

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Local Plan



Issues and Options Consultation

July-August 2025

Frequently Asked Questions



Visit: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/localplan



Cheshire West
and Chester

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What is a Local Plan?

A Local Plan is a legal document which sets out the future land use and planning policies for Cheshire West and Chester over a set period of time. The Local Plan will guide development in the borough, identifying the amount, type and location of development. The Local Plan provides an opportunity to set out and address the current and future needs of the borough including housing needs of all types, planning for infrastructure, identifying employment land and how best to protect our environment. Once in place, the Local Plan will become part of the statutory development plan. The statutory development plan for the borough is the starting point for determining local planning applications.

Why are we updating our Local Plan?

Councils are legally required to review a Local Plan at least every five years. In January 2024, the Council decided to prepare a new style Local Plan under the provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. However, since the new government was elected last year, the implementation of the new plan-making system has been delayed, and the deadline for submitting plans under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) has been extended to December 2026.

As a result, Council Cabinet decided on 15 January 2025 to begin the preparation of an update to the Local Plan under the current plan-making system, with the option to switch to the new plan-making system should it prove necessary and expedient to do so.

The update to the Local Plan will create a single Local Plan document that updates and replaces all policies in the Local Plan (Part One) and Local Plan (Part Two).

What will happen to the current Local Plan during the process?

The current Local Plan (Part One) and Local Plan (Part Two) will remain the adopted policy position until the new Local Plan is complete and is adopted by the council.

When and how can people have their say on the new Local Plan?

Community and stakeholder engagement is extremely important when developing a new Local Plan, and there will be a number of opportunities for people to contribute at various stages of the process.

You can have your say on the Issues and Options during a public consultation period which runs from 4 July 2025 to 29 August 2025.

The Council will undertake public consultation drop in events during the Issues and Options consultation, with details of this confirmed on the Council website.

Will the Plan be affected by the proposed reforms to the planning system?

The reforms to the planning system will impact the development of the new Local Plan. The new reforms will lead to accelerated timelines in the Local Plan preparation process, with plans now having to be prepared within two and a half years compared to the previous average of seven years. Councils will also be subject to mandatory housing targets through the government's new standard method for calculating housing targets.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the National Planning Policy Framework?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a document that is written by central Government and is a key document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied by local planning authorities such as Cheshire West and Chester. There was a major revision to the NPPF in December 2024 following the appointment of a Labour Government in July 2024. The 2024 NPPF can be viewed here: [National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-guidance).

What is the Local Transport Plan and how is it different to a Local Plan?

A Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document that is prepared by the Council to outline how we tend to manage and improve transport in the borough over a set period of time.

The Council knows that transport plays an important role in shaping lives and communities across our borough, connecting people to opportunities, shaping our neighbourhoods, and supporting our businesses. It is also a key contributor in our ambition to achieve carbon neutrality and tackle climate change.

The difference between a Local Plan and a Local Transport Plan is that Local Plans set out the spatial planning framework for the borough, guiding where development should take place, whereas Local Transport Plans set out the transport strategy for the borough, focusing on how people and goods move around.

The consultation for the new Local Transport Plan can be accessed via this link: [Share your views on the Future of Transport | Participate Now](#)

What is the Issues and Options consultation?

The Issues and Options is a very early stage of the Local Plan update process. It seeks to identify 'issues' with how the current plan is working in practice, and/or 'issues' which we would like the plan to address based on the current situation and evidence, but which it currently doesn't tackle, or doesn't tackle sufficiently.

Having identified a number of issues, this stage then considers 'options' for how the Plan might seek to tackle these issues. The current consultation seeks your views on whether you agree or disagree with the issues we have identified, and whether there are any others you think we should also tackle.

How can I take part in the consultation?

Formal representations and comments on the Local Plan Issues and Options can be made from **4 July 2025 to 29 August 2025**. Representations can be submitted through the council's online consultation portal: [Local Plan Consultation](#)

Are there any public events where residents can get more information?

Yes, we are holding drop-in events in the four key urban areas of the borough. This will give our residents the chance to speak to council officers and ask questions about the Issues and Options for the Local Plan.

The events will be held on the following dates:

Northwich - Wednesday 16 July 2025, 2-7pm (Barons Quay CW9 5FU)

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Chester - Monday 21 July 2025, 12:30-5:30pm (Storyhouse CH1 2AR)

Ellesmere Port - TBC.

Winsford - Wednesday 13 August, 12:30-5:30 pm (Winsford Cross CW7 1BA)

Who can comment?

Anyone can comment on the consultation. We would like to hear from residents, businesses and those living, working or studying in the borough.

Do I need to answer all questions in the Issues and Options consultation?

Not if you don't want to or don't feel able to. We will welcome any feedback you want to provide on any aspects of the Issues and Options consultation.

What is a Sustainability Appraisal?

A Sustainability Appraisal is a legally required process in the UK that supports the development of a Local Plan by assessing its potential social, environmental and economic impacts. It is a systematic process that is used during the preparation of Local Plans to promote sustainable development, evaluate the effects of the proposals within the plan, compare reasonable alternatives and ensure that the plan is compliant with environmental legislation.

Will an adopted neighbourhood plan need to be updated once the new Local Plan is in place?

There will not be a requirement to have an updated neighbourhood plan. However, if a neighbourhood plan policies conflicts with updated Local Plan policies, they may become out of date for a neighbourhood plan area if they were adopted before the new Local Plan is adopted.

Where this is the case, the most recent adopted plan takes precedence. This would not necessarily mean that the whole of the neighbourhood plan is out of date but may impact specific policies that are superseded by Local Plan policies.

Can a new neighbourhood plan come forward during the Local Plan update?

A new neighbourhood plan can be developed during the preparation of the updated Local Plan. We will work with neighbourhood planning groups to ensure there are no conflicts between neighbourhood plan policies and updated policies in the new Local Plan.

What about providing infrastructure?

The Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation provides three suggestions for where future housing may be located on our borough. Residents of these new houses will increase the use of our local infrastructure, such as schools, GP surgeries and highways. We will be developing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will identify specific infrastructure improvements we will be investing in to ensure we can meet the needs of our residents.

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What is the Community Infrastructure Levy?

Cheshire West and Chester is a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging authority meaning all new development which meets the council's requirement will be charged a levy per new floorspace developed. CIL will be used by us to support the provision and improvement of infrastructure to meet the needs of the proposed development, as identified in the IDP.

Town and parish councils will be passed 25% of all levy receipts if they have a made neighbourhood plan. If there is no neighbourhood plan the town or parish council will receive 15% of all CIL receipts. More information on how parishes can use CIL is available here: [Neighbourhood portion of CIL | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

How will the Local Plan create and support more jobs?

The Local Plan cannot directly supply jobs. However, it can make land available for new uses that will generate employment, protecting employment sites and support business development.

Where will future development go?

This initial Issues and Options stage of the plan-making process does not identify specific sites for development, but it does propose possible growth options for the distribution of development around the borough. Following the completion of the Issues and Options stage, the next stage of the plan-making process will see us publish a draft version of the Local Plan which will indicate the preferred options for growth, which will be supported by evidence.

What are the three spatial options?

Option A – Retain the Green Belt

Key Features

- Protects the Green Belt (42% of the borough).
- Focuses development outside the Green Belt on brownfield and non-Green Belt greenfield land.
- Major housing development south of Northwich (~5,000 homes).
- Urban extensions to the south/west of Winsford (~11,000 homes).
- Growth in non-Green Belt settlements like Tarporley, Tattenhall, Malpas, and Farndon.
- Limited development in Tarvin, Kelsall, and Cuddington and Sandiway.
- Employment focused on refurbishing existing areas and new sites outside the Green Belt.

Pros

- Preserves environmental and heritage value of the Green Belt.
- Encourages regeneration and brownfield land use.

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Cons

- Concentrates development in fewer locations, increasing infrastructure pressure.
- Limits flexibility in site selection.

Option B – Follow Current Local Plan Distribution

Key Features

- Continues the current Local Plan's distribution strategy.
- Large urban extensions around Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, and Winsford.
- Requires Green Belt release for ~11,000 homes.
- Moderate development in key service centres (e.g., Frodsham, Helsby, Malpas).
- 2,500 homes across rural areas.
- Employment land includes Green Belt release in Wincham and south of Ellesmere Port.

Pros

- Builds on an established strategy.
- Distributes growth more evenly across the borough.

Cons

- Requires significant Green Belt release.
- May not align with sustainable transport goals.

Option C – Sustainable Transport Corridors

Key Features

- Focuses development along rail lines and frequent bus routes.
- Modest urban extensions in Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, and Winsford.
- Greater development in rail-connected settlements (e.g., Cuddington, Helsby, Frodsham, Neston).
- Green Belt release for over 12,000 homes.
- Development near rural rail stations and bus corridors.
- Employment sites prioritized near transport hubs and with multi-modal access.

Pros

- Supports sustainable travel and reduces car dependency.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Encourages development in well-connected locations.

Cons

- May lead to more dispersed development.
- Greater potential impact on Green Belt due to corridor-based growth.

Is there more information on the development of the policies?

Housing and Employment

The plan addresses housing mix, affordable housing, rural exception sites, and specialist accommodation. Employment policies support strategic sites, local business needs, and economic growth.

Environment and Infrastructure

Policies cover flood risk management, Biodiversity Net Gain, green infrastructure, landscape protection, and sustainable construction. Infrastructure provision includes transport, education, health, and digital connectivity.

Historic Environment and Design

The plan aims to preserve heritage assets and promote high-quality design through a borough-wide Design Code and sustainable construction standards.

Energy and Waste

Support for renewable energy and low carbon fuels is emphasised. Waste management focuses on managing waste effectively in the borough and safeguarding existing facilities.

Minerals and Miscellaneous

Policies ensure sustainable mineral extraction and safeguarding. Additional policies address rural development, waterways, and aerodrome safeguarding.

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in Audio, Braille, 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 **equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**

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Pokud byste požadovali informace v jiném jazyce nebo formátu, kontaktujte nás

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਵੋ।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Türkçe bilgi almak istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.

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