

Middlewich Neighbourhood Plan Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 A Neighbourhood Plan is a Planning document that helps to create a strategy for development in the local community. This sets out a shared vision that can influence the planning of the town. It is not a 'wish list' or something that can be used to block development, but it sets out a positive vision for the area.

1.2 The Plan has been drafted according to the statutory requirements and within a framework of compliance to ensure it conforms to Cheshire East Council's Local Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.3 It has been prepared by a Steering Group of local residents and town councillors, assisted by Planning Consultants engaged by the Town Council. These consultants were paid for by grants from the government obtained by the Group for that purpose. This work on the Plan has included extensive consultation with residents, local businesses and various bodies who have an interest in the town and has taken approximately four years.

1.4 The Plan supports sensitive development, taking into account the importance of the town's heritage and the needs of its present and future residents. As Middlewich is likely to see significant housing growth, as set out in policies and proposals in the Local Development Plan for Cheshire East Council, it also supports much-needed transport infrastructure improvements. Proposals that encourage healthy lifestyles, cycling and walking are encouraged. This Plan aims to encapsulate the aspirations for the town and is a chance to engage with the Planning process.

1.5 Following the final stage of consultation, all responses were analysed and a Planning Consultant advised re amendments to be incorporated.

1.6 The Plan has recently undergone extensive scrutiny by an independent examiner and, following minor amendments, has been recommended to proceed to referendum.

2. Our Vision

By 2030, Middlewich will be a sustainable, vibrant and prosperous town in which people can enjoy living, working and following leisure pursuits. Community spirit will continue to flourish; heritage and canal network will be enhanced, and the profile and image of the town will be improved.

Middlewich will be a 'growing town', more in control of its own destiny. This growth will allow the town's population to achieve a critical mass which will both support and require the provision of new housing; enhancement of the town centre, new and more skilled jobs across a range of employment types, protection and development of the built and natural environment, and improved infrastructure; road and rail.

3. Key Objectives

- Middlewich Town Centre - To deliver a busy, people-focused place, with plenty to offer for both residents and visitors.
- Housing - To create excellent places for people to live, which meet their needs.
- Heritage - To ensure the story of Middlewich is embedded in the built environment of our town as it changes and make Middlewich a destination venue for industrial tourism, leisure and heritage.
- Transport - To create an efficient, safe and pleasant experience for residents and visitors as they move around and through Middlewich; to improve transport infrastructure; reduce congestion; and improve connectivity both within Middlewich and to other towns.
- Education - To deliver excellent services and facilities through great design in the right locations which connect to the town centre and provide outstanding opportunities for our young people.
- Health & Wellbeing - To make excellent provision for the health needs of Middlewich ensuring healthcare is in the right place so everyone in the town can access the service they need.

4. Summary of Policies

The policies are considered in a thematic way – themes include the Town Centre, Housing, Design and Heritage, Transport, Employment, and Education, Communities, Health & Wellbeing. The policies in each theme are, briefly:

- Town Centre - Enhancing Vitality and Viability, Shop Fronts, Security Measures and Advertising, Improving Quality of Place in the Town Centre, Markets, Town Centre Opportunity Sites, Land off Wheelock Street, Locations Outside the Town Centre, Canalside Development and Marina Opportunity Site
- Housing – Housing Strategy, House Types
- Design and Heritage - General Principles, Sustainable Design, Conservation Area Design, Canalside Development, Special Blue and Green Routes and Encouraging Walking and Cycling
- Transport - Middlewich Eastern Bypass, Car Parking, Rail Station
- Employment - Employment Land Strategy, Employment Land, Midpoint 18, Tourism and Visitors
- Education, Communities, Health & Wellbeing.- Education Hub, General Principles, Investment in New and Improved Facilities (Healthcare), Investment in New and Improved Facilities (combined education, health care and wellbeing facilities), Open Spaces, Protecting Local Biodiversity