

emery PLANNING

Local Plan Representations

by Scoping | 25-821

Cheshire East Local Plan – Scoping Consultation

Project:	25-821
Plan:	Cheshire East Local Plan
Stage:	Scoping
Date:	31 August 2026
Author:	Emery Planning

This report has been prepared for the client by Emery Planning with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. No content within this report has been generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Prior written approval from Emery Planning is required before any part of this document may be reproduced. Emery Planning Partnership Limited trading as Emery Planning.

Contents

1. Introduction _____ 1

2. Local Plan Period _____ 2

3. Housing Requirement and Supply _____ 3

4. Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site _____ 5

5. Development Management Policies _____ 7

1. Introduction

1.1 This statement sets out the representations of Emery Planning to the Cheshire East Local Plan scoping consultation. Emery Planning has submitted sites to the Call for Sites for clients and this submission covers the current consultation which seeks views on what the plan should contain and how future engagement should be carried out. During the consultation, the Government published the new NPPF on 17th August, so this is a key consideration for the scope of the new local plan.

2. Local Plan Period

2.1 In our submissions to the Issues and Options consultation in July 2024, we advocated a plan period to 2045. This was because the current Local Plan Strategy allocated sites to meet needs to the end of the plan period in 2030, and provided safeguarded land with the intention that the Green Belt boundaries will not need to be amended until 2045.

2.2 We note that the Framework (PM2(1b)) states that a local plan period should be no less than 10 years from the point of adoption of the plan. It does go onto state that local plans can cover a longer time period where this would, for example, help support the delivery of longer-term infrastructure or strategic development; Therefore, we support the proposed end date to 2045. This shorter plan period of ten years is in the context of a local plan following a Spatial Development Strategy, the plan period of which should set out a strategy for a sustainable pattern of growth covering a period of at least 25 years.

2.3 Whilst the previous conclusion as to whether development needs necessitate amendments to the Green Belt boundaries before 2045 is not binding on this plan and given the upward direction of housing needs, further releases will be required. Even so, an end date of 2045 would provide a 15-year plan period from the current plan end-date of 2030, and it would provide greater certainty that the plan period end date will not need to be amended through the plan preparation process and/or at examination.

2.4 Given the scale of Cheshire East, and in the absence of a SDS, then given this consultation is for a local plan, a plan period of at least 2045 is supported.

3. Housing Requirement and Supply

Requirement

3.1 The proposed housing requirement, as based on the local housing need calculated using the standard method and 2025 inputs, amounts to 2,530 dwellings per annum (dpa). The new Local Plan must seek to meet the latest applicable local housing need figure as derived by the standard method.

3.2 Furthermore, whilst local housing need is the minimum starting point, it is also important to consider higher growth scenarios. Policy HO2(3) of the 2026 Framework states:

> "Housing requirement figures should:
>
> a. Reflect the extent to which the identified needs of the area can be accommodated over the plan period as a minimum, in accordance with policy S1; and
>
> **b. Be higher than the overall figure identified in the local housing needs assessment where appropriate. This includes situations where a higher housing requirement is necessary to meet the needs of neighbouring areas, or to reflect growth ambitions linked to economic development or infrastructure investment**." (our emphasis)

3.3 There are other material considerations which should be appropriately explored and assessed by the Council in respect of the housing requirement and whether there is a need to increase it to meet affordable housing needs, support economic growth and assist neighbouring authorities with meeting their unmet housing needs.

3.4 An increase in the housing requirement is justified in the context of PM10(1) of the 2026 Framework where it is required to ensure that there is broad alignment between the housing and economic strategies. If the amount of housing growth is not sufficient to align with jobs growth, this could serve to constrain economic growth and place significant strain on the housing market due to the additional demand, and worsen affordability further if the jobs growth is not matched with sufficient housing growth. We note that an Economic development needs assessment and employment land review is to be prepared so it will be necessary for this to be consulted upon and consider the need for any uplift.

Supply

3.5 It is paramount that the emerging local plan identifies and allocates sufficient land for residential development to meet the local housing needs as a minimum. Policy HO3(1) of the 2026 Framework states:

> "Local plans should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet or exceed the housing requirement figure and pitch and plot requirements for their areas over the

plan period, drawing on the land availability assessment in accordance with policy PM9. This should include:

a. In relation to housing:

i. A supply of specific deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption of the plan, with an appropriate buffer (as set out in Annex D); and

ii A supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for the subsequent years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for the remaining plan period, where the plan covers more than 10 years."

3.6 Policy HO3 of the 2026 Framework is clear on the need to "meet or exceed" the housing requirement through allocations. As part of that, the plan should identify a supply contingency allowance of at least 10% (although it is recommended that a 20% buffer should be pursued[1]) to provide flexibility and protect against slippage and under delivery, on top of a realistic supply capable of meeting the minimum housing requirement. A full audit of the housing supply is necessary.

3.7 Having regard to settlement boundaries, the revised Framework published on 17th August 2026 provides new decision-making Policies S4 and S5 which set out the principle of development considerations on the basis of new development being located within or outside of settlement boundaries. It is therefore critical that the emerging local plan identifies clear settlement boundaries to provide clarity for future decision making and certainty for housebuilders and housing delivery. Settlement boundaries should appropriately reflect built-up areas, with a degree of inbuilt flexibility, and take into account proposed housing allocations.

Green Belt and Strategic Green Gap

3.8 The consultation states that a borough-wide Green Belt assessment is being undertaken to identify grey belt land and help inform any future decisions on potential Green Belt release. Because Green Belt policy is set nationally through the NPPF, the local plan is not expected to introduce additional local Green Belt policies. It will also be necessary to for a full review of the Strategic Green Gaps and land released where appropriate. We welcome acknowledgement in the consultation that evidence will be produced looking at the role and function of the current strategic green gap and how it could function in the future.

[1] Based on the Local Plans Expert Group report to the Communities Secretary and to the Minister of Housing and Planning in March 2016

4. Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site

4.1 We welcome recognition that the scoping will "*review whether existing policies for Jodrell Bank remain effective and whether additional guidance or controls are required*". The current position as applied by the Council is a virtual motorium for development in the consultation zone and no clarity or transparency on how development proposals are assessed, and the likelihood of proposals being considered acceptable. In short, development should be accepted in the consultation zone with specific design or mitigation measures.

4.2 It is also important that any assessment sets out the role that the Lovell Telescope will have in future. The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) telescope which has its headquarters at JBO enables more precise data to be collected than that which would have previously been collected by a single telescope and therefore less reliance on the data collected via the Lovell telescopes.

4.3 In their recent Factsheet titled "Jodrell Bank, e-MERLIN and UKRI funding", dated July 2026, the Science and Technology Facilities Council's (STFC) future funding decisions relating to e-MERLIN and Jodrell Bank explains what has been decided and what it means for UK radio astronomy. It's Key facts at a glance are:

- e-MERLIN funding continues until March 2028
- STFC does not directly fund the Jodrell Bank site itself
- The University of Manchester owns and operates the Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank Observatory
- SKAO headquarters remains based at Jodrell Bank
- The UK is investing £327 million in SKAO between 2021 and 2030
- STFC continues to invest in radio astronomy through SKAO

4.4 It then states:

> "*Following a prioritisation process, STFC will not continue funding e-MERLIN beyond the end of the current contract and will undertake a managed withdrawal process*."

4.5 The Future of the Lovell Telescope is then stated as follows:

> "*The Lovell Telescope is owned and operated by The University of Manchester.*
>
> *Decisions about the telescope's future will be taken by The University of Manchester and will depend on future funding and operating arrangements*."

4.6 STFC then state "*The planned withdrawal from e-MERLIN does not represent a withdrawal from the Jodrell Bank site more broadly. STFC continues to support activity at the site through investment in the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO), including*:

- *supporting the UK-hosted SKAO headquarters at Jodrell Bank*
- *supporting development of the UK SKAO Regional Centre*
- *investment in computing infrastructure and data access capabilities*
- *ongoing collaboration with The University of Manchester and the wider UK radioastronomy community*

4.7 The overarching reason for the decisions is under the heading "The UK is investing in the next generation of radio astronomy". It states:

- "*The UK is making one of the world's largest investments in next-generation radioastronomy. In a constrained funding environment, STFC has prioritised investment in SKAO, which will be the world's largest radio astronomy facility.*
- *Between 2021 and 2030, the UK will contribute £327 million to SKAO through the international SKAO organisation, alongside contributions from 13 other member countries. The UK's focus is on ensuring that UK researchers remain at the forefront of the next generation of radio astronomy capability*."

4.8 In that context JBO will remain a key science, education and tourism asset of the Borough which should be recognised in the local plan but the role of the Lovell Telescope has been and will continue to be overtaken by SKAO which has greater precision for science. The Local Plan needs to be clear as to what the future holds for the Lovell telescope and its heritage importance should be limited to its structure rather that its role to the global scientific community who now have a much greater opportunity to develop the scientific goals and technical specifications for a next generation radio observatory through the SKAO.

4.9 It is essential that development needs within the consultation zone are met and if the University of Manchester is to maintain that there is a meaningful impact on the Lovell Telescope, there must be clear assessments of the level of harm in interference terms, together with what will be done to mitigate this to an acceptable level. As part of this methodology, the council must also clarify how different types of development proposal will be considered in terms of their potential impacts on radio interference i.e. residential, commercial, education, leisure proposals.

5. Development Management Policies

5.1 Policy PM6(1)(c) of the Framework is clear that development management policies must not duplicate, substantively restate or be inconsistent with the content of NDMPs. Furthermore, Policy PM2(1)(d) of the Framework states:

> 1. Local plans should set out a positive vision and spatial strategy which supports the delivery of the spatial development strategy for their area, and should set out specific proposals for accommodating development needs and conserving and improving the environment at a local level. They should do this by:
>
> > …d. Including other policies, accompanied by concise explanatory text as necessary to aid interpretation, **only where these support the delivery of specific allocated sites** (to set clear expectations of what is required in terms of layout, infrastructure and design); **or where these address particular local issues in accordance with policy PM6**."

5.2 Any local policies or standards must accord with Policy PM6 of the 2026 Framework and should be underpinned by robust local evidence, clearly identifying which sites or areas the policies apply to and setting out the local circumstances for such an approach.

emery
PLANNING

2-4 South Park Court, Hobson Street
Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 8BS

+44 (0)1625 433 881

Regus House, Herons Way
Chester Business Park, CH4 9QR

+44 (0)1244 732 447

emeryplanning.com