

# Woodford Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Report 2021

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## Executive Summary

It is recommended that the implementation of neighbourhood plans is monitored over time, in order to assess their effectiveness in achieving their objectives. Monitoring can be carried out by the local authority or the neighbourhood forum and the WNF management committee took on the task in 2020.

In September 2019, the [Woodford Neighbourhood Plan](#) (WNP) became part of the Development Plan for Stockport. Since then the policies in the WNP have been used by Stockport Council planning officers and local councillors, along with local authority and national policies, in making decisions about planning applications in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area.

[Woodford Neighbourhood Forum](#) (WNF) became a consultee on planning applications in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area in July 2019 and our first Monitoring Report covered the period from July 2019 to September 2020.

This is our second Monitoring Report, which covers the period from September 2020 to September 2021 and aims to monitor the implementation of the policies in the WNP and also the aspirations that arose during consultation with residents, which are presented in a separate document, [Woodford Village Aspirations](#).

The forum management committee has continued to assess planning applications, noting general concerns and assessing applications against the criteria in the policies in WNP, Stockport Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Comments have been submitted to the Council planning officers. A total of 50 applications were received during the period from September 2020 to September 2021, many of which were for home extensions or outbuildings in gardens.

Last year, the WNF Management Committee noted that the WNP policies were often overlooked by applicants. The situation has slightly improved this year with more applicants citing WNP, but we noted that there were still some who did not.

We follow the progress of applications through the determination process, including progress through Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee and Highways Committee meetings, noting the reports and webcasts. The WNF management committee would like to thank our local councillors for their dedicated efforts in representing the residents of Woodford.

The [WNF website](#) includes a section on [Planning Applications](#), which is updated regularly and allows residents to find planning applications on the Stockport Council planning website and read WNF responses to them.

This year, we have noted that WNP was not referenced in one quarter of the council officer's reports for applications in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area that have been determined to date. This is disappointing, but we were pleased that in the majority of cases WNP was referenced and in general the outcomes are consistent with the vision and objectives of WNP.

The WNF Management Committee continues to work in harmony with the [Woodford Community Council](#) (WCC) Management Committee in order to encourage implementation of the aspirations set out in the supplementary document Woodford Village Aspirations. A Woodford Open Day at the Community Centre for the voluntary organisations in Woodford is being planned for June 18<sup>th</sup> 2022 to raise awareness of community activities and encourage participation.

Stockport Council is currently preparing an updated [Stockport Local Plan](#). We are grateful to Council officers for organising a meeting with representatives of the four neighbourhood forums in the borough to discuss the preliminary key principles and the management committee submitted a response to the online survey on those principles. We are pleased to note that the neighbourhood plans will be taken into account in the plan making process.

A 5-year review of WNP will be due in 2024, but this will need to be brought forward if a new Stockport Local Plan is adopted in 2023. This will provide an opportunity to review policies and consider whether any adjustments or additions are needed in order to achieve the vision and objectives.

The forum management committee continues to monitor local plans in neighbouring authorities and changes in national planning regulations, which may have an impact on Woodford residents, responding to consultations where appropriate.

## Introduction

Monitoring neighbourhood plans is recommended by Locality, a quango which provides supports for local community organisations in a variety of initiatives, including neighbourhood planning. The organisation has produced a [toolkit](#) to guide the process.

The guide explains that the local planning authority (LPA) has a key responsibility in implementing the neighbourhood plan by applying the policies through the development management process. Monitoring can be done by the neighbourhood planning group and/or other local stakeholders, such as civic societies. Some LPAs also monitor how effective neighbourhood plan policies are in practice and can provide feedback to neighbourhood plan bodies.

## Progress with implementation of WNP

WNF produced a comprehensive Monitoring Report in September 2020, which concluded that the WNP was being successfully implemented by Stockport Council and the vision and objectives were being upheld. This 2021 report provides an update on progress since the 2020 Monitoring Report was prepared.

Following a successful referendum in September 2019, [Woodford Neighbourhood Plan](#) (WNP) became part of the Development Plan for Stockport and is the most relevant, local and up to date part of the Development Plan for the designated Woodford Neighbourhood Area. This situation will pertain until the new Stockport Local Plan, which is currently being developed, is adopted. This

is expected in 2023. At that stage it will be necessary to review the WNP to check that it is still compliant with Stockport Borough and national policies. Neighbourhood plans should be reviewed every 5 years, so the adoption of a new Stockport Local Plan in 2023 will bring the review process for WNP forward by a year.

It is now over two years since Woodford Neighbourhood Forum became a consultee on planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area in July 2019. The Management Committee have assessed planning applications against relevant policies, focussing primarily on compliance with WNP policies, but also assessing against policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local authority policies in the Stockport Core Strategy and Stockport Unitary Development Plan 2006 (UDP). In addition to assessment against policy criteria, our responses also include any general comments and concerns about each proposal.

Aspirations, which arose during the consultation for the neighbourhood plan, but which were not appropriate to address through planning policy have been presented in a supplementary document, [Woodford Village Aspirations](#). We are continuing to work together with Woodford Community Council to advocate the implementation of these aspirations.

## Implementation of Policies

### Review of planning applications

At the time of writing we have looked at 50 planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area since September 2020 and these are shown in Table 2 in Appendix 1. This is an increased number compared with a similar time period last year and included a large number of applications for home extensions and outbuildings in gardens. There were two applications for replacement buildings, one of which was for a replacement for a warehouse destroyed in a fire last year, and two applications for limited infilling. One of the applications granted permission this year was a retrospective application for a building constructed to a plan that did not match the plans in the original planning permission. WNF requested conditions, which were included in the planning permission.

Of these 50 applications:

- 4 were withdrawn
- 1 was permitted development (exempted camp site)
- 1 was a non-material amendment
- 1 was an application for a Certificate of Lawful Development
- 5 were discharge of conditions on previous applications

Of the remaining 38 applications, 4 were reserved matters applications, providing more detailed proposals relating to previously granted outline planning permission.

