Chairmans Report

Cheshire East Local Plan Update As Reported to September 1st 2026 Parish Meeting

The Chair reported that the whole matter of the new Local Plan and indeed the potential impact on the village took him by surprise as neither he nor the Clerk had received any notification from CE Planning that this was going on. He thanked Mark Salmon for bringing it to his attention.

Current Status

- In response to new Gov't Housing Policy Cheshire East have decided to re-do their Local Plan.
- As a result of the new measures CE is mandated to increase the number of houses it builds from 977 pa. to 2530 over the period 2030->2045. This equates to 37,950 new houses. Hence the need for a new plan
- In December 2025 CE Planning issued a 'Call for Sites' communication to Landowners, farmers, Land Agents and developers for submissions of possible plots of land (The Parish were not informed of this).
- It was this that gave rise to the plot behind QB being submitted by Knight Frank – the local Land Agent for the Peckforton Estate. - We had no notification of this as a Parish
- This isn't the first time a call for sites has occurred. They did one in 2017 where in fact 7 plots were submitted. At that time all were deemed not suitable for inclusion in the plan and in fact only one was resubmitted this time, namely the land behind Quarry Bank.
- Submitting the plots for consideration in the new Local Plan does not bestow any classification on them with regards to planning. Each site (as in 2017) will be assessed for suitability for inclusion and they will still go through the same vetting process as would any planning submission where the community would have opportunity to raise comments, challenges etc.
- The Clerk and Chair attended a formal presentation from CE Planning on the new plan and one of the comments that really stood out was one of the planners saying that "*given the increase in the mandated build it is going to be much harder for Planning to sat 'NO' to applications*".
- The presentation took place on a Tuesday evening 11th August. This meeting was to formally notify Parish and Local Councilors of the new plan and to ask for input on the scope of the new plan. It's important to note that at this stage the input is not about individual plots, it is asking for community input into what the plan should cover. There are a range of subheadings, everything from:-
    - Changes to Greenbelt policy
    - Open Countryside
    - Brown Field Development
    - Economic Growth

    - Heritage, Culture & the Natural Environment
    - Demographic mix
    - Spatial Distribution
    - Gypsey and Traveler Development
    - Minerals & Waste
- There were more than 50 people on the meeting and in the main people were not happy. In particular there was a lot of annoyance at the timescale for submissions with the deadline being 1st September given the timing of the meeting to launch all this (11/08/26).
- In parallel to understanding what the plan is all about and what is required by the 1st September the Estate were also contacted (Celia Deeley, Estate Manager for Tollemache Estates), to discuss the submission of the land behind Quarry Bank Specifically it was explained there was a lot of concern around this including:-
    - Why we hadn't been informed
    - What was behind this, particularly as at least 1/3rd of the land sits in a conservation area.
    - Were the Estate aware of this and if so what are their plans?
    - And given the obvious impact on the village I raised disappointed we'd learned about this third hand, and I would have hoped we would at least have been advised.
- Celia was totally taken aback by this. She confirmed she was aware of a couple of plots in Bunbury that were being considered and indeed they were in consultation with the locals about these, but knew nothing about any plot in Peckforton being submitted. Celia confirmed she would speak to Knight Frank to find out more and come back to us.
- Celia confirmed that the submission was not instigated by the Estate but had been done by Knight Frank and was in fact a routine response from KF in relation to the CE Call for Sites.
- Given that this did not seem a priority for the Estate it was requested that if the Estate had no immediate plans for this piece of land, they either issue a statement to this effect for sharing with the community, or better still they withdraw the plot of land from the Call For Sites.
- It is confirmed that the Estate withdrew this piece of land for consideration in the new CE Local Plan.
- The Chair wrote to Estate to express thanks for the prompt action and received a very positive reply from Edward Tollemache acknowledging the note and saying: -

  I am glad this decision has been received favourably and hope we can continue to engage positively with you and the Parish on the right decisions for the estate and the local area over the next few years.
- Whilst the immediate issue and potential impact on Peckforton has been alleviated, it was nevertheless a bit of a wake-up call and we have to acknowledge that in the current environment no land is safe and therefore it is beholden on us to stay

abreast of what is going on with the CE Plan to ensure Peckforton's interests are protected. Specifically for us the key issues are:-

- Protecting the Natural Environment
- The Heritage of the area… the castles and 22 listed buildings.
- It is designated Open Countryside
- It's in a defined Conservation area.
- Lack of infrastructure
- It's under consideration as for inclusion as an AONB (National Landscape)

We are therefore continuing as if the situation in Peckforton hadn't changed

- With considerable help and support from Jon Hughes Peckforton Have submitted their detailed comments (as circulated prior to the meeting) to Cheshire East Planning and in doing so have asked for written confirmation that both the Chair and The Clerk are on their mailing list for future notifications in relation to this important matter.