



Chartered Town Planners & Architectural Technicians

GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

Installation of 6 no Glamping Pods and ancillary facilities

Property Address: 13 Hollingworth Fold, Syke Road,
Littleborough, OL15 0AJ.

August 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Green Belt Assessment is submitted on behalf of the Rochdale Council in respect of a planning application for the installation of 6 no Glamping Pods, tent area, communal hut, bike store and parking at 13 Hollingworth Fold, Style Road, Littleborough, OL15 0AJ. This Assessment should be read in conjunction with other drawings and documents accompanying the planning application.

1.2. This Assessment comprises:

- A description of the application property and surrounding area;
- A description of the proposed development; and
- How the application is considered to be exception to development in the Green Belt, in conformity with Paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF.

2.0 APPLICATION PROPERTY AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The proposed site for the glamping pods lies at the former Hollingworth Lake Backpackers Campsite. The Cottage and proposed site form part of the Hollingworth Lake Country Park, which lies on the edge of Smithybridge, a suburb of Littleborough. The site lies off Syke Road along the eastern shore of Hollingworth Lake. The site currently comprises a building, toilet block and grassed parking area.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1. The application seeks permission for 6 no glamping pods and deck, a communal hut, a bell tent with deck and a bike store with a green roof. The glamping pods will be accessed via a permeable footpath to reduce surface water runoff. The existing car parking area will have 8 no designated parking bays, one of which will be for an EV charging point. There will be also a dedicated tent area which will allow for 2 electrical pitches.

3.2. The site will also include improved landscaping features, including new hedgerows and tree planting, as well as increased shrubbery on site.

4.0 GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

4.1. The site is located in the Rochdale Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (referred to in this assessment as the NPPF) states that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF further advises that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.

4.2. Chapter 13 of the NPPF makes reference to protecting Green Belt land. Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that:

“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. 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”.

4.3. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- “a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land”.*

4.4. 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”.

4.5. Paragraph 153 also states that when considering any planning application in the Green Belt, that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, namely:

“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ 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”.

4.6. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out seven exceptions to inappropriate development mentioned in Paragraph 153. One exception at paragraph 154b) is for:

“The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) 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”.

4.7. The proposed glamping pods and its associated facilities are considered to be “outdoor recreation”, in accordance with Paragraph 154b set out above and are therefore considered to be an exception to inappropriate development.

4.8. This exception states that *“such facilities are not inappropriate only where they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”*. The site is bounded by areas of woodland to the north, west and east, whilst to the south the site is bounded by residential properties and a treeline. The site is therefore not considered to be is not an ‘open’ area of the Green Belt. The proposed glamping pods and other structures and features would be below the height of the trees and treeline. It is therefore considered that the ‘openness’ of the Green Belt would be preserved.

4.9. The land currently forms part of the Hollingworth Lake Country Park, which is used primarily for outdoor recreational purposes. The proposed glamping pods would also be used, and is defined as, an outdoor recreational space, in the same manner in which the former camping site was used. Therefore the proposed use of the land would continue to be used for recreational purposes and would not conflict with the current purpose of the land, as set out in Paragraph 154b of the NPPF.

4.10. No trees are proposed to be removed as a part of the development proposal. Additional trees are also proposed on site, as well as new hedgerows and shrubbery planted on site. The site will therefore be additionally screened by the planting of the trees and other landscaping features, including a green roof on the bike shed. The provision of a green roof on the bike shed further reduces and minimise any potential impacts on the openness on the Green Belt. Additional tree planting is also proposed behind the bike store which will be taller than the roof of the proposed bike shed. All of these additional landscaping features will enhance the site from a Green Belt perspective.

4.11. It is therefore considered that the openness of the Green Belt would not be changed in this location and the use of the land would not conflict with the current purpose of the land, as well as not lead to any harm to the Green Belt. It is considered that the additional landscaping features proposed will enhance the overall landscape in this area and be of a greater benefit to the Green Belt when compared to the existing landscape of the site.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 It is considered that the that the proposal would not represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The development is classed as an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt under Paragraph 154 (b) of the NPPF and would not harm the openness of the Green Belt.