

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	10 December 2012
Report of:	Strategic Director Places & Organisational capacity
Subject/Title:	Cheshire East Local Plan – Draft Development Strategy & Policy Principles
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Brown

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report considers the next stage of the Cheshire East Local Plan. The Council has undertaken a strategic 'Issues & Options' consultation and over the past year has embarked on an intensive programme of place shaping and neighbourhood planning to provide a 'bottom up' perspective on future growth and development. The Development Strategy and its sister document the Policy Principles now pull these elements together.
- 1.2 This presents a 'jobs led' strategy for growth and prosperous communities. They represent the last stage in the consultation process before a final (submission) version of the Core strategy is prepared in the summer of 2013.

2.0 Decision Requested

- To consider the report to Strategic Planning Board of 6 December 2012 and any recommendations arising from it.(Appendix 1)
- To approve for consultation the attached Cheshire East Development Strategy (Appendix 2)
- To approve for consultation the attached Cheshire East Policy Principles Document (Appendix 3)
- That the Cheshire East Development Strategy be used as a material consideration for Development Management purposes with immediate effect.
- That any minor typographical or other none material amendments be delegated for the Portfolio Holder's approval prior to publication.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that progress is made with the preparation of the Cheshire East Local Plan.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Ward Members

6.0 Policy Implications including - Carbon reduction & Health

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

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)

- 7.1 The preparation of the Local Plan is a time consuming and costly process. To speed up its production a temporary virement of £175,000 was approved at Mid Year Review to supplement the Strategic Planning's base budget. In addition one-off grant funding has also supplemented the base budget in 2012-13. The failure to produce a local plan in a timely way would cost the Council in terms of potentially expensive appeals and lost CIL revenue.
- 7.2 The Development strategy proposes that a series of strategic sites be developed across the Borough. As a major land owner the Council has a land interest in several of these. Those wholly or partly owned by the Council include: Leighton West, Crewe, Central Crewe, South west Macclesfield, South Macclesfield, Macclesfield Town Centre & the new settlement east of Handforth. These sites should be considered for development on their planning merits alone. However should any allocation be confirmed, the value of the land and benefit to the public would rise accordingly.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to prepare Local Development Frameworks, now known as Local Plans. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the procedures to be followed in the preparation of such plans.
- 8.2 The Development Strategy has been prepared under Regulation 18 which requires Local Planning Authorities to engage with the community and businesses regarding the preparation of the Local Plan. Whilst the preparation of the Development Strategy itself is not a statutory requirement it is nevertheless an important part of the Local Plan process and the results of the consultation will inform the preparation of the formal submission Core Strategy next year. It will

enable the Council to demonstrate to the Inspector who conducts the public examination into the Core Strategy that extensive consultation has been undertaken and that all reasonable alternative strategies have been considered; these considerations form part of the tests of soundness that the Inspector will apply.

- 8.3 The preparation of the plan is guided by the National planning policy Framework – and other related advice. The implications of this are considered within the strategy and in the remainder of this report.
- 8.4 The Localism Act 2011 imposes on local planning authorities, in preparing local plans, a duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities and other parties on strategic issues of common interest.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 **Local Plan Examination** Following the publication and its final consultation, the Core Strategy will be submitted for examination. The key test of examination is one of 'soundness'. For a plan to be considered sound, it must be:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with National Policy

Failure at examination has serious negative consequences for any Local Authority. By preparing and consulting on a draft Development Strategy, the Council is reducing the risk of this outcome.

- 9.2 **Planning Applications & Appeals.** Currently Cheshire East does not enjoy a five year supply of housing land – and some of its development plan policies are starting to become out of step with national policy. Consequently the Council is experiencing a large number of planning applications for housing on sites that are not allocated in the development plan. Some of these are subject to appeal and or legal challenge.
- 9.3 An up to date Local plan will not only provide new policies that are fully compliant with the NPPF but it will also identify a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. Consequently completion of the local plan will greatly assist the processing and determination of planning applications in the Borough.

10.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Plan Making in Cheshire East

- 10.1 The Development Strategy sets out the Council's essential thinking about the future shape and growth of Cheshire East. The Strategy is one of growth to create prosperous communities – with the provision of new employment areas and transport infrastructure being fundamental to its whole approach.
- 10.2 In the autumn of 2010 the Council published strategic 'Issues and Options' which considered different potential approaches to growth and development at a

Borough-wide, high level. One of the consequences of this work was the realisation that understanding of Cheshire East as a unified 'place' was still evolving. As a large County Borough, created in 2009 the area neither represented the historic County of Cheshire nor the District Boroughs which had become familiar since 1974.

- 10.3 Accordingly, the Council has invested considerable effort into 'Place shaping' at a level which is meaningful to most people in the Borough, particularly with the production of Town Strategies for each of the largest towns in Cheshire East. These were prepared according to neighbourhood planning principles and followed the award of government funding as a neighbourhood planning 'front runner'. The Development Strategy and Policy principles now brings together the findings of these strategies, the earlier issues and options and the research and evidence base, to create a coherent plan for the future of the Borough.

Delivering Wider Economic Growth

- 10.4 Delivering economic growth in Cheshire East remains central to the future prosperity of the Borough and increasingly important to the future sustainability of the Council. The Local Plan is an essential building block necessary to deliver an overall vision for economic growth.
- 10.5 The Local Plan is part of a much wider approach to developing the economy which is being led by the Leader and Cabinet to:
- Build stronger relationships with our existing businesses and investors to stimulate growth, build new enterprises and deliver jobs;
 - Build stronger relationships with local communities to support the local economy and create entrepreneurial towns and villages;
 - Directly promote employment and housing growth through development of Council assets and land to deliver jobs and new homes;
 - Focus education and skills investment to deliver a skilled workforce for the future and create opportunities for young people to build links with local businesses to encourage them to stay in Cheshire East;
 - Build new partnerships with developers and funding bodies to create new models of investment to stimulate growth;
 - Build a strong partnership with Government and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to bring investment in sites, infrastructure and influence a national economic growth strategy to recognise the significance of Cheshire East and the wider sub-region;
 - Maximise the impact that the Council can have on the local economy through directing our spending power locally, developing a local supply chain; generating employment opportunities for local people and ensuring the economic impact of major policy decisions is understood – we need to place the economy the heart of our corporate plan.
- 10.6 The Local Plan sets out the land uses required to deliver growth, as the spatial interpretation of the vision. The principles set out in the draft Development Strategy reflect this wider vision for economic growth.

Consultation & Evidence

- 10.7 The Localism Act 2011 provided legislation for the abolition of regional plans. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the Northwest Region was adopted in 2008 and looked ahead to the year 2021. Despite the government's best intentions the Northwest RSS has yet to be abolished – and along with other regional plans its revocation is currently the subject of strategic environmental assessment. Consequently the Regional Strategy remains part of the development plan for the time being. This means that the Cheshire east Local plan must accord broadly with the provisions of the RSS at least until 2021.
- 10.8 The Issues & Options Stage of the Local Plan set out high level choices for the scale and location of future growth in Cheshire East. This suggested options ranging between 1150 homes / 350 jobs per year through to 1600 homes / 950 jobs each year. Different options for the pattern of growth were also set out – with development either being concentrated in the south of the Borough and the main towns – or to a more even spread, including the option of Green Belt adjustment in the north. A rural variant with greater dispersal of growth was also consulted on. Overall the option for higher growth received the greatest support, although comments were made in favour of all proposals. Further detail is contained within the appended Strategic Planning Board report.
- 10.9 The Council has produced Town Strategies for each of the eleven largest towns in Cheshire East. These were prepared in conjunction with the relevant town or Parish Council (apart from unparished Crewe & Macclesfield) and frequently also involved existing town partnerships or similar bodies. The model for these documents was provided by the neighbourhood planning 'Front Runner' project, funded by the CLG. The first phase of strategies were subject to consultation earlier this year, with the final six strategies consulted on during September.
- 10.10 The Town Strategies for Alsager, Middlewich, Congleton and Sandbach (in part) have now been signed off by the respective town councils. The Report of Consultation on the remaining are included with the report to the strategic Planning Board. The Town Strategies are intended to inform the Cheshire east Local Plan; consequently the Development Strategy endeavours to reflect the approved documents and consultation responses as far as is possible.
- 10.11 The Development strategy is also supported by a strong evidence base. Key studies and areas of work within this include:
- Strategic Housing Market area assessment
 - Strategic Housing Land availability assessment
 - Employment Land review
 - Open Space & Green Infrastructure assessments
 - Renewable Energy Assessments
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
 - Landscape Character assessment
 - Transportation Studies
- These are or will be published on the Council's web site

Duty to Co-operate

- 10.12 Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council is under a duty to cooperate with public authorities and infrastructure providers over the preparation of development

plans. This provision was intended to ensure that after the RSS was abolished, there remained a means by which effective cross border working and cooperation could be secured. Discussions have been held and remain ongoing with all neighbouring local Authorities. Those areas which are of most pertinent to the consideration of the Development Strategy are the interfaces across the Greater Manchester boundary in the north and the impact of growth proposals in Crewe and Alsager on regeneration in the Potteries. There is also a localised issue of cooperation in the planning for Middlewich where the Borough Boundary is drawn very tightly around the town. This issue is discussed in more detail in section 10.12ff of the Strategic Planning Board Report.

11.0 STRATEGY & POLICY

The Context for the Plan

- 11.1 Cheshire East is one of the most successful economies outside of the south-east of England and a highly desirable place to live and work. The Borough has a strong industrial heritage from the rail engineering in Crewe to silk manufacturing in Macclesfield. Cheshire East retains today an entrepreneurial business base which has shown resilience during the recent recession.
- 11.2 Like everywhere across the UK, manufacturing employment is reducing but in Cheshire East we still have a higher presence of manufacturing than the NW or the UK, reflecting the strong industrial heritage and the growing number of local manufacturing businesses some of whom are expanding at a rapid rate. High-skill sectors such as Pharmaceuticals, Automotive, R&D also have a strong presence. Cheshire East accounts for 5.6% of the North-west's total employment, but made up 36.9% of the region's scientific Research & Development jobs.
- 11.3 There are many factors which underpin the economic success of the area, including the connectivity into major infrastructure. Cheshire East lies at the heart of the Countries major road and rail network, connecting the North West into the Midlands and South East, with Crewe to London journey times of 1 hr 40mins by rail. The rich and diverse natural environment and close proximity to the Peak District and major cities make Cheshire East a very desirable place to raise a family. There are low levels of crime and a strong education offer.
- 11.4 Cheshire East is made up of a number of very distinctive market towns that provide a vital economic and social hub for rural communities and many towns are currently facing the same challenges in terms of vacancies on the high street and the threat of internet and out of town shopping.
- 11.5 This is one reason why the Council cannot be complacent about the future of our economy. In an increasingly competitive global economic environment Cheshire East must compete strongly to retain our economic success and continue to build new enterprises that are able to compete in a global market place.
- 11.6 To do this over the next twenty years there is a need to invest strongly in our infrastructure network. We need to make it easier to get from place to place within Cheshire East, but importantly ensure Cheshire East is better connected to other economic centres such as Manchester and the South East. This means

building new roads, ensuring we have high speed broadband, improving rail stations and taking advantage of new national infrastructure such as High Speed2.

- 11.7 The Borough must also have a supply of new, high quality employment sites that take advantage of the infrastructure network. This means identifying more land for development, but linking new sites with appropriate infrastructure to ensure the creation of jobs.
- 11.8 The Council must protect, invest and reinvigorate our market towns through a town centre first policy and create the rich and diverse retail and social offer that can continue to be at the heart of community life.
- 11.9 We must protect as much of our natural environment as possible, and where new development is necessary we will 'swap' green belt allocations to limit the impact of new building and safeguard the best of the Cheshire countryside.

