APPENDIX 2 – Extract from "Housing Monitoring Update", Cheshire East Borough Council, April 2025

other communal accommodation. Any adjustments for student and other communal accommodation are calculated by MHCLG and added into the housing delivery test result.

3.18 The HDT result is published annually by MHCLG and has several implications for decision taking and housing land supply assessments which is set out at NPPF paragraphs 79 & 80, footnotes 8 & 40. These include:

- where delivery falls below 95% of the requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years;
- where delivery falls below 85% of the requirement over the previous three years, the authority should include a buffer of 20% to their identified supply of specific deliverable sites in addition to the requirement for an action plan.
- where delivery falls below 75% of the requirement over the previous three years, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies in addition to the requirements for an action plan and 20% buffer.

3.19 The Housing Delivery Test consequences apply the day following the annual publication of the Housing Delivery Test results, at which point they supersede previously published results. Until new Housing Delivery Test results are published, the previously published result are used.

3.20 The latest Housing Delivery Test: 2023 Measurement was published on the 12th December 2024 and reports on the three-year period of 2020/21 - 2022/23. The results for Cheshire East are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement

Homes required: 2020-21	Homes required: 2021-22	Homes required 2022-23	**Total number of homes required**	Homes delivered: 2020-21	Homes delivered: 2021-22	Homes delivered: 2022-23	**Total number of homes delivered**	**HDT 2022 measurement**
711	1039	1070	**2820**	2,348	2709	2335	**7392**	**262%**

3.21 The result confirms:

- No action plan is required to address a deficit in housing delivery
- A 20% buffer is not applicable in terms of the calculation of the five-year housing land supply requirement

APPENDIX 3 – Text from BBC website article "Planning bids for new homes rise in England but building remains low, data suggests", Feb 2026

Notes:

1. This appendix sets out text from the BBC website at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy4qejvqv4no copied on 11 Feb 2026.
2. The final page of the appendix sets out the findings of the article for Cheshire East.

Planning bids for new homes rise in England but building remains low, data suggests

Image source,PA Media

By**Daniel Wainwright**

Data journalist, BBC Verify

- Published

29 January 2026

The number of planning applications for new homes in England is at its highest level for four years, new data shared with BBC Verify suggests.

Applications for 335,000 homes outside London were lodged in 2025, up by 60% on 2024, according to Planning Portal, the service people use to request permission.

But there are warnings that more needs to be done to meet Labour's target of building 1.5 million homes by 2029, as separate government data released on Thursday suggests there has been a decrease in house building.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said it had "overhauled the planning system and removed long-standing barriers that have held back housebuilding".

Housing in your area

Type in a full postcode to find out how many homes your area has been adding

Type in 2 or more characters for results.

The UK government's target for 1.5 million homes is for England only. It does not apply in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, where housing is a devolved matter.

The increase in planning applications for new homes in England follows controversial reforms introduced by Labour, which allow development on some lower-quality green belt land, known as **"grey belt"**.

According to Planning Portal data, between October and December 2025, 109,000 new homes outside London were applied for across England, up 61% on the same three months of 2024.

The figures only relate to England as housing matters are devolved elsewhere across the UK.

Every region except London saw a rise in the number of homes applied for in 2025, but in the capital they fell by almost a third on the year before, returning to levels similar to 2023.

While it's too early to know the impact, it should be noted that in October, the government gave the mayor of London **powers to fast-track housing**.

Geoff Keal from TerraQuest, which runs Planning Portal, attributed the overall growth across England to a "streamlining" of the planning process.

He also praised the "grey belt" reforms which had led to "applications coming through that wouldn't have previously".

But the Local Government Association - which represents local authorities - said while councils supported moves to tackle the housing crisis, planning reform alone would not deliver the scale of homes required to meet Labour's 1.5 million homes target.

It said delivery was constrained by a shortage of construction workers and rising building costs.

Other new data released on Thursday suggests the government has more work to do.

New figures released about Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) - which measure how energy efficient a property is - in England in 2025 indicate that the total number of homes registered was slightly lower than the year before.

The government uses EPCs as an early indicator of new housing, because the data is published more frequently than the annual official new housing statistics. EPCs can also include homes that are not yet complete or occupied.

BBC Verify analysis of the EPC data suggests 99 areas out of 294 in England would need to more than double the number of new homes they had in 2025 to meet their annual target this year.

A further 22 saw the same number of homes or more registered than their targets called for, however councils said they expect the numbers to rise and fall from year to year.

There are however nuances to the data. For instance, 106,700 new homes in England received their first EPCs in the second half of 2025, which is 3,800 more than during the same six months of 2024.

In addition, the final three months of the year saw registrations rise by seven per cent compared with the same period in 2024.

In a report accompanying the EPC statistics, the government pointed to the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast of a continued decrease in completed homes because of "recent subdued housing starts".

Edward Clarke from planning consultants Lichfields said no-one should expect an upturn in housing yet as it can take years to go from planning to delivery.

"If the government's positive changes are implemented efficiently and effectively, there is an opportunity to achieve 300,000 homes built in a year by the end of this parliamentary term," he said.

Some local councils have **complained that the government's targets are "unrealistic"** and have called for a re-think.

[Typing into the BBC system a postcode in Cheshire East area brings up the following data:-

New home in Cheshire East

2,461 new homes are required by government targets

2,141 homes were added per year on average in Cheshire East between 2022 and 2025, which is less that the new target

1,855 new homes received their first Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in 2025

23 more than the year before

Planning permission in Cheshire East:

76% of planning applications for housing decided by Cheshire East Council in the year to September 2025 were granted

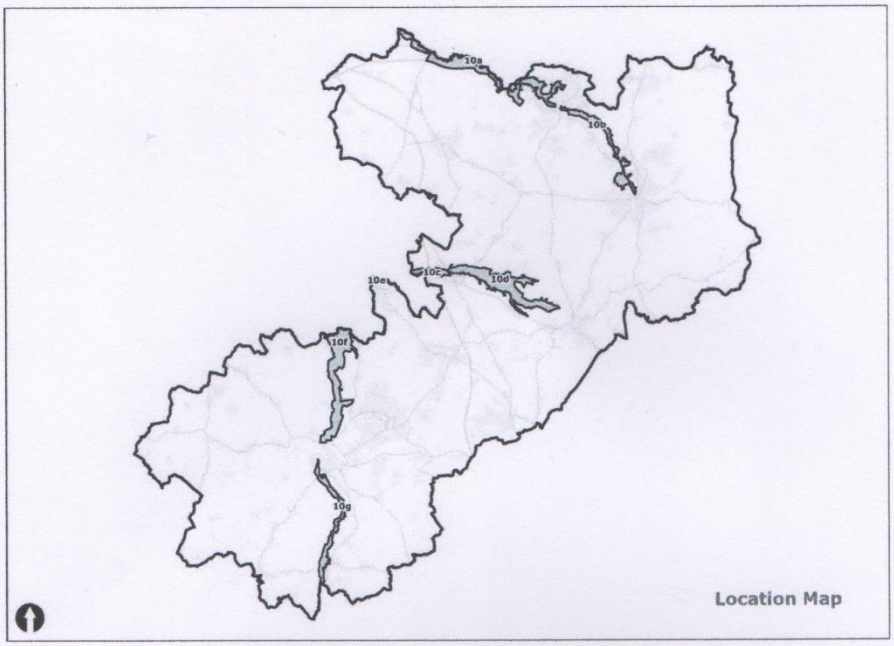
Compared with

76% of applications across England overall]

APPENDIX 4) – Extract from "Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment", LUC, May 2018

Note: This appendix includes the section of the LCA describing Landscape Character Type 10 "River Valleys"

LCT 10: River Valleys



Summary of location and landscape character

This landscape type contains the major rivers within the Borough; the Weaver, Dane and Bollin. Many of the largest settlements within the Borough are associated with the river valleys. The water power provided by the rivers to support textile mills increased their importance during the Industrial Revolution. The slopes of the valleys are densely wooded and sparsely settled, creating intimate landscapes. In the present day, they are important natural habitats and form popular destinations for recreation.

Representative photographs

Component LCAs

- LCA 10a: Lower Bollin
- LCA 10b: Upper Bollin
- LCA 10c: Lower Dane
- LCA 10d: Upper Dane
- LCA 10e: High Dane
- LCA 10f: Upper Weaver
- LCA 10f: High Weaver

Landscape description

Key Characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Distinctive steep sided valleys containing meandering river courses and their associated tributaries. The physical form of the valleys varies; some of the valleys are flat-bottomed and wide, whilst others are narrow with a more dramatic landform.
- The valleys have been carved into the underlying bedrock by glacial meltwater at the end of the last ice age. The River Dane is an important site for the study of fluvial geomorphology and is designated as a geological SSSI.

Woodland/tree cover

- There are high levels of woodland along the river and tributary valleys, of which a significant proportion is ancient woodland. Many of the woodlands are designated for their wildlife value.
- Mature in-field trees are a frequent feature within the pastures on the valley floor.

Land use and field patterns

- The primary land use is farming, with wet pasture fields along the valley floor divided into medieval enclosures with a mix of post and wire and hedgerows forming boundaries.

Semi-natural habitats

- Many important semi-natural habitats are located on the valley floors including areas of unimproved acid grassland and wetlands which are frequently nationally or locally designated for their wildlife value.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Archaeology and cultural heritage includes a Roman Fort, medieval moated sites and mills located along rivers which provide evidence of the industrial heritage of the area. Distinctive bridges and viaducts crossing the valleys, including the brick built Twemlow Viaduct which is a prominent feature in the Dane Valley.
- Styal Conservation Area contains a number of historic industrial and residential buildings.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Roads are infrequent and usually cross over the valleys on characterful bridges. There are some major routes which run through the area, including the A5102, A538 and the M6 which crosses the Dane valley close to Holmes Chapel.
- A popular landscape for recreation which is accessible via numerous rights of way, often following the watercourses. Promoted routes include the Dane Valley Way, North Cheshire Way, South Cheshire Way and Crewe and Nantwich Circular Walk.
- There are few villages within the valleys, with settlement generally limited to isolated halls and farms. Larger settlements, including Nantwich, Wilmslow, Congleton and Holmes Chapel are often associated with the rivers and can be prominent in views.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Varied views, although there are often high levels of enclosure due to the presence of woodland and wooded skylines are a common feature. Some parts of the landscape are more open with views funnelled along the valley which also include occasional glimpses of higher ground including the Pennine Hills.
- Perceptual qualities within the landscape are mostly highly tranquil and naturalistic. There are some urban fringe influences close to larger settlements including sewage works and industrial parks. Noise from nearby infrastructure including Manchester Airport and the M6 can have an adverse effect on tranquillity.

Physical and Natural Influences

Most of the rivers were formed during the glaciation of the last ice age, carved into the underlying bedrock and are overlain by alluvium deposited by the watercourses. The topography of the valley sides is varied along the course of the rivers, with some very steep sides and others which are shallower.

Many of the valley sides are clothed in mature woodland, much of which is also ancient. Trees and shrubs also line the river banks, with willows commonly found. In-field oak trees in pasture fields on the valley floors are also a feature.

Land cover mostly comprises wet pastures along the valley floors, divided in to fields of medieval and post-medieval origin which are enclosed by a mixture of post and wire fencing and hedgerows. The pastures are interspersed with valued semi-natural habitats including unimproved species rich grassland. A number of sites are nationally or locally designated for their wildlife value, including Holly Banks SSSI.

Historic and Cultural Influences

Rivers are distinctive features within the landscape and the importance of the Cheshire rivers as a means of transport has led to some major changes in the landscape. The rivers were important during the Industrial Age; water power provided by the rivers supported textile mills on the Bollin and the Shropshire Union Canal which was constructed in 1835. Quarry Bank Mill in Styal is a Grade II* listed mill which now serves as a museum, documenting the industrial history of the area. Managed by the National Trust, the red brick mill and surrounding gardens of Styal Country Park is a significant site within the Bollin Valley.

Settlement within the river valleys is sparse and mostly consists of scattered farms and hamlets, often constructed in a traditional vernacular of white render or red brick. Despite this, the rivers are also associated with larger towns, including Nantwich, Wilmslow, Congleton and Holmes Chapel. Water treatment works and industrial parks are associated with the edges of settlements.

A number of highways cross the river valleys on distinctive, characterful bridges which reflect the local vernacular. Twemlow Viaduct is a distinctive brick-built structure crossing the Dane Valley. Elsewhere, modern bridging structures of steel and concrete can appear incongruous and out of scale. Major routes include the A5102, A538 and the M6.

Visual and Perceptual Character

Perceptual qualities vary greatly between the different character areas according to the topography of the landscape, the presence of a flood plain and the depth of the valley. Views are generally restricted within the valley due to the steep topography and the dense vegetation. Any longer distance views tend to be funnelled along the watercourse. There are some longer views towards the higher ground of Alderley Edge and the Pennine Hills.

The steep valley sides often provide a sense of enclosure and remoteness with little or no intervisibility with adjacent landscapes and the trees on the slopes create wooded skylines. These areas are valued for recreation, providing a tranquil refuge adjacent to large settlements.

There are some urban fringe influences adjacent to the larger settlements within the valleys, including areas of horsiculture and golf courses. The perceptual qualities of the landscape are also influenced by adjacent major infrastructure including Manchester Airport. Where a major transport route traverses the valley this is often accompanied by traffic noise and a subsequent loss of tranquillity.

Landscape evaluation

Valued landscape features

- The steeply enclosed valley slopes of the rivers incised into the bedrock which give each valley a distinctive character and provide a sense of place.
- Important geological sites, including the nationally designated River Dane SSSI which provides evidence of geomorphological processes which have shaped the landscape.
- Dense woodland along the valley sides, including large amounts which are ancient in origin. The woodland provides a valued habitat and recreation destination, as well as offering other ecosystem services include carbon sequestration and flood alleviation.
- Remnant historic field pattern of medieval origin delineated by hedgerows which give the landscape structure and time depth and also provide a valued biodiversity resource and a link between habitats.
- Semi-natural habitat including wetland grassland, meadows, rivers and streams (often nationally or locally designated) which contribute to biodiversity and provide scenic interest.
- Important heritage features from various periods of history including a Roman Fort, medieval moated sites and industrial age mills which provide evidence of land use over time and a strong sense of time depth.
- Sparsely settled character which contributes to the rural character, although often associated with the origin and subsequent growth of larger settlements. A number of historic settlements are designated as Conservation Areas including Church Minshull and Styal and contain buildings of a local vernacular which provide a sense of place.
- The valleys provide a valued location for recreation and a tranquil refuge from nearby urban areas. Long-distance promoted routes are often associated with the valleys including the North Cheshire Way, Dane Valley Way and Crewe and Nantwich Circular Walk.
- Funnelled views along the valleys and between the valley sides. Longer views from higher ground which include glimpses of the Pennine uplands and enable appreciation of the wider landscape.
- The strong sense of enclosure due to the topography and high levels of tree cover which contribute to the sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from modern intrusions e.g. major roads and Manchester Airport. These also create prominent wooded skylines above the valley floors, providing a sense of place.

Landscape condition

Some areas of the landscape are well-managed (e.g. National Trust land around Styal Park), while others have seen changes in farming and management practices. Woodland areas are mostly in good condition with a diverse age structure and abundant ground flora although some woodlands have been eroded or degraded by stock grazing. In some places, intensification of farming has led to a loss of hedgerows as field boundaries and also resulted in issues such as overgrazing and poaching. The introduction of non-native species and injurious weeds is an issue in some localised areas and has an adverse effect on semi-natural habitats. Tranquillity in some localised areas is eroded by the close proximity of large transport corridors and urban fringe influences from major settlements.

Forces for change

- **Decline of important ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats** through reduction, fragmentation and deterioration of clough and riparian woodland. Some woodland areas affected by encroachment from development and farming activities. Ancient and semi-natural woodlands are often inappropriately managed. Mismanagement can prevent natural regeneration, e.g. stock grazing. Some sites have had inappropriate species introduced, such as rhododendron.
- **Felling of woodland to prevent the spread of pests and diseases,** leading to a loss of semi-natural habitat and dramatic change in landscape character, particularly adjacent to the watercourses.
- **Visitor pressure at some locations** leading to loss of tranquillity, loss and fragmentation of habitats, and demand for additional facilities.
- **Intensification of farming** leading to a deterioration of landscape condition and loss of the traditional pastoral character and an increase in large scale dairy sheds.
- **Loss of historic field pattern** due to field enlargement, decline in hedgerow management and

changes in land ownership, with a resulting increase in the use of fencing.

- **Reduction, fragmentation and deterioration of wetland habitats** through drainage and in-fill plus nutrient run-off from surrounding farmland. Some grassland habitats impacted by scrub encroachment.
- **Demand for waterside locations for new residential developments** due to changes to public attitudes as former industrial sites become desirable locations.
- **Changes to established pattern of industrial development** with potential new uses for established sites and deterioration or dereliction of redundant sites.
- **An increase in traffic levels,** particularly on the narrow rural lanes, which is likely to diminish levels of tranquillity and pressure to widen/ standardise roads eroding rural character.
- **On-going decline in traditional woodland management practices** leading to under management of farm woodlands, leading to general deterioration. Many hedgerow trees over-mature and in decline.
- **Erosion of built environment character through incremental development** which may lead to loss of historic buildings and vernacular character; the suburbanisation of rural properties and their curtilage; pressure for expansion of existing settlement, ribbon development and in-fill.

Landscape Strategy and Guidance

Overall vision and landscape strategy

The valleys are naturalistic, tranquil landscapes where wetland habitats and watercourses are managed for the benefit of biodiversity and flood alleviation. The characteristic woodland habitats are conserved and within the farmed landscape hedgerows are restored where there have been losses in the past. Recreation is managed so that it is sustainable, compatible with the conservation objectives and visitor pressure does not degrade landscape character. The landscape is sparsely settled.

The overall landscape strategy for the river valley type is to conserve the valued natural and cultural heritage features, enhance areas which are not in good condition and promote sustainable recreation activity.

Landscape Guidance

The following points provide guidance for landscape management and built development within the LCT:

- Avoid locating development (buildings and other structures) in visually prominent locations, particularly on the valley slopes.
- Appropriately manage the valued ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats, including prevention measures for tree pests and diseases to avoid the need for felling. Seek to replace non-native species with native species.
- Retain valued historic field patterns and replace hedgerows where there have been past losses to reinforce field patterns and provide valued linkages between habitats.
- Manage and enhance valued semi-natural habitats, particularly the rivers and the lowland meadows, fens and riparian vegetation along the river valleys through appropriate management/farming practices. Management of agricultural land should aim to reduce nutrient run off to these habitats.
- Create linkages between habitats where feasible, particularly wetlands, woodlands and semi-natural grasslands, retaining areas of importance for species diversity and balancing this with the need for recreation and enjoyment of the landscape.
- Create linkages between existing woodland by enlarging existing woodland or creating new woodlands, particularly on steep slopes.
- Maintain and promote the North Cheshire Way, Dane Valley Way and Crewe and Nantwich Circular Walk and provide further linkages to the rights of way network where appropriate.
- Protect valued heritage features within the landscape, including the canals associated with the area's industrial past. Promote interpretation of these features where it can be sustainably

managed alongside conservation.

- Respect the sparsely settled character of the landscape and the existing built vernacular. Ensure that any conversions of farm buildings retain a rural character, including their surrounds.
- Retain the rural character of the narrow, winding roads and avoid the over-engineering of roads which could create an urbanising influence within the strongly rural landscape.
- Utilise trees and woodland to screen the visual and audial effects of intrusive infrastructure where appropriate.
- Retain the high levels of tranquillity experienced throughout much of the landscape.
- Retain the sense of enclosure experienced in the valleys as a result of the landform and tree cover, while also maintaining the distinctive funnelled views.