

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

HPK/2025/0440
Valid 05/05/2026

HULL END FARM BEET
LANE
NEW SMITHY
CHINLEY

RETROSPECTIVE
APPLICATION FOR CHANGE
OF USE OF APPROXIMATELY
899 SQUARE METRES OF
ADJACENT AGRICULTURAL
LAND TO THE EAST TO THE
DOMESTIC GARDEN WITH
TEMPORARY CARAVAN
SITED IN THE GARDEN FOR
ADDITIONAL FAMILY LIVING.
AND CHANGE OF USE OF
EXISTING GARDEN; AS AN
AREA OF 438 SQUARE
METRES APPROXIMATELY OF
GARDEN WITHIN THE
EXISTING BOUNDARY OF
HULL END FARM TO
AGRICULTURAL LAND TO
THE SOUTH OF THE
FARMHOUSE

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development.
- Character & Design.
- Residential amenity.
- Historic environment.
- Highway safety.
- Ecology / Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Agricultural Land Classification.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is located at Hull End Farm, Chinley, in an area designated as Countryside and Green Belt.

Part of the application site to the north falls within the administrative boundary of the Peak District National Park (PDNP) Authority. The existing property of Hull End Farm falls within the PDNP boundary. This application is therefore a cross-boundary

application with the PDNP (PDNP Ref: NP/HPK/1125/1128), with the majority of the application site being within the administrative boundary of High Peak Borough Council.

Between the host dwelling and the caravan is a detached outbuilding. It is unclear what purpose this building serves.

Land levels across the site vary, although there is a general slope towards the south and south-west. This causes the site to appear in an elevated position within the landscape.

Two Public Rights of Way, Footpath No's.53 and 54, cross the application site.

PROPOSAL

Works have already been undertaken on site, so this application is made in retrospect. The submitted application form states that works commenced on 01/07/2025, but states the works have not yet been completed. It is unclear to the Council, based on the nature of the proposal, how the change of use has not already been completed, at least in part.

The applicants own Planning Statement makes reference to a *“recent change of previous garden into agricultural land for the purpose of sheep grazing within the bounds of the residence”*. The application has been determined on its merits.

Several elements form part of the application, which are split down as follows:

- a) Change of use of agricultural land to the west of the host property to domestic garden.
 - i. The submitted application incorrectly makes reference to this area being located to the east. This area of land has been identified as measuring approximately 899sqm.
- b) The siting of a caravan in the area of land referred to above at point (a), stated to be used for additional family living accommodation.
- c) Change of use of existing garden to the south of the host property to agricultural land. This area of land has been identified as measuring approximately 438sqm.

Based on a review of the submitted details and on-site observations it is unclear whether the area of land referred to as 'existing garden' was ever historically part of the residential curtilage of the host property.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES High Peak Borough Council Local Plan (2016):

Policy S 1 Sustainable Development Principles.

Policy S 1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development.

Policy S 2 Settlement Hierarchy.

Policy S 6 Central Sub-area Strategy.

Policy EQ 2 Landscape Character.

Policy EQ 3 Rural Development.

Policy EQ 4 Green Belt Development.

Policy EQ 5 Biodiversity.

Policy EQ 6 Design and Place Making.

Policy EQ 7 Built and Historic Environment.

Policy EQ 9 Trees, woodland and hedgerows.

Policy E 7 Chalet Accommodation, Caravan and Camp Site Developments.

Policy CF 6 Accessibility and Transport.

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024):

Part 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development.

Part 4 – Decision-making.

Part 12 – Achieving Well Designed Places.

Part 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land.

Part 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change.

Part 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment.

Part 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

High Peak Design Guide (2018).

Residential Design (2005).

Landscape Character (2006).

Biodiversity and geological conservation: circular 06/2005.

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

HPK/0002/6630 - Conversion Of Redundant Barn Into Farm Dwellinghouse -
Approved 24/06/1988.

HPK/0002/7085 - Conversion Of Barn To Dwelling - Approved 19/10/1988.

HPK/0002/7278 - Temporary Consent For One Year For A Caravan - Approved 07/12/1988.

HPK/0002/8920 - Renewal Of Temporary Consent For Caravan - Approved 23/01/1990.

HPK/0002/9913 - New Access From Hayfield Road - Approved 16/01/1991.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 18/06/2026.

Neighbour consultation period ends: 28/05/2026.

Press Advert: 11/06/2026.

Public Comments

1 written representation has been received from a resident, supporting the proposal.

A summary of the points raised in the submitted comment(s) is as follows:

- The proposal upholds the aesthetic and community feel of the surrounding area as:
 - It is modest in intent.
 - Location minimises visual impact.
 - Ample views afforded to Beet Lane.
 - Access drive to Hull End Farm would not require alterations.

A summary of the other points raised in the submitted comment(s) is as follows:

Chinley Buxworth & Brownside Parish Council:

- No objections to the proposed change of use of land.
- Object to the siting of the caravan due to its appearance, visual prominence in the landscape and intrusion into the Green Belt.
- The caravan could be sited elsewhere on the plot to appear slightly less prominent and intrusive.
- Suggest a date for the caravans removal should its siting be found acceptable.

Derbyshire County Council Highways:

- No objection - The proposed change of use will not have an unacceptable impact on the public highway or highway safety.
- There is a Public Right of Way through the site. An informative note to the applicant is advised.

Peak District National Park Authority:

- The site is prominent from the Public Right of Way which passes through it, and visible from Hayfield Lane further west.
- The original stone building at Hull End Farm is considered to be of vernacular character reflective of traditional (and possibly historic) modern agricultural buildings in the National Park. The to the west contributes to the agricultural setting of that building.
- The development proposed west of the modern agricultural building would change the use and alter the character of open agricultural land which contributes to the local landscape character type and to a degree to the setting of Hull End Farm, in a location which forms part of the immediate visual setting of the National Park.
- The domestication of the landscape as a result of residential garden, associated paraphernalia, and the caravan (which is substantial in scale and incongruous within its setting) and illumination at night, would harm the rural agricultural character, beauty and setting of the National Park and its valued characteristics which include landscape and heritage.
- From Hayfield Lane, the residential use would appear as an isolated encroachment into the agricultural landscape.
- The proposed tree and hedgerow planting would not negate the encroachment into the countryside nor the visual impact entirely, particularly during winter, and would not mitigate the visual impact when walking through the site via the Public Right of Way.
- Object to the application due to the impact of the development on the landscape and built heritage of the National Park, contrary to the first statutory purpose of the Park.
- Suggest conditions in the event that the scheme is approved, however recognise that the conditions would not overcome the overall harm identified.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust:

- There are no designated sites or protected species records within or adjacent to the site boundary.
- The habitat within the southern parcel, which is proposed for conversion to agricultural land, is described as garden but appears as a field on aerial mapping. Photographs should be provided to demonstrate the habitats present.
- The application appears part-retrospective. It is my understanding that the retrospective element is exempt from mandatory 10% BNG, however the non-retrospective element should deliver at least 10% gains.
- There are multiple issues with the submitted metric which need to be addressed, such as:

- Currently, the largest area of land which has already been converted to garden has been inputted into the metric as other neutral grassland.
- The metric should be used to calculate the losses /gains that will result from converting the smaller area of existing garden to agricultural land, as this is not retrospective.
- The type of development should be change of use, not residential as no dwellings are proposed.
- Section 21 has not been completed.
- Section 24 states that the site walkover is only valid until 12/02/26.
- There is no evidence to demonstrate that the person who completed the metric is a competent person.
- Photographs of all habitats reflected in the metric should be provided.
- The metric does not seem to have been used correctly and needs significant amendments.
- Pre- and post-developments plans should be submitted with the metric, clearly demonstrating the baseline habitats and proposed habitats within the red line boundary.

No other written representations received as part of the consultation process.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development:

Local Policy Position:

HPBC Local Plan Policy S 1 seeks to ensure the delivery of sustainable development, by ensuring, amongst other things, the effective use of land, protecting and enhancing the boroughs natural and historic environments, and securing high quality design and amenity standards. Policy S 1 seeks to locate new development in line with the boroughs Settlement Hierarchy.

HPBC Local Plan Policy S 2 sets out the settlement hierarchy for the borough. The application site falls outside of any identified settlement boundary, in an area allocated as countryside. In these areas development will be strictly limited to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, in accordance with policy EQ3.

Policy EQ 3 seeks to ensure that new development is strictly controlled in order to protect the landscape's intrinsic character and distinctiveness, including the character, appearance and integrity of the historic and cultural environment and the setting of the Peak District National Park. This will be achieved by, amongst other things:

1. Supporting proposals for agriculture and related development which help sustain existing agricultural enterprises, that maintain the landscape quality and character of the countryside.

2. Ensuring that all development is of a high quality design and protects or enhances landscape character and the setting of the Peak District National Park.

The submitted planning statement identifies the agricultural land as constituting a 'small holding', comprising sheep and chickens. Little detail has been submitted which indicates the extent of any agricultural activities taking place at the site beyond sheep grazing, and no details have been submitted as to how the development is necessary to support any agricultural enterprises.

An assessment of the proposals impact upon landscape quality and character, including upon the setting of the Peak District National Park, will be undertaken later in the report.

HPBC Policy EQ 4 states that within the Green Belt, planning permission will not be granted for development unless it is in accordance with national planning policy.

The Central Sub-area Strategy (Policy S 6) seeks to promote the sustainable growth of the central sub-area boundary, including meeting the housing needs of the local community, by, amongst other things, supporting the development of new housing on sustainable sites within the built up area boundary, whilst protecting and enhancing the historic environment.

National Policy Position:

Green Belt

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF (December 2024) identifies 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 their permanence.

Paragraph 143 sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt as being:

- 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.

Paragraph 153 identifies that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances, and "substantial weight" should be 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.

Paragraph 154 goes on to identify various forms of development which are deemed to be 'appropriate' uses within the Green Belt, which includes:

- a) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds).

Whilst this proposal does, in part, relate to a material change of use of land, the proposed residential use is considered not to meet the above criteria, so would represent an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, contrary to policy. This is the same scenario for the siting of the caravan, which is also considered to be contrary to Green Belt policy and would not meet any of the identified exception criteria.

‘Openness’ is generally regarded as keeping land permanently open and free from development. The siting of the caravan has introduced development within the Green Belt. The change of use of land for residential purposes is also likely to cause harm to openness by virtue of residential paraphernalia being placed on the land.

Conclusion:

Taking all these factors into account, it is considered that the principle of development at the site is unacceptable in policy terms.

A determination will be reached later in the report as to whether any adverse impacts of approving the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Character & Design:

Policy:

HPBC Policy EQ 2 seeks to protect, enhance and restore the landscape character of the Plan Area for its own intrinsic beauty and for its benefit to the economic, environmental and social well-being of the Plan Area. It seeks to achieve this by, amongst other things,

- a) Requiring that development proposals are informed by, and are sympathetic to the distinctive landscape character areas as identified in the Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document and also take into account other evidence of historic landscape characterisation, landscape sensitivity, landscape impact and the setting of the Peak District National Park and where appropriate incorporate landscape mitigation measures.
- b) Requiring that development proposals protect and/or enhance the character, appearance and local distinctiveness of the landscape and landscape setting of the Peak District National Park.
- c) Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement as identified in the Landscape Impact Assessment.

This approach is reinforced by Policy EQ 6 in relation to design and place making, requiring development to respond positively to its environment and the challenges of climate change, whilst also ensuring a contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place. The development proposal should therefore seek to

- a) Respect the character, identity and context of the landscape.
- b) Be of high quality design to protect, enhance and/or restore landscape character, particularly in relation to the setting and character of the Peak District National Park.
- c) Contribute to the areas character by virtue of its scale, layout, appearance, and materials, including the relationship with adjacent buildings and landscape features.
- d) Achieve a satisfactory relationship with adjacent development, and does not cause unacceptable effects or adversely impact local character and amenity.

Policy E 7 is in relation to Chalet Accommodation, Caravan and Camp Site Developments. Although the siting of the caravan would not be classified as a chalet or a caravan or camp site, the general principle of the policy is still considered to be of relevance to the siting of the caravan and echoes the policy requirements of EQ 2 and EQ 6 in relation to ensuring:

- a) The development would not have a prominent and adverse impact on the character and appearance of the immediate or wider landscape.
- b) Any visual impact would be well screened by existing landscape features.
- c) The visibility of structures when viewed from areas outside the site to which the public has access.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF (December 2024) identifies that planning decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place.

This approach is reinforced by Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (December 2024), which requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Paragraph 189 also identifies that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. Development within the setting of a National Park should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Landscape Character:

The application site lies within the Settled Valley Pastures landscape character area. This landscape consists of a pastoral landscape with permanent improved pasture.

The Council's adopted 'Landscape Character' SPD (2006) identifies various key landscape characteristics of this area, which include:

- a) Settled landscape of small nucleated settlements and scattered stone farmsteads with stone slate roofs.
- b) Small, irregular fields enclosed by mixed species hedgerows and occasional dry stone walls.

The 'Landscape Character' SPD also identifies that new development must contribute to and not erode the landscape character and sense of place. The most appropriate way to achieve this is to ensure that buildings respond to the landscape character. In areas within this landscape type where the landscape character has been eroded by previous activity any design approach should aim to improve and/or restore the landscape character.

It is important these characteristics are carefully considered during the assessment of the application to help maintain the strong local character and identity of this part of the High Peak, and the setting of the PDNP.

Assessment:

Land levels across the site vary, although there is a general slope towards the south and south-west. This causes the site to appear in an elevated position within the landscape. Both areas of the application site are visible from along the public rights of way which cross the site, but also from several other public vantage points, especially from Beet Lane and Hayfield Road (to the south and south-west).



Figure 1 – View of the site from Beet Lane, looking north, with the Peak District National Park behind.



Figure 2 – View of the site from Hayfield Road, looking north-east, with the Peak District National Park behind.

The areas of land subject to the change of use, and the siting of the caravan, are readily visible within the wider landscape. Aside from minimal scattered stone farmsteads, which is an identified key landscape characteristics of this area, the site is surrounded by undeveloped open fields, with the site and landscape setting having a traditional open, rural character and appearance, with open and long distance views due to the area's topography.

The siting of the caravan, with particular regard to its size, siting and appearance is considered to introduce an intrusive and visually discordant feature within the established rural landscape. In relation to the change of use of land, residential paraphernalia was observed on site, which included an outdoor table, chairs and a washing line. This also introduces uncharacteristic residential features within the open Countryside and Green Belt. Whether the caravan or the change of use of land are taken separately or cumulatively, the impact of the development is considered to have a harmful urbanising impact upon the rural character of the countryside and Green Belt, in particular their openness, in this location.

The application proposes the installation of new landscaping in the form of new tree and hedgerow planting. Based on the submitted layout plan, the vast majority of the landscaping is proposed to the north and north-west of the caravan with only a few trees proposed along the south side of the proposed garden land and caravan. This would not therefore provide any meaningful screening to the development when viewed from the east, south or west, and would not mitigate against the visual landscape harm, including upon the setting of the PDNP.

The 'Landscape Character' SPD sets out that where landscape character has been eroded by previous activity (as the development has already been undertaken, this is considered to be of relevance) any design approach should aim to improve and/or

restore the landscape character. It is considered that the application submission does not improve or restore landscape character, contrary to the adopted SPD.

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 requires a Local Planning Authority to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of national parks. As identified this is a cross-boundary application, with the boundary of the PDNP falling within the application red-boundary of site. The site and the PDNP are therefore seen together in short-long distance views from within the surrounding landscape, and there is a complementary relationship between the landscape character of the High Peak and the PDNP in this location due to similarities in landscape features. The site therefore makes an important contribution to the setting of the PDNP.

Given the siting, scale and appearance of the development, in conjunction with landscape topography, the proposal is considered to also have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the setting of the PDNP. Neither the change of use of land or the siting of the caravan would conserve or enhance the character, appearance, landscape setting or natural beauty of the PDNP.

The Peak District National Park Authority raise objection to the proposal, and their comments have been summarised earlier in the report. They consider that the development would alter the character of open agricultural land due to isolated domestic encroachment in an area which contributes to the local landscape character type and setting of the National Park. This in turn would harm the rural agricultural character, beauty and setting of the National Park and its valued characteristics which include landscape and heritage.

Conclusion:

Overall it is considered that the development would represent an uncharacteristic and visually discordant intrusion into the landscape, having a harmful urbanising impact upon the traditional rural character and appearance of the countryside and Green Belt in this location, in particular its openness, and cause harm to the character, appearance and local distinctiveness of the landscape and landscape setting of the PDNP.

Residential Amenity:

The requirements of Policy EQ 6 have been set out above, in relation to securing a satisfactory relationship with adjacent development and avoiding harm to amenity etc.

Given the nature, siting and scale of the proposed developments, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any detrimental harm to the amenity of any nearby property by virtue of overshadowing, overbearing or overlooking impacts.

Historic Environment:

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF (December 2024) highlights that when determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the

significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Paragraph 208 identifies that a local planning authority should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset).

Hull End Farm is identified on Derbyshire County Council's Historic Environment Record as comprising a partially extant 19th century farmstead, and as such would be considered a non-designated heritage asset. No heritage assessment has been submitted by the applicant.

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF (December 2024) identifies that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The setting of a heritage asset is defined within 'Annex 2: Glossary' of the NPPF (December 2024), and is identified as being "*The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*"

Hull End Farm was originally an agricultural barn converted to a dwelling in the latter part of the 1980's. The vernacular of the stone dwelling reflects the traditional character of accommodation within this area of the High Peak / National Park, and the surrounding pastoral fields are considered to form part of the setting of the dwelling, which contributes positively to the understanding of the sites former use as an agricultural barn. The change of use of agricultural land to domestic curtilage, and the siting of a caravan, is considered to amount to harm to the significance of Hull End Farm as a NDHA due to development within its setting which alters the established agrarian character of the surrounding landscape setting.

The development is considered not to impact the significance of any other heritage asset within the vicinity.

Highway Safety:

The vehicle access to the site remains unaltered as a result of this proposal. The caravan has provision for 1 double bedroom. The submitted planning statement details that the caravan would be occupied by one family member, who is a rural heritage craftsman working locally building dry stone walls. It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that this would generate a reliance on the use of a private vehicle.

No details have been submitted with the application which identifies the availability of parking or turning areas within the site. However based on on-site observations, there appears to be ample off-street parking capacity.

The consultation response from the Highway Authority raise no objection to the development, who conclude the proposals will not have an unacceptable impact on the public highway or highway safety. They do however advise an informative note is attached to any favourable decision in relation to the public right of way which crosses the application site.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon the safety and/or capacity of the local highway network.

Ecology / Biodiversity Net Gain:

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a mandatory requirement of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, and requires all planning permissions granted in England to deliver at least a 10% gain in biodiversity, which must be measured using Defra's biodiversity metric. The BNG requirement is a deemed condition of planning permission, and all on-site and off-site habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years via the use of Biodiversity Net Gain Management Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain is not applicable to retrospective planning applications made under Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The applicants submission states that the works have not yet been completed. They have submitted a Biodiversity Net Gain metric accordingly.

The submitted BNG metric identifies a net gain of 50.91%. The on-site habitats have been classified within the submitted BNG metric as constituting 'other neutral grassland'. Based on the baseline habitats within the metric relative to the habitats to be created, this causes a conflict and does not therefore satisfy the trading rules. It is therefore unclear whether the net gain figure stated is correct.

In addition the proposed type and level of tree planting conflicts between the submitted BNG metric and the proposed layout plan. The layout plan indicates the location where 10 trees are proposed to be planted, whereas the BNG metric only specifies the planting of 4 trees.

DEFRA's 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide' (Updated June 2026) specifies that when planting new trees, post-development size class is determined by the

diameter at breast height (DBH) of the tree at the time of site-planting. The guidance continues, stating that a newly planted tree should only be assessed as 'medium' size or above if they meet specific DBH size criteria at the time of site-planting. The size criteria of trees (DBH) is as follows:

- Small - DBH $\leq$ 30cm
- Medium - DBH > 30 to $\leq$ 60cm
- Large - DBH > 60 to $\leq$ 90cm
- Very Large - DBH > 90 cm

The 4 trees proposed to be planted, as specified within the submitted BNG metric, would constitute 1x small tree, 1x medium tree, 1x large tree, and 1x very large tree. It is considered that the tree sizes as specified for planting are unrealistic in scale, and this therefore casts uncertainty as to the conclusions and level of gain as stipulated within the submitted metric.

It has also been indicated that 5metres of hedgerow is to also be created.

The consultation response from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust also identifies a number of issues with the submitted metric, such as incomplete sections, a misrepresentation of habitats, out of date information, and absence of supporting details. They highlight that significant amendment to the BNG information is required.

Agricultural Land Classification:

The NPPF (December 2024), at Paragraph 187, seeks to enhance the natural environment by recognising the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile agricultural land. Annex 2 (Glossary) of the NPPF (December 2024) classifies best and most versatile agricultural land as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification. It has been identified that the application site has an agricultural land classification of Grade 4, and as such, would not constitute best and most versatile agricultural land.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The application site lies within designated Countryside and Green Belt, where within such areas there is a presumption against inappropriate development. It is considered that the proposal comprises inappropriate development in the Countryside and Green Belt, and therefore planning permission should be refused due to the development being contrary to Policies EQ 3 and EQ 4 of the High Peak Borough Council Local Plan (2016), and national Green Belt policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

The proposal should also be determined on the basis of whether any adverse impacts of approving the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, as to amount to 'very special circumstances', individually or in combination.

Harms Resulting from the Development

The proposal would comprise inappropriate development in the green belt and result in significant harm its openness and conflict the purpose of preventing encroachment into the countryside (paragraph 143c), and the consequential harm to the rural character of the area. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (December 2024) states that *"when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness"*. No very special circumstances have been identified to outweigh the harm to the green belt.

The development would represent an uncharacteristic and visually discordant intrusion into the landscape, having a harmful urbanising impact upon the traditional rural character and appearance of the countryside and Green Belt in this location, in particular their openness, and would cause harm to the character, appearance and local distinctiveness of the landscape and landscape setting of the Peak District National Park. This attracts substantial weight against the proposal.

The change of use of agricultural land to domestic curtilage, and the siting of a caravan, is considered to amount to harm to the significance of Hull End Farm as a non-designated heritage asset, due to development within its setting which alters the established agrarian character of the surrounding landscape setting. This attracts moderate weight against the proposal.

Although the application site does not constitute 'best and most versatile' agricultural land, the development would still result in an overall net loss of available agricultural land.

Although no harm has been identified in relation to the residential amenity of neighbours, or in the relation to highway safety, the absence of harm does not amount to benefits of the scheme.

Benefits of the Development

Whilst the proposal would provide additional living accommodation, this would be for a family member of the applicant so would not amount to very special circumstances or any wider public benefit. This aspect attracts neutral weight.

There are some environmental benefits associated with the development in the form of tree and hedgerow planting, but as set out there is ambiguity and uncertainty as to the amount, type and feasibility of the planting proposed. In addition, these elements could be undertaken outside of the planning process. Therefore, this aspect attracts neutral weight in the planning balance.

No wider social or economic benefits of the proposal have been identified.

Conclusion

When considering the above, it is concluded that in principle the development is unacceptable. The adverse impacts on the countryside, the openness of the Green Belt, the adverse impacts on landscape character including the landscape setting of the Peak District National Park, and the harm to Hull End Farm as a non-designated heritage asset, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the extremely limited benefits of the development.

Therefore the 'very special circumstances' required to outweigh the identified harms do not exist, and as such, the development represents an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt, for which substantial weight is attached.

Overall, having reviewed all the submitted information, and assessing this against all relevant policies and material planning considerations, within the planning balance, a refusal of planning permission is recommended for this application.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

Case Officer: Alex Bonser

Recommendation Date: 06/07/2026

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of High Peak Borough Council