

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Prosperity

Date of Meeting: 13th July 2010
Report of: Stuart Penny, Planning Policy Manager
Subject/Title: Stockport MBC Core Strategy

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report considers the current consultation on the Stockport Core Strategy Submission DPD, potential implications for the Cheshire East area and the suggested nature of the Council's response.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Prosperity direct that the Council formally supports as 'sound' the proposals for the Woodford Aerodrome Opportunity Site detailed in the Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is considered that the principles for development stated in the Core Strategy for determining the future use of the Woodford Aerodrome Opportunity site tie in with this Council's previous comments and form a good basis for developing more detailed planning guidance for the site.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 N/A

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 N/A

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 N/A

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 N/A

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 None for this Authority. Adjoining LPAs are required to consult this Council regarding the content of their Development Plan Documents.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 N/A

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 Stockport MBC has published its Core Strategy DPD and is asking for representations to be made by 19th July prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. These will be considered alongside the submitted DPD and examined by an independent Planning Inspector, who will consider whether the Core Strategy complies with legal requirements and meets the tests of soundness detailed in Planning Policy Statement 12.
- 10.2 This Council has previously made comments in relation to one aspect of the Core Strategy, namely its proposal for the future use of the Woodford Aerodrome site, during two previous rounds of consultation on the DPD i.e. on Preferred Options in November 2009 and the Pre-publication document in March 2010. The Woodford Aerodrome site is a significant site of some 205Ha within the Green Belt and lies across the administrative boundary between Stockport and Cheshire East. The two main areas of built development on the site are located within the Stockport area and consist of some 42 Ha, while the Cheshire East area is largely undeveloped consisting of part of the runway and open space. No other proposals in the Core Strategy have been considered significant enough, in terms of their potential impact on Cheshire East, to require representations to be made.
- 10.3 The overall planning strategy for the Stockport MBC area detailed in the submitted Core Strategy remains one of focusing development principally within the Stockport Central Area, within other regeneration priority areas and at sites where specific regeneration needs have been identified. The approach to Woodford Aerodrome also remains the same as detailed in the Pre-publication document. This is to identify the site as an Opportunity Site and to set out the broad principles for development but to leave these to be worked up in more detail through the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 10.4 This will allow a masterplan approach for the site to be developed in advance of it becoming vacant in March 2012 and for more extensive consultation to be undertaken on issues and uses. The SPD work will also be used to inform development of Stockport's Site Allocations DPD, which is currently programmed for adoption in December 2012. It is proposed that Cheshire East be actively engaged in the preparation of the SPD and an officer working group consisting of representatives from this Council, Stockport MBC and BAE Systems has already been established to look at Cheshire East related issues to input into this process.
- 10.5 The broad principles for development at the site detailed in the Core Strategy can be summarised as follows:

- There should be no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt;
- Development should not occupy a larger area (unless visual improvement through height reduction is achieved) or be of greater height than existing buildings and should result in environmental improvement;
- Consolidation of the two existing developed areas into one may be considered;
- Accessibility and sustainability issues will need to be addressed, including improvements to public transport and the highway network, when determining the level of development;
- Local shops and other services may need to be provided on site or in the local area and the capacity of local schools will need to be considered;
- Retention of the runway remains to be considered but is likely to be limited to private aircraft;
- Uses for the undeveloped areas of the site should be open land in character such as informal and formal open space;
- The impact upon the heritage assets at the site and the opportunities they present should be considered;
- Redevelopment at the site should be mainly for residential and employment uses but the scale of either use is not quantified at this stage of the LDF;
- Retail and indoor leisure uses (e.g. cinemas or bowling alleys) are considered unlikely to be acceptable.

10.6 The broad principles for development at the Woodford Site detailed in the Core Strategy are considered to adequately incorporate this Council's previous comments (see Appendix) and form a good basis for developing more detailed planning guidance for the site. No other proposals in the Core Strategy have been considered significant enough, in terms of their potential impact on Cheshire East, to require representations to be made.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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- Stockport MBC Core Strategy DPD – Proposed Submission Document : <http://stockport-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/pp/ldfcs/publicationcs>

Summary of this Council's Previous Comments on the Stockport Core Strategy DPD

- Cheshire East Council supports the mixed employment and residential use option at Woodford.
- Cheshire East Council supports the general approach identified that a strategic review of the Green Belt is not necessary during the Plan period and that any development at the Woodford Aerodrome site should be considered only within the limits permitted by current Green Belt policy for this site. As the Woodford Aerodrome site lies within a large Green Belt area that also includes the adjoining northern part of the Cheshire East Council area, any proposed strategic or local changes to the Green Belt should only proceed following a joint review exercise by the two Councils.
- The two MEDS areas should be retained unless it can be shown that there is a clear advantage to combining the sites. We would not favour the expansion of MEDS Site B as a combined site because of its remoter location and the likelihood of access issues. Any access to Site B from the A523 in the east will be problematic.
- The use of the open space for informal and formal recreation, particularly sports pitches or a country park (including woodland), would be supported provided any ancillary development was compatible with the site's Green Belt status.
- The existing runway facility could be considered a regional asset and, therefore, opportunities for its continued future use should be fully explored and discounted before consideration is given to deciding on a preferred option for developing the site. However, it is understood that Stockport MBC are exploring this issue and there has been no interest to date in retaining the runway. The opportunity exists to improve the alignment of the Poynton bypass should the runway be discontinued.
- The possible impact of any development, particularly residential, on existing services in the area will need to be fully considered when determining the appropriate future use and level of development at the Woodford site. The potential of using existing services in Poynton, such as the High School, may be limited by capacity issues.
- The Council agrees that the key issues have been identified and considers the issues relating to accessibility and sustainability to be of particular importance. The impact of any development on the surrounding highway network, including areas within Cheshire East, and the poor public transport provision in the Woodford area will need to be fully addressed when determining the appropriate nature and scale of development at the site.