

# *Prestbury Parish Council*



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Spatial Planning,  
Cheshire East Council,  
Westfields,  
Middlewich Road,  
Sandbach,  
Cheshire,  
CW11 1HZ.

Wednesday March 9th, 2016

Dear Sir,

## **CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO CHESHIRE EAST LOCAL PLAN**

Since the Cheshire East Council Local Plan process began, Prestbury Parish Council – along with a number of other bodies – has been calling on Cheshire East Council to reduce its housing numbers and its employment land allocations to more sustainable levels. Instead, both have risen consistently. We are dismayed that the latest iteration seeks further growth and even higher housing and employment land allocations, requiring a level of building that, realistically, is not going to happen.

Cheshire East Council's own evidence shows that it has never come anywhere close to the annual building rate that would be required, ie. an average of 1,800 dwellings per annum. The actual build figure required is in fact going to be higher because the Plan period has already started and the Borough is already failing to meet this level of provision.

Our major concern is that even more Green Belt land has now been targeted for development and, once it is removed from Green Belt, it will not be re-instated.

Cheshire East's ambition now, as expressed in the latest revisions to the Local Plan, is to achieve at least 36,000 new homes by 2030 and to allocate a total of 378 hectares of employment land (27 hectares more than the Submitted Plan asked for) – a figure which incorporates "a 20% flexibility factor". This hugely ambitious "pro-growth" strategy assumes there will be a minimum of 0.7% economic growth year on year for every year of the Plan. This is far too optimistic. It fails to build in any downturns over two decades.

When the latest figures are worked through to the Local Service Centre level, it means that the 13 Local Service Centres would now be required to accommodate a total of 3,500 new homes between them (instead of the original 2,500) and seven hectares of employment land instead of five. Half a dozen of the Local Service Centres are in Green Belt. According to the 'Vision for Local Service Centres': "This may require small scale alterations to the Green Belt in some circumstances".

The cumulative impact on the Green Belt is not to be disregarded, especially when proposed new roads are taken into consideration.

Prestbury Parish Council has often expressed concerns that if the Poynton Relief Road (formerly known as the Poynton Bypass) were built it would encourage development along it – regardless of the existence of the Green Belt. Our fears/ predictions are now all too clearly illustrated in the latest revisions to the Local Plan. There is a proposal for new employment land to be allocated in Adlington – our adjoining parish – to the south of the Adlington Business Park (ref. CS 60) alongside the proposed Poynton Relief Road. This land was classed as making a ‘significant contribution’ to Green Belt in the Green Belt Review carried out for the Local Plan process (parcel reference PY05).

Further, there is a proposal for 22 hectares of Green Belt to be ‘safeguarded’ for the next Local Plan on the former Woodford Aerodrome site alongside the proposed Poynton Relief Road (ref. CS 65). (N.B. Prestbury Parish has a boundary with the Woodford Aerodrome site). The intention is to remove this land from Green Belt now to avoid a further Green Belt review, despite the fact that this area was also classed as making a ‘significant contribution’ to Green Belt in the Green Belt Review (parcel ref. PY06). We object to both of these proposals because of the weakening effect they will have on the purposes of Green Belt, particularly that which aims to keep settlements separate from each other.

For the record, the Poynton Relief Road has not yet started to move through the planning process.

We do not accept that the higher housing and employment land allocations are justified or appropriate and we fear that the implications of them will be significant, especially in Green Belt areas. We regret but we feel we have no option but to continue as registered objectors to the Cheshire East Local Plan.

Please see our appendix for details of our objections.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGINA RYDER  
Clerk

## APPENDIX 1 - OBJECTIONS

Prestbury Parish Council believes the plan to be unsound in the following places:

### 1 Introduction

1.27 & 1.43 New housing figure – not justified, effective or positively prepared. Should be based on a more realistic growth projection.

1.30 Safeguarded sites – Woodford Aerodrome and land alongside the Poynton Relief Road not justified or positively prepared for the same reason as above.

### 3 Duty to Cooperate

3.1 The Council's claim that they have consulted with key stakeholders is not justified. Contact with Parish Councils has been superficial and no notice has been taken of their attempts at input.

### 8 Planning for Growth

#### Policy PG1 – Overall Development Strategy & Local Service Centres

New employment land and housing figures – not justified, effective or positively prepared. Should be based on more realistic growth projections.

#### Policy PG3 – Green Belt – Site CS60 Adlington Business Park Extension and Site CS 65 (Safeguarded) Woodford Aerodrome, Poynton and Fig. 8.1

These sites are not justified because the employment land figure is not justified. It is not sustainable and it is based on an unrealistically high assumption of economic growth. In addition, both sites were rated as making a 'significant contribution' to Green Belt in the Arup Green Belt Review.

#### Policy PG4 - Safeguarded Land - Site CS61 (Should be 65) Woodford Aerodrome

This site is not justified for the same reason given immediately above.

#### Policy PG6 – Spatial Distribution of Development & Table 8.3

It is wrong that the Local Service Centres should be required to accommodate 7 ha. of employment land and 3,500 new homes. It is not positively prepared or justified because the base economic growth forecast is unrealistically high.

### 11 Enterprise and Growth

#### North Cheshire Science Corridor & Fig 11.2

Not justified. This is a far reaching and vague spatial concept which covers the major part of the North Cheshire Green Belt. It is entirely predictable that developers will quote it as a reason for building on Green Belt land in future.

#### Policy EG4 – Tourism

Point no. 3 is not justified because it is so poorly/ loosely worded. It says: *"Proposals for tourist development outside the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres will be supported where .. (a) They are located within a Local Service Centre"*. The caveats do not mention Green Belt or impacts on traffic flow, road safety or environmental capacity. Notably, nothing is said about air pollution. It should be recognised that a number of the Local Service Centres are in fact small villages and some are set within Green Belt.

## 14 Connectivity

### **Justification for Policy CO2 – Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure**

Poynton Relief Road is listed here but it is not justified that it should be as the planning application has yet to come forward and the supporting documentation including the business case has yet to be published. Also, the transport modelling for the impacts of all the SEMMMS roads, of which the Poynton Relief Road is one, has yet to be placed in the public domain if indeed it has been carried out.

## 15 Local Plan Strategy Sites and Strategic Locations

### **Poynton – Fig. 15.42 and Site CS60 – Adlington Business Park Extension**

This site (which, incidentally, is in Adlington - the adjoining parish to Prestbury - and not Poynton) is not justified. It is predicated on the delivery of the Poynton Relief Road which has yet to progress through the planning system. This land was classed as making a 'significant contribution' to Green Belt in the Arup Green Belt review (parcel ref. PY05).

### **Poynton – Safeguarded Land – Site CS65 – Woodford Aerodrome**

This site would involve the removal from Green Belt of 22 ha. of land. It is not justified and should not be allowed to happen. This land was classed as making a 'significant contribution' to Green Belt in the Green Belt Review by Arup (parcel ref. PY06).