

SUMMARY

I object proposed allocation of Land West of Smith Lane for housing, economy and employment. Development violates Policies Hedgerows regulations 1997/SE 5/ENV 6 destroying irreplaceable ancient hedgerows & fields. It breaches Policies SE 3 and ENV 1 by severing wildlife corridors for endangered species Great Crested Newts and Bats, while removing strategic Green Belt buffers preventing urban sprawl between Mobberley and Knutsford. The allocation violates Policy SE 3 by causing the local extinction of Section 41 Priority Species (Lapwings, Brown Hares, and Stag Beetles). Disturbing and compacting the unique clay soil destroys unique habitat & subterranean winter shelters, failing mandatory conservation metrics under Policy SE 3.

OVERALL COMMENT

I object proposed allocation of Land West of Smith Lane for housing, economy and employment. Destruction of Irreplaceable Habitats (Policy SE 5 & SADPD Policy ENV 6) : The target hedgerows surrounding proposed development sites are ancient, satisfying the historical and ecological criteria of The Hedgerows Regulations 1997. They form a historic landscape pattern & biodiversity classification that cannot be mitigated or replaced. Evidence of Mobberley's ancient Hedgerow field systems & boundaries can be seen on the Tithe maps of 1838 meeting the pre-1850 historical criteria.

Severance of Protected Wildlife Corridors (Policy SE 3 & Policy ENV 1): These hedgerows and fields serve as essential terrestrial migration corridors and overwintering refuges (hibernacula) for Great Crested Newts and foraging corridors for protected bat species. Hedgerows act as a highways system for bats and a solid wall to bounce their echolocation off to hunt, their destruction creates acoustic voids and destroys insect habitat, their food source. Introducing economic high-intensity artificial external lighting creates an impassable visual barrier for light-sensitive bat species, functionally severing their feeding routes. The entire strip of land proposed for housing and economic development acts as a critical strategic barrier under Green Belt objectives. Allocating this vital strip of land completely destroys the strategic open countryside buffer keeping Mobberley separate from Knutsford. It acts as both a physical barrier against unchecked urban sprawl and an irreplaceable regional wildlife corridor. Mobberley is an officially recognized Domesday Book village,¹⁰⁸⁶. Mobberley's identity has been rooted in its open, rural countryside landscape for nearly a thousand years. As validated by the Natural England Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) and local environmental assessments, Mobberley's specialized 'clough' woodland systems form a critical, interconnected biodiversity corridor linked directly to the Cotterill Clough SSSI. The proposed allocation sits in direct geographic proximity to the West and East Woodend Clough systems located just across the railway line. These steep-sided, ancient cloughs form an unbroken environmental network with the Cotterill Clough SSSI. The hedgerows and fields of the Smith Lane site act as the primary, irreplaceable terrestrial corridor linking central village habitats to these western clough systems. Introducing development, high-intensity commercial light and hard surfaces here effectively cuts off wildlife, permanently

fracturing Mobberley's historic clough ecosystem. This woodland footprint has an unbroken lineage dating back past the year 1600, with its vast scale originally verified in the 1086 Domesday Book. Under National Planning Policy and SADPD Policy SE 3 / ENV 6, the council has a statutory duty to protect these ancient baselines. Developing here will cause irreversible fragmentation to these centuries-old ecological networks and guarantees the loss of village identity and severe habitat fragmentation.

Harm to Section 41 Priority Species (Policy SE 3):Lapwings nesting site: Lapwings exhibit strong site-fidelity—returning to the exact same fields on Smith Lane to nest year after year—they cannot simply be "mitigated" or encouraged to move to standard off-site landscaping plots. Heavy clay soils on this site form seasonal, shallow muddy pools during the critical spring breeding season (March–June). These pools are the primary foraging grounds where Lapwing chicks feed on surface and subterranean invertebrates. They are hyper-sensitive to human activity, vehicular noise, and domestic or feral predators (such as rats, corvids, and foxes) that thrive around commercial and residential hubs. The increase in site activity will lead to a 100% nest failure rate via abandonment or egg predation. Any physical development on this specific plot guarantees the local extinction of the colony. Brown Hares: development destroys forms for hiding, foraging vegetation, and increases road mortality. Stag Beetles: Eradicating ancient root systems destroys the centuries-old subterranean deadwood required for their multi-year larval life cycle. New planting offers zero saproxylic value, violating the mitigation hierarchy under Policy ENV 2. The loss of this habitat represents a concurrent breach of both National Planning Policy (regarding conserving and enhancing the natural environment) and Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Policy SE 5 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands). Policy SE 5 explicitly mandates the protection of trees and hedgerows that provide a significant contribution to biodiversity and historic character, mirroring the exceptional protection thresholds established at the national level. Complex root networks, accumulated soil microbiome, and specific lichen/flora communities mean it is a functionally irreplaceable natural asset. Land across these sites are clay soil, during increasingly hot summers, clay soils naturally crack open, forming deep fissures. Great Crested Newts, stag beetle larvae, and other invertebrates actively use these natural clay cracks as deep subterranean shelters to escape extreme heat or frost. Concreting over or compacting this specific soil type destroys a highly specialized subterranean habitat network that cannot be replicated on sand or artificial topsoil, failing the conservation metrics required by Policy SE 3 (Biodiversity).