At the time of writing, out of these 38 applications, 28 have been permitted by Stockport Council, 2 refused, 6 are awaiting a decision and 2 are showing “no results” on the Council website. In one of

the cases refused by the Council, the applicant appealed and the Planning Inspector upheld the appeal and granted planning permission.

The WNF management committee submitted comments on 17 applications, 8 were objections and the others were constructive comments or support. For applications that we believe are non-contentious and we have no comments, we have sent a No Objections response to Stockport Council planning officers.

Of the 8 applications where WNF submitted objections, 1 was withdrawn, 1 was refused by the Council, 4 were permitted and 2 are awaiting a decision. This indicated a fair degree of agreement between WNF and SMBC assessments of planning applications. Analysis of the Council officer's report on the 4 applications where WNF submitted objections were permitted by Council reveals that the forum's concerns were considered and in some cases alleviated by amendments to the proposals and the addition of conditions to the planning permission. See Appendix 4 for more details on this.

An unusual application this year was for an exempted campsite via the Camping and Caravanning Club (CCC), which did not need planning permission from the Council, but did need approval by the CCC. Neighbouring residents submitted objections to the CCC, one of them citing the WNP to illustrate that the proposed site was not compatible with the wishes of local residents. Residents' views were supported by the WNF management committee and local councillors in objections submitted to the CCC.

In separate sections in Table 2 in Appendix 1, we have recorded two applications which were reported in the first Monitoring Report but were discussed at Area Committee meetings in the time period covered by this second report; and one application that was permitted in the period covered by the first report but went to appeal during the time period of the second.

### **Awareness of WNP among applicants**

In the last report, we noted that we were disappointed to find that a number of planning applications did not make reference to WNP, even though Stockport Council publicised the adoption of the WNP after the referendum. We have noted a slight improvement in the proportion of applicants citing WNP this year, but there have been some who did not. We wrote to the Council in May 2021 to suggest that, if feasible, the standard planning application form (electronic and paper versions) should have a section requesting that applicants and/or their agents set out the relevant planning policies applicable to their proposals. This section could cover NPPF, Stockport Development Plan and any relevant Neighbourhood Plan. In this way, applicants and their agents would be expected to be aware of and take account of all levels of planning policy concerning their applications. The application form has not changed as far as we are aware and we will continue to monitor awareness of WNP among applicants.

However, we recognise that it is not essential for applicants to reference planning policies because it is the Council officers and local councillors who are responsible for carrying out the assessment against the WNP.

## Frequency of reference to WNP policies by Stockport Council

For the 28 planning applications that have been determined to date, we noted that WNP policies were referenced in the officer's reports for 22 applications, but there was no mention of WNP in the reports for 6 applications, which involved sites in Wilmslow Road, Chester Road and Jenny Lane. These are highlighted in Table 2 in Appendix 1. This is disappointing, but we are pleased that WNP is referenced in the majority of officer's reports and outcomes in general uphold the vision and objective of the neighbourhood plan.

The table below shows the frequency with which WNP policies were referenced in Council officer's delegated reports and reports to the Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee.

**Table 1: Frequency of reference to WNP policies in Council officer's reports**

WNP Policy	Frequency of referenced in Stockport Council officer's reports
DEV4	20
DEV3	12
ENV4	4
ENV3	4
DEV1	2
EMP3	2
DEV2	1
ENV2	1
EMP2	1
EMP1	1
COM1	1
ENV1	0
COM2	0
COM3	0
ENV5	0

**WNP DEV4: Design of new development** was the used the most frequently in planning applications during this period. This is perhaps not surprising because design is a consideration in many development proposals. The next most frequently used was **WNP DEV 3: Extensions**, reflecting the fact that there were a large number of applications for home extensions. **WNP: ENV3: Protecting Woodford's natural features** and **WNP ENV 4: Biodiversity** were each used in four applications, which will be an important part of achieving the objectives of the plan. **WNP DEV1: Limited infilling** was used in the two applications for limited infilling and **WNP EMP3: Use of Rural Buildings** was also used in two applications. **WNP DEV2: Replacement of existing dwellings**, **WNP ENV2: Enhancing public rights of way**, **WNP EMP2: Loss of Employment**, **WNP EMP1: New Businesses within the Area**, and **WNP COM1: Provision of new community facilities** were each used once.

More details can be found in Table 2 in Appendix 1

## Limited Infilling

Since WNF became a consultee in July 2019, there have been three appeals on planning decisions made by the Council, all relating to limited infilling. The [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) 2021](#) does not permit development in Green Belt apart from certain exceptions, which are listed in paragraph 149 of the NPPF. The exceptions include limited infilling in villages. WNP DEV1 defines limited infilling as the development of a relatively small gap between existing dwellings for one or two dwellings completing 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. (See Appendix 2 for the precise policy wording). The Stockport Development Plan also has strict policies on infilling in villages, although NPPF and WNP are more up to date. The NPPF, Stockport Development Plan and WNP policies were all cited in the following Appeals, which resulted in consideration of whether the more rural parts of Woodford with low density housing can be considered as lying within the village.

- DC/073788 | Erection of two detached dwellings and associated access works | Land Adjacent to Windyridge 65 Bridle Road

This application appears in last year's Monitoring Report. WNF submitted objections. It was refused by the Council and the applicant appealed. [The LPA Statement can be viewed here](#). The Planning Inspector considered that the proposal met the criteria for limited infilling and his comments included that the site "would be read in conjunction with the existing row of development on the south-eastern side of Bridle Road along with the development on the opposite side of the road and a new housing estate on a former aerodrome to the west." To the dismay of Council officers, local councillors, WNF management committee and neighbours in the Bridle Road, the appeal was upheld. [The Inspector's Decision letter can be viewed here](#).

