

SHAVINGTON-CUM-GRESTY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL ON
WEDNESDAY, 28th SEPTEMBER 2011

Present: Councillors K Gibbs, Mrs S Cheshire, Mrs G McIntyre, Mrs V Adams and B Melling.

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Councillor S Hogben, Mrs A Yoxall, P Yoxall, R Hancock, R Clarke, D Miller and Mrs B Kelly; and Ward Councillor D Brickhill.

Also in attendance: Mr R Ellison and one member of the public.

113. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

114. PLANNING APPLICATION No. 11/3010N - 45 DWELLINGS AT LAND AT CREWE ROAD GRESTY FOR TAYOR WIMPEY

The Clerk explained that the meeting had been called because the closing date for receipt of observations about this planning application was 5th October 2011 – the same date as the next scheduled Parish Council meeting and that by leaving it until that meeting any observations made would be too late to be considered by Cheshire East Council.

Members considered the application and discussed it in detail.

RESOLVED: That the following objections be forwarded to Cheshire East Council:

The Interim Housing Policy document adopted by Cheshire East Council on 24th February 2011 stated that it would “..manage the release of additional land for residential development through the consideration of planning applications to maintain a five years supply as an interim measure pending the adoption of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy. The policy has been developed in a manner so that it would not prejudice the consideration of alternative options for the development strategy of the Local Development Framework.”

As Cheshire East Council is undergoing Place Shaping Consultation regarding the LDF giving local residents and Parish Councils the opportunity to shape the Development Plan and how the challenges facing towns and villages can be addressed, it is clearly inappropriate to consider the release of significant housing sites in Shavington now as this would clearly prejudice the consideration of alternative options for the development strategy of the LDF.

The Interim Planning Policy also stated that it would “.. facilitate the release of a limited number of housing sites on the edge of Crewe outside the green gap”, and “When it is demonstrated through the Annual Monitoring Report that there is not a five year supply of housing land as defined by PPS3, subject to other saved policies of the relevant Local Plan being satisfied, residential development will be permitted in the following locations: Adjacent to the settlement boundary of Crewe provided that the site... is well related to the built framework of the settlement.”

This site is not adjacent to the settle boundary of Crewe and is not well related to the built framework of the settlement. It would represent an ad hoc expansion into open countryside contrary to the Crewe and Nantwich ADOPTED Local Plan and is in conflict with policy NE2 in that housing is not identified as one of the appropriate categories of development which could be allowed.

6. Interim Planning Policy: Release of Housing Land

Crewe is a principal town and will continue to be a focus for future housing development in the Borough as envisaged in the Crewe Vision. Although the overall amount and direction for growth has yet to be determined, it is considered that there is scope for sufficient housing development to be brought forward adjacent to the Local Plan settlement boundary of Crewe (not including the village of Shavington) to meet the short term need for housing land in the Borough in a way that would not prejudice the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

This site is not adjacent to the Local Plan settlement boundary of Crewe and is closely related to Shavington village. As Shavington is not included within the area where there is considered to be scope for sufficient housing development to meet the short term need for housing land in the Borough. As such there is an objection in principle to the release of housing at this time through this planning application.

Despite the applicant view in its Planning Statement there is no requirement at this time to consider sites such as this as contributing to the emerging Core Strategy as this document has not been produced, nor any decisions taken regarding the overall approach to future development requirements in the Borough.

The developer states that "The site is situated to the south of Crewe town centre and on the edge of the urban area".

The site is actually some distance from Crewe town centre and is not on the edge of the urban area.

Meeting a 5 year housing supply

Cheshire East Council has already decided that Shavington village is to be excluded from the area where sites could come forward to meet this requirement.

Prematurity

This applicant's description of the geographic location of the site is disputed. The site is not largely contained by built development and is certainly does not fall within the definition of an 'infill' site. No assessment of the landscape character of the area has been undertaken.

The applicant fails to mention that the Interim Housing Policy specifically excludes Shavington.

Public Benefits

These are not considered so significant to override the major policy objections to the proposal. One is temporary and others can be described merely as financial inducements. The provision of family homes, affordable housing and sustainability are elements which could easily be applied to any major housing scheme. They are not special to this site. In addition the Developer should be made aware that Shavington Primary School is already at capacity.

Planning Policies

"However, it is accepted that the site is located outwith the Crewe Urban area boundary where the RCNLP Policy NE.2] seeks to resist development. To this extent the development conflicts with the development plan. In this context it is important to note that the settlement boundaries for Crewe were established in the context of the housing needs defined in the Cheshire Structure Plan for the period 1996-2011. The housing and settlement based policies of the RCNLP has therefore expired, and the weight to be accorded to this conflict is consequently substantially reduced. Furthermore, this area of land is to be surrounded by significant future areas of development."

The RCNLP has not expired. It is still a strong material consideration in determining planning applications. The proposal is in conflict with the Development Plan. Major new development areas are only on the eastern side of the application site.

The scale of development proposal is not so significant that it would predetermine matters of the scale and location of housing requirement.

It is the scale and the location of this development in the open countryside beyond Crewe Settlement boundary which would predetermine matters of the scale and location of the housing requirement in the future Core Strategy.

115. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION STAGE 1

The Parish Council discussed its response to the Stage 1 Local Development Framework consultation.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk submit the following to Cheshire East Council on the feedback forms for the LDF:

The Parish Council considers it very important to retain a separate identity and not compromise the Green Gap; to ensure that existing businesses have the opportunity to expand; and also to ensure that Shavington continues to be surrounded by attractive open countryside.

Housing

Strong justification is needed to confirm a requirement of 10,000 additional homes in Crewe by 2030. The Council needs to demonstrate convincingly that there is not enough land within the town to accommodate the level of housing required to meet the identified need for new homes. This report does not deal with Shavington. However not allocating sufficient land for housing in Crewe would put pressure on sites adjacent to Shavington so Cheshire East must make sure that a thorough investigation of all potential housing in Crewe is undertaken. The focus should be on the release of brownfield sites with Greenfield sites only used as a last resort. The strong demand for housing in Crewe should be met in Crewe to take advantage of existing facilities and services and existing and proposed employment sites as well as reducing the need to travel (paras 2.7 onwards). Efforts should be made to reduce overcrowding and under-occupancy and the number of vacant dwellings in the housing stock. A key focus should be the production of Neighbourhood Plans to regenerate the deprived housing areas to encourage private sector housing investment looking at opportunities for new house building and re-developing existing homes. The Council should also produce clear evidence in terms of its supply of housing to show the amount of both green field and brownfield land.

Economy (para 2.27)

Existing employment sites with expansion land need to be safeguarded from future housing development. Care should be taken in selecting new employment sites to ensure that this doesn't lead to pressure to release adjoining greenfield land for housing in or adjacent to existing village locations outside Crewe settlement boundary.

Crewe Town Centre (para 2.45)

A vibrant and viable town centre is essential to the on-going prosperity of the Cheshire East area. Opportunities should be exploited to encourage more housing in flats and above shops the town centre so that the town is not a dormitory after the shops and other businesses have closed.

Chairman
5th October 2011