

# CHURCH MINSHULL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION STATEMENT

JUNE 2019

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This consultation statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 in respect of the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan. The legal basis of the Statement is provided by Section 15 (2) of Part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, which requires that a consultation statement should:

- Contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan;
- Explain how they were consulted;
- Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted;
- Describe how those issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Area is a rural parish in the unitary authority of Cheshire East Council. The parish is located approximately 5 miles (8.0 km) north west of Crewe and to the west of the River Weaver and the Shropshire Union Canal. The parish has a small population of some 425 residents (at the time of the 2011 census). The relatively small number of residents has meant that consultation with members of the community has been a real possibility at a manageable scale, which has helped to allow the community to become aware of the Neighbourhood Plan, and to contribute to its development through various consultation events and a questionnaire. Additionally, the Parish Council has published information on the community website <https://www.villagearena.org/information/cm-np.html> which has pages dedicated to the Neighbourhood Plan, where Neighbourhood Plan documents and background evidence have been published and available to view.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan is a community plan and must derive its vision, objectives and policies from the community. From the outset the Parish Council was determined that the residents should be kept informed and given every opportunity to inform the Steering Group of their views. Communication and consultation, in various forms, have played a major role in formulating the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.2 Throughout the process, the neighbourhood planning steering group has engaged in consultations with the community, using a variety of methods in order to gain as many views as possible.

2.3 It was considered essential to:

- Promote a high degree of awareness of the project;
- Form a steering group that contained both Parish Council members and volunteers from the local community;
- Encourage everyone to contribute to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan;
- Promote consultation events and provide regular updates on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan and its development.

2.4 Key to this programme was publicity to gain residents' engagement. This was gained via public meetings, drop-ins, leaflets, articles in village newsletters, a questionnaire, and electronic media via the community website. Consultation versions of the Neighbourhood Plan were available to view on the Parish website, along with other documents and reports.

<https://www.villagearena.org/information/cm-np.html>

2.5 Every effort has been made to ensure that the vision, aims and policies of the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan reflect the views of the majority of the local residents, whilst having regard to local and national policies.

2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan has been developed through regular consultation with the residents of Church Minshull. Cheshire East Council Planning department has also been consulted throughout the process and has provided invaluable information and advice. The Neighbourhood Plan Area was consulted upon from 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and was formally designated by Cheshire East Council on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

### 3. CONSULTATION EVENTS – THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA DESIGNATION

3.1 **Who was consulted and how were they consulted?** The Consultation on the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan Area ran from 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The proposed area was consulted upon for a six week period, and was available to view on Cheshire East Council's website.

3.2 Cheshire East sent an email to a list of statutory consultees and other interested groups and parties to inform them of the proposed designation and where it could be viewed. Information was also provided on the dedicated Neighbourhood Planning web pages on Cheshire East Council's website. Comments could be made online, by email or by post.

3.3 **What issues and concerns were raised?** One comment was received in support of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. No comments were received specifically on the Neighbourhood Area designation. Details can be found on the following web page  
<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-plans-a-f/church-minshull-neighbourhood-plan.aspx>

3.4 **How have the issues and concerns been considered?** As there were no adverse comments received, no changes were made to the proposed Church Minshull Neighbourhood Area, which was officially designated by Cheshire East Council on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

## 4 OPEN MEETING

4.1 **Who was consulted and how were they consulted?** In December 2015 a leaflet was delivered to every household in the Parish, inviting every resident to a public meeting at the Village Hall to hear about Neighbourhood Plans. Two guest speakers were in attendance. One, from Cheshire Community Action, who advised on the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, and the process to undertake. Another, from a neighbouring Parish who were very advanced with their Neighbourhood Plan, having received their Examiner's Report, who was able to give first hand advice regarding his experience. Additionally, members of the Parish Council were there to answer questions, along with the guest speakers.

4.3 **What issues and concerns were raised?** The meeting was exceptionally well attended, with approximately 66 residents attending. The community asked questions regarding the length of time to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan, the purpose and strength of Neighbourhood Plans, and the number of volunteers needed, but were very positive and supportive of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

4.4 **How have the issues and concerns been considered?** The meeting confirmed the desire from the community to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, and so a decision was made by the Parish Council to have the Neighbourhood Area officially designated, to set up a steering group, and to begin to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan.

