



Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

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

9 May 2026

To: Jane Chase

Dear Jane,

Reference: DC/098813

Proposal: Application for Permission in Principle for the erection of 1 No. Dwelling

Location: Land Adjacent To 34 Church Lane Woodford Stockport SK7 1RQ

1. General Comments

- The site is in Green Belt and policies relating to development in Green Belt apply.
- The site does not meet the criteria for grey belt.
- The site is in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area, and therefore subject to policies in the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan.
- The proposal does not meet the criteria for limited infilling in a village.
- The site is in one of the peripheral, rural locations in Woodford and far from the facilities in the village centre around the entrance to Woodford Garden Village. It is not an accessible location. See figures 1 and 2 below.
- An application for infill development of one dwelling at this site DC/087000 was refused in 2023.

Figure 1: Satellite image (29/05/2025) showing rural location of proposal



Figure 2: Satellite image showing the end of the housing line



2. Policies relevant to the application

We believe that planning policies relevant to this application include:

- NPPF 2024
- Stockport Development Plan:
 - o Woodford Neighbourhood Plan 2019
 - o Saved UDP 2011
 - o Core Strategy 2011

We note the policies in Chapter 13 of NPPF2024 concerning development in Green Belt.

We also note that Stockport Local Plan policies relevant to control of development in the Green Belt include:

GBA1.1, which includes Woodford in the extent of the Green Belt.

GBA1.2, GBA1.5, GBA1.6 and GBA1.7, which list criteria for the control of development within Green Belt.

LCR1.1, which does not permit development in the countryside unless it protects or enhances the quality and character of the rural area.

Woodford Neighbourhood Plan policy DEV1 is relevant to this PIP application.

3. Green Belt assessment

We believe that the site strongly performs the functions of Green Belt described in NPPF 2024 paragraph 143, including checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (purpose a), preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another (purpose b) and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (purpose c). In fulfilling purposes a) and b), it fails to meet the criteria for grey belt, as defined in NPPF 2024.

We note that the site lies within parcel SEB 9 described in the Stockport Green Belt Assessment Appendix A, prepared for SMBC by LUC. The parcel is comprehensively assessed on pages 583-586 of the LUC report. See Appendix below.

On page 586 the report concludes:

“The parcel makes a strong or very strong contribution to Green Belt Purposes A and B and therefore does not meet the definition of grey belt land.”

The proposal would harm the openness of Green Belt, which is a key component of the rural character in this location, where the ribbon development along Church Lane ends and less dense development begins.

The addition of just one dwelling would make very little contribution to the housing need in the borough and there are no exceptional circumstances to justify the resulting harm to the Green Belt in this location.

The permitted development at Woodford Garden Village is resulting in large numbers of new dwellings. A variety of development proposals and the draft Stockport Local Plan propose further large scale development in Green Belt in Woodford, which would change the local character and put unprecedented strain on local infrastructure. Additional proposals for development in Green Belt in Woodford would add to the cumulative impact.

4. Infilling

Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it meets one of the exceptions set out in paragraph 154 in the NPPF 2024. The applicant claims that the proposal meets one of these exceptions, namely:

e) limited infilling in villages

Is the site within a village?

The first question to address is whether the site can be considered to be within the village. The location of the site is in a field that was formerly grazing land and adjacent to a field that is currently in use for equestrian grazing by Dean Valley Farm. It is beyond the end of the ribbon development on Church Lane.

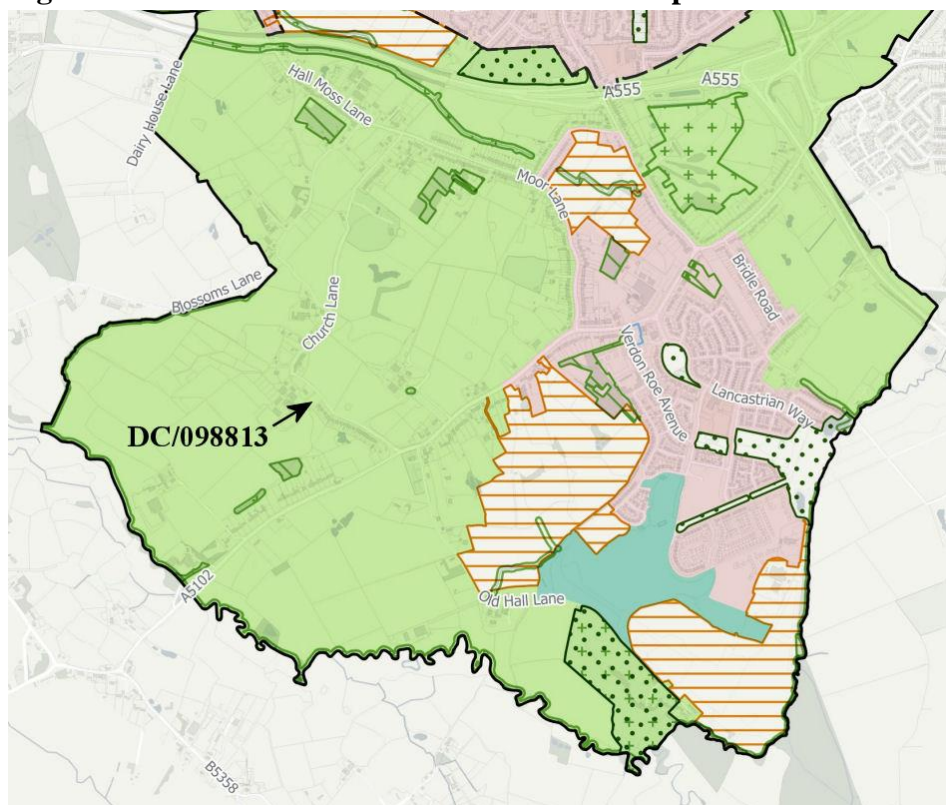
Case history indicates that such a site could be considered to be outside of the village settlement.

An application for infill development at the other end of Church Lane, DC/076613 was refused by the Council and dismissed at appeal by a planning inspector in 2021 (Appeal Ref: APP/C4235/W/21/3268543). The reasons for refusal by the inspector included lack of compliance with Woodford Neighbourhood Plan policy DEV1 on infilling and, in his view, the site lay outside of the settlement boundary, so infilling in a village did not apply.

The site is not within the settlement boundary in the emerging new Stockport Local Plan, as shown in the Policies Map in Figure 3 below.

We realise that the new draft Stockport Local Plan is at regulation 18 consultation stage and therefore at an early stage to carry much weight in planning decisions. Nevertheless, it reveals the Council's thinking about the village boundary.

Figure 3: Location of DC/098813 on Policies Map



Does the proposal comply with infill policy?

The second question to address is, should the site be considered to lie within the village, does the proposal meet the criteria for limited infilling.

Woodford Neighbourhood Plan includes the following policy on infilling

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

We believe that the proposal does not comply with this policy for the following reasons:

The site is positioned at the end of a fairly dense line of ribbon development along the south west side of Church Lane, including terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings. The perception in the street scene is that number 34 is the end of ribbon development and there is a complete change in character after that. Grazing land separates number 34 from Dean Valley Farm and the ambience becomes rural with large and widely separated dwellings thereafter on that side of Church Lane.

A field separates 34 Church Lane from the driveway to the house at Dean Valley Farm, which is a very different in character to the ribbon development. The distance from the end of the dwelling at 34 Church Lane and the start of the dwelling at Dean Valley Farm is 54 metres.

Therefore, the proposal does not comply with DEV1.

5. Unsustainable location

The site is in a peripheral, rural location in Woodford and far from the facilities in the village centre around the entrance to Woodford Garden Village. There is a bus stop approximately 480 metres away on Chester Road, but only one hourly bus route to Manchester, which does not go to Stockport. The nearest train station is in Bramhall which is over 2 miles away. It is not a sustainable location.

We realise that the new draft Stockport Local Plan is at regulation 18 consultation stage and therefore at an early stage to carry much weight in planning decisions. Nevertheless, the information below reveals the Council's thinking about the best use of this site.

In the Assessment of sites in the Green Belt associated with the consultation on the draft new Stockport Local Plan, the site of the proposal lies within Site ID SA25-0767.

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/assessment-of-sites-in-the-green-belt>

Green belt site assessment

Land north of Wilmslow Road, near Woodford, SK7 1RL



Site ID SA25-0767

Suitable for residential development? No

Suitable for commercial development? No

Suitable for protection? Yes

Notes The site is remote from shops and services and as such is in an unsustainable location and is unsuitable for development.

6. Summary

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

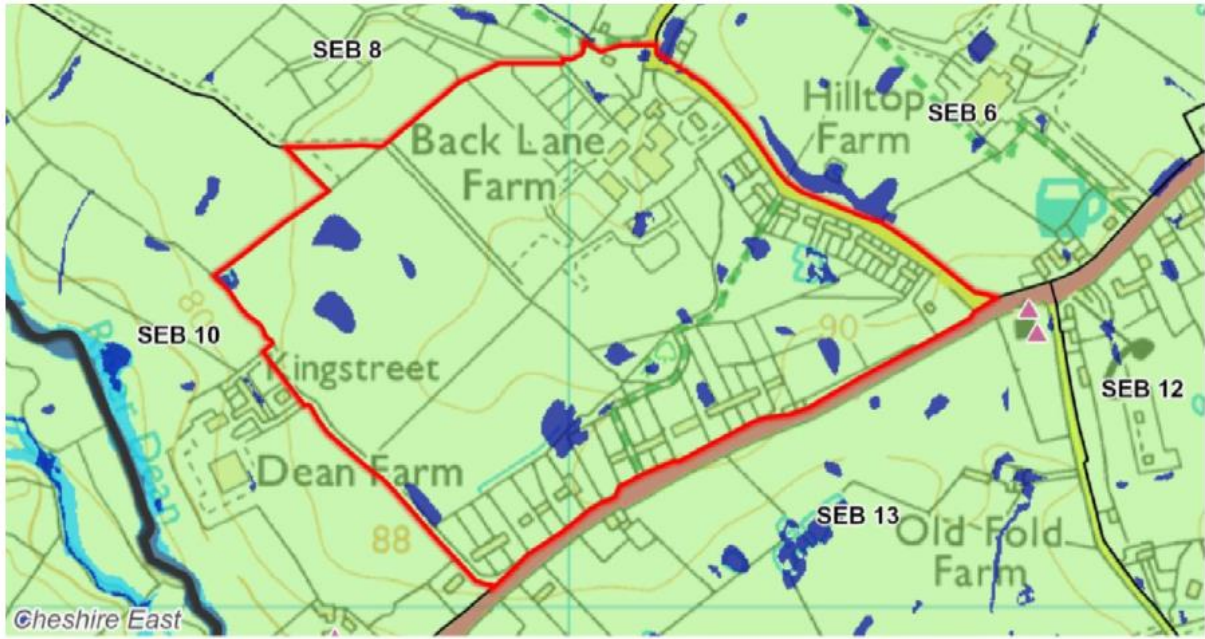
- The site is in Green Belt and does not meet the criteria for grey belt.
- The site is in a peripheral location which could be considered outside of the village settlement. In this case infilling is inappropriate development.
- If it is considered that the site is within the village, the proposal does not meet the criteria for infill as set out in WNP policy DEV1.
- The addition of one dwelling in Woodford would not make a significant contribution to the housing supply for the borough and the harm to the Green Belt would not be justified.

- The site is not a sustainable location. Public transport is very limited and car use would be very likely.

7. Appendix

Extract from Appendix A in LUC Green Belt Assessment

Contribution of land in Parcel SEB 9



- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| SEB 9 | NPPF Footnote 7 designations |
| Neighbouring parcel | Flood Zone 3 |
| Stockport | Flood Zone 2 |
| Green Belt | High risk of surface water flooding |
| | Listed building |

Description

- ✓ The parcel is located to the west of Woodford (including the potential new inset area of Woodford Garden Village), lying to the north of Wilmslow Road (A5102). It comprises a series of agricultural fields with some ribbon development along the A5102. Parcel size: 32ha.
- ✓ There is a combination of features creating a strong boundary between the settlement and the parcel. Several intervening scattered small woodland blocks and hedgerows and Church Lane combine to create strong separation from Woodford to the east
- ✓ There is no significant change in landform to create a sense of separation between the settlement and the parcel. The landform within the parcel is similar to that of Woodford and Woodford Garden Village to the east.
- ✓ There is a weak perception of urban development outside of the parcel. The parcel is located some distance from the nearest inset area at Bramhall, Poynton and Handforth/Wilmslow, and there is a weak perception urban development at Woodford to the east
- ✓ There is no significant urbanising development or activity in the green belt affecting this parcel. Whilst there is some existing inappropriate development within the Green Belt to the south of the parcel (residential properties along Wilmslow Road), the assessment is concerned with the performance of land that is not developed.
- ✓ There is a strong perception of the wider countryside, limiting the impact of any existing urbanising influence. There is a visual connection with countryside to the south-west (outwith SMB). However, development along Wilmslow Road to the south limits perception of the wider countryside in this direction.

Contribution to the Green Belt purposes

Purpose A	Purpose B	Purpose C	Purpose D	Purpose E	Grey belt
Very Strong	Strong	Very Strong	Weak/No	Equal	No

Purpose A – Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas: Very Strong contribution

- ✓ The parcel is near to a large built-up area. Handforth/Wilmslow is a town and so is also defined as a large built-up area.
- ✓ The parcel is predominantly free from urbanising development.
- ✓ The parcel is predominantly free from urbanising influences associated with development outside the parcel.
- ✓ The parcel lies beyond physical features which are restricting and containing urban development. Therefore its weakening or loss would have an adverse impact on this purpose.
- ✓ Development in the parcel would create an incongruous pattern of development by breaching strong physical features currently restricting and containing an urban area

Purpose B – Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another: Strong contribution

- ✓ The parcel lies in a moderate gap between towns. The gap between Handforth/Wilmslow and Poynton is wide. However, whilst there are some significant separating features (including the River Dean to the west and the A523 road corridor to the east) there is intervening urbanising development and a direct connecting road (A5102).
- ✓ The parcel is predominantly free from urbanising development.
- ✓ The parcel forms a large part of the gap. Despite the presence of existing development within the green belt to the south of the parcel, it forms a relatively large portion of the gap with open land within the parcel contributing to separation.
- ✓ Development of land in the parcel would likely significantly impact visual separation between towns. Development would occur within a core part of the gap, experienced when travelling between the towns (including along the A5102), which would reduce its separating role.

Purpose C – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment: Very Strong contribution

- ✓ The parcel is part of the countryside and so contributes to preventing encroachment on it.
- ✓ The parcel is predominantly free from urbanising development.
- ✓ The parcel is predominantly free from urbanising influences associated with development outside the parcel.
- ✓ Development in the parcel would significantly increase the urbanising influence on adjacent open land. The outer boundaries of the parcel are formed weakly by hedgerows to the west and the A5102 to the south, so development within the parcel would have some urbanising impact on adjacent open land.

Purpose D – Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns: Weak/No contribution

- ✓ The parcel does not form part of the setting of a historic town, with no visual, physical, or experiential connection to the historic aspects of a town.

Purpose E – Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land: Equal contribution

- ✓ All Green Belt land plays an equal role in relation to this purpose.

Grey belt

- ✓ The parcel makes a strong or very strong contribution to Green Belt Purposes A and B and therefore does not meet the definition of grey belt land.

Yours sincerely,

Evelyn Frearson On behalf of Woodford Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee