

**APPLICATION REPORT - FUL/350924/23**  
**Planning Committee 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Registration Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023  
**Ward:** Failsworth East

**Application Reference:** FUL/350924/23  
**Type of Application:** Full Application

**Proposal:** Pumping station  
**Location:** Bottom Field Farm, Medlock Road, Failsworth, Oldham, M35 9UA,

**Case Officer:** Graham Dickman  
**Applicant:** Sheridan Group Ltd  
**Agent:** Mr Stephen Harris

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application has been referred to Planning Committee for determination in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as it relates directly to a development which is also included for determination on this agenda, and which would involve a departure from the policies of the development plan.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the application should be approved subject to the conditions set out in this report.

**3. THE SITE**

- 3.1 This application relates to a parcel of land located immediately to the east of the buildings associated with Bottom Field Farm, a previously developed site located amidst open fields to the south of the settlement of Woodhouses.
- 3.2 Public Footpath 48 FAILS passes immediately adjacent to the proposed site.

**4. THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 This is a full application for a pumping station to serve a proposed development of 27 dwellings on the site immediate to the west.
- 4.2 The installation primarily relates to works which will be underground.
- 4.3 The exception to this will be a 1.8 metre high palisade security fence, hardstanding, and kiosk measuring 2.55 metres by 0.6 metres with a height of 1.65 metres.

4.4 A maintenance access track and turning area will also be provided. This will link to an existing access used for servicing a nearby high-pressure gas pipeline.

## 5. RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE

5.1 FUL/347760/21 – Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 27 no. dwellings. Pending determination.

## 6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 The adopted Development Plan is the Joint Development Plan Document (Local Plan) which forms part of the Local Development Framework for Oldham. The site is allocated in the Proposals Map associated with this document as Green Belt. As such, the following policies are considered relevant to the determination of this application:

- Policy 9 – Local Environment
- Policy 19 – Water and Flooding
- Policy 20 – Design
- Policy 21 – Protecting Natural Environmental Assets
- Policy 22 – Protecting Open Land

Highways	No objections
Environmental Health	No objections
United Utilities	No comments received

## 7. PUBLICITY AND THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

7.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, the application has been advertised as a major development by neighbour notification letters, display of a site notice, and publication of a press notice.

7.2 The application has been publicised by Press Notice, Site Notice, and individual notification.

7.3 2 representations have been received.

7.4 The representations state that the site is within the Green Belt outside the allocated development site (Section 8); it will cross sections of public footpath (Section 9); and there will be an impact on ecology (Section 10). It is questioned why it cannot be incorporated into the footprint of the main site (11.3).

## **ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL**

### **8. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 8.1 The proposed pumping station is required in connection with an application for a development of 27 dwellings on an adjacent previously developed site which also appears on the agenda for this Committee.
- 8.2 The site is located within the Green Belt. NPPF paragraph 137 states that 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”.
- 8.3 Paragraph 148 continues that ‘Very special circumstances’ to justify inappropriate development 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.
- 8.4 In this instance, the proposals are necessary to facilitate a nearby proposed residential development. That development is recommended for approval elsewhere on this agenda. Should that development be approved, any identified harm would be considered against the benefits of securing additional residential development on a previously developed site.
- 8.5 The proposed development will have some impact on openness, albeit this will be limited to the proposed kiosk and security fencing. The creation of hardstanding would not of itself impinge on openness.
- 8.6 Any impact from vehicle parking would be limited to short periods where servicing of the equipment is required to take place. This would include traffic movements associated with the development. Such impact would therefore be minimal.

### **9. IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC FOOTPATH**

- 9.1 As part of the related residential development application, it is proposed that the route of the existing public footpath is varied slightly, and associated improvements undertaken, including at the point where access is gained from Hartshead Crescent.
- 9.2 The diversion necessitated by the pumping station will not result in a route being created which was less attractive to use or caused difficulties for walkers.
- 9.3 Consequently, it is not considered that the development would adversely impact on use of the public right of way.

### **10. IMPACT ON ECOLOGY**

- 10.1 The proposed site is located on a field boundary approximately 20 metres from the existing developed site. As part of the related residential development application, it is

proposed to undertake additional biodiversity and landscape works around the development site. This includes the reinstatement and enhancement of hedgerows.

- 10.2 These works would ensure no adverse impact on ecological interests and assist in screening the site from the surrounding landscape.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The proposed development would not satisfy any of the types of 'appropriate development' as set out in paragraphs 149 and 150 of the NPPF. Very special circumstances need to be demonstrated to outweigh any resultant identified harm to the Green Belt.
- 11.2 The proposal will result in some, albeit limited, impact on openness and involve development intruding onto an otherwise undeveloped area. However, in weighing up the associated benefits from new residential development, it is considered that such very special circumstances do exist to outweigh the identified harm.
- 11.3 Whilst it has been suggested that the pumping station could have been incorporated into the main development site, this would have limited the site's development potential and reduced its ability to achieve the proposed building density required as part of the proposed site allocation and could potentially therefore impact on its viability.

## **12. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

- 1 The development must be begun not later than the expiry of THREE years beginning with the date of this permission.

REASON - To comply with the provisions of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development hereby approved shall be fully implemented in accordance with the Approved Details Schedule list on this decision notice.

REASON - For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and specifications.

- 3 No development shall take place until full details of soft landscape with an associated implementation plan, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All planting shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details in the first available planting season following the completion of the development, or such longer period which has previously been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The planting shall be maintained for a period of 5 years from the agreed date of planting. Any trees or plants which die, become diseased, or are removed during the maintenance period shall be replaced with specimens of an equivalent species and size.

REASON - Prior approval of such details is necessary as the site may contain features which require incorporation into the approved development, and to

ensure that the development site is landscaped to an acceptable standard having regard to Policies 9, 20 and 21 of the Oldham Local Plan, and saved Policy D1.5 of the Unitary Development Plan.

4. No works to trees or shrubs shall take place between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON - To ensure the protection of bird habitats, which are protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 having regard to Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan.

**SITE LOCATION PLAN (NOT TO SCALE)**

