

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE CHESHIRE EAST LOCAL PLAN SITE
ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES DOCUMENT SEPTEMBER 2020**

**HEARING POSITION STATEMENT PREPARED BY AXIS PED LIMITED ON
BEHALF OF EDF ENERGY**

MATTER 10

Matters, Issues and Questions for the Examination

Matter 10 – Rural Issues

1. AXIS PED Ltd (Axis) has been instructed by EDF Energy (EDF) to prepare and submit Hearing Position Statement(s) to the Examination of the Cheshire East Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (September 2020). This Statement should be read in conjunction with the previous representations made on behalf of EDF in September 2019 and December 2020. In accordance with the Inspectors Examination Guidance Notes, this Hearing Position Statement only deals with the relevant question in the Inspectors Matters, Issues and Questions for the Examination (MIQs) relevant to our original representations. Accordingly, it does not provide new responses or fresh evidence, rather seeks to provide our view on the matters raised by the Inspector.

166. Is Policy RUR10 positively prepared and consistent with national policy and LPS in supporting the growth and expansion of businesses in rural Cheshire East, in particular by limiting this to ‘certain types of’ and ‘small scale’ employment.

2. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that; *“Planning policies...should enable (a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas.”* Paragraph 85 supplements this by stating; *“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements...In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings...”* This is in recognition of the fact that all development in rural areas (big or small scale, and irrespective of its type) should still be sensitive to its surroundings. Policy RUR10, as

currently drafted, implies that only certain types of small-scale employment development would be appropriate, and this is inconsistent with the NPPF. New employment opportunities within rural areas are important in ensuring economic growth, and can be critical in meeting broader national requirements (e.g. helping to meet the Climate Change Emergency and deliver net zero). Large scale energy storage in halite deposits can only be developed in areas where the geological conditions allow, and sufficient capacity and connections to the existing gas and electricity infrastructure exist. The policy as drafted not only is contrary to the NPPF but is also potentially precluding the delivery of infrastructure that is invaluable to meeting the UKs net zero obligations.

167. Is Policy RUR10 justified in restricting additional or new employment buildings to the minimum level reasonably required for the existing or planned business operation?

3. Policy RUR10 requires that, where it is demonstrated that a proposal is appropriate in a rural area small scale (see previous point) employment development will be supported where additional buildings, structures and ancillary development are restricted to a minimum required for the existing or planned operation of the business.
4. The policy as drafted is structured around a presumption that employment development in a rural area will only be supported in circumstances where it is part of an existing or planned operation of an existing business. For the reasons specified above, vital, and appropriate employment business development may need to come forward in rural locations which is not part of an existing businesses operations but is still appropriate. The policy should be flexible to allow for this need.