



Cheshire East Council
Planning and Building Control,
Delamere House,
Delamere Street,
Crewe,
C1 2LL

Patron:
H M The King
President
Mary-Ann Ochota
Vice Presidents
Dame Fiona Reynolds DBE
Ali Miraj
Branch Chair
Jonathan Clarke

8th July, 2025

Dear Sir or Madam,

**COMMENTS ON CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATION ref. 25/0210/OUT:
Bloor Homes North West application to build approx. 200 homes at Prestbury Road, Macclesfield**

CPRE (formerly the Campaign to Protect Rural England) Cheshire Branch objects to this application by Bloor Homes and urges Cheshire East Council (CEC) to refuse it because:

- The applicant has not submitted convincing evidence that the area should now be considered to be Grey Belt and nor have they proved 'Very Special Circumstances' for building in Green Belt. The proposed development site lies on land that was regarded as essential to preventing urban sprawl and rated as making a 'significant contribution' to Green Belt purposes when consultants Arup conducted a borough wide Green Belt analysis on behalf of Cheshire East Council a decade ago for its Local Plan (Parcel ref. MF15). (See https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/research_and_evidence/research_and_evidence.aspx and the annex to this submission). CPRE's view is that this land is most definitely Green Belt and should remain so. Also, it lies next to a parcel of land that was designated as making a 'major contribution' (MF 13). And, we would remind CEC that 50 acres of Green Belt was lost in the immediate vicinity of this site, to the north, when permission was given to build the new King's School at Prestbury. If this application were permitted, it would further close the gap between two settlements – Macclesfield and Prestbury.
- No evidence has been presented to demonstrate that Bloor Homes have carried out a thorough investigation of brownfield sites to ascertain if it might be possible for them to provide a housing development on previously developed land in the Macclesfield area. In the Planning Statement Addendum they simply dismiss this possibility with the statement "*Limited brownfield residential opportunities in Macclesfield*" (Table 3.1, page 14) without justification. The National Planning Policy Framework has re-emphasised the government's commitment to 'brownfield first'.
- The site lies on the western side of the River Bollin catchment area, which is conserved by the Bollin Valley Partnership. They maintain the 25-mile (40 km) Bollin Valley Way that runs on the eastern bank of the river. Open and rural views from it to the west would be severely impacted.
- DEFRA's long term flood risk map shows that some sections of the Bollin river into which the site would drain has a high chance of flooding, as has virtually all of the brook that feeds into it and that runs along the north west site border. The significant surface water run-off from a sloping site of this size will exacerbate the chances of river flooding, despite the drainage system planned.
- Bloor Homes argue that one justification for allowing their application is the fact that, now Cheshire East's housing target has been increased by government, it no longer has a five year housing land supply. Whilst this is now the case, it is not in itself a reason to allow this application

- especially if planning permissions that have not been built out are taken into account.
- A major argument that Bloor Homes uses in support of this application is the fact that insufficient homes have been provided to meet housing need. It fails to mention the fact that permissions exist for over a million homes across England which developers have failed to fulfil (<https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/factcheck-englands-million-missing-homes> and <https://www.theconstructionindex.co.uk/news/view/one-in-three-planning-permissions-left-unbuilt> and <https://www.homebuilding.co.uk/news/one-in-three-homes-granted-planning-permission-arent-built-we-look-at-why>).
- The proposed site currently contributes to the nation's food supply because it is used for grazing. It is also an important and much valued open space on the north side of Macclesfield.
- Bloor is not proposing to make any new or extra provision for public transport other than the installation of two bus stops on Prestbury Road (the B5087) to serve an existing bus route that passes by the site once an hour. They are not offering to sponsor a new service. And pedestrian crossing facilities on the B5087 are the only provision towards public safety that are on offer.
- According to the traffic trip generation model, when the site is complete, it would generate an extra 205 trips in and out of the site in the morning peak time and an extra 185 trips in the afternoon peak time, but the transport consultants are relying on a large percentage of active travel movements. Based on the modelling of their traffic consultants, they claim there would be 86 new car driver trips in the AM peak hour and 89 new car driver trips in the PM peak hour. Whether or not this is an under-estimate would remain to be seen, especially as the calculations are based on 'total person trip rates' and it is unclear as to whether or not these include trips by visitors, service vehicles and tradespeople.
- The developer has not offered to provide any new health, educational or adult recreational community facilities, but relies on existing facilities elsewhere. The transport assessment lists distances to schools, the hospital and a pharmacy but fails to analyse whether any of these facilities are operating at capacity or not.

