Application	26/42092/PIP	**Case Officer**	Emma Bailey
Date Registered	08.04.2026	**Target Decision Date** **Extension of time**	09.06.2026 04.09.2026
Address	Land off Stallington Road Spot Acre Stoke ST3 7NT	**Ward** **Parish**	Fulford Fulford
Proposal	Permission in Principle - Erection of 1 detached dwelling with associated access, parking and landscaping		
Applicant	Mrs Emily Durber		
Recommendation	Approve		

Pre-commencement conditions required:	**Pre-commencement conditions Agreed**
No	

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application has been called in by Councillor Alec Sandiford Ward Member for Fulford for the following reasons:

'Regarding site suitability, land use, location and impact, highway safety, impact on Green Belt, sustainability, biodiversity and ecology, and access constraints'

CONTEXT

Proposed development

The application seeks Permission in Principle for the erection of one detached dwelling with associated access, parking and landscaping.

The application is supported by the following technical reports:

Document

Biodiversity net gain assessment / metric	☐
Design & access statement	☐
Ecological report	☐
Flood risk assessment	☐
Great crested newt assessment	☐
Heritage statement	☐
Land contamination assessment	☐
Planning statement	☒
Preliminary ecological assessment	☐
Transport statement	☐
Tree survey / assessment	☐
Other:	

Site and surroundings

The application site measures 0.239ha and comprises a corner plot on the south eastern side of the crossroads of Stallington Lane and Hilderstone Road (B5066) in between Spot Acre and Meir Heath. Directly to the east of the site is the dwelling of Blacklake Farm; on the opposite side of the road to the north are linear residential developments along the road frontage; the Black Lake Inn public house is located diagonally north west of the site on the opposite side of the cross roads. All other surrounding land is agricultural.

The site is mainly greenfield with associated redundant, single storey, brick outbuildings within it. Trees and vegetation make up most of the established boundaries with some additional trees being within the site. There is currently a gated access to the north eastern part of the site leading directly onto Stallington Road.

The site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary and as such for planning purposes is located within open countryside.

Constraints

- North Staffordshire Green Belt
- Outside any defined settlement boundary
- Flood Zone 1
- Great Crested Newts - Amber zone - small part of north of the site in red zone
- Historic farmstead

SITE HISTORY

Planning Applications

24/40073/FUL Retrospective change of use to Gypsy / Traveller site for four pitches (consisting of one static caravan, one tourer caravan and two parking spaces), a communal dayroom. Including works to access, surface, drainage, boundary treatments **Refused** on 23 October 2025

Previous relevant appeals
None

Legislative framework

Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, require decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the purposes of this application comprises The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 Parts 1 and 2.

Policy and Guidance

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (TPSB)

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031
SP1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SP2 - Stafford Borough Housing and Employment Requirements
SP3 - Stafford Borough Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy
SP4 - Stafford Borough Housing Growth Distribution
SP6 - Achieving rural sustainability
SP7 - Supporting the Location of New Development
T1 - Transport
T2 - Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities
C1 - Dwelling Types and Sizes
C5 - Residential proposals outside the settlement hierarchy
C7 - Open space, sport and recreation
N1 - Design
N2 - Climate change
N3 - Low carbon sources and renewable energy
N4 - The natural environment and green infrastructure
N5 - Sites of European, National and Local Nature Conservation Importance
N8 - Landscape character
The Plan for Stafford Borough: Part 2 (TPSB) 2011-2031
SP3 - Stafford Borough Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy
SP4 - Stafford Borough Housing Growth Distribution
SP7 - Supporting the Local of New Development
SB1 - Settlement Boundaries

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)
Design SPD 2018

National Planning Policy Framework 2026 (NPPF)
S3 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
S5 – Principle of development outside settlements

GB6 – Control of development in the Green Belt
GB7 – Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt
TR3 – Locating development in sustainable locations
L2 – Making effective use of land
DP3 – Key principles for well designed places
N6 – Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity
HE1 – Planning for the historic environment
HE7 – Decisions on non-designated heritage assets

National Planning Practice Guidance

The Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017

CONSULTATION

Site Notice Expiry	Press Notice Expiry
17 July 2026	**N / A**

Fulford Parish
20 May 2026

Objection
Fulford Parish Council wishes to call this application before the Planning Committee and objects to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The application title is inaccurate, as the site is not known as "Spot Acre".
- 26/42092/PIP - 20 The proposed highway access is considered to be unsafe and presents significant dangers to highway users.
- The development constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- The site has remained undisturbed for over a decade, allowing an established ecological habitat to develop. Any future development must therefore give full consideration to the presence of badger setts and bats, together with the wider ecological impact of the proposal.

Also, the land being proposed for access is not owned by the applicant, and although it is subject to easement, that is for a specific right for access for agricultural purposes, not residential.

SCC - Highway Authority
22 May 2026

Recommends refusal
Contrary to the objectives and policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
Contrary to the interests of highway safety.

Insufficient information has been provided at this stage regarding:

- Visibility splays.

