
Assessment of Proposed Green Belt Releases in the Emerging Stockport Local Plan

A report for CPRE

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Introduction to the Assessment of Proposed Green Belt Releases

The emerging Stockport Local Plan: Addressing our development needs (October 2025), published by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, sets out the Council's approach to meeting future development requirements. As part of this approach, the Plan proposes the release of a number of sites from the Green Belt to help meet identified housing and development needs.

This report assesses the planning implications of these proposed Green Belt releases, with particular focus on their potential impacts on the function, character and openness of the Stockport Green Belt. The assessment considers factors including existing site characteristics, previous land use, landscape and ecological constraints, agricultural land quality, community value, and the extent to which each site aligns with the Government's approach to green belt development.

The sites assessed within this report are taken from Appendix A - Details of proposed housing allocations on sites outside of the existing built-up area within *Stockport Local Plan: Addressing our development needs (October 2025)*. These sites form the list of proposed Green Belt release sites assessed throughout this report.

Appendix A – Details of proposed housing allocations on sites outside of the existing built-up area¹

Policy HOM 2a of the emerging draft Local Plan proposes the allocation of the following sites for residential development:

Site	Minimum number of dwellings	Site area (hectares)
<i>Previously developed (PDL)</i>		
HOM 2.12 Compstall Mills	130	1.56
HOM 2.13 Former Offerton High School	185	6.81
HOM 2.14 Woodford Garden Village Extension	545	29
<i>Grey belt</i>		
HOM 2.15 Hall Moss Lane	400	12.31
HOM 2.16 High Lane	1,000	47.57
HOM 2.17 Hyde Bank Meadows	250	5.99
HOM 2.18 Sandown Road	300	14.92
HOM 2.19 Jacksons Lane West	170	5.47
HOM 2.20 Jacksons Lane East	270	8.64
HOM 2.21 Offerton Sand and Gravel	150	5.43
HOM 2.22 Cow Lane (to rear of Sainsburys, Hazel Grove)	500	20.70
HOM 2.23 Brindale Road	100	1.94
HOM 2.24 Gravel Bank Road and Unity Mill	400	11.14
HOM 2.25 Land at Cheadle Hulme School	350	19.57
HOM 2.26 Dairyground Farm	500	26.84
HOM 2.27 Jenny Lane	190	9.54
HOM 2.28 Mill Lane (Hazel Grove)	50	1.36
HOM 2.29 High Lane Farm (Woodley)	185	3.54
HOM 2.30 Sanderling Road	120	3.02
HOM 2.31 Compstall Road North	250	8.52
HOM 2.32 Compstall Road South	200	4.16
HOM 2.33 Heald Green West	750	31.62
HOM 2.34 Shakespeare Road	150	4.88
HOM 2.35 Bolshaw Road	70	1.78
<i>Other</i>		
HOM 2.36 Heald Green East (part grey belt)	900	42.61
HOM 2.37 Norbury Hall / Land off Chester Road (Hazel Grove)	300	10.79
HOM 2.38 Chester Road (Woodford) (part grey belt)	550	30.79

¹ Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2025) *Stockport Local Plan: Addressing our development needs*.

1.HOM 2.12 Compstall Mills



1.1 Site characteristics

Compstall Mills is a former industrial complex at Andrew Street in Compstall, allocated in the emerging Local Plan for a minimum of 130 dwellings on 1.56 hectares. The site is located between the River Etherow and the built-up village, on the edge of Etherow Country Park and the conservation area.

1.2 Current and former uses

For many years Compstall Mills was a working cotton mill and industrial complex, with large brick buildings and associated yards. The mill use has now stopped. Several buildings are vacant or derelict, and parts of the site appear to be used only for low-level storage or are unused altogether. Everyday activity and visitors are now focused on Etherow Country Park, while the mill area is mostly closed off and feels neglected (Mookster, 2023).

1.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The site has a number of constraints that any housing scheme would need to address. It is within the Green Belt, forms part of the Compstall Conservation Area, includes a locally listed heritage asset, and sits in a sensitive historic mill setting where development would need to protect character, views, and significance. The riverside position, changes in ground levels, likely remediation needs, and flood-risk and drainage

considerations also make the site physically complex, while Stockport's evidence base highlights the importance of ecological corridors and habitat links, which is relevant given the site's relationship to the river corridor and wider ecological network. (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Planning Data, 2026).²

1.4 Value to the local community

At present the mill site itself has limited direct community use because it is largely private and in poor condition. However, the adjoining Etherow Country Park is an important recreational asset, and the mill complex also contributes strongly to local identity through its industrial history and its role within the conservation area. (Mookster, 2023).

1.5 Agricultural land quality

The site itself is not in agricultural use. Nearby land is identified as Grade 4 agricultural land, so agricultural quality is more relevant in the surrounding area than on the mill site itself.

1.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

The site strongly aligns with the Government's definition of grey belt as previously developed land within the Green Belt. The former mill buildings and associated industrial use mean it has a clear brownfield character, although heritage, ecology and flood-risk constraints remain important considerations.

1.7 Common-sense judgement on “grey belt” and overall view

In simple terms, Compstall Mills already reads as grey land rather than open countryside. Overall, it remains one of the more reasonable Green Belt locations for housing, provided any scheme properly addresses heritage, ecology, flood risk, and design quality.³

² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2026) *Planning Data Entity Record (ID: 44014607)*. Planning Data. Available at: <https://www.planning.data.gov.uk/entity/44014607>

³ mookster (2023) *Compstall Mills, Stockport - April 2023*. 28DaysLater. Available at: <https://www.28dayslater.co.uk/threads/compstall-mills-stockport-april-2023/>

2.HOM 2.13 Former Offerton High School



2.1 Site characteristics

Former Offerton High School is a closed secondary school site off The Fairway in Offerton, allocated in the emerging Local Plan for a minimum of 185 homes on 6.81 hectares. It is previously developed land in the Green Belt, but it still reads in part as a green edge because of its open pitches, grassed areas, and tree belts.

2.2 Current and former uses

The site was formerly Offerton High School and contains school buildings, car parks, and sports pitches. The school closed in 2012, and many buildings have since stood vacant, with demolition and site clearance now part of the site's recent history.

2.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The site lies in the Green Belt and any redevelopment would affect openness at this edge of Offerton. Key constraints include demolition and possible remediation works, access from residential streets such as The Fairway, and the need to protect the amenity, safety, and operation of the neighbouring Castle Hill and Lisburne special schools. The site is also identified as part of an ecological network core area, lies within the G Goyt Valley Landscape Character Area, and is associated with Grade 3 agricultural land, all of which strengthen the need for careful treatment of landscape and environmental effects.

2.4 Value to the local community

The vacant buildings currently create problems for neighbours, including vandalism and anti-social behaviour. At the same time, the grassed areas and tree belts soften the edge of surrounding housing, and the adjoining special schools are important community facilities whose setting and access need to be protected.

2.5 Agricultural land quality

The site itself is in educational use rather than agriculture. However, it is associated with Grade 3 agricultural land, so agricultural quality remains a relevant consideration in the wider area.

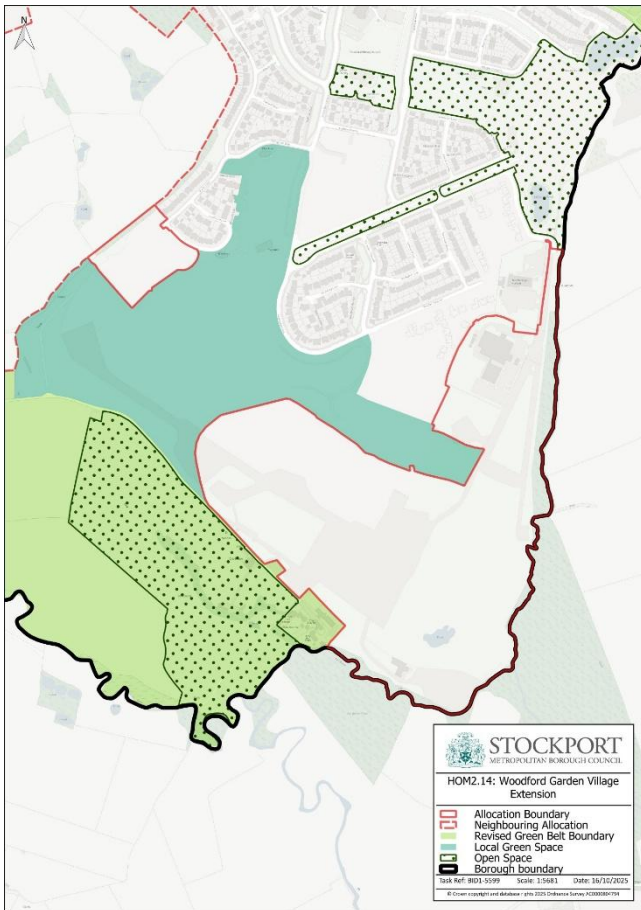
2.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

The site aligns strongly with the Government's definition of grey belt as previously developed land within the Green Belt. Although it includes open playing fields, the former school buildings, hardstanding and infrastructure give the site a developed character.

2.7 Common-sense judgement on “grey belt” and overall view

In common-sense terms, the site is a mixture of grey and green. Overall, it is a more reasonable location than open countryside sites, but development would still need to respect the site's openness, landscape role, and ecological context.

3. HOM 2.14 Woodford Garden Village Extension



3.1 Site characteristics

Woodford Garden Village Extension is land at the former Woodford Aerodrome, directly south of the new Garden Village. It is allocated for at least 545 homes on about 29 ha. On aerial images it appears as a large open area with earthworks, tracks and a few buildings between the existing housing, Avro Golf Club and surrounding fields.

3.2 Current and former uses

The land formed part of the aerodrome used for aircraft manufacture, with hangars, runway and hardstanding. The northern part has already been redeveloped as Woodford Garden Village (around 600 homes), while the extension covers remaining ex-airfield land to the south and south-east.

3.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The main issue is Green Belt: further housing would extend the built-up edge and reduce openness, even though the site is ex-aerodrome land. A Planning Inspector allowed an appeal for a 540-home scheme, concluding that the proposal was acceptable in planning terms and that the site met the grey belt criteria. Other constraints include the relationship with Avro Heritage Museum and Avro Golf Club, drainage on a large site and extra traffic through the Garden Village and onto Chester Road.

3.4 Value to the local community

At present the site provides a clear open break between the Garden Village, the golf course and the wider countryside, and gives long views over open land. The extension proposals

offer new homes, open spaces, paths and community facilities, but within a much more built-up framework than today.

3.5 Agricultural land quality

Sources describe this land as former airfield rather than working farmland, so the main concern is Green Belt openness and landscape character rather than loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

3.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

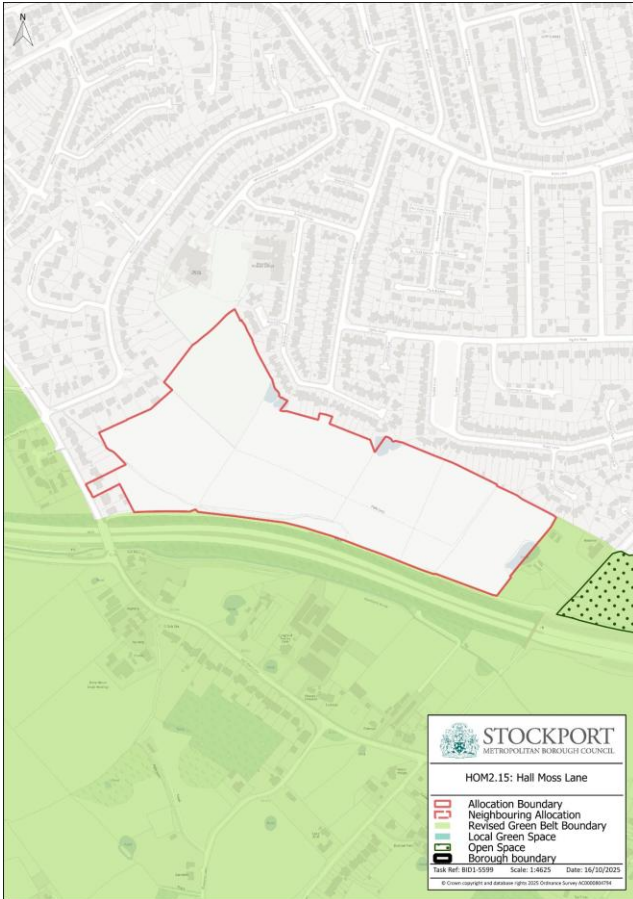
The site has a moderate to strong alignment with the Government’s definition of grey belt due to its former aerodrome use and previously developed characteristics. However, much of the site is now open land, meaning its grey belt status is less clear than fully developed brownfield sites.

3.7 Common-sense judgement on “grey belt” and overall view

Visually, the extension still feels very open: a large area of largely undeveloped land between the new housing and the golf course and fields. Building 540-545 homes here would remove most of that open gap and bring the village edge much closer to the countryside, so in everyday terms it behaves more like a key Green Belt buffer than a small, scrappy brownfield patch. ⁴

⁴ Manchester Evening News (2026) Major expansion of Woodford Garden Village approved after appeal. Available at: <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/major-expansion-woodford-garden-village-33611109>

4.HOM 2.15 Hall Moss Lane



4.1 Site characteristics

Hall Moss Lane is a Green Belt site on the edge of Bramhall, close to the A555. It is allocated in the emerging Local Plan for a minimum of 400 homes on 12.31 hectares and is listed as a **grey belt** housing site outside the existing built-up area. The land consists of open fields with hedgerows and ponds, forming a clear stretch of countryside between existing housing and the wider rural area.

4.2 Current and former uses

The fields are currently used for grazing sheep and horses and for haymaking in the summer. Available evidence indicates that the site has not previously been developed and remains agricultural greenfield land, with no permanent buildings on the site itself.

4.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The site is in the Green Belt and currently helps to limit urban sprawl and maintain separation between Bramhall, Woodford and other nearby settlements. Residents and local groups raise concerns about flooding, traffic onto Hall Moss Lane and the A555, limited local infrastructure, and impacts on habitats linked to ponds, hedgerows, bats and other wildlife. A live planning application by Jones Homes (DC/097442) proposes around 250 homes here, supported by a planning statement that argues the land should be treated as grey belt because it is said not to contribute strongly to some Green Belt purposes.

4.4 Value to the local community

Hall Moss fields are described by local residents as “treasured countryside”, used for walking, dog-walking and enjoying open views. A public footpath crosses the site and there is an established walking and cycling link alongside the A555 to Woodford Recreation Ground, so the land functions as an important local greenspace and gateway to wider paths. Community groups highlight the mental-health and wellbeing value of having this open, accessible countryside immediately next to existing neighbourhoods.

4.5 Agricultural land quality

Marketing and technical information describe the land as **versatile Grade 3 agricultural land**, suitable for grazing, equestrian use and paddocks, with traditional hedgerow boundaries and at least one pond. Without a detailed Agricultural Land Classification survey it is not possible to say whether any part is “best and most versatile” (Grade 3a or above), but the site clearly functions as productive farmland.

4.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

The site is identified as grey belt in the emerging Local Plan, but it is not previously developed land. Hall Moss Lane remains open agricultural land with hedgerows, ponds and landscape features. While its edge-of-settlement location may support a case for release, its current character is more consistent with open Green Belt countryside than with previously developed or degraded land associated with grey belt.

4.7 Common-sense judgement on “grey belt” and overall view

Although the site is identified as grey belt in the emerging Local Plan, it currently comprises open agricultural land with hedgerows, ponds and established public access routes. Development would therefore involve the loss of open farmland and a reduction in Green Belt openness, rather than the redevelopment of an obviously previously developed site.³

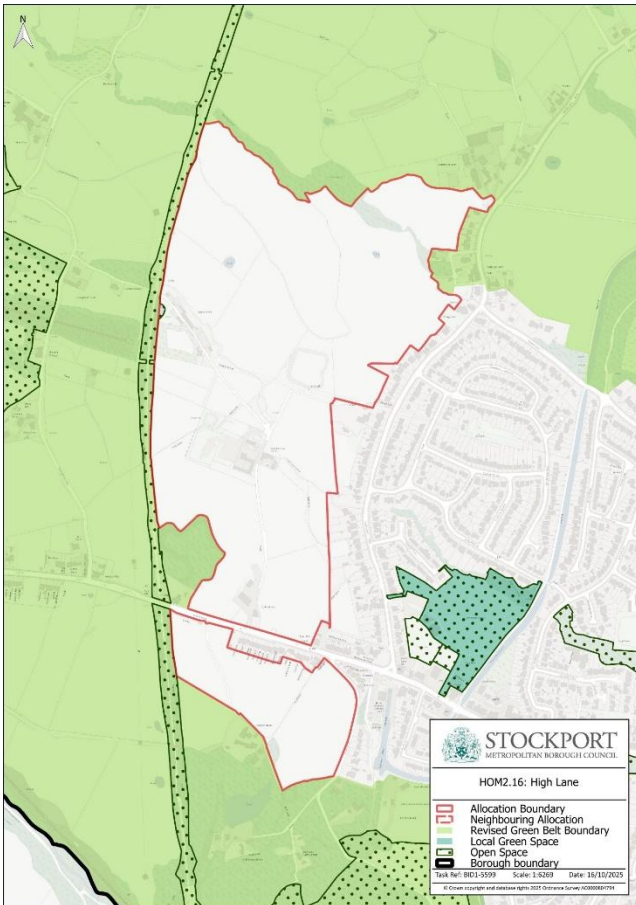
³LoopNet (2024) Development Site At, Hall Moss Ln, Stockport, SK7 1RA. Available at:

<https://www.loopnet.co.uk/listing/hall-moss-ln-stockport/31780275/>

Save Hall Moss Fields (n.d.) Save Hall Moss Fields. Available at: <https://savehallmossfields.co.uk/>

Save Hall Moss Fields Action Group (2025) Planning application. Save Hall Moss Fields. Available at: <https://savehallmossfields.co.uk/planning-application/>

5.HOM 2.16 High Lane



5.1 Site characteristics

High Lane is a large Green Belt site on the western edge of High Lane village, between existing housing and open countryside, close to the Hazel Grove and Disley. The Local Plan allocates it for a minimum of 1,000 homes on about 47.57 hectares, listed as a grey-belt housing site outside the current built-up area. The land is mainly open fields and grassland with hedgerows and small tree belts, forming a wide rural buffer around the village.

5.2 Current and former uses

The site is currently used as farmland and grassed fields rather than as a built or industrial site. There are nearby farm buildings and houses along the A6 and village streets, but the main allocation area itself has no large permanent urban structures.

5.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The land lies in the Green Belt and plays a role in limiting the spread of High Lane and keeping a clear gap between the village, Disley and other settlements. Local organisations and Disley Parish Council highlight major concerns about more traffic on the A6, existing Air Quality Management Area issues, pressure on schools and health services, and impacts on landscape and views towards surrounding countryside. There are also drainage and surface-water considerations and nearby features such as the Macclesfield Canal and local habitats, which would need careful assessment in any scheme.

5.4 Value to the local community

Residents see the fields around High Lane as an important part of the village's character and as a result it feels separate from the Greater Manchester urban area. People use nearby lanes, footpaths and the canal corridor for walking and cycling, and value long views over open land towards countryside destinations such as Lyme Park. Community groups argue that a 1,000-home estate here would change High Lane from a village into a much larger suburban settlement.

5.5 Agricultural land quality

The High Lane site is currently in use as agricultural fields and grassland, and neighbourhood plan material explicitly questions building on "good agricultural land" here rather than using brownfield sites. It has an ALC Grade of 3.

5.6 Assessment against the Government definition of "grey belt"

The site has limited alignment with the Government's definition of grey belt. It is predominantly open agricultural land with no previous development and continues to perform important Green Belt functions, including maintaining openness and separation.

5.7 Common-sense judgement on "grey belt" and overall view

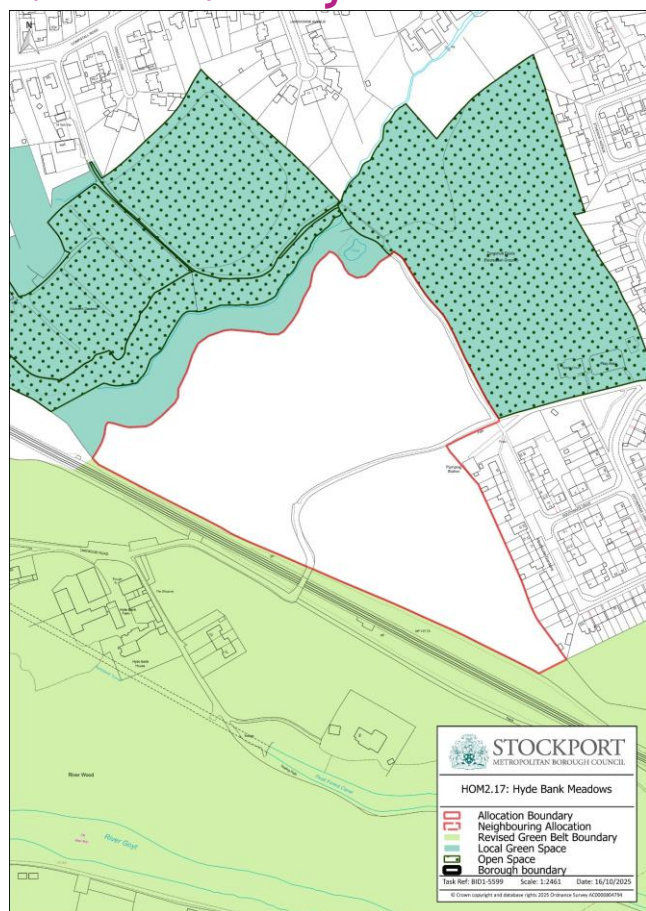
In common-sense terms, the High Lane allocation is clearly open countryside - a large block of undeveloped agricultural fields around the village - so building 1,000 homes here would remove a major green buffer and greatly expand the settlement, rather than simply tidying up a small, degraded site.⁶

⁶ Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2020) *High Lane Village NDP Consultation Statement*. Available at: https://consultation.stockport.gov.uk/planning/high-lane-neighbourhood-draft-plan/supporting_documents/High%20Lane%20Village%20NDP%20Consultation%20Statement.pdf

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2020) *High Lane Village Neighbourhood Development Plan - Submission Version (December 2020)*. Available at: <https://live-iag-static-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pdf/Local+Plan+evidence/251002+Addressing+development+needs+paper.pdf>

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2020) *High Lane Village Neighbourhood Development Plan Submission (December 2020)*. Available at: https://consultation.stockport.gov.uk/planning/high-lane-neighbourhood-draft-plan/user_uploads/hlvnp-housing--submission-dec2020-.pdf

6. HOM 2.17 Hyde Bank Meadows



6.1 Site characteristics

Hyde Bank Meadows is a Green Belt site on the southern edge of Romiley, at the end of Gotherage Lane. The Local Plan allocates it for a minimum of 250 homes on about 5.99 ha and lists it as a **grey belt** site outside the existing built-up area. The land sits between existing housing and Tangshutt Fields open space.

6.2 Current and former uses

The site is currently open grassland used as part of **Hyde Bank Farm**, and has not previously been developed for urban or industrial uses. It lies next to children's play space and football pitches at Tangshutt Fields, which are part of the wider recreational area but are not themselves proposed for housing.

6.3 Planning and environmental constraints

Hyde Bank Meadows is in the Green Belt and contributes to the open edge of Romiley. Residents and local groups raise concerns about extra traffic on Gotherage Lane, pressure on existing schools and health facilities, and the loss of nearby play space if facilities are moved within Tangshutt Fields. The sloping land and proximity to the river mean that drainage and landscape impacts need careful handling in any scheme.

6.4 Value to the local community

The fields and adjoining Tangshutt area are used for walking, children's play and local football, and are valued as a green edge to Romiley. The site forms part of the wider open space

network that gives residents access to grass.

6.5 Agricultural land quality

The land is part of Hyde Bank Farm and is recorded in SHLAA material as non-developed Green Belt farmland. It is also identified as an Ecological Network Core Area, within Landscape Character Area G: Goyt Valley, category River Valley & Upland Farming, with ALC Grade 3, and is adjacent to a nature reserve.⁷

6.6 Assessment against the Government definition of "grey belt"

The site has limited alignment with the Government's definition of grey belt. It is undeveloped farmland with no previous development and contributes to the open edge of Romiley, including its relationship with Tangshutt Fields.

6.7 Common-sense judgement on "grey belt" and overall view

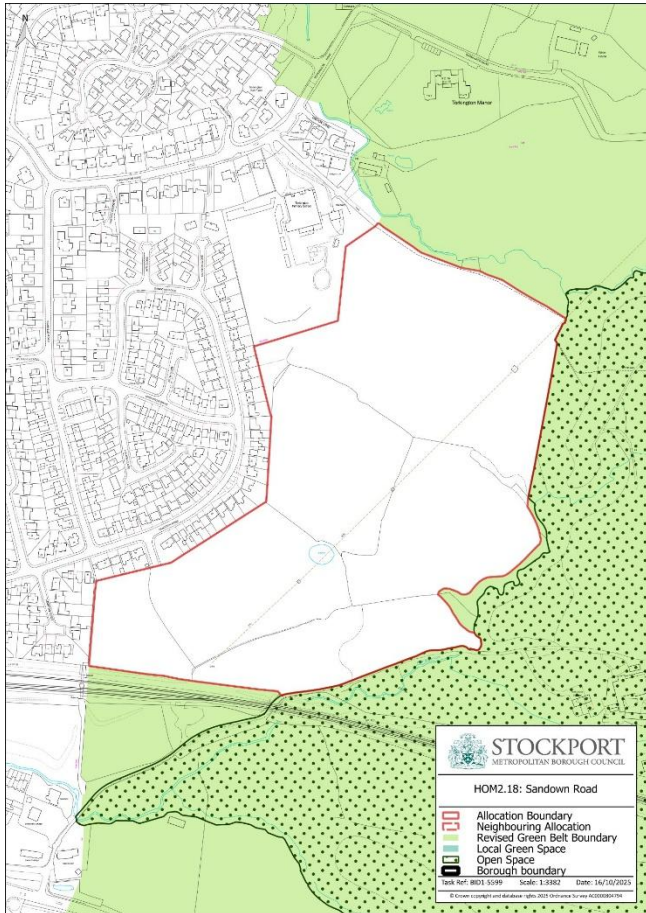
In everyday terms, Hyde Bank Meadows looks like open greenfield land: grassed farm fields next to a park and play area, with no obvious signs of previous development. Building 250 homes here would replace this open Green Belt edge with new housing, reduce the immediate green setting of Tangshutt Fields, and take a small but important area of farmland and local greenspace out of use, rather than simply reusing a clearly brownfield site.

⁷ Stockport Nub News (2026) *Plans shared for 250 new homes at Hyde Bank Meadows in Romiley*. Available at: <https://stockport.nub.news/news/local-news/plans-shared-for-250-new-homes-at-hyde-bank-meadows-in-romiley-289253>

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2020) *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Annex*. Available at:

https://downloads.ctfassets.net/ii3xdrqc6nfw/4z4QMcTHk1Rx0i3tgdJl6q/f0a3255de16575acdc38cb8a75275a65/2020_Stockport_SHLAA_Annex.pdf

7.HOM 2.18 Sandown Road



7.1 Site characteristics

Sandown Road is a Green Belt site on the eastern edge of Hazel Grove, between Sandown Road, Torkington Road and Hazel Grove Golf Club. The Local Plan allocates it for a minimum of 300 homes on about 14.92 ha and lists it as a grey belt housing site outside the existing built-up area. The land is currently a large open field parcel forming a green gap between Hazel Grove and the golf course.

7.2 Current and former uses

The site is described as open greenfield land used as pasture and informal greenspace, with no history of urban or industrial development. There are no large permanent buildings on the fields themselves; built development is limited to surrounding roads, houses and the golf course clubhouse.

7.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The land is designated Green Belt and currently helps to “check the unrestricted sprawl” of Hazel Grove and “safeguard the countryside from encroachment”, directly matching NPPF Green Belt purposes quoted by local groups. Residents and the Hazel Grove Greenbelt Action Group raise concerns about existing flood risk, weak local infrastructure, and protected wildlife on and around the site. The Story Homes proposals would need to address flood risk and air-quality impacts through formal assessments, but campaigners argue that building here would still be an “irreplaceable” loss of green space.

7.4 Value to the local community

The fields between Sandown Road and Hazel Grove Golf Club are seen locally as “precious Green Belt” that gives Hazel Grove a clear countryside edge and open views. The area is used informally for walking and forms part of the green setting of the golf course and nearby homes. Residents emphasise that once this large green field is built over, the open aspect that helps define Hazel Grove’s identity would be permanently lost.

7.5 Agricultural land quality

Public sources describe the site as greenfield pasture and grassland. It is Grade 3 agricultural land within Landscape Character Area I: Hazel Grove - High Lane, categorised as Lowland Farming, and is also adjacent to the A6-M60 Protected Corridor. It is clearly undeveloped land in current non-urban use rather than previously developed land.

7.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

The site has limited alignment with the Government’s definition of grey belt. It is open greenfield land with no previous development and contributes to the countryside setting and openness of the Green Belt on Hazel Grove’s edge.

7.7 Common-sense judgement on “grey belt” and overall view

In everyday terms, the Sandown Road site looks and functions as a substantial area of open countryside and local greenspace on Hazel Grove’s edge, separating housing from the golf course. Building 300 homes here would remove that green buffer and push the built-up area further into the Green Belt, rather than reusing an already developed or obviously “grey” site.⁸

⁸ Hazel Grove Greenbelt Action Group (HGGAG) (n.d.) *Our Objections* - HGGAG. Available at: <https://www.hggag.co.uk/Our-Objections---HGGAG.html>

Place North West (2025) *Story readies plans for 300 Hazel Grove homes*. Available at: <https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/story-readies-plans-for-300-hazel-grove-homes/>

Story Homes (2025) *Hazel Grove consultation boards*. Available at: <https://swineseye.consultationonline.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/555/2025/07/Story-Homes-Hazel-Grove-Boards.pdf>

8.HOM 2.19 Jacksons Lane West



8.1 Site characteristics

Jacksons Lane West is a Green Belt site on the southern edge of Hazel Grove, to the south of Jacksons Lane and opposite Hazel Grove High School. The Local Plan allocates it for a minimum of 170 homes on about 5.47 ha and lists it as a grey belt housing site outside the existing built-up area. The land forms part of a larger open tract between the school and surrounding fields.

8.2 Current and former uses

Planning reports state that the land is “currently in agricultural use”, with fields used as pasture/grassland. There is no evidence of previous urban or industrial development on the main housing area; existing built structures are confined to nearby roads, the school and farm buildings.⁹

8.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The site is Green Belt and contributes to the open edge of Hazel Grove and the setting of Hazel Grove High School and nearby green spaces such as Happy Valley. Local news and consultation material highlight concerns about traffic on Jacksons Lane, pressure on local services and the cumulative impact of several Green Belt schemes in this area. Proposals by Bellway and Taylor Wimpey include significant affordable housing and new open space, but would still involve substantial loss of existing open land.¹⁰

8.4 Value to the local community

Residents describe the land south of Jacksons Lane as “green open land” and an important part of Hazel Grove’s remaining

Green Belt. It provides open views from the school and nearby homes and forms part of the wider green corridor linking Jacksons Lane to Happy Valley.

8.5 Agricultural land quality

Planning material notes that the site is in agricultural use and has ALC grade of 3. It is therefore reasonable to treat it as currently functioning farmland/grassland. Some part of this land is under the A6-M60 protected corridor and contributed to wider River Valley & Lowland Farming landscape character area.

8.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

The site has limited alignment with the Government’s definition of grey belt. It is undeveloped agricultural land with no evidence of previous development and lies within the C Ladybrook Valley landscape character area and an ecological network core area. These characteristics suggest that the site continues to contribute to the openness and environmental value of the Green Belt.

8.7 Common-sense judgement on “grey belt” and overall view

The Jacksons Lane West site clearly functions as open agricultural and grassland on Hazel Grove’s edge, visually separating the high school and housing from the wider countryside and nature areas such as Happy Valley. Building around 170+ homes here would remove this local green buffer and push the built-up area further into the Green Belt, rather than reusing land that is already developed or obviously “grey”.

⁹ Stockport Nub News (2026) *New homes planned on ‘grey belt’ land in Stockport at 27-acre site*. Available at: <https://stockport.nub.news/news/local-news/new-homes-planned-on-grey-belt-land-in-stockport-at-27-acre-site-285955>

¹⁰ Stockport Nub News (2025) *Hazel Grove residents concerned over plans to build 176 new homes on green open land*. Available at: <https://stockport.nub.news/news/local-news/hazel-grove-residents-concerned-over-plans-to-build-176-new-homes-on-green-open-land-281778>

9. HOM 2.20 Jacksons Lane East

Jacksons Lane East is broadly similar to Jacksons Lane West in that it is currently open agricultural Green Belt south of Jacksons Lane, but it is larger (allocated for 270 homes on 8.64 ha) and extends further east and south towards Chester Road.



10. HOM 2.21 Offerton Sand and Gravel



10.1 Site characteristics

Offerton Sand and Gravel is a quarry and aggregates yard off Marple Road, south-east of Offerton, within the Green Belt. The Local Plan allocates it for a minimum of 150 homes on about 5.43 ha and lists it as a grey belt housing site outside the existing built-up area.

10.2 Current and former uses

The land is currently occupied by Offerton Sand & Gravel Ltd, operating as a commercial sand and gravel supply and landscaping materials yard. Historically it has been used for sand and gravel extraction, and recent planning documents describe it as a “former sand and gravel extraction site” still partly in quarry/aggregates use.

10.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The site lies in the Green Belt and sits close to woodland and nature areas; local comments note that it is “right next to a nature reserve”. Planning papers recognise that it is currently a working quarry/yard with heavy vehicle movements onto Marple Road, and raise issues around traffic, noise, dust, and restoration of the wider site. Any housing scheme would need to deal with ground conditions from past mineral working and manage the transition to adjoining open space.

10.4 Value to the local community

At the moment, the main function is commercial: supplying aggregates, soil and gravel to the wider area. The wider quarry land offers potential for future green space and

habitat creation if restored, and Stewart Milne’s proposals include turning the northern part of the site into open woodland with paths and play space.

10.5 Agricultural land quality

The allocation sits on quarry and yard land, not farmland. Agricultural land classification is therefore not a key issue here. Though the wider area is identified as Grade 3.

10.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

The site strongly aligns with the Government’s definition of grey belt as previously developed land within the Green Belt. Its current use as a sand and gravel yard and its history of mineral extraction give it a developed character, although ecological network considerations and its location within the G Goyt Valley landscape character area remain important constraints.

10.7 Common-sense judgement and overall view

This site is different from many other allocations: it is clearly a working quarry and aggregates yard rather than open countryside or farmland. Redevelopment here would mainly replace industrial/quarry activity with homes and green space, and, if well designed, could reduce heavy vehicle movements and improve the landscape right next to nearby nature areas, while still needing careful control of impacts and restoration quality.¹¹

¹¹ FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (2023) Land at Offerton Quarry, Stockport: Environmental Statement - Non-Technical Summary. Available at:

<https://docs.planning.org.uk/20230925/127/RJ12FSPJGUQ00/qj1d1ibqzm5tc8tr.pdf>

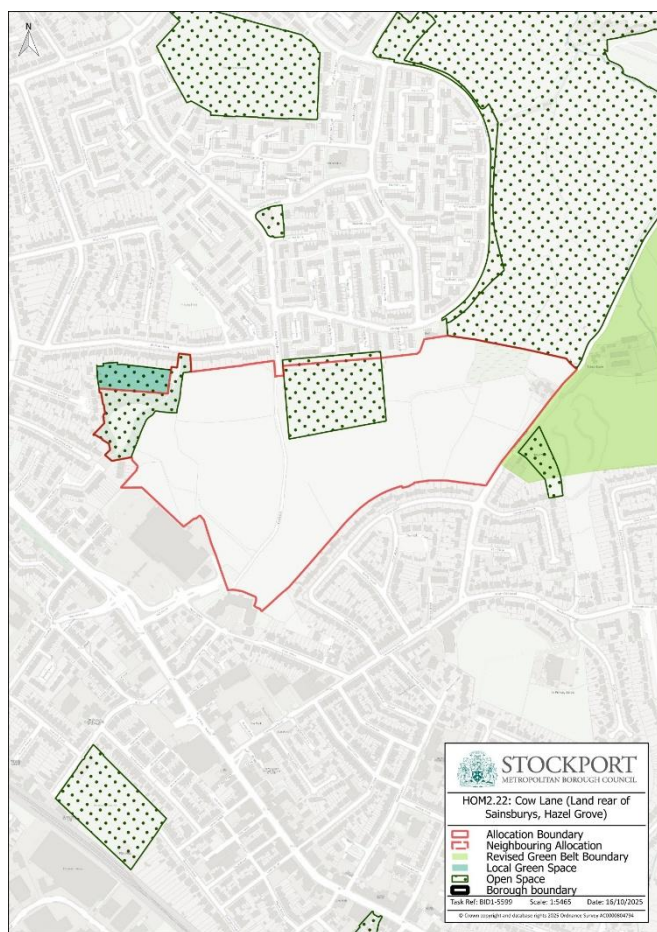
Place North West (2022) Stockport sand and gravel site could become 180 homes. Available at:

<https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/stockport-sand-and-gravel-site-could-become-180-homes/>

Place North West (2023) Offerton quarry residential plan moves forward. Available at:

<https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/offerton-quarry-residential-plan-moves-forward/>

11. HOM 2.22 Cow Lane (to rear of Sainsburys, Hazel Grove)



11.1 Site characteristics

Cow Lane is a large Green Belt site behind Sainsburys in Hazel Grove, forming an open wedge between existing housing. It is allocated for a minimum of 500 homes in the draft Local Plan.

11.2 Current and former uses

The land is currently undeveloped Green Belt, used as open land and adjoining/allotment space rather than an industrial or commercial site.

11.3 Planning and environmental constraints

Releasing Cow Lane would remove a significant area of Green Belt and expand Hazel Grove southwards and eastwards. Its size and position next to homes, roads and allotments mean major impacts on landscape, traffic and local amenity that require careful assessment.

11.4 Value to the local community

Local residents see this land as an important green buffer and setting for Dial Park allotments and nearby neighbourhoods. Concerns focus on losing this visible open space and having a large new estate of 500 houses in its place.

11.5 Agricultural land quality

A The site is identified as Grade 3 agricultural land, meaning it is moderate to good quality farmland. The loss of agricultural land is therefore an important

consideration alongside the site's Green Belt role.

11.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

Cow Lane is identified as a grey belt allocation in the Local Plan, but it is not previously developed land. The site is open Green Belt land within the H Offerton-Poise Brook Urban Fringe Landscape Character Area and includes ecological network corridors. Although its relationship with existing development and proximity to the town centre may support a case for release, it still functions as an open green buffer rather than a previously developed or degraded site.

11.7 Common-sense judgement and overall view

Common-sense judgement is that Cow Lane involves a very clear trade-off: significant new housing capacity versus the loss of a large, well-used Green Belt wedge behind Sainsburys. Because it is genuinely open greenfield land with community value, the justification for releasing it and the quality of any retained or replacement green space need extra scrutiny.¹²

¹² Hazel Grove Conservatives (n.d.) *Save Our Green Belt*. Available at: <https://www.hazलगroveconservatives.org.uk/save-our-green-belt>

Font Comms (2025) *Grey Is the New Green: How Stockport's Local Plan is set to redefine the Green Belt*. Available at: <https://www.fontcomms.com/news/grey-is-the-new-green-how-stockports-local-plan-is-set-to-redefine-the-nbspgreennbspbelt>

12. HOM 2.23 Brindale Road



12.1 Site characteristics

HOM 2.23 is a single parcel of land immediately east of Brindale Road, between existing houses and Highfields College on the west and the valley/A560 corridor on the east. The Local Plan allocates this site for a minimum of 100 dwellings on about 1.94 ha.

12.2 Current and former uses

The allocation covers open grassed land behind Brindale Road, currently without built development and used as informal open space on the valley side. There is no evidence of past industrial use; it reads as Green Belt edge-of-settlement land rather than a former quarry or yard.

12.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The site lies within the Green Belt and is included in the Local Plan's list of 27 Green Belt housing allocations. Its steeply sloping valley edge, proximity to Crookilley Woods and the A560, and adjacency to Brindale Road houses and Highfields College mean landscape impact, access, and amenity will be key constraints.

12.4 Value to the local community

At present the land forms a visible green buffer between the Brindale Road estate and the road/valley corridor, providing outlook, openness and informal recreation space for nearby residents. It also contributes to the green setting of Highfields College and the approach to Crookilley Woods.

12.5 Agricultural land quality

The site is identified as Grade 3 agricultural land. The site also falls within the E Tame Valley and Brinnington East Landscape Character Area (River Valley & Urban Fringe), meaning landscape value is also relevant alongside agricultural considerations.

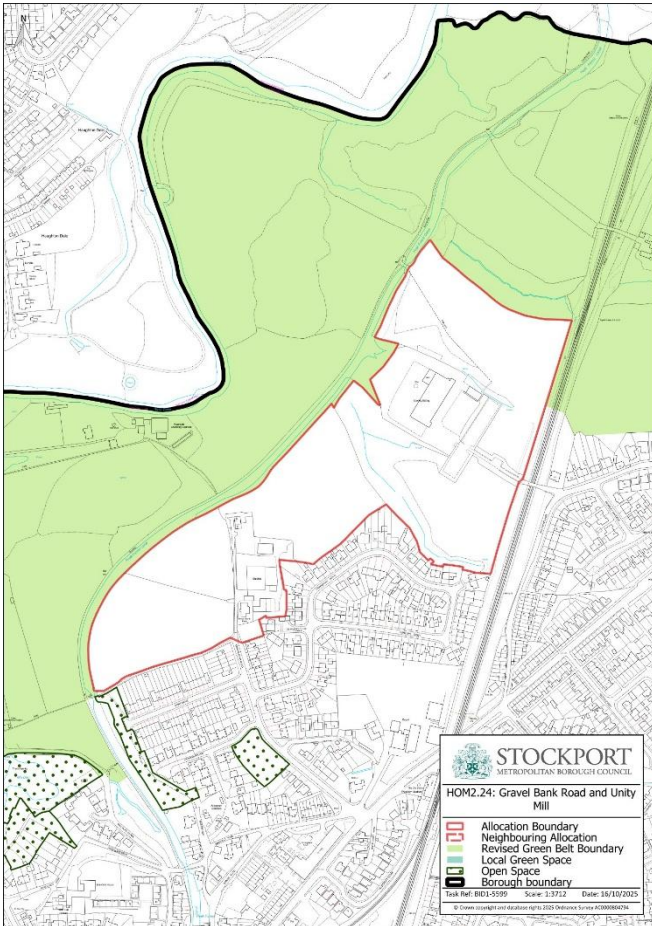
12.6 Assessment against the Government definition of "grey belt"

Brindale Road is included within the Local Plan's grey belt housing allocations, but it is not previously developed land. The site partly overlaps with Brindale Road Open Space and lies within an ecological network core area, meaning it has existing landscape and open space functions. Its urban fringe location may support a grey belt argument; however, it remains an open green parcel rather than a clear example of previously developed or degraded land.

12.7 Common-sense judgement and overall view

Common-sense judgement is that this allocation would replace a single, clearly defined green wedge behind Brindale Road with a compact estate of around 100 homes. The trade-off is between new housing in a contained location and the loss of the current valley-side open space that residents use and see as part of their local Green Belt.

13. HOM 2.24 Gravel Bank Road and Unity Mill



13.1 Site characteristics

Gravel Bank Road and Unity Mill is a Green Belt allocation in Woodley, with a minimum capacity of **400 homes** on about **11.14 ha**. It includes the land around Unity Mill and the adjoining fields behind Gravel Bank Road.

13.2 Current and former uses

Unity Mill is a former mill complex, while the Gravel Bank side is currently **greenfield land used for grazing and open space**. The current use is therefore a mix of brownfield mill land and open Green Belt land.

13.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The site sits in the Green Belt and is being treated by the council as part of its grey-belt housing supply. The mill is in the **Peak Forest Canal Conservation Area**, so heritage and canal-side character are important constraints.

13.4 Value to the local community

The fields and canal-side land give Woodley a green edge and are valued locally for openness and wildlife. Unity Mill is also a local landmark and part of the area's historic identity.

13.5 Agricultural land quality

The open land is currently used for **grazing horses** and farm activity, so it is not just unused scrub. No formal agricultural grade is given. The open land is identified as Grade 3 agricultural land and it is clearly active Green Belt pasture with some part of the site previously developed.

13.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

The site has some characteristics consistent with the Government's grey belt approach because it includes the previously developed Unity Mill site. However, much of the allocation is open Green Belt land with ecological and landscape value. Overall, it is only a partial fit with the Government's definition of grey belt.

13.7 Common-sense judgement and overall view

The trade-off here is mixed: Unity Mill offers genuine regeneration, but the surrounding fields are still open Green Belt countryside. Overall, it is a bigger and more complex release than Brindale Road because it combines redevelopment potential with the loss of a substantial green edge.¹³

¹³ Marketing Stockport (2026) *155 new homes proposed for Woodley*. Available at:

<https://marketingstockport.co.uk/news/155-new-homes-proposed-for-woodley/>

Place North West (2026) *Anwyl, Great Places plan 155 Woodley homes*. Available at:

<https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/anwyl-great-places-plan-155-woodley-homes/>

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2020) *Unity Mill*. Available at:

<https://assets.ctfassets.net/ii3xdrqc6nfw/41PCJgchCoolly6OqsU2a/2f309143523f36d917e76cb1a50e7a12/unitymill.pdf>

14. HOM 2.25 Land at Cheadle Hulme School



14.1 Site characteristics

Land at Cheadle Hulme School is allocated in the draft Local Plan for **350 homes**. The school's own land page says the site has been kept as **Green Belt** since the school acquired more land in 1946.

14.2 Current and former uses

The school says the fields have been **leased to a local farmer for sheep grazing since 1989**. It also says the land has **public rights of way and permissive pathways** across it.

14.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The land is Green Belt and part of the school's wider protected setting. The presence of rights of way and permissive routes means the land is not just private school grounds but a space with some public access.

14.4 Value to the local community

The school page describes the land as a maintained Green Belt around the school and says the routes link **Heathbank Road, Smithy Green and Woking Road**. That suggests value as open countryside and as a walking link.

14.5 Agricultural land quality

The clearest evidence is that the land is used for **sheep grazing**. No detailed agricultural land grade was found.

14.6 Assessment against the Government definition of "grey belt"

The public material reviewed does not give a clear site-specific grey-belt assessment for this exact parcel. It is safer

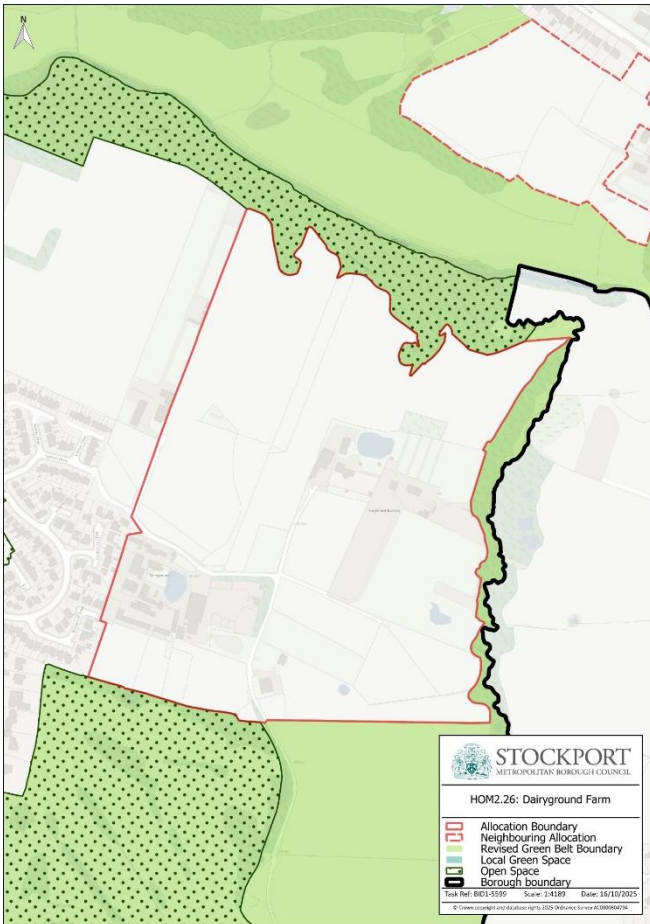
to describe it as Green Belt land proposed for housing.¹⁴

14.7 Common-sense judgement and overall view

On balance, this looks like a less strong option than some more contained sites, because it would remove open school-associated Green Belt land and public paths.

¹⁴ **Cheadle Hulme School** (n.d.) *Cheadle Hulme School Land*. Available at: <https://www.cheadlehulmeschool.co.uk/cheadle-hulme-school-land/>

15. HOM 2.26 Dairyground Farm



15.1 Site characteristics

Dairyground Farm is allocated in the draft Local Plan for **500 homes on 26.84 ha**. Public material also confirms that the detailed site information currently available relates to **part of the wider Dairyground Farm allocation**.

15.2 Current and former uses

The clearest descriptions show a **mixed-use site** rather than a simple open field. Sources describe it as a **former agricultural smallholding** with existing uses including **car repairs, open storage, equestrian activity, residential use, and buildings of varying quality**.

15.3 Planning and environmental constraints

The site is in the **Green Belt**. Available sources also show that the land sits on the edge of Bramhall and that the argument for development relies partly on the presence of existing buildings and disturbed land rather than a wholly undeveloped countryside site.

15.4 Value to the local community

The available material indicates local value in terms of **public open space, landscaping, walking routes and rights of way**. At the same time, the site is already supporting active business and equestrian uses, so it is not simply vacant open land.

15.5 Agricultural land quality

The evidence found does not support describing the relevant part of Dairyground Farm as straightforward agricultural land. It is better described as a **mixed and partly developed**

Green Belt site, and no clear agricultural land classification grade was identified for the wider allocation.

15.6 Assessment against the Government definition of “grey belt”

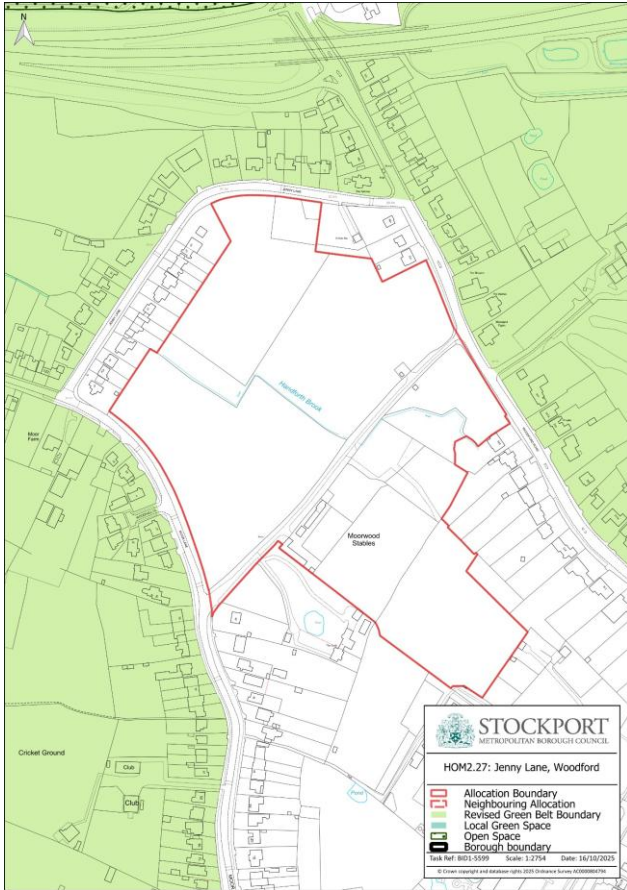
The evidence suggests that part of the site may fit the description of grey-belt because it is already mixed-use and partly developed but the material found does not show clearly enough whether that applies to the whole wider allocation.

