

PLANNING AND
BUILDING CONTROL

24 APR 2020



21 April 2020

Dear Ms Atkinson,

Application number: 126431/FO/2020 (Eastlands Arena)

I am writing to voice my objections & concerns regarding the above application.

I have several areas of concern regarding this proposal. My arguments are based on the current situation with concerts at The Etihad, which I feel is a good comparison:

Parking

This can be a problem on concert days, with a large number of additional vehicles parking in the area. This also affects the surrounding areas - up to a mile away. Many of the additional vehicles parked on the roads within the restricted zone are not ticketed by the parking wardens, so I assume their owners have found a way around the system.

Litter

Whilst additional bins are provided on concert days, a lot of people still tend to drop their litter, not only around the stadium and on the main walking route back into the city centre, but also on their way back to their vehicles. This affects a large area (up to a mile radius from the Etihad), not covered by the litter pickers the day after the event. A windy day (and/or the day after) makes this much worse.

What measures are proposed to tackle this ?

Traffic

The proposed site is served by only one main road – Alan Turing Way. This would create a massive traffic problem, as can already be seen on Ashton New Road before and after concert events at The Etihad.

The point made about everyone attending using public transport or walking from the city centre is an extremely poor one, as indicated by the parking problems mentioned above. Traffic jams following concerts at The Etihad can continue until well after midnight, as all the vehicles parked locally suddenly need to leave the area.

The point I am making is supported perfectly by this newspaper article:

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/one-direction-traffic-fans-hit-7198179>

There is also the drop-off and pick-up traffic, including taxis. Many pop concerts attract a teenage audience. I doubt most parents with access to a car would abandon a teenage daughter and her friends to public transport after dark. Indeed, some of the victims of the 2017 Manchester Arena terrorist attack were parents who were only there to pick up their children.

The road infrastructure is simply not there to support this extra traffic, and the proposals offer no new roads or extra road capacity whatsoever.

There are also numerous comments regarding traffic problems in this discussion thread; the area already has a reputation:

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowTopic-g187069-i236-k6595914-Robbie_Williams_at_Etihad_Stadium-Manchester_Greater_Manchester_England.html

What is the effect on traffic flow on Ashton New Road on a concert event evening (a good comparison for Alan Turing Way regarding this proposal) ?

Have you approached Stagecoach to find out the effect of Etihad concerts on the running times for their bus routes that use Ashton New Road (216, 230, 231) ?

What measurements have been taken of traffic levels on the surrounding housing estates after a concert at The Etihad, compared to normal times ?

Air quality

Extra traffic and traffic jams would have a detrimental effect on air quality for local residents. This would clearly have a knock-on effect on the health of local people. The current arrangements at The Etihad are for around half a dozen concert events per year – the proposed new Arena would create over 100 events per year.

I do not feel this issue has been given due consideration. The following text is taken from The Manchester Population Health Plan 2018-2027, by Manchester City Council & NHS Manchester:

"Poor air quality can worsen existing respiratory conditions such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in the short term, and long-term exposure contributes to early death rates".

The following two paragraphs are from the .gov website:

"The 2008 Ambient Air Quality Directive sets legally binding limits for concentrations in outdoor air of major air pollutants that affect public health such as particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2)".

"Air quality concerns can be relevant to neighbourhood planning, and it is important to consider whether air quality is an issue when drawing up a neighbourhood plan or considering a neighbourhood development order. The local planning and environmental health departments will be able to advise whether air quality is an issue that may need to be addressed in a neighbourhood area, and how this might affect potential policies and proposals that are being considered".

What do your measurements show the air quality to be (specifically NO2 levels) near the stadium on Ashton New Road (and other local roads) immediately before and after a concert, as opposed to the same time on the same night a week before or a week after ?

Noise

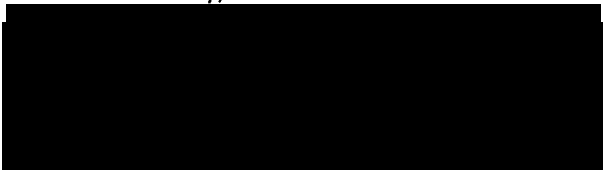
On a concert event night, people shouting & singing and frustrated drivers sounding their horns can be heard well past 11pm, sometimes beyond midnight. It is unreasonable to expect people living locally to have to tolerate this more than a few times per year, as is the current situation.

As you will be fully aware, I am both unhappy and concerned at this proposal, as are others locally. The proposed Arena would exacerbate the existing problems listed above. However, some people think planning approval is a foregone conclusion, and that the consultation and planning process are just for 'window-dressing'. I hope they are wrong, and that an objection raised by anyone living locally would be taken seriously.

I have seen the developer's responses to objections raised in the public consultation phase, which were weak, and failed to address these issues. Most, if not all, could even have been prepared beforehand by the developer, in full knowledge of the problems this proposed development would create.

This proposal would bring many problems, yet offers little benefit locally. There could well be (although this is widely disputed) demand for an out-of-town Arena in Manchester, but I firmly believe that this is not the location for it - a site close to the M60 would be much more appropriate.

Yours Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and any accompanying text.