

Cassidy⁺
Ashton

Architecture + Building Surveying + Town Planning

Land off Mount Pleasant, Simister, Prestwich

Planning Statement including Digital
Connectivity Statement

July 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction..... 1

2.0 Site Context 3

3.0 Development Proposal 6

4.0 Planning Policy Context 8

5.0 Planning Appraisal..... 15

6.0 Conclusion 23

1.0 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Cassidy + Ashton has been instructed to prepare and submit a Planning Statement in respect of a proposed residential development on land off Mount Pleasant in Simister, to include associated parking, private amenity space, boundary treatments and landscaping works.
- 1.2 Historically, the site is understood to have been a part of a wider farm complex. The site now comprises of grass and exposed ground.
- 1.3 The development description is as follows:

'Residential development consisting of 7 no. dwellings, alongside associated parking, private amenity space, boundary treatments and landscaping.'

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

- 1.4 This statement describes the site and its surroundings before setting out the design process that has culminated in the submission of this application. The statement seeks to demonstrate that the application has been prepared with full consideration of both the national and local planning policy context within which it sits. The conclusion is then reached that the development conforms to the principles of sustainable development and any other material planning considerations and therefore, planning permission should be granted.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- 1.5 In order to allow a proper assessment of the proposals and to satisfy the requirements of planning policy, the application is accompanied by the following supporting information, in line with local and national validation requirements:
 - Application Forms and Certificates
 - Application Drawings
 - Landscaping Plan
 - Ground Contamination Assessment
 - Digital Connectivity Statement (provided within Planning Statement)
 - Energy Statement
 - Biodiversity New Gain Assessment
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
 - Preliminary Drainage Strategy

- 1.6 This Planning Statement is to be read in conjunction with all other supporting documentation submitted alongside the application.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site extends to 0.44ha and is located on land off Mount Pleasant which lies within Simister.
- 2.2 Simister sits c. 1.5km east of Prestwich, Greater Manchester and has a population of approximately 650 no. residents.
- 2.3 As existing, access to the site is via Mount Pleasant, connecting the site to Simister Lane to the north and onto the wider highway network.



Figure 1 - Site Location (Source: Google Maps)

- 2.4 The application site comprises of grass and exposed ground. The site is not located within a conservation area but 150m west lies the Grade II Listed Church of St. George. The site is approximately 1km from both a Primary and Secondary school.

- 2.5 To the north-west of the site lies a large pond and to the south is a single-storey dwelling. An application for the change of use, alterations and extension to an existing stable block to form the dwelling was approved by Bury Council in 2020 (ref: 65090). Beyond this are further dwellings and agricultural buildings accessed from Nutt Lane to the west.
- 2.6 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which poses a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.
- 2.7 The residential properties to the north of the site, along Mount Pleasant, consist of semi-detached and detached dwellings with associated driveway parking and external gardens.
- 2.8 On Bury Council's planning policy map, the site is washed over by green belt, as is the wider built-up area of Simister. Whilst the wider location is clearly rural in nature, the cluster of development surrounding the application site presents a suburban character.
- 2.9 The site is located approximately 1km from Prestwich, which contains an array of facilities and services, including retail, employment and recreational provision.
- 2.10 Within Simister there are two public houses, a church, community hall and a play park. Bus stops are located along Simister Lane connecting Simister to Prestwich.
- 2.11 The site is therefore considered to be sustainably located, with access to public transport, places of work and other facilities and services.

CURRENT LOCAL PLAN LAND DESIGNATIONS

- 2.12 As shown in Figure 2, the application site falls within an area washed over by green belt under the Places for Everyone Joint DPD. The adopted Policies Map for Bury takes into account all saved UDP policies, the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document, the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan and the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan.
- 2.13 The local planning policies associated with these designations and other relevant planning matters will be set out within Chapter 4 and assessed in respect of the proposed development within Chapter 5 of this statement.



Figure 2 - Extract from Bury Council's Policy Map [Source: Bury Council]

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.14 Following a thorough planning history review, it appears this site has been subject to no recent planning applications.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL



Figure 3 – Proposed Site Plan [Source: Cassidy + Ashton]

- 3.1 The proposed development would comprise of 7 no. dwellings with associated landscaping, boundary treatments, garden space and parking.
- 3.2 A site layout plan (Figure 3) has been prepared which illustrates how the development would be laid out and the associated infrastructure provided.
- 3.3 The amount of development proposed is deemed appropriate for the area as it optimises the space available within the site providing both built development and biodiversity improvements. The proposed dwellings will integrate with the surrounding area and demonstrate a high-quality environment.
- 3.4 Access to the site would be taken from the end of the cul-de-sac, Mount Pleasant. A turning head would be provided to enable larger vehicles to traverse the site.
- 3.5 Each property will have two assigned parking spaces. To the rear of each property will be suitable private amenity space with landscaping to the front to break up areas of hardstanding required to

demarcate walkways and parking spaces. Additional soft landscaping will be planted around the boundaries of the site to improve the natural environment and setting of the properties.

- 3.6 The positioning of the proposed dwellings has been chosen to infill the gap in development between properties on Mount Pleasant to the north and the residential property to the immediate south of the application site. Land in the north-east of the site will be retained for landscaping and ecology purposes, creating a maintained area of open space.
- 3.7 The proposed accommodation mix is as follows:
- 2 no. 2 bedroom semi-detached properties – 81sqm GIFA
 - 5 no. 3 bedroom terraced properties – 105.5sqm GIFA
- 3.8 The semi-detached dwellings would comprise of two storeys. On the ground floor would be a kitchen and lounge plus WC, whilst the first floor would contain two bedrooms and a bathroom. The terraced properties would comprise of three storeys with a bedroom in the roof space. On the ground floor would be a kitchen and lounge plus WC, with two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor and a further third bedroom above. Dormers and Velux windows would be provided in the roof to allow light into this space.
- 3.9 It is envisaged that the development will utilise a modular construction method to meet an affordable solution to the provision of housing. This represents an innovative construction technique to provide high quality homes. The benefits of this method are that it can reduce construction times on site and result in a smaller carbon footprint than traditional construction, producing less waste and more efficient movement of materials as well as supporting improved quality control. Given the above this method of construction is considered to be a viable way in which to boost housebuilding within the UK.
- 3.10 The dwellings are also designed to have an EPC rating of 'A' and be net zero carbon, further illustrating their sustainability credentials.

PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

- 3.11 Pre-application advice has been sought from Bury Council on the proposals with their written comments being received on 17th March 2025. This response sets out comments regarding the proposals siting in the green belt, as well as those relevant to other material considerations.
- 3.12 Following receipt of these comments, the scheme has been amended, with the number of dwellings reduced. The resultant scheme presents an appropriate development which meets green belt requirements and an improvement in the biodiversity of the site.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2007 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The Local Plan sets out a long-term framework to manage future growth and development in the Borough up to 2043.
- 4.3 Together with the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Plan (PfE), the Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) forms Bury's Development Plan and the policies within them will be used as the basis for determining this planning application.
- 4.4 The Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) acts as a guide for the future development or protection of land in the Borough and together with other adopted Development Plan Documents its policies and proposals form the basis for the Council's decisions on planning applications. The current Bury UDP was adopted by the Council on 29th August 1997. The Council is now working to replace the adopted UDP with a new document called the Bury Local Plan. Until the new Local Plan is produced the UDP will continue to be used to make planning decisions.
- 4.5 Other planning policies and guidance which are material in the consideration of this proposal are:
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as revised in December 2024, sets out the Government's planning policies for England.
- 4.7 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 4.8 Chapter 5 of the NPPF considers the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes. Paragraph 61 emphasises the importance of delivering a sufficient amount and variety of land that meets the needs of groups with specific housing requirements and that land with permission should be developed without necessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet an area’s identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.
- 4.9 Chapter 12 of the NPPF seeks to achieve well-designed places with Paragraph 135 stating planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- 4.10 Paragraph 143 establishes that the green belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 4.11 Paragraph 153 states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the green belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the green belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the green belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 4.12 Paragraph 154 states the construction of new buildings in the green belt is regarded as inappropriate but there are exceptions to this, including:
- e) Limited infilling in villages;
 - f) Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan; and
- 4.13 Paragraph 155 does not regard the development of homes, commercial and other development in the green belt as inappropriate where:
- 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 proposed;
 - c) The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to Paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and
 - d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in Paragraphs 156-157 below.
- 4.14 The proposals represent a minor development and therefore the 'Golden Rules', set out in detail at Paragraph 156 of the NPPF would not apply.

BURY UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (UDP)

- 4.15 The Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) acts as a guide for the future development or protection of land in the Borough and together with other adopted Development Plan Documents its policies form the basis for the Council's decisions on planning applications.
- 4.16 Policy H2/1 outlines that all new residential development will be expected to make a positive contribution to the form and quality of the surrounding area. Factors to be considered when assessing proposals will include:
- the height and roof type of adjacent buildings;
 - the impact of developments on residential amenity;
 - the density and character of the surrounding area;
 - the position and proximity of neighbouring properties;
 - the materials to be used in proposed developments, especially their colour and texture.
- 4.17 Regarding the layout of the development, Policy H2/2 states that the following factors will be considered when assessing proposals:
- car parking provision;
 - access for both vehicles and pedestrians, and provision for public transport;
 - the possible need for traffic calming measures;
 - density;
 - space about and between dwellings;
 - landscaping and screening;
 - protection/provision of trees and hedgerows;
 - open space/children's play areas;
 - design for safety and security;
 - access/facilities for the disabled;
 - the existence of any public rights of way.
- 4.18 Policy HT2/4 states that the Council will require all applications for development to make adequate provision for their car parking and servicing requirements in accordance with the Council's car parking standards.
- 4.19 Under Policy EN1/2 the Council will give favourable consideration to proposals which do not cause an unacceptable adverse effect on the particular character and townscape of the Borough's towns, villages and other settlements. Factors to be considered when assessing proposals will include:
- the external appearance and design of the proposal in relation to its height, scale, density and layout;

- the relationship of the proposal to the surrounding area;
- the choice and use of materials;
- access and other design features for the mobility impaired;
- the design and appearance of access, parking and service provision;
- landscaping, including the use of natural landscape features, and open space provision;
- the use of lighting.

4.20 Policy EN6/3 considers the effect of land use changes on existing features of ecological or wildlife value and will take this into account when assessing development proposals. Any proposal should seek to retain such features and incorporate them into the development.

4.21 Policy MW1/1 outlines that the council has identified areas of search for the extraction of minerals on the Proposals Map and priority will be given for their extraction within these areas.

THE PLACES FOR EVERYONE JOINT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PFE)

4.22 The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan Councils sits at the foundation of proposals to improve employment opportunities, build the right homes in the right places, rejuvenate green spaces and reshape town centres.

4.23 Policy JP-C2 is concerned with the digital connectivity of new developments which will be required to provide high-speed digital infrastructure, with the latest mobile technology, full fibre and secure Wi-Fi, therefore promoting digital inclusion and supporting economic growth.

4.24 Development should adhere to the design management of 'Streets For All' (Policy JP-C5), through constructing accessible and safe streets that are inclusive for all users including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, to promote active travels and reduce car dependency.

4.25 Policy JP-C6 outlines that the development will only be supported where comprehensive walking and cycling networks are implemented to improve public health, reduce congestion, and lower carbon emissions.

4.26 Under JP-C8 the development must promote walking, cycling, and public transport by ensuring strong visual and physical connections, appropriate access to the highway network, and well-integrated, adaptable car parking that supports a high-quality, sustainable environment.

4.27 The proposal must reflect and respond to the qualities and sensitivities of the key landscape characteristics (Policy JP-G1) of its location, including having regard to:

- Topography, geology and drainage;

- Land use and field patterns;
 - Semi-natural habitats and woodland cover;
 - Archaeology and cultural heritage;
 - Settlement, road pattern and rights of way; and
 - Views and perceptual qualities.
- 4.28 Policy JP-G7 states that the development will be expected to promote the protection, enhancement, and expansion of trees and woodland, while significantly increasing tree cover to improve biodiversity, air quality, and the overall quality of life.
- 4.29 The enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity is considered in Policy JP-G8, requiring that the development will only be supported where it delivers a net gain in biodiversity, through measures such as enhancing habitat quality and connectivity, protecting designated sites, improving access to nature, supporting nature recovery networks, and safeguarding valuable soil resources.
- 4.30 Policy JP-G9 refers to proposals within the green belt which will be safeguarded to prevent urban sprawl, protect the countryside and maintain the separation of communities.
- 4.31 Considering the affordability of new housing, Policy JP-H2 states that developments must contribute towards targets for affordable housing by significantly increasing the supply of new homes.
- 4.32 The type, size and design of new housing is considered in Policy JP-H3. Proposals should provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including self-build and community-led projects, to meet local needs and support inclusive neighbourhoods, with all new homes meeting national space standards and built to accessible and adaptable standards where practicable.
- 4.33 Policy JP-H4 refers to the density of new housing, requiring all proposals to be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high-quality design.
- 4.34 Regarding sustainable places, Policy JP-P1 mandates that developments must promote sustainable communities through integrated planning that balances environmental, social, and economic factors, while delivering a distinctive proposal that enhances the natural and historic environment, reflects local character, and respects the area's identity through thoughtful design and materials.
- 4.35 Sustainable development, as set out under Policy JP-S1, ensures that the development contributes:
- Positively to the environment, economy, and society;
 - Minimise its adverse impacts;
 - Utilise sustainable construction techniques; and
 - Actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives

- 4.36 Under Policy JP-S2 the development is required to minimise carbon emissions and incorporate energy-efficient measures, supporting Greater Manchester's commitment to tackling climate change.
- 4.37 The proposal must address flood risk and the management of water resources (Policy JP-S4) to protect people and property from flooding and enhance water quality.

BURY'S SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (SPD)

- 4.38 Bury's Supplementary Planning Documents provide additional information on how the Council will implement various saved policies within Bury's Unitary Development Plan and the Places for Everyone Joint Plan.
- 4.39 SPD11 is concerned with Parking Standards in Bury. This document states that each two or three bed dwelling should be provided with two parking spaces. In respect of cycle storage, a secure area should be accommodated within each property's curtilage.

BURY'S HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

- 4.40 The latest available data for the Borough's housing land supply, set out within the Bury Five Year Supply of Deliverable Housing Land statement dated March 2025, states that Bury has a 5.8-year supply.

PLANNING POLICY SUMMARY

- 4.41 National and local planning policies are consistent in respect of development within the green belt. Whilst new development is generally regarded as inappropriate, there are exceptions to this, including limited infilling within villages. Local planning policies set out further guidance with regard to other considerations, including design and transport. All of these matters will be assessed in further detail within Chapter 5 of this statement.

5.0 PLANNING APPRAISAL

INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING APPRAISAL

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 In accordance with Section 38(6), the main issues of relevance to this application are as follows:
- Principle of Development
 - Design
 - Sustainability
 - Other Material Considerations

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

GREEN BELT POLICIES

- 5.3 The application site falls within the green belt. The entire area of Simister is 'washed over' by green belt as designated by Policy JP-G9 within the Development Plan. In considering development proposals within the green belt, both this policy and Section 13 of the NPPF apply.
- 5.4 The fundamental aim of green belt policy, as set out under Paragraph 142 of the NPPF, is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, as the essential characteristics of green belts are their openness and their function and permanence. Therefore, the two main considerations in respect of determining planning applications are the potential impacts the development could have on this perceived openness and upon the function and permanence of the green belt in this location. Paragraph 153 states that LPA's should ensure substantial weight is given to any harm to the green belt, including harm to its openness.

INFILLING IN VILLAGES

- 5.5 The development of new build dwellings would generally be deemed as inappropriate development, however, there are exceptions to this, set out within Paragraph 154 of the NPPF, namely, where it comprises limited infilling in villages or limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Development Plan.
- 5.6 The application site was previously a part of a wider farm complex and now comprises in part grass and exposed ground. To the north of the site are residential properties, located along Mount Pleasant and

directly to the south is a further residential property, which is accessed from Nutt Lane. Given the site is bound by residential development to the north and south, it can be seen as forming a gap within the built-up area, and as such, part of the village.

