

The Rt Hon Angela Rayner
Minister of State for Housing,
Communities & Local Government

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DATE: 29 August 2025

OUR REF: NM/MG/NoM

Dear Minister

**Re: Cheshire East Council Housing Targets
Notice of Motion: Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework resulting in
increased housing targets for Cheshire East**

Since the adoption of the local plan in 2017, Cheshire East Council has delivered an average of 2,230 homes every year. The Borough has seen and supported significant housing growth serving both the West Midlands and also Northwest economies given our notable and unique location, along the M6 corridor, north of the Core Cities of Birmingham and South of Greater Manchester and Merseyside. We are one of the busiest planning authorities in the UK and manage and determine over 5,000 applications per annum, quite an achievement given the acute shortage of skilled planning and building control professionals, given the sharp disinvestment in the sector since 2010.

We are in the process of refreshing our Local Plan given the new targets that have been set in order to deliver the Governments ambitions for 1.5m homes built over the parliamentary term. Our new housing target, established through changes to the standard method, is to build 2,603 units per annum, a 166% increase on the previous requirement of 977 per annum.

A notice of motion titled the “Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework resulting in increased housing targets for Cheshire East” - see attached link: <https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s126072/Notices%20of%20Motion.pdf> was tabled at our Full Council meeting on 16 July 2025 and unanimously agreed.

Our members and residents are concerned about this uplift and new target. Not just around the impact on building on open land, but the key infrastructure and services that need to be put in place to support this large increase in population, specifically:

1. Our local health care system and support. This is already under strain, and without national policies to bring forward new GP surgeries and health care walk in centres, the current infrastructure will struggle to cope.
2. Managing drainage is critical in order to prevent and reduce the impact of flooding on our roads and residents' homes. Over recent years, we have experienced a record number of named storm events, as well as increased intensity of rainstorms during winter. We need a clear drainage and infrastructure management plan in place ahead of increasing the delivery of the number of homes per annum across our Borough. We also need to ensure that all new developments have appropriate and sustainable drainage.
3. Our school place strategy is critical in order to provide the education for our youngest and most vulnerable. Most in need is SEND places, and we recently wrote to Ministers McMahon / Phillipson about the lack of progress determining the funding to deliver a SEND school at the former Westfield site in Sandbach, a decision that is now significantly overdue, and one that is failing our SEND learners. There will not be support for additional housebuilding in the Borough if we cannot assure our communities that we are delivering on the current need let alone additional need.
4. We are a devolution priority programme borough within Cheshire and Warrington sub-region, looking to have a focus on our town centres as soon as we are able to bring forward the spatial strategies with the new combined authority, supported by an elected mayor.

Given the above deep concerns, we need to co-design and put in place our physical infrastructure and people-focused services, we ask:

1. Agree to an incremental ramping up or leading in period from the current 2,603 units pa to a jointly agreed new target, as we build the foundations for our revised local plan, and the need to do so alongside any newly elected mayor.
2. Agree how our urban settlement policies can play a significant role in delivering the government's overall ambitions for 1.5m homes over the parliamentary term. For example, by diversifying our town centres to deliver large scale developments of high-quality apartments, integral improvements in the public realm and which are digitally and physically connected to active travel options; car-free, sustainable, and highly desirable.
3. Agree a plan and set of measures around Crewe Railway Station. This is at the heart of our plans, namely Crewe 360, so it can get underway as soon as we have a local policy in place. Our partners Network Rail and Avanti West Coast are already fully aligned to plan to regenerate the station and its wider amenity to provide over 600 homes within five years.

4. Agree how we put into place joint social infrastructure plans, notably around the delivery of health facilities, additional school places, transport and drainage plans too, through a named senior civil servant.

We look forward to your reply. We can make ourselves available at very short notice to hold conference with you and your team.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Mannion', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Cllr Nick Mannion
Leader of Cheshire East Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Gorman', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Cllr Michael Gorman
Deputy Leader of Cheshire East Council