

# Cheshire West & Chester Council

# Neighbourhood *Planning*



**July 2025**

## Local Plan Consultation

### The new Local Plan

Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&C) are preparing a new Local Plan to replace the existing Local Plan (Part One and Part Two). The Plan will cover the whole borough and will set a vision for at least the next 15 years.

The Local Plan sets out where development will take place in Cheshire West and Chester. It will indicate where we want a variety of development including housing, employment land, shops and industrial land. The vision emphasises climate change mitigation, wellbeing, infrastructure provision, and character protection. Objectives include economic growth, housing provision, environmental protection, and sustainable transport.

We are currently consulting on an Issues and Options document, which is the first formal stage in the process. We would like your views on how and where future development needs should be accommodated and also on the new vision and objectives.

The consultation sets out three spatial options for meeting future development needs which, based on a 15-year plan period would be around 29,000 new homes and 150 hectares of employment land. The options are accompanied by a series of maps identifying potential areas for growth around settlements in the borough. We would also like your views on how policies in the existing Local Plan could be amended and updated to take them forward as part of the new Local Plan.

### Three Spatial Options

We are proposing three different strategic options for where housing will be located across the borough. The three options offer different levels of housing in different areas depending on the approach we take:

- Option A) Retain Green Belt – retaining the protected area in the north of the borough where development is restricted.
- Option B) Follow current Local Plan distribution - by applying the same proportion of housing in the same areas as required under the last Local Plan.
- Option C) Focus on sustainable transport corridors - building houses where there are good existing transport links.

The three spatial options can be viewed in more detail here: [Three Spatial Options](#)

### Growth Areas

Growth areas are locations where it may be possible to identify sites to be allocated in the Local Plan for various uses, including housing, infrastructure and regeneration. Our growth areas are focussed on Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Winsford, Frodsham, Neston and Parkgate, and the key service centres. Each settlement has unique development priorities including regeneration, infrastructure, and environmental protection. The growth areas can be viewed in more detail here: [Growth Areas](#). These maps show different possible options and locations for development, and not all areas will be chosen to be allocated in the Local Plan.

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## Policy Development

This section explains the policies that we are proposing to retain from the current Local Plan and looking to develop under the Local Plan 2025. They are intended to ensure development is in the right place for people who need it whilst taking account of various environmental factors. The policies can be viewed in more detail here: [Policy Development](#)

## **How to get involved**

The Issues and Options report and supporting documents can be viewed online at: [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/localplan)

Paper copies of the Issues and Options will also be available to read at The Portal in Ellesmere Port, Wyvern House in Winsford, Storyhouse in Chester, Northwich Memorial Court and on the mobile library.

A number of face-to-face and online information events will be held during the consultation period, where officers will be available to answer questions and help people to respond to the consultation. Please visit [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/localplan) for more details.

Comments on the Local Plan Issues and Options can be submitted until 29 August 2025. Visit [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/localplan) to comment.

You can comment on all parts of the Issues and Options report, or just the specific sections you are interested in. The main sections are:

- [vision and objectives](#)
- [spatial options](#) (where development should go)
- [detailed policy approaches](#) (explaining what the topic-based policies may cover)

A Sustainability Appraisal has also been prepared to assess the sustainability of the proposed spatial options and policy approaches. Sustainability Appraisal is a process to evaluate potential social, economic and environmental impacts of a policy, plan or project. The Sustainability Appraisal is available to view and comment on online at [Local Plan 2025 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal](#).

## **Next steps in the process**

Following the Issues and Options consultation, we will consider all the responses received, along with other sources of evidence and information. We will use this information to inform the next version of the Plan - the Publication Draft Local Plan. Following further public consultation in Summer 2026, the new Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State, for examination in 2027.

## Locality funding for neighbourhood plans

Over the past few years, Locality have provided funding and technical support for neighbourhood planning. It has recently been announced that as a result of the spending review, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government cannot provide new neighbourhood planning support services for April 2025 onwards. This means that no new neighbourhood planning grants will be available and there will not be any technical support for evidence base studies, design codes or sustainability appraisals.

Any technical packages agreed by MHCLG before the end of March 2025 can continue and need to be completed by the end of March 2026.

CW&C will continue to provide support and advice to neighbourhood planning groups, but we have limited time and resources due to the level of work required in relation to the Local Plan.

## Other updates

### Planning and Infrastructure Bill

The January 2025 neighbourhood planning newsletter referred to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. The Bill is currently at the second reading stage in the House of Lords. It needs to pass through further stages at the House of Lords, before it can receive Royal Assent and be put in place.

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill aims to speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure. It also aims to support the delivery of the government's Clean Power 2030 target by ensuring that clean energy projects are built as quickly as possible. The Bill will introduce a new Nature Restoration Fund to unlock the positive impact development can have in driving nature recovery. It will also amend how planning committees operate in making decisions on planning applications and will introduce the production of Spatial Development Strategies to provide strategic planning at a sub-regional level.

### National Development Management Policies

It is proposed that national development management policies will be set by the Secretary of State. They will relate to the whole of England and will be used in the determination of planning applications. These national policies could override or replace Local Plan or neighbourhood plan level policies. They could also have a significant impact on the scope of future plans, as certain policies will already be provided at a national level and won't need to be repeated. The national development management policies have not yet been published, and it is not clear exactly when they are likely to be made available.

**Contact:** For more information on neighbourhood planning in Cheshire West and Chester, contact the Planning Policy team at Cheshire West and Chester Council:

**Email:** [spatialplanning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:spatialplanning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01244 973887

### Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in Audio, Braille and Large Print or other formats. If you would like a copy in a different format, in another language or require a BSL interpreter, please email us at [enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 0300 123 8 123 **Textphone:** 18001 01606 275757

**Email:** [enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

**Web:** [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)