

Planning Policy Comments

Application No: 73467

Location: Land west of Bury New Road / Peel Brow, Ramsbottom, BL0 0AZ

Proposal: Application for Permission in Principle for the construction of up to 9 no. zero carbon dwellings

Principle (Residential)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026) is a material planning consideration in planning decisions.

NPPF Policy S3 sets out the presumption in favour of development and distinguishes between development within settlements and development outside settlements.

This application is within a settlement, therefore NPPF Policy S4 applies. This states that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework.

NPPF Policy HO7 gives substantial weight to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community.

NPPF Annex D paragraph 8 states that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing, with an appropriate buffer. The supply of housing must be assessed against the housing requirement set out in the development plan where this is less than five years old.

The joint Places for Everyone Plan was adopted with effect from 21 March 2024 and sets the up-to-date housing requirement for Bury against which the deliverable supply of housing land must be assessed. PfE Policy JP-H1 sets the following stepped targets for Bury:

- 246 homes per year from 2022-2025;
- 452 homes per year from 2025-2030; then
- 520 homes per year from 2030-2039.

The buffer applicable to the five year supply assessment is based on NPPF Annex D paragraph 9. In Bury's case, a 5% buffer is required in accordance with paragraph 9c.

A 20% buffer is no longer required because:

- the latest Housing Delivery Test result exceeds 85% (NPPF Annex D paragraph 9b: 2025 result = 114%); and
- the collective PfE requirement for all 9 PfE districts exceeds 80% of the LHN for those 9 districts (NPPF Annex D paragraph 9c: 10,305 PfE target against LHN of 12,470 = 83%).

The Council has carried out an assessment of the housing land supply to determine whether sites meet the deliverability tests in the NPPF and can contribute to the five year supply of housing land. Based on the 2025 5-year supply, a supply of 2,231 homes has been identified for the period from 2025-2030. This is set against a requirement for 2,270

homes (including a 5% buffer and having taken account of past over delivery). The Council can therefore demonstrate a 4.9 year supply of housing land including a 5% buffer (or 4.7 years if past over delivery is excluded). There is therefore currently a slight shortfall in the five year supply against the adopted housing requirement. The proposal for up to 9 dwellings would make a small positive contribution to the housing land supply, which weighs in favour of the application.

The site is located within a settlement and outside of the Green Belt. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.

Biodiversity Net Gain

PfE policy JP-G8 requires development to follow the mitigation hierarchy of avoiding significant harm to biodiversity through consideration of alternative sites, then adequately mitigating and compensating for any remaining harm. It also requires development to avoid fragmenting or severing connectivity between habitats and to achieve a net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%. This reflects national statutory requirements.

This policy requires planning applications to be accompanied by a completed metric and written statement or draft Biodiversity Gain Plan. The policy also requires proposals to make appropriate provision for long-term management of habitats and geological features connected to the development. *This information will be required at the technical details stage.*

River Valley

Policy OL5/2 states that within the River Valleys, new buildings or the change of use of existing buildings or the change of use of land will not be permitted. The only exceptions considered acceptable will be those where the development would not lead to the division of the open parts of the valleys into sections and it falls within the terms below:

- a. where the area is designated as Green Belt the established Green Belt policies will apply; or
- b. where the area does not form part of the Green Belt, at least one of the following circumstances is met:
 - that the development represents limited infilling to an established valley settlement or industrial area;
 - that it is an extension to, or renewal of an existing industry, where the economic and employment factors are of overriding importance;
 - that the development is required in association with an outdoor recreation or appropriate tourist facility;
 - that the development is limited and will form part of, and be essential to, the maintenance of the provision and improvement of public services and utilities;
 - any other development that would be appropriate in the Green Belt.

The site is not located within the Green Belt, so Green Belt policies do not apply in this case.

In the context of the surrounding area, including the ongoing Willow Bank development (planning ref: 70222) comprising 57 dwellings, the site is well contained by existing built

form. It is now effectively enclosed by development, forming a self-contained parcel of land within the wider settlement.

As a result, the proposal can be viewed as limited infilling within an established valley settlement. It would sit comfortably within the existing built-up area and would not extend development into open countryside. This results in the development satisfying Policy OL5/2 and therefore being acceptable in principle.

Wildlife Links

Policy EN6/4 states that wildlife corridors should be consolidated and where appropriate, strengthened. Furthermore, the policy states that development which would adversely affect wildlife corridors will not be permitted. Any new development within or adjacent to wildlife corridors should contribute to their effectiveness by way of design, landscaping and siting of the proposals, along with mitigation works.

Whilst detailed ecological information is not expected at the Permission in Principle stage, the absence of supporting surveys and assessment means there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the development could be delivered without harm to the wildlife corridor. In particular, the submission does not address potential impacts on habitat, connectivity, or lighting, nor does it indicate how the corridor could be maintained or enhanced through design or mitigation.

