

Cheshire West and Chester Council

Making of Handbridge Neighbourhood Plan

Decision Statement published pursuant to Schedule 38A (9) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act (as amended by the Localism Act) and Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Handbridge Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1 Work on the Handbridge Neighbourhood Plan began in 2019, led by the Neighbourhood Forum. Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has involved extensive community consultation throughout, with support provided by Cheshire West and Chester Council.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Area was designated in January 2021 at the same time as the Neighbourhood Forum.
- 1.3 The Plan includes a detailed vision and objectives for Handbridge and policies relating to five topic areas: the natural environment and open space, sustainable transport and parking, design and key views, the historic environment and landmarks and commerce. The Plan is also supported by a Neighbourhood Area Design Guidelines report.
- 1.4 The draft Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting documents were formally submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council in December 2024. Following an eight-week period of publicity, an examiner was appointed with the agreement of the qualifying body (Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum). The plan was then subject to examination and the independent examiner's report was published on 3 April 2025. The report concluded that, subject to a number of modifications, the plan met the required 'basic conditions' and could proceed to referendum.
- 1.5 On 13 May 2025, the Council's Cabinet Member agreed to accept the examiner's recommendations and confirmed that the plan should proceed to referendum.
- 1.6 At the referendum held on 24 July 2025, voters were asked to say 'yes' or 'no' to the prescribed question:

"Do you want Cheshire West and Chester Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Handbridge to help decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

- 1.7 72% of those who voted said 'yes' to the plan. The outcome was as follows:

Response	Votes
Yes	415
No	161
Turnout	18%

Making of the Plan

- 2.1 Preparation of the Handbridge Neighbourhood Plan has now progressed through the prescribed stages set out in the regulations with a positive outcome at both independent examination and referendum. The plan now forms part of the statutory development plan for the area. The Neighbourhood Forum are to be congratulated on a significant achievement in reaching this stage, which would not have been possible without their hard work and dedication.
- 2.2 The final stage of the preparation process is for the Council to 'make' the Plan. At the meeting of the Council's Cabinet on 11 October 2017 it was agreed that the decision to make a neighbourhood plan be discharged to the Senior Manager – Head of Planning and Place Making. The full report and minutes can be read at:
<http://cmttpublic.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Clid=983&MId=5184&Ver=4>

Decision

- 3.1 That the Handbridge Neighbourhood Plan be formally made.
- 3.2 The reason for this decision is that the Handbridge Neighbourhood Plan has progressed through the prescribed stages set out in the regulations with a positive outcome at both independent examination and referendum. The Council is now required to make the plan and no reasons exist as to why this should not happen. The making of the Handbridge Neighbourhood Plan would not breach or would otherwise be incompatible with any retained EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).
- 3.3 The Head of Planning and Place Making hereby exercises their delegated authority to make the plan.
- 3.4 A copy of this note will be sent to Handbridge Neighbourhood Forum and anyone who asked to be notified of the decision. The note will also be sent to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning and the local ward councillors.
- 3.5 In accordance with Regulation 19 of the 2012 Regulations, the Council has published the following on its website at:
www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

- This statement which sets out the decision to make the plan and reasons for it;
 - Details of where the decision document can be inspected.
- 3.6 The final version of the plan and associated documents have also been published on the website.
- 3.7 The decision statement and Neighbourhood Plan documents can be viewed at the following location during opening hours:
- Online at local libraries including **Chester Library at Storyhouse**, Hunter Street, Chester, CH1 2AR. Please refer to:
<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/libraries/find-a-library> for library opening hours and contact information.
 - A paper copy is also available at: **Chester Library at Storyhouse**, Hunter Street, Chester, CH1 2AR (Monday – Saturday 8.30am-7pm; Sunday 9.30am-6pm; holiday opening hours may vary).

If you would like to view a paper copy of the documents at one of our principal offices, please contact us by telephone on 01244 973887 or email neighbourhoodplanning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk The principal offices are (open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm):

- The Portal, Wellington Road, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BA
- HQ Chester, 58 Nicholas Street, Chester, CH1 2NP
- Wyvern House, The Drummer, Winsford, CW7 1AH

- 3.8 Further information is also available by contacting;
neighbourhoodplanning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Charnley', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rob Charnley - Head of Planning and Place Making

29 July 2025