

Update 28/07: We have had a rewrite of the responses to the development. We had huge help from a local, professional writer to make the text less vague, more punchy, and evidence-based. We owe a huge debt to Mick Flaherty for his work!

Cheshire West and Chester council highlighted many green belt areas to build houses on to meet their housebuilding targets. One of these is the area between the Lakes Estate and Bradley, encompassing Hob Hey Wood. It appears this area was chosen due to proximity to Frodsham Train Station, without any consideration to its suitability.

The proposal is in consultation, we have until 29th August to respond.

Here, we've drafted some potential responses for people to use. These cover two areas, infrastructure and nature. The infrastructure data has been taken from previous FB posts with lots of detail of why this proposal should not go ahead. If anyone has any questions, please contact me.

Where to find the document:

<https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/resources/portal/supportingfiles/800927>

Maps of proposed development:

<https://cmttpublic.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/s91474/Appendix>

Frodsham is page 11, areas affecting Hob Hey are FRO01 and FRO02.

How to respond (more difficult on phone, easier on PC):

Go to -

<https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/kse/event/38393>

Click on 'READ AND COMMENT ON DOCUMENT'

Go to section 5.1 Key questions: SS41, SS42, SS43

If the portal is not easy to use, you can email or write:
Email: planningpolicy@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Post – Planning Policy, Cheshire West and Chester Council, The Portal, Wellington Road, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BA

If responding by email or post, please ensure that you include your name and contact details, organisation (where relevant) and which chapter, policy approach or section you are commenting on (including the question number, policy reference and/or paragraph).

1. This Development Must Not Go Ahead

This is not a polite suggestion. It is a firm and direct objection to building on FR001 and FR002, two parcels of Greenbelt land that border Hob Hey Wood and form part of Frodsham's only remaining rural buffer. This proposal is a textbook example of poor planning: it increases flood risk, overloads roads, strains local services, destroys wildlife routes, and rips up national policy. If approved, it will damage the town and everyone in it.

2. Traffic is Already Broken

The A56 and main roads through Frodsham are regularly gridlocked. When the M56 is closed or partially shut, all diverted traffic comes through the town. The Weaver Viaduct carries over 112,000 vehicles daily. That number spikes during roadworks, collisions, or closures. None of this is future risk. It's already happening.

Add hundreds of extra vehicles from FR001 and FR002 and the problem gets worse. Emergency vehicles already struggle to get through. This development will slow response times even more, putting lives at risk.

Source: Hansard (UK Parliament), 2015 – [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2015-11-17/debates/15111754000002/M56\(Junctions12To14\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2015-11-17/debates/15111754000002/M56(Junctions12To14))

3. Severe Impact on Ancient Woodland

Hob Hey is a Site of Biological Interest and ancient woodland, Britain's most biodiverse habitat.

The wood is home to thousands of species varying from common, to locally scarce, to nationally rare. Over 800 species are listed on the national biological recording site iRecord. Many species only occur in ancient woodland, an increasingly rare habitat.

The wood is a haven for both wildlife and local people who enjoy walking the woodland and reaping the benefits of being in nature such as reduced anxiety and depression. Improvements to the immune system and reduced blood pressure also result from time spent in nature.

Source: Nature and Mental Health Report', Mind.

Source: (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9665958/>).

4. Wildlife Corridors Will Be Destroyed

Hob Hey Wood is not a decorative patch of trees. It is a functioning woodland used by many species that need access to the surrounding environment. The wood connects to wider habitat corridors through the FR001 and FR002 areas. These corridors keep the ecology alive.

Building here breaks those links forever. You can't replace a hedgerow or regenerate a breeding ground once it's buried under concrete.

Source: Planning Inspectorate – https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN010153-000069-6.1_ES%20Vol%201%20Chapter%207%20Terrestrial%20Ecology.pdf

5. Significant Disturbance to The Woodland

Hob Hey is relatively secluded. Building hundreds of houses nearby could lead to significant disturbance of the woodland and its wildlife. The resulting huge increase in pets would result in problems. Cats are supreme predators which would take a toll on wildlife. Dogs would also disturb wildlife and their feces have been shown to cause nitrogen and phosphorus pollution.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/feb/07/dog-pee-and-poo-harming-nature-reserves-study>

6. Flood Risk is Not a Hypothetical

Surface water flooding is the biggest threat to homes in England today. Over 4.6 million homes are now at risk from it. That's double the number at risk from rivers or coastal surge. In Frodsham, those risks already exist. Hob Hey Wood and the green land around it act as a sponge. They slow rain and reduce flood peaks. Building on FR002 and FR001 means water runs off faster, overloading drains and pushing into homes and roads. The council's own Flood Risk Assessment warns against removing these natural barriers. From the late 1990's to 2005 this happened in Langdale Way! Residents experienced multiple sewerage floods leading to a campaign involving both the council and United Utilities to resolve the issue before the houses became uninsurable. This resulted in a year long disruptive excavation at Manor House School fields to install huge tanks to stem the catastrophic floods. UU stated that this was the only site that that type of construction could take place. House building adjacent could result in these issues arising again! Source: Cheshire West SFRA – <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/parking-roads-and-travel/highways/flood-risk-assessment-final-report.pdf>

Source: Financial Times – <https://www.ft.com/content/ff3bb769-9339-4015-80bc-4a3ea446504e>

7. GP Practices and Schools Are Full

There is no spare capacity in Frodsham's infrastructure. GP practices are running at limit. Schools are close to capacity. New homes mean more pressure, more waiting, more stretched services.

No part of this development includes concrete plans or funding for new public services. That means the burden falls on existing ones, which are already struggling.

Source: Cheshire West Monitoring Reports – <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/local-plan/authority-monitoring-report>

8. Air Quality and Light Pollution Will Get Worse

Frodsham is already inside an Air Quality Management Area. Cars are the top local pollutant. FR001 and FR002 would bring more cars, more exhaust, and more noise into a space that's supposed to be protected. Lighting from new housing, cars and street lamps will spill into Hob Hey Wood and rural zones. This ruins habitat for nocturnal species and affects human

sleep cycles. Light pollution has a detrimental effect on bats. There are seven species present in Hob Hey Wood including rare Nathusius' pipistrelle. Moths are also affected by light pollution. Source: Cheshire West AQMA Action Plan – <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/pests-pollution-food-safety/pollution-and-air-quality/air-quality-review-and-assessment/action-plans/action-plan-frodsham-0118.pdf> Source: Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night. Source: Impact of light pollution on moth morphology—A 137-year study in Germany <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.baae.2021.05.004>).

9. Antisocial Behaviour and Isolation Will Rise

New estates without integrated planning lead to social fragmentation. These areas become disconnected, under-policed, and under-supported. This isn't speculation. It's known from other developments nationally.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires that growth supports community cohesion. This proposal does not. It isolates new homes on the edge of town and dumps responsibility for cohesion onto already stretched services.

Source: NPPF (2023) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

10. House Prices Will Drop

People buy in Frodsham for access to open countryside, peace, and green views. Strip those away, and the value drops. This development removes the very features that give existing homes their worth.

Homeowners who've invested in the area will be hit with lower resale values and a loss of the rural edge they were sold on. Developers walk away with profit. Residents are left picking up the cost.

11. Greenbelt Is Not A Technicality

The Greenbelt is there for a reason. Once you breach it, you set precedent for more erosion. This is not just about FRO01 or FRO02. It's about what follows next if this goes ahead. National guidance is clear: development on Greenbelt land must be avoided unless there are absolutely no alternatives. In this case, there are alternatives. This land should remain untouched.

Source: GOV.UK Greenbelt Guidance –

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/13-protecting-green-belt-land>

12. Final Statement – Reject This Now

This proposal is bad planning. It adds pressure to failing infrastructure. It increases flood risk. It destroys wildlife corridors. It worsens air quality. It lowers property values. It puts lives at risk. It benefits developers and damages communities. This is not sustainable. It is not justified. It is not acceptable.

FRO01 and FRO02 must be removed from development plans entirely. This objection demands that the proposal be rejected in full. Nothing else will do.