



Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

c/o Woodford Community Centre, Chester Road, Woodford, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 1PS
Email: woodfordneighbourhood@gmail.com Web: <http://woodfordnf.co.uk>

Planning Services
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Town Hall, Edward Street
Stockport
SK1 3XE

3 Feb 2025

To: Planning Officer

Reference: DC/094533

Proposal: Outline application with all matters reserved for a new residential-led development comprising the demolition of the existing employment building and structures; the erection of residential dwellings, extra care accommodation, and a local community hub; the creation of new vehicle, cycle and pedestrian connections, open space, landscaping and other associated works.

Location: Woodford Garden Village Extension, Chester Road, Woodford, Stockport

Note: in this response we will use WGV extension as an abbreviation for this proposal.

1. We believe that the application should be refused for the following reasons:

a. The site of the proposals has Green Belt status

The site lies within the Green Belt in Stockport and should be assessed against relevant policies in NPPF December 2024 and the Stockport Development Plan.

As acknowledged in the Planning Statement submitted with the application, the proposal would not comply with the defined exceptions to development in the Green Belt set out in NPPF December 2024 paragraph 154(g) and would also be contrary to saved UDP Policies GBA1.2, GBA1.5 and GBA1.7.

We also note the section on the Woodford Aerodrome Opportunity in the Stockport Core Strategy which is relevant to this proposal.

The site currently includes large areas of open space, including grassland. The proposal would have a negative impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

We do not believe that there are very special circumstances to justify the harms to Green Belt that would result from these proposals.

b. This proposal breaks an agreement associated with the planning permission for Woodford Garden Village

The WGV extension proposal does not comply with paragraph 3.545 in the Stockport Core Strategy which states that *“there should be no greater impact than the existing development on the*

openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, development should not occupy a larger area of the site than existing buildings.”

This proposal breaks an agreement to reinstate the fields and hedgerows in the current proposal site, which was made when permission for Woodford Garden village was granted. It was an important part of the agreement in order to retain the openness of the Green Belt.

In the masterplan that was an integral part of the application for Woodford Garden Village, the proposed site was shown as a reinstated field network (reference number DC/053832 on the Stockport Council planning website).

As noted in our response to the consultation in July 2024, an SPD for the aerodrome site was prepared by Stockport Council in 2013 and several of us were involved in consultations on the draft. We were pleased to see that it is referred to in paragraph 2.43 in the Request for an EIA Scoping Report:

This masterplan is shown in paragraph 3.32 of the Request for an EIA Scoping Report, which states:

“The site is covered by the Woodford Garden Village planning permission from 2015. Figure 3 below shows the masterplan consented as part of that permission. The site of the proposed development is located at the southern end of this masterplan, in the areas identified as agricultural land and for commercial units adjacent to Oxford Aviation.”

We note that this SPD is referred to in the Planning Statement submitted with the application:

“6.136 In January 2013, the Council published the Woodford Aerodrome Opportunity Site SPD. This set out the environmental, social, design and economic objectives for the WOAS, and was a key policy document for the hybrid planning permission (ref. DC/053832) granted in January 2015 for the Woodford Garden Village.”

However, we note that the Planning Statement does not refer to the agreement in the SPD to reinstate fields and hedgerows.

If this area of the site is now developed, important mitigating elements will be lost, including the openness of the Green Belt, improving the visual impact of the site and contribution towards environmental mitigation, including carbon capture, wild life corridors and biodiversity.

A key element in the grant of planning permission for Woodford Garden Village will have been overturned.

c. The site is inaccessible

The proposed development would be a significant distance from the main part of Woodford Garden Village, the Aviator pub, the proposed shops, the exits on to Chester Road, and the facilities in the rest of the village, such as Budgens Store, Woodford War Memorial Community Centre and Christ Church Woodford. This distance in a straight line from the entrance to far southern end of

the site is over 1.5 km. We are concerned that these facilities could be beyond walking distance for elderly, or disabled residents and families with young children, creating a reliance on car travel.

The Planning Statement notes that 50% of C2 and C3 dwellings will be affordable. The site is remote from major employment opportunities and many local facilities which raise questions about its suitability for affordable housing.

The Planning Statement states:

“6.82 Paragraph 110 [NPPF December 2024] goes on to state that the planning system should manage patterns of growth in support of such objectives. This includes ensuring that significant development is focused in locations that are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.”

The Stockport Core Strategy paragraph 3.551 states that:

“There is a significant shortfall in the level of affordable housing in the area, however the site’s poor accessibility to services and public transport renders it a less desirable site for affordable housing unless accessibility can be improved.

New housing should be genuinely accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;”

The WGV extension proposal does not represent sustainable development.

d. The application cannot be determined without a means of access

The means of access should be part of the outline application.

2. Notwithstanding our objections outlined above, if the Council is minded to permit this development, we ask that conditions are included to mitigate the impacts.

As we noted in our response to the July consultation, in July In 2013, Woodford village comprised just over 500 properties and there were 1,200 names on the electoral register. Extant planning permission for Woodford Garden Village will triple the size of Woodford. An additional 540 dwellings in the extension proposals would quadruple it.

We were pleased that paragraph 16.2.2 in the Request for an EIA Scoping Report acknowledges the need to consider the cumulative impact of development:

“Woodford Garden Village: The consented Woodford Garden Village project will be considered alongside the proposed development.....”

“Garden Village at Handforth: The Garden Village at Handforth was granted planning permission in September 2023. Despite being located within the adjacent borough, the scale and proximity to the site means that there is the potential for cumulative effects that will be taken into account in the EIA.”

In addition, there are new developments nearby in Poynton and Wilmslow, which all put a strain on local roads and infrastructure.

The Design and Access Statement 1 submitted with the application provides an anticipated population of 2076 in the development when completed. This represents a significant increase in the population in Woodford over and above the existing population, which is already putting a strain on some of the local infrastructure.

We request that the following conditions are imposed before further development commences:

a. Actions under Section 106 agreements associated with Woodford Garden Village to be completed

Before any new development proceeds, any outstanding payments from Harrow/Redrow should be made and Stockport Council should provide evidence that the funds have been used to fulfil the agreed actions.

b. Woodford School expansion to commence

Residents have reported that the Woodford School primary school is already full and they have to take their children elsewhere.

The Planning Statement submitted with the application notes that the primary school was built with the potential to expand to two-form entry. This needs to commence at Phase 1 of any extension of WGV, in order to accommodate the existing needs as well as increased needs resulting from additional development.

c. Health care facilities to be increased

As we reported in our response to the July consultation, it is common knowledge that the local NHS is already over-stretched, there are problems with buildings at Stepping Hill Hospital, staff shortages and long waiting lists. Places at NHS dentists are in very short supply. The proposal for an additional 540 homes and an extra care facility will put additional strain on all health care facilities. Extra care units will also require trained staff.

The Design and Access Statement 1 submitted with the application provides an anticipated population of 2076 in the development when completed. This represents a significant increase in the population in Woodford over and above the existing population, which is already putting a strain on some of the local infrastructure.

The proposal will require increased local health care facilities, including GP surgery, dentists, pharmacies, and hospital. Provision needs to be planned at the outset.

Improvements at Stepping Hill Hospital should be supported.

There should be discussions with local GP practices in order to secure a GP practice within the Woodford Garden Village.

e. Woodford War Memorial Community Centre (WWMCC) to be expanded

Discussions about expansion of WWMCC have been ongoing intermittently since proposals for Woodford Garden Village were first muted over a decade ago. It is now clear that demand for such

facilities has increased and will increase further if WGV extension is permitted. The proposed community facilities located within the new site are welcome but unlikely to match those at WWMCC and they are very remote from parts of Woodford Garden Village near the entrances and even further away from “old Woodford”.

Therefore, expansion and improvement of WWMCC should be funded by a condition associated with a grant of permission for the WGV extension.

f. No through route for traffic via Old Hall Lane

Old Hall Lane is part of the Woodford Neighbourhood Area and one of the narrow rural lanes at the periphery of the village which form an important part of the character of the Neighbourhood Area. It is very narrow and unsuitable for large vehicles or high volumes of traffic. We note the proposal for a car park at the southern end of the WGV extension site for Avro Golf Course, which may help to reduce traffic on Old Hall Lane. We also note that it is proposed that there is no vehicular access from there to Old Hall Lane. It should be a condition on the permission that this does not become a through route in the future.

g. Environmental Impact mitigation is followed though

In our response to the July consultation, we noted that the Request for an EIA Scoping Report acknowledges the potential environmental impact:

“The applicant has accepted that the development is of a size and scale such that there is the potential for significant environmental effects to arise. Therefore, an EIA will be undertaken voluntarily and an ES will be submitted with the planning application.”

The proposed development will inevitably cause significant environment impacts, but we are pleased that the application includes proposed mitigation measures, especially the measures at the Old Hall Lane end of the site, which appear to acknowledge the measures to protect and enhance Wildlife Corridors recommended by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust (CWT) in their report [Protecting and Enhancing Woodford’s Natural Environment](#).

We request a condition on the permission that requires that all the proposed environmental mitigation measures are fulfilled.

h. There should be a Travel Management Plan

A Travel Management Plan will be needed on a site of this size which is remote from public transport and will be very dependent on car travel.

i. 20 mph speed limit on site roads should be imposed at the start

We hear from residents that traffic speeds on site are an issue. We know that it can take some time to instate speed limits so it should be a condition on the permission that they are imposed at the start of the development.

j. External sports provision needs to proceed.

The football pitch that was required for the existing development has not yet been built. There should be a guarantee that they would be provided if WGV extension was granted permission.

k. A construction management plan is needed

A construction management plan will be essential to minimise disruption for current residents and this should include a wheel wash for construction vehicles.

l. Employment opportunities should be encouraged

The Woodford Opportunity Site SPD prepared for the Woodford Garden Village development and Stockport Development Plan policies include support for suitable employment opportunities on site.

m. Public rights of way to reopen

Public rights of way from Woodford into countryside that were blocked by the Aerodrome should be opened as soon as can be done safely in areas of the site where construction work is completed.

n. No further development should take place on the aerodrome site unless a link to the Poynton Relief Road has been agreed

The extra traffic generated by 540 additional dwellings would substantially reduce the benefit that Woodford has gained in reduced traffic from the A555 and Poynton Relief Road, which the Stockport Council tax payers have paid for. This reduction in traffic should not be a reason for developers to “re-fill” the roads back to previous levels of traffic.

Possible typos noticed

Design and Access Statement 1, page 54

“Land Use Residential The masterplan includes 14.66 ha of residential land use, of which there are up to 15 self build and custom housebuilding plots , 50 c3 apartments, 75 extra car apartments.”

The map has two areas annotated 2 (*Extra Care* in the key). One is shaded red for “*Extra Care Facility (Use Class 2)*”. The other is shaded brown for “*Residential (Use Class 3)*”

Design and Access Statement 2, page 92

The illustration shows cattle in a green space among dwellings. Presumably there will not actually be cattle in such a location?

Yours sincerely,

Evelyn Frearson On behalf of Woodford Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee