



Land at Church Street, Malpas

Cheshire West and Chester- Issues and Options Consultation

Prepared for Diocese of Chester by Fisher German LLP

August 2025

Executive Summary

Land in Malpas

The land, hereafter referred to as the Land off Church Street, Malpas, is submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council on behalf of the landowner, the Diocese of Chester, as part of the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation.

Situated on the edge of the settlement boundary of Malpas, the site is in a highly sustainable location, offering a logical and deliverable opportunity for future residential development. It is suitable, achievable, and available for allocation, with clear potential to deliver community and policy benefits.

Why Allocate This Site?

High-Quality Homes – The land represents an opportunity to deliver a well-designed, landscape-led residential scheme that meets local housing needs and enhances the character of Malpas.

Community Investment – Potential to unlock funding for improved local services, green infrastructure, and sustainable transport connections.

Comprehensive Masterplanning – A larger allocation enables cohesive placemaking, integrating housing, public open space, and community facilities into a balanced, sustainable community.



Site Location & Context

The site is located off Church Street, Malpas and extends to c. 64.99 acres (c. 26.29 hectares) spread across six fields currently in agricultural use.

The site is owned by the Diocese of Chester, who are committed to working with an experienced development partner to deliver a sensitively designed scheme that complements the village's character and provides tangible benefits to the community, including enhanced facilities and new housing opportunities.

Boundaries & Surroundings

Eastern & Southern boundaries adjoin established residential areas, allowing integration with the existing settlement.

Northern & Western boundaries abut open countryside, offering opportunities for landscape buffers, green infrastructure, and biodiversity enhancement.

Access & Connectivity

Existing gated access points from the B5069 (Church Street) provide potential vehicular and pedestrian entry options.

Well connected to local road networks and within walking distance of Malpas High Street.

Location

Excellent position on the boundary of the Malpas settlement, representing a logical and sustainable extension.

Close proximity to local amenities including shops, schools, healthcare, and community services.



Landowner Aspirations

The Landowner, the Chester Diocesan Board of Finance, would like to see Malpas remain an inclusive, cross-generational community that carefully considers the wellbeing of local people, and the environment, enabling this land to serve its residents well into the future.

History and Ethos

The landowners are now looking for an ethical developer with a commitment to high quality housing provision that is respectful of architectural history and traditions, and sensitive to the Christian ethos and the Church of England's deep community roots in this area, its heritage and culture.

Community Engagement

Developers will need to engage with local community stakeholders through robust and creative consultation to provide a mix of housing tenures and types, with opportunities for making space for the enjoyment of nature, engaging local people in biodiversity projects.

Housing provision will demonstrate innovation around clean energy and insulation. In a changing climate, future developments should consider sustainable draining solutions to mitigate flooding, protecting local waterways.

Partnership

Prospective partners must demonstrate a commitment to balancing the interests of people, the planet and profit, connecting with the values of the Diocese of Chester: demonstrating careful and wise stewardship to prioritise the needs of the existing residents and future families.

Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation 2025

Site specific comments to support Malpas Growth Options (Section 5.1)

SS 50. Which of the identified potential growth areas around Malpas do you consider the most suitable?

All potential growth options for Malpas (Options A, B, and C) are essentially similar in their overall suitability, with no significant differences between them. However, within these options, land parcel MAL04 is considered the most appropriate for growth. It aligns with the current local plan's scale and distribution of development, and benefits from proximity to sustainable transport corridors. Its location adjacent to the existing settlement edge allows for a logical, contained extension of the village, supporting sensitive integration with the established built environment.

MAL04 offers the opportunity to deliver high-quality residential development consistent with the NPPF (2024) objectives, particularly those related to sustainable development, good design, and place-making (Sections 2, 12). This site includes significant open space and landscaping that will enhance the local character and biodiversity, in line with national design guidance and local landscape policies.

Importantly, MAL04 provides the ability to safeguard nearby heritage assets, including the Church and Malpas Conservation Area, ensuring development respects and reinforces Malpas's historic and rural identity. The site's potential to contribute positively to community infrastructure and provide accessible green space supports sustainable growth aligned with both local planning policies and national frameworks, promoting environmental, social, and economic well-being as set out in the NPPF.

Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation 2025

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SS 51. Do you have any further comments about any of the potential growth areas identified around Malpas?

It is essential that any future development around Malpas is carefully managed to preserve the village's distinctive character, heritage, and rural setting. Of the potential growth areas identified, MAL04 is particularly well placed to deliver this. The site offers a logical, well-contained extension to the village and provides the opportunity for a sensitively designed scheme that incorporates mature landscaping, green buffers, and appropriate building scale to ensure visual separation from the wider countryside and harmony with the existing settlement edge.

The presence of public rights of way crossing the site presents a further opportunity to enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity, supporting active travel and reinforcing Malpas's role as a sustainable rural service centre. With appropriate design, development at MAL04 can improve access to local open spaces and contribute positively to placemaking in line with the National Planning Policy Framework's emphasis on sustainable transport, health and well-being, and high-quality design.

Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation 2025

Site specific comments to support Malpas Growth Options (Section 5.1)

SS 52. Are there any constraints, including infrastructure provision, that should be considered for Malpas when developing the new Local Plan?

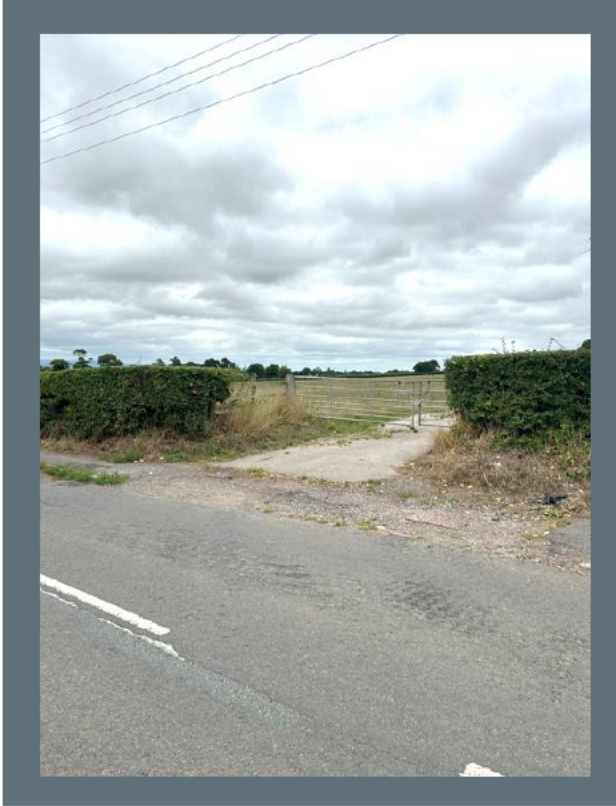
In preparing the new Local Plan, it is important to recognise the specific characteristics and sensitivities of Malpas while also identifying realistic, sustainable opportunities for growth. Like many rural service centres, Malpas faces infrastructure pressures. However, these are typical of villages in the wider borough and can be effectively addressed through the plan-led delivery of development, supported by coordinated infrastructure investment and developer contributions.

Heritage is a key consideration for Malpas, given the presence of the Conservation Area and multiple listed buildings. However, this should not be viewed as a constraint to development, but rather as a driver of quality. The Local Plan should ensure that new housing is guided by strong place-making principles, including local character, landscape integration, and sensitive design.

The land at MAL04 provides a deliverable and logical extension to the village that responds directly to these requirements. It offers the potential to accommodate new housing while maintaining the village's historic setting, protecting important views, and delivering accessible open space. Its scale and location allow for integration with existing movement networks, enhancement of public rights of way, and support for BNG - now a mandatory requirement in the planning system. Through site-specific policies and a strong design-led framework, the Local Plan can enable sustainable residential development at Malpas that supports the village's long-term vitality, protects its heritage assets, and delivers the infrastructure needed to accommodate modest, well-managed growth.

Site photos

Land at Church Street, Malpas



Site opportunities

Logical Extension to the Settlement

The site lies directly adjacent to the established residential edge of Malpas, creating a natural and logical extension to the village without encroaching into isolated countryside.

