



February 2013

SMBC approves the revised Woodford Aerodrome Opportunity Site SPD

The *Woodford Aerodrome Opportunity Site Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)* was approved by Stockport Council Executive Committee on Monday 14th January 2013. This brought to an end the first phase of the re-development of the site. The next phase is likely to be a planning application by the developers, Harrow Estates/Redrow Homes. We await this with interest.



Woodford United is comprised of some twenty residents from Woodford and the surrounding area, who are giving freely of their time and skills in such specialist areas as town planning, property legal expertise, architecture and engineering as well as communication, financial and management expertise.

Woodford United has worked diligently with the local MP and SMBC Councillors, as well as with representatives of other local councils bordering on the Aerodrome site. It has undertaken a survey of all Woodford residents, analysed and commented on the SPD proposals in depth, received sound legal advice from one of the country's leading barristers in this field, created a very effective exhibition in record time to run parallel to SMBC's exhibition, attended all relevant Council meetings, asking searching questions, and communicated with residents through leaflets, the WCC website and emails. . We would like to thank everyone who supported our campaign, both financially and in kind, without which much of this would not have been possible.



A Woodford United working group meeting

Woodford United would like to thank all the residents who responded to the draft SPD. SMBC received a massive 735 responses to the consultation. As a result of these contributions a number of positive changes have been made to the original draft SPD, as well as public commitments made during the subsequent adoption process.

The most significant changes made in the SPD:

A copy of the final version of the Woodford Aerodrome Opportunity Site SPD can be downloaded [here](#).

Traffic issues

The original draft relied on traffic data from 2001, but that was when the BAe factory was operating with shift patterns, not when a huge housing development was on the site. SMBC recognised this and the developer is now required to undertake a detailed traffic assessment of local roads and describe how traffic issues will be dealt with, both with and without the completion of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road (SEMMMS).

Area of development and Green Belt

There is now a clearer undertaking that the area of future development will not exceed the area of the current development of 42 hectares (approx 100 acres). Also, the development must have no greater impact on the Green Belt than the current development.

Phasing

Much more emphasis is now given to the importance of phasing. The developers are required to submit a comprehensive phasing strategy as part of the initial planning application. This includes the opening of a new single form entry primary school prior to the occupation of the 300th dwelling.

Public transport

The revised SPD states that new bus services and improved access to rail services will be needed to meet SMBC's strategy for sustainable accessibility in all new developments. In addition, the developer is required to provide long-term support to encourage less use of private cars and greater use of public transport.

Medical services

The previous draft was silent on healthcare issues. The amended SPD now refers to the potential need for increased healthcare provision and requires a review once responsibility has passed to GP-led boards.

Improvements to local community facilities

The Council has acknowledged that measures to facilitate integration of the new residents within the existing community could include enhancement of existing facilities.

House numbers

These have been reduced from 950 to 750-850. We view this as a good start, but only a start. We will continue to use our best endeavours to find ways to work with SMBC and developers to reduce this further.

Employment

We pressed for more area to be dedicated to employment opportunities. The revised SPD now allows for an additional 2 hectares for employment, estimating that this could create an additional 425 jobs. We believe this still isn't enough, given the overall size of the development.

Liaison between local councils

SMBC has confirmed its intention to engage in constructive dialogue with Cheshire East Council to ensure that a "joined-up" approach is taken to development within a 5-mile radius of Woodford since, if all the current development proposals were to go ahead, there would be over 4000 new homes within this area in the next decade. SMBC has agreed to establish joint governance arrangements to oversee the process and as part of the duty to co-operate.

The need for Woodford United's continuing effort

Whilst significant progress has been made in the revision of the SPD, we believe that the indicated number of 750 – 850 dwellings is still too high (the population of Woodford will almost quadruple!), that the 2 hectares allowed for potential employment use is too small, that traffic problems will be a nightmare unless dealt with robustly and that measures to preserve the character of the village have not been adequately addressed.

Therefore Woodford United will need to continue its work by responding to public consultations relating to the planning process, reviewing planning applications in detail and seeking legal advice where appropriate to ensure that such plans comply with procedural policies and legal requirements.

Woodford Community Council and Woodford United are committed to continuing to do their utmost to achieve a development solution for Woodford and its surroundings that is in keeping with the area and the expressed wishes of the residents. We look forward to your continuing support during the next phase of development. If you have any comments on our programme or can contribute additional expertise, please contact us at info@woodfordcommunity.co.uk

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