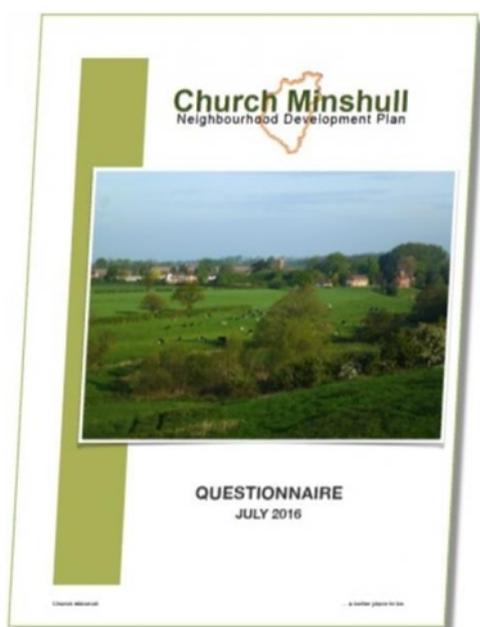
## 5. RESIDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

5.1 **Who was consulted and how were they consulted?** A questionnaire was delivered to every household in the parishes in during July 2016, to be completed by the end of August. (The questionnaire can be seen on the community website <https://www.villagearena.org/information/cm-np.html>) Further copies of the questionnaire could be downloaded from the community website, or copies could be requested from members of the steering group by telephone. A member of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group collected each questionnaire.

5.2 The questionnaire explained the process and purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan, and explained why the community needed a Neighbourhood Plan, what had been done so far, and what would happen next. It asked a number of questions, asking whether respondents agreed with the draft vision and aims for Church Minshull drawn up by the steering group, and asked for opinions and comments regarding issues covering housing; whether residents were in housing need; the character of Church Minshull; the countryside and environment; the local economy and travel patterns.

5.3 **What issues and concerns were raised?** 165 responses were received, from 220 households, an excellent response rate of almost 75% which reflects the community's interest in the Neighbourhood Plan. There were many long and detailed comments, again highlighting the interest and engagement of the local community. The questionnaire responses raised a number of comments, issues and concerns.

5.4 98.7% of respondents agreed with the draft vision. There were 38 comments on the aims, which were overwhelmingly supportive, with a number of suggestions to improve them. Respondents were 100% supportive of protecting green spaces, the landscape and nature conservation. Some respondents did not want to see any housing development, whereas others raised the need for smaller homes and homes that were innovative and eco-friendly.



5.5 Residents were very supportive of maintaining the rural character of Church Minshull, and there were comments on the need for better footpaths; the importance of protecting the Conservation Area, and the need to support the local economy, possibly with small, cottage like industry. The need to protect community facilities was also raised.

5.6 **How have the issues and concerns been considered?** The results were analysed and a report on the analysis of the questionnaire was prepared, with observations and ideas for next steps. The results highlighted the issues which were important for local people to see included in the Neighbourhood Plan, formed the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan policies, and helped to determine what evidence needed to be gathered to inform the policies.

5.7 Some comments were concerned with issues outside the remit of a Neighbourhood Plan, such as speeding and bus timetables. These were reported separately to the Parish Council.

5.8 The aims were refined to incorporate respondents' comments, and it was decided that the Neighbourhood Plan should have policies that covered housing and design; community facilities; environment; the economy; and heritage.

5.9 The issues raised also led to the decision by the steering group to prepare further reports to help provide background evidence and justification for the Neighbourhood Plan policies, on topics which had been seen as important by the community. As such a Housing Advice Note was prepared by Cheshire East Council, and help was given to the group from Cheshire East Council to prepare a Local Character Assessment. The reports can be viewed at <https://www.villagearena.org/information/cm-np.html>

## 6. DROP-IN EVENT

6.1 **Who was consulted and how were they consulted?** A drop-in event was held in the Village Hall on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017 from 3pm-7pm. Notification of the meeting was given on the community website, and Parish Magazine (“Insight”) which is sent to every household in the area.

6.2 The drop-in was attended by the members of the steering group, who were on hand to explain the Neighbourhood Plan’s progress, and to answer any questions. The results of the questionnaire were shared, and the draft policies and photographs were on display on large boards, for people to read and comment upon. Also available to view were the Local Character Assessment and the Housing Advice Note.

6.3 **What issues and concerns were raised?** Approximately 40 people attended the drop-in event. Attendees were supportive of the work that had been done, and of the emerging policies, and were interested to see the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. Comments were raised regarding the need for houses suitable for down-sizing and to encourage young people to stay/move into the area. There were also concerns about maintaining the character and environment of the area.

