JLL SEE A BRIGHTER WAY

Local Plan Representation

Cheshire East Local Plan: Scoping Consultation

On behalf of

Innova

September 2026

innova

Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. The Site 5
3. National Planning Policy Context 8
4. Responses to Scoping Consultation 13
5. Summary and Recommendations 18
Appendix 1: Site Location Plan 22

1. Introduction

1.1. These representations are submitted on behalf of Innova Renewables NG Holdings Limited ("Innova" or "our client") in response to the Cheshire East Local Plan Scoping Consultation.

1.2. The representations promote land south of Lymm Road, Little Bollington (*"the Site"*) for allocation as a strategic employment site in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan 2029-2045, specifically for data centre development.

1.3. The Site comprises approximately 60 hectares located on agricultural land and buildings associated with Spodegreen Farm, together with an area of previously developed land.

1.4. The Site is bordered by a derelict pub to the east (Chester Road), the A556, M56 and Lymm Road (A56). It is located approximately 450m southeast of Little Bollington village and approximately 1km north of the Dunham Massey Park and Garden.

1.5. The Site has previously been submitted to Cheshire East Council through the Call for Sites process (reference no: 396). In addition, separate pre-application discussions have been taking place with the Council during 2026 regarding the Site's potential for data centre development. These ongoing discussions have explored technical feasibility, planning policy considerations, infrastructure requirements and environmental matters.

The Applicant and Project Background

1.6. Innova identify and deliver sites for a range of developments including renewable energy and data centres. Innova has an experienced team working across a number of energy and infrastructure projects across the UK, identifying and securing the most appropriate sites and achieving permission through proactive and collaborative work with stakeholders and Local Planning Authorities.

1.7. The concept behind this development proposal is to deliver a campus-style data centre park. Traditionally, data centres have been built to address the operational requirements of a single occupier. This project seeks to provide data centre capacity on a much larger scale, providing opportunities for multiple data centre operators to cluster within the Site, offering a choice of plots and sizes.

1.8. The pre-application discussions have informed the development of these representations and demonstrate the seriousness of the promotional intentions of our client and the landowner Tatton Estate. The ongoing technical work and engagement with the Council provide confidence in the Site's deliverability and strategic potential.

1.9. This representation is therefore set out in the context of seeking to work constructively with Cheshire East Council to ensure that an effective, deliverable, and sound Local Plan is prepared for the borough over the period to 2045.

Purpose of Representations

1.10. The purpose of these representations is to:

a) **Provide detailed information about the Site and its strategic employment potential for data centre development;**

b) **Explain the national policy framework supporting data centre development as Critical National Infrastructure;**

c) **Respond to specific questions raised in the Scoping Consultation document;**

d) **Demonstrate how the Site aligns with national policy requirements and emerging Local Plan objectives;**

e) **Set out the substantial economic and infrastructure benefits the Site could deliver; and**

f) **Make recommendations for how the Local Plan should address data centre requirements and strategic employment opportunities.**

1.11. Innova looks forward to engaging further with Cheshire East Council throughout the plan-making process and remains available to provide further evidence, site-specific information and input as the Local Plan progresses.

2. The Site

The Site and Surroundings

2.1. The Site (Figure 1 and Appendix 1) extends to approximately 60Ha (c. 148 acres) is located on agricultural land associated with Spodegreen Farm, together with an area of previously developed land in the form of hard standing used as a storage compound, and Chester Road.

