

Cheshire East Local Plan

Draft Handforth Town Strategy Consultation





Just as people make plans, towns need to make plans too...

Cheshire East is facing many challenges over the next twenty years or so. These include responding to the issues around climate change and the need to move to a low carbon future, providing the infrastructure to enable local businesses to compete in a more globalised economy and enabling the increases in housing need to be accommodated. These challenges will need to be faced in a period of a slow growing national economy and reduced levels of infrastructure investment by the Government.

It will therefore be important to have a clear strategy to tackle these issues and to indicate how we want our towns to change and grow.

Cheshire East has been working closely with local community representatives in the spirit of localism to prepare Town Strategies for Crewe, Handforth, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich and Poynton; these documents will go on to play an important part in the production of Cheshire East's Local Plan.

This is your chance to make a difference



I want to encourage everyone to help us prepare the Town Strategies through this consultation so that we can make sure that Cheshire East continues to be a great place for us, our children and grandchildren to enjoy. In doing so, I would ask you to be positive about change. Successful towns and communities are those that can adapt to changing circumstances and evolve in a sustainable way. I urge you to get involved and give us your views to help determine the future of your town.

Cllr David Brown

Cheshire East Council - Strategic Communities Portfolio Holder & Deputy Leader of the Council

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1 Introduction

1.1 This draft town strategy for Handforth has been put together by interested parties from the local community working closely with Cheshire East Council.

1.2 Once finalised, the town strategy will feed into the Cheshire East Local Plan, which will set planning policies in Cheshire East to 2030.

Aim

1.3 The aim of this document is to set out a draft strategic view for the residents of Handforth of how Handforth could be developed up to 2030. A period of public consultation throughout September 2012 will give every resident the opportunity to engage with the draft strategic direction set out in this document and to have their say.

National Planning Policy Framework

1.4 The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages local authorities to have an up-to-date Local Plan in place as soon as possible. It says the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. 'Sustainable' means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations. 'Development' means growth... we must house a rising population... our lives and the places in which we live them can be made better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate.

1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework also says that local authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. It identifies the need for planning to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Local authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.

Local Plan

1.6 The Local Plan will be the new development plan for Cheshire East. It will contain planning strategy, policies and site allocations. It will be accompanied by an Infrastructure Plan that will set out the transport, social (e.g. schools) and other infrastructure required to support development.

1.7 The Local Plan will look at the social, economic and environmental needs of each town. It will help to deliver economic growth by identifying and unlocking development opportunities, and help us to co-ordinate the delivery of new and improved roads, public transport and utilities. It will help to improve our environment by setting improved design standards for new development; protecting nature conservation areas; promoting parks and open spaces; safeguarding heritage assets (such as listed buildings); encouraging the generation of renewable energy; and safeguarding the countryside by focusing development to the towns and larger villages.



1.8 The Local Plan will consider how much housing is needed, including the mix of types and sizes of new homes. It will look at possible sites and consider associated needs for new and improved schools and community facilities. It will also consider the needs for other types of land-use, such as employment, retail and leisure uses.

1.9 The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that at the heart of the planning system, there is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The Local Plan will enable the Council to guide this sustainable development to the most appropriate locations in Cheshire East, and to make sure that all new development contributes to future infrastructure needs. However, there will be tough choices to be made about where development should go.

Town Strategy for Handforth

1.10 During 2011, Cheshire East Council sought the views of residents, workers, visitors and shoppers what they most liked about their town or village and what they wanted to see improved. This was called the Place Shaping Consultation. The consultation identified that people particularly liked the health services in Handforth. They also liked the transport links to nearby towns and villages and areas to go walking. The two things that most were identified as areas in need of improvement were the district centre as a whole and allotments, parks and other green spaces.

1.11 Following on from the Place Shaping Consultation, the Council has been working closely with the local community to develop this draft strategy to guide the future planning of Handforth. Two workshops were held with a panel of stakeholders including local community organisations, local businesses and local residents.

1.12 The workshops discussed how the town strategy should meet the future needs of the town to make it an even better place over the next 20 years. Figure 1.1 shows what was discussed at each workshop.



Figure 1.1 Content of Workshops



1.13 This draft town strategy, agreed by the stakeholder panel is for wider discussion by Handforth residents in order to determine how the town should look like by 2030. Following on from the vision are a number of objectives needed to realise the vision, and a set of specific aims which add detail to the objectives. The draft town strategy also identifies a number of possible areas that may be suitable for future development.

1.14 This document was approved for consultation purposes at a meeting of Handforth Parish Council on 6th August 2012. It has been published for consultation to seek the views of the local community, businesses and other stakeholders.

Next Steps

1.15 Once all consultation responses have been considered, the town strategy will be amended as appropriate and will be used to inform the Cheshire East Local Plan. It is important to note that the town strategy itself will not introduce new planning policies, nor will it allocate any sites for development. Its purpose is to make sure that the views of the local community are properly taken into account when drafting the Local Plan.

1.16 Any new planning policies or site allocations will be proposed through the Local Plan, taking into account all other background evidence (such as housing needs assessment, employment land review, retail study, transport assessments, flood risk assessments, sustainability appraisals and others), national legislation, national guidance, and site-specific appraisals.

1.17 The Local Plan will be made up of a number of key documents including the Core Strategy, Site Allocations Plan and Infrastructure Plan. Figure 1.2 illustrates the relationship of the town strategy document to the Local Plan. This highlights how the town strategy will provide a steer to the content and direction of the Local Plan.

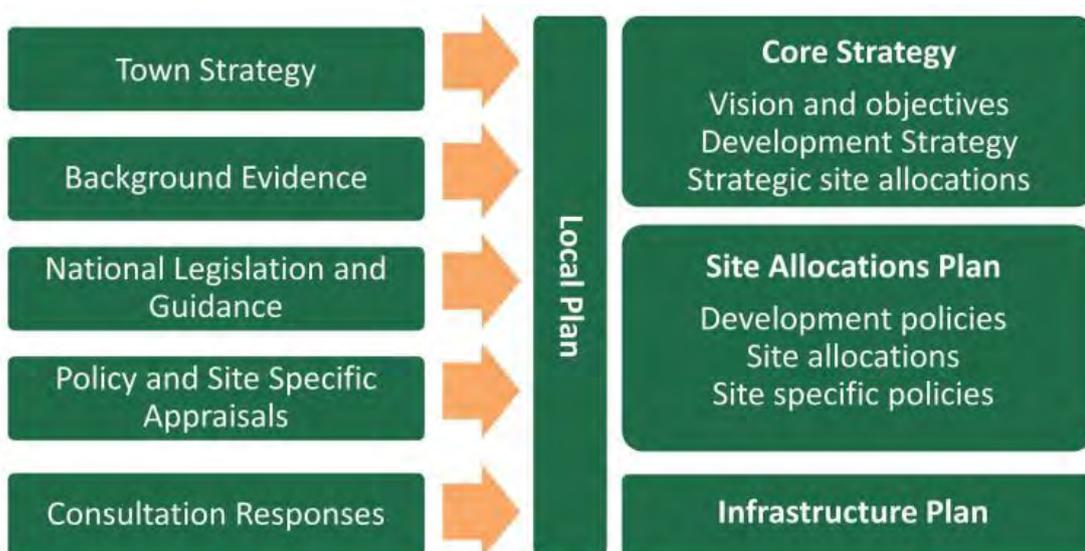


Figure 1.2 Relationship between the Town Strategy and the Local Plan

1.18 There will be further consultations on the Local Plan including consultation on an overall development strategy for Cheshire East in autumn 2012 and consultation on the draft Core Strategy early in 2013.



1.19 The Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan will both be subject to separate ‘examinations in public’ with a Government-appointed inspector. At the examination, the Council will need to demonstrate that all reasonable alternatives to the final proposals have been properly considered. This draft town strategy and consultation responses received will form an important part of the Councils evidence in demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives have been considered prior to drafting the Local Plan.

1.20 The Council aims to adopt the Core Strategy in late 2013 / early 2014 with the Site Allocations Plan following later.

Background material

Ambition for All

1.21 ‘Ambition for All’, the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy for the period 2010 to 2025 sets out how, over the next 15 years Cheshire East will continue to prosper. The activities outlined in the strategy are intended to improve the quality of life of all the people of Cheshire East and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Strategy provides a high-level vision for Cheshire East and includes:

Ambition for All

Cheshire East's Sustainable Community Strategy
2010 to 2025



- Nurturing strong communities, including the delivery of services as locally as possible and ensuring that communities feel safe;
- Creating conditions for business growth, including making the most of our tourism, heritage and natural assets and ensuring there is a good range of available employment sites and premises in all parts of Cheshire East with good transport links, to attract new and expanding businesses;
- Unlocking the potential of our towns;
- Supporting our children and young people;
- Ensuring a sustainable future by providing affordable and appropriate housing to meet future needs, by promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, by ensuring that all major developments are located with good access to local amenities, cycle and walking routes, by developing a green infrastructure plan to safeguard, manage and enhance our green assets, giving priority to the redevelopment of our vacant brownfield sites and by recognising the importance of mineral extraction to the local economy;
- Preparing for an increasingly older population including the provision of an adequate supply of suitable extra care housing; and
- Driving out the causes of poor health including investment in green infrastructure to encourage active and healthy lifestyle choices.



Corporate Plan

1.22 The Council has prepared a Corporate Plan for the period 2011 to 2013. Key, relevant actions to deliver those objectives include:

- Maximise developer contributions to improve infrastructure, culture, leisure and green spaces;
- Meet targets in relation to the provision of affordable housing;
- Reduction in carbon emissions;
- Growth in the Cheshire East economy and the visitor economy.



Other Background Documents

1.23 A number of background documents have informed the development of the Handforth Town Strategy during the consultation workshops. These documents include:

- Macclesfield Borough Local Plan 2004
- Cheshire East Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper 2010
- Place Shaping Consultation Handforth Snapshot Report 2011
- Cheshire Retail Study 2011
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2011
- Open Spaces Summary Report 2012
- Cheshire East Local Infrastructure Plan Baseline Report
- Local Transport Plan



2 Background

2.1 Handforth is a small town with a population of 6,150 located in the north of Cheshire. Wilmslow is directly to the south of Handforth, separated only by the River Dean and the towns share many of their facilities and services. Handforth is also very close to the Greater Manchester conurbation and is separated from Heald Green and Cheadle Hulme by a narrow gap.

2.2 The town was first established in Saxon times, due to its proximity to a ford over the River Dean. Handforth continued to develop due to its location on the road between Wilmslow and Manchester, providing coaching inns and other services to road users. Later it developed as an industrial base for paper manufacturing, printing industries and distribution, supported by its location on the rail line between Crewe and Manchester.

2.3 In the 1950s, the Spath Lane estate was developed to house people from inner city Manchester. Other estates have since been developed in the town and although there have also been employment-generating developments at Handforth Dean and Stanley Green Industrial Estate, a large proportion of the population commute to work outside of the town.

2.4 Handforth has a compact shopping area focused on Wilmslow Road and The Paddock. The centre faces stiff competition from nearby town centres and out of town shopping at Handforth Dean and Cheadle Royal.





3 Vision

Vision for Handforth

In 2030, Handforth will be a small and welcoming town with a strong community spirit and civic pride. It will provide for the needs of the whole community and will capitalise on its many advantages, including its location next to Greater Manchester and the Cheshire countryside.

Handforth will have a greatly improved district centre with attractive public spaces, a vibrant and varied shopping experience, a successful independent sector and a wide range of services.

Handforth will be a progressive town with its own identity, reinforced by the retention of the small undeveloped areas separating Handforth from Wilmslow to the south and Heald Green to the north. It will offer an excellent quality of life with high levels of employment, increased average incomes, a healthy population and better provision of sustainable transport. There will be good access to education and important services, with high quality open spaces and improved access to the surrounding countryside.





4 Objectives and Strategy

4.1 To deliver this vision, a clear strategy for the future of Handforth has been formulated. This strategy focuses on the key challenges that Handforth needs to address to meet the vision. It addresses the issues facing Handforth and looks to maximise local strengths and opportunities.

4.2 It is also important to remember that this strategy will not operate in isolation. It will provide a more detailed approach for Handforth in line with the overall strategy for Cheshire East.

4.3 To achieve the vision, the following objectives have been identified:

Objective 1: Economy

- To provide a good supply of suitably located employment land and buildings in order to attract new businesses and allow existing businesses to grow;
- To promote the economic potential of the area, exploiting its location close to road, rail and air links and support economic growth at Stanley Green Industrial Estate
- To support a high rate of employment in the Handforth population.

4.4 The Council and its partners will aim to:

- Improve access to and opportunities for employment for local people, including local links between Handforth and Stanley Green / Handforth Dean, and transport links to opportunities outside of Handforth;
- Support training, skills and education programmes to assist local people to access local employment opportunities;
- Safeguard and improve existing viable employment areas in the town at Stanley Green, Deanway Trading Estate and the cluster of office premises on Wilmslow Road;
- Support flexible working and investment in new communication technologies such as high speed broadband and wi-fi hotspots to allow home-working and to support businesses reliant on e-technology within the town;
- Encourage small businesses to form and develop through the provision of incubator units and other small industrial premises;
- Recognise the importance of agriculture to the local economy.





Objective 2: District Centre

- To enhance and promote the district centre, transforming it into a welcoming, vibrant place with a wide variety of both independent and branded retailers, eating and drinking venues, leisure and community facilities;
- To improve the overall quality of the district centre environment, with particular attention to The Paddock.

4.5 The Council and its partners will aim to:

- Promote the role of Handforth district centre for local shopping, business, leisure and community facilities to reduce the amount of trade lost to Handforth Dean and other out of town destinations;
- Support the role of independent shops and give schemes to enhance or expand such facilities positive consideration;
- Improve the overall quality of the environment in The Paddock, including improvements to the appearance, public areas and street furniture;
- Secure environmental improvements and traffic calming measures to Wilmslow Road including consideration of a shared street surface, reduction in street sign clutter and improvements to parking arrangements;
- Improve the links between the district centre and Meriton Road Park;
- Support a programme of events in the district centre including seasonal markets;
- Make sure that the centre has inclusive access for all.





Objective 3: Housing

- To provide good quality well designed housing, with a range of types, sizes and tenures in sustainable locations to meet the current and future needs of the population.

4.6 The Council and its partners will aim to:

- Allocate new sites for housing to deliver new homes to at least meet local needs to 2030;
- Develop good quality, well designed housing in sustainable locations to meet the current and future needs of the town. This includes providing affordable, intermediate, open market and specialist housing suitable for the elderly and those with particular needs.



Objective 4: Community and Services

- To maintain a high quality of life by improving existing facilities, services and amenities for all ages, and providing new ones where appropriate;
- To foster the existing strong sense of community and enable everyone to feel included, supported and valued.

4.7 The Council and its partners will aim to:

- Improve the provision and quality of community facilities such as the youth centre, library and medical facilities;
- Allow for opportunities to enhance the social and cultural facilities within Handforth for all ages;
- Ensure the provision of sufficient school places to meet future demand from within Handforth.



Objective 5: Environment and Sustainability

- To protect and enhance public green and open spaces, and increase accessibility for all;
- To improve access to the surrounding countryside;
- To promote renewable energy and energy efficiency in all new developments.

4.8 The Council and its partners will aim to:

- Give preference to the use of brownfield sites for development;
- Ensure that new development is designed to the highest standards and complements the character of the town;
- Protect public green and open spaces within the town, such as Meriton Road Park, Delamere Road and Henbury Road;
- Improve access to the open countryside surrounding Handforth;
- Preserve the existing small gap between Handforth and Heald Green to prevent the town merging with Greater Manchester, and the existing small gap between Handforth and Wilmslow to prevent the towns from merging further.
- Protect and enhance heritage assets and buildings and spaces of architectural and cultural importance;
- Provide sufficient land for allotments / community gardens to meet demand.





Objective 6: Transport and Connectivity

- To encourage the use of sustainable transport choices through improved bus routes and integration of bus and rail travel, improved walking and cycling routes, as well as improved roads;
- To improve car parking provision within the town;
- To ensure that services and employment, leisure, and cultural opportunities in nearby areas are as accessible as possible to Handforth residents by a range of transport options;
- To improve road safety and reduce the impacts of traffic.

4.9 The Council and its partners will aim to:

- Retain and improve car parking provision in the District Centre; provide car parking and drop-off facilities at Handforth Station; and improve parking arrangements at the health centre;
- Improve rail and bus links and improve integration of bus and rail services at Handforth Station;
- Provide disabled access to Handforth Station;
- Increase the provision of cycle networks and stands;
- Improve access to Manchester Airport, the M56 and future opportunities arising from Airport City by completing the A555 Airport Link Road and provide direct public transport links from Handforth to Manchester Airport;
- Reduce traffic speeds where necessary in residential areas.





5 Development Options

Why does Handforth need more development?

5.1 Through its Local Plan, Cheshire East Council has to ensure that there is sufficient land allocated for new homes, jobs, retail, leisure and other commercial developments. In particular, there is a need to make sure that there is sufficient housing to meet the needs of the town's current and future residents to 2030.

5.2 There are a number of key factors influencing the need for new housing, including:

- A rising population: the population of Cheshire East is expected to grow from 362,700 in 2009 to 379,300 by 2026⁽¹⁾.
- A trend of reducing household size: the number of households in Cheshire East is predicted to increase by 24% from 154,000 in 2006 to 191,000 in 2031⁽²⁾.
- The demand for affordable housing: across Cheshire East there is an identified need for 1,243 new affordable homes each year between 2009/10 and 2013/14⁽²⁾. In the Handforth, Wilmslow and Alderley Edge area, the equivalent figure is 51 per year, although it is acknowledged that Handforth currently has a higher proportion of affordable housing than some neighbouring areas.
- The social housing waiting list: in Cheshire East, 10,952 people have applied for social housing and are on the waiting list. Of these, 198 are on the waiting list for Handforth⁽³⁾.
- The requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure the managed release of sufficient land to meet the objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing.

5.3 Additionally, new housing can provide local benefits such as:

- Providing housing to meet the needs of the current and future community and enabling people to have a home.
- Providing funding for new infrastructure by collecting contributions from developers under the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements. New infrastructure could include a wide range of facilities including transport projects, improvements to walking and cycling routes, better parks and play areas and new local services and community facilities, amongst others (see chapter 6 for further information).
- Stimulating the local economy by providing jobs in the building trade, generating additional spending power in the local community and providing homes for people who come to live in the area.
- Supporting the vitality of the district centre and local services through increased spending and more service users

5.4 Given the Government's intention to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), decisions on housing supply will rest with local planning authorities without guidance provided by the framework of regional numbers and plans. While the housing requirement must be evidence-based and consistent with national advice, there will no longer be a requirement to conform to a top-down regional target. The housing supply numbers with the Cheshire

1 Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation 2010

2 Cheshire East Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2010

3 Cheshire East Housing Waiting List 2012



East Local Plan will be based on a variety of evidence and information including the potential development options considered in this document and the consultation responses received, population forecasting figures, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

What are the options?

5.5 Figure 5.1 identifies a number of potential areas within and adjacent to Handforth, that may offer opportunities for growth and development in the future.

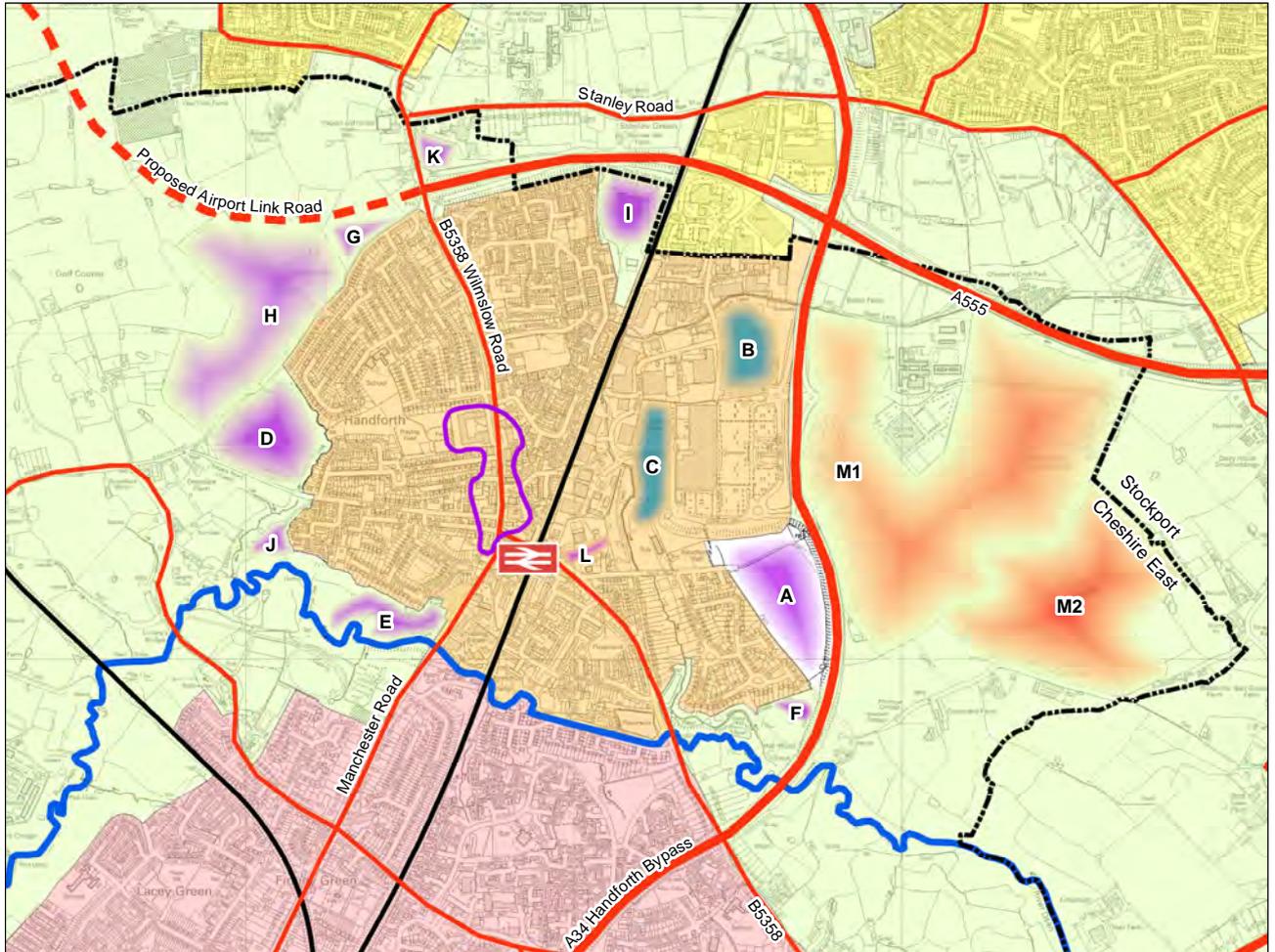
5.6 During the Local Plan Examinations in Public, the Council will need to demonstrate that all reasonable options have been considered prior to drafting the plan. We are keen to gather a wide range of views on all of these potential areas in order to assist this process.

5.7 These sites would be subject to further appraisal and no decisions have been made about the suitability of these areas. It is not intended that all areas will be developed to achieve the delivery of the vision for the town.

5.8 Please note that options identified on this map are not proposals and not all potential options identified would be required in order to achieve the vision for Handforth. The sum total of development envisaged requires significantly less land than the options shown on the map.

5.9 The Council is interested to hear the views of everyone including residents, businesses, community groups and all other stakeholders on the advantages or disadvantages of these potential development areas and their possible uses in the future. Consultation responses received to this strategy document and the outcomes of further evidence and assessment work will influence the scale of development for the town and which potential development areas are included in the Local Plan. Evidence and assessment work which will inform the Local Plan includes transport assessments, sustainability appraisals, an employment land review, viability studies amongst other assessments and figures.

5.10 The Stakeholder Panel does not support the inclusion of all of these potential sites in the Town Strategy. However, it is important to gather views on all potential sites to help justify the final strategy chosen. The views of the panel on each potential site are included in the final column for information. These views were sought during the last session of the first workshop. The panel split into three sub-groups to consider the sites. Each group spent only a short amount of time in reaching a considered opinion on all of the sites.



