

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Late information

AGENDA PAGES	DETAILS
Pages 11 - 23	Agenda Item 7 - FUL/355686/26 - Land off Failsworth Road, Failsworth. Additional Information Received: Following the publication of the Planning Committee report, a correspondence has been received from a member of the public on behalf of M35 Save Our Green Belt Group, querying the Planning Authority's conclusion that the application site is grey belt land as it has never been re-designated as such in any Local Plan, and pointing out that such conclusion indicates that the land no longer forms part of the Green Belt. Applicant's submission on the grey belt status of the land: The applicant submits that whilst they are of the opinion that the proposal would not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt, they also consider the site to be grey belt land and as such, the proposal would also not be inappropriate on this basis. In this regard, the applicant attempts to demonstrate that the proposal complies with provisions of Policy GB7 (Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt) of the NPPF. The policy sets out instances where development would not be inappropriate in the Green Belt and one of those instances is set out under exception (g), where all of the following must apply: i. 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; ii. There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed; iii. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework; and iv. In the case of major development involving the provision of housing, the development proposed complies with policy GB8. The applicant addressed each of the above in turn in their Planning Statement and concludes that the site is grey belt and as such the proposal would not be inappropriate. Planning Authority's response to the applicant's assessment of grey belt: For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined in the glossary to 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 any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in policy GB2'.

	As such, in relation to the query from the member of the public, it's important to understand that grey belt is not a separate designation that removes land from the Green Belt. The concept of grey belt is about recognising that not all land in the Green Belt fulfils the purposes of the Green Belt as strongly as others and so, if land over and above that available outside of the Green Belt is required for new development, it is grey belt that should be considered for development first. When preparing a new Local Plan, local planning authorities may conduct assessments of grey belt across their boroughs to identify the most suitable Green Belt to release for development, but outside the Plan-making process, local planning authorities must also assess individual sites against the criteria for grey belt as individual planning applications come forward in the Green Belt. However, even if a site is identified as grey belt, it must also meet the other criteria within GB7(g) to be considered appropriate development in the Green Belt. Considering grey belt policy, in regard to NPPF Policy GB7(g)(i), the Planning Statement accompanying the application considers the contribution the site makes towards the Green Belt purposes (a, b and d). The application is also supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal which has provided some view on whether the land could be grey belt. It is noted that figure 12 of the Planning Statement proposes a 'Green Belt Edge'. As an aside, it is important to note that this feature is not currently there and nor should the planning application redefine the existing Green Belt boundary. With regards to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d) in policy GB2, these are considered in turn below. <u>Purpose (a):</u> In relation to purpose (a) 'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas', the Planning Statement sets out that: <i>'The site is visually and physically contained by existing build development along its northern and western boundaries. Failsworth Road forms a strong and well-defined physical edge to the east, which would effectively prevent any further expansion of development. The proposed layout has been carefully designed to ensure that the southern portion of the site is retained as green infrastructure, incorporating landscaping and existing vegetation adjacent to the Brook. This approach establishes a clear and defensible boundary along the southern edge of the site and reinforces long-term containment. This is illustrated in Figure 12 of the Design and Access Statement. The southern part of the site is to be retained as existing (no intervention) aside from the removal of invasive species (Himalayan Balsam) and scrub to be replaced with tree planting where appropriate. Overall, the site occupies a sustainable location and is bounded on all sides by clear and readily recognisable physical features that would prevent unrestricted sprawl. In this context, the site represents a logical and contained location for development.'</i>
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	Annex E of NPPF (2026) sets out that when making judgements as to whether land is grey belt, authorities should consider the contribution that assessment areas make to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) and (d). In relation to purpose (a), the consideration is whether the site contributes to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. The guidance also clarifies that villages should not be considered large built-up areas. Taking whether the site contributes to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas first, the guidance sets out the features that are likely to be present and to help assess whether the site provides strong, moderate, weak or no contribution to the purpose. It is therefore necessary to consider which category applies to the area in which the application site falls. Annex E states that: <i>“assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development, and lack physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development. They are also likely to include all of the following features:</i> • <i>Be adjacent or near to a large built-up area; and</i> • <i>If developed, result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as an extended ‘finger’ of development into the Green Belt).”</i> Whereas, in relation to a moderate contribution, Annex E states that: <i>‘Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be adjacent or near to a large built-up area, but include one or more features that weaken the land’s contribution to purpose A, such as (but not limited to):</i> • <i>Having physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development;</i> • <i>Be partially enclosed by existing development, such that new development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development;</i> • <i>Contain existing development; and/or</i> <i>Being subject to other urbanising influences.’</i> In terms of the application, the site is directly connected to Failsworth to the north and west and Failsworth is a ‘large built-up area’. The area actually being developed for housing within the application is partially enclosed by that surrounding built-up area, and so would not result in an incongruous pattern of development. Therefore, the application can only be considered to have a moderate contribution to purpose (a) under the assessment criteria in Annex E <u>Purpose (b):</u> In relation to purpose (b) ‘to prevent neighbouring towns from merging’, the statement sets out that:
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	<i>'Annex E(4) of the Framework is clear that this purpose relates to the merging of towns not villages. Given the nearest settlement is Woodhouses which is a village the site does not form part of a gap between towns. The nearest town further south is Droylsden so the development of the site makes no contribution to purpose b). Notwithstanding, due to its contained nature and the clearly defined and defensible boundaries of the developable area incorporated within the scheme design, the proposal would not contribute to the perception of the merging of the settlement of Failsworth and Droylsden.'</i> Given Annex E is clear that this purpose only relates to the merging of towns, and the fact that Woodhouses is a village, it cannot be said that the application site makes a strong contribution to purpose (b). <u>Purpose (d):</u> For purpose (d), the consideration is whether the site contributes to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. There are no historic towns in the borough, and as such the development site makes no contribution to this purpose. Conclusion and amendment to recommendation: Exception (g)(i) within NPPF Policy GB7 paragraph 1 relates to development that 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. Given the reasons set out above, it cannot be said that the area being developed within the application would contribute strongly to purposes (a), (b) and (d), and therefore the area being developed must be considered grey belt. However, as set out in the Planning Committee report, the proposed development does not meet criteria GB7(g)(ii), related to the development meeting an unmet need for (in this case) housing. As a result, the proposal would not meet all relevant criteria to support the development under NPPF policy GB7(g). The officer recommendation therefore remains that the application be refused for reasons set out in the Committee Report.
Pages 55-82	Agenda Item 9 - FUL/355490/25 - Land at junction of Broadgate and Grimshaw Lane, Chadderton Additional Information Received: Since publication of the Committee Report, amended plans have been received to ensure that the submitted drawing package consistently reflects the amended building footprint assessed within the Committee Report. The

amendments reflect the previously agreed reduction in the scale and massing of the building and associated change to its footprint. There are no further changes to the scale, massing, design or appearance of the development from that assessed within the Committee Report.

In addition, prior to publication of the Committee Report, National Grid advised that it had no objection to the development subject to the proposed building achieving the required safety clearances from the existing overhead electricity infrastructure. A sectional drawing was subsequently submitted by the applicant to demonstrate these clearances.

Following publication of the Committee Report, National Grid identified inconsistencies within that sectional drawing and requested further clarification regarding the relationship between the proposed building and the overhead infrastructure. The applicant has subsequently submitted an updated sectional drawing to clarify this relationship and demonstrate that the required clearances identified by National Grid can be met. This has been considered by National Grid who have confirmed that they do not object to the scheme (response received 21.09.2026)

During the application, the applicant confirmed that they wanted to remove the basement floor from the scheme. This was accepted by the Local Planning Authority. This change had no impact on the external scale appearance or orientation of the building.

Representations Received

Since publication of the Committee Report, seven representations have been received. The concerns raised can be summarised as follows:

- Increased traffic and congestion, particularly around the Broadgate/Grimshaw Lane junction, and associated highway safety concerns.
- Insufficient on-site parking and the potential for overspill parking onto surrounding roads.
- Noise and disturbance associated with the restaurant and function/events use, particularly during evenings and weekends, including concerns regarding events and fireworks.
- Adverse impacts upon residential amenity and concerns regarding anti-social behaviour.
- Concerns regarding the scale, design and character of the development and the appropriateness of the proposed use in this location.
- Cumulative impacts arising from existing development, traffic and activity within the surrounding area.
- Potential impacts upon the Rochdale Canal and its ecological designations, including from lighting, drainage, pollution and increased activity.
- Concerns regarding surface-water drainage and pollution.
- Potential additional pressure upon existing community infrastructure.

Officer Response

	The matters raised within the representations have been considered. The majority of the issues raised are addressed within the Committee Report and do not alter the conclusions reached. With regard to traffic, highway safety and parking, the development has been assessed by the Highway Officer and Transport for Greater Manchester, with no objection raised. The proposal provides 89 on-site parking spaces, including six accessible spaces, together with 20 electric vehicle charging points and cycle parking. The level of parking provision is considered adequate to serve the proposed development. Having regard to the nature and scale of the development and the conclusions of the relevant highway consultees, the proposal is not considered to result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or a severe impact upon the operation of the highway network. In relation to noise, disturbance and residential amenity, the site is located within an established Business Employment Area and there are no residential properties in close proximity to the application site. Environmental Health has considered the proposal and has raised no objection on noise or residential amenity grounds and has not identified a requirement for specific noise mitigation conditions. The proposed restaurant and function/events use is therefore not considered to result in an unacceptable impact upon the amenity of surrounding residents. Concerns regarding anti-social behaviour are noted. The application site is presently vacant previously developed land, and the proposal would bring the site back into active use. There is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that the proposed restaurant and function/events use would result in unacceptable anti-social behaviour, and no consultee has raised an objection on this basis. This matter would not therefore provide a reasonable basis to refuse planning permission. The potential ecological impacts, including the relationship with the Rochdale Canal and its associated ecological designations, have been considered in detail during the Committee Report, including consultation with Natural England, and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. Subject to the mitigation and conditions identified within the Committee Report, no objection has been raised, and the development is not considered to result in an unacceptable impact upon the canal. Matters relating to surface-water drainage have been considered through the application. The Lead Local Flood Authority raises no objection, subject to the recommended conditions, which are considered sufficient to secure an appropriate drainage solution and manage potential impacts. The additional representations do not therefore raise any new material planning considerations which would alter the assessment or conclusions set out within the Committee Report. Amendments to recommendation: None.

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