

From: Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Forum

Date: 23rd February 2026

Dear Your Prestwich,

RE: Formal Response to Masterplan for Longfield Centre,

Thank you for allowing PVNF to pause our response until we had attended the consultation sessions. We must place on record that the information provided verbally at those events directly contradicted the distributed consultation leaflet, and the information which claimed the scheme would deliver ***“up to 250 homes, including a mix of affordable homes, as well as homes for first time buyers, growing families and downsizers.”*** Both the leaflet and the display banners at the event misled the public by implying that homes would be available for purchase. In reality, information that was withheld from all published material and disclosed only verbally, i.e.: that all 250 homes are intended to be rental properties managed by a private property management company. This omission is unacceptable. The inconsistency between the written material and the verbal explanation represents a serious failure of transparency and must be addressed immediately.

We have also attached to this letter a 27-page document compiled by PVNF containing the comments of local residents they have shared on social media platforms as a response to the recent Longfield Centre proposals.

The message within it is unequivocal: the overwhelming majority of residents are deeply alarmed by the proposals you have put before your constituents. Their concerns are consistent, substantial and impossible to ignore. We are requesting that you give full and serious weight to their voices and to formally acknowledge that the expectations of the community have been failed. These are not peripheral opinions, they come from the people who live, study, work and run businesses in Prestwich, and who will bear the consequences of the decisions you make.

This clearly reinforces the absence of real consultation: **You heard us but haven't listened!**

PVNF, would therefore, like to lodge our strong opposition to these proposals, which do not reflect the vast majority of the wishes of local people for this site as expressed in your own earlier 'consultations'. Nor in the results of our own extensive engagement with residents and businesses over the past 3 years, relating to the production of our Neighbourhood Plan.

We have set out our specific comments below but wish to take the opportunity of expressing our profound disappointment and betrayal of local people who you promised to have a direct role in developing sustainable proposals for this site. A review of the outcome of previous Your Prestwich consultations together with the results of our own engagements with the public revealed the following:

What was originally promised?

Buildings to reflect Prestwich's unique heritage and strong sense of community

Continue to involve the Prestwich community

Design to take inspiration from existing Prestwich architecture

Space for Independent businesses

A mix of housing, not just apartments. We found particular support for 3-4bedroom townhouses that would suit downsizers as well as couples and families wanting a central location as well as affordable accommodation

Community space is vital and central to any redevelopment

A New Health Centre to replace the existing tired and inadequate building

Provision for public toilets

A new library, on the ground floor

Lots of greenery in the scheme

A strong retail element that shouldn't be dominated by residential

In addition, many local people were concerned about the location of the car park, the scale of the proposed building and its impact on the surrounding residential areas if payment is required to park as this will lead to motorists using surrounding streets to park unless there is a residents parking permit system. The building of the car park is

now under-way and the community's concerns have already been ignored on this aspect of the site but there are many comments from residents about its over-bearing scale and lack of greenery.

What you are now proposing?

The scheme is dominated by 4 large, 7+ storey residential blocks, despite the fact that the community made it clear that this is precisely what we didn't want. The scale and density of these blocks within a local centre is totally out of character with Prestwich's heritage and there is nothing to suggest the architecture will be other than bland and over-bearing. This is particularly the case for the long block facing Rectory Green and will be four floors higher. The plans also lack any real detail and so it is impossible to assess how the requirements in respect of fire safety, energy efficiency, structural integrity, waste management, amenity space, temperature control within the flats, Bio Diversity Net Gain.

The large mono-housing element of this scheme is not supported by the findings of the Housing Needs Assessment for the Neighbourhood Area that Aecom undertook on our behalf. This found that the existing housing mix is generally quite balanced but that there was no need for any more 1 bed apartments. The HNA also pointed out that these has shown the lowest price growth over the last 10 years, compared to for example the growth for 4 bed family houses which have seen much higher growth. Whilst house prices are not an exact reflection of housing need & demand, they are a very good indicator. This scheme will simply result in an over-supply of the accommodation we don't need whilst failing to provide for the needs of the existing community.

The Community Hub building has disappeared (replaced by more flats) and there is now no commitment to a new health centre and the proposed layout will not provide for a site to enable one to be built in the future. This is despite the fact that promises were made to relocate the existing health centre into a new Community hub building that would also include a new library and community space. Many residents also commented to us that this building should also contain public toilets. New Public facilities were supposed to be central to this redevelopment and one, if not the most important aspect of this redevelopment.

Other than the 'L' shaped retail block containing half a dozen retail units, which hardly replaces what we already had, other retail units are dotted around under the large apartment blocks but there is no indication as to how feasible these units are, given there is no obvious way of servicing them. We doubt these units are viable and this raises questions about what will occupy the ground floors of these apartment blocks. Furthermore, there has been no indication at all as to which businesses will occupy any of the retail units so will we could end up with simply a mass of flats we don't want with numerous empty units at ground floor. Any robust scheme would have identified end users by now.

The proposed market seems to have been driven by Muse and not particularly by local demand. We continue to have doubts about the viability of this element of the scheme, in the short and longer term and therefore potentially its alternative use.

There have been many platitudes made by the Council and Muse over supporting and providing for local businesses but evidence on the ground points otherwise. Existing tenants who have managed to relocate from the Centre seem to have done it on their own with no assistance from the Council or Muse. If this is the way extent of support for local business, it does not bode well for the future – and what small or independent businesses are going to be clamouring to go into this scheme, given that some have already relocated and others have had to close down?

Despite almost 2 years since planning was granted for the two-phase scheme and in the intervening period the local community has had no input. Then out of the blue, a markedly poorer scheme is being promoted that lacks detail, including the design of the buildings, the provision of greenspace and landscaping throughout the site.

Role of Muse / Delivery and Long-term stewardship of the site

Neither Muse or the Council have provided any clarity about the roles of the parties in delivering, funding and managing this site. Questions were raised about these matters in the first and second consultations and in response the previous planning application but have never been satisfactorily answered. In particular:

We presume that the Council own all the land in this scheme (other than the existing Health Centre site), if so, what is happening with the value of that land? Has it been used for a car park that will then be used to support a large number of flats we don't

want? This money could have been used to support redevelopment of the precinct and a new health centre – with surface level car parking on Fairfax Road and part of the Longfield car park remaining.

If Muse's role is essentially that of a development manager what elements of the scheme (if any) will Muse develop themselves? Will other parties, for example develop and retain / dispose of the residential elements of the scheme? Who will develop the urban realm and landscaping elements of the scheme? Will its funding and delivery be linked to the various development parcels and what elements will be delivered as initial infrastructure of the site?

What is the ownership / tenancy proposals for the housing (houses and apartments)?

What plans if any are in place to prevent local residential streets being used for car parking by motorists who don't want to pay charges (if levied) in the new car park.

Health

With these plans showing no commitment to the replacement of the existing inadequate health centre building - and no location reserved for a new health centre to provide primary and community care; how will the Integrated Partnership Board deliver the Government's 10-year Health Plan for England "Fit for the Future", which aims to shift care from hospitals to community facilities? It is hard to see how the objectives of the "Fit for the Future" Health Plan can be met for this area as there appear to be no increased infrastructure to cope with the proposed increase in residents. Furthermore, health services for all the community who currently use the existing health centre will be further undermined.

Summary

It is difficult to express the anger that we feel about both the way this whole redevelopment process has been managed, the lack of real community engagement and the scheme that is now being promoted. One of our (younger) members spoke to Cllr O'Brien at a Your Prestwich Event early in the process and warned him not to over-promise and under deliver. This warning has not just become a reality but is proposing a scheme that could ruin Prestwich Village forever. At a time when faith in politicians and established institutions is at an all-time low, this will be another

example that reinforces the public's anger and ultimately disillusionment with their elected members and their institutions. We would urge you to re-connect with the local community and revise these proposals. In particular:

- Identify a clear road-map for redevelopment of the existing health centre
- Reduce significantly the number of apartments and include some town houses
- Ensure that the library is on the ground floor and provide some community space in the scheme
- Review the viability of some of the retail including the market hall
- Examine how a residents parking permit scheme could operate on surrounding streets if the Council decide to charge for use of the car park