities, to be available.

4.14   Responses to the various Town Strategy Consultations indicated the importance of sports and leisure facilities, with the Alsager Town Strategy identifying a 'Sports and Leisure Hub' and the draft Knutsford Town Strategy highlighting the intent to create an area of Sports and Leisure excellence.

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43   Available at
http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/spatial_planning/research_and_evidence/cheshire_town_centres_study.aspx
44   Available at
http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/spatial_planning/research_and_evidence/open_spaces_assessment.aspx

Option 1: No Policy

Description: This option would not include a policy in relation to leisure.

Justification: This option could allow for the loss of existing leisure facilities without any replacement. It could also lead to shortages in leisure facilities or to existing shortages getting worse.

Health and Well-being

4.15   The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.

Policy SC 2

Health and Well-being

1. The Council and its partners will create and safeguard opportunities for healthy, fulfilling and active lifestyles by:

    i.   Working in partnership with the health and social care providers to improve health across Cheshire East and reduce inequalities;
    ii. Requiring Health Impact Assessments on all strategic development proposals and seeking contributions towards new or enhanced health and social care facilities from developers where development results in a shortfall or worsening of provision;
    iii. Ensuring new developments provide opportunities for healthy living by the encouragement of walking and cycling, good housing design, access to services, sufficient open space and opportunity for recreation and sound safety standards;
    iv. Improving education and skills training and encouraging life-long learning;
    v.   Protecting existing community facilities and ensuring the provision of a network of community facilities, providing essential public services to meet the needs of the local community; and
    vi. Promoting the role of allotments, garden plots within developments, small scale agriculture and farmers markets in providing access to healthy, affordable locally produced food options.

Explanation

4.16   One of the core Principles of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning should *'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs'*.

Stronger Communities

4.17   Cheshire East's residents are generally healthier and have a greater life expectancy than the national average; life expectancy is 79 years for males and 82.6 years for females, compared with 78.3 and 82.3 respectively in England. However, there are pockets of poor health; there is a 10.9 year gap in male life expectancy and a 16.8 year gap for female life expectancy between areas within Cheshire East.[45]

4.18   Population forecasts suggest that the number of people aged 65 years and over will continue to increase, by 50 per cent over the next 20 years. In particular, the number of people aged 85 years and over is expected to double, reaching more than 20,000 by 2029[46].

4.19   Having timely and easy access to a range of health and social care services is a key issue for local people.

4.20   Creating opportunities for healthier and more active lifestyles is part of evolving national policy. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment highlights that 'adult participation in physical activity, as measured through sport and active recreation, in Cheshire East is generally similar to the national average, whilst activity rates are lowest in Crewe and Nantwich and highest in Macclesfield. Physical activity is important in childhood to support healthy growth and development, psychological well-being and social interaction. Obesity in childhood can lead to risks of coronary heart disease, strokes and poor mental health in later life, all causes of premature death. Across Cheshire East, 8.2 per cent of all children were obese in 2010 although this is less than the national average (9.6 per cent). [47]

4.21   Encouraging residents to live a healthy lifestyle involves the provision of facilities to encourage regular exercise taking and to maximise the opportunities provided by the natural landscape of the Borough to improve their health.

Key Evidence

1. Ageing well in Cheshire East Programme - A Plan for People aged 50 and over (2012-2017). [48]
2. Cheshire East Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; Population Projections, 2010. [49]
3. Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013 -2014. [50]
4. Building for Life Assessments

Consultation Responses

4.22   Responses to the vision within the Core Strategy Issues and Options Document highlighted the need to provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles for residents of Cheshire East.

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45   Source:Life Expectancy at Birth, Department for Health
46   Source: 2009 Mid Year Estimates, Office for National Statistics & 2010 Population Estimates
47   Cheshire East Council Child Poverty Needs Assessment
      2011(http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/community_and_living/research_and_consultation/cpna.aspx)
48   Available at http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/social_care_and_health/health_advice/ageing_well.aspx
49   Available athttp://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/social_care_and_health/jsna.aspx
50   Available at http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/health_and_wellbeing_board.aspx

Stronger Communities

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No Policy

Description: This option would not include a policy on health and well-being.

Justification: This option could result in increased deficiencies in health and well-being contrary to Government guidance and the Council objectives to increase opportunities for healthier lifestyles.

Option 2: Not seek opportunities to improve health and well-being.

Description: This option would not require not developments to provide opportunities for healthy living, including: open spaces, allotments, education provision and health and social care provision.

Justification: This option has not been pursued as it could result in increased deficiencies in health and well being contrary to Government guidance and the Council objectives to increase opportunities for healthier lifestyles.

Option 3: Allow loss of Community Facilities

Description: This option would allow the loss of community facilities, and potentially their replacement with alternative uses.

Justification: This option has not been pursued as it could result in increased deficiencies in health and well being contrary to Government guidance and the Council objectives to increase opportunities for healthier lifestyles.

Residential Mix

4.23   A neighbourhood with a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes will be more able to meet the changing needs and aspirations of its residents, through changing life stages, household shapes and sizes or changes in income. Providing greater housing choice increases the opportunities for households to remain within their communities and promotes social equality and inclusion by easing geographical constraints on the search for appropriate homes.

Stronger Communities

Policy SC 3

Residential Mix

1. All new residential development should maintain, provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities.

2. To meet the needs arising from the increasing longevity of the Borough's older residents, the Council will require developers to demonstrate how their proposal will be capable of meeting, and adapting to, the long term needs of this specific group of people. This could include the provision of Lifetime Homes and Bungalows and, if there is a need, extra care homes.

Explanation

4.24   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:*

- *plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);*
- *identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand'.*

4.25   In order to create mixed, balanced and inclusive communities, provision will need to be made for a variety of housing tenures, types and sizes. An appropriate mix of housing will need to be provided within individual developments, proportionate to the scale of development proposed. Smaller schemes will need to contribute to the mix of housing across the wider area.

4.26   Facilitating more balanced communities, comprising a range of ages, household types and incomes may also help achieve wider social policy goals, such as reducing concentrations of income poverty and social exclusion.

4.27   The Council will work in partnership to provide accommodation with a greater range of tenure options that is of good quality and better design, and meets Lifetime Homes standards, offering longevity and flexibility for the changing needs of ageing. Appropriate sites to meet this specific housing need will be identified within the Strategic Sites of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document. The Council may also seek a proportion of the overall housing land target to be developed as new housing for older person households.

Key Evidence

1. Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2010)

2. [Ageing well in Cheshire East Programme - A Plan for People aged 50 and over](#) (2012-2017)
3. Building for Life Assessments
4. Housing Statistics - Communities and Local Government Live Housing Statistics / Cheshire East Council Housing Statistics
5. Cheshire East Supported Living Strategy
6. [Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) 2013-2014
7. [Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2011-2016](#)

Consultation Responses

4.28   Responses to the Core Strategy Issues and Options document during the consultation process and during the workshops, highlighted the need to make sure that the housing needs of Cheshire East are met in terms of numbers and mix of housing, with the ageing population and changes to household make up regularly being discussed.

4.29   The consultation on the Snapshot Reports also frequently highlighted the need for housing for older people to be addressed, whilst many of the draft Town Strategies have highlighted the need for a mix of house types and the importance of addressing the needs of the ageing population.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No Policy
Description: This option would not include a policy in relation to housing mix and would allow for the market to decide the mix of housing types and sizes.
Justification: This option would not necessarily provide the mix of housing required to address the needs of the ageing population or to meet the needs of each community.

Option 2: More detail about mix of house types and sizes
Description: This option would see more detail added to the policy about the mix of house types required using evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
Justification: Although more detail may be useful in the short term to ensure we are providing housing to meet the needs of each community. The appropriate mix of house types may change over the plan period and therefore it may be inappropriate to add further detail to the policy.

Housing to meet Local Needs

4.30   The emerging policy seeks to address high levels of housing need whilst reflecting the economics of provision. The [Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#) (SHMA) and viability studies have informed the approach.

Stronger Communities

Policy SC 4

Housing to meet Local Needs

1. In residential developments the following affordable housing thresholds and percentages will be applied:

- In developments of 15 or more dwellings (or 0.4ha) in the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres at least 30% of all units to be affordable.
- In developments of three or more dwellings (or 0.2ha) in all other locations at least 30% of all units to be affordable.

2. Units provided shall remain affordable for future eligible households where this is a condition of development and remain with the property for its lifetime.

3. Residential developments should provide a mix of affordable housing tenures, sizes and types to help meet identified housing needs and contribute to the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities where people can live independently longer.

4. 'Housing to meet local needs' should be dispersed throughout the site, unless there are specific circumstances or benefits that would warrant a different approach. Market and affordable homes on sites should be indistinguishable and achieve the same high design quality.

5. Increasing choice and supply of 'housing to meet local needs' to reflect that housing markets change over periods of time and therefore the products that are made available to help people access rented and other affordable housing need to change to meet these market conditions

6. In exceptional circumstances, where scheme viability may be affected, developers will be expected to provide viability assessments to demonstrate an alternative affordable housing provision.

7. In exceptional circumstances, off-site provision or a financial contribution may be accepted where justified.

Explanation

4.31   The National Planning Policy Framework states that where Local Authorities have identified that affordable housing is needed, they should *'set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. Such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time'.*

Stronger Communities

4.32 A community's need for an appropriate balance and mix of housing, including the provision of affordable housing, is recognised at national level as a material consideration in determining planning applications for housing development. Government policy is to create sustainable communities that offer a wide range of housing types and tenures and are socially inclusive.

4.33 The Council is keen to enable people to live independently at all stages of their lives and to reduce cultures of dependency. It is keen to enable people to buy a home of their own and promote wider home ownership. It is also encourages families to grow and move into homes that match their current and future aspirations. There needs to be a wider choice of housing that can support people when they are older and allow them to remain independent for as much of their life as possible. Housing for local needs is a means of achieving these goals; it can support broader home ownership through initiatives such as housing for first time buyers and allow families to grow through fixed discount and shared ownership housing. Securing housing at the right price also supports a flexible and dynamic labour market and enhances the wider growth agenda. Housing that meets the needs of older people will be increasingly important as longevity improves; the right kind of whole life housing, bungalows or directly supported housing promotes independence and reduces the need to fall back on the care system. Consequently a good range of housing that meets local needs is vital to the overall strategy.

4.34 Although the Borough has a stock of good quality housing with relatively low vacancy rates, in many areas there is an imbalance in the type and tenure of available housing. There is a need to make sure that future housing development in Cheshire East helps to support economic growth by providing for a range of income groups. This includes housing for households seeking open market dwellings and those requiring affordable housing (including starter homes, shared ownership housing, discounted housing for sale and where required social rented, affordable rent and increased diversity of options through intermediate tenure). Such an approach will help to maintain long-term community sustainability and enhance the quality of life for local residents.

4.35 In addition the Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies that, based on Communities and Local Government modelling, there is a net shortfall of 1,243 affordable homes, of all forms, for each year across the Borough for the five year period 2009/10 to 2013/14. On this basis there is both a clearly identified need for more affordable housing to meet local needs, but there will not be sufficient supply-side opportunities through which this can be addressed. It is therefore important that the Council establish an affordable housing target within its Local Plan policies that secures a proper balance between the provision of affordable and market housing, reflecting the needs in Cheshire East.

4.36 To help address housing need the Council will seek affordable housing from residential developments in accordance with the stated thresholds. The Council will expect the affordable housing to be delivered without public subsidy and provided on site.

4.37 All development involving the provision of housing that meet the thresholds will be required to make provision for affordable housing , unless there are exceptional circumstances why this would not be possible.

Stronger Communities

4.38　The Council will seek the balance of housing that best meets local needs and the characteristics of the site. As a guide, currently, this would normally be 65 per cent affordable (or social) rent housing and 35 per cent intermediate affordable housing. The Council may refine both the headline percentage, tenure split and any geographical variation as the plan progresses. Any future requirements will be determined through evidence such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and local housing needs surveys.

4.39　Where a financial contribution is sought the Council will seek to use a standard methodology, which will be detailed in additional guidance, and based on evidence such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

4.40　Affordable housing requirements must also be balanced with other requirements for transport infrastructure, community facilities, open space and sustainable construction.

Key Evidence

1. Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010
2. Local Housing Needs Surveys
3. Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2011-2016

Consultation Responses

4.41　Responses to the Core Strategy Issues and Options document frequently referred to the delivery of affordable homes as part of their support for different levels of housing, with many highlighting the importance of ensuring that sufficient market and affordable homes are provided to meet the needs identified in Cheshire East. Other responses in relation to affordable homes also identified the need for education around affordable homes provision and around addressing the prejudices and stigmas related to this type of housing.

4.42　Although the affordability of housing was not one of the top responses in relation to what needs improving in each of the towns as part of the Place Shaping Consultation, it was still frequently mentioned. For example more than 25 per cent of people who responded to the Macclesfield Place Shaping consultation identified 'affordability of housing for those on lower incomes' as one of their top three issues that most needs improving.

4.43　Affordable housing was regularly identified by the Stakeholder Panels and Town Council as part of the draft Town Strategy documents.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No Policy
Description: This option would not provide an affordable housing policy within this document.
Justification: This option would rely on policy on affordable housing being provided elsewhere, otherwise it would be considered contrary to national policy, which states that where affordable housing need is identified that local planning authorities should 'set policies for meeting this need'.

