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1 Introduction

1.1 Cheshire East Council is currently in the process of writing a new Local Plan which will affect where and what type of development will take place in the area over the next 20 years. Consultation and evidence gathering are the cornerstones of the Local Plan and the process began with an 'Issues and Options' consultation in 2010 to consider the general level of preferred growth for the Borough.

1.2 To begin to understand the issues which communities felt were important to address through the Local Plan process, this stage was followed by a 'Place Shaping' consultation during the summer and autumn of 2011 which included a 'Rural Stakeholders Workshop' held on the 16th September 2011 specifically to address rural issues. As part of this consultation the Cheshire East Rural Issues Summary Document was produced as a discussion paper to:

- Provide a summary of existing local plan policies relevant to Cheshire East's rural areas
- Explain emerging government guidance and other relevant advice including the then draft National Planning Policy Framework
- Identify key challenges facing rural areas, to be addressed in the Local Plan

1.3 The aim of the Rural Stakeholder Workshop was to seek the expertise of a number of key agencies and establish an appropriate way forward to plan for the future of our rural communities over the next 20 years and addressing:

- Future challenges
- Future strategic planning policy issues for rural areas
- How more detailed policies should be developed for the emerging Local Plan

1.4 In response to the Rural Stakeholders Workshop and the wider consultation 97 comments were received on a range of issues including:

- The rural economy;
- Green Belt;
- Landscape character;
- Biodiversity;
- Rural heritage;
- Renewable energy;
- Rural housing; and
- Transport and communication

1.5 This document provides a summary of responses on these rural issues.



2 Rural Economy

2.1 The rural economy employs around 5,300 people and already plays an important role in the economic and cultural life of the Borough. The strength and size of the rural economy presents opportunities to make rural areas more sustainable through farm diversification which can support business activity and rural enterprise, contributing to the larger economy of Cheshire East.

2.2 To achieve this, secondary incomes should be encouraged through promotion of retailing and manufacturing, tourism, environmental technologies and renewable energies and through wider investment in transport infrastructure such as superfast rural broadband.

2.3 A full summary of comments received on this issue is outlined below.

| Comments | Number of Responses |
|--|---------------------|
| Encourage and support the development of countryside enterprise and rural employment and allow farm diversification and the setting up of micro businesses, the reuse of appropriate empty building and a working landscape | 17 |
| Acknowledge and protect the best agriculture land for food production as a vital, and increasingly important, core component of the rural economy that is as important as the provision of development land for a growing population | 10 |
| Restrict the size of housing developments in rural areas within defined parameters. Ensure small scale development is first considered within the town/village catchment areas in consultation with Parish Councils | 8 |
| Ensure development is supported by appropriate infrastructure ,i.e. schools, facilities, transport routes, high speed broadband (holistic approach to sustainability) | 7 |
| Apply design quality requirements to all rural developments and redevelopments, to ensure no detrimental effect to Cheshire East's heritage | 6 |
| Have a realistic attitude to the re-use of brown field sites | 5 |
| Maintain the viability of rural communities and their facilities by avoiding adjacent development which could undermine this. | 4 |
| Pursue the "low growth" housing option as set out in the LDF Issues and Options discussions | 3 |
| The Core Strategy should outline the benefits of woodlands in terms of its contribution to the rural economy, potential brown field regeneration, tourism and timber production | 2 |
| Encourage BREEAM excellent building and energy conservation and renewable proposals | 1 |
| Mineral extractions policies need to safeguard mineral resources | 1 |
| The LDF should promote a series of draft policies, for consultation, to support rural enterprise and development that will maintain the integrity of the Cheshire countryside. | 1 |



3 Green Belt

3.1 Large areas of land in Cheshire East are designated as Green Belt preserving open space between the northern part of the Borough and South Manchester and the southern part of the Borough and the Potteries and Staffordshire. As outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

3.2 Development in land designated as Green Belt is restricted to preserve its function however the National Planning Policy Framework states that certain forms of development may be appropriate including:

- Buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- Facilities for outdoor sport, recreation and cemeteries;
- Limited extension of existing buildings;
- Replacement of existing buildings;
- Limited infilling within villages; and
- Limited infilling or redevelopment of previously developed sites

3.3 A full summary of comments received on this issue is outlined below.

| Comments | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| Protect the Green Belt from development or re-categorisation | 14 |
| Limit development in the Green Belt to agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction and outdoor sport and recreation that preserve the openness of the Green Belt and some forms of renewable energy (as set out in the renewable energy study) | 9 |
| Policies should maintain a presumption against development in the Green Belt | 8 |
| Increase the extent of the Green Belt to preserve the “gaps” between settlements and important areas at risk | 7 |
| Enforce strict compliance with Green Belt legislation including the enforcement of advertising breaches | 5 |
| Ensure brown field development is encouraged before green field sites are considered, to ensure rural aspects and open spaces and agricultural land are retained | 4 |
| Policies should respond to issues identified in the Landscape character assessment i.e. reduction, fragmentation and deterioration of habitats, Loss of ponds, | 1 |



| Comments | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| Development in the Green Belt should be avoided at all times unless there is a specific and urgent need for high design standard development in “exceptional circumstances” | 3 |
| Recognise the vital strategic role of the Green Belt in avoiding the spread of urban sprawl and supporting wildlife | 3 |
| If the evidence base for the Core Strategy reveals significant development pressure, a review of the Green Belt boundaries should be carried out as part of a comprehensive assessment of Green Belt sites. | 2 |
| Strengthening the Green Belt boundaries in areas adjacent to urban areas | 2 |
| The Green Belt policies should be supplemented by other local designations, e.g. CBLP policies regarding agricultural protection around the town should be retained | 2 |
| Provide opportunities for youth | 1 |
| Tourism development should acknowledge what makes Cheshire attractive i.e. , rural tranquilly and ensure that this is not spoilt in an attempt to attract visitors | 1 |
| Ensure development is sustainable with sequential testing and an investigation into alternatives | 1 |
| Define “small scale industrial/economic undertakings” that may be allowed in the Green Belt” | 1 |
| Some Green Belt release allowed to facilitate development adjacent to road improvement schemes | 1 |
| Each area of Green Belt Space should not be allowed to reduce by more than 0.1% each year | 1 |
| Protection orders for the countryside | 1 |
| Recognise that small corners of the Green Belt are not genuinely worth protecting and permit development | 1 |
| No development on previously designated green belt | 1 |
| Ensure policy support development which is not inappropriate and in the spirit of the Community Right to Build Order, under the Localism Act | 1 |
| Increase support for diversification and tourism in the Green Belt | 1 |
| No wind farm developments | 1 |
| Do not build on Cheshire Green Belt, especially not the BAE site of Woodford. The area's services and infrastructure cannot cope with any additional residents. | 1 |
| Support for local councils that seek to protect, extend or maintain the Green Belt or strengthening of the powers that seek to achieve this. | 1 |



4 Landscape Character

4.1 Landscape Character is defined by the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular landscape. It is essential to inform responsible decision making and is a prerequisite for the planning of sustainable future landscapes, which in turn should protect the environment while accommodating and influencing change.

4.2 Character makes each part of the landscape distinct and gives each its sense of place. Each character area has its own identity, even though it may share some generic characteristics with other areas, and is formed by particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, field patterns and human settlement.

4.3 An informed approach to landscape character can:

- Inform new planning policies on landscape, as well as Supplementary Planning Documents;
- Guide and inform the development control process;
- Promote public awareness of landscape character and the importance of conservation and enhancement of the landscape;
- Guide and inform project planning by local and national agencies; and
- Assist the formulation of landscape management policies

4.4 A full summary of comments received on this issue is outlined below.

| Comments | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| Local designations are important and are needed. CCC Landscape Character Assessment is too broad brush, and is not protective. ASCV recognise that some areas are more important than others and need more protection. The ASCV definition should be retained. Local designations should be produced e.g. Parish Landscape Statements in the form of Supplementary Planning Documents | 10 |
| Preservation, Protection and maintenance of the character and fabric for a variety of special landscape areas, e.g. wetland mosses, AONBs etc | 7 |
| Only allow small development that will not interfere with the present use of the countryside that are "in keeping" with existing buildings and landscape and that do not change the landscape character from one character to another | 8 |
| Protection against inappropriate development. The setting of major settlements is as important as the built area. | 4 |
| More detailed descriptions and protection of countryside and landscape around major centres is needed, than is currently detailed in the Place Shaping Snapshot Report. There needs to be a clear distinction between rural and urban with strong edges and existing gateways maintained. | 4 |
| Ensure development include realistic planting schemes for trees and hedgerows at an early stage to encourage biodiversity and to help with screening | 4 |



| Comments | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| Increase the number of trees and amount of woodland to compensate for Cheshire's lower proportion of woodland than most counties e.g. by requiring that a proportion of reclaimed land is planted with trees e.g. the former British Aerospace site at Woodford | 4 |
| Commit to maintaining the openness of the countryside | 3 |
| Develop a forward looking Landscape/ Historic Landscape Strategy, taking into account Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation, climate change, renewable energy pressures, ecosystem services and functions and the importance of GI for biodiversity | 2 |
| Policies are required to take into account changes in farming, pressure to diversify and changing patterns of land ownership, ongoing decline in traditional woodland management practices and under management of farm woodlands, over mature hedgerows , deterioration of habitats and loss of historic field patters | 1 |
| Sequential Sustainability tests should be required to ensure that development is not permitted when there are alternative suitable brown field sites within the area | 1 |
| Retain mixed use ecological footprint | 1 |
| Introduce the CCC policy for protecting area such as SSSI's into the LDF process | 1 |
| No windmills | 1 |
| Scenic viewpoints should be afforded some protection | 1 |
| Close monitoring of aggregate extraction and mitigation of its impact on rural communities. Restoration of quarried areas to agricultural or rural / natural use | 1 |
| Any development should incorporate and preserve existing open space. Additional green space should be provided in any new build | 1 |
| Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve and the SSSI at Bagmere Farm are important elements of this and should be protected at all costs | 1 |
| Protection of local canals and public footpaths | 1 |
| Make cycle /bridle path access separate to road traffic to make the countryside accessible | 1 |
| No change | 1 |
| Preserve it | 1 |
| Improve it, via Councillor decisions only | 1 |
| Need to define terms more simply for the general public to comment | 1 |
| A landscape section should say more about ecosystems | |



| Comments | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| Encourage and retain dairy farming across the whole of Cheshire, which dictates much of its landscape character. Retain the former CCC smallholdings within Haslington as starter units for young dairy farmers | 1 |
| Include a policy to ensure “local distinctiveness” is a development consideration | 1 |
| Need more designation such as ASCV in the south of the area | 1 |



5 Biodiversity

5.1 Biodiversity is the term used to indicate the variety of life on earth – the variety of species of plants, animals and all other organisms, the genetic variation within these species and the variation between the ecosystems and habitats in which they live.

5.2 Biodiversity is a resource at the heart of the rural food economy and our countryside's ecological resilience and plays an important role in creating attractive places to live. The natural variety of species should be protected, managed and enhanced to provide an attractive and stimulating setting for work and play, with social and health benefits contributing much towards the quality of life for local people.

5.3 A full summary of comments received on this issue is outlined below.

| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| No development that negatively affects biodiversity. Require existing developments to actively improve their sites for the benefit of biodiversity e.g. more tree planting and TPOs (developer contributions) | 4 |
| Protection of indigenous species and facilitation for the reintroduction of species, along with the management of invasive species | 4 |
| Establishment of a baseline habitat survey and biodiversity audit, to include percentages of the total undeveloped area covered and not currently covered by designations which could help protect biodiversity, e.g. LNRs | 3 |
| Greater protection of species routes and feeding areas as well as habitats. Sequential testing should be required to ensure that development is not permitted when there are alternative sites within an area | 3 |
| Maintain or improve the landscape for BAP species e.g. old copse for dormice. This could link to the local economy and possible job creation | 3 |
| Protection of ancient woodlands and veteran trees outside woodlands(PPS9 and NPF)and a recognition that Environmental stewardship and English Woodland Grants Scheme can support better management and promote woodland planting | 3 |
| CEC should consider a woodland creation programme because Cheshire has only 4% of tree cover compared to the national average of 11%. Trees absorb carbon and help to reduce flooding. | 1 |
| Protection of SSSIs and Local Wildlife sites, along with Green Belt and good farming practices will ensure wildlife is protected into the future | 3 |
| The LDF should promote biodiversity more strongly and Protection of all aspects of bio-diversity | 2 |
| The Council should lead and encourage farmers and landowners to protect biodiversity through their farming practices, as well raising awareness through schools | 2 |
| CEC should promote the concept of Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) as suggested in the Natural Environment White Paper. | 2 |



| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| The LDF should include policies to protect Local Wildlife Sites and a recognition of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, and associated Cheshire orchard Project facilitated by Cheshire Wildlife Trust. | 2 |
| Increase biodiversity through the sympathetic restoration/reclamation of old gravel workings into wetland habitats (Jackson brickworks at Higher Poynton. BAe Woodford Aerodrome) | 2 |
| Wildflower meadows in set aside areas should be encouraged | 1 |
| Keep things as they are | 1 |
| Adopt rural area preservation schemes to enhance biodiversity | 1 |
| Careful management of non agricultural resources to create/maintain wildlife habitat | 1 |
| A less rigid attitude to what is "correct" for specific locations and a more forward thinking approach to encouraging natural changes to the environment | 1 |
| More recycling protection of important local sites which are not necessarily SSSI's | 1 |
| Increase the breadth of the species list to include invertebrates and indentify the wide variety of habitat types and their relative abundance. | 1 |
| Ensure that the protection of species does not place unreasonable costs on development, e.g. the relocation of Great Crested Newts | 1 |



6 Rural Heritage

6.1 The natural, built and landscape heritage of an area are important factors which define the character, identity and sense of place associated with a particular location.

6.2 By contributing to the creation of this sense of place, conservation of rural heritage provides wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits to maximise the contribution which the historic environment makes to rural areas. This contribution can be maximised through the preservation of heritage assets and support for sensitive new development where appropriate.

6.3 Many heritage assets in the built environment can be protected through national designation as a Listed Building or through recognition as a building of local architectural interest via the Local List of Historic Buildings.

6.4 A full summary of comments received on this issue is outlined below.

| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| Protection of heritage especially unique features, buildings and the character of an area wherever possible, including transport links such as canals and railways | 7 |
| Need more than a simple recording of where heritage sites exist. Need the adoption of the EH conservation principles, protectionist policies and also a re-adoption of all Conservation Area Appraisals and more decision making by local groups and parishes involved in this. | 4 |
| Acknowledgement of all listed buildings, sites, monuments, and conservation areas, and an agreement to retain these for future generations, undertaking preventative actions and maintenance and funding. | 3 |
| Sympathetic change and modification with a positive and practical attitude will ensure buildings are retained for future use. Proactive policies should allow this, including grants | 3 |
| Policies to encourage development and reuse – tax incentives for such developments that keep the existing fabric and improve / extend it and avoid demolition if at all possible | 2 |
| Undertake the widest consultation must be taken before changing the status quo | 2 |
| The NPPF appears to weaken PPS5 therefore the Local Plan needs to contain detailed heritage policies and reflect English Heritage advice, along with a precautionary approach to historic landscapes and gardens due to the incomplete nature of the data base. | 2 |
| Heritage is an important part of tourism and should be supported both in advertising and grant funding to deliver sustainable tourism | 2 |
| Greater protection for neighbouring areas to designated areas-impacted upon by inappropriate development | 1 |



| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| Need to take into account the heritage of ordinary people e.g. the history of Willaston as a railway village | 1 |
| Greater responsibility by owners to maintain properties/gardens relevant to heritage. Encourage heritage exploring armatures to reveal their findings by awarding high status and publicity and linking to academics to ensure the true depth of local heritage is not only exposed by community approved | 1 |
| Should be studied in detail and detailed discussion should take place to maintain and promote heritage framework | 1 |
| Local heritage should be promoted, Bear baiting should not (Congleton) | 1 |
| More use of Conservation Areas | 1 |
| Protection of sites sympathetic treatment to buildings and population centres | 1 |
| Protection orders for older properties | 1 |
| New development should recognise the value of heritage structures and areas and be designed to fit in and avoid domination. | 1 |
| Policies that prevent development which by way its height, scale, general mass, use of material, colouring or general design will dwarf, impede on, hide, conceal or visually distract from the impact of structures that are of documented importance to the local, regional or national heritage. Policies that will encourage development which by its height, scale, general mass, use of material, colouring and general design seeks to emphasize the character of local buildings and other structures that are of importance to the local heritage | 1 |
| Cheshire East should be proactive in protecting listed buildings, using legal powers when listed buildings are deliberately neglected or subjected to unauthorised development. The L DF should ensure that "enabling development" to fund the restoration of listed buildings is very strictly controlled. The Council should never authorise enabling development when a building's owners have allowed it to decay, as this risks creating a perverse incentive to neglect listed buildings. The LDF should aim to protect the industrial heritage of the area, including the Macclesfield Canal. | 1 |
| Presumption for preservation of heritage sites | 1 |
| The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project is an important baseline. The impact of development proposals on heritage assets should be analysed using heritage character appraisals. Absence of appropriate appraisal should be a reason for non-validation of a planning application. 'Seeing the History in the View', published by English Heritage should be referenced and used. The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment identified: Loss of historic parkland to agriculture and recreational use e.g. golf courses. Loss of historic field pattern due to decline in hedgerow management, with resulting increase in use of fencing. New uses for old buildings. Appropriateness of development in the setting of heritage assets, Identification of heritage assets other than listed buildings and | 1 |



| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| registered parks and gardens. There will be industrial, agricultural and archaeological assets that require suitable protection and/or interpretation. It is important that we know where these are and plans are drawn up for future funding through community infrastructure. The story of salt as used in the vision for Weaver Valley Conservation appraisal updates that reflect the new localism agenda, consult with people and manage change intelligently. | |
| Heritage buildings need to be capable of generating an income to ensure their long term survival. Recognise the financial burden a listing can put on a building's owner and only list the prime examples. | 1 |



7 Renewable Energy

7.1 Renewable Energy is energy which can be replenished and is generated from natural sources such as:

- Geothermal heating
- Solar energy
- Hydropower
- Ground, water and air source heat pumps
- Combined heat and power and district heating
- Biomass energy
- Anaerobic digestion and energy from waste
- Wind

7.2 High demand for oil and escalating levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide have driven global investment in the renewables sector to over £150 billion world wide. As the price and climatic impact of fossil fuels rises further, investment in renewable energy (the low carbon economy) presents opportunities to lower energy costs and insulate the cost of production from price spikes in global energy markets.

7.3 Investment in renewable energy offers rural communities significant opportunities to sensitively develop low carbon technologies, contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change and capture the financial advantages presented by renewable investment.

7.4 A full summary of comments received on this issue is outlined below.

| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| The case for inland wind farms is not made satisfactorily.(LDA Report “Cheshire East Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Planning Research”) commissioned by CEC) Applications should be viewed under the strictest criteria, with turbines being avoided in rural upland areas where they could have a detrimental effect on landscape character, nearby housing, tourism and migrating birds. | 21 |
| The use of solar panels should be encouraged wherever possible with the CEC taking a lead, with relaxed planning requirements (except in conservation areas) and provide impartial advice about small energy production in the home | 13 |
| Incentives/subsidies for homes and businesses to adopt renewable energy schemes including wind power, solar energy and rain water harvesting | 7 |
| Small scale hydro-electric schemes are generally out of sight and should be explored as a good fit to Cheshire East’s landscape. | 7 |
| House builders to be encouraged / forced to build homes with renewable energy including geothermal heating and micro hydro projects | 6 |
| Geothermal energy should be explored more | 5 |
| Support small wind turbine alongside railway line pylons, or at low level, or in a domestic setting | 3 |



| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| Greater freedom/promotion for the development/generation of renewable energy schemes, especially for communities | 3 |
| Policies that advocate the use of wood as a form of renewable energy, developing markets for wood fuel as part of sensitive woodland management | 3 |
| Any renewable schemes must fit /suit the local landscape and feature in long term plans | 2 |
| Encourage the use of renewable on employment sites | 2 |
| Policy should seek to encourage rather than demand the use of renewables at all stages of the planning process potentially by the use of 'carrots' rather than 'sticks'. All policies must be capable of being interpreted clearly without the need for large technical guidance notes.. Policy must not be open to interpretation in a dozen different ways by individual planning officers or committee members and must be capable of practical and economic solution not theoretical or rhetorical answers. | 1 |
| Issues around climate change could be more thoroughly addressed and would perhaps merit a separate policy. | 1 |
| Councils and RSLs to adopt renewable energy | 1 |
| Off shore wind turbines should be advocated in favour of inland wind farms | 1 |
| More encouragement for sustainable transport infrastructure | 1 |
| Support gas production from landfill sites | 1 |
| Anaerobic Digestion seems the only appropriate and cost effective renewable energy solution for Cheshire East. | 1 |
| Investigate pumped storage with nuclear power generation | 1 |
| Bio-mass and CHP are more suitable for urban areas. | 1 |
| Support the NPPF recognition of the wider environmental benefits of energy production and sustainable rural enterprise | 1 |
| Encouragement of gas store underground | 1 |
| Invest in research and pilot projects e.g. energy generation from cars travelling over pressure pads | 1 |



8 Rural Housing

8.1 Rural housing plays an important role in supporting the rural economy and rural services whilst enabling new families to remain resident in the areas and villages they grew up in.

8.2 The settlement hierarchy identifies the role that each settlement plays in delivering housing in Cheshire East. Whilst most housing development will take place in and around existing larger settlements (principle towns, key service centres and local service centres), to support rural communities and economies, some small scale development will take place in the sustainable villages and rural areas across the Borough during the life of the Local Plan.

8.3 A full summary of comments received on this issue is outlined below.

| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| Village Design Statements and all other adopted SPDs relating to housing, settlement patterns and landscape should be taken forward into the new Local Plan. Where Parish Plans indicate preferences with regard to local housing, these should be given due credence. These are all prime examples of "localism" in action. As a general rule, the majority of housing development should be within existing towns and the "brown field land first" rule should apply everywhere. Unless a rural community has indicated differently through a Neighbourhood Plan or a Parish Plan, rural communities should not be expected to accept any more than the most modest amount of housing necessary to ensure that they retain a balanced mix of homes and that the infrastructure has the capacity to cope with additional demands. | 10 |
| Retention of settlement zone lines; limited small scale development to provide starter homes within rural settlement should be supported provided the infrastructure is sufficient. | 9 |
| Policies should demand a documented proof of need for the proposed number and types of houses in the area; this proof to be included in the submission of planning application. The requirement to undertake individual parish assessments to ascertain the need - prior to permitting development on green field (brown field would be exempt). Sequential Sustainability Tests should be required to ensure that development is not permitted when there are alternative suitable brown field sites within the area. | 6 |
| Seek out "brown field " sites for redevelopment to provide affordable housing | 4 |
| It is essential that the rural areas are protected and are maintained for rural use only. No building on green land | 4 |
| Highest design standards requested. If there is demand, developers will still want to build, but they must reach decent standards of design and space and parking. | 3 |
| Bring into use, for the use of social/affordable housing any building that can be converted at reasonable cost any property that has been empty for some time e.g. former agricultural properties. | 4 |



| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| No tax rebate for second/holiday homes, more affordable housing stock. | 2 |
| Policy to encourage low cost and traveller provision that includes protection for existing residents with obligation to live in a manner that does not spoil an area | 1 |
| An increase in the number of plots available for development in rural areas to assist in making housing affordable. | 1 |
| Rural building conversions to be targeted as affordable housing not executive-type conversions. | 1 |
| More creativity needed for new housing to include shared facilities such as gardens, laundry rooms, children's' play areas etc. | 1 |
| Seek public opinion on first time buyer opportunities. | 1 |
| No building in gardens e.g. Prestbury, buy a house knock it down and build two) | 1 |
| Prestbury and some of its neighbouring parishes have suffered greatly from the 'knock-down and re-build phenomenon with the regular demolition of perfectly sound detached dwellings and their replacement with mega mansions built up to the boundaries and of unsympathetic design. The result is a gradual eroding of the rural look and feel of Prestbury and its similarly affected neighbours. Prestbury Parish Council appeals to Cheshire East Council to come forward with a policy which will put a stop to the changing character of the parish due to the surfeit of oversize mansions. | 1 |
| Only when all housing stock is full, should new builds be considered, and this should only be on brown field sites and where full time permanent jobs are available or could become available. | 1 |
| Support a small increase in the number of dwellings to meet the needs of locals but with attached restrictions regarding occupancy and/or length of tenancy. | 1 |
| That rural housing be supported but not at the expense of the rural residents who currently live there or wish to move back to where they came from with large expensive properties being built which will not help the rural communities | 1 |
| More open and favourable attitude to small and single property development in villages outside settlement boundaries. There is no reason why villages and small settlements should be treated less sympathetically than those within settlement boundaries provided those local communities are generally in favour of such developments. | 4 |
| Identifying optimum locations for rural housing should be based on a full appraisal of the physical capacity and sensitivity of the village to accommodate development as part of the Local Plan process. Strong design policies for rural development, should embrace contemporary design and innovation for e.g. energy efficiency and cover the importance of orientation, layout and networks and linkages. Important to ensure strong edges to settlements, making a distinction between the rural and | 1 |



| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| the urban not allowing creep that blurs the edges. Allocate sites so everyone knows where the Council will permit development and avoids unnecessary process over applications in unsustainable locations in the open countryside help define sustainability for Cheshire East. | |
| Avoid isolated homes in the countryside | 1 |
| Policies need to include a definition of sustainable development in Cheshire East | 1 |
| Must be sustainable, avoiding the merging of larger town boundaries by allowing rural housing | 1 |
| The only housing permitted in the Rural Area appears to be Affordable Housing, Dwellings associated with agriculture and forestry and for gypsy and travellers. This is too restricted. No one would be permitted to build a small manor house. Hence the present rules dictate that we are not allowed to add any building in the rural area that adds to our heritage. | 1 |
| Encourage the provision of affordable self-build plots or small clusters of plots. | 2 |
| Less garden infilling | 1 |
| The perceived levels of housing development required, must take into account the additional traffic congestion being created on already congested roads using the formula of 1.7 cars per household. Similarly the effects of sizeable developments on existing water and sewerage capacities should not be ignored at the planning stage. | 1 |
| Support for local councils that seek to protect or maintain the existing village inset boundaries and strengthening of the powers that seek to achieve this or improve the environment within the existing village inset boundaries. | 1 |



9 Transport and Communication

9.1 Transport and communication are vital to rural communities. The infrastructure that allows people to connect with other places and each other underpins the rural economy and the services it provides to both rural communities and those that enjoy access to the countryside.

9.2 Whilst Cheshire East has excellent national and international transport links, improving connectivity to rural areas through investment in public transport, roads and sustainable transport (cycling and walking) can help make the Borough an attractive place to live and work and contribute to a stronger sense of community. Improved access to transport can:

- create the conditions for business growth;
- drive out the sources of poor health;
- nurture strong communities;
- support children and young people;
- prepare the Borough for an increasingly older population; and
- unlock the potential of our towns

9.3 Alongside transport connections, investment in superfast broadband can also ensure that rural communities are able to access increasingly important internet services and benefit from more opportunities to work, and run businesses, from home.

9.4 A full summary of comments received on this issue is outlined below.

| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| Improved rural transport. Improved community facilities and transport links | 7 |
| Improve road maintenance but reduce speed limits and increase signage to reduce accidents. More restrictions on vehicles over 3.5 tonnes in rural areas and on quiet lanes, to ensure the safe use by walkers cyclists and horse riders | 6 |
| That rural transport be protected and maintained (via subsidies) so rural communities flourish by make the bus route be more viable by making the route cover much more area linking more than one or two communities to several key towns or areas, with interlink stage points or hubs. Making access to rural health centres easier & hospitals. | 4 |
| Affordability must be the criteria with the user paying a fair price with only the most limited of subsidy. Public transport costing should be affordable and not more expensive than parking for short journeys. | 3 |
| Better cycle ways/ paths. Undertake a review. The Rural Issues Summary document does not seem to make any consideration of reference to cycle path improvements | 3 |
| Rural transport that is timetabled to enable people to travel to work and school by public transport and to link more easily with rail. | 2 |



| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| <p>Excellent broadband is absolutely crucial to Cheshire East’s ability to meet its growth targets, and farm diversification..The importance of communicating aspirations to Cheshire East and including them in the processes for releasing CIL is an important part of the process that requires setting out.</p> | <p>3</p> |
| <p>Better access to more local towns and villages; shared private buses/mini-coaches; much better; rewarding shared cars to and from work</p> | <p>1</p> |
| <p>Community facilities should be clearly set out to include a wide range of infrastructure such as the usual village halls, playground etc, but also to include less formal open spaces, nature conservation areas, woodlands places to commune and general environmental improvements including local highway improvement schemes, shared space etc. Policies should also reflect the need to retain facilities in rural communities to ensure the sustainability of those communities. A strategy for using the countryside and rural environment for pleasure and exercise should be promoted - better footpaths and bridleways.</p> | <p>3</p> |
| <p>More smaller shuttle buses in rural areas</p> | <p>2</p> |
| <p>Rural housing should be near or accessible to existing rural transport. More (financial and other) support for development of inadequate village halls into all-purpose community centres</p> | <p>1</p> |
| <p>A regular bus service and community services to be upheld or replaced to how they were, e.g., travelling library, post office services etc</p> | <p>1</p> |
| <p>Many agencies have commissioned work documenting that normal commercial bus services are not the answer to providing public transport in many rural areas. Numerous examples are quoted of more imaginative solutions ranging from bus routes which can be varied on different days of the week to bus service which only run when people ring up in advance. Shared taxis have also proved a success in many areas. Principal authorities are rarely prepared to commit the funds to implementing them or working with Train Operating Companies to improve the fabric of rural rail stations and the facilities provided. Similarly, community facilities in rural communities are often lacking. Increasingly, important core services (such as a Post Office) are withdrawn from rural villages. These impacts on other commercial units. Policies are needed to ensure sustainable local communities</p> | <p>1</p> |
| <p>The Cheshire East LTP 2011-2026 refers to the challenges that exist for the 39% of Cheshire East’s rural population. One solution it offers is a proposal to make more use of taxi buses. However, Cheshire East has recently reduced its public transport subsidy. There is a lot that a principal authority can do for rural areas if they are regarded as a higher priority.</p> | <p>1</p> |
| <p>The right policies about sustainable communities need to be adopted in the Local Plan and the LTP. Capacity is required in order for Parish Councils to work in clusters. Transport issues need to be dealt with on a strategic scale.</p> | <p>1</p> |



| Comments | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| Recognised rural public transport as a life line for non car owners and a priority for supporting rural services | 1 |
| Demand the inclusion of Travel Plans for housing schemes for 10+ dwellings | 1 |
| To reduce the need for travel. Facilities such as rural shops, banks and post offices should be retained and supported in villages and smaller towns. Cheshire East can help by keeping open village schools, and pressing for the retention of police and fire stations. | 1 |
| Local bus services and cycle-ways/bridle paths separate from the Road Transport network but with fully integrated routes to all major centres. This is essential if private car use is to be reduced. Parking charges are counter-productive to the local economy | 1 |
| Need to avoid an increase in traffic on rural roads | 1 |
| The impact of all new development on traffic numbers through rural areas should be assessed. Proposed benefits to communities of highway schemes associated with new development should also be assessed and tested with communities. Community initiatives that adhere to highway requirements, but which can bring better quality of life to rural dwellers through environmental improvements should be supported and piloted. These should be a legitimate receptor of community infrastructure levy where development affects a settlement. | 1 |
| Regular assessments and controls of traffic volume flow and speed limits on country roads and lanes. Retention of bus services. Funding made available for parish / community halls. Due consideration of and consultation with the community regarding facilities. | 1 |
| Need substantial investment in the motorway system and infrastructure investment into improvements to the A50 stretch between Junction 17 & 18. | 1 |
| Charity/volunteer provision of transport will have to continue to offer assistance and, in some cases, the only solution. A possible answer worth pursuing in more detail, would be the provision of a voucher system, similar to the bus/train passes, which would be redeemable by taxi or volunteer transport providers or local domestic helpers. | 1 |



10 Next Steps

10.1 Cheshire East Council has already undertaken considerable work to progress the development of the Local Plan. An 'Issues and Options' consultation was undertaken in 2010 to consider strategic development options for the Borough and was followed by the 'Place Shaping Consultation' (of which the Rural Issues Consultation was part) over the summer and autumn of 2011.

10.2 Following this stage, Cheshire East Council worked with representatives from the Borough's 11 Principal Towns and Key Service Centres toward the creation of Town Strategies, an important part of the evidence base which has been incorporated into the formation of the 'Development Strategy'.

10.3 The Draft Development Strategy and Emerging Policy Principles Document will establish the preferred level and locations of growth to be pursued by Cheshire East and form an important milestone in the production of the Local Plan. These documents will be made available for public consultation in early 2013.

10.4 Following this consultation the final elements of the Local Plan will be produced – the Core Strategy, the more detailed Site Allocations document and the Waste Plan. Collectively these three publications will comprise the new Cheshire East Local Plan.