

Cheshire East Local Plan: pre-submission Core Strategy Consultation

Comments of Weston & Basford Parish Council

The Parish Council is supportive of the overall concept of the Plan and of the principles contained within the Core Strategy.

Spatial Distribution of Development

We are very concerned, however, about the inequitable distribution of Housing allocations between the northern and southern half of the Borough. Over 70% of the overall allocation for Cheshire East is committed to the south and there is a stark contrast in the degree of proposed expansion of the key Service Areas – the south taking the lions share in all cases. Weston & Basford Parish Council questions the ability of the local infrastructure, which is already overloaded, to cope with this, particularly in so far as the communities bordering the SE quadrant of Crewe are concerned (even given the proposed Crewe Green Link road and improvements to the A500). We are very fearful that the character and integrity of many of the bordering villages will be lost for ever and subsumed into urban sprawl.

Health and Well-Being

There seems to be little or no reference in the Plan to the future allocation of education facilities beyond Primary School level and of Secondary Medical facilities.

Pre-Submission Core Strategy: Non Preferred Sites

The Parish Council welcomes the non inclusion of the non preferred sites at **Gorsty Hill Golf Course (NPS 5) and land to the south of Weston (NPS 6)**. However, we consider that the reasoning for rejection should be tightened up and made more robust - e.g. the Grade 2* listed building Weston Hall was destroyed by fire some 8 years ago and does not currently exist: existing infrastructure is

already grossly overloaded: the character of the existing settlements will be destroyed etc.....etc.....

Core Strategy Sites and Strategic Locations

We are also supportive of the principle of the developments proposed at **Basford West (CS2) and Basford East (CS1)**. We note, however, that no reference is made about the ability of, and provision for, Weston to share some of the key facilities proposed within Basford East. We also consider that 1000 dwellings should constitute the upper limit of housing on Basford East.

South Cheshire Growth Village SE Crewe

The Parish Council remains extremely concerned about the South Cheshire Growth Village around Crewe Hall (SL3) and the Area of Search. Absolutely no empathy is shown, or weight given in the document to the potential impact of this village on the village of Weston and other communities within the Parish. For example, the reference to an 'appropriate buffer to Weston Village' could imply a single field, which would be totally inadequate and unacceptable. The infrastructure and urban sprawl implications are frightening!

The Parish does not want to see this development happen.

We recognize, however, that if it can't be stopped then considerable changes need to be made to reduce its harmful impact on our communities. The Parish Council is prepared to work closely with Cheshire East to achieve a compromise that we can tolerate. To this end a site meeting has already taken place between representatives of the Council and your Chief Planning Officer to investigate the constraints and realistic opportunities for any development. We believe we received a sympathetic hearing and trust that this will be followed through to a satisfactory conclusion.

The Parish Council urges Cheshire East to reconsider the concept of this Growth Village and make it an adjunct to the Basford East Development. Given the most attractive setting of this area we consider it a prime candidate for high quality, low density housing, which would be an essential ingredient for the future prosperity

of Crewe and complement Basford East. We do not consider it to be sustainable in its own right and it would be sufficiently close to share key facilities with Basford East which will be a fully sustainable unit.

In summary, if development is to happen in this location, the absolute minimum that the Parish Council and its residents would be prepared to accept is:

- Significant reduction in the size and impact of this development on Weston Village.
- Retention of significant areas of open agricultural land on either side of Main Road Weston approaching Weston Village.
- Physical separation from Basford East, apart from pedestrian links, to prevent urban sprawl.
- Design of infrastructure to ensure a marked reduction of traffic along Main Road Weston as well as a reduction of the status of Main Road
- A reduction in the numbers of dwellings and creation of high quality low density housing to take advantage of the most attractive setting.
- Sensitive design to safeguard the setting and listed buildings which make up Stowford and at the same time build upon the character of this picture postcard hamlet.

Green Belt PG3

The Parish Council is very supportive of the proposed Area of Search for additional Green Belt within the SE quadrant of Crewe and the Parish of Weston & Basford. We recognize that this is a powerful planning tool in resisting further development pressures and submit that a robust case can be made for its inclusion.

We request that the Parish is fully consulted on the drawing up of the definitive boundaries of this Green Belt and that it be further extended to include those potential areas excluded from development around Crewe Hall.

Finally, given the development which has already taken place within the Parish over the last 15 years – Wychwood Park, Wychwood Village, proposed

development at Basford East and West and possible further development around Crewe Hall – we wish to seek assurances in the Plan that no further allocations will be included within any of the villages which make up the Parish.

Our Parish will have taken one of, if not the biggest hit, in the whole of Cheshire East in so far as new development is concerned. This in itself will dramatically affect the character of our communities and our way of life – the reason we came to live here in the first place: enough is enough!!!!!!!!!!!!

A well attended Open Parish Meeting on the 9th December 2013 unanimously supported the Parish Council relative to all of the comments contained in this submission

Weston & Basford Parish Council

December 2013