

## **Woodford Neighbourhood Forum**

### **Planning statement in response to the planning applications by Harrow Estates**

**Planning applications: DC/053833, DC/054212 and DC/053832**

#### **Introduction**

The local communities of Woodford, Poynton, Adlington and adjoining areas have been working together over the last three years since British Aerospace vacated the former aerodrome site. On the Stockport side, the Woodford community has been successful in establishing a Woodford Neighbourhood Forum (WNF) to represent its views and to progress a Neighbourhood Plan for the future of the Woodford area. They will all be affected by the redevelopment of Woodford Aerodrome because of the scale and size of the site. Local residents accept that the re-use, conversion and selective redevelopment of the brownfield parts of the site containing existing buildings should take place. The majority of the site is open land forming the runway, apron areas and associated land and is protected by national Green Belt policy, with the eastern part of the site lying within Cheshire East Council

These planning applications seek to disregard the history and character of the Woodford area, and also disregard established planning policy for the area as set out in the Development Plan by proposing a housing development of around 1000 houses, solely within the Stockport part of the site boundary. This size and scale of development would triple the size of the existing Woodford village. Furthermore, the information presented with the hybrid application is misleading and contradicts the Development Plan and the Council's own Supplementary Planning Document for the site. For example, the Planning Statement accompanying the applications refers to only two policies for the Green Belt contained in the Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (May 2006) as being relevant to this whereas there are five policies (see section 1 below)

The applications also provide insufficient information so as to enable an informed opinion to be made about how the development of such a massive site can be controlled through the use of planning conditions and legal agreements. On behalf of those local communities, WNF formally requests Stockport Council to refuse the planning applications for the reasons below.

The WNF makes comments on the following aspects of the applications on behalf of the community of Woodford and will seek the support of other communities for our views.

- Conflict with the Development Plan
- Conflict with national Green Belt Policy
- Conflict with the Supplementary Planning Document for the site
- Loss of employment land

- Lack of sustainability and public transport
- Inadequate community facilities and services
- Local traffic impacts

The Forum's response to this application comprises four documents:

- This Planning Statement
- Comparison of Heads of Terms with SPD and community needs
- Proposed planning conditions in the event of the approval of planning permission
- Proposed reasons for refusal of planning permission

## **1 Conflict with the Development Plan**

The relevant Development Plan policies are those of the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and those of the Core Strategy (CS), particularly those for the location of new housing and also Green Belt policies and boundary definition. The main application (DC/053832) as submitted does not comply with policies in the Development Plan as we shall demonstrate.

There are five Green Belt policies in the Saved Policies of the UDP as follows:

GBA 1.1 concerning the extent of the Green Belt within Stockport

GBA 1.2 concerning the control of development within the Green Belt

GBA 1.5 concerning residential development within the Green Belt

GBA 1.6 concerning the re-use of buildings within the Green Belt

GBA1.7 concerning Major Existing Developed sites in the Green Belt

The relevance of these policies in the supporting planning statement to the application is not only ignored, but fails to recognise that by virtue of their consideration as part of the Core Strategy approval process by the independent planning inspector, the policies are up to date. Therefore they are part of the Development Plan. Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan. Paragraph 87 of the Framework confirms that inappropriate development (such as housing) is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

The application seeks to confuse the decision makers, whether it is Stockport Council, the Secretary of State, a planning Inspector or any subsequent legal testing of their decisions. The application seeks to create a substantial amount of new housing development within the Green Belt by virtue of a hybrid application. The most appropriate manner to achieve this would be through the submission of a separate outline planning application which seeks to place housing development beyond the acknowledged brown field part of the site upon which buildings are now

located. Furthermore, the hybrid application fails to provide sufficient clarity in terms of providing further guidance for development in terms of such matters as improving sustainability and accessibility and housing mix, tenure and affordability.

### **1.1 Green Belt**

There is no policy in the Core Strategy or the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan proposing a policy change to Green Belt policies and a rolling back of the Green Belt boundaries in this area, yet the hybrid planning application proposes development within the Green Belt (i.e. beyond the brownfield areas). Substantial parts of the adopted UDP are still in force, especially policies for the Green Belt. Policy GBA1.1 of the UDP specifically lists the Woodford area as a major part of the Borough to which the Green Belt policy will apply. The relevant Development Plan policies to be applied to the application include policy GBA1.1 of the UDP and it is perhaps the most relevant and significant. Policy GBA1.2 sets out the policy to be applied within the Green Belt and provides for a presumption against the erection of buildings unless for specific rural uses. All other uses (including housing development) are stated to be, by definition, inappropriate development and therefore harmful to the Green Belt. Paragraph 6.7 of the UDP confirms that planning applications not in accordance with this policy will be treated as departures from the Development Plan. Stockport Council has itself acknowledged the departure from the Development Plan proposed by this application and has treated the application as a departure application. Policy GBA1.7 established the principle of Major Existing Developed Sites (MEDS) to include the Woodford site within which selective redevelopment and re-use would be acceptable.

This application proposes development beyond the limits of the MEDS so it is either seeking to change the Green Belt boundary by default to a new, as yet undefined area, or to justify inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Regarding changes to Green Belt boundaries, these cannot be made in a planning application. Any changes to the definition of Green Belt areas have to be subject to a full review of the local area's needs over the next 10-20 year period. The adopted Core Strategy (2011) proposed no changes to the boundaries of the Green Belt in this area and retained the two areas of MEDS A and B contained in the UDP. Consequently, there has been no opportunity as required in the National Planning Policy Framework for an independent examination of changes to Green Belt boundaries by a planning inspector. To proceed in this manner is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework. If no change to Green Belt boundaries is proposed, the proposed residential development contained in this hybrid planning application is by definition harmful, inappropriate and a departure from the Development Plan. The hybrid application is therefore contrary to the Development Plan and should be refused planning permission.

### **1.2 Previously developed land**

The application seeks to demonstrate that the whole of the land within the applications is “previously developed land” and that therefore one of the exceptions to the presumption against residential development in the Green Belt applies. Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG 2) previously made provision for the limited infilling or partial or complete redevelopment of major existing developed sites (MEDS) in the Green Belt (whether redundant or in continuing use), provided they were firstly identified in an adopted Local Plan (i.e. as Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt). The term ‘Major Developed Sites’ has not been carried through into the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012. However, at paragraph 89, the NPPF does provide for the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. The definition of “previously developed land” is carried forward from the previous guidance and remains as follows: “and which is or was occupied by a permanent structure including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any fixed surface infrastructure” (Glossary Appendix to the NPPF). We would draw attention to Figure 2.2 Woodford Site Plan from page 9 or Figure 4.1 Existing Land Uses of the approved Stockport Council Supplementary Planning Document for Woodford Aerodrome which clearly demonstrate how little of the full application site accords with this definition. .

The developer has erroneously therefore assumed that the whole site within their ownership lying within Stockport meets the definition of previously developed land. On this basis, do they make the same claim for the remaining land within Cheshire East? Such an interpretation is clearly incorrect as the majority of the site did not comprise permanent structures or their curtilages, but an aerodrome, aprons and safety buffers all of which contributed to the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, the NPPF provides no guidance on the scale of the site to which the limited infilling or partial or complete redevelopment referred to above could apply. However, any infill or redevelopment still has to meet the impact on openness test. If the whole site is accepted as previously developed land, this application has to be considered against the purposes of including land in the Green Belt which are set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF. The relevant purposes to this site are as follows: to

- (1) check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. The designation of the boundary of the metropolitan area and Borough of Stockport and Greater Manchester boundary run cross this site is a reflection of the peripheral nature of the site. Furthermore, the previous use as an aerodrome confirms this as

such uses clearly cannot be accommodated within large built up areas. This area of open land clearly achieved this purpose of Green Belt which is confirmed by the Development Plan policies.

- (2) Prevent neighbouring town from merging into one another. The village of Woodford is contiguous with Bramhall and Poynton through the ribbon development along the main road between the settlements. The aerodrome is the major land use preventing the towns from merging into each other so they all join together.
- (3) Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The aerodrome created a positive use for this countryside area. The cessation of aerodrome related uses which included large areas of open land (both in agricultural use and used for safety and security) prevented encroachment from housing development onto the site. The plans accompanying this application clearly show a statement of intent to build houses across as much of the former aerodrome as they can.
- (4) Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. This site is not in urban use, the majority being in a use which can only occur outside built up areas i.e. an aerodrome. The community accepts the principle of the redevelopment of the MEDS as that would conform with existing Development Plan policies and retain the openness of the Green Belt at this point.