Bloor Homes maintain that because their proposed development adjoins a developed area of Macclesfield and lies a 25-minute walk from the town centre it is sustainable. It is not. The Green Belt around urban centres does not exist to be nibbled away at. The planning system identifies five Green Belt 'purposes'. Green Belt exists to: **1.** Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas; **2.** Prevent neighbouring settlements merging into one another; **3.** Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; **4.** Preserve the setting and special characteristic of historic towns; and **5.** Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. As the annex to this submission demonstrates so successfully, this proposal would contravene all these purposes. The extract quoted is from the Green Belt assessment evidence submitted by consultants Arup for CEC's first Local Plan a decade ago. This was accepted at the time by the planning inspector. The proposed unsustainable development by Bloor should not be allowed to proceed.

Yours faithfully,

LILLIAN BURNS
 For CPRE Cheshire Branch
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NB This is a revised response submitted following re-consultation on the application by the Council, prompted by supplementary submissions by Bloor. It replaces the CPRE letter dated 10th Feb. 2025.



**ANNEX TO CPRE SUBMISSION ON PLANNING APP.
25/0210/OUT BY BLOOR HOMES**

**NOTE: This is an extract from Green Belt Assessment Update 2015
Final Consolidation Report by Arup, for Cheshire East Council,
dated July 2015. Part of the Local Plan evidence base (page C78).**

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Parcel	1. Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area	2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4. Preserve the setting and special characteristic of historic towns	5. Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Overall evaluation
MF 15 Land to the north east of Prestbury Road and south east of Upton Wood	Significant Contribution. The southern and most of the eastern part of this parcel's boundary adjoins existing residential settlements creating strong boundaries that cannot lead to further development outside of this parcel. The western boundary is made up of ancient woodland which is seen as a moderate boundary whereas the River Bollin in the north acts as another strong boundary for this parcel and growth is further restricted here due to this river as well as the railway line further north. There is evidence of ribbon development to the south along the B5087 and the parcel plays a role in preventing further development along this road, however the parcel would greatly add to the sprawl within the Green Belt due to the proximity to existing settlements surrounding it.	Contribution. The parcel forms part of the less essential gap between Macclesfield and Prestbury to the north whereby development of the parcel would not result in the merging of settlements * * N.B. This assessment was carried out prior to the approval of and construction of the King's School site to the west of this parcel.	Significant contribution. There is a small area of residential properties within the parcel to the west and some urbanising influences adjacent to the north of the parcel. The parcel is well related to the settlement along the south and south western boundaries with open countryside located to the north and north west albeit separated by Upton Wood. Despite this, the parcel itself consists of open fields and still has a degree of openness within it.	Major contribution. Macclesfield is a historic town and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. It has a number of conservation areas which are located within the 250m buffer mostly on the eastern side of Macclesfield. Prestbury Road Conservation Area is located the south of the parcel adjoining the southern edge of the parcel and the Green Belt boundary.	Significant contribution. Macclesfield has 4% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the general area makes a significant degree of contribution to the purpose.	The parcel significantly contributes to a number of purposes for the protection of Green Belt which include protection from sprawl and assisting urban regeneration. Due to its lack of openness, however, it only makes a limited contribution to preventing encroachment. There are no historic assets nearby and therefore it plays no contribution in preserving Macclesfield's historical value. It does play a role in preventing towns from merging.

