

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Housing and Jobs

Date of Meeting:	27 th April 2015
Report of:	Interim Planning Executive
Subject/Title:	Sandbach Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Don Stockton

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Sandbach Town Council (STC) have produced a draft neighbourhood plan and are seeking representation on its content.
- 1.2 Draft neighbourhood plans must be subject to public consultation prior to submission to the Local Planning Authority (known as the Regulation 14 consultation). At this stage, the plan consulted upon must be the preferred option of the community producing the plan.
- 1.3 Consultation allows representations to be made and, where appropriate, for STC to make amendments to its proposed plan, prior to submission to Cheshire East Council for consideration.
- 1.4 This report provides a consultation response to the draft STC Neighbourhood Plan as appended to this report at Appendix 1.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the comments and recommendations shown in Appendix 1 be submitted to Sandbach Town Council as Cheshire East Council's formal response to the draft STC Neighbourhood Plan Consultation.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The reasons for each recommendation are outlined in the consultation response attached at Appendix 1. Neighbourhood plans must be produced to support sustainable development and meet the basic conditions as outlined at para 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. They must be produced in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and the strategic policies of the adopted local plan. In Cheshire East the relevant adopted local plan consists of the saved policies held within the Congleton Borough Local Plan 2011.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Sandbach Elworth; Sandbach Ettiley Heath and Wheelock; Sandbach Heath and Sandbach Town

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Councillor Gill Merry; Councillor Gail Wait; Councillor Sam Corcoran; Councillor Barry Moran

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 The Sandbach Neighbourhood Plan will, once adopted by CEC, form part of the statutory development plan for CEC and be applied within the Sandbach Neighbourhood Area.
- 6.2 To ensure CEC meets its responsibilities as the Local Planning Authority and to ensure co-ordination between the emerging Local Plan Strategy for CEC and locally produced neighbourhood plans, it is important for the Council to consider the implications of emerging neighbourhood plans and for the Council to make recommendations that would assist the delivery of positive and sustainable development in Cheshire East.

7.0 Implications for Rural Communities

- 7.1 A neighbourhood plan enables rural communities in Sandbach to participate in the plan making process and develop policies to address those planning matters that affect their interests and well being. The process allows greater engagement of rural communities and for such communities to take ownership of planning policy which directly affects their futures. The formal stages of consultation built into the neighbourhood plan process ensures such engagement is possible and the stages leading up to the production of a draft plan should also actively seek to enable all local residents and businesses in policy formation.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The emerging neighbourhood plan for Sandbach will incur direct costs to the Council to support an independent examination of the plan and, should the examination be successful, a local referendum. Such costs will be met through existing budgets and through grant funding from central government (£30,000 per neighbourhood plan is payable to the authority from central government to support this agenda).
- 8.2 As the proposed Sandbach neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan for Cheshire East Council, should the document be legally challenged, CEC will be responsible for meeting such costs.
- 8.3 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge levied on new development. Where an adopted CIL is in place, 15% of all CIL

payments must be allocated to the local council which hosts development. Where local councils have an adopted neighbourhood plan, this figure rises to 25% of CIL charges.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans and Orders, which may follow the making of a Neighbourhood Area, are prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 9.2 The Secretary of State has made the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 under powers conferred by the 1990 and 2004 Acts, and these Regulations, which came into force on 6 April 2012, make further detailed provision on this subject.
- 9.3 Once adopted by the Local Planning Authority (made), the neighbourhood plan is brought into full effect as a statutory part of the Development Plan for Cheshire East Council

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 Neighbourhood plans will, once formally adopted ('made') by the CEC, form part of the Development Plan for Cheshire East. At the current stage, the plan submitted to consultation is the preferred option of STC. The formal stages of consultation built into the neighbourhood plan process enable STC to receive representations and to inform any refinement, alterations or improvements prior to formal submission of the plan to CEC.
- 10.2 The Council continues to prepare its Local Plan Strategy and whilst the LPS is not yet adopted, the examination of the plan is due to convene in Summer 2015; it is recommended that neighbourhood plans take this document, and its evidence base, into consideration when proposing planning policy.
- 10.3 As any future neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan for Cheshire East, if legally challenged it is the responsibility of Cheshire East Council to respond to such a challenge and meet any associated costs.
- 10.4 Cheshire East Council will seek to work with local councils to ensure that policies proposed in neighbourhood plans meet the requirements placed upon them by legislation.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new legal rights that enable communities to prepare local development plans (neighbourhood plans)

with equal weight to the Local Plan for decision making purposes on development proposals.

- 11.2 Sandbach Town Council have prepared a draft neighbourhood plan with specific policy content that will potentially affect planning decisions within the Sandbach Neighbourhood Area.
- 11.3 From the day of publication, decision takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to their stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections and the degree of consistency with the Framework (NPPF para. 216).
- 11.4 The emerging Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (LPS) is such an emerging plan and not yet formally adopted. The LPS was submitted to examination in September 2014 and whilst the Inspector recognised that the first test of local plan making had been passed (the Duty to Co-operate), the examination was suspended to allow Council to address the areas of concern identified in the Inspector's interim views letter dated 6th November 2014.
- 11.5 The LPS has been in production since 2010, has been tested through a series of public consultations and is the final stages of production. It is anticipated that the examination of the LPS will resume in September 2015.
- 11.6 Accordingly this consultation response to the draft STC Neighbourhood Plan takes into account the NPPF, the existing Congleton Borough Local Plan, the emerging CEC LPS and other relevant legislation including the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

12.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Tom Evans
Designation: Principal Planning Officer
Tel No: 01625 383709
Email: Tom.evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk