



Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

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To: Jane Chase
Planning Services
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Town Hall, Edward Street
Stockport
SK1 3XE

21 May 2026

Dear Jane,

Here are our comments regarding the following planning application:

Reference: DC/098809

Proposal: Permission in principle for up to 3 residential units - Use Class C3

Location: Land At Hall Moss Lane, Woodford, Stockport, SK7 1PQ

As this is an application for Permission in Principle, we have focussed our comments on matters concerning the location, amount and use of proposed development.

1. The site is in a sensitive, peripheral location

- Members of the forum committee are long-standing Woodford residents who know the site well. It is an open field bordered by native trees and hedges that has been used for horse grazing for very many years until very recently, when the only access to the field was lost due to a grant of permission to DC/092296 for one dwelling on PDL adjacent to Church Lane and land that included the access route. See figures 3b and 6c.
- As the applicant points out “*The site sits between the settlement of Bramhall and Woodford, in an area of Green Belt*”. As such, it provides a green space contributing to openness and the gap between Bramhall (part of the Manchester conurbation) and surrounding areas, thereby helping to control urban sprawl.
- The applicant overstates the sustainability of the location. While there is some access to paths (Fred Perry Way) and buses, the location is peri-rural with limited public transport frequency compared to urban areas. NPPF paras 110/115 emphasise sustainable patterns; this is not a highly sustainable urban extension. The Connectivity Tool score of 58 is mediocre.
- Figure 1 illustrates the peripheral location in Woodford, not close to the limited amenities in the centre of the village. Car use to reach employment and amenities would be very likely:
 - The nearest shop is Budgens, which is 1.4 k away on Chester Road opposite Woodford Garden Village.
 - Woodford is not well served with public transport, with just one bus route through the village which runs hourly and goes to Manchester, but not Stockport. The nearest bus stop to the site via tarmacked pavements is 1.2 k away on Chester Road. A bus stop on Woodford Road is 860 m away via public right of way 16CG, which can be muddy in wet weather. The nearest railway station is 1.8 k away in Bramhall.
 - The distance to a bus stop in Bramhall/Cheadle Hulme is 1.35 k and the shops in Gilbert Road in Cheadle Hulme are nearly 2 k away.

- This part of Woodford has a semi-rural feel, with wide gaps in places in the housing line, providing views into fields with native hedgerows and trees. The field boundary is a viewpoint which contributes to the character and openness of the Green Belt. See Figures 2 and 6.
- There is a history of planning applications for development in the same field as the site of this proposal, including current applications for a wide access drive off Church Lane (DC/097406) and four new dwellings on the side of the field parallel to Church Lane (DC/097965). See Section 2 and Figures 3a and b.
- The site is not within the Predominantly Residential Area marked on the Policies Map in the draft Stockport Local Plan. See Figure 5.
- These features raise the question of whether it lies outside of the village boundary, which has important implications for the planning decision. See Section 3 and figure 5.

Figure 1: Satellite image showing peripheral location in Woodford of site of DC/098809



Figure 2: Satellite image showing location of site of DC/098809 on Hall Moss Lane



2. Planning history

- There is a history of several development proposals for the field where this site lies:
 - DC/067276 (infill 4 dwellings) in 2017 was withdrawn
 - DC/076613 (infill 2 dwellings) in 2020 was refused and appeal dismissed
 - A proposal for a campsite in 2021 was refused by the Camping and Caravanning Club
 - DC/092296 for 1 dwelling on PDL on Church Lane in 2024 was permitted
 - DC/097406 new access to the field off Church Lane submitted in 2025
 - DC/097965 for PIP for 4 dwellings on Church Lane submitted in 2026
 - DC/098809 for PIP for 3 dwellings in Hall Moss Lane, which is the subject of this response
- A scenario could arise whereby a larger amount of development on this field arises via a series of PIP applications for small aliquots at a time.

Figure 3a): Satellite image showing recent planning applications for development in the same field as the current application DC/098809



Figure 3b): SMBC planning map showing recent planning applications for development in the same field as the current application DC/098809



- Planning permission was granted in 2025 to the Daylesford Trust for one dwelling on the site of a small stable block (DC/092296) adjacent to Church Lane.
- A new access to the field from Church Lane is the subject of planning application from the Daylesford Trust (DC/097406).
- We particularly note the case history of a previous application for 2 dwellings adjacent to Church Lane in 2020 (DC/076613), which 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.

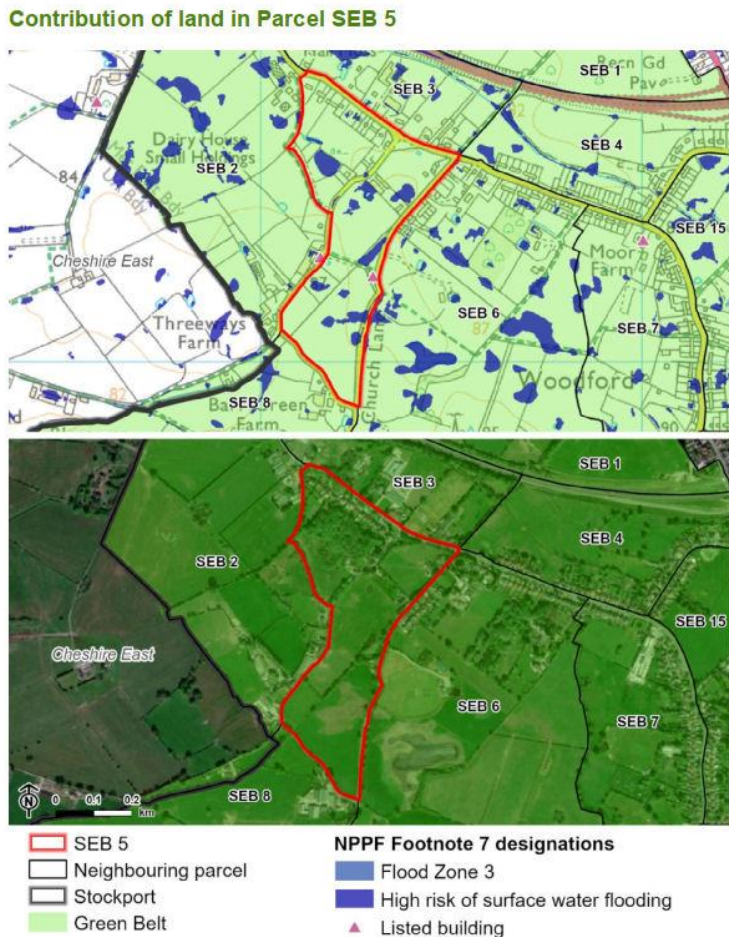
3. The site is in Green Belt

- The site is within Green Belt and subject to policies controlling development in Green Belt in NPPF 2024 and the Stockport Local Development Plan.
- The applicant's statement claims that the site qualifies as 'Grey Belt' under NPPF Annex 2 and para 155, but this is flawed and contradicted by the Council's own 2025 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) and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (purpose c). In fulfilling purpose a) it fails to meet the criteria for grey belt, as defined in NPPF 2024. The Green Belt Assessment conducted by LUC on behalf of Stockport Council in 2025 supports this view.

- The site is within parcel SEB 5 in the Green Belt Assessment conducted by LUC. See pages 567-570 of the report and Figure 4 below and the Appendix in section 8 of this response.

Figure 4: SEB 5 in LUC Green Belt Assessment



- The LUC assessment concluded:
Contribution to the Green Belt purposes

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

“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 surrounding parcels SEB 2, 4, 6 and 8 are also assessed as making strong contributions to the Green Belt, which could be harmed by development in SEB 5.
- The site lies within SA ID SA25-0741 in the interactive Green Belt Assessment map produced for the consultation on the emerging Stockport Local Plan (<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/assessment-of-sites-in-the-green-belt>)



Under Further Information this is described as follows:

“Site ID SA25-0741

Suitable for residential development? No

Suitable for commercial development? No

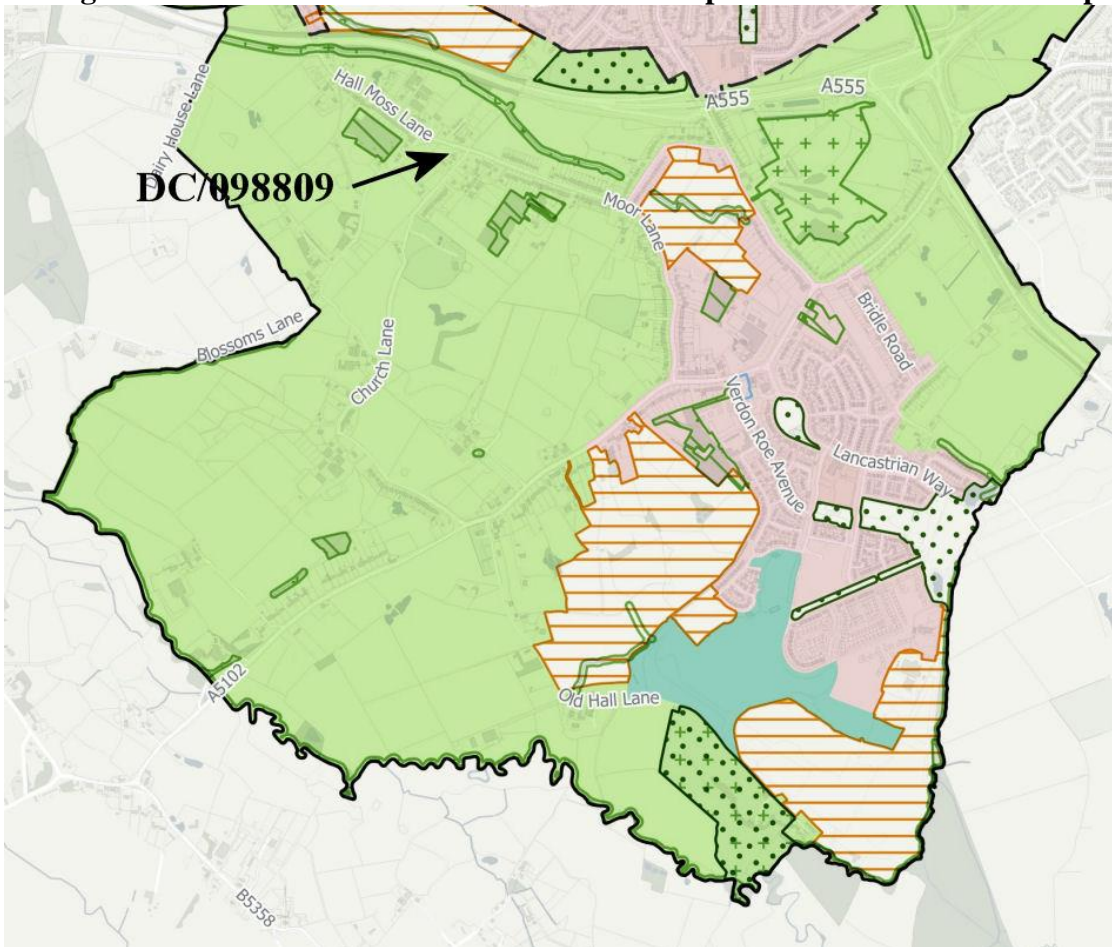
Suitable for protection? Yes

Protection use. Green Belt uses

Notes: Land does not contain grey belt and is remote from shops, services and public transport. Within proximity of a large number of protected and priority species. Should remain protected as Green Belt.”

- We acknowledge that the site of this proposal is a component part of the larger SEB 5 parcel and smaller than Site ID SA25-0741. However, analysis of this smaller section within the larger parcel indicates that it fulfils the key purposes of Green Belt and does not meet the criteria for grey belt. The notes in Local Plan Green Belt Assessment map support this view. They state: *“Land does not contain grey belt”*.
- The emerging new Stockport Local Plan proposes to denote “Predominantly Residential Areas”, shown in pink in the Policies Map, which do not have Green Belt status. The site of the proposal does not fall within the pink area and would remain in Green Belt. See Figure 5 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 best use of this site.

Figure 5: Position of site of DC/098809 on Stockport Local Plan Policies Map



4. Policies relevant to the application

We believe that planning policies relevant to this application include:

2.1. NPPF 2024

4.1. Stockport Development Plan:

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

Among the questions that will need addressing for this application are whether the site lies within a village and, if so, whether it meets the criteria for limited infilling in a village.

If the site is deemed to lie in Green Belt outside of the village boundary, then the proposed development is inappropriate.

If it is deemed to lie in Green Belt within a village, then it must meet one of the exceptions set out NPPF 2024, paragraph 154. Exception e) limited infilling in a village is the only one needing assessing in this case. The proposal should be assessed against policy DEV1 in Woodford Neighbourhood Plan 2019, which sets out the criteria for limited infilling in Woodford.

5. NPPF 2024

We believe that the proposal does not comply with policies, including but not limited to, the following:

Paragraph 143, which seeks to prevent encroachment into the countryside

Paragraph 153. Which suggests that planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness.

Paragraph 154, which sets out the exceptions for inappropriate development in Green Belt.

6. Stockport UDP

We believe that the proposal does not comply with policies, including but not limited to, the following policies concerning control of development in Green Belt:

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

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

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

7. Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

<http://woodfordnf.co.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>

The neighbourhood plan's vision, objectives and policies prioritise protecting openness, rural character, views, and natural features. It supports only limited, small-scale housing in keeping with character and not infill that erodes gaps. The neighbourhood plan policies emphasise compliance with national Green Belt policy and local distinctiveness.

The following policies are relevant:

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.

[WNP page 32 Views and Vistas map]

Assessment

The Woodford Neighbourhood Plan notes "*The pattern of green spaces and distinct gaps in the ribbon development along Woodford's roads and lanes contribute to the openness of the Green Belt*".

This proposal sits precisely at one of the viewpoints requested for retention by residents, namely the view from Hall Moss Lane across the fields between Church Lane and Blossoms Lane. Therefore, it does not comply with ENV1. See Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: a) Left: Image extracted from the views and vistas map in WNP. Proposal DC/098809 outlined in red (approx). b) Right: View from Hall Moss Lane across the field to Long Acre



c) Ponies enjoying flood water on the site



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.

Table showing Natural Features which are a key aesthetic component of the Woodford Landscape

1.	Trees in public places and bordering roads, in pavements and in grass verges along Chester Road, Wilmslow Road, Bridle Road, Church Lane, Blossoms Lane, Moor Lane, and Hall Moss Lane
2.	Trees and woodland with Tree Preservation Orders or Ancient Woodland
3.	Mature & veteran trees described and /or marked on maps in the WNF Landscape and Environment Survey report
4.	Grass verges with daffodils and wildflowers, such as bluebells
5.	Native hedgerows visible along roads, tracks and public rights of way across farmland
6.	Ponds visible along roads, tracks and public rights of way across farmland (12)

Assessment

The table includes trees and hedges bordering the site of the proposal, which should be protected.

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

Native hedges and trees play an important role in absorbing carbon emissions and particulate pollutants, as well as providing excellent habitats for wildlife. Any potential losses should be a consideration in the decision and mitigated.

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 proposal does not meet any of the criteria for compliance with this policy. It is a very wide gap in the housing line between the junctions of Church Lane and Blossoms Lane with Hall Moss Lane. There is not an otherwise continuous and largely uninterrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the street scene.

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

We note that decisions regarding Permission in Principle can only consider use, amount and location. Any detailed application in the future would need to meet the criteria set out in this policy.

7. Summary

We believe that this proposal should be refused for the following reasons:

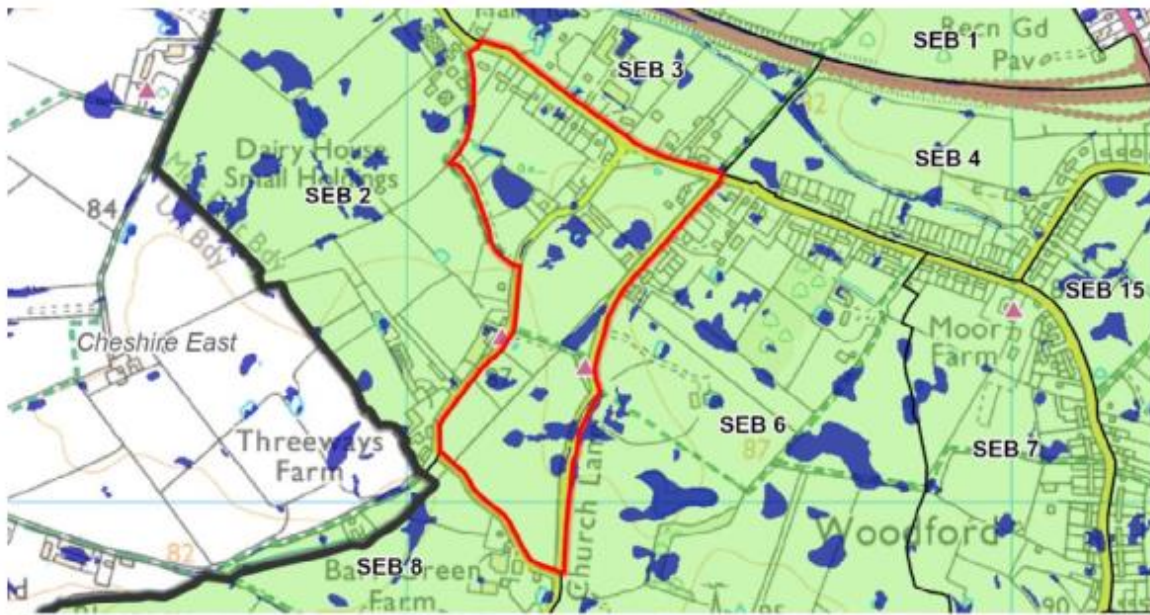
- The site does not meet the criteria for grey belt.
- The site is in an unsustainable location in Green Belt.
- The proposal does not comply with policies in NPPF 2024 and the Stockport Development Plan which seek to control development in Green Belt. It does not meet any of the exceptions to inappropriate development in Green Belt.
- It would harm the openness of the Green Belt and adjacent areas in Green Belt.

- The proposal does not comply with policies in the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan, which define infilling in Woodford and seek to protect natural features, local views and vistas and the rural character of the Neighbourhood Area in peripheral locations such as this.
- The site is in a sensitive location in Woodford, which is vulnerable to change.
- The addition of three dwellings would not make a significant contribution to the housing supply, which is being addressed by the emerging Stockport Local Plan.
- There are no very special circumstances that would justify the harms that would result from this proposal.
- Speculative development proposals threaten to undermine development in an organised and planned manner, as set out in the draft Stockport Local Plan.
- The cumulative impact of an ever-increasing number of development proposals, including this one, in and around Woodford is a significant concern to residents and their elected representatives.

8. Appendix

Extracted from:
Green Belt Assessment
Appendix A

Contribution of land in Parcel SEB 5



- | | |
|---|---|
|  SEB 5 | NPPF Footnote 7 designations |
|  Neighbouring parcel |  Flood Zone 3 |
|  Stockport |  High risk of surface water flooding |
|  Green Belt |  Listed building |

Description

✓ The parcel is located to the south of Bramhall and east of Handforth, south of the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road (A555). It comprises a series of agricultural fields. The adjacent area of Handforth, whilst currently comprising open agricultural fields, is inset from the Green Belt and contains an East Cheshire allocated site ('North Cheshire Growth Village, Handforth East'). Parcel size: 17ha.

✓ Boundary features within the gap between the settlement and the parcel combine to create moderate separation. Whilst the A555 forms strong boundary with Bramhall to the north, the presence of intervening hedgerows provides a moderate sense of separation from Handforth.

✓ 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 Handforth and Bramhall.

- ✓ There is some perception of urban development outside of the green belt. Land lies within an area of wider containment by settlement edges.
- ✓ There is no significant urbanising development or activity in the green belt affecting this parcel.
- ✓ There is some perception of connectivity with the wider countryside, limiting the impact of any existing urbanising influence. The outer boundary of the parcel to the east and south is formed relatively weakly by Church Lane and Blossoms Lane.

Contribution to the Green Belt purposes

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

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

- ✓ The parcel is near to a large built-up area. Bramhall is defined as part of a large built-up area, and Handforth is a town and so is also defined as a large built-up area.
- ✓ The parcel is free from urbanising development.
- ✓ There is some urbanising influence associated with development outside of the parcel.
- ✓ There are no physical features in reasonable proximity strong enough to restrict and contain development. The parcel is defined weakly by Church Lane to the east and Blossoms Lane in the south.
- ✓ There are no physical features strong enough to restrict and contain development in the parcel, such that it would weaken the wider Green Belt’s contribution to the Green Belt purposes and through this significantly increase the potential for incongruous patterns of development.

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

- ✓ The parcel lies in a moderate gap between towns. Land lies in a moderate gap between Bramhall and Handforth, but the A555 forms a significant separating feature.
- ✓ The parcel is free from urbanising development.
- ✓ The parcel forms a substantial part of the gap. The parcel forms a large portion of the gap.
- ✓ Development of land in the parcel would likely significantly impact visual separation between towns. In addition the development of land in this parcel would also be likely to increase urbanising influence on remaining land in the gap.

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

- ✓ The parcel is part of the countryside and so contributes to preventing encroachment on it.
- ✓ The parcel is free from urbanising development.
- ✓ There is some urbanising influence associated with development outside of the parcel.
- ✓ Development in the parcel would significantly increase the urbanising influence on adjacent open land. The parcel is defined weakly by Church Lane to the east and Blossoms Lane in 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