

DELEGATED REPORT

Report by Jennie Townsend	Date of report: 05/01/2026	Ref: 72495/FUL
Registration: 17/11/2025	LDFC: 10/12/2025	Expiry Date: 12/01/2026
Site Visit: 28/11/2025	Site Notice: 28/11/2025	Press Date: N/A
Objections: 3	Con Area:	Adv Type: PI
Reason for Delay: N/A		EIA: NA
		Dec Level: DEL
		Stat Class: MIOT

Proposal: Erection of stables and menage

Location: Land adjoining Plane Trees Farm, Bradley Fold Road, Radcliffe, Bolton, BL2 5QR

Description

The site relates to a field which is located in a rural area which is designated Green Belt and a Landscape Character Area. The site is linear in form which rises gently from south to the north. To the north of the application site is an agricultural building beyond which are residential properties, Plane Trees Farm and Plane Trees Barn with other outbuildings located close to these properties.

To the east and south are open fields and to the west is Bradley Fold Road from where the site is accessed.

The proposal is for a stable block and menage.

The stable block would be located to the south west of the agricultural building, in a more or less central position within the field. The stable block would be a 'U' shape, 12.6m x 10.7m within which there would be 5 stables and 2 tack and feed stores. It would be 3.7m high with a dual pitch roof. Window openings are proposed on the north, east and west elevations with a central door opening on the south elevation. The application form states that elevations would be timber with a green insulated roof covering.

The menage would be sited to the east of the stable block and would be 40m x 20m with a silica sand, wax and fibre surface enclosed by a 1m high timber fence.

The applicant states the stables would be for personal use and not connected to any commercial activities.

Relevant Planning History

51307 - Erection of new barn; change of use of existing barn to dwelling - Approve with Conditions 19/08/2009

64796 - Widening and modification of existing access, formalisation of car parking and change of use of agricultural land to form garden curtilage areas - Approve with Conditions 08/01/2020

66722 - Conversion of existing barn into 2no dwellings and widening/modification of existing access, formalisation of car parking and change of use of agricultural land to form garden curtilage areas - Approve with Conditions 24/08/2021

19/0033 - Removal of hedge row - 04/03/2019

22/0012 - New agricultural building constructed on land to the rear of Plane Trees Farm - 17/10/2022

23/0007 - Building works - 07/03/2024

Publicity

Letters sent to 14 properties on 18/11/25

Site notice posted 28/11/25

3 objections received with the following comments -

- Appreciate the need for Tenant farmers to be able to generate income, but permitting a fixed installation on open farmland creates a dangerous and unwanted precedent.
- The proposed stables are quite a distance from other farm buildings nearby. The stables should have been positioned further away from the road and adjacent (behind) the existing farm buildings at Plane Trees Farm. If they were behind the existing barn structure then this would have made them more in keeping with, and appearing part of the current farm buildings curtilage.
- Access to and from the proposed location is quite dangerous for cars given the blind viewing in either direction.
- The plans indicate an overall height of the stables being at 3.8m from FFL, we feel this would have a massive impact on the open feel of the area and also alter the view of the landscape from our property.
- The location for the stables and the menage should be swapped over. With the menage in the location of the proposed stables, it would keep the open feel to the land and there would be no visual impact for the surrounding properties and passing public.
- There is a more suitable location.
- Dangerous access to the site on a sharp bend.
- Excessive height. To block a natural view over the hills and towns is unacceptable.
- Further thought should be given to the natural beauty of the area

Statutory/Non-Statutory Consultations

Traffic Section - Recommend refusal on highway safety grounds

Environmental Health - Contaminated Land - No comments to make

Conservation Officer - No objection

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit - No objection in principle

Pre-start Conditions - Not relevant

Development Plan and Policies

NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
EN1/2	Townscape and Built Design
OL4/7	Development Involving Horses
HT2/4	Car Parking and New Development
JP-C5	Streets For All
JP-C8	Transport Requirements of New Development
JP-G1	Landscape Character
JP-G8	A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
JP-G9	The Green Belt
JP-P2	Heritage
JP-S4	Flood Risk and the Water Environment
JP-C2	Digital Connectivity
JP-S2	Carbon and Energy
SPD10	Planning for Equestrian Development

Issues and Analysis

The following report includes analysis of the merits of the application against the relevant policies of both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (PfE) and the saved policies within the adopted Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP), together with other relevant material planning considerations.

The policies of the UDP that have been used to assess this application are considered to

be in accordance with the NPPF and as such are material planning considerations. For simplicity, just the UDP and PfE Policies will be referred to in the report, unless there is a particular matter to highlight arising from the NPPF where it would otherwise be specifically mentioned.

Equality Act 2010: All planning applications are considered in light of the Equality Act 2010 and associated Public Sector Equality Duty, where the Council is required to have due regard for:

The elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation;

The advancement of equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and person who do not share it;

The fostering of good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and person who do not share it; which applies to people from the protected equality groups.

Human Rights: All planning applications are considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Under Article 6 the applicants (and those third parties who have made representations) have the right to a fair hearing and to this end full consideration will be given to their comments.

Article 8 and Protocol 1 of the First Article confer a right to respect private and family life and a right to the protection of property, ie peaceful enjoyment of one's possessions which could include a person's home, and other land and business assets.

In taking account of the Council policy as set out in the Bury Unitary Development Plan 1997 and all material planning considerations, it is concluded on balance that the rights conferred upon the applicant/ objectors/ residents/ other interested party by Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol may be interfered with, since such interference is in accordance with the law and is justified in the public interest. Any restriction of these rights posed by refusal/ approval of the application is legitimate since it is proportionate to the wider benefits of such a decision, is based upon the merits of the proposal, and falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town & Country Planning Acts.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes (without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it) a duty upon the Council to exercise its functions and have due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of its functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. In so doing and on making planning decisions under the Town and Country Planning Acts, the material Planning considerations shall have due regard to the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and its implications in the exercise of its functions.

Principle

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green belt is inappropriate unless one of the exceptions applies which includes b) for the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Policy OL1/2 - New Buildings in the Green Belt states that new buildings would only be appropriate for the purposes of agriculture and forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, providing they are not disproportionate additions or materially larger and limited infilling in existing

named villages.

UDP Policy OL4/7 - Development Involving Horses states that the principle of keeping horses for recreational or as part of commercially based equestrian activities will be considered acceptable where it would not have an adverse impact on the appearance of the rural areas. In particular, high standards of design, construction and maintenance will be expected.

PfE Policy JP-G1 states that development within a Landscape Character Area should reflect and respond to the special qualities and sensitivities of the key landscape characteristics of its location. the interface of new development within the surrounding country side/landscape if of particular importance and will require well considered and sensitive treatment.

SPD 8 - New Buildings and Associated Development in the Green Belt and SPD10 - Planning for Equestrian Development supports Policies OL1/2 and OL4/7 and provides guidance on new buildings and equestrian related facilities to do with scale, siting, design and materials in the Green Belt.

Siting and impacts on visual amenity

Proposed stable building

Policy OL4/7 states that particular care should be given to minimise visual impacts on the surrounding area and buildings designed to blend in with their surroundings and SPD10 states that stables should not be sited on an exposed skyline and be located close to boundaries or near to other buildings.

The proposed stables would be located in a lower area of the field comparative to the other buildings to the north which are formed in a cluster and views of these buildings from all directions are seen against the backdrop of each other and therefore have limited visual impacts.

The proposed stables would be positioned in a central and isolated part of the field and given the land also rises from south to north, would be exposed and prominent on the skyline and within the landscape and visually intrusive when viewed from all directions. As such the proposed stables are considered harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and Landscape Character Area.

The proposed stables would have a footprint of 12.6m x 10.7m (220 sqm) and would also sit on an extensive area of hardstanding, 20.6m x 18.2m (circa 373 sqm) thereby introducing a substantial form of development which would add to the visual harm created in the area.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be inappropriate and unacceptable development and contrary to policies OL4/7, JP-G1, JP-G9 and SPD10.

Proposed menage

The proposed menage would be positioned to the east of the stable block and directly to the south of the existing agricultural unit. It would have a footprint of 40m x 20m which is the maximum size advised in SPD10. The menage would be enclosed by a 1m high timber fence which would be acceptable within the landscape and for this type of development.

The manage would have a surface of silica sand, wax and fibre and details of this would be sought to assess its suitability within the landscape were the application to be supported.

Design and appearance

In terms of design, SPD10 advises that stables should be designed with monopitch or shallow sloping roofs and generally should be no more than 3 or 4 with one storage area for tack and feed. Applications exceeding this number should provide justification or in some

cases provide horse passports.

The applicant states that there are 4 horses on the land already and they own 2 more. However, no evidence of horse passports has been provided.

The proposed stables would have a more or less square footprint and 'U' shape form comprising 5 stables and 2 tackrooms. The roof would be dual pitched and windows inserted in 3 of the elevations. As such, the proposed building would have domestic type appearance and one which would be out of context within the rural and agricultural setting, particularly given the isolated location. The large windows on the north elevation in particular and the recessed doorway would add to the domestic style of the building which are considered inappropriate for the use and its setting within the landscape.

It is therefore considered that by reasons of design and appearance, the proposed development would be unacceptable within the Green Belt and Landscape Character of the Area and contrary to policies OL4/7, JP-G1, JP-G9 and SPD10.

Impacts on residential amenity

The proposed stables would be just over 40m away from the nearest dwellings at Plane Trees Barn which is located directly the north of the site. There are two first floor windows on the southern elevation which would overlook the site. It is not clear whether these windows are non-habitable or secondary windows as the main principle windows would appear to be located on the east and west.

That said, the proposed stables would have a height of 3.8m, a domestic type design and appearance and generous footprint and given the isolated and exposed location within the field and the surrounding area, considered harmful not only to nearby residents but those passing by, whether on foot or by vehicle. As such, the proposed stables are considered to be harmful to the amenity of the area.

The menage would be located further eastwards into the field and would be largely screened from views by the stables and other outbuildings from certain viewpoints and as such less harmful to the public and visual amenity.

It is therefore considered the proposed development would have an adverse impact on public visual amenity and would be contrary to policies JP-G1, EN1/2, OL4/7 and SPD10.

Highway issues

The site is accessed off Bradley Fold Road which is located close to a tight site access, nor have visibility splays been plotted. The site access is located close to a sharp bend where visibility is poor and access to and from the site, would be difficult and dangerous, particularly for a vehicle pulling a horse box and which would necessitate using the full width of the road which would be particularly hazardous close to the bend.

Turning or parking facilities have also not be shown.

The Highway Authority have been consulted and the proposal cannot be supported due to the intensification of use of a sub-standard, former purely field maintenance access on the leaving side of the bend, where visibility is poor and restricted by the fence to the north and hedging. The application lacks any details or information on the site access and there are no details of how surface water run-off would be treated.

As such, the proposed development would be unacceptable and have an adverse and detrimental impact on highway safety and contrary to policies EN1/2, JP-C5 and JP-C8.

Ecology

Summary

The only ecological issue is biodiversity net gain.

Wildlife Issues

Whilst no ecological appraisal has been provided, GMEU are satisfied the site is very low risk for protected species and nesting birds with no suitable habitat and no records of any protected species near to the development. No further information or measures are required.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 187 of the NPPF 2024 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. 10% BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

The development would result in the loss of low value grassland to development. There are no significant effects on wildlife.

A BNG assessment has been provided that indicates 10% can be achieved on the site and GMEU agree that this is the case. The only issue is that the baseline area and proposed development areas appear to be inaccurate, with the total area of modified grassland within the red edge shown as 0.12ha in the metric. Whilst not possible to accurately measure the area, given it does not confirm to existing boundaries, GMEU estimate the site to cover around 0.25ha. The menage area post development is also recorded as 0.065ha in the metric whilst the proposed plan, provided as an amendment, therefore after the metric is 20 x 40m ie 0.08 ha. When the metric is amended this would give a net gain of between 8 and 9%.

This is not regarded however as a significant issue at this stage, with two or three more rural trees enough to enable 10% to be achieved. Amendments can therefore be left to discharge of the statutory biodiversity gain condition, when the final version of the metric will be required as long as the developer accepts that these amendments are required.

As the habitat creation includes planting of rural trees a 30 year HMMP will be required. Given the units involved GMEU are satisfied that a standard condition for the HMMP is all that will be required.

In order to discharge the statutory biodiversity gain condition the applicant would need to provide:

- The biodiversity gain plan using the defra template,
- Final version of the metric with developers sections of start page completed and baseline area of modified grassland, area of menage and other habitat creation amended and
- The HMMP.

No mitigation for wildlife is required, the proposed trees and new stables providing potential habitat for nesting birds in the future.

Other issues

- No details of the proposed drainage or manure heaps have been provided and as such there is insufficient information to determine how surface water run-off or horse bi-products would be managed and treated.
- The red edge includes the length of Bradley Fold Road to the west of the field boundary up to the junction with Bury and Bolton Road. The applicant has signed Certificate A to declare they own the proposed site area which would be questioned in the event the application were to be supported. As the application is recommended for refusal, this has not been followed up by the LPA.

Recommendation: Refuse

Conditions and Reasons:

- 1 The proposed development would, by reason of its isolated location be a prominent and visually intrusive feature in the Green Belt and Landscape Character Area and would therefore be seriously detrimental to visual amenity and the surrounding area. The proposed development would therefore conflict with policies EN1/2, OL4/7, JP-G1 and JP-G9.
- 2 The proposed development would, by reason of its size and domestic style design, introduce an incongruous and discordant feature within the Green Belt and Landscape Character Area which would therefore be seriously detrimental to visual amenity and amenity in the surrounding area. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to policies EN1/2, OL4/7, JP-G1 and JP-G9.
- 3 The proposal would result in the intensification of use of a sub-standard field maintenance access in a hazardous position on the highway network in close proximity to the existing bend on Bradley Fold Road and at a point where visibility is restricted, which will lead to unacceptable conflicts between vehicles on the adopted highway to the detriment of the free flow of traffic and road safety. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to policies EN1/2, JP-C5 and JP-C8.
- 4 The proposal does not provide suitable accommodation for vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear, and therefore is detrimental to road safety and maintaining the free flow of traffic. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to policies EN1/2, JP-C5 and JP-C8.
- 5 The proposed servicing and car parking provision is inadequate and is likely to lead to vehicles parking and carrying out manoeuvres on the highway to the detriment of the free flow of traffic and road safety. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to policies EN1/2, JP-C5 and JP-C8.
- 6 The application contains insufficient information to ensure that surface water from the proposed development and hardstanding will not be discharged onto the adopted highway in a hazardous position on the highway network. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to policies EN1/2, JP-C5, JP-C8 and JP-S4.

<u>Case Officer</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Sign off Officer</u>	<u>Date</u>
JT 5/1/25		DM 08/01/26	