

Land West of Boundary Road, Cheadle.



RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Date

December 7, 2023



Planning Statement

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of an application seeking full planning permission for the construction of 2 residential dwelling on land to the West of Boundary Road, Cheadle
- 1.2 This application follows a refusal to develop the site, with the construction of a lambing shed and hay store ref SMD/2023/0129. The reasons for refusal were:
 - The activity of lambing will create noise and disturbance in a sensitive “residential” location.
 - The proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the open countryside.
- 1.3 The 2023 application followed a previous refusal SMD/2021/0646, again for the construction of a lambing shed and hay store. The reasons for refusal were:
 - No justification for the essential need.
 - The proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the open countryside.
- 1.4 It should be noted that both applications for the lambing shed related to the proposed diversification plans for the applicants existing well established farming enterprise.
- 1.5 The applicant owns and operates an existing farm enterprise at Mount Pleasant Farm, Cheadle Road, which can be seen on the wider context site location plan.
- 1.6 The proposal would deliver much needed accommodation in the area, the dwellings have been specifically designed to suit those looking for affordable starter homes in a village location, which is close to the main transport infrastructure and between the two main towns of Cheadle and Blythe Bridge.
- 1.7 The proposals relate to the continuation of farm diversification. Agriculture plays a crucial role in supporting the rural economy, diversification can support resilience of a farming enterprise but also contribute positively to the local economy.

2. SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 2.2 The site lies to the West of Boundary Road on the Southern Fridges of Boundary, just outside of Cheadle, Staffordshire.
- 2.3 The site has a large, gated access which serves the upper section of the large field. The site has a partial hard standing which has overgrown and is utilized for various farming activities, such as storing of machinery, equipment, silage, hay bales, collecting and feeding of cattle etc.
- 2.4 In terms of the immediate setting, the site abuts a Bungalow which has several outbuildings and an extensive curtilage, these buildings run along the northern boundary of the site. To the Southern boundary is a small farmstead called Sweethills, the shared boundary is a large embankment, with a hedgerow planted to the top.
- 2.5 The site sits in a built-up area of Boundary and is well screened by established hedging along the roadside and a belt of tree lines to the West.
- 2.6 The site itself is relatively level, with a sloping topography towards the larger fields once you get beyond the rear building line.
- 2.7 The site is well connected, with main roads running to Cheadle, Forsbrook, and Blythe bridge, the nearest bus stop of circa 250m away.
- 2.8 The site is well served by a well-established and well-regarded public house, "The Red Lion", with all of the required local amenities in the nearest small village of Forsbrook. Shops, butchers, restaurants, cafes, public houses, take away food outlets and off licenses.
- 2.9 Cheadle is the nearest local town, which is located within a mile of the site and benefits from all of the required facilities and amenities.
- 2.10 Blythe bridge is located 2 miles to the Southwest of the site and again has all the required amenities. But also benefits from the only train station in the district.

3. THE APPLICATION

- 3.1 The application proposes the construction of 2 No. semidetached dwellings, which will comprise of an entrance lobby, ground floor WC, separate kitchen and an open plan living and dining room on the ground floor, with 2 bedrooms and bathroom facilities on the first floor.
- 3.2 The dwellings have been specifically designed to suit the needs of first time buyers within an affordable price range in a desirable semi-rural location. These properties will suit the needs of those who wish to live in a more rural location and who do not wish to live on a newer housing estate.
- 3.3 Access would be provided via the existing vehicular access.
- 3.4 The proposal will provide an infill development, with no further encroachment beyond the existing established residential curtilage of the adjoining dwellings.

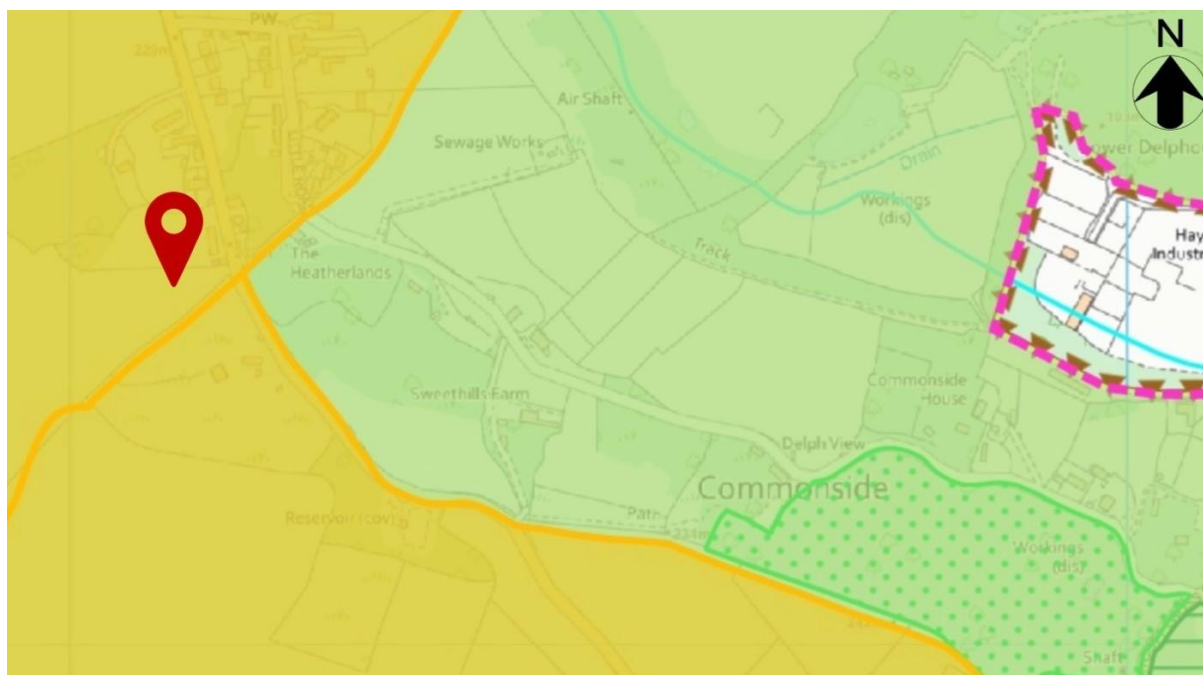
4. POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 The development plan comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

Staffordshire Moorland Local Plan (Adopted September 2020)

4.2 The site is situated within the Green Belt. The site is within the Neighborhood Areas of Forsbrook. The site is identified with a red pin on the image below.



4.3 Forsbrook has an allocation of 152 new dwellings under the Neighborhood Plan Housing Requirement. Stating that Forsbrook Parish includes the large village of Blythe Bridge, which has a good level of facilities and services and benefits from the only train station in the District. Table 5.5 of the adopted plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.4 The Framework was originally published in March 2012, the latest revision being September 2023. The relevant sections of the Framework are discussed in the planning considerations section of this statement below. However, the Framework states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

Neighbourhood Plan Area	(a) New Allocations	(b) Estimated Windfall	(a) + (b)	(c) Housing Requirement 2016 - 2031 (dwellings)	Specific Factors
Biddulph Parish	604 (Biddulph) + 0 (Biddulph Moor)	130 (Biddulph) + 13 (Biddulph Moor)	747	750	Biddulph parish includes Biddulph town and Biddulph Moor which is a large village. Both Biddulph town and Biddulph Moor are surrounded by Green Belt. The Local Plan sets out separate housing requirements for Biddulph town. The housing requirement for Biddulph Moor which falls in the rural area has been added to the Biddulph town figure. There are good facilities and services in Biddulph and a number of small sites identified in the SHLAA. Biddulph Moor has good links with Biddulph town and has had few housing completions over the last few years.
Brown Edge Parish	0	20	20	20	Brown Edge is the only village within the Parish. It is surrounded by Green Belt and the area outside the settlement within the Parish is limited. The SHLAA identifies a number of small sites not within the Green Belt which have development potential.
Checkley Parish	15	36	51	50	Checkley Parish includes a small village and three outlying settlements. The Parish area is relatively large compared to others. Checkley Parish has a high level of commitments due to a large outline permission at Chedle Road, Upper Tean. The SHLAA identifies a number of small sites which have development potential.
Draycott-in-the-Moors Parish	30	7	37	35	Draycott in the Moors Parish covers a large area however only incorporates one small village. Part of the Blythe Vale allocated site (Policy DSR1) falls within the western edge of the parish and it is considered that this would deliver approximately 30 dwellings Outline planning permission has been granted for up to 168 dwellings at Crosswell within the Parish.
Forsbrook	152	40	192	190	Forsbrook Parish includes the large village of Blythe Bridge. The Local Plan identifies Blythe Vale (Policy DSR 1) as a strategic mixed use site including residential development of approximately 300 dwellings, most of which falls within Forsbrook Parish. Phase 1 of the site has been approved for residential development. Blythe Bridge has a good level of facilities and services and benefits from the only train station in the District.
Leek Parish	614	275	889	890	The Local Plan sets out separate housing requirements for the town of Leek. Leek is the largest town in the District with a good level of services and facilities. The SHLAA identifies a number of small sites within the town which have development potential.
Leekdrith Parish	0	3	3	2-4	Leekdrith Parish is rural parish, approximately half the Parish is located within the Peak District National Park and half within the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan area. It covers a relatively large area with a small population. It includes the small villages of Meerbrook and part of Blackshaw Moor.
Rushton Parish	0	3	3	2-4	Rushton Parish includes the village of Rushton Spencer (although a small part of the village is located in Heaton Parish) and stretches west of the A523. Rushton Spencer has a limited number of services

5. APPROPRIATENESS OF DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The forms part of the wider farming enterprise, but is a small infill parcel of land, which provides access to parts of the field that can be accessed elsewhere on the farm, as described in the officers' reports for the applications for the Lambing Sheds, the site is isolated from the main complex of farm buildings and is within an established residential setting.

5.2 The gated access has long been established and hard standing is in place but overgrown over time. The site is used for the storage of machinery and fodder, and we therefore consider that the site could be classed as previously developed land.

5.3 New buildings within the green belt are generally regarded as "inappropriate development", which requires justification with reference to very special circumstances. There are exceptions to that general rule. One exception is set out in paragraph 149 (g) of the National Planning Policy Framework which is set out as follows:

- Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings) which would:
 - Not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development: or
 - Not cause substantial harm to the openness of the green belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to the meeting and identified affordable housing need within the area of the Local Planning Authority.

5.4. We consider that the site could be classed as an infill development as is evident from the submitted plans. And therefore, it is only subject to an assessment of the impact on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt.

Impact on the openness of the Green Belt:

5.5 There is no definition set out through policy or law as to what openness should comprise, and there is no standard methodology as to assessing the impact:

5.6 The word "openness" is open-textured, and a number of factors are capable of being relevant when it comes to applying it to the particular facts of a specific case. Prominent among these will be factors relevant to how built up the Green Belt is now and how built up the Green Belt would be if redevelopment occurs and factors relevant to the visual impact on the aspect of openness which the Green Belt presents. The decision makers must consider whether there is "harm" (Not merely change) to the openness of the Green Belt

5.7 The PPG at Paragraph 64-001 advised that:

"Openness can have both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposed may be relevant, as could its volume.

5.8 There is no development on the site at present although it forms part of the ribbon of residential development. And as set out in the officers' report for application SMD/2023/0129, the site is well screened with established hedgerow, and tree lined

boundaries to the East and the South, with a heavily built up residential boundary to the North, with a significant number of outbuildings.

5.9 The only open boundary is to the West. This boundary will have a newly planted native hedgerow with tree planting to match the other landscape boundaries. Thus, meaning that the site is well screened on all sides and cannot be seen from beyond the site itself.

Visual Impact:

5.10 In terms of visual impact, it is necessary to look specifically at the site and how it fits into its wider context. It forms part of a ribbon of development and is between two residential sites. The development would not extend beyond the existing well established residential boundaries and the dwellings are positioned on the existing building line.

5.11 Referring back the fundamental aim of the Green Belt Policy to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open to the protect the countryside, harm would not be caused to the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 138 of the Framework:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area – We consider the proposals are part of an infill development on an existing established ribbon development.
- To prevent neighboring towns merging into one another – the proposal would not cause or contribute to the merging of any towns.
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment – The proposals would be contained within the existing form of development and should be classed as infill.
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – There would be no impact on the setting and special character of historic towns.
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict or other urban land – there would be no harm caused to the urban regeneration initiatives elsewhere.

5.12 In summary, we conclude that the proposal would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

6. OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 We consider below other planning considerations to ascertain whether there is "any other harm", that needs to be appraised in the overall Green Belt Balancing assessment undertaken in the sections below.

Character and appearance

6.2 Considering the possibility of the intrusion into the countryside and if significant harm would be caused to the rural setting and the overall character and appearance of the area, we must assess the following:

6.3 Whilst it is accepted that there would be development on a site that is currently "undeveloped", the site is located between two established residential settings, and is located

within the ribbon development, with several other housing in close proximity. The development would not project further into the open countryside.

Highways and Access

6.4 The site is served by an existing wide vehicular access onto Boundary Road.

6.5 Once constructed the proposed development would slightly increase the number of light vehicle (Cars) movements, but there would be a significant reduction in the number of agricultural vehicle movements.

Ecology

6.6 The site comprises of mown grassland, which covers an existing hard standing, made up of stone and hardcore.

6.7 The site is enclosed by a hedgerow and trees, and the hedgerow would be retained as part of the proposals.

6.8 It is considered that the site has a very low ecological value, and therefore we do not consider that any further surveys are required.

Flood Risk and Drainage

6.9 The site is within Flood Zone 1 with a low probability of flooding. It is also in an area at very low risk of flooding from surface water. There would be no increased risk of flooding as a result of the proposed development.

7. GREEN BELT CONSIDERATIONS – VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

7.1 Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, are clearly outweighed by other considerations. In essence there is a requirement to assess the harm resulting from the proposal, outline and assess the other considerations and undertake a balancing exercise whereby the harm caused by the proposal is weighed against the other considerations. If the other considerations clearly outweigh the harm, this comprises the very special circumstances required to justify granting planning permission.

7.2 The Framework does not prescribe or define the scope of very special circumstances. The weight to be given to very special circumstances is therefore dependent upon the context of each individual case. However, case law has also determined that the circumstances do not need to be unusual or specific to the case to be special.

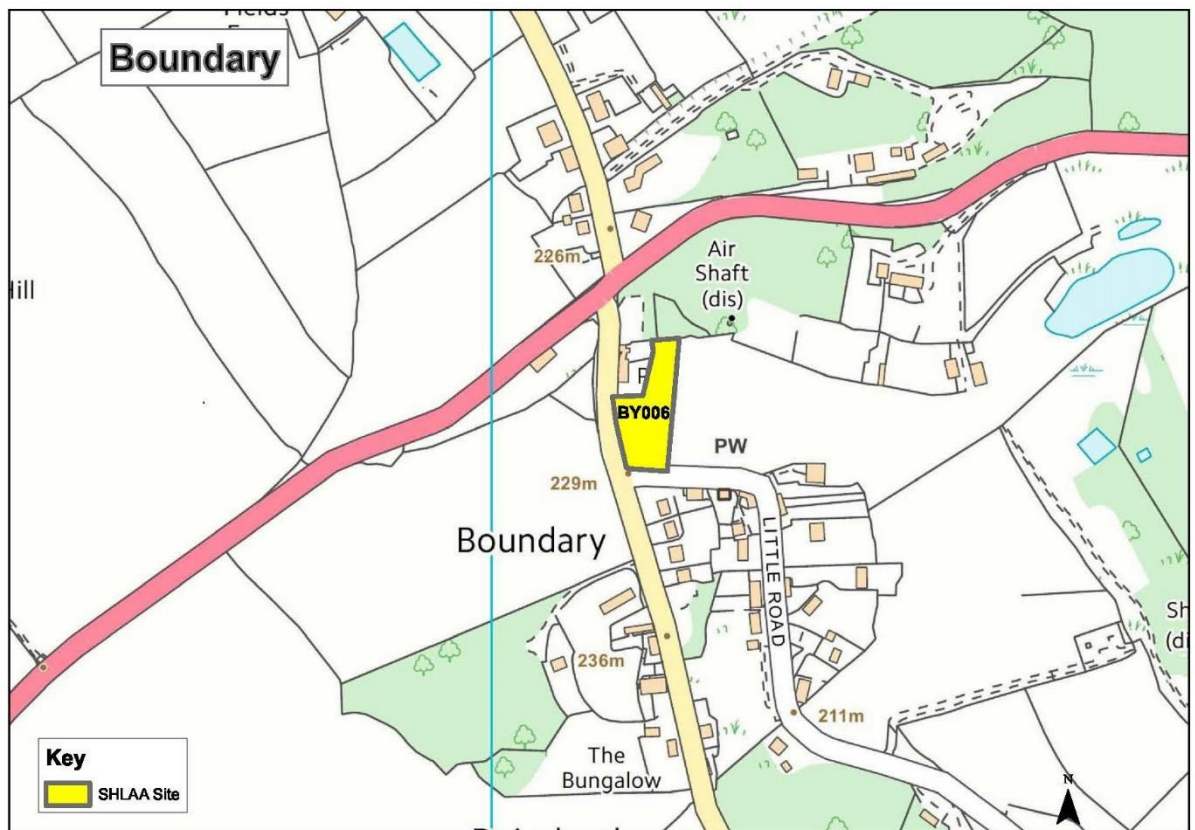
7.3 There are material considerations in favour of the development proposals, which should be afforded significant weight in the decision-making process such that they outweigh the definitional harm and the moderate harm which may be caused to the openness of the Green Belt. This amounts to the very special circumstances in which planning permission can be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

7.4 The considerations that comprise the very special circumstances in the case are as follows:

- The critical need to provide affordable housing for people who want to live in semi-rural locations.
- There are no alternative sites outside of the Green Belt in this location which are suitable, available or deliverable.
- The absence of a 5 year land supply
- Economic benefits.

Site Assessments:

7.5 Following a review of the councils Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA 2025) it is evident that only one site was identified in boundary, this site was considered unsuitable and therefore Boundary has no designated sites.



Absence of a 5-year housing land supply

7.6 Paragraph 60 of the Framework seeks to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. It states that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

7.7 The Council's Five Year Housing Land Supply Report sets out the five year housing land supply position at a base date of 1st April 2021 and a five year period to 31st March 2026.

7.8 It is often considered that the tilted balance cannot apply when a site is in the Green Belt and therefore would conflict with Green Belt policy. Our case is not that the tilted balance

should be applied but that the lack of a 5 year supply is a consideration that comprises part of the very special circumstances case. This approach has been upheld at appeal.

- 7.9 It is evident from other cases that the planning department at SMDC have considered the lack of 5 year housing supply in other redevelopment applications, and consider that weight should be added to applications that meet those needs.

Economic Benefits:

- 7.10 The proposal would deliver benefits to the economy through the creation of jobs during the construction phase.

Summary of very special circumstances

- 7.11 In summary, the other consideration set out above should afford significant weight in the decision-making process. We consider they outweigh the definition of harm and the harm which would be caused to the openness of the Green Belt is mitigated by the fact that the site forms part of the existing ribbon of development, the site is well screened, and the site is an infill development.