

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Strategic Planning Board

Date of Meeting:	3 October 2012
Report of:	Strategic Planning & Housing Manager
Subject/Title:	Woodford Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Document
Portfolio Holder:	Cllrs David Brown & Rachel Bailey

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report considers a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) prepared by Stockport Council to guide the redevelopment of the part of the Woodford aerodrome site which lies within its area.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board considers the draft Woodford SPD attached as Appendix 1
- 2.2 That, subject to any comments made by the Board the Portfolio Holders for Performance and Capacity & Communities and Regulatory Services be recommended to approve the following response:

“Cheshire East Council generally supports the proposals in the SPD, particularly in relation to recognising the need for non-vehicle links to Poynton and to the wider countryside, but requests that:

- Suitable reference is made in the SPD to identifying how secondary education is to be accommodated. Current analysis suggests that Poynton high school has capacity to accommodate an increase in pupils arising from the Woodford development. However such analysis is sensitive to a variety of factors and varies over time. Consequently the SPD will need to emphasis that should an impact be identified suitable mitigation will need to be provided;
- Reference is made to working with Cheshire East Council to agree the highway impacts and identify appropriate monitoring and mitigation measures; and
- A Glossary is added to the final document to aid understanding of technical terms.”

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure full consideration is given to the potential impacts of any development on Cheshire East.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Poynton East & Pott Shrigley, Poynton West & Adlington, Prestbury, Wilmslow Dean Row and other neighbouring areas.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 The eastern part of the site lies within Poynton East & Adlington – represented by Cllr Philip Hoyland and Cllr Roger West

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 A Supplementary Planning Document must, by definition, reflect the current development plan policy. Consequently the Document does not make policy as such, rather it expands and elaborates on existing policies as they relate to the Woodford site.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None directly – however the SPD will influence contributions made as part of any future planning obligation

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 A supplementary Planning Document is classed as a Local Development Document under the 2004 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act. Preparation of SPD's are governed by the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (SI 2204). This sets out the detailed means by which the SPD should be produced and adopted. It also enables the Secretary of State to intervene if appropriate (section 21).
- 8.2 Section 110 of the Localism Act imposes a new duty to cooperate between Local Planning Authorities. Authorities "must co-operate ...in maximising the effectiveness" of certain prescribed activities. These include the preparation of Local Development Documents. Consequently both Councils are duty bound to work together on this key cross border issue.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 The Council needs to ensure that the impacts of proposed new development are properly mitigated. The proposed SPD is a means of ensuring such impacts are fully addressed.

10.0 WOODFORD AERODROME

- 10.1 The SPD has been prepared following the closure of the former BAE factory at Woodford. The former factory, runways and accompanying facilities extend over some 500 acres and the site straddles the Stockport and Cheshire East border. Accordingly the two Councils had until recently been working together to prepare a joint SPD. However, as the SPD

consultation had been delayed and now coincides with the consultation on the Poynton Town Strategy, it was decided to concentrate on determine the future use of the Cheshire East part of the Woodford site through the Local Plan preparation process to avoid any confusion.

Site history & context

- 10.2 Woodford aerodrome was developed in the period between the first and second world wars and was the home of aircraft manufacturer Avro, maker of the famous Lancaster bomber and numerous other military aeroplanes. The Site later passed into the hands of British Aerospace and latterly BAe Systems who closed the factory in 2011 following the cancellation of the Nimrod Reconnaissance aircraft. BAe subsequently sold the facility to the business consortium Avro Heritage who in turn sold much of their interest to Harrow Estates, a subsidiary of Redrow PLC.
- 10.3 Approximately 60% of the site is located within Stockport and former factory, hangars and nearly all significant buildings are located on the Stockport side of the aerodrome. The Cheshire portion of the site comprises runway and open land – with the exception of a small industrial building which is situated directly to the north of the Adlington Industrial estate. The main access to the facility is via two entrances onto the A5102 Chester Road in Woodford
- 10.4 Prior to the sale of the facility BAe Systems engaged in a series of discussions and consultations with the local community culminating in a series of design workshops held in the summer of 2011. Both Stockport and Cheshire East were fully involved in that process and this experience has in turn informed the preparation of the current SPD.

