

Cheshire East Local Plan Scoping Consultation Response

To: Strategic Planning Team, Cheshire East Council (localplan@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Regarding: New Local Plan Scoping Consultation

Focus Area: Spatial Strategy, Infrastructure Capacity, and Protection of Adlington

Please accept this formal submission as part of the scoping consultation process for the new Cheshire East Local Plan into the 2040s. The points detailed below outline critical framework parameters and policy scope requirements necessary to protect the sustainability of the borough's rural communities, with a specific focus on the settlement of Adlington.

1. Vision and Spatial Strategy

The vision for the new Local Plan into the 2040s must explicitly protect the unique identity, landscape character, and scale of Cheshire East's rural villages and semi-rural settlements, such as Adlington. The spatial strategy's scope should direct the majority of new development toward existing major urban hubs that already possess established supporting infrastructure. The plan must avoid a disproportionate allocation of growth to smaller villages where development risks overwhelming rural environments.

2. Natural Environment and Green Belt

The policy scope regarding the natural environment must include a strict presumption against deleting land from the Green Belt. The scoping framework and its supporting evidence base should legally mandate a 'brownfield-first' policy across the borough. All available urban and previously developed land must be fully utilised before any greenfield or rural edge allocations are considered for inclusion in the plan.

3. Infrastructure and Transport (Lessons from Congleton and Local Lane Capacity)

The infrastructure policy scoping rules must be significantly tightened to prevent a repeat of the recent development failures witnessed in Congleton. In Congleton, thousands of houses were successfully built, but the local infrastructure completely failed to keep pace. Developers repeatedly failed to deliver promised community assets (such as the Astbury Place footbridge), and lack of infrastructure capacity left local medical services, dental practices, and school networks overwhelmed.

To protect rural areas, the Local Plan must mandate detailed, localized highway capacity assessments for rural networks. In Adlington, the key rural feeding lanes routing traffic onto the A523 are entirely unsuitable for increased or heavy traffic volumes. These specific routes include:

- **Street Lane**
- **Brookledge Lane**
- **Mill Lane**
- **Holehouse Lane** (leading to the Windmill Inn)

These lanes are narrow, contain historic bridges, lack continuous safe footways, and feature severe blind bends. The scoping framework must state that if local feeding lanes cannot safely handle construction or residential traffic volumes, development allocations in that area must be legally blocked. Furthermore, infrastructure upgrades must be contractually secured and fully built **before** any house construction is allowed to commence.

4. Climate Change and Local Flooding

The climate change policy scope must introduce strict criteria regarding local hydrology, natural drainage, and surface water flood risk. It is critical that the scoping framework accounts for the cumulative impact that new hard surfaces have on rural drainage systems, agricultural land runoff, and vulnerable local ecosystems.

5. Future Engagement

Regarding future consultation methods, the council should commit to specific, targeted community assemblies or workshops within smaller rural parishes. This will provide local residents with a transparent, structured mechanism to properly scrutinise draft spatial options and proposed site selections during the 2027 evidence consultation phase.