6.4 **How have the issues and concerns been considered?** The support given and the comments received were used to refine the policies further. The drop-in was also an opportunity to keep residents aware of the process and explain what could and couldn’t be included in the Neighbourhood Plan, and how the Neighbourhood Plan must have evidence for its policies and be in general conformity with local and national policy. The community were very supportive of the emerging policies, and the plan was then finalised ready for its Regulation 14 consultation.



## 7. REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION AND FURTHER DROP-IN EVENT

7.1 As required under Part 5, Section 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group completed a six week pre-submission consultation on the draft Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan between December 2018 and January 2019. Within this period the following was undertaken -

- Consultation with statutory consultation bodies
- Notification as to where the pre-submission Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan could be inspected
- Information on how to make representations, and the date by which these should be received
- A copy of the pre-submission Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan was sent to the Cheshire East Spatial Planning department

7.2 Cheshire East Council supplied approximately 100 e-mail addresses of interested parties which were all sent the Regulation 14 information letter and links to the Neighbourhood Plan website where they could view the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying documents. This was supplemented with contacts for local organisations and individuals which it was considered might have opinions on the Plan. A drop-in event was held at Church Minshull Village Hall on 6 April 2019. Residents were informed of the event on the Parish Council Website and in the Parish Magazine (Insight); the latter also gave contact details for those residents without internet access who wished to view a copy of the Neighbourhood Plan. An online version could be viewed on the Parish Council website at <https://www.villagearena.org/information/cm-np.html>

7.3 Comments on the Plan could be submitted by post or e-mail to the Parish Clerk.

7.4 At the drop-in events members of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group were in attendance to explain the Neighbourhood Plan, answer questions and give residents the chance to make comments on the draft plan. Copies of the draft plan and evidence base documents were available together with display boards (outlining the policies).

7.6 7 Church Minshull residents attended, read through the plan and discussed various aspects with the Steering Group. There were no disagreements with the policies and a number of people indicated they now understood what the Plan was about, others saying they would read through the Plan again, on line. Lots of questions were asked about Neighbourhood Planning and individual policies.

7.7 Along with local residents, the following people and groups were consulted as part of the Regulation 14 consultation:

Halton Council	Neighbourhood Planning – Cheshire East Council
Lancashire County Council	Greater Manchester Councils
Manchester City Council	Cheshire West Council
Newcastle - Staffs Council	Derbyshire Dales Council
Shropshire Council	Derbyshire County Council
Staffordshire Moorlands Council	Peak District National Park
Stockport Council	Chapel and Hill Chorlton Parish Council
Stoke Council	Audley Parish Council
Trafford Council	Keele Parish Council
Transport for Greater Manchester	Kidsgrove Town Council
Natural Resources Wales	Loggerheads parish Council
Derbyshire Dales Council	Madeley Parish Council
South Derbyshire Council	Biddulph Parish Council
Warrington Council	Whaley Bridge Parish Council
Malpas Parish Council	New Mills Town Council
Tarporley parish Council	Woodford Parish Council
Beeston parish Council	High Peak Council
Tiverton Parish Council	Lymm Parish Council
Natural England	Appleton Parish Council
The Environment Agency	Grappenhall and Thellwall Parish Council
Historic England	Stretton Parish Council
English Heritage	The Coal Authority
Network Rail	The Homes and Communities Agency
The Highways Agency	United Utilities
The Marine Management Organisation	Welsh Water
National Trust	Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership
Highways England	Stoke/Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Amec	Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub
National Grid	East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
O2	North Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Western Power	South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Electricity North West	West Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NHS- Eastern Cheshire	
NHS – Cheshire and Merseyside	
Liverpool Primary Care Trust	
St. Bartholomew’s Church, Church Minshull	
Church Minshull Village Hall	
Church Minshull Sports & Social Club	

7.8 **What issues and concerns were raised?** A total of 12 comments were received at the Regulation 14 stage, from 7 consultees. These were from 5 statutory bodies, 1 local church, and Cheshire East Council. There were no comments raised that required further action, other than from Cheshire East Council (Neighbourhood Planning Manager). The issues raised were that the housing policy should be amended to take account of the SADPD and Local Plan policies PG6 and SC6; advice that policies should not be split by photographs; the design policy CDH1 could be made more proactive; the views policy CDH2 amended for clarity and conformity; and that Economy policy ECON3 could be made more specific test related to a market test.

