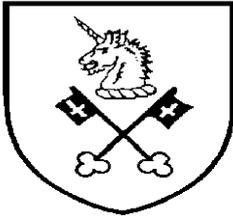


Prestbury Parish Council



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Mr. Adrian Fisher,
Spatial Planning,
Cheshire East Council,
Middlewich Road,
Sandbach,
Cheshire, CW11 1HZ.

22nd February 2013

Dear Mr. Fisher,

CEC LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS CONSULTATION – Supplementary Response

Prestbury Parish Council had already submitted their response to the Cheshire East Council Local Plan Development Options consultation when, half way through the six-week consultation period, the Strategic Planning Board approved an updated Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

Comments

We believe that the timing of this was unfortunate, particularly as the document itself was promised for last year and has a base date of March 31st 2012. We would have hoped that this document would have been released and publicised before the current consultation started, to give time for stakeholders to assimilate it.

The covering report summary to the Strategic Planning Board concludes by stating:

“The revised SHLAA has examined all available sources of housing supply and assessed them in terms of their potential to contribute ... over the next 15 years. The methodology has followed the example of the CLG good practice guidance and the approach of the Home Builders Federation. Incorporating a 5% buffer within the 1-5 year supply, the SHLAA identifies sufficient sites equivalent to 7.15 years housing supply for the years April 2013 to March 2018”.

(Report of the Strategic Planning & Housing Manager, agenda item 5, CEC Strategic Planning Board, February 8th, 2013)

The vast majority of the 'new' sites (ie. 'new' since the 2011 SHLAA as posted on the Local Plan website) are green field ones and many are on Green Belt. Those Green Belt sites which are in, or adjacent to, Prestbury Parish would have an impact on the green space which separates the village from Macclesfield, as well as on the landscape setting of the parish. While few are assessed as developable, no special circumstances are put forward to suggest they should be removed from Green Belt. We would urge that these are removed because of their importance to the definition of this village.

Detailed Comments

Ref. 4163: Macclesfield Rugby Football Club, Priory Park, Priory Lane, Prestbury

Macclesfield Rugby Club (which is ascribed to Macclesfield but which is in Prestbury) is identified as having the potential to provide 333 houses, 125 of them within 6 to 10 years and 208 of them within 11 to 15 years. Despite the fact that it is a Green Belt site designated for recreational/ leisure use, it is classed as 'deliverable'. In our initial response to the current consultation, we welcomed the fact that this site had been dropped, following its appearance in the Draft Macclesfield Town Strategy. We regard the use of this land for sports use as defending the green space between Prestbury and Macclesfield and object to its proposal for housing development. Is this a part of the 7.15 year housing supply referred to in the covering report to the Strategic Planning Board?

Ref. 4328: Land South of Alderley Road, Prestbury

This land adjoining the Rugby Club is also identified as being in Macclesfield when it is in Prestbury. This land is assessed with the potential to deliver 80 housing units, but we note that it is classed as 'not deliverable' and 'not achievable'. Our objection to site 4163 is strengthened by the concern that this assessment might change if site 4163 were developed, creating a large estate within the parish boundary and filling a key part of our valued southerly green belt surroundings.

Prestbury Parish Council objects to either or both of these Green Belt sites within our southern boundary being developed. Special circumstances have not been proved.

Ref 4368: Land off Shirleys Drive, Prestbury

This is a steeply-sloping new area of land which has come forward since the 2011 SHLAA. It is part of the open landscape setting that makes an important contribution to the Bollin Valley Way, although this is not mentioned in the assessment. The assessment acknowledges that the site is adjacent to the main Prestbury Conservation Area, in a flood risk area, in Green Belt and that there is a public footpath across it, (which runs west-east from the end of Shirleys Drive). In addition we are concerned at the potential increase in traffic along the Shirleys Drive, which we have been trying to reduce to protect residents of the Abbey Mill housing development.

Ref. 4252: Land off Bridge Green, Prestbury

This large area of land to the south of Bridge Green, on the opposite side of the River Bollin to site 4368, was the subject of a planning application (ref. 10/3333M) in 2010 as a memorial park, chapel of rest and gardens of remembrance. It was considered totally inappropriate at that time, because the area is in a flood plain, it has major access issues, the Bollin Valley Way runs through it and it is in Green Belt. To the relief of the Parish Council, that inappropriate application was withdrawn. We welcome the fact that this area has been judged as 'Not achievable' in the 2012 SHLAA.

Prestbury Parish Council objects to either or both of these Green Belt sites in the heart of our village being developed. They are equally important to the setting of the Bollin Valley Way which is an important recreational resource. The argument that there are no special circumstances for releasing this Green Belt land also applies equally to both sites.

Ref. 4245: Land at Flash Lane, Bollington

This farmland on Green Belt which it is estimated could accommodate 55 housing units, is a new addition since the 2011 SHLAA. It is on the east side of the A523 London Road which forms the boundary between Prestbury and Bollington parishes. It is not in the Parish of Prestbury but it is important to the setting of it and it contains a footpath from which there are views across Prestbury Parish. It is also land that is used for grazing. It is therefore welcome that it has been assessed as 'not suitable' and 'not achievable' in the SHLAA.

Prestbury Parish Council objects to the removal of any Green Belt surrounding the village, especially that which is productive agricultural or grazing land. This particular land, which rises up above the village of Prestbury, makes an important contribution to the setting of the settlement.

Ref 3314: Field Bank Farm west and 3315: Field Bank Farm east, Withinlee Road

We have commented previously on these two adjoining pockets of Green Belt land which were in the 2011 SHLAA. We note that CEC still considers them to be developable and achievable within six to 10 years, with the land to the west having the potential to deliver 38 housing units and the land to the east having the potential for 19. We believe it would be entirely inappropriate to develop this area which is outside the settlement boundary in an area that is 'washed over' by Green Belt. It is no clear whether these pockets of farmland are included in the 7.15 year housing supply figure.

Prestbury Parish Council objects to building on Green Belt surrounding this village, especially on agricultural/ grazing land and especially that which is in an area washed over by Green Belt. No special circumstances have been shown to exist for this land to be released from Green Belt.

Ref. 3372: Land to the North of Chelford Road

We have commented previously on this Green Belt land opposite Packsaddle Park which was in the 2011 SHLAA. We note that CEC considers this land to be developable and to have the capacity to deliver 85 housing units, 50 within six to 10 years and 35 within 11 to 15 years. We do not support this assessment.

Prestbury Parish Council objects to Green Belt being developed when no special circumstances have been proved for doing so.

Ref. 3359: Land surrounding White Gables Farm

We have commented previously on this extensive Green Belt land development proposal, which was in the 2011 SHLAA. It is stated that this area has the potential to deliver 1,500 housing units but CEC has concluded that the site is not suitable, not achievable and not currently developable. We concur with that assessment. We would point out that the settlement pattern of Prestbury is effectively three arms stretching out from the centre. If this area were developed, it would effectively fill in the space between two of those arms and it would double the size of the village. This is farmland and it should remain so.

Prestbury Parish Council objects to Green Belt being developed, especially that which is agricultural or grazing land and especially when no special circumstances have been proved for doing so.

Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR DICKEN,
Chairman