- 5.7 The NPPF does not provide an exact definition for a 'village'. However, the Oxford Dictionary definition states that a village is 'a group of houses and associated buildings, larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town, situated in a rural area'. The proposed site lies within Simister, which is considered to comprise a village, containing a number of residential properties alongside; a church, public houses, a community hall and playground. As such, it is considered that the location of the application site can comply with the exception within Paragraph 154(e) of the NPPF.
- 5.8 A generally accepted definition of infilling is the filling in of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage. Other definitions accepted at appeal include 'development within the confines of existing residential development' (appeal ref: APP/B5480/W/18/3200843) and 'the development of land that is surrounded by buildings on at least two sides within reasonable proximity' (appeal ref: APP/W4223/W/19/3227776). The development would represent the filling in of a small gap between existing residential development which sits to the north and south of the site, therefore complying with these definitions.
- 5.9 Notwithstanding the infill nature of the site, as existing, the site offers no value to the green belt, the primary purposes of which are to:
- a) Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
- 5.10 At present, the area of land on which development is proposed to take place, extends to c. 32m between the boundary of the closest property on Mount Pleasant and that of the single dwelling to the south. The closest urban area would be Middleton which is located 1km eastwards of the site. As such, the site is not considered to play a significant role in any of the purposes listed, with the proposal presenting a clear infilling of a small gap between existing dwellings.
- 5.11 Should this position, that the proposals represent limited infilling in a village, not be accepted by the Local Planning Authority, it is considered that the scheme also complies with the definition of grey belt land on which the proposed development would not be regarded as inappropriate.

GREY BELT

- 5.12 Grey belt is defined within the NPPF as land in the green belt comprising previously developed land and / or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to purposes (a), (b), or (d) in Paragraph 143 of the NPPF.
- 5.13 The relevant purposes are listed under paragraph 5.9 above. In respect of purpose (d), Simister does not represent a historic town and as such this matter will not be considered further.
- 5.14 Pre-application advice was sought from the LPA regarding a larger scheme than is currently proposed. In the LPA's response to the scheme, it was stated that this part of the green belt is considered to represent 'a small but crucial gap between Middleton and Prestwich which contributes strongly to checking the unrestricted sprawl of the emerging built environment at JPA1.2 and Middleton with Prestwich. Excluding the substantial barrier created by the M62, the gap is approximately 800m wide. The development of the site itself is therefore considered to play a strong role in inhibiting sprawling development and would represent an incongruous pattern of development'. Since the pre-application stage, the scheme has been reviewed and the extent of proposed development reduced. In the submission scheme, the built area extends to only c. 0.27ha and the development extends no further eastwards than the line of the existing access road on Mount Pleasant. The remaining boundaries are constrained by built development and natural features. As such, the scheme cannot be considered to result in urban sprawl. The gap between existing settlements will remain and the presence of built development will not extend any further into the green belt than existing buildings.
- 5.15 In terms of purpose (a), there is no formal definition of urban sprawl in planning policy or guidance but it is generally considered to be uncontained development on open land. The development of the application in the form envisaged would not result in uncontained urban sprawl as the site is contained by existing residential development on two sides, whilst a third is restricted by the presence of a large pond. To the east, the proposed development would go no further than the line of the existing access road from Mount Pleasant. The extent of built development therefore could not be considered by any observer when looking at the site upon completion of the development to constitute urban sprawl in any way whatsoever. The proposal would therefore fit wholly within the gap between existing development and not extend beyond this.
- 5.16 With respect to purpose (b), this seeks to ensure that neighbouring towns do not coalesce. Prestwich lies to the west of Simister and Middleton to the east, both 1km away. The proposed development would not result in the narrowing of this distance and the degree of separation between urban areas will remain unchanged. The development will take place in an area of green belt that is directly adjacent to a built-up residential area (washed over green belt) and therefore the overall effect on coalescence will be nil.

- 5.17 As such, the land does not strongly contribute to purposes (a), (b) or (d) of the green belt and therefore complies with the definition of grey belt land.
- 5.18 Paragraph 155 of the NPPF states that the development of homes in the green belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:
- 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 proposed;
 - c) The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and
 - d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.
- 5.19 Criteria (a) has been addressed elsewhere within this chapter. It is considered that the development would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the green belt, given the minor scale of the proposals and that it would be located within an existing gap in development.
- 5.20 In respect of a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed (criteria (c)), footnote 56 of the NPPF states that '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 (HDT) was below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years'. Thus, it can be considered that there is an unmet need if the council cannot demonstrate a minimum five year deliverable housing supply, or if the number of completed dwellings is deemed to be insufficient according to the Housing Delivery Test which applies. It is accepted that the council can currently demonstrate a 5.8 year housing land supply. However, the council has met only 64% of its HDT. Therefore, it can be concluded that currently, the HDT is not met and as such, there is a demonstrable unmet need for housing in the borough.
- 5.21 Evidence in respect of the sustainability of the location of the application site has been provided within this statement, to address criteria (c). The application site is located adjacent to an existing cul-de-sac and the existing highway could easily be extended to access the proposals.
- 5.22 It is considered criteria (d) is not applicable to this application as the Golden Rules are only required for major developments. This scheme comprises 7 no. new dwellings and as such represents a minor development.
- 5.23 It is concluded that the development would represent both an infill development and a grey belt scheme and would contribute to the housing land supply for Bury through the provision of a mix of dwelling sizes.

DESIGN

- 5.24 Both the NPPF and local planning policy require developments to be of a good standard of design and respectful of amenity. The design and scale of the new build development will therefore be sensitive to, and complementary to, the existing character and appearance of the area.
- 5.25 As existing, the site is comprised of grass with some limited hardstanding to the south. The proposal will support the provision of new housing, creating a small scale development which adds a mix of house types and sizes to the housing stock.
- 5.26 The development of the site will make a positive contribution to the locality, through the use of good quality materials and filling in a gap in built development between properties to the north and south of the site.
- 5.27 The proposed material palette has been selected to complement the character of the area, comprising of a red brick slip system, with K buff render at first floor level, and grey roofs. Sustainable design and construction principles will be complied with, through the utilisation of modern methods of construction (MMC). This allows construction, in part, to be completed off site, reducing the time associated with construction and improving sustainability, through reducing waste.
- 5.28 The proposed semi-detached properties will be two-storeys whilst the terraced properties will be three-storeys with the roof space utilised for a third bedroom. This will maximise density appropriately utilising the land available. A large proportion of the site is to be left undeveloped as a wildflower meadow. This will enable the development to provide its biodiversity net gain requirements on-site and provide an attractive setting for the properties.
- 5.29 The development has been set out to make the most efficient use of the space available on the site, to meet end user requirements, to provide a legible scheme and to take account of local character and amenity. The surrounding urban grain is mixed, to the north is a standard residential street comprising two rows of dwellings on generally long linear plots with a mix of hard and soft landscaping to their frontages. The proposed layout seeks to provide similar linear plots, with the two semi-detached properties located closest to the northern boundary of the site and fronting the new access road, this would then circuit around the buildings to where the further five terraced properties would face the rear of these properties. This layout creates active streetscenes whilst also providing enclosed private spaces for each dwelling.
- 5.30 A key element of local planning policy is to ensure that new developments are not detrimental to residential amenity. An acceptable standard of amenity for both existing and future residents would be achieved through the proposals. Appropriate separation distances are provided internally within the site whilst there would be no impact by way of overlooking concerning the interfaces between new and

existing development. Fencing and landscaping would be retained and supplemented within the site to support screening of the development.

- 5.31 Externally, the development incorporates good quality and accessible landscape amenity areas. Each dwelling will have its own private garden space whilst the south and east of the site would provide a wildlife meadow and other biodiversity features.
- 5.32 As such, the design of the proposed development is considered to be wholly appropriate in this location and accords with the requirements of the relevant local and national planning policies and the proposals represent sustainable growth.

SUSTAINABILITY

- 5.33 Within the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. There are three overarching objectives; economic, social and environmental, of which each is to now be considered.
- 5.34 Economically, the development would contribute to the economy through utilising local contractors, labour and materials. Once built, the occupiers of the properties would contribute to the local economy by utilising the local services and facilities.
- 5.35 Socially, the site is within a well-connected location. There are public transport links located within Simister with regular bus services. The proposed works would not be detrimental to the character of the area and would contribute to the local community of residents who live there.
- 5.36 Environmentally, the proposals comprise a range of soft landscaping proposals which will improve the setting and biodiversity of the site.
- 5.37 While the Council is currently able to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land, it has not met its HDT. Furthermore, this proposal offers a range of planning benefits. It supports sustainable development, contributes to the local housing mix, and delivers environmental and community gains all in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF (para. 8).

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

CONTAMINATED LAND

- 5.38 The site is currently vacant and it is understood to have last been in use as part of a farm complex. The submission is supported by a Preliminary Risk Assessment prepared by Wormseye. This report identifies the existing condition of the site and recommends that whilst it is unlikely for contamination to be present over most of the site, low levels may be present around the south corner. On this basis a limited site investigation is proposed which may be conditioned to any approval of planning permission where required.

