



APPEAL REFERENCE APP/C4235/W/25/3373210

**Woodford Garden Village Extension,
Former Woodford Aerodrome,
Chester Road, Woodford, Stockport**

SUMMARY NOTE OF CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE HELD 3 DECEMBER 2025 (VIA MS TEAMS)

1. The case management conference was led by the Inspector, Matthew Shrigley. The Inquiry is to be held at Stockport Council Offices, Stopford House, Piccadilly, Stockport, SK1 3XE. Opening at **10.00am** on **3 February 2026**.
2. The Inquiry is scheduled to sit for up to 5 days.
3. Once the parties' positions are finalised in relation to the main issues set out below, and with a better idea of timings for each element of the parties' cases following the submission of proofs of evidence, a more informed timetable can be considered.
4. The advocates were confirmed as Christopher Katkowski CBE KC, for the Appellant, and John Hunter for the Local Authority.

Main Statement of Common Ground

1. A signed Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) (dated 1 December) was submitted prior to the meeting.
2. The Inquiry will focus on those policies that are most important and those that are relevant to the matters in dispute informed by the SoCG.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case relate to:
 - Whether there would be any harm to the operation of the highway network or safety levels, including regard to any mitigation;
 - The adequacy of any provisions made by the development toward: (i) local education delivery (ii) recreational open space, as well as (iii) active travel and sustainable transportation, having regard to the site location.
 - Whether, or not, the appeal proposal is an inappropriate form of development accounting for the Green Belt policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraphs 155 -159, and if it is inappropriate are there any very special circumstances present to otherwise justify it.

Dealing with the Evidence

4. It was agreed that the evidence relating to the above identified main issues will be subject to cross examination.
5. Although the Inspector will lead the round table sessions for planning obligation and condition matters (or any main issue matter deemed suitable by the Inspector), the parties will need to work together in advance to prepare a draft agenda where appropriate, to ensure that all relevant matters are properly aired and interrogated.
6. Any outstanding matters, including matters raised by interested parties, planning policy, any benefits, and the overall planning balance, will also be dealt with through the formal presentation of evidence in chief and cross-examination.

Conditions

7. An agreed final schedule of suggested planning conditions and the reasons for them, including references to any policy support, is to be submitted at the same time as the proofs. The Council is to take the lead on preparing that list, in discussion with the Appellant.
8. Careful attention is to be paid to the wording and the conditions will need to be properly justified having regard to the relevant tests, in particular the test of necessity. You are reminded in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and that conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided unless there is a clear justification.
9. The reasons for any pre-commencement conditions will need to include that justification. Any difference in view on any of the suggested conditions, including their wording, should be highlighted in the schedule with a brief explanation given.

Planning Obligation

10. At the case management conference, the main parties accepted that a planning obligation would be required to deal with some aspects of the case being referred to. Heads of terms was still indicated as being the subject of ongoing discussion. On a without prejudice basis, the Inspector encouraged draft heads of terms to be submitted by the Appellant. A draft planning obligation is requested to be submitted with the proofs along with a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Compliance Statement.
11. Also without prejudice, any completed obligation will need to be submitted prior to the close of the Inquiry, with appropriate clauses.

Core Documents/Inquiry Documents

12. You will need to discuss and agree a list of core documents in advance of preparing your proofs so they can be properly referenced. That list is to be co-ordinated by the Appellant and must be submitted with the proofs, together with a hard copy set of the documents for the Inspector. A template for that list is attached.
13. The Core Documents should comprise only those documents to which you will be referring and do not need to include a copy of the NPPF or deal with areas where there is no dispute.
14. Any Appeal Decisions and/or legal authorities on which any party intends to rely will need to be prefaced with a note explaining the relevance of the document to the issues arising in the Inquiry case, together with the propositions on which you are seeking to rely, with the relevant paragraphs flagged up.
15. Where any documents on which it is intended to rely are lengthy, only relevant extracts need to be supplied, as opposed to the whole document. Such extracts should, however, be prefaced with the front cover of the relevant document and include any accompanying relevant contextual text.
16. The Core Documents will need to inform an Inquiry library, which can be accessed by interested parties. This was agreed to be facilitated electronically at the venue. The Council will be provided with an electronic set of the documents, and it will be for it to print out what elements it needs in hard copy. The inspector will also be relying on electronic versions of all Core Documents.
17. Any documents submitted once the Inquiry has opened will be recorded as Inquiry Documents on a separate list, overseen by the Inspector. A minimum of two copies of any new documents produced at the Inquiry will be required - one for the other main party and one for the Inspector. With extra copies to be made available to assist interested parties if necessary.

Inquiry Running Order

18. In general, the Inquiry is expected to finish each day no later than around 17.00 hours. The first day starting at 10am, and the Inquiry resuming at 10am on the subsequent days. Sittings are to run for around 1 and a half hours at a time to enable sufficient breaks.
19. In terms of running order, following the Inspector's opening comments on the first day of the Inquiry, he will invite opening statements from the main parties (Appellant first, followed by the Council) which will set the scene. He will then hear from any interested parties who wish to speak, which often suits those who have taken time out from work, or who may have other commitments.
20. The presentation of evidence during the sitting sessions will commence with a cross examination of the main issues.

21. In terms of the presentation of evidence in chief and cross-examination. Each respective main parties' case shall be dealt with, using a topic-based format.
22. The Council will present its evidence first, which will be cross-examined and re-examined, if necessary, followed by the corresponding evidence of the Appellant on the same basis. The Appellant's evidence should also address any other matters raised by interested parties at application and appeal stage.
23. On conclusion of that, the Inspector will lead the remaining usual round table discussion on provisions of the expected planning obligation and conditions issues.
24. That discussion will be followed by closing submissions (Council, then Appellant) which should set out your respective cases as they stand at the end of the Inquiry, with a written copy handed up at the time (along with electronic copies forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate's Major Casework Team), appropriately cross-referenced where evidence is relied on, for the avoidance of doubt.
25. It should be noted that the Inspector will carry out a site visit either after the Inquiry has closed, or before if an appropriate opportunity presents itself in the programme. Whenever it takes place, its purpose is simply for him to see the site and its surroundings.
26. The Inspector cannot listen to any representations/ discussion/ arguments during the visit, but parties can point out physical features, so it is important that you give some thought as to where you wish him to see the site from.

Document Submission Dates

27. All proofs are to be submitted no later than **13 January 2026**. Details of the preferred format and content of proofs and other material were an Annex to the pre-conference note.
28. Early draft heads of terms for the planning obligation are also to be submitted by **15 December 2025**, with a draft planning obligation no later than **13 January 2026** (accompanied by the relevant office copy entries and a CIL Compliance Statement prepared by the Council).
29. The Council is to ensure that a copy of the Inquiry notification letter and a list of those notified is sent into the Planning Inspectorate no later than **16 January 2026**.
30. There is no reference in the Rules or the Procedural Guide to supplementary or rebuttal proofs and the Inspectorate does not encourage the provision of such. However, where they are necessary to save Inquiry time, copies should be provided no later than **23 January 2026**.

31. It is important that any rebuttal proofs do not introduce new issues. As an alternative to a rebuttal, it may be that the matter could more succinctly be addressed through an addendum statement of common ground.
32. The advocates are to work collaboratively on the time estimates for each stage of their respective cases, with final timings for openings and closings, evidence in chief and cross-examination to be submitted no later than **26 January 2026**.
33. A draft programme will be issued following receipt of your final timings in due course, when the Inspector will have a better feel for the overall duration. Other than in exceptional circumstances, you are expected to take no longer than the timings indicated, which will require the cooperation of both advocates and witnesses.

Costs

34. An application for costs was not anticipated by the parties at the time of the CMC, although positions are reserved.
35. Costs can be awarded in relation to unreasonable behaviour which may include not complying with the prescribed timetables. You are also reminded in this regard, that in order to support an effective and timely planning system in which all parties are required to behave reasonably, the Inspector has the ability to initiate an award of costs, although hopefully this will not prove necessary.

M Shrigley

INSPECTOR

9 December 2025

Annex A

TEMPLATE FOR CORE DOCUMENTS LIST (adapt headings to suit)

* Any Appeal Decisions on which a party intends to rely must each be prefaced with a note explaining the relevance of the Decision to the issues arising in the current Inquiry case, together with the propositions relied on, with the relevant paragraphs flagged up. A similar approach is to be taken in relation to any legal citations relied upon.

CD1 Application Documents and Plans

1.1

1.2 etc

CD2 Additional/Amended Reports and/or Plans submitted after validation

2.1

2.2

CD3 Committee Report and Decision Notice

3.1 Officer's Report and minute of committee meeting

3.2 Decision Notice

CD4 The Development Plan

4.1

4.2

CD5 Emerging Development Plan

5.1

5.2

CD6 Relevant Appeal Decisions*

6.1

6.2

CD7 Relevant Judgements*

7.1

7.2

CD8 Other

8.1

8.2

Annex B – INDICATIVE PROGRAMME

1. Inspector's opening remarks

2. Appellant's opening statement

3. Council's opening statement

4. Interested parties views

5. Council's formal evidence

First witness

		Time estimate
1	Council's evidence in chief	
2	Cross examination (by the Appellant's advocate)	
3	Re-examination (by Council's advocate)	
		Total

Second witness

		Time estimate
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1	Council's evidence in chief	
2	Cross examination (by Appellant's advocate)	
3	Re-examination (by Council's advocate)	
		Total

6. Appellant's formal evidence

First witness

		Time estimate
1	Council's evidence in chief	
2	Cross examination (by the Council's advocate)	
3	Re-examination (by Appellant's advocate)	
		Total

Second witness

		Time estimate
1	Council's evidence in chief	
2	Cross examination (by Council's advocate)	
3	Re-examination (by Appellant's advocate)	
		Total

*Third witness if needed as per the above

7. Round-table session

	Time estimate
1. Planning obligation(s)/related issues.	
2. Conditions.	

8. Any other residual matters.

9. Closing submissions.

10. Costs (if any).

11. Site Visit arrangements.

12. Close of Inquiry.