

CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER: ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF MILLER HOMES

JACK LANE, DAVENHAM

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Signing off Sheet

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Authorised for and on behalf NJL Consulting

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 Managing Director

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by NJL Consulting on behalf of Miller Homes in response to the Draft Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) Local Plan Issues & Options Consultation (2025). The representations therefore provide specific responses to the relevant questions in the consultation in the context of Miller Homes 's site: the land at Mere Heath, Jack Lane, Davenham.
- 1.2 Overall, Miller Homes consider that several of the proposed options within the consultation document are positive and can enable required levels of growth. It remains critical, however, that ambitious economic growth and housing need are fully aligned in order to deliver the most sustainable patterns of development, and we comment on the consultation on this basis.
- 1.3 The site was previously submitted to CWAC in the Call for Sites process under site reference 0882.
- 1.4 As a key stakeholder in the area, Miller Homes wish to engage positively with the emerging plan to help to ensure it is genuinely effective, deliverable and with the right sites in logical locations.
- 1.5 These representations comment in relation to Miller Homes's site in Davenham, which sits adjacent to option ref NO06 as presented within the issues and options draft spatial strategy options, extract below, as well as wider commentary on policy proposals.

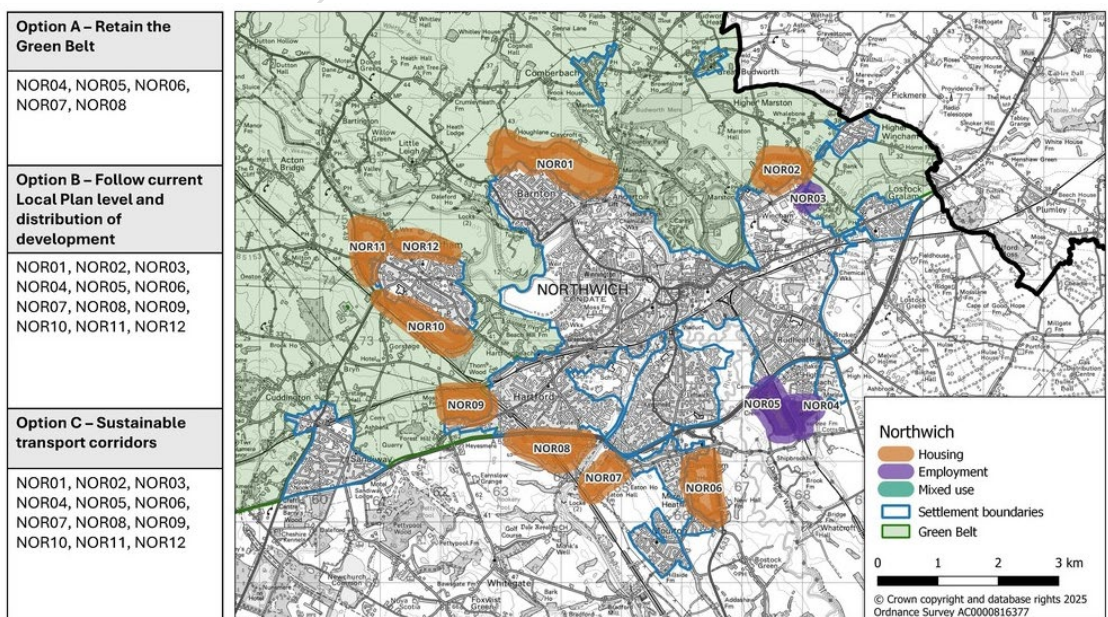


Figure 1: CWAC Issues and Options Spatial Strategy Options

1.6 The representations are set out in the following sections:

- Site context, history, ownership information and potential benefits (Section 2);
- Responses to the identified options (Sections 3 to 8); and
- A summary of our response to the consultation (Section 9).

1.7 To support this representation, a vision document for the site has been submitted which details the site baseline conditions and development opportunity to detail how the site can feasibly come forward to support CWAC in their housing aspirations.

2. The Site and Site Context

- 2.1 This section of the representations outlines the site context, the current development status and progress, the promoter and developer behind the site and the ongoing technical work to support the forthcoming development proposals.

Site and Development Context

- 2.2 The site is located to the west of Jack Lane, in Davenham which is identified as part of the Northwich Urban Area in the adopted Local Plan. The site, almost rectangular in shape, measures approximately 2.61 hectares and currently comprises of agricultural fields and unused natural landscape.
- 2.3 The site is subject to several local designations that recognise its landscape importance. It is located within the open countryside as defined under STRAT 9 (Green Belt and Countryside) and is protected through Policy GBC 2 'Protection of landscape' under Local Plan Part 2 and ENV 2 Landscape under Local Plan Part 1.
- 2.4 At a local level, the site is also located within a designated Key Settlement Gap. However, evidence produced for the Places Background Paper (2024), suggests that due to the site's location at the southern edge of the gap and its close proximity to existing buildings, it could accommodate partial development without compromising the gap's purpose of maintaining the identity of surrounding settlements.
- 2.5 The site consists of three fields (separated by hedges). In the centre of the site there is a pond that extends to the west along a shallow ditch. The two larger fields to the west and south are relatively overgrown, while the smaller field to the north has short grass coverage. The northern boundary is formed by the rear gardens of the houses on London Road, while the eastern boundary is defined by Jack Lane and the houses further south. The southern boundary of the site comprises of a garden area and open fields beyond.
- 2.6 The landscape surrounding the site is relatively flat, gradually dropping off to the River Weaver in the south-west and also falling away in the northeast towards the River Dane.
- 2.7 The site is sustainably located in terms of public transport with local bus services on Jack Lane and London Road providing regular services to Northwich, Sandbach and Crewe, whereby rail services offer connectivity to Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham.

Furthermore, various local amenities are within walking distance of the site, including two primary schools under 800m away and a high school within 1600m.

2.8 An extract of the site location plan is provided below for context:



Figure 2: Red Line Boundary

Relevant Planning History

- 2.9 From a review of the Council's online database, the site was subject of an Outline Planning Application (ref. 21/03480/OUT) for up to 60 dwellings. This application was subsequently withdrawn in March 2023 but was supported by a series of technical documents which detailed the suitability of the site across key matters.
- 2.10 Given that the previous Outline planning application (ref. 21/03480/OUT) was withdrawn in March 2023, it is not considered to have a direct bearing on this current proposal. However, the supporting technical documents from that application still serve to reaffirm the site's suitability for residential development.
- 2.11 As part of the Local Plan review, the site was submitted as a potential residential development site under the Council's Call for Sites exercise. The Stage 1 assessment assumed a capacity of 73 no. dwellings at a density of 35 dph.

Development Potential

- 2.12 The site is suitable for approximately 73 homes, allowing for the necessary access, infrastructure, drainage, open space and other key items. Primary access to the site would be available via a gated entry across the highway verge of Jack Lane on the eastern boundary, which extends behind the existing houses on Jack Lane and London Road.
- 2.13 The site is in single ownership which is critical to its delivery. Multiple or fractured ownerships, which require land assembly, can significantly delay development and thus impact on the ability for the council to accurately forecast when land may become available.
- 2.14 Miller Homes have an option to develop the site and are committed to delivering a high-quality scheme which complements their adjacent development. Development could come forward soon provided there is a favourable policy position. The fact that the site is controlled by Miller Homes as a willing, capable and proven developer means there is a realistic prospect of short-term delivery, subject to the necessary planning and associated permissions.

Summary

- 2.15 Overall, there are no constraints which are likely to be a barrier to development. If there are any perceived constraints, these will be considered through appropriate technical assessment work and scheme design.
- 2.16 The following sections of this representation provide comments on the specific questions raised in the Issues & Options document that are relevant to the site at Mere Heath, Jack Lane, Davenham.

3. Issues and Options Consultation Response

Implementation

(IN 1) Do you agree that this is the right evidence that we need to inform the new Local Plan? Is there further evidence that you think will be required?

- 3.1 Miller Homes agree that the listed evidence base is appropriate. However, it will be prepared and published these documents (particularly the Housing Need Assessment and Strategic Viability Assessment) as early as possible in the process so they can review the conclusions and understand what bearing these have on wider policies.

Spatial Strategy

(SS 1) Is there any reason for the Council not to deliver the 1,914 dpa required?

- 3.2 The Council should be planning for at least the 1,914 dpa as required under the Standard Method figures published in 2024. Any figure above this base level will ensure the LPA can address the shortfall in affordable housing provision and the need to sustain future economic growth in the borough.
- 3.3 Contextually, under the previous NPPF method, the annual housing target for Cheshire West and Chester was 532 dwellings. Under the standard method established within the latest NPPF and the updated figures published March 2024/2025 in line with affordability ratios, the annual housing target for the Council is 1,912 dwellings per year.
- 3.4 As the Council's strategic policies are more than five years old, paragraph 78 is also highly relevant. The Council needs to demonstrate a five-year supply against the standard method (taken from Planning Practice Guidance). Using the Council's latest land supply figure and published affordability, the 5-year calculation is as follows:
- Annual Requirement = 1,912
 - 5-year Requirement = 9,560
 - Plus 5% buffer = 10,038
 - Deliverable Supply = 4,209
 - Years Supply = **2.09 years**

- 3.5 The shortfall in supply is chronic and needs to be addressed through emerging Local Plan.
- 3.6 In terms of the housing figure proposed in the policy, it is important to highlight that 'exceptional circumstances' must be demonstrated to justify any deviation from the standard method. As clarified in the PPG, this requirement applies specifically to proposals for a lower housing need figure than that generated by the standard method. A higher figure is not as rigorously tested.
- 3.7 Our emphasis is based on the statement written in the PPG: *"The standard method uses a formula to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for. The standard method...identifies a minimum annual housing need figure. It does not produce a housing requirement figure."*
- 3.8 In contrast the PPG states how a range of circumstances may justify the determination of housing need which exceeds the standard method minimum, and that an assessment of need which establishes a figure which is higher than the standard method minimum will be considered sound if it *"adequately reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals."*
- 3.9 It is therefore important to consider whether any factors justify an increase in the standard method minimum when determining housing need but at the very least there is no reason as to why the Council should deliver below the identified dwellings per year as set out.

(SS 2) Should the Council consider a stepped housing requirement that plans for lower level deliver earlier in the plan period?

- 3.10 The PPG states: *"A stepped housing requirement may be appropriate where there is to be a significant change in the level of housing requirement between previous policies and / or where strategic sites will have a phased delivery or are likely to be delivered later in the plan period. Strategic policy-makers will need to identify the stepped requirement in strategic housing policy, and to set out evidence to support this approach, and not to unnecessarily delay meeting identified development needs. Stepped requirements will need to ensure that planning housing requirements are met fully within the plan period. In reviewing and revising policies, strategic policy-makers should ensure there is not continued delay in meeting identified development needs."*
- 3.11 CWAC reported in their latest Housing Monitoring Report (2024-2025) that in the last three years completions were as follows:

Year	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Total
Number of homes required	567	532	504	1,603
Net annual completions	1,401	1,366	1,215	3,982

3.12 It is clear that CWAC have been performing well against their previous requirement and delivering homes significantly higher year on year. As such, the revised target of 1,914 as set out in SS 1 should not be out-of-line for the council to achieve.

3.13 As explored in the following questions, one spatial option involves delivering homes via larger strategic sites, but this may result in slower or phased delivery and could justify a stepped housing requirement. Therefore, we consider this approach unsuitable as a preferred option, as it would not support a distribution pattern that effectively meets identified needs across the borough.

3.14 As such, we would not suggest that the Council consider a stepped housing requirement and that it should be aspirational in its approach to setting their housing requirement at the identified level of 1,914 or higher to ensure and support early delivery of housing over the plan period.

(SS 4) Do you agree with the approach as set out? If not, please suggest amends.

- **Direct new development and allocating land toward previously developed sites in settlements first.**
- **Where not sufficient, develop on the edge of existing settlements in locations with the best access to public transport and existing services and infrastructure. This may require release of Green Belt land.**

3.15 Given the limited availability of brownfield land, the targeted release of sites around sustainable settlements such as Kingsley is essential to meeting housing needs. Prioritising previously developed land aligns with the principles of sustainable development, as does promoting a well-distributed pattern of growth that meets needs across Cheshire West. Both elements of the proposed approach, focusing on brownfield sites and, where necessary, expanding at the edge of existing settlements, should be pursued together to ensure a comprehensive and balanced spatial strategy.

(SS 5) Settlement Hierarchy - Do you agree with the suggested approach? If not, suggest amends.

- 3.16 The proposed settlement hierarchy sets out the key settlements as Chester (City), Ellesmere Port (Main Town), Northwich (Main Town), Winsford (Main Town), Neston and Parkgate (Market Town) and Frodsham (Market Town). Each of these settlements will have individual place-based policies within the emerging Local Plan.
- 3.17 Additional settlements are also identified as able to meet the day-to-day needs of residents and those in surrounding areas. Beyond this, the hierarchy accepts that smaller settlements (e.g., Davenham) could accommodate infill development and small previously developed sites.
- 3.18 We agree with the proposed settlement hierarchy however, in principle, no settlement should be excluded from development, provided that their character is protected by high-quality planning and design (see Q SS 8), they are situated on routes that facilitate sustainable travel modes e.g., public transport, and local facilities can be provided.
- 3.19 Such development could actually benefit the sustainability of some settlements and bring forward additional services and facilities depending on what is required from additional housing or economic development. As such, we agree that it is necessary for smaller settlements to also accommodate some growth.

(SS 6) Should all settlements have some level of development, regardless of identification within the settlement hierarchy?

- 3.20 The population growth of CWAC cannot solely be addressed by larger settlements, as smaller settlements have their own demographic needs based on individual housing sub-markets and historic housing delivery.
- 3.21 As highlighted before, we recommend the emerging Local Plan aims for more than the minimum housing-need figure by using it as a starting point. This can help to ensure that the housing needs in each area are not only met but are also exceeded.
- 3.22 Therefore, in terms of distribution, we recommend housing is distributed in a manner which ensures the minimum housing need specific to each sub area of the borough and evenly distributed.

(SS 9) Have circumstances since adoption of the Local Plan changed to justify Green Belt release?

- 3.23 Green Belt release is critical in CWAC to provide the level of housing that has been identified as a minimum through the Standard Method calculation and allow for

housing to be distributed effectively throughout the borough and not simply towards larger settlements that are not located within the Green Belt.

3.24 The NPPF sets out that in exceptional circumstance, such as in instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means, they can review their Green Belt boundaries (in accordance with the policies in this Framework) and propose alterations to meet those needs in full.

3.25 Given the scale of housing uplift and the large swathe of the borough currently located within the Green Belt, CWAC will likely need to identify additional land by undertaking a full green belt review and additional housing needs evidence to support this.

3.26 Whilst the site promoted through these representations is not located within the Green Belt and Miller believe that this their site should be a priority location due to its non-Green Belt status, Miller still support the release of Green Belt Land as it will be required to ensure a well distributed housing delivery.

(SS 11) Please select the most appropriate spatial option:

- ***Option A - Retain the Green Belt***
- ***Option B - Follow the current LP level and distribution of development***
- ***Option C - Sustainable Transport corridors***
- ***None of these***

3.27 As set out in the following response, we believe an alternative spatial option should be explored.

(SS 12) Alternative - Do you have any alternative spatial strategy options to suggest?

3.28 We do not consider that any single option, as presented in the document, as the most appropriate spatial option and an alternative spatial option is detailed below.

3.29 From a review of all options, an alternative strategy could combine the strengths of Option B (distribution development by settlement hierarchy) and Option C (focussing development at sustainable transport corridors), while avoiding too much of a focus on a large urban extension only approach. By doing so, an alternative approach would:

- Prioritise brownfield and urban regeneration sites where available.

- Direct growth to main towns (Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Winsford) but avoid addressing needs through a few very large urban extensions.
- Support medium-scale growth at rail-served villages and key service centres (e.g. Lostock Gralam, Cuddington & Sandiway, Helsby, Frodsham, Tarporley) through targeted Green Belt releases.
- Allow smaller, proportionate growth in Local Service Centres and more rural settlements (e.g. Davenham) to sustain schools, shops, and services.

3.30 The benefits of an alternative proposition would be as follows:

- Deliverable: it would avoid an over-reliance on a few large, infrastructure-heavy urban extensions that could result in a delay of supply.
- Sustainable: it would support travel by train and bus, reducing car dependency, and strengthen smaller communities, as development would result in a subsequent improvement to infrastructure.
- Balanced: it would allow growth to be distributed fairly across towns, villages, and the rural area.
- Defensible: it would still allow for targeted Green Belt release particularly where a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes is not identified.

3.31 Overall, the key to this approach would be to spread growth across multiple settlements to reduce risk and ensure flexibility if some sites don't come forward as planned.

(SS 13) From those settlements identified in the Spatial Strategy options; should new housing/employment be allowed in other settlements? Specify type of development for example infill.

3.32 New housing or employment development should be allowed in other settlements, for example, smaller settlements are appropriate locations for limited infill or extension developments for housing and in some circumstances for commercial development. This is particularly the case in rural areas, as it would support the rural economy and small-scale businesses.

3.33 This will contribute to meeting the overall housing needs of the plan period and help to support the vitality of rural towns and villages.

(SS 14) Is option A appropriate?

- 3.34 Miller Homes do not agree with this option because although in theory (providing it is viable) it could help to meet the longer-term housing needs, it does not address the short-term acute housing needs in the borough.
- 3.35 This option relies on large urban extensions as part of its strategy for over 55% of its housing requirement. These often require substantial upfront infrastructure investment (e.g. new highways, schools, GP capacity, utilities). The consultation document acknowledges significant pressure on transport networks, school places, and healthcare across the borough and these costs can:
- Delay delivery of housing, undermining the Council's five-year supply.
 - Reduce viability for affordable housing and community facilities.
 - Concentrate pressure on single locations rather than distributing growth sustainably.
- 3.36 This is particularly relevant to the proposed 11,000+ homes to the south/west of Winsford. The existing Local Plan, alongside the Winsford Neighbourhood Plan, allocated land to the south/east of Winsford for 1,000 new dwellings, to be known as the Station Quarter. Of this allocation, just 215 homes have been approved, with the final homes still to be complete. As such, it is unlikely that Winsford would deliver the proposed additional MUE, as it is significantly behind in the delivery of Station Quarter.
- 3.37 Focusing growth on a small number of large extensions (e.g. around Chester or Winsford) risks creating an imbalanced settlement hierarchy, with a heightened concentration of growth in a few towns, continued under-investment in smaller (sustainable) settlements, such as Davenham and a lack of flexibility if one or more large extensions stall in delivery.
- 3.38 Furthermore, it only addresses housing needs within the large settlements, whereas the smaller settlements, which still have specific housing requirements, do not see additional development. The strategy should support equal distribution to ensure suitable delivery (with supporting facilities) as needed. Option A is therefore inappropriate due to the over reliance on long-term strategic extensions which can result in an unfair distribution of development across the district.

(SS 15) If not Option A - what changes could you suggest?

3.39 Miller Homes suggest pursuing a combined approach with Option B and C as detailed in the following responses.

(SS 16) Do you feel Option B is appropriate? For Housing Development, it includes:

- **Large urban extensions around: Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford.**
- **Total Green Belt release of sites to deliver 11,000 homes.**
- **Relatively limited development in Cuddington and Sandiway, Farndon, Frodsham, Helsby, Kelsall, Malpas, Neston and Parkgate, Tarporley, Tarvin and Tattenhall of 3,000 homes in total**
- **2,500 homes across the rest of the rural area, including both Green Belt and non-Green Belt land.**

3.40 As detailed through our response to question SS 12 we consider a mixed approach of Option B and C to be the most beneficial spatial strategy.