ECOLOGY

- 5.39 Policy EN6/3 considers the effect of land use changes on existing features of ecological or wildlife value and states that this will be taken into account when assessing development proposals. It is advised that any proposal should seek to retain such features and incorporate them into the development. This is supported by Policy JP-G7. In this respect, the area of development will be limited to an existing gap between residential development. The remaining site will be retained for biodiversity enhancement. There are considered to be limited existing features of value given the current status of the site.
- 5.40 The enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity is considered in policy JP-G8, requiring that the development will only be supported where it delivers a net gain in biodiversity, through measures such as enhancing habitat quality and connectivity, protecting designated sites, improving access to nature, supporting nature recovery networks, and safeguarding valuable soil resources. New tree specimens are proposed along the site's boundaries to provide a net gain as well as support screening and provide amenity value. A large proportion of the site will be retained for biological enhancement and can provide opportunities for biodiversity net gain where appropriate.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

- 5.41 Policy JP-C2 concerns digital connectivity and requires new development to provide high-speed digital infrastructure, with the latest mobile technology, full fibre and secure Wi-Fi, therefore promoting digital inclusion and supporting economic growth. In this respect the scheme will utilise the most advanced digital infrastructure available at the time of occupation. The developer will review opportunities by providers subject to planning consent being granted.

ENERGY STATEMENT

- 5.42 Under Policy JP-S2 the development is required to minimise carbon emissions and incorporate energy-efficient measures, supporting Greater Manchester's commitment to tackling climate change. The development has been designed to have an EPC rating of 'A' and to be net zero carbon.
- 5.43 An Energy Statement has been prepared by Base Energy to support the application and address this requirement. The report concludes that through the inclusion of low carbon technology the development could result in at least a 90% saving in CO2 emissions over Part L 2021 regulations.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

- 5.44 Policy JP-S4 requires proposals to address flood risk and the management of water resources to protect people and property from flooding and enhance water quality. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered to be at low probability of flooding. A Preliminary Drainage Strategy prepared by BEK supports the proposals and identifies options for providing SUDS infrastructure within the site. Subject to detailed design it is currently proposed for a geo-cellular soakaway or attenuation

tank to be installed under the proposed access road, subject to which option is feasible, the system would then discharge to ground or the public sewer.

TRANSPORT

- 5.45 The scheme provides vehicular and pedestrian access from Mount Pleasant via a new access road. An appropriately dimensioned turning head would be provided within the site to assist in servicing the new dwellings. The provision of 7 no. new dwellings is not considered to intensify use of the local network to a significant degree.
- 5.46 The scheme will meet the requirements of the Parking Standards SPD with two parking spaces per unit. Electric vehicle charging spaces can be accommodated within this provision.
- 5.47 Policies JP-C6 outlines that developments will only be supported where comprehensive walking and cycling and public transport networks are promoted, improving public health, reducing congestion and lowering carbon emissions. It is considered that the scheme will incorporate appropriate access for all users.

SUMMARY OF PLANNING APPRAISAL

- 5.48 The proposed development represents an appropriate form of residential development within a locality that is already characterised by existing residential uses. The scheme is in accordance with all relevant planning policies, including those relating to development within the green belt, where it is considered to constitute appropriate development. Furthermore, the proposal contributes positively to the principles of sustainable development as set out in national and local planning guidance.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This statement supports a planning application for the development of land at Mount Pleasant in Simister. The development comprises of a residential development consisting of 7 no. dwellings with associated parking, private amenity space, boundary treatments and landscaping.
- 6.2 The application site lies within a village washed over by the green belt. However, the site meets the criteria to be considered an infill plot and therefore meets the exception for appropriate development in the NPPF (Paragraph 154e) as well as being considered to constitute grey belt.
- 6.3 The proposed development would not appear out of character with the surrounding area and is considered to integrate well with the existing pattern of land uses.
- 6.4 The proposed development represents sustainable development and would not give rise to any materially harmful impacts. In this context, the scheme is compliant with both local and national planning policy and satisfies the criteria for appropriate development within the green belt. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal meets the relevant policy tests, and planning permission should be granted.

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