FORMAL OBJECTION / LOCAL PLAN REPRESENTATION

HE 234 - Land at Hole Farm, Hough Lane, Wilmslow

Site area: Approximately 33.45 hectares

Submitted uses: Housing, Industry and Commercial

Dear Cheshire East Council Local Plan Team,

Re: Strong Objection to HE 234 - Land at Hole Farm, Hough Lane, Wilmslow

I am writing to register my **strong objection to HE 234 - Land at Hole Farm being taken forward or allocated for housing, industrial, commercial or mixed-use development within the new Cheshire East Local Plan**.

I am a resident of [redacted], and the land included within the HE 234 submission lies [redacted] **the established residential properties in this part of Prestbury Road**.

I understand that HE 234 is currently a submitted site for consideration and that its appearance on the Council's map does not itself constitute a proposed allocation or grant the land any additional planning status. It is precisely because the Council is now considering which submitted sites are suitable for further progression that I believe these concerns need to be raised at the earliest possible opportunity.

HE 234 is a very substantial site of approximately **33.45 hectares**, promoted not simply for housing but for a combination of **housing, industry and commercial development**. In my view, there are serious questions concerning whether development of this scale and intensity is appropriate in this sensitive location.

1. GREEN BELT AND OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

The Green Belt position should be one of the fundamental considerations in the assessment of HE 234.

Cheshire East's own planning evidence identifies Wilmslow as having a defined Green Belt inset boundary, with Green Belt and open countryside beyond it. The Council's Wilmslow Settlement Report also describes the settlement boundary in this part of Wilmslow as following the Green Belt inset boundary along **Hough Lane towards the Prestbury Road roundabout**.

Given the location of HE 234, I request that Cheshire East establishes and publishes precisely how the submitted site relates to the **adopted Green Belt boundary** before considering it for allocation. In particular, the Council should publish a plan overlaying the entire HE 234 boundary against the existing Green Belt and state precisely how much of the 33.45-hectare site falls within it.

Where land within HE 234 is Green Belt, its contribution to the purposes and openness of the Green Belt must be properly assessed. Development of open land on this scale with housing, commercial premises, industrial development, roads, parking, lighting and associated infrastructure would represent an extremely significant and permanent change in its character.

The Council should therefore demonstrate why development here would be justified rather than treating the availability of the land for development as evidence that it should be allocated.

2. ALTERNATIVES TO GREEN BELT DEVELOPMENT MUST BE EXHAUSTED

Cheshire East's current work on the new Local Plan recognises the importance of maximising the use of brownfield and underused land, optimising development densities, considering appropriate sites

outside the Green Belt, assessing reasonable alternatives, and properly justifying any proposed alteration of Green Belt boundaries.

Before contemplating the development of this land, the Council should demonstrate why its housing and employment requirements cannot reasonably be met through **brownfield land, previously developed sites, existing allocations, redevelopment opportunities, appropriate increases in density and less environmentally sensitive locations**.

The fact that a landowner or developer has submitted HE 234 for consideration does not establish that development of this site is either necessary or sustainable.

3. PRESTBURY ROAD AND HOUGH LANE ARE IMPORTANT WILMSLOW GATEWAYS

The Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan specifically identifies **Prestbury Road (A538) and Hough Lane as important town entrances/gateways**. Policy TH1 seeks to protect the character of these approaches, resist inappropriate further ribbon development and ensure that development respects Green Belt requirements and Wilmslow's landscape character.

This is directly relevant to HE 234. Development of approximately 33.45 hectares could introduce housing estates, industrial/commercial buildings, estate roads, major junction infrastructure, car parks, servicing areas, signage, street lighting and commercial lighting. The cumulative result could be a profound urbanisation of the existing approach to Wilmslow.

The Council should therefore assess whether allocating HE 234 would undermine the landscape character and gateway function that the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect.

4. ENCROACHMENT AND CHANGE TO THE SETTLEMENT EDGE

The assessment of HE 234 should consider not merely whether development can physically be accommodated on the land but what development would do to the **form and edge of Wilmslow**.

A 33.45-hectare development would represent a major outward extension of built development. The Council should assess whether this would result in unacceptable encroachment into the countryside, erosion of Green Belt openness where applicable, an inappropriate extension of the existing built-up area, deterioration of the transition between Wilmslow and its surrounding countryside, loss of landscape character, and further urbanisation of the Prestbury Road/Hough Lane approaches to Wilmslow.

Once open land of this scale is developed, that change is effectively permanent.

5. INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTLY ADJOINING HOMES

I am particularly concerned that HE 234 has been promoted not simply for residential development but also for **industrial and commercial development**. [redacted] established residential properties on Prestbury Road directly adjoin the submitted site.

Potentially locating industrial or commercial operations immediately behind an established residential community raises serious questions regarding the compatibility of neighbouring land uses.

Potential impacts include operational noise; HGV movements; vans and delivery vehicles; loading and servicing activity; reversing alarms; machinery and external plant; external storage; early-morning and evening operations; security and commercial lighting; dust and emissions; air quality; increased traffic; and loss of the existing relatively tranquil residential/countryside environment.

These concerns relate to **residential amenity, pollution, noise, disturbance, light pollution, traffic and appropriate land-use relationships**, all of which are legitimate planning considerations.

Cheshire East Local Plan Policy **SE 12 - Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability** addresses harmful and cumulative effects including noise, dust, vibration, light pollution, air quality and additional traffic. Before allocating HE 234 for employment uses, the Council should demonstrate that industrial and commercial development could genuinely coexist with established neighbouring homes without unacceptable harm.

6. HIGHWAYS, TRAFFIC AND HOUGH LANE

Development of 33.45 hectares for mixed uses could generate a very substantial number and variety of additional vehicle movements, including residents' vehicles, employee commuting, HGVs, commercial vans, deliveries, servicing vehicles, visitors and customers.

This is particularly important because Cheshire East's own **Wilmslow Local Transport Development Plan** identifies **Hough Lane and Hough Lane roundabout** as locations where measures are required to improve traffic flow and address highway/access issues.

The Council should require a comprehensive Transport Assessment before determining that HE 234 is suitable for allocation. This should examine the effects upon **Prestbury Road, Hough Lane, Hough Lane roundabout and the wider highway network**, including cumulative development around Wilmslow.

A site should not be allocated on the assumption that highway problems can simply be solved later through a future planning application. Safe, sustainable and appropriate access is fundamental to determining whether this is an appropriate development location.

7. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND CAR DEPENDENCY

Cheshire East Policy **CO 1** seeks to locate development in sustainable and accessible locations and promote walking, cycling and public transport. The Council should demonstrate that residents and employees of a development of this magnitude would have realistic alternatives to private-car use.

A major peripheral development generating substantial additional car and commercial vehicle movements would require particularly strong justification if it resulted in increased car dependency.

8. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL IMPACT

HE 234 should not be regarded simply as vacant land capable of accommodating development. Open land around Wilmslow contributes to the character of the settlement and to the transition between the town and surrounding Cheshire countryside.

A detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be undertaken before HE 234 is considered suitable for allocation. It should consider the effect of development from Prestbury Road, Hough Lane, existing residential properties, public rights of way and the wider surrounding landscape.

The ability to plant trees or provide landscaping around a development does not recreate the openness of land once it has been built upon.

9. ECOLOGY, BIODIVERSITY, TREES AND HEDGEROWS

Development of approximately 33.45 hectares could have significant ecological consequences. Before considering HE 234 suitable for allocation, the Council should require comprehensive ecological evidence addressing existing habitats, mature trees, hedgerows, ponds and water features, protected

species, bats and birds, wildlife corridors, ecological connectivity, biodiversity value, and the effects of artificial lighting and increased human activity.

The cumulative fragmentation caused by buildings, estate roads, lighting, fencing and increased activity should also be considered. These issues should influence the decision about **whether the site is suitable for development**, rather than being postponed until after the principle of development has effectively been established through allocation.

10. FLOOD RISK, SURFACE WATER AND DRAINAGE

Development of a site of this magnitude warrants a comprehensive flood-risk and drainage assessment. Replacing substantial areas of open land with buildings, roads, car parks, commercial yards and other impermeable surfaces has the potential to alter existing surface-water drainage patterns significantly.

The Council should require evidence addressing existing surface-water flow routes, drainage arrangements, watercourses and ditches, ponds, ground conditions, Sustainable Drainage Systems, effects upon neighbouring properties and land, and future rainfall allowances associated with climate change.

I am not suggesting, without the necessary technical evidence, that the whole of HE 234 is presently at a particular level of flood risk. Rather, the **site promoter should be required to demonstrate that development would not increase flood or surface-water risk elsewhere**, including to existing properties adjoining the site.

11. LIGHT POLLUTION AND LOSS OF TRANQUILLITY

Industrial and commercial development could introduce substantial artificial lighting associated with buildings, roads, service yards, car parks and security. This could have consequences for both neighbouring residents and wildlife.

The Council should assess the potential change from the existing open character of the site to a significantly more urban, illuminated environment, especially where established residential properties immediately adjoin the site.

12. PRESSURE ON LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The availability of 33.45 hectares of land does not mean that the surrounding infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate development of that scale.

Before allocating HE 234, the Council should establish the existing and required capacity of schools, GP and healthcare provision, highways, public transport, sewerage and wastewater infrastructure, surface-water infrastructure, water supply, electricity and utilities, and community facilities.

The necessary infrastructure should be shown to be realistically deliverable at the appropriate time.

13. PREVIOUS CHESHIRE EAST ASSESSMENT OF WILMSLOW'S DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

During preparation of the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, the Council's **Wilmslow Settlement Report** concluded at that time that completions, commitments and existing allocations resulted in no remaining requirement for additional housing or employment land to be identified through that stage of the plan.

I recognise that the new Local Plan covers a different period and that development requirements can change. Nevertheless, if Cheshire East now concludes that a further **33.45-hectare site potentially containing housing, industrial and commercial development is required**, the Council should clearly explain what has materially changed, how much additional housing and employment land Wilmslow now requires, why that need has to be accommodated on HE 234, and what alternative sites have been considered.

14. EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND AND ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS

The need for industrial and commercial development on HE 234 requires particularly strong justification. Cheshire East already identifies employment locations elsewhere in and around Wilmslow, including **Wilmslow Business Park**.

The Council should establish why further industrial/commercial development needs to extend onto HE 234, particularly where the land immediately adjoins established residential properties. Employment development should be directed towards locations where commercial operations, HGV movements, servicing, lighting and other associated activities can be accommodated without unnecessary conflict with existing homes.

15. CUMULATIVE EFFECT WITH OTHER SUBMITTED SITES

HE 234 must not be assessed in isolation. The Council should assess the combined effects of potential development sites around Wilmslow upon Green Belt, landscape, traffic and junction capacity, schools, healthcare, drainage, ecology, utilities, air quality, public transport, and the overall scale and character of expansion around Wilmslow.

16. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OF EXISTING PRESTBURY ROAD PROPERTIES

Particular attention should be paid to the relationship between HE 234 and the existing residential properties along Prestbury Road. [redacted]

I recognise that the planning system does not exist to protect an individual's private view and that changes in private property value are not the basis of this objection. However, **noise, disturbance, privacy, overlooking, light pollution, air quality, traffic, environmental quality and the compatibility of neighbouring land uses are legitimate planning considerations**.

The Council should therefore consider existing residents as an integral part of its site assessment rather than treating HE 234 simply as an undeveloped area on a strategic map.

REQUEST FOR SPECIFIC EVIDENCE BEFORE HE 234 IS PROGRESSED

1. A plan showing the complete HE 234 boundary against the adopted Green Belt boundary.

2. Confirmation of precisely how much of the site currently lies within Green Belt.

3. An assessment of the site's contribution to the purposes and openness of the Green Belt.

4. A detailed assessment of reasonable brownfield, previously developed and non-Green-Belt alternatives.

5. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

6. A comprehensive ecological assessment.

7. A Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage Assessment.

8. A comprehensive Transport Assessment covering Prestbury Road, Hough Lane, Hough Lane roundabout and the surrounding network.

9. Evidence concerning HGV and commercial traffic generated by the industrial/commercial component.

10. An infrastructure capacity assessment covering education, healthcare, transport, sewerage, drainage and utilities.

11. An assessment of the site's relationship with the Prestbury Road and Hough Lane gateways identified by the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan.

12. An assessment of the effects upon existing residential properties directly adjoining the site.

13. An explanation of the need for additional industrial/commercial land in this particular location.

14. An assessment of the cumulative effects of HE 234 together with other potential development sites around Wilmslow.

CONCLUSION

For all of the reasons above, I **strongly object to HE 234 - Land at Hole Farm being selected or allocated for housing, industrial, commercial or mixed-use development within the new Cheshire East Local Plan**.

This is a very substantial site of approximately 33.45 hectares immediately adjoining an established residential community and situated in a sensitive location associated with the Prestbury Road and Hough Lane approaches to Wilmslow.

The potential development represents far more than a modest extension to the town. It could fundamentally change the character of this part of Wilmslow and potentially introduce substantial housing, industrial and commercial development, roads, traffic, HGVs, lighting and associated infrastructure onto currently open land immediately adjoining existing homes.

The fundamental question at this stage should not be **"How can HE 234 be developed?"** It should be **"Is development of HE 234 actually necessary, suitable and sustainable when compared with all reasonable alternatives?"**

I do not believe that case has been demonstrated. I therefore respectfully request that **HE 234 is rejected as a potential allocation**.

If Cheshire East nevertheless decides to progress the site for further consideration, I request that all of the evidence identified above is published and subjected to meaningful public consultation before any decision is taken to allocate the land.

I also request that residents whose properties directly adjoin HE 234, including residents of Prestbury Road, are specifically notified of future consultation concerning this site.

Please record this representation formally against **HE 234 - Land at Hole Farm, Hough Lane, Wilmslow**.

I would be grateful for confirmation that my representation has been received and recorded, and that I will be informed of future consultation stages concerning HE 234.

Yours faithfully,

Joanna Bhalla

[redacted]