

Policy details

Policy PG 2

Settlement Hierarchy

Principal Towns

In the Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, significant development will be encouraged to support their revitalisation, recognising their roles as the most important settlements in the borough. Development will maximise the use of existing infrastructure and resources to allow jobs, homes and other facilities to be located close to each other and accessible by public transport.

Key Service Centres

In the Key Service Centres, development of a scale, location and nature that recognises and reinforces the distinctiveness of each individual town will be supported to maintain their vitality and viability.

The Key Service Centres are Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.

Local Service Centres

In the Local Service Centres, small scale development to meet needs and priorities will be supported where they contribute to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities.

The Local Service Centres are Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury.

Other Settlements and Rural Areas

In the interests of sustainable development and the maintenance of local services, growth and investment in the other settlements should be confined to proportionate development at a scale commensurate with the function and character of the settlement and confined to locations well related to the existing built-up extent of the settlement. It may be appropriate for local needs to be met within larger settlements, dependent on location.

Policy PG 6

Open Countryside

1. The Open Countryside is defined as the area outside of any settlement with a defined settlement boundary⁽³⁴⁾.
2. Within the Open Countryside only development that is essential for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, public infrastructure, essential works undertaken by public service authorities or statutory undertakers, or for other uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted.
3. Exceptions may be made:
 - i. where there is the opportunity for limited infilling in villages; the infill of a small gap with one or two dwellings in an otherwise built up frontage elsewhere; affordable housing, in accordance with the criteria contained in Policy SC 6 'Rural Exceptions Housing for Local Needs' or where the dwelling is exceptional in design and sustainable development terms;
 - ii. for the re-use of existing rural buildings where the building is permanent, substantial and would not require extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension
 - iii. for the replacement of existing buildings (including dwellings) by new buildings not materially larger than the buildings they replace;
 - iv. for extensions to existing dwellings where the extension is not disproportionate to the original dwelling;
 - v. for development that is essential for the expansion or redevelopment of an existing business;
 - vi. For development that is essential for the conservation and enhancement of a heritage asset.
4. The retention of gaps between settlements is important, in order to maintain the definition and separation of existing communities and the individual characters of such settlements.
5. The acceptability of such development will be subject to compliance with all other relevant policies in the Local Plan. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to design and landscape character so the appearance and distinctiveness of the Cheshire East countryside is preserved and enhanced.

Policy EG 4

Tourism

1. The Local Plan Strategy will protect and enhance the unique features of Cheshire East that attract visitors to the area, including their settings, whilst encouraging investment. This will be achieved through:
 - i. The protection of Cheshire East's tourist assets, such as Tatton Park, Quarry Bank Mill, Little Moreton Hall, Macclesfield Silk Museum, Jodrell Bank, the Peak District National Park (adjoining the plan area), Alderley Edge, the Gritstone Trail, Tegg's Nose Country Park, Sandstone Ridge and the waterways that support appropriate sustainable tourist related development;
 - ii. Protecting visitor attraction sites;
 - iii. Promoting the enhancement and expansion of existing visitor attractions and tourist accommodation, and the provision of new visitor and tourism facilities, in sustainable and appropriate locations;
 - iv. Encouraging sustainable transport to tourist and cultural sites;
 - v. Encouraging and promoting opportunities for new tourist attractions in the historic and natural environment in sustainable and appropriate locations; and
 - vi. Improving access to our natural and historic landscapes through enhancing our vital public rights of way network
2. Proposals for tourist development of an appropriate scale, including attractions and tourist accommodation, will be supported within the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres.
3. Proposals for tourist development outside the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres will be supported where:
 - i. Either:
 - a. They are located within a Local Service Centre; or
 - b. They are located within an existing or replacement building; or
 - c. There is evidence that the facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction;
 - ii. And:
 - a. The scale, design and use of the proposal is compatible with its wider landscape or townscape setting and would not detract from the character or appearance of the area; and
 - b. It would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas; and
 - c. The proposals are served by adequate access and infrastructure; and
 - d. The site has access to local services and employment.

Policy EG 2

Rural Economy

Outside the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres, developments that:

1. Provide opportunities for local rural employment development that supports the vitality of rural settlements;
2. Create or extend rural based tourist attractions, visitor facilities and recreational uses;
3. Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses, particularly through the conversion of existing buildings and farm diversification;
4. Encourage the creation and expansion of sustainable farming and food production businesses and allow for the adaption of modern agricultural practises;
5. Are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Cheshire East, as determined by the council; or
6. Support the retention and delivery of community services such as shops and public houses, and village halls

Will be supported where the development:

- i. Meets sustainable development objectives as set out in policies MP 1, SD 1 and SD 2 of the Local Plan Strategy;
- ii. Supports the rural economy, and could not reasonably be expected to locate within a designated centre by reason of their products sold⁽⁴²⁾;
- iii. Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations;
- iv. Is supported by adequate infrastructure;
- v. Is consistent in scale with its location and does not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity;
- vi. Is well sited and designed in order to conserve and where possible enhance the character and quality of the landscape and built form; and
- vii. Does not conflict with Policies PG 3, PG 4, PG 6, PG 7, SE 3, SE 4, SE 5, SE 6 and SE 7 of the Local Plan Strategy.

