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LPA: Kirklees Council

Hightown Lane, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire

Erection of One Detached Self-Build Dwelling on Previously Developed Land

Planning Statement

Revision: 01

March 2026

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Millson Group Ltd on behalf of Mr. Schofield in support of a full planning application for the erection of one detached self-build dwelling at Hightown Lane, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire. The application is submitted to Kirklees Council as the Local Planning Authority.

The purpose of this statement is to set out the planning context for the proposed development, to assess the proposal against relevant national and local planning policies, and to demonstrate that the scheme represents an appropriate, sustainable, and sensitive addition to the streetscape of Hightown Lane. It should be read alongside the accompanying Design and Access Statement prepared by Millson Group, together with all other supporting documents submitted as part of the application.

The proposal relates to a previously developed gap site that has fallen into a state of neglect, becoming significantly fly-tipped and overgrown over many years. The development represents an opportunity to bring this eyesore land back into productive and beneficial use, delivering a high-quality home that respects the character and heritage of the Holmfirth Conservation Area.

2. Site Description and Context

2.1 Site Description

The application site is located off Hightown Lane in an established residential area of Holmfirth. The site occupies a gap in the built frontage along Hightown Lane and is characterised by steeply rising levels from the road pavement to the north-western boundary, totalling approximately 10 metres in change of level.

The land was formerly occupied by an outbuilding associated with an allotment use. That structure has since been demolished and the site has reverted to unmanaged, overgrown land. Over time the site has been significantly fly-tipped and has become an eyesore to the locality. Two low-quality trees were removed from the site following approval from the planning authority due to their positioning within the conservation area.

The lower portion of the site consists of compacted grass and earth, compacted through occasional informal vehicle use. There is no formal hardstanding or boundary treatment. Moving up the slope, vegetation becomes progressively denser, comprising a mix of shrubs, brambles, and semi-mature trees.



2.2 Designations Affecting the Site

The site is subject to a number of material planning designations, which are addressed in full within this statement:

- The site falls within the Holmfirth Conservation Area, as designated by Kirklees Council – Heritage Unlimited provided s supporting Heritage Statement.
- The site directly adjoins the Green Belt. A modest element of the proposed building — approximately 2 metres in depth at single-storey level — falls within the Green Belt designation, relating to the rear garden area of the site.
- The lower and principal part of the developable site constitutes Previously Developed Land (PDL) by virtue of the former outbuilding and allotment use that existed upon it.

2.3 Surrounding Context

The immediate surrounding area is established and residential in character. Hightown Lane is lined with detached and semi-detached stone-built properties, with a variety of terraced dwellings also present. The wider Holmfirth townscape is recognised for its distinctive character shaped by topography, industrial heritage, and a strong vernacular architectural identity rooted in the use of locally quarried stone.

Hightown Lane connects to Town Hall Street, Wood Lane, and Huddersfield Road (A6024), providing direct access into Holmfirth and the surrounding road network. Regional connections are supported by proximity to the M1 motorway via Junction 39 at Denby Dale, offering access toward Leeds, Sheffield, and national routes.

3. Description of the Proposed Development

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of one detached self-build dwelling. The proposed property is arranged across three stepped levels, working sensitively with the steep topography of the site rather than significantly altering existing levels.

At street level, a garage fronts directly onto Hightown Lane, maintaining the existing building line set by the adjacent raised semi-detached properties and reinforcing the established rhythm of the streetscape. The principal entrance is positioned above street level, accessed via a carefully designed front staircase from the pavement.

The ground floor is focused around the principal living spaces. A bay window to the living room frames elevated views across Holmfirth, while to the rear a generous kitchen and living space opens onto the garden, providing family-focused accommodation with strong connections to external amenity space. The upper floors provide bedroom accommodation with generous proportions comfortably meeting the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).

Critically, the property has been designed as a lifetime home and the applicant's permanent forever home. The scheme incorporates provision for a future platform lift, ensuring the property can be fully adapted to meet the occupant's needs as they age. This futureproofing approach reflects a commitment to accessible and inclusive design in accordance with Building Regulations Part M4(3) aspirations and national guidance on accessible housing. It demonstrates the applicants commitment to a self-build dwelling.

4. Planning Policy Context

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) is a material consideration in the determination of this application. The following chapters of the NPPF are of particular relevance:

Chapter 4 — Decision-Making: The NPPF confirms at paragraph 11 that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where a development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This proposal represents sustainable development: it delivers a new home on previously developed land; it improves a neglected and blighted site; and it makes a positive contribution to the streetscape of a conservation area.

Chapter 5 — Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Housing: Paragraph 62 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to give due weight to the needs of those wishing to commission or build their own homes. This application is expressly submitted as a self-build proposal, reflecting the applicant's personal ambition to construct their own permanent home.

Chapter 11 — Making Effective Use of Land: The NPPF encourages planning decisions that make effective use of land. Paragraph 122 states that planning policies should regard the reuse of previously developed land favourably, subject to other policies. The application site is previously developed land by virtue of its historical use associated with outbuilding and allotment structures.

Chapter 12 — Achieving Well-Designed Places: The NPPF places significant weight on the importance of design quality. Paragraph 130 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area. This proposal has been subject to an iterative design process, informed by the local vernacular and the character of the Holmfirth Conservation Area supported by the heritage consultant.

Chapter 13 — Protecting Green Belt Land: The NPPF at paragraph 154 sets out the types of development that are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. The principal building form and its developable footprint sit upon previously developed land. Only a modest incursion of approximately 2 metres at single-storey level relates to the Green Belt designation. This element is considered to be of minimal visual impact and is substantially enclosed by the existing context, the building form, and the rising landform.

Chapter 16 — Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment: Paragraph 200 confirms that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas to enhance or better reveal the significance of heritage assets. This proposal infills a gap site that currently detracts from the streetscape, replacing derelict land with a high-quality dwelling that responds directly to the architectural character of Holmfirth Conservation Area.

4.2 Local Planning Policy — Kirklees Local Plan

The Kirklees Local Plan (adopted 2019) provides the development plan framework for the determination of this application. The following policies are of material relevance:

Policy LP1 — Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development: The proposal accords with the policy presumption in favour of sustainable development, delivering a new home in a sustainable, accessible location within the settlement boundary of Holmfirth.

Policy LP11 — Design: Policy LP11 requires development to be of high quality design that contributes positively to the character of the area. The proposal meets this requirement through careful attention to frontage alignment, roofscape, materiality, and boundary treatments.

Policy LP13 — Heritage and the Historic Environment: Policy LP13 requires development to conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings. The application site falls within the Holmfirth Conservation Area. The proposal has been developed with specialist heritage input from Heritage Unlimited, whose supporting report forms part of this application.

Policy LP36 — Green Belt: Policy LP36 reflects the national Green Belt policy framework. The applicant acknowledges that a small element of the building's footprint touches the Green Belt designation. This is limited to approximately 2 metres in depth at single-storey level and is not considered to constitute inappropriate development given that the site as a whole constitutes previously developed land.

Policy LP44 — Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing: Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP44 supports self-build and custom-build proposals. This application is expressly brought forward by an individual applicant seeking to build their own home, which will serve as their permanent forever home. The proposal falls squarely within the definition of self-build housing as described in the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.

5. Key Planning Considerations

5.1 The Principle of Development

The principle of residential development on this site is strongly supported by national and local planning policy for the following reasons:

- The site constitutes previously developed land, as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF, by virtue of the former outbuilding and allotment structures that were present upon it.
- The site represents a gap in the built frontage of Hightown Lane and its development would constitute appropriate infill within the established settlement pattern of Holmfirth.
- The site is located within the settlement boundary and is accessible to local services, facilities, and transport connections.
- The proposal delivers a self-build home, which is expressly supported by both national policy and Kirklees Local Plan.
- The development will bring a derelict, fly-tipped, and neglected site back into productive use, delivering clear environmental and visual improvement to the locality.

5.2 Impact on the Holmfirth Conservation Area

The site lies within the Holmfirth Conservation Area. Historic England has identified Holmfirth as a conservation area 'at risk' due to the gradual erosion of its historic character. This context heightens the importance of new development making a genuinely positive contribution to the area.

The design of the proposed dwelling has been developed through an iterative process informed directly by the architectural character of Holmfirth and the immediate streetscape of Hightown Lane. Key design features include:

- Reclaimed local stonework as the primary masonry material, directly reflecting the vernacular of the conservation area.
- Reconstituted stone detailing in the form of heads, cills, plinths, and banding to the front elevation.
- Natural Welsh slate roof tiles, consistent with the historic roofscapes of Holmfirth.
- Sash-style window openings with vertically proportioned glazing, reflecting the established pattern of fenestration in the area.
- A bay window to the principal elevation, consistent with the adjacent and wider streetscape character.
- Cast iron railings and matte black aluminium rainwater goods, providing appropriate traditional detailing.

Heritage Unlimited have provided specialist conservation advice and their supporting statement, submitted alongside this application, concludes that the proposal would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Holmfirth Conservation Area, in accordance with the duty set out in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

5.3 Green Belt Considerations

The application site directly adjoins the Green Belt. A modest element of the proposed building — approximately 2 metres in depth at single-storey level at the rear of the property — falls within the Green Belt designation as a consequence of the site's topography and the position of the Green Belt boundary.

The applicant submits that this limited incursion does not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the following reasons:

- The site as a whole, including the element touching the Green Belt, constitutes previously developed land as defined by the NPPF. Paragraph 154(g) confirms that the re-development of previously developed land is not inappropriate within the Green Belt, provided it does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.
- The element falling within the Green Belt is confined to a single-storey projection of approximately 2 metres in depth — a modest and proportionate incursion that does not materially affect the openness or visual character of the Green Belt.
- The Green Belt boundary in this location runs through the site as a consequence of planning designation rather than any meaningful landscape or visual distinction. The element of the building touching the Green Belt is enclosed within the private amenity space of the property and is not visually prominent in the wider landscape.
- The proposed development would not conflict with the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out at paragraph 142 of the NPPF. In particular, it would not check unrestricted sprawl, prevent coalescence of settlements, assist in safeguarding the countryside, preserve the setting of historic towns, or undermine urban regeneration.

5.4 Design, Massing, and Visual Impact

The site is characterised by a steep rise in levels from the road pavement. The design response works with this topography through a stepped three-level arrangement, ensuring the building sits naturally within the landscape and

mirrors the terraced form of surrounding development. This avoids the need for significant re-grading or alteration of existing levels.

The massing of the proposed building has been carefully calibrated to align with the existing building line set by the adjacent properties, particularly No.41 Hightown Lane. The building scale reflects the character of the surrounding residential properties without appearing overly dominant or out of place.

The proposal sensitively infills the gap in the built frontage of Hightown Lane, replacing an untidy and visually detrimental gap site with a property of appropriate scale and character. This represents a clear visual improvement to the street.

5.5 Accessibility, Lifetime Homes, and Inclusive Design

A central and distinctive feature of this proposal is the applicant's intention to construct a lifetime home that will serve as their permanent forever home. The property has been specifically designed to accommodate the needs of the applicant both now and in future years, including as they age.

The design incorporates provision for a passenger lift within the internal layout of the property. The lift shaft has been included within the building footprint and the plans have been developed to ensure that lift installation can be achieved without structural alteration. This provision ensures that all levels of the property will remain accessible regardless of future mobility requirements.

This approach reflects best practice in inclusive design and aligns with the principles of Lifetime Home Standards and Building Regulations Part M4(2) and M4(3). It also reflects the aims of national planning policy, which encourages the provision of accessible housing to meet the needs of an ageing population and to enable people to remain in their homes throughout their lives.

5.6 Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed dwelling has been sited and designed with consideration for the amenity of neighbouring properties. The building footprint has been positioned within the constrained buildable area defined by the building line of No.41 Hightown Lane, the Green Belt boundary, and the access arrangements for neighbouring properties. Overlooking distances have been assessed and the proposed window positions have been designed to minimise any adverse impact on neighbouring properties. The building form does not appear overbearing or dominant in the context of the existing street pattern.

5.7 Access and Parking

Vehicular access to the site is taken from Hightown Lane, with a garage provided at street level that will accommodate off-street parking. The garage is fronted directly onto the lane and EV charging provision has been incorporated within the site layout, meeting emerging requirements for sustainable transport infrastructure. The site is located within a sustainable and accessible settlement, with pedestrian access to local services, facilities, and public transport connections.

5.8 Ecology and Trees

Two low-quality trees within the site were removed prior to this application following formal consent from the planning authority, which was granted due to the trees' condition and their positioning within the conservation area. The proposed development does not affect any other trees of amenity value. The development of this site, which has become significantly overgrown through neglect, will result in the managed improvement of this plot. As the proposal BNG exempt through the self build act, an ecology survey has not been carried out on the land. Despite this not being

a requirement, the applicant will be carrying out a full ecology survey of the remaining land ownership to make significant improvements to the ecology of the wider site.

6. Self-Build Considerations

This application is expressly submitted as a self-build project. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) imposes a legal duty on local planning authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area for self-build and custom housebuilding. Kirklees Council maintains such a register and is required to have regard to this demand in the exercise of its planning functions.

The NPPF at paragraph 62 requires that planning policies and decisions give due weight to the needs of those wishing to build their own homes. This proposal is a direct response to that national policy imperative: it brings forward a single custom-built home on a challenging infill plot within an established settlement.

The self-build nature of this project reflects the applicant's personal commitment to the property and to the quality of its design and construction. The property is intended to be the applicant's permanent and final home. This commitment is evidenced by the level of design quality proposed, the investment in specialist conservation advice, and the specific provisions made for lifetime accessibility and futureproofing.

7. Summary and Conclusions

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of one detached self-build dwelling at Hightown Lane, Holmfirth. Having regard to all material planning considerations, it is submitted that the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms for the following reasons:

- The site constitutes previously developed land and its development represents the effective re-use of a derelict and neglected gap site.
- The proposal is an appropriate infill development within the established residential settlement of Holmfirth and is located in a sustainable, accessible position.
- The proposed dwelling has been designed to the highest standards of conservation area sensitivity, using locally reclaimed stone, natural Welsh slate, and architectural detailing that directly responds to and enhances the character of the Holmfirth Conservation Area.
- Specialist heritage advice from Heritage Unlimited supports the view that the proposal will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Holmfirth Conservation Area, meeting the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- The limited incursion into the Green Belt designation is modest in scale, confined to a single-storey element of approximately 2 metres in depth, and relates to previously developed land. It does not constitute inappropriate development and does not harm the openness or purposes of the Green Belt.
- The proposal expressly responds to the national and local planning policy support for self-build housing, delivering a home that meets the applicant's long-term needs within the Kirklees area.
- The property has been specifically designed as a lifetime home with lift provision incorporated, demonstrating a genuine and planned commitment to accessible and inclusive design that will enable the applicant to remain in their home throughout their life.
- The development will deliver a clear visual improvement to the locality by replacing a fly-tipped, overgrown, and derelict site with a high-quality residential dwelling.

On the basis of the above analysis, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed development accords with the development plan, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and all other material considerations. There are no material considerations that would justify refusing planning permission, and the applicant and their agents respectfully request that Kirklees Council resolve to grant planning permission for the proposed development.