Development Plan Policy

- 10.5 The aerodrome is washed over by green belt in both the Stockport and Cheshire East development plans (the Macclesfield Local Plan 2004).
- 10.6 The two larger areas of building within the Stockport part of the site have been defined as “Major Existing Developed Sites” (MEDS) in the preceding Stockport Unitary Development Plan. The current Core Strategy identifies the site as a Strategic opportunity site and allows for the development of the two MEDS sites totaling some 42 Ha. This development can be on the current separated footprint or combined as a single unit, provided the overall impact remains the same.
- 10.7 In terms of the type of uses on the site, the Stockport Core Strategy advocates a mixed-use development of primarily residential and employment uses. Certain other uses, such as retailing are specifically ruled out. Key development principles outlined include accessibility and sustainability, high quality open space, retention of heritage assets and the limited use of aviation at the site.

- 10.8 While the SPD focuses on redevelopment on the Stockport side of the site, it remains important that the impacts and implications of any proposals are fully considered across the local Authority boundary.

Key Proposals

- 10.9 The SPD proposes the following key elements within the Stockport area:
- To accommodate residential development on an expanded northern MEDS site and to restore the southern MEDS site to countryside as part of a wider scheme of countryside restoration and open space provision;
 - To provide a total of around 950 dwellings, comprising a mixture of dwelling types, tenures and sizes to create a balanced and mixed community;
 - To create a modern Garden Village design through the extensive provision of greenspaces and corridors through out the development and linking these to the countryside beyond. A large village green, hierarchy of street typologies and distinct character areas is proposed to achieve this;
 - The public realm to be designed to maximise walking and cycling within the site and to provide for important external links to local destinations;
 - In addition to the residential development the Oxford Aviation employment use will continue in its current location and a new Heritage Centre will be built immediately north of it;
 - Other ancillary facilities to be provided on site to accommodate the needs of future residents will include a primary school, day nursery & crèche, a small supermarket and a limited number of other smaller shops and a public house;
 - Secondary school provision and health facilities to be provided off site within existing facilities in the Stockport area.

Linkage to SEMMS & Poynton Relief Road

- 10.10 The South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) 2001 was developed following a study into the traffic issues in the South East Manchester area. The study considered a number of previously proposed trunk road schemes and recommended that a reduced size road be built from Manchester Airport to the A6 at Hazel Grove as part of a multi modal strategy - the SEMMMS Relief Road.
- 10.11 . Manchester City, Cheshire County and Stockport Councils, with Stockport Council taking the lead, developed an outline scheme for the proposed SEMMMS Relief Road. This originally also included wider proposals such as the A6 (M) Stockport North South Bypass and A555/A523 Poynton Bypass

- 10.12 Funding for the project was originally identified in the last decade, but the project funds were subsequently cut following government spending reviews. In November 2011 the Coalition Government's National Infrastructure Plan identified the A555 Scheme as a priority for delivery and reinstated the Government contribution of £165m. In March 2012 a "Deal for Manchester" was announced and the Government's Budget statement identified the 'Earn Back' model which will provide the Combined Authority with the mechanism needed to fully fund the Scheme and its wider infrastructure plan for Greater Manchester.
- 10.13 Consequently the A555 Hazel Grove – airport link is once again being progressed as a serious transport proposal – and this major new road will pass directly to the north of the Woodford Site. In addition the proposal will facilitate the future delivery of a Poynton Relief Road – Included within the project will be the entry point from the SEMMMS Relief Road (roundabout or other suitable junction arrangements constructed adjacent to Bramhall Oil Terminal) and connected into a new junction, probably a roundabout, located on Chester Road.
- 10.14 The ending of aviation at Woodford brings the potential for a new streamlined alignment for the Poynton relief Road. However that is a matter which will need to be considered and if necessary safeguarded as part of the new local plan – it cannot be a provision of the current SPD, nor does the development generate any need itself for a Poynton Bypass.
- 10.15 However the SEMMMS road does influence the consideration of the transport implications of the proposed new development. This has been modeled on the assumption that the SEMMMS route will be built during the construction period of the new village. We are content that this is the correct approach to take given the funding commitment for the new road.

Implications for Cheshire East

The Scale & Mix of Development

- 10.16 The redevelopment of Woodford aerodrome represents a significant new development on the northern border of Cheshire East. However the principle of this redevelopment is established by the Stockport Core Strategy which identifies the area as a strategic opportunity site. The concept of redeveloping the redundant aerodrome is further supported by the National Planning Policy Framework which endorses the principle of re-using brownfield and derelict land such as the former factory site.
- 10.17 The Core Strategy envisaged a mix of uses for Woodford, whereas the SPD has an overwhelming residential emphasis. It is widely acknowledged that Woodford developed as a major aircraft

manufacturing base for historic reasons, centered on its airfield. Consequently Stockport argue that it is not best placed as a strategic employment site, given its peripheral location away from the main motorway links and the concentration of employment in other key locations across Stockport and the wider conurbation.

- 10.18 This therefore inevitably leads to a residential led use of the site – and this is considered preferable to other alternatives, such as retailing, which are ruled out by the SPD. The scale of housing is greater than some of the initial suggestions for the site, but given that the MEDS extends to 42Ha, the density of housing is less than the 30/Ha which has been widely adopted on recent developments.
- 10.19 The homes built at Woodford will all be within Stockport and will therefore contribute towards that Borough's housing supply. Whilst a location such as Woodford might not be the first choice for housing growth, development in this location avoids the potential for Greenfield development elsewhere and this is a principle which we would support. Although the housing at Woodford will not contribute towards housing totals in Cheshire East, it is never the less a factor that the Council will need to take account of in the preparation of the Cheshire East Local Plan, especially when determining the appropriate scale and location of development in Poynton and Wilmslow.
- 10.20 Overall therefore the scale of residential development is considered acceptable – and therefore the focus of the SPD should be on ensuring the development is sustainable and attractive – and that any cross border impacts are suitably mitigated.

Highways & transport

- 10.21 The SPD requires that a detailed Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan (TP) will be required in support of any proposals to develop the site, taking into account guidance in the Department for Transport / Department for Communities & Local Government 2007 "Guidance on Transport Assessment" and relevant local policy and guidance. It is proposed that the traffic position in 2001 should provide a baseline for this work. At its peak the factory employed over 2000 people and generated significant traffic movements. However the travel patterns for residential development will be different; typically resulting in a reversal of trip patterns from the site with more outbound movements in the morning peak hour, and more inbound movements in the evening peak, and a "flatter" traffic profile through the day
- 10.22 It is required that the TA should include operational assessments of key junctions on the surrounding highway network (to be agreed with both Councils) to understand the impact of the development proposals (over and above the 2001 baseline position) on local roads and assuming delivery of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road scheme.

- 10.23 Where significant highways impacts are identified, appropriate mitigation measures should be identified and agreed with SMBC and CEC, as part of the TA process. It is suggested that the traffic generation be assessed post development as part of this process. Mitigation might include improved sustainable transport measures to reduce car trips, or physical infrastructure improvements
- 10.24 Allied to this, the SPD emphasizes the role of public transport and pedestrian cycle links in reducing the overall vehicular movements from the site. It identifies sustainable links to Poynton Village and Poynton Railway Station. This will assist in meeting the objective in the Stockport Core Strategy for a sustainable and accessible development. The new garden village will generate additional travel demand and it is beneficial to ensure that some of that travel is by means other than the private car. Good cycle and walking links to nearby facilities does not remove the need for appropriate highway measures – but it can provide residents with a choice of transport options, especially if the routes are safe and convenient. Allied to this there is also the opportunity for the restoration of public rights of way previously severed by the runway's construction.
- 10.25 Accordingly the SPD provides the means of acceptably mitigating the travel and traffic impacts of the proposed development

Education & Community Facilities

- 10.26 The SPD proposes that a new primary school be provided as part of the new development. This will ensure that children living in the new homes can be educated at a nearby school that will be within easy walking distance of the whole new village. This removes much of the potential for additional traffic generation on the 'school run' and alleviates the need for additional places at Cheshire East schools such as Lower Park and Lostock Hall Primary schools.
- 10.27 In terms of secondary education there is sufficient space at Bramhall High School (in Stockport) to accommodate the secondary age children in the new village. The School has capacity to accommodate these children without further expansion. Historically a proportion of children from the Woodford area have also attended Poynton High School and sixth form (a facility not available at Bramhall High) – and overall children from Stockport account for 19.5% of pupils at the school. Current analysis suggests that Poynton high school has capacity to accommodate an increase in pupils arising from the Woodford development. However such analysis is sensitive to a variety of factors and varies over time. Consequently the SPD will need to emphasis that should an impact be identified suitable mitigation will need to be provided.
- 10.28 In terms of medical facilities the respective Stockport and Cheshire PCT's identify that there is surplus capacity for 9,395 additional

patients at the two doctors surgeries in Bramhall and space for a further 2,045 patients at the two surgeries in Poynton. Consequently the development is not considered to have an adverse impact on local health facilities.

- 10.29 Whilst the additional population at the village will prompt additional needs within the community it will also generate additional spending power locally. Consequently existing shops, restaurants and cultural facilities in Handforth, Wilmslow and Poynton can expect to benefit from increased footfall in the area.

11.0 Next Steps

- 11.1 Stockport will consider the comments received after the 15 October consultation closing date, amend as appropriate and approve the document later in the autumn.

12.0 Access to Information

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

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Woodford Supplementary Planning Document