Cheshire East Local Plan Scoping Consultation

Representations of Tatton Estate

September 2026

Turley

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1. Introduction

Tatton Estate and context to this representation

1.1 This representation to the Cheshire East Local Plan scoping consultation is submitted to Cheshire East Council on behalf of Tatton Estate.

1.2 Set in the heart of Cheshire, Tatton Estate is a forward-thinking and diverse rural estate committed to shaping places that foster wellbeing, connectivity and long-term growth.

1.3 Located just ten minutes from Manchester Airport, thirty minutes from Manchester city centre and forty-five minutes from Liverpool, Tatton Estate sits at the intersection of countryside and regional opportunity.

1.4 Tatton Estate is a family-owned private estate, spanning more than 5,500 acres and encompassing around 400 residential and commercial properties, villages, farms and natural landscapes.

1.5 As a long-term steward of this land, Tatton Estate is committed to creating sustainable, inclusive communities where homes, businesses, farming and nature thrive and exist in balance.

1.6 Through responsible ownership and collaborative partnerships, Tatton Estate works to create lasting value for communities while reinvesting in the infrastructure, environment and places that sustain them.

1.7 Through its extensive landholdings, and its commitment to working collaboratively with and having a lasting positive impact on the communities of which it is a part, Tatton Estate is in a unique position in its ability to contribute to the development and delivery of a progressive and sustainable Local Plan for Cheshire East and one which optimises benefits for all.

The Tatton Villages: a model for rural regeneration

1.8 This representation is made in the context of the Tatton Estate's recent submission to the Local Plan 'call for sites' exercise (March 2026) through which it submitted eight sites for consideration as development allocations through the Local Plan.

1.9 Whilst the call for sites submission includes sites that are proposed for development, Tatton Estate's vision and aspirations for the villages in which these sites are located goes significantly beyond the provision of new homes, rather working together these proposals are a vehicle to deliver a new and sustainable future for the 'Tatton Villages'.

1.10 Tatton Villages is an Estate-wide commitment to reconnect and reinvigorate Tatton's towns and villages. By investing in schools, shops, meeting places, green spaces and local services, Tatton Estate aims to strengthen everyday life across the local rural network. Its vision is shaped around existing towns and villages; Knutsford, Mobberley, Ashley, Rostherne, Millington and Bucklow Hill, set within 5,500 acres of land in North Cheshire, surrounding but not including Tatton Park.

1.11 Reflected in its proposals, growth within the villages would be distributed, landscape-led and tied to delivery of local facilities and infrastructure. Through this model Tatton Estate is strengthening life in local places, communities and villages; renewing them carefully so they grow and thrive rather than slowly losing their vitality.

1.12 This proposition sees the villages working together to distribute the benefit of infrastructure investment across a shared geography. To that end, Tatton Villages is not a single, large, edge-of-settlement expansion. It represents a coordinated approach to village renewal focusing on well-designed sites in and around established towns and villages, brought forward transparently within a coordinated framework and supported by infrastructure investments that will benefit existing and future communities within the area.

1.13 The new NPPF sets out the need for a positive approach to achieving a sustainable future for rural settlements (see Policy HO6) and supports their managed growth to enhance the vitality of rural communities and enable villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Tatton Villages is a practical, place-based embodiment of that. Through a holistic, multi-village approach, it creates an opportunity to demonstrate what exemplary growth can look like in achieving a sustainable future for this unique part of Cheshire.

Why villages need a new model

1.14 Across the UK, between 12,000 and 15,000 villages form the backbone of rural life, yet the infrastructure that underpins daily village life has gradually weakened: local services thin, younger households struggle to stay, older residents lose nearby facilities, public transport reduces and community life becomes harder to sustain.

1.15 The villages are not broken. They are out of balance. Tatton Villages is Tatton Estate's long-term commitment to restoring that balance.

1.16 Homes are central to renewal because viable services require viable populations. Housing is therefore not an end in itself but a catalyst for sustaining schools, meeting places, shops, sport, green space and everyday social life.

1.17 Against this backdrop, Tatton Estate's submission to the call for sites consultation set out its proposals for eight locations. These articulate Tatton Estate's ambition to put these villages individually and collectively on to a more sustainable footing whilst responding positively to the meeting the strategic development needs of Cheshire East in a way which maximises local economic, environmental and social benefit.

1.18 These representations to the Local Plan are made in the context of this proposal.

2. Comments on the Local Plan Scoping Document

2.1 Tatton Estate welcomes the opportunity to provide its comments on the Local Plan Scoping Document (LPSD) in the context of its proposals and land interests in Cheshire East which are summarised above.

2.2 Comments are provided in response to each heading / subheading where relevant. Summaries are provided where responses are more than 100 words long as requested by the Council.

LPSD Section 2: New Local Plan

Why prepare a new local plan

2.3 Tatton Estate welcomes the preparation of an up-to-date Local Plan. It supports the Council's recognition that the starting point for determining the level housing development which the Local Plan needs to make provision for is the Government's standard methodology, equating to 2,530 homes per annum. This scale of need requires a balanced portfolio of deliverable sites, including strategic and smaller allocations and urban and rural opportunities.

2.4 Housing should be planned as part of complete places. Site allocations should establish clear requirements for transport, education, healthcare, utilities, green infrastructure, affordable housing and community facilities. The Council should assess the net improvement a proposal can deliver, including whether development can make an existing settlement more sustainable, rather than treating the current absence of services as a permanent constraint.

LPSD Section 3: Context for the New Local Plan

Increase in housing requirement

2.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published on 17th August 2026 is clear that Local Authorities are expected to meet, as a minimum, the standard method calculation for housing need. For Cheshire East this will, as the LPSD acknowledges, represent a significant increase on the adopted housing requirement.

2.6 This uplift reflects the sustained need and demand for housing across the Borough. This is illustrated by the comparatively strong rates of completions of housing following the adoption of the current Local Plan, which whilst positive, have continued to fall short of the full need for housing, as evidenced by sustained affordability issues and growing numbers of households on the authority waiting list.

2.7 The NPPF continues to expect authorities to test whether the minimum need is representative or whether a higher requirement is justified with Council correctly recognising (at paragraph 3.7 of the LPSD) that the final housing requirement could be higher.

2.8 A proper reflection on the scrutiny of the housing requirement through the examination of the adopted Local Plan, and specifically the evidential justification for elevating the requirement to demonstrate alignment with planned economic growth, is an important consideration for the evidencing of need, even in the context of the standard method.

2.9 It is noted, in this context, that the LPSD acknowledges that, with reference to jobs growth, the adopted Local Plan has seen average annual growth of 1.3%, significantly exceeding the target prescribed in the Plan of 0.7% per annum (paragraph 5.68 of the LPSD). The likelihood of this was consistently expressed by many representors at the previous Local Plan Examination and it is reasonable to assume this level of growth will be sustained and indeed exceeded recognising the economic assets in the authority and anticipated infrastructure investment associated with Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) for example.

2.10 It is therefore important that in progressing the informing evidence base that this success and future investment potential is acknowledged and a positive approach taken to sustain growth over the next plan period. This aligns with the Government's vision, as articulated through the National Industrial Strategy.

2.11 In providing for the homes and employment land that is required, it is critical that the Local Plan acknowledges the sustained existence of different functional market areas within the Borough. This recognises the size of the Borough and the relationships that settlements in the north and south have with respective proximate larger economic centres.

2.12 Of particularly note, settlements in the north of the Borough (loosely defined as the previous Macclesfield district administrative area) are strongly related to the south Greater Manchester housing market as a result of strong commuting links by road and rail. This has historically driven high demand for housing and commercial floorspace in this market area within the Borough. The challenge of supply keeping pace with demand has continued to create challenging affordability pressures for local communities.

Summary and implications

The Local Plan should, in accordance with national policy (NPPF Policy HO2) and guidance, test whether a higher housing requirement than that calculated under the standard method is justified to reflect growth ambitions linked to economic development or infrastructure investment. This must take full account of the implications of planned infrastructure investment through NPR and related local and sub-regional economic strategies.

The Local Plan must acknowledge different market geographies in the Borough in providing for housing and employment needs. The planned provision of development in the northern market area must respond to strong demands arising from the strong relationship with the southern Greater Manchester Market and a strong local economy.

Changes to Green Belt policy

2.13 The LPSD identifies and seeks to summarise changes to national planning policy in relation to Green Belt since the existing Local Plan was produced and adopted.

2.14 The following points are highlighted at this stage as relevant to the onward development of the Local Plan in the context of the recently published NPPF.

2.15 Paragraph 2 of Policy GB3 of the NPPF confirms that exceptional reasons to amend Green Belt boundaries through a Local Plan include where a Local Authority cannot otherwise meet its development needs in full having considered the full potential of non-Green Belt sites for this purpose.

2.16 The consideration of alternatives to the use of Green Belt land includes assessing whether **suitable** sites to meet the development need exist outside of the Green Belt (Policy GB3 paragraph 2c).

2.17 In this context, suitable is a relative term. A proper consideration of whether development needs can be met without reliance on Green Belt is not simply a question of whether there is, theoretically, sufficient land for this purpose but rather the context to that land is an important consideration in determining its suitability as an alternative to Green Belt release. For example, does sufficient non-Green Belt land exist in the right locations, according to the intended spatial strategy, what are the land's accessibility characteristics, is it located where needs exist and is the land able to support the requisite infrastructure improvements to accommodate development?

2.18 Through Policy GB3, NPPF effectively requires a consideration of such matters in determining how much Green Belt land is needed to meet development needs and where. For clarity, it directs plan making authorities away from a process of exhausting all non-Green Belt opportunities, irrespective of their context, and then proceeding with the absolute minimum level of Green Belt release required to deliver a numerical development requirement. Instead, it requires a consideration of the suitability, and sustainability of sites (considered in the round), to meet development needs in a manner which accords with the objectives of the Local Plan and the achievement of most sustainable outcomes. This principle is further clarified through Policy GB4d. An appropriate site appraisal methodology will need to be developed to reflect this approach.

2.19 Policy GB3 also directs plan making authorities to identify suitable land around well-connected stations for development and that where a development plan's spatial strategy does this, exceptional circumstances do not need to be used to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries. Cheshire East has several well-connected stations and stations where, through planned investment, the frequency of services to station can increase a locations connectivity.

2.20 The LPSD notes that if there is need to release land from the Green Belt to meet development needs, grey belt land should be considered first. In accordance with Policy GB4 of the NPPF this sequential approach should be applied where *'… this promotes a sustainable pattern of development overall.'*

2.21 This is to say that the sequential approach to the release of Green Belt sites must be applied in the context of the need to achieve a sustainable pattern of development overall. Thus, consistent with the point made above, when considering Green Belt sites, the land's broader attributes need to be considered in determining its suitability for allocation, not just its grey belt credentials. A site's status as grey belt does not override all other considerations in selecting sites from the Green Belt for allocation. Overweighting of a site's grey belt situation, in a consideration of candidate Green Belt releases, should therefore be avoided as directed by NPPF Policies GB2 and GB4.

2.22 It is important that the approach to the identification, filtering and assessment of sites for allocation is based on a methodology which reflects the direction provided by NPPF policies GB2, GB3 and GB4 in this regard.

Summary and implications

In accordance with NPPF Policies GB2, GB3 and GB4, the appraisal and selection of sites for allocation must have regard to the need to achieve a sustainable pattern and distribution of development in overall terms and to the need to select sites which best achieve this beyond just a consideration of Green Belt status and contribution. The sequential approach to site selection must be carried out in this context. Whilst Green Belt is a critical consideration, an overweighting of the Green Belt status of sites must be avoided in the context of NPPF in order that the most sustainable sites, which collectively deliver the intended spatial strategy, are selected for allocation.

Economic growth

2.23 It is agreed that the Local Plan must provide for more than just the quantified need for employment land and ensure that the needs of different facets of the modern economy are provided for.

2.24 Within the LPSD, the Council highlights that the strong job growth has been achieved where there remains a healthy supply of employment land (375 ha, paragraph 5.68). Whilst in quantitative terms this appears significant, it is strongly recommended that the evidence base thoroughly re-assesses the suitability, and in particular the market attractiveness, of this supply of land as to the extent to which it meets the needs of key sectors and the needs of the modern economy as documented in NPPF Policy E1.

2.25 It is observed in this regard, for example, that the supply of remaining land along strategic road corridors (the M6 and M56) in the northern part of the authority in particular is comparatively modest in the scale of recognised elevated demand and NPPF's recognition of the specific locational requirements of the freight and logistics sector (Policy E3). This must take adequate consideration of the economic advantages the authority has on the basis of its proximity to large populations and areas of economic activity in Greater Manchester and Merseyside linked by this road network.

2.26 Recognising the datedness of the adopted Local Plan and its evidence, it is critical that account is given to the emerging demands and market signals arising from digital infrastructure, data centres and gigafactories in the authority, again recognising its connectivity, existing digital clusters within the authority and in close proximity to

Greater Manchester, for example. The emergence of a need for data centres since the last Local Plan in particular should be directly considered within the evidence base and will necessitate a specific policy response within the Local Plan.

2.27 There is a requirement for the Local Plan to recognise and provide for rural business development in accordance with NPPF Policy E4. This recognises that the rural economy is a significant contributor to the Borough's economic success.

2.28 Rural settlements in the north of the Borough have demonstrated that rural and village locations can support start-ups, hybrid working, local services, advanced manufacturing, research and development and flexible workspace where they are well connected or can be made sustainable. The co-location of homes, employment, active travel, green infrastructure and improved public transport through the planned growth of current rural settlements in the Borough would reduce the need for longer car journeys and strengthen local labour markets.

Summary and implications

It is recommended that the Local Plan identifies new allocations to provide for specific sectors of the modern economy which have seen elevated demand and/or have newly emerged since the adopted Local Plan was prepared based on an up to date evidence base which thoroughly re-assesses the suitability, and in particular the market attractiveness, of the existing supply of employment land in the context of a modern economy and economic growth opportunities which the Borough benefits from.

It is recommended that the Local Plan explicitly recognises data centres as a key component of the modern economy in Cheshire East and allocates strategic employment sites to meet identified needs.

The Local Plan will need to recognise and provide for the development of the rural economy and businesses within it in accordance with NPPF Policy E4.

Spatial Development Strategy

2.29 There is a need to progress the Local Plan without delay, notwithstanding the pending preparation of the SDS. As such, the Local Plan will need to allow for circumstances where the SDS, as a strategic policy document sitting 'above' the Local Plan, identifies and sets out strategic development needs which the Local Plan does not reflect.

2.30 This can be managed through the Local Plan acknowledging the relationship between it and the SDS and the potential requirement for an early review of the Local Plan to ensure any misalignment is addressed given the role of a Local Plan as a key delivery vehicle for the SDS.

2.31 The Tatton Villages proposition provides a corridor-based growth opportunity which should be considered in both strategies. It links existing settlements and stations with Tatton Park, Manchester Airport, Knutsford and Greater Manchester and can provide a coherent basis for planned investment rather than isolated piecemeal developments without a joined-up strategy for delivering local infrastructure improvements.

Summary and implications

The Local Plan will need to acknowledge the relationship between it and the emerging SDS and the potential requirement for an early review to accommodate the SDS.

The Tatton Villages proposition is a strategic, cross-boundary concept requiring consideration and positive planning for across multiple plan areas, including both the Cheshire East Local Plan and the SDS to ensure proper planning and delivery of infrastructure.

Strategic environment assessment

2.32 Tatton Estate supports an integrated assessment of environmental, social, economic, health and equality effects. Reasonable alternatives should be assessed consistently and at an appropriate level of detail through the SEA process. In this regard, the assessment must consider both adverse effects and the capacity of development to deliver net improvements, including affordable housing, services, employment, public transport, active travel, accessible green space, habitat creation, sustainable drainage and heritage enhancement.

2.33 The assessment should also consider cumulative and corridor-wide outcomes. A coordinated group of allocations under single long-term ownership may deliver infrastructure and environmental networks that would not be achievable through fragmented sites assessed in isolation. The SEA must deploy a methodology which allows such matters to be taken into account.

LPSD Section 4: Baseline information and spatial portrait

2.34 The Local Plan spatial portrait should identify the distinct role of northern Cheshire East and its functional relationship with Greater Manchester. This area contains strong strategic assets including the M56, Manchester Airport, the Mid-Cheshire Line, Knutsford and Tatton Park. It also contains rural settlements where limited growth and declining services have reduced sustainability over time. These opportunities and challenges should inform the spatial strategy and evidence base.

Cheshire East in a national context

Size, geographical location and population distribution

2.35 Cheshire East should not be assessed as a self-contained housing or economic market. The northern part of the Borough has strong cross-boundary relationships with Trafford and the wider Greater Manchester economy, while the Mid-Cheshire Line connects communities across Cheshire West, Cheshire East and Greater Manchester. Evidence on housing, employment, transport and infrastructure should reflect these functional geographies and be prepared jointly where appropriate.

Connectivity

2.36 The LPSD notes the existing connectivity characteristics of the Borough, including links into Greater Manchester to the north and international connections through Manchester Airport. This connectivity means Cheshire East is, in economic and housing

market terms, strongly linked to and influenced by Greater Manchester particularly, with this being most acute in the north of the Borough which interfaces with areas of high housing demand in south Manchester, whilst also being well connected to the city centre.

2.37 Whilst this context is an influence on the new Local Plan, it is also important that the Local Plan recognises and is informed by the future potential connectivity context to the Borough, including Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and potential tram/train links between Altrincham, Hale and Manchester Airport via Ashley through an extension of the Mid-Cheshire Line.

2.38 NPR particularly will have a strategic influence on the Borough's connectivity with surrounding settlements and areas of economic activity, impacting on movement patterns and changing the dynamics of localised demand for homes and employment space, its relationship with Greater Manchester, Manchester Airport and its contribution to the economy of the northwest.

2.39 The influence of this future investment is an important consideration in the onward development of the Local Plan including in respect of the scale of housing and employment development needed and its distribution.

2.40 The connectivity portrait presented within the LPSD is too focused on motorways and inter-city rail. It should also recognise the strategic role and unrealised capacity of the Mid-Cheshire Line and its stations, including Ashley and Mobberley. The line connects Chester, Northwich, Knutsford, Altrincham, Stockport and Manchester and provides access to employment, education, services and visitor destinations.

2.41 The Local Plan should set an outcome of retaining the existing rail services as a minimum and working towards at least two trains per hour in each direction, supported by development-generated patronage, station access improvements and coordinated investment. It should safeguard routes and land required for station expansion, walking, cycling and interchange improvements. This would advance policies TR1, TR3 and TR8 of the 2026 NPPF and benefit existing communities along the whole corridor.

2.42 The portrait should also recognise Tatton Park as a major destination generating substantial visitor movement through the Borough. Improved public transport and active travel access to the wider Tatton area would support the visitor economy while reducing pressure on the highway network.

2.43 In addition, there are planned active travel improvements, such as the Greater Bollin Trail, that will enhance local connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians and the plan should recognise and this and similar projects as part of the proposed transport infrastructure investment.

Summary and implications

The Local Plan should recognise both Cheshire East's existing connectivity with Greater Manchester and Manchester Airport and the transformative potential of future infrastructure investment, including Northern Powerhouse Rail and enhanced rail and tram-train connections along the Mid-Cheshire Line. These investments have the potential to influence housing and employment demand, spatial distribution and sustainable travel patterns across the Borough.

The Plan should also acknowledge the strategic role of the Mid-Cheshire Line, Tatton Park and planned active travel improvements, ensuring that growth supports enhanced public transport, walking and cycling connectivity whilst maximising wider economic, social and environmental benefits.

The future Local Plan will need to be informed by and shaped around these strategic investments which will influence development requirements and the spatial strategy which the Local Plan will need to progress.

Economic contribution

2.44 The acknowledgement of Cheshire East's economic success story must form a fundamental foundation of the Local Plan.

2.45 Considerable time was taken up through the Examination of the adopted Local Plan on the appropriate level of job growth which would be used to underpin the evidencing of need for both employment and housing.

2.46 The LPSD itself acknowledges that the level of growth planned for - 0.7% growth in jobs per annum - has been significantly exceeded. Indeed the authority has successfully achieved average annual job growth of 1.3% (paragraph 5.68 of the LPSD).

2.47 There is every reason, in the context of national and local economic objectives, to expect such a level of growth to be sustained over this plan period. The implications of facilitating this to occur and the role of identifying sufficient land to accommodate related business and population growth is a critical requirement of this plan and should be approached positively in its preparation.

Summary and implications

The Local Plan should recognise and plan for the recent historic level of economic growth to be maintained as a minimum. This is reflective of national planning policy and particularly NPPF Policy E1 which advocates a proactive and opportunity focused strategic approach to facilitating economic growth through the plan making system.

Heritage, culture and natural environment

2.48 The spatial portrait should recognise Tatton Park's strategic importance as a visitor destination receiving approximately 700,000 to 800,000 visitors in a typical year, as recorded by the Council. The Local Plan should consider how housing, visitor movement, sustainable transport, active travel, green infrastructure and the rural economy interact across the wider Tatton area.

2.49 Tatton Estate supports a landscape-led approach which protects designated assets, heritage settings, ancient woodland and high-value habitats while securing measurable nature recovery and public access. Agricultural land should be assessed according to quality, function and management rather than through a blanket assumption that all countryside performs the same role. Coordinated growth can retain field patterns, hedgerows and productive land, create connected habitats and support farming and rural enterprise.

Summary and implications

The role and status of Tatton Park as a major visitor destination should be recognised in the Local Plan spatial portrait alongside the potential for effective delivery of housing and infrastructure interact with a growing and diverse economy which is protected and nurtured as part of a bespoke strategy for this part of the Borough.

Cheshire East's diversity

Settlements and rural-urban composition

2.50 The LPSD acknowledges that the Borough has a significant rural character with 18% of residents living in rural areas, albeit also contains a number of larger towns.

2.51 Its rural character makes Cheshire East an attractive place to live and invest. However, its rural context presents a number of challenges in securing a long-term sustainable future for Cheshire East. Of note, the long-term viability and sustainability of a number of the Borough's rural settlements are under threat. Housing affordability, connectivity by sustainable modes of transport and poor quality or unsustainable service provision are common issues in the Borough's rural settlements.

2.52 This context to the Borough's rural settlements is an important consideration in the onward development of the Local Plan. The Local Plan, and where appropriate Neighbourhood Plans, provide an opportunity to respond positively to these threats and put the Borough's villages onto a more sustainable footing.

2.53 This requires a concerted focus on the steps which the Local Plan needs to take to achieve this, including through supporting appropriate levels of growth in settlements and seeking opportunities for an enhancement in service provision. A strategy which directs almost all growth to towns risks reinforcing declining services, limited housing choice, car dependency and demographic imbalance in villages.

2.54 This concept goes beyond historic approaches of seeing rural settlements as the least sustainable locations for growth but rather towards acknowledging that they exist as

existing concentrations of development, are a defining feature of the Borough's character and need to be allowed to evolve and change to achieve a sustainable future.

2.55 This principle is supported by NPPF Policy HO6 which supports the allocation of sites for development in Local Plans *'…which will support and enhance the vitality of rural communities and enable villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.'*

2.56 A coordinated approach towards the managed growth of the Borough's villages is needed through the Local Plan. This should involve a recognition of their inter-related nature (within defined geographies) where catchment areas for localised service provision overlap and which can inform a multi-village strategic masterplan where a coordinated growth plan, and service enhancement framework, can address some of their existing sustainability threats in the spirit of NPPF Policy HO6.

2.57 The Council should assess villages individually and as connected clusters reflecting their inter-reliance. The Tatton Villages proposition applies this principle through distinct but connected roles for Ashley, Mobberley, Rostherne and Bucklow Hill, linked to Knutsford and the Mid-Cheshire transport corridor.

Summary and implications

The Local Plan will need to take proactive steps to secure the long-term sustainability of the Borough's rural settlements, including fully engaging in a consideration of their current status and long-term threats and what they need to thrive in a modern context. This will require planned growth and management to deliver the services and infrastructure they require. This includes a consideration of how villages interact in terms of service provision and how, in this context, a multi-village approach across defined geographies can achieve a more sustainable future for the Borough's rural settlements.

Demographic mix

2.58 The age and demographic profile of the Borough has direct implications for the Local Plan's spatial strategy, housing mix and infrastructure policies and requirements. Of note, the Local Plan should increase the supply of smaller, accessible and adaptable homes, later-living accommodation, affordable homes and family housing in locations with access to services and public transport. This would allow older residents to move to suitable accommodation within their communities and release larger homes, while enabling younger households and local workers to remain or return.

2.59 Housing mix should be linked to measurable demographic outcomes, including the proportion of working-age residents, affordability, accessibility standards and access to healthcare and community facilities. Tatton Estate's village visions provide for a broad mix of tenures and typologies and, at Ashley, potential healthcare and school provision located within a walkable local centre.

Summary and implications

The demographic context to and needs of the Borough are an important influence on the Local Plan. This goes beyond housing mix but informs the site selection process. The Borough's needs are diverse in respect of future housing provision and it is important that the Local Plan engages in a proper consideration of what can be achieved in terms of housing provision and supporting infrastructure in respect of individual sites to best respond to this context.

LPSD Section 5: Scope of the new Local Plan

Local Plan period

2.60 Policy PM2 of the NPPF requires Local Plans to look beyond the specific defined plan period stating that Local Plans should reflect *'…longer term expectations extending beyond the plan period where appropriate, including for any broad locations for growth and regeneration identified in the spatial development strategy, and any specific strategic site proposals*'.

2.61 Clearly in the case of Cheshire East the Local Plan is intended to be adopted before the first SDS for the region, and so won't benefit from being informed by the SDS, however PM2 is clear that a Local Plan should consider the period beyond the Local Plan's stated timeframe notwithstanding.

2.62 There is a practical imperative to this. Not least, the most sustainable strategy for the future growth of the Borough may be to seek to allocate one or more new settlements and major urban extensions, the full potential of which may not be realised over the 15 year plan period.

2.63 In this context, it may be appropriate for the Local Plan to allocate such sites reflective of their delivery over 25+ years including on the basis of expected delivery beyond the 15 year plan period. The alternative of limiting the allocation to what is deliverable in the plan period, with no provision for the years after, would result in such options not being capable of performing favourably, when considered against alternatives, as the numerical yield during the plan period only may indicate a scale of development which is not reflective of a sustainable proposal (i.e. too small in the context of a new settlement proposal) with the benefits as a sustainable option only becoming apparent over the long term.

2.64 This shorter-term outlook is thus likely to result in a reliance on smaller scale, piecemeal expansion of existing settlements, putting these under stress and pressure without the benefit of a strategic plan for improved service provision which planning for new settlements or large urban extensions provides.

2.65 Policy HO4 of NPPF supports longer term strategic planning in encouraging planning for strategic scale sites which, by implication, will require the Local Plan to consider the years beyond the plan period, notwithstanding its initial focus may be over only 15 years.

2.66 Further, this longer term outlook is supported by Policy GB4 of NPPF which requires a consideration of the need to allocate safeguarded land when undertaking a Green Belt review for the purposes of minimising the need for a further Green Belt review when coming to review the Local Plan.

2.67 Again, whilst not itself directing that a plan period should extend beyond 15 years, this reinforces a need for the Local Plan to address some development requirements post-plan period and make provision for these, where appropriate, in this plan. This is important in enabling a seamless transition from the emerging Local Plan to the next iteration and ensuring, in accordance with NPPF Policy PM2, the Local Plan is grounded in longer term expectations and objectives.

Summary and implications

Whilst the plan period itself may be limited to 15 years, the strategic context to Cheshire East and its significant development needs, will require a consideration of strategic-scale sites and for the Local Plan to look considerably beyond this to effectively plan for the Borough's long-term growth.

In the absence of an SDS, and in the context of longer-term infrastructure investment and the anticipated role of new settlements and strategic employment sites in accommodating notably elevated requirements for housing and commercial floorspace, planning over a longer plan-period will be of significant importance for the Local Plan.

Creating a vision and objectives

2.68 The vision should commit Cheshire East to meeting identified development needs through well-designed, infrastructure-led and climate-resilient places which improve outcomes for existing and future residents. It should recognise the complementary roles of towns, villages and cross-boundary transport corridors in being able to support growth requirements in a truly sustainable manner.

2.69 Measurable outcomes should include: delivery against housing need and the five-year supply requirement; affordable, accessible and specialist housing; jobs and employment floorspace; the proportion of homes with convenient access to daily services; public transport frequency and station accessibility; walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity; delivery of education, healthcare and community facilities; publicly accessible green space; biodiversity and nature-recovery outcomes; operational and embodied carbon; flood and water resilience; heritage outcomes; infrastructure delivery against agreed triggers; and the demographic and geographic reach of engagement.

2.70 We set out above in relation to section 4 of the LPSD two central issues which the Local Plan will need to consider and which should be incorporated in the Plan's vision and objectives, these being:

- The need to take a proactive and positive approach to address the challenges and issues faced by a number of rural settlements in Cheshire East and enable a sustainable future for these communities with a focus on address

affordability challenge and service accessibility and sustainability. The vision should expressly reflect NPPF policy HO6 by supporting rural communities and enabling villages to grow and thrive where this sustains or improves local services.

- Shaping the Local Plan strategy around its future connectivity context, including NPR and other planned investment, and the influence this will have on the relationship of the northern part of the Borough with key economic areas outside of Cheshire East and housing and employment development markets and demand dynamics.

Summary and implications

A holistic vision and set of objectives will need to be defined which reflect the ambition to achieve the Borough's development needs but which recognise the opportunity to and imperative of looking behind these to deliver and optimise social and environmental outcomes. This will require a focus on accessibility, recreation, green infrastructure, the needs of rural and other communities and achieving significant environmental gains. Further the Local Plan will need to consider and plan for the Borough's future context, including the influence of NPR, which should be captured and reflected in its vision and objectives.

Planning for growth

2.71 The growth strategy should pursue economic, social and environmental objectives in mutually supportive ways. Infrastructure capacity must not be treated only as a fixed constraint: the assessment should identify what improvements are required, whether development can fund or support them and how they can be phased. This is central to the NPPF's vision-led approach.

2.72 The LPSD acknowledges the significant need for housing, calculated using the standard method. However, it is critical that assembling the evidence to inform both the housing and employment land requirement that the Council fully considers how the Plan will sustain the strong economic success achieved to date. This accords with the NPPF (see above including Policies E1 and HO2(3).

2.73 The Council, where evidenced, must include consideration of a housing requirement which exceeds the minimum standard method and ensures that the proposed supply of employment land will meet the needs of all segments of the local modern economy. This aligns with the commitment articulated in the Cheshire East Plan to unlock economic prosperity.

2.74 Tatton Estate's growth locations are predicated on improvement. They combine homes with rail and bus opportunities, active travel, education and healthcare provision, employment, public open space, biodiversity enhancement and community facilities. Their single ownership provides a basis for comprehensive planning and coordinated delivery rather than fragmented development.

Summary and implications

Sustaining and exceeding historic economic growth should be a clear intent of the Local Plan with growth options considered in the context of their ability to support this and to provide the facilitating infrastructure needed for this purpose. The Local Plan should also consider the need to plan for more housing than the standard methodology derived minimum and the strategic influences, future changes and opportunities which may inform this.

Identifying and assessing sites

Housing and employment sites

2.75 We have set out above, in relation to Green Belt policy considered in section 3 of the LPSD, the importance of a proper and correct application of national planning policy in relation to Green Belt when identifying and appraising sites and particularly ensuring that Green Belt characteristics are not overweighted in this process relative to other sustainability criteria.

2.76 This is central to ensuring the most sustainable sites are selected for allocation, when considered in the round, and that the outcome of the site selection process is reflective of the intended spatial distribution of development, rather than this being an uncontrolled consequence.

2.77 The latter is a common outcome where a narrow objective of minimising Green Belt release at all costs and then limiting such releases to sites which make the least Green Belt contribution is pursued. Such an approach would be at odds with the NPPF which is clear that priority is given to non-Green Belt sites (and within the context of Green Belt sites, to grey belt sites) only to the extent that this is compatible with achieving the most sustainable outcomes when considered in the round.

2.78 We would raise two further points in relation to the site appraisal and selection process at this stage:

1) It is important that sites are considered in the context of the development proposal which are presented and achievable in each case. Whilst a comparison of sites in their baseline (undeveloped) state is important to ascertain basic sustainable characteristics, allocation selections should be informed by what is achievable or proposed within a site, which may generate different conclusions as to what represents the most sustainable allocation options.

As an example, site size may have an influence on the ability to fund new infrastructure provision (including on site provision) which may change the conclusion of an assessment when considering one site over another. Alternatively, a developer's proposition may include specific additional onsite benefits, such as new recreation facilities, which support the wider community and which again should have an influence on how a site is scored (as long as such commitments were to be incorporated into the allocation policy as a specific requirement of the development).

To this end, the site appraisal process will be required to be carried out at a level of granularity which ensures critical points of difference, such as those presented above, are able to be considered and weighted as appropriate in the appraisal process. The alternative of a more crude appraisal process which considers sites independently of such detail, may result in less sustainable development proposals being selected for allocation.

2) In a similar vein, sites should be appraised in the context of what else is being considered and potentially allocated locally. Sites can work together to, for example, fund off site infrastructure improvements, but this can only be revealed, as a form of mitigation or localised benefit, when the scenario of two or more sites coming forward together is considered.

Again, and reflective of this, the site appraisal methodology needs to have a sufficient degree of sophistication built into it to consider how outcomes, in terms of a site's performance, may change in different scenarios.

Summary and implications

A site assessment methodology will need to be adopted which is sufficiently detailed to enable the most sustainable development options to be identified. This includes a consideration of the development proposals which each site can and are proposed to accommodate, not just the pre-development circumstances of the site, and a consideration of how sites may work together to deliver, in combination, the infrastructure requirements of a defined geography. Overweighting of Green Belt characteristics should be avoided with a requirement to consider the sustainability of sites and proposals on a broader basis to ensure the most sustainable sites, informed by a well-developed spatial strategy, are selected for allocation.

Green Belt

2.79 Our comments in relation to the influence and application of Green Belt policy in the assessment of candidate sites for allocation is set out above.

2.80 Tatton Estate supports the borough-wide Green Belt assessment and the sequential approach in NPPF policy GB3. The assessment should follow Annex E, use sufficiently small assessment areas and consider physical containment, settlement form and transport corridors. It should identify grey belt without conflating Green Belt purpose with separate landscape, heritage or ecological designations.

2.81 The Council should then assess whether potential releases would promote a sustainable pattern of development, including the ability to deliver affordable housing, necessary infrastructure and accessible green space under policy GB8. Land close to existing settlements and the Mid-Cheshire Line should be evaluated alongside planned service improvements and the capacity for comprehensive development. Tatton Estate's evidence indicates that relevant parts of its promoted land may meet the grey belt definition, but the Council should reach its own conclusion through the published methodology.

Summary and implications

Tatton Estate supports a Borough-wide Green Belt assessment in accordance with NPPF. This should inform the selection of sites based on an appropriate methodology reflective of NPPF. The relative benefits and sustainability of sites should be considered in the round with Green Belt status and contribution being one informant of this, albeit wider considerations in relation to site characteristics and benefits arising will be important to weigh appropriately in the process.

Settlement hierarchy

2.82 Comments are provided in relation to the spatial distribution of development, at a strategic level, below.

2.83 That issue has a interrelationship with the question of the settlement hierarchy. A settlement hierarchy is typically a reflection of the current situation in relation to the size and status of each settlement and the service provision within it. However it is important that this is not used to prevent a proper consideration of spatial options, and site selection which don't directly reflect a baseline settlement hierarchy having regard to existing infrastructure and scale.

2.84 To this end, a settlement hierarchy should not become a mechanism which locks settlements into their present condition to determine future growth capacity. The methodology should consider both current sustainability and the realistic post-development position where infrastructure and services are secured through an allocation. It should assess access to services across connected groups of settlements and recognise the role of public transport and active travel improvements.

2.85 The assumption that the hierarchy is fixed and the status quo should be maintained should not be automatically carried forward for plan making purposes. In expanding on this issue we would highlight three important points:

- There is a need to consider the spatial distribution of development at a strategic level particularly in Cheshire East since, in broad terms, the northern part of the Borough has a very different economic function to the south owing to its relationship with and connectivity to Greater Manchester and future planned infrastructure investment. This will have an influence on the question of how much growth is directed towards the north versus the south, to some degree irrespective of the size and status of existing settlements within these two locations.

- Set against this context, Policy HO4 of the NPPF requires Local Plans to consider the allocation of strategic sites, including new settlements, to meet development needs. This reflects that such sites, often based on the principle of pooling needs and meeting them in a smaller number of locations, may be the most sustainable way of planning for an area's growth. This provides the advantage of achieving a critical mass of development in a single location

where infrastructure can be properly planned and funded and where a diverse range of housing options can be provided.

Commonly strategic sites represent holistically planned new communities, albeit often representing a major expansion to a smaller existing settlement which means some road and infrastructure networks are already in place to build upon, supporting practical delivery (particularly in early years). Clearly in such instances the development is going beyond meeting the needs of that specific settlement and would involve a level of growth which wouldn't directly be supported through a narrow application of a settlement hierarchy as a direct indicator of a settlement's ability to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

To this end, a settlement hierarchy must be seen in its context and should not be used to inform a consideration of strategic scale sites which may be assessed pursuant to Policy HO4 of the NPPF. Any settlement hierarchy which is presented in the Local Plan should be reflective of the Local Plan's strategy, including intended development within that settlement. We would caution against its narrow use in appraising the relative sustainability of various development options for the reasons outlined.

- Finally, reflective of the points made above, it is important that the Local Plan is based on a detailed consideration of what rural settlements need to achieve a sustainable future. We set out above common threats affecting such settlements, including in relation to affordability and service accessibility and sustainability and, in this context, the principle of supporting their managed growth, on a targeted and planned basis, to address these. This may support, in some cases, a level of development which is greater than what has gone before to address these sustainability threats.

  Again, in this context we therefore would caution against a narrow use of a settlement hierarchy in providing direction as to the level of development which individual settlements should be permitted to accommodate. The settlement hierarchy shouldn't therefore be established as a limiting influence in respect of planned growth targeted at putting each settlement on a more sustainable footing through the Local Plan itself.

Summary and implications

A baseline settlement hierarchy should not be used as means of dictating the ability of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

The Local Plan should consider both current sustainability and the realistic post-development position where infrastructure and services are secured through an allocation. It should assess access to services across connected groups of settlements and recognise the

role of public transport and active travel improvements. This may justify allocating sites for development which do not reflect a settlement's current status in the hierarchy but reflects that a settlement's position in the hierarchy can evolve in the context of the delivery of the Local Plan. The Local Plan exists to manage this change.

Spatial distribution

2.86 We agree with the proposition that a range of factors will need to be considered in arriving at a proposed spatial distribution of development, both housing and employment, across the district.

2.87 It is recommended that the Local Plan acknowledge evidence of the existence of distinct housing market geographies. This is critical in the development of a spatial distribution strategy and the progression of the apportionment of the requirement for new homes and employment floorspace.

2.88 This must be underpinned by an appreciation of the drivers of need at a localised level and the potential of settlements to sustainably plan for growth which responds to evidenced needs. As we have identified this must recognise a forward-looking settlement hierarchy that factors in the potential implications of investment in infrastructure and is not just based on a current-day static position. This will ensure that the Local Plan does not seek to displace needs and thereby constrain development and economic growth potential.

2.89 We consider that factors relating to need, demand and planned infrastructure investment should form a critical first gateway for apportioning the overall requirement. This should be done prior to a consideration of potential supply constraints, with this mitigating a risk that needs are not met where they arise in the context of an appreciation of local market geographies.

2.90 A consideration of underlying information strongly affirms, for example, in this regard that a significant proportion of need should be accommodated in the north of the authority, i.e. broadly the former Macclesfield district. This recognises that:

- Circa 40% of stock across the borough is in this area (the former Macclesfield district). Where existing stock forms the baseline for the standard method calculation this is an important initial foundation from which to build. Using the need for 2,530 homes per annum across the borough as referenced in the scoping consultation (paragraph 3.4), simply apportioning on this basis would suggest the need to provide for over 1,000 homes per annum in the northern part of the borough.

- House prices in this area typically stand some 30% above the average for the authority (2021 – 2025)[1]. Growth in house prices across many of the settlements in the north of the authority has outpaced regional averages, creating worsening affordability challenges for young people to remain close to family or to live in proximity to employment. Analysis of 2024, house price data, for example

[1] HM Land Registry (2024) Price paid data. Averages based on five years' worth of sales

showed that the postcode area of Knutsford (WA16) was the most expensive place to buy a house in the North West, with the neighbouring postcode area (WA15) – which covers Altrincham, Ashley, Hale, Hale Barns, Timperley and Ringway - the next highest average.[2] With comparative affordability the other key component of the standard method calculation this would suggest that proportionate provision should be elevated in this part of Cheshire East to ensure affordability issues are proactively addressed.

- The area includes more than half of the jobs within Cheshire East (51%)[3] but the working-age population of this area has, despite proximity to significant employment opportunities, slightly declined between 2011 – 2021. Recognising the opportunity to sustainably accommodate jobs and homes again further reinforces the importance of providing a higher level of homes in the northern parts of the borough.

2.91 Tatton Estate strongly supports the Councils identification that a range of options in the distribution of development should be considered to sustainably accommodate needs and that this should include a distributed village-renewal option linked to public transport and existing settlement networks. The above drivers of spatial need must, however, form a critical early consideration in this process.

2.92 The LPSD is correct to acknowledge the scale of the borough and the diversity of its towns and villages. It is similarly important to recognise the comparative role that settlements have in the context of their communities, relationship with other proximate settlements and importantly larger economic centres, including Greater Manchester in the north and Stoke-on-Trent in the south.

2.93 These economic relationships, intrinsically linked to connectivity and proximity, mean that not only is there a breadth of settlements across the authority but there are at least two separate functioning Housing Market Areas (HMA). This was recognised within the adopted Local Plan identifying '*two functional sub-market areas*', with the southern part of the administrative area '*strongly linked to North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent*' unlike the northern part which is '*closely linked with Greater Manchester*'[4].

2.94 This was a conclusion of the Housing Development Study produced in 2015, which sought *inter alia* to '*identify functional housing markets*'[5]. It reviewed a range of indicators, many of which showed Cheshire East to be effectively split in two, with the boundary between the two broad rental market areas (BRMAs) that cover Cheshire East – shown at Figure 2.1 below – recommended as a suitable boundary between the two HMAs[6]

[2] https://www.business-live.co.uk/economic-development/most-expensive-place-buy-house-28335695

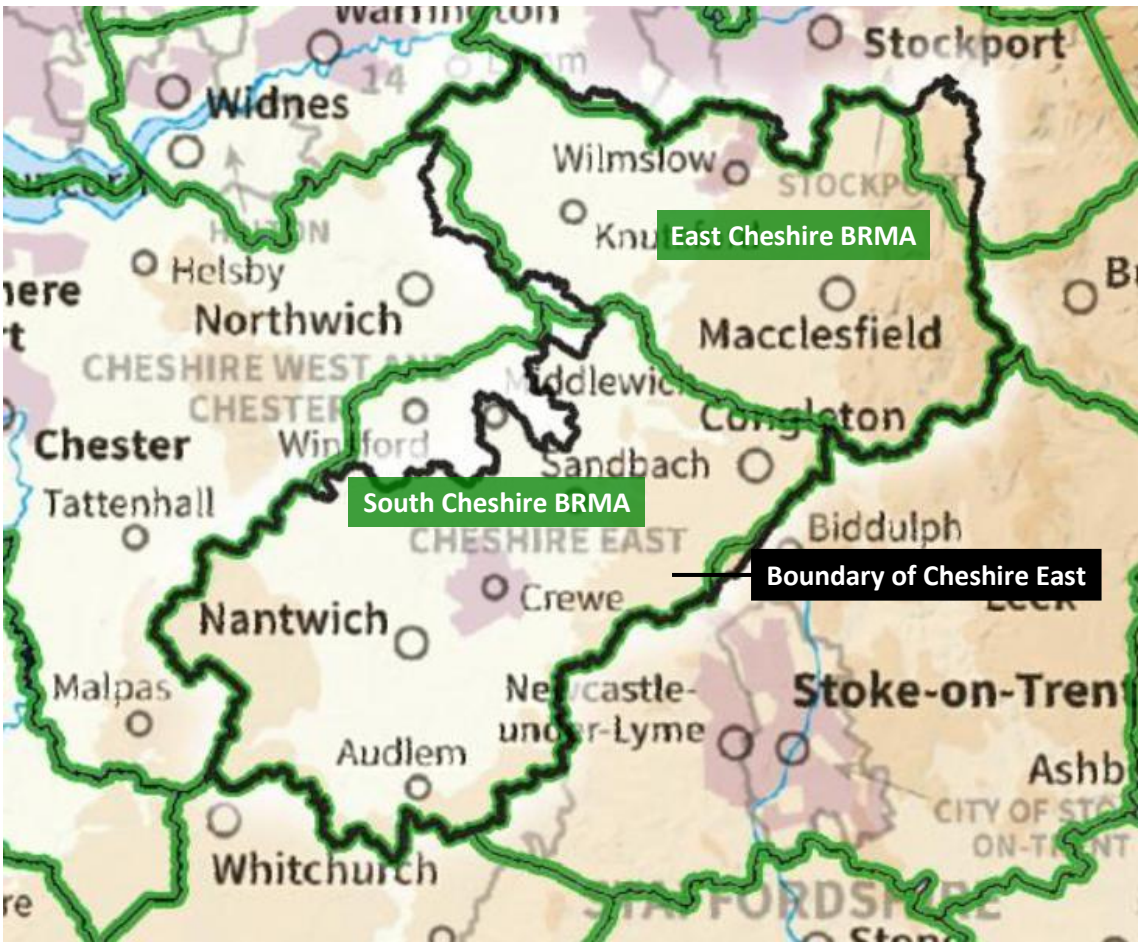
[3] ONS (2024) Business Register and Employment Survey

[4] Cheshire East Council (July 2017) Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030, paragraph 2.14

[5] ORS (June 2015) Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015, section 2

[6] *Ibid*, paragraph 2.30

Figure 2.1: Broad Rental Market Areas as the Basis of Local HMAs in Cheshire East



Source: ORS

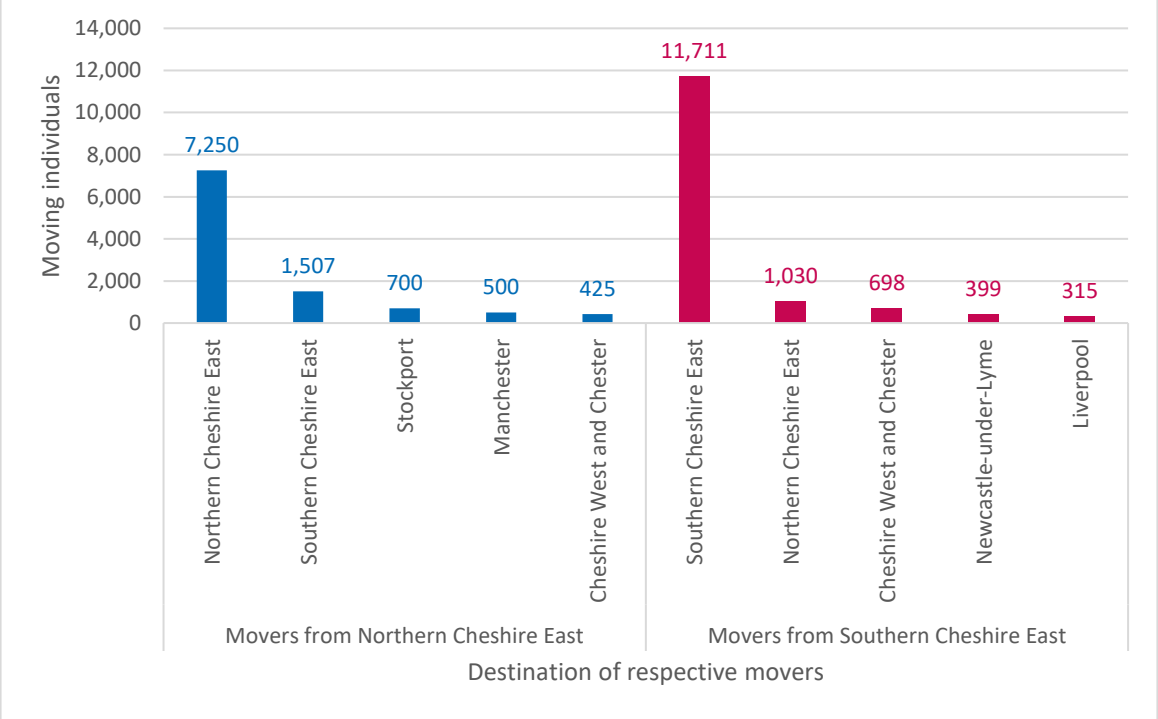
2.95 As the evidence informing the adopted Local Plan was clear to acknowledge, the northern parts of the authority have important functional relationships arising from connectivity to southern parts of Greater Manchester. The commitment to update the informing housing market evidence through the LPSD is supported and it is important that this re-visits the operation of local housing markets within the authority where it is anticipated that the distinct nature of the markets in the north and south are likely to have further increased.

2.96 In this context it is noted that the current Planning Practice Guidance continues to encourage analysis of migration flows, to determine '*the extent to which people move house within an area*'[7]. The best available data, from the 2021 Census, shows a relatively high containment of moves within the southern part of Cheshire East in particular. Almost two thirds (64%) of those moving from an address in the area during the year to March 2021 were still living in the southern part of Cheshire East at that point. They were notably over 11 times more likely to be doing so than living in the northern area, whose own movers were also around five times more likely to have

[7] *Ibid*

stayed in the area than relocated to the south. Destinations beyond Cheshire East also differ, with those moving from the north more likely to settle in Greater Manchester and those moving from the south generally favouring Cheshire West and Chester or Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Figure 2.2: Containment of Moves from Northern and Southern Cheshire East (2020-21)



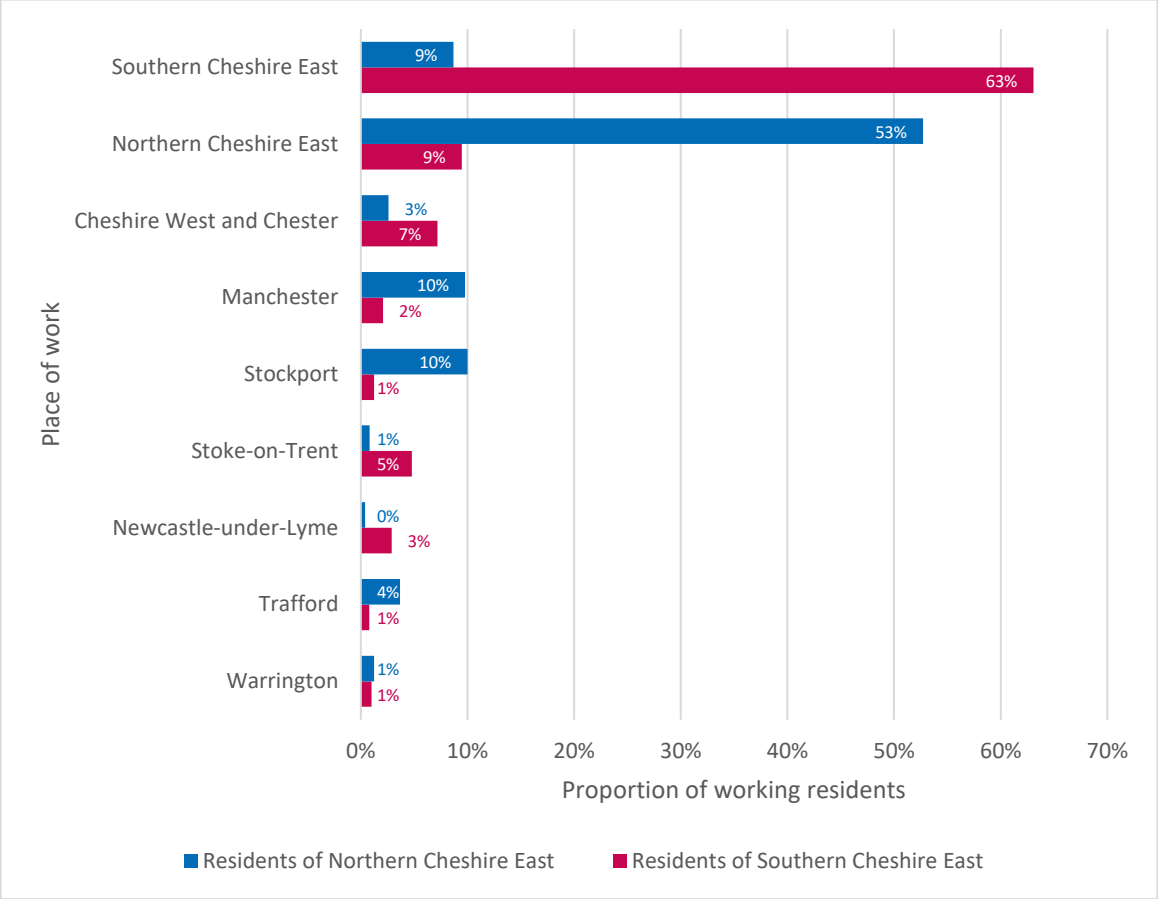
Source: Census 2021; Turley analysis

2.97 The PPG also suggests that 'contextual data such as travel to work areas' can provide 'information about the areas in which people move without changing other aspects of their lives'[8]. The latest official Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) – produced by the Office for National Statistics – are still based on the 2011 Census, which was covered by the Housing Development Study, but a more up-to-date position can be developed using data from the 2021 Census. While this is unlikely to be fully representative, having been undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic when individuals were instructed to work from home wherever possible, it is still considered to be of some value in offering incomparable detail on commuting patterns.

2.98 It shows that some 63% of the working residents of southern Cheshire East travelled to workplaces in the same area, around seven times as many as worked in the north (9%). Fewer – circa 53% – of those living in the north also worked there, with others being notably more likely to travel to Stockport or Manchester than to southern Cheshire East.

[8] *Ibid*

Figure 2.3: Variation in the Place of Work for Residents of Northern and Southern Cheshire East (2021)



Source: Census 2021; Turley analysis

2.99 The need to acknowledge functional relationships with areas to the north also recognises, in the context of the northern HMA, the continued growth and success of Greater Manchester, and specifically economic hubs around Manchester Airport, Stockport town centre and Manchester city centre have served to strengthen the importance of a distinct housing market geography with existing settlements in the northern part of the authority. This includes the larger settlements such as Macclesfield and Knutsford but also smaller settlements in close proximity such as Mobberley, Wilmslow and Handforth.

2.100 The scale of economic investment in proximity to these northern parts of the authority is demonstrated, for example, by ongoing Manchester airport transformation programme, which has seen circa £1.3bn spent on Terminal 2 and is estimated to generate an additional 16,400 jobs by 2040. Furthermore, the employment concentrated in this location is not limited to the airport alone, as the nearby Airport City is identified as a key new economic asset attracting global occupiers and investment within Places for Everyone[9] (PfE). This has the potential to deliver 500,000

[9] Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan – 2022 to 2039 (adopted 21 March 2024)

sqm of office, logistics, hotel and advanced manufacturing space, creating around 16,000 jobs in the next 10-15 years. Planned investment to enhance accessibility and connectivity to the airport – including the extension of the Metrolink, development of a new train station and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) – will only serve to increase its importance.

2.101 As we note above, the continued operation of separate and distinct local housing market areas must be a consideration when developing a settlement hierarchy and appreciating the current and future role and function of settlements.

2.102 Indeed, the adoption of a future or forward looking appreciation of comparative settlements roles within a hierarchy will be of significant importance for this Local Plan. Where it is agreed, as the Council has considered in its emerging evidence base to date, that settlements should be categorised on the basis of comparative scale and existing infrastructure it is important that this categorisation also takes into account their future capacity to sustainably accommodate further development, including in accordance with the intended distribution of development across Cheshire East at a strategic level – e.g. a north-south split.

2.103 Future settlement capacity potential and this not being defined by the baseline, is also reflected, for example, in the NPPF's support for sustainable development in settlements with comparatively strong rail access. Such an approach recognises the potential of infrastructure investment to facilitate growth where settlements are sustainably located within proximity of rail stations notwithstanding their existing size and status in a hierarchy which reflects the baseline.

Summary and implications

The Local Plan's spatial strategy should be informed by Cheshire East's distinct housing market areas, the distribution of housing and employment need, and the capacity of settlements and strategic locations to sustainably accommodate growth including via development-based investment in infrastructure. The underlying evidence supports directing a significant proportion of growth to the north of the borough, reflecting affordability pressures, economic activity and strong links to Greater Manchester.

The approach to a consideration of spatial distribution should also include options for the growth and expansion of existing villages as a sustainable means of meeting the Borough's significant development needs and achieving their renewal and revitalisation.

Development in the Countryside

2.104 Local countryside policies should not duplicate national decision-making policies or prevent plan-led allocations and sustainable village extensions. They should support rural businesses, tourism, farming diversification, community facilities, active travel and infrastructure where proposals are appropriately located and designed.

2.105 The distinction between unplanned isolated development and comprehensive growth physically related to an existing settlement is important. The Tatton Villages submissions are designed as extensions or renewal of existing communities, with

infrastructure, landscape and movement frameworks and should be assessed through the spatial strategy and allocation process rather than treated as isolated countryside development.

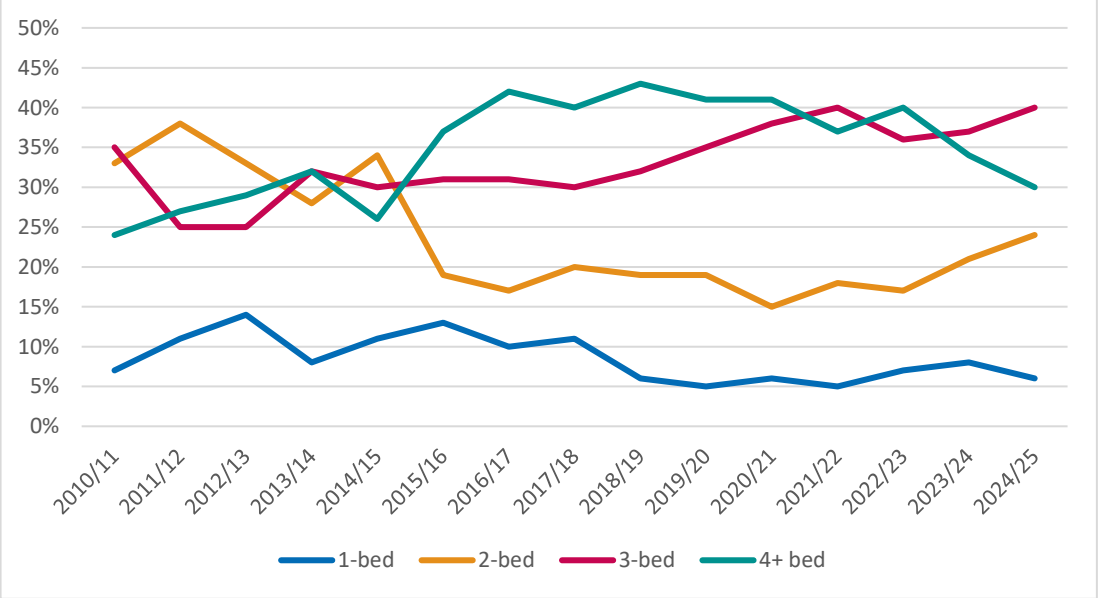
Housing

2.106 The commitment to prepare a Housing Need Assessment (LPSD paragraph 5.31) is strongly supported. It is critical that the authority understands the evidenced need for different types and tenures of housing, including housing required to meet specific needs.

2.107 In the context of a growing local economy, noting the LPSD's reference to the authority successfully achieving average annual job growth of 1.3% (paragraph 5.68), it is evident there will be a significant and sustained need and demand for housing to accommodate a growing workforce. This will include family-sized housing as well as housing offering the opportunity for younger households to remain and re-locate into the authority.

2.108 Evidence of the sustained need for larger family housing is apparent when looking at the historic profile of the size of homes delivered within the authority. This shows a sustained and growing provision of larger (3 and 4+ bedroom) homes, signifying a strong demand for family-sized housing.

Figure 2.4: Size of home completed annually 2010 – 2025



Source: Cheshire East Annual Monitoring Reports

2.109 For comparable, context it is noted that in neighbouring Greater Manchester the recently adopted *Places for Everyone Plan (PfE)*, similarly recognises the demand for a breadth of sizes of new homes. Whilst stating the importance of ensuring the delivery of a diverse mix of values and tenures of new housing the PfE is clear highlight the importance of attracting and retaining skilled workers to ensure the future competitiveness of Greater Manchester to compete for investment. It confirms a key aim to *'boost the supply of well designed, adaptable new homes with appropriate*

access to private space…to increase the options for skilled workers looking to move into or within our area.'[10]

2.110 However, continued issues of affordability will also be an important consideration. The evidence informing the adopted Plan identified a need for 1,401 affordable homes per annum, with just over 60% of this need being for affordable (social) rented homes[11]. In comparison to this need the delivery of affordable housing has fallen considerably short, with affordable housing only accounting for circa 24% of all homes delivered over the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 and equating to an average annual delivery of 581 affordable homes per year[12].

2.111 The consequence of supply falling short of need is reflected in the fact that that on 31 March 2025 there were 7,847 households on the waiting list in Cheshire East[13], with this scale of need being relatively consistent over the last 10 years.

2.112 It is recommended that the Local Plan take full account of the evidenced breadth of housing need in the distribution of housing and the typologies of sites identified to meet needs. This should recognise the informing drivers of housing need as well as the comparative viability of sites. In this context, for example it is important to understand the geographic relationship between growing employment opportunities and the comparative need for homes to meet the needs of working age households, including families, as well as the capacity of greenfield (and potentially greenbelt) land to viably support higher proportions of affordable housing in the stronger market areas of the authority.

Summary and implications

The preparation of a robust Housing Need Assessment is strongly supported to ensure that the Local Plan responds to the full range of identified housing needs, including family housing, affordable housing and homes to meet specific needs. In the context of sustained economic growth and rising employment, there will be a continuing need for a broad mix of housing, particularly larger family homes and housing that enables younger and working-age households to live close to employment opportunities.

The Local Plan should also address longstanding affordability pressures, recognising the significant shortfall in affordable housing delivery relative to identified need and the persistently high levels of housing need across the Borough. Housing requirements should therefore be distributed and planned in a way that reflects both economic growth and local housing market needs, whilst making effective use of sites capable of delivering a wide range of housing types and tenures, including affordable housing in the authority's stronger market areas.

[10] Places for Everyone Plan (2024), paragraph 7.28

[11] Cheshire East SHMA Update 2013, arc4, paragraphs 6.14 and 6.16

[12] Cheshire East Annual Monitoring Report 2024/25, Table 11.21

[13] It is noted that these figures exclude existing council tenants seeking a transfer, but include existing tenants of other social housing providers seeking a transfer.

Affordable Housing

2.113 Tatton Estate supports an ambitious but deliverable affordable housing policy aligned with NPPF policies HO5 and GB8.

2.114 Affordable housing should be integrated throughout developments. Delivery and occupation should be secured through clear phasing.

2.115 Tatton Estate's visions are based on mixed-tenure communities and compliance with the applicable affordable housing policy. The ability of site's to support the provision of affordable housing should be given appropriate weight in considering site allocations.

Housing Mix

2.116 Policies relating to housing mix should respond to ageing, affordability and changing household size while enabling mixed and intergenerational communities. Larger allocations should include a range of dwelling sizes, tenures and typologies and should provide accessible and adaptable homes consistent with NPPF policy HO5 and Building Regulations M4(2) and M4(3) requirements.

2.117 The policy should support moving within a community over a lifetime. Smaller and later-living homes can allow older residents to downsize locally, releasing larger homes, while affordable and family housing can retain working-age households. Housing mix should be considered with access to local centres, public transport, green space and healthcare.

Self build and custom built housing

2.118 Tatton Estate supports an appropriate contribution to self-build and custom-build demand within a diverse housing portfolio. Requirements should be based on robust demand evidence, allow for serviced plots within larger allocations and include delivery mechanisms which prevent plots remaining undeveloped and delaying wider infrastructure.

Housing diversification and providing for small and medium sized sites

2.119 Tatton Estate supports a diverse portfolio of site sizes in accordance with NPPF policy HO6. Small and medium sites can widen choice and support proportionate village renewal, but they cannot alone meet the borough's housing need or deliver all strategic infrastructure. The spatial strategy must also allocate larger, comprehensively planned sites capable of supporting schools, healthcare, public transport, employment, utilities and major green infrastructure.

2.120 The Estate's portfolio demonstrates this complementary approach: Rostherne, Mobberley and Bucklow Hill offer smaller-scale village growth, while Ashley and Knutsford can accommodate larger mixed-use propositions with more substantial infrastructure investment.

Employment and the economy

2.121 As the LPSD correctly identifies, an Economic Development Needs Assessment and Employment Land Review must form an important component of the evidence base. This will need to establish the quantitative and qualitative need for employment land, recognising as required by the NPPF different facets of the modern economy.

2.122 It is noted that the scoping consultation references the residual supply of some 375 ha of employment land across the borough. It is expected that the evidence base will thoroughly consider the extent to which this supply is attractive to the market and can accommodate the needs of different sectors of the market.

2.123 It is also important that, in accordance with a consideration of the spatial distribution of provision, an understanding of the location of this supply in the context of spatial drivers, economic changes and market dynamics is considered. For example, it is observed that despite perceived high market demand in the northern parts of the Borough for commercial development the Council's monitoring report (2024/25) suggests that take-up of employment land over the plan period to date has been very low in the northern parts of the borough (circa 17 ha). This implies a potential shortfall of market attractive land in this part of the borough.

Summary and implications

The preparation of an Employment Land Review is supported to ensure that future employment land requirements reflect the needs of the modern economy. The evidence should assess not only the quantity of land available but also its market attractiveness and suitability for different sectors.

The Local Plan should also consider the geographic distribution of employment land, particularly whether low take-up in the north of the borough reflects a shortage of attractive and deliverable sites despite strong market demand.

Town Centres

2.124 Tatton Estate supports the town-centre-first approach, but the hierarchy should also recognise local centres, village shops and community hubs which meet every day needs, support the sustainability of settlements and reduce travel demand. New or renewed facilities within planned village growth would complement, not compete with, Knutsford and other town centres. Policies should allow proportionate facilities where they support rural vitality, walkability and the 15-minute community principle.

Transport and infrastructure

2.125 The need for the Local Plan to consider the transport implications of the Local Plan and present a strategy for meeting the wider infrastructure requirements associated with the planned level of growth is recognised in the LPSD.

2.126 Transport should be used to shape the spatial strategy from the outset, in accordance with NPPF policies TR1 and TR3. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan should not simply identify highway mitigation after sites are selected. It should define outcomes for mode share, accessibility and service provision and coordinate land use with rail, bus, walking, wheeling and cycling investment and positively influence this.

2.127 The Mid-Cheshire Line should be treated as a strategic corridor. The Local Plan should protect the current service as a minimum and establish a partnership objective of at least two trains per hour in each direction, together with improved station access, walking and cycling connections, interchange and passenger facilities. This requires early engagement with Northern, Network Rail, the Combined Authority, Cheshire

West and Chester, Trafford and Greater Manchester. Growth at Ashley and Mobberley can increase the station catchments and patronage needed to support the case for investment.

2.128 Rostherne and Bucklow Hill should be sought to be connected to Ashley, Mobberley, Knutsford and wider services through an integrated bus proposition and active travel network. Existing and proposed Public Rights of Way, the Sustrans Regional Cycle Route and Greater Bollin Trail should form a connected movement framework, including access towards Tatton Park.

2.129 Social and utility infrastructure must be planned in parallel. We have set out throughout this representation that the ability of sites to individually or collectively secure infrastructure improvements in order to accommodate development, ensure this does not prejudice the ability of existing communities to access the infrastructure and service they need and to achieve wider community benefit is an important consideration in the selection of sites for allocation and indeed in consideration strategic options for accommodating development. Allocations should set requirements, costs, phasing triggers, delivery bodies and long-term management arrangements in this regard.

2.130 Tatton Estate has presented its Tatton Villages proposal within the recent call for sites submission which provides an opportunity for a collection of sites to work together to provide new and improve existing infrastructure supporting rural communities in this area of Cheshire East and in doing so ensuring growth can be accommodated in a sustainable manner. This reflects many of the principles outlined above.

Summary and implications

The Local Plan should embed transport and infrastructure planning within its spatial strategy from the outset, recognising the Mid-Cheshire Line as a key corridor for sustainable growth and investment.

Site allocations should be supported by clear infrastructure delivery requirements, with the Tatton Villages proposal demonstrating how coordinated growth can help secure infrastructure improvements and support sustainable rural communities.

Health and Wellbeing

2.131 Natural capital and health should be treated as infrastructure. Site selection and allocation policies should require connected green and blue infrastructure, accessible open space, biodiversity net gain, nature recovery, sustainable drainage, active travel and facilities which support social interaction and healthy lifestyles.

2.132 These measures should be secured through allocation requirements, phasing and long-term stewardship rather than left as discretionary design detail.

Health and Health inequalities

2.133 The Local Plan should address the less visible inequalities affecting rural areas, including housing affordability, limited public transport, access to healthcare and

services, social isolation and digital connectivity. Healthy-place policy should be embedded in the spatial strategy and site allocations.

2.134 Tatton Estate's proposals seek to create mixed-tenure, intergenerational communities with walkable access to green space and facilities. Potential provision includes healthcare and new primary schools, community and recreational facilities, shops, community halls, public house or restaurant, public open space and active travel improvements all of which will enhance health outcomes in rural villages.

Active Travel

2.135 Tatton Estate supports a connected, inclusive active travel network which serves existing and new residents and links homes to stations, schools, employment, local centres, community facilities and green space. Policies should address walking, wheeling, mobility scooters, adapted cycles and e-bikes and should require safe crossings, continuous routes, seating, wayfinding, cycle parking and long-term maintenance.

2.136 The Estate's visions retain and enhance Public Rights of Way and propose links to the Sustrans Regional Cycle Route and Greater Bollin Trail. These planned transport improvements should be recognised in the Local Plan.

Climate Change

2.137 Tatton Estate supports climate mitigation and adaptation being embedded in the vision, spatial strategy, site selection and allocation requirements. Sustainable location, mixed uses, public transport, active travel, compact form, low-energy buildings, renewable technology, green infrastructure, carbon sequestration and long-term stewardship should be assessed together.

Climate Change Adaption

Renewable and Low carbon energy

2.138 Tatton Estate supports policies for renewable and low-carbon energy which are proportionate, design-led and compatible with landscape, heritage, ecology and grid capacity. The village visions include on-site solar energy, heat pumps and flexible energy opportunities. Strategic engagement with electricity network operators should identify reinforcement requirements early and align them with renewable options for energy generation, and growth phasing.

Recreation and community facilities

2.139 Tatton Estate strongly supports a specific rural community facilities policy. Current service provision is partly a product of historic population and investment patterns. Policy should recognise that planned housing growth can create the critical mass and funding required to retain, restore or introduce community facilities and improve public transport.

2.140 Flexible and co-located facilities should be encouraged so buildings can adapt to changing needs.

Design

2.141 Tatton Estate supports:

- Design coding in principle
- Strong design governance
- Clear placemaking expectations
- Masterplan-led growth
- Landscape-led development
- Long-term stewardship models

2.142 However, Tatton Estate does not support a highly detailed borough-wide design code that seeks to prescribe development outcomes across every part of Cheshire East. The Borough is simply too diverse for a single code to appropriately guide development across the multitude of contexts in which development will need to be delivered which present varying challenges, opportunities and design requirements and drivers. To highlight this variety, these situations include:

- Strategic urban extensions
- New village growth
- Transport-oriented settlements
- Employment locations
- Rural communities
- Strategic infrastructure locations
- Green Belt release sites

2.143 A single code would either become so generic that it adds little value, or become so prescriptive that it constrains good, contextually-responsive urban design and placemaking.

2.144 The Council should ensure that future design codes remain focused on place-making outcomes, rather than prescriptive architectural solutions or compliance-based coding. Successful places are rarely characterised by rigid uniformity. Instead, they are defined by strong landscape structure, well-connected movement networks, attractive public realm, biodiversity, sustainability, health outcomes and local distinctiveness. Design codes should therefore prioritise:

- Landscape structure and green infrastructure;
- Walkability and active travel;
- Character and local identity;
- Climate resilience;
- Biodiversity enhancement;
- Public realm quality;
- Community infrastructure; and
- Long-term stewardship.

2.145 The LPSD appears to assume that design coding is primarily a regulatory exercise. Tatton Estate considers that coding has a more strategic and influential role than this and can be used positively to optimise positive place making outcomes. Design coding should therefore be viewed as a placemaking tool, not simply a development management tool.

2.146 Tatton Estate has already laid the foundations of this approach through the articulation of its Tatton Villages concept which goes significantly beyond meeting development requirements but has the outcome of achieving better places as its absolute focus.

2.147 An important underpinning component of Tatton Estate's villages proposal is responsible long-term stewardship. To this end, Tatton Estate sees placemaking as not solely a function of physical design, but also depends upon ongoing management, maintenance and investment in landscape, public realm and community infrastructure. Future design coding should therefore recognise stewardship and management arrangements as key components of successful place delivery.

2.148 The Tatton Villages Charter provides a consistent estate-wide standard while allowing each settlement to remain distinct. Its vision for the estate is landscape-led and structured around walkability, mixed uses, connected green infrastructure, local character and community facilities. The Estate has also undertaken early community engagement so local concerns and priorities can inform any later masterplanning if sites progress.

2.149 Tatton Estate's recommended approach to achieving effective place making through design policy and standards is tiered.

a) Borough-wide Design Framework:

2.150 Prepared by Cheshire East and linked to national guidance. This would establish:

- Design objectives
- Climate resilience expectations
- Green infrastructure principles
- Active travel requirements
- Healthy place principles
- Design review processes

b) Settlement Frameworks:

2.151 Prepared for specific settlements/areas (e.g. Knutsford, Tatton Villages, Southern Growth Corridor, Market Towns). This tier would establish:

- Character
- Growth objectives
- Settlement role (within hierarchy across Cheshire East)
- Strategic landscape structure

c) Site-specific coding:

2.152 Prepared alongside allocations, contributing to more detailed design coding. This tier would determine:

- Street hierarchy and typologies
- Block structure
- Landscape character
- Public realm
- Building typologies
- Design safeguards (inc. long-term management and stewardship)

2.153 This strategic approach is one which the Local Plan should take forward as an overarching framework for achieving better place making through design.

Summary and implications

Tatton Estate support design coding in principle, strong design governance. clear placemaking expectations, masterplan-led growth, landscape-led development and long-term stewardship models.

It would caution against adopting a rigid Borough-wide approach to design coding reflecting the diversity of the Borough rather a focus on place-based results, which achieve optimum social, environmental and economic outcomes, should be the focus of any approach to design coding or a design framework. This should be responsive to and cognisant of localised circumstances and variation across the Borough.

LPDS Section 6: Proposed Local Plan Engagement Strategy

2.154 Tatton Estate supports an Engagement Strategy which is timely, transparent, accessible and capable of demonstrating how evidence and representations have influenced plan-making. Engagement should include residents, businesses, infrastructure providers, operators, landowners, younger people and those whose housing needs are not represented by current home ownership patterns.

Key Issues

2.155 Tatton Estate agrees that housing need, the five-year supply shortfall, Green Belt review, infrastructure and the accelerated programme require early and focused engagement. The August 2026 NPPF must now be reflected throughout the process.

2.156 The Council should prioritise engagement on the choices which will determine delivery: the distribution of growth, strategic infrastructure, the role of rural communities, the Mid-Cheshire Line, affordable housing, Green Belt assessment, site selection and infrastructure phasing. This will help move debate from whether change occurs to where and how it can produce the best outcomes.

Engagement Principles

2.157 Tatton Estate supports the engagement principles, particularly early, evidence-led and partnership-based working. Infrastructure providers, transport operators and promoters with control of deliverable land should be engaged early enough to test options and delivery, while formal site assessment remains consistent and transparent.

2.158 Promoter-led community engagement should be recognised as complementary to the statutory process. Tatton Estate has sought to provide current information, answer questions and allow local priorities to influence its thinking before any planning application stage and has proactively organised community consultation events to discussion submissions to the call for sites exercise with local stakeholders and residents reflective of its commitment to early and collaborative dialogue.

Engaging methods

Engaging Site Promoters

2.159 Tatton Estate supports a transparent and consistent approach to site promoters. Published protocols should allow proportionate technical engagement on evidence, infrastructure and deliverability without creating preferential treatment. Records should distinguish factual clarification from advocacy and should be included in the engagement register where appropriate.

2.160 The Council should also maintain accurate public site records. Superseded or withdrawn submissions should be labelled and mapped separately from current promotions. This is essential to prevent public misunderstanding and to ensure assessment is based on the promoter's current position. Tatton Estate remains willing to provide technical evidence and coordinate engagement with infrastructure providers within the published process.

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