- DC/076613 | Demolition of existing buildings and erection of two dwellings with associated works | Land Off Church Lane

This application was submitted last year, WNF submitted objections and it was refused by the Council. The applicant appealed this year. The Council officers submitted a statement, which was excellent in our opinion, covering all the issues that needed to be considered, including whether the site was within the village. [The LPA Statement can be viewed here](#). It is important to note that, for areas in Green Belt that are not within a village, infilling is not permitted. To the relief of Council officers, local councillors, WNF management committee and neighbours in Church Lane, the Planning Inspector upheld the Council's decision and the appeal was dismissed. [The Inspector's Decision letter can be viewed here](#).

- DC/077533 | Erection of one infill dwelling (outline application with all matters reserved save for layout, access and scale) | Moorend Farm 181 Woodford Road

This application was submitted this year. WNF submitted comments. The application was refused by the Council and the applicant appealed. [The LPA Statement can be viewed here](#). The Planning Inspector considered that the proposal met the criteria for limited infilling in a village and upheld the appeal. [The Inspector's Decision letter can be viewed here](#).

Members of the management committee can recall other proposals for infilling on Chester Road and Foden Lane that went to appeal prior to WNF becoming a consultee on planning applications.

It appears that infilling in Woodford is a controversial issue and that WNP policies on infilling should be reviewed when the plan is reviewed to ascertain whether the wording needs amending in order to achieve the aims of the policy.

## **WNF website**

As reported last year, the [WNF website](#) includes a section on [Planning Applications](#). A table on this page provides links to planning applications on the Stockport Council website, WNF responses and the decision status of the application. The table has been updated at regular intervals and includes a search facility. It allows residents and other interested parties to view planning applications and WNF responses to them with ease.

## **Implementation of Aspirations**

The WNF Management Committee continues to work in harmony with the [Woodford Community Council](#) (WCC) Management Committee in order to encourage implementation of the aspirations set out in the supplementary document Woodford Village Aspirations. Unlike a parish council, neither WNF nor WCC have sources of funding which could be used to implement aspirations directly. We aim to influence fund holding bodies, such as Stockport Council and Greater Manchester authorities, in order to achieve progress. We will also explore any potential sources of funding for forum activities once a neighbourhood plan is made and no further grants are available.

During the periods of lock-down and restrictions on travel due to the Covid-19 pandemic there was a very marked increase in the use of the lanes and footpaths through fields in Woodford. A steady procession of walkers, as individuals, family groups or “bubbles” was observed on fine days. The numbers of joggers, horse riders and cyclists also increased on the lanes. When meeting outdoors was permitted, there were social gatherings in laybys and on grass verges. Since restrictions were lifted the numbers have reduced, but they are still higher than pre-pandemic levels, indicating that more people have discovered the benefits of these opportunities in Woodford. This has emphasised the value and importance of the lanes and footpaths to residents of Woodford and the wider borough for exercise, access to nature and social interaction, which are some of the aims of WNP and the Aspirations.

The WCC newsletter continues to include regular articles on local history, wildlife and footpaths aiming to enhance local knowledge and participation.

A Woodford Open Day at the Community Centre for the voluntary organisations in Woodford is being planned for June 18<sup>th</sup> 2022 to raise awareness of community activities and encourage participation.

## Relevance of WNP and Village Aspirations

The WNF Management Committee believes that the vision, objectives and policies in the WNP and the aspirations in the supplementary document Woodford Village Aspirations remain relevant in 2021. A summary of the Aspirations is provided in Appendix 3 for reference. We will continue to monitor this as the village evolves, noting in particular the impact of the large development on the former aerodrome site. The WNP is currently compliant with the most up to date version of the NPPF and the Stockport Development Plan. Therefore, no revisions are required at this stage. However, a review will be necessary when the new Stockport Local Plan is adopted circa 2023.

## Stockport Local Plan

Stockport Council is currently preparing an updated Local Plan. We are grateful to Council officers for organising a meeting with representatives of the four neighbourhood forums in the borough to discuss the preliminary key principles. The management committee submitted a response to the online survey on those principles. We are pleased to note that the neighbourhood plans will be taken into account in the preparation of the local plan. As forums are plan making bodies, we believe representatives should play an active role in the plan making process.

## Changes in National Planning Regulations

The WNF management committee continues to follow current and proposed changes in planning regulations, which could have profound implications for neighbourhood planning and public participation in planning. We submitted a response to the White Paper: Planning for the Future last year.

## Neighbourhood Plan Review

Neighbourhood plans should be reviewed every five years to ensure that they are still relevant and compliant with higher tier borough and national plans. A 5-year review of WNP will be due in 2024, but this will need to be brought forward if a new Stockport Local Plan is adopted in 2023. This will provide an opportunity to review policies and consider whether any adjustments are needed in order to achieve the vision and objectives.

While we have a policy that aims to achieve good design, we have noted that good design is a subjective and personal concept. Some recent neighbourhood plans have included Design Codes to aid assessment of design, aiming to maintain the character of the neighbourhood area. WNP review will provide an opportunity to consider the inclusion of Design Codes in order to provide detailed design guidance for new development in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area.

## Future Tasks

We will aim to:

1. Continue to monitor the implementation, efficacy and relevance of the WNP.

2. Maintain close liaison with Stockport Council planning officers.
3. Participate in consultation on the updated Stockport Local Plan.
4. Assess the impact of the arrival other Local Plans, such as the Cheshire East Local Plan Part 2, the Places for Everyone plan for Greater Manchester, and changes in Government Planning Regulations on the WNP.
5. Continue to work in harmony with WCC and Stockport Council, in order to encourage and advocate for the implementation of the Aspirations, including:
  - Community integration and participation
  - Improvements in community facilities
  - Measures to encourage access to outdoor exercise and nature
  - Measures to improve the environment and mitigate climate change
6. Explore potential sources of funding for forum activities once a neighbourhood plan is made.

