



## Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

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

11 January 2026

To: Planning Officer

**Reference:** DC/097356

**Proposal:** Certificate of Lawful Existing Use to confirm use of a building as a lawful dwellinghouse.  
**Location:** 465A Chester Road Woodford SK7 1PR

### 1. Comments and Concerns

- We are aware that this is an application for a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use (CLEU), which is presumably why we were not notified. However, we have a number of concerns. The application seeks to demonstrate that the dwelling has been in residential use for at least ten years and, therefore, the use is lawful.
- Soon after we had noticed this planning application on your website, the planning portal was out of action from the evening of Friday 8th January until Monday 12th January, which impeded our ability to study the documents and timelines. We can now see that the determination deadline was 18th December, but we are submitting this response in case there is still time for it to be considered.
- The aerial imagery clearly shows the building has existed since at least December 2000 (over 24 years ago), and the 2013 utility bill provides some proof of separate residential metering/addressing from that date (12 years prior to submission). Internal photos confirm current residential fittings, and the building's construction (block/timber with DPM/insulation) is consistent with a dwelling.
- However, we have concerns about the following aspects of the evidence submitted:
  - Aerial photographs prove physical existence but not actual use as a dwelling. They could depict a use for storage, ancillary commercial space, or a vacant building.
  - Only one utility bill is provided; no sequence of documents (e.g., bills from multiple years, Council tax payments, Electoral Roll or tenancy agreements) to demonstrate continuity.
  - The building was reportedly unoccupied post-probate in 2025, but no evidence addresses potential gaps in occupation.
  - Reliance on "incidental evidence from neighbours and local people" is mentioned but not substantiated with statements or affidavits, which are typically crucial for CLEUs.
  - The site's mixed context being adjacent to commercial/caravan uses raises questions about whether the building was a truly independent residence, or ancillary to the business, such as staff accommodation, which would not qualify as a separate C3 dwelling.
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## 2. Policies relevant to the application

If the evidence for lawful use is considered to be flawed and a retrospective application is assessed against planning policies, then we note that the site is in Green Belt and we believe that planning policies relevant to this application include:

### 2.1. NPPF 2024

### 2.2. Stockport Development Plan:

- Woodford Neighbourhood Plan 2019
- Saved UDP 2011
- Core Strategy 2011

### Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

We believe the following policies are relevant:

#### 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.*

#### Assessment

The proposed dwelling does not comply with this policy. It is positioned behind the development line on Chester Road. It does not form part of a 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. It is not built along similar building lines as adjoining properties.

In the unlikely event that the proposal passed this hurdle, then the following policies would also be relevant:

#### 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.*

#### Assessment

The building does not achieve a high standard of design.

#### 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.*

#### Assessment

Efforts should be made to encourage and protect any native trees, hedgerows or ponds associated with the site

**ENV4: Supporting biodiversity**

*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.*

**Assessment**

Efforts should be made to achieve biodiversity net gain, particularly with native species and planting to support pollinators.

Policies in the Stockport UDP and Core Strategy and NPPF 2024 relating to development in Green Belt, good design, landscape character and residential amenity would also be relevant.

Yours sincerely,

Evelyn Frearson On behalf of Woodford Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee