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Release Sent

LETTER RE CREWE LOCAL PLAN

Dear Editor,

RE: Crewe

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.

For Crewe, our overriding priority is the future prosperity of the town - formalising much that is already under way in the 'All Change for Crewe' programme. We want Crewe to be an economic beacon at the entrance to the North West, fuelled by its strong local businesses and excellent national rail connections.

In the strategy we plan to ensure the delivery of the major Basford sites for employment uses. To do this - and to pay for the supporting infrastructure - we propose that new housing is also developed. This will not only ensure that these sites get off the ground at long last - but they will also provide good quality housing on land already earmarked for development.

Within the town we are adopting a clear 'town centre first' approach, which aims to improve the scale and range of retail and commerce within the heart of Crewe. Around the station, we have identified land for development which will take advantage of the role of Crewe as a national rail hub.

Elsewhere we aim to improve access and facilities around Leighton Hospital - including a new public transport exchange and new shops and facilities. We therefore intend allocating land for 750 homes around the hospital to ensure these improvements can be delivered.

Crewe will only succeed in the coming years if its infrastructure is upgraded to match current and future needs. We recognise the single carriageway of the A500 as a potential constraint on our ambition. To help address this and to secure the future development envisaged by the Crewe town strategy, we now propose a south east Crewe growth corridor. This involves the creation of two new sustainable settlements at Crewe Hall and north of Barthomley, together with the creation of fresh employment land around Junction 16 of the M6.

Whilst we are determined to ensure a prosperous and dynamic future for Crewe, we also recognise that many value the open setting of the town. We therefore plan to reinforce this through a new and expanded Strategic Open Gap policy as a replacement for the current 'green gap' Finally and importantly we aim to make the strongest possible case to Government for a greenbelt between Crewe and Nantwich - to ensure that these towns develop as neighbours - but never merge as one.

We have been dismayed and disappointed by the recent appeal decision to allow 80 homes on a green gap site on Rope Lane, Shavington, against the wishes of ourselves and local people. We are taking urgent legal advice on this issue and are continuing our meetings with government to highlight our concerns.

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.

I therefore urge you to let us know your views when the consultation starts in mid-January.

Yours sincerely

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