Also, there is a parliamentary written answer given in 2007 which is relevant. It concerned the issue as to whether an airfield, either existing or redundant could be defined as previously developed land. This is unlike the Woodford case as this site also includes aircraft manufacture, repair and maintenance as uses of land and buildings. In reply to a question, the then Minister (Yvette Cooper) said it would depend upon local circumstances. "It is for local authorities in individual cases to judge whether an airfield or former airfield should be treated as previously developed land. There is no presumption that the land is previously developed is necessarily suitable for housing development nor that the whole of the curtilage should be developed".

### **1.3 Major Housing Development in a rural area**

There is no policy in the Core Strategy or other parts of the Development Plan proposing this site for housing use only, yet given the size of it, such a policy should

have been strategic enough. Indeed, the Woodford site is acknowledged as a strategic site in the Core Strategy, but only within the context of a mixed housing and employment development. Other housing policies of concern are those relating to the priorities for the location of new housing development. The priority for new housing development is on Stockport Central Area, within regeneration priority areas and on sites where specific regeneration needs have been identified. After that, urban areas with good accessibility are preferred locations and these are defined as being within and adjoining town and district centres of the Borough and in other locations which are genuinely sustainably accessible within the urban areas” (paragraph 3.3 of the Core Strategy). This site is in a rural area with limited sustainability and accessibility as noted by UDP’s planning inspector. The allocation for major new housing development on this site and of this size should have been the subject of a Site Allocations Plan following the adoption of the Core Strategy three years ago. The lack of progress of such a plan now leaves the Council with no site specific allocations to deliver the Core Strategy for new housing. We would remind the Council that the main functions of a Site Allocations Plan are as follows: to set out detailed development policies, to establish site allocations and to determine site specific policies. These important functions are again those which should be subject to separate “examinations in public” by a Government appointed inspector. A hybrid planning application in the manner submitted is an inappropriate vehicle to allocate the site for housing, to define the amount of housing and other housing matters properly reserved for independent examination.

The Core Strategy at CS3 and DM-H3 sets out Development Plan policy for housing mix including guidance of the amount of affordable housing. In the background paper for the examination on Housing the Council suggested that the Woodford site would provide houses with a mix of tenures, types and sizes; the target is 40% affordable in Woodford subject to viability. We note that the application proposes substantially below this level (10%) in the full component of the application, yet there is no information provided as to the reasons why the full amount of affordable housing cannot be delivered by the developer on this site. The hybrid application shows a lack of other details for affordable housing across the whole site. For example, what provision should be made on-site, what is the nature of the affordable properties required to be delivered along with such a large redevelopment, what types of tenure and what is the mix between the different sizes and types of properties? We understand that the Woodford area, due to its rural nature, is not a priority for investment in affordable housing. However, there is a need for affordable houses to be built in more sustainable locations and while we consider the Harrow approach is contrary to the Core Strategy requirement, we believe the deficit in numbers on this site (the other 30%) should be accommodated in areas of the Borough more in need of affordable housing.

#### **1.4 Employment**

There is no policy in the Core Strategy proposing the deletion and cessation of uses for such a large employment site as the Woodford one affords. Furthermore, within policy GBA1.7 of the UDP the Woodford site is identified as an Employment MEDS site. The reasons and explanation for the policy indicate that any residential development within these areas would need to satisfy a sequential approach to development and phasing criteria. The hybrid application fails to show how either of these criteria have been met in these proposals. There is however policy which seeks the protection of employment land from development of other uses, particularly housing as the largest user of newly developed land.

### **1.5 Woodford Opportunity Site Principles**

The Core Strategy sets out some specific principles for the redevelopment of the Woodford site, based upon the conclusions of the planning inspector who conducted the public examination. With regard to Woodford, the hybrid planning application fails to comply with some principles as follows:

#### **1 Mixed use**

The Core Strategy states “A mixed use development or primarily residential and employment uses would maintain a significant employment presence within the area and the wide borough as well as helping to meet housing needs, again in the locality and for the borough. The application contains very limited employment provision and none within the first phase of the development.

#### **2 Green Belt**

The Core Strategy states “Consolidation of the two MEDS (Major Existing Developed Sites) in the Green Belt into one may allow for a more cohesive and comprehensive development ...”The hybrid application proposes development on land beyond the total amount of land comprised in the two MEDS and has accordingly been treated as a Departure from the Development Plan by the Borough Council.

#### **3 Sustainability and accessibility**

The Core Strategy states” The site and the surrounding area of Woodford is currently poorly served by public transport and there are issues relating to the immediate highway access and links to wider highway network”. It proposes improvement to public transport and highways. The application itself proposes no improvements to the local highway network other than junction improvements and very limited proposals for improvements to public transport provision.

### **2 Conflict with national Green Belt policy**

The majority of the Woodford Aerodrome site in both Stockport and Cheshire East lies within the Green Belt, an acknowledgement by both authorities and government of the rural location of the site on the outer fringe of the conurbation. Within Stockport, the areas occupied by buildings are designated as brownfield sites (known as MEDS) which would allow for selective re-use and redevelopment. However, the proposed development area for this planning application is larger than the combined areas of the existing MEDS. So this is a major incursion into the Green Belt towards Cheshire, thereby reducing the sensitive open gaps between the three communities of Woodford, Adlington and Poynton and contrary to both national Green Belt policy as confirmed in the National Planning Policy Statement of 2012 and Green Belt policies within both Stockport and Cheshire East.

National policies concerning the principles for the location of new development and the continued protection of Green Belt land are set out in the National Planning Policy Statement (NPPF). The location of this amount of development in a location which the Council itself accept is poorly served by transport infrastructure is contrary to the principles of sustainable development set out in the NPPF.

### **3 Stockport Woodford Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

The purpose of Supplementary Planning Documents is set out in the National Planning Policy Statement (Annex 2 page 56) in which they are defined as “documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan” (in this case the Core Strategy). “They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular sites, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions, but are not part of the development plan”. It is clear that SPDs cannot be used to create new land use policies, rather they are to be used to provide a potential developer with greater detail to guide the implementation of development plan policies.

The attempt to redefine new Green Belt boundaries through the Woodford SPD is contrary to the NPPF which makes it clear such changes can only be done through the Local Plan (in this case Core Strategy) or a Site Allocations plan or an action area plan, all of which would be subject to independent examination. Furthermore, the SPD seeks to exceed the status accorded to it in the NPPF because of the nature and scale of the differences with adopted policies.

Notwithstanding these comments, the WNF notes that the hybrid application fails to comply with some important safeguards already identified within the SPD by Stockport Council. Although by its very nature much of the application is only indicative of potential development, many of these safeguards should be addressed

**The North West Regional Strategy (2008) Policy EM18 - Decentralised Energy Supply [RS Policy EM18]** requires that all residential developments comprising 10 or more units should secure at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, unless it can be demonstrated



by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable. In addition RS Policies EM15, EM16 and EM17 seek to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency, however these objectives have been inadequately addressed since the application fails to demonstrate how such targets and objectives will be achieved. Concerning housing mix, there should be a viability study to support the proposals. The approach is not consistent with a recommended “pepper potting” layout.

Among other elements, section 4.8 of the SPD states that a redevelopment scheme offers an opportunity to enhance the openness of the Green Belt. Although it is recognised that footpaths will be re-established and a culvert opened, overall there lacks the identification and trigger points for the establishment of outdoor sporting facilities, whilst the opportunities to create biodiversity in the form of an Eco Park, as was originally discussed at the workshops has been omitted.

Woodford is described as a ribbon development under 4.9 of the SPD with a density of 9-12 dwelling per hectare. Even accepting the Council proposed densities of 22 – 24 dwellings per hectare, the proposals falls outside those limits. The SPD recommends 750 – 850 dwellings, not 950 as indicated in the application.

4.20 makes reference to SEMMMS which is a significant factor in the development of the site, and a limit should be put on the number of dwellings permitted before its completion, and although it considers a Poynton bypass is not a material factor, provision should be made to take the opportunities afforded by such a road were it to be constructed, while 4.23 recognises routes along main roads are generally unattractive for cyclists due to narrow carriageway widths and high traffic flows thereby adding to unsustainability in the form of transport options. Additionally Public transport recommendations are made in the Heads of Terms accompanying the Planning Application and these must be the very minimum conditions applied.

The heritage of the site is addressed in section 4.39 yet there appear to be no plans to enhance or protect the control tower instanced as a heritage asset.

Insufficient details are provided to demonstrate the creation of a mixed and balanced community with particular reference to accommodation for people of all ages.

The site is not well located in relation to the potential workforce and markets. This statement supports the failure of the site to be a sustainable since it is anticipated that the majority of resident employment will require significant commuting.

Employment opportunities are set out and quantified within the SPD, however they are not guaranteed within the application. They must be conditioned as part of any approval.

Some of the creditable aims of the SPD are inadequately addressed, not least the failure to integrate the new development with the existing village. Local housing choice has not been identified. The actions and construction required to recycle / reduce waste following occupation is also unclear or omitted from the application.

There is no identified detailed provision for appropriate and affordable retirement housing built to Lifetime Homes standards which older occupants can downsize into. This provision should also include specialist and supported accommodation.

Under 5.85, the amenities of the existing properties fronting Chester Road and Bridle Road should be given particular consideration, and development should not adversely affect the privacy or general amenity of any adjoining occupiers. It is not clear in all cases that this has been effected.

Attention has been given when making this representation to the Heads of Terms. For clarity, suggestions for amendments to that document have been made, and are submitted together with this Planning Statement They should be read in conjunction with each other in order to highlight trigger and other SPD compliance elements.

#### **4 Loss of employment land**

The site has been used for the manufacture, repair and maintenance of aircraft for nearly ninety years, and the Council's own Development Plan acknowledges and supports this. The SPD makes very limited provision whatsoever for any employment uses on the site. In our view, the SPD cannot override the Development Plan on this point. Accordingly, it is our view that the application fails to comply with the relevant Employment policies of both the UDP (2006) and Core Strategy (2011).

A range of possible uses on some of the site were indicated as being acceptable to the planning inspector including some new build and/or some changes of use. The Council's own adopted policy acknowledges the need to protect employment areas from other uses (such as housing). It states "Were that to happen it would risk employment opportunities being missed in the longer term which could result in the need for greenfield and green belt being released to provide additional employment opportunities". Woodford village currently has very limited public transport and is a small rural area now remote from major employment areas following closure of the aerodrome.

Matter 3 Employment Issue 14 of the evidence presented by the Council to the public examination states as follows: "The Council feels that the maintenance of appropriate employment uses on the site is important for the retention of jobs in this area, the opportunities to utilise the skills the population possesses and to help contribute towards a mixed use development in the wider community". It also recognised the site as an opportunity to develop light industrial units and local expanding businesses on the site. This justification was accepted by the planning inspector and reflected in both his report and Stockport's own endorsement in the Woodford principles for development. The WNF considers the very limited amount of employment land shown in this application is flawed and merely a gesture given the changes to the Supplementary Planning Document. The application is based on incorrect assumptions made about the likely interest from a range of different potential employment generating type uses on this site. For example, the high bay buildings could be used for film and TV studios, be converted into offices or electronic –related industries or in part used for high bay warehousing purposes.

The completion of SEMMMS in both directions will improve the accessibility of the site for a wide range of employment purposes. Furthermore, as the country recovers from the recession over the last 5+ years, sites capable of accommodating new and expanding businesses and providing local jobs are important to secure that economic recovery. Approval of a wholly residential scheme for the first part of the development is a missed opportunity in any event.

## **5 Lack of sustainability and public transport**

Sustainable development is the first objective and the overriding principle of Stockport's Core Strategy. Yet the hybrid planning application proposes a housing led use, whereas a mixed use scheme would clearly be more sustainable and reduce the dependency on travel away from the area for other uses including employment. A major investment and improvement in public transport would be required to meet the needs of future residents for the full range of off- uses (such as secondary schooling, health, medical, weekly shopping and so). Very little information is provided in the application about what improvement would take place, who would be responsible for implementation, how they would be funded and at what stage they may be provided.

The Core Strategy states "The site and the surrounding area of Woodford is currently poorly served by public transport and there are issues relating to the immediate highway access and links to wider highway network". It proposes improvement to public transport and highways. The SPD itself proposed no improvements to the local highway network and no detailed proposals for improvements to public transport provision.

Furthermore, the hybrid application assumes that the SEMMMS road will be completed during the period of the development. The application makes little reference to what could happen if the SEMMMS road is not completed and the consequences for the site.

No attempt has been made to respond to the challenges set in the relevant sections of the Core Strategy which require a major uplift in local transport infrastructure to achieve the sustainable access required in that document.

## **6 Inadequate community facilities and services**

The hybrid application is very limited in addressing the full community impacts of a development of this size. Some on-site provision for local services is proposed, but experience elsewhere suggests that such new facilities face many challenges across all sectors if they are to be viable and successful. Of more concern is the failure to address the impact on the wider community of this scale of development on services such as secondary education, medical, health and other services and facilities. Further work by the developer and the two local councils will be required before it can be said with any confidence that there will not be a detrimental impact on the existing communities.

We have sought to endorse the provisions set out in the SPD which did seek to address the deficiency in community facilities needed for this increase in population. However, the hybrid application makes a limited attempt in this area to address the means by which those community facilities can be delivered over the period of development and beyond. We have considered the draft Heads of Terms submitted with the application and have prepared a separate document which seeks to address the gaps in likely provision as the community sees it.

## **7 Local traffic impacts**

Local residents are extremely concerned about the impact of increased traffic arising from this development which will arise from the construction and subsequent occupation of up to 1000 new houses in Woodford. The proposed extension of SEMMMS may well alleviate some congestion, but it is not at all clear from the application how local roads around Woodford, Adlington and Poynton will cope with this scale of development. More information is required on the impact on the local road network and potential traffic management schemes within these surrounding communities

We note that the hybrid application considers that 2001 should be adopted as the baseline year for the assessment of traffic impacts associated with the development. This was when British Aerospace were employing many staff on this site. A housing development of this size would result in a reversal of those trips. A residential development of this size causes real concern in respect of increased traffic congestion in the surrounding area at peak commuting times. Adlington Parish Council would therefore expect any traffic impact assessment to include consideration on the impacts on the wider area including the A523 and Brookledge Lane from Adlington to Pott Shrigley. Whilst Poynton Town Council would equally expect an assessment to include the town centre, Clifford Road and indeed Park Lane. Other affected routes within Cheshire East would include those between Adlington and Wilmslow and Handforth. It is clear that additional work needs to be carried out concerning the side roads within Bramhall leading to Stockport and the A34. Linked to the absence of other transport infrastructure proposals, the application fails to meet the aspirations of the Core Strategy for major improvement in sustainability and accessibility.

## **Conclusion**

The Aerodrome opened in 1924 and closed in 2011. The site contains a range of buildings and uses which have the potential for re-use and some redevelopment; part of the site containing those buildings is clearly brown field. The majority of the site is open, forming the runway, apron areas and associated land. The concern of the WNF is that the planning applications merely reflect the wishes of the selected preferred developer (Harrow Estates). It does not accord with national planning policies, it does not accord with Stockport's own planning policies as set out in its adopted Core Strategy nor previous Unitary Development Plan following independent examination by planning inspectors. It does not accord with the Council's own recent adopted Supplementary Planning Document for the site. It

does not reflect existing policies for the area contained within existing policies for the Green Belt on the Cheshire side of the boundary. It does not reflect the rural character and limited accessibility and sustainability of the local area on the boundary between the Greater Manchester conurbation and Cheshire. It certainly does not reflect the views and wishes of local residents who in the main agree that the site needs to be developed, preferably for a mixed use form of development with a far reduced number of houses. The applications should be rejected since they clearly only serve the wishes of the developer Harrow Estates. The WNF is keen to work with both local authorities to move the redevelopment of this redundant site forward.

WNF Chair

January 2014