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Supporting Statement
PiP application for the erection
of up to 9 no. dwellings

Land off Starling Road,
Ainsworth, Bury

Fort Group Ltd

October 2025



RTPI

mediation of space - making of place

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Supporting Statement has been prepared by Edgeplan, to accompany a Stage 1 Permission in Principle application for the erection of up to 9 no. dwellings at Land off Starling Road, Ainsworth, Bury.
- 1.2 A Permission in Principle application represents an alternative way in which to obtain planning permission for residential development, whereby the matters of principle are separated from the technical details. Therefore, there are two stages to obtaining this type of consent:
 - Stage 1: establishes whether a site is suitable in principle for housing-led development
 - Stage 2: concerns the consent of technical details and assessment of the detailed development proposals
- 1.3 Permission in Principle applications are considered in much the same way as standard planning applications in that they are determined in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, considering the relevant policies in the Development Plan and any other material considerations. However, the scope for assessment of Stage 1 applications of this type is limited to, it's location, land use and the amount of development proposed. As such, a technical suite of reports is not required at the initial stage. Should Stage 1 approval be granted, technical details consent could be applied for under a future Stage 2 application.
- 1.4 This Statement therefore seeks to provide a description of the site's context and the development proposals, alongside an appraisal of the planning merits of the scheme as part of an assessment of the relevant planning policies. The conclusion is then reached that Stage 1 Permission in Principle should be granted.
- 1.5 In order to allow an assessment of the proposals and to satisfy the requirements for validation of an application of this type, the following documentation is included with this submission:
 - Application form; and,
 - Location Plan.

2 THE SITE AND ITS SETTING

2.1 The application site is some 0.72ha in extent and relates to Land off Starling Road, Ainsworth. It comprises of a detached single storey dwellinghouse and outbuilding. It is located to the east of Starling Road and is effectively within the village of Ainsworth.

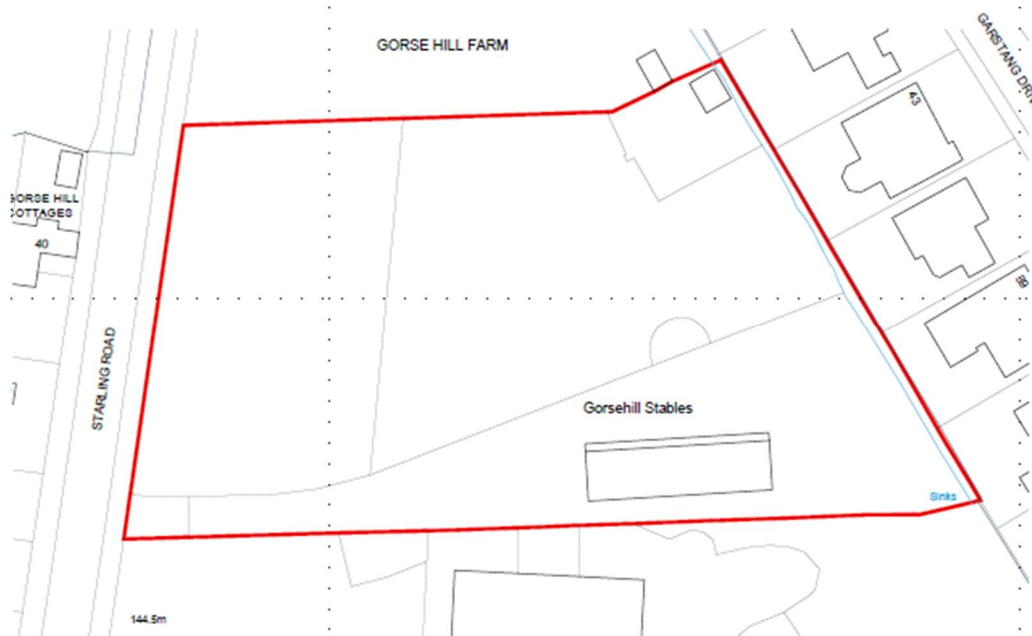


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

- 2.2 The existing dwellinghouse is set back from the highway and sits within a substantial plot.
- 2.3 Residential development surrounds the site. To the north is Ainsworth Road, which runs directly into Bury, to the east is the town of Bury, to the south is the town of Radcliffe and Bolton lies to the west.
- 2.4 The site is evidently well contained, surrounded by existing residential development and locationally sustainable.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 This Permission in Principle application seeks consent for the construction of up to 9 no. dwellings on land off Starling Road, Ainsworth, Bury.
- 3.2 At Stage 1 of the Permission in Principle process Article 5D of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017 confirms that the application only needs to be supported by a plan identifying the land to which the application relates. The extent of the application site is identified on the accompanying Location Plan.
- 3.3 It is clear that the size of the site is appropriate to accommodate the construction of up to 9 no. dwellings and associated infrastructure.
- 3.4 Technical details associated with the proposals, including the design of the proposed dwellings, will be subject to any future Stage 2 application

4 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Planning policy is set out within the development plan, which comprises the Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Places for Everyone (PfE).

Development plan

Proposals map

- 4.2 The combined UDP/PfE Proposals Map demonstrates that the site lies within the Green Belt.



Figure 2: Policies Map extract (site location denoted by red star).

Unitary Development Plan

- 4.3 The UDP was adopted in 1997, and policies were saved in 2007. However, the majority of UDP policies have now been superseded by PfE policies.
- 4.4 The following policies are considered relevant to the residential development of the site:

Policies considered most important to the principle of residential development

- H1/2: Further housing development
- H2/6: Garden and backland development
- OL1/2: New buildings in the Green Belt
- OL1/3: Infilling in Existing Villages in the Green Belt

Other Policies

- H2/1: The form of new residential development

- H2/2: The layout of new residential development
- EN1/2: Townscape and built design
- EN1/5: Crime prevention
- EN6/3: Features of ecological value
- EN6/4: Wildlife Links and Corridors
- HT2/4: Car parking and new development
- HT6/1: Pedestrian cyclist movement

Places for Everyone

- 4.5 The PfE is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts, including Bury for new jobs, homes and sustainable growth. It was adopted by Bury Council on 21/03/2024.
- 4.6 The following policies are considered relevant to the residential development of the site:

Policies considered most important to the principle of residential development

- JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Development
- JP-G9: The Green Belt

Other Policies

- JP-S1: Sustainable development
- JP-S2: Carbon and Energy
- JP-S4: Flood Risk and the water environment
- JP-S5: Clean Air
- JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing
- JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing
- JP-H4: Density of New housing
- JP-G1: Landscape Character
- JP-G7: Trees and Woodlands
- JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- JP-P1: Sustainable Places
- JP-P6: Health
- JP-C5: Streets for All
- JP-C6: Walking and Cycling
- JP-C8: Transport requirements of new development

Other Local Documents

Supplementary Planning Document 8: New buildings and associated development in the Green Belt (Adopted 10/01/2007)

- 4.7 This SPD is based on out-of-date National Policy. It does however provide some useful guidance on the Council's approach to new buildings in the Green Belt.

Emerging Bury Local Plan

- 4.8 The emerging Local Plan (eLP) will form part of the development plan, alongside the PfE. It will provide a more detailed set of locally specific policies. The eLP is in the early stages of preparation. The following policy is considered to be of relevance to this application:

- Policy LP-GB1: Infilling in Villages

- 4.9 This policy states that limited infilling in village settlements states that the Council will support limited infilling within the Borough's village settlements of Shuttleworth, Holcombe, Hawkshaw, Summerseat, Affetside, Nangreaves, Ainsworth and Simister where it is in keeping with the scale, character and appearance of its surroundings, does not give rise to unacceptable impacts and does not involve the loss of undeveloped land that makes a positive contribution to the character of the area.

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

- 4.10 The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. The following sections of the NPPF are considered relevant to this application:

- Achieving sustainable development;
- Decision-making;
- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- Building a strong, competitive economy;
- Promoting healthy and safe communities;
- Promoting sustainable transport;
- Making effective use of land;
- Achieving well-designed and beautiful places;
- Protecting Green Belt land;
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 4.11 Section 13 'Protecting Green Belt Land' is particularly relevant to this site. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of a number of exceptions apply. Notably, the 2024 NPPF has introduced 'Grey Belt'. The development of homes in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where:

- a. The development would utilise Grey Belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the

purposes of the remaining Green Belt;

b. There is a demonstrable need for the type of development proposed;

c. The development would be in a sustainable location; and,

d. Where applicable, the development meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements

4.12 Grey belt is defined in the annex to the NPFF:

Grey belt: 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.

156. Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review⁵⁸, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application⁵⁹, the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made:
- a. affordable housing which reflects either: (i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157 below;
 - b. necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and
 - c. the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

5 HOUSING SUPPLY, HOUSING DELIVERY AND HOUSING NEED

Housing Land Supply

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities are not required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing for decision making purposes if their adopted plan is less than five years old, and that plan identified at least a five-year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time that its examination concluded.
- 5.2 Bury's Five year Housing Land Supply Statement states that the Council's deliverable five-year housing land supply, based on a five year requirement of 488 dwellings per annum, is 2,440 dwellings, which equates to 5.8 years supply therefore demonstrating a five year housing land supply. However, Edgeplan considers that the supply should be reduced to below 5 years.

Housing Delivery Test

- 5.3 It is identified that Bury failed to score above 75% on the recent Housing Delivery test, scoring 64%.

6 PLANNING CASE

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the starting point for planning applications is the development plan. Applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 The scope of consideration for Stage 1 Permission in Principle applications is limited to; location, land use and amount of development. Any future Stage 2 application will enable the consideration of other, technical matters. Therefore, all further assessment in this chapter will concern the principle of development only.

Grey Belt Assessment

- 6.3 This assessment considers:

i) If Green Belt land is Grey Belt; and

ii) If the development proposed in the Grey Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Does the site strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes a), b) or d)

a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 6.4 In respect of criterion a), the site does not perform strongly. The site is partly previously developed and is well contained by built development to the North, West, East and South. The village of Ainsworth cannot be described as a large built-up area.

- 6.5 It can be concluded that the land does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purpose a) of NPPF para 143.

b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 6.6 The site is over 3.5km from the nearest neighbouring town of Bury.

- 6.7 The site is not in a town and forms a gap between existing built development. It will not result in the merging of neighbouring towns.

- 6.8 It can be concluded that the land does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purpose (b).

d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 6.9 In terms of preserving the setting and special character of historic towns, it can be concluded that the land does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purpose d). The site is not located near within a historic town.

Would the application of non-Green Belt NPPF footnote 7 policies to the scheme proposed on the Green Belt part of the site provide a strong reason for refusing development?

- 6.10 Footnote 7 refers to the policies in the NPPF (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

6.11 An assessment against the above criteria is provided below:

Habitat site/SSSI

6.12 The site is not located within a habitat site or SSSI.

Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast

6.13 The land is within the Green Belt but is not a local green space, designated as national landscape nor a national park, it is also not defined a heritage coast.

Irreplaceable habitats

6.14 The site is not an irreplaceable habitat.

Designated heritage assets and other heritage assets of archaeological interest

6.15 There are no heritage assets on site.

Areas at risk of flooding or coastal change

6.16 The site is located in flood zone 1, the lowest risk of flooding.

Conclusion

6.17 On the basis of the above, the land is grey belt for decision taking purposes. It must now be considered whether the development passes the appropriateness tests.

Would the proposed development fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan?

6.18 There would be no conflict with this aspect. The Green Belt would not be undermined.

Is there a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed?

6.19 It is identified that Bury only achieved 64% on the recent Housing Delivery test. Therefore, there is a demonstrable unmet need for residential development.

Would the development be in a sustainable location?

6.20 The site is sustainability located within an established residential community. For example, there are a primary school and bus stops within easy walking distance.

Does the proposal include major development involving housing?

- 6.21 The site's residential development would not constitute as major development

Can the development meet the Golden Rules relating to affordable housing contributions, infrastructure improvements and accessible green space?

- 6.22 As this application is not for a major development, the Golden Rules set out in para 155(d) of the Framework are not applicable.

Conclusion

- 6.23 The above assessment demonstrates that the site is Grey Belt and that the criteria of Para 155 of the NPPF is met.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This application seeks to obtain Stage 1 Permission in Principle for up to 9 no. dwellings on land off Starling Road, Ainsworth, Bury.
- 7.2 As a Stage 1 application, the proposals should only be assessed on the basis of the acceptability of the site's location, land use and the amount of development. Any technical matters beyond this are to be considered under any future Stage 2 submission.
- 7.3 This assessment has demonstrated that the site is Grey Belt. In this instance, the development of the site for up to 9 no. dwellings does not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 7.4 It is therefore considered that the development is acceptable in respect of its location, land use and the amount of development proposed, is in accordance with relevant planning policy and as such, Permission in Principle should be granted.

