

Application No: 25/0958/PIP
Application Type: Permission in Principle
Location: Land Off Bolshaw Farm Lane, Heald Green, Cheadle, Cheshire East, SK8 3JZ
Proposal: Permission in Principle for up to 6no. dwellings
Applicant: Mr Aiman Salama,
Expiry Date: 14-November 2025

Summary

It is considered that the site constitutes grey belt land, that would provide towards an unmet need, that need being Housing Land supply in a location which is on the whole considered to be sustainable relative to surrounding infrastructure and services and as such meets the parameters for paragraph 155 of the NPPF development, therefore the principle of the location and land use of the development is considered acceptable.

There are also no significant overarching concerns relating to: highways, access and parking; residential amenity; local character and design; ecology and biodiversity; trees and hedgerows; flood risk and drainage and contaminated land. This is subject to specific details relating to these items being provided for assessment at the Technical Details stage.

Summary recommendation

Approved – no conditions due to nature of the application type – technical consents to be submitted/ duration of the permission standard nationally set as 3 years from date of permission in principle.

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

1.1 This application is referred to the Northern Planning Committee as it is advertised as a departure from policy, which the Head of Planning is minded to approve.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

2.1 The site is greenfield or undeveloped land. The site is accessed via Bolshaw Farm Lane a part adopted (Cheshire East) and part private access.

2.2 The site is said to cover a 0.3ha area. It is noted from our internal mapping facility that the site is predominantly within the Cheshire East Local Planning Authority/Council area however slithers of the site to the North appear to be within the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Local Planning Authority/Council area boundaries. The following Officer Report only covers the policies/guidance relevant to planning for the Cheshire East Council area. See below image in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Cheshire East Council area and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council area, the latter shaded in grey, the magenta line indicates extent of adopted highways infrastructure



2.3 To the North of the site is the Heald Green area of Stockport, whilst to the South and including the site is the Cheshire East Green Belt. To the West is a series of large greenhouses associated with the W.Robinson and Sons wholesale plant nursery. To the South is a series of dwellings following a farm conversion known as Bolshaw Farm.

2.4 Further to the site visit conducted as part of the consideration of this application, it is noted the site is rather overgrown and does not appear to be managed in terms of landscaping. The site has many self-seeded plants, shrubs and trees both within the site and to its boundaries, those to the North at the boundary shared with Stockport are the most visually prominent, mature and largest. The site appears largely flat though some slight topographical changes may exist, noting this was difficult to appreciate given the current status of the site.

2.5 Bolshaw Farm Lane is a dual flow, single lane highway with a pedestrian pavement with streetlighting infrastructure to its Eastern then flowing into Southern sides (to one side of the Lane only).

2.6 The architectural narrative and scale is mixed, albeit all of domestic proportions and typical overall North-West vernacular. Dwellings to the North in Stockport are predominantly two storey, semi-detached finished in red brick with interlocking concrete tile roof and white framed fenestration on Davies Avenue. Those access off Bolshaw Farm Lane itself are larger, detached dwellings of similar external finishes and two storey scale. The dwellings forming part of the Bolshaw Farm conversion scheme in Cheshire East have a typical traditional rural, formerly agrarian characteristic in both form and materials.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPSAL

3.1 The proposed development is for the development of up to 6no. dwellings. The application is for Permission in Principle (PIP).

3.2 An indicative Site Layout supports the proposals appearing to show 6no. detached dwellings with 2no. off-road parking spaces accessed from a single point on Bolshaw Farm Lane focussed around a shared feature courtyard with roundabout to the South.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 03/0690P - demolition of agricultural buildings. change of use of existing agricultural buildings and farmhouse and erection of extensions to form 8no. two storey dwellings and 1no. bungalow with garages and associated landscaping and highway works – approved with conditions – 25th June 2003

5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published by the Government in March 2012 and has since been through several revisions. It sets out the planning policies for England and how these should be applied in the determination of planning applications and the preparation of development plans. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF is a material consideration which should be taken into account for the purposes of decision making.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires decisions on planning applications to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (2010 – 2030) was adopted in July 2017. The Site Allocations and Development Policies Documents was adopted in December 2022. The policies of the Development Plan relevant to this application are set out below, including relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies where applicable to the application site.

