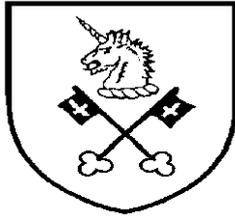


Prestbury Parish Council



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c.c. Cheshire East Planning Dept.

Wednesday March 9th, 2016

Dear Sir or Madam,

PRE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR MACCLESFIELD RUGBY CLUB SITE

Parish Councils are not planning authorities but they are statutory consultees and Prestbury Parish Council has always been meticulous in commenting upon planning applications and pre-planning consultations in their area, which we scrutinise conscientiously. We were therefore offended not to receive an invitation to the (very cursory) consultation event that was held on February 23rd for the Macclesfield Rugby Club site development proposals – the entirety of which lies within our Parish boundaries. And we are most concerned that many of our residents would not even have been aware of the event. Publicity appears to have been confined to one small advertisement in one edition of the local newspaper which appeared immediately beforehand and a mention at the ‘Make it Macclesfield’ event held in the Rugby Club on February 11th.

Where large sites are concerned, (this one covers 11 hectares), especially potentially contentious ones such as this in Green Belt, developers/potential developers are required to demonstrate to the local planning authority that they have consulted properly on their proposals. This does not mean holding one poorly publicised public event on one weekday afternoon for four hours and posting just a few details of the event on the developer’s website on the morning it takes place.

The planning proposal canvassed is for a sports pavilion which appears to be 50% larger than the current one, an artificial turf pitch plus other new pitches and enabling development which comprises new access roads and 68 dwellings (34 detached and 34 mews houses). All on land that has been designated as making a ‘significant contribution’ to Green Belt in the recent Cheshire East Green Belt review carried out for the Local Plan examination in public.

In view of the land designation, the location between a staggered road junction and Fallibroome School, the scale of the plans and the timing of them coming forward – while the King’s School planning application for an adjoining 20-hectare Green Belt site is under consideration – this constitutes a major proposal. Key stakeholders such as ourselves should have been formally notified of the consultation and more should have been done to alert the wider Prestbury public, eg. notices on noticeboards, flyers and an attempt to secure an editorial in the local newspaper.

We contend that the consultation has fallen far short of what can be considered to be acceptable. We believe there should be a longer, better advertised exhibition with plenty of notice given and a sufficiently long consultation period before any planning application comes forward

We also have issues with the limited amount of information that has been made available. For instance, the scant text on the display boards and on the website informs us that the total residential element of the plans could generate up to 50 new vehicle trips per hour during the weekday rush hour peak, but no further traffic data is made available. So, we learn that the whole enterprise is about having much-improved club and sporting facilities, including an all-weather playing pitch for year round use, and that this is all about making the club more commercially successful, but we are not provided with estimates of how much extra traffic these vastly-improved social and sporting facilities would generate. We are only provided with a rough estimate of new vehicle trips generated by the dwellings – and only at peak times. Information about the amount of extra non-residential traffic needs to be in the public domain as well as more information about residential traffic modelling.

In addition, the Rugby Club site plans show there is an intention to have a new access road onto Priory Lane for seven of the proposed properties – quite close to Four Lane Ends junction. This raises safety concerns, especially coming on top of acknowledged increased traffic.

It would appear that this development has not been assessed alongside the impacts of the proposed King's School development.

Prestbury Parish Council require much more traffic and environmental information on the planning proposals and possible implications for this site - and also we would like to see assessments of the likely cumulative impacts of the Rugby Club and the King's School site plans before feeling able to make further comments.

Yours faithfully,