

Independent Examination of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan Part Two: Land Allocations and Detailed Policies

Welsh Water's response to Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions for Examination

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Overview

Welsh Water is the statutory undertaker providing public water and sewerage services throughout the majority of Wales and adjoining parts of neighbouring English Local Authorities. Only part of the Cheshire West and Chester Council area falls under our operational control and this is for public sewerage only. Welsh Water does not supply water to Cheshire West and Chester Council area.

Investment in water and sewerage infrastructure is managed and delivered in rolling 5 year Asset Management Plans (AMP) which seek to ensure appropriate large scale investment is undertaken to provide capacity for growth. Welsh Water has invested in Chester Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) during the current AMP6 programme, which runs from April 2015 to March 2020, to provide additional capacity to accommodate the growth identified for Chester within the adopted Local Plan (Part One).

Welsh Water are required to put forward a business plan for investment in AMP7 which will run from April 2020 to March 2025 and as part of this work we require some certainty in terms of growth areas and site development proposals. An adopted Local Plan with identified allocated development sites strengthens the case that we can put forward in relation to projects requiring AMP funding. The water industry regulators Ofwat do not usually approve investment for infrastructure to serve unconfirmed growth. Alternatively, where development will create a need for additional infrastructure capacity in advance of any regulatory investment through the AMP process, developers can either fund the improvements themselves or enter into a requisition process to provide the public sewerage infrastructure to service the development. Should any improvements be required to a Wastewater Treatment Works developers can fund the upgrades via the provisions of a Section 106 (of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990) Agreement.

Matter 8 Chester

Issue 3 Employment land provision policy CH3

Q3. Is there any risk that site conditions and constraints might prevent development or adversely affect viability and deliverability? Are all sites viable and deliverable?

Q5. Are they appropriate and justified in light of potential constraints, infrastructure requirements and adverse impacts?

Welsh Water's representation at the deposit plan stage advised that the undertaking of a hydraulic modelling assessment (HMA) would be required for Site D Northern Gateway - Hoole Lane due to sewer flooding issues on the public sewer network downstream of the site. Developers will be expected to fund the undertaking of the HMA and the findings of the study would identify the extent of any sewerage upgrades required to accommodate the site. Developers can requisition the required improvements under the provisions of the Water Industry Act.

The cost to Welsh Water of delivering a sewer requisition scheme is offset by the income we generate from customer bills from the development site over a period of 12 years. Should the income received be greater than the cost of the scheme, then there is a nil contribution from the developer. Conversely, should the income received fall short of the scheme cost, a developers' contribution is required. Whilst it is apparent that the site has a public sewerage constraint this is not considered to be an insurmountable obstacle to delivery as a combination of developer contributions and the requisition process would enable the allocated site to be delivered as proposed.