



Supporting Planning Statement

*Permission in Principle Application for
Seven New Dwellings
at
Land off Farmside Lane,
Biddulph Moor*

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1.0 Introduction and Proposal

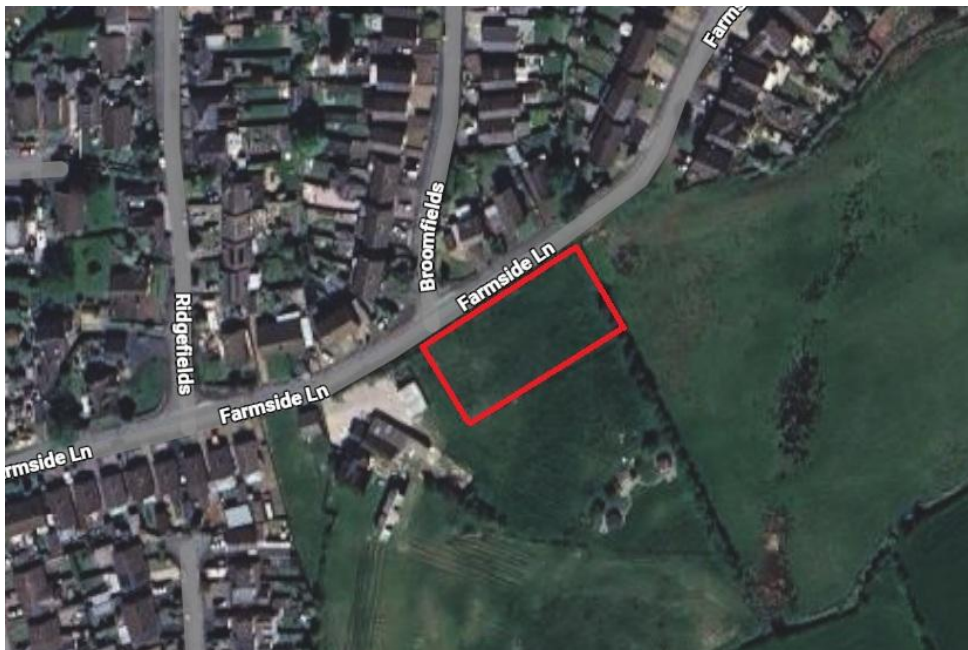
1.1 This statement has been prepared in support of an application for permission in principle for the erection of 7 no. new dwellings on land to the south of Farmside Lane, Biddulph Moor and seeks clarification as to whether in principle the site and proposed development is suitable in terms of its location, land use and amount of development.

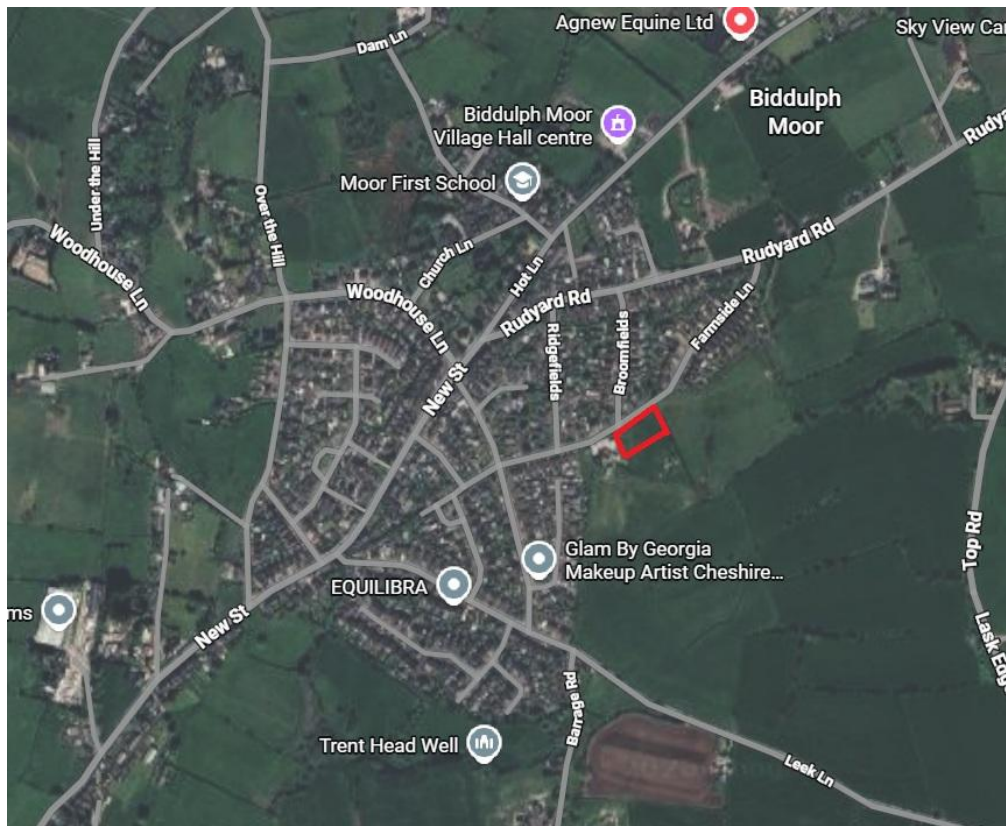
2.0 Site Description, History and Surroundings

2.1 The site is located on the eastern periphery of Biddulph Moor and within the authority of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. Biddulph Moor is a village which lies to the east of Biddulph and the south east of Congleton.

2.2 The application site is situated to the south of Farmside Lane, a road which runs around the outskirts of the village. The land is within Green Belt but lies on the immediate edge of the Biddulph Moor development boundary.

2.3 The site is bound by the highway to the north, a former farm and farm buildings to the south west and fields to the east and south. Residential development is present to the opposite side of Farmside Lane and further north east of the site on the same side of the road. The site is on the periphery of the settlement boundary line and forms an ideal opportunity for rounding off the existing settlement and built form of Biddulph Moor.





Aerial Images of Site and Surrounding Area © Google Earth

2.4 The existing site forms a vacant piece of land previously associated with the adjacent Hockadilla Farm but now under separate ownership and measuring 2050m². Access to the site is via Farmside Lane.



Images of the Site from Farmside Lane

3.0 Site and Relevant Planning History

3.1 The site has been subject to the following planning history:

- Application Reference SMD/1979/0490 – Site for Residential Development. Withdrawn 07/03/1979.
- Application Reference SMD/1981/0056 – Site for Residential Development. Refused 29/04/1981.
- Application Reference SMD/1987/0762 – Site for Residential Development. Refused 26/06/1987.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that *‘If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise’*.

4.2 The Development Plan for the site comprises of the Staffordshire Moorlands Adopted Local Plan.

4.3 The most relevant policies of this in relation to the determination of this application are as follows.

Policy SS2	Settlement Hierarchy
Policy SS9	Smaller Villages Area Strategy
Policy SS10	Other Rural Areas Strategy
Policy H1	New Housing Development
Policy DC3	Landscape and Settlement Setting

4.4 Current national planning policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2004 (NPPF) also acts as a material consideration for this application.

5.0 Planning Policy Assessment

5.1 This application is being submitted via the permission in principle consent route which is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for small scale housing-led development (up to 9 homes, under 1 hectare/1000sqm) which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development. The permission in principle (PIP) route has 2 stages; the first stage (or PIP stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second (technical details consent) stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. As this application is for PIP, in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), the scope of the assessment is limited to the following:

- Location
- Land use
- Amount of development.

5.2 Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the PIP stage with other matters considered at the technical details consent stage.

Location

5.3 The application site falls within an area designated as Green Belt as identified by the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Map and is therefore subject to local plan policies SS2 and SS10 where the site falls under the category of 'Other Rural Areas'. Policy SS2 defines these areas as follows: *'this comprises the open countryside where development is normally unacceptable and green belt where further development is generally inappropriate. Within these areas there are some groups of houses and hamlets which are not identified as 'smaller villages' because of their predominantly open character and loose-knit nature. They also contain major developed areas which may be suitable for appropriate development or redevelopment'*. Policy SS10 with specific regard to these areas states that *'These areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside'*. Policy SS10 then goes on to state that *'The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions: 1. Meet housing requirements and specific needs by:*

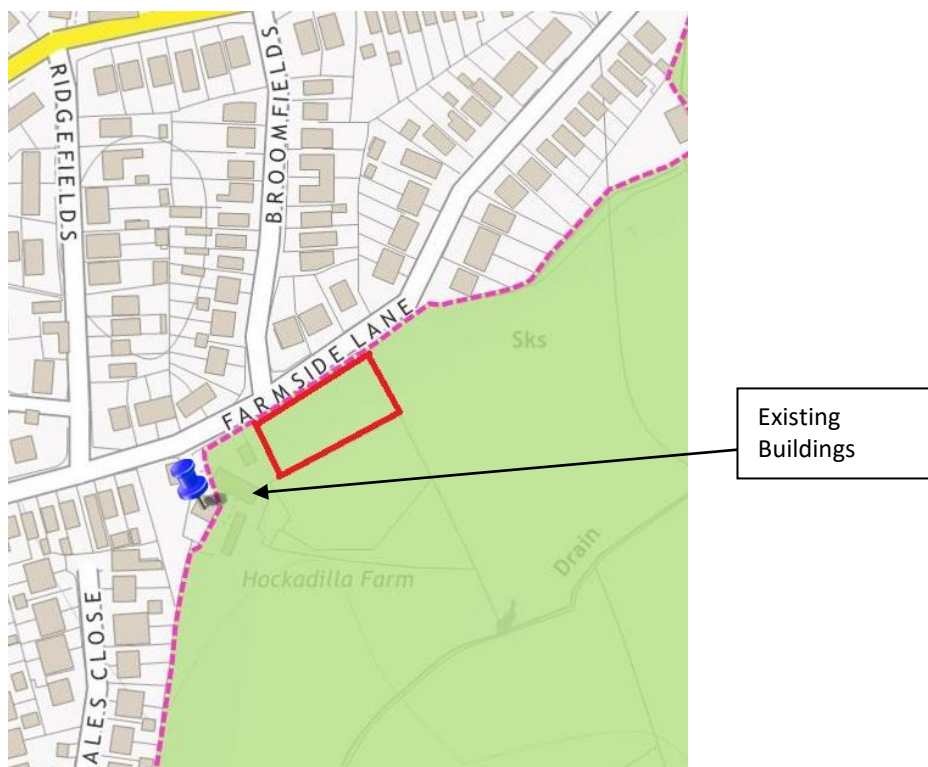
- *Restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside in accordance with Policy H 1;*
- *Allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H 1;*
- *Allowing extensions or additional domestic outbuildings to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. The Council will assess schemes having regard to the original dwelling, in cases where cumulative change has occurred;*
- *Allowing suitable development which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset in accordance with Policy DC 2;*
- *Allowing rural exceptions housing (in accordance with Policies H 1 and H 3);*
- *Allowing community facilities where that need cannot be met in a settlement within the hierarchy. In such cases the development should be in a sustainable location close to an existing serviced settlement'.*

It also advises that the Council will achieve the protection of the Green Belt by *'Giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape'* and *'Limiting uses which generate a substantial number of regular trips in areas that are not well served by public transport'*.

5.4 The NPPF similarly restricts development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as listed under Paragraphs 154 and 155.

5.4 As it exists, the proposed development does not fall within the criteria for appropriate development in the Green Belt. However, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council are currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply which, in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, renders policy SS10 out of date. The Council's housing land supply situation will be discussed in more detail under the Housing Land Supply section of this statement.

5.5 However, in relation to the visual impact on the Green Belt, the location of the application site lies on the periphery of the existing settlement boundary for Biddulph Moor with residential properties in close proximity of the site, all of which fall within this settlement boundary.



Extract from Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Adopted Policies Map 2020 (pink dashed line denotes settlement boundary)

5.6 As demonstrated above, the location of the site relates well to the built form of the settlement of Biddulph Moor and would be an ideal location to effectively round off the built form in this area whilst contributing to the Council's housing land supply deficit. The site is small scale and does not strongly contribute to any of the purposes of the Green Belt.

5.7 The achievement of sustainable development is a clear objective of both national and local planning policy. Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states that *'The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making'*. In relation to locational accessibility, Paragraph 115 goes on to advise that *'In assessing site that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location'*. When discussing any adverse impact of granting planning permission in relation to out-of-date development plan policies, Paragraph 11d ii of the NPPF advises that decision makers should have particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations.

5.8 Point 3 of Policy SS10 for development in other rural areas similarly encourages locationally sustainable development. Biddulph Moor is an established village with a primary school, post office, two local shops, a pharmacy, a village hall public houses and churches. The application site is easily accessible to the services and facilities within the village. In particular, the school (Moor First School) is 600m from the site, the pharmacy (Everest Pharmacy) is 350m, village community facilities (Biddulph Village Hall, Holt Lane Recreation Ground, Hot Scotch Park Playing Area) are 650m away and the nearest convenience store (Moor Store) is 350m from the site. In addition to this, the larger

town of Biddulph is less than 3000m away which offers more extensive shops and facilities including a supermarket, leisure facilities, a secondary school, bank, park, library and medical centre. There is a bus stop on New Street, 350m from the site, which provides an hourly bus service to Biddulph. This bus stop is fully accessible via pedestrian pavements. The site is therefore considered highly sustainable in locational terms in accordance with Policy SS10.

Land Use

5.9 The land in the surrounding area is in residential use. It is therefore considered that the proposed land use for new residential development would be suitable. Although the proposed development would not fall within any of the categories of exception to the restrictive policy relating to development within the Green Belt and would constitute a 'departure' from the development plan, the application needs to be considered subject to the tilted balance under paragraph 11d of the Framework due to the lack of housing land supply.

Amount of Development

5.10 The proposals seek permission in principle for a residential development of seven dwellings. As demonstrated by the indicative site plan provided with the application, the plot itself is capable of accommodating seven dwellings in the form proposed (3 no. sets of semis and a detached property of the same scale), comprising less than a hectare and 1000sqm of accommodation, and so would be under the size restrictions imposed on the permission of principle course of application.

Housing Land Supply

5.11 In December 2024, the Government published the latest version of the NPPF which changed the standard method for calculating local housing need. The latest housing land supply figures by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council were published in April 2025 which identified that the Council only a deliverable supply of 1,384 dwellings, and assessing this against their local housing need, they can only demonstrate a 2.95 year supply of housing land. The right to challenge these figures is reserved. The absence of five year housing land supply is an important material consideration. As the Council are no longer able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply, policy PG6 with regard to housing development in the open countryside is out of date and the tilted planning balance is engaged in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, meaning that planning permission should be granted unless there are any adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF. This statement has demonstrated that there are no adverse impacts of allowing this development. Although other matters would be dealt with through a subsequent technical details application, there are no known or likely constraints which might otherwise render the development unacceptable.

5.12 The proposals for the construction of 7 no. dormer bungalow properties on this parcel of land provides the opportunity to address some of the Council's housing land supply deficit on a site which has limited benefit in terms of its designation as Green Belt due to its location immediately adjacent to an existing settlement boundary. The site would deliver 7 no. new dwellings which would form part of an existing village and is in a practical, sustainable location to access the facilities and services the village (and neighbouring town accessible via public transport options) has to offer. The site is deliverable and could be delivered within the next five years. Should permission in principle be granted, an application for technical details stage could be submitted relatively quickly as an indicative site plan and house types have already been prepared by the applicant's agent. The delivery of seven dwellings in a sustainable location with very limited impact on the openness and character of the area and to meet an identified shortfall is considered a significant benefit of this

proposal.

5.13 As there is built form surrounding the site, the proposals would not significantly visually extend built form any further into the Green Belt and the new built form would be read in the context of the backdrop of the existing dwellings in the area. As such, it would not appear incongruous or as projecting built form into the surrounding countryside.

5.14 Most importantly, the site is not isolated and is in a location where other residential development is essentially located. As the tilted planning balance is engaged in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, there is therefore a presumption in favour of allowing this PIP application on the basis of the site's situation and surroundings.

6. Other Considerations

6.1 Although details are not for consideration as part of the current application for permission in principle, an indicative site layout has been provided with the application for illustrative purposes showing how seven dormer bungalow style properties could be accommodated on the site which it is considered to be an appropriate amount of development for this area of the site. Although technical matters would be dealt with at the subsequent technical details consent stage, below is a summary of the proposals in relation to any technical considerations and confirms how there are no known or likely constraints that could not be addressed satisfactorily as part of the technical details consent stage.

Highways

6.2 The indicative site plan shows the creation of 7 no. access drives off Farmland Lane to serve the new dwellings. If required, a highways report could be provided at technical details consent stage. However, bearing in mind the 30mph speed limit along Farmland Lane, it is considered that safe and suitable access arrangements can be made for the site.

Trees

6.3 The proposals would not require any tree removal or incursion into any root protection areas. Small sections of hedging would need to be removed to provide the new access points. However, this could be dealt with satisfactorily at technical consent details stage.

Amenity Space

6.4 The proposals show the provision of 7 no. properties with adequately sized amenity space including off street parking and gardens to comply with local planning policy with regard to housing standards.

Ecology / BNG

6.5 A phase 1 habitat survey along with a biodiversity net gain assessment would be provided for consideration with any subsequent technical details stage application to determine how this could be addressed and any mitigation measures required to eliminate or reduce any significant harm to biodiversity and geodiversity resulting from the development proposals.

Self-Build / Custom Housing

6.6 The applicant would be willing to put forward the development for self-build custom housing to assist in the Council meeting its quota for this type of development should this be required. Again, this would be considered in detail under any subsequent technical details stage.

7.0 Summary and Conclusion

7.1 Due to its location on the edge of the existing village of Biddulph Moor and on the edge of the existing settlement boundary, the application site would be an ideal land use for housing as the proposal would not undermine the protection of the Green Belt from urbanising development. The absence of a five year housing land supply triggers the tilted balance in Paragraph 11d of the NPPF and reduces the weight that can be attached to relevant policies for the supply of housing land.

7.2 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council are currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply which means that its policy for housing development in the Green Belt is out-of-date and planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. The benefits that these proposals would provide are the delivery of new housing within an authority which cannot demonstrate a five-year supply in a highly sustainable location and in an area where there is already built form in close proximity to the site. The scope of this application for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development only. However, this statement has indicated how at this stage there are no other technical considerations which would indicate that planning permission should not be granted.

7.3 Accordingly, permission in principle for the erection of 7 no. dwellings on the application site should be granted.

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