

Chelford Neighbourhood Plan: CEC Regulation 14 Comments

The Borough Council congratulates the Parish Council on the way in which the plan has been prepared, closely involving the local community and seeking to address priorities identified through consultation.

The Plan is the product of a very significant amount of hard work by volunteers and engagement with the local community which has clearly shaped the content of the Plan. It is clear from the introduction to the Plan that a significant amount of community engagement and consultation has already taken place to this point.

The comments in this representation are in relation to the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission consultation on the Chelford Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood plan policies must be in general conformity the strategic policies of the adopted local plan, should be clear and unambiguous and be supported by robust, yet proportional evidence. Comments here specifically consider the policy approach taken by the Parish Council with these factors in mind , provide guidance on proposed policies and whether conflict is likely to arise between the neighbourhood plan and the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. More general comments are also included for consideration.

General Recommendations:

The plan is very well laid out and visually easy to navigate.. The inclusion of a summary of evidence and research, plus community feedback, within the justification to each policy is generally helpful and informative although consideration should be given to moving some of this into appendices where it is especially lengthy (design policies, natural environment policies and local green space policies for example). Many of the maps could be consolidated on to a single, or pair, of 'key maps' to detail the spatial aspects of all policies.

The vision and objectives of the plan are clear and provide a natural link between the overall objectives of the plan and the policies chosen and are helpfully re-iterate within each policy section.

Vision:

The vision for Chelford sets a positive set of objectives covering many issues related to sustainable planning.

Detailed Policy Comments:

The following section details comments on specific policies in the neighbourhood plan. In forming this response the Council has given consideration to guidance in the NPPF, the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (2015), the Localism Act and advice held in the Planning Practice Guidance regards neighbourhood planning:

A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct

to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared.

Comments below are intended to assist the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in finalising its preferred plan prior to submission to the Local Authority. It should be noted that should the neighbourhood plan substantially and materially change in response to these and other representations, then it may be necessary to hold a second Regulation 14 consultation.

The Borough Council feels the plan has been very well prepared and correspondingly has only a limited number of specific comments to make.

Site Allocations:

There are substantial benefits to allocating development sites via the neighbourhood planning process, both in terms of delivering sustainable development and retaining a plan led approach through delivering local housing need. The parish council are therefore advised to investigate this option and the Borough are happy to advise on how this process can be undertaken.

Chelford Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Comment
HP3 (B)	The policies appears to apply to locations outside of the Chelford Settlement Boundary and if so, the policy could be made more clear by stating this explicitly.
LE1 (C)	In the case of existing employment sites in B1 and B2 uses the CELPS requires a marketing exercise of 2 years. It is advised that policy reflects the strategic policy approach of Policy EG3 in regard to B1 and B2 uses.
T1 (B)	Rather than use the term 'hazard' which could mean a wide range of subjective matters, for clarity and to introduce words which establish the need for a test of the specific circumstances at hand, it is advised to start the second sentence with the words 'Harmful impacts arising...'
T1 (F)	The policy as written is very permissive. It is advised to alter the wording to : 'Ancillary improvements to Chelford Railway Station which help sustain or improve it's operation and facilities (for example, parking improvements and cycle storage) will be supported.