Policy MP 1

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

1. When considering development proposals the council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants to find joint solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
2. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
3. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the council will grant permission, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:
 - i. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
 - ii. Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Policy SD 1

Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

In order to achieve sustainable development in Cheshire East, the following considerations to development will apply. Development should wherever possible:

1. Contribute to creating a strong, responsive and competitive economy for Cheshire East;
2. Prioritise investment and growth within the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres;
3. Contribute to the creation of sustainable communities;
4. Provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community including: education; health and social care; transport; communication technology; landscaping and open space; sport and leisure; community facilities; water; waste water; and energy;
5. Provide access to local jobs, services and facilities, reflecting the community's needs;
6. Ensure that development is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
7. Provide safe access and sufficient car parking in accordance with adopted highway standards;
8. Support the health, safety, social and cultural well-being of the residents of Cheshire East;
9. Provide a locally distinct, high quality, sustainable, well designed and durable environment;
10. Contribute towards the achievement of equality and social inclusion through positive cooperation with the local community;
11. Use appropriate technologies to reduce carbon emissions and create a low carbon economy;
12. Incorporate sustainable design and construction methods;
13. Support the achievement of vibrant and prosperous town and village centres;
14. Contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built, historic and cultural environment;
15. Make efficient use of land, protect the best and most versatile agricultural land and make best use of previously developed land where possible;
16. Encourage the reuse of existing buildings; and
17. Prioritise the most accessible and sustainable locations.

Policy SD 2

Sustainable Development Principles

1. All development will be expected to:
 - i. Provide or contribute towards identified infrastructure, services or facilities. Such infrastructure should precede the delivery of other forms of development, wherever possible;
 - ii. Contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of:
 - a. Height, scale, form and grouping;
 - b. Choice of materials;
 - c. External design features;
 - d. Massing of development - the balance between built form and green/public spaces;
 - e. Green infrastructure; and
 - f. Relationship to neighbouring properties, street scene and the wider neighbourhood;
 - iii. Respect and, where possible, enhance the landscape character of the area. Particular attention will be paid toward significant landmarks and landscape features;
 - iv. Respect, and where possible enhance, the significance of heritage assets, including their wider settings;
 - v. Avoid the permanent loss of areas of agricultural land quality of 1, 2 or 3a, unless the strategic need overrides these issues;
 - vi. Be socially inclusive and, where suitable, integrate into the local community;
 - vii. Avoid high risk flood areas, or where necessary provide appropriate mitigation measures;
 - viii. Use appropriate design, construction, insulation, layout and orientation to create developments that:
 - a. Are resilient to climate change;
 - b. Minimise energy use;
 - c. Use natural resources prudently;
 - d. Promote the use, recovery and recycling of materials;
 - e. Integrate or allow future integration of renewable energy technologies;
 - f. Discourage crime and anti-social behaviour;
 - g. Minimise trip generation;
 - h. Minimise waste and pollution; and
 - i. Are water efficient.
2. In addition to the above principles, residential development will be expected to:
 - i. Provide open space, of an extent, quality, design and location appropriate to the development and the local community;
 - ii. Provide access to a range⁽³⁷⁾ of forms of public transport, open space and key services and amenities⁽³⁸⁾; and
 - iii. Incorporate measures to encourage travel by sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport.
3. In addition to the principles in point 1 above, employment development will be expected to:
 - i. Provide an attractive setting to development in order to create an attractive and successful place to work, with minimum impact on the surrounding area;
 - ii. Provide a flexible development that can serve a range of sizes and types of employment; and
 - iii. Maximise opportunities for access and deliveries by a range of forms of sustainable transport.
4. In addition to the principles in point 1 above, retail/town centre development will be expected to:
 - i. Provide high quality pedestrian and cycle facilities, including secure cycle parking;
 - ii. Be located so as to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and to enable people as far as possible to meet their needs locally; and
 - iii. Provide good town centre linkages, by walking, cycling and public transport, if the development is located on the edge or out of town.

Policy RUR 8

Visitor accommodation outside of settlement boundaries

1. Under LPS Policy PG 6 'Open countryside', development that is essential for uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted in the open countryside. Certain types of visitor accommodation may be appropriate to a rural area where their scale is appropriate to the location and setting and where there is an identified need for the accommodation, which cannot be met in nearby settlements because the type of accommodation proposed is intrinsically linked with the countryside. This will not include new-build hotels or guest houses.
2. In the open countryside, proposals for visitor accommodation that are demonstrated to be appropriate to a rural area under criterion 1 will be supported where they accord with other policies in the development plan and:
 - i. it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal requires a countryside location;
 - ii. the proposals make the best use of existing infrastructure such as existing buildings, utilities, parking and vehicular access;
 - iii. additional buildings, structures and ancillary development are restricted to the minimum level reasonably required for the existing or planned operation of the accommodation; are well-related to each other and existing buildings and do not form isolated or scattered development;
 - iv. the proposal does not unacceptably affect the amenity and character of the surrounding area or landscape (including visual impacts, noise, odour, design and appearance) either on its own or cumulatively with other developments; and
 - v. appropriate landscaping and screening is provided.
3. Where visitor accommodation is permitted in the open countryside that would be physically capable of forming a habitable dwelling, the council will impose planning conditions and/or legal obligations to restrict occupancy of the accommodation to prevent unauthorised permanent occupation. This includes (but is not limited to) static caravans, chalets, cabins and pods.
4. In the Green Belt, permission for development that falls outside of the definition of 'not inappropriate' will not be granted, except in very special circumstances as set out in LPS Policy PG 3 'Green Belt'.