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

16 October 2026

To: Marcus Shingler

Reference: DC/100108
Proposal: Outline proposal for residential development (use class C3) with all matters reserved except for means of access
Location: Development Land Bridle Road Woodford Stockport

1. **Comments and Concerns**

- We were not notified about this application, although it is in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area. We noticed it on the planning portal and wish to make the following comments. Thank you for granting us extra time to do so.
- The site is in the designated area for the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to allow incremental development that retains the rural character of the village. This proposal does not comply.
- The site is in Green Belt and we challenge the applicant's claim that it meets the criteria for Grey Belt.
- Very small sites such as this are very unlikely to meet the purposes of Green Belt used to identify Grey Belt simply due to their small size, revealing a loophole in the guidance for villages in countryside that undermines the protection intended to be conferred by Green Belt status in such locations.
- By proposing that this small site should be classed as Grey Belt, this proposal seeks to exploit this loophole to create inappropriate development which would harm the Green Belt, the landscape character area, the character of the village and an ecological corridor.
- However, we believe that this site does not meet the criteria for Grey Belt because it fulfils Purpose A -To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas by checking the unrestricted sprawl of development beyond the boundary of the former aerodrome site and into the Green Belt which separates the Woodford Garden Village estate (WGV) from Poynton.
- Conversely, development of this site would extend the sprawl of development beyond the boundary of the former aerodrome site and into the Green Belt which separates WGV from Poynton.
- When the harm to the remaining Green Belt is assessed against the whole borough then clearly the effect is minimal. However, the harm to the remaining Green Belt in the village of Woodford is relevant and much more significant.
- The site is located adjacent to important natural features identified in Landscape and Environment studies which provide an ecological corridor (see Figure 4). This is also marked on the Policies Map presented with the draft Stockport Local Plan Regulation 19 version (see Figure 6).

- The site is located on a very narrow, single track, un-adopted lane leading to a dead-end in countryside. Access to the proposed development is completely unacceptable. Safety for all road users and access for emergency vehicles should be assessed.
- Woodford has a surfeit of large 4/5 bedrooms homes, and does not need any more. Four "affordable" semi-detached homes may be welcomed, but this is not a suitable location for them.
- The proposal is ahead of the Stockport Local Plan and would disrupt development in a co-ordinated and organised fashion with appropriate infrastructure.
- The Woodford Garden Village with its limited facilities is adjacent and there is access within 50 m on foot or bike, but it is 700 m to the bus stop on Chester Road.
- A site visit will be essential to view the nature of the location. See Figures 1-3.

Figure 1: Bridle Road at Holm Lea

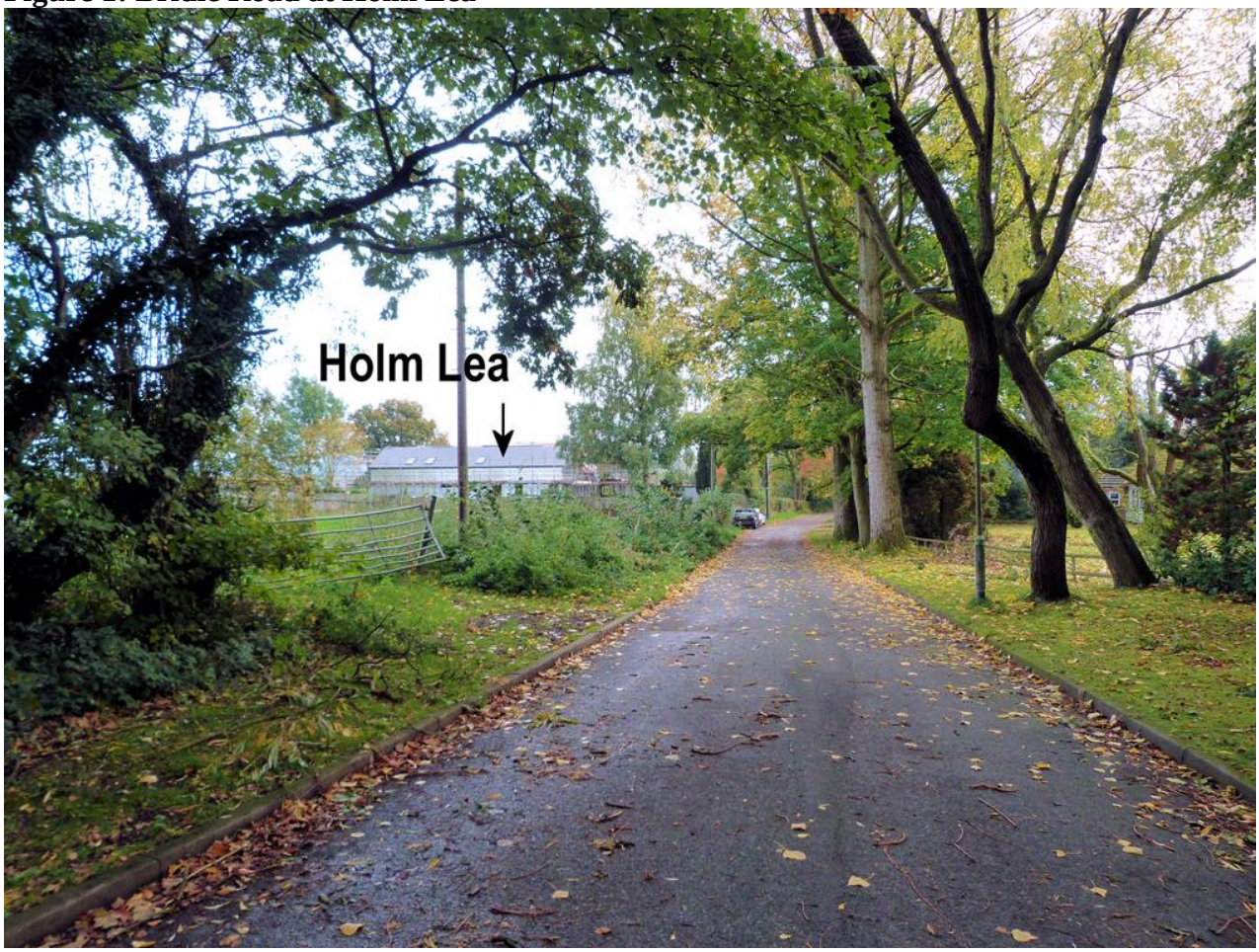


Figure 2: Road adjacent to the site



Figure 3: Bridle Road beyond the site



2. Policies relevant to the application

We believe that planning policies relevant to this application include:

2.1. NPPF 2026

2.2. Stockport Development Plan:

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

3. NPPF 2026

The revised NPPF 2026 includes the new concept of Grey Belt, which this proposal seeks to exploit. We believe that the site does not meet the criteria for Grey Belt for the reasons we have set out.

Even if the site is assessed as Grey Belt, then further criteria must be met before permission is granted including:

o The development would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area.

o There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed.

o The site is in a sustainable location.

For the reasons set out in this response, we believe that the purposes of the remaining Green Belt would be harmed, there is no evidence to support an unmet need for the 4/5 bedroomed houses proposed (affordable housing would be welcomed), the site is not in a sustainable location, and the access route is not acceptable.

Other factors to be considered in the planning balance include the impact on the Landscape Character Area, the openness of the Green Belt, Woodford's rural village character, the local ecological network, and the impact on local infrastructure due to speculative development outside of the Local Plan allocations.

If the site is not assessed as Grey Belt, then the proposal does not meet any of the exceptions to restrictions on development in Green Belt set out in the NPPF 2026, Stockport Local Plan, or the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan.

4. Stockport Local Plan

We believe that the proposal does not comply with the following SMBC policies:

Saved UDP Policy para GBA1.1, which includes Woodford in the extent of the Green Belt.

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

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

5. Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

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

The proposal conflicts with the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan's vision of managing change while retaining rural identity.

The following policies are relevant to this application:

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." See Appendix 9 for the Views and Vistas map from WNP.

Assessment
The impact of development of this site on views and vistas from Bridle Road and public right of way 101HGB should be considered.

