

10 REASONS TO OBJECT TO GODLEY GREEN!

Objections to the GMSF Godley Green Garden Village proposals

1. Godley Green is currently designated as green belt. It is green belt for a reason – to prevent urban sprawl and safeguard the character of the area. These reasons have not gone away. Building Godley Green garden village will contribute massively to urban sprawl.

2. Road Congestion. Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2017 recognises that *"there is a need to work with neighbouring authorities to provide high quality, high capacity sustainable transport alternatives in order to relieve pressure on the highway network"*.

Godley Green is likely to bring around 2500 extra vehicles using Stockport Road and connecting trunk roads every day, which conflicts with the above declared strategy (in blue italics). There are no proposals (other than the existing Mottram bypass/Glossop spur) for easing existing congestion, so this development can only exacerbate the problems.

3. Rail Congestion. *Greater Manchester's Springboard to a Greener City Region* document sets targets for people *"travelling less"* and for *"decarbonisation of travel"*. A commuter village conflicts with *"travelling less"* and the only option for *"decarbonisation of travel"* is to use the rail service (the Hadfield line stopping at Hattersley and Godley). A consideration of linking the Hadfield line to the Metro is promised, but this gives no grounds for optimism. Existing commuter trains are typically full by the time Hattersley station is reached, with people standing. To give confidence about *"decarbonisation of travel"*, specific measures need to be announced to address the existing situation and to provide reasons for thinking that a large influx of Godley Green passengers can be accommodated.

4. Village infrastructure. Specific measures need to be announced to give confidence that their development will be a community. Will there be a new primary school? The nearby high school (Alder Community College) is oversubscribed already. Nothing is being said about this by the planners. And what about NHS services? What about local employment prospects? What about community buildings (places of worship, meeting places, young people's groups, playgrounds, etc.). Unless these are planned in, with local authority support and oversight, the outcome is likely to be 100% housing.

5. The existing rural economy. The plans will transform the way the land is currently being used. Fields produce hay, and are used for grazing sheep, cows and horses. The land is not suitable for arable farming. About 150 horses live in the area, bringing a distinctive trade associated with horseriding as an outdoor activity. There are numerous jobs linked to working in the area and decision-makers ought to recognise how many dozens of jobs will be lost if the garden village plans go ahead.

6. The environment and its ecology. Godley Green is on the north side of Werneth Low. The area not only gets its own share of rain, but also run-off from Werneth Low. This means that the water table is quite near the surface and there are numerous small ponds scattered around the many fields. Whilst this limits the scope of farming, it supports a significant biosphere: deer, badgers, foxes, rabbits, birds of prey and many other species of bats, newts and other freshwater animals and plants. Green Lane and Brookfold Lane are descriptive of the whole area. Adjacent are Great Wood to the west and Back Wood to the south. Losing the Godley Green ecosystem will be a major loss to the green infrastructure of the area.

In relation this, we ask, have the planners commissioned a biodiversity survey? This pristine green belt is likely to have a high biodiversity index relative to surrounding urban areas, which relates to the next point.

7. The GMSF revised plans aim to protect and enhance biodiversity:

- [Section 1.24] “net gain in biodiversity”

- [Objective 8]: “We will Enhance the special landscapes across Greater Manchester, green infrastructure, biodiversity”....

-[Section 8.2] “The GMSF supports the important role of Greater Manchester’s natural assets by: Seeking a significant overall **enhancement of biodiversity.**”

Green Infrastructure Network.....”The network of green infrastructure that stretches throughout Greater Manchester will be designed, managed, protected and enhanced.”

- [8.51] “If the overall aims of a major net enhancement of biodiversity value across Greater Manchester and improved access to nature are to be achieved then all new development will have to play its part, each delivering a net gain in biodiversity. The green infrastructure network will be designed, managed and protected so as to help deliver the following key priorities for Greater Manchester: **Enhance biodiversity, by expanding, improving and connecting habitats.**”

- however, the plans appear to do the exact opposite of this **in the Godley Green areas!** Quite simply, habitats will be destroyed, connection between habitats will decrease, and wildlife migration corridors in this area, (which were diminished with the Tesco development), will be diminished yet further.

Thus it is hard to envisage biodiversity being expanded when a housing estate is built all over the habitats.

8. Re the Godley Green site, we object for the following two reasons. **A colony of Greater crested newts, a protected species,** found on a plot of land allocated for Alder Community High School, were relocated to ponds within and/or near the Godley Green proposed site. This reallocation is authentic and well attested. Subsequent to this relocation, the colony will most likely have undergone emigration throughout the habitat. Thus its range of occurrence is most likely to include the proposed site at Godley Green. We are not aware that ponds within the site have been tested for the DNA of the great crested newts, and until this has been conducted, the plans for Godley Green should be removed from the GMSF. According to Alan Law, Natural England’s chief strategy and reform officer, the DNA technology now facilitates that “Development will be guided away from these areas towards more suitable sites.” Thus if the DNA tests indicate the presence of these protected newts, development should be guided away from the site so as to leave the newts undisturbed.

9. Moreover, in relation to point 27, **reallocation of a species to a new habitat incurs an extinction debt.** This means that a subsequent relocation event would endanger the colony more than if it had not incurred a previous history of relocation. It is therefore unthinkable that the environmental stress of a further relocation should be applied to this colony because of housing development within the habitat.

10. It appears that there are large brown field sites throughout Tameside that are not yet logged in on the brown field register. These sites should be built on first, before Godley Green is even considered.

How to object – see ways to respond on our home page