

Report Propose

Local Plan Consultation

Author

Town Clerk

Background

Cheshire East Council published its Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation on 12 June 2026, confirming that it will prepare a new Cheshire East Local Plan. A Regulation 20 Scoping Consultation was subsequently launched, seeking views on the matters the new Local Plan should address, what it should contain, and how Cheshire East Council should engage with communities and stakeholders during its preparation.

The consultation notice was published on 21 July 2026, with representations invited from individuals, organisations and consultation bodies, including town and parish councils. The deadline for representations is 5.00pm on 1 September 2026.

Macclesfield Town Council Submission

Cheshire East's current Local Plan identified a need for 36,000 homes between 2010 and 2030, equivalent to 1,800 homes per year. The Government has since introduced a revised method for calculating housing need, taking account of the number of existing homes and local housing affordability. Under this revised method, Cheshire East's housing need has increased to 2,530 homes per year — a 41% increase.

We also recognise that the increased housing requirement may create pressure to release Green Belt land, including land that may be identified as Grey Belt. However, the Town Council considers that brownfield, underused and suitable sites within existing urban areas should be fully explored first. Where Grey Belt or Green Belt land is considered necessary, development should be in sustainable locations and supported by the infrastructure required for the additional population.

1. More and better homes for Macclesfield

Macclesfield should be promoted as an attractive place to live for people working locally, in Manchester and further afield — offering good rail and transport connections alongside access to green spaces and the countryside. Macclesfield could accommodate a significant proportion of Cheshire East's future housing growth, making the most of its excellent transport links.

2. More town-centre and urban living

The Plan should actively encourage appropriate housing within the existing town, including town-centre living, brownfield and underused sites, vacant buildings, upper floors, conversions and good-quality development that makes efficient use of land. Increasing the residential population within the town centre would support the long-term vitality of Macclesfield by bringing more people within walking distance of shops, services, employment, leisure facilities and the railway station.

The pedestrianised area of Macclesfield town centre should also be reviewed and re-evaluated, with the aim of creating a safer, more attractive and accessible environment for residents, visitors and businesses.

The Council considers that the new Local Plan should strengthen the pedestrianised town centre as an important part of the town's public realm and infrastructure. At present, there are a number of access points into the pedestrianised area and vehicles can enter before restrictions commence, park and then drive through the area once it is pedestrianised. The Council has experienced vehicles driving through events, creating safety concerns for the public.

As the town centre develops and more people live, work and visit, there should be a clear focus on pedestrian priority, with cyclists required to dismount within the pedestrianised area unless a clearly defined cycle route is provided. The Council would support consideration of automatic rising bollards or another controlled-access system at appropriate entry points, while retaining appropriate access for emergency services, servicing and deliveries.

Car Parks

Macclesfield Town Council supports the principle of considering the redevelopment of parts of the Duke Street and Churchill Way car parks to provide new housing and contribute to the regeneration and vitality of Macclesfield town centre.

These are well-located brownfield sites where new homes could bring more people into the town centre, supporting shops, businesses, restaurants and other services throughout the day and evening. Their proximity to Macclesfield railway station and the wider public transport network also makes them appropriate locations for higher-density town-centre living.

The Council's preference would be for Duke Street to be prioritised as the principal site for residential development, although development should be carefully designed. In particular, sufficient separation and amenity should be maintained between any development and the existing community centre, ensuring that it can continue to operate effectively.

The Council would also support higher-density development at Churchill Way, including potentially taller development where appropriate, reflecting the existing urban context and surrounding town-centre buildings and structures e.g Lusso building, Grosvenor Centre and multi storey car park.

Development at both sites should be high quality, well designed and appropriate to their town-centre setting. At Churchill Way in particular, development should make a positive contribution to the appearance of the area. The Council considers that partial redevelopment of the car parks should be the preferred approach, allowing housing to be provided while retaining an appropriate level of public parking.

3. Good-quality housing

Genuinely affordable housing, including social rented housing, should be a priority, meeting local needs and providing an appropriate mix for first-time buyers, younger people, families and older residents.

The Town Council would encourage the use of high-quality modular and prefabricated construction where it can deliver attractive, durable and energy-efficient homes while reducing construction time and disruption.

Higher-density town-centre housing with high energy performance, including excellent insulation, low-carbon heating and solar generation should be considered. Modern construction methods should provide an opportunity to demonstrate that

well-designed, sustainable homes can be delivered efficiently and appropriately for their urban setting.

4. Housing must be delivered, not just permitted

The Plan should focus on actual housing delivery rather than the number of planning permissions granted. Sites should be assessed for their likelihood of being delivered, with stronger monitoring of sites that remain undeveloped. The success of the Local Plan should be measured by homes built, not permissions granted.

5. Infrastructure must come with development

Housing growth must be matched by the infrastructure needed to support it, including roads, public transport, schools, healthcare, drainage, parks, leisure, walking and cycling and community facilities. Infrastructure should be planned, funded and delivered alongside housing rather than years afterwards.

6. Brownfield, Grey Belt and sustainable locations

MTC supports priority being given to brownfield and underused land and sites within existing settlements before Green Belt land is considered. MTC notes that Cheshire East Council is undertaking a borough-wide assessment to identify potential Grey Belt land. Where Green Belt release is ultimately required, suitable Grey Belt land should be considered alongside other sustainable options, with priority given to locations with good access to transport, services and infrastructure. Development should protect important green spaces, landscape and biodiversity.

7. Sustainable communities and the environment

Development should create attractive, sustainable communities and respect Macclesfield's character, heritage, green spaces, biodiversity and landscape, including the findings of the Macclesfield Character Assessment. [Macclesfield Character Area Assessment - Macclesfield Town Council](#).

8. A strong voice for Macclesfield

Macclesfield Town Council and local residents should have meaningful opportunities to influence the detailed development of proposals affecting the town as the Local Plan progresses. The Town Council should continue to engage with Cheshire East Council to ensure that Macclesfield's needs and opportunities are properly reflected in the final Plan.