



Response to Consultation Comments by Planning Policy

**APPLICATION 2026/0643 - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ONE
DWELLING (PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE)**

LAND ADJACENT FINKLE STREET LANE, WORTLEY, SHEFFIELD

PREPARED BY: TOM SHIELS MRTPI

Response to Planning Policy Consultation

We have reviewed the Planning Policy consultation response dated 27 August 2026. It is welcomed that there is now agreement between the applicant and the LPA that the application site constitutes grey belt. The consultation response also accepts that the proposal satisfies criterion (i) of Framework Policy GB7(g), and acknowledges the Council's current inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

The remaining objection, therefore, turns principally upon criterion (iii) of Policy GB7(g), namely whether the development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to Policy TR3. We respectfully disagree with the conclusions reached on this matter.

Public transport accessibility

Of particular concern is the statement that:

“There is no public transport provision in the vicinity of the application site.”

This is factually incorrect. Bus stops are located on Finkle Street Lane, approximately 80 metres from the application site, in both directions. Those stops provide public transport connections towards Deepcar and Barnsley town centre.

This is a material consideration which fundamentally affects the sustainability assessment. The Policy response proceeds from the premise that future occupiers would be dependent upon the private motor car because of a supposed absence of convenient pedestrian or public transport access. Indeed, that assumption forms the principal basis for concluding that the site is not sustainably located.

Once the actual public transport provision is taken into account, that conclusion cannot reasonably be maintained. A dwelling approximately 80 metres from existing bus stops cannot properly be characterised as having “no public transport provision in the vicinity”.

Moreover, the proposal is for a single dwelling, rather than development of a scale that would generate a significant number of journeys or necessitate substantial new transport infrastructure. The accessibility of the site should therefore be considered proportionately in the context of the very limited scale of development proposed.

Pedestrian and cycling accessibility

The site is also situated within an existing hamlet and is surrounded by established residential development. The policy response itself acknowledges that the site is not within an open rural setting but lies within the hamlet off Finkle Street Lane.

There are established pedestrian connections from the site, including a traffic-free public footpath towards Wortley. The consultation response identifies Wortley as approximately 830 metres away using that public footpath, and also acknowledges the presence of footways along the alternative highway route. These routes provide genuine opportunities for journeys to be undertaken other than by private car, alongside the site's public transport provision and opportunities for cycling.

The fact that sections of these routes are not street-lit does not render them unavailable or mean that future residents would necessarily be unwilling to use them. Lack of street lighting is a relevant qualitative consideration, but it should not be treated as determinative of whether a location is sustainable, particularly in a rural or semi-rural context where the same characteristics apply to many established settlements.

Relevant appeal decisions

This position is reinforced by the accompanying appeal decisions. Those decisions demonstrate that Inspectors have found proposals for individual dwellings acceptable in

locations exhibiting comparable, and in some respects materially poorer, accessibility characteristics.

Of particular relevance is the submitted Sheffield appeal decision, where the dwelling was considerably further from the nearest bus stop and pedestrian routes were also unlit. Notwithstanding those circumstances, the Inspector concluded that the location was sufficiently sustainable.

The approach taken in those decisions demonstrates the importance of assessing accessibility realistically and proportionately, rather than proceeding on the basis that some reliance upon private vehicles necessarily renders a site unsustainable. That is particularly pertinent to proposals for individual dwellings in rural and semi-rural locations.

Previous decision on the site

It is also material that sustainability was not identified as a reason for refusal of the 2017 outline residential application (2017/0845). The Policy response itself identifies that application as part of the relevant planning history.

Whilst each application must be determined against the development plan and national policy applicable at the time, consistency in decision-making remains an important consideration. If the Council now considers the site's accessibility to represent a fundamental objection to residential development, notwithstanding the existing pedestrian connections and public transport provision, there would need to be a clear and cogent explanation for that departure from the position previously taken.

Conclusion

There is substantial common ground within the Policy response. The Council accepts that the site is grey belt, that it does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) and (d), that any harm through countryside encroachment would be limited, and that the proposal satisfies criterion (i) of Policy GB7(g).

The outstanding objection rests upon the site's alleged lack of locational sustainability. However, a central factual premise underlying that conclusion, i.e. that there is “no public transport provision in the vicinity, is demonstrably incorrect. Bus stops are available approximately 80 metres from the site, in addition to existing pedestrian and cycling opportunities.

When those circumstances are properly taken into account, together with the very limited scale of the proposal and the evidence provided by the submitted appeal decisions, there is no sound basis for concluding that future occupiers would necessarily be dependent upon the private car or that the proposal fails Policy TR3.

Accordingly, the sustainability objection should be reconsidered and, given the acknowledged grey belt status of the land and the other conclusions already reached by planning policy, the proposal should be regarded as an appropriate form of Green Belt development under Policy GB7(g), rather than inappropriate development requiring very special circumstances.