7.9 **How have the issues and concerns been considered?** The issues and concerns have been given full consideration, and changes have been made to the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly, in preparation for formal submission. Various wording in the text and policies have been amended, as per suggestions, to add clarity and value to the Neighbourhood Plan. Changes were made to policies H1 – New Housing; CDH1 – Character and Design; CDH2 – Important Views and Vistas (the title of the policy was also amended from important Views and Vistas, to reflect the advice from Cheshire East Council); ECON3 – Community Facilities.

7.10 Additionally, changes were made to the Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the publication of the draft Local Plan Part Two SADPD (Site Allocations and Development Policies Document), and also reflect the most up to date National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

7.11 A summary of the representations made, along with the Steering Groups response and recommended amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan is detailed in Appendix 1.

## 8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The publicity, engagement and consultation completed throughout the production of the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan has been open and transparent, with opportunities provided for both statutory consultees and those that live and work within the Neighbourhood Area to feed into the process, make comment, and to raise issues, priorities and concerns for consideration.

8.2 All statutory requirements have been met and consultation, engagement and research has been completed. This Consultation Statement has been produced to document the consultation and engagement process and is considered to comply with Part 5, Section 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

APPENDIX 1: REPRESENTATIONS FROM REGULATION 14 PRE-SUBMISSION  
CONSULTATION

REFERENCE	CONSULTEE	COMMENT	NP STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
1	Highways England	Highways England have no comment to make at this stage.	No action.
2	National Grid	National Grid has identified the following high-pressure gas transmission pipeline as falling within the Neighbourhood area boundary: • FM21 – Elworth to Mickle Trafford From the consultation information provided, the above gas transmission pipeline does not interact with any of the proposed development sites.	Noted – No action.
3	The Coal Authority	Having reviewed your document, I confirm that we have no specific comments to make on it.	No action.
4	Historic England	Thank you for consulting Historic England on the above document. At this stage we have no comments to make on its content.	No action.
5	St Bartholomew’s Church, Church Minshull	The PCC of St Bartholomew’s Church Minshull supports the principles of the Neighbourhood Development Plan as a means of ensuring sensitive and appropriate development, which will allow the community of Church Minshull to continue to thrive into the future.	Noted, with thanks. No action.
6	Network Rail	Network Rail has no comments.	No action.
7	Cheshire East Council – Neighbourhood Planning Manager	In general the photos provide a helpful source of visual information but where they interrupt policy text it would be helpful to move them.	<b>Agreed. Amend the NP so that policies are not split by photos.</b>
8	Cheshire East Council – Neighbourhood Planning Manager	Generally, the Plan is well laid out, clear to understand and follows a logical progression 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. It should be noted that the Borough Council has recently published its draft	<b>Noted, with thanks. The NP will be reviewed prior to submission to ensure policies are not duplicated with the Cheshire East Local Plan Part Two.</b>

REFERENCE	CONSULTEE	COMMENT	NP STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
		<p>Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (part two of the local plan) which does cover some similar detailed issues covered by the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan. The full SADPD document can be accessed here and to ensure policies are not unnecessarily duplicated, it is advised to review the approach in the Council's plan ahead of the final submission of the neighbourhood plan.</p>	
9	Cheshire East Council – Neighbourhood Planning Manager	<p>Policy H1 - Church Minshull is not afforded a Settlement Boundary or Infill Boundary in the current development plan and is washed over by open countryside policy. Local Plan Policy PG6 'Open Countryside', therefore applies here which restricts development in the countryside for specific purposes and allows 'limited infilling' in villages or 'the infill of a small gap with one or two dwellings in an otherwise built up frontage'. Generally allowing up to 6 dwellings on a single development site in this location is therefore in conflict with the strategic approach set out in the Development Plan.</p> <p>Whilst the local community has indicated its support for allowing sites to develop up to six dwellings, the policy does not specify if there should be limitations on the location this is acceptable within. The policy would benefit from clarifying when and where this approach should be applied. For example, if the policy could clarify whether the allowance of up to six dwellings applies within the settlement to define what 'limited' means in this context or if the intent is to manage proposals in the open countryside it state that in circumstances where the restrictive approach set out in Open Countryside policy PG6 cannot be applied (because the Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land) then small developments, that do not exceed six homes and do not</p>	<p><b>Agree. Amend Policy H1 to read</b></p> <p><b>POLICY H1 – NEW HOUSING</b></p> <p><b>The whole of Church Minshull Parish is designated as 'open countryside', and new housing will be permitted that accords with Policy PG6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.</b></p> <p><b>In circumstances where the restrictive approach set out in Policy PG6 cannot be applied, then small scale development (under ten dwellings) that does not significantly harm the landscape or character of the area will be supported, where such schemes adjoin the main settlement of Church Minshull. Any such developments must be appropriate in scale, design and character of the locality.</b></p> <p><b>Amend the evidence and justification to reflect the changes to the policy – as follows</b></p> <p><b>Church Minshull is a rural settlement. No strategic need has been identified to deliver housing beyond local needs in the Cheshire East Local Plan. This Neighbourhood Plan recognises that in order to maintain a sustainable and flourishing community, some housing development may be appropriate to meet local housing needs. However, one of the main responses from the consultations was that people value the open countryside setting of Church Minshull, and it is the aim of the Neighbourhood Plan that new housing</b></p>

REFERENCE	CONSULTEE	COMMENT	NP STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
		<p>significantly harm the landscape or character of the area will be supported where such schemes adjoin the main settlement of Church Minshull.</p> <p>If the policy were to be re-drafted to reflect the suggested text it will be necessary to explain why six dwellings (and not another number) is considered an appropriate quantum of housing to support. If a satisfactory explanation cannot be reached it may be worth considering use of the term 'small scale development' (under 10 dwellings) as set out in Policy SC6 Rural Exceptions Housing.</p>	<p><b>development will remain of a scale and in locations appropriate to the open countryside, as accords with Policy PG6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan (appendix 1).</b></p> <p><b>Development in Church Minshull has historically been at a slow and steady rate. According to the 2011 census, the population of the village was 425. In the 1851 census, taken more than 150 years previously, the population was 380. The rural feel and open countryside are greatly valued by the local community, and large scale development would be out of character with the village.</b></p> <p><b>In the Cheshire East Local Plan, the village is defined as being outside settlement limits and in open countryside, where new housing is normally only permitted through conversions or replacement dwellings; limited infilling; limited affordable housing through rural exception sites; or for development that is essential for the conservation and enhancement of a heritage asset. The protection of the open countryside from urbanising development is a principal objective of the Local Plan Strategy. Indeed, one of the policy principles underpinning the emerging Local Plan vision is to develop brownfield sites, where possible, to minimise the use of greenfield and the open countryside. The questionnaire that was sent out to all residents in Church Minshull showed overwhelming support of over 94% for the housing aim of providing housing in keeping with existing properties as local need arises. There was also support for infill development (89%); small rural sites of up to six dwellings (81%) and the redevelopment of brownfield land for housing (94%).</b></p> <p><b>The housing policy H1 will allow for housing appropriate to the open countryside setting of the Parish as has historically largely been the case in</b></p>

REFERENCE	CONSULTEE	COMMENT	NP STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
			<b>Church Minshull. The policy recognises that should the circumstances arise where the restrictive approach set out in the Cheshire East Local Plan Open Countryside policy PG6 cannot be applied (for example because the Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land), then small scale development (under ten dwellings as defined in Local Plan Policy SC6) will be supported where such schemes adjoin the main settlement of Church Minshull and are appropriate in design and character to the locality. This is in order to remain in keeping with the character of Church Minshull and to continue to protect the open countryside.</b>
10	Cheshire East Council – Neighbourhood Planning Manager	Policy CDH1 - The policy could be made more proactive by altering the text to read: ‘...the design and layout of new developments should demonstrate how the relevant features and design characteristics identified in the Cheshire East Design Guide (2016) and the Church Minshull Character Assessment (2018) have been incorporated in the proposals.’	<b>Agree – amend Policy CDH1 as suggested.</b>
11	Cheshire East Council – Neighbourhood Planning Manager	Policy CDH2 - The framework makes no allowance to protect ‘views’ however the policy is based in a recognition that the local landscape is of special significance. Therefore the policy may benefit from seeking to protect the valued features and characteristics of the local landscape which are specifically identifiable. The following alteration is recommended: ‘Development proposals must not significantly harm, individually or cumulatively, the setting of Church Minshull or characteristic features within the local landscape.’	<b>Agree – amend Policy CDH2 as suggested.</b>
12	Cheshire East Council – Neighbourhood Planning Manager	Policy ECON3 - The term ‘strenuous efforts’ could be replaced with a more specific test related to a market test ...demonstrated that an appropriate marketing exercise has been	<b>Agree – amend Policy ECON3 as suggested.</b>

REFERENCE	CONSULTEE	COMMENT	NP STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
		undertaken to secure its continued us...'	
13	Church Minshull Village Hall	The Trustees of Church Minshull Village Hall supports the Neighbourhood Plan	No action
14	Church Minshull Sports and Social Club	Church Minshull Sports and Social Club support the Neighbourhood Plan	No action