

PLANNING STATEMENT

Land Adjacent to Dawes Cottage

Full Planning Application – Demolition of Existing Barn and Erection of Replacement Dwelling

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the demolition of an existing barn and the erection of a barn-style replacement dwelling at land adjacent to Dawes Cottage.

The proposal is brought forward within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is assessed accordingly against national and local Green Belt policy. The application is advanced transparently on the basis that Very Special Circumstances exist which justify the grant of planning permission.

The development is required to secure a permanent and sustainable family-based care arrangement for a severely disabled adult with lifelong and complex medical needs. The proposal is not speculative, commercially motivated or preference driven. It arises directly from established and evidenced disability-related requirements.

2. Site Context and Background

The site comprises an existing barn structure located within an established developed parcel associated with Dawes Cottage. The surrounding area is rural in character and forms part of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The barn has previously been the subject of planning history, including temporary consent. The current proposal seeks to provide a long-term, lawful and sustainable planning solution in place of temporary arrangements.

Importantly, the proposal replaces an existing built structure within the established curtilage and does not extend development into previously undeveloped countryside. The spatial envelope of development remains closely related to the existing residential grouping.

3. The Proposed Development

The application seeks full planning permission for:

- Demolition of the existing barn; and
- Erection of a barn-style dwelling constructed with a brick plinth and timber cladding.

The design adopts a restrained agricultural form, reflecting local rural character. The dwelling is carefully composed to avoid suburbanisation and to sit comfortably within the existing developed parcel.

The accommodation will enable proximity with structured separation to support a sustainable long-term care arrangement for a severely disabled adult whilst safeguarding minor children within the extended family.

4. Relevant Planning Policy Framework

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The following sections of the NPPF are particularly relevant:

- Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land

Paragraph 152 confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances.

Paragraph 154 confirms that Very Special Circumstances will not exist unless potential harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 96 supports planning decisions that promote safe and inclusive communities.

Paragraph 135 requires development to be sympathetic to local character while maintaining a strong sense of place.

The NPPF must be read as a whole. It seeks both protection of the Green Belt and the creation of inclusive, safe and sustainable communities.

4.2 Gravesham Local Plan Policy

The proposal has been assessed against the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and saved policies, including:

- Policy CS02 – Greener Borough (protection of countryside and Green Belt);

- Policy CS12 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity;
- Policy CS19 – Sustainable Development and Design;
- Policy CS20 – Heritage and Landscape;
- Saved Policy GB1 – Green Belt.

Policy CS19 requires development to respond positively to context and deliver high quality design. The proposed dwelling adopts a restrained agricultural form, utilises rural materials (brick plinth and timber cladding), consolidates built form within an existing developed parcel and avoids suburbanising features. It therefore satisfies the contextual and design quality objectives of Policy CS19.

Policy CS12 seeks protection and enhancement of biodiversity. The proposal retains existing boundary vegetation, delivers measurable on-site biodiversity net gain and incorporates native planting and ecological enhancement measures. The proposal qualifies for the statutory self-build exemption from mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements. Nevertheless, the scheme delivers proportionate on-site biodiversity enhancements and therefore, the development complies with Policy CS12.

Policy CS02 and GB1 reflect national Green Belt objectives whilst allowing for development where justified.

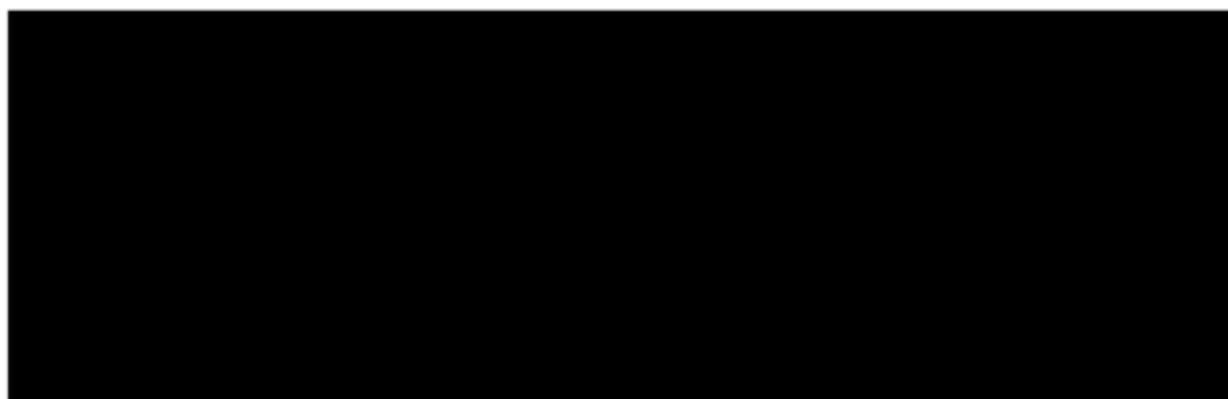
5. Green Belt Assessment

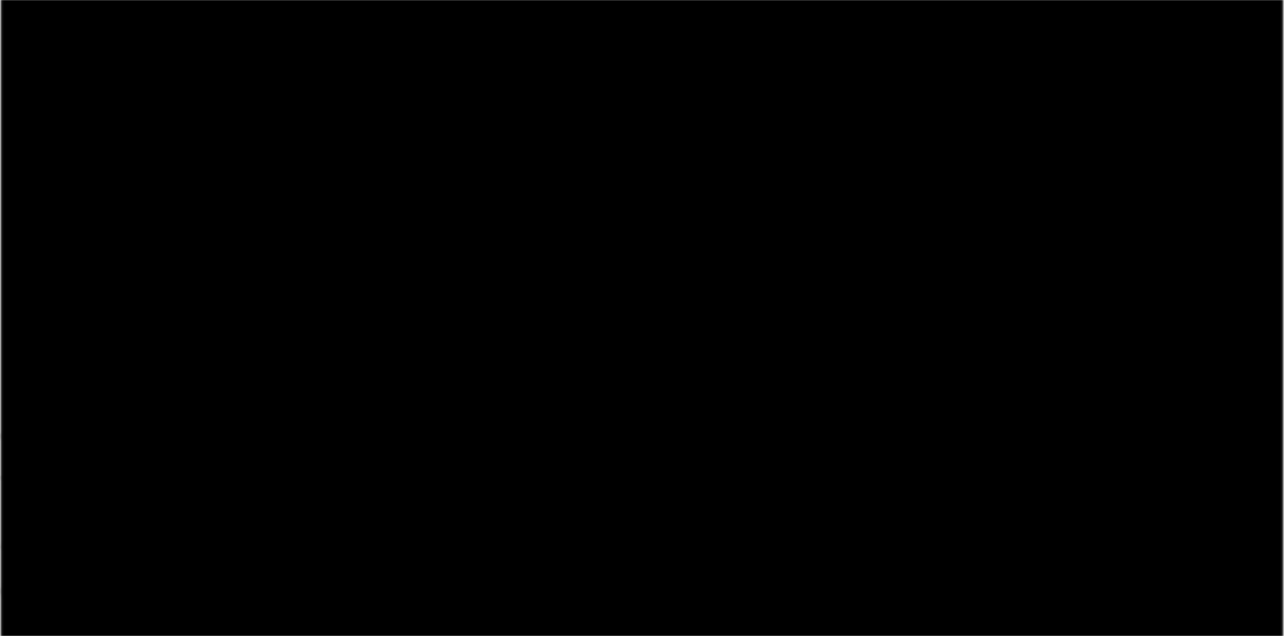
The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposal is therefore assessed under Section 13 of the NPPF.

The development replaces an existing barn within an established developed parcel. It does not represent outward sprawl or encroachment into open countryside. The overall pattern of built form remains contained and consolidated.

Whilst the proposal does not fall within the defined categories of development considered not inappropriate, national policy provides a clear mechanism for approval where Very Special Circumstances exist.

This case is advanced on that basis.





7. Equality Act 2010 Considerations

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 imposes a Public Sector Equality Duty requiring decision-makers to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and minimise disadvantage suffered by disabled persons.

The proposed accommodation directly addresses disadvantage arising from permanent disability-related functional limitations.

Failure to secure appropriate environmental provision would perpetuate disadvantage and undermine safeguarding. These equality considerations attract significant weight within the planning balance.

8. Temporary Permission and Long-Term Stability

The site has previously been subject to temporary planning permission.

However, the medical evidence confirms that the disability in this case is permanent and lifelong. The need for supervision, structured accommodation and safeguarding will not diminish.

Temporary permissions are generally appropriate where need is short-term or transitional. In this case, the need is enduring.

Requiring repeated temporary renewals would:

- Create uncertainty for a vulnerable adult;
- Undermine structured care planning;
- Increase safeguarding pressures;

- Fail to provide a sustainable planning solution.

A permanent permission, subject to appropriate occupancy restriction tying the dwelling to the care of the disabled family member, represents a proportionate and policy-consistent resolution.

9. Design, Landscape and Openness

The replacement dwelling adopts a simple agricultural form with brick plinth and timber cladding. The scale and massing are deliberately restrained.

The proposal:

- Consolidates built form within an established parcel;
- Avoids suburban design features;
- Retains the wider openness of the surrounding land;
- Maintains the visual relationship of the site within its rural context;
- Does not materially extend built form into open countryside beyond the established residential grouping.

In this respect, the proposal limits impact on openness and character and is consistent with the spatial objectives of Policy CS02 and Saved Policy GB1, subject to the consideration of Very Special Circumstances.

The development complies with NPPF Section 12 and Policy CS19 in delivering contextually appropriate design.

10. Biodiversity and Sustainability

The proposal delivers measurable environmental benefits including:

- On-site biodiversity net gain;
- Native planting and ecological enhancement;
- Solar photovoltaic panels;
- Air source heat pump;
- Rainwater harvesting;
- Grey water recycling.

These measures accord with Policy CS12 and national objectives for sustainable development. The proposal qualifies for the statutory self-build exemption from mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements. Nevertheless, the scheme delivers proportionate on-site biodiversity enhancements.

11. Planning Balance

The proposal is assessed transparently against Green Belt policy.

It replaces an existing structure within a developed parcel and results in limited additional impact on openness.

When weighed against the permanent and complex disability-related needs, safeguarding considerations, Equality Act duties, sustainability measures and biodiversity enhancement, the cumulative benefits are compelling.

This is an exceptional and enduring set of personal circumstances requiring a proportionate planning response.

The balance clearly falls in favour of granting planning permission subject to appropriate occupancy restriction.

12. Conclusion

This application is advanced openly within the Green Belt context and supported by compelling Very Special Circumstances arising from permanent and complex disability-related need.

A temporary permission cannot provide a sustainable solution to a lifelong condition.

The proposal replaces an existing built structure, maintains rural character, incorporates sustainable design and delivers biodiversity gain.

Subject to appropriate conditions, the development represents a lawful, proportionate and policy-compliant response to exceptional personal circumstances.

Planning permission is respectfully requested.