



Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2020-2040

Hearing Statement - Matter 3 Green Belt (Policy PSD5)

NC77: Bent Farm, Newchapel

April 2025

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1. Introduction

The Statement

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Condate Ltd. in response to the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan Examination in Public, and in particular in respect of site NC77: Bent Farm, Newchapel which was allocated within the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan but discounted from the Regulation 19 version.
- 1.2 Condate is working with the landowner and a housebuilder to progress the development of the site for residential, care provision, and small-scale local retail uses.

NC77: Bent Farm, Newchapel – The Site and Surroundings

- 1.3 The site comprises 13.87 acres of predominantly scrubland, a small area of previously developed land associated with the now demolished Packmoor Working Men's Club, and a number of lock-up garages off Turnhurst Road. The boundaries of the site are formed by built form to the north and east (Newtown), hedgerows and trees to the west along Birchenwood Road, and a housing estate dating from the late 1990s/early 2000s to the south.
- 1.4 The site is located in a predominantly residential area, but immediately opposite the site is a local medical centre, public house, and a pharmacy. The Packmoor Ormiston Academy (primary level) is within a five-minute walk of the site, as is the Packmoor Community Hall.
- 1.5 Newtown and Turnhurst Road forms part of one of the area's main bus routes, and there is a bus stop directly opposite the site.
- 1.6 It is important to note that the City of Stoke-on-Trent/Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme boundary passes through the site – 54% (7.49 acres) is within Newcastle-under-Lyme, 46% (6.38 acres) is within Stoke-on-Trent – and it is located within the Stoke-on-Trent Green Belt.

The Proposed Development

- 1.7 Our indicative development proposal is as follows:

Newcastle-under-Lyme Portion

- 57 homes – 40 open market sale, 17 affordable (Use Class C3);
- 70 unit care facility (Use Class C2);
- 3 retirement bungalows (Use Class C3); and
- Local Centre and associated car parking and service area (Use Classes Ea and F.2a).

Stoke-on-Trent Portion

- 35 homes – 24 open market sale, 11 affordable (Use Class C3); and
- 9 retirement bungalows (Use Class C3).

- 1.8 It is intended that the development proposal (the Newcastle-under-Lyme portion) will accord with Policy HOU2: Housing Mix, Density and Standards of the draft Local Plan. As such the mix for the 57 C3 dwellings will be as follows:
- 2-bed – 23 (40%);
 - 3-bed – 26 (45%); and
 - 4-bed – 8 (15%).
- 1.9 The mix for the 17 affordable units, care facility and retirement bungalows will be agreed in consultation with the Council’s strategic housing team and the selected Registered Provider.
- 1.10 In terms of the site’s ability to be progressed, it is:
- **Available:** the site is being taken forward via a promotion agreement between the landowner and Condate and therefore is available;
 - **Developable:** the site will be developable subject to policy change and successful allocation – this representation demonstrates the justification and begins the building of an evidence base; and
 - **Deliverable:** as referred to above, the site is being progressed via a promotion agreement between the landowner and Condate, who will be working with a housebuilder around the delivery of the scheme. In addition, a locally operating Registered Provider will be engaged to secure the provision and management of affordable and retirement elements, while the landowner will be responsible for the delivery and management of the local centre.
- 1.11 It is anticipated that the scheme could be progressed and completed over a four year period from granting of a planning permission. Assuming that the site is subsequently allocated in the Plan, then a policy compliant planning application could be submitted in the first half of 2026. If a permission is granted late 2026, this would see the completion of the development by late 2030/early 2031.

2. Hearing Matters

Matter 3 Green Belt (Policy PSD5)

Issue 3 Whether the approach to the alteration of the Green Belt and development within it is justified and consistent with national policy

Principle of Green Belt Release

2.1 We consider that exceptional circumstances do exist to alter the Green Belt in the Borough in order to:

- Achieve sustainable patterns of development; and
- Achieve an appropriate, deliverable housing land supply, and a balanced portfolio of allocations.

Green Belt Review

2.2 We consider that the Council's Green Belt Assessment is flawed in that:

- It is based on an outdated methodology, which in itself had issues; and
- It is not consistent with national policy (NPPF 2024) and the introduction of the Grey Belt concept.

2.3 Concerns regarding the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council Green Belt Assessment produced by Arup in 2017 – and subject to later revisions – have been raised in previous representations, and those concerns still remain.

2.4 But more fundamentally, Green Belt policy has changed from a national perspective, and while a brownfield first policy remains, there will now be a requirement for local planning authorities to identify Grey Belt – essentially previously developed land located in the Green Belt – and lower quality Green Belt land that could be released should the need be there.

2.5 However, although the Council has already acknowledged the need to release land from the Green Belt to meet the plan's development requirements, their new mandatory target will inevitably mean the need to release further land for development. In the first instance this should at least mean the reinstatement of sites that were allocated in the Regulation 18 draft; this is considered in more detail below.

2.6 In this context, it is considered that the 2017 Green Belt Assessment is out-of-date and will need to be revisited in order to focus on the identification grey belt and lower quality Green Belt land.

2.7 Policy PSD5 sets out how and where the Green Belt boundary will be amended in the Plan. However, the policy will need to be modified in the context of required modifications to Policies PSD1 and PSD3, and changes to the approach to Green Belt release at a national level through the NPPF 2024, as detailed above.

2.8 It should also be noted that the Council has already demonstrated exceptional circumstances to justify Green Belt release, as evidenced by proposed site allocations.

Required Modifications

PSD5: Green Belt

2.9 As with Policy PSD3, Policy PSD5 will be complex to address as it will need to respond to other policy modifications – specifically Policies PSD1 and PSD3 – the new mandatory housing target, and most pertinently, NPPF 2024. This will inevitably mean further amendments to the Green Belt boundary, and while it is perhaps not appropriate to discuss specific sites, the starting point should be:

- Reinstatement of sites that were allocated in the Regulation 18 draft but removed ahead of the publication of the Regulation 19 draft; and
- A review of the 2017 Green Belt Assessment in order to identify grey belt sites, and lower quality Green Belt sites, with a particular focus on the north of the Borough given the unbalanced distribution of housing land supply.

2.10 The above will then inform the required modifications to Policy PSD5, which will also inform any new site allocations.

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