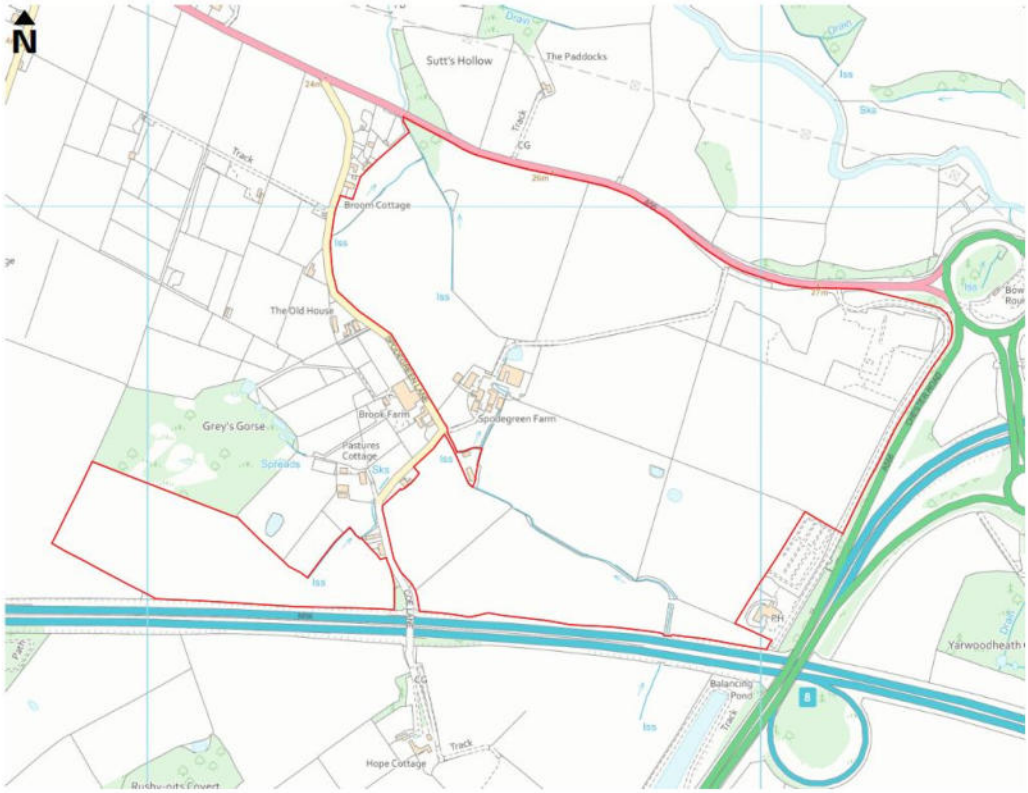


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

2.2. The Site is bordered by the former Cheshire Lounge public house, the A556, M56 and Lymm Road (A56). It is located approximately 450m southeast of Little Bollington village and approximately 400m south of the Dunham Massey Park and Garden.

2.3. The Site is wholly located within the administrative area of Cheshire East Council and sits within Little Bollington and Agden Parish Council's area. The boundary with Trafford Council is located approximately 200m north of the Site.

2.4. The Site is positioned within the Cheshire East Green Belt. National planning policy now clearly recognises that where there is a shortfall of land suitable for specific uses, this can be a valid reason to change Green Belt boundaries after considering other reasonable options for meeting development needs.

2.5. A new category of *'grey belt'* land has been introduced to national policy, defined as land in the

Green Belt comprising previously developed land and any other land that does not strongly contribute to purposes (a), (b), or (d) of the Green Belt.

2.6. The Site has strong potential to be classified as grey belt given its location and characteristics. Development of the Site would not enable any unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas due to its surroundings comprising predominantly open countryside save for the M56 and A556. Similarly, development would not allow any neighbouring towns to merge into one another, and the Site is not located within the setting and special character of a historic town.

2.7. The Site comprises an area of previously developed land at the north east corner, together with a small cluster of farm and rural buildings located toward the western boundary.

2.8. The adjacent site to the east (Tatton Motorway Service Area) was recently approved following appeal[1] (ref: application ref: 22/0872M). The Secretary of State concluded in that decision that the site would utilise *'Grey Belt'* land and that four out of five of the Green Belt purposes (a, b, d and e) were not engaged, with only purpose c (to safeguard the countryside from encroachment) engaged, meaning that the site plays a limited or weak role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. This decision was issued in March 2025, following an appeal lodged in May 2024, and this site is currently under construction.

Strategic Advantages

2.9. The Site benefits from excellent strategic connectivity via Junction 7 of the M56, located immediately southeast of the Site. This strategic route links Manchester to North Wales and connects to the M6, M62 and M60, providing direct access to Birmingham, Preston, Leeds, Liverpool and Greater Manchester.

2.10. The Site benefits from secured grid connection capacity, a critical requirement for the next generation of data centres delivering the infrastructure for demand driven data use by the use of AI. This is a fundamental locational requirement that severely limits the availability of suitable sites nationally.

2.11. The Site benefits from connectivity to the fibre network, another critical requirement for data centre development. The combination of secured grid connection and fibre connectivity is extremely rare and places the Site in a highly advantageous position for data centre delivery.

2.12. The Site benefits from available land ready for development of a suitable size to deliver the proposal. The scale of the Site allows for the campus-style data centre park concept, providing opportunities for multiple data centre operators to cluster within the Site.

2.13. The Site benefits from an unconstrained land parcel where the development can be positioned in areas of low flood risk, following the sequential approach. The Site is located predominantly in Flood Zone 1, with small areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 at the southern boundary. Areas of Flood Zones 2

[1] APP/R0660/V/24/3345318

and 3 associated with the Sutts Hollow Brook can be retained for landscaping and drainage elements only. However, the revised NPPF now also includes data centres as *"essential infrastructure"* in the flood risk vulnerability classification. This classification, combined with the Site's predominantly Flood Zone 1 location, strengthens the planning case for data centre development at this location.

2.14. The Site therefore meets all of the locational requirements for the delivery of a data centre along with suitable space for landscaping and planting.

3. National Planning Policy Context

3.1. This section examines the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that now provides strong support for data centre development as Critical National Infrastructure. The August 2026 update to the NPPF introduces explicit requirements for Local Planning Authorities to allocate sites for data centre development, recognise their specific locational requirements, and give substantial weight to their economic benefits in decision making.

3.2. The following paragraphs set out the relevant national policy provisions, the Government's broader industrial strategy for AI and digital infrastructure, the strategic context provided by the emerging Manchester AI Growth Zone, and the specific technical requirements that severely constrain the availability of suitable data centre locations.

Critical National Infrastructure Designation

3.3. The Government now class data centres as Critical National Infrastructure, as announced by the Technology Secretary in September 2024. Critical National Infrastructure is a term used to identify national assets that are essential to the functioning of society, such as those associated with energy, water, transportation, health and telecommunications.

3.4. This Critical National Infrastructure designation is intended to boost business confidence in investing in data centres in the UK, help generate economic growth for all and boost the resilience of the sector to help the UK top the global leagues for data security. The UK's data centre industry is generating an estimated £4.6 billion in revenues a year.

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

3.5. The NPPF was updated in August 2026. This latest version provides strong policy support for data centre development, reflecting the Government's recognition of their critical importance to the economy and modern society. This is set out below.

Plan-Making Requirements for Data Centres

3.6. NPPF Plan-Making Policy E1 *'Providing the conditions for long term economic growth'* requires local plans to:

> ***"Allocate sites to implement the economic vision and strategy and meet existing and anticipated needs over the plan period, paying particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy. This includes, where a need exists or is anticipated, making provision for:***

> ***i. clusters, networks and sites for knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure to support the growth of these industries (including laboratories, campus facilities, data centres and associated generating capacity, and grid connections)."***

3.7. This policy makes clear that local plans must actively plan for data centre development where there is an existing or anticipated need. The requirement to make provision for data centres and their associated generating capacity and grid connections reflects the specific infrastructure requirements of this use.

3.8. The policy also requires local plans to facilitate development for clusters and networks of data-driven industries. This directly supports the campus-style data centre park concept proposed for the Site, which would allow multiple operators to cluster and benefit from shared infrastructure.

Decision-Making Support for Data Centres

3.9. NPPF Decision-Making Policy E2 *'Meeting the need for business land and premises'* states:

> ***1. "To support business growth, substantial weight should be given to:***
>
> ***a) The economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and adapt; especially where this would support the economic vision and strategy for the area, the implementation of the Industrial Strategy, support improvements in freight and logistics and/or reflect proposals for Industrial Strategy Zones and AI Growth Zones."***
>
> ***2. ‘’Where a development proposal is required to demonstrate whether an unmet need exists (including under policy S5 part J) consideration should be given to whether:***
>
> ***b) Market signals indicate an undersupply of specific types of business land or premises, taking into account the anticipated catchment area for the type of development proposed, the changing needs of different sectors and the availability of suitable existing land and buildings.’’***

3.10. This policy requires decision-makers to give substantial weight to the economic benefits of commercial development that supports economic growth strategies. Furthermore, where demonstrating unmet need, consideration must be given to market signals indicating undersupply of specific types of business premises. The Site's potential contribution to the Manchester AI Growth Zone ambitions, combined with market signals demonstrating undersupply of data centre facilities in the region, means that substantial weight should be given to the economic benefits of data centre development on the Site.

Recognising Specific Locational Requirements

3.11. NPPF Decision-Making Policy E3 *'Meeting the specific requirements of different sectors'* states:

> ***"Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure that are needed to support the growth of these industries (including data centres and grid connections)."***

3.12. This policy explicitly recognises that data centres have specific locational requirements that must be addressed. The requirement for grid connections is specifically mentioned, reflecting the critical importance of power infrastructure to data centre delivery.

3.13. The policy requirement to make provision for clusters of data-driven industries again supports the campus-style concept and recognises that co-location of data centres can bring operational and resilience benefits.

Summary of NPPF Position

3.14. Together, these NPPF policies establish a clear and comprehensive framework requiring local plans to:

- **Allocate sites for data centre development where need exists or is anticipated;**
- **Recognise and address the specific locational requirements of data centres including grid connections;**
- **Make provision for clusters or networks of data centres;**
- **Give substantial weight to the economic benefits of data centre development; and**
- **Support the delivery of infrastructure needed to support data centre growth.**

3.15. The August 2026 NPPF therefore provides strong and unambiguous policy support for data centre development. Local plans must respond to this national policy framework by identifying suitable sites that can meet the specific locational requirements of data centres.

UK's Modern Industrial Strategy

3.16. The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (June 2025) highlights that harnessing the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution is a political and economic priority for the Government. Within this, data centres go to the heart of the UK's economic and digitalisation strategy. The strategy expresses an urgency for decision-making across high-priority developments, including data centres.

3.17. The AI Opportunities Action Plan, as published in January 2025, goes further. The plan sets out the critical role of data centres, underpinning the adoption and progress of AI, being the *'engines of the AI age'*. The plan sets out measures to promote the build out of data centres, whilst making it clear the investment in the foundations of AI is critical to secure world-class computing and data infrastructure.

Manchester AI Growth Zone

3.18. This opportunity for a data centre campus has the potential to form a wider part of the proposed Manchester AI Growth Zone and its ambitions to become the UK's AI demonstrator city-region, bringing significant economic growth and jobs to Greater Manchester.

The Need for Data Centres

3.19. Data centres are now a vital part of everyday modern life, quietly supporting the digital services that people, businesses and public organisations rely on. Almost every daily activity from using a smartphone, streaming TV or shopping online to booking GP appointments, making contactless payments, working from home or storing family photos depends on data being securely processed and stored within a data centre.

3.20. The need for new data centres is rapidly evolving, with exponential growth in the use and storage of data across the UK's economy. The forecasts are for a mid-range estimate of the demand for an extra 7.2GW of all types of data centre capacity by 2035. There is a critical need for new data centre capacity at scale and at speed to meet these needs for the UK economy.

Locational Requirements of Data Centres

3.21. The increasing demand for modern data storage is driving the development of large-scale facilities designed to deliver exceptional levels of connectivity, availability and resilience. These buildings are engineered with precise locational requirements to ensure access to substantial and reliable power supplies, robust digital infrastructure and high-capacity network routes.

3.22. Primary requirements for data centre locations are:

a) **Low Latency and Quick Data Access: The location should facilitate minimal delays in data transmission, allowing for efficient operations.**

b) **Connectivity: Strong connectivity is vital. This includes having redundant connections to prevent outages and being close to fibre networks for high-speed data transfer.**

c) **Power Availability: Reliable power sources are crucial for supporting cooling systems and backup generators. A consistent power supply helps maintain operational efficiency and prevents downtime.**

d) **Natural Disaster Preparedness: The site must be resilient against environmental risks such as floods, earthquakes or storms. A robust disaster recovery plan should also be in place to ensure swift recovery in case of an incident.**

e) **Proximity to IT Teams and Users: Being near IT staff and end users can significantly improve response times and further reduce latency.**

3.23. The Site meets all of these critical locational requirements. As a result of these stringent requirements, suitable sites for data centres are limited and must be carefully selected to meet the technical, operational and compliance needs of today's digital economy.

4. Responses to Scoping Consultation

4.1. This section sets out our clients detailed response to the key themes and questions raised within Cheshire East Council's Local Plan Scoping Consultation. This submission focuses on ensuring the emerging Local Plan fully recognises and responds to the strategic opportunities presented by digital infrastructure development, particularly data centres, as Critical National Infrastructure. The response is structured to align with the principal themes identified in the Scoping Consultation document, addressing matters related to the Plan's vision and objectives, economic development strategy, Green Belt policy, spatial distribution of development, infrastructure planning, and the evidence base that will underpin the Local Plan.

Vision, Aims and Objectives (Chapter 5, Section Creating a Vision and Objectives)

4.2. The Scoping Consultation states that *"The vision statement will need to be realistic, achievable and distinctive to Cheshire East. It will set a clear direction which all policies and proposals will need to support."*

4.3. The Scoping Consultation seeks views on priority matters for inclusion in the vision, aims and objectives and measurable outcomes for the new local plan.

Response:

4.4. The vision aims and objectives should explicitly recognise the strategic economic importance of data centres as Critical National Infrastructure and the role Cheshire East can play in supporting national priorities for AI growth, digital infrastructure and economic competitiveness.

4.5. The vision should acknowledge Cheshire East's strategic location and connectivity advantages (particularly in relation to Greater Manchester and the Manchester AI Growth Zone) and the opportunity this presents for attracting high-value investment in digital infrastructure and knowledge-intensive industries.

4.6. A specific objective should be included to facilitate the delivery of strategic employment sites for modern economy uses including data centres, recognising their specific locational requirements and infrastructure needs.

4.7. Measurable outcomes should include delivery of strategic employment sites for data centre and technology uses, inward investment secured in digital infrastructure and number of high-quality jobs created in knowledge-intensive sectors.

Economic Development (Chapter 5, Section Employment and Economy)

4.8. The Scoping Consultation states that "*National planning policy requires the new local plan to establish a clear economic vision and strategy that supports sustainable economic growth across urban and rural areas."*

4.9. The Scoping Consultation notes that "*The local plan must also allocate sufficient employment land to meet current and future needs, including for knowledge-based, high-technology and creative industries."*

Response:

4.10. The Local Plan should explicitly recognise data centres as a key component of the modern economy and allocate strategic employment sites to meet identified need for data centre development.

4.11. The Economic Development Needs Assessment and Employment Land Review should specifically assess the need for data centre development, taking into account national policy support, the Manchester AI Growth Zone proposals and the strategic advantages of Cheshire East's location.

4.12. The assessment should recognise that data centres have highly specific locational requirements (power infrastructure, fibre connectivity, sustainable location with access to skilled labour) which severely limit the availability of suitable sites.

4.13. Land south of Lymm Road should be allocated as a strategic employment site for data centre development given it meets all of the critical locational requirements and represents a deliverable opportunity to support national priorities for AI growth and digital infrastructure.

4.14. The allocation should recognise the campus-style concept allowing multiple data centre operators to cluster within the site, supporting resilience and cross-processing opportunities.

Green Belt (Chapter 5, Section Green Belt)

4.15. The Scoping 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."*

4.16. The Scoping Consultation notes that national policy now recognises grey belt land and that if there is a need to alter the Green Belt boundaries then grey belt land should be considered first.

Response:

4.17. The Green Belt assessment should recognise land south of Lymm Road as grey belt given it does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d).

4.18. Development of the Site would not enable any unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas due to its surroundings comprising predominantly open countryside save for the M56 and A556. Similarly, development would not allow any neighbouring towns to merge into one another, and the Site is not located within the setting and special character of a historic town.

4.19. The Site comprises an area of previously developed land at the north east corner of the site, together with a small cluster of farm and rural buildings located toward the western boundary, which strengthens the case for grey belt classification

4.20. The adjacent site to the east was recently approved following appeal for a Motorway Service Area (MSA). The Secretary of State concluded in that decision that the site would utilise 'Grey Belt' land and that four out of five of the Green Belt purposes (a, b, d and e) were not engaged. Notably, the MSA site is subject to additional designations beyond those affecting the Site, including a Local Landscape Designation, a Local Wildlife Site and designation as an Ecological Network Corridor.

4.21. Where grey belt sites can support the delivery of Critical National Infrastructure for data centre development and meet identified strategic employment needs, exceptional circumstances exist to justify Green Belt release.

4.22. National policy requires planning policies to recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors including data centres. Where suitable sites outside the Green Belt cannot meet these specific requirements, release of grey belt land is justified.

4.23. Therefore, this site should be considered as grey belt land.

Spatial Strategy and Distribution of Development (Chapter 5, Section Spatial Distribution)

4.24. The Scoping Consultation states that "*Once the overall amount of development has been determined, the new local plan will need to set a strategy for the distribution of this development across the borough."*

4.25. The Scoping Consultation notes that "*A range of factors will influence the distribution of development" including "availability of development sites, market attractiveness of locations, development viability."*

Response:

4.26. The spatial strategy should recognise the strategic importance of locations with excellent connectivity to strategic road infrastructure, power infrastructure and fibre connectivity for accommodating modern economy uses including data centres.

4.27. The spatial strategy should recognise that data centre development has highly specific locational requirements which severely limit the availability of suitable sites. These requirements include:

- **Secured grid connection capacity for substantial power requirements.**
- **Connectivity to fibre network for high-speed data transfer.**
- **Strategic road access for construction and operational needs.**
- **Sustainable location with access to skilled labour force.**
- **Suitable topography and absence of insurmountable environmental constraints.**

4.28. The spatial strategy should identify land south of Lymm Road as a strategic location for data centre and employment development given its exceptional connectivity advantages and ability to meet the specific locational requirements for data centre development.

4.29. The Site's location immediately adjacent to Junction 7 of the M56 provides excellent strategic connectivity to Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and the wider motorway network. The secured grid connection and fibre connectivity are critical requirements that cannot be met at most other locations.

Infrastructure (Chapter 5, Section Transport and Infrastructure)

4.30. The Scoping Consultation states that *"Identifying the infrastructure needed to support planned growth is a key requirement of the new Local Plan."*

4.31. The Scoping Consultation notes *that "The Local Plan will form part of a wider framework of transport policies and strategies operating at national, regional, borough and local levels."*

Response:

4.32. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan should recognise the critical importance of power infrastructure (grid connection capacity) and telecommunications infrastructure (fibre connectivity) for supporting modern economy uses including data centres.

4.33. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan should assess the availability of power infrastructure and fibre connectivity across the borough and identify priority locations where this infrastructure is available or can be delivered.

4.34. Land south of Lymm Road benefits from secured grid connection capacity and fibre connectivity which are critical requirements for data centre development. This infrastructure advantage should be recognised in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and reflected in the allocation of the Site for strategic employment use.

4.35. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan should also recognise the excellent strategic road infrastructure serving the Site via Junction 7 of the M56 and the A556/A56 providing direct access to the strategic road network.

Evidence Base (Chapter 5, Section Local Plan Evidence Base)

4.36. The Scoping Consultation sets out a list of evidence to be prepared including *"Economic development needs assessment and employment land review" and "Viability assessment".*

Response:

4.37. The Economic Development Needs Assessment and Employment Land Review should specifically assess the need for data centre development, taking into account:

- National policy support for data centres as Critical National Infrastructure.
- National policy requirements to facilitate development to meet the needs of a modern economy including data centres.
- The Manchester AI Growth Zone proposals and Cheshire East's strategic role in supporting this.
- The specific locational requirements of data centre development.
- The limited availability of sites that can meet these specific requirements.
- The substantial economic benefits data centre development can deliver.

4.38. The assessment should recognise that traditional employment land supply calculations may not adequately capture the need for highly specialised employment uses like data centres which have specific infrastructure requirements.

4.39. The Viability Assessment should also recognise the different viability characteristics of data centre development compared to traditional employment uses. Data centre development typically involves very substantial upfront infrastructure investment (particularly in power infrastructure) but can generate significant business rates revenue and economic benefits.

5. Summary and Recommendations

5.1. These representations have been submitted on behalf of Innova in response to the Cheshire East Local Plan Scoping Consultation. The representations promote land south of Lymm Road, Altrincham for allocation as a strategic employment site for data centre development.

5.2. The key points are summarised as follows:

National Policy Context

5.3. Data centres are now recognised as Critical National Infrastructure, reflecting their essential role in supporting the digital economy, public services and national resilience.

5.4. The National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) requires local plans to allocate sites for data centre development, recognising their specific locational requirements including grid connections. The NPPF also requires substantial weight to be given to the economic benefits of data centre development that supports economic growth strategies.

The Need for Data Centres

5.5. There is rapidly growing demand for data centre capacity driven by exponential growth in data use and emerging technologies including AI. Forecasts indicate demand for an extra 7.2GW of data centre capacity by 2035.

5.6. Data centres have highly specific locational requirements including secured grid connection capacity, fibre connectivity, strategic road access and sustainable location with access to skilled labour. These requirements severely limit the availability of suitable sites.

The Site

5.7. Land south of Lymm Road extends to approximately 60 hectares and is located on both agricultural land and previously developed land.

5.8. The Site meets all of the critical locational requirements for data centre development:

- Secured grid connection capacity (critical requirement).
- Connectivity to fibre network (critical requirement).
- Excellent strategic road access via Junction 7 of M56.
- Sustainable location with access to Greater Manchester labour market.

- Suitable topography and development capacity.
- Deliverable within plan period.

5.9. The Site is located in the Green Belt but has strong potential to be classified as grey belt given it does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d). The adjacent site was recently approved following appeal with the Secretary of State concluding it utilised grey belt land.

5.10. A landscape-led masterplan approach is being developed, the objective of this will be to demonstrate how the development can be accommodated whilst providing for substantial landscape and biodiversity enhancements.

Economic Benefits

5.11. Full economic assessments for this site are underway; however, it is considered the Site could deliver substantial economic benefits including:

- Around 350 FTE well-paid jobs on site supporting a wage bill of c.£20 million.
- Annual direct GVA contribution of c.£240 million.
- Wider economic effects through supply chain spend and multiplier effects.
- Support for Manchester AI Growth Zone ambitions.
- Significant business rates revenue for the Council.

Recommendations

5.12. Innova makes the following recommendations for the emerging Local Plan:

- **Recommendation 1:** The vision, aims and objectives should explicitly recognise the strategic economic importance of data centres as Critical National Infrastructure and the role Cheshire East can play in supporting national priorities for AI growth, digital infrastructure and economic competitiveness. The Local Plan should allocate strategic employment sites to meet identified need for data centre development as a key component of the modern economy**.**
- **Recommendation 2:** A specific objective should be included to facilitate the delivery of strategic employment sites for modern economy uses including data centres, recognising their specific locational requirements and infrastructure needs.
- **Recommendation 3:** The Economic Development Needs Assessment and Employment Land Review should specifically assess the need for data centre development, taking into account national policy support, the Manchester AI Growth

Zone proposals and the specific locational requirements which limit site availability.

- **Recommendation 4:** Land south of Lymm Road should be allocated as a strategic employment site for data centre development given it meets all of the critical locational requirements and represents a deliverable opportunity to support national priorities for AI growth and digital infrastructure. The allocation should recognise the campus-style concept allowing multiple data centre operators to cluster within the site, supporting resilience and cross-processing opportunities.

- **Recommendation 5:** The Green Belt assessment should recognise land south of Lymm Road as grey belt given it does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d).

- **Recommendation 6:** The Local Plan green belt boundary review should recognise that where grey belt sites can support the delivery of Critical National Infrastructure for data centre development and meet identified strategic employment needs, this constitutes exceptional circumstances justifying Green Belt release. Development management policies should further acknowledge that data centre proposals on such allocated sites demonstrate the very special circumstances required under national policy given their Critical National Infrastructure status and contribution to national priorities for AI growth and digital infrastructure.

- **Recommendation 7:** The spatial strategy should recognise the strategic importance of locations with excellent connectivity to strategic road infrastructure, power infrastructure and fibre connectivity for accommodating modern economy uses including data centres and identify land south of Lymm Road as a strategic location for employment development given its exceptional connectivity advantages and ability to meet these specific locational requirements for data centre development.

- **Recommendation 8:** The spatial strategy should identify land south of Lymm Road as a strategic location for employment development given its exceptional connectivity advantages and ability to meet the specific locational requirements for data centre development.

- **Recommendation 9:** The Infrastructure Delivery Plan should recognise the critical importance of power infrastructure (grid connection capacity) and telecommunications infrastructure (fibre connectivity) for supporting modern economy uses including data centres and acknowledge that land south of Lymm Road's secured grid connection capacity and fibre connectivity represent key infrastructure assets that should be reflected in the allocation of the site for strategic employment use.

Conclusion

5.13. Innova respectfully requests that these representations are given full consideration in the preparation of the new Local Plan and that land south of Lymm Road is allocated as a strategic

employment site for data centre development, recognising the substantial economic and infrastructure benefits this could deliver in line with national policy priorities.

5.14. The opportunity presented by land south of Lymm Road is time-sensitive the significant investment interest in suitable sites. Early identification of the Site through the Local Plan process would provide certainty for investment decisions and enable infrastructure planning to proceed efficiently. This would position Cheshire East at the forefront of Local Authorities responding proactively to national digital infrastructure priorities whilst securing substantial economic benefits for the borough.

5.15. Innova has demonstrated their commitment through ongoing pre-application discussions, which have explored technical feasibility, planning policy considerations, infrastructure requirements and environmental matters in detail, and are seeking to continue actively engaging with the Council. This proactive engagement reflects a collaborative approach to plan making and a willingness to address technical or policy matters that may arise during the Local Plan preparation process. Our client recognises that transparent and inclusive engagement with all stakeholders, including the local community, statutory consultees and neighbouring authorities, is essential to achieving plan soundness and building confidence in the deliverability of strategic allocations.

5.16. We trust that the Council will give these representations due weight in preparing the Local Plan and will engage with our client as site-specific policies and allocations are developed. Innova remains available for further discussions as required to support the Council's plan-making work.

5.17. Our client is committed to working with the council to achieve an effective and deliverable plan that addresses the area's needs while promoting sustainable development principles.

5.18. Finally, our client reserves the right to comment on the Local Plan as it progresses.

Appendix 1: Site Location Plan

This drawing is the copyright of INNOVA and must not be reproduced in whole or in part or used in any manner without their written permission.

This drawing is to be submitted for planning purposes only. All dimensions are to be confirmed on site prior to commencement of work.

Revisions:

Revision	Date	Revision Notes	Drawn	Inspected
01	21.04.26	First Issue	RE	SM
02	27.08.26	RLB Updated	OB	SM

LEGEND:

PLANNING APPLICATION BOUNDARY

Ordnance Survey, (c) Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Licence number OS AC0000813445

1 **SITE LOCATION PLAN**

Scale: 1:2500@A1

0 50 100 150 200 250m

SCALE 1:2500

Status: ***PLANNING***

Project: DAINES
CHESTER ROAD, ALTRINCHAM, WA14 4TP

Client:

3rd Floor, St George's House, 13-14 Ambrose Street, Cheltenham, GL50 3LG
Tel: 01242 388 633
info@innova.co.uk www.innova.co.uk

Designer:

UTU DESIGN LTD
Unit B2, The Courtyard, Severn Drive, Tewkesbury Business Park, GL20 8GD
+44(0) 1684 850019 design@utu.design www.utu.design

Drawing Title: **SITE LOCATION PLAN**

Drawn:	Checked:	Drawing Scale:	Size:
RE	SM	1:2500	A1
Project Code:		Drawing Number:	Revision:
INN002		***SP01***	**02**

JLL SEE A BRIGHTER WAY

Prepared by:
Tom Procter
Senior Planner
[redacted]

Approved by:
Mike Hopkins
Director
[redacted]

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