Its location supports a rounding-off of the settlement form, reinforcing a compact and cohesive village boundary.

Potential to Enhance Local Facilities

As part of a well-considered masterplan, the development could integrate new community facilities, commercial units, play areas, enhanced pedestrian routes, to benefit both new and existing residents. Improvements to local sports facilities could also be achieved.

Opportunities exist to connect with and improve existing footpath and cycleway networks, encouraging sustainable movement within the village.

Public Open Space & Biodiversity Net Gain

A proportion of the site could be dedicated to accessible green space, creating a recreational resource for the community.

Strategic landscaping and habitat creation could deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain, supporting the Council's climate and ecological objectives.

High-Quality Placemaking

The site allows for a design-led approach that respects Malpas's rural character while delivering a distinctive, attractive, and functional neighbourhood.

Potential to incorporate focal spaces, active street frontages, and integrated green corridors that enhance wellbeing and encourage community interaction.

Strong Market Demand

Malpas has a well-documented housing demand, particularly for family housing, underpinned by its schools, amenities, and quality of life.

A new development could meet this demand in a planned and sustainable manner.

Affordable Housing Delivery

The scheme presents a prime opportunity to deliver affordable housing for local people, supporting housing choice and social sustainability within the village.

Natural Containment of Development

The site's boundary adjoining residential properties on Sunnyside Lane forms a clear and defensible edge, preventing uncontrolled sprawl and maintaining the integrity of the surrounding countryside.



The site is largely free from significant development constraints and lies within the open countryside adjacent to the Malpas settlement edge. A number of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) trees are present, offering the opportunity to integrate mature landscaping into the design from the outset, enhancing character and biodiversity. Two public rights of way cross the site, which can be sensitively incorporated into a masterplanned layout. These routes provide potential for attractive pedestrian and cycle connections, ensuring local residents enjoy continued—and potentially improved—public access to green space and any new community amenities delivered as part of the scheme.

Deliverability and Viability

Ownership & Control

The site is under single ownership, ensuring clear land assembly and no fragmented titles.

Timescales for Delivery

The site could be brought forward for development in the short term (0–5 years), aligning with early phases of the Local Plan period.

No known legal or physical barriers to commencing works once allocated and consented.

Market Demand Evidence

Malpas is a sustainable rural service centre with demonstrated housing demand and limited new supply. Local market reports indicate strong interest from both local buyers and households, supporting viability.

Phasing

The site lends itself to a single developer, allowing swift housing completions to meet short-term housing needs. Potential to integrate with existing settlement edge in a coherent, design-led manner.

Key Viability Points

Level topography minimises abnormal infrastructure costs.
Access from Church Street is achievable with minimal intervention.

Sustainability & Design



Low-Carbon Design Principles

Homes could be designed to exceed current Building Regulations energy performance standards.

Potential integration of renewable technologies such as solar PV and air source heat pumps.

Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)

A masterplanned scheme could see the incorporation of permeable paving, swales, and on-site attenuation basins to manage surface water.

Measures to ensure no increase in off-site flood risk and potential to enhance local biodiversity through wetland planting.

Walkable, Connected Neighbourhood

The site is within short walking distance of Malpas High Street, schools, healthcare, and community facilities.

New pedestrian links to Church Street and adjoining streets would encourage active travel.

Green Infrastructure

Integration of new public open space and tree planting would strengthen the settlement's green network.

Native planting would provide habitats and support biodiversity net gain targets.

Climate Resilience

Buildings and landscapes designed for future climate adaptability (shade provision, ventilation, and flood resilience).

Use of sustainable, locally sourced materials where possible.



Summary

The landowners are committed to the delivery of the site and welcome further conversation to promote and develop the land for residential use.

The land at Church Street, Malpas is a logical extension to the Malpas Settlement Boundary and could be developed as a single parcel or phased approach.

The land is well located, contained and largely unconstrained.

There are a range of services available in the settlement within walking distance of the site, and the development of a larger masterplanned scheme could add significantly to these amenities.

Allocating this land for residential development would enable significant benefits to the continued sustainability of Malpas.

We would welcome dialogue going forward with Cheshire West and Chester Council to discuss delivering residential housing on this land.

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