

PROJECT SUMMARY

Title of Project: Local Plan Options.....Date: 21st July 2025.....

Lead Sponsor: Councillor Peter Bulmer

What ?	Objective - What's the desired end result? <p>CWAC has recently launched a consultation on its new Local Plan, regarding new potential housing sites. There is one potential site, CH02, which is the land between the A41 and the A55/ M53, right on our border with Christleton and Guilden Sutton. The Parish Council is working with other Parishes, Chester Green Belt Alliance (working title) with a view to contribute to a combine objection to this potential housing land allocation.</p> <p>The Local Plan is the key land use planning document for Cheshire West and Chester. It will help decide things like the most sustainable places for homes, shops and workplaces to be built, and how to protect the Green Belt, open space and the natural and historic environment.</p> <p>The new plan will be a single Local Plan document that will update and replace the policies in the current Local Plan (Part One) and Local Plan (Part Two), and will set out how much development is needed in the borough. It may also allocate new sites for development.</p> <p>The Local Plan Consultation Guide and Issues and Options summary document provides an overview of the draft Local Plan and the consultation.</p> <p>Information on the existing Development Plan for the borough can be found on the Adopted development plan page.</p> <p>The Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation is the first stage in producing a new Local Plan. CWAC want your feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether we've identified the right issues• which options are best to address these issues• our suggested policy changes• three possible strategy options for how the area could grow <p>CWAC is also asking for comments on the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, and Rural Proofing , as well as the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).</p>
Why?	Rationale - Why do we not want it? <p>Basis of objection</p> <p>1. Green Belt Protection</p> <p>* Policy Conflict: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local policies (e.g., Cheshire West Policy) strongly protect green belt land. Development is considered inappropriate unless "very special circumstances" can be demonstrated Brownfield First: National and local policy encourages development on previously developed land before green belt release.</p> <p>* Purpose of Green Belt: The site may serve to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Prevent urban sprawl.* Maintain the openness of the countryside.* Preserve the setting of historic Chester.* Encourage urban regeneration elsewhere - particularly to the West where there isn't the same challenge of villages proximate to the city. <p>2. Environmental and Biodiversity Concerns</p> <p>* Loss of Habitat: Development could threaten local wildlife, especially if the site includes hedgerows, mature trees, or habitats for protected species like bats or newts</p>

* Biodiversity Net Gain: Developers must now demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain, which can be difficult on greenfield sites.

3. Infrastructure Strain

* Traffic and Transport: The A41 is already a busy route:

-queues in the morning and the afternoons

-unacceptable accident injury risks

-PM2.5 and NO2 at many times exceeds the guideline levels

. Additional homes could exacerbate congestion, especially without significant upgrades to roads or public transport. Impact on rail congestion to London.

* Schools and Healthcare: Local services may be under pressure, with concerns about whether CH and CP schools, GP surgeries, and other amenities can accommodate new residents.

Flood Risk and Drainage: If the site is low-lying or near watercourses, there may be concerns about increased flood risk or inadequate drainage infrastructure. Flooding of Caldry Brook upstream due to increased run-off.

4. Heritage and Landscape Impact

* Historic Setting: Proximity to Christleton and features like Abbots Well may raise concerns about the visual and cultural impact of new development.

* Landscape Character: Development could alter the rural character of the area, especially if it's visible from public rights of way or scenic viewpoints.

5. Brown field development

The government targets should be met through building in brownfield locations and not greenbelt – the CWAC brownfield register shows 12,000 houses are possible against a target of 30,000 over 15 years – the register is inaccurate and understated – CPRE study to identify more land started, with a volunteer from Christleton in the group

6. Housing targets:

Cheshire West and Chester Council has put forward three spatial options for its new local plan to contend with having its annual housing targets bumped from around 500 to more than 2,000 by the Labour government.

Before the increase, CWAC boasted a land supply position of close to 12 years – putting the authority on a strong footing – but since the increase that has dwindled to between two and three years against the required five years.

The table below is a summary of the proposed housing number for the towns and villages. If option A is adopted, is there capacity in other areas to take the housing allocation needed?

Township	Option A Retain the green Belt	Option B Follow Current Local Plan Level	Option C Sustainable Transport Corridors
Chester	1500 - 3000	5000+	3000 - 5000
Cuddington & Sandiway	Up to 500	Up to 500	500 - 1500
Ellesmere Port	1500 - 3000	5000+	3000 - 5000
Farndon	500 - 1500	Up to 500	Up to 500
Frodsham	Up to 500	Up to 500	1500 - 3000
Helsby	Up to 500	Up to 500	500 - 1500
Kelsall	Up to 500	Up to 500	Up to 500
Malpas	500 - 1500	Up to 500	Up to 500
Neston	Up to 500	Up to 500	1500 - 3000
Northwich	5000 +	5000+	5000+
Tarporley	500 - 1500	Up to 500	Up to 500
Tarvin	Up to 500	Up to 500	Up to 500
Tattenhall	500 - 1500	Up to 500	Up to 500
Winsford	10,000+	3000 - 5000	3000 - 5000

Who?**Stakeholders – who needs to be involved, who is it for and who will make it happen?**

There is a strong argument for

- representing this group as a continuation of the group that worked on active travel

- avoiding the need to restrict the use of the group to just a local plan – note transport consultation currently

- the Wirral green Alliance assembled a group of 30 voluntary bodies which they represented with MP's, ward counsellors and the Chief Executive of the Borough Council

The public need to be made aware of these proposals so we need to consider something on our Facebook page to explain the facts, risk, consultation web link, map and then let's see what feedback we get.

This is separate to the Neighbourhood Plan, that just happens to be happening at the same time and has (luckily) given us the insights and knowledge which is helpful to all.

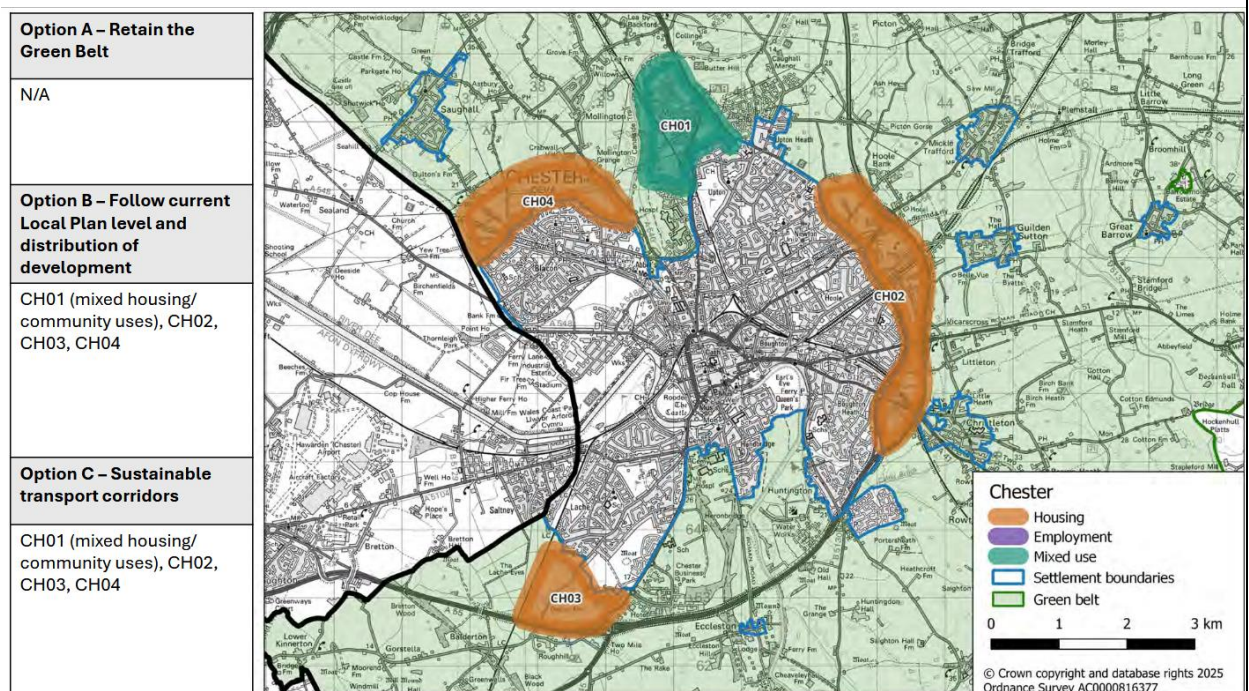
This is about protecting the green belt that surrounds us all and making sure that CWAC makes a decision that is thoughtful and considerate to our communities.

It's not that Christleton & Littleton benefit any more from this, we all benefit the same, which is to prevent the green belt that surrounds us all being swallowed by development., it's just that we're doing our best to drive this forward.

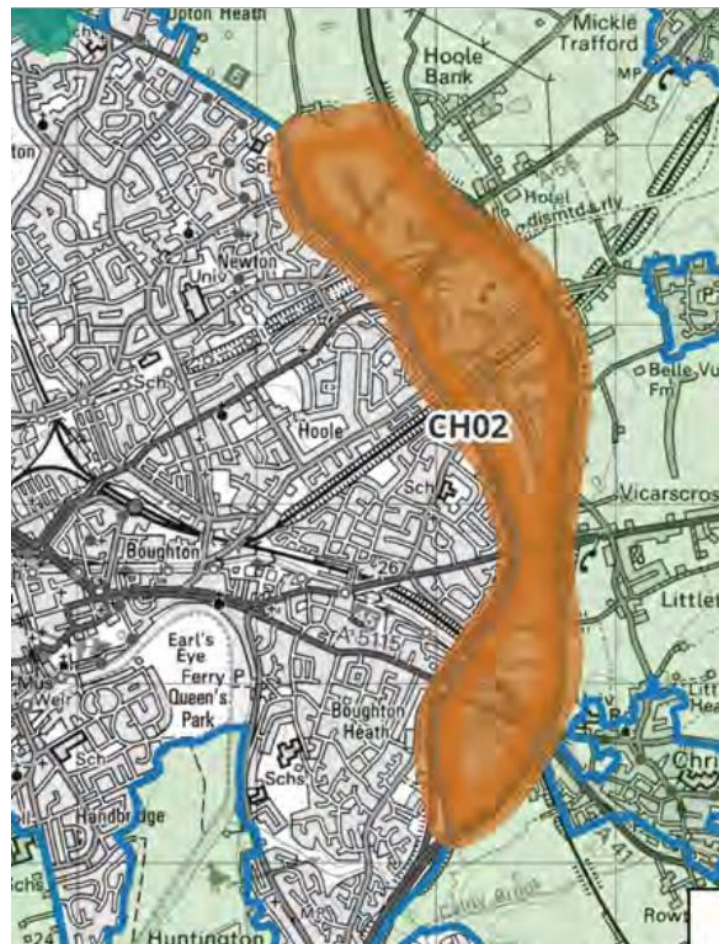
Where ?**Location - where is it needed, where can it happen?**

See maps below

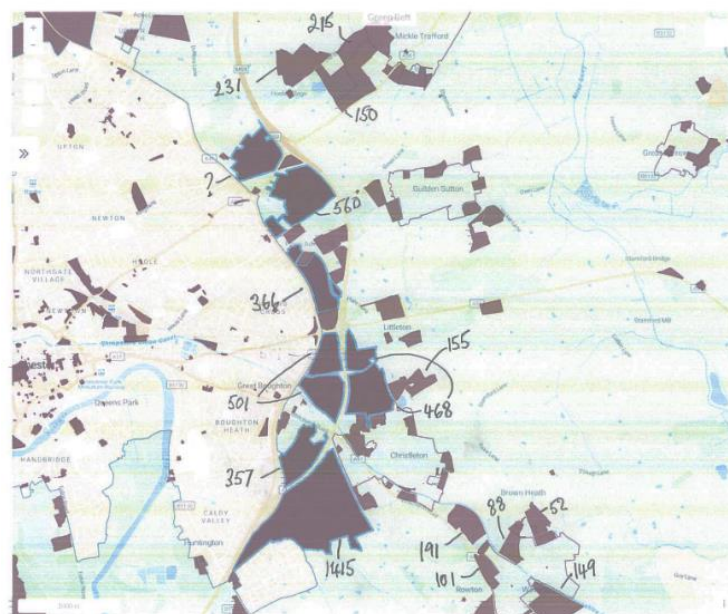
Map 1: Options around Chester



Map 2: CH02 detailed map



Map 3: Number of possible houses in CH02

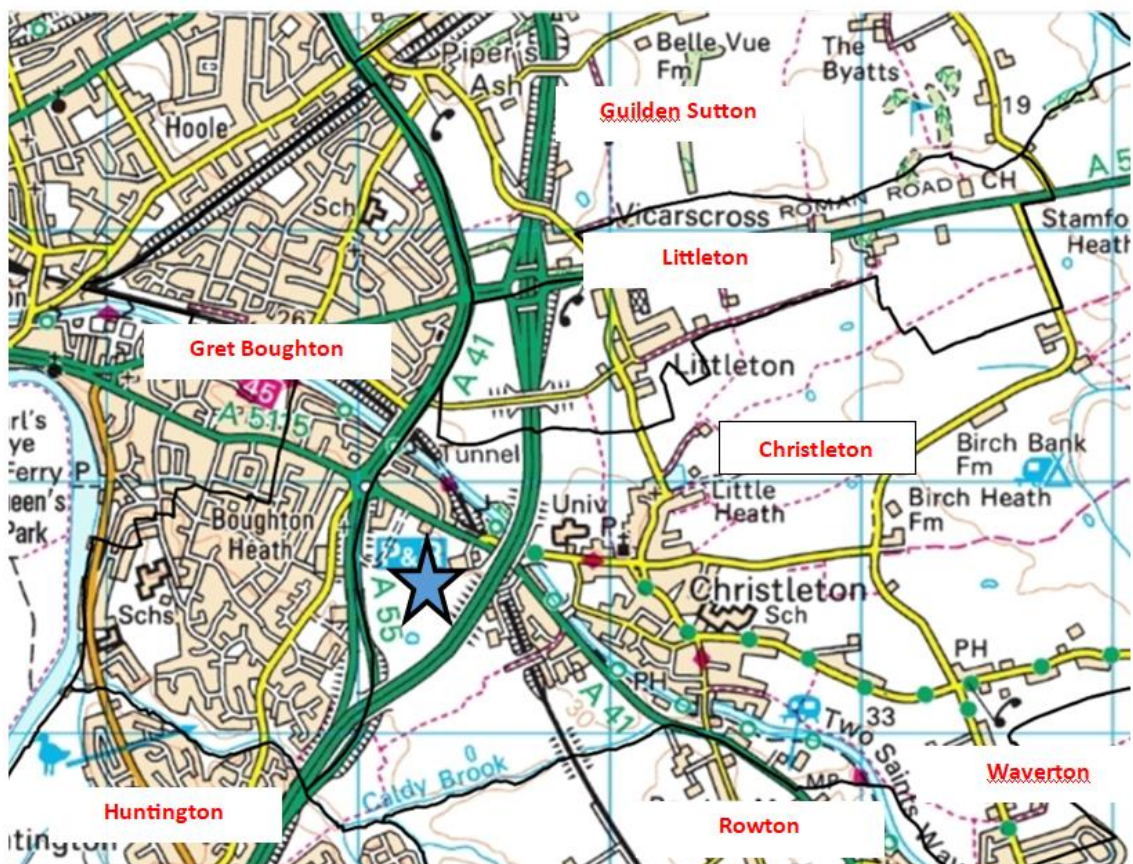


5000 ON THIS PLAN ALONE
JUST OVER 2 YRS CWAC TARGET
IF A FOCUS ON DEVELOPER SUGGESTIONS
FOR GREEN BELT

Map 4: Bloor homes layout



Map 5: Parish boundaries



When?	Timeframe - when is it needed, what is the realistic time frame?															
	Consultation dates are from 4 July 2025 until 11:59pm on 29 August 2025.															
	Drop-in sessions are planned to talk to council staff, who will be available to answer questions and help you respond to the consultation. Confirmed dates and locations are:															
	<table><tr><th>Date</th><th>Location</th><th>Time</th></tr><tr><td>Wednesday 16 July</td><td>Northwich (unit 12 & 13 Baron's Quay)</td><td>2-7pm</td></tr><tr><td>Monday 21 July</td><td>Chester (Garret Bar, Storyhouse)</td><td>12.30-5.30pm</td></tr><tr><td>Tuesday 5 August</td><td>Ellesmere Port (Vauxhall Suite, Civic Hall)</td><td>2-7pm</td></tr><tr><td>Wednesday 13 August</td><td>Winsford (28 Dingle Walk, Winsford Cross)</td><td>12.30-5.30pm</td></tr></table>	Date	Location	Time	Wednesday 16 July	Northwich (unit 12 & 13 Baron's Quay)	2-7pm	Monday 21 July	Chester (Garret Bar, Storyhouse)	12.30-5.30pm	Tuesday 5 August	Ellesmere Port (Vauxhall Suite, Civic Hall)	2-7pm	Wednesday 13 August	Winsford (28 Dingle Walk, Winsford Cross)	12.30-5.30pm
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	Next steps:															
Cheshire West and Chester Local Development Scheme under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act																
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How?	Resources - how can we do this, what do we need: resources, finance, support, expertise, partnerships															
	One quote for £10k, attached, from a recommended and vetted planning consultant – John Groves, who was part of a team that pushed back green belt withdrawal in the Warrington area. A further quote is due next week from Peter Black – part of a team who converted a Wirral green belt withdrawal plan to a brownfield development in Birkenhead.															
	Suggested split of costs by population/voter numbers/census numbers															
	Large parishes 30%															
	Medium sized parishes 20%															
	Small Parishes 10%															
	Therefore, if Guilden Sutton or Upton don't join:															
	Christleton 30%															
	Great Boughton 30% (£3k, plus Cllr time)															
	Waverton 20%															
	Rowton 10%															
	Littleton 10%															
	If other do join, we will go into credit, but no doubt there will be other costs as we go through this process, so we will create a fund to pay for this extra work.															
	We should work together so that we avoid contradicting each other, share costs and get a seat around the table throughout the local plan process particularly at the examination. A common focus of this group is the impact of development on the green belt coupled with the adverse impact on existing infrastructure which is over stretched.															

	<p>80 to 90% of the arguments are the same for all of the parishes. This first trench of course is relatively minor when shared between several parish councils. If we fail to get ourselves heard at this stage, we faced with not only a Planning consultant but a barrister as well at the examination stage and the cost could be 3,4 or 5 times later - most Parish councils make this mistake</p> <p>When it gets down to specific issues around the quality of greenbelt, the potential uses and individual infrastructure issues then John Groves would sit down with the parish counsel in question and make sure that the inputs were relevant to them</p>
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<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>Trusted 5 Parishes partnership, work together before Together, early, objections now Reusing some info from Neighbourhood Plan Experienced Consultants</p>	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>Arguments for more houses We will not benefit form any New Homes, CIL, as outside our area</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>If it does go ahead, do ensure we get better connections for cycling, bus route viability, Eco=-communities and not your bog-standard boxes in a field Opps to VXCC and CVCNC? S106, CIL, infrastructure improvements, Grid upgrades, greener transport links, junction improvements? Viable bus service, more frequent, evening sevicees</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>Loss of Green belt and all that brings Fields, hedges and historical landscape, ponds Food production Footpaths etc Land between two major traffic corridors, and the three major junction at over capacity already Loss of Rugby pitches?</p>

Bloor homes notes/ discussion

Outside our area, so should we contribute to objecting? Thin end of the wedge, if this is approved, does this open up the CH02 area for development between Great Boughton and Christleton?

1. 200 homes will rely on external facilities/ infrastructure.
2. Christleton have shown that they need 15 homes, but is this an anti-house approach, possibly NIMBY, but if they did get permission, then would the need for the 2000 properties along ring road diminish?
3. Wyldewood retirement village will be of a similar size when fully opened and will require lots of support staff back up visits. This development was built on a brownfield site not a greenfield one.
4. The number of homes from the plan did not include the semi's as a pair so the total goes up to 119 which still short of the 200 declared. The online drawing shows 63 detached, 22 large semi's, 4 small semi's and a block of 4 in a row. The drawing must have other hidden detail to bring it up to the 200 homes. From the drawing it shows a spacious arrangement for the homes so it may be that the price per house will be very high to make the project viable.
5. The plan showed approximately 110 properties, and their spatial plan seemed reasonable, the extra traffic on the road at 110 would only be in the region of 50-60 cars apparently. They do think that 200 is their "sweet spot " number for the development though, which would increase to 100-125 cars based on assumption. But a full traffic survey would still need to be carried out. Access to the site from the A41; - The access will be through the farmers field gate between the last house on the RHS and the Mercure. They say that the RH turn will be from a middle lane, but it looks very narrow for this. The proposed crossing for the pedestrians and bikes will be by a Pelican Crossing which will be close to the existing crossing. Again, over to the highways.

6. Also depending on the mix of property size and prices it should free up some to downsize in Gt Boughton and free up for families to move into.: local homes for local people.
7. They don't yet own the land so it's very speculative and it may never happen, and it's not part of the local plan, again it may not even get planning, interestingly the team running the consultation are the same ones that did the Wyldewoods development, including the landscapers and building architects.
8. Services: - If it proves that there is adequate capacity for electric then they may have to contribute to any enhancement. The fresh water will also be subject to scrutiny.
9. There is an existing gas main to the east side alongside the A55 with a 12m easement (6m to one side?) which will impact on the desire to limit noise to the estate with soundproof fencing etc to the elevated A55. Plus, some high trees. There is more scope to the west along the A41/A55 for a full range of noise limitation.
10. The foul will be taken down to the bottom of the site towards Caldry Brook collected into a tank then through a rising main back up to the A41. If it has capacity.
11. They say that the rainwater catchment will stay the same and with attenuation ponds etc will be stored till it can be released. However, with hard surfaces from roofs, roads, footpaths and cycleways will mean a faster run of than the current fields. Trust, they have done the sums correctly.
12. Other services: - Schools, I don't think they have thought about it as they think it will be up to the education dept. But if the nearest one is full then it will be a car trip even for the nearest one at rush hour at both ends of the day. Saighton had to build a large primary school due to the large number of houses. Much greater than these "200" homes but it is still a matter of concern crossing the very busy and fast A41.
13. There have been several house building areas nearby like the canal plot by the Trooper, again by the Cheshire Cat and the Law College. All must impact on local services.
14. Is it hard to come up with a single point of objection except that it feels wrong to build on green fields. It has been done in the past but with a denser house layout.
15. Bloor spotted the fact that doubling the housing target means that CWAC can only claim a 2-year housing supply instead of the required 5-year supply. This means under the new NPPF regime that there is a 'presumption in favour of development'. They have therefore submitted an application for 200 houses at the south end of CH02. This will be difficult to stop but resistance is important otherwise the full CH02 is opened up for development.
16. Is there a need for a brown field survey to identify more suitable locations?

Recommendations from the Wirral experience:

1. Get all the Ward Councillors on board opposing building on green belt - a first set of briefings complete for SE Chester MP shortly
2. Identify Planning consultant and barrister who can represent us - make our most effort at the start to remove options from the table - high quality professional quality input to REG 18 - costs are much higher when you need a barrister at examination

Recommendations:

Great Boughton Parish Council contribute £3k to cost of employing a consultant to prepare an informed and well-reasoned objection to the potential housing option on the land between the A41 and the A55/M53, along with comments on the Bloor Homes proposals.

Appendices:

1. CWAC Issues and Options Committee paper



1-ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER.pdf

2. Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan, Regulation 18, Issues and Options document:

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-and-performance/council-plans-policies-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan>



Draft Spatial Strategy Options Maps.pdf

3. Local Plan Issues and Options – FAQs



Local Plans Issues and Options FAQs.pdf

4. Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Consultation 2025 – Brief paper



Local plan briefing document.pdf

5. SE CHESTER PARISHES ACTION GROUP minutes June 2024



LOCAL PLAN ACTION GROUP MTG - June 24.pdf

6. John Groves, Town Planning email quote for Options response



John Groves quote - Reg 18 and 19.pdf

7. John Groves, Town Planning email quote for Bloor homes response



John Groves quote - Bloor objection 2505008 2.pdf

8. Bloor housing web pages:

<https://newhomesforchester.co.uk/>