



Weston & Basford Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Area was Designated by Cheshire East Council in May 2015.

The Plan Area covers the whole of Weston & Basford Parish.

When completed and approved the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Statutory Development Plan for Cheshire East which will be valid until 2030. This means that Planners and Government Inspectors will take account of the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan when making their decisions



Background to the Neighbourhood Plan

A Parish Plan was produced for the Parish of Weston & Basford in 2011 and identified those areas which residents wanted to be addressed. This elicited a 41% response. The Neighbourhood Plan will take this to the next stage of detail to enable the Parish Council to influence the location and type of development that can be approved within the parish.

The Parish Council has appointed a Steering Group to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. The members are: John Chambers, John Cornell (Chairman), John Densem, Don Fanstone, Trevor Gill and Peter Grant. This Group is working alongside Andrew Thomson Planning Consultant and our Clerk David Owen.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan

The Localism Act 2012 has given communities the right to produce a 'Neighbourhood Plan', a community lead framework for guiding future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. Instead of being told what to do, local communities now have the opportunity to influence the place where they live.

A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with National Planning Policy as well as UK and European Legislation and must have regard to strategic policies at local level. A Neighbourhood Plan can specify policies and guidance on many aspects of how new development is carried out, but it cannot specify less development than that identified for the local area, such as new strategic housing allocations. Weston & Basford will be expected to accommodate some new housing over the next few years and the amount will be decided through the Neighbourhood Plan process.

What has happened to date?

In June last year you received an explanatory leaflet explaining that your Parish Council was preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and in July a questionnaire inviting you to express your views on the future of Weston & Basford. 95% of respondents supported the draft vision.

'We want the seven settlements which make up the Parish of Weston & Basford to retain and develop their own character and to continue to thrive as vibrant communities. We want them to evolve, grow and prosper in a sustainable way and to provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future residents of this parish'.

Much background work has subsequently taken place with Cheshire East in assessing Local Housing Need (the likely numbers of houses needed to be built in the parish up to 2030, in addition to the strategic sites at Basford East and the South Cheshire Growth Village). A Landscape and Ecological Appraisal is also currently underway.

We are now at the stage, once we have assimilated your views, of formulating draft policies.

Independent Examination of the Plan and Referendum

Once the Plan has been prepared and consulted upon, an independent examiner will check that it meets all the necessary standards known as the Basic Conditions. If the Plan doesn't meet these Conditions the examiner will recommend changes.

The Plan will then become the property of Cheshire East who will organise a referendum within the Parish. This ensures that the people of Weston & Basford have the final say on or whether the Neighbourhood Plan comes into force. People living in the Neighbourhood Plan Area who are registered to vote in the local elections will be able to vote in the referendum. If more than 50% of people voting in the referendum support the plan, then Cheshire East must bring it into force.

The difference between Green Belt and Green Gap?

Green Belt

Green Belt is a statutory Planning Policy which means that Central Government attaches great importance to it. It is an effective and well tried Planning Tool for controlling and managing development. The fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

The western part of The Weston & Basford Neighbourhood Plan Area is protected by the North Staffordshire Green Belt—shown on the large scale map.

Cheshire East proposed a South Cheshire Green Belt in the initial stages of the Local Plan, but the Planning Inspector at the Examination in Public was not satisfied that a sufficiently robust case had been made that the area around Crewe satisfied the necessary criteria.

Green Gap

This is intended to form a similar function to the Green Belt, **but does not carry the same statutory weight.**

A Green Gap was introduced around Crewe as part of the Crewe & Nantwich Local Plan 2011. This has contributed significantly in containing development up to now. Cheshire East are now proposing that this be made a **Strategic Policy** within the Local Plan given the Inspector's comments on the Green Belt and the intense development pressure that our area is currently experiencing. Your Parish Council have made strong representations that this be extended to cover a much greater part of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.