

Supporting Statement

Application for Permission in Principle for

the erection of a detached dwelling

**Land Adjacent to 1 Ash Bank Road, Ash Bank, Stoke on
Trent, ST2 9DS**

November 2025

Permission in Principle – 1 Ash Bank Road, Ash Bank

Project	1 Ash Bank Road
Client	Mr C Cooper
Reference	2642
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Version	1

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years' combined experience in both the public and private sector.
- 1.2 The author of this statement, Jim Malkin, has worked as a principal planning officer in development control in local government, and more recently as a planning consultant in the private sector. He has extensive knowledge of the planning system and experience of the appeals process. He is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- 1.3 This statement accompanies an application for Permission in Principle. This is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle for residential development and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed, i.e. appearance of the development, ecology, highways etc.....
- 1.4 This application addresses the first stage of the process, and if successful will be followed up with an application for technical details consent.

2 Site and Planning History

- 2.1 The application site consists of the side garden of 1 Ash Bank Road, Ash Bank. The applicant Mr Cooper lives in the main property with his family and uses the site as domestic garden.

- 2.2 The site is surrounded by linear residential development associated with Ash Bank Road, with farmland to the rear. The site sits adjacent to the administrative boundary between Staffordshire Moorlands and City of Stoke on Trent Council, but falls to be considered by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
- 2.3 The site is enclosed predominantly by existing boundary hedgerows of varying heights. The existing property has two access points from Ash Bank Road, one to the main property and one into the garden area / application site.
- 2.4 The land is located within the designated greenbelt.
- 2.5 The site and surroundings are shown on the aerial image below.



3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The existing dwelling at 1 Ash Bank Road is occupied by Mr Cooper and his family

who have been considering options for the side garden for sometime as it is currently underutilised, whilst also being provided with its own access from Ash Bank Road.

- 3.2 Mr Cooper is therefore seeking permission for a new build dwelling on the site.
- 3.3 This application seeks permission in principle for a detached dwelling on the site, this will be sited to the west of the existing property and will follow the defined building line. Whilst detailed plans have yet to be prepared, it is anticipated that the dwelling would be a 2 bed dormer bungalow. However, the applicant would be happy to discuss matters such as siting and design with the local authority prior to the submission of the technical details' submission. However, it will be ensured that any future dwelling is in keeping with the context of the area and utilise local materials.
- 3.4 The dwelling would utilise the existing access from Ash Bank Road which serves the existing garden area and is utilised by Mr Cooper to access the domestic curtilage of the property.

4 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states that “applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.
- 4.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF affords weight to sustainable development which meets the overarching economic, social and environmental objectives of the Planning Framework.

4.3 Paragraph 11 advises that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Local Plan; and also in circumstances where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

4.4 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF expresses a commitment to delivering housing growth. It states *“To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed”*.

4.5 Paragraph 143 of the NPPF refers to development in the greenbelt. This states the following:

Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

4.6 Paragraph 155 refers directly to grey belt development and states the following:

The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

- a. *The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;*
- b. *There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;*
- c. *The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and*
- d. *Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.*

4.7 Chapter 12 of the NPPF houses a number of relevant paragraphs relating to the importance of appropriate design. Paragraph 131 encourages the creation of high-quality buildings which raise the quality of the built environment and create better places in which to live and work.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020

4.11 The Core Strategy was adopted September 2020 and contains a number of policies relevant to the determination of this application; these are listed as follows.

SS 2 – Settlement Hierarchy

Towns – these are the largest settlements comprising of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle which accommodate half of the district’s population and the majority of the district’s services and facilities. The spatial strategy seeks to focus future growth in these settlements and to strengthen their role as service centres. These settlements will be defined by a Development Boundary.

SS 10 – Other Rural Areas Strategy

This policy advises that other rural areas comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages. The policy restricts development to that which has an essential need to be located in the Countryside. It also provides guidance in relation to development in the green belt.

H1 – New Housing Development

The policy permits residential development and redevelopment on windfall sites within the development boundaries of the towns and larger village. All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future residents and existing occupiers.

DC1 – Design Considerations

All new development should be of high quality and incorporate detailing and materials which positively contribute to the character of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD. Proposals should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings in terms of scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Five Year Land Supply

- 4.9 Of critical importance to the determination of this appeal is the Council's catastrophic five-year land supply position. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council have a long-standing failure to provide an appropriate level of land supply. The Council in the recent appeal at '*land to the east of Froghall Road, Cheadle*' (APP/B3438/W/24/3351035) agreed that their land supply position was 2.95 years, a significant and demonstrable undersupply.

5 Planning Considerations

- 5.1 The proposals involve the erection of a new dwelling within a residential area off Ash Bank Road, Ash Bank, the land is currently domestic curtilage associated with 1 Ash Bank Road. The site is located in an established residential area, albeit outside of any designated settlement boundary, and is within the greenbelt.
- 5.2 The government's recent changes to the NPPF have fundamentally changed planning policy in relation to development in the greenbelt. This has superseded all local plan policies in relation to development in the greenbelt, as it provides specific support for development in areas which meet the definition of 'grey-belt' as set out in paragraphs 153 of the NPPF.

- 5.3 The NPPF in paragraph 153 now advises the following:

"When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness ⁵⁵. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

- 5.4 Footnote 55 clarifies that this requirement and states that *"Other than in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate."*

- 5.5 The proposed dwelling sits within the domestic curtilage of 1 Ash Bank Road. The revised NPPF defines Grey belt as *"land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7*

(other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.”

- 5.6 It is clear in this instance that the site is a garden within an urban area and therefore does not follow the definition of ‘*previously developed land*’ in the NPPF. Therefore further consideration will be given below to the relevant criteria set out in paragraph 143 in order to confirm the land as ‘grey-belt’.

5.7 **Purpose a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

The site sits within an area of linear housing facing Ash Bank Road; it is urban in character and the erection of a single dwelling within the domestic curtilage will have limited impact on the contribution to or future prevention of the sprawl of an existing large built-up area. In this instance it is considered that the application site does not strongly contribute to purpose (a).

5.8 **Purpose b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

The site is situated within an area of linear housing facing Ash Bank Road. It is noted that the Causley Brook provides a barrier between the administrative boundaries of Staffordshire Moorlands and City of Stoke on Trent Councils, but there is continuous development along Ash Bank Road which links into Werrington Road, with no clear physical breaks between ‘towns’.

Even if the Causley Brook corridor was considered to be a break between towns, development associated with the garden on 1 Ash Bank Road can be sited as such to ensure that it is located immediately opposite 4 Ash Bank Road and does not infill this gap further than existing. This is shown clearly on the aerial photo extract below, which shows the building line associated with number 4 and the potential siting of any new dwelling on the application site.



On this basis it is clear that the proposed development will not contribute to neighbouring towns merging into one another and therefore does not strongly contribute to purpose (b).

5.9 Purpose d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

The site is not within a conservation area and there are no heritage assets within the visible vicinity of the application site. The scale of development is such that it has no impact on Ash Bank or Bucknall and will have no impact on any 'special character'. It is therefore considered that the site does not strongly contribute to purpose d) of the greenbelt which is to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

5.10 It is therefore clear that land constitutes grey belt as defined by the NPPF.

Therefore, in accordance with revised paragraph 153 it is excluded from substantial weight being given to the level of harm the development would cause to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness.

- 5.11 Paragraph 155 of the NPPF thereafter confirms that *“the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:*

The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan”.

- 5.12 The assessment above determines that the site is grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt. As the site is now considered to be a Grey belt site, which is to be used for the development of a home, both of which are factors that now are not considered to be inappropriate development in the Green belt, it follows that in principle the erection of a detached dwelling is acceptable in broad principal terms.

- 5.13 With regards to the siting of the dwelling the site is located within an existing urban area, it is well served by public transport, with bus stops within 90m of the site providing sustainable transport options for future residents of the dwelling. It is therefore considered that this site is not in an unsustainable location, and therefore the development of this grey-belt site should not be restricted.

- 5.14 Of critical importance to the determination of this appeal is the Councils catastrophic five-year land supply position. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council have a long-standing failure to provide an appropriate level of land supply. The Council in the recent appeal at *‘land to the east of Froghall Road, Cheadle’* (APP/B3438/W/24/3351035) agreed that their land supply position was 2.95 years, a significant and demonstrable undersupply.

- 5.15 Therefore, in line with paragraph 11, footnote 8 of the NPPF policies that restrict the delivery of new housing are deemed out of date, and support is given to a new

residential development providing that it is deemed sustainable as defined by the NPPF.

- 5.16 For the reasons set out above, the scheme is in a sustainable location and does not result in any concerns in relation to its environmental impact. The scheme will have associated economic benefits associated with its construction phase, whilst future occupiers will support facilities in the local area.
- 5.17 The scheme will make a small but nonetheless much needed contribution towards the supply of housing. This is a benefit that outweighs the harm by virtue of inappropriateness and any other harm attributed to the development by the Council.
- 5.18 Appended to this statement at Appendix A are a number of recent appeal decisions that relate to sites with very similar circumstances which are provided to support this application, they show that in general principal terms the government and Planning Inspectorate see the development of sites, such as the application site as acceptable.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The application seeks permission in principle for a detached dwelling on land adjacent to 1 Ash Bank Road, Ash Bank.
- 6.2 This above statement confirms that the site constitutes 'grey-belt' as defined by the recently revised NPPF, as well as being in a highly sustainable urban location.
- 6.3 It is therefore considered that the development of site is in principle acceptable and meets the requirements of the NPPF for development in such locations as set out in the appeal decisions at Appendix A.

- 6.4 It is therefore considered that the development of the site, in principle, accords with the relevant requirements of both local and national planning policies. All other matters fall to be considered as part of a subsequent application for technical details consent.