Position Statement from Woodford Neighbourhood Forum
23rd November 2026

Severe over-development in and around Woodford

The Woodford Neighbourhood Plan forms part of Stockport's statutory development plan and reflects the clear wishes of local residents to support positive, incremental growth that protects the village's rural character, landscape, environment and infrastructure.

Changes in national planning policies have almost doubled Stockport's housing target and introduced the concept of Grey Belt, with the aim of increasing housing numbers.

The Forum is deeply concerned by the scale of development already approved and proposed for Woodford on Green Belt land. It will change the rural character of Woodford forever, and current infrastructure will not cope.

A complex situation has arisen in Woodford with developers applying for planning permission for development of large sites, some of which are also earmarked for future development in the new Stockport Local Plan.

Just over a decade ago Woodford contained around 550 houses. Woodford Garden Village, with permission granted in 2015 for almost 1,000 additional dwellings, created a three-fold increase. Separately from the new Local Plan, applications have recently been permitted for an extension to Woodford Garden Village and for land south of Chester Road, which will increase the number to well over 2,500 dwellings, a four- to five-fold rise. A further application for approximately 450 homes, refused by the Council, is currently with the Secretary of State. Additional large-scale applications in or adjacent to Woodford totalling over 460 houses are yet to be decided by the Council. The vast majority of these recently approved and proposed applications are on Green Belt land. Refusal by the Council runs the risk of appeal and a high chance of approval by a Government appointed planning inspector.

Meanwhile, the draft new Stockport Local Development Plan for the next 15 years, being prepared by the Council operating under direction from Government ministers, proposes over 1,500 new dwellings within or immediately adjacent to Woodford. This level of growth does not reflect the vision or objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. We have serious doubts about the ability of the Stockport Plan to deliver the necessary funding for education,

healthcare, retail and transport infrastructure, or to mitigate the significant traffic impacts on already congested local roads.

Two of the sites proposed in the Plan, namely Woodford Garden Village extension and Land South of Chester Road, have already been granted planning permission ahead of the Local Plan process and others may follow this route. This pattern is very worrying because these applications do not provide firm guarantees of the supporting facilities and infrastructure the community needs. The Local Plan should include infrastructure plans, but it will be too late for the current swathe of applications. It will be too late for Woodford.

Significant agreed and proposed applications in neighbouring Cheshire East are also appearing. When these are taken into account, the potential cumulative total of new dwellings within a 2 km radius of Woodford Community Centre exceeds 5,500.

The scale of these numbers is incredible. It cannot make sense. There are few employment opportunities in the area. Public transport is poor, current roads are considerably more congested than they were before Woodford Garden Village existed, and will only get much worse. All this development concentrated in this area is currently being driven by Government policy and developers, not by real housing needs.

Background notes

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum was designated in 2013. The Woodford Neighbourhood Plan was made following a successful local referendum in 2019 and forms part of the Stockport Development Plan.

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum has made a significant and detailed response to Stockport Council's recent Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation. We will continue to monitor all planning applications affecting Woodford and will continue to respond robustly where proposals conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan or place unacceptable pressure on local infrastructure and the Green Belt.

We remain committed to working constructively for the sustainable future of Woodford, while ensuring that the scale of change does not destroy the character and quality of life valued by residents.