



New local plan for Cheshire East

Waste topic paper (draft)
March 2024

Front cover images (clockwise from top-left):

- Crewe Market Hall and Municipal Buildings
- Arclid north plant site and lake (image supplied by Bathgate Silica Sand Ltd)
- Jodrell Bank Observatory
- Lamberts Lane Bridge, Congleton
- Tabley Park, Northwich Road, Knutsford

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1 Introduction

1.1 This topic paper provides further information to support the 'Waste' section of the new local plan issues paper. For ease of reading, it uses the same headings that are set out in the issues paper for this topic.

1.2 Cheshire East Council is the waste planning authority (WPA) for the borough excluding the area within the Peak District National Park. This means it is responsible for creating a planning policy framework for waste that will:

- Take account of the wider policy context for waste set out at the national level that aims to achieve more sustainable waste management.
- Safeguard existing waste management capacity.
- Provide for suitable additional provision.
- Help determine waste related planning applications.

1.3 The council consulted on a draft minerals and waste plan in late 2022 but is now considering producing a single local plan to include all planning policies for its area. If this happens, all the waste responses and sites received following the previous 2022 consultation (together with the existing pool of sites included in the initial draft site assessment that resulted from the 2017 call for sites exercise) will be considered during the preparation of the new draft local plan. The new minerals and waste policies once approved will replace the saved policies contained within the separate mineral¹ and waste² local plans prepared by Cheshire County Council, as well as the council's adopted local plan policies.

1.4 This waste topic paper provides a brief overview of the relevant national/local guidance that impacts on the emerging plan and provides more detail on the waste information than is provided in the issues paper. It also provides a summary of the current waste evidence base and explains how it will be used to shape the new local plan.

1.5 The main issues covered by this topic paper are:

- The current amount and type of waste arisings in the borough.
- The type and capacity of waste management currently present in the borough.
- The forecasted need for additional waste management provision within the borough over the plan period.
- Whether any capacity shortfalls are proposed to be met from management facilities outside of the borough.

1 https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/saved_and_other_policies/cheshire_minerals_local_plan/cheshire_minerals_local_plan.aspx

2 https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/saved_and_other_policies/cheshire_waste_local_plan/cheshire_waste_local_plan.aspx

2 Waste planning policy

National

2.1 Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) does not itself contain waste policies, it does identify under its environmental objective the need to minimise waste as one of the factors that will help achieve sustainable development.

2.2 National guidance on waste is instead set out in the 2014 National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) document. This requires WPAs to drive waste up the waste hierarchy. The waste hierarchy sets out a preferential sequence of interventions to manage waste based on the following priority order:

1. Prevention
2. Minimisation
3. Preparing for re-use
4. Recycling and composting
5. Energy recovery
6. Disposal

2.3 The NPPW also recognises the need for a mix of types and scale of facilities, considers the need for additional waste management capacity of more than local significance, and recognises the positive contribution that waste management can bring to the development of sustainable communities. The NPPW should be read in conjunction with the NPPF, The Waste Management Plan for England, and National Policy Statements for Waste Water and Hazardous Waste.

Local

2.4 At the local level, waste specific policies can be found in the 2017 Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (namely Policy SE 11 'Sustainable Management of Waste') and the saved policies of the 2007 Cheshire Replacement Waste Local Plan prepared by Cheshire County Council. These waste policies together with other relevant policies in the council's development framework are currently used to help determine any planning applications for waste in the borough. All these policies will be replaced once the new local plan is adopted.

3 Developing the evidence base for waste

Waste needs assessments

3.1 As the WPA for the borough, the council periodically commissions a Waste Needs Assessment (WNA) to understand the waste context and challenge for Cheshire East. Its purpose is to identify the amount and type of waste currently produced in the borough; forecast the amount of waste likely to be produced over the plan period; understand the extent to which existing facilities can satisfy the identified capacity requirements; determine the waste management capacity gap; and assess the extent to which this gap can be sustainably met by using available sub-regional capacity outside of the borough. The WNA is a key evidence document that the council has prepared to enable such considerations to take place.

3.2 The latest WNA was prepared in 2023 and covers period 2021 to the end of 2041. Any future iterations of the WNA will be incorporated into the new local plan as it progresses to adoption and used as evidence when determining waste management planning applications.

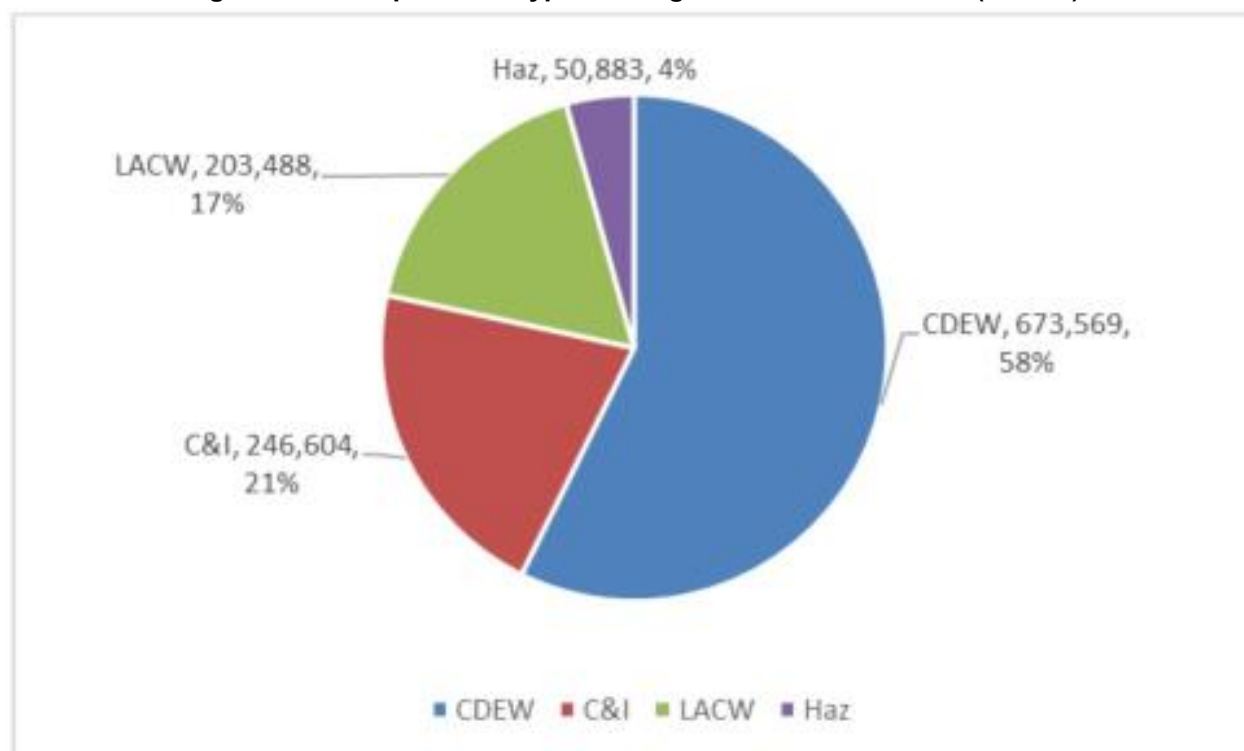
3.3 The 2023 WNA considered the following waste streams:

- local authority collected waste (municipal/household);
- commercial and industrial;
- construction, demolition and excavation;
- hazardous;
- low level radioactive;
- agricultural; and
- wastewater.

The findings of the 2023 waste need assessment

3.4 The latest WNA found that over 1.2 million tonnes of waste arose in the Cheshire East plan area in 2021, comprising the following principal waste streams: local authority collected waste (LACW) 203,488 tonnes (17%); commercial, demolition and excavation waste (CDEW) 579,569 tonnes (58%); commercial and industrial waste (C&I) 246,604 tonnes (21%); and hazardous waste (Haz) 50,883 tonnes (4%).³

3 Cheshire East Waste Management Needs Assessment 2023 (7 Overview Report) BPP Consulting Ltd.

Figure 3.1 Principal waste types arising in Cheshire East 2021 (tonnes)

3.5 It concluded that there appears to be sufficient existing consented capacity within Cheshire East to meet the predicted management requirements for waste required for the following waste streams up to the end of 2041:

- recycling and composting
- inert recovery
- hazardous waste

3.6 It also confirmed that no specific new management provision was considered necessary for the following waste streams to the end of 2041:

- low level radioactive waste
- agricultural
- waste water

3.7 The predicted principal shortfall in capacity to the end of 2041 was found to be for capacity to manage residual waste (predominantly comprising LACW and C&I waste that cannot be recycled). However, the WNA considered that the predicted shortfall in non-inert landfill could be met initially (until 2037) at the Kinderton Lodge facility in the neighbouring borough of Cheshire West and Chester Council. The report considered that any shortfall in capacity required after 2037 could be more than met by remaining non-inert landfill capacity elsewhere in the north west region.

3.8 The WNA also predicted a shortfall in 'other' recovery capacity throughout the entire plan period which may be met by the capacity identified in Halton (the Runcorn EfW facility) and the two EfW plants currently under construction in the Cheshire West and Chester Council area. These options will be considered further as the plan progresses through discussions with relevant authorities within the north west region. However, the principal aim is for waste to be driven up the waste hierarchy with a need

to boost recycling to reach the government's expectations around residual waste reduction by 2042. Therefore, proposals for new waste capacity (such as recycling and composting, and anaerobic digestion) that would move waste to a higher tier should also be progressed and not constrained by the identified shortfall in non-inert landfill capacity identified in the 2023 WNA.

4 Safeguarding of waste management facilities

4.1 As the WPA, Cheshire East proposes to safeguard all waste management sites which are in existing lawful waste use, have a planning permission but are yet to be developed, or will help provide a borough wide network of waste management provision.

4.2 Safeguarding waste management sites also ensures that the impact of non-waste related development on existing facilities, and on future sites and areas allocated for waste management, is acceptable and does not interfere with the efficient operation of waste facilities. Safeguarding sites will also assist in achieving the council's aim, of net self-sufficiency by creating a network of waste management facilities at suitable locations to implement the principles of the waste hierarchy.

4.3 It is proposed to include a 250 metre buffer on the interactive mapping that accompanies the new local plan to indicate where proposals for development will require the applicant to submit appropriate information to demonstrate that their development proposals do not create unreasonable restrictions on the waste facilities. If unacceptable impacts are found to occur the information submitted by the applicant must also demonstrate how those impacts can be successfully mitigated. This information may be required, at the discretion of the planning authority, for proposals within 400 metres of an operational or safeguarded waste site and in more limited cases, for proposals at a greater distance if it is considered that significant adverse impacts are reasonably likely to arise.

4.4 Currently Cheshire East has a network of seven household waste recycling centres (HWRC). The network of HWRCs plays an important role in the delivery of sustainable waste management in the borough and contribute to the reuse and recycling of waste by local residents and driving waste management practices up the waste hierarchy. Therefore, the draft plan will safeguard the HWRCs as strategic sites. The following sites are currently proposed to be safeguarded as part of the local plan:

- Alsager
- Bollington
- Crewe
- Knutsford
- Macclesfield
- Middlewich
- Poynton

4.5 However, a recent consultation by the council has proposed options around reducing the current seven HWRC to four core sites, namely Alsager, Crewe, Macclesfield and Knutsford. All sites will remain to be safeguarded in the draft plan until such time as a decision is made regarding rationalising the current sites.