

Cheshire & Warrington Rural Workspace Study

Cheshire County Council / Cheshire & Warrington Economic Alliance

Brief

BE Group was appointed, alongside Rural Innovation, to assess the supply of and demand for rural workspace in the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region. The study considered both existing and proposed workspace schemes that aim to support the local economy.

The overall objective of the study is to identify a number of projects that will help support a sustainable rural local economy. Funding is available for the projects, which address market failure.

Activities

- Site visits
- Extensive consultation with local authorities, property developers, estate agents and rural workspace operators
- Assessment of areas of search, as defined by the 2004 DCLG/DEFRA's rural and urban classifications
- Identification of potential projects
- Estimation of contribution of rural workspace to GVA and employment
- Guidelines on scoring projects.

Outcome

- 1.9 million sqm rural workspace identified (20 percent of Cheshire & Warrington's total supply)
- Contributes around a fifth of GVA, approx £2802 million pa in Cheshire & Warrington
- Market failure most evident in industrial supply - a great shortage identified, particularly in Central Cheshire corridor and West Cheshire
- £2 million rural workspace funding programme to be set up, targeting light industrial workshops up to 500 sqm.
- Target is to support 25 projects, creating 350 jobs - scoring criteria and project appraisal methodology developed.

