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Release Sent

## **David Brown Letter on Local Plan for Congleton**

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OUR REF:

YOUR REF:

Dear Editor,

RE: Congleton

Cheshire East has been in constant dialogue with its residents over the past two years and it's clear that across the Borough people are against development for development's sake.

Accordingly, what we have endeavoured to do is prepare a Development Strategy which offers a holistic view for the planning of the area whilst taking on board many residents thoughts and comments.

This is a consultation document which delivers our much vaunted five year supply and at last offers a shield against unwanted, unplanned and unsustainable development.

The Council began its consultation on the Local Plan two years ago and has since received a lot of feedback about what is required in the town. This has included consultations with local people and businesses, the Congleton Town Partnership and Congleton Town Council. The feedback has shown strong aspirations from many for growth and business development, whilst acknowledging that others have had an anti-growth stance. As part of this process £20,000 was provided by Central Government to facilitate a number of workshops with a cross section of residents and businesses to

produce a neighbourhood plan.

This plan was then used by the town council to produce the town strategy. The conclusions from which, highlight the need for a link road to the north of the town in order to retain businesses and enable business growth. Along this corridor will be developments including recreation and open space. The detailed plan has taken all these considerations into account including transport links, job growth and environmental / pollution issues from road congestion and this plan will deliver on average 175 houses per annum and will generate between 12,500 and 15,000 jobs over the 20 year period.

The development strategy for Cheshire East has to take a view of the whole of the Borough and hence you will see significant investment in road infrastructure from east to west and north to south. Jobs growth has been the significant driver for the production of the document and ensures the relevant infrastructure and housing needs will be met.

We want to tackle a number of planning issues in Congleton. Firstly, the insufficient amount and quality of employment land within the town, making it difficult for existing businesses to expand and for the town to attract new employers. Secondly, to provide more employment opportunities to help reduce the high levels of out commuting by residents. Thirdly, the provision of more housing to meet the needs and finally, the traffic congestion on the A34 through the town. To do this we are proposing a new road link for the A34 around the north of the town from which a number of sites for employment and housing can be accessed. These will provide some 20 hectares of employment land and around 3,000 new homes by 2030. This development will be supported by appropriate additional infrastructure including education, open space and community facilities. The route shown so far is purely indicative - but we will be working hard to produce a detailed alignment as soon as possible

By developing to the north of the town we are able to accommodate the future needs of Congleton, helping to retain its vibrancy, while retaining unaltered the existing green belt boundaries to the south and west of the town.

Finally a key purpose of the Development Strategy is to identify a five year supply of housing land so we can meet our housing obligations - and we will be doing the necessary technical work over the next few weeks to provide a robust case to underpin future decision making.

This strategy will be published for consultation early in the New Year. We feel we have listened already to many people's views - but we still want to learn and understand more and obtain different perspectives on these issues. Where there are difficult decisions to be made I will be meeting residents and others personally to fully understand the concerns. Overall I believe this to be a plan which keeps the best of what we all cherish about our towns and villages whilst also providing for a successful and prosperous future for us all.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor David Brown  
Deputy Leader of the Council  
Portfolio Holder for Strategic Communities