

PLANNING STATEMENT

**FRESHWAYS
LEEK ROAD, CELLARHEAD**

SEPTEMBER 2026

Site Address:

Freshways, Leek Road, Cellarhead, Staffordshire, ST9 0DQ

Applicant:

Mr. J. Shirley

Proposal:

Erection of replacement dwelling and associated works

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 8th September 2026

Job Reference: RDP/2026/093

Report Prepared By:

Rob Duncan BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

Contact Details:

Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd
St. Mary's Old School, Minster Pool Walk, Lichfield, WS13 6QT
Email: rob78duncan@gmail.com
Tel. 07779 783521

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. J. Shirley to seek full planning permission for the erection of a replacement dwelling and associated works on land at Freshways, Leek Road, Cellarhead.
- 1.2 The existing dwelling comprises a two storey, three bedroomed, detached property, with a single storey flat roofed projection extending off its northeastern elevation. The dwelling sits within a large plot, with access taken direct off the A520 Leek Road to the northwest of the site.
- 1.3 The application proposes the demolition of the existing dwellinghouse, and the erection of a replacement dwelling in its place. The replacement dwelling will be sited in the same general position within the plot, and will encompass a two storey, four bedroomed, detached dwelling with a single storey projection to its northeast.
- 1.4 The proposed dwelling will have a floor area of 358 square metres and will stand to a ridge height of 9 metres. It is to be constructed from a palette of materials comprising of red / orange facing brickwork, with a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof atop.
- 1.5 The accommodation of the new dwelling will comprise of an open plan kitchen / diner, separate dining room and living rooms, utility, shower room, plant room and integral double garage at ground floor, with four bedrooms (two ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor.
- 1.6 The means of vehicular access to the site off the Leek Road will be unaltered by the proposed development. A new parking area is to be created in front of the new integral garage, providing space for the parking and turning of at least three vehicles.

2 Site Location

- 2.1 The application site is located within the rural area forms part of the North Staffordshire Green Belt. The site area extends to some 0.14 hectares.
- 2.2 The existing dwelling comprises a two storey structure that is set back from the carriageway of the Leek Road behind a large area of front garden and highway verge. The front site boundary is enclosed by a tall wall constructed from artificial stone / grey brick, with vegetation set in behind.
- 2.3 To the northeast of the site lies a petrol filling station forecourt, which is served by dual access points off the A520. To the east lies existing commercial premises associated with the Shirleys Transport whose yard area also wraps around and encloses the southern boundary of the site.
- 2.4 Open fields extend to the west of the site, with the carriageway of the Leek Road being located to the northwest. The nearest neighbouring occupiers lie approximately 60 metres to the north on the opposite side of the Leek Road.
- 2.5 The existing dwelling is not statutorily listed, nor does the site lie within a Conservation Area. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low-probability of flooding) and is not identified by the EA Flood Map for Planning as being susceptible to surface water flooding.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2 The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are of relevance to the determination of the application:

3.3 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities.
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers.
- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community.
- increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce.

- a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment.
- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings.
- development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.
- support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.

3.4 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and 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. The policy confirms that the Council will meet housing requirements by allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policy H1. The policy also confirms that strict control will be exercised over inappropriate development in the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

3.5 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that all development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified

housing needs, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision. It goes on to state that all new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations. It also requires that new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.

3.6 Policy H1 also states that in the rural areas, only the following forms of housing development will be permitted:

- a) Affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere, in accordance with Policy H3.
- b) A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere.
- c) Proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.
- d) The conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; or where such development would represent the optimal

viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.

- e) Proposals to redevelop previously developed land provided it is not of high environmental value.
- f) The subdivision of an existing residential dwelling provided it is not in an isolated location.

3.7 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should:

- 1. be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area.
- 2. be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.
- 3. create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design.

4. incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development.
5. protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, overbearing development, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution.
6. promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate.
7. provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.
8. require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links.
9. ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed.
10. ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community.
11. be served by high speed broadband (>30mbps) unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with Next Generation Access Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In all circumstances during construction of the site sufficient and suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate ease of installation at a future date.

3.8 Policy DC3 of the Local Plan relates to ‘Landscape and Settlement Setting’ and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

1. Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence.
2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence.
3. Supporting developments which conserve or enhance the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds.
4. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape.
5. Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the Peak District National Park.

3.9 Policy NE1 of the Local Plan relates to “Biodiversity and Geological Resources’ and states that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development (and having regard to relevant ecological evidence) by (amongst other measures):

- Conserving, and enhancing regional and locally designated sites. The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) there is no appropriate alternative site available; and
 - b) all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and
 - c) appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible
 - d) the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.
- Expecting all development where possible seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative. Where any mitigation and compensation measures are required, they should be appropriately scheduled and managed according to the nature, size and scale of the development so as to minimise impacts that may disturb protected or important habitats and species.

3.10 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.
2. Ensuring that major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes or can be made accessible as part of the proposal.
3. Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.
4. Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or cycling routes. In addition applicants should also consider how their schemes can enhance the existing path network in line with the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also give consideration to the protection of non-definitive public footpath routes in addition to definitive routes.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of safeguarding the Green Belt, securing high quality design, safeguarding protected species and maintaining highway safety. The provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Guide SPD

- 4.2 The adopted Design Guide SPD provides advice aimed at securing the delivery of high-quality built development within the District, including new build dwellings. The content of the Design Guide SPD has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Impact on Green Belt

- 5.1 The application proposes the demolition of the existing dwellinghouse on the site, and the erection of replacement dwelling. The site is located within the rural area and is designated as part of the North Staffordshire Green Belt.
- 5.2 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan confirms that strict control will be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.
- 5.3 Policy GB7 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a number of types of development that are not inappropriate in the Green belt, and that should therefore not be regarded as being harmful to it, or be required to demonstrate very special circumstances. The list of developments includes:

“The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building is not inappropriate provided the existing building is permanent, substantial and lawful, and an extension/alteration does not result in a disproportionate increase, or a replacement is not materially larger than the building it replaces” (Policy GB7(b) refers).

- 5.4 Policy H1 of the Local Plan sets out the Local Authority’s approach to replacement dwellings, confirming such proposals to be acceptable where they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling, or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.
- 5.5 The existing dwelling is not one which can be considered to be intrinsic to the character of the area. It is an unremarkable and relatively utilitarian property

which dates from the 1960s and which does not exhibit any notable architectural or vernacular features that would otherwise render it intrinsic to the character of the area. The existing dwelling is nevertheless of a permanent and substantial construction, and has long been established on site as a dwellinghouse.

- 5.6 We furthermore submit that the proposed replacement dwelling will not be materially larger than the one it replaces and will not have a significantly greater impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling.
- 5.7 The existing dwelling has a gross floor area of 259 square metres and stands to a ridge height of 7.7 metres. The proposed replacement dwelling will have a gross floor area of 358 square metres and stand to a ridge height of 9.0 metres. Whilst the replacement dwelling will be larger in terms of both its floor area and ridge height, we submit that it will not be *materially* larger.
- 5.8 The proposal has furthermore been carefully configured to provide a coherent building design which responds positively to the established character of the area and wider Moorlands vernacular (discussed in more detail within the Design & Layout section below), and will occupy a similar position within the plot to the existing, and not result in any encroachment of development beyond the established confines of the site.
- 5.9 We consequently submit that the proposed replacement dwelling will not be materially larger than the one it will replace, and that the development will not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area compared to the original dwelling. The proposal is therefore held to meet the requirements of policy GB7(b) of the NPPF in this regard.

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- 5.10 The above notwithstanding, the proposed development can also be justified in Green Belt terms having regard to the provisions of policy GB7(g) of the NPPF which allows for the erection of new dwellings on so-called 'grey-belt' sites.
- 5.11 The site qualifies as grey belt land as it does not make a significant contribution towards purposes (a), (b) and (d) of the Green Belt, as defined by policy GB2(1) of the NPPF. We reach this conclusion having regard to the Local Authority's own Green Belt Study which confirms the wider area of land within which the site is located to make just a 'contribution' to purpose (a) of the Green Belt, and a 'limited contribution' to purposes (b) and (d). It is not found to make a 'significant contribution' to any of the relevant purposes of the Green Belt.
- 5.12 The re-development of the site for a new dwelling will furthermore not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt areas across the area of the plan, as the site is already occupied by the existing dwelling, and is located in close proximity to established built development. No conflict with policy GB7(g)(i) will therefore arise.
- 5.13 There is also an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed, as the Local Authority is unable to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing (2.95 year's supply). The Local Authority's Strategic Housing Market Assessment furthermore confirms that *"there is a still a need to provide larger, better quality dwellings in the District and meet aspirational needs"* (Paragraph 7.98(3) refers). No conflict with policy GB7(g)(ii) will therefore arise.
- 5.14 The site furthermore occupies a sustainable location that is within walking and cycling distance of day-to-day services and facilities on offer within the Larger Village of Werrington / Cellarhead, and which also benefits from close proximity to public transport connections on the Kingsley Road / Cellarhead Road, which provide regular services throughout the day connecting with Cheadle and Hanley. There are also illuminated pedestrian footways available
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for the entire distance between the site and those facilities / connections. No conflict with policy GB7(g)(iii) will therefore arise.

- 5.15 The so-called 'Golden Rules' do not apply as the proposal is not a major development, and consequently no conflict with policy GB7(g)(iv) will arise.
- 5.16 The above considerations lead us to conclude that the proposed replacement dwelling amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt in accordance with both policy GB7(b) and Policy GB7(g) of the NPPF and policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

- 5.17 The existing dwelling is an unremarkable and rather utilitarian structure that contributes little to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed replacement dwelling takes the opportunity to introduce a dwelling with a more traditional character that responds more positively to wider Moorlands vernacular.
- 5.18 The submitted proposal adopts a traditional domestic form, with a symmetrical appearance to the main two storey element of the building, subservient gabled projections, vertically proportioned window openings that are arranged in columns, and traditional window surrounds.
- 5.19 The side projection is wholly subservient, providing a hierarchy between the main dwelling and the ancillary elements of the proposal. The dwelling is furthermore to be constructed from red facing brickwork with a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof above, further reflecting Moorlands vernacular.
- 5.20 The proposed development is consequently concluded to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan, along with

the provisions of policy DP3 of the NPPF and guidance set out within the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD.

Residential Amenity

- 5.21 There are no immediate neighbouring occupiers to the proposed dwelling, the nearest being located some 60 metres to the north on the opposite side of the Leek Road. Given the distance between the site and those neighbouring properties, the proposal will not give rise to any conflict with the Local Authority Space About Dwellings standards, and consequently will not derive any harm to the residential amenity they currently enjoy.
- 5.22 The dwelling itself will benefit from a large area of private amenity space to its rear which comfortably exceeds the minimum required standard of 65 square metres. The gross floor area of the dwelling will also exceed the minimum floor space requirement as set out within the Nationally Described Space Standard.
- 5.23 The proposed development will consequently provide a good standard of amenity for future occupiers of the dwelling, whilst avoiding any harm to neighbouring residential amenity, and is therefore held to be consistent with the requirements of policies DC1 and H1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Highway Safety

- 5.24 The application site is served by an existing vehicular access off the A520 / Leek Road. The access benefits from excellent visibility in both directions on egress from the site. The site access has existing gates, but these open away from the highway and are located at least 7m rear of the carriageway edge. No alterations are proposed to these existing access arrangements.

- 5.25 Within the site itself it is proposed to create a new parking and turning area in front of the integral garage to provide space for the parking of at least three vehicles and to allow vehicles to turn so that they may leave the site in a forward gear. The level of parking provision proposed meets the adopted car parking standards for a four bedroomed property.
- 5.26 Having regard to these considerations it is concluded that the proposed development is in accordance with the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan and the provisions of policy TR6(4) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Protected Species

- 5.27 Owing to the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling the application is accompanied by a Bat and Bird Survey. The initial bat scoping assessment identified a number of potential roosting opportunities for bats, which consequently gave rise to the need for emergence surveys to be undertaken.
- 5.28 Two emergence surveys have subsequently been carried out, but no bat were recorded emerging or returning to roost in the building. The proposed demolition of the existing dwelling will therefore have no impact on bats and can be carried out without the need for a licence from Natural England.
- 5.29 The bat survey nevertheless identifies a number of recommended enhancements that should be carried out, as well as identifying some precautionary working measures that should be adopted. These recommendations can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition and in doing so the development will meet the requirements of policy NE1 of the Local Plan and policy N2 of the NPPF.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The submitted proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The proposal amounts to an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.
- The design and layout of the development will be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and will represent an improvement compared to the existing unremarkable property.
- The development will not detract from neighbouring residential amenity and will provide a good level of amenity for future occupiers of the replacement dwelling.
- The proposed development will not give rise to any severe residual impacts to highway safety.
- The proposed development will not give rise to any harm to protected species.

6.2 The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, H1, DC1, DC3, NE1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD.