CHURCH MINSHULL PARISH COUNCIL

OBJECTION TO THE CHESHIRE EAST LOCAL PLAN SCOPING CONSULTATION 2026

Cumulative impacts of West Crewe and Leighton development and proposed housing within Church Minshull

Consultation: Cheshire East New Local Plan – Scoping Consultation 2026

Objector: Church Minshull Parish Council

Consultation deadline: 5.00pm, 1 September 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Church Minshull Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Cheshire East Local Plan Scoping Consultation 2026.

The Parish Council recognises the importance of preparing a new Local Plan and accepts that Cheshire East must plan positively for housing, employment, infrastructure and the future needs of its communities.

However, the Parish Council has serious concerns regarding the apparent scale and concentration of potential development around West Crewe and Leighton, particularly when considered alongside substantial development already approved or under consideration in the area.

The Parish Council is especially concerned that the emerging spatial strategy could result in the progressive urbanisation of a very large area of land to the west of Crewe, with consequential impacts extending well beyond the immediate development sites and into neighbouring rural communities such as Church Minshull.

Of even greater concern, the consultation mapping appears to identify substantial areas of open land within and immediately around Church Minshull itself for potential housing development. The Parish Council considers this wholly unacceptable for a small village of approximately 450 residents.

We therefore ask Cheshire East Council to ensure that the new Local Plan does not simply identify land capable of accommodating housing numbers, but instead establishes a properly evidenced, sustainable and infrastructure-led spatial strategy which takes full account of cumulative impacts upon neighbouring rural communities, the rural landscape, highways, heritage, environmental quality and quality of life.

1. THE SCALE OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AROUND WEST CREWE

The Parish Council is particularly concerned about the apparent scale of land being considered for development around West Crewe.

The Council's published Call for Sites information includes substantial West Crewe submissions, including:

HE331 – West Crewe Sustainable Urban Extension – approximately 113.67 hectares.

HE347a – Crewe West – land east of Middlewich Road – approximately 174.17 hectares.

Together these two published submissions amount to approximately 287.8 hectares of land.

The Parish Council fully recognises that these are site submissions rather than adopted allocations, and that submission of a site does not mean that it will ultimately be included in the Local Plan or receive planning permission.

Nevertheless, the scale of these submissions is highly significant in the context of this consultation.

The Parish Council is concerned that, when these potential sites are considered alongside existing development around Crewe; approximately 1,250 dwellings already approved and under construction in the wider Leighton area; planning application 26/2711/OUT for up to approximately 2,100 additional dwellings at Leighton; and other potential development sites around West Crewe, the cumulative scale of potential urban expansion becomes extremely substantial.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the new Local Plan must not assess individual sites in isolation. The spatial strategy must first establish what scale of growth the area can sustainably accommodate and what infrastructure, environmental and transport constraints should determine where that growth takes place.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CHURCH MINSHULL

The Parish Council strongly objects to the apparent identification of open fields within Church Minshull itself for future housing development.

The Local Plan Scoping Consultation 2026 appears to identify areas of land for housing development within and immediately around Church Minshull, and not merely in the wider North West Crewe and Leighton area.

Of particular concern are areas of open countryside:

to the north of the village centre, behind St Bartholomew's Church and the Badger Inn; and

a further area to the east of the village, overlooking the River Weaver.

The Parish Council understands that the combined area of land indicated for potential development within Church Minshull is substantial – potentially approximately half the land area associated with the Leighton 26/2711/OUT proposal.

If this interpretation of the consultation mapping is correct, the Parish Council considers this to represent a fundamental and unacceptable change in the planning strategy for Church Minshull.

Church Minshull is a small rural village of approximately 450 residents. It does not possess the infrastructure, road network, pedestrian infrastructure, public transport provision or community facilities necessary to accommodate a development of this scale.

This is therefore not simply a question of whether individual housing sites could be designed acceptably. It is a question of whether Church Minshull has the physical and environmental capacity to accommodate a substantial expansion of the settlement at all.

The Parish Council's position is clear: it does not.

3. THE SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT IS DISPROPORTIONATE TO THE VILLAGE

Church Minshull is fundamentally different from the urban areas around Crewe.

a population of approximately 450 people;

narrow rural roads;

narrow pavements in places;

historic bridges;

constrained road approaches;

limited pedestrian infrastructure;

limited public transport;

a number of listed and historic buildings;

a sensitive village centre;

open agricultural land surrounding the settlement; and

a distinctive rural landscape and setting.

The village has evolved over many generations as a small rural settlement. The introduction of a substantial new housing estate, or estates, would represent a major expansion of the physical size and character of the village.

The Parish Council considers that such development would be contrary to the fundamental objective of maintaining the rural character of Church Minshull.

4. THE HIGHWAY NETWORK CANNOT ACCOMMODATE THE PROPOSED GROWTH

The Parish Council's strongest concern is the inadequacy of the existing highway infrastructure.

The roads serving Church Minshull are rural B-roads and local roads which were never designed to accommodate a substantial increase in residential traffic.

There are already significant constraints, including narrow carriageways, narrow pavements in places, limited passing opportunities, historic bridges and properties located close to the highway.

Additional housing would inevitably generate additional private car journeys, school traffic, commuter traffic, delivery vehicles, refuse collection vehicles, trades and service vehicles, visitor traffic and construction traffic over an extended period.

The Parish Council considers that the existing infrastructure simply could not safely and sustainably accommodate this additional traffic.

The problem would be particularly acute because Church Minshull is already used as a through-route between surrounding settlements.

Consequently, development within Church Minshull would not only generate traffic from the new residents themselves. It could add to the existing traffic burden and encourage further traffic through the village as motorists seek alternative routes around congestion elsewhere.

5. NARROW PAVEMENTS AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Local Plan must recognise that Church Minshull does not have the pedestrian infrastructure associated with a modern urban development.

In parts of the village, pavements are extremely narrow, while some roads have limited or no meaningful separation between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

Increasing the population substantially would inevitably increase pedestrian movements while simultaneously increasing vehicle movements.

The Parish Council therefore has serious concerns about the safety of pedestrians, particularly children, elderly residents and people with mobility difficulties.

It would be wholly inappropriate to allocate substantial housing development in a village without first demonstrating that safe pedestrian routes can be provided without fundamentally altering the historic character of the village.

6. IMPACT UPON THE HISTORIC VILLAGE

The proposed locations are particularly sensitive because of their relationship with the historic core of Church Minshull.

Development behind St Bartholomew's Church and the Badger Inn would need to be assessed not simply as a housing site but in terms of its effect upon the setting, views and character of the historic village.

Likewise, development on land overlooking the River Weaver raises potentially significant landscape, ecological, visual and heritage concerns.

The Parish Council considers that these locations contribute to the open rural setting which makes Church Minshull distinctive. Their development would risk changing the village from a small rural settlement surrounded by countryside into a substantially larger settlement.

That would be an irreversible change.

WEAVER VALLEY AREA OF SPECIAL COUNTY VALUE AND RIVER CORRIDOR

A large area in the east of the parish lies within the Weaver Valley Area of Special County Value. The Church Minshull NDP also identifies the parish as partly within the River Valleys landscape classification, characterised by meandering river courses, woodland along river and tributary valleys, grassy banks, bridges and isolated halls and farms. This designation and landscape character should be treated as a significant constraint when considering the proposed eastern site overlooking the River Weaver.

Development in or adjacent to this sensitive river-valley landscape could result in landscape degradation, loss of openness, visual intrusion, ecological fragmentation and disruption of the river corridor. It could also alter important long views across the Weaver Valley which the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies as contributing to the identity of Church Minshull.

The low-lying land surrounding the River Weaver is also a particular concern because parts of the parish are historically liable to flooding. The Local Plan must establish that proposed development will not worsen surface-water runoff or flood risk affecting the village core, existing properties, roads, bridges or downstream areas.

For any proposed development overlooking or draining towards the Weaver Valley, the site promoter should be required to demonstrate that there will be no increase in flood risk or surface-water runoff affecting Church Minshull. Assessment should include exceedance flows, climate-change allowances, groundwater, drainage capacity and downstream impacts, rather than relying solely on a normal design-storm assessment.

7. FLOODING, LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed eastern site overlooking the River Weaver is of particular concern.

Before any consideration could be given to allocating such land, the Local Plan would need to demonstrate that development would not result in unacceptable impacts relating to:

flood risk;

surface-water drainage;

the River Weaver;

biodiversity;

wildlife habitats;

landscape character;

ecological connectivity;

views across the valley;

recreational value; and

the wider rural setting of Church Minshull.

The Parish Council considers that the river corridor and surrounding countryside should be treated as an important environmental asset rather than simply as potential development land.

8. CUMULATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND THE NEED FOR A WIDER AREA ASSESSMENT

The Parish Council considers cumulative impact to be one of the most important issues which the new Local Plan must address.

The potential development around West Crewe and Leighton cannot reasonably be considered site by site.

For Church Minshull, the relevant question is not simply the impact of an individual development. It is the combined effect of all existing, committed, proposed and potential development upon the surrounding communities over the lifetime of the Local Plan.

The Parish Council therefore requests a cumulative development impact assessment covering the whole Crewe/Leighton/West Crewe area and Church Minshull.

This assessment should include all relevant existing developments; planning permissions; live planning applications; emerging allocations; Call for Sites submissions; infrastructure projects; and other committed or reasonably foreseeable developments.

Only such an assessment will reveal the true scale of transformation being contemplated.

9. INFRASTRUCTURE-LED DEVELOPMENT

Cheshire East states that the new Local Plan is intended to provide a coordinated approach to land use, infrastructure provision, design and environmental protection.

The Parish Council strongly supports that principle.

However, it is essential that it is applied in practice. Development capacity should be determined by infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints, rather than infrastructure being retrospectively adapted to accommodate predetermined housing numbers.

This must include highway capacity; public transport; walking and cycling infrastructure; schools; healthcare; emergency services; utilities; drainage; sewage capacity; electricity supply; green infrastructure; biodiversity; recreational facilities; and the capacity of surrounding rural roads and villages.

TECHNICAL HIGHWAY CONSTRAINTS – CROSS LANE, B5074 AND CHURCH MINSHULL BRIDGE

The Parish Council asks that highway evidence specifically addresses the physical bottlenecks at Cross Lane, the B5074 and Church Minshull Bridge. These are constrained rural routes and cannot be treated as though they were modern urban roads capable of being readily widened or adapted without significant consequences for the village's historic character and heritage assets.

The existing network is already under considerable strain. Narrow carriageways, narrow pavements, limited passing opportunities, bridge constraints and buildings close to the highway create a fragile network in which relatively modest increases in traffic can have disproportionate consequences. The Parish Council is concerned that additional traffic could cause queues and delays to extend towards Eardswick Lane and other local routes.

A transport assessment that demonstrates only that a strategic junction elsewhere has spare theoretical capacity would be inadequate. The assessment must model the actual local network, including the interaction between the B5074, Cross Lane, Church Minshull Bridge and Eardswick Lane, and identify where queues and rat-running are likely to occur during peak periods, incidents and construction activity.

The Parish Council also requests that construction traffic and HGV movements are modelled separately from ordinary residential traffic. The potential passage of heavy vehicles through the historic village is particularly concerning because of the proximity of older timber-framed and other listed buildings to the highway.

10. TRANSPORT, HIGHWAY CAPACITY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Transport should be one of the principal determinants of the spatial strategy.

The Parish Council strongly supports transport modelling but considers that it must extend beyond the principal urban roads immediately surrounding the proposed development areas.

It should identify potential displacement of traffic onto rural routes and specifically examine the consequences for Church Minshull.

The Parish Council considers that the existing B-road infrastructure around Church Minshull is fundamentally constrained and is unlikely to be capable of accommodating the additional volume of traffic that could result from cumulative development proposed around West Crewe, Leighton and within Church Minshull itself.

The assessment should consider carriageway width; passing opportunities; road geometry; bridge restrictions; pavement width; pedestrian safety; visibility; junction constraints; proximity of buildings to the carriageway; HGV movements; existing congestion; and peak-period operation.

11. TRAFFIC DISPLACEMENT AND PROTECTION OF CHURCH MINSHULL

A comprehensive traffic study must address how traffic generated by proposed development can be prevented or discouraged from routing through Church Minshull.

If modelling demonstrates that development traffic is likely to use Church Minshull as a convenient route between Crewe, Nantwich, Winsford, Chester and other destinations, the Local Plan should identify appropriate measures to discourage or prevent such traffic from using the village.

The Parish Council asks that the transport evidence considers:

the likely routes that development traffic would take through the wider network;

the proportion of traffic that could reasonably be expected to use Church Minshull;

the reasons motorists might choose routes through the village rather than alternative routes;

whether suitable alternative routes exist and have sufficient capacity;

what highway measures could discourage inappropriate through-traffic;

whether traffic-calming or traffic-management measures are appropriate;

whether HGV or weight restrictions should be considered where legally and technically appropriate;

whether junction or route changes could divert development traffic onto more appropriate strategic roads;

whether signage, routing or navigation-management measures could remove unnecessary traffic through the village;

how such measures would be monitored after development; and

what additional measures would be introduced if traffic through Church Minshull exceeds predicted levels.

Traffic mitigation should be designed around the protection of Church Minshull rather than simply accepting increased traffic as an inevitable consequence of development.

Any proposed traffic-management measures should be tested through the transport model before development is allocated or approved, rather than being considered retrospectively after traffic problems have occurred.

Any mitigation considered necessary to protect Church Minshull should be funded, secured and delivered as part of the development strategy, rather than leaving the cost and responsibility with the existing community.

12. HERITAGE, AIR QUALITY, NOISE AND VIBRATION

Church Minshull contains a significant collection of historic buildings. The Parish's Neighbourhood Plan evidence identifies 22 listed buildings and recognises the importance of the village's distinctive historic character.

Increased traffic can result in vibration; noise; pollution; visual intrusion; increased highway infrastructure; changes to the setting of heritage assets; and erosion of historic character.

The Parish Council is also concerned about air quality and vehicle emissions arising from increased traffic.

The Local Plan evidence should establish existing conditions and assess future scenarios incorporating committed, proposed and potential development, including cumulative impacts upon sensitive rural settlements.

The Parish Council wishes to emphasise that the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is not merely background evidence. It was made on 6 April 2020 and forms part of Cheshire East Council's statutory Development Plan. Cheshire East's published information confirms that made neighbourhood plans form part of the statutory development plan. The NDP itself records that neighbourhood planning carries statutory weight and must be taken into account in planning decision-making.

Policy H1 – New Housing is directly relevant. The NDP identifies Church Minshull as open countryside and seeks housing appropriate to local need and the existing character of the settlement. It supports small-scale development and its evidence states that large-scale development would be out of character with Church Minshull.

The Parish Council considers this particularly important when the emerging Local Plan appears to contemplate substantial housing sites within the parish.

Policy CDH1 – Character and Design requires development to respond to the settlement character and, amongst other matters, requires sympathetic transitions between settlement and countryside, protection of significant trees, hedgerows and walls, appropriate density and landscaping, sensitive treatment of Character Buildings and sensitive treatment at the gateways to the core settlement.

Policy CDH2 – Important Views and Vistas requires development proposals to demonstrate that there will be no negative impact on identified important local views and vistas. This is particularly relevant to the proposed sites around Church Minshull, where development could materially alter the open approaches, rural backdrop and long-distance views which are integral to the village's identity.

Policy CDH3 – Heritage and Conservation supports proposals which conserve and enhance Church Minshull's historic assets and their setting, requires the scale of harm or loss and significance of heritage assets to be taken into account, and requires development within the Conservation Area to be contextual and harmonising.

Policy ENV1 – Footpaths and Towpaths and Policy ENV2 – Trees and Hedgerows are also relevant because the village has limited pedestrian infrastructure and a landscape structure in which hedgerows, trees, river-valley vegetation and public rights of way make an important contribution to character, biodiversity and amenity.

The Parish Council therefore considers that identifying substantial new housing areas in Church Minshull would be fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and specific provisions of the made NDP unless Cheshire East can demonstrate, with compelling evidence, that the proposals are consistent with those policies and that any conflict can lawfully be overcome.

13. CHURCH MINSHULL NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan forms part of Cheshire East's statutory development plan.

The NDP identifies the importance of the village's rural setting and distinctive character. Its evidence base recognises the rural setting of Church Minshull, its agricultural hinterland and its attractive buildings within a rural landscape.

The Parish Council's objective is to maintain the rural character of Church Minshull and maintain and improve its high-quality natural environment.

The Parish Council recognises that the NDP does not control development in Leighton or West Crewe. However, it provides important evidence of the characteristics which the Church Minshull community has identified as important to protect.

The planning boundary of one parish should not become a boundary beyond which environmental, transport and heritage impacts are ignored.

LEGAL HERITAGE PROTECTION – CONSERVATION AREA AND LISTED BUILDINGS

Church Minshull's historic core is a designated Conservation Area. The NDP records that the Conservation Area was designated in 1969 and reappraised in 1998 and 2007. It also records that the church tower is a dominant visual reference point, visible from well outside the settlement edge, and that long views across the Weaver Valley contribute to the village's identity.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in exercising planning functions in relation to buildings or land in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. The Parish Council therefore requests that any allocation or development affecting the Church Minshull Conservation Area is assessed explicitly against this statutory duty.

Where development compromises important views into or out of the historic core, erodes the open rural setting, or changes the visual prominence of the historic roofscape or church tower, the Parish Council considers that this would represent a serious heritage impact requiring particularly compelling justification. The Parish Council recognises that Section 72 applies directly to land within the Conservation Area; for development outside it, the wider setting and significance of affected heritage assets must nevertheless be properly assessed.

St Bartholomew's Church is a Grade II* listed building and one of the principal visual landmarks of Church Minshull. The NDP identifies the church as one of four Grade II* listed buildings in the parish and records that its tower is visible from well outside the settlement edges. Development on the proposed northern fields behind the church therefore has the potential to alter the church's setting, prominence and relationship with its rural backdrop. Any allocation or application in this visual vicinity should include a robust heritage impact assessment and verified views.

The Badger public house and the village's historic timber-framed cottages and other listed buildings are likewise integral to Church Minshull's identity. The Parish Council is concerned that substantially increased HGV and heavy vehicle movements along constrained historic streets could increase vibration, noise, air pollution and disturbance immediately adjacent to older buildings and their foundations. These impacts should be assessed as part of the cumulative transport and heritage evidence.

14. GREEN BELT, OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND GREY BELT

The Parish Council is concerned about continuing pressure for development on land which has historically provided open countryside and, in some locations, Green Belt functions.

The Parish Council asks that any Green Belt and grey-belt assessment is undertaken rigorously and transparently, considering urban sprawl, settlement separation, countryside encroachment, historic settings, landscape character, ecological value, agricultural value and cumulative effects.

The introduction of the national concept of grey belt should not become an automatic justification for releasing large areas of countryside around Crewe or Church Minshull.

15. HOUSING NUMBERS MUST NOT DICTATE THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Parish Council recognises the need to plan for housing growth. However, housing numbers should not dictate the spatial strategy before the Council has established where development can genuinely be accommodated; what infrastructure is required; what environmental constraints exist; what transport capacity exists; what land is genuinely deliverable; and what cumulative impacts would result.

The fact that land has been submitted through the Call for Sites process does not mean that it is suitable or deliverable.

16. PROTECTION OF SMALL RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Parish Council asks Cheshire East to recognise the disproportionate effect that major urban expansion can have upon small rural communities.

A village such as Church Minshull has only a small population and limited physical infrastructure. It cannot reasonably be expected to absorb the consequences of thousands of additional homes elsewhere or a substantial expansion within the village itself.

The new Local Plan should therefore contain a clear principle that strategic development must not result in unacceptable cumulative impacts being transferred from urban development sites to neighbouring rural communities.

17. WEST CREWE, LEIGHTON AND CHURCH MINSHULL MUST BE ASSESSED TOGETHER

The Parish Council strongly recommends that Cheshire East prepares a strategic development framework covering West Crewe, Leighton and the affected neighbouring rural settlements, including Church Minshull.

This should consider existing housing; committed development; live planning applications; potential Local Plan allocations; Call for Sites submissions; employment land; infrastructure; roads; public transport; schools; healthcare; green infrastructure;

ecological networks; heritage assets; landscape character; flood risk; and neighbouring communities.

The assessment should then establish the maximum sustainable development capacity of the area and identify where development should not take place.

18. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Parish Council requests that the Strategic Environmental Assessment gives particular attention to the cumulative effects of large-scale growth around Crewe and Leighton and the potential housing sites within Church Minshull.

The assessment should consider reasonable alternatives, including lower levels of development around West Crewe; different spatial distributions of housing; greater use of previously developed land; alternative locations; protection of sensitive rural landscapes; protection of neighbouring villages; and infrastructure-led rather than land-led growth.

The SEA should assess whether the overall spatial strategy is environmentally sustainable, rather than simply whether individual sites can theoretically be mitigated.

19. THE PARISH COUNCIL'S SPECIFIC REQUESTS

Remove the proposed Church Minshull sites from consideration as strategic housing locations.

Do not pre-determine the scale of West Crewe or Leighton development merely because land is available.

Undertake a comprehensive cumulative assessment of all existing, committed, proposed and potential development.

Undertake wide-area transport modelling, including Church Minshull and surrounding rural roads.

Assess the physical limitations of the B-road network, including narrow carriageways, narrow pavements, historic bridges and constrained junctions.

Model alternative routes and traffic-management measures to prevent or discourage development traffic from routing through Church Minshull.

Make infrastructure capacity a prerequisite for development.

Protect Church Minshull's rural character, natural environment and historic setting.

Assess flood risk and environmental impacts associated with land overlooking the River Weaver.

Assess cumulative impacts on listed buildings, air quality, noise and vibration.

Ensure the Strategic Environmental Assessment genuinely examines alternative spatial strategies and lower-growth options.

Establish clear and defensible limits to urban expansion.

Secure and fund any necessary mitigation before development proceeds.

20. STRONG OBJECTION TO DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CHURCH MINSHULL

The Parish Council wishes to make its position unequivocally clear:

Church Minshull does not have the infrastructure or highway capacity to accommodate a major expansion of the village, and the Parish Council considers the apparent identification of substantial areas of open countryside within Church Minshull for housing development to be wholly unacceptable.

The village should not be turned into a strategic housing growth location simply because land is available.

If Cheshire East Council is not prepared to remove these sites at this stage, no decision should be made regarding their inclusion in the emerging spatial strategy until a comprehensive settlement-wide assessment has demonstrated that the necessary highway, pedestrian, drainage, environmental, heritage and community infrastructure can actually be provided.

In the Parish Council's view, such an assessment is highly unlikely to demonstrate that development on this scale is sustainable.

21. CONCLUSION

Church Minshull Parish Council supports the preparation of a new Local Plan and recognises the importance of planning positively for the future needs of Cheshire East.

However, the Council is deeply concerned about the scale and distribution of housing development being contemplated through the Local Plan Scoping Consultation 2026.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that the consultation appears to contemplate not only extensive development to the north-west of Crewe and around Leighton, but also substantial development within Church Minshull itself, including open fields to the north of the village centre behind St Bartholomew's Church and the Badger Inn and land to the east overlooking the River Weaver.

The potential scale of these sites is completely disproportionate to a village of approximately 450 residents.

Church Minshull has narrow rural roads, narrow pavements in places, historic bridges, constrained approaches, limited public transport and a highly sensitive historic and

rural environment. Its infrastructure simply cannot be expected to accommodate a major expansion of the settlement.

This concern is made considerably more serious by the cumulative development being contemplated elsewhere, including the approximately 1,250 homes already approved and under construction, planning application 26/2711/OUT for up to approximately 2,100 additional homes at Leighton, and the very substantial areas of land being considered for development around West Crewe.

It would be wholly inappropriate to add substantial housing development within Church Minshull on top of this already unprecedented level of growth in the surrounding area.

The Parish Council therefore calls upon Cheshire East Council to remove the proposed Church Minshull sites from consideration and to recognise that the village should remain a small rural settlement rather than becoming a new strategic housing location.

The Parish Council also considers that the existing B-road infrastructure simply cannot be assumed to accommodate the cumulative increase in traffic associated with development around West Crewe and Leighton and potential development within Church Minshull.

The consequences could include increased congestion, reduced pedestrian safety, increased noise and vibration, additional vehicle emissions and further deterioration of the historic and rural character of the village.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the new Local Plan should require a wide-area, cumulative transport assessment which explicitly considers traffic displacement and rat-running through Church Minshull.

Importantly, the assessment should not simply predict how much additional traffic might pass through the village. It should answer the more fundamental question: “What measures can be put in place to ensure that development-generated traffic uses appropriate strategic routes rather than being allowed to pass through Church Minshull simply because it represents a convenient alternative route?”

Alternative routing, traffic-management measures and appropriate mitigation should be modelled, assessed, funded and secured before the scale of development is established, rather than being addressed retrospectively once traffic problems have occurred.

The Parish Council strongly urges Cheshire East Council to ensure that the new Local Plan does not create a situation in which the consequences of large-scale urban expansion are transferred onto small rural roads which were never designed or intended to accommodate such levels of traffic.

INTERNAL

The Local Plan should protect Church Minshull's rural character, historic environment, natural landscape and the quality of life of its existing residents. It should not transfer the consequences of large-scale housing growth onto a small village whose infrastructure was never designed to accommodate it.

The Parish Council therefore objects to any Local Plan spatial strategy which would permit disproportionate and inadequately assessed expansion around West Crewe and Leighton or substantial housing development within Church Minshull without first demonstrating, through robust evidence, that the cumulative impacts can be sustainably accommodated.

The Parish Council would welcome further engagement with Cheshire East Council during preparation of the new Local Plan and requests that Church Minshull Parish Council is specifically consulted on future evidence, transport modelling, spatial strategy options and proposed site allocations affecting the wider Crewe, Leighton and Church Minshull area.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]

Chairman

Church Minshull Parish Council

On behalf of Church Minshull Parish Council

Date: 20/08/2026

22. KEY STATUTORY AND LOCAL POLICY REFERENCES

Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan (made 6 April 2020): Policy H1 – New Housing; Policy CDH1 – Character and Design; Policy CDH2 – Important Views and Vistas; Policy CDH3 – Heritage and Conservation; Policy ENV1 – Footpaths and Towpaths; Policy ENV2 – Trees and Hedgerows.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 72 – statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

Church Minshull Conservation Area Appraisal (2007), including the importance of long views across the Weaver Valley and the visual prominence of St Bartholomew's Church tower.

Cheshire East Local Plan and emerging Local Plan evidence concerning sustainable development, settlement character, landscape, heritage, transport and infrastructure capacity.

Church Minshull Parish Council – Local Plan Scoping Consultation 2026