

Mobberley Parish Council Response to Proposed Development Allocations

Overall Position

Mobberley Parish Council objects to the proposed residential, mixed-use and employment allocations within and around the parish. While the Council recognises the need to support sustainable growth and meet future development needs, it does not consider that the proposed sites represent appropriate or sustainable locations for development.

The Parish Council is concerned that the cumulative impact of the proposed allocations would place unacceptable pressure on local infrastructure, increase traffic congestion, result in the loss of Green Belt and open countryside, adversely affect biodiversity, and fundamentally alter the rural character and identity of Mobberley. The scale of development proposed across multiple sites would have consequences that extend beyond the individual allocations and would significantly affect the long-term sustainability of the village and its surrounding countryside.

Cumulative Traffic and Highway Impacts

A principal concern of the Parish Council is the cumulative impact that these developments would have on the local highway network.

Roads throughout Mobberley are already subject to congestion, particularly during peak commuting periods, school drop-off and collection times, and periods of increased airport-related traffic. Additional residential, employment and mixed-use development would generate significant numbers of vehicle movements, including commuter traffic, delivery vehicles, service vehicles and visitor journeys.

Many roads within the parish are narrow rural lanes that were not designed to accommodate substantial increases in traffic volumes. Junctions and routes connecting to Knutsford Road, Town Lane, Smith Lane, Pepper Street and other local roads already experience traffic pressures, and further development would inevitably increase congestion, delay journey times and create additional safety concerns.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned about the impact on pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. In many parts of the village, footway provision is either limited or absent and opportunities for safe active travel remain restricted. Additional vehicle movements would increase the risks faced by vulnerable road users and further diminish road safety throughout the parish.

Given the number of sites being promoted simultaneously, individual traffic assessments are unlikely to fully capture the cumulative impacts on the local highway network. The Parish Council believes that the combined effect of these developments would be considerably greater than the sum of their individual impacts and could fundamentally alter traffic patterns throughout the village.

Unsustainable Transport and Accessibility

The Parish Council considers that the proposed allocations are inconsistent with the principles of sustainable development due to their reliance on private vehicle use.

Public transport provision within Mobberley remains limited. Bus services are infrequent, railway connections provide only limited accessibility for many journeys, and walking and

cycling routes do not offer realistic alternatives for a significant proportion of daily travel requirements. As a result, future residents, employees and visitors associated with these developments would be heavily dependent on private cars.

This reliance on car travel would contribute to increased traffic congestion, higher carbon emissions and worsening air quality. The Parish Council does not consider that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate how sustainable transport objectives could be achieved across the proposed sites.

The Council is concerned that the proposed developments fail to align with national and local planning objectives that seek to reduce car dependency and encourage more sustainable methods of travel.

Pressure on Infrastructure and Community Services

The Parish Council has serious concerns regarding the capacity of existing infrastructure to accommodate the level of growth proposed.

Local schools, healthcare facilities, GP surgeries, utilities and community services already experience significant demand. Additional housing and employment growth would place further pressure on these facilities and could adversely affect service provision for existing and future residents.

There is currently insufficient assurance that the necessary infrastructure improvements would be delivered at the appropriate time or to a scale capable of addressing the impacts of development. The Parish Council believes that growth should only occur where infrastructure capacity exists or where comprehensive and deliverable improvements can be secured in advance of development.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned about primary school capacity. Based on the scale of growth currently being proposed across the various allocations, it is conceivable that even a small number of the larger developments could result in a need to increase primary school provision by as much as 50 per cent. Given the physical constraints of the existing school site, it is difficult to see how such an expansion could be delivered in its current location.

Should additional school provision be required, important questions remain unanswered. The Local Plan process has yet to identify where a new or expanded school facility would be located, how it would be funded, and what impacts it would have on surrounding land uses and infrastructure. Furthermore, if a replacement school were to be provided elsewhere, consideration would inevitably be given to the future use of the existing school site. The Parish Council believes these questions must be addressed before large-scale housing growth is allocated within the parish.

Loss of Green Belt and Open Countryside

Several of the proposed allocations involve the development of Green Belt land and areas of open countryside that make an important contribution to the character and setting of Mobberley.

The Green Belt plays a critical role in preventing urban sprawl, maintaining the separation of settlements, preserving openness and protecting the distinctive rural landscape of the parish. Development of these sites would result in the permanent loss of undeveloped countryside and reduce the openness that is fundamental to the area's character.

The Parish Council is concerned that the release of Green Belt land for development would undermine established planning principles and create pressure for further encroachment into surrounding countryside in the future.

The protection of open land remains essential to maintaining the rural identity of Mobberley and safeguarding the landscape setting that is valued by residents and visitors alike.

The Council considers that exceptional circumstances for releasing Green Belt land have not been clearly demonstrated, particularly when opportunities remain for the delivery of development on previously developed land elsewhere.

Harm to Village Character and Identity

Mobberley's identity is closely linked to its village scale, rural setting and separation from surrounding urban areas. The Parish Council considers that the proposed allocations would have a significant adverse effect on these defining characteristics.

The introduction of large-scale housing developments, employment sites, new roads and associated infrastructure would progressively urbanise areas that currently contribute to the village's countryside setting. The cumulative effect of multiple developments would alter the appearance of the parish and diminish the qualities that have shaped Mobberley's character over many generations.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that the scale and distribution of growth proposed would weaken the distinction between the village and neighbouring settlements, resulting in the gradual erosion of local identity and the loss of the village's unique sense of place.

The continued incremental loss of countryside around the village risks creating a pattern of urbanisation that is entirely out of keeping with the historic character of Mobberley and the wider Cheshire landscape.

Visual Impact and Residential Amenity

The proposed developments would have a substantial impact on the visual character of the area.

Many of the sites currently comprise open countryside, agricultural land and green spaces that provide important views and contribute positively to the landscape. Development would introduce extensive areas of built form, roads, lighting and associated infrastructure into locations that currently retain a rural appearance.

The Parish Council considers that these changes would significantly reduce the sense of openness experienced by residents and visitors. The loss of valued countryside views, together with the introduction of urbanising features, would diminish the visual quality of the area and adversely affect residential amenity.

Particular concerns also arise in relation to potential increases in noise, lighting and operational activity associated with employment uses and airport-related development pressures.

Environmental and Biodiversity Concerns

The Parish Council is concerned about the environmental consequences of the proposed allocations.

The development of greenfield sites would lead to the loss and fragmentation of wildlife habitats and ecological networks. Mature hedgerows, trees and biodiversity corridors that currently support birds, mammals, pollinators and other species could be adversely affected by construction and subsequent development.

The Council is also concerned about the wider environmental impacts associated with increased traffic levels, including higher carbon emissions, poorer air quality and greater levels of noise pollution.

The cumulative effect of development across multiple sites would result in a significant reduction in environmental quality and would undermine the natural character of the parish.

Particular attention should be given to the value of existing hedgerows, mature trees, watercourses and agricultural land, all of which contribute to the environmental resilience and ecological connectivity of the area.

Flood Risk and Drainage Concerns

The Parish Council has identified concerns regarding flood risk and surface water management.

The development of currently undeveloped land would introduce substantial areas of hard surfacing, including roads, driveways and building footprints. This would reduce natural infiltration and increase surface water runoff.

Particular concerns exist in relation to sites with challenging topography and drainage characteristics, where development may increase the risk of localised flooding and place additional pressure on existing drainage infrastructure. With the increasing frequency of extreme weather events, these issues require careful consideration and robust evidence before any development is contemplated.

The Parish Council is not satisfied that adequate information has been provided to demonstrate that these risks can be effectively mitigated over the long term.

Any increase in flood risk affecting existing residents, agricultural land or local highways would be unacceptable and contrary to the principles of sustainable development.

Airport and Railway Related Impacts

The Parish Council notes that several proposed allocations are located within an area already affected by Manchester Airport operations and associated transport activity.

Manchester Airport currently handles approximately 32 million passengers per year and has publicly stated aspirations to increase passenger numbers significantly over the coming decade, potentially reaching between 50 and 60 million passengers annually. Such growth would inevitably increase airport-related traffic, emissions, operational activity and aircraft movements.

The Parish Council is concerned that future planning decisions should take into account not only current airport impacts but also the likely consequences of future expansion. As passenger numbers increase, the geographical footprint of aircraft noise, traffic movements, air pollution and associated environmental effects is likely to expand accordingly.

Future residents occupying housing near the airport or railway line may be exposed to regular aircraft and rail noise, particularly during early morning and late evening periods. Such impacts have the potential to adversely affect residential amenity, quality of life and wellbeing.

In addition, employment allocations linked to airport-related activity are likely to attract further commuter traffic, service vehicle movements, lighting, noise and emissions, adding to the cumulative pressures already experienced within the parish.

The Parish Council therefore believes that the long-term growth trajectory of Manchester Airport should form an important consideration in assessing the suitability of development sites across Mobberley.

Brownfield Development First

The Parish Council strongly supports a brownfield-first approach to development and believes that previously developed land should be fully explored before any release of Green Belt or open countryside sites is contemplated.

Opportunities exist within the wider area to bring forward redevelopment on previously used land, including former railway-related land and historic goods yard or siding sites associated with local railway stations. Potential opportunities exist around railway infrastructure land serving locations such as Mobberley and Ashley, where development could be accommodated without the loss of valuable Green Belt countryside.

The Council also notes that redevelopment of former railway and industrial land has been successfully achieved elsewhere, demonstrating that brownfield regeneration can provide housing and economic benefits while limiting environmental harm and preserving open countryside.

A brownfield-led strategy would better align with the objectives of sustainable development, support efficient land use, protect valued landscapes and minimise the cumulative impacts currently associated with the proposed allocations.

Conclusion

Mobberley Parish Council concludes that the proposed allocations, both individually and cumulatively, would have significant adverse impacts on the parish.

The developments would increase pressure on the local highway network, exacerbate traffic congestion, place additional strain on infrastructure and public services, reduce Green Belt openness, harm biodiversity, increase environmental pressures and erode the distinctive rural character and identity of Mobberley.

The Parish Council does not consider that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that these impacts can be adequately mitigated or that the proposed sites represent the most sustainable options for meeting future development needs.

Significant concerns remain regarding school capacity, healthcare provision, highway performance, drainage infrastructure, airport-related impacts and the long-term consequences of cumulative development across the parish. The Council is not satisfied that these matters have been adequately addressed.

Accordingly, Mobberley Parish Council objects to the proposed allocations and supports an alternative strategy focused on the regeneration of brownfield and previously developed land,

protection of the Green Belt, safeguarding village character, and ensuring that infrastructure is delivered before development rather than in response to it. The Council believes that all realistic brownfield opportunities should be exhausted before any further loss of countryside or Green Belt land is considered.