



October 9<sup>th</sup> 2014

## **URGENT MESSAGE FROM WOODFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

### **Green Belt in Woodford Under Threat – You Can Help!**

The recently formed Woodford Neighbourhood Forum has followed keenly the progress of the proposed development at the former Woodford Aerodrome site. The Forum has been active in pursuing appropriate and proportionate development.

As previously reported, Stockport Planning and Highways Regulation Committee voted to approve the Harrow planning application for a development of up to 920 houses plus a 100-unit extra care unit on the former BAE site. Last week SMBC wrote to the Secretary of State saying that, given the nature and scale of the Woodford Aerodrome development, the application was being put forward for him to consider whether he concurs with the position reached by the authority. The Secretary of State will only investigate (“call in”) the application through a public inquiry if he believes that it is in contravention of Green Belt policy and guidelines. He has 21 days to decide whether to call it in or not. That clock is already ticking.

The latest government planning guidelines, fortuitously announced on 6 October 2014, make it clear that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of a Local Plan. The planning application for the Woodford Aerodrome site alters Green Belt boundaries. We do not believe SMBC has prepared or reviewed a Local Plan taking the boundary changes into account. Nor do we believe the circumstances are exceptional. Therefore, the application is in contravention of these guidelines.

The sheer scale of this proposed development will have wide ranging, adverse impacts on our area. Therefore, we urge you to make representations by post or email to the Secretary of State, The Rt Hon Eric Pickles. Contact details and deadlines are given below.

Your letter should emphasise the fact that the application is, we believe, in contravention of Green Belt Policy and guidelines as there is significant erosion of the local Green Belt area. Please refer to the application - number DC/053832, Woodford Aerodrome Opportunity Site. It is concerns about Green Belt which will determine whether or not the application gets called in. We want him to call a public inquiry because giving permission for housing on land allocated as green belt raises issues of regional and national importance.

In addition, there is no harm in including other concerns you may have, such as:

- The trebling in size of this small rural community
- Loss of rural village character in Woodford - visited by walkers and cyclists from neighbouring communities
- Significant increase in traffic volumes in neighbouring communities
- Overloading of already stretched services and facilities, such as doctors and schools, in neighbouring communities
- Lack of employment opportunities in the area

Personal letters expressing your own views are preferable. However, if you would prefer to use a template letter, one can be found on the Woodford Community Council website: [www.woodfordcommunity.co.uk/sos-letter.html](http://www.woodfordcommunity.co.uk/sos-letter.html).

**Please write as soon as possible to:**

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles  
DCLG  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

**or email:** [eric.pickles@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:eric.pickles@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

**The 21-day window closes on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014, but we have just been informed by the National Planning Casework Unit, which is dealing with SMBC's submission, that a decision could be made sooner,**

**Our local community needs your support. Don't rely on others - do your bit to help and act now!**



#### SIGN UP FOR THE NEWSLETTER !

It is vitally important to all the communities surrounding Woodford airfield that our views carry weight and that we can react promptly to changing events. For this, we need as many as possible to be signed up for the community newsletter. If a friend or an organisation has forwarded this newsflash to you, please ensure that you continue to receive copies of all future newsflashes and newsletters by subscribing [here](#).

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter and newsflashes you can unsubscribe [here](#).

Note: we respect your privacy and no information or data gathered from the online forms will be passed to any third party.

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Contact the Editor at [newsletter@woodfordcommunity.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@woodfordcommunity.co.uk)