

**Engineering works for a slurry pond on agricultural land at Sheep Hey Farm,
Leaches Road, Shuttleworth**

GR 379511;417736

Ref: CB/19-03-25-B.2

Planning Statement



December 2024

Amended 15April 2025

Prepared by Hartley Planning and Development Associates Ltd

The proposed development

The proposal is for a pond for the storage of slurry at Sheep Hey Farm.

Slurry would be collected from the landholdings of the applicant and his close family and would be taken by tanker to close to the proposed site where the material would be pumped into the lagoon for storage purposes.

When it would be needed for spreading on the land for fertilisation purposes, it would be pumped out into a tanker for transporting to the land, again in the ownership and control of the applicant and which is used for agricultural purposes.

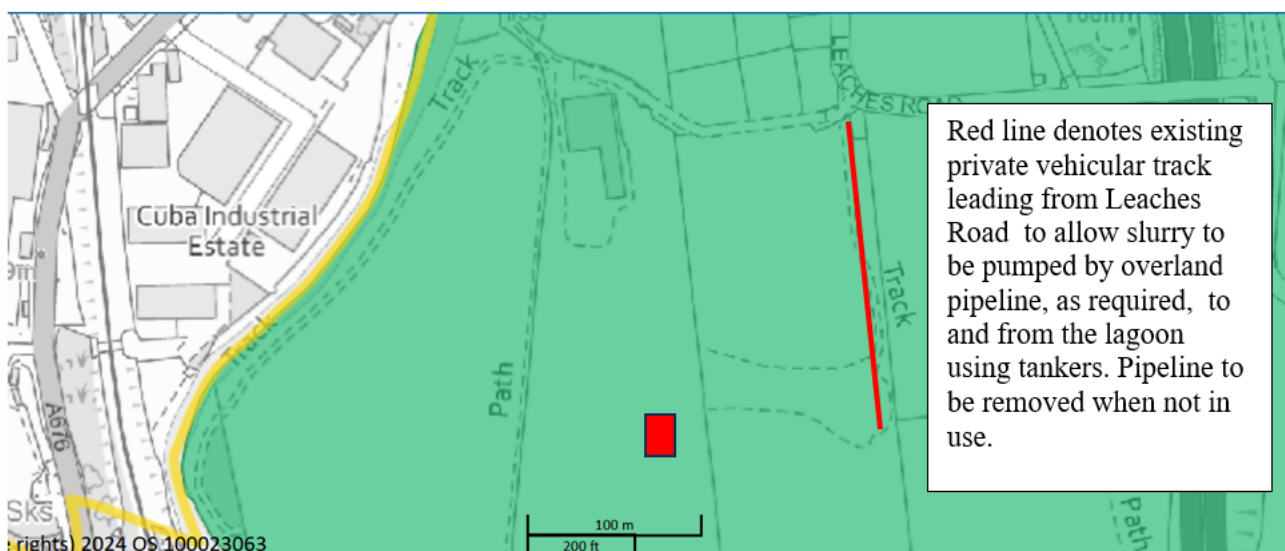
The reason for the proposed development is to counter the increasing costs of buying in chemically produced fertiliser.

Vehicular access is from an existing hard surface track to the east of the proposed site leading from Leaches Road, off Whalley Road.

The pond would be 30 metres by 20 metres in extent and 4 metres deep. It would have a hardcore stone base with a 2mm thick black plastic liner to make the pond impermeable and would have 45 degree slopes to each side..

It would be surrounded by 2-metre-high deer fencing with planting around it

The site is within the Green Belt



The Main Issues

The main issues are (i) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, having regard to relevant development plan policies, the Framework and the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; (ii) the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area, and (iii) whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Whether inappropriate development

The Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (2024) (PfE) policy JP-G9: reiterates the 5 purposes of the Green Belt as set out in national policy, including checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas, the prevention of towns merging into one another and to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

As there is no change of use of the application land, the proposed development would not be contrary to its aims.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework) notes at paragraph 142 that ‘the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence’.

Paragraphs 154 and 155 state that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of a number of exceptions applies including ‘engineering operations’ provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it .

The application proposal would not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt as it relates to an existing farm complex and it cannot be said to adversely affect openness as it is set down below surrounding land levels, other than the surrounding 2-metre-high deer netting.

Therefore, the proposed development would not amount to inappropriate development in

the Green Belt. No harm would be caused to openness or to any of the purposes of the Green Belt. There would be no conflict with the Green Belt requirements of the Framework, and it would accord with policy JP-G9 of the PfE.

Character and appearance

The land would remain in agricultural use, characterised by its open, pastoral appearance.

The fencing and planting would assimilate with the existing character and appearance of the area.

Other Matters

Biodiversity net gain (BNG)

A BNG metric is submitted with the application

Conclusion

The proposals would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. No harm would be caused to the purposes of the Green Belt, or to the character and appearance of the area.

Appendix: Addendum

Volume and capacity of the lagoon and its need

The proposed lagoon would be 20m by 30 m and 4 m deep. However, 1m of the height needs to be left to avoid overflows and to allow for rainwater additions (though as the slurry is a valuable agricultural fertiliser, the applicants would take action to pump out any excess for storage elsewhere, or to spread it in a controlled way on land within the farm units. But even if it did overflow, it would be onto agricultural land well removed from buildings in its path)

If the lagoon had straight sides, it would have a capacity (excluding the amount for overflow) of 1800m³. As the sides slope, we have assumed a reduced capacity by 10% to give an approx. figure of 1600m³

The are, on average through the year, approx. 400 cows on various landholdings and in buildings as follows: -

Twine Valley Farm . Approx. 250 cows

Sheep Hey Farm (in the shed immediately to the North of the application site). Approx. 110 cows

Close Nook Farm, Turn Village Approx 40 cows

The total is approximately 400 cows

According to the app 'slurry wizard ', a cow will produce on average 12 tons of muck per year.

Therefore, 400 cows will produce an average of 4,800 tons a year. Google advises that a tonne of slurry typically weighs 1m³. Therefore 1 ton has an average volume of 1.1m³. So, there are enough cows to produce about 5,280 m³ of slurry per year.

Therefore, there is over 3 times more slurry than the proposed capacity if it were to be all stored for 12 months – though the Environment Agency advises that 6 months can be long enough, thus reducing the surplus amount in half.

Even so, the lagoon is unlikely to provide space for all slurry produced This is one reason why a second application for a slurry lagoon at Twine Valley Farm near-by.

Any surplus which is not stored or applied directly to the land would be sold and/or removed from the farmland owned and occupied by the applicants.

Need

The reason for the proposed lagoon is because of the high price of chemically produced fertiliser. In addition, we consider that chemically produced fertiliser may not have the same environmental and soil benefits as does animal slurry.

Environment Agency (EA)

We are aware that the EA requires to be notified before the lagoon is brought into use Representatives of the EA have already visited Twine Valley Farm where a similar lagoon is proposed and here a planning application for it has been submitted.

We consider that the proposed lagoon and its construction details accord with the EA advice contained in '*Storing silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil*' updated on 12 October 2023.

Odour

While the site is at some distance from other land uses, we have commissioned an odour report by consultants 'Royal HaskoningDHV'. The resulting report will be submitted to the LPA as soon as it has been completed.

April 2025