

High Peak BC Planning Reference –	SMD/2026/0201		
Site Name –	Land north of Breach Road, Brown Edge		
Summary of proposals -	Outline application for up to 55 dwellings, public open space and associated works (all matters reserved except access)		
Consultation Note Subject –	Landscape and Visual Matters		
Planning Case Officer –	Chris Johnson		
Landscape Comments Prepared By –	Stuart Ryder of Ryder Landscape Consultants		
Date of site visit —	24/8/26	Date of note(s) No.1	11/9//26
Summary of overall findings	• No landscape objection is raised, subject to conditions securing the development envelope, two-storey height limit, site levels, vegetation offsets and northern green infrastructure area. • The site has Medium landscape sensitivity and would experience a High Adverse change, although the effect on the wider landscape character would remain Low Adverse. • Visual effects would be geographically contained but include Medium Adverse permanent effects on CP12 and nearby residents, potentially greater for the closest properties, with more limited effects from CP10 and CP70. • Mitigation should retain and reinforce boundary vegetation, replace the declining TPO beech group, integrate POS and SuDS, and secure comprehensive landscape details with at least ten years' initial establishment management and permanent ongoing maintenance.		

1 Introduction

1.1 This consultation response considers the landscape and visual implications of an outline planning application for up to 55 dwellings on land north of Breach Road, Brown Edge. All matters are reserved except access. The submitted block plan is therefore illustrative and the detailed layout, scale, appearance and landscaping would be determined through subsequent reserved matters applications should outline consent be granted.

1.2 The following documents have been considered:

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal, Influence Landscape Planning and Design Ltd, reference INF_N251349_R01, April 2026;
- Grey Belt Assessment, Influence Landscape Planning and Design Ltd, reference INF_N251349_R02, April 2026;
- Planning Statement, Heaton Planning Ltd, April 2026; and
- Arboricultural Key Facts Note, ACS Consulting, reference 5402/DR.25, October 2025.

1.3 A site visit was undertaken in the late afternoon and evening of 24th August 2026 in good weather and visibility conditions. The assessment considers the existing landscape character and visual context of the site, the findings of the submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), the illustrative development proposals and the extent to which an acceptable development could be secured through reserved matters, parameter controls and planning conditions.

1.4 The response is limited to landscape and visual matters. Although the site lies within the Green Belt and the submitted Green Belt Assessment has been considered where it overlaps with landscape character and visual openness, the overall planning balance and acceptability of the proposal under Green Belt policy are matters for the case officer.

1.5 The proposals have been considered against the latest August 2026 NPPF in this note.

2 Site and proposed development

Site and surroundings

2.1 The application site extends to approximately 3.2 hectares and comprises several small agricultural fields used principally for pasture. It lies immediately east of the existing settlement boundary of Brown Edge and within the Staffordshire Green Belt. Existing residential development adjoins or lies close to the western and south-western boundaries, while agricultural land continues to the north and east. Breach Road, the B5051, defines the southern boundary.

2.2 The land slopes generally southwards from higher ground along the northern boundary towards Breach Road, which lies at approximately 200 metres AOD. This topography, together with the site's small-scale pastoral fields and established vegetation, contributes to and makes it part of the surrounding Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands landscape.

2.3 Mature hedgerows and trees provide some established enclosure along much of the southern and eastern boundaries. The northern boundary is more open where it forms part of a larger agricultural field, while the western boundary adjoins the existing settlement edge. A line of trees running east-west through the northern part of the site is covered by Tree Preservation Order No. 4 of 1976. The Arboricultural Key Facts Note records that many of the beech trees within this group are in poor condition but identifies the oak, T13, as desirable for retention. The southern roadside hedge is also identified as highly desirable for retention.

2.4 Public footpath Endon and Stanley CP12 lies immediately south of the site, on the opposite side of Breach Road. Brown Edge CP70 passes approximately 430 metres north of the proposed built-development area, while CP10 follows higher ground to the west and south of Brown Edge. Existing landform, buildings and vegetation restrict wider visibility, although closer views are available from Breach Road itself, CP12 and a limited number of neighbouring residential properties.

Proposed development

2.5 The application seeks outline permission for up to 55 dwellings, including two-storey houses and an apartment building, with only the layout of access submitted in detail for approval. A single vehicular access would be formed from Breach Road in the Site's southern boundary. The existing agricultural access would be closed, with a separate track connection retained towards the remainder of the Applicant's land to the north-east.

2.6 The illustrative block plan indicates residential development across the southern and central parts of the site. It also shows:

- Public Open Space (POS) and a Local Area for Play (LAP) near the southern boundary;
- a notional attenuation pond and pumping station close to the site entrance;
- retained boundary hedgerows and trees, except where removal is required for access;
- native street-tree planting and mixed scrub planting;
- grassland and wetland habitat associated with the drainage proposals; and
- land in the northern part of the site principally reserved for biodiversity enhancement.

2.7 The illustrative scheme demonstrates one potential means of accommodating the proposed development. However, the landscape acceptability of the outline application will depend upon the parameters and controls secured at this stage being sufficient to ensure that a future reserved matters scheme responds appropriately to the site's topography, retained vegetation, rural edges and relationship with the existing dwellings within the settlement edge.

3 Planning policy and landscape context

Planning policy

3.1 The principal adopted local landscape policy is Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policy DC3, Landscape and Settlement Setting. This seeks to resist prominent intrusion into the countryside and development that would have a significant adverse effect on landscape character, settlement setting or important views. It also supports development that respects local landscape character, reinforces settlement setting, conserves landscape features and provides for positive landscape management.

3.2 Policy NE2, Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows, requires healthy trees, woodlands and hedgerows to be retained and integrated unless their loss is clearly outweighed by the need for and benefits of development. It also requires adequate new tree cover, mitigation of negative landscape effects and provision for future maintenance. Policy NE1 is relevant to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, while Policy C2 concerns the provision of open space associated with residential development.

3.3 The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD advises that buildings at settlement edges should sit comfortably within the landscape, respond to settlement grain and use building forms, materials and landscape treatment appropriate to their context. These considerations are particularly relevant to the treatment of the northern and eastern development edges.

3.4 The submitted reports refer to the December 2024 NPPF. That document has now been replaced by the August 2026 NPPF and the proposal should be considered against the current national decision-making policies. Relevant matters include:

- Policy S5 concerning development outside settlements;
- Policies GB6–GB8 concerning development in the Green Belt, grey belt and the Golden Rules;
- Policies DP3 and DP4 concerning context-responsive design and safeguarding design quality throughout the development process;
- Policy N2 concerning improvement of the natural environment; and
- Policy N3 concerning retention, provision and long-term maintenance of trees.

Policy DP3 requires proposals to respond to the history, character and features of their site and setting and to integrate with and enhance their surroundings. Policy N3 requires tree-lined streets where appropriate, suitable species and placement, and long-term maintenance of retained and proposed trees.

Landscape character

3.5 The site lies within the Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands Landscape Character Type. Relevant characteristics include strongly undulating or sloping landform, small-scale irregular fields bounded by hedgerows and trees, extensive views from higher ground, isolated properties and narrow rural lanes. The site's pasture, sloping landform and vegetated boundaries are consequently representative of several of the identified characteristics. Extensive views are achievable from Public Footpaths to the north with the site forming part of the fore to mid ground view in the longer panoramic scene.

3.6 The site is not subject to any national or local landscape designation and is not identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment as forming part of an important landscape setting to Brown Edge. This does not mean that it is without landscape value or sensitivity. The site remains an undeveloped component of the pastoral landscape adjoining the village and contributes locally to the transition between the settlement and the wider countryside.

3.7 The site's principal landscape attributes are its sloping landform, established roadside and eastern boundary vegetation, northern tree line and relationship with the small-scale field pattern. Its sensitivity arises less from rarity or designation and more from the permanent change that residential development would introduce at the settlement edge. The key issue is therefore whether the scale and disposition of development, together with retained and proposed green infrastructure, could create a coherent and defensible new edge to Brown Edge without causing prominent intrusion into the countryside or unacceptable harm to local landscape character.

4 Review of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal

4.1 Methodology and scope

4.1 The submitted LVA is described as a narrative appraisal rather than a formal Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. It states that it has been prepared with reference to GLVIA3 and includes a methodology addressing landscape value, susceptibility and sensitivity, magnitude of change and significance of effect. This provides a generally appropriate framework for an appraisal of a development of this scale.

4.2 A maximum study area of 1 kilometre was selected following analysis of a LiDAR-based Zone of Theoretical Visibility and field assessment. The ZTV incorporates existing built form and vegetation recorded during the winter months. My site visit broadly confirms the LVA's central observation that visibility is constrained by the undulating landform, existing development and established hedgerows and trees. However a 2km radius or larger would give greater certainty of visibility in longer range views, particularly to the south.

4.3 The representative viewpoints cover the principal publicly accessible receptor groups, including Breach Road, public footpaths CP12, CP10 and CP70, and POS within the adjoining residential area. The selected viewpoints are broadly representative of the available visibility, although limited in

number. They provide a reasonable basis for understanding the site's general visual context but offer less certainty about the precise effects of the eventual development.

4.4 This limitation is particularly relevant because layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are reserved matters. The LVA assesses an illustrative block plan and assumes that residential buildings would be no more than approximately 9 metres high. Neither the disposition and finished levels of buildings nor the detailed planting proposals are fixed through the current application. The findings should therefore be treated as an appraisal of the development parameters and the illustrative scheme rather than a definitive assessment of a final layout. Likewise 9m is a little low for a two-storey house but is acceptable as long as they do remain as two-storey and are not changed for 2.5 or 3 storey houses at a later date.

4.5 Subject to this qualification, I broadly accept the LVA's assessment of the site as having Medium landscape sensitivity and its principal findings concerning the likely direction and scale of landscape and visual change. However, the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation cannot yet be confirmed because the planting proposals remain conceptual. Acceptance in landscape terms should therefore depend upon appropriate parameters being secured at outline stage and a comprehensive landscape scheme being required at reserved matters.

4.6 In addition to the landscape design proposals there is the need for as much certainty and enforceability as possible with regards to the establishment aftercare and long-term management of both soft and hard landscape works. The challenges presented to soft landscapes through climate change (e.g. both flood and drought risks) needs to be addressed in any management planning documents for the external realm.

5 Landscape effects

5.1 The proposed development would result in the permanent change of approximately 3.2 hectares of pastoral agricultural land to residential development, roads, drainage infrastructure, public open space and associated green infrastructure. This would substantially alter the character of the application site, irrespective of the extent to which the development might be screened or filtered in external views.

5.2 I agree with the LVA that the application Site has Medium sensitivity to residential development. It is not designated for its landscape quality and is not identified as forming part of the important landscape setting of Brown Edge. Nevertheless, its sloping pasture, small-scale field pattern and established hedgerow and tree boundaries are representative of the Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands Landscape Character Type. The Site also forms an undeveloped transition between the existing settlement and the agricultural countryside to the north and east.

5.3 I also agree that the magnitude of change to the application site would be High, Adverse. This change from pasture to built development would be permanent and would introduce buildings, roads, lighting, garden boundaries and domestic activity. The proposed public open space, drainage features and habitat creation would provide some landscape and ecological benefits but would not prevent the fundamental change in the site's character.

5.4 Effects on the wider Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands Landscape Character Type are likely to be more limited. The site adjoins the established settlement edge and is contained to a significant degree by landform, development and existing vegetation. The proposed development would affect a

relatively small part of an extensive character type and would not materially alter the experience of the wider valley landscape. On this basis, the LVA's assessment of a Low, Adverse effect on the wider landscape character type is reasonable.

5.5 The acceptability of the development would, however, depend upon the creation of a coherent and defensible new settlement edge. Particular attention should be given to:

- retaining the southern roadside hedge, eastern boundary vegetation and oak T13;
- defining and protecting the northern green infrastructure and biodiversity area through legal agreements or Land Charges;
- providing a substantial replacement landscape structure where the declining beech group cannot be retained;
- maintaining suitable development offsets from retained trees and hedgerows;
- controlling the northern and eastern extent and height of built development with a maximum two storey height and possibly looking at single storey dwellings at these edges;
- ensuring that finished floor levels and earthworks respond to the sloping landform without reverting to extensive hard engineering or retaining walls, there should be enough ground left to deal with the slope; and
- placing important boundary planting in areas capable of effective long-term management rather than relying on planting within private gardens.

5.6 The illustrative proposals indicate that these objectives could potentially be achieved. However, the present landscape strategy is not sufficiently detailed to demonstrate its deliverability or long-term effectiveness. The principle of development may be capable of cautious acceptance in landscape terms, but this should not be interpreted as unqualified endorsement of the illustrative layout.

5.7 The penultimate bullet above points to a particular challenge of designing residential sites on sloping ground. Often housing layouts are designed with little or no consideration of onsite topography and how this is managed within the scheme. It should be included from the outset of any detail design process and aim to be low-key and non-intrusive in nature so the external realm can be as attractive as possible and private residential gardens useable and not subject to large level changes.

6 Visual effects

6.1 My site visit broadly confirms that views of the site are geographically contained. Visibility is greatest from locations close to the southern and western boundaries, while wider views are restricted by the undulating landform, intervening development and established vegetation. The selected viewpoints provide a broadly representative, although limited, account of this visibility.

Public rights of way

6.2 The principal public visual effects would be experienced by users of footpath CP12 immediately south of Breach Road. From the northern part of this route, the development would replace views of sloping pasture with a residential settlement edge. The retained roadside hedge would filter the lower parts of the development but roofs and upper elevations would remain apparent, particularly during winter and before new planting had established. I agree that this would result in a Medium, Adverse effect (sometimes referred to as a Moderate, Adverse visual effect)..

6.3 Visibility from the long-distance route CP10 is confined to a short section of higher ground. The proposed development would occupy a limited and filtered part of a broader valley view in which the proximity of Brown Edge is already understood. The wider outlook across the undulating agricultural landscape would remain available. A Low, Adverse effect is presented in the application LVA but I consider it to be slightly higher at Moderate/Minor, Adverse.

6.4 From CP70 to the north, the site is difficult to distinguish because of intervening vegetation, landform and its lower position. Any views of development or associated open space are likely to be to roofs set lower down slope and could be relatively easily screened out whilst still allowing a longer cross valley view to remain. The LVA reports a Low to Negligible Adverse effect for users of this route where again I would report it slightly larger at Low, Adverse. All these visual effects would be permanent.

Residential receptors

6.5 The greatest residential effects would arise for the properties adjoining or directly facing the Site's western edge and for the property opposite the Breach Road access (Breach Farm nameplate noted). Existing residents would experience the replacement of an undeveloped outlook with built development at close range. Although existing vegetation would provide some filtering, it would not remove this change. I agree that a Moderate Adverse effect for residential receptors overall is reasonable, with potentially greater effects for the closest and most directly orientated properties taking their visual effects up to Major/Moderate.

6.6 Viewpoint 07, taken from POS within the existing housing estate, is helpful in demonstrating the limited and glimpsed visibility available between existing buildings. It cannot, however, fully represent private residential views from upper-floor windows or rear gardens. The precise effects on individual properties will depend upon the eventual location, orientation, height and finished levels of the proposed dwellings which are currently not defined given the Outline nature of the application.

Breach Road and overall visual position

6.7 Effects on road users are likely to remain relatively localised, particularly where the existing southern and eastern vegetation is retained. The proposed access would create a more open and urbanised break in the Breach Road frontage, and the extent of vegetation removal and associated visibility splays should be clearly defined. Overall, the visual effects identified by the LVA are broadly credible, but they remain dependent upon the reserved matters scheme maintaining the assumed development extent, building heights, landscape buffers and hedge retention.

6.8 Alteration of this section of the Breach Road corridor is mitigated to a degree by the existing urban elements of street lighting, footpath and white lining of the road. The Site's southern boundary hedge should be retained or if partly removed replaced with advanced nursery stock, or through translocation of the hedgerow. Likewise the purple beech that mark this section of Breach Road should be retained or replaced and could be carried on into the proposals as a piece of local characteristic planting.

7 Landscape strategy and mitigation

7.1 The illustrative landscape strategy incorporates a number of appropriate principles. These include retaining the established boundary vegetation, setting aside land in the northern part of the site for biodiversity and green infrastructure, providing public open space, play and sustainable drainage,

and introducing street trees, scrub, grassland and wetland planting. Collectively, these measures could help integrate development with the existing settlement and create a more structured new edge to Brown Edge.

7.2 The retention of existing trees and hedgerows should form the starting point for the detailed design rather than being treated solely as visual screening. The southern roadside hedge and eastern boundary vegetation contribute to the site's character, enclosure and habitat connectivity. Adequate development offsets should be secured to allow their long-term retention without pressure arising from buildings, gardens, level changes, drainage infrastructure or future pruning.

7.3 The proposed northern green infrastructure and biodiversity area is an important component of the scheme. It would maintain a transition between the developed part of the site and the agricultural landscape beyond and provide space for replacement tree planting and habitat creation. Its extent should be defined and protected through the outline application so that it cannot subsequently be reduced or encroached upon at reserved matters stage.

7.4 The POS, play area and SuDS features provide an opportunity to establish a connected and multifunctional landscape framework. These features should be designed as an integrated part of the development rather than as separate or residual areas. Detailed proposals should demonstrate suitable landform, safe and attractive public access, appropriate planting and a coherent relationship between recreation, drainage, biodiversity and visual mitigation. They should be genuinely landscape-led rather than filling in the remainder green spaces after a housing layout has been fixed. The management of level changes across the Site is again highlighted as being important to the character and quality of the end external realm.

7.5 The declining condition of much of the TPO beech group creates uncertainty about the permanence of the existing northern landscape structure. A detailed arboricultural and replacement strategy should identify which trees can reasonably be retained, including oak T13, and provide for phased replacement planting capable of re-establishing a strong landscape boundary. Replacement should be based upon the structural and landscape function of the group rather than solely upon replacing individual tree numbers on a like for like basis..

7.6 Planting along the northern and eastern edges should be of sufficient depth and diversity to create a durable settlement boundary. Important structural planting should be placed within publicly managed land and should not depend upon planting within private gardens. Any Reserved Matters submission should specify species, sizes, densities, soil preparation, protection, establishment maintenance and replacement arrangements and demonstrate that planting would not conflict with utilities, drainage or highway requirements. In addition drainage and irrigation of individual tree stations, larger scrub and tree areas, hedgerows and ornamental beds need to be designed in at the Reserved Matters stage and demonstrably shown as feasible and funded for the development.

7.7 The proposed access would create a more open and urbanised break in the Breach Road frontage. The precise extent of hedgerow and tree removal required for the access and visibility splays should be established before permission is granted. The design should minimise vegetation loss and provide replacement native hedgerow and tree planting behind the visibility envelope to reinstate the continuity and landscape character of the frontage as far as practicable. Ideally the purple beech in the highway hedgerow are retained.

7.8 Because the application is in outline, the acceptability of the proposal should not rely solely upon the illustrative block plan. The following matters should be secured through approved parameter plans and appropriately worded conditions:

- the maximum extent of the built-development envelope;
- the maximum height of proposed buildings;
- the extent of the northern green infrastructure and biodiversity area;
- retention of specified trees and hedgerows and minimum development offsets;
- parameters for site levels, finished floor levels, earthworks and retaining structures; and
- the extent of vegetation removal required for access and visibility splays.

7.9 Subject to these controls, the illustrative strategy provides a reasonable basis from which an acceptable detailed landscape scheme could be developed.

8 Recommendations and planning conditions

8.1 The proposed development is capable of cautious acceptance in landscape and visual terms, subject to conditions imposed at outline stage that secure the essential development parameters and require the submission of comprehensive details at reserved matters. These conditions should ensure that the landscape principles shown on the illustrative material are carried through into the detailed scheme.

8.2 If you are minded to approve the development Conditions shall require the submission and approval of a detailed hard and soft landscape scheme. This should include:

- existing vegetation to be retained and removed;
- proposed trees, hedgerows, shrubs, scrub, grassland and wetland planting;
- species, numbers, sizes, densities and planting specifications;
- soil preparation, cultivation and establishment requirements;
- hard surfaces, street furniture, play facilities and boundary treatments;
- coordination with utilities, drainage, highways and visibility requirements;
- an implementation programme linked to development phases; and
- replacement of plants that die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased during the specified establishment period that is suggested to be 10 years.

8.3 An arboricultural condition should require an updated arboricultural impact assessment, tree protection plan and arboricultural method statement. These should demonstrate the retention and protection of the southern roadside hedge, eastern boundary vegetation, oak T13 and other trees of value. The submission should also include a phased strategy for managing and replacing the declining TPO beech group so that its landscape function is maintained and re-established over time.

8.4 Detailed existing and proposed levels should be submitted with the reserved matters application. These should include finished floor and ridge levels, road levels, earthworks, retaining structures, drainage features and representative cross-sections through all the Site's edges to demonstrate the relationship with adjoining land. The information should demonstrate that development would respond appropriately to the site's slope and would not result in unnecessarily prominent buildings, engineered landform or exposed retaining structures.

8.5 Conditions should control external lighting and boundary treatment. Lighting proposals should identify the location, height, direction, output and colour temperature of fittings and demonstrate that illumination at the rural boundaries would be minimised. Countryside-facing boundaries should avoid visually intrusive suburban treatments and should be integrated with structural planting. Close-boarded fencing should not form the principal outward-facing boundary of the development where a softer and more locally appropriate treatment can be provided.

8.6 A Landscape Management Plan should be submitted and approved before occupation of the development. It should cover a minimum establishment period of 10 years with landscape objectives and actions then set out in perpetuity care of the Site's external realm and identify:

- the landscape areas and features to be managed;
- management objectives and operations;
- inspection and maintenance frequencies;
- watering, weed control, pruning and replacement requirements;
- management of trees, hedgerows, scrub, grassland, wetland habitats and SuDS;
- monitoring and remedial procedures;
- arrangements for phased replacement of the northern tree group;
- updates to the Management Plan; and
- the organisation responsible for undertaking and funding the work.

8.7 Communal open space, structural boundary planting, SuDS and the northern green infrastructure area should be maintained by an identified management company or other responsible body. The condition should distinguish between the initial 10-year establishment and maintenance period and the permanent management responsibilities that would continue thereafter.

8.8 Subject to these controls, the landscape matters that remain unresolved at outline stage could reasonably be addressed through reserved matters and condition discharge. Failure to retain the essential development envelope, green infrastructure areas, vegetation offsets and height and level parameters would require the landscape and visual effects to be reconsidered.

9 Summary and conclusion

9.1 The proposed development would permanently change approximately 3.2 hectares of pastoral agricultural land at the edge of Brown Edge to residential development, associated infrastructure, public open space and green infrastructure. The Site is not subject to a landscape designation and is not identified as forming part of the important landscape setting of the village. Nevertheless, its sloping pasture, small-scale field pattern and established vegetated boundaries are characteristic of the Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands Landscape Character Type. I agree with the LVA that the site has Medium landscape sensitivity and that the magnitude of change within the application site would be High, adverse.

9.2 The influence of the development on the wider landscape would be moderated by its relationship with the existing settlement, the surrounding landform and established trees and hedgerows. A Low Adverse effect on the wider landscape character type is therefore reasonable. Visual effects would be geographically contained but would include a Medium, Adverse and permanent effect for users of CP12 and nearby residential receptors. More limited effects would occur from CP10 and CP70. The proposed retention of boundary vegetation, northern green infrastructure area, public open space, SuDS and new tree, scrub, grassland and wetland planting provides a reasonable basis for

mitigation, although the detailed design and long-term effectiveness of these measures remain to be established.

9.3 I raise no landscape objection to the outline application, subject to conditions securing the development envelope, maximum building height, vegetation retention and offsets, northern green infrastructure area, site levels and earthworks parameters. Reserved matters must maintain the parameters upon which the LVA and this consultation response are based and provide comprehensive landscape, arboricultural, lighting, boundary treatment and management proposals. Long-term management will be essential to the effectiveness of the mitigation, including the phased replacement of the declining northern tree group and permanent management of structural planting and communal areas. If a reserved matters scheme materially departs from the assessed parameters, its landscape and visual effects should be reconsidered.