

Subject: Cheshire East New Local Plan Scoping Consultation – Representation regarding Mobberley

Dear Local Plan Team,

I am writing as a resident of Mobberley in response to the consultation on the preparation of the new Cheshire East Local Plan.

I welcome the opportunity to contribute at this early stage and recognise the need for Cheshire East to plan positively for future housing, employment and other development. I am not opposed to appropriate and sustainable development in principle.

However, I object to Mobberley being identified as a location for substantial additional growth. This includes large-scale housing development, but also other significant development which would place additional pressure on the village's infrastructure and highway network, or cause harm to its Green Belt, landscape, environment and rural character.

My objection is based on the particular and cumulative constraints affecting Mobberley and, importantly, the need for these to be properly evidenced before decisions are made about the spatial strategy or potential site allocations.

Mobberley and cumulative development

Mobberley is currently identified as a Local Service Centre, but I do not believe that classification should be taken as evidence that the village has capacity for substantial further growth.

The village has experienced development in recent years and further land around Mobberley has now been put forward through the Call for Sites process. I understand that these submissions are not proposed allocations and that their inclusion gives them no additional planning status.

Nevertheless, land availability is not evidence of development suitability.

Before determining the appropriate scale or location of further growth in Mobberley, Cheshire East should undertake a settlement-level assessment of the cumulative effects of development already delivered and committed, alongside any additional development being considered.

Individual sites cannot properly be assessed without understanding their combined effect on the village.

Sustainable development, highways and Smith Lane

I am particularly concerned that the presence of Mobberley railway station could result in the village, or sites close to it, appearing more sustainable on paper than they are in practice.

A railway station is undoubtedly an asset, but proximity to a station is not in itself evidence of sustainable accessibility.

Assessment should consider whether residents can realistically and safely reach the station, schools, shops, healthcare, employment and other everyday services without relying predominantly on a car. This requires consideration of walking and cycling routes, footways, public transport provision and the nature and capacity of the surrounding highway network.

The constraints of Smith Lane are of particular concern. It is a narrow rural lane, single-track in places, without continuous pedestrian footway provision and with a constrained railway bridge. These characteristics are important when considering both residential and employment development in this area because additional development could generate additional movements by residents, employees, delivery vehicles and other traffic.

The assessment should consider the practical capacity and safety of the whole local highway network, including the railway bridge and other existing pinch points, rather than considering individual site accesses in isolation. Attention should be given to pedestrian and cyclist safety where there is no safe segregated route.

Green Belt, landscape and village character

I am concerned about the potential loss of Green Belt around Mobberley.

Any consideration of Green Belt, including land that may potentially be considered “grey belt”, should assess what that land contributes to Green Belt purposes, landscape, settlement pattern and the separation and identity of communities.

Mobberley retains a distinct rural identity. Its surrounding countryside, agricultural land, landscape, ecology, heritage and the relationship between the different parts of the settlement all contribute to that identity.

I therefore object to the allocation of Green Belt around Mobberley for large-scale development where this would cause unacceptable harm to those functions or to the rural character and setting of the village.

Reasonable alternative locations for growth, including appropriate brownfield and more sustainably connected locations, should be properly assessed and compared before Green Belt development around Mobberley is contemplated.

Manchester Airport, aircraft noise and aviation constraints

Mobberley's relationship with Manchester Airport must be given significant weight when considering its suitability for additional growth, particularly where residential development is concerned.

Aircraft noise is an established issue affecting Mobberley and should not simply be regarded as something that can automatically be overcome through acoustic insulation of new houses. The quality of the external residential environment, including gardens and other outdoor amenity space, matters too.

There is important local planning history in this respect. The appeal concerning the former Harman Technology/Ilford site at Town Lane, Mobberley (**APP/R0660/W/15/3027388**), involving proposals for up to 375 dwellings, was dismissed following a public inquiry, with aircraft noise and the resulting residential living environment being significant considerations.

Aircraft noise was also a material consideration in a later appeal relating to residential caravan use on land south of Broad Oak Lane (**APP/R0660/C/21/3268914**).

These decisions demonstrate that aircraft noise in Mobberley is not merely a theoretical concern.

I therefore ask that the latest available Manchester Airport aircraft-noise contours and evidence are incorporated into the assessment of potential development locations, including consideration of both internal and external residential amenity.

Potential sites should also be assessed against relevant aerodrome safeguarding requirements and Manchester Airport Public Safety Zone policy where applicable, with the relationship between potential development land and aviation constraints clearly mapped and published.

These matters should inform whether land is suitable for development at the site-selection stage, rather than being left until after allocation and treated primarily as matters capable of mitigation.

Infrastructure, drainage and environmental capacity

The evidence base should establish the actual capacity of infrastructure and services to accommodate further growth.

This should include education, healthcare and community facilities; drainage and wastewater infrastructure; flood risk and surface-water management; highways and transport; landscape; heritage; ecology and biodiversity; and agricultural land.

Flood risk and surface-water drainage should be considered cumulatively, including the consequences of additional impermeable development for existing roads, watercourses, neighbouring properties and downstream areas during periods of heavy rainfall.

I am not suggesting that assumptions should be made about capacity in any of these areas. Rather, I am asking Cheshire East to establish the position through robust evidence before deciding how much further development Mobberley should accommodate.

The importance of the Scoping Stage

Paragraph 6.41 of the consultation states that this Scoping Stage is intended to identify key issues, priorities and evidence requirements.

I believe the particular circumstances and constraints of Mobberley should therefore be recognised now.

Evidence requirements should include a cumulative settlement-level assessment covering development already delivered and committed; highways and safe active travel; realistic public transport accessibility; infrastructure and services; Green Belt purposes; landscape and settlement character; heritage; ecology and biodiversity; drainage and flood risk; agricultural land; aircraft noise; and relevant Manchester Airport safeguarding constraints.

Crucially, this evidence should inform the spatial strategy and subsequent site-selection process, rather than being undertaken only after preferred development locations have emerged.

Community engagement and transparency

I welcome the commitments within the consultation to meaningful, transparent and auditable engagement.

Paragraphs 6.44 and 6.65–6.67 indicate that representations will be recorded, key themes and areas of concern identified and consultation outcomes published showing how views have been considered.

I ask that this process identifies geographically concentrated concerns at settlement level. An issue repeatedly raised by residents of one village may be extremely significant locally even if it does not emerge as a dominant theme across Cheshire East as a whole.

I would also ask that rural communities are appropriately represented within the proposed Community Assemblies and that these complement, rather than outweigh, the wider body of representations submitted by residents and community organisations.

Conclusion

For the avoidance of doubt, I object to substantial additional growth being directed towards Mobberley and to the allocation of Green Belt around the village for large-scale development.

This includes substantial housing development and other forms of development which, individually or cumulatively, would result in unacceptable impacts upon infrastructure, highways and sustainable transport, landscape and settlement character, heritage, the environment, Green Belt purposes or aviation-related constraints.

This is not an objection to all development within Mobberley. I recognise that appropriate small-scale development, community facilities, local employment opportunities or housing which genuinely meets identified local needs may be beneficial.

My objection is to the use of Mobberley as a location for substantial strategic growth without evidence demonstrating that the village can accommodate it sustainably.

In my view, the combination of Mobberley's rural settlement character and Green Belt setting, constrained rural highway network, sustainable transport considerations, infrastructure requirements, environmental and heritage constraints and its particular exposure to Manchester Airport and aircraft noise raises serious questions about its suitability for significant additional development.

I therefore ask Cheshire East Council to ensure that Mobberley is assessed comprehensively and cumulatively before the scale or location of any further growth is determined, and that reasonable alternative locations, including brownfield and more sustainably connected locations, are properly assessed and compared.

Unless the evidence demonstrates that substantial further development can be accommodated sustainably and without unacceptable cumulative effects, Mobberley should not be selected as a location for significant additional strategic growth.

Finally, I ask that my objection and the evidence requirements identified within this representation are formally recorded as part of the Scoping consultation and demonstrably taken into account as Cheshire East develops its spatial options and subsequently considers potential site allocations.

Yours faithfully,

Lisa and Julian Barker
Mobberley residents

