

# Cheshire East Council considers master developer for 1,500-home Handforth Garden Village

Cheshire East Council is contemplating a collaboration with a master developer to secure funding and expertise for the Handforth Garden Village project. The proposed development, set on a 300-acre plot east of the A34 and south of the A555, plans to introduce 1,500 new homes, employment spaces, a village centre, extra care facilities, a school, a community hub, and green areas.

The council, which holds ownership of roughly 70% of the land, acts as the master developer and has reported considerable headway in advancing the scheme over the previous year. However, a report prepared for the upcoming economy and growth committee meeting highlights 'significant challenges' that persist, notably financial constraints and a deficit of in-house expertise to execute the project.

To address these issues, the report suggests partnering with MADE Partnership to investigate the feasibility of establishing a joint venture for the master developer role. MADE Partnership is a consortium consisting of Homes England, Lloyds Banking Group, and housebuilder Barratt Redrow PLC.

The report notes: "Working with MADE Partnership could therefore open a wealth of opportunities to access resource, expertise, and funding.

"MADE Partnership have offered to thoroughly explore the option of such a joint venture and will bear the costs of due diligence, provided the council enters into an exclusivity agreement whilst that work is ongoing."

During the period of exclusivity, MADE Partnership, with support from council officers, will focus on assessing the viability of setting up a joint venture. At the same time, they plan to advance essential workstreams crucial for the project's realisation.

"This would include continuing to work on progressing the initial preparation and infrastructure works, design and planning strategy."

At the conclusion of this exclusivity phase, officers are expected to report back to the committee with a recommendation on whether the council should go forth with a joint venture with MADE Partnership, the terms for such collaboration, or if it should consider other methods of delivery.

The report highlights that the cost projections for developing the Handforth Garden Village have soared due to inflationary pressures and the complexity of the programme. The council team responsible is small, and some members are juggling their involvement in this venture with alternate projects and additional duties.

It adds: "The scope and scale of work required for the delivery of the garden village far exceeds what can be provided by this small internal team.

"No one in the in-house team has experience of acting in the capacity of master developer for a complex development of this nature."

Consequently, councillors are being encouraged to agree Cheshire East's entry into an exclusivity deal with MADE Partnership to explore the potential establishment of a joint venture partnership, which would spearhead the Handforth Garden Village development.

A subsequent report will be presented to the economy and growth committee, which will then decide whether the council

should proceed with a joint venture with MADE Partnership. The economy and growth committee meeting is scheduled for 2pm on Tuesday, March 11, at Macclesfield Town Hall.

**Don't miss the latest news and analysis with our regular [North West newsletters](#) – [sign up here for free](#)**