

Wharfside Consultation Response

Introduction

Following on from Tia Anthea post about the ongoing consultation about the Wharfside Development, I thought I'd share my response to it.

I'd encourage people to attend the events and also submit a written response. I've really focussed on some key areas of concern but broader impact on Gorse Hill and also how the area can benefit.

Feel free to ask me any questions about stuff I've said (don't start a fight though), and to use this if it would be useful. The more of us that say the same or similar things and submit responses the more they have to listen. This is the email to send responses to: traffordwharfsidemasterplan@trafford.gov.uk

Key Areas of Focus

1. **Impact on the existing community** What is the impact on the existing community (particularly those who live closest to the development (Gorse Hill, Old Trafford), how has this been considered and how are they being involved?
2. **Community wealth building** Beginning from the premise of community wealth building – enabling communities to have direct ownership and control of assets and moving beyond a trickle-down approach to economics and instead have more wealth and high-quality jobs created by anchor institutions flow directly to the community.

Initial Critiques of the Consultation Approach

1. There has been poor promotion/awareness of this consultation; it has been done at one of the worst times of year when many are on holidays or are focused on getting kids back to school etc.
2. The document is dense to wade through; (as far as I'm aware) is only available online and wouldn't be able to be read on a phone.

Reflections / Comments / Questions

1. Existing Communities

There appears to be little reference to existing communities in the area, the impact of a massively increased local population on local resources and on increased visitor numbers to MUFC's new ground. When will an impact assessment be made on the local community? This should take into account the impact during the development but wider economic impact. Evidence shows from other large-scale redevelopment projects that the impact on the existing community is mixed at best. Looking at Elephant and Castle and the Olympic Park in particular where clear gentrification has seen a massive increase in rents and existing communities priced out of the area.

2. Economic Case & Jobs

Taking a community wealth building approach, how has the economic case been measured both in terms of impact on the community and directly for its benefit. When the numbers of jobs are calculated, how is consideration given to the types of jobs, who will have them and how many would be from the local community. As we know, much of the existing roles (that remain at MUFC after a large redundancy programme) are low paid and zero hours.

3. Local Plan Development

There is reference to a local plan being developed, this is a clear opportunity to move from the existing (poorly engaged with) consultation approach to meaningful co-production with residents.

4. Infrastructure

Infrastructure – considering the size of the new population being proposed there is limited reference to the need for new and increased infrastructure for the area: schools, GPs, dentists, social care etc. This is in comparison to the detailed information on transport and power infrastructure.

5. Transport Concerns

- The plan talks about travel mapping and this has been done (hypothetically) for the new area but does not include existing routes like Chester Rd in this, as we

know people will follow existing habits, desired route and, therefore transport (particularly on match days) will impact the existing communities.

- A new station is proposed but offers no benefit to the local community – an alternative location could be considered as this would benefit existing residents and reduce car use.
- Two proposed new crossings (one at the end of Avondale Rd and the other at the end of Thomas St) lack clarity of use. It is unclear if these will be solely for foot and cycle traffic as at one point they are flagged as “priority bus routes”. Gorse Hill would need guarantees that these wouldn’t be used for car traffic as the impact would be catastrophic. The area is gridlocked on match days – including resident streets already.
- Even if these are foot routes, this will still likely draw car traffic to Gorse Hill – serious thought needs to be given to reducing car use on match days to the most necessary (disabled people).
- Despite the proposed reduction in formal match day parking the development presents an opportunity to take this further and apply pressure to MUFC. Priority should be given to walking, cycling and public transport with shuttle bus options for those who must travel to the match to make the area as car-free as possible on match days. There are good examples of football grounds that have done this in Germany so there is precedent.
- For the resident developments and match parking the Masterplan merely proposes making parking look “pretty”; this doesn’t mitigate the impact on the health of residents from pollution.