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2017 (CELPS)

MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

PG1 Overall Development Strategy

PG2 Settlement Hierarchy

PG3 Green Belt

PG7 Spatial Distribution of Development

SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable Development Principles

IN1 Infrastructure

IN2 Developer Contributions

SC4 Residential Mix

SE1 Design

SE2 Efficient Use of Land

SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE4 The Landscape

SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE8 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

SE12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability

SE13 Flood Risk and Water Management

CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport

Appendix C Parking Standards

Site Allocations and Development Policies Document 2022 (SADPD)

GEN1 Design Principles

GEN5 Aerodrome safeguarding

ENV1 Ecological Network

ENV2 Ecological Implementation
ENV3 Landscape character
ENV4 River corridors
ENV5 Landscaping
ENV6 Trees, hedgerows and woodland implementation
ENV7 Climate Change
ENV14 Light Pollution
ENV15 New development and existing uses
RUR5 Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
HOU1 Housing Mix
HOU8 Space, accessibility and wheelchair housing standards
HOU12 Amenity
HOU13 Residential Standards
HOU14 Housing density
INF3 Highways Safety and Access

Neighbourhood Plan

6.2 Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan relevant to the consideration of this application are:

Handforth Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)

H1 New Housing in Handforth
H2 Providing Appropriate House Types, Tenures and Sizes to meet Local Needs
H8 Landscape and Biodiversity
H9 Trees and Hedgerows
H11 Encouraging High Quality Design
H12 Surface Water Management
H13 Supporting the Local Economy
H16 Congestion and Highway Safety
H18 Promoting sustainable transport

7. Relevant supplementary planning documents or guidance

7.1 Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance do not form part of the Development Plan but may be a material consideration in decision making. The following documents are considered relevant to this application:

Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)
Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain SPD
Environmental Protection SPD
SuDS SPD
Housing SPD
Cheshire East Borough Design Guide SPD
Green Belt Assessment Update 2015

8. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

8.1 United Utilities – request that Technical Consent include surface and foul water drainage based on hierarchy full investigation and if sustainable options not achievable why connection to public sewers are acceptable.

8.2 Highways Officer – no objections consider Bolshaw Farm Lane is constructed to a suitable standard as existing to act as an access to the site.

8.3 Environmental Protection Officer – no objections, informatives and conditions requests though cannot be actioned as part of a PIP application/decision. They refer to the Developers Guide as to the types of Assessments and Reports that should support any Technical Details consent concerning pollution and contaminated land.

8.4 Manchester Airport – no objections recommended conditions though cannot be actioned as part of a PIP application/decision.

8.5 Lead Local Flood Authority – objected to the proposals due to the lack of detailed drainage strategy/design plan for the site.

8.6 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council - no comments or objections to make. No concern over the connecting highway which is under their jurisdiction and do not consider there to be concern with Bolshaw Farm Lane and Bolshaw Road being adopted or being capable of accommodating the additional traffic that would be generated by the small-scale development that is under consideration.

8.7 Handforth Town Council – object to the proposals for the following summarised reasons:

- Development would result in a direct extension of Greater Manchester in what is a part of the core separation between Handforth, Cheshire East and Stockport, Greater Manchester to the North and therefore is unacceptable in principle concerning development of a Green Belt site where they consider no 'Very Special Circumstances' exist that outweigh harm to the Green Belt for other reasons.
- They consider the development doesn't fall within any exception Green Belt criteria and point to paragraph 70 of the NPPF relevant to Handforth Neighbourhood Plan in that there are extant permissions in the locality sufficient to meet the neighbourhood need. They consider there is an over-delivery of homes in the borough as part of the 2023 Housing Delivery Test.
- They consider that this site should have the same protection from development as expressed in the Planning Inspectorates dismissed appeal APP/R0660/W/21/3274056 in that it needs to be retained as undeveloped to ensure the prevention of urban sprawl and the merging of neighbouring towns – it is therefore not Grey Belt land.
- The applicants are unable to demonstrate the proposals of 6no. homes would comply with policies covering residential amenity of existing neighbours concerning the Cheshire East Local Plan, Site Allocations and Development Policies Document and the Handforth Neighbourhood Plan.
- The site is not sustainably located and is a significant separation distance from the local services and infrastructure available within Handforth and Stockport.
- The site cannot be used to address the neighbouring Authority Stockports' Housing Land supply shortfall.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

9.1 8no. comments were received from interested parties objecting to the proposals summarised as follows:

- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt which does not meet relevant exceptions for new development such as Grey Belt. It would result in uncontrolled sprawl and neighbouring towns joining together Heald Green, Stockport and Handforth, Cheshire East. It would be detrimentally harmful to its key characteristics its openness and permanence with no Very Special Circumstances demonstrated.
- Handforth and the immediate area has enough housing and therefore the site should not be used towards either Council areas Housing Land Supply.

- The proposals would detrimentally impact local services and infrastructure such as schools, doctors, water pressure, waste management and internet.
- The proposals would detrimentally impact wildlife such as Great Crested Newts, foxes, owls, bats, house martins, hedgehogs and others.
- The sites ecological value should prevent it from being included as Grey Belt.
- The proposals would detrimentally impact road safety as the access is barely wide enough for 2no. vehicles to pass. There are already parking issues on the lane due to uses of the nearby Mosque parking and walking to it for services.
- The proposals would detrimentally impact quality of life. The plans show no pedestrian infrastructure and would result in overlooking/loss of privacy for those on Davies Avenue and Bolshaw Farm Lane.
- The proposals would increase local flood risk and water management issues due to development of greenfield site.
- The proposals would be detrimental to the local character concerning merging of Heald Green and Handforth and the immediate rural/open countryside feeling and transitional point of the area. The proposals would represent the overdevelopment of a constrained site.
- The proposals would be detrimental to off-site trees in other ownership.
- Lack of publication and consultation letters to affected neighbours.

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Permission in Principle

10.1 The 'Permission in Principle' consent route 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.

10.2 The Permission in Principle consent route has two stages: -

1. The first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle; and
2. The second stage ('technical details consent') is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

10.3 The scope of Permission in Principle is limited to the following;

- Location;
- Land Use; and
- Amount of Development.

10.4 Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the Permission in Principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the Technical Consent stage (Local Planning Authorities cannot list the information they require for applications for Permission in Principle in the same way they can for planning permission).

10.5 It is not possible for conditions to be attached to a grant of Permission in Principle and its terms may only include the site location, the type of development and the amount of development. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) can inform the applicants what they expect to see at the technical details stage.

10.6 It is not possible to secure a planning obligation at the Permission in Principle stage.

10.7 The Local Planning Authority may not grant Permission in Principle for a major development, which is where the number of houses is 10 or more, the floor space created is 1,000sqm or more or the development is carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more. In this case the development is for 6 units and the site has an area of less than 1 hectare. The floor-space to be created is unknown at this stage but would need to be assessed at the Technical Details stage.

Green Belt

10.8 As the site is within the Green Belt involving new development policy PG3 of the CELPS, H1 of the HNP are relevant alongside paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF.

10.9 The site is undeveloped, greenfield land. The site is not within a village infill area. Taking these points into account it is not considered that the proposal represents new development that complies with any of the exception criteria listed in PG3 of CELPS or paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

10.10 The applicants suggest that the proposal is acceptable in principle as it would comply with paragraph 155 of the NPPF and utilise Grey Belt land in a scenario where the site is sustainably located overall and would meet an unmet need for the type of development proposed in this case housing. Paragraph 155 of the NPPF is not reflected in policy PG3 of the CELPS, and this policy is therefore not wholly consistent with the NPPF, which reduces the weight to be afforded to policy PG3.