(SS 17) If not Option B - what changes could you suggest?

3.41 Miller Homes suggest pursuing a combined approach with Option B and C as detailed in the following responses.

(SS 18) Option C - Do you feel Option C is appropriate? For Housing Development, it includes:

- **A more distributed pattern of development**
- **More modest urban extensions around Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford.**
- **Smaller settlements with a rail station, such as Cuddington & Sandiway, Helsby, Frodsham and Neston and Parkgate would take a bigger role in accommodating development.**
- **Total Green Belt release of sites to deliver 12,000 homes.**
- **Potential for further development in rural area and in places along bus corridors including: Farndon, Malpas, Tarporley, Tarvin and Tattenhall.**
- **Potential for enhanced role around rural rail stations including: Acton Bridge, Capenhurst, Delamere, Elton, Hooton, Lostock Gralam and Mouldsworth.**

(SS 19) If not Option C - what changes could you suggest?

- 3.42 Miller Homes support the overall aim of Option C, which focuses growth along key transport corridors. This approach is more consistent with national and local objectives on sustainability, climate, and infrastructure delivery and improves deliverability, and flexibility, ensuring housing needs are met throughout the plan period.
- 3.43 Growth at settlements served by strong transport infrastructure (e.g. Lostock Gralam, Cuddington & Sandiway, Helsby, Frodsham) is supported as it reduces car dependency and provides access to sustainable travel.
- 3.44 Whilst Miller Homes support this approach; it is clear from a review of the published options maps that some settlements do need further consideration to the level of housing they can provide when factoring in constraints and logical locations for development. One example is around Elton, as whilst it is acknowledged that there is a train station, it should be questioned whether it is appropriate to deliver housing adjacent to large employment works (e.g. ELT02) or isolated within major roads (e.g. ELT04). Similarly, in areas around Hooton Station, it appears that housing options would appear isolated and aren't necessarily the most logical place for housing.
- 3.45 Whilst we're generally supportive of Option C as presented, we advise on an alternative approach that adopts the same principles but includes an element of Option B which would ensure the strategy establishes a greater distribution of development across the borough but also where the development is most logical and appropriate like Millers site in Davenham.

(SS 21) What information should we take into account when assessing sites for allocation in the new Local Plan?

- 3.46 When assessing sites for allocation in the new Local Plan, constraints should be limited to those that have a clear and demonstrable impact on deliverability, such as designated habitats, flood risk areas, and heritage assets. A site's designation within a settlement gap should not automatically preclude its allocation, particularly where the parcel makes a limited contribution to its purpose as we have established previously within these representations. In such cases, well-considered master-planning can enable appropriate housing delivery alongside enhancements to the landscape and open space with limited impact.

(SS 29) Which of the identified potential growth areas around Northwich do you consider to be the most suitable?

3.47 As detailed throughout these representation, Miller Homes are promoting their site off Jack Lane, Davenham which lies to the south west of the growth option NO06. As such, we are of the view that this general area is most suitable however should be extended to cover Millers site.

(SS 31) Are there any constraints, including infrastructure provision, that should be considered for the area around Northwich when developing the new Local Plan?

3.48 Miller are supportive of any improvements to the sustainable transport links to Lostock Gramam Station to ensure both existing and future development can be well connected. Developing a strong pedestrian and cycle network around Lostock Gramam would ensure travel time is reduced for residents to reach the station.

3.49 Miller will commit contributions through any future application towards any necessarily supporting infrastructure to ensure that the settlement can grow in a sustainable manner to assist in CWACs long term housing ambitions.

Green Belt and Countryside

(GB 1) Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards Green Belt and countryside, as set out in GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside' above? If not please suggest how it could be amended.

3.50 The approach to the Green Belt and Countryside proposed is supported, insofar as the inclusion of policy and/or guidance around the approach to Grey Belt land.

3.51 The Grey Belt is an important part of the Labour Government's strategy to deliver 1.5 million homes in 5 years. The Grey Belt should be carefully considered and should enable the delivery of land not just previously developed, but also greenfield sites that no longer serve the purposes of the Green Belt.

3.52 However, STRAT 9 is unnecessarily restrictive and should be amended to reflect the approach within DM 19 and the NPPF to facilitate appropriate development that addresses the identified housing need, and regenerate previously developed land.

3.53 The NPPF sets out clear requirements for land within the Green Belt and should be adhered to within any forthcoming policy.

(GB 2) Should there be a separate policy for countryside and Green Belt areas?

3.54 The separation of the policies will enable a bespoke approach to the Green Belt, increasing protection and placing greater importance on the purposes of the Green

Belt (particularly the prevention of urban sprawl, coalescence of settlements, and protection of historic character).

- 3.55 In turn, policy that relates to the countryside can be expanded to consider additional appropriate uses, and place further emphasis on the visual and ecological importance of the countryside.

Housing

(HO 1) Do you agree with the suggested approach to mix, type and specialist housing in new developments? If not, suggest amends.

- 3.56 It is key to combine the existing approach based on up-to-date evidence alongside market knowledge to deliver the best opportunities for housing mix.
- 3.57 Policies for older persons and specialist housing, including the optional technical housing standards, should be based on evidence of need and tested for viability and the LPA should not attempt to force the market in terms of private dwelling mix where it is not required or evidenced.
- 3.58 Opportunities for sites for older persons and specialist housing could be identified in masterplans for strategic sites. However, there must be a mechanism to allow for alternative development where demand is not expressed. Site allocations should satisfy criteria, such as proximity of sites to public transport, local services and facilities (e.g., healthcare), and town centres.

(HO 2) Should mix, type and specialist housing be delivered through a percentage policy approach?

- 3.59 Miller Homes agree that a percentage approach should be given to provide guidance to what is expected and needed in the borough. However, this should be a flexible approach given changing needs throughout the plan period and allow for evidence to be provided at the time of submission of an application should there be any deviations from mix, type or if specialist housing is required. At most, a percentage approach would need to enable a range (e.g. 5-10%) to account for individual site needs and constraints.
- 3.60 A flexible approach that also requires consideration against the Housing Needs Assessment (or any such later document) would enable sites to more accurately meet local market demands and respond to updated assessments in real time.

(HO 4) Affordable Housing - Do you agree with the suggested approach? If not suggest amends.

- 3.61 The policy as written suggest the intention to reflect the government's requirement for housing sites in the Green Belt to provide at least 50% affordable housing.
- 3.62 The amount of affordable housing a scheme can provide depends on the overall viability of a project and a flexible approach is needed to take account the circumstances of individual schemes. The approach should be justified by up-to-date evidence of need and viability tested, as deliverability should not be compromised by over ambitious requirements. Therefore, the most effective approach would be to identify areas with the greatest need for affordable housing and apply lower thresholds in those locations, allowing for a more flexible and responsive delivery strategy.

Health and Wellbeing

(HW 2) Thoughts on threshold for HIA requirement?

- 3.63 Miller Homes agree that housing developments should take every reasonable opportunity to promote and positively contribute to the health outcomes for the borough. The supporting PPG, healthy and safe communities, suggests the use of a health impact assessment (HIA) can be beneficial "where there are expected to be significant impacts".
- 3.64 Planning policies SPDs can include specific triggers requiring a HIA to be submitted with a planning application, particularly where evidence shows that the development could significantly affect sensitive receptors. However, for this approach to be effective, CWAC must first establish clear health priorities and needs across the borough and throughout the plan period. This would then allow the Council to define appropriate local triggers, e.g., the size or type of development, or its location that would determine when an HIA is required.

(HW 3) Should we review separation distances of windows between habitable rooms as set out in current Local Plan Part Two Policy DM 2 and include them in a policy in the new Local Plan?

- 3.65 Miller Homes do not consider there a need to include a specific policy in relation to separation distances. This can be included within a supporting SPD which can go into further details regarding contextual changes around the borough that may result in instances where distances may require shortening or lengthening.

(HW 4) What is an appropriate quantity of outdoor amenity space to be provided in new development? What approach should we apply to apartments/flats?

3.66 Miller Homes agree that private outdoor amenity space is essential in new developments and should be provided. As with Policy HW 3, this could be further detailed in a dedicated SPD on outdoor amenity and open space. This SPD could establish clear thresholds, requirements, and exceptions, covering aspects like garden sizes, public open space standards, and play provision.

Open Space, Sport, Recreation and community facilities

(OS 1) Do you agree with the approach? If not suggest amends. Approach includes:

- **Major residential development to include provision of open space, sport and recreation in accordance with current policy DM35.**
- **Contributions to be required for playing pitches based on additional demand.**
- **Open space hierarchy to be on-site, off-site, financial contribution.**

3.67 Miller Homes supports the overall intent of this policy to promote healthy and sustainable communities. However, this must be balanced against the need to meet housing requirements. The release of carefully selected Green Belt land at Lostock Gralam presents an opportunity to deliver a comprehensive development that includes new and enhanced open space and recreational facilities.

3.68 Policy DM35 sets out a clear framework for delivering open space provision and allows for off-site contributions where on-site delivery is not practical. Carrying this approach forward into the emerging Local Plan would support a comprehensive strategy. However, it must be underpinned by up-to-date evidence to provide developers with a clear and consistent baseline.

3.69 Policy DM35 should be reviewed, as it sets open space provision standards based on an open space study that now requires updating. Revised evidence may lead to changes in the required provision for each typology, reflecting evolving local needs and priorities.

(OS 2) Are the current thresholds for contributions suitable, or do you have any comments?

3.70 Miller Homes consider that the thresholds set out in adopted Policy DM35 could be considered suitable, however, these need to be tested through a strategic viability assessment.

(OS 3) Is the current evidence sufficient or does it need updating?

3.71 Miller Homes recommends that CWAC update the Open Space Study, as the current assessment covers the period 2016–2030 and does not align with the extended timeframe of the emerging Local Plan. Open space provision and quality can change significantly over time, so an updated study is essential to ensure that both on-site and off-site contributions are proportionate and targeted to areas where need is greatest.

3.72 This approach aligns with Paragraph 103 of the NPPF, which states that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport, and recreation facilities (including any quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. The findings from these assessments should then inform what provision is required, which the Local Plan should seek to accommodate.

3.73 The Playing Pitch Strategy was updated in February 2025 and as such is considered appropriate to inform the emerging Local Plan.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 These representations, submitted on behalf of Miller Homes, focus primarily on the suitability of the proposed growth areas in relation to their site at Mere Heath, Jack Lane, Davenham. General comments are also provided on other key themes within the Issues & Options document.
- 4.2 In summary, we believe the emerging Local Plan should address the following key considerations:
- Ensure that the distribution of housing aligns with identified needs and avoids uneven patterns across the borough.
 - Plan for housing delivery that exceeds the minimum standard method figure, to fully realise growth potential within CWAC.
 - Meet employment growth targets in full within each Local Authority area.
 - Consider housing and employment growth together, to avoid restricting economic development and to ensure sufficient housing is available to support expected job creation.
 - Allocate suitable housing sites accordingly, with particular emphasis on delivering more homes in Davenham, where housing need is especially high.
- 4.3 The Council must therefore ensure that suitable housing sites are allocated to support the level of growth anticipated in this part of CWAC. The site identified in this representation (Land at Mere Heath, Jack Lane, Davenham) serves as a strong example of how this can be achieved.
- 4.4 Miller Homes 's site has been suggested as a potential area for development by CWAC and we support this. As highlighted in this document and the previous representations submitted; there are no technical constraints to prevent delivery of the site, it is suitable for housing and is in line with the growth strategy of CWAC.
- 4.5 We trust this document is considered as part of the Local Plan preparation and we welcome the opportunity to discuss any of the content within this representation note (both in regard to the suggested growth areas, or general comments regarding the Issues & Options document) to help CWAC produce a sound Local Plan.

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party. Any such party relies on this report at their own risk.

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