Option 1: No Policy

This option would not address the identified affordable housing need in Cheshire East and would lead to the issue becoming increasingly worse. Providing the policy in alternate documents would not necessarily have the same weight as including this in the Local Plan or may take longer to produce.

Option 2: Vary affordable housing percentages

Description: This option would see a variety of affordable housing percentages being applied across Cheshire East.

Justification: This option is not supported by technical evidence. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment states that it is 'unnecessary for the policy to adopt differential affordable housing targets'.

Rural Exceptions

4.44   Approximately 30 per cent of Cheshire East's population live in Local Service Centres (LSCs), Sustainable Villages and rural areas. The provision of additional housing is vital to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities in rural areas. Further supply is required to address the cost of housing, and to enable newly forming households to remain in their communities. Additional housing can also help to improve the viability of existing or potential local services.

Stronger Communities

Policy SC 5

Rural Exceptions Housing for Local Needs

1. Rural Exceptions housing for local needs will be provided as an exception to normal policies for the countryside, to meet locally identified affordable housing need:

i.   Sites should adjoin or be well related to Local Service Centres and Sustainable Villages and be close to existing or proposed services and facilities.

ii.   Proposals must be for small schemes and be appropriate in scale, design and character to the locality.

iii.   A thorough site options appraisal must be submitted, to demonstrate why the site is the most suitable one.

iv.   Proposals must consist in their entirety of subsidised housing that will be retained in perpetuity for rent, shared ownership or in partnership with a Registered Provider of housing.

   a.   In exceptional circumstances,proposals that intend to include an element of market housing, or plots for open market sale, may be acceptable. Such proposals will only be permitted on demonstrable viability grounds, for which the developer will be required to submit an open book viability assessment[51] or some other cogent reason that demonstrates the scheme could not otherwise proceed. The assessment must show the minimum provision necessary to deliver local affordable housing for that site and must not include an element of profit. A maximum of 20 per cent market housing may be provided.

v.   In all such cases they must be supported by an up-to-date[52] housing needs survey that identifies the need for such provision within the local community.

vi.   Occupancy will generally be restricted to a person resident or working in the relevant locality, or who has other strong links with the relevant locality[53].

vii.   The locality to which the occupancy criteria are to be applied will need to be agreed with the Council prior to determination of the relevant planning application. Generally this is taken as the Parish or the Parish plus adjoining Parishes, with Cheshire East.

viii.   To ensure an adequate supply of occupiers in the future, the Council will expect there to be a 'cascade' approach to the locality issue appropriate to the type of tenure. Thus, first priority is to be given to those satisfying the occupancy criteria in relation to the geographical area immediately surrounding the application site, widening in agreed geographical stages[54].

Stronger Communities

Explanation

4.45   The National Planning Policy Framework states that in rural areas *'local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Local planning authorities should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs'*.

4.46   This policy allows for the allocation of, or granting of planning permission for, small sites comprising of affordable housing to meet local needs as an exception to normal policies. The policy sets out the criteria against which such proposals will be evaluated and under what circumstances schemes solely for affordable housing may be permitted.

4.47   The Council recognises the particular difficulties in securing an adequate supply of housing for local needs in rural areas. Where it can be demonstrated that a proposed development will meet a particular locally generated need that cannot be accommodated in any other way affordable housing will be allowed as an exception to normal policy.

4.48   A number of rural exception sites have been successfully delivered in Cheshire East. However, the delivery of such schemes can be slow and the Council is keen to facilitate a higher provision of affordable homes in rural areas in the future with a view to maintaining sustainable communities and meeting their specific needs. The provision of small scale market development in conjunction with affordable units will help enable more development sites to come forward to meet local demand. The provision of a small number of market units will also help maintain communities where development would not otherwise occur. Such schemes will however, only be permitted where viability assessments or some other clear reason demonstrates that this is the only way that affordable housing to meet local needs can be delivered on the site. The Council would expect such schemes to be developed with support from Parish Councils and the Rural Housing Strategy.

4.49   Strong links[55] are currently identified as those who:

- Currently live, or have lived, within the boundaries of the Parish or adjoining Parish and have done for at least one out of the last two years or three out of the last five years.
- Have immediate family (sibling, son, daughter, parent, step parent or adoptive parents) who are currently living within the boundaries of the Parish or adjoining Parish and have done so for at least five years.
- Have a permanent contract of employment within the Parish or adjoining Parish.

4.50   The adjoining Parish must also fall within the boundaries of Cheshire East.

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51   In such cases the Council will commission an independent review of the viability study, for which the developer will bear the cost. The Council will not accept aspirational land value as justification for allowing a higher proportion of market value units.
52   within the last five years
53   in line with the community connection criteria as set out by Cheshire Homechoice
54   generally this is taken as the Parish and then Parish plus adjoining Parishes, within Cheshire East
55   in line with the community connection criteria as set out by Cheshire Homechoice

Stronger Communities

Key Evidence

1. [Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010](#)
2. Rural Housing Needs Assessments

Consultation Responses

4.51 During the consultation process for the Core Strategy Issues and Options Document14% of respondents supported some form of further development in rural areas. Whilst consultation on the Rural Issues Summary document highlighted concerns over the scale of development in the rural areas, with a number of respondents looking to ensure that brownfield sites were brought forward first and that development was supported by appropriate infrastructure and access to services. It was noted that evidence should be provided to identify need in these rural areas.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No Policy

Description: This option would not provide a policy for providing rural exceptions homes and instead it would be reliant on affordable housing sites becoming available that are in locations otherwise considered suitable in this document.

Justification: Without a policy on rural exceptions housing it is possible that insufficient affordable homes would be provided in the rural areas. Leaving people from these areas to move elsewhere to find homes, and potentially, leaving some local businesses and services to stagnate as their opportunities for staff and customers reduce.

Option 2: Not allowing any market homes

Description: This option would not support the provision of market homes to enable the provision of affordable homes.

Justification: It is likely that a number of rural exceptions schemes would continue to come forward without any need for market homes. However, having this as an option may open up a lager number of potential schemes, thereby increasing the opportunities to provide affordable homes for people in rural areas.

Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

4.52 Many Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople wish to find and buy their own sites to develop and manage, but have often been unable to secure planning permission to do so. Others require space to rent for pitching caravans – usually on sites owned and run by a Local Authority. An increase in the number of approved sites will help to meet demand for affordable Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. A more settled existence can benefit many members of these communities in terms of access to health and education services, and employment, and can contribute to greater integration and social inclusion within local communities.

Policy SC 6

Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

1. Sites will be allocated or approved to meet the needs set out in the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). Current evidence suggests there is a need for:

*   Up to ten transit pitches for Gypsy and Travellers;
*   37 to 54 additional permanent residential pitches for Gypsy and Travellers; and
*   Four additional plots for Travelling Showpeople in the period to 2016.

Beyond 2016, provision will be made on the basis of the average annual increase of provision for the 2006 to 2016 period as detailed above, until updated by a more recent GTAA.

2. The following considerations will be taken into account in the determination of locations for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites:

*   Closeness of the site to local services and facilities.
*   Access to public transport.
*   Safe pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access onto the site.
*   Appropriate pitch sizes.
*   Adequate provision for parking, turning and servicing.
*   Adequate provision for storage and maintenance, particularly where needed for Travelling Showpeople.
*   Mix of accommodation types and tenures.
*   Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
*   Impact on the Green Belt[56].

Explanation

4.53 Communities and Local Government's Policy for Travellers states that *'Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for Travelling Showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities'*. It goes on to suggest that *'local planning authorities should ensure that Traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally'*.

4.54 The latest count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans (January 2012) showed that there were 17 caravans on Local Authority or socially rented sites, there were 123 caravans on private sites (seven of which only have temporary consents) and there were seven caravans on unauthorised encampments.

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56   Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites in the Green Belt are inappropriate development

4.55   The overarching recommendation resulting from the Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment (May 2007) is that the Authorities across the Study Area engage pro-actively to meet the accommodation needs that have been identified as a result of the Assessment and that a strategic joined-up approach is taken. The needs within Cheshire East at the time of this Assessment were for between an additional 37 to 54 permanent residential pitches for Gypsy and Travellers and four plots for Travelling Showpeople for the period 2006 to 2016. A need for the development of between 25 and 37 transit pitches to accommodate transient Gypsy and Travellers was also identified for the whole Cheshire Partnership area, but this was not broken down by individual local authority area. A requirement of up to 10 transit pitches has been identified for Cheshire East in the policy as this is considered to be the minimum size needed to provide and manage a transit site on an economically sustainable basis.

4.56   Nearly half of those interviewed in this Assessment considered Cheshire, or areas within Cheshire, as their 'home'. Whilst by far the most preferred form of accommodation was a private site owned by either themselves or their family, followed by staying on a site owned by the Local Authority. The possibility of maintaining a travelling lifestyle by staying on a network of transit sites was viewed positively.

4.57   Further work is to be undertaken to update this information to 2030. If this has not been completed by 2017, the additional need will be calculated by projecting forward the average additional requirement identified in the 2007 GTAA.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment (May 2007)
2. Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans (January 2012)

Consultation Responses

4.58   Responses to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment suggest that it is important that the Council works closely with the Gypsy and Traveller community and those of the Travelling Showpeople community to make sure that their needs are appropriately addressed.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No Policy
Description: No Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy is provided in this document.
Justification: This option would be contrary to Government policy and provides no context to the provision of sites for the Gypsy and Traveller communities. This in turn would lead either to no provision being made and resultant unauthorised sites and the tensions associated with this, or planning by appeal with provision being made potentially in any location in the Borough. This would fail to place provision for Travellers on the same base as mainstream housing.

Option 2: Not include a target

Description: This option would not include a target for the number of pitches to be provided within Cheshire East.

Justification: This option would be contrary to Government policy and provides no context to the provision of sites for the Gypsy and Traveller communities. This in turn would lead either to no provision being made and resultant unauthorised sites and the tensions associated with this, or planning by appeal with provision being made potentially in any location in the Borough. This would fail to place provision for Travellers on the same base as mainstream housing.

Option 3: Rural exceptions sites

Description: This option would provide criteria for rural exceptions sites for Gypsy and Traveller and travelling Showpeople, allowing affordable sites to be provided in accordance with this policy.

Justification: At this stage evidence is not available to suggest there is a need for an additional rural exceptions policy, as sites for affordable pitches could be considered under the existing criteria. It is also not clear at this stage how affordable pitches would be managed and how they could be maintained as affordable sites in perpetuity; this would need further investigation.

Stronger Communities

5 Sustainable Environment

5.1   The environment of Cheshire East is unusually rich and varied and the high quality natural and man-made heritage is a key asset, attractive to both residents and visitors. The Core Strategy will maintain and enhance this asset that makes a fundamental contribution to the quality of life in Cheshire East. Development provides opportunities to enhance and contribute to the quality of the environment.

5.2   This section sets out positive policies to make sure development will protect and enhance Cheshire East's built and natural environment and the need to make sustainable use of resources. These policies take account of the contribution that an attractive environment can make to a successful economy and the well-being of local communities.

Objective 3: Environmental quality should be protected and enhanced.

This will be delivered by:

1. Respecting the character and distinctiveness of places and landscapes through the careful design and siting of development.

    i.   Maintaining and enhancing the character and separate identities of the Borough's towns and villages.

2. Reducing the Borough's impact on climate change by:

    i.   sustainable patterns of development;
    ii. prudently managing natural resources;
    iii. promoting renewable energy;
    iv. encouraging water efficiency;
    v.   using energy efficiently; and
    vi. avoiding developing land that may be at risk from the effects of climate change.

3. Addressing the local causes of water, air, light and noise pollution and the contamination of land, reducing the impact on local communities.
4. Conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment ensuring appropriate protection is given to designated and non-designated assets.
5. Providing new and maintaining existing high quality and accessible green infrastructure to create networks of greenspace for people, flora and fauna.
6. Establishing Green Belt and Strategic Open Gap boundaries that take into account the need to promote sustainable patterns of development and that address longer term development needs stretching beyond the plan period.
7. Providing an adequate and steady supply of minerals whilst making best use of them to secure their long-term conservation and avoiding unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment and human health.
8. Managing waste in the most sustainable and environmentally way possible through its prevention and utilisation as a resource without endangering human health and harming the environment.

Sustainable Environment

Performance Indicators: A Sustainable Environment
Renewable energy installations by capacity and type
Modal share of trips to / from work
Number of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other heritage assets
Proportion of heritage assets at risk
Provision of open space
Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest
Number and condition of air quality management areas
Mineral land-banks

Table 5.1

Quality of Place

5.3   High quality design is not just about how a development looks but also whether it is successful in its context, whether it functions well, whether it is enduring and of high quality, and lastly, whether it contributes toward broader sustainability objectives.

5.4   Achieving high quality design should be a key objective of those involved in delivering sustainable development. New development should be designed to deliver safe, secure, attractive and healthy places in which to live, work, visit and spend time. Development should take the opportunities available to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions. An inclusive built environment respects how people experience the development and addresses the needs of all in society.

Policy SE 1

Design

1. Cheshire East has a diverse built environment and new development should positively respond to this in its urban, architectural and landscape design. Place specific design solutions should achieve sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements, both urban and rural, and their respective settings in the wider landscape. Innovative and creative design solutions shall be encouraged where appropriate to the local context.

2. The objective and process for achieving high quality design should be embedded within the development process. This should be considered at the earliest possible stage and should follow the principles established in best practice and as set out in supplementary policies and documents forming part of the Local Plan.

3. Development proposals should be founded on a rigorous design assessment of the site and its context and should respond to and respect the amenity of the site and its neighbouring area in terms of scale, height, layout, architectural form, materials, landscape character, relationship to neighbouring buildings and uses and in terms of its impact upon the highway network and safety. Environmental sustainability should be a key design priority in the planning of new development.

Explanation

5.5   The National Planning Policy Framework states that '*well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities*'. One of the key objectives of the planning system is to '*always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings*'.

5.6   The National Planning Policy Framework also states that '*Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions*'.

5.7   High quality design is a key element to making places better and delivering environmentally sustainable developments. In order to protect the attractiveness of the Borough, it is important for developments to respond positively to their context, function well and to not adversely impact the amenity of the surrounding area and neighbours.

5.8   The Council shall seek to positively manage design quality through the following mechanisms:-

- By preparing a Design and Heritage Supplementary Planning Document
- By adopting a rigorous approach in the pre-application advice process and by requiring high quality planning submissions, including robust design and access statements
- Requirements for master planning and design coding for major developments
- Specifying minimum quality standards as agreed by Cheshire East Council
- Establishing a Local Design Review service

Sustainable Environment

- Yearly quality review of completed developments and reporting locally and in the Monitoring Report (MR)
- Local Design Awards

Key Evidence

1. Local Design Awards.
2. Landscape Character Assessments. **(57)**
3. Conservation Area Appraisals developed for Conservation Areas across Cheshire East. **(58)**
4. Village Design Statements. **(59)**

Consultation Responses

5.9   A number of comments in relation to the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation highlighted the importance of good design and of development being locally distinctive. This was also highlighted at the Town and Parish workshops during this same consultation.

5.10   The majority of the Town Strategies and draft Town Strategies also identified the importance of design in ensuring that their town's retained their unique features and distinctive townscapes and in some cases as a way to improve their character. In response to the Town Strategies for Wilmslow, Crewe and Knutsford, the consultees agreed that new development should be of a high-quality design that protect and enhance the character of the surrounding area.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No policy
Description: This option would provide no policies on design within the Core Strategy relying solely on guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.
Justification: This policy option would not be supported by the consultation responses received during the Core Strategy Issues and Options stage or to the Town Strategy consultations, which were very supportive of policies to protect local identity and the distinctive character of towns and villages in Cheshire East. Also, relying on national policy would not give the appropriate weight to design guidance produced at the local level, and may not give sufficient protection local distinctiveness.

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57   Available to view at
      http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/heritage_natural_environment/landscape/landscape_policy/landscape_character_assessment.aspx
58   Available to view at
      http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/heritage_natural_environment/conservation/conservation_areas/conservation_areas_appraisals.aspx
59   Available to view at
      http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/supplementary_plan_documents.aspx

Sustainable Environment

Policy SE 2

Efficient use of Land

1. All windfall development should:

  i.   consider existing landscape and townscape character in determining the character and density of development;
  ii.   build upon existing concentrations of activities and existing infrastructure;
  iii. not require major investment in new infrastructure, including transport, water supply and sewerage. Where this is unavoidable development should be appropriately phased to coincide with new infrastructure provision.

2. All windfall development should accord with the following sequential approach:

  i.   first, use existing buildings (including conversion) within settlements, and previously developed land within settlements;
  ii.   second, use other suitable infill opportunities within settlements; and
  iii. third, the development of other land where this is well-located in relation to housing, jobs, other services and infrastructure.

3. All development should be of a density appropriate to the area and its character.

Explanation

5.11   The National Planning Policy Framework states that '*local planning authorities may make an allowance for windfall sites in the five-year supply if they have compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply*'. When planning for any development, including windfall sites '*it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes*'.

5.12   The Council would like to make sure that where possible development is making the best use of land and existing infrastructure, and that resources are being managed prudently and efficiently. It is not always possible to predict where sites and buildings will become available and therefore it is not always possible to allocate all these sites for development. At the same time the Council would like to see these sites brought back in to use, not only in relation to the prudent use of resources but also to make sure that an area is not blighted by dereliction and vacancy, and to reduce opportunities for any criminal and anti-social activity to take place on the site. However, it is recognised that not all areas of previously developed land, will be suitable or appropriate for built development and this will be taken into consideration.

Key Evidence

1. National Land Use Database.
2. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Sustainable Environment

5.13 Consultation responses regularly request that the Council look to develop brownfield sites before any greenfield development takes place. This has clearly come through from comments to the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation and to each of the Town Strategies.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No policy

Description: This option would not include a policy on efficient use of land.

Justification: This would be contrary to the many comments we have had throughout our Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation and our Town Strategies consultations. Where the development of brownfield land has been strongly supported.

Option 2: Standard density policy

Description: This option would have included a standard density requirement across Cheshire East, for example at 30 dwellings per hectare.

Justification: Due to the individual nature of settlements and developments within Cheshire East it was not felt appropriate to apply a standard policy, as this would not necessarily be able to reflect the appropriate character of the area, which may be at a higher or lower density.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

5.14 Cheshire East has a distinct natural environment that contributes to the creation of an attractive and successful place. The landscape of the Borough is dominated by the flat topography of the Cheshire Plains containing a number of meres, ponds and marshes; however variety is provided as a result of the closeness of the Peak District to the east and the Mid-Cheshire Ridge to the west. This natural environment of the Borough is diverse, supporting a variety of habitats, flora and fauna.

5.15 The natural environment is one of the Borough's greatest assets and is highly valued by both residents and visitors alike. Protecting and enhancing the environment that makes Cheshire special is a key aspiration of the Local Plan.

Sustainable Environment

Policy SE 3

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

1.   Areas of high biodiversity and geodiversity value will be protected and enhanced. Enhancement measures will include increasing the total area of valuable habitat in the borough, and linking up existing areas of high value habitat and creating 'ecological stepping stone sites' and 'wildlife corridors'.

2.   Development proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse impact on a site with one or more of the following national or international designations will not be permitted:

- Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- Ramsar Sites
- Any candidate Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Ramsar sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse, effects on European sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites
- The Peak District National Park

3.   Development proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse impact on a site with one or more of the following local or regional designations, habitats or species will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances where there are clear overriding reasons for allowing the development and there are no suitable alternatives:

- Nature Improvement Areas
- National Nature Reserves
- Local Nature Reserves
- Sites of Biological Interest (SBI) or Local Wildlife Sites
- Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGGS)
- Designated Wildlife Corridors
- Habitats and species within the Cheshire Biodiversity Action Plan
- Priority habitats and species within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan
- Habitats and species listed in respect of Section 41 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
- Legally protected species
- Areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient or Veteran Trees

4.   All new development should positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and should not negatively affect biodiversity or geodiversity. To ensure there are no residual adverse impacts resulting from a proposed

> development, where in exceptional circumstances reasons of overriding interest mean an unavoidable adverse impact is likely to occur, these impacts must be addressed in accordance with the hierarchy of; mitigation, compensation and finally offsetting.

Explanation

5.16   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'planning permission will be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and the loss of aged veteran trees outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and the benefits of, the development in that locality clearly outweighs the loss'.* It also states that *'to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should: plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale...; identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites...; promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations...; and aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests'.*

5.17   The National Planning Policy Framework also states that *'The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by . . . minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity, where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures'.*

5.18   The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature' states that *'We want to create a resilient and coherent ecological network at national and local levels across England….To make this happen, the Government will put in place a clear institutional framework to support nature restoration. This means: establishing Local Nature Partnerships….Creating new Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) and strengthening support through the planning system'.*

5.19   Emerging Policy SE3 seeks to make sure that there is no overall loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and seeks to utilise mitigation, compensation and offsetting strategies to achieve this. Biodiversity offsetting is described in the <u>Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature'</u> as *'conservation activities designed to deliver biodiversity benefits in compensation for losses in a measurable way. Good developments incorporate biodiversity considerations in their design but are still likely to result in some biodiversity loss. One way to compensate for this loss is by offsetting: the developer secures compensatory habitat expansion or restoration elsewhere'.*

5.20   The level of offsetting required could be determined by means of assessments undertaken in accordance with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) metric published in March 2012 and offsetting could be delivered by developers in partnership with various partners including conservation organisations, local landowners and the Borough Council.

5.21   The designation of International, National and Local sites is an on-going process therefore the above policy will equally apply to any sites selected or designated subsequently to the adoption of the Local Plan. Conversely the policy will not apply to any site deselected after the adoption of the Local Plan.

Sustainable Environment

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire East - Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan (ongoing)
2. Cheshire Region Biodiversity Action Plan (2007)
3. [The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature'](#)
4. Natural England - Condition Surveys for Site of Special Scientific Interest (updated yearly)
5. Natural England Wildlife Plans (2011)
6. Natural England - Information on Environmental Designations (2012)
   www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/default.aspx
7. Sites of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site Registry (updated yearly)

Consultation Responses

5.22   There were relatively few people who completely disagreed with the Spatial Objectives of the Core Strategy Issues and Options, but a large number agreed in part, and have made a wide variety of suggestions for improvements to them including the need to protect landscape character, the countryside and key environmental assets.

5.23   During the consultations on the Town Strategies the consultees for Macclesfield and Knutsford in particular have recognised the high importance of their ancient woodlands and other designated sites, they agree that new development should not negatively affect these sites. With consultees in Knutsford insistent that stringent policies protect the natural environment from economic pressures.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1:No policy
Description: This option would not include a policy on biodiversity and geodiversity.
Justification: This would be against international and national policy and laws and afford inadequate protection to habitats of protected species. It would also give inadequate protection for nationally recognised landscapes. Finally, it would potentially undermine recreational and health benefits for people and undermine the quality, local character and amenity value of the countryside.

Sustainable Environment

Policy SE 4

The Landscape

1.   The landscape character of the Borough is distinct. Development should protect, and where possible, enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the rural and urban landscape. It must incorporate appropriate landscaping giving particular attention to the character of the area.

Factors that contribute to the enhancement of the landscape include:

i.   Protecting and where possible enhancing the character and quality of the landscape;
ii.   Effective landscape management measures;
iii. Suitable and appropriate mitigation for the restoration of damaged landscape areas;
iv.   Preserving and promoting local distinctiveness and diversity;
v.   Reflecting landscape character through appropriate design and management; and
vi.   Avoiding the loss of habitats of significant landscape importance.

2.   Development should protect and manage trees, hedgerows and woodlands that contribute to amenity, biodiversity and landscape character, in particular veteran trees or ancient semi-natural woodland. The multiple benefits of trees, woodlands and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring:

i.   The retention and protection of trees and woodland that are considered to contribute to the amenity and landscape character of the Borough, unless it can be demonstrated that significant environmental gain outweighs the trees value.
ii.   The retention and protection of hedgerows which are classed as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997).

3.   Proposals to increase the planting of woodland and that introduce positive woodland management - particularly in urban areas and the urban fringe, which will contribute to the enhancement of landscape character, amenity, recreation, health and welfare of residents, biodiversity, geological and historical conservation, ecosystem services, tourism and the economic regeneration of the Borough shall be encouraged.

4.   To make the most effective use of land and safeguard natural resources, including high quality agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a), geology, minerals, air, soil and water.

Explanation

5.24   The National Planning Policy Framework states that '*the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils*'.

5.25   The National Planning Policy Framework also states that *'planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss'.*

5.26   Trees in Townscape, a guidance document produced by the Trees and Design Action Group, states that '*trees make places work, look and feel better, as well as playing a role in climate proofing our neighbourhoods and supporting human health and environmental well-being, trees can also help to create conditions for economic success. With over 80 per cent of the UK's population living in urban settings, trees in and around built-up areas – which many call the 'urban forest' – have become a key component of the infrastructure that makes places work, look and feel better*'.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire East - Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan (ongoing)
2. Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (2008)
3. Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment (ongoing)
4. Cheshire East Landscape Strategy (in progress)
5. Cheshire Historic Landscape Assessment (2008)
6. The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature'
7. Natural England - Information on Environmental Designations (2012) www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/default.aspx
8. The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology - Ecosystem Approach (2011)
9. Landscape Assessment of Congleton Borough (1999)
10. Cheshire East Wind Turbine Sensitivity Study (in progress)
11. Cheshire East Locally Valued Landscapes Study (ongoing).

Consultation Responses

5.27   One of the key comments made in relation to the objectives of the Core Strategy Issues and Options was to include protecting landscape character, the countryside and key environmental assets in Cheshire East. Also as part of the consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper the Infrastructure Providers workshop discussed the need for factors such as landscape character to be considered.

5.28   A recurring theme in the Town Strategy consultations was the importance of food security and support for sustainable farming and food production.

Alternatives considered:

5.29   No alternatives were considered at this stage.

Green Infrastructure

5.30   Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green spaces, urban and rural, which are capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green Infrastructure has a potentially important role to play in mitigating the impacts of extreme weather events, particularly extended heat waves. In addition Green

Sustainable Environment

Infrastructure helps support biodiversity and makes an important contribution to the quality of the environment, as well as access to beautiful and well maintained green spaces such as parks and gardens, country parks and wildlife areas supports both physical and mental health and well-being.

Policy SE 5

Green Infrastructure

1.   Deliver a good quality, and accessible network of green spaces for people to enjoy, which provides for healthy recreation and biodiversity and that continues to provide a range of social, economic and health benefits.

2.   The focus will be on linking the various assets of Cheshire East's unique landscape – its upland fringes, Cheshire Plain, lowland heath, parkland estates, rivers, canals and watercourses, valleys and cloughs, meres and mosses and its distinctive towns and villages and their urban fringe.

i.   This network of Green Infrastructure assets should be safeguarded, retained and enhanced through the development of green networks/wedges and corridors.
ii.   Areas identified as having a shortage or opportunities for the provision of Green Infrastructure should be a particular focus for enhancement.
iii.   Any development should contribute to the creation of a good quality, integrated and accessible multi-functional network of green spaces.

3.   Green Infrastructure assets will be safeguarded to make sure that:

i.   Development does not compromise their integrity or potential value;
ii.   Developer contributions are secured wherever appropriate to improve their quality, use and multi-functionality; and
iii.   Opportunities to add to the Green Infrastructure network are maximised through partnership working.

4.   Strategic Green Infrastructure assets are those assets that either provide or could provide wider Green Infrastructure benefits. Working with partners, the potential of these corridors/strategic sites and areas to contribute to the aims of the wider green infrastructure will be supported. The Strategic Green Infrastructure Assets identified in Cheshire East are:

i.   Weaver, Bollin, Dane and Wheelock river corridors including cloughs and floodplains
ii.   Macclesfield, Shropshire Union and Trent and Mersey canals
iii.   Meres and Mosses Natural Improvement Area
iv.   Heritage town parks and open spaces of historic and cultural importance
v.   Public Rights of Way, cycle routes and greenways
vi.   Country Parks and estate parklands
vii.   Peak Park Fringe
viii.   Sandstone Ridge

5.   Strategic Open Gaps are largely undeveloped areas defined with the aim of:

i.   Preventing the merging of settlements;
ii.   Guiding development form;
iii.   Providing access from urban areas into green spaces/countryside; and

iv.   Providing recreational opportunities.

These areas would be a focus for recreational use, nature conservation, tree planting or other uses compatible with the above aims such as agriculture, horticulture and forestry.

6.   The contribution that open space, sport and recreation facilities make to Cheshire East's Green Infrastructure network will be strengthened by:

i.   Policies and designations to protect and enhance existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities, encouraging multiple use and improvements to their quality;
ii.   Requiring developers to make provision for adequate open space;
iii.   Ensuring that networks of multi-functional Green Infrastructure are designed into all major development schemes;
iv.   Securing new provision to help address identified shortages in existing open space provision, both in quantity, quality and accessibility; and
v.   Promoting linkages between new development and surrounding recreational networks, communities and facilities.

Explanation

5.31   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure'*.

5.32   The wide variety of natural landscapes, biodiversity habitats, green spaces, rural areas and the network of footpaths and bridleways is seen as one of the reasons why Cheshire East is such an attractive place to live by local people. There are concerns amongst local people about potential loss of green spaces and other places important for outdoor recreation and natural beauty and biodiversity. The policy principles link with those in Emerging Policies SE3 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity', SE4 'The Landscape' and SE6 'The Historic Environment' linking all the various green assets of Cheshire East from parks and gardens to woodland copses, hedges and ponds.

5.33   It is important to co-ordinate Green Infrastructure provision so that resources are used effectively. The Council's Green Space Strategy sets out the Green Infrastructure assets and the various partners involved in green space provision and contains a vision, background evidence, recommendations and an action plan. The Council's Open Space Assessment adds further detail at town and village level.

5.34   Provision of multi-functional Green Infrastructure should create: places for outdoor relaxation and play; space and habitat for wildlife; opportunities to access nature; climate change adaptation; opportunities for environmental education; space for local food production; improved health and wellbeing; reduced air, water and noise pollution; green transport routes to promote walking and cycling; and improved quality of place. It can also play a major role in attracting economic growth and investment, increasing land and property benefits, promoting tourism, and increasing business productivity.

5.35   The combined open space standards would give a total figure of 4.2ha of open space per 1,000 population, though in some cases commuted sums may be more appropriate for outdoor sports and green infrastructure connectivity. The requirement per family dwelling would therefore be in the range of 45m^2 per home – children's play, amenity green space plus allotments – to 105m^2 per home – children's play, amenity, allotments, outdoor sports and green connectivity – in areas with severe shortages in open space. It is likely that the total amount of 105m^2 per home would be required on major greenfield and brownfield development sites and the amount required would be influenced by other available evidence at that time.

	Children's Play Space	Amenity Green Space	Allotments	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Green Infrastructure Connectivity
Quantity (per 1,000 population)	0.8ha	0.8ha	0.2ha	1.6ha	0.8ha
Quantity (per family home)	20m^2	20m^2	5m^2	40m^2	20m^2

Table 5.2 Open Space Standards

5.36   In some cases commuted sums may be required for biodiversity offsetting/compensatory habitat expansion.   Good developments should incorporate biodiversity considerations in their design but there is still likely to be some biodiversity loss. One way to compensate for this loss is by offsetting where there is compensatory habitat expansion or restoration elsewhere.

Key Evidence

1. Green Infrastructure Framework for North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral (2011)
2. Cheshire East Open Space Assessment (2012)
3. Cheshire East Green Space Strategy (2012)
4. Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Crewe (2012)
5. Green Infrastructure Partnership (2011 www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/green-infrastructure/
6. Forestry Commission - Benefits of Green Infrastructure (2010)
7. Natural England - Information on Environmental Designations (2012) www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/default.aspx

Sustainable Environment

Consultation Responses

5.37 Responses to the Core Strategy Issues and Options document Indicated that there was general support for the approach taken to Green Infrastructure as 86 per cent of respondents either agreed with the objectives, or agreed in part. Indeed, one of the key messages for the improvement of the Objectives, was the need to include protection of landscape character, the countryside and key environmental assets.

5.38 Responses to the Place Shaping consultation indicated that improving open space and improving a place's appearance were deemed to be of importance within most communities.

5.39 Responses to the various Town Strategy consultations indicate that a key objective for communities is the protection and enhancement of the towns environmental assets and open spaces For example the people of Macclesfield are very supportive of improvements being made to the river Bollin, as are the people of Middlewich regarding the improvements to the canal network.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No policy
Description: This option would not provide a policy on Green Infrastructure.
Justification: There would be no increase in the green infrastructure network and the associated benefits which would not be in conformity with National Planning Policy Framework and could lead to an unsustainable Local Plan and developments.

Option 2: Only seek Green Infrastructure on Strategic Sites.
Description: This option would only seek Green Infrastructure where associated with Strategic Sites.
Justification: It would cause disparities between different parts of the Borough, especially in those areas already deficient in green infrastructure. Additionally, biodiversity targets would not be met.

Historic Environment

5.40 Cheshire East contains a much valued, varied and unique built heritage. Key assets include Macclesfield's silk and industrial heritage, Little Moreton Hall, Crewe's railway heritage, Tatton Park, Lyme Park, Styal Mill, Tegg's Nose, the canal network, historic towns and parts of the Peak District National Park, amongst others. Other unique attractions include a wealth of Historic Parks and Gardens and Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope. In addition, there is a wealth of locally important heritage assets, valued and cherished by local communities.

5.41 Many of these heritage assets are vulnerable to change and are under pressure. Once damaged or removed, they are irreplaceable, to the detriment of current and future generations. Consequently, it is important to the long term well-being of the Borough that there is positive stewardship of its built heritage and that its conservation and management are key priorities in the future place shaping of Cheshire East.

5.42 The Borough also has a rich archaeological resource from the prehistoric to the Second World War, including sites such as the Bridestones Neolithic chambered tomb, the Roman and medieval saltworking remains of Middlewich and Nantwich, the saxon Sandbach Crosses and the defences of the former airfield Cranage.

Sustainable Environment

Policy SE 6

The Historic Environment

1.   Cheshire East has a unique heritage. The character, quality and diversity of the historic environment should be conserved and enhanced in order to contribute to heritage values and local distinctiveness.

2.   Designated heritage assets, namely areas and sites of national historic, architectural or archaeological importance and their settings shall be protected and, where appropriate enhanced. Designated heritage assets currently within Cheshire East comprise:

- Conservation Areas;
- Listed Buildings;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Registered Parks and Gardens; and
- Registered Battlefields;

3.   Non-designated heritage assets are also important elements within the rich tapestry of built heritage across Cheshire East. Often these have strong local affinity or association and are important in the eyes of their respective communities. These assets and their settings shall be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. New development should seek to understand the presence of, preserve, and avoid damage to non-designated heritage assets where possible and put in place appropriate mitigation measures including investigations and publication of the results as appropriate, where damage is unavoidable. Non designated assets within Cheshire East are:

- Areas of local archaeological interest (Areas of Archaeological Potential and Sites of Archaeological Importance)
- Buildings of local architectural or historic interest (Local List)
- Locally important built assets not on the Local List
- Locally significant historic parks and gardens

4.   In heritage contexts, high quality design should aim to avoid pastiche and should foster innovation and creativity that is sensitive to the heritage context in terms of architectural design and detailing, scale and massing and materiality.

5.   Cheshire East Council will seek to positively manage the historic built environment through engagement with landowners/asset owners to make sure that heritage assets are protected, have viable uses, are maintained to a high standard and are secured for the benefit of future generations.

Explanation

5.43   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance'*.

5.44   Cheshire East Council has a range of responsibilities and statutory powers to positively manage the historic environment. In order to safeguard and maximise the gain from the Borough's heritage assets, the Council shall seek to use these measures appropriately and responsibly and for the public benefit in order to conserve and enhance the Borough's historic environment.

5.45   The Council will expect developments to respect and promote the distinctive local heritage of the area, including the historic silk industry in Macclesfield and the importance of the rail industry in Crewe.

Key Evidence

1.   Conservation Area Appraisals developed for Conservation Areas across Cheshire East.
2.   Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Assessment (2008).
3.   Cheshire Historic Towns Survey (1997 - 2002).
4.   Cheshire East Local List of Historic Buildings .
5.   The Cheshire Historic Environment Record (contains Sites of Archaeological Importance).
6.   Nantwich Waterlogged Deposits Report No3.
7.   Management Strategy for the Historic Environment and Archaeological Deposits (2010).

Consultation Responses

5.46   Within the consultations on the Town Strategies a number of residents highlighted the importance of the distinctive identity of their town, and in particular the importance of the historic environment. For example respondents to both the Knutsford and Macclesfield Town Strategies have expressed a desire to conserve and protect the high-quality architecture, heritage and local distinctiveness of the town. Whilst heritage is the infrastructure priority that the people of Macclesfield feel to be most important.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No Policy
Description: This option would not include a policy on the historic environment.
Justification: This option would provide no added preservation or enhancement to the historic environment, over and above what is required by legislation and Government guidance. This would not necessarily be sufficient to protect the distinctive identities of Cheshire East and would not provide a focus on heritage within the Borough. It may also mean that other sustainable development criteria would be given greater precedence.

Sustainable Environment

Low Carbon Energy

5.47   The worlds climate in in a period of warming. Scientists agree *'there is an overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is happening, and that it is primarily the result of human activity,'*[60] mainly through the combustion of fossil fuels that result in the release of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide.

5.48   Continued global warming will result in many changes to the environment, both locally and internationally. Some of these anticipated changes include *'average global temperatures [rising] by up to 6°C by the end of this century. This is enough to make extreme weather events like floods and drought more frequent and increase global instability, conflict, public health-related deaths and migration of people to levels beyond any of our recent experience. Heat waves, droughts, and floods would affect the UK too'.*[61]

5.49   The social, environmental and economic costs of climate change could be huge if no global action is taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, International, European and National legislation has been introduced to achieve a reduction of global carbon emissions in order to reduce the cause and effect of climate change.

5.50   The UK legislation on carbon dioxide emissions is contained in the UK Climate Change Act 2008, this commits the UK to:

- A 20 per cent reduction of 1990 Carbon Dioxide levels by 2010.
- A 34 per cent (potentially increasing to 42 per cent) reduction of 1990 Carbon Dioxide levels by 2020
- An 80 per cent reduction of 1990 Carbon Dioxide levels by 2050.

5.51   The UK Government has also committed to increasing the percentage of energy generated form renewable resources. The Renewable Energy Directive 2009, states that '*by 2020, 15 per cent of energy should be generated from renewable resources'*.

5.52   In order for Cheshire East to contribute to the achievement of these objectives there is a need to introduce policies that encourage the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and encourage the implementation of renewable energy.

Sustainable Environment

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60   DECC, (2011), Carbon Plan
61   DECC, (2009), UK Low Carbon Transition Plan
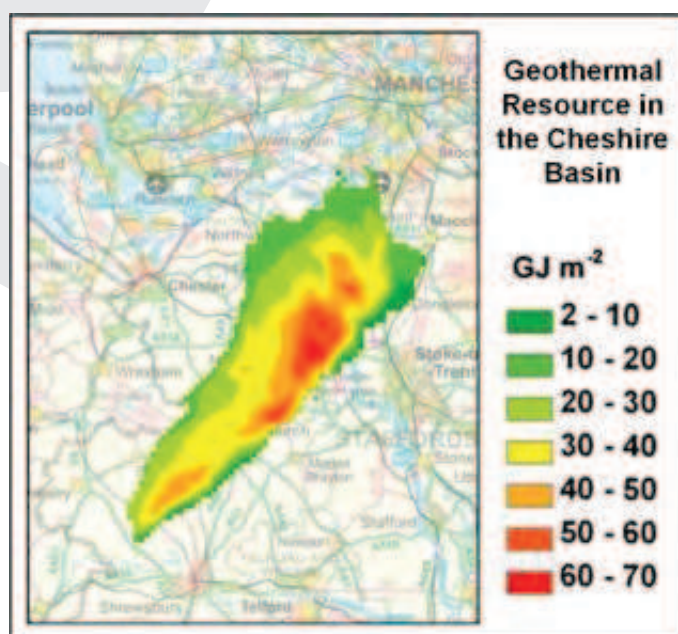
Policy SE 7

Low Carbon Energy

1. Low carbon energy is vital to the future of Cheshire East's environment, economy and people. Proposals for appropriately sited zero and low carbon technologies, where they are in accordance with local and national guidance and will not have a significant adverse effect on the natural, historic or built environment will be supported.

2. Proposals for zero or low carbon technologies must address any potential negative impacts that may arise from the development. This includes the efficient operation of Jodrell Bank, surrounding airports and any flight paths over the Borough; the built and natural environment; and the amenity of those living or working nearby, with regard to visual, noise, odour, air pollution and any other effects.

Explanation

5.53   The National Planning Policy Framework states that the planning system should *'support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)'*. It also states that *'planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development'*.

5.54   There are various sources of zero and low carbon energy that can be applied in Cheshire East. It is anticipated that the following technologies will be the most viable and feasible:

- Solar thermal and photovoltaics on south facing buildings throughout the Borough. Ground mounted schemes may be appropriate where they do not conflict with other policies of the plan.
- Combined heat and power and district heating will play an important role, particularly in strategic and major employment, retail, residential, and community and other developments where there are high energy demands.
- Biomass boilers serving individual or groups of buildings and communal heat and power systems, particularly in rural communities.

Geothermal Resource in the Cheshire Basin

GJ m^{-2}

- 2 - 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 60
- 60 - 70

- Community led and farm scale anaerobic digestion.
- Community led hydropower schemes, provided that the impacts on the river environment and surrounding ecology are mitigated.
- Heat pumps, particularly in locations off the gas network.
- Geothermal heat.
- Wind turbines. Low wind speeds mean that large scale turbines are unlikely to be viable; they may also have an unacceptable environmental impact; in particular any proposal would be required to demonstrate that it does not have a detrimental impact on the landscape.

5.55   Proposals for energy generation from zero and low carbon sources will be treated on their merits in accordance with other policies of the Local Plan, national guidance and any future Supplementary Planning Documents. This will also assist in ensuring future energy security.

Key Evidence

1. Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Study (2011)
2. Renewable Energy Policy Study (2010)
3. Renewables Handbook (2011)

Consultation Responses

5.56   As part of the consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper the Macclesfield Citizens Panel workshop identified that there should be an increase in the use of renewable energy, whilst the Infrastructure Providers workshop discussed the carbon output of development and impacts on environmental capacity.

Alternatives considered:

5.57   No alternatives were considered at this stage.

Policy SE 8

Energy Efficient Development

1.   In order to deliver national and local carbon dioxide reduction targets, all new development will be expected to be of the highest feasible construction standards in order to maximise energy efficiency. It will also be expected to integrate suitable renewable energy technologies. Where this is unsuitable development should be designed to maximise opportunities to retrofit suitable renewable technologies.

2.   When considering the design of a development, consideration should include the opportunities within the surrounding landscape/townscape both on and off site, in addition to the design of development.

3.   Where development is over ten homes or non-residential development over 1,000m^2, it will be expected to secure at least 10 per cent of their predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources, unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development and its design, that this is not feasible or viable.

4.   In those areas identified as 'District Heating Network Priority Areas' or within large scale development, new development should contribute to the development of a strategic district heating network, where feasible and viable, by seeking to make use of available heat (including geo-thermal)and waste heat as follows:

- Large and mixed use developments of over 100 dwellings or non residential development of 10,000m^2 gross floor space should install a site wide district heating network.
- Smaller developments should connect to any available district heating network.
- Where a district heating network does not yet exist, developers should demonstrate that the heating and cooling equipment installed is capable of connection to a network at a later date.
- New development should be designed to maximise the ability to accommodate a district heating solution in terms of overall layout, phasing, mix of uses and density.
- Development with high energy demands should give consideration to their potential role in providing an anchor load for a district heating network.

5.   In those areas that are not connected to the gas network, new development will be encouraged to deliver their residual energy from low and zero carbon sources.

Explanation

5.58   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'to support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should: plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions; actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and when setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards'*. It also states that development should *'comply*

with adopted Local Plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption'.

5.59   Cheshire East is relatively constrained in terms of its capacity to generate renewable energy, particularly from large scale technologies, consequently achieving national and local targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and increase renewable energy generation will be extremely challenging. Without a requirement for efficiency standards that exceed the requirements of building regulations on large sites it would be unlikely to occur.

5.60   Cheshire East Council and Housing Associations will lead by example by seeking to maximise energy efficiency and incorporation of renewable energy generation through the refurbishment and redevelopment of land and buildings in their ownership.

5.61   This justification for the on-site low carbon energy target is drawn from the Cheshire East 'Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Planning Research' and the Zero Carbon Hub 'Carbon Compliance: Setting an Appropriate Limit for Zero Carbon New Homes – Findings and Recommendations, February 2011', which consider both the technical feasibility and financial viability and is justified by the particular challenges and characteristics of the Borough. This target seeks to achieve a balance between the social, economic and environmental imperative of higher standards and the commercial realities of property developers. The Council recognises that this will in some cases remain a challenging target, particularly for certain building types, and so it will be acceptable to average compliance across all buildings in a development.

5.62   Compliance with this requirement should be demonstrated through the completion of the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) which assesses the energy rating of development. The SAP process is already required to demonstrate compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations for England. If viability is uncertain, applicants should use open book accounting to allow the determination of viability.

5.63   The purpose of the 'district heating network priority areas' is to prioritise district heating in areas where the potential is greatest and to take advantage of available heat sources such as geothermal or waste heat. The development of District Heating Networks to serve strategic developments and areas where there are major energy users are being explored. However, it is recognised that delivering District Heating Networks cannot be achieved though planning alone. The aim of this policy is to help make sure that new development makes an appropriate contribution.

5.64   The design and layout of site-wide networks should be such as to enable future expansion into surrounding communities. Where appropriate, applicants may be required to provide land, buildings and/or equipment for an energy centre to serve existing or new development, irrespective of whether the scheme is currently in operation.

5.65   The viability of district heating schemes is heavily influenced by a development's density, mix of use, layout and phasing. Residential development should normally be at least 55 dwellings per hectare and a minimum size of 100 homes. Mixed use development can allow densities to be lower and can provide a good 'anchor' development (i.e. provides a

Sustainable Environment

high and stable heat load over the day and year). The cost of district heating pipes is high and so the layout of a development should seek to minimise the length of pipe needed. The on-site network should consider how it can be connected to a strategic network in future.

5.66   The Council is committed to encouraging households and businesses located in areas off the gas network to move away from heating systems powered by liquid gas, oil or electricity towards low and zero carbon technologies. Applications for new development in areas off the gas network will be expected to comply with this requirement. This will have economic benefits for the occupants as well as contributing to the achievement of national and local carbon dioxide and renewable energy targets.

Key Evidence

1.   Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Study (2011)
2.   Renewable Energy Policy Study (2010)
3.   Renewable Energy Handbook (2011)
4.   Local Energy Networks Project (2011)

Consultation Responses

5.67   As part of the consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper the Macclesfield Citizens Panel workshop identified that there should be an increase in the use of renewable energy, whilst the infrastructure providers discussed the carbon output of development and impacts on environmental capacity.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: Use recommendations from the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Study

Description: This option would use the proposed policy from the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Study which states that *'developments in 'district heating network priority areas' and residential developments over 10 dwellings or non-residential developments over 1,000m2 in all areas will be required to emit a maximum of 6 kilograms of CO_2 per square metre per year (kg CO_2(eq) m^2/year), where feasible and viable*'.

Justification: It was felt that at present this policy may lead to a lot of developments suggesting that this was not viable or feasible and therefore it would not actually achieve what it intends to.

Policy SE 9

Allowable Solutions

1.   Money raised through Allowable Solutions will contribute towards the delivery of energy efficiency and carbon dioxide reduction priorities identified by Cheshire East Council.

Explanation

5.68   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'to support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should: plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions; actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and when setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards'*.

5.69   Cheshire East Council is seeking to significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions within the Borough. Money raised through Allowable Solutions provides an opportunity to contribute towards projects that will reduce carbon dioxide emissions, either by increasing the efficient use of energy or providing alternative sources of energy which are less carbon intensive.

5.70   Cheshire East Council will establish a list of key projects to achieve carbon reductions. The priority of these projects will be informed by the relative carbon saving, the likelihood of the project coming forward without support from Allowable Solutions funding and the strategic objectives within the Borough.

Key Evidence

1.   Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Study (2011)
2.   Renewable Energy Policy Study (2010)
3.   Renewable Energy Handbook (2011)

Alternatives considered:

5.71   No alternatives to this policy were considered at this stage.

Minerals

5.72   The following policy principles have been arrived at through consideration of national planning policy, local, sub-regional and regional evidence on minerals, and the views of stakeholders.

Sustainable Environment

Policy SE 10

Minerals

Sustainable minerals development will be facilitated through:

- Making provision for an adequate and steady supply of key industrial and aggregate minerals through the identification of appropriate and environmentally acceptable areas for future extraction;
- Ensuring the prudent use of mineral resources and supporting the provision of suitable alternatives to primary land-won minerals;
- Safeguarding surface-won mineral resources to prevent their unnecessary sterilisation and supporting prior extraction where viable;
- Safeguarding where necessary existing and potential mineral related infrastructure;
- Supporting and encouraging the sustainable transportation of minerals wherever possible;
- Ensuring mineral workings are reclaimed at the earliest opportunity and restored to the highest practicable standard;
- Recognising the importance of utilising underground cavities created following salt extraction for gas storage purposes; and
- Setting environmental criteria against which planning applications will be assessed to make sure mineral operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or human health.

Explanation

5.73 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that minerals are essential to support economic growth. It requires Minerals Planning Authorities to plan for a steady and adequate supply of minerals but also emphasises the importance of making best use of such finite resources, securing their long-term conservation.

5.74 Cheshire East contains mineral resources of both local and national importance. These include silica (or industrial) sand, construction sand, hard rock and salt. For key mineral resources, national policy requires a sufficient planned provision to allow mineral landbanks to be maintained. For aggregate minerals, provision should allow for at least 7 years supply of sand and gravel and at least 10 years supply of crushed rock. In planning for the aggregate provision, account must be taken of the published National and Sub-National Guidelines (see Appendix C Evidence 'Minerals'). For silica sand, a stock of at least 10 years permitted reserves should be maintained at individual sites.

5.75 Through the identification of areas where future mineral extraction is considered appropriate and environmentally acceptable (subject to planning permission) levels of provision can be planned for. This approach offers a level of likelihood to both local communities and the minerals industry as to where extraction may take place whilst also providing a degree of flexibility. Having considered consultation responses and evidence, areas for the future extraction of silica sand, salt and construction sand will be identified to meet national policy requirements. For other mineral resources found within the Borough, including energy minerals,

a criteria based approach is considered to be most appropriate. Sites for future peat extraction will not be identified as stipulated in national policy. This approach presents a continuation of that taken in the current Cheshire Replacement Minerals Local Plan. The definition of future areas for mineral extraction will be made through the Site Allocations and Policies Document.

5.76 To reflect national policy, it is important to make the best use of Cheshire East's finite natural mineral resources securing their long-term conservation for future generations. Through supporting the provision of suitable alternatives to primary land-won minerals such as secondary or recycled aggregates, the need for exploiting new resources can be reduced. The need, and where necessary, identification of sites suitable for the production of recycled aggregates will be contained in the Waste Development Plan Document. Whilst it is accepted that it is not always feasible to replace primary minerals, it is important to ensure that they are used prudently.

5.77 As minerals can only be worked where they naturally occur, potential exists for their sterilisation by other forms of non-mineral development. By safeguarding known mineral resources, needless sterilisation can be prevented, conserving them to meet the needs of future generations. In some instances it may be appropriate to allow for prior extraction of the mineral. It may also be necessary to safeguard certain mineral related infrastructure to allow for the sustainable transportation of minerals and the provision of alternatives to primary land-won minerals such as recycled aggregates. The definition of Minerals Safeguarding Areas and supporting policies will be made through the Site Allocations and Policies Document.

5.78 Where minerals extraction does take place, the high quality restoration and aftercare of sites for a range of uses must to be secured. This can include agriculture, geodiversity, biodiversity, native woodland, the historic environment and recreation. Restored workings can also contribute to the provision of Green Infrastructure (see Emerging Policy SE5).

5.79 Local geological circumstances in Cheshire East have demonstrated their feasibility for underground gas storage in cavities created following salt (in brine) extraction. The Local Plan will therefore need to recognise and encourage this afteruse in response to requirements of national planning policy (subject to ensuring appropriate integrity and safety measures). Government has identified the need for gas storage capacity to contribute to national energy security.

5.80 For all mineral extraction it is essential that workings do not give rise to any unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or on human health. Policies will be brought forward through the Site Allocations and Policies Document setting out environmental criteria against which all mineral related planning applications will be assessed.

Key Evidence

1. Communities and Local Government 'National and regional guidelines for aggregate provision in England 2005-2020' (2009)
2. North West Aggregates Working Party 'Annual Monitoring Report 2010' (2011)
3. North West Aggregates Working Party 'Sub-Regional Apportionment of the 2005-2020 Guidelines for Aggregate Provision in the North West' (2011)

Sustainable Environment

4. Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East 'The Future of Sub-Regional Apportionment in the Cheshire Sub-region' (2010)
5. British Geological Survey (BGS) 'Mineral Resource Information in Support of National, Regional and Local Planning – Cheshire'

Consultation Responses

5.81   Consultation on the 'Minerals Issues Discussion Paper' gave opportunity for members of the public and stakeholders to offer views on possible approaches taken by the Local Plan to address key strategic minerals planning issues.

5.82   Responses on how the Plan should secure an adequate and steady supply of minerals depended on the mineral resource in question. For the future working of silica sand, construction sand and salt the identification of 'preferred areas' was considered by stakeholders as appropriate to plan for future provision. In addition a wider 'area of search' for silica sand and construction sand would offer a degree of long term flexibility. For other mineral resources found in the Borough, a criteria based approach was considered the most appropriate including for energy minerals. To achieve the prudent and efficient use of minerals responses acknowledged the need to identify appropriate end uses for specialist minerals. However, other views highlighted the limits planning can place on determining how a resource is used.

5.83   Responses were in general agreement over the encouragement and maximisation of using alternatives to primary minerals such as suitable recycled material to minimise new primary extraction. However , there are limitations of the feasibility of replacing primary minerals such as silica sand and salt in industrial processes. It was considered that the encouragement recycled materials would be best facilitated through waste policy with the identification of potential recycling sites.

5.84   The majority of consultation responses favoured the safeguarding of all Cheshire East's surface mineral resources including those in urban areas. Mineral related infrastructure associated with silica sand and brine extraction should also be considered.

5.85   Most respondents considered that the location of mineral deposits in Cheshire East does not generally lend itself to sustainable transport alternatives, such as strategically placed railways, waterways or pipelines. With the exception of brine and silica sand pipelines, there is currently no alternative transport method to road in the Borough. It was felt encouragement should be given to alternative transport where it is feasible but maintain a flexible attitude.

5.86   Responses concurred that the appropriate restoration of mineral sites should depend on the nature of the site, taking each case on its merits. A pro-active approach to the afteruse of underground cavities created following salt extraction for gas storage purposes was favoured, providing that the necessary safety measures are put in place.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No policy
Description: This option would not provide a policy on minerals.

Sustainable Environment

Option 1: No policy

Justification: This approach would not be in conformity with National Planning Policy Framework and could lead to unsustainable mineral development in Cheshire East.

Option 2: Identifying specific sites and extensions to existing existing sites

Description: Only specific sites for mineral extraction including extensions to existing sites would be identified to meet national provision requirements.

Justification: Approach would provide a high degree of certainty for the industry and local community as to where mineral extraction may take place but would offer little flexibility over the plan period.

Option 3: Criteria based approach

Description: Mineral planning applications would be determined on a case by case basis in accordance with identified criteria should they come forward.

Justification: Approach would provide greatest flexibility as to where mineral extraction may take place but would provide little certainty to industry and the local community. Would not allow the Local Plan to make provision for the maintenance of mineral landbanks.

Waste

Policy SE 11

Waste

1. Waste will be managed in accordance with the principles of the waste hierarchy. Priority will be given, in order, to its (i) prevention; (ii) preparation for re-use; (iii) recycling; (iv) other recovery; and (v) disposal.

2. The sustainable management of waste will be delivered by:

- Bringing forward a Waste Development Plan Document setting out policies and proposals for waste management in Cheshire East, including the identification, and if necessary, safeguarding of appropriate sites required to the meet the identified waste management needs of the Borough;
- Fully integrating with the strategy to manage Cheshire East's municipal waste to minimise reliance on landfill; and
- Co-operating with other Waste Planning Authorities in order to achieve the management of waste at the most sustainable facilities.

Explanation

5.87   The National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012 does not contain specific waste policies. The Government has indicated that these are to be published as part of the 'National Waste Management Plan for England' expected in 2013.[62] In the interim, waste policy is to be guided by the existing Planning Policy Statement for Waste (PPS10). However, preparation of the Local Plan and decisions on waste applications will need to have regard to policies in the Framework so far as relevant.

5.88   A key objective of sustainable development is to produce less waste and wherever possible use it as a resource. To deliver this, the management of waste must be driven up the 'waste hierarchy' whereby options for management are prioritised in order according to their environmental impact.[63] The most sustainable and environmentally friendly option is to reduce the amount of waste that is produced in the first place. When waste is created, priority is given to preparing it for re-use, then recycling, then recovery, and last of all disposal (for example landfill).

5.89   The Local Plan must make sure there are sufficient opportunities for the provision of waste management facilities in appropriate locations to meet communities needs. It must also make sure waste management does not endanger human health or damage the environment and enable waste to be disposed of in one of the nearest appropriate installations. The identification of facilities needed and environmental criteria to assess waste applications will be brought forward through the production of the Waste Development Plan Document.

5.90   As set out in national planning policy, the Local Plan should both inform and be informed by the relevant municipal waste management strategy. There is current uncertainty over the future options and contractual arrangements to manage Cheshire East's residual municipal waste. This follows the withdrawal in October 2010 of Government backed PFI funding for a Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant facility near Northwich intended to provide sufficient capacity to treat residual municipal waste from both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester from 2014. Alternative options to this scheme are currently being fully considered. The Waste Development Plan Document will need to fully integrate with the Council's strategy for municipal waste to ensure it is managed in the most sustainable way, reducing reliance on landfill.

5.91   Evidence shows that there is considerable planned waste management capacity in the neighbouring Cheshire West and Chester authority. Whilst there can be no assumption that facilities in any neighbouring authority will be available to manage Cheshire East's waste over the plan period, surplus capacity outside the authority may present the most sustainable option. Cheshire East is prepared to co-operate with neighbouring Waste Planning Authorities over planning issues of cross boundary waste movements in the preparation of the Waste Development Plan Document.

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62   As detailed in: DEFRA (2012) 'Progress with delivery of commitments from the Government's Review of Waste Policy in England (2011)'

63   A requirement of EU and UK legislation under Article 4 of the revised Waste Framework (Directive 2008/98/EC) transposed into UK law through the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011

Sustainable Environment

Key Evidence

1. Urban Mines 'Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils - Waste Needs Assessment Report' (2011)
2. Cheshire Consolidated Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2007-2020

Consultation Responses

5.92 Consultation on specific planning policy options for waste management will take place as part of preparation of the Waste Development Plan Document.

Delivery and Monitoring of Policy

5.93 The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process.
- Preparation of more detailed policies within a Waste Development Plan Document

5.94 The Policy will be monitored by:

- Cheshire East Monitoring Report
- Waste Monitoring

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No Policy
Description: This option would not provide a policy on waste.
Justification: The Local Plan must have regard to the waste hierarchy in response to European and National legislation. This approach would not be in conformity with national planning policy and could lead to unsustainable waste development in Cheshire East.

Pollution

5.95 The Local Plan plays a key role in determining the location of development that may give rise to pollution, either directly or indirectly, and in ensuring that other uses and development are not, as far as possible, affected by major existing or potential sources of pollution. Development should avoid and, if necessary, mitigate against environmental impacts.

Sustainable Environment

Policy SE 12

Pollution

1.   Development should be located and designed so as to minimise and, if necessary, mitigate against environmental impacts either as a result of the impact of existing sources on the development, or as a result of the development's impact on the environment.

2.   Where development is proposed on or close to existing sources of pollution (air, noise, vibration, light, or contaminated land) developers will be required to demonstrate that it is sited and designed in such a way as to reduce the impact from these sources to acceptable amenity levels appropriate to the proposed use concerned. Consideration should be given to refusing proposals that place a financial penalty on existing regulated 3rd party businesses for example developments that increase the risk score and thus permit fees from an existing environmental permitting regulated company.

3.   Where development has the potential to introduce a new source of pollution into the environment, either as a result of the development itself, or as a result of impacts associated with the development (for example increases in road transport emissions) developers will be required to make sure that new development is designed in such a way, or suitable mitigation is included, or sought through S.106 agreements, to reduce the impacts of pollution to an acceptable amenity level.

4.   In respect of Contaminated Land in particular, where a development proposes to introduce new sensitive receptors to a site, for example new residents, developers will be required to prove that the site is suitable for its proposed use, or provide suitable recommendations for further investigation in order to adequately assess the site's suitability and to design mitigation/remediation measures if necessary.

Explanation

5.96   The National Planning Policy Framework states that the planning system should *'prevent both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability'*, therefore when preparing Local Plans *'the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment'*.

5.97   Some types of development may cause or contribute to air, water or land pollution. The Council will make sure levels are kept to a minimum and are acceptable to human health, the environment and the amenity of neighbouring or nearby users.

5.98   The Council will seek the advice of the appropriate regulatory organisation including the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive and Civil Aviation Authority, on proposals falling within defined consultation zones. There are a number of installations and pipelines handling notifiable substances in the Borough and the Proposals Map will indicate consultation zones appropriate to their uses. Sensitive developments such as hospitals, schools or nursing homes will not be permitted in areas where the possible risk to human health is unacceptable.

Sustainable Environment

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire East Air Quality Strategy (2011)
2. Cheshire East Air Quality Management Areas and their resultant assessments
3. Cheshire East Air Quality Action Plan (2011)
4. Cheshire East Annual Air Quality Reports (most recently 2012)
5. Cheshire East Contaminated Land Strategy (2011)
6. Environmental Noise Directive - Noise Action Plans (various for Air, Road, Agglomerations)
7. Cheshire Planning Noise Guidelines (Part 1: Mineral and Waste Disposal) (1996)

Consultation Responses

5.99   The respondents to the Knutsford Town Strategy support policies that show consideration of their loss of amenity due to proximity to the airport and flight paths.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No policy
Description: This option would not include a policy on pollution.
Justification: This would rely on the policy within the National Planning Policy Framework to prevent inappropriate developments being located together. It would not provide the detail or local elements required and may not provide appropriate protection of existing or new residents against pollution.

Water Management

5.100   Flood plains are areas of land alongside watercourses over which water flows in times of flood, or would flow but for the presence of defences. Flood plains perform the essential function of storing water during flood events.

5.101   The effectiveness of rivers and flood plains to convey and store flood water, and minimise flood risk, can be adversely affected by human activities, especially by development that physically changes the flood plain. As well as increasing the risk of flooding and impeding works to reduce flood risk, this can destroy the ecological value of the land and break up linear habitats such as river corridors.

Sustainable Environment

Policy SE 13

Water Management

1.   Developments will integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk, avoid an adverse impact on water quality and quantity within the Borough and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation, by making sure that:

i.   Development avoids areas of flood risk. In exceptional circumstances, where a Sequential and Exception Test indicate development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
ii.   New development is designed to be safe, taking into account the lifetime of the development, and the need to adapt to climate change. Design guidance is available within the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Cheshire East.
iii. All developments, including changes to existing buildings, include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) to manage surface water. All developments should aim to achieve a reduction in the existing runoff rate, but must not result in an increase in runoff;
iv.   New development improves drainage by opening up existing culverts where appropriate;
v.   Proposals within areas of infrastructure capacity constraint, and any major development, demonstrates that there is adequate water infrastructure in place to serve the development;
vi.   New development enhances and protects water quality; and
vii. New development incorporate water efficiency measures.

Explanation

5.102   The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Plans should *'take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape".*

5.103   *It also states that "inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere'.*

5.104   This policy looks to make sure that development is directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding, especially development that includes key infrastructure and major utilities. It also seeks to make sure that surface water created by new developments is mitigated, thereby reducing surface water run-off impacts of new development on downstream areas in terms of quantity and run off rates. This will also assist in meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and will help to mitigate any adverse effects on water quality.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire East Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2012)

Sustainable Environment

2. Cheshire East Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
3. Cheshire East Surface Water Management Plan

Consultation Responses

5.105 There have been limited responses in relation to water management to any of the consultations that have taken place so far. However, general comments provided by those organisations responsible for elements of water management support the inclusion of a policy in the Local Plan.

Alternatives considered:

5.106 No alternatives considered at this stage.

Policy SE 14

Jodrell Bank

Within the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope Consultation Zone, as defined on the Proposals Map, development will not be permitted that can be shown to impair the efficiency of the telescopes.

Explanation

5.107 The Council has been directed to consult the University of Manchester on a wide range of planning applications within the zone defined on the Proposals Maps. This policy aims to make sure that the telescopes retain their ability to receive radio emissions from space with a minimum of interference from electrical equipment.

5.108 The Council are currently considering providing further detailed policy and advice in a future policy document.

Key Evidence

1. Town and Country Planning (Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope) Direction 1973

Alternatives considered:

5.109 No alternatives to this policy were considered at this stage.

Policy SE 15

Peak District National Park Fringe

Within the Peak District National Park Fringe development that would have a detrimental impact on the purposes of the Peak District National Park will be resisted.

