



Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

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Ms Jane Chase
Planning Officer
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Town Hall, Edward Street
Stockport
SK1 3XE

22nd July 2019

Dear Ms Chase

PLANNING APPLICATION DC/073788 Land Adjacent to Windyridge 65 Bridle Road Woodford Stockport SK7 1QN

As a consultee, Woodford Neighbourhood Forum would like to make the following comments on the above planning application.

- The application does not acknowledge that the site is in Green Belt.
- The site does not constitute a small gap between existing dwellings and cannot be classed as infill.
- It represents encroachment into the countryside in Green Belt.
- It will impair the openness of the Green Belt.
- It does not fulfil any unmet need in terms of type of housing.
- It is located on a narrow stretch of road close to an emergency exit from the aerodrome development and vehicles parked on the road could impede progress of traffic and emergency vehicles.
- The field and native hedge which borders it are important parts of the countryside and ecology of the area, contributing to aesthetic and environmental benefits.

It appears to contravene policies in the NPPF, SMBC Saved UDP and policies in the emerging Woodford Neighbourhood Plan. We appreciate that you are the expert on national and local authority policies, but for completeness they are included here:

1. The site is in Green Belt and therefore subject to Green Belt policies in the NPPF. We believe that the proposal does not comply with the following paragraphs in the NPPF:

1.1. **NPPF paragraph 134**, which seeks to assist in prevention of encroachment into the countryside.

The site is currently an agricultural field bounded by hedgerows and trees that provides continuity of the countryside to the south east and east of Bridle Road.

1.2. **NPPF paragraph 143**, which seeks to prevent harm to the Green Belt.

The site makes an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, which would be impaired by the proposal.

- 1.3. **NPPF paragraph 144**, which advises Planning Authorities to give substantial weight to any harm caused to the Green Belt and notes that special circumstances only exist where any harm is outweighed by other circumstances.

There are no special circumstances that would justify the harm caused to the Green Belt by this proposal. Given the very large quantity of development underway and proposed in and around Woodford there is no pressing need for additional dwellings, nor does this proposal provide a type of dwelling that is in short supply. 920+ dwellings of a variety of sizes have planning permission on the aerodrome site. This is more than adequate for local needs. An additional 750 are proposed on the aerodrome site in the revised draft GMSF. Development proposals in the CEC Local Plan, including in Poynton and the large North Cheshire Garden Village of 1,500 dwellings on Woodford's west border will all provide more than enough local housing, which in fact threaten to overwhelm local infrastructure and cause traffic congestion. There is already a large cumulative harmful impact on Green Belt in and around Woodford.

- 1.4. **NPPF paragraph 145**, which provides exceptions to inappropriate development in Green Belt and includes limited infilling in villages

We do not believe the proposal can be classed as infill. The site represents the end of a housing line on the southern side of Bridle Road. Another dwelling further down the road is some distance away and around a sharp bend in the road. This cannot be described as "limited infill".

2. We believe that the proposal does not comply with the following SMBC policies:

- 2.1. **Saved UDP Policy para GBA1.1**, which includes Woodford in the extent of the Green Belt.

- 2.2. **Saved UDP Policy paras GBA1.2, GBA1.5, GBA1.6 and GBA1.7**, which list criteria for the control of development within Green Belt.

- 2.3. **Saved UDP Policies, Policy LCR1.1**, which does not permit development in the countryside unless it protects or enhances the quality and character of the rural area.

3. Woodford Neighbourhood Plan has passed independent Examination and been approved by SMBC to proceed to referendum and therefore carries some weight in planning decisions. We believe that this proposal does not comply with the following policies in the emerging (amended) WNP:

- 3.1. **WNP policy DEV1**, which states:

"Limited infilling in the Neighbourhood Area, comprising the development of a relatively small gap between existing dwellings for one or two dwellings, will not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, subject to such development respecting local character. Limited infilling should comprise the completion of an otherwise continuous and largely uninterrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the street scene where the scale of development is compatible in character to that of adjoining properties. Limited infilling should be built along similar building lines as adjoining properties."

As stated above, this proposal does not constitute limited infilling because it does not complete an otherwise continuous and uninterrupted built frontage. In fact, the site represents

the end of the housing line and the beginning of the countryside at the bottom of Bridle Road, with the next property some distance away around a right hand bend in the road.

3.2. **WNP policy ENV1** which seeks to respect views of the countryside.

This proposal would impair views of countryside for walkers using Bridle Road and for neighbouring residents.

3.3. **WNP policy ENV3**, which seeks to protect natural features including native hedgerows, and **WNP policy ENV4**, which supports the conservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity, including that found in open spaces, trees and hedgerows, in order to promote and support wildlife and other forms of biodiversity

This proposal includes part of field 1F1 bounded hedgerow 1H1, which is a species rich hedgerow as reported in the [Woodford Landscape and Environment Report](#), see pages 16, 19 and 141. Countryside hedges are protected by Natural England and DEFRA guidelines if they meet certain criteria which include being adjacent to agricultural land:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-hedgerows-regulation-and-management>.

Species-rich hedgerows are classed as [Habitats of Principal Importance in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan](#) and [Cheshire Wildlife Trust](#) recommends that any proposals that involve the removal of hedgerows or sections of hedgerows or their associated features (e.g. ditches, banks, standard trees) should be supported by an assessment to ascertain their status in relation to The Hedgerow Regulations.

In this notoriously wet, poorly drained location, the green vegetation absorbs water and helps to reduce surface flooding.

During preparation of the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan, feedback from consultation with residents for the Woodford Neighbourhood provided the following:

- The openness of the Green Belt in Woodford is particularly important to residents and visitors from the wider borough. This proposal would impair it for users of Bridle Road, footpath 101HGB and local residents.
- The survey conducted by the Forum identified a demand for 2-bedroomed properties. The proposed development will not meet that need.

In summary, we believe that the proposal does not comply with national, local authority and neighbourhood plan policies and does not fill any unmet need.

Yours sincerely,



Evelyn Frearson

On behalf of Woodford Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee