



Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0278
Location: Moorside Farm, Nick Road Lane, Wardle, Rochdale, OL12 9PW
Proposal: Erection of an Agricultural building
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Rosalind Gralton

SITE

The application site relates to Moorside Farm, accessed off Nick Road Lane.

The application specifically relates to a parcel of land adjacent to the farmhouse. The site is remote from the adopted highway.

The site is located within the Green Belt.

PROPOSALS

Planning permission is sought for the erection of an agricultural storage building. No works to landscaping are proposed, the application seeks permission for the agricultural building only.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

25/00996/AGR - Prior approval for the erection of an agricultural storage building - Refuse 2025-10-27 - Appeal Dismissed.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone (PfE):

JP-S1 - Sustainable Development

JP-S4 - Flood Risk and the Water Environment

JP-G1 - Landscape Character

JP-G7 - Trees and Woodland

JP-G8 - A net enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity

JP-G9 - The Green Belt

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

DM1 General Development requirements

E6 Supporting and Diversifying the Rural Economy

SO2 Secure Healthy Communities

SO3 To improve design, image and quality of place

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

G4 Green Belt

G6 Green Infrastructure

G7 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

G8 Managing water resources and flood risk

G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

PUBLICITY

Letters were sent to neighbouring properties on 17/04/2026.

Principle of development

The application site is located within the Green Belt as allocated under the revised Green Belt Boundaries which form part of Places for Everyone. The National Planning Policy Framework, 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 permanence'.

The NPPF lists the five purposes of the Green Belt:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Paragraph 154 of the Framework regards development in the Green Belt as inappropriate unless it meets one of the exceptions stipulated.

A prior approval application was refused for the same site in 2025, due to insufficient information provided in order to determine the site was agricultural.

As part of this current assessment for a planning application, it is accepted the use of the building will be agricultural. It therefore comprises an exemption to inappropriate development under Paragraph 154 (a). As such, impact of the building on openness does not need to be assessed.

Character and Appearance - Design and Landscape

The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. This is largely reflected within Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy, which requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design. The agricultural building is constructed in concrete panels, Yorkshire timber boarding and a corrugated roof, which is considered in keeping with that of agricultural buildings in the locality. While the building has a canopy on one side, it is not considered this would be unacceptable from a design perspective.

Policy P2 of the Core Strategy recognises the importance of protecting the Borough's unique character. New development will be expected to protect and enhance the countryside and landscape of the borough by:

- Successfully integrating with its key natural features;
- Protect and open up important views of hills and valleys
- Protecting, enhancing and utilising cultural landscapes.

Policy JP-G1 also establishes that the interface of new development with the surrounding countryside/landscape is of particular importance. These transitional areas require well-considered and sensitive treatment. In particular, opportunities to improve the intactness and condition of the landscape should be taken. Policy JP-G5 sets out the importance of uplands. The uplands contain importance component

parts of the green infrastructure network and amongst other requirements, new development should integrate into the landscape by utilising existing tree/woodland cover and dips in the landform. The GMLAS report states the uplands are characterised by a remote, highly rural landscape, with long panoramic views, and associated with a sense of openness, remoteness and isolation.

At the national level the NPPF (paragraph 187) requires planning decisions to enhance the natural and local environment, by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, and by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The proposed development will introduce an agricultural building, clustered adjacent to the existing farmhouse. A dry-stone wall marks the boundary of the site. The site is clearly rural in character emphasised by its remote location and varying topography. No formal hardstanding is proposed, which is welcomed to maintain the natural rural character of the area. The existing informal landscaping would be sufficient to mitigate any negative impacts of the proposed building, however, the design, proposed materials are considered acceptable.

The proposed development therefore complies with policies JP-P1, JP-G1 and JP-G5 of the PfE Joint Development Plan, policies DM1 and P1, P2 and P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and The Framework.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment through minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. PfE Policy JP-G8 aims for a net enhancement of biodiversity through increasing the quality of existing habitats and its management. CS Policy G7 also requires developments to protect existing biodiversity including trees and vegetation, and developments should result in a net gain. The following headings sets out the assessment of the impact on relevant species and biodiversity net gain.

The site is an area of grassland. The applicant has submitted a BNG Metric and Statement. The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit have been consulted on the application and following the amendment of the location plan, no issues are raised.

A condition securing biodiversity enhancement is attached to the decision notice.

As such, the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain provisions are deemed applicable to the proposals. Given that the application is supported by no information relating to the biodiversity value of the site, the impact of the development cannot be determined and therefore fails to comply with the relevant policy and statutory requirements. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Paragraph 187 of the NPPF and Policy JP-G8 of the PfE.

Neighbour Amenity

Policy DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy requires all new developments to demonstrate that they are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its

impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users.

The agricultural building proposed, or use of the site for an agricultural activity is not out of keeping or unexpected in the rural area. The adjacent farmhouse is associated with the site, and while this is not secured via condition, on the balance of probability, it is unlikely this property will ever not be associated with the farming use. It is therefore not considered the proposal would be unacceptable with regard to noise or odours.

Highways

Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to improve accessibility by locating development where good access to public transport is available or can be provided and, in all circumstances, prioritises the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area. Policy DM1 also states that all development proposals should provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location. Paragraph 116 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The Council's Highways Officer was not consulted on the application; however the proposal is isolated from the adopted highway network and it is not considered any changes or new road safety issues or concerns are raised as a result of the proposal. The proposal would not alter existing parking arrangements for the adjacent farmhouse.

As such, the proposal is in compliance with policy T2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and relevant highways paragraphs within the NPPF.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

The proposed development constitutes an exemption to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. An assessment of the application shows the proposal would not have an unacceptable visual impact nor unacceptable impact on residential amenity and is in conclusion compliant with the relevant policies contained within the Core Strategy, PfE and the NPPF.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (3)

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason – To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and documents hereby approved: -

- Location Plan - received 03/06/2026
- Proposed Floor Plan & Elevations

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Unitary Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The materials used in the construction of the exterior of the development hereby permitted shall match those described within the application form and as stated within the approved plans, pursuant to condition 2.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 4 The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.