

## Who are Save Birley Fields?

Save Birley Fields are a local community group consisting of students and residents in Hulme and Moss Side.

## What are we calling for?

Any development on Birley Fields must consider:

1. **A valid Consultation** - A consultation that asks the community how they would like to develop the space and doesn't only shout out about the benefits of a proposed development.
2. **Saving local green space** –There is very little green space left in Hulme and once green space in the city has gone it is very difficult to get it back. There is increasing scientific evidence supporting the retention of natural spaces on the basis of health and wellbeing.
3. **Community facilities** – Facilities must be provided based on what the local community want and need. These facilities must be guaranteed, not subject to funding.
4. **The environment** - Any development must be 21<sup>st</sup> Century in design with aspects such as renewable energy and sustainable transport to be considered as essential, not dependent on funding streams.
5. **Jobs** –New jobs should be created, not simply transferred from other MMU campuses - A new campus should not threaten people's jobs elsewhere in the University, which might happen in the current economic climate.
6. **No car Park** - Any development on Birley Fields must not include a car park. Car Parks impact people's health, increase carbon emissions & detriment local sustainable transport initiatives.

## Our responses to some of MMU's claims:

**'80% of the local community in Hulme and Moss Side want a new campus.'** MMU carried out 835 questionnaires in Hulme and Moss Side of which 668 residents supported the development. Hulme and Moss Side has a joint population of around 30,000 people so only 2% of the population have actually supported the plans. Also - the wording of the questionnaire pointed out all the benefits of the development but MMU forgot to mention plans to build a 400 space car park or five blocks of student accommodation.

**We need longer term help to deliver our ambition of an integrated community campus and an environmental three zeros campus."** Vice Chancellor, John Brooks, 28th July 2010. Whilst, the "core" parts of the development may be built, recent cuts by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) of £8.5m mean there may not be sufficient funding for the project to go ahead in full. This means that important aspects of the project such as renewable energy sources, grey water recycling, rain water harvesting or any proposed community facilities may now not go ahead.

**"The New Birley Fields Campus will create up to 340 new jobs"** – MMU has estimated that 340 jobs will be created by the development. However, actual figures could be a lot less seeing as MMU have recently been cutting jobs across the university. Also - MMU's funding has just been cut by 25% by the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) which could threaten further job losses. So the question is: During a recession, should the university management be spending £154m on a shiny new campus or protecting front line workers from cuts to public services?

**"The campus will incorporate shared community facilities"** The plans for community facilities comprise of retail and commercial businesses at the bottom of student accommodation. MMU's Strategic Development Framework report, 2009, shows that these community facilities will only replicate existing community facilities (e.g a health centre). A repetition of existing facilities is not offering anything new to the local community only competing with existing services.

**Birley Fields will have "Specialist Healthcare and teaching Facilities"** Whilst buildings at the new campus will have start of the art facilities, MMU have forgotten to mention that existing libraries at Elizabeth Gaskell and Didsbury campuses will be cut meaning that existing facilities at All Saints Park will be put under further strain, being used by 6000 extra students, which will detract from the quality of service.

**"MMU is determined to make Birley Fields the Greenest campus in the UK"** Whilst MMU should be applauded for their ambitious green plans, MMU has admitted that it is unlikely to deliver these plans in the short term based on funding problems. Furthermore, proposals to build a 400 space car park contradict their plans to build strong public transport links and invest in sustainable forms of transport. The expansion plans at Didsbury campus were opposed by local residents and councillors due to congestion and parking problems already being a major issue from the existing campus.

## How you can get involved

**Sustainable Alternatives** - A village green or a community farm? Let us know if you're interested in getting this started.

**Raising awareness** – Got a feel for getting stories in the local newspaper? We need people to do creative actions to attract media attention to the campaign.

**Planning and Legal** – With planning permission being pushed back until December, we've got time to challenge the planning decision.

**Consultation**– We want to find out what local residents want to use the green space for.

**Petition** – If you've got a bit of free time to get a petition together opposing the development, please get in touch.

**Engaging with staff and students** – Staff and students at the Didsbury and Elizabeth Gaskell campuses are going to be impacted via the move to Birley Fields.

**Lobbying the council** – We need people to write letters to councillors and MP's opposing the development.

### Contact

Please go to [www.birleyfields.org.uk](http://www.birleyfields.org.uk) for more information.

Get in touch: [Savebirleyfields@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Savebirleyfields@hotmail.co.uk)

Join our facebook group: 'Save Birley Fields'



### The MMU plans:

- Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) are currently in stage C, the design stage, of plans to build a new campus on Birley Fields in Hulme.
- Birley Fields is part of MMU's plans to contract from 7 to 2 campuses and will involve the relocation of over 5000 students and 1000 staff from the Elizabeth Gaskell and Didsbury campuses.
- The 22,000 square metre plans include academic buildings, student accommodation and a public square. The All Saints campus combined with the Birley Fields campus would become the main MMU site serving 30,000 students across 7 faculties.
- Due to funding problems, planning permission has been put back until December and the campus is now being built in stages, due to be finished by 2014.