Explanation

The Peak District National Park is an asset of national, regional, and local importance and plays a special role at the centre of England. It was the first of 15 national parks in the United Kingdom to be designated for their spectacular landscapes, cultural heritage and wildlife, and for people to enjoy them.

5.110 The 1995 Environment Act establishes the statutory purposes of national park designation, as:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the national parks; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities [of the parks] by the public.

5.111 Section 62 of the Act also places a general duty on all relevant authorities, statutory undertakers and other public bodies, to have regard to these purposes.

5.112 The Peak District National Park is a complex tapestry of different landscapes but there are three distinct areas: the less populated upland moorland areas and their fringes (the Dark Peak and Moorland Fringes); the most populated lower-lying limestone grasslands and limestone dales and the Derwent and Hope Valleys (the White Peak and Derwent Valley); and the sparsely populated mixed moorland and grassland landscapes of the south west (the South West Peak).

5.113 Special Qualities define what is distinctive and significant about the Peak District compared with other parts of the country. Understanding these qualities helps us to plan effectively and manage the national park in order to protect them.

5.114 Special Qualities of the Peak District National Park include:

- Natural beauty, natural heritage, landscape character and landscapes.
- Sense of wildness and remoteness.
- Clean air, earth and water.
- Importance of wildlife and the area's unique biodiversity.
- Thousands of years of human influence which can be traced through the landscape.
- Distinctive character of hamlets, villages and towns.
- Trees, woodlands, hedgerows, stone walls, field barns and other landscape features.
- Significant geological features.
- Wealth of historic buildings, parks and gardens.
- Opportunities to experience tranquillity and quiet enjoyment.
- Easy access for visitors and surrounding urban areas.
- Opportunities to experience dark night skies.
- Vibrancy and a sense of community.
- Cultural heritage of history, archaeology, customs, traditions, legends, arts, and literary associations.
- Opportunities for outdoor recreation and adventure.
- Environmentally friendly methods of farming and working the land.
- Craft and cottage industries.

Sustainable Environment

- Opportunities to improve physical and emotional well-being.
- Special values attached to the national park by surrounding urban communities.
- The flow of landscape character across and beyond the national park boundary.

Key Evidence

1. Environment Act 1995 (Sections 61 & 62)
2. Peak District National Park Core Strategy 2011

Alternatives considered:

5.115 No alternatives to this policy were considered at this stage.

Sustainable Environment

6 Connectivity

6.1   The Local Plan aims to capitalise on the strengths of the existing transport system in Cheshire East, including good transport links to major centres by way of the rail and motorway network, and sets out how we will look to improve it into the future.

6.2   The scale of development proposed will require significant investment in transport infrastructure and a step change in the provision of public transport and other sustainable modes. The economic strength of Cheshire East, and the quality of life on offer, very much depend on the accessibility, speed, quality and cost of transport facilities. Therefore increasing accessibility and promoting sustainable travel is a key theme within this Emerging Policy Principles document.

6.3   We must also be realistic about the challenges we face. The way we travel is changing to adapt to climate change and new technologies, the age profile of the population and shifts in the global economy.

6.4   Good transport links are crucial for a successful economy, thriving towns and rural areas and a good quality of life for all our residents. We want to make sure that our public transport system enables people to get to the places they want to, when they want to, that people can walk and cycle as a real alternative to the car and that our transport system is integrated across all modes of transport.

Objective 4: To reduce the need to travel, manage car use, promote more sustainable modes of transport and improve the road network.

This will be delivered by:

1. Building homes that are close, or easily accessible, to where people work, shop and enjoy recreational activities.
2. Ensuring development gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport within its design.
3. Encouraging travel by sustainable means in order to reduce congestion.
4. Developing improved transport and infrastructure networks.
5. Enhancing the role of key railway stations. Enhancing the role of Crewe as a national rail hub.
6. Provision of additional transport infrastructure to improve connectivity.

Performance Indicators: Connectivity
Travel times for residents to key services
Quality and quantity of cycleways
Quality and quantity of Public Rights of Way

Table 6.1 Performance Indicators

Connectivity

Sustainable Travel and Transport

6.5   The challenge for the Local Plan is twofold; to redress shortfalls in infrastructure and improve connectivity necessary for economic growth, but also to change the need for travel and the way we do it, by promoting new and sustainable options.

Policy CO 1

Sustainable Travel and Transport

1. Reducing the need to travel by:

*   Locating development in the most sustainable and accessible locations;
*   Encouraging more flexible working patterns and home working; and
*   Supporting improvements to communication technology for business, education, shopping and leisure purposes.

2. Improving pedestrian facilities so that walking is attractive for shorter journeys[64] including:

*   Supporting the priority of pedestrians at the top of the road user hierarchy and make sure that in centres and residential areas, the public realm environment reflects this priority;
*   Creating safe and secure footways and paths linking with public transport and other services; and
*   Ensuring new developments are convenient, safe and pleasant to access on foot.

3. Improving cyclist facilities so that cycling is attractive for shorter journeys[65] including:

*   Creating safe and pleasant links for cyclists travelling around the Borough;
*   Providing secure cycle parking facilities at new developments, at public transport hubs, town centres and at community facilities;
*   Improving route signing; and
*   Working with community groups to develop local cycling initiatives and seek external funding to assist with the development of the local network.

4. Improving public transport integration, facilities, service levels and reliability[66] including:

*   Rail infrastructure - current schemes comprise:

    *   Improvements to Crewe Railway Station, promoting its national role as a rail hub;
    *   Supporting the aspiration for re-opening the Sandbach to Northwich railway line to passengers; and
    *   Engage in proposals for improving rail connectivity through High Speed Rail;

*   Bus Infrastructure - current schemes comprise:

    *   Improving Crewe Bus Station.

*   Improving public transport service levels, which may involve temporarily subsidising new buses to enable sustainable access to new development; and
*   Engage in proposals for improving rail connectivity through the Northern Hub capacity improvement scheme.

Connectivity

Explanation

6.6   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. Smarter use of technologies can reduce the need to travel. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel'. Therefore 'encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion'.*

6.7   To effectively influence the individual's choice about their mode of travel a range of options must be available that provide accessible, attractive, safe and reliable alternative options. Public transport also has an important role to play in planning for sustainability and future needs by encouraging a shift towards low carbon transport. An increase in the number of shorter journeys made by foot will contribute towards sustainability by reducing carbon emissions, as well as being beneficial for health and tackling congestion.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire East Local Transport Plan 2011-2026[67]
2.   Cheshire East Local Transport Plan - Implementation Plan 2011-15[68]
3.   Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026[69]
4.   Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan - Implementation Plan 2011-2015[70]
5.   Town Strategy's for Alsager, Crewe, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.[71]

Consultation Responses

6.8   During the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation a significant number of people thought that there were additional challenges related to accessibility and transport that needed to be addressed. In particular,delivery of the Woodford - Poynton Relief Road and improvement and integration of public transport services were raised as key issues.

6.9   In considering the objectives of the Core Strategy Issues and Options document a number of people highlighted the need to emphasise the importance of developing a sustainable transport network, and promotion of walking, cycling and public transport.

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64   in line with policy S7: Walking of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
65   in line with Policy S8:Cycling of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
66   in line with policies S3: Public Transport (integration and facilities) and S4: Public Transport (service and reliability) of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
67   Available to view at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel/local_transport_plan.aspx
68   Available to view at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel/local_transport_plan.aspx
69   Available to view at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/leisure,_culture_and_tourism/public_rights_of_way/rights_of_way_improvement_plan.aspx
70   Available to view at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/leisure,_culture_and_tourism/public_rights_of_way/rights_of_way_improvement_plan.aspx
71   Available to view at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local_plan_consultations/town_strategies.aspx

6.10   Within the Town Strategies many comments were made about the need for transport improvements, to increase the integration of the services and to improve the facilities and services available. For example the Middlewich Town Strategy[72] identifies the need to complete the Middlewich Eastern Link Road and the aspiration to reinstate the passenger rail service.

6.11   Within the Town Strategies the residents of Poynton and Alsager also highlighted the importance of high speed fibre optic cabling provision.

6.12   With 82% of respondents being in favour of the strategy, there is resounding support for increased sustainable connectivity and linkages in Crewe, including improvements to Crewe Railway Station (including its connection to the town centre) and integrated transport planning which encourages more walking and cycling.

Alternatives considered:

6.13   This emerging policy principle closely reflects that contained in the Local Transport Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, alternative options for the overall approach have not been identified at this stage.

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72   finalised and approved by Middlewich Town Council on 4th July 2012

Connectivity

Policy CO 2

Enabling business growth through transport infrastructure

Supporting new developments that are well connected and accessible by:

1. Minimising the future need to travel by locating new development in locations where there is a good range of housing, jobs, shops and services already accessible by public transport, cycling and walking[73].

2. Enabling development by supporting transport infrastructure, regeneration and / or behaviour change initiatives that will mitigate the potential impact of development proposals[74] including:

- Supporting schemes outlined within the current Transport Infrastructure Plan. Current schemes comprise:

    - South East Manchester Multi-Modal Strategy (SEMMMs) and consideration of relief for the A6 corridor;
    - Woodford to Poynton Relief Road;
    - Middlewich Eastern Link Road;
    - Congleton northern link road;
    - M6 J17 improvements (Sandbach);
    - M6 J16 improvements (Crewe and Alsager);
    - Basford West link road (Crewe);
    - Improvements to Crewe Green roundabout (Crewe);
    - Improvements to the A5020 Weston Road roundabout (Crewe);
    - A new highway link between the A537 and A523 (Macclesfield);
    - Capacity improvements on the A500 Barthomley link road to M6 (Crewe);
    - Flag Lane link road (Crewe); and
    - Crewe Green Link Road (Crewe);[75]

- Supporting improvements to communication technology for business, education shopping and leisure purposes;
- Providing recharging points for hybrid or electric vehicles in large new developments in order to reduce carbon emissions; and
- Adhering to the current adopted Cheshire East Council Car Parking Standards.

Explanation

6.14   Good transport connections are integral to our ambitious plans for economic growth and protecting our environment to ensure a sustainable future for all our residents and businesses.

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73   in line with Policy S1: Spatial Planning of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
74   in line with Policy B2: Enabling Development of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
75   (other schemes may emerge over the lifetime of this document)

6.15   Climate change is nationally recognised as one of the most important challenges facing our society. Transport accounts for 25 per cent of our carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions in the UK and personal car travel is the single biggest contributor to individual CO_2 emissions[76].

6.16   Residents of Cheshire East have higher than average CO_2 emissions at 10.3 tonnes per person, compared to the national average of 8.4 tonnes per person. In addition, transport accounts for an average of 35 percent of these emissions, rising to as much as 41 per cent in the Macclesfield area.[77]

6.17   One of the most important ways of reducing carbon emissions is to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, and to encourage more sustainable modes of transport such as cycling, walking, buses and trains. Development should be located in areas close to existing facilities and shops, and to transport hubs and bus routes. Maintaining or increasing the mix of uses in an area reduces the need to travel, as well as adding vitality and diversity.

6.18   Another key element is to facilitate, where possible, ICT, broadband and other technologies that remove the need to travel and to facilitate local access to these technologies. A flexible approach to the emergence and uptake of new technologies will also be required where these offer attractive and affordable communication or transport solutions.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire East Local Transport Plan 2011-2026[78]
2. Cheshire East Local Transport Plan - Implementation Plan 2011-15[79]
3. Cheshire East Council's Business Travel Planning Guidance
4. Cheshire East Parking Guidance
5. Town Strategy's for Alsager, Crewe, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.[80]

Consultation Responses

6.19   During the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation a significant number of people thought that there were additional challenges related to accessibility and transport that needed to be addressed. In particular,delivery of the Poynton bypass and improvement and integration of public transport services were raised as key issues.

6.20   The Draft Crewe Town Strategy highlights the need for a number of strategic road links and suggested the inclusion of recharging points for electric cars.

6.21   Highway improvements featured strongly throughout the Town Strategy consultations with most towns supporting improvements to transport infrastructure. For example: Highway improvements are considered to be the highest infrastructure priority in Crewe and 80% of consultees in Middlewich believe the Eastern Link road to be essential infrastructure.

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76   DECC website
77   DECC website
78   Available to view at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel/local_transport_plan.aspx
79   Available to view at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel/local_transport_plan.aspx
80   Available to view at
     www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local_plan_consultations/town_strategies.aspx

Connectivity

Alternatives considered:

6.22   This emerging policy principle closely reflects that contained in the Local Transport Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, alternative options for the overall approach have not been identified at this stage.

Digital Connections

6.23   Digital technologies have been a major driving force in influencing and shaping industry and the society in the 21st Century. Changes that are currently transforming our working, learning, leisure and community environments will need to be given due consideration and accommodated in the future spatial design of Cheshire East.

Policy CO 3

Digital Connections

1. High capacity, leading edge digital communication networks will be supported in Cheshire East to meet the needs of both business and communities.

- Providing the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations are kept to a minimum, consistent with the efficient operation of the network.

2. Developers will be required to include the necessary physical infrastructure to accommodate information and digital communications (ICT) networks as an integral part of all appropriate new developments.

Explanation

6.24   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'advanced, high quality communications infrastructure are essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband'*.

6.25   New developments will need to be 'future-proof' with appropriate digital infrastructure that will meet both existing and future communication needs. It is essential that the Council works with developers to make sure that the appropriate digital infrastructure is incorporated, including both 4G and 5G networks.

Consultation Responses

6.26   During the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation the workshop for infrastructure providers highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure, particularly its role in rural areas and for improving business opportunities.

Alternatives considered:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="1" style="background:green;color:white">Option 1: No Policy</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description: This option would not include a policy on digital connections.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Justification: This option could see developments brought forward that do not give consideration to the need for digital connectivity.</td></tr>
</table>

Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

Policy CO 4

Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

1. All major development proposals that are likely to generate significant additional journeys will be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and / or Travel Plan.

   i.   The Transport Assessment will need to demonstrate that the highway network will be no worse off as a result of development;

   ii.   The Travel Plan will need to propose measures that will mitigate the impact of increased trips generated on the highway network; and

   iii. Major developments will be required to monitor traffic generated by that development and share data with the Local Authority.

Explanation

6.27   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'all developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment'*.

6.28   Proposals for developments that are likely to have a significant transport impact will be required to include a Transport Assessment. This provides the opportunity to assess traffic generation, identify measures to reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility, including the production of a Travel Plan.

6.29   Travels Plans are an essential tool in terms of ensuring that people are encouraged to use public transport as an alternative to the private car. Travel Plans can help overcome concerns about new development by finding new ways of addressing travel needs and demonstrating how to influence travel choices. They also offer numerous benefits to developers, businesses, employers, employees, residents and the local community. Further

Connectivity

information on the purpose, benefits and advice on how to prepare a Travel Plan is provided in the Cheshire East Travel Planning Guidance Note at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel/travel_plans.aspx.

Alternatives considered:

Option 1: No policy
Description: This option would not provide a policy for Travel Plans or Transport Assessments and would rely on policy from the National Planning Policy Framework.
Justification: This would not add the local detail required to ensure that transport can be planned for appropriately. Most developments impact on transport demand. If not addressed systematically, it would impact on the safety of the existing network and its ability to function at an acceptable level of efficiency.

Connectivity

7 Monitoring and Implementation

7.1   The Local Plan policies will be subject to continuous monitoring in order to assess their impact and ensure the successful delivery of the vision and spatial objectives. This is to be achieved by measuring the performance of policies.

7.2   Monitoring data can be drawn from national, regional and local published sources supplemented by yearly employment, retail and housing completion surveys, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), town centre surveys, the collection of national indicators required by central government and other local research. The Council will publish a yearly monitoring report that will summarise key performance indicators that are established by the Core Strategy later in 2013.

7.3   The Local Plan policies will be implemented through a number of mechanisms, including but not exclusive to:

- Development management, through appropriate consideration of planning applications;
- Development and preparation of more detailed policies through the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document, Waste Development Plan Document and future Supplementary Planning Documents;
- Working with partner bodies, organisations, funding bodies, businesses and developers through private and public sector partnership arrangements and investment;
- Partnership working with public sector partners such as health and social care providers;
- Funding mechanisms including developer contributions, the Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding mechanisms;
- Private sector, including registered landlords;
- Local Design Review, design and quality audits and awards;
- Preparation of town / village design statements and neighbourhood plans by Town / Parish Councils and local communities;
- Regular updating of the evidence base to support the Local Plan, as required.

7.4   Further detail on the implementation and monitoring of Local Plan policies will be included in the Core Strategy later in 2013.

8 Glossary

Affordable housing	Housing, whether for rent, shared ownership or outright purchase, provided at a cost considered affordable in relation to incomes that are average or below average, or in relation to the price of general market housing.
Aggregate	Materials used forconstruction purposes such as sand, gravel, crushed rock and other bulk material.
Allowable solutions	A project or scheme which will deliver verifiable carbon savings and meet additional national acceptance criteria. On-site, near-site and off-site projects may qualify for inclusion on Government and National lists.
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	A report submitted to the Government by Local Planning Authorities assessing progress with and the effectiveness of a Local Plan.
Area of Search	A technique used to identify areas of land that are considered to contain mineral resources and are generally free from major mappable constraints.
Best and most versatile agricultural land	Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.
Brownfield	Previously developed land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
Climate change adaptation	Adjustment to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.
Climate change mitigation	Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
Community Infrastructure	The basic facilities, services and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society. It includes community buildings and halls, leisure facilities, education services, healthcare facilities and renewable energy installations.

Glossary

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	A levy allowing Local Authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.
Community Strategy	A strategy prepared by a Local Authority to improve local quality of life and aspirations, under the Local Government Act 2000.
Conservation	The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
Conservation Area	Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Core Strategy	Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision and strategic objectives of the planning framework for an area, having regard to the Community Strategy.
Development	Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land." Most forms of development require planning permission.
Development Plan	This includes adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Regional Spatial Strategies also remain part of the Development Plan until they are abolished by Government. |
Economic Development	Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).
Employment Land	Land identified for business, general industrial, and storage and distribution development as defined bu Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order. It does not include land for retail development nor 'owner specific' land.
Employment Land Review (ELR)	A review of the employment land portfolio within the Borough to form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.
European site	This includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, and is defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Glossary

Geodiversity	The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.
Green Belt	A designation for land around certain cities and large built-up areas, which aims to keep this land permanently open or largely undeveloped. The purposes of the Green Belt is to: • check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas prevent neighbouring towns from merging • safeguard the countryside from encroachment • preserve the setting and special character of historic towns • assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land Green Belts are defined in a Local Planning Authority's Development Plan.
Greenfield	Land, or a defined site, usually farmland, that has not previously been developed.
Green Gap	A local designation that seeks to maintain the definition and separation of existing communities, and to indicate support for the longer term objective of preventing Crewe, Willaston, Wistaston, Nantwich, Haslington and Shavington from merging into each other.
Green Infrastructure (GI)	A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
Habitats Directive	European Directive to conserve natural habitats and wild flora and fauna.
Heritage Asset	A building, monument, site, place, area of landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas. Heritage Assets also include local listed buildings and places.
Historic Environment	All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
Historic Park and Garden	English Heritage compile a register of 'Historic Parks and Gardens'.

Historic parks and gardens are a fragile and finite resource: they can easily be damaged beyond repair or lost forever. From town gardens and public parks to the great country estates, such places are an important, distinctive, and much cherished part of our inheritance.

Housing to meet local needs
Affordable housing - Housing, whether for rent, shared ownership or outright purchase, provided at a cost considered affordable in relation to incomes that are average or below average, or in relation to the price of general market housing.

Inclusive design
Designing the built environment, including buildings and their surrounding spaces, to ensure that they can be accessed and used by everyone.

Infill development
The development of a relatively small gap between existing buildings.

Infrastructure
Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

Infrastructure Plan
National planning policy formally requires Local Authorities to demonstrate sufficient infrastructure exists, or will be provided, to support their strategies for new development as set out in their Local Plan documents.

Key Service Centre (KSC)
Towns with a range of employment, retail and education opportunities and services, with good public transport. The KSCs are Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.

Landbank (Mineral)
Quantity of mineral remaining to be worked at sites with planning permission. Usually expressed as the number of years that permitted reserves will last at an indicated level of supply or given rate of extraction.

Listed Building
A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures, for example wells within its curtilage. English Heritage is responsible for designating buildings for listing in England.

Local Development Order (LDO)
An order made by a Local Planning Authority extending permitted development rights for certain forms of development, with regard to a relevant Local Development Document.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

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Local Plan	Through the Localism Act 2011 the Government refers to the statutory development plan as the 'Local Plan'. To reflect this it is proposed that in future the Cheshire East Local Development Framework will be renamed the Cheshire East Local Plan.

The term is used to describe a folder of documents, which includes all the Local Planning Authority's Local Development Documents. A Local Plan is comprised of:

- Development Plan Documents, which form part of the statutory Development Plan; and
- Supplementary Planning Documents.

The Local Plan will also comprise of:

- the Statement of Community Involvement
- the Local Development Scheme
- the Annual Monitoring Report
- any Local Development Orders or Simplified Planning Zones that may have been added

Alternatively it is also an old-style development plan prepared by District and other Local Planning Authorities. These plans will continue to operate for a time after the commencement of the new development plan system, by virtue of specific transitional provisions.

Local Planning Authority (LPA)	The Local Authority or Council that is empowered by law to exercise planning functions. Often the local borough or district council. National parks and the Broads authority are also considered to be Local Planning Authorities.
Local Service Centre (LSC)	Smaller centres with a limited range of employment, retail and education opportunities and services, with a lower level of access to public transport. The LSCs are Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury
Main town centre uses	Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).
Mineral Resources	Potentially valuable minerals for which reasonable prospects exist for eventual extraction.

Mineral Reserve	Mineral resources with planning permission for extraction.
Mineral Safeguarding Area	An area designated by Minerals Planning Authorities which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.
Neighbourhood Plan	A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
Open Countryside	The open countryside is defined as the area outside the settlement boundaries of those towns and villages in the Borough identified as Principal Towns, Key Service Centres, Local Services Centres or Sustainable Villages. Settlement boundaries will be shown on the Proposals Map of the Local Plan.
Open Space	All space of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and also including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which can offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can also act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife.
Place Shaping Consultation	A stage in preparing new plans for places in Cheshire East. It looks at the challenges facing each town or village and ideas about how each place can be improved. It will then look at the options for the plan for each place. From this a Strategy for each town or village will be produced and the proposals will be

incorporated into the draft Cheshire East Local Plan Core Strategy. |
Pollution	Anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils, which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, the natural environment or general amenity. Pollution can arise from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light.
Preferred Area	Areas containing known mineral resources largely unaffected by substantial planning constraints where planning permission might reasonably be anticipated providing proposals are environmentally acceptable.
Previously Developed Land	Land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure - excluding agricultural or forestry buildings, and associated fixed-surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development.
Principal Town	The largest towns with a wide range of employment, retail and education opportunities and services, serving a large catchment

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area with a high level of accessibility and public transport. The Principal Towns are Crewe and Macclesfield.

Public realm	Those parts of a village, town or city, whether publicly or privately owned, available for everyone to use. This includes streets, squares and parks.
Ramsar sites	Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.
Renewable energy	Energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment, for example from the wind, water flow, tides or the sun.
Rural exception sites	Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.
Safeguarded Land	Safeguarded Land is land between the urban area and the Green Belt. It ensures the protection of Green Belt within the longer time-scale by reserving land which may be required to meet longer-term development needs without the need to alter Green Belt boundaries.
Site Allocations Plan	Part of the Local Plan and will contain land allocations and detailed policies and proposals to deliver and guide the future use of that land.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI)	Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Spatial Portrait	A description of the Borough as a place to live, work and visit and includes its key characteristics and features.
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitat Directive, which is transposed in UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.
Special Protection Areas (SPA)	Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	This sets out the processes to be used by the Local Authority in involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all Local Development Documents and development management decisions. The Statement of Community Involvement is an essential part of the new-look Local Plans.

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Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	A Local Development Document that may cover a range of issues, thematic or site specific, and provides further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' Development Plan Document.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.
Sustainable Development	A widely used definition drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The Government has set out four aims for sustainable development in its strategy 'A Better Quality of Life, a Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK'. The four aims, to be achieved simultaneously are: • Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone; • Effective protection of the environment; • Prudent use of natural resources; and • Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
Sustainable Village	A settlement that has a limited range of services and facilities, with opportunities available to access more sustainable transport modes, where limited infill would be appropriate to meet locally generated needs.
Town Centre	Includes a range of different-sized centres, including market and country towns, traditional suburban centres, and quite often, the principal centre(s) in a Local Authority's area.
Transport Assessment	An assessment of the availability of, and levels of access to, all forms of transportation.
Travel Plan	A plan that aims to promote sustainable travel choices, for example, cycling, as an alternative to single occupancy car journeys that may impact negatively on the environment, congestion and road safety. Travel Plans can be required when granting planning permission for new developments.
Tree Preservation Order	A mechanism for securing the preservation of single or groups of trees of acknowledged amenity value. A tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order may not normally be topped, lopped or felled without the consent of the Local Planning Authority.
Use Classes	Use classes are broad classes of use for buildings or other land.

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They are used to help to define if a change of use has taken place and therefore if something can be considered to be development.

A change of use is not 'development' where the former use and the new use are both within the same Use Class.

The General Permitted Development (Amendment) Order in turn provides that certain changes between Use Classes are not to be regarded as 'development'.

Use Classes (B1, B2 and B8)

B1 - Business

(a) Offices other than financial or professional services such as banks, building societies, estate agents or employment agencies

(b) Research and Development - laboratories, studios

(c) Light industry

B2 - General Industrial

B8 - Storage and Distribution

Wholesale warehouses, distribution centres and repositories

Viability Study

A report, including a financial appraisal, to establish the profit or loss arising from a proposed development. It will usually provide an analysis of both the figures inputted and output results together with other matters of relevance. An assessment will normally provide a judgement as to the profitability, or loss, of a development.

Waste Arising

The amount of waste generated in a given locality over a given period of time.

Waste Hierarchy

A framework for securing a sustainable approach to waste management.

Wildlife Corridor

Strips of land, for example along a hedgerow, conserved and managed for wildlife, usually linking more extensive wildlife habitats.

Windfall sites

Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

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