Campaign to Protect Rural England Cheshire

Registered Address:
Victoria Buildings, Lewin Street,
Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9AT

Telephone: 01606 835046
Email: info@cprecheshire.org.uk
Website: www.cprecheshire.org.uk

Royal Patron
HM The King

Branch Vice President
Peter Raynes

Branch Chair
Jonathan Clarke

4th September 2026

Planning Department
Cheshire East Council
Delamere House
Delamere Street
Crewe
Cheshire, CW1 2LL

Dear Sir/Madam

CPRE Representation on Application 26/2445/FUL - (Land South of Houndings Lane)

It has become fashionable in government circles these days to blame the shortage of affordable housing on the Planning System. If only builders could bypass all the red tape, they would build all the houses we need and we would no longer find young people living with their parents because they cannot afford a home of their own. And yet the government keeps loading up the planning system with more and more rules that developers must satisfy. Cheshire East has an existing adopted Local Plan for the period 2010 to 2030, with the number of houses that are to be built over that period having been approved by a Government Inspector. However, already 4 years short of the end date, the goal posts have been moved and Cheshire East has been given new targets, not for 2030-2050, but applicable immediately, without any time to plan where the extra houses are to go or how they are to be supported with roads, schools and services.

Cheshire East Council is producing a new Local Plan, but in the meantime their planning committees are being told that the Council cannot afford to refuse any large application, because it will in any case be granted by the Inspector on appeal and the Council cannot afford the extra costs. So what is the point of the Council spending so much time and trouble on a Local Plan, when all its authority to refuse a large application is being undermined?

The basic assumption is that the need for housing trumps all other considerations, such as preserving farmland, preventing road congestion, preserving nature and green spaces, preventing overcrowding of schools and medical facilities and maintaining a lively town centre. Developers pay lip service to these needs but their submissions are written by experts who have been paid to come up with the right answers.

The really sad thing is that it is not the planning system that slows down the supply of houses; it is the supply of customers. It is easy to observe, by visiting a housing estate under construction, that builders build at the rate they can sell. When times are slow, 4-bedroom houses will remain unfinished until the houses already built have been sold. The developers will not lower their prices to attract sales, for fear of cutting their profits. May I ask, have all the strategic sites allocated in the current Local Plan been fully built-up yet?

The Cheshire branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England
Registered charity number 248304

Of course, to make money you must keep to a minimum the amount of land on a site allocated to non-profit making purposes. The outline application that forms part of this proposal allocates a large part of the site to a “country park”, but landscaping is a reserved matter and these plans can be changed when the Reserved Matters application is submitted, or even subsequently via variations. The only plans in the full application are those for the spine road and the vehicle access to the site. Once these are established, there can be no going back on its development. I could cite a number of instances in Cheshire East where attractive features appearing in a Masterplan to gain approval for an outline application have subsequently been quietly deleted. The question arises, given the amount of time and trouble that has been spent on writing submissions in support of this application, why is it not a full application?

To summarise: Cheshire East Council should be allowed to plan the type and location of housing to be built in their Borough over the next 20-year period. The decision on how this site is to be used and what role it should play in the life of the town should not be arbitrarily taken out of their hands in the interest of financial gain without regard for the overall wellbeing of the people of Sandbach.

Yours faithfully

Amanda Martin, Planning Volunteer, CPRE Cheshire

The Cheshire branch of the Campaign to
Protect Rural England
Registered charity number 248304