

## TRAFFORD CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION

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### DAVENPORT GREEN - Response to Document CD12.72.

**1. Introduction.** As a local resident and Council Tax payer, I continue to maintain my support for Trafford Council's proposal to return this area of Davenport Green to the status of Green Belt.

**2. Regeneration.** I consider the Council's para 5.2 at p.6 very strongly points up the need to protect green field space, and also to concentrate development on to easily accessible areas of social disadvantage. This would greatly assist with lessening the problem of inner city deprivation and outer suburban affluence which has been and still is a problem in many post-industrial Western cities. I am sure that this would have become a major problem with the City of Manchester if the present policies of encouraging investment and urban living into the city centre instead of allowing this all to migrate to suburban fringes had not been embarked upon some years ago.

2.1 Although Trafford is considered to be a comparatively quite affluent Borough, it does nevertheless have areas of deprivation which the Council quite rightly wishes to redress. I consider that economic regeneration in and very close to those areas would be much more beneficial than any development at the remote Davenport Green.

2.2 Paras 9.1 and 9.2 at p.9 both highlight this, and I consider that the Council should not allow any fringe development which would put at risk this continuing urban regeneration and the improved social cohesion that this will foster. Para 8.4 at p.8 reinforces my point, and the Council must pursue this socio-economically wise course.

2.3 Para 9.5 at p.10 raises the "critical mass" element, a feature in all successful urban business economies, with its benefits of concentrations and co-locations of different types of businesses, all capitalizing from their respective presences in a compact geographical area, allowing ease of rapid formal and informal contact. Such compact areas are easily served by radial surface transport links which can often operate at a profit instead of needing constant public subsidy.

2.4 Para 9.3 supports this; to me it is massively significant that after various business interests and groups discussed the economic future of Greater Manchester, Davenport Green was not mentioned.

**3. Development Standards.** The local residents striving in 1995 to keep Davenport Green entirely in the Green Belt lost their case, but they had the not unfavourable outcome of the 1996 UDP Inspector's consent with its many stipulations aimed at

allowing only the most exceptional type of development on the area removed from green belt. (Para 8.8, at p. 9).

3.1 Since then, there has been the constant fear that these stipulations would be watered down to allow for mere run-of-the-mill type developments which could just as easily be located in existing developed areas.

3.2 Para 8.7 at p.9 shows this very attempt being made! This must be firmly resisted by the Council because if any part of Davenport Green should have to be developed, then it should exceptionally and only be for the highest quality construction and for the most prestigious of occupier(s), in accordance with the 1996 Inspector's ruling.

#### **4. Transport and Access to Davenport Green.**

4.1 Any development on Davenport Green would, by virtue of its local geography, especially its proximity to the M56 motorway, be accessed almost totally by car. I agree with the end of the Council's para 5.2 at p.6 about unsustainable commuting patterns. In city-centre locations it is possible, although politically unpopular, to force commuters on to public transport by permitting little if any car parking at new developments. In the Davenport Green context, this would be quite impracticable, as well as totally unacceptable to any developer.

4.2 Regarding Appendix C, pages 38-39, sections S2 & S3.

4.2.1 Page 38's para 2 mentions providing new and improved pedestrian and cycle links, then states that "the bus route from Altrincham to Davenport Green and the Airport could feasibly be routed close to Wythenshawe Hospital which would provide Trafford residents with better access to this important facility".

4.2.2 Page 39 para 1 refers to "two new high frequency bus services would be introduced to link Davenport Green to the interchanges at Altrincham...and Manchester Airport...". Reference is also made to "the proposed loop of the western route to the Metrolink extension...". Para 2 refers to various cycle routes which surround the Davenport Green area.

4.2.3 We must never lose sight of the original proposal for Davenport Green which would allow access to the site only via the Thorley Lane bridge over the M56 motorway into the proposed development, and no further. Through traffic from Roaring Gate Lane and Shay Lane via Thorley Lane to Runger Lane would be banned. Therefore the bus route referred to at 4.2.1 which is the current "Arriva" service 18 would, if it were actually to serve (rather than merely pass near to the edge of) Davenport Green, have to divert off Runger Lane into Thorley Lane and run round the development complex, after already having made its existing diversion off Runger Lane to serve the Airport's Cargo Centre. It would indeed be possible to have this 18 call at Wythenshawe Hospital, but this would be after the bus had already served the Airport bus station, Woodhouse Park, Wythenshawe bus station and Benchill; it could then run via Hollyhedge Road and Southmoor Road into the hospital bus stands, then pick up its existing route back on Southmoor Road towards Sale Moor, Stretford and the Trafford Centre.

4.2.3.1 The current 18 running time from Altrincham (via Hale Road – A538 – and Halebarns centre), badly congested each peak hour, to Wythenshawe bus station is 30 minutes, plus say 7 minutes for the run round the proposed Davenport Green development. Add say 11 more minutes to the Hospital, and this would make 48 minutes from Altrincham, and 39 minutes from Halebarns centre. The existing service 11 from Altrincham takes 30 minutes to this hospital, but via Timperley and Baguley.

4.2.3.2 Hale Road and Halebarns village would become even more congested if the traffic along Davenport Green's lanes were barred by the closure of Thorley Lane to through traffic. The impact on the 18 bus would be adverse.

4.2.3.3 An 18 to Wythenshawe Hospital would be a new link for Halebarns people, but this is a very affluent area of high car ownership and usage, and the 18 is (sadly) not much used. Halebarns residents would simply not even consider a bus to get to Wythenshawe Hospital, let alone one taking 39 minutes.

4.2.4 As for the items on p.39 (my para 4.2.2) , the two high frequency bus services could not possibly run at a profit, and would have to make detours to pick up passengers from Airport related sites like the Cargo Centre and the bus/train station, with all the delays that a motorist would see as totally unacceptable.

4.2.4.1 The cycle lanes would be pleasant in good summer weather, but I consider it quite unrealistic to expect anything but a very small number of staff at any development at Davenport Green to get there by cycle.

4.2.5 The Metrolink tram loop proposed to cross Davenport Green was dropped in June 2004 to save £39 millions, at that date's prices. When this Airport line was first proposed, the route currently planned for construction via Wythenshawe proper was, incredibly, completely absent, and only much local protest got that line put into the tramway network plan. As a result, the **initial** tram plans were seen merely as a use of public money to crowbar open this Green Belt area for private developer benefit.

4.3 To summarize, the type of development envisaged for Davenport Green would attract very high quality management and professional staff, none of whom would use any of the public transport or cycle lanes invoked so as to enhance the environmental credentials or "score" of such a development. The buses would run – for a while – and then quietly be withdrawn due to lack of patronage, or they would carry on with a large subsidy from public funds, creating pollution and congestion in addition to that created by the additional car traffic that it was hoped the buses would obviate.

## **5. Surrounding Developments.**

5.1 Manchester Airport's long term expansion plans call for the eventual development of a considerable amount of what is currently green belt land around the A538 between the M56 junction 6 and the runways at Castle Hill. The current Manchester City Council Core Strategy work calls for this land to be excluded from the Green Belt, on the basis that the Airport has nowhere else to go for space on which to grow.

5.2 If this should come to pass, then the green belt PPG2 role of Davenport Green will become even more important as a buffer between large areas of development. Therefore I consider that the whole of Davenport Green should be of Green Belt status, to reinforce this role. The Council's para 6.1 on page 6 also sees this as important, and also rightly couples it to regeneration and quality of life issues.

5.3 The Council's para 9.7 on page 11 refers to the availability of other sites quite apart from the A538 land at my 5.1 above, and I support the view that there is no need to consider Davenport Green for any development. While I would question the "improved sustainability scoring of the Davenport Green development proposal" (Para 12.2), I agree with the Council's conclusions at section 12.

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7<sup>th</sup> May 2011.