## Appendix 1: Table 2. Planning Applications in the Neighbourhood Area from 18 Sep 2020 to 23 Sep 2021

### Key

	WNF objected
	Called in to Area Committee
	WNP not referenced in SMBC report
	Refused by SMBC or at Appeal

Number	Application	WNF objection	Date WNF comments submitted	Called in to Area Committee	Status (on 17 Oct 2021)	WNP policies* referenced by SMBC
DC/081992	26 Moor Lane, two storey extension	No	23 Sep 2021		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/081683	32 Jenny Lane, two storey side and rear extension	No	23 Sep 2021		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/082207	2 King Street , garage to garden room	No	23 Sep 2021		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/082302	Land off Church Lane, exempted campsite	Yes, sent to Camping and Caravanning Club			Decision to be made by CCC	NA
DC/081763	Bramwood House, extension	No	29 Jul 2021		Permitted	Not referenced
DC/081672	91 Moor Lane, Warehouse rebuild	Support with suggestions	30 July 2021	Yes 21.11.2021	Awaiting decision	
DC/081697	Retention of illuminated logo panel top sign to teller machine, 442 Chester	No	29 Jul 2021		Permitted	DEV4
DC/081696	Retention of an automated teller machine 442 Chester Road	No	29 Jul 2021		Permitted	DEV4
DC/081746	Rose Cottage, Bridle Way, Outbuilding Application for Lawful Development Certificate	Comments not applicable	30 July 2021		Not on website	NA
DC/081625	353 Chester Road, Discharge of conditions of planning permission DC/069855	No	22 Jul 2021		Accepted	NA
DC/080679	1 Moor Lane, Single storey front, and	Yes	21 Jul 2021		Awaiting decision	

	two-storey rear extensions					
DC/081602	354 Chester Road Discharge of condition 3 of DC/069547	No	21 Jul 2021		Decided	NA
DC/081516	Appletree Cottage , 141 Woodford Road, Reserved matters outline planning permission DC076101	No	14 Jul 2021		Permitted	ENV3 ENV4 DEV4
DC/081615	21 Bridle Road, Non-material amendment to planning permission DC/079242	No	29 Jul 2021		Permitted	NA
DC/081533	481 Chester Road, Construct of detached single storey outbuilding	No	8 Jul 2021		Withdrawn	NA
DC/081489	Holm Lea, Bridle Road, Replacement dwelling	No	8 Jul 2021		Awaiting decision	
DC/080975	6 Moor Lane single storey rear extension	No	23 Jun 2021		Awaiting decision	
DC/080907	453 Chester Road, Replacement of roof, and extensions	No, but comments	23 Jun 2021		Withdrawn	NA
DC/080899	213 Woodford Road, single storey extension	No	8 Jul 2021		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/081087	Moorend, discharge of conditions	No	8 Jul 2021		Decided	NA
DC/080637	9 Bridle Road, discharge of conditions	No	8 Jul 2021		Decided	NA
DC/080923	Church Hall, discharge of conditions	No, but comments	27 May 2021		Decided	NA
DC/080596	Flora Cottage, reserved matters	No, Support	27 May 2021		Permitted	NA
DC/080886	Jenny Lane, kiosk removal	No	19 May 2021		Permitted	NA
DC/080608	21 Bridle Road, 2-storey extension	Yes	19 May 2021		Withdrawn	NA
DC/080620	Rose Cottage, Bridle Way, extension	Yes	17 May 2021		Refused	DEV3 DEV4
DC/080339	234 Church Lane,	No			Permitted	DEV3

	single storey extension					DEV4
DC/080325	Budgens, 442 Chester Road, offices	Yes	14 April 2021		Amended plans Permitted	EMP1
DC/079737	505 Chester Road, variation	No	1 Apr 2021		Awaiting decision	
DC/080047	131 Woodford Road, single and 2-storey extension	No	26 Mar 2021	Yes. <a href="#">Officer's report</a>	Permitted	Not referenced
DC/079160	451 Chester Road, 2-storey extension	No	24 Mar 2021		Permitted	Not referenced
DC/079872	403 Chester Road, extension	No	18 Mar 2021		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/079920	27 Church Lane, loft conversion	No	Not submitted		No results on SMBC website	NA
DC/079635	Dean Hill, Wilmslow Road, extension	No	10 Mar 2021		Permitted	Not referenced
DC/079213	453 Chester Road, roof replacement	No	2 Mar 2021		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/079242	21 Bridle Road, rear dormer extension	No	2 Mar 2021		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/080104	139 Woodford Road, extension	No	Not submitted		No results on SMBC website	NA
DC/078995	141 Woodford Road, reserved matters	No	Not submitted		Withdrawn	NA
DC/079649	130 Moor Lane, garden room	Yes	26 Feb 2021		Awaiting decision	
DC/079260	394 Chester Road, reserved matters	No Support	22 Jan 2021		Decided	NA
DC/078671	32 Jenny Lane, 2-storey extension	No + note TPO	3 Jan 2021		Permitted	Not referenced
DC/078974	443 Chester Road, extension	No + Comments	30 Dec 2020		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/078723	221 Woodford Road, extension	No	9 Dec 2020		Permitted	Not referenced
DC/078432	Foden Lane, disabled dwelling ◊	Yes	7 Dec 2020	Yes. <a href="#">Decision notice</a>	Permitted	ENV2 ENV3 ENV4 DEV1 DEV4
DC/078167	Orchards, Church Lane, garage retrospective	No, but requested conditions	12 Nov 2020	Yes. <a href="#">Officer's report</a>	Permitted	DEV4 EMP3
DC/077533	Moorend, infill ◊	Comments	26 Oct 2020	<a href="#">Officer's report</a>	Refused	DEV1 DEV4
					Permitted at Appeal	

DC/077949	130 Moor Lane, 2-storey extension	Yes	26 Oct 2020	Yes. <a href="#">Officer's report</a>	Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/078365	Dutch House, Wilmslow Road, replacement	Comments	14 Oct 2020	Yes. <a href="#">Officer's report</a>	Permitted	DEV2 DEV4 ENV3 ENV4
DC/077912	529 Chester Road, extension	No	26 Sep 2020	Yes. <a href="#">Officer's report</a>	Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/075511	548 Chester Road, change of use to Church Hall	Yes	18 Sep 2020	Yes. <a href="#">Officer's report</a>	Permitted	Saved file showed: EMP2 EMP3 ENV3 ENV4 COM1 DEV4

Planning Application in last year's monitoring report which went to Area Committee after September 2020

DC/077092	505 Chester Road, extension	Yes	29 Jul 2020	Yes. <a href="#">Officer's report</a>	Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/076482	Old Hall Farm, Old Hall Lane, Barn Conversion to 4 dwellings plus 1 plus 3 dwellings	Yes	27 May 2020	Yes. <a href="#">Officer's report</a>		ENV1 ENV4 EMP3 COM3 DEV1 DEV4
DC/076483	As above: listed building consent			<a href="#">Officer's report</a>		

An Appeal on an application submitted and refused last year was dismissed by the Planning Inspector.

DC/076613	Church Lane infill ◇	Yes	11 July 2020		Refused	◇
					Refused at Appeal	

\*See Appendix 2 for WNF policies; SMBC = Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council; NA = Not Applicable;

◇ See section on Infill

## Appendix 2: WNP Vision, Objections and Policies

The **Vision** is: To manage and support beneficial change whilst retaining and enhancing Woodford's rural identity, character quality of life and sense of community.

The **Objectives** are:

**Environment:** To preserve and protect the openness of the Green Belt, the rural character, the landscape, important views, natural features and biodiversity.

**Employment:** To seek to protect and support local employment.

**Community:** To preserve and enhance recreational and heritage assets to promote a healthy community.

**Development:** To provide variety and mix that meets local needs and manage limited infilling, including residential, employment and community uses.

The **WNP Policies** are:

### **ENV1: Respecting views and vistas**

Development should respect local character. In doing so, it should recognise and take into account the importance of the views and vistas listed in the Table and indicated on the Map below.

### **ENV2: Enhancing public rights of way**

The enhancement of public rights of way throughout the Neighbourhood Area will be supported.

### **ENV3: Protecting Woodford's natural features**

The protection and/or enhancement of Woodford's natural features, including those identified in the Table below, will be supported.

### **ENV4: Supporting biodiversity\***

\*The variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.

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 will be supported. Development should, where viable and deliverable, achieve net gains in biodiversity.

### **ENV5: Reducing light pollution**

Proposals for floodlights requiring planning permission should demonstrate how the potential for overspill will be controlled to a high level whereby it will not cause significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

**EMP1: New Businesses within the Area**

The sustainable growth of local businesses and facilities, including the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, will be supported, subject to development respecting local character, highway safety and residential amenity. The development of high quality communications infrastructure will be supported, subject to any such development respecting local character through sympathetic design and camouflage, where appropriate.

**EMP2: Loss of Employment**

Proposals for the change of use of employment land should be supported by evidence that the existing land use is no longer viable.

**EMP3: Use of Rural Buildings**

Proposals for the re-use of redundant buildings and the replacement of buildings, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces, will be supported. Such development should not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

**COM1: Provision of new community facilities**

The provision of new community facilities that respect local character and the amenity of neighbouring occupiers will be supported.

**COM2: Development of Community Facilities**

Development should not result in the loss of an existing community facility, including any of the Features of Value to the Community listed below, unless it can be demonstrated that the harm arising from any such loss would be mitigated by the provision of an equal or greater benefit to the community.

**COM3: Woodford Heritage assets**

New development affecting a heritage asset, including the setting of the asset, should conserve or enhance the asset in a manner according to its significance.

**DEV1: Limited infilling**

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.

**DEV2: Replacement of existing dwellings**

Development comprising the replacement of a dwelling should not be materially larger than the dwelling that it replaces and must have regard to local character and residential amenity.

**DEV3: Extensions to existing dwellings**

Residential extensions should be in keeping with the host property and its surroundings. Development that would reduce an existing gap between properties should not create an incongruous “terracing” effect.

**DEV4: Design of new development**

All new development in Woodford Neighbourhood Area should achieve a high standard of design. New residential development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and respond to the Neighbourhood Area’s rural character, to its ecology and to its landscape. Where appropriate and viable, the development of sustainable drainage systems, the retention and enhancement of landscape, wildlife and ecological networks and the achievement of high environmental and energy standards will be supported.

Full details can be found here: [Woodford Neighbourhood Plan](#)

## Appendix 3: Woodford Village Aspirations

The **Objectives** relate to: Movement, Environment and Integration (of the existing community with the new community on the Aerodrome development).

**Movement:** To create safer roads, streets and lanes and increase public access to countryside by foot, cycle and bridleway and to encourage sustainable transport.

**Integration:** Ensure integration and linkage between the Neighbourhood Area and the Aerodrome development to achieve an enhanced, enlarged community.

**Environment:** Supporting clean air

The **Aspirations** are as follows:

**Aspiration 1:** To create a safe and secure network of walking routes around and within Woodford and improve links with surrounding areas.

**Aspiration 2:** To create a safe and secure cycling network.

**Aspiration 3:** To achieve better quality and more frequent bus services for Woodford with a greater range of destinations.

**Aspiration 4:** To achieve improved safety for all road users, and to encourage increased levels of walking and cycling, including speed reduction schemes where appropriate.

**Aspiration 5:** To support the provision of accessible information about facilities, services and activities throughout the extended village and its communication to new residents.

**Aspiration 6:** To encourage and support the development of physical infrastructure, which facilitates linkages throughout the extended village.

**Aspiration 7:** To establish and maintain a dialogue with the land owner, developer and local authority and with the community to promote effective integration of the old village and new development.

**Aspiration 8:** To achieve clean air in Woodford by avoiding the burning of waste and supporting initiatives that would reduce levels of air pollution on roads and in homes.

Full details can be found in the supplementary document here: [Woodford Village Aspirations](#).

## Appendix 4: Review of applications where WNF objected but the Council granted permission

This section comprises notes and extracts from reports. For full details of WNF responses and Stockport Council reports, please refer to the [table on the WNF website](#) and the [Stockport Council planning website](#).

### 1. DC/080325 | Change of use from dwelling to office | First Floor Flat 442 Chester Road [Delegated Report](#)

#### WNF objections and comments included:

- The office is shown accommodating 39 staff plus 2 visitors. We feel that this is too many for this site
- Insufficient parking on site for their vehicles.
- Additional traffic movements could have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the residential properties in close proximity to the site
- Traffic safety issues for users of the shop, the offices, the estate and the museum.

**The application was amended to reduce the number of office suites to 6.**

#### SMBC comments included:

... The application proposes the conversion of the first floor from a 3 bed flat to offices with the internal layout arranged to provide a reception and 6 suites of varying sizes, a kitchen area and toilets. Access to the first floor would be via the existing external staircase to the rear...

..... WNP policy EMP1 confirms that the sustainable growth of local businesses will be supported subject to development respecting local character, highway safety and residential amenity....

... Whilst this part of Woodford is not a rural area, it is within the Green Belt and on the urban fringe. Chapter 9 of the NPPF confirms that economic growth should be given significant weight and that the growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported. The use of this previously developed site in a location that is well related to an existing settlement would therefore be compliant with para 84. In this respect it is also noted that the redevelopment of the former Woodford Aerodrome site opposite this application site includes for 8361m<sup>2</sup> of B1c (industrial) floorspace along with improvements to public transport. Subject to a satisfactory assessment in relation to local character, residential amenity and highway safety, the proposal is considered compliant with policies E1.2, E4.2, EMP1 and chapter 6 of the NPPF...

#### Conclusions

The proposed development will have no adverse impact on the Green Belt or Landscape Character Area. The proposal therefore accords with policies LCR1,1, GBA1.2 and GBA1.6 together with para 146 of the NPPF. The proposal is small scale and a potential source of local employment, on this

basis the proposal in terms of the loss of residential accommodation does not conflict with policy HP1.3. The proposal in terms of the provision of employment floorspace is appropriate in size and scale to its surroundings and has good access to the highway network and public transport. The development respects local character, highway safety and residential amenity. As such the proposal is consistent with policies E1.2, E4.2, CS7 and EMP1. The provision of employment floorspace in this urban fringe location is consistent with Chapter 9 and para's 80, 83 and 84 of the NPPF. The site is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport and will not give rise to levels of traffic generation that are harmful to the safe operation of the highway. Sufficient parking is proposed for the offices and retained for the shop such that there will not be an adverse impact in relation to overspill parking or in turn, highway safety. Cycling parking and electric vehicle parking can be secured by condition. On this basis the proposal is compliant with policies CS9, T1, T2 and T3. Noting the change in policy position and recent major developments in the locality since the consideration of the previous application together with the revisions to the parking layout and the lack of objection from adjacent residential occupiers, it is not considered there will be an unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of the locality. The proposal is thereby compliant with policy SIE1.

## **2. DC/077949 | Two storey side extension & single storey rear extensions & demolition of existing garage | 130 Moor Lane**

### [Committee Report](#)

#### **WNF objections and comments included:**

- The calculations submitted with the application suggest that the permitted development option would result in a 78% increase in volume. Planning permission is sought for an extension that would result in a 99% increase in volume.
- The 99% volume increase in the proposal could be regarded as a disproportionate addition to the original size of the building, and therefore non-compliant with this policy [NPPF 145a).

#### **SMBC comments (from saved file) included:**

There are no policies in the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan that relate to the extension of dwellings within the Green Belt with policy DEV1 relating to limited infilling between dwellings rather than the extension of dwellings.

#### **Further to the comments received from the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum, the percentage of the increase of the original dwelling has been reduced from 99% to 64%.**

The volume of the proposed extensions equals 250 cubic metres, which is a 64% volume increase of the original dwelling. In this respect, the volume of the proposed extensions would clearly exceed the one-third increase in volume referenced in policy GBA1.5 and for the purposes of para 145c of the NPPF would be considered disproportionate to the size of the original building. The proposal would therefore represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt and in accordance with para 143 of the NPPF can only be approved where special circumstances exist.

## SUMMARY

The general design of the proposed development is considered acceptable in terms of its relationship to the existing dwelling, the character of the street scene and the visual amenity of the area in accordance with UDP policy CDH1.8, Core Strategy policy SIE-1 and WNP policies DEV3 and DEV4.

The proposal would not unduly impact on the residential amenity of the surrounding properties or prejudice a similar development by a neighbour, in accordance with UDP policy CDH1.8 and Core Strategy policy SIE-1. Other material considerations such as the Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings SPD and the NPPF have also been considered and it is judged the proposal also complies with the content of these documents.

By definition the proposal constitutes inappropriate development, however it is considered that the case for very special circumstances is sufficient to outweigh harm by reason of inappropriateness.

On balance the proposal amounts to sustainable Development, consequently it is recommended that permission be granted subject to appropriate planning conditions.

### **3. DC/078432 | Construction of two dwellings and associated works | Land At Foden Lane** [Decision notice](#)

#### **WNF objections and comments included:**

- Out of character and scale in this site, being much larger in height and mass than other neighbouring dwellings.
- The footprint is increased by 50% over the approved dwelling. It represents over-development in this location.
- Loss of residential amenity for residents in neighbouring dwellings, with regard to disturbance, noise, loss of privacy and overshadowing.
- Three storeys to the south of the terraced houses on Moor Lane, which back on to the proposal, will reduce light in these properties.
- Fire risks need to be assessed.

#### **Planning history:**

A PA was refused by the Council and allowed at appeal. The planning Inspector noted that the appeal proposal would amount to infill development as the site is a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage.

Outline permission was granted to two dwellings at the site. Plans were then submitted for one of the plots to be adapted for use by a disabled person, which included a roof terrace adjacent to back gardens of properties on Moor Lane.

**Following discussions at Area Committee, where local councillors suggested changes to produce less harm to residential amenity for residents on Moor Lane, amended plans were submitted, which included a much reduced roof terrace.**

**SMBC comments included:**

... The NPPF and WNP offer the most up to date policy position in relation to development in the Green Belt and as such, greater weight is afforded to the relevant policies in these Plans...

...The application site and its relationship with neighbouring properties generally has not changed since DC064515 was allowed on appeal. The Inspector concluded that the site is positioned within the village of Woodford and is an infill site. The comments made by the Inspector in allowing that application remain relevant to the consideration of this current application. Applying also the provisions of policy DEV1 of the WNP it is noted the site comprises a small gap between existing dwellings and will complete an otherwise continuous and largely interrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the streetscene. Noting that the siting of Tall Tree to one side of the site is further back than the side of 149 Moor Lane to the other, the proposed development would not be built along similar building lines as adjoining properties. Being positioned forward of Tall Trees and behind the side of 149 Moor Lane, its staggered position relative to both neighbouring properties will however respect the building line. For these reasons it remains the case that the site represents an infill site in a village. The main issue for consideration is whether the proposal amounts to limited infilling on account of the scale of development now sought...

Conclusions

Planning permission DC064515, which was allowed on appeal in 2017, remains extant and capable of implementation by virtue of the Business and Planning Act 2020 (Part 3, Section 17). This is a material consideration which carries significant weight in the determination of this current application.

The application site is within an accessible location for the purpose of housing delivery. Whilst the provision of 2 additional dwellings will make a negligible impact on the current undersupply of housing, collectively applications of this nature can assist. The proposal accords with policies CS2, CS4 and H-2 of the Core Strategy.

The loss of the agricultural land on this site contrary to policy GBA2.1 can be justified.

The development comprises 'limited infilling within a village' and is therefore 'appropriate' having regard to para 145e of the NPPF and policy DEV1 of the WNP. The development will not cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposed development will cause no harm to the Landscape Character Area or general character of the area and thus complies with saved policy LCR1.1 of the UDP Review together with policies CS8 and SIE1 of the CS DPD and DEV4 of the WNP.

The development is considered to be of a size, siting and design that will be in keeping with the character of the locality and will not harm the amenities of the existing neighbouring occupiers. The proposal is therefore compliant with policies H1, CS8, SIE1 and SIE3 of the Core Strategy DPD together with advice contained within Chapter 12 of the NPPF.

The proposed development will not give rise to conditions prejudicial to highway safety and therefore complies with Core Strategy policies CS9, T1, T2 and T3 together with advice contained within the NPPF.

Subject to the imposition of conditions the proposed development will cause no harm to ecology. In this respect the proposal is compliant with saved UDP Review policy NE1.2 together with policy SIE3 of the CS DPD, ENV4 of the WNP and advice contained in the NPPF.

Matters relating to drainage can be secured by condition thus ensuring compliance with CS policy SD6.

Having regard to the tilted balance in favour of the residential development of this site as set out at para 11 of the NPPF, Members are advised that planning permission should be approved as the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas of importance (the Green Belt) do not provide clear reason for refusing planning permission. As such the application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions referenced in this report together with others considered reasonable and necessary and subject to a S106 agreement to secure compliance with policies L1.1 and L1.2 of the UDP Review and SIE2 of the Core Strategy.

**The following Planning Applications were reported in last year's monitoring report but progressed to Area Committee after September 2020**

- 4. DC/075511 | Change of use of land and buildings from a car showroom to a Church meeting hall together with elevational alterations to the building, external alterations to the layout of the site, erection of a 1m high timber fence and gates to the frontage and landscaping throughout the site. | 548 Chester Road**

[Officer's report to Area Committee](#)

**WNF objections and comments included:**

- The proposal is not in a sustainable location. Public transport to and from the site is poor.
- Noise from cars being parked for early services on a Sunday would disturb neighbours.
- Risk of overflow parking on local roads
- The site is in a sensitive location due to heritage assets, Christ Church and Davenport Arms.

**There were amendments to the application to include details of parking spaces and vegetation.**

## **SMBC comments included:**

...Woodford Neighbourhood Plan policy EMP2 states that proposals for the change of use of employment land should be supported by evidence that the existing land use is no longer viable.

As noted by the Neighbourhood Forum in its comments, viability information has not been provided in order to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for an employment use. It is noted that the lawful use of the site as a car showroom does allow for small scale employment, but that this is a sui generis use rather than a traditional employment use such as industrial or office uses. It is also noted that the site has been vacant for a number of months. Due to the relatively small scale nature of the previous employment use, and noting that the somewhat sensitive location of the site would not be appropriate for many other employment uses (for example, industrial or large scale commercial uses, or uses for indoor recreation), Officers are of the view that in this instance it would be difficult to sustain a refusal based upon the loss of this employment site and as such the application can be determined despite the absence of a viability appraisal...

..The noise assessment has provided details of the 'worst case scenario' for the impacts of the congregation arriving and departing the site by car early on a Sunday morning and considers impacts such as car doors slamming. In this respect the report concludes that noise levels resulting from car door slams would result in internal noise levels below 45 dB LAF max, with open windows, which would be suitable for sleep purposes. Officers have had regard to this in making their assessment, and do not consider the impacts upon the residential accommodation at the Davenport Arms or indeed any other adjacent residential property to be so significant as to warrant refusal of the application...

... In light of the sensitive nature of the site within the Green Belt and due to the potential impact upon the street scene, a condition should also be imposed to ensure that parking is to be restricted to within the marked bays...

... as noted in the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum's comments, works on the site should avoid damage to these trees or their roots, which are part of the natural features in Woodford. This is to be controlled by condition...

... It is noted in the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum's comments that the site is in a sensitive location with regard to design because it is adjacent to The Davenport Arms, and within sight of Christ Church and the Lychgate, which are Grade II listed buildings. The proposed development, which in physical terms only relates to minor elevational alterations, the provision of front boundary fence, landscaping and a significant reduction in parked cars, is not considered to result in adverse impacts upon the setting or significance of the nearby heritage assets...

... The Woodford Neighbourhood Forum has raised comments regarding sustainable drainage. The application does not include any new areas of hardstanding or extensions, and therefore it would

not be reasonable or necessary to require the submission and implementation of a drainage strategy.

## Conclusions

There are no adverse impacts of granting planning permission in terms of the impact on the Green Belt, and nor will there be any other adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits arising when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. As such the application is recommended for approval for the reasons set out in this report.

### 5. DC/077092 | Erection of extensions to existing dwelling | 505 Chester Road

#### [Officer's report to Area Committee](#)

#### **WNF objections and comments included:**

- Very large increase in size
- Impact on openness of Green Belt
- Reduction in gap between neighbouring properties

#### **SMBC comments included:**

... it is considered that the proposal would respect the design, scale, materials, character, appearance and proportions of the existing dwelling and surrounding area would not result in harm to the character of the street scene, the visual amenity of the area or the in accordance with UDP policy CDH1.8 and Core Strategy policy SIE-1 and Policy DEV3 of the WNP.

... whilst the resulting dwelling will be materially larger in volume than the original dwelling, on account of its bulk, height, mass and siting will maintain the openness of the Green Belt and will not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. This is considered to constitute very special circumstances and as such, the development in Green Belt terms is compliant with the NPPF. Should planning permission be granted, a condition would be placed on the permission removing all permitted development rights associated with extensions to the dwelling.

Whilst the objections from the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum have been taken into account, it is not considered that the proposal should warrant refusal on the impact on the openness of the Green Belt nor does the proposal constitute as inappropriate development in the Green Belt as explained in detail above. Members are advised that the reference to policy GBA1.7 by WNF is not relevant to this application as the site does not fall within a Major Existing Developed Site as defined on the UDP Proposals Map...

**SUMMARY** The general design of the proposed development is considered acceptable in terms of its relationship to the existing dwelling, the character of the street scene and the visual amenity of the area in accordance with UDP policy CDH1.8 and Core Strategy policy SIE-1. The proposal would not unduly impact on the residential amenity of the surrounding properties or prejudice a similar development by a neighbour, in accordance with UDP policy CDH1.8 and Core Strategy policy SIE-1. Other material considerations such as the Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings SPD and the NPPF have also been considered and it is judged the proposal also complies with the content of these documents. Whilst the proposal constitutes inappropriate development it is considered that the case for very special circumstances is sufficient to outweigh harm by

reason of inappropriateness. On balance the proposal amounts to Sustainable Development, consequently it is recommended that permission be granted subject to appropriate planning conditions.

- 6. DC/076482 | The demolition of existing agricultural buildings, the conversion of existing L shaped curtilage listed barn to form 4 dwellings, the existing detached curtilage listed barn to form 1 new dwelling, and the erection of 3 new-build dwellings with landscaping, access and associated works.  
| Old Hall Farm Old Hall Lane**

#### [Officer's report to Area Committee](#)

#### **WNF objections and comments included:**

- Three of the dwellings not on previously developed land and not one of the exceptions to restriction in Green Belt
- Need to be assessed for their impact on the heritage asset.
- Recommend that conditions include planting of
- Native trees and hedges in strategic positions in order to provide screening and retain the rural character of the setting.
- Any native trees and hedges on the site of the proposal should be retained
- Recommend that the conditions include the planting of native trees, hedges and flowering species to support pollinators

#### **SMBC comments included:**

... The proposal is contrary to EMP3 in that the buildings to be converted will not be in the same use. Noting however the extant consent and the ability to convert agricultural buildings to alternative uses under Permitted Development rights, it would be extremely difficult to argue for the retention of the agricultural use of these buildings (which in any event ceased many years ago as is evidenced by their condition). Issues of impact on the Green Belt are dealt with below.

... The conversion of existing buildings and the creation of the large area of amenity space to the west of the site is considered appropriate in the Green Belt and complies with policies GBA1.2, GBA1.5, GBA1.6 and para 146 of the NPPF. The erection of 3 detached dwellings is however contrary to GBA1.2, GBA1.5 and para 145 of the NPPF, is 'inappropriate' in the Green Belt and can only be approved where VSC exist. In this respect it is considered that the proposed development secures enhancements to the significance of the heritage asset together with the landscape and visual qualities of the area that are not already secured by the extant permission and would not be secured by a lesser form of development. This weighs heavily in favour of the proposed development and is of such significance that it is considered to outweigh the harm that will arise to the openness of the Green Belt. As such, it is considered that the applicant has demonstrated the VSC required to justify otherwise inappropriate development in the Green Belt consistent with para's 143 and 144 of the NPPF...

- 7. DC/076483 | The demolition of existing agricultural buildings, the conversion of existing L shaped curtilage listed barn to form 4 dwellings, the existing detached curtilage listed barn to form 1 new dwelling, and the erection of 3 new-build dwellings with landscaping, access and associated works.  
| Old Hall Farm Old Hall Lane**

Listed building consent

## [Officer's report to Area Committee](#)

### **SMBC comments included:**

CONCLUSIONS The impact of the proposed development upon the significance of the heritage assets within and adjacent to the site is assessed in the heritage statement submitted with the application. In this respect Officers conclude that the proposal will deliver an enhancement of the setting of the main farmhouse. The further retention and conversion of listed curtilage buildings, the relocation of the parking and the revised landscaping of the wider site will result in further enhancement to the heritage assets beyond the previously approved scheme. In this regard the proposal is considered compliant with Co