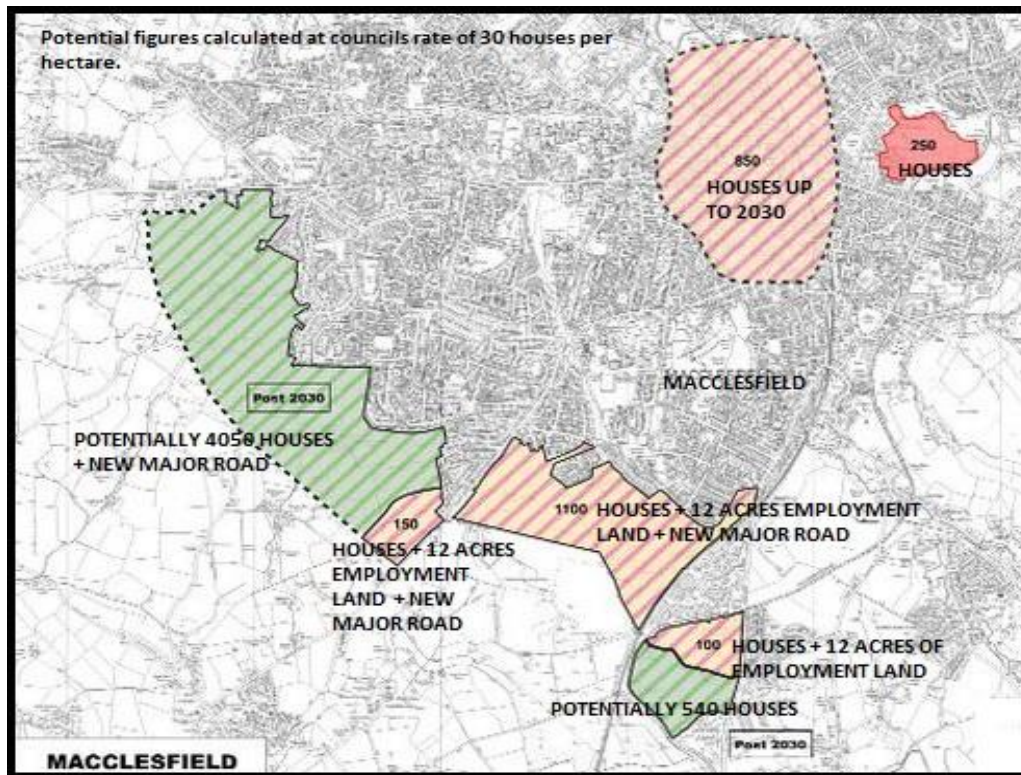


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For immediate release.

## Back Door Green Belt Land Grab

Cheshire East Council's Local Plan flies in the face of resident's wishes and government advice with 50% of Macclesfield's green belt to be destroyed



Cheshire East Council has quietly unveiled another consultation for the people of Macclesfield and surrounding areas. In the last consultation 95% of responses objected to the removal of 400 acres of land from the green belt in south west Macclesfield and over 3000 residents signed a petition to protect it for future generations.

So what did the council do?

With the support of only 2% of all respondents to their consultation, they propose to build on the Fence Avenue site, the Danes Moss site, the Gaw End Lane site and the land off Congleton Road near the Rising Sun, then “safeguard” another 400 acres across the south west of Macclesfield and at Gaw End Lane for property development after 2030.

It is this type of steamrolling over the will of the public that makes a mockery of the democratic process. Was it really a consultation or is all this a rubber stamping exercise?

Councillor Michael Jones stated in the Macclesfield Express that only 1% of land in the plan to be used was green belt but 50% of the whole of Cheshire East's green belt grab is in Macclesfield.

The figures the council are using are wrong. The Office for National Statistics have said that Cheshire East should be planning for an increase of 20,000 not 27,000 homes across the county – this overestimate by Cheshire East and refusal to adhere to correct figures is one of the main reasons Macclesfield and surrounding areas is being targeted for green belt destruction. This is an unsubstantiated target figure that the council won't change.

Councillor Brown has added another 37 acres of industrial employment land plus 5000 square metres of retail into the mix even though we have a 30 year supply of employment land for businesses. Brown field sites are supposed to be developed first, but there is no detailed plan for this and the area that has been identified for regeneration doesn't even have most of the brown field sites in it.

Any land that is to be "safeguarded" (earmarked) is safeguarded not for the residents of Macclesfield to enjoy, but to be given to developers in exchange for a major new road that will go from the football club right round to Chelford Road.

Anything to do with this safeguarded land will never be debated again – Cheshire East has created a back door to get its hands on our green belt. Safeguarded land will only be subjected to a review not consultation from residents before it is destroyed forever.

2030 is not within the remit of this plan.

We are not alone in thinking that Councillor Brown has over stepped the mark with this plan. Minister Nick Boles has already advised the council of the foolishness of this idea. He stated the planning horizon is only to 2030. He gave some clear advice to Councillor Brown – "Anybody who is suggesting that there is any requirement to safeguard land for future development between 2030 and 2050 is wrong".

Indeed Macclesfield MP David Rutley raised the point in the House of Commons recently following his concerns. Again the minister Nick Boles said "there is nothing in the Localism Act 2011, in the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) or in any aspect of government planning policy that requires someone to plan beyond 15 years. So, anybody who is suggesting that there is any requirement to safeguard land or wrap it up in wrapping paper and ribbons for the future development between 2030 and 2050 is getting it wrong. There is no reason for it and my honourable friend can knock that suggestion straight back to wherever it came from".

Gina Oliver, spokesperson for Save Macclesfield Green Belt said, "How many people have to tell Councillor Brown that he is wrong before he listens? Residents of this community need to make their voices heard again and stand up to this madness. Object to this plan now. If we don't object, the council will do whatever it likes and use its back door to destroy the green belt – one of the things that makes Macclesfield so special".

More information on the reasons for objecting and how to do so can be found on our website:

[www.savemacclesfieldgreenbelt.com](http://www.savemacclesfieldgreenbelt.com)