Overall Spatial Strategy

- 11.10 Cheshire East is a great place to live and work; but it will only remain that way if changes and evolves to meet the needs of future generations. That change needs to be managed so that it reinforces the advantages the area already possesses – and not work against them.
- 11.11 The development strategy maps out the jobs, homes, commerce, infrastructure and community facilities that the area will need in the future. The Council is committed to a jobs-led growth strategy that places the prosperity of our citizens at the heart of everything we are seeking to achieve
- 11.12 This is in many ways a federal plan – recognising the distinctive character of different parts of the Borough and acknowledging that there is no single county town that dominates the area. The core principles are:
- Concentrate development in the two largest towns of Crewe & Macclesfield. Development that is necessary to support the regeneration of Crewe & Revitalisation of Macclesfield
 - Development of the medium sized towns - Key Service centres – linked to their distinctive needs and characteristics. Those in the north of the central belt of the Borough will carry proportionately a greater part of development.
 - Key service centres in the north of the Borough will accommodate correspondingly less development, recognising green belt constraints.
 - Up to three new settlements are planned – at Handforth, Crewe Hall and Barthomley; these will provide jobs and homes in a planned environment with good infrastructure, rather than loading onto the periphery existing constrained settlements
 - Significant new employment areas will be delivered to underpin our strategy – at Basford in Crewe, Radway Green / J16 near Alsager, J17 at Sandbach,

Middlewich, North Congleton, South Macclesfield and at Wardle. Existing key employers will be supported to grow and develop.

- 11.13 Connectivity is the key to achieving this growth, maximising the benefits of Crewe as a national rail hub and exploiting the potential of Wilmslow and Macclesfield Stations. Substantial new road infrastructure will be required to open up the east of Cheshire and connect the M6 with main settlements and surrounding major roads.
- 11.14 The strategy also adopts a 'town centre' first approach to retailing and commercial development, supporting but changing the way town centres perform and function.
- 11.15 Aside from areas allocated for necessary development the unique character and distinctiveness of the Cheshire countryside will be protected and enhanced. A new Green Belt is proposed to separate the historic town of Nantwich from Crewe – and a new 'Strategic Open Gap' policy will preserve undeveloped areas between Crewe, Sandbach, Middlewich and adjoining areas. Fresh Landscape Character policies will apply across the Borough and the periphery of the Peak District National Park will be protected.

Jobs & Employment

- 11.16 Jobs and prosperity are at the heart of the Development Strategy. Accordingly the strategy seeks to promote the right conditions for job growth – by boosting the delivery of existing major employment sites, improving connectivity and identifying new areas for future investment and expansion. The starting point for this is an assessment of current employment land and assets.
- 11.17 The Employment Land Review 2012 considers the demand for and supply of employment land in Cheshire East between 2009 and 2030. The review considers all employment land uses that fall within Use Classes B1 (offices, research and development and light industrial), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution). It shows that Cheshire East is a key economic driver for the North West region. The local economy provides 6.4% of the North West's economic output and contains 7.5% of its businesses.
- 11.18 The Employment Land Review forecasts that there is a need to provide between 277.8 ha and 323.7 ha of land for employment purposes between 2009 and 2030 across the whole Borough based on current or past trends. This equates to between 13.2 ha and 15.4 ha per year.
- 11.19 A review of the sites currently considered to be part of the supply of land for employment development indicates that 272.4 ha of land from the existing employment land supply could be suitable for allocation for employment in the future.
- 11.20 A review of current areas in use for employment areas shows that although the vast majority of these are still likely to be in use for employment purposes by 2030, a number may have ceased to serve a useful economic function and be better used for other purposes

- 11.21 The Employment Land Review therefore provides a baseline from which to build. In order to ensure the future prosperity of the area and to assist in the national growth agenda it is proposed that further employment land be identified in key locations, to provide further economic opportunities. Some of these will be phased to later in the Plan period to give the best opportunity for existing sites to grow.

Transport & Connectivity

- 11.22 Improved Connectivity forms a vital part of the development strategy – and goes hand in hand with new development opportunities. Better transport is both a driver for economic growth – but new development is also a means of securing new infrastructure. The Strategy highlights the role that Crewe Station can play in leading the regeneration of the whole town; this position could also be greatly enhanced by the advent of HS2. The Fast rail links to Manchester and London are also key advantages of Macclesfield and Wilmslow Town Centres.
- 11.23 New Road infrastructure is also promoted and protected via the strategy – the dualling of the A500 is critical to future growth in Crewe as are improvements to junctions 16 & 17 of the M6. A new northern link road is proposed around Congleton to both relieve existing congestion and also open up new land, especially for employment development. This in turn will facilitate links into Macclesfield – where a southern and south-western link road is planned, connected to new development. To cement linkages with Greater Manchester and the new SEMMS route a Woodford-Poynton relief road is proposed

Housing growth

- 11.24 The provision of housing in any development plan reflects a combination of evidence and policy. The various strands of evidence may point towards a particular figure or range of housing to be provided; the application of policy then may suppress or elevate that figure according to the desired objective in mind.
- 11.25 In Cheshire East there are a number of factors that influence the scale and location of future housing. In terms of overall quantum, whilst the RSS remains part of the Development Plan, the housing totals to 2021 need to have regard to the policies of the Regional Plan. The Housing provision figure within the RSS is 1150 homes pa. Alongside this, the NPPF advises that Local plans need to meet the full, objectively assessed housing needs for their area. In addition there is also the ongoing requirement to identify a five year 'deliverable' supply of housing – and a further ten years worth of 'developable' sites or broad locations for housing.
- 11.26 The demographic and housing market evidence currently available to the Council all suggest that there is an ongoing need to provide additional housing in Cheshire east. This reflective of population growth, changes in household size and composition, family breakdown and other societal changes plus patterns of migration within the UK (and beyond). Set against these 'elevating' factors are matters which serve to constrain supply; these include green belt, infrastructure limitations, highway capacity and environmental designations. Having factored these issues together it is proposed to gradually increase housing provision from

its current RSS annual total of 1150 dwellings through to an average annual provision of 1500 homes pa after 2020.

Period	2010 - 2015	2016-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030	Total
Annual average	1150	1250	1500	1500	1350
Totals	5,750	6,250	7,500	7,500	27,000

11.27 The proposed increase in housing provision over the plan period is reflective of the NPPF advice to “boost significantly” the supply of housing land and yet also recognises the low rates of building at present and the likely timelines in getting some new allocations up and running. More detail is provided on this issue within the Report to Strategic Planning Board (section 11.24ff)

Five Year Supply of Housing Land

11.28 The NPPF requires that Council’s identify a five year supply of ‘deliverable’ supply of housing land, plus a 5% ‘buffer’. The strategic sites in the Development Strategy have been chosen so that they will meet the housing needs of the area over the whole plan period – but they have also been selected so that there are sufficient sites that will improve housing supply with immediate effect. This will significantly improve the range of sites available – and ensure that a pipeline of supply is now in place.

11.29 Based on the range of sites selected, the Council can now demonstrate that a five year supply of housing land (plus buffer) has now been identified. It is proposed that this be documented in a separate housing supply paper.

Town Centres

11.30 The Strategy adopts a ‘town centre first’ approach that supports the revitalisation of the principal town centres. In particular Crewe and Macclesfield Town centres are identified as major points for growth. In Crewe this is complimented by regeneration based on the railway station – as a further ‘hub’ of growth

Green Belt & Countryside

11.31 As well as promoting new growth and development the strategy also seeks to protect and enhance the best of the Cheshire Countryside. The Council recognises that some development has to take place within the green belt in both the north and the south of the Borough. This is necessary in the exceptional circumstances of achieving sustainable development over a period of several decades. However review also allows for the potential for new green belt to be explored. An ongoing issue since the creation of Crewe as a railway town in the 19th century has been its relationship with Nantwich – the ancient major settlement in the south of Cheshire whose origins date back to the Roman era. It has long been the policy of successive Councils to protect the character of this historic town; we now propose that this is done through the medium of green belt.

11.32 The Case for reviewing Green Belt Boundaries is set out in more detail in the report to The Strategic Planning Board (section 11.35ff). Green Belt is characterised by its permanence and openness – it is intended to ensure as a

long term policy and so should only be altered exceptionally via a local plan. Before green belt alteration is proposed thought should first be given to accommodating development within the main conurbation, within towns washed over by the green belt or beyond the green belt boundaries. None of those options adequately address the needs of north Cheshire looking ahead another twenty years; accordingly there are considered to be exceptional circumstances to justify green belt alteration in these areas.

- 11.33 The NPPF suggests that sustainable development can sometimes be best achieved via new settlement. This ensures that development takes place in a properly planned context with good infrastructure. Accordingly it is suggested that a proportion of development be consolidated into a new settlement near Handforth. This will seek to minimise the impact on the greenbelt – sometimes termed a ‘greenbelt swap’ – but ensure that development takes place in a location where it can support and sustain existing towns.
- 11.34 In the South of Cheshire the green belt context is quite different and is drawn up to surround the Potteries towns in Staffordshire. Here green belt review is considered necessary in order to secure the dualling of the A500 road. This represents vital infrastructure that will support the regeneration of Crewe.
- 11.35 It is the ongoing growth of Crewe that provides the context for the final green belt policy alteration – the creation of a new green belt around Nantwich. New green belts should be considered only exceptionally. However the regeneration of and expansion of Crewe together with its growing economic role places continued pressure on the very limited space between the town and its small historic neighbour, Nantwich. Green Belt will once and for all ensure that the towns maintain their separate and complementary identities.
- 11.36 In addition to these green belt measures two further new countryside policies are proposed. To reduce the risk of Crewe, Sandbach, Middlewich and related villages merging into an uncoordinated conurbation, it is proposed to designate new areas of ‘strategic open gap’ that will ensure their remains openness around these towns. This will replace existing ‘green gap’ policy.
- 11.37 Elsewhere Cheshire East is proud to encompass part of the second most visited national park in the world – the Peak District National Park. To ensure that this national designation is given the best possible protection along its border, a new ‘buffer zone’ is proposed that will safeguard the amenity and visual character of the national park itself.

12 STRATEGIC SITES

- 12.1 The Development strategy is supported by the identification of land for development. This falls into several categories:
- Strategic site – where the boundaries of the site are clearly defined
 - Strategic locations – where the broad locality is known – but where further work may be necessary to specifically identify the appropriate site boundaries
 - Areas of Search. This applies to the need to identify development land well into the future. It may be most appropriate to bring forward detailed proposals through the Site Allocations document or possibly an area action plan.

- Corridors of interest. Where new road proposals are under consideration but a formalised protected line has not yet been identified the Strategy refers to 'Corridors of Interest' to describe the swathe of land where the road is likely to be located.

12.2 The strategic Sites are located for the most part within the Principal towns or the Key Service Centres. It is these towns that have the infrastructure and facilities that are best able to support new jobs, homes and other development. These larger towns have also been the subject of the recent 'Town strategies' each prepared according to neighbourhood planning principles. Consequently the vast majority of strategic sites have already been the subject of consultation as part of the Town Strategies.

12.3 Where a town Strategy has already been approved by the relevant town council the Development strategy wherever possible reflects the preferred sites or options set out in that strategy. However, in some cases the consultation process has also thrown up new sites for consideration; accordingly there are a small number of sites that have not previously been the subject of consultation. These include developments at Wardle aerodrome, Crewe Hall, Barthomley and Radway Green

13.1 POLICY PRINCIPLES

13.1 The Development Strategy is accompanied by an Emerging Policy Principles Document. This expands on many of the concepts set out in the Strategy – but also provides additional guidance. The Focus of these policies is to provide a clear framework for the determination of planning applications.

13.2 The Council has a number of tools that it can bring together to ensure the delivery of its strategic ambitions. The authority to manage and control development through the planning application process is very powerful, if used correctly and creatively it can enhance and add value to the development process. Conversely if employed clumsily or if development is uncoordinated then the economy and environment may be harmed. Consequently the Policy Principles are designed to ensure that all planning decisions, big and small are aligned with the overall objectives of the Council.

13.3 The main policy areas considered are:

- Enterprise & Growth
- Stronger Communities
- Sustainable Environment
- Connectivity

Within each section the document sets out the key strategic policies that will guide development in future.

13.4 The Document covers a wide area of policy arenas. New or amended policy areas to particularly note are in the area of health where much better recognition of planning and health links is made for the first time. In addition the document sets out a policy on renewable energy that promotes the specific advantages of Cheshire –such as geothermal heating – and down plays others such as large scale wind farms

15.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report are listed in the Appendices to the Development Strategy and Policy Principles Documents

Further Information can be received from:

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Appendices:

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| Appendix 1 | The Report to Strategic Planning Board 6 December 2012 (hyperlink below) |
| Appendix 2 | The Cheshire East Development Strategy (available on Supplementary Agenda) |
| Appendix 3 | The Cheshire East Policy Principles (available on Supplementary Agenda) |

APPENDIX 1 REPORT TO STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD 6 DECEMBER 2012

<http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=279&MIId=4627&Ver=4>