Legend

Railway Station	Cheshire East Boundary	Built Up Areas	Potential Options for Comment
Railway Line	District Centre Area	Handforth	Employment
A Road	River Dean	Wilmslow	Housing
Other Road	Green Belt	Heald Green / Cheadle Hulme	Mixed Use
Proposed Road			

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Picture 5.1 Potential Handforth Development Options



Option	Potential Development Use	Comments	Views of Stakeholder Panel
A	Housing	<p>Area of open land south of Handforth Dean Retail Park, west of the A34 and north and east of existing residential properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarded Land in the Macclesfield Local Plan 2004, i.e. land that may be required to serve development needs after 2011; • Adjacent to the urban area and bounded by Handforth Bypass; • Surrounding land uses are residential and retail. There is open countryside to the east across the bypass; • Footpaths across the area with mature trees around its edges; • Estimated potential to provide up to around 250 new dwellings. 	<p>The panel held mixed views about this site. Some considered it to be unsuitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is agricultural land; • It is close to a listed building (Handforth Hall). <p>Others felt that it could be suitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a self-contained location between the urban area and the bypass • Development here would have fairly limited visual impact
B	Employment	<p>Vacant brownfield site within Stanley Green Industrial Estate, just north of Handforth Dean between the A34 and Earl Road (formerly used for airport car parking):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated employment land in the Macclesfield Local Plan 2004; • Within the urban area; • Surrounding land uses include warehousing, offices, small industrial units and retail. There is open countryside to the east across the bypass; • Would provide around 4 ha of land for employment uses; • Potential for vehicular access from A34 and from Earl Road (without providing a through-route); • Council-owned land. 	<p>The panel considered this site to be suitable for development. However, there were differing views on the best use of the site. Some members felt that the site should be used for housing, whilst others felt that it would not be suitable for housing, and should be used for employment.</p>



Option	Potential Development Use	Comments	Views of Stakeholder Panel
C	Employment	<p>Vacant site to the rear of Handforth Dean Retail Park, split into two parcels north and south of Lower Meadow Road:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated employment land in the Macclesfield Local Plan 2004; • Within the urban area; • Surrounding land uses include retail, offices, warehousing and industrial units. There is an area of open space to the south of the site; • Would provide around 2 ha of land for employment purposes. 	<p>The panel considered this site to be suitable for development. However, there were differing views on the best use of the site. Some members felt that the site should be used for housing, whilst others felt that it would not be suitable for housing, and should be used for employment.</p>
D	Housing	<p>Area of open land between Clay Lane and Sagars Road west of Dobbin Brook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undeveloped Green Belt land; • Adjacent to the urban area; • Surrounding land uses are open countryside / agricultural land and residential properties; • Estimated potential to provide up to around 200 new dwellings. 	<p>The panel considered this site to be unsuitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is agricultural land; • Access could be difficult; and • The area is important in landscape terms
E	Housing	<p>Area of open land north of the River Dean and west of Wilmslow Road:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undeveloped Green Belt land; • Adjacent to the urban area; • The surrounding land use is predominantly residential properties. The River Dean is adjacent to the land; • A small area of the land is designated as a flood zone and there is a Site of Biological Importance to the north; • Estimated potential to provide up to around 70 dwellings; • Council-owned land. 	<p>The panel considered this site to be highly unsuitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts are in the flood plain; • Parts are steeply sloping; and • It is important to keep this area open to maintain a gap between Wilmslow and Handforth.



Option	Potential Development Use	Comments	Views of Stakeholder Panel
F	Housing	<p>Small area of land between Woodlands Road and the Handforth Bypass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Undeveloped Green Belt land; ● Adjacent to the urban area; ● Surrounding land uses are residential properties, the bypass and Hall Wood. There is open countryside across the bypass; ● The land is close to a site of Biological Importance; ● Possible access through vacant plot on Woodlands Road; ● Estimated potential to provide around 20 dwellings. 	<p>The panel held mixed views about this site. Some considered it to be highly unsuitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is very close to ancient woodland; ● It is very close to a Site of Biological Importance. <p>Others felt that it could be suitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a self-contained location between the urban area and the bypass; ● Development here would have fairly limited visual impact
G	Housing	<p>Area of land between Clay Lane and the proposed Airport Link Road (A555):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Undeveloped Green Belt land; ● Adjacent to the urban area; ● Surrounding land uses are residential properties and open countryside. Once the Airport Link Road is completed, this will bound the land to the north; ● Estimated potential to provide up to around 40 dwellings. 	<p>The panel held mixed views about this site. Some considered it to be unsuitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Its proximity to the new road may lead to a poor living environment; ● It is part of the important gap between Handforth and Heald Green. <p>Others considered that it could potentially be suitable because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is relatively small in size; ● It would be located between the urban area and new road.



Option	Potential Development Use	Comments	Views of Stakeholder Panel
H	Housing	<p>Larger area of land between Clay Lane and the proposed Airport Link Road (A555):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undeveloped Green Belt land; • Partly adjacent to the urban area; • Surrounding land uses are residential properties and open countryside. Once the Airport Link Road is completed, this will bound the land to the north; • Estimated potential to provide up to around 500 dwellings; • Partly Council-owned land. 	<p>The panel held mixed views about this site. Some considered it to be unsuitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be access issues. <p>Others thought that it could be suitable because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If changes to Green Belt proved to be necessary, development here may have less adverse impacts than sites elsewhere around Handforth.
I	Housing	<p>Open area of land between Tatton Road, the A555 and the railway line:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undeveloped Green Belt land; • Adjacent to the urban area; • Surrounding land uses are residential properties, the A555 and the railway line. Across the railway are commercial and industrial properties at Stanley Green Industrial Estate; • Estimated potential to provide up to around 100 dwellings; • Council-owned land. 	<p>The panel considered this site to be highly unsuitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The playing fields are a valued recreational area; • There is a shortage of open space facilities
J	Housing	<p>Wooded area of land east of Dobbin Brook and west of Knowle Park, site of former Knowle House Hospital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownfield site within the Green Belt; • Adjacent to the urban area; • Surrounding land uses are residential properties, Dobbin Brook and the River Dean; • Access via a track to Sagars Road; • Adjacent to a Site of Biological Importance • Estimated potential to provide up to around 25 dwellings. 	<p>The panel held mixed views about this site. Some considered it to be unsuitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are potential access issues; <p>Others thought that it could potentially be suitable because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although it is in the Green Belt, the site is brownfield (previously developed); • It is self-contained and would not be visually prominent.



Option	Potential Development Use	Comments	Views of Stakeholder Panel
K	Housing	<p>Grassed field east of Wilmslow Road and north of A555:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undeveloped Green Belt land; • Adjacent to the urban area; • Surrounding land uses are a hotel, public house, retail and the road network; • Estimated potential to provide around 30 dwellings. 	<p>The panel held mixed views about this site. Some thought that it should be considered because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a relatively small site on the other side of the A555 to the main settlement of Handforth. <p>Others thought it unsuitable because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development here would further close the small gap between Handforth and Heald Green.
L	Housing Car Parking Allotments	<p>Vacant field off Old Road between the youth centre and St. Benedict's Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undeveloped small piece of land; • Within the urban area; • Surrounding land uses are the youth centre, church, residential properties and a wooded area. • Close to Handforth station • Council-owned land; • Estimated potential to provide up to around 20 dwellings; • Alternatively, if less dwellings were built, there could be potential to incorporate additional parking facilities for Handforth Station and / or allotment gardens 	<p>The panel considered this site to be suitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a small unused site within the urban area; • There is potential for additional community benefits (e.g. additional parking for Handforth station)



Option	Potential Development Use	Comments	Views of Stakeholder Panel
M1	Mixed Use	<p>Large open area of land east of the A34 Handforth Bypass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Undeveloped Green Belt land; ● Detached from the urban area; ● Surrounding land uses are open countryside, the A34, a leisure complex and offices. Across the A34 are retail uses at Handforth Dean; ● Access would need to be taken from A34; ● Given the distance from and physical barriers between existing residential areas and this area of land, development here would effectively form a standalone community. As such, there would need to be a mix of uses to serve the day to day needs of residents. ● The area extends to nearly 60ha. There is an estimated potential for around 1000 dwellings on part of the space. The rest of the area could be developed for a mixture of open spaces, leisure facilities, employment uses and a new local centre which might include some local convenience shops, community hall, primary school and similar uses; ● Mainly Council-owned land. 	<p>The panel held mixed views about this site. Some considered it to be unsuitable for development because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It would be a new settlement and not relate to Handforth at all; ● It would close the open space between Handforth and Cheadle Hulme; ● People here would not use or support the facilities in Handforth; ● The amount of development would be too much and meet the needs of a much wider area. <p>On the other hand, others though it worthy of consideration because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There would be no need to develop any other greenfield sites in Handforth; ● The land is currently largely unused; ● Development here would minimise the impact on Handforth.



Option	Potential Development Use	Comments	Views of Stakeholder Panel
M2	Safeguarded land for possible future development needs beyond 2030	<p>Large open area south-east of area M1 and north of Blossoms Lane:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undeveloped Green Belt land; • Detached from the urban area; • The area is surrounded by open countryside; • Given the distance from and physical barriers between existing residential area and this area of land, development here would effectively form a standalone community. This could only happen as a further phase to development of M1. As such, this land would need to be safeguarded for possible future development needs beyond 2030. • Any firm proposals would come through a review of the Local Plan at a later date but it is envisaged that the area would be mixed-use but predominantly residential; • Mainly Council-owned land. 	The panel held mixed views about this site for the same reasons given for site M1.

Table 5.1 Description of Areas and Potential Uses

Housing

5.11 The Core Strategy Issues and Options paper in 2010 identified a range of different development scenarios. Under these scenarios, Handforth would need to accommodate up to 600 new homes during the 20 years between 2010 and 2030, and enough employment land to meet the needs of the area. This housing figure equates to up to 30 new homes each year. It will be essential to ensure that the final figure promoted for Handforth is sufficient to meet local needs for new housing and development without having unacceptable adverse impacts.

5.12 As of March 2012, there were 48 net additional new homes with planning permission in Handforth, and 29 net new homes have been built since 2010. It is estimated that other small brownfield sites in Handforth (excluding sites B and C identified by Cheshire East Council for potential employment uses at Stanley Green / Handforth Dean) could have a capacity for around 27 additional dwellings by 2030.

5.13 Taking into account the homes already built since 2010, the number of new homes with planning permission, and the small brownfield sites in Handforth, there would be a need to find new sites to accommodate up to around 500 new homes to meet the range envisaged in the Issues and Options paper.



Employment

5.14 The amount of land for employment that will be required in Handforth to 2030 will be informed by the Cheshire East Employment Land Review. At present, it is considered that sites B and C as well as other smaller brownfield sites within Handforth Dean / Stanley Green are likely to meet the future employment needs of Handforth, in addition to re-use of existing employment premises in the town when they become available.

5.15 The Employment Land Review is not yet complete but early indications are that sites B and C will be required to serve the needs for employment development to 2030, and should be retained for that purpose. If these were used for housing, it is likely that alternative sites would need to be found for employment.

Alternative Future Development Option: Land to East of Handforth Bypass

The new Local Plan needs to identify enough land within or on the edge of Handforth to meet local development needs to 2030. This could be enough land for up to 500 new homes (taking into account those already built / with permission / on small brownfield sites), although this figure will be refined further following this Town Strategy consultation, some further population forecasting work and a consultation on an overall development strategy for Cheshire East.

An alternative to further development within or on the edge of the existing Handforth urban area, could be to plan for a new 'sustainable community' on area M1 to the east of the Handforth Bypass. The size of the area, and the amount of people needed to sustain new community facilities and services means that development here would have to be of a size to meet some of the needs from other nearby areas, as well as local needs in Handforth. If this was to emerge as a favoured approach, it is also envisaged that the adjacent area M2 would be 'safeguarded' for possible future development needs beyond 2030 but would not be allocated for development in this Local Plan.

The Council is particularly interested to hear views on the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative approach.



6 District Centre

6.1 A greatly improved district centre, with attractive public spaces and a vibrant and varied shopping experience, a thriving independent sector and a wide range of services is central to the vision for Handforth.

6.2 Objective 2 and the aims that follow set out how this could be achieved. Improvements could be achieved by improvements to the quality of the environment, traffic calming measures, improvements to parking arrangements, promotion of the centre, support for independent retailers and a programme of events.

6.3 There is also a need to review the existing district centre and shopping area boundaries in line with objective 2 to ensure that the boundaries are still appropriate and to help safeguard the functions of the centre. This will be important as different planning policies specific to town centres will apply with the town centre boundary.

6.4 Handforth District centre has been divided into character areas that will help to inform policies in the Cheshire East Local Plan. They reflect the nature of the existing development and how the stakeholder panel would like to see the area developed and used in the future. Figure 6.1 shows the district centre boundaries and areas.

Area	Comments
Shopping Area	This is the main shopping area in the centre where the main aim is to retain and improve the retail provision. Residential use of upper floors is also encouraged.
Open Space	It will be important to protect and enhance the open space within the district centre.
Car Parks	The aim is to retain and improve existing car parks in addition to looking at other ways of improving parking.
Community Use	It is assumed that the uses in this area will be retained, although any development proposals will be considered on their merits.
Mixed Use Area	It is assumed that the uses in this area will be retained, although any development proposals will be considered on their merits.
Potential District Centre Extensions	<p>These areas are currently outside of the defined district centre boundary (as set in the 2004 Macclesfield Local Plan). The panel suggested that two areas could be consider for future inclusion in the district centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area along Station Road so that the train station is within the centre to help promote better physical links and signage between the two; and • Area at entrance to Meriton Road Park to help promote links between The Paddock and the park, and to possibly act as a new pedestrian gateway into The Paddock from Meriton Road

Table 6.1 District Centre Areas

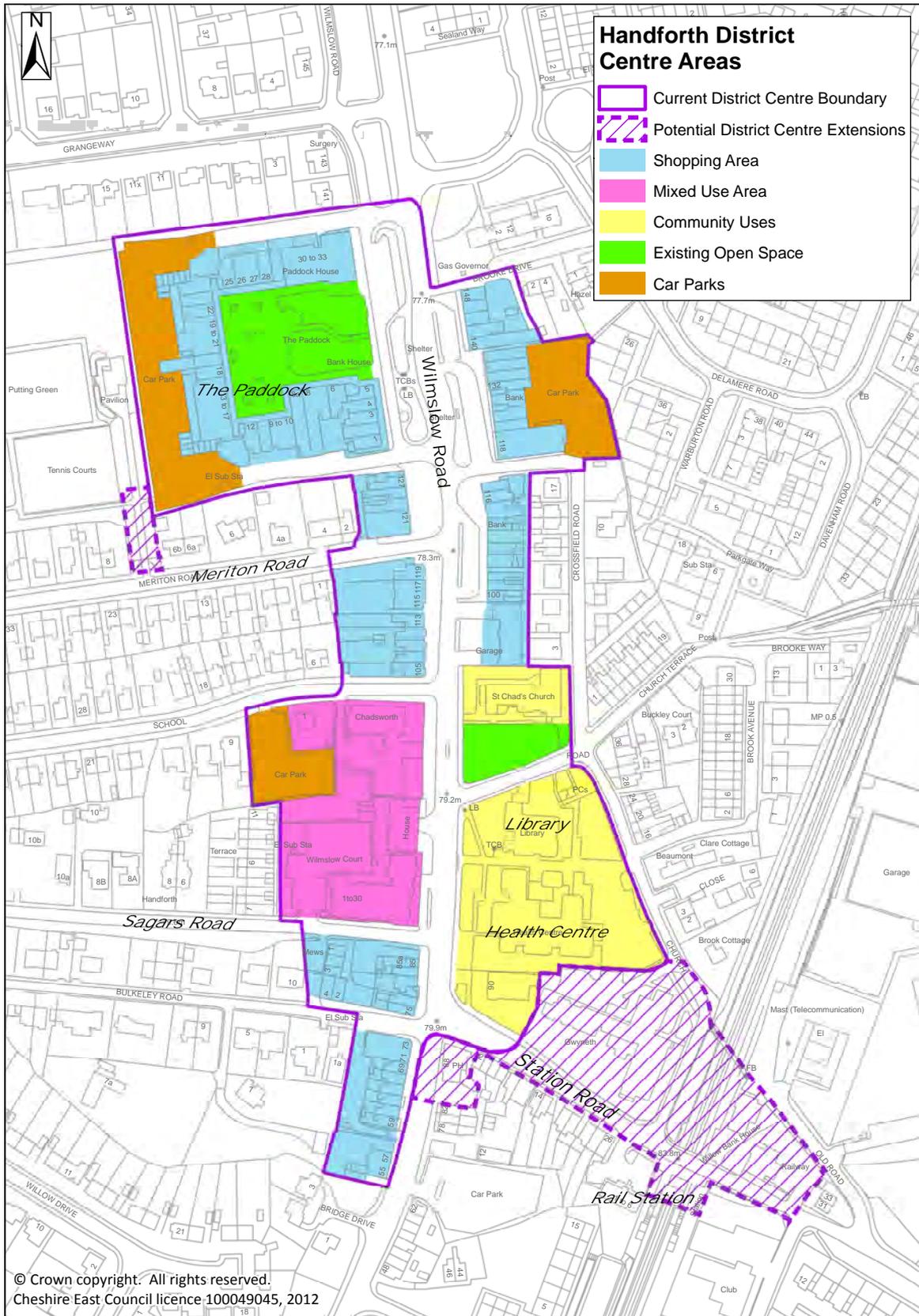


Figure 6.1 Handforth District Centre Areas

6.5 As part of the Town Strategy consultation, we are interested in your views on the potential extensions to the district centre boundary and whether these character areas are suitable to develop future policies for the district centre.



6.6 The stakeholder panel also considered that the district centre would benefit from:

- Retaining free parking in the car parks;
- Encouraging locally distinct, high quality retailers including delicatessens, butchers, greengrocers, fishmongers etc as well as niche retailers;
- Providing better access to shops for disabled and elderly residents;
- Installing 'gateways' to the centre to add to the sense of place.



7 Infrastructure Priorities

7.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy that Local Authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The proceeds of the levy will be spent alongside other sources of funding to provide infrastructure to support the development of the area.

7.2 It is important to consider the infrastructure required to support the development proposals and the relative priorities for phasing (what order infrastructure is delivered over the plan period). The Town Strategy should establish priorities to guide future investment in the town through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

7.3 Cheshire East Council will implement a CIL charging schedule alongside the new Local Plan to help pay for infrastructure. It will therefore be important to publish a list of the types of infrastructure items required and their funding to ascertain the levels of Community Infrastructure Levy required from developments.

7.4 The stakeholder panel has identified and prioritised the following list of infrastructure requirements to deliver the Vision and Strategy as proposed.

Essential Infrastructure

- Completion of the SEMMMS Airport Link Road to join the existing A555 with Manchester Airport and the M56 to the west and with the A6 at Hazel Grove to the east;
- An environmental improvement scheme at The Paddock / district centre to improve the overall environment and appearance, public areas, street furniture etc;
- Provision of car parking facilities at Handforth station;
- Improved disabled and mobility impaired access, particularly at the station;
- Provision of affordable housing and special needs housing;
- More frequent and integrated public transport serving destinations within and beyond Handforth;
- New and improved school facilities.

Important Infrastructure

- Environmental and safety improvements to the pedestrian links between Handforth and the employment areas at Stanley Green and retail area at Handforth Dean;
- Improved children's play areas;
- Wilmslow Road environmental improvement scheme which could include traffic calming, potential shared space scheme, reduction in street sign clutter, improvements to parking arrangements etc;
- Better facilities and activities for young people;
- Enhancements to community facilities such as the youth centre and library.