- Access construction and surfacing details.
- On-site parking provision.
- Vehicle turning and manoeuvring areas.
- Bin storage and collection arrangements.
- Access gate arrangements.
- The Highway Authority advises that visibility splays of 2.4m x 203m in each direction would normally be required from the proposed access due to the 60mph speed limit on Stallington Road.
- Details of the access design and surfacing would be required at the next stage, together with any necessary permits for works within the public highway.
- Any access gates should be located at least 5 metres behind the highway boundary and open inwards to allow vehicles to clear the carriageway before opening or closing gates.
- The applicant will need to demonstrate adequate parking provision in accordance with Stafford Borough parking standards, together with sufficient turning facilities and cycle storage at the TDC stage.
- The Highway Authority notes that public transport provision in the area is limited:
    - o The nearest recorded bus stops on Hilderstone Road are used only by school services.
    - o The nearest physical bus stop on Stallington Road is approximately 1,126m from the site and is not connected by a footway.
    - o The nearest publicly accessible bus stop is at Grindley Lane, approximately 1,650m away.

- The Highway Authority considers the site to be poorly served by local facilities and amenities, noting that nearby schools, shops and services are located some distance from the site.

- It is concluded that future occupants would be highly reliant on private vehicle use for day-to-day activities and that the site does not provide a genuine choice of transport modes.

- The Highway Authority considers the proposal to be an unsustainable location for residential development, resulting in increased car dependency and failing to maximise opportunities for sustainable travel.

SBC - Biodiversity Officer
11 May 2026

Protected Species/Ecology
At the TDC stage, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal will need to be submitted to assess the ecology of the site and potential for protected species. A CEMP may be necessary - dependent on the findings of the PEA.

Any removal of trees/hedgerows will need to be properly assessed and compensated for, along with consideration of nesting birds.

Swift nesting bricks will be required to be fitted under the eaves of each house along with hedgehog access on any boundary fencing.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
A completed statutory Metric will need to be submitted along with a BNG Assessment Report, explaining how the required net gain will be achieved and managed and monitored.

SBC - Forward Planning
22 May 2026

- The site lies outside any defined settlement boundary and therefore conflicts with the spatial strategy set out in Policies SP3, SP7 and C5 of the Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031.
- The adopted Local Plan remains part of the statutory development plan and continues to carry weight in decision-making, notwithstanding that some housing policies are now considered out-of-date due to the Council's housing land supply position.
- Stafford Borough currently cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land, with the latest published position indicating a supply of 3.37 years. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged.
- The site is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and must therefore be assessed against national Green Belt policy contained within the NPPF.
- The site is considered to comprise Grey Belt land as defined by Annex 2 of the NPPF, as it does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d) set out in paragraph 143 of the Framework.
- The proposal would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the Borough and therefore satisfies criterion (a) of paragraph 155 of the NPPF.
- Given the Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, there is a demonstrable unmet need for housing development and criterion (b) of paragraph 155 is satisfied.
- Whilst outside the defined settlement hierarchy, the site is approximately 1 mile from the services and facilities available at Rough Close/Meir Heath and is connected by existing pedestrian infrastructure. The site is therefore considered to represent a sustainable location for a small-scale residential development and satisfies criterion (c) of paragraph 155.
- The proposal relates to a single dwelling on a site of approximately 0.239 hectares and does not constitute major development as defined within the NPPF. Consequently, the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements in paragraphs 156-157 do not apply.
- Overall, the proposal is considered to accord with the requirements of paragraph 155 of the NPPF and would not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- Whilst there remains conflict with the development plan spatial strategy, the proposal benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF and should be assessed through the overall planning balance having regard to all other material considerations.

SBC - Environmental And Health Services
18 May 2026
No objection

Condition's recommended

SCC - Archaeology
3 June 2026

No objection subject to conditions

- The site forms part of a 19th century historic farmstead, identified on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map and recorded on the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (SHER).
- Much of the original farmstead to the east has already been lost, with the buildings within the application site representing the last remaining elements of the historic farmstead, likely former agricultural outbuildings.
- Historic farmsteads are recognised as non-designated heritage assets that make an important contribution to rural character, landscape quality and local distinctiveness.
- The submitted Planning Statement indicates that all buildings on the site would be demolished. The Historic Environment Team advises that the resulting complete loss of the historic farmstead would be regrettable.
- Concern is raised that the application provides no assessment of alternative options, including the retention and conversion of the existing buildings, nor justification that the structures are beyond repair.
- The response notes that, where buildings are structurally capable of reuse, their retention would better align with national objectives relating to sustainability, carbon reduction and the reuse of existing buildings.
- Notwithstanding the above concerns, aerial photography and street-view imagery suggest that the buildings may be in a poor state of repair, and conversion may not ultimately prove viable.
- Should Permission in Principle be granted, the Historic Environment Team advises that the loss of the buildings should be mitigated through a programme of historic building recording prior to demolition.
- The recommended recording should be undertaken to a standard equivalent to a Historic England Level 2 Building Survey, documenting the buildings individually and as part of the wider farmstead complex to improve understanding of their development and historic use.
- Any archaeological and historic building recording works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified specialist in accordance with relevant professional standards and guidance.
- The Historic Environment Team recommends that an appropriate archaeological/building recording condition be attached to any subsequent consent (at Technical Details Consent stage), requiring the submission and implementation of an approved Archaeological Project Design and the completion of post-investigation reporting and archiving.

SBC - Conservation Officer
No representation received

Contributors

25 neighbouring letter of objection has been received and can be summarised as follows:

Principle of development

- Site does not represent a sustainable site
    - heavy reliant on private car - no genuine choice of transport modes - unreasonable to expect occupant to walk
    - nearest services in stone or Meir a number of miles away
    - nearest bus stop is 1.1 miles
    - nearest supermarket, medical centre and pharmacy are more than 2.5miles away
- Would introduce an isolated dwelling in the open countryside
- A single house would make negligible contribution towards the housing supply whilst causing disproportionate harm to Green Belt openness

Green Belt

- Harm to green belt
- Impact to openness
- Does not fit the criteria for development on green belt land
- Does not meet any green belt exceptions
- Encroachment into green belt land
- Land not grey belt land

Agricultural Land

- Loss of Grade 3 agricultural land
- Farm land capable of growing crops eroded/lost

Character of area / design

- Change to the rural character and reduce rural landscape
- Would erode the character of the countryside
- A two storey dwelling would
    - not be in keeping with the area
    - be over dominant and overbearing
- Existing buildings on site are single storey and not dominating

Highways

- Close to junction that is already dangerous and busy
- Numerous traffic accidents at this junction
- Visibility is already limited Impact on highway safety
- Already been many road traffic incidents in this location
- High traffic area
- Extra traffic is not needed
- Would make it unsafe for pedestrians if increase in traffic and poor junction
- Speed on Hilderstone Road are excessive - speed awareness campaigns already undertaken
- No pavement on Stallington Road

Existing access

- Not in applicants ownership
- Is a dirt track with no appetite to upgrade
- Access used daily by a number of large farm vehicles

- Access not designed for residential traffic - exclusively agricultural

Impact on neighbouring properties
- Would have a harmful visual impact on the neighbouring Black Lake Farm and smallholding due to close proximity

Trees
- All boundaries are tree lines - no trees should be lost

Ecology
- There are protected species in the area

Infrastructure
- Already experience power cuts and drainage problems in the area which would be worsened by the development
- Internet issues

Land ownership
- Access is not in applicants ownership
- Easement is in place but this applies to agricultural access not residential
- Access used daily by a number of large farm vehicles

Other matters
- Address is incorrect, it is stated that the site is in Spot Acre and Fulford Dale. This is incorrect as the postcode is in Meir Heath
- This development could open up the flood gates for others
- Construction would result in noise and disturbance to nearby residents

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE CONTEXT

What is the permission in principle consent route?
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 details of development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

What matters are within the scope of a decision on whether to grant permission in principle?
The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage. The determination of the application must be made in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan unless there are material considerations, such as those in the National Planning Policy Framework and national guidance, which indicate otherwise.

Local authorities cannot list the information they require for applications for permission in principle in the same way they can for applications for planning permission. It is not possible

for conditions to be attached to a grant of permission in principle nor can planning obligations be secured.

Exemption of certain developments

The determination of this application should be assessed firstly as to whether the proposal is an exempt development as set out in Article 5B as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017. Should the proposal fall within an exception then a permission in principle cannot be granted.

(1) A local planning authority may not grant permission in principle, on an application to the authority, in relation to development which is-

a) Major development

Major development is defined as involving one or more of the following: the provision of 10 or more houses; the provision of a building(s) where the floor space to be created is 1,000m² or more; the development site has an area of 1 hectare of more. This is further defined within The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, Article 2.

This application seeks the development of up to 1 dwellings and has a site area of approx.. 0.239ha. The development is therefore not major development.

b) Habitats development

Habitats development is defined as "*development which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site*".

The application site is not located within the zone of influence of any European sites and is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any such site. The proposal is therefore not habitats development.

c) Householder development

The proposal seeks to erect up to 1 dwellings and is therefore not classed as householder development.

d) Schedule 1 development

(2) A local planning authority may not grant permission in principle, on an application to the authority, in relation to Schedule 2 development unless
(a) the local planning authority has adopted a screening opinion under regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations that the development (up to and including the maximum net number of dwellings) is not EIA development;
(b) the Secretary of State has made a screening direction under regulation 7 of the EIA Regulations that the development is not EIA development; or
(c) the Secretary of State has made a direction under regulation 63 of the EIA

Regulations that the development is exempted from the application of those Regulations.

The proposal is not Schedule 2 development as defined in regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations.

Consultation before applying for permission in principle

The proposal does not include development specified in Article 5C, therefore no consultation is required prior to submitting the permission in principle application.

OFFICER ASSESSMENT

The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development.

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Conflict with TPSB Policy

Spatial Principle 3 (SP3) of The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) sets out the settlement hierarchy for the borough and directs the majority of future development towards the towns of Stafford and Stone and the defined Key Service Villages.

Spatial Principle 4 (SP4) of TPSB states that the annual targets for the distribution of housing development, supported by necessary infrastructure will be: Stafford (70%), Stone (10%), Key Service Villages (12%) and Rest of Borough Area (8%).

The application site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary identified within Policy SP3. The development is therefore, in policy terms, located within 'open countryside' and falls within the 'Rest of Borough Area'. Policy SP7 requires in part that development in the countryside will only be supported where it is consistent with the objectives of SP6, E2 and C5 in supporting rural sustainability. Policy E2 deals with Sustainable Rural Development and supports residential development outside of designated settlements provided this is in accordance with Policy C5.

Policy C5 (A) states that where development sits outside of the identified settlements, proposals for new residential development will be required to meet the criteria in policy SP7 alongside three other criteria. These require demonstration that provision cannot be accommodated within the identified boundaries of settlements in the hierarchy; supported by a parish based local housing needs assessment and appraisal showing that it meets the defined needs, and that the development is of high quality reflecting local character.

Overarching Policy SP1 reiterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The submitted application does not provide information on whether the development can be provided within the settlement boundary and is not supported by a parish based local housing needs assessment and appraisal showing that it meets any defined needs. Accordingly, the proposed development would conflict with Policies SP3, SP7, E2 and Policy C5A whose objectives have already been outlined above.

Assessment against the NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 17 August 2026 and is a material consideration to which significant weight must be afforded in the determination of planning applications. The Framework confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by managing the use and development of land in the long-term public interest. Development plans and decisions should actively guide development towards sustainable solutions whilst responding to the character, needs and opportunities of individual areas.

The 2026 NPPF introduces National Decision-Making Policies (NDMPs), which are material considerations that apply directly to planning decisions. Of particular relevance in this case are NDMP S3, which establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and NDMP S5, which relates to development proposals located outside defined settlements.

The application site lies outside any settlement identified within the development plan settlement hierarchy and also within the Green Belt. Policy S5 (5) outlines that Policy S5 does not apply to development proposals in the Green Belt and development in the Green Belt should instead be determined in accordance with policies GB6, GB7 and GB8 (as appropriate).

Is the proposal an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt

The NPPF Policy GB6 (control of development in the Green Belt), paragraph 1 states that '*Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories in policy GB7'*. NDMP GB7 (1) (Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt) list 8 exemption criteria which are categories of development which are not considered inappropriate in the Green Belt and should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt or be required to demonstrate very special circumstances. Of this list, criteria g. is relevant to this development.

g. Development where all of the following apply:

i. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
ii. There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed[41];
iii. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework; and
iv. In the case of major development involving the provision of housing, the development proposed complies with policy GB8.

Footnote [41] – Which, in the case of applications involving the provision of housing, means the lack of a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, including the relevant buffer where applicable, or where the Housing Delivery Test results was below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous

three years; and in the case of traveller sites means the relevant local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable traveller sites.

An assessment of the application against GB7 (1) g. is contained below.

Would the development utilise grey belt land? (i)

The glossary contained within Annex B of the NPPF has the following definition of Grey Belt land:

> *Grey Belt: For the purpose 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 Policy GB2.*

The site is not previously developed land, so the first question is whether the site strongly contributes to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in Policy GB2 of the Framework. These three criteria are to:

> *(a) Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;*
> *(b) Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
> *(c) Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*

(a) Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;

The location is not defined as a large built up area in the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031. The recently updated Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this purpose of including land within the Green Belt does not apply to locations not identified as large built up areas. The site is bordered on two sides to the north and west by Stallington Road and Hilderstone Road (B5066) respectively, to the south by an agricultural field and to the east by an existing property. Therefore the proposal would not result in the unrestricted sprawl of a large built up area. In terms of the proposal itself, it is not considered that the development as proposed would comprise 'unrestricted sprawl'.

Owing to the above, it is not considered that the application site makes a strong contribution towards restricting the sprawl of large urban areas and does not make a strong contribution to purpose a).

(b) Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The site does not adjoin the urban areas of a town, and again, the recently updated PPG confirms that this criterion applies to towns, not other locations. The site is not near any town. The site therefore does not make a strong contribution to purpose b).

(d) *Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*

The application site does not adjoin a historic town, and again, the PPG states that this applies to towns, not other locations. The site therefore does not make a strong contribution to purpose d).

In light of the above assessment, the site does not strongly contribute to purposes a), b) or d) set out in policy GB2 of the Framework. The proposals would also not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.

Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposed development site does comprise Grey Belt land and would also not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan and therefore the proposed development accords with criteria g) and sub criterion i) of Policy GB7 of the Framework.

Is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed? (ii)

Footnote 41 to this sub criteria sets out that in the case of applications involving the provision of housing means the lack of a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, including the relevant buffer. In this regard, the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply, with appropriate buffer. The Council has published a statement confirming that the supply stands at 1.95 years. There is therefore a demonstrable unmet need for the proposed development.

In light of the above assessment it is concluded that currently there is a demonstrable need for development in Stafford Borough and therefore the proposed development accords with criteria g) and sub criterion ii) of policy GB7 of the Framework.

Would the development be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework? (iii)

Policy TR3 of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) seeks to ensure that development is directed to sustainable locations and that transport considerations are integrated into decision-making from the outset. The policy requires regard to be had to the accessibility of a site, the opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport, and the extent to which future occupiers can access services and facilities without undue reliance on the private motor car. The Framework also recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and that decision-makers should take account of the particular circumstances of different locations.

In assessing the proposal against Policy TR3, it is noted that the application site falls outside any recognised settlement boundary identified within the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP3 of TPSB and is therefore located within the open countryside, forming part of the "Rest of the Borough" under Policy SP4. Notwithstanding this designation, the site's sustainability credentials must be considered having regard to its actual accessibility, rather than solely its location relative to defined settlement boundaries.

The site is situated approximately 1 mile from the services and facilities available within Rough Close and Meir Heath, which form part of the wider Stoke on Trent urban area. These communities provide a range of day-to-day services and facilities including local shops, a butcher, florist, primary school, dentist, places of worship, public houses and a village hall. As a consequence, future occupants would have access to a level of provision comparable

to, and in some respects exceeding, that available within many Key Service Villages identified within the development plan hierarchy.

Importantly, the site is connected to Rough Close and Meir Heath by a continuous footway along Hilderstone Road (B5066), enabling future residents to access local services on foot. The presence of this pedestrian connection provides a realistic and attractive opportunity for walking and cycling for a range of everyday journeys. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is currently no dedicated footway along Stallington Road immediately adjacent to the site, the distance involved is relatively short and grass verges are present, allowing pedestrians to step clear of passing vehicles where necessary before connecting with the established pedestrian network on Hilderstone Road.

Whilst neither Hilderstone Road nor Stallington Road are served directly by a bus route, bus services are available within Rough Close and Meir Heath, providing links to larger settlements and to a wider range of employment opportunities, retail facilities, education establishments and community services. Consequently, future occupants would have access to sustainable transport options beyond the private car and would not be isolated from public transport provision.

Policy TR3 does not require all journeys to be undertaken by sustainable modes, particularly in rural and semi-rural locations where travel patterns will inevitably differ from those found in urban areas. Rather, the policy seeks to ensure that development is located where there are realistic opportunities to access day-to-day services and facilities by a range of transport modes and where future residents are not wholly dependent upon the private car. In this regard, the site benefits from reasonable proximity to a good range of services and facilities, opportunities for walking and cycling, and access to public transport connections within the nearby settlement.

Furthermore, the site's proximity to the Stoke on Trent urban area distinguishes it from more isolated countryside locations where residents would have little option other than to rely entirely upon private vehicle use. Whilst some car journeys are inevitable, this is consistent with the expectations of national policy for developments in rural and edge of settlement locations.

Taking all matters into account, it is considered that the proposal would accord with the objectives of Policy TR3 of the NPPF. The site offers a genuine choice of transport modes and provides reasonable access to a range of day to day services and facilities. Future occupants would not be wholly reliant upon private car use to meet their everyday needs. The site is therefore considered to represent a sustainable location for residential development, and this weighs in favour of the proposal.

In the case of major development involving the provision of housing, the development proposed complies with policy GB8 (iv)

This criterion relates to the application of the ‘Golden Rules’ specifically for major development. The application seeks permission for 1 dwelling on a site area of 0.239ha and is therefore not classed as a major development. The proposal therefore does not need to be considered against the ‘Golden Rules’ contained within policy GB8.

Conclusion on Location

The proposed development would conflict with the spatial strategy set out in Policies SP3, SP4, SP7, E2 and C5A of TPSB insofar as the site lies outside any defined settlement boundary and the proposal has not been supported by evidence demonstrating that the development cannot be accommodated within an identified settlement or that it meets a locally identified housing need.

However, the application must also be assessed against the NPPF (2026). In this regard, the site has been found to comprise Grey Belt land, would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt, would address an evidenced unmet housing need arising from the Council's significant shortfall in housing land supply, and would be located in a sustainable location having regard to Policy TR3 of the Framework. The proposal therefore satisfies all of the relevant criteria of Policy GB7(1)(g).

Whilst there remains conflict with the adopted development plan in respect of the location of development, the site benefits from a clear policy basis within the Framework as an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. Consequently, the conflict with the development plan carries reduced weight in this instance and the proposal's compliance with Policy GB7(1)(g) of the Framework weighs significantly in favour of the development.

LAND USE

The existing site is greenfield and does have the remnants of old, now derelict brick built structures which formed part of the historical use of the site as agricultural/forestry. The site does not appear to be in active agricultural or forestry use and is clearly separated from the surrounding agricultural landscape by mature hedges and trees. Whilst it is washed over by Grade 3 agricultural land use, the presence of remnants of buildings on the site negate any meaningful agricultural land loss and as such the loss of agricultural land weighs neutral in the planning balance.

In terms of compatible land uses, the application site lies in close proximity to a number of residential dwellings as well as a public house. In this context, Class C3 residential development is considered to represent an appropriate land use in principle.

The remaining land use surrounding the site is agricultural fields and ongoing arable operations. It is not considered that these activities would prejudice residential development in this location. Equally, the proposed residential use would not unduly constrain the continued operation of surrounding agricultural land.

Overall, the proposed land use would sit comfortably within the prevailing pattern of development and would not undermine the existing mix of residential, commercial and agricultural character in the area. The proposal would not introduce a form of development that would be inappropriate in principle or detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

TPSB Policy N1 sets out design criteria including the requirement for design and layout to take account of residential amenity and local context and have high design standards. Policy N8 states that new development should respect the character of the landscape setting through layout. Policy N5 requires development to retain and integrate healthy, mature trees. Policy C1 advises that new development should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes.

The proposal is seeking 1 dwelling on the site which has a site area of 0.239ha. The site is considered an appropriate size to accommodate the dwelling, front and rear gardens and on site parking. It is noted that on the boundaries of the site are mature trees and hedges, non are protected by tree preservation orders (TPOs). The quantum of development at the site should mean that all existing green infrastructure on the boundaries can be retained and this would help ensure the character of the wider area is maintained.

The details of design, scale, layout and access would all be considered at the Technical Details Consent stage (TDC).

In light of the above, and for the purposes of the Permission in Principle, it is considered that the quantum of development proposed would be appropriate for its location.

Other matters

Flood Risk / Drainage

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. lowest risk of flooding), which is compatible with this type of development/use.

At Technical Details Consent Stage the applicant should provide details of how foul and surface water drainage will be managed on the site. Any surface water drainage strategy should follow the hierarchy as outlined in the NPPF, prioritising infiltration, then discharge to watercourse, and only where demonstrated to be unfeasible, connection to a sewer. The strategy should be informed by site specific ground conditions and where infiltration is proposed, include the results of a percolation test.

The submitted details should demonstrate that surface water will be managed sustainably, will not increase flood risk on or off site, and will be capable of being maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Flood risk and drainage will be fully assessed at the TDC stage.

Highways

Limited details have been submitted at this stage regarding highways matters however noting the application route (permission in Principle) this is to be expected.

The submitted site plan indicates that the existing agricultural access within the application red line boundary would be upgraded to current standards and utilised as the main vehicular access to the site. Whilst it is acknowledged that this access is not within the applicant's

ownership, the applicant benefits from a legal easement over the track. The comments submitted by the landowner are noted. However, at this stage of the planning process, access and highway matters do not need to be fully resolved or agreed in detail. These matters will be considered and assessed comprehensively at the Technical Details Consent stage, where the precise design and suitability of the access arrangements will be determined.

The highways authority have been consulted on the application and have recommended refusal.
The highways authority pass comment that the application has not demonstrated visibility splays (2.4m x 203m in each direction), on site parking provision, bin storage / collection or details of the construction and surfacing of the vehicular access. However all of these matters will be addressed at the TDC stage.

The highways authority also comment that the site cannot be regarded as sustainable as a result of poor access to public transport links and is not within a reasonable walking or cycling distance of essential services and amenities and primary and secondary education. The matters of sustainability of the site have already been addressed in early paragraphs of the officers report and the case officer draws a different conclusion from the highways officer in this instance in regard to sustainability based upon recent appeal decision regarding sustainability.

Whilst the comments raised by the highways authority are noted, much of the content will be addressed at the TDC stage.

At TDC stage it is expected that the proposal should demonstrate full details of a safe and suitable access including suitable visibility splays and sufficient on site parking in accordance with Stafford Borough Councils parking standards. Agreement with the land owner of the access will also need to be given to use the access and for improvements to it to be undertaken.
Highways matters will be fully addressed at the TDC stage.

Loss of historic farmstead

As part of the consultation process, the application was referred to Staffordshire County Council's Historic Environment Team, which advises that the site forms part of a 19th century historic farmstead. The buildings currently present on the site appear on the First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping and are therefore considered highly likely to be part of the original farmstead complex. Whilst much of the farmstead to the east has been lost over time, the remaining buildings represent the surviving historic fabric of the former agricultural holding, potentially comprising historic outbuildings rather than the principal farmhouse.

Historic farmsteads are recognised as non-designated heritage assets and can make an important contribution to the historic environment through their evidential, historic and communal value, whilst also contributing positively to local distinctiveness, landscape character and an understanding of the historic development of rural areas. The NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Policy HE7 requires decision makers, when considering proposals affecting a non-designated heritage asset, to make a balanced

judgement having regard to the significance of the asset and the scale of any harm or loss arising from the proposal.

The submitted Planning Statement confirms that all existing buildings on the site would be demolished to facilitate the proposed development. Given the previous loss of elements of the wider farmstead complex, the proposal would result in the complete removal of the surviving farmstead buildings and consequently the total loss of the remaining non designated heritage asset. This is regrettable and weighs against the proposal. It is, however, acknowledged that the buildings are understood to be in a poor state of repair and that their retention and conversion may not represent a viable or practical option.

Notwithstanding this, the demolition of existing buildings results in the loss of embodied carbon and does not align with the broader objectives of the NPPF in supporting the transition to a low carbon future and the efficient use of resources. The proposal would therefore result in a degree of harm through the loss of a non-designated heritage asset and this harm must be given appropriate weight in the planning balance.

Having regard to the significance of the surviving farmstead buildings and the advice received from the Historic Environment Team, it is considered that the proposal would result in harm through the total loss of a non-designated heritage asset. Nevertheless, the asset is not statutorily designated, its significance is limited by the previous loss of much of the wider farmstead complex, and the remaining buildings are reported to be in a poor state of repair. On balance, the harm identified attracts moderate weight against the proposal.

The Historic Environment Team has advised that, should planning permission in principle be granted, a programme of archaeological investigation and historic building recording should be secured by condition at the Technical Details Consent stage. This would ensure that an appropriate record of the asset and its significance is made prior to its loss, thereby preserving the site's archaeological and historic interest by record in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF.

Ecology / Trees

No ecology information has been submitted at this stage. The site is located within mainly within an Amber risk zone for Great Crested Newts with a small portion of the northern part of the site being in red. There are mature trees and hedges on some site boundaries which may house species of ecological importance.

To inform the TDC application it is expected that a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) be submitted to assess the surrounding land, trees and hedgerows for protected and other species. The results of this survey and any necessary mitigation should be presented at the TDC stage. A CEMP may be necessary depending on the findings of the PEA.

Any removal of trees/hedgerows will need to be properly assessed and compensated for along with considerations of nesting birds. A tree constraints plan and Arboriculturally Impact Assessment and Method statement should be submitted as part of the TDC application.
Ecology matters will be fully addressed at the TDC stage.

Biodiversity Net Gain

At TDC stage a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment report and BNG metric will be required. Any onsite BNG provision will be required to be provided within the red edge. A legal agreement at TDC stage may be required to secure any BNG.

BNG matters will be fully assessed at the TDC stage.

CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE

The development site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary and is therefore classed as open countryside. As set out within this report, the proposal conflicts with Policies SP3, SP4, SP7, E2 and C5A of TPSB, which seek to direct new housing development towards the Borough's established settlement hierarchy and require development outside those locations to satisfy specific policy tests. This conflict attracts weight against the proposal.

However, the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The proposal would provide a small addition to the housing supply which weighs in favour of the development. As a result of the unmet housing need, the development must also be considered against the NPPF (2026).

The site has been assessed against Policy GB7(1)(g) of the NPPF and is found to satisfy each of the relevant criteria. The site comprises Grey Belt land, would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt, would contribute towards addressing an identified housing need, and is considered to be located in a sustainable location having particular regard to Policy TR3.

As a consequence, the proposal constitutes a form of development that is not considered inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Significant weight is therefore afforded to the proposal's compliance with national Green Belt policy and its contribution, albeit modest, towards addressing the Borough's housing shortfall.

In terms of harms, the proposal would result in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset through the demolition of the remaining elements of a historic farmstead. Whilst this harm is regrettable and attracts moderate weight against the proposal, the significance of the asset is reduced by the previous loss of much of the wider farmstead complex and the poor condition of the remaining structures. Matters relating to highways, ecology, biodiversity net gain, drainage, access arrangements, design and landscaping can be fully assessed and resolved through the TDC process and do not weigh significantly against the principle of development at this stage.

Taking all matters into account, it is considered that although the proposal conflicts with the adopted development plan's spatial strategy, the material considerations in favour of the development are substantial. In particular, the proposal's compliance with Policy GB7(1)(g) of the NPPF, the existence of a significant unmet housing need, the sustainable location of the site, and the fact that the development would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt collectively outweigh the identified policy conflict and the moderate heritage harm.

Accordingly, on balance, the proposal is considered acceptable and Permission in Principle should be granted.

In determining a Permission in Principle application, the Council is required to consider whether the site is suitable for development in terms of its location, land use and amount of development, having regard to the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations.

The proposal conflicts with Policies SP3 and C5 of The Plan for Stafford Borough, due to its location outside a defined settlement boundary and the development has not been justified against the requirements for residential development in the open countryside. The proposal would also result in the loss of the remaining buildings associated with a historic farmstead. These matters attract moderate weight against the proposal.

The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply and as such the proposal would make a small contribution to this. The updated NPPF is also a material consideration in the determination of the application. The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of NDMP S5(1)(j) by contributing to an evidenced unmet housing need, being physically well-related to an existing settlement and being of a scale capable of being accommodated by existing infrastructure. Significant weight is also afforded to the conclusion that the site comprises Grey Belt land and that the proposal would not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt under NDMP GB7.

The proposal would provide a modest social and economic benefit through the delivery of an additional dwelling and associated investment in the local area. Matters relating to highways, ecology, biodiversity net gain, trees, drainage and detailed design remain capable of being satisfactorily addressed through the subsequent Technical Details Consent process and therefore carry limited weight at this stage.

Overall, whilst there is conflict with the development plan and some identified harm arising from the loss of a non-designated heritage asset, these harms are outweighed by the significant benefits associated with addressing an evidenced housing need and the support afforded by the NPPF.

The recommendation is therefore to approve the permission in principle application.

Recommendation

Approve subject to Informatives

INFORMATIVE(S)

1 This permission in principle (PIP) shall cease to have effect three years after the date of this Decision Notice. The technical details consent (TDC) relating to the proposed development must be granted prior to the expiration of the PIP.

2 The plans relevant to this Permission in Principle decision are indicative only and are limited to the following:

2899-001- Location plan

For the avoidance of doubt, this Permission in Principle does not approve the detailed layout, design, access or scale of development, which will be considered as part of any subsequent application for Technical Details Consent.

3 This Permission in Principle establishes the acceptability of the proposed development in terms of location, land use and amount only. It does not approve the detailed design, layout, access, or technical matters associated with the development.

In accordance with national guidance, the Local Planning Authority advises that any subsequent application for Technical Details Consent (TDC) should be supported by sufficient information to enable a full assessment of the proposal. The information is expected to include, but is not limited to, the following matters:

Design, Layout and Access
- A proportionate assessment of the character and appearance of the area and the relationship of the scheme to neighbouring properties;
- Detailed site layout showing the siting, scale and height of dwellings;
- Access, parking and internal layout details in accordance with Highway Authority standards;
- Visibility splays from any new access
- Finished floor levels and site levels.

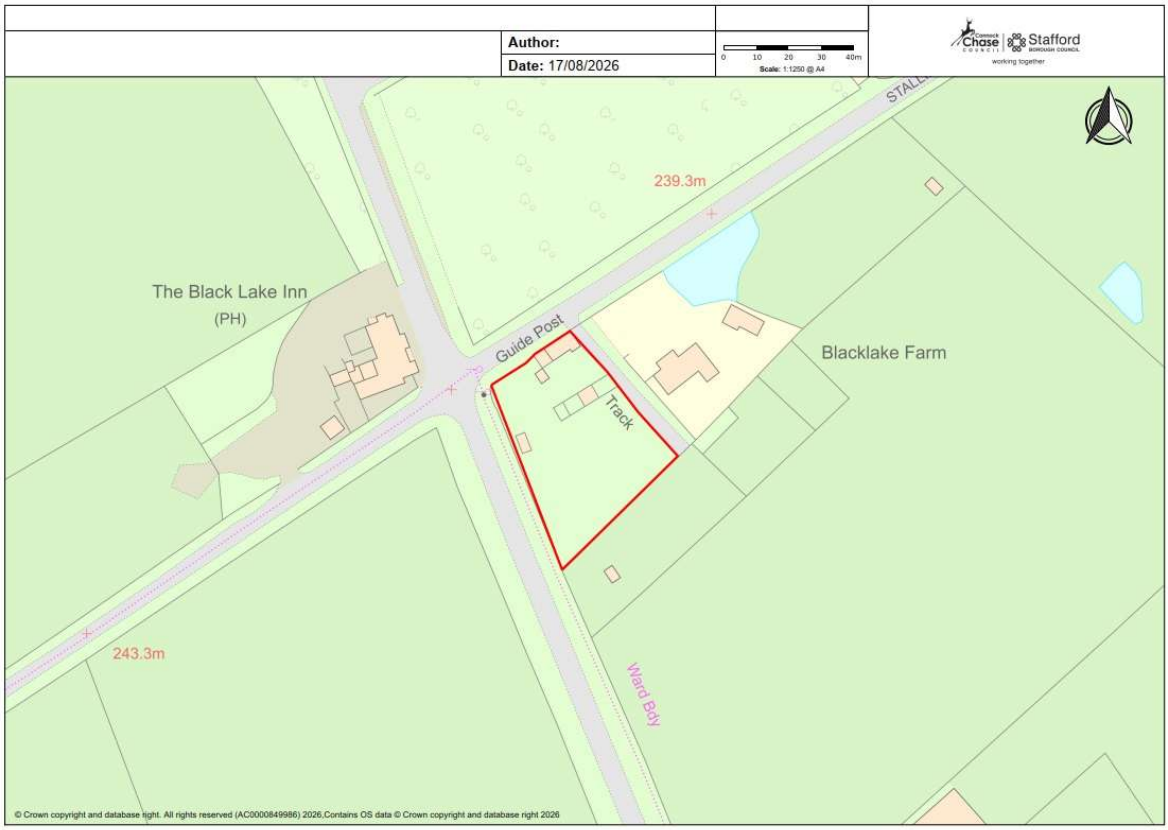
Landscape and Visual Matters:
- o Detailed landscaping scheme, including boundary treatments and screening
- o Hard and soft landscaping details

Ecology and Biodiversity:
- o Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA)
- o Any required protected species surveys
- o Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)
- o Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and BNG metric

Drainage and Flood Risk
- A foul and surface water drainage strategy demonstrating compliance with the NPPF drainage hierarchy, including percolation testing where infiltration is proposed and details of long term maintenance arrangements.

The above matters will be fully assessed at the Technical Details Consent stage. The inclusion of this informative does not prejudice the outcome of any future application for Technical Details Consent.

26/42092/PIP
Land Off Stallington Road
Stallington



PVWRCM