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1st September 2026

Cheshire East Council (Strategic Planning Team)
Delamere House
Delamere Street
Crewe
CW1 2LL

By email only: localplan@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam

Cheshire East Local Plan Scoping Consultation- Harworth Representations

I write on behalf of Harworth Estates Investments Limited (Harworth) to provide representations to Cheshire East Council's Scoping Consultation for their emerging Local Plan.

Whilst it is recognised that this scoping consultation is not a Call for Sites exercise, I would like to make a brief reference to Harworth's land interests within Cheshire East, to provide context to our representations. As a strategic land promoter our representations relate primarily to the topics of this scoping consultation which would be of relevance to our land interests at land to the south west of Crewe.

The remainder of this letter is structured by including the subheading from the QPUS consult webpage which Harworth is seeking to make representations regarding, followed by the associated consultation response. When referring to the 'scoping document' within these representations, I am referring to the content of the QPUS consultation webpage.

Local Plan Period

The proposed local plan period until March 2045 is considered an appropriate plan period. With the plan being expected to be adopted in March 2029, a 16 year plan period would help support the delivery of longer-term strategic development. It is recognised that the local plan will be reviewed every 5-years, in accordance with national policy, which would allow suitable flexibility for changing circumstances, whilst still maintaining a 15 year plus long term vision for Cheshire East.

Creating Visions and Objectives

The scoping consultation requests views on priority matters for inclusion in the vision, aims objectives and measurable outcomes of the new local plan. The need to deliver housing in sustainable locations to meet identified needs should be central to this.

Planning for Growth

Harworth supports the Cheshire East's recognition within this section of the scoping document of the need for the plan to support the delivery of much needed homes. It is positive to hear that the sites submitted through the 2024 and 2026 Call for Sites exercises are being assessed in order to identify potential development sites. It is

noted that there will be additional opportunities to submit sites or update existing submissions as the local plan progresses.

Strategic Green Gap

The scoping document recognises that as 'strategic green gap' is not defined in national policy the approach to it will need to be set through local plan policies and evidence will need to be produced looking at the role and function of the strategic green gap and how it could function in the future. Haworth supports Cheshire East undertaking a review of the strategic green gap, as it is considered that some parts of the designated strategic green gap do not contribute strongly towards its fundamental purpose of maintaining settlement separation and identity.

For Cheshire East to produce a suitably ambitious and pro-growth plan which delivers the required levels of housing, employment, and infrastructure a thorough review of the strategic green gap will be required, especially in locations adjoining the principal towns and other sustainably located sites, which could be contributing towards the Council's growth ambitions. In addition to a review of the strategic green gap, Harworth recommends that any retained policy relating to it should include suitable flexibility to allow much needed homes and other forms of development to come forward in specified circumstances.

Settlement Hierarchy

Harworth support Cheshire East's existing settlement hierarchy which recognises Crewe and Macclesfield to be the two principal towns within the borough.

Spatial Distributions

The scoping document specifies that once the overall amount of development has been determined the new local plan will need to set a strategy for the distribution of development across the borough. Harworth agrees with the factors which will need to be considered for this strategy and encourages the Council to take an approach to locating new development within and on the edge of the existing key settlements, as these are the most sustainable locations in terms of availability of jobs, and infrastructure as well as existing public transport connections. Harworth would encourage the Council to consider Crewe as a key growth location given its designation as a principal town and that it has the most well-connected train station in the borough, which encourages sustainable modes of transport.

Housing

Ensuring the provision of sufficient, high-quality housing is a key function of the local plan, and Harworth agrees with the Council's recognition that the standard method for calculating local housing need should be used to establish the minimum number of homes that should be planned for over the plan period.

Harworth supports the Council's recognition of the need to deliver affordable homes. Harworth also encourages sufficient flexibility to be built into such policies in order to ensure viability is not compromised.

Harworth supports the Council's recognition of the need to provide a mix of housing that reflects current and future needs. Again, sufficient flexibility should be included within such policies to allow for changing needs over the plan period.

Transport and Infrastructure

Harworth agrees with Cheshire East's scoping document in its recognition of the need to promote sustainable travel patterns, making effective use of existing transport infrastructure and planning for new infrastructure where necessary. Harworth is supportive of a sustainable approach to development which prioritises growth around existing key settlements in order to utilise existing transport infrastructure and promote sustainable transport. Harworth recognises the need for new developments to proportionately contribute towards new infrastructure where necessary.

Design

Harworth agrees with the need to create well-designed sustainable places and recognises that there is already national policy guidance relating to design, including the National Design Guide and the recently published August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework's Policies DP1-DP4 which relate directly to design. Given the national policy coverage of the topic, Harworth would encourage the local plan to avoid being overly prescriptive in its design policies or leading to delays in determination of planning applications due to onerous subjective comments relating to design matters.

Evidence Base

Harworth agrees with the scope of the proposed evidence base set out within the scoping document and should input from developers be required in the preparation of any of these, we would be happy to assist. In particular, the Housing Needs Assessment, Spatial Distribution of Development Report, and Strategic Green Gap Review are of interest to Harworth and it would be beneficial if evidence base documents were made publicly available as soon as practicable.

Engagement Principles

Harworth agrees with the Council's engagement principles included within the Scoping Document. Making the evidence base documents available as soon as possible would support a collaborative and transparent approach to engagement.

Engagement Approach and Method

Harworth supports the approach and method to engagement outlined within the plan. Harworth particularly agrees with the need for inter-generational input into the emerging plan, as often certain age groups within the community tend to be more engaged with the plan making process, which can lead to engagement and feedback which isn't necessarily reflective of the wider population. For instance, the housing shortage is disproportionately impacting certain age groups, who may not necessarily engage with the local plan process as much as others, so it is important that the views of all age groups are given proportionate consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide representations to this scoping consultation. I trust the feedback will be duly considered. Should any further information be required please do not hesitate to get in contact via the details below. I look forward to further opportunities for engagement as the local plan process progresses.

Yours faithfully

Nicola Simpson

Development Planner

[redacted]

For and on behalf of Harworth Group