

Proposed Residential Development Land at Rifleman's Close, Wilmslow, Cheshire

Frequently Asked Questions – Pre-Application Public Consultation

1. What is the purpose of this consultation?

Hourigan Planning (Chartered Town Planners) is preparing a full planning application on behalf of Elan Homes Holdings Limited for a proposed residential development on land at Rifleman's Close, Wilmslow, Cheshire (hereafter referred to as the site).

We have been instructed to notify neighbouring homes, Ward Councillors Goldsmith and Gorman, as well as Wilmslow Town Council that a planning application is currently being prepared. We are seeking feedback from the local community on the draft proposals.

Feedback received from this current consultation will inform the preparation of the scheme before it is finalised and a full planning application is submitted to Cheshire East Council.

2. When will you be submitting the planning application?

We plan to submit the planning application to the Council in early 2026 following the closure of the consultation period and once we have had a chance to properly consider all comments received.

3. What is the proposed scheme?

We are proposing to submit a full planning application for 14 new homes. At this stage, a DRAFT Proposed Site Layout has been produced, which indicates how the site *might* be developed, but the design is evolving and will be informed by any comments received during the period of public consultation.

The draft site layout has been informed by the technical work undertaken to date by the Applicants and their technical consultancy team. At this formative stage, the draft site layout shows a sketch of how the new homes could be configured alongside areas of proposed public open space, an area for children's play¹, significant areas of new native species planting and the retention of existing trees, hedgerows and grassland.

Density & Housing Mix

We envisage that the developable area could be built at around 29 dwellings per hectare which results in 14 new homes. At this stage, it is envisaged that the development would comprise of 2 and 2.5 storey homes in a mix of house sizes and number of bedrooms ranging from 2 to 5 beds as set out in the table below.

¹ Shown as a 'LAP' otherwise known as a 'Local Area of Play' on the enclosed DRAFT Site Layout.

House Type	Number of Market Units	Number of Affordable Units	Total
Two beds	0	3	3
Three beds	1	3	4
Four beds	3	0	3
Five beds	4	0	4
TOTAL	8	6	14

Affordable Homes

Policy SC 5 of the Local Plan Strategy requires that all residential development on sites of over 15 dwellings or 0.4 hectares in Key Service Centres provide at least 30% of the total residential units as affordable housing. The subject site is approximately 1 hectare in size. As shown in the table above, the Applicants are proposing to deliver 45% of the total number of homes as affordable housing subject to the "Golden Rules" required by Paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The tenures of the affordable housing will be discussed and agreed with the Council during the course of the planning application process. Any future planning application would be accompanied by an Affordable Housing Statement.

Access

It is proposed that a new vehicular access would be created as a continuation of Rifleman's Close at the southern point of the site, in the position shown on the DRAFT Proposed Site Layout. A Transport Statement would be submitted with the full planning application, which will set out the proposed access arrangements and demonstrate how the development will adopt sustainable travel principles.

New pedestrian footpaths are proposed on both sides of the vehicular access and road within the site, linking into the existing pedestrian footpaths on Rifleman's Close.

Trees, Woodland, Hedgerows & Biodiversity

A large part of the site will remain undeveloped and given over to areas of Public Open Space and include a children's play area.

Trees and hedgerows are to be retained where possible and would be enhanced with significant areas of new planting.

Overall, the proposals would seek to deliver at least 10% net gain for biodiversity (otherwise known as 'BNG'), and this will be illustrated in documentation submitted with the full planning application.

Water management

Surface water will be managed through the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). These measures will be fully detailed in a Drainage Strategy to be submitted in support of the scheme.

Foul water will be pumped from a pumping station in the north west of the site into the existing sewer system with the permission of the appropriate authority.

Informal Open Space and Play Areas

Informal open spaces and new planting are proposed to be provided in the northern part of the site which would be accessible by the wider community, providing people with the opportunity to exercise amongst nature. A children's play

area is proposed in this open space set within a landscape and planted area where it would be accessible for children living in the new homes, and well as other children in the wider locality.

4. How have you come up with the scheme?

The DRAFT Proposed Site Layout shows how the site could be developed in line with the following principles:

- A landscape-led approach which seeks to retain and protect trees and hedgerows where possible and introduce significant new planting.
- Providing for effective transition from the built environment to the countryside through significant new areas of planting and landscaping throughout the site and on its periphery.
- Ensuring that the development would blend in with the surrounding residential streets, respecting the topography and the character of the area as well as respecting the private amenity of the existing homes which surround the site to the north, east and south.
- The external appearance of the dwellings and the boundary treatments around the site will reflect the vernacular of the local area, including that of the adjoining Riflemen's Close development.
- We are seeking to contribute to a mixed and balanced community. Dwellings on the site will comprise a mix of sizes between 2 and 5 bedrooms.
- Measures to manage surface water run-off from the development will be deployed - these measures will be fully detailed in a Drainage Strategy to be submitted in support of the scheme. The proposal will follow best practice in the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) hierarchy and contained in the Council's Design Guide.

5. Why are you proposing this development?

The existence of “the most acute housing crisis in living memory”² in the UK is the catalyst for the Government’s reforms to the planning system, including the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), last updated on 7 February 2025. The crisis affects all parts of the country and means that home ownership is not possible for many, rents are increased due to a shortage and there are people without access to a safe and secure home. The response to the housing crisis translates into policy with the Framework’s requirement to “significantly boost”³ the supply of homes and ensure that the “needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed”. These are long-standing pillars of national planning policy, first introduced in the Framework 2012 as part of the then Coalition Government’s efforts to address a housing crisis which has only got more acute in the intervening 13 years. Further to this, the Housing Secretary, Steve Reed⁴, issued a “call to arms” to key developers and housebuilders as part of the next phase of getting “Britain building faster” to “break down the barriers to development and build the 1.5 million homes this country needs as part of our Plan for Change”.

² Building the homes we need, Written Ministerial Statement made on 30 July 2024 (Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government).

³ The Framework, Paragraph 61.

⁴ [Housing Secretary issues 'call to arms' to 'build, baby, build' - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-secretary-issues-call-to-arms-to-build-baby-build)

In the Cheshire East authority area there is a deficient housing supply, and so there is a demonstrable unmet need for open market and affordable housing in this area.

The site in question lies adjacent to the built-up area, it has access to a range of shops, schools, and services to meet day-to-day needs and is in a demonstrably sustainable location for future development. Whilst the Applicants acknowledge that the site is in the Green Belt, the site is surrounded by existing development on three sides, and it is capable of being considered Grey Belt land and not inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of decision-making.⁵

6. What are the economic benefits of the proposals?

The construction of the proposed development would contribute to generating full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs within the construction industry over the build period, which would be a benefit to the economy of the local area.

Moreover, the proposals would also generate additional expenditure within the local economy, supporting local shops, services and businesses in Helsby village and further afield. This level of expenditure would in turn support jobs in the local areas as well as potentially creating additional public sector jobs (e.g. teachers, doctors etc.) as a direct consequence of the proposals and additional residents.

The development will deliver 45% affordable housing, helping to address affordable housing needs in the administrative area by providing opportunities for lower income households to own their own home or to secure affordable accommodation.

New residents occupying the development would also generate demand for health, education and other services off the site (e.g. schools, hospitals, public administration), thus supporting further public sector employment. Where necessary financial contributions will be paid to mitigate the impact on social infrastructure.

Lastly, the proposals would generate an additional capital receipt for Cheshire East Council via New Homes Bonus payments, based on the properties adding to the net supply of housing in the District.

Overall, it is evident that the application proposals are fully commensurate with the economic dimension of sustainable development and would represent a significant economic boost for the area.

7. What are the social benefits of the proposals?

The proposals would make a meaningful contribution to meeting housing need within the local area both in terms of both open market and affordable homes.

Increasing the overall supply of housing improves affordability by redressing supply/demand issues and reduces prices overall thereby allowing more people access to the housing market and enhanced social mobility, which is a positive social benefit.

The proposals could also result in the creation of a high-quality living environment comprising a mix of dwellings and would support any future community's health, social and cultural well-being. It would also facilitate the creation of jobs within the local labour pool, both during construction and the operational phase.

⁵ The Framework, Paragraph 155.

The site is well located in relation to local services and has the potential to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle and encouraging more sustainable forms of travel. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposals would also be socially sustainable.

Moreover, the proposals include public open space and play space on land that is currently private and inaccessible to the community, benefiting the health and wellbeing of people in the area. These social benefits would not materialise without the development proposed.

8. What are the environmental benefits of the scheme?

The proposed development presents an opportunity to improve and enhance the biodiversity credentials of the subject site through proper management of existing trees and hedges, supplementary landscaping with additional planting of trees and carefully designed areas of open space. The proposals will also deliver at least a 10% net gain for biodiversity.

The full planning application will be accompanied by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment as well as Ecology survey reports and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and a Habitats Management and Maintenance Plan.

The applicants are committed to ensuring that any future residential development adopts a fabric first approach and utilises renewable sources of energy. The proposals could include air source heat pumps and solar panels, as well as other energy efficiency measures deemed appropriate, thereby allowing the proposals to exceed the requirements of existing Building Regulations. Each home would also be built with its own Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVC) as well as secure cycle parking.

9. What about impacts on local infrastructure?

The provision of adequate leisure, community and cultural infrastructure is essential to the creation of sustainable communities. These facilities help to create social cohesion and encourage people to feel a sense of pride and belonging in their local areas. Wilmslow has a range of facilities, including shops, doctors' surgeries, dentists, a library, a number of primary schools and a high school. The provision of new dwellings can create an increase in demand for these facilities, and it is important to ensure that suitable provision is made for this growth in the community and the increased demand that will be placed on local community facilities.

Policy IN 2 of the Council's Local Plan Strategy confirms that new development that generates a requirement for infrastructure will normally be permitted if the necessary on and off-site infrastructure required to support and mitigate the impact of that development is delivered. This can be in the form of financial contributions to services like education, primary care, bus services, and it can also be in the form of physical improvements, such as highways improvements.

When a planning application is submitted, the Council will seek responses from statutory bodies who will set out what site-specific mitigation might be required and why. Where such requests meet the CIL⁶ Regulations, site-specific mitigation may be the subject of a Section 106 Agreement. With this in mind, the community can therefore rest assured that this development will mitigate any impact it has on local infrastructure. The Council can control how the scheme is delivered by way of a planning condition imposed on any planning permission granted. This could for example regulate delivery and construction times so as to minimise (and potentially avoid) disturbance to local residents.

⁶Community Infrastructure Levy.

10. How can I get involved?

All of the consultation material can be found online at our website: www.houriganplanning.com/consultations

There are a number of ways to comment on the draft proposals:

By email: hello@houriganplanning.com using “Land at Rifleman's Close, Wilmslow Consultation” as the email subject line.

By Post: Land at Rifleman's Close, Wilmslow Consultation, Hourigan Planning, 10th Floor Chancery Place, 50 Brown Street, Manchester, M2 2JG.

Consultation Period Closes: **Midnight on Wednesday 14 January 2026.**

Please note: Comments received will be summarised and addressed in a Statement of Community Involvement to be submitted with the planning application. No personal details will be published. The local community will also have a further opportunity to comment on the scheme once a formal planning application is lodged with the Council.