Desirable Infrastructure

- Provision of next-generation high speed broadband;
- Additional allotments and / or community gardens;
- Improved links between The Paddock / district centre and Meriton Road park;
- Programme of improvements to cycle routes and footpaths;
- Increased provision of cycle parking stands;
- Programme of enhancements to existing open spaces;
- Renewable energy projects;
- Improved sports and leisure facilities to serve all age groups;
- Extended CCTV facilities in the district centre;
- New public art installations;
- Household waste and recycling centre.

7.5 The list of priorities set out above will also be shaped by further evidence such as transport assessments and other important assessments to ensure the delivery of the Local Plan.

7.6 The resources received from the Community Infrastructure Levy are finite and will not be able to cover all the aspects the Council and community may wish. The Council in the preparation of the Local Plan will investigate the expected costs in infrastructure provision across the Borough, prepare a list of charges attached to development and set out how this should be spent.



8 Consultation and Contact Information

8.1 Your views on the draft Handforth Town Strategy are important. Please complete a questionnaire today!

8.2 An exhibition will be held at Handforth Library, The Green, Wilmslow Road SK9 3ES from 31st August to 1st October 2012. The library is open on Mondays (9:30am - 5:00pm), Tuesdays (9:30am - 7:00pm), Thursdays (9:30am - 5:00pm), Fridays (9:30am - 5:00pm) and Saturdays (9:30am - 1:00pm). Please note that the library closes for lunch between 1:00pm and 2:00pm.

8.3 Copies of the questionnaire and the draft Handforth Town Strategy document can be obtained from Handforth library and the Council's Customer Service Centres at Macclesfield Town Hall and Delamere House, Crewe.

8.4 They can also be viewed on the Council's website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan.

8.5 Please return your questionnaire on one of the following ways:

- Online using the Local Plan consultation portal at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan;
- By posting your completed questionnaire in the box at Handforth Library;
- Returning your questionnaire to us at Freepost RSRX-YYYYE-AYRS, Spatial Planning, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

8.6 Please return your questionnaire by **Monday 1st October 2012**.

Contact Information

8.7 For further information on the Cheshire East Local Plan or on the consultation for the draft Handforth Town Strategy, please contact the Spatial Planning Team.

- E-mail: Ldfconsultation@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Phone: 01270 685893
- Website: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan

8.8 You can also follow us and join in the debate using social media:

- Twitter: search for @PlaceShaping
- Facebook: find us at www.facebook.com/CESpatialPlanning
- LinkedIn: search for "Spatial Planning Cheshire East"

8.9 For further information on Handforth Parish Council please contact the Parish Clerk on 01625 523330 or email handforthparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk.



9 Glossary

9.1 This Glossary provides definitions of the uncommon words, terms and abbreviations used in this document.

Affordable Housing	Housing, whether for rent, shared ownership or outright purchase, provided at a cost considered affordable in relation to incomes that are average or below average, or in relation to the price of general market housing.
Brownfield	Previously developed land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
Community Infrastructure	The basic facilities, services and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society. It includes community buildings and halls, leisure facilities, education services, healthcare facilities, renewable energy installations and transport infrastructure.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	A charge allowing local authorities to raise funds from developers of land to pay for new community infrastructure.
Community Strategy	A strategy prepared by a Local Authority to improve local quality of life and aspirations, under the Local Government Act 2000.
Core Strategy	Forms part of the Local Plan setting out the spatial vision and strategic objectives of the planning framework for an area, having regard to the Community Strategy.
Council	Although Handforth Parish Council selected the stakeholder panel and have been involved in the process of preparing this consultation document, the word 'Council' in the draft Town Strategy generally refers to Cheshire East Council.
Employment Land	Land identified for offices, research and development, light industry, general industry and storage & distribution uses (planning use classes B1, B2 and B8).
Employment Land Review	A review of the employment land portfolio within the Borough to form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
Green Belt	<p>A designation for land around certain cities and large built-up areas, which aims to keep this land permanently open or largely undeveloped. The purposes of the Green Belt is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas• prevent neighbouring towns from merging• safeguard the countryside from encroachment• preserve the setting and special character of historic towns• assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land



	Green Belts are defined in the Local Plan.
Greenfield	Land, or a defined site, usually farmland, that has not previously been developed.
Infrastructure	Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.
Infrastructure Plan	National planning policy formally requires Local Authorities to demonstrate sufficient infrastructure exists, or will be provided, to support their strategies for new development as set out in their Local Plan documents.
Listed Building	A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures, for example wells within its curtilage. English Heritage is responsible for designating buildings for listing in England.
Local Plan	<p>The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by</p> <p>the local planning authority in consultation with the community. A Local Plan comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development Plan Documents (including the Core Strategy and Site Allocations documents), which form part of the statutory Development Plan• Supplementary Planning Documents <p>The Local Plan will also comprise of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Statement of Community Involvement• the Local Development Scheme• the Annual Monitoring Report• any Local Development Orders or Simplified Planning Zones that may have been added
Open Space	All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.
Previously Developed Land	See 'brownfield'.
Public Realm	Those parts of a village, town or city, whether publicly or privately owned, available for everyone to use. This includes streets, squares and parks.



Renewable Energy	Energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment, for example from the wind, water flow, tides or the sun.
Safeguarded Land	Land between the Green Belt and urban area that is identified to meet longer-term development needs.
Site Allocations Document	Part of the Local Plan and will contain land allocations and detailed policies and proposals to deliver and guide the future use of that land.
Site of Biological Importance	Locally important site of nature conservation adopted by Local Authorities for planning purposes.
Statement of Community Involvement	This sets out the processes to be used by the Local Authority in involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all Local Development Documents and development management decisions. The Statement of Community Involvement is an essential part of the new-look Local Plans.
Supplementary Planning Documents	Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design.
Sustainability Appraisal	An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.
Sustainable Development	<p>A widely used definition drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."</p> <p>The Government has set out four aims for sustainable development in its strategy 'A Better Quality of Life, a Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK'. The four aims, to be achieved simultaneously are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone;• Effective protection of the environment;• Prudent use of natural resources; and• Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
Transport Assessment	An assessment of the availability of, and levels of access to all forms of transportation.



Cheshire East Council

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