As such, there remains uncertainty as to whether the principle of development complies with Policy EN6/4. Based on the information currently available, the proposal is therefore considered to be in potential conflict with the policy. *This information will be required at the technical details stage.*

Housing

Type, Size and Design of New Housing

PfE Policy JP-H3 – Seeks to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes. All new dwellings must 1. comply with the nationally described space standards and 2. be built to the 'accessible and adaptable standard in Part M4(2) of Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable. This will need to be addressed at Technical Details stage.

Density

The NPPF Policy L3 expects development proposals to make efficient use of land, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing, local market conditions, the availability of infrastructure (including that supporting sustainable transport modes), a site's connectivity and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

Within settlements NPPF Policy L3(2)(a) expects development proposals to contribute to an increase in the density of the area in which they are situated. The only exception is where there is a clear justification that this is either inappropriate or not possible (for

example, where the prevailing density is already very high, the nature of the accommodation required precludes higher densities, or where it would conflict with other policies in this Framework). In considering the potential to increase densities, the existing character of an area should be taken into account, in accordance with NPPF policy DP3, but should not preclude development which makes the most of an area's potential.

The site is in a sustainable location, in close proximity to Ramsbottom Town Centre and with good access to sustainable transport modes.

PfE policy JP-H4 requires new housing development 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. Policy JP-H4 sets out minimum densities that should be considered, with this site falling in an area where a minimum net residential density of 70 dwellings per hectare applies.

As stated in the planning statement, the red edge of the site covers an area of approximately 0.49 hectares, so development at 70dph would equate to 34 dwellings. (Note that the density has been calculated on the area quoted in the planning statement, rather than the less accurately measured area used in the previous application).

The proposal is for up to 9 dwellings. 9 dwellings would equate to 18 dwellings per hectare, which is significantly below the PfE policy requirement and fails to make efficient use of land.

The indicative development area on the indicative layout equates to circa 0.3 hectares, which avoids the steeper land adjacent to 40 Bury New Road and takes account of the need to give consideration to the TPO trees at Stage 2, so even when this is accounted for (albeit that as a PiP application, this is not set at this stage), the density would be only 30 dwellings per hectare.

Policy JP-H4 allows for lower densities where they can be clearly justified by:

1. Local housing market issues, such as a demonstrable need for a particular type of housing that cannot be delivered at a higher density; or
2. Site-specific issues, such as the design context and any potential impact on the wider landscape or townscape including heritage assets and green infrastructure.

The Bury Housing Need and Demand Assessment (2025) indicates that Boroughwide, the greatest needs for market housing are for 2 and 3 bedroom properties, with the strongest demand being for 3-bed houses. In North Bury, for market housing the greatest demand is for 3-bedroom houses, followed by 4-bed houses. There is also some demand for 1 and 2 bedroom properties. There are not considered to be particular local housing market issues that would warrant development at a low density.

The site's designation as river valley and wildlife links and corridors does not automatically justify a lower density, as the site could accommodate a larger number of smaller units without increasing the impact, rather than 9 dwellings as shown on the indicative planning layout accompanying the application.

Although there are existing low density homes up the hill to the south of the site, the area is characterised by terraced properties – including a row of terraced properties directly opposite the application site, as well as those along Peel Brow and Derby Street, and therefore a higher density would be consistent with the design context. A higher density could be achieved through a mix of terraced properties or (subject to heritage

considerations) small scale apartments as seen opposite the site (such as at 1 to 4 Peel Court).

The applicant's supporting statement references the development under construction at the Former Mondi site (Willow Bank, planning ref 70222) at around 35dph. However this was a derelict brownfield site with site specific issues, including flood issues, car parking, archaeological / heritage issues and the impact upon the Conservation Area, and on balance this density was accepted for this specific site. The Mondi development is not considered to set a precedent for lower density on the application site. In any event, even when accounting for the indicative area of 0.3 hectares from the indicative layout, the proposed density is only 30 dwellings per hectare, and is lower than that achieved on the Mondi site.

The development of the application site at a density of 18-30 dwellings per hectare (depending on the area applied) is contrary to JP-H4 and NPPF policy L3.

NPPF Policy L3(4) states that "Development proposals that do not make efficient use of land in accordance with paragraph 2 of this policy should be refused".

NPPF Policy S4(2)(c) is clear that when considering whether the benefits of a development proposal would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, this would include situations where development proposals fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances. This would include Policy L3(4).

Landscape Character Area

The site is within the River Irwell (north Bury) and Kirklees (LCA23), an area of Incised Urban Fringe Valleys as assessed by the GM Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment.

Policy JP-G1: Landscape Character states that development within a Landscape Character Type should reflect and respond to the special qualities and sensitivities of the key landscape characteristics 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.

The interface of new development with the surrounding countryside/landscape is of particular importance. These transitional areas require well-considered and sensitive treatment. In particular, opportunities to improve the intactness and condition of the landscape should be taken.

Recreation

The site is identified in the UDP under Policy RT3/2 (specifically part of RT3/2/1 – Nuttall, Ramsbottom) as additional provision for recreation in the countryside. However, this has not been implemented.

Officer: PB/MW**Date: 19/08/2026**