Response to Local Plan Scoping Consultation: Land North of Blakelow Road, Macclesfield

Background

The map of site submissions indicates that the above land bounded by Blakelow Road, Leadbeaters Reservoir, South Acre Drive, Buxton Road and Buxton Old Road has been put forward for consideration for housing and residential development.

As the land is current designated as Green Belt we understand that it would need to meet the criteria for Grey Belt for such development to be considered.

The current NPPF definition says Grey Belt is Green Belt land which "does not strongly contribute" to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d). Those are:

- (a) checking unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- (b) preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another; and
- (d) preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.

For the land north of Blakelow Road, we would make the following points in support of our view that it does not meet the criteria for Grey Belt, is not suitable for and should not be considered for development.

The land restricts urban sprawl

The land provides a clear physical and visual transition between the town and the open countryside towards Teggs Nose Country Park and the Peak District National Park beyond.

Its development would move the effective built-up edge of Macclesfield out into the countryside.

The land is well above the town and rises steeply towards Blakelow Road, making development on it potentially highly visible from Macclesfield and from surrounding higher ground and a particularly obvious erosion of Green Belt openness.

The land preserves the setting and character of Macclesfield

Macclesfield is a historic town which has a distinctive relationship with the surrounding open landscape, especially on its eastern side. The land provides an important part of the visual setting of the town, particularly when viewed looking eastwards from within Macclesfield.

The openness of the land allows expansive views from Blakelow Road over the town and beyond to Manchester and the hills of North Wales, which are appreciated and enjoyed by residents, walkers and cyclists.

The land serves an important agricultural, ecological and heritage function.

The land comprises open, undeveloped, agricultural fields, used to graze livestock and constitutes a functionally coherent part of the Green Belt.

The land rises up from the adjoining Leadbeaters Reservoir and is within its catchment area. Together they form a strong landscape feature that makes the land part of a wider ecological system.

Together with a number of protected trees, there is evidence of bats, barn owls, toads and red kites being present on the land.

The land forms part of the semi rural setting for a listed cottage and barn on Buxton Old Road.

Prepared on 28 August 2026 by:

James De Santis and Catherine Webb