15.7 Common-sense judgement and overall view

Overall, Dairyground Farm looks like a reasonable site to consider, because it is not a simple untouched field and part of it already has a mixed, developed character. However, it would still be a significant Green Belt release, and it would also push the built-up edge of Bramhall closer to Hazel Grove, which is an important planning concern.¹⁵

¹⁵ **Manchester Evening News** (2025) ‘I’ve got nowhere to go’: “I’m...”. Available at: <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/ive-got-nowhere-to-go-im-31330181>
Wain Estates (n.d.) *Commercial small holding approved for housing*. Available at: <https://www.wainestates.co.uk/commercial-small-holding-approved-for-housing/>
Pegasus Group (2026) *Planning Statement* (planning application document). Available at: <https://docs.planning.org.uk/20260407/127/T75X1EPJMUZ00/mjupuknxgni1g77f.pdf>

16. HOM 2.27 Jenny Lane



16.1 Characteristics

Jenny Lane is a greenfield site on the edge of Woodford. It consists of agricultural fields and improved grassland used for grazing and hay production.

16.2 Current and former uses

The site is currently in agricultural use and reads as open fields. There is no obvious indication that the wider site has a substantial former developed use.

16.3 Planning constraints

The main constraint is that the site lies in the Green Belt. Development here would also bring the edge of Woodford closer to Kitt's Moss and reduce the gap between them, raising concerns about settlement merging.

16.4 Value to the local community

The site contributes to the open character of this part of Woodford and helps maintain separation between the built-up area and Kitt's Moss. As open land next to Jenny Lane and the Cinder Track, it also has local value as visible countryside and as part of the setting of the area.

16.5 Agricultural land

Jenny Lane should be treated as agricultural land. Development here would therefore involve the loss of farmland, although the agricultural land grade is not confirmed here.

16.6 Government definition of grey belt

Jenny Lane does not fit the definition of Grey Belt especially well, because it is open agricultural land that helps maintain separation between Woodford and Kitt's Moss rather than land that appears obviously degraded or weakly performing.

16.7 Overall view

Jenny Lane does not feel like an ugly or obviously degraded site. It feels more like open farmland on the edge of Woodford, and development here would look more like the loss of countryside and settlement separation than the redevelopment of genuinely poor-quality land.¹⁶

¹⁶ Woodford Neighbourhood Forum (2018) *Woodford Landscape and Environment Report: Part 1*. Available at: http://woodfordnf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Woodford-Landscape-and-Environment-Report-Part-1-April-2018_opt.pdf

Stockport Nub News (2026) *New park promised in Stockport village*. Available at: <https://stockport.nub.news/news/local-news/new-park-promised-in-stockport-village-298954>

17. HOM 2.28 Mill Lane (Hazel Grove)



17.1 Characteristics

Mill Lane is a small greenfield site on the edge of Hazel Grove. From the aerial view, it reads as a contained parcel of open land rather than a larger piece of countryside. 50 homes are proposed on 1.36 hectares of land.

17.2 Current and former uses

The site appears to be open grassland at present, with no obvious built form across the main area. It does not look like a brownfield site or a place with any substantial former development.

17.3 Planning constraints

The site lies in the Green Belt and is tightly framed by existing development and major infrastructure. Its small size and edge-of-settlement position mean the main issues are likely to be openness and landscape impact.

17.4 Value to the local community

I could not find enough reliable site-specific information to say much about the site's value to the local community. Beyond the fact that it is an undeveloped parcel of land, it is better not to make stronger claims without clearer evidence.

17.5 Agricultural land

The site appears to be open grassland rather than built land, so it should be treated as greenfield. On that basis, development would still mean the loss of open land at the settlement edge, even if the exact agricultural grade is not known.

17.6 Government definition of grey belt

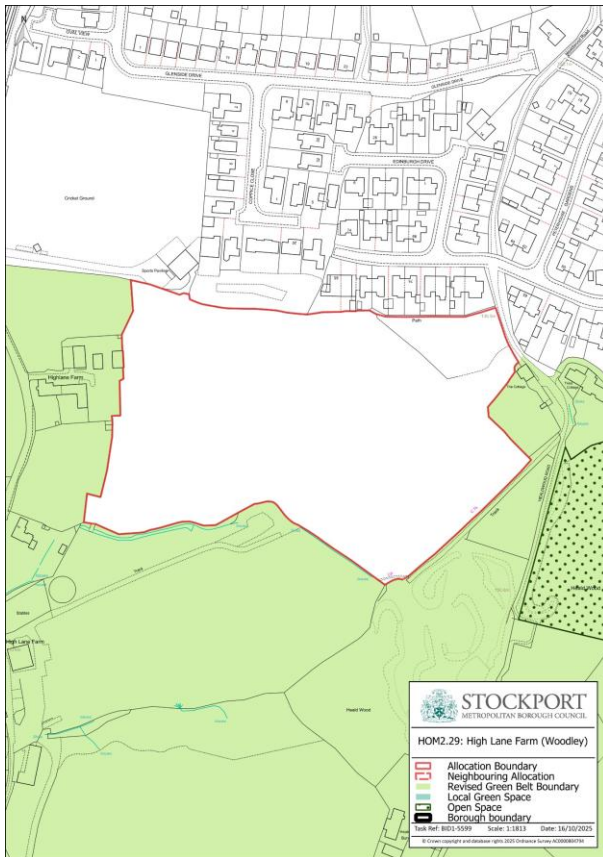
Mill Lane does not obviously appear to be a strong grey belt candidate, because it seems to function as open land on the edge of Hazel Grove rather than as degraded or weakly performing Green Belt land.

17.7 Overall view

Mill Lane is a relatively small parcel of land and is bounded by development and roads on most sides, so it has a more contained character than many Green Belt sites. On that basis, it is easier to see how it could be developed than a larger, more open site.¹⁷

¹⁷ Hollins Strategic Land (2025) Hazel Grove. Available at: <https://www.hsland.co.uk/hazलगrove.html>

18. HOM 2.29 High Lane Farm (Woodley)



18.1 Characteristics

High Lane Farm, Woodley is a greenfield site proposed for housing in the emerging plan. SMBC proposes around 185 homes on 3.54 hectares of land.

18.2 Current and former uses

The site appears to be in agricultural use and reads as open farmed land. There is no sign here of any substantial built or industrial former use.

18.3 Planning constraints

The site lies in the Green Belt and is part of the open countryside around Woodley. Its position within a wider settled landscape means the key issues are openness, landscape impact and the loss of a farmed rural parcel.

18.4 Value to the local community

The land helps keep a rural edge to this side of Woodley and contributes to the wider green gap within the area.

18.5 Agricultural Land

The land is Grade 4 agricultural land, so it is poorer-quality farmland and not best and most versatile agricultural land.

18.6 Government definition of grey belt

High Lane Farm still reads as open countryside and farmland, so it does not look like weak or leftover Green Belt land.

18.7 Overall view

Overall, this is a substantial open rural parcel, so development would mean the loss of countryside rather than the reuse of degraded land.



Figure 1: Aerial image of the land.

19. HOM 2.30 Sanderling Road



19.1 Characteristics

Sanderling Road is a small greenfield parcel at the edge of the built-up area. From the image, it looks like an enclosed piece of open land tucked between housing and the wider countryside.

19.2 Current and former uses

The site appears to be open grassland at present. There is no clear sign here of substantial built development across the main parcel.

19.3 Planning constraints

The main constraint is its Green Belt location. The site is also tightly framed by existing housing on one side and open rural land on the other, so the key issue is how far development would push the settlement edge into the countryside.

19.4 Value to the local community

The land contributes to the break between the existing urban area and the open countryside beyond. It also helps preserve the more rural edge of this part of Stockport.

19.5 Agricultural land

It appears to be open grassland, so it should be treated as greenfield land. On that basis, development would involve the loss of open land at the edge of the settlement.

19.6 Government definition of grey belt

Sanderling Road does not obviously look like weak or leftover Green Belt land. It reads more as an open green edge parcel than

as degraded land with little planning value.

19.7 Overall view

Overall, Sanderling Road looks like a small but still meaningful piece of open countryside at the settlement edge. Development here would mean a further encroachment into the Green Belt rather than the reuse of land that has already lost its rural character.



Figure 2: Aerial image of the land.

20. HOM 2.31 Compstall Road North, HOM 2.32 Compstall Road South

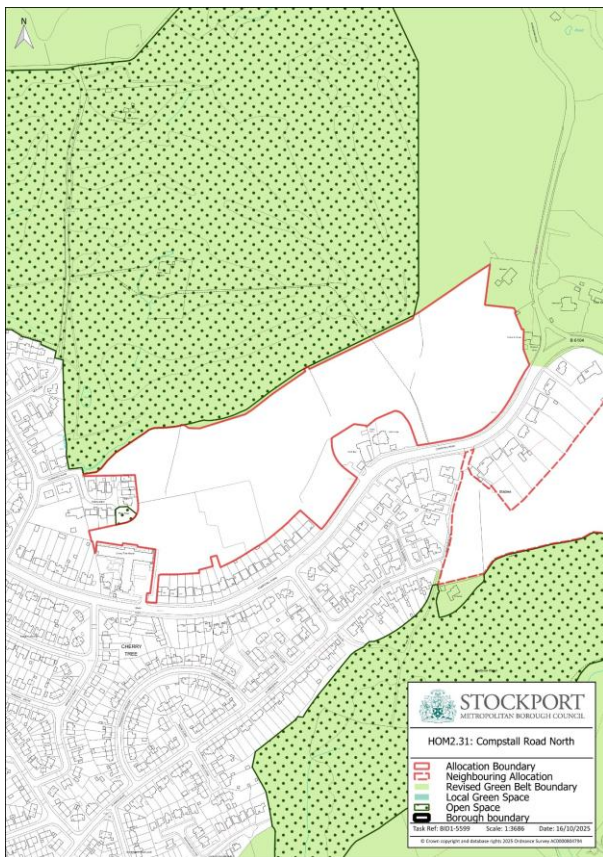


Figure 3: Compstall Road North

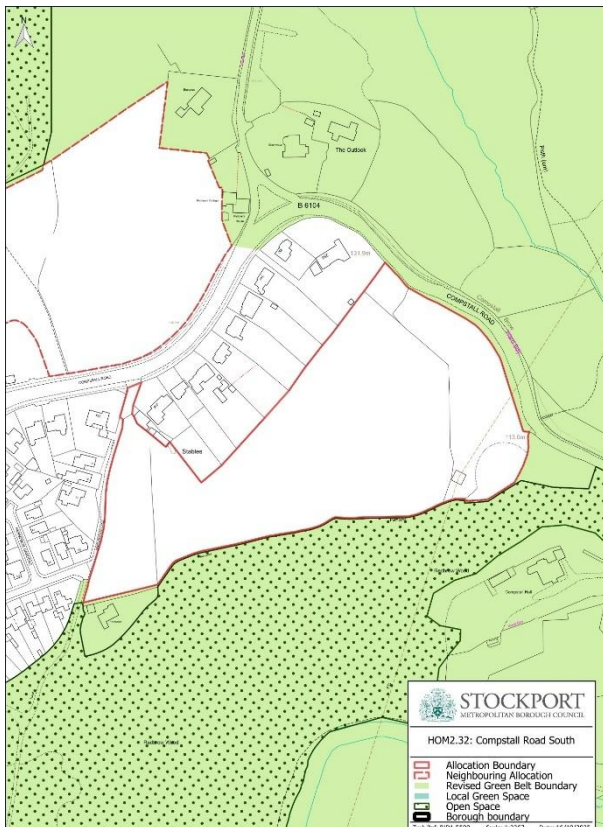


Figure 4: Compstall Road South

20.1 Characteristics

Compstall Road North is proposed for 250 homes on 8.52 hectares, and Compstall Road South for 200 homes on 4.16 hectares. Taken together, they are two greenfield sites on the edge of Romiley.

20.2 Current and former uses

Both sites appear to be undeveloped land rather than previously developed land. I have not found clear evidence of any substantial former built use across either site.

20.3 Planning constraints

The sites lie in the Green Belt and within a landscape character area. They are also identified as being within ecological networks and a linear corridor, so landscape character and habitat connectivity are both relevant planning considerations.

20.4 Value to the local community

The area appears to have value to the local community as open green space and for wildlife. Local commentary describes it as valued open space for residents and says it supports birds of prey, bats, hedgehogs, deer and pollinator species.

20.5 Agricultural land

The Agricultural Land Classification map North West Region suggests that much of Romiley is lower-grade agricultural land, but the map is strategic rather than site-specific and is not detailed enough to confirm the exact grade of this site.

20.6 Government definition of grey belt

Although these sites have been discussed as part of the council's grey belt release, they still read as open edge-of-settlement land rather than obviously degraded or leftover land. On that basis, the case for grey belt is not especially strong on character alone.

20.7 Overall view

Taken together, Compstall Road North and South would amount to a sizeable release of open Green Belt land on the Romiley edge. They are more clearly greenfield extensions than redevelopment sites, so the main issue is whether that loss of open land can be justified.¹⁸

¹⁸ Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2026) *Heritage assets*. Available at:

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/directories/entry/heritage-assets/Conservation-7>

Natural England (2010) *Agricultural Land Classification Map: North West Region (ALC002)*. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/144015>

21. HOM 2.33 Heald Green West



21.1 Characteristics

Heald Green West is a large proposed housing allocation for **750 homes on 31.62 hectares**. It is a substantial Green Belt site, but it is also related to existing urban development on two sides.

21.2 Current and former uses

The site is open Green Belt land and is not previously developed land.

21.3 Planning constraints

The site lies in the Green Belt and within a **landscape character area**. The main planning issues are the loss of openness and the effect of releasing a large parcel of land, even though the site is partly contained by urban development and sits on the opposite side of the road from the wider body of open land.

21.4 Value to the local community

The site has value as open land within the current Green Belt. It contributes to openness, although its role is more limited than a site that forms part of a much wider continuous countryside gap.

21.5 Agricultural land

The site is understood to be **Grade 3 agricultural land**. That means it is good to moderate quality farmland rather than the poorest grades.

21.6 Government definition of grey belt

This site has a stronger case than a more isolated parcel because it is bounded by urban development on two sides and is separated by the road from the wider area of open land. Even so, it still contributes to openness, so the case for grey belt is arguable rather than clear-cut.

21.7 Overall view

Overall, Heald Green West is a large open Green Belt site that is more contained than some of the more exposed countryside parcels elsewhere in the plan. That makes it easier to justify than a fully open site, although the scale of the proposal still means the impact of release would be significant.¹⁹

¹⁹ **Natural England (2024) Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) (England)**. Available at: <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::provisional-agricultural-land-classification-alc-england/explore?location=53.363636%2C-2.240347%2C14>

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2026) Find conservation and heritage assets. Available at: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/directories/entry/heritage-assets/Conservation-7>

22. HOM 2.34 Shakespeare Road



22.1 Characteristics

Shakespeare Road is a proposed housing allocation for 150 homes.

22.2 Current and former uses

The site is a vacant green space and is not previously developed land.

22.3 Planning constraints

The site lies in the Green Belt and is adjacent to the safeguarded A6-M60 protected corridor, which forms part of the SEMMMS road scheme. That means any development would need to take account of both Green Belt policy and the need to avoid prejudicing the safeguarded route.

22.4 Value to the local community

The site has value as open green space within the local area. Based on the information available, it is fair to describe it as a long-standing vacant green parcel rather than a site with a developed or derelict character.

22.5 Agricultural land

The agricultural land classification is urban. This means the site is not treated as agricultural land in the usual farming sense.

22.6 Government definition of grey belt

The site is not previously developed land, but nor does it appear to be open agricultural countryside of the kind seen on some larger edge-of-settlement sites. Its urban context may make the case for release easier than for a more open rural parcel, although the

protected corridor remains an important constraint.

22.7 Overall view

Overall, Shakespeare Road is a vacant green Green Belt site for 150 homes in a more urban context than many of the other allocations. It is still open land, but it appears to be a more contained and potentially more arguable release than the larger open countryside sites elsewhere in the plan.²⁰

²⁰ Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2025) Assessment of sites in the Green Belt. Available at: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/assessment-of-sites-in-the-green-belt>

Westchurch Homes (n.d.) Future developments. Available at: <https://www.westchurchhomes.co.uk/partnerships/future-developments/>

23. HOM 2.35 Bolshaw Road



23.1 Characteristics

Bolshaw Road is a proposed housing site in Heald Green identified through the local plan process. It is a greenfield site within an urban-fringe landscape, and available material indicates a site area of about 1.78 hectares with existing boundary vegetation and water features.

23.2 Current and former uses

The site is described by the developer as **greenfield** land and there is no indication in the material reviewed that it is previously developed land. The site has been purchased for residential development and is being promoted as a wholly affordable-led housing scheme.

23.3 Planning constraints

The site lies within the **B Heald Green Fringe Landscape Character Area**, categorised as **Lowland Farming & Urban Fringe**. The land is also classified as **Urban** in Agricultural Land Classification terms, so agricultural quality is not a defining issue here; the more important matters are Green Belt policy, settlement edge character, ecology, and access.

23.4 Value to the local community

The site contributes to the local urban-edge landscape through its open character and existing natural features. Hedgerows, a pond, and pedestrian connections appear to be among the features that give it local environmental and amenity value.

23.5 Agricultural land

The site is classified as **Urban** under Agricultural Land Classification, so it is not productive agricultural land.

23.6 Government definition of grey belt

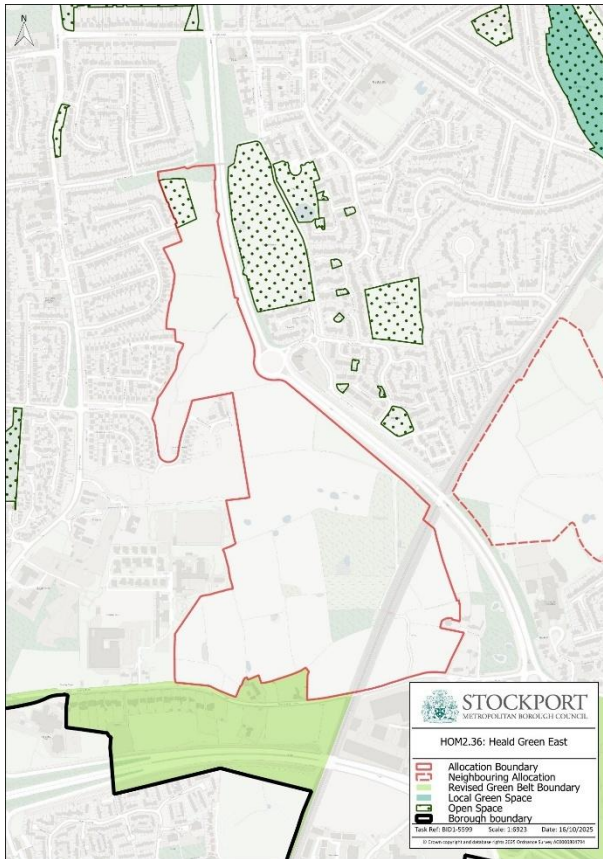
Its landscape context is more urban fringe than open countryside, which supports a more nuanced view of the site's character. The agricultural classification being urban also suggests it is different from a farmed rural field.

23.7 Overall View

Bolshaw Road is a small greenfield urban-fringe site proposed for 70 dwellings in the emerging Local Plan. It could be argued to meet the council's grey belt approach, but it is not an obvious example of previously developed or degraded land and still has some open landscape value. Development here could also weaken the gap at the edge of Heald Green and add to pressure for further growth towards Handforth.²¹

²¹ **Breck Homes** (2026) *Breck submits planning for 64-home affordable housing scheme in Stockport as purchase completes*. Available at: <https://www.breck.co.uk/news/breck-submits-planning-for-64-home-affordable-housing-scheme-in-stockport-as-purchase-completes/>
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2025) *Stockport Local Plan - Our Homes (interactive policies map)*. Available at: <https://localplan.stockport.gov.uk/map?chapter=our-homes&stage=1&title=Our+homes>

24. HOM 2.36 Heald Green East



24.1 Characteristics

Heald Green East is a major proposed housing allocation in the emerging Stockport Local Plan for **900 dwellings** on **42.61 hectares**, and it is identified by the council as **part grey belt** rather than wholly grey belt.

24.2 Current and former uses

The site appears to be predominantly **greenfield land**, although the council's classification of it as **part grey belt** suggests that some parts are more influenced by surrounding development or infrastructure than others. It is a large urban-fringe site rather than a clearly previously developed parcel of land.

24.3 Planning constraints

The main planning constraints are the site's scale, Green Belt status, landscape sensitivity, and likely effects on the settlement edge. The site is within the B Heald Green Fringe character area, and a large part of it is Grade 3 agricultural land, meaning that landscape and agricultural land quality are both relevant considerations alongside ecology, access, drainage and infrastructure capacity.

24.4 Value to the local community

The site has value as open land on the edge of Heald Green and contributes to the transition between the existing built-up area and the wider fringe landscape. Because it is a large site, its release would not just affect one field or edge parcel but could materially alter how this part of Heald Green relates to surrounding land and nearby settlements.

24.5 Agricultural land

A large part of Heald Green East is Grade 3 agricultural land. Grade 3 is classed as good to moderate quality agricultural land, although whether it counts as best and most versatile depends on whether the land is Grade 3a rather than 3b, and that distinction is not confirmed by the information currently available.

24.6 Government definition of grey belt

The site may meet the council's case for being part grey belt, especially given its urban-fringe context and the influence of surrounding infrastructure and development. However, it is not an obvious example of degraded or previously developed land, and the presence of a large area of Grade 3 agricultural land and a defined landscape character area means the grey belt case is mixed rather than straightforward.

24.7 Overall view

Overall, Heald Green East is a large greenfield urban-fringe site with some characteristics that may support a part grey belt argument, but it also has clear landscape and agricultural value. It should not be seen as a simple brownfield-style release, and because of its size it raises wider questions about Green Belt loss, settlement edge change and the long-term direction of growth in this part of Stockport.²²

²² **Manchester Evening News** (2025) *Stockport areas where nearly 9,000 new homes could be built*. Available at: <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/stockport-areas-nearly-9000-new-32713539>

Marketing Stockport (2024) *Consultation launches on major Heald Green housing development*. Available at: <https://marketingstockport.co.uk/news/consultation-launches-on-major-heald-green-housing-development/>

Place North West (2025) *Bloor tables £100m Heald Green homes plan*. Available at: <https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/bloor-tables-100m-heald-green-homes-plan/>

25. HOM 2.37 Norbury Hall / Land off Chester Road (Hazel Grove)



25.1 Characteristics

HOM 2.37 is identified in the emerging Stockport Local Plan as Norbury Hall / Land off Chester Road (Hazel Grove) with a proposed capacity of 300 dwellings on 10.79 hectares. In practice, the site appears to be an open parcel of edge-of-settlement land, with only limited development influence on one side rather than a strongly urbanised site overall.

25.2 Current and former uses

The land is best understood as a mixed greenfield parcel, with some parts considered urban and other parts classed as Grade 3 agricultural land. Despite the site name, Norbury Hall itself does not appear to be the main subject of the allocation, and the site reads more as open land off Chester Road than as a heritage-led redevelopment site.

25.3 Planning constraints

The site lies within the C Ladybrook Valley Landscape Character Area, categorised as River Valley & Lowland Farming. The main planning constraints are therefore Green Belt release, loss of open land, effects on the rural edge of Hazel Grove, agricultural land loss on the Grade 3 parts of the site, and the broader effect of extending built form southwards.

25.4 Value to the local community

This land appears to have local value as an open buffer on the edge of Hazel Grove and as part of the wider valley and farming landscape. Its value is not just visual: because it remains largely open, it helps maintain a distinction between the built-up area and the more rural land beyond.

25.5 Agricultural land

Part of the site is identified as Grade 3 agricultural land, while other parts are considered urban. Grade 3 is classed as good to moderate quality agricultural land.

25.6 Government definition of grey belt

The site may have an arguable grey belt case because it sits on the settlement edge and includes some land considered urban. However, by appearance and character it seems to be mostly an open parcel, and because it lies in the C Ladybrook Valley character area with some Grade 3 agricultural land, it is not an obvious example of degraded or brownfield-style grey belt.

25.7 Overall view

Overall, this looks more like an open greenfield extension to Hazel Grove than a straightforward grey belt release. Development here would push the settlement edge further south and could weaken the Green Belt gap in the direction of Poynton, raising a coalescence concern as well as a simple countryside-loss concern. For that reason, the site is better described as a debatable and relatively weak grey belt case rather than a clear-cut one.

26. HOM 2.38 Chester Road (Woodford)



26.1 Characteristics

HOM 2.38 is identified in the emerging Stockport Local Plan as **Chester Road (Woodford)**, a **part grey belt** allocation for **550 dwellings**. The site is south of Chester Road and comprises several fields currently in agricultural use.

26.2 Current use

The site is predominantly **greenfield land** in agricultural use rather than previously developed land. It is therefore better understood as open farmland on the edge of Woodford than as a brownfield redevelopment site.

26.3 Planning constraints

The site is in a **Lowland Farming** landscape character area, and the land is identified as **Grade 3 agricultural land**. The main constraints are therefore Green Belt release, loss of open farmland, and the effect of extending development further into the countryside.

26.4 Community value

The site has value as open land at the edge of Woodford. Because it remains in agricultural use, development would represent a clear change from countryside to housing land.

26.5 Grey belt assessment

Although the site is identified by the council as **part grey belt**, it is still largely open agricultural land. In common-sense terms, this makes it a weaker grey belt case than a clearly degraded or previously developed site.

26.6 Agriculture Land

The site is in Lowland Farming landscape character area and the land identified as Grade 3 agricultural land. The main constraint hence would be loss of open farmland.

26.7 Overall view

Overall, this is a **greenfield farmland site** with a qualified rather than strong grey belt case. The key issue is the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land in a Lowland Farming landscape, not the reuse of obviously derelict land.²³

²³ **Marketing Stockport (2025)** *Over 500 new homes proposed for Woodford*. Available at: <https://marketingstockport.co.uk/news/over-500-new-homes-proposed-for-woodford/>

Assessment methodology

The sites have been assessed to consider the relative strength of the case for their release from the Green Belt. The assessment considers factors including existing land use, previously developed land characteristics, contribution to Green Belt purposes, landscape and ecological sensitivity, agricultural value, and community role.

Sites are grouped as:

- **Stronger case for release** - sites with existing development, brownfield characteristics, or clear opportunities for regeneration.
- **Mixed case for release** - sites where there are factors supporting development but also significant environmental, landscape or community considerations.
- **Weaker case for release** - sites that remain open countryside or agricultural land and where development would result in a significant change to Green Belt character.

Site	Assessment	Reason
HOM 2.12 Compstall Mills	Strong candidate for release	Previously developed historic mill complex with clear brownfield characteristics, although heritage and ecology require careful treatment.
HOM 2.13 Former Offerton High School	Strong candidate for release	Previously developed school site with existing buildings, hardstanding and no agricultural function.
HOM 2.14 Woodford Garden Village Extension	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	Former aerodrome land supports grey belt classification, but the scale of development would significantly alter an open landscape gap.
HOM 2.15 Hall Moss Lane	Weak candidate for release	Open agricultural landscape with strong countryside character, recreation value and Green Belt separation function.
HOM 2.16 High Lane	Weak candidate for release	Large area of open farmland where development would substantially expand the settlement edge.
HOM 2.17 Hyde Bank Meadows	Weak candidate for release	Open grassland linked to wider recreational space, with limited evidence of previous development.
HOM 2.18 Sandown Road	Weak candidate for release	Greenfield countryside site contributing to Hazel Grove's rural edge and openness.
HOM 2.19 Jacksons Lane West	Weak candidate for release	Agricultural land forming part of Hazel Grove's open countryside setting.
HOM 2.20 Jacksons Lane East	Weak candidate for release	Similar to Jacksons Lane West; open agricultural land with limited brownfield characteristics.
HOM 2.21 Offerton Sand and Gravel	Strong candidate for release	Existing mineral and commercial use means redevelopment would represent reuse of disturbed land rather than loss of open countryside.
HOM 2.22 Cow Lane	Weak candidate for release	Large open Green Belt parcel with local recreational and landscape value.
HOM 2.23 Brindale Road	Weak candidate for release	Small site but functions as a visible green valley-side buffer.

HOM 2.24 Gravel Bank Road and Unity Mill	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	Contains a genuine redevelopment opportunity through Unity Mill, but surrounding Green Belt fields remain sensitive.
HOM 2.25 Land at Cheadle Hulme School	Weak candidate for release	Open school-associated Green Belt land with public access and countryside character.
HOM 2.26 Dairyground Farm	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	Mixed-use character provides some justification, but it remains a substantial Green Belt release.
HOM 2.27 Jenny Lane	Weak candidate for release	Open agricultural land contributing to separation between settlements.
HOM 2.28 Mill Lane	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	Small, contained site surrounded by development, although still greenfield land.
HOM 2.29 High Lane Farm (Woodley)	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	Smaller and more contained than major countryside releases, but still agricultural Green Belt land.
HOM 2.30 Sanderling Road	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	Limited scale and containment reduce impacts, but it remains open Green Belt land.
HOM 2.31 Compstall Road North	Weak candidate for release	Open Green Belt land with ecological and landscape value.
HOM 2.32 Compstall Road South	Weak candidate for release	Open Green Belt land with similar constraints to Compstall Road North.
HOM 2.33 Heald Green West	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	Urban containment makes release more defensible, but the scale of development remains significant.
HOM 2.34 Shakespeare Road	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	More urban context and limited agricultural value, but still represents Green Belt loss.
HOM 2.35 Bolshaw Road	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	Small urban-edge site with some containment, but remains greenfield.
HOM 2.36 Heald Green East	Potentially suitable but with significant constraints	Part-grey belt classification and urban influence support release, but scale and landscape impacts remain.
HOM 2.37 Norbury Hall / Chester Road	Weak candidate for release	Open valley-edge landscape with agricultural and countryside value.
HOM 2.38 Chester Road (Woodford)	Weak candidate for release	Predominantly agricultural Green Belt land with limited previous development characteristics.