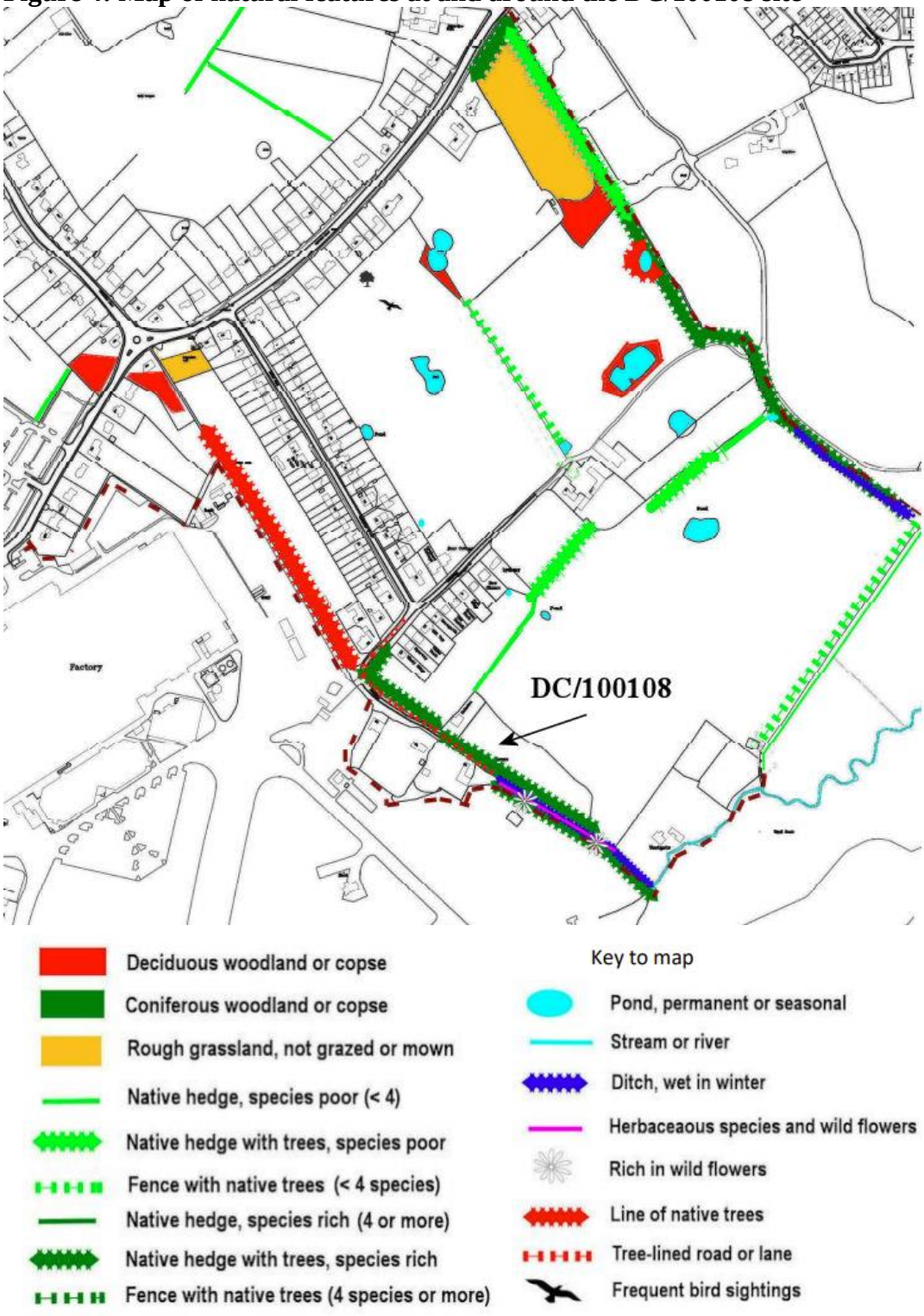
ENV3: Protecting Woodford's natural features
"The protection and/or enhancement of Woodford's natural features, including those identified in the Table below, will be supported."

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 site location was surveyed during our Landscape and Environment Study, see pages 13 to 16. The lane at the site is bordered by native trees and species-rich native hedges. A drainage ditch runs from the end of the lane to join other drainage channels and streams bordered by native vegetation and wildflowers forming a corridor for wildlife (see Figure 4 - 6).
These natural features at the site should be protected from any potential harm due to development.

Figure 4: Map of natural features at and around the DC/100108 site



See also the Policies Map presented with the Regulation 19 version of the Stockport Local Plan.

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 due to development of this site should be a consideration in the decision and mitigated.

DEV1: 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
If the site does not meet the criteria for Grey Belt, then this policy is relevant. The proposal does not comply.

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
Any detailed application would need to meet the criteria set out in this policy.

6. Draft Stockport Local Plan

The Regulation 19 version of the draft Stockport Local Plan has been published for consultation. While it does not yet carry full weight, some aspects are nevertheless relevant to this proposal including:

- The Policies Map reveals that the site would not be within the settlement boundary of Woodford and would remain in Green Belt (see Figure 6).
- The Policies Map marks the area adjacent to the site and extending south eastwards from the end of Bridle Road as an Ecological Networks Linear Corridor (see Figures 5 and 6). The DC/100108 proposal has the potential to harm the ecological network here.
- The Green Belt assessment conducted by LUC on behalf of the Council in 2025 includes this site in parcel SEB 17

The assessment states:

*"**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 Poynton is a town and so is also defined as a large built-up area.*
- *The parcel is predominantly 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 outer boundary with adjacent Green Belt land to the south is defined weakly by field boundaries.*
- *Development of land in the parcel would have an incongruous impact on the urban pattern. Despite the presence of the A523 to the east, development would reduce the size of the gap between Woodford (including Woodford Garden Village) and Poynton, which would weaken the sense of separation between them."*

- We believe that the site of DC/100108, which lies within this parcel, would reduce the size of the gap between development sprawl in Woodford Garden Village and Poynton, which would weaken the sense of separation between them and therefore the site does not meet the criteria for Grey Belt.