10.11 Paragraph 155 of the NPPF reads *'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 proposed⁵⁶;*
- (c) The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework⁵⁷; and*
- (d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.'*

10.12 The proposals will be assessed for compliance with each of the relevant parameters of paragraph 155 in turn, with the principle only being acceptable subject to adherence to all factors.

Is the land Grey Belt (NPPF para 155(a)):

10.13 The NPPF provides a definition of Grey Belt land within its glossary of *'For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined 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.'*

(Footnote 7: The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.)

10.14 The site is not previously developed land (PDL/brownfield land). Purposes (a), (b) and (d) listed in paragraph 143 are:

- (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

10.15 The determination on whether the site should be classed as 'grey belt' is initially a question about whether the site does not strongly contribute to either purpose (a), (b) or (d) of the Green Belt. The Cheshire East Green Belt Land Assessment Update 2015 (CEGBLA) is relevant to these considerations. The CEGBLA refers to majority of land parcels around the Handforth area as making 'significant' or 'major' contributions to the Green Belt in Cheshire when assessed against the five purposes. The application site forms part of HF07 as identified in the CEGBLA.

10.16 HF07 covers a 23.8ha, whereas the application site covers a 0.3ha. The site is also nestled between the edge of the existing Heald Green, Stockport sub-urban transitional area and a farm re-development of Bolshaw Farm, which is in Handforth, in a wide, but narrow (North to South) gap. Even if this parcel were developed there would still remain a 550m (as crow flies) gap between the Southern edge of the site and the most Northern edge of the defined settlement of Handforth, Cheshire East, with a large undeveloped area of agricultural land between and the relief road. On balance it is not considered that the development of this smaller part of the overall HF07 parcel would result in the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area, and therefore the site is not considered to make a strong contribution to purpose (a). Similarly, the proposal would not result in neighbouring towns merging into one another, and therefore is not considered to make a strong contribution to purpose (b). Finally, in terms of purpose (d) (preserve the setting and special character of historic towns), the CEGBLA states that the site (HF07) makes 'No contribution: Handforth is not a historic town.' This is considered to be the case for the application site, and therefore it does not make a strong contribution to purpose (d).

10.17 As such, the application proposals are considered to meet this key test as to whether a site represents Grey Belt in that the site is not considered to 'strongly' contribute to either purposes a, b or d.

10.18 In terms of the areas or assets listed in footnote 7, the only one of relevance to the application site is that a small part of the site is at risk of flooding. As is explained further below (in flood risk section of report) this is a limited area and is at a low risk of flooding, and as such this would not provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

10.19 The site is therefore considered to be grey belt, as defined in the NPPF.

10.20 Turning to the consideration of whether the development would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan. The proposal would not result in the encroachment of the countryside given that it is an extremely limited, small and already enclosed portion of land between existing urban development. In respect of 143 (e) (assisting in urban regeneration) it would not fundamentally conflict with this as there is limited previously developed land potential in both Heald Green and Handforth areas as noted on page 228 of the HF07 assessment in the Green Belt Assessment Update. Taking all the above matters into account, it is considered that the proposals 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.

10.21 Paragraph 155 (a) criterion is met.

Is there an unmet need for the type of development? (NPPF para 155 (b))

10.22 The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was adopted on the 27th July 2017 and forms part of the statutory development plan. The plan sets out the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and makes sufficient provision for housing (36,000 new dwellings over the plan period, equating to 1,800 dwellings per annum) in order to meet the objectively assessed needs of the area.

10.23 As the plan is more than five years old, deliverable housing land supply is measured using the local housing need figure (plus 5% buffer), which is currently 2,603 dwellings per year rather than the LPS figure of 1,800 dwellings per year.

10.24 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies the circumstances in which relevant development plan policies should be considered out-of-date. These include:

- Where a local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with appropriate buffer) or:
- Where the Housing Delivery Test Measurement indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing required over the previous three years.

10.25 In accordance with the NPPF, the council produces an annual update of housing delivery and housing land supply. The council's most recent Housing Monitoring Update (base date 31 March 2024) was published in April 2025. The published report identifies a deliverable five year housing land supply of 10,011 dwellings which equates to a 3.8 year supply measured against the five year local housing need figure of 13,015 dwellings.

10.26 The 2023 Housing Delivery Test Result was published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities on the 12 December 2024 and this confirms a Housing Delivery Test Result of 262%. Housing delivery over the past three years (7,392 dwellings) has exceeded the number of homes required (2,820). The publication of the HDT result affirms that the appropriate buffer to be applied to the calculation of housing land supply in Cheshire East is 5%.

10.27 In the context of five-year housing land supply, relevant policies concerning the supply of housing should be considered out-of-date and consequently the 'tilted balance' at paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged.

10.28 There is therefore an unmet need for the development, which would provide a positive contribution of 6no. dwellings towards the Councils Housing Land supply.

10.29 Paragraph 155 (b) criterion is met.

Sustainable location? (NPPF para 155 (c))

10.30 Related to the 155(c) assessment are NPPF paragraphs 110 and 115.

Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states that significant development should be focused in locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised, b) safe and suitable access can be achieved c) the design of the scheme should meet national guidance and d) any highways impact mitigated

10.31 The site is accessible on foot to the wider area due to the presence of pedestrian pavements to at least one side of the adopted highway. It is on the edge of the existing built up area of Heald Green, Stockport.

10.32 Policies SD1 and SD2 of the CELPS provide an overview of what types of sites may be considered as being sustainably located with regards to proximity to and availability of infrastructure including transport and other supporting facilities. Within the justification text of policy SD2 of the CELPS is Table 9.1 which sets out recommended distances, dependent on location, that new development is expected to be within distance of. Table 9.1 is provided below:

Criteria	Distance
Public Transport	
Bus Stop	500m
Public Right of Way	500m
Railway Station	2km where geographically possible
Open Space	
Amenity Open Space	500m
Children's Playground	500m
Outdoor Sports	500m
Public Park and Village Green	1km
Services and Amenities	
Convenience Store	500m
Supermarket	1km
Post Box	500m
Post Office	1km
Bank or Cash Machine	1km
Pharmacy	1km
Primary School	1km
Secondary School	1km
Medical Centre	1km
Leisure Facilities	1km
Local Meeting Place / Community Centre	1km
Public House	1km
Child Care Facility (nursery or crèche)	1km

10.33 Footnote 37 and 38 states '37. As a guide, a range is considered to be within the maximum recommended distance of a bus stop; a multi-functional open space; and a convenience store, in addition to four or more other services or amenities, dependent on location. 38 Recommended distances are set out in Table 9.1 below. The council will have regard to proposed improvements to services and amenities that are to be brought forward as part of the development.'

10.34 Table 1 below shows the compliance with the distances to facilities and services as listed in SD2 of the CELPS Table 9.1 as red for non-compliance and green for compliance.

Criteria	Distance (km)	Location
Public Transport		
Bus Stop	0.7	Southgate Centre, Wilmslow Road
Public Right of Way	0.65	Handforth PROW FP21
Railway Station	2	Heald Green Train Station
Open Space		
Amenity Open Space	1.9	Stanley Hall Park
Children's Playground	1.9	Stanley Hall Park
Outdoor Sports	0.85	Cheadle and Gatley F C
Public Park and Village Green	1.3	Heald Green Village Hall
Services and Amenities		
Convenience Store	0.55	A1 Convenience Store
Supermarket	2.7	Tesco Handforth Dean
Post Box	0.6	Davies Avenue
Post Office	0.55	A1 Convenience Store
Bank or Cash Machine	0.8	Morrisons Daily
Pharmacy	1.8	Well Pharmacy
Primary School	0.75	Bolshaw Primary School
Secondary School	3.4	Cheadle Hulme High School
Medical Centre	1.6	Hulme Hall Medical Group
Leisure Facilities	4.2	Life Leisure Cheadle
Local Meeting Place/Community Centre	1.3	Heald Green Village Hall
Public House	0.7	Wagon and Horses, Wilmslow Road
Child Care Facility (nursery or creche)	0.95	The Little Acorns Day Nursery

10.35 The site is not within the maximum recommended distance of a bus stop, multi-functional open space, but is within the recommended maximum distance of a Railway Station, Convenience Store, ATM, Primary School, Public House and Child Care Facility. Whilst this may be the case, it is clear following site visit the immediate area feels walkable, with intact, recently upgraded pedestrian infrastructure and street lighting that provides safe walking routes to these services. Some of the services/facilities listed such as Post Box, Post Office, Outdoor Sports, Bus Stop and PROW are only just outside the maximum recommended distance thresholds. On balance, it is considered that there are opportunities to reach the services listed as being beyond the recommended distance standards via public transport or other transport options such as cycling. It is therefore

considered that the site is sustainably located on the whole with options for services or facilities within reasonable distances within Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council area to the North and Cheshire East Council are to the South.

10.36 Paragraph 155(c) criterion is met.

Highway Access, Safety and Parking Provision:

10.37 Concern was raised within letters of representation regarding the safety of the access and the intensification of use on the highways network, the parking levels and the use of the lane for parking associated with the nearby Mosque. Technical matters such as access safety or layout details are considered at a later stage if this application is approved. The site would also need to provide sufficient off-street vehicle and cycle parking provision in accordance with CEC parking standards for new dwellings. Any Technical Details application would need site access and visibility splay drawings concerning any new access taken off Bolshaw Farm Lane. It should also be noted that no objections are raised by the Highways officer, or by Stockport MBC.

Residential amenity and design/local character

10.38 Whilst the comments from the public concerning residential amenity regarding privacy, overlooking and overbearing impacts are noted, these are unable to be considered as part of this Stage 1 PIP application. Any future Technical Matters application should be supported by detailed plans, elevations and streetscene information including levels that provide context of neighbouring dwellings that show compliance with the relevant design, character and residential amenity policies. The housing is also expected to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards, to provide sufficient internal living accommodation. New housing is expected to also provide suitable levels of external amenity space for new occupants. In terms of the amount of development proposed it is considered 6no. dwellings could be accommodated on the site taking into account local plot size themes/density and would not represent overdevelopment of a constrained site.

Ecology and Biodiversity Implications

10.39 Concern was raised as to the impact of the development on nature conservation, ecology and biodiversity of the site. As stated above Local Planning Authorities must not grant permission in principle for development which is likely to affect a Habitat Site (as defined within the NPPF). The site does not trigger Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zones so there are unlikely to be any issues with sites designated under the Habitat Regulations. Technical Details consent should be supported by Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and any supporting Ecological Assessments that recommends and Biodiversity Metrics regarding Biodiversity Net Gain.

Trees and Hedgerows

10.40 The Forestry Officer has reviewed the proposals and notes that 'Trees located to the northern boundary of the site are subject to the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council Bolshaw Farm, Heald Green) Tree Preservation Order 1989, which protects a group of trees comprising of four Oak, two Sycamore and one Ash which follow the rear garden boundaries of properties on Davies Avenue. Whilst the TPO is administered by the neighbouring Authority the protected trees are a material constraint and must be retained and safeguarded in accordance with Local Plan Policy SE 5 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland) and Policy ENV6 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland) of the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD).

10.41 Key Considerations for future development

1. Root Protection Areas (RPAs):

Any future layout must demonstrate that the RPAs of retained TPO trees can be retained and protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012. This includes avoiding encroachment from buildings, hard surfacing, and underground services.

2. Canopy Spread and Shading:

The siting of any proposed dwelling must consider the future growth potential of retained trees, their relationship and social proximity to development, shading impact, and seasonal nuisance (e.g., leaf fall), which could lead to future pressure for removal or inappropriate pruning.

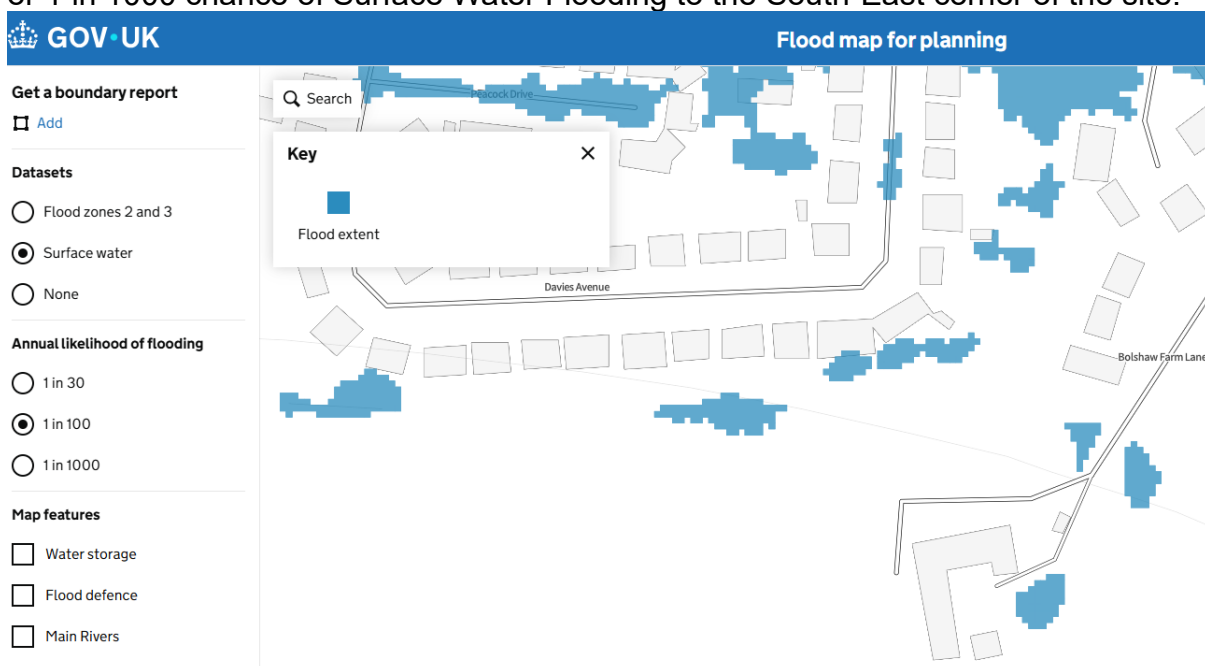
3. Access and Infrastructure:

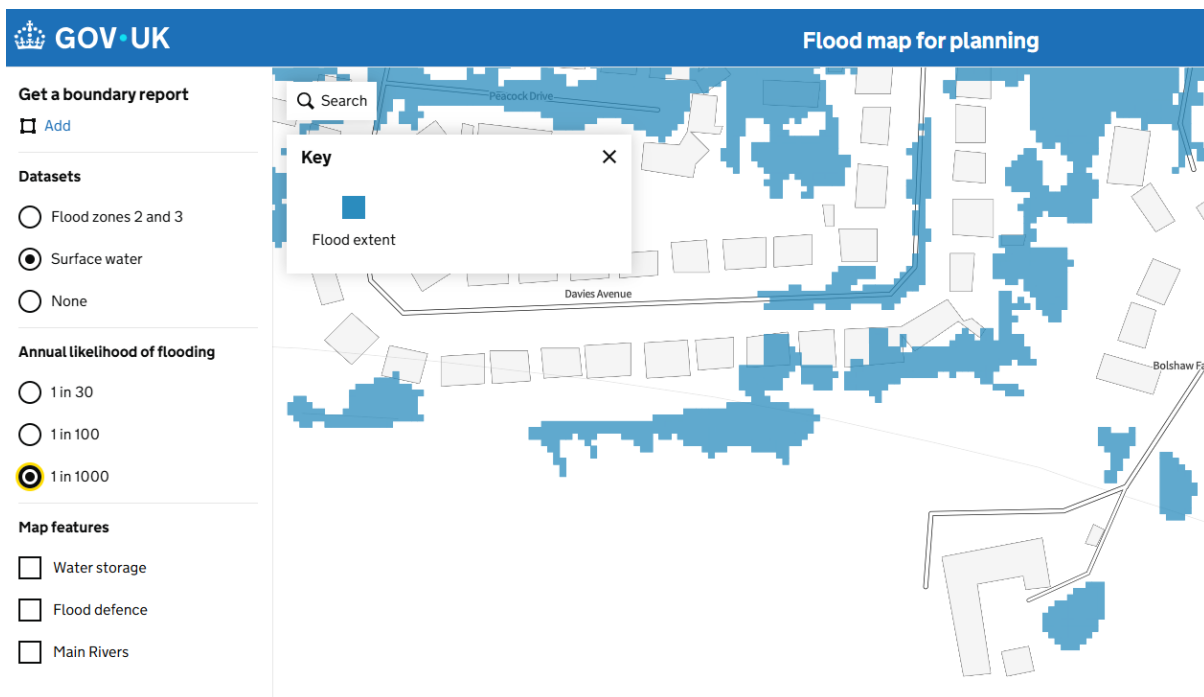
The design of access routes, driveways, and service connections must avoid conflict with RPAs. This should be addressed at the Technical Details stage with a detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Method Statement (AMS).

10.42 The site contains retained TPO trees that represent a significant constraint to development. While the principle of development may be acceptable, accommodation of six dwellings potentially could have an adverse impact on protected. Any future Technical Details application must therefore be supported by a comprehensive AIA and AMS which must demonstrate that the proposed development can be achieved without detriment to the health or amenity value of the protected trees, in accordance with Policies SE 5 and ENV6.

Flood Risk/Drainage

10.43 The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of river/tidal flooding) according to the Environment Agency Flood Maps. There is a small pocket of 1 in 100 chance or 1 in 1000 chance of Surface Water Flooding to the South-East corner of the site.





10.44 Paragraph 175 of the NPPF is relevant in that *‘The sequential test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding, except in situations where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that no built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future (having regard to potential changes in flood risk).’*

10.45 Given the limited area and relatively low risk nature of flooding on part of the site as indicated it is not considered that a sequential test is required to support the proposals. It is considered that the number of units indicated, nature of topography and site constraints can facilitate a suitable layout and mitigation without further detrimental implications on flood risk or water management.

10.46 It is noted that the LLFA has objected to the proposals due to the lack of detailed drainage strategy plan. Notwithstanding this given the site is located in an overall low flood risk and surface water flooding area the drainage implications can be considered at the Technical Details stage and any future application would need to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Detailed Drainage Strategy.

Contaminated Land

10.47 The application is for new residential properties which are a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present or brought onto the site. This matter would be dealt with at the Technical Details stage. The Environmental Health Officers note it is within a landfill impact zone and is listed within both high/low and Coal Mining Activity Risk Zones with known coal seams through part of the site where there may have been unrecorded coal workings which could have resulting gas, land stability and health and safety issues. A Phase I and Phase II will be required to support any Technical Details application with emphasis on gas monitoring and better understanding of the on-site coal deposits.

Other matters

10.48 Whilst neighbours have indicated the presence of items that were previously refused planning permission and apparently sought for removal from the site, these matters do not bear weight on the determination of this application and are separate matters for enforcement.

11. PLANNING BALANCE/CONCLUSION

11.1 As the land use, location and amount of development is considered to be acceptable, it is recommended that Permission in Principle is approved.

12. RECOMMENDATION

12.1 Approve – no conditions due to nature of the application type – technical consents to be submitted/ duration of the permission standard nationally set as 3 years from date of permission in principle.

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions / informatives / planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Planning has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Northern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

