

# Cheshire East

## Personal Details:

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**Organisation Name:** Congleton Town Council (Representative of parish/town council)

## Comment text:

Please see attached a letter from Congleton Town Council.

We will not have staff in the office until the 2 April, but if you wish to clarify any points then please contact David McGifford, Chief Officer 01260 270350 ext. 1 or call [REDACTED]

## Attached Documents:

- 28.03.24-lgbc---congleton-tc-response\_.docx



# Congleton Town Council

Historic Market Town

Chief Officer: David McGifford CiLCA

28 March 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

## **Congleton Town Council Response to the Local Government Boundary Review Consultation**

Congleton is a rapidly expanding town in the southeast of Cheshire East Borough and is recognised as a key service centre for the area. Congleton Town Council, which is the most local tier of Government, has long believed and expected that Link Road would form a new natural boundary between the built-up town settlement zone and the more rural parishes that the town also serves.

The growth of Congleton has been a key issue in the Local Plan, the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and within the recent Local Governance Review of the area. The Local Plan Strategy Document (2010- 2030) Policy PG 7 Spatial Distribution of Development said that Congleton was expected to accommodate development in the order of 24 hectares of employment land and 4,150 new homes. Much of this new housing has now been built but immediately abutting the current settlement zone in land made useable via the building of the link road and service roads leading to the new road.

Whilst you are reviewing the warding within Cheshire East it would be remiss of us as a Town Council if we failed to alert you to the case for making the Link Road the new boundary for Congleton. It is the boundary that most people think of as the limit of Congleton. In Cheshire East Council's work on the Brereton Ward, it twice refers to the Congleton Link Road as a boundary.

### **Reasons for believing the Link Road should be the new Boundary for Congleton.**

1. The Town Council and its business community lobbied hard for the link road as it was recognised that the town was short of employment land and employment opportunities for its residents. Despite opposition from the local Parishes the Link Road (opened in April 2021) allowed the expansion of the town. It was expected that the growth in the residential and employment sites would strengthen the town. We believe this has happened, but now the land boundaries need to take into account the newly built zones.
2. The new homes – many of which have now been built – are marketed and sold as Congleton and have a Congleton postal address. They use Congleton services – schools, shops, leisure facilities, health facilities, green open spaces, attend town events. The new estates identify as Congleton and have the same interests and needs as people living on adjacent estates which are within our boundaries. To anyone driving through the town there are no visual clues that they have left Congleton and entered a rural parish.

3. The new residents use the town's facilities, and we believe they should have a say and a vote in the future of the town and deserve to be represented by Congleton politicians. Having them belong to Congleton will strengthen the town and allow for better facilities for all within the town.
4. When conducting the recent Local Governance Review Cheshire East Council initially proposed that the Link Road would be the new boundary for Congleton. Congleton Town Council agreed with this proposal and so didn't feel the need to lobby. The proposal was overturned when two parish councils conducted surveys and found some of the people living in the parishes would prefer to stay within the parish rather than become part of Congleton Town. It is unclear if the difference in precept paid to a parish council rather than the town council which was highlighted in the surveys had an influence. The Town Council has lodged its objections with the Borough Council but they were not prepared to allow Congleton residents to respond to the amended plans through another public consultation.
5. It has been a major hurdle for the development of the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan that the vast majority of the 4,140 new homes (up to 10,000 new residents) are outside of the town boundary and therefore not part of the Neighbourhood plan area, even though the impact that the new housing is a large one on the future of the town and needs to be planned for. Ideally the whole of the Congleton area would be covered by good walking, cycling and public transport links. An aspiration of the town, but we can't make plans for the parishes.
6. For policing purposes it makes no sense that half of the Congleton Retail park is in a separate parish boundary that falls under the Sandbach Policing Unit (Marks and Spencers, B&M, Boots) whereas Tesco and McDonalds are in Congleton. This is the ideal time to acknowledge the expansion of what everyone calls Congleton and make it part of Congleton.

We are not clear whether including the new parts of Congleton as Congleton will have an impact on electoral equality. Congleton has been allocated 6 councillors by Cheshire East. However, we would suggest that the importance of natural community identity and interests along with effective and convenient local government and future-proofing the cohesive running of the town should be at the heart of the decision-making process in this case.

Yours sincerely



David McGifford Chief Officer,



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