Figure 5: DC/100108 site layout

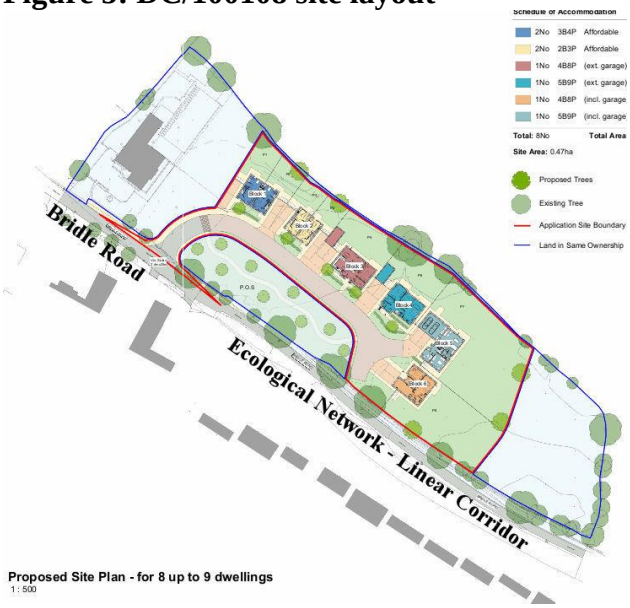


Figure 6: Stockport Local Plan Regulation 19 Policies Map – DC/100108 location



Stockport Local Plan Regulation 19 Policies Map - Key



7. Suggestion for conditions and Section 106 agreement

Notwithstanding our objections to this outline proposal, we suggest that, in the event of a decision to grant approval, it should be tightly controlled via conditions and a robust Section 106 agreement to protect character, deliver public benefits and prevent harmful implementation, including:

- Access & highways to be discharged before commencement: full detailed access design, visibility splays, construction traffic management plan, off-site highway improvements, active-travel links, and any required Traffic Regulation Order contributions; no occupation until access is complete and available.
- Reserved matters to be submitted within a short timescale (e.g., 18–24 months) and to include design codes/parameters plans limiting height, density, scale, massing, materials, amenity space size and boundary treatments and layout so that development respects Woodford's rural character.
- Affordable housing with tenure mix, phasing, and provisions secured in the S106; to avoid any late-stage viability review.
- Open space, play, sports and biodiversity: off-site public open space, children's play, and formal sports contributions; Biodiversity Net Gain with long-term management plan, monitoring and funding secured.
- Landscape & trees: detailed soft/hard landscaping, tree protection with an arboriculture method statement and tree protection plan, and retention of key natural features. Trees should be mature not saplings
- Drainage & flood risk: sustainable drainage scheme and no occupation until completed.
- Ecology: full ecological surveys with mitigation/enhancement, and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- Noise, air quality, sustainability: compliance with noise assessment mitigation; energy/sustainability statement meeting Core Strategy SD policies and any higher emerging standards; electric-vehicle charging and cycle storage.
- Phasing, construction & residential amenity: CEMP covering hours, dust, noise, wheel-washing, parking for contractors vehicles not on the grass verges of Bridle road as previously experienced; no commencement until all pre-commencement conditions are discharged.
- S106 heads of terms in addition to affordable housing and education, healthcare, active travel, formal sports, and any other infrastructure contributions necessary to make the development acceptable; monitoring fees; and clauses ensuring the permission is not implemented in a way that prejudices the emerging Local Plan allocations or cumulative impacts in Woodford.

- Time limits and revocation/modification safeguards: short implementation period; ability for the LPA to review or modify if the emerging Local Plan is adopted with conflicting allocations or policies.

8. Summary

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

- The site does not meet the criteria for Grey Belt.
- The proposal does not meet the criteria for any of the exceptions to the restrictions on development in Green Belt.
- The site is in an inaccessible location in Green Belt.
- The proposal 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 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 access via a narrow, single track, un-adopted, dead-end road is completely unacceptable. Safety for all road users and access for emergency vehicles should be assessed.
- There is no evidence of an unmet need for large 4/5 bedroomed houses in Woodford.
- The proposal would cause harm to the ecological network due to proximity to a wildlife corridor.
- The addition of 8 dwellings would not make a significant contribution to the housing supply, which is being addressed by the emerging Stockport Local Plan.
- Speculative development proposals threaten to undermine development in an organised and planned manner, as set out in the draft Stockport Local Plan.
- There are no very special circumstances that would justify the harms that would result from this proposal.
- In conclusion, the proposal does not comply with NPPF 2026, the Stockport Local Plan, or the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely,

Evelyn Frearson On behalf of Woodford Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee